

DIIS REPORT

DIALOGUING PARTNERSHIPS

AN ANALYSIS OF THE DIALOGUE
ASSUMPTIONS OF THE DANISH PARTNER-
SHIP FOR DIALOGUE AND REFORM

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2003, the Danish government launched the Partnership for Dialogue and Reform (PDR) with the dual objective of 1) establishing a basis for improved dialogue, understanding and cooperation between Denmark and the Arab region; and 2) supporting existing local reform processes in the Middle East and North Africa. With the first objective, which is the focus of this study, PDR was intended to demonstrate the trivialization of Huntington's thesis of a clash of civilizations that Al Qaeda, only few years before, had brought back to the limelight of international politics and endeavoured to prove. PDR was to show populations in Europe and the Arab world that there was indeed a strong, shared agenda between the so-called West and the mother-region of the Islamic world and that mutual misconceptions and prejudice could be overcome through the joined pursuit of this agenda of progress.

The objective of this study is to analyse how and to what extent PDR as it has been designed is actually furthering its second objective of improved dialogue, understanding and cooperation. Essentially we do this by analyzing *whether professional, long-term partnerships in PDR contribute to dismantling mutual prejudice and to building trusting interpersonal relations and genuine partnerships across cultures.*

The study is based on qualitative data gathered from semi-structured interviews with twenty Moroccan, Jordanian and Danish individuals ('partners') who have personally been engaged for at least two years in seven different partnerships. Six of the seven partnerships studied are between professional peers. The sample is thus representative of what might be called the 'ideal' PDR partnership. However, it is not necessarily representative of PDR partnerships in general and should not be regarded as an evaluation of the dialogue in PDR. It assesses if and how PDR has the potential to fulfil its dialogue objectives under the ideal conditions the program aspires to: long-term partnerships between professional peers. For the 'younger' PDR partnerships, the findings can be used as valuable lessons learned from some of the more experienced PDR partners.

Our results show that **mutual prejudices** are generally dismantled in PDR partnerships. The Danish partners unanimously stated that their Arab partners had surprised them positively in terms of professional standards and general affability. For the Jordanian and Moroccan partners, the meeting with the Danish partners effectively changed a widely held stereotype about Danes being cold and impersonal or

even unwelcoming to Muslims. In return, a general expectation that Danes would be marked by a negative image of the Arab world was generally confirmed, and many Arab partners therefore saw PDR as a welcome opportunity to reveal the 'real' Arab world to their Danish partners. As a general rule, the partners were perceived as representatives of their nationality and not exceptions to it. Visits to the partner country appeared important in this process of generalizing positive attributes from the partner to the nation as such.

If PDR is to have a wider effect on intercultural understanding between Denmark and the Arab world, the positive effect on partners' mutual perceptions has to reach beyond the partners who are actually involved. The potential scope of the societal multiplication effect of PDR partnerships is assessed to depend on a range of aspects: the numerical size of the individual partner's networks and the level and nature of general prejudices against the other, as well as the standing and credibility of the partners in these networks. For instance, Danish partners with no prior experience of the Arab world, to whom the PDR experience contributed to considerable adjustments in their own attitudes to it, might very well be some of the most effective channels for countering stereotypes about Arab society. Internationally oriented partners, on the other hand, are more likely to agitate in public for a global vision of dialogue and understanding, thereby reaching a wider audience and contributing to raising the information level of the general debate.

With one exception, the PDR partnerships that were studied are characterized by high levels of **mutual trust** among partners. Factors furthering trust include:

- knowledge of each other's competencies and levels of autonomy in order to avoid mistaking a lack of ability or decision-making power with a lack of will or good intentions;
- insight into the partner's personal and organizational integrity and local standing;
- predispositions to trust professional peers;
- the experience of managing conflict or crisis together;

And for the Arab partners to trust their Danish counterparts:

- a willingness and interest to learn about broader social, economic, political, cultural and historical circumstances of the Arab partner country and the Arab region as such.

It is argued that more affective types of trust or friendships generated through social interaction between partners outside work hours and facilitated by the intercultural skills of the partners, is especially crucial. Changes in personnel and the lack of a common language typically inhibit the development of trust, particularly affective trust.

Partners attributed a range of positive effects to the close personal relations in the partnership. Significantly, communication was perceived as smoother when relations grew stronger. Partners need to be aware, however, that what one partner perceives as superficial civility to be removed as relations are strengthened, another partner might perceive as a token of the strength of the relationship. Trust was also found to influence the partners' impressions and expressions of cultural differences. Only in partnerships that were low in trust did partners frequently refer to supposed national cultural attributes of the partner as explanations of behaviour.

Most partners perceive of their engagement under PDR as a **partnership**, although usually not without flaws. Some partnerships suffer from a gap between the partnership model offered by PDR and Arab partners' expectations based on prior experience of donors. While the professional engagement of Danish PDR partners is highly appreciated, some Arab partners are frustrated at the slower pace of project development and the scope of project activities on the ground. Partners are often acutely aware of the intrinsic power imbalance that stems from the Danish partners' proximity to the donor and the fact that the latter often control project budgets. However, institutional measures, such as joint decision-making, together with the high degree of mutual professional respect that is present in most partnerships, serve to maintain the perception of an equal partnership. Genuine reciprocity was singled out, especially by the Arab partners, as a quality when it was present in their partnership and as an area for improvement if it was lacking. The issue of reciprocity is found to be essential in bolstering the sense of equality in the partnership and to avoid unconstructive speculations about alleged ulterior motives of the partners.

While the relationships that have developed into actual friendships are likely to be maintained after the ending of PDR financing, some form of professional interest in maintaining the relationship has to be present in order for the remaining relationships to endure. This underlines the importance of strengthening genuine and explicit reciprocity in the partnerships.

In **conclusion**, we find that, under the circumstances of the partnerships studied for this report – where partnerships take place between professional peers and have lasted for more than two years, with a minimum of partner turnover on both sides – PDR serves to dismantle mutual prejudice and to build social capital between Denmark and the Arab world. Only one of the seven partnerships studied showed few results in these two areas.

The positive effects of dismantling prejudice and building social capital in the partnerships studied can partly be credited to the professional affinity between partners. Most importantly, professional affinities:

- foster mutual professional respect and reduce the sense of inequality in the partnership
- provide a common professional platform from which both sides can often benefit in terms of inspiration and new perspectives, thus strengthening a sense of genuine reciprocity in partnerships,
- provide an opportunity for mutual identification, which mediates the development of trust as well as the dismantling of prejudice
- tap into national networks that are not necessarily within the reach of partners who work with international development cooperation for a living, thereby strengthening the potential multiplication effect on mutual prejudices in the partners' societies.

A potential draw-back related to professional twinning arrangements is the difficulty of finding skilled Danes from the relevant sectors who also possess the level of knowledge about Arab society that Arab partners ideally ask for. However, intercultural skills and openness towards Arab societies in general proved to be effective substitutes for prior experience or formal knowledge of the Arab world. Another challenge is posed by the relatively lower impetus for nationally oriented professionals to self-sustain an international network.

Most aspects of trust encountered in the partnerships studied take time and frequent meetings to develop. In this respect, it is true that long-term partnerships are required to build trusting partnerships. Genuine partnerships, however, do not depend as much on duration as on the adherence to central PDR principles of equal status, respect for local Arab circumstances, mutual ownership and reciprocal benefits.

Recommendations: Some areas were identified where practice could improve. Explicit reciprocal benefits of the partnerships should be strengthened, and efforts should be made to bridge the gap between Arab partners' general expectations of donors and the actual partnership offered in PDR. The following recommendations at the end of the paper are presented to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

- *To maintain the present core principles of PDR, but give more attention to the issue of reciprocity when handling project applications.*
- *To assess partners' strategic position to lower mutual prejudices in the Arab world and Denmark when handling project applications.*
- *To consider ways to remove the Danish partner from the role of 'purse-keeper'.*
- *To consider ways to avoid partner frustrations over limitations in the pace and scope of the cooperation.*
- *To allow continuously for sufficient travel and representation funds in partnership budgets.*
- *To offer an introductory course in the history, society and culture of Denmark/the Arab partner country.*
- *To develop and test light support structures to help maintain personal and professional networks in the future.*

The following recommendations are presented to the PDR partners:

- *To establish an explicit, shared understanding of the organizational and individual interests and expected as well as experienced benefits of the partners involved.*
- *To establish an explicit, shared understanding of the concept and content of the partnership between the partners at an early stage in the partnership.*
- *To weigh the following when identifying professionals to represent them in the partnership:*
 - a. *Sufficient language skills (in the relevant 'third' language, typically English or French)*
 - b. *Professional skills and seniority matching the partnership representative*
 - c. *Personal drive and interest in entering into a cross-cultural partnership*
 - d. *Intercultural skills*
 - e. *Likelihood that the person(s) will not change position during the partnership period (alternatively assigning a team to engage in the partnership in order to reduce vulnerability to one individual's departure)*
 - f. *Position in the organization that allows for the institutionalization of know how and inspiration gained from the partnership*

- *To stay in close contact with the relevant donor representative during the formulation of the joint project to ensure that proposals are within reach in terms of financing possibilities.*
- *To plan for recurrent occasions where relationships can develop in a social context.*
- *To approach the objective of dialogue in PDR as a means to nurture relations and strengthen the partnership.*

INTRODUCTION

‘The world is diverse, but people in Denmark and the Arab region share the same aspirations towards peace, justice and prosperity. It is exactly through strong people-to-people partnerships that we can overcome stereotypes and build bridges in a joint effort towards this common goal.’ (Dr Per Stig Møller, then Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs, quoted in the introductory pamphlet on the Partnership for Dialogue and Reform from 2009¹)

The Partnership for Dialogue and Reform

The Partnership for Dialogue and Reform (PDR) was launched in 2003 by the Danish government. The program has the dual objective of 1) establishing a basis for improved dialogue, understanding and cooperation between Denmark and the Arab region, and 2) supporting existing local reform processes in the Middle East and North Africa. The program thus reflected two central concerns in Danish international political thinking at the time: the worrying social, economic and political stagnation of EU’s neighbouring region to the south, as spelled out in the UN’s Arab Human Development Report from 2003; and the increasing adherence in international political debate to the idea that the ‘West’ and the ‘Islamic world’ were on course for a ‘clash of civilizations’, as outlined in Samuel Huntington’s famous article from 1993 (and book from 1996), and as revitalized by the terrorist attacks of 9/11 2001.

With PDR, the Danish government aimed to support those actors in the Arab world who were working to pull the region out of the stagnation described in the Arab Human Development Reports. And by the same token, PDR would disprove and demonstrate the trivialization of Huntington’s thesis that Al Qaeda was working to prove. PDR would serve to show populations in Europe and the Arab world that there was indeed a strong, shared agenda between the so-called West and the mother region of the Islamic world and that mutual misconceptions and prejudice could be overcome through the joint pursuit of this agenda of progress. The development of strong partnerships between individuals and organizations in Denmark and the Arab world would thus bolster the power of resistance of those who believe

¹ In 2009, the name of the Programme was “The Danish-Arab Partnership Programme”. The name was changed in November 2010 to “The Partnership for Dialogue and Reform”.

in a common future of cooperation against those who see relations in terms of a clash of civilizations. Seen from a post-cartoon perspective, the *raison d'être* of the second objective of PDR seems almost prophetic.

The program was launched with a bilateral and a multilateral track,² of which only the former is of interest to this study. The bilateral track was developed as bilateral partnerships between Danish organizations and their sister organizations in Jordan, Yemen and Morocco and a number of regional programs where partnerships were formed between Danish organizations and a range of organizations throughout the Arab region. Today around 120 Danish organizations and an even greater number of Arab organizations are involved in partnerships or activities under PDR. Professional twinning is going on between Arab and Danish judges, journalists, editors, lawyers, women's activists, municipal workers, human rights activists, representatives of labour market organizations, artists, parliamentarians, youth activists, social scientists, and penitentiary officials, just to name some. Since 2003, 100 million DKK (approx. 13.42 million EUR) has been allocated annually to PDR by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

PDR is guided by six fundamental principles:

1. 'The programme is *demand driven*. Activities within the programme are reflections of demands for cooperation on reform initiatives formulated by Arab governments and non-governmental organizations. All activities are identified, designed and implemented in close collaboration between Arab and Danish partners.'
2. 'The activities are based on *equal partnerships* – with particular focus on professional cooperation, exchange of knowledge and sharing of experience. The aim is to support professional and strategic networks – to the mutual benefit of Arab and Danish partners.'
3. 'To build genuine partnerships and mutual trust takes time. Hence, the Partnership Programme is establishing partnerships with a perspective of *long-term cooperation*.'
4. 'No *"size-fits-all"*. Reform processes by necessity follow their own path according to the specific societal and political circumstance of the country'

² The multilateral track consists of Danish efforts in multilateral forums, particularly the EU, to strengthen cooperation with the Arab world around reform issues. Dialogue aspects relevant to the multilateral track will not be included in this study.

5. 'All activities fall within one of the *three thematic focal and reform areas*: Fundamental freedoms and good governance; The development of knowledge-based societies; The promotion of gender equality and women's participation in social, political and economic life.'
6. 'Activities encompass partners with an interest in reform and dialogue at *both governmental and non-governmental level*.' (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2010)

Objective, scope and structure of the study

The objective of this study is to analyse the tenability of the assumptions underlying the design of PDR in relation to its second objective of improved dialogue, understanding and cooperation. Essentially we do this by analysing whether professional, long-term partnerships in PDR contribute to dismantling mutual prejudice and to building trusting interpersonal relations and genuine partnerships across cultures. This also casts new light on some of the dynamics in the partnerships and provides lessons for how to build successful partnerships in the future.

We thus look at the *outcomes* of dialogue in terms of changes in prejudices and the strength of the social capital that has been built up. We will not examine the actual dialogue that takes place within the partnerships. But we do suggest that partnership and dialogue in PDR are two sides of the same coin, interdependent and mutually reinforcing: dialogue does not take place only when partners communicate in writing or verbally. All actions, decisions, gestures etc. in a partnership are seen as expressions in a dialogue that collectively defines the partnership. And vice versa, the quality of the partnership will always set the scene for specific dialogues taking place between partners.

In other words, if partners or donors want to assess the state of dialogue in PDR partnerships, this can be done by looking at the state of the partnership. When trying to understand the objective of fostering dialogue in PDR, it makes more sense to talk about dialoguing partnerships than dialogue in partnerships.

It is also important to stress that this study zooms in on a single, limited aspect of PDR. Most importantly, it is not within the scope of this study to analyse how PDR contributes to its reform objective. PDR's contribution to reforms in the Arab world has been the scrutiny of other studies and reviews initiated by the MFA. It seems reasonable to assume that well-functioning partnerships based on trust and

an elaborate level of mutual understanding would also be more effective in pursuing the joint project of reform. However, irrespective of how interesting and relevant this linkage between the nature of the partnership and the success of the reform project pursued by the partnership arguably is, it is not covered by this report.

The report is primarily targeted at the MFA and the many Danish and Arab organizations working in PDR in the hope that it will serve to make the discussion and work on dialogue aspects in PDR more concrete, and that its findings will create an awareness of some of the inherent dilemmas involved in, for instance, the choice of partners. Our point of departure is that PDR – and similar cross cultural initiatives internationally – are here to stay: it is not our mission in this report to discuss the overall *raison d'être* of the program.

The report is structured as follows:

In **Chapter 1**, we give an account of the methodology and method used. Two sets of assumptions about how PDR works to further dialogue, understanding and cooperation are introduced, and it is explained how these assumptions will be analysed through a number of questions about the partnerships' impacts on mutual stereotypes and their ability to build mutual trust and genuine partnerships.

Chapter 2 investigates whether the partnerships contribute to changing mutual stereotypes and prejudice. We ask if the partners themselves have had to overcome prejudices, and if in their own networks they have advocated a more nuanced perspective on each other. We briefly discuss the likelihood of a multiplier effect on partners' personal and professional networks.

In **Chapter 3**, we look at the degree to which mutual trust and genuine partnerships have been developed in these partnerships that have lasted for more than two years. In the first part of the chapter, we extract the essential ingredients in building a trusting relationship, and we look at some of the benefits that trust instils in the PDR partnerships. In the second part of the chapter, we zoom in on the concept of partnership. How is the concept understood by the partners? And is the cooperation perceived as a partnership? Reciprocity and equality emerge as the key elements in a genuine partnership, and we discuss the conditions necessary for these partnership qualities to thrive. Finally we discuss the potential of partnerships to evolve into a more permanent Arab-Danish social capital.

In **Chapter 4**, we summarize and conclude the report. We return to the initial dialogue assumptions and discuss whether professional kinship and long-term personal cooperation between partners are the decisive factors in our findings, or if others aspects also influence the results.

In **Chapter 5**, we give recommendations to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and partners in PDR based on our findings.

I. METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

I.1 Methodology

The aspiration of this study is to provide insight, lessons learned and recommendations to practitioners working with PDR and other similar cross-cultural partnerships. It does not aspire to provide a scientific contribution to theories of intercultural relations, interpersonal trust, north-south partnerships or prejudice. Such theories and related scientific research from academic disciplines as diverse as social psychology, international management and development studies have, however, been useful in the design and analysis of the study as reflected in the present chapter.

Overall approach to cross cultural relations

Since we are analysing a programme that is intended to build bridges across cultures, a few initial words on our overall perspective on cross-cultural relations are in order.

Inspired by the theoretical and methodological suggestions of Udo Staber (2006) and other critiques of the mainstream structuralist approach in cross-cultural management literature (Friedman and Antal 2005; Søderberg and Holden 2002), we apply a social constructionist process perspective on the cross-cultural meetings that take place in PDR.

Since the topic of cross-cultural management grew as a research area in the early 1980s, strongly inspired by the comprehensive study of national cultures in fifty countries by Gert Hofstede in 1980 (*Culture's Consequences*), the study of cross-cultural relations has been dominated by researchers trying to identify cultural differences along Hofstede's (or similar) cultural dimensions and to determine the impact of national culture on organizational and individual behaviour (see Kirkman, Lowe and Gibson 2006 for an overview of 180 studies).

However, as this research has unfolded over the last thirty years, scholars have had to come to terms with the fact that, although national culture rarely *never* matters, specific circumstances, situations, socio-economic conditions and not least individuals with complex cultural identities and immersed in diverse power relations seem always to be at play, making it almost impossible, or at least overly complicated, to determine *when* national culture matters (Leung et al. 2010; Ybema and Byun 2009; Oyserman, Daphna, Coon and Kimmelmeier 2002; Tayeb 2001; Maznevski, Gibson and Kirkman 1998).

Our own study of the partners in PDR is a case in point. While we cannot say that it is impossible in our empirical material to find statements and opinions that could be traced back to Hofstede's dimensions, it is clear that there are no cultural patterns to be found in our study that meaningfully distinguish the three nationalities involved (Danish, Jordanian and Moroccan). Rather, we see that cultural identities are constructed or evoked contextually, and that this construct is linked to the nature of the relationship developed between the partners (see also Hubbert et al. 1999; Ybema and Byun 2009).

The structuralist approach frames intercultural differences as problems or conflicts to be anticipated and avoided. The constructionist approach, on the other hand, sees the intercultural meeting as unpredictable, as something to be managed, and as an opportunity for learning and developing new intercultural skills (Friedman and Berthoin Antal 2005; Staber 2006). From a constructionist, processual perspective, the 'solution' to the intercultural challenge thus lies in the intercultural skills of the individual actors (Ang et al. 2007; Söderberg and Holden 2002).

As a consequence of the constructionist approach, our analysis of the PDR partnerships does not focus on cultural differences and how these are handled. Rather, it analyses the relationships between the partners, including how cultural differences, where relevant, impact on these relations. How we go about doing this is described in further detail below.

PDR's 'dialogue-assumptions'

PDR's dual objective to strengthen dialogue and support reforms in the Arab region is pursued holistically, and not through separate activities. The objective to establish a basis for improved dialogue, understanding and cooperation between Denmark and the Arab region hinges on the particular design of the programme in its support of Arab reforms through long-term twinning arrangements between professional peers in Denmark and the Arab world.

This design rests on two fundamental set of assumptions which constitute the axis of our analysis. The two set of assumptions are presented below, together with key questions of the analysis, central concepts and limitations to the analysis of each assumption.

First ‘dialogue assumption’: PDR lowers mutual prejudice

The first assumption about PDR’s contribution to improved dialogue, understanding and cooperation between Denmark and the Arab region is as follows:

- The professional dialogues occurring within twinning arrangements between Arab and Danish sister organizations not only foster exchanges of professional experience, but also *reduce mutual prejudice and adjust existing stereotypes*.

Although more than 120 Danish organizations and even more Arab partners are today engaged in partnerships under PDR, in order for PDR to have a wider societal effect on mutual prejudices, the implicit assumption of the program design is furthermore that:

- Changes in mutual stereotypes and reductions in prejudice generated among the PDR partners will spread to the surrounding society.

Prejudice is an antipathy based on a stereotype and here perceived as exclusively negative (Allport 1958; Hilton and von Hippel 1996). Stereotypes are understood as generalized beliefs about a certain group, as well as theories about why certain attributes of this group go together. Stereotypes can thus be both positive and negative. Thinking in stereotypes is a way of compartmentalizing and analysing a complex reality that is used by all of us, and is as such not a negative phenomenon. Some stereotypes even constitute a relatively accurate reflection of reality. When we include stereotypes as a concept in our analysis, it is in order to capture any type of change in perception expressed by the partners interviewed – negative as well as positive – without entering into a discussion of whether such perceptions are reflections of reality or not.

The first assumption concerning the reduction of prejudices has theoretical backing in social psychology, namely Allport’s ‘intergroup contact hypothesis’ from 1954. Simply put, this hypothesis implies that negative intergroup attitudes are most effectively reduced by personally connecting members of these groups with each other, as long as a few criteria for this contact are observed: the contact should have authority support; there should be the potential for friendship; equal status of the participants in the situation; and the contact should occur as part of ‘ordinary purposeful pursuits’ in order to avoid artificiality (Allport 1958). The viability of this hypothesis has been amply documented (see Pettigrew et al. 2007, who refer to an analysis of 516 studies, of which 95 per cent demonstrate a negative relationship

between contact and prejudices). Recent research has also documented the specifically positive effect of *friendships* as opposed to other types of relations (Pettigrew 2007; Paolini et al. 2007).

Literature on prejudice and stereotypes presents several models that explain how changes in stereotypes and prejudices occur in such intergroup meetings. Research shows that people tend to believe that most out-group members will resemble the specific out-group member that they know. Changes in stereotypes can occur in a dramatic fashion when people experience a critical level of inconsistency between the reality they encounter and their stereotypes. There is, however, also the possibility that such inconsistencies will be tackled as an exception to the rule by inventing a 'sub-group' to the stereotype, which is thereby preserved (Hilton and von Hippel 1996).

Relevant questions for our analysis of the PDR partnerships are therefore:

- *Does the reality mutually offered by and to the partners actually present a stereotype-inconsistency, or does the experience of working with each other align with prior stereotypes?*
- *If the partners' experience of each other is inconsistent with prior held stereotypes, is this inconsistency categorized as a sub-group of e.g. the particular profession of the partner (for instance, by reasoning that, 'He is agreeable, but that's because he is a journalist. Most Arab/Danes are not like that'), or does it spur a change in the stereotype proper?*

A limitation to the analysis is that the partners interviewed may have been more inclined to reveal *formerly* held prejudices, either because they may not be aware of having certain stereotypes and prejudices until these are challenged by reality, or because they do not like to admit being prejudiced.

It is also quite possible that some of the interviewees, when asked about what kind of expectations they had of the partner nationality before entering into the cooperation, refer to commonly held stereotypes (e.g. people from Scandinavia are cold), without this being a deeply held personal belief of the interviewee which was subsequently changed during the course of the PDR partnership.

The second assumption – that partners will work as advocates for each other in their own networks – is also substantiated by theory and prior research in social psychol-

ogy. It is thus well documented that prejudices towards any other group of people tend to be less dominant with people who know someone who has a friend from that group (Pettigrew et al. 2007; Wright et al. 1997; Paolini et al. 2007; Liebkind and McAlister 1999). It is thus a reasonable supposition that relations forged between Danes and Arabs in PDR contribute to dilute existing prejudices – if any – in the PDR partners’ respective networks – *to the extent that PDR partners refer to the PDR experience in their own networks*. We therefore ask the question:

- *Do partners refer to the PDR experience in public debates and discussions with personal networks of colleagues, family and friends?*

It is likely that partners have differentiated levels of impact on their networks. As explained by Wright et al. (1997: 75), ‘*Influence is exerted by those believed to share the relevant social identity in a process called referent informational influence. The in-group member influences attitudes and actions because he or she is regarded as interchangeable with the self.*

It was, however, beyond the scope of this study to interview family, friends and colleagues of the interviewed partners in order to check whether partners’ advocacy have had any effect on their immediate networks. The conclusion on the wider societal prejudice-reducing effect of PDR will therefore assume more the character of a discussion.

Second ‘dialogue assumption’: PDR builds social capital

In the presentation of PDR, it is stated that, ‘To build genuine partnerships and mutual trust takes time. Hence, the Partnership Programme is establishing partnerships with a perspective of *long-term cooperation*.’

The second set of assumptions regarding PDR’s contribution to establishing dialogue, understanding and cooperation between Denmark and the Arab region is as follows:

- Mutual trust is built up through long-term cooperation in PDR; and
- Genuine partnerships are built up through long-term cooperation in PDR

As is stated in the presentation of PDR, ‘*The main focus is on people-to-people contact. It is expected that the professional and personal contacts currently developed will last for long.*’ (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2010). Thus it is also assumed that:

- The professional and personal bonds created as part of PDR are sufficiently strong to last beyond the concrete PDR cooperation and serve as more permanent social capital between Denmark and the Arab world.

Social capital is here understood as ‘the sum of trusted, reciprocal relationships between citizens and their associations at all levels of politics and economy’ (Fowler 1998).

The levels and antecedents of **trust** in PDR is relevant not only because they are important indicators of the strength of the relationship per se – and a sine qua non for partnerships to develop long lasting networks that outlive PDR financing – but also because trust can be expected to have a range of other desired effects on PDR partnerships:

- *Exchange of knowledge* – the essence of what is supposed to happen between PDR partners – thrives in relationships with high mutual affective trust (Chua and Morris 2009; Cross, Borgatti and Parker 2001).
- Widening horizons understood as *questioning prejudices*, being open to other ways of thinking and strengthening cultural intelligence, requires mutual honesty and frankness that can best be created in an atmosphere of personal trust (Hubbert et al. 1999; Pettgrew et al. 2007).
- To the extent that national cultural identities are selectively activated – and that this mostly happens in situations of anxiety or uncertainty (Ybema and Byun 2009; Tayeb 2001) – increased levels of trust are likely to *diminish the partners’ expression and impression of cultural differences*.

The issue of interpersonal and inter-organizational trust has been intensively explored in management literature since the mid-1990s (McAllister 1995; Mayer, Davis and Schoorman 1995). This literature points to two main sources of trust: 1) evidence of the person’s competence and reliability (cognition-based trust) and 2) an affective experience between persons (affect-based trust) (McAllister 1995; Chua, Morris and Ingram 2009). Affect-based trust is often considered more profound than cognition-based trust. It is seen as ‘more stable over time, across situations, and with respect to small trust violations’ (Williams 2001: 379). Research also suggests that, when professionals turn for advice or seek knowledge from peers, their choice of partner will rely on interpersonal trust or friendship rather than any objective assessment of who would be the most talented person to provide knowledge and advice (Cross, Borgatti and Parker 2001). In terms of assessing the likeli-

hood of PDR developing long-term, self-sustaining relationships between Danish and Arab professional peers, it thus appears particularly relevant to understand the development of affective bonds between the partners.

When analysing the antecedents of trust in the PDR partnerships we are – because of the nature of this study – focusing on the trust that stems from the relationship between the partners. Admittedly, the level of trust is also influenced by the individuals' general psychological predisposition to trust other people. In longer term relationships, however, this general predisposition becomes gradually less important over time, while the history of the relationship – or the relational factors studied here – gain in significance (Becerra and Gupta 2003).

Relational factors that are important for the generation of trust identified by prior research will structure the analysis of PDR relationships. They include:

- Knowledge about organizational and personal capacity in order to adjust expectations and avoid misunderstanding a lack of capacity for a lack of will (Gulati and Sytch 2008; Larson 1992)
- Knowledge about personal and organizational integrity (Shoorman, Mayer and Davis 2007; Gulati and Sytch 2008; Becerra and Gupta 2003; Larson 1992)
- Identification based on mutual values and interests (Lewicki and Bunker 1996)
- Sense of working for a shared cause (McAllister 1995; Shoorman, Mayer and Davis 2007)
- The way crisis and conflicts are handled (Gulati and Sytch 2008)
- Frequency of meetings (McAllister 1995; Becerra and Gupta 2003)

Besides these factors, which are common to working relations in general, Chua and Morris (2009) have pointed to *intercultural skills* as a factor to be taken into account when dealing with trust in cross-cultural settings. Inter-cultural skills, or 'cultural intelligence' as defined by Earley and Ang (2003), consists of individuals' behavioural flexibility, allowing them to adapt to the demands of very different social situations and develop a high level of self-awareness of one's own cultural assumptions, knowledge about other cultures and the motivation to persist despite inevitable frustration. Friedman and Berthoin Antal (2005) frame it as the individual's ability 'to overcome the constraints embedded in an individual's culturally shaped repertoire, creating new responses, and thereby expanding the repertoire of potential interpretations and behaviours available in future intercultural interactions.' In this perspective, while knowledge about other cultures is useful, it is insufficient – and

perhaps even problematic due to tendencies to stereotype – if it is not coupled with general relational competences and the ability to assess and rationalize specific situations.

The questions we seek to answer in relation to the development of trust between PDR partners are:

- *Have PDR partners developed mutual affective and cognitive trust, and what are the important factors affecting the development of trust?*
- *How do the partners perceive the level of trust as impacting the strength of their partnership?*

What constitutes a **genuine partnership** in a North-South context is a question that has been discussed in development literature since the 1990s. The question has been made increasingly complicated by the many kinds of North-South cooperation that are labelled ‘partnerships’ today. As Fowler puts it, ‘Today’s rule of thumb in international development is that everybody wants to be a partner with everyone else on everything everywhere.’ With the multiple interpretations and usages of the term, it has become a ‘something nothing world’ (Fowler 2000: 3). We therefore start by asking:

- *What do the PDR partners understand by a ‘genuine’ partnership?*

We then zoom in on the qualities of a good partnership highlighted by PDR partners: equality/mutual respect and reciprocity/shared goals and interests. These are also some of the key qualities highlighted in the development literature as defining for genuine partnerships (Fowler 1998, 2000; Mullinix 2002; Brehm 2001; Lister 2000; Hauck and Land 2000; Mohiddin 1998).

The concept of North-South partnerships among equals has been especially challenged by one strand of development literature as a complete contradiction in terms. In a relationship where one partner retains a financial, technological and institutional advantage over the other, it is downright hypocritical to talk about genuine partnerships, it is argued (Fowler 1998, 2000; Abrahamsen 2004).

Others argue that such inherent imbalances can be remedied to some extent through structural measures (Ashman 2000), as well as the social capital developed

in the relationships (Brown and Ashman 1996). As Brown and Ashman argue, the stronger the personal relationships, the higher the levels of social capital available for problem-solving, and the more easily gaps created by different levels of power and knowledge can be bridged. Fowler argues for the importance of shared interests, which leads him to advocate the ‘de-professionalization’ of development partnerships and the promotion of ‘twinning of schools, local governments, minority and women’s groups, trade unions etc. which possess sufficient common characteristics to have shared concerns and interest’ (Fowler 1998: 152). Mohiddin lowers the threshold even further by pointing out that, although shared interests are the most powerful motivation for forming and maintaining a partnership, ‘the bottom-line in partnership (...) is self-interest of the people concerned’ (Mohiddin 1998: 6).

PDR partnerships are established to support reform initiatives in the Arab world, not in Denmark. Arab partners working on reform issues in the Arab world are supposed to benefit from Danish know-how or experiences in order to strengthen this work. And financing for activities is provided by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Yet, one of the central PDR principles is that, ‘The activities are based on *equal partnerships* – with particular focus on professional cooperation, exchange of knowledge and sharing of experience. The aim is to support professional and strategic networks – *to the mutual benefit* of Arab and Danish partners.’ But is it at all possible to develop mutually beneficial partnerships when the focus is solely on Arab reform issues? Is it possible to mitigate the imbalance through social capital, shared interests or even self-interest and still create a sense of a genuine partnership? We answer this by asking:

- *Do PDR partners perceive their partnerships as genuine in the sense that they are based on equal status, mutual respect, reciprocity and shared goals? Are the inherent power imbalances in the partnerships remedied, and if so, how?*

The last part of the dialogue assumption, namely that the professional and personal bonds created as part of PDR are sufficiently strong to last beyond the concrete PDR cooperation and serve as more permanent social capital between Denmark and the Arab world, is by nature difficult to predict. We asked the partners about their own expectations of a future relationship. Based on these answers and the analysis of the nature of trust and partnerships that developed, we ask:

- *Do partnerships have the potential to outlive PDR financing.*

See the text box for a quick overview of the sum of questions dealt with in this report.

Key questions of the study

Does the reality mutually offered by and to the PDR partners present a stereotype-inconsistency, or does the experience of working with each other align with prior stereotypes?

If the partners' experience of each other is inconsistent with prior held stereotypes, is this inconsistency categorized as a sub-group of e.g. the particular profession of the partner (for instance, by reasoning that, 'He is agreeable, but that's because he is a journalist. Most Arab/Danes are not like that'), or does it spur a change in the stereotype proper?

Do partners draw on the PDR experience and potential new insight in the partner country in public debates and discussions with personal networks of colleagues, family and friends?

Have PDR partners developed mutual affective and cognitive trust, and what are the important factors affecting the development of trust?

How do the partners perceive the level of trust to impact on the strength of their partnership?

What do the PDR partners understand by a 'genuine' partnership?

Do PDR partners perceive their partnerships as genuine in the sense that they are based on equal status, mutual respect, reciprocity and shared goals? Are the inherent power imbalances in the partnerships remedied, and if so, how?

Do partnerships have the potential to outlive PDR financing?

1.2 Method

The study is based on in-person semi-structured interviews with selected individuals (referred to as 'partners') involved in partnerships under PDR in Denmark, Jordan and Morocco.

In order to test the dialogue assumption that genuine partnerships and mutual trust evolve in long-term partnerships, we have primarily interviewed partners who personally collaborated for a minimum of two years and with at least two personal encounters per year.

Furthermore, the emphasis has been placed on partnerships between professional peers. Six of the partnerships we studied are thus among professional peers. One partnership is between a Danish project coordinator and an Arab civil society organization.

Since our interest is in analysing the dialogue assumptions of the PDR *design*, our sample is representative of the PDR *ideals* about long-term cooperation between professional peers. However, it is not necessarily representative of PDR partnerships as such. Some PDR partnerships are younger, others have been subject to personnel changes, and a few partnerships are not between professional peers, but, for example, between project coordinators on the Danish side and NGO activists on the Arab side. Our findings should thus not be used to assess the overall dialogue condition in PDR, but only to assess if and how PDR has the potential to fulfil its dialogue objectives under the explicit aspirations of the program: that it is long term and between professional peers. For the 'younger' PDR partnerships, the findings can also be used as valuable lessons learned from some of the PDR partners with longer experience.

Apart from the two deliberate common denominators mentioned above, the partnerships in the sample cover all three thematic focal areas of PDR, bilateral as well as regional programs (three partnerships have been developed as part of a regional program, while four partnerships form part of a bilateral program), and governmental (two) and non-governmental (five) partnerships. Partnerships generally consist of a relationship between two organizations – one from Denmark and one from either Morocco or Jordan. In one case, it includes four organizations, one Danish and three Arab.

In most partnerships, interviews were conducted with the person responsible for the partnership. If more than one person was significantly involved in the daily business of the partnership, the other relevant persons were also interviewed to the extent possible. In three Arab organizations and in one of the Danish organizations, two persons were thus interviewed. A total of 20 people, 8 Danish and 12 Arab partners were interviewed for the study. The 20 individuals interviewed, 10 men and 10 women, represent a wide variety of professions. Most of them are academics, and all are senior representatives of their organizations, with a long professional track record in their field of work. The sample includes partners on each side who have no other experience in working internationally, as well as partners who have extensive international cooperation experience.

Danish partners were interviewed once by DIIS. Arab partners were initially interviewed in their own language by local researchers in Morocco and Jordan contracted by DIIS. In Jordan, interviews were conducted by researchers at the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan. In Morocco, interviews were conducted by an independent consultant, Hamid Chbouki, PhD. In both countries, most of these interviews were followed up by second interviews by DIIS in French or English. Interviews were conducted throughout the spring of 2010 and typically lasted 1½ to 2 hours.

An interview guide developed by DIIS was employed in all interviews. The guide is attached as Appendix 1. Interviews were transcribed and, in the case of interviews with Arab partners, translated into English.

Our analysis is solely based on these interviews, and as such is a presentation and analysis of the partners' subjective assessments of their partnerships. When interviewing some of the governmental partners on the Arab side, we found it challenging to get beyond the official line and politeness towards the Danish partner. In one case, the partner had to receive approval from the central administration to give the interview. These interviews have been given less weight in the analysis.

2. COMBATING PREJUDICES

Prejudice: An antipathy based on a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed towards a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a member of that group. The net effect of prejudice, thus defined, is to place the object of prejudice at some disadvantage not merited by his own misconduct. (Allport 1958: 10)

Stereotypes: Beliefs about the characteristics, attributes, and behaviors of members of a certain group as well as theories about how and why certain attributes go together. (Hilton and von Hippel 1996: 240)

According to the first set of ‘dialogue assumptions’ the intercultural meetings in PDR are supposed to dilute mutual prejudices, and PDR partners are supposed to work as each other’s advocates in their home constituencies. We start by a description of what happened to PDR partners’ stereotypes in the encounter with PDR reality. We, then check whether this PDR reality is perceived as an exception or as the rule. Finally, we discuss the potential multiplication effect on prejudices in partners’ societies.

2.1 Stereotypes meet reality

Prejudices and stereotypes can change if they are challenged by reality and if the person doing the stereotyping does not categorize the inconsistencies experienced between stereotypes and reality as an exception rather than the rule. The question is, whether the reality mutually offered by and to the PDR partners presents stereotype inconsistencies?

The PDR partners we interviewed were generally individuals without strong prejudices towards others. Many clearly had a normative reluctance to admit to early stereotypical prejudgements of their partners. Nevertheless, a few trends emerged of prior held mutual prejudgements or stereotypes. We start by describing the type of stereotypes about the Danes that the Arab partners typically brought to the table and how they fared through the cooperation. Next we turn to how the Danish partners’ stereotypes about Arabs developed.

Arab partners' ideas of Danes before and after PDR

- Many of the Arab partners entered the partnership with their Danish partner with the expectation that they would be dealing with people who are professional, but also a bit cold, rigid and impersonal. Arab partners were generally surprised to find their Danish counterparts to be much warmer and friendlier than expected.

'I thought Denmark being in the North of Europe, people would be very cold and distant, but they were extremely warm and hospitable.' (Arab partner)

'When we went there, our opinion that the Danish people were colder not only changed, but disappeared.' (Arab partner)

'I didn't know much about the Danes, so I didn't expect much. I had a feeling that they would be like the British; a little cold and rigid. But it appeared to be the opposite; the Danes are warmer than my expectations.' (Arab partner)

Only in one case did this stereotype accurately apply to the Arab partners' perception of their Danish partner. As implicitly understood, the personal relations in this partnership were not very well developed and, at the risk of entering the dead end of a 'chicken and egg' discussion, this might have contributed to the failure of this partnership to dismantle cultural stereotypes in general, a matter we shall return to in the next chapter.

- A few of the Arab partners had had the impression that Danes would be unwelcoming towards Muslims. In all cases, this impression changed after a visit to Denmark:

'I found how much they respect the others and how tolerant they are, and I have never felt that I was in a foreign country. (...) We visited the Arab side of Denmark. We saw how free they were in everything (...) It is not true that everybody is against Islam and waging a war against Islam. We saw that this does not exist.' (Arab partner)

- Almost all the Arab partners expected to meet considerable misconceptions from their Danish partners. They were keenly aware of the tarnished image of the Arab world in parts of the West and expected the Danish partners' perspective to be tainted by it. This perception was most often *confirmed* in their meeting with their Danish partners.

Symptomatically, unlike any of the Danish partners, who rarely uttered concerns about the image of Denmark, many of the Arab partners pointed to PDR as an opportunity to change the image of the Arab world.

‘To them (the Danes, ed.), the Arab world is backward, so it is better (for them) to come and see for themselves that there are some neat, educated and respected people. The partnership is good for them and good for us. Exposure is very important.’ (Arab partner)

‘We are much closer to the Spaniards and the Italians (...). They like us and we like them and they know a lot about us. I think that in the north there is only a negative idea about us. As if we were created as poor and backward or that people are still living in tents.’

(Arab partner)

- One feature that impressed several of the Arab partners in their encounters with Denmark was the ‘simple living’, illustrated by the fact that even high-ranking persons take their bike to work and that their offices are not grandiose or flashy.

This experience – usually from a visit to Denmark – in some cases served to lower expectations of the financial capacity of the Danish partners and led Arab partners not to interpret Danish economic moderation as mistrust (when scrutinizing project budgets) or as a lack of hospitality (when an Arab partner is not put up in a five-star hotel during a visit to Denmark).

‘The Danes are simpler than us. (...) For instance, you go to their offices and you find them simpler than ours, even though they finance us. (...) Another example: Someone went to Denmark for a session of trainer, and they put him in a hotel, which I later stayed at and found it ordinary. But that person considered it to be an insult and asked to change hotel. But these are normal things for the Danes. The manager rides a bicycle to work.’ (Arab partner)

‘I went to Denmark and I saw our big boss washing the dishes because he was the last person to leave the office, and he also goes to work by bicycle. It is nice to see these people who are really old and important, yet acting with each other without favouritism. You will definitely respect them.’

(Arab partner)

Danish partners’ ideas of Arabs before and after PDR

- The Danish partners are generally positively surprised about the advanced professional level of their Moroccan/Jordanian partners, as well as about the overall level of development in the Arab partner country. This applies even to some

extent to those Danish partners who have a record of working professionally in or with the Arab world. In all cases, the partnerships seem to nurture increased professional respect for the Arab partners among the Danish partners.

A couple of weeks ago I was accompanied by a colleague (to a partnership meeting), and he was very surprised by the high level of competence (of the partners) compared to what we are used to. This related to both their educational level and communicative level.’ (Danish partner)

‘Originally I thought – I probably assumed that most of the sharing would be us giving our perspective so that they could learn. What was interesting was how much we could learn as an organization.’ (Danish partner)

- Many of the Danish partners who were unfamiliar with the Arab world before starting the PDR co-operation realized that they had held stereotypical views about Arabs as being hostile to Westerners, oppressive of women or just generally less developed. These stereotypes had typically been modified already after the initial encounters with their counterparts.

‘You don’t necessarily get the best impression (of Arab culture) when you run into poorly integrated second-generation immigrants. (...) So it’s been really healthy and refreshing to visit [the Arab partner country] and discover that this is not the norm. On the contrary, they are simply so helpful, hospitable and open.’ (Danish partner)

‘Whereas here in Denmark we have a tendency to discuss the role of women (in the Arab world) as something rather inhibited or hidden away, you get a completely different experience when you travel to (the Arab partner country). It’s a total wake-up call when you meet the (Arab) women.’ (Danish partner)

‘When you are invaded every day with news about the Middle East, you start to form these ideas of what to expect. And of course, I went there with some of these preconceived notions. (...) All the expectations, all the images I had in my head from the news were completely contrary to my experience. My experience is one of unbelievable hospitality. (...) My perception of the Arab world has completely changed because of this experience.’ (Danish partner)

2.2 Exception or rule?

As described in the previous chapter, on several accounts the reality that the partners presented to each other did not coincide with previously held stereotypes. The

question is then whether these inconsistencies between stereotypes and perceived reality led to an adjustment in the stereotype or if it was ignored as an exception to the general (stereotypical) rule.

- A few partners expressed the view that they believed the partners they had encountered formed an exception to the generally held stereotype.

I am well aware that the (Arab) society, which I have just been in dialogue with, it is the crème de la crème. They are the privileged in this society, who are working to solve the problems of the less privileged.’ (Danish partner)

However, this tendency to perceive the partners as a ‘subgroup’ was the exception, and in one case it seemed to be linked to the fact that the partner had not visited her partner country.

- In general the Danish and Arab partners indicate that visiting the partner country as part of a working relation has modified their perceptions of the entire nationality or country in question.

Allport (1958) argues that the phenomenon of changing a stereotype when meeting its inconsistencies is especially common with people that are ‘habitual open-minded’, i.e. who are from the outset suspicious of generalizations and sweeping statements. As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, many of the PDR partners we interviewed indeed expressed an aversion against generalizations, which might explain the fact that ‘sub-grouping’ was relatively rare among PDR partners.

2.3 Wider effects? Spreading the word

In our interviews, we tried to acquire an idea of the extent to which the PDR experience was being activated in the partners’ networks. Almost all partners say that they use the insights gained in their partner’s country in discussions with colleagues, friends and family. A few have also engaged in public debates where reference has been made to experiences gained from the partnership.

- Many of *the Arab partners* have been in situations with colleagues, friends and family – but also in some cases with their organizational constituencies — where they had to defend their partnership with a Danish organization due to the cartoon incident.

For a few of the Arab partners, the need to defend cooperation with a Danish partner continues to this day, due to the cartoons and due to the Danish government's perceived stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict (the latter only mentioned by one partner).

In such cases, Arab partners typically refer to visits to Denmark and discussions with partners in order to nuance the image of Denmark as Islamophobic. Also, the content of the partnership in itself is highlighted by Arab partners to demonstrate that Denmark makes concrete, positive contributions to the Arab world. In this sense, ironically, the cartoon incident in some cases constitutes the occasion on which to provide information about positive Danish initiatives that would otherwise not necessarily be noticed. As one Arab partner replied, when asked whether the insights gained from the PDR cooperation had been useful in public debates:

'I would say that the debate emerged after the publication of the cartoons, where people started to ask who the Danes are. There were several opportunities for us to say that the Danes are not like that. And talking about the Danes was not a kind of flattery, but there was an exploitation of the issue [the cartoons, ed.] in a horrible way.' (Arab partner)

The *Danish partners* often find themselves compelled to bring more nuance to discussions among Danish colleagues and friends about Arabs and the Arab world. As such,

- Danish partners frequently advocate for a less stereotypical perception of their partners' countries and populations.

They also generally felt that the fact that they worked with an Arab partner gave their interventions a higher degree of credibility.

'Of course people come up to me sometimes and ask about different things. Clearly, when this happens you try to explain to them that the world looks a bit more complex when you're down there than when you look at it from here. So I would say that my friends and family and colleagues (...) they get some other details from me than they would otherwise be able to read about in the media.' (Danish partner)

The Danish partners who have drawn on their PDR experience in some form of public debate are all partners who have a track record of working with the Arab world and for whom the Arab world continues to be part of their career.

- Some of the most efficient channels for countering stereotypes about Arab society within their networks could very well be the Danish partners with no prior experience of the Arab world, for whom the PDR experience contributed to considerable modifications in their own attitudes to that world.

As non-resource persons on the Arab world, they might have a different type of credibility with colleagues and friends with whom they shared opinions and views on the Arab world prior to being involved in PDR:

'When you're at a dinner or lunch with colleagues or whatever and end up discussing conflicts or other problems (related to people with an Arab ethnic background in Denmark). In those situations I think I have been able to offer a more nuanced picture. Because many people only see — just as I used to do myself...I could say in these situations, that it was positive for me, because perhaps I tended to forget a little that there is a more complex story than the one we see and read about. And in this respect, I believe that I have been able to contribute with some of my own experiences in [the Arab partner country] which have been positive.' (Danish partner)

- The partners with a long track record of working with the Arab world are more likely to reach a wider audience by drawing on their PDR experience in public debates. However, to the personal networks of friends, family and colleagues – and potentially also to parts of the wider audience, depending on the status of the partner — the partner's insight into the Arab world brings nothing new to the table.

As one of the Danish partners noted,

'I have been a part of it for so many years, and everyone knows where I stand, so it [the PDR experience] hasn't added anything new.' (Danish partner)

2.4 Part-conclusion: PDR's effect on mutual prejudice

As a general rule, the partners were perceived as representatives of, not exceptions to, their nationality. Visits to the partner country appeared important in this process of generalizing positive attributes from the partner to the nation as such. Central mutual prejudices were clearly lowered among the PDR partners we studied. None of the Danish partners felt that their Arab partners had lived up to any of the negative stereotypes held prior to the cooperation. Similarly, to the Jordanian

and Moroccan partners, meeting with the Danish partners effectively changed a widely held stereotype about Danes being cold and impersonal or even unwelcoming to Muslims. In return, a general expectation that Danes would be marked by a negative image of the Arab world was generally confirmed, and many Arab partners therefore saw PDR as a welcome opportunity to reveal the 'real' Arab world to their Danish partners.

Almost all PDR partners also claimed that the experience of working with the other partner was regularly used in conversations with family, colleagues and friends, and a few partners had also spoken about the experience in public. Especially *friendships* between partners can be expected to have an indirect prejudice-reducing effect on their personal networks. As we will see in Chapter 3, quite a few of the PDR partnerships we studied have indeed developed quite affective, personal relationships. It is, however, impossible from our study to draw any conclusions about the nature, durability or scope of the societal multiplication effect of these friendships. Obviously, the numerical size of the individual partner's networks is of importance. The level and nature of general prejudices against Arabs in these networks will also matter: if non-existent, the effect will obviously be nil. However, if these prejudices are very deep seated and emotionally constituted, it might be difficult to expect a longer term effect through indirect contact alone.

Some of the most effective channels to dismantle prejudices about Arab society within their networks could very well be those Danish partners with no prior experience of the Arab world to whom the PDR experience contributed to considerable modifications in their own attitudes about the Arab world. Internationally oriented partners, however, proved more likely to advocate a global vision of dialogue and understanding in public, thereby reaching a much wider audience and contributing to raising the overall information level of the general debate. The degree to which this contributes to a direct change in attitudes or the lowering of prejudices in a broader audience, is, however, questionable.

3. MUTUAL TRUST AND GENUINE PARTNERSHIPS

Social capital: The sum of trusted, reciprocal relationships between citizens and their associations at all levels of politics and economy. (Fowler 1998)

‘...creating and maintaining high levels of social capital is not without costs and risks for the organizations and individuals involved. Building and nurturing social capital consumes substantial time and effort.’ (Staber 2006)

The second set of ‘dialogue assumptions’ held that ‘mutual trust and genuine partnerships’ are built up through the long-term cooperation in PDR and that the professional and personal bonds created as part of PDR are sufficiently strong to last beyond actual PDR cooperation and serve as more permanent social capital (or ‘bridges’) between Denmark and the Arab world. We start by describing the development of trust in the PDR partnerships – which were the important mediators of trust and what worked as barriers – and the importance of trust to the strength of the partnerships. We then turn to the issue of partnership, where we look at the partners’ own perceptions of the concept and whether their own partnerships live up to these perceptions. Finally we discuss the prospects for the partnerships to develop into self-sustaining networks.

3.1 The development of mutual trust

Trust: The expectation that another organization or person can be relied on to fulfill its obligations, to behave in a predictable manner, and to act and negotiate fairly even when the possibility of opportunism is present. (Gulati and Sych 2008; Zaheer, McEvily and Perrone 1998)

During all our interviews, we asked the partners to rate the trust they have in their counterpart on a scale from 0 to 10 (10 being absolute trust, 0 no trust at all).

- In general, the partners interviewed express very high levels of trust in each other.

The average of the ratings given is 8.6. If we omit the two lowest ratings, the average increases to 9.1. This number must, however, be taken as a very loose indicator. The individual ways in which partners may have defined the issue of trust and the scale from 0-10 are legion. Furthermore, we only have a momentary snapshot of reality, as levels of trust may fluctuate over time.³

Asked how trust had developed, answers overall fell in two broad categories: 1) the development over time of mutual knowledge about each other's organizations and societies (cognition-based trust); and 2) the development of personal relations between the partners (affect-based trust).

Mutual knowledge as a basis for trust

- Trust between PDR partners is developed over time as the partners gain increased insight into and understanding of the partner's inter-organizational behaviour and capacities.

One of the common sources of trust mentioned was thus the partner's track record of living up to obligations and commitments in the partnership.

In one case, the Danish partner rated his Arab partners using this dimension,

Actually, I trust all of them a lot. I would give them a top score. Because there hasn't been a single situation when we have agreed to do something with them which hasn't worked out.' (Danish partner)

Mutual understanding is important to build a trusting relationship. To know from the beginning what are the expectations, the goals. It was very important with frequent meetings in the beginning to adjust expectations'.
(Arab partner)

Earlier in the interview, however, the Danish partner had very clearly expressed his frustration that the Arab partners did not deliver the expected inputs to joint products. As he explained, however, he had with time realized that the missing inputs had more to do with capability deficiencies than with the lack of good intentions. As a result, this experience did not affect his trust in his partners negatively.

³ One Arab partner raised his initially rather low rating of his trust in his Danish partner in our follow-up interview with him. He explained this by the fact that the Danish partner had followed up on a joint commitment in the meantime.

The Arab partners in this particular case used the same dimension to determine their (low) level of trust in the Danish partner:

'Every time we have an agreement on the 'how' of the project, the Danish party agree with us, take into account our suggestions, but do not implement them' (Arab partner).

Similarly, a rather low rating of trust given to the Danish partner from one of the Arab partners was explained by the Danish partners' failure to follow up on a specific joint commitment. In our understanding, the failure to follow up in a timely manner was possibly beyond the control of the partner and caused by hesitance or slow processing in the Danish partner organization or with the donor. One of the other Arab partners in this partnership seemed to have some insight into this cause, which moderated the negative effect on his trust in the Danish partner somewhat.

- Several Arab partners referred to a visit to their Danish partner organization as a trust-building event where they were convinced of the credentials of the partner or the partner organization.

An example of this type of integrity-generated trust was given by one of the Arab partners as follows:

'The visit to Copenhagen was a milestone in this trust between me and (the Danish partner). We visited the organization which he represents, and we were able to notice the relationships developed between him and subalterns. Another event which marked me was the day where the Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs invited us for dinner. When we had finished, he rode off on his bicycle. It surprised us to see someone with such high authority within the state to take his bicycle home. We learned a lot from this gesture. (The Danish partner) also took his bicycle. It demonstrates that he can speak to his counterparts, to his subalterns and that he feels comfortable with highly placed persons and those less so. It shows there is a trust established between third parties in Denmark. (...) These events increased our trust. If there is trust among their own counterparts, this is going to lead to trust among other parties.' (Arab partner)

- Several of the partners on both sides mentioned the handling of specific conflicts in the partnership as a facilitator of trust.

'Trust develops with experience. You get to know the person when you face problems and see how you deal with that problem. Trust develops after that.' (Arab partner)

Experiencing the partner tackling a problem or a conflict in a fair, open and honest manner created trust. One Arab partner, who temporarily withdrew from cooperation due to the cartoon incident in 2006, even pointed to handling this more abstract crisis as something that brought the partners closer:

'For all work that involves a group of people, if there is no trust, it cannot advance. (...) The project blocked when the caricature incident occurred as there was suspicion. The (Arab) partner did not see from their Danish counterparts the desire to move forward and cooperate in a strong and transparent manner. But this allowed for us to grow and become closer, and realize the good intentions on both parts' (Arab partner)

- Several Arab partners pointed to the importance of a broader political and cultural understanding of the Arab world as an element in developing trust in their Danish counterparts.

One of the Arab partners, who had developed very close and amicable personal relations with the Danish partner, explained her trust-rating of 8 instead of 10 with reference to the fact that the Danish partner was unable to understand or accept certain issues – for instance, regarding women's liberation – in the Arab world:

'We need to understand each other's starting point. Here you cannot sexually liberate the women. Then the young girls would be killed. You need to know the society. I want to liberate women in my country. I will fight my own battle. They can support it' (Arab partner)

Similar arguments about the Danish partner's lack of understanding of local circumstances were given by the Arab partners in the one case, mentioned above, where the trust in the Danish partner was very low.

Several Arab partners also mentioned the importance of their partner's understanding of major regional conflicts and the impacts they have on social, economic and political life in their country (the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Jordan and the Western Saharan conflict in Morocco).

Personal affection as a basis of trust

Surprisingly, of all the partnerships included in this study, the lowest levels of personal bonds between the partners were found in case where the partners met most frequently (around six times a year). The problem – as it was defined by both sides,

but especially pronounced by the Arab partners – was that these meetings, for which the Danish partner typically came to the Arab country, were strictly business-focused. The partners had literally no social time together. This was partly due to the very tight time and travel schedules of the Danish partner, but it was also perceived by the Arab partners as a lack of interest. One of the Arab partners thus mentioned that the Danish partner, at least on one occasion, had preferred to dine in his hotel room rather than with his Arab partners.

Apart from this particular case, it has been a natural part of the development of partnerships that the partners have dined or gone on excursions with each other during mutual visits. Some have met their partners' families, and some have even accommodated each other in their private homes during visits.

- All the partners who developed some type of personal trust in each other pointed to the frequency of time spent *outside* work with their partner as an important element in developing this relationship:

'Choosing (name of Danish partner) was appropriate for two reasons. The first thing is her character, her psychological characteristics – she is a people's person and is very social. Also, maybe because she has lived in (the Arab partner country) for some time and she knows something about Arab culture. Communication with her was easier because she knew us'. (Arab partner)

'The fact that we have had two different people from [partner organization] at two different events [in Denmark] – the main goal was of course professional – but where we have had the time to go out and have dinner together in the evening, we have had enough time to get to know each other socially as well. Yes, this is probably something that makes a difference.' (Danish partner)

'I can say that it helped as we met different times here and in Denmark (...) Some of us were even invited to their families, and we did the same.' (Arab partner)

- A shared, personal commitment to a higher cause was often mentioned as a source of affective trust by the PDR partners.

As expressed by Arab partners in two separate partnerships:

'We are not looking for "What is in it for me?". It is our passion to develop this project. I would like to see [Arab country] grow, and [the Danish partner] has the same idea. We have the same passion, the same common ground.' (Arab partner)

'We are working with one methodology and a clear vision. We both want our societies to develop and progress.' (Arab partner)

- Identification as a basis for trust was found among partners and partner organizations where the sense of professional kinship was strong.

Some of the PDR partners were rather explicit about this type of professional identification:

'I am a (profession), so is (the Danish partner). (...) I am an expert in (the particular field), so is he. He does not refuse other people's ideas, and this is something we have in common. These are elements that have been positive to the professional relationship and the personal relationship.' (Arab partner)

Asked if the partnership had encountered problems due to cultural differences, one of the Arab partners responded,

'Of course, because of the two different cultures, but we as (profession of both partners) did not find any' (Arab partner)

Conversely, in the one partnership where the partners were less of a professional match, consisting of a project coordinator in the Danish organization and an NGO activist in the Arab organization, the Danish partner explained why she rated her trust in her Arab partner at 8 instead of 10 as follows:

'The odds are not the same, because their goal is also to raise money for their organization. But this doesn't mean that I don't trust them as project partners. It's more because at the end of the day we are not quite equal, and our interests are not exactly the same as theirs in this.' (Danish partner)

- The term 'respect' was often reiterated when discussing the origins of trust with Arab partners. Arab partners emphasized their need for respect both as professionals and as members of Arab society/culture.

'I consider him as a role model to me with his respect, gentleness, professionalism, and his respect to the Arab culture and society.' (Arab partner)

Familiarity with the Arab world or interest from the Danish partner to learn about

Arab culture and society was highlighted by virtually all Arab partners as a positive feature:

'Maybe because she lived in (the Arab partner country) for some time and she knows the culture, the communication was easier with her because she knew us.' (Arab partner)

A perceived lack of interest from the Danish partner, as observed in a single case, was noted as a negative feature.

- The ability to show interest in the partner's culture can be considered as an element of overall intercultural skills, which was also found to be important in the development of trust.

Our interviews did not seek to check systematically the inter-cultural capability of the partners. Nevertheless, when asking about the development of relationships, insight was provided by both sides into the partners' cultural awareness and their individual ability to be flexible and open to, for instance, other ways of doing business.

We almost exclusively came across *Danish* partners who expressed high awareness of the importance of intercultural skills. This, we believe, has its natural cause in the circumstance that all projects take place in the Arab partner countries and with the objective of furthering reforms on the ground there. This inevitably brings about the anticipation that it is the Danish partners who need to know and adapt to the culture and context they are working in.

Those among the Danish partners who were highly praised by their Arab counterparts were typically very conscious of the importance of intercultural and interpersonal skills. As pointed out by one of the Danish partners with thorough experience from working in the Arab world:

'It's about understanding other cultures. But it is also about having a really good understanding of people. Who's sitting across from you. You adjust the way you talk and

"Sometimes you feel that your partner – no matter if he is French or Italian – wants you to get to where he is, and not the other way around. It is you who have to speak their language and understand their culture. The difference with the Danish partner is that they were ready even to learn Arabic if they had to, only to be able to talk to us. They were trying to get closer to us in a way that we understood that they wanted to build relationship with us'. (Arab partner)

formulate yourself according to who's sitting across from you. That is really important, I think. You might have an enormous professional and specific knowledge about the [Arab partner country] and the Arab Initiative and so on, but if you don't have the people skills to engage partners, to really understand what they are saying, you're not going to get much out of it.' (Danish partner)

Another Danish partner, who had no prior working experience in the Arab world, but who works with cultural awareness in his professional life, demonstrated many aspects of intercultural skills in Early and Ang's (2003) sense of the term: he had studied Arab culture, learned some Arabic, and invested his vacation in learning more about Arab history and culture by visiting archaeological sites etc. And the meeting with his Arab partner was clearly actively employed to widen his cultural repertoire and to reflect on his own cultural assumptions:

'...it wasn't until I went there (to the Arab partner country, ed.) that I was humbled in the sense that "You know what? You are not as smart as you think you are when it comes to moving in and out of cultures". So it has really helped me to take a step back and say: "How do I need to adapt my behaviour and adapt the way I am looking at the world to be more effective in what I do?" (...) I've had to take a step back and say: "OK, your perspective is very Euro-centered, your foundation is very different from their foundation, so I have learned how to speak differently about different topics.'" (Danish partner)

This partner's openness to learning new cultural codes was very directly noticed by his Arab partner. In an effort to describe the ideal person to engage in PDR partnerships, his Arab partner pointed to the desirability of making an effort to get to know the culture of the partner and referred to the Danish partner as an example.

But we also find Danish partners who were not very reflective about the issue, but who still report situations where intuitive cultural skills had clearly been activated. One of them, for instance, after describing a training session organized by the Danes for their Arab partners, where different standards of organization and encountering culture had clashed, unconsciously demonstrated Early and Ang's criterion of the 'motivation to persist through inevitable frustration',

'In many situations I am extremely impatient, but for some reason or other I am very patient when it comes to these relationships.' (Danish partner)

Barriers to trust in PDR partnerships

- The lack of a common language is a barrier to building trust.

The Danish-Moroccan partners in our sample have clearly had a harder time developing personal relations than the Danish-Jordanian partners. While the Danish-Jordanian partners can all communicate in English and do not need translators, very few of the Danish partners speak any French, just as only one of the Arab partners interviewed was fluent in English. Communication between partners has therefore most often been handled through an interpreter, and contact in between meetings by phone or email is therefore also rare, unless the Danish partner knows sufficient French. In two of the partnerships studied in Morocco, the partners did not have each other's contact details, as contacts were always handled by a French-speaking coordinator.

Most detrimental, perhaps, is that social interaction beyond working hours is more difficult to maintain on a regular basis when the partners are dependent on a third-party interpreter. Considering whether the partners would remain in contact after the project, one Danish partner stated:

'If it had been someone I communicated with in English, or if we were able to communicate just as well in French, then I do believe...if nothing else there would be a courtesy visit. However, I think the language barrier is so limiting, that it means we won't do that.' (Danish partner)

- In one partnership, a change of personnel was experienced as disruptive and frustrating for the other partner.

With the importance attached to personal relations by the majority of partners interviewed, it would be logical to conclude that a change of personnel in the partnerships would be negatively received by the other partner. Since one of our partner selection criteria for this study was that they had worked together for a minimum of two years, all partners, except one, were still working together and had therefore not experienced a change in personnel. In one case, however, the Danish partner interviewed had changed jobs after having initiated and worked for more than two years in the partnership. In this partnership, we met a clear frustration from the Arab partner about the change in personnel:

'Unfortunately there is a constant change in people, which (...) we don't really appreciate. (...) It becomes more difficult when you just meet someone and you start having a personal contact or a relationship, and then there is a different one in the next meeting. We would rather have the same ongoing contacts.' (Arab partner)

The frustration of this particular Arab partner was expressed in two ways: he was frustrated that the close personal relationship with the original Danish partner had not been continued beyond the partnership experience:

'We are warm, and it is in our culture to take care of our guests. You want them to come to your house, to share food, and when you do this, you think that you built a permanent or at least a continuous relationship with that person. But I know, if I invite an American or Canadian or a European, I just offer a dinner to him, that's all. I know that it will stop at this point, so I don't blame you, but... We built so many things, but nobody called, nobody asked for us or tried to say hello, at least on the internet...' (Arab partner)

And he was frustrated with a perceived loss of momentum in the project following the departure of the original Danish partner. The lack of momentum and the disappointing shallowness of the personal relations initially created led him to question the nature of the partnership and its objectives.

'I don't want something just for politics (...) They want to amend the conflict with the Arab world by financing some projects, and then when it is forgotten, so they leave.' (Arab partner)

- There were no clear indications that the purse-keeping role of most Danish partners had a negative effect on trust.

Formal control mechanisms related to project management could be expected to foster attitudes of ill-will, scepticism and distrust by signalling suspicion. Project and budget reporting was, however, rarely referred to by the Arab partners during our interviews. In one partnership, which was characterized by a high degree of trust and professional affinity between the partners, the Arab partner saw the meticulous control of funds by the Danish partner as a reflection of national frugality (see Chapter 2). Control of funds was thus explained by the general moderation in the Danish lifestyle, and not as a lack of trust in the partner.

In several of the other partnerships we studied, Arab partners were not involved in the Danish partners' budgetary control, since budgets were entirely administered by the Danish partners. In one case, this was a source of grievance. The Arab partners in this case complained that project budgets were not shared with them. This lack of transparency was perceived as a deficit of trust in them as partners. However, it is possible that the lack of budget transparency – rather than being a barrier to trust in itself – became a problem due to the general lack of trust in the Danish partner in this particular partnership.

3.2 The importance of trust in PDR partnerships

Are trust and personal relations at all important to the PDR partnerships? We now turn to the second question pertaining to the issue of trust, namely how the partners perceive the level of trust to impact on the strength of the partnership.

- Several of the Danish partners who developed especially *affective* trusting relations with their Arab partners highlighted the positive impact this had on communication.

The closer the relationship, the more informal and straightforward the communication became. The Danish partners especially experienced it as a relief when communication could happen without too much beating around the bush.

"I am not sure it is necessary. Surely it is helpful, but I don't think it is mandatory. It makes any potential problems less likely (...) It is like a machine, if you put oil on it, it runs smoother." (Arab partner, referring to personal relations among partners)

'Right now we communicate really well and without having to go through a whole lot of polite chitchat, because we know each other so well. This is something that has definitely developed over time. Now we just pick up the phone and use each other's first names and can send an email without having to write 'Dear' first and just make some quick enquiries.' (Danish partner)

'The level of communication is very good, I think. We managed to discard all that distant politeness which you have to have when you approach each other at the start.' (Danish partner)

- Arab partners also felt that communication became easier over time. However, not all Arab partners saw introductory civilities as a necessary evil until relations were sufficiently well established.

As one Arab partner expressed it:

‘However, I do hope that one day our Danish partners call us and start speaking about the weather before talking about the project.’ (Arab partner)

Another Arab partner clearly saw the mutual, explicit interest in personal matters as a symptom of the excellent relationship between the partners:

‘My relationship with the Danish counterpart in general is excellent, more than excellent. We ask about each other’s health, we talk about our families.’ (Arab partner)

These findings indicate a somewhat ironic risk that closer personal relations might actually have an adverse effect on communication: as relations grow stronger, Danish partners may tend to skip the aspect of communication that for Arab partners serves to express the strength of the relationship.

- Several of the partners also pointed out that it becomes easier to handle conflicting interests or points of view once a good personal relationship has been established.

‘The friendship helps a lot. We discuss things frankly. When we don’t agree, it helps when we are friends.’ (Arab partner)

‘The level of professional communication is a hundred times better when there is a social dimension there too. It is far, far easier to say in a humorous way, “But our country is poor, and that is why we can’t afford to connect everyone in (partner’s town) to the Internet.” It is much easier to accept things when you can use the same sort of language you use in a social setting, where you’re chatting and having a laugh. (...) It is much easier to turn down something without it becoming embarrassing for any of the people involved.’ (Danish partner)

- Trust was also found to facilitate the understanding and handling of cultural differences and to delimit culture as a comprehensive explanatory factor for differences.

Trust is required to express frustrations freely and clarify misunderstandings. As one Danish partner explained:

'You can easily be curious about different things but unable to ask because it could be considered offensive. So, yes, how well you know people does have an impact on how much you ask them questions.' (Danish partner)

When partners are left to guess for (context-specific) explanations, they tend to resort to (e.g. cultural) stereotypes. In our interviews, we see a correlation between trust and the activation of 'culture' as an explanation for problems or complications in the relationships. Only a very few of the partners interviewed resorted to 'culture' as an explanation for the nature of communication or relationships built between them. In a few partnerships characterized by strong professional relationships and Danish partners with elaborate intercultural skills, the idea of explaining anything in the relationship with reference to cultural differences was so remote to the partners that our interview guide almost made no sense. As a Danish partner shrugged when asked about how the partners sought to understand each other's cultures:

'But I don't think we look at it in that way. I don't think we say to ourselves, "now I'm going to try to understand your culture". I think we just try to understand each other as human beings.' (Danish partner).

Only in the one partnership where levels of trust were rather low did partners repeatedly evoke differences in national cultures to explain misunderstandings.

- One Danish partner suggested that affective trust built through social interaction served to bolster the perception of genuine, shared objectives:

'There is no doubt that if we as Danes travelled down there and couldn't be bothered to go out with them and eat with them and tell jokes, they would regard us more as people who come with our own agenda. Now they see us as human beings like themselves, you could say.' (Danish partner)

This suggestion finds support in the one case where social interaction was kept to a minimum. In this partnership, the Arab partners – despite sharing professional identities with their Danish partner – were unclear about the Danish partner's agenda. One Arab partner believed that the cooperation was an attempt by the

Danish government to improve Denmark's image after the cartoon crisis. One saw it as an attempt to gain more influence in their region of the Arab world, and one perceived the partnership to be a way for Denmark to strengthen its relations with the Arab world. All thus experienced the Danish partner as motivated by indirect, political and unilateral agendas in seeking cooperation, rather than by the project's actual objectives.

In other words, trust and personal relations in PDR partnerships are important to the strength of the partnerships. It makes communication easier – although partners need to be aware of different interpretations of communicative measures – it facilitates problem-solving, and there is a possibly mutually reinforcing relationship between trust and the perception of shared objectives or agendas. Judging from the frequency with which cultural stereotypes were activated as explanations by partners with different levels of trust, we also believe that trust furthered mutual understanding across cultures .

3.3 Genuine partnerships?

The second set of questions related to the assumption that PDR builds social capital revolves around the concept of 'genuine partnerships'. In light of a general confusion about the concept, we first establish what PDR partners understand by a genuine partnership before we look at the degree to which their own partnerships are experienced as genuine.

- When asked about what generally qualified a relationship as a partnership, the defining qualities mentioned most frequently by the partners were:
 - **Equal status** of the partners (mentioned by 6 Danish and 3 Arab partners) and the related aspect of **mutual respect** (mentioned by 3 Arab and one Danish partner).
 - **Reciprocity**: that both partners take and give in the partnership (mentioned by 3 Danish and 2 Arab partners) and the related issue of **shared goals and interests** in the project (mentioned by 4 Arab partners).

Shared goals and interests and mutual respect were also important mediators of mutual trust and have as such already been dealt with to some extent in the first part of this chapter.

The mixed blessing of Danish partners actually acting like *partners*

'I think perhaps to be honest that there is some kind of expectation among our Arab partners that we Danes are the ones taking the lead because we were the ones who came up with the idea of getting together.' (Danish partner)

In several of the partnerships studied, the Arab partners were still or had been working with other donors on other projects.

It is clear that the PDR approach of working through professional partnerships rather than providing direct funding for concrete projects on the ground was unusual and often difficult to adjust to.

One of the Arab partners thus initially defined a partnership as a relationship where the Arab partner proposed a project and the foreign partner funded the parts of the project they liked. The Danish approach of initial discussions, followed by a search for relevant Danish partners, followed by another round of discussions to find a common project was clearly greeted with some ambivalence by this partner. On the one hand, the Arab partner would have liked immediate funding for the organization's projects and did not like any kind of interference in overall project objectives or strategies. She was therefore frustrated with the Danish partner's reluctance to fund her proposals and saw dialogue on projects as attempts to interfere. On the other hand, she was also frustrated with the usual donor-recipient relationship. Asked to give her understanding of the concept of partnership during the second interview, she replied as follows:

'First, to be equal in partnership. Second, to understand and to be involved. To understand my ideas and to be involved in them. I don't like the people who just give me money – like the EU – and they never visit even the project. Because the partnership is not just money. Okay, we need money, but it's not just money. It's to develop ideas. To come just with an evaluation at the end of the year, and to ask questions and 'fill in this stupid form', or to just take the receipts. This is not a partnership. A partnership, it means to discuss, to... and this is done by the Danish.' (Arab partner)

This dilemma of Arab partners, between wanting funding for activities on the one hand and wanting to build a meaningful partnership with foreign professionals on the other, we found in several of the partnerships. On balance, however, it appears that the partnership experience was valued the highest. Only one partner said explicitly that he preferred direct funding over the PDR partnership. This person was, however, a partner in the partnership where trust and personal relations were not very developed.

The question is whether partners perceive their own partnerships as partnerships and as genuine in the sense that they are based on equal status, mutual respect, reciprocity and shared goals, and if and how the inherent power imbalances in the partnerships are remedied.

- Partners generally perceived of their cooperation as a partnership, although not necessarily as perfect by their own ideal standards.

Only two partners (both Arab) did not perceive the relationship with the Danish partner as a partnership. In one of these cases, the dialogue among the partners had not yet amounted to a concrete project between the partners. In the other case, the Arab partner was frustrated with the scope and pace of the cooperation after a change of partner on the Danish side.

- Many partners – especially among the Danish – expressed a clear awareness of the structural inequality of a partnership where one of the partners is in control of the budgets and in closer contact with the donor than the other. Nevertheless, the Danish partners often see their partners as equal because they choose to measure this from a human or professional perspective.

Imbued with this meaning, the concept of equality becomes rather similar to the idea of ‘mutual respect’ that is reiterated more often by the Arab partners.

‘I think that when we discuss the project and what we want to do, it is very equal. But of course that is only until we reach a point where I have to sit down and say “Well, we can’t support that” when they come up with a budget. When it comes to financial matters, we are not equal because I have a responsibility under the Partnership Program that money is spent on the right sort of activities.’ (Danish partner)

‘As human beings we are equal, but when we get down to discussing concrete problems about what we are to do, and how we should develop the collaboration (...) that’s where the sense of equality disappears. Because (the Arab partner) would really like to get some computers, and he really wants this and that... (Q: What about the professional relationship?) That is on an equal basis. We’ve spent a lot of time on this, also because on reflection we actually do think that it is pretty exciting to talk about our system. (...) Both us and our partners have really benefited from this.’ (Danish partner)

- Most of the Arab partners also feel that the partnerships are characterized by mutual professional respect.

There are only few statements in our interviews with Arab partners that indicate that the Danish partners have fallen into the ‘pitfall of paternalistic behaviour when holding the purse strings’ (Fowler 1998).

- Beyond a genuine feeling of finding a professional equal match in the Arab partner, it is also clear that several of the Danish partners made explicit efforts to instil a sense of equality into the partnership.

This is done *inter alia* by making sure that formulation and decision-making are genuinely shared:

‘Even if we gain more, he (the Danish partner) has a good understanding and he had a strong position to make sure that the Arab participants were in the lead. (...) (The Danish partner) always says that he doesn’t want to be in the forefront, and I can say with total honesty and frankness that our role was bigger than the role of the Danes in the formulation of the project.’ (Arab partner)

Only one Danish partner claimed that the project had been *formulated* by the Danish side alone. Everyone else – including, conspicuously, the Arab partners of this particular Danish partner – had perceived it as a joint process. We did not come across partners on either side who said that *decisions regarding project development* etc. were not made jointly by all the partners involved.

The sense of equality was also promoted by Danish partners by being explicit about not wanting to impose Danish solutions on the Arab partner, by being careful not to lecture and by staying open to mutual learning opportunities:

‘What I really try to avoid is lecturing – or adopting a “Now I’m going to tell you how we do things” attitude’ (Danish partner)

‘There is none of your “We know better because we come from Denmark” sort of talk. So the meeting is on an equal basis.’ (Danish partner)

- None of the Arab partners expressed dissatisfaction with the structural dimensions of the partnership (contracts, reporting procedures, decision-making structures etc.).

On the contrary, some of the Arab partners praised the flexibility of structural arrangements of the partnerships.

Reciprocity

In response to being asked what would strengthen the partnership, several Arab partners pointed to the development of greater reciprocity in terms of benefiting from the partnerships.:

'Find common interests between us (...). It would be beneficial if they knew more about our culture and religion and (theme of partnership), as they have numerous (Arabs) in Denmark, and it may facilitate their system and understanding.' (Arab partner)

'I didn't feel that we were able to develop a genuine exchange of experiences. Many times we sent people to Denmark to be trained there, but there has not been a single Danish (professional) who came to (the Arab partner country).' (Arab partner)

"What I'm always watching out for is when projects like ours start to develop into a teaching experience...because I think we are wrong if we think we can take that attitude (...) We need to keep in mind that – even though we think they should learn something from us – whatever they learn, they have to learn in their own context. And at the end of the day we will discover that we have taken home as many lessons as they have.' (Danish partner)

- The issue of reciprocity is clearly one where there is room for development in most partnerships. However, the seeds for strengthened reciprocity are clearly present in several partnerships in the shape of a shared awareness of reciprocal benefits from the cooperation.

'Our partnership is mutual in the sense that it is not only a one way kind of (the Danish partner organization) passing on their experience. It is mutual in the sense that I am learning as much.' (Danish partner)

When asked about whether he perceived cooperation with the Danish organization as a partnership, an Arab partner replied:

'Absolutely. Even the Danish partner takes advantage of this cooperation. They also learn from us, as they have a very important (Arab) community living in Denmark.' (Arab partner)

This perspective was reflected in the interview with his Danish partner:

'The point to us was also that we also have huge challenges in Denmark related to conflicts with citizens of another ethnic background. So the twinning was also meant for us to hopefully learn something from this project, which would enable us in our system to (provide a government service) in a much better way.' (Danish partner)

We also see ideas of reciprocity which are not narrowly connected to the issue of cooperation. Several Arab partners thus pointed to the reciprocal need to combat mutual prejudice:

'I want our relationship to be two-sided. Just like we understood that the cartoons do not represent the whole (of) Danish society, I would like them to know more about the reality in the Arab world and the development of the society we are living in.' (Arab partner)

In one partnership, the Arab partner was very clear on the fact that professionally the Danish partners were far ahead, and that they had nothing to learn from their Arab counterparts. However, there was an equally clear recognition that the Danish partner benefited from the partnership in terms of a more intimate knowledge of the Arab world.

A similar idea was expressed by several Danish partners in different partnerships. The Arab partner was offered Danish expertise on a reform issue and funds to implement initiatives. In return, the Danish partners gained inspiration from another source than usual and insight into the Middle East. Thus, despite the inequality in the field of sharing know-how related to the project, the sense of a mutual give and take was maintained.

It can obviously be argued that a genuine partnership should be based on a *shared* cause (Fowler 1998, 2000). However, more asymmetric interests and benefits also seem to be quite acceptable to the partners.

- What seems to be important is that the mutual benefits – whether symmetric or asymmetric – are understood and accepted by both partners.

3.4 The potential for long-lasting networks

All but one of the partners interviewed are currently involved in PDR-financed cooperation, and conclusions about the potential of partnerships to result in networks that outlast the current PDR funding will by nature be speculative. Nevertheless, it is indicative that some of the partners with high levels of mutual trust and a sense of being in a genuine partnership have already initiated joint activities outside PDR.

- Several PDR partners highlight the impact that good personal relations in particular have had on the development of professional work in terms of expanding the partnership to new areas.

As one partner expressed it:

‘The personal relationship has been hugely instrumental in the professional partnership. I think that if we weren’t as friendly, if we didn’t like each other as much as we do, I don’t think that the professional side of it would have moved on as far as it has moved on. There is just an ease of conversation, and it facilitates us to explore other areas of professional interest.’ (Danish partner)

Continued cooperation within a partnership with low levels of trust may very well persist, be renewed and even expand as long as there is new funding available. But it is not very likely that partnerships that are low on trust will gain a life on their own which will survive without PDR.

However, the PDR partnerships in our sample have generally developed very trusting relationships. If they do not continue, it will not be due to low levels of trust. Nor will it be out of frustrations over a lack of respect or perceptions of equal status among the partners. Most Danish partners seem to have gained respect for their professional knowledge rather than for the generally few funds they provide access to. And the professional respect is mutual. Danish partners are generally impressed with the professional level of their Arab partners, and most seem to gain from the professional interaction with their Arab partners.

However, while little is thus standing in the way of partners continuing their relationship beyond PDR financing,

- none of the partnerships are characterized by any degree of interdependence that would in itself sustain a partnership. The maintenance of partnerships – or the social capital created through these partnerships – relies on the partners' *motivation* to stay in touch.

One straightforward motivation to stay in touch is the wish to maintain a cherished friendship. Several partners included in our study have developed friendships which seem likely to outlive the ending of PDR cooperation.

Danish and Arab partners, both individuals and institutions, for whom working with the Middle East or Europe has become an important part of their career track or institutional mandate will also have a natural inclination to try and maintain relations with their partners as part of their professional network, including in cases where affective ties have not developed into actual friendships.

Danish and Arab partners who share a professional thematic interest but who are not naturally linked to Denmark/Morocco or Jordan might have an interest in maintaining relations as part of a larger international network of professionals in their field. However, if (as is often the case) there are no specific professional or institutional reasons to fortify links especially with Denmark/the Arab world, there is a risk that networks will wither after PDR cooperation has ended unless they can be maintained by friendships and/or a network support structure of some kind. Due to the generally positive experience of most partners from working with each other and the affective ties thus established, it is likely that partners will be motivated to engage in some kind of network structure as long as the human and financial resources required to do so for the individual are kept at a minimum.

3.5 Part-conclusion: PDR's contribution to Danish-Arab social capital

Partners in our sample are generally very good at developing trusting relationships in partnerships which are by and large perceived as genuine. The PDR partnerships we studied are, with one exception, characterized by high levels of mutual trust among partners. Factors furthering trust include: social time spent outside working hours; intercultural skills; knowledge of each other's competencies and levels of au-

tonomy; insight into the partner's and the partner organization's integrity and local standing; predispositions to trust professional peers; the experience of managing conflict or crisis together; and, for the Arab partners to trust their Danish counterparts, a willingness and interest to learn about the broader social, economic, political, cultural and historical circumstances of the Arab partner country and the Arab region as such. However, changes in personnel and the lack of a common language must be expected to inhibit the development of trust, particularly affect-based trust.

In the one partnership where the Arab partners did not have a lot of trust in the Danish partner, a combination of factors seems to have contributed. Most strikingly, as opposed to the other PDR partners we studied, the partners in this partnership did not take time off to meet and get to know each other outside working hours. Furthermore, decision-making processes on the Danish side were perceived as non-transparent, the Arab partners experienced the Danish partner as having low intercultural skills, and the partners did not have a clear understanding of why the Danish partner was involved in the partnership.

However, most partners attributed a range of positive effects to the close personal relations in the partnership. Communication especially was perceived as smoother when relations grew stronger. Partners need to be aware, however, that what one partner perceives as a superfluous civility to be abandoned as relations are strengthened, another partner might perceive as a token of the strength of the relationship. Trust was also found to be important in the partners' ability to cope sensibly with cultural differences and to limit the use of 'culture' as an all-explanatory factor for differences. Only in the partnership that was low on trust did the partners frequently refer to the other's national cultural attributes as explanations of behaviour.

Creating a sense of mutual respect and equal status in a relationship with an inherent imbalance of power is quite a challenge. To the extent that partnerships succeed in doing this in PDR, it is likely to be the result of conscious efforts on behalf of the Danish partners to compensate for the inbuilt inequality in the relationships and the sense of equality and mutual respect fostered by the professional affinity between partners. It is, however, also likely that the strength of personal relationships between PDR partners has an impact. Finally, the lack of grievances on behalf of the Arab partners regarding the structural dimensions of the partnership can be seen as an indication that PDR structures, and the way they are interpreted and administered by PDR partners, generally do not undermine the sense of genuine partnerships.

Under the circumstances of the partnerships studied here – where partnerships take place between professional peers and have lasted for more than two years, with a minimum of partner turnover on both sides – PDR is successfully building social capital between Denmark and the Arab region. We can only speculate whether these relationships are sufficiently strong to become more permanent. While the relationships that have developed into actual friendships are likely to be maintained, it is our assessment that some form of professional interest in maintaining the relationship has to be present in order for the remaining relationships to endure. This underlines the importance of strengthening genuine and explicit reciprocity in the partnerships.

4. CONCLUSION

Dialogue assumptions of PDR verified

Our aim was to analyse the tenability of the underlying 'dialogue assumptions' in PDR: 1) that professional dialogue in twinning arrangements between Arab and Danish sister organizations lowers mutual prejudice, and that there is a multiplier effect of these prejudice-reducing meetings in the partners' societies; and 2) that through long-term cooperation, the PDR partners build mutual trust and genuine partnerships that are sufficiently strong to be self-sustainable and serve as more permanent social capital between Denmark and the Arab world.

Overall, our findings support the dialogue assumptions of PDR: the long-term professional partnerships in PDR included in this study generally serve to undermine mutual prejudice and to establish new networks of social capital between Denmark and the Arab world. Only one of the seven partnerships studied showed few or no results in these two areas.

The dilemma of strategic partner choice

We have also discussed the extent to which the impact on mutual prejudice has a multiplication effect in the partners' societies and the extent to which the social capital built is likely to be sustainable. To some extent these two objectives risk being at odds: internationally oriented partners are more likely to draw on their PDR experiences in public debates, thereby reaching a wider audience. The actual impact they have on people's prejudices, however, is questionable. On the other hand, these partners often have a given interest in maintaining international relations and are in this sense most likely through PDR to contribute to a more permanent social capital. More nationally oriented professionals engaged in partnerships with professional Arab peers for whom the PDR experience contributed to considerable modifications in their own attitudes about the Arab world are potentially more effective in lowering prejudices in their own personal networks. They are, however, less likely to engage in public debates, and their contribution to more permanent social capital is potentially weaker, unless it can be continuously supported externally. Choosing partners can therefore to some extent be seen as a balancing act between widening the Danish-Arab network structure and its impact on the one hand and maximizing the likelihood for self-sustainable networks on the other.

The many merits of partnerships between professional peers

Our findings also allow us to be more specific about *why* partnerships between professional peers work as well as they seem to, and *how* trust and genuine partnerships are built. Is it essential, as assumed by PDR, that partnerships are between professional peers, and that they are long term?

In terms of combating prejudice, the professional twinning arrangements in PDR allow the partners to view their Arab or Danish counterpart as part of a professional 'in-group' as well as part of a cultural or national 'out-group'. In this way partners benefit from the mutual trust of the professional in-group to explore and demystify characteristics of the cultural out-group.

In terms of social capital, developing a trusting relationship is given the optimal point of departure between professional peers: there is a predisposition to trust people from your own professional cadres, and it is easier to recognize shared professional interests and believe in common objectives. Furthermore, the mutual respect between professional equals seems to some extent to compensate for the inherent power imbalance in partnerships in cases where the Danish partner controls the budget. Finally, reciprocity, in the sense that the exchange of knowledge on the matter of substance was of interest and inspiration to both partners, was also often found in these professional twinning arrangements.

One potential drawback related to professional twinning arrangements is the difficulty of finding professionals in the relevant fields in Denmark who also have a profound knowledge and working experience of the Arab world. However, while understanding of the Arab world is unmistakably highly valued by the Arab partners, we did not find it to be a *sine qua non* for good partnership relations. It does, however, require that the Danish partners possess a minimum of intercultural skills and that they are perceived to be open and interested in learning about Arab culture, history, politics etc.

The importance of duration to trust and genuine partnerships

Most kinds of trust developed in PDR partnerships clearly require time. It takes time to learn about each other's loyalty during crisis, personal and organizational integrity and competencies. And it requires frequent meetings outside working hours to develop affective trust. Though these types of trust are thus clearly built up over time, they can also be boosted through mutual visits to each other's organizations.

However, not all the mediators of trust that we came across required time to evolve. Knowledge, or failing that, openness to learning about the broader social circumstances of the relevant sector, the Arab partner country and the Arab region as such, as well as cultural skills, can raise the level of initial trust in a PDR partnership. Furthermore, clear reciprocal benefits – or second best – an explicit, shared narrative in the partnership about ‘what is in it’ for each of the partners also removes grounds for speculation about ulterior motives and provides solid grounds for mutual trust in the partners’ sincere commitment to the partnership.

Whether instant or built up over time, the development of a trusting relationship requires a certain amount of personal investment from the partners and is unlikely to happen without some degree of personal enthusiasm and drive vis-à-vis the partnership. This underlines the importance of PDR partnerships being demand-driven, not only by the Arab partners (as already established in the PDR principles), but also by the Danish partners.

Mutual trust can be conducive to the perception that one is engaging in a genuine partnership. Apart from this, developing genuine partnerships is not seen as relying decisively on duration. Rather, what appears to matter is the mutual attitude with which partners enter the partnership and the structural arrangements guiding it. Mutual respect for partners’ capacities, professionalism and opinions constitutes an indispensable crutch for the perception of equality in an institutionally power-skewed relationship. Another crutch consists of the insistence of mutual ownership in the formulation and decision-making processes related to projects in the partnership. Finally, genuine reciprocity gives substance to the sense of equality and mutual respect in a partnership. These requirements for genuine partnerships are already formulated as central principles of PDR and do not require years of cooperation to be fulfilled.

Countering the notion of a clash of civilizations?

One of the prejudices that is clearly dismantled in the partnerships is the notion of mutual hostility. In this sense, the partnerships we studied make a very concrete contribution to countering the perception of a looming clash of civilizations. The idea of a shared agenda, however, is not always crystal clear in the partnerships. Partners often have implicit understandings of reciprocal benefits, but in some cases – especially if trust is for some reason hampered – the lack of explicit, mutually accepted and genuine reciprocity can lead to unconstructive speculations about the Danish partners’ ulterior motives or agendas.

Danish partners should also be aware of a seemingly general tendency initially to underestimate their professional Arab peers. Although this misperception is easily corrected in the Danish partners, the fact that it is there at all serves to confirm Arab partners' impression of being perpetually degraded by the West. PDR thus faces the dilemma that, of two dominant negative stereotypes in Denmark and the Arab partner countries respectively, one is dismantled in the encounter with reality, while the other risks being confirmed in the process: a prevailing stereotype among Danes about the Arab world as relatively backward and overly traditionalist part of the world (see also Wegter and Pultz 2010) predominantly relates to *facts* and is largely unrelated to the relations between the West and the Arab world. As such this stereotype is relatively easily countered for the individual partner during a visit to either Jordan or Morocco. On the other hand, a predominantly negative stereotype about Europe among the Arab partners hinges on the historical *relations* between the West and the Arab world, i.e. the West as a post-colonial power-seeker over the Arab world. And while this narrative certainly also relates to facts – about Western policies towards the Middle East, for instance – it also relates to the attitudes and perceptions with which Westerners encounter Arabs. Even though Danish perceptions of the Arab region and of Arab partners quickly change as they embark on their PDR partnership, the mere fact that they were there to change risks confirming the prevailing perception about the conflicting nature of relations between the West/Europe and the Arab world.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

1. *It is recommended to maintain the core principle of PDR as formulated in the Presentation of PDR of February 2010. It is, however, recommended to increase attention to the issue of reciprocity when handling project applications from PDR partners.*

There is congruence between core PDR principles as formulated by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the good qualities of the PDR partnerships – real and ideal – that are emphasized by partners on both sides. The observance of these principles is important to the development of true partnerships and to trust-building relationships. While projects are generally jointly formulated and managed, they are rarely mutually beneficial on paper. Genuine reciprocity is essential for partners to be motivated to staying committed in the long term. Partners have sometimes created their own narratives of partners' motives for participating in the partnership. Mostly, these narratives are shared and accepted, but in less well functioning partnerships they can take the form of unconstructive speculations about ulterior motives. Partners should be encouraged to become explicit about mutual benefits when applying for funds.

2. *When handling applications for PDR funding, it is recommended to assess partners' strategic position to lower mutual prejudices in the Arab world and Denmark.*

In order to maximize the societal effect of the prejudice-reducing meetings in PDR, it is recommended to assess and balance the potential quantitative as well as qualitative impact more broadly in society. Quantitatively, it matters how many people are directly involved in the partnerships, the size of the partners' respective network of colleagues, family and friends, and the extent to which partners can be expected to disseminate PDR experiences to a public audience. Qualitatively, it matters how relationships are allowed to develop between partners, the standing of the individual partners in their own networks, the importance in society of these networks and the value added of PDR in reaching these networks.

- 3. In order to enhance equality in partnerships, it is recommended that ways be considered to remove the Danish partner from the role of 'purse-keeper'.*

The genuine sense of equal status between professional peers is often strained in situations of negotiating funds and budgets. This could be partly remedied by letting a third party – a professional project coordinator in a suitable organization – manage the project. Another option is that the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs becomes directly involved in the formulation of projects and takes over the function of setting budget boundaries and criteria in phases of formulation and budgeting.

- 4. It is recommended that ways be considered to avoid partner frustrations over limitations in the pace and scope of the cooperation.*

Much can be done by the partners themselves (see recommendations below) to mitigate frustration with the pace and scope of the cooperation if the expectations and possibilities of the partnership are harmonized early in the process. Still, Danish partners are often competing with other donors for the time and human resources of their Arab partners. While Arab partners appreciate the engagement and professional exchange involved in PDR partnerships, many also need to promote activities on the ground for which they need financing. If partnerships could also be used as a vehicle to apply for traditional project funding from other donors, this could potentially ease the dilemma of donor-preference that some Arab PDR partners find themselves in.

- 5. It is recommended that budgets be set aside for all key partners to travel to their partner country at least once in a project period, and to allow for budgets to include representation expenses.*

It is clear that country visits, rather than visits *from* the partner, create a broader understanding of the partner country, of the partner organization and of the professional issue being discussed as part of the partnership. Furthermore, mutual visits and hospitality are of crucial importance in developing trust and strong relationships between partners.

- 6. It is recommended that key DAI partners be offered an introductory course in the history, society and culture of Denmark/the Arab partner country. It is recommended as part of these partner courses to train intercultural skills and raise awareness about common misconceptions and stereotypes – especially for partners that are newcomers to PDR.*

Partners have a clearly stated curiosity and interest about the broader social aspects of their partner country, and the professional quality of the interchanges taking place on a range of issues would most likely benefit from partners being introduced more thoroughly to the context of the issue at stake. Some of the partners have made provisional attempts to give such an introduction to their partners, but generally this is not a core competence for most partners. Nor do partners often have the resources and the necessary knowledge that would allow them to gain this insight through self-study. Where there are clear tendencies of preconceived notions between partners, there is no reason why partners should not be prepared for this in advance, thereby potentially facilitating the professional dialogue. For example, Danish partners should be made aware of a predisposition to underestimate their Arab peers as well as about the alertness on the Arab side about this tendency. It is important, however, that such training is done in a way that avoids promoting the cultural attribution error of expecting certain behaviour based on established stereotypes. Generally, the development of *inter-cultural skills* is seen to be more expedient than trying to get a grip on a national culture (see Nygaard 2010 for a practical approach to training international skills).

- 7. It is recommended that light support structures be developed and tested to help maintain personal and professional networks in the future.*

Not all relationships generated as part of PDR partnerships have the potential for sustaining themselves in the future. We suggest, however, that sustainability is challenged more by a lack of natural occasions and time to network, and less by a lack of will and interest. Network structures in the form of, for instance, the setting up of social networks like 'Friends of PDR' and the organization of annual thematic conferences inviting former and present (as well as, perhaps, potential future) partners relevant to a specific theme could potentially constitute the kit that will maintain a valuable network in terms of passing on lessons learned and best practices, generating new and broader networks, etc.

Recommendations to the partners

- 8. When developing partnerships, it is recommended to establish – and to nurture continuously – an explicit, shared understanding of the organizational and individual interests and expected as well as experienced benefits of the partners involved.*

Clear reciprocal benefits – or second best – an explicit, shared narrative in the partnership about ‘what is in it’ for each of the partners removes grounds for speculation about ulterior motives and breeds trust in partners’ sincere commitment to the partnership. The content of this reciprocity can take various shapes. What is important is that it is genuine and mutually accepted as reflecting legitimate interests.

9. *When initiating a partnership, it is recommended that an explicit, shared understanding of the concept and content of the partnership be established.*

It cannot be expected that the concept of partnership has the same meaning for all partners. It is important to discuss and come to an agreement about the desired qualities of each partnership. Likewise, the content or development of activities in each partnership should be made clear, including the pace with which activities can be expected to develop and the scope that activities can be expected to take.

10. *Organizations entering into partnerships are recommended to weigh the following when identifying preferably a team of professionals to represent them in the partnership with:*
 - a. *Sufficient language skills (in the relevant ‘third’ language, typically English or French)*
 - b. *Professional skills and seniority matching the partnership representative*
 - c. *Personal drive and interest in entering into a cross-cultural partnership*
 - d. *Intercultural skills*
 - e. *Likelihood that the person(s) will not change position during the partnership period (alternatively building the partnership around a team of people to reduce vulnerability to the departure of one individual)*
 - f. *Position in the organization that allows for the institutionalization of know how and inspiration gained from the partnership.*

The quality of the relations that are built up is obviously highly dependent on the personal drive, skills and attitudes of the individuals involved on both sides. While great care should be taken to let the right persons represent the organization in the partnership, the partnership should avoid becoming overly vulnerable to the departure of one individual.

11. *Prior to and throughout partner negotiations about joint projects, it is recommended that the Danish partner stays in sufficiently close contact with the relevant donor representative in order to ensure that suggestions and proposals are financially viable.*

Very long negotiations, where projects have to be redefined again and again due to donor constraints, are detrimental to the development of trust in the Danish partner. While no financial commitments can be made from the Danish partner until projects have been approved by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Danish organization should have a clear idea of financing possibilities before starting negotiations with Arab partners.

12. It is recommended that recurrent occasions be planned for where relationships can develop in a social context.

Affective relationships between partners are important to several aspects of the partnership dialogue. Social time spent with the partner is an investment that will return in terms of, among other things, a higher quality of communication.

13. It is recommended that the objective of dialogue in PDR be approached as a means to nurture relations and foster partnerships.

Many PDR partners – also outside this study – have expressed uncertainty about how to approach and pursue the objective of dialogue in PDR. We have argued that dialogue and partnerships are intrinsically intertwined and that it makes no sense to deal with one in isolation from the other. Building bridges and combating stereotypes across cultures, which are generally defined as the objectives for dialogue, are best pursued by establishing social capital. Social capital is in turn best created in PDR by establishing strong professional and personal relationships in genuine partnerships.

Annex I: Interview guide

Analysis of the dialogue in the Danish-Arab Partnership Program Interview guide [Morocco version]

- Number** = Research question to be analysed
- = **underlying questions to be illuminated**
 - = questions to be asked in interviews

0. Introductory remarks

- Aim of study: to analyse the development of the professional partnership and the dialogue between the partners in the project.
- Purpose: to gather lessons learned, best practices and general recommendations for strengthened partnerships. **Not** an evaluation of the success of the project. Will not be used to determine whether project is to continue or not.
- Interview will last around 2 hours and will cover: 1) factual questions about the cooperation; 2) your perception of the nature of the partnership with the Danish organization and the personal relationship developed with your partner in Denmark; 3) your assessment of your personal benefit from the cooperation in terms of new knowledge of Danish society.
- The interview will be recorded, but only the research team in DIIS will get access to the interviews. In the final analysis report, all citations from the interviews will be anonymous.
- DIIS hopes that you will see this study as an opportunity to contribute to strengthening relations between Denmark and Morocco. This requires a very frank and open discussion. However, if there are any questions you for some reason feel uncomfortable answering, refraining from answering is of course completely acceptable.
- You will receive a copy of the report, which will also be given to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

1. Introductory questions (estimated interview time: 10 minutes)

- **Facts:**
 - When (year/month) did your organization start cooperation with the Danish partner? When did the initial negotiations about cooperation begin?

- How many people in the organization have been directly involved in negotiations and cooperation with the Danish partners?
- Has there been a change in personnel responsible or involved in the partnership during the time of cooperation?
- Who are the person/persons in your Danish partner organization that you are dealing with or meeting on a regular basis.
- How often have you met with your Danish counterpart?
- Are you staying in touch in between meetings? How?
- Before cooperating with the Danish partner, have you cooperated with Danish organizations before? With other foreign organizations?

2. To what extent do partners find that they have developed a strong professional or personal relationship that is or is expected to be extended and used outside the current project cooperation? (estimated interview time 1 hour)

- **How do partners perceive the professional partnership?**
 - I would like you to talk about how the cooperation with your Danish partner works. When you entered into the initial talks with [name of Danish partner] how did you **expect** that it would be to work with this Danish partner?
 - Has your **perception** of the cooperation and your Danish partner **evolved over time**?
 - How would you characterize the nature of the cooperation between you? Can you summarize in three words what you think characterizes the cooperation/professional relationship?
 - The overall idea behind the Partnership Program is to develop mutually beneficial and equal partnerships between Moroccan and Danish institutions. What do you understand by the term **partnership**?
 - Do you think of the cooperation with the Danish organization as a partnership? (elaborate answer)
 - Was the project you are working on formulated **jointly** by both you and your Danish partner? Did you have disagreements about the design – how were they solved – what did you think about the solution?
 - Do you manage and take decisions about the project jointly? Have you had disagreements about the project's development? How did you solve them? What did you think about the solution?

- How would you characterize the **communication** between you? Have you experienced misunderstandings due to culture or language? Has there been a development in how well you communicate?
 - Can you think of any (or other) problems or aspects that you found it difficult to deal with in relation to the cooperation?
 - **How do partners perceive personal relations in the partnership?**
 - The way the professional cooperation has functioned – to what extent do you think that that is related to the persons involved on both sides and how they get along? (elaborate answer)
 - Think of the person in the Danish partner organizations that you are dealing with the most. From a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is someone you do not **trust** at all, and 10 is someone you trust 100 pct., how would you rate your relationship to that person today? Explain.
 - The level of trust you describe, has that developed over time? Can you point to specific events or activities – formal or informal – that contributed to the building of trust between you?
 - Have there been occasions where contacts have been made between you that were not strictly related to the project cooperation? [for instance, during the incident with the Danish cartoons?]
 - Can you think of anything that could help improve the partnership and strengthen relations between the two organizations?
- 3. To what extent do partners assess that they have benefited from the cooperation in terms of a broader understanding of their partner’s cultural and national background? (estimated interview time: 30 minutes)**
- **Has cooperation generated an increased interest in Denmark/Arab world that has led partners to seek new information from other sources than their partners?**
 - **Has the cooperation itself led to an increased sense of insight into more general aspects of Danish/Arab societies?**
 - **Has the cooperation contributed to mutually nuancin stereotypes and prejudices?**

- Do you think that you have **learned more** about Denmark and Danes from being in this cooperation? Elaborate. What? How?
- Have you been **surprised** about anything that you have learned about Denmark or Danes? What, Why?
- Have you sought information about Denmark from **other sources** than your partner? Why/on what occasion. What? Where?
- Do you think that you have **changed your perception of Denmark** or Danish people during the time of the cooperation? Elaborate. Concrete event/experience that changed your perception?
- [if experience with cooperation with other foreign organizations: Do you think there is a difference between working with Danish partners and working with xx partners?]

4. To what extent do long-term partners work as advocates in professional and personal networks for an increased understanding of Danish/Arab societies? (estimated interview time: 20 minutes)

- **Have partners used insights gained from the cooperation in public debates?**
- **Are partners using insights from cooperation when discussing with friends and family?**
- **Are partners using insights from cooperation in other professional relations?**
 - Has the insight about Denmark/Danes been useful in contexts other than the cooperation itself? Elaborate.
 - Have you drawn on the insight
 - In public debates?
 - When discussing with colleagues or professional networks?
 - With friends and family?
 - Elaborate – how often and in what contexts.
 - Would you say that the cooperation with the Danish partner has been an experience that has contributed to the **institutional capacity** of your organization – or has it mainly been an experience and a network that you personally carry with you? Elaborate.

THANK YOU

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