

Berne, April 2013

## **A selection of quotes from storytelling interviews on different aspects of the dlgn network**

### ***On the face-to-face-meetings...***

*“At the F2F it was impressive to see how many people work on different projects, thinking on the issue and developing it. There was an apparent willingness to be experienced in order to get away from conserving knowledge towards exchanging it across organisations.”*

*- Pascal Arnold, HSI Switzerland*

*„People coming from different contexts and approaches, I felt, we belonged together, we were one community.“*

*- Preeta Lall, NPO India*

*„I felt what I did in Albania was not something isolated but a part of a bigger endeavour which goes beyond borders“*

*- Elda Bagaviki, NPO Albania*

*“Before Sarajevo I was a member of dlgn but I did not feel ‘engaged’. Then in Sarajevo I realized that ‘the network was living’ and I got the feeling that I truly belong to the Network. I became more conscious of the true purpose and utility of my engagement.”*

*- Snezana Mistic Mihajlovic, MDPi Bosnia and Herzegovina*

*„By being open with others and sharing your experience you move into a peer evaluation process and you begin to see where you are standing yourself.“*

*- Preeta Lall, NPO India*

*“Without the face-to face meetings in Delhi and Sarajevo we definitely wouldn’t be where we are. That is when the seeds have been planted.”*

*- Preeta Lall, NPO India.*

*“It was the exposure to the new thinking and the new technique at the F2F. And at the same time being in a small group it was a good opportunity to exchange, to be well received, to share openly and to receive from the others.”*

*- Elda Bagaviki, NPO Albania.*

*“I appreciated meeting the people behind the “e-mail addresses”, learning the resources and competences the network members represent, which eventually lowered the threshold to get in touch with them.”*

*- Liliane Tamutzer, SDC Bhutan*

*“ F2F meetings are very useful to get to know people and to connect them with each other. Otherwise, we don’t necessary call people we don’t know. Thanks to the F2F connections, If I need something I now know whom to call.”*

*- Ibrahim Mehmeti, NPO Macedonia*

*“As a newcomer to SDC I was amazed to see that there is an organisation which invests so much into the professional development of its local staff. With SDC we get stimulations the whole year around. The exchange challenged me to think more on what to do and how to do it when approaching a project.”*

*- Petar Vasilev, NPO Serbia*

*“Since the F2F I exchange more with people from SDC or HSI and engage more pro-actively.”*

*- Pascal Arnold, HSI Switzerland*

*“The network, the activities we engage in, the objectives (what we want with that) became much more concrete through participation in the F2F.”*

*- Snezana Mistic Mihailovic, MDPi Bosnia and Herzegovina*

*“ The main change was the acquisition of new knowledge. For example, I remember that power analysis was discussed during the F2F. It was for me like an eye opener.”*

*- Snezana Mistic Mihajlovic, MDPi Bosni and Herzegovina*

### **On the training on advising for members of the dlgn...**

*„I am more pro-active since the training, when I realize things are moving rather slow and with some action from my part the situation could change. I try to do this in an empowering way. I go and talk to partners and try to put it in a constructive way: how do you see where the situation is: how can we make a difference. I try to have a discussion leading to a solution. “*

*- Elda Bagaviki, NPO Albania*

*“It was intellectually also a good experience because I started to see the other perspective. It brought another way of thinking. It changed my interaction with people and how I perceive a situation in advisory situations and also in general situations.”*

*- Elda Bagaviki, NPO Albania*

### **On the training on decentralisation...**

*“I got a thorough understanding of the practices and elements linked with decentralisation, when we brought all the things we operationally do into a more strategic unified frame”*

*- Elda Bagaviki, NPO Albania*

*“I come from a rule of law background but I am not an expert in local governance. During the workshop, I started to understand the complexity of the concept of decentralization and how the issue of local governance is linked to sector policies of the country.”*

*- Ziad Sharia, NPO Occupied Palestinian Territories*

### **On peer review learning projects...**

*“ The most exciting moment for me was working in the learning project on civil society and decentralisation. I could learn about our colleagues’ processes and compare them with what we do here in Macedonia. It was quite demanding but also positive because some questions from third parties gave me different perspectives from our daily realities. They helped me to think more about the way to approach civil society support in designing my own projects. It is more valuable to work with concrete cases and reflect on them.”*

*- Ibrahim Mehmeti, NPO Macedonia*

## **On the network in general...**

*“My attitude and thinking changed, the way how I deal with things. This for sure I will attribute to the network.”*

*- Elda Bagaviki, NPO Albania.*

*“Without the network and the face-to-face meetings we would live in small islands and continue our work as we always did. We didn’t have time and we didn’t take the time to think about these questions.”*

*- Preeti Lall, NPO India*

*“For me as a newcomer to the network and as being employed by a partner organisation, it was useful to gain insight in how ‘Bern’ functions, relationships with Coofs, roles, positioning, etc.”*

*- Liliane Tarnutzer, SDC Bhutan.*

*“As a newcomer I am eager to find help and experience. The dlgn is the most important thing for me in my work.”*

*- Ziad Sharia, NPO Occupied Palestinian Territories*

## **What was the link between your action and the network? And which products did you use?**

*“I participated in the elaboration of two working tools (LGA and municipal finances). Occasionally, I also send information on my organisations’ activities, included in the newsletter. This gives me a good opportunity to disseminate information about my organisations’ activities.”*

*- Snezana Mistic Mihajlovic, MDPi Bosnia and Herzegovina*

*“I was requested to do a power analysis for a consultancy. On this occasion, I could use the knowledge that I acquired through the network and developed it as a new field of expertise.”*

*- Snezana Mistic Mihajlovic, MDPi Bosnia and Herzegovina*

*“Since a lot of HSI’s activities are implementations of SDC projects, I am specifically interested in participating in the thematic discussions of SDC. If we know what is discussed within SDC, we can adapt our approaches to it.”*

*- Pascal Arnold, HSI Switzerland*

*“I motivated People from HSI, to attend courses organised or mediated by dlgn, such as the T4D with DeLog or the practitioners’ course with the Institute of federalism.”*

*- Pascal Arnold, HSI Switzerland*

*“In order to approach the question of decentralisation and local governance in Palestine, the dlgn is a key entry point for me in my work to find help and experience.”*

*- Ziad Sharia, NPO Occupied Palestinian Territories*

*„I normally used it as a source of inspiration on a conceptual basis, like performance based grant systems and the endeavour to work within national governance system instead of outside for sustainability reasons.”*

*- Petar Vasilev, NPO Serbia*

*“Besides my contribution of a case study and internal consultation processes like the “gender equity strategies, the discussion and products were mainly for inspiration and reflection. Only the LGB was considered for application but later found inappropriate.”*

*- Liliane Tarnutzer, SDC Bhutan*

*“What changed was the easier access to resources and specialized knowledge (beyond Google).”*

*- Liliane Tarnutzer, SDC Bhutan*

*“The meetings were helpful for the lively discussions. I also contributed with case studies. The products were helpful for support and inspiration but not for a one to one application.”*

*- Elda Bagaviki, NPO Albania*

*“We adapted and applied the LGA for small local governments. We took the product, launched a process, discovered, adapted, appropriated and applied it. We always checked back with the tools. We saw the relevance and made it our own.”*

*- Preeta Lall, NPO India.*

*“We introduced ‘performance based grant systems’ into discussions on a future contract with GIZ in Serbia. This was inspired by the discussions at F2F Sarajevo”*

*- Petar Vasilev, NPO Serbia.*

*“In milestone moments of project implementation (Evaluation, internal Reviews, YPO, Prodoc) I sensitized people on particular issues (PED, local finances, on-budget support and systemic approaches).”*

*- Pascal Arnold, HSI Switzerland*

*“Seeding of learning happens slowly. It is a process. You make connections. Many connections. Later when you talk to your partners you link your discussions back. To know that the material is laying there matters. When you need it you can get back to it.”*

*- Preeta Lall, NPO India.*

*“Particularly very interesting for me is the list of consultants/experts.”*

*- Alexander Grunauer, GiZ Serbia.*

*“The sharing of experience which took place with the dlgn network in this regard enabled me to learn the way SDC approaches governance in general and such aspects in particular.”*

*- Alexander Grunauer, GiZ Serbia.*

### ***In which of your domains of activity did you notice concrete changes or wanted to change practices you can link to the learning through the network?***

*“The main change was the acquisition of new knowledge. For example, I remember that ‘power analysis’ was discussed during the F2F. It was for me like an eye opener.”*

*- Snezana Misic Mihajlovic, MDPi Bosnia and Herzegovina*

*“The trend concerning SDC-practice (legal service) is not conducive to innovations. The currently discussed integrity clause, would include a penalty of 10% of the project’s budget”*

*- Pascal Arnold, HSI Switzerland*

*„Participating in the glgn network is a natural process of capitalization – We looked at the things we supported. We worked out the rational, what we did, why, how and with whom.“*

*- Preeta Lall, NPO India*

### ***How did your thematic expertise evolve in the last 4 years and how did dlgn contribute to it and to your professional perspective?***

*“I am more committed and dedicated to the idea of decentralization, including bringing decision making closer to the people.”*

*- Petar Vasilev, NPO Serbia*

*“Thanks to dlgn I now feel much more confident in using and sharing those methods learned. I can engage confidently with local stakeholder and other donors. It certainly contributed to develop the institutional capacities of my organization and to improve its positioning in the local stakeholders set-up.”*

*- Snezana Mistic Mihajilovic, MDPi Bosnia and Herzegovina*

*“For sure in my team, we all know about the dlgn. Our level of knowledge is much higher now.”*

*- Snezana Mistic Mihajilovic, MDPi Bosnia and Herzegovina*

*“The network helps to update the knowledge we already have, to clarify some new governance approaches and to connect colleagues for exchanges. The best experience for me was this peer exchange within the learning project.”*

*- Ibrahim Mehmeti, NPO Macedonia.*

*“Thanks to the network I feel that I am enabled to relate discussions on local practices to a more theoretical framework which might be appreciated by partners.”*

*- Liliane Tarnutzer, SDC Bhutan*

*“When the Swiss talk about inclusiveness, they are really meaning inclusiveness. I can say it when I see how it is practiced by SDC.”*

*- Ziad Sharia, NPO Occupied Palestinian Territories*

### **Where do you see the biggest potential and the biggest need for practice to evolve? And what can the network do to favour it?**

*“We did not have much in term of guidance, recommendations etc. Now we have the dlgn.”*

*- Snezana Mistic Mihajilovic, MDPi Bosnia and Herzegovina*

*“The biggest potential I see in the field of on-budget and political assessments. Adapting these concepts consequently would set free a big potential.”*

*- Pascal Arnold, HIS Switzerland*

*“There is need to structure processes to allow for more reflection on the experiences accumulated in the field and more time and space to engage and reflect with others.”*

*- Elda Bagaviki, NPO Albania*

*“A good point already existing but with further potential is the presence of several relevant donor organisations involved in the network, who are really willing to coordinate and share experience.”*

*- Alexander Grunauer, GiZ Serbia*

*“When we have F2F meetings, we should have a more debate-type of programme, so more interactive.”*

*- Ibrahim Mehmeti, NPO Macedonia*

*“Very important would it also be to increase the peer exchange modality, and to design it more in an offer mode not a request mode. It is more comfortable to be offered to take part in the learning of colleagues.”*

*- Ibrahim Mehmeti, NPO Macedonia*

*“The COOF Management should be more aware about the work inspired by the dlgn network and conducted by people in the field.”*

*- Ibrahim Mehmeti, NPO Macedonia*