

# **COURSE FOR AID AND DEVELOPMENT WORKERS ON INTEGRATIVE PERSONAL AND SOCIOCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND DYNAMICS**

**6<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> August 2012 and 11<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> March 2013**

**UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA CONFERENCE CENTRE, EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA**

OFFERED BY

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Despite current changes in development assistance towards more policy dialogue and budget support and less direct involvement in implementation of development projects, there are still thousands of 'development workers' that continue to be posted to work in foreign cultures, be it working with NGOs, UN agencies, the EU, development banks, national authorities or in embassies. Whether they move for a long time, and often with their families, or sign up for a short term contract in humanitarian assistance, as election observers or technical advisers, they all need quickly to be able to adapt and relate effectively in their new environment.

In development and humanitarian assistance work, the main focus has often been on how to transfer the development worker's strategic and technical skills to local people in a foreign (sub-) culture with insufficient attention to personal, cultural, and social skills. In the field of development work the lack of ability to integrate self-awareness with sociocultural development has often resulted in unsatisfactory improvements and personal frustrations expressed as lack of mutual respect and consensus, distancing, burn-out, and sometimes destructive personal behaviors (such as excessive alcohol, risky sexual behavior, abusiveness).

Social development and humanitarian assistance work requires self-knowledge and awareness as well as knowledge of cultural and social development and technical skills in a given area. The integration of these spheres of development combined with a keener awareness of the dialectic between culture specificity and universality reduces "us and them" thinking and provides an opening to more egalitarian development and collaboration processes.

Bringing together people from different cultures who are involved in, or are going to be involved in, development work in this course provides the opportunity of bringing awareness to, and accepting, cultural differences and for learning methods of interacting and collaborating together. These skills are of utmost importance for current and future aid and development workers.

The course will provide the students opportunities to:

- integrate knowledge and skills in personal, social and cultural development based on equality and participatory approaches;
- increase their awareness of how individual backgrounds and beliefs affect interactions in culturally diverse settings;
- apply concepts of systemic dynamics;
- apply the knowledge in a culturally diverse classroom and field study setting;

- continuously build on the knowledge of personal and cultural dynamics acquired through the course programme and thereby to practise the skills they will need in their practice setting;
- deepen a process of personal and professional development;
- explore the characteristics of organizational structures: governmental/NGO/community.

The main approach used in this course is experiential and participatory learning. By 'experiential' we mean learning through direct involvement in personal, relational and interactive activities, and reflection on those activities, in a safe, respectful and engaging environment.

*"I hear and I forget. I see and I believe. I DO and I understand."*  
Kung Fu Tzu (Confucius)

The course comprises two interlinked components:

1. Experiential Approaches to Personal Development and Relational Dynamics
2. Participatory Approaches to Health and Sociocultural Development.

The course will be offered in two parts, August 6-17 2012 and March 11-22 2013 at the University of Alberta Conference Center in Edmonton, Canada. In the interim period, the participants will have the opportunity to explore a topic of personal relevance in terms of facilitating change and to receive feed-back. The course is co-facilitated by Dr. Jonathan Hooton, PhD. and Dr. Birgit Westphal Christensen, PhD. Together they have many years of experience in the fields of personal development, counseling, holistic healing, public health, nursing, cultural and social development in many different cultures in Africa (including 8 years in Mozambique), Asia, Europe, and North America. Facilitation will be done in English.

The course fee is 4,000 Canadian Dollars, including all facilitation and course materials, a welcome dinner, and community visits.

The main course content, methodology, and literature are summarized on the following pages. A description of accommodation available at the University of Alberta and a course registration form are also included.

## **Main Course Content, Methodology, and Literature:**

The sessions will integrate the two components of the course and include exploration, experimentation, and application of the following main themes, concepts and methods:

### **1. EXPERIENTIAL APPROACHES TO PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RELATIONAL DYNAMICS**

#### **Learning opportunities**

- **Developing whole-body awareness**
  - integrating mind, emotion and body intelligence.  
*Experiential exercises to facilitate whole-body awareness.*
  
- **Developing relational awareness and respect**
  - awareness of one's own and others' needs and limits.  
*Learning somatic awareness of personal and relational boundaries leading to respect for one's own and others' limits.*  
*Introduction to the experience and understanding of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.*
  
  - collaborating with people from different backgrounds and cultures.  
*Experiential explorations of, and reflections on, interactions with members of other cultures (national or organizational).*
  
  - expressing personal beliefs and spiritualities.  
*Reflecting on one's own spiritual beliefs and how they affect an ability to accept those of differing cultures and religions.*
  
- **Developing presence**

*The essential quality necessary for relationship is presence, the ability to be fully available to those we are interacting with. Presence can be learned through becoming aware of:*

  - our core self as a body or somatic experience;
  - interruptions to the flow of core energy, experienced as 'splitting off,' muscular tightening and armouring, and loss of aliveness;
  - loss of connection to core self and core values often revealed as over-extending oneself, burn-out, and as addictive behaviour such as workaholism, alcohol and drug addiction, and risky sexual practices;
  - intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and values.
  
- **Examining personal blind spots**
  - unconscious beliefs;  
*How do we discover our unconscious beliefs? What effect do they have on our effectiveness?*

- rejected personal qualities;  
*What we reject we repeat. How does this observation influence our presence?*
- prejudices.  
*Examining how personal prejudices effect the ability to engage and interact with a community or organization. How do prejudices exclude essential participants needed for effective solutions? How do we learn prejudices such as racism and gender prejudice?*
- **Exploring effects of cultural differences and interactions**
  - experiences of living in a different culture;
  - learning from a different culture;
  - acknowledging and accessing support systems;
  - attending to personal and family well-being;
  - handling of crises, burn out.
- **Applying principles for healthy functioning of systems**

*Living systems, particularly people and organizations, are composed of elements (people, plants, animals) that are in ever-changing relationships. A change in one element will affect all other elements. The following principles have been observed to facilitate the functioning of healthy human systems:*

  - inclusivity;
  - orders of precedence;
  - balance of give-and-take;
  - respect;
  - acknowledgement of what is actually happening.
- **Discriminating levels of conscience**
  - personal – binds individual to family and group;  
*Exploration of forces that bind an individual to different groups (family, work organization, community, nation) and that lead to internal conflicts of opposing belief systems and to moral dilemmas.*
  - systemic – seeks to balance exclusions and disorders;  
*Disruptive behaviours can be understood as evidence of a lack of balance and harmony in a system rather than as an individual's sole responsibility.*
  - non-duality – empowers, empathizes, includes.  
*Dualistic thinking separates and polarizes perception, most notably in instances of racial and gender prejudice. Such perceptions exclude, reduce compassion and foster power-over and power-under (perpetrator-victim) stances. Non-dualistic thinking and approaches include through being non-judgmental, encourage compassion, and allow for solutions and resolutions to emerge out of the context of the system rather than by applying linear thinking.*

- **Observing orders of helping**

- acknowledging limits of self and others;  
*Do we know our own physical, emotional and intellectual limits?*
- motivation for helping;  
*Are we helping because we have been asked or because we cannot deal with our own feelings? Helping can become taking.*
- recognizing parent-child dynamics in helping relationships;  
*Do we help out of a need to feel superior, from paternalistic feelings, which can foster a dynamic of disempowerment in those being 'helped'?*
- respecting the context in which help is offered;  
*Do we impose solutions from our own culture that ignore the culture and context of those being helped?*
- taking a non-judgmental stance;  
*Do we side with one party/group against another?*
- respecting the order of precedence in the system (community, organization, culture) being aided.  
*The helper, consultant, development worker is often the last to enter a community or system. Who came first in the system? Those who come first deserve respect and honouring for satisfactory solutions to be reached.*

- **Facilitating changes**

- debriefing personal experiences of studying/working in development;
- assessing readiness for change in self and workplace;
- students' assessment of the potential for, and methods of, influencing systems.

### **Processes**

- talking circles
- body-awareness, breath and boundary exercises
- 3-dimensional interactive representations and images
- group discussions
- reflective questions
- field observations and interactions

## 2. PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES TO HEALTH AND SOCIOCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

### Learning opportunities

- **Living and working in a foreign culture**

- working in integrity within foreign cultural norms and traditions, integrating cultural strengths, agenda setting, equality, participatory approaches

*Culture: Exploration of concepts, values, traditions, norms, language, artifacts. Discuss how we are carriers of a specific culture. What is the function of culture in today's world? What is the relationship between culture specificity and universality? Discuss concepts such as empathy, compassion, gender roles in universal and culture specific perspectives. How can culture specific practices inform universal knowledge and vice versa.*

*Integrity: Have the participants define/describe what working in integrity means to them and how they know that they are working/not working in integrity. Plenary exploration of cultural constructs that direct individual and group behaviors and the underlying values and beliefs.*

*Cases on development work in foreign cultures that challenge these cultural constructs and traditions. Plenary exploration of ways of finding a balance between adapting to a foreign culture and maintaining personal integrity. Discuss the beliefs inherent in and the significance of operational concepts such as cultural intelligence, cultural competency, culturally appropriateness, culture sensitivity, cultural barriers, cultural enablers, and cultural strengths.*

*Participation And Equality: The many (culture specific) meanings and use of participation and equality. What is the rationale for aiming at equality and participation in development assistance? How are these concepts applied and misapplied in development/community projects (discuss cases)? Why is agenda setting often exempt from the participatory approach in development – and with what consequences? What are possible other ways of setting the agenda at policy and practice levels?*

- differentiating government, informal, community, family structures and systems, including different world views, spirituality, complementary emic and etic knowledge and wisdom.

*Structures and systems: Explore the functions of different systems and structures and discuss the interaction between systems, individuals and communities. Analyze the typical structures and systems in developing countries, and discuss what world views (including values) these systems reflect, as well as various strategies and methods for change.*

*Knowledge and wisdom: What are (emic and etic) knowledge and wisdom? Status and use of different kinds of knowledge and wisdom in development policies and projects.*

*Spirituality: The practice of various universal and local expressions of spirituality and their influence on individual, family and community orientations to development policies and projects will be explored based on field observations and cases.*

- knowing and collaborating with healing and caring systems

*Healing and Caring Systems: Healing and caring systems in evolutionary, historical, and culture specific perspectives. Group exercise: What do healing and caring systems reflect? Integration of (knowledge from) traditional and 'modern' healing and caring systems. Field observations/cases, including home based care for chronic/AIDS patients, self-care among elderly, health promotion among refugees/immigrants, etc.*

- **Working in partnerships**

- understanding the effects of prejudices (racial, gender, etc.), structures, systems, roles on partnerships

*Partnerships: Exploring concepts and characteristics of partnership. Partnership models, structures, systems, roles. Discussion of coherence between equality, participation and partnership models based on cases.*

*Prejudices: Exploring experiences of prejudices among participants. Origins, types, manifestations, effects of prejudices. How do prejudices influence partnerships (exercises: gender prejudices and intimate relationships, racial/ethnocentric prejudices in work situations, prejudices against foreign development workers, etc.)*

- embracing equality and collaboration

*Examples of projects and methods that have managed to embrace equality and collaboration (case study analysis/field study).*

- promoting mutual learning and collaborative research

*Examples of joint teaching projects and participatory research studies (literature review, presentation of articles).*

- **Working for a foreign institution/organization**

- integrating into foreign cultural norms and priorities

*Reconciling personal and foreign (international) institutional/organizational cultural norms and priorities. Case study: World Bank, WHO, The Global Fund.*

- discriminating between facilitator/adviser and decision maker roles

*Characteristics of facilitator/adviser role and decision maker role.*

*Group discussion.*

*How to move between roles*

- dealing with mutual prejudices, corruption, accountability, conflicts of interest, obstruction, elitism, isolation, entitlement, corruption and other challenges

*What do the phenomena of mutual prejudices, corruption, lack of accountability, conflicts of interest, obstruction, elitism, isolation, entitlement express? What are the consequences for projects, countries, development assistance? How do development agency policies see and tackle these phenomena and what are the options facing the development worker?*

- **Working with development and humanitarian assistance**

- understanding historical context of development politics and assistance, changing ideologies, policies and strategies, discussing lessons learned from development assistance

*The history of development assistance, ideologies, policies and strategies. Identifying and discussing the lessons learned from development assistance.*

- analyzing current priorities in development assistance, new aid modalities, analyzing synergistic and conflicting paradigms in development and their consequences, discussing international policies and funding as instruments of power

*Review of the Paris Declaration and its evaluation. Concepts of alignment and harmonization. New aid management guidelines, budget support. Role of civil society and private sector. Case study analyzing synergistic and conflicting paradigms in development and their consequences, discussing international policies and funding as instruments of power. Scenarios for the future.*

## **Processes**

- case studies
- literature review
- group discussions
- consensus building exercises
- reflective questions
- role play
- field observations and interactions

## **Course Manual:**

A course manual, included in the course fee, will be provided to participants.

**Recommended List of Course Literature to be Obtained by Participants:**

- Chambers, R. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.).(2007). Ideas for Development. London & Sterling, Virginia: Earthscan. (pp. 268)
- Fechter, AM. & Hindman, H.(eds). ( 2011). Inside the Everyday Lives of Development Workers. The Challenges and Futures of Aidland. USA: Kumarian Pres. (pp. 224).
- Horn, KP. & Brick, R. (2009). Invisible Dynamics. Systemic Constellations in Organisations and in Business. Heidelberg: Carl-Auer Verlag. (pp. 205).
- Inglis, J.& Steele, M. (2005). Complexity Intelligence and Cultural Coaching: Navigating the Gap Between Our Societal Changes and Our Capacities. *Integral Review 1, 2005, pp35-45.*
- Mikkelsen, B. (2005). Methods for Development Work and Research. A New Guide for Practitioners. New Delhi: SAGE Publications. (pp. 373).
- Mosse, D. (2005). Cultivating Development. An Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice. London: Pluto Press. (pp. 315).
- Rist, G. (3<sup>rd</sup> English ed.).(2010). The History of Development. From Western Origins to Global Faith. London & New York: Zed Books. (pp. 288).
- Torbert, B. et al. (2004). Action Inquiry. The Secret of Timely and Transforming Leadership. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, Inc.(pp.248).

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## **AVAILABLE ACCOMMODATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA**

Details for booking accommodation will be made available on acceptance into the course.

### **Year Round Guest Accommodation**



Lister Centre offers 20 hotel style guest rooms on a year round basis. Guest rooms feature variety of room types: one queen or queen with sofa-bed or two double beds. Room Amenities: private washrooms, cable TV, telephones with free local calls, high speed internet access, clock radios, daily housekeeping service. Enjoy access to coin-operated laundry and vending/ice machines. We also offer one barrier free room for those guests requiring accessible accommodation. Nightly rates include overnight parking (for one vehicle) and continental breakfast. Our guest rooms are conveniently located in the same building as our Conference Centre meeting facilities, in a quiet and private area.

**NIGHTLY RATE** Single or double occupancy starting at \$119.00 per night plus applicable taxes

### **Schäffer Residence Summer Accommodation (Available May through August)**



Our newest residence offers single rooms with private washrooms, telephone service with free local calls high speed internet and work desk. Schäffer residence features common lounge with comfortable seating with cable television on each floor and large communal kitchens, coin-operated laundry service, and more. Certainly not your traditional university residence, and definitely a great value!.

**NIGHTLY RATE** Single rooms \$69.00 per night plus applicable taxes