

# KV13 Study Tour for DIPD Partners



**KV13** is the Danish acronym for **Municipal Elections 2013**. On Tuesday 19 November 2013, the Danes will be invited to participate in the election of 98 **municipal councils** and 5 **regional councils**. This is an exercise that takes place every four years on the third Tuesday of November, and it is an important dimension of **Danish democracy**. This year DIPD has decided to make KV13 an opportunity for **inspiration and learning** for some of our partners around the world.

## Background

We believe that there are elements of Danish local level democracy that could be used as an inspiration for political party cadres from political parties in young democracies struggling to find out how to build sustainable, well-functioning and democratic local branches. The purpose is not to duplicate what Denmark is doing, but rather to be inspired by the Danish example when it is considered relevant from the point of view of citizens in countries like Bhutan, Bolivia, Egypt, Ghana, Myanmar, Nepal, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In Denmark local level elections are seen as being very important, both from a democratic and a governance point of view. Democratically because it offers citizens an opportunity to focus on the communities they know best. And from a governance point of view because many of the taxes paid by citizens are managed at the local level for public schools, maintenance of roads, health facilities and much more.

Some partners are currently in a process of discussing and developing approaches to the local level. For those the seminar is an opportunity to strengthen this process. For others the participation can serve to inspire a future process of local level involvement, strengthen the dialogue and cooperation across party lines, and share experiences in a South to South perspective.

Participants will be invited for a two-day introductory seminar, where the key features of the Danish political system will be discussed; then participants will be hosted by a local branch of one of the eight political parties for two to three days to be able to observe both the campaigning, the voting and the counting of the votes; finally participants will gather for a seminar to prepare action plans for their own country and party.

## Objectives

The overall purpose of the project is to **strengthen the capacity** of partners in their work with **local level politics** based on the inspiration from the 'Danish way'. At the same time the presence of many parties and different country situations makes it possible to create a productive South-South environment.

The objectives of the **introductory seminar** are the following:

1. Provide the delegates with an introduction to the most important aspects of Danish local democracy, the history, the institutions, the processes, etc.
2. Explain what the most important issues (political and substantive) at stake in this election are and how the parties are positioned on these issues.
3. Present and explain how the Danish municipal and regional election system is organized and how members of councils are elected.

The objectives of the **local community programme** are the following:

1. To serve as a reality check and link between the introductory seminar and the lessons learned seminar.
2. To offer an opportunity to see how the electoral process and the Election Day is managed at the local community level in different parts of the country.
3. To experience how ordinary members and officials of the political parties engage with their constituencies.

The objectives of the **lessons learned seminar** are the following:

1. To reflect on the experiences and conclude on what the delegates consider to be the most important lessons learned.
2. To discuss how these lessons learned can be relevant in the very different local level political settings that the delegates are representing.
3. For each delegate to develop his/her own action plan with ideas to solve the problems and challenges that he/she has described before arrival.

## Participants

A total of close to **50 representatives** from both multi-party and party-to-party projects are expected to participate: Approximately **25 participants** from multi-party partners, representing Myanmar, Bhutan, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Nepal; and approximately **25 participants** from party partnerships, representing Ghana, Zambia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Egypt and Bolivia.

## Overall programme structure

The programme is organized into three sections – first an introductory democracy seminar; followed by observation of the election in local communities; and finally seminars to digest the observations made. To benefit optimally from the programme, participants will have to arrive in Copenhagen no later than 14 November in the evening. Departure can take place on 22 November at the earliest.



The following pages will present different parts of the programme in more detail. While we hope that no changes will be necessary, this cannot totally be ruled out of course!

**15-16 November:**

### **Seminar on 'Danish Democracy'**

During the two days of Friday and Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> November 2013, participants to KV13 from around the world will be given a basic introduction to the Danish political system (institutions and processes, formal and informal rules, etc.), of course with a focus on the system at municipal level.

Friday 15 November	
09:00-10:00	Welcome & Introductions [Henrik Bach Mortensen & Bjørn Førde]
10:00-12:00	<b>The Danish political system</b> [Robert Klemmensen]
12:00-13:00	Lunch
13:30-15:00	<b>The Danish political culture</b> [Poul Nielson]
16:00-18:00	<b>Visit to Local Government Denmark (LGDK)</b> [Holger Pyndt]
Saturday 16 November	
09:00-10:30	<b>The municipal elections in practice</b> [Ulrik Kjær]
10:30-12:00	<b>Representation of women at municipal level</b> [Elisabeth Møller Jensen]
12:00-13:30	Lunch
13:30-15:00	<b>The role of civil society in local level politics</b> [Jens La Cour]
15:00-16:30	<b>The nature of local level politics</b> [Christina Thorholm & Rolf]
16:30-17:30	Conclusions and expectations

The following offers a more detailed presentation of the purpose and contents of each of the modules of the two-day seminar.

#### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

**By Henrik Bach Mortensen and Bjørn Førde**

The Chairman of DIPD will welcome the participants to Denmark and explain why this way of 'using' the municipal and regional election situation has become an integrated part of the methodology being used by DIPD to work with political parties in its partner countries. The DIPD Director will present the overall programme.

***Henrik Bach Mortensen** is the Chairman of the Board of the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD). He is a member of The National Board of The Liberal Party (Venstre) and he is a co-founder of the political think-tank CEPOS.*

***Bjørn Førde** is the director of the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD). Before joining DIPD, he was Director of the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre. Previously he has been serving as the Resident Coordinator of the UN in Botswana.*

#### **THE DANISH POLITICAL SYSTEM**

**By Robert Klemmensen**

In many countries, politics at national and local level differ in many ways, and Denmark is no exception. To start out, it therefore seems to make sense to provide an overview of the Danish political system as a whole – including the history of how it evolved at both levels. The presentation will include elements like: the national multiparty system – major dominant parties as well

as smaller parties; particular parties participating in municipal elections, the concept of negative parliamentarianism; the electoral system and proportional representation; how parties are organized and funded, including rules and regulations of funding. It will not provide a detailed presentation of all the parties, but this will be covered by written material.

**Robert Klemmensen** is Professor at the Department of Political Science and Public Management, University of Southern Denmark. He is educated cand.scient.pol. from University of Copenhagen and has been working extensively within the fields of Comparative Politics and Political Psychology.

## IS THERE A SPECIAL DANISH POLITICAL CULTURE?

By Poul Nielson

In much of our work with partners, we often point to the ‘friendliness’ among politicians from opposing parties as a Danish characteristic, as well as the willingness and ability to involve minority parties in dialogue on important social legislation. Indeed, there is often a certain pride in mentioning our strong orientation towards consensus politics. But to what extent is all of this true – and special for Denmark? How closely is it linked with the broad agreement on key features of the ‘welfare state’? What particular events in Danish history have shaped the ‘special’ Danish political culture?

**Poul Nielson** is a Danish politician with an extensive career in Danish politics, where he represents the Danish Social Democrats (Socialdemokratiet). He is educated cand.scient.pol from University of Aarhus and is former Danish Minister for Development, Minister of Energy and EU Commissioner for Development. Besides being a member of several boards and councils he has also contributed to several books and publications.

## VISIT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT DENMARK (LGDK)

By Holger Pyndt

LGDK was founded in 1970 as a result of the first comprehensive local and regional reform in Denmark, when three LG associations merged into one, but its roots stem back into the 1860s. LGDK is an influential interest organisation with 375 full-time staff. It negotiates with the Ministry of Finance every year about local government financing and is involved in all key legislation impacting local authorities. The participants will learn about how the different political parties in the Board cooperate, how LGDK tries to influence central government decision-making, which services LGDK provides to its members, how LGDK is managed politically and administratively, how LGDK is organized nationally and locally, and how LGDK works at international levels.

**Holger Pyndt** has worked more than 30 years in LGDK and since 1990 he has managed LGDK’s international consultancy services. He has experience from work with more than 30 different countries, including East/Central Europe, Asia, Africa, and MENA. He has taught undergraduate students at the International Study Programme affiliated with the U. of Copenhagen.

## VISIT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT DENMARK (LGDK)

By Ulrik Kjær

Following the general political system presentation on the first day, the second day will start with a more detailed presentation of the system of municipal governance and elections. So while the election part is of course at the center of attention, it is also relevant to understand why the election is so important – the governance and management of tax resources that are important for the livelihoods of citizens in areas like health, education, sewage, water, etc. On the electoral part the following will be covered: how the elections are organized formally/legally; how the voting procedure is organized; how votes are counted and by whom; how local politicians relate to their local constituencies; how parties and local groups identify and decide on their list of candi-

dates; how the electoral campaign is funded; etc. – DIPD has developed a Guide on “Political parties at local level”, and this will be used as a reference book.

***Ulrik Kjær** is a Ph.D and Professor at Department of Political Science, University of Southern Denmark. He is an expert in local election and local government studies. He has written several books and given lectures on local elections and democracy.*

## REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AT MUNICIPAL LEVEL

**By Elisabeth Møller Jensen**

Denmark has received international recognition for the almost 40% representation of women in the Parliament, and this has been achieved without the use of quotas, which most of the political parties are against. It has also been noted that Denmark at the moment has a woman as Prime Minister, and that many of the appointed ministers are women, and indeed young women. At the municipal level the representation of women grew steadily until the 1990's, where it stagnated at 27 %. The 2009 election was a breakthrough to almost 32 %. Now it is essential to continue the progress.

***Elisabeth Møller Jensen** is the Director of KVINFO (the Danish Centre for Information on Gender, Equality and Diversity) since 1990. KVINFO consists of a research library, a Mentor Network and a large international department focusing on the Middle East and North Africa. Elisabeth Møller Jensen is an author and contributor to many articles and books. She holds an MA in Nordic Languages and Literature and an M.Phil. in Danish. For further information about KVINFO, visit [kvinfo.dk](http://kvinfo.dk).*

## THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN LOCAL LEVEL POLITICS

**By Jens La Cour**

Part of the ‘democratic culture’ that we talk about in DIPD is also about how the political parties that hold the political power in the national parliament and in the municipal councils relate to and cooperate and/or compete with the organizations in civil society that would like to influence decisions to be taken by parliaments and councils. This can broadly be talked about as the art of lobbying, with all the pros and cons and inherent dangers. But at the local level it can often play out somewhat differently, because the issues become understandable and accessible by the local communities. This is not to say that the issues necessarily will be more easily resolved, because there can be as much at stake locally as at national level. Using the example of the environment can illustrate the relationship between politics and civil society.

***Jens La Cour** represents The Danish Society for Nature Conservation where he works as a Campaign Director and Senior Policy Officer of the campaign ‘Climate Communities’. He is member of the Executive Committee (Management Board) at European Environmental Bureau and has previously worked as Head of Section in the Danish Ministry of the Environment. He holds a Master’s Degree in Political Science from University of Roskilde.*

## THE NATURE OF LOCAL LEVEL POLITICS

**By Christina Thorholm and Rolf Aagaard-Svendsen**

Following the presentation of the system as such by an academic and researcher, it makes sense to have a presentation of the ‘system’ as seen from the perspective of the people competing for influence: the politicians. Representatives from two different parties and two different municipalities will tell their stories/experiences, of how they decided to engage in local level politics (in the context of the recent discussion on how difficult it is to attract new candidates because of too much work and too low pay); what influence you have as a member of the council; how easy or difficult it can be to find common ground on key issues with other parties or groupings; why members of parties and groups jump ship from one party to another; how the parties at local level relate to the mother party at the national level; etc.



**Christina Thorholm** is a member of The Danish Social-Liberal Party (Radikale Venstre). She is a member of the City Council and an election candidate in the municipality of Hillerød. She is educated in the fields of economy and pedagogy and currently she is working with managing activities for adults with mental disabilities.

**Rolf Aagaard-Svendsen** is a member of The Conservative People's Party of Denmark (Det Konservative Folkeparti) and chair of International Committee. He is former mayor of the municipality of Lyngby-Taarbæk. He is member of several boards including the board of DIPD. He is educated as a civil engineer and is currently working as a senior advisor with democracy projects in various countries.

#### **Sunday 17 November:**

##### **A day off from work!**

For many of you, Sunday 17 November will be a day off from work. Considering that you have been travelling long distances and then participated in two days of intensive seminar presentations, we thought it would be useful to allow you to walk the streets of Copenhagen on your own for a day, and in so doing also observe how ordinary citizens pay attention (or not) to the many election-related messages surrounding you.

However, for some of you it might be necessary to travel on Sunday, to reach your host community destination in time to experience the frenzy of the last days of campaigning.

#### **Monday 18 and Tuesday 19 November:**

##### **Observing the campaigning and voting procedure**

On Monday 18 and Tuesday 19, you will be 'hosted' by members of the political parties in communities in or close to Copenhagen, or in some cases at some distance from Copenhagen. For some this will require travelling with trains in particular, and in a few cases maybe by air. But as you will find out, Denmark is a small country from a geographical point of view.

In a few cases '**hosting**' could actually mean what the term traditionally means: that you will be offered a place to sleep, meals, etc. But in most cases '**hosting**' will mean that you will be guided around the community, to visit candidates from various parties, observe a last minute discussion among candidates, meet with representatives from the parties who have been involved in the development of election strategy, and at the end observe the casting of votes, speak to the local media, etc. We also hope that many of you will be able to experience the celebration of the parties that turn out to be the winners!

This part of the program is the most difficult to plan, so we will only know the final organization of participants into groups when you all arrive.

#### **Wednesday 20 November:**

##### **Visiting "Folketinget" and Informal 'Get-Together'**

The day after the election is a hectic phase for the candidates who have won a seat in the municipal council. They will be negotiating the various coalitions that aspire to occupy the seat of Mayor for the next four years. Therefore it is difficult to get in touch with the successful candidates on this day.

We have therefore organized a tour of the Danish Parliament called "Folketinget" for you, starting at 13:45 in front of the Parliament. The tour will be guided by the two chairpersons of DIPD, **Mr. Jeppe Kofod** from the Social Democrats, and **Mr. Karsten Lauritzen** from the Liberal Party. Following the tour through the magnificent building, Jeppe and Karsten will take to respond to questions about the work of a Member of Parliament.

At 17:00 hours, we will meet another group of international guests visiting Denmark with the same objective as our group: to observe and to learn! They have been invited by the **Danida Fellowship Centre**, and they are here on a three week course – focusing much more on technical issues of both elections and decentralization. But we thought it could be interesting to bring the two groups together, and to share some initial reflections on what you have seen.

This ‘get-together’ will be very informal in nature, although there will be a brief talk about the local community centre where the meeting will take place, and we are also hoping to have a talk by one of the local candidates running for the Council of Copenhagen.

**Thursday 21 November:**

### Seminar on ‘Action Planning’

On the last day we will gather in what is called the “Black Diamond”, a beautiful building on the waterfront of downtown Copenhagen, which is the home of the Royal Danish Library. This is where we will have our final meetings and also the official farewell dinner. The details of the programme have not been finalized yet, and they will only be finalized after the first seminar, to learn from this. But the broad outline is the following:

09:00 – 11:00	<b>Conclusions from the KV13 election: winners and losers – and how is the health of local democracy in Denmark now?</b> Presentation and Q&A session with Professor Robert Klemmensen
11:00 – 12:00	<b>Reflections and observations of KV13: any inspiration?</b> By individuals or groups of delegates
12:00 – 13:00	<b>Buffet lunch</b> in the Atrium of the Black Diamond
13:00 – 15:00	<b>Drafting of action plans</b> Organized in country groups or country sub-groups
15:00 – 15:30	<b>Coffee/tea break</b>
15:30 – 17:00	<b>Presentations of draft action plans and Q&amp;A</b> Presented by each country delegation
17:00 – 17:30	<b>Official closing of the KV13 project</b> By the Chairman of DIPD, Henrik Bach Mortsen
17:30 ---	<b>Official farewell dinner</b> In the Søren Kirkegaard Restaurant of the Black Diamond

### Background information

A number of documents are available on the DIPD website. The most important are the following (they will also be part of the material participants will get upon arrival):

- **Experiences from KV13.** Articles published by the daily newspaper ‘Politiken’.
- **Danish political parties.** Compilation based on websites of the parties.
- **Women in municipal elections.** Articles collected by KVINFO.
- **Political Parties at Local Level.** A DIPD Guide. 2013.