# isfit 21 Cheating knowledge

# The Dialogue Ghoup

# What is the Dialogue Group?

The Dialogue Group is the part of the International Israel/Palestine, Sri Lanka, and the Balkans. The Student Festival in Trondheim (ISFiT) which serves to give a practical approach to peace building. Through the Dialogue Group, students from various focus areas come to Røros, Norway to participate in a dialogue seminar. The aim is to create an homelands. understanding of the various backgrounds and points of views, and to create friendships across ethnic, religious, cultural, political and geographical boundaries. Students meet as individuals on neutral ground to talk, engage, have fun, and to participate in dialogue exercises. In Røros, they gather at a cabin to participate in a 10 day long dialogue seminar. After the seminar they travel to Trondheim, where they participate in ISFiT. The topic for this year's festival will be Creating Knowledge, and with this theme ISFiT wants to make students more active and aware of their role in creating knowledge.

The Dialogue Group started in 1997, and it is an ongoing project under ISFiT. The project has its roots in a belief that students are the future leaders, and they are important catalysts for social change. Conflict resolution, dialogue, and reconciliation must take place at the grassroots level, as well as at the state level. Students have often proved to be the social force with the strongest determination for social changes, and can therefore play an important role in peace building within their communities.

Since 1997, the Dialogue Group has invited students from focus areas such as South Africa, Northern Ireland, Guatemala, Colombia, Kashmir,

Dialogue Group has led to similarly inspired dialogue seminars in Chechnya, Iran, Ethiopia, and Uganda. Here, previous dialogue participants have arranged the seminars for youths in their

The Dialogue Groups have gained praise from both participants and prominent peace actors. This includes the Crown Prince of Norway, Haakon Magnus, and the previous prime minister, Kjell Magne Bondevik, who both were present during the tenth anniversary of ISFiT in 2007.

# Who are the workers in the Dialogue Group?

The Dialogue Group is organized through a separate section within ISFiT. The Dialogue Group organizers consist of several positions: Head of Dialogue, Assistant Head of Dialogue, two Dialogue Coordinators, four Dialogue Facilitators, and more. This fall, the Dialogue organizers will undergo an extensive seminar and training program. In addition to learning from the dialogue organizers of previous ISFiT years, the Nansen Center for Peace (one of our partners) will organize seminars for us on topics such as dialogue, the role of the facilitator, mediation, and peace building.

The Dialogue Group utilizes the support system that ISFiT provides, and we collaborate with different groups within ISFiT, such as the marketing team, the recruitment team, and the financial management team.

# Why Dialogue?

In a conflict situation the level of communication between different ethnic, religious, cultural, and/ or political groups is often limited or virtually nonexistent. Dialogue serves as an avenue for people to meet as individuals and to go further than being representatives for one side or a specific cause. In dialogue, everybody gets the opportunity to tell their impressions of a conflict or a situation without being confronted with facts. Dialogue is a process and it is not about winning, everyone agreeing, or having to defend your point of view. Instead, it is about creating understanding and connections.

The Dialogue Group invites students from various sides and identities to a neutral platform where the participants can share their experiences and participate in dialogue. The participants' views of each other often change during the seminar

and once it is over. The participants get to know each other as individuals and fellow humans, thus breaking barriers that may have hindered this understanding in the past. Once these barriers are torn down, new relations and friendships are built through engagement, exercises, conversations, and social activities. The Dialogue Group wishes to highlight the strength, opportunities, and hope which lies among the youth.

Two examples have been included to illustrate the previous participants' experiences through dialogue. The first example is an Israeli participant in the Dialogue Group from 1997 refused to sleep in the same room as another Palestinian participant. By the end, this participant ended up leaving the seminar with a new friend - the Palestinian participant. The Israeli participant made the following comment:

"If Arafat and Netanyahu had participated in the Dialogue Groups it would not have been a conflict in the Middle East anymore"

Another participant from Rwanda had a similar experience during the Dialogue groups in 2011:

"Dialogue opened my mind. In my life it was my first time to talk about my personal experience. The amazing thing, is that after the dialogue, I felt reborn and something changed in me. It is like my brain and mind became lighter and that is the time that I started to think clearly without hatred that was eating for more than 15 years of my life"

# The Participants

The target groups for the Dialogue Group are students with different ethnic, religious, cultural, and/or political backgrounds. The participants will be chosen based on factors like their engagement in their local community, their wish for a better future and motivation for the dialogue seminar. We wish to have participants with different backgrounds and experiences. Back in 2019, the theme was in connection to the thematics of ISFiT 2019 (migration), and the focus areas were the Balkans, Colombia and Ukraine. This year's focus areas are Poland and Hungary, both countries currently countries.

The recruitment of participants will happen by utilizing contact networks in the different focus areas, spreading information about the seminar, and by ultimately encouraging students to apply. After this, organizers of the Dialogue Group usually travel there to conduct the interviews and to try to recruit new applications. This year is different due to the corona-virus and the globally and unpredictable situation, we will not plan for a trip. The Dialogue Group organizers will interview the applicants digitally due to corona. Through this process, we want to ensure that the participants divided by polarization, politics and conflicts have the right motivation for being participants, regarding identities. This year's theme is creating and that both they and their local communities knowledge, and we wish for the participants to will benefit the most possible out of the seminar. exchange experiences, opinions and constructive It is important to underline that all Dialogue thoughts regarding the development of the two participants will be financially supported for both travel, food and accommodation, throughout the Dialogue seminar and the ISFiT festival. This is so that an individual's financial situation may not hinder them from applying.

### The Goals

The goals of the seminar are to:

- Create trust, respect, constructive communication, and understanding between students from different sides of a conflict
- Give the students an opportunity to learn from and meet students with different point of views
- To promote dialogue as a significantly important tool for conflict resolution and reconciliation
- To create positive experiences through dialogue and to learn about other areas of the world
- To strengthen and support students in areas of conflict in their common work to promote peace and a better future in their local communities

### How will this be done?

For Dialogue Participants, ISFiT will be a 10 days-seminar. The participants will first meet in Oslo, where the main focus for the participants will be to get to know one another. Then, everybody will travel to Røros together and will participate in a ten-day seminar for dialogue. The seminar at Røros will make the participants familiar with dialogue as a tool for conflict management. Before dialogue about emotional issues around conflicts and difficulties can be established, it is important to create trust and mutual respect between participants. Through various communication exercises, roleplay, and games the participants and group leaders will explore the various conflicts, the consequences, and future opportunities.

Participants will develop a better understanding of the complexity of each other's situation, various worldviews and needs by sharing their experiences and their relationship to the ongoing difficulties. After the 10-day dialogue seminar, the students will then travel to Trondheim in order to partake in ISFiT. If the corona-situation is under control, the dialogue participants will be placed into workshops with specific themes, in which they will get to practice their skills learned in the Røros Seminar with the circa 130 other students participating in ISFiT. After the seminar, the dialogue participants will receive support and follow-up from the Dialogue Group, all building up towards the summer 2021, when the participants will use their competence to arrange a new dialogue seminar.

### Summary

The Dialogue Group is a section within the neglected; the Dialogue Group is working to create good relations and facilitate fruitful dialogues to take place between students from different sides in a conflict. The Dialogue Group wants to create across boundaries - nations, socioeconomic, geographical and on different spectrum of opinions. The Dialogue Group believes that students play an important role in creating social change. They are the leaders of tomorrow, and they can be key blaming others and/or creating barriers.

The students will meet for dialogue in Røros and Trondheim, both in Norway. There will be participants from each focus area: Poland and Hungary. The seminar will take place in Røros where participants will live together in a cabin and get the opportunity to get to know each other before the dialogue begins. Through exercises, role-playing, and games, the participants will gain a greater understanding of each other's situation and experiences of the conflicts.

After 10 days at Røros, the participants of the International Student Festival in Trondheim dialogue groups will travel to Trondheim to partake (ISFiT) which brings together students from in ISFiT. Here, they will meet the other students from different focus areas to participate in sessions of around the world. In Trondheim, the main goal dialogue in a neutral surrounding, with a desire—will be to partake in the ISFiT 2021 festival, which to contribute to peace in practice. In a conflicted includes workshops, seminars, plenary sessions, situation, communication across ethnic, religious, cultural events, and more. There will also be focus political, cultural or geographical lines can easily be on how they can use what they have learned to pursue projects and dialogue work within their home countries.

The Dialogue Groups is organized by eight volunteers, who are students in Trondheim, mutual respect, understanding, and friendship. Norway. Throughout the fall of 2021, these student volunteers will undergo a comprehensive training program instructed by some of the dialogue groups' partners, including the dialogue network at Nansen Peace Center. Time will also be used to get familiar with the focus areas being worked on. drivers for building a society where the community Participants are recruited via contact networks of and reconciliation are in focus, rather than simply ISFiT and the Dialogue Group. The Dialogue Group organizers will interview the applicants digitally due to corona, to ensure that participants have the proper motivations.