

# BRING DEMOCRACY SUPPORT BACK HOME!



PRESENTATION BY BJØRN FØRDE

WESTMINSTER FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY  
AND UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM CONFERENCE ON:  
DELIBERATING DEMOCRATISATION: EXAMINING CHANGE AND THE ROLE OF  
INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT  
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# SOME OF THE ISSUES



BJØRN FØRDE  
ENGAGING WITH DEMOCRACY GLOBALLY

## I WILL TOUCH UPON SOME OF THESE ISSUES:

- INSPIRATION AND BRANDING.
- FOUR DANISH INSPIRATIONS.
- NEPAL: OWNERSHIP, LEADERSHIP AND TRUST.
- BHUTAN: WOMEN OF THE HIMALAYAS.
- ZIMBABWE: IS THERE A LINE IN THE SAND?
- DOCUMENTING CHANGE.
- THE ALTERNATIVE?
- EVALUATIONS AND RESEARCH.
- BRING DEMOCRACY SUPPORT HOME!

# INSPIRATION AND BRANDING



- Neither export nor import of democracy, but possibly support to local efforts.
- The understanding was that we should do more than generic democracy.
- After all, we are supposed to know our own history, principles and institutions best.
- Part of the methodology has therefore been to present the key challenges to Danish democracy.
- We believed that our legitimacy was closely linked to our honesty about our own limitations.



# FOUR DANISH INSPIRATIONS



# NEPAL: OWNERSHIP & TRUST



- High-level representation - high-level commitment.
- Nomination from the top.
- Partnership and ownership formalized.
- Start small - get it right – using a consensus approach.
- No financial/commodity support – shared costs.
- Flexibility and quick turnaround.
- Sense and sensibilities.
- Trust towards DIPD.



# BHUTAN: IT IS 'BHUTAN FIRST'



- Building on successful official cooperation.
- Building on close personal relationships.
- Taking the time (lots of time) needed.
- Understanding the sensitivities involved.
- Accepting the Bhutanese system.

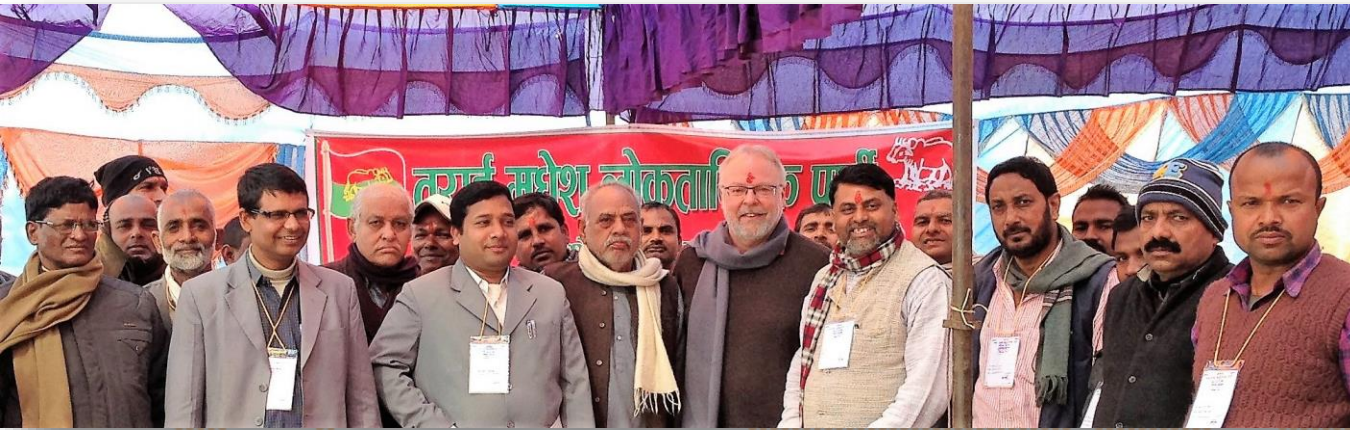
# ZIMBABWE: A LINE IN THE SAND?



- Personal involvement since 1970.
- Baseline study identifying the options.
- Partnership with a credible local institution.
- Sharing the risk with NIMD.
- Communication with top-level leadership.
- Who are friends and/or enemies?
- Linking up with Embassy, EU, UN.
- Are we being taken for a ride?



# DOCUMENTING CHANGE



- Nepal: Yesterday only men, today also women.
- Bhutan: From state-led and top-down to bottom-up.
- Zimbabwe: Different stories – different audiences.
- Long-term change – short-term reporting.
- Short-term funding – long-term requirements.
- Yes, change documented, but attributed to who?



# EVALUATIONS & RESEARCH



- When DIPD was set up by Parliament, academics argued against based on the 'evidence'.
- Staff at DIIS not particularly enthusiastic about working closely with the new institute.
- Review 2013, Youth Evaluation 2016, Review 2016, Myanmar evaluation 2016.
- Participating in CODE/Conflict and Democratization, a four year research project at Aarhus University.

# AN ALTERNATIVE?



- Photo shows party leader Uffe Elbæk from the new 'Alternative' party, at DIPD in June 2014, discussing with Maoist and Communist from Nepal.
- Today the Alternative has a partnership with a new party by Baburam Bhattarai, former Maoist PM.
- Great enthusiasm for the alternative approaches taken by the Danish party.



# BRING SUPPORT BACK HOME!



What I suggest DIPD and others should look into:

1. How to bring democracy support home.
2. How to understand the marketplace.
3. How to include civil society.
4. How to get the 'theory of change' right.
5. How to coordinate with our friends.