

Introduction to the Ilmenau Dialogue Center (IDC)



Dear dialoguer,

we are happy that you are interested in the dialogue methodology. In this document, we quickly want to highlight how we understand dialogue, our aims with organising and conducting dialogue sessions, the team and the ISWI e.V. association the project is based at, our future planned projects and how you can join in and contribute.

1. Dialogue Methodology
2. Team and ISWI e.V. Association
3. Aims of the Group
4. Future Projects
5. How can I Join in?

1. Dialogue Methodology

The Dialogue Methodology we seek to utilise has been pioneered at and employed by the Nansen Center for Peace and Dialogue. We learned about it first from Dr. Steinar Bryn during ISWI 2019.

Here is the definition of the Nansen Center for Peace and Dialogue (<http://www.peace.no/dialog/>): "Dialogue is a conversation based on humility, respect and openness which allows us to learn about each other. By learning about each other, unmanageable situations can become manageable. Dialogue enhances relationships in a community and strengthen the social fabric. Dialogue opens the door to peaceful co-existence."

2. Team and ISWI e.V. association

Currently, the Ilmenau Dialogue Center is based at the Initiative Solidarische Welt Ilmenau e.V. (ISWI e.V.) which is a student association that was founded to foster tolerance and mutual understanding. Its biggest project is the International Student Week in Ilmenau which is a biennially held student conference that gives a platform for about 350 students from all over the world to share their thoughts on the pressing issues of the time.
<https://en.iswi.org/>

The team of the Ilmenau Dialogue Center currently consists of mainly ISWI members. Through this project, ISWI e. V. seeks to inculcate dialogue as means for enhancing mutual understanding, conflict transformation and peacebuilding.
<https://en.iswi.org/projects/dialogue/>

3. Aims of the Group

1. To understand and apply dialogue as a tool for enhancing mutual understanding.
2. To build capacities to facilitate different forms of dialogue.
3. To organise and host regular dialogue sessions in Ilmenau.
4. To promote dialogue as a methodology for peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

4. Future Projects

Dialogue Programme in May 2021

At this stage, the dialogue group at ISWI e.V. aims at organising a dialogue programme in May 2021. It shall take place directly before the International Student Week in Ilmenau 2021 (ISWI 2021).

In two dialogue sessions, we hope to enhance mutual understanding and develop respect for varied perspectives between the participants on contentious topics and issues.

A more detailed description of the Dialogue Programme can be found in the appendix of this document.

Trainings and Seminars about the Dialogue Methodology

We have already conducted a training for facilitating dialogue sessions. It took place from 22 to 25 October 2020 in Ilmenau. We would like to conduct at least one further dialogue training in the first quarter of 2021, before the Dialogue Programme in May 2021.

5. How can I join in?

First of all, cool that you came down to this section. Of course we'd be happy to welcome you within the team. There are several possibilities within the project where you can become active yourself:

- Project Capacity (Facilitation | Research | Follow-Up)
- Funding
- Outreach (Social Media | Print Media | Press Work)
- Coordination (External Partners | Participants | Internal Communication | Team Coordination)
- Infrastructure (Rooms | Catering | Material | Transportation)
- Documentation

A more detailed description of the roles you can take over for the organisation can be found in the appendix of this document.

Appendix

Future Projects

Concept of the Dialogue Programme of ISWI 2021 21.05.2021 – 27.05.2021, Ilmenau

The **International Student Week in Ilmenau (ISWI) 2021** presents a platform for youth from across the globe to discuss pressing issues of our time, to gather wide-ranging perspectives, and to work together towards a peaceful and sustainable future. The conference will be held from 28th May to 6th June 2021 in Ilmenau, Germany and is organised by the Initiative Solidarische Welt Ilmenau e.V., a student-led NGO based on the campus of TU-Ilmenau.

The **Dialogue Programme at ISWI 2021** precedes the actual conference and will be held from 21st May to 27th May 2021 in Ilmenau. The programme seeks to enable an open and respectful conversation aimed at learning from one another [1]. The organisers hope to enhance mutual understanding and develop respect for varied perspectives between the participants on contentious topics and issues.

The Dialogue Programme includes two parallel dialogue sessions. Each dialogue session will be based on the overarching topic “climate change”. Participants themselves will decide on their interests within the field and own the conversation. Participants will include individuals who are directly or indirectly affected by the chosen topic and/or are involved in various capacities in the discourse surrounding the topic.

The organisers will fulfil the role of facilitators of the dialogue sessions entrusted with the duty to ensure a participant-driven dialogue that provides an opportunity for every participant to engage and contribute within a welcoming and open environment.

Accommodation and catering of all participants will be covered by the organisers. Travel expenses of the participants will be completely or partially covered.

How can I join in?

Project Capacity

Research: For conducting a dialogue session, it is essential to have a good and firm background knowledge on the topic. Hence, we want to research on the topics of the dialogue sessions we organise by reading literature, reports and talking to people being involved.

Facilitation: In a dialogue session, it is good to know tools of facilitation and to agree to some ground rules of dialogue. We therefore look for people who are interested in accompanying dialogue and who ideally took part in some trainings.

Follow-Up: Ideally, we want to continue the work with the selected topic and follow-up on the topic and participants. We hence can develop methods how to keep in touch with former participants and monitor the changes within the situation of the selected topic.

Funding

When organising a dialogue session or a dialogue training/seminar we are dependant on resources. Some we can get from the ISWI e.V. association. For some others we would need to gather funds.

This includes writing project descriptions, developing finance plans, taking care of the finances, researching and applying for funding.

Outreach

As we want to have an impact, we also want to set a positive light on the project – both online and offline. This includes press work with local print media or maybe also writing guest articles in magazines, as well as managing the social media platforms for the project. This can be a basis for reaching out to potential participants.

Coordination

Participants: Without people participating there will not be dialogue. This means that we – once the topic for the session is decided – want to outreach to potential participants who are connected to the topic. It is also important to keep contact and assist before and during their stay in Ilmenau.

External Partners: By now, we already have connected with local (such as IfMK at TU Ilmenau) and non-local partners (Nansen Center for Peace and Dialogue (NCPD), Organising Team of International Student Festival in Trondheim (ISFiT)). These help us with organising the project and we can ask for advice and their personal views for evaluating and improving our organisation process. We are also happy to share current proceedings on the ongoing planning status and want to stay in touch for exchanging thoughts and ideas.

Internal Communication/Team Coordination: This includes follow-up on meetings, sending e-mails to the team, coordinating tasks and taking care that the whole process of organisation is running smoothly.

Infrastructure

Rooms: For trainings, workshops and dialogue sessions we would need to search for and book acceptable rooms. This also includes accomodation for the participants. Ideally, these rooms fulfill several criteria we would need to discuss.

Catering: It is important that participants, facilitators and organisers feel well. In order to create this feeling, a good supply with food and drinks is helpful. We might want to consider different diet wishes and neceseties.

Material: We would need some items and material for successfully conducting dialogue sessions and trainings. One has to organise it and buy it in accordance with the finance team.

Transportation: Especially when conducting dialogue sessions distant from public transport, a team taking care of mobility of persons and goods is needed. Vehicles need to be booked and conducted.

Documentation

When we want to evaluate our project, it helps to document most of the proceedings. By this, follow-up can be improved and upcoming dialogue sessions and further projects can benefit from it.