UNIVERSITY OF AGDER

Global Future and Local Impact

Effects of NHO Agder's talent mobilzation pilot program

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Abstract

This dissertation is undertaken as the final requirement of the Master of Management degree at the University of Agder. The topic is the Global Future talent mobilization pilot program which was launched in 2007 with the goals of qualifying highly educated immigrants for management and board positions as well as contributing to growth in the Agder region. The central research questions are: What impact has Global Future had on the work life of participants two years later? How can the experiences of participants and stakeholders be used to further develop and improve the Global Future program in order to address integration and full utilization of labor resources in Agder? Is empowerment of the individual sufficient to achieve the goals of integration and full utilization of labor resources?

Global Future is viewed in a cultural perspective with focus on identity development, acculturation, role-modeling, mentoring and networking. The literature selection reflects this focus, drawing heavily on the work of Gert Hofstede (2001) in the area of culture and organizations and Bhagat and London (1999) in identity development and acculturation. The qualitative research design is cross-sectional, involving interviews, secondary analysis, thematic analysis and narrative analysis. Global Future participants, program designers from NHO, and human resource managers at two prominent companies, Agder Energi and Aker Solutions, have been interviewed, and this data makes up the greatest part of the research. The participants' experiences and insights are presented as cases grouped by their employment status when they started the program (unemployed, underemployed, or successful). The most important findings are in the areas of role-modeling, mentoring, identity, career ambition and employability and obstacles and attitudes. The findings show that the program has had the greatest impact on the underemployed group, substantial impact on the unemployed group and virtually no impact on the successful group. Participants in the underemployed group experienced the greatest impact on their personal development and identity, and this seems also to have impacted their careers, albeit indirectly. The least successful elements of the program proved to be mentoring, networking and ties to private enterprise. Participant insights and recent studies on mentoring and networking form the basis for suggestions for developing and improving the Global Future program to better address integration and full utilization of labor resources in the region. Empowerment of the individual is a step

toward integration and full labor resources, but it is not adequate alone. In addition, employers must understand the obstacles immigrants meet when applying for employment in terms of language and formal qualifications, and create workplaces characterized by cultural tolerance and inclusion.

Foreword

Success is in many ways about belief in oneself. I find that it is much easier to believe in yourself if other people believe in you. So, I would like to thank these people who believe in me, and believe in others like me:

To the participants of Global Future who allowed me to interview them: Thank you for your candor. I would have nothing to report without your honesty.

To Siri Mathiesen, Helen Stie and Nils Thorsrud of NHO: Your belief in immigrants is at the foundation of Global Future. Thank you for your support. Although what follows is sometimes critical, I hope that it will be a positive contribution to NHO's further development of Global Future and programs like it.

To my advisor, Torunn Skåltveit Olsen, and lecturers Ivar Amundsen, Atle Svendal and Inge Bergdal at UiA: Thank you for your inspiration and encouragement. I have learned a lot.

To my boss, Svein Arild Pedersen: Thank you for always believing in me, for encouraging me to take this Master degree, and for allowing me the flexibility to complete it. You are a true mentor and an exemplary leader, and I am lucky and grateful.

To my husband Reidar and children, Erik and Nora: Thank you for putting up with fast food frequently over the last three years. There will soon be a return to nutritious meals and family outings. I have missed you.

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1 Introduction and research question

1.1 Introduction

Norway is currently facing great challenges in terms of integration of immigrants. In 2008, Norway received more immigrants in a single year than ever before, a culmination of 40 years of immigration which has resulted in a significant part of the current population having an immigrant background (Brekke et al., 2010). At the same time, Norwegian attitudes toward immigrants have become more critical, with 4% less of the population responding that immigrants make a useful contribution to Norwegian society than the previous year (Blom, 2009). Changes in immigration policy (Immigration Laws of 2001 and 2010) and increased globalization ensure that labor immigration will only increase in the foreseeable future (Brekke et al., 2010).

According to Statistics Norway, employment for immigrants is greatly affected by the length of residence in the country. There is a positive threshold at 4 years and another leap at 10 years, due in part to the time it takes to learn the Norwegian language and to re-qualify for employment (NOU 2010:7). In 2002, the federal government approved the "Introduction law" which established a two-year program for certain groups of immigrants to learn Norwegian and receive work experience while receiving a salary. Prior to this, immigrants from these groups received welfare payments and hence limited support in moving toward financial independence (Brekke et al., 2010). Attention was on bare minimum employment rather than on maximizing potential.

Several factors came together in 2006 to set the stage for the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO) to launch the Global Future talent mobilization program in 2007. Norway had been suffering from a prolonged shortage of skilled labor, Female Future[1] had been a great success, a new Inclusion to Work Life agreement (*IA avtale*) had been signed and globalization was on everybody's lips. The underlying concept of Global Future was to change attitudes by vaulting well-educated immigrants into leadership positions, onto boards and into the political arena. The level of ambition was much higher

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1   Female Future is an NHO initiative designed to train women for board membership. It was created in 2004 after a law reform required 40% female representation on the boards of publicly owned (ASA) companies.

than for the introduction program, as were the requirements for participation. The Global Future strategy was two-fold: the immigrants themselves would be empowered and inspire those that come after them by being role models, and employers would begin to see immigrants as resourceful people. According to NHO, rather than focusing diversity management initiatives within companies and organizations, individuals would transform companies from the inside out (interview with NHO Agder director Siri Mathiesen, 2010).

The Global Future pilot was an 18-month leadership development program with the goal of increasing the participation of immigrants on boards and in leadership positions in Agder. It would ride on the success of Female Future, the program on which it was based. The main components of the program were mentoring, role-modeling, network-building, Norwegian cultural competence, Board Member training and Health, Environment and Security certification. Thirty-seven immigrants were selected for the pilot program, which was completed in December 2008. An evaluation of the program was made the following spring, and positive results have lead to the launch of the program nationally. Ten NHO chapters in Norway began their own Global Future programs in the autumn of 2010.

Almost two years after the completion of the pilot, the participants have had more time and distance to reflect upon the program and how it has changed their lives in Norway. I am one of those participants, and as such believe I have a unique opportunity to delve beneath the surface of the evaluation of 2009 and reveal the deeper consequences, benefits and potential points of improvement of the program.

1.2 Research question

Global Future grew out of the success of Female Future, a national leadership development program catalyzed by the legislative decision to require 40% representation of women on the boards of publicly owned companies. Global Future would target another underrepresented population: immigrants. The pilot program was launched in 2007 and was initiated, designed and run by NHO Agder. Shortly after completion of the program, an evaluation was made and the program was declared a great success (Karlsen, 2009).

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Minister of Trade and Industry, Trond Giske, praised the program, saying "This is really converting ideas into action and is one of the most successful projects in integration that I have seen." (www.nho.no, 2010, my translation.) In 2010, the Ministry gave 1 million NOK to NHO to develop Global Future on a national scale. Ten regions in Norway subsequently launched their own Global Future programs based on NHO Agder's design. Global Future is a unique program which takes a radical departure from traditional forms of integration initiatives. This thesis takes a closer look at the success factors of Global Future as well as its weak points.

My research question is:

What impact has Global Future had on the work life of participants two years later?

Two questions which follow from this are:

How can the experiences of participants and stakeholders be used to further develop and improve the Global Future program in order to address integration and full utilization of labor resources in Agder?

Is empowerment of the individual sufficient to achieve the goals of integration and full utilization of labor resources?

In-depth interviews with participants and stakeholders provide valuable insight into the program itself and a glimpse into immigrants' career development in Norway. There is great focus on mentoring, role-modeling, and network-building. These are three themes that were highlighted continuously throughout the program. I also believe that these three elements could not have been amply evaluated in 2009 because each of these aspects requires time in order to see evolution. The aforementioned components of Norwegian cultural competence, Board Member training and Health, Environment and Security certification will only briefly be touched upon for three reasons: they were thoroughly evaluated in 2009, there is consensus as to the value of these components, and they remain a part of the GF2 program with only slight alterations. In addition, identity and culture have emerged as crucial elements for understanding the impact of the program.

Primary data collection is through semi-structured in-depth interviews with mentoring, role-modeling and network-building in focus. Ample time for free expression during the interviews resulted in the emergence of several recurring themes, the most important of which are identity, ambition, and

attitudes and obstacles. The participants tell compelling stories of personal development. There is a clear distinction in program impact that seems to be associated with the degree of success that they had achieved before entering the program.

In order to get an impression of how well Global Future is meeting the challenge of full labor resource utilization, I compare employers' perceptions with those of the participants and NHO. Karlsen's (2009) evaluation is an important source of data that will be brought into the discussion. Other studies on mentoring, role-modeling and networking support suggestions for improvement of the program.

Global Future must be seen in the context of immigration and integration in Norway, so a constructionist perspective involving culture, values and identity is applied to analyze the data. I draw heavily on the work of Geert Hofstede (2001) and Bhagat and London (1999) in order to understand and interpret the collected data.

Integration and full utilization of labor resources are major challenges for Norwegian society. Global Future can make a significant contribution to these challenges, and it is therefore important to take a critical look at the program.

2 Background

2.1 The Vision

The seeds of Global Future were sown more than 20 years ago while Siri Mathiesen, now leader of NHO Agder, was a caseworker at the Norwegian Ministry of Immigration. At this time, in 1986, Norway's small immigrant population was made up almost entirely of asylum-seekers, predominantly from Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Chile (Brekke et al., 2010). "There was practically a stop on immigration," says Mathiesen. "The immigration offices were about control, not about integration. We turned them into clients from day one. Immigrants were looked upon as severely in need of help. We never asked: Who are they? What do they want? What can they do? There were very many resourceful people."

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Immigrants in Norway had been "treated" to the support provided by the welfare state, benefiting financially from programs administered by various public offices without having to meet any demands from society, she explains. Mathiesen describes this as a "clientization" of immigrants. With many years experience working with immigrants and asylum seekers, her view was that it is better to focus on the resource represented in this population. She tried to affect the situation of immigrants as a case worker in the public sector, as a politician and through work with Amnesty International, but without success. She recalls a turning point in Norwegian immigrant policy when the "Introduction program" was made into law in 2004. A similar program, called "New chance" was established one year later to offer the introduction program to immigrants who had been in Norway for many years but still had not found long-term employment. The situation leading up until this point is described in the first section of the proposition for the Introduction program:

"What characterizes a newly arrived immigrant's situation today is the relatively long period of inactivity after settlement in the municipality. Few enter the labor market quickly, and there is often a lack of a continuous, planned, goal-oriented and coordinated effort with the intention of giving the newly arrived immigrant a basic foundation in Norwegian language and society. This situation is reinforced by the fact that social aid appears to be the only major source of income for newly arrived immigrants. This leads to an unwanted track for many newly arrived immigrants. Socialization of new arrivals is to too large a degree concentrated on proving need in terms of social aid. Over a long period of time, this can result in long-term dependency upon public services and consequently a passive existence for the individual. In turn, this causes stigmatization for this group in society and hinders active participation in society from their side." (Ot. prp. nr. 28, 2002-2003, my translation)

The change in policy and paradigm follows:

"The government believes that the natural point of departure is that it is first and foremost the newly arrived immigrants themselves who are responsible for participating actively in society. Society for its part must facilitate this so that it is actually possible. The municipality has main responsibility for the introduction of the newly arrived immigrant into society. The federal government, for its part, will grant the municipalities the necessary tools for this work, that assure motivation and active participation in the transition to an active work life. An arrangement whereby active participation in an individually designed introduction program results in the right to corresponding payment of financial support as compensation for participation, will provide the necessary signal effect from society." (Ot. prp. nr. 28, 2002-2003, my translation)

Statistics from 2009 show that only 25% of participants entered employment upon completion of the introduction program (NOU 2010:7). According to Mathiesen, the introduction program gave immigrants new hope, and expectations that when they had completed the program, a door would be open, and they would find employment in Norway. Posters advertising the intro program present Norwegian language as "the key to Norway."

"But the door still didn't open," recalls Mathiesen. "Their name was wrong, skin color was wrong, everything was still wrong."

She says she believed that Norwegian society was not taking the problem seriously, and was at fault for not making clear enough demands on immigrants. "We only do this toward people who we see as equivalent to us," she says. She says she noticed that there were no visible role models, leadership or board representation from the immigrant population, and that good human resources were going to waste. "So my dream began - the dream of thinking in a totally new way, meeting them as equals, as resourceful people," she says.

This was a radical departure from the status quo. It was not until after completing the Female Future program herself (as a participant in 2004) that she had the opportunity to begin to realize this dream. In 2005, she was offered the position of leader of NHO Agder. At that time, she needed a reason to take on that responsibility and position of power, and Global Future became that reason, she says. "I wanted to change the attitude in Norway," she says, "and let Norway become a part of the global society, and see value in human dignity."

Even as leader of NHO Agder, Mathiesen did not manage to convince the national office of NHO to invest in her Global Future idea. Her co-worker at NHO Agder, Adviser Nils Thorsrud explains that she had trouble articulating the idea and selling it in 2005, and that it took some time for the idea to mature. However, the success of Female Future, talk of globalization, a labor shortage in Agder and the signing of a new Inclusion in Work Life agreement (*IA avtalen*) began to conspire to set the stage for a pilot program in Agder. The Inclusion in Work Life agreement was a key factor in establishing a broad partnership for Global Future in Agder.

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2.2 Inclusion in Work Life agreement

According to the program documents, the main goals of Global Future were to

> "qualify foreign workers for management positions and seats on boards of directors which result in growth and long-term value creation. The program will also contribute to fulfillment of the intentions stated in Norway's Inclusion in Work life agreement (*IA avtalen*)" (GF program documents, 2006).

The first Inclusion in Work life agreement was signed in 2001 by the Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion and the employer organizations NHO, HSH (Federation of Norwegian Commercial and Service Enterprises), KS (Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities), NAVO (Norwegian employers' association for enterprises affiliated with the public sector) and the State as employer represented by the Minister of Government Administration and Reform, and the employee organizations LO (Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions), Unio (Confederation of Unions for Professionals, Norway), YS (Confederation of Vocational Unions) and Akademikerne (Federation of Norwegian Professional Associations). It focused on people who were already part of the work force and the intention was to keep people in paid employment rather than on public subsidies. The main purpose was to lower absence due to sickness and retain older employees (rather than lose them to early retirement). The agreement was extended in 2003 and evaluated in 2005, resulting in a new agreement in 2006, and a subsequent revision and renewal in 2010. The current agreement is valid until 2013.

The agreement that was signed in 2005 and went into effect in 2006 differed from the original agreement in its emphasis on including groups which had previously not had success entering the labor market. The agreement had the following intentions:

> "achieving a more inclusive working life for the benefit of the individual employee, workplace and society at large, reduction of sick leave and disability pensions, and developing and utilising the individual's resources and working capacity through active work." (*IA avtale*, 2006)

While the original agreement primarily focused on reducing sick leave and increasing retention of

people who were already employed, the new agreement focused also on inclusion and recruitment of people who had not yet entered the labor market.

> "The IA Agreement is to help more people enter the workforce through appropriate organisation of the policy instruments and increased use of ordinary working life to provide training, experience and qualifications that are adapted to fill the needs of working life." (*IA avtale*, 2006)

The agreement obligates the parties to: work to achieve a good and targeted working environment, focus on goal- oriented tolerance and diversity, and work to raise consciousness in connection with hiring to prevent discrimination on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity or functional ability (*IA avtale*, 2006). The timing could not have been better for Global Future.

NHO Agder went directly to potential partners in the public sector and offered them a package that they could buy into in order to meet the requirements of the IA agreement. "NHO became the alibi for many partners," Thorsrud says.

Adecco, Agderrådet, Arendal municipality, Aust-Agder County Council, Cultiva, IMDI, Innovation Norway, KS, Kristiansand municipality, NAV, University of Agder and Vest-Agder County Council joined the partnership and provided the funding to launch the pilot program.

Other than Adecco, which is the recruitment firm that screened and interviewed the applicants, private sector companies were not asked to join as partners. NHO took responsibility for representing private enterprise, inviting companies to participate in gatherings and the mentor program, but not asking them for financial support (interview with Thorsrud, 2010).

2.3 The program

Global Future drew upon the success of Female Future, but already at the out-set the program developers were aware of the differences in the target groups. Changes were made to the Female Future format in order to tailor it to the needs of immigrants.

The program consisted of twelve two-day sessions, one study trip and three social events. The content of the program follows (from the program documents, 2006):

1. Leadership development with a mentoring program
2. Board of Directors training course – BI examination - 6 ECTS credits
3. Management skills
4. Occupational health and safety law - HMS certification (Health, Environment and Security in the workplace)
5. Story telling (conveying personal stories)
6. Presentation techniques /media training
7. Coaching
8. Relation management / change management
9. Culture and knowledge dissemination
10. Visibility and meeting places - the participants as hosts

The program was delivered by guest lecturers from the University of Agder, Norway's School of Management (BI), NHO and various guest speakers. The Global Future 2 programs have retained most of the content of the pilot, but each regional NHO office has been able to adapt the program to their region. In Agder, the 18-month program has been compressed to 12 months, and alterations have been made in program delivery and sequence. I will return to this toward the end of this dissertation.

3 Theory

When the research design is cross-sectional, and the research strategy qualitative, inductive theory tends to be the approach used (Bryman, 2008). Through the process of researching Global Future and interviewing participants, unexpected themes emerged and prompted a review of literature to support and explain the findings. Culture and identity played a more significant role than, for example, program evaluation and diversity management. My choice of literature reflects this.

3.1 Culture

A program such as Global Future must be viewed in terms of culture. It is precisely the cultural context which has created the conditions for the development of the program. I have chosen the work of Geert Hofstede to view culture in a constructionist approach, meaning that culture will be seen as an "emergent reality in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction" (Bryman, 2008, 20). Constructionism views culture not as an external element that constrains people, but as a social reality affected by people involved in social relations (Bryman, 2008).

Hofstede (2001) sees social reality as a construct - something that people define into existence in order to make better sense of the world around them. Social scientists make models in order to understand social reality, and these models are also affected by the scientist's subjective view of reality, which Hofstede (2001) refers to as his "mental programming." Mental programming occurs on three levels: universal (mostly inherited, and common to all humans - the characteristics that set the species apart from other animals), individual (partially inherited, unique to the individual) and collective (mostly learned, programming common to people in some groups, but not in others). Culture falls into the collective category, the mental programming of which can be passed down from generation to generation (Hofstede, 2001).

To put it in simpler terms, a social scientist from Norway will approach an explanation of social reality from the perspective of his own individual life experience, as a human having grown up in Norway in the Norwegian culture. A social scientist's mental programming is the lens through which he conducts his research, and this necessarily has an effect upon the result (Hofstede, 2001). Of course, this lens is not particular to social scientists. Everyone has a mental program and a cultural lens through which they view the world.

Hofstede (2001) also considers values to be an important construct for describing mental programming. Unlike culture (a collective construct), values can be held individually, as well as collectively. When a value is held collectively by a majority, it can be said to be the "desired norm." Norms in society again lead to the development and maintenance of family, educational, political and legislative systems and

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institutions which then perpetuate the norms. An immigrant has to be able to understand and adapt to the norms of the society in order to cope. In "Culture's Consequences," Hofstede defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another." (2001:9)

Hofstede (2001) bases culture on "mental programs" - the values that one learns at a young age, first from family, then in schools, and then again confirmed by the rest of society. Value systems are generally set by age 10, and are therefore difficult to change. However, reprogramming of these value systems are an essential part of successful integration into a new culture (op. cit.).

Hofstede (2001) identifies what he calls the five major cultural dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, and long-term versus short-term orientation. These findings are based upon his research of IBM employees in 40 different countries and a comparison of their cultural values. Each country has received a score on each of the dimensions, which represent differences in values and behavior across societies (op. cit.).

Hofstede's (2001) power dimensions can be applied to analyze and explain differences in values and, subsequently, behavior between different societies, and this has been done extensively since the first publication of "Culture's Consequences." However, the country dimension scores represent an average across societies (when large numbers of individuals in the society are surveyed), and not the behaviors and values of individuals (op. cit.). Though it is very tempting, I will not apply these scores to the participants involved in my interviews and draw conclusions based on the differences in dimensions between their home countries and host country, Norway. I see the participants as individuals, not stereotypes. Instead, I will draw upon the subsequent work of Gert Hofstede, his son Gert Jan Hofstede and Michael Minkov in "Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind" (Hofstede et al., 2010). The implications of the power dimensions as described here are highly relevant to an analysis of Global Future. The main themes I will use in my analysis are identity, acculturation and mental models. In addition, I will draw upon the studies presented in "Global Perspectives on Mentoring" by Kochan and Pascarelli (2003) to look at how mentoring, role-modeling and networking can be used in multicultural settings.

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3.2 Identity

Hofstede (2001) asserts that identity is connected to a sense of belonging and, unlike culture, is not linked to values. Identity is primarily an individual trait, but it is also possible for a group to have a shared identity. This necessitates a shared "other." In the Global Future context, identity can be looked upon from several possible angles, both individual and shared. Global Future 1 consisted of participants from 22 different countries. Here, there is potential for several different "others." (The Russian participants may consider the Iranians to be "others," the Americans to be "others" or even any non-Russians to be "others.") Alternatively, Global Future participants can identify with each other as "immigrants" and define the Norwegian majority as "the other." In the larger context of employment in Norway, another important shared identity emerges. Norwegians may feel a strong Norwegian identity in the workplace, and immigrants risk being considered the "other" by the majority population.

In "Diversity at Work," Polzer and Caruso (2008) present identity negotiation as a lens for examining social interaction in diverse settings. Identity negotiation describes the interplay of the self-views of targets and the appraisals of perceivers in terms of establishing congruence in order to work together. Self-views are defined as cognitions individuals have about themselves, and appraisals are defined as cognitions individuals have about others. Polzer and Caruso (2008) propose that individuals constantly engage in the process of identity negotiation, but that the process is more crucial in more diverse environments. Identity negotiation is said to "buttress an individual's sense of stability and coherence in the world through self-verification - the individual's experience of having his or her self-view affirmed by other people's appraisals" (2008:92).

In short, identity negotiation helps people make sense of the individuals and the world around them and enable diverse individuals to work together. Through identity negotiation, congruence can be established, and high congruence appears to be desirable for effective work in teams and the accomplishment of collective goals, even more so when the teams consist of people with diverse backgrounds. Conversely, incongruence may lead to conflict or avoidance of the individual whose identity has not been successfully negotiated (Polzer and Caruso, 2008). The Global Future program

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itself is a diverse setting which involves extensive identity negotiation for the participants, but a different type of identity negotiation than that which the participants would encounter in a natural work environment.

Changes in a person's career role are often also accompanied by a change in professional identity (Ibarra, 1999). Professional identity is defined by Ibarra as "the relatively stable and enduring constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role" (1999:1). Ibarra's research suggests that individuals "try on" different personas, often those of role models or mentors, as they move up in their careers, thereby adjusting their own identities to their new role. They may imitate their superiors, or pick certain aspects of several role models and incorporate them into their own persona in order to alter their professional identity (op. cit.). Ibarra calls this "provisional identity" and proposes that this still needs to be refined and internalized in order to develop into a new, coherent professional identity.

Dobrow and Higgins (2005) build upon Ibarra's theory, suggesting that the development of new professional identities is linked to developmental networks. The findings of their longitudinal study of MBA students five-years after graduation suggest that it is essential to develop self-knowledge or identity awareness and adaptability in order to fulfill their career potential (Dobrow and Higgins, 2005). These findings can be used to illuminate the the development of identity as well as the significance of networks for the participants.

3.3 Acculturation

Acculturation is the process whereby a foreigner adjusts to his new environment,and is often preceded by culture shock (Hoftstede et al., 2010). Culture shock is what foreigners experience when they bring their basic values, acquired early in life, into a new cultural environment and then meet new values in the new culture. The process of moving from one culture to another generally follows an "acculturation curve" which begins with euphoria, followed by culture shock, acculturation and finally the establishment of a stable state.

"Phase 4 is the stable state of mind eventually reached. It may remain negative compared with home (4a) - for example if the visitor continues to feel alienated and discriminated against. It may be just as good as before (4b), in which case the visitor can be considered to be bi-culturally adapted, or it may even be better (4c). " (Hofstede et al., 2010:385)

At the same time, there are standard ways in which inhabitants of host countries adapt to foreigners which includes a cycle of curiosity (similar to euphoria for the foreigner), ethnocentrism and polycentrism. Ethnocentrism is the evaluation of foreigners against the value system of the host system (where the host system is considered to be the correct system) and polycentrism is the acceptance that other standards are also acceptable. Polycentrism will only be achieved if the hosts are repeatedly and regularly exposed to foreigners (op. cit.).

Bhagat and London (1999) examine acculturation and its effects on immigrants' careers, taking into account demand stresses, opportunity stresses and constraint stresses that immigrants are likely to experience when adopting to their new country. They conclude that acculturation stress is a "major determinant of immigrants' career outcomes" and that it is relevant for success, satisfaction, self-esteem and commitment to their career (1999:358). Demand stress refers to conflict with the cultural values of the new society, dealing with stereotyping and ethnocentrism, and the politics of career-management issues. They find management issues to be a significant source of demand stress and emphasize the importance of learning the norms in the new country. "In order to succeed in Western organizations, one has to learn the political norms and social influence mechanisms of the larger society. Immigrants are often handicapped in this respect" (1999:356).

Opportunity stress refers to the opportunities to achieve that are most often seen in the case of immigrants coming from countries where they lacked this opportunity to a host environment that affords them a fair and equal opportunity for reward. Opportunity can also be a stress because, although the potential to achieve exists, it is not always so easy to accomplish (Bhagat and London, 1999).

Constraining stress refers to the minor daily challenges, such as communication problems, that immigrants meet trying to blend with the new culture while maintaining ties to the old (op. cit.). Global Future participants have all encountered these stresses to varying degrees, and the program itself can

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play a role in reducing these types of stress.

3.4 Mental models

Argyris (1999) has developed the concepts of single-loop learning, double-loop learning, espoused theories and theories-in-use in order to explain how individuals, and individuals in organizations, learn. To briefly explain, single-loop learning is learning that occurs "whenever an error is detected and corrected without questioning the underlying values of the system." Double-loop learning, on the other hand, occurs when errors are corrected by "first examining and altering the governing variables and then the actions." The governing variables are not the underlying values people espouse (claim to believe in), but the values that can be observed or inferred through people's behavior (Argyris, 1999:68). Argyris differentiates between the two by referring to the first as one's "espoused theory" and the other as one's "theory-in-use." Double-loop learning involves a change in one's theory-in-use, and this can be accomplished by altering one's mental models (op. cit.).

Argyris' (1999) mental models are the concepts that are developed early in life that help people cope with the world around them, and are the foundation for Hofstede's (2001) concept of culture as "software of the mind." Argyris points to mental models as an obstacle for double-loop learning:

> "These programs are sets of rules we use to design our own actions and interpret the actions of others. We retrieve them whenever we need to diagnose a problem or invent or size up a solution. Without them, we'd have to start from scratch each time we faced a challenge" (1999:232).

Hofstede (2001) relates this description directly to culture, describing the process of moving from one culture to another as to a return to infancy, in which the most basic things must be relearned. Both Argyris' mental models and Hofstede's software of the mind can be used to explain the learning that occurred in the participants of Global Future.

3.4.1 Co-generative learning

The co-generative learning model (Argyris, 1999) can be applied to the Global Future program as a whole, but most specifically to the week-long excursion half-way through the program where the "Open

spaces" technique was used for an extended length of time with focus on a concrete task.

Participation is a premise for a democratic learning process, and it follows that the practice of co-generative learning is the same practice that forms the foundation of a democratic society (Klev and Levin, 2002). Democratic participation is at the foundation of the co-generative learning model, and is also highly valued in many workplaces in Norway. This varies widely from culture to culture and presents an interesting challenge for a program like Global Future. Democracy is created by giving the individual the space and opportunity to affect and control his immediate life situation (op. cit.). The participatory model is based upon engagement and involvement, active participation and a framework that allows the individual to make independent decisions (op. cit.).

3.5 Mentoring and business links

In "Global Perspectives on Mentoring," (Kochan and Pascarelli, 2003) several successful cases of mentoring, co-mentoring and the use of social networks are presented. Many of the examples studied have implications that could be considered for the development of Global Future. Snyder and Acker-Hocevar (2003) present a model for online social networking which enables cross-cultural mentoring and co-mentoring around concrete business cases. The cases provide a bridge between theory and practice, and facilitate emergence of mentors and co-mentors around the subject of the cases rather than through direct mentor-protégé partnerships (Kochan and Pascarelli, 2003).

McMahan and Fritzberg (2003) present a cross-culturing mentoring model in "Global Perspectives on Mentoring" (Kochan and Pascarelli, 2003) where the mentor meets the immigrant protégé half-way on their "cultural bridge." McMahan and Fritzberg (2003) state that what more often occurs is the sacrifice of the immigrant's cultural heritage to the host country's culture, and that this can actually be amplified by the mentor's goodwill in trying to help the immigrant assimilate.

Carraher et al.'s (2005) article "Mentoring across global boundaries: an empirical examination of home- and host-country mentors on expatriate career outcomes" in Mentoring and Career Development (Baugh and Sullivan, 2005) looks at global mentoring as a means to facilitating acculturation, with

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focus on the stages of pre-departure, expatriation and repatriation. They explore both the benefits to the protégé, as well as benefits to the organization in the host country. During the expatriate stage, the mentor assists the protégé in establishing relationships in the host country, learning the job, learning cultural and organizational norms, bridging information gaps between the home and host countries, and maintaining relationships with other mentors. To some extent, the findings related to the expatriate stage can be applied to the mentoring program in Global Future.

3.6 Diversity and diversity management literature

Diversity has been a buzzword in psychology and sociology for decades, and has also been creeping into organizational theory as diversity management (Brief, 2008). The concept stems from the United States, and is primarily associated with integration of persons with minority backgrounds into the workforce. In "Successful Diversity Management Initiatives, Arrendondo (1996) describes diversity management as supporting

> "a new paradigm for present and future change based on cultural relativity, open-mindedness, reciprocity, and continuous learning(...)History reveals that people want to maintain their uniqueness; if people are the fabric and substance of US industries, it cannot be expected that they will drop their ethnicity, gender or intelligence at the office or factory door" (1996:6).

Diversity management has historically been linked to affirmative action in the US, and a strong focus has been on hiring, retention and salary practices toward disadvantaged populations, most notably African Americans (Brief, 2008). Now, the concept of diversity management has been expanded to include all minority populations, including women, people with disabilities, and people of different race or ethnic origin than the majority population (op. cit.). The situation in Norway has, in a way, evolved in the opposite direction, with *likestilling* (equality) first addressing gender equality, and now having evolved to also include equality independent of race, ethnicity, nationality, or disabilities (*IA avtale*, 2006). Diversity management in Norway follows the development of the Inclusion agreement and the Discrimination law.

Arredondo's "Successful Diversity Management Initiatives" (1996) provides good models for initiatives

in organizations, with the core concept being that diversity management is a "paradigm for change with people as its focal point" (1996:19). Successful diversity management begins with a shared vision, and continues with a good strategy linked to sound business rationale. She states that it is essential for organizational leaders to link diversity management to practical business goals and processes and at the same time emphasizes the importance of diversity education being contextual.

In the US, one of the most successful arguments for diversity management has been economic, communicated in terms of profit, competition, hiring, retention, and creative problem solving (Arrendondo, 1996). This concept has come to Norway fairly recently, and is one of the selling points NHO uses for Global Future.

4 Research design and methodology

The research design is qualitative, cross-sectional with case study elements, involving semi-structured interviews, content analysis, document analysis, and official statistics. A program impact assessment approach has been chosen as the point of departure for data collection. Program documents and an in-depth group interview with the program designers at NHO Agder form the basis for an articulation of the program theory. The impact of the program on individuals and the region is explored through in-depth interviews with stakeholders and participants. Secondary analysis of a professional evaluation of Global Future (Karlsen, 2009) makes up a significant part of my research.

4.1 Cross-sectional research design

Cross-sectional research design is defined by consisting of more than one case, with quantifiable data, collected at a single point in time. Patterns of association occur in cross-sectional research (Bryman, 2008). Though cross-sectional design is most often associated with quantitative research, it is also a popular choice for qualitative research, especially when examining causality and elucidating participants' experience (op. cit.). The alternative would be experimental design, which is not an option in this case due to the element of time. The Global Future pilot has been concluded, and Global Future 2 is just in the start phase at the writing of this dissertation. The best alternative for gaging impact is

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therefore through cross-sectional research including data collection, document analysis and application of the research of others.

Variation is a key element in cross-sectional research design, and is the primary reason for selecting more than one case (Bryman, 2008). I have sought to select as many cases as possible, cases being represented by GF participants. Although ideally, I would have interviewed each participant, this has proven to be a logistical challenge. I have ensured a good representation of nationalities, ages, distribution throughout the public and private sectors, and most importantly across the categories of unemployed, underemployed, and successful. These three categories form the framework for the presentation of data. There were 37 people selected to participate in Global Future. Two withdrew from the program in the early stages due to obligations at work. Of the 35 who completed the program, five were absent for more than 50% of the time and were not approached for interviews. One of the participants died in August 2010. Of the 29 participants who were contacted, I interviewed 17. Of these 17, five were unemployed at the start of the program, four were in the successful category and eight were underemployed.

Variation between cases is established through the gathering of quantifiable data (Bryman, 2008). At the start of each interview, I gathered data on employment and job application history, nationality and residence in Norway.

In cross-sectional design (as exposed to experimental design), data is gathered at a single point in time (Bryman, 2008). All of the interviews have taken place in September and October, 2010, so all of the interviewees have had the same lapse of time since the conclusion of the program. The data is supplemented by an evaluation that was also made at a single point in time, four months after conclusion of the program (Karlsen, 2009). A film tracking the pilot program and produced by Media Services (2009) on behalf of NHO, provides some background material for individual participants' development during the program.

Patterns of association refer to the examination of relationships between variables, as opposed to a manipulation of variables as seen in experimental research. Causal relationships have to be inferred in

cross-sectional research, which provides a challenge for validity. Ambiguity in determining cause and effect is inherent in this type of research, and causal influence affects internal validity (Bryman, 2008). This has been a great challenge in my research, and the internal validity does suffer.

4.2 Semi-structured interview

A semi-structured qualitative research interview format was chosen in order to assure a basis for comparison among participants while at the same time providing a sufficient framework for them to tell their own stories.

I have used a phenomenological approach, attempting to understand the Global Future program through the participants and stakeholders' own perspectives. The point of departure of this approach is the desire to understand social phenomena from the interviewees' own perspectives, describing the world as it is experienced and related by the interviewees (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). With subjects as personal as culture, career, and immigration, a phenomenological approach seems to be most appropriate.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) describe 12 aspects of the qualitative research interview from a phenomenological perspective, all of which suit the subject matter of Global Future. They are: life world, meaning and the interpretation of this, quality (versus quantity), description, specificity, conscious naiveté, focus, ambiguity, change, sensitivity, interpersonal situation, and positive experience. The twelve aspects relate to Global Future in the following ways:

- Life world: the interviewees' own experiences of work life, job-seeking and the Global Future program are central themes.
- Meaning: the interviewees' understanding of the above are crucial to evaluating the impact the program has had on their daily lives in Norway.
- Quality: while the interviewees also provide quantitative information on number of jobs, interviews and positions offered, their subjective experiences are the main focus of the interviews.
- Description: the interviews left ample time for detailed descriptions of elements of the program and of daily work life.

- Specificity: the interviews drew out specific descriptions of events before, during and after program participation.

- Conscious naiveté: at several points during the interviews, I had to pretend to know less than I did in order to draw out alternative perspectives on the same event.

- Focus: the interviews focused on role-modeling, networking, mentoring and employability.

- Ambiguity: at several points, interviewees contradicted themselves in terms of the degree of impact Global Future has had on their employment and development.

- Change: at several points, interviewees had eye-opening experiences and made comments such as, "I hadn't thought of it that way before, but..."

- Sensitivity: as a GF participant myself, I had a high degree of knowledge of the subject matter involving the program and as an immigrant I have an understanding of the processes involved in immigration.

- Interpersonal situation: as a GF participant myself, I already knew the interviewees, and rapport was easy to establish.

- Positive experience: many of the interviewees expressed satisfaction with having had the opportunity to talk about and reflect upon the program through interviews.

An interview guide was designed around the central program themes of role-modeling,mentoring, networking, program content and the participants' work day (see Appendix). Quantifiable questions relating to employment-seeking were included in order to chart progress before and after GF. The interview guide concluded with three open questions seeking the participants' perspectives on the program and the impact that it had.

For each interview, the participants were presented with a brief introduction of the topic and the reason for the research, as recommended by Bryman (2008). The reason was explained as an effort to discover the impact of the program on the participants and to elicit recommendations for improvement. The purpose for the interview was presented to the interviewees as 1) to form the basis for a master thesis and 2) to provide anonymous feedback to NHO Agder so that comments and insights could be used to further develop Global Future. It was also made clear that the project was undertaken on my own initiative, not commissioned by NHO, but that NHO Agder was aware of the project.

For the vast majority of the interviews, the interview guide served as a check-list used toward the end of the interview rather than as a script. With a short introduction of the reason for the interview and a bit

of prompting, many participants covered the questions in the guide by telling their stories before, during and since GF. Answers given in the interviews were coded using the "Framework" approach to thematic analysis, and narrative analysis has been employed in order to exploit the value of the participants' own stories.

I set out to interview all GF1 participants who had attended at least 50% of the program and the 4-day study tour to Hovden. All of the gatherings were mandatory, but despite this there were five participants who could not attend substantial parts of the program due to professional or personal reasons. In contrast, Karlsen's evaluation invited all participants to respond. I believe that to assess a program like Global Future fairly from a participant's point of view, participation should be a requirement.

I contacted the potential interviewees either by email, sms or Facebook and asked them if they would be interviewed for my thesis. I interviewed everyone who responded. The interviews were done face-to-face except for two, which were done via Skype. All of the interviews were conducted in Norwegian and then translated by me into English. I chose to make notes during the interviews rather than record them for two reasons. The first was out of sensitivity to the fact that all interviewees were interviewed in another language than their mother tongue, and I wanted to establish as relaxed an atmosphere as possible. I do not believe the interviewees would have felt comfortable having the interviews taped.

Secondly, I am trained and have worked as a journalist and have substantial experience with taping and note-taking. I am skilled at note-taking, and prefer it to taping. Of course, this method did cause me to have to ask the interviewees to repeat some of their answers so that I could get exact quotations. I have attempted to translate the interviews from Norwegian into English while retaining as much of the character of the speaker as possible. I think this has been relatively easy to achieve precisely because Norwegian is not the native tongue of any of the interviewees. I have also freelanced as a translator for ten years, so I feel confident of the results. When selecting quotations, I have encountered challenges to retaining anonymity. In these instances, I have chosen to respect anonymity and paraphrase.

In addition to interviewing participants, I have interviewed the three people who were responsible for the Global Future program at NHO Agder and two human resource managers at companies in Agder,

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Aker Solutions and Agder Energi. I used an interview guide for these interviews as well (see appendix).

4.3 Confidentiality

In most instances, confidentiality has not been a significant issue. I promised all interviewees confidentiality in the interest of eliciting open and honest answers to my questions. In most cases, the opinions expressed would not have been harmful to anyone and confidentiality seems a bit superfluous. However, some interviewees were rather critical to NHO, and in these cases confidentiality has been maintained by anonymizing the responses of all of the interviewees. Norway is a small country, Agder a small region and the identity of the participants is public information. It would not be difficult to identify participants on the basis of nationality alone. It is important that respondents are protected from any possible repercussions as a consequence of their honesty in interviews (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

4.4 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis refers to searching for and analyzing themes, or codes, in the collected data. Bryman (2008) describes a strategy called Framework, which was developed by the National Centre for Social Research in the UK. Framework calls for the construction of an index of themes and sub-themes in a data matrix. The Framework technique recommends searching the data for the following: repetitions, indigenous typologies or categories, metaphors and analogies, transitions, similarities and differences, linguistic connectors, missing data and theory-related material (Bryman, 2008). I employed this method in order to organize and analyze the data collected from interviews with participants.

The trends which emerged from the interviews led me to group respondents into three categories relating to their employment and career status at the outset of Global Future: unemployed, underemployed and successful.

By unemployed, I mean unemployed at the start of Global Future. By underemployed, I mean participants who were employed but were not satisfied with their employment level or their occupation

as it related to their qualifications. By successful, I mean participants who were satisfied with their careers and their career path. In some cases, the status of participants in the first two categories has changed since participation in Global Future and they would be categorized in a new way now. For the purpose of my research, I believe that employment status at the start of the program provides the best framework for presenting the data.

Further, several themes emerged in addition to the subjects of role-modeling, mentoring, networking and employability that I first set out to investigate. The most important of these are identity and career ambition. I have therefore chosen to present the findings thematically under each employment category with role-modeling, mentoring, identity, career ambition and employability and attitudes and obstacles as sub-categories. Surprisingly for me, networking through the Global Future program does not appear to have as strong a link to the employment categories as the other themes, so I present networking separately, along with program content, communication and profiling and an employment summary.

Although I found thematic analysis to be a very valuable tool in seeing patterns in participants' responses, I found that narrative analysis could complement the technique by preserving the participants' own stories in a different way.

4.5 Narrative analysis

Knowledge produced in interviews is often narrative in nature (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Narrative analysis is a technique for analyzing the stories people tell in order to make sense of their own lives and the world around them (Bryman, 2008). In several instances, the in-depth interviews resulted in participants telling their own stories of immigration and employment in Norway. The stories told in these interviews illustrate the participants' transformations.

> "Narrative analysis is often employed to refer both to an approach - one that emphasizes the examination of the storied nature of human recounting of lives and events - and to the sources themselves - that is, the stories that people tell in recounting their lives(...)It is the ways that people organize and forge connections between events and the sense they make of those connections that provides the raw material of narrative analysis" (Roberts, 2002, in Bryman, 2008:553).

My main challenge in analyzing and presenting the data was that the respondents each have their own background story which has greatly affected their experience as immigrants and as job-seekers in Norway. Their names, nationalities, and language level play a great role in how they are perceived and in how they perceive their own experiences. It is tempting to tell all respondents' stories in great detail and do justice to each unique experience, but I have instead tried to see patterns and pick out the aspects of each individual experience that can contribute to the development of the Global Future program. However, the unique nature of the individual immigrant experience is relevant to the issue of integration in Norway, and should be a part of the story. I have attempted to retain this by introducing each employment category with a participant's story.

I have chosen three participants' stories in particular as representations of findings substantiated by other participants and Karlsen's (2009) evaluation. They have been chosen as exemplifications of typical cases. Exemplifying cases provide a context for answering the research questions (Bryman, 2008). They are not the most compelling stories, but they are the most representative. I have chosen one participant to represent each of the group categories: unemployed, underemployed and successful. These participants represent the average period of residence in Norway and average number of job applications for the group. I have not limited the presentation of data to these three representative cases, but also include the perspectives of other interviewees to give a more complete picture of the situation. My intention in using representative cases is to enable the reader to identify with the individuals behind the research. I have given each representative case a Norwegian name in order to disguise their nationality in the interest of confidentiality.

Narrative analysis focuses the attention from what happened to how the participants make sense of what happened (Bryman, 2008). This is essential in understanding the full impact of Global Future upon participants.

4.6 Secondary analysis

Secondary analysis is the analysis of data previously collected by other researchers or statistics

compiled by social research organizations. Advantages to using previously collected data are considered to be cost, time, and quality, as well as the option for different types of data analysis than those used in the original research (Bryman, 2008).

A professional, thorough evaluation of Global Future was made by Thore K. Karlsen of Kappa*Fi shortly after completion of the program and published in 2009. The evaluation is entitled "*Ressurser skal brukes! En evaluering av prosjektet Global Future på Agder i regi av NHO*", translated to "Human capital must be used! An evaluation of NHO's Global Future project in Agder (Karlsen, 2009, my translation)." This evaluation has been an invaluable resource for my research. The response rate from participants was very high (34 of 35 participants), and the questions carefully constructed and analyzed.

My focus is not on replicating the results of this evaluation, but rather on supplementing the findings almost two years later, after time has allowed participants and NHO greater reflection upon the program's impact. I have also investigated elements not thoroughly covered by the evaluation, such as role-modeling, networking and the participants' everyday work life since completion of the GF program. These elements can only be investigated through in-depth interviews with participants. In addition, while Karlsen had a clear purpose of evaluation, my main purpose is not to evaluate the GF program as such. My emphasis is much more on the individual's development process, the impact that the program has had on their lives, and how their insight can provide valuable feedback for further development of the program.

Karlsen's (2009) evaluation relied heavily on feedback from a standardized electronic evaluation and only used in-depth interviews to a very limited degree. I also considered using an on-line questionnaire as a departure point for my research, but I believe that this could have endangered data-gathering by giving the impression of a repetition of an exercise the participants had already been through. As previously stated, I am not attempting to replicate Karlsen's findings or to undertake a longitudinal study, although I am sure Karlsen's evaluation provides a good foundation for such a study in the future.

The in-depth interviews resulted in a different type of data which was more difficult to quantify, but with greater potential for analyzing learning and development. Many of the participants commented

that they had a need to talk about the program. During the interviews, it was clear that many participants had reflected upon the questions since the conclusion of the program and had a need and desire to express their opinions. Many said that "it felt good" to have the chance to talk about their experiences again. When combined with secondary analysis of Karlsen's evaluation, my research adds to the picture of the impact and evolution of Global Future.

4.7 Impact assessment

In "Program Evaluation: A Systematic Approach", Rossi et al. (2004) emphasize the importance of assessing program outcomes, impact, effects and efficiency. Rossi (2004) suggests that the first step in evaluating a program is to articulate the program theory. The three components of program theory are program impact theory (assumptions about the change process and expected results), the service utilization plan (how to reach the target population, deliver the program, and conclude the relationship) and the organizational plan (program resources and general organization). The challenge is to draw out the theory represented in the program developer's actions and assumptions (op. cit.). This has also been a challenge with Global Future.

The program theory forms the basis for impact assessment, which measures the effects programs have on their intended and perhaps also unintended outcomes (Rossi, 2004). Impact assessment shows the cause and effect of the program and its specified elements. In-depth interviews with participants, NHO and several companies in Agder have been undertaken to investigate the impact the program has had almost two years after its conclusion.

Interviews with NHO program designers as well as an examination of program documents formed the basis of an articulation of the program theory, an attempt to reveal what Rossi (2004) calls the "social reality."

4.8 Validity

External and internal reliability and external and internal validity are terms commonly applied to

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quantitative research (Bryman, 2008). The terms have been adapted to qualitative research and resulted in the following alternative criteria: trustworthiness (comprising credibility, transferability, dependability and confirm-ability) authenticity, and relevance (op. cit.).

Cross-sectional research and patterns of association present a challenge for proving causality, thereby presenting a problem for internal validity (Bryman, 2008.) Experimental design is an alternative to cross-sectional design, and interviewing immigrants with higher education and Norwegian language skills who did not participate in the program could have been an option. However, in this particular case, I believe the challenges of causality would still have been too great to assure internal validity. Instead, I have attempted to interview as many participants as possible in order to strengthen the patterns of association and increase the credibility of the inferences.

The issue of reflexivity also needs to be addressed, as I am an immigrant and have myself participated in Global Future. As Hofstede (2001) would point out, I bring my own mental programming to the research. My mental programming includes a history of immigration as far back as my family history can be traced. I am proud of that history, and of my immigrant background. I believe that a society is richer for its diversity, and I believe that it is wise to have many perspectives on any given issue. My own experiences with the countries to which I have immigrated have largely been positive. As a British citizen raised in the United States and having lived in Denmark, Slovakia and Norway, I have not been particularly disadvantaged, but I have felt what it means to be an outsider to some degree.

My encounter with Global Future as a participant has also been characterized by positive experiences. I am grateful for the opportunity to have participated, but this does not prevent me from taking a critical look at the program and outcomes. When choosing a subject for the master thesis, I was aware of the need to choose a topic of great interest to me. Participation in Global Future has influenced my choice of topic, and it has also been an asset in terms of familiarity with the program components, access to interview subjects, and the establishment of rapport with the interviewees. I have arrived at the research questions out of genuine curiosity, and I did not have any pre-conceived ideas about the answers. I believe that my participation in the program adds credibility to the data collected during interviews in that I have managed to draw out honest assessments both from the stakeholders and the participants. I

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have also had access to the program components and observed participants' development during the program first-hand.

I must admit that Global Future has had a positive impact on me personally, but I believe that I have been able to maintain my objectivity throughout the research and the writing of this thesis. The voices in this thesis are those of the other participants, not mine.

5 Articulation of the program theory

Before a thematic presentation of the research findings, an articulation of the goals and strategies of Global Future provides a framework for understanding the data. In order to put the sections that follow into proper context, I also include a brief description of role-modeling and mentoring in Global Future.

5.1 Program impact theory

Program impact theory encompasses assumptions about the change process and the expected results of the program (Bryman, 2008). Global Future was a pilot program, and the change process and expected results were very unclear for the program developers at the outset. NHO adviser Nils Thorsrud expresses the program in these terms:

> "It is an all-encompassing societal perspective on migration and integration. We had to set Global Future into context. Commercial life had to support it to make human resources multi-cultural and visible. We wanted to change attitudes in the participants, so that they would change their employers' attitudes, just as much in the public sector as in the private sector."

As previously stated, the Global Future program was developed from a vision conceived by Siri Mathiesen, director of NHO Agder. The vision was based upon Mathiesen's own experience working with immigration, her background in development studies, and her experience as a Female Future participant. It took some time for the idea to mature, but the vision culminated in the creation of the concept of "Global Future." Arredondo (1996) emphasizes the importance of a shared vision or mission statement in any successful diversity initiative, stating that it is "fundamental to arriving at a state of multicultural actualization" (1996:65).

The goals of Global Future are articulated in the following way:

1. to qualify highly educated people with a foreign background for management positions and board positions in Norway

2. to contribute to growth and long-term value creation in Agder (Karlsen, 2009)

The underlying concept of the program as articulated by Mathiesen, Thorsrud and Stie during a group interview seems to be:

recruit talented individuals - affect the attitudes of the individuals - empower the individuals and shape them into role models - send the role models into employment - let their attitudes affect their organizations.

5.2 Service utilization plan

The service utilization plan considers how to reach the target population, deliver the program, and conclude the relationship (Rossi, 2004).

Attempts to reach the target population were made through the media, brochures, program partners, as well as direct recruitment through private business presentations and approaching individuals with immigrant backgrounds. Potential participants could apply directly to Adecco, or through their employer if the employer was a Global Future partner. Local newspapers *Fædrelandsvennen* and *Agder Posten* both gave Global Future front-page coverage when the program was launched.

The program content revolved around the following three tools:

1. the information and skills that are necessary for attaining a management or higher level position in Norwegian employment

2. tools that lead to self-reflection and strengthening of self-confidence in the participants

3. tools that create a framework for developing in local or regional settings (such as network-building and visibility) (Karlsen, 2009)

The program was delivered by guest lecturers from the University of Agder, Norway's School of Management (BI), NHO and various guest speakers. It was an 18-month program, arranged as 12 two-

day gatherings and one 4-day study trip. For the first year, the two-day gatherings included a night spent in a hotel, paid for by the project. All meals were also included. Gatherings for the final semester were held at BI in Kristiansand, and included lunch.

Consideration of the conclusion of the program was not made during the program development phase, but was developed about half-way through the program. The program concluded at a final two-day gathering in Arendal where mentors, stakeholders, the media and politicians were invited to join participants for dinner. Participants were encouraged to give testimonies to their experiences as immigrants and their experience as Global Future participants. The following day, participants gave short status reports which were recorded on video by Media Service, and received certificates of participation.

5.3 Organizational plan

The organizational plan takes into account the program resources and the general organization (Rossi, 2004).

When the national office of NHO refused to act on the vision proposed by NHO Agder, the regional office took it upon themselves to find funding for the program locally. They used the strength and success of Female Future and the newly signed *IA avtale* to recruit partners to participate in the funding and execution of the program. A labor shortage and a booming economy contributed to the effort. As Thorsrud says, "It never would have happened if it had been after the financial crisis," referring to the crisis of 2007.

Once NHO Agder had secured funding for Global Future, the program was developed by Mathiesen, Thorsrud, project manager Helen Stie and a committee composed of representatives from the project partners. A steering committee with one representative from each of the partners met for a report on the progress of the program once each semester. When asked how they developed the program, Thorsrud looks to Stie and says, "You have to be honest here." Stie replies, "Yes, Nils, of course," sighs, smiles, and then follows with the Norwegian expression, "*Veien ble til mens vi gikk.*"

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Directly translated, this means "The road was made while we walked," or "Our course was defined as we sailed" but I don't know of a corresponding metaphor in English. I am not sure this is a concept that is fully accepted in an Anglo-Saxon culture or the cultures of GF participants. As we will see later, participants are critical of the program execution. Despite Stie's modest description of the plan for the program, the program was to a large degree designed by NHO, presented to the committee for approval, and accepted.

5.3.1 Role-modeling

In developing GF, NHO made role-modeling, along with talent and diversity, one of the three focal points of the program. This is reaffirmed in interviews with NHO in 2010. Mathiesen understands role modeling to be a crucial factor for integration, and emphasizes the importance of role models for second generation immigrants. One of the intentions of Global Future was to create role models, make them visible in society and integrate them into companies where they would help to change attitudes (interview with Mathiesen, 2010).

5.3.2 Mentoring

NHO established the mentor program in the same way as in Female Future, but Stie says that there were many more challenges in finding mentors for immigrants than women. "I felt that I had to explain the idea in much more detail," Stie says.

The mentor program was the strongest link to the private sector and included prominent businesspeople, politicians, and leaders in NGOs and the public sector. Karlsen's evaluation (2009) showed dissatisfaction both from the mentors and the participants. I will return to this after the presentation of data.

Presentation of data

Data is presented in two primary sections: Employer perceptions and Participant perceptions. Employer

perceptions of Global Future are represented by interviews with HR managers at two large, regional NHO companies: Agder Energi and Aker Solutions. Participant perceptions make up a large part of the research material and are represented by 17 participants. A more detailed description of the way in which this data is presented follows the "Employer perceptions" section.

6 Employer perceptions

In developing and running Global Future, NHO took responsibility for representing private industry. Member companies were not approached to act as project partners, but some managers of member companies served as mentors. Agder Energi was represented on the Board of NHO while Global Future was being developed, and Aker Solutions is currently represented on the Board of NHO. Mathiesen confirms that both Bjørn Simonsen of Agder Energi and Bjørg Hansen of Aker Solutions have supported the development of Global Future with constructive comments and positive feedback. Human resources managers of Agder Energi and Aker Solutions, two large employers in Agder, were interviewed to gage employer perceptions of Global Future and integration in the workplace in general.

When Global Future was launched, there was a labor shortage and both companies were interested in expanding their pool in order to recruit enough skilled labor to fill their needs. This included looking abroad for talent. The situation has changed dramatically since the financial crisis of 2007, and neither company is actively recruiting abroad now. Agder Energi has had a hiring freeze in 2010, and Aker Solutions is not actively recruiting either. The two companies are in very different situations in terms of diversity management.

HR Manager Kjersti Lie is just in the beginning stages of developing diversity management programs directed at immigrants for the Agder Energi conglomerate. Agder Energi is composed of several daughter companies, and diversity varies from company to company. So far at Agder Energi, diversity management has focused mainly on gender equality, retaining employees who are nearing retirement age, and integrating people with physical and mental disabilities. Agder Energi's goal of 10% of all new employees having a non-Norwegian background will not take effect until the company starts hiring again. Lie admits that Agder Energi has not come far with this type of diversity management, and that the company has a lot to learn. There are no managers with immigrant background at present. There is

little diversity in the company when it comes to nationality, but Agder Energi's HR/HMS strategy includes making Agder Energi interesting for immigrants / second generation immigrants as a point. Agder Energi promotes its involvement in Global Future in the HR/HMS strategy: "The company develops policy / tools for creating diversity (Global Future, NAV/Eures, Female Future, network cooperation, etc. (AE, 2009)."

Aker Solutions, in contrast, is an internationally oriented company with English as the working language, employees from 28 different nations, and several managers with a immigrant backgrounds. There is no goal of hiring a certain percentage or number of foreigners. Diversity is woven into two of the company's six values. "We respect and encourage diversity and build strong, energised and effective teams - and we have fun together, making us even better" is a part of the value "People and Teams." The statement "We challenge each other. The best decisions are taken when different opinions and different cultures meet in open and direct dialogue" is a part of the value "Open and Direct Dialogue" (http://www.akersolutions.com/en/Utility-menu/About-us1/Our-vision-and-values/). HR Manager Nina Norheim is responsible for recruitment and multicultural competence at Aker.

Both Lie and Norheim have positive general impressions of Global Future, but say they have heard little about the program. They both associate GF to Female Future, and have understood that the concept is to lift well-educated foreigners into leadership and board positions in the same way as Female Future had the goal of increasing women's representation on boards and in management. Agder Energi hired a participant from GF1 for a short-term project and is supporting a current employee who is participating in GF2. Two of Aker Solutions' employees participated in GF1. They say that Global Future participation would be noticed on an applicant's CV, and that they would ask about it during interviews. Global Future is perceived as added value, but it would not replace formal qualifications.

Lie believes that the key to getting managers at Agder Energi interested in diversity management lies in relating diversity to profitability. "We have a lot of good goals, and we are going to do something about this. We need to be more creative and find more solutions," she says. "When people notice that it is profitable, when they really feel a need - that's when we can do something."

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6.1.1 Recruitment and hiring

When it comes to hiring, both Lie and Norheim say their companies are looking for the best people with the best qualifications. For Agder Energi, this also includes language skills. Lie says:

> "I can't understand that there are any obstacles as long as you are qualified and can speak Norwegian. We are interested in the best. We want them, but the best skills and knowledge can often be hidden, and it often happens that you choose people who are most like yourself. You have to be brave enough to hire someone who is different. I have a feeling that there are a lot of hidden talents. I think there are a lot of resources out there, but I would say it is important for foreigners to show that they have guts, and that they are energetic. I don't really think the color of a person's skin is so special."

Aker requires NOKUT approval of qualifications from abroad. For technical positions and members of international teams, Norwegian is not a requirement at Aker. Norwegian is required for most administrative positions. For Norheim, there are two criteria: qualifications in an area of competence that Aker is looking for, and the ability to cooperate with others. "One thing is not more important than the other. You can have all the knowledge in the world, but if you can't manage to convey that to others and work in a team, it's not worth very much to us," says Norheim.

Both Lie and Norheim acknowledge that, aside from language, another big obstacle for foreigners is getting their first job in Norway. Lie says that getting the first job in Norway is the toughest, and adds that Agder Energi is not experienced in interpreting foreign qualifications. "Once you've gotten in, you can move up in the company," she says. "The language is the first obstacle. If you don't learn the language, you'll be isolated." Norheim says that most of the immigrants Aker hires already have work experience and references from Norway, and many have worked for Aker first as consultants. "Then, there is no difference to us between a foreigner and a Norwegian," says Norheim. Neither Agder Energi nor Aker Solutions have internship or trainee programs which target immigrants.

Lie also cites having "door openers" into new markets who can understand the new cultures as a reason to hire immigrants. While Agder Energi is strongly connected to the local market, daughter companies Otera and Statkraft Agder Energi Vind are more internationally oriented, she says.

Aker Solutions is more experienced in using employers with immigrant backgrounds to open doors to new markets, but Norheim is quick to point out that the company prefers to hire local managers when they set up offices abroad. This is based on the idea that local managers will understand the local workforce best, but Norheim says that there is focus on bringing the local managers into the Aker culture, which is a Norwegian culture.

6.1.2 Integration

Even though Norwegian is not necessary to work at Aker, Norheim perceives language as the greatest obstacle for foreigners, followed by culture. Norwegian courses are offered and employees are encouraged to learn the language so that they will become better integrated and gain a better understanding of Norwegian society, says Norheim.

Aker Solutions has been offering cross-cultural awareness courses to its employees for two years, and has established a «cross-cultural connections» program in Kristiansand, based on a model designed by the headquarter office. Cross-cultural connectors are employees who have received intercultural communication training and then go on to train other employees. Cross-cultural connectors form a sort of network for spreading intercultural competence. Norheim says that an understanding of culture is very important for the assembly and functioning of good teams, and that is why there has been so much focus on culture at Aker.

7 Participant perceptions

For the purpose of presenting the research findings, participants have been grouped into three main categories based upon their career status when entering Global Future: unemployed, underemployed or successful. This roughly represents the distribution of status of the entire group of participants.

Participants in the unemployed group were unemployed when they started GF, but may have been undertaking higher education. Most of those interviewed are also unemployed as of this writing, with just one exception.

I define underemployed as employed, but at a lower level than expected for the participants' formal qualifications. It is also important to note that these participants also evaluated their own situation at the start of GF to be underemployed. So, this is not an arbitrary definition, but is also related to the participants' perceptions of themselves.

Success can be defined in many ways. For my purposes, I define success as participants' satisfaction with their position and career path when they started GF.

I have chosen one participant from each category to exemplify the circumstances of each category. In each case, the most representative participant of all interviewed has been chosen, but the name has been changed and the nationality withheld in order to preserve anonymity.

As an introduction, I present their stories. Following each story, I present the findings in more detail, divided into the following themes: role-modeling, mentoring, identity, career ambition and employment and obstacles and attitudes. The sections following unemployed, underemployed and successful present further findings in the categories of networking, program content and communication and profiling. A thorough discussion of the implications of the findings for the Global Future program, employers in Agder, and regional development follows the presentation of data.

7.1   Unemployed - Meet "Kari"

Kari came to Norway as a refugee in 1998 with a technical degree from her homeland. Like most immigrants, she has gone through the NAV "Introduction program" and has been in practical training funded by NAV for several years. In fact, she is still receiving NAV subsidies in her current job, in combination with a 20% position funded by her employer. Her degree is not recognized in Norway. Since the Global Future program, she is still only partially employed, not in the vocation for which she is trained, and is still reliant on subsidies from NAV. This is how she tells her story:

"I applied for about 30 jobs, and have taken more higher education in Norway, first in my profession and then in another profession. I had never been called in to an interview, and have just worked as a trainee through NAV. Really, I was hired through a trainee position through NAV, but I can say that I was not used, but abused. It was not a trainee position. They used me just like a regular interpreter,

but when the trainee period was over after two years, they refused to hire me. Before Global Future, my thoughts were in total chaos. I needed a job, but I didn't know what I should do. There were a lot of questions in my head and I could not find the answers.

"When I started Global Future and saw many people in the same situation, I saw that I was not alone. There were a lot of people with the same problems. I felt more secure, that I could stand on my own two feet. Things became less foggy and I started to see my path.

"Two years ago, I went to (her current employer) and said, "You talk a lot about integration. Now, I have done my work. Now you have to do yours." I knew this was a kind woman. "Just apply," she said. "No," I said. "If I do that, there are also many Norwegians who will apply, and one of them will get it. That is why I am here. I want your help. I am not leaving your office until I get a job. Have a look at my papers." She asked me for a week and I said, "OK. I trust you."

"I saw her as the only possibility for me. In under a week, she called me in for an interview and offered me a 50% temporary position subsidized by NAV. I have completely new feelings now. Before Global Future, I felt all alone in an ocean, a person who couldn't swim. Now, I see that there are others in the ocean and that we can help each other to swim."

7.1.1 Role-modeling

The unemployed participants mainly look to the successful members of the GF group as role models. They did not consider themselves to be role models before GF. They state that they have learned a lot from the other, more successful participants and they can see themselves gradually becoming role models since GF, for people of their own nationality and for their children. The concept of being a role model is limited to people within their closest circles, and they credit Global Future with making them aware of this role.

Kari says, "Global Future has become more recognizable. People know I have been to Global Future, and they look at me in a different way now."

Only one unemployed participant considered himself to be a role model before participating in GF. His perception of himself as a role model is related to his personality, not to his career. He says he has considered himself a role model since adolescence in the person that he is, and the way that he treats

people. Since coming to Norway, this feeling has intensified and he has become a prominent role model for other immigrants from his region of the world. Since Global Future, he has been appointed to the board of the Christian Intercultural Association. He says that this is a direct result of his attaining Board competence through Global Future.

For this participant, being a role model remains quite separate from his career track, where he has been sidelined due to lack of approval of qualifications that would allow admission to higher education, this despite his having attained a master's degree in his homeland. He works several part-time positions in order to make ends meet, and is taking adult education courses in order to qualify for a master program in Norway. He finds it stressful not having a full-time, permanent position.

7.1.2 Mentoring

The mentor program was clearly most useful for those who were unemployed at the start. The best example of the potential of the mentor program comes from Kari:

> "My mentor was really good. I really wanted to work in my profession, and he tried to find a job for me. I felt very secure, month after month, and I started to tell him personal things. He tried to talk to a lot of people for me. I started to believe in myself more and more because of my mentor."

The other interviewees in the unemployed group expressed satisfaction with their mentors, but none of them have continued contact, and none of them made new connections through their mentors. One mentions that it was more of an obligation on both sides, which they fulfilled, but that they had no common interests and so there was no benefit for either party, and no real reason to continue the relationship.

7.1.3 Identity

The establishment of a group identity through GF was crucial to the development of the unemployed. One participant describes the effect in this way: "I have met so many clever foreigners that I never would have come into contact with. The same kind of people as me, with qualifications and a good

education. When I got a chance to compare, I felt a belief in myself."

Before GF, this participant's network in Norway was limited to immigrants from her homeland and her Norwegian language school classmates.

For some participants, the establishment of the group identity took time and occurred relatively late in the program. One participant says:

> "We needed more time at the beginning of the program to get to know each other. This really only happened at Hovden. Time to become friends, and develop the feeling of being in the same boat and that we could move forward. Global Future has strengthened my belief in myself, the glow I have gotten from knowing who I really am."

While the strengthening of personal identity through group identification is an important development in the unemployed group, this is the group that is most critical of the way in which the program ended. They describe a feeling of "being dropped," of having friends and then losing them.

"I wish that NHO had checked on us afterward - that we could get together now and then. I want to get together," says Kari. "It would be nice if they had checked how we are doing, if we are managing or whether we need extra help. I went to all of the gatherings and I needed this."

7.1.4 Career ambition and employability

A main obstacle to employment in Norway for participants in this group is the recognition of higher education from abroad. All of the participants who are currently unemployed have higher education from their homelands that is not recognized fully in Norway (engineering, economics or technical education).

Before Global Future, they had each applied for 30-50 jobs. None of them had been called in to a single job interview. Since Global Future, they have been called into interviews, but only one of all of the participants interviewed has received an offer for a permanent position.

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They have, however, received short-term employment, mostly subsidized by NAV through the "Qualification program."[2] The NAV qualification program can be an important entry path to employment, as is evident in the case of the underemployed immigrants in the next section. It is important to note that the qualification program is intended to be a temporary measure leading to regular employment. The subsidy is not to be given for longer than one year (NAV.no, 2010). Unfortunately, the qualification program has not led to permanent employment for any of the participants in the unemployed category.

Kari is receiving NAV subsidies again. She has never been employed in Norway without some type of NAV subsidy. She says, "I am still not 100% sure that I have a job. Norwegians speak really nicely to you, and they say that they need you and your competence, but they are not so nice when you need a signature on a contract!"

In the time it takes to learn the language(s) and take additional education, ambition can suffer. This is clear from the interviews. Highly qualified professionals put on a false smile and describe lower level jobs as "OK." An engineer who teaches Norwegian to immigrant children for a low salary says "it's OK because I feel like I am helping the children."

For participants in the unemployed group, Global Future has the potential to give some of that lost ambition back. This is clear in the case of an interviewee with a master's degree in economics who worked as a cleaner for three years before receiving a job in her field after starting GF:

> "I am in a phase where I need security and I prioritize this instead of salary. There are not enough challenges in my current job. I have heard that when you reach one goal, you are happy, and that lasts for about three months. Then you want something else. Now I want something else. Higher salary, more challenges, more responsibility. I may have to get higher qualifications now. I have to look at the market and adapt to the market's demands."

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2   The Qualification program is a social initiative administered by the Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration (NAV). It consists of instruction and on-the-job training as well as advisement that should lead to employment or other meaningful activity.

7.1.5 Obstacles and attitudes

Interviewees in the unemployed group see being an immigrant as an obstacle to employment in Norway. When asked what obstacles they see, the answers are directly related to being foreign. Kari replies that her only obstacle is that she is an immigrant and that she is still struggling with the language. She also says that she realizes she has to be careful about taking days off for illness because she thinks that this will be used against her, and that it will reinforce the stereotype of the foreigner abusing the system. "If I were Norwegian, I wouldn't have to be so careful," she says.

Another unemployed participant responds to the question of obstacles in this way:

> "There are few positions in my field. Many of the positions I am interested in also require management skills. I feel that being a foreigner and being a manager is very difficult. I do not want a management position. Also, it is difficult to suggest anything new in Norway. My qualifications are also difficult for employers to interpret. A Norwegian education gives you a natural advantage. Not to play "the foreigner card," but being a local applicant is an advantage."

For this group, the formal qualifications are closely tied to being a foreigner, and the rejection of formal qualifications from a foreign country becomes linked to being foreign. This response also shows that the participant herself does not believe that she, as an immigrant, can be a successful leader in Norway. This differs greatly from the perspective of the "successful" group of participants, as will be shown later.

One of the interviewees who is technically in the category of unemployed observed other participants' attitudes like those above as very different from her own. Her circumstance is exceptional: she was and is "unemployed," but by choice. She has given up her job to pursue a new degree in Norway (a country she chose to immigrate to), and she is quick to make the distinction that her situation is much different to someone who has not chosen to come to Norway in the first place and not chosen to be unemployed. When asked about her biggest obstacle, she replies:

> "Obstacle? That is hard to say...I need to explain how I maybe look at things a bit differently, now after I have spoken to others in GF. If I have a clear goal for a job, I have to see if I have the

qualifications. Right now, I do not have a clear goal for a position. I think that in Norway we have more opportunities and attitudes play a very important role. To me, things are 50-50, give and take. If you want to get something, you have to give something. If you have qualifications, you will be able to get what you want. The rules of play are straight-forward. If you apply without qualifications, it is your fault that you don't get the job. You have to be realistic. I was an HR manager in (home country). I would never apply for that same position here because you need experience from Norway. You have to begin at a lower level in Norway and work your way up. There were other participants who were not realistic – you have to learn the system in your field in the new country before you can get a job in your field in Norway. Some people expect to get the same type of job that they had. Some just wait, without getting more qualifications. Others have opportunities, but they just sit and wait."

7.2 Summary - unemployed

Interviewees in the unemployed category on average applied for 30-50 jobs and were called in for no interviews before Global Future. Of those interviewed, only one is currently in full-time permanent employment. The others are employed part-time (involuntarily), or unemployed. They do not see themselves as role models in their professions, and only one sees himself as a role model at all. The mentor program has only benefited one of the interviewees. The ambition level varies, but is lower than for interviewees in the other groups. Formal qualifications and language difficulties are the greatest obstacles to employment and advancement for interviewees in this group. Interviewees are mostly satisfied with the educational components of Global Future, but are disappointed with the mentor program and networking opportunities. The greatest benefit of the program has been from meeting other participants and being able to identify with them.

7.3 Underemployed - Meet "Ole"

Ole came to Norway in 1987 as a refugee, eventually received a bachelor's degree and went on to pursue a master's degree. Like most immigrants, he also received his first job in the field for which he was qualified with subsidies from NAV, but was quickly hired permanently. Since Global Future, he has risen in the ranks at the same employer in the public sector and now holds a managerial position in his field. This is how he tells his story:

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"I had applied for more than 50 jobs, and wasn't called in for a single interview. I went to the unemployment office, and they recommended that I change my name. I said, "Forget it." I walked around from door to door with my papers and asked people to look at them. Finally, someone showed their interest and recommended that I apply for a job with subsidies from NAV. This was in 2002.

"One of the reasons that I applied for Global Future was so that my children would not have to experience the same problems as I have. They bear my name. Society has to change how they relate to names.

"I don't know if the fact that I have been encouraged to apply for leadership positions (at current employer) is a direct effect of Global Future, but it can have had an effect. For me personally, the best thing about Global Future was coming together in a group with so many cultures and seeing that everyone has had the same challenges, even people from Western countries, and seeing that you can put these people together and make it work to a certain extent, make it function socially.

"Professionally, I knew a lot of the content beforehand because of my job and because I have been a union representative, but I got a lot out of the lectures on leadership and the Board Member training course. That was very useful.

"Some immigrants hide behind the excuse that "society has a problem" in the same way that parties like FRP blame immigrants for all of society's problems. I think both are completely wrong ways of thinking.

"I think it was really important that NHO, as a representative for private commercial enterprises, took this initiative and put their finger on the problem: that the public sector must mirror and represent the population."

7.3.1 Role-modeling

None of the participants in this category said that they considered themselves to be role models before GF. Several of them did say that other people have called them role models for the members of their immigrant communities, but none of them saw themselves this way before GF. Now, all of them are aware of being role models, and all but one (Ole, above) appear to be comfortable in this role. "I don't look at myself as a role model," he says, "but I lead by example. In GF, I had more experience than many others, and I tried to talk to them, but I would call that sharing experience. I don't see myself as a role model."

The other participants in this category clearly saw their role evolve, and the women see themselves not only as role models for immigrants from their countries, but for all female immigrants. One female participant says:

I want to be a role model - I want to work more on helping others. I can be a role model for women with immigrant backgrounds, not just in terms of careers, but also when it comes to adjusting to life in Norway. We women are often without our own network. There are many lonely people in our situation. Many have no family, only a professional network or a network through their husband. If something goes wrong with that, we are very much alone.

Another participant noticed a change in himself since GF, but also looked to NHO to use participants more as the role models it had helped create. He says:

"I recognized myself in the group. I don't experience this at work. Here, I had people who understood me, my way of being and people whom I could understand. I wouldn't have thought I would have been used as a role model because I am not typical enough. I don't feel like I am a good example of a bad example of integration(...)I have gotten involved in things I never would have seen myself involved in before. I received a role in my base group in Global Future, and also with Global Future Consulting, even though I thought I would try to stay out of the limelight. I had hoped that NHO would have used us more actively as role models for GF2, but I can't see that that has happened."

Several of the participants have gone on to middle management positions since Global Future. This makes them examples of success in their organizations. It also gives them responsibility for hiring new employees, and several of them are proud of the fact that they have hired other immigrants.

7.3.2 Mentoring

Interviewees in the underemployed group benefited even less than the unemployed from the mentor program. One participant says:

"It was a bad match. Our wishes were different, and we only met twice. He couldn't contribute much because I had come further than he had thought. I am so honest and open that I said I was interested in meeting people in his network. He was nervous about this, and did not want to appear to be my agent. NHO should have taken into consideration where I was. I was too strong. I could have been a mentor myself on the strength of my background and experience. NHO should clarify the roles and the needs for networks before they match up. I didn't need a pat on the back. I needed a network or a door opener, and my mentor wanted to hold back. He had maybe misunderstood or had not had it explained correctly."

While a mentor cannot be expected to act as an "agent," mentoring was clearly an aspect of the program

that was intended to promote network-building and strengthen ties to companies in the region. None of the interviewees made new connections through their mentors.

In one case, the mentoring program was very successful. This was an exception. The success can be credited to the fact that this participant found her own mentor, on recommendation from her boss. Her mentor was someone at her workplace, and they met very frequently. The content of their sessions was professional, centering on potential for cooperation with industry in the participant's homeland. The relationship was characterized by mutual respect, and the mentor showed genuine interest in the participant's business ideas. The mentor did not introduce the participant to his network, but in contrast to the example above, this was not important to the protégé. Also in contrast to most of the other examples, this mentor displayed a high degree of intercultural competence, according to the interviewee.

> "He was really outgoing, absolutely not a typical "*Sørlending.*"[3] He is on the boards of a lot of companies in Northern Norway, and has spent a lot of time there and in Germany. I am unbelievably satisfied with the experience, and am very grateful. It was not necessary for him to introduce me to people. I already have the connections I need in my homeland, and I am able to help myself. He didn't have the people in his network that were useful to me."

These examples show the importance of expectations when it comes to a mentoring relationship, and this will be discussed further in the next chapter.

7.3.3 Identity

Sense of identity in the underemployed category is characterized by the achievement of biculturalism, and by the statement "I am not the typical foreigner." It can be inferred that they had achieved biculturalism and a strong sense of identity before GF, but that GF has boosted their awareness of their identity and allowed them to see this in a more positive perspective. Self-confidence appears to also have increased most in this group. They all express a feeling of "coming home" when they joined the other participants at the gatherings. The interviews show personal growth through group identification, as illustrated by this participant:

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3   Sørlending = person from the southernmost part of Norway.

"I feel that I have become more open and more secure. Meeting other people with similar experiences is a very good opportunity to look at one's self in a broader perspective. I don't know. Maybe a got a little better understanding of other people's lives and experiences. It's so easy to fall into a "Oh, I am from a foreign country, everything is so difficult" sort of trap. It's good to know that you are not alone with challenges like this. This provides a kind of sense of belonging to a group of people who have to perform better in order to achieve something."

This last sentiment is uttered by several interviewees, who expect to have to outperform their Norwegian peers in order to get ahead in the new host country, either by working longer hours or taking fewer sick days. Ole also describes a sense of belonging during the gatherings, and says, when asked about his social life at work:

"I don't feel like a foreigner, to put it that way. I feel that I can be the person I am. I am maybe not the typical foreigner, but I have some of my culture with me. I have other ways of doing every day things, and my colleagues appreciate this...In my nature, I am, *"ja vel,"*[4] if there is something in a culture that is more positive, I'll make it a part of me. I would neither call myself (his nationality) or Norwegian. I take what is positive from a culture. I think it's positive, whether it is (his nationality) or not, to hold a door open for another person, so I hold the door open, even though some Norwegian women look at me strangely. I have always tried to be myself, even though I felt like a foreigner when I first came to Norway."

Another participant described her workplace this way: "I have nothing to complain about. I am a little special, I guess. I can seem a little different, but that's OK. I feel that I have been accepted and approved. I communicate fine and I think people understand me. I am very satisfied."

Global Future allowed certain members of this group in particular to find a place as leaders of the base groups, and also in the groups formed during "Open spaces" at Hovden. By the interviewees' own assessment, this has motivated them, and given them more self-confidence.

"Self-confidence is a key word with Global Future. I always had self-confidence in my homeland, and have always worked hard, but in Norway I was in the process of being worn down. With Global Future, I got my self-confidence back in place, and the rest of it just follows. Self-confidence and motivation are the two main things, and they mean a lot for integration. This is the key to success, in my opinion. For integration, it means everything."

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4   Ja vel is roughly translated to "I see" or "you know", but is a distinctly southern Norwegian colloquial expression.

These individuals have either received promotions in the same organizations in which they were employed when they entered GF, or have been hired into more relevant positions since starting GF. They are also mentioned most frequently by other participants as having had a positive influence on them, either in terms of sharing of experience and expertise or direct job recommendations.

7.3.4 Career ambition and employability

Participants in the underemployed category have gotten over the first hurdle, and received their first jobs. Many of them came to Norway as teenagers, and have higher education from Norway, so approval of qualifications has not been an obstacle for the majority. These participants showed the greatest amount of ambition upon entering Global Future, and their level of ambition seems to have increased during participation in the program. There is great variation in their expression of ambition, related to the positions they are in now.

Those who are still underemployed are frustrated, but continue to apply for new jobs. They are disappointed by GF's effect on their applications. Those who have advanced describe their jobs as challenging. They often work long hours, and see the need to increase their competence to keep up with the challenge, but they find this exciting and positive overall.

Several of the participants in this category attribute their advancement at least in part to Global Future. They have either received new positions after being recommended for a job by a fellow GF participant, or feel that participation in GF has added value to their CVs. A participant who was encouraged to apply for her current job by another GF participant says:

> "It may not have been a deciding factor for hiring me that I participated in Global Future, but I think it aroused curiosity. It was discussed during the job interview, and if I and another applicant had been even, I think it definitely would have played a role."

The others express some uncertainty as to whether they have received promotions as a result of GF, but say that they think the program has influenced their careers at least indirectly. Interestingly, all of the

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participants who received promotions are the first foreigners to have been hired in their departments. They have since received management responsibility and have hired more foreigners (as well as Norwegians).

One participant in this group says, although he does not think he got his job because of GF, he exploited knowing people at NHO when applying for a job in an NHO member company. He says:

> "It is important to do a little research before the job interview to see where their networks and my networks cross, and to consciously use this. I emphasized the fact that NHO, Innovation Norway and Kristiansand municipality organized Global Future. (His current employer) has contact with all of these in one way or another, so it is positive to mention that you know people from these organizations and know what they are responsible for."

There is one participant in the underemployed category who says that GF is not profiled enough, and that it has not helped her in her job applications. She is still in the same position as at the start of GF. She has been very frustrated in her job search, especially because many of the jobs she has applied for have been advertised by partners of Global Future. "Global Future has not helped - not with NAV or public offices, either. On my CV, I always compare GF to Female Future because at least people have heard of Female Future. During interviews, no one even asks about Global Future," she says. She is also critical of the certificate that was awarded on completion of the program, and doubts that this has any added value when applying for jobs. However, she also says that she has been called in to more interviews since completing the program. None of these have resulted in job offers.

7.3.5 Obstacles and attitudes

The perception of obstacles varies widely in the underemployed group. Answers to the question "What do you perceive to be the greatest obstacle for you in your career?" range from an extremely negative view to an extremely positive view where the interviewee replies, "If there are any obstacles, they lie within me, myself."

At the other end of the spectrum is the participant who is still in the same position but has been denied

promotions she feels she deserves. She says:

"I feel discriminated against here. Completely ignored. I am looked upon as a secretary, not a leader. There must be two reasons: either it is because I am a woman or it is because I am foreign. I don't know which. I am skeptical. There is definitely something or another going on here. Language is also an obstacle. After some years, we stagnate. Our Norwegian is good enough, and the language stops developing. As soon as we open our mouths, they're skeptical to whether or not we can write reports as well as they can. This affects my security and credibility. The language is not perfect, so people doubt your ability to communicate. There are no courses for people at our level. You'll never get rid of the accent, and people are skeptical."

I will return to the issue of language in a later section.

Ole, who received a promotion during GF, responded to the question as one might expect any

Norwegian manager would:

"As a manager in the public sector, having to relate to people who you can not fire is a challenge - motivating people who don't really want to work. Some people have the ability, but not the will. How do you tackle the ones who neither have the ability nor the will? I have learned a lot about this at Global Future."

Ole is also quick to point out that being a foreigner was an obstacle when he applied for his first job,

but that it is not an obstacle in his current organization. "It's very much up to us ourselves to decide how

to tackle this. I could have just complained and taken welfare benefits, but I feel that it is up to me to do

something about this and prove that society is wrong when it comes to foreigners," he says. Now that

he has a good reference from his current employer, he does not see being foreign as an obstacle for

future applications.

Another participant who has received a better job since GF says, "I got so much energy out of Global

Future, and I started to believe that there is no problem getting any position I want."

7.4 Summary - underemployed

Interviewees in the underemployed category experienced the same obstacles as described by those in

the unemployed category until they got their first jobs. All but one of the interviewees has advanced at

their employer or gotten a better job during or since Global Future. None attribute this directly to

Global Future, but most credit Global Future with having had at least an indirect effect on their personal development and confidence. The interviewees' perception of themselves as role models has developed through Global Future. The Board competence course is the part of the program that they say benefited them most. The mentor program did not function satisfactorily for any of the interviewees. Their perception of obstacles varies, but the more satisfied they are with their jobs, the less they see being a foreigner as an obstacle.

7.5 Successful - Meet "Bjørn"

Bjørn came to Norway in 1984 as a student. After receiving his master's degree, he got his first job (for which he was extremely over-qualified) through a friend and worked his way up the ranks at the same private sector employer, but at several different divisions and locations. His position is unchanged since participating in Global Future. He tells his story like this:

"I have always been a person who gets involved. I like to make speeches, am politically active, and get invited to meetings with various ministries and organizations. I have been asked to run for office. I don't think it is necessarily because I am a foreigner, but because I show interest in the local community and have a lot of friends. I don't really think it matters that I am a foreigner.

"I wanted to be a part of Global Future to lift the others and to be positive, to tell my story and to spread the message that you can't give up. I went into the program with the thought of being a role model for the others, but I didn't manage to do it. I wanted to inspire through team-building, and I could have arranged visits to companies, but I didn't get any room on their program.

"It was a good idea, and has put Agder and immigrants on the map a little. The lectures were of no use to me, but they were well put together. There could have been more brainstorming, and we could have played a larger role.

"This is about people. You have to move a person from one place to another, where there are many pitfalls along the way. You have to show the way around the pitfalls in order to function in the system. I didn't see that in this project."

7.5.1 Role-modeling

Several of the participants in this category were highly visible in their communities before GF, and had long been role models for immigrants in the region. Their attitudes toward being role models are very different, and it is not possible to categorize them as one group. It is fair to say that several of them felt

that they themselves had created their own destinies and success, but that as Global Future participants much of their self-made success has been attributed to Global Future.

"I have been portrayed as a poster child for Global Future, but I feel that I am the same as I was before. I was made before Global Future, and I feel that I was chosen as a participant to be a role model," says one participant.

Another felt that he was a good candidate to be a role model for the less successful participants as well as for future participants in GF2, but does not feel that his resources were used. Although he has also been profiled in the media, his offers to contribute to the program and try to lift the others were declined.

"Couldn't we have been more active as role models?" he asks. "Has anyone been involved in developing Global Future 2? They should have used us for this." Out of everyone surveyed, none have been approached by NHO regarding GF2 apart from being asked to appear at a press conference for the launch of GF2 in Agder.

When asked whether or not he saw himself as a role model, another interviewee answered, "Yes and no. I have always been proud of the fact that I have managed on my own in Norway without welfare. I have never been unemployed."

7.5.2 Mentoring

None of the interviewees in the successful category credit the mentor program with giving them any benefit. Their responses range from mild satisfaction - "it was OK" to great dissatisfaction - "there was no point - he had nothing to offer me."

One participant provides this explanation: "In Norway, if you are a weak, helpless and poor foreigner, you get lots of help. You satisfy a need in Norwegians. When they meet someone who is equivalent, or stronger, they back off because they see you as a threat."

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7.5.3 Identity

Interviewees in the successful category already had a strong sense of identity, and like many interviewees in the underemployed group, can be said to have achieved biculturalism. They experience being foreign as a strength, even more so than the underemployed group, and they have all actively exploited their biculturalism in their careers.

They are prominent in Norwegian society, and are active in the community and in politics. They say they are asked to participate in the community not because they are foreign, but because they are active, involved and visible. They believe that their status is based on their accomplishments.

One interviewee explains her perception of herself before GF:

> "I was aware of who I was, the effect I have upon others and what I as a foreigner had accomplished. I have been asked to be in resource groups before, but no one has ever said to me that it was because I was foreign. I think it is based on my achievement."

They are the epitome of the goal of NHO: immigrants who use their biculturalism to open doors to new markets. The hitch is that none of those interviewed attributes this to Global Future, and all of them had achieved success on their own before entering the program. They support the goals of Global Future, but say that they personally have gained little from the program.

7.5.4 Career ambition and employability

All of the interviewees in this category have demanding, challenging jobs, and they all require demanding, challenging jobs in order to be satisfied. They have a glow about them when they talk about their work, and it is clear that they are driven to achieve. They all work in international environments.

"My job is fantastic, there is no better place to work in the world. There is a great environment, not only with my colleagues, but also the work culture - welfare, continuing education. It is a very international workplace," says one.

"My job is very exciting, there are huge challenges, and it is demanding," says another.

Several of the participants in this category have been through the phases of the unemployed and underemployed, but their long residence in Norway, excellent language skills and tenacity had made them successful before they entered the program. Two of the interviewees grew up in Norway and have encountered prejudice, but have not had to overcome obstacles such as qualification recognition and lack of language skills.

None of them attribute continued career success to Global Future. Participants in this group have been highly profiled by NHO, and they continue to support Global Future as a good idea publicly, but they do not think that their success is a result of Global Future. They consider themselves to be self-made.

7.5.5 Obstacles and attitudes

The respondents in the successful group have an extremely positive attitude toward their careers, and see few obstacles. In response to the questions: "What do you see as the biggest obstacle for you in your career?" one participant replies:

> "If there is an obstacle, you have to get around it. Solve it. I see this as a part of my job, a part of life. The greatest obstacles are the ones you make yourself. I see first the advantages of being a foreigner. You look at things in different ways, and appreciate things that Norwegians take for granted. These are advantages. When I think of disadvantages...a disadvantage is the thought of how you are perceived by others. You know the language, but the accent can get in the way of communication. This can be an obstacle. I am very conscious of how I am perceived. As soon as you open your mouth, you are «placed.»"

This interviewee speaks excellent Norwegian, as do all of the participants in the successful group. Language is expressed as a liability by interviewees in every category, and here the emphasis is on oral communication and pronunciation. Most participants are confident in their written abilities.

7.6 Summary - successful

The interviewees in this group were successful at the start of Global Future, and their success continues. They are characterized by the achievement of biculturalism, and they do not perceive being

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foreign as any type of obstacle. On the contrary, they use being foreign as an asset. Though successful, they do not attribute their success to Global Future. They see themselves as role models, have done so for a long time, and do not perceive any change in this since Global Future. The mentoring program did not function satisfactorily for any of the interviewees in this category. The Board competence course was only cited by one interviewee as useful. Two interviewees had already taken the course before Global Future. All in all, the program appears to have been redundant for these participants.

7.7 Networking

One of the goals of the program was to strengthen participants' networks by establishing meeting places, particularly between participants and Norwegian businesses, but also among the participants themselves. "Base groups" of 5-6 participants were established based on the results of the Jungian Type Index (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jungian_Type_Index), and one member of each group was chosen to lead the groups. None of the interviewees express positive outcomes from the base groups. The majority say that they simply did not function, and some say that the groups were "Ok" but that they did not meet outside of the regular GF gatherings. When asked to explain why they thought the groups did not work, most interviewees say that there was a lack of understanding about what the groups should do. They suggest assigning concrete tasks to the base groups. A few interviewees also say that some individuals emerged as too strong in the base groups, and dominated the other, weaker members. Geographical distance was mentioned as a difficulty for most groups. Participants were spread across two counties, and location was not taken into account when the groups were assembled.

In addition to the "base groups", the mentor program was also a means to increase participants' network. This appears to have been the weakest point of the program. Karlsen (2009) evaluated networking by asking 2 yes / no questions. The first question was: Had the participants increased their networks by adding other GF participants? 26 answered yes, 6 unsure and 2 answered no.

That eight did not answer yes can only be explained by one of two possibilities:
   1. These two barely attended the gatherings (there were a few participants who attended less than 30%)
   2. There was a different cultural understanding of network than that which is the norm in Norway.

By Norwegian standards, meeting in this context of GF over a period of 18 months would qualify to count all participants in one's network. When I asked the question, "Who do you still have contact with from Global Future?" I received variations on the following reply: "Contact? What is contact?"

The second question was: Had the participants increased their networks through meetings with their mentors or through the project partners? Here, only 17 participants answered yes. These questions gave no indication of the extent to which participants increased their networks. During the interviews, questions asked revealed how many GF participants the interviewees still had contact with, continued contact with mentors, introductions through their mentors, and whether or not they made contacts through the events held during the program. The results follow, and they are not good.

All of the participants interviewed had extended their networks to include other GF participants. On average, the interviewees have kept in touch with 2-4 participants regularly since completion of the program, but consider their networks to include a larger number of GF participants (on average, half of the group). Networks are here defined as social media networks or people that you would stop and have a chat with if you met them by coincidence.

Only one of the interviewees still has substantial contact with his mentor, since they now work in the same organization. Only one of the interviewees was introduced to anyone new by their mentor. None of the interviewees made a single lasting contact through the events organized during the program. There was no difference in terms of the participants' status when entering the program (unemployed, underemployed or successful). All of the participants recognize the importance of networks in terms of employment and success in Norway, and many have managed to establish their own networks in Norway, but none attribute this to Global Future.

"There was no contact with Norwegians during the events. This could have worked better. It is the key to business," says one participant.

"Network building can be the thing that gives the most back. There should be more focus on that," says

another." I will return to ways in which to do this in the next chapter.

7.8 Program content

Overall, the Global Future program receives a high rating from participants. Participants are grateful to have had the opportunity to take a professional development program for free, and to have met new people in similar situations to themselves. When asked for suggestions for program improvement, one interviewee says that it is important to take participants' diverse cultural backgrounds into account. He advises:

> "Respect the fact that we are not "foreigners." We are Colombians, Americans, Iranians, Russians. There are huge cultural differences, religious differences, and age differences. It is difficult to get everyone to work together as if they were the same, like in Female Future."

This is an inherent dilemma for a program like Global Future, and an added challenge is to draw on this diversity and turn it into an advantage.

The informational program components covering Norwegian organizational and political culture, self-development and Health, Safety and the Environment (HMS) got high ratings from the unemployed and some of the individuals in the underemployed category. The successful group, and some in the underemployed group, thought much of this content was redundant. This part of the program appears to be best suited to the needs of the unemployed group.

"The lectures have made us more independent and secure. Most of us did not have enough information about these things. Now I know my rights and obligations," says Kari. Bhagat and London (1999) emphasize the importance of learning how organizations work, and the politics of upper influence. The participants in the successful group had learned these norms on their own, but it is clear that this part of the program benefited the other participants significantly.

Many of the unemployed participants had not had the opportunity to experience democracy and involvement in the workplace, an important norm to understand in the Norwegian workplace. Lectures

on Norwegian organizational culture and HMS filled in many gaps for participants in this category.

The Board competence course was praised by all interviewees who attended the course. (A few of the participants had already received Board certification and did not attend.) At one point in the program, NHO considered cutting this part of the course. Participants reacted very strongly to this, as it was the only component that carried credit, and it was one of the reasons they had applied for Global Future in the first place. NHO listened to the participants, and delivered the Board competence course through a third party (BI).

Apart from the components that were delivered in a traditional lecture format, Global Future used base groups as the smallest social unit and a mentor program as the link to local employers in the private and public sectors. Mathiesen views the program as an arena where "talented individuals meet each other, with respect." The program initially established base groups to bring the participants together and create small social networks. The base groups were assembled based on the results of the Jungian Type Index (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jungian_Type_Index) which participants took at the start of the program. None of the interviewees expressed satisfaction with the base groups. One participant describes her experience with the base group this way:

> "The base group just didn't work. There were several reasons, but one was that we didn't have enough time to interact. When there are people with so many different cultures, you need twice as much time. You need a common goal, or at least common interests. It ended up being a bit childish, or artificial."

The Global Future recruitment brochure states that potential employers will be involved in the program through the mentoring program and use of businesses as cases. In the same brochure, the first point under program content is *Leadership development through a mentor program*. Interviewees in all categories express great disappointment with the mentor program. When the mentor program is intended to be the main source of leadership development and the strongest link to private enterprise, and the mentor program fails, a significant part of the program fails.

The program content best suited the needs of the participants in the unemployed group, who on average have the shortest number of years resident in Norway. Participants in the underemployed category benefited from the program content to varying degrees based upon how much knowledge they brought into the program. Many of the interviewees in this category had acquired a good understanding of the norms of working in Norway before program participation. The Board competence and HMS courses impacted them the most. Participants in the successful group perceived the program content to be too basic, and redundant for them, with the exception of the Board competence course (for those who were not already certified). Program elements that are heavily criticized are the mentor program, networking and contact with businesses. I will return to this in Chapters 8 and 9.

7.9 Communication and profiling

The success of Global Future 1 was essential to the proliferation of the program throughout Norway. Participants openly state that they felt Global Future was not well enough known or profiled in the early stages of the program. At the time, NHO Agder was upfront about controlling access to the press. Media Service was hired to document the program from start to finish, and then to release it to the media. The Media Service (2009) production was aired on NRK after the conclusion of the program. A few participants were profiled in local and national newspapers, as well as Migrapolis (an NRK TV program on immigrants in Norway). Karlsen's (2009) evaluation received very positive coverage in the media, and Global Future was declared a success.

One participant followed Global Future in the media in amazement, especially stories of participants who had had success in private enterprise. "It's a stretch to say that they did this because of Global Future. It's stretching the reality...a little bit...too much," she says. During interviews with these participants, it became clear from the time lines that Global Future could not have been the direct cause for their getting these jobs.

NRK Sørlandet reported the following on June 6, 2008 (my translation):

> Thirty or so educated immigrants in Aust-Agder have received work, after having been unemployed, or having had positions where they have been overqualified. The Global Future project has made it simpler for many to get attractive jobs. One of those who has a job through the project is 40-year-old Elena Horne, who is originally from Russia. "To get my first job, I had to send out 280

applications. That I now have a job is fantastic, just fantastic," says Horne. Horne is both an engineer and an economist, and has management training from her home country. The cooperation project between NHO and NAV made it possible for her to become Director of Finances for Finsam Refrigeration.

Apart from the blatant error in the first sentence, where 30 or so immigrants participating in the program come from Aust-Agder and have become employed or received promotions, Horne is misrepresented. She was in fact employed in a relevant position before Global Future and accepted the management position two weeks after she started GF. The 280 applications she refers to (it was actually 210) is before she received her first job in 2005, completely of her own volition. NHO frequently uses Horne to profile Global Future, but does not make the explicit statement that her job is a result of Global Future, as NRK does. During the interview with me, Horne clarifies:

> "In 2005, I was going completely crazy. I met the wall. I went to the municipality with my papers and asked for an internship. They were shocked. People just don't do that. They said that if NAV was behind it, they would give me an internship. I went across the road to NAV. Ten minutes later, they called me and said I could start the next day. After that, my boss helped get me a job in Arendal. I kept applying for other jobs, and then I was offered a permanent position as an accountant at an accountancy agency. This is the job I had when GF started. It was fairly boring, so I kept looking. Two weeks after GF started, I was offered the job at Finsam. So, it had absolutely nothing directly to do with Global Future, but I have found inspiration. In that way, Global Future has a connection. I have received a ton of energy, a real lift. There is no doubt about that."

Several participants react to the fact that the people who were most profiled in the media had achieved their success before Global Future. They say that NHO should have been brave enough to show the program as it was, rather than picking examples of already successful individuals to exemplify the program's success. One participant says:

> "All in all, I don't think you can expect a program like this to be a success the very first time. I think NHO should have been aware of this and been realistic. What you read about in the newspapers is not actually what happened, and in the future this may come back to haunt NHO."

The program partners profile Global Future to a limited degree on their websites, and the information found on the websites is out-of-date. Adecco advertizes Global Future most prominently of all of the

program partners under "About Adecco" and "Community responsibility" on its website (www.adecco.no).

The following partners have articles regarding the launch of Global Future2 on their websites, but they have to be found using a search engine: Aust-Agder County Council, Vest-Agder County Council, Cultiva, IMDI, NAV, and Kristiansand municipality. Global Future is not prominently profiled on the websites. Arendal municipality, Innovasjon Norge Agder, KS and UiA do not profile Global Future on their websites.

Interviews with HR managers in Agder Energi and Aker Solutions reveal that NHO has managed to communicate the goals of Global Future by linking the program to Female Future, but that the program is otherwise not very well-known.

7.9.1 "Human capital must be used!"

The irony in the title of the evaluation "Human capital must be used!" is that, while NHO consistently promoted the importance of using the resources that exist in the immigrant population, participants commented that these same resources could have been exploited more during the program itself, but were not. The members of the successful group especially felt that their offers to share knowledge and networks fell on deaf ears.

Early in the program, one participant took the initiative to invite participants to his home for dinner. He proposed that participants worked together in groups to prepare a dinner where they could invite their mentors and others. One group volunteered to design an invitation and completed work on that. While he was in the process of assigning things to other groups, NHO took over, booked a new location, arranged for catering, and sent out its own invitation to guests selected by NHO. This served to insult and alienate a resourceful, highly profiled and successful participant. He expresses his feelings at that time like this:

"I really could have done something with my company. I could have gotten some funding for team-

building. The whole event would have been done as a team-building activity instead of as a catered dinner as it turned out. I lost interest in the whole group then. I was actually really hurt. I have a high-level management position, and they did not trust me to do that little task which was actually my idea! It left a bad taste in my mouth."

Several participants expressed disappointment that the focus was too much on socializing among the group, and too little on applying the resources that existed in participants' competencies and experience. One participant says:

"My advice to NHO is to be clear about Global Future not being just another social initiative. You have to join us and do something yourself. There should be more room for individual initiative, and effort to create a feeling of ownership. They need to come up with ways of doing this."

One participant also criticized the evaluation itself, the format as well as the content. She says:

"That's not the way to do it. If you really want to know what's going on you need interviews, or did NHO just want to show that everything was a success? When I read the results of the evaluation, I was shocked! It was like reading a description of something completely different, something I had never been a part of!"

7.10 Employment

NHO is quick to point out that employment was not a goal of Global Future - that participation in Global Future would not necessarily lead to a new job or a promotion (Mathiesen, 2010). The program designers say they never intended this to be an expectation, but that it was clear in the early stages that several participants came with the wrong expectations. It was a challenge to "re-program" their expectations, says Thorsrud, adding that most of this was accomplished with the help of other participants who had more realistic expectations.

However, the measurable results of Global Future, according to the program documents, are: participants who receive new jobs, participants who receive relevant jobs, participants who advance in their present organizations, participants who receive board positions, and businesses that hire people with a multicultural background and benefit from their competence in key positions, leadership positions or on boards.

7.10.1 Employment status

Before Global Future began, nine participants were unemployed. At the point when Karlsen's (2009) evaluation was made, 21 participants reported that they had received new jobs or promotions since GF started. Not surprisingly, the employment status of participants has changed since the evaluation. I have not managed to assemble a complete overview of all participants' employment status due to lack of response from a few participants, but have confirmed the following through interviews:

- Seven of the 21 (new jobs or other) were promotions within the participants' current organization (their employer when GF began), and of these all have maintained their current position except one, who left their private sector employer for a more challenging job in the same sector.

- One was appointed manager of Global Future Consulting, but left this position in favor of a full-time permanent position in the public sector which she still holds.

- One was employed in a temporary position in the public sector and has since moved into a more permanent position at the same employer.

- One has received a new job in the same sector.

- Three have remained in the new positions that they accepted during Global Future.

- Three of the 15 "newly employed" were "employed" with subsidies from NAV, and when the subsidies were no longer available, all three lost their jobs. Of these, two are unemployed and one has a new part-time position, partially subsidized by NAV and partially paid for by the public sector employer.

- Two more are currently unemployed, a total of 4 unemployed and 1 partially employed with subsidies from NAV.

Many of the participants who were unemployed at the start of Global Future are either unemployed at this writing or receiving subsidies from NAV. Only one of the interviewees in this category is employed in a permanent, full-time in a job that is suited to her qualifications. Many of the interviewees who were underemployed have moved up the career ladder since participating in Global Future. There is no change in employment status in the interviewees in the successful category.

8 Discussion

In this chapter, I return to my research questions: *What impact has Global Future had on the work life of participants two years later? How can the experiences of participants and stakeholders be used to further develop and improve the Global Future program in order to address integration and full*

utilization of labor resources in Agder? Is empowerment of the individual sufficient to achieve the goals of integration and full utilization of labor resources? It is important to keep the context of Global Future in mind throughout the discussion. Global Future is a Norwegian program developed for an extraordinarily diverse group of people, to some degree mirroring the challenges of immigration in Norwegian society at large. As such, the program as well as the insights given by the participants, must be viewed through a cultural lens. The most important finding regarding the impact of the program has to do with development of the participants' identity. In a cultural context, identity development also plays a strong role in acculturation and adaptation to the host country. This chapter is divided into two sections: Impact and Program Development. The first section focuses on the first research question, and the second section focuses on the two sub-questions. This chapter begins with a discussion of acculturation, intercultural competence and identity. The program development section focuses on how the experiences from GF1 can be used to develop the program and address integration and utilization of labor resources in Agder, and whether individual empowerment is sufficient for achieving this goal. Suggestions for program improvement are treated in a separate chapter, following the discussion.

8.1 Impact

8.1.1 Acculturation and Intercultural Competence

The three groupings of participants all exhibit different degrees of acculturation, with the most successful group having come furthest in the process. In most cases, the degree of acculturation is related to the amount of time spent in Norway, again with the successful group having spent the longest amount of time. Throughout the interviews, the participants are well aware of cultural differences and their importance to the success of the program. As previously mentioned, acculturation is the adjustment to a new culture and is associated with three types of stress: opportunity stress, demand stress and constraint stresses. One of the antidotes to acculturation stress is social support, which can take the form of role modeling, mentoring, friendships or assistance when needed (Bhagat and London, 1999). Global Future can have provided the necessary social support to enable the underemployed and unemployed participants to deal better with the stress associated with their situations through the social gatherings.

Opportunity stress results from the realization that it is not always so easy to attain the rewards available in the new society (Bhagat and London, 1999). In order to receive fair and equal access to the rewards, an immigrant must learn a new language, build new networks and work within new processes and structures (op. cit.). The three different groups of participants can be seen to be in three different stages of dealing with opportunity stress, with the unemployed group having just mastered the language but still in the early phase of network-building and learning to work within new structures. In terms of the program, they naturally received the most benefit from the educational components on Norwegian organizations and politics. Many of the participants in the underemployed group had accepted jobs that were beneath their qualifications and the jobs they had held in their home countries. Bhagat and London (1999) found that downward mobility (accepting jobs below their qualifications) is frustrating to many immigrants, but that some immigrant groups cope with downward mobility differently. This may explain why some of the participants are satisfied with jobs they are overqualified for, while others are not. Global Future has had the greatest impact on participants in this group when it comes to upward mobility. Feelings of increased self-confidence and more positive attitudes have resulted, and there is a shift in the perception of being foreign as an obstacle. From the interview data, it is possible to make the following two observations: 1) the more satisfied the employee is with his current position, the less he perceives being foreign as an obstacle. 2) the more positive the perception of being foreign, the more satisfied the employee is in their current position. It is very difficult, however, to determine what is the cause, and what is the effect.

The demand stresses of adjusting to a new social environment can create problems for maintenance of self-esteem during the phases of acculturation (Bhagat and London, 1999). Increased self-esteem and self-confidence is cited more often than any other single factor by the interviewees as a benefit of Global Future. Participants in the successful group do not see that they have increased their own self-esteem through Global Future, but they saw this effect in others.

Constraint stresses are the daily "hassles" of living in a new culture. These are experienced to a varying degree, but mostly center upon language difficulties. The interviewees do not appear to experience a high degree of constraint stresses once they enter employment in Norway. On the contrary, they generally enjoy their jobs and feel accepted by their colleagues.

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Bhagat and London (1999) suggest that career motivation also combats the negative effects of acculturation stress.

> "Resilience, insight and identity are linked to career motivation. Resilience keeps people energized and helps them maintain their commitment and overcome difficult situations. Career insight is clear and objective understanding of self and one's work environment. It gives people a better view of their strengths and weaknesses(...)Career identity directs one's efforts toward a concrete set of career goals...We suspect that immigrants who are able to maintain steady levels of career motivation will be more likely to be effective in sustaining positive career outcomes while dealing with acculturation stresses." (Bhagat and London, 1999:360)

Motivation is another Global Future benefit frequently cited by participants in the unemployed and underemployed groups.

Once the stresses of acculturation are overcome, the immigrant reaches a stable state which can be negative compared with the home country, as good as the home country, or even better than the home country (Hofstede et al., 2010). I have not asked participants directly whether or not they prefer living and working in Norway to living and working in their home countries. However, it would not be a great leap to draw at least one conclusion from the overall impressions given during the interviews. Interviewees in the successful group describe their work situations as "fantastic," and "no better place in the world to work." I would say that their stable state is better than it was in the home country. The unemployed and underemployed participants give very individual assessments of satisfaction, and I conclude that where they rate on the stable state scale is as individual as they are. Family life, social life, and interaction with the community are also important factors for the quality of the stable state. However, their achievement of a stable state seems at least in part to be tied to the success that they have achieved professionally.

Intercultural competence is generally viewed to be an important tool in adapting to a new society and cultural context (Bhagat and London, 1999). Intercultural competence is a significant educational component of the Global Future program, but this is criticized by most interviewees, who say that they

had already developed this type of competence. "Been there, done that," says one. The general opinion of participants is that Norwegians and NHO need the intercultural competence training more than the participants, who had acquired these skills in order to survive in a new environment. One participant gives this insight:

> "I think a big problem is the cultural differences. They are trying to make a program from a Norwegian perspective, but they have people from other countries. We need people who understand that education and other qualifications are different in Norway than in other countries. A program like Global Future gives people from different countries different expectations. They did not try to understand our different angles and approaches when it comes to different cultures(...)The program we went through was also unclear because of the cultural differences, and the program was from a Norwegian perspective. When you know you are from another culture, all those elements come up. You put on the glasses from your country, and you're not going to see the same thing from the same point of view as people with other glasses. We can use these differences, but in a different way."

Program delivery is very much from a Norwegian perspective, with the program having been modeled on another Norwegian initiative, Female Future. Hofstede's research supports the interviewee's observation. According to Hofstede (2001), delivering programs from one culture's perspective without consideration of the mental models of the target population of the program will result in different outcomes than intended.

Acquisition of intercultural communication skills follows the pattern of awareness, knowledge and skills (Hofstede et al., 2010). Awareness is the understanding that people from different cultures have different mental programs, knowledge refers to knowledge of the other culture, and skills are based on awareness and knowledge, but developed in practice (op. cit.).

Global Future impacts the acculturation process of participants in the unemployed category by providing informational and educational components which fill in the gaps necessary for understanding Norwegian work life. Participants in the underemployed category have received a considerable boost in self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation as a result of the program, and this helps them cope better with the demand stresses of acculturation. Participants in the successful group had already gone through the stages of acculturation before they started Global Future, and have not benefited from the program in terms of acculturation. Interviews with participants show that intercultural competence is

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generally already acquired before participation in GF, but it is something that the participants note could be taught to Norwegians.

8.1.2 Identity

The greatest impact of Global Future has been on identity. The unemployed and underemployed participants experienced the emergence of a group identity which also impacted their personal identities. Both the unemployed and underemployed groups exhibit a strengthening of personal identity and perception of themselves in relation to Norwegian society. The interviewees in the successful group already had a well-developed sense of personal identity, and were aware of this.

The strengthening of identity in the unemployed and underemployed groups seems to be the key success factor of the program. The participants in the successful group all exhibited an ability to interpret being an immigrant as something positive. Those in the underemployed group did this to a lesser degree, while the participants in the unemployed group had a markedly more negative interpretation, generally seeing being foreign as an obstacle to success in their careers in Norway. The most dramatic changes have occurred in the unemployed group, where the interviewees' mental models have changed as a result of Global Future. They are able to look at things from a new perspective, their theories in use change, and gradually they develop new mental models (Argyris, 1999). The personal development educational components in Global Future encouraged this type of change, but the participants' own sharing of success stories have enabled some of the unemployed participants to change their mental models.

Participants in both the unemployed and underemployed groups expressed a change of attitudes as a result of the program, and increased feelings of security and self-confidence. "Being in the same boat" was a recurring metaphor. Many of the interviewees established a group identity through Global Future that went beyond people of their own nationality. Hofstede et al. (2010) explains establishment of group identity as "in-groups" and "out-groups." The first in-group is defined early in life by the family and the culture that one is born into, but people who move between cultures meet the challenge of being in the "out-group" when they enter the new culture (op. cit.). In the interviews, participants express feelings of

belonging with other GF participants, despite their differing cultures and nationalities. Interestingly, the Global Future program can have created a new group identity which worked against integration. Global Future participants created their own new in-group which acted as a buffer toward the traditional in-group (Norwegians). In fact, during some of the social gatherings, Norwegians (generally members of the majority in-group) could have experienced feeling like members of an out-group in their own home culture. Several participants commented on the fact that during the social gatherings, Norwegians were often segregated from the Global Future participants, who chose to socialize with each other. This was also noticed and mentioned by Mathiesen of NHO. She had expected participants to make more active attempts at mingling and networking. Intercultural encounters among groups rather that individuals, tend to confirm each group's identity rather than enhance mutual understanding (Hofstede et al., 2010). The lack of connections made during gatherings with Norwegians cannot solely be attributed to the host culture.

In addition to identity awareness and adaptability, professional identity development is also essential for people to realize their career potential in a new culture (Baugh and Sullivan, 2005). A characteristic of professional identity development is looking to others as role models, and adapting qualities observed in others to one's own identity (Ibarra, 1999). Throughout the process of professional identity development, people use the feedback they receive from others to develop their self-insight and try on "provisional selves" until they settle on an identity that makes them comfortable (Ibarra, 1999). Global Future provides an arena for professional identity development by bringing people of diverse backgrounds together as role models.

The element of time plays a key role in professional identity development, which occurs in tandem with career development (Baugh and Sullivan, 2005). This may provide an explanation for the well-developed sense of professional identity exhibited by interviewees in the successful group. Interviewees in the underemployed group are still in the process of "trying on" professional identities, as they are still in relatively early stages of career development. The participants who have gone from underemployed to successful, in particular, seem to still be finding their feet as leaders in their organizations. Interviewees in the unemployed group have to re-negotiate their professional identities, as most of them have either had to change careers or to accept jobs under their qualifications.

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8.2 *Program development*

Global Future 1 was a pilot program. Although it was based on Female Future, the program had not been tried out on its target group, which proved to be an extremely diverse group of people. It was an experiment both for NHO and for participants. The evaluation of 2009 (Karlsen, 2009) was relatively positive, but suggested ways in which to improve the program. NHO has implemented many of these changes already. Through the interviews, participants have been afforded the opportunity to reflect upon their own experiences and suggest ways in which Global Future can be improved for future participants. I have also interviewed HR managers at two companies in Agder to see if the company is meeting the goals of full utilization of labor resources in the region. In order to address these questions, I will discuss program execution, business ties and participants as resources. Specific suggestions for improvement will be reserved for the following chapter.

8.2.1 Recruitment

In order to be effective, a program must know its target population, be able to direct services to that population, and be able to screen out people who are not within the defined target population (Rossi, 2004).

The program documents define the following target group for GF1:

- Immigrants with higher education from all continents (first generation immigrants are the main target group)
- People in employment that is relevant to their education
- Entrepreneurs (including self-employed business people)
- People who are overqualified for their current jobs
- The unemployed
- Age group: 30-50

The qualifications for applying for GF1 as presented to the public in recruitment material were: 1) good Norwegian skills 2) legal residence in Norway 3) completed education - preferably higher education before coming to Norway (GF brochure, 2007). Few of the people in the successful category met the last requirement. Most of them had received higher education in Norway, and some of them had also grown up in Norway, receiving all of their education in Norway.

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The interviewees in the "successful" group expressed the clear opinion that they were not the target group, and that NHO "missed their mark." Many of the other interviewees had no leader ambition, but just wanted to come further in life and saw Global Future as an opportunity for this. To some extent, NHO missed the target group also with these individuals, but seems to have hit a target group that the intro program had failed.

Target specification is meant to establish boundaries, but there is a risk of making the specification too inclusive, thus making it difficult to match the program to the target (Rossi, 2004). The range of skills, successful employment and time spent in Norway resulted in an extremely diverse group which alone would have created a challenge for program delivery. On top of this, nationality, cultural background, and reason for immigrating added to the complexity of the group. One participant explains the challenge of delivering a program to a diverse group of people in this way:

> "There are two types of people who come to Norway: Those who chose to be here and those who didn't, who have not chosen and who maybe also cannot return to their home country. For those who chose, it is easier to see the positive sides of the country. For those who didn't, it is 20 times harder and you see more barriers. And that was another thing: I felt that the program placed everyone in the same category. People need different types of help. The situation of a refugee is very different from mine. If you give different people the same treatment, you will still get different results."

This same participant describes other participants as passively "sitting and waiting" for a good job to come along. Of the participants I interviewed, I find little evidence of "sitting and waiting", but if one participant has interpreted her observations this way, I think it is reasonable to assume that outside observers (Norwegian society in general) may do the same. This participant makes a distinction between those who immigrate voluntarily and those who come as refugees or asylum seekers. Particularly in the case of refugees, the ability to provide a safe environment for their own children often outweighs the interviewee's own career ambition. They are willing to sacrifice their careers for the secure future of their children.

A weakness of GF1 was representation of nationalities, with the obvious absence of some of the larger immigrant groups in Norway (Vietnam and Germany), and very low representation from Norway's

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strongest trade partners (again, Germany, all of Western Europe and most noticeably China and the rest of Asia). "The most common coverage problem in social interventions is the failure to achieve high target participation, either because of bias in the way targets are recruited or retained or because potential clients are unaware of the program, are unable to use it, or reject it." (Rossi, 2004, p.185) Recruiting was done by Adecco, a GF partner company which specializes in recruiting foreigners. GF1 had a relatively high representation of some nationalities (Russia and Iran), and this was criticized by the interviewees, including those who came from these countries.

NHO Agder has been more actively involved in the filtering of candidates for GF2, placing greater emphasis on Norwegian language skills. In recruiting participants, NHO now says the important set of criteria are: talent, potential, language and ambition. Whether or not the participants are Western or non-Western is irrelevant (Mathiesen, 2010). The recruitment brochure for GF 2 has been revised to target the following:

- People who are overqualified for their current jobs
- Immigrants in relevant positions with ambitions of having future management positions
- Self-employed
- Entrepreneurs
- Immigrants with higher education who are not employed
- Age group: 28-48

The age group has been lowered slightly, and primary selection criteria from GF1 "Immigrants with higher education from all continents (first generation immigrants are the main target group)" has been removed, as has the stand-alone category "unemployed."

Global Future is a talent mobilization program with the intention of nurturing future leaders for the region. For the program to have the intended impact, the correct target group must be recruited. The application for Global Future asked potential participants to describe their career ambitions, but this is a difficult characteristic to actually observe and confirm in an interview. Rossi (2004) states that target definitions must also be feasible to apply, and that characteristics that are difficult to observe can be nearly impossible to put into practice. When participants with no leadership ambition are recruited to a leadership development program, the program will not have the desired impact. This seems to have

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occurred in GF1. Participants in the unemployed group have gotten a lift from the educational elements, but NHO selected some unemployed participants with no desire to become leaders.

Participants in the successful group had already achieved a level of success above and beyond what Global Future provided for them. In the case of the successful interviewees, NHO either missed the mark in selecting employees who were overqualified for the program, or missed the mark by selecting the right people but not meeting the challenge of delivering an appropriate program. According to Rossi (2004), a thorough needs assessment that takes into account participants and stakeholders' perspectives can lead to a reconceptualization either of the target population or of the program in order to increase impact.

The Global Future program best matched the needs and ambition level of the participants in the underemployed group, but even here there was great variation in the knowledge and experience that participants brought to the program. NHO has already taken steps to ensure that recruitment for GF2 places more emphasis on ambition, but to improve impact, program content should also be better tailored to the needs of the participants based upon their employment level and experience when they enter the program.

8.2.2 Program execution

With such a diverse group of people in terms of nationality, background, age, and experience, delivering a program to fit all participants' needs is a great challenge. When it comes to the overall program planning, frustration is expressed by members of all groups that they did not have a plan for the full program at the outset. At several points during the program, participants asked for a plan for the following months and were met with the reply, *"Veien blir til mens vi går"* or "Our course will be defined as we go." Findings from the interviews show that this was interpreted as, "they don't know what to do with us."

A participant from the unemployed category says:

> "Some of the time, it seemed like NHO didn't know what they should do with us. It was a good idea, and a really good start, but it didn't seem like it was so well-thought through, especially in terms of mapping our competence. In fact, if it had been well-planned, I don't think I would have been

selected for the program. It was too early for me in terms of language."

Providing a complete schedule for the entire program should be easy to fix for GF2 and subsequent programs.

Program delivery included overnight stays in hotels with all meals included. Participants comment that this made them feel "appreciated, "worthy" and "dignified." Several of the participants had never spent the night at a hotel in Norway. It can also be inferred that they were not accustomed to feeling "appreciated," "worthy" or "dignified" in Norway.

From the interviews, it is clear that participants had very different expectations for the program, and this has led to very different degrees of satisfaction. Participants in the successful category, especially, had expected the program to be at a higher level than it was. One participant says:

"What was the goal of Global Future? For me, this was not clear. It was never clear. I applied because I thought it was something else – something that would give us information but on another level. It was a bit too basic."

Program goals should be articulated through a goal-specific action plan which establishes a time line, assigns responsibility for implementation, and sets up a system for accountability (Arredondo, 1996). The goals should also be anticipated and communicated when the plan is set (op. cit.). The goals of Global Future as communicated by NHO are, as previously stated (Karlsen, 2009):

1. to qualify highly educated people with a foreign background for management positions and board positions in Norway
2. to contribute to growth and long-term value creation in Agder

During the four-day study trip to Hovden, participants were introduced to a technique called "Open spaces." The purpose was for the group to come up with a product, and it began with a broad generation of ideas, which were written on paper and placed in the center of the room. The ideas were then grouped thematically, and each participant could choose a subject to work further upon in groups. Each

group had the task of coming up with a product that could be further developed (Media Service, 2009). The co-generative learning model (Argyris, 1999) can be used to describe the framework for interaction in "Open spaces" and and also throughout the program. The basic premise of the co-generative learning model is the importance of systematizing and structuring learning processes (Klev and Levin, 2002). The initiator generates learning and development through practical activities while the problem owners are enabled to make better decisions through an increase in skills and competence. Not only are concrete tasks accomplished, but through this process, resources are fostered that can be realized at a later date (op. cit.).

In the case of Global Future, NHO was the initiator and the participants were the problem owners. "Open spaces" was run by consultants hired by NHO. The consultants' challenge is to make themselves redundant. This can only occur if the knowledge and skills they possess are made available to the participants through co-generative learning (op. cit.).

The long-term goal is for the organization to be self-sustaining (op. cit.). This can be said to have been one of the greatest challenges of Global Future. Not only would participants lose the learning community to which they had become attached, but they would also move either into old organizations or new organizations alone. GF was a safe, nurturing environment away from the participants' actual work environments where they would be expected to apply what they had learned.

The end result of Open spaces was the proposal of the establishment of a company, Global Future Consulting. The story of Global Future Consulting is outside of the scope of this dissertation, but, in brief, a company was established, earned a little profit, and because of lack of involvement from shareholders is being dissolved at the time of this writing. One of the features of "Open spaces" was that the groups received a limited amount of time to work on tasks, and were told at the beginning that it would come to an abrupt end: "When it's over, it's over" was the refrain. This became a metaphor for the whole program, something that many of the participants reacted to in the interviews. "When it's over, it's over? What did that mean? Really, that is kind of dumb," said one participant.

With social intervention programs, it is important to define the way in which a program will conclude so that the participants do not experience a sense of loss (Rossi, 2004). Many of the participants say that they would have liked follow-up since the conclusion of Global Future. "I think NHO is sick of us, and I would have expected more from NHO," says one. "I thought they would have used us as role models for GF2 but I can't see that that has happened."

Participants notice the absence of a well-developed, cohesive plan. It is also clear that participants came into the program with different expectations from each other and NHO. NHO is aware of these shortcomings, and attribute this to GF1 being a pilot program (Mathiesen, 2010). The lack of continuity between GF1 and GF2 has also been noticed, and NHO is planning on establishing an arena for the groups to meet in 2011.

9   Suggestions for improvement

This section proposes some suggestions for how the Global Future program can be improved to meet the challenges of integration and full utilization of labor resources in Agder. The chapter focuses primarily on the weakest point of the program from the perspective of the participants: lack of cultural understanding, mentoring and networking and ties to business. Following this, I also briefly look at two obstacles that are currently outside the scope of Global Future, but important to consider in terms of meeting the challenges of integration and utilization of resources: formal qualifications and language.

After the successful evaluation of Global Future, funding was granted by the Ministry of Trade and Industry to run the program nationally. Ten regional offices of NHO have launched local versions, based on the NHO Agder model. NHO says that unions have been resistant to the program, and LO has therefore backed out of the program as a partner (Stie, 2010). NHO has already used the experience from the pilot program and the evaluation (Karlsen, 2009) to alter the program. The changes are briefly presented here before the suggestions for improvement.

9.1.1   Changes for GF2

Global Future 2 officially began in June 2010. It uses the same template as the pilot, but a few

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alterations have been made. As previously mentioned, the recruitment criteria have been slightly altered in order to identify immigrants with leadership ambition, and the age has been lowered slightly. There is no requirement of higher education outside of Norway for GF2.

Norwegian language skill has been more heavily emphasized. The number of participants has been limited to 27, which Stie says makes the program easier to organize and more cost-efficient. The program goals have also been altered slightly, with much more focus on increasing visibility of participants and businesses than in the pilot program. The program will be delivered in the same number of gatherings, but will be compressed into a 12 month program period (down from 18 months). The leadership development program has been out-sourced. Otherwise, the program is similar to GF1.

In Agder, the base groups embarked on a three-day trip for the second gathering, where they received an assignment right away. The assignment was already formed ahead of time, and was much more concrete than the "Open spaces" assignment GF1 received on their study trip, which occurred toward the end of the program. Stie says the intention of having the study trip at the start is to help participants to get to know each other better, and earlier, by working together toward a common goal. This is very much in line with the suggestions made by the interviewees. The task involves creating a marketing campaign, so this should also contribute to increasing the visibility of the participants, says Stie. Thorsrud says having a concrete task will also avoid the complications caused by the result of Open spaces, which was the Global Future Consulting company. In addition to the changes already made after the pilot program and as a result of Karlsen's evaluation, I would like to propose further improvements based on participants' suggestions and recent research in the field of networking and mentoring.

9.1.2 Intercultural focus group

Through the interviews, I see individuals with experience and insights that are valuable to the development of Global Future that have not yet been tapped by NHO. When asked whether or not immigrants have been used as focus groups for the development of Global Future and Global Future 2, Mathiesen answers that this was never the point. "It wasn't supposed to be another special social initiative program for foreigners - it is based on mobilizing the talent of the individual," she says. This

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seems to contradict the program content, which included intercultural communication and understanding. It also seems to contradict NHO's idea of seeing immigrants as resources. In fact, it seems naive to think that a program directed toward immigrants would be best developed if it were solely developed by a group of non-immigrants. McMahon and Fritzberg (2003) explain the difference in the immigrant's experience in relation to that of the cultural native:

"Whereas we all develop and change throughout our lives, these young people are on a journey that most of us cannot begin to appreciate. The identities that those of us who are cultural natives rely on to take us through life's changes are relatively stable. For young immigrants, however, establishing a sense of cultural identity, who they are, can be like trying to stand tall on an unstable fountain." (Kochan and Pascarelli, 2003:362)

Interviewees believe that cultural differences were not taken into account when designing the program, and they express a desire to contribute and to be involved in the further development of GF. The focus group could also be used to establish a bridge from GF1 to GF2, and eventually to GF3. Giving previous participants a role in development would also preserve the link to NHO and would provide an opportunity for continuity.

NHO emphasizes the importance of immigrants as resources and role models in promoting Global Future regionally and nationally. Interviewees do not experience their resources being used in the development of GF2. The interviews show that the participants have reflected upon their experience since Global Future, and that they have valuable insight into the program. The participants can provide the intercultural competence and the life experience of immigrating to Norway that the program designers are missing. Participants' life experience can complement NHO's program design experience if it is exploited. When NHO developed the Global Future pilot program, they did not have a pool of highly educated immigrants to draw upon. Now, through the pilot, there is a pool of people who are eager to use their knowledge and experience. NHO has a unique opportunity not only to gain from their expertise, but also to reinforce their own message by recognizing the talent in these resources and using it.

NHO uses a few participants as spokespersons for Global Future. This may be the most effective way of

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communicating the program, but as previously stated, NHO needs to be cautious about how these participants are presented. None of the highly profiled interviewees confirm a direct link between Global Future and their current positions. However, they are all good examples of integration and utilization of labor resources in the region. Their stories can be used to promote this goal.

9.1.3 Networking, mentoring and role-modeling

The findings show that networking and mentoring did not meet up to participants' expectations, but that there has been a meaningful effect on role-modeling. Karlsen's (2009) evaluation asked how the mentor program could be improved, and suggested the following: Better suitability between the protégées needs and the mentor's desire to contribute; More structured arrangement for the program (in terms of frequency and content); Early evaluation of the program so that it is possible to switch mentors; Other. The recommendations focused on making the structure more strict and matching the mentors and protégées better. In Karlsen's (2009) evaluation, most interviewees claimed that the reason the mentor program did not work to its full potential was lack of time on both sides, but there were also other explanations.

In the interest of improving future versions of Global Future, I will convey the participants' suggestions in the light of research on other networking or mentoring programs. I will also offer my own suggestions for how the interviewees' ideas and recent research can be applied to Global Future to improve networking through the base groups, role-modeling and mentoring.

Most of the interviewees suggest that the base groups could be improved by giving the groups more concrete tasks, and letting participants choose groups based on the tasks. Participants also express dissatisfaction with forming groups before anyone had a chance to get to know eachother. The element of time came up frequently. One creative solution proposed by an interviewee is to establish base groups which include an external participant from a company. The company representative could advise participants, and perhaps also propose a case for each session.

As previously stated, the mentor program was a disappointment for the majority of participants, but a

look at more successful mentoring programs can provide ways to make mentoring work for future versions of Global Future. It must also be mentioned that in Global Future 1, businesses were not used as cases with the possible exception of the Board competence course, where certain businesses were used as examples. An alternative model for improving the base groups and enhancing co-mentoring follows.

Snyder and Acker-Hocevar (2003) present a cross-cultural professional development program model where groups are established around fields of interest with a process leader for each group (Kochan and Pascarelli, 2003). "The program model was designed to facilitate the exchange of dialogue across role groups, thereby building social networks of professional development, lifelong learners, and co-mentors" (Kochan and Pascarelli, 2003:316). Structuring the base groups around fields of interest with a process leader would provide the concrete tasks and the little bit of direction that seems to have been missing from the base groups, according to the interviewees. Snyder and Acker-Hocevar's models are online social networks, but in Global Future, a combination of face-to-face meetings and online networks could be used. This would also solve the frequently-cited difficulty of geographical distance with the base groups.

Many of the participants already considered themselves to be role models when they entered the program, and many attribute a strengthening of this feeling to Global Future. Participants in the successful group were eager to share their expertise, and felt that their resources were not exploited by NHO. These role models could have been used more actively as "co-mentors" in the networking model described above. In Snyder and Acker-Hocevar's (2003) experience, co-mentors naturally emerged around concrete cases that were discussed in the online networks. Snyder and Acker-Hocevar (2003) find that professional development programs tend to consist of "short-lived bytes of theoretical concepts" and that online social networks can be used as bridges to transfer knowledge and develop theory in practice. When lack of time and geographical distance are so frequently mentioned by participants as challenges to the mentoring program, online networks could be considered as a solution also here.

Bhagat and London (1999) emphasize the importance of mentoring as a means for immigrants to learn cultural norms quickly.

> "Professionals wishing to succeed rapidly need mentors - other successful managers in more advanced work roles who can help the junior professional understand the intricate and complex social processes surrounding such issues as performance appraisal, managerial succession and so forth" (Bhagat and London, 1999:356).

McMahan and Fritzberg (2003) see immigrants on a culture bridge, in the process of forming an integrated cultural identity between their homelands and their host countries. They suggest that the mentor must meet the immigrant in the middle, neither sending him back to his home culture nor standing in the safety of the host culture and waiting for the protégé to arrive (Kochan and Pascarelli, 2003). Their model is for a mentoring program for immigrants entering higher education. There is a strong emphasis on intercultural training for the mentor in order to prevent an assimilation approach to the relationship. Instead, the mentor should make an effort to understand and learn from the immigrant's experience, so that both the mentor and the protégé learn. McMahan and Fritzberg (2003) also advocate bringing potential mentors and protégés together in groups or networks and letting relationships form naturally, so that the protégé and mentor choose each other. As previously mentioned, the most successful mentoring relationship from Global Future was one in which the protégé chose her own mentor (Kochan and Pascarelli, 2003).

In "Mentoring across global boundaries: an empirical examination of home- and host-country mentors on expatriate career outcomes," Carraher et al. (2005) present a study of companies that used networks of mentors in order to cover transitions from home to host countries. Although their focus is on managers in transnational companies, some of the findings can be applied to Global Future. They see networks of mentors as relational links where experiential and relational tacit knowledge can be transmitted from more experienced employees to less experienced ones (Baugh and Sullivan, 2005). Carraher et al. (2005) propose combining mentors, co-mentors and protégés to provide an extensive network for newcomers. As the newcomer becomes more experienced, he transitions into a role where he, too, can mentor those who come after him. In Global Future, participants in the successful group could have been brought into a network like this, if not for GF1, then certainly for GF2. This should be

considered for subsequent programs.

The establishment of a good match is essential for a successful mentoring relationship, and on-the-job mentoring is also an effective method (Kochan and Pascarelli, 2003). NHO could also alter the mentoring program by teaming up GF participants with mentors from their own companies, or by focusing their experience with mentoring more directly toward NHO member companies in Agder. By this, I mean moving the mentoring experience from the Global Future program and into businesses. This could be accomplished by establishing mentor training programs focusing on pairing immigrants with successful managers in their own companies.

9.1.4 Strengthening business ties

As previously mentioned, links to businesses in Agder relied heavily on the success of the mentoring program. This has made the program's link to businesses very vulnerable. Interviewees express disappointment with the lack of contact with local businesses. Suggestions made include the establishment of unpaid traineeships, shorter stays in several different businesses, including business people in the base groups, and group visits to businesses. There were business presentations throughout the Global Future program, but most of the presentations were made by stakeholders in the public sector, and only very few from NHO's partner businesses. Participants were disappointed by the content of the presentations, which they expressed as a reiteration of the companies' websites.

> "GF should have been the link between education and businesses. I never expected a job, but I expected something else from the business presentations. Everything that they presented I could have read on their websites. I was always expecting, toward the end, that they would say that they needed a trainee or could offer a short placement – as a route in to the company."

Several participants propose the idea of a trainee program for Global Future participants, to give them exposure to Norwegian companies and organizational cultures. "NHO has all the companies. Why aren't they using them?" asks one participant.

Another participant is quick to point out that a stronger tie to business would not just benefit Global Future participants. "This would be the most effective way to improve the program," he says. "Global

Future is a win-win situation. First and foremost for the participants, but there is also a benefit for companies because they will get to meet labor resources that are different."

HR managers at both Agder Energi and Aker Solutions acknowledge that getting the first job in Norway is the biggest hurdle. Most of the foreign employees that they hire already have work experience and references in Norway. A Global Future module developed in cooperation with local businesses to provide short-term exposure to companies in the region through unpaid traineeships, internships or company visits would provide a stronger link to industry. Participants would learn organizational norms more quickly, have the opportunity to prove themselves in a new workplace, expand their networks, and also gain references from a local employer. Sending participants in to local companies would also help NHO meet the goal of increasing visibility of talent.

9.2 Formal qualifications and language

Formal qualifications and language are two issues which deserve special attention because they are vital to employment in Norway, especially for non-Western immigrants and for refugees (NOU 2010:7). They are frequently mentioned by interviewees in all groups. They are still obstacles for participants in the unemployed groups, and have been obstacles for the other participants in the past. Human resource managers at companies in Agder say that formal qualifications are necessary for employment, adding that most of the immigrants that are employed in their companies have at least some higher education in Norway. Attitude and policy adjustments in these areas may affect employment opportunities for immigrants positively.

Of the participants who were employed in relevant positions when they began Global Future, very few (three) had only qualifications from their home countries. Of these three, two were from the USA. All of the others had taken some form of higher education in Norway, most at the master level. Global Future may add value to a CV, but it will seldom replace Norwegian education. Interestingly, HMS certification and the Board certification are frequently cited by GF participants as highlights of the program. Both of these resulted in formal qualifications in the form of certificates, and in the Board certification, also ECTS credits. One interviewee specifically criticized the Global Future Certificate of Completion as "amateurish" and said that she did not feel it added value to her CV.

According to several interviewees in the unemployed group, lack of Norwegian qualifications continues to be used as a reason to not employ foreigners. There is no system in Norway for tracking the education that immigrants bring with them when they immigrate, but a quality of life survey in 2008 found that 24% of immigrants in Norway had some higher education when they immigrated (Henriksen, 2008 in NOU 2010:7). Eight percent have taken higher education in Norway (op. cit).

The participants who were unemployed at the start have high qualifications from their home countries that have not been approved in Norway. Their choices are to keep pushing ahead in the hope that someone will hire them despite this, to take higher education in Norway in their field, or to choose another profession altogether and begin higher education in the new field. This affects their level of ambition.

The challenges of higher qualifications in Norway should not be underestimated. Many immigrants come from countries with strong traditions in higher education, for example Iran (NOU 2010:7). At the same time, entrance requirements to higher education in Norway are very specific and strict. In addition to a high level of Norwegian, candidates must have a high level of English, and meet academic requirements that are very much tailored to the Norwegian system and leave little flexibility for evaluating foreign qualifications. Often, the route for admission into master level programs is long, despite attainment of a bachelor qualification abroad. In the time it takes to learn the language(s) and take additional education, ambition can suffer. This is clear from the interviews. Highly qualified professionals put on a false smile and describe lower level jobs as "OK." An engineer who teaches Norwegian to immigrant children is satisfied doing this because it enables her to bring her children up in a country that is at peace. The opportunities afforded by Norway for the interviewees' own children outweigh the lack of upward career mobility. However, this is a great loss of human resources for Norwegian society.

The Norwegian language sets immigrants apart from the rest of the population the moment they open their mouths. For many immigrants, Norwegian is not the only language obstacle. For many jobs in Norway, as well as admission to higher education, competence in English is also required.

Mangfold and mestring (NOU 2010:7, 2010) describes the language situation in Norway in this way:

"Even with very intensive attempts to learn the new country's language, adults can almost never attain the melody of the language. They will in practically all cases speak like a foreigner, or with an accent. And even though their appearance is not so different from the average Norwegian's, their language will give them away, no matter how much they think they have managed to assimilate. I have interviewed many newly arrived immigrants who have said that they have taken Norwegians' challenge to become completely Norwegian seriously. But, as much as they tried to speak effortlessly, as much as they tried to pretend that they had become completely Norwegian, they were asked the (certainly very friendly) question: "You aren't Norwegian, are you then?" Now we've given up, they say, now we know that it's no use, we can't change completely. Everyone knows that we are not Norwegian, why should we pretend to be? It's natural that such problems have a completely different significance in countries like the Scandinavian ones, with a linguistically very homogeneous population, than in a linguistically very heterogeneous population like those found in Australia, USA (especially New York) or in Israel." (Eitinger 1981:87 in NOU 2010:7, my translation)

This frustration is echoed by GF participants. Hofstede (2010) sees language as a vehicle for cultural transfer. "Having to express oneself in another language means learning to adopt someone else's frame of reference. It is doubtful whether one can be bicultural without being bilingual" (Hofstede et al., 2010, 389).

Language is a factor that defines an "in-group" and an "out-group" in Norway. Ability in the host language is often transferred to positive assessment of other professional skills (op. cit.). Conversely, bad language skills often lead to lower ratings of other professional skills (op. cit.). As is evident from the interviews, language continues to be a challenge even for well-educated immigrants in Norway.

10 Conclusion

Participants have an overall positive image of the Global Future program, but the program affected different individuals in different ways. The experiences can roughly be grouped according to the participants' employment situation when they started Global Future: unemployed, underemployed and successful. The program's impact depends upon participants' knowledge, experience, expectation and employment level upon entering the program. In order to maximize impact, program content should be

better tailored to the needs of the participants based upon their employment level and experience when they enter the program. Many of the effects of the Global Future program have been indirect, focusing on identity, motivation, self-esteem and self-confidence.

Participants in the underemployed group have had the greatest degree of development in this area, but there has also been significant development in the unemployed group. Another finding is the development of participants' perceptions of themselves as role-models, which has been strengthened in most of the interviewees in the unemployed and underemployed groups. As for the program components, the unemployed group received the most benefit from the informational and educational components, while the underemployed group considered these to be beneficial, but a bit too basic. Networking and mentoring were two areas of disappointment for the participants, but their experiences, combined with recent research in the field, can be used to improve these aspects of the program for GF2.

It is the impact on the underemployed group that most closely matches the intended impact of the program, to develop immigrants' leadership ability and mobilize talent in the region. There was no significant impact on interviewees in the successful group. This can be looked upon in two ways: either the participants were at such a high level that they never should have been recruited in the first place (they were the wrong target group) or, if they were the intended target group, NHO underestimated their needs and failed to deliver a program high enough for the participants in regard to their substantial work experience in Norway. This can be corrected with a thorough needs assessment after selection of participants to customize the program to the target group.

The experiences of the participants and stakeholders can be used to further develop Global Future in order to address integration and full utilization of labor resources in Agder in several ways. Very simply, planning, execution and conclusion of the program can be adapted by taking cultural differences into greater account. An intercultural focus group consisting of participants from the pilot program would both contribute to program development and make good use of the participants' unique competence, reinforcing the GF message "human capital must be used." Strengthening ties to business

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is the most dramatic way in which the program can be improved in order to address full utilization of labor resources in Agder. This can be done by altering the mentor program and the networking aspect of Global Future to link participants more closely to companies in the region. Successful integration into work life is key to successful integration into society, so strengthening of this aspect of the program would also strengthen the integration aspect of Global Future.

Finally, to answer the question: Is empowerment of the individual sufficient to achieve the goals of integration and full utilization of labor resources? Interviews reveal empowerment of several participants in the unemployed and underemployed categories. Empowerment has a great effect on the individual and on the individual's career. Several of the participants who have received management positions have subsequently hired other immigrants. They serve as role models in their workplaces and pave the way for immigrants who follow them. They have an effect on integration and utilization of labor resources. However, individual empowerment alone cannot achieve the goals of integration and full utilization of labor resources. In addition, companies like Agder Energi and Aker Solutions have to create environments and establish organizational cultures that foster intercultural communication. Full utilization of labor resources is only possible when the host country allows immigrants full access to the labor market. Obstacles like formal qualifications and language still hinder immigrants from receiving full access.

Global Future takes a radical departure from traditional intervention programs directed toward immigrants. In viewing the immigrant not as a social client, but as a resource to society, Global Future endeavors to empower the individual. At its most successful, Global Future positively impacts the individual by strengthening a sense of identity, self-confidence, self-esteem and the perception of being a role model. However, the program is not without its shortcomings. It did not have the intended impact on the participants who were most successful when entering the program, and elements like mentoring and networking did not live up to the expectations of participants or stakeholders. Global Future is a step toward better integration of highly educated immigrants and diversification of the workplace in Agder, but empowerment of the individual alone is not enough to achieve the goal of full utilization of labor resources.

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12 Appendix

Interview guide - participants

Interview guide - NHO and businesses

Global Future Intervjuguide

Nasjonalitet: **Kom til Norge:**

Jobbsøking før GF: Hvor mange jobb søkte du i Norge før GF? Hvor mange ble du kalt inn til intervju for? Hvor mange jobb fikk du på åpen utlysning før GF? Hadde du fått et jobbtilbud uten at du søkte stillingen før GF?

Jøbbsøking siden GF: Hvor mange jobb har du søkt i Norge siden GF? Hvor mange har du blitt kalt inn til intervju for? Har du fått en jobb på åpen utlysning siden GF? Har du fått et jobbtilbud uten at du søkte stillingen siden GF?

Din arbeidsdag:
Hvordan er det å jobbe i din bedrift?
Jobber du mest alene eller i grupper?
Er det mange utlendinger?
Hvordan har du det sosialt på bedriften (i pausene, lunchpausene)?
Hva opplever du som den største hindring for deg i din jobb?

Programinnhold: Hva synes du om forelesningene om norsk politikk, samfunn og kultur?
Hvordan fungerte din basisgruppe?
Hvordan fungerte mentorordningen?

Nettverk:
Hvilke GFdeltakere kjente du før GF? Hvem er dine nærmeste kontakter nå? Har du tatt kontakt med andre GF deltakere siden GF avsluttet? I business sammenheng? I sosialt sammenheng?
Introduserte din mentor deg for nye mennesker? Hvordan?
GF har grupper på Linked In og Facebook. Er du på Linked In eller Facebook? Er du medlem av gruppen? Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?

Rollemodell / Forbilde:
Så du på deg selv som en rollemodell før GF? For hvem? Ser du på deg selv som en rollemodell? Hvordan har dette endret seg?

Hvordan har GF påvirket ditt arbeidsliv?

Hvordan ville du forbedre programmet?

Har du noe mer du vil si?

Intervjuguide NHO

Hvordan kom dere på ideen?
Var det foretatt en needs assessment?
Planlegging av selve programmet - hvem gjorde hva?
I forhold til mangfoldsledelse og at dette bør ideelt sett skjer i organisasjonene, hva var motivasjonen
for å lage et program som fokuserte på individene istedenfor organisasjonene i Agder?
Har initiativer rettet mot organisasjonene i Agder blitt vurdert? Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?
Etter evalueringen, hvilken endringer ble gjort for neste runde?
Hva er de største hindringer for utlendinger i arbeidslivet i Agder?
Hva har vært GFs viktigste bidrag?
Hva er den største suksess med programmet?

Intervjuguide bedrifter
Hvordan vurderer du din bedrifts behov for mangfoldledelse eller mangfoldinistiativer?
Har det blitt foretatt noen initiativer? Hva var omfanget?
Er fagforeningene opptatt av dette?
Finnes det ledere i bedriften med ikke-norsk bakgrunn?
Har det blitt foretatt noen initiativer?
Ble din bedrifte invitert til å være en partner i Global Future?
Har du hørt om Global Future?
Hvilke assosiasjoner har du til Global Future?
Hvilke vekt ville du ha lagt på deltakelse i GF i forhold til ansettelse?
Har du hørt om Female Female?
Hvilke assosiasjoner har du til Female Future?
Hva er den største utfordring for din bedrift i forhold til innvandrere?
Hvordan kan NHO bidra?