

Assessment of Results: FK in Nepal, Norway and Ethiopia

Final Report Summary

Fredskorpset (FK) Norway, a governmental body under the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has been doing a two-way partner-based exchange program for 9 years. So far, they have already organized 4000 young people from 54 developing countries and Norway, and set up partnership with over 400 organizations, private companies and public institutions. The goal of FK is to facilitate contact and cooperation between individuals, organizations and institutions include organizations, municipalities, schools, universities and private companies working in a broad range of sectors from health, education, media and community work to agriculture, energy and business development.

The report *Assessment of Results-FK in Nepal Norway and Ethiopia* is a review that Nordic Consulting group (NCG) was commissioned to do by Fredskorpset (FK) Norway. The purpose of review was to assess a selected number of FK projects to contribute to FK Norway's program development, to provide a strong learning element for the organization, to assist in developing improved methodologies, success indicators and definitions of results, and to render advices for a better performance. The report covers three countries, Nepal, Ethiopia and Norway. The study applies both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, including in-depth interviews with partners and participants of the FK exchange program, and two web-based surveys for both former and current FK partners.

Program and Partnership

FK's task is to facilitate exchange of people between partner organizations in Norway and the South or South-South, in partnerships including non-governmental organizations, municipalities, schools, universities and private companies. The targeted participants of FK's programs are mainly 18-35 years old young people. The partner organizations get funding from FK to exchange participants between the organizations, based on project documents stating the learning needs and expected outcomes of the exchange. The program cycle of FK projects are made up by the following phases; initial contact between the exchange partners; joint planning with all partners; preparatory course for participants; mid-term review by FK; home-coming seminar for participants and partner organisations with FK; and follow up work in home organization.

Main findings, conclusions and recommendations

NCG was asked to look at four aspects of the FK programmes; institutional capacity building, networking, peace-and bridge-building and young leadership.

The main conclusion of study is that FK is producing substantial results with potentially strong impact. However, it is stated that ensuring results at partner organization level – and monitoring - needs improving in order to capitalize on results.

The report also states that FK has been able to produce good results relevant to "Climate, Conflict and Capital" by initiating and facilitating successful partnerships between environmental journalists,

human rights activists, media women, health research institutions, and anti-corruption networks across Asia, Africa and Norway. However, a closer cooperation with embassies in Norwegian priority countries is needed, as well as ensuring that FK partnerships are in line with national governments plans and priorities.

Institutional capacity-building and institutionalisation of transfer of capacity

The report concludes that in many organizations and institutions technical expertise has been developed at personal level and in several cases transferred to institutions by development of systems/mechanisms and enhancement of services. Some success indicators are:

- Match between partners' qualifications and needs
- Degree of enabling learning environment
- Partners' support to participants
- FK monitoring, ability to intervene if partnership is not yielding results, change the direction

There are strong outcomes of FK partnerships building institutional capacity. However, FKs facilitation and monitoring of the "institutionalization of results", i.e. transfer of capacity at institutional level could be improved. FK needs to step up the systematization of monitoring of results: Statistics on alumni participants' whereabouts (staying in country or leaving) must be produced regularly for FK to monitor trends of countries or organizations, and good practices for building institutional capacity need to be shared among partners in country and region.

Different results are found according to the different types and sectors that FK is working with; NGO sector, private sector and government/semi-government sector. For the civil society sector, most partners reported a transfer of skills for writing reports and fund-raising proposals both when they hosted foreign participants and when they reintegrated the returning participants. Part of the fund-raising abilities was related to improved language skills. Institutional outcome in the South-South private sector development (PSD) was stronger than the two North-South private sector partnerships; in the South-South institution there were measurable changes in the way the company promoted product, promotional strategies and new tools for enhancing the products. In the government/semi-government sector, the team found an excellent example of complimentarity and synergy where FK support was combined with funding from the Norwegian Embassy and Norad.

International networking

The team advises that FK could revise the different networks considering carefully in terms of function and purpose. Networks could be more tailor-made and geared towards the different needs of 4 groups; FK partners, FK current participants, FK former participants (alumni), and FK Norway's needs. FK networks are being used on many levels to enhance the results of capacity-building, leadership and peace- and bridge-building.

Peace and bridge-building

FK's roots stem from the tradition of building bridges for peace and understanding. The team suggests that FK's main mission is not specific peace building work, but a broader definition of term: FK's core mission could be defined as an exchange program that is fostering global citizens and leaders for the future by building institutional capacity in areas of health, education, civil society and business. Peace- and bridge building should be viewed as a cross-cutting issue in all FK partnership more than a specific result area to report on.

Leadership

The team finds clear evidence that participants' independence is enhanced through participating in the program. The participants' ability to work and solve issues independently in their work places was reported by a large majority of the 48 participants interviewed in the three case countries. This is also confirmed by FK survey: More than 50% of the South participants agree that they have much more independence at work after the return from FK, while most North participants feel that this is the same, as in, before their exchange. Supervisors at the partner organizations shared that the FKer became much more independent and work on her/his own.

It is also reported that participants after coming home from the exchange have added job responsibility and greater professional responsibility in their work places. In addition, FK partnerships have provided exposure not only to individuals but for organizations being leaders of a group of partners in a partnerships agreement. This requires great skills in negotiation and dealing with other partners. Case studies on leadership (especially in Nepal) shows that there are many results on developing leadership skills among the individual youth participants and substantial institutional capacity-building results (but not necessary affecting leadership in home/host organization).

Retention of participants is often a challenge for the home partner organizations. Partners shared how valuable their staff had become after returning from the exchange program; their 'social' capital has increased enormously, they are self-confident, visionary, entrepreneurs and see more opportunities than difficulties. Participants often grow "out" of their home organization - which is good for the individual participants and society, but usually a loss for the partner organization.