



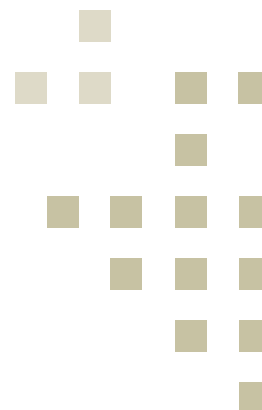
# [656] Paper

## Study of selected Fredskorpset exchange projects

Axel Borchgrevink

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of International  
Affairs      Norsk  
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Besøksadresse: Grønlandsleiret 25  
Adresse: Postboks 8159 Dep.  
0033 Oslo  
Internett: [www.nupi.no](http://www.nupi.no)  
E-post: [pub@nupi.no](mailto:pub@nupi.no)  
Fax: [+ 47] 22 17 70 15  
Tel: [+ 47] 22 05 65 00

# Study of selected Fredskorpset exchange projects

**Axel Borchgrevink**

**[Abstract]** The present study examines nine Fredskorpset exchange projects, in order to assess the degree to which the goals specified have been reached. The basis for the exchanges is the partnerships established between institutions in Norway and counterpart entities in the South. The projects studied encompass a wide variety of such partnerships, illustrating the flexible and innovative attitude that Fredskorpset has shown during its first two years of operation. By basing its work on such partnerships, Fredskorpset has avoided some of the weaknesses of traditional volunteer programs. In terms of achievements, there are variations among the projects. While individual learning of participants was strong in all cases, the degree to which institutional benefits were achieved varied. Well-matched partners with sufficiently strong institutional structures; thorough planning of exchanges; and participants selected in accordance with well-defined needs for professional skills were seen to be important factors for successful projects.



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## o. Executive summary

Since 2001, Fredskorpset (Partnership for Development) has been supporting the exchanges of young people between institutions of Norway and countries of the South, as well as directly between Southern countries. In order to learn from the exchange experiences gained in the first two years, Fredskorpset has commissioned the present study. The main objective of the study is to *assess the degree to which the goals specified for individual exchange projects are being reached*. Furthermore, the study should contribute to the further development of the monitoring and evaluation system of Fredskorpset.

Nine exchange projects, representing the variety of partnerships Fredskorpset has been working with, were selected to be studied. Axel Borchgrevink of NUPI (the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs) was contracted to do the study. The study combined the review of relevant documents with personal interviews (in Norway, Tanzania and South Africa) and questionnaires distributed through e-mail (to contact persons and exchange participants it was not possible to visit).

### *Goals statements and monitoring systems*

The goals of the individual exchange projects were reviewed. A conclusion was that they were too loosely formulated to be used as the basis for a formally structured monitoring and evaluation system. For a number of reasons, the study does not recommend that Fredskorpset attempts to introduce such a system. Still, it is pointed out that clear goals for the exchanges are necessary in order to develop good work plans. It is therefore recommended that Fredskorpset continues putting an emphasis on the formulation of goals during the planning phase of the projects. These goals, however, should be dealt with flexibly and pragmatically, allowing them to be revised along the way and without insisting on the goals being *the* yardstick with which to measure the success of the exchanges. For Fredskorpset's internal monitoring it is possible to use an e-mail based interview system that would allow a large number of stakeholders to be consulted. However, much better information will result if this can be complemented by some sort of personal communication.

### *The partnerships*

The projects selected give a fair representation of the variety of exchange types that have been established through Fredskorpset. Partnerships studied range from a construction company with its fully owned subsidiary company, through specialized agencies such as the Norwegian and Ugandan bureaus of statistics, and NGOs, research institutes and farmers organizations with a common interest in sustainable agriculture, to band organizations. This illustrates Fredskorpset's willingness to try out new and varied forms of cooperation. It is easy to be impressed, by the flexible and innovative attitude that has been demonstrated, and by the fact that in little over two years,

so much has been achieved – both in terms of having systems in place and in terms of the results of the exchange projects.

The importance given to the partnership idea means that Fredskorpset distinguishes itself from traditional volunteer programs. The partnerships studied must be termed real partnerships, not just in name. They have been formed on the basis of recognized common interests and seem to allow an open dialogue. Still, exchanges are not always balanced. In about half the exchanges the North participants are expected to teach while the South participants shall primarily learn. This, of course, is not unnatural, given the differences in resources between North and south partners. More problematic, perhaps, is the fact that in some cases, the motives for having an exchange project seem quite vague. Without having clear ideas of what the institutions want to achieve by the exchange, chances are that the project is less successful. Partnerships based on specialized professional skills seem to stand a better chance of developing exchanges with clear purposes.

#### *Achievements*

Results of the exchanges are of different types. Starting with the individual level, one can perhaps identify two types of learning: acquiring knowledge of another country and culture, and increasing professional skills. The first type of learning is less interesting for the present discussion because it is really a logical consequence of any exchange. The other type of learning, related to professional skills, is found in many of the projects. Not so surprisingly, such results are most clearly seen in what may be termed the ‘professional’ exchanges.

However, it is the institutional level that is the most interesting one for investigating impacts, and perhaps the level where these are most difficult to achieve. To some extent, the individual and institutional levels are interconnected, as the increases in professional skills and international knowledge of the participants translate into greater human resources for those organizations that retain their participants after the return. A further important result at the institutional level is an increased international orientation. This can be seen both in the establishment of closer relationships between the partners, which in the majority of cases studied will serve as the basis for new forms of cooperation between them (in addition to the further Fredskorpset exchanges, which most partnerships are also planning). Moreover, there is a general increased international interest within the organizations as a result of the exchanges. A final type of result at the institutional level is where the participants have been able to contribute to improvements that will remain in place after they leave. This is usually dependent on the participant coming with specific professional skills, and seems to have been achieved for a number of the South partners. It is more difficult to see such institutional improvements among any of the Norwegian partner institutions.

#### *Factors affecting achievements*

Briefly, some of the factors that affect the results achieved can be pointed out. On the one hand, there are obstacles that prevent or limit the achievements. Many of them are well known, such as language problems, lack of social integration, and conflicts arising out of cultural differences. Further-



more, deficient planning and/or recruitment is a frequent cause of underachievement. Similarly, where a partner's specific interest in the exchange is not clear, and diffuse objectives are consequently formulated, the chances are that the placement will have limited institutional impacts. Weak institutional structures of the host institution or lack of institutional grounding of the exchange project also imply risks. Where there are internal conflicts in host organizations, exchange projects often suffer. Too short time periods for the exchanges, or dividing the time between too many host institutions, are other reasons that have been quoted for limited achievements. Lack of longer time horizons may also limit the achievements, particularly in the case of the larger exchange projects.

The factors that contribute to positive results of the exchanges are to some extent the mirror images of the obstacles mentioned above. Most important is perhaps that there is a good match between the participant's qualifications, a well-defined and conceived work plan, and the needs of the host institution. This usually presupposes partners who complement each other, and where both institutions have clear ideas of what they can get out of the partnership. It seems that what have been termed the professional placements are the ones that are most likely to realize impacts at all levels. Finally it is worth pointing out that where candidates are recruited internally there is a greater chance that the benefits of the increased knowledge and skills of the participant will be retained by the sending partner.



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Objective of study

Since 2001, Fredskorpset (Partnership for development) has been supporting the exchanges of young people (22 to 35 years) between institutions of Norway and countries of the South, as well as directly between Southern countries. Being interested in learning from the exchange experiences gained up to now, Fredskorpset has commissioned the present study.

The main objective of the study is to *assess the degree to which the goals specified for individual exchange projects are being reached*. Furthermore, the study should report on the activities and short-term effects of the projects; strengthen the partner institutions' awareness of their goals and possibilities of achieving them; and give Fredskorpset feedback from the project level in order to make its services to the partner institutions more efficient and relevant.

The Terms of Reference (see enclosed 'Oppdragsbeskrivelse') also specify

- that the study should show whether the partner institutions reach their goals as specified in partner- and collaboration agreements
- that results and learning should be identified both with North and South partners
- that the study should assess the mechanisms used by the partner institutions in order to steer towards goals and correct deviations
- that the study should encompass both the main and the secondary partner of each network
- that the study should contribute to the further development of the monitoring and evaluation system of Fredskorpset

Fredskorpset identified nine exchange projects to be studied (see table). These were selected in order to represent the range and variety of different types of exchanges and partner institutions. Furthermore, in order to facilitate fieldwork, there was a certain geographical concentration, in that all exchanges included a South partner in Southern/Eastern Africa.

<i>Norwegian partner</i>	<i>South partner</i>	<i>Country</i>
Delta Internasjonalt (International Partnerships YWCA/YMCA)	South African National Council of YMCAs	South Africa
	The National Council of YMCAs of Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka
Diakonhjemmets Høgskole	Christian Health Association of Malawi	Malawi
Høgskolen i Bergen		
Isandi	Penduka	Namibia
KanEnergi/Statkraft Grøner	Tanzania Traditional Energy Development and Environment Organisation (TaTEDO)	Tanzania
	International Energy Initiative	Brazil
Norsk Folkehjelp (Norwegian People's Aid)	Center for Peace Action	South Africa
Norges musikkorps forbund (Norwegian Band Federation)	Field Band Foundation	South Africa
Statistisk sentralbyrå (Statistics Norway)	Uganda Bureau of Statistics	Uganda
Utviklingsfondet (the Development Fund)	Envirocare	Tanzania
Noragric		
Norsk senter for økologisk landbruk		
Veidekke	Noremco	Tanzania

## 1.2 Methodology

NUPI (the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs) was selected to do the study, within a total time frame of five weeks.

A first step of the study was the revision of the objectives of the individual exchange projects, as these are specified in the partnership agreements between the partner institutions and the collaboration agreements between the North partners and Fredskorpset. The defined goals were extracted from the documents and systematized according to whether they were general goals or goals for North or South partners, or for North or South participants. The resulting goals statements were then presented to the different North partners for approval, in some cases with specific questions for clarifications. In general, few revisions were made to the formulation of goals as they were found in the different written agreements. The final versions of these goal statements are presented in the Appendices.

Given the available time frame, it is largely based on interviews and on questionnaires distributed by e-mail. The six partner institutions in Tanzania and South Africa were visited, and interviews were conducted with the contact persons for the exchanges, exchange participants (both Norwegians in service and returned South participants) and, in some cases, with colleagues or superiors of the participants. On the Norwegian side, those partner institutions based in Oslo were also interviewed personally – mainly the contact persons, plus in one case also the exchange participant. In total, six of eleven South partners and seven of twelve North partners were interviewed in person. Furthermore, eight North participants and nine South participants were interviewed personally.

In addition to the interviews, individually tailored questionnaires were sent to the remaining partner institutions<sup>1</sup> and exchange participants. Responses to these questionnaires were obtained from seven partner institutions (three in Norway and four in the South) and six participants (four from Norway, two from the South).

For every exchange project, there has been at least one interview. The number of persons consulted for the individual projects range from three (Statistics Norway/Uganda Bureau of Statistics – only one interview) to eleven (Norwegian People's Aid/Center for Peace Action, all of them interviews in person).

Both interviews and e-mail questionnaires focused on two main issues: On the one hand the process of the exchanges, with an emphasis on difficulties encountered and how they were met – and on the other hand, the results or effects of the exchanges, and how they corresponded to the objectives stated.

As time has been a key limiting factor for the study, certain priorities have been made. Perhaps most importantly, I have not been able to focus fully on the information activities of the exchange projects.

The limitations of the data material should be clearly spelled out. Firstly, it is highly uneven. As was to be expected, the interviews yielded information of a much greater scope and depth than was the case of the e-mail questionnaires. While many of the responses to the questionnaires have been detailed and thorough, it is clear that a deeper understanding of difficulties encountered and of the degree to which goals have been achieved require the kind of probing and follow-up that is only possible in a personal interview. And in terms of the theme of difficulties encountered – especially where these include conflictive relations – it is clear that a personal interview may lead to a kind of confidence and openness that can never be hoped for in an impersonal interview by e-mail.

Secondly, as this study is basically based on interviews, it necessarily becomes subjective. When asking people whether they have been successful, it would be naïve to expect totally disinterested answers – especially when some respondents may feel that a continuation of Fredskorpset support could depend on this assessment. There exists a countertendency, in that some people may be modest or prone to underestimate own achievements. Still, this only underlines the subjectivity of such data, and there is no reason to assume that the tendencies to exaggerate and underreport should cancel each other out. In order to make a more independent assessment, the consultant needs to tease out the underlying experiences and observations on which the respondents make their judgement. The opportunity for this is clearly much greater in the personal interviews.

Thirdly, arriving at more independent assessments of the achievements of the different projects is greatly aided by having interviewed as many different involved parties as possible, preferably through personal interviews. In particular where conflicts between stakeholders have appeared, one is highly

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<sup>1</sup> Due to a mistake, questionnaires were not sent in time to Noragric and Norsøk. Furthermore, due to the consultant's confusion over the contractual arrangements between Diakonhjemmets høgskole, Høgskolen i Bergen, and the Christian Health Association of Malawi, Høgskolen i Bergen received a questionnaire that was not really appropriate for the exchange project in question.

dependent on hearing the two sides. For some of the exchange projects, the material for making judgments is limited to only one personal interview and a couple of e-mail interviews. For others, there is a better basis. In the descriptions of the individual projects, I have listed the interviews on which the analysis is based. Still, it should be pointed out that in general, the conclusions drawn for individual projects must necessarily be tentative.

When it comes to the general conclusions of the main report, however, I believe they stand quite a bit stronger. These are inferences drawn from many cases, and are further supported by a consideration of the social mechanisms underlying them. To some extent these conclusions are still subjective, in the sense that another consultant would have drawn them somewhat differently. Nevertheless, I have tried to make explicit my reasons for concluding as I do, thereby allowing the reader to make independent judgments.

One thing the reader should be aware of is the fact that Fredskorpset have been changing some of its routines. This study presents material from different periods, and some of the findings may therefore refer more to historic problems than to actual ones.

### **1.3 Structure of the report**

The Terms of reference for this study indicate two main concerns of Fredskorpset: receiving inputs for to the improvement of the Fredskorpset monitoring system and knowing the results of the selected exchanges. The structure of the report somehow mirrors this, where chapters Two and Three primarily address the first issue, while chapters Four and Five, plus the concluding chapter Six, deal largely with the latter concern.

Chapter Two looks at goals, or objectives, of the exchange projects. The Terms of Reference focus very explicitly on the formulation of goals, and the three sections of the chapter looks at general problems of goal formulation, the goal statements as they are found in the exchange projects studied, and to the suitability for Fredskorpset of systematizing monitoring and evaluation on the basis of goals statements.

Chapter Three gives a brief summary of experiences with e-mail interviews in the study, with a view towards the use of this methodology in a Fredskorpset monitoring system.

Chapter Four summarizes the individual exchange projects, describing background and intentions of partnerships; specific placements of participants; and results and difficulties.

Chapter Five attempts to draw out general lessons from the individual projects. The focus is on the processes, mechanisms and factors that may have relevance for the results achieved by the different projects.

In chapter Six, conclusions are drawn with respect to the achievements of the different projects, and to the factors that affect the successfulness of the exchanges.

## 2. Goals of Fredskorpset exchange projects

### 2.1 Fredskorpset and the definition of objectives

The Terms of Reference for this study focus on goals, or objectives<sup>2</sup>. This is in accordance with standard practice for reviews and evaluations, where the objectives for any intervention necessarily form the point of departure for any assessment of achievements. The practice is based on a conventional understanding of projects as consisting of the carrying out of plans to reach certain objectives. This understanding is embodied in different planning and management tools, such as the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) widely used in development activities. Defining objectives is not always straightforward, however, and in the present context, it is necessary to start with some general reflections on objectives in Fredskorpset exchange projects.

A first observation is that in planned interventions such as development projects, objectives exist at different levels, and can be understood to be hierarchically organized. To take a simple example, the construction of a school might be the immediate objective of a development project, but this is but an element in a larger objective of offering better educational services in the area. This again has the objective of improving educational levels among the population, which at yet another level may be seen as instrumental for reaching a final objective of development in economic, social or political terms. Should one want to, one could create such chains of goals that become virtually endless. This is a complex matter, and it is easy to get lost.

In order to get a grasp on these goals hierarchies, without making the issue unnecessary complicated, I will here distinguish between three levels, which we can call *product objectives*, *results objectives* and *development objectives*<sup>3</sup>. In a Fredskorpset case, the realization of the exchange itself might be the product objective, achieving a concrete improvement within one of the involved partner institutions because of the exchange might be a results objective, while the overarching objectives of contributing to international understanding and poverty reduction could be development objectives. For the present study, it is the middle level of results objectives that will be the central concern. Yet it is important to point out that in the planning of projects, the goals of different levels need to be considered together: A successful project is one where there is an intrinsic relationship between the levels, so that the products implies or leads to the results, which again leads to the development objectives. It is worth emphasizing that while theoretically, the distinction between these levels may seem straightforward, it is very easy to get confused when dealing with them in practice. What are ends and what are means to other ends – and what ends are higher in the hierarchy

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<sup>2</sup> In the following, I use the terms ‘goals’ and ‘objectives’ interchangeably.

<sup>3</sup> For some purposes, this schema might be too simplistic. Some planners, for instance, divide the middle level into three different levels, such as results, effects, impacts.

– are not always easily and unambiguously determined, and even the most experienced and adept at using these terminologies sometimes get it wrong.

A further important point is that different objectives have different time frames. While some results are seen immediately, others may take some time to materialize. Thus, where an objective of the exchange program is to motivate employees (through having the opportunity to take part in an international exchange program) this goal could conceivably be achieved as soon as the program is announced, even before the exchange actually takes place. On the other hand, an objective of replacing the expatriate staff of a Tanzanian construction company with national employees is necessarily a long-term process. The implication of this is that the appropriate time for investigating goals achievement may vary widely from project to project.

Another complicating factor is that in projects with many stakeholders, there may be different sets of objectives involved. In Fredskorpset exchanges, the goals of the North partner will normally be different from those of the South partner. Furthermore, there are goals both at the level of the individual participants (such as learning about other social and cultural circumstances and acquiring new professional skills) and at the level of the institutions involved (for instance strengthened international network or increased capacity within specific fields of operation).

Objectives also come in different logical types. Some imply a qualitative change – the establishment of something that previously didn't exist. There are very few such objectives in the projects studied, but a few cases can be found in the Development Fund/Norsøk/NORAGRIC/Envirocare agreement. One example is 'establish linkage between resource poor farmer groups in Kilimanjaro and farmer's groups in Norway'. This is a type of objective where it is relatively easy to determine unambiguously whether it is being achieved. (In the example referred to, obviously dependent on how one chooses to define 'linkage'.) Other objectives specify a gradual change. These are the most common objectives in the projects studied, and the statements of these objectives often start with verbs like 'strengthen', 'improve', 'learn' or 'develop'. In these cases, the question is not really whether an objective is being realized or not, but rather the degree or extent to which it is being realized. This makes the investigation of goals achievement more complex. Theoretically, statement of goals of this type need to specify the extent of improvement or learning expected. In practice, this is very difficult to do. It requires the development of indicators in the form of a quantitative scale to 'measure' – or qualitative levels to 'verify' – achievements. While this is possible to do for just about any objective<sup>4</sup>, it is cumbersome and normally requires the aid of specialists. It is therefore quite natural that this has not been attempted in any of the projects. But it does mean that a large part of the objectives defined remain of the form 'gain knowledge on youth programs of Norway' or 'strengthen information and marketing activities'. The first of these examples actually seems an unavoidable consequence of spending a year with a Norwegian youth organization. The second example may be a slightly more useful as a statement of a goal (it is less self-fulfilling), but still leaves no way of deciding how much improvement is to be expected, nor how this improvement can be seen, measured or verified.

4 A number of planning, monitoring and evaluation manuals specify ways this can be done.



## 2.2 Goal statements of the studied projects

The partnership and collaboration agreements of the different exchange projects were revised in order to extract the goals specified for the different projects. Elements for this were found under different headings in the agreements – Overall Objectives; Specific Objectives; Partners' Interest in the Exchange; and in some cases under 'Main Activities of the Exchanges' and 'Information Activities of the Program'. These elements were then organized into 'overall objectives' and goals 'for North partners', 'for North participants', 'for South partners' and 'for South participants'<sup>5</sup>. (The original intention was to reformulate the goals to make them more precise, in order to facilitate the assessment of the degree of goals achievement. In practice, however, this was found to be too large a task, and was discarded.)

In almost all cases, the stated goals correspond to what I have termed results objectives. In one case, the 'overall objectives' may tend more towards what I have called development objectives ('develop global understanding'). In another case, what I would have termed a product objective is included ('meet as many bands as possible'). Overall, however, the partner institutions have largely focused on the middle level of objectives, which is the one where it makes sense to focus both in terms of a study such as this one, as well as for general monitoring purposes.

In terms of timing, none of the goals statements specify when different goals are expected to be met. In some cases familiarity with the projects and common sense will allow this timing to be easily established. However, in many cases, the lack of specifying to what extent an objective is expected to be met also makes it difficult to have any opinion on when this should be achieved. By itself, this indeterminacy with respect to timing is not a serious obstacle for the present study. However, if Fredskorpset intends to use the formulation of goals as management instruments for monitoring and follow-up of the exchanges, this is a weakness that needs to be addressed.

In most cases, it was possible to extract objectives for all stakeholders – North partners, South partners, North and South participants. In some cases, however, goals were less specific and clear for some of the stakeholders than for others. There may be different reasons for this – some partners may have invested more in this work, or, it sometimes seemed, the exchange was understood as being mainly in the direct interest of one of the partners. One could also point out that the complex statement of goals for the different parties may involve paradoxes and contradictions. Thus, individual learning for the participant may be enhanced in a difficult placement, where (and even because) institutional objectives are not reached.

It is in terms of specifying to what extent the goals should be met, that the statements show the greatest weaknesses. Most of the goals formulations are of the form 'develop skills that will help institution *x* sustain itself and grow' or 'increase knowledge/understanding of sector *y* in country *z*'. This does to some extent indicate the direction one wants to move (even though also here more precision could have been hoped for) but says nothing about how far one wants to reach. When it comes to the learning objectives specified for the individual participants, these statements often become so empty as to be

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5 For those exchanges where there were different North or South partners with specific objectives, the goals were further subdivided according to this.

virtually meaningless. Living for a year in another country, one cannot avoid ‘getting increased knowledge of the society and culture’ in question, or in some sense, to ‘develop a greater understanding of global issues’. As discussed above, while it is always possible to formulate goals that are more specific, and with indicators to match them, this is quite complicated. There is certainly no reason for criticizing the organizations involved for this looseness, which seems highly reasonable under the circumstances<sup>6</sup>. But there are two implications to be drawn. The first is that studying the extent to which goals are being realized in these projects becomes much less of an exact science, and more an issue of judgment. And the second implication is that if Fredskorpset wants to use the partnership objectives as instruments for systematic monitoring and adjustments for goals achievement, then there are large investments that need to be made in order to strengthen the process of formulating these goals.

### 2.3 Goal formulation as a management instrument

If Fredskorpset wishes to improve the current monitoring and reporting system, a natural idea would be to seek to emulate the ideas of the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) or similar planning, monitoring and evaluation systems. Such systems are commonly used in a wide variety of management contexts, not the least within the development industry. The basic idea of these systems is to organize the formulation of goals (at different levels), interventions and expected outcomes into a coherent and logically consistent schema. This schema can then be used for monitoring and evaluation purposes, checking if outcomes are produced at the times expected. Should this not be the case, this is an early warning that the project is not on track and allows the project management to make adjustments. When properly handled, the LFA is a very efficient instrument for project management.

However, even though the basic idea of such systems may seem tempting when considered abstractly, I believe there are strong reasons for why Fredskorpset should consider carefully whether this is the way they wish to go. Firstly, as the above discussion of objectives show, this is a complex area. In any project it is easy to get lost in the levels of goals hierarchies, and the development of indicators is quite difficult and time-consuming for projects with objectives such as the Fredskorpset exchanges. To this must be added the fact that the planning of the exchanges is handled by a multitude of different partner institutions, with widely different interests, capacities and starting points. To give all these organizations the necessary training in planning, monitoring and evaluation techniques that ensures they are able to use them to advantage is a daunting task (perhaps even more so as there often is quite a resistance to the use of such tools within many of the institutions with which Fredskorpset works).

Secondly, a premise of the LFA is that all project objectives can be ordered into a logically consistent hierarchy. As we have seen, the set of ob-

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<sup>6</sup> Some organizations felt that Fredskorpset had started attaching great significance to the stated objectives only after the partner and collaboration agreements had been made. They claimed that they would have spent more time developing these objectives had they known at the outset that they would be central for assessing achievements.

jectives found for this kind of multi-stakeholder project can be quite complex, and is not easily organized into a unified whole. At times, there may even be direct contradictions, such as between individual learning goals and institutional improvement goals. In order to integrate these, one would need to prioritize goals, and for instance put institutional interests before individual (or vice versa). This would perhaps require Fredskorpset itself to make clearer priorities among its overarching goals.

Thirdly, one line of criticism against LFA or similar approaches is that they may become quite rigid. In a way they are expressions of an engineering mentality, where things can be planned in detail in advance, and blueprints for execution made. In reality, in social development projects, this is rarely the case. Of course, properly handled, LFA does give opportunities for revisions along the way. Still, these should be revisions largely in terms of adjusting inputs, while maintaining goals. Should one wish to revise also the goals of the projects underway, the LFA is no longer a very useful tool.

One thing that has emerged in the study is that many exchange contact persons have expressed that it is very difficult to decide what the exchange participant should work with until the person is there and professional qualifications and personal characteristics can be assessed. They therefore postpone decisions on work plans. This seems to make sense for some of the exchange projects – but it does have some implications for the objectives formulated during the initial planning phase. Clearly, these objectives will need to be open and not very specific – precisely the kinds of goals statements that do not fit well with the LFA. One clear recommendation for the Fredskorpset – if they decide to use stated objectives as the basis for monitoring and reporting of achievements – is that there should be a mechanism for revision of goals some time after the exchange has started.

At a deeper level, it is possible to question the extent to which a management system based on the formulation of explicit goals is really suited to an institution such as Fredskorpset. The Fredskorpset idea could be said to be that by bringing people together and exchanging experiences between countries within a framework of equal partnership, then, through a myriad of complex and unspecified ways, synergies arise, and mutual understanding, development, poverty reduction and increased respect for human rights are among the outcomes. If the Fredskorpset truly believes that good things tend to arise from exchanges, even though it is hard to specify in advance how this comes about or the concrete expressions they may come to take, then it may seem contradictory to base the management of projects and the measure of success on the correspondence to explicit goals stated in advance. This would focus reporting on these specific areas, while unexpected impacts of the exchanges – positive or negative – might be ignored.

Finally, it could be pointed out that when goals achievement is used as a measure of success, an unintended side effect is that ambitiousness is punished. For instance, in a case where two projects achieve exactly the same results, but where one had more ambitious objectives than the other, the one with the smallest ambitions for what to achieve would come out as more successful (if measured by the ratio of achievements to goals). Strategic adaptation to this would imply setting goals that are easy to reach – not necessarily conducive to achieving ‘exchanges of excellence’.

To conclude, I believe that in the light of the above considerations, Fredskorpset has been right in not organizing the exchange projects with a full-fledged planning, monitoring and evaluation system based on the formulation of objectives such as the LFA. This does not mean the idea of goals should be abandoned. Setting goals for the exchanges must still be practiced. Indeed, the present study suggests that where the partners have clear ideas about what they want to achieve through the partnership, chances are better that the exchange will be successful. Thus, partners should continue to set goals for their exchanges, but they should be dealt with flexibly, allowing the revision of goals along the way and without insisting on these goals being *the* yardstick with which to measure the success of the exchanges.

### 3. E-mail interviews and monitoring systems

The Terms of Reference specifies that the report should describe the experiences of using e-mail interviews and the implications these experiences may have for the development of an improved monitoring and evaluations system for Fredskorpset.

In terms of response, this was quite high on the institutional side. Only one out of eight partner institutions did not fill in and return the e-mail questionnaire. For participants the response rate was lower. Only six of 13 questionnaires were returned. To some extent, however, the low response rate may be due to the use of old and no longer functioning e-mail addresses. I have not had the time for trying to ascertain whether these are still active or have been replaced by new ones.

It seems probable that Fredskorpset, if they establish a monitoring system based on reporting through e-mail interviews, would get at least as high a response rate from institutions, and probably a higher one from participants (if only because Fredskorpset would be better placed to keep track of current e-mail addresses).

The most important aspect about the questionnaires, however, is the quality of information in the responses. These vary widely. A star example, such as the response from the contact person of the Norwegian Band Federation, answers each question directly and in great detail, and includes frank and reflected discussions of those issues that are more problematic. Even though this response is singled out as it is special, there are also other answers that have been thoroughly and competently filled out. Responses such as these would give Fredskorpset excellent material for its monitoring system. However, unfortunately there are others that are of much less value. There are different reasons for this – it is partly because many are much less detailed and less work have been put into them, and partly because some of them confuse project inputs, external factors, outputs and results, and from the consequent muddle it would be difficult for Fredskorpset to extract the useful and relevant information to feed into its monitoring system. Furthermore, difficulties and conflicts are usually referred to briefly and euphemistically – if at all – and it is therefore difficult to judge the importance of these problems. While it is difficult to conclude definitively from such a small sample, it seems that the institutional questionnaires – from the contact persons for the exchanges – give somewhat better information than those from the participants.

If Fredskorpset wishes to introduce a monitoring system based on e-mail interviews, there are a few things to be learnt from this exercise. Firstly, it will be useful with some training of participants and contact persons in order to avoid confusion between categories and levels.

Secondly, the questionnaire was structured around the objectives defined for the individual projects. However, as these objectives were not always very clear, this may have served to confuse the respondents rather than help them. Fredskorpset should either ensure that goals are better formulated, or abandon the focus on goals and ask for results (outcomes and impacts) in its reporting form.

Thirdly, to the extent that I have succeeded in getting an understanding of the different exchange projects, this is largely dependent on the fact that I have interviewed different actors. The stories from different sources complement each other and serve to give several sides to a process. Moreover, when some versions are fuller, it is easier to draw out the implications of those that are briefer. For me it has been a great advantage that at least one interview for each project has been personal, and thereby yielded much richer information. By sending e-mail questionnaires to all the actors involved in an exchange, Fredskorpset could emulate this procedure. Perhaps it would even be possible to combine this with some form of fuller information, such as debriefing interviews of participants or personal meetings with contact persons at one or more specific stage of the exchange process.

## 4. The exchange projects

### 4.1 Delta

#### **Delta internasjonalt KFUK-KFUM, South African National Council of YMCAS, The National Council of YMCAS of Sri Lanka**

(Since 2003, the East Jerusalem YMCA has been included in the partnership, but they are not dealt with in this study)

Within the international YWCA/YMCA organization, exchanges of different types and durations have been going on for a long time. When the Fredskorpset exchange opportunity arose, Delta asked its partner organizations (3 in Asia, 3 in Africa, 2 in the Middle East) who would be interested in taking part. Sri Lanka and South Africa responded positively.

The specific interests of the organizations were identified: Sri Lanka wanted to focus on reconciliation (and were consequently interested in learning from the South African experience); South Africa were interested in strengthening its Tensing activities through learning of Norwegian experiences; and Norway (both Delta and Rønningen Folkehøyskole) was interested in strengthening international solidarity aspects of the work. On the basis of this, detailed plans for an exchange project of several years were worked out. As the partnership agreement shows, a lot of work has gone into the planning of the different placements and the specification of objectives for each.

The first phase of the project saw a Norwegian and a South African participant in Sri Lanka, a Sri Lankan and a South African participant in Norway, and a Norwegian couple (sharing one contract) in South Africa. (A Sri Lanka to South Africa exchange was planned for the second year, but dropped for budgetary reasons as Palestine was taken into the partnership.)

In Sri Lanka, a personal conflict between the two participants colored the exchange experience. However, as they worked on different tasks, the participants were still able to complete their missions. According to the Sri Lankan coordinator, they both contributed important insights from their home countries to their respective areas – reconciliation and youth work. Still, incompatibilities due to cultural differences were also experienced in both cases.

In Norway, the placements seemed to be quite successful. The participants shared their time between being teachers at Rønningen folkehøyskole's Global Solidarity course and the Delta Internasjonalt office where they worked with the international solidarity advocacy in the organization, doing information work with local chapters of the YMCA. The impression is that the participants had relevant tasks and were able to contribute usefully in the daily running of activities. To what extent they succeeded in leaving something of lasting effect in the host institutions is perhaps a more open question. Socially, the participants seemed to do well. The participants' individual learning may have been mostly related to getting to know a new society

and culture, and less of direct professional relevance for their work in the home countries. (At least this seems to be the case for the South African participant.) While the Sri Lankan participant has gone back to an active role within Sri Lanka YMCA, the South African participant has been less closely integrated into the organization's work after returning.

In South Africa, things have been more complex. The Norwegian participants have been frustrated by what they feel has been a lack of support from the YMCA South Africa leadership. One problem seems to be that the Tensing project has to a large extent been the personal interest of the former program director, and less well grounded in the national organization. When he left the organization just as the Norwegian participants arrived, this meant that they had little institutional backing for their work. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that they are placed in Cape Town – where the former program director was stationed – whereas both the leadership and much of the Tensing activities are located in other areas. At the time of my visit, the situation had evolved into a conflict between the participants and the General Secretary of YMCA South Africa, where they saw him as creating obstacles for the realization of their program, and he felt they lacked willingness to adapt to the YMCA South Africa structures. Up to now there has been little involvement of the Norwegian exchange coordinator/sending institution in resolving the problem. Should the conflict persist, this would seem necessary in order to overcome it. In conclusion, the participants have been able to do constructive work with individual Tensing groups, but the placement has been less successful in terms of the goal of contributing to building a Tensing movement that could attract youth to the YMCA.

#### **Personal interviews:**

North participants: Sara Birgitte Øfsti and Ottar Nesje, Cape Town 17.11.03

South participant: Avril Petersen, Cape Town 17.11.03

Contact person: Treven Hendricks, Johannesburg 19.11.03

Exchange coordinator: Jan Edvard Ness, Oslo 27.11.03

#### **E-mail interviews:**

Contact person Sri Lanka: Aruna Nonis

Sri Lankan participant: Jude Simion

## **4.2 Diakonhjemmet**

### **Diakonhjemmets Høgskole, Høgskolen i Bergen, Christian Health Association of Malawi**

Being unaware that Høgskolen i Bergen had separate agreements with Fredskorpset and CHAM, I have not examined the goals of those agreements, nor did I send questionnaires to the participants involved. For this reason information relating to Høgskolen i Bergen is extremely patchy and impacts of that exchange will not be directly discussed.

The contact between CHAM and Diakonhjemmet was made by Fredskorpset, which suggested a partnership might be formed. Both parties saw an interest in this, in terms of strengthening international networks, up-



grading employee's skills and knowledge, and increased motivation among staff.

Two Norwegian social workers and one nurse went to Malawi, while a Malawian public health specialist came to Norway. In general, practical problems – such as language difficulties, lack of integration, cultural conflicts – have been smaller than what might have been expected, while the greatest difficulty reported has been to make full use of the professional skills of the participants. It is reported that a workshop in Malawi after a few months, discussing work plans and resolving difficulties, was fundamental for the results they have achieved.

In Norway, the Malawian participant worked on a literature survey of hiv/aids prevention and care. Due to formal requirements of lecturers, introduced with the recent reform of Norwegian university education, he was not allowed to contribute much to the teaching at the school. It was also felt that six months was too short a stay. Direct impact of his work for Diakonhjemmet may be limited. For Diakonhjemmet, the great benefit of taking part in the exchange may have been by establishing links with and knowledge of a new African country. Only one of the North participants will be retained by Diakonhjemmet after returning.

In Malawi, the nurse teaches at a nursing college, while the social workers have been linked to a hospital. As lack of qualified people is a serious limitation for CHAM, the exchange is of great value for them. They also report that the South participant's access to literature and internet resources while in Norway implied a valuable upgrading of his skills (and that x-ray training received by the participants going to Bergen also had translated into more efficient use of equipment after the return). As social workers have not been employed within the health sector previously, the two participants who have shown how their approaches may be useful will be leaving a specific impact.

**Personal interview:**

Contact person Øyvind Eggen, Oslo 24.11.03

**E-mail interviews:**

Contact person Malawi, Ruth Mwandira

Contact person Høgskolen i Bergen

North participant Mona Klokkerud

### **4.3 Isandi**

#### **Isandi, Penduka**

The relationship between Isandi and Penduka goes back long before the Fredskorpset partnership started – indeed Isandi was created mainly to function as a buyer of the handicrafts produced by Penduka. When the possibility for Fredskorpset support came up, this was thought to be an excellent way of strengthening Penduka, which had a weak organizational structure, largely dependent on the Dutch woman who had been the main force behind Penduka's creation. Specifically, the exchange project was intended to contribute to better contact and smoother trade relations between the partners.

Two Norwegian participants were recruited. One was to work with improving Penduka's systems for logistics, pricing and orders, while the other would work with organizational aspects related to the female producer groups, as well as product design. A Namibian was recruited (from outside the organization) to work in the Isandi shop in Oslo, and learn about the Norwegian market, with the intention that upon returning she could take on a key role within Penduka.

On the Namibian side, the participants have experienced a number of frustrations as the institutional structure around them has been quite weak. Identifying what kind of tasks they ought to concentrate on has been a problem they appear to have struggled with quite a bit, and without very much help and support. An organizational restructuring of Penduka towards the end of their stay came too late to resolve their difficulties and indeed meant very limited time for transferring knowledge to those who will need it in the future. Still, it seems that through their stay, the participants have managed to introduce a number of organizational improvements that, if followed up, should lead to better and more efficient production in the future. Contacts with and understandings of Isandi and the Norwegian market seem also to have improved. Nevertheless, there is a concern that through the difficulties with following up requirements of the Fredskorpset exchange, what Penduka is learning is rather that they are continually failing. As such, the impact of the exchange could be considered to be negative for an organization that is struggling.

On the Norwegian side, the exchange was not successful. The person recruited apparently had expectations for her work in Norway that did not fit with Isandi's plans, and the participant came into conflict with the contact person of Isandi. Given the small size of Isandi as an organization, there were really no opportunities for mediating the conflict or letting the participant relate to other staff. Both the participant and the contact person therefore had a difficult time of it. While the participant is under contractual obligations to work with Penduka for a year after the return to Namibia, it is doubtful whether she will be interested in continuing after that. It is therefore uncertain how much use the placement has been for Penduka.

Isandi and Penduka have decided not to continue with Fredskorpset exchanges.

#### **Personal interview**

Contact person Kjersti Lie Holtar, Oslo 26.11.03

#### **E-mail interviews**

Contact person Namibia Martha Muulayo

North participant Kjersti Augland

North participant Inger Marie Øfsti

### **4.4 NPA**

#### **Norwegian People's Aid, Center for Peace Action, Township AIDS Project, Special Medical Services**

The idea for a Fredskorpset exchange project came up within NPA as a way of integrating better the national and international divisions of its organiza-

tion, by allowing people with a background in voluntary work in Norway to work with the NPA partner organizations abroad. NPA consulted its partners in South Africa (i.e. the organizations with programs or projects funded by NPA), and selected the three organizations as they did voluntary work that somehow paralleled the work of NPA in Norway.

Three Norwegian participants were to divide their time between the three South African organizations. These, in turn, selected one participant each to go to Norway. The participants were recruited largely on the basis of voluntary work experience, with little attention to professional skills.

In South Africa, work plans were only developed after the participants had arrived and their personal characteristics and qualifications could be assessed. In this way, they could also express their own interests. At SMS, they worked with emergency medical services. This was terminated after it appeared that the participants were exposed to outcomes of violence for which they were not prepared. New plans were made but not implemented, as SMS was rocked by the murder of its director, staff was accused of being implicated, and the organization started to disintegrate. For the remainder of the stay the participants only worked with TAP and CPA, being involved in different surveys and trainings, as well as writing the history of CPA. TAP and CPA were happy with the exchanges, although the longer term impacts for the organizations may be difficult to discern.

On the Norwegian side, the exchange must be characterized as a failure. The participants were based at a Folkehøyskole (a boarding school for youth and young adults aimed more at personal development than at professional training). Their expectations of what they would be learning did not correspond to the course given, and the school seemed to do very little to integrate them. All classes were in Norwegian, and the participants eventually stopped attending most of them<sup>7</sup>. The participants were also quite isolated socially. The idea had been to combine studies with participation in voluntary work of different organizations, but this was only realized to a limited extent. Although the participants matured during the year, and did learn something about a new country, the impacts of this exchange must be counted as minimal.

NPA has to some extent reached its objectives, as the returning North participants are being integrated into NPA's local work, thereby embodying some form of integration between national and international activities. For the South partners, the objectives of the exchange were not very clear – apart from giving an opportunity to some of the volunteers of the organization. Unfortunately, this is an opportunity that to a large extent has been wasted.

### **Personal interviews**

Johannesburg 19.11.03:

South participants Deidre Brown, Doreen Nhlapo and Tsietsi Mokhele (individually)

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<sup>7</sup> The school headmaster, who took part in the planning of the placement and expressed the school's interest in hosting it, was taken ill at the beginning of the year and was absent from the school during the remainder of the placement. Possibly the experience would have been different if this had not happened.

TAP director Enea Mobaung and project coordinator Boitumela Rakosa  
CPA coordinator Royal Lekoba  
CPA interns Henifa Ibrahim and Eshmin Harinarain  
CPA contact person Mildred Dreyer  
Oslo, 21.11.03:  
Contact persons Vigdis Holm and Kristin Eskeland

#### **4.5 Norwegian Band Federation Norwegian Band Federation, The Field Band Foundation**

The two partners had been in contact for a few years and organized shorter exchange visits before the Fredskorpset opportunity arose. By allowing longer exchanges, Fredskorpset was seen as ideal for the purpose of reducing the limitations faced by the Field Band Foundation in terms of instructors, as well as for deepening the musical exchange between the organizations. The previous exchange experiences were useful for the partners in setting objectives for the exchange program.

They started with two participants from each organization in 2001, in 2002/2003 there were six North participants and four South African, while currently they are in the third round of exchanges, with two South Africans in Norway and four Norwegians in South Africa.

The Norwegians work at the local level with the band instructors. Partly, they give additional training to the instructors; partly they work with the most advanced band members. They work in pairs, and during their in South Africa, they move around so that all six band regions are covered. The experience seems to be highly successful, especially after some adjustments to the recruitment and preparation procedures after the first year's cultural and communication problems. Among the changes introduced was a 'Guidance Draft', specifying the roles of participants and the Field Band Foundation and the communication lines to sue in cases of conflict. As a result of the exchanges, there have been notable improvements in the planning and organization of band practices, and knowledge of notation and of arranging is also advancing. Moreover, the Norwegian instructors have produced manuals, and the impression is that the exchange has also served to inspire and increase motivation internally within the Field Band Federation.

The South participants have been based at a Folkehøyskole with a thematic focus on music. This has been combined with efforts to send the participants to visit as many member bands of the Norwegian Band Federation as possible. There they have taught their 'South African approach' to band music, teaching Norwegian kids and instructors to leave chairs and music sheets behind, and play and move in a freer way and to new rhythms. The South African participants have clearly learnt things that are useful for them and for their work in the Field Band Foundation, and they are spreading a form of musical inspiration within the Norwegian Band Federation that may well live on after they leave.

Reintegration to the South African context after returning has been difficult for some South participants. While the Field Band Foundation is highly aware of the problem and doing what it can to minimize the effects, this is a

structural problem that will necessarily remain a dilemma for this kind of exchange.

In conclusion, this is a program where clear institutional benefits can be seen. This is particularly so on the South African side, where the partners have been very effective in designing a program aimed directly at resolving clear and felt needs. On the Norwegian side, there are also impacts, but perhaps more vague ones, related to an improved international focus and to an increased awareness of other musical approaches.

### **Personal interviews**

Durban 18.11.03

Contact person Retha Cillier

North participants Thomas Aarø and Knut Vik

Regional coordinator Bryan Clarke

South participant Takatso Mtswene

### **E-mail interview**

Contact person Ingunn Ek

## **4.6 Statkraft Grøner**

### **Statkraft Grøner, Tatedo, International Energy Initiative**

This tripartite partnership arose out of the interest of SG (at that time Kan Energi) to use the Fredskorpset opportunity for establishing a relationship with institutions working with renewable energy issues. Potential institutions were mapped, and five were shortlisted and visited. The final selection was made based on compatibility between institutions and the specific requirements of an exchange project.

In the current (first) phase of the exchange, there is a Norwegian participant in Tanzania, a Tanzanian in Brazil, and a Brazilian in Norway.

As for the Tanzanian in Brazil, I have no direct information, and will not make any assessments (apart from mentioning that the intention is to try to extend his placement, which would seem to be an indication of a successful placement).

The Brazilian in Norway suffered somewhat from the move of the exchange from the company of Kan Energi to SG two months into his placement. Still, as SG is a bigger company, it has probably been easier to find relevant tasks for him there. He has worked on different projects, writing reports and proposals and collecting information. His participation in tenders (working but at no extra cost) has probably secured SG one or two contracts, thereby establishing new business relationships for SG.

The Norwegian participant working in Tanzania seems well integrated into TATEDO, and has participated in a number of different projects. While his background allows him to contribute in terms of general energy planning, he is learning a lot with respect to village energy issues in developing countries.

In general this seems to be a well conceived exchange partnership where there is a good fit between the partners and where participants have been selected carefully. On the one hand there is a direct impact in terms of the par-

ticipants' learning – they are acquiring knowledge that makes them eligible for international contracts. This is of course also an advantage for the institutions, as their human resources get upgraded. At the same time, the exchange project is achieving its goals of establishing closer links between the partners, and they will probably cooperate together on larger projects in the future. TATEDO and SG have already submitted a pre-qualification bid together.

The importance of regular partner meetings, for developing a real partnership, and for working out the concrete details of exchanges and resolving problems, has been emphasized.

#### **Personal interviews:**

Dar es Salaam 12.11.03

Contact person Estomih Sawe

Colleague Ndaga Mwakabuta

North participant Trond Gärtner

Oslo 27.11.03

Contact person Jonas Sandgren

Brazilian participant Rodolfo Gomes

## **4.7 SSB**

### **Statistics Norway, Uganda Bureau of Statistics**

The partnership was established after SSB invited partner institutions from eight countries in the South to take part in an exchange program. Positive responses were received from Uganda. (And from Malawi, but on that front, things have been moving more slowly, so that an exchange is just about to start. The same is the case with the Nicaraguan sister institution, with which contact was established through Fredskorpset).

Preparation for this program has taken a long time. Being a state institution, SSB has had many complicated consultations in order to follow all formal requirements, involving for instance public announcements for recruitment and intensive discussions for the development of contracts acceptable both to unions and the personnel department.

For the South participant, coming from a smaller and newer institution, it was difficult to find a place in a much more specialized organization. A work program was put together that ensured that she took part and received training in a number of different areas. Language turned out to be a much greater problem than foreseen, due to the fact that all statistical information is collected in Norwegian.

The North participant was to a greater extent able to fill a hole and do a job on her own. She worked on a business survey and was able to contribute input of her own into its realization. At the same she gained valuable experiences of working in an international setting.

In general, the objectives of the exchange seemed to be met. The South partner reports having received benefits in terms of strengthening statistical capacity and of upgrading the human resources. Direct results for the Norwegian institution are perhaps more difficult to discern, apart from the fact

that as intended, the program should have contributed to the motivation of staff. Participants have benefited directly through new learning and experiences.

**Personal interview:**

Contact person Elisabeth Gulløy, Oslo 01.12.03

**E-mail interviews**

Contact person Uganda: James Muwonge

South participant Winifred Nankya

## 4.8 The Development Fund

### The Development Fund, Noragric, Norsøk, Envirocare

This partnership is one of a larger exchange program involving the three Norwegian institutions<sup>8</sup> and six institutions in the South. The three Norwegian institutions decided to use the Fredskorpset opportunity for forming a partnership for the promotion of sustainable agriculture, and each institution named two partners in the South. These range from agricultural universities to relatively small farmers groups. Fredskorpset has selected only the Tanzanian NGO Envirocare for this study.

In the first year of exchanges, the South participants rotated between the different Norwegian institutions, in addition to having a spell at a Norwegian farm. Tasks for the Tanzanian participant ranged from following development studies courses and doing research on certification systems for organic agriculture to taking part in practical farm work and receiving training in computer skills. While this gave the participants a varied experience, they found it difficult to move every six to eight weeks and have to go through a new integration process each time. Consequently, this system has been changed during the current (second year) exchange.

The first year's Norwegian participant to go to Tanzania did not fit in very well with Envirocare. Problems were perceived somewhat differently, but involved lack of tasks for her during a period and communication difficulties perhaps related to cultural differences. A visit to Tanzania by the Norwegian coordinator after some months served to lessen the problems somewhat, but the relationship between participant and partner was never completely healed, and it is difficult to see what results the exchange yielded. The current North participant is a researcher (social scientist) from Norsøk. He is somewhat better integrated into the organization, and has made contributions to Envirocare's work with certification of organic production. Still, the impression is that the full potential of his capacity is not tapped in the work he is doing and that better planning for the placement would have been an advantage.

In terms of results, this is most directly seen at the level of individual learning, where participants are gaining knowledge of other countries and international structures, as well as specific insights into issues of ecological agriculture. Indirectly the partners also benefit from this, through the

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<sup>8</sup> Originally, the Norwegian Farmers and Smallholders' Association was part of the partnership, but was subsequently replaced by Norsøk.

strengthening of their human resources. (The Development Fund does not recruit internally, and therefore does not get this kind of benefit.) Furthermore, the partners are brought closer together through the cooperation, and are gaining new knowledge also at an institutional level. For instance, Norsøk is strengthening its international knowledge and profile, the Development Fund deepening its knowledge of ecological agriculture, while Envirocare is learning more about trade with organic products and certification systems.

#### **Personal interviews**

Dar es Salaam 13.11.03:

North participant Øystein Sogn

Contact person Loyce Lema

South participant Salome Kisenge

Oslo 25.11.03:

Contact person Ola Relling

### **4.9 Veidekke**

#### **Veidekke, NOREMCO**

This exchange is particular in that the South partner is a 100% owned subsidiary company of the North partner. An overall objective of the exchange is to contribute to the replacement of expatriate staff in the leadership of the South partner by national employees.

Two South participants – one engineer, one foreman, both long-term employees of Noremco – worked in different Veidekke construction projects in Norway, thereby gaining both concrete working experiences, and perhaps most importantly, insights into a different organizational culture. Veidekke intends eventually to promote them to positions that have previously been held by expatriates. This is thus a case of very direct linkage between individual learning and institutional benefit.

The two North participants have had somewhat different placements. One has worked in a department where his (also expatriate) superior appeared to have little interest and belief in a project to replace expatriates by nationals. The participant experienced a lot of resistance and did not achieve very much. Recognizing the problem, his work plan has been changed for the latter part of his exchange period. The other North participant had greater authority through working as a project leader. Furthermore he had very clear conceptions of what he wanted to achieve, and set about making a system of formalized job descriptions with corresponding qualification requirements that allowed circulation of personnel on the basis of performance. Already, this has allowed the promotion of two Tanzanian employees to the position of site managers, which had previously only been held by expatriates.

It is thus possible to point to clear results at the institutional level for three of the four placements. This must consequently be considered a successful exchange project (as long as it is understood to be an exchange between partners, and not an internal restructuring process that Fredskorpset is subsidizing).



**Personal interviews**

Dar es Salaam 14.11.03:

Contact person Tor Ivar Foshaug

North participant Anders Bentzrød

North participant Halvard Leren

South participant Harrison Mringo

South participant Elly Charles Mjahas

**E-mail interview**

Contact person Knut Iversen



## 5. Phases, key moments, processes

### 5.1 Establishing partnerships

The background for the different partnerships vary somewhat. In most cases, the Fredskorpset exchange partnerships are built on previous relationships between the partners. Some of these relationships were very close, such as between construction companies Veidekke and its Tanzanian subsidiary Noremco, or between the Namibian handicraft producer's organization Penduka and its main buyer Isandi. In only two cases did relationships start with the Fredskorpset partnership: Kan/Energi (later Statkraft Grøner) started its Fredskorps engagement by doing a survey of potential partner institutions in Africa and Latin America, and Diakonhjemmets Høgskole was approached by Fredskorpset and asked if they would be interested in partnering with Christian Health Association of Malawi. Clearly, having a previous relationship means that the partners know each other better, and it makes planning easier. But the data gathered cannot support any conclusions as to whether this also leads to better results for the exchange projects<sup>9</sup>.

Motivations for taking part in Fredskorpset exchanges vary, and this may actually be a quite important variable. One problem encountered by the 'old Fredskorpset' was that host institutions were not always interested in the work of the volunteer. Sometimes, access to project funds through the volunteer, or to his or her car, were the main reasons for wanting to take part in the program. Such lack of interest in the volunteer usually translated into an unsuccessful placement<sup>10</sup>. The 'new' Fredskorpset has wisely abstained from linking these types of resources to the exchanges. Still it would be naïve to presume that for this reason similar mechanisms do not exist within the program.

As the Fredskorpset is a Norwegian program, it is only natural that all the partnerships (with the exception of Diakonhjemmet/Christian Health Association of Malawi) were initiated by the Norwegian partner. The South partners accepted the Norwegian institutions' invitation on the basis of an appraisal of the potential benefits of the partnership. But in some cases the perceived benefits were possibly more in terms of maintaining a relationship with a partner institution in the North or of humouring a donor than related to the concrete benefits of a two-way exchange of personnel. This way of thinking seems to lead very easily to underspecified placements with somewhat random or indifferent objectives. These kinds of placements are often – but by no means always – unsuccessful. Such cases contrast quite strongly with partnerships based on similar professional skills, where placements that profit from complementarities seem to be much more easily planned and achieved. They also contrast with other partnerships where the interests and

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<sup>9</sup> At any rate, such conclusions should not really be expected to emerge from so small a sample.

<sup>10</sup> This, at least, was the case in Nicaragua, where I took part in a review of the 'old' Fredskorpset (Norwegian Volunteer Service) in 1991. It should be emphasized that Nicaragua was in many ways a particularly problematic field for the 'old' Fredskorpset.

potential benefits of the different partners have been thoroughly discussed and worked through – even if the partnerships are not based on professional complementarities (the different YMCA organizations have for instance succeeded in defining for each partner the concrete and specific areas where they wish to obtain results from the exchanges).

In many of the partnerships, it seems to have been easier to design relevant placements in the South than in Norway. In some exchanges this is reflected by having more North participants, or having the South participants in Norway for shorter periods. This does open for the question of whether the Fredskorpset insistence of having ‘equal’ exchanges between South and North, and thus being fundamentally different from traditional volunteer programs, might be an ideology that does not always match reality. If placements in Norway are sometimes created to only to satisfy Fredskorpset requirements, rather than on the basis of real interests and felt needs, then it should not be surprising if stated objectives are vague, or the results of these placements turn out to be limited.

Another important element for the establishment of successful partnerships is that these are grounded in the organization as a whole and not simply the brainchild of one person. Unless the contact person for the exchange has solid backing within his or her organization, it will be difficult to ensure that the adjustments and administrative support required for a successful exchange are forthcoming. Furthermore, there are several cases that show that even if the person supporting the exchange is in a leadership position, this will not be enough if that person leaves or becomes ill, and there is no wider commitment to the exchange project.

## 5.2 Recruiting participants

As all partners know, this is a crucial step. The person recruited needs to combine professional skills with personal characteristics and specific attitudes. The way this has been handled has varied a lot between the different organizations. In some cases the identification of the participant may have predated the planning of the Fredskorpset exchange project (as was the case for Kan Energi and for at least one of the Veidekke participants). In other cases, professional qualifications directly related to the tasks the participant would be doing were basic conditions for the recruitment (for instance the Norwegian Band Federation, Diakonhjemmet/Christian Health Association of Malawi or International Energy Initiative). In other instances, candidates were recruited more on the basis of what they could learn than based on what they could contribute during the exchange. This could be both with respect to highly specialized professional training (Uganda Bureau of Statistics) or to much more open cultural, international and organizational learning (for instance Norwegian People’s Aid).

Obviously, these variations have a lot to do with the different partnerships – what commonalities they are based on and what the partners’ interests in the exchange are. Where the specific objectives of the partnership are more diffuse, intentions for placements are usually also less specific, and requirements for recruitment will naturally be more open – less professionally focused and more geared towards personal characteristics.

One observation is that in about half the exchanges, there is a clear pattern where the North participants are recruited in order to teach, while the South participants are recruited in order to learn. While this may be said to contradict to some extent the Fredskorpset idea (rhetoric?) of an equal exchange, it is far from unnatural given the differences in terms of resources that obtain between most North and South partners. The other half of the exchanges, on the other hand, show much more balanced relationships in this respect.

An aspect of recruitment that has particular implications is whether it is done from own staff, from within the organization's membership, from the 'institutional surroundings' or whether it is based on a completely open announcement. This will of course depend both on the size and type of institution, as well as on the requirements of the placement. It seems clear, though, that where there are objectives of bringing the partner institutions closer together, recruiting someone from within the organization is a great advantage both in terms of the participant then being better placed to 'represent' the sending partner, and because he or she would then hopefully have a place within the organization upon the return, thereby continuing to be a 'contact point'. Furthermore, it is a general point that where participants return to a position within the sending organization, the learning from the exchange will not only be of benefit to the individual, but also the institution. Thus, in order to achieve results at the institutional level, there are good reasons for giving priority to recruitments from within one's own ranks. The awareness of this point seemed widespread among the contact persons interviewed.

### 5.3 Preparation

There are two sides to preparation of the exchanges – preparation for the participants, and preparation for the host institutions. With respect to the latter, it was expressed by many that hosting an exchange involved much more work than expected, both with respect to practicalities such as work permits and lodgings, and with respect to the social integration of the participant. One contact person spoke of handling such exchanges as being 'an administrator's nightmare'. Furthermore, receiving an exchange participant from another country involved new responsibilities the coordinators were not always prepared for or sure of how to handle. The idea of arranging preparatory courses also for partners – which I understand is under discussion – was generally very positively received.

For the participants, preparation involves several aspects. One is being prepared for the work they will be doing. In a number of cases, participants arrived with the impression that they would be doing something different from what the host institution had planned. Many of these cases involved South participants coming to Norway, who expected to receive more formal training and education than was the case. To some extent, the misunderstandings might be due to deficient communication between the partner organizations. Of equal importance, however, were the strong connotations the idea of going to Norway for work or training had for many of the South participants, connotations that lingered on even if the plans had been correctly explained by the contact person of the sending organization. Discovering

that what you will be doing will be less relevant and qualifying than you expected, precisely at the point when you struggle to fit into a new society, can be quite a blow. It therefore seems important that more emphasis is given to the way placement plans are conveyed to the prospective participants, with particular attention to the way general statements of ‘learning during your stay in Norway’ may be misunderstood.

Of course there are also North participants who have been disappointed as they have not been able to do what they expected. In these cases, however, the disappointment has less to do with the having understood the plans incorrectly, but more with the fact that the plans were difficult to realize, for lack of resources, organizational problems or other unforeseen circumstances. There were also South participants who experienced this. It is not always easy to prepare participants for the fact that things may not work out as planned, but this at least is a theme that is dealt with through the preparatory courses.

The attitude to these courses among the participants was somewhat mixed, but generally positive on balance. The one thing appreciated by everyone was the meeting and getting to know other participants from other countries. Some claimed this to be the start of life-long friendships; others emphasized meeting so many reflected and interesting people from many countries. As for the contents of the course, opinions were more varied. Some thought too much time was spent on issues that were not new to them, while others felt that the contents had been very useful, particularly the parts preparing them for living in another society. A few South participants expressed that they felt the courses to be mainly oriented to Norwegians going to work in Southern countries. As a general conclusion, though, the impression gained is that the course does serve an important preparatory function – perhaps the effect is greatest precisely for those who need it the most. The location poses a dilemma – for the South participants, it is an advantage if the course is in Norway, and for the Norwegian participants, it may function best if held in South. At the same time including North and South participants in the same courses is useful, and highly appreciated by most participants.

One thing that was pointed out was that the Fredskorpset somehow communicated a double message through this course. South participants coming to Norway spend the first two (or even four) weeks on a course where the Fredskorpset message and identity is constantly reinforced. For those participants who eventually encountered problems – perhaps with their host institution – and contacted Fredskorpset for help, the refusal to get directly involved with the participant could be quite a disappointment<sup>11</sup>. In my opinion, Fredskorpset’s policy of insisting that it is the partners who have the full responsibility for resolving all issues with the exchange is a sound one – but perhaps this implies a need for down-playing the Fredskorpset image during the preparatory courses?

Coming home after the exchange implies problems for some. These are problems for which it is probably impossible to prepare the participants

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<sup>11</sup> This does not mean to imply that Fredskorpset does not do anything in such cases. But what is done is largely done through the host institution, normally without dealing directly with the participant.

completely, but the more emphasis put on this aspect during the preparatory phase (especially before leaving the home country) the better.

#### **5.4 Integration into the work situation**

There are a number of variables that affect the participants' integration into the work of the host organization. One could be said to relate to the degree of skills and specializations required. There are large differences in this respect. At one end are what one could call professional placements, where participants have been recruited on the basis of specialized skills and are expected to function as professionals. Examples of this are the partnerships of Statistics Norway/Uganda Bureau of statistics, Statkraft Grøner/TATEDO/IEI, Veidekke/NOREMCO and Diakonhjemmet/CHAM. In general these placements offer good opportunities for identifying meaningful tasks and thereby integrating the participants. One problem experienced by Diakonhjemmet, however, which limited this potential, was the difficulties of participants to gain recognition of their qualifications. Partly there were bureaucratic obstacles to this, as the Malawian public health specialist were barred from giving classes due to the strict formal requirements of Norwegian teachers, or the Norwegian specialized nurse who was unable to practice until after completing a one month internship that seemed relatively meaningless as it had no relationship to the field she would be working in. But there were also more general instances of lack of recognition of the knowledge of the participants, and consequently, complaints that they were allowed to do much less than they felt able to. Conversely, as systems were more advanced in Statistics Norway than in the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, there were limitations as to how the Ugandan participant could contribute – and the placement could be said to be primarily oriented at the training of the participant. Anyway, the overall conclusion must be that these 'professional exchanges' in general were quite conducive to a good integration of the participants.

The next type of exchange partnerships could be termed semi-professional, in that they were more or less loosely sector-oriented, and required that the participants have knowledge of the field, without necessarily being professionals (although some were). This could be said to involve the partnerships of the Development Fund (sector: sustainable agriculture), the YMCA (different areas of youth work), the Norwegian Band federation (band music) and Isandi (handicraft production and fair trade). In most of these cases, the partners seem to have succeeded in creating meaningful placements that drew on and developed the skills of the participants, thereby aiding work integration.

While it should be emphasized that the categorization is tentative, and that there are certainly grey zones and overlaps between the categories, one might finally suggest a category of non-professional exchanges, represented by Norwegian People's Aid/Center for Peace Action. Here participants are recruited on the basis of experience of voluntary work, and are to function within such structures in the host country. The experience seemed successful in South Africa while it didn't work very well in Norway. There are different factors behind these results, but it is possible to suggest that in general, these

kinds of placements run greater risks of not being able to match participants and jobs in a way that promotes good work integration. Today, the non-professional exchanges are organized under the 'youth program' Fredskorpset Ung, on somewhat different terms than for the regular Fredskorpset exchanges.

Another distinction between different exchanges could be on the basis of what interests the partners have in receiving exchange participants. If these are interests are concrete, then it is possible to design specific work plans, with corresponding skills requirements, and recruit on the basis of this. Under these circumstances, the probabilities of matching participants to tasks are greater, and a good integration more likely. On the other hand, where interests are fuzzier, there may be a tendency to make up tasks for the participant, tasks that often are of less importance and less centrally involved in the organization. Consequently tasks may not seem very meaningful to the participant, and he or she may be functioning in relative isolation from the rest of the organization. This is obviously not conducive to integration. Placing participants as students in schools may be one variant of this. Generally, unless the teaching received is perceived as relevant and is matched by other activities that integrate the participants in a community of work (as is the case for the Field Band Foundation participants), this kind of placement does not lead to a good integration. It may also be doubtful whether it corresponds to the Fredskorpset idea.

The length of the exchange is of course an important factor. Participants require time to get to know a new social and institutional context and find their place within it. In some cases, time originally planned for has not been sufficient. Thus, in some cases, the partners are asking for extension of the periods, or lengthening the stays for second phase participants. The plan for the next participant to Statistics Norway, for instance, involves a longer stay, and the participants coming to the Development Fund or to Center for Peace Action will not divide their time between as many different institutions as did the first year participants. There may be a tradeoff here between objectives of individual learning and institutional improvement. An old saying related to technical assistance is that for the first year of a placement, the expert is learning, and only in the second year will he or she be useful. This is a quite flexible saying – one version has it that in the first six months the person is learning, while he is useful the next six months. The point, however, is that if the main objective of Fredskorpset is to contribute to individual learning, this will require shorter placements than if institutional improvements are the main purpose.

Organizational issues are also important for the integration of participants. In some cases a weak institutional structure, internal conflicts, a lack of institutional commitment to the exchange, or resistance to its objectives within the organization, have created difficulties. Problems of this nature can for instance be seen with respect to the placements with Isandi, YMCA South Africa, Ringsaker Folkehøyskole (NPA) and Noremco<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Difficulties of fitting in may of course also be due to characteristics of the participant – for instance to his or her level of professional skills or abilities to adapt to a new cultural and organizational context. Even though this has been alleged in some instances, I have no data that have led me to conclude that this has been the case for any of the exchanges studied, and will not cite specific cases.



Conversely, a responsive institution will react to problems of integration by adjusting work plans and placements. Examples of this may for instance be found in the cases of Noremco and of Diakonhjemmet/Christian Health Organization of Malawi. This is a form of active management for goals achievement that is facilitated by having partner meetings a couple of months into the exchanges, with the specific intention of making adjustments to optimize the placements.

In many cases, language problems created difficulties in the work situation and limited the performance of the participants. This was a problem both for North and South participants alike. As language is of equal importance for the social integration of participants, increased attention to – and funding for – language training was a recommendation made by many of the people interviewed. Some even suggested that language training started before leaving the home country, others that time should be set off for this during working hours throughout the placement period.

## 5.5 Social integration

Social integration is important for the objective of learning about another society and culture. Furthermore, it is important for the general well-being and functioning of the participant. There are cases where lack of social integration has led to depressions and severely hampered the over-all achievements of an exchange. Still, the data I have gathered do not allow more than some general observations on this issue.

Some South participants found social integration in Norway to be difficult to achieve. As mentioned, language is undoubtedly one factor for this problem, but can hardly be the whole explanation. Further investigation is necessary in order to know more about the factors behind this. Most of those living in students' quarters or complexes for short-term construction workers attained social integration in this setting, but this did not apply to all. For some, the company of other participants – whether from the same organization, or people met through Fredskorpset preparatory courses or other arrangements – became the mainstay of their social network. Participants working alone, in small places outside of Oslo may be particularly vulnerable in this respect. It is of course possible that under these circumstances they will have a greater incentive for making contacts with Norwegians, and therefore be more successful in this respect – but this cannot be taken for granted.

For Norwegian participants, achieving some form of social integration seemed easier. At least I have no material indicating otherwise.

One issue that came up was the question of how far the host institution's responsibility went for ensuring that the participants had a social network. To put it bluntly: To what extent should the contact person (and other representatives of the organization) open his or her personal life and use spare time to ensure that the participant is not lonely? In most cases a balance in this respect seemed to be fairly easily achieved – indeed contact persons were generally happy to have some role also outside the work setting, without feeling that this was getting out of hand. In some cases, however, contact persons felt that participants requested more than they were willing to pro-

vide. In another and somewhat different case, strained relations at work between a participant and the contact person prevented the latter from being able to be of any help when the participant experienced personal problems. The question of who should be a backup support for the participant under such circumstances – maybe Fredskorpset?<sup>13</sup> – was raised.

Economy is also a factor that affects integration. In all the cases I came across, participants seemed to have no problems with living conditions or making ends meet with the pay received (although quite a few Norwegian participants used savings from before to finance cars, travel during vacations, or school payments for children). There was, however, a concern among some South participants that while the payment for those placed in Norway were sufficient to live on, this was only in a way that must be considered poor by Norwegian standards. Price levels scared many in Norway, and when you feel cinema tickets are too expensive for you, this obviously has consequences for your social life. In contrast, it was pointed out, those who were placed in the South were in a position to lead a very different lifestyle, more in line with the better-off in society. On the other hand, it could be responded, the South participants uphold their salary in their home country, in addition to what they receive to live on in Norway, while North participants only receive payment to cover living costs in the country where they work.

Fixing payment levels within the Fredskorpset is of course difficult, and to some extent the differences pointed out have to do with differences in the levels of living costs in different countries, over which Fredskorpset has no influence. As a general conclusion, I would say that Fredskorpset has been quite successful in finding a reasonable level of remuneration. But perhaps the most worrisome aspect for Fredskorpset is the fact that among many South participants there is a perception of injustice, an injustice that it is naturally enough understood in terms of general global differences and exploitation between North and South. Such understandings were exacerbated by the fact that participants in Norway received different kinds of benefits – related for instance to paid vacation – and the lack of contracts for many of the placements allowed some to conclude that ‘South participants have no rights’.

## 5.6 Home coming

Coming home can be difficult for some participants, whether home is in the North or the South. For returning Norwegians, problems seem mainly to be related to issues of meaningfulness – Norwegian concerns are perceived as trivial and irrelevant compared to the context they have been living in. It seems that quite a few of the Norwegian participants who experience this kind of difficulty seek to find some way of returning to work in the South. Clearly, these kinds of problems are not wholly negative.

The problems of returning to the South are somewhat different. After having lived for a year in one of the richest countries in the world, it can be quite hard to return to a situation of living in a township in South Africa,

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<sup>13</sup> Obviously this would only be possible for placements in Norway – which was the case of the story referred to.

perhaps even being unemployed. The possibility of a life under very different material circumstances has been dangled in front of you – you have even to some extent taken part in it – and then it is taken away, and you are back where you started. The difficulties may be exacerbated by the fact that friends and family may treat you differently – expecting to share in the wealth you are assumed to bring back, or imagining that you are now feeling and acting superior to them. There are great differences between the social backgrounds of different South participants. Such problems are obviously most common among those who come from the poorest circumstances, and even among them, there are not all who seem to experience these difficulties to any significant degree. But for a few, there may be serious difficulties involved. It is difficult to know just how to address this problem. Preparation – discussing the problem in advance – is obviously one way that one may seek to reduce the effects, but will not do away with the difficulty.

### **5.7 Partners' relations with Fredskorpset**

In general, comments from partners about Fredskorpset were overwhelmingly positive. The institution was seen as meeting the different partner organizations in an open and flexible manner, being willing to accommodate to and adjust for special circumstances, and giving sensible advice when asked. There was a general support for the basic Fredskorpset model, where the partners have the full responsibility for the exchanges, and Fredskorpset limits itself largely to funding and arranging preparatory courses.

However, there were also a few problems that were indicated. Several North partners had experienced that what they had understood to be commitments for support to projects over several years involving a number of exchanges turned out to be firm commitments only for the first year. A clearer and more explicit communication from Fredskorpset might have avoided the misunderstandings. But underlying these more prosaic difficulties of communication – that hopefully belong to the past – is the larger issue of whether Fredskorpset ought to be able to make commitments for several years, which is really necessary for the planning of the larger exchange programs such as the ones that Delta and the Development Fund are coordinating. A longer planning horizon could bring a lot of benefits: allowing more care to be taken in the recruitment of participants and better preparation in terms of language learning; it would mean less administrative resources spent on negotiating new contracts; and it might allow the overlap of placements with opportunities for direct transfer of experiences and avoiding the termination of contracts for lodgings rentals (with consequent need for furniture stowage), and so on.

An issue raised by some South partners related to what they perceived as an uneven relationship inherent in these supposedly equal partnerships. That the Fredskorpset needs to have one of the partners as contract partner, and that for practical reasons this is the North partner, is only natural. But the fact that the North partner is alone in reporting to Fredskorpset, and that indeed many reports, contracts and Fredskorpset forms are in Norwegian, effectively sidelines the South partners to a much greater extent than necessary. It is difficult to understand why this is so, in particular given the gener-

alized rhetoric of equal partnership. Requiring all such documents to be in a language accessible to both partners and Fredskorpset – normally English – would be a simple, yet efficient way of righting this imbalance. (A further idea for strengthening the partnership aspects that was suggested was if Fredskorpset might support and even run the kind of intranet-setup that Statkraft Grøner has established in order to secure the partners' easy access to updated versions of all relevant documents.)

A third issue that was raised was whether Fredskorpset might have a somewhat stronger role in terms of giving advice on all the formal and legal practicalities of exchanges. The example given referred to a North participant who ended up paying more taxes than necessary as the sending partner had included the support for lodging and related costs on his income statement. If Fredskorpset could facilitate more and better information on such issues, this would be a great help for the partner institutions that normally have little experience with such issues.

## 6. Conclusions

### 6.1 The Fredskorpset exchanges

The projects selected give a fair representation of the variety of exchange types that have been established through Fredskorpset<sup>14</sup>. Partnerships studied range from a construction company with its fully owned subsidiary company, through specialized agencies such as the Norwegian and Ugandan bureaus of statistics, and NGOs, research institutes and farmers organizations with a common interest in sustainable agriculture, to band organizations. This illustrates how Fredskorpset has set out to with clear intentions of trying out new and varied forms of cooperation. It is easy to be impressed, both by the flexible and innovative attitude that has been demonstrated, and by the fact that in little over two years, so much has been achieved in terms of having systems in place and in terms of results of the exchange projects. That some problems have also been encountered along the way is in the nature of these types of projects, and does not detract from the overall conclusion that Fredskorpset has had a successful start-up phase.

The basis of the Fredskorpset model has been the partnership idea. In this way, the organization has clearly distinguished itself from traditional volunteer programs such as 'the old Fredskorpset'. It has long been acknowledged that even if *equal* partnerships in development cooperation is an unattainable ideal due to the differences in resources between partners, it still worth striving to get as close to this ideal as possible. From this perspective, the partnerships studied are quite advanced – partnerships in much more than just name. All of them were formed on the basis of recognized common interests and seemed to allow an open dialogue where the respective concerns of both North and South partners were clearly expressed.

But even if partnerships are real, the exchanges are not necessarily balanced. For instance, as has been pointed out, in about half the exchanges the North participants are expected to teach while the South participants shall primarily learn. While this cannot really be termed a balanced exchange, it is nevertheless quite natural given the differences in resources between North and South partners. Furthermore, in the other half of the sample, the exchanges were much more balanced in this respect.

More problematic, perhaps, is the fact that even if the partnerships are based on recognized common interests, it is not always easy to translate this into good exchange projects, where institutions develop as a consequence of exchanging personnel. In some cases, the motives for having an exchange project seem quite vague. Without having clear ideas of what the institutions want to achieve by the exchange, chances are that the project is less successful. Partnerships based on specialized professional skills seem to stand a better chance of developing exchanges with clearer purposes.

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<sup>14</sup> Except for South-South exchanges, which are an important and innovative part of the Fredskorpset portfolio, but is not covered by the present study.

## 6.2 Achievements of the studied exchanges

It is difficult to offer general conclusions on the extent to which the exchange projects have reached their stated goals. This is not primarily because of the different experiences of the individual exchanges, but rather due to the imprecise statements of goals. As few goal formulations specify the extent of achievement expected, one easily arrives at conclusions that yes, goals have been fulfilled, because it is always possible to identify some way in which organizations have been ‘strengthened’ or individuals have ‘learnt’. Trying to discuss achievements in terms of formulated goals would therefore lead to paradoxical conclusions where projects with very moderate achievements might score 100%, while other projects that would seem to have achieved larger impacts, might still score lower if they had clearer goal statements. For these reasons, the following discussion focuses more on achievements than on the formulated goals of the exchanges.

Results of the exchanges are of different types. Starting with the individual level, one can perhaps identify two types of learning: acquiring knowledge of another country and culture, and increasing professional skills<sup>15</sup>. The first type of learning is less interesting for the present discussion. This is not because it is unimportant – it is rightly an explicit goal of the Fredskorpset exchanges – but rather because it is really a logical consequence of any exchange. While it is true that some participants learn more than others, due both to personal characteristics as well as to the conditions of the exchange, the data from the present study do not allow me to differentiate between different results in this respect. (Related to this there is what may be called personal growth through the exchange experiences. Again it is difficult to say who has achieved the most in this field or why, but it is very evident that some of the participants have matured and benefited significantly in this way.)

The other type of learning, related to professional skills, is found in many of the projects. Not so surprisingly, such results are most clearly seen in what I have termed the ‘professional’ exchanges<sup>16</sup>. Here participants are performing professionally under new circumstances. Unless the placement fails completely, the participants will necessarily have increased their professional experience and skills, and thereby have acquired greater value on the labor market. Some participants received explicit training or courses in addition, which added to the professional learning, but even for those who did not, new and relevant skills were evidently acquired in all cases. Also in the cases of the ‘semi-professional’ exchanges<sup>17</sup> it was possible to identify this type of result in all the cases. Generally, however, the learning in these cases was less directly professionally relevant and it would be more difficult to conclude definitively that greater value on the labor market was an outcome.

However, in many ways it is the institutional level that is the most interesting one in terms of looking at impacts. While individual learning is a direct outcome of any exchange (and difficult to measure or compare anyway), it is by no means a given that impacts from the exchanges are realized at the

15 Even if in practice, there will be grey zones of overlap between these types.

16 The projects characterized in this way involved Statistics Norway, Statkraft Grøner, Dia-konhjemets Høgskole and Veidekke.

17 Delta, Isandi, Norwegian Band Federation and the Development Fund.

level of the partner institutions. To some extent, the individual and institutional levels are interconnected, as the increases in professional skills and international knowledge of the participants translate into greater human resources for those organizations that retain their participants after the return. (Where participants were recruited externally, however, this resource is usually dispersed after the end of the contract.) Furthermore, to the extent that the possibility of taking part in an exchange project serves to strengthen the motivation of the institutions staff – which is an explicit goal in a number of cases – then the institutions will have strengthened its human resource base also in another way. While I have had no opportunity for investigating directly whether this is taking place, it does seem a likely effect in a number of cases (again dependent on internal recruitment).

An important result at the institutional level is an increased international orientation. This can be seen both in the establishment of closer relationships between the partners, which in the majority of cases studied will serve as the basis for new forms of cooperation between them (in addition to the further Fredskorpset exchanges, which most partnerships are also planning). Moreover, there is a general increased international interest in all of the organizations (with the exception perhaps of the Development Fund and Isandi, which both had a more or less exclusively international focus from the outset) as a result of the exchanges. By working together with participants from other countries, employees of many sections of the institutions have acquired a new international perspective.

A final type of result at the institutional level is where the participants have been able to contribute to innovation or improvement that will remain in place after they leave. This is usually dependent on the participant coming with specific professional skills, and seems to have been achieved for a number of the South partners, such as Noremco, the Field Band Foundation, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, the Christian Health Association of Malawi, and maybe others. It is more difficult to see such institutional improvements among any of the Norwegian partner institutions.

### **6.3 Factors affecting achievements**

Briefly, some of the factors that affect the achievements of the exchanges can be pointed out. On the one hand, there are obstacles that prevent or limit the achievements. Many of them are well known, such as language problems, lack of social integration, and conflicts arising out of cultural differences (often related to differences in organizational patterns and communicative styles).

Furthermore, deficient planning and/or recruitment – where work plans and participants' qualifications do not go well together – is a frequent cause of under-achievement. Similarly, where a partner's specific interest in the exchange is not clear, and diffuse objectives are consequently formulated, the chances are that the placement will have limited institutional impacts. Weak institutional structures of the host institution (very small organizations may be particularly vulnerable) or lack of institutional grounding of the exchange project (where the project is linked to one individual rather than the organization as a whole) also imply risks. Where there are internal conflicts

in host organizations, exchange projects and participants risk being caught in the crossfire.

Too short time periods for the exchange, or dividing the time between too many host institutions, are other reasons that have been quoted for limited achievements. Lack of longer time horizons may also limit the achievements, particularly in the case of the larger exchange projects.

As has been pointed out previously, there may be some contradiction between different objectives. For instance, placements where there are conflicts or difficulties of an institutional nature will normally achieve few results at the institutional level. On the other hand, they may result in the participant acquiring a lot of knowledge, even if it can be a painful process while it is going on. This may be a consolation to some participants, even if the institutional effects of such exchanges are limited.

The factors that contribute to positive results of the exchanges are to some extent the mirror images of the obstacles mentioned above. Most important is perhaps that there is a good match between the participant's qualifications, a well-defined and conceived work plan and the needs of the host institution. This usually presupposes partners who complement each other, and where both institutions have clear ideas of what they can get out of the partnership. It seems that what have been termed the professional placements are the ones that are most likely to realize impacts at all levels. Finally it is worth pointing out that where candidates are recruited internally there is a greater chance that the benefits of the increased knowledge and skills of the participant will be retained by the sending partner.



# 7. APPENDICES

## 7.1 Goals statements of the exchange projects

### 7.1.1 DELTA:

#### Overall objective:

- Develop global understanding
- Build organizational capacity for increased and relevant youth participation

#### For South partners

- a) South Africa National Council of YMCAs
  - Learn from Ten Sing experience in Norway in order to build similar program (but appropriate to SA context) in South Africa
  - Develop skills that will help SAYMCA sustain itself and grow
  - Increase the knowledge of YMCA Sri Lanka and Norway
  - Develop program focusing on real youth issues, thereby attracting more young people to the YMCA
  - Develop understanding of South/North and South/South issues, particularly related to poverty, health and technology
  - Develop model for North/South and South/South cooperation that can be used in other partnerships
- b) National Council of YMCA Sri Lanka
  - Learn from experience of South African partner of active participation in advocacy for democracy, peace and human rights
  - Include an international dimension to the YMCA Sri Lanka youth programs
  - Formulate international components of training programs of the proposed National Training Centre of the YMCA Sri Lanka

#### For South participants

- a) South Africa – Norway
  - learn about issues affecting young people in Norway
  - develop new skills in teaching methods
  - develop a greater understanding of global issues
  - obtain insights into how projects and youth events are managed in a First world society
  - gain experiences of working in an international set up which is concerned with international co-operation
- b) Sri Lanka – Norway
  - gain knowledge on youth programmes of Norway YMCA-YWCA and educational activities of YMCA Folkhighschools .

- learn of the international dimension of Norway YMCA-YWCA programmes such as Communication for Change (CFC) etc.
  - gain skills of working in an international environment
- c) South Africa – Sri Lanka
- Gain a greater understanding on the realities of the ethnic conflict
  - Obtain knowledge on human behaviour in a multi-racial and multi-religious context
  - Understand the consequences of colonialism
  - Develop new skills in conflict management and dispute resolution
- d) Sri Lanka – South Africa
- Develop greater understanding of South African culture and ability to live and work in a foreign context
  - Understand the life of South African in the post apartheid period
  - Gain knowledge of how cultural expressions can be used in struggles of people
  - Experience different types of music in South Africa and learn them up to great stand.
  - Gain experience in how to co-ordinate local and national Ten Sing groups

**For North partner**

- Internationalize the YWCA/YMCA youth educational and training program
- Increase South participation in international YWCA/YMCA programs in Norway
- Improve relevance and focus of advocacy activities
- Improve international educational perspective at the two ‘folkehøyskoler’

**For North participants**

- a) Norway – South Africa
- Obtain experiences by working in an international setup which is concerned with international co-operation
  - Understand the realities of the youth sector in South Africa and the YMCAs response to those realities
  - Develop a greater understanding of South African culture and the ability to live and work in a foreign context
  - Develop a deeper understanding of partnerships between North & South and the skills to take this experience and integrate it into the programs of the YMCA in Norway
- b) Norway – Sri Lanka
- To gain a wider understanding on structure and functions of youth based organizations in Sri Lanka
  - To have a knowledge and understanding on youth’s response to the social issues in countries in south

- Gain experience on people's participation in peace, democracy and human rights in Sri Lanka

### **7.1.2 Diakonhjemmet:**

#### **General objectives**

- Knowledge sharing, transcultural exchange, broadening of horizons
- Motivation of employees
- Strengthen the institutions' strategic competence on international health and social issues, including HIV/AIDS issues
- Develop the philosophic and normative foundations for churches' international social responsibility (diakonia)

#### **For South partner**

- Transfer of technical skills and knowledge
- Increased international network for CHAM
- Further education and training for employees

#### **For South participant**

- To develop knowledge on HIV/AIDS strategies.

#### **For North partners**

- To develop knowledge and competence on Malawi health and development issues
- To develop knowledge on HIV/AIDS strategies.
- To improve international components of the education in all departments of Diakonhjemmet College.

#### **For North participants**

- To develop knowledge and competence on Malawi health and development issues
- To develop knowledge on HIV/AIDS strategies.

### **7.1.3 ISANDI**

#### **Overall objectives**

- The cooperation should support the mission of Penduka: to help Namibian rural women create their own jobs based on skills and resources that they already have
- Increased cultural and contextual understanding between the two organizations

#### **For the North partner**

- Smoother and more professional trade logistics with partner
- The concept of FTP – Fair Trade Partnership – should be made known and advocated to a broader network
- Common marketing activities and systems should be established.

### **For the North participants**

#### **For the South partner**

- Smoother and more professional trade logistics with partner
- More grassroots women's activities within network
- Broader specter of products developed for export
- Strengthened role as focal point
- The concept of FTP – Fair Trade Partnership – should be made known and advocated to a broader network
- Common marketing activities and systems should be established.

#### **For the South participant**

- Increased knowledge of society and cultural context of Penduka's export market

### **7.1.4 Statkraft Grøner**

#### **Overall objectives**

- The exchange projects should lay the foundations for long-term co-operation between the partner institutions

#### **For the North partner**

- Open new markets and increase activity in the South
- Build staff capacities
- Benefit from the partner institutions qualifications and networks
- Build long term relationship with partners with complementary competencies

#### **For the North participant**

- Upgrading of skills: technical, linguistic, cultural understanding, organizational development

#### **For the South partners**

##### **a) TaTEDO**

- Benefit from the partner institutions qualifications and networks
- Build staff capacities
- Deepen contact with Norway
- Build long term relationship with partners with complementary competencies

##### **b) IEI**

- Benefit from the partner institutions qualifications and networks
- Build staff capacities
- Learn from TaTEDO's experience with rural energy services
- Build long term relationship with partners with complementary competencies

**For the South participants**

- Upgrading of skills: technical, linguistic, cultural understanding, organizational development

**7.1.5 Norwegian People's Aid****Overall objectives**

- Contribute to organizational strengthening of partners by allowing young members learn and develop their capacities for participation and mobilization

**For the North partner**

- Increase knowledge of NPA's international work among members at local level, thus integrating better the national and international dimensions of the organization
- Increased understanding of North/South issues within organization and in the Norwegian public in general

**For the North participants**

- learn skills that they can use in our organisations – to activate, motivate, inform and train others
- increase the understanding of issues such as Health, Welfare and Education in South Africa
- learn methods which they can transfer to their voluntary work in Norway

**For the South partners**

- get more knowledge about NPA and NPA's national work

**For the South participants**

- learn skills that they can use in our organisations – to activate, motivate, inform and train others
- learn methods which they can transfer to their voluntary work in South Africa

**7.1.6 Statistics Norway****Overall objectives**

- Enhance capacity for statistics – and hence good governance – in Uganda and Norway

**For the North partner**

- Get to know their Ugandan sister organization and Ugandan society better
- Motivated staff through the realization of their interest in development issues

**For the North participants**

- Learn how things are done in a completely different situation when it comes to resources and national statistical system
- Get used to present their home organization in a new setting
- Increased and very relevant competence for international statistical cooperation and consulting

**For the South partner**

- Statistics training of staff
- Support for development of new statistics areas: data collection, survey management, statistical standards and analysis etc, including IT and dissemination
- Strengthen primary statistical activities and international experience
- Attract young statisticians by exchange opportunity

**For the South participants**

- Learn Statistics Norway's way of doing things through practice
- Enable them to see different solutions, and evaluate and choose in a strategic manner between them

**7.1.7 Norsk Musikkorps Forbund**

**Overall objectives**

- Exchange of music and musical skills

**For the North partner**

- To give its membership access to new forms and approaches to music
- Create a network towards other musical cultures

**For the North participants**

- Receive new competence and impulses from South African colleagues
- Learn a new approach to music, new playing techniques and new genres

**For the South partner**

- Make the Field Band Foundation self sufficient of instructors by 2005, thereby contributing to the growth of the organisation
- Train instructors in instruction methods, teaching techniques, playing techniques, notation, reading music, arranging music, and music theory
- Improve the organisational structure of the bands, the running of the local organisation, and the structure of the entire band organisation

**For the South participants**

- Receive training in educational methods, playing techniques, sound production, music theory and other subjects
- Meet as many bands as possible

### **7.1.8 Development Fund**

#### **Overall objectives**

- Promote reciprocal learning for sustainable development with focus on agriculture

#### **For the North partners**

##### **a) Development Fund**

- Strengthen and expand relationship to partner organizations in the South
- Improve project and program implementation
- Strengthen information and marketing activities
- Improve knowledge of South partners' countries, in particular with respect to sustainable development
- Strengthen cooperation with Norsøk and Noragric

##### **b) NORAGRIC**

- Strengthen institutional contact with partners in the South
- Cooperate in research and publications
- Strengthen educational program by using participants as course lecturers
- Strengthen potential for recruiting new researchers by giving graduate students experience from developing countries

##### **c) NORSØK**

- Strengthen efforts to make ecological agriculture a strategy for sustainable development
- Develop staff capacity for realizing Norsøk's overall objectives
- Expand international network

#### **For the North participants**

-

#### **For the South partner**

- Strengthen efforts to combat poverty at grassroots within the fields of sustainable agriculture, marketing and information activities
- Establish linkage between ENVIROCARE individuals, international groups and institutions that share our mission and vision.
- Establish linkage between resource poor farmer groups in Kilimanjaro and farmer's groups in Norway
- Build communication system between ENVIROCARE and partners in Norway

#### **For the South participants**

- Learn and acquire different skills on organization capacity building and sustainability
- Learn and acquire knowledge on information management
- Learn about farmers co-operatives.
- Learn from different agricultural research institutions.

### **7.1.9 VEIDEKKE**

#### **Overall objectives**

- Creating the base for replacing European expatriates with Tanzanian professionals in management positions in Noremco.
- Capacity building for Noremco Employees
- Increasing interest and desire within the Veidekke organisation for cultural understanding and developing an understanding amongst employees concerning the possible employment opportunities that exist (e.g. with Noremco) in developing countries for the purposes of capacity building

#### **For the North partner**

- Ensure that the Norwegian owner (Veidekke) gains insight into all aspects of corporate business in Tanzania, including cultural and managerial challenges and issues of social corporate responsibility

#### **For the North participants**

- Acquire general cultural understanding and particular knowledge related to Noremco's organization and activities

#### **For the South partner**

- Training and professional development of local/African leader candidates to replace European expatriates in Noremco's leadership in Tanzania and Zambia
- Ensure understanding for and identification with the cultural and managerial requirements that a Norwegian owner (Veidekke) makes towards its subsidiaries (Noremco) and its management in a country like Tanzania

#### **For the South participants**

- Acquire insights into Norwegian conditions in general and Veidekke in particular, including its organization, project procedures on the ground, planning and monitoring systems, cultural attitudes

## **7.2 Terms of Reference**

### **Oppdragsbeskrivelse**

#### **Studie av måloppnåelse i prosjekter innen Fredskorpset**

#### **Hovedformål**

Det skal gjennomføres en studie av måloppnåelsen hos utvalgte partnere på vegne av Fredskorpset. Studien finansieres av midler fra Utenriksdepartementet. Studiens hovedformål er å vurdere resultatoppnåelsen hos utvalgte partnere i fredskorpsprosjekter i forhold til formulerte mål.



**Videre gjennomføres studien for å**

- vurdere i hvilken grad planlagte aktiviteter og formulerte resultater på kort sikt er realisert i de utvalgte prosjekter.
- bidra til å styrke partnernes bevissthet om deres egne prosjektmålsettinger, målformuleringer og reelle muligheter for å nå disse.
- bidra til å styrke evnen hos administrasjonen i Fredskorpset til å gjøre sine tjenester overfor partnerne mer relevante og effektive.

**Premisser:**

- Studien skal kartlegge om partnerne når sine målsettinger slik de er spesifisert i partner- og samarbeidsavtaler.
- Resultater og læringseffekter skal identifiseres hos begge partnere (i Nord og i Sør) som inngår i prosjektet.
- Studien skal vurdere partnernes egne mekanismer for å styre mot mål og korrigere avvik i partnerskapet.
- Studien skal omfatte både hovedpartner og sekundære partner i hvert nettverk.
- Studien skal kunne nyttes som et bidrag til videre utvikling av Fredskorpsets monitorerings- og evalueringssystem.

**Omfang og metode:**

Studien baserer seg på følgende metode og dokumentasjon:

- Arkivstudier
- Intervjuer av hjemvendte fredskorpsdeltakere og partnere i Norge
- Briefinger overfor Fredskorpsets administrasjon
- Spørreundersøkelser pr.e-post overfor partnere i sør slik det framkommer av tabellen under.
- Feltarbeid i Sør Afrika og Tanzania. Intervjuer av hjemvendte fredskorpsdeltakere og partnere slik det framkommer av tabellen under.

## Utvalg av prosjekter

De følgende partnerskap skal inngå i studien

<i>Fredskorpsets avtalepartner</i>	<i>Metode</i>	<i>Sørpartner</i>	<i>Metode</i>	<i>Land</i>
Delta Internasjonalt	Intervju	South African National Council of YMCAs	Intervju	
		The National Council of YMCAs of Sri Lanka	E-post intervju	Sri Lanka
Diakonhjemmets Høgskole	Intervju	Christian Health Association of Malawi	E-post intervju	Malawi
Høgskolen i Bergen	E-post intervju			
Isandi	Intervju	Penduka	E-post intervju	Namibia
KanEnergi/Statkraft Grøner	Intervju	Tanzania Traditional Energy Development and Environment Organisation (TaTEDO)	Intervju	Tanzania
		International Energy Initiative	E-post intervju	Brasil
Norsk Folkehjelp	Intervju	Center for Social Action	Intervju	Sør Afrika
Norges musikkorps forbund	E-post intervju	Field Band Foundation	Intervju	Sør Afrika
Statistisk sentralbyrå	Intervju	Uganda Bureau of Statistics	E-post intervju	Uganda
Utviklingsfondet	Intervju	Envirocare	Intervju	Tanzania
Noragric	E-post intervju			
Norsk senter for økologisk landbruk	E-post intervju			
Veidekke	Intervju	Noremco	Intervju	Tanzania

### Kildedokumenter

Følgende dokumenter er tilgjengelig som grunnlagsmateriale for studien:

- Avtaledokumenter med prosjekt- og målbeskrivelse.
- Årsrapport fra 2002.
- Partnernes prosjektrapporter for 2002.

### Språk

Rapporten fra studien skal være på engelsk.

### Framdriftsrapport før datainnsamling

Før datainnsamlingen starter presenterer konsulenten en framdriftsrapport med plan for datainnsamling med, intervjuguider, skjema for intervju pr. e-post og operasjonisering av målformuleringer.

### Forventet innhold i rapporten

- I hvilken grad når partnerne sine målsetninger for utvekslingene
- Hvilke faktorer påvirker graden av måloppnåelse
- Mekanismer for målstyring blant partnerne
- Erfaringer fra arbeidet med målformuleringer og implikasjoner for rutiner i Fredskorpset
- Erfaringer fra intervjuer pr. e-post som mulig element i et internt Fredskorps- oppfølgings- og evalueringssystem.

## 7.3 Questionnaires

### Questions for contact persons for Fredskorpset exchange,

#### A) Results of Exchange Projects

1. Below you will find a list of the goals or objectives that were defined for your exchange project. Please describe to what extent these results have been achieved for your institution (or are being achieved, in the case of exchanges that are still on-going).  
Try to be concrete and specific in terms of how results are seen and experienced, and what difference they make for the work your organization is doing.
2. In many of the projects, goals were also defined in terms of what the individual exchange participants would learn. Try to assess the extent to which these goals were achieved (for North participants, South participants, or both, depending on who you have had contact with).
3. Have there been other positive impacts of the exchange project, that were not foreseen when the project was planned? Have there been any (unforeseen) negative effects of the exchange? (Please be specific.)

#### B) Managing the exchange project

4. Was the planning and preparation of your exchange project adequate? Were there issues that were not foreseen? Could Fredskorpset have helped more in this process?
5. What challenges or difficulties were encountered in the execution of the exchange project? (Typical problems might involve language or cultural differences; unequal expectations among exchange participants and the institutions where they would be working; mismatch between qualifications and requirements; lack of realistic plans for what the exchange participant would be doing. Were problems of these types encountered, or other types of difficulties?)
6. How were these challenges met? Where the problems overcome, or did they affect the extent to which the goals of the exchange were achieved?

## **Questions for Fredskorpset exchange participants**

### **A) Results of Exchange Projects**

1. Below you will find a list of the learning goals that were defined for your exchange. Please describe to what extent these results have been achieved (or are being achieved, in the case of exchanges that are still on-going).
2. Goals were also defined for the institutions involved in the exchange. Below you will find a list of these objectives. Please try to assess the extent to which these goals are being reached. If you only feel capable of answering for one of the institutions, then only answer for this one. Try to be concrete and specific in terms of how results are seen and experienced, and what difference they make for the work your organization is doing.
3. Have there been other positive impacts of the exchange project, that were not foreseen when the project was planned? Or have there been any negative effects? (Please be specific.)

### **B) Participating in the exchange**

4. Was the planning and preparation of your exchange project adequate? Were there issues that were not foreseen? Could Fredskorpset have helped more in this process?
5. What challenges or difficulties were encountered during the exchange project? (Typical problems often involve language or cultural differences; unequal expectations among exchange participants and the institutions where they are placed; mismatch between qualifications and requirements; lack of realistic plans for what the exchange participant would be doing. Were problems of these types encountered, or other types of difficulties?)
6. How were these challenges met? Where the problems overcome, or did they affect the extent to which the goals of the exchange were achieved?