



"Has It Been Worth It?"

The significance of participating in a MIC programme as seen from a Norwegian municipality's perspective

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On assignment for KS International Department
May 2012, University of Oslo, Institute for Sociology and Human Geography

PREFACE

The purpose of this paper is to explore the significance of participating in North-South municipal partnerships for a municipality in the North. Our object of study has been Gran municipality, which has now entered into their last period of cooperation with the Ugandan municipality Mukono. Since this partnership is to be phased out, the question that needed an answer was: Has it been worth it for Gran? While the overall benefits for Southern municipalities in municipal partnerships seem to be well documented, not much has been said about the benefits for the participants in the North. In light of this, the task given to us by KS has been very interesting. Due to the lack of empirical evidence, this process has been intense and educational, but at the same time inspiring, and it required a certain level of openness in regard to the willingness to learn.

As the process now has come to an end, we would like to thank those who made this possible, and also those who have supported us and our work during this process. Firstly, we want to thank our informants, who have answered our many questions and been enthusiastic in regard to the overall project. Sincere gratitude should also be directed towards Benedicte Brøgger for excellent guidance. We also thank our employer KS and the main coordinator of the MIC programme, Pernille Nesje, who has supported us through this process. Finally, we would like to thank Prosjektforum lead by Tian Sørhaug and Haldor Byrkjeflot, for this educational, inspiring and demanding opportunity.

Oslo 21.05.12

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ABSTRACT

In this report we analyse if participating in a MIC programme has been worth it for Gran municipality. There has been little focus on the output for Gran in their partnership with two municipalities in Uganda. Overall there is a lack of focus on the Northern partner in this kind of partnerships. Through interviews with the participants in Gran, we have found that there has been a lot of learning and personal gains for the individuals in form of cultural awareness, friendship and motivation in their work. However, it has been difficult to bring the learning from the individuals to the council as a whole. There has been some community involvement through schools in Gran and when delegations have visited from Uganda. We discuss the concept of mutuality in terms of input and output. In relation to the partnership process there seems to be a high level of mutuality but when it comes to output, the focus has been on the South. There is a lack of time and resources to be spent in the North as well as a lack of strategic goals on behalf of Gran. Although the partnership has been politically embedded in Gran there is a lack of political priority. However, if there is to be mutual learning and benefits on behalf of the North partner, the local authorities need to conceptualise such partnerships as potential sources for learning. In other words there exists a need to create a 'learning culture' within the organisation. We outline five lessons learned from the Gran case: (1) The need to see capacity building as a process based on continuity and trust; (2) the need to establish a willingness to learn; (3) channels for disseminating information and knowledge to the organisation and beyond, (4) to ensure political priority, and (5) the potential for setting some more strategic and political goals for the Northern partner, related to attracting, keeping and developing human resources, good publicity and spreading international involvement to local institutions and businesses. This may offer stronger opportunities for mutuality of benefits in municipal partnerships.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background: KS International Projects and the MIC Programme

The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) has been involved in international activities for almost two decades and coordinates projects in over 20 countries (KS 2009a). Since 1997 KS has coordinated a programme for Municipal International Cooperation (MIC) funded by NORAD. In the agreement, it is stated that KS shall ensure support to the involved municipalities through facilitation of capacity building, exchange of experience between the involved partnerships and quality control in order to secure that the projects of the supported municipalities follow the priorities of the Norwegian Parliament, the policies of NORAD and the conditions set in the MIC programme agreement (KS 2009b). The general idea is that Norwegian municipalities possess experience and knowledge of interest to municipalities in the developing world. According to the MIC Guidelines from 2010, KS and its participating members seek to "contribute to capacity building in selected areas in a limited number of municipalities in a few developing countries in order for those to deliver better services to their citizens that in the longer term can lead to Millennium Development Goal (MDG) attainment and poverty reduction" (KS 2010a). The overall strategic goal is for good governance processes to be included in municipal governance and services. According to the MIC guidelines both partners will play an equal and inclusive role when it comes to the overall aim of capacity building (KS 2010a:4). However, although the MIC Guidelines state that there should be mutual capacity building, it includes many descriptions of goals directed towards the South partner, but none for the North. The MIC programme has grown since its start in 1997 to include 15 partnerships in 2012.

1.2 Object of Study

In this project the focus is on the MIC partnership between Gran municipality in Norway and Mukono in Uganda. This partnership has been a part of the MIC programme since its beginning. In addition to being one of the oldest partnerships in the programme, it is also one of the few that has included a South-South component by including the neighbouring municipality of Lugazi in the cooperation. The partnership is coming into its final period and there is a need to document the partnership and its effects. However, while several reports have given KS valuable information on the effects on behalf of the South municipality, it has been a challenge to document the added value and learning on behalf of Gran. The big question for KS then is: "Has it been worth it?".

1.3 Research Questions

Although MIC stresses that the concept of North-South municipal cooperation is based on the idea of sharing information and mutual learning, there has been a lack of systematic focus on the added value for the North municipalities. In this project we will therefore focus on the significance of the project for Gran. Our research question is: *What is the significance of participating in the MIC programme as seen from the North municipality's point of view?* We want to explore the significance of participating in MIC for:

- *The individual:* What is the significance and added value of participating in the MIC project as experienced by the individuals? What have they experienced and learned?
- *The organisation:* Have there been any learning or changes implemented into the daily operations of the council as a consequence of the MIC partnership? Has there been mutual learning between the North and South municipalities?
- *The local community:* Has there been any impact for the local community?

By interviewing participants and community members, the purpose of this study has been to explore the added value of the MIC programme on behalf of Gran. By exploring the Gran case we also want to outline some general lessons learned in terms of how to achieve increased awareness of mutual benefits and learning for the Northern partners in the future.

1.4 Summary of Chapters.

Chapter two locates our analysis in the context of broader theoretical debates about mutuality in North-South partnerships, pointing to the fact that limited empirical research has been conducted on Northern participants. We then proceed to a presentation of the Gran-Mukono case in chapter three, before we outline our use of methods in chapter four. In chapter five, we analyse the added value and learning for Gran, looking at the individuals, the council and the local community, as well as what the participants say about mutuality and equality, success factors and weaknesses. Our main conclusion is that although there has been plenty of mutual learning at the individual level, there is a lack of explicit focus on what the municipality can gain from the partnership. In chapter six we outline what we see as the five major lessons learned from the Gran case: 1) the need to see capacity building as a process built on continuity and trust; 2) the need for creating a learning culture; 3) disseminating knowledge through the organisation and beyond, and; 4) ensure political priority. Last, 5) we point to the need for rethinking mutuality in output as more than mere learning, suggesting to set some more strategic and political goals for the North partner. For a summary of findings see the matrix in appendix I.

2.0 NORTH-SOUTH MUNICIPAL COOPERATION - A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

2.1 The Development of North-South Municipal Cooperation

There is no agreement in the literature on the definition of partnerships between cities or municipalities, and a plethora of synonyms are used, such as city-to-city cooperation, town twinning, municipal international cooperation and so on. This reflects the diversity of activities in such cooperation (Bontenbal & Lindert 2009:131). For the purpose of this paper, we will use municipal partnerships, as it is the municipality that is our object of study.

The development of municipal partnerships started in Europe, and up until after World War II, they were predominantly cultural and primarily between Northern cities. There have been shifts in scope and goals, and after the 1960s, partnerships have become a global phenomenon. One of the most obvious shifts has been the emergence of partnerships as expressions of decentralised development cooperation (Bontenbal 2009a:34). This came as a result of the change towards democratisation and decentralisation in the 1990s, and the emphasis on local action. Thus, political, economic and institutional society building became important. Explicit demands were made for democratization in the form of multiparty elections, observance of political human rights and good governance (Dengbol-Martinussen & Engberg-Pedersen 2003:49). Good governance meant “inclusion of civil society in political decision making processes; open and transparent political-administrative systems that were accountable to the citizens; control of corruption and misuse of power; and a certain degree of decentralization of power to the local authorities” (Dengbol-Martinussen & Engberg-Pedersen 2003:49). This institutional development involved capacity building which is here understood as “the process by which individuals, organisations, institutions and societies develop abilities (individually and collectively) to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives” (UNDP 1997:3)

Partnerships were at first developed primarily as aid delivery mechanisms, but are now increasingly more involved in capacity-building and the exchange of local governance knowledge and practices. Many municipalities involved in partnerships today, are functioning on an equal footing with other international cooperation agencies (Bontenbal 2009a:34). The increased focus on partnerships in the 1990s reflects a shift from the traditional asymmetrical donor-recipient relationship, where donors have done most of the decision-making, towards trying to make it a more equal relationship, a partnership (Bontenbal 2009b:100).

2.2 Characteristics of Municipal Partnerships

Municipal partnerships are characterised by the fact that they are usually founded on two pillars; the local state apparatus and its constituency, i.e. the citizens themselves. The local

administration is usually involved in the formal political and technical encounters between the municipalities. The constituency is involved through participation of civil society, the non-profit and the private sector (Bontenbal 2009a:36). Municipal partnerships are often also characterised by a North-South dimension, which brings together local governments in the 'North' (the industrialised, developed world) and in the 'South' (the developing world). This component is connected with the aim of strengthening the developmental capacity of local governments, an important aspect of the good governance agenda. This in turn is meant to contribute to local development, liveability and productivity, and to reduce poverty in the South (Bontenbal 2009a:36). Finally, Bontenbal (2009a:37) mentions that an important aspect of municipal partnerships is the potential mutuality of effort and benefits between the partners. This distinguishes municipal partnerships from other forms of development cooperation. She points out the fact that Southern partners in practice are supported by means of financial aid and capacity-building activities, while the Northern partners are benefiting through increased awareness and knowledge of global issues, and also the public's opportunity to engage in development efforts. Hence, there is a two-way capacity building. However, there is limited empirical evidence on this (Bontenbal 2009a:37).

2.3 True Partnerships? - Contrasting Views in the Mutuality Debate

Partnerships are seen to possibly create a cooperation based on equality and mutuality, with beneficial processes and outcomes for both parties, but it can also involve highly unequal power relations and determination (Johnson & Wilson 2006:1). A key word in this debate is mutuality, and according to the literature, this is something that most municipalities in such partnerships aim at (Ewijk & Baud 2009:220-221). In practice however, is not always clear what the benefits should be for the partner in the North, and it is often described in abstract terms. The general emphasis is still on knowledge transfer from the North to the South (Ewijk & Baud 2009:221). The authenticity of partnerships has therefore been criticised in two ways. Firstly, it is criticised for being 'old wine in new bottles', meaning that the same dominance of donors is still present, but disguised by using a more political correct term: partnership (Bontenbal 2009a:48) The second criticism concerns the many barriers that are argued to pose problems for partnerships in achieving 'true' or 'genuine' partnerships based on equality, shared objectives and mutual benefits. Among these are structural inequalities, which continue to represent the classic linear model of North-South knowledge transfer, as the North retains financial, technological and institutional advantage over the South (Bontenbal 2009a:48).

When investigating the potential of partnerships, one can distinguish between two

counterposing ideas: the ideal view and the sceptical view (Johnson & Wilson 2006:3) “The ideal view of partnerships is based on ideas of dialogue, reciprocity, trust and sharing of different values, knowledge and practises to realise mutual benefits ”(Johnson & Wilson 2006:7). In the ideal view, difference is seen as a driver of mutuality, and it is this difference that enables each partner to offer and gain something from the cooperation. Thus, partners are assumed to play complementary roles, which in turn offer an opportunity for learning (Johnson & Wilson 2006:7). The sceptical view on the other hand asserts that mutuality is not possible due to inequality, especially unequal power relations (Johnson & Wilson 2006:3).

‘Difference that drives mutuality’ has benign connotations, whereas ‘difference through inequality’ implies poorer and richer, less and more valuable, and is manifested in a relative lack of mutuality that might be evidenced by unidirectional flows of knowledge, resources and benefits (Johnson & Wilson 2006:8).

Terje Tvedt (2008:23) has a related point on power in aid relations. He points out that an important aspect of power in such relationships, which also makes it difficult to study, is that it is a form of power that is not recognised as such. The act of doing good on behalf of others is seen as the opposite of exercising power, because the values attached to this act is shared by ‘everyone’ and considered right, universal or simply normal. Thus power is often unintended. In order to identify the exercise of power in this field one must recognise that the people exercising it do not necessarily understand their own position, because they have themselves been subject to the power they are exercising, and influenced by the rhetoric they are exercising it with. Since this power is not articulated, its consequences will to a certain extent also be unintended (Tvedt 2008:23-24). However, power is complex and not necessarily unidirectional. Lister (2000:13) points out that although structures reinforce power asymmetries, ‘capacity-building’ strengthens a Southern agency’s voice and ability to affect the overall framework. Capacity-building may focus on the learning of specific skills and competencies; it may also be more generic and diffuse, for example in building confidence, enabling people to speak in meetings and developing leadership. This can be very important in influencing wider organisational change (Lister 2000:13).

The ideal view and the sceptical view are ideal types, and in reality partnerships will lie somewhere in between. Johnson and Wilson (2006:3) point out that the extent, to which a given partnership approaches one of the two ideas, can be described as a mutuality gap.

2.4 Analysing Mutual Learning in Municipal Partnerships

The ideal and sceptical views show that unequal relations are at the heart of the debate of mutuality in partnerships (Johnson and Wilson 2006). These unequal relations are also present

in learning outcomes. In municipal partnerships learning appears to take place at the individual level, the organisational level and at the city level (Bontenbal & Lindert 2008:132). According to Bontenbal (2009a:211) there are three relevant questions when exploring learning in municipal partnerships. Firstly, who is generally engaged in the activities, and thus the ones who are exposed to learning opportunities? Secondly, what is learned by the participants, both in terms of personal and professional learning? Finally, has the partnership resulted in the move towards organisational learning from individual learning, and which mechanisms are present to foster this transition?

Devers-Kanoglu (2009:202) points out that one relevant guideline to explore education and learning in municipal partnerships can be drawn from the 'intention' that is tied to the activities carried out. Municipal partnerships can constitute an impulse for informal learning, which results from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It can be intentional, but in many cases it is not, and therefore ends up as tacit knowledge (Devers-Kanoglu 2008:204). Thus, it is important to distinguish between the aims of learning and other intentions because where the aim is clear, a broad range of learning is likely to be fostered, appreciated and evaluated, according to predefined standards and norms. Unintentional learning on the other hand bears the risk of being ignored (Devers-Kanoglu 2009:202). According to Bontenbal (2009a:51) a difference in learning outcomes is observable in 'solid' versus 'soft' benefits. While solid benefits, such as technical knowledge and financial resources, are observed in the South, learning on the North's behalf is seen in soft benefits. Soft benefits can be awareness-raising and education in the sphere of development and global citizenship. However, since much of the learning in the North is soft, much remains implicit and therefore goes unnoticed. Since implicit knowledge often is perceived as inferior to codified knowledge, it is a danger that this knowledge remains undervalued. Hence, the lack of recognition that municipal partnerships are a potential source for learning may result in the obstruction of organisational change in the North (Bontenbal 2009a:56).

Research on learning in municipal partnerships is scarce (Devers-Kanoglu 2009:203; Bontenbal 2009a:37; Johnson and Wilson 2008:2). Lack of research is a general problem in municipal partnerships: "The number of academic studies about municipal international cooperation has been limited, and relatively little is known about their objectives and results, organisational structures, success factors and weaknesses" (Bontenbal & Lindert 2009:131). Thus, more research is necessary, which supports the need for evaluations such as ours.

3.0 INTRODUCING THE GRAN-MUKONO PARTNERSHIP

3.1. The Cooperation between Gran and Mukono

The Gran-Mukono partnership became an official part of the MIC programme in 2000. This happened immediately after a two year long introduction pilot project. Before this, informal contact between Gran and Mukono had been established through a private and local organisation called 'Hand In Hand Uganda' (HIHU) (NIBR/KS 2002:35). It was through this organisation that the mayor in Mukono contacted the mayor in Gran and initiated the partnership. For the first six years the cooperation included only Gran and Mukono, but in 2006 the neighbouring town council Lugazi joined as a third party, turning the cooperation into a North-South-South partnership. This implies that Mukono shall transfer experience and knowledge gained via Gran to their neighbours in Lugazi (KS 2009:13). In Gran there is one main project coordinator, who has held this position since the beginning in 2000. At this point the mayor in Gran was the driving force behind the project. After she started working in the central government, a political group consisting of three local politicians was established. External expertise is used to a certain extent depending on the specific content of the different projects. After 13 years of cooperation, Gran and Mukono will be phased out in 2013. The main project purposes have been *increased local government income, financial transparency, political and administrative accountability, and gender balance* in form of a more demographically representative local government (KS 2009:13). In accordance with the project purposes, different initiatives have been carried out in Mukono, and the establishment of a more efficient system for tax collection has been a main priority. A better organised renovation system and a more orderly market place are other projects worth mentioning.

There have been some happenings in Gran due to the MIC partnership. They have received delegations from Mukono: and Lugazi during local elections and last year they were there for the 17th of May celebration (Constitution Day), and participated in the parade. During their visits there has been involvement of local institutions such as the healthcare station, the waste company and some schools.

3.2 Mutual Learning and Added Value for Gran?

When it comes to the Southern municipality, the goals and benefits have been clear and measurable in terms of material visibility. However, even though the programme is founded on the idea of mutual learning and capacity building, there is a systematic lack of focus on what this learning should consist of for Gran. The report from the pilot project stated that the

learning effects on behalf of Gran was limited, and concluded that "a sustainable institutional co-operation depends on a positive output for both partners. This seems to be a challenge on the part of Gran, which may in the longer run endanger the sustainability of the institutional co-operation" (KS/NIBR 2002:44). Nevertheless, after the report from 2002 there are only a few places where learning for Gran is mentioned, such as "Better understanding for developing questions in Gran municipality" (Gran Kommune 2005) or "Better understanding of the Mukono-Lugazi-Gran cooperation in the Norwegian society" (Gran Kommune 2006). In addition to the vague and 'soft' learning goals, there is also a lack of empirical goal assessment for Gran, which makes it difficult to say to what extent learning actually has taken place. This is reflected upon in the report from 2005 stating that: "This programme (...) has qualities that hardly can be measured by indicators, e.g. when it comes to relations between people, mutual understanding and bonding" (Gran Kommune 2005:3). In the newest application from 2011 the expected effects are "intercultural understanding" and "experience in international cooperation". It is against this backdrop that we have been asked to analyse the added value for Gran municipality.

4.0 METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

4.1 Choosing a Qualitative Inquiry

Due to the nature of our research questions and the relative lack of knowledge and literature on the significance attributed to participating in a North-South cooperation project, we have chosen a more explorative and qualitative design. A qualitative inquiry is applied when there is a need or want to explore a social issue or phenomenon to gain a more complex and detailed understanding of it, and when quantitative measures and statistical analysis simply do not fit the problem (Creswell 2007:39, Thagaard 2011:11). Thus we have chosen to have semi-structured interviews with key informants. The strength of semi-structured interviews is their flexibility. By giving the interviewees opportunities to bring up their own ideas, there are chances of finding out key issues which you might not have considered. At the same time, you ensure that the areas you believe to be important are covered (Willis 2006).

4.2 Data Collection - Semi-structured Interviews

Our main data is collected through interviews with key informants in the period between the 15th of February and 15th of May 2012. The project coordinator in Gran has worked as a gatekeeper. We have come in contact with further informants through ‘the snowball method’ and purposive or strategic sampling, which implies that we have contacted people with knowledge and qualifications that are relevant to our project, and then asked them about others with the same qualifications (Thagaard 2011:56, Creswell 2007:15). We have interviewed the following persons: the project coordinator in Gran (who is employed in the administration); the previous mayor from Gran who initiated the partnership; three politicians who have been directly involved in the project; one politician who has not been directly involved, but has had visitors from Gran; two specialists who have been involved in specific parts of the project; the principal of one school in Gran; the leader of ‘Hand in Hand Uganda’(HIHU); and finally a nurse who received visitors from Mukono at her workplace. We have also done a focus group interview with four people in the international department at KS. In addition to this, we have done a small ‘mini survey’ in Gran in order to test the extent to which knowledge of the partnership is present in the local community. It is important, however, to mention that this mini survey is not representative due to a small sample. Finally, we have read reports and project applications. We have gotten informed consent from all of our informants. The interviews have been held in Norwegian, but we have translated all the quotations from our informants in this report.

To keep flexibility while making sure we get answers to all of our questions we have chosen a semi-structured interview design. This allows for open-ended questions while still

covering the interview guide (Widerberg 2010:225). To achieve this structured flexibility we have constructed our interview guide around four main topics covering learning and added value in Gran for the individuals, the organisation and the local society, as well as asking the participants to evaluate the program in terms of strengths and weaknesses. We have also asked them to reflect on questions on mutuality and equality (see Appendix IV). Each topic was followed by several possible suggestions for follow up questions to keep us on the right track, but at the same adjusting it according to whom we spoke with. This follows from the key idea behind qualitative research, being to learn from the participants and to follow their lead (Creswell 2007:39). Before developing our interview guide, we prepared ourselves by having explorative meetings with KS and with our gatekeeper in Gran. In addition we rooted our questions in comprehensive studies of reports, theory and empirical research that we have found relevant. This embeds our research within a theoretical framework and may therefore also contribute to the wider research field (Thagaard 2011:53, Widerberg 2010:244).

4.3 Strengths and Weaknesses of Our Data

We have continuously stressed the importance of flexibility in the data collection process by asking open-ended questions and changing the questions after we 'explore' to reflect an increased understanding of the problem (Creswell 2007:43). We feel that we have accomplished this, which can be seen as a strength in our data. It is however important to note that we had little experience with doing interviews. Therefore we were conscious about how we asked our questions, trying not to ask leading questions and to act in an objective manner. We were trying to get the informants to talk about things they may not have reflected upon and also trying to find out if informal learning had occurred. Nevertheless, it is always a danger that we did not succeed in being objective. However, the answers we got were quite consistent among the informants, which indicate that the answers were genuine. The questions we asked were to some extent characterized by what we were looking for, and there is always a risk that the informants understand this and try to answer in a way they think we, or KS, want them to. Another drawback is the fact that during the analysis, we did experience that there were questions that we had should have asked, but that we had not thought of beforehand. One lesson we have learned is thus to prepare well, because "you can always reread a book for what you missed, but you cannot keep going back to informants" (Boot et.al. 2008:83). Finally, it is important to note that what we interpret and choose to emphasize in our analysis depends on our preconception. Being four people in our group can be seen as an advantage as we have had several discussions on what to include. We have all read the

interviews and discussed our findings, we have all concluded on the same main findings and all four individuals have also pointed out different things of different importance.

A deficiency of our sample is the fact that we have not been able to interview the Southern partners due to time and resource limitations, except for short email correspondence with the project coordinator in Mukono. Some of our findings, especially in regard to success factors and weaknesses of the relations between the partners, may therefore be biased in favour of the Northern partner. However, since the main purpose of this project is to analyse the added value for the North, and not the South, we do not believe this to be too problematic for our findings. In addition, there seems to be wide agreement among our informants on issues concerning the relationship with Mukono, which might make our findings more genuine. Nevertheless, in more comprehensive studies it would be desirable to also explore the Southern point of view, as this may shed light on aspects that we have not thought of. Another important aspect to take into consideration is the fact that this project was given to us by KS. Even though some of the project group had knowledge about international cooperation and aid in general from previous studies, it is a danger that our understanding of the partnership may have been influenced by KS and by our gatekeeper, who both have been central in our preparations. We have tried to overcome this danger by doing thorough research, both theoretically and empirically. In addition, the wide agreement in the project group on the different issues regarding both data collection and the analysis of the data may have prevented this influence.

5.0 "HAS IT BEEN WORTH IT?"

- The added value of participating in a MIC programme

As we have seen in the literature review, the mutual benefits for Northern partners in municipal partnerships is generally thought to consist of so called ‘soft’ capacities such as increased awareness and knowledge of global issues as well as promoting ‘global citizenship’ by giving opportunity for the public at large to participate in development efforts. The empirical evidence on learning in North has however so far been limited, especially as it is difficult to measure the impact of the intangible benefits for the North compared to the more tangible results in the South. As stated earlier more research on the ‘reality’ of these benefits are therefore much needed (Bontenbal 2009, Johnson & Wilson 2009, Devers-Kanoglu 2009, Van Ewijk & Baud 2009). We will begin with looking at the significance of participation for the individuals, focusing on dimensions of *personal* and *professional learning*, as well as other experienced personal benefits, such as friendship and motivation. Then we will look at learning and added value for the organisation looking at potential synergy effects on the day-to-day running of the council as such, before we move to the significance for the civil society at large. Last, we will look at how participants reflect on issues of mutuality and equality, as well as what they mention as important success factors and weaknesses.

5.1 Individual Learning

According to Ulrike Devers-Kanoglu (2009:202-204) municipal partnerships can be seen as highly stimulating fields for individual learning, but since such learning often remains highly implicit, or even unconscious, it is easily ignored. Following the few who have empathically dealt with Northern learning at the individual level in municipal partnerships (Bontenbal 2009, Van Ewijk & Baud 2009, Johnson & Wilson 2009) we look at two dimensions, *personal* and *professional*, noting that these dimensions often feed back on each other.

Personal Learning and Benefits – ‘It has changed my life’

From our material it is possible to outline several learning dimensions for the participants that to some extent correspond with the dimensions outlined in Bontenbal's (2009) study of Northern learning among Dutch officials. At the most general level, several of the respondents in Gran pointed out that involvement in the project had increased their *awareness of global inequality* in life and working conditions and hence caused *reflection* on their own work and life conditions which they had taken for granted, and made them realise how privileged they are here. One informant, a politician, notes that the first meeting with the political system in Mukono (which then was a single-party system) made her more aware of the value of having a functioning democracy and being able to co-operate with other parties.

This increased awareness and reflection of being part of a larger global context is underscored by almost all of the key informants, and is also of significance for professional learning. In this way learning through difference made them put their own situation into perspective. Hence, they approach the ideal view of mutuality where difference can be seen as a learning source.

A second related and often mentioned dimension is increased knowledge about different cultures, peoples, traditions and values and thereby reducing simplistic stereotypes and prejudices towards 'the other'. As one informant stressed, the most important lesson learned for participants in Gran was a better understanding of Uganda and African countries: "I guess we have been a little brainwashed by the media and that the poor people, you know, flies in the eyes, bloated stomach, and so on.. It is a picture of a lot of criminality and such (...) we only hear about the negative". Several underscore how *larger cultural understanding* plays an important role in reducing prejudices and becoming more open towards difference, and it is widely concluded that more knowledge and contact with people from different cultural environments is the most important personal learning factor. A few also mentioned to have been *inspired by the attitudes and values* of their Southern colleagues towards life and work, one pointing to the Ugandan enthusiasm and willingness to learn, and another to the family-orientation and respect for the elderly as a valuable lesson from the South, both on a personal, and on a professional level.

None of the respondents mentioned any *personal skill development* such as increased patience or social skills. This however, does not necessarily imply that it has not occurred. There is reason to believe that a lot of social and cultural *know-how*, learned through daily activities and interaction, remains little reflected on and therefore exists on a largely unconscious level, thus being harder to abstract and formalise (Flyvbjerg 2006) Some informal skills development must undoubtedly be involved when the coordinator remarks that it has "changed her as a person". Other more *overall personal benefits* mentioned were 'new impulses' and enjoyable experiences through travel, and for some of the most central participators; personal contacts and new friends. For the head coordinator the personal gains of participation are described as immense. She describes the overall experience as "a fantastic journey" and regularly talks about the main coordinator in Mukono as a close friend who she trusts and has regular personal communication with. She describes the personal benefits:

It is almost not describable.. for me it is totally...(...) you are speaking of a person who has been living in the countryside and has a good life in every way, but the international bit (...) imagine that I have been so lucky to be a part of this. (...) It has gone so well. I feel so small. (...)

sometimes I think it is luck, but I must have done something right. (...) It has changed me as a person. Definitely.

Cultural understanding is also mentioned by a specialist in close relation to increased motivation and personal enjoyment through travel and meeting with different people:

(...) to meet another culture has been very rewarding to me personally. And then there has been the exchange of experience and (...) communication with people, and seeing that we are very similar in thinking. There is another thing that has meant quite a lot to me; when I have this as a part of my job, I try to stretch a bit further in my job. It works like a 'carrot' to me, that makes me motivated to work. I think it is important in the municipalities of especially district-Norway, that we have something that is a motivating factor, when we work hard with our daily small and big challenges.

This stress on the MIC cooperation being a motivating and inspirational factor is underscored by several participants, and is linked up to professional learning.

Professional Learning

Some of the *professional learning benefits* mentioned for local officials and politicians in previous studies are *increased job satisfaction, new skills* (doing things differently) and *language proficiency* (Bontenbal 2009:52). As we see above, the cultural learning is often linked to increased work satisfaction and motivation at work. This is further linked to increased professional skills in cross cultural communication and the use of English as a work language: "For us, the language, as already mentioned, and the stimulation in the day by day tasks make it interesting to be both an employed and a politician in a municipality with such a project". Having learned to use the English language both written and orally better, has made several of them more comfortable with having international contact through their work.

The enrichment of working internationally, being able to look beyond borders, intercultural communication and global citizenship are also often mentioned 'side effects' amongst officials in Netherland, as studied by van Ewijk and Baud (2009:233), and is seen to provide room for reflection and broadening their horizon leading them to regard their own professional work in a new light. Johnson & Wilson (2009) make the important point that interaction with the 'other' may provide a mirror for more critical reflection of one self and in this way may be beneficial for both personal and professional development. In this way municipal-to-municipal cooperation gives rich possibilities for comparison where the difference between partners can be seen as a positive trigger, rather than an obstacle, to reflect and learn, and offer opportunities for mutual learning. The chief of the waste department in Gran says that being asked questions of why they do as they do, and why they could not do it differently, has forced him to reflect on issues and dilemmas that he had not been conscious of before. One politician also mentioned that the political practise of representation in

Mukono, where they have reserved seats for women, handicapped and youth, has made her more conscious about how important it is to include different types of people on the lists, and that she had brought this importance of diversity into her professional thinking.

When asked about more tangible learning and technical skills our respondents are generally quite sceptical, and it is primarily personal gains and 'softer' types of professional learning that are characterised, with language learning being the most 'solid' one. When it comes to more direct learning from South to North the majority apologises when saying that there is not too much to point out, and that the technical knowledge transfer has been primarily North-to-South, with the South having more benefits from the capacity building. This may be related to the fact that Northern partners often feel that they possess 'better knowledge' in terms of this, and that implicit knowledge is inferior to more codified knowledge so that knowledge transfer from South to North remains undervalued. This type of unintended learning is vulnerable since it is rarely expressed in the political objectives of the partnerships (Van Ewijk 2009). This has in turn, as we will see, implications for conceptions on mutuality, and may further obstruct organisational learning in the North as participating municipalities do not fully conceptualise MIC as a potential source for learning (Bontenbal 2009:55-56). Our informants indicated that they identified several opportunities to learn, but that these opportunities have not been fully utilised. Some of our respondents also indirectly indicate the need for bringing such learning to a more conscious level, mentioning that many of the things they have learnt they had not consciously reflected on before being asked in the interview. In this way evaluating such experiences may have a positive function of raising the attention towards learning in the Northern municipality, making it more explicit and effective.

Next we will consider if these individual learning experiences have had an impact on Gran as an organisational unit. Have there been any added values or changes in the daily operations of the local administration as a consequence of the MIC partnership? Has there been any mutual learning between the two municipalities as such?

5.2 Organisational Benefits and Learning

A challenge to mutual learning in municipal partnerships concerns the potential to go beyond the individual to institutionalise experience within the organisation (Johnson & Wilson 2009:11). While we have found a lot of recognition of personal learning and added value for the directly involved participants, our informants are more sceptical towards learning for the council as a whole. As one informant underscores: "It stays with the individuals". Just like Bontenbal's study of Dutch officials (2009a:218), and Johnson and Wilson's study of partnerships between municipalities in the UK and Uganda (2009:78), the large majority of

Northern participants stated that that there had not been implemented any changes in practise on behalf of the North council as such. This is in stark contrast to answers given by South participants in previous studies, which represents a 'mutuality gap' (Bontenbal 2009a:218, Johnson & Wilson 2006). However, even though there is little acknowledgment of direct learning on behalf of the municipality as an administrative unit, this does not rule out possible synergy effects and added values for the wider administration, especially as personal and professional experiences and benefits may spill over on and affect the organisation.

Capacity building may focus on the learning of specific skills and competencies, but it may also be more generic and diffuse, for example building confidence or enabling people to speak publicly. Such generic capacities may be the most important ingredients for influencing wider organisational change (Johnson & Wilson 2006:6). As noted earlier several respondents stressed the increased motivation and that this also affected other work tasks making them do a better job overall. International work possibilities are also described by several informants as a 'carrot', which in the case of the head coordinator kept her in her position in Gran when she could have moved elsewhere. In this way one important added value of participating in the MIC programme for the municipality could be related to attracting, enhancing and keeping vital human resources, as well as promoting Gran as an interesting place to work and live. Likewise increased international competent staff with English language proficiency could be seen as a major benefit for municipalities today. In relation to this, Gran municipality was nominated by the Norwegian Peace Corps as an 'international municipality' due to their international efforts. The informants tell about how the council, as well as local businesses in Gran, is often used by KS as hosts for international visits relating this to their reputation as a municipality with international experience, something which is verified by the staff at KS international project department. As one respondent from the waste department points out it is easy for KS to ask them to receive visitors because they have gotten used to international contact and are more comfortable with the language than many other municipalities. When asked if this has had any concrete impact on the daily functioning of the council as such, the general response was that this is limited. However, some of the key informants stress the need to create a more conscious strategy to use their international identity as a means to market and promote the municipality. The lack of constructing and implementing such a conscious strategy is related by the participants to a lack of time and resources, as well as political priority, something which is also mentioned as an important hinder towards disseminating knowledge through to the wider organisation and to the public.

As Bontenbal (2009a:218-219) points out in her studies, there seem to exist a need for a more practical application of the individual benefits and knowledge into daily working practise if it is to have a wider impact on the partner organisation, and this knowledge needs to be more actively disseminated and shared with colleagues. By providing exposure to a wide range of people the partnership may become owned by the entire organisation and not just the individuals. Although the coordinator states that she has made attempts to spread information in the administration, as well as in the community, through arranging information meetings, picture slideshows and writing on the municipal webpage, she stresses that the interest has been low or moderate. As another informant points out, the risk is that the partnership is something that is only discussed informally over lunch break, or at random meetings by the coffee machine, and that it is not given enough formal priority. A related problem pointed out by one of the politicians, is that colleagues might get suspicious that the involved are gaining pure personal advantages from the project, such as free travel and leisure. Spreading information, and instruments for evaluating the project goals, may therefore be important to lift individual experiences to a higher organisational level, and for avoiding the image of the 'travellers club' by legitimising international activities vis-à-vis local political leaders and the constituents (Bontenbal 2009a:210). At the same time demands from external funders for concrete results within tight timeframes may run counter to effective joint learning processes leaving little time and resources for institutionalising knowledge in the North organisation (Johnson & Wilson 2006:18).

At last the question arises whether the cooperation could also generate some more tangible benefits for the North municipality going beyond more conventional one way flows, for example through the recent trend of adopting innovative democratic governance practise that has emerged in the South, a trend often referred to as a 'return of the caravels' (Bontenbal 2009a:53-54). Some of our informants have mentioned this as an opportunity pointing to the possibility of using the Ugandan model for political representation to reflect on how they themselves could get better at including people with disabilities. Other possibilities for direct learning from the South were also mentioned, such as having a separate speaker at council meetings so that the mayor would be freer to participate in the debate. None of this has however so far been implemented into practice. We will look at further possibilities for conceptualising more strategic political goals for the Northern partners in the concluding chapter, but now we will turn to what the MIC programme may have signified for local community of Gran.

5.3 Involving the Community.

Municipal institutional cooperation may imply that the partnerships are based in the local governments and city councils only, however, these partnerships often move beyond local governments and can involve participation of stakeholders from civil and private spheres as well (Bontenbal 2009:35). Johnson and Wilson (2009:23) refer to this as 'institutional spreading' and this has the potential to link the partnerships to other networks in the community and promote other types of learning. In the case of Gran municipality there have been different types of direct and indirect links as a consequence of the Gran-Mukono partnership, and a special case for Gran was that there were already ties to Uganda in the local community before the onset through the local organisation HIHU. The fact that there were already bonds between the two societies has been mentioned by several of the respondents as an important factor contributing to the success of the partnership.

In Gran, two elementary schools have indirectly been involved in the cooperation by raising funds through their annual 'school jogging'. 'School jogging' is a solidarity project which they do every year, and one of the schools has donated money to schools in Mukono and Lugazi for the past six years. This type of project is however not in line with the guidelines for MIC since it comes close to traditional fund raising activity, and as such it involves a certain tension with the ideal of mutuality in municipal partnerships (Johnson & Wilson 2009:24-25). Although the school projects are not directly related to MIC, there is reason to say that the choice of recipient has come about as a consequence of it. The project coordinator in Gran has visited the elementary school; showed pictures from Uganda and told about how the money has been spent, and when the delegation from Mukono/Lugazi have been in Gran, they have visited the school. The principal at one school told us that this motivates the children, and that it is important for the pupils to get a personal relation to what they are raising money for. The thought underlying the school cooperation was initially also to have some sort of mutual learning. Efforts were made so that the children in the two different countries could be 'pen pals', but the differences in living situations made it difficult. In 2008 they tried a different type of cooperation with two schools in Mukono and Lugazi. They had a project called 'I'd like to ask you something', where they wanted to share what it was like to be a pupil in Norway and learn what it was like in Uganda. They made an exposition with pictures from the schools in Uganda and the principal says this was an eye opening experience for the children to learn that lots of things were in fact similar. This potentially creates learning in both places. There is reason to believe that this has spread beyond the children as the exposition was open for other students and families as well.

There has been some community involvement when there have been delegations from Uganda in Gran. One informant, a nurse at the city hall, had them for a visit at the health care station. The informant lives in Gran and her work place is at the city hall where the project is based, but when asked what she knows about the programme she says that she knows that there is a partnership, but not much more. The visit was short and not planned in a way that could promote discussions, but more as an information meeting held by the nurse. So in this case, to increase the mutuality, it could have been an idea to plan the visit in a different manner. The meeting could for example have been arranged as a discussion session about the health care systems in the two countries. But again the fact that there was little time is mentioned. Another informant states that when he had two members of the delegation living at his home the neighbours were interested in meeting them, but because of a tight programme it was not possible.

Bontenbal (2009a:51-52) states that to increase public awareness has traditionally been a key objective of municipal partnerships. This is also stated as an objective in the MIC application form from 2006, but does not seem to have received much focus in Gran. Most of the informants believe that the main population in Gran probably does not know about the cooperation, and states that more could have been done to inform and involve the inhabitants, but due to a lack of time and resources this has not happened. To find out how much the general population knew, what they knew and how they had heard about it, we decided to do a small survey in Gran. We went to the local shopping mall on a Friday afternoon and talked to 32 people, and 15 of them knew that Gran had some sort of link to Uganda. They had mainly heard about it through the 'school jogging', the local newspaper, through personal relations with someone involved in the project, and through the organisation HIHU. Just one person had read about it on the municipality's webpage. On questioning them about what they had heard, they mostly said "not much", but that they knew there was some sort of link. Several mentioned fund raising through the 'school jogging' and building schools in Uganda. This indicates that it is difficult for the general population to distinguish between the work of the municipality, HIHU and the schools.

5.4 Conceptions and Thoughts on Mutuality and Equality

According to our informants reflections on mutuality and equality, and in tune with previous studies (see Bontenbal 2009a, Johnson & Wilson 2006) we find it useful to distinguish between what the informants say about mutuality and equality in relation to the partnership process, e.g. agenda-setting, ownership and decision making, and what they say about mutuality in regard to the specific outcomes of the projects, e.g. mutual benefits and learning.

We will show how the participants are approaching the ideal view of mutuality in terms of the former, but are representing a ‘mutuality gap’ with respect to the latter.

Mutuality in Partnership Input

With regard to mutuality in the relationship and partnership processes between the two municipalities, many of our informants point out that the relationship between the partners has been based on mutuality and equality, by which they mean that the Northern partner has not been dominant in decision-making and that they have felt that they have cooperated with equals. One informant states that: “I feel that we have met equal partners, council men, mayors, politicians. (...) We have met very, very skilled people, who have given us a lot in return and we have absolutely been equal discussion partners.” This statement underscores that there has been a peer-to-peer cooperation, which puts focus on a collegial relationship founded on professional equality and mutuality. As we will discuss later, this can help to create more mutuality in the partnership.

Something that has been pointed out as an important factor for the mutuality is the fact that the funding comes from Norad, and not Gran. The two parties have together decided how to spend the money. However, the money is to be spent on the projects in Uganda, something that naturally suggests a certain degree of one way transfer between North and South. Even though most of our informants have pointed out that the relationship has been based on mutuality, a few comments have been made, which to some extent say otherwise. Two of our informants told us that the participants in Gran insisted on there being representatives from the opposition in Mukono when they came to visit Gran, even though the partners in Mukono did not agree to this. For them it was natural that only the people in position should come. Another comment was made about an episode where the delegation from Gran had decided to check Mukono’s accounting in the project, without telling them beforehand. This shows that the representatives in Gran at some points throughout the relationship have exercised some power. There is only limited reflection on this, and it can perhaps be seen in relation to Tvedt’s point about unintended use of power. Nevertheless, in general the impression from our informants is that there has been a high degree of mutuality and trust in relation to the partnership process and that this has been important for the success of the programme. This is also confirmed by the project coordinator in Mukono, and from the leader of HIHU who told us that he has only gotten positive feedback from people he knows in Uganda in relation to the MIC programme.

Mutuality in Partnership Output

As we have seen above, the informants approach the ideal view when they describe mutuality and equality in terms of the participation processes and the relationships between the two partners. In regard to outcome however, they point out that mutual learning has not occurred, at least not in terms of technical knowledge transfer. They reflect on the distinction between ‘solid’ and ‘soft’ learning, and that the learning outcome for the Northern partner in a project like this, is different from that of the Southern partner.

An interesting aspect, especially in regard to the MIC programme’s goal of mutual learning, is that when asked whether it is important that the Northern partner gains something from the partnership, many of our informants responded that they do not see this as important, at least not in terms of technical knowledge transfer. They do point out that as individuals they have learned something, but that it is not important to them that Gran as a municipality should gain from the partnership. The focus is on capacity building in the South. This reflects the sceptical view to a certain extent, and also a more traditional way of thinking about aid, as pointed out by Tvedt. Several of our informants have pointed out that Gran should “help” because they are able to do so and that Gran is a relatively rich municipality and therefore have a global duty. Some informants say that even though KS state that there should be mutual capacity building, it is not so important to them that Gran gets something back. Thus, it becomes evident that our different informants are approaching both the ideal and the sceptical view. Johnson and Wilson (2009:216) note that there is a need for a conceptual shift from thinking of these types of partnerships as primarily development assistance towards an explicit focus on the possibilities for learning for both parties. This is done by one of our respondents, who point out that mutual learning is important for the legitimacy of the project:

It is important in several ways. (...) the municipality spend money and time on something that does not concern us in our local society at all. What do the tax payers in Gran gain from this? We must be very aware of this, so we must be able to refer to this (...). It is important in terms of increased human knowledge. It is also important in the balance between us and them (...), that this is not a top-down situation, but a partnership between equal partners. (...) So finding things that we in the North can get back in terms of learning is important to achieve self-respect in this relationship.

Thus, as also pointed out by Johnson and Wilson (2009:216), the fact that many of our informants are altruistic is not in itself a bad thing, but if mutual learning is a goal, it can be a possible obstacle for the mutuality since it is not prioritised.

5.5 Important Success Factors and Weaknesses

So what do the informants point out as the strengths and weaknesses of this project? In our interviews with the respondents there have been several things that have been prevalent when

they have talked about the project. In general they agree that the Gran-Mukono partnership has been a considerable success.

Success Factors

Many of the informants mention that an important success factor is that there were already established ties between Gran and Mukono through the local organisation HIHU. Since the relation was already there it was easier to establish and develop a relationship based on *continuity and trust*. Continuity is something that has been underlined by many of the respondents when explaining why the cooperation between Gran and Mukono has worked out so well. This can be exemplified by the fact that the important position of project coordinator in Gran, as well as in Mukono, has been held by the same two persons from the very beginning and until now. There is no doubt that this has contributed to continuity, enabling the involved participants on both side of the partnership to build and maintain relations of trust, transparency and predictability. Continuity is therefore of crucial importance to enhance trust, and may potentially contribute to mutuality and more genuine ownership to the programme objectives (Bontenbal 2009:49). This is stressed by the project coordinator who states that: “We have never failed each other”. This statement brings up an important aspect with continuity, which is that continuity is dependent on trust. Thus, the combination of continuity and trust in the relationship has been an important success factor.

Another important success factor has been openness and humbleness, which are also linked to continuity and trust. One informant emphasises the importance of this in establishing contact between two municipalities, which on the surface does not seem to have much in common. Openness and humbleness refers more specifically to the overall *willingness to listen and learn*. This may in turn be seen in relation to *personal dedication*, which many of our respondents have stressed as vital for the success. In this regard openness and humbleness may be seen as important ingredients in establishing contact, but also as the foundation for building sustainable relations of trust. Openness can also be put in relation to what Bontenbal (2009:43) calls the two-way flow of information, which makes mutual understanding and thus learning, more likely. An interesting point in regard to this is the fact that it was the mayor in Mukono who actually initiated the cooperation. This has been mentioned by our informants as an important factor for the success and for creating mutuality in the relationship.

By sharing vital information, knowledge and experience, it seems like the participants from Gran and Mukono have enabled and enhanced a relationship based on mutuality. Central to this is the fact that it has been a peer-to-peer partnership. When it comes to the partnership between Gran and Mukono it is a commonly held view among the informants that the

participants are professional equals, treating each other as colleagues by sharing information, experience and knowledge. The project coordinator in Mukono also confirms this. Thus, it may seem like the relationship is complementary placing the logic of the cooperation close to the idealistic view. In accordance to this, many informants feel that both mutuality and equality have been present in the relationship between the two municipalities.

When we asked our informants about political embeddedness, the fact that it has been *politically embedded* in Gran was often mentioned as an important success factor. While many of the findings indicate variations in accordance to interest and political priority, the overall political embeddedness has been relatively stable during the years. When asked if there has been political agreement, one member of the political group says that: "Yes, absolutely (...) I think that there always have been unanimous decisions in Gran council". While political embeddedness is important, an overall support in the local community must also be considered as a necessity. Many indicators suggest that this to a certain degree has been prevalent in the case of Gran.

Weaknesses

When considering weaknesses, the spreading and transfer of knowledge about the MIC programme are restricted to the few, making overall organisational learning difficult. As previously mentioned, a similar tendency can be seen in relation to the local community as a whole. Thus, the transfer of knowledge from the individual to the administration and the local community as a whole seems to be limited. This is something that the informants also point out as an obstacle for further utilising of the programme. Lack of both time and resources on behalf of the Northern municipality are mentioned by almost all the informants as problematic in terms of spreading the knowledge beyond the people involved in the partnership. Dealing with their ordinary jobs, many informants feel that they do not have enough time to give the programme more priority. Hence, it seems like there is an intrinsic link between restricted learning possibilities and the overall lack of time and resources. This can be considered as an obstacle for information spreading.

The lack of time and resources is directly linked to political prioritisation. As discussed earlier in this chapter, political embeddedness has absolutely been prevalent in the case of Gran, but it seems to not have had political priority. One informant points out that the MIC programme very often is at the bottom of the political agenda. While some politicians have found the programme both interesting and educational, others have been more sceptical about the overall utility. Several respondents find that the programme both had political embeddedness and was given more political priority, when the mayor who initiated the

partnership held that position. One informant believes that this was ‘the heyday’ of the project. Many informants have stated that after she started working in the central government, the interest in the partnership, and consequently also the political prioritisation, has dropped. Hence, in deciding whether, or not, the programme should be given priority, and thus also time and resources, it becomes evident that the political leadership plays an influential role.

While the benefits on behalf of the Southern part in this particular case are well-documented, not much has been documented on behalf of Gran. This can be seen in relation to the fact that KS have not formalised any specific goals for the Northern municipalities. By talking to the informants it has been made clear that without any tangible goals, there exists uncertainty about what there is to gain for Gran. Due to the lack of specified goals, there is potential for improvement.

5.6. Summary of Findings

Our main findings are that there has been a lot of individual learning for the directly involved individuals in Gran, however, a knowledge transfer to the organisation as a whole has been difficult. There exists a need for more reflectivity and to create a learning culture. This will be further discussed in the next and concluding chapter. As we have seen the local community has been involved through different ties in the community, but there is not much knowledge of the MIC programme beyond the people who have been directly or indirectly involved. If this is a goal, there is a need to spread more information about it, and in order to do this it is necessary with more time and resources, as well as political will. When it comes to mutuality there is some ambiguity, and several of our informants are positioned in between the ideal and the sceptical view. They are approaching the ideal view when it comes to mutuality in input relating to tasks and decision-making. When it comes to mutuality in output, our informants do not seem to find this equally important, and they are therefore approaching the sceptical view. However, they do not seem to find this a problem. There are a lot of success factors explaining the sustainability of the Gran-Mukono-Lugazi partnership, but as we have seen there is still room for improvement when it comes to establishing mutuality in output for Northern partners. See Appendix I for a schematic overview of findings.

6.0 FURTHER DISCUSSION AND LESSONS LEARNED

Municipal to municipal cooperation is often celebrated for their high level of mutuality with regard to learning benefits, but as we have seen the learning benefits for the North partners are primarily recognised to stay with the individuals and it is difficult to observe any direct learning on behalf of the municipal council as such. This returns us full circle to the underlying question of whether North-South municipal cooperation may be mechanisms of equal, horizontal exchange of knowledge, as is underscored in popular discourse, or whether they are just ‘old wine in new bottles’ (Bontenbal 2009a:57). To what extent is mutuality in learning comprehensible for North-South relationships? What can we learn from the Gran case, and how can the level of mutuality in output for the North partners be further conceptualised and developed? As we see it, there are five major lessons learned from Gran which we will discuss in this chapter: First, (1) the need to see capacity building as a process based on continuity and trust. This is related to the sustainability of mutuality in the partnership conditions in terms of ownership and *input*. Then we will discuss the need to (2) establish a willingness to learn, (3) to disseminate information and knowledge to the organisation and beyond and (4) ensuring political priority. These are related to the problem of moving beyond individual learning, and are crucially dependent on the organisational conditions of political legitimacy and financial as well as human resources in the North (Bontenbal 2009a:103). Last, (5) we want to stress the need to rethink mutuality in *output* as more than just learning by pointing out the potential of setting some more strategic political goals for the Northern partner.

6.1 Making Capacity Development a Sustainable Process.

As we have seen, the continuity of the partnership and the trust between participants in Gran and Mukono have been major success factors, as is outlined by several of the respondents. This underscores the important need to see *capacity building as a process* where long-term relations and continuity in project groups and participants are vital in order to generate sustainable results (Bontenbal 2009b). This is related to mutuality in the partnership conditions and there are two critical issues for sustainability and continuity in this regard: First, the importance of low turnover in project participants and the need for this long-term relationship to be based on principles of friendship and trust (Bontenbal 2009a:192-193). The fact that both the head coordinators in Gran and Mukono have been involved from the early phases of the partnership, and that they have developed a relationship based on trust, can

therefore be seen as crucial to the success of this particular MIC programme, making the Gran-Mukono partnership a case for others to learn from. Other important aspects in this regard, as pointed out by the coordinator in Gran, are the facts that the programme was initiated by the South, and that it was built on already established ties between the two communities.

The second crucial issue for sustainability is further related to *ownership* and whether capacity is built on existing knowledge, resources and practices in the South (Bontenbal 2009b:101-104). Ownership in this regard can be related to whether or not the partnership approaches what Fowler has called ‘authentic partnership’ which implies mutually enabling, inter-dependent interaction with shared intentions (1998:144 in Johnson & Wilson 2006:8). Thus, as we have seen, mutuality in municipal partnerships cannot be considered only in light of learning opportunities, but must also be understood in terms of motivation and investments made (Bontenbal 2009a:225). According to Johnson and Wilson (2006:14), municipal partnerships have the potential to bridge the mutuality gap and approach this ideal sense of partnership despite large inequalities in resources. This is done by creating peer-to-peer relationships which provide opportunities for equality as like-minded people of similar professional backgrounds work together on common municipal issues. This aspect of mutuality is, as we have seen, stressed by several of our key informants, and may in turn facilitate what Johnson and Wilson (2006:14) have called ‘dialogic learning’ through mutual understanding and sharing a common platform. Seeing partnership and capacity building as a process is thus also important for rethinking partnership as a learning process and moving the partnership towards the ideal, rather than the sceptical view. By establishing a ‘common ground’ between institutions and professionals of a similar type, municipal partnerships can be seen to pose an advantage compared to more traditional forms of North-South cooperation and NGOs in relation to both higher levels of mutuality in the partnership process, and in terms of learning (Bontenbal 2009a:231).

6.2 Creating a Learning Culture

The scaling up of individual learning experiences to sustainable organisational change is a common subject in the literature on capacity development and organisational learning more broadly, and is generally seen as challenging. In North-South partnerships this is especially so for the Northern partners (Bontenbal 2009a:53). This may result from a one-sided focus on knowledge transfer from North to South, related to the central objective in most MIC partnerships being to strengthen local governance in the South. However, it can also be related to a too narrow focus on learning. Toeffler once noted that we often need to ‘learn

how to learn' (Thompson & McHugh 2009:90). One of the greatest challenges in inter-organisational relationships is thus to put aside our preconceived notions about others and be open to new ideas and new ways of doing things (Ewijk & Baud 2009:221). Johnson & Wilson (2006) argue that there is a need to create a 'learning culture' within the organisation. The idea of a *learning organisation* was first introduced by Chris Argyris, and is based on the thought that individual knowledge can work together to develop collective competency and learning. This relies on what is often referred to as 'second order' learning and the ability to communicate what has been learnt. In other words, there is a need to create dialogic 'learning spaces' within the organisation where tacit knowledge may be further developed and made more visible and effective (Svedberg 2002:312-318). The question for the future is therefore how partnering municipalities can develop such a learning culture.

In their study of municipal cooperation between UK and Uganda, Johnson and Wilson (2006:15) found that conceptualising partnerships as 'learning spaces' helped promote mutuality in the relationship between the participants and contributed towards closing the mutuality gap. In other words a willingness and openness towards learning from the partnership, and from the differences of 'the other', is needed from the onset. As we have seen, personal dedication towards the project and a humbleness and willingness to learn have been mentioned as success factors in Gran. However, this willingness to learn seems to have been confined to the key individuals and there has been little reflection on how the municipal council as such could learn from the partnership. According to Johnson and Wilson (2006:20-21), lack of organisational learning can be related to three main difficulties: (1) the structural position of the individuals in the organisation which affects the ability to disseminate knowledge to the wider organisation, (2) the lack of a strong culture for learning with the local authorities not conceptualising partnerships as potential learning sources, and (3) the political agenda setting powers of councils. All of these problems are interrelated and underscores the need for channels for spreading information and political priority. Mutuality may be enhanced if partnerships are conceptualised as learning models, where inherent differences between the partners are seen as opportunities to learn, rather than constraints, and where there exist learning benefits for both Northern and Southern partners. Conscious agency is thus required to make learning more reflexive and intentional, as more than just desirable 'side effects': "By making the learning explicit, such partnerships draw attention to the possibilities for making both the learning and the partnership more effective" (Johnson & Wilson 2009:21-22).

6.3 Disseminating Knowledge through the Organisation and Beyond

To be able to scale up from individual experiences and share and embed individual learning organisationally a learning culture is needed in the organisation. This can only happen when the individuals that are involved have sufficient influence on the organisation to act as a "change agent". Organisational factors such as political support and time and resources to implement and spread information on what have been learned in practise, are crucial in this process (Bontenbal 2009a:53). As Bontenbal (2009a:206) point out, there exists a need to provide exposure to a wide range of people so that the partnership is 'owned' by the entire organisation and not just by a few individuals. Our key informants mentioned several difficulties with sharing their learning more widely, especially the lack of time and resources to do so. This was mentioned in relation to the spreading of information both to the council, and to the local community. Hence, in partnerships such as these, it is necessary for the people involved to have time and resources at hand, should one achieve information spreading. However, seeing that it would be difficult to receive money from Norad that is to be spent on the municipalities in Norway, it would be necessary for the municipalities themselves to provide these resources. This may however be difficult since there are always many tasks and financial constraints in municipalities, and if the partnership is not prioritised it is not likely that money will be distributed to this sort of work. Thus, time and resources are intrinsically linked to political priority.

6.4. Ensuring Political Priority

The local political authorities and leadership are as we have seen vital for the political priority of partnerships. This is confirmed by many of our informants who are pointing out the difference in the time before and after the first mayor. She was a key initiator to the project and spent much time on spreading information about the project and legitimising the effort put towards it. After she left office, the political priority has been reduced. The MIC programme has become more of a marginal task within the wider administration confined to a few dedicated individuals. Many informants have, as previously mentioned, pointed out that the partnership is always at the bottom of the political agenda in council meetings. This underscores the fact that councils have a political as well as a bureaucratic life. Political changes have an impact on continuity and may also potentially reduce a council's motivation to capitalise learning from partnerships. Thus power relations within the council may also affect mutuality (Johnson & Wilson 2006:21).

Another interesting aspect here is that political priority is necessarily linked to legitimacy. Our informants have pointed out that it would be difficult to prioritise the

partnership if it is not supported in the local communities. Authorities have to justify their activities in terms of their core functions, which is to deliver effective service to their own constituencies. If mutual gains cannot be demonstrated it becomes difficult to justify the continuation of the partnership (Johnson & Wilson 2006:12). This in turn may be linked to the attitude towards municipalities taking on such tasks. It was pointed out by our informants in KS that the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad have not recognised municipalities as an important agent in Norway's policies towards developing countries. Thus, to be involved in North-South partnerships is not seen to be a typical municipal task. This can perhaps be an aspect to take into consideration in terms of legitimising the priority of such municipal partnerships. Hence, it becomes evident that institutional consolidation is of crucial importance to guarantee that sustainability and continuity are expressed through the municipalities' political commitment or mandate to do international cooperation, the administrative bedding of the MIC activities, the financial and human resources available in the North as well as working in joint action with civil society and other stakeholders (Bontenbal 2009a:46).

6.5 Rethinking Mutuality in Output - Towards More Strategic Goals for the North

Above we referred to the need to promote a learning culture in the Northern councils making mutuality in learning more explicit and effective. There is no doubt that the potential of such partnerships as learning sites are often undervalued and overlooked in practise. However, it is also possible to ask whether the potential of MIC programmes as sources for mutual flows of knowledge may at times be exaggerated and that there is a need to be more realistic in terms of what Northern partners actually can gain from municipal partnerships to avoid sustaining a "myth of equality" (Bontenbal 2009a:56-57). There is therefore a need to rethink the concept of mutuality in output as more than mere learning.

As we have seen, the participants in the North often have a more altruistic purpose towards capacity building in the South, and learning from the South as such, simply does not seem to be considered a central objective. Nevertheless, mutuality in terms of outcomes is important for the stability and legitimacy of local governments participating in such partnerships. Bontenbal (2009a:223) stresses the need to rethink the concept of mutuality in terms of outcomes to identify other possible benefits for the wider municipal administration that are not directly related to knowledge and learning, but may offer stronger opportunities for mutuality of benefits in MIC partnerships related to a more strategic and political organisational perspective. We will here outline three opportunities which we see as potential

strategic and political programme goals for North municipalities participating in MIC programmes in the future:

Attracting, Keeping and Developing Human Resources

As we have seen, one strategic goal of the MIC programme can be the creation of more loyal employees, enabled through an exciting international project which potentially increases both job satisfaction and motivation in the local administration. This can further be used strategically to present the local government as an attractive employer which offers more varying work possibilities and thus opportunities in regard to professional as well as personal development. It can also be useful to see the local community, administration and political arena as a springboard for personal and professional development that moves beyond the local society. Putting the municipality in a wider context can possibly enhance learning possibilities, and create a vivid local democracy and community. Local institutions can also be considered as an arena for recruitment, as this is underlined by Baldersheim and Rose (2005:58). Due to this, the MIC programme can be used to educate and enlighten citizens, officials and politicians at the local level in terms of international understanding, language proficiency and enhanced negotiating capabilities. In an increasingly international society, such competence may be seen as a valuable requirement, making local citizens, officials and politicians more attractive for jobs in the central government.

Good Publicity for the Municipality

Municipal partnerships can be used in a strategic way. By being a dedicated and cooperative participant in regard to such municipal partnerships, one can potentially gain valuable experience and knowledge, which will be interesting for other municipalities and organisations that consider the same possibilities for international involvement. If used properly and seriously, this experience and knowledge may be used intentionally to achieve good publicity. As we have seen, Gran has built up a reputation as a dedicated municipality when it comes to international contact over the years, and is thus regularly used by KS for international visits. In addition they have been contacted by other municipalities in search for help to set up their own MIC partnerships. This can be used far more strategically than it is today, something which is also pointed out by our participants. In this way municipalities can use their MIC engagement to promote themselves as 'international municipalities', building a global identity, and framing the municipality as an interesting partner vis-à-vis other municipalities, both nationally and internationally. This may also be used for recruiting inhabitants, making the municipality an interesting place to work and live.

Spreading International Involvement

By spreading international involvement and offering opportunities for citizens and local organisations and businesses to take part in developmental cooperation, one can establish multiple institutional ties and a common platform for international understanding and global awareness locally. This could potentially widen the scope beyond the local borders, putting the Northern municipalities in a wider global context in regard to both learning possibilities and overall responsibilities as global citizens. Many of our informants have recognised the potential need for an international strategy. By initiating an international strategy and establishing multiple ties, it would probably be easier to legitimise the MIC programme as a political priority. In terms of this, there is no doubt that Gran already has a foundation to build on. This could be used to spread involvement locally and further substantiated by a politically initiated international strategy.

An important point to mention is that all of these three benefits are already present as potent synergy effects and added values in Gran, but are also mentioned by our informants as something that could, and should, be made more explicit and strategic in terms of programme goals, and hence made more intentional and effective, rather than seeing them as just desirable side effects. Turning to more strategic and politically formulated goals for the Northern participant involves a rethinking of mutuality, since mutuality in benefits may in this way not necessarily be seen as seeking identical benefits for North and South, but rather as strongly related to the extent to which the results achieved correspond to the political and strategic partnership objective sets. Since these objective sets can be seen as different, the understanding of such partnerships should move beyond learning and include more political and strategic outcomes as well (Bontenbal 2009a:230-231).

7.0 CONCLUSION - Has It Been Worth It?

So, what has been the significance of participating in the MIC programme for Gran municipality? Has it been worth it? When it comes to the individuals involved the answer is a definite yes. The opportunity to participate in international activities has involved a lot of personal learning and reflection, as well as other overall personal benefits, such as friendship, inspiration and increased motivation to work and stay in Gran. This has, as we have seen, also spilled over and created professional learning at the individual level. When it comes to benefits and changes on behalf of the municipality, it is difficult to find any concrete learning and changes in the daily running of the council as a direct result of the partnership. We have therefore found a certain ‘mutuality gap’ when it comes to the mutual output from the partnership. However, there have been several potent synergy effects and added values for the council since Gran has gained a certain national reputation as an ‘international municipality’, and through staff with increased international experience, language proficiency and motivation to stay and work. They have also been relatively successful in including a larger part of the local community through multiple institutional ties, school projects and the like. The strategic and political potential of these added benefits of municipal cooperation have however not been fully used. There is a need to make them more explicit in terms of programme objectives and goals, in order to fully extract their potential. If to gain something back from the partnership is an objective, there needs to be more strategic focus on what these gains *can* and *should* be. There must also be more information spreading and knowledge transfer if the partnership is to be known and supported by a larger group of people, both within the organisation and in the community at large. This crucially relies on time and resources, as well as political priority with the councils conceptualising partnerships as a potential source for learning. There is, in other words, a need to create ‘a learning culture’ within the organisation if mutual learning and benefits for the Northern partner are to be enhanced.

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UNPUBLISHED RAPPORTS AND APPLICATIONS CONSULTED

Gran kommune (2005) Project rapport 2003-2005 (unpublished)

Gran kommune (2006) Application form (unpublished)

Gran kommune (2008) Project rapport (unpublished)

Gran kommune (2011) Application form (unpublished)

APPENDIX

Appendix I: Summary of Findings

Learning and added value for Gran	Success factors	Weaknesses	Five Lessons Learned	Potential Strategic Goals
<p>Individual learning</p> <p><i>Personal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased awareness of global inequality and self reflection - Increased cultural awareness, reducing prejudices and stereotypes - Inspiration from the attitudes and values of Southern colleagues towards life and work (few) - Personal skill development (un-reflected) - Overall personal benefits: friends, enjoyment, personal contacts, inspiration, motivation <p><i>Professional</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased job satisfaction/motivation - Language proficiency and cross cultural work and communication skills - Reflecting on own professional practice, but no implementation of changes - No 'solid' knowledge transfer from South to North <p>Organisational learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Few formal changes in the organisation's daily functioning - Synergy effects: motivated and internationally skilled staff, international reputation - Need for a more conscious international strategy <p>Added value for the local community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wider inclusion and learning through multiple institutional ties and school projects - Lack of information on MIC to inhabitants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuity and trust in the relationship between partners - A willingness to learn on part of the key individuals involved - Personal dedication - Mutuality in the partnership process (input) related to professional equality (peer-to-peer) and ownership - Political embeddedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of organisational learning and mutuality in output for the North council - Problems with disseminating and sharing information and knowledge with the larger organisation as well as the wider public - Lack of political priority with councils not fully recognising partnership as a potential learning source - Lack of time and resources for intervention in the North - Lack of strategic goals for the North 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The need for seeing capacity building as a process built on continuity and trust 2. The need for establishing a culture for learning within the organisation by making learning more explicit 3. The need for channels for disseminating information and spreading the knowledge within the council and beyond to include the local community at large 4. The need for political backing and priority given if the project is to have any strategic value for the North council 5. The need for setting strategic and political goals for the North council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keeping, recruiting and strengthening human resources for the municipality - Reputation building as part of an international strategy - Spreading international involvement by including other local organisations and businesses

Appendix II: Revised Mandate

"Has it been worth it?"

The significance of participation in a MIC program (Municipal International Cooperation) as experienced from the North perspective.

Project background: KS International Projects and the MIC program

The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) coordinates projects in over 20 countries and has been involved in international activities for almost two decades. KS is committed to the development of a stronger and more vital local democracy in Norway as well as abroad, and their stated objective is *to support the development of an efficient and independent local government sector that attends the needs of the inhabitants*¹. Since 1997 KS has coordinated a program for Municipal International Cooperation (MIC) funded by NORAD. Through the agreement it is stated that KS shall ensure support to the involved municipalities through facilitation of capacity building, exchange of experience between the involved partnerships and quality control in order to secure that the projects of the supported municipalities follow the priorities of the Norwegian Parliament, the policies of NORAD and the conditions set in the MIC program agreement². The general idea is that Norwegian municipalities possess experience and knowledge of interest to municipalities in the developing world. According to the MIC Guidelines from 2010 KS and its participating members seek to "contribute to capacity building in selected areas in a limited number of municipalities in a few developing countries in order for those to deliver better services to their citizens that in the longer term can lead to MDG attainment and poverty reduction"³. The MIC program has grown since its start in 1997 to include 15 partnerships in 2012.

Object of Study.

In this project the focus will be on the MIC partnership between Gran municipality in Norway and the municipality of Mukono in Uganda. This partnership has been a part of the MIC programme since its very beginning and has therefore witnessed and experienced the different challenges and changes to the program over time. In addition to being one of the oldest partnership in the program it is also one of the few which have included a second element, a South-South component, by including one of Mukono's neighbouring municipalities, Lugazi, in the cooperation. The partnership is now coming into its final period and there is a therefore

¹ <http://www.ks.no/u/English/Services/KS-International-Projects/>

² <http://www.ks.no/u/English/Services/MIC/>

³ MIC Guidelines 2010

a need to document and evaluate the partnership and its effects. While several rapports have given KS valuable information on the assistance effects on behalf of the South municipalities, there has been a challenge to document synergies and the possible added effects which are not "reportable" or "measurable" in terms of project goals, especially the added value and learning on behalf of the North partner, Gran municipality. The big question for KS then is: "Has it been worth it?".

Research question.

Although MIC stresses that the very concept of North-South municipal cooperation is based on the *idea of sharing information and mutual learning* there has been a lack of systematic focus on the added value of the MIC partnership on behalf of the North municipalities. In this project we would therefore focus on the local significance of the project for Gran. Our research question is: *What is the significance of participating in the MIC program seen from the North municipality point of view?*

We want to explore the local significance at three levels:

- What is the significance and added value of participating in such a project as experienced by the individuals who has been directly involved in the project? What have they experienced and learned? How do they represent and talk about the project?
- Has there been any results or changes in the daily running of the local administration in Gran as an effect of the MIC partnership? Has there been any *mutual* learning between the North and South municipality?
- Has there been any significance for the local community as a whole, and if so, what has been the effects?

Project goal.

By interviewing and talking to participants and local community members, as well as reading and analyzing MIC rapports and local news articles we hope to explore and contribute to increased awareness of possible added value of the MIC program on behalf of Gran. We also hope that by reflecting on and learning from the Gran-Mukono case study it is possible to bring about an increased focus on added value and goals for the North partners in cooperating in a MIC program.

Appendix III: Form of Consent

Informasjon- og samtykkeskjema

Informasjon til deltakere i intervju

Universitetet i Oslo ved Prosjektforum (www.prosjektforum.uio.no) har i samarbeid med KS (Kommunesektorens interesse- og arbeidsgiverorganisasjon) en prosjektgruppe med masterstudenter som ønsker å undersøke merverdien av deltakelse i MIC-programmet for Gran kommune. I den forbindelse vil vi se på hva deltakelsen har betydd for Gran kommune i form av mulige synergieffekter, merverdi og læring.

Vi ber deg om å forberede deg på spørsmål vedrørende følgende tema:

- Egen rolle og erfaringer i forhold til MIC-programmet
- Betydningen av prosjektet for kommunen, både administrativt og for lokalsamfunnet, med særlig vekt på gjensidighet og læring
- Din evaluering av Grans deltakelse i prosjektet.

Lengde av intervjuet: Intervjuet vil ta ca. 1 time og 30 minutter.

Konfidensialitet: Fordi vi intervjuer et begrenset utvalg aktører innenfor en kjent kommune blir tilstrekkelig anonymisering vanskelig. Vi vil allikevel utelate navn i rapporten dersom ønskelig. Intervjuene vil ikke bli publisert i sin helhet og vi vil kun trekke ut deler av intervjuene i rapporten. Direkte sitater vil tilsendes informanten for godkjenning. Opptak av intervjuene vil være tilgjengelig for prosjektets medlemmer mens prosjektet pågår. Det er full anledning til ikke å svare på spørsmål og til å trekke seg fra intervjuet underveis, inkludert informasjon som er gitt tidligere.

Lagring av intervjuet: Intervjuene vil bli tatt opp og transkriberes til tekst. Alle lydfiler vil bli slettet etter prosjektet er avsluttet i juni 2012.

Kontaktinformasjon: Ved spørsmål, kontakt Eirin Kristiansen på telefon eller e-post.

Tlf: 41 65 08 07 **Epost:** prosjektks@gmail.com

Samtykke: Dersom du samtykker til å delta på intervjuet under disse retningslinjene ønsker vi at du sender vår kontaktperson en e-post for å bekrefte intervjuet.

Appendix IV: Interview Guide

Kort presentasjon av formål med prosjektet: Formål: Betydningen og merverdien av deltakelse for Gran kommune. Vi er interessert i dine erfaringer og tanker rundt hva det kan ha betydd for kommunen, om det har vært noe læring eller betydning for lokalsamfunnet, samt hvordan du evaluerer prosjektet.

Samtykke, reservasjonsrett, frivillighet.

1. Posisjonering: Hva har vært din rolle i MIC prosjektet?

1.1. Fortell litt om prosjektet og ditt engasjement i det (hvem, hva, hvor, hvordan, når, hvorfor)

1.1.2: Til dem som ikke har vært med fra begynnelsen: Hvordan ble du tatt i mot/implementert i prosjektet - hvordan var opplæringen?

1.2 Hvem har din kontakt gått igjennom? Hvem har du primært samarbeidet med? Hvordan har forholdet vært?

1.3. Noen avgjørende hendelser/utfordringer?

1.4. Betydningsfulle endringer underveis? (Fra LFA til RBM?)

2. Hva har vært formålet med en slik deltagelse for Gran kommune?

2.1 Hva har vært Grans rolle og hva har vært Mukonos rolle i samarbeidet? Hvordan har kontakten vært mellom Gran og Mukono? (gjensidighet/tillitt)

2.2 Hva har vært KS rolle/samarbeidet med KS?

2.3 Har det vært noe bevisst fokus/snakk om læringsmål og utbytte for Gran? Fortell! Eventuelt hva kunne disse målene ha vært? (harde/myke mål)

2.4 Hva var det tenkt man at Gran skulle få ut av samarbeidet da prosjektet startet? Har dette eventuelt endret seg?

2.5 Hva har vært merverdien for Gran slik du ser det? Har det hatt en betydning annet enn for enkeltpersonene? Synnergier/ringvirkninger?

2.6 Er det viktig at det også skal ha gevinst for nordkommunen?

2.7 Er det viktig at norske kommuner deltar i slike samarbeidsprosjekter? Hvorfor?

2.8 Gran har blitt utnevnt til internasjonal kommune? Hva har dette betydd? Fortell! (stimulert nettverk/kontakt, politisk betydning, ect.)

2.9 Noen effekter for daglig drift? Jobber dere mer internasjonalt?

3. Personlige erfaringer - Hva har prosjektet betydd for deg?

3.1 Hva har du lært av prosjektet? Hva har prosjektet gitt/betydd for deg?

3.2 Har du tatt med deg denne læringen ut av prosjektet? Hvordan har du brukt det du har lært? Formidlet til andre? Har det påvirket noen av dine andre arbeidsfelt?

3.3 Hva slags relasjoner til og samarbeid har du hatt med de andre deltakerne i prosjektet både i Gran og Mukono?

3.4 Noen hendelser som har vært avgjørende for ditt engasjement?

3.5 Hva slags forventninger hadde du da du gikk inn i prosjektet? Hvordan svarte erfaringen til disse forventningene?

3.6 Positive/negative erfaringer og fortelling.

4. Betydning for lokalsamfunnet?

4.1 Hva tror du det har betydd for Gran som lokalsamfunn (utover administrasjonen) at man har deltatt i ett slik prosjekt?

4.2. I hvilken grad er det øvrige lokalsamfunnet blitt involvert i samarbeidet? Har det vært noen spesielle tilstelninger eller arrangementer? Fortell!

4.3 Samarbeid på tvers av organisasjoner? Flere instanser involvert, f.eks. HIHU - er dette viktig?

4.5 Er det viktig at ett slik prosjekt har politisk støtte/er politisk forankret? Betydninger for lokalpolitikken?

4.4 Hva har vært gjort for å skape engasjement og hvordan kunne man eventuelt skapt mer engasjement?

5. Oppsummering og evaluering av prosjektet.

5.1 Hva skal til for å få til gjensidighet og læring i et slik samarbeid? Hvordan føler du at Gran har lyktes med dette? Hva er suksessfaktorene?

5.2 Nå går prosjektet mot slutten, hva er veien videre? Vil/Bør kommunen fortsette å jobbe internasjonalt, og er dette viktig? Hvordan blir kontakten med Mukono fremover?

5.3 Hva er de viktigste lærdommene man kan trekke ut fra dette prosjektet? Hva kunne vært gjort annerledes/betere?

5.4 Hva tror du norske kommuner kan få ut av å delta i ett slikt prosjekt?

5.5 Noe mer vi burde ha snakket om som du vil tillegge?

5.6 Hvem burde vi snakke med?