

KS



ANNUAL REPORT 2005/6

KS International Projects

About KS

The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) is the only employers' and interest organisation for municipalities, counties and local public enterprises in Norway. The association was founded in 1972 as a result of an amalgamation of The Union of Norwegian Cities (founded in 1903) and the Norwegian Association of Rural Municipalities (founded in 1923). As of April 2006 all of the 431 municipalities and 19 counties are members, as well as approx. 500 public enterprises.



- KS advocates the interests of its members towards central government, the Parliament, labour organisations and other organisations.
- KS advises and informs the members about all matters and developments of importance to local government.
- KS facilitates exchange of experience between its members.
- KS conducts the central collective bargaining on behalf of its members.

Vision

An efficient and independent local government sector that attends to the needs of the citizens.

Mission

Shall be the most preferred development partner for the local government sector.

- KS facilitates exchange of experience between its members.
- KS conducts the central collective bargaining

Main objectives

- Be a unifying policy and employer organisation for local government.
- Strengthen the members as competent and reliable employers.
- Achieve increased freedom of action and better basic conditions for different groups of members.
- Contribute to alternative organisation models and working methods which promote quality, efficiency and citizen participation.



Preface

By Halvdan Skard,

President of KS

President of the Congress of the Council of Europe

Local government in Norway is increasingly involved and active on the international level. On the European arena, Norwegian municipalities and counties are working to promote their interests and participate in the economic and social development of Europe. KS experiences increased willingness to take part in international projects both in Europe and other parts of the world. An objective for KS is to strengthen the framework and possibilities for Norwegian municipalities and counties to participate in international cooperation projects.

KS and the members are involved in international cooperation projects in about 20 countries, financed by the Norwegian government. In particular, the Norwegian municipalities are involved in Municipal International Cooperation (MIC) programmes. In 2006 KS renegotiated the MIC programme for Africa/Asia with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), resulting in an expansion of the programme, creating possibilities for more municipalities to take part. MIC programmes also play an important part in the international activities in the Balkans. At the end of 2006, 18 of KS' members were directly involved in the MIC programmes.

The European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanismes are becoming increasingly important for cooperation between Norway and new EU member states. So far KS has focused on information and advisory services

to sister organisations and local government in the beneficiary countries and KS members. At the end of 2006 the first local government project funded by the EEA Financial Mechanism, with KS as partner, was granted the Association of Polish Cities.

Support to sister organisations continues to be the core activity of KS' international cooperation projects. KS is involved in such projects in 6 countries, and has a joint programme with the Council of Europe for establishment of local government associations in Azerbaijan. One of the key activities in the cooperation with sister organisations is the KS model for training programme for local elected councillors. KS is involved in three such programmes on the Balkans. 2005 and 2006 also marked the beginning of a large scale training programme for female politicians in India. This programme will be developed to become a regional programme for South Asia.

On the following pages are a list of all international projects with KS involvement, including cooperation partners and budgets in 2005 and 2006. In this report, we have chosen to highlight the projects in India, Serbia, Tanzania, Kosovo, Russia and the MIC programme for Africa and Asia.

We thank all partners for the good cooperation in 2005 and 2006 and look forward to good collaboration in the years to come.

Overview of KS' international projects 2005/2006

The budget indicates the amount that KS managed, and may represent only a share of a larger Norwegian contribution to a programme, or the amount may represent the KS share in a cofinanced project with other institutions. All amounts are stipulated in Norwegian Kroner (NOK). 100 NOK ≈ 12 Euro. KS' international projects were in 2005 and 2006 financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) or the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

Country	Project	Partners	Budget and funding
Afghanistan	Pre-appraisal on status of gender mainstreaming in programmes with Norwegian support	KS – The Norwegian Embassy in Kabul	2005: 130.000/ NORAD
Azerbaijan	Support to establishment of local government association	KS - For The Sake Of Civil Society	2005: 2.000.000/ NMFA 2006: 2.000.000/ NMFA
Bosnia - Hercegovina	Municipal International Cooperation	Orkdal - Mostar Sund – Konjic KS coordination activities	2005: 900.000/ NMFA 2006: 1.035.000/ NMFA
	Institutional cooperation with sister organisation; councillor training programme and training of municipal staff	KS – Associations of towns and municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, ALVRS in the Serb Republic, and SOGFBiH in the Federation.	2005: 1.000.000/ NMFA 2006: 1.000.000/ NMFA
Croatia	Institutional cooperation with sister organisation; councillor training programme.	KS – The Union of the Association of Towns and the Association of Municipalities.	2005: 650.000/ NMFA 2006: 1.250.000/ NMFA
Georgia	Capacity building	KS – National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia	2005: 1.400.000/ NMFA 2006: 600.000/ NMFA
India	Pre-study regarding training of elected women representatives	KS- The Hunger Project/ Aagaz Foundation	2005: 148.000/ NORAD 2006: 4.356.357/ NMFA
Kosovo	Pilot project in three municipalities for strengthening of local government and local economic development	KS – Hamar-Region, The Royal Norwegian Society for Development, Business Innovation Programs, Glogoc/ Glogovac, Obiliq/ Obilic, Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje	2005: 5.000.000/ NMFA 2006: 5.000.000/ NMFA
	Councillor capacity building programme	KS - Association of Municipalities of Kosovo	2006: 2.000.000/ NMFA
Macedonia	Fact-finding mission within possible local government cooperation between Macedonia and Norway	KS	2006: 200.000/ NMFA
Madagascar	Municipal International Cooperation	Stavanger – Antsirabe	2005: 370.000/ NORAD 2006: 400.000/ NORAD
	Development of indicators for sustainable development	KS – Antsirabe, Stavanger	2005: 300.000/ NORAD
	Assessment of project proposals	KS	2006: 154.262/ NORAD
Malawi	Municipal International Cooperation	Fredrikstad - Lilongwe	2005: 350.000/ NORAD 2006: 400.000/ NORAD
	Municipal International Cooperation	Flora - Nkotakota	2005: 350.000/ NORAD 2006: 400.000/ NORAD
	Municipal International Cooperation, pre-study	Førde – Ntchisi	2006: 125.000/ NORAD
	Institutional cooperation with sister organisation	KS – Malawian Local Government Association, Local Government Association of Zambia	2005: 44.000/ NORAD 2006: 47.602/ NMFA
	Support to the Ministry of Local Governance's assessment of gender mainstreaming	KS – The Norwegian Embassy in Lilongwe	2005: 95.000/ NORAD

Namibia	Municipal International Cooperation	Elverum - Tsumeb	2005: 200.000/ NORAD 2006: 100.000/ NORAD
	Municipal International Cooperation	Kristiansand - Walvis Bay	2005: 280.000/ NORAD 2006: 100.000/ NORAD
Russia	Presidential Initiative - Training of Russian Managers and Civil Servants + seminar 2000-2006	KS - Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry, Federal and Regional Commissions in Russia	2005: 1.000.000/ NMFA 2006: 1.175.000/ NMFA
	Municipal International Cooperation	Ballangen – Tosno Gildeskål – Lodeynoye Pole Narvik – Kingisepp Steigen – Podporosje Tysfjord – Kirisji Nordland – Leningrad oblast Youth project: "Youth and democracy" KS coordination activities	2005: 1.000.000/ NMFA
Serbia Montenegro	Programme for environment and sustainable development in Serbian municipalities	KS – Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM)	2005: 2.500.000/ NMFA 2006: 3.000.000/ NMFA
	Municipal International Cooperation	Buskerud – Obrenovac Vefsn – Gornji Milanovac Fauske – Melenci Saltdal – Nis Hemnes - Prokuplje Levanger – Herceg Novi KS coordination activities	2005: 2.350.000/ NMFA 2006: 2.160.684/ NMFA
	Municipal Development Project	KS, Cajetina, International Management Group, Buskerud County Council	2005: 200.000/NMFA
South Africa	Municipal International Cooperation	Vest-Agder - Thembisile	2005: 200.000/ NORAD
	Municipal International Cooperation	Oslo – Mbombela	2006: 400.000/ NORAD
Sri Lanka	Municipal International Cooperation	Tromsø – Jaffna	2005: 100.000/ NORAD 2006: 200.000/ NORAD
Tanzania	Methods for cooperation between local governments and civil society	KS - Agder Research	2005: 352.000/ NORAD
	Information on methods for cooperation between local governments and civil society	KS – Agder Research	2006: 150.250/ NORAD
	Assessment on poverty and gender aspects in local government reform	KS	2006: 306.873/ NMFA
Uganda	Municipal International Cooperation	Gran – Mukono – Lugazi	2005: 350.000/ NORAD 2006: 400.000/ NORAD
Zambia	Municipal International Cooperation	Eid - Mbala	2005: 350.000/ NORAD 2006: 400.000/ NORAD
NORAD	Development of general methods, tools, guidelines and indicators	KS	2006: 737.205/ NORAD
	Coordination activities for MIC in Africa	KS	2005: 220.000/ NORAD 2006: 309.636/ NORAD



Local entrepreneurs cooperate on developing business plans



A Business Centre in Glogovc arranged cow fair for local farmers

Local Economic Development and Local Governance in Kosovo

KS is working with various partners on local economic development and local governance in three municipalities in Kosovo. The idea behind the project is to cooperate with local authorities to enable a favourable framework for local entrepreneurs.

Local priorities

As a result of a fact-finding mission conducted in November 2002 by a team from KS, the implementation of the project for improving local government and local economic development in the municipalities of Glogoc/ Glogovac, Obiliq/ Obilic, Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje started in 2004.

Local priority and needs showed that local economic development was a key focus area for the municipalities, especially within agriculture and small and medium enterprises. Aiming at improving the framework for local economic development through cooperation with the local governments, KS assigned Norges Vel, specialized in agriculture, Business Innovation Programs (BIP), specialized in the field of business development, and the Hamar-region as partner in developing local government. A local project office was established in June 2004, KS Kosovo.

Business Development and Credit Line

In dialogue with local entrepreneurs and local authorities, a need for improved business planning and organization was expressed. KS Kosovo in cooperation with BIP started organizing training events for Business Plan Development and Strategy Implementation. Participants of these events were farmers and local entrepreneurs.

KS Kosovo selected participants to the training seminars. 87 local entrepreneurs have so far participated in the trainings. A need for financial stimulation came to surface after the trainings, leading to the establishment of a credit line in cooperation with the local bank, Banka Ekonomike. With loans granted with an interest rate of 5%, this was new to Kosovo. With full repayment of the loans, the credit line is becoming a sustainable fund, also for future entrepreneurs.

Norges Vel has worked particularly with capacitating the local farmers, including study visits to facilities and farmer communities in Macedonia, Kosovo and Norway. As a result, several farmers have shown interest in working together to strengthen their position in the market, and



28 enterprises competed in the KS student enterprise fair



Local farmer develops his greenhouse with loans from KS' credit line

two farmers set up a joint company for milk collection in 2006. Truck loads of second hand machinery from Norway have made cheap quality material available to local farmers.

Business Centres and Student Enterprise

A priority in the three municipalities from the start was to improve communication between the local administration and the business community, support to farmers and training for municipal staff.

As a result of the cooperation between the municipalities in Kosovo and Norway, the idea of setting up business advisory centres surfaced. The municipalities provide

locations for the centres, buildings and provide staff to work at the centres. In addition Computer Centres have been established as an integral part of the Business Centres, creating an environment that will serve as advisory, information and training centre for the local community.

One of the main activities in 2006 was the development of a Student Enterprise programme. Four schools and 133 students have so far participated in the programme, and 28 student enterprises were

created, with a fair being held in November 2006, the winner coming to Norway in spring 2007.

Municipal cooperation

KS has for several years coordinated and facilitated municipal international cooperation between Norway and other countries. With the already developed cooperation between the Norwegian and Kosovo municipalities, the methodology of municipal international cooperation is a good way of making the results of the project sustainable. In 2006, the partnership agreement between Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje and Stange marked the start of such programme.

Transfer of competence and experience

The experiences from the pilot project in the three municipalities may serve as an example for other municipalities in the region. KS has initiated cooperation with the Association of Kosovo Municipalities in order to transfer the experiences and knowledge from the project to two of their committees. KS has also been requested by Kosovian authorities to expand the project to other municipalities in Kosovo.



India has more than 1 million elected women at local level



Elected women representatives meet with the President of India

Capacity Building for Elected Women in India

Important democratic reform

India is going through one of the most important and extensive democratic reforms in world history. A Constitutional amendment from 1993 reserves 33% of the seats in the rural village councils, the so called Panchayats, to previously under-represented groups, i.e. women, lower casts, ethnic minorities and other under privileged groups. After the last local government elections, India has 42% women in the rural councils. This totals to 1 million elected women - more than all other countries in the world together!

Three year project

KS is involved in this democratic reform through a 3 year institutional cooperation project (2006-2008) with Aagaz Foundation, an Indian NGO. The cooperation is focusing on capacity building for elected women representatives in the rural village councils in 6 of the 32 Indian states through a one year course based on four modules. The project is supported by the Norwegian Embassy in India with a budget of 5 million NOK per year.

Mutual learning

The cooperation project is based on mutual learning between India and Norway, with the following elements important for the learning process.

For Norway

The project gives KS, in a small relatively homogenous democracy with 4.5 million inhabitants, the unique possibility to learn from the experience of organisations in the largest and most diverse democracy in the world with 1100 million inhabitants:

- How to approach enormous challenges with very limited resources
- How to manage governance systems that tackle ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic diversity
- How to focus on the dignity and respect of elected systems and representatives
- How to develop a positive and creative organisational and leadership culture



The Norwegian Crown Prince and Princess were present during the graduation



More than 600 elected women graduated from the training programme

For India

Poverty, as well as class differences, are seen as major challenges to development in India. Norway is interesting in this respect, even if it is a small country, because of the development from one of the poorest to one of the richest countries in Europe during the last 50 years. This is not only due to oil and gas, but to the governance systems that divide rights and duties between all groups of the population. This has resulted in Norway being presently no. 1 on the UNDP Human Development Index. The project gives the possibility to learn from the Norwegian experiences:

- Norway has a well established local government system with one of the oldest local government acts in the world, The Alderman Act from 1837.
- Norway has developed strong local government institutions at all levels, including a local government association that represents the interests of all local governments.
- Norway has a proud tradition of gender equality and a high percentage of women in decision making.

- KS and Norwegian local governments have staff members with a broad and long local government background.

Main activity 2006: Graduation ceremony with Royal presence from Norway and the President of India

The main activity 2006, was a 3 days Graduation Ceremony in Delhi for more than 600 elected women representatives from village councils in the six states. The historic importance of the event was underlined by a visit to the President of India as well as by the presence of the Royal Norwegian Crown Prince and Crown Princess.

Main challenge in 2007: Exchange of experience with other South Asian countries

The project includes exchange of experience with similar projects in other countries in the South Asia region, i.e. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Nepal. The focus will be on capacity building for women politicians as well as on the potential role of elected women in conflict prevention and resolution.



150 young russians applied for internship in Norway 2006



Visits to enterprises are part of the training programme

Training Programme For Russian Civil Servants and Business Managers

KS and The Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO), funded by The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are working together to improve the skills among Russian managers and civil servants, and build new contacts between Norwegian and Russian businesses and local and regional authorities.

Norway is one of a number of countries contributing to a large Russian programme known as the Presidential Programme. This programme was initiated by former President Jeltsin in 1997, and prolonged by President Putin until 2012. A Federal Commission with regional branches in Russia are close cooperation partners to KS and NHO in the implementation of the programme.

Internship training in Norway

Since 2000, 195 young Russians have taken part in the Norwegian programme. The overall goal of the programme is to increase the common knowledge and cooperation between Norway and Russia,

and to support the development of democracy, stability and social welfare for the inhabitants. An important tool in order to reach this goal is transfer and exchange of competences. The programme aims at giving positive support to the reform processes Russia currently is undergoing, through providing young Russian civil servants and business managers the opportunity to develop their capacities in line with international standards and exchange experience with colleagues in Norway.

The participants take part in trainings in both Russia and Norway, and each participant has an internship period of three weeks in an enterprise or public organization. In cooperation with the participant, the Norwegian hosts put a substantial amount of work into making a successful programme according to the aims and responsibilities of the trainee.

Important contacts with future leaders

The programme has created a vast network of personal and professional contacts



Individual internship of three weeks constitutes the main part of the training.



The importance of the people to people dimension was stressed by Mr. Støre, Minister of Foreign Affairs

between Norway and Russia. Many of the participants are the future top leaders both within private and public sector. Almost all of the participants experience the programme as positive for their career, and the annual evaluations show that:

- 31 % of participants get higher position after the internship
- 75% claim changes in their career are related to their participation in the programme
- All participants find the experience valuable in their work in Russia
- 85% manage to implement new ideas and activities in their own working place
- 92% report they have a new approach to management after the training

Former participants of the programme have also established a network among themselves and created a website for former participants of the Norwegian programme, www.nrp.ru. They arrange regional meetings and support each other in development of their careers.

2007 – 2009: New phase with new focus

Norwegian focus on Russia as a strategic partner is greater than ever. In 2005, a new White Paper focusing on the possibilities and challenges in the High North was adopted. Cooperation between private and public sector is important when exploitation of natural resources shall be developed in an environmentally sustainable manner. In this relation, the cooperation with Russia is important. As the Presidential Initiative enters a new phase from 2007 to 2009 the focus on the High North will be strengthened, with energy and environment as key issues.

There will also be opened a possibility for heads of local authorities to come on study visits to Norway in relation to the intership period. KS will also work for the possibility of a reversed internship training with participants from Norwegian local government sector going on training in Russia. The aim of these two new initiatives is to strengthen the cooperation between Norway and Russia after the internship training is finished.



Cooperation on Service Delivery between Local Government and Civil Society in Tanzania

Service delivery cooperation

The local government reform in Tanzania is focusing on cooperation between local governments and civil society. The reform states that services are to be provided at local government level in collaboration between local government, civil society and private sector.

This joint project between Agder Research (AF) and KS deals with methods of cooperation between local government and civil society on service delivery. The aim of this project has been to develop methods for increased contact and cooperation on service delivery for the actors involved, including the more informal parts of civil society.

Practical and theoretic phases

In the first phase of the project, KS and AF did a field study in Morogoro Municipality to map out how needs were catered for by the people themselves, by the local government and NGOs. The aim was to investigate the cooperation, or lack of cooperation, between the actors involved in service delivery. Based on these findings, KS and AF developed methods for cooperation on services between the

involved actors, resulting in a final report (2005) and tip sheets with more detailed examples of the challenges facing service delivery, including suggestions for improvement.

Tip sheets for improved cooperation

The aim of the tip sheets is to focus on improved cooperation between civil society and local governments regarding service delivery as a method for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery to the population.

In the tip sheets the concept cooperation is used and understood as a continuum of five different elements: Contact, Exchange of Information, Division of Services, Collaboration on Services and Coordination of Services. The concept distinguishes between horizontal cooperation, between local government and NGOs, and vertical cooperation, between local government, NGOs and local communities.



Integration of women and women's issues in the local government reform

Tanzania is presently undergoing a local government reform that started 8 years ago, devolving tasks, responsibilities and resources from the national to the local level.

Poverty alleviation

KS was responsible for a study in May 2006 showing that women and women's issues are not adequately integrated into the local government reform. This is serious, not only because of the democratic implications, but also because it implies a strong risk of failing to reach the key goal of the reform itself: poverty alleviation. As in most developing countries, women constitute the majority of the poor in Tanzania. In addition, women are traditionally responsible for the care of other poor groups, such as the elderly, the sick, the HIV victims, and orphans. Therefore, it is virtually impossible to reach the goal of poverty alleviation if women and women's experiences are not included at the political and the administrative level.

The study was commissioned by the PMO-RALG, the President's Office of Regional Administration and Local Governments,

and was jointly funded by PMO-RALG and the Norwegian Embassy in Tanzania.

Maternal Health

A second KS study was undertaken in December 2006, assessing how women and women's issues could be better integrated in local governments, particularly in the rural areas. The KS study proposes an 18 months pilot project in 3-5 selected districts, focusing on Best Practices with Maternal Health as the entry point. Maternal Health is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals, implying that indicators and monitoring mechanisms have been established. The pilot study focuses on the effect of improved cooperation and coordination on Maternal Health. The maternal mortality in Tanzania is very high, even in an African perspective, and has been almost unchanged for the last 20 years. The Best Practices will later be shared with 8-10 districts where there is a potential for improvement.



The Sustainable Development Conference was attended by ca. 350 participants



The President of Serbia, Mr. Boris Tadic, meets local producers during the conference

Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development in Serbia

In 2004 a programme for improving living conditions in Serbian towns and municipalities was initiated. The three year programme focuses on improving the environmental conditions by enabling local governments and cooperation with National Government. By joint action, the aim of the project was to define and pursue policies of sustainable development in the future. The programme is funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by KS' sister organisation, the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM), together with KS and Fredrikstad municipality.

Expected Outputs

- To increase expertise of the SCTM to address the issues related to environmental protection and sustainable development, so that it could provide advice and consulting services to its members, as well as to be able to participate in the discussions with Central Government and to influence the legislation.
- Creation of a specialized Data base of the SCTM that can serve as a source of information on environmental and sustainability issues for all interested parties.

- To provide additional support to Serbian municipalities through capacity building activities and various specific activities.
- To identify and create networks of municipalities with related environmental challenges, and develop models to tackle these challenges.

By developing networks of municipalities, cooperating with Central Government, and addressing common challenges within the environmental field, the programme has given results that will benefit the local communities.

Networks created

The project has supported two networks established during the program; The Serbian Polluted Towns Coalition and the Local Agenda 21 Coalition. Both coalitions have developed policy papers on how to improve the conditions in Serbian municipalities. The Polluted Town Coalition has started advocating the Central Government to urge the government to further help on cleaning up their "hot spot" areas while the LA 21 networks works more on the overall strategic planning for sustainable development at local authorities.



The conference in Sombor exposed local culture and dances



Locals used environmentally friendly transport on the day of sustainable development

National Conference on Sustainable Development

The 2nd National Conference on “Local Sustainable Development in Serbia” was held in Sombor in May 2006. The Conference was attended by the representatives on the highest level from 73 out of 163 Serbian municipalities. The Conference members were addressed by Boris Tadic, President of the Republic of Serbia. Highlights of the Conference included presentations of achievements in the pilot municipalities, and addresses from the managers of the National Strategies on Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction.

Activities of pilot municipalities

The Pilot program was aimed to develop local sustainable development strategies and initiate LA21 processes in Serbian municipalities during 2006 - early 2007, with the coaching help of SCTM and external facilitators. 7 municipalities were selected out of 90 applications to become pilot municipalities. These are Sombor, Becej, Koceljeva, Smederevska Palanka, okuplje, Paracin and Varvarin. In addition Pancevo, Ada and Prijepolje municipalities have been linked to the program as well.

Main activities have amongst others been to make municipal forums, public communication strategies, promotion of the LA 21 ideas, involvement of citizens, involving local experts in the process and identifying specific problems with regard to sustainable development. The main outcome will be to present a sustainable development strategy in each municipality by early 2007.

Capacity building

Two manuals have been prepared to help increase understanding of participatory processes and methods on how to do strategic planning for sustainable development at local level. The first manual – “Local Sustainable Development – Challenges of Development Planning at the Local Level” was presented at the LA 21 Symposium in Belgrade in February, while the second manual - Visioning Process for Municipalities” was published for distribution to all municipalities in December.

In addition, SCTM gives continuously support to members on request and additionally arranged regional meetings to increase capacity in municipalities that are outside the pilot program.



Provision of drinking water has been focused in the Stavanger-Antsirabe partnership



Elverum has a broad cooperation with Tsumeb in Namibia

Municipal partnership improves local conditions

It is a growing recognition that local authorities are crucial players in the efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. This implies specific challenges for the development of local authorities to ensure that institutions are performing efficiently and that there is the necessary political will and capacity to promote economic growth and promote democratic participation and equitable distribution of services.

Municipal International Cooperation (MIC) is a methodology for strengthening local democracy and improving service delivery, with the overall goal of improving living conditions for the people in local communities through mutual learning and exchange of experiences between municipalities.

MIC programme with Africa and Asia

The first MIC programme in KS was established in 1999, with financial support from NORAD. The programme consists today of 9 twinning projects between Norwegian local governments and local governments in southern Africa and Asia. The participating partnerships in 2006 are:

Eid	Mbala, Zambia
Elverum	Tsumeb, Namibia
Fredrikstad	Lilongwe, Malawi
Flora	Nkhotakota, Malawi
Gran	Mukono & Lugazi, Uganda

Kristiansand	Walvis Bay, Namibia
Oslo	Mbombela, Sør-Afrika
Stavanger	Antsirabe, Madagascar
Tromsø	Jaffna, Sri Lanka

In addition, 3 new pilot projects have taken place between Førde and Ntchisi in Malawi, Jølster and Mpulungu in Zambia, and the 4 Norwegian municipalities of Hyllestad, Askvol, Fjaler and Solund and Tindouf in West Sahara.

Programme focus

The objective of the MIC programme is to strengthen the capacity of local governments in cooperating countries, as well as strengthening the international understanding within Norwegian local governments, through mutual exchange of experience. The methodology used in the cooperation should facilitate experience sharing to enhance capacity both in North and South.

The focus within the partnerships is on improved municipal services within e.g. education, improved facilitation for small and medium private sector establishment, councillor and leadership training with promotion of women and gender issues and participatory planning.

The aim is that the programme through the different set of activities shall orientate itself



Mukono municipality opened a local market in cooperation with Gran



Networking and sharing of experiences between partnership improves the programme

towards the democratic processes that are set free within the framework of municipal development, e.g. participative planning processes, transparency of municipal records and reports, principles of political and financial accountability and asset management.

Challenges

So far, all partnerships have been able to implement activities according to plan, with the exception of Tromsø – Jaffna where the cooperation has come to a stand still due to the conflict situation in Sri Lanka.

It is a challenge of the programme to find ways of documenting the improvements in local governance processes achieved in stead of concentrating mostly on the physical results of the project. It is necessary to focus more on monitoring and evaluation of the “learning” aspect in the partnerships involved.

It is further a challenge to substantiate how the different activities of the MIC partnerships contribute to the overall goal of the programme - include good governance processes in municipal governance and municipal services as part of the global fight for poverty reduction and sustainable development in line with the Millennium Development Goals.

Since none of the partnerships have conducted baseline studies it is difficult to measure progress properly on their key indicators. Hence, this area will be addressed by all during 2007.

Future development

The MIC programme has been granted a 3-year contract with NORAD (2007-2009), which gives a more predictable framework for planning. The budget for the programme has been considerably increased by NORAD, which enables the programme to expand the number of partnerships, as well as professionalising the cooperations involved.

With a stronger focus on results, the programme will focus on how to find and use suitable monitoring tools to measure capacity building, learning and implementation of democratic processes.

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