Friends in need are friends indeed: triangular co-operation and twinning for capacity development in South Sudan

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■ Executive summary

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) initiative provides 199 civil service support officers (CSSOs) to South Sudan, where they are twinned with counterparts across many ministries and sectors to rapidly develop core government capacity in a coaching and mentoring scheme. These CSSOs come from the civil services of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, and are seconded for two-year terms. The initiative resonates well with the UN Civilian Capacity reform process and the calls for more use of regional capacity, and more flexible and bottom-up approaches when supporting countries emerging from conflict. The initiative is a promising and potentially innovative model of triangular co-operation for capacity development for four reasons. Firstly, it provides a model of large-scale support to rapid capacity development in core government functions. Secondly, the use of regional capacity to a certain degree mitigates the potential resentment that capacity support can generate when external experts are brought into capacity-poor environments. Thirdly, the programme already shows evidence of impact on core practices such as establishing strategic plans, drafting policies and supporting their development. Finally, there seems to be a strong ownership of the programme by the government of South Sudan and many of the twins.

Acknowledgements

Governance is not a theory – it's a practice
(CSSO, South Sudan)

Foreword

We were motivated to undertake this study by our belief that the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) Regional Capacity Enhancement Initiative (hereafter the IGAD initiative) has the potential to address some of the lingering concerns about international capacity development assistance to countries emerging from conflict. In the literature on peacebuilding there has been criticism of international actors being "empire lite" (Ignatieff, 2003) or neocolonialism in disguise (Duffield, 2001; Chandler, 2006), aiming to "civilise" "dependent populations and territories" (Paris, 2002: 637). In the literature on capacity development the use of short-term and expensive consultants, often from Western countries, has been criticised for having little long-term impact, and being costly and not sensitive to local culture or needs (Pouligny, 2006; Autesserre, 2006). Several of these considerations have also been reflected in the United Nations (UN) secretary-general's recently released Civilian Capacity Reform Programme.[1] The IGAD initiative seems to counter some, if not most, of these critiques and has generated much interest from UN member states, the UN, the African Union and other relevant actors in its short lifespan. However, to date little knowledge has been generated about this initiative. This study, as well as the other publications that have emerged from it (see Appendix 2), seeks to fill this gap. We identified the IGAD initiative as an important case study for exploring the promises and pitfalls of recent approaches to capacity development in post-conflict fragile states and have thus extracted important lessons learned in this area.

The study builds on more than 100 individual and group interviews conducted in Juba, South Sudan in January 2013 covering all levels of the IGAD initiative (see Appendix 1).

Introduction

The IGAD initiative offers a unique example of an innovative approach to capacity development in fragile states. The initiative takes the form of a collaboration between South Sudan, on the one hand, and Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Norway, on the other, with technical support from the UN Development Programme (UNDP). The government of the Republic of South Sudan's (GRSS) Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development serves as the key implementing partner. In terms of the initiative, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda have by March 2013 seconded 199 civil servants to South Sudan through bilateral agreements, where they have been "twinned" with South Sudanese civil servants as "civil service support officers" (CSSOs) for a two-year term. The seconding countries continue to pay the salaries of the secondees and Norway

funds programme management and operational costs such as per diems and travel for the CSSOs. The accumulated budget approaches $18 million for the two first years, on top of salaries paid by the seconding countries, making this project the largest of its kind to date to be implemented anywhere in the world. In addition to capacity, the initiative is of critical political importance in terms of linking the IGAD region together.

Four overall assumptions underpin the IGAD initiative's approach to capacity development. Firstly, it assumes that the cultural affinity between the South Sudanese and the CSSOs increases the latter's acceptance by the former. Secondly, it assumes that this affinity increases the CSSOs' adaptability and thus increases the flexibility of the programme. Thirdly, it assumes that the ownership and effectiveness of the programme are stronger because capacity is not developed through the use of international consultants on short-term missions, but through a regionally organised capacity exchange that provides for a better sociocultural fit and a more suitable professional match. Fourthly, it assumes that embedded, on-the-job learning and coaching lead to more sustainable and lasting capacity development and improvements in the core government functions of South Sudan, including positive behavioural changes among the South Sudanese civil servants involved.

The research project explores some key areas of inquiry related to these four assumptions, including:
• the motivations of the CSSOs;
• the process of mentoring and coaching, and developing twinning relationships;
• the assumptions and challenges behind the cultural and professional affinity argument;
• gender dimensions;
• the practical administration of the project; and
• impact and cost-effectiveness.

The following two sections will (1) contextualise capacity development and the concept behind mentoring and coaching in South Sudan; and (2) outline some of the main characteristics of the South Sudanese civil service. The main part of the report comes next, followed by a discussion of future plans for the IGAD initiative. The report concludes with final reflections and recommendations addressed to the key stakeholders in the IGAD initiative and the broader community working on capacity development.

Contextualising the IGAD initiative
The concept of capacity development

The notion of capacity development has a rich history. The basic assumption of international development, as the discipline manifested itself in the middle of the 20th century, was that developing countries lacked governance skills and abilities and that socioeconomic growth could be

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1   For more on the reform process and links to the report of the Senior Advisory Group and subsequent reports of the UN secretary-general, see <http://civcapreview.org/>. See also De Coning and Karlsrud (2011) and De Coning et al. (2013).

stimulated by injecting skills and know-how. Development aid policies in the 1960s were generally conceptualised as "technical assistance" programmes. In the 1970s the name of these programmes was changed to "technical co-operation" to suggest a more equal relationship between donor and recipient. Typical activities included the dispatching of foreign consultants on short-term contracts, the provision of equipment and supplies, and the training of developing-country personnel in North America and Europe. In the late 1980s and early 1990s "capacity-building" emerged as a key concept of development aid and became widely recognised as a primary goal. Underlying this era's approach to capacity-building – and development in general – was the assumption that organisational and individual performance could be enhanced by the creation of Western-style organisations and administrative structures. Furthermore, it was assumed that individual performance improves when a particular set of skills and technologies are transferred through training activities (Hilderbrand & Grindle, 1997: 31-33). Along with the technical focus, the approach to capacity-building taken at this time assumed that capacity-building programmes could be designed externally and implemented top-down.

During the early 1990s these technical co-operation programmes were the subject of a number of evaluations. The 1991 report of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) entitled *Principles for New Orientations in Technical Co-operation* called for changes in existing practices. Simultaneously, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) embarked on a review of technical co-operation in Africa and the report *Rethinking Technical Cooperation: Reforms for Capacity Building in Africa* was published in 1993. The approach to capacity in these studies had a narrow focus on one-way technical skills enhancement. The UNDP publication effectively presented proposals on how to "deliver the existing package more effectively" (UNDP, 1993), implying that capacity-building programmes could be designed externally. Efforts at "consultation with user and beneficiary groups", the OECD (1991: 7) report noted, should only be made "whenever possible and relevant". This thinking translated into grand projects inspired by Western standards of governance. In such projects Western donors were both the key architects and implementers.

The top-down approach to capacity underwent revision in the early 2000s. The 2001 UNDP report *Reforming Technical Cooperation for Capacity Development* sought to revise the notion of capacity and emphasised concepts such as ownership and sustainability, as well as the importance of recipient initiative and local capacity. The book *Capacity for Development: New Solutions to Old Problems* published by UNDP in 2002 also exemplifies the changing approach to capacity.

Around the early 2000s development, as well as state-building, peacebuilding and capacity-building, had come to be viewed as a group of highly overlapping activities. Local ownership, sustainability and awareness of recipient communities' needs were emphasised as key features of how to approach the question of capacity more effectively. The trend of this period was to focus on the endogenous processes of capacity development as the process of change from the perspective of those undergoing the change. Capacity-building was seen as "an endogenous process that concerns what goes on in a particular country concerning the creation and/or reinforcement of each of the capabilities, apart from whatever donors do" (Brinkerhoff, 2007: 67).

Concurrently, the approach to capacity moved away from "capacity-building" towards "capacity development". This conceptual change is apparent in publications of organisations such as UNDP (e.g. UNDP, 2008). The conceptual change also manifested itself in project descriptions. The capacity project in Kosovo and the Capacity for the Afghan Public Service Programme in Afghanistan exemplify this. For both projects the term "capacity-building" was replaced by "capacity development" during the mid-2000s (CSO & UNDP, 2011: 10).

It may seem like a subtle change, but this change in the notion of how to improve capacity reflects a shift in how major international development agents such as the OECD-Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the UN, the British Department for International Development, the U.S. Agency for International Development and, increasingly, the World Bank approach the issue of fragile states. Context has become everything. It is acknowledged that responsive and functioning state institutions need to grow out of the local political, social and cultural context – with all the expectations, beliefs, practices and capacities that exist within it. Capacity *development* adheres to a focus on nurturing already existing practices and capacities, and a country-led and -owned process. It assumes that sustainability may be achieved only by engaging closely with the motivation, support and aspirations of the people in the recipient country. Profound and rooted changes in attitudes, behaviour and professional skills, and thereby enhanced governance capacity, are believed to be obtained in the same way (CSO & UNDP, 2011: 10). Capacity has become something intimately connected to what country actors believe and do. This approach to improving capacity is closely connected to the discourse on fragile states and resilience. It is often argued that weak capacity is the key cause of fragility and that capacity development constitutes the road to resilience.

Perhaps the most important lesson learned from the last decades of international state-building is, not surprisingly, that government institutions and civil servants cannot be installed from above. Rather, responsive and functioning state institutions need to grow out of the local political, social and cultural context to embody local expectations, beliefs, practices and capacities. Recent calls for greater local ownership; contextualisation; the deepening and broadening of the pool of expertise (to accommodate

diversity); bottom-up inside-out approaches; and – not least – the evolution of more accessible, cost-effective and flexible deployment arrangements should all be understood against this backdrop.

Many see South-South-organised coaching and mentoring as the answer to these calls. In a UN context, these processes are viewed as constituting an approach that may be used to address individual and relational parameters, because they not only focus on the transfer of technical knowledge, but also on local needs and the development of local capacities. They are conceptualised as being able to address capacity deficits in countries emerging from conflict with a much stronger focus on relations and cultural affinity, as well as an acknowledgement of the need for sustained and dedicated engagement.

Coaching and mentoring for capacity development (including South-South co-operation) have previously been utilised in post-conflict settings such as Kosovo, Liberia, Iraq, Timor-Leste and Afghanistan. The present IGAD initiative and the planned African Union initiative in South Sudan indicate that the model has reached a level of ambition and maturity where it is perhaps possible to speak about South-South-based coaching and mentoring as a key instrument for capacity development in the state-building toolbox.

South Sudan's fractured civil service

The previous section contextualised historically the current *zeitgeist* of capacity development. This section outlines the national context of South Sudan. It is necessary to understand both elements in order to see why triangular South-South co-operation for capacity development utilising coaching and mentoring seems to be one appropriate answer to South Sudan's capacity deficits.

Overall, the configuration of the South Sudanese government and civil service is a result of buy-ins, balancing, and the accommodation of military structures, former rivals, militias, clans and family members in the civil administration. South Sudan presents us with a neopatrimonial mode of governance where oil wealth is distributed from political patrons to client supporters.

The South Sudanese civil service can be described as comprising (1) civilians who stayed during the civil war; (2) demobilised fighters; (3) returnees from Khartoum; (4) diaspora members from elsewhere; and (5) young South Sudanese who have recently graduated from university. While there are capable and committed staff in all these groups, there are also many with very few or no skills, including a category that can be described as "corridor sitters", i.e. people who are on the payroll, but spend their time doing very little and at times do not even show up for work.

Qualified civil servants are an extraordinarily scarce resource after decades of devastating conflict that claimed around 2.5 million South Sudanese lives. In addition to the lack of qualified staff, the government faces major challenges in managing basic ministerial and administrative affairs such as procurement, budgeting, accounting, evaluation and planning. Similarly to other post-conflict countries, public employment in South Sudan has been used to appease and stabilise various groups and individuals. As a result the GRSS is not only faced with the challenges of reforming the public sector, but this sector must also function as a social safety net and a source of power and resources to be traded during political negotiations.

Observers both inside and outside the government see the large number of former fighters absorbed into various parts of the government as an additional challenge to civil service reform. Although ex-fighters may hold strong individual and leadership skills, their deep-seated military culture and often-poor educational background do not always allow for a smooth conversion to the civil service.

The civil service system suffers from a lack of accountability, corruption, and non-merit-based appointments – and, equally problematic, a general lack of individual skills and ministerial structures. For instance, the absence of a pension scheme means that there is no incentive to retire and thus the civil service sector is inhabited by a number of elderly staff who have little motivation either to perform or leave. Further, since the oil stopped flowing in 2012 and austerity measures were put in place, the civil service has been plagued by irregular and delayed salary payments and frozen operational budgets. As an example, during the time of fieldwork in January 2013, the staff in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation – one of the most prominent ministries – had no ink for their printers. This indicates how hard the austerity measures have hit the civil service. Challenges are manifold, and the provision of essential services such as education, health and water remains very limited, with most service delivery carried out by international and national NGOs (Johnson, 2011: 212).

Altogether, the GRSS faces an urgent need to shift towards a culture of governance, negotiation, responsiveness, facilitation, consultation and accountability. The need for capacity development is directly linked to the critical peacebuilding priority of presenting the population with tangible peace dividends. Trust and confidence in a legitimate state capable of delivering security, social services and governance are needed. Developing the capacity of the civil service in South Sudan is, however, one of construction rather than reconstruction. "We are just beginners", several South Sudanese civil servants explained.

Developing and strengthening governance capacity thus remain the top priorities of the current government and the international donor community. Currently, a range of capacity development initiatives in South Sudan are supported by African regional organisations, the international community and a number of donors. In the Rapid

Placement Capacity Initiative, for example, UNDP has over 100 UN volunteers placed in state ministries across the country.

Fact box

South Sudan achieved its independence on July 9th 2011 as the end result of a process that started with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 between the Sudan's People Liberation Army/Movement and the government of Sudan. The CPA was sponsored by IGAD, which is composed of East African countries, and a consortium of donor countries, and provided for a referendum on southern self-determination, which was held in January 2011 with the support of the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). UNMIS was succeeded by the UN Mission in South Sudan.

The IGAD initiative: a focus on coaching and mentoring

Triangularly organised South-South co-operation on capacity development

The IGAD initiative can be viewed as a child of the evolution of the approaches to capacity in international state-building and peacebuilding, and a response to the concrete needs and the particular environment of South Sudan. It is an attempt to address the large capacity gaps in South Sudan's civil service while seeking to accommodate calls for culturally and technically appropriate capacity, local ownership and regional co-operation. As a development aid programme, the IGAD initiative can be described as a triangularly organised South-South co-operation initiative on capacity development. The CSSOs remain on the payrolls of their respective home countries for the entire two-year deployment period.

The project presents itself as an alternative to conventional short-term technical assistance projects, which have demonstrated limited success in fragile state environments. It also reflects strong Ethiopian, Kenyan and Ugandan interests in a resilient South Sudanese state, with whom they share borders, a regional economy and a security environment. In 2012, for instance, the World Bank identified South Sudan as Uganda's largest trading partner from 2007 onwards. The diplomats from the contributing countries, the IGAD ambassador and many of the CSSOs interviewed emphasised how the IGAD initiative embodied a strong sense of "mutual dependency and shared destiny". Hence, the investment in sending a substantial number of civil servants to South Sudan for extensive periods of time while retaining them on their home countries' payrolls seems to represent a combination of self-interest and altruism that has worked well in this context.

The initial work to connect political intentions with operational capacities was critical to the project. Yet the fact that the work was spread across four different countries was profoundly challenging. Each participating country had divergent expectations and different approaches on entering the partnership. Further, the UN as an institution is not particularly geared to working towards regional approaches; UNDP is no exception. Country programmes, operational modalities and budgets most often remain focused on individual countries.

As of February 2013 the initiative had 177 Kenyan, Ethiopian and Ugandan CSSOs on board. The last 22 CSSOs arrived in March 2013, making the total number 199. The CSSOs work in various South Sudanese ministries and bodies at the national and state levels. At the national level institutions hosting CSSOs range from the air-traffic control tower at Juba Airport and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the laboratories at the Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries and the National Legislative Assembly. At the state level most of the CSSOs are medical personnel – specialised doctors, nurses, midwives and laboratory technicians. Altogether, CSSOs are deployed to 19 ministries. Their areas of expertise fall under health (44%), human resources (9.2%), management (4.3%), secretarial (3.7%), urban planning (4.8%), administration and procurement (9.2%), air-traffic control (0.6%), veterinary lab technicians (2.5%), geology (0.6%), communication and ICT (6.1%), finance, trade and commerce (6.6%), labour affairs (5.5%) and the rule of law (2.6%) (UNDP, 2013: 10).

Quality of CSSOs

An often-voiced concern about South-South co-operation and the reliance on individuals not vetted by well-known international organisations is whether the quality of their work and motivation is sufficient. In the context of the IGAD initiative, some of the participating countries have notable problems regarding good governance, including serious corruption problems. However, the study found that the calibre and integrity of the CSSOs were high – sometimes extraordinarily high. Because of the regional interconnectedness and the sheer size of the investment, the sending countries had made significant efforts to recruit the most suitable and capable CSSOs for deployment. For these countries to join the "donor club" has been a big step (although a step all three countries gradually took much earlier than this programme). There has therefore been significant attention from the most senior levels of government not to make it a waste of sparse government resources.

"Twinning" as an organising concept

The CSSOs' role is to "coach and mentor" their South Sudanese "twins" through on-the-job training with the aim of strengthening the twins' capacity to perform their civil servant duties. The IGAD initiative's stated primary objective is to "transfer knowledge" from CSSOs to twins (UNDP, 2013: 3-5). The initiative's terms of reference or project documents do not spell out what such coaching and mentoring and knowledge transfer imply or how the process is supposed to unfold.

CSSOs who were human resource management specialists were very articulate about the concept of coaching and mentoring. However, on average these concepts failed to enter the everyday vocabulary of the CSSOs and their South Sudanese colleagues. Instead, both groups preferred the concept of "twinning" to describe their interaction and partnerships – a somewhat broad and undefined concept that connotes an equal relationship between the CSSOs and their South Sudanese counterparts and which worked well for everyone concerned as being both flexible and "power neutral". It was generally understood as on-the-job training where the CSSOs continuously advised and shared knowledge with their twins. The sense of equality emanating from this concept might be part of the explanation for its popularity.

Motivations of CSSOs

The motivations and attitudes of the CSSOs are critical in understanding the spirit of the IGAD initiative. The CSSOs' general professionalism, commitment, and willingness to cope with and endure the challenging environment in South Sudan encapsulate what an initiative like this can accomplish. The question of motivation also explains some of the successes and challenges of the initiative.

Why do 199 professionals sign up for a two-year job in a hardship-afflicted post-conflict country? All the CSSOs were already employed in their home country in (often) desirable positions. Overall, the CSSOs broadly referred to six key motivations for enrolling in the IGAD initiative: (1) to help their "African brothers and sisters"; (2) to be part of creating a new nation; (3) financial incentives; 4) to improve their CVs; (5) to start an international career; and (6) boredom in their former jobs and a desire for adventure. Often, multiple motivations were presented, but they almost always touched on elements of supporting a new nation in its initial post-independence phase. Hence, the narrative around the motivations for deploying was more related to idealist aspirations than one would expect in a classic technical assistance programme.

In addition to the abovementioned factors, many CSSOs had established working relationships and projects that they felt loyal to. A significant percentage of CSSOs stated that they enjoyed doing what they were doing. Most also said that they truly believed in the project's fundamental concept of regionally organised twinning.

At the same time, some CSSOs stated that they had experienced a decline in motivation since arriving in South Sudan. The list of demotivating factors was long. Firstly, many CSSOs encountered some scepticism when they arrived at the ministries to which they had been allocated. This was explained by the failure of the IGAD initiative to create proper awareness of the CSSOs' arrival and the role they would play, as well as a general and growing South Sudanese scepticism towards foreigners from neighbouring countries. Some CSSOs had very challenging experiences with regard to living conditions.

When arriving to Juba, the CSSOs were greeted by their countries' ambassadors, but according to some CSSOs, not many efforts had been made by their embassies to follow up on their situation outside of the steering committee. However, the embassies seemed to have engaged more proactively with their CSSOs recently, including by organising social events. Many CSSOs felt they had been left on their own in a foreign country where living and working conditions differed radically from their expectations and prior experiences. Before their deployment and during their induction the CSSOs had been informed about what South Sudan would be like. But it seems as if it had been difficult to imagine from the positions of relatively safe jobs and comfortable lives at home the full scope of what a two-year deployment in South Sudan would be like.

The monetary factor was also a demotivating factor, in particular for those who live in expensive Juba. Some CSSOs shared tents costing around $1,400 a month. An air-conditioned room in Juba can easily cost around $2,000 a month. Hence, for many of the CSSOs who in their home countries had reached middle- to senior-level positions and lived comfortable lives, the cost of living in Juba came as a shock. This was not least the case if they compared their total income (salaries at home + allowances) with "regular" international staff in Juba. Although the monthly allowances of roughly $2,500-3,500 depending on grade were expected to cover living costs in South Sudan and not act as an extra salary, most CSSOs had hoped to save up money during their deployment.

Generally the CSSOs felt that both their accomplishments and difficulties were inadequately acknowledged, hence the feeling of a lack of recognition was a dominant sentiment among them. As discussed elsewhere in this report, this issue relates to the programme design, in terms of which CSSOs were assumed to be entering a more solid institutional context than was the case in most instances. The Programme Management Unit (PMU) was equipped with neither the capacity nor the mandate to carry out hands-on human resource management of individual CSSOs. The programme design accorded the GRSS responsibility for the professional management of the CSSOs, but the mid-term assessment made it clear that this was not happening.

The country's austerity measures also had a significant negative impact on the motivation of CSSOs, as budget cuts prevented work from being done and projects from being implemented. Further, the delayed payment of salaries led to widespread absenteeism among GRSS civil servants. Quite a few CSSOs expressed anxiety about possibly ending their two-year deployment with little hard evidence of their work and without any form of formal recognition to put in their CVs. To address this concern the PMU has now designed a certificate that will be awarded to CSSOs completing their deployments.

Developing twinning relationships

Arriving at host ministries

Many CSSOs arrived in South Sudan with set expectations of what they would be doing. They expected to work on developing the capacities of their South Sudanese counterparts through a process of on-the-job coaching and mentoring. Unfortunately, this was often hampered in part by insufficient preparation and consultation at the directorate and lower levels of the target ministries. The importance of induction and preparation was actually taken into account in the original programme design. However, realities on the ground made many of the assumptions unrealistic and envisioned activities unimplementable. There were widespread problems with regard to the participation of the South Sudanese twins in the induction process. In a number of instances no twins were allocated. Often there was limited knowledge of the purpose of the initiative at the working levels in target institutions. As mentioned above, only the upper levels of the ministries appeared to have been informed adequately of the purpose of the IGAD initiative.

The absence of proper participation in the induction process and lack of sufficient preparation for the arrival of CSSOs affected the initiative negatively. The lack of understanding of the project – and in particular the logic of the coaching and mentoring approach – appears to have led a number of ministries to request personnel to fill staffing gaps instead of asking for CSSOs in areas where a South Sudanese counterpart was already present and would benefit from coaching. This resulted in some CSSOs being placed in positions without a twin.

Hence, many CSSOs experienced an unnecessarily long-winded start-up phase. It took three to six months or more for most of them to find their feet and establish effective working relations, and typically they themselves had to explain the purpose of their deployment and the wider initiative to their supervisors and twins in their host institutions. After arriving in ministries where personnel were ill-prepared for or even unaware of their arrival, CSSOs had to initially "hang around" and sensitise themselves to the context and others to their presence. Considerable efforts had to be made to become accepted by the local staff because, due to the lack of knowledge of the purpose of the project, many of them believed that the CSSOs had come to "steal their jobs" or were paid for by the GRSS.

Members of the Project Steering Committee, including all the partner countries and UNDP, argue that the first batch of CSSOs arriving in June 2011 should be considered a "pilot" group that had to bear the brunt of these challenges. Later groups have been somewhat better prepared and their entry into their respective ministries has been smoother. At the time of the mid-term assessment in May-July 2012 many of these initial problems had therefore been ironed out and 83% of the CSSOs confirmed that they were working with a defined twin or group of twins (UNDP, 2013: 21).

Types of twinning relationships

Roughly three types of twinning relations evolved in the various ministries. One group of CSSOs were twinned on a one-to-one basis, while another group were twinned with larger groups of individuals or with whole directorates. So-called "group twinning" appears to have been a popular approach when supervisors and CSSOs came up with strategies for how to make the best of the sudden influx of knowledge, on the one hand, and to cope with widespread absenteeism, on the other – the latter was a problem when a twin was absent and the CSSO was thus unable to coach and mentor. Group twinning also had the advantage of providing a more sustainable knowledge transfer to target institutions in the context of high staff turnover. If one individual got a job elsewhere other people were left to preserve and utilise the new skills. Besides addressing issues of absenteeism and high staff turnover, group twinning generally seems to have been the modality with the highest impact. It also enabled CSSOs to work differently with different twins depending on their backgrounds, willingness to learn and so forth.

A third group of CSSOs ended up with no twins. For the most part this group appear to have worked as normal employees performing line functions, effectively substituting for South Sudanese civil servants rather than developing capacity. Some of these have nonetheless managed to induce behavioural change and/or improve processes and institutions through their sheer presence (transforming by example). However, the sustainability of these achievements may be questionable as the knowledge of *why* changes were made may not have been transferred.

Working as twins

The CSSOs used a range of different approaches when they worked with their twins. Most CSSOs would often let the twins do the work by, for instance, letting them draft a document. The CSSO would then subsequently go through the document with the twin to comment and make suggestions for corrections, or the twin would perhaps seek advice. Hence the twinning process typically consisted of guided or supervised work based on continuous interaction between the CSSO and his/her twin(s).

A few CSSOs distinguished between coaching and mentoring. Coaching was seen as the act of transferring knowledge through various types of on-the-job training in a somewhat fluid, informal and ad-hoc manner. Mentoring was seen more as a pure advisory role in which the twin would have to more explicitly subordinate him-/herself to the CSSO and actively seek guidance. If it adhered to this distinction, the research found a multitude of coaching practices, but few examples of classic mentoring, which may well reflect the egalitarian dynamics ingrained in coaching practices between twins as compared to mentoring by a mentor to a mentee.

Another popular strategy among CSSOs was to work with their twin(s) on a given task as a learning-by-doing method

of transferring knowledge. Examples include building a laboratory, developing labour inspection manuals, or drafting a policy or law. For the CSSOs working on more hands-on issues in hospitals and clinics or in air-traffic control, the transfer of knowledge mostly took place through the everyday interaction between CSSOs and their twins. Somewhat further from the coaching and mentoring ideal, a number of CSSOs would do the work themselves and then go through it with their twins. In a few cases CSSOs would do the work themselves without in-process consultation with their South Sudanese counterparts. This approach was employed in cases where CSSOs had no twin or in cases of work overload – as when a surgeon found himself to be the only one in Jonglei as fighting broke out.

The twinning experiences are difficult to define in terms of a simple formula and have developed in very context-specific and individually driven environments. CSSOs and GRSS twins alike emphasised the importance of the day-to-day interaction, the constant presence of additional professional capacity with the ability to draw on experiences from elsewhere, and the gradual development of trusting relationships in what often became a *permanent state of learning*.

The nature of the relationships between CSSOs and twins varied between passivity – or even resentment – and strong friendships. But what made good twins? In addition to the obvious importance of personality matching and "good chemistry", some objective factors were also observable. The considerable length of time in which the CSSOs were present on the ground made it possible for respectful and amicable relationships to develop between twins and CSSOs. The duration of the deployment, combined with cultural similitude, also facilitated dialogue and understanding between the two groups. Importantly, where trust had developed it seemed to entail a willingness on the part of the twins to reveal individual and institutional weaknesses, to make mistakes, and to learn from them. Embodying this egalitarian and trustful peer relationship, both CSSOs and their South Sudanese counterparts described each other as *twins*, indicating that they were peers rather than parts of a hierarchical mentor-student relationship.

Twinning identity
The study found that CSSOs were not seen as consultants, but more like "equal" colleagues. Traditional international consultants were sometimes belittled by both the CSSOs and their twins. On some occasions a CSSO even reworked the outputs of consultants due to their lack of understanding of the local context. Despite the examples of initial resentment, CSSOs were perceived as being much closer to the South Sudanese civil servants than other internationals, and CSSOs conversely felt much closer to their South Sudanese colleagues than other internationals. The stereotype of an international consultant was a relatively young and newly educated person with no civil service experience, but with good drafting skills who worked as a technical expert in institutions on short-term contracts

with specific terms of reference. They tended to work alone and on different tasks to those taken on by the South Sudanese staff.

In the eyes of some twins this results in poor and unsustainable knowledge transfer to the South Sudanese counterparts and an unequal relationship between national staff and consultants. The fact that the CSSOs were more senior, active civil servants seemed to have allowed a level of "professional communion" not seen with traditional international consultants. The fact that CSSOs have the freedom and mandate to work with local staff on the latter's own tasks appears to better facilitate a sustainable knowledge transfer and also shapes how CSSOs are perceived in the workplace. As one director-general in Yambio put it: "[the CSSO] is living in the village like any South Sudanese. He has no means of transport and just comes on foot; he just eats in the same places as we do." Hence, the shared living and working conditions seem to have created a good basis for building trusting relations.

Vague mandate and flexibility
There has been a considerable degree of vagueness surrounding the functions the CSSOs have been expected to perform in South Sudan. In most of the terms of reference the CSSOs' primary task has been formulated as a "responsibility for coaching and mentoring civil servants" in a given ministry, but with limited information on exactly where, with whom and how. A number of supervisors and CSSOs perceived the unclear mandate as a challenge in the design of the IGAD initiative because it provided them with little managerial direction. Like a number of other supervisors, a supervisor in the Ministry of Petroleum and Mining found it hard to evaluate the performance of the CSSOs because he could not assess performance against clear terms of reference. In addition, the vagueness of the job descriptions was also at times a source of stress for the CSSOs, as they arrived alone in their designated ministries with no clear idea of what to do and how to do it.

At the same time, in other contexts the loosely defined mandates and terms of reference of the CSSOs have been one of the clear strengths of the project. CSSOs in the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Finance, for instance, emphasised that the flexibility in their terms of reference allowed them to arrive in their host institutions with open minds. This enabled them to flexibly identify and address the particular needs and capacity deficits of these institutions at that particular moment. Through this flexibility some CSSOs were able to freely analyse the context and identify specific needs as their entry point, which corresponds well with the recommendations in the OECD's Fragile States Principles (OECD, 2011).

The "cultural and professional affinity" argument: assumptions and challenges

Cultural fit

A key assumption underpinning the IGAD initiative is that civil servants from the region – and specifically from neighbouring IGAD countries – are better positioned to "mentor and coach" South Sudanese civil servants, given the cultural and professional affinity that exists between them. The study found that in the context of the IGAD initiative, the idea of cultural affinity was not just a weakly defined theoretical assumption. It is a strong narrative that is believed and articulated by most of those involved in the initiative. Higher-level decision-makers, such as politicians and ambassadors, UNDP programme management staff, the CSSOs, and, most importantly, the GRSS "twins" and supervisors referred to cultural affinity as one of the main strengths and unique characteristics of the IGAD initiative. Language used by the CSSOs themselves, by twins and supervisors to describe the affinity concept included references to "understanding the environment better", "feeling at home", "assimilating quickly", and working with "our brothers and sisters". It is assumed that cultural affinity and connectedness increase programme effectiveness by transferring skills and knowledge in a more culturally and contextually sensitive way. It is also assumed that local ownership is greater compared to traditional North-South capacity development through technical assistance.

The cultural affinity factor evidently relates to the regional proximity and inter-twined history of the countries involved. During South Sudan's protracted civil wars many South Sudanese took refuge, studied, and worked in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda and continue to have close ties with these countries. Often with family members still living there, South Sudanese travel to these countries frequently and many speak Swahili, the national language of Kenya that is also spoken in Uganda. All three countries also provided instrumental support to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army's long struggle with the north, creating a strong sense of brotherhood. Furthermore, all the participating countries played some role in brokering the CPA with the north, which has also contributed to a feeling of responsibility and companionship among these countries. In addition, several CSSOs emphasised the emotional connections they feel with South Sudan. For example, a number of CSSOs from Uganda stated that they had spent their childhood as refugees from fighting in northern Uganda "in the bush" in what is today South Sudan. Others said they had been involved with and volunteered in refugee camps hosting South Sudanese in their own countries.

Finally, the notion of independence as a national achievement is celebrated among all the participating countries, including Ethiopia, which prides itself on never having been colonised. Many GRSS twins felt a connection to the surrounding countries for the same reason. Many CSSOs also presented – rather emotionally and passionately – an explicit narrative around the idea of South Sudan as "the new nation". South Sudan's secession from Sudan was seen as the latest victory in the pan-African aspiration towards independence, and CSSOs expressed a strong urge to continue supporting "their African brothers and sisters" in the post-independence phase. Hence, the ties connecting IGAD initiative participants were not only based on regional affinity, but sometimes also on shared life experiences and a shared discourse around collectively overcoming the vestiges of a post-colonial heritage.

The idea of "cultural affinity" also builds on the premise that cultural similarities, including the tacit understanding of formal and informal social norms and a close-knit history, make it easier for civil servants from IGAD countries to relate to and work in South Sudan. Finally, the initiative seems to rely on the assumption that cultural affinity makes Ethiopians, Kenyans, and Ugandans better equipped to adjust to and endure the sometimes-challenging living and working conditions in South Sudan. We argue below how this may be a problematic assumption.[2]

Professional fit

The other assumption in relation to "fit" can be summed up as the "professional fit" argument. The CSSOs come from civil services that have largely evolved along the same lines as what is expected for South Sudan. By bringing in civil servants from neighbouring countries, IGAD initiative benefitted from CSSOs with actual civil service experience from the region. This may be viewed as "experience-based capacity development", as the sending countries have been through societal transitions resembling those facing South Sudan.

Limits of the cultural and professional fit

As already mentioned, some CSSOs reported having encountered some scepticism from their South Sudanese counterparts and twins. In most cases trust was reported to have been built relatively quickly and most of the CSSOs settled into their professional roles vis-à-vis their host institutions within the first three months. That said, significant suspicion from the South Sudanese counterparts had to be overcome in some instances, i.e. around the deployments of CSSOs into "sensitive" ministries such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, the Ministry of Petroleum and Mining, and the Legislative Assembly.

Outside of these "sensitive" contexts, the initial negative reactions were usually entrenched in fears of the CSSOs "taking over our jobs" and the misconception that the GRSS paid the CSSOs to fill positions that could have gone to South Sudanese nationals. But there were also examples of more deep-rooted negative reactions to the CSSOs

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2   For a lengthier discussion, see also Felix da Costa et al. (2013).

connected to a growing resentment of the many foreigners from the region flooding into South Sudan to benefit from the anticipated economic recovery.

More broadly, the "cultural affinity and regional fit" argument seemed to have its limits. Many of the CSSOs struggled to fully adapt to the challenging living and working environment in South Sudan, and some were suffering from serious health problems as a result of their deployment, including psychological distress. Language barriers were a very real challenge, particularly at the state level, where in many cases Arabic was the dominant language.

Seen from the outside, the cultural affinity argument seems to have supported the assumption that individuals from neighbouring countries can endure harsher living conditions than "international experts", i.e. Westerners. This assumption is evident in the differential treatment that CSSOs receive compared to other international staff. For some of the CSSOs deployed at the state level, access to basic sanitary services and things such as air conditioning has in some cases been very limited. While most CSSOs seemed willing to accept challenging living conditions, many emphasised that the difference between being mid-career civil servants living comfortable lives in their home countries and being deployed to South Sudan to live in a tent was far greater than they had expected. Adding to this was the evident difference between the salary and benefits "package" of the CSSOs and that of other international experts working for NGOs, as well as bilateral and multilateral actors. However, it is also part of the story that CSSOs sometimes opted for cheap housing in insecure locations because they wanted to limit their expenses with a view to sending money home.

The IGAD initiative's key strength lies in the provision of highly skilled professionals from neighbouring countries that are historically, culturally and emotionally connected to South Sudan. The initiative and the cultural and regional proximity raise questions about the more "traditional" approach to capacity development, which has largely relied on experts with no connection to the country they work in, with limited directly transferable "lived" experience, and with an expectation to operate in a personal and professional environment that is significantly more advanced than their actual surroundings. These features have often only created little bubbles of development around such technical experts.

Several CSSOs made references to how this approach had failed in their home countries and how they felt that the IGAD initiative presented a significantly more effective model for knowledge transfer. One CSSO explained that "people from East Africa are seen as closer to us culturally, but people from Europe are seen as having more knowledge". However, as described elsewhere, the CSSOs deployed were by and large highly trained and experienced professionals with solid careers in their home countries and hence experts in their own right.

The general working environment proved challenging for many CSSOs, who often had no office space and no desks, filing cabinets, Internet connectivity or IT equipment. This was often a fate they shared with their South Sudanese counterparts, including their designated twins. The idea in the project design, as explained by the project team leader at the time, was that the CSSOs would need to operate in a working environment similar to their twins – at the same level, so to speak – in order to transfer knowledge that would resonate appropriately with their counterparts. If, for example, lack of Internet access hindered effective work practices, the CSSO would need to work with his/her twin to raise the issue in the ministry. If UNDP stepped in and provided quick fixes whenever such needs emerged, it was believed, the capacity to deal with issues independently would not be developed.

While this guiding principle seems perfectly reasonable from a project design point of view, it led to significant grievances on the part of some CSSOs. The inability and sometimes unwillingness of the PMU/UNDP to assist with the provision of the most basic materials exacerbated the feeling among CSSOs of having been "left alone" in South Sudan. Many CSSOs expressed notable willingness to work in challenging environments with no fixed office space and no designated desk, but did complain that their professional skills were under-utilised and their ability to transfer knowledge was impeded by the lack of basic equipment. Several CSSOs, particularly in the health sector, managed to get materials from their home countries or from NGOs. In a few instances the CSSOs had worked with their twins to draft donor proposals or ensure the procurement of needed materials, which obviously represents an important competence for a government with limited resources of its own.

Administration

The IGAD initiative applied an ambitious and unusually thorough strategy to ensure genuine buy-in from the South Sudanese government. The most senior levels of government were fully supportive of the initiative, and there was recognition in the programme design that buy-in would need to be anchored formally in the receiving institutions. Consequently, over the first year several meetings were held by the group of under-secretaries (the highest rank in the South Sudanese civil service) to discuss the specifics of the IGAD initiative. In addition, discussions were held at the level of cabinet ministers and in parliament.

Yet, while the programme stakeholders believe that this ensured less resentment among South Sudanese civil servants and created a useful network of very senior staff with a fairly deep knowledge of the programme, we found that very little had "trickled down" when the initiative rolled out. Below the level of director-general, not much substantial knowledge of the initiative was evident before the CSSOs started arriving in the ministries. The reason for this appeared to be the same reason why the initiative was there: lack of capacity and ministerial structure, and little

understanding of transformative learning processes in the civil service.

From the onset the IGAD initiative did not resemble a classic technical assistance intervention. The significant investments in project design and preparation mentioned above were essentially seen as UNDP's main delivery to the project (UNDP, 2013: 11; see also Rosén & Tarp, 2011a; 2011b). As mentioned earlier, the assumption was that once the CSSOs were deployed, the receiving institutions of the GRSS took over responsibility for them. However, while UNDP initially – and perhaps rightfully – saw its main involvement and value added in terms of setting up the initiative, the theoretical appeal of the "hands-off" model clashed with the realities on the ground. UNDP had the basic capacity to manage the project (e.g. order tickets for CSSOs' leave, handle insurance questions, pay out daily support allowances, arrange group meetings with CSSOs, etc.), but not to engage at a deeper level in the professional lives of the CSSOs. The capacity of the GRSS was in most instances so weak that there was little support from the hosting institutions. Finally, the contributing countries had no capacity (and no desire) to get deeply involved in the operational aspects of the programme. This raised issues around ownership and created considerable confusion among CSSOs as to where they could and should turn when personal (including medical) or professional issues arose and support was needed.

Once it came into being as a GRSS-UNDP hybrid located within the Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development, the PMU seems to have realised that an entirely hands-off model is neither feasible nor acceptable to the involved stakeholders. However, the more active involvement of UNDP and the PMU does change the basic principles of the project – from facilitating a regional, bilaterally organised exchange of capacity into a slightly more traditionally executed capacity development initiative. Donors, the CSSOs and the contributing countries seemed to have increased – or more clearly articulated – their expectations to the PMU over the last year. On the part of UNDP this has led to the decision to recruit additional capacity to the PMU to manage the project. Also, Norway will second a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) officer, a communications officer and a human resource officer from the Norwegian Refugee Council's NORCAP roster to the project.[3] This development not only changes the profile of the project slightly, but also increases its cost. Considerations about this trade-off should be taken into account in future phases of the programme, as well as in similar initiatives elsewhere.

Another issue that CSSOs had already pointed to in the initial phase of the research in 2011 was the absence of a structured knowledge exchange among CSSOs. The PMU had very recently started organising townhall-type meetings among the CSSOs in the first months of 2013, which was greatly appreciated. The possible assumption that such networks would emerge independently was only partly realised, and most CSSOs felt that a more frequent and structured exchange with their peer CSSOs would have been beneficial. The study found that the CSSO knowledge exchange component could have been much more thoroughly developed in the project design, including structured knowledge exchange among professional groups, nationalities and CSSOs performing similar functions.

With regard to the social life of CSSOs, most of them unsurprisingly spend most time with their own nationals – both other CSSOs and other fellow nationals living in South Sudan. Many CSSOs considered their embassies as the natural institution to organise social events for them (venue and occasion) – an idea that resonated with staff of the three embassies in our interviews.

Gender

The IGAD initiative has had a positive impact on gender relations in both its immediate context and in terms of policy formulations and other ministerial outputs. Around 30% of the CSSOs are women who are deployed entirely on a par with their male colleagues. There are female CSSOs with male twins and male CSSOs with female twins. It must also be noticed that the anchor person for the whole IGAD initiative – the under-secretary at the Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development – is a woman, as was her predecessor. Consequently, the IGAD initiative has benefitted from a strong female management team that has been sensitive to gender relations among CSSOs, twins, supervisors and in the general work environment. From a gender perspective the value of this distribution of decision-making has proved to be crucial. It has created a much-needed push for the empowerment of women in the host institutions.

The delivery of visible and tangible outputs is key to gaining respect and influence in a ministerial environment that is governed more by affective relations than meritocracy. The study found that well-educated and experienced female CSSOs function as role models for younger South Sudanese female civil servants. There is a need for such examples in South Sudan as a way of demonstrating the possibility of performance-based career advancement. This need is even greater among women, who remain marginalised and under-represented in the South Sudanese civil service.

In a patriarchal country like South Sudan the impact of supporting existing female capacity cannot be underestimated. The IGAD initiative presents a promising model for working with gender issues though providing coaching and mentoring to and by female civil servants. It should be added that nearly half of the CSSOs were health professionals in positions traditionally held by women, such as nurses and midwives.

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3   See <http://www.nrc.no/?aid=9167121> for more information about the roster.

Impact and cost-effectiveness
Impact
The impact of the IGAD initiative has been hampered by austerity measures. Few policies have been implemented and impact has thus primarily taken a less tangible form than easily measured service delivery. Hardly any funding has been available for recruiting much-needed staff, procuring essential materials and maintaining operations. CSSOs have had to deal with poorly equipped and sometimes even deserted offices. Often no funding has been available to carry out key functions, such as for labour inspectors to undertake systematic labour inspections. Similarly, in many instances it has not been possible to implement the policies drafted by CSSOs and their twins due to the lack of resources. Impact in the form of tangible office output has consequently suffered. For example, a system for registering co-operatives was developed, but it has still not been possible to reap the benefits of the system by actually registering and auditing co-operatives.

Even taking these limitations into account, the mid-term review found that 82% of supervisors found that the institutions' service delivery had improved as a result of the programme (UNDP, 2013: 14). In the same review 80% stated that the skills of twins had improved as a result of the programme. This positive assessment is also shared by the twins themselves, 95% of whom in the mid-term review agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they are learning a lot from working together with CSSOs (UNDP, 2013: 14).

To be sure, impact is more than tangible office output and service delivery. "Although there are challenges", a GRSS twin in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning noted, "it does not stop us from learning". In this regard the IGAD initiative has had a positive impact on the capacity of the South Sudanese civil service in a number of respects.

Firstly, the initiative has had an impact on fundamental aspects of working in a civil service. Although some of the current GRSS civil servants previously served in the Khartoum government or with international NGOs, many had no experience of civilian administration. The result has been a general lack of understanding of what it means to be a civil servant, what a given position entails and what the purpose of a given institution is. In a focus group interview with directors in one ministry it was noted that "people in the office [before the IGAD initiative started] did not know what they were employed for". In many cases the initiative has helped provide South Sudanese civil servants with an understanding of what it means to have a civilian job and to be a civil servant. In addition, the GRSS civil servants have developed a greater understanding of the purpose of their institution and a realisation of what their own jobs are about through their interaction with the CSSOs.

Secondly, the IGAD initiative has helped design and implement basic standard operating procedures that are key to a functioning civilian administration. Such procedures and their related skills are features of all institutions and not necessarily specific to a given ministry. Examples include time management (when to show up for work), communication (the proper way to communicate internally and externally), the archiving of correspondence, the practice of minute taking at meetings, the drafting of official letters, etc. Analytical skills and the ability to identify problems are other areas in which the CSSOs appear to have had an impact. The improvement of twins' drafting skills is perhaps the area of work emphasised most frequently. These skills are crucial for the proper functioning of institutions, although – along with the impacts discussed above – they are harder to measure and not tied to a specific policy area.

Thirdly, the initiative has had a positive impact on South Sudanese capacity in terms of institution-specific administrative and regulative capabilities. This includes the capacity to conceive of and develop rules and regulations, procedures, and administrative frameworks, as well as the ability to develop and maintain systems and processes. Although these areas do not in themselves amount to tangible outputs for the population, they do – paraphrasing one CSSO in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning – provide the framework and mandate for the provision of future output in a given institution. Examples of such frameworks include the drafting of a pension plan in the Ministry of Human Resources, a procurement bill in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, and a framework for registering and auditing co-operatives in the Directorate for Co-operative Development; systematising the issuing of permits at the Ministry of Trade and Commerce; and the improvement of the system of directing, receiving and registering departing and arriving flights at the airport.

Cost-effectiveness
The first phase of the project is approaching a total funding from Norway of $18 million. It is estimated that a further $10 million is needed to finish two-year terms for all current secondments, some of which have only recently arrived. The first phase of the project would then end in March 2015.

In the first phase from June 2011 to June 2013 the average costs per CSSO per month, including overheads, runs to $6,200 a month or $74,400 per year, excluding the national salaries of the CSSOs. Although this might appear to be expensive, it is still significantly less than what a UN employee or an international consultant would cost. Included in this figure are also other programme costs – support to government processes, programme design, the drafting of job descriptions, recruitment, M&E, etc. As an example, the yearly costs of a mid-level UN staff (P-4) serving in South Sudan easily exceeds $180,000, excluding assignment grants, rest and relaxation travel, home leave

travel, boarding costs, etc. In light of this the use of CSSOs is a significantly more cost-effective approach to capacity development than the use of international staff or consultants.

In addition, it should also be taken into account that the twinning approach focuses less on immediate outputs (e.g. in the form of service delivery) and more on the development of long-term institutional capacity. Although the IGAD initiative has already had considerable impact, as discussed above, it is likely that most of the positive effects of the project are still to be felt. This strengthens the argument that this is not just a more sustainable model for capacity development, but also one that is more cost-effective.

In the current planning there will be an overlap between Phases 1 and 2 of the project. The second phase, running from mid-2013 to mid-2015, is intended to include another 25 CSSOs and 25 South Sudanese civil servants recruited from the diaspora.

Based on the current estimates received from the IGAD initiative's PMU, it seems that the initial start-up costs have been absorbed and that the project is now running on much lower average costs than in the initial phase. Using the figures we have received, an average person-month should now cost around $5,800, including overheads and all related "programmatic costs" per month. The average person-month costs for the entire project thus ends up at $6,000 per month, if all the estimates and assumptions are reasonably correct. In addition to this the costs of Phase 2, which are estimated at $10.5 million, are made up of the salaries that the CSSOs receive in their home countries and costs related to the secondment of three people from the Norwegian Refugee Council (in the areas of human resources, communications and M&E), starting in the middle of 2013.

Taking into consideration that many of the costs seem to have been incurred at the beginning of the project, we would urge the partners to consider maintaining the number of CSSOs at 200 during Phase 2. There is a strong business case for reaping the benefits of having already incurred the initial sunk cost investments and of being able to design the next phase(s) of the programme by taking previous lessons learned into account.

Future phases of the IGAD initiative
Including the diaspora?

Several of the interviewees and some of the partners suggested the inclusion of a diaspora component in the second phase of the initiative, i.e. the recruitment of skilled South Sudanese from the diaspora who could act as qualified twins on the government side. Both benefits and challenges are attendant on such a development. Diaspora members could bring additional capacity with an even better understanding of local culture and challenges, but with a stronger skill set. However, there is a need to unpack and disaggregate the diaspora as a group. Diaspora members could be (1) South Sudanese who have stayed in neighbouring countries for short or longer periods, in refugee camps and/or in urban areas; or (2) South Sudanese who moved to Western countries, in particular Australia, Canada, Britain and the U.S., as either refugees or for economic reasons. Common to many of them is the wish to return to South Sudan to contribute with the skills that many of them acquired while abroad. However, for many it has proved difficult to re-enter South Sudanese society and get relevant jobs once they are back in Juba. This is particularly true for those returning after independence. In fact, the urge to include a diaspora component in the next phase seems in part driven by the failure to recruit diaspora members through other mechanisms established for this purpose.

This failure seems to be grounded in the varying degrees of resentment against these groups in South Sudan. Members of the diaspora are often perceived to have left while others stayed to fight the war; and at the same time gained qualifications, skills and wealth while abroad. Military-elites-turned-bureaucrats may also feel threatened by relatively better-educated diaspora members and seek to protect the privileges they have obtained. As already explored in the section on cultural fit/ownership, there is a clash between this system of government and the form of government that the IGAD initiative supports. Also, fiscal austerity has made it increasingly difficult to recruit new capacity into the civil service. Including diaspora members in the project and the government is also part of transforming the government into a meritocracy that values knowledge and ability over connections from the war and clan affiliations. This means that diaspora members pose a relatively larger threat to some elites in South Sudan than the CSSOs, who will eventually leave.

Another major challenge will be to devise remuneration strategies that do not significantly differentiate between incumbents and diaspora members. It will thus be crucial to devise exit strategies upfront to ensure the absorption of diaspora members into the regular workforce on equal terms with the existing bureaucracy. This has proved to be tremendously difficult in other diaspora-based capacity development programmes. The partners indicated that these concerns had indeed been contemplated and that diaspora members would be paid at the same level as South Sudanese staff, but that some benefits and allowances would be added initially. Diaspora members would sign two-year contracts that bind them to serving an additional two years during which the benefits and allowances would be phased out. The fact that diaspora members will also by default have developed multiple identities should not be underestimated either. Members of the diaspora those perceived as "South Sudanese" when abroad and, for example, "British" when in South Sudan.

The way forward

The partners are currently discussing a possible Phase 2 of the initiative. There is an ambition to strengthen the focus on the state level and for the GRSS to carry out a thorough capacity needs assessment in prioritised sectors and bring in specialised capacity that responds to these needs in the second phase. However, with regard to the diaspora component, this study found that it would seem to be highly unfortunate to scale down the number of CSSOs to accommodate diaspora members or for any other reason. The deployment of the first batches of CSSOs is showing very promising results even in the very challenging context of fiscal austerity. With even better preparation, more careful selection of institutions and levels of service, and better human resource management of the CSSOs, the positive impact is likely to increase further. A diaspora component could potentially add significant value and inject some much-needed longer-term capacity into the civil service. Some of the partners also considered scaling up the number of CSSOs and the possible inclusion of other countries, thus reviving an African Union initiative that closely resembles the IGAD initiative. Such an initiative would aim to increase the total number of CSSOs to 1,000. If the partners want to scale up the initiative or include a diaspora component, this will require additional financial contributions. In this case, additional donors could be invited to strengthen the financial commitment and broaden the funding base, but also to add support to triangular co-operation for twinning and mentoring as an innovative approach to capacity development. Given the promising results of the initial phase of the IGAD initiative and the significant investments made by donors in South Sudan, expanding the initiative would seem to be a logical next step.

Final reflections

After one-and-a-half years of implementation, the IGAD initiative is essentially still in its infancy – at least in its capacity as a large-scale laboratory in which to study this novel model of twinning-based capacity support. All in all, the study found the initiative to be very promising in terms of its positive impact, the level of ownership, its adaptability, and the flexibility and sustainability of the knowledge transfer taking place. Some of the reasons for the initiative's success seem to relate specifically to the local context, while others are more widely applicable. Some of the issues that have negatively impacted the project, such as the lack of proper twins, might be more easily overcome in countries where civil services have reached higher levels of maturity.

The initiative further provides ample support for the UN secretary-general's agenda on civilian capacity reform, providing concrete evidence of the usefulness of regional capacity to build up core government functions in states in the aftermath of conflict.

The study identified a strong need for recognition among all the CSSOs we met during our visit – something that the programme now seems to be addressing more seriously. While the reception and induction phase for most CSSOs was perceived positively, the follow-up had not matched CSSOs' expectations. It must be acknowledged that a more personalised and contextualised follow-up with each CSSO is a very tall order. Nevertheless, this study found reason to advise partners to continuously consider ways of recognising the significant contributions that the CSSOs have made and to improve their quality of life.

This is an issue that could be resolved relatively easily. The CSSOs are sent through official channels and are essentially representatives of their respective civil services in South Sudan. Through frequent invitations to their embassies for the celebrations of national holidays and social events, joint meetings when new CSSOs arrive, and departure ceremonies once they have completed their assignment, CSSOs would be given due acknowledgement as representatives of their countries. More frequent get-togethers would also strengthen the bonds of the CSSO community. The PMU is now planning to issue a formal certificate on the departure of successful CSSOs signed by all the relevant actors. This could help boost their CVs and perhaps further an international career for them.

To this effect, it makes sense for the UN and the wider international community to somehow roster "graduated" CSSOs in order to draw on their experience elsewhere. These CSSOs will form a rather unique cadre of specialists and active civil servants with unique post-conflict capacity development experience – a resource whose scarceness has been documented in the UN's Review of Civilian Capacities and elsewhere.

Recommendations
Partner countries

- Complement buy-in at the most senior levels in ministries and institutions with dedicated efforts to communicate the objectives of the programme and identify suitable twins at the lower levels.
- Aim for a more even allocation of CSSOs across ministries, and include more core government and upstream institutions such as the Central Bank, the Ministry of Justice and security authorities, perhaps focusing more on core government functions than service delivery functions (where the risk of ending up "doing" rather than coaching seems higher).
- Ensure proper matching of CSSOs with twins or twinning groups on appropriate levels and in core functions to leverage expertise and maximise impact.
- Consider group rather than one-to-one twinning to ensure the sustainability of capacity transfer and pre-empt high staff turnover.
- Consider widening the funding base with the inclusion of other donors to keep the number of CSSOs at a minimum of 200. For instance, the funds for the diaspora programme could be fundraised for separately.
- Consider how the capacity hubs developing around

CSSOs in ministries may be used as anchor points for other development initiatives.

- Explore further the gender potential of deploying female CSSOs.
- Expand the use of "reverse" embedding where South Sudanese civil servants are embedded in other countries' civil services for a period.
- Because CSSOs are secondees of the partner countries, embassies should consider hosting social events for CSSOs and should also give a certificate of appreciation at the end of service issued jointly by UNDP, the GRSS and the partner state in question.
- Consider piloting the inclusion of diaspora members and acknowledging the important longer-term contribution they can make, including an exit strategy that can manage the expectations of all parties. This would include employing diaspora members as GRSS staff, not paying them more than local employees and imposing clear time limits on any benefits or allowances.
- Neighbouring countries also have obvious commercial and political interests in South Sudan – a factor that could potentially lead to problematic practices among CSSOs, and which therefore needs to be openly addressed.
- The partner countries should consider the possibility of transforming the IGAD initiative into a permanent structure.

UNDP/UN in South Sudan

- Consider measures to strengthen GRSS buy-in into the PMU, e.g. by including staff with civil service experience.
- Clearly articulate in future project designs the trade-off between a more hands-on approach to project management and a hands-off model, including cost implications.
- Dedicate more resources to organising knowledge exchanges among CSSOs. Facilitate this process among CSSOs and match those facing specific challenges with others who have overcome similar ones.
- Avoid downscaling the programme at this stage where programme establishment costs have been absorbed and important lessons learned.

UN/IGAD/World Bank/partner states/research

- Consider using the IGAD capacity development model to develop core government capacity in other countries emerging from conflict.

- Establish a mechanism to roster or otherwise keep tabs on CSSO alumni as a group of specialists with post-conflict capacity development expertise.
- Organise peer-to-peer learning among the GRSS staff involved in the initiative and countries where similar activities will be planned.
- Consider the IGAD initiative as a possible best practice initiative in the context of the new UN Capacity Development Strategy, and to inform discussions at the Capacity Development Group at the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy, the OECD DAC Network on Governance, and the Learning Network on Capacity Development.
- Conduct further research on the cost-effectiveness/ impact dimension at the end of the project.

Appendix 1: Methodology

The field research on the IGAD initiative is part of a wider project looking at innovative forms of capacity development support. Previous field studies have been conducted on capacity development through mentoring and coaching in Afghanistan (see Rosén, 2011; Rosén & Tarp, 2011a; 2011b; 2012). In combination with desk studies and consultations with stakeholders, these studies have helped the team to develop a research methodology that includes identifying the most important issues to focus on.

We have thus followed the IGAD initiative from its inception until February 2013. DIIS and NUPI researchers undertook initial field visits to Juba, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya in August and October 2011. Four minor papers were published, which were used as reference papers for setting the agenda for the fieldwork (see Appendix 2). Based on previous research, desk studies and consultations with stakeholders, a research and interview guide was developed prior to departure and adjusted after pilot interviews. Overall, our research focused on two dimensions: (1) the establishment of an overall picture of the entire project; and (2) the capturing of experiences, opinions, and sentiments from those involved on all project levels in order to find out what worked and what did not, and how such projects could be strengthened and better utilised. We used semi-structured explorative interviews, which were conducted in Juba, Malakal and Yambio from January 7th to 28th 2013. A total of 101 semi-structured interviews were conducted with 147 people. Of the 101 interviews, 12 were group interviews. The durations of the interviews ranged from half an hour to several hours.

Interviews	CSSOs	Twins	Supervisors	UNDP and other stakeholders	Total
Interviewees (M/F/Total)	53/21/74	20/15/35	19/3/22	11/5/16	103/44/147
Gender distribution M/F (%)	72/28	57/43	86/14	69/31	70/30

The team interviewed participants in all GRSS institutions included in the IGAD initiative during the field visit. Further interviews were conducted at a workshop for CSSOs deployed at state level from January 21st to 23rd 2013, ensuring wide representation and covering CSSOs deployed in most of the ten South Sudanese states. The interviews were recorded or notes were taken.

Finally, a half-day validation workshop was conducted with representatives from the CSSOs, GRSS, UNDP, IGAD, Kenya and Norway in Juba on February 22nd 2013 where we presented our draft report and findings and received very useful comments and input. We also sought and received written comments on the draft report from the partners.

The research was self-initiated and has not been subjected to any political, donor or UN interests. The host institutions of the researchers have contributed with salaries and time for conducting the research. Field research, travel and conferences are funded by NOREF, which is an independent foundation established to integrate knowledge and experience in order to strengthen peacebuilding policy and practice.

Appendix 2: Other publications emerging from this study[4]

- Felix da Costa, Diana et al. 2013. "Triangular cooperation for capacity development in South Sudan." Oslo: NOREF.
- Felix da Costa, Diana et al. 2013. "The IGAD initiative in South Sudan: a case study in OPEN." Copenhagen: DIIS.
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From research in 2011:

- Rosén & Tarp (2011a).
- Rosén, Frederik & Kristoffer Nilaus Tarp. 2011. "Building civil servant capacity in South Sudan." Policy Brief. Copenhagen: DIIS.
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4   Studies given in shortened form appear in full in the list of references.

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