7 Things to Know About Fragile-to-Fragile (F2F) Cooperation

1. **F2F is about g7+ countries helping each other**

Fragile-to-Fragile, or F2F, cooperation is the support that countries experiencing conflict or emerging from crisis provide to each other. This can be peer learning, knowledge generation, support to homegrown peacebuilding and statebuilding, and assistance at times of crisis. The shared knowledge and experiences inform the collective message that the g7+ uses to advocate for reforms in development cooperation, peacebuilding and statebuilding.

2. **The driving principles of F2F**

F2F was born under the spirit of voluntarism, cooperation and solidarity. It does not aim to promote any specific model of development. Rather, it is based on the belief that there is no single best-fit answer to all the challenges in all the g7+ countries. F2F cooperation encourages the sharing and context-specific adaptation of relevant experiences and knowledge among the g7+ countries.

3. **The unique character of F2F cooperation**

F2F cooperation involves interaction among countries with a focus on sharing the lessons that each country has learnt throughout its development trajectory, to the benefit of its peers. As countries affected by conflict, g7+ members have first-hand experience of common, yet unique challenges. Thus, cooperation among them inspires a true sense and shared vision of a better and safer world for all.

Knowledge-sharing under F2F cooperation is not merely about the sharing of abstract ideas, but also about the practical application of each country’s expertise in helping each other. It encourages g7+ countries to take the initiative, take the lead and take ownership over knowledge-sharing and over their own development processes.

F2F cooperation includes offering countries wisdom in advancing dialogue and reconciliation. This includes facilitating dialogue between stakeholders and offering the support of peace champions from other g7+ countries as intermediaries.

4. **Focus areas of F2F cooperation**

Since the idea was formalized by the g7+ in 2014, F2F cooperation has focused on the following areas:

- Peer learning and knowledge generation in peacebuilding and statebuilding. Among other things, this has included support for democratic elections, consolidating knowledge and experiences on natural resource management, facilitating interactions among member countries in thematic areas such as justice, and exchange programs in the domain of public finance management.

- Providing support in the context of acute and emerging crises. This has included facilitating dialogue to make and promote peace and reconciliation in the g7+ countries and provide assistance in responding to natural and man-made crisis.

- Supporting the implementation of the New Deal. This has involved exchanging experiences and generating knowledge around the country-led and country-owned processes of applying the New Deal principles – a landmark agreement between g7+ countries, international development partners and civil society to improve development policy and practice.
There are many examples of F2F cooperation so far.

Guinea-Bissau elections

In 2013, the transitional government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau requested assistance from Timor-Leste with their election. Timor-Leste established a Support Office focused on administration, finance and logistics in Guinea-Bissau and provided a Technical and Advisory Support Team to the voter registration process. Timor-Leste trained and mentored people in registration technology and IT and conducted civic education campaigns to encourage citizens to register to vote. They also provided support for the Voters Registration Database System, printing and disseminating voter lists, civic education campaigns, preparations for polling stations, delivery and collection of election materials, monitoring of the Election Act and publication of the election results. Guinea-Bissau held elections at a cost of USD $6 million, far less than the international community’s estimate of USD $40 million. This support drew on Timor-Leste’s own experience of conducting elections. It also contributed to credible democratic elections in a g7+ country – an early step in the road to recovery and resilience.

Supporting peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic

In 2014, eight g7+ Justice Ministers met for the first time in Freetown, Sierra Leone, to discuss the progress and challenges they face in improving justice systems in countries affected by conflict and fragility. One of the key challenges discussed was contract negotiation – important in raising the revenues necessary for fragile states to sustainably invest in development. The g7+ Secretariat developed and circulated a briefing paper on justice sector support available to g7+ countries on this important topic.

Sharing knowledge on justice in g7+ countries

In March 2014, representatives of the g7+ met with government officials, community leaders and civil society representatives from the Central African Republic (CAR) in Dubai, against the background of the civil conflict that the country had been experiencing since 2012. During this meeting, the g7+ heard about the challenges facing CAR and pledged to help in assisting the country’s exit from the crisis.
To support the sharing of experiences among member countries, the g7+ Secretariat published a Natural Resource Book, providing an overview of natural resources in each g7+ member state, the primary extractive industries, the legal and fiscal frameworks in place for managing natural resources, and issues related to governance and transparency.

This research is critical given that one of the biggest challenges for countries affected by fragility is the mobilization of resources to finance development. The natural resource endowments in many of these countries are substantial but are often difficult and costly to extract and poorly managed. Developing an understanding of the situation in each of our countries puts us in a better position to plan for how these resources can be mobilized to the benefit of all our people. The book is available at the g7+ website www.g7plus.org

Financial assistance to Ebola crisis response in West Africa

The g7+ watched in horror at the unfolding Ebola crisis in the g7+ countries of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone throughout 2014-15 and the slow international response. In the spirit of solidarity, and understanding from experience how crises such as these can set back hard won progress, Timor-Leste donated USD $2 million to the Governments of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. In line with New Deal principles, Timor-Leste channelled the funds through the national systems of the three recipient countries to address the Ebola epidemic. This example of fragile-to-fragile cooperation showcases a unique way to address the humanitarian-development nexus, providing support to respond to a crisis while also fostering country ownership and leadership.
management. The program drew on the experience accumulated by both countries over the last decade and exposed the officials to technical solutions which may be usefully considered for adoption in Afghanistan and Timor-Leste.

The g7+ Foundation has also conducted research on experiences of public financial management in Afghanistan and Timor-Leste as part of cross-country learning. The research findings are available at: http://www.g7plusfoundation.org/#history.

**Future expansion of F2F cooperation**

In 2016, the g7+ member countries carried out a mapping exercise to identify potential areas for future F2F cooperation. The g7+ member countries demonstrated a keen interest in sharing their experiences and learning from each other in relation to a variety of new topics within the thematic areas of peacebuilding and statebuilding, including reconciliation, security transitions, public financial management, natural resource management, and vocational training, among others.

One of the most pertinent areas to be pursued in 2017 is the sharing of experiences of the transitions following the withdrawal of UN peacekeeping missions. Two g7+ countries have experienced such transitions already (Timor-Leste in 2012 and Sierra Leone in 2014), two are scheduled to do so in the near future (Liberia and Haiti), and more will eventually do so. We welcome other countries and our development partners to work with us to address how best to manage post-UN transitions from the security, political, social and economic perspectives.

**How is F2F cooperation resourced?**

Unlike much development cooperation that depends on financial support from donors, F2F cooperation focuses on mobilising the resources available to member countries to help each other. This may include financial resources, as some of the above examples highlight, but it also includes the valuable currencies of knowledge, experience and peer support. These resources highlight that g7+ members have much to offer to each other, even though they may be low-income countries. Development partners have a role to play by providing financial and other forms of support through triangular mechanisms. Discussions are underway with the WB and UN agencies in this regard.

**How can you get involved?**

Visit our website at www.g7plus.org and subscribe to our quarterly newsletter. Follow us on Facebook and twitter. Email g7plus.secretariat@gmail.com or call +670 3310126 to work with the g7+ member countries on future F2F initiatives.