The Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP) provided educational opportunities to individuals from disadvantaged populations committed to social justice. For over ten years (2001—2012), the program promoted social change in communities worldwide: talented individuals from 22 countries were selected and provided academic resources to excel in their path as social justice leaders. Since 2013, the Institute of International Education (IIE) has been studying the impacts of IFP on its alumni and their home communities. This research brief is part of a series prepared by IIE to study topics of interest related to IFP and its impact on social justice issues worldwide.

Alumni of IFP increased their academic knowledge through advanced study and consequently have the potential to apply this knowledge to bring about social change in their home communities. This research brief discusses the potential relationship between the alumni capabilities to create change and their communities’ readiness to adapt to change through the lens of the KPMG’s Change Readiness Index (CRI). The success of alumni as social justice leaders will potentially be influenced by how open, ready, and prepared their communities are for social change.

The CRI measures a country’s ability to respond to change from various external and internal forces. Each of the 22 IFP countries is vastly different in its political and economic realities, as well as its susceptibility to be affected by social, economic, and political change. These factors affect the extent to which IFP alumni can address equity and sustainability issues in their communities. Although the KPMG CRI findings may not predict the success of IFP alumni to advance social justice, the findings provide us with some contextual knowledge on IFP countries and a greater understanding of the determinants of change readiness that may help or hinder IFP alumni in their efforts to achieve social change.

The IFP Alumni Tracking Study Issue Brief Series explores thematic issues related to IFP and its alumni, including social justice, leadership, community development, equity in education, and economic development. The series is meant to examine IFP through various research and analytical lenses and provide scholars, practitioners, and the IFP community with points of discussion and debate.
The IFP Model and Social Change

The Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP) offered advanced study opportunities to approximately 4,305 individuals from the world’s most vulnerable populations in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Russia.

Launched with a grant from Ford Foundation in 2001, IFP aimed to reduce long-standing inequalities in higher education. By extending “fellowship opportunities to candidates from marginalized and excluded communities, IFP strived to promote leadership for social justice, and demonstrate that, given the right platform, those who lacked access to quality higher education can richly contribute to broader social change” (Gupta, 2013).

Unlike other fellowships, the IFP model did not use traditional selection criteria, and instead prioritized leadership potential and commitment to social change when selecting candidates. In addition, candidates were selected from groups and communities that lacked systematic access to higher education.

IFP’s theory of change proposed that the IFP leaders’ acquisition of knowledge and skills may lead to impacts on the community and societal level. Their increased knowledge, awareness and changed perceptions will enable them to strengthen their capacity as leaders in their efforts to improve their home communities, countries, and regions.

The IIE Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact is currently engaged in a ten-year tracer study of IFP alumni (2013—2023).

KPMG’s Change Readiness Index

KPMG’s1 Change Readiness Index (CRI) defines a country’s ability to respond to, mitigate and take advantage of change. Positive change is defined as emerging markets and new technologies that can result in growth opportunities. Negative change can be in the form of economic, political, or social factors that lead to destabilization in a country.

Change readiness refers to the extent that a country’s government, private and public enterprises, and civil society can manage and respond to change. In addition, a country’s change readiness is measured by its ability to capitalize on new opportunities. The aggregate Change Readiness Index (CRI) score is computed annually for 90 countries and is available in the full report (link). Among the IFP countries, for example, Chile has the highest CRI score meaning that it has a high capability of managing and responding to change. In contrast, Russia has a lower CRI score indicating that it may be less capable in its efforts to mitigate the effects of negative change.

What is change readiness?

“Change readiness relates to the capability of a country’s agents – its government, private and public enterprises, people, and wider civil society – to anticipate, prepare for, manage, and respond to a wide range of change drivers, proactively cultivate the resulting opportunities, and mitigate any potential negative impacts.”

Source: KPMG, 2013.

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1 The change readiness index was calculated by KPMG International Cooperative (“KPMG International”). KPMG International provides no client services and is a Swiss entity with which the independent member firms of the KPMG network are affiliated.
The CRI is comprised of three sub-indices: Enterprise Capability, Government Capability, and People & Civil Society Capability (Figure 1). In this research brief we focus on the People & Civil Society Capability sub-index because of its direction relationship to the IFP model of change.

Figure 1. Dimensions of the Change Readiness Index

The People and Civil Society sub-index includes determinants related to individual, social and cultural determinants of capability that directly impact a country’s ability to adapt to social change:

- **Human Capital**: The allocation of education among the adult workforce (quantity and quality).
- **Civil Society**: Domestic institutions that help to build social cohesion.
- **Inclusiveness of Growth**: The benefits of economic growth reach every segment of society.
- **Gender**: Men and women equally participate in the labor force.

**CRI’s Relevance to IFP’s Alumni Tracking Study**

Sen (1993) suggests that access to education and the freedom to achieve one’s fullest potential is a human right that should be equal in society. One’s ability to function in society is a human capability that is linked to social justice, development, and personal welfare. When individuals are unable to improve their capabilities, there are constraints to their personal agency. Nussbaum (2006) expands on Sen’s research and proposes that a quality education develops and advances human capabilities.

The relationship between education and social justice has been explored through other lenses. Researchers such as Fraser (1996) acknowledge three components that revolve around social justice: redistribution, recognition, and participation. Tikly and Barrett (2009) further suggest that recognition is fostered through education. Through advanced study, IFP alumni have potentially gained a better understanding of their rights and are now better equipped with the knowledge and skills to identify and address urgent needs in their communities.

The success of alumni’s social justice endeavors may be dependent upon how open and adaptable their communities are for structural change. Communities’ propensity for change at the country level may support or negatively affect such endeavors. Propensity for change and responsiveness to the alumni efforts is determined by various factors such as the adult literacy rate, gender equality, and the social cohesiveness of society.

“Social Justice: The fundamental principles and human rights that enable equal distribution of benefits and burdens throughout society.”

- *The IFP Alumni Tracking Study*
The degree to which a country’s civil society is receptive to such change is reflected in the People & Civil Society Capability sub-index. A country’s population must be willing to accept reform in its current social structure for change to occur. Emile Durkheim’s theory of deviance proposes that a society that lacks deviance from cultural norms is incapable of adapting and making strides towards social advancement (Thorlindsson & Bernburg, 2004). Social structures may be resistant to change because they are supported by long-standing cultural norms. Structural change involves marginalized individuals gaining more equitable opportunities, bridging the economic and social divide.

The civil society determinant of the People & Civil Society sub-index can be attributed to the strength of a country’s social cohesion. Research suggests that weak societal cohesion increases the risk of disorganization, fragmentation, and exclusion amongst community members, which in turn has the potential to have negative consequences (Colletta, Lim & Kelles-Viitanenm, 2001).

IFP countries that exhibit low social cohesion (characterized by distrust and antipathy) amongst their communities may experience less progress towards social justice. The alumni in these countries may struggle to promote social change as their communities will be unwilling to come to agreement. Disunity among a community will result in dissension when new policies encouraging social reform are introduced. On the other hand, communities that are bonded harmoniously with a sense of kinship will function as a socioeconomic system based on equal opportunity. Thus, if government agencies and organizations within IFP countries are put in place to cultivate and maintain social cohesion, alumni from these countries will be able to generate a larger impact.

Another key determinant of the People & Civil Society sub-index is the inclusiveness of growth of a country. In order for economic growth to be inclusive, the benefits from growth must be shared amongst all members of society. It should not culminate in discrepancies amongst a society with regards to income level, assets, education and health opportunities (Adedeji, Du & Opoku-Afari, 2013). This will diminish the impact of any poverty reduction efforts. Therefore in IFP countries with low inclusiveness of economic growth, alumni have fewer opportunities to drive social development.

This research brief focuses primarily on the People & Civil Society Capability sub-index of the overall CRI. Countries that demonstrated high sub-index rankings were highlighted to illustrate their unique capabilities in managing change. The analysis also focuses on how IFP leaders can capitalize on their country’s strengths to implement social change.

“Overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalized obstacles”
- Fraser, 2008

KPMG Change Readiness Findings in IFP Countries

The Change Readiness Index (CRI) score measures a country’s resilience and ability to capitalize on the new opportunities that arise from change. CRI determines the extent to which a country can achieve sustained and equitable longterm growth and improve living standards.

It is critical to note that while change readiness correlates with income levels, development levels, and access to resources, these assets do not necessarily define a country’s change readiness. Many relatively developed
nations have lower levels of anticipated change readiness in comparison to countries with limited economic assets. For instance, despite its low income level, Tanzania ranks comparatively high on its CRI illustrating its openness to adapt to changes implemented in its civil society.

Additionally, a country’s current socio-political situation can temporarily dictate its change readiness. For instance, although Egypt’s CRI may be attributed to its current fragile and politically unstable state, it does not mean that its low change readiness will remain permanent. A country’s CRI can improve significantly after experiencing shock because post-conflict countries gain new perspective and apply different methods to increase their preparedness for social unrest. Thus, while it is important to note which countries ranked highly, it is equally critical to recognize the countries which made the most improvement in their ability to respond to change (see Figure 2).

**People & Civil Society Capability**

The People & Civil Society Capability sub-index is examined to analyze which IFP countries are more inclined to undergo social change. Table 2 offers the aggregated and disaggregated rankings. The IFP model intended to promote development through the establishment or growth of these determinants in IFP countries.

- **Human Capital**

  The CRI suggests that human capital can contribute to social development, as adult literacy affects the country’s ability to adapt to change. Factors of human capital include education quality and quantity. The IFP model supported the development of human capital by providing access to higher education among marginalized communities.

- **Gender**

  The CRI discusses how gender equality can bolster the development of a country because when more females participate in the labor force, greater female resources are fully capitalized. The IFP model contributes to the gender determinant of the sub-index because it was designed to select female fellows who were socially excluded and marginalized because of their gender. The model strived to promote and extend access to higher education for disadvantaged females.

- **Inclusiveness of Growth**

  The CRI suggests that a country’s development is incumbent upon its ability to manage change in a way that allows all members of society to advance. Inclusiveness of growth can be linked to the promotion of social equality as benefits of growth reach all social classes. IFP aimed to promote equal growth, specifically in the education sector by providing support to disadvantaged individuals for their academic goals.

- **Civil Society**

  The CRI proposes that civil society organizations can promote sustained growth because they can inspire policy debates committed to resolving humanitarian and social issues. Ghana and

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**Figure 2. Top 5 IFP Countries with Most Improved CRI Rankings**

![Top 5 IFP Countries with Most Improved CRI Rankings](image-url)
Senegal score highly on their civil society determinant illustrating that they have domestic institutions in place that help to build social cohesion.

- **Health**

The CRI suggests that better health is associated with other positive outcomes such as higher productivity and life expectancy. These outcomes can also increase incentives for citizens to invest more in education and to generally work harder towards long-term goals.

- **Demographics**

The CRI findings indicate that countries with a large working population will be more resilient and prepared to deal with change. Ghana and Uganda obtain the highest ranking for demographics. This indicates that Ghana and Uganda’s populations are capable of managing and responding to change because they have a young population.

“Clearly, what matters is the ability of countries to deliver more promising economic, governance, and social foundations that support future growth and sustainable development.”

- **KPMG 2013**

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**Table 2. People & Civil Service Capability Rankings of IFP Countries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>People and Civil Society Capability</th>
<th>Human Capital</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Inclusiveness of Growth</th>
<th>Demographics</th>
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*Rankings are out of a total of 90 countries and only IFP countries are listed in the chart above.

*Palestine was not included in the analyses because of the lack of KPMG CRI data available for the country.
Analysis of Findings

The IFP study aims to measure social change at the individual, organizational and community levels. Individual change is defined as alumni knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) during their fellowship. KSAs can help the alumni recognize and address issues related to social justice, development, and social policy. Individual change can then yield a large-scale societal impact from IFP alumni applying their KSAs into their organization and community.

A large-scale impact is strongly influenced by a country’s receptiveness for change. Colletta, Lim & Kelles-Viitanenm (2001) suggest that in order for a country to have inclusive mechanisms in place that drive social development, it is critical for diverse groups to be bonded harmoniously. IFP alumni can advance their efforts in achieving social impact by taking advantage of their high civil society capability.

Furthermore, a high civil society ranking indicates that institutions such as NGOs and nonprofits are able to exert and practice freedom of expression. This can create a platform for alumni to discuss issues related to social justice. Efforts of IFP alumni can be bolstered by raising awareness and disseminating knowledge about one’s position in society. Conversely, limited access to information and restrictions on freedom of speech may serve as an impediment to IFP alumni wishing to promote social justice through a public forum.

“Through literacy, communities can begin to support themselves, react to and interact with the government and the dominant culture in a productive way. This in turn allows for positive change for individuals, their families, and their communities in the face of historical repression.” -Owens, 2012

Often times, growth in countries results in discrepancies in education, income, and health opportunities. Inclusiveness of growth reinforces IFP’s vision that if the education sector advances it would not only benefit upper class citizens but also citizens who come from marginalized backgrounds. This would result in reduced long-standing inequalities in higher education at large. Thailand and Philippines score highly on their inclusiveness of growth measure. This suggests that both countries may have the potential to capitalize on growth opportunities that affect disadvantaged individuals.

An ageing population in IFP countries can also pose as a challenge for alumni as overall there will be fewer individuals that are independent and employed in the labor force. On the other hand, countries ranking highly on demographics may have a competitive advantage because they can potentially grow at a faster rate and be able to adapt to new changes. Uganda and Ghana score highly on their demographics determinant illustrating that less of their populations are dependent (e.g., elderly, children). Societies with a predominant elderly population also tend to be influenced more by traditions and customs in contrast to societies with a younger population that may be open to rapid change. Thus, IFP alumni from Uganda and Ghana may find it easier to pursue improvement in their home communities.

Finally, countries tend to develop more slowly if fewer women are participating in the labor force. Growth is inevitably stagnant because less of the population is employed and contributing to the social and economic development. Nevertheless, countries that provide women the same opportunities as men can capitalize on female
resources and help advance society by reducing social inequalities. IFP alumni from China can capitalize on its high gender equality in their social justice endeavors. Female IFP alumni can have higher positions from which they can influence social change compared to the countries with low gender equality where women are unlikely to have positions of influence.

Conclusion

This analysis of KPMG’s Change Readiness Index highlights the extent to which the IFP alumni will be able to address social justice issues in their community. This is influenced by their home country’s ability to be open and adaptable to structural change.

A potential limitation of the CRI for our study purposes is that it does not isolate cities and smaller regions of a country. For example, China’s overall CRI score (28) does not inform us of the overall CRI of smaller regions such as Altay. The CRI of Altay will vary drastically from an urbanized and metropolitan city such as Shanghai. Thus, it is worth considering to what extent CRI scores will potentially predict the social impact of IFP leaders, specifically those in remote areas. Moreover, although KPMG suggests that a country’s per capita income level and resilience to change are correlated, lower income does not necessarily always dictate a lower change readiness. A prime example includes Philippines which scored higher than some European countries such as Spain and Italy.

Although the KPMG CRI findings in our 22 IFP countries may not predict the success of IFP alumni to advance social justice, the findings provide us with some contextual knowledge on IFP countries and a greater understanding of the determinants of change readiness that may help or hinder IFP alumni in their efforts to achieve social change.

References


