IQA REPORT 2014

Partnerships on the road to strengthened local democracy

ICLD Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy

The Municipal Partnership Programme

Regional Federation Östsam – SERDA (Sarajevo Economic Region Development Agency), Bosnia and Herzegovina

Östhammar - Poti, Georgia

Sundsvall - Ulundi, South Africa

Söderhamn - Ugu, South Africa

Arvidsjaur - Mwanga, Tanzania

Robertsfors - Machakos, Kenya

Vänersborg - Omaruru, Namibia

Falun - Tsumeb, Namibia

Jessica Olson
Karin Norlin Bogren
Maria Larsson
Rikard Eduards

Content

SUMMARY

THE MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIP Programme is a SIDA-funded programme that, via the exchange of knowledge and experience between municipalities, regions and county councils (hereinafter collectively referred to as 'municipalities'), contributes to the sustainable local development of democracy in Sweden's partner countries for development cooperation, as well as in Sweden itself.

During 2014, sixteen (16) in-depth Internal Quality Assessment (IQA) studies of projects under the auspices of the Municipal Partnership Programme were conducted. Their purpose was to investigate and explore how the partnerships contribute to achieving the Programme's goals, to provide a foundation for further developing the Programme, to better support the partners, and to collect good reference examples.

The selection criteria were that the projects in the partnerships should have a focus on municipal technical services under way for at least two years. The reason for choosing projects focused on technology was the assumption that it could be particularly difficult to show the development of democracy in these kinds of projects.

Approximately sixty (60) individuals in Sweden and the partner countries have been interviewed as part of the

IQA. This report summarises the particularly important and recurring experiences that the interviewees shared.

Follow-ups show that the projects, among other things, have contributed to the development of democracy, primarily for the partner countries. It is clear that the commitment of the steering groups is vital for the partnerships', and thereby also the projects', positive results. The results of the follow-ups indicate that when the principal objectives of the projects have dealt with capacity strengthening and enhancement, rather than technical solutions, they have been more successful in achieving sustainable results. What emerges consistently in the partnership projects visited is that the inhabitants gained stronger confidence for the municipality when they experienced that municipal services had improved. This confidence and trust has in turn, led to an increase in the inhabitants' engagement and participation. More interesting results and lessons learned are presented in the Results and Analysis section.

Lastly, the lessons that the ICLD has learned regarding improvements to the Programme are described. Since writing this report, work with further developing the ICLD's results framework has continued and the Programme-specific results framework has been replaced from January 1, 2016, with the ICLD's results framework.

INTRODUCTION

THE MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIP Programme contributes to the fight against poverty by improving poor people's access to the services for which local and regional politically-controlled bodies are responsible, as well as by increasing people's ability to participate in local political processes. This creates the preconditions for the development of democracy. Via the Programme, funds are granted to pursue result-oriented projects, steering groups, inception phases, development/expansion and dissemination.

The report aims to summarise and describe the results of the monitoring of the Municipal Partnership Programme that was conducted in 2014 by means of 16 in-depth studies (IQAs) and to present an analysis of the studies. The analysis forms the basis of proposals for further developing the Municipal Partnership Programme and the IQA methodology.

BACKGROUND

ALL APPROVED PROJECTS in the Municipal Partnership Programme are monitored through a standardised reporting process to the ICLD. The reporting requirements include an economic follow-up of the approved budget. Another tool used to monitor the results of the Programme is IQA, a review and evaluation follow-up method based on interviews and observations usually made during a site visit in the municipality. IQAs are carried out by programme officers within the Municipal Partnership Programme.

The purpose of IQA

The primary purpose of the IQA is to monitor how the partnerships contribute to the fulfilment of the Programme's objectives. The monitoring is also aimed at providing a basis for the further development of the Programme, for example, by highlighting significant results which otherwise do not come to the ICLD's attention through the project reports. A third purpose is to provide an essential basis for the ICLD to strengthen its efforts, guidance and support to the partners in the Programme. It is important to identify the mechanisms that are critical to achieving the desired results. The fourth purpose is to highlight good examples and results that can be employed in communication where, for example, municipalities can be inspired and learn from one another, or where new

municipalities can get inspired to become active within the Programme.

The IQA's purpose is not to compare the results obtained with the results communicated by the municipalities in their reports.

Development of the Programme

Within the Municipal Partnership Programme, a development project has been conducted that includes preparing an action plan to implement Results-Based Management (RBM), develop a programme-specific results matrix, and identify indicators and sources of verification for monitoring and evaluation.

The background to this work is that in 2012, the ICLD developed a comprehensive organisational results matrix. The matrix is based on a theory of change that is made up of a causality chain where greater knowledge of local democracy, human rights, environment and climate change, as well as the role of women in development, will lead to a strengthened capacity to initiate and participate in change processes related to sustainable local democratic development. Based on this matrix, a programme-specific results matrix was developed. The overall programme-specific objective reads:

The Municipal Partnership Programme will contribute, in the countries where the Programme operates, to: strengthened local democracy, improved environment, greater equality, greater respect for human rights and increased internationalization within Swedish municipalities, county councils and regions.

The Programme's objectives are divided into five dimensions of local democracy that form intermediate objectives for the Programme. Each project must be able to show that the results will lead to some of the intermediate objectives being strengthened in the cooperation country's municipality. The intermediate objectives are: Improved methods of information for and dialogue with community residents, improved methods for considering the needs of vulnerable social groups and minorities, improved methods for enhanced transparency and accountability, improved formulation of municipal services that meet the needs of residents, and improved methods to ensure the representativeness of local and regional politically-controlled organisations. In addition, there is an intermediate objective focused on the development of the Swedish participants: Strengthening

the capacity of Swedish municipalities within the management of objectives and results as well as international activities.

IQA monitoring is carried out continuously and will highlight the above mentioned dimensions of local democracy. The dimensions to be specifically highlighted in the monitoring and the selection criteria are determined annually in conjunction with operational planning. The ambition is to work systematically with the different intermediate objectives of the Programme.

Since this report was written, the work to develop the ICLD's results framework has continued and the programme-specific results framework was replaced as **from January 1, 2016, with the ICLD's results framework.**

New results framework as of January 1, 2016

The overall objectives of the ICLD are to be achieved through activities within the municipal partnerships, in the international training programmes, and via research-related activities. These activities are designed and intended to increase citizens' influence by strengthening local government within one or more of the core areas outlined below. Local governments are strengthened through increased knowledge, which in

"" ACTIVITIES THAT ENSURE THAT NO DISCRIMINATION OR VIOLATION OCCURS, THAT CONSIDER VULNERABLE GROUPS' NEEDS, AND THAT SPECIFICALLY FOCUS ON THE POSITION OF WOMEN ARE EXAMPLES OF MEASURES REGARDED AS SUCCESS FACTORS

turn leads to increased capacity, increased awareness and greater support for the process of change within the core areas.

Equity/inclusion: This means that citizens must be treated in an inclusive and equitable manner. All citizens should have equal opportunity to express their needs and be considered from their individual preconditions. Examples of measures that are seen as success factors include ensuring that discrimination and abuse do not occur, considering the needs of vulnerable groups, and putting a special focus on women's status.

Participation: This means that local governments have a responsibility to actively promote a high level of participation in local decision-making processes relating to the formulation of public policies and services. The focus here is not only on ways to increase participation in decision-making, but also of increasing citizens' influence over important issues. Examples of such steps include the development of instruments for increased dialogue and responsiveness and greater adaptation to citizens' needs and desires.

Transparency: This means that transparency in decision-making processes within public sector planning and policy-making is of crucial importance for people to participate in local issues in an informed manner. For citizens, increased transparency means that elected officials and civil servants to a greater extent than before act in an open and predictable manner. Therefore, measures that ensure greater transparency and predictability are desirable from the ICLD's perspective.

Possibility to demand *accountability*: This means that power and responsibility relationships should be clear and the possibility to hold local governments accountable exists. Since it is not always possible for citizens to directly participate in decision-making, responsibilities must be made clear and it must be possible to demand accountability from all stakeholders. Informing citizens about how decisions are made, who is responsible, and what the consequences for misconduct or errors are, all indicate that local governments are providing their citizens with the means to demand accountability.

METHOD

THE ICLD HAS produced an instruction document for how IQAs are to be carried out, which includes a dialogue guide, templates, and interview guide.

In an IQA, the project manager and/or coordinator, a politician and a minimum of two participants in the project are to be interviewed. The interview guide is sent to each interviewee prior to the interview. During the interviews that were conducted in 2014, the municipalities themselves had the possibility to choose whether they wanted to do the interview in a group or separately. One municipality had prepared, on its own initiative, a set of written materials ahead of the visit. In all cases except for four, the interviews were conducted on-site in the relevant municipality. One interview was conducted via Skype, one over the telephone, and two in a municipality other than the own home municipality.

This report comprises a collective analysis of all completed interviews. They are thus not reported individually.

SELECTION CRITERIA

IN 2014, the starting point for selecting which projects would be subject to an IQA was focused on municipal technical service projects linked to the intermediate objective *Improved formulation of municipal services that meet the needs of residents* and the intermediate objective *Improved methods of information for and dialogue with community residents*. The reason why the ICLD specifically chose technical projects aimed at improving municipal services was the assumption that it is particularly difficult to show the development of democracy in so-called 'hard' projects. The ICLD wanted to investigate the possible challenges that may arise with linking technical services to democracy. This assumption was based on the programme officers' experiences from reviewing reports and presentations submitted within the Programme. Technical projects that had a strong connection to education were therefore removed. A further selection criterion was that the parties should have had time to work together for a number of years (at least two-year projects) and that the project would either be in its final stages or recently completed.

This means that each selected partnership has applied for and been based on the ICLD's previous guidelines and application forms. Therefore, many of these partnerships produce results of a more technical nature. In several of the partnerships, the focus has been on the theme that the

parties have worked on together and not on the intermediate objectives mentioned in the chapter **Development of the Programme.** Despite this, the ICLD has seen results that contribute to the various intermediate objectives.

SELECTION

IN 2014, sixteen (16) interviews were conducted. The country, the municipalities interviewed, the project's name, the years the project was underway, the location for the interview, and the date when the parties began working together within the framework of support from the ICLD are all listed below.

Bosnien-Hercegovina
Cooperation partners
SERDA (Sarajevo Economic Region Development Agency) – Regional Federation Östsam

Project name
Waste management - as means to increase local democracy and citizen's influence

Time period the project was underway
2012 – 2014 (3 years)

Location of the interview
Sarajevo
Via Skype

Receiving support from ICLD since
2009

Georgia
Cooperation partners
Poti Sakrebulo – Östhammar Municipality

Project name
An efficient and expedient fire emergency service in the future

Time period the project was underway
2010-2011 (2 years)

Location of the interview
Poti
Östhammar

Receiving support from ICLD since
2009

South Africa
Cooperation partners
Ulundi Municipality – Sundsvall Municipality

Project name
Waste Management Strategy, for the Municipality of Ulundi

Time period the project was underway
2011-2012 (2 years)

Location of the interview
Ulundi
Sundsvall

Receiving support from ICLD since
2009

South Africa
Cooperation partners
Ugu District Municipality – Söderhamn Municipality

Project name
Water management

Time period the project was underway
2010-2011 (2 years)

Location of the interview
Ugu
Visby

Receiving support from ICLD since
2009

Tanzania
Cooperation partners
Mwanga District – Arvidsjaur Municipality

Project name
Local Growth/Energy

Time period the project was underway
2010-2012 (3 years)

Location of the interview
Mwanga
Arvidsjaur

Receiving support from ICLD since
2009

Kenya
Cooperation partners
Machakos Municipality – Robertsfors Municipality

Project name
Creating capacity centres for sustainable development

Time period the project was underway
2010-2011 (2 years)

Location of the interview
Machakos
Umeå

Receiving support from ICLD since
2009

Namibia
Cooperation partners
Tsumeb Municipality – Falun Municipality

Project name
Sustainable Waste Management

Time period the project was underway
2012-2013 (2 years)

Location of the interview
Tsumeb
Stockholm

Receiving support from ICLD since
2009

Namibia
Cooperation partners
Omaruru Municipality – Vänersborg Municipality

Project name
Development of Wastewater Infrastructure

Time period the project was underway
2011-2013 (3 years)

Location of the interview
Omaruru
By telephone

Receiving support from ICLD since
2009

SUCCESS FACTORS

By reviewing all of the interviews, the ICLD has been able to identify examples of results that contribute to the Programme's five intermediate objectives. Sometimes the parties have described these as an 'expected result' of the project, and sometimes they have described it in connection with them receiving a question about an unexpected result or side-effect of the project they implemented.

Through the interviews, a consistent picture emerges of what the parties have identified as success factors for a good and stable partnership in which the results of the work are sustainable. One factor that was stressed by individuals in the cooperation countries is the importance of being able to implement the knowledge acquired via the partnership in their respective organisations, irrespective of whether or not external financiers are required.

The success factors given below have been described in different words by different individuals from different countries and in different positions. However, no significant differences have been identified between countries or positions.

Clarity and roles

Virtually everyone highlights the importance of clarity and division of roles within a partnership. They call attention to the fact that everyone involved needs to know what the Municipal Partnership Programme entails and what is contained in the guidelines and budget guidelines for the Programme. This should be made clear early in the partnership. This also includes knowing what roles, mandates and tasks the project managers, project participants, coordinators and steering group participants have and what these entail. Several of those interviewed believe that clarity is required between the project team and steering group regarding roles and mandates.

Another important factor appears to be keeping the groups as intact as possible. Some point out that individuals should not be replaced unless this is necessary, for example, when that individual leaves.

The coordinator was frequently singled out as a particularly important individual, as they should have an overview and knowledge about which participants need to be included in their particular organisation. The coordinator should have the mandate to carry out his or her responsibilities, from both politicians and from civil servants.

Confidence and trust

All interviewees describe the importance of the relationships within a partnership. In Mwanga, they described that originally there were two groups, which eventually became one team. Time is needed to meet and build relationships, trust and confidence between one another. Once this exists, openness and acceptance in the group is created, irrespective of whether that is the steering group or the project team. In most partnerships, the parties have invited one another other to each other's homes and families. In Tsumeb, the project leader comments: "Being invited as a relative, you are not seen as alien. Now we know their husbands and kids. This keeps an open strong bond. Just be yourself, don't keep yourself high and mighty. We can see each other and then fill in each other's gap."

Communication

Representatives from the municipalities believe that as many people as possible should know why the municipality has chosen to be part of a municipal partnership. A minimum prerequisite is that everyone in the project team and steering group has themselves fully understood its objectives and purposes.

Communication between the parties is considered to be especially important, even if difficulties of a technological nature may sometimes arise. The importance of everyone being able to write and read the same material was highlighted, for instance by the Municipality of Falun, which pointed to the digitisation of the application process as an excellent tool to jointly work with the material during the periods between parties meeting each other. They also think that this will be even more useful when it also becomes possible to report electronically. It will become an important tool for working together and building a mutual relationship.

It is essential to communicate both plans and results with the inhabitants of both partner municipalities. Tsumeb is an example where the group describes that improved service delivery in the form of clean water and refuse collection which is critical for those who live in the municipality. When cooperation leads to concrete results, the results must be communicated so that the residents appreciate the difference. Good internal and external communication will establish the mandate throughout the municipality.
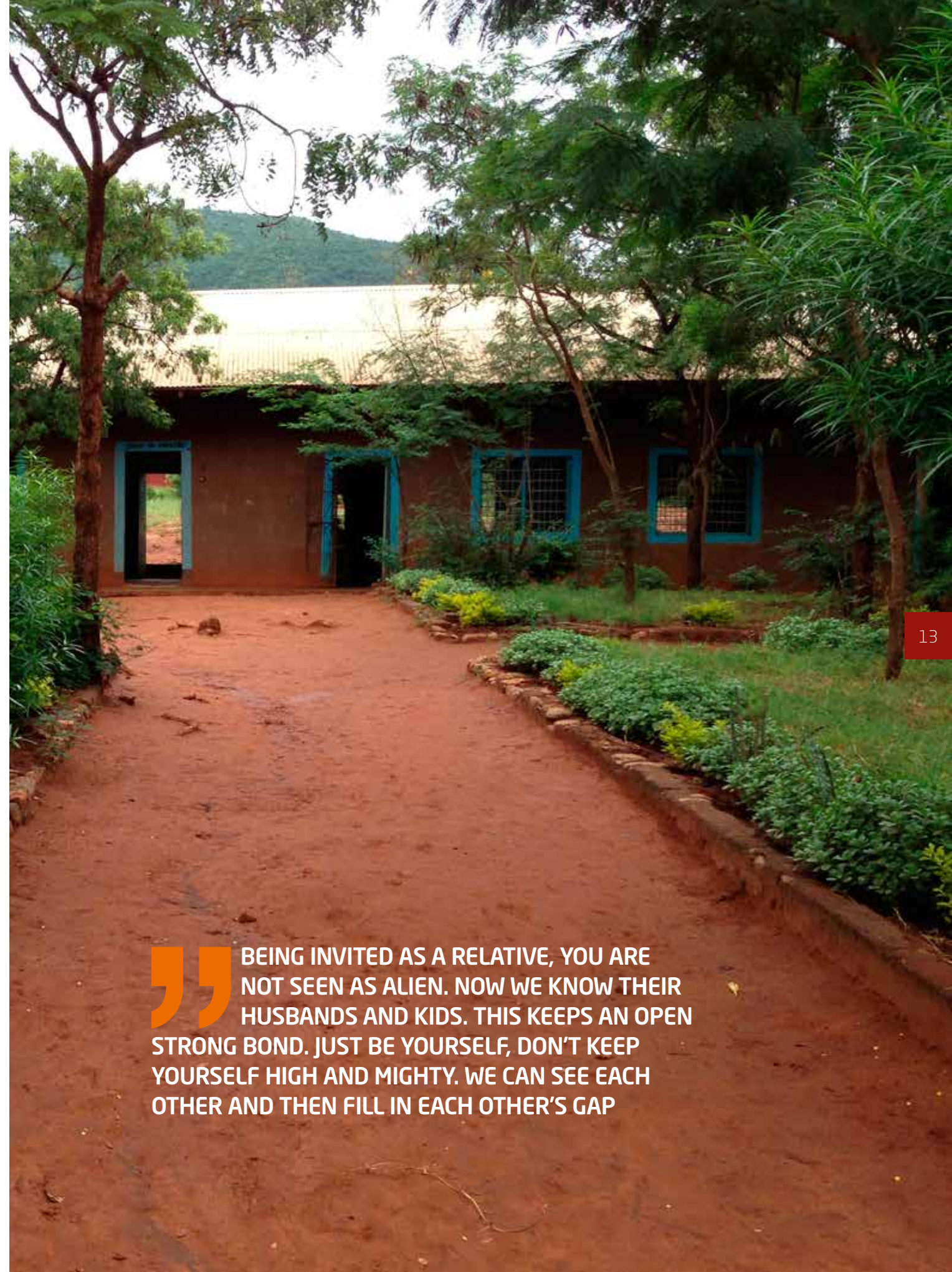
> BEING INVITED AS A RELATIVE, YOU ARE NOT SEEN AS ALIEN. NOW WE KNOW THEIR HUSBANDS AND KIDS. THIS KEEPS AN OPEN STRONG BOND. JUST BE YOURSELF, DON'T KEEP YOURSELF HIGH AND MIGHTY. WE CAN SEE EACH OTHER AND THEN FILL IN EACH OTHER'S GAP

Ensuring political support

Political anchoring via the steering group was expressed as being essential, not only to obtain a mandate and priority for the ongoing partnership, but also to make necessary decisions, to guide and direct, to monitor and follow up, and to ensure that the results will be sustainable. In this manner, according to those interviewed, a large part of democratic development occurs through the steering group. In partnerships where the steering group is weak (either the entire the group or just one party), the entire partnership can easily fail when one of the named tasks does not function properly. Many think that the design of the steering group is good. Since it has representatives from both the political majority and the opposition, a broad political consensus is created, which makes the partnership less vulnerable. The cooperation agreement is described as an important document regarding anchorage and sustainability. Several individuals also describe the importance of anchoring the partnership at national level.

Expectations and joint ownership

The group from Arvidsjaur is one of several that pointed out the importance of the parties, at an early stage in the partnership, working together to reconcile what expectations the groups have of each other. This includes clarifying that cooperation is a shared responsibility so that everyone has the same understanding and that the parties experience a common ownership. Several individuals from cooperating municipalities report that they initially thought there would be so-called investment money available within the Programme. When the parties later understood the strengths of sharing experiences, they thought that the major advantages and benefits of the method of cooperation became clear. It was occasionally noted, however, that the parties may be required to request special funds from their own national level or, alternatively, from other organisations for implementations that require investment funds.

Project planning and context

Several expressed the view that a relevant problem must first be identified and a good, clear project plan prepared later. If possible, it is useful to produce a baseline in order to more convincingly communicate the successes and progress that have been achieved to residents. The project plan should be specific and clear in order to facilitate its implementation. One important aspect is that parties do not initially make the project too big. Instead, it is consid-

ered better to allow it grow in tack with its progress and acceptance. It is crucial to identify and include important stakeholders such as, for example, residents, institutions of higher education, local businesses and other relevant organisations or groups. Several individuals indicated the inclusion of appropriate stakeholders as a decisive factor for the sustainability of results.

With the formulation of objectives, the parties often reconciled their plans against local operational plans plus any established national and international aspirations. One example is the partnership between Machakos and Robertsfors where the parties interconnected their local challenges with the Millennium Development Goals. Each partnership must be adapted to the context that prevails in the specific cooperation. In Tsumeb, the group remarked: "The first important factor mentioned is the crucial involvement of all relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, it is important that all have a common and clear understanding of the project. Then it makes it much easier ..."

Commitment and involvement

In the interviews, the ICLD has met many committed people. Commitment and involvement is often specified as an important force when a group of individuals working together wants to effect change and development. The parties highlight the importance of the individual for successful collaboration within a partnership. Within the partnerships, there are also many enthusiasts, which in itself can be regarded as a strength. However, this does not mean that an individual should make herself or himself indispensable, thus making the partnership vulnerable. There are examples where enthusiasts have not adequately included others and, above all, have failed to document properly, with adverse consequences for the cooperation.

> **TIME IS NEEDED TO MEET AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS, TRUST AND CONFIDENCE BETWEEN EACH OTHER. WHEN IN PLACE, THIS CREATES TRANSPARENCY AND ACCEPTANCE IN THE GROUP.**

14

15

COOPERATION IN THE WORLD

Low risk for corruption

Lack of funds in the Programme for capital investment is perceived by many as positive since the risk of corruption thus becomes very small. Nevertheless, it is important to establish selection criteria for those participating in a partnership regarding what they are committing themselves to, as well as which rules and regulations are governing. The partners highlight the importance of being observant of various power relationships.

Side-effects and unexpected results

The ICLD often hears about what the parties themselves describe as unexpected results or side-effects that have resulted from a partnership. Several examples of this became evident in the IQAs that were conducted in 2014. The following descriptions are thus descriptions from the municipalities themselves. This does not mean that the ICLD considers them as unexpected results or side-effects, but rather that they are, in fact, a part of the results. This may be due to the development of the Programme mentioned in the beginning of this report.

Awareness

In many interviews, explanations of awareness are described in somewhat different ways as an unexpected result. Sometimes it was about how elected officials and civil servants become aware of problems in a way that they had not expected, and that is perceived as new. On other occasions, it involves raising the awareness of the public in general. In Mwanga, Omaruru and Machakos, interviewees report that they feel that the municipality has become much cleaner as a result of the public's increased awareness as a result of the partnership: "Machakos town has become more beautiful and clean. A strong sense of responsibility of taking care of your garbage has grown from this partnership and the practical implementation. We learnt from Robertsfors that it is possible to clean the city at night with better torches and lights. In 2011 we became the second cleanest city in Kenya." In Mwanga, there are also examples of how the district has become much cleaner. Among other measures, they have introduced collective cleaning after each church attendance on Sundays.

The team from Sarajevo highlights another aspect of the awareness that they were not expecting. They describe that they learned a lot from seeing how Swedish citizens' political awareness is linked to accountability.

Self-confidence, responsibility and ownership

Both Arvidsjaur and Mwanga tell us in different ways about how self-confidence among civil servants increased in both municipalities. This is seen in different ways, among other things, in increased confidence of the staff involved in the partnership leading to more people daring to adopt a more prominent attitude and take their professional role more seriously. This is primarily described as a side-effect of the partnership, but some had not expected this effect.

Another manifestation is that groups dare to discuss a greater range of issues than before and have different perceptions. For example, discussing and daring to express their opinion on the new Constitution. The parties describe that they sometimes sit up at night and discuss different issues of concern. In Mwanga, the group comments: "We are proud and have confidence now to take care of the environment. We feel an ownership of the problem and our environment. Before we thought that it was a problem for the government to take care of, not ours. We can make a change."

Trust and relationships

There are several examples of how civil servants and elected officials in the partner country feel that their relationships internally within the municipality have changed as a consequence of the partnership, something that they had not expected. In Ulundi, one civil servant remarked: "The relationship between councillors and officials has improved. Councillors have not really known what the municipality has done regarding waste management, now they realise that. Thereby trust has increased." In Mwanga they commented:

> **WHEN IT COMES TO LEADERSHIP WE HAVE SEEN THE SWEDISH INFORMAL RELATION AND DIALOGUE BETWEEN OFFICIALS AND POLITICIANS. IT IS POSITIVE TO TALK MORE ON EQUAL TERMS. THE PARTNERSHIP HAS GIVEN US PRIDE IN OUR WORK"**

"Now we plan and discuss together with our politicians" and in Omaruru they are talking about the same thing regarding leadership: "When it comes to leadership we have seen the Swedish informal relation and dialogue between officials and politicians. It is positive to talk more on equal terms. The partnership has given us pride in our work!"

Structural changes and new networks

In Tsumeb, the team explains that Namibia's first municipal company has started up in the municipality as a side-effect of the project. They got the idea from Falun when their economist had the opportunity to spend a day together with his counterpart when they visited the municipality. The activity was not part of the project plan at the time the application was made.

Other municipalities talk about new unexpected networks that have arisen. In Ugu, Sundsvall explains that a new network of teachers has been formed. The team in Ugu describes other structural changes: "Through the partnership, we have been able to integrate activities in the municipality. For example it makes us understand the needs of the department of education and how we can assist them. This partnership has created a platform for communication with other local actors in a way that we did not do before."

In Tsumeb, a national network has been created with other parties active within the Programme. "As a side-effect of the partnership we have started networking with other partners in Namibia on waste. For example, we visited Swakopmund and Rundu in Kavango visited us. In that way we can help and improve each other's work."

In the cooperation between Östsam and SERDA, one unexpected result the parties experienced was that the private recycling operator Aida Commerce has increased its interaction with regional administrations and municipal organisations, and has even signed an agreement with the Vogosca municipality. Aida Commerce was allowed to join a partnership trip to Sweden within the project, after which it developed a significant part its recycling operations. The fact that all local citizens have an opportunity to sell scrap to Aida Commerce means that a further opportunity for income for vulnerable groups in society has arisen, in this case the Romani, who are exposed to considerable discrimination in the labour market.

What is sometimes described as 'ripples' arises within the municipality when departments other than the one that is active within the program are affected in a positive way: "There has been a town planning effect that has come out of this cooperation between Tsumeb and Falun. The improvement of the waste management plan also influenced the structuring plan. Some ideas from the waste management project also affected policies within other sectors."

Both Robertsfors and Machakos talk about the Green Solutions Week conference as a side-effect of the partnership. For Robertsfors, the conference resulted in an incredible dissemination. For example, a 'Green Solution brochure' explaining all about their partnership has been available at Swedish embassies around the world. This has resulted in entirely new contacts – a completely new network. In Machakos, they describe it like this: "It started as a collaboration funded by ICLD, some years ago between the municipality of Machakos and Robertsfors, and has now evolved to a meeting place between local and national authorities in Kenya, but also other stakeholders, Swedish and international organisations." (A Dialogue Document from the Conference Green Solutions Week, 2011:04 SIDA Partnership Forum)

Increased resources to partner municipalities

The ICLD has also been told about increased resources allocated to the municipality by funding agencies other than the ICLD as a consequence of the partnership. For example, the emergency services department in Poti received a new concrete floor as well as paint, and was able to expand the number of services. In Machakos, a MoU has been signed with private investors, which is expected to lead to positive effects in the future.

Xenophobia in Europe

In both Falun and Arvidsjaur, the xenophobic trend underway in Europe is gradually influencing society. The experience gained from working with partnerships can become valuable for the municipalities' work in this field. For example, a workshop on xenophobia was held in Falun, where they used their lessons learned about participating projects. The municipalities describe the importance of transparency and of discussing these particular issues.

New projects and new cooperative efforts

In a municipal partnership of long duration, the parties have often had many projects that are integrated with each other. It is positive that the projects benefit from each other, but it can be difficult to report on the results of individual projects. This has also been described by

> **THE TRAINING CAME TOO EARLY, AT A TIME WHEN WE HADN'T YET HAD THE DAMS IN PLACE; WE WERE PRESENTED THE VISION RATHER THAN THE PROCESS. WE THEREFORE DID NOT HAVE THE POSSIBILITY TO USE THE KNOWLEDGE WE GOT.**

the parties as an unexpected result – that, via the collaboration, new ideas would arise for new projects and new areas of cooperation, and that past results find use in the new projects.

Sometimes the active municipalities inspire other municipalities to form partnerships of their own. An example of this is Kajiado County and the city of Umeå, which had not worked together previously within the Municipal Partnership Programme. They have been inspired by the Machakos and Robertsfors cooperation, and are now applying for a partnership together.

Positive recognition for the municipality

Many of the partnerships gain recognition and attention in a positive way in the news media in the partner countries. The municipalities describe this as important in several respects, but not something that they had expected. This creates confidence and pride, along with the feeling that their municipality can become a model for others. There are hopes that this positive attention can lead to more positive things.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Correlation technical projects – development of local democracy

Experience exchange or capital investments – what will lead to implementation?

How is it possible to focus on an exchange of experiences when the need for tangible infrastructure investment is so obvious? This is a question that has been raised and dealt with differently in partnerships with a focus on municipal technical services where the IQAs have been conducted. Many partnership projects that develop models, methods or systems are in need of investments in order to implement the results.

The relationship between learning via an exchange of experience and capital investment in, for example, dams, wells and new landfill sites, has appeared different in the projects where the ICLD implemented IQAs during the year. In some cases, the Swedish municipalities themselves passed on second-hand 'products' to their partner municipality. For example, Östhammar transferred their used fire engines to Poti in Georgia, and then later on carried out an exchange of experience regarding their use and management. In other cases, part of the exchange of experience focused on learning to acquire financial investments. Tsumeb and

Falun collaborated on the development of a sustainable refuse collection plan, in which one element was to strengthen the capacity around writing applications to obtain investment money. In their partnership, the municipalities' own commitment and investments were present as a guarantee of being able to achieve the partnership objectives. There are several examples of how the establishment of objectives for the project is connected to the municipality's already previously planned investments.

The cooperating partners often highlight implementation as an important part of the partnership. They emphasise the value of experience 'arriving' at the right moment for it to lead to something that can be implemented. "The training came too early, at a time when we hadn't yet had the dams in place; we were presented with the vision rather than the process. We therefore did not have the possibility to use the knowledge we got," reports a project participant from Omaruru. The timing may depend upon when the exchange of experiences is made in relation to when the financial investment is made. The implementation depends upon not only financial investments, but also on when and how key decisions are made by local political officials. Political influence over the project planning affects the achievement of the objectives.

The results of the interviews indicate that cases where the partnership projects have had a strong focus on objectives related to increased knowledge instead of products being in place have been more successful in achieving sustainable results. Having to rely on other funding agencies or sponsors investing in the products as a starting point has, in some cases, been a major risk factor. In the latter case, the exchange of experience and learning fails. Another conclusion is the critical importance of making it clear what the politicians are responsible for and what their responsibilities are in a municipal partnership. It is especially important that this is clear from the very beginning. A strong relationship between the project team and the steering group is an essential element for a successful implementation.

Service delivery establishes confidence and trust

In the partnerships the ICLD has visited, those interviewed described how the projects led to the municipality being able to improve the services they have the responsibility to provide to the residents. The IQA studies show that this is primarily what the Municipal Partnership Programme contributes to these infrastructure projects. This has been shown in examples such as

Tsumeb in Namibia, Ulundi in South Africa, and Sarajevo in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which drafted plans for and improved their waste management. In addition, Ugu in South Africa and Omaruru in Namibia have improved the water supply in their respective municipalities. Poti in Georgia has strengthened its capabilities concerning its emergency rescue services and Mwanga in Tanzania has improved access to renewable energy. But how do these examples show development of local democracy? Is it possible to see that increased service delivery also impacts the poorest citizens' needs?

The partnerships where IQAs were conducted include examples of how the enhanced community services increased living standards of the poorest sectors. For example, Ugu describes how the secure delivery of water has increased specifically for poorer residents who as a rule live in rural areas. In the previously mentioned example from Sarajevo, it shows how income opportunities for vulnerable social groups are created. These opportunities existed before the project, but they have been expanded thanks to more types of refuse that can be recycled. Previously it was mainly the Romani who brought in waste and scrap; now it is also elderly citizens and the unemployed.

Something that consistently emerges in all the partnership projects visited is how the municipalities' improved delivery of public services strengthened their confidence and trust vis-à-vis the residents. In Omaruru, one representative comments: "We had a situation where we didn't have water at all! The boreholes were broken, and dried out, because we couldn't maintain them, and the politicians didn't see it as a priority. Through the partnership they made it a priority. Service delivery is key to people's trust and confidence, otherwise no one trusts that you are capable". In Poti, residents have become aware of the municipality's strengthened capacity for emergency services and are thus beginning to interact more with the local authorities.

That strengthening the delivery of public services leads to greater confidence and trust in the municipality is something that the ICLD regards as an important link between infrastructure projects and the development of local democracy in the Municipal Partnership Programme. With increased confidence, inhabitants dare to believe in the local-level decision-making and begin to turn to local authorities not only to use resources but also to themselves exert their influence by raising issues and challenges. In this manner, the municipal partnership acts as a catalyst for increased participation from local residents, thereby contributing to the development of local democracy.

Existing or new forms for citizen dialogue?

How and whether projects result in cooperative partners establishing new forms for dialogue with the citizens is one way that the ICLD measures the development of local democracy. The question is what can be regarded as creating an increased dialogue with the citizens, thereby demonstrating the development of local democracy? Are more forms of dialogue with citizens available? Are a greater number and new groups participating and getting involved, albeit in the existing forms, which ICLD has seen in the infrastructure projects that have been the focus for 2014's IQAs. The meetings with inhabitants are often described in the form of awareness campaigns; information to raise awareness that in many cases goes from the municipality to the inhabitants and not in the other direction.

One way is to involve the affected population groups in the project planning at an early stage. Another way is to work with awareness campaigns for the relevant issues that the project concerns. In the latter case, it appears that the projects to some extent use existing methods to reach out with their information and in some cases establish new methods.

In those cases when the poorest people are involved at the beginning, it is possible to see a stronger link to the alleviation of poverty. Mwanga is an example of where the close link between the people and local politicians led to that they worked with the women's cooperative and briquette making machine in Kivolini, the poorest village in the district.

In Mwanga, already existing forms for dialogue with residents were employed, such as via schools and environmental clubs, to raise awareness about the project theme. Also in Omaruru and Tsumeb, existing channels for providing information to the residents were used to increase awareness about water and waste management; issues were highlighted through already established meeting formats and media channels. In Sarajevo and Ulundi, the dialogue on environmental issues was established via the existing educational system.

In Mwanga, it was noted that a change at the organisational level in terms of dialogue with citizens occurred as a side-effect of the project on renewable energy. The dialogue between the citizens in Mwanga and the organisation has changed and the value of having a dialogue with the citizens and anchoring

> **WE HAD A SITUATION WHERE WE DIDN'T HAVE WATER AT ALL! THE BORE HOLES WERE BROKEN, AND DRIED OUT, BECAUSE WE COULDN'T MAINTAIN THEM, AND THE POLITICIANS DIDN'T SEE IT AS A PRIORITY. THROUGH THE PARTNERSHIP THEY MADE IT A PRIORITY.**

the work politically has increased. The technical projects where the ICLD performed IQAs include further examples where dialogue and various forms of involving citizens are described as a side-effect or by-product, rather than the central focus.

External parties as agents of pro-democracy change

In some cases, partnership municipalities have used civil society organisations (CSOs), universities or private companies as mediators, 'implementers,' or experts in factual issues. In several cases, external actors are used to involve the residents of the municipality. Omaruru cooperates with an umbrella organisation that gathers together several water supply organisations. The organisation brings together the voices from the residents and also acts as a watchdog to ensure that the municipality uses the water properly. The company Aida Commerce, which has already been mentioned, is one example, and in Tsumeb, the collaboration with students from the Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, is described as a significant contribution to its results. The students' research and investigations concerning the situation with refuse in Tsumeb formed the basis for dialogue meetings with the city's residents. The investigation opened up opportunities for dialogue with new groups in society, including the group of people who live off and on garbage dumps, and reassessed their value.

The ICLD looks very favourably upon interaction with other actors when it strengthens the project objective. Questions that the ICLD raises relate to how the cooperation can be reinforced and strengthened in order to lead to a situation where the development of local democracy is fostered. It is also important to ask the question of whether this may be counter-productive to the ICLD's objectives for the Municipal Partnership Programme, in other words, strengthening the local government's capacity. One issue for the ICLD to discuss further is whether it is the citizens' trust and confidence in the civil society's organisations that is strengthened, rather than the municipalities? Is there a risk that these solutions can be a way for municipalities to forego responsibility for the dialogue with their citizens?

Enhanced self-confidence and increased transparency

In Ulundi, project participants say that the partnership has led to increased dialogue and cooperation between administrations, between elected officials and civil servants, between the municipality and the traditional system, and between the municipality and the local busi-

ness community. Their opinion is that it has increased transparency and insight into the decisions and pathways to decision-making in the municipality.

Similarly, participants in Mwanga said they feel that they own their 'freedom of thought' in a different way as a result of the partnership, which affects their position in the organisation. They describe that the partnership has led to increased awareness of the ownership over local issues and a strengthened self-confidence to take responsibility for them. Many of the project participants visited by the ICLD describe a strong sense of self-confidence, often as a direct result of having seen a different type of society via the exchange made possible by the Programme. One individual in a municipality describes how it personally made him feel a greater ownership: "I am a land surveyor, with more infrastructure focus. My first job was to measure everything, update all the pumps and the infrastructure. I wasn't keen to see what the people needed. But the partnership project made me being more focused, and to feel responsible and responsive for what people need."

This strengthened ownership to which several projects testify can perhaps be said to lead to stronger local governance. The 2014, IQAs have shown several examples where it has led to the municipality taking greater responsibility for local issues.

First improved service – then democracy

One of the most distinct reflections made is that several of these technical projects continued their cooperation in new projects that focus more clearly on aspects of democracy, such as getting citizens engaged and working to raise awareness.

In Tsumeb, they say that "The next project would favourably be looking into the 'soft issues,' when the 'hardware' is done. It will be focused on changing minds and attitudes when it comes to waste, it will be focusing on you as an individual. That is how we also connect the waste issue into a project focusing on democracy improvement." In Poti, the emergency rescue service cooperation has now led to a partnership project on young people's opportunities for exerting influence. In Machakos, they describe that the project has changed a great deal regarding attitudes about sustainability issues. To create long-term change, however, they are now working on a project involving participation and influence for young people and their possibility to influence local policies towards sustainable development. "We see it as a natural step, that the project on sustainable devel-

opment lives on through the youth," comments a project participant in Robertsfors.

In Machakos, Kenya, a new form of capacity centre as a forum for learning about sustainability issues was

established as a result of the partnership project. The refuse disposal project in Tsumeb has been preceded by a project where a learning centre for residents was established. The present plans are for it to be used in

SUMMARISED REFLECTIONS, TECHNICAL SERVICES AND DEMOCRACY

From the IQAs conducted in 2014, the ICLD can see that partnership projects with an emphasis on technical services tend to be or become dependent on investments. How the projects have dealt with this has varied. Technical projects are often implemented in parallel with projects that are focused on dialogue and learning. This dialogue with citizens is often conducted by awareness-raising campaigns about the issue at hand, and often the dialogue created is regarded as a side-effect. The technical projects often lead to new projects where democratisation issues are more clearly brought into focus. They also lead to the strengthening of local government, in particular through improvements in the delivery of public services. This leads to increased trust and confidence in local government, which in turn can lead to increased participation. The IQAs have also shown increased organisational transparency and individual self-confidence, which has in turn strengthened local governments in several ways.

the project. In Mwanga, a learning centre was built parallel to the project for renewable sources of energy.

Democratisation at the Swedish partner

"The Swedish partner has most probably learned more about our different forms of democracy than about the subject of cooperation itself," commented a project participant from one of the Swedish municipalities.

To a large extent, most of the changes that have occurred among the Swedish partners in the 'IQA projects' deal with the importance of reflecting upon their own activities in an international context, about new perspectives on their own operations and activities, and improved internal collaboration. In one example, it was mentioned that the Swedish partner learned more about the different forms for dialogue with residents than on the actual topic of the cooperation itself. Most of the examined partnerships cannot describe any results in the Swedish municipality that directly developed the area of cooperation in question, but it was felt certain that new perspectives on, for example, their own working methods and practices or policies, did lead to renewal and development.

One example of how both partners developed within the theme of cooperation is the cooperation between Robertsfors and Machakos. Machakos, a neighbouring region to the city of Nairobi, is expanding quite rapidly and there are plans to develop various industries, primarily IT-related. Robertsfors does not have the same situation in terms of expansion, but nevertheless shares the same challenges in ensuring that development takes place in a sustainable manner. During a three-year project, they have together worked to increase the respective municipalities' capacity to work towards a sustainable society. Action plans and capacity centres for sustainable development have been built up in both locations. In Robertsfors, the capacity centre has taken the form of a website to better adapt to the context. In addition, the development of the project for youth participation and influence by young people is planned, implemented and evaluated based on both parties' perspectives.

What affects the results achieved for the Swedish partner? To a large extent, this has something to do with the design and structure of the Programme. It is important to look more closely at what made some partnerships more clearly based on a common challenge, with clear objectives for both parties. Perhaps it's the basis on which the parties began to cooperate? Or the project manager's role in establishing forms for equal relationships?

The impact of external factors

External factors have a major influence on the results, which became obvious with the IQAs.

National and local levels

One prominent factor affecting the partnership's ability to achieve results is the relationship of local decision-making to the national level. In projects where the ICLD conducted an IQA in 2014, this deals, among other things, with how new laws within the subject area of cooperation impact the results. In Tsumeb, the project leader describes the effects of a new state-organised transformation of waste management and how they confidently look forward to new environment and climate legislation that better lives up to international standards taking effect.

Also relevant is how areas of responsibility are changing between the various different levels. In some cases, there have been huge changes during the course of the project. In Kenya, an extensive constitutional change led to fundamental changes in local decision-making levels. Instead of small municipality-like units, local government is now governed in larger regions called Counties. The Partnership Project's management was forced to change 'residence.' From having the project and steering group 'owned' by the mayor and leading elected officials in the Machakos Municipal Council, ownership transferred to the Department of Education and Social Affairs in Machakos County, a solution and change that both parties believe has worked smoothly. The highlighted critical success factor is that the transition was strategically coordinated; partnership coordinators met with key strategic stakeholders at the appropriate point in time. It was also crucial that the Swedish partner had good process understanding, according to the project manager in Machakos who comments: "Also the Swedish partner's extensive understanding and knowledge about the changes affected the smoothness of the transformation. The Swedish coordinator was going through the Constitution and knew what was expected." Their joint collaboration has also shown that changes can lead to something positive. The Capacity Centre has now spread to all nine 'sub-Counties.' Joint collaboration with other stakeholders and an ambition to constantly 'scale up' has constituted a solid foundation.

That the national level has the possibility to make decisions concerning various types of community and social services, and who finances them, does affect the

> **ALSO THE SWEDISH PARTNER'S EXTENSIVE UNDERSTANDING AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE CHANGES AFFECTED THE SMOOTHNESS OF THE TRANSFORMATION. THE SWEDISH COORDINATOR WAS GOING THROUGH THE CONSTITUTION AND KNEW WHAT WAS EXPECTED."**

26

27

partnerships. The ICLD can see a difference in how partnerships manage the relationship with the national level. Communication between local and national level is often the subject of discussion about improvements. One factor that determined how well the projects were able to successfully deal with the difficulties and pressures from the national level is how firmly the project is anchored in the organisation and how well-established the relationship with the Swedish partner is. That the project's steering group works strategically and with a long-term focus is also crucial. The IQAs that were conducted in 2014 show the importance of making a clear context and risk analysis at the start of project planning. Providing context-specific support to the local level in a proper manner is a key issue for the ICLD.

Thematic priorities

The themes of environment/climate change, human rights and democracy as well as gender equality must be integrated throughout programmes funded with Swedish development assistance. In most of the IQAs that the ICLD conducted in 2014, responses concerning the thematic priorities for the development assistance were weak. This may reflect that the previous application forms for these older partnerships gave less guidance regarding thematic priorities.

During the interviews, many project participants came up with more ideas about how the problem, the objectives and the activities could be influenced by these analyses. For instance, it was stressed that even refuse disposal and access to clean drinking water and electricity affect women and men differently. From this starting point, consideration was given to how the project might have been or should be developed taking these perspectives into account.

Certain Swedish partners described how they placed demands on the cooperation partner that the project group must include both women and men. This occurred after the cooperating municipalities selected only male representatives. In some cases, structural difficulties and political opposition towards the integration of the thematic priorities was expressed.

Development related to the thematic priorities has sometimes been described as something that occurs in more informal situations; everyday situations in which participants from the cooperating partners come together to see how tasks and routines are managed in different ways. This may be about who cooks and prepares the food or who washes clothes. However, it

can also be about the way that garbage is thrown away, or about how goods are reused. These situations often lead to fruitful discussions that relate to human rights, gender equality and environmental impact.

These IQAs provide the opportunity for the ICLD to immerse itself in what the thematic priorities mean for the Municipal Partnership Programme. What does it mean, for example, to have a gender equality analysis in the Programme? IQA methodology also offers the possibility to gain an understanding of the different norms and values in the questions and to pose the question as to whose standards and values should apply. Not least, it has demonstrated that clearly-put questions generate better answers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the implications for the development of the Municipal Partnership Programme

1. Improved support for activities within the Programme

The **External parties as agents of pro-democracy change** section describes the risks associated with municipalities cooperating with Civil Society Organisations at the expense of the development of a greater dialogue with local residents. This may perhaps be a topic for the ICLD's Knowledge Centre and Advisory Group to contribute more knowledge, or to ascertain if relevant research is lacking at present.

A couple of the interviewed stakeholders have requested improved opportunities to benefit from the results of other partnerships. This is well in line with and supports the Programme's plans to develop the website as a platform for disseminating results from the partnerships. For increased accessibility, the content should then be available in English. Another form of dissemination of experiences and results that has been requested is networking events. The ICLD has, in its current communication strategy, a plan for establishing networks. That facilitation of networking meetings should be possible in cooperation countries is also supported by the IQAs.

Further requests concerned support for risk analysis and management of deviations from the project plan. The ICLD can contribute with its collective experience of frequently occurring risks and how various deviations and changes can be managed and, to some extent, the deviations that have led to

partnerships being cancelled. Note that any decision to suspend cooperation lies with cooperation partners themselves.

2. Development of the application and reporting processes

As the Programme is aimed at alleviating poverty, it is important that the ICLD can ensure that the results of the partnerships working to improve municipal services will actually benefit resource-poor local residents. Monitoring suggests that the ICLD needs to set more stringent requirements regarding the presentation of this context in the application and reporting forms in order to be able to assess it. Other important items in the presentation of context is how local levels related to regional and national levels and, for example, the situations regarding HIV/AIDS, political and social conflicts, colonial legacy and business climate.

These IQAs have resulted in the opportunity to look in-depth at what the thematic priorities mean for the program. Not the least, the IQA process has shown that clearer questions lead to better responses. A development effort has been initiated in which the issues surrounding the thematic priorities will

be integrated into the different phases of a project planning and thus in the individual sections of an application. The development work to integrate human rights as a thematic priority remains to be done. Requirements for gender distribution in the stakeholder groups, quality in the gender equality analyses, and accounts of whose norms and values are being applied are examples of issues to consider and take a stance on.

3. Development of the Programme

A local ownership is often mentioned as a key component in Swedish development cooperation. The Municipal Partnership Programme is built upon local ownership since the implementing municipalities also contain the target groups of the cooperation. The IQA in Mwanga revealed that the municipality has in practice taken a larger ownership of the areas of responsibility formally prescribed to them via Tanzania's decentralisation process. The question of whether this type of development should be measured within the Programme is therefore timely and should be part of the discussions concerning its development.

Another issue relating to the Programme comes from an observation confirmed by the IQAs, namely that projects that begin by developing municipal services often continue to develop other dimensions of local democracy, especially concerning citizen influence. This could perhaps motivate new modules within the Programme that enable the possibility to seek funding for multi-stage cooperation, such as planning – implementing – making aware.

Furthermore, the need to facilitate cooperation with strategic partners is apparent. One challenge for the parties in the cooperation countries is finances. In the ICLD's current guidelines, reimbursement for transportation costs is permitted in Sweden but not in the cooperation countries nor during the time between meetings of both partners. One development of the guidelines would therefore be to allow these expenses, either generally within the partnership or more focused on strategic cooperation.

It has been made apparent that different stakeholders interpret the meaning of reciprocity in different ways. The ICLD has identified four main types of interpretations through the 2014 IQAs:

1. That the parties have identified a common challenge in both of the municipalities that the project should solve. For example, when both parties need to develop their waste management plans and, via the partnership, produce two project plans (which need not be identical) that are then implemented in each respective municipality.
2. That the cooperation partner has identified the challenge that must be solved in the cooperating municipality and that the Swedish partner supports them in these efforts rather than visiting their country and telling them what problem they have.
3. That the partners work side-by-side where everyone has the same information and documents and reports jointly.
4. That the Swedish partner acts as support when the partner in the cooperation asks for it, but that implementation is carried out solely by the partner in the cooperation country. With this particular interpretation, support usually consists of a transfer of knowledge from the Swedish partner to the cooperation partner.

These various interpretations of reciprocity are important to consider in the forthcoming revision of the guidelines.

4. Development of Programme objectives

Improved service delivery is central to increasing the municipalities' legitimacy and confidence in the examples highlighted in this report. When this report was written, service delivery was one of the five dimensions of local democracy that the partnerships can push for. Other alternatives are possible, such as regarding service delivery as an intermediate objective that leads to local democracy and not as the objective itself. Yet another alternative is to regard service delivery as an intermediate objective for the Municipal Partnership Programme but not as a dimension of local democracy. With this latter way of thinking, even the strengthened organisational capacity acknowledged in the monitoring could be categorized as an intermediate objective for the Programme without it being defined as a dimension of local democracy.

The project leaders' assessment of the partnership's communication with local residents made it clear that a majority used existing forms of citizen dialogue. In several cases, the participants reported a high participation from local residents. At present, the ICLD measures the share of projects that have developed new forms for citizenship dialogue. The formulation of the Programme's objectives means that results related to the improvement, expansion and implementation of existing dialogue mechanisms are not recognised. This relationship also applies to improvements in municipal services, consideration of vulnerable social groups, and the other dimensions of local democracy. One result of the monitoring is that the intermediate objectives can be reformulated in order to better express the anticipated results.

(See how the work has evolved under the heading **New results framework as of January 1, 2016.**)

A warm thank-you to all who participated in the ICLD's interviews and visits!