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Contribution of Decentralized Cooperation to Decentralization in Africa

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Preface

Decentralized cooperation is an innovative way of supplementing development assistance within the context of decentralised governance. Initiated after World War II, mostly in the form of twinning, it was initially aimed at building bridges of understanding and confidence between peoples of nations which had been at war. Nowadays its objectives are much broader than the traditional twinning. These include community development - with a focus on meeting basic needs, municipal capacity development, awareness-raising and development education.

The study highlights that decentralized cooperation can be considered as one of the main strategies and tools for achieving the eight Millennium Development Goal which among other targets, aims at promoting commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction through partnerships and collaboration. In this regard, decentralized cooperation is seen as a vehicle for creating lasting North-South, mutually rewarding cooperation that can foster sustainable development. Recent trends, in fact, show an increasing importance of decentralized cooperation and decentralization as more and more essential pillars of the new Euro-African partnership architecture.

As demonstrated by the study, this type of cooperation applies a bottom-up approach through institutional, social and grass roots partnerships between institutions and civil societies of two or more entities. Working on common interests and needs rather than the opinions of the different parties in conflict, decentralized cooperation also can play an essential role in promoting conflict resolution and peace building.

Due to its specificities, the potential contribution of decentralized cooperation to decentralized governance is tremendous. However, for this potential to be tapped in, partnering local authorities should not be tempted to implement projects that offer potential quick-wins without concurring actions in the areas of capacity development and institutional support for decentralized governance.

One of the constraints, highlighted in the study, is the lack of systemic collection and analysis of data on ongoing decentralized cooperation initiatives. This limits the possibility for a thorough assessment of decentralized cooperation and of its actual impact on the process of decentralization in Africa.

Thus the study represents an attempt to address this topic and hopefully it will serve the purpose of highlighting some of the relevant issues of a future research agenda.



GUIDO BERTUCCI

Director of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management

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Acknowledgements and Notes

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Chapter I and chapter III - Mr. George W. Matovu, Regional Director of the Municipal Development Partnership- Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Chapter II - Prof. Andrea de Guttury, full professor of Public International Law and Director of International Research Laboratory on Conflict, Development and Global Politics at the Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, Pisa, Italy.

Chapter IV and Chapter V - Luisa Nardi, Research Fellow at the Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, Pisa, Italy.

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The views expressed are those of the individual authors and not of the United Nations.

Executive Summary

The objective of the study on the “Contribution of Decentralized Cooperation on Decentralization in Africa” is to assess whether the Euro-African decentralized cooperation activities have an impact on decentralization process in the African nations. This issue was examined through desk research, published books, workshop reports, articles in newsletters and journals, Internet search and Interviews.

After examining the various ways in which decentralized cooperation is defined by practitioners, the study adopts - in line with the scope of the research - the following working definition: decentralized cooperation includes any project, initiative, or partnership for development cooperation among at least one European and one African sub-national authority.

Once defined, decentralized cooperation is analyzed for the value it brings to North-South relations. In particular it is emphasized that this type of cooperation:

- Calls for “better” development, which focuses on needs and priorities expressed by the population
- Establishes a clear framework for engagement of civil society in the international development and cooperation
- Consolidates cultural, technical and economic partnerships between local communities as a tool to promote human development and peace
- Provides an opportunity for conflict resolution and peace building
- Brings about sustainable cooperation at the local level, with the Northern partners contributing their own experience and transferring their knowledge and resources directly to the community/local entity concerned

The study then describes the general principles of decentralized cooperation which include:

- Promoting the active involvement of all groups of stakeholders
- Seeking consultation and complementarities between stakeholders
- Decentralizing management
- Introducing a process approach
- Giving priority to capacity building and institutional development

An overview of the history of decentralized cooperation is also offered to gauge the significant evolution it has had in the past decades. An important milestone in the advancement of decentralized cooperation is the Cotonou Agreement as it:

- Recognizes both local government and non-state actors as fully fledged actors and partners in international cooperation and development processes.
- Focuses on the specific importance given to the support of decentralization processes
- Is operationalized by country strategy papers (CSPs)

The innovating aspects of the Cotonou Agreement include the eligibility for funding of local authorities from the European Union, not only those from Africa. This decision was based on the general recognition that decentralized cooperation is an effective means for reinforcing development and on the unique role European local authorities can play in this process

The study then examines the motivating factors for promoting decentralized cooperation. These differ in Africa from Europe. In the former this type of cooperation is stimulated by the need to overcome challenges including economic structural adjustment programmes, failures in central government systems to deliver, misuse of aid resources and the eagerness to transform local governments as engines of development. In Europe, on the contrary, one of the strongest motivating factors is the sense of frustration caused by the persistent poverty affecting developing countries.

The following lessons emerged from the analysis of five case studies on decentralized cooperation experiences from an African perspective:

- The practitioner-to-practitioner approach provides a collegial mutual working relationship among partners that can be effective in sharing expertise and knowledge to tackle challenges faced by cities
- A mutually rewarding partnership should be based upon equity and reciprocal inputs from partners
- Openness is needed in preparing agreements that need to include, among other measures, indicators of progress
- Community based organizations should be given prominence in partnership agreements in order to increase confidence among the various actors
- Agreements should be structured around one or two main actions directly benefiting the affected communities
- The cooperation between partners should be periodically evaluated
- Local authorities need to ensure that procedures are in place for the careful consideration of financial transactions

The conclusion, drawn from three case studies on European decentralized cooperation experiences, is that the choice of focusing decentralized cooperation activities on decentralized governance is a winning one. However, the following preconditions need to be fulfilled if these actions are to succeed:

- A strong and enduring political support is required for the success of decentralized cooperation actions
- The European sub-national authority needs to have a developed institutional and organizational framework to be able to engage in decentralized cooperation activities. This increases the predictability of available cash-flow and human resources and ensures its ability to fulfill commitments made
- The existence of a previous relationship with the identified partner increases the possibility of positive outcome
- The adoption of a participatory approach that promotes ownership and empowerment is a key success factor
- The involvement of external expertise - beyond that available within the European local authority - on local governance and development cooperation is required to effectively sustain an African counterpart on decentralization matters. Time and resources should also be invested to gain knowledge of the legislative and administrative framework of the African partner
- The European local authority needs to realistically assess what it can offer; it should also play an active role, within a peer-to-peer perspective, not limited to channeling funds

- It is crucial to promote donor coordination and synergies to avoid duplication and wastage of resources. In addition, the project management cycle and the logical framework approach should be adopted to enable partners to properly manage the various project phases
- Local authorities need to work hard on their communication strategy if they want to attract the attention of the media
- An effective and sustainable development co-operation policy requires that both Northern and Southern parts need to clearly perceive the advantages of their collaboration

Finally, the study offers some recommendations for consideration by governments both in the developed and developing countries. The key messages are highlighted next:

- (i) Political support: the presence of a strong political support is to be considered as a pre-requisite for the initiation of any decentralized cooperation partnership and on its endurance will depend, to a large extent, the resilience of the partnership over the time.
- (ii) Institutional framework: an enabling institutional and organizational framework is instrumental in guaranteeing the success of any decentralized cooperation activity, and all the more so, for those activities sustaining decentralized governance that might place an extra-burden in terms of personnel commitment and require longer time-horizons.
- (iii) Decentralized cooperation as a process: decentralized cooperation is better framed as a process rather than as a series of discrete actions or once-off projects.
- (iv) Streamlining decentralized governance: when properly implemented, decentralized cooperation is process-oriented and also entails a peer-to-peer approach that increases local ownership and sustainability prospects.
- (v) Capacity development: decentralized cooperation in support of decentralization calls for the application of a number of skills and specific conceptual knowledge that local authorities do not necessarily possess.
- (vi) Additional technical expertise: it is crucial to access this external expertise that can be obtained, for instance, by partnering with specialized NGOs, research centres, universities or by taking part in targeted programmes offered by a National Association of Local Authorities or by an agency of the United Nations.
- (vii) Framing actions within local and national priorities and programmes: while this might appear a rather simplistic proposition, it can in fact be a difficult endeavor which often ends up undermining the ownership and sustainability of decentralized cooperation initiatives.
- (viii) Participation of civil society organizations: the added value of involving civil society through its diverse and various articulations – i.e. NGOs, trade-unions, CBOs, universities, church groups, business chambers, etc. – in development activities was recognized in a plethora of instruments adopted by the United Nations and the European Union level.

(ix) **Monitoring and Evaluation.** Decentralized cooperation activities are often not adequately monitored and not thoroughly evaluated. It is crucial to identify and apply appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

(x) **Funding.** The scarcity of funding for decentralized cooperation activities is a complaint shared by all sub-national authorities. African and European sub-national authorities should step up their lobbying efforts at national and international levels to increase the financial support they receive for decentralized cooperation.

(xi) **Research agenda and data gathering.** European bilateral donors should collect periodic data on ongoing decentralized cooperation initiatives. These data should be made widely available through a website possibly modeled on the one of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs that allows queries using different criteria (French sub-national authority involved, country of intervention, sector of intervention, international network).

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Acronyms

ACP	African, Caribbean, Pacific
AER	Assembly of European Regions
AREED	Africa Rural Energy Enterprise Development Programme
ART	Support programme for territorial and thematic networks of human development cooperation
ASCOMI	Association of Communes of Mbam and Inoubu
BDC	Belgian Development Co-operation
CALRE	Conference of European Legislative Regional Assemblies
CAPAQ	Support Unit for District Development Projects
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CRIS	Country Response Information Systems
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
CUL	Catholic University of Leuven
DBSA	Development Bank of South Africa
DC	Decentralised Co-operation
DG	Decentralised Governance
DSIF	Domini Social Investment Fund
EU	European Union
G7	Group of 7
GSO	Municipal Co-operation with Developing Countries Programme
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IST	Information Society Technologies
IULA	International Union of Local Authorities
KCC	Kampala City Council
KMC	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
LA21	Local Agenda 21
LASDAP	Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan
LC3	Local Council Level 3
LCC	Leuven City Council
LGIB	Local Government International Bureau
LGMB	Local Government Management Board
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MIC	Municipal International Co-operation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAHECO	Nakuru Affordable Housing and Environmental Co-operative
NALGAs	National Association of Local Government Authorities
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NMC	Nakuru Municipal Council
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECD-DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PC	Personal Computer
PGCH	Post-Graduate Centre for Human Settlements
SFR	Strategic Framework for Reform

SIDA	Swedish International Development Programme
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNOA	United Nations Office in Angola
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VVSG	Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities
UTO	United Towns Organization
WHO	World Health Organization
ZDC	Zonal Development Committee
ZINWA	Zimbabwe National Water Authority

INTRODUCTION

A. Foreword

The idea of development through decentralized cooperation is rapidly gaining attention as a means towards establishing and consolidating decentralized governance, promoting national and local development as well as redesigning and sustaining international cooperation. It is a strategy that is strongly supported by both bilateral and multilateral agencies - the United Nations, but also the European Union (EU), and the World Bank - national associations of local government authorities (NALGAs) and Civil Society organizations. Decentralized cooperation can safely be considered to be one of the main strategies and tools for achieving the 8th Millennium Development Goal (MDG) which among other targets, aims at promoting commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction through partnerships and collaboration. In that regard, decentralized cooperation is seen as a vehicle for creating lasting north-south; south-south; mutually rewarding cooperation that can foster sustainable development.

According to existing literature, the concept of decentralized cooperation in international cooperation appeared for the first time in the Fourth Lome Convention (1989), and it was expected to be an innovation on the micro projects approach introduced under Lome 1 (1975-80). This change created space for new actors from outside governments to become active participants in struggling against poverty, promoting local economic development, as well as social and cultural transformation. The change also opened a window for non-state actors to be eligible to use Lome resources, which hitherto were the monopoly of central government agencies. Since then, decentralized cooperation has made significant strides towards promoting joint local authority initiatives and city-to-city cooperation programmes and intensifying exchanges regarding development cooperation.

This should not come as a surprise because, as Jacques Jobin points out, growing urbanization and the need for sustainable development mean that problems require urgent solution both in the North and in the South.

Thus, whether to preserve quality of life, or to stimulate the local economy, or to reduce poverty, municipalities are, all, required, to some degree, to overcome the same problems. Deteriorating infrastructure often affects private investment, job creation, and productivity. Local economies are thus largely dependent on adequate infrastructure and quality of municipal services, if they are to stay competitive. These are challenging issues where municipal governments can learn from each other, share knowledge and experiences and assist each other. This is all the more crucial, because in addition to everyday's management of local affairs, municipalities are often the first level of government responsible for the quality of life of their citizens and the protection of the environment.

Then, not surprisingly, decentralized cooperation has often been credited for providing local authorities with motivation and space to exercise their autonomy and discretion based on the needs of their localities and populations, for allowing the mobilisation of actors in the civil society and players in public and private, local and national institutions around development programmes, but also for favouring exchange of know-how and expertise and institutional strengthening. Hence, it has been argued that decentralized cooperation enhances decentralized participatory democracy and governance as well as the principle of subsidiarity and local ownership of development.

While this might well be the case, one has to admit that the actual impact of decentralized cooperation on the process of decentralization has so far not thoroughly been assessed and there are only few and partial documented attempts in this direction. Whatever the reasons for this lacuna - be it because it has so far been taken for granted or because the fragmentation of decentralized cooperation initiatives made it difficult to draw conclusions across the field under exam - time has come to start addressing it.

B. Aim of the research

The aim of the research was to assess the impact of the Euro-African decentralized cooperation activities on the process of decentralization ongoing in many African countries.

C. Definition of decentralized cooperation

Before proceeding to briefly outline the structure of this work, it is of paramount importance to address the issue of the working definition of decentralized cooperation utilized in this study as to clarify the scope of the field under analysis.

There is no universally accepted definition of decentralized cooperation. Jangu Le Carpentier, President Delegate of United Towns Organizations (UTO) to the 1994 International meeting for Decentralized Cooperation with Africa, sponsored by the Council of Europe, emphasized that:

What is important today is the realization that decentralized cooperation is a concept with considerable impact. ... It is a notion, which is still a little vague. ... if we attempt to define it more precisely, we would be taking a risk: either it would be defined in such general terms that it becomes a maze of contradictions, or it would be defined in such a restrictive manner that everyone would be completely lost."

However, many forms of it share a common characteristic of involving non-state actors¹ in development and service provision. In January 2000, Philip Lowe of the European Commission issued an operational Guide to decentralized cooperation in which he defined the concept as first and foremost a different way of doing things which seeks to put stakeholders (of every kind) at the centre of the cooperation process and involve them throughout the activity cycle, setting out each party's role and responsibilities, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity². A UNDP study carried out in 2001 defined *Decentralized cooperation* as "a long-term partnership between communities in different cities or towns and as a mechanism for establishing a novel "partnership" modality, which focuses on direct relationships between regional territories, as opposed to the model that promotes bilateral cooperation at the national level"³. A Committee of Decentralized Cooperation of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), under the presidency of the Mayor of Lyon and Mr. Gérard Collomb that met on 10 February 2006 in

¹ Non-State Actors are defined as: private sector, economic and social partners (including trade unions) and civil society in all its forms (churches, self-help groups, community organizations, registered charities, independent research and academic institutions etc).

² Philip Lowe, (2002). Note to the Departments of DG DEV and Delegations in the ACP/ALA/MED Countries and CEEC, p. 2

³ Extracted from the Memorandum Of Understanding signed between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and The Assembly of European Regions (AER)

Washington, D.C. defined Decentralized Cooperation as “*a solid partnership between foreign local communities*” [aimed at] “*encouraging mutual prosperity and consolidate local development and governance*”. The UN-Habitat viewed decentralized cooperation as a process “whereby cities (and indeed other institutions) work together on defining their problems and devising appropriate solutions on the basis of shared experience among peer groups⁴”. Ambrogio Manenti of World Health Organization (WHO) defined decentralized cooperation as systematic cooperation links between local communities in donor countries and local communities in countries that need support⁵.

Decentralized cooperation is known under different names, such as twinning, city-to-city cooperation, city link, and jumelage. More recently, a new concept – municipal international cooperation (MIC) has joined the literature of decentralized cooperation opening the possibility of providing long term technical and financial assistance to municipal governments in the spirit of partnership and global common interest⁶. The underlying principle is that closer cooperation and exchanges between municipalities in the South and North can lead to creative and effective solutions for local development issues. MIC also encompasses networking and cooperation between associations of local authorities in the North and their sister associations in the South.

As stated before, there are many definitions of decentralized cooperation, sometimes rather conflicting among each other, and none of the said definitions can be said to be prevailing. For the purpose of this study, keeping in mind the overall goal of the research, it was decided to focus on instances of decentralized cooperation defined as any project, initiative, or partnership for development cooperation among at least one European and one African sub-national authority. This choice has allowed:

- ⇒ To narrow down the wider field of the internationalization activities undertaken by sub-national authorities by referring to the specific goal of the decentralized cooperation activities, that is development cooperation;
- ⇒ To include all the decentralized cooperation activities featuring the participation of additional actors in addition to the two sub-national authorities - e.g. NGOs, CBOs, universities, national associations of local authorities, international organizations, business, and so on;
- ⇒ To exclude those activities, referred to as decentralized cooperation by, for instance, the EU, that feature uniquely the participation of non-state actors in the North and in the South or of one sub-national authority and one or more non-state actors;
- ⇒ To keep out all those instances in which the European sub-national authority acts merely as a channel of funding for activities designed, devised and later implemented by NGOs or other non-state actors in an African country, even if in partnership with a local sub-national authority.

⁴ City-to-City Cooperation: Issues Arising from Experience *An Interim Report* prepared as an input to discussions on decentralized cooperation at the IULA/UTO Unity Congress, Rio de Janeiro, 3-6 May 2001 and on city-to-city cooperation at the 25th United Nations General Assembly Special Session (Istanbul+5) New York, 6-8 June 2001

⁵ Ambrogio Manenti WHO Consultant, Decentralized Co-operation a New Tool for Conflict Situations: A case study of the Experience of World Health Organization WHO, Regional Office for Europe in Bosnia and Herzegovina

⁶ Jossy Materu, Tony Land, Volker Hauck, Jane Knight, Decentralized Cooperation and Joint Action: Building Partnerships between Local Government and Civil Society in Africa. Policy Management Report 10. 2001. p. 19.

D. Structure of the study

This study is structured in five chapters: chapter I provides some introductory remarks on the evolution of decentralized cooperation followed by some general remarks on the decentralized cooperation activities between Europe and Africa. Chapter II addresses the evolution of the current legal framework for enhancing Euro-African decentralized cooperation. Both chapters III and IV present case-studies and lessons learnt on Euro-African decentralized cooperation projects sustaining decentralization, the main difference between the two being that chapter IV is more focused on analyzing the “European end” of the linkage. Finally chapter V contains some concluding remarks and a set of recommendations.

E. Methodology

The present one is for its main part a desk study. The information utilized was derived through (i) Internet search, (ii) published books, workshop reports, and articles in journals. In addition, in drafting chapter I and III, advantage was taken of the literature available from some embassies and provided by the Departments of Development Cooperation, while chapter IV benefited as well from un-published documents made available by the Euro-African Partnership for Decentralized Governance, the *Istituzione Centro Nord-Sud*, and the Regional Council of Picardie. Interviews to representatives of the same institutions and of VNG International - the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities - complemented the sources used for this chapter.

F. Constraints

While the literature on decentralized cooperation is not scarce *per se*, it can by no means be termed complete. First of all, to the best of our knowledge, a hub where reliable data on the amount of decentralized cooperation funding extended by European sub-national authorities is collected on a periodic basis does not exist. Also problematic is the fact that a significant part of documents - studies, but also websites and information - on decentralized cooperation is produced uniquely in the language of origin of the given European country (thus not only English and French but also Italian, German, Spanish, Swedish and so on). These and other deficiencies are compounded in the case of the decentralized cooperation initiatives ongoing between European and African counterparts. In fact, decentralized cooperation is a field which has not yet been subjected to serious interrogation in Africa and as a result, it is still not well documented.

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Ambrogio Manenti WHO Consultant, *Decentralised Co-operation a New Tool for Conflict Situations: A case study of the Experience of World Health Organization* WHO, Regional Office for Europe in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Lowe, Philip (2002). Note to the Departments of DG DEV and Delegations in the ACP/ALA/MED Countries and CEEC

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I. OVERVIEW OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF DECENTRALIZED COOPERATION BETWEEN EUROPE AND AFRICA

The aim of this first chapter is to provide an overall picture both of the evolution and context of decentralized cooperation and of the ongoing decentralized cooperation activities between African and European counterparts. The chapter is structured as a discussion based on the following questions:

- How many countries in Africa engage in decentralized cooperation activities with European countries?
- What is the relative weight of decentralized cooperation activities in comparison to other forms of development assistance extended to African countries?
- How are decentralized cooperation partnerships built?
- What are the main typologies of actors that engage in decentralized cooperation?
- What are the main sectors addressed by decentralized cooperation projects
- How are decentralized cooperation projects identified?
- Are there conscious efforts to frame the decentralized cooperation projects within the development priorities of a given country?
- How can decentralized cooperation projects evolve into long-standing partnerships for development?

Additional research is required to complement the above scenario with information relevant to answer the following questions:

- Out of all ongoing decentralized cooperation projects, how many are focused on decentralized governance?
- Are there countries or bodies in Africa that have a significant tradition of decentralized cooperation activities focused on decentralized governance?
- Are there decentralized cooperation activities focused on decentralized governance facilitated by a certain agency/body? (a State, a Region, a UN agency.)

A. Evolution of Decentralized Cooperation

When the first links were formed in Europe in the aftermath of World War II, cooperation between communities - or "twinning" as it was called, was seen by local leaders first and foremost as a means to build bridges of understanding and confidence between peoples of nations which had been at war. Twinning was aimed at bringing about social and cultural exchanges between civic officials, schools and community groups. Since then, while inter-city exchanges continue, linking has branched out in various directions, sometimes as a result of a community initiative, sometimes after a move made by the mayor, and on other occasions, as a result of "marriage brokering" by a bilateral or multilateral donor.

In Africa, links were initially developed between newly independent states and the former colonial powers as a strategy to build ties based on trust and mutual respect. Schools and local authorities were mainly involved in these types of links.

When city-to-city cooperation began, links were almost always between town halls⁷. Led by mayors and civic leaders, they tended to be somewhat exclusive, consisting largely of high-level visits between the twinned towns, supplemented by cultural and sporting exchanges. Nowadays link's objectives are likely to be much broader than traditional twinning. Community development with a focus on meeting basic needs, municipal capacity building, awareness-raising and development education are now the most commonly found objectives. Matters of governance, strengthening local democratic institutions and encouraging wider community participation in every aspect of city life are emerging more frequently on agendas too⁸.

There are many reasons for the growth in city-to-city partnerships. The world community has realized that all development ultimately takes place at the local level, and the local dimension is becoming more and more important in the international arena. In addition, it is also realized that local communities have a larger role to play at the global level. Multilateral agencies such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the EU recognize the fact that the rise of civil society is one of the landmark events of modern times. In that regard, it is now acknowledged that the twenty-first century will be the century of establishing partnership that bring together central governments, local governments, civil society organizations and the private sector to pursue mutual development goals.

1. The International Dimension

The landmark event for local governments was the founding of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) in Paris, on 5 May 2004, which strongly supports decentralized cooperation as a vital contribution to the construction of a peaceful and sustainable developed world (UCLG, 2004).

Decentralized cooperation has also been influenced radically since the 1990s by the recognition of various civil society stakeholders as partners in policy formation at local, national, regional and global levels during major United Nations conferences and declarations which include:

- The Rio Earth Summit 1992 and the acceptance of Agenda 21 which recognized that global problems have their roots in local actions and, that, cities are thus key actors in the quest for sustainable development.
- The Istanbul City Summit 1996 and the resultant "Habitat Agenda" where the status of local governments, as the closest partners of national governments in implementing this agenda, was acknowledged for the first time.
- The Brussels Programme of Action (POA) for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), adopted in 2001, which called the attention to the importance of participation of and close cooperation among all relevant stakeholders at national and local levels in the development process.
- The United Nations Millennium Declaration and, in particular, the Road Map Towards its implementation (2001), which underlined the importance of strengthening local government and civil society participation in decision-making processes
- The Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (2002) in which the important international developmental role of local government was stressed once again.

⁷ UNDP (2000). Challenges of Linking, p. 8

⁸ UNPD, Ibid. p. 8

- The First Conference of European and African Regional Assemblies, on the theme “Decentralization: the New Dimension of Peace, Democracy and Development” which recognized the pivotal role played by local and regional authorities in promoting local sustainable development and participative democracy, and spreading a culture of tolerance, peace and solidarity.
- Also the United Nations 2005 World Summit re-emphasized “the important role of local authorities in contributing to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs”⁹.

2. The Cotonou Agreement and Participation

As we will see in chapter II (section F.), the revised ACP-EU Partnership Agreement popularly known as the Cotonou-agreement explicitly recognizes both local government and non-state actors as fully fledged actors and partners in international cooperation and development processes. In light of this new development the Cotonou-agreement also underscores the importance of a participatory approach in forging development cooperation. The challenges posed by poverty combined with the dynamics of decentralization, urbanization, democratization, and the emergence of more enlightened, better organized and aggressive pressure groups made it essential to ensure the widest possible participation of all sectors of society in the definition and formulation of development cooperation policies and priorities in accordance with each country's individual circumstance¹⁰.

Unlike in previous Agreements, for the first time, the ACP and the EU legally committed themselves to involve new actors in development cooperation. Article 2 of the Agreement defines participation as a fundamental principle of the cooperation between the EU and the ACP-countries. The principle of participative development is promoted to involve a wide range of actors. As pointed out by Françoise Moreau¹¹, this approach contributes to enhancing ownership of development strategies by the beneficiaries, consolidating accountable, sound and democratic institutions, exercising citizenship, and facilitating public-private partnerships.

3. Country Strategy Papers (CSPs)

The new partnership that involves non-state actors has given rise to new processes of programming in countries from the South. The purpose of the country strategy papers (CSP) is to provide a framework for ACP-EU cooperation and assistance based on the partner country's own policy agenda, EU objectives, an analysis of the country's situation, and the activities of other major partners. The CSP specifically points to where Community assistance will be directed and how it integrates with other donors' interventions.

B. Decentralized Cooperation and Decentralization

⁹ 2005 World Summit Outcome Document: United Nations, A/60/L.1* of 20th September 2005, para 173. page 39

¹⁰ Françoise Moreau, Non-state Actors: A Preliminary Assessment, p. 1

¹¹ Ibid. p. 1

Defined by Diana Conyers as a process of change in which functions previously undertaken by government institutions at national level become the responsibility of government or non-government institutions at sub-national level, the current wave of decentralization has gained more recognition over the last twenty five years as a strategy for realising good governance, deepening democracy, and fostering local development. There is consensus that decentralized authority or governance is instrumental in achieving a number of different objectives. These include, but not limited to: local empowerment, administrative efficiency and effectiveness, national cohesion and central control, and reduction in public expenditure (refer to Box 1). Decentralization may take many different forms. Most writers however, divide the different forms of decentralization into three broad categories. Rondinelli and Parker suggested the following descriptions: deconcentration or administrative decentralization¹², fiscal decentralization¹³, and devolution¹⁴ or democratic decentralization¹⁵ (Rondinelli, 1981 and Parker, 1995 as cited by James Manor, 1995. p.4). However, Diana Conyers argues that such broad categorisations are so broad that they do not adequately demonstrate the relationship between objective and form of decentralization. According to her analysis, there are five forms or dimensions of decentralization and these are: the types of functions decentralized; the types of powers decentralized in relation to those functions; the level to which the powers are decentralized; the institutions to which they are decentralized; and the method of decentralization.

Box 1: Arguments for Decentralization

Several arguments have been put forward in support of decentralization and the strengthening of local government

First, transferring governance to local government levels provides significant opportunities for popular participation and increased involvement by people and communities in decisions that directly affect their lives. Second, it is through strengthened local governments that municipal programmes, plans, and service provisions are likely to reflect local needs more accurately than in centralised systems of governance. Last, more autonomous local governments charged with services delivery and which are accountable to their local political constituency, will manage the local fiscal base and revenue collection system more efficiently and effectively than central administrations.

Source: MDP-ESA Working Document 1991.

The ultimate objective of decentralization is to ensure that services easily reach people and guarantee democratic participation at local levels. Decentralized governance is expected to make local governments both democratic and developmental. For democratisation, decentralization is intended to create space and opportunities for citizens and residents to participate in local decision-making processes and to influence policy direction at local and central level. As for economic development, the decentralized states are expected to reduce poverty by making public services more responsive to the needs of people and to foster local development through investment and employment creation. The idea therefore, of applying decentralized cooperation to enhance decentralization is intended to strengthen the participation of civil society organizations in governance processes.

1. Decentralized Governance and Civil Society

¹² Deconcentration refers to the dispersal of central government officials into sub-national levels.

¹³ Fiscal decentralization refers to downward transfers by which central government cede influence over budgets and financial decisions to sub-national levels.

¹⁴ Devolution refers to the transfer of resources and power, as well as tasks to lower levels.

¹⁵ Democratic decentralization refers to freedom to elect local representatives.

Joint action between decentralized authorities and civil society has the potential to make a positive contribution to poverty alleviation and sustainable local development¹⁶. It also has the potential to strengthen local accountability and democratic governance, and in so doing, to reinforce wider processes of political and administrative decentralization. As pointed out by Angela Nkalubo¹⁷, in the past, identification of development projects was mainly done by central government, using technical officers or development agencies, with little or no involvement of beneficiaries. However, under decentralization, the emphasis is on bottom-up planning in which community members are expected to identify their needs, analyse them, prioritise them, implement, manage, do the monitoring and evaluate the results. Communities can express their views and needs through non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, religious and faith based organizations, trade unions, traditional leaders, to mention a few.

As NGOs are becoming more and more involved in the implementation of official aid programmes, partnerships between NGOs and local and national authorities are evolving. This is especially the case in the field of environment, where community participation is often the key factor for successful projects. It also holds true for urban development projects where the type and level of cooperation between local authorities and NGOs and CBOs has a direct influence on the sustainability of urban development and environmental projects.

2. Decentralized cooperation as a new form of cooperation

There is a general trend in Europe towards decentralized cooperation. The EU and a number of European governments are looking at the decentralized approach as a new form of development cooperation in the new millennium. Decentralized cooperation is regarded as a political instrument which simultaneously creates a new financial approach. The essence of this is that government spending for development cooperation is organized on a local, rather than on a central level. A reallocation of resources to local levels has implications for local governments, who will be assigned greater responsibilities in financing and implementing development programmes, especially regarding the urban habitat and poverty reduction.

3. Closing Mutuality

Setting the agenda is based on the principle of *equality* of the partners and *mutuality*. This explains the notion of reciprocity. While the partners recognize that they are highly unequal in material terms, they recognize also that the South has much it can do for its Northern partner in other ways. These may be significant, albeit if intangible, in terms of cultural values, development education, broadening experience and raising awareness of global issues. At times the benefits to the Northern partner may be concrete, especially in terms of know-how in low-cost, pragmatic ways to address common urban problems. **Reciprocity** presupposes that both partners should benefit. The partners do not view their link as one-way aid. Secondly, it is important to emphasize the aspect of **continuity**. Being a partnership, a link continues indefinitely. It is up to the partners to decide when, if ever, to end the relationship. Bamako (Mali) and Angers (France) have now been linked for twenty-five years. The core resources required for link activities are generally raised through the efforts of the communities and their city halls themselves. Thirdly, comes the concept of **interdependence** and linkages.

¹⁶ Jossy Materu et.al 2001. p. 7

¹⁷ Angela Nkalubo. *Community Participation and Decentralised Governance in Uganda* in Delius Asiimwe and Nakanyike B. Musisi (eds), 2007, p. 61

C. Objectives of Decentralized Cooperation

As conceived by the European Commission, the objective of decentralized cooperation is, first and foremost, to *ensure 'better' development*, by taking greater account of the needs and priorities expressed by the population¹⁸. In that regard, it aims to enhance the role and place of civil society in the development process. It consists, on the one hand, in bringing together and ensuring the collaboration at different intervention levels of the potential economic and social actors in the North and in the South. On the other, it consists of eliciting the active and determining participation of direct beneficiaries in decision-making and in the different stages of the actions that concern them.

Ambrogio Manenti points out that the objective of decentralized cooperation is to create and/or consolidate long-term cultural, technical and economic partnerships between local communities as a tool to promote human development and peace. In this context, the term "local communities" refers to a decentralized politico-administrative level of a country, e.g. a municipality, or groups of towns, which answers to a local administrative body such as a province, county or department. They include the political administration (mayor, city councillors, etc) and the population. For the purposes of decentralized cooperation, the local community is represented by a committee or working group which includes the local authorities, representatives of public institutions (e.g. health services) and organised civil society groups such as associations, NGOs, professional bodies, trade unions, the commercial sector, etc. The organised local community is thus the protagonist of decentralized cooperation initiatives, mobilising resources, culture, history and all the potential of its territory. Decentralized cooperation applies a bottom-up approach through an institutional, social and grass roots partnership between institutions and civil societies of two or more entities. Working on common interests and needs rather than the opinions of the different parties in conflict, decentralized cooperation plays an essential role in promoting conflict resolution and peace building. In addition, decentralized cooperation creates a "culture of exchange", enables people to have access to knowledge and information, encourages people to take control of their own problems, helps to break the authoritarian grip that manipulates and polarises the population, and generates development which does not rely heavily upon external funding. Decentralized cooperation can better use its potential when it is an integral part of a multilateral programme with a specific role of UN agencies such as co-ordination of activities and technical assistance ensuring an orientation in line with the national policies, reform trend and international standards.

Manenti goes on to say that decentralized cooperation is not about:

- activities of local governments (municipalities, provinces, etc.) using top down methods similarly to traditional centralised cooperation;
- *horizontal initiatives which link enterprises or institutions of different countries without a human development approach;*
- activities of international NGOs performing as specialized agencies of cooperation without relationships with the civil society of their countries;

¹⁸ Discussion Paper 8: What Role for Local Authorities in Decentralised Cooperation under the Convention of Lomé? 1999

- activities inspired by volunteerism, solidarity and goodwill but which are isolated, fragmented, not focused on the quality of the interventions, not linked with public institutions and their policies, and/or not co-ordinated.

D. Principles of Decentralized Cooperation

In the EU environment, decentralized cooperation has the following five main tenets:

- *Active involvement of all the various groups of stakeholders* (transferring responsibility to them). This entails making the recipients genuine stakeholders and/or partners who are able to assume responsibility for their own development.
- *Seeking consultation and complementarities between stakeholders*. This entails promoting dialogue and linking action at various levels (local, national and regional), as well as forging new public-private partnerships as a strategy and basis for sustainable lasting basic services.
- *Decentralising management*. This involves delegating responsibility for management (including financial management) down to a level, which is as close as, possible to the recipients of the service (the principle of subsidiarity). This requires a fundamental change in the attitudes and role of central government to become more of a policy maker and facilitator in the provision of services.
- *Introducing a process approach*. This involves efforts to create genuine involvement and ownership. In addition, there is emphasis on listening, dialoguing, mobilisation of local resources, achieving goals and action as part of a continuous process, joint evaluation, etc. Furthermore, there is emphasis on joint monitoring and results-based evaluation.
- *Giving priority to capacity building and institutional development*. This seeks to increase the potential and control of local initiatives. It further aims at encouraging growth in the number of stakeholders, organising and training themselves as well as forming networks and building partnerships with each other and with public entities.

These tenets were reaffirmed in three key policy documents namely:

- ⇒ the Development Policy Statement of the Council,
- ⇒ the Cotonou Agreement (signed in 2000) which set out as one of its guiding principles “the equality of partners and ownership of development strategies by the countries and populations concerned” (Art. 2); and,
- ⇒ the 2002 Commission Communication on the participation of Non-State Actors in the EC development policy.

1. Examples of Decentralized Cooperation Projects: Guiding Principles

A number of projects and programmes are useful in giving a more accurate picture of decentralized cooperation in practice and theory (Box 2 and Box 3), respectively.

Box 2: A Partnership of Mutual Benefit: Nakuru in Kenya and Leuven in Belgium

In 1998, when cooperation was established between Nakuru in Kenya and Leuven in Belgium¹⁹, both cities were initiating the process of preparing their Local Agenda 21 programme. Through this process local actors in Nakuru were able to identify a number of priority issues that Leuven supported based on its capacities and possibilities. For example Leuven backed the introduction of cobblestones as a low technology to pave roads. It also supported a pilot project for the improvement of municipal housing which is now replicated in municipal housing estates. On the other hand, Nakuru's experience in developing its Strategic Structure Plan inspired Leuven municipality especially in terms of participatory approaches used in Nakuru involving the mobilisation and participation of local communities. Through respective Local Agenda 21 institutional mechanisms, a large number of local actors were linked - such as schools, for example, thus giving students in Leuven a better understanding of African realities.

Source: Jean-Christophe Adrian, UN-Habitat's Local Agenda 21 Programme Manager.

Box 3: ACP-EU Principles

The negotiating directive from the ACP-EU Protocol proposes an inclusive partnership based on the following principles²⁰:

- Developing genuine dialogue with the social and economic stakeholders regarding cooperation policies and priorities, particularly in areas which directly affect those stakeholders;
- Direct involvement of decentralized stakeholders (public and private sector) in projects and programmes (managed in line with the principle of subsidiarity);
- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders and boosting their capabilities (as a major aim in every field of cooperation);
- Involving stakeholders in an appropriate manner in planning and programming for each country or region;
- Promoting genuine partnership between stakeholders, having set out the role each is to play;
- Recognising the local dimension of development and setting up a coherent framework for consultation with the aim of improving the integration of action at various different levels (general, sectoral, regional, national and local);
- Increasing the role of local authorities and public-private partnership.

E. Motivating Factors for Promoting Decentralized Cooperation

In Africa, decentralized cooperation gained momentum during the post-economic structural adjustment programmes (ESAP)²¹ in search of alternative ways to address development challenges of economic decline, rapid urbanization, deepening poverty and environmental degradation. Decentralized cooperation was viewed as a new mode of development cooperation in economic technical, cultural, environmental, and political areas that repositioned local government and its stakeholders to play a more active role in the development process. Associated with the Lome IV Convention signed in 1989 between EU and ACP countries, decentralized cooperation was presented as a new approach that aimed to put actors (rather than projects and money) at the centre of development cooperation²². This was seen to foster bottom-up approaches to

¹⁹ The Partnership Agreement was signed on March 12, 1998 in Leuven, Belgium.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 12.

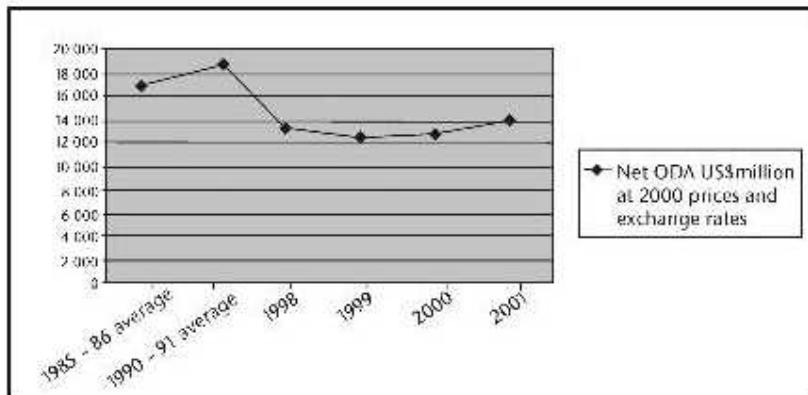
²¹ ESAP was introduced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank during the 1980s as a strategy to drive macroeconomic reforms in Africa. ESAP was characterized by freeing the market forces to get prices right, floating of exchange rate, trade liberalisation....

²² Jossy Materu, et. al., p.8

development, thereby promoting democratization, local ownership, and ensuring greater policy coherence and sustainability of projects and programmes.²³ Soon after the launching of ESAP, it was realized, with ample evidence, that aid resources channelled through central governments were not being put to best use. The expected impact of such assistance on addressing basic development needs, and, in particular, to arrest poverty had seldom been realized. Concern was expressed, for instance, about the lack of ownership and participation in development processes, inadequate attention paid to building capacities outside of the government sector, as well as to pervasive inefficient use and misuse of aid resources by government bureaucracies. Against this concern, alternative ways to channel aid were sought, creating opportunities for local governments, NGOs, the private sector, women's groups, and other grassroots organizations to move to the forefront in aid delivery. There was a deliberate effort to encourage greater participation by community based organizations²⁴ actors (civil society, the private sector, and local communities).

It must be noted also that while decentralized cooperation started to become more and more relevant, the overall Overseas Development Assistance trend was showing (Figure 1) a decrease of cash flow to Sub-Saharan Africa. Whilst this sub-region might continue receiving the largest portion of the continent's aid, funds are increasingly being diverted towards other promising regions of Asia, Eastern Europe (the Balkan republics) and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Figure 1: G7 Total ODA Disbursements to Sub-Saharan Africa



Source: OECD (2003: Table 30)

In the North the underlying initial motivation to link is commonly a response to a sense of frustration of the continuing increase in Third World poverty; despite the multitude of efforts governments and society have made to overcome it. Whereas scope for

²³ Ibid. p.8

²⁴ The African Charter for Partnership between Inhabitants and Local Collectivities, adopted at the Windhoek inhabitants' forum which met in Namibia from 12 to 18 May 2000, defines community-based organizations, whether formal or informal, as *"a form of representations of the people. They act in the interests of the people, bringing them together in one voice, and are accountable to the community at large. Local authorities are as a result of election by the people hence the call for the recognition of each other legitimacy. Mutual recognition is a precondition for partnership."* [sic] It is certainly true that any project must be based on the people's initiatives and forms of organization, but this is not sufficient to generate a true civic movement.

involvement in the traditional conduits of development cooperation are to all intents and purposes beyond the reach of the man in the street, a link provides a direct way for the public at large to participate in development efforts and to obtain an accounting of their own community's contributions - how they were spent and what was achieved. The second common denominator to most links is the need perceived by local leaders, inside or outside official circles, for development education and raising their community's awareness of global issues.

The external pressure coincided with growing public frustration with the failure of post-independence governments to perform and to respond to popular demands, to stimulate economic growth, to provide a basic level of development and embrace basic democratic rights. These concerns reflected a deeper crisis in governance, and called for more open, accountable and effective government, and creation of opportunities for more active participation by the civil society and the private sector in the development process.

Matters of governance, strengthening local democratic institutions and encouraging wider community participation in every aspect of city life are emerging more frequently on agendas too.

These days, the link itself may be between the respective town halls, or between local institutions or local groups, or any combination thereof. Though the town mayor and her or his council, together with the local Member of Parliament, continue to play an important part in most links, the management of the link can be shared with the community at large, typically through a board of trustees or similar arrangement. Often a community-based organization will take the lead and manage the link, with the town council providing its good offices in support. Equally often, the council plays the lead role and draws community groups and institutions into the link. At each end of the link there will usually be a "link person" who plays a crucial role. She or he coordinates the link and is, *de facto*, the person primarily responsible for making the link a success. It is usual for a link to have started out by identifying matters of mutual interest and to be grounded, sooner or later, on a formal partnership agreement. There are also what one might term specialized links, most commonly found between schools, universities and hospitals. In Entebbe (Uganda), for example, every school has a link to a school in the County of Dorset in the United Kingdom. The mayor of Entebbe's primary aim is to build awareness of other cultures.

The desire to form a link may originate in the community at large or inside city hall. Often - in the North - there is a group or an individual who feels strongly that her or his community should become more aware of the developing countries and respond in a most direct way. Just as often, the link is social or political in origin, mayors or senior officials having met during an overseas trip.

It might be safe to say that apart from local authorities and their associations, decentralized cooperation is not well known in the general public. The public is generally not informed. Leaders of NGO's and CBOs might be quite informed. However, their members may not be well informed about decentralized cooperation. By and large, Decentralized Cooperation differs in a number of aspects from the traditional approach to development.

F. Number of Countries Involved and Reasons for Involvement

The following African countries can be considered to be engaged in decentralized cooperation activities with European countries: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Decentralized cooperation has tended to vary from country to country depending on local circumstances. However, recent reforms to liberalize the political environment and to grant more autonomy to local governments have contributed to an upsurge in interest in decentralized cooperation activities. Unfortunately, there are not well documented studies of the reasons why some countries are more active than others.

Democracy and governance are key in determining the level of activity in decentralized cooperation at national and sub-national levels. The national level is crucial in setting the appropriate national framework conditions for facilitating the process while the local level is crucial in providing champions and actors in to forge decentralized cooperation. Various reports show that where democracy and good governance are not functioning sufficiently well at both levels, there can be an obstacle to the development of the whole society and the weakening of community based initiatives. One can safely say that countries which are enjoying stable democracy and are committed to the observance of the rule of law, decentralized activities are likely to flourish. This is the case in Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda. Conversely, in countries where there is perceived absence of stable democracy and lack of rule of law, activities on decentralized cooperation are likely to be curtailed as is the case in Zimbabwe and until recently, Liberia and Sierra Leone (Box 4).

Box 4: Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme

The Scheme was undertaken in Countries that are politically unstable or unprepared for Decentralized cooperation. It was generally harder to convince local authorities of the importance of the scheme project and to pursue its aims and objectives because other political issues took priority.

Source: Phase One Report on the Good Practice Scheme

Decentralized activities also have the opportunity to flourish in countries, such as Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda, where there is adequate legislation for the existence of civic movements and their involvement in governance.

Nevertheless, some countries - especially the Anglophone ones - are not aware of funding opportunities for decentralized cooperation from the European Union. Furthermore to some countries, this funding process is too bureaucratic, complicated, time consuming, and difficult to follow²⁵.

²⁵ Decentralized Co-operation and Local Government Conference on Decentralized Co-operation and Local Government, Stockholm, 17-18 Oct. 2000, p 1.

G. Principal Typologies of Actors in Decentralized Cooperation Projects

There are two broad categories of non-state actors that engage in decentralized cooperation other than local authorities. Each of these plays a distinct and useful role in decentralization cooperation. The first category relates to non-governmental organizations (NGO), which focus on development cooperation, and issues of human rights, and the civil society. The latter includes non-governmental organizations, community based organizations, associations, religious organizations, trade unions, women groups, student movements, etc. This category tends to focus on development cooperation with a view to promoting community awareness, providing local services, and protecting the interests of the poor and disadvantaged groups.

The second category relates to private agencies or business/the private sector, which includes confederations industries, national chambers of commerce covering retailers and traders, etc. The liberalization of markets has brought in the private sector. This category tends to focus not only on trade but also on providing jobs, services, and income generating activities.

H. How Are Decentralized Cooperation Partnerships Built?

A number of countries have set criteria for participating in decentralized cooperation programmes. The criteria below are quite common:

- Understanding the goals and objectives of the partnership programme
- A council resolution to participate in the programme
- Acceptance of, and ability to follow programme guidelines for definition, design, monitoring, and evaluation of partnership activities
- Commitment to ensure adequate participation of women
- Existence of adequate staff to permit technical exchanges
- Willingness to involve political representatives, as well as professional and technical staff at all levels
- National political security and stability
- Demonstration of decentralization responsibilities to local levels
- Existence of a national association of local government authority (Box 5).

Box 5: The North-South Local Government Cooperation Programme co-ordinated by the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities builds capacity and strengthens the role of local governments worldwide.

The North-South Local Government Cooperation Programme supports equal cooperation between local governments in Finland and in the south. During the 2005-2007-programme period, the geographical area covered by this programme is sub-Saharan Africa. Local government cooperation involves the exchange of knowledge and skills (colleague-to-colleague cooperation) whilst also concentrating on concrete development projects. Local governments in the north and the south deal with similar issues, such as resident participation in planning and decision making, and the provision of basic public services.

Funding under the North-South Local Government Cooperation Programme is granted for the activities related to the different functions of local governments, i.e. provision of basic public services (social, health, education, technical infrastructure, environmental, cultural and economic development and library services) which promote some of the following objectives: poverty eradication; response to environmental threats; equality, democracy and human rights; good governance; and prevention of conflicts. In Finland, funding is also granted for international awareness and tolerance education projects carried out under the programme.

The following organizations can be accepted as actors within the North-South programme: municipalities, towns and cities and other parties representing the local government level, such as joint municipal authorities, regions and regional councils. In the south, all parties representing the local government can be accepted as actors within the programme: districts as well as municipalities and cities.

Source: Ms Saja Ohtonen, Programme Manager North-South Cooperation

An example of a North-South cities partnership which represents a successful decentralized cooperation activity is found in Uganda (Box 6).

Box 6: How Gulu's, Uganda link with Lancashire, UK developed out of Local Agenda 21

C2C Context: In the course of an advisory visit by the UK Association of County Councils aimed at developing a technical cooperation programme with its Ugandan counterpart association, an initial contact with Gulu was made by Lancashire's County Planning Officer. A joint project for developing a Local Agenda 21 programme was then drawn up with Gulu and implemented with co-funding from the European Union.

Outcomes/Lessons: After the funded project was completed, Lancashire decided to reduce its direct commitment and transfer responsibility for the link with Gulu to a non-profit company, which is continuing to exchange Local Agenda 21 information and seeking to develop broader exchanges and community projects with Gulu. The county council is represented on the board of the company but has no continuing financial commitment to the link. Measures to strengthen the capacity of the link and expand community engagement are actively underway at both ends following the cessation of guerrilla activities in Northern Uganda.

Issues Arising: Relatively few European Local Agenda 21 programmes have comprised an explicit North-South element. This one came about through the enthusiasm of an individual officer taking part in an advisory mission for his association and has survived subsequent organizational challenges on both sides. The link is now institutionalized at community level.

Source: Lancashire County Council, Global-to-Local

I. Main Sectors Addressed by Decentralized Cooperation Projects

The list of sectors addressed by decentralized cooperation projects can be endless. However, some of them are more strategic and valuable to citizens than others and are usually promoted by both northern and southern partners. These include: education and health programmes; environmental concerns and sustainability including water (Box 7), sanitation, and waste management; governance i.e. electoral processes, management of council meetings, council staff relations, and community consultations; human rights; management in areas such as financial management information systems, equipment maintenance, and human resources development; women's participation in economic and social life; fighting crime; youth programmes; as well as information and communications technology.

1. The Water and Sanitation Sector

The water and sanitation sector is critical in Africa and partnerships have been fostered to develop it (Box 7).

Box 7: Partnership in the Water Sector

In Africa, lack of water leads to greater migration towards industrialised countries. It makes health care and prevention policies impossible. It leads to tensions between peoples, hunger and disease. Local water governance is a determining factor for the development of our countries. In the areas where water is scarce or completely unavailable, we have to create bridges between water concessionaries, vendors and users, to make water available to everyone at affordable prices. To enact projects aimed at increasing the number of people who have access to water, greater economic contributions are required on the part of local governments in industrialised countries. In order for this to happen, more cooperation and solidarity is necessary.

(Moussé Daby Diagne, President, Municipal Development Partnership for West and Central Africa)

2. Environmental Sustainability

The millennium development goals number seven (MDG7) focuses on environmental sustainability which is a key area of the global development agenda. The United Nations set three measurable targets including: (i) integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse loss of environmental resources; (ii) reducing by half by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water; and (iii) achieving significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

Decentralized cooperation in the area of environmental sustainability is one of the most active areas in building partnerships. Efforts have focused on (i) sharing knowledge and operational experiences; (ii) identifying ways and means to improve coordination and collaboration at country and policy level; and (iii) developing and implementing joint activities. In many partnerships, the issues of clean water and sanitation have emerged as priority areas for cooperation. This is because of several diseases and deaths that are due to contaminated water sources. Activities including: (i) construction of public toilets or latrines; (ii) construction of safe water wells, have been established to assist developing countries to achieve the set targets. The area of environment is very broad but efforts of decentralized cooperation have scored tangible benefits in sub-sectors like reversal of environmental degradation, solid waste management, afforestation, to name but a few. The cases can be classified as urban (Box 6) and rural (Box 7). Tourism is also recognized as a key component to the economy of many areas and overseas partnerships can help promote local development efforts.

3. The Energy Sector

There have been strides to also develop the energy sector in Africa through decentralized cooperation actions. ***The Africa Rural Energy Enterprise Development Programme (AREED) (Under the Equator Initiative)***²⁶

Objective

In Africa nine out of ten people do not have access to electricity and 75% of current energy use is derived from dwindling biomass fuels such as wood and dung. AREED is a multi-stakeholder initiative that empowers small and medium-sized enterprises to deliver clean, affordable energy services to the poor using environmentally sound technologies, thus promoting new opportunities for poverty reduction and sustainable development. The AREED approach offers rural energy enterprises and local entrepreneurs a combination of business development support and start-up financing. This integrated financial and technical support allows entrepreneurs to plan and structure their enterprises in a manner that prepares them for growth and eventual investments by mainstream financial partners.



²⁶ The Equator Initiative is a partnership that brings together the UN, governments, civil society, business and foundations to help build the capacity and raise the profile of local enterprises in the tropics that link economic improvement and job creation with protecting the environment. It includes: BrasilConnects, the Government of Canada, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), IUCN - The World Conservation Union, The Nature Conservancy, Television Trust for the Environment (TVE) and the UN Foundation.

Achievement

Since 2000, AREED has provided enterprise development services to more than 150 African entrepreneurs and approved more than 25 investments in local companies that provide a range of energy services, including fuel-efficient cook stoves, wind pump repair services, solar driers to preserve food, the supply and servicing of solar home systems, etc. The AREED programme has operations in Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Tanzania and Zambia. Cooperating partners include several African NGOs, E&Co (a small energy investment group), the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), UNEP and its Collaborating Centre on Energy and Environment, the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA), Domini Social Investment Funds (DSIF) and the UN Foundation²⁷.

4. Information and Communications Technology

An emerging area of cooperation between Europe and Africa is that of telecommunication technology with profound impact on decentralized governance. In reality, it is safe to say that the use of ICT to influence governance in Africa is still scant (Box 8) but is growing rapidly with the support and involvement of development partners.

Box 8: The Divide

Of all the gaps that exist between the South and North, none is growing faster than the information gap, and the information highway threatens to increase the growth rate to the point where some countries and some segments of society -- in both South and North -- may be left out altogether.

Source: David Nostbakken, Executive Director, WETV and Shahid Akhtar, Director, International Development Research Center (IDRC)

With each passing day the suspicion about ICT by many chief executive officers is wearing off often following exposure through conference and visits and many are acquiring skills in computer literacy, they are appreciating the role of information in management and administration, and are becoming inter-users. Within each local authority, public access tele-centres and information boutiques are springing up for the benefit of the civil society.

This effort is intended partly to bridge the digital divide and partly to cut red-tape, promote efficiency in service delivery as well as eliminating abuse of public services. From the community perspective, ICT (Box 9) are viewed as an effective instrument for empowering communities and unlocking their potential in development processes. Various studies show that computers, internet, and mobile phones are rapidly being made available to local authorities and community centres to facilitate efficient communication and decision making.

Box 9: What is ICT?

Information and communications technology (ICT) includes a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store and manage information. ICT is not a single technology but a combination of hardware, software, media and delivery systems. It encompasses a great range of rapidly evolving technologies such as: television and radio, phone lines with operators, phone lines with automated touch-tone answering systems, personal computers (PCs), networked PCs, and PCs with CD-ROMs and DVDs, fax machines, electronic benefits transfer, smart cards, credit cards, Internet (e-mail, world wide web), kiosks, computer-mediated conferencing and videoconferencing, commercial applications (such as word processors, spreadsheets, simulations) and proprietary applications (such as decision support models and management information systems). These technologies are rapidly evolving.

²⁷ www.areed.org

It is also interesting to note that many remote areas traditionally marginalized districts or town in each country are taking advantage of ICT to get closer to the mainstream of activities. Indeed it is safe to say that ICT is increasingly playing an instrumental role in supporting and strengthening decentralized governance in Africa. Increasingly in many countries, local authorities and their associations as well as NGOs and civil society organizations have computers and web-sites. In rich local authorities, these are self financed while in others they are made available in form of donations or gifts from their counterparts in the north. In countries such as Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda, ICT infrastructures – physical and regulatory – of notable capacity are being set up to support the new innovation. Many local authorities have established websites through cooperation activities. A wide range of civil society organizations are at the forefront of forging cooperation through ICT. These include: women's groups, trade associations, political advocacy groups, credit and savings cooperatives, environmental groups, media fraternity and various other types of NGOs. Various countries have established policy instruments that clearly stipulate the intended objects in embarking ICT. A study carried out in Mozambique showed that districts with reasonably well established ICT networks, such as Lichinga and Cuamba, were able to attract and retain qualified doctors (Jørn Braa 2001: p.18).

In Mozambique, the ICT Policy and the ICT Policy Implementation Strategy sets out challenging goals for the long-term future, where ICT shall:

- Contribute to the eradication of absolute poverty and improve the lives of Mozambican citizens;
- Fight against illiteracy and accelerate the development of human resources;
- Provide universal access to information and global knowledge;
- Raise the efficacy and efficiency of the public and private sectors;
- Improve governance and public administration;
- Create a legal and business environment favourable to the production and dissemination of ICT;
- Make Mozambique a producer and not only a consumer of ICT; and
- Lift Mozambique to the level of being a relevant, active and competitive partner in the Global Information Society and the world economy.

Specifically, ICT has been supporting the following objectives of decentralized governance:

- Improve efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of public services.
- Ensure transparency and accountability of government.
- Provide access to information to improve business and simplify citizens' lives.(IST Africa Report 2006, p. 13)

Within the above framework, a number of initiatives have been introduced at sub-national levels of governance designed to facilitate ICT access to a majority of low-income citizens. These include the Provincial Digital Resources Centres (CPRDs), telecentres, Digital Agencies and Multimedia Community Centres (CMCs) and eHealth initiatives focused on HIV/AIDS (e.g. Country Response Information System (CRIS), HIV/AIDS Response Project Database, Sharing Best Practices).

In South Africa President Thabo Mbeki has in various local and international fora stressed the importance of ICT for social and economic development saying: "If we must continue

the fight for liberation against poverty, against under-development, against marginalisation ... information and communications technology ... is a critically important tool in that struggle" (Imbizo for African Youth, 2001 as cited by IST Africa Report 2006, p. 32).

In Tanzania, the Government is committed, amongst others, to promoting the creation of bilateral relations and cooperation with regional and international organizations that generate, process, and store and disseminate ICT driven information in order to expand and strengthen local ICT capacity (IST Africa Report 2006, p. 62.)

One of the fundamental components of eAdoption in the three countries is the mobilization of partners and stakeholders for the development of the ICT sector. In Mozambique, partnerships exist with UNDP Mozambique (ICT for Development Programme), the Government of Italy (implementation of Government Network), Microsoft (Learning Programme to support schools), and Unlimited Potential initiative to support CPRDs.

This effort can best be illustrated by the Information Society Technologies in Africa (IST-Africa) initiative which seeks, among others to: (i) increase research cooperation between European and African organizations in areas funded by the European Union; (ii) inform policy at national, regional, and international level; and (iii) provide a framework support for inter-governmental exchanges with Africa (e.g. between SADC member states) and between the African Union and the European Commission. The main objectives of the **IST-Africa Initiative** are to establish a better understanding of current exploitation of Applied ICT in Africa and opportunities for adaptation of European funded research results and international research collaboration, to establish a collaboration framework for researchers and government officials in European and African States, and to create a sustainable community with strong pan-African and international participation, focused on the economic and social impact of Applied ICT in Africa. An interesting area of cooperation involves dissemination of European research results in Africa and to promote the participation of African organizations in European research projects.

IST-Africa also facilitates skills transfer through training workshops, and provides a framework for European and African researchers to explore opportunities for cooperation (Boxes 10 and 11).

Box 10: Information Society Technologies

During 2005 and 2006 – with the assistance of the European Commission, **IST-Africa** supported a limited number of complementary activities in Mozambique, South Africa, and Tanzania to facilitate wider impact of applied ICT across Sub-Saharan Africa.

The activities carried out were:

- The development and delivery of 10 training modules for e-Business, e-Government, e-Health, e-Learning, ICT for Agriculture & ICT Sensitization (with European & African case studies) as multi-day training workshops in Mozambique (10), South Africa (10), Tanzania (10) & Botswana (4)
- The publication of 2 annual comparative reports outlining the current "State-of-the-Art" and level of e-Adoption in the areas of e-Government, e-Health and e-Learning in Mozambique, South Africa and Tanzania
- The organization of 2 international conferences in Africa to facilitate EU-ACP networking, and highlight IST exploitation & international cooperation opportunities

The training courses and workshops provided a practical foundation for adoption of applied ICT in different African States, showcase African and European good practice and exploitable research results.
Source: IST Africa Report 2006, p. 8

Box 11: Collaboration between SCOPE AND UNAFEZA

Non-governmental and civil society organizations too, both foreign and African, are trying hard to empower marginalized population groups and provide training and support for ICT use. Project SCOPE, a US based networking organization has been collaborating with UNAFEZA, an organization in Congo that works for the civil and human rights of Congolese women. UNAFEZA undertakes many projects to empower these women and move them into the political and economic life of the country, by promoting economic autonomy, community organization and increasing the health care resources available to women and children.

It is noted that the exploitation of ICT has enormous potential for impact in Developing Countries, to meet societal demands, more efficient delivery of public services and supporting economic development. Yet economic development is institutionally-determined, and this lies in the administrative capacity of any organization (Box 12).

Box 12: What is administrative capacity?

This is the ability of an organization to achieve its goals.

Administrative capability means the institutional capacity of a government...to formulate and carry out plans, policies, operations, or other measures to fulfil public purposes (Donald C. Stone in Honadle, 1981).

This definition has the advantage of estimating ability in relation to goals and of suggesting possible remedies for deficiencies. If, for example, a government department did not have sufficient trained personnel to carry out its tasks, the clear prescriptive message would be that either additional personnel should be provided to ensure that it could fulfil those tasks or that those in post should be further trained to enhance their skills. In practice, many individual governments and aid agencies appear to take this approach in their capacity-building programmes. Why, then, does it so often fail? Is it simply because the political, social and economic environment does not enable whatever skills are acquired or changes that are made to be put to good use? Or are there deficiencies with the method itself?

J. Framing Decentralized Cooperation Projects Within the National Development Priorities

Box 13 shows the manner through which decentralized cooperation can be enmeshed in development priorities of a country.

Box 13: Mainstreaming DC Projects to Country Needs and Priorities: the Case of Angola

In October 2000, the PDHI and MINPLAN signed a collaboration agreement with the Fundo de Apoio Social (FAS), a MINPLAN programme funded by the World Bank. Following the agreement, regular FAS/PDHI/local government meetings were held in the three provinces in order to co-ordinate activities. Moreover, as from 2001, the PDHI's activities were included in the Angolan Government's national public investment programme. This indicates the extent of their integration into national policies.

In 2000, an agreement was signed with ILO to provide technical assistance for LEDAs in the Provinces of Bengo, Benguela and Kwanza Sul. In December 2001, the Province of Bengo received a visit from the Angolan President, and during meetings, the governor illustrated the results achieved by the PDHI and stressed the importance of the Bengo LEDA for the economic development of the province.

An agreement was reached with the United Nations Office in Angola (UNOA), the UN agency responsible for technical assistance to Angola, at the time, on the issue of human rights, to co-finance activities promoting human rights. In May 2002, the PDHI provided UNOA with office space in its premises in the Provinces of Benguela and Kwanza Sul. Two information and training seminars on citizens' rights were organised in Benguela, on 7–8 February 2002, and in Sumbe, on 18–20 February. The effectiveness of the collaboration was recognized in a letter of thanks from Mussagy Jeichande, representative of the UN secretary-general in Angola, to the PDHI.

Collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) saw the organization of common projects in the three provinces, using the "food for work" formula, and co-financed projects, identified together with the working groups of the Provinces of Bengo, Kwanza Sul and Benguela. WFP used the food to reimburse the work of all vulnerable groups, and not only evacuees, encouraging them to take part in PDHI training courses.

1. Urban Governance and management

The area of urban governance and management also attracted cooperation between northern and southern partners. There is a growing understanding of the added value technical cooperation among cities and of its effects on the improvement of citizens' livelihood. Such partnerships are also useful in strengthening local-level institutional capacity in areas such as planning, financial management, information technology, communication and enhanced governance (refer to Box 14). A clear understanding of the notion of governance is critical to the understanding of urban governance and management. Given the dearth of information and data it is difficult to measure the impact of decentralized cooperation on governance.

Box 14: Definitions of Governance

A review of the literature reveals many definitions of governance. Some narrowly focus on the role of governments in the development process. Some are very command-and-control oriented:

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines governance as "*the action or manner of governing*"

The World Bank "*Governance*" stands for *the practical exercise of power and authority by governments in the management of their affairs in general and of economic development in particular*. From World Bank Report *Governance and Civil Service Reform: A Regional Programme* in Findings Number 23, August 1994

Some connote shared pluralist management and decision-making that includes citizens and citizen bodies as well as the private sector:

"Governance is the process through which ... institutions, businesses and citizens' groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations and mediate their differences." Louise Fréchette, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Speech to the World Conference on Governance, Manila, May 31, 1999

And still others describe governance as *comprising "the traditions, institutions and processes that determine how power is exercised, how citizens are given a voice, and how decisions are made issues of public concern"*. Frew Dubale, Economic Commission of Africa, in an email to the ADF listserv on July 15, 1999 as cited in Information and Communications Technology for Improved Governance by African Development Forum 1999, p. 8

Matters of governance, strengthening local democratic institutions and encouraging wider community participation in every aspect of city life are emerging more frequently on agendas too. Governments recognize that they cannot act alone. While acting globally, the world community acknowledges the importance of local actions. At the town and city level, the townspeople themselves have greater opportunity to participate in their community's affairs and to take part in "people-centred" development. Sustainable development is a function of local actors aided by external actors where the former transmute into action the ideas from the latter. Certain principles are necessary towards sustainable development.

The Middlesbrough (UK)/Masvingo (Zimbabwe) link protocol, signed in 1988, is thought to have been one of the first to explicitly include governance issues in its agenda. The protocol describes the link as being "...dedicated to the growth and preservation of local democracy in local government administration to ensure honest and efficient service to our two communities." Since then, improved governance has been receiving attention, explicitly and implicitly.

Through its link with Kirklees, the Kampala City Council too is enhancing its local governance and accountability. The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), in its evaluation of local authority links between towns in Sweden and the Baltic States, notes a number of "indicators of positive effects" including participation in local elections, information, the meaning and implications of democracy, as well as in the decision-making process. SIDA also records the spin-off effect, of many other contacts having been made between linked towns, as a result of the initial local authority link. Good governance and poverty reduction are recognized nowadays as being inseparable: governance provides the enabling framework within which the community can work to rid itself of poverty. "Governance is now recognized as one of the most important factors in determining the health and prospects of a society." This recognition suggests that partners will increasingly choose to include in their agendas the ways and means to help their local authorities and institutions become fully reflective of the aspirations of the community.

The Belgian development cooperation has the following objectives²⁸:

- To strengthen management capacity at local level, e.g. training of municipal staff or introduction of planning procedures;
- To strengthen local democracy, e.g. by introducing new methodologies such as participatory planning or a communication policy, and by reinforcing the civil society at local level;
- To support partnerships between municipalities and citizens' associations, with the municipal authorities in the 'director's seat';
- To strengthen local authorities as economic actors, e.g. in partnerships with the local business sector.

K. Experiences of Decentralized Cooperation Activities Focused on Decentralized Governance

Box 15 shows the extent to which the concept of decentralized cooperation has been applied to support decentralized governance. The example of Jinja Central Market under the Jinja Municipality highlighted in this Box is a clear indication of how innovativeness through governance is instrumental in transforming the decision space of different stakeholders. Thus hostile relations which existed between the rulers and the ruled had a positive turning point to the health of both the place and the people in it (citizens).

Box 15: Innovative Experiences with Decentralized Cooperation

Perhaps the most innovative and most formal partnership among the current cases is in Uganda. When the Jinja Central Market was previously under the control of the Jinja municipality, it was managed and administered through the municipal departments of public health, law enforcement, and the treasury. Poor and inefficient revenue collection, high recurrent expenditures, unsanitary conditions, and poor security plagued the market at that time. The relationship between vendors and local authorities was often acrimonious: municipal authorities taxed highly without maintaining the market, while vendors were permanently in arrears on payment. With the passage of a decentralization act in 1993, the Jinja Central Division (a sub-county — Local Council Level 3 or LC3) took over the administration of the Jinja Central Market. The LC3 then decided to transfer the responsibility for revenue collection from local

²⁸ Partnership in view of a more sustainable urban development: *Evaluation of the city to city cooperation between Leuven and Nakuru*, Evaluation Report, October 2004, p. 6

authorities to a private entity. GOKAS, a private management firm, was selected through competitive bidding by a tender board consisting of members of the local council and the community. The present arrangement emphasises co-management of the market by a broader coalition of stakeholders, including the municipality, the LC3, GOKAS, and the vendors. Under this arrangement, delineation of responsibilities has been clearly specified from the outset. The municipality sets service delivery standards, while the LC3 is responsible for ensuring that revenues are collected and that selected services, such as garbage removal, are provided. GOKAS manages the collection of dues and provides and maintains key services, including water, electricity, and sanitation. Finally, the vendors are responsible for security in the market premises and settlement of inter-vendor disputes. The Jinja Central Market vendors association has played an important role in advancing the interest of vendors. It is the largest and best-organised institution in the municipality and exerts strong influence over decision-making related to organization and operation of the market. For instance, no change in the market is introduced without the endorsement of the vendors' association. Governance in the market has been characterised by an emerging partnership between OKAS and the vendors. This has been facilitated through regular meetings and consultations around issues of tax collection and service maintenance. These changes in market management have contributed to higher revenue collection without rate increases, a reduction in recurrent expenditures, and improved hygiene and security.

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II. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR ENHANCING EU-AFRICAN DECENTRALIZED COOPERATION

A. Aim of the Chapter

The main goal of this part of the study is to describe:

- the evolving international legal framework regulating decentralized cooperation in order to assess the opportunities and limits of this new modality of carrying out cooperation activities;
- the emerging, in the international community, of a new attitude favouring and promoting decentralization as a mean to improve and foster good governance, democracy and the rule of law principles.

The focus of this part of the research will be mainly legal and related to international rules which are being developed at universal and at regional (European) level²⁹.

B. Implementing the Millennium Development Goals through decentralization: new challenges and opportunities for the international community

In the United Nations system the question of the role to be played by local authorities in international affairs, and specifically in the area of development cooperation, has become more and more central. Although, has already mentioned in chapter I (section I.A.1), only in the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro local authorities were indicated for the first time as a potential partner in implementing United Nations policies. The relevance of their potential role has been repeated later on in several documents. Just as an example, we might quote the final Declaration adopted in 1996 by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in which the parties attending the meeting have solemnly declared that "we must (...) promote decentralization through democratic local authorities and work to strengthen their financial and institutional capacities"³⁰.

Democratic governance is as well of pivotal importance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as it contributes to the creation of an 'enabling environment' for the implementation of the MDGs, in particular, the elimination of poverty.

In recognition of this fact, the world leaders meeting in New York on the occasion of the adoption of the Millennium Declaration clearly spelled out that no effort should be spared "to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law, as well as respect for all

²⁹ The issues related to the validity of the agreements signed between local authorities as well as all the dispute settlement mechanism to solve future disputes about the interpretation of these agreements will not be dealt with in this research: on these issues please refer to UN-HABITAT Best Practices Seville centre for city-to-city co-operation, *Local Governments and international development co-operation: a European Survey on strategies and policies*, May 2006, www.unHabitat.org

³⁰ UN-Habitat, *Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements*, par. 12

internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms including the right to development”³¹.

As clearly stated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), democratic governance is an essential element in advancing human development and achieving the MDGs for the following reasons:

- “When more than economic growth is considered, democracy can work to put in a political dynamic to respond to the social and economic priorities of people and contribute to reducing poverty and promoting human development.
- Democracies contribute to political stability and thus to human security because open space for political contests allows for more peaceful resolution and management of conflict.
- Democratic institutions and processes that give voice to people, and hold rulers accountable, as well as open competition for power, make politicians more likely to respond to the needs of ordinary people”³².

More specifically, in the case of local governance and decentralization both issues are clearly linked to the achievement of the MDGs in the following ways:

“Firstly through the promotion, for example, of participatory planning and monitoring in UNDP will help address the question of how globally selected indicators (e.g., the MDGs) can be made relevant at the local level. Albania’s pioneering work in advocating the MDGs, through regional tours and local visits, and incorporating MDGs in local initiatives can help serve as a model for other countries.

Secondly, local level representative bodies and councils are responsible for local budget allocation and expenditure can be strengthened in their capacity to ensure that resources and services to the poor are being delivered in accordance with local poverty reduction goals.

Thirdly through support for local elections, more democratic local party structures, strengthened citizens groups, local level transparency and democratic processes citizens can ensure that results are achieved, resources are allocated according to commitments and public servants at the local level are held accountable for poverty reduction achievements”.³³

In the 2001 Report of the UN Secretary General “Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration” it is clearly stated that in order to reach the fundamental goal of more inclusive political processes that allow for genuine participation by all citizens, the necessary strategy should include “supporting government efforts to strengthen local governance in urban and rural areas”³⁴.

³¹ A/RES/55/2, par. 24.

³² UNDP, Governance and the Millennium Development Goals, in <http://www.undp.org/governance/mdgs.htm>

³³ UNDP, Governance and the Millennium Development Goals, in <http://www.undp.org/governance/mdgs.htm>

³⁴ A/56/326, par. 218 ff.

This was reconfirmed in the Monterrey Consensus (2002). The donor side of the good governance equation is also being increasingly recognized; the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) firmly calls on donors to apply principles of good governance when providing support to developing countries. In very recent times it is worth mentioning the significant advancement made within the framework of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlement programme which adopted, in April 2007, very sophisticated “Draft Guidelines on Decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities” submitted to the 2007 Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The Article 1 of these Guidelines states that

“Political decentralization to the local level is an essential component of democratization, good governance and citizen engagement”³⁵.

C. The changing legal framework in Europe about cross-border cooperation between local authorities³⁶

There are significant differences among legal and political systems as to regulating the role to be played by local authorities in international relations. Despite these differences, recent trends show an increasing tendency to facilitate a higher involvement of local authorities in international affairs. A clear demonstration of this is the 1980 Outline Convention on Trans-frontier Co-operation between territorial communities or authorities (already ratified to this date by 25 countries) and followed by two protocols, adopted by the Council of Europe. Article 1 clearly spelled out the goal of this agreement:

“Each Contracting Party undertakes to facilitate and foster transfrontier co-operation between territorial communities or authorities within its jurisdiction and territorial communities or authorities within the jurisdiction of other Contracting Parties. It shall endeavour to promote the conclusion of any agreements and arrangements that may prove necessary for this purpose with due regard to the different constitutional provisions of each Party”³⁷.

According to article 2 of the Convention, “transfrontier” cooperation shall mean:

“(...) any concerted action designed to reinforce and foster neighbourly relations between territorial communities or authorities within the jurisdiction of two or more Contracting Parties and the conclusion of any agreement and arrangement necessary for this purpose. Transfrontier co-operation shall take place in the framework of

³⁵ HSP/GC/21/2/Add.2, Article 1.

³⁶ See more on this UN-Habitat Best Practices Seville centre for city-to-city co-operation, *Local Governments and international development co-operation: a European Survey on strategies and policies*, May 2006, www.unHabitat.org

³⁷ CETS No 106, Article 1.

territorial communities' or authorities' powers as defined in domestic law"³⁸.

In the Convention, the contracting parties (States) declare their full commitment to fulfil the following tasks:

- ⇒ resolving legal, administrative and technical difficulties of cross-border cooperation (art. 4);
- ⇒ considering the possibility of providing regional and local authorities with special facilities in order to engage in cross-border cooperation (art. 5);
- ⇒ supplying relevant information to other contracting parties, to their own regional and local authorities, and to the Council of Europe (art. 6).

The Convention also proposes model treaties/agreements of cross-border cooperation adapted to the needs of regional and local authorities (that can be consulted in Annex III of the Convention).

Both the Convention and the related annexes and protocols are a clear sign of the increasing interest, already sprouted in the early '80, about the European local authorities' potential contribution in launching a new era of North-North and North-South cooperation.

D. The rising importance of decentralized cooperation and of decentralization in the European Union-Africa political dialogue

In many respects, therefore, Europe has been a front-runner in identifying decentralized cooperation and decentralization as a new and powerful instrument for contributing to sustainable development. Besides the 1980 Convention mentioned in the previous paragraph, the various activities carried out within the framework of the 1975 Lomé Convention, and then the Cotonou Partnership Agreements between the European Union (EU) and the so called African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, it is worth recalling that in 2003, the European Commission (EC) issued the first specific communication on "Governance and Development" (COM 615/2003), followed by a draft "Handbook on promoting good governance in EC development and cooperation" (2004). In December 2005, the *European Consensus on Development and the EU Strategy for Africa* was signed. Both recognize the importance of governance and the need to support it. On 30 August 2006, the EC issued a new communication on governance. In this document "the key role that local authorities can play in achieving the Millennium Development Goals"³⁹ is clearly stated. In commenting on the above EC communication, the European Union Committee of the Regions - an advisory body within the EU decision making machinery - reinforced this view and spelled out a few core principles for strengthening decentralized cooperation. According to the Committee of the Regions:

"a) governance means the installation of credible and competent local authorities, able to deliver the advances of democratic decentralization to their fellow citizens, respecting their rights and meeting their needs;

³⁸ CETS No 106, Article 2.

³⁹ COM (2006) 421 final, 1.1, p.5.

- b) all cooperation policies and programmes run by the EU Commission and member States alike must take proper account of the need to give local authorities of developing countries and countries in transition the means to shoulder the responsibility falling to them, and to give European local authorities the means to offer support through their experience and know-how;
- c) progress in local governance and the obstacles it can encounter should be evaluated constantly at country level...
- d) in general terms the decentralization process in developing countries should be given special attention when drafting each country strategy paper”⁴⁰.

E. From the Lomé Convention to the Cotonou Agreements: the evolution of the normative regulation of decentralized cooperation and of decentralization

As previously mentioned, both in definitional and policy development terms, the Lomé Convention and then the Cotonou Agreements, between EU Member states and ACP states, represent major milestones in clarifying the potential role of decentralized cooperation and decentralization for improving life conditions in developing countries. In evaluating the results of the more than 25 years since the signing of the Lomé Convention, one of the few generally shared conclusions is that the political dimension of development has to be recognized as part of the process and that a closer involvement of civil society, the private sector and economic and social actors in the ACP-EC partnership has emerged as an important new dimension to be further encouraged.

The renewal of the ACP-EC agreement was the subject of intense discussions from 1996, beginning with a Commission Green Paper and public debate. Negotiations, started in September 1998, were successfully concluded in early February 2000. A new ACP-EC Partnership Agreement was signed in Cotonou, Benin on 23 June 2000. The text of the agreement was significantly amended in parts in 2005 through the "Agreement Amending the Partnership Agreement" also signed in Cotonou⁴¹.

The Cotonou Agreement, and to a more significant extent, the 2005 Amending Agreement, introduced several new rules on decentralized cooperation, offering a unique legal and political basis for the future development of this new way of conducting development policies.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding and confusion in terminology, it is of the utmost importance to underline that in EU reasoning, the concept of decentralized cooperation involves not only local and regional public institutions, but also every actor that plays an active and innovative role in society. These include those who work for territorial development in NGOs, cooperatives, trade unions, women's and youth associations, educational, training and research institutions as well as small and medium sized enterprises, etc.

⁴⁰ CdR 383/2006 fin EN/o, par.4.

⁴¹ The text of the Agreement Amending the Convention is reproduced in the Official Journal of the European Union, L 209 of August 11, 2005.

This definition is based on five main tenets, as follows:

- *Active participation of the various groups of stakeholders.* For the European Commission, recipients should become genuine stakeholders and/or partners who are capable of assuming responsibility for their own development.
- *Seeking consultation and complementarity between stakeholders.* As part of a programming-centred approach, decentralized cooperation aims to promote dialogue and coherence in the initiatives of various stakeholders. It seeks to link action at the local, national and regional levels.
- *Decentralized management.* A cornerstone of the approach is delegating responsibility for management (including financial management) to a level as close as possible to the recipients.
- *Introducing a process approach.* As it takes some time to secure genuine involvement and ownership, time is a central issue. The traditional project approach should therefore become an iterative approach with emphasis on listening, dialogue, mobilization of local resources, achieving goals and action as part of a process.
- *Giving priority to capacity building and institutional development.* Decentralized cooperation does not just focus on material needs; it also seeks to strengthen the potential action and management of local initiatives.

F. Contributions of the 2000 Cotonou Agreement and the 2005 Amending Agreement to the definitive consolidation of the concept of decentralized cooperation in European Union-African relations.

The duration of the Cotonou Agreement itself represents a fundamental innovative element that has had a clear impact on the issues at stake. The agreement was concluded for a period of twenty years, with a clause allowing for revision every five years and a financial protocol for each five-year period. This time limit will undoubtedly allow for proper planning of activities and will create a long lasting general framework conducive to long-term engagement of all those involved and interested in the implementation of the agreement itself. This is a first important innovation that will facilitate and support a long-lasting change in attitude on the topics relevant to this paper.

That said, it is important to remember that the Cotonou Agreement is based on five interdependent pillars:

- Comprehensive political dimension
- Participatory approaches
- Strengthened focus on poverty reduction
- New framework for economic and trade cooperation
- Reform of financial cooperation.

The first two pillars are particularly relevant for the purposes of the present study. In this framework it is useful to mention the following innovative aspects of the agreement:

(i) The increased attention to the role to be played by local authorities in Africa for promoting development principles:

- Article 2 of the Cotonou Agreement specifically mentions that “apart from central government as the main partner, the partnership shall be open to different kinds of other actors in order to encourage the integration of all sections of society,...into the mainstream of political, economic and social life”.
- Article 6.1 defines the actors of cooperation. On the State side, local, national and regional Government bodies are listed. On the Non-State side, the agreement mentions the private sector, economic and social partners, including trade unions and “civil society in all its forms according to national characteristics⁴². There are additional selection criteria stated in Article 6.2 to cut down non-State actors “in all its forms” to a more manageable manner. The Agreement mentions three such qualifying criteria: Recognition by the parties of non-governmental actors shall depend on the extent to which they address the needs of the population, on their specific competencies and whether they are organized and managed democratically and transparently.”

(ii) The recognition that among those eligible for financing within the framework of the Cotonou agreement, there are also “departments or local authorities of the ACP States” (article 58, para. 2 a), subject to the agreement of the ACP state or ACP states concerned.

(iii) The specific importance given to the support of decentralization processes in Africa:

- Article 33, para. 3, states that “Cooperation shall support ACP States' efforts to develop their public institutions into a positive force for growth and development and to achieve major improvements in the efficiency of government services as they affect the lives of ordinary people. In this context, cooperation shall assist the reform, rationalisation and the modernisation of the public sector. Specifically, cooperation support shall focus on...f) political administrative, economic and financial decentralization”.
- Article 33, para. 4, clarifies that “Cooperation shall also assist to restore and/or enhance critical public sector capacity and to support institutions needed to underpin a market economy, especially support to...d) building the capacity at the local and municipal levels which is required to implement decentralization policy and to increase the participation of the population in the development process”. The issue of participation is also mentioned in Article 4 that outlines the general approach to its various forms. In particular it identifies the three areas where Central Governments should allow participation of new actors (policy formulation and drawing-up programmes, implementation of cooperation projects and programmes in areas that concern non-state actors and access to capacity building support).

⁴² ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, 2000, Article 6, p. 7

- Article 60 (Scope of financing) includes among the activities that might also be financed, activities and projects aimed at "institutional development and capacity building". Furthermore, Article 7 points out that the contribution of civil society to development can be enhanced by strengthening community organizations and non-profit non-governmental organizations in all spheres of cooperation. This requires encouraging and supporting the creation and development of such organizations, and establishing arrangements for their involvement in the design, implementation, and evaluation of development strategies and programmes.

The above three aspects were further developed and reinforced in the 2005 agreement amending the Partnership Agreement signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000. As already mentioned, one of the main features of the original Cotonou agreement was its twenty year duration and a clause allowing for revision every five years. As a matter of fact, in 2005 the parties decided to adopt an amending agreement to update the initial provisions and introduce changes necessary to keep it coherent with the ongoing evolution of Euro-African relations.

The 2005 Amending Agreement introduced a change in article 58 par. 2 according to which "local decentralized authorities from ACP States and the Community" become eligible for financial support, subject to the agreement of the ACP State or States. The innovating aspects of this rule are that local authorities from the EU, not only those from Africa, become eligible for funding. This decision was based on the general recognition that decentralized cooperation is an effective means for reinforcing development and, in this framework, on the unique role to be played by European local authorities.

G. Concluding remarks: towards a more stable, legal framework supporting decentralized cooperation and decentralization in EU-Africa relations

Based on what was mentioned in the previous paragraphs, we can say that there is a clear trend in EU-Africa relations that considers both decentralized cooperation and decentralization processes as increasingly essential pillars of the new Euro-African partnership architecture.

In the past, decentralized cooperation gained increasing interest as an additional tool in carrying out development programmes. It has proved to be quite effective and has shown promising results. Recently, support for processes and activities favouring decentralization of power from central state to local structures has gained momentum and has attracted the interest of an increasing number of active partners in development programmes. In this context, the evolution of the rules embodied in the EU-ACP Treaties (both Lomé and the Cotonou Conventions) and the precious work carried out so far by the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlement Programme, offer a very solid and sound basis on which potentially to build new activities. It is now up to the local authorities, both in Europe and in Africa, to use this window of opportunity in an effective manner and make a concrete contribution to the creation of an 'enabling environment' to achieve the MDGs. This means, in particular, eliminating poverty, as well as promoting democracy, strengthening the rule of law, and respecting all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development.

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III. DETAILED CASE STUDIES OF INVOLVEMENTS IN DECENTRALIZED GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

A. Case Study 1: Partnership between Kampala City Council, Uganda and the Kirklees Metropolitan Council, United Kingdom

1. Background Information

The City of Kampala initiated a link with a metropolitan council in the United Kingdom in 1995 (Box 16). According to documents available, the origins of this partnership can be traced back to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio, or first World Summit that took place in Rio de Janeiro in 1992⁴³). One of the issues emphasized at the Summit was the need to promote North-South partnerships to demonstrate the global nature of sustainable development and the interdependency of communities and nations⁴⁴. The partnership was originally brokered by the Local Government Management Board (LGBI) and was funded during the first two years (1995-1997) by the European Union. Other partners behind the Partnership were: the Local Government International Bureau (LGIB) and the Uganda Local Authorities Association (ULAA)⁴⁵. The partnership came to an end in 2002 and was evaluated in 2003.

Before decentralization in 1997 all local authorities in Uganda, Kampala City Council (KCC) inclusive, were centrally controlled. This control manifested itself in the following ways:

- All revenue sources from which local governments raised revenue were determined by the Central Government
- All Treasurers were appointed by Central Government
- All budgets had to be approved by the Minister of Local Government
- If a local government wanted to borrow money for one or the other, that local government had to seek permission first from the Minister of Local Government
- The Minister of Local Government had the powers to appoint Councillors
- There was poor definition of the roles and obligations of Local Government versus those of Central Government. As a result, there was a lot of Central Government interference in the running of local government

The policy of Decentralization was formally adopted by Uganda in 1995 when it was enshrined in the 1995 Constitution. Chapter Eleven, Article 176 (2) (b) provides that “Decentralization shall be a principle applying to all levels of Local Government and in particular from higher to lower local government Units to ensure peoples’ participation and democratic control in decision making”.

In 1997, the Local Government Act was enacted. In this Act the policy of Decentralization as enshrined in the Constitution was elaborately laid out. The roles and obligations of each level of government are clearly laid out.

⁴³ The second Summit was organised in Johannesburg, South Africa 10 years latter.

⁴⁴ J. Roster (2000) Global links for local democracy, p. 13

⁴⁵ ULAA changed the name to Uganda Local Government Association (ULGA)

Box 16: Practitioner to Practitioner Partnership between Kirklees and Kampala

The established partnership - practitioner to practitioner partnership - fell within what Fowler (1998: p.144) called 'authentic partnership': *'mutually enabling, inter-dependent interaction with shared intentions'* This link focuses on technical cooperation matters through exchanges of expertise. During a first period, the two municipalities exchanged teams of professionals who visited both towns to identify what would be the areas where both towns could benefit from each other and what concrete activities could be launched. This was done in a spirit of mutual benefit and not only as a North-South transfer of capacity.

Three areas were selected as crucial for Kampala namely:

It is important to point out that this cooperation only relies on exchange of technical staff. There is no political nor citizen exchanges. It is a deliberate decision to go slowly and rely, first, on concrete activities for both parties. Once things will be achieved, other kind of exchanges may be looked upon. Terms of relationships are much more balanced and people talk of the same problems without looking at each other as an eventual source of income. There is no financial cooperation between the two city councils and it seems that it is not possible. City councils in the North depend on taxpayers' money and it would be very difficult for them to justify an overseas utilization of their money.

The challenge that the Kampala City Council faced was how to identify innovative ways of improving on the quantity of locally raised revenue and management of local resources in order to meet a myriad of problems including demand for better services. With the newly acquired autonomy through decentralization, KCC had the latitude and clear mandate to determine how they wanted to transact business including determining their priorities. KCC was fortunate to have a dynamic reform minded Town Clerk, Mr. Gordon Mwesigye and a supportive Mayor, His Worship John Ssebana Kizito.

To implement the necessary reforms, Management put in place a Strategic Framework for Reform (SFR). The SFR had three main elements:

- To restructure the organization with a view to rightsizing it
- To Contract out all non-Statutory functions (both in service delivery and in management) to private sector
- To improve financial management practices
- To move away from being direct service providers to enablers
- To dispose off all non-productive assets
- To review all laws that could impact on the operations of the Council

No sooner was the SFR put in place, than it was realized that KCC needed expertise that was not available in-house. The alternative was to go out and hire consultants. This turned out to be expensive and the Council did not have money. An opportunity occurred when the Town Clerk met City Manager of Kirklees Metropolitan Council (KMC) in the United Kingdom at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janerio in the presence of the Director of the Local Government Management Board. Having gone through a similar restructuring recently, KCC asked KMC whether they would be willing to conclude a technical cooperation arrangement with KCC. KMC agreed. Both LGBI and ULAA proposed that the partnership should be based on "practitioner to practitioner" approach as opposed to the traditional form of municipal partnership – twinning – which is more concerned with political and cultural exchanges as symbols of international friendship. Practitioner to practitioner collaboration is grounded in professional council employees, such as engineers, finance officers, planners, and environmental health officers who share their knowledge and expertise in joint problem-solving.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Hazel Johnson and Gordon Wilson (2000), *Which Way to Learn: A Report into the Municipal Partnership between Kampala City Council and Kirklees Metropolitan Council 1995-2002*, p. 11

The Technical Cooperation Agreement was based on both sides agreeing as to what they would like to see realized from the technical cooperation. For KCC, the main objective was to be assisted in its efforts to develop and progressively implement its strategic and development initiatives to help achieve a credible level of service delivery, and to foster a mutually agreed arrangement that would see orderly, sustainable transfer of skills and good practices at extremely low cost. Through discussion and dialogue, five priorities were agreed upon:

- The preparation and design of the traffic improvement strategies for the Central Business District
- The preparation of the project documents for the Nakivubo Channel Rehabilitation Project
- Development of a new organization structure for KCC
- Setting up of new financial management systems
- Identification and design of a new Landfill Site and the expansion and contracting out of the management of the existing one.

2. Benefits from Decentralized Cooperation

(i) Organization restructuring: KCC was restructured and the following results were registered:

- Right Sizing: KCC was able to reduce the workers to 1500 from 8000. The new workshop was aligned to the new mandate of being an enabler rather than a direct service provider. In addition, a results-based performance system was installed
- Staffing: Qualified staff was recruited in the finance department

(ii) Adoption of Alternative Service Delivery: The Council managed to contract out services. This was applied in two broad areas, i.e. service provision and revenue collection.

- Service Provision: KCC successfully outsourced the following services formerly undertaken directly by the council:
 - ✓ The sweeping of streets
 - ✓ Grass cutting and gardening
 - ✓ Provision of security services
 - ✓ The cleaning of the City Hall

Those who were laid off were immediately hired by the contractors that were engaged to provide services. The savings are indicated in the Table 1 below.

Table 1: Savings in Service Delivery

Expenditure	1999/1996		Savings:
	Actual Cost (Shs)	Contracted Cost (Shs)	
Cleaning Services – H/Q Staff Costs	420,000,000.00	46,260,000.00	373,740,000.00
Security Services Staff Costs	480,000,000.00	67,200,000.00	412,800,000.00
Road Cleaning Services – Staff Costs	720,000,000.00	312,000,000.00	408,000,000.00
Total Expenditure	1,220,000,000.00	774,380,350.00	1,445,619,650.00

- **Revenue Collection:** In the effort to improve revenue mobilization, KCC privatized revenue collection. The revenue sources that were privatized were:
 - ✓ Revenue from all parks
 - ✓ Revenue from markets
 - ✓ Revenue from public toilets
 - ✓ Street car parking
 - ✓ Trading licences

The privatization of revenue collection was a resounding success. Table 2 shows the comparative revenue collected from the sources that were privatized and those before contracting out.

Table 2: Comparative Revenue Collected From the Sources That Were Privatized and Those before Contracting Out

Privatized Local Revenue	1993/94	1996/97	1999/2000
	Actual	Actual	Actual
Vehicle Parks	600,000,000.00	1,512,778,000	1,955,133,200.00
Markets	240,000,000.00	651,523,000.00	829,447,151.00
Street Parking	-	-	420,000,000
Total Local Revenue	840,000,000.00	2,164,391,000.00	3,204,580,351.00

(iii) **Partnership Advantages:** The Institutional Arrangement: The practitioner to practitioner approach was applauded by all parties as an effective arrangement compared to the standard practice of employing consultants. The new approach was seen as a more collegiate relationship embodying a learning process to problem solving. A senior officer from KCC said comparing a partnership vis-à-vis the engagement of consultants:

“In 1991, a First Urban Programme was formed here, with big money from the World Bank. In the Agreement was a provision for technical assistance in which we got 14 expatriates who consumed a whopping US\$ 4 million. At that time the internal capacity of KCC was low, and not many people could benefit from their presence, so at the end there was either little benefit or nothing. The expatriates left their reports on the shelf, and many of us thought it had been a waste of money. We thought that if we aligned with a local authority in the same business as ourselves, it would be cheaper and more relevant.”⁴⁷

KCC was able to ‘sell’ the cost-benefit of the practitioner to practitioner approach to the World Bank and secure funding for the partnership, instead of the World Bank taking the more usual consultancy route.

KCC people learned a good deal through the partnership particularly ‘soft’ skills of project management, consulting and involving stakeholders in project processes (especially users), and relating to the public. Good general practices were also mentioned – such as the importance of timekeeping. Demonstration projects in relation to traffic management were generally considered to be tangible successes and added to the motivation to continue the partnership.

Visits by KCC officers and councillors to KMC enabled them to see ‘good practice’ in action. An example appreciated by KCC politicians and staff was the practice of ‘public

⁴⁷ Hazel Johnson, *ibid* p. 14

petitioning' at the start of council meetings a practice where members of the public or groups address the relevant committee of the Council about an issue of concern. This practice is now part of the KCC procedures. The former Town Clerk of KCC Mr. Gordon Mwesigye had this to say:

"The politicians have come to see things differently. I remember on one of the tours that we sent the Council Speaker. When he came back he allowed the procedure of allowing the public to air their grievances on the floor of the Council Chamber to take place. At first some of us thought that was going too far, but it has become part of our standing orders and procedures. People come to do this. They send in their complaint and air it in the Council Chamber. It is open to the press who then scream big headlines. The impact of that process is that the public has come to view the Council as their Council, not something distant and closed."

Councillors were also impressed by the shorter, 'professional' nature of meetings that were held at KMC.

In terms of human resources, Ugandan and UK education and training systems have many similarities, and the officers in the partnerships were qualified people. However, the opportunity for gaining experience in work projects, specializing in a given area of engineering or environmental health, and for building tacit knowledge and developing 'best practice' was much greater in the UK than in Uganda. In the latter, there are limited budgets and therefore personnel and professionally-qualified officers have to manage a multitude of tasks. In the sceptical view of partnership, therefore, these inequalities between the partner authorities would be apparent in the working relations, with a dominant role played by the northern partner, a unidirectional knowledge transfer (based on the idea that knowledge and best practices reside in the North), and a resource transfer levered by the northern partner, whether directly or not. In sum, the sceptical interpretation of these inequalities would have an adverse effect on the mutuality of the partnership process.

3. Widening Mutuality Gap

(i) End of the Partnership: Interestingly, the partnership ended partly when the original champions within KMC were no longer in place and partly when the original persons within the World Bank who worked on the programme and the respective replacements started raising some technical questions⁴⁸. For example, in line with World Bank ideology, it was argued that partners should be chosen in a more transparent way, with at least elements of a competitive process, than had been the case with the KMC link. KCC was advised to advertise for a new partner. The Project Coordination at KCC had this to say about the way the partnership ended:

"It didn't end on a bad note, we were getting what we wanted. What ended was the financing by the World Bank. The World Bank asked if, having had Kirklees for 5 years, whether we would like a change. It asked, 'Why don't we cross-fertilise and try and see another town?' Another World Bank argument was that the UK is very developed compared with Uganda and we might do better with a town in a more similar situation. The World Bank also argued against sole-sourcing – the link with Kirklees

⁴⁸ Hezel Johnson et.al ibid. p. 16

had not been advertised. So we did advertise [for a new partner] in the International Development magazine but nobody responded. You can't just go out and advertise, there has to be a need and willingness to cooperate. So we have identified Hyderabad. Although the link with Kirklees has ended they are still our brothers and sisters. We can still go to them. If all the original people were still there, there would be no problem".

4. KMC Perspectives

The KMC officials agreed with KCC officials that champions are extremely important in making a partnership succeed. They also shared the view that having sustainable funding is important. However, the KMC officials had a slightly different interpretation of the practitioner to practitioner benefits and the effectiveness of the visits, however, had a rather different emphasis from that of KCC. While recognising the strengths of practitioner to practitioner collaboration and the associated visits when they worked as they should, and fully supporting the theory, KMC nevertheless felt that there was a certain mismatch at times between the rhetoric and the way things worked in practice. Visits were described as being mainly 'management tourism' by one KMC interviewee. Generally among KMC officers, it was felt that, especially towards the end of the partnership, there was a tendency for KCC counterparts to treat them more and more like consultants and for KCC to move further and further away from the original practitioner to practitioner concept. One concomitant aspect of this among KMC engineers was sorely felt – that of lack of feedback from KCC concerning how well the advice and recommendations they had provided, often during time outside of their normal work hours, had been received and whether it had been implemented and with what results. Also KMC felt that the practical projects in which it had been involved in Kampala achieved, since an early success in traffic management, at best mixed results because of poor implementation capacity in KCC. In other words, communication between the two councils was often poor, and Kampala did not have the finances (due in part to its extremely poor revenue collection) nor the human expertise to act on the advice it received. In short, the partnership from the KMC perspective was not as effective as it wished and in the long run motivation to keep it alive waned.

It should be underlined that this is not entirely a case of KCC saying one thing (the rhetorical position'), KMC another (the 'reality position') about the sustainability of the partnership.

There were divergent views on both sides, although that described above was put forward the most forcefully. Thus, some KCC engineers themselves recognized the tendency especially towards the end to treat their KMC counterparts as consultants, citing lack of time due to 'normal' work at both ends as a pressure that hampered full collegiate relationships. Other KCC interviewees recognized too that not everyone had taken the visits to Kirklees seriously, and people had had other personal agendas. They felt, however, that these visits did improve with time as a result of feedback. Even on the KMC side, an alternative view was expressed that was less harsh about the 'other personal agendas' associated with visits to Kirklees, suggesting that these had to be accepted as an 'overhead expense'. Kirklees officers also felt that, despite the problems, the practitioner to practitioner spirit was kept alive with benefits both to KMC and KCC. These officers highlighted especially improved management skills in the PCU in Kampala. Below are some of the testimonials:

“Practitioner to practitioner, or shoulder to shoulder: strengths are that it aids development, because you have people who share common problems who will sit down together and talk and find ways and means. Even with the Nakivubo channel2, our people took a pride in finding out and getting answers to their questions. This type of arrangement was getting solutions on their [i.e. Kampala’s] terms and starting from where they were”.

Retired ex-senior officer, KMC

“They did seem interested [on KCC visits to KMC] and the visits did help them to analyse their own problems and suggest solutions. Weaknesses: but you can’t go on from there if there is no implementation. I’m sure one or two things were implemented, but overall it was not effective”.

At the end of a study visit to Kirklees, KCC officers thought aerial surveys would be a quicker way than conventional surveying for land use planning and also to establish a property register to assist in rates’ collections. These suggestions were not implemented, probably because of lack of resources. KCC has only a few planning officers and KMC has 50. On practitioner to practitioner, individuals built up good relationships via emails too. When that worked well it was very good. Communication could be pretty task-oriented and that was good. The more practically based it was, the more valuable.

However, it tended to go away from practitioner to practitioner to consultancy. E.g. Rather than saying we’ve got this problem, what’s your advice, they would ask, ‘Can you do this for us?’ For example, they asked a KMC officer to go to Kampala on specific dates to carry out the necessary inspections and verifications before the handover of the extension to the landfill site and the leachate treatment plant from the contractors to KCC. There’s a fine line between asking for advice and doing it for them”.

International Liaison Officer, KMC

“In consultant mode there is no feedback loop, and should be contrasted with working alongside. We were being treated as consultants towards the end but we didn’t set out to do that. We saw our task to be a critical friend”.

“Critical friend means being straight and honest, taking into account of course the different circumstances. A consultant will tell you what you want to hear”.

Two senior KMC engineers

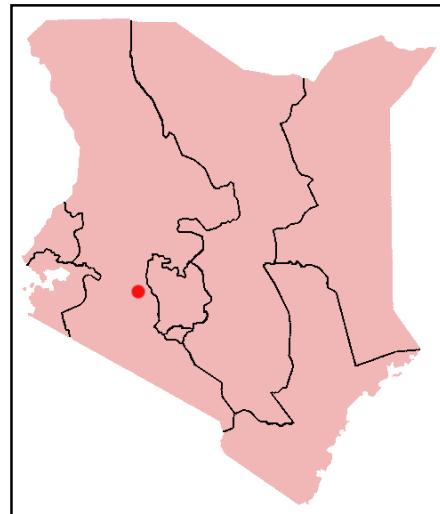
B. Case Study 2: City-To-City Cooperation between the Nakuru Municipal Council (NMC) in Kenya and the Leuven City Council in Belgium

1. Background Information

Nakuru is Kenya's fourth largest urban centre and the capital of the Rift Valley province with roughly 300,000 inhabitants. It lies about 1850 m above sea level and 275 miles from Nairobi. Nakuru was established by the British as part of the White highlands during the colonial era and it has continued growing into a cosmopolitan town.

The case study highlights, amongst others,

- The main objectives of the city link, influential personalities and the motivations for their support in the two cities
- Impact of the partnership on local authorities, administrations and the population in general, and the added value of the partnership
- Relations between the partners: communication, mutual respect and reciprocity, both at the level of the two local authorities and administrations as well as between the participating institutions, associations and individuals;
- Results or outcome: what was achieved and sustainability results



2. Origin and preliminary stages of the partnership

In Nakuru the idea of a city-to-city link was first raised in connection with the initial fourth pillar of Localising Agenda 21 – Stimulating innovative partnerships: promoting a policy dialogue between cities with similar problems, on the basis of successful local experiences. It was expected that a parallel initiative between residents of the two cities would lead to a comparable cooperation. The initiative had to remain with the two cities, but the working groups in Leuven and Nakuru were expected to undertake their own projects, based upon information and supported by the two cities.

In Leuven everybody unanimously confirms that the initiative came from Han Verschure of the Post Graduate Centre Human Settlements (PGCHS) of the Catholic University of Leuven. At the request of the United Nations (UNCHS, UN-Habitat) PGCHS was assisting Nakuru in developing its LA 21 and the centre was looking for financial and technical support. Its proposal got the support of elected local politicians and senior municipal staff in Leuven. This resulted in a Partnership in view of a more Sustainable Urban Development. The agreement of 12 March 1998, stipulates that both cities would:

- Develop an appropriate structure to achieve the objectives of the 'Localising Agenda 21' programme
- Involve their respective administrations and services, as well as the representatives from all local stakeholders and actors
- Draw up a list of priority actions and closely follow up these actions in terms of organization and technical implementation

- Exchange information on ongoing activities, thereby offering each other support with regard to contents
- And their Councils would involve other interested organizations or stakeholders in this process of exchanging experiences and implementing priority actions
- Involve their respective populations in this process

Just like in the previous case study, the city-to-city linkage between the Nakuru Municipal Council (NMC) in Kenya and Leuven City Council (LCC) in Belgium started with informal interaction at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The relationship was brokered by the Catholic University of Leuven (Post Graduate Centre Human Settlements - CUL-PGCHS). City-to-city cooperation aims at the joint achievement of a process of capacity building and improvement of the quality of local government in one or more specific areas. The cooperation is the result of a process with maximum involvement of the population, in order to create a broad public support. This support should both exist internally (at the level of elected officers and municipal staff) and externally (within associations of citizens and local social and economic stakeholders). To safeguard the future, the partnership needs a minimal structure that guarantees the involvement of internal and external actors. The idea received support from the Belgian Development Cooperation (BDC), very supportive of and active in promoting international cooperation between cities through two programmes with similar objectives but using different procedures. The objectives were:

- Strengthening local level management capacity e.g. training municipal staff or introducing planning procedures
- Strengthening local democracy, e.g. introducing new methodologies such as participatory planning or a communication policy, and reinforcing the civil society at the local level
- Supporting partnerships between municipalities and citizens' associations, with the municipal authorities in the 'director's seat'
- Strengthening local authorities as economic actors, e.g. in partnership with the local business sector
- Overcoming Nakuru specific challenges

After setting the priorities, NMC realised it neither had capacity nor resources to address its challenges. In 1996 the Catholic University of Leuven called on the City Council to become a partner of Nakuru in the LA21 exercise. Leuven complied with that request and started its own LA process in 1997. It established a Plan of Action, in cooperation with BBL – Federation for a Better Environment – an umbrella organization for conservationist and environmental groups. The Plan comprised actions for:

- Using responsibly raw materials and energy (use of recycled paper, follow up of energy consumption in public buildings, avoiding the use of tropical hardwood in municipal building projects, etc.)
- Establishing a 'birth forest'
- Partnering with Nakuru
- Environmental improvements in particular city areas
- Promoting cycling in the city centre

In March 1998 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the city of Nakuru. Local Agenda 21 was the guiding theme of the cooperation. The Nakuru Localising Agenda 21 programme started in 1995 on the occasion of Habitat (the United Nations' Conference on Human Settlements Programme) as a study on how to implement a

blueprint for sustainable development at local level and how to reconcile urban development and environmental protection.

The objectives were:

- (i) Support the implementation of broad-based participatory environmental improvement plans – improvement of social housing is regarded as an essential part of environmental protection
- (ii) Improve the quality of the urban infrastructure to achieve better living conditions for the lower income groups;
- (iii) Improve the quality of urban development plans, by means of integrating them in strategic structure and investment plans in the medium and long term

Through a series of workshops and consultations with the support of CUL-PGCHS, the following were identified as the most important priorities for the Council:

- Preparation of a Strategic Structure Plan
- Creation of an administrative unit for town planning
- Upgrading the council housing (established in the 1950s)
- Improving solid waste removal and water supply in low income areas of the city
- Improving the overall tax collection
- Training local leaders (councillors) and municipal staff and establishing district development committees

Meanwhile, various spheres of governance had guidelines for international cooperation which needed to be followed as a matter of procedure. For instance, the Federal Government programme of international cooperation emphasizes the technical, administrative and managerial side of the partnership:

- (i) Only municipal staff can be deployed in exchange and training activities
- (ii) Small investments can be used to support the partner city in specific actions
- (iii) The programme is based on Royal Decrees that have to be renewed annually

In 2001 Leuven received a grant for its policy of international cooperation.

The programme of the Flemish Community (government) is based upon four pillars:

- Larger opportunities for expansion of the city-to-city cooperation
- Sensitization
- Capacity building, including a fully fledged North-South policy in the municipality in Flanders and strengthening of a political and administrative basis or support for that policy
- Programmes based on three-year covenants, renewable every year after an evaluation.

The actions in the Leuven Plan of Action 2001-2004 were funded through this channel.

On 1April 2004, the Flemish Parliament adopted a new decree in relation to local development cooperation. City-to-city cooperation aims at the joint achievement of a process of capacity building and improvement of the quality of local government, to be achieved in one or more specific areas. The cooperation is the result of a process with maximum involvement of the population, in order to create a broad public support. This

support should both exist internally (at the level of elected officers and municipal staff) and externally (within associations of citizens and local social and economic stakeholders).

The Flemish Community charged the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) to come up with a blueprint to achieve an ideal city-to-city partnership. In 2003, after seven years of cooperation between Leuven and Nakuru, VVSG came up with the following blueprint to achieve an ideal city-to-city partnership:

- Reach a consensus on the concept and the importance of a partnership in local policy (of international cooperation)
- Organize a large information and consultation procedure on objectives and concrete stages
- Provide a link with the policy options – compare the own city profile with that of potential partners
- Draw up a profile of potential partner cities
- Search for possible partners
- Confirm the choice of the partner city – this may include an identification mission, the proposal of a cooperation agreement and sounding out with stakeholders in both cities
- Elaborate a programme for several years and annual action plans, with specific objectives and projects

One should keep in mind that this blueprint was drafted in 2003, five years after the start of the cooperation between Leuven and Nakuru.

Following the signing of the cooperation agreement, both Leuven and Nakuru created structures to ensure the link between LA 21 and the city-to-city partnership.

Nakuru had the following structures:

- (i) LA 21 Coordinator
- (ii) Management Team, including the chairpersons of the six commissions of the Municipal Council of Nakuru (meeting every three months and proposing political statements and resolutions to the Council)
- (iii) Core Team (established in 2003 on the proposal of Leuven, meeting every month) with representatives of the departments involved in the actions: the Town Clerk's Department, Finance, the Municipal Education Office, the Municipal Engineer's Department, Social Services and Housing, Water and Sewerage, Public Health and Environment. Co-opted members includint the head teachers of Moi, Kibowen Komen (Ronda), Bondeni and Prisons Primary Schools
- (iv) Local Team, a combination of the Management and Core teams
- (v) Four Zonal Development Committees (ZDCs): East, Central, South and Western, each with their own constitution and functions. The main purpose was to coordinate the activities of all the Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in the area and to make maximum use of available resources by drawing up a hierarchy of needs. An example was the Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP) - local projects in the framework of a four years' plan and financed by a municipal fee of three percent. The ZDCs were established in 1995-1996 in the process of the preparation of a Strategic Structure Plan, as part of LA 21
- (vi) Leuven Task Force, constituted by representatives of CBOs of Nakuru. The Leuven Task Force was interested in cooperation with the NMC with regard to domestic

waste collection and control of storm water, and was looking for support from Leuven with respect to these issues

During the evaluation exercise, it was felt that members of various teams were well motivated and well acquainted with the actions under their responsibility.

3. International recognition

Leuven and Nakuru cooperation received international attention and recognition by the United Nations, including Habitat, in view of the fact that people from different backgrounds contributed with (sometimes small) actions.

4. The position of Non-state Actors in Nakuru

CBOs in the Municipal Council of Nakuru were very active – most CBOs were organized as savings cooperatives with 20 to 40 members operating under the dynamic leadership of the Nakuru Affordable Housing and Environmental Cooperative (NAHECO) as an umbrella organization – despite their very limited resources. According to the evaluation report, CBO participation in the different meetings was very high, although these meetings were convened at very short notice. The presentation of activities and field visits was convincing. CBOs also undertook actions for the improvement of the local environment in their areas: voluntary work for the removal of domestic waste from the streets, improvements of secondary sewer sewage pipes, planting of trees. The report also noted that the degree of participation of women in these CBOs was remarkably high.

In Leuven, the supporting structures were:

- (i) The North-South Office
- (ii) Platform LA 21, with an executive committee composed of Bond Beter Leefmilieu, the municipal department for Environment, the North-South Office and Han Verschure of Leuven University. In addition, the Platform was buttressed by a steering committee (created in 2003) comprising representatives of the local business community, environmental associations and non-governmental organizations for development cooperation. The Platform had five working groups, including the Nakuru 'Werkgroep' or Nakuru Task Force⁴⁹.
- (iii) A steering committee composed of the members of the executive committee, the alderman and representatives of various municipal departments.

5. The attitude and the position of the working groups or task forces in both cities

According to available reports, the attitude/position of the working groups or task forces in both cities was “to wait and see”. They felt insufficient recognition and support; they felt uncertain with regard to their mission, competencies and positions in the structures of the partnership. They tended to wait for initiatives coming from the public actors (the municipalities). In Leuven the membership of the task force depended on personal

⁴⁹ The Nakuru Task Force had only a limited number of active members. At the beginning it was composed of ten members, but later on were reduced to only six. These individuals joined the group out of personal sympathy. The group was founded in February 2003, so it has only had a short period of time so far to prove its usefulness. It has tried to establish links with the Leuven Task Force in Nakuru and it also organized a working visit to Nakuru in July, 2003.

sympathy and there were no non-governmental organizations with strong links with Kenya. This state of affairs limited the field of action of the Nakuru Task Force.

6. Observations

(i) Actions and measurement of results: Reports available indicate that the agreement between Leuven and Nakuru was sufficiently clear with regard to the general objectives of the partnership but less clear concerning the conversion into concrete actions with measurable results. This was only developed at a later stage, with the agreements between Leuven and the federal and Flemish government. Some observers pointed out that in the interval a shift occurred in Leuven concerning the implicit meaning of the partnership, away from international cooperation in view of sustainable development between two cities and towards a link of international development cooperation with sustainability as a common denominator. In other words: the city link became a simple modality of the general policy of development cooperation and the link with sustainable development and LA 21 became blurred.

(ii) Vision about the partnership in Leuven: Records show also that there was a lack of joint vision in Leuven: some expressed a preference for limited actions in the South, others preferred to send material help to Eastern Europe. According to some interlocutors, most people involved in the cooperation appreciated the availability of federal or Flemish funds relieving Leuven of a large part of its financial burden, and the media interest attracted by some actions. The importance was felt to reach later on a broader agreement on the general vision and objectives.

(iii) Participation: All the interlocutors recognize that there was little or no participation from the population in Leuven during the first stages. Even the Third World Council was not asked for an advice. This advisory body was set up in 1984 and was composed of associations and individuals interested in North-South relations. In those years the relations between the City Council and the Third World Council were rather 'antagonistic'. The City Council was willing to take its own initiatives and did not want to limit itself to support the propositions of the Third World Council; whereas some representatives in the Third World Council defended the position that international cooperation could better be left to non-governmental organizations. This lack of participation was seen as the most important cause for the limited support for the partnership within associations and the general population.

(iv) Importance of the covenants: The policy of the federal and Flemish governments did not influence the initial decision in Leuven to engage in a city-to-city partnership, but clearly did influence the concrete actions of the last three years. The availability of funds, first at federal and later at Flemish level, was a strong incentive to conclude a covenant and facilitated new and more actions. Little by little the type of actions became more in accordance with the requirements of the Flemish Community.

(v) Drafting of action plans: From the reports, compliance with these requirements did not seem to be a major problem. However, the timing for the drafting and approval of the yearly action plans did constitute a burden for non-professional stakeholders. Associations, and more in particular the task forces in both partnering cities, need to be able to rely on administrative and technical support from municipal staff. The most appropriate bodies for this support seemed to be the LA 21 Coordination in Nakuru and the North-South Office in Leuven.

7. Nakuru's position

For obvious reasons, the insertion of the city link in the framework of covenants in Belgium was less important in Nakuru. For the people there, the partnership remained an integral part of LA 21. The covenants were considered as agreements that were concluded by the partner in Leuven to comply with the formal and financial framework of the national authorities.

8. Cooperation with the national association of municipalities

The initiation of the partnership did not correspond with the ideal procedure proposed by VVSG. At the beginning, there was neither consensus on the concept, or broad-based information and consultation procedures prior to the decision making. There was never a choice between several potential partners on the basis of the profile of these cities and no vision for the long run. As a result, several actions were started in a haphazard way, not on the basis of a clear ranking of priorities.

Corrections were made during the process, under the influence of the integration of the partnership in the framework of the Flemish Community. There was, in general, little experience with city links in the field of international development cooperation in the period 1995-2000. Leuven was a pioneer and only the second Flemish city to start a city-to-city partnership with a partner in the South. VVSG accepting that "every city has to go through a learning process" stressed the importance of paying attention to:

- (i) Clarifying the long term vision with shared basic assumptions. This would be facilitated by linking the provisions of the original Memorandum with concrete actions
- (b) Enhancing the involvement of residents in the two cities, not only by means of information and consultation but also by clarifying the position of private actors in the structures of the partnership, by introducing actions in a public (municipality) – private (associations) partnership and by supporting other non public-private partnership actions of CBOs in Nakuru
- (c) Strengthening the position of the task forces in both cities, without adding additional structures, but by simply giving recognition to the two working groups within their respective roles.

9. Impact

Most interlocutors thought that the general impact on the populations of both cities was small or minimal, but that specific actions were well-known (such as the cobblestone project and the communication link between schools). These actions have become the visible 'signboards' of the city link, which make it more visible and concrete for specific sections of the population (municipal workers, teachers). In Nakuru most actions were highly appreciated.

The promoters of the partnership had high expectations and hoped that, after some time, the majority of residents would be familiar with the general vision and fundamental objectives of the city-to-city link. This was probably too ambitious. In spite of all the nongovernmental solidarity campaigns of the last forty years and their growing financial

success in the North, awareness and in-depth knowledge of the actual living conditions and the challenges in the South remain rather limited to a small but committed part of the population (Box 17). The creation of broader support for development cooperation is a slow process and is the result of many small actions involving each time a particular part of the general population.

Box 17: Support for Women Groups

It is well known that support for women's initiatives has an important and immediate effect on the livelihood of low income families: more often women spend an additional income on better food and school education for their children than men. Support for these groups can also have a mobilizing effect in Leuven.

Well-targeted information and communication can of course increase the impact of the partnership. Leuven undertook quite some actions in this respect: it published a brochure and organized an exhibition during the first years of the partnership, there were informative articles in the local press, information was published in the bulletin of the Third World Council ('Berichten uit de wereld', lit). Tidings were from the world as well as on the municipal website. According to some interlocutors, there was insufficient information available during the initial stages and there was also some confusion with regard to the source: was the information coming from the university? From the city? From both? In later stages the information mainly focused on specific actions and paid insufficient attention to the vision and the general objectives.

Nakuru had far less opportunities and material resources for the dissemination of information. The partnership was promoted by means of signboards on the streets (for the cobblestone project) and information provided during meetings and lectures. An important channel was no doubt the news passed from mouth to mouth during visits of people from Leuven or during building camps. It was difficult to estimate the impact, at best it was a slow 'trickling down' process.

Support for the city link remained limited. In Leuven, this could be partly explained by the lack of information and consultation during the initial stage. Afterwards, unsuccessful attempts were made to involve more strongly the Third World Council, associations and schools. There seems to have been more support for LA 21. Consequently, highlighting the link between the city-to-city cooperation and LA 21 would have had the potential to enlarge the support for the former.

According to most interlocutors in Leuven, the impact on the operations of the city council and that of the different departments remained limited. Reasons mentioned were that in most concrete actions only one or two departments were involved, that the problems of the two cities were so immensely different and it was impossible to compare the resources both partners had at their disposal. However, participating departments and organizations appreciated the cooperation and stressed that the city link gave an additional 'flavour' to their daily business. The department for Environment was convinced of the importance to emphasize that the achievement of sustainability in Leuven could not be dissociated from the global context and that the city link with Nakuru was a good reminder of this link. School teachers were convinced that the communication link with Nakuru had a positive impact and did make a difference for their pupils: the children realized that they were leading a fairly privileged life and learned to put in perspective what they saw or heard about the Third World in the media.

There was lack of information at the level the councillors in Nakuru. There were misunderstandings with regard to the objectives and the available financial resources and it was easy to understand that most councillors were mainly interested in actions benefiting their own constituencies (the Town Clerk and the LA 21 Co-ordinator were aware of this shortcoming and suggested correcting actions).

According to members of the steering committee of the evaluation in Nakuru, the city link certainly had an impact on the level of the (senior) staff officers, less on the level of the elected councillors. They think that there was a more positive attitude in Nakuru towards nongovernmental and community based organizations and also greater attention for the long term perspective, a result of the drafting of the Strategic Structure plan.

10. Conclusions

The communication link between primary schools was highly appreciated by all parties involved. Two schools were particularly emphatic on this point. Moi Primary School equipped a separate classroom where pupils came together twice a week to execute tasks, in the framework of the communication link, concerning environmental awareness or information about HIV/AIDS. Bondeni Primary School paid great attention to environmental education and small actions for 'greening' the school grounds. In Leuven teachers too, confirmed that the communication link offered a surplus value in the pedagogical approach. As one official said, if the actual city link was stopped, the schools would try to find another similar opportunity for exchange. It is interesting to note that the practical difficulties during the initial phase, due to the uneven numbers of pupils in classes in both cities and translation problems, were smoothly solved. The objective of direct communication between individual pupils was initiated and the emphasis on school-to-school communication was scaled up, with the teachers as central actors.

The building camps in Kibowen Komen (Ronda) Primary School led to substantial improvements in the quality of the infrastructure. The school acquired good classes, to the satisfaction of parents and teachers. The presence of volunteers was seen as a concrete expression of solidarity between Leuven and Nakuru. It was reported that the stay of the young volunteers also made the partnership better known. The partnership achieved the following:

- Setting up of a Stabilised Soil Block classroom
- Roofing of two classrooms
- Equipping three classrooms with windows and doors and painting of the facilities
- Provision of 120 pieces of school furniture
- Completion of two separate sanitary blocks for boys and girls

These improvements created a new dynamic and a conducive learning environment: enrolment increased and marks in the National Examination (important for access to secondary schools) improved.

In Leuven the building camps became the best known actions of the city-to-city cooperation. They were integrated in the action programme of the 'Bouworde'. The volunteers positively testified about their work in Nakuru. In this way several hundreds of youngsters heard a lot about the partnership between Leuven and Nakuru.

The building camps were expensive actions. On the other hand, they certainly met an urgent need in Nakuru and made the partnership more visible for the population.

The HIV/AIDS seminars for NMC staff certainly answered to an important need. Two seminars were held and 48 peer educators were trained.

11. Setbacks

(i) Lack of capacity: A mutually rewarding partnership should be based upon an equal input of both partners. In reality this is often not the case. Southern partners tend to look at northern partners as donors. Furthermore, in the case of Nakuru, some projects were not completely finished due to shortage of skilled craftsmen and the difficulties to get technicians for particular parts of the construction work. Where there were voluntary groups, NMC could not provide basic equipments such as wheelbarrows, brushes and gloves.

(ii) The relations between the partner cities: This is normally a delicate but crucial condition for sustaining decentralized cooperation. In the case of Nakuru and Leuven, reports available indicate that the partners treated each other in a brotherly and friendly way, but at the same time they were also a little bit cautious. For instance, in Leuven, there were complaints about the difficulties in the exchange of information. There was satisfaction about the financial reports, but less so about the communication on the results of the actions.

There were concerns about the timing for reporting and for the presentation of new action plans. Quite often, Nakuru did not respect timelines for reporting. There were also references to possible corruption. In Leuven, there were several interlocutors who talked about the dubious international reputation of Kenya with regard to good governance and the fight against corruption. For instance, the high cost of the renovation of the Flamingo I Estate and to a lesser extent that of the HIV/AIDS seminars were questioned. Some members criticized the cost of travel and study visits and thought that the objectives of the partnership could have been achieved without these expensive actions. It was pointed out that in such a context, the expected mutual learning process on an equal footing could be hampered. In the process, the cooperation degenerates into the traditional development cooperation.

(iii) Continuation of the partnership: None of the contacts in Nakuru expected the partnership to be discontinued. It was widely (but not always openly) recognized that some actions were not successful or would need to be adapted. Some interlocutors in Leuven suggested looking for a new partner city. At the same time they realized that these proposals would invite criticism and would not be feasible in the short term.

C. Case Study 3: Partnership between the City Council of N'Djamena and the City of Toulouse on Introducing Water Quality Monitoring systems

1. Project History

For the last ten years, the City of Toulouse has been involved in a process of decentralized cooperation with the city of N'Djamena. Cooperation programmes are developed with local authorities and involve projects implemented through formal agreements and

partnerships involving a wide range of actors. The cooperation with N'Djamena is implemented in liaison with the French Cooperation Mission and in coordination with the actions undertaken by the French Development Agency. Since 1996, Toulouse's municipal hygiene and health service plays an active part in this process. Their involvement takes the form of assistance in reorganizing N'Djamena's own hygiene and health service, including the provision of staff training, and support in developing an action plan to improve solid waste management in the African city. The training component has led to the development of procedures for conducting food hygiene surveys, and for the progressive implementation of sanitary inspections, vermin control and water quality analyses.

At the same time, since 1998 the efforts of the City of Toulouse focus on two priorities: the solid waste and sanitation management plan and the provision of assistance to its African counterpart in the management of municipal operations. Based on a feasibility study conducted in collaboration with the French Cooperation Mission and the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations (French public financial institution dedicated to local authority development), an action plan was developed addressing social and sanitary aspects as well as technical and financial considerations.

The plan, finalized in 2000, is to be implemented in several phases, leveraging the available input at the local level and the support of national or international institutions.

In accordance with the recommendations of the action plan, the City of Toulouse contributes to various pilot actions (assistance for N'Djamena's municipal waste recycling facility), while maintaining close ties with various other funding agencies involved so as to ensure the smooth coordination of the different programmes and their consistency with agreed objectives.

2. Objectives

The main objective is to improve public services with a view to enhancing the quality of life of the population. Project development is underpinned by a process of dialogue and consultation with the community, and emphasis on their participation. In the area of sanitation, the aim is to improve health and living conditions in urban areas by fostering a cleaner and healthier environment.

3. Partners

In N'Djamena the partners include the Cooperation and Cultural Action Service of the French Embassy, the French Development Agency, the General Hospital of N'Djamena, and various groups representing the civil society sector (local development groups, sanitation committees, women's groups).

In Toulouse they include various engineering universities (Institut Catholique des Arts et Métiers, Institut National Polytechnique de Toulouse, Institut National des Sciences Appliquées), Médecins du Monde, and the Urban Development Agency for Greater Toulouse, regional hospital.

4. Implementation and Achievements

Water hygiene monitoring is the role of the hygiene and health service. This aspect is addressed through several new water supply projects. With the financial banking of the French Development Agency, the City of N'Djamena has extended the water supply to hitherto un-serviced areas. Since early 2003, 100,000 people have had access to distribution points served by five new boreholes tapping the city's deep aquifer. Eight standpipes and 23 water distribution kiosks are supplied by five water towers.

The arrangements for managing these facilities are particularly innovative involving a participatory approach, where the community itself plays a central role in improving its own living conditions. The city council has entrusted the operation of the facilities to private operators, who sell the water at a set price and are responsible for the maintenance of the installations. The water towers are situated in the public spaces among the street stalls, shops, latrines, trees and gathering places. They are managed by the associations responsible for managing the places.

The City Council oversees the facility operations through the structure CAPAQ (Support Unit for District Development Projects), which also has a coordinating role. The unit, managed by an environmental engineer, is staffed by representatives of other municipal services including Hygiene and Health, Roads, Social Welfare and Education, etc. It is thus within the framework of CAPAQ, that the health and hygiene engineer monitors hygiene in public places where water distribution points are located, as well as water quality. A hypochlorite treatment is administered by the fermier in a purpose built, secure building. The City of Toulouse has supported the project through targeted training and the provision of reagents and chlorine meters to measure chlorine concentrations and ensure that the treatment process has been properly administered.

The outcome has been better control of the monitoring of the water distributed by standpipes and water towers. The action, which requires long-term follow-up and the provision of appropriate equipment, is to be pursued.

D. Case Study 4: Partnership between the City of Thann, and the Association of Municipalities of Mbam and Inoubou, in Cameroon and the Alsace Region, Strasbourg, France to Assist in Water Management

1. Project History

Water supply facilities in Cameroon are of varying degrees of sophistication (developed or natural sources, wells with or without pumps, scan-water-type installations, etc.). In rural areas and beyond the outskirts of urban centres, there are often problems related to the maintenance and sustainability of the installations and the quality of the water provided, while some of the remotest villages have no facilities at all. In the département of Mbam and Inoubou, about 315 supply points were identified. These had been built by a diverse range of stakeholders, including the state, bilateral and multilateral cooperation bodies, NGOs, local associations and the private sector. The absence of any coordination between these players has meant that there is no consistency between the types neither of structures created, nor in the procedures established to manage them.

Against the backdrop of the privatisation of the SNEC (national water corporation), the Water Law of 1998, and then the Decentralization Law of July 2004 placed responsibility with the communes (the smallest administrative sub-division) in water management

matters. In 2003, aware of the difficulty of managing water issues individually, the eight communes of Mbam and Inoubou decided to join forces as the “Association of Communes of Mbam and Inoubou” (ASCOMI), with the aim of implementing water projects and controlling water operations, pooling resources, and establishing a policy with particular emphasis on civil society initiatives.

2. Objectives

The project aims to foster the development of project implementation capacities at cross-municipality level, empowering ASCOMI to exercise control over water projects and services, within a participatory approach involving all local stakeholders. In doing so it contributes to Millennium Development Goals by promoting good governance in the areas of water and poverty reduction.

The approach intends to be integrated and innovative, incorporating sanitation issues from the outset through a pilot action planned for the town of Bafia.

The partnership proposed by IRCOD will mobilise resources from both Cameroon and France (Alsace in particular), as part of a mentoring process to assist in the development of structures capable of contracting, implementing, managing and supervising water projects and services.

3. Partners

Partners: the Alsace Region, Adrien Zeller, Chairman (1 Place du Wacken, BP 91006, 67000 Strasbourg); the Association of Municipalities of Sélestat Marcel Bauer, Chairman (1, rue Louis Lang, 67600 Sélestat), the Town of Thann, Jean-Pierre Baeumier, Mayor (Hôtel de Ville, 1, place Joffre, 68800 Thann).

Other Partners: In France: Syndicat départemental de l'eau et de l'assainissement du Bas-Rhin, PS-Eau (water and sewage authorities).

Local Partners: Association of Municipalities of the département of Mbam and Inoubou

Beneficiaries: The eight municipalities of the département of Mbam and Inoubou, Pascal Anong Adibimé, Chairman of the Association of Municipalities of Mbam and Inoubou

4. Implementation and Achievements

The project is based on an exchange of practices and experience between the communities of Alsace and Mbam and Inoubou. It also leverages the expertise of organizations which specialize in the supervision of water development and governance projects. And it contains a sanitation “research and action” component implemented in collaboration with French universities.

Through a collaborative process (involving all stakeholders, including the decentralized state services), the project will determine the role and legal form of a newly formed water and sanitation service, provide assistance in recruiting staff to run the service and identify the respective roles of the actors on the ground. A second stage will involve the training of staff through an exchange of practices (assistance at the local level and training in

Alsace). A resident team will then ensure supervision on the ground, in partnership with a local NGO and a representative of the consortium.

5. Expected Achievements

- The improved governance and management of water through the development of management procedures for municipalities coming together (as ASCOMI) to exercise control over the provision of services and infrastructures, within a participatory process involving all stakeholders (state services, public structures, local associations, NGOs, etc.).
- The development of a sustainable community-based service capable of managing water supply and sanitation projects for the eight municipalities of Mbam and Inoubou.
- The rehabilitation of the existing water infrastructure and improvement of the quality of the available resources.
- The establishment of a capital investment programme for the progressive expansion of facilities to cover the entire Mbam and Inoubou area.

E. Case Study 5: Twinning Between Marondera Municipal Council in Zimbabwe and Leighton-Linsdale, United Kingdom

1. Introduction

The case of Marondera-Leighton-Linsdale councils' partnership is rich with experiences. The agreement was signed on 25 September 1992. Of interest are the aspects of cooperation building, driven by specific agreed tenets, and the development of the cooperation during its implementation stage. The political will was the main driver of the twinning. In addition, commitment was highly demonstrated especially on the part of the northern partner. Leighton-Linsdale is composed of two towns joined together located in Bedfordshire; some fifty miles from Greater London. The location of the town is in the zone dominated by the landed gentry of Britain hence a territory of the Conservatives.

2. The Process and Establishment of Cooperation

In building partnerships, the Town Clerk mentioned the general difficulty of attracting people's interest. His endeavours to link up with different urban centres, particularly in the South, have provided no dividends. The main factor behind the problem was lack of political will and changes in the administration. "We would negotiate with one council in office. Trying to pursue the issue further we would then find 'new signatures' on the letters. In all cases, the new office bearers were in a state of discomfort or perplexity regarding the issue of cooperating" (Marondera Town Clerk, 25 January 2007). This was the case with South-South Cooperation. "Also, our endeavours to partner with some African towns were ambushed by the suggestions by one war veteran lady councillor who dismissed the whole idea by simply saying: "What is it that we will get and learn from fellow African?" South-South cooperations are really difficult to establish.

Within this context, the Marondera-Leighton/Linsdale twinning has a long-lasting history. There was a family (the Leake family) that has always linked and visited Marondera in the 1970s. It donated to the Marondera Town Council a children's library built through a

family fund (the Leake Trust Fund). One of the family members, Mary who had a degree in Library Management, came to assist the council to run the library. She bought her farm near the Marondera town where she could easily travel daily to work. The family paid for her services from the family fund. The family and the fund continue to buy and donate books for the library. The council pays rates (water, electricity and other sundries) and also adds some books to the library. All the schools in the town use the library. The original idea was that the lady librarian, Mary, would train community people to run the library.

Mr. Leake, the elder brother of Mary visited her sister every year. He is a farmer and Leighton. Mr. Leake negotiated with the Leighton-Linsdale Mayor upon his return home on the agenda of twinning with Marondera. The Mayor, after deliberations with his council, invited the partner from the South to come and sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Council resolutions were reached resolving that the twinning be initiated and that the Mayor and Town Clerk be sent for signing the agreement. Proposals were exchanged. After panel beating these drafts from both sides, the Town Clerk and the Mayor went with gifts, which included some copper plates to Leighton-Linsdale. From there they brought a several books. The Marondera team financed its journey but hospitality was from the northern partner.

3. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The MOU between Marondera and Leighton-Linsdale was dedicated to: "...the preservation and development of democratic local government in the two communities by the pursuit of excellence in Urban Council administration, the exchange of people, technologies and expertise, and the promotion of economic and social welfare."

(i) Governance

The two councils inform each other of new developments happening in their areas of jurisdiction. This can be prior to or in the aftermath of council elections or when there is a government reshuffle of ministers or any development directly or indirectly affecting people's administration. For example, after that the Government decision that the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) would take over the water management - which makes the position of many local authorities uncomfortable given that the commodity was the main contributor of revenue (Marondera municipality, up to 40 percent) - the councils discussed their fears and other like matters in the atmosphere of trust and brotherhood.

(ii) People-to-people

The friendship between the two councils brought into picture the friendships among different people. The notable kind of social partnership has been with schoolchildren paying each other visits. This has happened even independently from the councils. Some school heads continue to communicate and exchange gifts and visits. This in turn helps the development of the community at large as the exchanged gifts such as books add to the cultural enhancement (some council staff also visited Leighton-Linsdale when they were studying in the UK as part of homage to the partnership).

(iii) Technology

The North provided new technologies especially computers.

(iv) Economic welfare

Nothing big has happened as in other councils where fire trucks have been donated.

4. Cooperation Actors

There have been a number of players to the development of Marondera and Leighton (see Table 3). These include:

- Mr. Leake and His sister, Mary
- The Mayor of Marondera
- The Mayor of Leighton-Linsdale
- The Town Clerk of Marondera
- The Town Clerk Leighton-Linsdale
- The Council of Leighton-Linsdale
- The Council of Marondera
- Marondera schools (heads, schoolchildren and other members of staff)
- Leighton-Linsdale schools (heads, schoolchildren and other members of staff)
- Families of the schoolchildren from both ends (Marondera and Leighton)
- The Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Government
- The Minister and Cabinet

Table 3: Decentralized cooperation matrix: Case of Marondera

Activity	Issue	Player(s)	Methodology	Outcomes
Brainstorming	▪ Development ▪ Governance ▪ Welfare	Council	Meetings	Areas of cooperation
Prioritisation	▪ Development ▪ Governance ▪ Welfare	Council	Meetings	Areas of cooperation
Initiation	▪ Development ▪ Governance ▪ Welfare	Council Donor	Meetings Correspondence Visitations	Plans, goals, objectives
Resolution	▪ Development ▪ Governance ▪ Welfare	Council Donor	Meetings Correspondence Visitations	Plans, goals, objectives
Negotiation	▪ Development ▪ Governance ▪ Welfare	Two councils	Meetings Correspondence Visitations	Areas of cooperation and strategies
MOU	▪ Development ▪ Governance ▪ Welfare	Two councils	Meetings Correspondence Visitations	Areas of cooperation
Visitation	▪ Development ▪ Governance ▪ Welfare	Two councils	Meetings Correspondence Visitations	Speculation of possibilities on ground, consolidation of agreements on paper
Implementation	▪ Development ▪ Governance ▪ Welfare	Two councils Communities Donors	Meetings Correspondence Visitations	Projects Donations Exchanges
Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)	▪ Development ▪ Governance ▪ Welfare	Two councils Communities Donors	Meetings Correspondence Visitations	Projects Exchanges
Adjustments	▪ Development ▪ Governance ▪ Welfare	Two councils Communities Donors	Meetings Correspondence Visitations	Areas of cooperation and strategies

5. Benefits of the Cooperation

The partnership has brought benefits on both ends:

- Funds (from the Leake Family Trust Fund -LFTF) to the Marondera Council for the repair and maintenance of the children's library

- Computers and books sent by Leighton-Linsdale to Marondera
- Enrichment through school children exchanges
- Insights and highlights on governance and council administration
- Communication and exchange
- Donation of the library to Marondera
- Tours

6. Integration of the Cooperation into the Development Plan of Marondera

The Marondera first Strategic Plan (1998-2002) highlighted the cooperation and friendship between Marondera and Leighton. This shows how partnerships can be mainstreamed in the development planning of a region. Local stakeholders were advised on the existence of such partnership and the development it has proffered to the community.

7. Has the cooperation sparked off other cooperation?

The partnership was supposed to become tripartite, as Leighton had promised to link up Marondera with her partner – a German town. Unfortunately the mayor who was pursuing the negotiations left office before the conclusion of the cooperation. The next mayor was not interested. He declined to take the issue further.

F. Conclusions and Lessons Learnt

The five case studies examined in the foregoing paragraphs show that decentralized cooperation has roots in the historical set up of the world - beginning with rudimentary commercial trade, through colonialism, through liberation struggles - and has assumed a significant role in the development cooperation. It is clear that decentralized cooperation is an innovative way of supplementing development assistance within the context of decentralised governance. The practitioner-to-practitioner approach, as we noted in the case of Kampala, provides a collegial mutual working relationship among partners that can be effective in sharing expertise as well as knowledge in tackling some of the issues faced by cities. At the same time, it can also be concluded that given the cost of engaging consultants or 'expatriates' in the conventional development cooperation, the idea of twinning comparable local authorities is a more sustainable option. It is interesting to note that after three years of experimentation, the Kampala City Council was able to 'sell' the cost-benefit of the practitioner-to-practitioner approach to the World Bank and secure funding for the partnership, instead of the World Bank taking the more usual consultancy route.

Budget constraints among partner institutions in Africa, noted in the case studies involving both Kampala (Uganda) and Nakuru (Kenya), tend to make relationships likely to be lopsided - with northern partners playing a dominant role both in terms of knowledge transfer and finance. Such inequalities can have an adverse effect on the mutuality of the partnerships.

As a corollary to the above conclusion, the case studies also revealed the dilemmas that cities face in choosing partners and how the partnership processes should be managed. For example, whilst the Kampala City Council was generally happy with the outcome of its partnership with Kirklees, the view of some donor partners was that the relationship needed to be reviewed in order to find another partner that was comparable to

Kampala. The argument was that Kirklees was too advanced for receiving relevant information and capacity from Kampala. In addition, it was pointed out that, for purposes of transparency, Kampala City Council was required to advertise for partners rather than limiting the selection to one partner. Such external interference, with its undesired effects, need to be guarded against as it might undermine the spirit of partnerships.

The experiences of various partnerships have also revealed how difficult it is to guarantee seriousness and commitment. For instance, one of the cases earlier examined shows that not everyone took the visits to the Northern counterpart seriously and some of the delegates tended to have their personal agendas. Moreover, in the case of Nakuru-Leuven partnership, there were difficulties concerning the exchange of information. There was satisfaction about the financial reports, but less so about the communication on the results of actions.

In some instances, partnerships are personalized as opposed to their institutionalization. For example, in the case of the Marondera Municipality in Zimbabwe, when the mayor who was pursuing the negotiations left his office before the conclusion of the cooperation, the next mayor was not interested and declined to take the issue further.

In sum, the lessons emerging from the case studies show that:

- (i) A mutually rewarding partnership should be based upon equality and reciprocal inputs from partners
- (ii) Openness is needed in preparing agreements. It is important to include indicators to assess the results of partnership actions
- (iii) A more prominent place for community based organizations (CBOs) in partnership agreements enhances confidence among various actors
- (iv) It is important to structure agreements around one or two important actions that directly benefit the affected community
- (v) To ensure effective utilization of resources, an agreement between participating partners should include an evaluation of the cooperation between the principals who can jointly reflect on the results and outcomes of the cooperation
- (vi) Local authorities need to ensure that procedures are in place to demonstrate the careful consideration given to every financial transaction
- (vii) Local authorities need to decide their expenditure policy relating to twinning links. For example, whether travel should be economy class, or whether business class travel is acceptable, and if so, subject to what rules. Some Government departments and international organizations, for example, have rules that permit their staff to travel business class if the journey is longer than a specified number of hours. Local authorities need to set and follow similar rules, and be willing to justify expenditures
- (viii) In the case of the use of hotels, local authorities need to have a policy on their type and price range. The golden rule is to be reasonable.
- (ix) Occasionally, the issue arises about a member on official duty wishing to be accompanied by spouse who has no formal role. It is important for the concerned person to know that he or she is responsible for all additional costs incurred (however minor) and that the person must be prepared to justify his or her position, in case of comment or criticism
- (x) In many cultures, giving or receiving gifts is not only normal but also required. It is often considered impolite not to accept or to show reluctance to accept, even relatively generous gifts. Whilst gifts of purely nominal value may be kept by the

recipient, any more substantial donations, or valuable ones should, on return, be declared and recorded in the authority's register of gifts and hospitality.

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IV. DECENTRALIZED COOPERATION FOR DECENTRALIZED GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA - THE EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

A. Introduction

The first twinning agreements among European cities and municipalities can be traced back to the end of the Second World War. It is however only at the end of the 80s that decentralized cooperation, between sub-national entities of the North and of the South, emerged as a structural and rising phenomenon.

For instance Desmet and Develtere report that Spanish sub-national entities accounted for 2.14% of official development assistance (ODA) in 1989 and to 13.5% in 1998⁵⁰. This share, which rose to 15% in the year 2000, currently covers an impressive 30% of the Spanish ODA. While the activism shown by Spanish sub-national authorities is to unprecedented levels compared to the rest of the continent, there are anyhow solid indications that sub-national authorities in other European countries have also greatly increased their commitment to decentralized cooperation.

European countries that, according to the current state of this research, engage in decentralized cooperation activities are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, and Sweden⁵¹. As an example of the greater involvement of European sub-national authorities in decentralized cooperation it is observed that, while the German Länder were responsible for 6.9% of ODA in 1996⁵², in 2002-2003 according to OECD data this share came up to 11% in 2005⁵³.

Yet as another proof of this mounting interest, it is possible to quote some of the data findings of a survey on policies and methodologies in local international cooperation undertaken by the UN-Habitat Seville Centre and that involved 27 local authorities of ten different European countries⁵⁴:

- The total annual budget for cooperation devoted by 20 of the surveyed local authorities exceeded 61 million euros
- The average percentage of the total budget dedicated to development cooperation by the participating local authorities was of 0.5%

⁵⁰ DESMET, A. & DEVELTERE, P. (2002), *Sub-National Authorities and Development Co-Operation in the OCED-DAC Member Countries*, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, pg. 19.

⁵¹ For additional information on the activities undertaken by the sub-national authorities of the countries cited please see among others: MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES ETRANGÈRES, (2001), *La coopération Internationale des collectivités locales de l'Union Européenne*, COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONS, *North/South Cooperation: the Action of Europe's Local Government Associations*; OECD, (2005) *Aid Extended by Local and State Governments*, Pre-print of the DAC Journal 2005, Volume 6, No. 4; EMMINGHAUS, C. (2003), *Kommunale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit Ansätze und Erfahrungen anderer bi- und multilateraler Geber. Studien zu den Niederlanden, Großbritannien, Dänemark und der Europäischen Union*. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH.

⁵² DESMET, A. & DEVELTERE, P. (2002), *Sub-National Authorities and Development Co-Operation in the OCED-DAC Member Countries*, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, pg. 13.

⁵³ OECD, (2005) *Aid Extended by Local and State Governments*, Pre-print of the DAC Journal 2005, Volume 6, No. 4, pg. 13.

⁵⁴ UN-HABITAT BEST PRACTICES SEVILLE CENTRE FOR CITY-TO-CITY CO-OPERATION (2006), *Local governments and international development co-operation: a European survey on strategies and policies*, pg. 32.

- Each authority funded an average of 144 projects in the last 5 years

Leaving aside discussions concerning the sheer numerical importance of decentralized cooperation, it is a relevant phenomenon in that it represents a distinctive modality of cooperation with unique features. Much is said in the literature about the characteristics of decentralized cooperation and its comparative advantages as opposed to other forms of cooperation. Indeed, as already mentioned in chapter I, when properly implemented decentralized cooperation is process-oriented and entails a peer-to-peer approach that increases local ownership and sustainability. It contains transaction costs as well as personnel costs. Decentralized cooperation can also be an effective channel for funds at the local level and, differently from other cooperation modalities, be long-term. Owning to its specificities, one would think of decentralized cooperation as one of the preferred modalities to accompany, at least in part, African sub-national entities in the new demanding tasks called for by decentralization.

The aim of this chapter is then first to examine aid sources for decentralization in Africa, then to assess the contribution given by decentralized cooperation within this framework and further to analyze some of the possible reasons as to why only a limited number of decentralized cooperation initiatives support decentralized governance. This part will be followed by three case studies selected in light of their differing characteristics as to provide, if not an overview, at least a first impression of the variety of programmes and projects that can be undertaken under different circumstances in support of decentralized governance. The last section will then look for similarities and common elements among the three case studies from a European perspective.

B. Who supports decentralized governance in Africa?

Decentralization has been accompanying most democratization processes in Sub-Saharan Africa and has increasingly been “presented by cooperation agencies as a way to promoting good governance”⁵⁵. Indeed in donors’ view decentralization “should help to improve State interventions, to efficiently manage the use of public resources, to meet the needs of populations, and to foster political participation”⁵⁶.

As shown by Table 4 compiled with data extrapolated from the Africa Governance Inventory Portal⁵⁷, support to decentralization figures high among donors’ preferences and receives 14.33% of the total budget allocated to the governance area in the AGI’s participating countries of Sub-Saharan Africa from the 80s on⁵⁸.

⁵⁵ SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA CLUB & MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP (2003), *Policies of Cooperation Institutions and Decentralization in Africa*, Preliminary Document of AFRICITIES 3, Yaoundé, 2-6 December 2003, pg. 9.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁷ The Africa Governance Inventory (AGI) web portal is an online gateway to governance-related information in Africa that can be consulted at: <<http://www.unpan.org/agiportal/>>. The AGI was originally developed in 1999 by the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations (UNDESA), with financial support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Italy.

⁵⁸ It should be stressed that out of entire Sub-Saharan Africa, only thirty-one countries have participated in the AGI since 1999, thus its data while providing a useful indication of a trend, cannot be regarded as complete. Furthermore, in so far as reliability of data is concerned, it should be underscored that is up to the participating States to upload in the database information that is accurate and up-to-date. The AGI participating countries since 1999 on are: Benin, Botswana, Burkina-Faso, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, The Gambia, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

*Table 4: Governance Funding Source by Classification Area for Sub-Saharan Africa (1980s to present)**

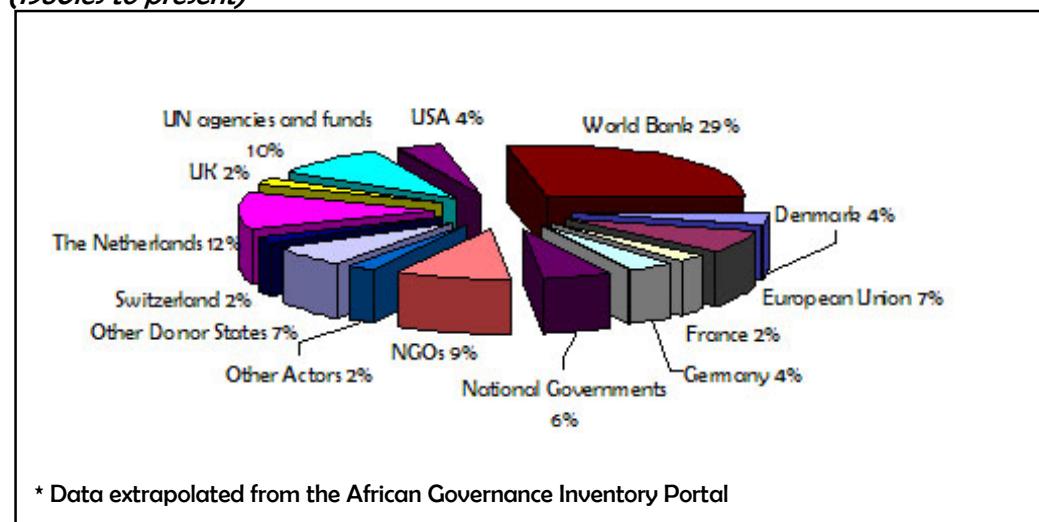
Governance Classification Area	Budget (US\$)	% of Total Budget
Socio-Economic Management	4,510,404,917.60	26.89%
Rule of Law and Human Rights	1,145,495,808.58	6.83%
Leadership Building	188,652,515.17	1.12%
Electoral System	109,325,207.46	1.17%
Communication, Press & Media	109,325,207.46	0.65%
Public Administration	5,511,500,872.84	32.86%
Civil Society Empowerment	924,815,321.97	5.51%
Peace and Stability	1,586,431,920.51	9.46%
Decentralization	2,402,730,512.19	14.33%
Parliamentary System	197,574,109.80	1.18%
TOTAL	16,772,342,477.58	100.00%

* Data extrapolated from the African Governance Inventory Portal

Decentralization has been supported so far by various multilateral donors including the European Union, UNDP and IFAD and the World Bank (that so far as committed more than US\$575 million to it).

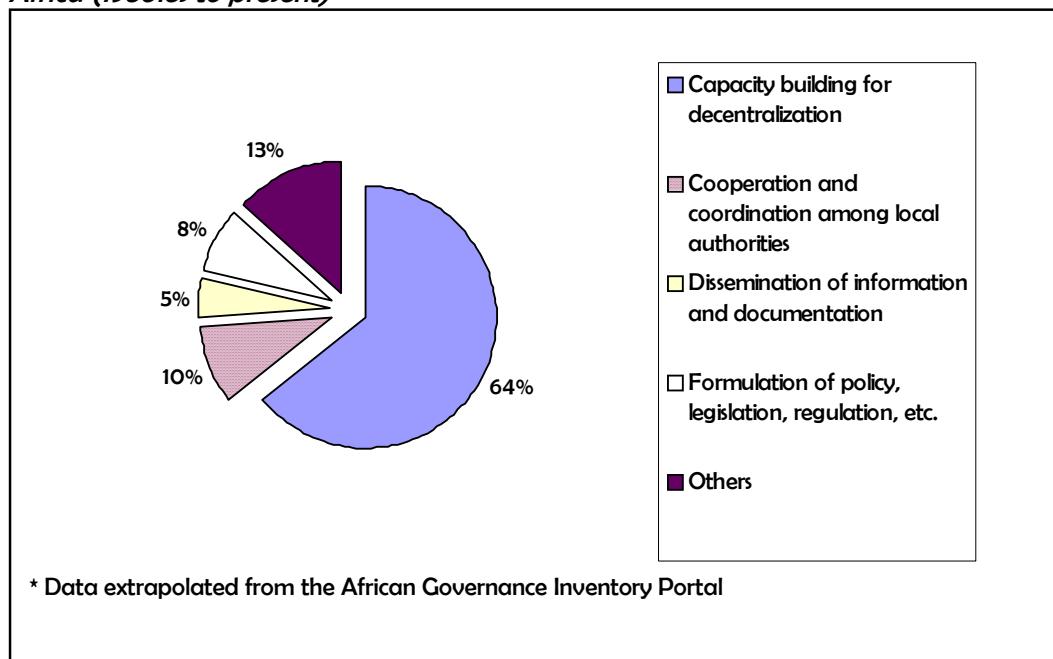
Bilateral cooperation too has been extremely active in this sense as for instance the Netherlands alone has contributed 12% of the total decentralization funding in Sub-Saharan Africa (Figure 2). Remarkable has also been the support granted by Germany, the United States of America, and Denmark only to name a few.

*Figure 2: Sources of financing for decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa (1980ies to present)**



By looking then at the typology of activities funded - or to be funded - in Sub-Saharan Africa (Figure 3), not surprisingly 64 percent is allocated to capacity building. In fact, it is well known that the “scarcity of qualified personnel in local government is dramatic” and that decentralization reforms “have further exacerbated the shortage of local human resources in Africa”⁵⁹.

*Figure3: Decentralization budget allocation by classification component for Sub-Saharan Africa (1980ies to present)**



However, it is important to highlight that the AGI Portal does not give indications as to what extent financing for decentralization comes from decentralized cooperation activities. In fact, data reported in the AGI Portal are not broken down to indicate whether the funding indicated comes from aid extended by sub-national authorities through decentralized cooperation activities. The next paragraph will then attempt to draw some inferences as to the magnitude of this support.

C. Assessing the support of Decentralized Cooperation to Decentralized governance

The assessment of the contribution of decentralized cooperation to decentralization processes in Africa depends on what it is regarded as a “relevant” support. For instance, taking into account that the competences of municipalities often span across numerous fields- ranging from education to spatial planning, from the promotion of local economic development to health, and so on- virtually any decentralized cooperation project would, to some extent, sustain a counterpart municipality. A shipment of medicines may enable the local dispensary to function thus in turn contributing to the municipality absolving its functions in the health sector. Likewise, a wide encompassing project supporting a participatory approach for establishing a medium-term local development plan would

⁵⁹ SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA CLUB & MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP (2003), *Policies of Cooperation Institutions and Decentralization in Africa*, Preliminary Document of AFRICITIES 3, Yaounde, 2-6 December 2003, pg. 16.

also contribute to help the same municipality. Yet, the two can hardly be assimilated in so far as supporting decentralization.

On this point it is worth recalling the findings of the evaluation of the decentralized cooperation activities between France and Mali undertaken by Husson and Diawara. In fact, the two authors indicate that the actions undertaken by French collectivities revolve around two axes⁶⁰:

- The “stratégie du conteneur” consisting in shipping a container full of equipment of presumed (and seldom effective) utility.
- The project-approach that emphasizes the importance of participatory frameworks and promotes local ownership. However, this approach too is considered having a number of shortcomings like the fact that it is short-term, it underestimates the necessary institutional backing, and often it does not take into account the local socio-political context and historical heritage.

Husson and Diawara underline the value of the ongoing institutional exchange between the French and Malian collectivities. In view of the importance of this exchange of experiences on the organization and the functioning of the respective collectivities, they then proceed to exhort the French local authorities to take a step further moving from institutional exchange to institutional support. The definition given of “appui institutionnel” – institutional support – is then:

le renforcement d'une collectivité :

- dans sa capacité à établir, programmer et coordonner des priorités réalistes en prenant en compte les contingences sociales, économiques, politiques et financières,
- dans ses compétences pour assurer la maîtrise d'ouvrage des équipements relevant de ses attributions,
- dans sa capacité à organiser et pérenniser les services collectifs nécessaires à l'améliorer des conditions de vie des populations⁶¹.

Thus, sharing the remarks by the two authors and finding their propositions convincing, for the purpose of this chapter, *decentralized cooperation activities have been regarded as supporting decentralization exactly when they have, albeit not necessarily uniquely, these key features of institutional support.*

After having clarified the object of the assessment to be conducted in this part of the study, it remains to be seen whether the remarks formulated in the case of the French-Malian decentralized cooperation are an isolated case. This would mean that most decentralized cooperation activities are geared towards institutional strengthening and capacity building at the local level.

⁶⁰ HUSSON, B. & DIAWARA, M. (2003), *Évaluation de la coopération décentralisée franco-malienne*, Direction Générale de la Coopération Internationale et du Développement, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, pg. 20-21.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, pg. 26.

Unfortunately, this does not seem where things stand now. For instance, Anger and Moberg in their evaluation of the Norwegian Municipal International Cooperation Programme- basket funding provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for decentralized cooperation projects aimed at supporting decentralized governance- wrote:

There are several examples whereby the projects have turned into “NGO-style” projects focusing more on service delivery than institutional capacity building and where the Norwegian municipality is seen more as a “channel of funds” and a “regular development agent”, with little emphasis on transfer of knowledge and the building of strong local governments in the south.⁶²

Furthermore, OECD conducted a comprehensive study on aid extended by sub-national authorities in 2005. The study laments that there were “very few contributions [...] reported under the government and civil society sector which includes aid to local administration and decentralization”⁶³.

Lastly, it should be pointed out that a short recognition of the few available databases reporting information on decentralized cooperation initiatives can easily confirm this finding⁶⁴. For example, by consulting the database of the French National Commission of Decentralized Cooperation we find that there are some 633 “decentralized cooperation linkages” between French collectivities and sub-national authorities in Sub-Saharan Africa⁶⁵. However by cross-checking this list with that of projects supporting “government and civil society”, also present in the database, it appears that only 34 of these “linkages” included actions that could be regarded as supporting decentralization⁶⁶.

This seems to be a missed opportunity as decentralized cooperation could have a key role in accompanying and sustaining the decentralization process ongoing in many African countries. In fact, some of the recurrent, albeit not universal, features of decentralized cooperation - such as the peer-to-peer and learn-by-doing approach as well as its long time horizon and its process nature - could be major strengths in service of decentralized governance.

Much of the aid extended by European sub-national authorities is channeled through NGOs and civil society organizations and only a portion of this aid is devoted to decentralized cooperation initiatives. It is therefore important to analyze why, so far, European sub-national authorities have missed the chance to support their African

⁶² ANGER, J. & MOBERG, L. (2005) *Review of the Norwegian Municipal International Cooperation (MIC) Programme: Final Report*, Public Management and Scanteam, pg. 4.

⁶³ OECD, (2005) *Aid Extended by Local and State Governments*, Pre-print of the DAC Journal 2005, Volume 6, No. 4, pg. 19.

⁶⁴ Consult for example the online database of the decentralized cooperation activities in Tuscany (<http://cdt.iao.florence.it/santanna/>) where it emerges that 25.56% of the projects are focused in the education sector, 24.61% in the social sector, and 17.06% on health and nutrition against a 4% of the projects on institution building. Similar findings are also found in the *Atlas Cooperazione Decentratata 2004-2006: Kenya Somalia, Sud Sudan* that reports that the great majority of projects of decentralized cooperation are focused on the “social and health sector”. VERNARECCI, J., CATTELAN, C. & KHIMII, S. (2007), *Atlas Cooperazione Decentratata 2004-2006: Kenya Somalia, Sud Sudan*, Nairobi, Italian Embassy – Development Co-operation Office, pg. 8.

⁶⁵ The database can be consulted on line at: <<https://pastel.diplomatie.gouv.fr/cncl/consult/ListOfZP.asp>>

⁶⁶ Any project of the said list includes an extremely concise description that made it possible to operate a selection. The 34 projects included descriptions that ranged from “support to decentralization” to “urban governance”, from “institutional support” to “civil registry”, from “training of municipal personnel” to “support to the municipal and inter-municipal actors”.

counterparts in facing the challenges of decentralization. Some of the possible reasons might be the following:

- European sub-national authorities are stimulated by a concern to address the local population immediate needs as also channeled by African local authorities without though paying attention to incorporating the institutional dimension. Indeed as Dahene has written “municipalities work towards concrete and tangible results because they feel that this is what their Southern partners expect”⁶⁷.
- Undoubtedly, as Brunet points out, physical realizations and certain typologies of projects (e.g. access to water) offer a more ‘positive image’ and hence tend to be favoured⁶⁸. Needless to say the political return for both the European and the African local authorities is higher in these cases compared to the more ‘volatile’ return on capacity development activities.
- European local authorities know well how to carry out functions and tasks assigned to them within their respective countries decentralized framework, however they do not necessarily possess what Anger and Moberg refer to as the “conceptual knowledge about the processual relationships within the sustainable local governance circle”⁶⁹ that is a key element in designing projects supporting decentralization.
- Moreover decentralized cooperation projects sustaining decentralization need to be based upon a detailed knowledge of the legislative, institutional and administrative framework of the African counterpart. Acquiring such knowledge requires time and additional efforts in comparison with other typologies of projects.
- Finally, it should not be forgotten that European local authorities often face severe personnel constraints and that they may be wary to commit to projects requiring them to undertake measures such as seconding an employee for a considerable period of time in a foreign country.

Going over the list presented above one could argue that, albeit in some cases important, none of these obstacles is per se insurmountable if the opportunity of sustaining decentralization through decentralized cooperation is to be exploited.

In fact, against this background there are some notable exceptions whose expertise and acquired know-how should be capitalized upon such as:

- A number of projects devised and undertaken by some European local authorities with partners from Sub-Saharan Africa focused on institutional capacity building in several areas ranging from local development planning, to social services, urban management to tax collection and so on. Two examples of this typology of projects, the one between the Region Picardie (France) and the Collines Department (Benin) and the AfricaForm project by the Regional Council of Tuscany (Italy), will be analyzed in detail the following section.

⁶⁷ DHAENE, C. (2004) Moving beyond project assistance in MIC, *Promoting local governance through Municipal International Cooperation*, Issue 21, Capacity.org, pg. 6.

⁶⁸ BRUNET, F. (2007), *Etude de capitalisation d'opérations AFD/Collectivités Françaises: Rapport de deuxième phase*, Agence Francaise de Développement & Cites Unies France, pg. 8.

⁶⁹ ANGER, J. & MOBERG, L. (2005) *Review of the Norwegian Municipal International Cooperation (MIC) Programme: Final Report*, Public Management and Scanteam, pg. 12.

- Thematic programmes sponsored by a certain State or by its development cooperation agency. Within these programmes, funding for decentralized cooperation projects is made available provided that these are focused on supporting decentralization. Relevant examples are: the “Norwegian Municipal International Cooperation Programme” sponsored by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad); the “Twinning Cooperation between Municipalities in Sweden and Countries of the South” funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA); and the “Municipal Co-operation with Developing Countries Programme (GSO Programme)” first and “LOGO South” then sponsored by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Specific programmes - coordinated by international agencies - that in some instances have also assisted local authorities in Sub-Saharan Africa. One of such programmes is ART- French acronym that stands for “support for territorial and thematic networks of human development cooperation”- an initiative that brings together a number of United Nations agencies and programmes, among which UNDP, UNESCO, UNIFEM, WHO, and UNOPS⁷⁰. ART, formally initiated in 2004, stems from the human development framework programmes developed since 1989 (PRODERE, SMALP, HEDIP, PDHL, PDHI, SEHD, ATLANTE, PRINT, PASARP, CITY TO CITY, APPI, UNIVERSITAS). ART helps regional and local authorities in the South and the North to set up alliances and partnerships in support of local development and governance processes prioritised by countries. So far ART GOLD has been initiated in a number of countries including Mozambique and Gabon in Sub-Saharan Africa. Very interestingly “ART involves local communities in development processes, and promotes a new type of multilateralism in which the United Nations system works together with governments to promote the active participation of regional and local authorities, local communities and social stakeholders in the South and the North, while striving to fulfil the MDGs”.

Another initiative belonging to this category, and seemingly inspired by the same understanding of multilateralism, is the Euro-African Partnership for Decentralized Governance initiated by UNDESA, CALRE and the Regional Assembly of Tuscany and that among its main activities enlists the development of “projects focusing on specific countries, with the aim to promote decentralized governance through partnership between European and African local authorities and institutions”⁷¹.

The following section will then present three case studies of decentralized cooperation for decentralized governance in Sub-Saharan Africa.

D. Decentralized Cooperation for Decentralized Governance in Africa: Three Case Studies

The three case studies presented in the next session have been selected in light of their differing characteristics as to provide, if not an overview, at least a first impression of the variety of programmes and projects that can be undertaken under different circumstances in support of decentralized governance. These are:

⁷⁰ For an overview of the ART Initiative it is possible to consult an illustrative brochure in French available at: <http://www.hcci.gouv.fr/lecture/synthese/initiative-art-gold-pnud.html>. To better understand the methodology proposed by the programme it is useful to consult ART INITIATIVE, (2005) *A Guide to Local Planning Processes within the Framework of ART GOLD Programs*.

⁷¹ Quotation from the Euro-African Partnership for Decentralized Governance website that can be consulted at: <<http://www.euroafricanpartnership.org/index.htm>>.

- the decentralized cooperation project between the Region Picardie (France) and the Collines Department (Benin)
- the project AfricaForm initiated by the Regional Council of Tuscany (Italy)
- the GSO and then LOGO South Programme financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and managed by VNG International, the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities

An effort was made to distill from them food for thought and possible lessons learnt that can inform the debate around this important topic and eventually contribute to further action in this field.

Information needed to present the three cases has been compiled through an analysis of the relevant documentation available on the internet and supplemented by additional documents provided by the Euro-African Partnership for Decentralized Governance, the *Istituzione Centro Nord-Sud*, and the Regional Council of Picardie. Face to face and telephone interviews complemented the above desk research.

The people interviewed include: Ms. Flauvie Dutry and Ms. Coralie Peyrot-Bagard and of the International Relations and Decentralized Cooperation Office of the Regional Council of Picardie; Mr. Enrico Cecchetti, Director of the Euro-African Partnership for Decentralized Governance and former Vice-President of the Regional Council of Tuscany; Ms. Cinzia Chighine and Mr. Khaled Hajlaoui of the *Istituzione Centro Nord Sud*; and Mr. Hans Buis, Coordinator of Municipal International Cooperation of VNG International.

In so far as the structure is concerned, each case study contains a narrative summary describing the project origin, its implementation, its main achievements and activities planned for the future. A section, within each case study, called “element in focus” will highlight some of the project’s characteristics helping to draw conclusions from a European perspective.

More specifically the said section will highlight the following elements across the three case studies:

- ⇒ Institutional and organizational framework of decentralized cooperation activities of the European local authority. Does the concerned European local authority have a specific budget line on decentralized cooperation? Does it have personnel exclusively devoted to it? Does it have a decentralized cooperation plan?
- ⇒ Partnership. How have partners been chosen? Has this choice responded to some specific criteria and/or motivation? What effective role was played by the European local authority? Is the political support for the project strong or rather erratic?
- ⇒ Synergies and related initiatives. To what extent were synergies with other actors and projects pursued? Have other projects been initiated thanks to the one under study?
- ⇒ Awareness raising and involvement of civil society. To what extent is the project known to civil society? To local community of immigrants? What initiatives were undertaken to make the project known to civil society? Was the media interested in the project?

- ⇒ Perceived advantages. What are according to the European local authority the advantages it gained from engaging in the project?
- ⇒ Monitoring and evaluation. Was the project adequately monitored? Was it evaluated? If so, how did the concerned European local authority react to the evaluation findings and recommendations?

Relevant information gathered through the case studies narrative and through these sections will then be analyzed in the final part of the chapter as to conclude whether there are some characteristics which may then be regarded as enabling and success factors for decentralized cooperation on decentralized governance.

Lastly, before proceeding on to presenting the three case studies, a caveat needs to be made stressing the limits of the present chapter. In fact it is exclusively focused on the European perspective, or better on the European end of the decentralized cooperation projects presented. Thus it does not address some key issues on the African side of the projects such as: what elements are pivotal for its success in the African country from an institutional and socio-economic perspective; to what extent are decentralized cooperation activities focused on certain areas/regions within a country and what kind of implications this has; whether the decentralized cooperation projects cause negative side effects in terms of competition between territories in the country concerned; to what extent, if any, the project acts as a disincentive on tax collection at the local level; whether and to what extent a decentralized cooperation activity might cause an administrative overburden and so on and so forth⁷².

E. Case Study 1: Decentralized Cooperation Between the Picardie Region and the Collines Department

The collaboration between the Picardie Region and the Collines Department of Benin started in 1996 and is scheduled to end only in 2011. As of today, it can be regarded as a highly successful project encompassing a comprehensive approach in support of the ongoing decentralization process that is built upon a participatory methodology. Thanks to its original design and positive results it was awarded the first prize of the *Haut Conseil de la coopération internationale*⁷³ in 2002.

1. The Project

The Collines Department is located in the center of Benin, a rather marginal area otherwise not reached by decentralized cooperation initiatives. It includes six municipalities – Banté, Dassa-Zoumé, Glazoué, Ouéssé Savalou and Savé – and roughly 300 villages with an average population density of 41 inh./km².

Prior to the commencement of the project, there had not been cooperation between the Picardie Region and the Collines Department. In fact the choice of intervening in the

⁷² Some of elements quoted are, for instance, analyzed by HUSSON, B. & DIAWARA, M. (2003), *Évaluation de la coopération décentralisée franco-malienne*, Direction Générale de la Coopération Internationale et du Développement, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères.

⁷³ To see the motivation for awarding the prize please consult: <http://www.hcci.gouv.fr/prix/2002_prix.html>

Department was suggested by a non-governmental organization based in the Picardie Region, the *Centre International de Développement et de Recherche* (CIDR), which subsequently became one of project partners.

In addition to the Picardie Region, in charge of the project, and of the CIDR that provides technical assistance, the other project partners are the six municipalities of the Collines Department, and the *Maison des Collectivités Locales*, a public body that does capacity building in favour of the municipalities of Benin.

As shown by Table 5, the project has benefited from substantial financing coming not only from the Picardie Regional Council, but also from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from the French Agency of Development, from the European Union (through its budget line B7 6002 devoted to decentralized cooperation), as well as from the State of Benin and from the six municipalities involved.

*Table 5: Financing for Phase I and Phase II (in thousands of Euros)**

Period	Picardie	French State	French Development Agency	Others	Benin State – MCL-	Municipalities	Total
Phase I (1996-1999)	609.80	609.80	457.35	142.69	-	-	1,819.63
Phase II (2000-2006)	640.00	640.00	1,300.00	286.00	221.00	422.00	3,509.00
Total	1,249.80	1,249.80	1,757.35	428.69	221.00	422.00	5,238.63
As percentage	23%	23%	33%	8%	4%	8%	100%

*Table reproduced from GALANDRIN, PILLOUD, *Evaluation retrospective du Project de Développement Local des Collines – 1^{ère} et 2^{ème} Phase – Benin*, 2006, Groupe Agence Francaise de Development

The local development project of the Collines Department runs through three different stages. Initiated in 1996, when the decentralization process in Benin had been approved but not yet implemented, the first phase of the project, ending in 1999, was mainly focused on promoting local development through a participatory approach. The second phase, started in 2000 and concluded in 2006, was instead devoted to sustain the then ongoing decentralization as in 2003 the first municipal elections were held. In 2007 the project entered its third 5-year stage whereby donor support should be phased out and sustainability mechanisms should be established.

The project employs six facilitators, one per municipality, that were initially trained by the CIDR. Starting in the second phase of the project, they were under the supervision of the *Maison des Collectivités Locales*. Facilitators, through participatory diagnostic-planning approaches, are tasked to assist each village in drawing up a biannual “local development plan” and in designating a village representative.

Village representatives take part in Territorial Committee meetings where priorities are agreed upon and a list of micro-projects is selected for each municipality. Once, vetted by the Mayor, the agreed list is presented for approval to the Committee on the Development of the Territory, a body comprised of civil society representatives and six elected Mayors. The Committee determines the resource allocation for each municipality

from the Fund for the Development of the Territory - the financial outlet of the project-based on the size of the municipality population and on the state of advancement of the previous biannual local development plan. Each municipality, through its Mayor, then becomes responsible to undertake the agreed micro-projects and to co-finance their cost for a 20 percent share.

This process has also been accompanied over the years by specific actions of capacity building targeting local and elected officials including trainings at the *Maison des Collectivités Locales*, study tours in Picardie, and short courses delivered in Benin by officials of the Regional Council of Picardie.

2. Results achieved

Already 411 micro-projects had been implemented as of march 2006, when the project was still in its second phase. The micro-projects completed span across numerous fields: access to water, sanitation, construction of roads and bridges, farmers' training, constructions of markets and hangars, and so on.

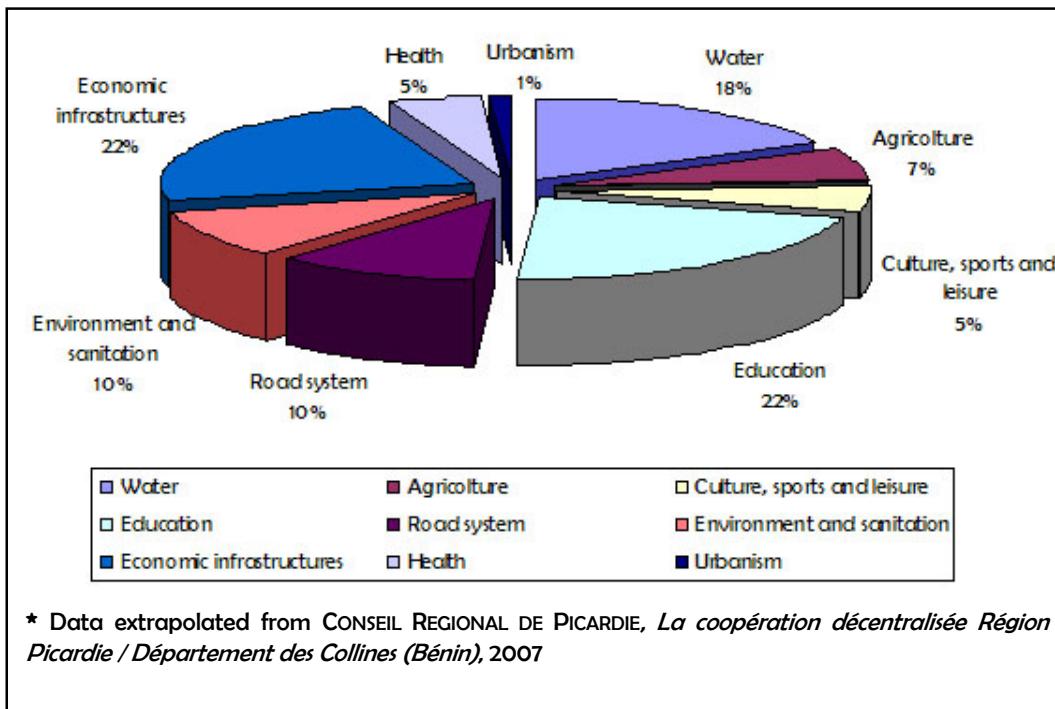
Figure 4 indicates the percentages of resources the Fund for the Development of the Territory allocated to each sector. The sectors that have received the lion share of the investments are: education, access to potable water - understandably an absolute priority for the local population- and investments on economic infrastructures, a source of revenues for cash-stripped municipalities. It is also worth noticing that there are great differences in the choices and priorities expressed by each municipality as, for instance Banté concentrated 33.7% of investments on access to water while Savé only 3.2% on water and 45.3% on economic infrastructures. Conversely Banté spent only 6.6% on education compared to the 31.2% spent by Savalou and Glazoué⁷⁴.

Importantly, the evaluation study undertaken by the French Agency of Development indicates that the micro-projects can also be regarded as satisfactory in terms of their technical realization, the participation of local population and the acceptable level of maintenance⁷⁵.

⁷⁴ Data from CONSEIL REGIONAL DE PICARDIE, (2007) *La coopération décentralisée Région Picardie / Département des Collines (Bénin)*.

⁷⁵ GALANDRIN, PILLOUD, (2006) *Evaluation retrospective du Project de Developpement Local des Collines – 1^{ere} et 2^{eme} Phase – Benin*, Groupe Agence Francaise de Development, pg. VI.

*Figure 4: Actions per sector financed by the Fund for the Development of the Territory as a percentage of the total funds**



Leaving aside the yet impressive number of micro-actions realized, the project has had so far a number of remarkable positive achievements in terms of promotion of local empowerment and support of the decentralization process. The project in fact:

- ✓ Succeeded in institutionalizing a mechanism of participation of the local population and, by ensuring linkages between the village and the municipal level, assisted to increase the understanding of the role of locally elected Mayors
- ✓ Enhanced transparency and democratic accountability in the use of public funds and this is all the more important because, as Wennink and Baltissen point out, “participation in decision-making and accountability towards local communities at the Department and Commune level are critical elements for up scaling” community driven development initiatives⁷⁶;
- ✓ Strengthened the management skills of the newly elected mayors and their knowledge of procurement procedures
- ✓ Built measures leading to the sustainability of the devised mechanisms by, for example, transferring part of the project personnel, i.e. the facilitators, under the responsibility of the *Maison des Collectivités Locales*, a public institution in Benin
- ✓ Supported inter-communality, a key component of a successful decentralization process, by backing the creation in 2004 of the *Collines Inter-communal Grouping*

⁷⁶ WENNINK, BALTISSEN, (2003) *Let's Ease Our Pace Because We Are in a Hurry: Scaling Up Community Driven Development in Benin*, Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), pg. 26.

comprised of the six elected Mayors and the 6 Chairs of the Territorial Committees who took responsibility for most of the project on the ground⁷⁷

- ✓ Successfully piloted a number of mechanisms that were then somewhat subsumed by the Benin State. For instance since 1999 Benin operates an *Agence de Financement des Initiatives de Base* which awards small grants for community projects. Furthermore each municipality is now requested to have its own local development plan although not necessarily drafted using the participatory methodology of the project.

3. The way forward

As previously stated, in the year 2007 the project entered in its third - and last - stage aimed at ensuring the phasing out of donor support and the self-reliance of its results starting in 2011. Thus project activities during this phase, as agreed between the Picardie Regional Council and the Collines Inter-Communal Grouping, revolve around the following axes⁷⁸:

- Accompany municipalities in their mission of planning and coordinating the different actions on their territories with actions that include training of local officials and elected leaders, as well as capacitating those in charge of planning to conduct ex-post evaluations
- Sustain municipalities and local actors in ensuring the quality of projects implemented and the correct management of the existing equipment by undertaking measures such as: creating an inventory of all public estate and equipment, helping municipalities to draw up multi-annual maintenance and rehabilitation plans, etc.
- Keep supporting citizens' participation at village and communal level by helping the municipalities to establish a communication policy targeting their populace, designing and institutionalizing specific training courses for village representatives and other similar measures
- Develop inter-communal services in line with national policies through actions such as assisting to adapt the statute and the internal organization of the Collines Inter-Communal Grouping to the evolving national context
- Promote collective processes and solidarity among the municipalities of Collines by, for example, assisting to define the policy and the external representation of the Collines Inter-Communal Grouping
- Enact, at communal and inter-communal level, a specific policy of promotion of local economic development by, for instance, creating and supporting - within each municipality - public-private consultation cells, backing the creation of an inter-communal observatory of the local economy

⁷⁷ This is all the more important because as Le Masson points out "L'intercommunalité est une question d'actualité au Bénin et le Président [...] en a fait un axe de sa politique générale". LE MASSON, (2006) *Etat des lieux de la coopération décentralisée franco-béninoise*, Ambassade de France au Bénin, pg. 8.

⁷⁸ For further details please see CONSEIL REGIONAL DE PICARDIE, (2006) *Programme 2007-2011: Groupement Intercommunal des Collines, Département des Collines, République du Bénin*.

4. Case Study 1: Elements in Focus

- ⇒ Institutional and organizational framework of the Picardie Region decentralized cooperation activities. The Picardie Regional Council can count on its Office of International Relations and does have a specific budget line devoted to decentralized cooperation, whose overall amount in 2006 was a bit less than 1.8 million Euros. It seems that the Picardie has a policy to concentrate available resources on few selected and long term initiatives rather than watering down its contribution in a myriad of small projects. Thus, last year available resources were committed to only three projects, two of which in Benin, and one in Niger. By looking at the projects undertaken, it also appears evident that - over the years - the Region has been building a specific know-how on decentralized cooperation focused on a participatory approach to development coupled with support to decentralization. In this sense, for instance, is the decision taken in 2004 to adopt the following criteria in selecting countries with which to engage in decentralized cooperation activities: (a) countries should be francophone, (b) they should be democratic, and (c) they should have embarked on a decentralization process.
- ⇒ Partnership. The choice of intervening in the Collines Department was suggested by a non-governmental organization based in the Picardie region, thus confirming the catalyst role NGOs often play in determining interventions by local authorities. Nevertheless it should also be stressed that the Regional Council and its international relations office remained actively involved throughout the project taking part in its definition, ensuring the overall management, carrying out periodic on the spot monitoring, hosting the Collines delegation and even directly providing training to its counterparts. Moreover, the political support for the project continued even when the political assets within the Regional Council changed.
- ⇒ Synergies and related initiative. Within the project framework, links were established with other programmes aimed at sustaining decentralization in Benin (including one undertaken by the World Bank). As a result of the long-lasting relationship with the Collines Department, several associations based in Picardie initiated small twinning projects that also received support by the Regional Council. It is also worthwhile stressing that, because of the positive results of the project undertaken in the Collines Department, other municipalities in the Alibori Department, also in Benin, asked to initiate a similar initiative (this project was initiated last year by the Regional Council of Picardie in partnership with UNDP).
- ⇒ Awareness raising and involvement of civil society. Project activities are publicized through the informative website and the periodic journal of the Regional Council. Moreover in 2007 the Annual Forum of Decentralized Cooperation of the Picardie Region focused on Benin, thus providing a good opportunity to showcase the project. In so far as the media are concerned, they have demonstrated some interest on major project events.
- ⇒ Perceived advantages. The project officer interviewed answered rather vaguely the question concerning perceived advantages for the Picardie Region in engaging in the project.
- ⇒ Monitoring and evaluation. The project was adequately monitored using objectively verifiable indicators through periodic reports written by its personnel complemented by monitoring visits of the CIDR and the Regional Council of Picardie. The project

has also undergone final independent evaluations at the end of each phase. The Picardie Region always reacted positively to evaluations and took action on its main recommendations.

F. Case study 2: AfricaForm

Since 2003 the AfricaForm project has been organizing study tours for local authorities of selected African countries (initially in Tuscany, and subsequently in other Italian Regions). This project was selected as a case study because the study tour formula proved to be a dynamic tool that was able to adapt to different needs. It also had a catalyst role for other more ambitious initiatives.

1. The Project

As it often happens, this project was initiated thanks to the energy and commitment of key individuals. A group of Regional Councilors of Tuscany were very eager of initiating projects benefiting Africa. Nevertheless, the “Giunta” – a local institution comprising the President of the Region and his/her Cabinet – (and not the Regional Council) is in charge of decentralized cooperation activities, many of which were already taking place in some African countries. Thus, there was the risk that the Regional Council would duplicate existing initiatives. However, within this framework, one of the responsibilities of the Regional Council is that of entertaining relations with homologous institutions abroad. It was then agreed that a project supporting study tours, targeting African local authorities, could well fit in the Regional Council’s mandate in addition to the ongoing initiatives of the Giunta.

Co-sponsor of the project became the *Consiglio delle Autonomie Locali*, the body representing the provinces, municipalities and mountain communities adjacent to the Regional Council of Tuscany.

As none of the partners could make staff available to the project, the implementation of AfricaForm was entrusted to the *Istituzione Centro Nord Sud* (hereinafter *Centro Nord Sud*), a specialized institution of the Province of Pisa that undertakes decentralized cooperation and awareness raising activities.

The first three countries selected to take part in AfricaForm between 2003 and 2004 were Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Senegal. The choice of countries clearly reflected the wish of using the study tour tool not only for capacity development purposes but also as an opportunity to strengthen already existing and long-lasting ties with the beneficiary countries (for example, all Tuscan Provinces are twinned with local governments in Senegal).

Thus, in selecting the local authorities to be invited for the study tour, the *Centro Nord Sud* solicited nominations of potential trainees from Tuscan provinces, municipalities, NGOs and associations known to be active in that given country. This practice has proven to have two main advantages: on the one hand, it increases chances of having a motivated group taking part in the study tour, as those recommending the participants have known them for years. On the other hand, it lays the foundation for an *ad hoc* coordinating committee of each study tour that helps define schedule, meetings and also provides substantial in-kind contributions, covering for example board and

accommodation. In fact, according to reliable estimates while the cash disbursement for each “module” – i.e. for each country study tour – has been between 12 and 20 thousand Euros, real costs have been three times higher.

As part of the first three AfricaForm modules, in addition to institutional visits, participants attended a full-fledged training on a topic of their choice agreed upon in advance. Thus, the Ghana module of AfricaForm – attended by a couple of Municipal Planning Officers, a Chairman of the Revenue Board, a Chairman of the Finance and Administration Board, and a District Finance Officer – focused on “Local Taxes and Fiscal Decentralization”, while the Burkina Faso and Senegal modules chose to receive a training on “Decentralized Cooperation as a Driver of Local Development”. The training courses, provided by several faculties of the University of Pisa and of the Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna, were well received and judged effective by participants.

Relying on the positive outcomes of the first three modules, the Regional Council of Tuscany then decided to engage in an ambitious initiative, the organization of the “First Conference of European and African Regional Assemblies”. In doing so, the Council decided to broaden its focus from capacity development actions targeting local authorities to the explicit support of decentralized governance. The Conference, held in Florence in September 2004, was co-sponsored by the Regional Council of Tuscany, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the Conference of European Legislative Regional Assemblies (CALRE) and saw the participation of roughly 100 local authorities, 60 of which coming from 28 different African countries.

The study tours and the Conference proved then to be two mutually reinforcing initiatives and fruitful of synergies. AfricaForm assisted in the Conference organization in that directly identified the participants from Ghana, Burkina Faso and Senegal, but also showed how effective it was to select participants on the basis of wide consultations. Thus in drawing the list of invitations, suggestions were elicited not only from local authorities and NGOs from Tuscany, but also from other European Regions belonging to CALRE, from officers of UNDESA and UNDP, and in some instances also from the Italian embassies located in African countries.

The Conference, on the other end, offered an opportunity for establishing new contacts that then resulted in additional modules of AfricaForm, and even more importantly led to frame a wider initiative in support of decentralized governance in Africa.

In fact, the Final Declaration adopted by the Conference participants, among other things, suggested the creation of an observatory that would act as “a focal point for the exchange of information and best practices in the area of decentralization and decentralized cooperation, and for the training of regional and local officials and staff in partnering with relevant international actors”⁷⁹. In view of the establishment of such an observatory in 2005 UNDESA, CALRE, and the Regional Assembly of Tuscany created the Euro-African Partnership for Decentralized Governance.

From this moment on, AfricaForm continued its actions under the aegis of the Euro-African Partnership and became an integral part of its activities leading to a number of changes:

⁷⁹ REGIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TUSCANY, CALRE, UNDESA, (2004) *Final Document of the I Conference of the European and African Regional Assemblies*, Florence 17-18 September 2004.

- Until July 2006, the *Centro Nord Sud* was responsible for organizing the modules targeting local authorities in Benin, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso II, and Rwanda. From then on, the Euro-African Partnership assumed responsibility for organizing the study tours for officials from the Ivory Coast and the Democratic Republic of Congo (respectively held in November 2006 and April 2007).
- The practice of receiving AfricaForm co-financing and its participation in the coordinating committee was not in line with the Euro-African Partnership nature and ambitions. Thus, intensive outreach ensured, with time, the participation of provinces, municipalities and NGOs from other Italian regions in the initiative. For example, the Ivory Coast module - jointly sponsored by the Euro-African Partnership and UNDP - was supported, among others, by the Italian National Association of Municipalities, the province of Milan and the municipalities of Pavia and Rome, as well as by NGOs based in Rome and in Turin.
- AfricaForm is no longer seen as a tool to simply strengthen existing ties but as a springboard for new decentralized cooperation projects in support of ongoing decentralization processes in the partner countries.
- Consequently it was decided to drop the training component, as otherwise the 7-10 days agenda of the study tour risked becoming overwhelmingly crowded, and instead to focus more, on the basis of a preliminary needs assessment, on exposing the participants to issues of interest to them. Thus the delegations visited various local governments' offices, departments and agencies, including the office of the register, the social service department, offices charged with economic activities, urban planning and so on. They gained experience on the functioning of urban waste collection and management, as well as the role and functions of the Italian National Association of Municipalities; they visited productive realities of their choice such as plant nurseries and cooperatives for cereal production and livestock breeding, etc.
- Through their participation in study tours, delegations were able to suggest possible matches between their needs and priorities in terms of decentralization and service delivery and what actors they visited had to offer. Study tours were in some cases followed by in-depth needs assessment and feasibility missions undertaken by the Euro-African Partnership in the country with the aim to then design and set up a full-fledged decentralized project in support of decentralized governance. Of course, as many of the tours have taken place in 2006 and 2007 this is still an ongoing process however it is important to highlight that as a result decentralized cooperation projects supporting decentralized governance are underway in Burkina Faso, Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo.

2. Results achieved

While an evaluation of AfricaForm has not yet been carried out, some of its positive results are the following:

- ✓ In the last four years it has allowed the visits of more than 70 local authorities coming from Ghana, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mali, Benin, Niger, Rwanda, Ivory Coast, and the Democratic Republic of Congo
- ✓ It has strengthened existing ties between Italian and African collectivities

- ✓ It created linkages among participating local authorities delegations. For example participants in the Senegal module maintained contacts among each others and invited their colleagues to participate in public events
- ✓ It laid the groundwork for facing challenging topics such as that of decentralized governance and the support that decentralized cooperation can give to it. The new module which started in October 2007, was aimed at highlighting another fundamental theme i.e. the original contribution women bring to local governance. The participants were five women serving as Mayors and Councilors in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Liberia, Mali and Uganda
- ✓ It allowed the participants to make focused requests of assistance for sustaining the decentralization process in their countries⁸⁰ and this has led to new decentralized cooperation projects.

3. Case study 2: Elements in Focus

- ⇒ Institutional and organizational framework of the decentralized cooperation activities in Tuscany. As previously recalled, the Regional Assembly of Tuscany usually does not engage directly in decentralized cooperation activities. However, it should be highlighted that Tuscany presents a vibrant landscape of decentralized cooperation characterized by effective multi-level governance⁸¹.

The Region itself, under the authority of the *Giunta*, the executive body, devotes every year a significant amount of resources to decentralized cooperation, and awareness rising on development issues. In addition to the activities of the Region, Tuscan provinces and municipalities as well engage in decentralized cooperation projects accompanied by a wide spectrum of civil society organizations ranging from NGOs, small parishes, trade unions, universities, production cooperatives and utilities companies to cultural associations. The Region has then devoted many efforts to build a “Tuscan System of Decentralized Cooperation” allowing for consultations and coordination among different actors through a number of instruments including the annual conference of decentralized cooperation, a dedicated information system, a secretariat, and a number of area Coordinating Committees that, among other things, provide substantial inputs for the multi-annual Regional Plan of International Cooperation⁸².

- ⇒ Partnership. As previously indicated, the first modules of AfricaForm were targeting countries and local authorities with very established pre-existing ties with counterparts in Tuscany. Since the establishment of the Euro-African Partnership, the choice was made on the basis of consultations held not only with Tuscan local

⁸⁰ For example, the delegation of Niger prepared at the end of its visit a document addressed to the Regional Council of Tuscany, UNDESA, and the other project partners in which, taking into account what they had seen and learnt during the study tour together with their needs, they proposed the future priority axes for decentralized cooperation project with their territories.

⁸¹ For further analysis of this aspect, please consult IZZO, (2006) *Questioni e prospettive della cooperazione decentrata dall'Andalusia alla Toscana. Un'indagine sulla governance multilivello*, CeSPI, Working Papers 27/2006.

⁸² Currently there are 20 Area Coordinating Committees and 2 Working Groups. In so far as the African continent is concerned there is a general Africa Coordinating Committee, one for Saharawi ad one for Senegal as well as one Working Group on HIV/AIDS and one Working Group on Water.

authorities and civil society organizations, but also incorporating suggestions coming from decentralized cooperation actors of other Italian Regions (Lazio, Lombardy, Piedmont and Emilia-Romagna) interested in sustaining the project. In addition, for some of the most recent modules – Rwanda, Burkina Faso, and Democratic Republic of Congo – the composition of the delegation was agreed upon with the national Ministries in charge of decentralization, while in the case of the Ivory Coast module, it was drawn up following the suggestions of the local UNDP office and, the national association of local authorities (of UVICOCI). AfricaForm always enjoyed a high level of political support and the Regional Council of Tuscany remained actively involved in its organization, first directly and then through the Euro-African Partnership.

- ⇒ **Synergies and related initiatives.** AfricaForm has never been perceived as a self-containing initiative but rather as an opportunity to strengthen existing ties and develop new ones through intensive consultations with other actors. The activism demonstrated in this sense by the *Centro Nord Sud*, and even more by the Regional Council of Tuscany first and the Euro-African Partnership then, is indeed quite impressive. In just a few years the Partnership was able to undertake joint initiatives with decentralized cooperation actors of other Italian Regions. It also enlisted the support of UNDESA and CALRE, to cooperate with UNDP, to sign statements of intent with, for example, the National Association of Municipalities of Mali and with the Government of Rwanda, to obtain financing from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and from private foundations, and so on. This was possible because of an intense advocacy action (exploiting all available channels and venues for presenting the project) and to the existence of a strong political backing.
- ⇒ **Awareness raising and involvement of civil society.** As if often happens with projects of this nature, AfricaForm is not known to the citizenry at large, however civil society organizations engaged in development cooperation do know of its existence as its activities are publicized through the relevant area Coordinating Committees. A conscious effort has also always been made to involve the Federation of African expatriates in Tuscany and to organize meetings attended by the AfricaForm participants and the corresponding local Diaspora. In so far as media coverage is concerned, this has been extremely sporadic and carried out only from local media pointing to the difficulties in raising journalists' interest in any decentralized cooperation activity.
- ⇒ **Perceived advantages.** The answer received from Mr. Cecchetti, former Vice-President Regional Council of Tuscany, on the perceived advantages of the Regional Council of Tuscany in engaging in AfricaForm, was rather vague.
- ⇒ **Monitoring and evaluation.** AfricaForm has not been evaluated yet and its monitoring so far appeared rather loose. As the Euro-African Partnership utilizes a result-oriented framework, it is advisable that in the future AfricaForm will use it too.

G. Case study 3: From GSO to LOGO South

In the 1990s a number of Governments and international organizations came to recognize the potential contribution to be brought by decentralized cooperation and decided to set up dedicated programmes to harness it.

Interestingly, some Northern European Governments decided to support decentralized cooperation programmes as a way to support decentralized governance in target countries and as a tool to enhance awareness among their own citizenry on development cooperation issues⁸³. The programmes so devised had a number of common organizational features. In particular, basket funding for decentralized cooperation projects was entrusted to the national association of local authorities in charge of managing a programme and reporting back to the donor.

Following a round of evaluations of some of the said programmes, the resulting findings and recommendations for improvements, looked very similar to each other⁸⁴. Different however was the fate of each programmes after the evaluation. In fact, while in the case of Sweden this has led SIDA to drastically reduce its support to the initiative, in the Netherlands the programme was drastically restructured to enhance its coherence and overall effectiveness. Then the Dutch experience seemed to be the most suitable case study as, compared to the other programmes, it can be seen as a process that went further along the way and may thus provide for additional elements of interest and food for thought.

1. The GSO Programme

The Programme of Municipal Co-operation with Developing Countries (hereinafter GSO) was established in 1994 and lasted until 2003 through three agreements, stipulated in 1994, 1998 and in 2000 between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and VNG International, the International Co-operation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities.

According to the 1998 GSO agreement, the programme had two main objectives:

- Strengthening local governments in developing countries by means of concrete cooperation activities between municipalities, and
- Mobilizing public support for international cooperation in the Netherlands, to be interpreted as increased involvement of Dutch municipalities in international cooperation and increased involvement among the population as a result of information services and awareness raising activities linked to the GSO programme.

In principle it was the partner municipality who was to take the initiative for an activity and then present it to the Dutch municipality which then would have requested the necessary funding to VNG to implement it. The evaluation, undertaken by the Policy and

⁸³ For a summary description of these sort of programmes initiated in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, and Sweden please consult COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONS, *North/South Cooperation: the Action of Europe's Local Government Associations*. For a more through description of donors experiences in Great Britain, the Netherlands, Denmark, and the European Union with the formation of municipal development partnerships, please consult EMMINGHAUS, C. (2003), *Kommunale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit Ansätze und Erfahrungen anderer bi- und multilateraler Geber. Studien zu den Niederlanden, Großbritannien, Dänemark und der Europäischen Union*. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH.

⁸⁴ Compare for instance the findings of the evaluations on the Swedish, the Norwegian and the Dutch programmes: ANDRÉASSON, KÖNIGSON, (2003) *Sida's Program Twinning Cooperation between Municipalities in Sweden and in Countries of the South*, Sida Evaluation 03/39, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Department for Infrastructure and Economic Co-operation; ANGER, MOBERG, (2005) *Review of the Norwegian Municipal International Cooperation (MIC) Programme: Final Report*, Public Management and Scanteam; POLICY AND OPERATIONS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT, (2004) *On solidarity and professionalisation: Evaluation of Municipal International Co-operation (1997-2001)*, Job Evaluations nr. 297, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands.

Evaluation Department of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, found that this was seldom the case and that rather the project was formulated by an *ad hoc* mission of the Dutch municipality in consultation with the partner municipality⁸⁵.

The implementation modalities of the GSO programme were the following:

Programme for temporary deployment of Dutch civil servants: whereby, upon request by the partner municipality, Dutch civil servants were sent on advisory or project formulation missions, or for organizing training activities.

Local Government Internship: the partner municipality could request and obtain to have their civil servants or administrators undergoing a period of practical training in a Dutch municipality.

Municipal Initiatives: a financing scheme for inter-municipal small projects. Notably, this scheme did not allow for the input of external resources and investment costs were only partially compensated.

Municipal Management Training Programme: study tours in the Netherlands. These were articulated in one week introductory course delivered by VNG and followed by a two weeks internship in a Dutch municipality.

Programme Support Activities: short courses offered by VNG for Dutch civil servants on working with local governments in developing countries and on project management.

The GSO programme was financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs with roughly 2.5 million Euros a year and co-financed by all participating municipalities mostly through in-kind contributions covering the salary of the civil servants involved, the use of office spaces, and so on.

2. Main Findings of the Evaluation of GSO

As previously indicated, the Policy and Evaluation Department of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, undertook an evaluation of the GSO programme covering the period 1997-2001 whose main findings were as follows:

- There was a disagreement concerning one of the main objectives of the GSO Programme, namely the mobilization of public support for international cooperation in the Netherlands, as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs never allocated specific resources to it nor specified expected results in this sense.
- The overall programme coherence was low as “the activities had little in common and were carried out in a manner that was spread out too much, both thematically as well as geographically”⁸⁶.
- In so far as relevance, the evaluation found that roughly 80 percent of GSO activities were relevant with respect to the problems of partner municipalities and 60 percent of them “were relevant from the perspective of the Ministry of Foreign

⁸⁵ POLICY AND OPERATIONS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT, *On solidarity and professionalisation: Evaluation of Municipal International Co-operation (1997-2001)*, pg. 60.

⁸⁶ POLICY AND OPERATIONS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT, *On solidarity and professionalisation: Evaluation of Municipal International Co-operation (1997-2001)*, pg. 5.

Affairs policy regarding the GSO programme", while "less than 40 percent was relevant in relation to national policies"⁸⁷.

- The effectiveness of the implementation modalities of the GSO programme varied - as some were judged - highly effective such as the internship period and the group training in the Netherlands, and others less so, such as the temporary deployments of Dutch civil servants.
- In two thirds of the reviewed cases activities were carried out efficiently.

3. The LOGO South Programme (1994-2010)

The weakness and critical points the evaluation highlighted, prompted intense discussions between VNG International, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Dutch municipalities involved leading to the establishment in 2004 of LOGO South a much improved version of the previous GSO programme.

Below are some of the changes introduced:

Unique Programme main objective. The mobilization of public support for international cooperation in the Netherlands was dropped as a main objective as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided not to allocate any money to it. The programme purpose was then indicated as to develop the capacity of local governments in target countries "to achieve 'good local government'"⁸⁸.

Increased focus. The number of developing countries assisted diminished. A choice was made to focus on those where there were at least two or three existing linkages between a Dutch municipality and a local counterpart⁸⁹. There are furthermore four thematic programmes (water management; solid waste management; HIV/AIDS; and citizen participation) that are open to additional countries.

Improved programme development. Dutch municipalities can no longer pick in isolation the topic they would like to work on with their partner municipalities as all the municipalities active in a given country need to work on an agreed theme. The process by which the theme is chosen and a corresponding country framework programme is drawn is a participatory one involving all parties both in the beneficiary country and in the Netherlands⁹⁰. Of course this has so far proven to be a time-consuming exercise requiring between six months and one year, however, according to independent research commissioned by VNG international, it was regarded by partners as truly participatory and has increased local programme ownership.

Use of the logical framework methodology. All countries and thematic programmes have their own logical framework with the indicators column duly filled in which undoubtedly will improve programme monitoring and evaluation.

⁸⁷ POLICY AND OPERATIONS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT, *On solidarity and professionalisation: Evaluation of Municipal International Co-operation (1997-2001)*, pg.133 and pg. 134.

⁸⁸ VNG INTERNATIONAL, (2007) *LogFrame of LOGO South for the period 2007-2008*.

⁸⁹ The countries so chosen are then: Benin, Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia, Nicaragua, The Palestine Authority, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Surinam, and Tanzania.

⁹⁰ As an example it is recalled that the programme purpose of the Ghana programme revolves around the provision of fee-based solid waste services, while in South Africa concerns increased service delivery in the field of social housing.

Opportunities for coordinating and sharing experiences. Each LOGO South programme has its own National Coordinator whose role is one of troubleshooter, of reporting back to VNG but also of facilitating in country meetings (four to five times a year) among the involved municipalities. Similarly, Country programme meetings are organized in the Netherlands with the Dutch participating municipalities. These meetings have allowed for increased coordination but also provided a venue for discussing common challenges faced, to share experiences and best practices.

Increased role of VNG International. While in the GSO programme the role VNG was playing was that of a facilitator and of an administrator, the changes outlined above made it evident that in the LOGO South programme had a much stronger coordinating and steering role.

According to the information gathered, in general, actors welcomed these changes. Also the Dutch local authorities, after an initial resistance by some, came to appreciate the advantages and the rationale behind the choice of streamlining themes and target countries.

4. Case study 3: Elements in Focus

- ⇒ Institutional and organizational framework of the decentralized cooperation activities of the Dutch municipalities. According to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Policy and Evaluation Department data, the municipalities participating in the GSO programme were characterized “by a more elaborate structure of administrative coordination (full time civil servants or special departments) and a more frequent involvement of civil society (city linkage foundations) as a reference point...Only 13 percent did not have a central supervisory or coordination structure”⁹¹. Not surprisingly it was also found that “larger municipalities proved to have more capacity and financial facilities for international policy than smaller municipalities”⁹².
- ⇒ Partnership. The GSO programme did not lead overall to the establishment of a significant number of new city-linkages as the funding applications presented were in the framework of pre-existing partnerships. The same holds true for LOGO South even though the programme is actively encouraging more Dutch municipalities to start working in the selected target countries. Dutch municipalities were highly involved in project activities throughout the initiative and assumed responsibility for project management.

In so far as political support is concerned, the Policy and Evaluation Department of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports that in 52 percent of all Dutch municipalities applying for GSO funding “the decision was taken by the municipal council or the Major and Aldermen”⁹³. Then, according to the information gathered through the interview with Mr. Hans Buis, Coordinator of Municipal International Cooperation of VNG International, it can be concluded that the municipalities choosing to engage in decentralized cooperation were rather strong in their

⁹¹ POLICY AND OPERATIONS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT, *On solidarity and professionalisation: Evaluation of Municipal International Co-operation (1997-2001)*, pg. 59.

⁹² POLICY AND OPERATIONS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT, *On solidarity and professionalisation: Evaluation of Municipal International Co-operation (1997-2001)*, pg. 60.

⁹³ *Ibidem.*

commitment while, of course, changes of political leadership at both ends of the partnership could result in a delay of planned activities.

- ⇒ **Synergies and related initiatives.** In comparison to GSO, LOGO South has a much stronger emphasis on donor aid coordination and on establishing linkages and synergies with existing projects and initiatives. In Ghana, for example, where LOGO South partners cooperate with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and with GTZ, this has led to pace each respective project to ensure maximum synergies. Furthermore in some countries, LOGO South national coordinators usually, together with the national local government association, have been organizing “partners’ conferences” bringing together donors, experts, and training institutions active in the field of decentralization.
- ⇒ **Awareness raising and involvement of civil society.** As already anticipated, the mobilization of public support for international cooperation in the Netherlands is no longer one of the programme objectives. Then, while VNG International provides periodic updates through its website and *ad hoc* publications, Dutch municipalities are not required to publicize their activities within LOGO South. In so far as media coverage is concerned, it is extremely difficult to get the attention of the national media showing greater interest “in activities than in results”⁹⁴.

It is easier to get the attention of the local media sometimes in occasion of visits of particularly interesting personalities. However, attention of the local media is also often drawn negatively when some Councilor criticize the use of municipal funds for development cooperation initiatives. This, more than anything, has an effect on the decision of politicians to travel abroad making sure that there are very good reasons for this type of cooperation as to avoid unjustified accusations. The caution that has to be taken to avoid negative press does not however diminish enthusiasm and willingness of those local governments engaging in LOGO South.

- ⇒ **Perceived advantages.** According to Mr. Buis, the advantages most often quoted are openness vis-avis a globalizing world, human resources development through international exposure, and, in some instances, improved relation with communities of immigrants whereby a choice is made to cooperate with countries where the majority of immigrants come from⁹⁵.
- ⇒ **Monitoring and evaluation.** According to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Policy and Evaluation Department findings on the GSO programme:

“Within the Dutch municipalities, responsibility for monitoring international activities was far from clear. It might be expected that the longer the relations between municipalities existed and the more activities were implemented at the same time, the more progress monitoring would be called for. This turned out not to be the case. On the contrary, the newer the relationship, the more attention for monitoring. Higher financial input by the Dutch municipalities did not result in more intensive monitoring either. This might be due to the nature of the municipal contacts: long-

⁹⁴ Hans Buis, telephone interview, 26 September 2007.

⁹⁵ *Idem*.

standing linkages were mostly ‘friendship linkages’ and a business-like attitude may not seem appropriate in such a friendship link”⁹⁶.

This situation however changed drastically after the evaluation report was released, in that not only its recommendations were incorporated into the design of LOGO South and measures were taken to address the previous programme weaknesses, but also a results-based framework was introduced and measurable indicators were identified.

H. Conclusions

While designing and testing a European model approach to decentralized cooperation for decentralized governance in Africa goes beyond the scope of this chapter, the three case studies portrayed offer a number of common elements and lessons learned that will be highlighted in the present section. Additional research on similar case studies will be able to validate or not the conclusions here drawn.

First of all, the choice of focusing decentralized cooperation activities on decentralized governance seems to be a winning one. This appears all the more true when the choice was endogenous to the European sub-national authority. In fact, according to Mr. Cecchetti, in Tuscany there are indications that the topic of decentralized governance will increasingly be streamlined across the board and also on the side of private foundations. In Picardie this choice led the region to develop a specific know-how and a distinctive approach to decentralized governance accompanied by a coherent decentralized cooperation policy.

When the choice of pursuing a decentralized cooperation approach to decentralized governance is sponsored by the central government, as in the Dutch case, caution is to be taken to carefully design the corresponding programme as to enable local authorities at both ends to fully exploit the potential of their relationship.

Looking at the three case studies it seems possible to pinpoint two context factors that surge to the level of enabling factors. The existence of these factors should be ascertain before a choice can be made on the side of the European local authority as to whether or not to engage in decentralized cooperation activities in support of decentralized governance:

- ⇒ The presence of a strong and enduring political support for decentralized cooperation. Initiatives geared to sustain ongoing decentralizations processes need a long-term commitment to be effective and this cannot happen in the midst of erratic political support. Moreover, since these projects entail a strain not only on the budget but also on the human resources available to the sub-national authority, they cannot endure without a “real buy-in at the highest political and administrative levels”⁹⁷. In fact, in all three cases reviewed this element was present.

⁹⁶ POLICY AND OPERATIONS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT, *On solidarity and professionalisation: Evaluation of Municipal International Co-operation (1997-2001)*, pg. 64.

⁹⁷ SMITH, R. (2004), Discussing Local Governance in the Context of MIC, *Promoting local governance through Municipal International Cooperation*, Issue 21, Capacity.org, pg. 3.

- ⇒ The existence in the sub-national authority of a developed institutional and organizational framework of decentralized cooperation activities. The Picardie Region has indeed a multi-annual plan of decentralized cooperation, dedicated budget lines, and full-time staff devoted to it. The local authorities participating in the GSO programme had comparable characteristics. The case of the Regional Council of Tuscany was a slightly different one in that it is not the body in charge of decentralized cooperation activities, however, as it was shown, the regional framework in which it operates is a highly developed one of multi-level governance of decentralized cooperation. Moreover, as the initiative grew more ambitious, it was translated under the aegis of the Euro-African Partnership, a multilateral initiative with its own budget and dedicated personnel. The developed institutional and organizational framework is a key factor in ensuring that the sub-national authority will be able to fulfill its commitments in any given decentralized cooperation project as it increases predictability of available cash-flow and human resources. Moreover, civil servants in charge of decentralized cooperation will more likely possess specific knowledge of development issues or have opportunities and incentives to build it over time.

Again by reviewing the three case studies, there are a number of elements that, if not regarded as prerequisites, can at least be classified as success factors:

- ⇒ Existence of a previous partnership. Whether initiated by the local authority itself or by a local civil society actor, the existence of a previous relationship brings a number of advantages. Emminghaus for example quotes among them the “detailed knowledge of the structures and actors of partner municipalities”, and the “experience both in the identification of appropriate thematic areas and in the selection of dependable project partners” that minimize “risks in the formulation and establishment of the project”⁹⁸.
- ⇒ Adoption of a participatory approach. As the director of VNG International said, “listening and understanding the needs of the partner is more crucial than sending the message”⁹⁹. As to avoid capacity building initiatives to be menu driven and to ensure aid effectiveness - as recommended by the UNDESA Ad Hoc Expert Group on ‘Tracking the Reforms in Aid Delivery, Management and Accountability’ - participation, ownership and empowerment are key factors¹⁰⁰. Thus, the Regional Council of Picardie adopted a participatory methodology all along involving the local population, the Mayors, and all the other key-actors at national level. The study tours organized within the context of AfricaForm were based on a previous recognition of the participants’ interest. The LOGO South Programme, then changed the previous

⁹⁸ EMMINGHAUS, C. (2003) Municipal Development Cooperation, Approaches and experiences of other bilateral and multilateral donors. Studies of the Netherlands, Great Britain, Denmark, and the European Union, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, pg. 18.

⁹⁹ KNIP P., *Shaping Globalisation with Local Authorities: Challenges to Partnership and Integration*, Presentation to the 10th Nationwide Conference of Local Governments and Initiatives in Hamburg, Germany, 24 November 2006.

¹⁰⁰ In fact the Ad Hoc Expert Group indicated “the following tenets for aid effectiveness:

- Ownership of aid management by the recipient target group at the local level;
- Participation of the recipient target group at the local level in the aid process including setting of goals, budget and planning, monitoring and evaluation and expenditure
- Empowerment for the recipient target group including training, institution-building and access to mechanisms and institutions for aid implementation.”

UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (2003), *Tracking the Reforms in Aid Delivery, Management and Accountability*, pg. 1.

methodology to incorporate a participatory planning process involving both Dutch and target countries actors in defining project themes and objectives.

- ⇒ Involvement of additional expertise. As Anger and Moberg pointed out “one can not expect that the municipalities will be up to date regarding policies and best practices within local governance and development cooperation (which in fact is at least full-time work in itself)”¹⁰¹. This expertise is however often necessary if the European sub-national authority is to effectively sustain an African counterpart on decentralization matters. Thus, for instance, the Regional Council of Picardie partnered with the CIDR an NGO whose expertise revolves exactly around local development and decentralization. In the LOGO South programme such expertise is provided for by VNG International, while in the case of AfricaForm this role is now played by the Euro-African Partnership.
- ⇒ Active role played by the European local authority in the project. The role played by the European local authority should not just be one of channeling funds to the local counterpart as otherwise the potential advantages of the decentralized cooperation modality, first of all those inherent to the peer-to-peer approach, disappear. In fact in the cases under review the European sub-national authorities remained actively engaged in all project phases from its definition, throughout its implementation and then in its evaluation.
- ⇒ Realistic assessment of what the European sub-national authority has to offer. Brunet writes that local authorities “ont une préférence parfois excessive pour les actions spectaculaires”¹⁰². The tendency to overstate what realistically one’s has to offer is something European sub-national authorities should guard themselves against. Similarly they should be wary of the fact that being an effective administrator back at home does not translate into being able to offer pre-cooked solutions to partner sub-national authorities in developing countries.
- ⇒ Knowledge of the legislative and administrative framework faced by the African partner sub-national authority. Thus for instance, the Regional Council of Picardie, successfully piloted a number of mechanisms that were then somewhat subsumed by the Benin State, still working within the national legal and administrative framework. Of course, in order to gain the required knowledge, the European sub-national authority needs to be prepared to invest additional time and resources before project starts for a comprehensive situation analysis that will eventually contribute to project relevance.
- ⇒ Search for donor coordination and synergies. One of the harshest critiques of Desmet and Develtere to decentralized cooperation is that “many sub national authorities organize their development co-operation in splendid isolation” thus directly contributing to jeopardize donor coordination¹⁰³. The three case studies presented went instead in the opposite direction. In this sense, remarkable examples are provided by the initiative of the LOGO South Programme to organize in-country “partners’ conferences” - calling together donors, experts, and training institutions

¹⁰¹ ANGER, J. & MOBERG, L. (2005) *Review of the Norwegian Municipal International Cooperation (MIC) Programme: Final Report*, Public Management and Scanteam, pg. 12.

¹⁰² BRUNET, F. (2007), *Etude de capitalisation d’opérations AFD/Collectivités Françaises: Rapport de deuxième phase*, Agence Française de Développement & Cites Unies France, pg. 8.

¹⁰³ DESMET, A. & DEVELTERE, P. (2002), *Sub-National Authorities and Development Co-Operation in the OCED-DAC Member Countries*, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, pg. 19.

active in the field of decentralization - and the constant coordination efforts involving all multiplicity of actors within the framework of AfricaForm.

- ⇒ **Adoption of the project cycle management tool.** The process-nature of decentralized cooperation is often rightly emphasized; however measurable progress is also important. The project cycle management and the logical framework approach enable project partners, among other things, to verify the intervention logic, to properly manage the various project phases, to exactly know what they are expected to do and, very importantly, to measure progress or a lack thereof through a series of objectively verifiable indicators. Then, the adoption of logical framework approach from the LOGO South programme and for the project undertaken by the Regional Council of Picardie should be regarded as a good practice in decentralized cooperation for decentralized governance.

As an attentive reader may recall, some of the factors analyzed in the “elements in focus” paragraphs of this chapter - namely the involvement of civil society, the relationship with the media, and the perceived advantages by the European sub-national authority in engaging in the projects - have not been included in the above lists of enabling and success factors as they lead to more nuanced conclusions:

- **Involvement of civil society.** According to the UNDP Bureau of Development Policy one of the characteristics of a successful city-link is community-wide participation in it, in fact “the wider the participation, the more a link succeeds”¹⁰⁴. The three case studies presented in this chapter, however, do not support this statement. In fact, in the Dutch case study the mobilization of public support for international cooperation in the Netherlands was dropped as one of the programme main objectives. Even in the case of AfricaForm, arguably the one that most invested in publicizing its activities and in involving civil society, it is not possible to speak of involvement of the Italian citizenry at large as this is necessarily limited to specialized sectors of civil society. In fact, as Brunet recently pointed out, mobilization of civil society “est partout assez faible, et c'est un regret souvent exprimé”¹⁰⁵.
- **The role of the media.** Again the UNDP research states that “the enthusiastic support of the media is an essential element” of a successful link¹⁰⁶. However, none of the three case studies received significant media attention apart from occasional interest by the local media and, as the Dutch case proves, not necessarily in a positive way. This is not to say that positive media coverage would not be an important add-on to decentralized cooperation in general. However, one also has to acknowledge that development cooperation rarely makes the headlines and that local authorities may need to work hard on their communication strategy if they wish to make some progress in this sense.
- **Perceived advantages.** Studies conducted by UN-Habitat conclude that “to have an effective and sustainable development co-operation policy, both parts the recipient and the donor need to see the advantage of the relationship”¹⁰⁷. Nevertheless, the issue of reciprocity did not seem a priority for those interviewed. In the cases of the

¹⁰⁴ UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, (2000) *The Challenges of Linking*, pg. 23.

¹⁰⁵ BRUNET, F. (2007), *Etude de capitalisation d'opérations AFD/Collectivités Françaises: Rapport de deuxième phase*, Agence Française de Développement & Cites Unies France, pg. 17.

¹⁰⁶ UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, (2000) *The Challenges of Linking*, pg. 23.

¹⁰⁷ UN-HABITAT BEST PRACTICES SEVILLE CENTRE FOR CITY-TO-CITY CO-OPERATION (2006), *Local governments and international development co-operation: a European survey on strategies and policies*, pg. 10.

Regional Council of Picardie and of Tuscany the underlying motivation to engage in the projects was solidarity and those interviewed did not really make reference to any other perceived advantage. According to the information gathered from Mr. Buis, Dutch local authorities seem to be better equipped to articulate perceived advantages in terms of openness vis-avis a globalizing world, human resources development gained through international exposure, and, in some instances, improved relations with communities of immigrants.

This is not to say that significant advantages did not accrue to the Regional Councils of Picardie and Tuscany thanks to the projects, as, for example, both initiated collaborations respectively with UNDP and with UNDESA thus arguably raising their 'international stature'. Then, it might well be that the Dutch sub-national authorities can better point out what they get in return for engaging in a decentralized cooperation project as their commitment is indeed more often challenged by skeptic local Councilors and journalists than their French and Italian colleagues. Nevertheless, in times of economic difficulties and budget cuts it might then be a good idea for all sub-national authorities to begin drawing the list of advantages gained from engaging into decentralized cooperation as to not being caught unprepared¹⁰⁸.

In 2001 Bossuyt lamented that change processes and new opportunities in the field of decentralization and poverty reduction "do not seem to have triggered so far a deep and systematic policy debate on the roles and specific added-value of European local authorities in this rapidly evolving field of international cooperation"¹⁰⁹. It is hoped that European local authorities, building on the experience of those among them that have undertaken decentralized cooperation activities favouring decentralized governance, will indeed come to realize their specific added value and bring their original contribution to this field in the near future.

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¹⁰⁸ Exhaustive lists of possible advantages are found in GREEN L., GAME C., AND DELAY S. (2005), *Why Should My Local Authority Be Involved In An Overseas Project? Understanding the domestic impacts of local government involvement in international development*, School of Public Policy University of Birmingham, and in UN-HABITAT BEST PRACTICES SEVILLE CENTRE FOR CITY-TO-CITY CO-OPERATION (2006), *Identification and exchange of strategies for improving the effectiveness of city-to-city cooperation projects in support of the millennium development goals*, Workshop Report, Seville 22-24 March 2006.

¹⁰⁹ BOSSUYT, J. (2001) Decentralization and Poverty Reduction. What Role for European Local Authorities, In: STOCCHIERO A. ed. *Dossier governi locali e lotta alla povertà in Africa Sub-Saharan*, CeSPI, pg. 38.

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V. CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The European Parliament, in its resolution of March 2007 on “local authorities and development cooperation”, adopts a compelling reasoning as to justify the involvement of local authorities in development cooperation. This underscores the importance for local authorities to have “the necessary political legitimacy, know-how and experience of running local affairs” and their ability “to mobilise other local stakeholders around them”¹¹⁰. It also adds that “their specific knowledge of the area under their administration makes local authorities a crucial lever in combating poverty and inequality”¹¹¹. The European Parliament then:

“Recognizes that the involvement of local authorities in development policies is essential for achieving the MDGs and ensuring good governance; believes that ownership of development policies is a significant step towards transparency and democracy in development aid and enables more effective and more viable projects and programmes to be devised on the basis of beneficiaries' real needs”¹¹²

In view of the above, not surprisingly, the research on the conditions and modalities of engaging local authorities (acting singularly and in cooperation with others) to promote development and good governance, has recently gained the centre stage.

Within this overall framework, as stated in the introduction, the actual impact of decentralized cooperation on the process of decentralization has so far not been thoroughly assessed. Thus the present study, albeit by no means complete, represents an attempt to start addressing this topic and hopefully it will serve the purpose of highlighting some of the relevant issues of a future research agenda. Keeping this in mind, the aim of this last chapter is then to present some final tentative remarks followed by targeted recommendations.

However, one last point needs to be made. The effectiveness of the contribution of a decentralized cooperation project to decentralization cannot be easily disentangled from the effectiveness of the project itself. Hence, some of the remarks here formulated will specifically address issues related to the contribution of decentralized cooperation to decentralization. Others will be of a more general nature referring to elements of good practice in decentralized cooperation in so far as these are perceived as instrumental in realizing activities that effectively support decentralized governance.

This being said, the final remarks and recommendations concerning the contribution of decentralized cooperation activities to decentralization are the following:

- **Political support.** The presence of a strong political support is to be considered as a prerequisite for initiating any decentralized cooperation partnership. On this element and on its endurance will depend, to a large extent, the resilience of the partnership over the time. Admittedly, it will be impossible to insulate entirely the

¹¹⁰ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, Resolution of 15 March 2007 on local authorities and development cooperation (2006/2235(INI)), Official Journal of the European Union C301E/249, para. G.

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*, para. X

¹¹² *Ibidem*, para. 2

decentralized cooperation partnership from the possible negative consequences stemming from a change in the political leadership at both ends of the linkage.

There are however a number of actions that could potentially mitigate negative repercussions. For example, the existence of an action plan detailing the commitments undertaken will make it more difficult to withdraw support in the mist of a project. Also, the practice of carrying out evaluations and to act upon their findings will strengthen accountability and transparency in the use of public funds thus undermining arguments often moved against decentralized cooperation activities. At the European end of the partnership, the ability to prove accrued benefits - such as those in terms of personnel motivation and upgraded skills, international exposure and so on - will then help to counter the argument of development cooperation not being an appropriate business for local authorities. Lastly, it is worth underlining that politicians are not eager to alienate the favours of potential constituencies, thus whenever civil society groups are closely involved in the decentralized cooperation activities, they might be more wary of withdrawing support altogether.

Recommendations:

- African and European sub-national authorities should consider acting upon the suggestions formulated above – that is to draw detailed action plans; to carry out evaluations on a regular basis and ensure the required follow up; to be able to point to accrued advantages; and to involve civil society groups – as to mitigate possible negative consequences stemming from a change in the political leadership.
- **Institutional framework.** An enabling institutional and organizational framework is instrumental in guaranteeing the success of any decentralized cooperation activity, and all the more so, for those sustaining decentralized governance that might well place an extra burden in terms of personnel commitments and require longer time-horizons.

Recommendations:

- European sub-national authorities should adopt a multi-annual strategic plan detailing decentralized cooperation priorities in terms of sectors and geographical areas. On the basis of this instrument, they should draw an annual implementation plan. This will allow for a careful planning of resources needed for achieving the stated objectives and provide essential data for the subsequent evaluation of the achievement of policy objectives. The plan will be a key factor in ensuring that the sub-national authority does not overstate and overstretch its capacities in this field and will be instrumental in ensuring the fulfillment of commitments in any given decentralized cooperation project (i.e. by increasing predictability of cash-flow and available human resources).

While this might not be possible for smaller municipalities, larger ones and higher tier sub-national authorities should set up an *ad hoc* office on decentralized cooperation or devote to it *ad hoc* personnel within a relevant office – such as the one charged with international relations. The *ad hoc* office/personnel will perform a number of key functions, such as draft the multi-annual and annual decentralized cooperation plan,

contribute to the design of the decentralized cooperation projects, ensure their follow-up and compliance with financial and reporting guidelines, guarantee the involvement of other relevant offices and departments, keep abreast of policy and normative developments relevant to decentralized cooperation, and so on. Smaller municipalities that cannot commit specific human resources to decentralized cooperation should consider, at least in case of more ambitious decentralized cooperation projects, partnering with larger ones and/or higher tier sub-national authorities that have *ad hoc* offices.

Each sub-national authority should then inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of any decentralized cooperation project it undertakes as to benefit from relevant country information and, very importantly, from the assistance of the local embassy that can go a long way in easing red-tape and guaranteeing local political support.

- African sub-national authorities require, as much as their European counterparts, specific skills and competences in designing and managing decentralized cooperation projects. Then, a viable and sustainable institutional arrangement needs to be put in place to ensure effective management of decentralized cooperation projects. Thus it would be advisable for each African sub-national authority to have at least one appointed person for decentralized cooperation (to have more than one would decrease the possible risks associated with personnel turnover). This person would, among other things, get familiar with the often complicated narrative and financial reporting requirements of the counterparts. He/she would act as a focal point for official communications, keep abreast of national and international relevant policy and normative developments, and, very importantly, be the one who is familiar with the overall picture of the different initiatives undertaken.

As its European counterparts, each African sub-national authority should inform the competent Ministry of Foreign Affairs of all decentralized cooperation project it undertakes to benefit from its assistance and good offices when needed.

- European States. Since international development cooperation is not the core business of European sub-national authorities, unsurprisingly they face a number of administrative obstacles in carrying out decentralized cooperation projects. The difficulties in transferring money or opening bank accounts in foreign countries compounded by the administrative burden they face for any simple task carried out, force many of them at best to invite a different actor, often a NGO, to take the project lead, if not to outsource it entirely. While not disregarding in any way the positive contribution of civil society to decentralized cooperation, it is recommended that each State undertakes, in consultation with local authorities and the national association representing them, a mapping exercise of the main administrative obstacles with a view to removing those that hinder project implementation. Also, it would be important to prepare and make available a specific manual for sub-national authorities on the correct procedures to be followed in carrying out tasks associated with decentralized cooperation projects.

- **African States.** Administrative bottlenecks are also often found on the African side of the decentralized cooperation linkage. Thus, each African State should undertake a revision process similar to the one outlined above with a view to simplifying procedures and requirements to be satisfied by decentralized cooperation actors. At the end of this process, two manuals should be drafted on relevant administrative procedures, one designed for local sub-national authorities - to be widely distributed with the support of the local national association of local authorities - and another one devoted to European sub-national authorities - whose distribution could be ensured by local embassies and through relevant websites (such as the one of United Cities and Local Governments of Africa, that of the Euro-African Partnership for Decentralized Governance, and so on).
- **Decentralized cooperation as a process.** Decentralized cooperation is better framed as a process rather than as a series of discrete actions or once-off projects. As it was mentioned in relation to the institutional framework, while this element is important in general, it is more so in the case of decentralized cooperation sustaining decentralization. The process-nature of decentralized cooperation implies the establishment of a relationship between sub-national authorities within a learning spirit that takes into account local conditions and cultures. Essential corollary of a process of this nature is the adoption of an adequate timeframe and a medium/long term commitment on both sides.

Also, the concept of process calls for an evolution of the relationship over time whereby responsibilities for concrete project implementation as well as financial responsibilities are gradually transferred to the African partners. This would go a long way in testifying the existence of a solid relationship based on trust that minimizes the negative consequences of the unpredictability of resources. In fact, one of the remarks occasionally made by European local authorities on their African counterparts, is that they are not forthcoming with complete information on ongoing decentralized cooperation and, more in general, on development projects; this results, at times, in avoidable duplication of efforts and overlaps.

While this frustration might be understandable, one should also not fail to look at the other side of the coin. The African sub-national authority is indeed expected to perform a mission impossible: devising accurate and realistic plans without knowing beforehand the level of resources available for their implementation. Then, even if a project is agreed upon with a European counterpart, the African local authority cannot be sure that the promised resources will in fact be forthcoming and especially whether they will come in the agreed timeframe. Any rational and risk-adverse player, thus, would prefer to bid on "more than one horse" as to minimize the odds of a shortage of resources in a key area, hence the resulting duplication and overlapping. Surely the proven reliability of the commitments undertaken by a long-time European partner will reduce the need to resort to this strategy; the direct availability of funds for carrying out agreed upon activities will reduce this further.

Recommendations:

- **European sub-national authorities** should be prepared to adopt a medium/long term horizon for any decentralized cooperation linkage they decide to entertain. Then, while the desire to support many communities around the world is laudable, "the more-the better" should not become their motto. The process nature of decentralized cooperation, in fact, calls

for a concentration of available resources on a few selected and long term initiatives rather than watering down contributions in a myriad of small projects.

Also, European sub-national authorities face the challenge of remaining accountable on how tax-payers money is spent. Nonetheless, they should aim to gradually transfer responsibilities for project implementation as well as financial responsibilities to their African counterparts.

- African and European sub-national authorities should always be mindful of cultural differences and show sensitiveness towards them. Also they should not underestimate the differences of the local contexts and therefore never adopt pre-cooked solutions. Lastly, to ensure continuity, it is essential that both parts involve more than one person in the linkage. Joint planning of activities – including the identification of agreed indicators to assess results – increase the success of process-oriented partnerships.
- **Streamlining decentralized governance.** As earlier stated, when properly implemented, decentralized cooperation is process-oriented. This entails a peer-to-peer approach that increases local ownership and sustainability, while containing transaction and personnel costs. They can therefore be an effective channel for funds at the local level and, differently from other cooperation modalities, have a long-term timeframe. Due to its specificities, the potential contribution of decentralized cooperation to decentralized governance is tremendous. However, for this potential to be tapped in, partnering local authorities should not be tempted to turn to projects that offer potential quick-wins without concurring actions in the areas of capacity building and institutional support for decentralized governance.

Recommendations:

- European sub-national authorities should not undertake projects that involve service delivery or infrastructure building without accompanying them with concurring capacity building actions (including on project planning and implementation, procurement and tendering, managing recurring and maintenance costs, etc.). If this is not done, the added value of these actions is lost and it is better leaving these tasks to more suitable development agents such as NGOs.
- African sub-national authorities undoubtedly face severe resource constraints and infrastructural deficiencies in providing services to citizens. This said, when discussing their priorities with their European colleagues they should avoid mentioning only the immediate material needs they are required to satisfy. They should also include those related to skills-upgrading of available human resources and more in general to capacity development.
- Multilateral and bilateral donors that provide basket funding for decentralized cooperation initiatives, should make sure that financed actions are not confined to physical realizations. Interventions should also include concurring actions in the areas of capacity building and institutional support for decentralized governance.

- **Capacity Development.** Decentralized cooperation, in support of decentralization, calls for the application of a number of skills and specific conceptual knowledge that local authorities do not necessarily have. Hence, the need to undertake specific capacity-building activities in relevant areas such as project design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and so on.

Recommendations:

- African and European sub-national authorities should understand the added value of having *ad hoc* skilled personnel and consider, whenever possible, the opportunity of financing the participation of their personnel to relevant capacity-building courses or, at least, allow them to take part in these courses during their working hours.
- African and European National Associations of Local Authorities should recognize the key role they have in this regard by organizing targeted courses and making them available to their associates. External expertise (e.g. NGO programme officers, university faculties, personnel of international organizations, etc.), should be enlisted to ensure the quality of these courses.
- **Additional technical expertise.** Even when European sub-national authority officials have capacity, they will not turn into experts of decentralized governance. Nevertheless, this expertise - accompanied by a detailed knowledge of the legislative, institutional and administrative framework of the African counterpart - is essential to design effective actions in support of decentralized governance within the framework of the decentralized cooperation partnerships.

Recommendations:

- African and European sub-national authorities should secure the necessary additional technical expertise. This can be obtained in many ways such as by partnering with specialized NGOs, research centres or universities; or by taking part in targeted programmes offered by a National Association of Local Authorities or by an agency of the United Nations.
- Bilateral and multilateral donors interested in initiating thematic programmes in support of decentralized governance, through decentralized cooperation, should make sure that the required additional technical expertise becomes part of the programme design and that participating sub-national authorities fully exploit this learning opportunity.
- **Framing actions within local and national priorities and programmes.** While this might appear a rather simplistic proposition, it can in fact be a difficult endeavor which often ends up undermining ownership and sustainability of decentralized cooperation initiatives.

Recommendations:

- European sub-national authorities should not engage in menu-driven activities. They should also make sure that any initiative undertaken within decentralized cooperation partnerships responds to the priorities expressed

by the counterpart. The European sub-national authority needs to match these priorities with what it can realistically offer. Although this requires an upfront investment in terms of time and resources it will contribute to ensure relevance, ownership and sustainability. Within this framework, exchanges and visits of sub-national authority' representatives have proven to be an effective tool worth financing.

- Once the relevant local priorities have been identified, the European sub-national authority should examine the related national policies and programmes in place as to avoid undermining them.
- African sub-national authorities should become aware that they are the ones that bear the biggest responsibility in this realm. They should make sure that their priorities are met. Being aware that any decentralized cooperation activity brings advantages but also an extra-burden, they should not consent to projects that do not meet their local needs. Also they have the primary responsibility of sharing with their European counterparts the relevant national policies and programmes in place as to avoid conflicts and waste of resources.
- African National Associations of Local Authorities and African Ministries of Local Government should consider organizing annual conferences calling together bilateral and multilateral donors, international organizations, decentralized cooperation actors, specialized NGOs and research centers, academic and training institutions engaged in the field of decentralization. These conferences will ensure coordinated and synergic actions among stakeholders in line with the national decentralization framework.
- European and African Sub-national authorities should encourage the National Associations to schedule coordination meetings in order to increase possible synergies and forms of cooperation.
- **Participation of civil society organizations.** The added value of involving civil society through its diverse and various articulations – i.e. NGOs, trade-unions, CBOs, universities, church groups, business chambers, etc.– in development activities has been recognized in a plethora of instruments adopted both by the United Nations and the European Union. Civil society is part and parcel of the widely accepted notion of “governance”. Thus, the question is no longer *whether* civil society should be involved but rather *how* best achieving this result. In fact, the involvement of civil society is crucial in ensuring the consistency of identified areas of cooperation with community needs and priorities.

Recommendations:

- African and European sub-national authorities are uniquely placed to ensure participation of civil society organizations in their various activities, including those related to decentralized cooperation. The involvement of civil society should be pursued from the onset and throughout the various phases of the partnership to guarantee real buy-in and proper support to any decentralized cooperation partnership.

Also, participation is more likely to happen when the sub-national authority has made it a consistent pattern of behavior of involving civil society groupings. Within the realm of decentralized cooperation, this can be facilitated through a number of mechanisms and recurring activities successfully piloted over the years by a number of sub-national authorities. Relevant examples of these are: holding fairs and annual conferences bringing together civil society organizations engaged in development activities; drafting the multi-annual decentralized cooperation plan following ample consultations with the civil society stakeholders; setting up coordinating committees involving civil society organizations engaged in cross-cutting themes, in a specific region and/or country.

Sub-national authorities should under no circumstances abdicate their leading role and keep involved throughout the decentralized cooperation process. It will otherwise be impossible to capitalize on the advantages of the peer-to-peer approach and fully express the potential of the institutional support offered.

- **African and European Governments**, when moving from a concept of decentralization to decentralized governance, should at minimum make sure that the national institutional/legislative framework in place does not hinder participation of civil society actors. It is further recommended that they undertake positive actions aimed at capacity building for sustainable cooperation and development targeting all relevant actors. For sub-national authorities this includes training on promoting participation and involvement of civil society while, for non-state actors, it should focus on familiarization with available opportunities and effective ways to seize them.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation.** Admittedly, decentralized cooperation activities are often not adequately monitored and not thoroughly evaluated. The main purported reason is the small monetary value of implemented actions that does not warrant the monitoring and evaluation investment. This argument fails to acknowledge the fact that even relatively small contributions committed year after year, summed up, amount to a significant budget. Moreover, often small amounts of cash disguise relevant in kind contributions that are not monetized. More importantly, monitoring and evaluation are essential for accountability purposes and they become a learning exercise that allows to identify best practices and select/ undertake corrective actions when they are needed.

Recommendations:

- **European and African sub-national authorities** should overcome any reservation they may have and build appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in their activities. Because decentralized cooperation is better understood as an ongoing process, relevant indicators should be selected as to capture this additional dimension as well.

In keeping with a learning spirit that goes beyond the single partnership, they should also consider the opportunity of sharing both the methodology used and the evaluation findings with the community of peers and with other relevant actors (such as national associations of local authorities, researchers, relevant United Nations agencies, etc.). This exchange of lessons

learnt and best practices would also contribute to the development of a monitoring and evaluation methodological tool custom-tailored for decentralized cooperation.

- Bilateral and multilateral donors should ensure the periodical evaluation of decentralized cooperation actions possibly at multiple levels (single initiative, national level and programme level). They should then make evaluation findings widely available through their websites, through the OECD-DAC Evaluation Resource Centre (DEReC), and through other relevant websites.
- **Funding.** The scarcity of funding for decentralized cooperation activities is a complaint formulated by all sub-national authorities. During times of lower transfers to local authorities, the earmarking of funds for development activities becomes increasingly complicated. This difficult situation is then compounded by the fact that alternative funding opportunities, offered by multilateral and bilateral donors, are not many. In the few instances in which those are available, often sub-national authorities are forced to engage in a fierce competition with NGOs to access them.

Recommendations:

- African and European sub-national authorities should step up their lobbying efforts at national and international levels to increase the financial support they receive for decentralized cooperation. For the lobbying to be successful, they should coordinate their efforts and strongly articulate their positions through their national, regional and international representative associations.
- Bilateral and multilateral donors, should increase their financial support to decentralized cooperation because of the specificity and value-added of this modality. They should do so both by allowing sub-national authorities to access budget lines so far opened only to NGOs, but also by establishing specific lines devoted to decentralized cooperation. Particularly welcome would be the sponsoring of thematic programmes supporting decentralized governance through decentralized cooperation (as some European States have already done). They should also fund programmes allowing temporary exchanges of personnel between African and European sub-national authorities, as well as internships for African personnel in Europe. Such programmes would favour the spread of good practices, contribute to capacity building and, within the framework of an existing decentralized cooperation partnership, become a catalyst for future initiatives.
- European Union. As the larger provider of ODA in the world, the European Union could not but be singled out for additional recommendations in this context.

The budget line of the thematic programme on “Non-State actors and local authorities” should be substantially increased - in 2007 only € 30

million were devoted to local authorities¹¹³ and only € 3,350,000 were earmarked for local authorities in ACP countries to support interventions in 1 Caribbean and 8 African countries within the framework of objective 1 of the above budget line, i.e. "actions aiming at promoting an inclusive and empowered society in partner countries",¹¹⁴.

Also, the European Commission should ensure that a significant proportion of EU budgetary aid for geographic programmes to African countries be allocated directly to sub-national authorities.

- **Participation to aid policy definition.** In its 2007 resolution on "Local authorities and Development cooperation", the European Parliament asks the Commission "to ensure that decentralization and local authority action become a focus of Community aid in developing countries" and "where decentralization is not a focal point, to support the action of local authorities through aid to the country's decentralization policy in terms of capacities, fund availability, budgetary support, legislative support or other forms of support"¹¹⁵. In keeping with the centrality assigned to sustaining decentralization, the European Parliament then coherently emphasizes the importance of the participation of local authorities both in Europe and in developing countries to the upstream definition of the EU aid policy.

Thus, the same document takes great care in developing a series of practical suggestions to ensure that local authorities play the explicit role of *partners* (and not merely beneficiaries) in line with the provisions of the revised (2005) Cotonou agreement. Given the significance of the said recommendations, some will be briefly summarized below:

- The European Commission should specify in the country strategy papers the procedures and mechanisms for more closely involving local authorities, their representative organizations and civil society partners in all phases of the cooperation process (dialogues and formulation of strategy papers, programming, implementation, reviews, and evaluations)¹¹⁶;
- Local authorities and their associations (at national, regional and global levels) should be invited as observers in forums for dialogue between the EU and partner countries, such as the Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the ACP-EU Council of ministers¹¹⁷;
- The European Commission should establish "a partnership with a platform of associations representing local authorities active in the field of cooperation, modelled on the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development, to facilitate dialogue and cooperation with Community institutions, coordinate cooperation between local authorities and assist them in implementing

¹¹³ Data extrapolated from the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, *Thematic Programme "Non state actors and Local authorities", Annual Action Programme for 2007*, available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/worldwide/civil-society/working-documents_en.htm

¹¹⁴ The 8 African countries are Chad, Malawi, Mozambique, RCA, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. EUROPEAN COMMISSION, *Thematic Programme "Non state actors and Local authorities", Annual Action Programme for 2007*, pg. 14-15.

¹¹⁵ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, Resolution of 15 March 2007 on local authorities and development cooperation (2006/2235(INI)), Official Journal of the European Union C301E/249, para. 18

¹¹⁶ *Ibidem*, para 11.

¹¹⁷ *Ibidem*, para. 16.

development policies”¹¹⁸;

- Also fundamental is the undertaking of the European Parliament “to carry out a detailed political follow-up with associations of elected representatives of the implementation of the DCI [Development Cooperation Instrument] within both the EU and developing countries, in particular by examining country strategy papers, and to inform local authorities of new opportunities open to them and, in the event of difficulties on the ground raised by local authorities, to forward information to the Commission”¹¹⁹.

European bilateral donors should support and commit to implement the European Parliament propositions formulated above. Also, it is recommended that they should consult local authorities and national associations of local authorities in the definition of their own aid policy. In fact, while recognizing the different, yet complementary roles, to be played by the two cooperation modalities, effective consultations would go a long way in supporting the achievement of the objectives of aid harmonization put forward in the Paris Declaration¹²⁰.

- **Research agenda and data gathering.** As stated in the introduction to this work while “the literature on decentralized cooperation is not scarce per se, it can by no means be termed complete”¹²¹. A number of deficiencies can be pointed out: the absence of a hub tasked with collecting, on a periodic basis, reliable data on decentralized cooperation and funding sources availed by European sub-national authorities for this purpose; a large share of information on decentralized cooperation is produced uniquely in the language of origin of the given European country; moreover, very importantly, so far, decentralized cooperation is a field which has not yet been subjected to serious interrogation in Africa and as a result, it is still not well documented. Thus, any future research agenda on the impact of decentralized cooperation on decentralized governance in Africa should be complemented by efforts aimed at filling these gaps.

In this context, it is important to emphasize the role of universities and research centers in analyzing the trends and challenges in decentralized cooperation. Indeed, local universities can be extremely useful in documenting information about decentralized cooperation in Africa, which at the moment is hardly available.

Recommendations:

- European bilateral donors should collect periodic data on ongoing decentralized cooperation initiatives. These data should be made widely available through a website possibly modeled on the one of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs that allows queries using different criteria (e.g. French sub-national authority involved, country of intervention, sector of intervention, international network, etc.)¹²². Interestingly, the same website

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*, para. 20.

¹¹⁹ *Ibidem*, para. 13.

¹²⁰ Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2005, adopted at the II High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. The document can be consulted at <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf>>

¹²¹ Pg. 14.

¹²² The website can be consulted at: <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/actions-france_830/cooperation-decentralisee_1054/base-donnees-cooperations-decentralisees_3914/index.html>

has a remote procedure allowing French sub-national authorities as well French diplomatic delegations to update information thus ensuring completeness of the information with limited maintenance costs. The information contained in such a database might prove useful not only for analyzing main trends of decentralized cooperation. This would benefit researchers but even more so policy makers. Also, the same information can spur coordination among different sub-national authorities working in the same country as to avoid overlaps, realize fruitful synergies and launch even more ambitious initiatives.

- Multilateral and bilateral donors should seriously consider funding additional research on the impact of decentralized cooperation in Africa, and more specifically on decentralized governance in African countries. A series of case studies of this nature would be instrumental in drawing lessons learnt and pointing to best practices worth replicating.

They should also fund the establishment of an on-line hub on decentralized cooperation between Africa and Europe where relevant information can be collected on available funding opportunities, national and international legislative texts and documents, manuals, case studies on best-practices, lessons learnt, analyses of the current trends and challenges to decentralized cooperation and so on.

- African Governments should recognize their interest in a research agenda, firmly anchored in the local context and aimed at promoting decentralized governance and increasing the effectiveness and impact of decentralized cooperation. To ensure the inclusion of their perspectives, they should keep engaging in setting research priorities and undertaking actions aimed at facilitating such research. They should also contribute relevant data and information in their possession. Within their financial possibilities, they should also consider the option of co-financing such research as this helps testifying their commitment and interest to effectively apply the resulting research findings.

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