Kronoberg – Tlokwe City Council Cooperation

Assessment Report

7 projects

2006 – 2011

7 chosen projects

The overall goal with the cooperation between Tlokwe City Council and the Kronoberg County as stated in its Memorandum of Understanding is to exchange professional knowledge between the partners. Over six years of formal cooperation have resulted in the implementation of more than 20 projects apart from the so-called Monitoring Committee.

The overall objective with this assessment report is to list the tangible results among the projects implemented.

The report gathers as well key elements that are considered by the project participants as important for a successful implementation of a project. This report is seen as an evaluation of our cooperation and it presents tools for strengthening our future work.
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**Coordinators of Kronoberg – Tlokwe City Council cooperation**
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Summary

Over the six years of formal cooperation more than 20 projects were implemented apart from the Monitoring Committee which is a compulsory requirement according to the rules of ICLD.

The overall goal with the cooperation as stated in the Memorandum of Understanding is to exchange professional knowledge between the partners. At the MC-meeting in South Africa in November 2010 a discussion took place regarding the outcome of the projects as well as further development of the partnership. The task to make an assessment with the overall objective of finding out tangible results from our cooperation was given to the three coordinators of the partnership. Seven projects were chosen for investigation out of the 20 that have been implemented since 2006. The Swedish coordinators were responsible for gathering the data on the Swedish side and the South African coordinator on the South African side. The results were then collected in this report which also gathers key elements and/or factors that the participants consider important in a successful project implementation.

Some but not all of the seven projects resulted in tangible effects. The assessment gives explanations as to possible reasons but it also presents a lot of valuable information for use in the development of our cooperation and of the projects that we implement together.
Background

This chapter presents the history of the cooperation and its structure as well as the decision behind this assessment.

**Background of the partnership**

In 2006 the Memorandum of Understanding was signed for the first time between the Regional Council of Southern Småland, the City of Växjö, the Kronoberg County Council in Sweden and Tlokwe City Council, Potchefstroom in South Africa in agreement to start formal cooperation.

The agreement points out a number of areas of cooperation where exchange and capacity building reinforces local democracy, being the overall focus for all projects. The cooperation is quite unique since it gathers three actors on the Swedish side. This made it possible for a large number of participants to benefit from the cooperation, strengthening the contacts between the actors and resulting in a broad partnership. Financing for the joint projects was sought at the International Center of Local Democracy (ICLD) (earlier SALAR international), Sweden and their so-called municipal partnership program.

Between 2006 and 2011 a total of 20 projects were implemented focusing on, among others but not limited to, areas such as democracy, gender equality, entrepreneurship, human resources, public relations and communication, adult education, technical and spatial planning, municipal finance, arts and cultural policies. The projects always applied for one year but in some cases, when one year was not enough or when new ideas appeared, new applications were submitted for their prolongation into a second and even a third year, granted by ICLD.

**The Monitoring Committee**

ICLD requires that each partnership has a coordinating function. In 2006 the Monitoring Committee (MC) was established. The MC consists of three elected politicians from each side of the partnership and it requires that at least one of the representatives belongs to the opposition party. On the administrative side there are three coordinators (officials): one from South Africa and two from Sweden, the reason for two officials from Sweden being that there are three actors on the Swedish side to coordinate.
The guiding principles of the MC operations are:

- All project ideas must be submitted in writing for consideration and recommendation in order to search financing from ICLD,
- During the MC meeting in either Sweden or South Africa participants from the current projects submit both a written and a verbal report,
- The MC itself gives ideas on new projects to be initiated and
- In general it considers how to improve the overall twinning partnership.

A particular feature of the MC agenda is when participants give one another a perspective of the current political life in each country with a special focus on the local and regional levels.

The MC including the coordinators meets twice a year – once in Sweden and once in South Africa. Besides the coordinators have their own meeting once a year and the venue alters every year between Sweden and South Africa.

Decision on an overview of the cooperation

At the MC-meeting in November 2010 in South Africa a discussion took place regarding the outcome of the projects as well as further development of the partnership. The aim of the Swedish municipal partnership program is to exchange knowledge in order to build capacity with a win-win focus. The questions raised during the meeting were: Is this happening? and How can we strengthen this?

We live in a changing world with constant new pre-conditions, challenges and opportunities and this needs to be taken into account in the continuation of an active cooperation between the Tlokwe City Council and the Regional Council of southern Småland, the City of Växjö and the Kronoberg County. The discussion resulted in the proposal to evaluate and highlight the results achieved so far. The coordinators were given the task to conduct an internal assessment of the projects and present its results at the next MC-meeting in Sweden 2011.

The coordinators agreed on a plan of the assessment but due to the delayed decisions by the ICLD regarding the application for the MC-function in 2011, as well as the new conditions granting fewer working days to the Swedish coordinators the plan had to be postponed and ambitions had to be lowered.

The document you are now reading is the evidence that the above mentioned challenges were overcome and the assessment undertaken.
Objective of assessment

The two main objectives of the assessment are:

- To list tangible or non-tangible results of the projects implemented so far.
- To list some key elements and factors that should be taken into consideration in project development and implementation.
Method

In this chapter the implementation of the assessment process is presented.

The first step consisted in the selection of a number of projects to be analyzed. Out of the twenty implemented projects, seven were chosen by the coordinators. The second step required a plan of the process and responsibilities. The proposal for the assessment was presented and approved by the MC at the meeting in Sweden, June 2011. (See appendix 1.)

The following projects were chosen and the following reasons defined their inclusion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of project</th>
<th>No of years</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PR-project, PR</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Several years, tangible results unclear for Swedish side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Staff Exchange Knowledge, TSEK</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Several years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Entrepreneurs in Kronoberg and Potchefstroom, FE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Many direct results, but what happened later?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Team Finance, ITF</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Used by ICLD as a good example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Integrated Planning Practice, SIPP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Apparently not so many results, why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art &amp; Cultural Policy Exchange, ACPE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Only project with policy exchange in focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, GE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Area of cooperation is also a horizontal objective for ICLD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, an interview guide was developed jointly by the coordinators and it was then the responsibility of each side (Sweden and South Africa) to collect the data in their respective country. The method is described below for each country.
**Sweden**

One person for each project was selected and contacted for an interview. This person was required to have taken an active part in the project, been responsible for it or involved in some way. In some cases two persons were interviewed at the same time about the same project upon request from the selected person. In one case (Female Entrepreneurship) one of the South African participants was visiting Sweden at the same time as the interview took place and was then interviewed together with the Swedish participant. It was judged by the interviewer that it would not affect the answers negatively (i.e. provide less honest answers or less information) but quite the opposite.

The interviews were carried out in a semi structured way, meaning that the questions were asked according to the interview guide but that depending on the answer, follow-up questions were given to clarify the answer or to develop/motivate it. The interviews lasted between 60 and 80 minutes and notes were taken by the interviewer which were later typed into a word document. The respondents were earlier informed about the purpose of the interview, as well as of the fact that they would not be anonymous. No one objected. The questions were sent to the respondents in advance.

**South Africa**

One person for each project was selected and contacted for an interview. This person was required to have taken an active part in the project, been responsible for it or involved in some way. No request was received from those interviewed to be accompanied by one more person of the project.

The interviewees received their questions prior to the interview, which gave them the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the contents of the questions. This proved helpful considering the fact that some of the projects under investigation took place more than four years ago.

It was decided to assemble all of them under one roof at the same time. They provided responses to the questions in the presence of the interviewer. This was partly because the questions for all the projects were the same; in the event a contribution was made or further questions asked on the assessment all present would benefit from such an exercise.

Appendix 2 gives information regarding the interviews, who was interviewed and when.
Results

In this chapter the answers to the questions are presented without further comments.

1. Did the project reach its objectives? If not, why?

Sweden
Many of the respondents had difficulties recalling the objectives of the projects but most of them said they recalled that all the areas in focus had been included and that the project had been carried out as planned. One person said the objectives had definitely been reached and even more, unexpected results were reported. Another said that the objectives were not measurable which made it difficult to estimate if they were reached. A couple of persons said they were not aware of the objectives of the project.

South Africa:
In the cases where the projects took place a while ago it was more difficult for the participants to remember the objectives of the project in detail. However, due to the fact that the title of the project and the work they carried out during the project related to their field of work they were sure that it met the objectives of the project.

All were confident that the individual projects all led to the strengthening of the twinning partnership as proved by its durability.

2. Did the project result in any tangible results?

Sweden
Out of the seven projects only the International Team Finance identifies that the new position as internal auditor established in Växjö was a result from the exchange on how to manage risks and risk analysis.

The rest of the answers were very much about inspiration, changing of mindsets and perspectives, learning something new as well as reflecting upon own work (which there is seldom time for), testing new things\(^1\), using English, team building with your co-workers etc. The new input and knowledge that was gained during the project was treasured by the participants and some mentioned that this South Africa-experience came up every now and then in work related discussions. The knowledge is there and it is difficult to say when it affects the work and decisions taken, one of the respondents concluded.

\(^1\) in the PR project a local TV-station from Växjö took part filming the work as well as a debate about Gender Equality that was organized at the local TV-station with participants from both countries.
Some words from the respondents:

- Reflecting upon your own work during the project implementation does lead to development.
- The exchange gives new input and perspectives that later leads to new ideas and form part of future decisions and actions.
- It was very competence developing for me as a servant in the public sector.
- It (the project) is still often part of discussions and I see parallels between what we saw there and what we have here (cultural diversity for example).
- We found friendship that now is about to result in a business cooperation.

South Africa:
Some of the respondents could not identify tangible results that directly emanated from the projects, especially Arts and Culture Policy Exchange.

In the case of International Finance the tangible result was the procurement of a machine that will enable them to archive their documents better and ensure less hardcopy paper is being used.

In the case of PR Best Practices that ran for more than one year it led to an internship program and the development and improvement of the website municipality.

In the case of Women in Entrepreneurship a lot of initial promise was shown of business spin-offs after the project. Still there are private visits from only one South African business woman to Växjö, Sweden but so far it has not yet resulted in anything tangible.

The other important consideration to be made is that not all the results from the projects are necessarily tangible there are also non-tangible results.

3. What are the lessons from taking part of the project?
   a. With regards to the project implementation (way of working etc...)

Below is a list of learning outcomes with regards to the project implementation:

Sweden:
- It is good to discuss matters having a set of questions to answer (ITF)
- It is good to focus on the practical work (PR)
- It would have been even better if there had been a more concrete objective (for example, to build a website) (PR)
- Internship is valuable but can be difficult practically (PR)
- The more years, the more focus upon the work i.e. less time spent on “recreational matters”. (PR)
- The participants need an introduction to the project (the way of work, thinking, context, why he/she is there) (ACPE)
- A professional project coordinator is very good (GE)
- Engagement from the participants is important and can be triggered by giving responsibility (GE)
- Distance communication is difficult (almost all projects)
- Cooperation with someone/something totally different (culturally) is good and enriching (TSEK)
- Sweden and South Africa are different and sometimes it is difficult to meet at the same level (quality issues and scenario analyses vs. real life) (TSEK)
- Time is needed not only for the trips but for the preparations and also to take care of the results (several projects)
- Take the opportunity to involve other persons than the actual project participants when they are here in order to let more people take part and benefit. (TSEK)
- Focus on one or a few objectives/areas, be concrete. (TSEK)
- It was good to be in pairs, one Swede and one South African with the same focus. (FE)
- Sometimes it feels like the South Africans are a little too polite and do not demand so much just because the money comes from Sweden. (several projects)

**South Africa:**
- There is always a need to balance off the formal part of the program that focuses on the project objectives with the non-formal part of the program (tours) – (PR)
- More internship programs will serve the projects better – (PR)
- The development of the municipal website was a very good specific objective that was reached (PR)
- The time management of the program is very important as it helps to stay focused on the project objectives – (ITF)
- At the beginning of the project visit it would be helpful if all participants are reminded of the project objectives and evaluated at the end of it – (ITF)
- There must be more time for the participants to meet one another (ITF)
- Orientation of systems and life in the respective countries is important (GE)
- The project must include male gender although it may have an emphasis on woman (GE)
- The communication that takes place between project participants after the project visit is also a good consequence – (ACPE)
- The differences in development between the partners are good as they provide many learning possibilities (ACPE)
- It is at times impossible to reach all the objectives set out in the project within one year (ACPE)
- The successful implementation of a project takes a lot of time, team work and preparation (TSEK)
b. With regards to the results?

**Sweden:**
- Peer review was good because it put more pressure on us to deliver results. (ITF)
- The results are difficult to identify if the objectives are imprecise. (PR)
- It is good if the objectives are incorporated into already existing work. (ACPE)
- The participants have to be open to learning and to convert it to their own reality. (GE)

**South Africa:**
- The results were achieved with the development and improvement of the website. (PR)
- Results are sometimes achieved after the project has ended (ITF).
- There are immediate results and future results that have to be achieved and the future results are never considered (GE).
- Not all the results obtained are mentioned in the project proposal at the beginning of the project. There are unintended results never imagined at the beginning of the project (ACPE).
- Results must be more widely shared with the broader community and continuously emphasized (ACPE)

4. What is your experience having taken part in the project? And for your organization?

**Sweden:**
All the respondents agreed that taking part in the project was an amazing experience. For many it was the first time they went to Africa and just to visit a different country not as a tourist but seeing, learning and gaining understanding of the structures, challenges and methods is very interesting and worthwhile. A lot of gains were made at the personal level but much of it can be used in professional work. A number of respondents say that many problems/challenges are the same but the way they are handled and the preconditions are different and here one can learn from another. It opens up to see new solutions. It gave the participants international experience which in some cases became the starting point for other international cooperation.

The organization has gained co-workers that have accumulated experiences, knowledge and new perspectives in their work, strengthening as group. One person said that participating definitely strengthened her professional tasks. A lot mentioned that they felt they can give very much but might not get as much back, at least not tangible things. But it certainly gave the employees new perspectives into their own organization. The participants realized that going away made them an ambassador for their organization while presenting it and reflecting upon its challenges and possibilities. Everyone said that they would not want to be without this experience because it had a great impact on them in many ways.
South Africa:
All of the participants in the assessment had only positive things to say about their own participation in the project. It starts with the opportunity to travel abroad for the first time and have the exposure to a developed Europe.

Others feel that they are important because other people in other areas of the world are interested to learn from them. Thus, they have something to contribute and share with other people.

Some feel that their perspectives of their work are now being positively influenced or improved and that makes them better employees.

In the case of the Gender Equality Project the participant felt that the municipality was reaching out to broader society and include them in the partnership and in this way the benefit is shared.

The indirect benefit for the municipality, it was felt, is that it has employees who are more capacitated and even happy and therefore they are more productive in the workplace.

5. What are the advantages with the collaboration?

Sweden:
- It gives new perspectives
- Time to reflect upon your work
- Network on the other side of the globe
- Marketing of our organization
- New solutions to old challenges
- Rise the interest of international politics
- Awareness of the surrounding world
- You realize what you should appreciate (open society, less fences for example)
- Exchange is important
- Business possibilities

South Africa:
- Isolation is destroyed and it is possible to mix with people of a wider world
- Learn new, better and at times easier ways of doing exactly the same thing
- Learn that people everywhere, in a way, are the same. The needs are the same: jobs, water, food etc.
- Learn to appreciate differences
- Meet new people, build new networks.
- Help in a small way to make the world a better place.
- The local economy is stimulated and poverty is fought
- The developmental needs are addressed in a sustainable way
6. What disadvantages can you see? How do you think they should be tackled?

The table below shows the answers by the Swedish respondents. There are of course more ways or possibilities to handle the disadvantages/risks.

**Sweden:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantage/Risk</th>
<th>How to handle it</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not taken seriously</td>
<td>Select the “right” participants with time and interest to do something about it, connect the focus to the existing work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looked upon as a vacation/reward</td>
<td>Right participants (courage when selecting participants), demand reports and inform others of purpose and expected outcome which is generally very little done on the Swedish side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far away, few can participate</td>
<td>Use the internet for more and closer communication, create a virtual working area for communication and preparation correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We work differently and South Africa has in some ways less resources than Sweden</td>
<td>Differences can be enriching and South Africa has other strengths that we do not have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could result in “just a nice trip”</td>
<td>Make sure you have a professional project coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the same person takes part several times in visits to SA the use is decreasing causing a greater loss because he/she is also absent from work ²</td>
<td>Spread the participation and let new people take part instead of the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa is considered exotic and cooperation with them is questioned especially if there are no tangible results</td>
<td>Information, as well as that the politicians are behind the cooperation and express it which will legitimize it. It should not be put on the individual official</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are expected to know English</td>
<td>Let people take an English course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² This should be seen in the light of that the respondent meant that one year (two visits) was enough in order to discuss similarities and differences and that more time would not increase the gains/lessons for the Swedish side. Other respondents said the opposite that with more time it is more likely that one can really find the good and transferable examples. In the end it must depend upon what area is in focus.
South Africa:
The disadvantages amongst others may include:
- It may come to an end
- It may lead to over dependence and not independence
- Wrong perceptions may be created

7. In your opinion, what are the factors of a successful project?

Sweden:
Several factors have already been mentioned especially under question 3 but below is a list of all factors, many of which were mentioned by a number of respondents. The most highlighted factor was the wish to have better communication with the partner in the projects, not only during the visits but also before, in between and after. A better dialogue would facilitate the implementation of the projects and also better projects. One person expressed it the following way: “Communication doesn’t work with South Africa! Not e-mail, not by phone... it is the most important and has to be solved.”

The list does not reflect an order of significance.
- Good distance communication
- Interesting and engaged participants, with the right motive, time and knowledge
- Good matching with South African participants
- Courage to change participants if necessary (especially for year 2 and 3 if needed)
- A clear task and goal for the project connected to the project plan
- A clear task for each participant
- To have time for reflection during the implementation and also during the visits
- To use current challenges/problems and to compare how both sides handle them = more motivating
- Introduction to the project and international work
- Professional project coordination
- Not too heavy program, time to reflect
- Not too many areas of focus, fewer give each more time
- An active counterpart in South Africa
- An active project coordinator in Sweden and one in South Africa
- A good project plan
- Higher status of the exchanges/visits within the organization
- No “free ride” but demand from the “boss” of reporting back
- Time for preparations
- To discuss a subject from both sides perspectives during the same visit in order to create a dialogue about it not just lectures.
- To do projects which last more than one year
South Africa:
The factors for a successful project include:
- Clear goals and objectives for the project
- Good leadership from the project leader
- Good organizational skills from the project leader
- Clear communication of what is expected from everybody in the project
- Spreading and publishing of project results
- The right atmosphere between participants must be there – working environment.
- Respect for one another’s culture and way of doing things
- Good balance of the participants

8. Did any unexpected or non-planned results (tangible and /or intangible) occur during or after the project implementation?

Sweden:
- Increased contact between participating organizations/persons on the Swedish side due to planning and preparations of the visits
- A collection of money to Emmanuel’s Hospice in Potchefstroom started among the staff at Panncentralen.
- Knowledge exchange about how to talk to children about sexual abuse
- Good and valuable to travel with “your” politicians, i.e. time to talk to them in a more relaxed environment
- Better contact with and knowledge about the participants from Sweden (who might not be your daily colleagues)
- Interest for South Africa as well as other South Africa-projects that exist within the cooperation.
- Discussions about gender equality and politics within the project although the issue in focus was technical matters. For year two one subject of focus became a soft one: how to meet and treat people

South Africa:
- The formation of personal relationships that last long after the project has been completed.
Concluding discussion

In this chapter the answers presented above are discussed in order to present some conclusions.

The answers given during the interviews with some of the people involved in the seven different projects point out a number of aspects that are of relevance for the development of the cooperation. The responses are also a clear picture of the meaning of the cooperation at both the individual and organizational level. The assessment shows that tangible results are not so common in this kind of projects. The exchange of knowledge, visits to each other’s countries, regions, cities, homes, cultural attractions, natural attraction, conversations, e-mail exchanges, and meetings have resulted only in so much more that is not tangible.

This assessment itself could be classified as one of those non-tangible results but its importance lies in its meaning. This is the first time an overview of the cooperation has been made, making it a learning exercise. The assessment gathers a number of factors that highlight both strengths and challenges in the future work within our cooperation.

Tangible results

The definition of a tangible result can be questioned in the scope of this report. It has been a challenge to tell a tangible result, as well as to measure it. The projects generated by the cooperation are meant to be based on knowledge exchange, not resulting in infrastructure or investments. Therefore, a tangible result is understood here to be more than just knowledge exchange. It is anyway important to highlight that ICLD rules through the program framework are very clear and point out the kind of activities allowed.

The cooperation between Tlokwe City Council and the county of Kronoberg is a successful one since already 20 project applications have been approved, 20 projects have been implemented and according to the financiers successfully reported. The cooperation has simply proved its results. However, the cooperation aims at showing results which can be measured, seen and recognized, as well as continuing to deliver a meaningful cooperation.
The coordinators together with the interviewees were able to identify some concrete results directly linked to the projects:

**International Team Finance**

| In Sweden: the recruitment and introduction of an internal auditor in the municipality of Växjö as a result of the exchange, making the municipality aware of the different risk management levels. | In South Africa: the procurement of a scanning-machine that makes it possible to archive documents better and ensure less hardcopy paper is used. |

**PR Best Practices**

In South Africa: an internship program of two weeks for a South African official. He was part of the team responsible for developing a new homepage for the municipality. The North West Provincial Government (regional level) appreciated the new page and other municipalities have asked for help on developing better webpages.

**Gender equality**

In Sweden: A meeting around domestic violence gathered 60 participants besides the ones participating in the project.

Other tangible results from other projects not included in the assessment

**Living History**

- In South Africa: the use of the pedagogic method called time travel resulted in being part of a network, allowing further exchange of knowledge

**A life time of Learning – Adult Education**

- In Sweden: Lessebo has introduced a small ceremony when adult learners finish their diploma. In many other countries it is traditional to celebrate special occasions like this but in Sweden this stops after high school. The experience from South Africa made them consider the importance of the achievement even for adults.

Another result linked to the same project was that the contact between the Swedish participants (from different municipalities) increased and their cooperation resulted in the preparation and submission of other projects (for example EU funded)

One of the participating adult learning centers is now in the process of starting a new collaboration with Vusulela College in Potchefstroom.
Tshwaraganang – Library project yr 1
- In South Africa: two so-called integrated libraries have been established in Potchefstroom in a pilot project, the idea is taken directly from Sweden.

Public Relations 3
- In South Africa: the Tlokwe City Council webpage was developed after the exchange already mentioned. But eventually it was decided to manage the webpage “inhouse” after seeing the benefits in Växjö.

Human resources
- In Sweden: New guide on recruitment was developed in Växjö and Älmhult according to the model followed at the City Council in Tlokwe. Another result was the particular attention given to the leader positions and their competences and skills. The Municipality of Växjö uses questions regarding this issue today through their recurrent staff surveys.

It is difficult to suggest any specific lessons learnt from the analysis of these particular projects that could apply to others and provide easy to follow steps always delivering tangible results. The interviewed participants of both the projects with and without tangible result, point out a number of challenges common to each other’s projects and non-particular characteristic can be seen. To speculate on logical reasons behind these results would not lead to good tools for future work. Therefore, we can only ratify that tangible results are rare, that they can be identified, and the projects executed in this cooperation brought results even outside the scope of the project application and implementation, and should be detected by an active search.

As stated earlier in this document the aim of the cooperation is to build and strengthen capacity and to exchange knowledge in a win-win situation. The interviews confirm very clearly that the cooperation lives up to the goals stated by the partners, the ICLD program and deliver development in many ways: personal, organizational and local although not numerous tangible results can be identified.

Common challenges

External factors of this rapidly changing world challenge individuals, projects, organizations and of course our cooperation in many different ways. The possibility of foreseeing some of them can only help us to be aware of the dangers ahead and mostly to tackle them with solutions that reinforce us in the earliest possible stage. This assessment report is the first one made for this cooperation, although all the specific projects have been reported to, reviewed by and approved by both ICLD and other instances inside our organizations and countries. It is the first time we have had the opportunity to gather several projects and the view of their implementers in one document. This assessment is then a valuable tool for the future development of projects. The participants of the interviews and the coordinators see a number of challenges ahead:
- **Project development**: Projects need time for proper planning as well as realistic objectives in line with existing work. The preparation of projects is a demanding process that needs real involvement of the actors concerned. Projects continuing in a second or third year are pointed out as more focused, reconfirming the need of a dialog during the development stage of the project. The challenge consists in fewer resources available. There is also the communication challenge, addressed as well as listed.

- **Project implementation**: The need of an introduction of project goals and objectives is a pre-requisite for involved participants and should be a task of the project leader in both countries. Apart from engaged and serious participants, the role of the project leader must be exercised in a professional way. The leadership does not only belong to the leader of the project but also to the organizations and the MC. One way of exercising it is through follow-ups, allowing a connection into the day-to-day work and future activities.

- **Improvement of the communication**: Communication, dialog and information need to flow in a more open, integrated and continuous way. The challenge of the distance among us and the difference in manners and customs make the communication among the actors in the projects and organizations even more important to address. The challenge can be addressed with tools of communication more advanced than phone and e-mail, e.g. online meetings.

- **Distributing and sharing outcomes**: Outcomes of the projects need to be more systematically distributed to project participants, organizations and even to other actors such as ICLD. Although reports are made by each project, the sharing of the results can always be improved. Both failure and success stories of projects could be shared as a learning exercise. Distributing lists of lessons learnt and key factors to persons who are to develop a project can help us in future successful projects, in partnership and other aspects. Another very important observation is one made by the gender equality project: the participant pointed out that this project showed a particular real and important connection with the society, highlighting the importance of distribution of the cooperation. The idea of being able to find new ways to reinforce such an important challenge in our societies gives the possibility to anchor the partnership and is an effective way of developing our citizens.

- **Learning**: To further discuss and analyze the projects and the results of the assessment and to map out where changes could be made. This could even be done with the help of ICLD and other actors involved in the same kind of cooperation.
Final key factor for success

It is inevitable to react and reflect on the several comments made by the participants around the meaning of their participation in the projects. Their participation has been an overwhelmingly positive experience that has definitely strengthened them as persons and in their profession. This will of course also affect the organization by making them work in a more positive way. The collaboration gives people opportunities to broaden their professional views by encountering on a number of occasions something completely different but still familiar. A common reflection among the participants is that challenges are the same but solutions differ. It is eye-opening in many ways.

A South African participant highlighted the biggest advantage of the project by saying:

“We have stimulated local economy, fought poverty, helped in a small way to make the world a better place”

Finally, the interviewees stressed that the projects have had an impact for them as persons. Concerning their organization one repeated comment was that their work have resulted in adding value to the work which probably would not have ever happened without the cooperation. This comment can be seen as a positive sign for the work carried out by all of us in the past six years.
APPENDIX 1 - Proposal

PROPOSAL: Evaluation 2011 Cooperation Kronoberg – South Africa

The MC decided during the last meeting in November that a document presenting a list of tangible results among the 20 implemented or/and ongoing projects should be produced.

Objective: To list tangible results among projects implemented so far between the actors.

Background: Since new preconditions and challenges need to be taken into account to the continuation of an active cooperation between the Tlokwe City Council and the Regional Council of southern Småland, the City of Växjö and the Kronoberg County Council, it is necessary to evaluate and highlight the results achieved so far.

Process:

1. To choose among the 20 projects being implemented so far.
2. 7 projects will be evaluated and analyzed, the projects were chosen for various reasons presented below.
3. The projects and reasons are:
   a. PR-project year 1-3 the projects length, several years running
   b. Technical Staff year 1-2 several years
   c. Female Entrepreneurs many direct results, update needed
   d. Int. Team Finance
   e. Sustainable Integrated Planning apparently not so many results, why?
   f. Art and Culture Policy Exchange only project with policy exchange in focus
   g. Gender Equality area of cooperation

4. The questions to the project participants shall include:
   a. Did the project reach its objectives? If not, why?
   b. Have the project resulted in any tangible results?
   c. What are the learning’s from taking part of the project?
      i. With regards to the project implementation (way of working etc…)
      ii. With regards to the results?
   d. What is your experience by having taken part of the project? And for your organization?
   e. What are the advantages with the collaboration?
   f. What disadvantages can you see? According to you how should they be tackled?
   g. What are the factors, according to you, for a successful project?
   h. Did any unexpected or non-planned results (tangible and/or intangible) occur during or after the project implementation?

5. Gathering of the results in each country.
6. Gathering and analysis of the interviews/questionnaires in each country.
7. Gathering and common analysis of the results, including a dialog between the coordinators, it could be via on-line.
8. Final document and presentation. The document could include the following topics:
   a. Summary
   b. Short around the method
   c. List of results in different categories (depend on the findings, could be direct during the project, after the project, as appointed in the goals, as an unexpected result…)
   d. Short analysis that could include a suggestion on coming interesting topics as part of the results, need of reinforcement work to achieve “new” goals. As well as some learning’s done and proposal for improvement.
## APPENDIX 2 - Respondents

### Sweden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Year carried out</th>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Team Finance</td>
<td>2009/2010</td>
<td>Kerstin Sundström, Katarina Johansson, City of Växjö</td>
<td>Chief of Finance, Chief of Budget</td>
<td>2011-12-04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art &amp; Cultural Policy Exchange</td>
<td>2007/2008</td>
<td>Sunny Sundström, Alvesta municipality (at the time, today at the Regional Council)</td>
<td>Manager of Arts and Culture (in Alvesta)</td>
<td>2011-10-19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotion of Gender Equality 1</td>
<td>2010/2011</td>
<td>Peter Lundgren, City of Växjö</td>
<td>Coordinator Youth Center</td>
<td>2011-10-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Staff Exchange Knowledge yr 1-2</td>
<td>2006/2007, 2007/2008</td>
<td>Julia Ahlrot, City of Växjö</td>
<td>Head of Environmental Sustainability</td>
<td>2011-10-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Year carried out</td>
<td>Respondent</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Team Finance</td>
<td>2009/2010</td>
<td>Pam Wilgenbus</td>
<td>Deputy Manager of Finance</td>
<td>2011-12-19</td>
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<td>Tlokwe City Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Team Finance</td>
<td>2009/2010</td>
<td>Mohammed Kader</td>
<td>Assistant Manager, Budget Office</td>
<td>2011-12-19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotion of Gender Equality 1</td>
<td>2010/2011</td>
<td>Ronnie Matras</td>
<td>Administrative Officer</td>
<td>2011-12-19</td>
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ICLD International Centrum för Lokal Demokrati