

Evaluation of ICLD

2015



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1. Executive Summary

In the spring of 2015, Oxford Research was assigned to carry out an evaluation of the Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD). ICLD's mission is to promote local democracy in low and middle income countries through supporting partnerships between local governments in Sweden and in cooperation countries, offering International Training Programmes for actors from cooperation countries and organising a Knowledge Centre on local democracy. The evaluation has been conducted through a combination of surveys, interviews, field studies and document studies, using the OECD/DAC criteria for evaluating international development cooperation as the analytical framework. The emphasis in the data collection has been put on ICLD's operations and their results, discussing potential impact on local democracy, and ramifications for ICLD's organisation.

The main conclusion of the evaluation is that ICLD functions well and that the assigned tasks are completed in line with expectations. ICLD plays an important role in Swedish development cooperation by including Swedish and foreign municipalities, regions and counties, as active development actors. Swedish municipalities have capabilities and experiences that are useful for municipalities and regions in cooperation countries. At the same time, Swedish municipalities often find that partnerships with other countries build their own capacity. Similarly, International Training Programmes make important contributions to local democracy actors, as demonstrated mainly through their evident results on capacity building and behavioural change.

In addition to high performance, ICLD has demonstrated on-going development in line with needs identified in the evaluation. The main recommendation is therefore to uphold quality and continue efforts to improve operations. This includes continued development of the result based management framework, the Municipal Partnership Programmes and the International Training Programmes. Special focus should be put on further exploiting synergies between different activities, and on establishing a sound, logical progression of results, feasibly in the sphere of influence of the type of activities within ICLD's mandate. A more concentrated effort should be put into consolidating the Knowledge Centre, establishing consistent and transparent routines and a process for identifying and prioritising between research themes. There is also significant potential to expand outreach activities, ICLD stepping into a role as a central knowledge hub on local democracy.

2. Introduction

The International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD) is part of the Swedish development cooperation. ICLD's mission is to promote local democracy in low and middle income countries through supporting municipal partnerships, offering International Training Programmes and organising a Knowledge Centre. ICLD is financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Oxford Research was given the assignment to carry out an evaluation of ICLD's operations during the spring 2015. This chapter presents the assignment, the analytical framework and the approach to the assignment, data collection methods and the outline of the report.

The evaluation has been conducted by a team of evaluators from Oxford Research, with expertise assistance from Gunnar Andersson (Ordbildarna AB) and Allan Gustafsson (Mapsec).

2.1 THE ASSIGNMENT

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess ICLD's organisation and operations based on the OECD/DAC's criteria to be used for evaluating international development cooperation: *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability*.¹ The evaluation concludes with recommendations for strengthening the Swedish development cooperation in the field of local democracy. The recommendations will focus on how ICLD's operations can be developed and how ICLD, as an organisation, can promote such development. The evaluation covers ICLD's operations since its foundation in 2008 until 2015.

Due to the available budget and time limit for the evaluation in relation to the scope of ICLD's operations, the evaluation does not attempt to measure directly the effects or impact of ICLD's activities. Instead the evaluation assesses effects and impact through the perceptions of the respondents and from the information provided in the documentation with the aim to provide relevant observations to guide the future development of ICLD and its activities.

2.1.1 Evaluation questions and disposition

The Terms-of-Reference for the evaluation are focused on five overarching questions. The questions have been organised in a framework of three themes. The three themes have been used to structure the evaluation and the presentation of the report. The questions are however not independent of each other. In designing the data collection, interview guides and questionnaires, various topics have been combined to enable an analysis in which the different themes cross-fertilise each other. The three themes are:

¹ OECD, 2015, DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance.

- **Theme 1** – Municipal Partnership Programme (MPP). This theme focuses on the partnerships between Swedish municipalities and counties and municipalities and counties in Sweden’s development partner countries.
- **Theme 2** – ICLD's operations. This theme focuses on the International Training Programmes (ITP) and the Knowledge Centre (KC) organised by ICLD. The overarching question is how and to what extent these operations have contributed to strengthening local democracy.
- **Theme 3** – ICLD. The last theme focuses on the effectiveness, capacity and synergies of ICLD's organisation and activities.

The three themes are discussed in the three main chapters of the report (chapters 5, 7 and 9). In addition, ICLD’s mission, organisation and activities are presented (chapter 3). The three field studies that have been carried out for the evaluation are presented individually (chapters 4, 6 and 8). The final chapter contains conclusions and recommendations (chapter 10).

2.2 METHOD AND DATA COLLECTION

A combination of document studies, interviews, surveys and field studies have been used to collect data. The OECD/DAC criteria have guided the data collection and the analytical framework.

2.2.1 Document studies and initial exploratory interviews

Document studies have been used for two purposes: firstly, as a basis for reviewing ICLD’s organisation, mission and activities, and secondly, as a basis for assessing the results of projects within MPP.

Initial exploratory interviews have been conducted with key persons of ICLD’s staff and constituents. These interviews have served as a basis for obtaining a detailed picture of ICLD’s organisation, mission and development over time. The exploratory interviews have also been a measure to highlight expectations of the evaluation and perceptions of what important aspects should be taken into consideration. In total eight exploratory interviews have been carried out with:

- The Secretary General
- Four Programme Directors
- The Chair of ICLD’s board
- A Representative of Sida

2.2.2 Surveys and interviews

Two surveys have been used to gather data from project coordinators of the Municipal Partnership Programme (MPP) and from participants in the International Training Programmes (ITP). The survey for the MPP has been sent to all project coordinators – in Sweden as well as in the partner countries – who have been involved in projects since 2009. The ITP survey has been sent to every participant of the ITPs since 2010. Furthermore, complimentary structured interviews have been conducted. The

structured interviews have had a design similar to that of the surveys, and have been used as a supplement to get detailed answers with clarifying explanations and reasoning. The selection of projects and respondents for the structured interviews was done in consultation with the ICLD. In total eight participants and mentors of the ITPs and 13 project coordinator of MPP projects were interviewed. The following table shows the response rates for the surveys.

Table 1. Sample sizes, numbers of responses and response rates for the surveys.

	Sample	Respondents	Frequency
MPP	241	81	34%
ITP	325	114	35%

The next table shows the number of Swedish and non-Swedish respondents in the data collection for the MPP.

Table 2. Number of respondents for MPP.

	Survey	Interview
Swedish	42	8
Non-Swedish	39	5

For gathering qualitative data for the issues related to the Knowledge Centre (KC) semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight respondents in total. Four of them are members of the KC’s Advisory Group, two are researchers who have received research grants from ICLD and two are external researchers and experts in the field of local democracy.

2.2.3 Field studies

Field studies have been carried out to study three municipal partnerships. The field studies have also been used as a measure to conduct interviews with ITP participants and to gather information about their projects of change. The purpose of the field studies is to investigate, analyse and describe detailed examples illustrating how the theory of change of ICLD is implemented in practice. The sampling has been conducted through convenience sampling, identifying objects of study where the effects of the MPP and ITP can be studied simultaneously. The final sample has been selected from a list of suggestions compiled by ICLD. Hence, it is important not to interpret the field studies as typical cases, or of good or best practice. Rather, the field studies add complexity and depth to the evaluation.

The field studies entail interviews with participants on all levels of the projects: target groups, operative personnel, project leaders and local decision makers with a general responsibility for the development of the community. Additional stakeholder interviews have also been included to the extent that it has been possible to arrange.

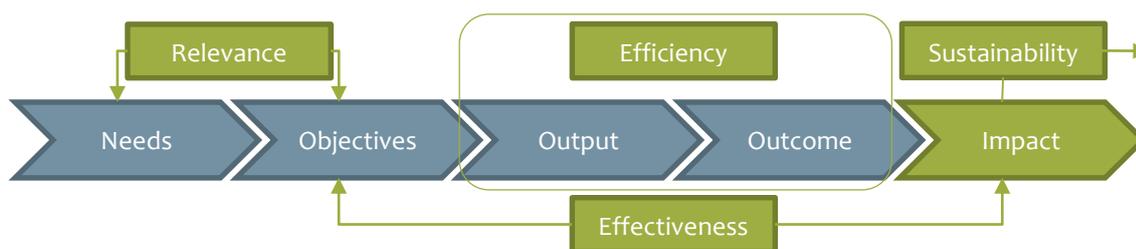
The following partnerships have been studied:

- Kinda, Sweden, and Kimilili, Kenya.
 - 3 interviews in Kinda and 9 interviews in Kimilili.
- Robertsfors, Sweden, and Machakos, Kenya.
 - 3 interviews in Robertsfors and 8 interviews in Machakos.
- Botkyrka, Sweden, and Cair, Macedonia.
 - 2 interviews in Botkyrka and 10 interviews in Cair.

2.3 ANALYSIS

The final results within each theme are analysed based on the OECD/DAC criteria for evaluating international development cooperation: *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact* and *sustainability*.² The following figure and related bullet points present the criteria and how they relate to a development intervention:

Figure 1. Graphic depiction of the OECD/DAC criteria.



- **Relevance:** The extent to which the activity is suited to the needs, priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor.
- **Effectiveness:** The extent to which an activity attains its objectives.
- **Efficiency:** A measure of the inputs in relation to the outputs.
- **Impact:** Positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
- **Sustainability:** The extent to which the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after the project funding has been withdrawn.

The analysis of the last theme involves a synthesis of knowledge from projects and activities with ICLD's organisation and working methods in order to identify possibilities for synergies between projects, education and research. Examples of positive added value and synergies will be highlighted. The analysis of each topic is concluded with related recommendations, while the analysis of the final theme represents a synthesis that takes into account different needs and opportunities of the present and gives recommendations on ICLD's priorities and overall direction.

² OECD, 2015, DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance.

3. About ICLD

The International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD) is a non-profit organisation the purpose of which is to promote local democracy in low and middle-income countries. Financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), ICLD is active in the fields of knowledge development, education and training, and international cooperation between institutions and authorities. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) is the responsible authority and constitutes the board of ICLD together with Region Gotland and Lund University.

3.1 MISSION

ICLD is part of the Swedish international development cooperation. ICLD supports Sida in matters concerning local democracy and autonomy and supports Swedish municipalities and regions in matters regarding international development cooperation.³ ICLD's mission – to promote local democracy in low and middle-income countries – is mainly executed by channelling funds to three core activities:

- Municipal Partnership Programme (MPP)
- International Training Programmes (ITP)
- Knowledge Centre (KC).⁴

ICLD's activities are governed by agreements between the ICLD and Sida, ICLD's byelaws and decisions by its board, and by the three principles for the Swedish development cooperation:^{5 6}

- The government's aid policy framework stipulates the overarching objective for the Swedish development cooperation – to promote opportunities for people living in poverty and under oppression to improve their living conditions.⁷
- Sweden's policy for global development describes how different policy areas and different actors should work together for a positive global development.⁸
- Three thematic areas, decided by the government, for the Swedish development cooperation – 1) democracy and human rights, 2) environment and climate, and 3) gender equality and women's role in development.⁹

³ ICLD, 2014, Stadgar för ICLD.

⁴ ICLD, 2013, Förslag till strategi för Internationellt centrum för lokal demokrati 2013-2015. (See also: ICLD, 2013, ICLD RBM-matris).

⁵ ICLD, 2013, Insatsavtal mellan Sida och ICLD om kärnstöd till ICLDs verksamhet under 2013-2015.

⁶ ICLD, 2013, Förslag till strategi för Internationellt centrum för lokal demokrati 2013-2015.

⁷ Regeringen, 2013, Biståndspolitisk plattform.

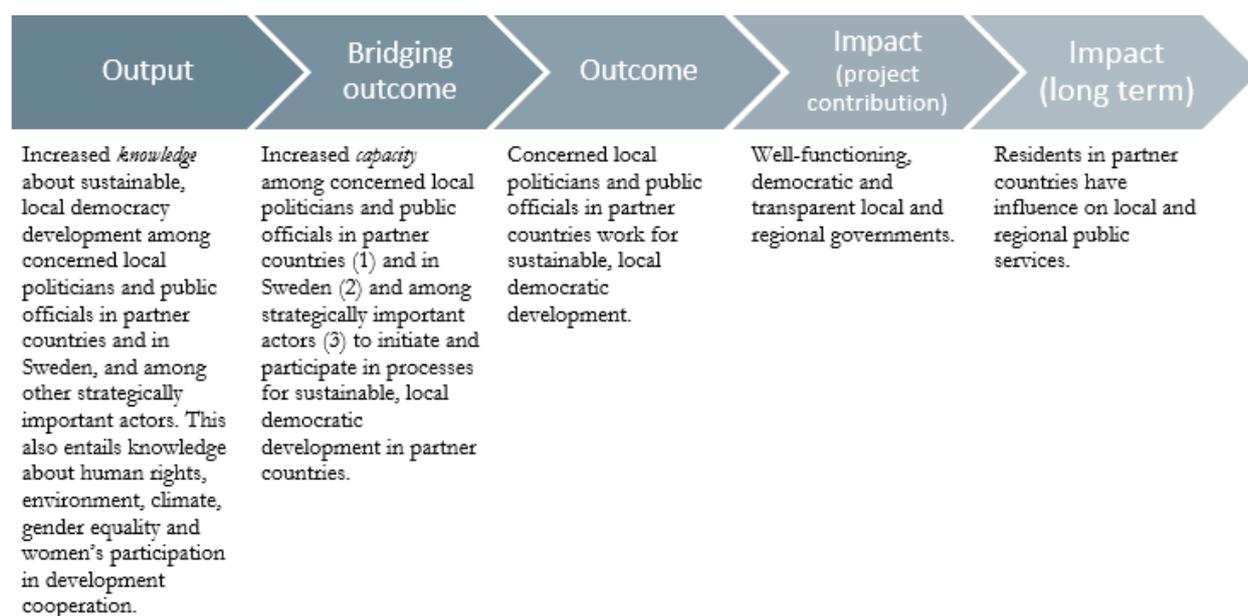
⁸ Regeringen, 2002, Gemensamt ansvar: Sveriges politik för global utveckling.

⁹ Regeringskansliet, 2010, Gemensamt ansvar för global utveckling.

3.1.1 ICLD’s results chain

Since autumn 2011, ICLD has a results oriented approach for its activities using Results-based Management (RBM).¹⁰ RBM is a management strategy and a theory of change which is based on causal links between activities and short and long term results. The strategy of ICLD’s operations for the period 2013-2015 constitutes the basis for its RBM matrix and its annual operation plans for the current time period. The RBM matrix also contains indicators to assess the results of ICLD’s activities.¹¹

Figure 2. ICLD’s results chain, 2013-2015.



3.2 ORGANISATION

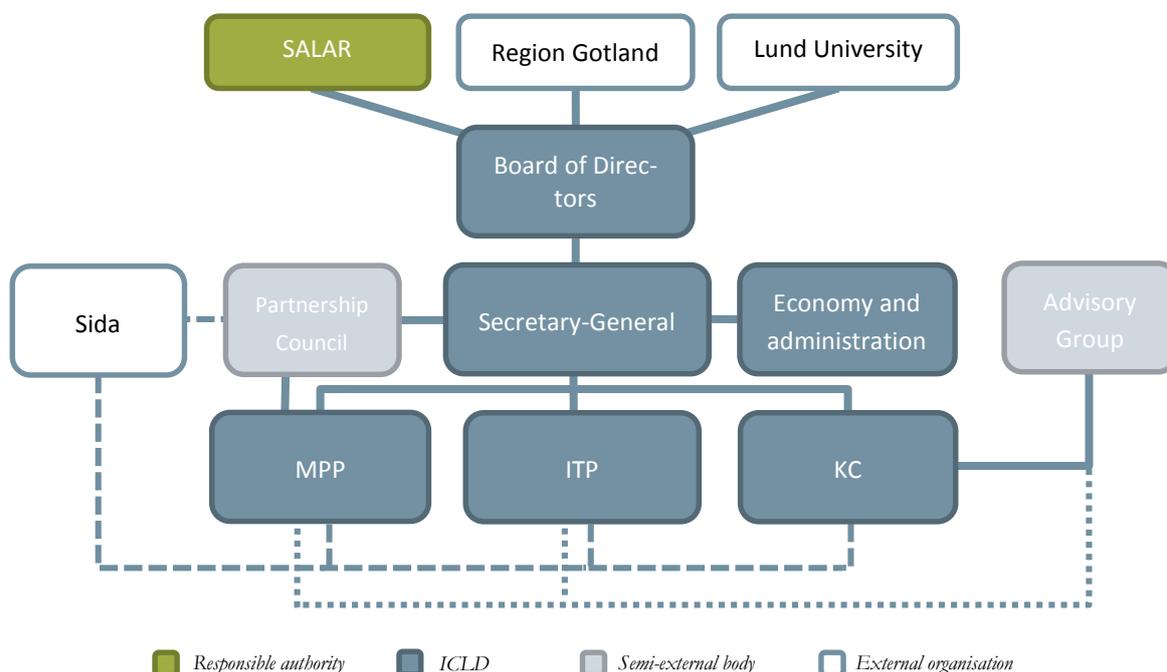
ICLD is situated in Visby on the island of Gotland. ICLD’s Board of Directors consists of two representatives of SALAR, one representative of Region Gotland and one representative of Lund University. SALAR is the principle responsible authority for ICLD.¹² The figure below displays an organisational chart for ICLD.

¹⁰ ICLD, 2012, Annual Report 2011.

¹¹ ICLD, 2013, Förslag till strategi för Internationell centrum för lokal demokrati 2013-2015.

¹² ICLD, 2009, Verksamhetsplan 2009.

Figure 3. ICLD's organisational structure.



ICLD's secretary-general is responsible for the centre's overall, joint functions with the support of a financial/administrative department. The centre is divided into three departments, responsible for the KC, the ITP and the MPP respectively.^{13 14}

There are two semi-external bodies connected to ICLD. The Partnership Council consists of two members from the ICLD and two representatives from SALAR. It submits proposals to Sida regarding partners to be approved for the MPP. The proposals are based on applications from municipalities and regions. Sida makes the final decision on the applications. The Advisory Group consists of national and international researchers and officials of development cooperation. The aim of the Advisory Group is to provide support in assessing the quality and relevance of research projects and programmes and to act as a basis for discussions about the development of ICLD's operations.¹⁵ As of 2015, the Advisory Group consists of nine members.¹⁶

3.2.1 Staff

ICLD presently has 15 employees.¹⁷ The departments of the MPP, the ITP and the KC have one Programme Director each. The other employees at the departments are Programme Officers.¹⁸ ICLD

¹³ ICLD, 2010, Annual Report 2010.

¹⁴ ICLD, 2015, Verksamhetsplan 2015.

¹⁵ ICLD, 2010, Annual Report 2010.

¹⁶ ICLD, 2015, Verksamhetsplan 2015.

¹⁷ ICLD, 2015, <http://www.icld.se/kontaktaoss.pab> (Accessed: 2015-03-30).

¹⁸ The departments of MPP and ITP are headed by the same person. However, during 2015 the person is on leave of absence and is substituted by two person, one person for each department.

has one Secretary-General. The other five staff members work with communication, administration, finance and quality assurance.¹⁹

Table 3. Number of staff posts.

Department	Secretary-General	Economy and administration	MPP	ITP	KC	Total
Number of staff	1	4	4	4	2	15

3.2.2 Funding

ICLD's operations and secretariat are financed by Sida. ICLD received SEK 219 million for the period 2008-2012²⁰ and SEK 195 million for the period 2013-2015²¹. The budget for 2013-2015 is divided on following areas:

Table 4. ICLD's budget 2013-2015 in SEK million (rounded values).²²

Year	Secretariat	MPP	ITP	KC	Total
2013	12	42	5	1	60
2014	12	39	12	2	65
2015	13	39	16	2	70
Total (2013-2015)	37 (19%)	120 (62%)	33 (17%)	5 (3%)	195 (100%)

In addition, ICLD has been granted 20 million SEK extra from Sida to the round of applications during the spring and is likely to be granted another 20 million SEK to the round of applications during the autumn. Furthermore, 2 million SEK has been granted from Sida's bilateral support to Zimbabwe in order to arrange an ITP in Zimbabwe. One person has been hired to manage this project, making 16 the total number of persons employed.

3.3 ACTIVITIES

As mentioned above, ICLD is responsible for three core activities: the MPP, the ITP and the KC. Before ICLD was formally established on 1 January 2009, SALAR's international section and Sida

¹⁹ ICLD, 2015, <http://www.icld.se/eng/contact.pab> (Accessed: 2015-03-31).

²⁰ ICLD, 2010, Avtal mellan Sida och ICLD om stöd till verksamheten under 2008-2012.

²¹ ICLD, 2013, Insatsavtal mellan Sida och ICLD om kärnstöd till ICLDs verksamhet under 2013-2015.

²² ICLD, ICLDs Budget 2013-2015, (OpenAid: <http://www.openaid.se/sv/activity/SE-0-SE-6-7260086101-GGG-15110/>, Accessed: 2015-03-31).

were responsible for the MPP and ITP, respectively. The KC was established by ICLD in autumn 2009.²³

3.3.1 Municipal Partnership Programme (MPP)

The MPP is a cooperation programme between municipalities, regions and county councils in Sweden and in partner countries to promote sustainable development of local democracy. The partnerships are characterised by mutual cooperation and benefit for parties in both countries and may involve projects concerning all municipal and county council areas of responsibility. Between 2009 and 2014, 74 Swedish municipalities, regions and county councils had participated in 193 different projects. Projects concern themes such as waste and water management, social inclusion, tourism, education and entrepreneurship.²⁴

The first step in applying for funding from the MPP is to establish a binding agreement between the parties in Sweden and the partner country for an agreed period of cooperation. The parties are required to establish a steering group composed of elected representatives of the local governing majority, the political opposition and leading public officials from both countries. The steering group's task is to assess project plans, to follow up and to assure the quality of the projects.

The parties may apply for funding for the steering group and for one or several projects of one, two or three years' duration. The parties may also apply for funding to cover costs of preparatory work (inception phase), broadening of established partnerships (development/broadening) and dissemination of information and relevant practice from the partnerships (dissemination). The parties may apply for funding of other types of partnership configurations. These are *three-party cooperation*, which includes cooperation with two foreign parties, one of which is located in a non-eligible partner country, *multi-party cooperation*, which includes several partners in Sweden or in the cooperation country, and *youth democracy*, where eligible parties of the MPP apply for funding through their youth councils for projects aimed at enhancing young people's influence on local democracy.

Applications are submitted in an online application form available on ICLD's webpage. Applications can be submitted between 15 February – 15 March and 15 September – 15 October each year. ICLD administers the applications while the decision on whether the project will be financed or not is made by Sida on the proposal of ICLD. ICLD can also assist parties to contact suitable cooperation parties in partner countries. Eligible countries for the MPP are Sweden's partner countries for development cooperation.^{25 26}

3.3.2 International Training Programme (ITP)

The objective of the ITPs is to strengthen local governments and civil society in low and middle-income countries. The ITPs are based on a series of lectures, study visits, workshops and close inter-

²³ ICLD, 2012, Annual Report 2011.

²⁴ ICLD's database ÅRA (Accessed 2015-04-09).

²⁵ Eligible countries for the MPP as of 2014, are: Europe: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine and Belarus; Asia: India, Indonesia, China and Vietnam; Africa: Botswana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

²⁶ ICLD, 2012, Riktlinjer för programmet Kommunalt Partnerskap.

action between participants, their organisations and mentors. Also, the participants should work actively with individual projects for change during the training period. The ITPs are organised over a period of 12 to 24 months and take place partly in Sweden and partly in the partner countries. There are around 25 participants in each ITP.

To participate in an ITP, organisations have to nominate key actors of the organisations, for example politicians, public officials or NGO-members.²⁷ The applications are submitted to ICLD that selects the participants. Firstly, the applicant organisation is assessed in terms of its relevance, stability and competence. Secondly, the plans of projects for change are reviewed together with the applicant's potentials.²⁸

ICLD has been responsible for the development, administration and implementation of four ITPs during the period 2008-2012 and 2013-2015, respectively.²⁹ The content of the programmes is suggested by the ICLD in the annual operation plans and is approved by Sida.³⁰ Sida decides the eligible countries for each ITP.³¹ The four programmes during 2013-2015 are:

- Local Political Leaders: Capacitating Women in Politics
- Local Democracy and Social Sustainability with a Gender Perspective
- Sustainable Development and Local Democracy through the Symbiocity Approach³²
- Towards Local Democracy and Local Development through Local Government³³

3.3.3 Knowledge Centre (KC)

The KC initiates and supports research, knowledge and competence sharing between researchers and practitioners on local democracy, local autonomy and local governance. The Advisory Group, consisting of Scandinavian and international researchers in the fields of local governance and local democracy, reviews research proposals submitted to the KC for financial support.³⁴ ³⁵ Decision of approval of financial support is taken by Sida.³⁶ ICLD supported seven research projects during 2010-2011 and four projects during 2013-2014.³⁷

²⁷ Sida, 2014, Riktlinjer för Sidas internationella utbildningsprogram.

²⁸ ICLD, 2011, Selection criteria – Organizations and individuals.

²⁹ Initially, ICLD procured ITPs from external actors. Starting out three programmes were arranged in this way. This was then cut back to one programme and lately to none.

³⁰ ICLD, 2010, Avtal mellan Sida och ICLD om stöd till verksamheten under 2008-2012.

³¹ Sida, 2014, Riktlinjer för Sidas internationella utbildningsprogram.

³² Organised in association with SKL International.

³³ Organised in association with UNCDF.

³⁴ ICLD, Guiding principles for ICLD research funding.

³⁵ ICLD, Criteria for selection of members of the ICLD Advisory Group.

³⁶ ICLD, 2013, Insatsavtal mellan Sida och ICLD om kärnstöd till ICLDs verksamhet under 2013-2015.

³⁷ ICLD, 2015, webpage. Available: <http://www.icld.se/eng/research.pab> (Accessed 2015-04-09).

4. Partnership Kinda – Kimilili

“Before, Kimilili was dark. Now, there are streetlights.” (Street vendor in Kimilili).

When looking into the partnership between Kinda and Kimilili, it is hard to miss the solar street lights that were set up in the first project in the partnership, a project focused on sustainable urban planning. When the delegation from Kimilili visited Kinda, they were specifically inspired by two things, the street lights and the waste management. Both these things were therefore prioritised in Kimilili when the delegation came back. However, Kimilili is a small town in Western Kenya, near the border to



Uganda. It has very little resources. Therefore, Kinda assisted financially in setting up the solar street lamps. When one is visiting Kimilili and inquiring about the partnership, the solar street lamps are emphasised by everyone.

The four street lamps are strategically placed in the town. Two are standing at Kinda-Kimilili Garden on the main street near where the matatus leave to Bungoma and other nearby towns, and where women sell grilled maize and other goods, one is placed outside the hospital and one at Gustafs Children’s Home. After sunset, they provide oases of light in an otherwise dark town. According to people in town, they have made Kimilili safer. For the women who sell goods on the side of the street, their business hours have been made significantly longer, resulting in a corresponding increase in income. One street vendor we spoke to, says that the income has tripled compared to before the street lights

“With the solar lamps, I am able to make enough income to sustain my family” (female street vendor, 39 years old).

It is undeniable that the solar lamps have had a significant development effect, but not an obvious local democracy impact. The subcounty administration has applied for and received government funds to build a further 50 solar street lamps over a period of 5

years. It is furthermore something that everyone spoken to in Kimilili mention as the biggest result of the partnership.

4.1 ACTIVITIES

Given that the MPP focuses on capacity building, and only finances learning sharing activities, the fact that the street light is emphasised to this degree is worth noting. Kimilili is a small town with very limited resources and very dire needs. It has been difficult for the administration to benefit from the

exchange with Kinda. This was especially the case early in the partnership, when the expectations on what the partnership would contribute with were somewhat unrealistic, together with limited capacity in Kimilili's local administration. This partly changed due to two factors: first, the partnership coordinator, the project leader and the mayor all participated in ICLD's ITP. Secondly, the new Kenyan constitution moved the local decision making mandate from the municipality level to the county level. Both these things contributed to raise the capacity in Kimilili. This, in combination with an increased understanding of what the partnership could contribute to, led to better preconditions for Kimilili to be able to benefit from the capacity building aspects of the partnership.

Currently, the partnership has one ongoing project focusing on youth democracy. Youths from both countries have participated in the delegation trips along with leading administrators and politicians. In Kimilili, this has led to a focus on a youth house in Kimilili, to activate the large groups of youth who have a lot of capabilities, but little room to make use of their capabilities. The house has only just begun its operation (it had the first meeting the same week as Oxford Research visited Kimilili). The idea is that it should be a house where the youths can meet and engage in different activities, and that it should be an inclusive place built on democratic principles, much like the youth house "Kåken" in Kisa. The county government has allocated a house in Kimilili for this purpose. It remains to be seen whether this house will turn out to be useful to meet the challenges for youths in Kimilili, but it is beyond doubt that Kimilili has been inspired by Kinda.

Kinda has to a certain degree also been inspired by Kimilili, but in a less concrete way. The youths in Kinda were inspired by the micro financing instruments available for youths in Kimilili, and have started a similar function in Kinda. The civil servants in Kinda, as well as leading politicians, mostly highlight personal development for the ones involved, the professional development of leading an international partnership, as well as increased understanding for cultural differences, which has become increasingly important as Kinda receives migrants from various places around the world.

The partnership has old roots. Organisations in Kinda has cooperated with Kimilili, and especially the Mount Elgon area, since the 1980s. This has led to a high degree of understanding of the local context in Kimilili. It has also contributed to a high degree of trust between the partners in the partnership.

The contribution from ITP has, according to the interviewed participants, been undeniable. Kimilili has had three participants in ITP. Alice Wafula and Gerry Nyongesa participated in a training programme focused on sustainable urban planning. This was a topic not directly related to their daily work, as Gerry Nyongesa is a teacher and Alice Wafula is a social officer, nowadays employed by the county. However, since they were both heavily involved in the partnership with Kinda which was focused on urban planning, they have had much use of the training. They have also continued to work with environmental topics and urban planning in different projects. More than knowledge about urban planning, they have benefitted heavily from skills in project leadership, and about heaving an inclusive approach in decision making. As a teacher, Gerry has also used the learning methods applied in ITP in his daily work. Gerry Nyongesa thinks that participating in ITP has been extremely helpful, and he only wishes that he had participated earlier, so that the partnership would have benefitted even more.

The former mayor and now member of the county assembly Ms. Florence F. Wekesa has also participated in an international training programme, focused on women as leaders in politics. Florence states

that learning about empowerment of women, and how to empower other women, were the most important results of the training programme. Florence has now initiated self-help groups for women with different empowering activities, such as handicraft workshops. It has also helped her personally in her work as mayor and now in her work as member of the county assembly (MCA). She has had extensive and very constructive contact with her mentor in Sweden. All in all, it has strengthened her as a women in the leadership.

4.2 IMPACT

The most concrete result of the partnership is the investment in street lights, widely cherished by all respondents in Kimilili. It has contributed to a better income for business women operating on the streets, as well as improved safety during the evening and nights in Kimilili. It will now be significantly scaled up through joint efforts between the county and the national government. The impact of the first partnership projects were a much greater awareness about the importance of clean and tidy common spaces. This inspired Kimilili to purchase a tractor for waste management, and campaigns in school have informed about how to keep the town clean. The respondents in Kimilili state that the participation of civil servants and a politician in ITP has contributed to capacity building, which in turn has had indirect effect on local democracy and participation in decision making.

The partnership has faced some difficulties and challenges along the way. Unrealistic expectations (on financing) from the Kenyan side. According to respondents in both Kimilili and Kinda, people involved from Kimilili had very high expectations on the partnership. This was most particularly true in the initiating phases of the partnership. Politicians and other expected potential personal benefits as well as financial investments in municipal service in Kimilili. This was to some degree met by the investments in the solar street lamps, which might have contributed to sustained expectations, which might have negative consequences for the partnership if leading decision makers feel let down by the partnership. However, from a development perspective, the solar street lights were a very appropriate investment.

Varying degree of support from politicians on the Kinda side. The support from politicians in Kinda has varied along with shifts in ruling coalitions in Kinda, according to the project leader and the coordinator. This has led to an unstable partnership environment. This is not uncommon for the municipal partnerships financed by ICLD, as they often run over several years, sometimes decades. In the Kinda case, it has led to a feeling of uncertainty for the involved persons regarding how much they are able to prioritise the partnership.

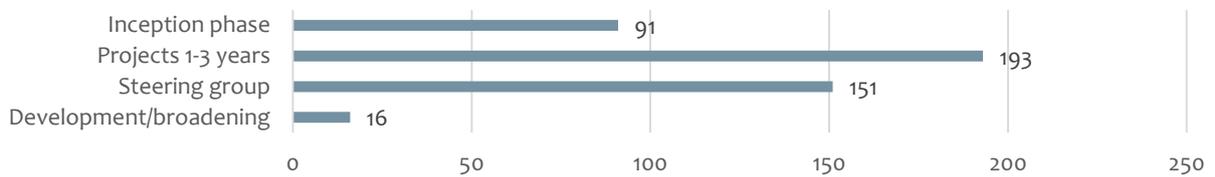
Kimilili has limited resources and capabilities to make use of the partnership, which was hindering the project results especially in the early phases of the partnership. This was to some degree countered by the participation of two civil servants and one politician in ITP, as well as the transfer of mandate from the municipality level (Kimilili) to the county level (Bungoma county). The engagement from the county level has been impressive, illustrated for example by the deputy governor of Bungoma county participating in the delegation trip to Kinda in the spring of 2015. Despite these improvements, Kimilili has very acute needs, which may make it more difficult to benefit from learning sharing activities when compared with for example Machakos.

5. Theme 1: Municipal Partner Programme (MPP)

5.1 PROJECT AND PARTNERSHIP PORTFOLIO

MPP funds partnerships between municipalities. In a single partnership, there can be several different projects ongoing. For example, one partnership can consist of one steering committee, with several projects that the steering committee is handling. The steering committee usually consists of leading politicians and civil servants from both partners. Below, the number of approved projects are found

Figure 4. Number of approved projects.



Looking specifically at the projects lasting 1-3 years (from now on called projects), the project may have different focus areas. In the figure below, all projects are categorised according to their focus areas. The municipalities may also apply for funds to develop or wide an existing project or for communication and dissemination about the partnership. The figures below are based on data from ICLD’s database of MPP for the years 2009-2014.

Figure 5. Number of projects per project type.

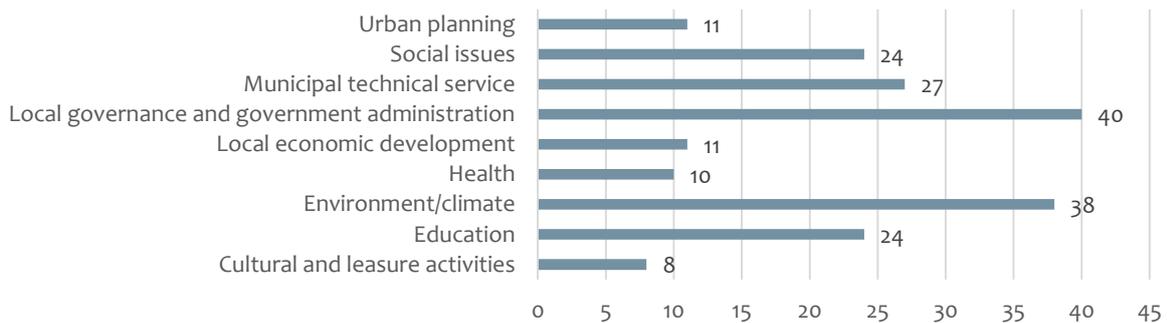
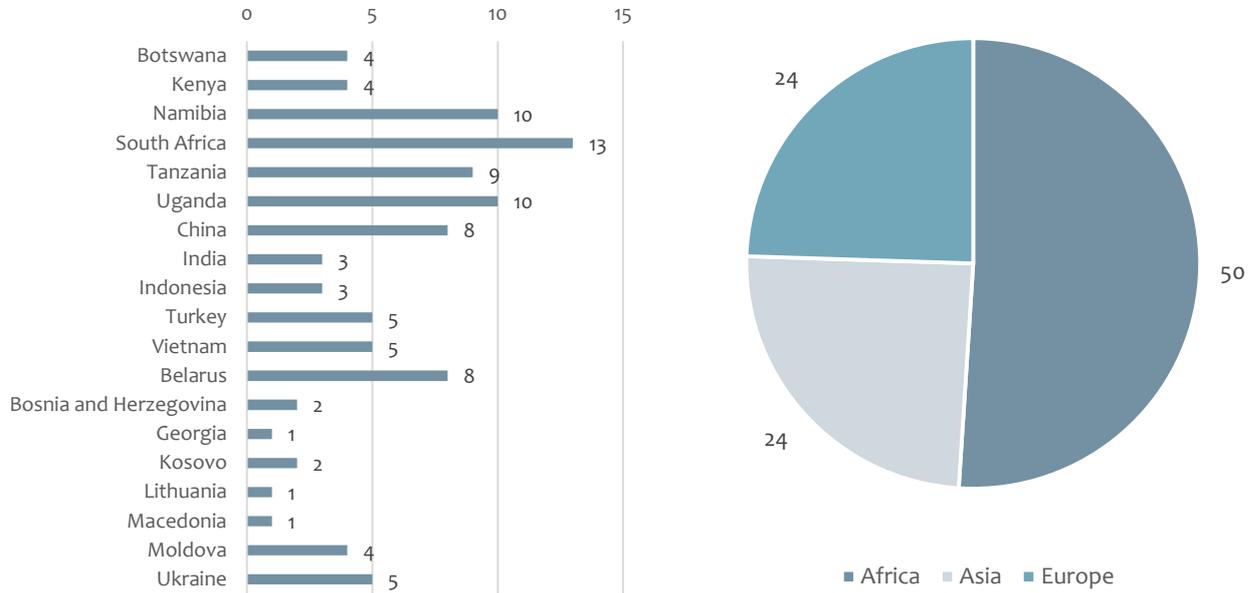
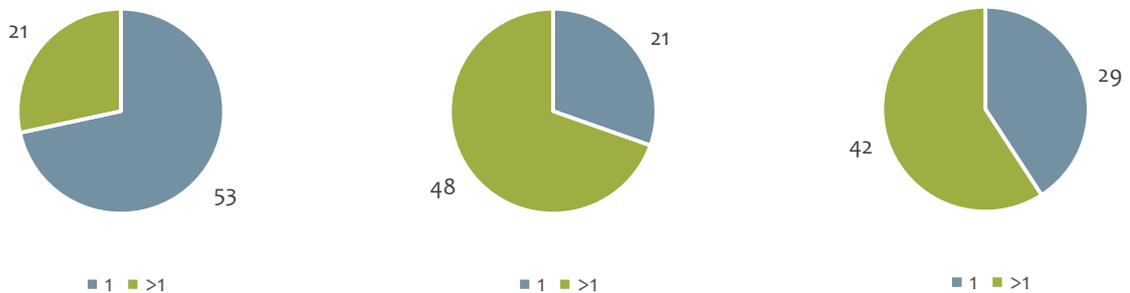


Figure 6. Number of partnerships per country*. The partnership in Lithuania is a three-party cooperation. Figure 7. Partnerships per continent.



The figures above show the geographical spread of partnerships. It shows that partnerships with an African partner is most common, and South Africa is the most common country. One partnership can consist of many projects, and one municipality may be engaged in several municipalities. The figure below to the left shows that most municipalities are only engaged in one partnership. Since a partnership can last for many years, and a steering committee project is granted for no more than 3 years, there can be many steering committee projects following each other in a single partnership. The figures below show that most Swedish partners have been involved in more than one project, and most of the municipalities have also been involved in several steering committee projects.

Figure 8. a) (left) Number of Swedish organisations with more than one partnership, b) (middle) number of Swedish organisations with more than one project of 1-3 years, c) (right) number of Swedish organisations with more than one steering group.



5.2 DOES MPP CONTRIBUTE TO LOCAL DEMOCRACY?

The overarching goal of MPP is to contribute to local democracy and increased participation in decision making. To assess relevance, efficiency and impact of ICLD, this evaluation looks into how the MPP is succeeding with reaching this goal. According to the result framework set up for MPP, it contributes to local democracy through improved methods in the municipalities, regarding transparency, equality etc. (see 5.3.1 below). First however, we look into how ICLD contribute to local democracy through improved local service, improved potential of participation in decision making, and how all this may contribute to a long term impact. The entire discussion is based on the observation that improved capacity, both individual and institutional, is the core of MPP outcomes.

The improved knowledge and capacity is often the most evident and straightforward result of the projects within the partnerships. All the municipalities interviewed state that the project has contributed to increased knowledge about local democracy, women's role in development, environment and climate or for instance young persons' ability to participate in the decision making. Of course, the knowledge gained differs from project to project and is very dependent on the focus area of the specific project. However, it is more difficult to see a clear improvement in the capacity in the institutions as such rather than the individuals who have participated. Most often, the projects are focused on the concrete goal, for instance better capacity regarding transmittable diseases. That means that the objectives regarding improved capacity regarding local democracy, participation, women's role etc. are not as prioritised.

In the Swedish municipalities, the respondents often state that the partnership has been vital to improve the understanding for cultural differences also within the municipality. The respondents also state that this improved intercultural understanding among the municipal civil servants has become more important along with a higher share of inhabitants born abroad. The MPP is intended to have reciprocal benefits, and the Swedish municipalities most often point out for example improved intercultural knowledge and understanding, the chance to see their own municipal service with foreign eyes and finally, as a way to increase the employees' competence in general.

5.2.1 Improved local service

The partnership programme has a bottom-up approach, which means that the municipalities have a large degree of freedom to focus the projects on things that they think are important. Often, this means that the local service is in focus in the project. This implies that the projects often result in concrete changes among the involved municipalities. In the survey, over half of the municipalities (including Swedish municipalities) state that they have made changes in the municipal service as a result of the partnership. In most cases, these changes are most evident in the partner country.

One of the most common change undertaken by the municipality in the partner country is to improve the waste management process. Study trips to waste management functions are often included in delegation trips to Sweden. One such example is the municipality of Da Nang in Vietnam, who stated the following in the survey:

Waste related service is the public service that affect the life of the whole community. In the partnership between Borås and Da Nang in waste management project, the local government has constantly changed its policy decision making towards encouraging and engaging its citizens in this process. During the planning of waste management, the local authorities have taken survey and studies about the current waste management situation. This is to understand various aspects related directly the livelihood of the local people, including: waste collection time (what time is most suitable for each citizen community), waste collection methods, the locations to build transit stations that do not pollute the community area, the cost/ benefit analysis of waste recycling to be the basis for the education and behavior change among local people, the market for recycled materials,... As these areas have interrelation with different stakeholders and a majority of the population, feedback and proposals from local people are essential in formulating and executing policies.

The effects on local service is however in no way exclusive to the partner municipalities. Also in Sweden, the partnership may lead to concrete changes being done. For instance, Sundsvall states that

Sundsvall also realized that "waste" to us is not the same as waste for people in other countries. As we have a lot of people in the municipality coming from different countries and cultures, we have started to educate "ambassadors" within different groups of inhabitants, to make sure our information about waste management is presented in a way that is understandable regardless of where you come from.

In one of the field studies conducted, in Machakos, the respondents emphasised that they were very eager to participate in the partnership, because they needed to improve the local service. The municipality was aware that the competence and capacity among the employees were poor, and therefore, they had a strong interest in participating in a capacity building programme. Machakos is just one example indicating that the local partners' main interest is improved local service.

In the survey, a number of respondents wish for a more flexible financing approach, allowing for direct investments also in physical facilities that benefit municipal services. This is however not the intention of the partnership, and a change in the policy is unlikely. The interviews indicate that the Swedish partners often have to emphasise repeatedly that the focus of the MPP is capacity building and knowledge exchange. If financial investments have to be done, the partner or partners have to find other external funds for this end. Such external funding is not at all uncommon. Most of the respondents we have interviewed state that external funds have been mobilised to some extent. The MPP can thereby act as a catalyst for investments in local service. The solar lamps in Kimilili is one such example.

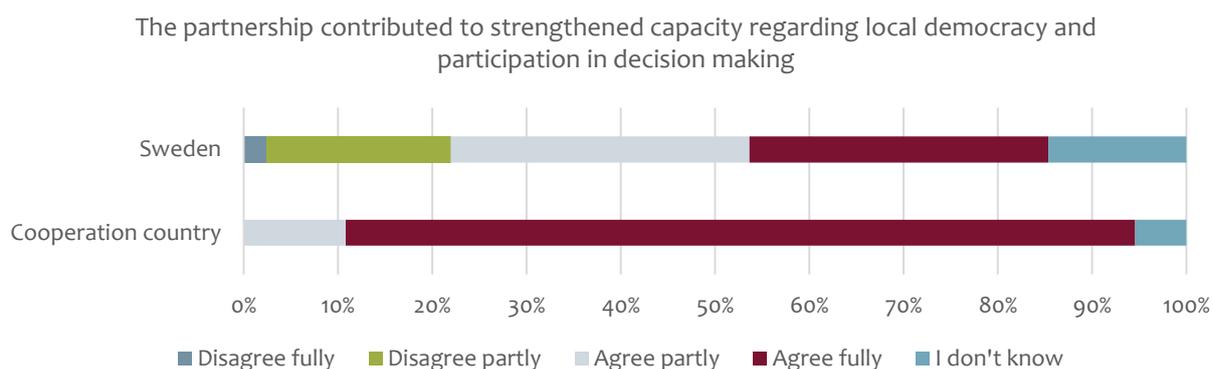
ICLD has discussed quite thoroughly whether improved municipal service in the local partner municipality is likely to contribute to the long term impact that ICLD wants to see, i.e. improved local democracy. The partnership council has discussed the value of improved local service as part of the assessment process. It is also thoroughly discussed in the aggregated IQA report from 2014. The IQA report states that improved local service is the most evident result of the partnerships. Hence, the report discusses whether the improved municipal service contributes to local democracy in the longer run. ICLD argues that improved service delivery leads to increased trust for leading politicians.

This discussion is relevant since many projects focus specifically on improved local service. But it is based on assumptions of a cause-effect chain that could be verified empirically in general terms, but perhaps not always in the specific cases of the MPPs.

5.2.2 Improved potential for participation in decision-making

Local community participation is a fundamental aspect of a functional local democracy. Many of the projects also addresses this aspect. As seen in the figure below, the partnership coordinators do believe that the partnership contributed to “strengthened capacity regarding local democracy and participation in decision making”. All respondents were asked to fill in improvements in their own municipality, rather than in the partnership as a whole. This is likely the reason that answers differ greatly between the Swedish respondents and the respondents in the cooperation country. No less than 84 % of the respondents in the partner country agree fully with the statement, 11 % agree partly and the rest do not know. The Swedish respondents are less prone to agree fully, although very few disagree with the statement. This indicates that the capacity building regarding local democracy and participation does come as a result of the partnership, but mainly in the partner country.

Figure 9: The respondents were given instructions to “Please choose the response that agrees with your opinion of the partnership. 1 – I completely disagree with the statement, 4 – I fully agree with the statement:”

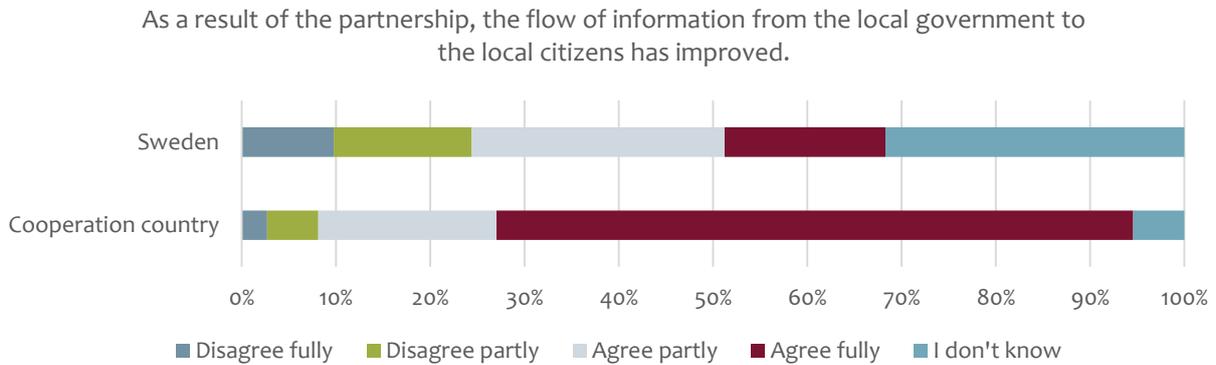


The survey respondents were also asked to comment on how the participation was facilitated. The following quote illustrates how participation can be improved through a technical platform for exchange of views:

The project of school exchanges and residents dialogue between Jinan and Vasteras will provide a platform for students to interact with companies and residents to interact with government departments. Their opinions, female or male, old or young, will be heard and taken into consideration in decision making process. Besides, climate change and environment problems, the concern of residents, will be the priority of both government and companies. (Quote from survey)

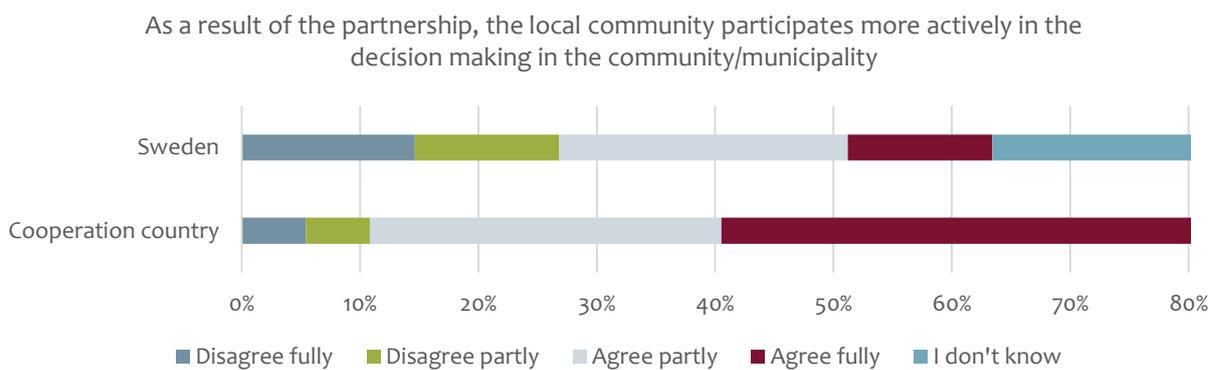
It is also interesting to check the following figure in this context. A considerably large share of the survey respondents state that the flow of information has improved as a result of the partnership. Also here, it differs greatly between Swedish and local respondents.

Figure 10: The respondents were given instructions to "Please choose the response that agrees with your opinion of the partnership. 1 – I completely disagree with the statement, 4 – I fully agree with the statement:"



Many of the Swedish respondents state that they do not know. The Swedish respondents are asked to fill in the situation for the Swedish municipality, and it is clear that the partnerships often are a very small part of the municipal activities in Sweden. Therefore, it is more difficult to trace any effect in Sweden. It is also unrealistic to expect these kind of concrete results of the partnership in both partner municipalities.

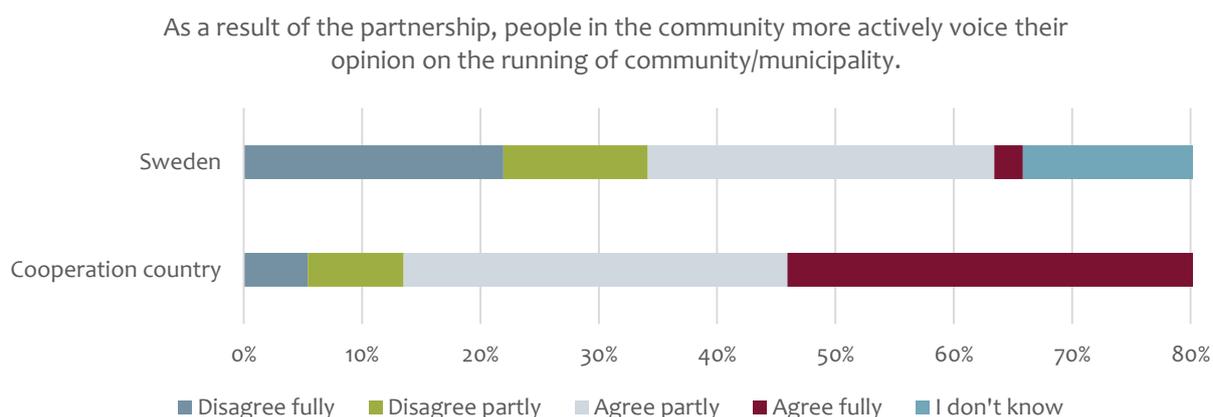
Figure 11: The respondents were given instructions to "Please choose the response that agrees with your opinion of the partnership. 1 – I completely disagree with the statement, 4 – I fully agree with the statement:"



The respondents were also asked whether the local community actually do participate more actively (figure above) and whether the local community makes their voices heard more often (figure below). These questions refer to results of the partnership on the longer term, and it is an indication of impact rather than outcome. It has been more difficult for the respondents to fill in, a larger share has answered that they do not know. Swedish respondents are again more sceptical about these effects, 32

% disagree, partly or fully, that the local community participates more actively in their municipality, and 44 % disagree concerning if the local community is making their voices heard. All these questions refer to their own municipality, and it is not surprising that the effects are seen in the partner country.

Figure 12: The respondents were given instructions to "Please choose the response that agrees with your opinion of the partnership. 1 – I completely disagree with the statement, 4 – I fully agree with the statement:"



Participation is often part of the core objective of the projects aimed at youth. In the field studies, the participating youth have gained an understanding about the political process and about their rights and obligations as citizens. Furthermore, the youth directly involved in the projects state very strongly that they have gained confidence as a result of participation in the partnership, which will enable them to take part more actively in the local democracy. This goes for both partner countries and the Swedish municipalities. In Robertsfors for example, a young woman has submitted a petition as a result of participating in the project about youth for democracy.

To sum up, the MPP is likely to contribute to increased participation, but it is difficult to pinpoint how big this effect is and for how long it is sustained.

5.2.3 Enabling long term impact

This evaluation has not had the possibility to try to pinpoint the long term impact of MPP. It is likely that such an impact is impossible to trace, given that the partnerships are a rather limited input to the partner country and the development of local democracy that may or may not take place. However, this evaluation looks into whether ICLD create conditions that enable a long term impact of the MPP. This is a discussion that very much relates to the discussion about result based management below.

Impact through a programme like MPP is likely to arise if the partnerships contribute to individual and institutional capacity development, which leads to strengthened local democracy. The programme as a whole does create suitable conditions for such capacity development. When looking into the partnerships, there are a number of favourable conditions that will contribute to more lasting impacts:

- Partnerships with a strong sense of mutual benefits for both partners are likely to be more successful. To have a partnership, it takes two more or less equal partners. This requires the Swedish partner to assess what their benefit from the partnership is. Many municipalities have seen effects in capacity development among their staff, for example the developed skill in leading international cooperation projects. Many municipalities also state that an increased insight into other cultures is beneficial. However, some municipalities have stated all kinds of inspirations from their partners, regarding how to work with very limited resources, how to reuse waste, how to increase participation in decision making etc. The mutual benefits increase the chances that the partners look upon each other as equals. If the partnership is formed with win-win in mind, both partners benefit.
- The field visits as well as other interviews with partners have shown that the degree of anchorage in the partner organisations often differ widely. ICLD recommends the partners to involve both opposition and the ruling party into the steering committee. This has also been the case in the Swedish municipality. However, this strategy has not always been implemented in the cooperation country. This may risk the legitimacy of the programme. For example, in one of the visited Kenyan counties, leading politicians have stated that there simply exists no opposition. The partnerships that are able to include opposition also in the partner country is likely to enable better conditions for long term impact. One problem that arises in some of the municipal partnerships which have been interviewed is that the engagement in the cooperation projects decreases when either of the municipalities changes political leadership. This has been pointed out as a challenge in several of the municipalities. After a change in leadership, the project leader in the municipality often notices, either implicitly or explicitly, that the cooperation is now less prioritised.
- There are indications that the competence of the project leaders and coordinators in the partnerships differ substantially. This is not surprising, since most Swedish municipalities often has no or very limited experience of international cooperation projects. ICLD tries to combat this lack of competence through project leader courses that are tailor made for persons involved in the MPP. The course include for example LFA, global decentralisation trends, municipalities' role in alleviation and much more. This is a very important work to increase the quality as well as the status of MPP in Swedish municipalities. However, the information about these training programmes had not reached all project leaders and coordinators, so it is important to include this information in the information packages which go out to the municipalities both after approval and rejection of applications. ICLD should consider to broaden the target group of participants in those courses, to open a course also for municipalities who are considering to participate in the MPP.

5.3 DEVELOPMENT OF MPP OVER TIME

The respondents interviewed, both from ICLD's partners and the municipalities, state that there has been a continuous development of ICLD's management of MPPs over time. Below, some areas in which this development has taken place is particularly looked in to.

5.3.1 Development of the results framework

ICLD has had an organisation-wide results framework since 2012, and to complement this the MPP has developed its own results matrix

The overall goal for MPP is:

- MPP shall, in the countries where it is active, contribute to:
 - Strengthening local democracy
 - Improving the environment
 - Increasing equality
 - Increasing the respect for human rights
 - Increasing Swedish municipalities', county councils' and regions' internationalisation

ICLD agrees that this goal is on a level where it is difficult, if not impossible, to attribute the specific contribution of the partnership programme to long term impact in a specific country. Thus, no indicators are connected to the overall goal. The bridging objective, called programme goal, says that local and regional organisations in MPPs target countries should meet the needs of citizens to a better extent, within those areas where MPPs has been active.

Below the programme goal, five different dimensions of local democracy development are included in specific objectives, each with connected indicators and potential sources for data to verify the indicators:

- Improved methods for information to and dialogue with the citizens within the municipality,
- Improved methods to take different groups in the society into account,
- Improved methods for strengthened transparency and accountability,
- Improved methods for municipal services which meet the demands of the citizens, and,
- Improved methods to ensure representativity in political assemblies.

In addition there is one specific objective regarding the development within the Swedish partner:

- Improved capacity in Swedish municipalities regarding result based management and international cooperation.

It stands clear that ICLD, and especially the MPP, has put in a lot of effort and worked systematically over the past years to develop its results framework and how it is utilised. Among many encouraging developments the Internal Quality Assessment method has been adopted to help ICLD to follow up on results. The organisation has also updated application forms and other materials to promote results based management. This work has also had an effect on how annual reports are written and structured, moving from more activity based reporting to, starting from the annual report of 2013, having more focus on results linked to clearly defined target groups.

Still, results based management of the MPPs brings its specific challenges as attribution of partnership projects to longer term results beyond output and ‘bringing outcome’ level – usually relating to development of different capacities – is difficult, especially as ICLD is not directly responsible for managing project towards results, but has to rely on its agents in the form of Swedish municipalities and their local government partners.

Furthermore, it is not immediately clear how the results framework of MPP relates to, and feeds into, the overall results framework of ICLD. This should be a challenge shared by the organisation as a whole, i.e. how can results from the three types of activities be aggregated and related to the results framework of ICLD as a whole, to serve as a conducive tool for result based management.

5.3.2 The assessment process

ICLD has since its establishment worked continuously to develop the assessment procedure. In the early days of ICLD, there were three different calls for applications. It was quickly reduced to two, which seems sufficient. ICLD has developed an electronic system for applications, where both the Swedish partner and the partner in the cooperation country can work simultaneously. This electronic system has reduced the administration involved in the assessment process. The electronic tool is open one month before closure of the application period. Partners interviewed have been satisfied with the help and support given by ICLD during the application period. It is fairly easy for the applicants to get issues clarified from ICLD.

After deadline of the applications, the officials at ICLD draw lots about which applications which official shall assess. The officials thereafter assess the applications after a set of specified assessment criteria which are there to ensure consistence with the guidelines for ICLD and other steering documents. Thereafter, all staff involved in MPP gather to discuss all applications, to ensure that the assessment is not dependent on one individual.

Then, the applications and the assessment done by the staff are sent to the partnership council. The partnership council is made up of the General Secretary, plus one additional person who should have a good insight in both ITP and the Knowledge Centre. SALAR also participates with one person from the international unit, as well as one person from SKL International. The MPP staff has selected a number of applications to discuss in particular, but the council looks into all applications. After this, all applications are recommended either for approval or rejection. A written justification is also attached to each application. Then, applications and relevant material are sent to Sida, which circulates information about the applications to the relevant embassies. Finally, Sida meets with ICLD to discuss questions concerning applications, and then Sida takes the final decision. In the meantime, ICLD has prepared their communication to all the applicants.

Usually, there is a good number of applications to the partnership programme. ICLD has worked consistently through different fora to attract new partners. This has had good effect; there are often many more applications than what can, in the end, be approved. However, this does not automatically imply a true competition between applications where the best ones are selected. Usually, a rather high number of applications are not entirely relevant for the MPP. This could be because they have a

suboptimal approach towards the partnership or that they cooperate with the wrong type of actors, or another reason which makes it fairly easy for ICLD to reject them. Therefore, it may be that all applications that reach the requirements of sufficient quality are approved. The MPP would probably benefit from more and better competitiveness between applications, where only the best ones are selected. This has been the case in individual rounds of applications, but it is far from always the case. Therefore, ICLD should continue to strive for a large number of competitive applications.

The assessment process is rigid, and it ensures that a number of essential points are addressed:

- The applications are thoroughly discussed and worked through by all officials at ICLD working with MPP. Thereby, the assessment procedure and conclusion should not differ depending on the responsible official.
- Through the partnership council, the assessment process involve persons with an insight in ITP and KC, which should lead to synergies between the three areas of activity. The partnership council also ensures that the assessment process involves external opinions, experiences and reflections.
- The application is usually written in English and ICLD tries to ensure that also the local partner is involved in the application process. However, we have encountered cases where the application has been written in Swedish. The local partner's engagement already in the application process is likely to be important for the success of the partnership. Therefore, ICLD should further encourage that the local partner is involved.
- The Swedish embassies are included and are thereby also informed about the partnerships which will be active in the country.

The assessment procedure has developed over time. ICLD works continuously to improve the application form, the communication and feedback to applicants, the synergies to other parts of ICLD etc. ICLD also strives to reach new partners. According to the interviewed municipalities, there have been a professionalisation over time at ICLD regarding the partnership programme. ICLD also sees a professionalisation among the applicants, and that the applications are better for each round. This indicates that both the municipalities and ICLD are developing thanks to a continuous dialogue.

5.3.3 ICLD's support to partners in MPP

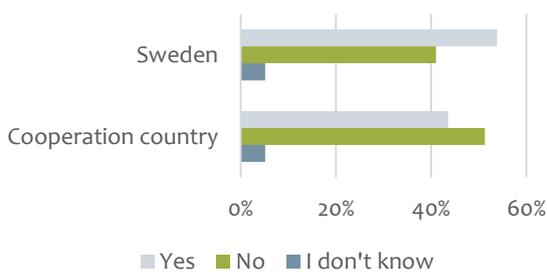
One important task for ICLD is to support the municipalities before, during and after the project. For instance, ICLD arranges training courses in project management and logical framework approach (LFA), which has been appreciated by the municipalities interviewed for this evaluation. As illustrated by the visited partnerships, the competence and qualities of the project leaders and the coordinators are of outmost importance for the success of the partnerships. The partnerships' contribution to the goals of ICLD is therefore facilitated by qualified project leaders. Courses in LFA for the Swedish project leaders should therefore improve both the efficiency and the effectiveness of MPP over time. More than just a course in the logical framework approach, the respondents also state that the courses are a chance for the project leaders to exchange ideas and experience between each other, which is at least as important.

“The knowledge that is very useful is Logical Framework Approach (LFA) for project management.” (quote from the survey)

To further encourage knowledge sharing between the involved parties, ICLD also arranges meetings between Swedish municipalities involved in partnerships in the same country, for instance Kenya. Also these meetings have been highly appreciated. The meetings between the Swedish municipalities enable the participants to discuss common challenges, but also provide an opportunity for looking at the partnership from a more strategic perspective. It happens that municipalities arrange these kind of meetings on their own initiative, which further indicates that it helps the municipalities in their work with the partnerships.

In the survey directed to all coordinators of the steering committees of the partnerships, we asked about to what extent they had been in contact with ICLD to increase their capacity regarding local democracy and participation in decision making. Around half of the respondents had been in contact with ICLD. It is more common for the Swedish municipalities to be in contact with ICLD regarding these issues

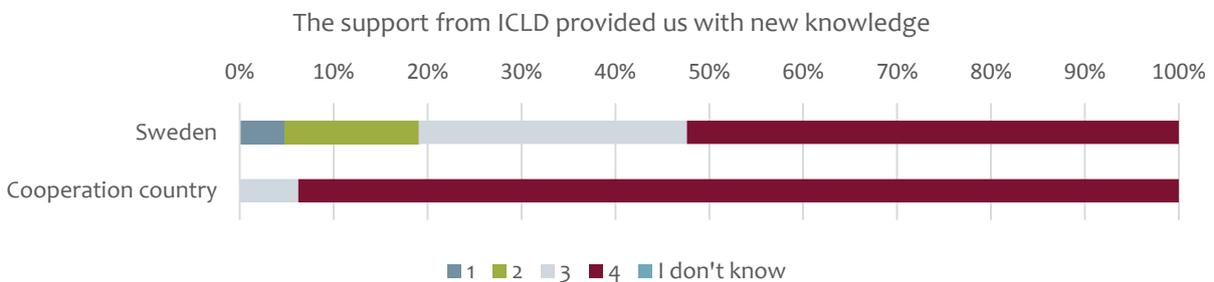
Figure 13. Have you been in contact with ICLD to increase your capacity to work with local democracy and public participation in decision-making?



The coordinators who answered yes on that question were asked to what extent they agreed with four different statements, illustrated in the figure below. It shows that a large majority found that the support provided by ICLD gave them new knowledge. The respondents in the cooperation countries are more positive about the new knowledge provided by ICLD. This is somewhat surprising given that ICLD mainly is in contact with the Swedish partner. However, the respondents in the cooperation countries are in general more

positive regarding the partnerships. It can also be assumed that the cooperation countries have a larger need for knowledge regarding local democracy, and therefore assess the support from ICLD more positively.

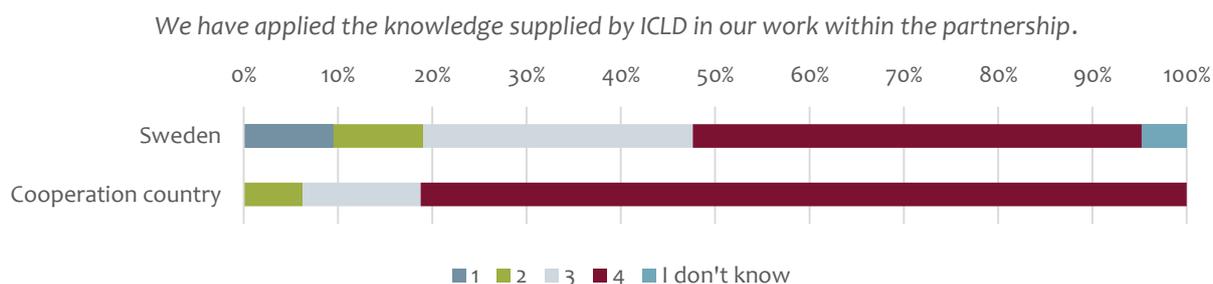
Figure 14. The respondents were given instructions to “Please choose the response that agrees with your opinion of the partnership. 1 – I completely disagree with the statement, 4 – I fully agree with the statement.”



An almost as big majority states that they have been able to apply that knowledge in their work with

the partnership. This indicates that ICLD is well on track in its support to the municipalities, since the partners who seek support from ICLD get it and are able to use it in their work. However, it is worth noting that a big part of all the respondents have not been in contact with ICLD for guidance in local democracy or participation issues. It is worth for ICLD to consider an even more proactive approach, to ensure that the partners who engage in municipal partnerships do not stay passive in their development of local democracy and participation in decision making.

Figure 15. The respondents were given instructions to "Please choose the response that agrees with your opinion of the partnership. 1 – I completely disagree with the statement, 4 – I fully agree with the statement."



The survey also investigated whether respondents have used ICLD material in their partnership and if they have sought information from other sources as well. Much fewer respondents made a clear statement on these questions and it is therefore difficult to draw any clear conclusions based on them. However, fewer partnership seem to use ICLD material directly and few use ICLD as a way to get other kind of information regarding local democracy.

5.3.4 Involvement of Swedish embassies

In the evaluation of MPP made in 2010, one of the recommendations was to include the embassies to a larger extent in the programme. This has been done during the past years. As mentioned above, the embassies are included in the assessment process. When Sida make its decision, it usually consults the embassies. It has also happened two times during the last five years that MPP becomes available in new countries, (Mozambique and Zambia). In order to make the contextual analysis and to mobilise local municipalities, the embassies have been heavily involved. Furthermore, the partnerships do involve the embassies in their activities from time to time. This is usually not made through ICLD, even though ICLD often is informed about such activities. ICLD has also used the embassies to arrange network meetings in the cooperation countries, where municipalities can meet and exchange ideas between them. Those kind of network meetings have usually only been arranged in Sweden, but ICLD, together with the resident Sida mission, is now testing it in the cooperation countries.

6. Partnership Botkyrka – Čair

The Municipality of Čair makes up a good portion of central Skopje, Macedonia, on the north side of the river Vardar. It is one of the minority of municipalities in Macedonia with a majority of ethnic Albanians. Minority populations include ethnic Bosnians, Macedonians, Roma, Serbs and Turks. During the years 2010-2013 two partner projects were completed by Čair and Botkyrka municipality in south Stockholm, Sweden. Botkyrka municipality is very diverse with more than a hundred languages spoken within the population.

The partnership builds on several years of relations between culture workers in Sweden and in the region prior to its inception. The initial contact was established between the circus company Cirkus Cirkör based in Botkyrka and the Children's Theatre Centre in Čair in 1999, when Cirkus Cirkör visited the region to perform for refugees from the conflict in Kosovo. Through networks such as Intercultural Cities (ICC), the exchange expanded to the municipal governments, politicians and officials meeting for the first time in 2005. The idea of joint projects grew out of a mutual interest in aesthetic tools for intercultural understanding among children and youth. After receiving initial funding from the Swedish Institute, Čair and Botkyrka first applied for a partnership project in 2010.



Figure 16. A work produced by Drin Shaqiri, one of the children who participated in the project *The Place with Many Faces* in Čair. The work depicts buildings in the Old Bazaar area dwarfed by statues built the last few years.

6.1 ACTIVITIES

The two projects revolve around using aesthetic tools for promoting democratic participation and intercultural understanding among children and youth. The first project was called *Democracy through Theatre* and entailed sharing knowledge and experience in the use of aesthetic tools. The second project was called *The Place with Many Faces* and focused specifically on needs and opinions of children and youth in the context of urban planning. Skills and knowledge were taught through joint and separate workshops, practicing different aesthetic tools, and study visits.

The partnership has faced some significant challenges since its inception. Initially, the Children's Theatre Centre was to be included in the partnership but declined to participate when they did not receive the funding they expected from the municipality. With the support from ICLD, partners were able to reorganise the project and instead include the school that then became a significant partner in the partnership. Other than this, the project has not faced any major unexpected obstacles. Rather, the challenges to the partnership pertain to institutionalising the partnership's results, for Čair, to funding the implementation, and to the sustainability of the cooperation between

the partners. The culture department in Botkyrka considers the cooperation within the partnership to be concluded with the completion of the second project while the participants from Čair would appreciate further exchange.

These kinds of projects bring us closer to Europe, which is very much in line with aims and priorities of the Municipality of Čair. – Tenta Agai Demjaha, partnership coordinator in Čair

Deliverables within the projects have been, among other things, exhibitions and printed material. The coordinators for Botkyrka point to a report that summarises the tools used for involving children and youths in dialogue within the context of urban planning. They also point to how participation in the project provided a much needed external perspective on their work and strengthened the capacity of the participating officials. In Čair, participants highlight improved relations between children and youths within the two main ethnic groups. As a result of the project, the children constituting the main beneficiaries in the schools participating in the project started mixing and spending time outside school hours. Another result is that teachers and municipal officials and politicians became aware that children are able to form and express opinions on the municipality's operations. One of the main objectives of the first project, and an important rationale for the partnership, was establishing a Youth Council in Čair inspired by that in Botkyrka. This has not yet been realised but the ambition is still alive with the interviewees in Čair.

6.2 IMPACTS

The intended impact was to be achieved through institutionalising results of the projects, for example through a Youth Council in Čair and a joint forum for the Youth Council and urban planning department in Botkyrka. Such institutional changes have yet to take place, although the municipality of Čair is currently negotiating to take over the operations of the Children's Theatre Centre in order to create a municipal youth culture centre. In Botkyrka, the culture department is also continuing their efforts to include children in urban planning processes. Notwithstanding the end result of these processes, there are several indications that the partnership has functioned within a context where it has contributed to the participation and integration of children and youth.

The two main ethnic groups in Macedonia are segregated, geographically and in socio-economic terms, and there has been tension between them. Segregation based on language is institutionalised in the educational system. There is a model³⁸ for integrated schooling based on a principle of bilingualism applied in a few schools throughout the country, one of them the Rajko Zinzifov/Ismail Qemali school that was one of the schools participating in the projects. Both partners testify that there has been a real transfer of skills and methods using aesthetic tools to promote integration. One specific example of how this result continues to impact the municipality is an on-going project applying aesthetic techniques to promote integration and advocate for the integrated schooling model in two schools in Čair and two schools in the neighbouring municipality of Karpoš, where children speaking Macedonian respectively Albanian as primary language study in different shifts. The project is funded by the City of Skopje and run as a project-for-change within the framework of artist, art pedagogue,

³⁸ Nansen model for integrated education. <http://www.nmie.org/index.php/en/nansen-model/about-the-nansen-model>

and NGO activist Shqipe Mehmeti's participation in ICLD's international training programme for Eastern Europe.

Several, similar processes, sustained by the involvement of NGO's, have been detailed by the interviewees in Macedonia. This includes a project for raising awareness and promoting integration of people with disabilities, set in motion by one participant's experiences in Sweden. The project is also supported through participation in an upcoming international training programme focusing on human rights. Another example is how local NGO's employ the results of the second project through exercising their new understanding of the right to participate in detailed urban planning. However, since results are not institutionalised, long term impact is dependent on continued support from the political leaders. The municipality of Čair has been headed by the same mayor, Izet Mexhiti, since before the partnership. According to the interviewees in Čair, his commitment to the issues in focus for the cooperation have been instrumental for the continued efforts. Hence, a shift of leadership may jeopardise continued application of the results of the partnership.

7. Theme 2: ICLD's operations

ICLD organises and administers international training programmes and a Knowledge Centre function. Formally, Sida decides on awarding research funds. For the rest ICLD enjoys considerable independence. Accordingly, there are significant instances of coordination and synergy between the two functions, if not always formally instituted.

Overall, the evaluation of ICLD's own operations is positive. The participants' appreciation of the training programmes is significant. Likewise, interviewees comment that ICLD's Knowledge Centre is unique and has performed in line with what can be expected. The main potential for improvements is found in supporting the ITP participants' capacity for implementing changes, in consolidating the Knowledge Centre, and in further exploiting potential synergies between the different units.

7.1 ITP EVALUATION

The overall results of the survey and interviews with ITP participants are highly positive. Participants are very satisfied with their experience and rate the performance of the training programmes highly. Interpreting the positive results it is important to be aware that for many of the participants, a training programme is a unique experience, and they are often grateful for the opportunity given to them. However, the results from the interviews suggest that the participants may express criticism and still agree with a positively worded statement. Since respondents generally agree (3 or 4) rather than disagree (1 or 2) with statements, we focus the presentation on the variations between agreeing somewhat and agreeing completely with a statement.

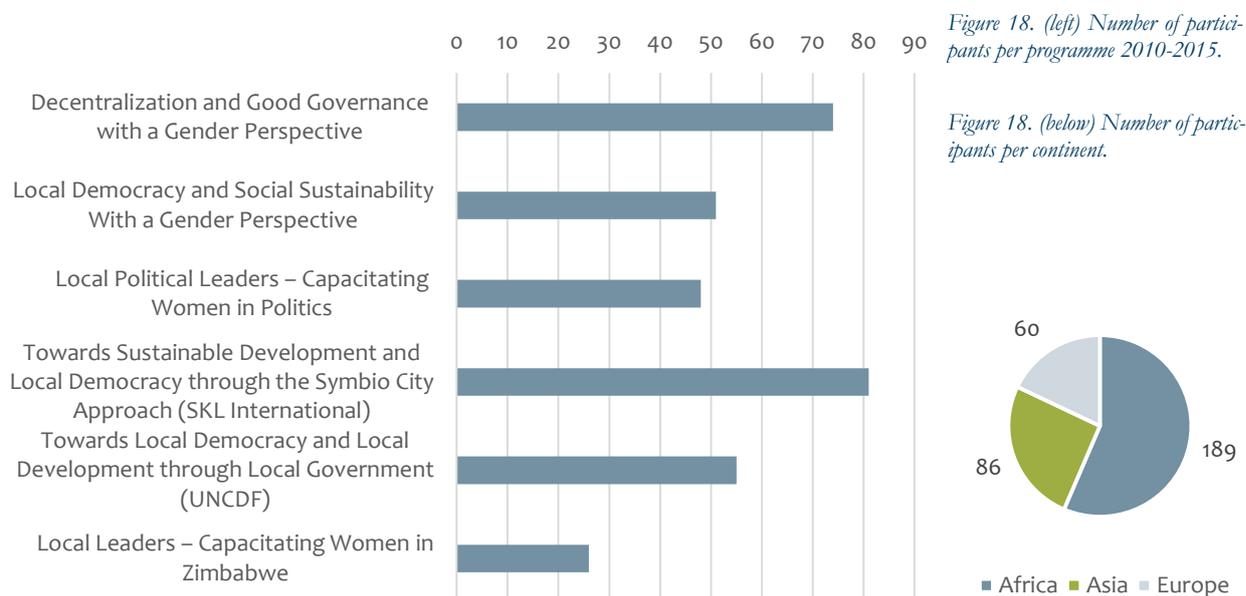
Breaking down the results of the survey is not justified since different groups of respondents are too small for resulting differences to be statistically significant. However, a general comment can be made as regards a break down into two main groups depending on the type of programme, that is, whether arranged for political leaders or for government officials.³⁹ The group of politicians is almost without exception more positive than the mean respondent. However, the deviations follow a very similar pattern to the pattern of mean responses, which suggests that it may mirror that the political leaders are generally more positive, for some reason, rather than that the one type of programme being consistently of higher quality. The difference is not explained by the qualitative data from comments and interviews since the selection is small and does not focus on this specific topic.

³⁹ The programme arranged for political leaders is *Local Political Leaders: Capacitating Women in Politics*. The special assignment to arrange an ITP in Zimbabwe is as well aimed at political leaders.

7.1.1 Set-up and overview of ITP

The ITP unit organises international training programmes of four different types, as detailed in the introduction to the report. Each training programme lasts for 18 months. It consists of an inception workshop, a three week phase in Sweden with lectures and study visits, a regional workshop one year into the programme, and a final workshop. After the programme ends, ICLD monitors participants for another year. During the time of the programme, participants pursue a project-for-change, or work on a strategic issue, which is accounted for during the final workshop. Each participant is also supported by a mentor with regional and or academic expertise, throughout the programme.

The distribution of participants between the different programmes is displayed in the figure below. The results are presented and discussed jointly for all training programmes arranged by ICLD.



ICLD monitors the quality and progress of each cycle of a training programme by sending surveys to the participants. Each phase of the programme is followed by a survey, some of which are designed by ICLD, some by Sida. In the surveys, the participants rate each element of the training with respect to the extent to which it contributed to the objectives of the programme. Sida’s surveys are distributed later in the programme, also after it is finished, and consist of statements similar to the ones used in this evaluation.

The information from the surveys is a comprehensive record of the participants’ views of the training. As such, it can be used to monitor the quality and progress of the training. Presumably, to be of significant use for developing ICLD’s activities, this type of data needs to be supplemented by additional qualitative information, for example from interviews, as is done in this evaluation. However, it is not clear that such comprehensive extent of the surveying is necessary for either purpose.

7.1.2 Selection of participants for ITP

The current guidelines for selecting participants to ITP date back to early 2011.⁴⁰ The guidelines for selecting participants are clear and detailed, without being too extensive. They consist of the following three steps:

1. Assessment of the relevance of organisations
2. Assessment of project proposals
3. Assessment of the change potential of organisations

The first and third steps are designed for assessing civil society organisations. Since ICLD focuses on local governments and administrations, this raises the question whether the guidelines could be more suitably adjusted to ICLD's framework. In practice, the second step, assessing the project proposals, is the main criterion, since the other two are not adjusted for assessing municipalities or other public organisations. The assessment of project proposals focus on their theory of change. In addition to this criterion, ICLD has, in practice, added a language criterion to ensure that participants are sufficiently skilled in English. This decision was made after arranging a cycle of the training programme with the help of interpreters, leading to the conclusion that too much of the interaction between participants and with the mentor was lost in such a set-up.

In effect, the first and third criteria, have for public authorities been replaced by an assessment of the backing of the participant and of the project for change from the home authority. This entails checking that the work is budgeted and included in the authority's operative plan. In addition, a superior must commit to participating in inception and final workshops, as well as monitor the participant's progress. There is no indication that the selection of participants is inadequate, neither in the processes nor in the final composition of the group. However, the guidelines should be updated to mirror the actual practices, to promote transparency and continuity.

7.1.3 ITP's efficiency and results

Efficiency relates to the use of input resources in producing intended outputs and outcomes. Efficiency, outputs, as well as outcomes are highly rated by the participants. Potential for improvement and minor corrections can be traced by comparing how the level of complete agreement with the statements vary.

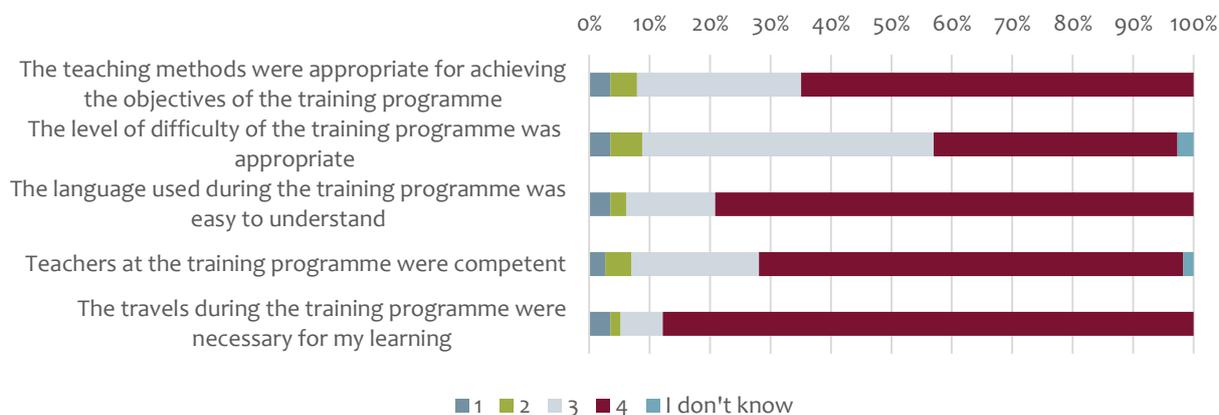
7.1.3.1 Efficiency in the setup and organisation of ITPs

One section of the survey was dedicated to the efficiency of the activities during a training programme. Some of the most positive results of the whole survey is found within this section. Especially, the travels during the training programme are regarded as essential for the learning process. Less positive results relate to the difficulty of the training programme. From comments and interviews we relate this to work load and requests for more support in translating experiences to the home environment.

⁴⁰ ICLD (2011). Selection criteria - organizations and individuals. ICLD advanced international training programmes (ITP)

For the survey results, see the figure below.

Figure 19. The respondents were given instructions to "Please choose the response that agrees with your opinion of the training programme. 1 – I completely disagree with the statement, 4 – I fully agree with the statement."



Interviews suggest that the respondents interpret “travels” to refer specifically to the Swedish phase. This part of the training programme is what has made the deepest impression on the interviewees and they frequently relate to the Swedish phase synonymously with the programme as a whole. The formal teaching is mainly conducted during the Swedish phase, which is one reason why it is essential for learning. Nevertheless, interviewees also emphasise how study visits and live examples from Sweden put their home environment in perspective, acting as a catalyst for new ideas.

On the other end of the spectrum, though still with a highly positive assessment of the training programmes’ performance, is the level of difficulty of the training. The statement about the difficulty being appropriate is one of few statements in the survey that less than half of respondents agree completely with. As is indicated by the next statement, language is not a major complication. In addition, comments and interviews indicate that rather than the material being too advanced, participants request additional applied – ‘hands on’ – elements, and examples that are more clearly related to their national or regional context. This interpretation is mirrored by the assessment of teaching methods as well as assessments of statements about practical abilities to apply the knowledge gained in the programme, which are presented in the section on results below. Another point that is raised is that some additional time might be needed to process the large amount of material presented during the Swedish phase. That would indicate that difficulties are not related as much to the content as to the rate at which it is delivered and how it is assimilated during the visit to Sweden.

Interviews and comments from the survey respondents show that there are different levels of satisfaction regarding mentors. While some respondents have a good overall experience of the mentorship, comments are raised which stress a desire for more extensive contact, continued support after the programme ends and better insight into regionally specific contexts. Following quotes highlight these wishes and provide recommendations for improvements:

Resource persons would need to be enlisted from the groups' respective countries of origin, to the extent possible, to allow participants to relate quickly with their countries' level of development and also to view the training programmes as being more relevant to participants' countries of origin and then, of course, compare and contrast with other various environments.

There are also requests for support for follow-up meetings to share experience and discuss progress after the end of the programme:

It is hard to make our project sustainable when there is no follow up. When the training phase ended there were no follow ups except for the final evaluation. The excitement and the moral of the project risk to die out. There need to be more connection, in terms of how your project evolves and to reconnect with the other participants. There should be national, international or inter-council peer-reviews of the projects to see if you accomplish what you wanted to accomplish.

7.1.3.2 Output of the ITPs

The primary results of a measure are called outputs. As regards the international training programme, output should be that participants have increased knowledge and skills, and are more invested in promoting local democratic processes. The participants' assessments are in line with these aim, the least positive assessment relating to applying theory in practice, see the figure below for survey results.

Figure 20. The respondents were given instructions to "Please choose the response that agrees with your opinion of the training programme. 1 – I completely disagree with the statement, 4 – I fully agree with the statement."



The assessment of the outcome of the training is highly positive. Around nine out of ten respondents tend to agree, rather than disagree, with the statements. There is an interesting discrepancy between the results for the last two statements, both relating to how knowledge is translated into practice. While participants agree to a very high degree that the training programme provides practical examples of local development projects, they do not agree as highly to having been taught how to apply theory in practice. This echoes arguments to put examples and experience in a regional or developing country context. Being that we have already established that the Swedish phase is one of the main values of

the training, the result suggests that increased focus on contextualising and processing practical experiences, in a regional or developing country context, may contribute to the outcome of the training programmes. One interviewee stated that:

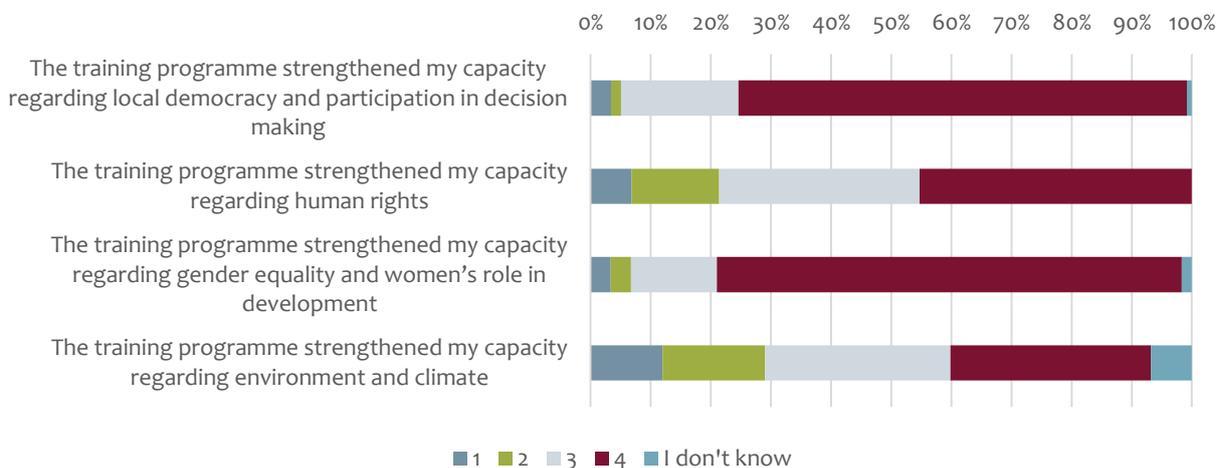
The training should also include more case studies in developing countries where the democracy and local governance are still evolving or fragile.

Several interviewees and survey respondents, especially from African countries, express that they have acquired knowledge and skills of project planning which have been rewarding and useful for managing projects both within and outside of the training programme. Some interviewees even state that they have used their project planning skills for personal projects. Another recurring aspect among the respondents is that the training programme has contributed to increased self-confidence in their professional lives.

7.1.3.3 Outcomes of the ITPs

The outcome of the training programmes can be viewed from different perspectives. On the one hand, we have asked about strengthened capacity within the areas in focus for ICLD’s operations, results displayed in the figure below. On the other hand, there are the ways in which the participants apply their experiences in their work, see the following figure. In general, results are positive, especially regarding ICLD’s core areas of expertise. One significant positive side-effect seems to be the establishment of domestic networks for support and knowledge sharing.

Figure 21. The respondents were given instructions to “Please choose the response that agrees with your opinion of the training programme. 1 – I completely disagree with the statement, 4 – I fully agree with the statement.”

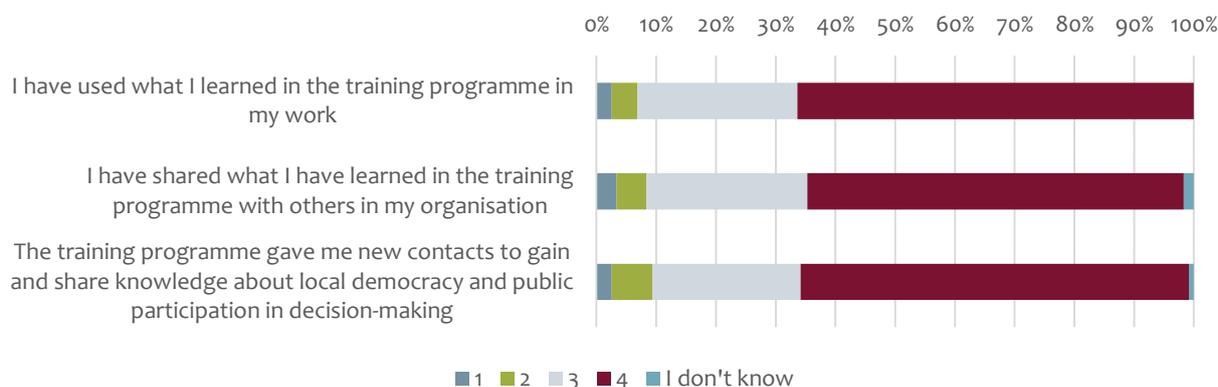


Assessments as regards capacity building within the knowledge areas in focus for ICLD’s activities are very positive. A large majority of respondents completely agree that the training programmes have strengthened their capacity within local democracy and participation in decision making. Results are also very positive for the area of gender equality, distinctly standing out from more modest, though

still positive, results for the other knowledge areas in focus: human rights, and environment and climate. This discrepancy is mirrored by the fact that several of the training programmes focus on gender aspects, through a gender perspective on local government or by design limiting participation to female political leaders. Several of the interviewees connected to the Knowledge Centre also recognise that ICLD successfully has addressed local democracy specifically from a gender equality perspective. Some of the respondents to the survey disagree with the statement about environment and climate saying that their programme did not focus on such aspects. However, breaking down the answers for the different programmes suggests that gender equality is better integrated across programmes, which may indicate a successful mainstreaming of this issue.

The programme is deemed to have had an impact on the participants’ work in the ways indicated in the graph below.

Figure 22. The respondents were given instructions to "Please choose the response that agrees with your opinion of the training programme. 1 – I completely disagree with the statement, 4 – I fully agree with the statement."



Nine out of ten respondents agree with the statements that they have applied their new knowledge and skills in their work and that they have shared this knowledge with colleagues. Interviewees express these outcomes for example as increased ability to advocate for changes, as increased capacity to provide necessary services, to be able to constructively deal with criticism and opposing views and to gauge the views of the population through citizen surveys and the involvement of representatives from NGO’s and special interest groups.

Nearly nine out of ten respondents judge that they have increased their professional network that allow them to gain and share knowledge. Several of the interviewees argue that the training programme gave them valuable contacts, mainly domestic, which have been important for their work and professional career. For example, one interviewee states that:

The ITP provides, not only concepts and tools about local democracy, but connection with government officials from the same country. We became very good partners after the training. It is an outstanding results from the ITP.

However, as previously mentioned, there are requests for enhanced contact with ICLD and participants after the training programme is completed:

It seems that after the fourth phase, contact between participants and ICLD (including the mentors) is minimum or none. It would be useful if there is a platform that could ensure this contact.

7.1.4 ITP’s effectiveness and impact

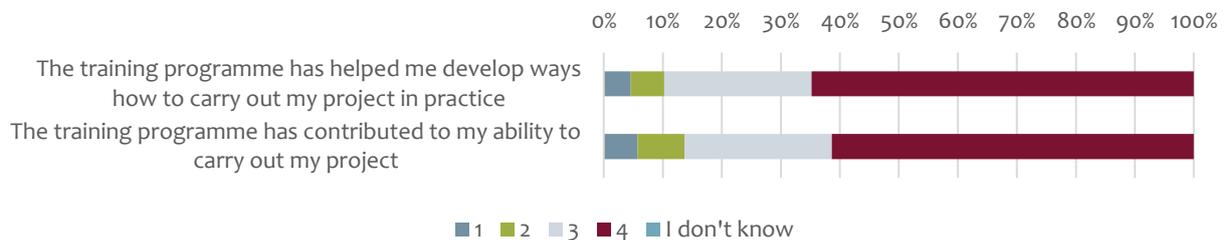
Ultimately, the training programme is intended to impact on the influence of the local population on decision-making and lead to corresponding adjustments of the local democracy and services offered. Some of the examples mentioned in the text above indicate such institutional changes taking place as a result of increased knowledge and skills. However, participants also run projects-for-change, or in the case of the local leadership programmes, work with personal strategic issues. Especially the projects-for-change are intended to lead directly to institutional changes.

There are a few clear examples of institutional changes attributed to the projects-for-change and participation in the training programme. Although, while a majority of the respondents and interviewees report that their projects have led to changes, most examples are of behavioural changes, especially concerning the participants themselves. Hence, there is little evidence that the training programmes are effective in achieving intended impacts in terms of institutional changes. This said, it is important to note that achieving direct institutional impacts through a training programme is an ambitious objective. Viewing the projects-for-change as a part of the learning process, there is significant evidence that training programmes are effective in achieving impacts in the form of behavioural change.

7.1.4.1 Projects for change

The introductory questions about the project-for-change relate to how the training programme contributed to the participants’ projects. Respondents agree strongly with these statements, see the figure below.

Figure 23. The respondents were given instructions to “Please choose the response that agrees with your opinion of the training programme. 1 – I completely disagree with the statement, 4 – I fully agree with the statement.”

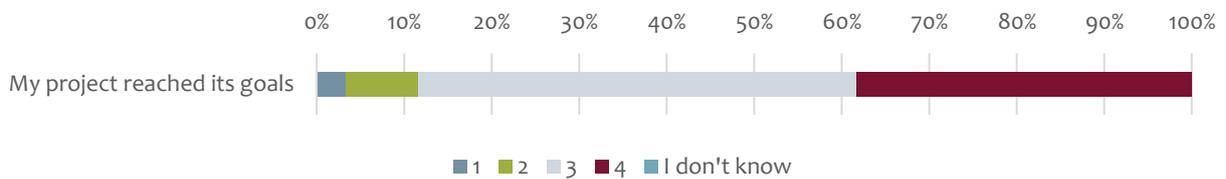


On the one hand, the statements relate to methods for implementing the project, and on the other hand to skill development to be able to complete the project. Assessments for both dimensions are similarly positive. While several of the comments mention that the training contributed with methods for implementation that improved the project, there are also requests for more support from the

training programme in seeing the project through. This echoes calls for a more extensive engagement from mentors as related in the section on set-up and organisation of ITP above. Interviewees clarify that some of the most rewarding results of the training for the projects is to learn to clearly develop the project concept and, from that, identify the concrete goals for it. One respondent describes it in terms of learning to apply the logical framework approach.

Two out of three respondents confirm that they have completed their projects for change. Of these, nine out of ten state that their project to some degree reached its goals, see figure below.

Figure 24. The respondents were given instructions to "Please choose the response that agrees with your opinion of the training programme. 1 – I completely disagree with the statement, 4 – I fully agree with the statement."



The proportion of respondents that agree completely with the statement is less than half, making it one of the least positive results of the survey. Comments on this statement are dominated by references to insufficient funds as a reason why they have been unable to implement the project in full. Some of the comments relate how the project has not been prioritised by the home organisation. A few respondents suggest that ICLD could provide some financial support for implementation of projects. Of the participants that state that their project is not finished, a few explain that the project is still in progress, or is stalled due to bureaucracy at local or national levels. The interviews give further context to how participants see their projects. A few interviewees describe how their project was a part of on-going efforts, for example to increase the proportion of women in politics and decision making. From this perspective, progress can be slow, and difficult to attribute to the project specifically. In line with the comments about project concepts above, it may also be a signal that projects have not been sufficiently delimited and concrete to be measured against expected impacts.

In the survey, respondents have stated the topic for their project. Two out of three respondents report that their projects have led to at least some of the intended changes, see the figure to the right.

Figure 25. Has your project led to change within the topics for the project?



The question was followed by a mandatory follow-up question to give examples of successful impacts. Two thirds of the respondents give detailed answers to this question. The respondents provide examples of changes in the local communities which they attribute to their projects-for-change. Many of the comments are based on perception and not on practices or results becoming institutionalised, like the following:

Youngsters and their opinions are taken much more seriously by the adults.

[There is a] higher number and quality of women's participation in politics and decision-making of the province.

From the interviews and from some survey comments, there are however examples of concrete impacts in the form of institutional changes attributed to participation in the training programme. These include the implementation of citizen surveys in preparation of a real estate development project and contributions to drafting a law for right of public access to information. Other examples are given in the following quotes:

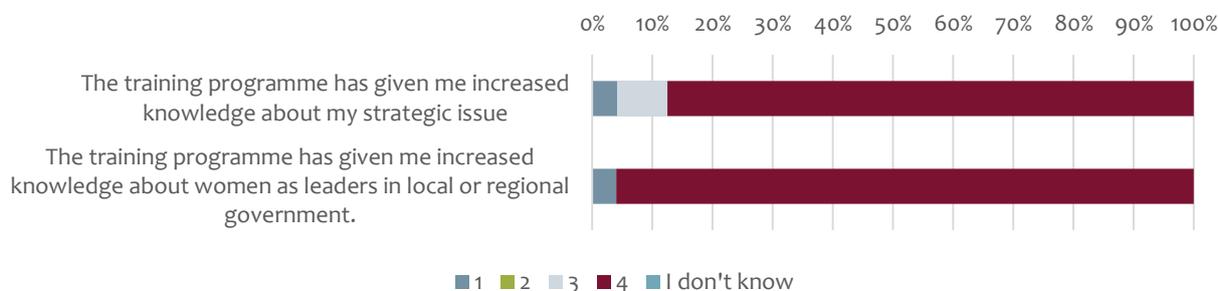
I assisted the council to set up a gender desk subcommittee for dealing with gender mainstreaming for the whole council, the Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Women Affairs, and other development partners.

We have since instituted ward budgeting committees that we work hand-in-hand with for purposes of formulating the annual budget. After we get the budget approved by central Government, we also use the same structures to review the budget with a view to obtain consensus and buy-in for purposes of effective implementation of development projects and programmes as well as service delivery.

7.1.4.2 Strategic issue

The strategic issue is the analogue of the project for change in the training programmes for female political leaders. Issues are aimed at the personal development of participants to strengthen their capacity. Only one of the programmes is of this type, so the answers are few to these survey questions. However, results are highly consistent, see the figure below.

Figure 26. The respondents were given instructions to "Please choose the response that agrees with your opinion of the training programme. 1 – I completely disagree with the statement, 4 – I fully agree with the statement."



From the comments to the statements, it appears as though a major portion of the respondents' strategic issues have related to interacting with peers and with the public in arguments, negotiations and public speaking. On the one hand, several of the respondents describe changes in their own actions, speaking out and taking a stand. On the other hand, others relate how they are met with more approval and acceptance from colleagues, not in the least men in other leading positions. There are also examples from comments and interviews how they use their new skills to encourage other women in and outside of the political system. We have less data on the alleged impacts of participating in such a project. One example from an interview is increased service delivery within the area of sexual and

reproductive health, leading to a reduction in home births under poor hygienic conditions and to reduced spreading of HIV.

7.2 KC EVALUATION

The evaluation of the Knowledge Centre indicates that it is the least developed of ICLD's three units. It is also the newest of ICLD's activities – the training programmes and municipal partnerships had predecessors to model the work on. Given this condition, and considering also that the budget for the Knowledge Centre is much smaller than the budgets of the other units, the performance of the Knowledge Centre is in line with the expectations. However, there is also potential for development.

The stated purposes⁴¹ of the Knowledge Centre are multiple, but the evaluation identifies the production of policy relevant and applied research as the main rationale for ICLD's research funding. Commissioning research is the most suitable method for distributing research funds for this purpose. In addition, given the rationale, dissemination of research appears as integral to the Knowledge Centre. ICLD disseminates research findings in different ways, but there is potential to improve through increased consistency and through developing new and existing communication channels.

7.2.1 Set-up and responsibilities

The main activity of the Knowledge Centre is to administer funds for research on local democracy. The funded projects are monitored and the results of the research are collected, published and disseminated. In addition, the Knowledge Centre staff administers the meetings of the Advisory group and arranges conferences and workshops to bridge the gap between researchers and practitioners. One final task, which is not formalised, is to arrange internal reading groups to raise the level of knowledge and promote the use of research results in ICLD's other units.

The Advisory group plays a central role in the Knowledge Centre. In principle, its members serve as advisors for the whole of ICLD. So far, they have mainly had an impact on issues of strategy and through reviews of research proposals. The final decision about which projects to fund are taken by Sida.

7.2.2 ICLD's role as a financier of research

ICLD is a small organisation with a limited budget for research. The research initiated and supported is to fall in the areas of local democracy, local development and decentralisation. In addition, the research should be relevant for ICLD's operations and in a policy perspective. These are the limitations, content-wise, to the research funded by ICLD. As regards the purpose of the research funding it is stated that the knowledge development should support Sida and Swedish local governments

⁴¹ ICLD (n.d.). Guiding principles for ICLD research funding.

within their fields of activity and that ICLD should initiate and support research in the field. The research is also to contribute to ICLD being established as a distinguished international actor.

Each of ICLD's funding agreements contain an allotment for research. The distribution of these funds to research projects has proceeded in different ways. During the first years, research funds were distributed continuously. Topics were identified mainly in the discussions of the Advisory Group and research was commissioned from researchers in ICLD's network. The last time research funding was distributed, in 2013, the centre tried out a new approach, announcing a single general call for proposals. After discussing the quality and scope of the research we return to the opinions about different approaches to distributing funds for research.

7.2.2.1 Scope and quality of the research

Local democracy is a research field with many dimensions. Decentralisation and governance are central themes, but there are many more aspects that may be included. While a subdivision of the field of research relevant to ICLD somewhat depends on the perspective of the individual researcher, it is clear that the amount of funding available for research is not sufficient to simultaneously cover the entire field. As regards the bulk of the research, if not published in a recognised publication, quality and appropriateness of the award process need to be demonstrated in other ways in order to sustain the legitimacy of ICLD as a research funding agency. However, the Advisory Group contributes to the academic reputation of the centre, as several of the members are recognised internationally.

Several of the interviewees with insight into the research funded by the centre state that the mix of research that has been funded by ICLD is well-balanced. There are some areas that have not been covered, but full coverage can and should not be expected. The one area that is recognised as a strong area by several of the interviewees is the gender dimension and women's participation in local democracy. One concrete suggestion is given as to what ICLD should focus on. The suggestion relates to processes taking place in the developing world which carry substantial impact on the conditions for aid and development support.

Currently we see a strong process of urbanisation, especially in Africa. [...] ICLD should follow this development. [...] There is also a strong decentralisation process under way around the world, but with not enough devolution. [...] ICLD needs to continue working with the political dimension of decentralisation as the main aid agencies lack such a political mandate.

The independent interviewees refrain to comment on the quality of the research funded by ICLD as they have not studied the published material in detail. One indication as to the quality of the research is however acknowledged by several interviewees. Books that have been published are renowned and of high quality, as ensured by the peer-review of the publisher. This is recognised to have contributed to ICLD's profile internationally.

7.2.2.2 Rationale for ICLD's research activities

The guiding principles for ICLD state several purposes for the research funding. One of these are to initiate and support research in the relevant areas. Depending on the interpretation, this purpose may be regarded as problematic from the viewpoints expressed by several of the interviewees.

One of the fundamentals in allocating research funds is safeguarding independent peer-review of research project applications. Especially when funding basic research, grantees are to be selected from a wide population based on a strong commitment to awarding the projects that are recognised as most suitable by the research community. Such a process requires a wide scope and consumes significant administrative resources. ICLD has neither the sufficient resources for administering such a process, nor a sufficient budget for allocating funds across a wide spectrum of topics.

Similarly, the small grants that ICLD can offer are not sufficient for initiating new research areas. The amounts granted can typically be used to supplement and branch out research in areas in which a research team already has some activities.

I think their niche needs to be seeking out researchers already doing this kind of research. Starting up research in new areas is not possible with ICLD's comparably small budget.

Rather than pioneering knowledge on local democracy, the rationale for ICLD's Knowledge Centre builds on its other purpose, providing support for development cooperation activities. Support for ICLD's own activities can be included in this. Many of the interviewees stress policy relevance and dissemination of research to practitioners, to impact development cooperation and processes, as central for ICLD's performance and role in a development cooperation context.

It is good that ICLD has contacts with researchers to get input to their activities and strengthen their quality. In a sense, we are more important for them than they are for us.

This rationale and functions also carry consequences for the approach to distributing research funds.

7.2.2.3 Distributing research funds

Agreement was not unanimous around announcing, as was done, a general call for proposals as a method to distribute research funds. While the experiment progressed as planned, after it was completed, the general agreement among interviewees was that it shall not be repeated. Proponents of this approach to distributing funds emphasised how processing a large number of applications led to learning and networking. At the same time, they acknowledge that it was a challenging process that generated a lot of work. Instead of wide calls, most interviewees advocate an approach for distributing funds that builds on commissioning research based on an analysis of strategic needs. When commissioning research, it is also easier to ensure production of deliverables that are policy relevant and accessible for non-academic audiences.

ICLD is a very small research institution. They do not have the capacity or routine for major calls. They would gain from focusing on commissioned research, to find competent researchers having written interesting articles and contact these for performing research projects for ICLD.

It is important to note that channelling research funds to policy relevant applied research through a more directed commissioning approach does not limit the need to ensure the legitimacy and quality of the research and of the award process, rather the opposite. More than one interviewee raises concerns about how the award decisions are being made, signalling that it may be necessary to be more transparent about the practices used when selecting topics and grantees.

7.2.2.4 Competence needs

A final point raised by a majority of the interviewees is the need to ensure sufficient competence in an organisation that is to assess, support and utilise research. A funding agency for research needs someone in the staff that has the knowledge and experience to manage research activities. Several interviewees express concern that the position as head of the Knowledge Centre is vacant. It is possible that alternative forms of employment should be considered to ensure that such competence can be tied to the centre.

The director of the Knowledge Centre is the only person in my view, and I am not talking about any one person I am talking about the office, is the one who can get all the things that I have mentioned implemented

In addition to being necessary for managing the research funding, significant academic experience is necessary to manage knowledge development within ICLD. Qualified academic skills are deemed to be essential for the Knowledge Centre to function as a knowledge hub and driving force for developing ICLD's activities, and for ICLD as a whole to fully utilise the Advisory Group as a resource.

7.2.3 Dissemination of research – synergies with ICLD's other units

Given that the dissemination of knowledge is regarded by the interviewees as the main purpose of ICLD's Knowledge Centre, synergy between research and ICLD's other activities, training programmes and partnerships, is key. In addition, ICLD organises events for external stakeholders and publishes research results. The dissemination of research is recognised as an area under development. While there are several models for coordinating ICLD's different activities and spreading research results, there is a need to ensure that they are applied consistently. ICLD's web site and web presence also offer significant potential for improvement.

7.2.3.1 Interaction between researchers and practitioners

A portion of the Knowledge Centre's budget is dedicated to arranging meetings in the form of conferences and workshops. Interaction between researchers and practitioners seems to be quite frequent in the context of ICLD's own activities, if somewhat ad hoc. Especially the ties between the Knowledge Centre and training programmes are multiple. There is potential to further formalise these ties, incorporate participants from the partnership programme to a larger extent, and to develop external outreach activities.

In the context of the training programmes, ICLD itself is a natural arena for meetings between researchers and practitioners. Advisory group members and associated researchers have participated as lecturers in the educational parts of the training programme. Advisory group members and other associated researcher have also participated in workshops, mainly in connection with training programmes. There is an ambition to harness potential synergies when associated researchers are present in the region when a meeting takes place. While such arrangements are cost efficient, it requires maintaining significant flows of information between training programmes and associated researchers and it is not clear that efficient mechanisms exist for such practices. Another means through which researchers and practitioners are put in contact is through the mentoring that is organised as a part of the training programmes.

While the connections between researchers and practitioners within the training programmes seems to be quite an established practice, interaction within the context of the partnership programme does not appear to be commonplace. No established forms for putting representatives from the partnerships in contact with researchers seem to be in place. Advisory Group members suggest a better integration of the partnership programme with the other parts of ICLD's activities, referring both to harmonising internal decision-making and the design of activities involving several of ICLD's three units, and to giving the Advisory Group an extended mandate to review and contribute to the design of the partnership programme.

Promoting interaction between researchers and practitioners externally appears to take place mainly through conferences and seminars. ICLD has arranged conferences and seminars, and Advisory Group members and associated researchers have participated in external conferences on research and development cooperation. Six such events have been organised since 2013 and up to the finalisation of this report. While a few events are recognised to have been highly successful, some interviewees request more efforts to be directed towards creating meeting places for researchers and practitioners. One example that is suggested is arranging conferences presenting research results to an audience of local politicians and officials in the regions or countries where the research has been conducted. Presentations of research results and experiences from partnerships and training programmes can be combined in such an event. Other possibilities mentioned for creating meeting places to increase interaction is building ICLD's network with other aid agencies and NGO's active in development cooperation.

7.2.3.2 Communicating research to practitioners

In general, the mechanisms described above also contribute to the dissemination of research to practitioners, for example through the training programmes, where research material is part of the curriculum. The Advisory group can and does also have an influence on the training programmes at the design stage. When it comes to the dissemination of research funded by ICLD, there is a need to continue developing mechanisms and communication channels.

As regards the communication of results of research funded by ICLD, the process of disseminating research results is under development. There is a strong understanding of the need to develop mechanisms for this among the interviewees, and many recognise that ICLD is committed to achieving this. Concerns and suggestions by interviewees are generally not expressed as criticism, but focus on the future development of the centre, acknowledging that ICLD is a small organisation with limited resources, especially for research.

I understand that they do not have time for [summarising the results of the research that has been performed]. ICLD's staff are generally very busy.

One way the accessibility of research results is to be ensured is through the production of policy briefs. The idea of policy briefs is alive with several of the interviewees. However, as of yet, it has not been put into general practice. It is suggested that the preparation of a policy brief should in future be a condition for receiving a grant.

Interviewees in general stress the need to improve communication of research to practitioners. One suggested mechanism is regional or national conferences for local decision-makers as mentioned above. Another theme that is discussed by a few of the interviewees is developing the web presence of ICLD. The research funded by ICLD is displayed on the organisation's web site, but the site is not developed to function as a knowledge hub. Rather than the material being adjusted to web site, the web site is adjusted to the form of the material. The function of the web site as a knowledge hub could be improved by organising it by thematic areas rather than by research projects. Development of the web presence also include suggestions to increase social media activity to promote knowledge content.

8. Partnership Robertsfors – Machakos

When approaching Machakos from Nairobi, a huge sign to the right is among the first things to appear. The sign shows where the youth and children centre is located. With a view over the nearby hills, several white houses with library, ICT-centre, a canteen, and lecture halls make up the youth centre. This centre, with replicas being built in all subcounties of Machakos county, is fully inspired by Sweden. During the delegation trips to Sweden, Machakos was inspired by Fryshuset and also by Robertsfors' work with practical vocational training for the youth. Therefore, the youth centre provides courses in ICT, automotive mechanics, as well as entrepreneurship and employability. This is a way to combat the large youth unemployment in the county.

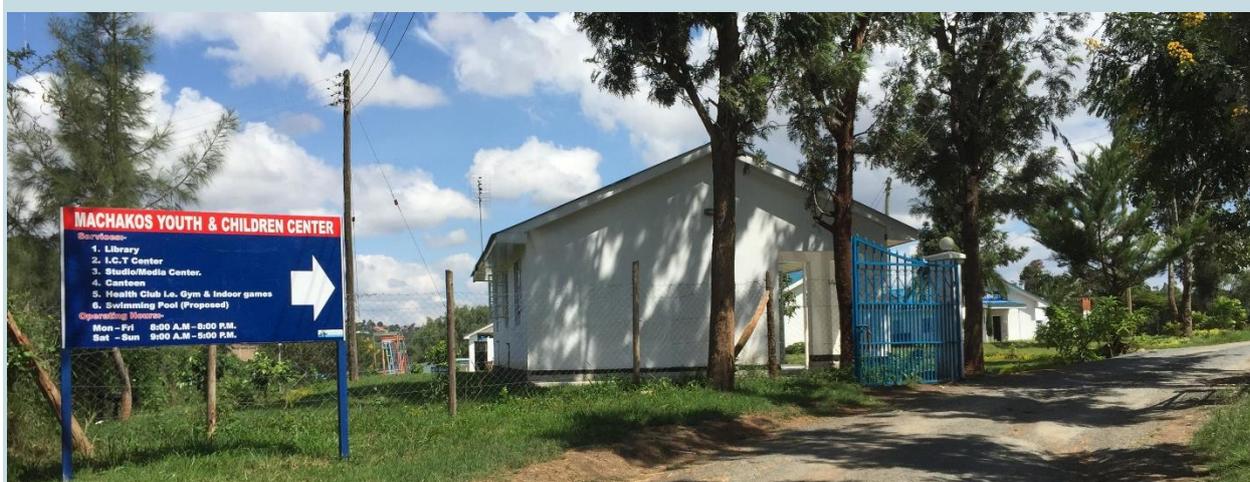


Figure 27. The youth centre in Machakos

8.1 ACTIVITIES

The partnership between Robertsfors and Machakos was initiated in 2007, and started with two projects related to sustainable development. When these were finished, the constitution in Kenya was rewritten and political power was moved from the municipalities to the county level. Therefore, the county took over the partnership with Robertsfors. The two first projects were replaced by a project focused on young people's participation in local democracy, called Youth for Democracy and Human Rights. It was recently finished and the two partners have sent in an application for a new project, related to local leaders for the new sustainable development goals.

Besides the partners' respective trips to Machakos and Robertsfors, a number of activities have been carried out during the years. In the most recent project, Youth for Democracy, Machakos has focused their activities on making the youth aware of human rights, and about their rights according to the Kenyan constitution. The youths directly involved in the project have given talks in the schools in Machakos about these rights. There has been conferences for a wider group of youths, and a network of existing youth groups has been built. A tree planting project, where school children adopt a tree, has also been initiated.

8.2 IMPACT

Both partners emphasise how much they have learnt from the partnership. Both partners highlight that the youth has gained knowledge about their rights as citizens, their human rights and about local democracy. This has had the effect that the youth now are more able to hold the political leaders accountable for any wrongdoing in the county. According to the chief officer for education, youth and social welfare, Mr. Mysuoka Kalla, this has already began to happen, as the youth is more vocal about their rights and more active in the development of the county today. In Robertsfors, the youth is also taking part in the local democracy and in the running of the municipality. One young woman, Zorica Grubor, has for instance filed a citizen's petition to the municipal council. Sandra Brändström, another participant, has become politically engaged and is now member of the municipal executive committee. Barriers between the politicians and the youth have been removed, as stated by one of the participating youths in Kenya:

"It is so easy to approach them now. We had the mayor and members from the county assembly on the trip, it felt like having my friends on the trip. [...] We view politicians like people we cannot approach, but now I know they are normal people and very approachable." (Emily Ndunge, 17 years, Machakos). Similar statements were made by all the youth who participated in Kenya.

What stands out in the partnership between Machakos and Robertsfors is the strong feeling of mutual interest. Patrik Nilsson, the 'mayor' of Robertsfors, highlight the benefits for Robertsfors. A problem in Robertsfors is that many youth leave the municipality to seek opportunities elsewhere. Therefore, involving the youth in the decision-making in the municipality is a question for long-term survival. Patrik Nilsson also emphasises that Robertsfors has a lot to learn from the East Africa.

One way to ensure all participants that the trip to the partner county will actually be rewarding has been to have a thorough dialogue about the programme before departure. Both parties thus get a clear understanding of what to expect from the trips, which has been helpful for the partnership.

The project has wide support in both Sweden and Machakos. In Robertsfors, both the ruling party and the opposition participate in the steering committee. And there is a wide support for international partnerships in the municipality. This has been an important factor for the partnership as it has brought stability. In Machakos, the support from the chief officers and leading politicians has also been substantial, manifested for instance by the fact that a lot of the ideas that have come up during the project (more town cleaning, youth centre, tree planting etc.) also has received external support.

The coordinator for the partnership in Machakos, Mr. Nicholas Nzioka, has also participated in an ITP course for sustainable urban planning. Nicholas is the director of environment and urban planning in the sub-county administration. Nicholas participated in a training programme in sustainable urban planning with the Symbio City approach. His project of change was to create guidelines for urban planning in the city, which now also have been put in place. Nicholas appreciated the interactive learning methods at the training programme, and he is able to use the new knowledge almost daily in his work as environment director. For example, he now works with the planning of a new part of the city of Machakos, and thereby has practical use of the ITP. The skills and understanding gained at the ITP course has benefitted also the partnership according to Nicholas. Nicholas is now more skilled as

project leader, which helps the partnership. Therefore, there is local synergies between ITP and MPP, in building capacity at local level.

The partnership between Machakos and Robertsfors is characterised by qualified coordinators, in both countries, coordinators who keep the development, local democracy and human rights in focus. This is not always the case in the MPP, and this particular partnership has arguably gained from this. Almost all activities are done with a human right perspective. The partnership thereby succeeds in combining local democracy and increased participation with improvements in local municipality service.. The organisational changes that have been made on the Kenyan side, moving authority from the municipal level to the county level, makes it necessary to keep emphasising the guidelines of MPP as well as ICLD's objectives.



Figure 28. Carol and Sam, two of the participating youths in the partnership.

The partnership between Machakos and Robertsfors has been widely communicated to both internal and external target groups, further contributing to ICLD:s objectives. For example, a high level conference was arranged in Machakos as part of the first environmental project.. Participants from all counties in Kenya, as well as a national minister, participated. Furthermore, the partnership was included in the high level Human Rights conference in Umeå 2014, the biggest Human Rights conference in Europe. The partnership has cooperated with the Swedish Embassy in Kenya and has also had contacts with UNDP in Nairobi. Internally, information has been spread to leading politicians and to the citizens in both Machakos and Robertsfors. The partnership is likely to be followed by more partnerships in the regions: Umeå municipality and the region of Västerbotten want to start their own partnerships with counties in Kenya, which is likely to leverage the effects on local democracy.

9. Theme 3: ICLD – organisation and synergies

This theme gathers the results from theme 1 and 2 and applies them to evaluation questions regarding ICLD as an organisation. The overall picture is that ICLD performs in line with the expectations. This leads to the conclusion that there is no reason to question ICLD as an organisation or its basic set up.

This chapter thus focuses on the potential for improvements, on compensating for obstacles and on meeting future challenges. Since the chapter focuses on ICLD as a whole, we also summarise results about synergies between the different units of ICLD.

9.1 CONDITIONS FOR ICLD'S WORK

Interviews with ICLD's management and stakeholders, as well as the positive results of the evaluation of the activities, suggest that external conditions for ICLD's work are favourable. In this section we also comment on ICLD's network of existing and potential partners.

9.1.1 High expectations in relation to mandate

ICLD lacks control over certain parts of the theory of change of its operations, particularly regarding the MPP. In the MPP, the municipalities are responsible for the focus and activities in each partnership. Since the partnership programme is based on a bottom-up approach, ICLD have few levers to influence it. In addition, Sida makes the formal decisions regarding which partnerships to fund – although they rarely or never oppose the recommendations from ICLD. A valid question is, thus, whether there is a mismatch between ICLD's mandate and the outcomes that their programmes are expected to achieve.

ICLD's assessment process is rigid enough to ensure that the partnerships selected for funding contribute to ICLD's goal. However, to ensure that the right kind of applications are received, a more proactive approach could be required. It would contribute to a higher number of good applications in each round, which would lead to improved competition between applications.

9.1.2 Existing and potential partners

ICLD's governing organisations represent different groups of stakeholders and partners. They consist of the development actor Sida, the knowledge actor Lund University and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) and Region Gotland as representatives of the operative target group. These three types of actors make up the most obviously relevant partners for ICLD.

9.1.2.1 Development actors

Development actors consist of both national and international aid agencies and other development organisations. ICLD has significant ties with Sida, being that Sida finances ICLD. Through Sida, ICLD is also the Swedish representative in the DeLoG network of aid agencies focusing on local government. A few interviewees comment on ICLD's relations to other actors, emphasising the role that ICLD has to play in raising awareness about issues of local government and decentralisation in the development community. Relevant partners mentioned in this context are the main aid agencies, including UNDP but also NGO's and think tanks in the partner countries. ICLD has also strengthened the cooperation with embassies in the partner countries during the last years. The embassies contribute with knowledge about the local context as well as feedback on some of the MPP applications in the assessment process but also a great network in the partner countries, useful for outreach activities.

9.1.2.2 Target groups

On a national level, ICLD has an existing fruitful cooperation with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR). A representative from SALAR is chairperson of the board of ICLD. ICLD uses SALAR frequently to spread information about its activities and about the possibility to participate in the partnership program. This is natural given that SALAR represents all municipalities and regions, and it has contact points to all relevant local authorities. SALAR is a useful channel for communication, but it is also an important informant to ICLD about issues regarding decentralization and local democracy in Sweden. ICLD also has an ongoing cooperation with SKL International, a company owned by SALAR. SKL International participates for instance in the partnership council, where ICLD can draw on the experience from SKL International. SKL International is engaged in many international cooperation projects involving local authorities in the cooperation country, in Sweden, or both. In this sense SKL international is a mix between a target group representative and development actor. To succeed disseminating results of activities funded by ICLD to a wider audience in the partner countries it would be suitable to develop ties with similar organisations in these countries.

9.1.2.3 Knowledge actors

ICLD already has a network of researchers through personal relations, through the advisory group, through funded research and through contributions made to training programmes. Interviewees point out that it is important to keep expanding this network. Such expansion includes both building stronger ties to the research environments in Sweden active in the field of local democracy and to focus on research cooperation with actors in partner countries. Developing relations with Swedish research environments ensures ICLD's access to quality assurance and an overview image of the research field, promoting ICLD's legitimacy in the Swedish context. However, ties to researchers and research organisations in the partner countries and regions are highlighted as essential to contribute to ICLD's objectives. Collaborating with and strengthening research in the developing world potentially bring added value in the form of improved dissemination of research results in the region, increased understanding of local contexts, and capacity building for assimilating research. Actors to approach include individual researchers and institutions as well as joint organisations such as CODESRIA, the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, mentioned by one of the interviewees.

9.2 SYNERGIES BETWEEN ACTIVITIES

From the annual reports and from interviews with ICLD staff it is clear that the integration and harmonisation of work of the different units and the search of synergies is of high priority for ICLD.

There are some existing practices that exploit the potential for synergies between different functions of ICLD. Such synergies can roughly be categorised into three types:

- Joint actions
- Using another unit as a resource
- Exploiting networks across units

Joint actions include joint events, for example coordinating ITP workshops and training with researchers associated with the Knowledge Centre. Recently, more network meetings have also been arranged, where both ITP participants and MPP participants are invited, for example in South Africa. Different ways of resourcing one unit by combining it with another is also an existing practice, such as having a participant in a partnership join a training programme to strengthen the capacity to manage the partnership, or by using material from the Knowledge Centre as study material in a training programme. A final practice that realises synergies is utilising networks from one unit for disseminating information to another. For example, partnerships can function as a channel to disseminate information about the training programmes. However, synergies seem to be exploited on a case by case basis, and, while there are synergies between all units, they mainly include ITP in some way.

9.2.1 MPP and ITP

The case studies have provided illuminating examples of how synergies between the partnerships and training programmes may be exploited. The synergies identified are intended and sought after by ICLD. They mainly consist of using ITP as a resource for strengthening the capacity of participants in a partnership and using the partnership network as a platform for spreading information of ITP to broader circles in the partner countries.

The partnerships in the case studies were chosen specifically because they included participants in training programmes. Hence, they should be regarded as examples of the results of such a practice, rather than as representative for the average partnership. However, the examples do suggest that combining a partnership with participation in an ITP significantly strengthens the capacity of the partner. In Kimili, the participation of some of the officials was instrumental for managing the partnership in a professional way. In Ćair, training programmes initiated based on the partnership have contributed to joint capacity building in the municipality and in NGO's working with democratic participation and human rights. Ćair is also an example of how the network established through a partnership is used as a platform for spreading information about ITP, the Macedonian project coordinator having taken as a task upon herself to distribute information locally and regionally, to supplement ICLD's regular channels.

Considering the positive examples, it is desirable to extend these practices to more partnerships and establishing routines to promote them. Notwithstanding the observed synergies, there is also potentially room for exploiting synergies through the kind of joint actions that are arranged between ITP and the Knowledge Centre. Inviting municipal partnerships to final workshops or arranging national fora for sharing research knowledge and experiences are two such possibilities.

9.2.2 ITP and KC

Being that both ITP and the Knowledge Centre are knowledge activities, they have many natural interfaces. It is also between these two units that we find the most examples of different kinds of synergies.

There are several opportunities for organising joint activities between training programmes and the Knowledge Centre. Researchers associated with the Knowledge Centre are contracted to lecture at the Swedish phase of training programmes, and, when opportunity arises, are invited to participate in regional workshops within training programmes. The Knowledge Centre also occasionally functions as a resource for ITP, supplying study material for training programmes and conveying advice on the design of training programmes from the Advisory Group. However, these activities are generally decided upon on a case by case basis, which suggests that a more formalised structure for such practices could increase their frequency.

The mentoring function can be regarded as a venue for directly putting researchers in contact with practitioners and promoting knowledge transfer. However, interviews suggest that mentoring can also be coordinated with research in the same region, conversely contributing to knowledge development.

9.2.3 Unused potential

Synergies between the Partnership Programme and the Knowledge Centre are not as evident as their respective relations to ITP. The few examples are one or two joint workshops for researchers and partnership participants and are instances of research projects focusing on municipalities from partnerships. However it is not clear how the experience from such research projects carry over to other partnerships and the partnership programme as a whole.

A knowledge and research strategy for the centre could revolve around the partnerships as an arena for research and the Knowledge Centre as a knowledge source for partnerships. Presently, few participants in the partnership programme are aware of the ICLD's function as a Knowledge Centre. ICLD could harness the partnerships as an arena for directly conveying evidence-based practices to practitioner in the midst of development processes. This could be supplemented by mechanisms ensuring that evidence for the effectiveness of practices is strengthened by coordinating research resources with the selection, content and direction of partnership and partnership projects.

9.3 CAPACITY, ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE OF ICLD

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, the evaluation shows that ICLD successfully fulfils its tasks. This is the main finding, which in turn means that the most relevant direction of development is creating favourable conditions for increasing positive synergies between different units. Considering that the organisational structure appear suitable, this is perhaps most efficiently implemented on the managerial level. As regards capacity, there is only one significant concern, the vacancy of the office of manager of the Knowledge Centre.

9.3.1 ICLD's organisation

ICLD consists of three units carrying out three tasks. We have found no reason to question this set-up. Keeping in mind that the evaluation has focused on external activities, the competent delivery within the three different units, suggests that the organisation has sufficient capacity to perform in line with expectations.

The structuring of ICLD in three separate units performing three different tasks is suitable. However, this can be likened to a functional organisational structure, easily resistant to efforts to exploit synergies, unless information sharing and joint processes across units are appropriately formalised. The evaluation suggests that the coordination of different units is mainly ad-hoc, but, at least in some cases, rest on quite established ideas of how activities and resources within the units can be coordinated. Given that ICLD is a small organisation, non-formal relations between the different units can be assumed to contribute to information sharing and coordination. Formalising some of the practices and mechanisms for positive synergies may contribute to a more consistent use of synergies and reduce their vulnerability to turnover among the staff members.

The location in Visby is a challenge for establishing ICLD as a physical meeting place for national and international experts and stakeholders within local democracy. Acting as a knowledge hub is easier in a location where many people pass by and with high international accessibility. This condition needs to be taken into account when devising a strategy for dissemination of knowledge and networking meetings.

9.3.2 Result framework

ICLD has worked systematically during the last years to develop the results framework and how it is used for results based management. This has resulted in an overall result matrix for the organisation, as well as result based management procedures for the three units. In the overall results framework the work of the Knowledge Centre is not particularly visible. This has also been pointed out in annual plans and reports. Furthermore, the indicators developed are mainly of quantitative nature – e.g. number of – or a combination of quantitative and qualitative nature – e.g. share of... who feel that.... There is also a mix of subjectively verifiable indicators such as ‘share of officials who experience that they have an improved understanding...’, and more objectively verifiable indicators such as ‘share of researchers who have established contacts with local politicians...’ This mix of types of indicators is not a problem in itself, sometimes the opposite, but when related to the output they are to measure, and the means of verification, logical gaps can sometimes be identified.

One example of the above is in relation to output 1.1: *Concerned politicians and officials in partnership countries have improved knowledge about local democracy and local self-governance at local and regional level.* The first indicator can help to understand whether this has been achieved, although a self-assessment might not be enough to prove that it has happened. The second indicator – the number of downloads of ICLD publications – says nothing about whether the output has been produced or not. A similar logical gap can be identified in relation to output 1.2. for which the sources of verification do not directly indicate that the output has been achieved.

9.3.3 ICLD's management structure

The management level of ICLD mirrors the organisational structure, with one manager for each unit. Being that the organisational structure appears suitable, rather than making organisational changes to institute mechanisms for synergies, a formalisation of mechanisms for synergies may be realised through developing the management practices. Since the evaluation focuses on external activities, we only have indications as to the management practices of the centre, however, circumstantial evidence point to a potential to harmonise and coordinate decision-making. An indication of this potential was when, for a limited time, the manager of the ITP unit was also the manager of the Knowledge Centre, which, it is claimed, contributed to improved synergies between the two units.

It may be that supplementing the unit-based management structure with a process perspective would contribute to better decision-making. A cross-cutting process perspective is supported by management practices that facilitate allocation of resources and coordination across the units, for example for arranging joint activities or using resources of one unit in the operations of another unit, or, for that matter, reallocating financial resources from one unit to another. This may be achieved by combining a strategy for developing synergies between functions with suitably formalised process flows for delivering for example a training programme workshop where researchers or partnerships participate.

One last note to be made about the management of ICLD is the vacancy of the office of manager of the Knowledge Centre. Several interviewees express concern over this situation. Considering also that the Knowledge Centre function appears to be the least developed of the three core activities, the evaluation team shares this concern.

10. Conclusions and recommendations

The evaluation has showed that ICLD plays an important role in Swedish development cooperation by including Swedish and foreign municipalities, regions and counties, as active development actors. These actors are responsible for much of the public service provided to citizens around the world and play an important role in eradicating poverty. Swedish municipalities have capacities and experiences that is useful for municipalities and regions in the cooperation countries. At the same time, Swedish municipalities often find the partnership with other countries useful for building their own capacity. The evaluation presents that by building capacity through the Municipal Partnership Programme, through the international training programmes arranged by ICLD, and through financing and stimulating research in the field of local democracy, ICLD is a relevant actor contributing to local democracy and increased participation in decision making.

ICLD has a potential to be a reliable source of information, knowledge and support on all issues regarding local democracy in an international context. In the agreement with Sida, it is stated that ICLD shall be such a source of information and knowledge for Sida. However, with time, ICLD could become a strong actor also benefitting other stakeholders. One such group of stakeholders are of course the municipalities and regions themselves. By increasing the status of the MPP, through a more competitive application process and by increasing the demands on the project leaders (see below), and through increased synergies between the Knowledge Centre and the other activities, ICLD could become the one-stop-shop for local democracy issues.

The evaluation has further shown that ICLD has clearly developed in a positive direction over time. The organisation is continuously working to improve in areas where problems are identified. To facilitate this ongoing work, some points for consideration are explained below.

10.1 CONTINUED WORK ON RESULTS BASED MANAGEMENT

As stated earlier in the report it is clear that ICLD since 2012 has worked systematically and with strong effort to develop its results framework and how it is used for results based management. At the same time the overall results chain and theory of change, and ICLDs results framework, and e.g. the results framework of MPPs are somewhat parallel systems where there is a risk that double efforts are made to measure whether results have been achieved or not.

It is recommended that ICLD continues its systematic work to improve its results based management approach, for example through the IQA methods. This includes actively engaging all staff in a continuous discussion about the organisation's theory of change, how results should be defined and followed-up, what level of results is relevant to measure, and how to attribute ICLD contributions to results at outcome and impact levels. As much of ICLD operation is about knowledge and capacity

development it could be relevant to pay extra attention to the causal link between learning and performance/change in behaviour, e.g. in what way is a person performing differently after participating in a training programme. It could also be good to learn from other methods of results management, such as e.g. Outcome Mapping, where instead of defining *success indicators* efforts are put into assessing gradual changes in moving towards the results by using *progress indicators*. This could help to capture and honour the many stepwise changes occurring within partnership projects and based on ITPs. It could also help ICLD to advance from the discussion of whether improved local service is an indicator of improved local democracy, and turn to concrete indicators of progress within local democracy.

10.2 CONTINUED PROFESSIONALISATION OF MPP

The Municipal Partnership Programme is the activity that receives the most resources. It is also the activity which reaches most organisations, both in Sweden and in the cooperation countries. The MPP has, as we have seen, a significant potential to increase capacity in municipalities, which may contribute to poverty alleviation as well as increased local democracy and participation in decision making. Today, there are a wide range of possible projects areas, and ICLD do not want to limit the partnerships in their ambitions. This leads to a bottom-up approach, where ICLD awaits applications from municipalities. ICLD and Sida can only choose the applications of the absolute highest quality when there is a true competition between eligible applications, which is not always the case as mentioned above.

10.2.1 Rigid assessment process allowing a wider mandate

The assessment process is rigid, and the evaluation team assesses that ICLD has the capacity to manage also the decisions regarding MPP applications. Today, ICLD is responsible for the assessment process, but the decision authority lies at Sida. ICLD however has both sufficient staff resources, sufficient routines and quality assurance systems in order to manage also the decisions regarding the applications. A wider mandate for ICLD could contribute to a clearer responsibility of the entire result chain, from partnership applications to their impact. Sida could in such a model instead have a seat in the partnership council.

10.2.2 Improving competition between good applications

Although ICLD has noted an increased interest in the programme over the years, and also a professionalisation of the applicants, ICLD limits its room for manoeuvre with a bottom-up approach. ICLD should consider a more proactive approach in the management of the programme, which would also enable a more strategic use of the knowledge and experience built up in the organisation. As more and more experience is concentrated in ICLD, it is important that ICLD is able to channel this knowledge into better partnerships. The partnerships are already today contributing to ICLD's goals in an efficient way, but a more proactive approach would further fertilise this development of increasingly professional partnerships.

A proactive approach could be exercised in many different ways. It could for example be done by steering applicants towards a certain thematic area through active support during the application process. It could also be done by concentrating partnerships in a certain country towards a geographic area or towards a thematic area, to increase the potential for impact. It could also be done by identifying municipalities in Sweden that would be appropriate for a certain partnership, and encourage their participation. Especially, partnerships with a potential to contribute to institutional capacity building, rather than exclusively individual capacity building, should be prioritised.

10.2.3 Support to active partnerships

Furthermore, ICLD should continue to provide more active support to project leaders. The fact that only half of the MPP respondents had been in contact with ICLD for support in local democracy issues indicates that partnerships often get a very practical focus, where local democracy is not always the first priority. This is fine, but through active support from ICLD, the effects on local democracy can be improved. ICLD should consider how they can meet the needs of the partnerships, and how they can utilise the built up experience in order to assist ongoing partnerships. One such practice that should be continued are the different network meetings between active municipalities. They are appreciated, and allows for partnership coordinators to exchange ideas and experiences. However, the demand for knowledge support around local democracy capacity building is big, and ICLD should consider how they can further meet this demand.

10.2.4 Professionalisation of project leaders

A more proactive approach towards MPP, where ICLD sees itself in active ownership of the entire results chain, also requires ICLD to continue to work with the development of the project leader's competencies. These courses have had different shapes during the years. As indicated in the annual report of 2011, the comprehensive training offered to municipal representatives over the course of a year was highly appreciated. These courses need to be made available for the project leaders and coordinators at an early stage in the partnerships. Presently, some of the project leaders are not aware that ICLD arranges these kind of courses, and some have been made aware only very late in the partnership. ICLD should consider to make the courses available for a broader group. Today, this is only available for persons who have submitted an application. ICLD should consider to also include municipalities who are considering an application. This would contribute to better applications. ICLD could take a fee for the courses where participants do not have active projects, to make the courses for this group financially self-supporting.

10.2.5 Managing expectations

Another concrete way to help the project leaders and coordinators would be to provide them with support in the communication towards their partner in explaining the guidelines of the programme. Today, many partners have unrealistic expectations regarding for example financial investments. The Swedish partner often acts as a gatekeeper in relation to the programme, and puts a lot of energy into explaining the guidelines. This many times must be repeated when new people get involved in the partnership. To increase efficiency in the MPP, ICLD could assist the project leaders more proactively and develop a communication tool kit for the project leaders with this challenge in mind.

10.3 CONTINUED INCREMENTAL ADJUSTMENTS TO THE DESIGN OF ITP

The evaluation indicates that the International Training Programmes function well with respect to fulfilling the objectives. They have an established format and the evidence suggests that they are competently executed. The evaluation gives no reason to suggest any general, overall modification of ITP. However, some details are identified that can be addressed as an element of the continued development of the training programmes. They primarily relate to improving support for implementing new skills and knowledge in the participants' local context. However, the part of the evaluation focusing specifically on ITP is not sufficiently comprehensive to provide definite solutions to the identified details.

10.3.1 Relating training content to local development contexts

Many interviewees express that the experience from lectures and study visits during the Swedish phase is essential. However, the participants' assessments indicate that results could improve by supporting their abilities to translate theory and examples to their local context. Hence, ICLD could do well to develop methods and/or training sessions to assist participants in this process. Without changing the content of training programmes, such support could be provided through employing mentors with insight into relevant regional and local contexts, or by allocating part of the time spent in the Swedish phase to a regionally based activity later in the programme aimed at providing support in transferring the experiences from the Swedish phase. It is also conceivable to replace some of the current content with suitable examples from a development country setting, using successful projects-for-change from earlier programme cycles or completed municipal partnership projects.

10.3.2 Continued support for participants

In line with the request for support in translating the new knowledge to their local contexts, several participants also request additional and continued support to implement changes in their local context. This could be achieved through extending the contract with mentors and also highlights the added value that using mentors with insight in local and regional contexts could supply. Several participants also request follow up sessions after the programme ends, which is in line with the recent practice of inviting previous participants to regional workshops and initial steps to support the establishment of alumni networks.

10.3.3 Revise the framework for result based management and monitoring

It is noted that achieving direct institutional impacts through a training programme is an ambitious objective. In line with the discussion about result based management above, it may be suitable to revise these expectations to focus on behavioural changes. This includes re-evaluating to which degree the projects-for-change are viewed as a learning method rather than as a means for effectuating institutional changes. Such a process should be paired with a revision of the use of surveys for quality development and monitoring in line with eventual changes made to the results framework. Furthermore, the surveying of each cycle of a training programme is quite extensive. If used to monitor the

quality of the operations, it may be sufficient to survey a limited sample of the programmes arranged each year. If surveys are to be used for development of programmes, they could be more appropriately focused on specific experimental changes or areas under development.

10.4 REALISING POTENTIAL SYNERGIES

A significant rationale for setting up an organisation with the combination of tasks performed by ICLD is the expected synergies from coordination and cross-fertilisation between the different units. The evaluation indicates that the centre reliably delivers on its main tasks, administering funds for partnership projects, organising training programmes and administering funds for research. This suggests that the initial phase of establishing routines and reaching a sufficient level of efficiency in delivering these services is over. At this stage, development of the centre should focus on realising the inherent potential synergies.

Present practices realising synergies are described in the last chapter of the report. They especially concern ITP and the other two branches respectively. However, existing synergies tend to be exploited on a case by case basis. Establishing mechanisms and routines for exploiting the current practices, formalised in a suitable way, may increase efficiency in organising joint events and reduce vulnerability of such practices to employee turnover or to being overlooked when there are peaks in the workload. This may be achieved by applying a process perspective across the three units of ICLD, considering joint actions and deliveries as end products. It is then also important to establish routines for monitoring opportunities for joint efforts and sharing information.

The main unused potential we identify is developing the Knowledge Centre to become a resource for the MPP and a driving force in the development of ICLD. The evaluation indicates that the knowledge among partnerships of ICLD's function as a Knowledge Centre is low. Potentially, the Knowledge Centre could supply expert advice to partnerships, and partnerships could be more strategically studied to provide evidence for developing the programme. This would require a more proactive strategy for the development of evidence based practice in the organisation, including a strategic management of the research. It also goes hand in hand with new and more active platforms for outreach and a more active ownership of the partnership programme.

10.5 DEVELOPING EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE OUTREACH

ICLD is an agency with a unique niche and with the assignment to promote and spread knowledge about local democracy. There is reason for the centre to keep building a higher profile in its external communication and stepping up the ambition in its outreach. Establishing a higher profile is a means to achieving higher impact and wider dissemination of relevant information. Such a development includes refining the trademark for the entity to aid in the communication. The external communication

of ICLD can also be developed by combining a more extensive web presence with more proactive knowledge outreach activities.

10.5.1 More extensive web presence

Developing ICLD's web presence, over several platforms, would be conducive to achieving a wider impact. To function as an online knowledge hub, the current web site may be supplemented with a thematically organised platform that collects research results and practical tools for promoting local democracy. Such a knowledge platform must not necessarily be limited to spreading knowledge produced within the scope of activities financed by ICLD. The aims of the centre is better served if all relevant material is included, directly or through linking with other web resources.

A similar function as ICLD's Knowledge Centre is performed by the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research. Their outreach activities and platforms can be used as an inspiration for possible directions of developing the communication of ICLD. The centre for gender research manages different platforms with knowledge and practical tools for use in promoting gender equality as well as databases of researchers and of research, and publishes knowledge bulletins in the form of newsletters and popular summaries of research results.

Increasing the web presence is also aided by interconnecting the presence on relevant social media with the web site. Simple measures such as embedding Facebook and Twitter feeds on the homepage and establishing mechanisms for publishing links to the ICLD web site news on social media improve interconnectivity. More advanced measures would be working with interactive material and applying a proactive network building strategy on social media.

10.5.2 Proactive knowledge outreach

Proactive outreach entails directly supplying primary target groups with relevant material. Policy-relevant knowledge, from own research or other sources, can be directly distributed to the network of project and training participants as well as alumni. The success of a more ambitious communication strategy then depends on the form of the material that is communicated. At present, there are practices to ensure that research results are easy to understand for practitioners, such as policy briefs. However, the preparation of policy briefs must be generally implemented. There is also already a significant body of material that would need to be summarised and presented in a more accessible fashion, highlighting conclusions and ramifications for local decision-makers and organising them thematically.

Another possibility for proactive knowledge dissemination that is mentioned by interviewees is arranging nationally based fora for local decision-makers. Such fora would be relevant once a research project is completed. In addition to presentations of research results from research conducted in the country, partnerships and training programme alumni can contribute.

10.6 KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

The Knowledge Centre is the unit that still has some distance to go before it has found a solid shape. One clear recommendation is that the centre's research funds be distributed through commissioning applied policy-relevant research. Such a practice rests on the establishment of a strategy and processes for cumulative knowledge production in close connection with the needs of ICLD's target groups. Rather than asking target groups directly, this should be based on analysis and on the monitoring of trends and of the development of knowledge within the field. Furthermore, if research is to be commissioned, it is essential to ensure that the process for identifying research needs is appropriate and that the process of distributing grants is transparent and legitimate from an academic perspective. It may also be relevant to make strategic decisions to focus on a narrower subset of research topics to ensure that the results are cumulative. Gender issues is identified by several interviewees as one possible such area.

Turning ICLD as a whole into a legitimate, academically qualified organisation entails raising the academic competence of the centre as a whole. A key element in sustaining the legitimacy of ICLD as a research financier is employing a manager of the Knowledge Centre with research qualifications. For ICLD as an organisation to be able to absorb the results of commissioned research, and to reduce the dependence on one or a few staff members, it may also be fruitful to employ mechanisms for developing the research qualifications of the centre as whole, such as including this competence in the recruiting strategy and in continued training of the existing staff.

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