

Twinning Cooperation between Swedish and Bosnian Municipalities

Börje Wallberg

**Department for Central and
Eastern Europe**

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Sida Evaluation 00/15

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Eastern Europe**

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Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Summary and conclusions

Swedish-Bosnian municipal twinning co-operation

Since 1997, financed by Sida, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities, SALA, has been managing a Programme for twinning co-operation between Swedish and Bosnian municipalities. The Programme has covered thirteen Swedish and twelve Bosnian municipalities. The main objective has been to build up relations and activities that would strengthen democracy, management capacity and social welfare in the co-operating Bosnian municipalities.

The Programme was embarked upon in 1997. To a large extent it was built on the pattern of the earlier, highly successful municipal twinning co-operation programme with the Baltic States and Poland. Given the different political situation in Bosnia, there was nevertheless an understanding both within Sida and SALA that the support to the Programme had to be looked upon as a first experimental phase. So far, Sida has paid 6 million SEK to the Programme that is managed by SALA. This includes co-ordination of the Programme, study of programme proposals and monitoring of the different activities. SALA is authorised to grant up to SEK 400,000 for each project. Each Swedish municipality can be granted funds for one project at a time only and they shall be used within one year. SALA is further responsible for the follow-up of the activities that are carried out by the different Swedish municipalities and for reporting to Sida of results, possible progress and problems.

At the end of the first three-year agreement with SALA, Sida wanted to make an evaluation before any decision could be taken to continue of the Programme. SALA undertook to carry out this task as an internal evaluation. Both SALA and Sida saw the evaluation as an important point of departure for a further dialogue between the parties as to how programmes like this could be developed in the future. The evaluation was made in two steps, in Sweden, in October-November 1999 and through visits to all municipalities in Bosnia in February-March 2000. Evaluator was Mr Börje Wallberg, who had earlier participated in the before-mentioned evaluation of the Baltic and Polish Twinning Programmes.

1. Interviews in Sweden

The persons interviewed in Sweden were generally satisfied with the progress of their programmes, although they did not conceal that it could sometimes be difficult to get information and establish and maintain contacts. In reality, they claimed, it had taken the whole first year, 1997, and part of 1998 to establish a dialogue and get the first activities.

The long distance to Bosnia and the high costs for travel as well as language problems were given as other major problems. The difficulty of transferring the Swedish concept of local democracy and local management to their Bosnian partners was also mentioned. Some persons had found the political environment in Bosnia very different to that of Sweden. Corruption was a great problem all over the country, although they were generally more positive about their co-operation partners. Some complained about some of the SALA rules of the programme but no one gave any major problems that could endanger the newly established co-operation. This positive attitude in the Swedish municipalities about the development of their Bosnian twinning programmes was further confirmed in a follow-up in December 1999, made by SALA, on request by Sida.

2. Findings in Bosnia

During the evaluation part in Bosnia a different and less positive picture emerged. Some positive developments were registered, mainly within the better functioning co-operation programmes, as regards the areas of education, democracy, social welfare, technical issues and local self-management, but the general picture of the Programme was negative. Out of the present twelve co-operation agreements four, or possibly five, were considered to function in an expected way, whereas seven of them had different weak sides.

Internal co-ordination as regards the co-operation with the Swedish municipality was often weak and sometimes non-existent. In many cases, the mayor held “all threads” in his own hands and there was no co-ordinator and no files to go back to. Thus, the general knowledge about the SALA Programme was weak in many of the municipalities visited. In some cases mayors and other high level dignitaries had been replaced by new ones and they had left without sharing their knowledge about the Programme. Many municipalities also, unfortunately, seemed to look upon the twinning programmes as an “entrance ticket” to larger contributions by Sida or other Swedish donors. The overall “Sida goals” regarding local democracy and local management, as described in the general agreement between Sida and SALA, were not really in focus in the majority of municipalities visited. Instead, nearly all Bosnian partners emphasised their great needs for technical rehabilitation and infrastructure improvements that would demand much more substantial funds than this Programme could ever offer. Thus, there was a great need to try to analyse both what results there may be and to analyse, why there were such great differences in the way of looking at the SALA Programme between Swedish and Bosnian municipalities.

2.1 Quality of Dialogue

The interviews in Sweden gave that, in spite of distance and language problems, a functioning dialogue and a trustful relationship had been established. In Bosnia the evaluator got many indications that this was not always the case. The quality of the dialogue appears to have been higher in five of the twelve twinning arrangements. In three municipalities, lack of funds and some lack of communication (or understanding) appear to have been negative and given frustration on the Bosnian side. In one municipality, a newly appointed political management questioned the right of their own co-ordinator to represent the city. In three municipalities the change of mayor has had negative effects on communication and co-operation. In at least five, or six municipalities the expectations on the SALA programme were found to be unrealistic. In one Swedish municipality the conclusion of the contract of the Bosnian-born co-ordinator had brought a rupture in relations.

The fact that, often, the mayor often manages the programme himself is one problem. Once a mayor is replaced, the programme risks failing. Since, for good reasons, funds are entirely in the hands of the Swedish municipalities, there was apparently no real administration with files, records and rules for the programme. The overall conclusion is that the quality of the dialogue has been deficient in at least seven of the twelve twinning arrangements. The top oriented management in the Bosnian municipalities had also not been conducive to a broad dialogue and a transparent management of the Programme. This was a situation that neither the implementing agency, SALA, nor Sida, should accept.

3. Lacking analysis of preconditions for the programme

The positive opinions given by the Swedish municipalities in the first part of the evaluation, combined with a long list of “positive developments” and promising initiatives in the evaluation, could indicate that, after some initial problems, the SALA Twinning Programme was now beginning to

take off. After all, the programme has only been functioning for about two years and the amount of money spent SEK 6 million, was not very big in relation to the many initiatives taken. Unfortunately, such an analysis is only part of a less positive scenario.

The SALA Programme does not function well, mainly because of the difficult situation in Bosnia. There has been a serious lack of analysis before the Programme was initiated. Cultural aspects, the prevailing political scene in Bosnia as well as local conditions and preconditions for a twinning co-operation should have been better analysed. Such an analysis should have resulted in more stringent considerations as to how such the Programme could have been best prepared, implemented, managed and monitored.

Strategies, policies and rules and regulations for the Programme better suited for the prevailing situation should have been set up. The roles of the different parties should have been better defined. More effort should have been given to inform the Bosnian municipalities about the scope of the Programme and the limits of it. Sufficient financial resources should have been put at the disposal of the managing agency, SALA to enable it to monitor the Programme in order to fulfil its mission. Sida and SALA should share the blame for this insufficient analysis and preparation of the Programme.

4. Organisation of the programme needs to be improved

The basis for the organisation of the SALA Programme are different steering documents, as the Agreement between Sida and SALA, the Sida Guidelines for the Programme and the SALA Circular with instructions for applying municipalities. In general, they are all fully in line with the Swedish policy for aid, clear and consistent, but not sufficiently adapted to the Bosnian reality. The evaluator therefore believes that neither Sida, nor SALA has really understood the different and difficult preconditions for a municipal twinning co-operation with Bosnia.

The administrative fee for SALA of 4 and later 5% (around SEK 220,000) for the management of such a complicated programme is low and a proof of this. SALA, in its turn, has, seen its role more as a “project examination board” and a fund granting and administration body. Consequently SALA has devoted too little time and effort to networking, counselling and an active monitoring of the work of all the twelve municipalities. As a result of this passive role, the reporting to Sida has become weak. Sida, in its turn, can be blamed for having been too efficient in its negotiations with SALA about the management fee. Yet, SALA could, even within the present funds available, have played a more proactive, focal role in Sweden, in bringing the participating municipalities together, keeping them better informed and giving practical advice, etc.

Reporting has also been weak and this has been criticised by Sida. The lack of a uniform format for and the inexperience (or lack of knowledge) of reporting of the participating municipalities was evident. Under such circumstances, it has been difficult for SALA to make a synthesis of the many different activities and to draw any operative conclusions from them. The fact that the SALA co-ordinator has had no funds to travel and get experience from the field has contributed to this insecurity as regards reporting.

At present, the Programme can to a large extent be characterised by unclear definition of roles and insufficient flow of information. The Swedish municipalities, in general, have treated their twinning co-operation as unique and, until last autumn, few of them had had any regular contacts with another. Much could have been gained, if there had been regular meetings between them to exchange information, discuss ideas, co-ordinate shipments and to learn from each other. The same unfortunately applies for the Bosnian municipalities as well. Also within Sida there are weaknesses.

Sida is financing the programme, but the Swedish Embassy in Sarajevo has had little role in the Programme and is e.g. normally not consulted before a decision is taken to finance a project.

There are also a number of rules in the present set-up of the Programme that should be discussed. Many of the Swedish municipalities complained about the rule that air travels to and from Bosnia can only be covered up to SEK 2,500 per person, when the actual cost amounts to more than SEK 6,000. Another rule that has created problems is that municipalities can only apply for one project at a time and that the project has to be completed within one year. If not, the unspent funds have to be repaid to SALA. This rule risks blocking other, equally important, but possibly less expensive projects that aim at a change of minds. The one-year time limit is another problem. In the light of that rule, recipients may prioritise bigger, more concrete projects e.g. in infrastructure and preparations for bigger investments that can be carried out in one year, rather than to deal with smaller, more ideological and less “concrete” projects on development of democracy, social issues and equality.

The evaluator has also had some concern about the role of Sida not only in the analysis of the preconditions and the set-up of the Programme and the decisions about some rules and regulations in the Programme. Gradually, during the evaluation he has become more and more concerned about a number of other aspects of the involvement of Sida. Although SALA has formally been responsible for the evaluation, it has in reality been Sida that has been steering it. The underlying idea to delegate the responsibility of the evaluation, was that SALA needed to learn more about this kind of work. In the present circumstances it is, however, not surprising that the sense of ownership within SALA has been low and the dialogue with the evaluator weak, although constructive. This is not satisfactory and for future evaluations of this kind, Sida will need to have a more stringent policy and code of behaviour.

Another aspect is that Sida, both in Sarajevo and in Stockholm, have urged the evaluator to be more precise in his definition of the word “development” and list what has been achieved. This creates another problem, to define what is meant by the words “achievements” and “developments”. The repeated demands from Sida to make lists of such “achievements” given an indication that Sida has a very different way of looking at the Programme, more or less, as any other development project managed by consultant companies. The essence of a municipal co-operation of this kind should be a long-term co-operation process between citizens and management of two municipalities. This concept appears to have carried less weight in Sida, which may reflect a different thinking and may also be an important obstacle for a constructive dialogue between Sida and SALA.

Different persons within Sida have posed the question, whether the present SALA Programme could, or should not, be concluded and replaced with a different programme, where more funds would be given to a smaller number of the more efficient Swedish municipalities. Behind this naturally lies the conclusion that the overall results of the present Programme have been poor and that now it would be time to try something else. The evaluator has a different opinion and finds that this reflects too much of an “either or” attitude.

There are already differences in the present SALA Programme that should need some further considerations beyond a simple closing down.

The co-operation between Stockholm and Sarajevo has been efficient and is very much appreciated. Gothenburg has with no doubt been very efficient in its co-operation with Tuzla. The co-ordination management of both cities see great scope for further development of their work but at the same time they have expressed their frustration with the attitude of Sida to any more developed co-operation. Both cities have the confidence of their partners and knowledge about the conditions in this difficult part of the world. They could certainly manage bigger funds and projects. Another

programme that could be looked upon in another way than within the present twinning programme is the co-operation between the NGO ZGP in Mostar and SALA Kronoberg. In the opinion of the evaluator this project lies closer to the areas of human rights, reconciliation and democracy.

5. A future for the Sala programme?

Of the twelve twinning partnerships under the present SALA Programme, four, or possibly five are deemed to be functioning in a good or reasonable way. In the other seven twinning agreements, there are different kinds of inconsistencies in expectations, of negative changes in the municipal management and negative behaviour, of delays in the start-up of co-operation and of various deficiencies in communications. Does this mean that the Programme has totally failed and that it should be abandoned? The evaluator has seriously considered that alternative in the light of his experience from Bosnia. However, after careful consideration he has come to the conclusion that the reasons for a continuation carry more weight than the reasons for a closing down.

The first reason is long term and strategic. For the next stage, after the physical reconstruction of the war damages, the development of structures of a civil society will now become even more important than before.

Secondly, the Programme is small and can be easily managed by Sida at the same time as it has a potential, if it becomes better managed by SALA and more realistic about the very different Bosnian political context.

Thirdly, the critic about the Programme, given in this evaluation, actually gives both Sida and SALA an excellent opportunity to learn and to make the necessary redesign of the Programme.

Fourthly, the evaluator considers that on the Swedish side, there is still a lot of good will, important resources and some promising initiatives.

The fifth reason concerns the timing of a possible conclusion right now, after the recent municipal elections, when there may be important changes on the local political scene.

The conclusion is that a better functioning SALA Programme could result in important improvements in the Bosnian local management context, if only there was a more shared understanding of the objectives of the Programme and of what the available resources could be used for.

6. Lines of action in a possible continuation of the Sala programme

The evaluator proposes Sida to continue the SALA programme for another three years and evaluate it again, before any more realistic conclusions can be made. For a continuation of the Sida funding of the SALA programme the evaluator proposes a number of important improvements:

1. A seminar should now be arranged in Sweden with the participation of all the municipalities, SALA and Sida in order to discuss this evaluation and how the Programme could be improved in the light of it. This should be the start of a regular forum of meetings in Sweden with SALA and all the co-ordinators of the co-operating municipalities in order to get an exchange of information and ideas working.
2. The present “funding of projects” approach should be transformed into a yearly programming of the co-operation. A number of changes as regards financing of travel costs, the rule that money shall have been used within one year and the rule that only one project at a time can be financed should be reconsidered. No municipality should, however, have more than SEK 400,000 at its disposal. Unused funds from one year shall reduce the grants for the following year.

3. Roles and responsibilities in the Programme should be reconsidered and reformulated and the flow of information among the many different stakeholders reorganised. The fee to SALA for the management of the Programme should be adjusted in the light of this reformulation.
4. The five best-functioning municipal co-operation programmes should continue more or less in the same way as they do today. They already work with a similar programme approach. They should be looked upon as them as “qualified” to make further proposals. Consider whether the Stockholm support to adult education should not be a project on its own, if not it should continue within the agreement with the canton of Sarajevo.
5. The other Swedish municipalities that want to continue co-operation should be given an opportunity to initiate another round of discussions with their co-operation partners – in the light of this evaluation. Those municipalities that come up with acceptable plans for the future could be re-installed as “full participants” in the SALA Programme. Other programmes should be concluded. This process could be started up with a seminar or a conference in Bosnia, where the evaluation and its consequences can be openly discussed. SALA and SIDA could be present at that seminar to assist and give the framework for such discussions.
6. One prerequisite for a continuation shall be that in both Bosnian and Swedish municipalities there must be an appointed, qualified co-ordinator that is not on the political level. Co-ordinators should have knowledge of English. There must be a general agreement between the municipalities on the co-operation but also an agreement on each programme or project that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the two parties. There must further be transparent rules and regulations for the co-operation on both sides and the files must be open for all those interested in the co-operation. Reporting systems at all levels and in both countries will need to be upgraded.
7. The Programme will need to ensure that “soft” areas, like democracy, social welfare and gender are prioritised and included as important components of the co-operation. SALA should compile a basic material that describes the Swedish democratic system, local democracy and self-management to be used as an introductory material.
8. A rule that the Swedish Embassy in Sarajevo shall have the right, or possibility, to study the different proposals to SALA and give its opinion should be introduced. Swedish municipalities should inform the embassy about their travel plans to Bosnia, the objective of their visits and after the visit send a mail with the travel report for information. The embassy shall not be obliged to give any opinions about the information received, but may do so in certain cases.

Introduction

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities, SALA, has been running a programme of twinning cooperation between Swedish and Bosnian municipalities since 1997. The programme, which has been financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida, has included thirteen Swedish and twelve Bosnian municipalities. The main objective of the programme has been to build up relations and activities that strengthen democracy, management capacity and social welfare in the twinned Bosnian municipalities.

Its directives state that the programme shall be based on earlier, positive experience gained from a similar programme with local authorities in Poland and the Baltic States. Given the very different conditions in Bosnia, this first phase of the programme was regarded, to a very great extent, as an experimental and learning process. By January 2000, Sida had disbursed SEK 6 million to the programme. Of this amount SEK 1 million was disbursed in 1999.

SALA is the organisation responsible for running the programme, i.e. coordinating the programme, studying programme proposals and monitoring activities. SALA is authorised to grant up to SEK 400,000 to each project it finds viable. Swedish municipalities can only be granted funds for one project at a time and the funds granted must be used within one year. SALA is responsible for following up the activities of the different municipalities and for making reports on results, progress and problems to Sida.

Although the programme was embarked upon three years ago, in 1997, it soon became clear that it faced problems. The participating Swedish municipalities claim that preliminary contacts took up most of the first year and that no substantial programmes of cooperation could be started until 1998, in some cases not even until 1999. Given both the initial difficulties and the fact that the first three-year agreement with SALA had expired, Sida came to an agreement with SALA that it was necessary to make an evaluation of the programme before any possible extension of the programme could be approved. SALA undertook to carry out this task as an internal evaluation. Both SALA and Sida saw the evaluation as an important point of departure for further discussions between the parties on the future development of the programme.

For this evaluation, SALA employed Mr Börje Wallberg of UCS AB. Mr Wallberg participated in the evaluation of the twinning cooperation programme in Poland and the Baltic States and many other programmes and projects in Central and Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Central America. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for his assignment are enclosed as *Annex 1*.

The ToR state that, in a dialogue with the partners in cooperation, Mr Wallberg shall collect facts on the different programmes and analyse them for their impact on local democracy, social services and technical and education programmes. The quality of the dialogue between the partners shall be assessed, as well as the capacity of the partners to carry out the agreed programmes.

1. Methods of evaluation

The evaluation was performed in two steps. The evaluator had to cancel a planned visit to Bosnia in October 1999 for health reasons. Instead he carried out the first stage of the evaluation programme in Sweden, in October and November. Most of the eleven participating Swedish municipalities were visited and interviews were held with the officers responsible for the programmes in the municipalities. Since the municipalities are spread all over Sweden, it was not possible to visit all of them. Instead, long telephone interviews were held with the officers responsible in the municipalities which were not visited. Discussions were also held with the officers responsible at SALA and Sida.

Due to heavy snowfalls in Bosnia in December and January, the evaluation was further postponed. It finally took place during the period 15 February–1 March. All twelve Bosnian municipalities were visited and discussions held with officials responsible there for the programmes.

In most cases more people were present than those mentioned in the programme. In some of the meetings not all of those present were introduced, nor did they contribute to the discussions. In general, the meetings lasted between one and two hours and were sometimes followed by a meal during which the discussions were continued. The evaluator tried to follow the Terms of Reference for his assignment, but often had great difficulties in doing so. Many of the municipal functionaries who were interviewed were not fully in the picture about the programme. Instead they had a different and, for them, much more important agenda, i.e. to secure funds from a major donor, such as Sida, for large rehabilitation and reconstruction schemes.

During the visits to Gorazde, Bileca, Mostar and Konjic, the officers responsible at the Swedish Embassy, Mr Peter Swartling, First Secretary and Ms Slavenka Perkovic, Assistant Programme Officer, accompanied the evaluator. Ms Perkovic functioned as the interpreter at these meetings. During all other visits, the Swedish-Bosnian interpreter, Mr Nermin Omeragic, worked for the evaluator. It has therefore been possible to make checks afterwards on what happened during the many different meetings.

In this respect the evaluator would like to express his sincere gratitude to all those that assisted him in the planning and implementation of this visit, especially the Swedish Embassy in Sarajevo, where Ms Slavenka Perkovic made all the contacts and managed to arrange a really well-balanced programme.

2. Findings in Sweden

A survey of the projects that have already been concluded, or are under implementation, shows that, with the exception of Stockholm's programme of cooperation with Sarajevo, few projects really got underway during 1997. In fact most of the participating Swedish municipalities made their first, exploratory contacts towards the end of 1997 and in 1998. They claimed that it had taken quite some time to establish durable relations and build up mutual confidence after the first contacts. Therefore, most of them stated that "their programme of cooperation" had only been in progress for between one year and eighteen months. It was also clear that the twinning cooperation projects had progressed in very different ways.

Among those municipalities which reported that they had managed to establish functioning programmes of cooperation beyond the initial exploratory contacts were, in addition to Stockholm and Gothenburg, Burlöv, Hörby, Staffanstorps, Karlskrona and Åre. Also in Luleå, a city which had had many contacts with Zenica before the SALA Programme, there was definite confidence that, after some initial exchanges of delegations, it would be possible to develop closer cooperation in the fields of education and the environment. Gävle had received a number of delegations from Gorazde, including a group of orphans for post-war psycho-social rehabilitation and a group of English teachers to study language education in Sweden. Gävle had recently concluded an official agreement with Gorazde and intended to expand its programme of cooperation. Gävle claimed that democracy was always in focus in all contacts with Gorazde. The cooperation agreement between Strängnäs and Konjic was still in an initial phase, but the coordinator in Strängnäs was very optimistic about the future.

Some problems were also noted in the interviews. Vaggeryd had had an agreement with Travnik and had supplied Travnik with a digitalisation table for municipal mapping. Then the mayor and some of the local management were removed from their duties and the programme of cooperation ceased to function in spite of many efforts to revive it on the part of the municipal management of Vaggeryd. The local association of local authorities of Kronoberg had originally intended to start a programme of cooperation with Mostar. However, given the high level of animosity between the Bosnian and Croat population and the dual local management of the city, they had been obliged to limit the programme to collaboration with a local, multi-ethnic NGO, ZGP ("Association Of Citizens For Human Rights Protection").

The persons interviewed were, in general, satisfied with the progress of their programmes, although they did not conceal the fact that it could sometimes be difficult to obtain information and maintain contacts. With the exception of the two cases mentioned above, no evidence was given of any major problems that could endanger the newly established programmes of cooperation. Nevertheless, some persons pointed out that the political environment in Bosnia was very different to that of Sweden and that corruption was a great problem throughout the country. However, with one exception, the pending case of the former mayor of Sanski Most, the interviewees did not really believe their cooperation partners to be corrupt, or at least not very corrupt.

The long distance to Bosnia and the high costs of travel as well as language problems were given as other major problems. The difficulty of transferring the Swedish concept of local democracy and local management to their Bosnian partners was also mentioned by the Swedish municipalities. As opposed to the Baltic-Polish programme, there had been relatively few formal training courses on local democracy. Instead, they claimed that there had been "practical training" in the form of meetings with Swedish local politicians, participation in municipal meetings, study visits followed by discussions, etc.

The Swedish municipalities also raised some complaints about the present "rules of the game", for example the amount of SEK 2,500 for air fares, which was far below the actual ticket price. Another problem raised was that the Swedish municipalities could only apply for one project at a time and that the funds granted had to be used within one year. This blocked other ideas or new priorities and put unnecessary pressure on the partners to use the funds within the time limit. Finally, they pointed out that the funds available for cooperation had been spent during the first year, 1999. There was thus a great need for replenishment for the last few months of 1999 and the year 2000 in order to maintain activities at the same level as before. However, Sida decided to await the outcome of this evaluation before arriving at any new decision on further funding.

2.1 Some Early Observations In Sweden

In his first report, based on interviews in Sweden, the evaluator made a number of critical observations. It was obvious that both the political and general situation in Bosnia was very different and much more difficult than that in the Baltic States and Poland and that this had caused some problems, especially in the initial phase.

This situation should have necessitated some careful consideration on the part of the financier, Sida, and the managing agency, SALA, on essential requirements for a twinning programme, but there were indications even at this stage that this had not been done to an acceptable degree.

In this situation the role of SALA should then have become more pro-active, both in respect of its advisory capacity and its management and monitoring of the programme. SALA, lacking experience of Bosnia and sufficient financial resources for active management of the programme, had focused its work on the assessment of project proposals, granting funds and, to some extent, on giving basic information to interested municipalities. SALA's contacts with municipalities and its monitoring of the programme had been inadequate and this had also led to a situation in which the different Swedish municipalities had little contact with each other.

One municipality became frustrated when it realised that its own resources and the SALA project contributions would be insufficient for what its partner municipality wanted. It had little idea whether or not the demands of its twinning partner were reasonable. In a similar spirit, some representatives of other Swedish municipalities also contacted the evaluator to initiate a discussion and obtain advice on their programmes of cooperation. This, of course, should have been the natural responsibility of SALA.

Where the City of Stockholm was concerned, the situation was frustrating but in a different way. They felt that there was some passive resistance on the part of Sida towards any further initiatives from their side, despite the fact that their projects had been much appreciated both by their Bosnian counterparts and by President Clinton in a speech made during a visit to Sarajevo in 1999. Instead they had established cooperation with US AID, an agency which they had found to be much more supportive and less bureaucratic.

Nevertheless, the conclusions from the interviews in Sweden gave a picture of an emerging SALA twinning programme. After rather a long period of trial and error, the Swedish municipalities now saw positive developments taking place among their partners. Despite initial difficulties, they had now established good relations with their twinning partners and gave accounts of many interesting cooperation projects. Only one municipality had lost contact with its partner. This positive attitude on the part of the Swedish municipalities to the progress of their Bosnian twinning programmes was further confirmed in a follow-up made in December 1999 by SALA at the request of Sida. In their replies, all the municipalities expressed the same optimistic views about the future of their twinning programmes.

3. In Bosnia – Developments and problems

During that part of the evaluation made in Bosnia, a different and less positive picture emerged. General information on the SALA programme was not always available. In many cases, the mayor held “all the threads” in his own hands and there was no other designated coordinator for the twinning programme and apparently no files to refer to. In some cases mayors and other high level dignitaries had been replaced by new ones who had not received any information about the programme. Internal coordination of the twinning programme with the Swedish municipality was often weak and sometimes even non-existent.

Many municipalities also, unfortunately, seemed to look upon the twinning programmes as an “entrance ticket” to larger contributions from Sida or other Swedish donors. The overall “Sida goals” in respect of local democracy and local management, as described in the general agreement between Sida and SALA, were not really in focus in most municipalities visited. Instead, almost all Bosnian partners emphasised their great needs for technical rehabilitation and infrastructure improvements that required much more substantial funds than the SALA programme could offer.

Thus, there were great needs both to try to analyse what positive results that may have been achieved and to try to understand why there were such great differences between the Swedish and Bosnian municipalities in their ways of looking at the SALA programme. Since the programme has only had a proper form for some two years, it may still be a little premature to talk about “results” or “achievements” that can be measured beyond any doubt. In his review of what has happened, as required by the Terms of Reference, the evaluator has therefore chosen to write about “positive trends and developments” in the programme.

Had this programme been in progress for a longer period of time than two years and had the funds spent exceeded the SEK 6 million of the thirteen agreements, this would be a very critical statement. However, given the very different and difficult situation in Bosnia, the evaluator would prefer to postpone his final verdict on the programme and look at results in a three-year or four-year perspective.

Where the different objectives mentioned in the directives are concerned, there are a number of developments that should be highlighted. It is also necessary to discuss some weaker points and problems.

3.1 Democracy And Local Management

Almost all persons interviewed did express an interest in learning more about the Swedish local democracy and management system. In most interviews, however, it was difficult to really find out what the Bosnian side had actually learnt and what they were interested in learning more about. To some extent this may be due to the fact that, in reality, many of the cooperation programmes have just started, as in the case of Strängnäs. Some positive examples were nevertheless noted.

The mayors and senior politicians of Maglai and Tuzla, and to some extent Zenica, described their enthusiasm for the Swedish local democracy and management systems. They had met and talked to a great number of Swedish politicians at the local and national level and had also been present at many political and management meetings in their partner municipalities. Thus, they claimed to have a good understanding of the Swedish model for local management, and they wanted to transform their municipalities to work more in this way. The mayor of Maglai in particular wanted

to introduce more of the Swedish model in committees in order to avoid the often endless sittings of the municipal council to decide on issues that could have better prepared in advance.

The mayor of Tuzla even added the remark that all his employees had come back from Gothenburg full of impressions and ideas but “without really understanding that what they had seen was, in fact, what should be normal features of the local management system in Bosnia in the future!” Gothenburg appears to have worked with the democratic aspects in a planned way and the response, especially in Tuzla, was good. Gothenburg has also apparently earned itself a reputation for this, since it has been invited to take a leading role in a EU project that aims to create networks for the development of democratic systems between cities in EU and in the SEE (South-East European) countries.

Both Tuzla and Maglai had sent many key, management level employees to their respective partners and had thus been able to disseminate knowledge and thinking on new models for local management. However, in Tuzla, the vice-mayor admitted that the dissemination of what had been learnt in Sweden “could have been better”.

For the mayor of Bileca, the democratic aspects and those of self-management were even more important, especially in consideration of new legislation for municipalities that he claimed would be introduced after the elections in April. These new laws gave much more responsibility and freedom to the local political structures. At the same time this also meant that it was increasingly important to acquire more knowledge about local political systems and self-government. The main themes for the first visit to Sweden from Bileca, in March 2000, would be “local democracy and self-management”. This was quite a broad approach for what we later found out to be a three-day visit to Sweden.

Furthermore, the multi-ethnic group of highly educated and respected women that would be used as “a bridge” for a possible twinning programme between SALA Kronoberg and the divided city of Mostar, have been studying the Swedish local democratic system closely, both in a study circle and during a visit to Sweden. In Sweden special emphasis had been given to gender aspects, insofar that the group had met and held discussions with a great number of female Swedish politicians at both national and local levels. Their impressions were somewhat mixed. They had expected “more democracy, but nevertheless, it was a system well worth working for”. The problem with this project is that it has been left “hanging in the air” for over one year due to a lack of funds.

In other municipalities, some verbal praise was given to democratic issues but, in many ways, the evaluator believes that the persons interviewed had a different agenda. Developing more efficient local management in their municipalities would naturally strengthen their own positions of power. In one meeting, after a somewhat provocative question, the evaluator was given a heated reply that they did very well in this respect: Their town would soon be nominated an “open city”. They were already working over political boundaries and with gender issues. No donor should come and lecture them about democracy. This reaction was not unexpected. It is probably due to the fact that over the years many donors have been lecturing them a bit too much.

On support for the development of local management, the following was further noted. In Travnik, Karlskrona has supported local management with the software and computers for a citizen registration system and has also contributed to the development of a GIS system for the administration of land and construction issues. Both initiatives were much praised. The latter project, however, borders on a similar Sida-funded project in the same region.

As stated above, both Maglai and Tuzla stated that they had learnt much about Swedish local management, but the long-term results of what has been done cannot be evaluated yet.

During the interviews, a major difference to the Baltic Programme emerged. In Bosnia, there had been less theoretical training and more practical examples. Nevertheless most Swedish municipalities considered that, by appearing together over political boundaries in meetings with their Bosnian partners and by letting them follow municipal meetings, they demonstrated another model for local democracy and cooperation and another way of working. Unfortunately, there were few references to this in the interviews in Bosnia.

Conclusions

1. Of twelve municipalities, only four stated that they had worked in a planned manner with the democratic issues and in at least three there had been a positive response. This is much less than what could have been expected, i.e. that all twelve cooperation agreements should somehow have dealt with these issues.
2. The low frequency of positive responses could, however, be due to some extent to a lack of knowledge of the programme in some municipalities, since in interviews in Sweden “democracy” was described as a focal issue by almost every coordinator.
3. In one case, in Maglai, the evaluator felt that improved local management efficiency was in reality more important than democratic aspects.
4. In the present political situation, the majority of the municipalities are more interested in the development of management capacity. Behind this, possibly, lies a wish to “serve the inhabitants” in a better way and hopefully with more transparency. This could be a true form of democratic development, but it could also be used as a tool to strengthen existing local power structures that may not be democratic at all.
5. The majority of the Swedish municipalities have done relatively little to provide broad political training in order to provide a coherent theoretical background to Swedish democracy and local democracy. In this respect, the Bosnian programme differs from the Baltic programme, where this was a fundamental part of the initial twinning work.
6. Given the extremely complicated political situation in Bosnia, the evaluator finds that SALA and the Swedish municipalities have missed adding an important initial and common component that could have given a better point of departure for the programmes of cooperation.
7. The entire concept of the Kronoberg-Mostar project could really be discussed, as it lies very much outside the original concept of the twinning programme.
8. SALA Kronoberg has delegated the project to a local Swedish NGO that is working as their intermediary. In this way, the “twinning” between SALA Kronoberg and Mostar is now being developed by two organisations that were not the original, intended partners.
9. So far, the achievements in respect of “democracy”, are considered to be limited, partly because of the short period of time of the programmes of cooperation, partly because of the political situation in Bosnia, at least the situation that prevailed before the elections in April 2000. The situation after the elections may offer new opportunities in this respect.

Recommendations

1. For a possible future twinning programme, SALA should develop, together with the Swedish municipalities, basic material on Swedish democracy and local democracy in Sweden and on the conditions which must be in place prior to the implementation of this type of programme. This material should be an obligatory initial component of their programmes of cooperation.
2. In this way, SALA can ensure that a description of the objectives, the rules of the game and the expected outcome of the programmes will be presented in a similar way by all Swedish municipalities.
3. Another way of doing this could have been in the form of seminars in Bosnia with participation of leading representatives of all Swedish and Bosnian municipalities concerned, and of SALA and Sida.

3.2 Education Cooperation

Social sectors and education are the responsibility of canton level. Therefore, municipalities in the Bosnian Federation have no formal responsibility for education and their involvement in both sectors varies considerably. In Tuzla, for example, the Social Democrats rule the city and SDA the canton. This has resulted in a situation of non-communication and non-cooperation between the two levels. The city management of Tuzla deplored this state of affairs. They considered that it was more important to deal with the social issues at the local level, where there were closer contacts with the inhabitants. In this respect they considered the present political situation as one of many issues that confuse the political scene in Bosnia today. In spite of this, a number of initiatives have been taken in the programme in the field of education.

Where Zenica and Luleå are concerned, there has been an exchange of pupils, which has now resulted in a project in which Zenica has now applied to the Olof Palme Foundation for support for the building of an eco-school of the same type that they had seen in Luleå. Zenica is one of the most polluted cities in Europe due to its run-down, ex-communistic heavy industry and city management has opted to start educating its schoolchildren as one of its action lines. In this work, Zenica collaborates with the canton. Ronneby has also cooperated with Zenica in an education programme in ecology but this project has been completed.

In Sarajevo, Stockholm has supported the reconstruction of the Third Gymnasium. This is an important higher education institution, one of the really integrated high schools with special programmes for returning refugees. Another cooperation project is being run in the field of adult education and computer training. The adult education programme in computer education has a social edge since, of the twenty-four students admitted to the course, ten are disabled persons. This may enable them to find suitable, qualified jobs in spite of their disabilities. According to the Bosnian counterparts both projects have been carried out with great skill. Stockholm has recently concluded an official agreement with the canton of Sarajevo to continue this programme of cooperation in the fields of adult education, computer education and waste management.

Direct cooperation between Bileca and Staffanstorp is still in the initial phase, but the first delegation from Staffanstorp included a school director and some teachers. They studied conditions in the schools. They also brought some education materials for water testing and a biological atlas which

were found to be of great value in this impoverished town. Thus, on the basis of this first visit, the mayor considered that there would be grounds for future cooperation in the field of education. Strängnäs plans to receive a delegation of schoolchildren from Konjic this summer.

Lyckeby school in Karlskrona has, according to its director, had a successful programme of cooperation with the Hasan Kikic School in Sarajevo. Lyckeby school has a large number of children of Bosnian nationality. It was therefore natural for this municipality to enter into a programme of cooperation with the school in Sarajevo. The project has now finished but contacts between school management, teachers and students are continuing via e-mail. The management of both schools would very much like to continue and expand this programme.

Gävle has received a group of English teachers from Gorazde for a two-week study tour and training. In Gorazde, the evaluator was given the somewhat surprising comment that the two-week period had not provided the anticipated increase in levels of knowledge of English among the participants. This is naturally an unrealistic expectation as well as an indication that the objectives of the study visit had not been clear to municipal management. The fact that the mayor was new to his post may have contributed to this. The High Representative had relieved his predecessor of his duties in November 1999.

Another aspect of this, mentioned by many on the Bosnian side, is the prospect of enabling a more frequent youth exchange. This has also taken place between Luleå-Zenica, Gävle-Gorazde, and Karlskrona (Lyckeby school) – Hasan Kikic School.

Conclusions

1. Education and social welfare is part of the responsibilities of the cantons. Therefore, these two areas are not directly areas of cooperation in the SALA programme. If Sida would like to support education in Bosnia on a larger scale, this will probably have to be done in another programme with cantons.
2. The support provided by Stockholm for the rehabilitation of the Third Gymnasium has been very well managed and the results of that project could well be characterised as an “achievement”. However, hitherto it has been a physical reconstruction project. Whether it will be really sustainable will depend whether the management is able to continue the successful work of reintegrating returning refugees and running a multi-ethnic education programme.
3. With the exception of the Stockholm Programme and possibly, with time, the eco-school in Zenica, the scope and breadth of the projects have been limited and the long-term effects can be expected to be small so far. News about the intended Swedish support to the eco-school came as a surprise to Sida in Sarajevo. This is negative, since the embassy has the responsibility for coordination of Swedish assistance to Bosnia.
4. In spite of the division in responsibilities between cantons and municipalities, there are cases where municipal management has a certain involvement in the social sectors. This has led to the above interventions in education.
5. Although the Stockholm support both to the Third Gymnasium and to the adult education programme is apparently very well managed and much appreciated in Sarajevo, it could be debated whether or not these programmes are really municipal cooperation programmes. It seems to the evaluator as if they have somehow grown beyond the twinning concept and are now of a size that would merit other measures.

6. On the other hand, Sida's general policy is to work mainly outside Sarajevo, since such a large proportion of donor funds nevertheless end up in the capital. This may explain Stockholm's criticism of Sida for being "lukewarm" about this programme of cooperation. The recently concluded agreement with the canton of Sarajevo may offer a practical way out of this dilemma, i.e. with competent Swedish project management in non-prioritised geographical areas.

Recommendations

1. Given the present division of responsibilities between cantons and municipalities, most of the Swedish support to education will either have to be channelled through cantons or through direct programmes of cooperation between Swedish and Bosnian schools.
2. The programme of cooperation between Stockholm and the canton of Sarajevo for support to the Third Gymnasium and adult education is functioning well and is larger than a normal twinning cooperation project. It should therefore be assessed in a different way than the "normal cooperation projects" in the SALA programme.

3.3 Social Welfare Cooperation

For the same reasons as for support for education above, relatively little has been done in the SALA programme to develop real programmes for social welfare structures. This does not mean that the Swedish side has been passive in this respect. Many of the programmes have had strong elements of social support.

Gothenburg's support to Tuzla and Sanski Most through the NGO "Reningsborg" has resulted in the establishment of second-hand shops in both cities run by the War Invalid NGO, RVI, that can use the profits for the benefit of the many war invalids. Initially Gothenburg had some problems with the town management of Sanski Most in respect of establishing who should be the owner and who should be able to use the profits. Gothenburg managed to stand firm and maintain the rights of the RVI, one sign of many that the culture of business is still very different in Bosnia. Both projects have nevertheless been highly praised by their cooperation partners in Bosnia.

Furthermore, in addition to the SALA Programme, Gothenburg took the initiative to arrange a conference in Tuzla on psychosocial issues in the aftermath of the war. The conference was given the name "Trust and Identity" and it gathered more than 200 participants. It is planned that the next conference, in 2001, shall take place in Republika Srpska and that other Swedish municipalities shall play a greater role in this conference.

Hörby is now preparing to send ten second-hand mini-dairies to Maglai. Although this is technical support, it has a social aspect, i.e. to enable the poor farming community around Maglai to produce and sell milk, and the children to get better access to an important source of nutrition. Luleå has sent two of its employees working with social issues to Zenica to work and learn more about the situation in Bosnia and has thus laid a foundation for future cooperation in this respect.

The above-mentioned Stockholm support to adult education in computer science with a strong emphasis on handicapped students is another project which may have a great social impact in a long perspective. Burlöv is preparing to send a major shipment to Lukavac including used hospital equipment and two used ambulances.

Gävle has had a programme of cooperation with Gorazde which has included the psychosocial rehabilitation of war refugees and relief from post-war traumas for children and families. Gävle has also had a group of orphan children visiting Sweden, living with Bosnian refugee families in Gävle.

In the Åre programme, the person responsible for equality and gender in Zivinice participated in the first group of visitors. She was now said to be working on a plan for increasing equality in her hometown.

As part of the cooperation programme with Sanski Most, Gothenburg has had a number of persons coming to study social issues and health care.

Conclusion

Eight of twelve municipalities have had aspects of social development in their programmes, but, in general, these interventions have had little to do with the development of social work structures. It can, therefore, be expected that the long-term effects of much of what has been done hitherto will be limited.

3.4 Technical Cooperation

In all Bosnian municipalities visited the need of all kinds of physical reconstruction was a definite priority. However, this physical reconstruction was as much a result of poor maintenance during the communist era as of damage in the war. Given the poor status of most of the physical installations and the many destroyed houses in the municipalities, it is not difficult to understand why all the municipalities stressed this form of cooperation, if in different ways. Many of the Swedish municipalities have also tried to meet the requests of their twinning partners.

Stockholm and Gothenburg have received many delegations which have come to study the municipal refuse collection systems and waste disposal. In both cities the politicians wanted to continue this form of cooperation.

Other areas in demand were drinking water supply, sewage water treatment and infrastructure planning. These areas were given high priority by municipal management in Maglai, Tuzla, Bileca, Lukavac, Zivinice, Konjic and Sanski Most. In three cases, Lukavac, Zivinice and Sanski Most, the evaluator was shown draft reconstruction programmes that would have amounted to hundreds of millions of DM.

Åre has spent both time and money on a project for the rehabilitation of leaking water pipes in Zivinice. In Åre there is a local company that specialises in new techniques to reline old and leaking water pipes. In principle, this could mean that the technical know-how of Åre could be used to assist Zivinice in its important work of rehabilitation. In reality, however, there is a risk that the difference between what the town management wants and what Åre can supply is too large. A small pilot project to teach the requisite techniques is, however, now being discussed.

Conclusions

1. There was a vast difference between the expectations of the Bosnian municipalities in this respect and what a small municipal twinning programme such as the SALA programme can contribute. This is probably the key reason why the SALA programme, as a whole, is not really functioning well.

2. The majority of the Bosnian municipalities seem to have entered into the present twinning cooperation with high expectations for more Swedish aid funds through the closer cooperation with their Swedish partners. It was also obvious that they expected this kind of funding to be given in the form of grants and not credits which is the normal way of financing major investments.
3. For at least one Swedish municipality, Åre, this has become a worry, i.e. how far and with how much they can support Zivinice.
4. For the evaluator, this was a constant problem at almost every meeting during the visits to municipalities in Bosnia, i.e. having to explain that the twinning programme was not a “back door” to more Swedish funds. In some meetings it was evident that the message was not really understood. In realistic technical cooperation of this kind, the message in respect of the intentions and limitations of the programme should have been better disseminated, explained and repeated, etc. until it finally reached its recipients.

In any possible future programme of this kind it must be absolutely clear to all partners involved how far they can go in respect of these large fund-consuming infrastructure projects.

A Swedish municipality can normally share knowledge with its partner city, assist in finding good and inexpensive technical solutions and give a hand in the preparation of project proposals for funding by major credit institutions. Once a credit has been secured, a Swedish municipality could probably also give some assistance in the preparation and supervision of the implementation of the project.

3.5 Business Development

Many of the persons interviewed in Bosnia stressed their interest in having more commercial relations with Sweden. The question that has to be posed in this respect is to what level legislation and the “rules of the game” of the Bosnian commercial market are conducive to any closer business relations. The answer is unfortunately still negative.

In Zivinice, municipal management, on one hand, wanted to establish a joint venture with the tube lining company in Åre, but on the other hand they claimed that there was little interest on the part of Bosnian companies in entering into this type of cooperation! The reason for this most likely lies in the fact that any company working for the municipality would have difficulties in getting paid. In Tuzla, the mayor also wanted to see more Swedish companies in joint ventures with Bosnian counterparts. The prospects for cooperation of this type appear to be bleak in the present political and economic situation. The Swedish joint venture company Swedfund, for example, has no intention of starting to work in the country.

Business culture and language problems have also occurred. Hörby tried to assist a company in Maglai with some used timber processing equipment, but the project failed because of tedious decision-making procedures and poor communications on the recipient side.

Some prospects, although not yet in progress, have been reported. In Travnik, the Karlskrona branch office of the Swedish-Finnish IT-consultant TietoEnator has had some discussions with a Bosnian IT-company on joint tenders for IT-projects in Kosovo. For Konjic municipal management, one of the most important prospects of the forthcoming twinning programme was possible cooperation with a container production company in Strängnäs to meet the needs in Kosovo.

On the other hand, it has to be admitted that, in some cases, those interviewed on the Bosnian side did not only regard commercial cooperation as a method to make profits, but also a means to influence and change the attitudes of the inhabitants as regards the economy and economic cooperation.

Conclusions

1. The business environment in Bosnia is still considered to be too insecure for any extensive commercial cooperation in the form of joint ventures.
2. So far, little has been achieved as regards commercial activities, although there are a number of ideas and still undefined intentions floating around.
3. Well-functioning small-scale commercial cooperation with Swedish companies under the twinning programme could become an important instrument in the work of changing the attitudes of people and the business climate. However, this type of cooperation should be self-financed and not subsidised by SALA-funds.

3.6 Gender Issues

Generally, during this first phase of the SALA Programme, there were few projects or exchanges of delegations where gender issues have been in focus. In some delegations there have been more women than in others. This has mostly been the case when the participants have been employed in social sectors and education. However, the general attitude towards gender issues, both on the Swedish and the Bosnian side, has been positive where the inclusion of more women in municipal cooperation is concerned.

In the reports from Swedish municipalities, there are a few indications that gender issues have been included in one way or another. As mentioned above, one lady, working with issues of equality, participated in the Zivinice delegation to Åre and is now preparing a plan for her work. The whole Mostar concept is to try to work for peace and reconciliation through a group of qualified and generally respected women.

Conclusion

Although some positive initiatives have been taken, it appears that gender issues have not yet played any important role per se in the SALA Programme.

4. The quality of the dialogue

The interviews in Sweden and in Bosnia give quite a different picture as regards the quality of the dialogue. In Sweden, most interviews indicated that, despite distance and language problems, the Swedish municipalities had been able to establish a functioning dialogue with their partners and that a relationship of mutual trust had been established. Yet, some interviews indicated that initially it had been difficult to get beyond the polite phrases and to enter into deeper and more serious discussions. Another problem for some had been to get answers in time and to maintain communications.

In Bosnia, there were some examples of programmes of cooperation which functioned well, for example between the municipalities of Gothenburg and Tuzla, Stockholm and Sarajevo, Luleå and Zenica, Hörby and Maglai and Staffanstorps and Bileca. The fact that the International Director in Zenica was fluent in English appears to have been a very important factor for the quality of the dialogue with Luleå. In the other cases the evaluator found deficiencies.

In Lukavac, Zivinice and Mostar the present lack of funds had led to a break in the programmes and there was clear frustration about the slow progress of the SALA twinning programme. In Mostar, the Swedish coordinator had visited the city with an EU-delegation in order to try to secure funds from them, but this had created insecurity as to where the SALA programme was heading. In Lukavac, one participant suddenly spoke out at the end of the meeting, complaining about the slow progress of cooperation with Burlöv and making comparisons with German twinning, which he claimed was more efficient.

In Gorazde, after the initial, normal positive comments about cooperation with Gävle, the new mayor suddenly changed his approach and claimed that the contact person on the Bosnian side, was “a semi-private person” who had more or less monopolised contacts with Sweden. According to the mayor, this person had visited Sweden seven times and the management of the municipality had little insight into what had been done during these visits. He then turned to the representatives of Sida and demanded that the “right channels” should be used. When informed of this by the evaluator, the coordinator in Gävle was not aware of this change of attitude and spirit. He had experienced the programme of cooperation with Gorazde as very smooth and valuable on both sides. This situation may change once again, since, after the April elections, the Social Democratic Party together with the Liberals will most probably take over the political management of the city.

In Konjic, the mayor deplored the fact that a visit planned to take place in the autumn of 1999 by a delegation from Strängnäs, including the director of the local container factory, had been cancelled for lack of time and hoped they would now come during the spring. The evaluator read some criticism in this remark, i.e. that the Swedish side had not put every effort into the twinning programme. The fact that Strängnäs received its SEK 53,000 in 1998 and that, hitherto, little has happened, appears to confirm this critical interpretation.

In Sanski Most, the change of mayor as a result of charges of corruption seems to have had a very negative influence on the dialogue with Gothenburg. The thirteen persons present at the meeting with the evaluator were badly informed about the programme and their expectations of it were far from what any municipality with a functioning internal dialogue could ever expect. Things are now also happening in Sanski Most that are totally counterproductive to any trustful cooperation with Gothenburg. (See below under chapter 5.1).

In Travnik, the evaluator met another problem. Before leaving Sweden the evaluator had received a rather impressive list of planned and ongoing projects from the coordinator in Karlskrona. The mayor, however, only talked about two projects that he praised highly, the computer support to the town administration and the GIS project. The mayor was rather new to his post. He was appointed in March 1999. It is therefore possible that he did not know about all the other interventions.

As regards the defunct programme of cooperation with Vaggeryd, he blamed the outgoing mayor and his group for not having informed him. Since Vaggeryd has made repeated efforts to renew contact, this may only be part of the truth, or possibly Vaggeryd has tried to contact people at lower levels in the administration. Anyway, he had now found out about the programme of cooperation with Vaggeryd and had re-established contacts with the Swedish municipality. He regarded the programme with Karlskrona as concluded and foresaw a new programme of cooperation with Vaggeryd.

This information was totally new to the former (Bosnian) coordinator in Karlskrona. An interpretation of why this happened may be that the contract of the Karlskrona coordinator was concluded at the end of 1999 and that the mayor did not see any new natural cooperation partner there.

Conclusions

1. The quality of the dialogue appears to have functioned well, or reasonably well, in five twinning arrangements,
2. In three municipalities, the lack of funds for projects and some lack of communication (or understanding) appear to have had a negative effect.
3. In one municipality, the newly appointed political management questions the right of their own coordinator to represent the city.
4. In three municipalities a change of mayor has had negative effects on communication and cooperation.
5. In at least five or six municipalities the expectations of the SALA programme were found to be unrealistic.
6. In one Swedish municipality the conclusion of the contract of the coordinator has apparently caused a rupture in relations.
7. One of the biggest problems of the present SALA programme is that, on the Bosnian side, it is often managed by the mayor himself. Thus, if a mayor is replaced, there is a risk that the programme may fail. Since the funds for the programme are, for good reasons, entirely in the hands of the Swedish municipalities, there was apparently no real administration with files, records and rules for the programme.
8. Corruption was often mentioned on the Swedish side as a possible problem in the dialogue, but in reality few of the interviewed believed that their counterparts were corrupt or at least very corrupt. Thus, there is a gap between the general statement and the opinions of the interviewees that could be true, but could also be due to a too unsuspecting attitude on the Swedish side.
9. The overall conclusion in this respect is that the quality of the dialogue has been deficient in at least seven of the twelve twinning arrangements. Top management in the Bosnian municipalities is also not conducive to a broad dialogue and transparent management of the programme.

This is a situation that the implementing agency, SALA and the funding agency, Sida, should not accept. Different solutions will have to be discussed and agreed.

Recommendations

1. One absolute demand on both Bosnian and Swedish municipalities alike is that the programme should have an appointed coordinator at a high management level.
2. Policies, rules and regulations must be transparent and known to all employees, involved or interested, on both sides. All relevant information should be routinely collected and kept in files that are available to all.
3. Stronger demands in respect of English language skills for the nominated Bosnian coordinators would also improve the present situation.
4. Sida and SALA should once again discuss the basic rules of the programme and try to avoid financing single projects and instead transform it into a yearly programme that could contain both smaller technical/administrative initiatives and those that deal with democracy, equality and local self-management. This would not place a greater strain on a municipality than having to deal with one major project that may arouse unrealistic expectations in the twinned Bosnian municipality.

To some extent this situation may, however, depend on the construction of the programme.

Today, Swedish municipalities have to present “projects” for funding by SALA. These funds shall be used within one year. Furthermore, if a municipality is granted funds for one project, this will block discussions on all other programmes of cooperation for that year, regardless of how useful and urgent something else may be. This makes a planned programme with different small interventions of a “transfer of knowledge character” difficult and it forces the Swedish municipalities either to try to place many different interventions under headings where they do not belong or to find their own resources for them.

5. Conclusive analysis of the Sala twinning programme

The positive opinions given by the Swedish municipalities in the first part of this evaluation, combined with the long list of positive developments and promising initiatives provided above, could indicate that, after some initial problems, the SALA twinning programme is now beginning to take off. After all, the programme has only been functioning for about two years and the amount of money spent, SEK 6 million, is not very big in relation to the many initiatives taken. If this had been the case, the evaluator would have been very pleased. Unfortunately, the mainly positive picture presented above is only part of the scenario.

The present problems of the SALA twinning programme are mainly due to the very difficult situation in Bosnia. There was a serious lack of analysis before the programme was initiated. Cultural aspects, the prevailing political scene in Bosnia as well as local conditions and preconditions for twinning cooperation should have been better analysed. This type of analysis should have resulted in more stringent considerations on how the intended programme could best be prepared, implemented, managed and monitored. Strategies, policies and rules and regulations for the programme, better suited to the prevailing situation, should have been set up. The roles of the different parties should have been better defined. More efforts should have been made to inform the Bosnian municipalities about the scope and limits of the programme. More resources than the present 5% administration fee should have been put at the disposal of the managing agency, SALA, to enable it to manage and monitor the programme in a better way.

Sida and SALA must share responsibility for this. To some extent, the present situation may be due to the positive evaluation of the Polish and Baltic twinning programmes of 1996 that may have lead both organisations to believe that a Bosnian programme could be built up in the same, more or less, self-managing way as the earlier programme. A second point of departure for the programme can be found in an ambition to assist refugees to return home.

5.1. Polish-Baltic Twinning Programme and Returning Refugees – Points of Departure for the Bosnian Programme

The 1996 evaluation of the twinning programme with Poland and the Baltic States was very positive and created some enthusiasm at Sida for this type of municipal cooperation. The evaluator, who was part of the two-man team in that evaluation, still considers that this programme of cooperation was very successful. It was an example of an almost “NGO-like” movement in many Swedish municipalities that wanted to assist the newly liberated neighbouring countries in their aspirations to build new democratic structures. Thus, from the beginning, democracy was at the top of the

agenda in every municipal partnership that was formed. This development was further strengthened by strong and active Swedish popular support, especially for the small Baltic States, and a genuine will to assist our neighbours on the other side of the Baltic Sea. At the same time, there was also a clear understanding that the development of local, democratic structures in these countries would be beneficial for all countries in the Baltic region, both politically and for the development of economic and other relations.

The timing of the establishment of the Polish-Baltic twinning programme could not have been better. The different interventions with the Swedish municipalities fitted into national development ambitions for local democracy and self-government like one cog-wheel into another. This has not been the case in Bosnia and the preconditions are far more complicated.

The distance to Bosnia is longer both physically and in respect of culture, language and technical communications. The situation in Bosnia is also much more difficult with its tense and complicated national political scene. The development of local democracy often lies in the hands of “strong men”. Corruption is widespread and is generally considered as a major threat to the development of a new more democratic and multi-ethnic Bosnia.

Adjustment to foreign aid has proceeded rapidly. The habit of demanding foreign support rather than trying to find internal solutions has, with time, undermined the interest and commitment of the donors. The donor society is, with some justification, very disappointed at the low level of government interest in making the necessary changes to transform the country into a democratic and self-sufficient society. Aid funds are also no longer coming from emergency budgets, and new areas of conflict and disasters such as Kosovo, Central America after the Hurricane Mitch and now, recently, the floods in Mozambique, are demanding more attention from donors.

To some extent, Sida and SALA have taken this very difficult situation into consideration, since Swedish funds are under the control of the Swedish municipalities. For most of them, this has been essential. Otherwise, they state that they could not have assumed responsibility for their programmes. But the question still remains as to whether Sida, SALA and the municipalities themselves have sufficiently analysed this complicated situation and adapted their interventions accordingly. The evaluator does not think so. The design of the present programme appears to have been based on good intentions but, unfortunately, less on the actual situation.

The other origin of this programme can be found in an original idea to assist Bosnian refugees to return to their home country. The idea was that closer relations with the former municipalities would bring the two partners together in a form of cooperation, where Bosnian refugees in Sweden would get more contacts with people in their home country and, thus, a more positive and realistic idea about their prospects for re-emigration. It was in this spirit, for example, that Gävle obtained its twinning programme with Gorazde, since a large number of its Bosnian refugees came from that town.

Thus, individuals from the Bosnian community in Sweden were highly instrumental in the early development of the programme. This is the case, at least in Karlskrona, Ronneby, Burlöv, Gävle and Åre. In other municipalities Bosnians also work as interpreters and part-time employees. In many cases, the Bosnians involved proposed possible partners, established channels of communication, functioned as interpreters and communicators and sometimes also proposed the content of programmes.

After his return from Bosnia, the evaluator has discussed his findings with some of them. They were not surprised at his findings, although very depressed. They had expected their compatriots in the

twinned municipalities to respond better to the Swedish programme. One person said that he had really wanted to show to his fellow countrymen the wonderful example of Swedish local democracy and management. With time, he had hoped, this would give results in his old country. In fact, many of the Bosnians involved in the programme appear to have been at least as Swedish as the Swedes themselves! This positive verdict does, however, also include a certain criticism towards them for their lack of realism about the conditions for the SALA Programme in the start-up period.

The original objective, an increase in the return of refugees to Bosnia, has not been achieved. Most of the municipalities report that this has not happened, or that they do not know. Some also claim that this was not an objective when starting up their programmes. Only two municipalities, Karlskrona and Stockholm, report that any re-emigration worth mentioning has occurred. In the latter case a figure of thirty families was given, which should be compared with the total number of Bosnian refugees in Sweden which is around 55,000.

The situation for returning refugees has also proven to be difficult. In a very illustrative case, just reported from Gothenburg, the mayor of Sanski Most had recently declared a very successful returning refugee as “undesirable in his municipality” and “advised” him to go back to his original hometown, Banja Luka. This person had, on his return, started a carpentry workshop in Sanski Most and developed it into a factory with 70 employees. In this process he had reportedly established good relations with the former mayor, who is now under investigation for suspected corruption. Whoever is right in this case, it is apparent that the mayor considers himself fully competent to act as prosecutor, judge and police, although 70 work places may be lost. This is a good illustration of the present very difficult situation for local democracy in Bosnia. Gothenburg now intends to conclude its cooperation programme with Sanski Most.

Conclusions

1. Although initially the programme was started as an experiment, it was not sufficiently well analysed and prepared. It was based on two unrealistic preconditions, the positive results of the Baltic twinning and the idea of promoting the organised return of Bosnian refugees living in Sweden. Neither has been positive for the programme.
2. Sida and SALA should have better analysed the actual situation in Bosnia and defined possible critical issues that could be negative for the programme. Had this been done, the strategies, policies, rules and regulations of the programme would most likely have been different.

5.2 The organisation of the programme

The foundations of the SALA programme are the different steering documents (the Agreement between Sida and SALA, the Sida Guidelines for the Programme and a SALA Circular with instructions for applying municipalities). These three documents contain a number of conditions, rules and regulations for the programme. In general, they are all fully, clearly and consistently in line with the Swedish policy for international development cooperation but, as described below, not sufficiently adapted to the Bosnian context.

5.2.1 The agreement between Sida and SALA and other documents

Under the present organisation of the programme, Sida pays SALA for the management and supervision of the Programme. The SALA fee was originally 4% of the first SEK 5 million and then 5% for the second payment of SEK 1 million.

The official agreement between Sida and SALA, as well as the general guidelines are clear, realistic from the Swedish point of view, and in accordance with Swedish development cooperation policies.

The SALA instructions for the Swedish municipalities that wish to propose projects for financing are likewise clear and understandable.

The problem is how these three documents should be read and how they should be understood. How can Swedish support best be given in such a difficult situation as that in Bosnia? What is meant by “democracy” and “strengthening the local administration” in the Bosnian context? How can small projects of up to a maximum of SEK 400,000 contribute to “increased employment” in a situation where the economy has largely been ruined by the war? It is probably not impossible, but such issues should have been discussed in depth with all the municipalities interested in cooperation with Bosnia. All this would have merited more considerations and consultations between all partners, from Sida, via SALA down to the municipalities applying for project money. This has not happened.

The SALA coordinator has only visited Bosnia once, at the start-up of the programme, but did not even have time to visit all the municipalities involved. Since then, under the present agreement, SALA has not had enough resources to let him visit Bosnia even once a year to monitor the programme in the field. At the same time, under the agreement, SALA is supposed to be the focal point for the municipalities in Sweden. SALA shall give advice, supervise what is happening and make a result-oriented report once a year to Sida on the effects of the programme in relation to the objectives set (para 7.2 in the General Agreement).

Conclusions

1. The evaluator believes that neither Sida nor SALA has really understood the different and difficult preconditions for municipal twinning cooperation with Bosnia.
2. The low administrative fee for SALA (4% and 5% – in total some SEK 220,000) for the management of such a complicated programme is proof of this. Sida has actually received services from SALA in accordance with this low fee and in Bosnia this has certainly not been enough!
3. SALA has responded logically and has seen its assignment as mainly to regulate, receive applications, examine project proposals and grant funds for the programme.
4. Yet SALA could, even with the present funds available, have played a more proactive role in Sweden. SALA could have developed a more active focal role, bringing the participating municipalities together in meetings, keeping them better informed about what was happening in the different programmes and giving practical advice that would have permitted a more realistic and consistent Swedish strategy and approach.

Recommendation

In other forms of development cooperation the administrative fee varies from 8 to 14 per cent (for UNDP) depending on the complexity of the project or programme. Based on the above analysis and the demands for a more active and qualified management of the programme, Sida and SALA should initiate a discussion on what needs to be done, coupled to more reasonable management fee.

5.2.2 Reporting

In the programme, SALA has furthermore been the recipient of reports from the different projects. SALA should, under the agreement, also make regular follow-ups and summaries of the many projects implemented. This has been difficult and the poor standard of reporting has been criticised by Sida.

The evaluator fully agrees with this criticism. When, at the beginning of his assignment, he tried to get an overview of the many different projects, he was confronted with a large number of reports, ranging from thick “books” to very thin descriptions of what had happened in the different projects. Furthermore, the reporting system was not coherent.

The lack of a uniform format for reports, and the inexperience (or lack of knowledge) of reporting on the part of the participating municipalities, was also evident. It is obvious that under such circumstances, it will be difficult for SALA to make a synthesis of the many different activities and to draw any operative conclusions from them. The fact that the SALA coordinator has had no possibility to draw on experience from the field has contributed to this insecurity where reporting is concerned.

5.2.3 Rules and regulations

There are a number of rules in the present arrangement of the programme that should be discussed. Many of the Swedish municipalities complained about the rule for air travel to and from Bosnia. At present air fares can only be covered up to SEK 2,500 per person. The actual cost is more than SEK 6,000 for a return ticket. Thus, finding funds for travel purposes often creates a serious problem, since it is not legally possible to use municipal budgets for expenditure of this type. Some of the persons interviewed have described their dilemma to find funds for travel purposes as an “inventory process”.

Another rule that has created problems is that municipalities can only apply for one project at a time and that the project has to be completed within one year. If not, the unspent funds have to be repaid to SALA. This rule risks blocking other, equally important but possibly less expensive, projects that aim at changing attitudes.

The one-year time limit for the use of project funds is another problem. In the light of this rule, recipients may give priority to large and concrete projects, e.g. in infrastructure, and preparations for major investments that can be carried out in one year, rather than to take up smaller, more ideological and less “concrete” projects for the development of democracy, social issues and equality.

Conclusions

1. The request for full funding of tickets from Bosnia to Sweden is, in the opinion of the evaluator, quite reasonable. The present rule is unrealistic, since the Bosnian municipalities have little possibility to pay even part of the travel costs to Sweden. Furthermore, by law, Swedish local authorities are not allowed to finance such external activities with taxpayers’ money. On the other hand, the Bosnian partner municipality should be responsible for all expenditures for Swedish visitors to their own country.
2. The evaluator agrees that the one-year rule may be counterproductive. There is a risk that money will be spent just for the sake of spending it within the prescribed time limits. The other problem in a country such as Bosnia is that distances and poor communications may make it difficult to conclude a project within the prescribed time.
3. Funding only one project at a time actually blocks programmes of cooperation in other areas which could have been included as small components in a broad programme of cooperation - with fewer demands for funds from SALA.

Recommendations

1. The maximum payment for travel to Sweden should be adjusted to cover the lowest return air fare.
2. The present SALA programme should be transformed to include one-year programmes that can contain different elements up to a maximum amount and not merely one single project at a time. The applications by the municipalities should be examined in the same way as before, but more consideration should be given to those proposals that give priority to the overall objectives of the programme as described in the present guidelines.
3. Funds not spent in one year should be transferable to the next and deducted from the maximum amount for that year. This means that no municipality would have more than SEK 400,000 at its disposal at any one point in time.

5.2.4. Roles and flow of information

At present, the programme is characterised to a large extent by an unclear definition of roles and an insufficient flow of information.

SALA has, more or less, seen its role as the project examination board, fund-granting and administration body. Consequently, in the opinion of the evaluator, SALA has devoted too little time and effort to networking, counselling and active monitoring of the work of all the twelve municipalities. As a result of this passive role, the reporting to Sida has been weak. Sida, in turn, can be blamed for having been *too efficient* in its negotiations with SALA about the management fee.

The Swedish municipalities, in general, have treated their twinning cooperation programmes as unique and, until last autumn, few of them had had any regular contacts with other municipalities. Much could have been gained if there had been regular meetings between them to exchange information, discuss ideas, coordinate shipments and to learn from each other.

The same applies to the Bosnian municipalities. For example the coordinator in Zenica was found to be ignorant of the citizen registration system that Karlskrona had supplied to nearby Travnik. There is a great risk that efforts may be duplicated under the present organisation of the programme.

There are also weaknesses at Sida. Sida is financing the programme, but the Swedish embassy in Sarajevo is not consulted by SALA before a decision is made to finance a project. Consequently, there is a risk that a municipality may embark on a project that overlaps another financed by Sweden, as has apparently been the case with the GIS project for Travnik.

The role of the Swedish embassy in Sarajevo in the programme needs to be strengthened. There is for example, no policy, or rule, as regards how and when representatives of the different municipalities should maintain contacts with the embassy. Some visit the embassy regularly, others occasionally, a few only rarely. Among those that visit the embassy, some go to the ambassador and some to the counsellor for development cooperation and this has created another problem, since internal channels of information have not always functioned properly there.

During the evaluation, the evaluator also heard some negative comments about the programme in the embassy. This is not surprising since, when the flow of information is sporadic, it is usually negative news that is spread. What is healthy and positive rarely surfaces in such a situation. The evaluator considers that here both SALA and many of the Swedish municipalities have missed a

very important PR factor: keeping the different stakeholders properly informed and including representatives of the financiers in their information network.

The evaluator is aware of the fact that it was not originally intended that the SALA programme should lie under the management responsibility of the embassy. The difficult conditions for this kind of cooperation in Bosnia should, however, have merited more active monitoring by the embassy, especially as SALA has no representation in the country.

Conclusion

For a possible future twinning project, all parties involved will need to discuss and agree on a better information system than the present system in the SALA programme. A system of this type must involve all possible partners in Sweden and the partner country.

5.3 Sida's Different Roles

As mentioned above, the evaluator has felt some concern about the role of Sida in the analysis of the preconditions and design of the programme. Other problems have been the inadequate administration fee for SALA for a programme of this type and some of the rules and regulations set by Sida. The other role of Sida, solely to be the financier of additional funds for the programme with SALA as the implementing agency, was not originally considered to be a major problem by the evaluator. Gradually, however, he has become more and more concerned about a number of other aspects of the involvement of Sida.

In discussions on the first report from Sweden and the first two draft evaluation reports, the evaluator has begun to discern both a certain degree of impatience with the slow progress of the programme and some not entirely realistic expectations of it.

5.3.1. Who is responsible for the evaluation?

Although SALA is formally responsible for this evaluation, it is in reality Sida that has steered it. The final Terms of Reference were proposed by SALA, but were approved by Sida after some elaborate changes. The evaluation is financed by Sida. In the discussions on the first two drafts, it is in reality Sida that has been the most active in the dialogue.

The underlying idea of delegating the responsibility for the evaluation was that SALA needed to learn more about this kind of work. In the present circumstances it is, however, not surprising that the sense of ownership at SALA has been low and the dialogue with the evaluator weak. For the evaluator this situation has given some cause for concern as to whom to address in the report and with whom to carry on the dialogue. He has chosen to maintain as close relations as possible with Sida, not least on account of the very good support and cooperation with the Swedish embassy in Sarajevo, and has seen this dialogue as mainly constructive and supportive.

Now, at the end of the evaluation, the question arises as to the extent to which Sida can issue directives for the final version of a report that formally lies in the hands of SALA, even after SALA has officially declared that it is satisfied with it. This is not a satisfactory situation and for future evaluations of this kind, Sida will need to have a more stringent policy.

5.3.2. Developments, achievements or "measurable results?"

Sida, in both Sarajevo and Stockholm, has urged the evaluator to be more precise in his definition of the word "development" and list "what has been achieved". This creates another problem, i.e. to define the meaning of the words "achievements" and "developments". The evaluator finds it very difficult to make such a listing, for three reasons:

- *Firstly*, because there are no pre-set LFA-indicators in the programme, only objective areas on which the municipalities were expected to focus their efforts. Therefore, an evaluation of that kind would be unfair to the participating municipalities. The Sida funds allocated to the SALA twinning programme were intended to facilitate municipal cooperation and not to run traditional aid projects.
- *Secondly*, municipal cooperation is a process and as such it must be given time to develop and mature before any measurable results can be seen.
- *Thirdly*, making an “absolute” evaluation after only two years in such a difficult environment as Bosnia is also highly risky. If, for example, the Bai Bang Paper Mill Project, or the Sida-supported fishery school in Kelibia in Tunisia had been evaluated in this way, the reports would doubtless have stated that too little had happened. It might even have recommended the termination of both of these so highly successful projects!

Although the present SALA programme leaves much to be desired, the mere idea of having attained sustainable “achievements” and “measurable results” in less than two years in this kind of programme with only “greasing funds”, and in a country such as Bosnia, is unrealistic, unless “achievements” are formulated in, for example, the following way:

- a cooperation agreement has been concluded between two municipalities;
- x number of study groups in the area of democracy have been sent to Sweden and/or Bosnia;
- x number of shipments of equipment have been sent to Bosnian twinning partners;
- x number of technical consultations have been provided under the cooperation agreement;
- an eco-school project has been identified and a project initiated;
- a group of young orphans has been given the opportunity to go to Sweden for rehabilitation;
- a high school has been rehabilitated;
- a successful computer training programme is in progress;
- etc.

From this point of view, it can be advocated (and no doubt the Swedish municipalities will do so, when they read this report!) that there have been many achievements of this type and that these can be listed and measured. The evaluator does not agree with measuring progress in this since it is a very “mechanical” way of looking at achievements. Another and better way would be to assess whether *the effects of what has been done have had a long-term, positive influence in the areas of cooperation!*

For the evaluator, this issue has recently become increasingly important and worrying. The repeated demands made by Sida for lists of such “achievements” have given him a feeling that Sida regards the programme, more or less, as a development project managed by consultant companies. It appears that the essence of municipal cooperation, a long-term process of cooperation between citizens and management of two municipalities (of which one is weak in many respects), carries too little weight in this way of thinking. This may reflect a very different idea of the original twinning concept and could constitute a major obstacle to a constructive dialogue between Sida and SALA.

5.3.3 A change or a development of the municipal cooperation concept?

Different persons at Sida have posed the question as to whether the present SALA programme could, or should, be terminated and replaced by another programme, where more funds would be given to a smaller number of the more efficient Swedish municipalities. Behind this naturally lies the conclusion that the results of the present programme have been poor and that now it is time to try something else.

Once again, the evaluator has a different opinion since he feels that this reflects too much of an “either or” attitude. There are already deviations in the present SALA programme that need further consideration beyond simply terminating the programme.

Cooperation between a number of municipalities is growing and should be allowed to continue to grow. Moreover there are further openings for bigger projects based on the twinning programme. The programmes of cooperation between Stockholm and Sarajevo and Gothenburg and Tuzla have been efficient and highly appreciated. The coordinators in all four cities see great scope for further development of their work but, at the same time, they have expressed their frustration with the negative response at Sida to proposals for an expansion of cooperation. Both cities have the confidence of their partners and good knowledge of conditions in this difficult part of the world

The evaluator naturally understands the role of Sida: to ensure that projects and programmes in the SALA Programme do not grow out of control and become “big, grey elephants”. Yet, he cannot understand why qualified “aid operators” in Bosnia, such as these two cities, cannot be entrusted with larger projects, as has the City of Amsterdam through the Dutch Ministry for Foreign Affairs. (see below, chapter 6.3).

Another programme that could be assessed in different way than as a component in the present programme of twinning cooperation is the programme between the NGO ZGP in Mostar and SALA Kronoberg which, in the opinion of the evaluator, lies closer to the areas of human rights, reconciliation and democracy.

6. Other international twinning programmes and municipal support

6.1 The Atlas Print Project

The Italian-funded Atlas Print Project was conceived in the aftermath of an early humanitarian assistance programme. The project idea was to connect municipalities in Italy and Bosnia and, at the same time, carry out a survey of the social needs of all municipalities in Bosnia and make priorities between them. The method selected was a bottom-up approach, where the project worked from the grass-root level and upwards to analyse needs and discuss projects and finally reach a consensus on the direction of the future development of the social sector. A number of Italian municipalities participated in this programme that was managed through a special co-ordination office in Rome. The municipalities managed to raise about 1 MUSD for the project themselves, and through cooperation with their respective regions another 2.7 MUSD was raised for different interventions in the cooperating Bosnian municipalities. The Italian municipalities worked closely with their partners in seminars and workshops in order to identify the most important needs and also to analyse where they could best be of some assistance.

UNDP/OPS claimed that the most positive outcome of the Atlas Project was that it created a methodology for planning and consensus building. It also demonstrated the effectiveness of decentralised cooperation. The division of responsibility between municipalities and cantons in respect of social work and education was overcome through mixed working groups. Some of the Italian municipalities were still maintaining relations with their twinned cities.

The end product of the entire project was an Atlas which would describe the social needs of all municipalities in Bosnia. The Atlas was also intended to function as a basis for possible further Italian support to the social sectors.

Although funds came from Italy, the project was managed by UNDP/OPS in Bosnia. The project started in April 1996 and was planned to last for nine months, but in reality it took longer and the final product, the Atlas, was not ready until 1999. Funds for a second phase have still not been granted, but UNDP has stated that the project is being further developed in three municipalities. One of them is Travnik. The evaluator heard nothing about this during his visit to Travnik.

Conclusions

Some comments on the Atlas Project made by other persons during the evaluation gave the impression that it was still uncertain whether or not there would be any continuation of this project. The evaluator had mixed feelings about it. The end product, the Atlas, is a thick volume containing an enormous amount of information but, when looking at the descriptions of the "Swedish" municipalities one by one, the descriptions are rather shallow and the information given will soon be outdated. The method could, nevertheless be interesting to study closer.

6.2 German Twinning

At the present time nine German cities have partnerships with cities in Bosnia. Two of them have a long history and more highly developed levels of cooperation but they may serve as examples of what is going on in the other partnerships.

The city of Gelsenkirchen has had connections with Zenica since 1969 and the city of Friedrichshafen has cooperated with Sarajevo since 1972. Both therefore had established good connections with their Bosnian partners long before the war and there were good exchanges in the areas of culture, youth, sports, etc. There was also a regular exchange of delegations of municipal representatives and an interchange of citizens. These relations were completely cut at the outbreak of the war in 1992. Instead the German cities supplied humanitarian assistance in the forms of food supplies, seeds and medicines. A great number of shipments were organised by both cities, mostly by trucks but also by air. Concerts were arranged for the support of the sister cities, aid organisations were founded and fund raising actions were organised for the benefit of inhabitants in the two sister cities.

After the war, the German cities have participated actively in the reconstruction work. Fire brigade and rescue vehicles, buses, tools and school materials have been supplied. Both cities have received a great number of refugees from their twinned cities. Programmes for re-emigration have been set up and special efforts have been made to assist returning refugees and others in respect of their living conditions. Gelsenkirchen has assisted Zenica in the reconstruction of houses and Friedrichshafen has contributed DM 800,000 for a mobile health centre in Sarajevo.

There is no German government support connected to these initiatives, but the government considers this twinning support to be good and helpful. Twinning arrangements between two sister cities are considered to offer the best possible option for the successful re-emigration and re-integration of the refugees. Hitherto the German twinning programmes have not been subsidised with official aid contributions. The relative wealth of the German cities involved, for example the DM 800,000 contribution for one project only from a medium-sized city such as Friedrichshafen, makes the impact of this support important.

6.3 City of Amsterdam's development cooperation programme with Tuzla

The City of Amsterdam has one cooperation project with Tuzla, and another with Pristina in Kosovo. These two projects have, however, nothing in common with twinning programmes. The City of Amsterdam is, according to information received, implementing and managing projects and programmes as an executive agency for Dutch aid. This could be a model of interest in respect of cooperation that has developed beyond the normal twinning concept, for example in the cases of Stockholm and Sarajevo and Gothenburg and Tuzla.

6.4. The MIFI Programmes

MIFI stand for Municipal Infrastructure Finance and Implementation training. The programme is managed by OSCE, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The first MIFI programme was embarked upon in 1999. Ten municipalities, among them Gorazde and Konjic, were the pioneers. The objective of the programme was to strengthen the finance management capacity, to increase citizen participation in the process and thereby its transparency. Another objective was to raise the creditworthiness of major infrastructure projects in the municipalities.

The project worked through a series of intensive workshops that provided the participants with the necessary knowledge and “tools” with concrete applications for improved financial management, for identification of roles and responsibilities, improved communications and project planning. Throughout the programme, the municipalities have been bringing home the methods and mechanisms introduced in the workshops and applying them to real infrastructure projects. The motto for the programme was “transparency and accountability in local government”.

The results of this first programme have been followed up and the results were very positive. All municipalities had made changes in their financial structures and there was a greater openness as regards the budget process. Yet, it was interesting to note that Gorazde ended up last of the ten in the evaluation of progress achieved – with 32.19% of verifiable goals met – whereas Konjic came fourth with 55.63%.

The first MIFI programme for the ten municipalities was then complemented with a basic programme, MIFI-II, for a broader group of 49 municipalities, which was financed by Sida. This programme recognised the fact that many municipalities were at different stages of post-war reconstruction and development. The objective was to introduce them to this new way of managing finances and to see which municipalities would qualify for the next stage. The workshops given in this programme gave an introduction to some of the tools necessary to improve transparency and management in municipal government, the same tools that functioned as cornerstones in MIFI-I.

Conclusion

MIFI-I, is an interesting project in the light of the somewhat discouraging results of the present SALA programme. The municipalities that have qualified for a programme of this type have actually displayed an interest in developing efficiency, transparency and wider popular participation in their management of resources. That would mean that they are more open to change and have more knowledge of the processes required to succeed in their development work. As such they would be more open to outside contacts and have a better basis to start from, once twinning cooperation has been established. Therefore, one way of continuing the SALA programme could be to let those municipalities that have passed “the MIFI exam” become eligible for twinning cooperation.

7. A future for the Sala programme in Bosnia?

As presented above in chapter 3, many interesting initiatives have been taken by almost all the Swedish municipalities. Yet, the totality of the programme is far from as successful as it may seem from the Swedish perspective. Of the twelve twinning partnerships under the present SALA programme, four, or possibly five, are deemed to be functioning well or in a reasonable way. In the other seven twinning agreements, there are various types of inconsistencies in expectations, of negative changes in the municipal management, of negative behaviour, of delays in the start-up of programmes of cooperation, and of various deficiencies in communications.

Does this mean that the programme has totally failed and that it should be abandoned? The evaluator has seriously considered this alternative in the light of his short but frustrating experience in Bosnia. However, after careful consideration he has come to the conclusion that the reasons for a continuation carry more weight than the reasons for closing down the programme.

The first reason is long-term and strategic. For the next stage, after the physical reconstruction of the war damage, the development of structures of a civil society will become even more important than before. A long interview with a well-placed Swedish member of staff in the Office of the High Representative indicates that development of this type will now be in focus - and will remain in focus for many years. If aid continues to flow into Bosnia, where can the international society find a better base for its work for long-term solutions and peace than at the local level in a country that is divided into two entities, and split into three ethnic groups that are not yet reconciled with one another? In this perspective, an efficient Swedish twinning programme could be one very small, but strategic component.

Secondly, the programme is small and can be easily managed by Sida at the same time as it has potential if it is better managed by SALA and is more realistic about the tough, if not rough, Bosnian political context.

Thirdly, the criticisms directed towards the programme in this evaluation give both Sida and SALA an excellent opportunity to learn and make the necessary rearrangements to the programme.

The fourth reason is that the evaluator considers that, on the Swedish side, there is still a great deal of goodwill, some splendid initiatives and important resources. Therefore, in the long run, a more efficient SALA programme could result in important improvements in the Bosnian local government context, if there is a greater understanding of the objectives of the programme and of what the available resources can be used for. If so, the dialogue would become more open and realistic, without hidden agendas, and based more on mutual interests.

The fifth reason is that the outcome of the recent elections may offer new opportunities of this type for the SALA programme. Reportedly, this will now be the case, at least in Gorazde. It may later prove to be the case that the timing of the decision to close down the programme has been very bad!

However, the conditions required for a continuation of the programme imply that

- the pre-conditions for the programme will have to be changed;
- the roles of the different parties involved will need to be better defined;
- the rules and regulations will need to be better adapted to the actual conditions;
- the flow of information will need to be much improved;
- the possible need for some SALA representation in Bosnia by local monitoring, or closer monitoring by Sida, will have to be clarified;

8. Action lines for a possible continuation of the Sala programme

If Sida decides to continue to fund the SALA programme, the evaluator proposes that the following measures should be taken:

1. A seminar should be arranged in Sweden with the participation of all the municipalities, SALA and Sida in order to discuss this evaluation and how the programme could be improved in the light of the report. This should be the start of a regular forum of meetings and communications in Sweden with the participation of SALA and all coordinators of the municipalities concerned in order to obtain an exchange of information and ideas.
2. The present “funding of projects” approach should be transformed into a yearly programming of cooperation. A number of changes concerning the financing of travel costs, the rule that funds shall be used within one year, and the rule that only one project can be financed at any one time should be considered. No municipality should, however, have more than SEK 400,000 placed at its disposal. Unused funds from one year shall reduce the grants in the following year.
3. Roles and responsibilities in the programme should be reconsidered and reformulated and the flow of information among the many different stakeholders reorganised. The fee to SALA for the management of the programme should be adjusted in the light of this reformulation.
4. The five best-functioning municipal cooperation programmes should continue more or less in the same way as they do today. They already work more or less with a programme approach. They should be regarded as “qualified” to make further proposals.
5. The other Swedish municipalities that wish to continue programmes of cooperation should be given an opportunity to initiate another round of discussions with their cooperation partners – in the light of this evaluation. Those municipalities that come up with acceptable plans for the future could be re-installed as “full participants” in the SALA programme. Other programmes should be terminated.
6. Sida should consider whether the Stockholm programme of support for adult education should be a separate project – if not it should continue within the agreement with the canton of Sarajevo. Sida could also consider whether Gothenburg and Stockholm could implement bigger projects.
7. The process of changing the concept of the programme in Bosnia could be started up with a seminar or a conference in that country, where the evaluation and its consequences can be openly discussed. SALA and Sida should be present at this seminar to assist and provide the framework for such discussions.
8. One prerequisite for possible continuation shall be that in both Bosnian and Swedish municipalities there must be an appointed, qualified coordinator who is not on the political level. Coordinators should have knowledge of English.
9. There must be a general agreement between the municipalities on the programme of cooperation as well as an agreement on each programme or project that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the two parties. Furthermore, there must be transparent rules and regulations for the programme on both sides and the files must be open to all those interested in the programme. The reporting system at all levels and in both countries will need to be upgraded.

10. The programme will need to ensure that “soft” areas, such as democracy, social welfare and gender are given priority and included as important components of the programme of cooperation. SALA should compile basic material that describes the Swedish democratic system, local democracy and self-management for use as introductory material.
11. A rule should be introduced that the Swedish Embassy in Sarajevo shall have the right, or possibility, to study the different proposals made to SALA and to give its opinion. Swedish municipalities should inform the embassy about their travel plans to Bosnia, the objective of their visits and, after the visit, send a mail containing the travel report for information purposes. The embassy shall not be obliged to give any opinions about the information received, but may do so in certain cases.

Stockholm, 29 September 1999

Terms of Reference for

1999-004483/210

An evaluation of the twinning co-operation between Swedish and Bosnian municipalities

Since 1997, Sweden has supported a twinning co-operation between Municipalities in Sweden and in Bosnia. This co-operation is funded by Sida, the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency, but the implementing agency is the Swedish Association of Local Authorities, SALA.

The co-operation covers twelve Bosnian municipalities, i.e. Sarajevo, Mostar and Tuzla, and thirteen Swedish, the biggest being Stockholm and Göteborg. The areas of co-operation have been mainly focused on the development of democratic structures for the local governance, environment and social sectors as education. So far, for this co-operation, Sida has granted about SEK 5.7 million.

The twinning co-operation with Bosnia has to some extent been built on the experience of a similar co-operation with Poland and the Baltic States. In line with that co-operation the amounts granted for each intervention has been kept at a rather low level, normally around SEK 400,000.

After almost three years, it has now been estimated that a more comprehensive evaluation and analysis of the twinning co-operation will be necessary in order to have a better basis for the further planning and organisation of the work.

Sida has, therefore, requested SALA to make a follow-up of the achievements so far, of possible problems and bottlenecks in the work and to present to Sida its conclusions of the present programme.

For this work, Mr Börje Wallberg of Union of Consultants, Scandinavia AB has been assigned. Mr Wallberg has previously evaluated the Swedish twinning co-operation in Poland and the Baltic states as well as of a large number of other development aid projects and programmes.

1. Objective:

The objective of this consultancy is to collect, in a dialogue with all partners, the necessary information about the present municipal twinning co-operation between Sweden and Bosnia and to present an analysis and conclusions as to how it has contributed to the development (show types of result) of the Bosnian municipalities and how a possible further step in this co-operation could best be developed.

2. Activities

The consultant shall during a period of maximum five weeks

- study all relevant documents at SALA regarding this co-operation
- meet selected representatives of the Swedish municipalities involved and discuss with them their experience, with regard to cooperation and result, and possible improvements;
- travel to Bosnia and meet selected representatives of Bosnian municipalities and discuss with them their experiences so far and their proposals for improvements; if possible the consultant shall also visit one or more ongoing projects;
- meet the representative of Sida in Sarajevo;
- meet representatives for other aid organisations, for instance OHR, OSCE and NSU, to discuss with them their approaches and experiences;
- analyse the materials collected from document studies and interviews;
- write a report to SALA about his observations, analysing the implementation results of the twinning, draw conclusions on its effectiveness in fulfilling the objectives and to make recommendations on any further twinning cooperation programme.

3. Issues to be studied

The consultant shall study the following aspects of the ongoing co-operation:

On democracy:

- in what respects may the Swedish support have contributed to the development of local democracy in the municipalities concerned and are there any effects in Bosnia as a whole?

On the impact of the social programmes:

- how the Swedish interventions have been included or adapted to fit into the municipal programmes;
- in what way these rather small programmes have been taken over by the Bosnian municipalities and become sustainable parts of their own programmes;
- the effects of the social projects generally and from a gender aspect;

On the impact of more technical and educational projects

- how the Swedish interventions have been included or adapted to into the municipal programmes;
- in what way can the Swedish support to technical studies, etc. lead to a more coordinated and co-financed investment programme as regards the rehabilitation of the infrastructure in the municipalities concerned;

On the dialogue between the partners

- how the different projects have been agreed upon and the quality of dialogue between the partners;
- what levels are involved and how decisions are taken;
- the competence of delivery on the Swedish side and the Bosnian receiving capacity.
- how the projects are being followed up by the partners involved;
- how possible conflicts of interest are resolved;
- how the interest among Swedish municipalities is in pursuing twinning cooperation;

On the management of the training programmes

- the contents and quality of the training given;
- the quantity and quality of training materials;
- the selection procedures, also with a gender perspective;
- the effectiveness of training, what has been possible to implement of the programmes?
- the possibility of a Bosnian take-over of the training programmes given.

On the involvement of immigrants from Bosnia

- the involvement of Bosnian immigrants in the cooperation;
- how the experiences of the immigrants have been used;

4. Expected output

A draft report shall be ready to be presented to SALA and the municipalities involved not later than 15 November 1999.

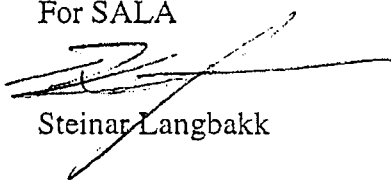
5. Timetable and reporting:

The field assignment of the consultancy will be carried out during the period 1 October to 15 November 1999. The maximum time for the field assignment will be two and a half weeks. There will be two and a half weeks for document studies and other preparations as well as for interviews in Sweden and for reporting.

A conclusive report, not exceeding twelve pages, with an analysis of the projects so far executed and, if considered necessary, recommendations for improvements shall be given. Relevant information may be added in the form of annexes to the main report.

The report shall be written in English.

For SALA



Steinar Langbakk

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