



City Diplomacy

A case study of Velsen's activities in Galle, Sri Lanka

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Summary

City diplomacy is all activities undertaken by local governments for their counterparts in other regions in the world aimed at creating peace and development.

It started with city-to-city programs aimed at reconciliation after the Second World War. Around the 1970s it developed into a practice of influencing public opinion and national policy on international political matters. From the 1980s on, feelings of solidarity with (post-)conflict regions led to development cooperation by local governments.

Personal engagement and feelings of solidarity with particular parts of the world and international politics in general, combined with some self-interest, are reasons for getting involved in city diplomacy. It starts with some influential individuals who gather a group of motivated others around them. Such a group may consist of civil servants, local councillors, civil society members and consultants.

The city diplomacy coalition has many options to choose from. Lobbying and dialogue activities are possibilities but development cooperation is the most common form of city diplomacy by Northern European countries.

Regardless of the chosen form of city diplomacy, some conditions should be met for city diplomacy to be successful. There are in the first place some practical conditions, such as flexibility, sufficient knowledge of the situation and sustainable cooperation with civil society and NGOs. Additionally, there are some political conditions such as long-term commitment, impartiality and finding key figures.

The research is an attempt to map the practice of developmental city diplomacy and to compare the outcomes with theoretical and scientific views on city diplomacy in the field of development. The case study concentrates on the activities of a Dutch local government (the municipality of Velsen) and its connected NGO (SOS Velsen) in the partner city abroad (Galle, Sri Lanka).

The central question of the research is: How does the case Velsen – Galle compare to the theory of city diplomacy? The answer to this question reveals the lessons learned from practice and the theoretical aspects which need further research.

The developmental city diplomacy program of Velsen-Galle originates in 1976. It was an initiative of the city council of Velsen. In 1985 a foundation called SOS Velsen was set up to coordinate the program. The mayor of Velsen acted as the chairman of the foundation until 1997 when SOS Velsen was privatised.

Yearly around € 52,000 is invested in the program, resulting in a total investment of around € 1,300,000 over the years. Funding comes from yearly grants of the municipality of Velsen, donations and co-funding. In total 171 projects have been conducted. Of these projects 143 projects were completed successfully.

Throughout the years the professionalism of SOS Velsen has increased. The foundation started to work with a project list and sets terms of conditionality.

The activities within the Velsen-Galle city diplomacy program are compared with theoretical and scientific insights on city diplomacy in the field of development. The developmental city diplomacy program of Velsen – Galle came into existence along the same lines as described in theory. It started as an initiative of a small group of people within the city council. This coalition was extended with the

mayor, civil servants and people from civil society. The NAAL makes the 'coalition of willing' complete.

A motive to start the program were feelings of solidarity with Third World countries. Efforts from the side of inhabitant Evert Jongens led to the connection of Velsen and Galle.

In the beginning the activities were targeted at the citizens of Velsen. From 1985 on the focus shifted to development cooperation in Galle. This development is a consequence of general developments in city diplomacy in The Netherlands in the 1970s and 1980s.

As for many local governments occupied with city diplomacy the main focus of Velsen is development cooperation in the form of projects. Lobbying and dialogue activities are performed by SOS Velsen only on a small scale.

The most important success factors of the program were the focus on knowledge exchange, attention to local needs, support of key figures and the long-term commitment of both parties.

Pitfalls were the changes in political composition of the local government of Galle, a lack of money and cultural barriers.

There are a lot of comparisons between the theory on city diplomacy and the practice of Velsen in Galle. However, some topics need further debate. There is in the first place no direct link between the projects of SOS Velsen and conflict prevention, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. That conflict isn't a prominent factor in the city diplomacy campaign doesn't mean that it is not part of it at all. Secondly, lobbying and dialogue activities form a negligible part of the program. This is however not uncommon for programs conducted by cities in Northern-European countries. Finally, the city diplomacy program is executed outside the direct sphere of influence of the local government of Velsen. The city diplomacy campaign was in the first place an initiative of the municipality of Velsen and for some time its responsibility. The current construction in which SOS Velsen executes the program is in line with what is described in theory about the possible forms of a coalition. The debate leads to the final conclusion that the case of Velsen-Galle is representative for developmental city diplomacy.

Foreword

In September 2008 I started with a Master in Conflicts, Territories and Identities at the Radboud University Nijmegen. After having completed a bachelor in Business Studies it was a relief to learn more about the social aspects of society. It was a very interesting year in which I have learned a lot about all aspects of conflict. The highlight of the year was the excursion to Bosnia-Herzegovina. The people and their environment made a big impression on me.

With this thesis I finish the master curriculum. It took me fifteen months to conduct the research and write the thesis. The process had its ups and downs. Combining the research with a first fulltime job was sometimes hard for me. But I received help from several people to whom I am very grateful. In the first place this is Bert Bomert. He had patience with my slow progress, didn't see me often in person but responded to my requests as quickly as he could. I have big respect for Klaas van Slooten, who helped me out so many times in such a short notice. And last but not least, I was inspired by the contributions of Arne Musch and Dion van den Berg who were willing to cooperate with an expert interview.

I would also like to thank my family, friends and boyfriend for supporting me throughout the whole process, encouraging me to persist, cheering me up and keeping faith in a successful end.

Emmy Wijnen, Heesch, November 2010

Introduction

General introduction

This research deals with the activities of a Dutch local government (the municipality of Velsen) and its connected NGO (SOS Velsen) in the partner city abroad (Galle, Sri Lanka). The thesis analyses the activities of the Velsen-Galle city diplomacy relationship against the background of the theory and scientific insights concerning city diplomacy. The central goal is to create insight in which initiatives have succeeded and which have not, in order to learn from experience and to determine where there is a discrepancy between theory and practice. This central goal has been translated into the central question:

How does the case of Velsen – Galle compare to the theory of city diplomacy?

City diplomacy entails a broad spectrum of practices and activities. This research is an attempt to map the practice of developmental city diplomacy in Velsen-Galle and to compare the outcomes with theoretical and scientific views on city diplomacy in the field of development.

Since city diplomacy is a relatively new research topic, additional research questions have emerged during the research. Not all of them could be answered within the scope of this thesis. Questions which will be answered are:

- What is the definition of city diplomacy?
- What is the added value of city diplomacy?
- What motives lie behind city diplomacy?
- Which forms can city diplomacy take?
- Who gets involved in city diplomacy?
- How are city diplomacy campaigns organised?
- What factors make city diplomacy a success?

This set of questions will be answered, both from the perspective of the scientific/academic views on city diplomacy in general, and of the practical activities within the framework of the Velsen-Galle developmental city diplomacy in particular.

Societal relevance

Conflicts disrupt societies. Infrastructure is demolished, governance is lacking or even totally absent, and societal ties are cut. After a conflict a country faces the huge task of rebuilding society. This is not only a task of concern to national governments, but it plays an especially important role at the local level. Local governments are the government layer responsible for the delivery of basic services for the people, like housing, education and health care. It is therefore that local government can make an important contribution to peace building and development. This is one of the main reasons why local governments and their civil society are involved in city diplomacy. The problem is, however, that local governments and civil society often lack sufficient knowledge of and experience with city diplomacy.

This research creates awareness of city diplomacy activities, described in theory as well as those already implemented in practice. By investigating successful and failed city diplomacy activities within one case and comparing these successes and failures with what is written in theory, a start is

made in exploring the practical field of city diplomacy. It is especially important that local governments learn about what has not worked, and why, in order to prevent mistakes to be repeated.

Scientific relevance

City diplomacy is a relatively new concept which has not been much studied yet. Contemporary research on city diplomacy mainly concentrates on what can, and what cannot, be headed under the definition of city diplomacy. Most research is exploratory. There are still a lot of subjects and elements of city diplomacy to be researched. What is often lacking in the current level of knowledge is the link with practice. It is however important that linkages are created between theory and practice of city diplomacy in order to provide local governments with a sufficient basis for (professionalization of) action.

The research puts the current state of theory in perspective by using a practical example. By doing so, not only practice can be further developed but theory also benefits. The research will highlight gaps in contemporary theory which need further research in order to be filled. It raises questions which will function as a basis for the development of theory. In this way, the research elaborates on existing knowledge.

Chapter 1: Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature and designed to get a first rough idea of the practice of city diplomacy, as compared to theory. It is to provide a basis for further research. Based on literature study and expert interviews, the study analyses a case of city diplomacy in practice. In this chapter the research strategy, data collection and data analysis methods and the reliability and validity of the research are discussed.

1.1 Research strategy

The first part of the research focuses on the definition of city diplomacy. It contains a description of the emergence, practices and goals of city diplomacy. The next step is to compare this picture with the practice of city diplomacy. This has been done in the form of a case study: “an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context: when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident: and in which multiple sources of evidence are used”.¹

The research concentrates on the case study of Velsen – Galle. It describes the activities of the local government of Velsen and its connected NGO SOS Velsen in its partner city Galle in Sri Lanka. This case has been chosen for several reasons. First of all, it is one of the longest running city diplomacy initiatives in The Netherlands. The relationship between Velsen and Galle originates in 1976. There have also been quite a few activities in this particular city diplomacy program. During the 34 years of its existence, so far around 170 smaller and larger projects have been undertaken. The longevity and activity of this city diplomacy campaign make it an interesting case to study. In addition, what has determined the choice for Velsen – Galle is the cooperation between the local government (municipality of Velsen) and civil society (SOS Velsen) in the city diplomacy program. This phenomenon of cooperation between the city government and private initiative is recognised by experts as an important circumstance, but not much studied yet.

The form of a case study has been chosen because it is not possible to cover the whole field of practice in one research. Therefore one example of practice is studied. A case study is the best way to study how and why things go the way they go and is therefore suited to study the practice of a phenomenon such as city diplomacy.² Finally, this research strategy was chosen because city diplomacy is a new and complex phenomenon with a lot of variables and relations between them.³

1.2 Data collection and analysis

When choosing for a case study, multiple methods of data collection are possible. Amongst others these are interviews, observations and content analysis. In this research, the choice has been made for interviews and content analysis.

1.2.1 Interviews

Expert interviews with Arne Musch (VNG International) and Dion van den Berg (IKV Pax Christi) have been used to gather information on city diplomacy in general. An in-depth interview with Klaas van Slooten (secretary of SOS Velsen) was held to gather information on the case of Velsen – Galle.

¹ Yin (1989) in Vennix (2004: 151).

² Yin (1989) in Vennix (2004: 153).

³ Peters (1995) in Vennix (2004: 152).

Interviewing was preferred over observation, because it is hard to observe city diplomacy since it is an abstract process which occurs partly in people's minds and partly across a large amount of physical places and topics.⁴

The research makes use of open interviews, based on an interview guide.⁵ In this type of interview a list of topics (selected by the researcher) is used. The researcher determines the order in which the topics are discussed during the interview. The aim is to let the respondents do the talking. The researcher listens, summarises and asks questions based on comments of the respondent. In this way, all topics were covered but the respondent had enough time and space to talk freely about the things which came up in his mind in relation to the subject of city diplomacy.

1.2.2 Content analysis

In addition to interviews, content analysis has been used. Several documents were studied:

- Municipal documents on the origin of the program in Galle
- Annual reports of SOS Velsen from 1988 up and till 2009
- Travel journals of the board members of SOS Velsen
- Articles from news papers
- The website of SOS Velsen

The type of content analysis used in the research is a qualitative-interpretative analysis.⁶ This type of content analysis is based on the qualitative research tradition in which theory is compared with practice. Qualitative-interpretative content analysis requires from the researcher that she takes the social context of the author of the document in mind and searches for the underlying meaning.⁷

1.2.3 Data analysis

In qualitative research there is interplay between data collection and data analysis. It happened likewise in this research. First, the expert interviews were held and recorded on tape. The comments of the experts were used as input for the interview with the secretary of SOS Velsen. Afterwards, transcription of the recorded interviews took place in which two steps were taken. The first step was the exact documenting of the conversation on paper.

The next step was data reduction with help of displays of Miles and Huberman.⁸ The displays were designed along the dimensions of city diplomacy mentioned in the theoretical part of the research. The answers of the respondents and relevant parts of the studied documents were translated into the displays in order to make the analysis easier. In this manner theory and practice were put together in one scheme⁹. This makes it easier to compare the theory of city diplomacy with the case study. The structured method makes coding of the material unnecessary.

1.3 Reliability and validity

The reliability and validity of a research are important criteria for the quality of the research. These two aspects are discussed below.

⁴ Marshall & Rossman (1999).

⁵ Patton (1980) in Vennix (2003: 167).

⁶ Wester (1995) in Vennix (2003: 176).

⁷ Vennix (2003: 182).

⁸ Vennix (2003: 213).

⁹ Part of the scheme can be found in appendix A.

1.3.1 Reliability

Reliability has to do with the exactness of the data collection. Data are reliable when two measurements lead to the same results.¹⁰ There can be differences in results when there are mistakes in the method of data collection or in the instruments.

Reliability can be increased when methods of data collection are standardised. In the research the method of data collection was the use of open interviews. The usage of an interview guide meant that the interview topics were more or less discussed in the same order every interview. This increases the level of reliability.

In general, a concern with qualitative research is that just a small sample is studied. This has as a result that small mistakes are less obvious and have a greater impact on the research.¹¹ In this research one case is studied and in order to prevent mistakes and increase the reliability, the conversations have been put on paper directly after the recording of the conversation. In this way it is prevented as much as possible that the researcher's perspective intermingles with the answers of the respondents.

1.3.2 Validity

Validity can best be described with help of the question: is the researcher measuring what she wants to measure? Validity is about structural mistakes in the data collection.¹²

Internal validity means that the conclusions of the research are not influenced by other factors than the research data.¹³ The internal validity of the research is safeguarded in two ways. The use of open interviews has as an advantage that it leaves space and time for the discussion of other relevant topics besides the scheduled ones, so-called probing. The interplay between data collection and data analysis, resulting from the direct transcription of data in between interviews, leaves room for the verification of interpretations from one interview in the next.¹⁴

External validity means that the conclusions of the research are also valid for another population. To establish external validity the case must be a good representation of the total population. In this research the total population consists of all cases in which there is a form of city diplomacy taking place. The research studies only one of all possible cases. Moreover, every case of city diplomacy is different because of different conditions. Therefore it is hard to establish a research sample which represents the total population well. Lessons learned from the research could be valid for other examples of city diplomacy, but this is not necessarily the case.

¹⁰ Vennix (2003: 99).

¹¹ Boeije (2006).

¹² Vennix (2003: 99).

¹³ Korzilius (2008).

¹⁴ Boeije (2006).

Chapter 2: City diplomacy

In this chapter an analysis of city diplomacy is given. This description has been based both on academic literature and various expert interviews.¹⁵

2.1 Development of city diplomacy

Although city diplomacy is a relatively new term, the concept has been applied over many years already. Decentralised cooperation started with city-to-city programs after the Second World War between cities that suffered from the war.¹⁶ It was aimed at (re)creating trust and respect between the populations of cities in formerly warring countries. These were the first steps of local governments in the international arena.

Later on, cities and local governments became more and more involved in international relations. Regional, local and non-governmental actors started to cooperate more and more on global issues.¹⁷ It was a natural development caused by the seemingly contradictory phenomena of globalisation and decentralisation. On the one hand, technological progress led to modern means of communication and transportation techniques. This resulted in more intensive international contacts and exchange. Not only economics and trade, but also other topics such as politics became global interests. The innovations in information and communication technology created opportunities for actors on the periphery to be informed on, and influence, decision-making at the centre.¹⁸ On the other hand, national governments started to delegate more authority and responsibilities to lower government levels such as regional and local governments. This led to the empowerment of local government, also in the field of international relations.

As a result of this, city diplomacy campaigns started to emerge in the 1970s in several countries, amongst which The Netherlands. In the beginning, city diplomacy initiatives were mainly a reaction to world political affairs such as the nuclear arms race. City diplomacy campaigns in those days focused on creating awareness and changing government policy.¹⁹ In that sense city diplomacy was mainly an internal matter, in particular aimed at the local citizens and politicians.

This started to change from the 1980s on, when city diplomacy became more externally orientated. From that period on, city diplomacy is based on feelings of solidarity with cities and their populations in countries in – or just out of – conflict. City diplomacy campaigns were shaped in the form of programs.²⁰ Those programs are aimed at conflict prevention, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. Post-conflict reconstruction in the form of development programs is the most commonly found form of city diplomacy.

Nowadays, local governments even develop their own foreign policies and influence.²¹ Only since recently, city diplomacy has a legal basis. Local governments do not have a legal international

¹⁵ Expert interviews with Arne Musch (senior project manager at VNG International) on August 4, 2009 and Dion van den Berg (senior at IKV Pax Christi) on August 17, 2009.

¹⁶ Van Overbeek (2007: 15).

¹⁷ Sizoo & Musch (2008: 10) and Klem & Frerks (2008: 49).

¹⁸ Van der Pluijm & Melissen (2008: 7).

¹⁹ Van den Berg (2008: 95 – 101).

²⁰ Van den Berg (2008: 96).

²¹ Avramopoulos (2003: 32) and CERFE Group (2003: 43).

personality. Nor do they have an independent presence in international institutions. But recent developments in international law, such as the European Charter of Local Self-Government, offer space for the legal argumentation of city diplomacy.²² In first instance this only accounts for European countries. The national governments in Europe have not yet developed a legal basis for international engagement of local government. Until then, three types of roles for local governments in the international political system can be distinguished on the basis of rational legal argument. These are: (1) participation in programs of international organisations, (2) formal representation in international organisations, and (3) autonomous development of cooperation programs.²³

2.2 Definition of city diplomacy

City diplomacy practices have changed over the years. A wide range of practices and activities has been developed. This makes it harder to define what city diplomacy exactly is. City diplomacy has been defined in many ways by even more authors. Some definitions overlap, others are based on totally different perspectives.

Focussing on process, city diplomacy is seen as the communication process between the political entities of local government.²⁴ Or, more specifically, as the institutions and processes by which local governments represent their interests on an international stage.²⁵ These definitions concentrate mainly on the traditional meaning of diplomacy: representation of interests on an international scale. Much more interesting are these interests of local governments and the reasons for their international engagement.

Definitions which pay attention to the interests of local government mention the aspects of conflict and development. In those definitions city diplomacy is described as all activities undertaken by local government in war-affected countries in order to prevent and/or resolve conflict, enhance social cohesion and build democracy.²⁶ City diplomacy can be prevalent in situations of conflict, but also in situations of potential conflict or (temporary) zones of peace.²⁷ It can easily be confused with decentralised cooperation, which is also about local governments working together on the development of a particular area. However, decentralised cooperation doesn't exclusively focus on at conflict affected areas, as city diplomacy does.

2.3 Motives for city diplomacy

Local governments have plenty of tasks to fulfil for their own citizens. Why do they, on top of that, also want to get involved in developmental city diplomacy? There are several reasons for this.

As mentioned before, feelings of solidarity with other parts of the world are nowadays a common reason for city diplomacy. Local governments seem to feel a responsibility to protect and support other citizens and to contribute to peace and development. They are an ideal partner because they have gained experience in dealing with familiar matters at home, such as creating social cohesion and a stable democracy.²⁸ The choice of a twinning partner is often just a matter of supply and

²² Papisca (2008: 28) and Van der Pluijm & Melissen (2007: 14).

²³ Papisca (2008: 29 – 32).

²⁴ Coolsaet (2004: 1).

²⁵ Van der Pluijm & Melissen (2007: 6).

²⁶ Musch (2009: 1 – 3) and Van Overbeek (2007: 3).

²⁷ Musch (2009: 6).

²⁸ Sizoo & Musch (2008: 9).

demand. The wish to contribute to development is met by a demand for help from a local government in a conflict prone area.²⁹ The main reason for local governments in conflict prone areas to demand for help is that they are the government layer experiencing the effects of conflict most directly. It is not always the local government itself asking for help. Not uncommon, the worrisome case of a local government is presented on the international stage by a NGO already working in the area.³⁰ NGOs working in a conflict situation are able to identify the problems of a local government in an early stage and have often more international contacts than the local government itself. Through these contacts they can ask attention for the problematic situation.

A local government itself doesn't have a 'personality', so there should be 'someone' or 'something' within it which evokes the action. It is mostly an individual or a group of engaged persons within local government who express these feelings of solidarity. Personal engagement of influential people with international political issues and development cooperation is therefore one of the main reasons why a city gets involved in city diplomacy.³¹ Combined with a personal interest in a particular country or region abroad often determines the choice for the city diplomacy partner. This explains why so many Dutch cities undertook projects in countries of the former Yugoslavia. The mayor, civil servants or council members felt connected with the region because of the familiar culture or because they went there on holiday.

However, it is not only solidarity that drives local governments. Self-interest plays a role too. Often economic interests in the partner region, such as trade connections, form the basic argument to start a city diplomacy program.³² In other words: local governments wish to gain something from the city diplomacy program too. One of the advantages of city diplomacy is its reciprocity: both local governments benefit from the partnership and the programs.³³ However, the local government on the supporting end often profits less from the program than the local government on the receiving end. Benefits for the supporting local government are for example: an improvement of its reputation, civil society engagement, or exchange possibilities.

What makes local governments suitable partners in city diplomacy is that they are the closest government layer to civil society. They are involved in the daily life of their citizens and aware of the needs and problems affecting them.³⁴ Partly as a result of this, most local governments in donor countries possess a lot of technical expertise and are routinely practicing medium and long-term project planning and budgeting.³⁵

2.4 Forming a coalition

Most city diplomacy programs start with personal engagement or prospects of personal gain on the side of an influential person within local government. This is, however, not enough to start a successful city diplomacy campaign. The initiator has to gather a group of motivated people around him or her.

²⁹ Sizoo & Musch (2008: 9) and Van Overbeek (2007: 19).

³⁰ Musch (2009: 7).

³¹ Van der Pluijm & Melissen (2007: 14-15).

³² Galtung (2000: 861).

³³ Van der Haar et al. (2009: 22) and Van Overbeek (2007: 10).

³⁴ CERFE Group (2003: 43).

³⁵ Van Overbeek (2007: 33).

This process can be compared with forming a political coalition. It is all about finding people with the same interests and goals, willing to cooperate to achieve a common goal. The process of them coming together is often influenced by politics and personal interests. This is especially the case when the initiative comes from the city council. The city diplomacy initiative then becomes part of the overall political game. Winning or losing on other topics and the political background (coalition or opposition) of the party which proposes city diplomacy possibly influences the readiness to support the city diplomacy initiative.

Whether or not the initiative comes from the city council, bringing together a group of motivated people is essential for city diplomacy to take root. The 'coalition of the willing' can have different compositions. A local government can choose to execute the city diplomacy program itself or to delegate this task to (representatives of) civil society, for example in the form of a non-governmental organisation, NGO. A combination of these two forms is, of course, also possible. Within local government it can be the civil servants and/or council members being involved in the program. Quite often local coalitions are extended with a consultant, who for example advises on the (political, social, cultural) context of the recipient local government.

2.5 Forms of city diplomacy

After having formed a coalition, the city diplomacy campaign can start. There are many possible ways in which the program can be designed. In general, three forms of city diplomacy can be distinguished. These are activities in the field of (1) lobbying, (2) dialogue, and (3) development cooperation.³⁶ These categories of city diplomacy do not exclude each other and can be carried out simultaneously.

Lobbying is mainly conducted before a conflict breaks out. It is a form of city diplomacy which touches most upon the traditional meaning of diplomacy. Just by supporting local governments in the conflict area, foreign local governments can lend some of their legitimacy to them.³⁷ Additionally, local governments support peace-minded local leaders so that their position and legitimacy improves.³⁸ A strong and legitimate local government is the basis for a stable future. But foreign local governments can also take on a more active role in lobbying. They can act as bridge builders, mediators, persuaders, facilitators and trainers.³⁹ All of these roles aim at resolving conflict between warring factions. Besides taking on these general roles, local governments can also focus on special forms of lobbying. A niche within lobbying is the human rights agenda. Local governments can join platforms or organise demonstrations to stress the importance of human rights and get attention for the fact that these are absent in a certain region at the moment.

Dialogue activities, on the contrary, are mainly conducted during and after a period of conflict.⁴⁰ Dialogue activities can take several forms. Community building and reconciliation are among the popular ones. Dialogue is then aimed at (re)creating trust and social cohesion within societies.⁴¹ But it can also take the form of representing citizens in peace negotiations.⁴² Dialogue activities are sometimes aimed at the media, because exchanging information can lead to mutual understanding

³⁶ Sizoo & Musch (2008: 17-18) and Klem & Frerks (2008:47).

³⁷ Musch (2009: 15).

³⁸ Musch (2009: 11).

³⁹ Van Overbeek (2007: 4).

⁴⁰ Galtung (2004: 862).

⁴¹ Sizoo & Musch (2008: 18).

⁴² Klem & Frerks (2008: 63).

between warring factions and can thus help in the process of prevention or reconciliation.⁴³

Northern European countries such as The Netherlands are, in general, more action oriented and use in most cases developmental city diplomacy. Development cooperation is the last form of city diplomacy. Development cooperation can take on even more forms. Most development cooperation has a project basis. Projects are developed for example in the fields of security, development, economy, culture, cooperation or representation. Culture is seen as important because quite often misunderstanding between groups of people is primarily caused by cultural ignorance.⁴⁴

2.6 Success factors of city diplomacy

Regardless of the choice of form of city diplomacy, there are some conditions which should be met in order for city diplomacy to become a success story. The most interesting part of this research has been the comparison of the success factors as mentioned in theory with what has worked in the case of Velsen - Galle. What is recommended from a scientific/theoretical point of view is not necessarily what works in practice. What is successful city diplomacy according to theory? Multiple conditions have been mentioned, which can be roughly divided in political and practical conditions.

2.6.1 Practical conditions

The practical conditions focus on process and project design and can more or less be controlled by the executors of the program.

- (Post-)conflict areas are so dynamic that project designs should be no more than a *rough guideline*.⁴⁵ *Flexibility* is needed to adapt to changing situations such as a shift of power. Not everything can be done at the same time, too. Practitioners often suffer from a so-called attention bias.⁴⁶ They develop too many projects at the same time resulting in small budgets for each project and poor management and control. It is a challenge to choose programs and activities very carefully and making wise decisions about the allocation of time and effort.
- As much attention should be paid to *process* as to product.⁴⁷ Project proposals often state the end goals of a project. The process of achieving these goals is, however, extremely important given the dynamic environment. Careful attention should also be paid to the process in order to avoid supporting illegitimate leaders. For example supporting economic activities of someone who invests the earnings in weaponry.
- In projects not too much money should be involved.⁴⁸ An influx of too much 'foreign funding' can disturb a local economy. For example: practitioners importing material from their own country and neglecting local producers can disrupt the local economic context. Moral and technical support over a longer period can, on the other hand, be a real support to local actors. Capacity - in terms of political will, available time and people, technical expertise and speaking the relevant language(s) - is often more important than money. Failures of city diplomacy activities are quite often the result of a *mismatch in capacity*. A simple example is

⁴³ CERFE Group (2003: 48).

⁴⁴ Van der Pluijm & Melissen (2007:28).

⁴⁵ Kenneth Bush (2004).

⁴⁶ Van Overbeek (2009: 11).

⁴⁷ Bush (2008: 112).

⁴⁸ Van den Berg & Musch (2008: 7).

the absence of someone within the foreign delegation speaking the language of the country on the receiving end. So, local governments should think more in terms of expertise instead of money. Expertise is mainly sited in local government and local democracy.

- Programmes must be *participatory* and concentrate on learning.⁴⁹ Promoting participation and learning has some clear advantages. It ensures a continuity of personnel and involvement when the program ends from the foreign local governments' side. It creates a network of supportive, committed people in a variety of positions and it attracts and retains the right kind of community leadership.
- Assistance should be *coherent and responsive* to local needs.⁵⁰ City diplomacy is a multidisciplinary undertaking. It should address all facets of support. It is even more important that the projects are based on local needs. This creates commitment and sustainability. People are not always able to formulate their wishes in a constructive manner, but they are well aware of the local needs of their communities. It is difficult for local governments in (post-)conflict regions to talk about their problems so practitioners should take proper time to built relationships and formulate needs.
- Both states and international actors should acknowledge *local governments as key actors* for development. A strong institutional, juridical and political framework should be built so that local governments are recognised as autonomous actors. Assistance should focus also on local institutions, thereby realising a steady basis for future development, security and democracy.⁵¹
- To avoid fostering dependency, it is important to set *terms of conditionality*.⁵² City diplomacy is not a one way donor mechanism but supposed to grow into a sustainable relationship. In this way it is also possible to take advantage of the available and potential assets of societies. An example of creating reciprocity in the program is the exchange of knowledge between civil servants of both municipalities on local matters.
- Practitioners should have *sufficient knowledge* about the situation.⁵³ Any local government with foreign activities must know the people and the context of the area. This is difficult since political leadership may change, displaced people may arrive and leave, etc. But practitioners with a lack of knowledge about the context can even become a hazard to the project - and to peace and development in general. In this sense practical knowledge about the region is more important than theoretical knowledge on city diplomacy. The practical knowledge component consists of the historical context, political context, social context, cultural context, religious context and economic context of the region.

⁴⁹ Bush (2008: 114).

⁵⁰ Van Overbeek (2007: 47).

⁵¹ CERFE Group (2003: 45) and Van Overbeek (2009: 2).

⁵² Van Overbeek (2007: 29).

⁵³ Van Overbeek (2007: 59).

- Another success factor is establishing *linkages with civil society and the private sector*.⁵⁴ Local governments' officials are not the only persons that can make city diplomacy into a success. Civil society organisations and local enterprises could support those projects that are relevant to their area of expertise. In this way the often limited resources of local governments are extended. Every city has cultural organisations such as orchestras, theatre groups or youth workers. These can for example assist in building a community centre.
- In almost every (post-)conflict situation there are multiple NGOs active. They often use non-governmental channels to distribute aid, thereby undermining the position of local governments. NGOs often even take over part of the responsibilities of local government such as education and public health. The NGOs are often not very willing to give these responsibilities back to local government. It is a challenge to *work together with NGOs and enhance the legitimacy of local governments* at the same time.⁵⁵

2.6.2 Political conditions

In addition to the practical conditions, there are also some political conditions which should be met. Politics are dynamic, especially in developing countries. It is therefore a challenge to meet the political conditions. This challenge is complicated by the fact that reliability of other people and organisations play a role too with regard to the political conditions.

- Projects must address *underlying causes of conflict*.⁵⁶ Underlying causes could for example be ethnic tensions or scarcity of resources. There should in the first place be awareness among practitioners that, although the conflict may be officially over, the war isn't necessary out of the people's minds. Tensions and pre-assumptions can still be vivid. The underlying causes of conflict must be solved to establish sustainable results. Additionally, a war economy can still be present. Some people get rich of selling food in times of scarcity for example. Not everyone is welcoming foreign assistance. To effectively address the underlying causes of conflict, projects should be in line with the perspectives of other organisations such as national government and the United Nations.
- The attention should be on local ownership and *long-term commitment*.⁵⁷ Long term commitment from both sides and involving local people and organisations creates trust and sustainable results. It takes time to develop trusting relationships between project partners, between governments and civil society and between groups within civil society. In this sense it is important to cooperate on the basis of equality. This can for example be achieved by involving partners in formulating project proposals and long-term planning.
- Theory suggests a *focus on individuals* rather than organisations.⁵⁸ Trust is the basis for cooperation. Partnerships with trustworthy individuals who support city diplomacy is therefore considered even more important than the link to the organisation behind these

⁵⁴ Van Overbeek (2007: 16 – 17) and CERFE Group (2003: 45).

⁵⁵ Van Overbeek (2007: 56) and Van der Haar et al. (2009: 15).

⁵⁶ Van Overbeek (2007: 49).

⁵⁷ Van den Berg and Musch (2008: 7).

⁵⁸ Van den Berg and Musch (2008: 7).

people. Without the support of key figures nothing happens. On the other hand there should be awareness that being dependent on individuals makes the project vulnerable.

- Practitioners often meet reluctance among *powerful local actors* with political, social and economic power. Some of them are afraid to lose influence. Since powerful actors are often key figures for change, it is a challenge to convince them of the need for city diplomacy. Finding strong leaders who believe in the principles of peace and democracy is essential.⁵⁹ Moral support is too often underestimated. It may provide credibility and authority. An important part of city diplomacy is identifying and creating coalitions of people willing to take part in and support programs. Programs are more effective when a political figure is part of the coalition because they have a certain amount of authority.
- Practitioners should be *impartial* and at the same time have the guts to bring sensitive matters up to discussion.⁶⁰ It is wise not to work with hidden agendas, but to open up about the intentions of the program right from the start.

2.7 Pitfalls of city diplomacy

City diplomacy has several advantages which motivate local governments to start city diplomacy campaigns. However, there are also some pitfalls and concerns connected to city diplomacy which governments should be aware of.

A concern of city diplomacy is the volatility of city councils. A changing composition of the council can result in the withdrawal of city diplomacy initiatives. This can happen both from the side of the supporting local government as well as the receiving local government. Connected with this argument is the disadvantage of meeting reluctant local councillors who do not want to participate in city diplomacy initiatives.⁶¹ Either because they don't understate the importance of city diplomacy or because they want to do it differently from their predecessor and get rid of all his initiatives, including city diplomacy campaigns. But even if councillors are willing to support city diplomacy initiatives, it can be dangerous for them to step up against violence because they are themselves part of the social structures.⁶²

Finally, national policy can obstruct local level initiatives and the other way around too. Funding decisions by donors are often made on central government performance, making local governments dependent on the performance of others.⁶³ On the other hand, city diplomacy activities interfere with the (former) state monopoly on diplomatic activities by ministries of foreign affairs. Whether pursuing mutual or mutually excluding interests, the need for coordinating the diplomatic activities of cities and state actors is pressing, given that foreign policy is said to benefit most from coherence and continuity.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Musch (2009: 13).

⁶⁰ Van Overbeek (2007: 59).

⁶¹ Van Overbeek (2007: 53).

⁶² Sizoo & Musch (2008: 20).

⁶³ Van Overbeek (2009: 3).

⁶⁴ Van der Pluijm & Melissen (2007: 12 - 13).

Conclusion

City diplomacy is all activities undertaken by local governments for their counterparts in other regions in the world aimed at creating peace and development.

It started with city-to-city programs aimed at reconciliation after the Second World War. Around the 1970s it developed into a practice of influencing public opinion and national policy on international political matters. From the 1980s on feelings of solidarity with (post-)conflict regions led to development cooperation by local governments.

Personal engagement with particular parts of the world and international politics in general, combined with some self-interest, are reasons for getting involved in city diplomacy. It starts with some influential individuals who gather a group of motivated others around them. Such a group may consist of civil servants, local councillors, civil society members and consultants.

The city diplomacy coalition has many options to choose from. Lobbying and dialogue activities are possibilities but development cooperation is the most common form of city diplomacy by Northern European countries.

Regardless of the chosen form of city diplomacy, some conditions should be met for city diplomacy to be successful. There are in the first place some practical conditions, such as flexibility, sufficient knowledge of the situation, and sustainable cooperation with civil society and NGOs. Additionally, there are some political conditions, such as long-term commitment, impartiality, and finding key figures.

The next chapters compare this (more theoretical) description of city diplomacy with the case study of Velsen – Galle. The research investigates where theory and practice overlap and where there are discrepancies. Current theory doesn't give a lot of insights in the pitfalls of city diplomacy. Because city diplomacy is a relatively new phenomenon there are not a lot of practical examples yet to deduct the pitfalls of city diplomacy from. This makes it interesting to study the pitfalls in the case of Velsen-Galle.

Chapter 3: Velsen – Galle

3.1 Introduction

The Dutch municipality of Velsen has, since 1976, a city diplomacy campaign in Galle, Sri Lanka. Galle is situated at the southwest coast of Sri Lanka and has around 112,000 inhabitants.⁶⁵ It is a port city with fishery as its main economic activity. Many of the historical landmarks of the city, such as buildings, monuments and street names, form a memory to the seventeenth century when the Dutch set foot on ground in Sri Lanka through the VOC. The Dutch drove out the Portuguese in 1656, and were in turn driven out themselves by the British army in 1796. The Dutch built package houses in Galle to store cinnamon and transport it to Low Countries.⁶⁶

Galle has a Fort which is on the World Heritage List because of its unique drainage system. Within the fort there is a library, a maritime museum and a Dutch Reformed Church. The Fort is the main touristic site of Galle and creates employment for the citizens of Galle.⁶⁷

Although Galle is not located in the conflict region in the north-east part of Sri Lanka where Tamil rebels and the national army until recently were involved in a civil war, the city and its inhabitants did experience the effects of the conflict. The conflict, for example, had a negative effect on the total economic sector of the country.⁶⁸ The government has spend a lot of the national budget on defence, which could otherwise have been spend on other fields such as education or health care. Also the touristic sector of the country has suffered from the instable political situation. The economy of Galle has in this way indirectly suffered from the civil war. Galle has only occasionally experienced the conflict directly. In 2006, for example, the Tamil Tigers tried to attack ships of the navy in the harbour of Galle. This attack failed. In 2009 the civil war came to an end when the Tamil Tigers were defeated by the national army. During the last days of the war, the Tamil Tigers used their last two airplanes to conduct an attack on Galle. One airplane with explosives on board hit a building in Galle. The other was shot down on its way to the national airport.⁶⁹

3.2 Origin of the program

The relationship between Galle and Velsen originates in 1976. That year the council of Velsen, as part of the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the municipality, expressed its wish to establish co-operational ties with a city in the Third World. At the same time, Galle had the wish to connect itself to a Dutch municipality with a comparable background. Both cities have a port and are of similar size. The cities of Velsen and Galle were brought into contact by Evert Jongens, who used to live in Velsen and who was the founder of the Netherlands – Sri Lanka Foundation. It was at that time – and still today - a unique initiative because no other Dutch city is active in Sri Lanka.⁷⁰

In response to the request of the council, the potential cooperation with Galle was discussed in the council meeting of the municipality of Velsen in September 1976.⁷¹ A special committee had investigated the possibilities and written a report for the council. The report discussed whether it

⁶⁵ Annual report 2009, SOS Velsen.

⁶⁶ Website of SOS Velsen.

⁶⁷ Annual reports, SOS Velsen.

⁶⁸ www.alertnet.org, 18th of November 2010.

⁶⁹ Interview with Klaas van Slooten, secretary of SOS Velsen.

⁷⁰ Website of SOS Velsen and www.stedenband.nl, 18th of November 2010.

⁷¹ Minutes of the council meeting of 16th of September 1976.

was a wise idea to establish a cooperation program with Galle and, if so, in which form this cooperation should be carried out.⁷² Feelings of solidarity were the main argument to propose to connect with Galle. The report further states that the aim of the relationship should be to maintain a constant dialogue between the two cities in order to let inhabitants experience each other's culture and learn from each other. It did not yet mention development cooperation as such, but it was exclusively focussing on dialogue activities. Reciprocity of the program and long-term commitment were regarded important preconditions for the program.

Some political parties showed reservations and expressed arguments against the proposal. These were the Communist Party (CPN), Labour Party (PvdA), Christian-Democratic People's Party (CDA) and Progressive Velsen.⁷³ One of the arguments of CPN was that the money could better be used for projects to support citizens in Velsen itself (e.g. projects to relieve poverty). They stated that they didn't want to assign money to the project in any case. CPN even said it believed that the proposed program was a kind of hobby of the aldermen who wanted to make nice trips, paid for by the public. PvdA stated that the program shouldn't entail exchanges of cultural and sports groups between Velsen and Galle, but should focus on the exchange of educational and medical expertise. The fraction of CDA didn't see the added value for Velsen to get involved in international relations. International contacts were seen as unnecessary, or should be started with cities closer by, for example somewhere in Europe. Another argument of CDA was that Velsen overestimated the effect it could generate in Galle. Progressive Velsen foresaw problems with the mentality of the people in Galle and questioned whether the government of Velsen dared to address these in conversations with the government of Galle. But in the end, all parties except for CPN underpinned the importance of cultural exchange and voted in favour of the proposal.

3.3 A short history of the program

In the beginning the program was executed by two civil servants of the municipality of Velsen. The program was small-scale, partly because communications technology was not as advanced yet as it is nowadays. Another reason was a lack of capacity in terms of people.⁷⁴

This changed around 1985 when the mayor wished to enlarge the program. He was particularly interested in the program and wanted to expand the amount of projects but did not have the capacity to do so.⁷⁵ As a result, SOS Velsen (Stichting Ontwikkelingssamenwerking Velsen) was founded in June 1985, as a cooperation platform of people from different backgrounds with an interest in international cooperation and development. The municipality of Velsen delegated the execution of the city diplomacy program to SOS Velsen. The mayor of Velsen was the chairman of the foundation and a civil servant acted as secretary.⁷⁶

Another change came in 1997. The local government had to cut expenses and the mayor thought this would be conflictive with his role as the chairman of SOS Velsen.⁷⁷ From then on the mayor acts as an advisor of SOS Velsen and no longer as chairman. The local government of Velsen is no longer directly involved in the city diplomacy program, except for the yearly grant it gives to SOS Velsen.

⁷² Proposal 'Relation with Galle (Sri Lanka)' (1976).

⁷³ Minutes of the council meeting of 16th of September 1976.

⁷⁴ Interview with Klaas van Slooten, secretary of SOS Velsen.

⁷⁵ Interview with Klaas van Slooten, secretary of SOS Velsen.

⁷⁶ Annual reports, SOS Velsen.

⁷⁷ Annual report 1998, SOS Velsen.

At the same time SOS Velsen became more professional. It started to work for example with the so-called project list. The project list is a schedule which states project number, project description, project leader and project progress.⁷⁸ Based on this project list it is easier to report on the status of projects at any time requested. The project list is used as a starting point in meetings of the board of SOS Velsen. Another example of the professionalization is that SOS Velsen now pays more attention to the background of recipients. It checks for example whether the projects are managed properly.⁷⁹

The year 2004 was a special year for SOS Velsen. The tsunami in December 2004 left large parts of Galle devastated. The tidal wave destroyed the coastal line and took around three thousand lives. From all over the country, people offered SOS Velsen donations in the form of money and goods. An additional organisation, the foundation Velsen helpt Galle (VhG), was set up to coordinate and control all projects and activities related to rebuilding Galle after the tsunami. The foundation was dissolved in 2007 and the money and projects that remained were transferred to SOS Velsen.⁸⁰

Despite all the good work Velsen has done in Galle after the tsunami and in general, not everyone is enthusiastic about the program. In 2008 a council member of the municipality of Velsen stated to the press that helping Sri Lanka, a country in conflict, means contributing to the war. While acting as an international observer in Sri Lanka, he noticed that the Tamils as well as the Sri Lankan government disrespected human rights. He stated that such a government doesn't deserve help and was therefore critical about the connections between Velsen and Galle.⁸¹ Velsen deals with this kind of feelings by taking them seriously, and by explaining that stopping the program would also affect innocent people. SOS Velsen also discusses these matters with the government of Galle.⁸²

The statements by the council member started a discussion in the council about the city diplomacy program. As a result, in 2008 the municipality of Velsen organised a small conference about the city diplomacy program. The municipality invited seventy influential people of Velsen to the conference. The statements debated about were:

- Velsen should only develop projects which are practical and have a tangible effect;
- A good relationship with the local government of Galle is important;
- The citizens of Velsen are insufficiently involved in the program;
- The twinning relation has also benefits for Velsen;
- Democracy and a well-functioning juridical system are preconditions for the program.

The outcome of the debate was that SOS Velsen should continue its city diplomacy program but should develop small, tangible projects and should keep visits and tributes to the local government of Galle to a minimum.⁸³ This is in line with the new working method which SOS Velsen introduced in

⁷⁸ Project list of June 2009, Board of SOS Velsen.

⁷⁹ Annual report 2003, SOS Velsen.

⁸⁰ Interview with Klaas van Slooten, secretary of SOS Velsen.

⁸¹ Van Houten (2010).

⁸² Annual report 2006, SOS Velsen.

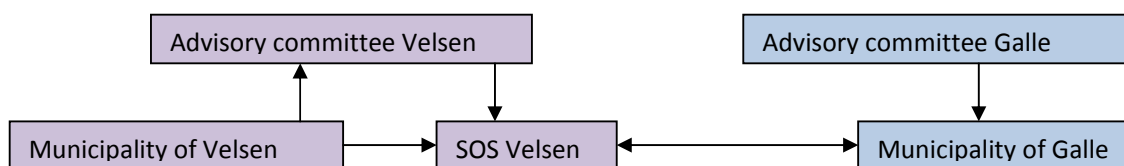
⁸³ Bangert (2008).

2007. The new working method focuses on conducting fewer projects at the same time, faster progress and more cooperation with the citizens of Galle.⁸⁴

Recently, Velsen has become a so-called Millennium municipality. This means that the municipality assigns itself to the millennium goals of the United Nations and tries to make progress in achieving these goals. Becoming a Millennium municipality forms an extra incentive for continuation of the program.⁸⁵

3.4 Structure of the program

From 1985 on SOS Velsen takes part in the city diplomacy campaign in Galle and from 1997 on this is done without direct interference of the local government of Velsen. The present structure of the program is as follows:



SOS Velsen has nine board members from different backgrounds. The board has had members with for example an educational, financial or religious background. They share a common interest in development cooperation. All board members participate on a voluntary basis. The board of SOS deals with the daily matters of the foundation. The advisory committees, on the other hand, give topical and occasional advice. The advisory committee of Galle for example advises on opportunities for projects and the advisory committee of Velsen advises on how to engage the citizens of Velsen with the program. The mayor of Velsen chairs the advisory committee of Velsen. The committee further consists of some civil servants and former board members of SOS Velsen, but also interested citizens. The advisory committee of Galle consists mainly of municipal employees and in addition a teacher and librarian, for example. It is also the task of the advisory committees to control the activities of the municipalities and SOS Velsen.⁸⁶

The statutory goals of SOS Velsen are:⁸⁷

- Creating insight in global issues and international cooperation through education and workshops
- Setting up projects, especially for the inhabitants of Galle, as an expression of feelings of solidarity resulting from the abovementioned created awareness
- Facilitating and supporting initiatives and activities of the inhabitants of Velsen, aimed at Galle

In achieving these goals, SOS Velsen is supported by the Netherlands Alumni Association of Sri Lanka, NAAL.⁸⁸ The Netherlands Alumni Association of Lanka consists of some 350 to 400 Sri Lankan people

⁸⁴ Annual report 2007, SOS Velsen.

⁸⁵ Website of SOS Velsen.

⁸⁶ Interview with Klaas van Slooten, secretary of SOS Velsen and annual reports of SOS Velsen.

⁸⁷ Annual reports, SOS Velsen.

who have studied in The Netherlands. The NAAL reviews the project proposals, gives advice on the (financial) feasibility of projects, manages the financial streams of projects, and controls and reports on the progress of projects. The NAAL reports to SOS Velsen whether a project is finished according to the agreements made. This is also checked by the members of SOS Velsen visiting Galle each year. Other partners of Velsen in the developmental city diplomacy program are the Dutch embassy in Sri Lanka, the Sri Lankan embassy in The Netherlands and on occasion some other NGOs or foundations.

Besides the fact that the municipality of Velsen is represented in the advisory committee, SOS Velsen also receives a yearly grant of around 20,000 euro of the local government.⁸⁹ In the beginning SOS Velsen received administrative support of the municipality of Velsen. A civil servant was the secretary of the foundation. This changed in 1993 in another attempt of the municipality to cut costs.⁹⁰ The rest of the money that is needed for the developmental city diplomacy program comes from co-financing by other government layers or other NGOs, or from occasional donations by private citizens, schools and companies in Velsen.

| Financial support (1985-2010)¹ | |
|--|-----------|
| Municipal grants | € 500,000 |
| Co-financing | € 105,000 |
| Donations | € 175,000 |

¹ These are estimations based on information provided for by SOS Velsen.

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Total amount invested in program (1985–2010)¹ | € 1,300,000 |
|---|--------------------|

¹ This is an estimation based on information provided for by SOS Velsen.

There is a considerable difference, of more than five hundred thousand euros, in the calculation above. It has not become clear from the data from which source(s) this additional money came. Probably not all donations and co-finance have been recorded.

The foundation accounts for its program and expenditures in the form of annual reports, which are checked by an accountant. Besides this, it sometimes uses additional forms to account for the municipal grant. For example, a photo exhibition with pictures taken from the projects in Galle has been organised.⁹¹ SOS Velsen has given information about the program on local fairs and permanently does so via its website sosvelsen.nl. At the 15th anniversary of the program a congress was organised.⁹² The Sri Lankan ambassador has been a special guest at some of these occasions.

3.5 Projects within the program

From its start in 1976, a total of 143 smaller and larger projects have been completed in this developmental city diplomacy program. An additional 28 projects have been started but not completed, due to a lack of funding, capacity or other reasons (see Chapter 4).⁹³

| Number of projects each year (total of 171) | | | |
|--|---|------|----|
| 1978 | 2 | 1997 | 10 |

⁸⁸ Interview with Klaas van Slooten, secretary of SOS Velsen and annual reports of SOS Velsen.

⁸⁹ Website and annual reports of SOS Velsen.

⁹⁰ Interview with Klaas van Slooten, secretary of SOS Velsen and annual reports of SOS Velsen.

⁹¹ Zwart (2008).

⁹² Annual report 2000, SOS Velsen.

⁹³ Website of SOS Velsen.

| | | | |
|------|------|-------------------|----|
| 1984 | 2 | 1998 | 4 |
| 1985 | 1 | 1999 | 6 |
| 1986 | 6 | 2000 | 9 |
| 1987 | 8 | 2001 | 9 |
| 1988 | 3 | 2002 | 5 |
| 1989 | 5 | 2003 | 6 |
| 1990 | n.a. | 2004 | 12 |
| 1991 | 5 | 2005 | 7 |
| 1992 | 4 | 2006 | 5 |
| 1993 | 4 | 2007 | 13 |
| 1994 | 4 | 2008 | 11 |
| 1995 | 9 | 2009 | 7 |
| 1996 | 10 | 2010 ¹ | 4 |

¹ Number of projects until September 2010.

The next paragraphs describe the different forms of city diplomacy used by Velsen in Galle. Some interesting projects are described in more detail. The last paragraph describes the development of the program throughout the years.

3.5.1 Lobbying

The first category of projects within city diplomacy are lobbying activities. When local governments lobby, they use their network and influence to bring about positive changes. Velsen used some forms of lobbying, although only very occasionally. Lobbying by SOS Velsen is carried out on an ad hoc basis.

An example is the working visits paid to Galle by the board members of SOS Velsen, sometimes together with the mayor of Velsen. The board members of SOS Velsen pay working visits to Galle almost every year. The trip is paid for by themselves, no financial support is provided. During the working visits the delegation members visit projects, have meetings with the NAAL, municipality of Galle and other government organisations.⁹⁴ Some working visits were rescheduled to a later date because of regular bomb attacks by rebel groups. The delegation members address these and other political issues with the government officials they meet. They put pressure on the government officials to disapprove of the situation by explaining that funding could be stopped as a result of the political unrest.⁹⁵

What often helps in these situations is when the mayor of Velsen is part of the delegation. In Galle it is regarded an honour when such an important figure visits their municipality. The mayor can take advantage of his position and use it to stress the importance of certain projects or developments.⁹⁶

But Velsen also lobbies in The Netherlands. In this respect, the relations of Velsen with other organisations in the country involved in city diplomacy didn't always go smoothly. Although VNG International is one of the main partners of SOS Velsen for example, they sometimes have a totally different point of view. In 2003 VNG International wanted to change its policy in reaction to a change of focus of the national government towards African countries. It meant that VNG International would only support programs when there were at least two municipalities active in the country. This

⁹⁴ Travel journals of board members SOS Velsen.

⁹⁵ Annual report 2006, SOS Velsen.

⁹⁶ Interview with Klaas van Slooten, secretary of SOS Velsen.

would mean the end of support for SOS Velsen, because Velsen is the only municipality active in Sri Lanka. Fortunately, the mayor of Velsen was able to turn the tide by starting a lobby.⁹⁷ This type of lobbying is however different from that described in theory which takes place on an international stage.

3.5.2 Dialogue activities

Another category of city diplomacy is dialogue activities. Dialogue activities (re)create trust and respect between different cultural groups. Dialogue activities are further aimed at reconciliation and enlarging social cohesion. Velsen almost makes no use of dialogue activities in the developmental city diplomacy program.

The only exception is the participation of two boys from Galle in an international conference.⁹⁸ In 1993 the United Nations of Youth organised a conference in The Hague with young people from several parts of the world where civil wars were raging. One of the boys from Galle was a Muslim, the other was a Buddhist. They spoke on the conference which aimed to shed a light on the problems of young people in war-affected countries. Contacts and accommodation were cared for by SOS Velsen.

3.5.3 Development cooperation

The most practiced form of city diplomacy by Velsen is development cooperation. Most development cooperation is carried out in the form of projects. At the start of the city diplomacy program it was explicitly stated, however, that projects were not to be the focus of the program.⁹⁹ However, since the mayor wished to expand the activities of the program and founded SOS Velsen in 1985, projects have been the main occupation of SOS Velsen. A couple of projects are described hereafter to illustrate the content of the developmental city diplomacy program.

Categories of projects

Projects have been developed in the fields of security, development, economy, culture, cooperation and representation. The projects of Velsen can be classified along these lines.¹⁰⁰

| Number of projects by category | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|---------|---------|-------------|----------------|
| Security | Development | Economy | Culture | Cooperation | Representation |
| 2 | 86 | 24 | 47 | 10 | 2 |

Security project

The civil war between the national government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers has caused the loss of thousands of lives. A lot of children have become orphans. When the civil war ended in 2009, displaced people started to leave the refugee camps. A couple of girls went to the Christ the King Girls Home in Murunkan. SOS Velsen spent € 5,000 on humanitarian relief aid for this orphanage. The money can be used to buy food and realise four new toilets. The progress of the project is unknown because communication with Christ the King Girls Home is difficult.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Annual report 2003, SOS Velsen.

⁹⁸ Annual report 1992 – 1993, SOS Velsen.

⁹⁹ Minutes of the council meeting of 16th of September 1976.

¹⁰⁰ Website of SOS Velsen.

¹⁰¹ Website of SOS Velsen.

Developmental project

A successful example is the Lighthouse Pool.¹⁰² A community focused 25-metres swimming pool with four lanes, changing rooms, showers, children's pool and office was built opposite the Lighthouse Hotel in Galle. SOS Velsen has financed the swimming pool together with other NGOs and with help of donations from a firm in Velsen. It took a while to find a suitable site for the swimming pool. Some of the sites which the local government assigned to the pool were already taken for another project, some were too far away from schools and bus stations. The building phase however was a success because fast progress was made from the beginning. Agreements are made for maintenance and management of the swimming pool. Maintenance is for example done by the swimming teachers. The goal of the project is to enable free swimming courses for children, women, fishermen and disabled people. It is part of the trauma project of SOS Velsen. Many Sri Lankan people could not swim and drowned during the tsunami. A lot of children are afraid of water as a result of this. The swimming lessons help traumatised children. Unfortunately the pool isn't used during the days because swimming lessons are not part of the school curriculum.

Economical project

A very successful project was the realisation of a day care centre. In an old library the Day Care Centre was realised, where mothers can bring their small children so that they can work and gather an income themselves. It is a huge success because it is used intensively and the building is in a proper state. Around 43 children visit the centre every day. The project was coordinated by an expert from The Netherlands via the program PUM (Project Uitzending Managers). The project now serves as an example for other municipalities in Sri Lanka who wish to set up a day care centre. This is a good example of knowledge transfer.¹⁰³

Cultural project

Not all projects which started off with problems were ended premature. The old library and connected fire-brigade are transformed into a sports complex where several sports are practiced. It started well with the collection of sports materials by the sports and recreation department of the municipality of Velsen. The materials were shipped to Galle for usage in the new gymnasium. This sport complex was realised in an old library where also the fire-brigade was housing. The project was however delayed because of heavy rainfall and because Galle municipality did not pay the bills. The building contractor temporarily stopped construction work as a result of this. It took a lot of time and pressure from the side of SOS Velsen to convince the local government of Galle of the importance of this project. Almost two years later than planned the gymnasium was finished. Nowadays it is used for the practice of several kinds of sports.¹⁰⁴

Cooperational project

A project which is copied by other cities is the VTA training centre. A Dutch and Sri Lankan Rotary Club have donated money for setting up a VTA training centre where young people can follow courses such as ICT. This is of great help in finding a job later on. The Sri Lankan students are asked to do voluntary work later on in their life to continue the legacy of the project. The computer network was installed by Dutch students of the NOVA College. For them it was a foreign internship. The students also took care of raising funds, buying materials and shipping of these to Galle. The students

¹⁰² Fernandopulle (2010) and annual reports of 2004 to 2009, SOS Velsen.

¹⁰³ Annual report 2000, SOS Velsen.

¹⁰⁴ Annual report 2003, SOS Velsen.

also built a computer network in the city hall of Galle. The teachers of NOVA College accompanying the Dutch students trained the computer teachers in Galle (train-the-trainers). At the end of 2003 already 1250 had subscribed for a computer course at the VTA training centre.¹⁰⁵

Representation project

In 2004 the mayor of Galle had the plan to recruit a civil servant for international affairs. The civil servant would get his or her own office equipped with modern communication technology. The civil servant had to inform Velsen on the progress in the city diplomacy program every month. The office could also be used by the Advisory Committee of Galle (ACG) for meetings. Unfortunately, the mayor didn't keep his promise and didn't recruit someone for this function. Furthermore, SOS Velsen gets the impression that the ACG is hindered by the local government of Galle.¹⁰⁶

Most projects of Velsen can be shared under developmental, economic or cultural activities. Examples of these are the building of new neighbourhoods, a sports complex, day care centre and ICT training centre. It is interesting to see which sorts of projects were more successful than others.¹⁰⁷

Success of projects

In this research a successful project is defined as a project in which the stated end goal is achieved. The end goals of the projects in the developmental city diplomacy take many forms. These are physical end goals such as the realisation of a community centre, swimming pool or houses. But it are also social end goals such as organising exchanges between schools, educational courses and sports activities.

The table below categorises the projects along their successfulness. All projects which are taken off the project list of SOS Velsen because the end result is achieved are categorised as successful.¹⁰⁸

Unsuccessful projects are those projects which are taken off the project list because they are ended by SOS Velsen premature. This can have several reasons which will be explained later on in the research. Some projects are categorised as 'unknown'. This is either because it is not known if the end result has been achieved or because the projects are still running.

| Percentage of success by category | | | | |
|--|-------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Total | Success (%) | Failure (%) | Unknown (%) |
| Security | 2 | 1 (50) | | 1 (50) |
| Development | 86 | 73 (85) | 9 (10) | 4 (5) |
| Economy | 24 | 19 (79) | 5 (21) | |
| Culture | 47 | 37 (79) | 7 (15) | 3 (6) |
| Cooperation | 10 | 2 (20) | 6 (60) | 2 (20) |
| Representation | 2 | 2 (100) | | |

For the three biggest categories (development, economy and culture) the success rate is around 80%. This is quite high, given the dynamic circumstances in which the projects have to be executed. It is more difficult to say something about the successfulness of projects in the other categories because

¹⁰⁵ Annual reports 2003 and 2004, SOS Velsen.

¹⁰⁶ Annual reports 2004 and 2005, SOS Velsen.

¹⁰⁷ Website of SOS Velsen.

¹⁰⁸ Project list of SOS Velsen on its website.

of the small numbers within the categories. In those categories one success or failure incredibly changes the percentage.

| Percentage of success by year | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|
| 1978 | 100 | 1997 | 100 |
| 1984 | 100 | 1998 | 100 |
| 1985 | 100 | 1999 | 100 |
| 1986 | 100 | 2000 | 88 |
| 1987 | 100 | 2001 | 66 |
| 1988 | 100 | 2002 | 60 |
| 1989 | 100 | 2003 | 83 |
| 1990 | n.a. | 2004 | 25 |
| 1991 | 100 | 2005 | 43 |
| 1992 | 100 | 2006 | 80 |
| 1993 | 100 | 2007 | 62 |
| 1994 | 100 | 2008 | 73 |
| 1995 | 100 | 2009 | 53 |
| 1996 | 100 | 2010 | n.a. |

It seems remarkable that the success rate drops in the latest years of the program. However, this can be explained:

- The complexity of the projects increased.¹⁰⁹ A project completed in the beginning of the program was for example a donation of beds to Bona Vista elderly home. The Solid Waste Management Program has been conducted in the latest years of the city diplomacy program.
- SOS Velsen has changed its policy towards a more professional working method. More projects are ended because the money is not spend according to the agreements or because a lack of management information.¹¹⁰
- SOS Velsen conducts less projects at the same time than before. As a result of this there is more budget for each project. Another result is that with such small numbers one failure affects the success rate more than with a larger amount of projects.
- A simple reason is that there are more projects of the last ten years shared under the category 'unknown'. Some projects are still running but could later become part of the success category.

Failure of projects

The most common reasons to end a program are a lack of money, insufficient information, cultural differences or communication problems.

| | |
|---|---|
| Lack of money | 6 |
| Insufficient information | 8 |
| Cultural differences / communication problems | 8 |
| Other | 6 |

Lack of money

Velsen has a school for sport education (CIOS). One of the courses of the sport education is

¹⁰⁹ Annual reports, SOS Velsen.

¹¹⁰ Annual report 2008, SOS Velsen.

‘international sports development’. This course has led to successful sport projects in South-Africa and Zimbabwe. The essence of the projects is that a graduation student of CIOS teaches the trainers abroad. Sport is proven to be a good instrument to diminish criminal activity, enhance physical well-being and learn young people to cooperate. CIOS proposed to extend the project to Galle. One of the teachers of the school went to Galle in 2001 to prepare the project. In 2003 an additional visit was paid to the city by a civil servant of Velsen and a graduation student to investigate the need for this project. They concluded that there is a huge need for sports development. The project was supposed to start in 2004 but experienced a lack of funding. VNG International was prepared to co-fund 50% of the project if the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport would also fund 50%. The Ministry wasn’t able to support the project. Appeals to other organisations such as the Johan Cruijff Foundation led to nothing. In 2006 SOS Velsen decided to stop the project.¹¹¹

Insufficient information

One of the biggest projects was the Solid Waste Management Program (SWMP).¹¹² The project was executed in cooperation with VNG International. VNG International provided part of the funding and coordinated the general program. The goal of the SWMP, in which also the Canadian Union of Municipalities and the World Bank were active, was to stop illegal dumping of waste and to find a way and location for managing solid waste handling. The aim was to establish cooperation between Galle and its neighbouring cities and to find a mutual, combined waste disposal site. Some people from Galle therefore followed a course in solid waste management and visited some relevant sites in The Netherlands. Dutch experts on waste management visited Galle later on in order to transfer their knowledge onto the locals in Galle. They explained who are involved in waste management, how they could cooperate and how a solid waste implementation plan (SWIP) must be written. SOS Velsen created a project office in Galle which was occupied by the solid waste manager which advised the five local municipalities on waste management. However, the project was ended prematurely, because the cities didn’t cooperate well enough. Except for one municipality, they didn’t write a project proposal in time and they were not able to find a suitable location for a common waste disposal site. This was a reason for VNG International to stop the project and quit funding it.

Cultural differences / communication problems

SOS Velsen has conducted a couple of attempts to establish contacts between Dutch and Sri Lankan students. All of these attempts failed. The project with the scouting groups of Velsen and Galle is illustrative for all attempts to establish contacts between Velsen and Galle. In 2007 four scouting groups within Velsen indicate that they would like to maintain contact with scouting groups in Galle. SOS Velsen has contact with someone from Galle who followed a course of VNG International in The Netherlands and who has connections with scouting groups in Galle district. He says that there are about 69 scouting groups in Galle and its surroundings but none of these has an email account. Therefore SOS Velsen makes contact with the District Scout Commissioner in Galle. Contacts with him are rigid and in the end he doesn’t reply at all anymore.¹¹³

Other

SOS Velsen has built a neighbourhood with houses for families which became homeless by the

¹¹¹ Annual reports of 2000 to 2006, SOS Velsen.

¹¹² Interview with Klaas van Slooten, secretary of SOS Velsen and Annual reports of 2001 to 2008, SOS Velsen.

¹¹³ Annual report 2007 and 2008, SOS Velsen.

tsunami: Aththiligoda. In the new neighbourhood thirty-eight houses were built in a Dutch fashion. The houses have two floors and a front- and backyard, something which is uncommon for Sri Lankan houses. The houses were furnished before they were handed over to the new owners. The project experienced big trouble in the beginning. This was caused by a change in mayors of Galle. Two candidates gathered a same amount of votes during the local elections and decided to govern two years each. The housing project started under the first mayor. He appointed a site to build the new neighbourhood. The first step in the project was to chop down the trees on the building site. Somewhere around then there was a shift in power and the second mayor started with his governing period. He decided to make a football field of the site where the houses were planned. The NAAL heard this and stopped the plans of the mayor. The NAAL could prove with documents that they owned the construction site. In this example the project ended successfully but in some other occasions reluctance on the side of the mayor has caused projects to fail.¹¹⁴

The pitfalls and success factors of the program are described in more detail in the next chapter.

3.5.4 Development through the years

The content of the developmental city diplomacy campaign has changed over the years.¹¹⁵ In the beginning the project was executed by the municipality of Velsen. The focus of the program was creating awareness among the citizens of Velsen for international cooperation. This was done by establishing friendship ties with Galle and organising all kinds of activities in Velsen. When SOS Velsen took over the coordination of the program, the focus shifted from Velsen to Galle. SOS Velsen started projects in Galle to support and develop the town.

The first projects were aimed at improving hygiene. In 1988, for example, a well was renovated and the sewerage was improved.¹¹⁶ When hygiene levels in Galle improved sufficiently, SOS Velsen started projects with an educational focus. For example, two sewing schools were built so that women were also educated and could find a job.¹¹⁷ Educational projects still form an important part of the program. The VTA training centre is a successful example of this.¹¹⁸ During the years other topics gained importance too. A couple of projects in the field of sports have been designed and there is more attention for culture.

The form of projects changed too. In the beginning a lot of projects concentrated on maintenance or renovation of buildings. Maintenance of buildings isn't a priority in Sri Lanka, so after a couple of years the earlier renovated buildings were in decay again.¹¹⁹ In 2007 SOS Velsen decided to no longer fund these kind of projects but to focus on new developments.¹²⁰ These need not necessarily be physical projects. The program developed from solely physical projects like building community centres and houses in the beginning to a broader selection of projects like waste management and internships. The focus shifted from material support to knowledge exchange between the two local governments.

¹¹⁴ Annual report 2009 and interview with Klaas van Slooten, secretary of SOS Velsen.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Klaas van Slooten, secretary of SOS Velsen.

¹¹⁶ Annual report 1988, SOS Velsen.

¹¹⁷ Annual report 1991, SOS Velsen.

¹¹⁸ Annual report 2003, SOS Velsen.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Klaas van Slooten, secretary of SOS Velsen.

¹²⁰ Annual report 2007, SOS Velsen.

Also the choice of partners for the projects changed. Due to several experiences with a non-cooperative local government of Galle, SOS Velsen changed its focus to working relations with other organisations such as local NGOs. At times SOS got the feeling that the local government of Galle didn't appreciate the interference of the foundation.¹²¹ A possible explanation for this is the fact that the NAAL controls the cash flow of projects. This leaves no room for local leaders to enrich themselves with aid money. Besides this, Galle became less dependent of the support of Velsen because a lot of organisations became active in the region after the tsunami.¹²²

In relation to this, the advisory committee of Galle consists now of more people from outside the local government. The trend to work more outside of the local government of Galle is further stimulated by the attention for local ownership and citizen participation. A request should come from Galle's society assuring the participation of the citizens. In this way ownership within the project is created. It is based on the principle that a recipient of a project also should contribute to the project. In the neighbourhood Siyambalagahawatta this happened when the citizens helped to renovate the well.¹²³ Local ownership is further stimulated by giving part of the funding in the form of a loan which the recipients should pay back in the future.

On the other hand the attention for creating local ownership and interest in the developmental city diplomacy program in Velsen decreased. In line with the wish of the council to create awareness for international cooperation among the citizens of Velsen this was one of the main goals in the beginning of the program. There was a newsletter, a symposium, a 'circle of friends' who donated money, expositions, readings and even an educational package for schools in Velsen.¹²⁴ Nowadays some events are still organised but these are either related to already scheduled festivities or to account for the expenditures of the foundation.

Conclusion

The developmental city diplomacy program of Velsen-Galle is an interesting case. Starting as a small municipal project with an internal focus, it developed into an intense relationship between both cities with a total number of 171 projects completed in several fields of development cooperation and a independent foundation coordinating the whole process. The program is very successful given its average success rate of 80%. The success of the program is partly the result of the professional working methods of SOS Velsen and partly the result of the (financial) support of other organisations such as VNG International. Only 28 projects were a failure, mainly due to a lack of money, cultural barriers, communication problems or a lack of information.

The question is whether the case of Velsen-Galle is exemplary for developmental city diplomacy. Lessons learned from the case study are in that case worthy information for other municipalities interested in starting city diplomacy campaigns. The next chapter makes the comparison between theory and practice.

¹²¹ Annual report 2007, SOS Velsen.

¹²² Annual report 2007, SOS Velsen.

¹²³ Annual report 2002, SOS Velsen.

¹²⁴ Annual report 1988, SOS Velsen.

Chapter 4: Comparison

By comparing the case of Velsen – Galle with the theory as described in Chapter 2, I will investigate to what degree the case and theory overlap.

4.1 General remarks

The developmental city diplomacy program of Velsen originates in the late 1970s. In the beginning the activities were aimed at creating awareness for international cooperation among the citizens of Velsen. When SOS Velsen was founded in 1985, the focus shifted to development cooperation in Galle. This is in line with the general development in The Netherlands from an internally orientated practice of city diplomacy in the 1970s to an externally orientated practice of city diplomacy in the 1980s.

With regard to the external orientation of city diplomacy, three types of roles can be distinguished. These are (1) participation in programs of international organisations, (2) formal representation in international organisations, and (3) autonomous development of cooperation programs. Velsen has chosen the last role, as most municipalities do.

4.2 Motives for city diplomacy

Scientific insights on city diplomacy tell us that motives for city diplomacy are feelings of solidarity, personal engagement with international affairs and certain parts of the world, and self-interest on the side of the initiator.

According to theory feelings of solidarity are the most commonly stated argument for city diplomacy initiatives. Feelings of solidarity indeed formed a motive for Velsen. The municipality wished to establish ties with a city in the Third World. Additional reasons for Velsen to develop a cooperation program with Galle were the wish to enlarge the awareness of its citizens for international cooperation and the wish to learn from each other's culture and habits.

Self-interest didn't play a role in the choice of Velsen to start a twinning relationship with Galle. Economic motives were absent. There is some attention paid to reciprocity of the developmental city diplomacy program. The small amount of reciprocity of the program is in the cultural exchange between the populations of the two cities.

As for personal engagement, enthusiasm on the side of some local council members formed the spark of the initiative. The contacts of a former inhabitant of Velsen in Sri Lanka did the rest. Velsen and Galle were brought together by Evert Jongens. Without his interference the ties between Velsen and Galle wouldn't have existed. The literature already mentions the importance of key figures that support the program.

Once it was decided that Velsen would become active in the international arena, the choice for Galle was just a matter of supply and demand. This is one of the scenarios described in theory. It further describes that an appeal to cooperate either comes from a city in The Netherlands or from a city or NGO in the conflict affected region. In the case study both situations occurred. Galle had expressed the wish to connect with a city in The Netherlands with a harbour and of about the same size. At the same time the council of the municipality of Velsen wished to connect with a city abroad.

4.3 Forming a coalition

City diplomacy campaigns start with the formation of a group of dedicated people by the person or organisation which took the initiative to start the campaign. Forming such a coalition is similar to its political equivalent. It is all about finding people with the same interests, willing to cooperate to achieve a common goal. The process is influenced by political games and personal interests. The resulting coalition can have different forms. The city diplomacy program is either executed by the local government itself or (partly) delegated to civil society.

The developmental city diplomacy program in the case study was an initiative of the municipality of Velsen. It was in first instance an idea of a couple of council members. They conducted a research into the possibilities of international cooperation for Velsen. Connecting with Galle was one of the options. The possibility was further elaborated in the project proposal for the city council meeting of September 1976. During the council meeting there was some debate on the topic. On the one hand there were parties (Progressive Velsen, PvdA) which found that the proposal didn't go far enough. They wanted more attention for reciprocity and tangible projects. On the other hand there were parties (CPN, CDA) which didn't see the added value of the proposal and wanted to spend the money on other matters. In the end all political parties except for CPN agreed to start the program.

The coalition of council members in favour of the city diplomacy program was extended with the mayor of Velsen and some civil servants. They were responsible for the execution of the program. In 1985 SOS Velsen was founded. A board with members from all backgrounds in society was appointed. The coalition was further extended with these board members and now consists of representatives from the local government and civil society. On paper the ideal coalition also contains a consultant. This role is occupied by the NAAL.

In the case study all three possible constructions for execution of city diplomacy programs were present for a while. In the beginning the program was executed solely by the local government of Velsen. With the foundation of SOS Velsen in 1985 it became a combined task of the municipality and the board of SOS Velsen. With the privatisation of SOS Velsen in 1997 the program became the responsibility of the foundation only.

4.4 Forms of city diplomacy

City diplomacy can take several forms. Theory mentions three common forms of city diplomacy: lobbying, dialogue activities and development cooperation. Lobbyists can take on the role of bridge builder, mediator, persuader, facilitator or trainer. Dialogue activities are aimed at recreating trust and social cohesion. Development cooperation in the form of projects is the most prevalent form in city diplomacy campaigns of Dutch cities. Development cooperation is targeted at the fields of cooperation, representation, security, economy, culture and development.

Lobbying and dialogue activities are only conducted on a small scale in the developmental city diplomacy program of Velsen in Galle. Lobbying by Velsen is performed to protect the funding opportunities and policy of the foundation. In doing so, Velsen municipality and SOS Velsen take on the role of persuader. In its relations with Galle, Velsen takes on the roles of facilitator and trainer. The aim of the activities is to develop the professionalism of the municipality of Galle.

The main focus in the case study of Velsen-Galle is on development cooperation to support and develop Galle. First it took the form of raising awareness for international cooperation in Velsen but

later on projects in Galle became the main focus of the program. Most projects are developed in the fields of development, economy and culture.

4.5 Success factors of city diplomacy

Chapter 2 mentions several political and practical conditions which should be met for city diplomacy to be a success. But what is scientifically recommended doesn't necessarily work in practice. This paragraph compares the theoretical conditions with the practice in the case Velsen – Galle.

4.5.1 Practical conditions

The practical conditions focus on process and project design and can more or less be controlled by the practitioners of the program.

- Conflict areas are dynamic so project designs should be no more than rough guidelines and flexibility is required. Time and money should be allocated wisely. SOS Velsen doesn't have standardised project designs but adapts the project to the situation. So it has a high level of flexibility. It recently decided to concentrate on a few projects at the same time, safeguarding faster progress and higher budgets per project.
- Theory states that as much attention should be paid to process as to product. SOS Velsen however favours product over process. The goals of the projects are often cited in terms of a facility for the people of Galle. How to achieve the goal has to be found out along the way. SOS Velsen has in other words no explicit policy for designing the process of projects.
- It is also recommended to think in terms of expertise rather than money. SOS Velsen has an average expenditure of around € 52,000 each year. So there is not a lot of money to spend on the projects. Materials and labour are bought locally. One of the main success factors in the case is the exchange of expertise between Velsen and Galle. In all of the successful projects within the city diplomacy program this plays more or less a role. The Day Care Centre was for example set up by a retired manager from the social sector in The Netherlands who has a lot of experience with these kinds of projects.
- In line with this is the argument that projects should be participatory and concentrate on learning so that the projects can be continued after foreign support stops. All projects of Velsen in Galle have a duration between one and five years. After that the community is responsible for the maintenance of the facility or continuation of the project. Sometimes this is achieved by designing participatory projects, such as the renovation of the well, but still quite a few projects are one-way traffic.
- Furthermore, assistance should be responsive to local needs in order to create commitment. In the case study project proposals are written and submitted by organisations and persons in Galle themselves and for that matter are a direct representation of a need or wish. Besides that, SOS Velsen yearly investigates in cooperation with the local government of Galle what their needs are.
- Another theoretical success factor is concentrating on local institutions thereby creating a strong and legitimate government. In the beginning the local government of Galle was the main partner of Velsen and some government officials visited Velsen to learn more about the organisation and management of the municipality. Later on Velsen developed more projects

outside the influence of the local government of Galle. Indifference and reluctance at the side of the local government have led to this decision.

- To avoid fostering dependency it is important to set terms of conditionality. SOS Velsen only recently started to do this by giving part of the funding in the form of a loan which should be paid back by the recipients. The idea is that the loan can be paid back from the leverage of the project. Furthermore, sufficient information should be provided by project partners in order to get funds. If not enough progress is made, the money is retrieved.
- Having this practical knowledge is one of the success factors of city diplomacy. SOS Velsen has gathered its knowledge of Sri Lanka and Galle in particular through the working visits to Galle over many years and through the contacts with the NAAL and other NGOs in the area.
- But knowledge of the context is not enough. It is important to establish linkages with civil society and the private sector. In this way the often limited resources of local governments are extended. The first linkage between Velsen and the civil society and private sector of Galle is the NAAL. The NAAL acts as a bridge builder and mediator for SOS Velsen. The manager of the NAAL, Kumar, is one of the key figures of the city diplomacy program. In a lot of projects the civil society and the private sector are involved. An example is the swimming pool which is supported by and built on land of the Lighthouse Hotel. Besides the NAAL, SOS Velsen has also good connections with mayor De Silva, the Dutch embassy in Sri Lanka and the Sri Lankan embassy in The Netherlands, VNG International and Evert Jongens. Just to name a few. This picture is in line with that described in theory. Linking up with civil society, corporations and NGOs is suggested there as a success factor.
- It is a challenge to work together with NGOs and enhance the legitimacy of the local government at the same time. SOS Velsen works together with other NGOs as well as the government of Galle. The advisory committee of Galle combines all parties. In this way respect for both the private and public sector is created.

4.5.2 Political conditions

Theory mentions also some political conditions which should be met for city diplomacy to be successful. It is a challenge to meet the political conditions because the political environment is dynamic.

- Projects must address underlying causes of conflict. Although the delegation members of the visits to Galle address the conflict between the national government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil rebels, the projects of SOS Velsen don't address the underlying causes of conflict. Galle hasn't got a large population of Tamils, so the war dynamics are less prevalent there.
- Attention should be paid to local ownership and long-term commitment. It takes time for a relationship to grow, to built trust and connections. Velsen is active in Galle since 1976 and has taken this time to grow a sustainable partnership. It is nowadays a respected partner of the city of Galle. Besides long-term commitment it is important to form a relationship on basis of equality to realise local ownership. SOS Velsen did this well by using the concept of citizen participation in for example the renovation of the well and setting up the VTA training

centre. All project proposals are written by the people in Galle and they are assisted in this by the NAAL.

- Theory suggests a focus on individuals rather than organisations. Partnerships with trustworthy individuals who support city diplomacy are considered even more important than the link to the organisation behind these people. In the projects of SOS Velsen in Galle it is often proved that an individual can make a huge contribution to the progress of the project. The efforts of Kumar, the president of The NAAL, are a vital element in almost all projects. An example was the housing project in which the NAAL prevented that the land was used to develop a football field instead of houses.
- Also within the government strong leaders are an important asset. There is a need for key figures promoting the program. The impact of the changes in mayors of Galle picture this well. Some mayors are very enthusiastic about and give support to the city diplomacy campaign while others hamper progress by focussing on self-interest.
- Practitioners should be impartial but at the same time bring sensitive matters up to discussion. What has made many projects of SOS Velsen into a success is that the foundation does not hesitate to put sensitive matters onto the table. The implications of the conflict between the national government and the Tamil Tigers for development cooperation is discussed several times during working visits to Galle. The political unrest is discussed with the mayor of Galle, but also with the district officer and the ambassador of Sri Lanka. SOS Velsen works without a hidden agenda but clearly states what the goals of the program are.

4.6 Pitfalls of city diplomacy

Theory describes some reasons for not starting or continuing city diplomacy. One of these is the volatility of city councils, resulting in a withdrawal of city diplomacy activities. Others are obstructive national policies and reluctant local leaders.

The volatility of city councils can result in a changing attitude towards city diplomacy. The changes in mayors of Galle had a lot of impact on the progress of the projects. The new mayor either supported the program or obstructed it by introducing own plans. In Velsen changes in composition of the city council didn't have severe effects on the twinning relation. It only resulted in an evaluation of the city diplomacy program in 2008 with a positive conclusion.

Meeting reluctant local leaders can also frustrate the city diplomacy program. Especially some mayors of Galle were causing frustration. They promised things they didn't carry out or they were more interested in personal gain than in the city diplomacy program with Velsen.

Finally, obstructive national policy can hamper progress. National policy changes in The Netherlands often led to unrest and a draw back in co-funding for the program. This was the reason why the sports development program wasn't continued. A shift in focus to Africa and the introduction of the criteria of at least two active municipalities in a country to apply for funding have led to a lot of unrest among the board of SOS Velsen. Attempts of national government, VNG International and Velsen municipality to cut costs have resulted in smaller budgets for the program.

The program has also experienced some pitfalls which are not described in the background information on city diplomacy. Therefore further research on these pitfalls is advisable. The program

and projects experienced some cultural barriers. Sri Lankan people are for instance not used to maintenance of buildings and equipment. They are also not used to write reports and reply to e-mails as quickly as in The Netherlands. In some cases the cultural differences have led to a premature ending of a project, as happened with the Solid Waste Management Program. Plain unluckiness, such as heavy rainfall which caused delay in several projects, is also not described in theory. Probably because it is something which can't be controlled.

Conclusion

The developmental city diplomacy program of Velsen – Galle came into existence along the same lines as described in theory. It started as an initiative of a small group of people within the city council. This coalition was extended with the mayor, civil servants and people from civil society. The NAAL makes the 'coalition of willing' complete.

The motive to start the program were feelings of solidarity with Third World countries. Efforts from the side of inhabitant Evert Jongens led to the connection of Velsen and Galle.

As for many local governments involved in city diplomacy, the main focus of Velsen is development cooperation in the form of projects. In the beginning the activities were targeted at the citizens of Velsen. From 1985 on the focus shifted to development cooperation in Galle. This development is a consequence of general developments in city diplomacy in The Netherlands in the 1970s and 1980s. Lobbying and dialogue activities are performed by SOS Velsen only on a small scale.

The most important success factors of the program were the focus on knowledge exchange, attention to local needs, support of key figures and the long-term commitment of both parties. Pitfalls were the changes in political composition of the local government of Galle, a lack of money and cultural barriers.

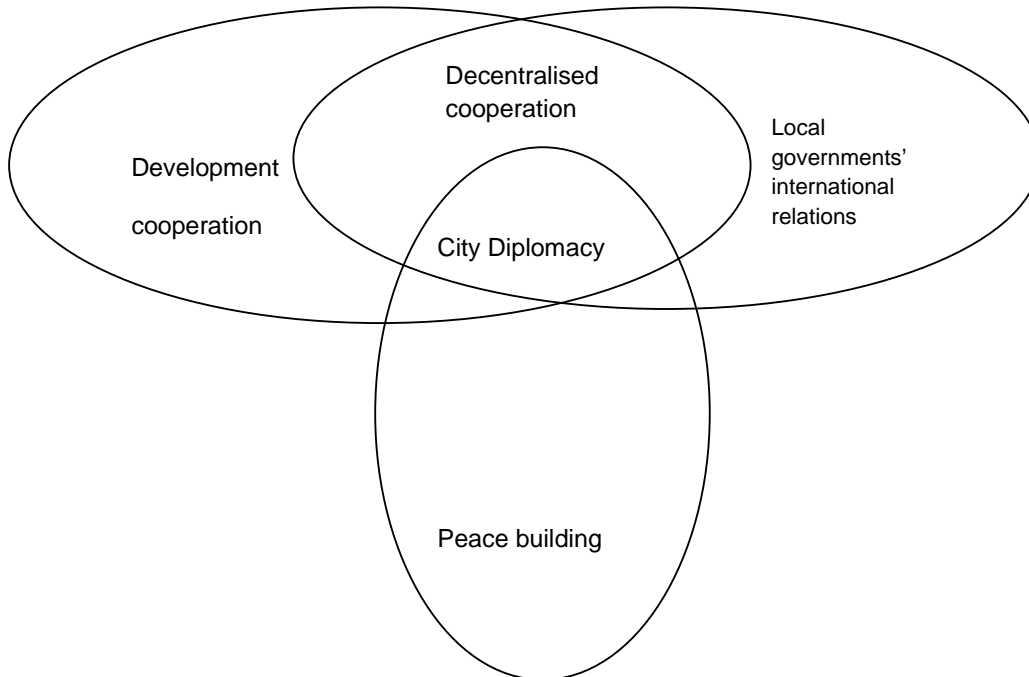
The first impression is that there are a lot of similarities between the case of Velsen-Galle and the scientific insights on city diplomacy. However, there are also some aspects of the case which need to be further debated. There is for example no direct relation between the projects of SOS Velsen and conflict prevention, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. These are the components of city diplomacy. Besides this, the city diplomacy program entails almost no examples of lobbying or dialogue activities. It is debateable if a case which focuses only on development cooperation is representative for city diplomacy. Finally, the program is executed by a foundation without a lot of interference of the local government of Velsen. Especially in the latest years of the program. Keeping this in mind it is again debateable to what extent the case is a form of city diplomacy. The questions are debated in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

There are a lot of comparisons between the case study and the theory on city diplomacy. The origin of the program is in line with what is written about motivations to start city diplomacy and about the forming of coalitions of supportive people. The activities of Velsen in Galle can be shared under the forms of city diplomacy mentioned in the second chapter. Almost all success factors and pitfalls of city diplomacy written about can be found back in the case. There are just a few differences between the list in Chapter 2 and the practices found in the case. Following this line of argumentation it can be said that Velsen – Galle is a representative case of city diplomacy. However, there are also some aspects of the case which need to be further debated.

5.1.1 The conflict dimension of city diplomacy

The definitions of city diplomacy assume that activities within a city diplomacy program are aimed at conflict prevention, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. When the conflict dimension is absent one should speak of decentralised cooperation.¹²⁵



Given the absence of a direct link between the activities of SOS Velsen and the dimensions of city diplomacy it is fair to ask the question if the case study is a real example of city diplomacy or rather an example of decentralised cooperation.

The civil war between the Tamil Tigers and the national government of Sri Lanka was fought in the North and East of the country. Galle is located in the South. The city did however experience the effects of the conflict. Attacks on the city were unusual but the effects of the conflict on the economic situation of the city were significant. The projects of SOS Velsen are not directly aimed at conflict prevention, peace building or post-conflict reconstruction. An exception is for example the

¹²⁵ Van Overbeek (2007).

support for the Christ the King Girls Home. SOS Velsen does however address the conflict and political instability when visiting Galle. It is concerned about the political situation and takes notice of the conflict dynamics in project designs. Although at first sight only marginal, there certainly is attention for the conflict in the program of Velsen in Galle.

Only if peace building activities are added to the mix of development cooperation and local governments' international relations one can speak of city diplomacy.¹²⁶ With regard to this discussion it can be concluded that the case of Velsen-Galle is a form of city diplomacy.

5.1.2 The absence of lobbying and dialogue activities

Another topic for debate is the absence of lobbying and dialogue activities within the case of Velsen-Galle. The main focus of the city diplomacy program is development cooperation. Lobbying and dialogue activities play only a very minor role in the case study. The lobbying and dialogue activities which are conducted are not representative for the examples mentioned in theory. Is the case of Velsen-Galle representative for city diplomacy if only development cooperation takes place?

The case of Velsen-Galle is no exception. Most cities in Northern-European countries focus on development cooperation in the form of projects. Being more critical on the choice of the case study could possibly have led to a better example of city diplomacy which contained more examples of lobbying and dialogue activities. Still development cooperation would probably have covered the biggest part of the program. The case of Velsen-Galle is maybe not the best example of city diplomacy but it is representative for city diplomacy. Keeping the focus on development cooperation in mind, a refinement of the conclusion is that the case of Velsen-Galle is representative for *developmental city diplomacy in Northern-European countries*.

5.1.3 The level of interference of local government

There is still one aspect of the case study to be discussed. The term city diplomacy implies that the main actors in this field are cities or other local governments. In the case of Velsen-Galle the developmental city program is coordinated by a foundation called SOS Velsen. The foundation isn't part of the municipality of Velsen nor has board members with a political background. It can be debated if this fact implicates that the case of Velsen-Galle is not representative for city diplomacy.

Nowadays the city diplomacy program is coordinated by SOS Velsen. However, the start of the program lies within the city council of the municipality of Velsen. The twinning relationship with Galle was established by the municipality of Velsen. In the beginning of the program the municipality executed the program itself. Later on SOS Velsen was founded and took over the job. The mayor of Velsen and a civil servant were board members of SOS Velsen. Only since 1997 the foundation operates independent from the municipality of Velsen. To a certain degree, because it receives funding from the municipality yearly. Theory describes three constructions of city diplomacy: complete control by the municipality, complete control by civil society or a combination of this. The case of Velsen-Galle is exemplary for the last category and is therefore representative for city diplomacy.

¹²⁶ Van Overbeek (2007).

5.1.4 The final conclusion

After having made a comparison between the case of Velsen – Galle and the theory on city diplomacy and having discussed the remarkable parts of it, the research question can be answered: How does the case Velsen – Galle compare to the theory of city diplomacy?

City diplomacy is a container concept which contains many forms and aspects. The case of Velsen-Galle concentrates on a couple of these aspects and is therefore representative for a part of city diplomacy. The conclusion of the research is that *the case of Velsen-Galle is representative for developmental city diplomacy*.

5.2 Consequences for theory

A major remark which should be made with respect to this research is that it concerns only one case. The lessons learned could be useful for other local governments with aspirations in the field of city diplomacy but some cautiousness is advisable. Since every situation is unique, different methods may work than those described in this case study. Readers should keep in mind that the case of Velsen-Galle is mainly representative for *developmental* city diplomacy. Other examples from practice should be studied to cover the whole field of practice of city diplomacy.

So far not a lot is known about the practice of city diplomacy because it is a relatively new phenomenon. Further and wider case studies are necessary to test and complement theory. The description of the case offers also some topics for further theoretical research and explanation. What is the role of culture and cultural differences in city diplomacy? To which extent can local governments control the city diplomacy program? These are interesting topics to be researched.

5.3. Recommendations for SOS Velsen

Also some recommendations for SOS Velsen can be made on basis of the comparison.

The indifference and reluctance on the side of the local government of Galle has frustrated many projects. This is a reason for SOS Velsen to develop projects outside the sphere of influence of the local government when possible. As described in theory local institutions are very important for the development of a region. Although perhaps difficult, SOS Velsen should therefore invest in the relationship with the local government of Galle. If successful this will lead to a constructive working relation which will benefit the program.

There is not a lot of reciprocity in the program yet. SOS Velsen is taking steps to change this by for example concentrating on tourism, economy and knowledge exchange. This is a positive development which carries interesting chances with it. Strong contacts between the harbours of the cities for example can have positive effects for Velsen too.

SOS Velsen doesn't pay a lot of attention to process at the moment. The end result is the starting point of projects. When focussing more on process some pitfalls can be eliminated or reduced. An example is installing separate steering committees for each project, who are responsible for and helped with writing project proposals with a proper financial part, managing the project and reporting on the progress. More projects will be a success then.

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Appendix A

| Practical conditions | |
|---|---|
| Theory | Practice |
| Project designs should be no more than rough guidelines. Flexibility is required. | SOS Velsen doesn't have standardised project designs. |
| More attention for process than product. | More attention for product than process. |
| Expertise is more important than money. | Average expenditure of € 52.000 each year. Successful projects contain elements of knowledge transfer. |
| Projects should be participatory and concentrate on learning. | Renovation of the well is form of citizen participation. Most projects are one-way traffic. |
| Assistance should be responsive to local needs. | Yearly investigation of needs with local government of Galle. Individuals and organisations write project proposals. |
| Attention for creating a strong and legitimate local government. | A shifting focus from local government of Galle to civil society of Galle. |
| Set terms of conditionality. | Part of the funding is given in the form of a loan. When insufficient information is received, projects are ended. |
| Having sufficient knowledge on the contexts. | Working visits, NAAL, other contacts. |
| Establish linkages with civil society and the private sector. | The NAAL (and it's manager Kumar) is the most important partner in Galle. Furthermore: VNG International, mayor De Silva, embassies, Evert Jongens. |
| Work together with NGOs. | Advisory committee in Galle and Velsen consist of both government officials and civil society members. |