

Lessons learnt on Twinning

**Possibilities and limitations of the twinning model
as an instrument for organisational learning
and institutional development**

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Sida

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
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Division for Democratic Governance

Preface

"Institutional collaboration" or "twinning" as a method for development of public administration capacity was first used by Sida in the early 1980's.

Twinning in this context means the long-term pairing of a national authority or agency in the country of cooperation with a Swedish twin organisation – for instance pairing the national audit offices in Namibia and Sweden. The underlying theory is that pairing organisations with similar tasks in their respective countries should result in efficient capacity development.

Today twinning arrangements are common in many areas of development cooperation. This report gives a summary of a seminar addressing experiences from twinning in three main areas of public administration: auditing, taxes and statistics. Among the seminar participants were representatives from twin organisations in Laos, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Sweden, and also from Sida and independent consultants.

When twinning as a method started in the 1980's, it was a time of discovery. The participants in the twin organisations were all pioneers exploring the concept, finding new possibilities to work together as partners in cooperation. Quite soon, twinning was hailed as an effective development method. Today, Sida and other donors regard institutional development as a strategic issue for the future.

There is, however, always a built-in risk that successful methods become their own enemies. For those with a hammer only, every problem is a nail. If methods are allowed to fall into a rut, become utilised beyond their limitations or applied where other methods would perform better, poor results can arise and the method itself fall into disrepute.

Hence, the purpose of this seminar was to evaluate the use of twinning as a method in development cooperation so far, to examine its benefits and drawbacks and its role as *one method among several* in development cooperation. And indeed, the seminar gave evidence both to the method's effectiveness and limitations and helped us participants to understand how twinning arrangements can be improved in the future.

I trust that the reader of this document will benefit from sharing our experiences and attempts to better understand the potential of twinning as one of many tools in development cooperation.

Pleasant reading!

Lennart Nordström
Head, Division of Democratic Governance
Sida

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	page 5
2. Learning is the key word	page 6
Beyond the sense of intuition	
Twinning creates a learning environment	
Does the Swedish partner learn?	
3. Can organisations learn?	page 11
A theoretical framework	
"Moving towards a learning organisation"	
"Training" does not automatically lead to "learning"!	
"But visible training programmes are needed!"	
An important psychological dimension in twinning	
Need for self-examination?	
Different views on the role of advisers	
Technical training versus organisational development	
Is twinning different from other forms of development cooperation?	
Knowledge is not a commodity!	
4. Twinning in its wider institutional context	page 20
Long-term goals aiming at democratic governance	
From twins to families!	
Ideas for improvements in the monitoring and evaluations	
5. Recommendations to Sida	page 25
Appendix	
A. List of participants	
B. Facts about the twinning projects	
C. The programme of the seminar	
D. A memorandum with reflections from the seminar, by <i>Dr Lennart Gustafsson</i> .	

1. Introduction

In January 2000 Sida – through its Division for Democratic Governance – organised a seminar with the aim of discussing the possibilities and limitations of the twinning model as an instrument for organisational learning and institutional development.

The seminar was based on a report by Merrick Jones and Peter Blunt, "Twinning as a Method of Capacity Building" (1998), about two twinning arrangements:

- The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) Namibia, and the Swedish National Audit Office (RRV, Riksrevisionsverket).
- The National Statistics Centre (NSC), Laos, and Statistics Sweden (SCB, Statistiska Centralbyrån).

Another input to the seminar was the "Action Programme for Capacity and Institutional Development", which was presented by a task force within Sida in August 1999. The seminar was seen as an opportunity to introduce and discuss the contents of the action programme, thus creating a link between the new policy paper and experiences of the twinning model as a means for institutional development.

In the seminar there were participants representing organisations in three main areas of public administration support: auditing, statistics and taxes. Representatives from the organisations which were included in Jones' and Blunt's study participated, as did representatives from the Department of Taxes in Zimbabwe and the Swedish National Tax Board.

Dr Merrick Jones represented the team of consultants who had made the study.

There were also participants from Swedish organisations in other areas where twinning arrangements had been applied during recent years, for example policing and financial management.

Other participants at the seminar were staff from various divisions within Sida, as well as external consultants who have experience from working with the twinning method in their specific areas.

A list of participants is included as *Appendix A*.

Summaries of basic facts about the three twinning projects that were represented in the seminar, are presented in *Appendix B*.

The programme of the seminar focused on sharing mutual experience. It contained three parts. First, introductory lectures where the cooperation partners from Laos, Zimbabwe and Namibia shared their practical experiences from twinning in three different contexts. This part also included some introductory comments about the study on twinning and about Sida's new action programme.

The second part of the programme (in the afternoon Day 1) contained group discussions when the groups were invited to "discuss institutional development from the following perspective: Expectations from the cooperation partner and the means to fulfil them and how to evaluate."

The third part (Day 2) was a panel discussion where themes from the group discussions were highlighted and discussed further.

The programme is included in *Appendix C*.

Before the seminar the participants were provided with written background material which consisted of the report by Jones & Blunt, Sida's new action programme (see above), and an article by Steinar Askvik: "Twinning in Norwegian Development Assistance: a Response to Jones and Blunt" (*Public Admin. Dev.* 19, 403–408, 1999).

This report summarises the presentations and discussions in the seminar. It would not have been meaningful to describe it in chronological order, because most of the issues were brought up several times in different parts of the programme, though from different angles. Thus the notes from the different discussions have been ordered in accordance with the themes that were used during the panel discussion.

This report has been compiled by *Lage Bergström* in cooperation with *Anne Ljung*.

2. Learning is the key word

Beyond the sense of intuition

Already in the opening lectures of the seminar it became obvious that the term "twinning" can mean different things in different contexts. We talk about "twinning" as a method or a model or even as a metaphor. The term is not very precise.

On the other hand it is also true that the word "twinning" makes intuitive sense, as *Ms Carin Norberg*, Assistant Director General of Sida, pointed out in her opening speech. It seems to be sensible to anyone of us, that the organisations in a twinning arrangement should be able to learn from each other, especially if they respect each other and have confidence in each other. Consequently, the main assumption for the whole idea of twinning has been that two organisations with the same or similar task in their respective countries should be able to cooperate more dynamically.

One aim of the seminar was to go beyond this sense of intuition, in order to explore the possibilities and limitations of the twinning model, using the three cases in Laos, Namibia and Zimbabwe as a point of departure for the discussion.

In the opening lectures all three representatives from the twin organisations admitted that they were not very familiar with the term "twinning". Instead they had only used words like cooperation, assistance to development, Swedish support, and so on. And when the twinning cooperation started, the expectations from their side were not very explicit. *Dr Fanuel Tjingaete*, Auditor General in Namibia, stated that he was almost hostile to the idea from the beginning.

"Over the years, during the 1970' and 1980's, there was so much talk about development aid, cooperation, technical assistance, and so on. And the history of these things was very miserable worldwide. Many of us had become very weary of development cooperation, whatever it was called. When I took over the Office of Auditor General of Namibia in 1993, there were talks in the air about cooperation between Sida, RRV and my office. Personally I was very pessimistic, almost hostile, to the whole idea of working together with anybody from abroad. But it was government policy generally, and Namibia needed of course resources from outside to be able to start delivering, because the expectations were high in the air. So, in a way I was forced into saying yes to the cooperation, but I was extremely careful. However, if I had to, it was very comforting to know that the cooperation partner was Swedish, because Sweden had a long history of cooperating with Namibia at the time when we were fighting for independence. So, in that respect, there was a kind of trust relationship already from the beginning. This made it easier for us to develop the psychological contract between us and RRV, that I think is a precondition for success in a cooperation like this.

What is also important, was that when we came together, we agreed – in fact without having heard of "twinning" – that we had to do things very differently from the traditional approach. The very first thing was of course to say: *Do we really need assistance? If yes, what?* So we embarked upon a needs analysis, that highlighted a number of areas where certain learning needs were to be covered. That was our starting point, even before there was a formal contract between us and Sida."

The starting point for the Department of Taxes in Zimbabwe was quite different. The Commissioner, *Mr Gershem Pasi* said that the department had gone through a very difficult period and he explained by describing what happened after Zimbabwe became independent in 1980.

"At that time it was a question of white versus black, and most of those in positions of authority in the department were white, and they just left. So what happened was, that the then Prime Minister appointed people by presidential directives who didn't know anything about taxes. They were just appointed to make sure that the ship didn't sink. Most of them couldn't take the pressure so they left very soon and new people came in. Consequently, our tax collection went down quite severely. There was an extensive training programme, but as soon as somebody was trained, they left for employment outside the department. That was because of the poor conditions which are available in the department. Today, every major accounting firm in Harare has their tax divisions manned by former tax officials. I thought of quitting several times, too, but every time I was about to leave, I was promoted. So, in 1996, I was the deputy commissioner when the commissioner went on an early retirement, and I found myself in a situation where I had to hold the fort. At this time the tax collection was very low and the government demanded from us that additional revenues had to be delivered.

The cooperation with Sida and RSV (Riksskatteverket) had been ongoing for some time when I became the commissioner. But we have never used the word twinning. What we discussed was just assistance coming from Sweden. I am glad that the twinning idea was guiding Sida at the time, and I am glad that RSV was chosen to be our partner. When the decision was made it was a tender and the other bids were based on the approach that the assisting organisation would come in with their own staff and say: we do the work for you. The approach in the bid from RSV was different, it was one of cooperation! *We would work together and we would learn from our partners.* And by learning we don't mean coping the Swedish tax system, because we had our own system and we have been developing it in our own way. What we are learning from this cooperation is how to do what we do efficiently and effectively."

When the discussions went on during the seminar, some sort of shared understanding developed that learning is the key word for all the collaborative arrangements that are included in what we call twinning.

Twinning creates a learning environment

Mr Bounthavi Sisouphantong, Director of National Statistics Centre, Laos, was very decided when he said that he did learn from the collaboration with the SCB. And he continued:

"My staff learn, too. They learn how to deal with computers, they learn English to communicate with our counterparts, they learn how to carry out a survey, and so on. We also learn how to view statistics, as a very objective matter (see the box). Still, in our political environment we have to be a little bit flexible, for instance when we estimate GDP. But now I feel that we have to be very strong and uphold the idea of statistics as something objective.

The support from twinning with SCB helps us to do that. But in the beginning we didn't talk about twinning.

The *long-term contract* is very important for the twinning cooperation. It helps us think about development in a long-term perspective. That is not the case in many other development projects, where everything is supposed to happen very fast, which very often means that somebody from abroad is actually doing it. The long-term contract allows us to forget something. If we do forget something we can pick up what we have missed later on. Through the long-term perspective we also get some room for thinking and reflection.

The *personal relations* are very important. It takes some time to build up trust, but now I have come to know the SCB, I know their capacity and I know the people working there. We talk about so many things, and it is not always a question of funding. I think this personal contact is a platform for a link that will go on even after the Sida funds have ended.

I have heard that twinning is considered to be more expensive, but I don't think I agree to that. Because with twinning you gain much more than in most other arrangements. If you compare with other projects, they can also be very costly because the learning aspects are often missing in those projects. So when a project is completed, you haven't really achieved anything sustainable."

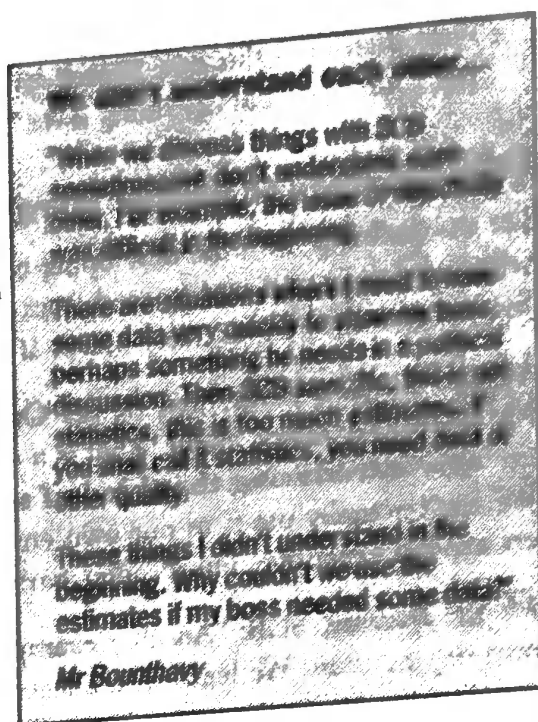
Mr Pasi added another thing about the learning process through the twinning cooperation; the problem of being the only organisation of its kind in the country:

"Unfortunately for any tax administration, there is only one in a country, so you really cannot exchange ideas with anyone. If you want to exchange ideas with somebody outside your own department you have a problem because all other tax experts in the country belongs to the opposite side fighting against you. So the only other parts you can discuss with openly, are your external partners, outside your own boundaries. So twinning provides this exchange of relevant competencies. And the good thing has been that this exchange has taken place at various levels, not only at the top. There was a period when this was very important for me personally, that is when I was newly appointed commissioner and entrusted with the collection of revenues under very difficult circumstances. What kept me going at that time was knowing that I had the telephone and was able to contact my colleagues at the RSV, tell them about my problem and ask for advice. That was really a morale booster for me. I didn't have to call them very often, just knowing that I had the possibility was sometimes enough."

When Dr Tjinggaete elaborated on the learning aspects, he emphasised the importance of planning:

"When we talk about learning, we must ask ourselves: learning what? Do we just go around and try to build up a wealth of knowledge, or are we selective in what we are learning? A particular organisation should learn what? And for what purpose? When we at OAG tried to dynamise our organisation we started with a needs analysis, where we took out certain areas of focus that we thought were important. And then we tried to acquire that particular knowledge and transform it into working knowledge. That was our approach.

However, in practice, I think we went through a number of stages. Initially we were recipients. We were exposed to a learning environment by twinning with RRV and we acquired and internalised knowledge. We



have then used this new knowledge in restructuring our institution and put it on a certain operating level."

Does the Swedish partner learn?

For the partners from the developing countries it was evident that they themselves and their staff had learned from the twinning arrangement? But do the Swedish partners learn?, they asked. If so, what?

Mr Lars Lindgren, SCB: "Yes, we do. One example is the household survey that Mr Bounthavy talked about. That is a new way of conducting the survey, and we are now introducing that kind of surveys in other parts of the world. We can't actually use it in our own environment, because our Swedish interviewers are too expensive, but in other parts of the world it is working very well."

Mr Svan Björkstrand, SCB: "Another example is that we bring back knowledge to our own organisation. We learn in management and a long-term adviser is a great benefit when he or she comes back. They have learned a lot, become **more flexible and tougher**, and they are in great demand within the organisation. Both the long-term and short-term advisers are taken out of the line - international work is used as a carrot within the organisation - so there is an understanding in the organisation that this work is important."

Mr Göran Svan, RRV: "Yes, we too have learned. Even for us international work is used as a carrot, but there are sometimes problems too. Departments are frustrated when good people are recruited to an overseas project."

But our people are not learning so much in the auditing area, like new auditing technology or such things. But we have learnt about organisational development. We have been able to bring home experience on how to change organisations and really how to go about to do it in practice. When we have worked with methods development concerning our overseas project, we have immediately **benefitted for our own way of organising work at home**. We have also gone through a process of reorganisation for the last 24 months, and we have drawn a lot of experience from the overseas projects that we have been able to put in into that process."

Mr Lennart Malmsten summarised this discussion saying that Swedish authorities in general have positive experiences from twinning arrangements. Often they point out that the staff benefits as regards professional knowledge, language proficiency and social competence. Very often twinning seems to have increased the possibilities for Swedish authorities to attract and keep well qualified staff.

3. Can organisations learn?

A theoretical framework

As *Dr Tjingaete* so laconically pointed out in his opening lecture, the history of development cooperation is full of failures. Experience from the 1970's and 1980's has shown us that the provision of technical equipment and intensive training, without anything else, was not sustainable and thus very often meaningless. The notion of sustainability involves something around the ability to learn and the ability to adapt in response to learning. Do we have reason to believe that the twinning method provides this kind of learning environment? What is needed for the organisation as a whole to learn, not only some of the staff?

In his opening lecture on Day 1 *Dr Merrick Jones* stated that:

"...the Terms of Reference of our study specifically said that the main focus of the study was the issue of learning between two organisations. At that time, in 1997, Sida had started to be influenced by the kind of main line thinking and practice around this whole issue of organisational learning. So basically, the meat of our report was not so much about the technicalities of twinning but rather about the question: Can two organisations learn from each other? If so, how? And that is a very complex question.

It appears that some organisations can learn to perform better, based on their experiences. The definition of learning – certainly in the behavioural field – is a sustained change of behaviour. If we find that an organisation as a whole is behaving differently, then we could conclude that learning is taking place at that level. However, are the theories of individual learning applicable?

We are told by *behaviourists* that a most powerful learning method (which we are using instinctively) is simply to repeat successful behaviour. So if the behaviour results in some pleasure or some positive reinforcement we change our behaviour and learn. And a lot of methods that we use in classrooms depend entirely on that method. The teacher gets a response that he or she wants and reinforces it by saying "well done". If you look at twinning the word "modeling" would tell us that this is the basic idea. We look at a model that we think makes sense and we copy it.

Questions are crucial

"OAG in Namibia is an organisation which is full of professional auditors, but the director, *Dr Tjingaete*, is not an auditor. One of the implications of this is that, if these auditors put in front of him something to sign, either he takes it on trust (which could be very dangerous because he gets the blame if it is wrong), or he asks them a series of questions. However, he is not asking these questions as an auditor, he is asking them as a non-auditor: What does this mean? Why have you done this? Could it not be done another way?

Dr Tjingaete has made it OK to ask questions in his organisation! Because if the boss asks questions, it must be all right. And asking questions is something very central when you see learning as a cyclical process. When we met professionals in OAG – and also many young people coming into that organisation – we were very impressed of their insistence on their right to ask questions.

So our conclusion is that an organisation which regularly asks that many questions is developing a culture of learning."

Dr Jones

But learning is not only about behaviour, there is also a *cognitive level*, the level of understanding and meaning. The two partners in a twinning arrangement, do their understandings correspond? Do they attach the same meaning to these complex phenomena such as institutional development and sustainability and organisational learning?

The most powerful way of explaining things on the cognitive level, I think, is *action learning*. That is the notion of learning as being cyclical. We don't learn if we just do something and if it doesn't work we do something different. And if that doesn't work we try something else. (Which could be the history of many development cooperation projects.) But for learning to happen, the notion of reflection is absolutely crucial. You have to stand back from the action and mentally ask questions like "what have we done?", "why did we do that?", "what was the result of it?". You have this whole notion of praxis from Paulo Freire, that activism by itself is useless and mentalism by itself is useless. These things have to be combined!"

Based on this theoretical framework, *Dr Jones* also gave examples of successful learning as a result of twinning arrangements. The example in the box on page 11 shows the importance of questioning as part of the culture in a learning organisation. It also exemplifies that the quality of leadership is a crucial element in organisational learning.

However, *Dr Jones* also concluded that "organisational learning is generally not an issue of major significance in current twinning arrangements. Even at the individual level, the focus is on training rather than learning, which results in the usual emphasis in formal off-job training rather than seeking opportunities for learning from work."

"Moving towards a learning organisation"

In his opening lecture on Day 1, *Dr Tjinggaete*, stated that the twinning project had resulted in successful organisational learning. He argued against the conclusion in the report of Jones & Blunt, that formal off-job training had been the main vehicle for learning. Instead, he said, at the Office of the Auditor General they had used a lot of different methods/activities in order to achieve sustainable capacity building:

- The intensive training programme of training OAG's own trainers to conduct formal off-job training courses;
- Equal participation by OAG and the RRV in selecting short-term consultants who were aware of the Namibian environment, problems and needs;
- The combined decision by both OAG and the RRV to focus extensively on providing on-the-job-training to the staff, which the report recognises as the most effective method of skill transfer and learning;
- Consistent support to the RRV's long-term advisers to create a questioning and reflective attitude in the OAG staff which, as the report recognises, they succeeded in achieving;
- Continuing efforts to adapt a more open and participative management style;

- Successful efforts to provide staff with basic and continuing professional and management training;
- Successful efforts to secure the right level of training budget from government, at a time of severe economic constraints.

Dr Tjungaete concluded that "these examples point towards the evolution of a learning organisation. More importantly, I am confident that the structures established during the project will enable the learning process to be sustained."

"Training" does not automatically lead to "learning"!

In the panel discussion on Day 2, *Dr Jones* elaborated further on the ideas of organisational learning. He was then a little more provocative by arguing that "we have a problem in development work, because there is *an absolute obsession with training*". And he continued:

"In development cooperation there is a belief that training can solve all and any problems. There is this conventional wisdom that training automatically leads to learning, which automatically leads to enhanced performance at the individual level. That is also thought about at the organisational level, as if training is the key to learning. However, if there is a lesson from all that area of organisational learning, it is that this is not the case.

I think the emphasis should not so much be on formal training, but in *searching for opportunities for learning within the normal operations of an organisation.*

Those learning opportunities could be very simple ones, for instance somebody is off sick or on vacation and somebody is acting on his or her place; that is a learning opportunity and can be structured. When an organisation is experiencing failure or success, that is a learning opportunity. And so on. Organisations these days are changing and all these changes create areas where we can ask questions like: What can we learn from doing this? What did we learn from trying to do that?

Maybe one of the indicators for a culture of learning would be where those kinds of questions become normal and accepted. Today there is a tendency for organisations to focus on "task" and to neglect "process". We would instead quite normally ask process questions, not just task questions. And one of those process questions would be the learning questions: What did we learn from this? What is important to us about how we did this? An so on.

There is a new direction in the literature which is known as *tacit learning*, emphasising that we are in fact learning all the time, but we don't process it in a conscious way. We just neglect it. But there is this enormous reservoir of possibilities for learning which is our day-to-day experience of problems. We don't process it as individuals properly and we don't process it as organisations.

the environment is changing, and we need to keep pace with those changes. The way to do that, from an organisational point of view, and to make sure that all the staff really acquires the new knowledge needed, is to have visible training programmes.

We are sometimes *too quick to blame a person or an organisation* if they don't perform well. Very often we haven't taken the time to give appropriate and relevant training. (Compare with the story in the box on page 14.)

When we are talking about issues like good governance, sometimes we are too quick to judge. For instance when we talk about corruption, we often say: "These people are corrupt!", because somebody has given something to an official to get something done. But if you look at it more closely, maybe you find that either of them – the civil servant or the recipient of the service – didn't know what was required of them; their obligations, their rights or their duties. So they went about it the best way they thought how. So in that case we should conclude: We need to train our staff to be able to deliver the services expected. And also educate the populace as to their rights and obligations."

An important psychological dimension in twinning

Already in his opening lecture on Day 1, *Mr Bounthavy* argued that the most important impact from the twinning cooperation so far, has to do with **confidence**. At the NSC they have got confidence in themselves through the cooperation with SCB, he told us. (See example in the box.) *Mr Lundgren* reinforced that statement by saying that he didn't see the role of SCB so much to be transferring knowledge. "At NSC they are already very knowledgeable through their education", he said. "In some sense we are transferring competence, because we are trying to solve problems together with them, using their knowledge and our knowledge. But what I have found many

Increased confidence

"Once in a developing country, you are dependent on many donors. It is important to have confidence when we discuss with the donor representatives. For instance, when we had started our cooperation with SCB, the World Bank suggested that it should be a very standard type, which we thought was too complicated for the country. Through their cooperation with SCB, we got new ideas about the possibility of doing a primary household survey, less expensive and out in reach of our capacity and still of value for the country. Because of the confidence we had got through the twinning project, we were able to argue in a way that the World Bank accepted the idea."

Mr Bounthavy

times to be our main role is to transfer confidence. They can see how we work, solving problem together, and that gives confidence."

Dr Ingemar Gustafsson, the facilitator of the panel discussion emphasised this opinion even more: "I have been struck by the fact that in all the three twinning cases that we discuss, there were evidence of an important psychological dimension. The advantages of twinning was expressed in terms of increased confidence, personal relations, trust, psychological contract, etc. And I think it is important to be explicit about this, because there is a risk that we on the donor side don't give this psychological dimension the right value when we are discussing contracts and financial agreements."

Need for self-examination?

Dr Anton Johnston summarised one part of the discussion by saying that none of us with interest in development of competence means that training is something bad. "The bad thing would be to do nothing but training! Training must be combined with other measures in order to stimulate learning. The important thing is to find a good balance." And he went on by emphasising the importance of motivation.

"The total structure of the twinning arrangement should create motivation and make people engage in the development of their work. The most important issue here is if the people involved are motivated or not. And once they are motivated to learn, perhaps they learn in various different ways and are prepared to engage themselves in learning experiences which in other contexts they would not be prepared to do. So the practical question for all of us involved in twinning would be this: In the day to day work we put one or two long-term advisers into an office building in Vientiane or Harare or whatever; do those people create a relationship with the management and the staff which actually results in a dynamic learning environment? The study by Jones & Blunt has made this question even more important to attend to. Actually their report exemplifies quite a lot of negative things that seems to happen within twinning arrangements. People are pushed into courses without motivation, they have been trained instead of getting opportunities of learning by doing. People are sitting next to counterparts or sent to Sweden and that is modeling... They are learning to copy what people do in rich countries instead of doing things in an applied way to their own society. And so on. If all these criticisms are true, do we really put people in the field who have the right kind of skills? Have they actually thought about what learning environment they are going to create?"

Computers and trust

"It is interesting to note that computerisation seems to have been a common way of starting the cooperation - in these three projects as well as in others that I know of. The computers have been a kind of key to the door. The twin organisation has admitted its lack of knowledge about computers, and has been motivated to learn - and also to change methods and administrative routines in order to make use of the new technology. Through this process trust has developed and this has facilitated expanding the cooperation to other areas as well."

Dr Johnston

Sometimes training is the only way!

"We have to remember that large organisations are not homogenous. Demands from some parts of the organisation can differ from the demands from other parts."

In my specific area, which is IT, we have to do training, because that is the only way. Take for instance the internet evolution or databases, direct training is the only way. It is the same as basic training in mathematics. There are no short cuts, you can not sit down and wait for learning opportunities, you have to have direct training."

Mr Bäcklund

Different views on the role of advisers

In the discussions it was disclosed that different conclusions about the use of advisers were drawn by *Mr Steen*, *Mr Pasi* and *Mr Bäcklund*, from their experience in the three projects, i. e. auditing in Namibia, taxes in Zimbabwe and statistics in Laos.

Auditing in Namibia

More than one long-term adviser (LTA) is necessary to build a team – and also to build a momentum in work. That is why the Namibia project was successful. Only one LTA would have to struggle to make an impact. More people in less time creates a momentum and also a team-spirit.

Many short-term advisers (STA) should be available. Then of course there is always an optimal limit where the additional costs are not worth it.

Mr Steen

Taxes in Zimbabwe

The number of LTAs depends on the project. LTAs shouldn't be too many, because then they cease to be consultants. Emphasis should be on local people doing things and LTAs guiding them.

Many STAs with different expertise are needed. Missions have to be very well defined.

If you have too many LTAs you might use them to perform things that they are not really knowledgeable about.

So there is a trade-off between STAs and LTAs.

Mr Pasi

Statistics in Laos

The LTA is the coordinator in the country – he or she identifies the needs in cooperation with the partner organisation. Then there is also a coordinator in Sweden organising the STAs.

You have to follow up the STA missions. One way of doing that is study tours, especially in the region. Often it is more relevant to look at examples in the region than going to Sweden. Study tours have to be made on the right managerial level, i. e. people who can have an impact in the organisation. Normally that means the highest possible level.

Mr Bäcklund

Technical training versus organisational development

From the presentation of training/learning activities at OAG, Namibia, (see page 12–13), it is obvious that different learning needs are dealt with differently, within the twinning format. Is it then possible to draw conclusions on what kind of learning strategies should be used for different needs?

Dr Lennart Gustafsson took up the distinction between learning in the more technical areas – statistics, auditing or whatever – on one side, and on the other side the development of the organisation as such. "Perhaps different approaches are needed, within the twinning format, for creating learning in those two different areas. It seems as if the twinning arrangements have proven to be quite effective in the first area, by transferring technical knowledge. But it seems as if the focus has been moved from that area to the organisational development perspective, where other resources are needed as well. It seems as if the twins together are not enough, when it comes to the more organisational development aspects; management, leadership style, staff attitudes, and so on. So the question is, are external resources needed in order to create learning in this area?"

Mr Pasi agreed about the differences, but meant that **technical training and organisational development go hand in hand**. "When we started cooperating with our Swedish partner, it was initially at the technical level. But we soon realised that that alone would not be successful, because when you have got the technical competence to deal with computers and other things, you need the human resources to manage it. We then brought in the management aspects and

started management training. It was not through the twinning project, but with other consultants (and financed by another donor). I think this has been very successful and I think it was wise to do the management training alongside the twinning cooperation. The change of management must go hand in hand with other improvements of our work. I must emphasise that we are not in any way adopting the Swedish tax system, but from our Swedish partner we have learnt how to be more efficient in whatever we are doing. To achieve that, the study visits to Sweden have been very important. If you want to improve efficiency, it helps if you can expose the staff to an organisation similar to your own but more advanced and more efficient than you are, so that you give people a measure of something looking up to."

Mr Steen agreed with *Mr Pasi* and said that this is an area where the RRV has learnt a lot during the years. "In 1989 we were very inexperienced and the emphasis was

on technical training. Very little was about management and organisation knowledge. However, we had this feeling of uneasiness – something was lacking in the whole thing even if we became more and more professional. Slowly knowledge came about. Now I think we have the capacity to assist our twin partner even in this respect. But we are cooperating with other consultants when it comes to the actual training in management."

Is twinning different from other forms of development cooperation?

"I have been working with development cooperation for more than twenty years", *Mr Rolf Folkesson* said, "and I have always been interested in the question of development of knowledge and how to deal with that on the practical operational level. But I am fairly new at DESA, the Division for Democratic Governance at Sida. What strikes me when we now discuss the twinning metaphor, is that I don't see any real difference between this kind of arrangements and other kinds of arrangements, consultancy services and so forth." Even if this statement was objectionable to many of the participants, *Mr Folkesson* went on arguing:

"All the questions raised in the report of Jones & Blunt are the same as you find in all other arrangements aiming at capacity development. You have the same kind of problems that are important to address. This is

"Now we are more focused!"

"In the department we were working hard. All of us were very tired at the end of the day, but the results were not that evident. Then I realised that we were working hard, but in various directions. We were not planning, we were not focused. I could be working very hard in one direction, and my colleague worked hard in the opposite direction!

I tried to speak with my colleagues about this even before, when I was junior. Together with a colleague from RSV, I organised a meeting trying to make a corporate plan. But it was difficult because everybody else said, that you are running away from your duties. You as head office, sit down and draw your planning and tell us what we are supposed to do. Then I said, no we have to work together, and I got the support from my colleague from RSV. We managed to win them over and they agreed that they had to participate.

Now, it is not my plan, it is everybody's plan. People are participating; they say: we want to do this, we want to do that... So we are working together. We are now more focused!"

Mr Pasi

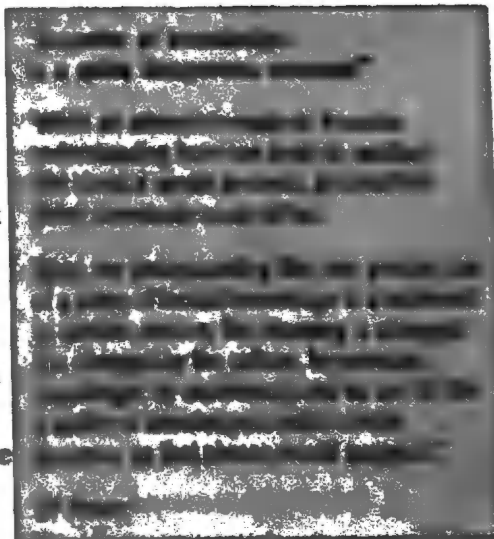
why I like very much the conclusion of *Mr Steinar Askvik* in his article¹. He says that it is just a question of two professional organisations working together.

For example, one of the major institutional development projects that Sida has financed, is the Vinh Phu Paper Mill Project in Vietnam. The Swedish people working there in the 1980's were contracted by a consultancy firm. Their major task was transfer of knowledge. The consultancy firm pulled out very quickly, after ten years of support to such a huge project. Many people were convinced that everything would collapse. But what we see now, by the end of the 1990's, is that this paper mill is running extremely well. Consequently, the Vietnamese must have learnt something in the process. A number of issues here are of course related to the political environment, particularly the economic policy that has changed allowing this kind of enterprise to work more efficiently. But there are also a lot of internal organisational factors, about management and other issues, that are important to be able to run a modern factory and plan for the whole process of providing raw material from the forests, and so on.

My conclusion is that – when we leave the semantics and go down to realities – the important issue here is that the project must focus on capacity building and learning. If the supporting organisation is a consultancy firm or a public authority is not the decisive issue. Nor is it important if it is called twinning or something else. What is important is how the project is designed in order to stimulate learning and change.”

It was *Mr Sten* who responded to this challenge to twinning as such. He agreed that. “Yes, it is true that the same problems of, for instance, the balance between off-job-training and on-job-training, have to be addressed in twinning as well as in other projects.” But on the other hand he saw a big difference because of the fact that the Swedish twin organisation is such a big professional body:

“The professional body that you get access to in a twinning arrangement is much wider, compared with support through a consultancy firm. First you have the whole range of expertise within RRV, then you also have access to the international network that we have with other international organisations. As a big organisation we have daily feedback of experience from our own fieldwork, which we are feeding into our own development work. We have a lot of projects going on about methods development and organisation development, which maybe a smaller consultancy



¹ Steinar Askvik: “Twinning in Norwegian Development Assistance: a Response to Jones and Blunt” (Public Admin. Dev. 19, 403-408, 1999)

firm does not have at all. If I look back in the history before we engaged in this work, we were constantly feeding small consultancy firms with our own people, who were asked to take leave and join the consultancy firm on a short- or long-term basis. In a way they were tapping us for experience all the time. So we said, we can as well do this ourselves, and also take the responsibility for it."

Knowledge is not a commodity

In his concluding remarks *Dr Jones* commented on some of the concepts that had been used in our discussion, among others "transfer of knowledge", which he thought is a quite dangerous concept because "knowledge is not a commodity!" (See the box on page 19).

Dr Jones emphasised that this discussion should not be dismissed as a question of semantics. He warned of reducing the discussion to being about labeling instead of understanding:

"This is not a question of semantics, and that goes for many other aspects of our discussion here. For instance our study on twinning was exploring the meaning and possibilities of organisational learning within twinning arrangements. The study was not about the application of labels.

When I have been questioning the concept of training, and instead emphasised learning, it is not because I believe that training is useless. On the contrary, as you know I am a trainer myself!

Yes, training can be successful in providing skills and knowledge. However, the acquisition of knowledge and skills is not sufficient. *It is the application of the knowledge that matters!* And that is where the gap can often happen, in twinning arrangements and elsewhere. And that is why it is so important to think in terms of learning strategies instead of training programmes."

4. Twinning in its wider institutional context

Long-term goals aiming at democratic governance

In his presentation of the new "Action Programme for Capacity and Institutional Development", *Dr Ingemar Gustafsson* introduced a way of systematising capacity development on different levels, (see the model on next page). A twinning arrangement is a long-term relationship between two organisations, in the middle of the model.

Yet, the twinning arrangements have goals that are aiming at changes at higher levels, concerning the institutional context which the particular twin organisation is part of. For instance, the long-term goal of the statistics cooperation between NSC in Laos and SCB is formulated as follows:

"...to make Laotian society more visible, i. e. differences in living conditions between and within regions, ethnic groups and women and men, and to make such information available to all." (See Appendix B).

This long-term goal touches upon a number of issues that have to do with transparency, accessibility to information, the right to express yourself and so on. All these issues

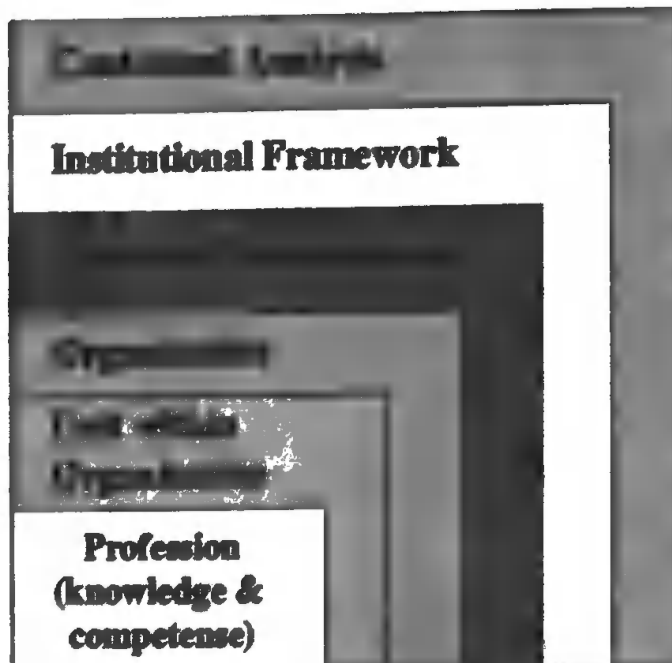
have to do with democratic governance in a wider sense, not only with efficiency in each particular authority. The question is then: Are these issues addressed within the twinning arrangements? If so, how? Is the twinning model suitable for this kind of goals?

As spokesman for the Laotian project, *Mr Bounthavy* noted that these issues had been dealt with in the twinning cooperation, but only partly. "We have discussed what really is possible. As you know these issues are political. The goal was formulated in 1994, but there are some limits for what we can actually do within the frame of the twinning cooperation. What we have done is to discuss **for whom do we produce the statistics**. We think that statistics should be used in the Lao society, so that information about different groups should be available. And when we in 1996 drew up an action plan for the period up to year 2000, we tried our best to implement this idea. But I cannot say we have reached the goal yet."

Another example, *Mr Bounthavy* said, is about the **legal framework**. When the cooperation started, the director of Statistics Sweden was the head of the first mission to Laos, and he asked for more legal documents about the development of statistics. We thought it was possible to do something, but when we drafted some documents we understood it was too early. The society was not prepared. Now in the year 2000, we think it is OK to discuss these things."

In one of the groups this political dimension was discussed in more detail. It seemed to be a consensus in the group that for Swedish development cooperation **the notion of democratic governance will be even more emphasized during the coming years**. For instance, the UN conventions on human rights will be used more explicitly in the discussions about support for development of governmental institutions. How will such a change of the focus in the cooperation influence the twinning arrangements?

Dr Lennart Gustafsson argued that more emphasis on democratic governance will make the twinning cooperation more controversial. Up to now most of the



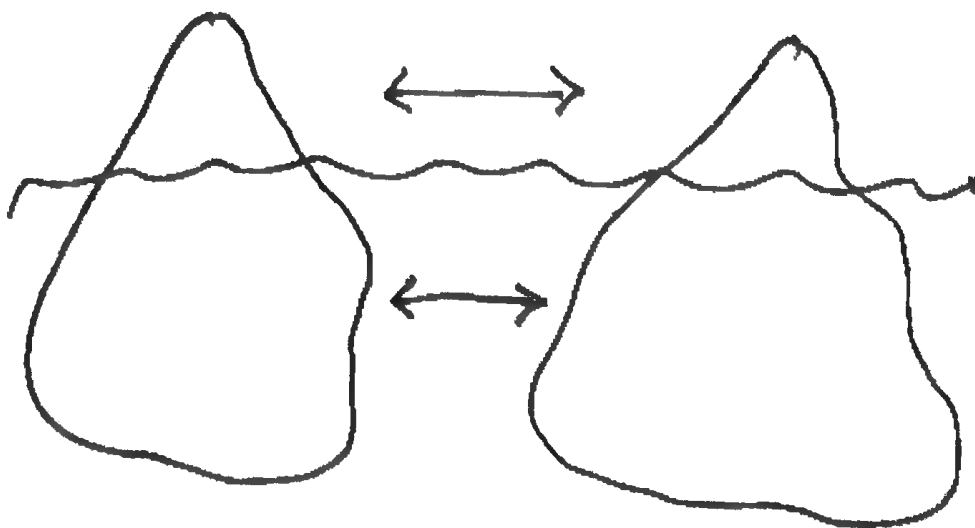
activities within a twinning arrangement had been on technical issues in the different professional areas – auditing, statistics and so on. But for the future the interaction between governmental institutions and the citizens will be of equal importance. How you organise this interaction is more of a political question and you cannot be guided by some general understanding between professionals, as is the case for instance about the core of auditing work.

After the seminar, *Dr Lennart Gustafsson* has elaborated further on these thoughts in a memorandum with reflections from the seminar. The memorandum is enclosed as *Appendix D*.

Dr Ingemar Gustafsson concluded from this discussion that "the wise thing to do would be to limit the use of the twinning model to the original meaning of the term, that is pairing two organisations with the same mandate. Consequently, **twinning should be used when the scope of the development efforts is within the mandate of the twin organisation.** If the development cooperation is aiming at changes in a system of organisations, or in the institutional framework, other methods may be more suitable. Or perhaps, twinning must be combined with other interventions as well."

From twins to families!

"It is popular with icebergs nowadays," said *Mr Lars Lundgren*, went to the flipchart and drew two icebergs, symbolising the two twins. Then he used the drawing to go deeper in the analyses of a twinning cooperation.



"We have visible things in the tips of the icebergs, that is law, policies, organisation, technology, money, knowledge and formal education. That I think is easy to transfer in a twinning set-up as well as in any other set-up. These visible issues are what we agree on in our formal contracts.

Below the surface of the water there are a lot of invisible things, like management, power, social conflicts and social networks, people's will and fantasy, transparency norms, confidence, culture, attitudes, problem solving capacity, etc.

Learning and change as regards these invisible qualities happen, as for instance Mr. Bounthavy has told us, but it is not planned. It is a lucky chance if such development will happen. The question is, should we try to light up all those invisible things and make them part of the twinning cooperation in a conscious way.

Many things from the invisible part of the iceberg are in fact involved in the twinning process, but not consciously and planned. Earlier today we have mentioned for instance confidence and personal relations.

Other invisible dimensions, like management capacity and leadership style are often attended to, but then we usually hire an outside consultant to do management training, we are not doing it within the twinning cooperation as such.

I think we can gain a lot by extending the twinning process even more to the invisible aspects. Then I think that we on the Swedish side can learn a lot if we too take the opportunity to enlighten our own organisation in these areas.

Maybe it is not the best to use the Swedish twin partner as the facilitator or trainer in these dimensions, but I don't think it is always necessary to hire specialists like we do now for management training. I think it is often better to extend the twinning cooperation to a tripling arrangement like we do in our statistical project in Namibia. There we organised a cooperation with three partners, even the statistical office in Zimbabwe. And for many learning aspects it was very effective to organise meetings between the colleagues in Zimbabwe and Namibia, to make it possible for them to exchange views and learn from each other."

Dr. Lennart Gustafson supported this view by informing about the work which had been done in the task force for the new action programmes on institutional development. "The task force had used some time to review many of Sida's capacity building programmes and concluded that in order to create changes of the "invisible aspects" in an organisation or a system of organisations, you often need to organise the development programmes differently. Often different kinds of **structures have to be established** in order to ensure that you have the right competencies available and also to ensure a platform that give all the different stakeholders opportunities to be active in the change process. This idea of "tripling arrangements" is one kind of networking that is very interesting. Maybe it is possible to extend them even further to some kind of "family arrangements"?

In one of the group discussions, an example of such a "family arrangement" was introduced by Dr. Lennart Gustafson. In discussions with Russia, there is an idea of forming a joint framework for a cooperation programme where the central authorities for auditing, taxes and financial management in Russia are working together with their respective twin organisation in Sweden. And included in the same programme there will be other activities aiming at changes in their common institutional context.

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Ideas for improvements in the monitoring and evaluations

In the groups on *Day 1* there were animated discussions about why and how evaluations are carried out, and many critical views were presented. For instance:

- Evaluations focus too much on technical aspects and on activities, not so much on learning processes and relations.
- Baseline studies are seldom carried out, which means that many evaluations become meaningless.
- It is always very difficult to sort out the impact of the programme from other influences.
- The donors ask for evaluations, but they don't take the time to reflect and learn from them. The cooperation partners seem to be less interested, but on the other hand: do they really get the chance to involve themselves in the evaluations?
- Evaluations of today are focusing too much on control, and too little on diagnosis in order to find ways of doing things better.

On *Day 2* the panel discussion focused more on ideas for improvements.

Ms Høllgerd Dyssen: "Perhaps one way to improve the monitoring of the twinning programmes and also in a more structured way bring up the wider issues would be to **organise a workshop or a seminar with the stakeholders, maybe once a year**. Then we could invite the other interested parties in the society to have a discussion about the development in the twin organisation with focus on the links to the others, discussing the problems and also giving feedback to the organisation on how it relates and how its relationships to the surrounding world develops. Such a workshop would bring up the wider issues, and for Sida also, this would be interesting to try as an alternative to the normal evaluations which I think usually haven't proved to be very successful.

However, I think you need to structure it, first of all you need to have monitoring workshops at regular intervals. And I think there should be maybe one person with the responsibility over a couple of years to organise these events, in order to follow up the different issues. This person should have skills to do this in a dynamic way and make the stakeholders involved. Maybe this could be combined with the preparation for the annual reviews, because that is the time when Sida discusses with the country on the progress of the support to the sector. Thus, this is the moment to address the wider issues as well."

Mr Rolf Folkesson: "I want to propose something very concrete about twinning. The two twins are professional organisations and I think **Sida should give them more of a free hand in developing their cooperation**, including to address things like the institutional context, because very often the institutional consequences and links are not easy to see and understand in the beginning of a programme. When I say more of a free hand, I mean from the very first moment when they start to analyse the situation and prepare the cooperation. Of course Sida should give finan-

cial frames and agree on the objectives, but then it should be up to the twins to find out the best ways of organising the twinning cooperation. Then, perhaps a better kind of monitoring system is needed, where other professionals come in, look upon what has really been done and propose improvements."

Mr Bantay: "We have seen from the report of Jones & Blom, and from this seminar, that there are a lot of difficulties and obstacles, when an institution in a developing country struggles to develop. Thus, monitoring is important and I think it is possible to engage a third party in some structured way, but I think **self evaluation would be even better**. I think Sida should make efforts to develop methods for self evaluation and share these methods with us."

Ms Ingafill Coltro: "I think it is important to ask **for whom do we do the monitoring or evaluation?** Who is supposed to benefit from doing it? If you know why, it is much easier to decide how. However, my favourite is actually the gathering of the different stakeholders in for instance an annual meeting or workshop. Then it is possible to review the project activities in their wider perspective."

Mr Pasi: "When we talk about monitoring and follow-up, it is important to realise that these things take time if they are carried out seriously. If you organise seminars with stakeholders, there is a risk that the discussions will be too superficial, because there will be difficulties to devote enough time for the meetings. Then it would be better to improve the systems of monthly reporting and other forms of self evaluation. Last year the programme officer from the Swedish Embassy took part in an evaluation workshop at our department. I think that was worthwhile."

Mr Stein: "It is important to establish a baseline which you agree upon together. Otherwise we might have different discussions about that."

5. Recommendations to Sida

There is a need for change in Sida's role as regards the twinning arrangements, at least according to the views of the participants in the seminar. Many proposals were put forward.

Mr Bantay: "An improved approach for Sida would be to be more involved in the strategic planning. Sida should assess the changing environment very thoroughly and use this analysis in the coordination of the different Swedish programmes in the partner country.

In our case we didn't see Sida at all in the beginning. We discussed only with SCB and we knew that they received funding from the Swedish government. Now we have learnt about the different roles, and we have more discussions between the three parties. I think that is good. Sida should be much more visible in the cooperation. Sida has a role in the

annual meetings, and Sida should be involved in discussions about how the twinning cooperation links to other ongoing projects.

Sida has also a role for the follow-up and sharing of experience about twinning. I think the twinning concept is very important, but perhaps there is some need to revise and improve the method. For instance, now a long-term adviser is seen as a must, but perhaps this is not the case. Perhaps sometimes we don't need a long-term adviser."

Mr Pasi: "One of the good things with twinning arrangements is the flexibility, to allow for the twinning partners, where they see fit, to decide on bringing in certain expertise which may not be available within the two organisations. Or to decide on activities that were not foreseen in the beginning of a project period. However, more could be done to make sure that such flexibility isn't hampered by the financial agreements."

Dr Tjängö: "We have had a constant dialogue with our partners on the other side of the table, also including Sida. This dialogue was always conducted in such a way that we were never feeling to be the junior partner – and I think this has been very important. So I think three things are very important. To keep the channels of communication open at all times, the mutual trust and respect should always be there, and then whatever problems would pop up along the way would definitely be dealt with. I have understood during this seminar that the capacity within Sida to deal with these difficulties when/if they arise, could be improved."

Mr Bäcklund: "Sida is representing Sweden in the partner country. Consequently, Sida should give more support in the initial stages of the twinning cooperation – most important is to help the twin organisations to understand the institutional context and set reasonable limits for the twinning cooperation, i. e. about the political situation or budget systems. Otherwise we will find out these things the hard way, which perhaps is not the most efficient way."

Most likely these contextual factors are affecting all Sida-financed projects in a country in the same way, for instance in Vietnam there is this movement from planned economy to a system where it is possible to make reallocations within the budget. This is a problem in all Vietnam projects and Sida could do something about it.

Often there seems to be a difference in how the role of Sida is perceived, between the Embassy and Sida headquarters."

Mr Sævi: "The Embassy can play a very important role as a broker and facilitator and for getting a good start with the twinning cooperation. (In Namibia they performed this role very well!) Sida, as the official Swedish representative, has got the contacts with the government in the country."

Sida can do better in the follow-up process. There are shortcomings in the way sector reviews have been conducted because of lack of time devoted to the task. It is needed to plough deeper – otherwise you don't get the discussions you want and the reflection.

Sida seems to have a management problem, too. Some people are not suitable to be representatives of Sweden/Sida, and it seems as if Sida not always is able to deal with problems of this kind. But when it happens it is a serious problem, that should be attended to."

When he summarised the discussion about the role of Sida, *Dr Ingemar Gustafsson* concluded that it seemed to be consensus among the participants that **Sida should focus more on the contextual and strategic issues**. Together with its discussion partner, which is very often a ministry, Sida should analyse the framework and say: "This is the framework, we would like this area to be an area of cooperation for the next ten years and the parameters are like this, the objectives are like this." That is Sida's strategic role. **When a twinning arrangement is established, Sida should take on the role of facilitator**. Sida should learn more about the twin organisations, gather experience, participate in the annual meetings, etc. In short, Sida should play a more active role. Sida shouldn't look at itself only as a provider of funds.

However, there seems to be another conclusion as well, *Dr Ingemar Gustafsson* continued: Sida should leave **more of a free hand to the twin organisations to plan their cooperation within the frames that are defined**. During the cooperation period, Sida's role is to facilitate and follow up, but the twin organisations should be given the responsibility to really do the work."

Appendix 1

Twining Seminar 19-20 January 2000

PARTICIPANTS

Mr Bounthavy Sisouphanthong, National Statistics Centre, Laos
Mr Gershem T. Pasi, Department of Taxes, Zimbabwe
Dr Fanuel Tjingaete, Office of the Auditor General, Namibia
Dr Merrick Jones, University of Botswana

Marie Kaufman, RRV
Göran Steen, RRV
Gösta Wilholm, RSV
Sten Bäcklund, SCB
Lars Lundgren, SCB
Bo Dahlström, ESV
Lotta Paulsson, PHS

Lage Bergström, Consultant
Lennart Gustafsson, Consultant

Carin Norberg, DESO (day 1)
Ingemar Gustafsson, DESO

Gunilla Essner, DESO/Health
Helen Nordensson, DESO/Culture & Media
Hans Persson, DESO/Education
AnnLouise Olofsson, ÖST/EVB (day 2)
Thomas Nyström, INEC/URBAN
AnnLis Åberg, INEC/IKTS (day 1)
Therese Borrman, SEKA/EO (day 2)

Ingalill Colbro, DESO/DESA
Anders Emanuel, DESO/DESA
Rolf Folkesson, DESO/DESA
Anton Johnston, DESO/DESA
Anne Ljung, DESO/DESA
Lennart Nordström, DESO/DESA
Emma Raval, DESO/DESA
Staffan Smedby, DESO/DESA
Ewa Westman, DESO/DESA (day 1)

Appendix B

Summary

STATISTICS COOPERATION/TWINNING IN LAOS

Twinning partners

- National Statistics Centre, NSC, Vientiane
- Statistics Sweden, SCB, Stockholm

Period of cooperation

- Initiated in 1991/92, i. e. eight years of cooperation so far
- Present agreement from 1 January 1998 to 31 December 2000 (3 years).

Costs of cooperation

- Between 1991/92 and 1997 the NSC/SCB cooperation amounted to SEK 39 million.
- Present agreement (3 years) total SEK 25 million, disbursed 1998-99 about SEK 12 million.

Purpose of cooperation

- Long term:
 - In the long-term to make Laotian society more visible, i. e. differences in living conditions between and within regions, ethnic groups and women and men, and to make such information available to all.
- Short to Medium term:
 - Help develop NSC into independent and sustainable statistical institution through building of competence and capacity of personnel and organisation.
 - Enhance ability to produce qualitative statistics.
 - Help develop a national statistical system.

Summary

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL (OAG) NAMIBIA, AND THE SWEDISH NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE (RRV)

Twinning partners

- Office of the Auditor General, OAG, Windhoek
- Swedish National Audit Office, RRV, Stockholm

Period of cooperation

- Commenced 1994.
- Present agreement from January 1, 1999 – December 31, 2001.

Costs of the cooperation

- Between 1994 – 1998 SEK 24 800 000 was utilised.
- Present agreement SEK 7 260 000.

Purpose of cooperation

This last phase of cooperation will concentrate on consolidating the organisational development, but also further develop the institutional framework.

Mode of cooperation

A specific agreement between Sweden and Namibia sets the conditions and the framework for the cooperation including the possibility for OAG to sign a contract directly with RRV which has been done.

Summary of the ZIMTAX Project

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF TAXES (DoT) AND THE NATIONAL TAX BOARD OF SWEDEN

Training partners

- Department of Taxes, DoT, Harene
- National Tax Board of Sweden, RNU, Stockholm

Period of cooperation

Total period of cooperation is 12 years. The project was initiated in 1987 and was terminated by the end of 1999.

Costs of the cooperation

Total Sida support to the project amounted to SEK 32 million.

Purpose of cooperation

The major objective of the ZIMTAX Project was to improve the DoT's effectiveness and efficiency in revenue collection through the introduction of modern technology, modern methods of management and planning as well as the building up of in-house management and technical competence.

Appendix C

SEMINAR ON TWINNING AS A METHOD FOR INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Date January 19-21, 2000

Place Nida's Conference Centre at Nya Nydalen 33
(Please note that the chair code is 0791.)

January 19
9.00

Opening of the seminar
Einar Norderhaug, Assistant Director General, Nida
Department for Democracy and Social Development
Introduction of participants

9.30

Practical experiences from twinning cooperation
Mr. Bannhavy, Director of National Statistics Centre, Laos
Mr. Paul, Commissioner of Taxes, Zimbabwe
Dr. P. Ujigaste, Auditor General, Namibia

Questions

Coffee break

11.00

Twinning as a method of capacity building
Dr. Mervik, Japan

Questions

11.45

Nida's Action Programme for Capacity and Institution Development
Dr. Ingemar Gustafsson

Questions

12.00

Lunch

14.00

Introduction to group discussion

14.15 17.00

Group discussion

18.00

Dinner

January 20

9.00 11.30

Panel discussion
incl. conclusions and summary of the seminar and group
and panel discussions.

Moderator: Ingemar Gustafsson

Coffee

12.00 13.00

Lunch Seminar for Nida APG, Nya Nydalen 33
open to staff at Nida, whose conclusions from the seminar
will be shared with a larger audience.

Appendix D

Docent Lennart Gustafsson
2000-01-25

Några reflektioner i anslutning till seminariet SEMINAR ON TWINNING AS A METHOD FOR INSTITUTION DEVELOPMENT 19-20 januari 2000

Jag tar här upp ett par synpunkter som jag hade tänkt föra in i den avslutade diskussionen men tiden och diskussionens inriktning gjorde dem väl speciella i sammanhanget. Kanske kan de ändå genom denna PM komma till användning i den fortsatta beredningen. Jag utvecklar dem gärna muntligt.

Perspektivvidgning 1: Från överförande av tekniska sakkunskaper till gemensamt arbete för organisationsutveckling

I Jones' och Blunts artikel framhålls en perspektivförskjutning. "Twinning" (institutionellt samarbete) behandlas inte bara eller ens främst som ett samarbete i de gemensamma sakfrågorna (den tekniska kompetensen) utan som ett samarbete för att utveckla den "mottagande" institutionen som organisation (organisational development genom lärande för att åstadkomma en "lärande organisation"). Mycket av diskussionen kom att handla om just denna perspektivförändring; gott nog, det var ju utgångspunkten för seminariet.

Perspektivvidgning 2: Från förvaltningsbistånd till samarbete för democratic governance

Diskussionen under seminariet tangerade dessutom en frågeställning som dock inte i mina ögon kom att belysas särskilt djupt utanför vår grupp, nämligen att det hittillsvarande samarbetet främst berört tekniska områden (sakfrågor) inom statens kärnområden. Gemensamt för dessa är att de rör skelettet i det som kan kallas "staten". Viktiga områden är därför "financial management" inkluderande revision, skattesystem, nationalbanker och upphandling; statliga funktioner som är av betydelse för samhällsplaneringen i stort, inkluderande statistikproduktion och fysisk planering; offentlig organisation och ledningsutveckling, inkluderande statens roll som arbetsgivare och kompetensutveckling inom de administrativa områdena; samt utvecklingen av kommunal organisation.

Ofta finns inom de prioriterade områdena en internationellt vedertagen uppfattning om god praxis – internationella fackorganisationer hr t.ex. lagt fast principer för god redovisningssed; det statistiska vetenskapssamfundet har en etablerad uppfattning om "rätt" metoder; osv. Problem som uppkommer inom samarbetet har därför ofta kunnat behandlas tekniskt eller "objektivt". Sida betonar visserligen att samarbetsinsatserna måste anpassas till sammanhanget i mottagarlandet, men med den professionella konsensus som ofta råder i de prioriterade områdena är risken för konflikter i sakfrågor liten. Likartade lösningar kan tillämpas i många samarbetsländer.

I framtiden kan man vänta en breddning av förvaltningsbiståndet till att också omfatta insatser som skall stärka demokratin i samarbetsländerna och utveckla de mänskliga rättigheterna i dessa. Eftersom en väl fungerande förvaltning är en av många förutsättningar för en effektiv demokrati och eftersom det ofta är offentliga institutioner som har att förvara de mänskliga rättigheterna, så är sambanden mellan "demokratisk samhällsstyrning" och effektiv förvaltning tydliga. Men ändå är perspektivförändringen antagligen mer omvälvande för de svenska samarbetet och dess aktörer än vad bytet av abstrakta begrepp först antyder.

En viktig tes i regeringsskrivelsen "Demokrati och mänskliga rättigheter i Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete" är att Sverige i ökad utsträckning skall använda FN:s konventioner om mänskliga rättigheter som instrument för att bestämma mål och följa upp resultat i biståndet. Främjande av demokrati och mänskliga rättigheter skall vara ett genomgående och centralt inslag i Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete. En del i detta blir att *operationalisera rättighetskonventionerna* och därigenom få vägledning för insatser.

Skrivelsen håller fram betydelsen av bred folklig medverkan av olika offentliga program och verksamheter. Inte minst viktigt i detta sammanhang är den relativa betoning som skrivelsen lägger vid rättigheterna om materiell standard, dvs de som handlar om grundläggande behov såsom rätten till rimlig levnadsstandard, hälsovård och utbildning. Man säger också att utvecklingen av en demokratisk regeringsmakt handlar om "att skapa en kultur inom statsmaktens alla förgreningar som är präglad av att staten är allmänhetens tjänare, inte tvärtom". Den offentliga funktionernas självklara uppdrag att "leverera" – såväl rättsäkerhet som mer basala tjänster inom undervisning och vård – får med denna utveckling större vikt.

Medborgaren i alla sina roller – som aktör och påverkare, som mottagare av offentliga tjänster och som föremål för den offentliga maktutövningen – får en ny betoning i resonemangen om "democratic governance". Den offentliga verksamheten kan därmed inte betraktas som en företeelse som kan hanteras på ett i huvudsak tekniskt-administrativt sätt. Synsätt som framhåller den offentliga verksamhetens system och funktioner för den enskilde kan väntas ta större utrymme. Sambanden med det civila samhället blir därmed ett tema.

Sammanfattningsvis innebär perspektivförändringen att *gränssnittet mellan förvaltning och medborgare blir lika viktigt som förvaltningens interna system*. Detta gränssnitt rymmer två viktiga aspekter; medborgaren som påverkare och medborgaren som mottagare av offentliga tjänster. Breddningen av synen på förvaltningsbiståndet leder till att uppmärksamheten inte begränsas till de förvaltningspolitiska systemen "i sig" utan också innefattar de samhällsinstitutioner som skall förverkliga de politiska besluten och därmed tillhandahålla medborgarna den offentliga servicen. (I service lägger jag här även funktioner som att upprätthålla rättsäkerhet.) Det innebär att också de sektoriella samhällsinstitutionerna kommer i fokus för förvaltningsbiståndet. Förbättrad offentlig verksamhet kommer att kräva bättre fungerande sektorsinstitutioner inte bara i form av bra skolor utan också i form av god utbildningsadministration, inte bara i form av bra sjukhus och kliniker utan också i form av god vårdadministration, etc.

Denna vidgning av de sakfrågor, institutioner och organisationer som kan komma att omfattas av "twinning"-arrangemang är inte okontroversiell. De traditionella sakfrågorna inom förvaltningsbiståndet styrs som redovisats av brett omfattade normer i form av modeller och gemensamma värderingar. *De tillkommande frågorna är mer beroende av politiska avvägningar, nationella lämplighetsbedömningar och professionellt mode.* Det nya "twinning"-samarbetet kommer exempelvis att väcka en skarp diskussion om lämpligheten av marknadsinflytande i offentlig verksamhet, t ex om vilka verksamheter som lämpar sig för out-sourcing och om former för partnerskap mellan den offentliga verksamheten, det civila samhället och den privata, kommersiella sektorn. Det är inte alls säkert att svenska institutioner och deras partner representerar samma ideal i sådana frågor. Det blir än mindre fråga om export av svenska lösningar.

Med en ny betoning av sektorsverksamhetens arbetsförhållanden ändras också tankekedjan om hur goda förvaltningssystem utvecklas. Medan den rådande doktrinen synes ha varit att utvecklingen av centrala, generella, relativt enhetliga förvaltningssystem skulle leda till en god förvaltning i samtliga sektorer (och därmed bättre service delivery) så blir nog framtidens tänkande mer det motsatta, dvs. att det är förhållandena inom respektive samhällssektor som får avgöra vad som skall anses vara god förvaltning just där. När analysen börjar i en bedömning av brister i en samhällssektors förmåga att faktiskt tillhandahålla medborgarna vad de har rimliga anspråk att begära, så blir de förvaltningsmässiga hindren snabbare uppenbara. Prioriteringarna i utvecklingssamarbetet kan göras enklare och tydligare.

Erfarenheterna från förvaltningsutvecklingen i de olika samhällssektorerna får därmed spela en större roll när man definierar vad som skall vara det gemensamma kittet i de nationella förvaltningssystemen – dvs i de statliga kärnfunktionerna. *Förutsättningarna för "twinning" också i kärnområdena blir mer svårdefinierade.*

Perspektivvidgning 3: Från projektbistånd till sektorsprogrammering

Den traditionella förvaltningsbiståndsinsatsen är projektet. Exempelen på seminariet var tydliga; en svensk organisation får Sidas uppdrag att som partner med en systerorganisation i ett mottagarland ömsesidigt och fortlöpande utforma stödet. Ett och samma mottagarland kan med denna metod få stöd i sin förvaltning-utveckling från olika länder med olika förvaltningstraditioner. Detta leder ibland till idékonflikter, särskilt om givarna är verksamma inom närliggande områden.

Förhoppningen bland många synes vara att det som kallas Sector Wide Approach, SWAp, skall eliminera en del av problemen med projektbiståndsformen. Tanken i korthet är vad jag förstår att

- koppla biståndet inom en sektor till landets makroekonomiska situation och till den reguljära budgetprocessen
- relatera insatserna inom sektorn till kapaciteten i den aktuella förvaltningen (och andra institutioner av betydelse), samt
- koordinera olika givares insatser inom sektorn.

På detta sätt vill man integrera förbättringar av "service delivery" inom en samhällssektor med utvecklingen av de institutioner som är verksamma inom sektorn. Helhetssynen stärks.

Om detta blir mönster kommer förutsättningarna för berörda "twins" att bli än mer komplex. Samordningen måste nu inte bara ske parvis utan i fördjupad diskussion med andra givare. I Sveriges fall torde det komma att kräva mer av såväl Sida (i planeringsarbetet) som berörd svensk samarbetsinstitution. Den mottagande institutionens relation till sin omvärld blir betydligt tydligare, vilket förstås kan väntas öka effektiviteten men också samarbetets komplexitet.

Slutsatser

Om dessa förändringar kommer att bli verklighet står det svenska förvaltningssamarbetet inför nya, stora krav. Utformningen och styrningen av förvaltningsbistånd i form av institutionellt samarbete, som redan idag är en komplex fråga, kommer att bli än mer krävande eftersom

- fler landanpassade lämplighetsbedömningar kommer att behöva göras vid utformningen av insatserna (global professionell konsensus är inte givet)
- insatserna kommer att vara inslag i större samlade program, där Sveriges del skall samordnas med andra givare (mer krävande planering för såväl Sida som svensk institution)
- många aktörer skall samordnas inte bara mellan givarländerna utan måhända även inom dessa (jämför det svenska s k ryssprojektet där det svenska finansdepartementets "twinning" med sin ryska systerorganisation inkluderar medverkan av RRV, ESV, Riksgäldkontoret, Riksbanken och andra institutioner; "twinning" kan komma behöva utvecklas till "family to family")
- förvaltningskunnandet kommer att behöva innefatta både generell förvaltningspolitik och sektorsrelaterade förvaltningsprinciper (större krav på brett kunnande hos utresande konsulter)
- förvaltningskunnandet skall integreras med kunnande om demokratisk utveckling och mänskliga rättigheter (större krav på brett kunnande hos utresande konsulter)
- förvaltningskunnandet skall kombineras med sakkunskap om den aktuella sektorn.

Sidas åtgärdsprogram är ett viktigt steg för att möta många av dessa krav. Men jag tror att innehållet i vad som kallas Internationell kompetens (sid 7) också explicit bör innefatta frågor som sammanhänger med idékomplexet Democratic governance och metodkomplexet Sektorsprogrammering enligt vad som kortfattats antytts här.