



some kind of a “confusion phase” Report from a visit with delay
Zambia to Piteå 3-7 mars 2014

Background

Zambia is the latest country for Municipal partnership programs through International Center for Local Democracy, ICLD. Through the program for Symbio Cities three Zambian municipalities were invited to Sweden together with a number of other African municipalities, to participate in a study program which also included a visit to the northern part of Sweden, including Kiruna.

During their stay in Kiruna a mini -matching program was on the agenda, where Piteå participated and met representatives from Chinsali in Zambia. This resulted in a joint application to ICLD for an inception phase where the focus was on development of local democracy.

Sweden has a long tradition of democracy and also of municipal governance. Piteå has also for many years been working with development of local democracy and was also awarded a UN prize for the work regarding transparency that was done in the Municipality.

Program

The group was intended to come here on Sunday morning but due to poor communication from the airport staff in Lusaka they missed the plane even though they had checked in.

So instead of Sunday morning they arrived on Monday afternoon and we had rescheduled the program from 5 to 4 days.

Monday – to settle

On Monday afternoon Anita Granqvist, a social counsellor at the Municipality and myself went to Luleå airport to meet them. It was the first trip abroad for two of them with snow for all of them. They had not realized how cold it was in Sweden – even if it was warm regarding the time of the year - we had to arrange for winter cloths so they could be outside.



Ian Mukondo

Mary Sinkala

Patrick Kambita

Sham Kapyanga

The people who came from Chinsali were Patrick Kambita, chief executive officer, Mary Sinkala director for the social and environmental department, Ian Mukondo, counsellor and Sham Kapyanga, mayor.

They were accommodated at a hostel in the town center. Anita was collecting winter clothes while Mary and I went to the local grocery store and bought breakfast food for the week, as they had to make breakfast themselves at the hostel.

It was not time and energy for more than a meal and some informal talk regarding, the program, expectations and to get a brief understanding of Chinsali and Piteå.

Tuesday: Municipal activities and participation

Due to the delay we missed a few things on Monday, as introduction and their participation at the executive committee meeting. The politicians were fully busy on Tuesday so we mainly followed the program already done.

08:30- 11:30 Kultur och fritid; Participation of youth



Monica Hansson



Terese Enmark



Kristina Sandström



Sofia Holmbom

Hostesses; Monica Hansson, Terese Enmark – youth counselors and two young girls, Sofia Holmbom, a youth worker and Kristina Sandström doing internship.

From the department they told us about their way of working with youth were participation and initiatives were promoted.

The girls also talked about self-esteem and how they today both wanted to stay in Piteå and be active citizens and also believed that they had possibilities to do so. They stressed the importance of being listened to and given responsibilities in order to grow.

Study Visit SAVO -Work for people with disability



Cecilia Fahlman Agneta Johansson Ian with clients and the rest interested in book binding

Savo is a municipal day-care center for people with disabilities. Here are around 40 people working. Here they have developed the business of book binding and is today one of the biggest binderies in the country.

We were met by Cecilia Fahlman, director and – Agneta Johansson, Social services development officer, who talked about possibilities for clients in the Social Sector to be involved and carry out activities/work related to their abilities. It was a qualitative work carried out in the bindery and the workers were proud of their work.

Snow mobile and walking on the ice



You can't come from Africa to Piteå in March without trying to ride on a snow mobile or walk on frozen sea. Culture/Park and Leisure, a department of the Municipality had prepared some very typical outdoors activities for the group. In a Laplander's tent they had made up a

fire and made coffee. We brought sausage to roast. There were scooter overalls for them to put on and they could all try to ride the snow mobiles and walk on the sea, the frozen sea.



We ended the evening with a dinner with catered food at my house where Agneta Johansson also participated.



It was relaxed and gave opportunities to informal talk.

Wednesday; local democracy in practice



Peter, Elisabeth and David are going to Zambia in May

This day the focus was on local democracy and participation of politicians. Peter Roslund, mayor and Elisabeth Berg local leader for the Conservatives participated. David Sundström, community strategist participated also. All three of them are going to Chinsali in May. Mats, who is the chief executive officer should talk about , a Swedish municipality and its responsibilities and The residents and the taxes;

But as he was sick with fever it was addressed by Peter Roslund. David made an introduction of Piteå as well as Patrick Kambita made one of Chinsali. We also saw a film from there. Chinsali is made to be the provincial headquarter of Muchinga Province around 800 km north of Lusaka. To be a leader in Chinsali is a great challenge as they are building up a new city, with a University, residential areas, Schools, hospital etc. and there are plans for an air port. Even though it is the government which carry out the building projects it affects the Municipality highly in many aspects. They have realized that the need to have the involvement of the local people and that development of local democracy is extremely important in order to become successful.

During the day it was a lot of sharing experiences of challenges related to development of local democracy, role of politicians and benefits of having a local democracy. We talked about local democracy in different contexts and importance of trust from the people.



A journalist from the local newspaper wrote an article about the ICLD cooperation.



Anna-Lena Pogulis



Anett Karlström

In the afternoon they met with Anna-Lena Pogulis, municipal strategist and Anett Karlström, administrator of local democracy who shared their experiences from different methods we are using in the process of development of local democracy.

It was Peoples' panel, Citizen petitions, Your point of view, Citizens' spot, Young People's participation etc. and the it was described on a quite practical level as how it works, When do we use it? How do we use it? How do we use the result? Outcome of these activities? And Influence on trust.

Before we went to see SMASK – Student song contest from all Swedish Schools of Music, we went to the Hamburger restaurant, BIG BOY for food.

Thursday: legal rights to participate



In Chinsali, they are as mentioned, building a new city more or less from scratch. We met with Florian Steiner – architect and the theme was to explore the Possibilities for people to be involved in planning processes in a Municipality which led to interesting reflections and discussions.

Florian Steiner – Architect



During the days we had from different perspectives talked about the Swedish Welfare system but now Anita Grankvist make an exposé of how the Swedish Welfare systeme works from the cradle to the grave.

Anita Grankvist – counsellor



There was a wish from the group to see how we handle our garbage and waste. After lunch we went both to our recycling center to hear and see as well as we went to Repris. We met Gunnar Lundkvist who told us about Repris, a place where people can leave used items which are repaired, if needed, and

sold in a shop. It gives job opportunities to people who are a bit from the regular job market. Repris is a part of the municipal activities and the profit from sales more or less runs the place. We also went to the Red Cross who also has similar activities.

In Zambia they have only one recycling center, like the one they saw and they thought that they have to tackle their waste problem in other ways.



Of course it also gave opportunities to do some shopping to bring home to Zambia.



This afternoon the Municipality hosted a dinner for the Zambian group. Guests were the working committee of the Chief Executive committee. It was an early dinner as we were going to see the semifinal in the Swedish hockey league for ladies between Munksund, Piteå and Linköping. A new experience, ice hockey and ice hockey for ladies.

Friday; Summery and future



The last day of an intense week. Anita Granqvist, David Sundström and I had together with the group from Zambia a workshop to reflect on the week and to try to get a platform for cooperation.

We started of by reflected on why we wanted to develop our relations. We divided into two groups, one Zambian and one Swedish. From the Swedish side we said that

- We don't have any African relations which is a disadvantage as Africa is a very interesting continent and
- We through these contacts and in cooperation we would get new perspectives and knowledge which could affect our own development
- We have common challenges as the trust from the citizens in public governance and different perspectives can create new insights and ideas
- To meet in the area of education and dialogue with the citizens is interesting
- We are proud of working with international relations/cooperation. We think it can attract competent people to work with us.
- ICLD funding enable us to do these projects which is an advantage

From the Zambian side they reflected mostly on the week and the impressions they had got and would bring back home.

- Everyone pay taxes and that is not negotiable
- The education is free
- That the mayor/deputy mayor is given the mandate by all citizens (electorate)
- That Piteå has developed forums for the citizens dialogue and that citizens participate in decision making processes
- That there are functions, powers and resources in the Municipality to work with these issues
- Citizens' involvement in the planning processes. That there is a right to appeal before implementation of the plan in a Municipality
- Integration of the disabled in to the Society for the wellbeing of the National Development
- Youth and Women Empowerment
- Youth involvement in decision making.

Reflections:

Both Zambia and Sweden are democratic countries; there are both similarities and of course many differences. But democracy is a foundation for both of us – but in different contexts. What do we mean when we talk about local democracy? What do we mean by developing the local democracy? Why should people be involved in different processes between the elections? How does it look like in Chinsali and in Piteå?

I think that personal meetings are invaluable in order to be able to discuss these issues in order to address problems we have in our municipalities and develop a project that can benefit both parties. In order to broaden our minds it is important for both local politicians and officials to become a bit familiar with other environments and other contexts and from these perspectives share views in the area of local democracy. What is it we want to develop and why?

We want to believe that we in Sweden are almost totally free from corruption. But during the 10 last years we have seen scandals in a number of Municipalities where politicians and officials have been involved in businesses far free from corruption. For the moment a study is carried out in order to get an understanding of the situation. Not even our Municipality has been totally free from it.

One assumption in this study is that the reputation a politician has is important when it comes to keep his honesty and trust worthy. If you have a bad reputation you will be

punished sooner or later. Politicians' reputational fear degrades when anonymity is increasing or when actions are hard to discover. One objective for the research is to see if corruption has increased at the local level and if it has become a problem. At the same time a study referred to by Professor Henrik Ekengren Oscarsson at the University of Gothenburg shows that there is an increasing trust in our politicians. In 1988 44% of the citizens showed trust (very or rather big trust) for our politicians and in 2010 the figure was 61%. These are challenges we think that we in one way or another will address in our cooperation.

A good start

It was really fun to host the group from Zambia. They were curious, interested and eager to start the cooperation. But I also think that it can be some kind of a "confusion phase" to come to a foreign country with all new impressions and meetings with new people all the time. I wished that there had been more time with our politicians so they had been comfortable together and started a process of deeper communication.

A reflection done here was that Chinsali is a very exciting Municipality and we feel honored that they want to work with us. A Cooperation we look forward to.



Gerd Sävenstedt

