



ISSN: 2230-9926

Available online at <http://www.journalijdr.com>

IJDR

International Journal of Development Research
Vol. 08, Issue, 03, pp.19349-19355, March, 2018



ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS

DO SISTER CITIES MATTER FOR INTERNATIONAL MUNICIPAL NETWORKING? ANALYSIS OF CITIES OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR PROVINCE IN CANADA

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 20th December, 2017
Received in revised form
16th January, 2018
Accepted 23rd February, 2018
Published online 30th March, 2018

Key Words:

Sister city, Town Twinning, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, St. John's – Waterford and Stephenville – Castlegar.

ABSTRACT

To ensure better reinforcement for the objectives of the Development Millennium Goals (DMGs), cities are presented as key players in the formulation and implementation of public policies not only at the municipal level but at the international level as well. Sister city movement aims to empower local communities and to strengthen their role in the decision-making process to better respond to the sustainable development objectives. Through the literature, different attempts exist to provide significant description of the relationship taking place between different sister cities at the local, national, regional and international level. This research investigates primarily the type of networking which ties the sister cities existing in Newfoundland and Labrador province in Canada. The study aims to present a detailed analysis of the following: reasons of networking between cities; motives driving the initiatives for the formulation of networking; sectors of intervention; level of intervention; outcomes and changes brought to the community through the process of networking; problems of the implementation phase; and the actions taken during the evaluation phase for networking sustainability. The results of the research demonstrate that public policy networking, which exists between the sister cities in Newfoundland and Labrador province in Canada, may be described as strong ties. Nevertheless, those cities need to dedicate attention, regarding the implementation and the evaluation phase of public policy networking, to improve the existing relationships.

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Citation: Dr. Naglaa Fathy El Dessouky. 2018. "Do sister cities matter for international municipal networking? analysis of cities of newfoundland and labrador province in canada", *International Journal of Development Research*, 8, (03), 19349-19355.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 21st century and with the growing globalized world the city has become a key player in the formulation and implementation of public policy at the municipal, national, regional and international level. Global governance concept contests the traditional paradigm where the government is considered as key player in decision making, and hence introduces different new actors participating in the elaboration of international public policies. To reinforce this new role at the international level the city has been gone through a networking process, especially to meet the Development Millennium Goals (DMGs). This research aims to study the structure describing the ties existing between the sister cities in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Canada. A detailed analysis of two cases will be carried out to study St. John's sister city with Waterford in Ireland and

Stephenville sister city with Castlegar in British Columbia, Canada. We attempt first to present the concept of networking between cities. Then, the research investigates the type of networking which ties the sister cities existing in Newfoundland and Labrador province in Canada. We presented a detailed analysis of the following: reasons of networking between cities; motives driving the initiatives for the formulation of networking; sectors of intervention; level of intervention; outcomes and changes brought to the community through the process of networking; problems of the implementation phase; and the actions taken during the evaluation phase for networking sustainability. At the end, the research presented the findings of this study through the conclusion and recommendation part.

The concept of networking between cities

A thorough literature review demonstrates the differences which exist in the European and the American literature regarding the concept of networking between cities. For the

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European concept it is very well known as “Town Twinning” however the American concept introduces this type of collaboration as “Sister Cities”. The process of city networking was first introduced in Europe shortly after the World War II as Town Twinning. For the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), the Town Twinning concept is defined as “A twinning is the coming together of two communities seeking, in this way, to take action with a European perspective and with the aim of facing their problems and developing between themselves closer and closer ties of friendship”¹. The primary values of this twinning process, according to CEMR, are networking and companionship between local communities to create common background for better understanding and better process for elaborating the study and solving issues of shared interest.

In the United-States of America this type of networking becomes officially known as Sister Cities in 1956 after the establishment of the organization of Sister City by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, lately becomes known as Sister Cities International (SCI). The definition provided by SCI highlighted the importance of the global relationship, therefore Sister city is presented as “A sister city, county, or state relationship is a broad-based, long-term partnership between two communities in two countries”². For SCI the values behind this type of relationship are quite special where the best practice of citizen diplomacy is considered as cornerstone for global peace and prosperity. A detailed literature review demonstrates that the field of studies related to sister cities still relatively embryonic and many efforts need to be invested to examine different hypothesis and to build solid assumptions about the subject.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology strategy is a comparative case study of the sister cities networking strategies implemented between St. John’s – Waterford and Stephenville – Castlegar. The research tool is a questionnaire which contains seven open questions that was directed to key persons and project coordinators, responsible of the formulation and implementation of sister cities initiatives in Newfoundland and Labrador province, Canada (Appendix 1). All the interviewee persons are treated as anonymous and the selection of this sample is random. After the process of data collection, the answers are coded and then analyzed by means of Atlas.ti software program allowing in this respect to treat the qualitative data for analysis ends.

Analysis and Interpretation

This research investigates primarily the type of networking which ties the sister cities existing in Newfoundland and Labrador province in Canada. The study aims to present a detailed analysis of the following: reasons of networking between cities; motives driving the initiatives for the formulation of networking; sectors of intervention; level of intervention; outcomes and changes brought to the community through the process of networking; problems of the

implementation phase; and the actions taken during the evaluation phase for networking sustainability.

Reasons for networking: similarity or distinction

Through the literature, we may conclude that the majority of authors stress the importance of similarities between sister cities as central reason for networking, however merely few authors highlight the importance of networking to foster strong connections between dissimilar cities to benefit from differences.

Location and population size

In the case of St. John’s – Waterford we may identify the significance of similarities between the two cities as a reason for networking. Both cities are coastal cities which enjoy the presence of maritime port as the Port of St. John’s and the Port of Waterford. The city of St. John’s is the capital of Newfoundland and it is located on the eastern side of the Avalon Peninsula in the southeast of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador one of the Atlantic provinces of Canada (The Canadian Encyclopedia - St, John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador). Waterford city is the capital of the south east of Ireland. The city is situated in the province of Munster on the south eastern coast of the Republic of Ireland (Wikipedia – Waterford). According to the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the city can be described as small, medium or large based on the size of its population. “small urban centers have a population less than or equal to 500,000 people; medium urban centers, a population between 1 million and 5 million people; and mega urban centers, a population of 10 million or more” (UN\ DESA, 2013, p.54).

The population of St. John’s city as for 2016 census is 108,860 (Statistics Canada 2016. Census Profile, 2016 Census. St. John's, City [Census subdivision], Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada [Country]). The population of Waterford city & suburbs is estimated to be 53,504 according to the 2016 census (Central Statistics office Ireland, 2016 census of population). Accordingly, we may possibly mention that both sisters can be describes as small urban centers. The other case, is the presence of two sisters cities within Canada but in different provinces which is Stephenville - Castlegar. For Stephenville, it is situated in Newfoundland and Labrador province - Castlegar is located in British Columbia province. We may also identify the significance of similarities between the two cities as a key reason for networking.

Stephenville town is located on the north shore of St George's Bay on the south west coast of Newfoundland (The Canadian Encyclopedia- Stephenville). The population of Stephenville town as for 2016 census is 6,623 (Statistics Canada 2016. Census Profile, 2016 Census Stephenville, Town [Census subdivision], Newfoundland and Labrador and Saskatchewan.). The City of Castlegar is located in the British Columbia Province in the west of Canada. The city is on the west bank of Columbia River at its intersection with Kootenay River, in the middle between Calgary and Vancouver (The Canadian Encyclopedia- Castlegar). The population of Castlegar city is estimated to be 9,023 according to the 2016 census (Statistics Canada 2016, Census Profile, 2016 Census Castlegar [Population centre], British Columbia and Nova

¹ Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) official website, retrieved on December 16, 2017. This definition was introduced by Jean Bareth, one of the founders of the CEMR, after the World War II.

² Sister Cities International (SCI) official website, retrieved on December 16, 2017.

Scotia [Province]). Accordingly, we may possibly demonstrate that both sisters can be describes as small urban centers.

Historical connections

Going in parallel to the most stated reasons in the literature, the primary motive for St. John's – Waterford twinning is related to the common heritage and the historical connections between the two cities. This history back to the eighteenth century when migration ties were rigorously taking place from Ireland to NL in addition to the fishing business which flourished to promote the ties between the two cities (St. John's – Waterford Background to Twinning document, p.2). Stephenville - Castlegar is a similar example, where the historical connections is playing an important role behind the connection of the two sister cities. The representatives of the twinning agreement between the two cities adheres that the ties gathering the cities can be better described as friendship based on commonalities. They stated that Stephenville has French Heritage and Castlegar has Doukhobor Heritage. Moreover, both cities are paper mill towns as both have been major investors in pulp and paper industry. Also, both cities have airports correspondingly known as Stephenville Airport (CYJT) and Castlegar Airport (YCG). In addition, both cities headquarter the provincial college systems. The provincial community college system of NL, College of the North Atlantic, is headquartered in Stephenville where there is a campus for students from the south west region of Newfoundland. On April 29, 1996, Mr. Roger Grimes, former Minister of Education, declared that for cost saving purposes, Stephenville has been chosen as the headquarter site for the provincial college system to merge five regional colleges: Cabot, Eastern, Central Newfoundland, Westviking, and Labrador (News Releases, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador-Canada, July 30, 1996: Education). For Castlegar, it is home for Selkirk College, the first regional community college in BC (Selkirk College home page - Selkirk Overview). The representatives of the twinning agreement of the two cities also mentioned that one of the reasons behind the ties is that both cities are regional service centers. Stephenville enjoys the presence of different banks, schools, and in 2003 the town witnesses the establishment of a modern hospital with 42 beds (Stephenville, Newfoundland Canada - Home Page). Similarly, Castlegar represents the West Kootenay's commercial service centre. The city provides various services as health, financial, education, garbage and recycling, transportation and recreation (The city of Castlegar – Home Page). In general, the two cases of sister city in NL, St. John's-Waterford and Stephenville-Castlegar, confirm that networking is primarily based on the similarities which exist between sister cities.

Table 1. Reasons for networking: similarity or distinction

St. John's-Waterford	Stephenville-Castlegar
Similarities based on:	Similarities based on:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location and population size • Historical connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location and population size • Historical connections

The networking formulation: Internal or external initiative?

Through the literature review, we may discern two different types of networking initiative taking place between sister cities. In the first venue, the city simply chooses to refer to the

organization of Sister City International (SCI) which may possibly help in parenting between cities if they ask for this service (SCI- official website). Otherwise, the city goes through an internal process for stakeholders' consultation to initiate the network relationship with another city. In both cases, St. John's-Waterford and Stephenville- Castlegar, the cities went through the second alternative which focuses mostly on internal initiative coming from inside the city itself. In general, it is more often that the elected representative of the city how has the right to sign the official agreement of networking to certify a relationship between two sister cities. In our research, we attempt to answer a fundamental question about the key players participating in the elaboration of sister cities networking initiative. It seems important to investigate how the initiative of sister cities comes to the government strategic agenda. For St. John's-Waterford case, public sector, private sector as well as and educational institutes in both cities were the key players in the government agenda setting for the two cities networking. For St. John's, the Ireland Business Partnership (IBP) was established in 1997 to incorporate different public and private actors who have primarily the role to foster the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) elaborated in 1996 by the government of Newfoundland and Labrador to establish a solid relationship with the Republic of Ireland. Another important key player from the education sector has to be mentioned for this initiative, it is the Marine Institute of Newfoundland and Labrador. This institute plays and vital role to provide the initiative with the researches and development related to maritime affaires (St. John's – Waterford Background to Twinning document, p.1). Another important key player in these affaires, as mentioned by the representatives of the twinning initiative, is Memorial University. Business School of Memorial University, in specific, has been playing a crucial role in providing researches related to business ties strengthening between the two cities.

For Waterford, a similar agency was established in 2000 and formally launched in 2001 in Ireland called The Ireland Newfoundland Partnership (INP). This initiative integrates the public sector and the private sector as well with the main goal to strengthen the established ties between Ireland and Newfoundland and Labrador (Ireland Business Partnership Innovation, Trade and Rural Development). Also, the educational sector, through the Marine Institute of Cork, represents an important actor in the agenda setting and networking elaboration for maritime business policy between Ireland and Newfoundland and Labrador. For this mission, the Marine Institute of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Marine Institute of Cork elaborated an important joint agreement (St. John's – Waterford Background to Twinning document, p.1). Moreover, the Waterford Institute of Technology is an important actor to mention, as stated by the sister cities initiative representatives. Special ties have been elaborated between business schools existing in both entities the Waterford Institute of Technology and Memorial University to present research papers and reports to foster the business and trade relationship between the two cities. As a final step to formalize St. John's – Waterford sister cities initiative, the Mayor of Waterford communicates with the Mayor of St. John's and a twinning agreement was signed and sealed by Waterford City Council and the City of St. John's Municipal Council dated in September 30, 2002 (St. John's – Waterford Background to Twinning document, p.2; Waterford and St. John's Twinning Agreement). Stephenville- Castlegar

also is a good example of internal initiative coming from inside the cities themselves for networking. In June 1998, to reach this purpose, both cities went through an agreement called “Community Leaders Partnership Program (CLPP)” (The city of Castlegar – City Hall – Sister Cities, official website). The key players in this initiative were different municipal, business and community leaders to exchange knowledge and mechanisms to face common issues. This initiative is financially reinforced by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Government of Canada and the Royal Bank of Canada (The city of Castlegar – City Hall – Sister Cities, official website).

Table 2. The networking formulation: Internal or external initiative

St. John’s-Waterford	Stephenville-Castlegar
Internal initiative coming from inside the city itself.	Internal initiative coming from inside the city itself.

Sectors of intervention

In this step of our research it is necessary to introduce a typology presenting the sectors of intervention for the sister cities. We will mainly investigate the type of networking to be described as unilateral\ single sector or multilateral\ several sectors of intervention. It is common in the literature that the twinning between the different cities is further described as multilateral through which the connected cities seek a parallel development in different sectors where culture and business are the foremost. St. John’s – Waterford is an example of networking which is similar with what is found in the literature. Their focus can be better described as multilateral sectors of intervention. Both cities have a strong concern in the formulation and implementation of different policies related mostly to business, culture and education-youth development sector (St. John’s – Waterford Background to Twinning document, pp. 1-2). Stephenville – Castlegar as well, their sister cities initiative may be described as multilateral sectors of intervention. Their networking strategy is devoted to the sectors of economic, social, cultural and linguistic development among Canadians from communities across the country (The city of Castlegar – City Hall – Sister Cities, official website).

Table 3. Sectors of Intervention

St. John’s-Waterford	Stephenville-Castlegar
Multilateral sectors of intervention through:	Multilateral sectors of intervention through:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business, • Culture and • Education-youth development sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic, • Social, • Cultural and linguistic • Development among Canadians from communities across the country

Level of intervention: National, Regional or International Policies

Based on the analysis of the previous sections of this research, we may conclude that the level of intervention of sister cities, in the two cases, can be basically described as national-oriented policies. In the two twinning cases, St. John’s - Waterford in Ireland and Stephenville- Castlegar in British

Columbia, Canada, the cities dedicate more attention to strengthen their relationship to better respond and to propose effective solutions to common local issues related to each city more than to participate in providing solutions for regional or international issues such as global warming, climate change, biodiversity, food access, water problem, human rights, etc.

Table 4. Level of intervention: National, Regional or International Policies

St. John’s-Waterford	Stephenville-Castlegar
National-oriented policies focus on common local issues	National-oriented policies focus on common local issues

Benefits and opportunities\ changes brought to the local community?

St. John’s – Waterford sister cities initiative can be described as serious relationship which focuses on the development of both cities. As mentioned by the initiative representatives, different benefits have to be highlighted. First, there have been organized source of contacts between the two authorities which paved the road for people and organizations who aspire to establish good connections between the two cities. Furthermore, the historical connections between the two cities lead to a strong and direct friendship which can be obviously seen in various activities as some exchanges and visits between the two cities, the establishment of the Rooms and a permanent exhibit to focus on the historical ties, in addition to the elaboration of the youth initiative for youth exchange between the two cities. A great advantage in the field of business and trade partnership has to be stated, especially after the establishment of the Ireland Business Partnership (IBP) in Newfoundland and the Ireland Newfoundland Partnership (INP) in Ireland. This was followed by a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2000 between St. John’s Board of Trade and the Galway Chamber of Commerce to strengthen the respective economic and commerce development. Also, the Canadian Senior Trade Commissioner in Ireland has been implicated in this issue (St. John’s – Waterford Background to Twinning document, p.1). Stephenville- Castlegar cities initiative can similarly be described as serious relationship which focuses on the development of both cities. The friendship relationship between the two cities was based on communalities which focused on common discussions and exchange of knowledge to face mutual issues. Despite the fact that no policies were elaborated between the two cities, we may conclude that the mutual visits and open dialogues between the Councils of the cities had brought a significance impact at the level of the two cities.

Problems of implementation\ challenges and threats

As a primary source of problem for the implementation of the sister city initiative between St. John’s, NL and Waterford, Ireland is the lack of resources, especially the financial and human aspects. As per the representatives of the twinning initiative, there is no devoted office of international relations for the agenda setting of resources provision and allocation. The representatives of the initiative also stated that there were small amounts of financial support dedicated to the networking for some project and related support work. Another problem relevant to the implementation of the twinning agreement is how to calculate the returns.

The representatives of the agreement stated that in most cases the profits of this type of relationship are better understood only when there are tangible economic returns which are often the outcome of business ventures or investments.

cases of sister city initiatives studied we may conclude that the initiatives have been dedicated more attention to the formulation and implementation of the networking however little focus have been devoted to the evaluation of the

Table 5. Benefits and opportunities\ changes brought to the local community

St. John's-Waterford	Stephenville-Castlegar
Serious relationship which focuses on the development of both cities in the following areas:	Serious relationship which focuses on the development of both cities in the following areas:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organized source of contacts between the two authorities Exchanges and visits between the two cities Youth exchange between the two cities Business and trade partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common discussions and exchange of knowledge to face mutual issues Mutual visits and open dialogues between the Councils of the two cities

Table 6. Problems of implementation\ challenges and threats

St. John's-Waterford	Stephenville-Castlegar
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of resources, especially the financial and human aspects. No devoted office of international relations for the agenda setting of resources provision and allocation. Problems related to how to calculate the returns. The concern of citizens to explore their ancestors tend to be bigger than to know to where they emigrated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No solid implementation for the sister cities policies and no challenges or threats to face in this case

Table 7. Policy evaluation and networking sustainability

St. John's-Waterford	Stephenville-Castlegar
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More attention has been given to the formulation and implementation of the networking, however, little focus have been devoted to the evaluation of the accomplishments and to the regular assessment of the outcomes. Limited considerations to the elaboration of future action plans and the elaboration of sustainability policies for the networking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More attention has been given to the formulation and implementation of the networking however, little focus have been devoted to the evaluation of the accomplishments and to the regular assessment of the outcomes. Limited considerations to the elaboration of future action plans and the elaboration of sustainability policies for the networking.

The philosophy behind the sister city agreement is another critical challenge. The representatives of St. John's - Waterford agreement believe that the concern of citizens to explore their ancestors tend to be bigger than to know to where they emigrated. In this case, St. John's is more likely to have more interest to discover the historical connection with Waterford than the vice versa. For Stephenville- Castlegar cities initiative, we may conclude that the elaboration of networking policies between the two cities was primarily focused on exchange of visits, discussion on common issues and proposal of solutions to face mutual problems. Therefore, there was no solid implementation for the sister cities policies and no challenges or threats to face in this case.

Policy evaluation and networking sustainability/ Instruments for assessing future action plan?

Through the literature review we may notice the scarcity of researches related to the subject of policy evaluation of sister cities. The focus is clear in the literature about the process of elaboration and the implementation, nevertheless, so little was mentioned about the evaluation and the networking sustainability. The representatives of the sister city initiative of St. John's- Waterford confirmed that it is too early to go for the assessment of the initiative as it is in the very early phase of the implementation. The same case occurred in the networking between Stephenville- Castlegar. The representatives of the sister city initiative highlighted the fact that there was no evaluation process or assessment for future action plans between the two cities. In general, in the two

accomplishments and to the regular assessment of the outcomes. Moreover, we may notice that despite the two initiatives have a solid networking strategy and a clear identification of the areas of collaboration, there are limited considerations to the elaboration of future action plans and the elaboration of sustainability policies for the networking.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This research investigates primarily the type of networking which ties the sister cities existing in Newfoundland and Labrador province in Canada.

- For the two cases of St. John's – Waterford and Stephenville-Castlegar, we may identify the significance of similarities between the two cities as a reason for networking. We may recommend that the sister cities policies may go through the networking process with other dissimilar cities to take advantage of the cities' differences in different field, e.g. economic, cultural, social, educational, etc.
- For the two cases of St. John's – Waterford and Stephenville-Castlegar, we may recognize that the networking formulation may be described as internal initiative coming from inside the city itself. The cities went through an internal process for stakeholders' consultation to initiate the network relationship with the other city. We may recommend that further stakeholders and the citizens have to be integrated in

these processes of policy formulation to better respond to their needs.

- We investigated the sectors of interventions of networking between NL cities. For the two cases of St. John's – Waterford and Stephenville-Castlegar, we may conclude that their sectors of intervention may be described as multilateral\ several sectors of intervention through which the connected cities are seeking a parallel development in different sectors where culture, education and business are the foremost. The sector of environmental protection was obviously absent in the two cases, which may be integrated in further networking policies between the cities as a significant sector of intervention, specially NL province in Canada represents one of the key province in the formulation and implementation of the country environmental policies.
- The level of intervention of sister cities, in the two cases, can be basically described as national-oriented policies. In the two twinning cases, St. John's - Waterford in Ireland and Stephenville- Castlegar in British Columbia, Canada, the cities dedicate more attention to strengthen their relationship to better respond and to propose effective solutions to common local issues related to each city. We may recommend a broader perspective for the two cases to integrate other regional or international issues such as global warming, climate change, biodiversity, food access, water problem, human rights, etc.
- For the two twinning cases, St. John's -Waterford and Stephenville- Castlegar, we may describe their networking as serious relationship which focuses on the development of both cities. Real benefits and opportunities lead to significant changes were brought to the local communities. As mentioned earlier, a study and analysis of the communities' needs, as well as an empowerment of all stakeholders concerned, may strengthen the implementation process of networking between the sister cities.
- For the twinning cases of St. John's –Waterford, the fundamental problems of the networking policies are demonstrated in the lack of resources, especially the financial and human aspects; the absence of an office responsible of this type of networking for the international relations intended for the agenda setting of resources provision and allocation; and the problems related to how to calculate the returns. More attention has to be dedicated to overcome these problems for better implementation of the sister cities policies. For Stephenville- Castlegar cities initiative, we may conclude that the elaboration of networking policies between the two cities was primarily focused on exchange of visits, discussion on common issues and proposal of solutions to face mutual problems. Therefore, there was no solid implementation for the sister cities policies and no challenges or threats to face in this case. Policy-makers of the cities may dedicate more attention to strengthen the ties for the best of the cities and to broaden their areas of intervention.
- For the two cases of St. John's – Waterford and Stephenville-Castlegar, we may conclude that the initiatives have been dedicated more attention to the formulation and implementation of the networking, however, little focus have been devoted to the evaluation of the accomplishments and to the regular

assessment of the outcomes. Furthermore, we may notice that despite the two initiatives have a solid networking strategy and a clear identification of the areas of collaboration, there are limited considerations to the elaboration of future action plans and the elaboration of sustainability policies for the networking. Policy-makers of the sister cities initiatives may devote more attention to the evaluation process and the assessment of outcomes to achieve the purpose of sustainability for the networking process.

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Appendis (1)

Questionnaire

1. What are the significant reasons for networking: similarity or distinction?
2. What type of networking policy formulation: Internal or external initiative?
3. What are the major sectors of intervention?
4. What is the level of intervention: National, Regional or International Policies?
5. What are the fundamental benefits and opportunities of networking? What are the real changes brought to the local community?
6. What are the fundamental Problems of implementation\ challenges and threats?
7. Is there a devoted attention to policy evaluation process and networking sustainability / Instruments for assessing future action plan?
