

Program Theories in Omaruru and Vänersborg
- A Minor Field Study about Institutional Factors in
International Cooperation



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ABBREVIATIONS

ICLD = International Centre for Local Democracy

ICT = Information and Communications Technology

MPHC = Multi Purpose Help Centre

NGO = Non-Governmental Organisation

SIDA = Swedish International Development Agency

SME = Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

ABSTRACT

In this thesis three approaches of new institutionalism; rational choice institutionalism, sociological institutionalism and historical institutionalism, are used to study how institutional factors affect the way actors view joint international projects. In order to do this an empirical case study was made of the municipal partnership project between Vänersborg municipality in Sweden and Omaruru municipality in Namibia, called “Development of Citizen NGO-Network”. Because the project was in its starting phase at the time of the study semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals involved in the project at that stage so as to investigate how they visualized the continuation of the project. The answers were used to reconstruct two program theories, one for the Namibian and one for the Swedish counterpart, in order to structure and illustrate the actors’ perceptions of the project. Attempts were then made to explain the differences and similarities between the program theories with the help of a set of institutional statements derived from the three approaches.

The results show that factors from all the three approaches to a varying extent affect how the actors perceived the project. Hence, based on this case study, theories of new institutionalism can contribute to an enhanced understanding of international cooperation.

Key words: program theory, new institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, sociological institutionalism, historical institutionalism, international cooperation, municipal partnership project, Namibia, Minor Field Study

1. INTRODUCTION

In the following chapter, an introduction to the study is given by presenting the problem definition, purpose and research questions. The contributions of the study are also stated, both at a general and case-specific level.

1.1 Problem definition

It is widely known that the public sector is not organized according to one singular model. Rather, public sector organizations differ between countries and are subject to change over time. By travelling abroad we have seen the different faces of institutional organization, and as master students of public administration our wish to explain and analyze how public institutions operate has only grown. In our studies we have become familiar with the school of thought called new institutionalism which provides an intriguing analytical perspective on how individual behaviour is affected by institutions. New institutionalism consists of a range of approaches from which three have been chosen for our study. Central to all theories are the concept of institutions, how they are defined and how institutions affect individual and group behaviour.

In this thesis, we intend to combine our interest in public administration and international issues by using theories of new institutionalism to study if and how institutions affect the success of international partnership projects. To do this, theories of new institutionalism will be applied to a specific case of international collaboration; that is a municipal partnership project between Vänersborg municipality in Sweden and Omaruru municipality in Namibia. Institutional factors may affect the cooperation in several ways. Important aspects are; does unequal access to information affect goal perceptions? Are differences in organizational culture reflected in stakeholders' vision of the project? And if so, what implications do such factors have on the attainment of project goals? As a theory about different institutions and contexts, new institutionalism can greatly benefit the analysis of how institutional factors affect international collaboration. Examples of such factors are cultural differences, interpretation of situations and access to information or knowledge about institutional constraints.

The aim of the partnership project between Vänersborg and Omaruru, which serves as the case to be studied in this thesis, is to create an NGO-network defined as a suitable and sustainable structure where ideas and knowledge as well as economic

transactions can travel across national borders. When creating such a structure a potential problem is the fact that the municipalities may have the same loosely defined overall goal but different understandings of what the problem is. Organizations may have different ways to go about reaching the same goal or they may have different goals altogether. Figure 1 below illustrates the case when different problem perceptions lead to a variety of problem solving methods which yield dissimilar outcomes. If the municipalities who will initiate the NGO-network project have different program theories, the cooperation runs a risk of facing difficulties, for example when it comes to program sustainability.

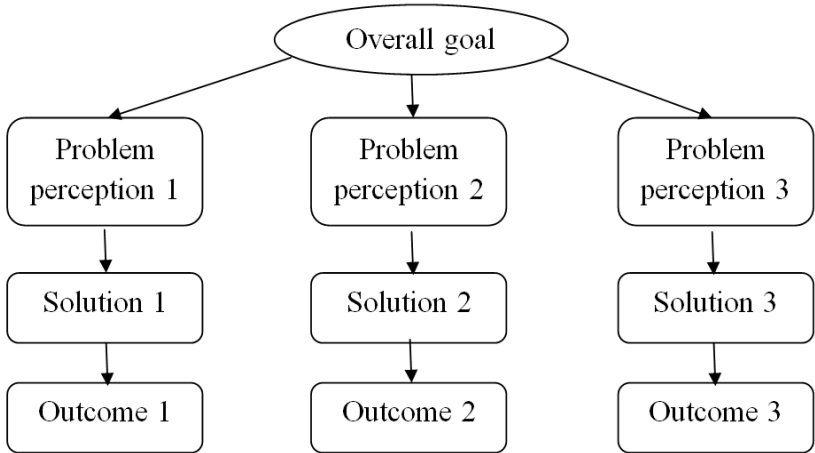


Figure 1.1 An illustration of different problem perceptions.¹

In order to illustrate and analyze the stakeholders’ potentially different visions of the project, we intend to use program theory as a method for presentation. It is important to note that program theory can only go so far as to *illustrate* and *clarify* stakeholders’ views on a program, while theories of new institutionalism offer explanations to *why* they think this way. Program theory is a detailed way to portrait the different strands of reasoning. It illustrates, usually in a graphic form, how an actor perceives a problem and how it should be solved.² Hence, the focus is on what is being evaluated, such as a policy or a project.³ Program theory was mentioned by Edward Suchman already at the end of the 1960s. It was further developed by Carol Weiss in the early 1970s and has grown in popularity ever since.⁴ Today it plays an

¹ Inspired by Rogers, Patricia and Weiss, Carol (2007) “Theory-Based Evaluation: Past, Present, and Future” in *New Directions for Evaluation*, no. 114, p. 69
² Lindgren, Lena (2012) *Terminologihandbok för utvärdering*. Lund: Studentlitteratur, p.69
³ Donaldson, Stewart I. and Lipsey, Mark W. (2006), “Roles for Theory in Contemporary Evaluation Practice: Developing Practical Knowledge” in *The SAGE Handbook of Evaluation*. SAGE Publications Ltd, p. 64
⁴ Weiss (2007), p. 68f

important role in needs assessment, program planning, evaluability assessment and evaluation of interventions both in the private and the public sector.⁵

There are many definitions of program theory. Bickman⁶ defines it as “*The construction of a plausible and sensible model of how a program is supposed to work*”. Although Bickman’s definition captures the essence of program theory, it fails to incorporate the importance of context. Donaldson’s definition of program theory as “*The process through which program components are assumed to affect outcomes and the conditions under which these processes are believed to operate*”⁷ is more appropriate for this study. Since context plays an important role in institutional theory (and hence probably affects international cooperation), the latter definition is used in this thesis. *Program* is a generic name for interventions which can and has been used for both emergent small projects and multiyear strategies.⁸ The word *theory* in this context does not mean a theory in the scientific sense of the word⁹. It is rather a model that explains how an actor who has created a program thinks that cause and effect are linked in it. Program theory can certainly be but does not have to be based on scientific theory.¹⁰

By applying program theory as a method of illustration it is possible to categorize each step on the way from resources to impacts and to illustrate the causal effects between subsequent stages. This can be summarized as a figure which, if well-developed, can be easily read and understood by program participants, stakeholders or anyone who needs to be aware of how a program is supposed to function. In this thesis, institutional elements will be added as explanatory factors to the program theories. The following figure exemplifies how institutional factors can affect each step of program planning and execution.

⁵ Donaldson and Lipsey (2006), p.63, 65

⁶ Bickman, Leonard (1987), “The functions of program theory” in *New Directions for Program Evaluation, Special Issue: Using Program Theory in Evaluation*, Vol. 1987, issue 33, p. 5f

⁷ Donaldson (2001)

⁸ Rogers, Patricia and Weiss, Carol (2007), p. 63; Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 30

⁹ Where events or phenomena are described, explained or predicted based on empirical evidence

¹⁰ Funnell, Sue C. and Rogers, Patricia J. (2011), *Purposeful Program Theory*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, p. 31; Lindgren (2012), p. 72

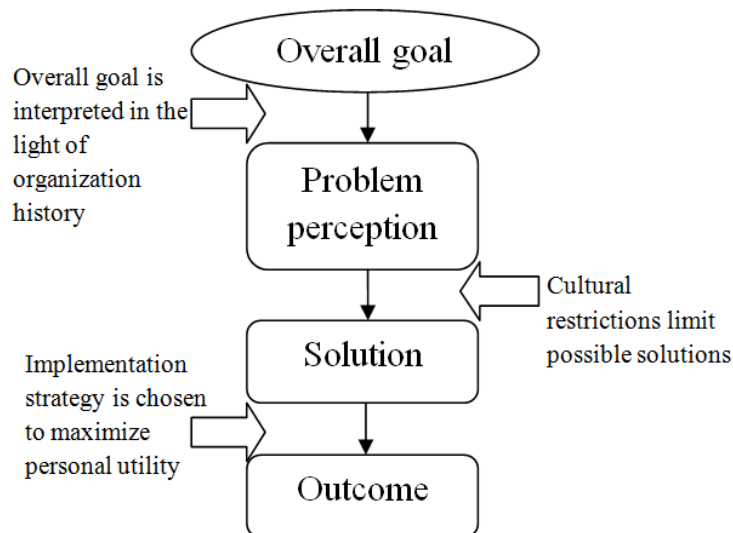


Figure 1.2. Example of how institutional factors can affect program theory

In this thesis two program theories will be outlined; one for each municipality. These will be so called preferred program theories¹¹, constituting of stakeholders' personal views of the project.¹² In addition to this, official documents have been studied in order to attain information about economical limitations and official statements about the project. By being aware of such aspects, we will also be able to tell if an actor has more knowledge about for example the official goals or available resources and thereby may have more power to affect the program.

1.2 Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to knowledge about how institutional factors affect international collaboration in the public sector. In addition, the purpose is to integrate the theory of new institutionalism with program theory in an empirical case study. By reconstructing program theories for two municipalities engaged in an international joint project, the differences and similarities in how the two parties view the project can be clarified. New institutionalism will then serve as an explanatory factor to the differences and similarities between the program theories.

The principal research questions are:

1. How do institutional factors affect the way public sector actors view joint international projects?

¹¹ See Chapter 3.1

¹² See p. 19

2. How do differences in these perceptions affect the attainment of project goals?
3. How can question 1 and 2 be studied through program theory?

Question number one will be answered in the method chapter and in the analysis (chapter 7).

The second question is answered in the analysis and the conclusion (chapter 8), while the answer to the last question is presented in the results (chapter 6).

1.3 Contributions of the study

On a general level, this study is intended to contribute to research on international cooperation between public organizations. More specifically it offers an explanation to the question of how international cooperation is affected by institutional factors such as differences in culture, history and organizational structures. The study can also serve as a starting point for future evaluations within this area.

The intent is to use program theory to contribute to a better understanding of how the Swedish/Namibian counterparts perceive the NGO-project, its goal(s) and the countries' cooperation overall as well as to shed light on critical aspects which ought to be considered when establishing the NGO-network. Our hope is that the enhanced understanding will result in a more coherent view of the project and its goal(s), and in the long run to a more sustainable cooperation between the municipalities.

1.4 Disposition

In the subsequent chapter 2, an introduction to new institutionalism as well as the three chosen approaches is given. This overview concludes with an analytical framework which serves as a starting point for the analysis. Program theory is explained in chapter 3, which also presents the concept of complicated and complex interventions. Chapter 4 is about the method of qualitative interviews as well as this study's validity and reliability. Background information about the studied NGO-project is given in chapter 5, followed by the results of the interviews which are presented as program theories. These are analyzed through institutional theories in chapter 6, which also contains our assessment of the explanatory power of institutionalism. Finally, chapter 7 contains conclusions and a summary of this study's findings.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Since this study not only aims at describing how something is, but also the reason for this being, it is a form of explanatory study. Explanatory studies can have different approaches with varying degrees of theoretical emphasis.¹³ The most suitable approach for us is to conduct a theory consuming study by seeking to explain a case with the help of existing theories, thereby allowing for a thorough investigation of the specific case combined with the usage of established theories.

Our theoretical framework will provide explanatory factors to the program theory when analyzing how institutional factors affect international cooperation. Put differently, program theory can only go so far as to *illustrate* and *clarify* stakeholders' views on a program, while new institutionalism offers explanations to *why* they think this way. However it is probable that institutional theories will not be able to explain all of our findings. Nor is this the intent of this study since it is of a theory consuming kind. Therefore we do not view it as problematic that other explanations may be needed to complement the institutional theories.

2.1 New institutionalism

New institutionalism is a school of thought developed during the 1960s and 1970s as a reaction to the behavioural¹⁴ perspectives dominating during that time. New institutionalism is not a single unitary theory, but contains different approaches. For example, Peters distinguishes between six different institutionalisms: normative, rational choice, historical, empirical, sociological and international institutionalism.¹⁵ Although it is possible to differentiate between these approaches, and even additional sub-disciplines, many of them have similar features. Because of **these** similarities, Hall and Taylor settle for a three-fold division between historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism and sociological

¹³ Esiasson, Peter, Gillijam, Mikael, Oscarsson, Henric and Wängnerud, Lena (2012), *Metodpraktikan: Konsten att studera samhälle, individ och marknad*. Nordstedts Juridik) p. 35f for more information on theory conducting, theory contesting and theory consuming studies.

¹⁴ Within political science, behaviouralism emphasises an objective, quantified approach to explaining and predicting political behavior. See for example Guy, James John (2000) *People, Politics and Government: A Canadian Perspective*. Pearson Education: Canada.

¹⁵ Peters, Guy (2005), *Institutional Theory in Political Science: 'the new institutionalism'*, 2nd edition. Continuum, p. 18

institutionalism.¹⁶ Since these approaches are specific enough to be separated from each other, but also wide enough to cover the main contents of new institutionalism, they have been chosen as the basis of this study's theoretical framework.

To understand the theories of new institutionalism, it is important to state what is meant by an institution. The definition differs somewhat between the approaches, but generally an institution is defined as some sort of structural feature of the society. This structure can be formal, such as legislature, public agencies or legal framework, as well as informal, such as network, shared norms or culture. An important criterion is that there has to be some stability over time for an institution to exist. In addition, an institution implies some sort of behavioural constraint (formal or informal) on its members. Finally there should be some sense of shared values among the members, although the importance of this criterion varies between the different approaches.¹⁷

Another crucial aspect of new institutionalism is how individual behaviour is affected by institutions. This can be explained either by the calculus or the cultural approach. In general, scholars of rational choice institutionalism adhere to the calculus approach and sociological institutionalists adhere to the cultural approach, while historical institutionalists posit themselves in between these. The calculus approach assumes that individuals behave strategically and rationally in order to attain their goals. When making a decision, individuals calculate how others are likely to act, as far as information about this is available. Since institutions embody some sort of rules that are consistent over time, they provide information about the present and future behaviour of its members. Therefore, institutions affect behaviour by changing the expectations an actor has about the probable actions of others. Not surprisingly, the cultural approach disagrees on all this. According to this view, behaviour is not fully strategic but affected by a person's worldview and context. Individuals are seen as satisfiers rather than utility maximizers and generally turn to established routines to attain their goals. Although those adhering to the cultural approach do not deny that humans behave rationally, they emphasize that behaviour depends on the interpretation of a situation rather than on instrumental calculation. Institutions bear with them rules, routines and symbols which serve as filters for interpretation, and so also affect the very identities, preferences and actions of the members.¹⁸

¹⁶ Hall, Peter A. and Taylor, Rosemary C.R. (1996), "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms", Discussion Paper 96/6, *Max-Planck-Institut für Gesellschaftsforschung*. Köln, p. 5

¹⁷ Peters (2005) p.18f

¹⁸ Hall & Taylor (1996), p.7f

2.1.1 Rational choice institutionalism

In line with the calculus approach, rational choice institutionalism assumes that individuals behave rationally and strategically. As a result, institutional rules are assumed to be chosen because of their functionality and effectiveness.¹⁹ How individual behaviour is affected by institutions is explained by the following line of reasoning. Institutions provide positive and negative enforcement mechanisms. In order to calculate how others will react to given situations, individuals depend on having knowledge about these mechanisms. Consequently, individuals accept institutional constraints because they know that the other members are subject to the same rules, which enables them to predict future actions.²⁰ Another key feature of rational choice institutionalism is the focus on collective dilemmas. Collective dilemmas take place when individuals trying to maximize their own preferences produce a collectively suboptimal outcome - that is when another outcome would make at least one of the actors better off without making any actors worse off. This is sometimes analysed through game theoretic models such as the 'prisoner's dilemma' and the 'tragedy of the commons'. When institutions fail to inform/guarantee actors about the behaviour of others, there is a risk that collective dilemmas will occur.²¹

2.1.2 Sociological institutionalism

Drawing on social constructivism²², there is no division between institutions and culture within sociological institutionalism: institutions are considered to be a product of formal or informal cultural practices. Institutions provide 3moral templates essential for the interpretation of the society, thereby affecting individual behaviour. It is argued that institutions influence behaviour not simply by stating what one should do but also by affecting what one can imagine oneself doing in a given context. In other words, institutions affect the very preferences (and thereby actions) of individuals. This is not to say that humans are irrational, but rather that what is considered as rational is itself socially constituted. Furthermore, individuals and organizations try to express their identity in socially appropriate ways. Due to this, institutional choices are not made because of their efficiency (as postulated

¹⁹ Peters (2005), p. 63

²⁰ Peters (2005), p. 66

²¹ Hall and Taylor (1996), p. 12

²² Social constructivism emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society. See e.g. Derry, S. J. (1999) "A Fish called peer learning: Searching for common themes" in O'Donnell, Angela and King, Alison (Eds.) *Cognitive Perspectives on Peer Learning*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: Mahwah

by rational choice institutionalists), but because they are valued within a broader cultural environment, thus enhancing the social legitimacy of the institution or its members. As a consequence some institutional practices are dysfunctional with regard to achieving the formal goals, referred to as “logic of social appropriateness” in contrast to “logic of instrumentality”.²³

2.1.3 Historical institutionalism

The concept of institutions is broadly defined within historical institutionalism, ranging from laws and routines to norms and social class. Accordingly, they use both the calculus and the cultural approach when discussing institutional effects on behaviour. An important feature within this strand of institutionalism is the emphasis on power asymmetries - it is argued that institutions tend to distribute power and access to decision-making processes unevenly across social groups. In other words, an organization can be described as the mobilization of bias.²⁴ Moreover, a key concept within this approach is “path dependency”. This refers to the fact that initial policy choices have an effect on subsequent policies far into the future. Hence, these policies will persist and a path is likely to be followed in the absence of other pressures.²⁵ In other words decisions are not only made because of their effectiveness, but also with consideration to how similar historical situations have been handled. The surrounding context often changes faster than institutional procedures, which sometimes leads to unintended consequences and inefficiencies. Lastly, historical institutionalists believe that other factors than institutions affect political outcomes, thus locating institutions in a chain with other forces, notably socioeconomic development and the diffusion of ideas. Here it is argued that institutional decisions tend to reinforce certain ideas in society while undermining others.²⁶

2.2 Critique against institutionalism

As with most theories of political science and public administration, the new institutionalism does not stand without criticism. Starting with the rational choice approach, critics blame it for having a too simplistic image of human motivation. Resting profoundly on assumptions of rational and calculating actors, the theory is at risk of overlooking important dimensions of

²³ Hall and Taylor (1996), p.15f

²⁴ Hall and Taylor (1996), p. 6ff

²⁵ Peters (2005), p.71f

²⁶ Hall and Taylor (1996), p. 10

human behaviour. This also affects how historical actions are analysed, where rational choice theorists assume that institutions were created by actors who correctly perceived the effects thereof. In doing so, the possibility that action may have been affected by more complex motives is ignored. As a consequence, rational choice institutionalism offers limited explanations for the occurrence of inefficiencies within institutions. Neither does the theory take power asymmetries into account when analyzing institutional creation.²⁷ Lastly, some critics blame rational choice institutionalism for its inability to be falsified since it is difficult to find situations where individuals can not be said to act rationally in some way.²⁸

Also the sociological institutionalism has been blamed for understating the importance of institutional power asymmetries. Even though these scholars analyse institutions through a cultural lens, they seem less interested in the fact that cultural environments can entail unequal power distribution. The total reluctance of separating culture and institutions also makes the definition of what constitutes an institution quite blurry. Moreover, critics argue that sociological institutionalism is too focused on macro-level processes, which leads to individual action being ignored. Hence, it is claimed that the effects of institutions almost are analysed as "action without agents".²⁹

As for historical institutionalism, this theory cannot be accused for overlooking the significance of power asymmetries. Instead it has been criticized for a lack of understanding of how institutional change comes about. Scholars of this approach seem so preoccupied with analysing institutional continuity that their theory of change is rather limited. As described earlier, the concept of "path dependency" assumes that an institutional path will be followed in the absence of other pressures (or "critical junctures"). The problem is to explain what precipitates these critical junctures – what kind of and how much pressure does it take for the path dependency to be broken? Although historical institutionalists generally point to the impact of economic crisis and military conflict, their answer to this question remains imprecise. So in the same way that the assumptions of rational action within the rational choice institutionalism cannot be falsified, the vague theory of historical path dependency is difficult to invalidate. Finally, even though the ability of historical institutionalists to use both the calculus and the cultural approach is often viewed as a great strength, this eclecticism comes with a price. Since an institution can be almost anything, and

²⁷ Hall and Taylor (1996), p. 18-20

²⁸ Peters (2005), p. 67

²⁹ Hall and Taylor (1996), p. 21

since individual action is affected by a long range of aspects, it is unclear exactly how institutions affect individual behaviour.³⁰

2.3 Analytical framework

In order to be able to merge institutional explanations with program theory, we have compiled a list of institutional statements. The selection of statement was based on two criteria; firstly that they are fundamental for each institutional approach and secondly that we regard them as possibly relevant explanations for conflicting perceptions about international cooperation.

Rational choice institutionalism

1. Logic of instrumentality: institutional rules are chosen because of their functionality and effectiveness.
2. Institutions are created by actors who correctly perceive the effects thereof.
3. Individuals calculate how others are likely to act as far as information about this is available. When institutions fail to inform/guarantee actors about the behaviour of others, there is a risk that collective dilemmas will occur.
4. Institutions provide positive and negative enforcement mechanisms and since members are subject to the same rules it is possible to predict future actions for individuals within the same institution.

Sociological institutionalism

1. Institutions provide moral templates and filters such as rules, routines and symbols essential for interpretation of the society, thereby affecting the behaviour, identities and preferences of the members.
2. Logic of social appropriateness: What is considered as rational is itself socially constituted. Individuals and organizations try to express their identity in socially appropriate ways → rules are chosen because they are valued within a broader cultural environment, thus enhancing the social legitimacy of the institution or its members.
3. Individual behaviour is affected by worldview and interpretation of a situation.
4. Individuals are satisfiers rather than maximizers and turn to established routines to attain their goals.

³⁰ Hall and Taylor (1996), p. 17ff

Historical institutionalism

1. Institutions tend to distribute power and access to decision-making processes unevenly across social groups.
2. Policies persist and a path is likely to be followed in the absence of other pressures. Choices are made with consideration to how similar historical situations have been handled. The surrounding context often changes faster than institutional procedures.
3. Other factors than institutions affect political outcomes, e.g. socioeconomic development and the diffusion of ideas.

3. PROGRAM THEORY

In this chapter a review of program theory will be given. As explained below, program theory is used as a method to structure and illustrate the facts that are discovered in the interviews with program stakeholders.³¹

3.1 What is program theory?

A simple program theory is usually comprised of at least three boxes: resources, activities and results in the form of outputs and outcomes.³² In this study a more elaborate program theory has been pursued in order to find out how the boxes are linked in causal chains and how strong the links are. For that reason the simple program theory has been complemented with a theory of change and a theory of action, as recommended by Funnell and Rogers. The one refers to the central mechanisms that bring about change; the other describes how a program is constructed to activate their theory of change.³³ Each theory comprises of three parts, shown in table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Components of theory of change and theory of action³⁴

Theory of change	Situation Analysis	Focusing and Scoping	Outcomes Chain
Theory of action	Success Criteria	Program and Non-program Factors	Resources, Activities and Outputs

A *situation analysis* is the first part of a theory of change and involves among other things the identification of the nature and extent of the problem, its causes and its consequences as well as opportunities and strengths.³⁵ In the studied NGO-project, the program is about an opportunity rather than a problem so the situation analysis will instead map to whom and how the project is an opportunity in addition to giving attention to barriers and strengths. *Focus* is about what the program does; it can be determined by looking at which strategies and policy tools the program is employing. *Scope* is comprised of desired outcomes within the program's reach although not in its direct focus. *Focusing and scoping* also includes stating what issues

³¹ For interviews see Chapter 4

³² Lindgren (2012), p.69

³³ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 31

³⁴ Adapted version of table in Funnell and Rogers (2011), p.150

³⁵ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p.150-154

and which actors lie at the boundaries of a program, in between focus and scope.³⁶ Those actors are referred to as boundary partners and are expected to contribute to outcomes which are beyond the direct focus of the program.³⁷ *Outcomes* are defined as observed changes, without any claims on causality between the program and the outcomes.³⁸ When constructing a program theory, an *outcomes chain* can however show the changes that the program is expected to cause, in some cases in combination with other factors. An outcomes chain shows stepwise how one outcome leads to the other and can also illustrate parallel chains, feedback loops or negative, unwanted outcomes chains.³⁹ An outcomes chain as such will not be constructed in this thesis but as far as it is possible, links will be made between certain outcomes. In addition to outcomes, we have chosen to include the term *impacts*, defined as “*That portion of an outcome change that can be attributed uniquely to a program, that is with the influence of other sources controlled or removed*”⁴⁰.

A theory of action contains firstly, *success criteria*, which state in detail the “*desired features of each of the outcomes in the outcomes chain*”⁴¹, and thus provide the basis for measuring to which degree an outcome has been achieved. Ideally, every success criteria consists of an attribute and a comparison. An attribute refers to a specific outcomes feature and a comparison states how this feature can be measured or defined in detail.⁴² Secondly, *program factors* relate to program features which affect the achievement of a program’s outcome and can be influenced by program funders, management or by staff.⁴³ *Non-program factors* are external factors that cannot directly be controlled by program staff, but which may have a significant impact on the program.⁴⁴ Lastly, *resources, activities* and *outputs* convey what the program does to produce the outcomes.⁴⁵ *Resources* are here all inputs in the form of financial, human or material resources that go into or are used in a program.⁴⁶ *Activities* are

³⁶ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 167

³⁷ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 175

³⁸ Lindgren (2012), p. 22

³⁹ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 177

⁴⁰ Rossi, Peter H., Lipsey, Mark W. and Freeman, Howard E. (2004), *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach*. SAGE: Thousand Oaks, p. 232

⁴¹ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 204

⁴² Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 204

⁴³ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 204, p. 217

⁴⁴ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 219

⁴⁵ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 230

⁴⁶ Lindgren (2012), p. 50

defined as efforts through which money, staff and other resources are utilized to create specific outputs.⁴⁷ *Outputs* are defined as the direct result from an activity.⁴⁸

In figure 3.1, the theories of change and action are integrated into the program theory applied to the current case. The program theory shows the resources that are needed for activities and how activities lead to outputs. Given program and non-program factors, the program will result in outcomes and impacts such as defined by the success criteria.

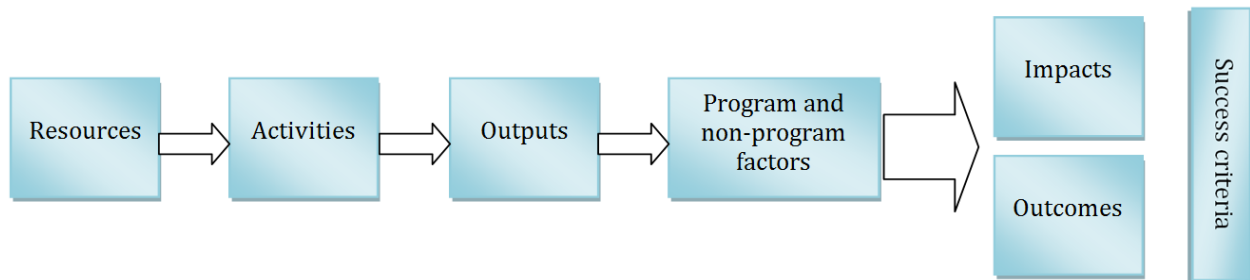


Figure 3.1 Example of program theory illustration

3.2 Constructing program theory

Which approach that should be used when constructing a program theory depends on what type of information is available, when in the projects' phase the program theory is to be constructed, and for what purpose. Often it is helpful to have some level of mixture of approaches since they favour different processes and sources of information.⁴⁹ There are a number of perspectives on program theory and ways to construct these.

Perspectives on program theory can be summarized to three categories: espoused theories, preferred theories and theories in action. When searching for the *espoused theory* of a program, the aim is to find out how the program is supposed to work according to official documentation.⁵⁰ The espoused theory may be important to elicit for the sake of accountability.⁵¹ *Preferred theories* relate to how stakeholders would like to see the program operate, considering goals, operational strategies, barriers to effective operation as well as beneficiaries of the program. In order to elicit a *theory in action* it is necessary that the project has passed the planning phase since this category focuses on what participants believe

⁴⁷ Lindgren (2012), p. 12

⁴⁸ Lindgren (2012), p. 65

⁴⁹ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 113

⁵⁰ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 127

⁵¹ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 111

actually happens or has happened in practice, including what decisions have been implemented and which strategies have proven to be effective.⁵²

Funnell and Rogers distinguish between three ways to construct a program theory: deductive, inductive and through articulating mental models.⁵³ When using the *deductive approach*, formal and informal documentation is at the centre of attention, for instance program guidelines, reports, performance information and previous evaluations. By studying literature and documents about the problem that the program addresses it becomes clear whether there is a documented theory about how the program is supposed to work.⁵⁴ *Inductive* development refers to program theory construction through observation of the program in action, for example through participant observation or by interviews with program staff and other relevant stakeholders. The main objective of the inductive approach is to find out how the program works in practice.⁵⁵ Finally, the method of *articulating stakeholder mental models* aims at understanding how actors believe a program to work or how they would like to see it work. Thus, the focus is on stakeholders' perception of what happens (or what should happen) in a program. This information is usually gathered through workshops and interviews with the actors. Among the key stakeholders whose mental models can be elicited are program staff, management, target groups and partners involved in the project.⁵⁶

As noted, the inductive approach requires that the program is up and running. Since the NGO-project has not yet reached this point the inductive approach has not been used. Instead, our main focus has been to articulate the stakeholders' mental models. This is the most suitable approach given the current phase of the project, and also because we want to illustrate the stakeholders' perceptions and visions as described above. Consequently the most important perspective on the program theory will be the actors' preferred theories. This approach and this perspective are also most suitable given the fact that institutional theories will be used to explain the program theories. The aim is to investigate how the stakeholders perceive the project and how they want it to work. The deductive approach has been used as a complement by reading official documents linked to the project. This contributes to an overall understanding of the project, which will be useful when analyzing the preferred program theories.

⁵² Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 127

⁵³ A similar classification is also made by Patton, Michael Quinn (2008), *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, 4th edition. SAGE: Thousand Oaks

⁵⁴ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 108-111

⁵⁵ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 111

⁵⁶ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 102f

In many cases, program theory is used not only to extract the stakeholders' vision about how a program is supposed to work, but also as a method to improve and clarify this vision. The process of constructing the program theory together with the involved stakeholders is seen as empowering since they gain a better understanding of the program, its goals and how these should be reached.⁵⁷ That being said, it should be stressed that this study does not aim at helping the participants to improve their program theories. Rather than acting as facilitators, our role is to re-construct how the participants view the project today.

It is finally important to note that the respondents may be reluctant to discuss some parts of the project, or may not be completely honest about it. There may be concerns that discussing sensitive topics will underpin divisions among the staff. The program may have hidden agendas, such as political reasons to favour the interests of certain groups. It is also possible that the staff recognizes that their project has limited potential to have an impact, and therefore either hesitates to discuss it or tries to exaggerate the potential of the project.⁵⁸ These problems are however most common when a program facilitator works together with the staff to draw out the program theory, which is not the case in this study. Furthermore we have had these issues in mind when creating the interview questions⁵⁹ and we will minimize the risks of being misguided by using many sources of information to cross-check data.

3.3 Simple, complicated and complex situations and interventions

It is crucial to take the nature of the situation and of the intervention into account when developing program theory. Situations and interventions can either be simple, complicated or complex. One way to decide on the nature of a situation is to analyse it through agreement on ends and certainty on means. In a simple situation there is both agreement on ends and certainty on means, but in complicated situations there is only one of these. In technically complicated situations there is agreement on ends but uncertainty on means (a specific goal is agreed upon, but there is uncertainty on how to get there), whereas in socially complicated situation it is agreed on what means to use but not towards what goal. In complex situation there is disagreement on means as well as on goals.⁶⁰ According to Funnell and Rogers, a simple intervention is characterized by standardized activities implemented by one organization. In complicated interventions there are a variety of components which are

⁵⁷ Donaldson and Lipsey (2006), p. 65

⁵⁸ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 135-138

⁵⁹ See Appendix 2

⁶⁰ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 71f

implemented by multiple organizations, albeit usually in predictable ways. Finally, complex interventions are carried out by multiple organizations with emergent and unpredictable roles. Such interventions are flexible and so intended short- and long-term goals are likely to change when new stakeholders become engaged, or new opportunities/threats emerge.⁶¹ Furthermore, Funnell and Rogers argue that complexity can be assessed by the governance of an intervention. Simplicity in this case is an intervention usually carried out by one organization with a homogeny perspective, i.e. where the staff agree on what should be done and how. Complicated governance is conducted by multiple stakeholders, but nevertheless with agreement on objectives and procedures. Lastly, complex governance is characterized by an emerging list of stakeholders, division of responsibilities and goals.⁶²

Finally, complexity can be analysed by the sufficiency of an intervention, referring to whether the intended impacts can be reached without assistance from other projects or certain contextual factors. In simple interventions this is the case, but in complicated (no distinction to complex) interventions other factors or projects are needed for success. Attainment of goals of a complex intervention can either be dependent on the contribution of a subsequent intervention or by working hand-in-hand with other interventions.⁶³

After presenting the results of the interviews we will assess the complexity of this study's situation and intervention. This assessment will then be used for guidance of how the municipalities' program theories should be presented.

⁶¹ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 72ff

⁶² Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 80-82

⁶³ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 85-88

4. METHOD

Program theory is not a theory in the traditional meaning of the word, but rather an approach to re-construct how a program works or is supposed to work. Therefore it is a very useful tool to illustrate how actors perceive a project or want a project to work. Apart from some literature and case-specific documents, the main source of information in this study is derived from semi-structured interviews with project participants in Omaruru and Vänersborg. The answers will be analyzed and used to reconstruct program theories for the municipalities.

4.1 Interviews

The main focus of the study is on the persons involved in the planning and initiation of the project, first and foremost the project groups in Omaruru and Vänersborg.⁶⁴ Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with 5 persons from Vänersborg and 6 persons from Omaruru. A semi-structured interview as source of information has the advantage that the respondents have a larger range of possible answers, including the possibility to reject the underlying assumptions of the interviewer's questions.⁶⁵ In contrast, the fact that standardized and comparable interview answers cannot be provided by semi-structured interviews can be seen as a drawback if the purpose of the study is to test a hypothesis. As the purpose of this study, however, is not to test a hypothesis but rather to *explore* the differences and similarities of the municipalities' program theories and unearth plausible institutional explanatory factors, a less stringent *explorative* and *descriptive* interview design has been chosen. In an *explorative* interview the interviewee is presented with a set of questions the answers to which are met with follow-up questions in order to explore new perspectives to the subject matter.⁶⁶ *Descriptive* interviews attempt to map central aspects of how the interviewees perceive their surroundings.⁶⁷ In order to draw the most versified possible picture of interviewee's mental models and retain spontaneous and vivid answers, the way the interview questions are presented and explained is adapted to the dynamic dimension of the interview situation, i.e. the interviewees' knowledge on the subject and role in the project. Moreover, in line with the

⁶⁴ See p. 26

⁶⁵ Kvale, Steinar and Brinkmann, Svend (2009), *Den kvalitative forskningsintervjun*, Studentlitteratur: Lund, p. 189

⁶⁶ Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), p. 120-122, p.128

⁶⁷ Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), p.120-122

purpose of an explorative study, we have posed follow-up questions in order to clarify the meaning of vague answers and to discover all possible aspects and explanatory factors.

Each interview took about 1.5 hour to conduct and the respondents were informed about this beforehand as an estimated required time. The Namibian respondents were interviewed face-to-face while the Swedish stakeholders were interviewed via Skype⁶⁸. Since we had no access to a web-camera, the Swedish respondents could not see us. According to Esaiasson et al., personal interviews give the interviewer the best control over the interview situation and enables consideration to body language etc. But on the other hand the interviewer runs a risk of affecting the answers by mimics or way of posing the questions. In addition, factors such as the interviewer's age, sex or ethnicity might affect the respondent's answers.⁶⁹ Both personal and telephone interviews are suitable for questions that might need explanations because of their complexity.⁷⁰ For us it was a great advantage to be able to elaborate some of the questions and adapt them to the respondents' knowledge about the project. We also preferred telephone and personal interviews over interviews in writing since language barriers otherwise probably would have had a greater impact on the interviews. Lastly, personal and telephone interviews were most suitable given the semi-structured method of the interviews.

The interviews have followed the interview guide presented in Appendix II. Since the respondents' answers have been used to re-construct program theories, we were guided by factors relevant for program theories when constructing the interview guide. In order to attain information for the situation analysis, we also wanted the respondent's perception on why and to whom the program is an opportunity, and what barriers there are to achieve this. But bearing in mind that the respondents are not familiar with the concept of program theory, the questions were adapted in how they were posed and in what order. Instead of grouping the questions by for which part of the program theory they are relevant they were grouped by topic, allowing for a more fluent conversation. When analyzing the interviews, the answers were relocated to suit the construction of program theory.

The interviews were recorded with a Dictaphone. For optimal time management, only relevant parts of the interviews were transcribed word for word. Since six of our interviews were conducted in Namibia, it was necessary to take cultural factors into account.⁷¹

⁶⁸ An Internet-based tool for audio and visual communication

⁶⁹ Esaiasson et al (2012), p. 235

⁷⁰ Esaiasson et al (2012), p. 236

⁷¹ Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), p. 160f

During the three weeks spent in Namibia before conducting the first interview, we became acquainted with the country's and Omaruru municipality's norms and social codes, which hopefully somewhat lowered the risk of cultural misunderstandings. The interviews in Omaruru were conducted in English, which is the official language in Namibia and therefore language problems were limited. In addition to cultural aspects, the interviewees especially in Omaruru belong to a social elite composed of leaders in the society with a position of power. According to Kvale and Brinkmann, there are certain risks associated with interviews with experts, such as asymmetric power relationships between the interviewer and the interviewee or the interviewees having prepared own discussion tracks in which they can convey their thoughts and ideas.⁷² In order to level out power asymmetries a background research was conducted on the interviewees' career and areas of expertise prior to the interview. Moreover, falling into irrelevant *conversation tracks* was avoided by keeping in mind the purpose of the study and by following the interview guide.

During the interviews, one person focused on the fluent communication with the interviewee while the other concentrated on observing the situation, taking notes and filling in with follow-up questions. Before switching on the Dictaphone the interview was commenced with a brief introduction about ourselves, the purpose of the study, how the interview will be conducted, how the results are going to be used and lastly the terms of confidentiality. The interview subject was deemed not to be so sensitive as to require complete anonymity for the interviewees. However no names are printed as the names in themselves are irrelevant for the study. The quotes in this study have been sent by email to the interviewee for comments and approval.

4.1.1 Selection of respondents

The selection of respondents was first and foremost based on the stakeholders most involved in the project who were assumed to be informed about the project and able to influence it. Accordingly the members of the project group or steering group in each municipality were interviewed. In Omaruru the steering group consists of the mayor, the deputy mayor and the CEO⁷³ Recently also the financial manager has been involved in the project by participating in meetings and will be more involved in the future. Apart from this core of involved staff, also two other respondents in Omaruru were chosen due to contextual reasons. The present

⁷² Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), p. 163

⁷³ Chief Executive Officer, correspondent to *kommundirektör*

mayor has only been in office since May 2012, and so has limited knowledge on the previous partnership projects with Vänersborg. Therefore the former mayor, who has been involved in most of the previous projects, was also interviewed. In addition to this, we interviewed a citizen who is very active in different NGOs in Omaruru. This respondent has also been the local responsible person for one of the previous projects and has a good overall insight in the municipal partnership. The interviews with these two persons focused mainly on previous projects and questions about contextual aspects in Omaruru. Because of this, the answers were important for understanding the context but not directly relevant for creating program theories about the NGO-project, and thereby the answers are not presented in this study.

On the Swedish side, interviews were conducted with all four members of the project group who visited Omaruru in October 2012, plus the international coordinator at Vänersborg municipality. The steering group in Vänersborg consists of the international coordinator and three local politicians, but because the politicians are not yet fully involved in the project they were not interviewed.

For confidential reasons the interviewees have been randomly distributed the codes O1, O2, O3 and O4 in Omaruru and V1, V2, V3, V4 and V5 in Vänersborg

4.2 Generalization

When it comes to theory consuming research such as our study, the role of the theory is to be applied to the case to determine whether it can give a sufficient explanation to the outcome. Therefore, generalizability in the quantitative meaning is not so much the goal as in-depth understanding of the case.⁷⁴ However, following Staffan Larsson's analysis⁷⁵, the study has some qualitative generalisation claims. There are many different conceptualizations of generalization, and Larsson distinguishes between five types of qualitative studies with their own lines of reasoning on the topic. The first two argue that generalization is not needed, but all other qualitative research has some generalization objectives. The line of reasoning most appropriate for this study is called *Generalization through context similarity*. As the name implies, the focus is on similarities between the researched context and other contexts. Thus, it might be possible to generalise this study's findings to how institutional factors affect other international cooperation projects. More similar contexts yield a higher degree of generalization possibilities, and so this line of reasoning is most appropriate in studies where a

⁷⁴ Esaiasson et al (2012), p. 89f

⁷⁵ Larsson, Staffan (2009), "A Pluralist View of Generalization in Qualitative research". *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, Vol. 32, issue 1, p. 25-38

lot of contextual factors are known. This study does take some contextual factors into consideration, but because we are not aware of some factors – especially in Namibia – we cannot fully generalize through context similarity. However, this study can be seen as a first step towards stating more general claims about international cooperation between public actors. The study will contribute by showing how some of the contextual and institutional factors in the municipalities affect the cooperation.

4.3 Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to whether the study focuses on issues relevant to the research question.⁷⁶ More simply put: Does the researcher study what he/she has intended to study?⁷⁷ To ensure high validity, the questions in the interview guide should therefore be relevant for addressing the research questions. Validity in a qualitative interview study is usually higher than in a quantitative interview study because questions can be explained so that there is smaller risk for misunderstandings. Since we are using semi-structured interviews we have the ability to adapt the questions to the interviewees' position and knowledge in the project, and to clarify the questions. This in combination with a carefully constructed interview guide ensures high validity for our study.

Reliability refers to the degree to which the same result would be achieved if the study was replicated by other researchers.⁷⁸ In order to strengthen the reliability of this thesis the interview questions have been made as detailed and unambiguous as possible. In order to overcome language barriers, the questions will be posed in an easily-understood manner.

Due to matters outside the control of the interviewer, reliability in a qualitative interview study is irrevocably lower than in a quantitative study. For example, two persons would transcribe the same recorded interview in different ways,⁷⁹ or one person might answer the same question differently depending on the surrounding situation or the interviewer's persona.

Whether the interviewees' answers are consistent and true is important for both the validity and the reliability of a study.⁸⁰ Control questions are therefore used throughout the interviews to see, for one, if the interviewee's statements are trustworthy, and for two, if we

⁷⁶ Ejlertsson, Göran and Axelsson, Jonas (2005), *Enkäten i praktiken: en handbok i enkätmetodik*, 2nd edition. Studentlitteratur, p. 102

⁷⁷ Esaiasson et al (2007), p. 64

⁷⁸ Esaiasson et al (2007), p. 70, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), p. 263

⁷⁹ Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), p. 200f

⁸⁰ Esaiasson et al (2007), p. 102, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), p. 263, 267

have interpreted the answers correctly.⁸¹ In addition, the fact that the same questions will be posed to several different actors in Omaruru and Vänersborg allows for cross-checking of the answers.

⁸¹ Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), p.188

5. RESULTS

This chapter commences with a brief introduction to the relationship between Omaruru and Vänernborg, followed by some important official statements about the NGO-project. After this, the results from the interviews are presented as program theories in order to illustrate how the stakeholders view the project. As explained in Chapter 3, to conduct a situation analysis as well as focusing and scoping are important when re-constructing program theories. Consequently, the actual illustrations of the municipalities' program theories are preceded by a situation analysis and focus and scope for each municipality.

5.1 The relationship between Omaruru and Vänernborg

The cities of Omaruru in Namibia and Vänernborg in Sweden are connected through historical ties ever since the middle of the 19th century. Around this time Charles John Andersson, an explorer from Vänernborg, came to the small society Omaruru. Axel Eriksson, also from Vänernborg, was not late to follow in Andersson's footsteps and moved to Omaruru where he started dealing with trade. Eriksson's business grew and laid the foundation to what would become the city of Omaruru. Eriksson was also an ornithologist and sent preserved bird skins back to Vänernborg, where they still today are displayed at the local museum as one of the world's finest collection of birds from southern Africa. The historical connection lives on, and the municipalities of Vänernborg and Omaruru have collaborated within the framework of partnership projects since 2001. Seven projects have been successfully completed, ranging from environmental conservation to HIV/AIDS-prevention and women empowerment. The overall goals have been to strengthen the local democracy and to reduce poverty in Omaruru.⁸²

The partnership project between Vänernborg and Omaruru is financed by funds from the Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD) which in turn is backed by SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency). ICLD manages development programs whose overall purpose is to reduce poverty by promoting local democracy. One of these programs is the municipal partnership program called *Kommunala Partnerskapsprogrammet* from which municipalities in Sweden can apply for financial support for partnership projects in low and middle-income countries, such as Namibia. The purpose of the partnership projects is to contribute to the development of democratic local

⁸² Pamflet Vänernborg Omaruru (2012). For a list of the previous projects, see Appendix 1.

authorities as Sweden has a long tradition of local self-government. ICLD is gradually phasing out the support to partnership projects with Namibia and March 2012 was the last opportunity to apply for funding. Two final projects have received funding: one regarding water and waste management (2012-2015) and one for the development of a citizen NGO-network (2012-2014).⁸³ The focus of this thesis is on the latter of these.



Figure 5.1 Delegation from Vänersborg, Mayor and Deputy of Omaruru municipality, the authors of this thesis and representatives from NGOs visiting the Multi Purpose Help Centre in Otjiwarongo

5.1.1 Official statements about the NGO-project

The official name of the project is “*Development of Citizen NGO Network*”, but it is commonly referred to as “*the NGO-project*”. As the partnership program between the cities now enters its final phase, the need for cooperation based on organizations rather than individuals is underlined in the official documentation.⁸⁴ Therefore, an umbrella organization is to be created under which Swedish NGOs will take over the role of Vänersborg municipality for the future work between the towns.⁸⁵ Vänersborg is now facing the question of how this organization/NGO-network should be formed. They strive to find a structure for

⁸³ Application for Municipal Partnership: Development of Citizen NGO network (2011)

⁸⁴ Application for Municipal Partnership: Development of Citizen NGO network (2011), p. 11

⁸⁵ Application for Municipal Partnership: Development of Citizen NGO network (2011), p. 4

the network that suits organizations from both Swedish and Namibian contexts. Furthermore, routines for economic transactions and monitoring of projects need to be created. This includes, according to the Omaruru memorandum of understanding, Omaruru municipality opening an account for transferring funds from Vänersborg to different projects in Omaruru. According to the memorandum, *“All transfers will first reach the municipality of Omaruru, but there should also be possibilities for donors to direct money to certain projects or activities”*. Omaruru should also start creating a simple application form for applying for funds from the account.⁸⁶ According to the official project application, the purpose of the project is to take advantage of existing contacts and experiences to enable a future collaboration on a citizen to citizen level. The project’s main objective is *“to build a sustainable structure for planning, executing and financing projects between NGOs in Vänersborg and Omaruru”*⁸⁷.

The project budget amounts to approximately 800 000 SEK to be used within a timeframe of two years. This money is earmarked in the project budget for specific activities such as trips between the cities, information events and the creation of a homepage. The NGO-project is managed by a steering group and a project group in each country. In Vänersborg the steering group consists of the international coordinator at the municipality and three local politicians. The project group includes two civil servants who act as the Swedish project leaders, the director of the museum in Vänersborg and one representative from the NGO *“Omarurugruppen”*. At present, mainly the project group and the international coordinator are involved in the project. There is supposed to be an equivalent organizational structure in Omaruru, but since the project group is yet to be formed there, the project is managed by the steering group. The people involved today are the mayor, the deputy mayor and the CEO. Also the financial manager has been involved. A contact person who can also take part of the decision making process when the financial structure is in place is to be chosen from the Omaruru municipality staff. According to a signed memorandum of understanding, this contact person should preferably be the Housing and Property Officer who was appointed in November 2012.⁸⁸ Attached to each municipal partnership project is a so called management committee who supervises the project. Moreover, they are supposed to provide quality assurance by assessing program plans and implementing follow-ups.

⁸⁶ Memorandum of Understanding (2012)

⁸⁷ Application for Municipal Partnership: Development of Citizen NGO network (2011)

⁸⁸ Memorandum of Understanding. Omaruru (2012)

According to ICLD's guidelines, the management committee should comprise representatives from both the political majority and the opposition.⁸⁹ When it comes to the NGO-project, the Swedish management committee has planned a trip to Omaruru during 2013 to follow up the progress made until then. This is referred to as the management project and has its own budget.

According to documentation, the project is an opportunity for both the cities of Omaruru and Vänersborg, for the poor and for organizations such as NGOs and SMEs. Stated examples of NGOs are churches, Erikshjälpen and Omarurugruppen. That NGOs should be in focus is stated in a letter from Vbg to Omaruru.⁹⁰ The focus on NGOs is however less obvious in the Omaruru memorandum of understanding signed in October 2012, where it is stated that *"In the new structure the municipal offices will only support and advocate the future work, and other organizations must play leading roles"*. The citation indicates a shift in focus which corresponds to how thoughts evolved during the Swedish project group's visit to Omaruru in October 2012. Furthermore, according to documents, the project will lead to skills development for staff in both municipalities and cultural exchange. For Vänersborg municipality, internationalization is a goal in itself. The international policy document of Vänersborg municipality states that international work shall create added value to the inhabitants and the business sector of Vänersborg municipality.⁹¹ The fact that the Vänersborg-Omaruru cooperation is not institutionalized in Omaruru is however considered as a barrier; the cooperation depends on the efforts of individuals.⁹² Still, there are strengths in the form of contacts and structures from previous cooperation, a financial department in Omaruru which can be developed and high level of commitment and interest among citizens and NGOs in Vänersborg and Omaruru.⁹³ Finally, according to the memorandum of understanding it might be possible to use the existing municipal buildings in Ozondje⁹⁴ for future projects and activities. This possibility is to be investigated by the municipality of Omaruru.

⁸⁹ ICLD Guidelines for Municipal Partnership (2011), p. 5

⁹⁰ Official email (2012-09-24) from Vänersborg municipality to Omaruru municipality regarding visit to Omaruru in October 2012

⁹¹ International policy Vänersborgs kommun (2011), p. 1

⁹² Application for Municipal Partnership: Development of Citizen NGO-Network (2011), p. 8

⁹³ Application for Municipal Partnership: Development of Citizen NGO network (2011), p. 6, 12

⁹⁴ A city district in Omaruru

5.2 Situation analyses

5.2.1 Vänersborg Situation Analysis

Table 5.1 Situation analysis, Vänersborg

To whom an opportunity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both Om & Vbg (areas) - NGOs in Vbg and Om (organizations) - Civil society/ individuals through NGOs
What type of participants/ NGOs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All organizations with an interest, preferably previously involved - Art, music, culture, sport, HIV/ AIDS-prevention, charity - churches, museums, schools, kindergartens, newspaper - Omarurgruppen, Vänersborg museum - Maybe SMEs
How an opportunity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural exchange, better understanding of other people's situations - Maintenance of cultural heritage - Counteract xenophobia in Sweden - NGOs exchange of experiences, work methods and solutions - Empowerment → Better NGOs in Om - Vbg learning how to cope with scarce resources, use skills in a different environment - Secondary opportunity: poverty alleviation and job creation in Om
Current barriers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor communication, no responsible person in Om - Cooperation not institutionalized - Lack of time - False perception of Vbg as "loan contractor" - Lack of financial resources for people and NGOs in Om - No safe place/stalls to conduct business - Lack of awareness amongst citizens and NGOs - Politicians in Vbg not involved - Risk of politicians not respecting that NGOs = voluntary work
Current strengths?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Historical ties, cultural heritage - Previous cooperation; good understanding of organizations and what is feasible - Willpower in Om municipality and existing knowledge in financial department

The project is seen as an opportunity for the areas of Omaruru and Vänersborg, for NGOs in Vänersborg and Omaruru and for the civil society and individuals through NGOs. The types of participants that are seen as suitable for the project are all organizations with an interest in the collaboration but preferably those that have been previously involved in the collaboration between the cities. Organizations involved in art, music, culture, sport, HIV/AIDS-prevention and charity are mentioned as potential participants as well as churches, museums, schools,

kindergartens, local newspapers. Lions, Rotary, Zonta and possibly Odd Fellow are examples of interesting organizations. Omarurugruppen and the Vänersborg museum will most probably be involved as their representatives were in Omaruru in October 2012 as a part of the Swedish project group. The opinions were mixed in the Swedish project group as to whether SMEs should be a target group. According to V5, they were not a target group initially but as it became evident during the project group's visit in Omaruru that there is a need for support to SMEs their significance and potential relevance for the project grew. Hence, V5 do not want to totally rule out the possible participation of SMEs, but with the reservation that they need to be organized in larger associations for this to be possible. V3 still regards SMEs as irrelevant, claiming that "*We cannot link NGOs in Vänersborg with 70 potential one-man businesses in Omaruru.*" V1 sees the inclusion of SMEs a future possibility, but emphasizes that the economic transactions system must be in place first, stating that when the application process is up and running it does not matter if the applicants belong to NGOs or SMEs. V4 is reluctant to include SMEs, but underlines that the organizational structure in itself is irrelevant since some SMEs, such as the local newspaper, may play an important role in Omaruru. When asked about the turn-up at the meeting in Ozondje, V4 answered: "*Most of the participants did not fit the NGO-project. I don't know what the intention was from the municipality of Omaruru, but for us one-man businesses were not the main target, although not completely ruled out*". V4 stressed that this was most evident during the follow-up meeting two days after the initial meeting.

The project is seen as an opportunity since it enables cultural exchange which is regarded as rewarding in itself. What is more, people in Vänersborg can get a better understanding of other people's situations, xenophobia can be counteracted in Sweden and the cultural heritage which dates back to the 19th century can be maintained. Furthermore, the project can make it possible for NGOs to exchange experiences, work methods and solutions, thus empowering the people involved and improving the NGOs work in Omaruru. People from Vänersborg can benefit by learning how to cope with scarce resources and by using skills in a different environment. All the interviewees stressed the importance of the project not becoming a traditional aid-program. As V4 put it, "*I do not regard it as a cooperation if you only send money*". When asked about the long-term goals of the project, the respondents mentioned aspects of poverty alleviation, job creation and redressed inequalities in Omaruru, but this was thought of as outcomes far into the future. As an example, when asked about the relevance of SMEs, V5 answered that "*To include SMEs gives the project a broader strength*

since the project ultimately is about poverty alleviation". Moreover, the respondents saw the NGO-project as a potential contributing factor rather than sufficient in itself to achieve these outcomes.

The interviewees in Vänersborg mentioned a number of barriers. V2 mentioned that during the previous cooperation, and yet today, there have been problems with the communication with Omaruru since there is no responsible person for the project. V2 and some of the other respondents also mentioned problems with institutionalizing the cooperation, and that the success of the previous projects has depended on individual efforts. V1 and V5 mentioned lack of time to commit to the project. V1 put it as the project "*...simply will have to fit in to everything else I do. I haven't scheduled any separate time for this. I work more than 40 hours a week so it's demanding.*" V3 also talked about lack of time, but rather in the sense of the two-year time-frame of the project: "*I think that if this is going to lead somewhere and live on after the municipalities' money runs out (...), it will take a lot of work since it's a very short period of time*". Many of the respondents also expressed aversion of the municipality of Vänersborg being seen as a traditional donator. According to V1, during the visit to Omaruru they "*...were perceived as loan contractors and as if we already had money, which was not the case.*" Among other mentioned barriers were lack of financial resources and places to conduct business in for NGOs and SMEs in Omaruru, and also lack of awareness about the project amongst citizens and NGOs. Especially respondent V3 emphasized the lack of commitment from the local politicians in Vänersborg municipality as problematic. V3 also saw it as problematic if the municipalities were to treat NGOs in the same way they treat their administration and give directions of plans to execute.

The respondents generally showed more agreement on the current strengths than on the barriers. Among the current strengths mentioned were the historical ties between Vänersborg and Omaruru and, related to this, maintenance of cultural heritage. The respondents also highlighted that the previous collaborations between the municipalities had rendered a good understanding of each other's organizations and surroundings. Finally, the respondents emphasized the amount of will-power in the municipality of Omaruru and the existing knowledge about economical transactions among the staff in their financial department.

5.2.2 Omaruru Situation Analysis

Table 5.2 Situation analysis, Omaruru

To whom an opportunity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both Om & Vbg (areas) - The unemployed/ poor but also the rich (individuals) - NGOs ~ SMEs (organizations)
What type of participants/ NGOs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGOs ~ SMEs - E.g. business people, churches, women-NGOs, education, music, sport, farmers - People that already have tried starting a business /are involved in NGO
How an opportunity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vbg learning how to cope with scarce resources, use skills in a different environment - Poverty alleviation and job creation in Om - Empowerment → Better businesses/NGOs in Om - More tourism - Cultural exchange: mutual learning - NGOs exchange of experiences, work methods, solutions - Improved relationship community/municipality - New responsibilities for the municipality
Current barriers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People short-sighted expectations, opportunistic - Lack of patriotism and bad relationship with municipality - Bad communication (Vbg-Om) - No platforms for community to reach the municipality - Lack of resources in Om municipality (money, staff, knowledge) - Bad basic services - People lack capacity: education, financial resources - No safe place to work - Segregation of wealth along ethnic lines - SWAPO national level
Current strengths?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Historical ties - Swedes open-minded/not racist - Cultural diversity - Knowledge in financial department

According to the group of interviewees in Omaruru, the project is an opportunity for both the cities of Omaruru and Vänernborg, especially for the unemployed and poor but also for wealthy individuals and to organizations. The types of organizations that are seen as potential participants of the project are NGOs and SMEs. The views on whether those two types of organizations are conceptually different range from seeing them as identical to seeing them as altogether separate but equally important for the project. Respondent O2 did not make any distinction at all, phrasing it as *“In Namibia we don’t call it NGO, we call it SME. SMEs are the same as NGOs.”* Respondent O1 had difficulties separating NGOs from SMEs. In his

opinion NGOs have both social and corporate components: *“As much as they want to address problems in the community, they also want to make more money to survive and sustain themselves.”* Respondent O4 saw SMEs as the project’s main target group. When comparing SMEs to NGOs, O4 stated that *“NGOs is not equal to small businesses, but they should work hand in hand with SMEs who have funds.”* Examples of possible project participants that have been given from the Namibian stakeholders are business people, churches, NGOs specialized in women’s issues or education, music or sports organizations, and farmers. People that already have tried starting a business or who have been involved in an NGO are viewed as the primary target group.

The project is seen as an opportunity in many ways. It gives an opportunity for Vänersborg to learn how to cope with scarce resources and how to use their skills in a different environment. Nonetheless, the project is even more seen as an opportunity for the municipality and town of Omaruru, where it is expected to entail poverty alleviation and job creation. People will become empowered when learning new skills, which in turn is expected to lead to better businesses and NGOs in Omaruru. It is somewhat unclear what kind of skills training is referred to. Respondent O1 underlined the importance of developing what O1 called Omaruru’s three strengths: agriculture, transport and tourism, while the other respondents emphasized skills in ICT, business and accounting, handicrafts, accommodation services etc. The project is considered to have the potential to boost tourism. Furthermore, the project is expected to provide opportunities for NGOs to mutual learning through cultural exchange and exchange of experiences, work methods and solutions. Finally the project can improve the relationship between the community and the municipality in Omaruru and add new responsibilities for the municipality.

A number of barriers that might interfere with the partnership project have been noted. Firstly, the respondents stated that people exhibit short-sighted expectations and opportunistic behaviour. An underlying problem is lack of patriotism, in other words lack of a sense of belonging and willingness to contribute to the common good, as well as a poor relationship with the municipality, partly due to a lack of platforms for the community to reach the municipality. At the same time, communication between Vänersborg and Omaruru is unsatisfactory. Furthermore, Omaruru municipality is lacking resources when it comes to funding, staff and knowledge. Basic services in Omaruru are inadequate. People lack capacity in education and financial resources and there are no safe places to work and conduct business. The fact that SWAPO is the leading party at the national level since the municipality

of Omaruru largely is run by non-SWAPO members and segregation in wealth along racial lines is a challenge. Especially respondent O4 saw political obstacles, and referred to SWAPO at the national level disapproving of the appointment of one of the staff in Omaruru municipality when stating “*Honestly, they don’t want XX in the office*”. O1 on the other hand did not raise this as a problem and stated that political questions will not affect the project since the municipality is autonomous. This perspective stands in sharp contrast to respondent O4 who claimed the municipality to be dependent, and even merely a part of, the government and the ministries.

On the other hand, project participants in Omaruru can see strengths as well. One is that the Swedes are open-minded and unprejudiced when it comes to cooperating with different people. Another is cultural diversity in itself. A third strength is the existing knowledge within the financial department in Omaruru.

5.2.3 Comparison of situation analyses

Both the municipalities saw the project as an opportunity in general for both Omaruru and Vänersborg. Both sides talked about the civil society and individuals benefiting through the involvement of organizations, although the Namibian respondents were more inclined than the Swedish respondents to refer to SMEs. Some of the Namibian respondents did in fact not make any distinction between NGOs and SMEs. When it comes to giving examples of organizations that should be involved, areas such as churches, schools and artists were mentioned by both sides. The Namibian stakeholders stressed the importance of involving people that had already tried starting businesses or had experience of volunteer-work, which was not mentioned by Vänersborg. Rather, they stated that Swedish NGOs that have been involved in the previous cooperation with Omaruru should be prioritized, and that the participants in Omaruru should be based on who is interested.

Regarding *how* the project is an opportunity, there were many similarities between the municipalities. Common examples were that Swedish participants would learn how to cope with scarce resources, while the Namibian organizations would benefit more directly by gaining resources and knowledge. Both sides also mentioned cultural exchange, although from slightly different perspectives: Omaruru emphasized the mutual learning connected to exchange, while Vänersborg highlighted the intrinsic value thereof. Moreover, poverty alleviation, more tourism and general development of the town of Omaruru were

mentioned by both municipalities, but Vänernsberg seemed to think of this as an opportunity further down the road.⁹⁵

There were some agreements on what constitutes the current barriers, such as lack of communication between the municipalities and lack of resources for the municipality and citizens in Omaruru. But the stakeholders also had many different perceptions on barriers. For example, only the Namibian stakeholders talked about the lack of patriotism amongst citizens in Omaruru and about the lack of basic services such as schools and hospitals in the area. The focus on the latter might point to that the Namibian stakeholders have a more holistic view on the NGO-project as a part of the municipality's overall goals such as improved health and living standard. Furthermore, only the Swedish respondents mentioned problems of institutionalizing the work with the NGO-project at the municipality of Omaruru and they put more emphasis on the lack of a responsible contact person in Omaruru. The Swedish interviewees also discussed the low level of awareness about the project amongst citizens and organizations in both cities, which was not considered as a problem by Omaruru. Finally, the Swedish respondents expressed worries about citizens in Omaruru having misinterpretations about them as financially very strong.

5.3 Focus and Scope

5.3.1 Vänernsberg Focus and Scope

Table 5.3 Focus and scope, Vänernsberg

What lies within the focus of the program?	What lies within the scope of the program?	Who are the boundary partners?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic transactions to NGOs - Cultural exchange - Knowledge transformation between NGOs - Information to participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depends on the NGOs involved - Strengthened NGOs and SMEs - Historical ties & cultural heritage maintained - Increased competence among staff in Vbg and Om - Increased awareness of partnership - Improved business environment in Om - General poverty alleviation/higher living standard/redressed inequalities in Om - Tourism from Vbg to Om - Increased interest in development issues - Counteract xenophobia in Vbg - Erect building/MPC - Contribute to Vbg best music municipality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizations for funding - Management project - Local businesses

⁹⁵ More about this in the program theories on p. 40ff

The Swedish respondents showed a high level of consistency regarding the focus of the project. All interviewees mentioned that the project should deal with economical transactions to NGOs in Omaruru, albeit V4 stressed that this would only be necessary if the NGOs in Vänersborg and Omaruru wanted so themselves. Moreover, all of the respondents mentioned some sort of cultural exchange, generally talking about art exhibitions and music projects. V1 specified this further by stating that the project might contribute to Vänersborg's strive to become the best music municipality 2013.⁹⁶ Finally, all interviewees saw knowledge transformation between NGOs and spreading of information about the project to the citizens in the cities as belonging to the focus of the project.

When it comes to the scope of the NGO-project, all Swedish respondents agreed on some points. First of all, they were reluctant to state the scope too specific and claimed that the orientation of the project will depend on what type of NGOs that become involved. They also agreed that one of the intended outcomes of the project is to strengthen the involved NGOs or SMEs. The respondents highlighted the importance of the countries' historical ties and saw the maintenance of the cultural heritage as within program scope. The respondents, especially V2 and V4, also mentioned that the project will lead to enhanced competence among the staff in both the municipalities. Finally, the project was seen as a way to increase the awareness about the partnership and connection between Vänersborg and Omaruru. V5 expressed discontent about the general awareness of the cooperation between the municipalities, stating that *"People are not informed. [...] If we are dissatisfied with the way information is spread about the cooperation in Vänersborg, then it's even less known in Omaruru!"* Further, V5 together with V1 mentioned improved business environment, possibly by the erection of stalls, as a desired outcome from the project. The same respondents expressed that poverty alleviation through job creation and redressed inequalities was within program scope. A slight increase of tourism from Vänersborg to Omaruru was mentioned by V1 and V3 as a possible result from the project. These interviewees also thought that the cooperation could lead to an increased interest in development issues among citizens in Vänersborg and possibly also counteract xenophobia in Vänersborg. Last but not least, the erection of a building similar to the Multi-purpose help centre in Otjiwarongo was discussed mainly by respondent V5 and V3. Respondent V3 was careful to note that this should be seen as a possible outcome on a very long term. All of the respondents who

⁹⁶ This is however part of the project's scope and not its focus.

mentioned the erection of a building seemed to think of this as a step far along the way rather than something that needs to be completed during the 2-year long project time.

To conclude, the Swedish stakeholders shared more or less the same perceptions, albeit of general character, about potential boundary partners to the NGO-project. The project will depend on some kind of external funding after the 2-year project time runs out, which was mentioned by all the respondents mentioned but generally without specifying this any further. The involved people in the management project⁹⁷ were mentioned as boundary partners by respondent V1 and V2. Respondent V1 also talked about potential support from local businesses, such as through sponsoring.

5.3.2 Omaruru Focus and Scope

Table 5.4 Focus and scope, Omaruru

What lies within the focus of the program?	What lies within the scope of the program?	Who are the boundary partners?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic transactions to NGOs/SMEs - Cultural exchange - Skills training at MPC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthened NGOs and SMEs - Empowerment of community and the poor - Redressed economic inequalities in Om - Better image→more tourism and investors - New responsibilities to Namibian municipalities - Improved welfare services in Om - Improved relationship community/municipality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizations for funding - Otjiwarongo - Ministries - Constituency council - (Schools, hospital, police)

In Omaruru’s view, the focus of the project should be on economic transactions to NGOs/SMEs, cultural exchange and skills training at the future multi-purpose help centre. Within the scope of the project lies first of all strengthened NGOs and SMEs and the empowerment of the community, especially the poor. To redress economic inequalities in Omaruru is also a part of project’s scope. Moreover, the scope encompasses creating a better image for Omaruru to attract tourism and investors. Lastly, new responsibilities to Namibian municipalities, improved welfare services in Omaruru and an improved relationship between the community and the municipality are also within scope of the project. On a whole, all the Namibian respondents had difficulties or were reluctant to separate the goals of the NGO-project from the municipality’s overall goals. For example, when asked about the purpose of the meeting in Ozondje, respondent O1 answered that both the NGO-project and other subjects were discussed, like economic development. *“You can’t speak about the NGO-*

⁹⁷ See p. 28

project without speaking about the social economic development.” Finally, The Omaruru interviewees identified the following as boundary partners: organizations for funding, Otjiwarongo municipality, different ministries as well as the constituency council⁹⁸ in Omaruru.

5.3.3 Comparison of Focus and Scope

Both sides expressed that economical transactions between organizations is within program focus. As mentioned earlier, the project should also focus on cultural exchange between the cities. During the interviews, the Swedish respondents generally put a lot of emphasis on knowledge transformation. Although the Namibian respondents did not explicitly mention knowledge transformation, they would probably not oppose to this as being within program focus since they stressed the importance of empowering organizations in Omaruru. The Namibian respondents also highlighted the need of a building similar to the Multi-purpose help centre in Otjiwarongo, and hence thought this should be within program focus.

Vänernborg also approved of this idea, but rather as a subsequent intervention. In other words they saw the erection of a building as within program scope.

Apart from both sides mentioning strengthened NGOs/SMEs as being within the program’s scope, they also discussed maintenance of the historical ties between the cities, although Vänernborg put more emphasis on preservation of the cultural heritage. As described earlier, both sides mentioned tourism, job creation and increased living standard in Omaruru as within program scope, but the Namibian respondents saw this as more relevant for the NGO-project than the Swedes did. The Swedish stakeholders talked a lot about the project as a way to increase the interest for development issues among citizens in Vänernborg, and also mentioned counteraction of xenophobia as within program scope, which Omaruru did not discuss. The Namibian respondents argued that improved welfare services in Omaruru could be within program scope. Correspondently, one of the Namibian interviewees (O3) mentioned schools, hospitals and the police as possible boundary partners. Omaruru also talked about the Constituency council as an important boundary partner, while Vänernborg instead spoke about the Management project. Both sides mentioned organizations for funding as boundary partners, but in different ways. Examples from the Swedish interviewees were funds and NGOs on the national (Swedish and Namibian) level, while the Namibian respondents

⁹⁸ The constituency council refers to the council of Omaruru constituency which is a part of the Erongo Region. The constituency council is also referred to as *”the regional office”*.

discussed external funding more loosely. They also put more faith in receiving funds from Namibian ministries. Lastly, Omaruru also saw the municipality of Otjiwarongo as a boundary partner since they will probably assist Omaruru with the NGO-project by sharing their knowledge and experiences of managing a Multi-purpose help centre. Vänersborg did not explicitly mention Otjiwarongo as a boundary partner, but would probably not oppose to this either since Otjiwarongo is discussed as a potential boundary partner in the signed memorandum of understanding.

5.4 Program theories

5.4.1 Vänersborg Program Theory

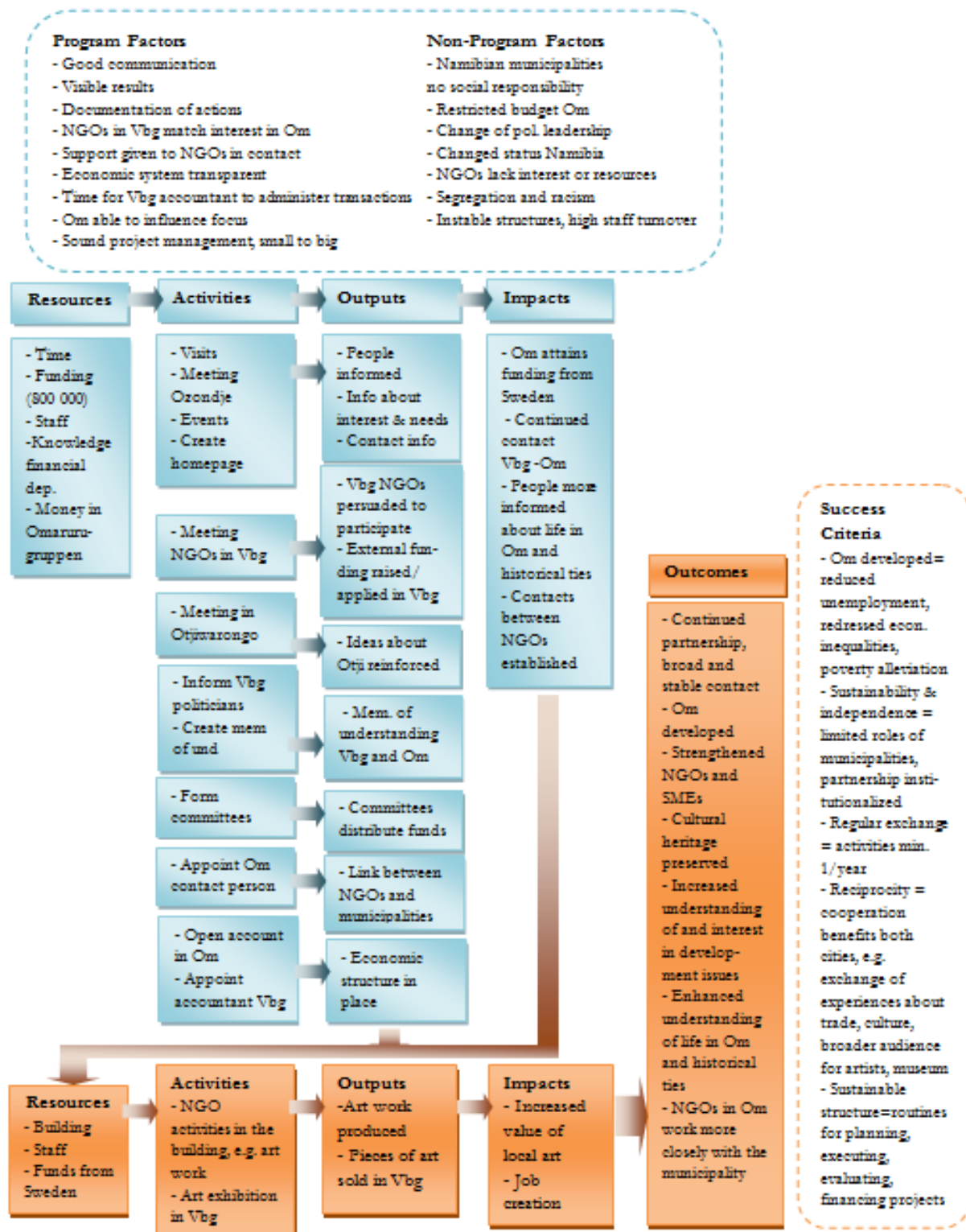


Figure 5.2 Vänersborg preferred program theory

Program factors

- *Good communication*: this is perceived as three-folded. For one, the concept of the project needs to be communicated with the NGOs and the citizens in order to ensure trust and limit misunderstandings and false expectations. V4 proposed that this could be done by letting Swedes with experience of Omaruru (and vice versa) inform Swedish NGOs about the situation in Omaruru, the organizations there and so on. This also relates to the program factor *Support given to NGOs*, where it was mentioned that NGOs who have established contact with an organization in the other city should be given support by project participants.

Secondly, the created committees should be in close contact with the municipalities and communicate their progress to them. Thirdly, the specific coordinator in Vänersborg and in Omaruru needs to have contact with each other and with the communities. In that way the coordinators can get in touch with NGOs or citizens who otherwise cannot be reached.

- *Time for Vbg accountant to administer transactions*: this person is not yet appointed but the project budget allows for a part-time accountant during the project time. It is probable that some accountant already working at the municipality of Vänersborg will be responsible for the economical transactions for the NGO-project, and hence it is only a question of that person having enough time to devote to these tasks.

- *Omaruru able to influence focus*: all of the respondents in some way underlined that Omaruru should be able to influence the focus and direction of the project. In the words of V5, “*The initiative to which projects and which NGOs that will participate should come from (the committee in) Omaruru*”.

- *Sound project management, small to big*: the respondents agreed that it was good to start with small and visible projects, or as V4 put it “*It’s better to succeed with a small, simple project than that failing totally with a big project.*” The fact that the Swedish respondents think of the NGO-project as a small step towards the ultimate goals of poverty alleviation and similar outcomes is reflected in how the program theory is presented; as the NGO-projects impacts leading to new resources and activities and so on.

Non-program factors

- *Namibian municipalities no social responsibility*: this was mainly considered as problematic by V4 and V5 who related this to the lack of a specific responsible person for the NGO-project and other international issues.

- *Change of political leadership*: V3 mentioned this, in either Vänersborg or Omaruru, as an important non-program factor. In V3’s opinion the current political leaders in Vänersborg are

not fully involved in the NGO-project. The other respondents focused more on future changes in the political leadership in Omaruru and how this might affect the cooperation. This was also related to the *instable structures and high staff turnover* at the municipality of Omaruru which the respondents agreed had time-delaying effects.

- *Changed status in Namibia*: this refers to an UN-decision to change the development status of the country from low-income to a middle-income country, which in turn affects foreign aid to Namibia and Omaruru.

- *NGOs lack interest or resources*: many NGOs in Vänern might not have the resources or interest to participate in the project. This was mentioned by several of the respondents, and generally they expected only a couple of NGOs in each city to cooperate with each other because of the many conditions that needs to be met (such as mutual interest, enough time and money, interest in international cooperation etc.)

- *Segregation and racism*: some of the respondents mentioned problems with segregation and racism in Omaruru. As V2 put it, *“Depending on whether you belong to the tribe of herero or damara you have different access to information. The municipal employees are treated differently depending on ethnicity. Therefore we need to spread information [about the project] as widely as possible.”* Some of the respondents also expressed worries about ethical segregation affecting who will have access to the NGO-project. When asked about how the composition of delegates coming to visit Vänern in the beginning of 2013, V2 said *“That the persons coming to visit us are representative for their NGOs is the most important thing. They should not be selected because they know the mayor [of Omaruru].”*

Activities and outputs

- *Meeting in Ozondje*: Ozondje lies in the outskirts of Omaruru, and during the Swedish project group's visit to Omaruru in October 2012 the municipality of Omaruru had invited about 70 citizens and the Swedish project group to a meeting in Ozondje to discuss the NGO-project. Because of the large turnout, there was also a follow-up meeting two days after the initial meeting. Although the Swedish respondents said that the meeting contributed to an enhanced awareness of the project among the citizens, they also expressed discontent about the turnout at the meeting. V3 expressed it as follows: *“The municipality of Omaruru told us about the meeting and that they had invited many different NGOs. But the meeting was not conducted in that way. [...] Most of the participants were not NGOs but rather SMEs or individuals with hopes of starting their own businesses. This is not manageable within the frame of the NGO-project. But the meeting still benefited us since we attained interesting contact information.”*

V3 still thinks that SMEs are irrelevant for the project, while it seems the attitude of V5 was changed after the meeting in Ozondje, stating that *“To include SMEs was not the initial objective of the project, but it arose there [in Ozondje].”*

- *Create homepage*: there is a specific amount of money in the budget to create a homepage where information about the NGO-project will be posted, although this has not happened yet.

- *Meeting NGOs in Vänersborg*: the Swedish project group has planned to conduct a meeting and discuss the NGO-project with interested organizations in Vänersborg. In the beginning of 2013, probably when the delegation from Omaruru visits Vänersborg in, there will be some sort of open event to which the citizens will be invited. Through these activities, the Swedish stakeholders hope to raise interest for the NGO-project among organizations as well as the community at large. When there are a number of organizations involved, they can start small fundraisers or apply for external funds which can later be donated to Omaruru.

- *Visit to Otjiwarongo*: this activity also took place during the Swedish project group’s stay in Namibia. Otjiwarongo is a city twice the size and located just over an hour north of Omaruru, where respondent V1 and V5 together with some of the staff from Omaruru municipality visited a Multi-purpose help centre. The centre is funded by NGOs in Holland and financially administered by a Dutch municipality and the municipality of Otjiwarongo. Also local businesses in Otjiwarongo support the centre. Thus, equipment or money is donated from Dutch NGOs via the municipality in Holland to the municipality of Otjiwarongo. Then a committee in Otjiwarongo distributes the donations to different projects, although there are some possibilities for the donators to direct their contributions to certain project areas. Two of the Swedish stakeholders had visited the centre during a previous trip to Namibia and were already then impressed by the work they saw there. Therefore they stated that their previous opinions about the centre were reinforced during the last visit to Otjiwarongo, and that they would like to see something similar created in Omaruru in the future. Also the other Swedish respondents were positive to the idea, but they underlined that the project budget only covers for trips between the countries, some events and allowances for the Swedish project group. In other words, there is currently no money to build a centre in Omaruru or employ staff to work there. Neither seems this to be the main objective for the Swedish stakeholders. V3 thought a centre could be interesting but that it felt like a too big goal to reach before within the two-year project time. V4 stated that *“We could benefit from a building [...], but this is not the basis [of the NGO-project].”*

- *Memorandum of understanding*: during the project group's visit in Omaruru, a memorandum of understanding regarding the NGO-project was written by representatives from both municipalities. This document lays out the basic idea of the project and states the next planned steps for the municipality of Omaruru. An equivalent document stating the intentions of the municipality of Vänernborg is about to be written, although it is necessary to first *involve the politicians in Vänernborg* in order for this to happen.

- *Form committees*: the respondents talked about forming a committee in each city. In Vänernborg this committee might be the small NGO Omarurugruppen which has been involved in some of the previous projects. Probably representatives from other local NGOs will also participate in the committee. The composition of the committee in Omaruru is less clear, but it will probably consist of representatives from involved NGOs/SMEs and someone from the staff at the municipality. The intent is that these committees will be in contact with each other, but the interviewees had different opinions about the roles of the committees and of the municipalities. One line of reasoning, argued most firmly by V5, was that the Swedish committee should be responsible for coordinating the donations from NGOs via the municipality of Vänernborg. The donations will arrive to a specific account at the municipality of Omaruru, and then the Namibian committee will decide which NGOs or which projects will receive them by some form of application procedure. Put differently, instead of direct collaborations between NGOs, the donations will be administered by the municipalities and distributed by the committees. V5 stated that the committee "*...knows what is needed and what will render legitimacy in Omaruru, and so they should decide where the money will go. The decisions should be based on the needs in Omaruru, not from what the NGOs in Vänernborg want to do. If we were to connect NGOs directly to each other, the municipalities will be overlooked and we will loose control over what happens in the project.*" According to V5, this would lead to lack of transparency and risks of corruption. The other respondents did not explicitly oppose to this approach, but saw direct contact between NGOs as a complementary way. Mainly V1 and V3 emphasized this as a good approach, referring to that Swedish NGOs wants visible results from their donations. In the opinion of V1 and V3, people and organizations will be more inclined to donate or otherwise participate in projects if they can see the contributions of their efforts. V4 did not state anything specific about the administration of the funds, but rather stressed that the focus on *economical* transactions should be minimized.

- *Appoint contact person in Omaruru*: apart from the committee, the respondents mentioned that there should be a responsible person for the NGO-project, preferably at the municipality of Omaruru or in close contact with them. The contact person would be in close contact with the local NGOs/SMEs in Omaruru and work as a link between the organizations and the municipality.

Impacts

As described above, organizations in Vänersborg are going to be informed about the NGO-project and, if interested and able, will start cooperating with similar organizations in Omaruru. When the account in each municipality is opened, donations can be transferred from Vänersborg to Omaruru. The cooperation between organizations will lead to maintenance of the contact between Omaruru and Vänersborg, which is intended to last even after the expiration of the project time. Another, but related, impact is that citizens in both municipalities will become more informed about the cooperation. The Swedish respondents highlighted that citizens in Vänersborg will be more aware of the historical ties between the cities and of the living conditions in Omaruru.

Subsequent program

After the expiration of the project time, the cooperation between organizations in Omaruru and Vänersborg is supposed to continue with only limited involvement from the municipalities. It is expected that by this time, some money have been raised by Swedish NGOs and possibly the municipality of Omaruru will also have applied for funding from Namibian ministries. Thereby it will be possible to erect a building in Omaruru, similar to the Multi-purpose help centre in Otjiwarongo, where participants can go to attain training, manufacture products or conduct other activities. From here on there are a range of possible outputs and impacts, such as artists from Omaruru having art exhibitions in Vänersborg, thereby raising the value of their local art. According to the respondents, such collaborations would also benefit the involved Swedish NGOs by widening their horizons and by the intrinsic value of cultural exchange.

Outcomes

In the long run, the NGO-project together with subsequent interventions is intended to lead to a number of outcomes. First and foremost, the partnership between Vänersborg and Omaruru will continue through the different connections between organizations. Through the different projects and collaborations, the NGOs and SMEs in Omaruru will be strengthened and

thereby able to extend their businesses. For example, an HIV-prevention group might be able to employ more staff or give some allowances to volunteers, and thus reach a broader audience and contribute to improved health in Omaruru. In other words, strengthened NGOs and SMEs will contribute to the overall development of and poverty alleviation in Omaruru. V2 also saw this as an opportunity to improve the relationship between the municipality of Omaruru and the local NGOs, since natural contact surfaces will be created for example through the formed committees. All of the respondents, especially V4, mentioned the preservation of cultural heritage. Many of the interviewees also talked about an increased understanding of life in other cultures, not least among young people and pupils through collaborations between school. V1 and V4 mentioned reduced xenophobia as a possible outcome.

Success criteria

The Swedish respondents to a certain extent elaborated the inherent meaning of each outcome. One of the interviewees specified regular exchange as activities between the cities at least once a year. When asked to specify how many organizations they would like to see cooperate, all respondents answered that between one to five pairs of collaborations would be a success. The concept of sustainable structures was defined as routines for planning, executing, evaluating and financing projects between organizations in the cities. The NGO-project should become independent, which refers to that the municipalities should play limited roles after the end of the project time. The project should also be sustainable through institutionalization at the municipality of Omaruru instead of being dependent on certain individuals there.

When talking about certain goals of the project, the Swedish respondents had difficulties in specifying them. This was most apparent with the outcome regarding development of Omaruru, which was linked to reduced unemployment, redressed inequalities and poverty alleviation, albeit without further measurement. Moreover, it should be underlined that even though the respondents did specify some of the outcomes, they seemed to do so in a spontaneous manner without carefully reflecting on the answer.

5.4.2 Omaruru Program Theory

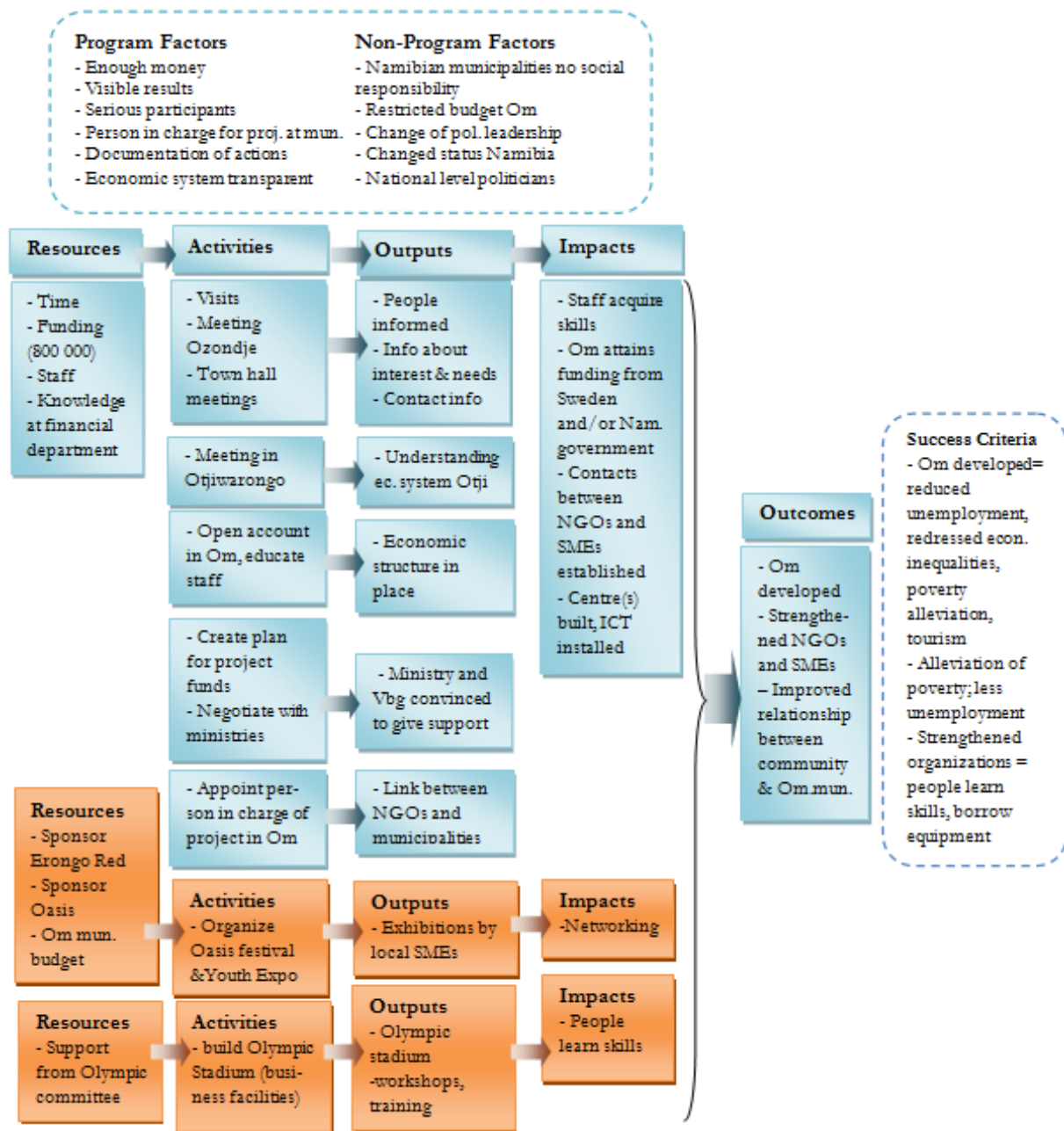


Figure 5.3 Omaruru preferred program theory

Program Factors

- *Visible results*: To prevent resistance against and ensure support for the project O2, O3 and O4 emphasize that there needs to be visible results. For example, a building should be in place soon. O2 stresses that visible results are needed both because the public expects it and as a proof of action for the Swedes. O3 argued: “*We cannot continue without a building, it will make the implementation possible.*”

- *Serious participants*: Unserious participants who give a bad impression of the project would create a negative feedback loop by deterring interest of those participants who would be serious. This might also deter possible donors from supporting the project.

- *Person in charge at municipality*: O2 and O3 stated that a municipality staff member should be given the responsibility for the project in Omaruru. O3 said this would improve communication between Vänersborg and Omaruru and O2 pointed out that for the continuity and progress of the project it would be good to have one person working on it continuously.

- *Documentation of actions and Economic system transparent*: Seen as important for transparency and accountability which lead to trust and prevent misuse of funds.

Non-Program Factors

- *Namibian municipalities no social responsibility*: Municipalities in Namibia have no responsibility for social issues who lie under the responsibility of different ministries. Municipalities mostly handle technical issues and Omaruru municipality is not an exception having only three departments: Planning and technical services, HR and Finance.⁹⁹

- *Restricted budget Om*: The municipality's budget is very restricted, especially when it comes to social interventions.

- *Change of political leadership*: If the political majority changes in Vänersborg or Omaruru change the interest in or ability to engage in international collaboration may be affected.

Resources

- *Time*: O2 stated that the building should be in place before 3 years when the project ends. This suggests that O2 has misunderstood the project's *time* frame which is 2 years.

- *Funding*: Of the four interviewees only O1 was aware of the project's budget of 800 000 SEK and how it can be used. O3 and O4 were not aware of the budget of the project and how it is earmarked for different purposes. When asked about the how the project's budget of 800 000 should be spent O3 responded by asking if it is in Euros. O4 had not at the time of the interview received any information about the project's budget and O2 does not mention the 800 000 during the interview. Due to the insufficient knowledge on the project's funding, there is a risk of misperceptions not only among the community members but also among politicians at Omaruru municipality about what is economically feasible within the project, and there have been indications in this direction during the interviews. O4 seemed to think

⁹⁹ *Omaruru Municipality webpage*, "About us: Omaruru Municipality", <http://www.omarurumun.org/page.php?pn=about>, retrieved 2012-12-06

that Vänersborg already has funds available. Unaware about the earmarked project budget, O4 asserted that Omaruru municipality should *create[a] plan for project funds*¹⁰⁰ and inform Vänersborg and the NGOs about the plan. O4 held the impression that *“if the Swedish people approve it [the plan] they will release the funds and then we should take it from there.”* O2 appeared to have understood the NGO-project as an opportunity for SMEs to get funding. When asked about O2’s role in the project O2 responded *“My role is to encourage young entrepreneurs to take the opportunity with both hands and start something of their own“*. Moreover, when talking about NGOs O2 mentioned that *“The NGO-project came at the right time. We have different companies – non-governmental.”*, making no distinction between SMEs and NGOs. Consequently, to the question what that the meeting in Ozondje was about, O2’s answer was *“Meeting the Swedish people who have come for NGO-projects, for networking, to give possible support if we have the same understanding. Then the people had decided to come and visit to see what the [Swedish] people had to offer.”* O3 asserts that *“Today to be realistic, we are depending on donors to buy in to the idea of the NGO-project”*. According to O3, donors are needed for financial assistance, for example to pay the rent for a specific building and transport for the coordinator since he needs to go and see the public, and for capacity building. O3 continues that it may be possible to ask a ministry for a donation in the form of a building they do not use but certain funds would still be needed for maintenance, renovation and allowances for volunteers. It is unclear how big a part of this funding O3 assumes could come from Vänersborg but O3 does not mention any other donors.

Activities and Outputs

- *Town hall meetings*: According to O1, town hall meetings are meetings between the municipality and the community held approximately once a month where community issues are discussed. O1 claimed that Vänersborg has been discussed there extensively for at least 5 months, though always together with other issues. Based on how vaguely O1 talked about the town hall meetings, the NGO-project has probably only been discussed briefly or in broad terms and most likely no actual decisions regarding the project were made there. During the 6 weeks we spent in Omaruru no town hall meeting were held, although two should have taken place, indicating that the meetings are not held that regularly.

- *Negotiate with ministries*: The ministries in Namibia have considerable influence in municipal matters. O1 stated that the municipality can apply for funds through governmental

¹⁰⁰ Belongs to activities in the program theory.

grants. O3 brought up that Omaruru could follow the example set by Otjiwarongo municipality, who has negotiated with the ministry of gender equality and child welfare so that children who cannot afford school fees can be accommodated freely. The constituency council¹⁰¹ is the link to the government, O3 argued, and they can negotiate with the government for the exemption from school fees. The constituency council works under the ministry of Regional and Local Government Housing and Rural Development. O4 brought up that it is that ministry who provides a budget every year for all the municipalities in Namibia, to be used for, for example, technical projects. Both O3 and O4 stressed that the constituency council/the ministry needs to be informed of what happens in Omaruru, since, according to O4, the money comes from this ministry and therefore they have to approve the budget every year and also any extraordinary expenses should also be approved by them, e.g. the trips to Sweden. O4 argued that before Omaruru municipality can apply to the ministry of regional councils and local government housing for funding the municipality would need to convince the ministry that social community development and international cooperation such as the NGO-network project is something worth investing in. This may however prove to be difficult, O4 added, since projects such as the NGO-project are not first priority for the government. Because of the municipality's constrained economic situation and debts dating back to before the independency, the main priority for the ministry is to *"help the municipality to grow and sustain itself e.g. by funds for servicing of the area, water network, electricity network, sewerage network, and then building houses in that area from which the Municipality can generate tax-incomes."* One respondent in Namibia asserted that political issues could be a great obstacle for receiving funds from the government and ministries. The respondent claimed that the government and the regional office disapprove of the recent appointment of the CEO because the CEO belongs to a certain ethnic group and because he does not belong to SWAPO and therefore the government and the regional office may be reluctant to give funding both for the NGO-project and even for the municipality itself: *"Even the whole budget of the municipality could be stopped due to [XX] being the one administering it. The trip to Sweden in August for example was not approved by the ministry even though all such trips should be approved, but they went anyway."*

- *Open account in Omaruru, educate staff:* As written in the Omaruru memorandum of understanding, the Namibian respondents mentioned that an account is to be opened in Omaruru through which funds from Sweden will be transferred to different projects. The

¹⁰¹ The former mayor of Omaruru, Mike Tjirare, is currently councillor of Omaruru constituency council.

account will be a part of the *economic system [in place]*. Staff needs to be educated on how to administer the funds.

- *Appoint person in charge of project in Om:* Although not brought up explicitly as an activity there was a general agreement on the need of a person who could be responsible for the project in Omaruru and who could function as *a link between NGOs and municipalities*. According to O2, a person was appointed as Housing and Property Officer in November 2012. The role of this person would be at least to administer donated items, such as sewing machines, which could be lent to people.

Impacts

- *Staff acquire skills:* Staff at Omaruru Municipality can acquire skills when working with the project and attending training through the management project.

- *Centre(s) built, ICT installed:* The interviewees in Omaruru put much emphasis on building a centre or in other ways acquiring a building and having ICT there to facilitate communication between community members in Omaruru and Vänersborg.

Outcomes

- *Strengthened NGOs and SMEs:* All respondents agreed on that SMEs and the business sector needs to be strengthened. O2 mentioned specific plans to erect stalls in Omaruru to be used by business people to sell their items and services.

- *Improved relationship between community and Omaruru municipality:* O4 mentioned that project could lead to the municipality working more closely with the community: *“The community needs to be more involved in the project than us. We should just administer the funds. They are our customers.”* O3 stated that the relationship between the council and the community will improve, that the roles will become clearer and that people will become more involved as a part of the council/municipality.

Concurrent Programs

The program theory for Omaruru illustrates how the interviewees in Omaruru viewed the project as a part of the municipality's activities alongside other municipal projects which all contributed to outcomes consistent with the municipality's overall goals. The two concurrent program theories underneath the projects program theory are examples of the municipality's other projects. The Oasis festival and Youth Expo was a one-week festival held in the end of October 2012 where youth enterprises showcased and sold their products and local artists

performed. There are also plans to build an Olympic stadium and in connection to it business facilities in Omaruru with support from among others the Olympic committee.

Success Criteria

The outcomes brought up by the respondents were on the whole ambitious but not defined in detail so as to enable the development of specific success criteria consisting of attributes and comparisons. For example, *Omaruru developed* was defined as reduced unemployment, redressed economic inequalities, poverty alleviation and more tourism. The development of Omaruru's three economic strengths was also mentioned by O1 in this context.

5.4.3 Comparison of Program Theories

Both the Namibian and the Swedish respondents mentioned transparency in the economic system and the ability to show visible results from the project as important program factors. Vänersborg stressed the importance of matched interest between participating organizations, which Omaruru did not discuss. The Swedish respondents underlined that Omaruru needs to be able to highly influence the focus of the project, while no equivalent statements were made by the Namibian counterpart. Vänersborg also talked about sound project management by starting with small steps, which was not mentioned by Omaruru. Instead, the Namibian interviewees thought finding serious and committed participants was important, especially in the beginning of the project.

There were many agreements regarding non-program factors. Both sides acknowledge the impact of Namibia's changed development status and the fact that Namibian municipalities have no social or welfare responsibilities. Also the municipality of Omaruru's restricted budget was brought up as a non-program factor, but only the Swedish stakeholders mentioned the high staff turnover in Omaruru municipality as a problematic non-program factor. The Namibian respondents instead regarded it as problematic that SWAPO is the biggest party at national level while many important positions within the municipality of Omaruru are held by non-SWAPO members. Similar to this line of reasoning, the Swedish stakeholders acknowledged that changed political majority in Omaruru might affect the NGO-project.

Moving on to resources, the two program theories display similar statements but it should be noted that the awareness of these resources varied a lot between the respondents. As noted earlier, the Swedish stakeholders had more knowledge of the existing resources than the Namibian respondents had.

When asked about activities, both Omaruru and Vänersborg mentioned trips between the countries, the meeting in Ozondje and the visit to Otjiwarongo as important. Moreover, they stated that an account for transactions is to be opened in each city. Both sides mentioned that Omaruru should appoint a contact person or a person responsible for the NGO-project, however it is yet unclear who this will be and that person's specific responsibilities. The Swedish interviewees underlined that a committee should be created in each city, but this was only brought up by one of the Namibian respondents (O4). The Namibian interviewees mentioned that they would need to negotiate with different ministries for funding, while this was not brought up to the same extent by the Swedish side.

The activities mentioned by both sides seemed to have similar intended outputs, such as citizens and organizations becoming more informed about the project and the municipalities becoming more aware of the local interests and needs. The stakeholders have somewhat diverging perceptions about the attainment of funding, which is reflected in the outputs. Here Omaruru mentioned convincing Vänersborg and Namibian ministries to release funds, while Vänersborg stated that external funding might be derived from organizations, or that small fundraisings may be conducted by local NGOs in Vänersborg. (Since outputs precedes impacts, this also leads to some differences in the financial statements below impacts.) Furthermore, the Swedish side brought up that NGOs in Vänersborg needs to be persuaded to participate in the project, while the Namibian respondents did not mention this and thus seem to take this interest more or less for granted.

When it comes to impacts, two main differences are visible. Firstly, Omaruru expected the raised money to lead to the erection of a centre where ICT can be installed, while this is seen as an outcome, preceded by more resources and activities, by Vänersborg. Secondly, Vänersborg explained of the NGO-project's impacts as citizens in Vänersborg becoming more informed about life in Omaruru and the historical ties between the cities. These aspects were not mentioned by the Namibian respondents. Consequently, some of the outcomes differ between the municipalities, such as the Swedish stakeholders placing more emphasis on the preservation of cultural heritage and increased interest in development issues in Vänersborg. This being said, there were also agreement on some outcomes, primarily strengthened NGOs/SMEs and poverty alleviation in Omaruru. Both sides also mentioned that the project might lead to improvement of the relationship between the municipality of Omaruru and the community there. But as is evident by looking at the program theories, Vänersborg and Omaruru display dissimilar ways of reaching the intended outcomes. As

indicated by the program theories above, it seems that Vänersborg view the NGO-project as sufficient to lead to the above stated impacts, which will later lead to new resources and activities. When these activities have lead to additional impacts, the overall outcomes of poverty alleviation etcetera can be reached. Omaruru on the other side regard the project as one intervention of many all leading to the same outcomes. They are also more ambitions regarding the impacts of the NGO-project. In other words, respondents in Omaruru have more confidence in the project achieving large changes by itself, compared to the Swedish respondents who ascribe the project a lower degree of sufficiency.

As described in Chapter 3, success criteria are supposed to specify the desired features of each outcome. Although in general the success criteria of both Vänersborg and Omaruru were characterized by a lack of attributes and comparisons.

6. ANALYSIS

In this analysis, the concept of institutions refers both to the municipalities of Vänersborg and Omaruru and to the future institution of the NGO-network. As noted earlier the three approaches define institutions in different ways, and so this analysis encompasses each of these perspectives on what constitutes an institution. The sentences in italic are the institutional statements derived from the different approaches presented in chapter 2. Each statement is then applied to the respondents' answers regarding the NGO-project to see whether they offer any explanations to this case. We have adapted the analysis to the specific contexts of Vänersborg and Omaruru. In other words, when discussing culture, rules and other institutional aspects, the focus is on the local situations rather than on the entire countries. The analysis is concluded with a summary of how institutional factors can explain the municipalities' program theories.

6.1 Rational choice institutionalism

1. *Logic of instrumentality: institutional rules are chosen because of their functionality and effectiveness.*

If we refer to institutional rules chosen for the NGO-project (rather than internal rules for the municipalities); this argument is partly applicable to the creation of the economical transaction system. Both the Namibian and the Swedish respondents mentioned the importance of a functional and reliable transaction system and that the financial staff at Omaruru municipality needs to be taught to manage it securely and correctly. On the other hand also other aspects than technical functionality were stressed, such as transparency. Indeed, it could be argued that transparency contributes to the functionality and effectiveness of the economic system, but it can also be seen as a way to enhance the legitimacy and social acceptance of the project. Thus rational choice institutionalism can only to some extent explain the rules chosen for the economic system. It is still too early to comment on whether other institutional rules for the NGO-project will be chosen because of their effectiveness, but it is deemed as unlikely that this will be sufficient as explanation.

2. *Institutions are created by actors who correctly perceived the effects thereof.*

If we refer to the creation of an institution as the creation of the NGO-network: the actors had difficulties in stating the impact of the project. There can be two reasons for this; either because the interviewees have hidden agendas or for some other reason want to keep the

intended effects secret to us, or because they have not fully calculated the effects of the project. If arguing in line with rational choice institutionalism, the answer would be the first explanation. Actors calculate the effects of institutional creation, and individuals are utility maximizing, so the reluctance to depict the project's impact could be due to individual or municipal-specific motives not suitable to display openly. It is impossible to determine with certainty, but we think this explanation is deemed as insufficient. For the Swedish side it seems more probable that the inability to determine impact is due to a desire to let both municipalities have a say on this. In other words they might want to keep the intended effects quite general and open in order to ensure joint influence. The explanation to the Namibians' inability to define impact may be two-folded; partly because of lack of information on the project, and partly because of a wish to incorporate the NGO-project with the municipality's overall goals. Consequently the project is seen as one intervention of many striving towards ultimate goals such as poverty alleviation.

Finally, a general explanation to the difficulties of determining impact could also be that the project is still in its planning phase. Although this does not totally prevent predictions about impact, it makes predictions more difficult.

3. *Individuals calculate how others are likely to act as far as information about this is available. When institutions fail to inform/guarantee actors about the behaviour of others, there is a risk that collective dilemmas will occur.*

According to the calculus approach, the ability of the Namibian stakeholders to calculate how the Swedish stakeholders will act may be restricted due to lack of information. Since they seem to be unaware of the (original) restrictions of the project, and since the Swedish delegation has failed to explain their intentions, the Namibian stakeholders are given a lot of room for interpretation about some aspects of the project. Therefore they will try to steer the project in favour of themselves, e.g. by emphasizing the importance of cohesiveness between project-goals and the municipality's other goals. Another example is the situation analysis, where Vänernsberg and Omaruru have quite similar views on the strengths of the project but when it comes to barriers and negative side-effects opinions differ both within and between the municipalities. In Omaruru, the reluctance to talk about negative side-effects and barriers may stem from a wish to ensure maximum support for the project from Vänernsberg. Although not completely agreeing on the rational choice assumption on individuals as self-interested, this explanation is deemed as somewhat applicable to the NGO-project. Both municipalities want their counterpart to gain from the cooperation, but when left uninformed about the

wishes of Vänersborg, the staff in Omaruru will try to maximize the attainment of their own goals. In other words, analysed as a collective dilemma, it might be possible to attain a higher overall satisfaction without any of the parties being worse off (provided that more consideration to the goals of Vänersborg does not conflict with the goals of Omaruru).

4. *Institutions provide positive and negative enforcement mechanisms and since members are subject to the same rules it is possible to predict future actions for individuals within the same institution.*

It is easier for an individual to predict actions of actors that operate within the same institution since they are bound by the same rules - whether formal or informal. This should limit the risk of collective dilemmas within each municipality, and hence could be an explanation to the higher level of coherence within the municipalities compared to between the municipalities. But even though all of the Namibian respondents and two of the Swedish respondents operate within the same institution there are some differences in goal perceptions within them. Put differently, the fact that individuals operate within the same institution and are aware of institutional constraints does not automatically enable behavioural calculation. This being said, it should be pointed out that the project group in Vänersborg is quite fragmented since it consists of representatives for NGOs as well as for the municipality, of which one person no longer is employed by the Vänersborg municipality. This might affect the cohesion of the group and might also lower the degree of institutional impact from the municipality.

6.2 Sociological institutionalism

1. *Institutions provide moral templates and filters such as rules, routines and symbols essential for interpretation of the society, thereby affecting the behaviour, identities and preferences of the members.*

While not claiming to be experts on Namibian culture, we feel safe to say that symbols and official titles seem to play a more important role in Omaruru than in Vänersborg. This is for example reflected in how politicians and public officials behave and dress during public events. The use of official titles is very important, and the organizational structure of the municipalities in Namibia seems to be more hierarchical than in Sweden. Overall, there is a more visible distinction between the municipality staff and the rest of the community in Omaruru compared to in Vänersborg. It is likely that this affects the relationship between the municipality and the citizens, and hence might also affect the NGO-project. For example, the lack of platforms for citizens of Omaruru to express their needs to the municipality may be

explained by the clear distinction between the civil society and the municipality. On the other hand, many of the Namibian respondents expressed a wish to engage the society in the project in order to improve the municipal-civil relationship. It would be interesting to further investigate this relationship and the reasons for the division. Are the residents encouraged to give their opinions to the municipality? Would they automatically do so if the right platforms were provided? Why have the municipality not created these platforms - is it due to economical restrictions or other factors, such as culture or historical ways of managing Namibian municipalities?

Furthermore, the concept of institutions as a filter for interpretation may explain the divergent opinions on the project's target group. More elaborately, different definitions of what constitutes an NGO may be explained by differences in the general Swedish/Namibian perception thereof. It is plausible that the difference between a company and an NGO is bigger in Sweden than it is in Namibia. This in turn affects the difficulty for/reluctance of the Namibian respondents to differentiate between these two target groups.

The diverging opinions regarding barriers and negative side-effects to the project may also be caused by a reluctance to talk about negative issues or give critique because it is not considered appropriate in social situations. Thereby, it has not been possible to develop a common view on barriers. What is considered as socially appropriate is in turn defined by cultural institutions.

2. *Logic of social appropriateness: What is considered as rational is itself socially constituted. Individuals and organizations try to express their identity in socially appropriate ways → rules are chosen because they are valued within a broader cultural environment, thus enhancing the social legitimacy of the institution or its members.*

The Swedish respondents expressed confusion and some disappointment about the fact that mainly one-man-businesses, and not NGOs, were invited at the meeting in Ozondje. Apart from the argument that it might be difficult to separate NGOs from SMEs in Namibia, there can be another explanation to the turn-up at the meeting. The municipality of Omaruru might have recognized that there was a high demand to participate in the project/meeting amongst unemployed citizens who want to start their own business. Since the unemployment rate in

Omaruru is strikingly high¹⁰², and since it is popular to talk about empowerment of unemployed (to reduce youth unemployment, the government encourages efforts to teach business skills to the youth¹⁰³), it probably gave high social legitimacy to invite unemployed/SMEs to the meeting. The same argument is applicable to the Swedish respondents; the preference of NGOs over businesses may partly be explained by the amount of legitimacy it gives to the municipality of Vänersborg.

3. *Individual behaviour is affected by worldview and interpretation of a situation.*

Even within the municipalities there are competing perceptions of the project's target group. This is especially visible in Vänersborg where the stakeholders either highlight NGOs or SMEs, or some mixture of both. As noted earlier, it appears that strategic calculation is not the only explanation to these perceptions. It is more likely that the individuals' preferences are affected by personal worldview and interpretation. Relevant factors could for example be ideological stance and opinion on NGOs and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, when comparing the municipalities' situation analyses it becomes evident that there are competing interpretations of the current situation. For example, in Omaruru's situation analysis lack of patriotism and poor welfare services are seen as obstacles, while Vänersborg mentions problems to institutionalize the cooperation. There seems also to be different interpretations of the concept "cultural exchange". The Namibian stakeholders point to how exchange can empower the participants and by that contribute to poverty alleviation, while the Swedish respondents stress the intrinsic value of cultural exchange. It is reasonable to believe that different interpretations of the current situation lead to different goal perceptions and thereby different behaviour.

4. *Individuals are satisfiers rather than maximizers and turn to established routines to attain their goals.*

We have not observed any "satisfying" tendencies amongst the stakeholders. Rather, despite lack of resources and time, both sides set quite high goals for the project and seem prepared to work hard to achieve these. Regarding the tendency to turn to established routines to attain goals, it is difficult for us to assess this; partly because of the early stage of the project and partly because we do not have enough knowledge about how the previous projects or the municipalities' international cooperation overall have been handled.

¹⁰² The official unemployment rate in the Erongo Region is 34 % according to *National Planning Commission "Erongo Region – Census Indicators 2001"*, http://www.npc.gov.na/census/erongo_indicators.htm, retrieved 2012-12-20. The unemployment rate is most likely even higher in the city of Omaruru.

¹⁰³ Stated by O3 during interview

6.3 Historical institutionalism

1. *Institutions tend to distribute power and access to decision-making processes unevenly across social groups.*

Some of the Swedish respondents feared that cementation of power asymmetries might be an unwanted consequence if the municipality of Omaruru is allowed to hand-pick participants for the committee and for the trips to Vänernborg. The argument was that power distribution and access to information in the municipality is subject to segregation along tribal lines, and if the individuals in office themselves are allowed to select the participants some groups will inevitably be locked out. Another statement relevant for power asymmetries was that some of the Namibian respondents indicated that certain citizens should be prioritized as participants. The interviewees stated that the project should prioritize people that have already tried to start their own business or are involved in an NGO since these individuals most likely will become serious and committed participants and thereby strengthen the project. Although an understandable argument, this approach might disadvantage some groups in society. For instance it is possible that the poorest or most vulnerable individuals have not been able to or have not had enough energy to engage in own businesses or organisations. Moreover, it ought to be difficult for the staff at the municipality to keep track of everyone who has been engaged in such activities. Hence individuals who already have good contact with the municipality will have an advantage. This being said, it is too early to say for sure whether the NGO-project itself will affect the distribution of power in Omaruru.

2. *Path dependency: Policies persist and a path is likely to be followed in the absence of other pressures. Choices are made with consideration to how similar historical situations have been handled. The surrounding context often changes faster than institutional procedures.*

During the interviews several respondents emphasized the importance of the NGO-project's reciprocity. Both sides, but especially Vänernborg, expressed a strong desire to avoid what they called "*traditional aid-programs*" and traditional roles of donator and receiver. Although the emphasis on this varied among the respondents, the general opinion was that merely economical transactions from Vänernborg to Omaruru is not the project's goal. Correspondently, Omaruru agreed that both sides should be able to gain from the cooperation. Nevertheless, some answers pointed towards maintenance of traditional roles within development policy. This was most obvious among the Namibian respondents who all to

some extent underlined that they needed money from Vänernsberg and other donors for different activities. The Swedish interviewees had ideas both on how Vänernsberg and Omaruru could benefit from the cooperation, but generally they put more emphasis on how they could (financially or otherwise) support Omaruru. This could be referred to as an example of contextual change preceding institutional adaptation; even if both sides have agreed to not fall into roles of donator and receiver (which also can be seen as an overall contextual change, see for example the Paris declaration¹⁰⁴) the individuals within the institutions have not yet fully adapted to this change. Instead they partially fall back to how international cooperation has been handled historically. But bearing this in mind, it is important not to jump to conclusions about the management of the project. While the roles may seem somewhat “traditional”, this is also quite logical when considering the economical differences between the municipalities. This is probably as much an explanation as path dependency to the situation.

On a general level, it seems likely that historical aspects affect the municipalities. Since big changes are slow and cumbersome to bring about, it may become problematic if the success of the NGO-network relies on any extensive transitions in their practices, at least on a shorter sight. Examples of this are goals or processes that require comprehensive changes in the way either municipality is organized or their modus operandi.

3. Other factors than institutions affect political outcomes e.g. socioeconomic development and the diffusion of ideas.

This line of reasoning might contribute to understanding future processes in/related to the NGO-network. For instance, what will affect whether Omaruru succeeds in attaining funding for the project from certain ministries? Or whether the Namibian government will agree to give the municipality new areas of responsibilities? Contributing factors could be the socioeconomic development of the country as well as how the idea of the NGO-project is presented to the boundary partners. The theory of diffusion of ideas is also applicable to the future collaborations between the NGOs/SMEs, where it is likely that the effects and sustainability of the cooperation will be affected by how the exchanges of ideas take place. It is also possible that new ideas about international cooperation are spread and will affect the NGO-project. (See article “The diffusion of ideas in development theory and policy”).

¹⁰⁴See for example *Forum Syd*, “Parisdeklarationen: Nytt ramverk för biståndet”, <http://www.forumsyd.org/upload/tmp/glufs/Bistandspolitik/Parisdeklarationen.pdf>, retrieved 2012-12-01

6.4 Summary: Institutional explanations to the NGO-project

This part of the analysis is derived from the above review of institutional statements. In order to clarify how institutional factors affect the NGO-project, actions and opinions relevant for the project (in italic) are put in relation to institutional explanations.

- *The creation of the economical transaction system*

Rational choice explanation: Rules are chosen due to their functionality and effectiveness.

Sociological explanation: Institutions and individuals strive to express their identities in socially acceptable ways.

Our comment: The rational choice explanation is coherent with how the stakeholders would like to manage the economical transaction system in terms of efficiency and functionality.

The sociological statement contributes to the explanation by taking consideration to the fact that the respondents regard transparency in the economic system is equally important.

Transparency is necessary in order to ensure legitimacy and social acceptance of the project.

- *Omaruru municipality's strive to incorporate the project with their other goals*

Rational choice explanation: Individuals act strategically and by calculation to maximize their own utility.

Our comment: When left uninformed about the preferences of Vänernsberg, the staff in Omaruru will try to maximize the attainment of their own goals. This being said, we believe that the Namibian stakeholders would have taken greater consideration to the wishes of their Swedish counterpart if provided with more information.

- *Lack of platforms for citizens in Omaruru to express their needs to the municipality*

Sociological explanation: Institutions provide moral templates and filters such as rules, routines and symbols essential for interpretation of the society, thereby affecting the behaviour, identities and preferences of the members.

Our comment: The division between the municipality and the community may be related to hierarchical organization structures within the municipality, which affects the way the municipal employees' relationship to the citizens. Nevertheless, we would like to underline that this is only one potential explanation as the lack of platforms might also be due to restrictions in time, knowledge or money at the municipality.

- *The respondents having different definitions of NGOs*

Sociological explanation: Institutions serve as a filter for interpretation.

Our comment: There are different definitions of NGOs because the distinction between a company and an NGO probably is clearer in Sweden than it is in Namibia. This affects the difficulty for the Namibian respondents to differentiate between these two target groups.

- *The respondents' reluctance to talk about barriers and negative side-effects*

Rational choice explanation: Individuals calculate how others are likely to act as far as information about this is available.

Sociological explanation: Institutions provide moral templates and filters such as rules, thereby affecting the behaviour of the members.

Our comment: According to the rational choice explanation Omaruru is reluctant to talk about barriers and negative side-effects opinions between the municipalities because talking about these may compromise maximum support for the project from Vänersborg.

Contrastingly, according to the sociological explanation there is a reluctance to talk about negative issues or give critique because it is not considered appropriate in social situations. What is considered as socially appropriate is in turn defined by cultural institutions in the form of moral templates. In this context, both explanations seem plausible, although the sociological explanation is deemed to have greater significance. Yet, the possibility that the respondents simply cannot see or are unaware of barriers and negative side-effects cannot be ruled out.

- *The turn-up in Ozondje/Omaruru's focus on SMEs and Vänersborg's focus on NGOs*

Sociological explanation: Logic of social appropriateness - individuals and organizations try to express their identity in socially appropriate ways.

Our comment: Since the unemployment rate in Omaruru is strikingly high, and since it is popular to talk about empowerment of unemployed (to reduce youth unemployment, the government encourages efforts to teach business skills to the youth¹⁰⁵), it probably gave Omaruru municipality high social legitimacy to invite unemployed and SMEs to the meeting. The fact that at least some of the Swedish respondents preferred NGOs over businesses might be explained by the amount of legitimacy it is linked to in Vänersborg.

- *Competing perceptions of target group within Vänersborg*

Sociological explanation: Individuals' preferences and actions are affected by personal worldview and interpretation.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with O3

Our comment: This is a plausible explanation to the divergent perceptions among the Swedish stakeholders. Relevant factors could for example be ideological stance and opinion on NGOs and entrepreneurship. The fact that preferences are affected by worldview and interpretation also offers a general, but somewhat vague, explanation to the differences between the municipalities' situation analyses due to what is considered as problems and solutions.

- *Vänernborg's wish to influence the composition of the Omaruru delegation*

Historical explanation: Institutions tend to distribute power and access to decision-making processes unevenly across social groups.

Our comment: Cementation of power asymmetries might be an unwanted consequence if the municipality of Omaruru is allowed to hand-pick participants.

- *Signs of maintenance of traditional roles of donator and receiver. Different understandings of cultural exchange or why it is important.*

Historical explanation: Path dependency - policies persist and a path is likely to be followed in the absence of other pressures. The surrounding context often changes faster than institutional procedures.

Our comment: The stakeholders have not yet fully adapted to the changed context with new roles within development policy. Instead they partially fall back to how international cooperation has been handled historically. The Namibian stakeholders point to how exchange can empower the participants and by that contribute to poverty alleviation, while the Swedish respondents stress the intrinsic value of cultural exchange. Albeit it should be stressed that economical differences between the municipalities also can explain the situation.

- *Future success or failure to attain external funding. Success or failure for Omaruru municipality to gain new responsibilities.*

Historical explanation: The diffusion of ideas and socioeconomic factors affect political decisions.

Our comment: Whether Omaruru succeeds in gaining new municipal responsibilities and whether either the Namibian or the Swedish stakeholders succeeds in attaining external funding can be affected by the socioeconomic development in Namibia and Sweden. It is also highly probable that this is affected by how the idea of the NGO-project is presented to the boundary partners. Finally, the effects and sustainability of the future collaborations between

the NGOs/SMEs will be affected by how the exchanges of ideas take place. It is also possible that new ideas about international cooperation are spread and will affect the NGO-project.

6.5 The limitations of institutionalism

Although we have seen that institutional factors can explain many aspects of international cooperation, there are limitations to the scope of institutionalism. This is evident in each of the three approaches in this study.

Starting with rational choice institutionalism, we disagree on that institutions are always created by actors correctly perceiving the effects thereof since this does not seem to be the case in the NGO-project. Rather, the actors displayed unwillingness and/or inability to calculate the effects of the project. This being said, we do believe that sound *attempts* of effect-calculation require well-informed actors. Nor does the rational choice assumption of utility-maximizing and strategically calculating individuals seem to be consistent with our case. Although individuals and thereby institutions strive to achieve their goals, we believe there are deeper explanations than self-serving motivations to this. Finally, rational choice institutionalism suffers from its inability to be falsified as behaviour always can be said to be rational in some way for the individual. This limits the explanatory power of the approach.

Moving on to sociological institutionalism, their contrary view of individuals as “satisfiers” seems non-applicable to this study’s stakeholders. A more general and more severe problem is sociological institutionalists’ total reluctance to distinguish between institutions and culture. Indeed we agree that it is important to take serious consideration to cultural aspects when analysing institutions, but because of the lack of distinction it is necessary to be very familiar with the surrounding culture in order to state something about the institution. This somewhat reduces the usability of this approach.

In the same way as rational choice institutionalism can be difficult to falsify, so is the case of historical institutionalism. This concerns particularly the theory on idea diffusion where it is more or less stated that “diffusion of ideas matters”, period. Even though the acknowledgment of such factors enhances the usability of historical institutionalism, more in-depth analysis of why and how idea diffusion matters is called for. Finally, the theory of path dependency seems fruitful in this study's case, but the related concept of critical junctures is difficult to apply prior to such change. In other words it cannot be used beforehand to determine for example what is needed to change/brake the traditional roles within development policies.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Reflection

Due to the complexity of the NGO-project, specific impacts are difficult to identify in advance. As Funnell and Rogers put it, *“Defining what you want to achieve so precisely is usually counterproductive because of the wasted time and resources in attempting to predict the unpredictable”*¹⁰⁶. Hence, it would probably be both difficult and counterproductive to set detailed, quantitative goals for the project. But in no ways does this prevent the identification of mutual goals, albeit of general character. As shown clearly in the program theories, outcomes are interlinked with activities and correspondently it is necessary to come to an agreement on both ends and of means to get there. Otherwise, again citing Funnell and Rogers, *“Uncertainty about how to produce a desired result fuels disagreement, and disagreement intensify and expand the parameters of uncertainty”*.¹⁰⁷

Where does this leave the NGO-project, then? Firstly, it is understandable that the impacts and particularly the outcomes of the project as visualized by the interviewees are of far-reaching character. Nonetheless it is crucial to come to an agreement on *how* these goals should be met. Put differently, the intervention would benefit from transforming from a complex to a complicated one. Even though it is difficult to predict the impact and outcomes of the project, there needs to be some agreement about what type of activities to do and why those methods and activities are chosen. In order to reach such a decision, the stakeholders in both municipalities need to be conscious of the economical limitations of the project. It is equally important that the stakeholders are aware of their counterpart’s visions and desires of the future of the project - otherwise it will be difficult to take consideration to how the other municipality can benefit from the project. The Swedish respondents seem reluctant to steer the project without the involvement of the municipality of Omaruru, which we think is an admirable attitude. Nevertheless, they need to improve their communication with Omaruru in order to avoid misinterpretations about the limitations and purpose of the project.

Based on the findings of this study, one of the first topics to discuss should be the project’s target group. The municipalities need to start by discussing this internally (this is especially important for the Swedish stakeholders as they at present have different perceptions

¹⁰⁶ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 80

¹⁰⁷ Funnell and Rogers (2011), p. 72

of the intended target group) and then talk to the other municipality. It lies beyond the scope of this study to determine which of the competing perceptions of target group or impact and outcomes are the most suitable. For that reason we confine ourselves to recommend spreading information and sharing intentions to a greater extent between the municipalities. Clarity about whom the project addresses enables further discussions on how the target group should benefit from it (success criteria) and by what means to get there (activities and outputs). Hence, a thorough and open-minded debate about the target group offers a good starting point for the continuation of the project.

Moving on to a more general level and to the first research question, what conclusions can be drawn about the influence of institutional factors on in the way public sector actors view joint international projects? Based on this study, it is evident that institutional factors can affect international projects in a number of ways. When it comes to rational choice institutionalism, the study has shown that the ability to predict how other actors, within the same institution as well as in the counterpart's organization, will act is affected by access to information about the cooperation. When there is insufficient information, individuals are left with either the option to guess what the other actors want to do or the option to simply not take consideration to other actors' desires and future actions. Moreover, it is likely that some institutional arrangements are chosen due to practical reasons such as efficiency. But when examined more closely with the help on social institutionalism, such choices may also be the results of contextual reasons. In this study the importance of social legitimacy is one of the most evident reasons. It also seems plausible that institutions in the meaning of culture can affect how actors perceive situations and concepts. This calls for thorough discussion among stakeholders about the inherent meaning of concepts and objectives important for cooperation. In the current case study, an example of this was the different perceptions of the distinction between an NGO and an SME. Additionally, and maybe not that surprisingly, following historical institutionalism it seems that power asymmetries might affect international joint projects. If there are inequalities in access to resources or information within either of the institutions, this might affect who can or are able to participate in the project. It is also possible that the roles countries play in international cooperation are largely a product of historical ways of managing such situations. As an example, in the studied case there seems to be a risk of taking on traditional donor-recipient roles.

If agreeing on that institutional factors do affect international cooperation, and that consequently there will often be differences in the way stakeholders view such collaborations, what does this mean for the attainment of project goals? The answer to the second research question will vary among different projects, but some general conclusions can be made. Differences in perceptions of what constitutes the project's goal(s) will sooner or later lead to that either of the stakeholders will not reach their intended goals. That is, if provided that one goal prevents or hampers the attainment of the other. If there are diverging goal perceptions where both goals can be met, this might not be as problematic as the first case, but diverging goal perceptions are still likely to affect the project negatively. Since impacts, and to some extent outcomes, are the products of resources, activities and outputs, diverging goals are reached by diverging program theories. In other words, if there are different goals perceptions there are probably different visions about how a project is supposed to function. Hence, it might be possible for a project to lead to two different goals, but only if the project in advance is adapted to fit both these goals. As shown in this study, program theory is a very suitable tool to illustrate and clarify perceptions of goals and ways of reaching them.

7.2 Other explanations and further studies

Cultural explanations from sociological institutionalism can contribute to an enhanced understanding of international collaboration. But as described above, this acquires existing knowledge about the countries' cultures. We believe this to be especially important in this study's case since Namibia and Omaruru are culturally heterogeneous societies, in many ways characterized by segregation and power- and resource asymmetries along racial and tribal lines.¹⁰⁸ (This was also acknowledged as a problem for Omaruru by both the Namibian and the Swedish respondents). Although the Swedish society is culturally more homogenous and cannot be said to be divided along tribal lines, one can presume that other inequalities and asymmetries affect the municipality of Vänersborg. With respect to this, the concept of culture should be broadly interpreted, ranging from symbolic meanings to organizational structures. But in order to not repeat the mistake of social institutionalists and analyze culture only on an all-including structural level, we suggest that more specific analytical levels are added. For example, organizational theories could be used for analyzing the roles, actions and structures of public agencies in international collaborations such as the NGO-project.

¹⁰⁸ See for example Miescher, Giorgio (2012) "Facing Barbarians: A Narrative of Spatial Segregation in Colonial Namibia" in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 38, issue 4.

When it comes to the shallow analysis of idea diffusion, more profound understanding thereof can probably be found in *discursive institutionalism*. This approach is often referred to as *the fourth new institutionalism* and underlines how ideas are conveyed and how this differs between discourses.¹⁰⁹ Similar contributions could also be found within *network theory* which has become increasingly popular within the field of international relations. In short, network theory emphasizes social and material structures among actors and how such relationships are created through processes such as idea diffusion.¹¹⁰

Apart from other theories within the academic realm, we would also like to point to some factors that might provide explanations in themselves. First and foremost, the NGO-project is still in its planning phase. This does not alone explain the different perceptions within and between the municipalities, but it is likely that some of the disagreements will be overcome as the project develops. Though, it should be underlined that the current problem of information asymmetry needs to be solved in order to minimize the risks of misinterpretations. In addition, the apparent economical difference between the municipalities also affects the cooperation and is in fact part of the basis of the partnership. As O1 put it, “*The economic hierarchy is the essence of the partnership*”, referring to that both municipalities can benefit by learning from how a different economic situation is managed.

Finally we would like to strike a blow for the importance of case-specific knowledge and proper communication between stakeholders. Regarding the NGO-project, we believe that enhanced communication and awareness about the counterpart’s visions can be reached if a mutual program theory is developed by both municipalities together with an evaluator or program facilitator. When there is a more cohesive understanding of the project, this can advantageously be communicated to and discussed with the boundary partners and not least with the citizens in each city.

¹⁰⁹ See for example Schmidt, Vivien A. (2008) “Discursive Institutionalism: The explanatory power of ideas and discourse” in *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 11, p. 303-326.

¹¹⁰ See for example Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery (2009), “Network Analysis for International Relations” in *International Organization*, Issue 63, p. 559-92.

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APPENDIX I

Projects between Omaruru and Vänersborg

2003-2004

Project name: Axel

- Sustainable water supply
- Environmental conservation: sanitation and landfill

2004-2005

Project name: Auroa

- Democracy and transparency
- Women empowerment: improved potential for self-sufficiency
- Environmental conservation and environmental education (continuation of project Axel)

2006-2007

Project name: The good circle

- Improved administrative routines
- Environmental consequence description of blockage in Omaruru river
- Development of non-profit organizations, leadership and youth in sports
- Women empowerment (continuation of project Auroa)

2007-2008

Project name: Human recourses

- Young democracy
- Reach the market (continuation of Women empowerment in project The good circle)

2008-2009

Project name: Mutual satisfaction

- Coordination and development of HIV-prevention
- Musical project

2009-2010

Project name: Crossing horizons

- Continuation of the HIV-prevention project of Mutual satisfaction

2012-2014

Project name: Connecting cultures

- Water and waste management
- **Development of Citizen NGO-network**

APPENDIX II

This document served as an interview guide. The sequence of the questions was changed during some of the interviews in order to allow for a more fluent conversation. When necessary, the questions were explained further. The emphasis on the different areas of questions was somewhat adapted to the respondent's position in and knowledge about the project.

BACKGROUND

1. For how long have you been working at the municipality?
2. Have you been involved in any of the previous partnership projects with Vänersborg/Omaruru?
3. If yes: Can you tell us if there was a project/a part of that project that worked really well?
4. If yes: Can you tell us if there was a project/a part of that project that worked poorly?

BACKGROUND OF THE NGO-PROJECT

5. When were you first involved in the NGO-project?
6. Could you tell us about the initiation of the project? What has happened so far in the project?
7. How is the museum/Omarurugruppen linked to the NGO-project?
8. What is your role in the project?
9. How much time do you have for your disposal to work with this project?
10. What responsibilities do the other stakeholders have?
11. Apart from the mayor, the deputy mayor and the CEO, will additional staff from the municipality of Omaruru be involved later?
12. Do you have "portfolios" for the councilors at Omaruru municipality?

FINANCE/PROJECT FUNDING

13. Can you tell us about the funding of this project?
14. How are/will the funds be distributed? How much is ear-marked for specific purposes?
15. Is the Municipality of Omaruru going to pay for certain project expenses?
16. Is there currently a "Community development fund"? If yes; how large is it?

17. Does the municipality of Omaruru have money set aside for Local Economic Development? If yes: how much of this money could be used for the NGO-project?
18. From which ministries can the municipality of Omaruru apply for grants/funding?
19. What should the economic transaction system be used for?

COMPARISON OF THE MUNICIPALITIES

20. The municipality of Omaruru mostly handles technical issues and has no department for international cooperation. Do you think this has any implications for this project?
21. Vänersborg municipality has a department for international cooperation but no one is working full-time with the NGO-project. Do you think this has any implications for this project?
22. As we have understood, the politicians in Vänersborg are not yet involved in the NGO-project – (how) does this affect the project?
23. In some ways, the municipalities of Vänersborg and Omaruru are different (such as in size and in culture of the organizations and of the countries), in what ways is this a positive thing for the project?
24. How can it be negative?

OZONDJE & OTJIWARONGO

25. What is your definition of an NGO?
26. What was the purpose of the meeting in Ozondje?
27. How did the meeting contribute to the NGO-project?
28. How did you market the meeting?
29. What did you learn from the visit to the MPHIC in Otjiwarongo?
30. Can you tell us more specifically how the economic transaction system in Otjiwarongo works?
31. Any specific parts from the MPHIC that you would like to have in the NGO-project?
32. Any parts that seem less relevant to copy?
33. How do the conditions in Omaruru differ from the conditions in Otjiwarongo?

PURPOSE

34. Who is the main target group for the project?
35. If the project worked well, how would this benefit the target group?
36. What are the current obstacles for them to achieve those things?

37. Which NGOs do you see as most suitable for the NGO-network?
38. Can you think of why the NGOs would not be able or willing to commit to the project?
39. What can you do to make this better/prevent it from happening?
40. To whom else could this project be an opportunity besides the target group?

GOALS

41. On a short term (6 months – 1 year), what should the project have achieved?
42. Definition? How would you know if this goal is reached?
43. What resources are needed and what needs to happen in order to reach this goal?
44. Ultimately (e.g. in 10 years), what should the project result in? (For individuals, for society?)
45. Definition? How would you know if this goal is reached?
46. What resources are needed and what needs to happen in order to reach this goal?
47. Can you think of any positive spin off-effects from the project?
48. Can you think of any negative side-effects from the project?
49. Is there anything that can happen that may have an impact on the project and that you cannot affect?

OTHER ACTORS

50. Besides the municipalities, who else needs to be involved for the project to work?
51. What do they need to do for the project to work? How would you know if they were doing that?
52. What are you doing/can you do to influence them to do this?

FUTURE STEPS

53. How do you visualise the NGO-network project to look like/work in practice?
54. What is the next step(s)?
55. What types of resources and activities are needed for this to happen?
56. How will this contribute to the final purpose of the project?
57. How will the composition of the Omaruru-delegation be decided?
58. How are you going to spread information about the NGO-network?