Between local governments and communities

Knowledge exchange and mutual learning in Dutch-Moroccan and Dutch-Turkish municipal partnerships

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7. Strengthening local governance processes

7.1. Introduction

The previous chapter described the types of learning in the Dutch-Moroccan and Dutch-Turkish municipal partnerships. This chapter will address the question to what extent learning in municipal partnerships contributed to strengthening local governance processes (local governments, local government–civil society interfaces and broader governance networks). The chapter analyses the implementation of new policies in the local governments selected as case studies. Chapter 2 described how local governments increasingly work as actors in a governance network, coordinating processes of local development together with civil society organizations and the private sector (Baud et al. 2011; Pierre 2000: 4). Several authors have demonstrated that city-to-city partnerships did help strengthen local government bodies in the Global South; however, there is less evidence of strengthening local government bodies in the Global North (see Bontenbal 2009). In addition, although the importance of community-wide participation has been emphasized, there is limited evidence of initiatives that focus on strengthening civil society (Van Lindert 2009; Bontenbal 2009a).

One of the reasons is that civil society initiatives are generally small-scale and more field-based. Initiatives are also hindered by lack of funding, lack of professional knowledge on working with partners in the South and lack of adequate understanding of development needs (Bontenbal 2009a: 243). Moreover, there are very few empirical studies addressing local politics and political representation, which is related to the sensitiveness of the subject (Bontenbal 2009b). Northern partners opt to focus on ‘safer’ technical issues instead of more controversial topics. Despite this gap, Bontenbal found that the way municipal projects were implemented was relevant for the development of more participative forms of local governance. She argued that C2C partnerships can help strengthen local government–civil society relations, not as a direct goal or effect of the C2C partnership, but rather as multiplier effects of programmes on capacity building for individual local government and civil society actors. Therefore, it is also important to assess these indirect effects (Bontenbal 2009a: 262). As Baud et al. (2010) illustrated, municipal international cooperation can also strengthen broader governance networks by spillover effects to other municipalities, engaging knowledge institutions and linking up with higher levels of governance.

The impact of strengthening governance processes and non-governmental actors at different scale levels can be captured in four main impact models, which are directly related to the conceptual framework and actor models presented in chapter 3 and 5 respectively. The four models are (1) the classic local government model; (2) the multi-actor network model; (3) the multi-level network model; and (4) the hybrid multi-level network model (see figure 7.1). The potential of strengthening governance processes are highlighted in table 7.1. The model and table are first followed by an assessment of
the strengthening of local governance processes in Morocco and Turkey, and then by an analysis of the impact on local governance in the Netherlands.

Table 7.1 Potential for strengthening governance processes for the various impact models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Classic local government network</th>
<th>Multi-actor network</th>
<th>Multi-level network</th>
<th>Hybrid multi-level network</th>
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<td>Strengthening governance (outcomes)</td>
<td>Stronger local government bodies (e.g. service delivery)</td>
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<td>Stronger NGOs, CBOs, private organizations</td>
<td>Stronger broader governance networks</td>
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Part A. Strengthening local governance in Morocco and Turkey

7.2. Implementation of new local government policies

In most local governments in Morocco and Turkey the lessons learned from the exchanges were also being implemented. In several cases, the projects were not yet at the stage of applying lessons learned, because they were initiated shortly before the PhD research or because of the limited mandate of the local governments in question.

7.2.1. Exchanging technical knowledge and knowledge regarding processes

In the cases where lessons learned were being implemented, tacit/embedded knowledge was usually not utilized directly, but internalized and adjusted to fit the local context. There was a clear difference in the exchanges involving technical knowledge and knowledge on processes. In several cases technical knowledge was more or less directly copied, while knowledge on processes was more embedded and required additional adjustment to fit the local context. Most respondents referred to the need to adjust knowledge on organizational processes, as illustrated by an officer from Amsterdam’s fire department:

Our quality manager on diving affairs goes there [Kocaeli] to look at the procedures, the quality, controls, maintenance of equipment...these are all relatively basic and technical matters. It is not about the organization and who is in control of what. It is about how you get into the water, how you control your equipment, how you make sure you obtain certificates. ...So it is really about the implementation of such affairs, and not about how this fits in the Turkish context. I feel that organization issues are more bound to the context...copying such things there will never work.

In a few cases procedures were largely copied. According to an environmental engineer from the Environmental Union of Municipalities in Afyon, they adopted Haarlem’s approach to informing the public regarding waste collection:

They said that they prepared a programme giving information about daily gathering of waste; from which points and when people should put the waste to the boxes. And this information was being distributed to every house through brochures. We saw that if you do something for the public, you need to inform them and we started with housewives. We applied the same procedure as mentioned in Haarlem by R. [the director of the waste management company].

The available budgets restrict the possibilities for implementing expensive technologies, according to an environmental engineer of Afyon province:

We have been to an institution for burning medical waste [in the Netherlands]. It was amazing but it costs a lot. We agreed that we cannot apply this technology in
Turkey. Instead of this technology of burning medical waste, we preferred sterilization of medical waste because of money restrictions. It is cheaper.

7.2.2. Combining knowledge through exposure
By visiting the Netherlands, attending seminars and participating in daily work practices, professionals were able to combine the new knowledge they were learning and to reflect on what types of practices were useful for their own municipality. The former mayor of Berkane confirmed that through the cooperation with Zeist he could study the entire process of waste management in the Netherlands, which helped him in the privatization of the waste management system in Berkane. Waste is now collected by a private company, and municipal representatives of Berkane, Zeist and NGOs in Berkane expressed that Berkane is a lot cleaner than before. Also the former mayor of Al Hoceima said that during the visits he tried to understand the challenges faced by the host municipality and compare them with the problems back home. The visits helped him understand the different approaches and select a fitting solution for the Al Hoceima context. The coordinator for international relations of the fire department of Kocaeli mentioned that through the international exchanges they were able to compare and see different approaches. This also included ‘negative learning’, i.e. learning what not to do (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996). In the words of the international coordinator, ‘we do not need to follow the long way. We can take the short way instead.’

7.2.3. Improved disaster preparedness
The training of firefighters in Kocaeli was particularly relevant: the municipality is situated in an earthquake-prone area and hosts large complexes of petrochemical industries. Firefighters were trained to work with new equipment, acquired with EU support, and obtained knowledge on the procedures of dealing with hazardous material. The firefighters shared that now they felt more confident in their work:

At that time [the 1999 earthquake in Kocaeli] we were not ready for an earthquake. We were not trained and had no equipment. Now I know. I heard people shout ‘rescue me, rescue me’. But I had no equipment. It was very, very difficult. After the earthquake for 3 or 4 months I heard people in my dreams shouting ‘rescue me, rescue me’. It was a psychological drama. ...The Hazmat [Hazardous Material] training is very important to me. Maybe there will be another big earthquake. Hazardous material might be involved. I just hope we are ready.

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129 It should be noted that although several respondents mentioned that waste management is significantly improved, there are still concerns about the control of landfills and the functioning of the PPPs.
7.2.4. **Unintended outcomes**

In one case the exchange of knowledge clearly had an unintended outcome: the construction of a public park near the river in Berkane. The idea arose during the collaboration with Zeist, and funding was secured from the national government. The coordinator from SSR, the association that supports returnees to the area, commented:

> Who started the idea? It was Zeist and the Municipality of Berkane. They wanted to set up a park and finally the province took over the idea. And the King [Mohammed VI] provided a budget to set up the park. ...It is stimulating that there is an interest from abroad, from Zeist...it also motivated people here, members of the administration, to start working.

The research could not identify examples of applied learning from the exchange between the police departments of Rotterdam and Casablanca, as this collaboration was still in its early stages at the time of research. Police officers from Casablanca indicated that the exchange programmes were short and intensive, giving time to only briefly see practices in the Netherlands. They learned a lot on issues like camera supervision and security in the harbour, but during the research period the exchange has not yet led to the implementation of lessons learned.

7.2.5. **Constraints to learning and implementing knowledge**

The main obstacles to learning were related to the Dutch officials’ limited knowledge of the Moroccan and Turkish context, in particular the mandate and competencies of Turkish and Moroccan local governments. This included both generalized knowledge (mainly general knowledge about governance processes in Morocco and Turkey) as well as embedded knowledge (mainly knowledge on the particular governance arrangements in the partner municipality). In many cases this led to false expectations, misunderstandings and delays in the implementation of the projects. Lessons on the governance system in Morocco and Turkey were mainly learned on the job. A police officer from Rotterdam highlighted the importance of the context:

> How does the system work? Police work is always bound to the context. Never isolated! The context is determined by society: What are the relevant subjects? What is determined as guiding principles by the political administration? This is the same everywhere. You have to learn about the context. And you learn about the context gradually. Usually there are general presentations during the exchanges, and afterwards you start discussing with each other. This way you learn more profoundly.

A consultant involved in several exchange programmes mentioned that he learned about the importance of the context during an exchange program: ‘To be honest I have to say that when we started the social workplace [we] did not really know the legislation. Now I don’t start a project without asking myself what the legal framework looks like.’
As pointed out in chapter 6, the migrants who were involved generally had limited knowledge regarding governance arrangements. Most of them had lived for many years in the Netherlands or were born in the Netherlands. Especially the native Dutch professionals who were involved in exchange programmes and were living in Morocco or Turkey at the time the research was carried out commented that if the participants had investigated the institutional context in depth before they started the cooperation fewer problems would have occurred. The Dutch ambassador in Morocco commented that fostering youth participation in Morocco is a complicated process: ‘Actually you should first make a good analysis. Why are youth not involved? Do the Dutch municipalities have the capacity to act? In most cases it is a political problem.’

In some cases the limited knowledge of the local context by Dutch professionals led to misunderstanding or frustration by partners in Morocco and Turkey. The mayor of Emirdag, who was personally not involved in the exchange programmes in the framework of the LOGO East program, mentioned the challenges rooted in the fact that their counterparts in Haarlem did not fully understand the governance structures in Turkey:

We as municipalities are not just following our own heart. We are implementing things according to regulations that municipalities have to obey. ...The problems we have with Haarlem stem from this; they are involved in the project without knowing the regulations for municipalities [in Turkey].

Because of the limited mandate and budgets of local governments in Morocco and Turkey, the lessons could not always be applied during the project period. This left several Dutch partners feeling frustrated, as programme targets could not be met, and in some cases they felt the projects were not successful. This was generally perceived differently by their partners in Morocco and Turkey, for whom it is common practice that knowledge-exchange processes take a long time, and that central government budget allocations and formal approval are required before being able to implement or adjust practices.

The cooperation with Zeist, for example, has not yet resulted in the clearing of the old waste disposal site in Berkane, one of the key projects objectives, because the required support and funding from national government was not obtained during the project period. The Dutch respondents felt their counterparts in Berkane could have been more creative in finding other funding sources, for instance, clearing and rehabilitating the old disposal site and selling the land to investors as construction land. This was not seen as an option in Berkane: they did not have the freedom and financial resources to act on their own and were dependent on the national government. The local government representatives also felt that it was not acceptable to build housing on a former waste disposal site and wanted to develop the site into a large park. Despite this, they still perceived the cooperation with Zeist as very useful. A policy officer from

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130 It should be also mentioned that the average Dutch person is also not very likely to know the details about the mandate of local municipal government or NGOs in the Netherlands.
the Municipality in Berkane said that the cooperation was relevant for building up documented knowledge on the project in files, and that it highlighted the importance of thinking through processes. He compared the process with a train that is moving slowly, while passengers get on and off: 'With environmental issues you have to keep on talking, and finally something will happen. Only if the municipality has found a solution will the central government get involved. Zeist is part of this process, as well as a door to Europe and important with respect to solidarity [with us].’ A member of an environmental organization in Berkane involved in the programme expressed a similar view:

I always believe that something cannot start now and give a result tomorrow. There are some results that you can get tomorrow, but we have to wait for some results for a long, long time. Because this is...it's not baking bread. This is something that is very, very complex, and it needs time and a lot of elaboration. ...Zeist had started in fact, part of the project, which is very important. Like doing some research, getting some analysis [of the situation], and seeing what the result is going to be. And if we get some results showing us that the project is going to fail, why start the project? We should start something that will last, not fail!

The founder of a women organization in Casablanca commented on the rigidity of the support programme focusing on involving men in addressing the issue of domestic violence. She felt the programme was highly relevant and mentioned it was the first of its kind in Morocco. An important indicator of measuring the success of the programme was the number of men participating in the sessions: ‘It was an innovative project in a patriarchal context; a culture where men do not talk about their problems. ...What is the result? It is not just a number, it is the whole process!’

7.3. **Strengthening interfaces between governmental and non-governmental actors**

Chapter 4 described the process of decentralization as well as the role and position of local governments in relation to other actors in Morocco and Turkey. Governance processes are still highly centralized, but local governments have been increasingly working in new governance arrangements. It can be argued that the cooperation with peer local governments abroad was particularly relevant for Moroccan and Turkish local governments because it happened at the right time. This was confirmed in interviews with policy officers from Kocaeli and Emirdag (Turkey) and Berkane (Morocco), who were facing the challenge of adjusting processes to meet EU standards or international norms. They referred to the relations with their Dutch counterparts as ‘doors’ or ‘windows’ to Europe. Most respondents mentioned that cooperation with Dutch local governments helped in opening up spaces and strengthening interfaces between government bodies and civil society. As discussed elsewhere, representatives of Dutch local governments were not very knowledgeable on the Moroccan and Turkish context.
In many cases they might not have fully realized they were working on fundamental issues, where quick progress is hard to achieve.

Several respondents from Morocco and Turkey—both from local government as well as non-governmental organizations—mentioned that the international exchanges with their partner municipalities have indeed helped to strengthen the links between local government and non-governmental actors at home. *Inter-municipal cooperation* stimulated *intra-municipal cooperation*. As might be expected, relations were especially strengthened through partnerships that included both governmental and non-governmental actors: Haarlem-Emirdag, Zeist-Berkane and Meppel–Al Hoceima. These partnerships can be described as multi-actor models (Model 7.2). Differences regarding government–civil society interfaces, between the Netherlands, on the one hand, and Morocco and Turkey, on the other hand, were often mentioned by the respondents from Moroccan and Turkish municipalities as an important source of learning on embedded knowledge. Exposure to other contexts was important for both understanding the practices in partner municipalities as well as for understanding the Dutch context and governance arrangements. A municipal officer from the health department of Berkane, for instance, explained that he learned a lot about relations between the municipality and NGOs in the Netherlands by participating in their joint meetings.

Linkages between various actors at different governmental levels were especially strengthened in Emirdag during the LOGO East programme (2005–2010), which was also one of the declared project objectives. According to respondents from Haarlem and Emirdag, learning regarding horizontal multi-actor processes (like how to work together as a team) was the most important form of learning within the partnership. Before the cooperation started, there were hardly any local partnerships between different actors in the municipality of Emirdag and the province of Afyon. The former policy advisor and coordinator of the Municipality of Emirdag confirmed this observation (a view also shared by non-governmental actors): ‘Many organizations started to work together, which was a novelty to Emirdag. ...I have learned that working as a team makes you stronger.’

Relations between governmental and non-governmental actors were also strengthened in Berkane and Al Hoceima, although the impact of the exchanges was not as strong. As already mentioned, both in Berkane and Al Hoceima waste management was privatized, following the global trend in policy to privatize waste management (Royaume du Maroc, Ministère de l’Interieur 2010). Although waste management was improved, government officials indicated that they sometimes had problems in the negotiations with these companies as they were working in a PPP for the first time (workshop organized by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs–EVD).

Despite the first signs of strengthened local government–civil society interfaces, the deeply rooted divisions regarding which actions fall under municipal competencies and which lie outside did not change during the short course of these short projects.

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131 The terms ‘inter-municipal cooperation’ and ‘intra-municipal cooperation’ were introduced by Devers-Kanoglu (2009) (see also chapter 1).
Representatives of women’s organizations in Al Hoceima indicated that despite their joint mission with staff from the Municipality of Al Hoceima to Meppel, and despite the mutual exchange of information between the Municipality of Al Hoceima and women’s organizations, the international exchange has not yet resulted in strengthened relations between these actors. Because education falls under the competence of central government, local governments were also not involved in the exchange between secondary schools. In Berkane the NGO l’Homme et l’Environment was an important actor in the programme activities on both waste management and youth participation. However, this participation did not clearly result in strengthened connections between the NGO and local government in other fields.132

In Berkane there were indications of strengthened connections between the municipality and youth organizations, profiting from the support of the Municipality of Zeist. During the research period the cooperation did not lead to concrete visible changes; however, the findings did show that spaces for collaboration were opening up. One could argue that it is also too much to ask for a relatively small programme to lead to fundamental changes in the given time period. The youth who were involved in the exchanges expressed that they learned important dispositional skills. As described in the previous chapter, representatives of various youth organizations expressed that they learned how to discuss issues with representatives from local governments as well as other ‘professionals’. Two members of youth organizations in Berkane commented, ‘our youth is active and has an aim it wants to reach. The municipality has started supporting us and attaches more value to us [than before]. They organize meetings between youth and stimulate communication between both sides. So they are changing.’ Also the municipal officer in charge of social affairs attested to the changes: ‘Our attention towards these youth associations was more about financial assistance. …The meeting in the summer...was the first time when we got to know about them, and for the municipality to see their activities and what they do.’ Two SSR employees felt that the participants from Zeist could ‘put a finger on the sore spot’, i.e. they could address sensitive issues as a ‘naïve outsider’. Both the NGO representative and the employees of SSR mentioned that meetings took place in a ‘remarkably’ open atmosphere, which enabled many issues to be discussed.

7.3.1. Critical views
Although strengthening linkages with civil society was important for the police in Rotterdam, it was not part of the exchange with Casablanca. The international relations coordinator indicated that their Moroccan counterparts were also not interested in this subject as, according to her, they had well established linkages with their community.

132 This was probably also related to the role of NGO l’Homme et l’Environment in critically following large-scale economic development programmes in the coastal area, which are likely to have a negative impact on the natural resources and biodiversity.
Although nearly all respondents in Emirdag mentioned they felt that the strengthening of linkages between local government and civil society was the most important impact of the Haarlem-Emirdag partnership, the newly appointed mayor of Emirdag, who was not involved in the LOGO East programme on waste management, did not support the exchanges between non-governmental actors without the involvement of the local government. One key Dutch respondent of Moroccan descent was critical of projects that aim to involve both local government and NGOs at the same time. She emphasized the many differences between the Netherlands and Morocco, and that they pose barriers to learning:

The common citizen [in Morocco] does not trust all those elected people...so if a [Dutch] municipality starts cooperating with such a [Moroccan] municipality and is searching for contact with the citizens...well, you know...it is futile! You have to make choices as a [Dutch] municipality: Do I want to work with civil society or with the political part? You see, you have to draw your consequences. One is not to be united with the other.

This critical view shows the sensitivity of the topic; however, it was not shared by most of the respondents in the Netherlands, Morocco and Turkey.

7.3.2. Communication with citizens
In the Dutch-Turkish cases, Haarlem-Emirdag (waste management) and Amsterdam-Kocaeli (preservation of cultural landmarks), informing citizens was formulated as part of the project. The municipalities indicated that they learned a lot from their Dutch colleagues, and Dutch practices were to a large extent copied and applied. In the case of Kocaeli, informing the wider public was formulated as part of the cooperation, and the Municipality of Kocaeli even went a step further than the Municipality of Amsterdam. They distributed leaflets and organized citizen meetings. The participating civil servant from Amsterdam shared that the Municipality of Amsterdam could actually also improve their approach and learn from the project. Unfortunately no conclusion can be drawn about the knowledge obtained by citizens as the research could not include a comprehensive citizen survey.
Box 7.1 A breakthrough in Turkey

In other C2C partnerships between Turkey and the Netherlands (not included as a case study) there were some interesting examples of this type of learning. In the Municipality of Lüleburgaz a service desk providing one central location where citizens could address their grievance was established through cooperation with the Municipality of Deventer. Also in Bergama (in cooperation with the Municipality of Alkmaar) a similar facility was established. The project was seen as an important achievement by participants of the closing seminar of the LOGO East programme because a service desk as a tool that can provide space for citizens to express their views and ideas is a relatively new idea in Turkey.\(^{133}\) The former ambassador even referred to an important breakthrough in Turkey—putting a structure in place where criticizing a governmental body was institutionalized (interview January 2010).

7.4. Strengthening broader governance networks

The LOGO East and MATRA support programmes incorporated frameworks for exchanging knowledge between local governments and for involving the national government level. These interventions were aimed at strengthening the local governance sector as a whole. Several seminars in Turkey and Morocco were organized, with the participation of both Dutch and Moroccan/Turkish municipalities as well as representatives from local government associations and the national government. In two cases knowledge institutions were involved: the University of Afyonkarahisar was involved in the exchange on waste management and environmental awareness creation between Emirdag and Haarlem, while there were also linkages with the University of Kocaeli for the exchange between the fire departments of Kocaeli and Amsterdam. The research did not include an analysis of the learning that took place in the other participating local governments, but some conclusions can be drawn about the question whether spillover effects to other municipalities occurred and whether the local government sector was strengthened, based on data acquired at seminars and interviews with respondents from selected case studies.

The exchange between Dutch and Turkish fire departments was a clear example of cooperation that also aimed to strengthen broader governance networks. This can be described as the ‘multi-level network model’ (model 7c). Three Dutch municipal fire departments (Amsterdam, Deventer and Enschede) joined forces with three Turkish municipal fire departments (Edirne, Lüleburgaz, Corlu), the Union of Municipalities of the Southeast Anatolia Region (GABB) and the Union of Firefighters of Turkey in the attempt to make an inventory of existing equipment and expertise in the fire departments in south-eastern Turkey. Possibilities were explored to exchange materials and experience among the various fire departments within Turkey, and these initiatives were also aligned with the Union of Firefighters of Turkey and the national government. Due to financial constraints, a complete inventory of all fire departments in Turkey

\(^{133}\) The final conference on the LOGO East programme took place in Ankara, 18-19 January 2010.
could not be implemented by the participating institutions. The introduction of voluntary firefighters, a concept copied from Amsterdam and introduced in Kocaeli, was also introduced in Diyarbakir in eastern Turkey. A Dutch consultant living in Turkey, who was involved in several municipal partnerships, referred to the scepticism expressed by the representatives of the Turkish fire departments at the start of the programme regarding the recruitment of voluntary firefighters in a developing country like Turkey:

Still he started to think about it and when, after half a year, Amsterdam returned [to Kocaeli] he said: ‘Look, a voluntary fire brigade!’ ...Now they also have a voluntary fire department in Diyarbakir...modelled on the concept of Kocaeli.

In the case of waste management no clear indications were found of strengthening of the sector, but knowledge was exchanged between various municipalities. The municipal partnership with Haarlem helped generate a lot of attention in the local press for the waste management programme within the Afyon Province, which provided exposure for the Municipality of Emirdag, a relatively small town. Knowledge was also disseminated between municipalities within Afyon, and several municipalities have participated in the conferences organized within the framework of the LOGO East.

The same observation holds true for the programmes on youth participation in local governance in Morocco. The programmes received attention from the broader public, and the national government was involved in the closing seminar of the MATRA programme. However, no definite conclusion can be made about the extent of strengthening of the governance sector. This might also be too much to ask from a relatively small programme. Moreover, this issue cannot be seen in isolation from the 2011 ‘Arab spring’, which revealed the frustration felt by the young population about the high unemployment rates and their limited access to meaningful political participation and economic prosperity. Although it can be argued that youth participation is important in addressing youth issues at the local level, addressing the colossal challenge of high unemployment was outside the project’s scope. Exchanges between secondary schools at the local level could also serve as the first step to initiating changes at the national level. As explained earlier, a professor at a secondary school in Al Hoceima, also a member of the national workers union, was inspired by the exchanges with his Dutch peers. He shared his new knowledge of the Dutch schooling system—especially the emphasis placed on practice-oriented secondary schools—with a wider local and national network. However no conclusions can be drawn on the potential effects of this kind of exchange.

134 An interesting initiative did take place within the framework of the municipal partnership between Amsterdam and Larache (Morocco). The project facilitated internships within Larache for young people in Larache. The idea to set up internships where young people could build up experience and networks came out of the exchange with the Municipality of Amsterdam (which also helped set up these internships).
There are examples of several other projects that enjoyed substantial media attention and of municipalities exchanging knowledge with surrounding municipalities. The smiling faces project, a workplace for people with disabilities in Kocaeli set up in collaboration with the Municipality of Amsterdam, was a novel initiative in Turkey and attracted a lot of publicity. The project was visited by several other municipalities. The national government was also interested in the project’s results and used some of the lessons for amending national legislation on care for people with disabilities. The project leader, a Dutch consultant living in Kocaeli, noted this impact:

While the individual project was only partly successful as knowledge was thrown away [all personnel was replaced after the local elections], it has been very successful on the national level because the legislation was [partly] based on ‘Smiling faces’. ...The central policy department in charge of the disabled constantly visited Kocaeli and he has adapted a lot in the legislation. ...This never was the intention, but it did happen.

This is a form of a hybrid multi-level network model as it involves both various actors at the local level and also includes higher governance levels. Generally it can be concluded that in most cases the impact of the exchanges did go beyond the municipal borders, and there are some clear examples of initial attempts to strengthen the governance sector as a whole, particularly in Turkey.

Part B. Strengthening local governance in the Netherlands

7.5. Implementation of new local government policies

Whereas the knowledge exchanges did result in concrete changes in government project policies in Morocco and Turkey, the impact in the Netherlands is less clear. As described in chapter 5, the use of support programmes played an important role: local governments were forced to develop clear programmes; they had access to funds to facilitate exchanges; and they had to document the project’s results. As chapter 6 showed, learning did occur but it was more tied to individuals. Generally, most exchanges did not lead to drafting or implementation of new policies in the Netherlands.

New local government policies, which phased out special programmes aimed at supporting certain migrant groups, combined with the general budgetary restrictions, also limited the possibilities for learning and implementing new ideas. In the exchange between Al Hoceima and Meppel, on issues concerning the integration of the Moroccan community in Meppel, most of the opinions and ideas of the delegation of Al Hoceima were contrary to the current political climate in the Netherlands. Programmes seen as valuable by the participants from Al Hoceima were stopped because of policy shifts and budget cuts. Respondents from the Municipality of Al Hoceima and local NGOs felt, for example, that learning Arabic was important in relation to the emancipation and
integration of Moroccan migrants in the Netherlands. They referred to the Moroccan context whereby the national government recognized and supported the Berber language stimulating the emancipation of Berber population.

7.5.1. **Constraints to learning and implementing knowledge**

Several constraints to learning were mentioned by the respondents. The differences between the Dutch and Moroccan/Turkish context did provide condition for learning on cultural issues for the Dutch participants and the exchanges did trigger reflection on their work processes. However, it was also perceived as a limitation to learning. They felt that there were not enough similarities to foster learning and argued that focusing on cities in Western Europe for learning exchanges was more useful. As the coordinator of the international affairs department of Rotterdam shared, ‘for real knowledge exchange European cities are a more obvious choice: the same degree of organization, the same kinds of problems, the same scale. It is easier to exchange things.’

This perceived lack of similarity could also be related to a limited ‘openness to learn’, as learning from differences requires one to be open to new ideas. Robinson et al. (2000) argued that learning requires an openness to learn. Not being fully open to learn—due to perceived inability, a lack of flexibility or due to ‘fear of the unknown’—can also be an important limitation to learning. The director of the welfare organization in Meppel (Welzijn Mensenwerk) referred to her own experience in the Netherlands of students in community development programmes choosing ‘safe’ or well-known places for internships, instead of internships in which they could build up experience in working with migrant groups. She also observed that for some Dutch colleagues the threshold to communicate with these groups was high, and that they avoided having extensive contacts with migrant groups. They preferred to pass on this task to her, as she was of Moroccan origin and seen as better equipped to communicate with these groups. She expressed her frustration with this practice: ‘This way the knowledge will never be obtained!’

As described in the previous paragraphs, officers from the Rotterdam-Rijnmond Police Department indicated that they learned about specific cultural issues and the governance system in Morocco as well as benefiting from established network and personal relations with key counterparts for their operational tasks. For instance, the cooperation helped facilitate the administrative procedure for sending Rotterdam police officers to Morocco to interview a witness in a murder case. They also explored how the contacts with Casablanca could be used to draw lessons on dealing with youth at risk from the Moroccan community in Rotterdam, which was difficult because of the different contexts. The former head of a local police station in the Rotterdam-Rijnmond Police Department confirmed: ‘These cultural differences...it is quite complex how that works. The Moroccans in the Netherlands cannot be compared to the Moroccans in Morocco.’ Her successor also shared this sentiment: ‘As the content of the work is very different it is hard to compare it. With other police departments in the Western world it is easier as there is more overlap.’ A consultant of Moroccan origin from Rotterdam, who
worked as interpreter during the visit of the Rotterdam police to Casablanca, shared her view on the importance of the different context:

I felt that they [representatives of the Rotterdam police department] were seeking something where it was not to be found. The youth in Casablanca is another type of youth, with a very different kind of background than youth here. The way the police is dealing with citizens, the legislation, it is very different from here. So what do you want to learn from each other?

It can be concluded that there is tension between, on the one hand, learning based on differences with an open approach to learning, and, on the other hand, the existence of many differences that may hinder learning. The perception of what can be learned also varies significantly from one person to the next. Generally, there are limits to the lessons that one can draw from another context. The former director of The Netherlands Institute Morocco (NIMAR) commented that one should have realistic expectations about what can be learned from the exchange with migrant source countries: ‘in the end integration in the housing, education and marriage market is a Dutch process in which preconditions should be created in the Netherlands’ (Van Ewijk 2009).

Another limitation to learning is related to a possible lack of knowledge regarding the context. As described in the previous chapter, knowledge regarding the Dutch context is required in order for the Turkish and Moroccan participants to be able to draw useful lessons. Also for drawing lessons on Turkish and Moroccan practices knowledge on the context is required among Dutch professionals. Having limited knowledge on the context was not clearly mentioned by Dutch respondents as a constraint to learning. However, it could have been an underlying cause for the limitations in extracting lessons from Morocco and Turkey, especially as the exchanges were generally short. At a workshop during the final seminar of the LOGO East programme two researchers from the Gazi University in Ankara did mention this lack of knowledge as a potential explanatory factor. They commented that Dutch professionals might not fully understand the Turkish system, which makes it hard to draw lessons.

A lack of preparation and facilitation in the process of knowledge exchange and learning also limited learning. In the case of Zeist-Berkane, and to a lesser extent Meppel–Al Hoceima, the possibilities to learn were limited: the policy officers of social affairs did not engage in extensive knowledge sharing with their peers during their stay in Morocco. Although the policy officers expressed that they did learn about general cultural issues, they felt that the exchange processes were too superficial. There was hardly any space created for facilitating learning on diversity during the work visits and informal conversations. Moreover, language was an important communication barrier. Limited use was made of what is generally perceived as one of the main strengths of city-to-city cooperation, namely peer-to-peer learning (Bontenbal 2009a; Van Ewijk and Baud 2009; Johnson and Wilson 2007, 2009), which restricted learning possibilities. One of the social affairs policy officers from Zeist described this barrier: ‘To me it is still not
clear what we can benefit from as Zeist. At different levels it is not clear. It is possible, for example, regarding the elderly, housing...[but] it is too superficial.’

As a general observation, it can be said that the participants were not adequately prepared before visiting their partner municipality. A policy officer from Meppel compared her experience working at the municipality with a previous experience working at an insurance company. At the insurance company a visit abroad was organized more professionally; employees received a quick language course and time was spent on learning about cultural differences. As a civil servant she felt that she just ‘hopped over to Morocco’.

7.6. **Strengthening interfaces between governmental and non-governmental actors**

All Dutch municipalities tried to build bridges between the municipal government and citizens of migrant origin through the partnerships with their peer local government in Morocco or Turkey (Van Ewijk and Baud 2009). As explained in chapter 5, whereas the larger municipalities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam did not actively engage non-governmental actors, the smaller municipalities of Haarlem, Zeist and Meppel did involve NGOs. In Amsterdam and Rotterdam cooperation with migrant source countries followed their international relations policy of building connections on a more general level through public awareness-raising campaign. A policy officer from the Municipality of Rotterdam mentioned that the cooperation between Rotterdam and several municipalities in migrant source countries had a symbolic value, i.e. it was regarded as a ‘positive gesture’ to the citizens of Rotterdam (interview policy officer Municipality of Rotterdam). At the project level (the Rotterdam-Casablanca exchange between police departments) the partnership was utilized to build bridges between the police and the migrant community. After local government policies, the size of the municipality was an important variable for the involvement of civil society organizations. A Dutch consultant living in Kocaeli and working as a liaison officer with the Municipality of Amsterdam explained:

> In big cities such a connection between sister cities is not so vibrant. In smaller municipalities you’ll find that in the Netherlands the music group is involved...at a certain moment everybody is involved. ...Well, that is just not the case between Kocaeli and Amsterdam.

The separation of municipal and civil society level was seen as a missed opportunity by several respondents, including a former NGO employee of migrant origin from Rotterdam:

> It really moves people if the municipality where they live and work is doing something with their country of origin. You just notice it, just the interest, yes, it
really is appreciated. And people are prepared to be involved. ...I feel it is a pity that the municipality keeps it separate.

Due to the economic slowdown and the budget cuts, local governments are increasingly shifting their focus towards what they see as their core functions. In many municipalities support programmes for civil society organizations are being cut. This shift is also evident in international relations policies, with several local governments reducing both the scope of activities and the financial allocations. They are relying more on initiatives from civil society actors, but several municipalities are also phasing out civil society support programmes. Breda, for example, discontinued the policy of supporting development initiatives in countries of origin set up by migrant organizations in Breda.

7.6.1. **Informing citizens**

Despite general policies to build bridges towards migrant groups, municipalities did not put much effort in informing citizens about the municipal partnerships. Capacity in terms of budget and staff for communication was limited or non-existent. In some cases the provision of information to citizens about the exchange programmes was not regarded as a municipal task. Some municipalities also seemed to prefer to keep a 'low profile' with their international cooperation initiatives, due to the generally volatile public support. In most municipalities information on cooperation was disseminated occasionally through local newspapers or the websites of local governments (but locating this information on the websites usually required extensive effort). For instance, in Amsterdam the local television AT5 reported a series on the visit of the former mayor, Job Cohen, to the partner Municipality of Kocaeli in 2006, and the Municipality of Zeist regularly communicated about the partnership with Berkane through the local newspaper. Meetings were also organized with the migrant communities in all involved municipalities, but not on a regular basis. In Zeist, for example, the youth who visited the partner municipality Berkane for an exchange programme gave a presentation during a cultural meeting. Despite these efforts, most of the interviewed participants, both from local governments and civil society organizations, expressed that the municipal partnerships were not well known in their community. A participant of Moroccan origin from Zeist commented, ‘it is a closed community [involved in the cooperation]. It should be much more in the open’.

7.6.2. **Breaking down barriers**

Despite poor communication strategies, those who participated in the exchange programmes (mayors, alderman, municipal officers and representatives of NGOs) expressed that the C2C partnership helped break down barriers and facilitate the communication between the municipality and the migrant community. It also helped in

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135 This research did not include a broad citizen survey to measure public awareness of the case study municipal partnerships.
addressing sensitive issues. A police officer from the Municipality of Zeist working at the
neighbourhood level confirmed this observation: ‘It is mainly about the connection. If
you are in contact with each other you are able to understand each other. When I
returned from Berkane I was able to build a better bridge to the youth. It shows you are
sincerely interested.’ Also the officer responsible for international relations in Meppel, a
second generation migrant, agreed with this point: ‘The mayor can use it [the
partnership] very easily, for instance, when he discusses problems. If you have no
partnership and you only highlight problems, you will have less response. In that case
you will have a very different story.’ The international relation officer of Zeist mentioned
that during a period of crisis, the 2006 murder of a member of the board of the local
Mosque, the relationship with the Moroccan community, established through the
partnership with Berkane, was very helpful for openly discussing issues. It was actually
the Moroccan community that took the initiative of approaching the municipality in this
case.

Respondents from several municipalities mentioned that through international
exchange programmes new relations between municipalities and NGOs were
established and existing contacts were intensified. In one case the international
programmes were also used strategically, as testified by a municipal officer from
Amsterdam:

We do benefit from the contacts with other departments for our work in
Amsterdam. It helps to settle barriers that exist within the municipality. … I also
try to put together interesting delegations...people who have been working on
the same kind of issues for years, and who have never met each other. It really is
beneficial if they spend some days together.

Bridges were also built between NGOs and the migrant community. A teacher from a
primary school in Haarlem, which has a sizable migrant student body that includes
several children whose parents were born in Emirdag (Turkey), was very positive about
her visit to the partner school in Emirdag:136

Making contact with parents in our school is sometimes more difficult than it is in
‘white schools’.137 ...The visit to Turkey helped in establishing contacts. Parents
approach you more easily...also the children. They feel ‘our teacher is interested
in us’. Sometimes the children have the idea ‘the [native] Dutch only think we are
bad’.

7.7. **Strengthening broader governance networks**
The LOGO East and MATRA support programmes did put some structures in place to
promote learning among the local governments in Morocco and Turkey; however, such
structures were largely absent for promoting learning in the Netherlands. The exception

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136 The participant financed her visit through a small grant from an external organization.
137 A ‘white school’ (*witte school*) is a term widely used in the Netherlands to refer to schools that have
predominantly native Dutch pupils.
are the joint activities organized at the start of the Morocco Municipal Platform, with help of VNG International and MATRA support. These included a visit by a delegation of representatives of Moroccan local governments, organized around the time of the 2006 local elections in the Netherlands. The delegation had a role as observers. The purpose was to also demonstrate how local elections are organized in the Netherlands as well as to discuss the participation of citizens of migrant origin in the local elections. Exchanging knowledge on issues related to social cohesion was an additional objective of the visit. Several municipalities that participated in the platform (Zeist, Meppel, Gouda and The Hague) also jointly organized activities on youth exchanges. Even though knowledge exchange did take place between the participating local governments, this knowledge was not clearly embedded or linked to higher government levels. In the framework of the Turkey Municipal Platform, Dutch local governments met and exchanged experiences on LOGO East projects. In these platform meetings, there were almost no knowledge exchanges on issues related to social cohesion and integration (author's observation during multiple platform meetings). It can be concluded that unlike in Turkey (and to a lesser extent in Morocco), where the first signs of the strengthening of the governance sector could be observed, there were no indications of strengthening of the governance sector in the Netherlands as presented in the multi-level and hybrid multi-level network model.

7.8. Conclusions
This chapter focused on the question to what extent the process of knowledge exchange and learning in Dutch-Moroccan and Dutch-Turkish municipal partnerships led to strengthened local governments, stronger local government–civil society interfaces and stronger broader governance networks. Four models illustrate the different impact of exchanges in municipal partnerships: (1) a classic government network model, whereby mainly local government bodies are strengthened; (2) a multi-actor network model, in which both local governments and non-governmental actors are strengthened as well as their interfaces; (3) a multi-level network model, which focuses on strengthening local governments as well as broader governance networks including higher government levels; and (4) a hybrid multi-level network model, which combines the multi-actor and the multi-level network model.

The research found a variety of models in the case studies. The dominant models were the classic government network model and the multi-actor network model, while there were also some examples of the multi-level network model. The findings demonstrated clear evidence of strengthened local government bodies in Morocco and Turkey (especially service delivery). Implementation of lessons learned was particularly strong in Turkey, where communication was easier and local governments had more

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138 The Platform for Municipal Cooperation between the Netherlands and Morocco (Platform Gemeentelijke Samenwerking Nederland-Marokko) together with the Dutch Embassy in Rabat and NCDO organized the exchange (see http://www.vng.nl/nieuws/06-02-22/marokkaanse-waarnemers-bij-de-gemeenteraadsverkiezingen, last accessed 20 December 2012).
space to manoeuvre compared to Morocco. In Morocco important forms of learning occurred, but in some cases the lessons could not yet be applied. The study found only modest evidence for the strengthening of civil society in Morocco and Turkey. However, the findings are still relevant, especially in light of the important ongoing changes in these countries, particularly in Morocco. Governmental and non-governmental actors in the Netherlands especially learned about cultural issues and diversity as well as reflecting on their own work processes. Due to the direct link with the migrant community, this kind of learning is more openly recognized and appreciated in Dutch-Moroccan and Dutch-Turkish municipal partnerships compared to other North-South municipal partnerships. Despite the personal learning that occurred, the extent of policy change was limited. Several lessons were not applied as it was difficult to adapt them in the existing policy practices, or there was no space and flexibility for adopting bottom-up practices. So, although local governments are interested to engage in international exchanges with Morocco and Turkey, the learning that occurred did not always materialize into policy changes.

This chapter demonstrated that C2C partnerships can be an efficient way for strengthening the interfaces between local government and civil society. Especially in the Dutch-Moroccan municipal partnerships, transnational linkages paved the way to address local politics and political representation: a subject that is often neglected due to its sensitivity (Bontenbal 2009b). In the Netherlands, local government–civil society interfaces were strengthened when local governments actively involved civil society actors, including migrant organizations. In most municipal partnerships a multi-actor network model was clearly visible. The findings confirm that city-to-city partnerships have the potential of strengthening local government–civil society interfaces, which can occur as an indirect effect in partnerships where both governmental and non-governmental actors are involved (Bontenbal 2009a).

Especially in Turkey, there were indications that broader governance networks were strengthened as knowledge on certain projects (e.g. fire safety) was exchanged in a wider context and aligned to policymaking at the national level. These cases conform most closely to a multi-level network model. There were no clear indications of the existence of hybrid multi-level model; only the exchange on the workplace for people with disabilities has some characteristics of this model as it involved both governmental and non-governmental actors, and the project also served as a pilot for policymaking in other municipalities and higher government levels. This never was an objective from the onset of the programme, and the subsequent cooperation between Amsterdam and Kocaeli mainly focused on the exchange between local government bodies. In Morocco there was less evidence of this effect, while there were no indications of strengthened broader governance networks in the Netherlands.

Figure 7.2 and table 7.1 present the dominant impact models which were found in the case studies. Three models were visible, whereby the multi-actor model was central. Strengthening broader governance network as shown in model 7c occurred in
some cases, but to a certain extent and only in Morocco and Turkey (not in the Netherlands).

![Figure 7.2 Adjusted impact models for the strengthening of local governance processes](image)

Table 7.2 Strengthening governance processes for the various impact models in case studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Classic local government network</th>
<th>Multi-actor network</th>
<th>Multi-level network</th>
<th>Hybrid multi-level network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases (project level)</td>
<td>Some cases</td>
<td>Many cases</td>
<td>Some cases, first signs</td>
<td>No clear case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Police</td>
<td>Waste management</td>
<td>Fire department</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Youth participation</td>
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<td>Social welfare</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Fire safety</td>
<td>Waste management</td>
<td>Waste management</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Preservation of</td>
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<td>cultural landmarks</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>the Netherlands</td>
<td>Fire safety</td>
<td>Policy</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Youth</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Schools</td>
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