



The Future of the Haarlem-Mutare City Link - March 2008

Foreword

Haarlem is officially linked with Mutare in Zimbabwe. The Haarlem-Mutare City Link Foundation (*Stichting Stedenband Haarlem-Mutare*, or SHM) was established in 1991 to help develop and form the relationship between the two cities. SHM is an independent organisation with close working links to the City Councils and other organisations.

Haarlem and Mutare are working towards a sustainable society. Both cities research and promote activities and programmes that are focussed on strengthening the prospects and capacities of all residents with respect to sustainable development. This work is not restricted to the city-level; it reaches right into the heart of the suburbs as well.

The city cooperation follows five basic principles:

- Sustainable development;
- Reciprocity;
- Exchange of knowledge and experience based on equality;
- Activities are based on a firm assessment of the situation in consultation with the local population;
- The programme and activities are transparent and results can be accounted for.

These principles form the necessary basis for all work carried out by SHM.

The foundation's mission is as follows:

The Haarlem-Mutare City Link Foundation's mission is to work towards the achievement of equal rights for development in both North and South, focussing its activities thereby on a sustainable future. This is done by a small scale exchange of Haarlem's civil society with that of Mutare.

This goal is to be achieved by developing and supporting activities that strengthen the bond between Haarlem and Mutare.

The City Link organisation encourages open dialogue and firm cooperation at a local level between North and South that is focussed on sustainable development. Furthermore, it acts as a meeting place and a point of reference for parties in Haarlem that are interested in international cooperation. Information is available not only about the cooperation with Mutare, but about Zimbabwe and Africa in general too. In this way the city link facilitates a transfer of knowledge and self-help, based on respect for the culture and self-esteem of both North and South alike. This helps to form a good basis for sustainable development; 'study kits' are lent to primary schools to give an impression of the situation in Mutare.

This is all done under the motto: *'Mutare, a window to the third world in Haarlem. For a sustainable Mutare, and a sustainable Haarlem too.'*

The population of Mutare needs our financial and moral support. Especially on the eve of the 2008 presidential elections, civil society can give the democratization and development of the country a new impulse from beneath.

History

The city link between Haarlem and Mutare will be 15 years old this year. The initiative for a city link was taken by the third world platform in Haarlem and other local development agencies together with Haarlem's City Council (contact with Mutare came about via the City of Groningen). Together, these organisations worked out the details of the city link and established the following basic principle: cooperation in various areas of interest based on reciprocity and equality.

The task of implementing the city link in Haarlem has been given to the Haarlem-Mutare City Link Foundation (SHM). In Mutare this was initially a responsibility of the City Council. Due to political developments in Zimbabwe, contact with political and governmental agencies was frozen several years ago. As a result, SHM no longer has direct contact with Mutare's City Council, which is now effectively under the control of the central government in Harare.

In Mutare the city link is sustained by private partnerships, foundations and individuals working on their own initiative, regardless of their role or position in society.

The City Council of Haarlem subsidises the upkeep of SHM's office in Haarlem. In addition, the City Council makes a sum of money available for a coordinator to operate in Mutare.

Reorientation

In recent years the city link has accomplished a lot. Thanks to the work of hundreds of volunteers and tens of organisations in both cities, the pioneer phase of the arrangement is definitely over. Many activities are well established in the city link organisation and/or have been taken into the care of independent local organisations. The city link between Mutare and Haarlem is growing up. The city link's working methods have also attracted a lot of interest from national and international organisations. This interest is demonstrated by, for example, a continuing increase in the number and type of activities held in Mutare and Haarlem. In spite of the recent unsettling political developments in Zimbabwe, there is an increase in the number of projects being carried out. The city link's position therefore also needs to be reconsidered.

In the autumn of 2005, the SHM board decided to find out which developments arising from the city link activities were the most desirable, and how the city link should be organised in the near future. This research was carried out with funding from ICCO and SHM. This memorandum is the basis for the SHM board's policy document. It will be followed by one or more implementation reports.

Research Questions

The executive established a number of research questions. The main features of these are as follows:

- a. What is the influence of the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe, and in particular Mutare, on the development of our projects and activities?
- b. Can our projects and activities be protected against (local) political influence?
- c. What role can an umbrella or platform organisation such as LA 21 play to achieve this? Or is it better to work with strong grass root organisations?
- d. What improvements can be made to the organisation and communication between SHM in Haarlem and the city link/LA 21 in Mutare?

- e. Which target groups and organisations are not yet involved and what can we do to get them involved?

Reports

Bert Bruijn visited Mutare on two occasions in 2006 and spoke to those involved with the city link there. His findings are recorded in the report 'How Green is the Grass?' In 2006 SHM commissioned two young graduates to study cultural activities (Elise van der Mark) and health care (Manon Beetstra) within the framework of Xplore.

An evaluation report of the sport project was released in 2005 under instruction from SHM, ICCO and the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

LA21 ordered a baseline survey to be conducted in the Mutare suburbs of Hobhouse and Murahwa by Africa University. The results of this survey were published in January 2007. In March 2007 the social impact of the sport project in Mutare was researched by Africa University for the Haarlem Mutare Sport Leaders.

The above mentioned documents form the basis of this document.

Key Findings

All of the reports recognise the need to strengthen the organisation in Mutare and Haarlem, as well as the need for a better supply of information and improved communication and exchange of information between the office in Haarlem and those concerned in Mutare.

Another broadly supported recommendation is to invest in people in Mutare, who can make a positive contribution both now and in the future.

The dictatorial regime in Zimbabwe is leading the country towards economic and social decline, and is suppressing freedom of speech, associations and public meetings. This is of great importance. Both society and the regime itself are staring into the abyss. It is difficult to predict when this regime will fall, or what will replace it. It is therefore quite likely that the situation will worsen even more before any improvement is seen.

Looking to the future, SHM and its contacts can play a modest but nevertheless important role in Mutare and the surrounding area. Having a good organisation in place is therefore of crucial importance. People of local importance and young residents, who are the basis for the future, can be stimulated and trained in their activities.

In one of its reports, the International Crisis Group indicated that it will take between 10 and 15 years for the Zimbabwean community to recover from the damage caused.

Local Action 21 and Local Organisations

Originating from contacts made through the city link, the organisation Local Action 21 (LA 21, an initiative from UNCTAD) plays an important role in Mutare. It is now the meeting platform between several departments of the Mutare City Council and local organisations. Three years ago LA 21 became a foundation. If it were down to us, this initiative will soon be picked up again by Mutare. LA 21 can then become the movement responsible for the content of all activities related to the city link in Mutare. The coordinator in Mutare will also be brought into the LA 21 organisation. Responsibility for work and activities is thus secured at the executive level of the Haarlem-Mutare City Link partnership and between both coordinators.

The projects and activities can of course be carried out by other organisations in Mutare, although the primary discussion partner for Haarlem at an executive level is the restyled LA 21 (the coordinating organisation).

This ensures that the SHM board in Haarlem has a counterpart in Mutare, which in turn can help to develop equality further. Equality also means that Mutare is responsible for its own activities and the ways in which these are carried out. The same applies to Haarlem. As mentioned in the foreword, the basic principles of the city link are sustainable development, reciprocity, transferability and a good analysis of the existing situation.

The role of LA 21 can be strengthened further by providing it with more facilities. Furthermore, organisations in the different sectors, such as Haarlem Mutare Housing Trust Foundation (HMHT) and the Mutare Haarlem Sport Leaders (MHS), have to be able to continue as robust and independent organisations. LA 21 will also continue to function as a breeding ground for activities and projects.

In addition, LA 21 provides office facilities and coordinates activities (such as capacity building and joint communication) for its associate grass root organisations. It is, and will remain, a platform to test the activities of participating organisations. From LA 21, new organisations can be developed. There are few civil organisations in Zimbabwe able to determine their own position and operate independently. An important task of the city link in Mutare is to help people organise themselves, either at a small, local level, such as community-based organisations, or with specific interests in mind. If beneficial to these groups or organisations, the creation of an independent registered organisation such as HMHT must be encouraged. Such organisations are important for several reasons: they can attract their own capital, they allow similar activities to take place within a single organisation, they protect umbrella organisations against financial risks, and they are better placed to prevent takeovers and influence from unwanted sources.

In Haarlem work is to be carried out by the different working committees and staff. In Mutare this work is to be performed by the staff already in place (coordinator, project leader, volunteers etc.). It is up to LA 21 how it further organises its affairs. Consideration is to be given, however, to existing or future grass root organisations or those initiated from sector committees. The aim here can be to make initiatives relating to sustainability and social ownership self-reliant. There is as much communication as possible between the organisations in Haarlem and Mutare during the implementation phase. This helps to develop equality further.

Position and Job Description of the City Link Coordinators in Mutare and Haarlem

The city link coordinator in Mutare is the spider in the web for parties in Mutare that are involved with the city link. The role of the city link coordinator is to initiate activities and manage people in Mutare. He monitors communication between Haarlem and Mutare. The same profile applies to the coordinator in Haarlem. In the Netherlands/Haarlem, additional emphasis is placed, in particular, on attracting funds that will allow the city link to flourish. Both coordinators are responsible for the proper implementation of activities and ensure there is good communication internally and between different working committees and grass root organisations in Mutare.

Cooperation with International NGOs

A small level of cooperation exists with a number of organisations that are active in Mutare, including ICCO, SNV, and several foreign organisations and UN organisations. A number of organisations have indicated an interest in extending this cooperation further. The good contacts established by SHM and LA 21 create a good basis for expanding and strengthening the cooperation with these NGOs and reinforcing the cooperation with local organisations in Mutare, including the churches.

Focussed on the Future

The following are required to keep activities focussed on the future and to ensure the results achieved can be built upon:

1. Invest in the people of Mutare

Training has to become a standard feature of all city link projects for those people involved in these projects. By training people, just like the sport leaders, local talent is able to develop and contribute to the city link and the community in Mutare. Providing this training requires cooperation with local education establishments and financial support from NGOs.

Specific education for Zimbabweans in the Netherlands or elsewhere, in the form of courses or studies, is a good way to promote management training. For this purpose agreements need to be made with organisations and education establishments in the Netherlands. Agreements also have to be made with the Immigration and Naturalisation Department to make long-term student placements in the Netherlands possible.

2. Invest in the people of Haarlem

In Haarlem the city link organisation is already a voluntary organisation with working committees and an office team of volunteers, subsidised employees, students and paid employees. Two or three permanent scholarships are usually offered to young people at the office. Supervision is currently provided by the city link coordinator. If we wish to expand the number of scholarships available, then the supervisory capacity will also need to be expanded.

3. Give special attention to the involvement of women

The projects that are carried out by the city link in Mutare give structurally too little attention to the position of women. Women are involved in the projects but seldom have a say in their implementation. We need to give this specific attention and to make it a central point for consideration in all projects.

4. Strengthen Local Action 21

An office/assembly centre is to be established in Mutare. This will function as a meeting place in the city for employees and volunteers of the city link.

The office will be provided with simple facilities:

- telephone;
- computer;
- good internet connection;
- photocopying machine.

The facilities will be shared with other related and reliable organisations.

Agreements will be made with ICCO regarding these facilities and how the office is manned.

5. Support grass root organisations

Following the Mutare Haarlem Sport Leaders and Haarlem Mutare Housing Trust, we would like to make the further development of grass root organisations possible. This first step has already been taken with the starter programme Culture and Health Care, in which grass root organisations are supported by allowing a Zimbabwean trainee to work alongside a Dutch starter.

6. Promote organisations in Mutare

LA 21 functions as an umbrella and discussion platform for local organisations and civil servants. There are few civil organisations in Zimbabwe that are able to determine their own position and operate independently. An important task of the city link is to help people in Mutare organise themselves, either at a small-scale local level, such as community-based organisations, or with specific interests in mind. If beneficial to these groups or organisations, the creation of an independent registered organisation such as HMHT must be encouraged.

Such organisations are important for several reasons: they can attract their own capital, they allow similar activities to take place within a single organisation, they protect umbrella organisations against financial risks, and they are better placed to prevent takeovers and influence from unwanted sources. The disadvantage of a powerful umbrella organisation with substantial financial weight is that it can easily become a target for external influence, which can cause major damage to projects and networks.

7. Promote organisations in Haarlem

SHM's mission is *to be a window to the third world*. The foundation's activities take place with as much cooperation with other organisations in Haarlem as possible. The aim is to promote co-ownership of this form of international cooperation by these Haarlem-based organisations. The conditions for this cooperation are a strong network, a good PR policy and good communication with our partner in Mutare.

8. Promote work placements

In cooperation with ICCO, we have been sending young trainees and experts to Mutare for several years now. These people have made an essential contribution to the sport project in Mutare. Following completion of the sport placements, temporary placements are now being planned in the fields of culture and health care. The long-term relationship with ICCO, and the opportunities that this provides for the city link in Mutare, as well as in Haarlem, is of vital importance. Building on the

opportunities provided and seeking cooperation with organisations that are already active in Zimbabwe, such as Hivos and SNV, can further strengthen the foundation. We must make sure we are properly equipped for this cooperation, both professionally and in terms of policy.

9. Gain support in the Mutare community
SHM has built up a lot of good will in Mutare. Many people are aware of the contribution made by the foundation to society there. It is important that the investment in good will continues. Involvement of the Mutare people in the city link is essential. Considering the increase in activities in Mutare, it is important to get more people to participate in the projects and to broaden the activities of the city link in Mutare. One way of doing this is to attract the right people for the projects (e.g. Gift Sanyanga in HMHT), and holding on to them. Another approach is to offer student placements and to cooperate with people and organisations when activities and projects are being implemented.

10. Gain support in the Haarlem community
SHM's mission requires us to continue investing in projects and activities in the city and region. The foundation would also like to share 'ownership' of these activities with organisations in Haarlem. Its activities should serve to enhance community development in Haarlem and Mutare and, where possible, should be reciprocal. The experience of the MHS can be used as an example of this. Together with the local community sport workers in Haarlem and Mutare, MHS is able to carry out sport-related work in local communities.
The education project 'A Journey to Mutare' (*Een reis naar Mutare*) ensures that the Haarlem community is well aware of the city link. Other activities in Haarlem, such as sporting and cultural activities, also make an important contribution.
The board and staff at SHM must continue to promote cooperation with organisations in Haarlem and the involvement of volunteers.
Involvement of Mutare residents in the implementation of projects here in Haarlem could also be improved. This would give Mutare the chance to become the window to the third world that it aspires to be.

11. Secure finance for activities in Haarlem and Mutare
The activities in Haarlem and Mutare are having less and less to do with the government. In Zimbabwe this has been prompted by the political and economic situation. In Haarlem we are faced with a state government that does not want to do business with Zimbabwe (VNGI) and a situation in which SHM is growing faster than the City Council's structural funding. This means that SHM has to be even more proactive in seeking finance from Dutch NGOs, companies and private donators. Funding is often provided as project subsidies. As a result, SHM is continually looking for sponsors for its projects. In practice, this leads to continual innovation and an increase in the city link's activities in Haarlem and Mutare.

12. Improve internal organisation
The same increase in city link activities also has consequences for SHM. The following aspects require attention: communication and the organisation of processes within the office (autonomy of the working committees), and the relationship between staff, working committees and the board. So that they can be properly defined, everyone's responsibilities are to be gathered together and recorded.