

SISTER CITIES RELATIONS: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

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Introduction

Sister City relations has been widely known abroad and the benefit of it has been felt in the context of bringing closer relationship among nations, even in materializing mutual beneficial cooperation among countries which conduct this partnership system.

But, on the other side there have been no less criticism and cynicism addressed to this Sister City relations. One said that Sister City relations was only a new form of domination of the rich countries for the poor ones or other cynicism saying that Sister City relations has only been a disguised Civic Junketing behind the formalized relations.

We do not have to be pessimistic to the benefit of Sister City relations by the presence of those various cynical opinions, since various surveys made on this issue showed that cities partnership relationship has grown since quite some times as a manifestation of real need felt by city community members to establish friendly cooperation, and its growth it showed many advances both in the form of its implementation and its constant growing objectives, to become a local government cooperation system of multidimensional character.

1. Sister City At Its Initial Growth

Municipal International Cooperation (MIC) or commonly known as "twinning" or "jumelage" appeared for the first time in the 1940s in the Western European Countries. According to Jean Bareth, a founder of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR),

"Jumelages can be defined as an officially sanctioned permanent partnership between two or more municipalities which promotes the exchange of knowledge and experiences, and involves different sections of society."

Further, in the years 1960s that partnership relations was developing in the United States under the name of "Sister City", in line with the appeal of President Eisenhower to promote diplomacy among peoples called "people to people diplomacy". The partnership relations was filled up with cooperation activities especially social and cultural, aiming at thawing out the rigid and tense situation prevailed in international relations, after the end of World War II.

The program of "people to people relationship" launched by the US President Dwight Eisenhower on 11 September 1956 had grown as such and became a worldwide program by the end of the 20th century. The basic thinking of the launcher was how to create a city to city affiliation, that through this "people to people diplomacy", various international problems which remain unsettled by diplomats on the conference table, could be bridged by peoples. He said,

"The Sister Cities programs is an important resource to the negotiations of governments in letting the people themselves give expression of their common desire for friendship, goodwill and cooperation for a better world for all."

The basic consideration of Eisenhower was that through sister city cooperation that stagnating dialogue among nations caused by the political interest antagonism could be exercised and give benefit to cooperation of nations.

The impact of the present globalization has encouraged the intensity of communication and interaction among nations, including intermunicipalities and their communities. The importance of friendly relations and mutual understanding among nations and states have been constantly felt in the context of supporting the materializing of sphere of international association, which would

support the national interest of every nation and state. In the United States Sister City relations has developed very rapidly. Within four decades since 1956 according to information available with Sister City International, the number of cities which established this partnership was steadily increasing, where in 1996 it was recorded at 1,605 cities in the United States had established partnership with 1,600 cities in 117 countries. Outside the United States sister city relationship has also been rapidly growing. Several cities in Europe and Asia could be taken as examples, Rotterdam has 33 Sister Cities, Tokyo 12, Seoul 13, Beijing 22 and **Jakarta** 12 Sister Cities.

2. Present Development of Sister City

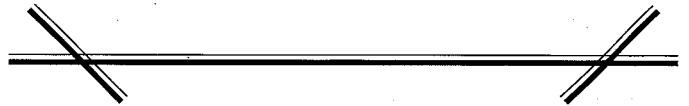
In the further development, especially in the 1970s until to date, there have been many shiftings of basic idea of Sister city. If at first it had only a character of relations between communities and its orientation was only on the effort of growing mutual understanding and brotherhood relations among nations, now it has developed into a form of relations based on the presence of mutual beneficial cooperation covering various dimensions, they are dimensions of governmental and development activities, socio-cultural and tourism as well as promotion of economic cooperation and networking, trade and investment. In addition, in the implementation of cooperation there have been two variants which could differ the level of position of every cities establishing this partnership. **First**, the symmetrical relations, that is the two cities stand on equal basis, to give and to take something reciprocally balanced reflected in various implemented programs. **Second**, asymmetrical relations, the two cities do not stand on equal basis, that one of the cities is giving more to the other city partner, on the basis on the owned additional value, both in technological, experience and financial capabilities.

Besides the shiftings of the basic idea, there has been also shifting on the entities of government doing this exercise. From activities originally limited to city to city relationship, now the participants have also been governments of provincial level (Sister-Province), or between a province with other state (Sister-State Province). By this development, various names appeared for the inter-city/inter-regional relations, not only using "sister city" terminology as for the first time launched, variations have now come up, and every country had different terminology. In the United Kingdom, this affiliation was called "twinning", in Germany "Städte Partnerschaften", in France or francophone countries it was called "jumelage". There are also names like "alliance", "bond" and "link", or called by "Kota Bersaudara" or "Kota Kembar" in Indonesia.

In addition, there has also been different of principle in managing this Sister City relations. **First**, the principle saying that Sister City relations is the business of the city government, supported by people participation in the implementation of that relationship. **Second**, that Sister City relations was considered to be the full business of the city community, where the city government only gives the necessary moral support and acting as facilitator.



One factor of general character encouraging the rapid development of municipal international cooperation (Sister City) is revolution in the area of communication and transportation.



The different perception had influenced the way of Sister City management, both at planning level and in the funding of the implementation. In general, countries following the first principle consider that Sister City relations is part of the city government business, having structural apparatus to exercise the activities and providing the necessary funds for implementing the agreed activities. Community participation in this case is the form of participation in filling up the program of cooperation, trade contact among businessmen, social-cultural relations, which altogether is implemented under the formal "Sister City" umbrella. Cities following the first principle among others are: cities in Indonesia, Japan, Korea, China and the Netherlands.

On the other hand, for countries following the second principle, the whole program, funding and implementation would be entirely exercised by the community, through a board in the form of a Committee who works voluntarily. Matters relating to the funding and implemen-

tation of activities, would entirely be exercised by the community. The city government in this case would only act as facilitator. This second school is generally followed by cities and regions in the United States.

According to Gerrit Jan Schep, there are five factors of general character encouraging the rapid development of municipal international cooperation (Sister City), they are:

1. Revolution in the area of communication and transportation. These factors provide facilities in the inter-human relations. In the social-political-economic context these factors make the creation of global issue easier.
2. The rapid urbanization in the developing countries. Statistics showed that there has been very significant growth of cities since the last 25 years resulting from urbanization. In 1965, less than fourth of population of countries of medium and low income lived in cities. In 1990 this number was estimated to increase by 1,5 times, consequently new cities have emerged. There were two direct results from this phenomenon, they are:
 - a) the ever growing potency of cities which encourages the interest to participate in international cooperation.
 - b) the ever growing importance of the international cooperation itself.
3. Decentralisation process in many countries. This decentralization (also democratization) process created new issues and problems. To overcome this, they need inspiration, experience and expertise from other cities considered to have more experiences in overcoming those excesses.
4. The disintegration of the Soviet Union. This factor gave way to opportunities for cities in the world (and was made use especially by Western Europe) to establish relations with countries in Eastern and Central Europe.
5. Failure experience in development assistance. North-South Development assistance involving donor institutions, central governments and NGOs, in several cases was felt less effective. This was caused among others by the fact that city government was not included in the process. While the city government has sufficient knowledge, expertise, and access which could be used for settling specific problems and the impact would strengthen the local institutions.

Further, at the end of 1970s and 1980s, according to Gerrit Jan Schep, there was a development on the cooperation substance, where issues on foreign assistance, trade and politics became more important in international co-

operation among cities. The development could be divided into 3 (three) principles **First**, inter-cities international cooperation giving mere emphasis on trade aspects. This happened due to the steadily decreasing aids from the federal government of the United States to the cities in the United States. And forcing those cities to find their own income resources. The city governments were encouraged to commence promoting trade contacts through other countries abroad by giving various incentives to foreign investors, beside stepping up the development of infrastructure and other facilities. By the presence of this new trend, inner-states cooperation in the United States represented a combination between diplomacy among peoples, cultural exchange and trade. **Second**, inter-cities international cooperation which gave more emphasis on development assistance aspects. The forerunner of this type of inter-cities cooperation was the Netherlands. According to J.P. Pronk, Municipalities initiative program should be extended to support the project of Local Government bodies in the developing countries. The aim was promoting solidarity and togetherness with countries of the third world through providing financial and material assistance in the context of supporting the growth of local and regional governments as well as the awareness of the importance of the attention to the development issues. From this perspective, foreign assistance was considered as a means in lessening the gaps between North and South. Cities in the then Federal Republic of Germany, France, Belgium, United Kingdom and Canada were also considered to be forerunners in placing "aid" as an area of cooperation in the sister-cities programs. **Third**, international inter-cities cooperation which gave more emphasis on political aspects as a substitute of "jumelage" which had a traditional character. Followers of this school were part of anti-apartheid cities in the Netherlands, United States, and cities initiators of "Nuclear Free Local Authorities" of Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom.

In Indonesia, sister-cities relations has developed sufficiently rapid. Today, there have been more than 51 cities and provinces in Indonesia have established city partnership relations with those abroad. For the Indonesian Government sister-cities relations is considered as a beneficial program and encourage City Governments in Indonesia to exercise cooperative relations with local governments abroad.

With the support of the central government (national government) to the development of Sister City relations, now there have been cities in Indonesia which have developed partnership relations with other cities abroad. The City of Jakarta, being the capital of state, now has 10 (ten)

Sister Cities and 2 (two) Sister – Provinces/State relations, they are: Jeddah (79), Rotterdam (83), Seoul (84), Islamabad (84), Tokyo (89), Los Angeles (91), Casablanca (91), Beijing (92), the State of Arkansas (93), Berlin (94), the State of New South Wales (94), Paris (95). Those partnership (Sister-City) relations have been catered with various activities beneficial for the two cities in partnership, both in the area of city administration in the efforts of promoting performance in the area of urban services, like city planning, traffic and transport, solid waste and various disposals and areas of social and youth affairs, like exchange of sports missions, home stay, cultural mission, NGO activities, as well as promotion of trade, investment and tourism (like exhibition, business mission, and tourist promotion exchanges). That way sister-cities relationship conducted by the City of Jakarta with its partners has covered areas of city administration, social activities and business world, so that all the city stakeholders take part in the role for establishing international relations in urban scope and provide meaningful contribution in supporting bilateral relations among nations.

Based on the survey of Gerrit Jan Schep, contained in his book "Local Challenges to Global Change", that the main aims expected from the materializing of an international inter-cities cooperation are in the effort of:

- strengthening infrastructure at local (city) level and democratization;
- providing human assistance and poverty alleviation program;
- promoting friendly relations, mutual understanding and peace;
- cultural exchange;
- enhancing the capacity and managerial and technical skills;
- promoting the awareness of community members;
- enhancing trade and business promotion;
- improving of human environment;
- improving of formal education.

Basically those aims are widely varied, there are of qualitative and also of quantitative character. But the important thing is the presence of "measurability" and "specificity" factors, besides the externality aspect, like:

- promoting friendship and relations of specific character (example: Louisville-Quito cooperation);
- enhancing the awareness of North-South relations and issues (example: cooperation between Idstein in Germany and Moshi in Tanzania).
- peace consolidation and enhancement of friendship and mutual understanding among city communities;
- developing of democracy; alleviation of poverty and enhancement of religious life.

On the other hand, some cooperation benefit of special character and more measurable could be taken as examples, like:

- strengthening local capacity and promoting administration efficiency of the city government and urban services, as well as enhancement of community participation (example: city cooperation of Shariki in Japan with Dornod in Mongolia);
- promoting the rainfall and sanitation management of city government (example: city cooperation of Nantes in France with Cochabamba in Bolivia).

The above examples indicate that in its development Municipal International Cooperation was consistently seeking for an ideal form, if at first it gave more emphasis to "diplomacy" and protocolar aspects, in its development the substance was shifting/developing into more concrete areas in various aspects of community life with a focal point of urban services aspect.

3. Sister Cities Relationship Development in the Future

By the rapid interaction and communication development among nations, Sister City relations will also be influenced to be a relationship which at first took the form of "People to People Diplomacy" to become a form of formal inter-cities relations which remained rooted in the will and the presence of people participation, so that it represented a combination between participation of the community members and co-role of the City Governments and businessmen.

The Phenomenon of the future Sister City relations is predicted to give more emphasis on the presence of real and measurable benefits, as was broadly discussed at the 32nd IULA (*International Union of Local Authority*) World Congress in 1995 in the Hague. In the background of the Congress, IULA issued a book: "Local Challenges to Global Change: A Global Perspective on Municipal International Cooperation". According to IULA, municipal international cooperation or more popularly known to us as Sister Cities, experienced three walks. **First**, between 1950-1960s relations had more emphasis on cultural and friendship twinning. **Second**, between 1970-1980s Sister Cities relations was based on development oriented project support programmes, and **Third**, was commenced in 1980s until today, Sister Cities activities involved various forms of projects of innovative characters. Besides, IULA saw the possibility of a great change in the characters of Sister City in the 1990s, they are:

1. From Ceremony to Substance
2. From Friendship to Projects

3. From Amateurism to Professionalism
4. From Community lead to Municipality-lead
5. From non-measurable to measurable objectives
6. From General to Targeted Activities
7. From Intangible to Tangible Results
8. From Incidental to Systematic Technical Cooperation
9. From Simple to Complex Linkage
10. From Single Issue Orientations to Broad Ranges of Activities
11. From Single-Structured to Multi-Structured Linkage

The change of characteristics as put forward at the IULA Congress has a strong reason. The development of meaning of inter-community diplomacy introduced by President Eisenhower to be an overall inter-city relationship, is now developing world wide with various variations in accordance with the situation and condition and cultural differences. Part of it remained to give emphasis on the community initiative, and the other part remained involving city government, community and private sector. The consequence of the interference of the regional government, according to IULA, the relations would go to the directions of a relationship which give more emphasis on substance with specific shape in the form of implementation of development projects, and the handling would be done more professionally.

IULA also anticipated that Sister City relationship should be filled up with activities covering urban techniques and could bridge business relations. Therefore, IULA thought the need of a governmental institution at every city who would do the job, as mentioned "From Community-lead to Municipality-lead". By the auspices of the government, the "accountability" aspects would become a must to be supported by the presence of measurement towards the attainment of the objectives (from non-measurable to measurable objectives). Other characteristic which gives color to Sister City relationship with the involvement of city government is that the conducted activities would not have a too general sense, but it would go to the direction of achieving certain target (from general to targeted activities) and it could be expected to bring tangible results, and the incidental character could be elevated into a systematic technical cooperation. Other difference under review was, that with the leadership of city government in Sister City relationship, the networking that was originally simple in character if managed by the community, could be developed into a complex linkage. Since when at first it had only single issue orientation, by the governmental guidance with full structure and with clear and orderly job-distribution, it would develop this activity into the one which would have broad ranges of activities and multi-structured linkage.

4. Conclusion

Though not all of the prediction of IULA would come true in a short period of time, but in various countries Sister Cities relations have tends to develop into a formal or semi-formal inter-cities relations. This is supported by the fact of the size of the benefits which would be gained from Sister City relations, both by the City Government, the community and the private sector, as one of the materializing of Private and Public Partnership (P3) in the implementation of Sister City activities. We are in the hope that with the more open international relations and supported by the ever advanced technology in the area of information, communication and transportation, Sister City could be constantly developing with various variations of form, structure and activities, in accordance with the situation, condition and culture of the respective nation. The most important thing is that by the steadily developing Sister City relationship in foreign countries with various variations in its implementation, it would steadily strengthen the feeling of brotherhood and cooperation among nations as one the basic elements in creating world peace as explained by President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

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