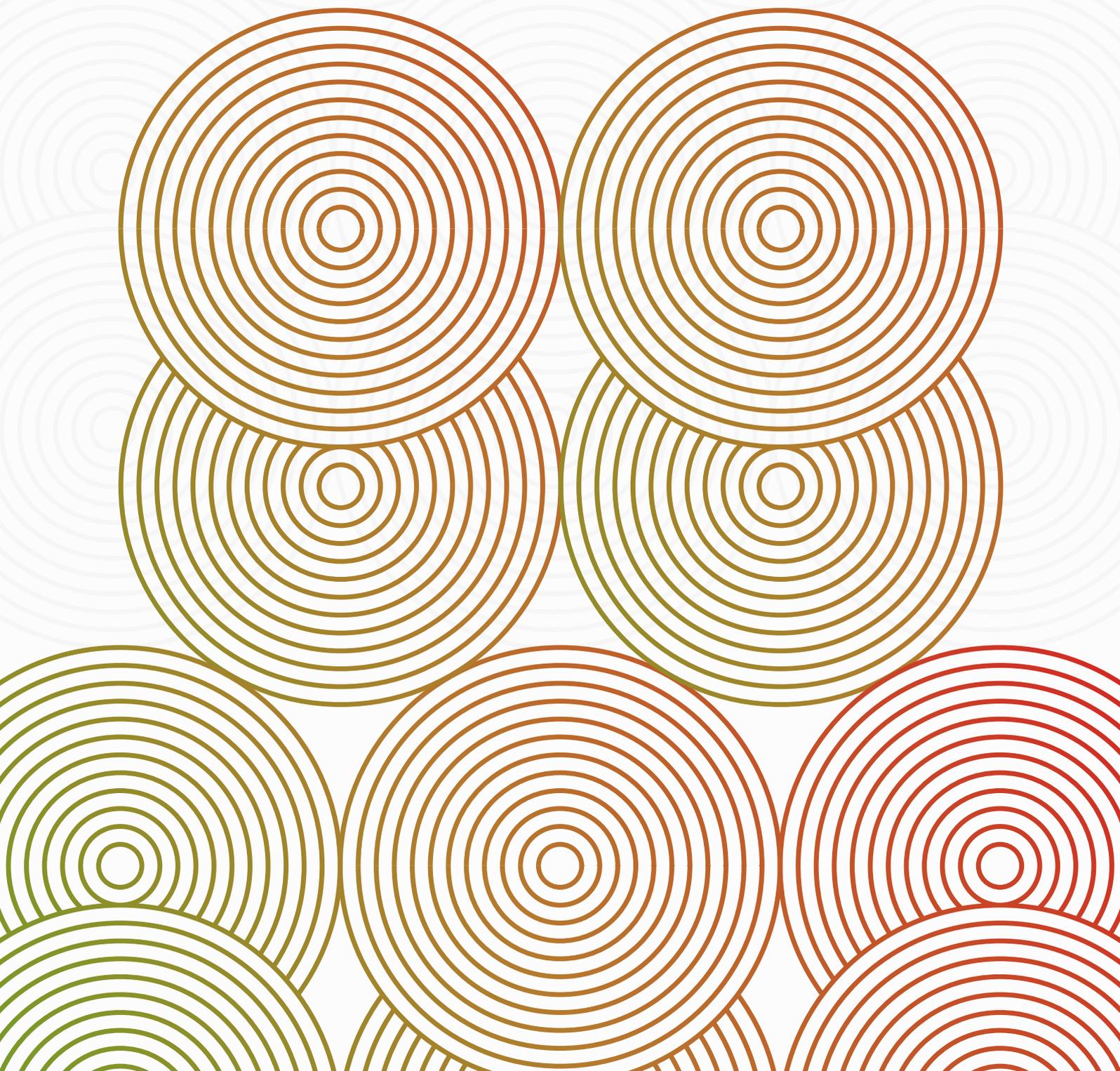# BUILDING COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK FOR CITY-TO-CITY COOPERATION IN BELT AND ROAD REGION

A study to lay a roadmap for functional city-to-city international cooperation, measure effectiveness of communication channels and the sister cities concept to create a robust, effective communication strategy for local governments in the Belt and Road region to achieve common goals

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DISCLAIMERS

About UCLG ASPAC

UCLG ASPAC is the largest regional section of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), a worldwide association and the only local government organization recognised by the United Nations. UCLG was established on 01 January 2004 and is headquartered in Barcelona, Spain.

UCLG ASPAC was established in Taipei on 14 April 2004. UCLG ASPAC is the key knowledge management hub on local government issues in the Asia-Pacific region. Its scope of work includes advocacy, capacity building, policy and research, programme and projects, and decentralised cooperation. The Asia and Pacific region has linkages to more than 7,000 local governments. It represents well over 3.76 billion people, making up more than half of the world's population, and incorporates economically fast-developing countries such as China, India, and Indonesia.

UCLG ASPAC members are mostly individual city and local governments and their associations. UCLG ASPAC Secretariat is hosted by the Capital City Government of Jakarta, Indonesia.

About BRLC

UCLG ASPAC Committee on the Belt and Road Local Cooperation (BRLC) was inaugurated at Thematic Session on People-to-People Connectivity at the first Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing. BRLC is founded, within the framework of UCLG ASPAC, by Hangzhou Municipal Government and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) with the Secretariat located permanently in Hangzhou.

With the mission of Openness, Cooperation, Sharing and Win Win, BRLC, based on the UCLG ASPAC, is committed to integrating the Belt and Road Initiative into exchange and cooperation among local governments with various practical exchange and cooperative programmes and activities; to building a cooperation platform to share experience and resources for mutual benefits and win-win outcomes in the fields of economic development, culture and education, urban governance, rural development and internet economy, thus achieving "people-to-people bonds" and "state-to-state relations." Meanwhile, BRLC will form a work pattern which is dominated by the Committee and participated by social forces so as to utilise social resources and integrate forces from all parties to jointly conduct international exchange and cooperation.

BRLC warmly welcomes members of UCLG ASPAC and other regions of UCLG, cities along the Belt and Road route, Hangzhou's sister cities and other related cities or organisations.

Foreword

Cities and towns globally face a variety of challenges—some of these are unique, and a lot of them are common. Therefore, the need for effectual cooperation and knowledge sharing among cities and local governments has become essential than ever to deal with complex and emergent urban issues.

In ancient times, cities have been the seats of power and wielded administrative and financial authority for many centuries. Cities used to converse with other cities on international or trade issues. But, over the years, beginning in the 18th century, nation-states gradually became strong. And, the role of cities in international cooperation reduced to a minimum. With urbanisation picking pace in the developed countries in the 20th century, decentralised cooperation emerged. In the early years of the 20th century, one of the first associations of intercity cooperation was established in 1913. According to the report released by the World Associations of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC) in 2001, the association enabled general information exchange and mutual support. It was also a platform for cities to discuss local issues with their peers in different countries and find solutions.

Most peer-to-peer connections were developed in developed countries in the early years of city-to-city communication and collaboration connections. Later, many developing countries too joined the bandwagon and benefitted from decentralised cooperation between foreign cities. For instance, Hangzhou city established its first sister city connection at the municipal level with Gifu city of Japan in 1979. Since then, it has established over 30 sister city associations with cities from several countries. This report will provide an insight into the experiences of Hangzhou city and the benefits of such associations.

Local Government Associations also played a crucial role in establishing connections between cities for mutual benefit. United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific (UCLG ASPAC) has consistently improved communication among local governments and enabled collaboration between local governments to leverage collective knowledge and resources of LGs in the Asia Pacific. UCLG ASPAC has been among the pioneers in institutionalising strategic partnerships with local governments and national municipal associations to benefit LGs in the region. To augment cooperation and strengthen communication among the member cities, UCLG ASPAC also constituted a committee, namely 'Belt and Road Local Cooperation', through which over 80 members are connected in the Belt and Road Region.

Today, digital technologies have brought an extensive transformation in the field of intercity-communication and decentralised cooperation. The ongoing Pandemic has accelerated the pace and frequency of communication among cities. All of us witnessed the immediate benefits of such connections when cities with existing relationships with foreign local governments assisted their peer in a time of need. However, it is to be noted that developing a formal city-to-city cooperation and communication mechanism

framework is a complex task because of individual choices of cities to decide communication channels, language barrier, resources at the disposal of LGs, the capacity of local government officials etc. Therefore, it is the need of the hour that cities develop communication and international cooperation strategies and integrate them in development cooperation programs based on commonality.

Apparently, every local government set their priorities based on the needs and demands of their citizenry, challenges they face, resources available to them, the competence of their workforce, long-term goals, and their individual commitments to global goals. All of these clubbed together define a city's joint economic, social, and ecological development goals. Therefore, such assessment can lay the foundation for building a communication strategy for decentralised cooperation among local governments. It is also to keep in mind that strategic communication and collaboration between cities enable cities to access the best available resources and ideas, innovative tools, sustainable practices,and learning from local governments' experiences in specialised domains. Hence, strategic communication in such a scenario becomes an instrument for impactful policy making, resource and knowledge sharing for formulating a common agenda, developing and implementing plans for focused impacts.

As a way forward, cities can use conceptual umbrellas such as Sustainable Development Goals, the objectives of committees like the BRLC, and the New Urban Agenda as a common starting point to build decentralised collaborations.

Urban areas are increasingly playing a proactive role in mainstreaming new ideas and catalysing change in cities to achieve the objectives under a range of global agendas and programs. Cities are continuously innovating and adapting global learning to suit local imperatives. Thus, they need to learn from their peers. Local governments need to build robust communication channels to ensure cities and towns are updated with their peers' urban innovations and learning experiences to leverage the available knowledge resources and technologically advanced tools.

Belt and Road Local Cooperation Committee is enabling communication among the member countries and their cities. To augment the efforts of the LG associations and committees, this research report intends to build a communication and collaboration framework for local governments along the Belt and Road region. The research report will use secondary data, interviews and questionnaire-based surveys with members to spotlight effective communication strategies for promoting the objectives of BRLC and other common issues that cities can address jointly.

The content of the report reflects (i) the results of a survey held among a focused group of cities along the Belt and Silk Road, (ii) the key suggestive outcomes from the interviews conducted of the city representatives and other stakeholders, (iii) an analysis of secondary research data and relevant information and policy documents available in the domain, and, lastly (iv) 10 Action-points for local governments to build a functional communication framework for peer-to-peer communication and collaboration among local governments at international level for advancing mutual learning and knowledge sharing.

I am hopeful that this report will help us create a robust and effective communication framework for the cities and local governments in the Belt and Road region to address common issues of concern with collective knowledge and resources available to them.

Best,

Dr Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi

Secretary-General

UCLG ASPAC

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Source: UCLG ASPAC, 2021.

Chapter 1

City-to-City Cooperation an Overview

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2) Imperatives of C2C Cooperation and Communication
3) Types of C2C and their advantages
4) Recent experiences of Cities in C2C in Dealing with the Pandemic
5) Key Takeaways

The realm of international relations was majorly dominated by the promotion and preservation of international collaborations. However, with the rise of globalisation, cities had the opportunity to establish beneficial relations with other cities. This process, although slowly, was adopted by almost all major economies by the start of the 21st century. (Nganje, 2015)

Since then, the world has seen a major thrust towards increased cooperation and collaboration for achieving multiple global agendas at the local level. The main actors in this regard are cities and local governments, being closest to the people and being responsible for grassroots level development and growth. However, multiple aspects falling under the jurisdiction of local governments makes it imperative for them to collaborate to better the outcome of their work (Cormann, 2019). Although the types and benefits of city-to-city cooperation vary with every city, the primary objectives are similar – establishing a definitive path of knowledge and technology sharing; promoting the exchange of goods, services, culture and human resources; and ensuring that the services rendered are world-class.

This chapter intends to give an overview of how city to city cooperations have evolved to become the complex network of collaborations that exist today, what benefits and opportunities they present to the participating cities, what types of C2C collaborations are in practice, and how C2C partnerships proved to be helpful during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

1. Evolution of City-to-City (C2C) Cooperation

Achieving any global agenda without incorporating the role of cities is difficult and next to impossible. And with the number of cities and the global urban population on the rise, it is becoming more common for cities to collaborate to share growth and development. (Smith, 2013) However, occupying less than 3% of the global landmass, they account for 82% of the global GDP, are responsible for more than 70% of the world's GHG[1] emissions, and 80% of the energy consumption. Thus, the onus of taking global agendas and missions to the local levels are the responsibility of cities, which need more cooperation amongst themselves to better their infrastructure, service delivery and improve the standard of living of their citizens.

Since ages, the norm of international collaborations has been followed, with central governments establishing trade, commerce and cultural relations. With the advent of the 1990s, cities began playing a more proactive role in collaborating, cooperating and communicating with other cities from across the globe. The World Associations of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC) was formed by many prominent local government associations in 1996 and aimed to develop their collaboration with the United Nations collectively. (Organisation, 2019)

Since then, multiple local government associations/collaborations/agreements have been developed, aiding local governments in reaching their potential. The recent concept of inter-city collaboration being that of Sister Cities. A rather interesting concept, it involves knowledge and resource sharing between cities from different countries, and sometimes even continents, with the mutually beneficial exchange of goods and services. Even during the COVID-19 Pandemic, cities with sister cities across the world stood to benefit more from the methods and tools used to arrest the spread of the Pandemic as compared to other cities. One of the major reasons for

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[1]A greenhouse gas is a gas that absorbs and emits radiant energy within the thermal infrared range, causing the greenhouse effect. The primary greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere are water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide

this was that knowledge and information sharing of best practices between sister cities helped them adapt to the rapidly changing urban environment due to the Pandemic.

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) has reported that cities are responsible for nearly 75% of global CO_2 levels, with transport and buildings being the largest contributors (UNEP, n.d.). In the coming decades, hundreds of millions dwelling in cities are likely to be affected by rising sea levels, increased precipitation, floods, frequent and stronger cyclones, storms, and more extreme heat and cold periods. The urban poor will be the most vulnerable section in the cities. This will negatively impact the most vital physical and social infrastructure situated in urban areas (UN-Habitat, n.d.). In light of these contemporary problems, cities are considered important centres to lead a sustainable LED. Devolving central power to local authorities accordingly is thus imperative in the coming decades, particularly during the post-pandemic recovery.

2. Imperatives of C2C Cooperation and Communication

City-to-City (C2C) cooperation and communication can prove to be very useful for the cities involved in that it aids the smooth flow of information and best practices. Additionally, there are many other ways in which C2C cooperation can help the concerned cities better their services and infrastructure and the well-being of their citizens. The basic advantages of cities engaging in C2C cooperation can be summed up into the following types:

a. Access to global expertise, technology and knowledge

b. Planned, well rounded and timely development

c. Vibrant, growing and externally interacting economy

d. Cultural collaborations and exchange

e. Greater representation on the world stage

f. Utilisation of digitalisation and other technologies of the 21st century

a. Access to expertise, technology and knowledge

The most evident advantage of C2C cooperation is access to global expertise and technology that cities get. Although modern technology has reached every corner of the globe since the advent of globalisation, several cities from the developing world are still falling behind. In this scenario, collaborating with a city from a developed nation (City 2) can prove beneficial for that from the developing world (City 1). Not only does City 1 gain access to world-class research and development infrastructure, it also gets the chance to plan policies and schemes with the help of experts from all across the world.

On the other hand, for City 2, the benefits are equally visible. Helping a city by providing knowledge, expertise and technology can develop them and make them aware of its assets and liabilities. This gives them a chance to build their infrastructure and services in such a way that it reduces their costs, delivery time, and, most importantly, their carbon footprint. This eventually helps in the global climate change battle.

b. Planned, well rounded and timely development

Due to the difference in levels of development and access to resources, it is often the case that while cities in developed countries are adopting new concepts (like the 15-minute city[2]), less developed cities are still dealing with typical urban issues like shortage of funds, lack of adequate infrastructure, etc. On the other hand, while some cities have excellent mobility services, others have flawless public service delivery mechanisms. In such cases, the advantage of C2C cooperation is highlighted significantly. In the first scenario between a developed and developing city, the experience of the developed city can aid the less developed city in envisioning opportunities, challenges and advantages in implementing a project/scheme which has already been implemented in the developed city.

In the second scenario, the accomplishments of one city aid in overcoming the shortcomings of the other city, and vice versa. This establishes a symbiotic relationship between the two cities, capable of developing both of them simultaneously.

Moreover, suppose one city is funding/implementing a project in its sister city. In that case, the checks on the quality, timeliness and effectiveness of the project ensure that it is beneficial and no unfavourable practices are being undertaken due to the involvement of a third party. Lastly, in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, C2C collaboration ensures that development is coordinated and all-round, not one-sided and haphazardly executed.

c. Vibrant, growing and externally interacting economy

Although the central/federal government decides macroeconomic policies in almost all cities, business-related policies are formulated locally. This means that a city's policies play a significant role in determining how well its markets and businesses thrive. For example: in many South Asian countries, street vendors play an integral role in the urban economy. They not only make products locally available to the public at lower-than-usual costs, but they also provide employment to a large number of semi-skilled and unskilled citizens. Thus, a city while utilises the services of street vendors and does not treat them as unwanted, unplanned elements of the urban ecosystem tend to have a more vibrant and participatory economy.

C2C cooperation in this sense can aid cities in establishing concentrated trade agreements and provide a broader market to their businesses. Moreover, C2C cooperation also opens the gate for students and the youth to build on their skills and gives them a chance to utilise them fruitfully with the help of targeted educational and skill-building policies implemented simultaneously by the two cities. Lastly, as discussed earlier, successful economic and business-related policies of one city can be implemented, with appropriate changes, in the collaborating city, benefitting both cities by providing a new market and consumer base to both the cities.

d. Cultural collaborations and exchange

Cities are often home to rich heritage and culture. However, the fast-paced urban environments that cities are adopting, promoting and exchanging culture often takes the back seat. Cultural collaborations between cities are thus extremely important and valuable. Cultural collaboration

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[2]A 15-Minute City is a residential urban concept in which most daily necessities can be accomplished by either walking or cycling from residents' homes. The concept was popularized by Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo and inspired by French-Colombian scientist Carlos Moreno.

ensures that the cultures of either of the two cities do not fade away and makes the citizens of both cities more aware of the beliefs, practices, and cultures of people from other regions/countries of the world. Such collaboration between cities has also assisted in promoting tourism activities too.

e. Greater representation on the world stage

A successful C2C cooperation between two or more cities is also lauded by local governments globally. Thus, the successful implementation of coordinated development plans in all member cities is a big achievement that brings the city to the forefront on the global stage. It also makes it easier for the city to connect with more cities to further increase their scope of cooperation and development in the future.

f. Utilisation of digitalisation and other technologies of the 21st century

With the advent of the 21st century, the world witnessed the introduction and increased use of multiple new and advanced technologies like blockchain, the Internet of Things (IoT), and video conferencing. These have helped various industries simultaneously, and C2C collaborations have not been alien to them either. Earlier, organising a platform for information exchange and knowledge sharing was both costly and time-consuming. However, with the widespread use of online video conferences, webinars and online meetings became common. This helped multiple cities worldwide stay connected with their sister cities without spending hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Additionally, the information exchanged is also available on the web, making it accessible to everyone worldwide. This, in turn, made it more convenient for cities to share best practices with other cities. With the help of IoT, measuring key performance indicators of projects undertaken under C2C collaborations became more manageable, as on-ground data became available to the local governments more easily, without using many on-ground surveyors without wasting time in collecting, compiling and analysing data.

Apart from this, C2C cooperation yields countless other advantages for the cities involved, which may not fall in the categories mentioned above.

3. Types of C2C and their advantages

Collaboration between cities, although popularised recently, can be of four types, based on the number and type of entities involved. These four types of city-to-city collaborations are:

a. City to city

This is the most common type of collaboration where two cities come together to establish a formal and structure medium of communication and knowledge sharing. The main advantage of such a collaboration is that post-analysis, a city can choose another city that has mastered the type of civic service that they themselves lag behind in. Once another municipality, which qualifies the requirement of the first city and can also find benefit from the collaboration, mutually agrees to collaborate with the first city, a C2C cooperation is established.

Through this form of collaboration, pre-determined types of civic services, infrastructure and policies can be improved by local governments with ease after ensuring that they are being improved with the help of the best minds in the world. Additionally, communication and knowledge sharing between the two cities is direct and flows smoothly. (Luiz, 2019).

b. Multi-city

This form of collaboration involves multiple cities communicating with one another. This way, multiple cities, with multiple and varied strengths and weaknesses can benefit from one another by sharing best practices, advanced technologies, and skilled workforce. Moreover, this ensures that the development of the cities involved is rapid and all-round.

One of the main requirements of this form of collaboration is that all cities must be at a relatively equal level of development. If, for example, the event of Tier III city, collaborating with a group of Tier I cities, although possible, will yield less than satisfactory results. One of the main reasons for this is that the issues and concerns of a Tier III city will be more concerned with improving the quality of civic services and infrastructure available in the city, while that of a Tier I city will be with attracting and managing the growth of all kinds. Secondly, a common set of problems is also a trait of a multi-city collaboration. This helps all involved cities combine their research and development capacities to work on a common yet universal solution. This also ensures that the needs of everyone are addressed at the planning level, giving birth to a universal city.

c. City and LGA

This is yet another form of C2C cooperation where a city collaborates with a local government association.[3] This way, a single city collaborates indirectly with multiple cities, who are also collaborating with each other, through the local government association (LGA). On the other hand, the LGA is responsible for spearheading universal development programs, research and ideas for local governments and handholds them wherever required. Usually, this collaboration of a city with an LGA is established only at the national level. However, there are multiple examples of cities partnering with independent, international local government associations for short durations concerning a particular project.

This way, it is ensured that local governments get a chance to voice their opinions in policymaking at the national level and that they are allowed to become a part of the nation's common development agenda. This ensures that the urban development of a nation contributes directly and immensely to national development and that cities do not function as independent bodies of unplanned and unintegrated growth and development.

d. LGA and LGA

This is the most diverse and complex form of C2C collaboration for a city. This form of collaboration entails that two LGAs partner to benefit cities members of either one or both the LGAs. Thus, this form of association helps the most number of people and affects development in many cities in one go. Moreover, it also ensures that all basic pre-requisites of any

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[3]A local government association is a body which collectively represents all local governments in a country. The existence of local government associations can be witnessed in all parts of the world. They act as a bridge between the voice of the local government and that of the national government, ensuring adequate funds and favourable policy decisions for local governments. They have varied forms of membership.

project/undertaking/policy-level decision of the LGA and its members are scrutinised and adhered to. This way, the working of both the LGA itself and its member cities becomes more transparent. Lastly, national governments often undertake this form of collaboration to ensure local area development through a top-down approach that ensures ground level changes resulting from policy decisions.

4. Recent experiences of Cities in C2C in Dealing with the Pandemic

The COVID-19 Pandemic proved to be a brutal and revealing test of the resilience of cities and their preparation of handling unforeseen circumstances. While many cities eventually succeeded, the economic loss and loss of life was immense and has left a considerable gap in the urban centres' current position and that which they had envisioned during the pre-pandemic period. For those cities involved in C2C collaborations, however, the story was very different. Although immediately after the Pandemic reached every corner of the world, it took a little time for cities to recuperate and reorganise themselves to function under the new normal, the collaborations they had struck with cities from different regions of the world proved to be beneficial just a few months later.

As mentioned earlier, the aspect of C2C collaboration that helped cities the most during the Pandemic was knowledge and resource sharing. In many cases, cities, to aid the battle against the COVID-19 Pandemic in a sister city, organised fundraisers and exported free-of-cost masks. For example, when China was witnessing record-high COVID-19 infections last year, the Canadian city of Markham raised $20,000 in a dinner event for its sister city of Wuhan. When the Pandemic came under control in Wuhan, the city returned the favour by supplying 12,000 surgical masks to the frontline workers in Markham. This, according to administrations of both the cities, helped them immensely in curbing the virus spread. The funds collected by Markham helped Wuhan purchase essential supplies, while the masks supplied by Wuhan helped Markham safeguard the lives of their frontline and healthcare workers. The American city of San Antonio also showcased a similar example when the city's residents came together to fund the cost of essential medical supplies to be sent to their Chinese sister city Wuxi when cases in China were rising exponentially. When the condition deteriorated in the United States of America, the city of Wuxi sent 30,000 face masks to the city of San Antonio to aid their battle against the Pandemic.

A similar case was witnessed when Zhongshan, a city in southeast Asia, shipped masks and personal protective equipment (PPE) kits to its three sister cities: Moriguchi and Nagasaki, Japan; and Markham, Canada. Seeking help, when the Pandemic was raging in China in early 2020, various Chinese cities reached out to their partner or friendship cities, seeking help n procuring masks and PPE kits. Responding to the cry for help, multiple cities from across the world reached out to their sister cities in China and Japan, China's largest twinning partner, initiated the bulk of such gestures, followed by South Korea, another major twinning destination for China(Jin & Harrison, 2020).

Cities in South Asia also utilised their collaborations with American cities. For example, the American city of Norfolk received 2000 masks as a donation from Ningbo Beilun District, China. In addition, Utah has maintained a sister city relationship with Liaoning since 2016. When the Pandemic raged in the United States of America, Utah announced that it had received 7,000 N95 masks, 70,000 disposable surgical masks, 7,000 protective suits and 3,000 face masks for children from its sister city. This, according to authorities of Utah, greatly

aided their battle against the Pandemic and helped them arrest the virus spread (Yinmeng, 2020). Similarly, despite receiving a request call from its long-time sister city of Chengdu to provide medical-level PPE kits for its frontline warriors, the American city of Phoenix eventually ended up receiving approximately 15,000 masks from Chengdu, which were later distributed across the state of Arizona, where Phoenix is located (Blokland, 2020).

UCLG ASPAC also facilitated resource sharing between different south and southeast Asian cities during and after the Pandemic. This included organising a webinar series to create an interactive platform for cities in the global south. Through this webinar series, UCLG ASPAC aided knowledge sharing between its member cities, fulfilling their duties and roles.

5. Key Takeaways

Thus, there are countless examples of cities from different parts of the world helping their sister cities during the Pandemic. Apart from the Pandemic too, there have been numerous instances when cities have benefitted from their collaborations with other cities and have built a better urban environment for their citizens, as has been discussed in the forthcoming chapters of this research. This chapter has given details about the types of decentralised local cooperation available to cities and how each of them functions. However, there is no set formula for the success of one kind of collaboration. It will depend on the current needs and requirements of local governments. It is for cities and LGs to assess their requirements based on the benefits of each kind decentralised international collaboration. A few of the critical learnings that cities have learned from their past experiences are given below:

Cities must ensure that their C2C collaborations are not left idly and only exercised in need. Constant collaborative efforts with established sister cities must ensure that in times of need, the medium of communication is not already dead.

Cities must be more involved in humanitarian diplomacy, like the ones which were witnessed by the world during the Pandemic.

Although not a pre-requisite, cities must establish a symbiotic relationship with other cities, where both parties benefit from all activities undertaken jointly, even if the benefit is not equal between the two parties. This ensures that the two parties continue to remain interested in keeping the C2C collaboration intact.

Cities must keep the people at the centre of any collaboration. This helps in formulating projects and policies that are concurrent with the needs of the people and not the vision or ideas of the administration/local government.

Sufficient and long-term exchange of skills, commodities and services between the participating cities must be planned and executed from the very beginning. In this way, it is easier for cities to stay in touch with their partner city continuously, keep learning from their experiences, and stay up-to-date on the latest developments in urban development in different parts of the world.

The COVID-19 Pandemic was a huge wake-up call for cities worldwide, making them realise that they cannot 'live like an island' and need to collaborate to survive and thrive. The new world now taking shape cannot afford local governments working in silos and needs coordinated, planned action to overcome global issues like COVID-19, future imminent pandemics, climate change, and global warming.

Source: UCLG ASPAC, 2021.

Chapter 2

Role of Local Government Associations in Strengthening City-to-City Cooperation

1) UCLG ASPAC: Enabling LGs to Collaborate in the Asia Pacific
2) National LGAs and their significance in Connecting LGs
3) Interviews with Key Cities
4) Conclusion

The previous chapter explained how C2C cooperations can boost the development of the cities involved in such associations. LGAs play a monumental role not just in town twinning but also for the city they are operating in. Over the years, many countries and groups of countries have formed local government associations, but only a few are proactive in supporting the local government institutions in their region. UCLG ASPAC has emerged as one of the main LGA in the Asia Pacific region, with an extensive network of local governments ranging from the Philippines, Nepal, Indonesia, India, Laos, Pakistan, South Korea to China. UCLG ASPAC has assisted local governments in several countries and assisted them in strengthening their network with a range of activities and programs. The role of UCLG ASPAC in providing handholding support during the Pandemic was noteworthy as it helped cities connect based on their requirements and resources. The details of ULCG ASPAC activities will be discussed later in this chapter. Still, its activities reflect that a robust LGA can bring about a transformative change in the way cities communicate, especially during the emergencies like Covid-19.

"The role of local governments and LGAs as development actors is two-fold." (Authorities, September 2010) First, it is about affecting the human development of the community they are representing or are part of. Second, it is of spearheading the activities involved in international cooperations. This includes a broad sphere of operations with a long history and a rich conceptual background. Typically, such tasks require the involvement of local self-governments and are closely aligned with SDGs or issues that have a global impact. In peer-to-peer cooperation, LGAs work on strengthening their institutional setup and their capacity for advocacy and services. They also partake in knowledge sharing by running development cooperation programs and partnerships to build local civic bodies expertise in other countries.

Over the years, several such exchanges have been organised by LGAs across the globe. Moreover, this is not a new practice and has been an ongoing effort since the 1980s as local governments and their associations have been expanding their international development cooperation activities. Such intercity dialogues are also focal points for cultural exchange, promotion of peace. They are aimed at enhancing the leadership role of local governments in terms of social and economic development. (Buis, 2009) Local Representative Governments and their LGAs need to stay proactive and keep the system churning with updated knowledge and skills. This includes the think tanks sitting at the legislative level and the people belonging to their constituencies. To increase the engagement of community stakeholders in LED initiatives, they can also increase the transparency and accountability in their processes. Furthermore, the LRGs and LGAs need to engage in dialogues on the global stage with the national governments and international development partners so that their vision, concerns and needs are clearly known and ultimately addressed. (Governments, 2019)

1. UCLG ASPAC: Enabling LGs to Collaborate in the Asia Pacific

The last two decades have seen unprecedented growth and transformation, with the global urban landscape expanding alongside the ever-increasing population. The growth has triggered changing dynamics that the local governments and policymakers need to keep up with. This growth needs to be spearheaded in a sustainable direction so that cities can maintain pace. In other words, countries need to adopt political, economic, social, legal and regulatory systems that facilitate the smooth functioning of cities, which in turn help in formulating better policies, establishing better relations and communication with other local governments. A city's potential for enabling environment directly correlates to its existing norms, history, culture, governance

practices, investments in human capital development and technologies.(Saiz, 2020)Cities must incorporate a robust and adaptive enabling environment to achieve the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.

UCLG ASPAC links over 7000 local governments, representing about 3.76 billion people. This includes more than half of the world's population and economically fast-paced countries like China, India, and Indonesia. UCLG ASPAC is based out of Jakarta, Indonesia, but its activities are spread across the Asia Pacific. UCLG ASPAC is a lighthouse for local governments in the region. With its handholding support to local governments, it has improved the functioning of many cities with its strategic interventions in many sectors. For example, in 2020, it helped local governments in Indonesia with the localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The work was entrusted to the organisation by the Indonesian Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA).

It is also making progress in building the framework of LOCALISE SDGs, LEAD for SDGs, International Urban Cooperation (IUC) Asia, and Climate Resilience and Inclusive Cities (CRIC) Programme.

In partnership with international development organisations from Europe, they are the lead implementing agency, namely Pilot4Dev, ACR+, ECOLISE, and the University of Paris-Est Marne-la-Vallée, for an ongoing EU project CRIC. The main objective of this five-year project is to propose long-lasting and unique cooperation through triangular cooperation between cities and research centres in Europe, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand. This project will contribute to sustainable integrated urban development, good governance, and climate adaptation through long-lasting partnerships. These activities of the UCLG ASPAC has a significant relevance at the continent level. Furthermore, UCLG ASPAC has developed an efficient knowledge sharing system in the Asia Pacific so the outcomes of its activities in a particular country can be easily scaled up in member local governments in other countries.

The 21st Century Maritime Cooperation Committee is a standing committee of UCLG ASPAC, jointly initiated by CPAFFC and the Fuzhou Municipal People's Government. The Committee aims to promote cooperation in the research and development of marine technology, trade and commerce. Since its establishment, 56 cities and organisations of 26 countries from 5 continents have joined the Committee. The Committee is also working with coastal cities in the Asia Pacific and the world to propagate the idea of dialogue and discussion in maritime cooperation and help push forward the development of the Core Area of the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road. (ASPAC, 21-ST Century Maritime Cooperation Committee, 2017)

There are many good examples of the impact it created in the region. Supported by the Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, UCLG ASPAC and the Jeju International Training Centre (CIFAL Jeju), organised the first-ever training on "Sustainable Tourism: Policies for Delivering Social, Environmental, and Economic Benefits in the Asia-Pacific Region" on 17-20 November 2015 in Jeju. The training witnessed participants sharing their case studies and learning from experts in the field. At the end of the training, one key takeaway was that central, local governments, and other stakeholders should build sustainable tourism practices. (ASPAC, Tourism and Culture, 2015)

Moreover, UCLG, in collaboration with Metropolis and Seoul Human Resource Development Centre, organised an Online Training Programme on building the city's resilience. The training was conducted in three sessions wherein they emphasised shared learning and examining best practices from other cities, especially during the COVID-19 induced Pandemic. The webinar

invited experts from Tehran Municipality, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, and individuals of the Senate Department from Berlin. They discussed the practices incorporated by the authorities in their jurisdiction related to the mitigation of earthquakes and tsunamis, waste management systems, and policies regarding increased sustainability. Dr Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary-General of UCLG ASPAC, emphasised incorporating smart city concepts, collaboration and data-sharing between its stakeholders.

UGLC ASPAC set up a Consultative Meeting between the Municipal Association of Nepal and National Government with Partners on Voluntary National Review (VNR) Development Process in December 2019. The meeting was held to ensure local governments' inputs in the VNR preparation process and the report. To attain positive results, both the LGAs and the LGs need to work in close collaboration. "The involvement of local governments in the preparation of VNR in some countries is varied. However, many of the LGAs are not even familiar with the VNR. The main objective is to identify how local governments and local government associations can get involved in the VNR process. Nepal is chosen as one of the pilot countries", underlined UGLC ASPAC Secretary-General Dr. Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi. The National Planning Commission in Nepal formed a Steering Committee for localising SDGs and hence included LGAs. The VNR will allow National LGAs to work alongside LGs and connect these authorities with a common goal of further development. At the meeting, several participants shared their views on VNR and how, with the assistance of UCLG APAC LGAs, coordination and communication with the LGs can be improved and drastically increased. Another programme, IUC Asia, a UCLG ASPAC and European Union collaborative programme, focused on assisting 12 cities from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Viet Nam on climate change issues.

More recently, UCLG ASPAC has also developed its Manifesto (2021-2025) through an extensive consultative exercise with local government members from all over the Asia Pacific. As a result, it has provided a roadmap to all the member cities to work collectively on the common goals and address local issues collaboratively. Alongside all these activities, UCLG ASPAC plays a central role in connecting cities through extensive webinars and online training programs during the Pandemic to respond well in time. Hence, the role of local government associations is vital in building peer to peer connections between cities in the region or at the global level.

2. National LGAs and their significance in Connecting LGs

Globalisation processes and intensive urbanisation has changed the framework and channels for the flow of information. Rapid digitalisation has further encouraged LGs in establishing city networks and realise the idea of forming a 'global city'[4]. Coming up with innovative ways to understand the new reality in today's international scenario is critical to global governance. National LGAs typically work in a fashion that supports the member councils in promoting and improving the implementation of policies drawn by the LG. LGAs represent the councils and ensure that they are the local government's strong, credible voice on the global stage. LGAs provide practical and on-ground support in the European regions on a subsidised basis or free of charge. Third, LGAs have an increased involvement at the local and community level. This makes LGAs a suitable vehicle for development. Their support is corporate as they run leadership programs and peer challenges. With their increased involvement, an area's livability may increase

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[4] Global city is an urban centre that serves as a hub within a globalized economic system and has significant competitive advantage.

as more hands are involved in tailor-making policies that are more suited for the particular area. Local and Regional Governments of Finland, in their research paper on LGAs, state that they have three broad task areas. They function as the representative voice of the local governments and often negotiate on their behalf. LGAs provide a platform for sharing and exchange of ideas. While running such operations, they are also actively involved in increasing the mutual learning for local government practitioners. LGAs also support the local governments in achieving efficient and effective local governance, service provisions, and local development. The aforementioned objectives indicate that the LGAs play a crucial role in mediating between the "bottom-up", locally-based ingredients of development, and those of "top-down" coordination.

The CPAFFC has also been a vital organisation in promoting international person-to-person diplomacy and international relations and cooperation between foreign countries for China. One of the oldest in China, having been established in 1954, the CPAFFC has worked hard to implement China's independent peace policy, observing the Five Principles of peaceful coexistence. (The Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), n.d.) The body has also played a crucial role in establishing China's dominant position on the world stage. In December 2015, the SLLF, a body of the USA, and the CPAFFC signed a memorandum of understanding. The MoU led to the large-scale knowledge exchange in educational programs, wherein legislative leaders from both organisations discussed critical contemporary policy issues. (SLLF, 2016)

FSLGA, a body that handles the affairs of LGAs in Sri Lanka, stated in their objectives that it functions with the main goal of coordinating between Local Councils and Local Governments. They have adopted a unified approach while they assist LGAs and LGs in problem-solving over common issues. They also strive towards increasing the participation of Sri Lanka's local governments on the global stage by establishing solid partnerships with national and international networks. FSLGA further clarifies in their reports that networking is also related to sharing ideas and learning from other nations' practices to better their community. Sri Lanka was one of the nations deeply impacted by the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. It was an undersea megathrust earthquake that registered a magnitude of 9.1-9.3. The following year, FCM and the FSLGA launched the Canada/Sri Lanka Municipal Cooperation Program to support the reconstruction and rehabilitation of communities affected by the incident above. The program initially started with its focus on bringing back to life the disrupted municipal service delivery, but it soon shifted its focus to enhancing inter-governmental relations and coordination (UCLG). After the initiation of the program, the three tiers of local governments came under one umbrella. The program provided the LGAs with a platform to exchange information and issues related to common concerns, which, in the end, represented the interests of LGs.

To realise the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda[5], cities must create an enabling environment that encourages intercommunication and territorialisation strategies and local government coordination. Asia and the Pacific are the main contributors to global greenhouse gas emissions. By adopting the Paris Agreement in 2015, many countries in the region promised to devote their resources towards carving a path towards a long-resilient recovery with green fiscal packages. Asia and the Pacific could lead the world towards climate change mitigation by enabling LGs to collaborate with international bodies. "Inherent synergies between voluntary strategic regional

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[5] The New Urban Agenda is an action oriented 24-page document that provides the global principles, policies and standards required to achieve sustainable urban development, to transform the way we construct, manage, operate and live in our cities.

cooperation and integration, and carbon markets, can be harnessed to promote other sub-regional cooperation and integration efforts, while the use of carbon markets helps countries reach Paris Agreement goals." (Susantono, 2020) Nations in the Asia Pacific region have a successful track record in utilising carbon market instruments through initiatives such as the Joint Crediting Mechanism Capacity Building Program run by the Asian Development Bank6. The program aims at enhancing the regional distribution of Clean Development Mechanism projects at regional and sub-regional levels. Such programs promote the integration of market mechanisms in Asia and the Pacific region, creating an enabling environment for LGs to collaborate.

3. Interviews with key cities

To better understand the role of local government associations and how LRGs have benefitted from their collaborations, mentioned below is a case study of Baguio, the Philippines, and Xi'an, China, based on survey questionnaires filled by the respective city's authorities.

a. Baguio, The Philippines

Q 1. What are the major objectives of your LRG in engaging with other local government associations/organisations?

The City of Baguio is committed to establishing alliances and cooperation with local government associations and organisations to foster long-term mutual partnerships that assist communities in gaining a national and global perspective to the challenges they face through planned cultural, educational, business/trade and humanitarian assistance exchanges.

Further, learning from other LRG' best practices and experiences and possible sharing of resources are the City's other main objectives in engaging with other Local Government Associations/Organisations.

For more details, please access the following document:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XBHN8QiScrn_k8uGRA_GeAubB942bXwn/view?usp=sharing

Q2. Kindly describe the kinds of existing cooperation engagements? Also, list the number of city collaborations your LRG has?

Baguio City is a member of the League of Cities of the Philippines, a local government league in the Philippines with the primary purpose of ventilating, articulating, and crystallising issues affecting Government administration and securing solutions through proper and legal means thereto.

The City has existing Sister City engagement with local and international government associations. The City's existing cooperation agreements aim to:

- Reciprocally plan and sanction programs toward the development /

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[6] Over 90 per cent of the Joint Crediting Mechanism Capacity Building Program are hosted by Asia and the Pacific.

improvement/enhancement of government administration, tourism, cultural preservation, the arts, environmental protection, agriculture, trade and commerce, education, technology, and the holding of various endeavours which are mutually beneficial to both parties; and

- Promote each other's assets by:

Exchange of and other collaterals in each other's locality; b. Encourage tours of each other's places of interest; and c. Reciprocal visits during festivals and other special pursuits.

CITY COLLABORATIONS OF BAGUIO CITY

No	City/Municipality	Class	Province	Mayor
1	**AngelesCity**	HUC	Pampanga	CarmeloG.Lazatin,Jr.
2	**AlaminosCity**	1st CC	Pangasinan	Arth Bryan C. Celeste
3	**Babatngon**	4th	Leyte	Maria Fe Galapon-Rondina
4	***Bacarra**	3rd	Ilocos Norte	Fritzie Ann Kaye DC.Gapasin
5	**BacolodCity**	HUC	Negros Occidental	Evelio "Bing" R.Leonardia
6	**BalangaCity**	4th CC	Bataan	Francis Anthony S.Garcia
7	**Bani**	2nd	Pangasinan	Cothera Gwen P.Yamamoto
8	**Barlig**	5th	Mt.Province	Clark C.Ngaya
9	**ButuanCity**	1st HUC	Agusan DelNorte	Ronnie Vicente C. Lagnada
10	**CalbayogCity**	1st CC	Samar	Ronaldo P. Aquino
11	**CandonCity**	4th CC	Ilocos Sur	Ericson G. Singson
12	**Daet**	1st	Camarines Norte	Benito S. Ochoa
13	***Dalaguete**	1st	Cebu	Jeffrey B. Belciña
14	**DavaoCity**	HUC	Davaodel Sur	Sara Duterte-Carpio
15	**Dipaculao**	3rd	Aurora	Danilo A. Tolentino
16	**Gattaran**	1st	Cagayan	Matthew C. Nolasco
17	**Kabacan**	1st	Cotabato	Herlo P.Guzman,Jr.
18	**Kapangan**	4th	Benguet	Manny E. Fermin
19	**Libon**	1st	Albay	Wilfredo "Das" V.Maronilla
20	**Licab**	4th	Nueva Ecija	Eufemia D. Domingo
21	**Lopez**	1st	Quezon	Rachel A. Ubana
22	**LucenaCity**	HUC	Quezon	Roderick A. Alcala
23	**MakatiCity**	HUC	NCR	Abigail "Abby" Binay-Campos
24	**MandaueCity**	HUC	Cebu	Jonas C. Cortes
25	**MarawiCity**	4th CC	Lanao Del Sur	Majul U. Gandamra
26	**MuñozCity**	4th CC	Nueva Ecija	Nestor L. Alvarez
27	**Murcia**	1st	Negros Occidental	Victor Gerardo M. Rojas

28	**Ormoc City**	1st ICC	Leyte	Richard Gomez
29	**OzamizCity**	3rd CC	Misamis Occidental	Sancho Fernando F. Oaminal
30	**Pavia**	2nd	Iloilo	Laurence Anthony G. Gorriceta
31	**Pudtol**	4th	Apayao	Hector Reuel D. Pascua
32	**SanCarlosCity**	2nd CC	NegrosOccidental	Rene Y. Gustilo
33	**Zamboanga City**	HUC	Zamboanga del Sur	Maria Isabelle G. Climaco-Salazar

City, Municipality / State	Country	Mayor	Liaison Officer
1) Caernarfon	North Wales, United Kingdom	*Hywel Wiliams (Member of Parliament)	Ms. Sonia Dao-as
2) Changnyeong	Korea	Chung Shik Kim	
3) Chicago City, Illinois	USA	Lori Elaine Lightfoot	
4) Cusco City	Peru	Victor G. Boluarte Medina	
5) Darebin, Victoria	Australia	Susan Renie	
6) City and County of Denver, Colorado	USA	Michael B. Hancock	
7) Gongju	Korea	Kim Jeong-Seob	United Korean Community Asso.
8) Hangzhou	China	Huang Kunming (Acting)	Mr. William Ang / Mr. Peter Ng
9) Hanyu, Saitama Perfecture	Japan	Komei Kawata	Pines City Lions Club c/o Consul Teraoka
10) City and County of Honolulu, Hawaii	USA	Kirk Caldwell	Mr. Art Tibaldo
11) Karuizawa, Prefecture of Nagano	Japan	Masayoshi Sato	Mr. Masahiro Okuda
12) Kislovodsk	Russia	Natalya Lutsenko	
13) Mainz	Germany	Michael Ebling	
14) Mt. Hagen, Western Highlands	Papua New Guinea		
15) Oxnard, California	USA	Tim Flynn	
16) Palmerston North	New Zealand		
17) Seoul	Korea	Won-Soon Park	
18) Shepparton	Australia		
19) St. Louis Park, Minnesota	USA	Jeff Jacobs	
20) Staffanstorp	Sweden		
21) Taebaek	South Korea	Yeon-Sik Kim	Mr. Hae Choul "Alex" Joung
22) Taitung County	Taiwan	Justin Huang	

23) Taxco, State of Guerrero	Mexico		Hon. Bernardo M. Vergara
24) Ulsan City	Korea	Maeng-woo Bak	
25) Vallejo, California	USA	Osby Davis	Ms. Catherine dela Rosa
26) Vaughan, Ontario	Canada	Maurizio Bevilacqua	Ms. Linda Insignia
27) Guam	USA		
28) Wakkannai	Japan	Hiroshi Kudo	Mr. Masahiro Okuda
29) Whitehorse, Yukon	Canada	Dan Curtis	
*30) Samcheok Si	South Korea		
30) Jeju Special Self Governing Province	South Korea	Sang-o Kim	
31) Nanjing	China		

Q3. Do you follow any protocols followed during intercity decentralised cooperation? Who spearheads such engagements?

The City Tourism and Special Events Office (CTSEO) takes charge of our Sister City engagements. The City Planning and Development Office and the City Budget Office spearhead the activities for cooperation agreements with other partner cities.

For more details, please access the following file:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/15lnEPV8RgGTtGvbHLCe5H3SEcipKhWui/view?usp=sharing

Q4. In your experience, how did the Sister City collaboration help your LRG during the Pandemic?

On the onset of the proclamation of State of National Emergency and localised lockdowns, our sister cities assisted in ferrying locally stranded tourists in Baguio and facilitated their transfer to their respective homes.

b. Xi'an, China

Q 1. What are the major objectives of your LRG in engaging with other local government associations/organisations?

Under the framework of a "dual circulation" development pattern in which the domestic economic cycle plays a leading role while the international economic cycle remains its extension and supplement, Xi'an continues to broaden high-qualified opening up and strengthen cooperation with other local governments, achieve integration and jointly build the "Belt and Road" great setup. We will improve channels, platforms and carriers for opening up, build an open economy of higher standards, establish a centre for external exchanges, and form an international gateway hub linking China and other countries.

Refer to 'The Fourteenth Five-year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of Xi 'an City' and the 'Outline of the Long-range Goals' for more details.

Q 2. Kindly describe the kinds of existing cooperation engagements? Also, list the number of city collaborations your LRG has?

Establish the Eurasian Economic Comprehensive Park, Sino-Russian Silk Road Innovation Park, Airport Economic International Cooperation Park, China-Europe Cooperation Industrial Park and other international cooperation industrial parks, UCLG Government Civil Servants Training Project, UCLG Local 4Action Hub Project, UCLG Tourism Committee, and "7 Key " workshop.

Xi'an participated in the development of the New Eurasian Land Bridge Economic Corridor, the China-Central-Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor, the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor, and the China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor.

Xi 'an now has 39 international friendly exchange cities and 64 friendly exchange cities.

Some documents which may be referred to for further details are:

- The Fourteenth Five-year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of Xi 'an city and the Outline of Long-term Goals in 2035
- Guanzhong Plain Urban Agglomeration Development Plan
- Shaanxi Province "Belt and Road" Construction 2020 Action Plan
- Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Development of the Western Region and Forming a New Pattern in the New Era

Q 3. Do you follow any protocols followed during intercity decentralised cooperations? Who spearheads such engagements?

There are 39 cooperation agreements with international friendly exchange cities and 64 letters of intent on developing friendly exchange cities signed.

The Foreign Affairs Office of Xi'an Municipal People's government is responsible for strengthening cultural and people-to-people exchanges and cooperation among local governments. Xi'an Development and Reform Commission is responsible for promoting urban cooperation in the Silk Road Economic Belt.

Q 4. In your experience, how did the Sister City collaboration help your LRG during the Pandemic?

- Share urban governance experience in combating epidemic diseases
- Conduct international anti-epidemic assistance
- Continuously broaden exchanges in culture, tourism, education, and other sectors, aiming to share development experience and promote people-to-people exchange.

4. Conclusion

Local Governments can expand their access to knowledge resources and handholding support in special areas by proactively engaging with local government associations. Hence, it is essential where cities need to proactively engage themselves while planning for peer to peer city collaboration. The example of cities interviewed highlights that both cities have C2C connections

with over 2-3 dozen cities, and each partnership has a specified objective. Xi'an also has a dedicated department to handle affairs of decentralised collaboration and communication. The research suggests that cities and local governments can benefit significantly by regularly engaging with local government associations. LGAs provide an added advantage to their members by making them available resources and tools, not just from one city but from hundreds or thousands of cities. Furthermore, the networking events, webinars, workshops and conferences provide LGs with an opportunity to select the best-suited peer for city-to-city cooperation activities.

Source: UCLG ASPAC, 2021.

Chapter 3

Response from Local Governments to Assess the Needs, Gaps and Requisites

1) Introductions
2) Questionnaire for LGs
3) List of Cities Participated
4) Analysis
5) Outcomes

1. Introduction

This chapter of the research paper, just like its previous chapters, wishes to better understand how cities have been benefitting from C2C collaborations, and why other cities must support and promote the establishment of C2C collaborations amongst each other. With the help of a questionnaire drafted specifically for the research and filled out by a group of cities, we intend on bringing to the forefront the on-ground advantages, imperatives, challenges and opportunities of C2C collaborations. The questionnaire has been divided in five sections to understand the importance and relevance of different aspects necessary for a successful decentralised city-to-city cooperation. At the end, the result of the survey underlines the significance of the most important aspect necessary for decentralised local cooperation.

2. Questionnaire for LGs

A total of three select LRGs participated in the survey. A questionnaire, which was sent withthe following set of questions, was divided into five sections (Objective; Process and Tools; Mechanism; Outcome; Key Issues):

Objective

1. What should be the basic criteria for establishing city-to-city Cooperation (C2C) between two cities from different countries? (Multi-Choice)

    - Demography
    - Common urban challenges
    - Similar Environmental conditions
    - Common Goals (Smart City, NUA, SDGs, BRLC agenda, etc)
    - Others

    1-B.   If any criteria used is not mentioned above, please explain here.

2. If your city is establishing a C2C Collaboration with a city from different country, what would be your objective? (Multi-Choice)

    - Knowledge/Idea Sharing
    - Technology Transfer
    - Strengthening people-to-people connections
    - Boost tourism
    - Other

    2-A.   If any objective is not mentioned above, please explain here.

3. Do you think exchanging ideas on culture development can help a city?

    - Yes
    - No
    - Maybe, don't know

    3-A. Briefly write your reasons for your answer in above question.

Process and Tools

4. Does your city communicate with other cities outside your country (whatever forms of relations) on a regular basis?

    - Yes
    - No

    4-A. If not, why so?

    4-B. If yes, which communication channel does your city prefer or use? (Multi-choice)

    - Email/Fax/Tel
    - Through National/State Government Channels
    - Social Media
    - Through LG Associations such as UCLG ASPAC
    - Others

    4-C. Specify the channels used by your city below.

5. Which platform do you use for communication and exchange of information between you and LRGs of other countries/regions/provinces?

    - LRG association in your country
    - Global or regional LRG association
    - Others

    5-A. If you use other/not mentioned platform for the same, please specify.

6. Is there a pre-established line of communication between you and local governments/local **government** associations in your country and beyond?

    - Yes
    - No
    - Can't say

    6-A. Please comment

7. Who plays the leadership role in international city cooperation for taking policy-level **decisions**?

    - Elected Representative
    - Local Government Official
    - Communication agencies/ Third party Consultants
    - Representative of national/ state government.
    - Others

    7-A. If others, please mention below.

8. In the rapidly advancing digital world, what are the best mediums available for knowledge sharing between cities from different nations? (Multi-Choice)

    - Web Portal

- Online meetings/ Conferences
- Social Media
- Newsletters

8-A.   If others, please mention.

Mechanism

9. Does your city have a dedicated communication department to handle international affairs or city-to-city Cooperation at global level?

- Yes
- No

10. Do you first get to know about an idea/innovation and then reach the appropriate city for information/collaboration or do you first establish connection with some cities and then exchange ideas with them only?

11. How many cities is your LRG currently engaged in regular contact and information exchange with?

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 10-20
- Over 20

12. Do you think member cities should have a centralised information system for sharing knowledge and ideas? If Yes, what could be the best suited medium?

- Website
- Monthly Newsletter
- Case study compediums
- E-forum

Outcome

13. Do you think news of unique ideas and innovations from other cities inspires your Local or Regional Government (LRG) to do something similar for the better development of your urban space?

- Yes
- No
- Can't say

13-A.   If no, briefly explain.

14. How do you feel about the information you receive from BRLC and UCLG ASPAC Member cities from foreign countries?

- Relevant
- Non-relevant
- Generic
- Repetitive

14-B. If others, please specify

15. Do you believe that exchanging knowledge has helped your LRG in improving the liveability of urban space?

- Definetely
- Not at all
- Can't say

15-A. If not, please explain briefly.

15-B. If yes, which idea/concept borrowed from another city has been the most useful to your LRG?

16. In your opinion, why do you think the exchange of knowledge from other cities has been useful to and applied in your LRG? Because ……

- Other LRG has similar challenges
- Mayor/Governor has strong leadership and values the importance of international cooperation
- LRG has experience and effective department in charge of international cooperation
- It is supported by the association of LRG such as UCLG ASPAC

16-A. If others, please mention.

Key Issues

17. How easy or difficult it is to connect with a foreign city for knowledge/idea/innovation sharing?

18. In which categories/sectors has your organisation exchanged knowledge? Provide Details.

19. What are the most prominent barriers in establishing C2C cooperation? Please share your experience.

20. Lastly, what is your suggestion for improving city-to-city communication? In your opinion, what could/should be the essential components of the communication framework?

3. List of Cities Participated

The following cities participated in the research survey:

- Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Fuzhou, China
- Jambi, Indonesia

4. Analysis

This section of the chapter analyses the responses given by the cities that participated in the research survey. In the first question inquiring the essential criteria for establishing C2C collaborations, all three cities expressed that having shared goals like the NUA, SDGs, etc., having similar environmental conditions, and common urban challenges are the basic criteria for establishing C2C collaborations. The city of Fuzhou additionally said that demography is also an essential criterion for them.

Graph 1: What should be the basic criteria for establishing
city-to-city cooperation (C2C) between two cities from different
countries?
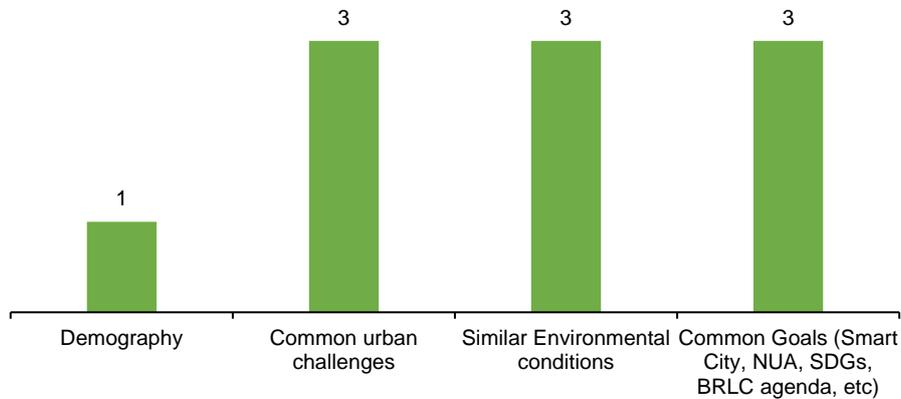
The second question enquired of the main objective of respondent cities behind establishing C2C collaborations. The most common goals were knowledge/idea sharing, technology transfer and strengthening people-to-people connections, which were selected by all three cities. The responses in terms of other options of the question are depicted in Graph 2. This shows a clear intention of mutual benefit and development between participating cities.

Graph 2: If your city is establishing a C2C Collaboration with
a city from different country, what would be your objective?
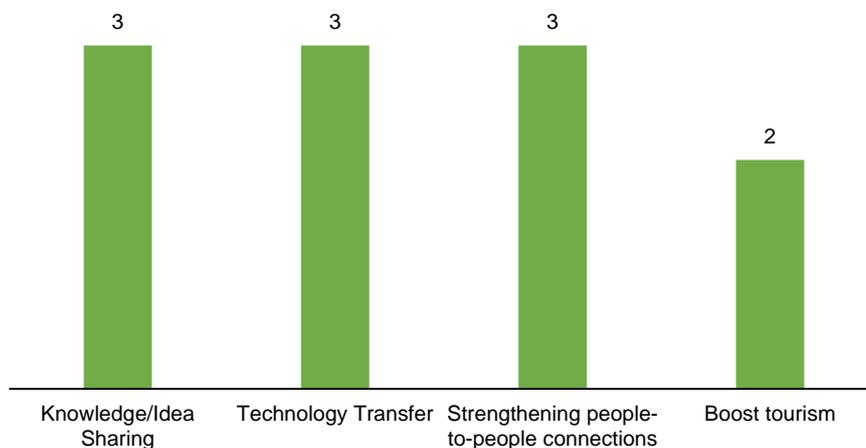
The third question affirmed that all cities believe that exchanging ideas based on cultural development can help cities. Question three-part 'a', "Briefly write your reasons for your answer in the above question," asked cities why they believe exchanging ideas on cultural development can help a city. The city of Kuala Lumpur stated that "Culture relates to lifestyle that leads to facilities provided to accommodate to the lifestyle. Understanding one's Culture allows individuals to understand one another better, thus improving communication." On the other hand, the city of Jambi answered by saying that it creates common grounds for cities to collaborate on other projects.

The fourth question asked,"Does your city communicate with other cities outside your country (whatever forms of relations) on a regular basis?". The three cities of Kuala Lumpur, Fuzhou and Jambi, replied affirmatively.

Graph 3: If yes, which communication channel does your city prefer or use?
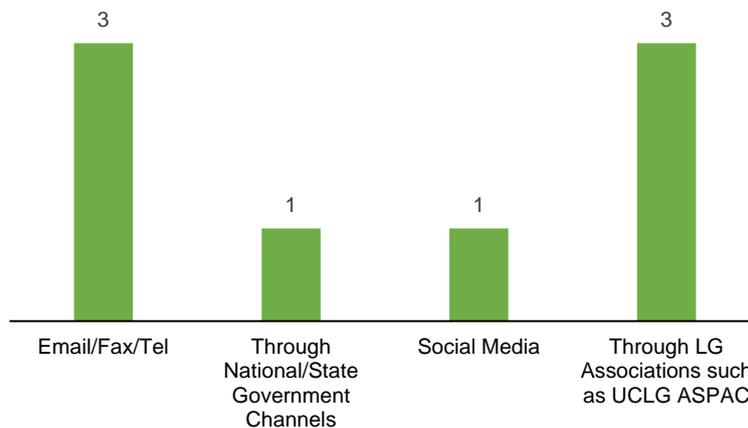
Question four-part 'b' stated, "If yes, which communication channel does your city prefer or use?". The city of Kuala Lumpur mentioned Email/Fax/Tel; national/state government channels; and LG associations such as UCLG ASPAC, as their mediums. The city of Fuzhou stated Email/Fax/Tel; Social Media; and LG Associations such as UCLG ASPAC, as the mediums they use to communicate with cities outside their country. Lastly, the city of Jambi said that it uses only Email/Fax/Tel, and LG Associations such as UCLG ASPAC as their communication medium.

Graph 4: Which platform do you use for communication and exchange of information between you and LRGs of other countries/regions/provinces
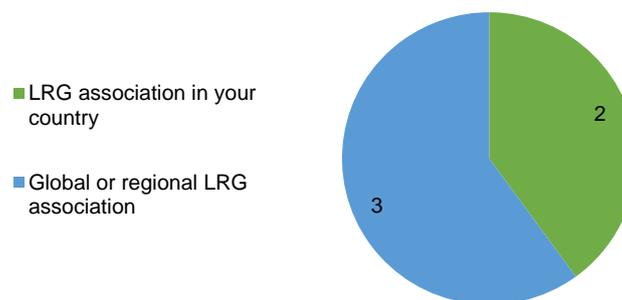
Question five enquired the platform that responding cities use for communication and information exchange between them and other countries/regions/provinces. Three cities said that global or regional LRG associations are a medium they use, and two cities said they use their country's LRG association as a medium for communication with other

countries/regions/provinces. This shows that LRG associations play an extremely vital role in facilitating communication between cities, whether within a country or across multiple countries.

Three cities (Kuala Lumpur, Fuzhou and Jambi) said that there is a pre-established line of communication between their city and LRG association/LGA of their/other countries in response to question six. Question 7 was concerned with the person responsible for leading international city cooperation and taking policy-level decisions regarding the same. In response, only the city of Kuala Lumpur has a state/national government representative looking after the two roles mentioned above. In Fuzhou, the role is handled by a local government official, while in the city of Jambi, the responsibility of that of either an elected representative or of a local government official.

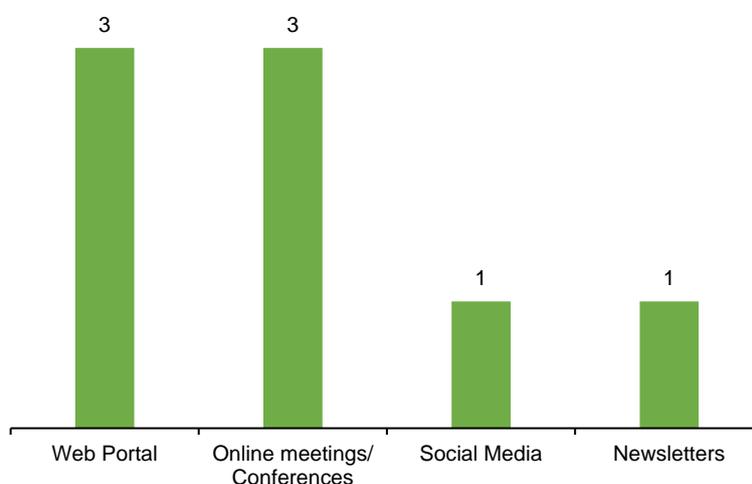Graph 5: In the rapidly advancing digital world, what are the best mediums available for knowledge sharing between cities from different nations?

The next question dealt with the use and advantages of modern technologies in facilitating C2C collaboration. It asked, "In the rapidly advancing digital world, what are the best mediums available for knowledge sharing between cities from different nations?". The answers of the three cities are depicted in Graph 5. Web portals and online meetings/conferences are the mediums all three cities consider best for inter/city knowledge sharing.

Question nine of the questionnaire determined that all three cities have a dedicated department responsible for international affairs and C2C cooperation globally. In response to question 10, the city of Fuzhou claimed that they first heard about an interesting idea/innovation that has been implemented in another city. Then they consider establishing partnership/sharing information with the concerned city. On the other hand, the city of Jambi said that only after establishing a mutual relationship with another city do they delve into the innovations/idea implemented by them and plan to incorporate/implement them in their city.

In reply to question 11, the city of Kuala Lumpur and Jambi said that they are engaged in regular contact/information exchange with less than five cities currently. On the other hand, the city of

Fuzhou informed that they are regularly in contact with over 20 cities at the same time for facilitating information exchange.

Graph 6: Do you think member cities should have a centralised information system for sharing knowledge and ideas? If Yes, what could be the best suited medium?
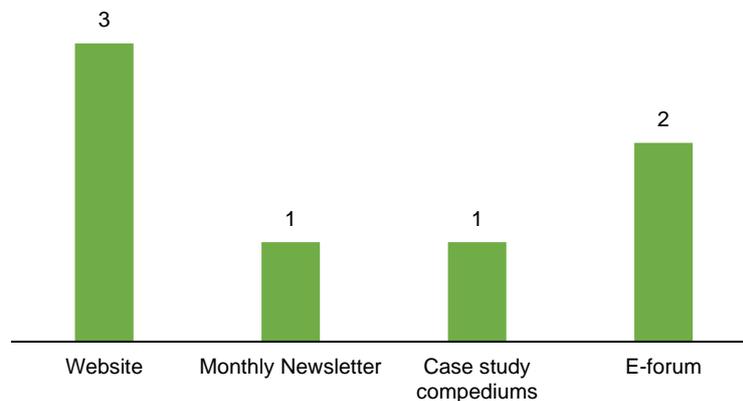
Question 12 asked, "Do you think member cities should have a centralised information system for sharing knowledge and ideas? If Yes, what could be the best-suited medium?". Graph 6 depicts the responses of the three cities.

In response to question 13, all three cities agreed that news of unique ideas and innovations from other cities inspires their LRG to do something similar to develop their urban spaces better.

All three cities also agreed that they find the information they receive from BRLC and UCLG ASPAC member cities relevant. Additionally, the city of Fuzhou said that the information they receive from the two mediums is generic too. Question 15 inquired whether the cities believe that sharing information with other LRGs has helped them improve their urban spaces. All three cities replied positively to the question.

In response to question 15 part 'b', cities were asked to mention the idea/concept borrowed from another city that has helped them improve their urban spaces. The city of Kuala Lumpur said, "Waste management is done in several cities in Asia (UCLG ASPAC members) such as Indonesia, Taiwan and Japan are a good example for case studies." The city of Jambi said that city-to-city cooperation is the concept which has been borrowed from another city and has helped them in improving their urban spaces.

Question 16 inquired, "In your opinion, why do you think the exchange of knowledge from other cities has been useful to and applied in your LRG?" The city of Jambi said that 'other LRGs have similar challenges, which is why knowledge sharing with such LRGs have been successful. The city of Fuzhou selected all four options, indicating that 'other LRGs having similar challenges; Mayor/Governor having strong leadership and values the importance of international Cooperation; LRG having experience and effective department in charge of International Cooperation; and support by the association of LRG such as UCLG ASPAC, are all reasons successful knowledge sharing between them and other cities. The city of Kuala Lumpur stated that similar challenges and strong leadership of elected representatives while valuing the

importance of international cooperation are the main reasons for successful inter-city knowledge sharing.

Question 17 enquired how difficult it is for the respondent cities to 'connect with a foreign city for knowledge/idea/innovation sharing?'. The city of Kuala Lumpur said that it is moderately difficult, while the city of Jambi said that it is hard for them to connect with foreign cities due to the varied mediums of communication used by different countries.

In response to question 18, the city of Jambi said that they had exchanged knowledge on 'waste, capacity building and climate change sectors. The city of Fuzhou stated 'Maritime cooperation, urban development, and marine economy' among the sectors in which they have exchanged information. The city of Kuala Lumpur listed 'culture exchanges; urban management matters, i.e. managing traffic jam; low carbon initiatives; and technology'.

Stating the most prominent barriers in establishing C2C Cooperation, the city of Kuala Lumpur named 'establishing a connection, getting to the right person and interest to collaborate; communication-language barrier; and different roles and functions of different cities'. The city of Jambi, on the other hand, said that the language barrier is the main barrier to establishing C2C cooperation for the city.

Lastly, the city of Kuala Lumpur suggested that information on who to contact and the medium of contacting another city must be readily available for all cities, thereby making it easier for them to establish inter-city cooperation.

5. Outcome

The five sections of the questionnaire (Objective; Process and Tools; Mechanism; Outcome; Key Issues) and the responses of the three cities helped in clearly understanding various aspects with regards to C2C cooperations, why cities prefer to establish, and how they benefit from them. Following are some of the critical outcomes/learning/takeaways from the responses received.

- Firstly, one of the most common essential criteria for cities is the commonality between the participating cities. The aspect of having an issue/goal/objective/condition in common with another city is what encourages them the most to collaborate with other city/cities.
- Secondly, in terms of establishing C2C cooperations, knowledge/idea/technology sharing and building people-to-people connections were considered the most common and widely accepted.
- All cities believe that idea exchange aimed at cultural development helps a city in more ways than one, including making the public more in tune with their own and other cultures and increasing their tolerance of people from different cultures and backgrounds.
- Fourthly, cities engage in inter-city communication with cities outside their own country very regularly. This means that they continuously work towards fostering their C2C relations through different mediums. The most commonly used mediums are through Email/Fax/Tel and via LGAs such as UCLG ASPAC.
- Cities use the LRG association in their respective countries or global or regional LRG association as a C2C idea/information exchange and communication platform. Many cities also have a pre-established line of communication between them and their respective LRG associations/LGA.
- Different officials/persons in different LRGs handle the international affairs/C2C communication of an LRG is handled by different officials/persons in different LRGs. While in

some, elected representatives are responsible, a representative of the national/state government is responsible.

- Web portals and online meetings/conferences are considered the best mediums for cities to avail knowledge sharing.
- Most cities also have a dedicated department in charge of communication at both international and global levels.
- Cities do not have a uniform sequence of steps that they take before establishing C2C relations. While some prefer to establish a relationship and then look into the innovative ideas/innovations they can borrow, other cities first look for the innovative ideas and then collaborate with the concerned cities.
- Many cities also believe that a website is the best-suited medium that member cities of a partnership/collaboration must utilise for information/knowledge sharing. This also helps the participating cities choose which initiatives/innovations/ideas are best suited for their city, can be implemented smoothly, and would help improve the livability of their urban spaces.
- Having similar challenges was the most common reason cities believe that knowledge sharing between them and other cities has been a success. This implies that when two or more cities face similar issues, they find it easy to communicate, thereby promoting C2C collaboration between them.

Lastly, the most prominent barrier to communication between two cities is believed to be the absence of information on who is responsible for international communication in an LRG, who is the decision-making authority in this respect, and what process/procedure they follow once both cities have established the need to cooperate. Thus, a well-suited, all-around mechanism is the need of the hour in making C2C collaboration more accessible to more cities across the world.

Source: bernardenergy.com, 2018.

Chapter 4

Sister Cities: Experience of Hangzhou City and Other Cities

1) Sister City Concept: An Overview
2) Experience of Hangzhou City
3) List of Sister Cities Collaboration with Hangzhou: Case Studies
4) Key Takeaways: Global learning in City-to-City Collaborations

1.   Sister City Concept: An Overview

The terms "sister city", "friendship city", and "twin city" sound similar but are used for different kinds of relations between two cities. Twin cities are a type of conurbation that develops through time from two neighbouring cities or urban centres into a single conurbation – or a collection of closely spaced urban areas. For example, the cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad are often referred to as 'twin cities' in India. Sister cities are more conventional than friendship cities. In some cities, "friendship city" is frequently utilised as the first stage in a relationship, with "sister cities" emerging once the bond has been developed and the partners are certain they desire a long-term relationship(What is a Sister City?, 1956).

A Sister City relationship is the formalised partnership between two cities in two or same countries that has a long-term commitment and is supported by the respective governments. A relationship is officially established after the highest elected or appointed official from both communities sign off on an agreement to become sister cities. The very first instance of a sister city relation was in the United States of America under the leadership of President Eisenhower. These sister city relationships are often the result of prior relationships between mayors, trade relationships, historical connections, ancestral/demographic ties, expatriate communities, or shared geographical/sectoral challenges. Often, faith-based groups and personal experiences, articles, and conferences are sources of building sister city relationships.

Through person-to-person "citizen diplomacy," these relationships bring people from different cultures together to celebrate and accept their differences and to foster cultural, educational, informational, and trade exchanges. A sister city initiative is unique because it brings together three critical sectors of a community: government, business, and a diverse group of citizen volunteers(What is a Sister City?, 1956).

Presently, many cities model and mould their development with the help of their sister cities. For example, Cape Town has formed partnerships with many international cities to foster trade and investment through mutual benefit, resulting in investment worth approximately $780 million over the past year amid the COVID-19 pandemic (Huaxia, 2021). San Francisco, over the years, has had exchanges take place through its Sister City Programme in virtually all areas of the community – sports, art, culture, educations, government and business. (Sister City Program, n.d.)

An organisation called 'Sister Cities International' has coordinated official sister city affiliations since 1956. It was created during a conference on citizen diplomacy in the USA. The aim was to make it a symbol of global peace and prosperity by creating bonds among citizens from different cities. It was believed that if people from different cultures and communities came together to celebrate and appreciate each other's qualities and idiosyncrasies, it would lessen the chances of conflicts.

All the members of Sister Cities International are independent entities having several management structures. Most sister city associations are run by volunteers,

representatives from local government, or some combination of these groups. At times, certain museums, cultural centres, chambers of commerce run sister city relations of their place. (What is a Sister City?, 1956)

Sister city relations, especially when established between two cities from different nations, allows citizens to learn about each other's culture and become directly involved in developing unique solutions to common problems. Moreover, sister cities programs introduce the idea of world peace at the individual level by encouraging citizens to better understand all kinds of communities by contrasting their way of life with another culture.

2. Experience of Hangzhou City

Local government officials of the city of Hangzhou oversee the city-to-city cooperation. Representatives from the Foreign Affairs Office of Hangzhou said that developing mutual understanding between two cities and creating win-win cooperation is the primary goal of their LRG. Cities act as independent entities for sister city collaborations, so Hangzhou uses either global or regional LRG association platforms to establish connections with other cities. The major objectives for the city of Hangzhou behind establishing a C2C collaboration with any city include strengthening people-to-people connections, boosting the tourism sector, and industry cooperation. As a city with over 31 established C2C relations, it sees demography and shared goals as the basic criteria for selecting city-to-city cooperation (C2C) between two cities from different or the same countries.

Cities prioritise mobility, infrastructure, and innovations when forming associations with other cities. Hangzhou has been leading the way in working significantly on cultural development in the city with the help of C2C collaborations. At present, Hangzhou is the perfect example of a city that has managed to conserve its cultural essence, despite the influence of industrialisation, rapid urbanisation, and globalisation. The city has been paving the way in making cultural development an essential part of the city's development. Its cultural associations with the city of Gifu and Leeds are the most popular ones.

The long list of Hangzhou's sister city collaborations shows that the city is doing something right in establishing these relations. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 had shaken the entire world, and the priority for nations and cities became to look out for themselves. However, sister cities across the world, not breaking their established connection, did their best to prioritise each other along with themselves. In the case of Hangzhou, the city and its sister cities shared donations and experiences to strengthen each other in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

At the beginning of the pandemic, since China was the first nation in the world to be hit by coronavirus, Hangzhou's sister cities came forward and voluntarily donated anti-epidemic medical supplies. It so happened that by the time the SARS-CoV-2 virus had hit other nations in the world, China had already had some experience with the virus. Being true to the relations established with various cities outside China, Hangzhou had, at once, started sharing rescue supplies and procurement assistance. The city also shared its

experience and minute lessons, even with its internal sister cities. The heart-warming endeavour of sister cities supporting each other in the fight against the pandemic was warmly welcomed by the Sister Cities International organisation. Additionally, this solidarity and cooperation were acknowledged and reported by the mayors and media of the sister cities and the Olympic Council of Asia.

Hangzhou city officials believe that during the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing 'face-to-face communication online has allowed exchanges to continue during the pandemic, maintaining cordial relations, and working together to fight the disease and boost economic recovery. The city also organised interactive sessions with Heidelberg, Cape Town, and Lugano and had exchanges on issues such as cross-border e-commerce, digital marketing and youth education because, after some time into the pandemic, the focus had to distribute to other aspects of cities, which were left stagnant during the lockdown. The process became a little less messy for the cities having pre-established C2C collaborations with other cities across the world like Hangzhou. The online interactive sessions, documents, and studies shared between cities assisted them in drawing out adequate plans to leave the pandemic behind.

3. List of Sister Cities Collaboration with Hangzhou: Case Studies

a. Giving education and exposure to youth

WHO?

Dresden, Germany
Hangzhou, China

WHEN?

Relations between these two cities were established in 2009 at a meeting in Hangzhou. In November 2007, a delegation of representatives from Dresden Administration, City Council, University of Dresden, and various businesses travelled to Hangzhou to meet for the first time with the authorities of the Chinese city. Following a visit of an Hangzhou delegation to Dresden in April 2009, the twinning between Dresden and Hangzhou officially began. At this time, Dresden Mayor Lutz Vogel and Hangzhou Mayor Cai Qi signed a Memorandum of Understanding on friendship and cooperation. (Dresden (Germany) and Hangzhou (Zhejiang), 2011)

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

Within a few months of signing the agreement, Dresden and Hangzhou had scheduled several activities, mostly related to education and research. In both cities, scientists from universities and research institutes met in January 2010 to establish the groundwork for future cooperation in cancer research. In the same month, eight Chinese experts came to Dresden to assist German colleagues with the renovation of the Chinese Pavilion, which was constructed for the International Hygiene Exhibition in 1911. In May, children from both cities participated in the 3rdInternational Children's Choir Festival, which artists organised

in February for the Chinese partner city. Expert exchanges are also common, such as between the Economic Development Office and the Environment Centre of Dresden. Dresden University students also visited Hangzhou's university as part of an engineering study trip. (Dresden (Germany) and Hangzhou (Zhejiang), 2011)

Hangzhou's local government body has been acting as an intermediary in establishing a sister-school relationship between Hangzhou Xuejun High School and Prince Henry's Grammar School, Hangzhou Maiyuqiao Elementary Educational School Education Group and Montessori School of Dresden, making inter-school exchanges more flexible. In fact, under the educational exchange cooperation agreement framework, the city authorities have been continuously implementing inter-school exchange projects between the cities of Hangzhou, China Lugano, Switzerland, Dresden, etc.

THE EXPECTED LONG-TERM IMPACT?

When the idea of friendship, cooperation, and accepting the differences of different cultures and cities is introduced at a young age, it is expected to go a long way in changing the mindset of people and developing more tolerance against cultural and linguistic differences between the cities.

b.   Strong ties for medical advancement

WHO?

Gifu, Japan
Hangzhou, China

WHEN?

The friendly relations between the cities of Gifu and Hangzhou dates back to February 1979. Not so long after the establishment of the Sister Cities International, Hangzhou signed documents with Gifu as its first sister city on February 21, 1979.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

In 1962, ten years before the normalisation of diplomatic relations between Japan and China, monuments were erected in the two cities, each bearing an inscription written by the mayor of the partner city. The inscriptions express the two mayors' hopes for peaceful relations between Japan and China. On the monument in Hangzhou City, the inscription, written by the mayor of Gifu City (then Mayor Matsuo Gosaku) reads – "An end to war between China and Japan". The Gifu City monument, which stands in the city's Japan and China Friendship Garden, reads – "May friendship between Japan and China endure generations". (Oike, 2007)

Gifu Pharmaceutical University had set up an academic exchange programme with Hangzhou's Zhejiang University School of Medicine in 1984. Over the years, the two cities have conducted a mutual exchange of doctors, nurses and health personnel for visits, lectures, and advanced learning. Hangzhou's First People's Hospital had also signed an

agreement with Gifu Municipal Hospital to establish friendly inter-hospital relations. This relationship had come in handy for both the cities through the years as they dealt with pandemics or regional outbursts of diseases.

Moreover, a garden was built in 1999 to commemorate the 10thanniversary of the friendship partnership between Gifu and Hangzhou city. This Japan-China Friendship Garden is located near the south bank of the Nagara River, north of Gifu Park (Gifu Koen) in Gifu. The garden is classic, Chinese style with a keyhole gate, ornamental ponds, bridges and pavilions. In addition, a central pond has been made in the garden resembling the famous West Lake in Hangzhou, which has inspired both ancient Chinese and Japanese poets. (Japan-China Friendship Garden Gifu, n.d.)

THE EXPECTED LONG-TERM IMPACT?

Japan and China both have a long history of earthquakes. In China, such records date back 3000 years; in the Korean peninsula, 2000 years; and in Japan, 1500 years. East Asia has the widest-ranging and longest history of earthquake recording of any area in the world. By exploiting this, the cities and their researchers can understand the world's seismic history. In the same way, historical records of various meteorological phenomena could deepen the world's knowledge of the history of planet Earth. (Oike, 2007) Additionally, facing a threat from earthquakes, the two cities can continue sharing knowledge, experience, and innovative solutions to sustainably develop their respective cities.

c. Growing industry and business

WHO?

Oulu, Finland
Hangzhou, China

WHEN?

Hangzhou established a partnership with Oulu in 2013 because this Finnish city is known for its cooperative, competent people, active development, high-class services, versatile business structure, and a strong economy.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

A Belt and Road Local Cooperation Committee (BRLCC) held in the City of Hangzhou in 2018 had representatives from the City of Oulu, Finland, and other member cities of the BRLCC network taking part in it. The event marked an important turning point in the consistently strong relationship between Hangzhou, a key city leading China's efforts towards an innovative and high-tech economy, and Oulu, Capital of Northern Scandinavia for MrKyösti Oikarinen (Centre Party), Chairman of the City Board in Oulu, was elected as the Vice President of the BRLCC in China in December 2018. (Oulu & Hangzhou Ties Strengthened Via BRLCC, n.d.) His appointment supported the expertise in Oulu Region in gaining a stronger foothold in the highly competitive Chinese markets and supported

the increase in Oulu's international visibility through all available channels in China in the field of business, as well as in tourism and education. Juha Ala-Mursula, Director of Business Oulu, had said that Oulu's contribution to the work of BRLCC would help Finnish companies ride the crest of China's rapid development in digital services, e-health and mobile communications. (Major international role for Oulu in China, 2018)

In April 2019, a trade delegation from Oulu, Finland, attended the 2050 Conference in Hangzhou to seek opportunities in cooperation with Hangzhou enterprises of related fields. To promote communication and business negotiations between Oulu and Hangzhou, a meeting was held as well. (Secretariat, 2019)

Moreover, around 25 headmasters from Hangzhou had embarked on a trip to Oulu in 2019 with a desire to immerse themselves in the Finnish education system. For two weeks, the Chinese headmasters had access to expert presentations and visits to actual schools to see how they function daily. They witnessed how Oulu had been incorporating technology into their school system, how a modular classroom works in practice, and how it affects the classroom dynamic. The headmasters' trip culminated in a round-table discussion with their Finnish counterparts. Officials regarded it as an illuminating experience for both nationalities and an eye-opening experience concerning cultural approaches in teaching. (Finnish School System Makes An Impression on Chinese Primary School Headmasters, 2019)

THE EXPECTED LONG-TERM IMPACT?

In addition to the BRLCC's presence in Oulu, Finnish companies have already begun seeing more and more assistance and opportunities for their growing industries in China, such as e-commerce, artificial intelligence, digital health, and wireless communications. (Oulu & Hangzhou Ties Strengthened Via BRLCC, n.d.) The union between Hangzhou and Oulu is expected to exponentially increase the incredible innovation already coming out of these two tech hubs.

d.   Prioritising culture and history of cities

WHO?

Lugano, Switzerland
Hangzhou, China

WHEN?

The friendly exchanges between Hangzhou and Lugano had started long back in 2006. The cities signed a sister city agreement during the 4thInternational Sister Cities Mayors Conference held in Hangzhou in 2012.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

Over the years, the cultural envoys of the cities have exchanged the cultures and histories of the two sides through a series of activities. There have been inter-school exchange

projects under the educational exchange cooperation agreement between the two cities to foster understanding and prompt learning of the cultures. Recently, Hangzhou actively promoted education modernisation and expanded educational opening against post-G20 Summit and pre-Asian-Games. These exchange activities are expected to inject new impetus into the Sino-Swiss relationship. (Hangzhou, Lugano cement friendship ties, 2018)

This year, the City of Lugano, in collaboration with the Artisans Association of Ticino (Aticrea), UniversitàdellaSvizzeraitaliana (USI) and Centro scolastico per le IndustrieArtistiche (CSIA), had organised a Cross Border Digital Marketing event on April 22. The objective was to learn about communication strategies and social commerce technologies in handicrafts and design in China. Some topics related to cross-border digital marketing were discussed to provide Ticino's artisans with basic knowledge to benefit from Chinese social channels and promote their products in China. Possible intercultural communication strategies, online and offline marketing approaches for the craft industry, and the potential to exhibit their craft products in Chinese fairs were also tackled. (Lugano Hangzhou Online Talk: Cross Border Digital Marketing , 2021)

An exhibition named 'The Lakeside Stories', featuring design and artisan works from Hangzhou, was held in its sister city Lugano in Switzerland in 2020, from November 7 to 13. Hangzhou-Lugano friendship has been enhanced through such a series of cultural activities and exchanges over the years. (Yingying, 2020) 2020 also marked the 70thanniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Switzerland.

THE EXPECTED LONG TERM IMPACT?

Sino-Swiss relations are rapidly developing, presenting Lugano with more opportunities for collaboration in trade, culture, and tourism. (Visit from the Chinese Ambassador in Switzerland to Lugano, n.d.)

e.   Transforming education and infra for future

WHO?

Leeds, United Kingdom
Hangzhou, China

WHEN?

In one of the first UK-Chinese city partnerships, Leeds and Hangzhou joined forces in 1988.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

In 2018, a delegation from the Leeds City Region travelled to China to mark the 30thanniversary of the two cities being twinned. Strong links have been established between schools, universities, sporting institutions and businesses over the last few decades. A new memorandum of understanding between the cities was signed during the meeting. It included new commitments from both cities to work together in preparation

for the Leeds2023 year of culture, initiating an information exchange about technology, transport and a pledge to establish a link between the two cities' library services. (Newsroom, 2018)

Coun Blake, the then Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of Hangzhou People's Congress, said that the relationship with Hangzhou had brought tremendous economic and business benefits to the Leeds city region. It continues to bear fruit in a wide variety of ways in Leeds - "from the many students travelling to study at our universities to the Chinese Olympic athletes who have trained in our sporting facilities". (Newsroom, 2018)

Soon after, in 2019, Leeds Libraries' Chief Librarian Andrea Ellison visited Hangzhou to sign an agreement, which looks to enhance cooperation between the two cities' library services. The visit was part of a more comprehensive network trip between British and Chinese libraries sponsored by the British Library. The MOU highlighted a commitment to a regular exchange of information such as items of local interest, including local cultural events, festivals and local history resources, and ongoing communication between the two cities. The delegation of Leeds took back with them the lesson on how recent legislation in China has assisted in the growth and expansion of the library sector in Hangzhou. This was in stark contrast to the more challenging environment for the public library sector in the UK. (Ellison, 2019)

During the pandemic, Hangzhou donated 10,000 face masks to the city of Leeds. The Chinese city also shared details and examples of best practices adopted in various parts of China to tackle the coronavirus pandemic. (Face masks from Sister City Hangzhou arrive in Leeds, 2020)

THE EXPECTED LONG-TERM IMPACT?

The renewed agreement between the two cities in 2018 had Hangzhou pledge to assist Leeds in smart city technology and integrated transport. Leeds has documented several attempts – and failures – to build a mass transport system over recent years, and Hangzhou has three 'subways' or 'metro' lines present already and has plans to build 13 in the coming years. High-speed bullet trains also directly take commuters to major cities like Beijing and Shanghai. Hence, Leeds awaits a major transformation in its transportation sector due to its ties with Hangzhou. (Millington, 2018)

4. Key Takeaways: Global learning in City-to-City Collaborations

Initially conceived as a post-world war means of developing friendships and cultural ties, sister cities were based on similarities such as name or economic function. More recently, greater recognition has been given to the economic foundations and benefits of these connections. (Cremer, 2001) Hangzhou and its sister cities offer a perfect demonstration of how the emergence and development of embedded partnership ties are vital for cities to derive sustainable economic and social benefits.

The case study conducted on Hangzhou's C2C collaborations revealed all the things the city has been doing right in its strive to develop the city and simultaneously healthy

relationships with other cities. Amidst the rapidly advancing digital world, the process of collaboration has started becoming a little tricky but convenient as well. The city of Hangzhou believes that online meetings/conferences can be a great medium can be the best medium available for knowledge sharing between cities from different nations establishing collaborations. Moreover, the LRG of the city recommended a centralised information system developed by sister cities or member cities for sharing knowledge and ideas and updates with other LRGs and citizens even. This could create a platform for other cities looking to establish C2C collaborations where they could learn from others' experiences and weigh in every aspect of the process before diving in. Additionally, transparency could be established with the people in general, who could see all the events, deals, development work being taken place due to those collaborations.

At the basic level, the ease of establishing a partnership or collaboration depends on the willingness between two cities to do so. However, it becomes more difficult for a willing city to develop collaboration with another city that does not have any source to disseminate information about all of its works, innovations, initiatives, etc. This reflects the importance of a city having a good platform, for instance, a website, to enable visitors to understand the basics of the culture of that city, the works in progress, innovations in action. This could eradicate the gap in information that often hinders C2C collaborations between two cities, especially two cities from different nations.

The sister city agreements are signed with the intention that they last indefinitely, in contrast to usual agreements signed between cities or nations for particular projects only. The survey highlighted that these relationships are carried out mainly at a grassroots and local level, which intensifies the efficiency of all the work and projects. As opposed to other kinds of collaborations, sister city partnerships contain a tacit understanding that sister city relationships should be characterised by reciprocity of effort and benefit, with neither community profiting at the expense of the other. (Cremer, 2001)

Cultural exchanges and greater cross-cultural understanding are the main motivations for the grassroots involvement necessary to sustain sister-city relationships. Even though, in the long run, the most reliable and the strongest drives for international understanding and exchange are economic and business links and work opportunities, it is the cultural understandings that are built up over time that provide the favourable environment which can reduce risks and uncertainties involved in economic enterprises such as trade, tourism, and investment. (Cremer, 2001) Experts have, time and again, referred to the critical role of culture to enhance the livability of cities as it plays the role of empowering people to connect with their communities and shape their urban environments. (International Conference on "Culture for Sustainable Cities" , 2015)

Each sister city relationship develops its own set of activities that best suit the need and resources of both the partners. For example, as of February 1, 2017, the city of Gifu had established university-to-university with 46 universities and one government agency in 17 countries. (Newsletter for International Exchange, Gifu University , 2017)

Due to the presence of the concept of sister cities, the international community and decision-makers have the opportunity to create masterpieces out of their cities. They can address poverty alleviation and manage economic transitions, notably by enhancing cities' tremendous cultural assets, learning from others' knowledge and experience, and utilising human potential. With globalisation and digitisation, the whole world is in everyone's hands. This exposes each individual to all kinds of differences between them and people from other communities, cultures, cities, and nations. This has made recognising and accepting cultural diversity possible, thereby fulfilling an essential aspect of maintaining world peace. Collaborative partnerships between cities in student exchange programmes, shared exhibition galleries, talks, and sharing best practices, information, knowledge, and resources can encourage community participation and reduce inequalities.

Source: alvaro-reyes-qWwpHwip31M-unsplash, 2020.
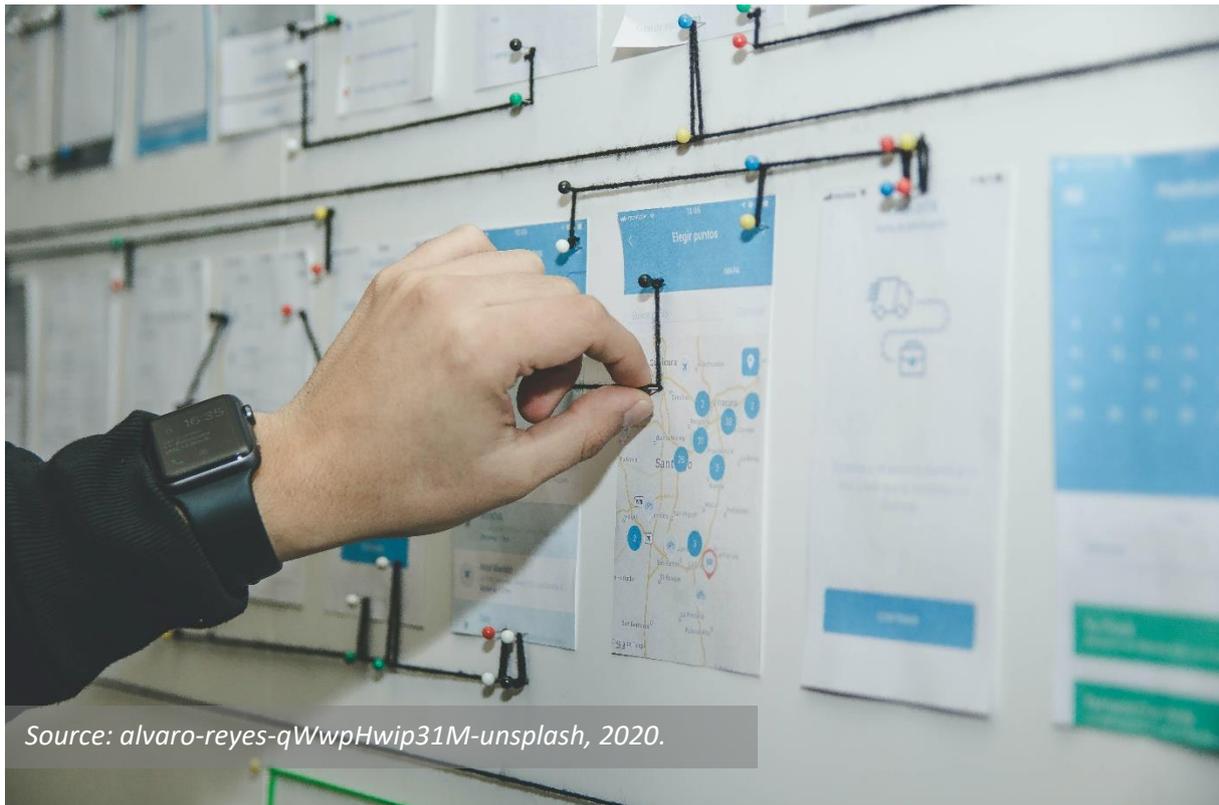
Chapter 5

Conclusion: Action Points to Build Communication and Collaboration Strategy for Local Government

1) Twinning Objective of LGs in Developing Communication Framework for C2C Collaboration
2) Enabling Access to Right Communication Tools, Resources, Essential Components, Mechanism and Digital Tools
3) Building Bridges to Cross Communication Barriers in City-to-City Communication and Ramping up Human Resources
4) Integrating Consistency/Follow-up Activities for Better Results
5) Leveraging on the Strengths of LGAs Network like UCLG ASPAC within the Country and Beyond
6) Template for C2C collaboration
7) Way Forward

Decentralised cooperation and collaboration are gaining momentum to solve local issues with international partnerships between cities and Local Government Associations.

This chapter presents an action plan for decentralised cooperation and collaboration practitioners in the Belt and Road region to improvise their communication with global peers, develop a communication framework within the existing systems for effective and target-based outcomes, and innovate how they jointly run projects locally with partners abroad. In addition, the Action Points can serve as a reference to add value to their future cooperation and communication activities with international peers in the local government domain. The earlier chapters in this report present case studies from selected cities in the region and beyond to demonstrate the assortment of efforts taken by governments at the sub-national level, their capacity to act and generate sustainable change, building expertise of LGs and assisting in solving day to day pressing issues. This report also provides an insight into the multifaceted ways of peer-to-peer cooperation among LGs, cities and towns, and their stakeholders.

Local Governments in the Belt and Road Region can use these Action Points, formulated based on the primary and secondary research finding of this report, as a reference to develop their decentralised cooperation, communication and collaboration framework suited to their local requirements.

1. Twinning Objective of LGs in Developing Communication Framework for C2C Collaboration

Fostering partnerships between cities have been instrumental in addressing everyday challenges of local governments by taking advantage of collective resources and expertise in a specific area. Every city is different in its own way. But cities face common challenges. So two different cities can be united by the same challenge. For example, Beijing city faced the air pollution problem in the last decade, but it has come out with an effective strategy to combat air pollution and make its air breathable. Another example of decentralised cooperation could be the collective efforts of cities worldwide to combat the COVID-19 crisis. Cities shared their experiences and know-how in real-time with other cities and LGAs and shared resources.

There are hundreds of cities worldwide that are facing the same problem and working on developing a mechanism to address the issue. For a successful partnership between cities, local governments must list their objectives of creating a cooperative and collaborative partnership with another local government or consortium of LGs. It could be based on their immediate local requirements, long term goals or their functional strength. Based on this, cities and local governments can zero in on the local governments they would like to partner with or join hands.

Local governments, especially in the developing countries, can get handhold support from the cities which have already resolved the issue with the trial and error method. Therefore, cities in developing countries can solve the problem without wasting their time, energy and resources on redundant experiments or making the same mistakes by their peers.

In the race to achieve global goals by 2030 and initiate climate actions, there are hundreds of common areas where cities and local governments worldwide are working. Decentralised collaboration among global cities would boost the efforts of all stakeholders and make sure the targets are met within the timeline. Recently, especially after the Pandemic, local governments and their associations have increased their involvement in development cooperation. The objective is to enhance the capacity development of LGs, facilitate and strengthen

decentralisation, strengthen local development processes to address the pressing issues of the current time.

2.   Enabling Access to Right Communication Tools, Resources, Essential Components, Mechanism and Digital Tools

The second Action Point for LGs in the series is to have a Communication Strategy. It shall be directed towards choosing appropriate communication tools and developing a mechanism for decentralised international communication. It requires creating a special cell within the existing system of the municipal corporation. It is required by the local governments to have a dedicated Decentralised Global Communication Cell that should be a focal point for such communication and collaboration activities. The designated cell has to chart out the available communication channels with the local corporation, knowledge resources, and a database of collaborative partners of sub-national governments in the country and abroad. In the absence of resources, local governments can designate an existing staff to be the nodal person for joined activities under a decentralised partnership between LGs.

Having a communication strategy help in planning and validating the progress of the activities as desired by the Local Government leadership. Another significant communication activity is to update partner cities and the public at large with the updates of work regularly. The experiences of the Pandemic has spotlighted the significance of access to digital media resources. Local governments must encourage their human resources to use available digital resources. Cities without any digital presence must create a digital presence of their cities or towns on social media or develop their website. It will open doors for them to have a new partnership as the potential partners can get information about their activities, events and running programs. It can also enable future alliances. Cities can benefit themselves and provide resources to others if they participate in online events, seminars of Local Government Associations, or international knowledge institutions.

3.   Building Bridges to Cross Communication Barriers in City-to-City Communication and Ramping up Human Resources

The Third Action Point for LGs is to cross all the potential communication barriers while communicating with partner cities. Developing effective communication in decentralised global communication is a challenging task. Cultural and language difference in partner cities could be the primary barrier. In cross-cultural communication, both parties need to be comfortable in communication. To cross the first barrier, one should mutually decide the language of communication best suited to both parties or everyone concerned. Sun national governments should give due respect to values, norms, beliefs, and for this, a basic understanding of the recipient's background is essential. Effective cross-cultural communication requires cross-culture competence, and for this, cities and local governments shall focus on Cross-cultural sensitivity, cross-cultural awareness & cross-cultural ability. Finally, it requires adequate training of communication cell staff to come out of ethnocentrism to build trust with other cities and make them comfortable in dialogue with local governments.

Another focus area could be precise communication techniques. For example, while communicating with peers, local governments should communicate with specific points, ask open-ended questions, and request required information as a response instead of closed-ended questions to avoid any communication gap. Local governments can also refer to the 7 Cs of

communication theory for overcoming any communication barrier that may arise. The 7 Cs include Clarity, Correctness, Conciseness, Courtesy, Concreteness, Consideration, and completeness.

Based on the well-accepted communication techniques and principles mentioned above, cities can develop a universally accepted communication handbook for decentralised local communication with international peers. In addition, local governments can also consider having workshops and training programs for their employees to improve their cross-cultural competence. Such programs cal help make the employees aware of cross-cultural knowledge and assist them while having a discourse with other cities' representatives to provide the details about their cities' specific requirements, running activities, and available expertise to share.

4. Integrating Consistency/Follow-up Activities for Better Results

The fourth action point in developing a communication strategy for individual cities or local governments is ensuring consistency and regularity in communication during the Association and building a rapport with peers for future programmes. Cities need to follow through with the nodal communication contact in a regular and timely manner. While establishing a partnership with a municipality under decentralised global communication collaboration, the timeline of deliverables and responsibilities of both LGs engaged must be defined under the communication and collaboration framework. From the beginning of the joined project and programmers to better a specific sector in the local government's territory, the local governments or any other stakeholder involved must stick to the deadline. There should be a timely update on the progress made under joined efforts. Both LGs or their consortium must enlist when we expect those things to be done and when the next meeting or response is due. The chosen medium and channel of communication should be predefined to avoid any communication gap in primary communication or follow-up. For example, if the cities have been mutually decided to use emails for communication, follow-ups cannot occur over physical mail. Everything must be clear from starting till the end.

Digital technologies can be used for making follow-up communication activities efficient. There are many tools available that can mark a particular activity or thread of activities open, observe the scheduled activity of the concerned partner for the future, and create a follow-up reminder for the same. The use of such tools must be discussed and finalised at the beginning of the Association among LGs.

5. Leveraging on the Strengths of LGAs Network like UCLG ASPAC within the Country and Beyond

The fifth action point for cities to strengthen their decentralised global communication and collaboration is to leverage the strengths of Local Government Associations (LGAs) and city networking groups. LGAs, with their vast network within the country and beyond, can enable local governments to form a strategic relationship with other cities based on their knowledge of local governments requirements and resourcefulness. For example, UCLG ASPAC has emerged as a lighthouse for local governments in Asia Pacific and helped its member cities address critical local government issues by providing training, handhold support, and required knowledge and helping them establish international partnerships. In addition, several UCLG ASPAC committees give impetus to the works done in a particular area of concern to member local governments and cities. Such areas include cultural cooperation, the Belt and Road Local Cooperation, committees for sub-regional local governments, and 21st Century Maritime Cooperation Committee.

The nature and functions of local government associations are ever-evolving with the requirement of the time. Therefore, cities must develop systems for a stable connection with LGAs and their events to understand the dynamics of the current trends in local government or urban space. Documentation of the best practices and enabling access by acting as vehicles for exchanging experiences of member municipal governments are at the core of LGAs functions. These functions allow them to develop a good rapport with city governments and leaders and gain access to valuable sources of information for their members, as well as for outside partners. Thus, cities can associate themselves with LGAs, specific committees. It could be their first step in establishing the right collaboration with global peers.

6. Template for C2C collaboration

The significance of City-to-City collaboration is growing in the post-Pandemic world. Based on the research done for this project, here is a template for local governments' reference to build their peer or LGA partnerships for addressing the needs of their local governments and their citizens.

Template 1.0

Objective
• **Description of the issues of concerns:** • **The objective of the Association:** • **Potential Areas of Joined Collaboration Activities:** • **Partners Involved:**
Communication Strategies • ***What are the C2C collaboration's objectives?*** • ***Enlist Communication barriers.*** • ***Enlist the medium/channel of communication:*** • ***Preferred Language of Communication:*** • ***Provide the details of strategies and processes that will be implemented to meet the objectives?*** • ***What are the risks and challenges for developing this project? What are potential solutions to address them?***
Team and Resources • ***What expertise and roles are needed to complete the planning process and project?*** • ***Details of Nodal Persons for C2C Communication:*** • ***Matrix of Responsibilities of Activities to be Done:***
Measuring the Outcomes

- ***Desired Deliverables. What are the expected deliverables and their content?***
- ***Matrix for measuring the success of the Association/Partnership. Mutually decided Key Performance Indicators...***
- ***Post Activity Report.***

7. Way Forward

This report presents the best practices and a flexible communication framework for establishing decentralised collaboration between local governments, cities or LGAs. We call on all decentralised cooperation practitioners in Asia Pacific cities and regions to reach out to the UCLG ASPAC and BRLC and share their experience from decentralised cooperation projects.

Cities and local governments are the main actors. They can ensure the achievement of sustainable development agenda and build an efficient system of sharing knowledge, learning and resources in the post-Pandemic period. Such associations require smooth communication among cities in real-time. It is needed that the capacities of LGs, especially those in the developing countries, are improved with partnerships and collaborations to face new challenges. It is sure that the experiences and know-how accumulated through peer-to-peer exchanges not only benefit cities and associations directly but can provide valuable inputs to solve global issues.

C2C cooperation during the Pandemic has demonstrated that robust collaboration between cities can strengthen the nation and society by ensuring that many actors are working jointly for a common cause. However, the best practices selected only provide a small insight into the possibility and variety of cooperation between local governments and associations. The ambition is limited to illustrate what, when, where, and how C2C collaboration can be developed.

The primary purpose of this report is to provide a rational framework for decentralised collaboration to cities and LGs by offering details of a wide range of forms in which local governments and cities cooperate and give an insight into the essential mechanism support and common objective needed to build on mutually beneficial collaboration. In addition, it is intended that this report provides a basic understanding and significance of C2C relationships, enlists advantages and challenges considered by governments and partners, and provides a roadmap to feasible solutions.

Abbreviations

ACR+	:	Association of Cities and Regions for sustainable Resource management
BRLC	:	Belt and Road Local Cooperation
C2C	:	City to City
CPAFFC	:	Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries
CRIC	:	Climate Resilient and Inclusive Cities
ECOLISE	:	European Network for Community-Led Initiatives on Climate Change and Sustainability
EU	:	European Union
FCM	:	Federation of Canadian Municipalities
FSLGA	:	Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities
LED	:	Local Economic Development
LG	:	Local Government
LGA	:	Local Government Association
LRG	:	Local Regional Government
MoU	:	Memorandum of Understanding
NUA	:	New Urban Agenda
SDGs	:	Sustainable Development Goals
SLLF	:	State Legislative Leaders Foundation
UCLG	:	United Cities and Local Governments
UCLG ASPAC	:	United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific
USA	:	United States of America
UK	:	United Kingdom
VNR	:	Voluntary National Reviews

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Asia-Pacific

Annex 1. Questionnaire 1 Communication Framework for Cities Questionnaire

Research Report: Communication Framework for Cities

Your responses in this survey will help us understand how cities in the Belt and Road region communicate with member cities for decentralised communication internationally. This survey will help in developing a communication framework for cities and assist them in improvising it further for maximising impact for building back better.

OBJECTIVE

1. What should be the basic criteria for establishing city-to-city cooperation (C2C) between two cities from different countries? (Multi-Choice)

   - Demography

   - Common urban challenges

   - Similar Environmental conditions

   - Common Goals (Smart City, NUA, SDGs, BRLC agenda, etc)

   - Others

   1-B. If any criteria used is not mentioned above, please explain here.

2. If your city is establishing a C2C Collaboration with a city from different country, what would be your objective? (Multi-Choice)

   - Knowledge/Idea Sharing

   - Technology Transfer

   - Strengthening people-to-people connections

   - Boost tourism

   - Other

   2-A. If any objective is not mentioned above, please explain here.

3. Do you think exchanging ideas on culture development can help a city?

   - Yes

   - No

   - Maybe, don't know

   3-A. Briefly write your reasons for your answer in above question.

PROCESS AND TOOLS

4. Does your city communicate with other cities outside your country (whatever forms of relations) on a regular basis?

    - Yes

    - No

    4-A. If not, why so?

    4-B. If yes, which communication channel does your city prefer or use? (Multi-choice)

    - Email/Fax/Tel

    - Through National/State Government Channels

    - Social Media

    - Through LG Associations such as UCLG ASPAC

    - Others

    4-C. Specify the channels used by your city below.

5. Which platform do you use for communication and exchange of information between you and LRGs of other countries/regions/provinces?

    - LRG association in your country

    - Global or regional LRG association

    - Others

    5-A. If you use other/not mentioned platform for the same, please specify.

6. Is there a pre-established line of communication between you and local governments/local government associations in your country and beyond?

    - Yes

    - No

    - Can't say

    6-A. Please comment

7. Who plays the leadership role in international city cooperation for taking policy-level decisions?

    - Elected Representative

    - Local Government Official

    - Communication agencies/ Third party Consultants

    - Representative of national/ state government.

    - Others

7-A. If others, please mention below.

8. In the rapidly advancing digital world, what are the best mediums available for knowledge sharing between cities from different nations? (Multi-Choice)

- Web Portal

- Online meetings/ Conferences

- Social Media

- Newsletters

8-A. If others, please mention.

MECHANISM

9. Does your city have a dedicated communication department to handle international affairs or city-to-city cooperation at global level?

- Yes

- No

10. Do you first get to know about an idea/innovation and then reach the appropriate city for information/collaboration or do you first establish connection with some cities and then exchange ideas with them only?

11. How many cities is your LRG currently engaged in regular contact and information exchange with?

- 0-5

- 6-10

- 10-20

- Over 20

12. Do you think member cities should have a centralised information system for sharing knowledge and ideas? If Yes, what could be the best suited medium?

- Website

- Monthly Newsletter

- Case study compediums

- E-forum

OUTCOME

13. Do you think news of unique ideas and innovations from other cities inspires your Local or Regional Government (LRG) to do something similar for the better development of your urban space?

- Yes
- No
- Can't say

13-A.   If no, briefly explain.

14. How do you feel about the information you receive from BRLC and UCLG ASPAC Member cities from foreign countries?

- Relevant
- Non-relevant
- Generic
- Repetitive

14-B. If others, please specify

15. Do you believe that exchanging knowledge has helped your LRG in improving the liveability of urban space?

- Definetely
- Not at all
- Can't say

15-A.   If not, please explain briefly.

15-B.   If yes, which idea/concept borrowed from another city has been the most useful to your LRG?

16. In your opinion, why do you think the exchange of knowledge from other cities has been useful to and applied in your LRG? Because ......

- Other LRG has similar challenges
- Mayor/Governor has strong leadership and values the importance of international cooperation
- LRG has experience and effective department in charge of international cooperation
- It is supported by the association of LRG such as UCLG ASPAC

16-A.   If others, please mention.

KEY ISSUES

17. How easy or difficult it is to connect with a foreign city for knowledge/idea/innovation sharing?

18. In which categories/sectors has your organisation exchanged knowledge? Provide Details.

19. What are the most prominent barriers in establishing C2C Cooperation? Please share your experience.

20. Lastly, what is your suggestion for improving city-to-city communication? In your opinion, what could/should be the essential components of the communication framework?

We're almost there—just some general questions about you and your LGs/LRGs.

o   Name
o   Name of your organisation
o   Your Designation
o   Email
o   Phone number
o   Name of your City/Region/Province
o   Name of your country

Thank you for your time.
We really appreciate your efforts and time for sharing this information. It will help us in building a robust communication framework for cities.

Annex 2. Questionnaire 2 Research Report- Form for three cities

Research Report: Communication Framework for Cities

Your responses in this survey will help us understand how cities in the Belt and Road region communicate with member cities for decentralised communication internationally. This survey will help in developing a communication framework for cities and assist them in improvising it further for maximising impact for building back better.

1. What are the major objectives of your LRG in engaging with other local government associations/organizations?

   1-A. Please upload a file, if any, to supplement your answer to the above question.

2. Kindly describe the kinds of existing cooperation engagements? Also, list the number of city collaborations your LRG has?

   2-A. Please upload a file, if any, to supplement your answer to the above question.

3. Do you follow any protocols followed during intercity decentralized cooperations? Who spearheads such engagements?

   3-A. Please upload a file, if any, to supplement your answer to the above question.

4. In your experience, how did the Sister City collaboration help your LRG during the pandemic?

   4-A. Please upload a file, if any, to supplement your answer to the above question.

We're almost there—just some general questions about you and your LGs/LRGs.

- o   Name
- o   Name of your organisation
- o   Your Designation
- o   Email
- o   Phone number
- o   Name of your City/Region/Province
- o   Name of your country

Thank you for your time.

We really appreciate *your efforts and time for sharing this information. It will help us in building a robust communication framework for cities.*

BUILDING COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK FOR CITY-TO-CITY COOPERATION IN BELT AND ROAD REGION

A study to lay a roadmap for functional city-to-city international cooperation,
measure effectiveness of communication channels and the sister cities concept
to create a robust, effective communication strategy for
local governments in the Belt and Road region to achieve common goals