



Seminar summary

Achieving sustainable internationalization in cities

Comparing Latin American and European perspectives

Thursday, 5 July 2018 from 9am to 5pm
Hôtel de Ville (city hall) in Paris

For several years, local governments around the world have been working to strengthen and increase their presence on the international stage, and to ensure greater consistency across their different departments' actions. However, due to the lack of institutionalization, these processes do not always survive political alternations or institutional changes, preventing local governments from taking advantage of the benefits provided by a policy of internationalization to the development of the territory. The sustainability of internationalization requires developing a strategy at several levels: local, national and international.



The objective of this seminar has been to allow cities of the two regions (Latin America and Europe) to share and contrast elements that can contribute to give sustainability to the international action carried out by a local government. AL-LAs stands for an internationalization public policy of a territory, that should be coherent with the local identity and the expectations of the inhabitants. The content of the seminar has been built from the proposals of the Notebook AL-LAs n ° 8: "Towards a sustainable

international action in the cities" that belongs to the Collection of Notebooks for the internationalization of cities.¹

A hundred-people participated in the seminar: representatives of local and regional governments in Europe, Latin America and Africa, mostly members of Cités Unies France, AL-LAs and Platforma; researchers and students of French universities; representatives of other networks of cities of the two regions; as well as representatives of international organizations. This document summarizes the main ideas of force.

OPENING SESSION BY THE ORGANIZERS

Speakers:

- **Patrizianna Sparacino-Thiellay**, General Delegate for International Relations for the City of Paris
- **Roland Ries**, Mayor of Strasbourg, France, and President of Cités Unies France (CUF)
- **Hervé Conan**, Director of the Latin American & Caribbean Department for the French Development Agency (*Agence Française de Développement – AFD*)
- **Noelia Erika Wayar**, Director of International Relations for the City of Cordoba, Argentina, and representative for Mercociudades
- **Cristian Espinosa**, Director of International Relations for the Quito Metropolitan Area, Ecuador, and representative for the Alianza eurolatinoamericana de cooperación entre ciudades (AL-LAs)
- **Marlène Simeon**, Director of Platforma

Moderator: Nicolas Witt, Deputy Director of CUF



¹ Link to the AL-LAs Notebook No. 8 (available in Spanish only): <https://proyectoallas.net/2018/07/03/cuaderno-8-hacia-una-accion-internacional-sostenible-en-las-ciudades/>

“Catching the international virus”

To open the proceedings, and in the name of Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, Patriziana Sparacino-Thiellay, General Delegate for International Relations, saluted the commitment of all the partners around the table who made this seminar possible. She recalled the longstanding efforts by the City of Paris to institutionalize its external action.

The topic is as timely as ever given that the cities have an increasingly important role to play in global diplomacy. Cities have evolved from being spectators to lead actors and are ever more involved in international action taken in step with the needs of regional partners and populations.

Several factors explain this multifaceted shift in international action by cities:

- The growing role of city networks, which have become powerful influencers on national as well as international policies.
- The willingness to expand relationships of cooperation, solidarity and “especially decentralized cooperation, which has helped spread the international virus to many of our employees,” said Ms Sparacino-Thiellay.
- Finally, the emergence of a new form of cooperation based on discussing issues and innovative solutions, sharing experiences and forming win-win partnerships.

These three changes have helped internationalize public policies and increased the appeal for both employees and elected officials.

Nevertheless, for the General Delegate for International Relations for the City of Paris, it is because such action is increasingly cross-cutting and multifaceted that the continuity of cities’ international action has become a priority itself.

Finally, discussions should take into account the budget limitations that cities face, “especially in France, with rules on expense ceilings that are imposed in State-City contracts,” said

Ms Sparacino-Thiellay, before giving the President of Cités Unies France the floor.

After welcoming all the participants and thanking the City of Paris for hosting the event, Roland Ries recalled that the COP21 in Paris marked a decisive step in legitimizing the local and regional international action and that “we will not go backwards: it is clear that diplomatic relations between states on one side and cities with a role to play on the other are not opposed – the two can complete each other”.

However, Mr Ries mentioned the budgetary concerns currently affecting France. “It would not be reasonable to continue financing regional governments for their international action within the 1.2% increase set out by the Financial Pact for the 322 largest among them. Doing so means they might then refocus their efforts on traditional issues and leave international action to the state government.”

“Withdrawal: a political and intellectual error”

More broadly, the President of the CUF would like to draw attention to the future of international action by local governments, which are “today at a crossroads” facing rising populist withdrawal tendencies.

For him, “this populist risk must be fought. **Thinking that you can withdraw and no longer participate in international action is a political error, an attack on international solidarity, and I would even go so far as to say an intellectual error.** At a time when the world is as interconnected as ever, we cannot start withdrawing back to local issues and putting up walls. It is a danger we need to take seriously because there is a genuine rise in local self-interests”.

The discussions from this seminar will not only provide greater insight about knowledge between Latin American and Europe but will also show that there are other types of relationships.

Funding projects that are different, innovative and jointly run by French and Latin American cities

While the AFD has only recently extended its action to Latin America (in 2009), its current investments total €8 bn, 20% of which goes to local governments (more than €1.5 bn). The AFD's Hervé Conan recalled that "always working through partnerships is part of our DNA. This is an important aspect of our strategy in Latin America: working in partnership with states as well as local governments. We are almost the only technical and financial partner that can provide loans directly to local governments".

For Mr Conan, France has considerable expertise to share on a large range of key subjects for cities such as climate change as it applies to local issues (urban transport, sustainable cities, energy, waste management, etc.). "For all of these topics, France has a wealth of experience. The AFD wants to be a go-between with other stakeholders such as the CUF and local governments in France and Latin America." He also mentioned that "we have a lot to learn from the Latin American experience" about ecological and social transition, which are central to the new AFD strategy in the region. "Our role is also to showcase and disseminate Latin American experiences in France."

Discussions between counterparts, and especially during occasions such as this one, can also be a forum where very different, innovative and joint projects between French and Latin American cities can be presented. These projects are assisted and co-funded by the AFD through tool such as FICOL, a recent mechanism that allows French local governments to support projects in developing countries. The AFD then ensures that each of its actions is well promoted.

The benefits of being part of a network

Working in a network is another strength that makes cities' international action sustainable. Noelia Erika Wayar, Director of International Relations for the City of Cordoba, was attending the seminar as the representative for the Mercociudades network, a major network of 300 cities of varying sizes in the South American trade bloc Mercosur. This network deals with

issues of governance, innovation and strengthening this region.

In echo of the joint approach mentioned by previous speakers, Ms Wayar explained that the Mercociudades city members have many experiences to share with the international community and are happy to do so at every opportunity. "These forums for exchange are important for sharing our best experiences as well as our weaknesses and the difficulties encountered by other cities. This way we can work together to find solutions and identify those that can be applied while taking into account local differences and practices. We make the most of these meetings to get as much benefit from them as possible."

Discussions were held between the 300 cities as well as in cooperation with other networks such as AL-LAs and CUF. After confirming her commitment to continue discussions beyond the present meeting, Ms Wayar said she was pleased to see that these venues were also accessible to small and medium-sized cities.

Defending the role of small cities in their regional development approach

This topic was covered by Marlène Simeon, Director of Platforma.

Platforma is a pan-European coalition of local governments committed to decentralized cooperation. One of its main missions is to lobby European institutions to recognize the importance of working with local governments on international action. The Platforma team also helps its members with capacity building to adapt to new European and international frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals or the Paris Agreements. Platforma promotes exchanges among its members to help them stay informed and apply these framework agreements to their actions.

Finally, the third area involves evaluation and monitoring, for which lobbying efforts are also carried out, "because the European Union consistently asks itself what local governments

can contribute to development. The EU develops guidelines for civil society organizations and for large cities, but Plataforma also advocates for small cities which have a real role to play in their regional development approach”.

Working in our cities to address human dramas

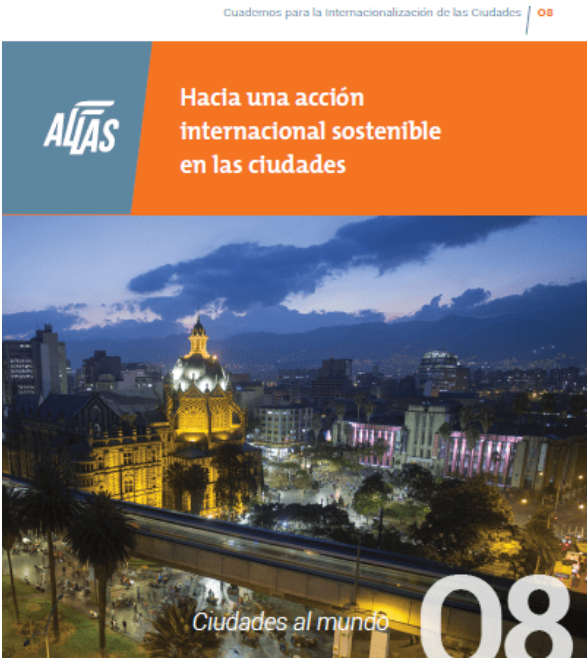
Cristian Espinosa, Director of International Relations for the Quito Metropolitan Area, Ecuador, and representative of AL-LAs, shared the humanist vision of the CUF President. He recalled that all those who contributed to the joint work in Notebook No. 8 share the idea of international solidarity and the universal character of human rights. “We can see this today with migrants from Venezuela. While the situation is challenging at the borders, the real

drama is playing out in our cities. Migrants need greater solidarity within our cities. Unfortunately, we do not have access to Venezuela’s cities for political reasons. If we maintained international relations with them, such action would be easier.”

For him, this is proof that international actions by cities can help resolve these issues and transcend the traditional focuses of transport, ecology, etc. “This is why it’s extremely important to remember that Latin American cities have developed this network with the support of European cities, including the City of Paris. But there is still a lot of work to do.” This seminar is proof of the efforts that still need to be made.

INTRODUCTION: ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE INTERNATIONAL ACTION

- **Braulio Diaz**, General Coordination for AL-LAs – Mexico City
- **Jeannette Velez**, researcher at Glocal Actions & Solutions



In this session the publication "Towards sustainable international action in cities" was presented, which is part of the Collection of Notebooks for the internationalization of cities

A new Pandora’s box: how to showcase the impact of internationalization on our own regions

AL-LAs considers itself a think tank that strives to create strategic and participatory alliances with a long-term vision to resolve the issues on local agendas. The members share and work together

to defend the idea that internationalization is not the exclusive purview of state governments, but also concerns cities, regardless of their size. “They all have something to learn and to teach. We do not see cooperation as an issue between funders and beneficiaries but as strategic alliances to develop solutions,” said Braulio Diaz.

AL-LAs set itself two priority working areas to help cities bolster their international action: knowledge management and professionalizing international departments. The network comprehensively analyses all aspects of internationalization based on very specific cases: improving legal frameworks, institutional organization, how to communicate, good citizenship issues, etc. The results of these analyses are published in the first seven issues of the collection of Notebooks on internationalization in cities.

“Last year, there was another topic to study: how to communicate, including with our own local government. How can the impact of internationalization on our own regions be showcased? Beyond strategic issues, there was also the message of how to showcase the beneficial aspects of quality of life in our cities. We opened this new Pandora’s box to determine what can help a city make its international policy sustainable,” Diaz explained.

Two important points in particular are dealt with in Notebook No. 8, which was just published:

- measuring the impact of internationalization, but not solely from a quantitative standpoint, and
- how to assess these internationalization models which take different shapes in our cities.

Mr Diaz also mentioned that the process has only just begun in terms of considering how to measure progress and impacts on regions, but the issue is just as relevant to Latin American cities as it is to European cities.

Systematizing knowledge sharing and preventing silos

Jeannette Velez, a substantial contributor in the work included in Notebook No. 8, rounded off this introduction by noting several conditions that are necessary to sustain international action and which are included in the last issue.

Public policies have three phases: creation, implementation and evaluation. To be sustainable, internationalization must be fully integrated into this process and not be considered just a bonus.

“Efforts must be made to avoid silos and having everyone do what they want.” For that to happen, she discussed how it is important to create a multi-stakeholder forum dedicated to international action within the local government to achieve a consensus on the direction to take. “Internationalization efforts exist outside of city hall. Many regional stakeholders are involved in internationalization and they need to be included. Ties must also be made with legislative bodies. If they are not included, there is a risk of not being able to move forward.”

Finally, a clear process should be outlined to identify the stakeholders, limits, co-responsibilities and budgets.

For Ms Velez, a researcher, systematizing and capitalizing on internationalization efforts also take place by disseminating and showcasing those efforts. Knowledge sharing must also be systematized. “Knowledge management scenarios need to be drawn up so that everyone can think about issues within forums for exchange rather than in a compartmentalized way.”

At the regional level, working through a network helps make internationalization sustainable. “Cooperation plans between cities must be created so that everyone wins. All international networks need to know what is going on. There must be a clear direction with indicators that can be used to track the process within the administration and see how contributions will be made from a regional development policy standpoint and to promote good citizenship to improve local living conditions.”

Finally, the expected results at the local, regional and international levels must be determined as soon as international actions are developed. Results must be gathered directly from external

stakeholders and should make it possible to measure whether the local government's internationalization goals have been met in line with a continuous improvement approach.



Photo by Miguel Camacho

SESSION I: Conditions for strengthening the regional internationalization process

Speakers:

- **Carina Reyder**, Director of International Relations for the State of Minas Gerais, Brazil
- **Carolina Bernal**, Deputy Director of Knowledge Management for the Agency for Cooperation and Investment for the Medellin Metropolitan Area, ACI Medellin, Colombia
- **Patrick Geroudet**, Deputy Mayor of the City of Chartres, President of the Argentina Country Group for Cités Unies France
- **Fortuné Pellicano**, Councillor of Brest Metropolitan Area in charge of decentralized cooperation, Mexico Country Group for Cités Unies France

Moderator: Paola Arjona, AL-LAs Technical Director



Objective: Discuss actions that can make the international action of local government sustainable at the local, regional and international levels.

To reinforce the regional internationalization process, thought should be given to how to connect the institutionalization process with local government management at the local, regional and international levels. It is only by ensuring that stakeholders at these different levels take ownership of the issue that **collective efforts** are possible to legitimize the local government's international action.

Several **conditions for success** are identified by participants to ensure the success of "this collective action depending on the level".

I. **At the local level**

- **Political willingness** shared among all relevant elected officials is essential for developing international relations in local government.

- **Administrative teams are on board.** Fortuné Pellicano explained that the expertise of a city's departments is essential for a project to be successful. "Political willingness is necessary but not enough on its own. In Brest, we worked to make international action a part of all of the city's public policies through joint projects run with other partner governments, which developed a greater awareness within the government departments".

- **Improve cross-cutting cooperation** with technical departments to add a qualitative

aspect to the internationalization strategy. The head of international relations for the city of Nanterre, who was attending the seminar, compared his role to that of a "general practitioner doctor" who has knowledge of various specialities.

- **A joint strategy** must be drawn up with cooperation from elected officials and city departments as well as partners – regional authorities who will also be involved in the project and support networks such as CUF. In Medellin, when there was a change in government, the first thing that was done with the Agency for Cooperation (ACI Medellin) was to identify new priorities and partnerships based on this focus on supporting international projects. It was this cooperation that provided the roadmap for everyone to follow. For Mr Pellicano and the Brest Metropolitan Area, "decentralized cooperation is only a tiny part of international action and it can only work if there is osmosis between the municipalities, the metropolitan area and the city."

- **Including the internationalization strategy in the regional development plan**

The city of Medellin started with initiatives at the international scale but then developed a more comprehensive public policy by integrating international issues in its urban development plan, called "*Medellin is counting on you*". ACI

Medellin managed the internationalization for Medellin and ten other municipalities. Including internationalization in the plan provided tangible guidelines and led to a dozen own indicators to be tracked, such as the number of jobs created, the amount of foreign investment in the city, the number of trade fairs or international events, and the number of partnership agreements signed.

- **Showcase economic development**

For the Brest Metropolitan Area, **showcasing the economic aspects** helps bolster local international action and aligns with one of the AFD's areas of focus. "When we work with the state of Veracruz, Mexico, which has eight million inhabitants, whereas the Brest Metropolitan Area only has 240,000, they expect us to talk about our experiences. We have to be realistic about the topics we discuss. For us, economic development is at the heart of our partnership," says Mr Pellicano.

He also gave a concrete example of this approach: for 15 years, the elected officials of the Brest Metropolitan Area have maintained close ties with the city of Tsingtao, China (with eight million inhabitants) by attending their festivities every year. Two years ago, the Brest Metropolitan Area was able to measure the "direct return on investment" of this relationship, because Chinese investors from Tsingtao set up a processing plant outside Brest to process milk from Finistère into powdered milk to meet the needs of the Chinese market, with exports leaving the port of Brest. Moreover, because of their longstanding ties, the former mayor of Tsingtao has become the governor of Shandong Province, which opens the door to a number of possibilities.

Another investor who owns a school in Tsingtao also created a university network with the ESC Brest business school for which the investor has become the main shareholder. "It's more than a return on investment – it's a win-win economic partnership between the two regions."

- **Involve citizens:** "If the population is not at the heart of the projects, there's no point."

The deputy mayor of Chartres, president of the CUF Argentina Country Group, added another essential condition for success: citizen support. "Citizens need to understand the benefits of this internationalization in terms of appeal for their own region and useful exchanges with other countries."

For Mr Pellicano, the answer again lies with the economy. "Over the past several years we have begun to understand that we need to communicate about the benefits of our financial investments in our international policies for the metropolitan area, and for our citizens. We have integrated international action into the metropolitan area's economic policy. For us, the international action is as cross-cutting as economic development. We also chose to highlight the economic development so that citizens understand the benefits."

However, participants were curious about how to ensure that internationalization is not limited to just economic development or how to create a comprehensive internationalization strategy that includes other aspects such as citizen participation or governance issues.

Djamel Sandid, head of international relations for the city of Nanterre, took a slightly different perspective, explaining that "the internationalization of cities isn't random – we have people from more than 80 different countries within our population! For us, the internationalization of our regions has to be done so as to showcase the international actions of our residents, especially through collaborative projects. Cities are not alone to work on international action. They should also promote projects led by regional stakeholders to strengthen internationalization."

The city of Le Lamentin, Martinique, has maintained a partnership with the city of Santiago, Cuba, for 22 years. Several specific and innovative projects were launched upon request of residents with the help of Cuban specialists, such as:

- identifying talented young people (in music, art, etc.) from elementary school age

- diabetes prevention: more than 500 people came to the Place du Lamentin public square for a free diabetes screening by doctors from Le Lamentin and Cuba.
- the implementation of a biological inventory for biodiversity in the city's mangrove, for which scientists from Martinique and Cuba and mangrove users collaborated.

For Christina Joseph Monrose, Councillor for the city of Le Lamentin, “these examples show that the if population is not at the centre of the projects, there is no point in doing them. We communicate on all the results, because **it's important for the population to appropriate these international exchanges.**” She added, “For us, the return on investment is also visible through the skills that city employees gain through these exchanges and then use again when assisting other city stakeholders.”

II. **New challenges at the regional level**

Regions face new challenges in terms of public services, mobility, interconnection, environmental protection and regional management. Coordinating public policies using regional schemes is essential, and the link with internationalization, while it may add a certain degree of complexity, can also provide a range of solutions. Internationalization can be used as a tool for regional development in a number of areas.

The state of Minas Gerais in Brazil, with 20 million inhabitants, has the country's third largest economy. With 853 municipalities, managing the internationalization policy is a highly complex undertaking. To ensure more consistent actions, an international affairs network was created at the regional level to help the 72 organizations involved in international efforts communicate with each other. One of the difficulties to resolve was to keep the state governor informed in real time of the international action carried out by 853 cities. For this, an information system was set up to make internal communication updates for the network easier. “All you have to do is click a button to see the number of international agreements signed by any particular city,” explained Carina Reyder.

Ensuring coordinated and concerted action is a continual challenge.

Another problem is due to the fact that Brazil's constitution stipulates that no international agreement can be concluded without central government approval. Lobbying efforts are now underway to change legislation so that the state of Minas Gerais can sign agreements more spontaneously with other countries. “We are calling for voluntary contributions from those who would like to participate in our related research and publication efforts.” The state of Minas Gerais has developed an expertise in agriculture, new technologies and water resources that it is ready to share through international cooperation projects,” said Ms Reyder.

III. **At the international level: an important role to play through networks**

The range of areas for exchange and cooperation has continually grown, from healthcare to education, sanitation, the environment and the economy.

Twinning programmes have become genuine cooperation agreements and local governments are now stakeholders in the international agenda, as was the case in setting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is therefore very important for local governments to work together, share their experiences and maintain solidarity with each other on all issues that affect them.

Today, CUF has 25 country groups, and each one is a **forum to promote the exchange of ideas and pooling of resources** between local governments cooperating in a particular region. One of the advantages is also to allow **exchanges between local governments of different sizes**. Thanks to CUF, even small local governments representing just a few thousand inhabitants can access these country groups so they can **professionalize and strengthen their international action**.

These groups also play a role of **technical liaison** in a variety of areas such as healthcare, water and waste management, sanitation,

international solidarity and the economy. The advantage of these country groups is to develop **joint actions**, including rapid and effective mobilizations such as those required during natural disasters; one such example was a solidarity fund created for cities in Japan and in Haiti. “This long-established and sustainable chain of friendship is what makes this solidarity work quickly and well,” emphasized Patrick Geroudet. Finally, these country groups are also a powerful way to advocate for local interests in **French parliament and the central government**. These country groups are part of the grassroots diplomacy that has developed in recent years in France.

This new role of local governments must be supported by the strong conviction that they can also “change the world” at this scale, and even more so when they are a part of networks such as AL-LAs, UCLG or CUF. These networks have played a non-negligible role in strengthening the internationalization of cities as influential stakeholders in setting the international agenda. “In these networks, there is a sense of reciprocity between local governments, and that is essential for each party to improve its practices. For example, on citizen participation, Latin America is a real-life laboratory. We have learned a lot,” said Mr Sandid from Nanterre.

Laurence Gourvil from the city hall of Rezé, France, mentioned that you cannot expect more citizen participation in projects, more cross-cutting cooperating between departments and more involvement in city associations without dedicating more human resources, skills and expertise. One of the answers to the need for financial and human resources could be in **pooling internationalization resources with other cities** in France. To this end, local government networks committed to international action are precious resources for technical support and learning about the possibilities for joint actions, especially for small towns.

Working as a network of local governments also encourages **direct exchanges and sheds light on the realities of experiences on the ground**, as a representative for the city of Sarh, in southern Chad, brought up, before inviting the local governments of Latin America to come see for themselves the realities of her verdant city. “With each partnership, we can learn about the experience of local residents. Come see and ask yourself ‘What are the people who live there capable of?’” to overcome resistance and preconceived ideas. Perhaps internationalization might become a new life philosophy.

SESSION II Criteria for measurement and evaluation of international action by local government

Speakers:

- **Aline Abreu**, International Relations Advisor for the City of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- **Cristian Espinosa**, Director of International Relations for the Quito Metropolitan Area, Ecuador
- **Noelia Wayar**, Director of International Relations for the City of Córdoba, Argentina
- **Arnau Gutiérrez**, Assistant Director-General for International Affairs, Networks and Multilateral Council of Aude Organizations, City of Madrid, Spain
- **Nicolas Cimbaro**, Mission Head for Decentralized Cooperation, Departmental Council of Aude, France

Moderator: Rocío Rodriguez, Union of Ibero-American Capital Cities (UCCI)



Objective: Analyse actions and broaden the main measurement criteria to monitor and evaluate the internationalization of local governments based on three dimensions: institutional, policy-based and regional.

A 3D evaluation

Work by the AL-LAs platform has helped identify three dimensions of the issue of evaluating the internationalization of local governments:

- **The institutional dimension:** The departments involved in the cooperation policy should also report on progress and advances they may make. Evaluating with the departments involved in international actions is key to ensuring better participation from them and, most of all, better results from the exchanges of experiences with partners with a view improving these technical partnerships.
- **The policy-based dimension:** Evaluation will gauge how well goals set by elected officials have been met as part of their strategic vision for cooperation policies and their vision for the future. Evaluation is a policy decision-making tool.
- **The regional dimension:** The aim is to evaluate the impacts on the region.

Discussions between participants have helped develop **innovative, qualitative and specific criteria** for internalization.

Knowledge management based on exchanges between networks of local governments that allows for joint learning

Exchanges of best practices between local governments involved in international action are rich and varied. They may deal with a variety of subjects from localizing SDG processes to the latest trends in digital administration. In Rio de Janeiro, the Office of International Relations manages its international action as a public policy to make it more sustainable. Its participation in international forums such as AL-LAs is a criterion for good management. “We created a strategic plan that shows the advantages of the international policy by connecting it with the SDGs. The plan also includes international relations as an objective. There are specific objectives for the Office of International Relations with criteria to be met.”

These criteria include the opportunity to participate in events organized by city networks, the possibility to present or discuss actions by the city of Rio, or exchanges of experiences and expertise. This capacity building helps strengthen the skills of employees involved in international relations, particularly by allowing them to participate in work/exchanges of city networks or by contributing to research.

Cross-cutting cooperation between departments and interinstitutional coordination

The policy-based dimension of evaluation reflects the importance of cross-cutting cooperation and interinstitutional coordination to ensure that internationalization can support the objectives of local authorities.

For Cristian Espinosa, it is key to take note of the scale of evaluation. “For example, a health policy evaluation could show good results overall, but may indicate significant disparities at the neighbourhood level in Quito. Samples need to be taken and assessed methodically.”

Influence on the international agenda and stakeholder involvement: two new evaluation criteria?

In recent years, local governments have played a groundbreaking role in the international agenda creation process, whether with respect to the SDGs or the New Urban Agenda adopted during the Habitat III conference in Quito. This role is an impact in and of itself for the progressive internationalization of local governments. It is also an indicator, as explained by Arnau Gutiérrez for Madrid. “Cooperation projects are important but do not account for all of the international action for a city like Madrid. Measuring the impact is extremely complex and cannot be summed up by the number of projects. You can determine the impact by our ability to influence the international agenda.”

In Cordoba, the mayor sets out a plan with objectives to be met by area for each year, then performs a quantitative measurement by area. However, as Noelia Wayar explains, “what really matters is our influence on the international agenda and the forums in which we work”. She added, “You also have to see if you are able to communicate well so that citizens and other stakeholders are informed.” For Cordoba’s director of international relations, the issue of sustainable internationalization depends on its institutionalization. “In ten years, we have been able to join networks and participate in forums like this. But if there was a change in government, international action could be

called into question. It is important for it to continue.”

Involving regional stakeholders such as chambers of commerce, universities and economic development agencies is one way to sustain internationalization strategies. To this end, **the international agenda should be shared with all stakeholders**. “We work with three universities in particular which have international departments. We share the mayor’s agenda with the rectors, see who wants to participate and launch calls for contributions to take part in international forums. The universities are also a part of project co-construction.”

In Cordoba, consideration is already being given to creating an “Internationalization Office” that can involve all stakeholders and oversee international action. “Each elected official can add their touch, but the international policy will be guaranteed and the work that has already been done won’t be lost.”

Evaluation is also reflected in citizens’ views

The degree of international openness can be measured with indicators such as the amount of foreign investment in the region, the number of cultural events with an international scope, etc. According to Mr Gutiérrez, there needs to be constant evaluation. “The current evaluation system seeks to measure the effect of internationalization in terms of network participation, from a qualitative point and view and not just quantity. The aim is to understand the effects of the internationalization policy.”

For him, internationalization can also be assessed from a qualitative view based on citizens’ interest in and their opinions of their local government’s international policy. A survey can show if they are interested and how informed they are. If this survey is carried out every year, it can show positive impacts. It can also shed light on the dynamic. The impact of international action can also be assessed through workshops or forums to gauge citizen reactions.

For Nicolas Cimbaro, from France’s Aude administrative department, citizen feedback should not be feared, whether in France or from

direct beneficiaries of the cooperative efforts in the partner region. “In Peru, farmers told how they increased their yields by two or three times by better controlling water flows following the project we carried out, and that their living conditions had improved. **Evaluation can simply be such feedback, which reflects acceptance by the populations and an understanding of the benefits of the cooperative action,**” he said. “Evaluation can be administrative, budgetary, policy-based – but it also be achieved through human interactions.”

Proof by impact

In the end, what should evaluation be used for? For Mr Gutiérrez, once the results of internationalization have been measured, “it is still difficult to revise the roadmap. Measures must be appropriated through policy decisions”. “Many elected officials still do not understand the importance of internationalization,” said one participant. Concrete examples and proof by impact can help convince them. To do this, everyone needs to work together, with a holistic vision and towards a more horizontal management style, with regional planning carried out jointly.

A long-term plan: starting the process and setting an ambition

In reality, the participants concluded that the process is really only in its infancy. For Javier Sanchez, it is clear that future practices will not be the same as today, because “we are still struggling to exist, to affirm international action as a public policy”. In this “struggle”, work carried out by local government networks, such as AL-LAs, must have a starting point. “It is important to assess how things are today to see if we’re going in the right direction.” Mr Gutiérrez also mentioned that internationalization is a recent phenomenon and is still in its learning phase. He noted the example of ministries and offices of the environment, which just a couple decades ago did not exist, before now being widespread. “Today we cannot imagine a city without an environmental or health department. The same needs to happen for international policies.”

Researcher Jeannette Velez, who has contributed to work by AL-LAs, came back to

the complexity of internationalization given the ever-changing reality regions face. “We produce certain things, and tomorrow something else. The indicators have to be tied to actions to evolve with them. You also have to remember that the international dimension contributes to regional changes, but it must not be attached to those changes.”

Evaluation: “One phase of our cooperation programmes”

Nicolas Cimbaro, Mission Head for Decentralized Cooperation, Departmental Council for Aude, France

“Implementing this evaluation policy was not easy. Elected officials and city employees were not familiar with doing evaluations. Today, this is just how we do things, but that that took some time. They are even required by national and international funders. Evaluation is not easy but given the improvements that can result from the process, it has become impossible to not do it. To ensure success, all partners need to be involved beforehand, including on the choice of methodology. **Evaluation must be done as a team** – it is not the local government’s responsibility alone. Next, the decision needs to be made whether to **handle it internally** or ask an external consulting firm to do it. The Departmental Council of Aude, which manages six decentralized cooperation programmes in Lebanon, Tunisia, Burkina Faso, Argentina, Ecuador and Peru, decided to do it internally. We wanted to complete the evaluations ourselves because they help us **to learn and grow**. These are occasions to discuss experiences, successes and failures. And it is very important to be able to **share resources with other partners**. Evaluation is one phase of our cooperation programmes. You also have to consider the post-evaluation: Is a shift in direction needed? Which decisions need to be taken based on the evaluation results? This is difficult to do from a policy and technical point of view, but it helps us reposition our programmes.

To sum up, evaluating our international actions:

- helps us learn from others by encouraging discussion with partners, therefore improving our practices,
- aids elected officials' decision making, and at a technical level, can be used to

determine the following phases of cooperation in conjunction with our partners,

- improves cooperation partnerships, and
- is a way to be held accountable to funders.”

SESSION III Advances in and challenges of evaluating local and regional internationalization policies

Speakers:

- **Oliver Castañeda**, General Coordinator of Administrative Modernization of Mexico City, Mexico
- **Nelson Fernandez**, Director of International Relations for the City of Montevideo, Uruguay
- **Juan Carlos Diaz**, Coordinator of the Multilateral and Regional Development Programmes, Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity (FAMSI), Spain
- **Javier Sánchez**, Head of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for the Government of Catalonia, Spain
- **Fernando Santomauro**, Representative for UCLG Learning
- **Moderator: Adrien Licha**, Knowledge and Exchange Project Manager for PLATFORMA



Objectives: Discuss various actions to identify measurement tools, create a series of indicators to highlight results, develop methodologies and design information management tools.

While certain local governments have developed evaluation practices, often the focus is on monitoring measurements or capitalizing on experiences, which, in the best of cases, allows the internationalization results to be shared with citizens. However, the methodologies are not always fully able to gauge the effects of internationalization, either within the local institution or in terms of impact on the region. This round table aims to promote discussion among participants to identify new possibilities with regard to evaluation.

Adjusting the focus: moving away from the project approach

For Adrien Licha, looking at the economic impacts to assess internationalization alone is not enough and ignores many valuable insights, especially with African local governments. International solidarity is another angle to be considered, and it has historically been at the heart of decentralized cooperation. For Platforma, less effort should be made to show the effects of each exchange or cooperation project and more effort dedicated to understanding the internationalization processes.

For Javier Sánchez, a certain pragmatism is required in terms of evaluation: “It seems to me

that evaluating international action – as with any public action – must be done according to the objectives of the public policy and on the results obtained. There is rarely a strategy that reflects the real change we want to see, so public policies need to be assessed for what they are.” However, he suggested putting local and regional international action into perspective with regard to what other regional stakeholders are doing, because internationalization is not limited to public action. “All international action cannot fall to local governments alone. It is better to have a plan for joint analysis at the regional level.”

Setting the right priorities

Oliver Castañeda said that local authorities must start at the beginning: they need to do a diagnosis of local problems and set priorities accordingly. “Efforts need to be made to develop public policy with broad citizen participation. For example, in Mexico, we have a problem with child literacy. What do we do? Only a good diagnostic will make it possible to determine the objectives and indicators to reach which can then be evaluated.” Work does not stop with the project: “The challenge is continuity. Another diagnostic needs to be carried out to know if the problem is still a priority at the end of the project cycle.”

Financial management is also a connected issue. “How do you get the resources you need to meet the objectives you set?” Mr Castañeda asked. “Cross-cutting cooperation is not as much a question of horizontal collaboration as it is a way to incorporate international actions into budget allocations. You have to look at not just one action, but rather all public policies that deal with the same priority.” He added, “International action by local governments cannot be separated from public management and vice versa.”

Diversifying the approaches and working through networks

Juan Carlos Diaz noted the risk of fragmentation that can result from a lack of financial support and policies when dealing with ever more serious issues, such as migration. “Local governments want to have influence and take action, but national governments have the

actual skills to do so.” He added, “This is why FAMSJ encourages strategic alliances with other local governments to discuss shared issues such as fair trade or institutional reinforcement. It is important to continue creating forums for dialogue between local governments.”

With regard to evaluation specifically, Mr Diaz suggested considering the “evaluability” of international action and noted the need to create measurement criteria to better assess the social impact.

Fernando Santomauro, from another network, highlighted the importance of learning from mistakes. Even if the cities represented at the seminar “are part of the elite in terms of internationalization,” they have all experienced failures from which they can draw lessons.

At UCLG, the creation of a strategic plan was highly informative. A working group focused on identifying indicators for a programme called *Advocacy*.

The second UCLG programme, *Learning*, came about from the idea to conduct theme-based cooperation case studies to improve training, including online. Evaluation is also a learning tool.

The example of Montevideo: evaluation is a founding process

Nelson Fernandez felt that he was “lucky to come to a city, Montevideo, that had already been involved in internationalization for 20 years,” but when he took over his post, the International Relations Division was still under the Department of Economic Development. “I finally understood that there were different 240 twinning agreements, but they were always drafted using the same text. We say we’re going to work together, but we do not set specific objectives.” Under his direction, the division was restructured. “I said I wanted to evaluate everything: the number of trips and the reasons for them, as well as which employees spoke which languages.”

From there, new objectives were set:

- **Professionalization** (e.g., working time, knowledge of English, the use of modern communication tools

such as video conferencing, collaboration with universities which could provide useful expertise to train employees, etc.).

- **Institutionalization** of international relations, starting with the separation of the international relations division from the economic department.
- **The creation of a public policy** with a strategy by country: it was decided that by the end of the term, international action needed to be considered a necessary public policy that went beyond political affiliation to ensure its sustainability.

“Work carried out within AL-LAs was an excellent way to find solutions for the roadmap we created at Montevideo.

The first year, the focus was on qualitative indicators (number of meetings, number of projects, number of agreements signed, etc.) to establish an international action situation report.

The second year, qualitative and quantitative indicators were combined.

The third year, we no longer measured trips or twinning agreements, but strove to evaluate which international actions were supporting the municipality’s five strategic areas of focus.”

Evaluation shows what international action by local governments can achieve

Laia Vinyes Marce from Platforma noted her appreciation of the fact that the local governments participating in this seminar were part of a genuine process of reflection and were asking a lot of questions about their internationalization, the first impact of which, she said, was its integration into other public policies. For her, internationalization is a source of innovation.

FAMSI’s Juan Carlos Diaz went further, saying that evaluation needed to give local governments a way to promote not only the effects of their international action but their mode of governance and the type of relations they create with their partners locally. Together, these efforts show what international action by local governments can achieve and evaluation is a way to prove it.

Evaluation is a tool for the democratic process

For Daniel Kamelgarn, advisor at CUF, “There are always a few questions that need to be asked before starting an evaluation, and the answers will guide the choices in terms of evaluation management and methodologies:

- Who are you doing the evaluation for? For citizens, for internal purposes, for accountability for funders, etc.?
- Why are you doing the evaluation? For accountability, to learn, to capitalize on the experience, to take decisions, etc.?
- What are the evaluation priorities? You can’t evaluate everything – choices need to be made.
- How do you evaluate? The answer to this question depends on the previous answers.

The OECD’s Development Assistance Committee has done substantial work on evaluating development assistance policies, which is useful when considering how to evaluate local government internationalization.

Evaluating public policies has long been carried out by local governments when they access European structural funds. They now master this exercise and today, you could say that evaluation has become a tool for the democratic process – even if elections remain the ultimate evaluation!”

SEMINAR CLOSING REMARKS

Nicolas Witt, CUF

The AL-LAs has done an amazing job in just a few years to work through a network to develop precise information about concepts and practices. This work has been extremely stimulating for the network's members in France and Latin America. We hope that the efforts will continue within the CUF, UCLG, Platforma, and others as well.

Nelson Fernandez, AL-LAs

Evaluation should be focused on the objectives tied to local governments' policy priorities. The point of international relations is not to be an end in itself. Rather, it is a process with numerous opportunities to promote dialogue with multiple stakeholders.

Internationalization should indeed be considered a tool in the democratic process, for which there is room for action by everyone. This conclusion is shared by all the cities which are part of AL-LAs and all cities which consider democracy a key value.



Figure 1. Seminar participants. Photo by Miguel Camacho.

PARTICIPANTS

	Name	Family Name	Institution
1	Cathya	ADJOLOHOUN	CITES UNIES FRANCE
2	Alexandre	ADJOLOHOUN	CITES UNIES FRANCE
3	Emilien	AMBLAT	AGENCE FRANCAISE DE DEVELOPPEMENT - AFD
4	Paola Andrea	ARJONA CAYCEDO	VILLE DE MEXICO AL-LAS
5	Jack	ARTHAUD	ETABLISSEMENT PUBLIC D'AMENAGEMENT DE SAINT ETIENNE
6	Olivia	BAKKER	ETAT DE YUCATAN
7	Carolina Maria	BERNAL SIERRA	ACI MEDELLIN
8	Laura	BERTRAND	AMBASSADE DE L'ARGENTINE EN France
9	Santiago	BETANCUR	ECOLE NATIONALE D'ADMINISTRATION
10	Lisa	BONNET	MINISTERE DE L'EUROPE ET DES AFFAIRES ETRANGERES
11	Virginie	BRUNEAU-CHABOSSEAU	Ville de POITIERS
12	MICHEL	CALVINO	URBANISTE DU MONDE
13	Miguel	CAMACHO GIMENEZ	FUNDACION COMUNIDAD IBEROAMERICANA
14	Louise	CAPELLE-LEHEMBRE	CITES UNIES FRANCE
15	Olivier	CASTANEDA CORREA	VILLE DE MEXICO
16	Mareva	CESTOR	MINISTERE DE L'EUROPE ET DES AFFAIRES ETRANGERES
17	Nicolas	CIMBARO	CONSEIL DEPARTEMENTAL DE L'AUDE
18	Jesus	CISNEROS	AMBASSADE DU MEXIQUE EN FRANCE
19	Julien	CHIAPONNE - LUCHESI	VILLE DE STRASBOURG
20	Jean-François	CLAVERIE	IHEAL
21	Hervé	CONAN	AGENCE FRANCAISE DE DEVELOPPEMENT - AFD
22	Stéphanie	COTREL	VILLE DE REZE
23	Jérémie	COURTINOT	CITES UNIES FRANCE
24	Ombeline	DAGICOUR	UNIVERSITE DE PARIS &ehss
25	Stéphanie	DAPSANCE DIXON	COMMUNAUTE D'AGGLOMERATION D'AMIENS METROPOLE
26	Sophie	DAVIN	
27	Wim	DE GEEST	VILLE D' EDEGEM
28	Braulio	DIAZ	VILLE DE MEXICO-AL-LAs
29	Juan Carlos	DIAZ	FAMSI
30	Cristian	ESPINOSA	METROPOLE DE QUITO
31	Sophonie	ETIENNE	CONSULAT GENERAL D'HAITI A PARIS
32	Jocelyne Dalila	EUSTACHE	BAIE MAHAULT
33	Delphine	FALCHIER	AGENCE FRANCAISE DE DEVELOPPEMENT - AFD

34	Nelson	FERNANDEZ	Ville de Montevideo
35	Aline	ABREU	RIO DE JANEIRO
36	Katarina	FOTIC	CITES UNIES FRANCE
37	Denis	GAILLARD	AMBASSADE DE FRANCE AU LIBAN
38	Alice	Gautier	CITES UNIES FRANCE
39	Patrick	GEROUDET	CHARTRES
40	Laurence	GOURVIL	REZE
41	Vincent	GUIMARD	AMBASSADE DE FRANCE AU MEXIQUE
42	Arnau	GUTIERREZ CAMP	Ville de Madrid
43	ESTELLE	HEDOUIN	ESTELLING
44	Beatriz	HERNANDEZ	AMBASSADE DU MEXIQUE EN FRANCE
45	Marion	HOYEZ	CODATU
46	Mathilde	JEAN	BREST METROPOLE
47	Christina	JOSEPH MONROSE	LE LAMENTIN MARTINIQUE
48	Marieme	MABIDI	VILE DE RENNES/RENNES METROPOLE
49	Daniel	KAMELGARN	CITES UNIES FRANCE
50	Christophe	KATSAHIAN	MINISTERE DE L'EUROPE ET DES AFFAIRES ETRANGERES
51	Célestine	KETCHA COURTES	RESEAU DES FEMMES ELUES LOCALES D'AFRIQUE
52	Monadje Fatimé	KOLMAGNE	VIILE DE SARH (TCHAD)
53	Daouda	KEITA	BAGNOLET
54	Constance	KOUKOU	CITES UNIES FRANCE
55	David	LANGLOIS	PARIS
56	Marion	LERICHE	SO COOPERATION
57	ADRIEN	LICHA	PLATFORMA
58	Yann	LORVO	AMBASSADE DE FRANCE EN ARGENTINE
59	Gaëlle	LOVERGNE	UNIVERSITE CATHOLIQUE DE LILLE
60	Camila	MARQUEZ	AMBASSADE DU CHILI EN France
61	Maël	Martinie	CODATU
62	Félicia	MEDINA	CITES UNIES FRANCE
63	Gustavo	MERLO	AMBASSADE DE L'ARGENTINE EN France
64	DIANE	ODILLE	CONSEIL DEPARTEMENTAL MEURTHE-ET MOSELLE
65	Rebeca	ORNELAS BERNAL	IHEAL
66	Catherine	PAQUETTE	INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT (IRD)
67	Fortuné	PELLICANO	BREST METROPOLE
68	William	PEREZ LORIA	ESTADO DE YUCATAN
69	Mariana	RANTISSI	VILLE DE REZE
70	Carina	REYDER	ETAT DE MINAS GERAIS
71	Roland	RIES	CITES UNIES FRANCE
72	Rocio	RODRIGUEZ	Union des Villes Capitales Ibéro-américaines (UCCI)

73	Eric	RUBIO	ESTADO DE YUCATAN
74	Javier	SANCHEZ	GENERALITAT DE CATALOGNE
75	Djamel	SANDID	NANTERRE
76	Fernando	SANTOMAURO	CGLU
77	Geneviève	SEVRIN	CITES UNIES FRANCE
78	Marlène	SIMEON	PLATFORMA
79	David	SINGH	CITES UNIES FRANCE
80	Patrizianna	SPARACINO- THIELLAY	PARIS
81	Claudio	SULE	CIUDAD SUR
82	Viviane	TCHUNG-MING	COLLECTIVITE TERRITORIALE DE GUYANE*
83	Jean-Louis	TESTUD	CITES UNIES FRANCE
84	Tania	THELINEAU	LE LAMENTIN MARTINIQUE
85	Jeannette	VELEZ	GLOCAL ACTION AND SOLUTIONS
86	Laia	VINYES MARCE	PLATFORMA
87	Gabriel	VOISIN-FRADIN	GRENOBLE -ALPES-METROPOLE
88	Noelia Erika	WAYAR	VILLE DE CORDOBA
89	Nicolas	WIT	CITES UNIES FRANCE