

# North-South city partnerships improving local governance in the urban South



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## Introduction

The aim of the research is to gain insight into the contributions North-South city partnerships make to local governance and local development in the South.

- World wide, local governments have become prominent players in the international development cooperation arena. Cities partner up and seek to contribute to improve local governance and enhance local development in young democracies and areas struck by poverty.
- The changing nature of local administration in the South fed by decentralisation processes entails a stronger developmental role for local governments despite a lack of organisational capacity and resources. Therefore, local institutional strengthening is a mayor concern in the South.

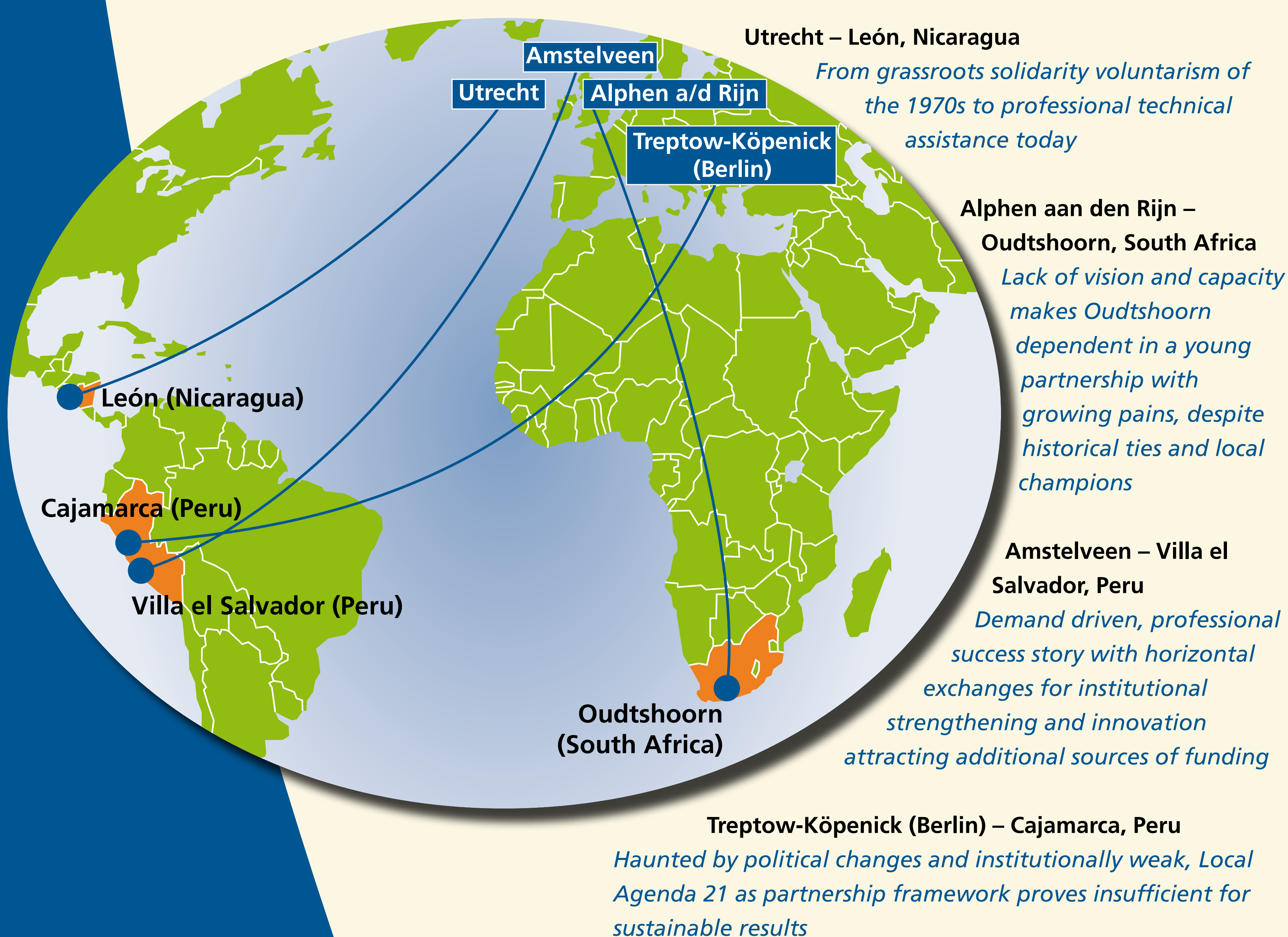


## Research questions

- Organisation: How are city partnerships organised and justified in both North and South? [policy, resources, stakeholders, know-how, motivation, legislation]
- Interaction: To what extent do city partnerships function effectively as mechanism for capacity building and knowledge sharing for local governance and development? [power relations, agenda, 'good partnering']
- Impact: To what extent do city partnerships contribute to improvements in local governance and urban development in the South? [institutional performance, multi-sector partnerships]

## Methodology

- Four case studies of North-South city partnerships (8 cities)
- Qualitative research in North and South: e.g. in-depth interviews with local politicians and officials, NGOs etc.
- Multiple case studies: comparing Organisation in both North and South, comparing Impact in the South and comparing the partnerships' Interaction.



## Current phase of the research



### Preparing for analysis April-July 2007:

- Transcribe in-depth interviews
- Classify documents, reports, plans
- Design frameworks for comparison and analysis

### Issues raised

- To what extent can we compare processes, North-South, S-S, N-N?
- Look for commonalities and diversity among cases?
- Discursive analysis: 5 countries, 5 languages, cultural interpretations
- Organising and doing in-depth analysis of qualitative data

### Results and preliminary conclusions

- Organisation: Political support, formalised international cooperation policy, participation within the local authority and an involved civic society in both North and South are crucial to successful partnerships. The highly volatile nature of local politics (South) undermines continuity and consolidation of partnerships.
- Interaction: There is mixed evidence that individual learning from city exchanges is successfully transformed into organisational change or institutional strengthening. Ownership and a demand driven city partnership agenda are crucial to guarantee political and administrative commitment and flexibility to incorporate change in local governance.
- Impact in the South:

Urban livability and productivity	Local government effectiveness	Local government responsiveness	Civic society and multi-sector partnerships
++	+	-	+/-
E.g. clinics, schools, employment creation, environmental awareness raising	E.g. information systems, structural plans, leadership skills, performance management	Difficult to enhance; beyond sphere of influence city partnerships, learning in the North	Strengthening civic society organisations and participation capacity (opportunity)