

Position Paper by Eine Welt Netzwerk Hamburg (EWNW) – One World Network Hamburg – on the Sister City Relationship between the City of Hamburg and the City of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

10.08.12

The EWNW explicitly welcomes the agreement on a sister city relationship between the two cities, Hamburg and Dar es Salaam.

- **Encounters:** The sister city relationship can contribute to citizens from both cities coming together to learn from, with and about each other, and to form partnerships and friendships.
- **Partnership:** It can exemplify that "Africa" is much more than a needy continent waiting to be developed by the North and that cooperation beyond well-meant development aid is possible and appropriate.
- **Inter- and trans-cultural learning:** The sister city relationship can play a role in dismantling existing prejudice and clichés in both cities with the aim of promoting a better understanding of thought patterns as well as familiar and foreign context and conduct.
- **Global learning:** The sister city relationship can contribute to learning more about life in an African metropolis as well as getting to know ones own city and to identify shared as well as separating factors.
- **Postcolonial perspective:** The sister city relationship can encourage ways to deal with often repressed colonial history of the city of Hamburg as well as the colonial relationship between Hamburg and Dar es Salaam / Germany and Tanzania. It can contribute to a culture of remembrance and through a postcolonial perspective it can encourage a critical approach to (neo-) colonial structures, power relationships, perceptions, interpretations and construction of identities in both cities.
- **Sustainability:** The sister city relationship can support the shaping of a sustainable inter- and intra-generationally fair development in both cities.

EWNW is concerned that the realisation of this potential is endangered by

- **Insufficient aspirations in content**

So far no thorough discussion has taken place in both cities around the concept of sister city relationship, resulting in both sides getting involved without a jointly reflected understanding of the process. Conditions, content and players in relation to the sister city relationship have mainly been determined in Hamburg.

No reference has been made to the special colonial context in the agreement on the sister city relationship nor in the declarations of cooperation. Thus the intention to express, handle and overcome the reproduction of colonial clichés, interpretations and power relations is missing.

The aims of the sister city relationship are strongly directed towards "development" in Dar es Salaam and are in contradiction to an understanding of partnership that would allow for changes to happen in both cities. This leads to an undefined conflict of interest between the demands of a partnership, development projects and economic interests.

- **Insufficiently institutionalized structures**

A large international undertaking like this sister city relationship needs a managing director equipped with adequate financial means and responsibility. In order to do justice to the meaning of such a relationship and its potential, EWNW sees a special need for action in the following:

- Developing a concept for the sister city relationship, including quality definition and control and the corresponding distribution of public goods
- Support for regular internal communication and information as well as providing ideas to continuously develop the sister city relationship
- Advice and support for existing partnerships
- Developing and organizing extended training
- Inclusion of areas that have thus far been neglected (culture, NGOs, etc.)
- Integration of other funders from the public and private sector
- Publicity work to raise awareness of the sister city relationship and the sister city in Hamburg

EWNW declares the necessity to

- drop the tautological expression of a „partnership on eye level“ with Dar es Salaam and instead to jointly reflect on the content and effects of the sister city relationship in an honest and self-critical manner.
- actively open up the sister city relationship for people from both cities, who want to get involved on a temporary basis and outside of formalized relationships.
- consciously and actively include people from Dar es Salaam living in Hamburg, especially if they are taking part in partnership exchange programmes in the City of Hamburg.
- establish coordinating offices in both cities that will work closely together.

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