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Urban Development Projects: Neighbourhood, State and NGOs

Final Evaluation of the MOST Cities Project

by
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Abstract

In accordance with its terms of reference, this report contains the main results of the final evaluation of the “Cities Project: Management of Social and Environmental Transformations (MOST/UNESCO)”. The evaluation was carried out in three stages. In the first two we assessed the activities undertaken in the two Cities Project pilot sites, Dakar and Jalousie. In the third stage, which is the subject of this report, we have carried out a general assessment of the Cities Project, as a follow-up to the two earlier stages. The assessment process is largely qualitative, i.e. it is neither a financial nor a cost-benefit assessment in the strict sense.

Mural at Jalousie, Haiti

Supervised by the Haitian painter and sculptor Patrick Vilaire and inspired from an original work by him, the local people are gradually producing a mural of which the whole neighbourhood is proud.



The aim of the observations, analyses and recommendations contained in this report is to assess the relationship between the objectives, implementation and methodologies of the Cities Project and the results obtained. To this end, we have tried to answer a broad range of questions concerning two issues in particular:

1) The actors and the relational framework of a development project in an urban environment.

As part of an initial stocktaking of the implementation of the Cities Project and making use of accumulated experience of the subject, we have drawn up a “general framework of action” for urban development projects (cf. p. 17 ss). To begin with, we endeavour to analyse the type of action engaged in by neighbourhood organizations and the local networks from which they draw their support. We emphasize at the outset the value of neighbourhood organizations – often the principal social capital of the inhabitants, as well as a remarkable tool for social action. In addition to this utilitarian function, support for organizations of the poorest inhabitants helps to achieve recognition for the cause of the neglected and thence for democratic culture. Next, we stress the extremely complex nature of support networks, which cannot be understood without in-depth knowledge of the special features of each site. This observation should, moreover, serve as a warning of the dangers of the “drift towards a community-biased approach” which often leaves individuals to face tightly-knit and oppressive networks on their own. This raises the issue of the role of the State. Later in the report, we stress the irreplaceability of public institutions and the State in performing a dual function: as a provider of support and co-ordination in the public arena and as an architect of the democratic resolution of conflicts. Public institutions perform a role as regulators of social life which neither neighbourhood associations nor development NGOs can accomplish.

2) The added value of the Cities Project. In pursuit of the objectives of the Cities Project, we have tried to define its place within the twofold context of strategies to alleviate poverty and promote democratic culture. We have accordingly defined the initiatives of the Cities Project as falling within the framework of a development project, i.e. responding to the demand both for an improvement of the quality of life and for the promotion of public-spirited participation in community life. This report

contains a number of attempts to expose certain false antitheses where development projects are concerned: micro/macro, state/civil society, research/action.

We have defined the “added value” of the cities project in terms of three major types of contribution and action: *Legitimacy, catalysis and research-action*. 1) It sets out to confer legitimacy on those involved in the development project (supporting initiatives of local inhabitants and their neighbourhood organizations; “encouraging the State to perform its due functions”, and promoting a certain type of democratic action.) 2) Forming part as it does of an “action-reaction” rationale, the Cities Project aims to promote a kind of participatory process (catalysis). 3) Through a process of collective effort and feedback between action and conceptualization, the Cities Project aims to build up a fund of practical knowledge and to produce conceptual and methodological frameworks which should be useful in drawing up guidelines for urban development projects.

Access to drinking water at Malika, Senegal



I. The evaluation: terms of reference, methodology, the evaluation process

This report contains the results of the final evaluation of the Cities Project: management of social and environmental transformations. The Cities Project was set up in 1996 as part of the MOST programme and became operational in the same year. An intersectoral¹ research-action project extending over a 6-year period (1996-2001), its goal is to “encourage initiatives designed to improve the quality of life and encourage citizens to play their role in the urban environment”. Designed within an experimental framework, the Cities Project had an initial phase during which two pilot sites were set up: Yeumbeul-Malika in the suburbs of Dakar (Senegal), and Jalousie, in the suburbs of Port-au-Prince (Haiti). An evaluation process was scheduled for the end of this first phase, during the 2000-2001 period.

The evaluation process has followed the terms of reference approved by ADG/SHS on 8 March 2000. According to these terms, the evaluation was designed as a three-stage process. In the first two stages we assessed the two pilot experiments, especially by means of an impact study and by taking stock of the lessons to be learned from the action taken. The evaluation of the two pilot sites attempted to answer the following questions, which are closely related to the objectives of the Cities Project:

1. How does the Project contribute to the training of local actors in the fields of social and environmental management?
2. How does the Project, which aims to improve inhabitants’ living conditions, trigger a development process? How does it facilitate the transition from an anti-poverty strategy to a development strategy?
3. How does the Project contribute to the construction of democratic culture and a sense of community via a partnership between the people and their elected representatives, thereby helping to narrow the gap between the people and the State?
4. How does the Project relate to the power games played by local actors?

The third stage of the process, the final evaluation of the Cities Project, can be seen as the result of the assessment process of the pilot sites. This report should therefore be considered as the continuation of the two assessment reports of the pilot sites:

Evaluation of the project “Cities: management of social transformations and the environment” – The Jalousie Project: “integrated development of a Haitian shantytown”.

Evaluation of the project “Cities: management of social transformations and the environment” – The Neighbourhood Social Development Project in Yeumbeul and Malika, in the suburbs of Dakar, Senegal.

The analyses contained in the present report thus aim to provide an overview of the conclusions drawn from the assessment of each site, and only contain a brief summary of their descriptive and analytical content. The following points are fundamental to this report:

While the report largely consists of an overview of the actions undertaken under the Cities Project, it also incorporates other experience gained from development projects and projects to promote citizenship and alleviate poverty in an urban environment.

It contains an analysis of the project geared to its transferability to other contexts. To this effect, the evaluation disregards distinctive features associated with cultural identity or with the specific situation of each site, concentrating instead on factors with wider relevance.

¹ It is an “intersectoral” project because, within the framework of MOST, the Cities Project involves both the ecological sciences and the human sciences. We shall return to this point.

The report contains a number of assertions and recommendations intended for the drafting of a future position paper or conceptual and methodological guide for setting up projects in other sites.

This evaluation has been prepared in order to facilitate analysis of the Cities Project in the two dimensions fixed by its terms of reference: policy relevance and research relevance. In terms of *policy relevance* we observed “[the project’s] capacity to influence policies, but also, in particular, far upstream [its capacity to] nourish a political culture, a democratic culture [...] another way of engaging in politics in contexts of political crisis”. In terms of *research relevance*, we observed the Cities Project’s capacity to create a process of “feedback between research and action: an ongoing two-way process of cross-fertilization”. This being so, the task was “to evaluate, in the way in which the Cities Project has been implemented, the relationship between action, observation and lessons extracted through the capacities for joint action of social actors (NGOs) and social science researchers”. In this respect, this report is a stock-taking exercise which aims to provide a critical overview of the approach developed by the Cities Project. The report is thus intended to be a component in the research-action process.

II. The Cities Project. Objectives, methodology and field of action

The Cities Project was programmed as part of Major Programme II, within the framework of the MOST Programme, for the 1996-2001 period.² Three objectives were designated for the Cities Project:

1. To support local projects trying out innovative ways of dealing with social and environmental problems in cities.
2. To contribute to integrated training in the social and environmental management of cities for national and local planners and community organizers.
3. To provide for the dissemination of relevant information among decision-makers, citizens and the media.

The purpose of the Project is to “encourage initiatives designed to improve the quality of life and encourage citizens to play their role in the urban environment. It aims above all to develop local authorities’ management capacities with regard to social and environmental problems”.

In accordance with these directives, we have provided an overview of the main thrusts of Cities Project action on the basis of conclusions reached after analysis of documentary information and field observation of experiments carried out in each pilot site.

Support for local initiatives

One of the Cities Project’s main thrusts stems from its resolve to support initiatives by inhabitants. Effective implementation of the Cities Project starts from grassroots initiatives leading to the creation of a dynamic local development process.

During the evaluation, this initiative was revealed as yielding highly positive results. This judgment is based on two observations. First, organized social forces clearly exist in every needy area of every city. Second, these social forces are particularly important because in most cases these populations are more or less left to fend for themselves without support from institutions and without State recognition. This social force, organized on the basis of local support networks (family-based, traditional and/or neighbourhood-centred), is the inhabitants’ main bulwark against life’s vicissitudes. In the perspective of the Cities Project, local organizations constitute an extremely valuable social capital for any social development project in an urban environment. The Cities Project does not ascribe demiurgic qualities to neighbourhood organizations. They are regarded as a starting point in the creation of a dynamics of democratic culture and improved living conditions.

A grassroots project. The micro level

The preceding point explains the “micro” nature of Cities Project activities. Since support for local initiatives is a ground-rule of the Project’s implementation, the latter can only be effective in the form of interventions at grassroots level.

The fact that Cities Project interventions take place at the micro level should certainly not be taken to reveal a bias towards this level and against the macro level for development policies. The two are not mutually exclusive and our choice of the micro level does not rule out the possibility of later action at the macro level. The Cities Project is an example of a policy of mediation that enables the capacities of local actors and structures to be used as a springboard for developing a follow-up process on the macro level.

Furthermore, in view of the doubt and even suspicion often shown by macro-level actors (especially governments and international agencies) towards comprehensive transformation projects, one advantage of the micro level is its showpiece possibilities. By providing an example it can enrich public debate about development policies and poverty eradication on the basis of practical activities.

² Cf. the 28C/5 document, the overall reference text for the Cities Project and this evaluation.

A research-action project

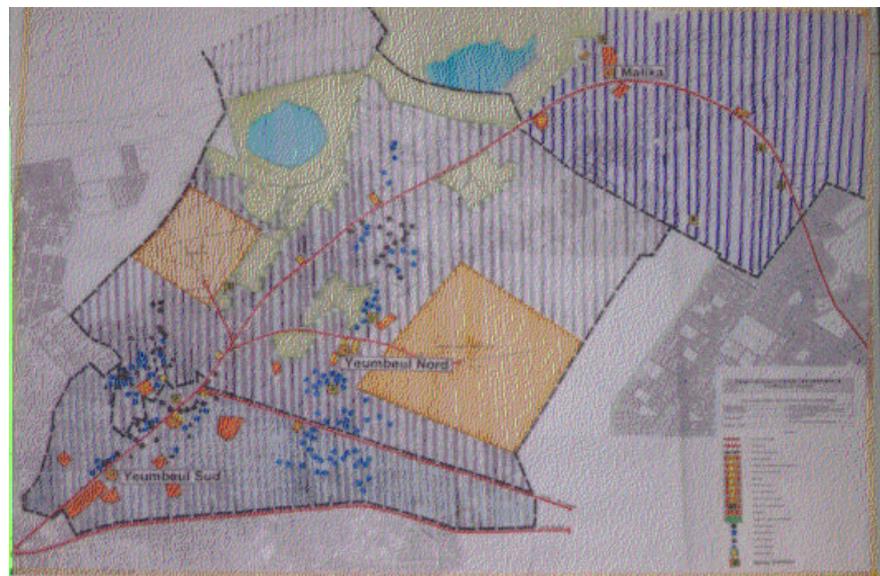
As specified in its objectives, the mission of the Cities Project is not the direct production of an end-product nor the implementation of NGOs' development or funding projects. As a research-action project, its objective is to devise and promote frameworks and guidelines for action to develop and promote democratic culture in an urban environment.

The main objective of action taken as part of the Cities Project is to produce information about the management of social transformations. The two-way process inherent in research-action projects must serve to strengthen the capacities of local actors, especially local authorities and neighbourhood organizations.

The aim of Cities Project interventions is to produce an ongoing two-way process of cross-fertilization between different aspects of the Project: action/production of conceptual frameworks for action.

Map of Yeumbeul and Malika showing some features of the Project

The result of a fund of pooled resources and joint efforts



Incorporating the Cities Project into the MOST/UNESCO framework and into the context of the UN system

The Cities Project forms part of the "Management of Social Transformations (MOST)" programme. It is by virtue of its nature as a research-action programme that the Cities Project fits into the framework of MOST as a programme of comparative research in the social sciences.

The Cities Project fulfils MOST's three principal purposes: 1) Fostering the production of knowledge on social transformations. 2) Enhancing the relevance of social science research and expertise for policy-making and development. 3) Strengthening scientific, professional and institutional capacities, particularly in developing countries.³

Within the purview of MOST's mission to work with the full range of development actors in drawing up public policies (cf 160 EX/12, p. 3), the distinctive feature of the Cities Project is its capacity to promote dialogue between the parties involved. As soon as a research-action process is set in motion, the production of knowledge and skills ceases to be a one-way process (from the university to decision-makers, or alternatively from research to action) and becomes a dialogue in which all the

³ Cf. UNESCO, Executive Board 160 EX/12 of 9 August 2000.

actors are knowledge-bearers and decision-makers. This is valid at all levels of action, from neighbourhood associations to funding agencies, including development NGOs and the State.

Since UNESCO is not a project funding agency, each of the interventions of the Cities Project must have a showpiece function and produce knowledge that can be pooled within conceptual frameworks. Through its inclusion in the MOST programme, the Cities Project forms part of UNESCO's mission as an "ethical organization and critical think tank" within the United Nations system.

For while the actions implemented under the Cities Project are designed to improve inhabitants' quality of life, this is not ultimately a core objective of the Project. As a micro development project in an urban environment, each site in which the Cities Project is operational seeks to "support local projects trying out innovative ways of dealing with social and environmental problems". This aspect of Cities Project interventions defines its position within UNESCO's specific role. In executing the Cities Project, UNESCO does not seek to take the place of other development agencies but to provide a framework in which to legitimize actions and devise and catalyse conceptual frameworks arising out of each stage of implementation.

The intersectoral nature of the Cities Project

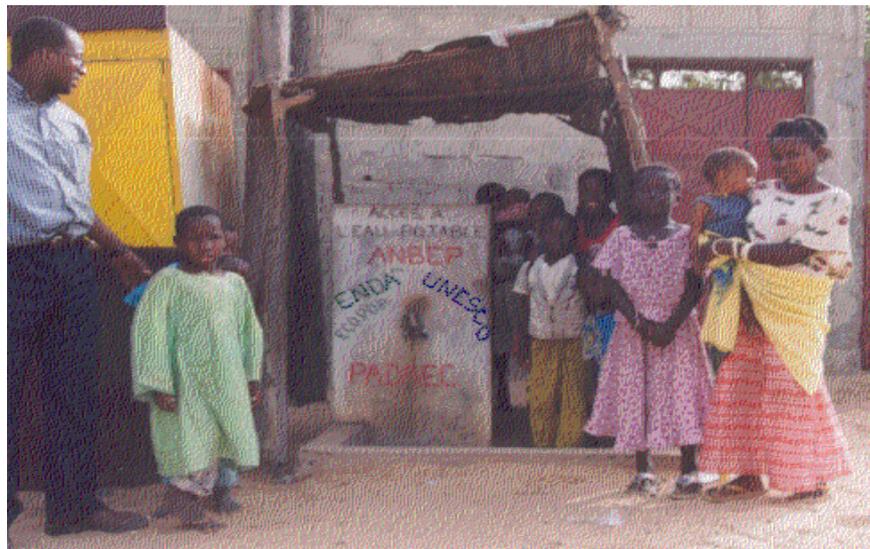
The Cities Project is designed as an intersectoral project, i.e. it seeks to associate the social sciences and the ecological sciences. In a large majority of cases, problems concerning quality of life in poor neighbourhoods are closely linked to environmental problems. In such cases it is observable that co-operation between the social sciences and the ecological sciences is subject to two limiting factors. First, initiatives by inhabitants, development NGOs and local authorities designed to improve the quality of life often require input from the ecological sciences when a major technical complexity crops up. Typical cases are access to drinking water, sewage disposal and the collection, treatment and disposal of household refuse. Moreover, the ecological sciences often contribute additional legitimacy and educational input when populations are mobilized. Second, measures taken to resolve environmental problems within a process of sustainable development cannot work without the participation and involvement of the people directly concerned. The solution of environmental problems often involves a drastic transformation of ways of life rooted in socio-cultural traditions and forming part of strategies for survival.

III. The Pilot Sites: Overview of Cities Project activities in Dakar and Port-au-Prince

The Cities Project, in line with its experimental nature and in accordance with its terms of reference, launched activities in two pilot sites. Document 28 C/5 programmed the preparation of “two pilot activities on marginalized urban and/or suburban areas (including one in a coastal zone). On the basis of an evaluation of existing experience in this field and of the scientific data available, new experiments will be carried out in close partnership with neighbourhood associations and local authorities, in order to contribute to solving social and environmental problems.”

These two pilot activities gave rise to two development projects:

The Neighbourhood Social Development project in Yeumbeul and Malika in the suburbs of Dakar, Senegal.⁴



Setting up the Cities Project in Yeumbeul-Malika: background and description.

In the case of Yeumbeul and Malika, the Cities Project can be defined as a project designed to improve environmental conditions through sewage disposal and access to drinking water, and also to promote income-generating activities. The living conditions of local people were improved by the construction of:

- more than 256 cesspools,
- 2 latrines,
- 10 or more standpipes,
- 4 public lavatories,

and the organization of a household refuse collection service.⁵

The Project also gives backing to self-managed economic activities, including:

⁴ The full text of the evaluation of the Yeumbeul-Malika Project can be found in Denis Merklen: Evaluation du projet sur “Les Villes: gestion des transformations sociales et de l’environnement” – UNESCO. Le Projet Développement Social de Quartiers à Yeumbeul et Malika, dans la banlieue de Dakar, Sénégal. UNESCO-MOST, 2000. The document is available on www.unesco.org/most

⁵ This list of results dates from the time of the site assessment (April/May 2000). Changes have occurred since then, in particular the introduction of a tanker for sewage disposal and the construction of a community centre (with French funding).

- women's groups,
- manufacture of satchels,
- setting up a community shop.

After making contact with the NGO Enda-Ecopop, which forms part of Enda Tiers Monde, an NGO of Senegalese origin, the Cities Project initiated its first experiment in the Yeumbeul neighbourhood in 1996. This is a traditional Lebou village⁶ which is today part of the borough of Pikine in the Dakar conurbation. The Project was launched with a local organization in the Yeumbeul-Sud neighbourhood. Drawing on its long experience and its thorough knowledge of local conditions, Enda-Ecopop contributed a large number of technological innovations in the fields of environmental problems (e.g. systems used in cesspools and treatment of sewage) and social management (e.g. a longstanding fund of experience concerning economic interest groups, especially women's groups).

Once the Project found its feet, it created increasing momentum and a number of associations from neighbouring areas asked to join in. The Project was then extended to the Yeumbeul-Nord and Malika neighbourhoods, involving six associations in all and covering an area with an estimated population of 150,000.

A Decentralization Act promulgated in 1996, when the Project was getting underway, created "Communes d'arrondissement" (county boroughs) in Senegal. Yeumbeul-Sud, Yeumbeul-Nord and Malika became boroughs, each of which formed a local government. A conflictual situation arose when several mayors perceived the Cities Project experiment as a source of political competition undermining their representative status. Despite this initial perception on the part of the local authorities, the borough of Malika decided to play an active role in the Project and became the partner of the development NGO in the neighbourhood in view of the weakness of the voluntary sector in this locality. This decision by the mayor of Malika eventually persuaded the other two mayors to follow suit. In due course, the Cities Project built up a head of steam, involving all the political and social actors in the Yeumbeul/Malika area in a project steering committee. Distrust between political and social actors gradually gave way to a process of co-operation and dialogue which led to joint management of investments, premises and resources.

Meanwhile the original budget of the Yeumbeul-Malika project contributed by UNESCO was almost doubled thanks to support from two funding sources, Coopération Française and the European Community. The Project is currently engaged in discussions with two ministries (Town Planning and Decentralization) and has been brought into discussions about the urban development project of the borough of Pikine (one million inhabitants).

The project for "Integrated Development of a Haitian Shantytown" in Jalousie, in the suburbs of Port-au-Prince, Haiti.⁷

Setting up the Cities Project in Jalousie: background and description.

In 1996, the Cities Project Co-ordinator contacted the Groupe de Recherche et d'Echanges Technologiques (GRET), a development NGO with an international range of activities that was well established in Haiti. After an initial stage devoted to establishing contacts and finding out about the people living in various districts in the Port-au-Prince conurbation, UNESCO decided to incorporate the Jalousie neighbourhood as a pilot site in the first phase of the Cities Project.

⁶ The Lebous were the first ethnic group to occupy the Cape Verde peninsula.

⁷ The full text of the evaluation of the Jalousie Project can be found in Denis Merklen: Evaluation du projet sur "Les Villes: gestion des transformations sociales et de l'environnement" – UNESCO. **Le Projet Jalousie: développement intégral d'un bidonville haïtien**, UNESCO-MOST, 2000. This document is available on www.unesco.org/most

GRET already had considerable working experience of several Port-au-Prince neighbourhoods, where it had focused its efforts on drinking water supply problems. Taking as its starting point the policy of the water company operating in the metropolitan region of the capital (CAMEP) regarding the supply of drinking water to shantytowns, GRET drafted a “social engineering” programme designed to mobilize the population and to contribute to capacity-building in local organizations.

GRET regarded Jalousie as another area where it could pursue its action on water-related issues. In this case, GRET was taking advantage of the opportunity offered by Cities Project support in order to extend its range: “The Jalousie programme is even more ambitious, aiming to promote integrated development in this neighbourhood, taking as its springboard the commitment created in a community by the water issue before going on to tackle coherently issues linked to sewage disposal, land use, employment, leisure activities, in short everything that affects everyday life”. These were the terms in which GRET saw the Jalousie Project in 1997.⁸ A technical problem promptly arose and changed the course of the Project. CAMEP announced that it was impossible to supply Jalousie with drinking water because too much investment would be required. This significant piece of information caused the Project’s whole strategy to be modified. It was no longer possible for water to act as rallying point for the neighbourhood or for water management to provide the interface between neighbourhood associations, the inhabitants, the NGO and the State.

GRET had already set up the Neighbourhood Support Foundation (FAQ), the team that would take charge of the Jalousie Project. The team started work after learning of the difficulty announced by the water company. Efforts already being made to mobilize the inhabitants began to bear fruit. A discussion process was launched, the neighbourhood associations being reluctant to lose the backing of FAQ and UNESCO. It was they who now put forward a proposal to improve urban living standards. The fact that Jalousie is built on the Morne Calvaire hillside, that the dwellings are squashed together and that State intervention has been lacking are all major complicating factors for those living in the neighbourhood. Bridges are required because the ravine is impassable in rainy weather; some parts of the neighbourhood are gradually collapsing so that a retaining wall is needed; some footpaths are in a bad state and need repairing, etc.

So, in line with proposals made by neighbourhood associations, the Jalousie Project turned towards “improving the urban framework”. During the first stage of the Project there was no alternative but to improve the built environment. What changed was not the overall objectives but the social approach strategy. In point of fact, GRET’s original proposals had included work on the built environment. The Jalousie Project initially envisaged work in the following areas: drinking water supply, sewage disposal, the road network and public spaces, the land occupation problem, street furniture, decorative handicrafts in the Haitian folk tradition.

During the initial stages of the Jalousie Project, an evolution in the capabilities of local actors soon became apparent. The participatory process triggered by FAQ’s intervention as part of the implementation of the Cities Project soon empowered the neighbourhood associations to take the initiative with regard to Project strategy. The Jalousie associations have definitely made progress in the sphere of social and environmental management. Implementation has so far produced a number of practical results:

- improvement of the road and pedestrian network,
- a retaining wall,
- a small footbridge over the ravine that cuts across the neighbourhood,
- a football ground,
- three small squares plus their outdoor furniture,
- lighting of these squares via solar-powered street-lamps,
- street furniture made using local craft techniques,
- participatory production of a mural, co-ordinated by the Haitian sculptor Patrick Villaire.

⁸ BRAILOWSKY, Alexandre: *Projet Jalousie. Développement intégré d’un bidonville haïtien*, Port-au-Prince, GRET/Haiti, 1997, p. 4.

A spirit of participation has been created and as a result full benefit has been drawn from the Project. First, a public arena has been opened up where none existed before. Second, the cultural dimension of the handiwork has added new facets to the Project. As we have seen,⁹ these two components (opening up of public arenas and the cultural aspects of the operations) have set the Jalousie Project on the way to achieving Cities Project objectives.

The value of input from the Cities Project becomes apparent when the artistic aspect of its work is considered in the light of the double standard characteristic of Haitian society which has often tended to despise and ostracise folk art. This activity has had a tonic effect on people's sense of identity, an indispensable factor in the training of democratically-minded political actors in line with the objectives of the Cities Project.

A positive impact has also been noticed on local actors and the local power system. Before implementation of the project, three associations were operating in competition with each other in Jalousie, indicating a dispersal of collective effort and the fragmentation of the neighbourhood. Following a proposal from FAQ, these three grassroots associations set up a Central Management Board (COGEC). The Board was created to unify and rationalize neighbourhood community organization. COGEC is one result of FAQ's work as a mediator between grassroots organizations and UNESCO, and hence of the implementation of the Cities Project. The creation of COGEC is important because it provides an opportunity to overcome the locally focused approach typical of grassroots groups. The Jalousie associations, like those we observed in Dakar, are each attached to a particular section of the neighbourhood. This fragmentation (now being overcome via COGEC) is often a crucial problem neighbourhood associations have to deal with when they have to establish a line of communication with the State (because it opens the door to cronyism on the part of political parties). This result of the Project's implementation suggests a way of dealing with problems regarding the empowerment of actors. It is observable that one result of Cities Project intervention is the empowerment of neighbourhood organizations and the settlement of conflicts within the neighbourhood.

As in Yeumbeul and Malika, UNESCO's role can be summed up as that of legitimizer and catalyst. It performs this function via communication between the actors and with the various State bodies. During our evaluation mission in Port-au-Prince, we were present at meetings with the mayor of Pétion-Ville, with the President of the Republic's adviser on city planning and with the head of the water company (CAMEP). These meetings were a continuation of the efforts the Cities Project Co-ordinator had been making since its inception. Such efforts dovetail into a work strategy similar to that followed in Dakar, as the Co-ordinator's mission reports reveal. In Haiti, as in Senegal, the aim is to inform the authorities of what is being done, to make them aware of the Project's objectives, bring them closer to the population and endeavour to involve them in the Project. In the case of CAMEP, a compromise was reached, namely that the question of drinking water supply in Jalousie would be reviewed (moves are already afoot with a view to installing a number of standpipes in Jalousie). In the case of the Pétion-Ville municipality, the new mayor has expressed his intention to involve the town authorities in the Project. This willingness to communicate with the authorities is complemented by an effort to close the gap between the population and the State. After each contact with the authorities the neighbourhood associations are informed and are encouraged to pursue their communication efforts. UNESCO is particularly qualified to fulfil this role since its position is outside local political issues. In implementing the Cities Project, UNESCO brings all its authority to bear in the performance of its role as legitimizer of democratic practice and as promoter of a culture of civic responsibility.

Main results of Cities Project action in Yeumbeul-Malika and Jalousie

Improving quality of life as a direct consequence of constructive work. Direct impact on the environment and social life in the neighbourhoods.

⁹ Cf. the evaluation report on the Jalousie Project, 2nd stage of the Cities Project evaluation.

Strengthening neighbourhood associations as a consequence of:

- Bringing associations together within the management structure of the Yeumbeul-Malika Project and within the Management Board in Jalousie.

Training members of associations.

- Forging relationships between associations and the State (the county boroughs and Pikine town hall in Yeumbeul-Malika; Pétion-Ville town hall and the water company, CAMEP, in Jalousie).

- (In Yeumbeul-Malika) Broadening the Project's field of action from one to three neighbourhoods and bringing in five other neighbourhood organizations (the Project started out with a single association). Setting up a local Project headquarters for associations, with computer facilities. Incorporating various association representatives into the structure of the development NGO, Enda-Ecopop.

Reinvigorating the population's sense of identity as a result of UNESCO intervention, the Project's artistic component and promotion of the Jalousie Project in the media and with the authorities. This had an immediate positive effect by effacing the negative view of Jalousie as a "shantytown of prostitutes and delinquents".

Involving the State directly by incorporating the three county boroughs into management of the Project (in Yeumbeul-Malika).

Promoting democratic culture by:

- Strengthening neighbourhood organizations.
- Improving public recognition of the neighbourhood, its project and its achievements.
- The development NGO and UNESCO acting as mediators between the population and the State. In Yeumbeul-Malika, establishing a direct population/State link where none existed before and direct State involvement.
- Introducing democratic working methods.
- Raising the public authorities' awareness of the neighbourhood's needs and of the population's readiness to find new ways of coping with their problems.

Recommendations

The Cities Project should continue working along these lines. Ending UNESCO's co-operation would be a disincentive for the population and for the development NGO. Moreover, ending UNESCO participation would jeopardize the links (being established or consolidated) between actors in the Project, especially State-neighbourhood links.

- In order to encourage populations to act autonomously within the development process launched by the Cities Project three lines of work should be followed:
 - Diversifying funding sources.
 - Training neighbourhood associations and county boroughs to develop their capacity to handle funds directly. Independence of the development NGO.
 - Local government capacity-building at county borough level.
 - In Jalousie, continuing efforts to consolidate links between local government (the town hall), the development NGO and the neighbourhood. This action should gain from the Mayor's avowed willingness to work on local government structures. One useful step might be a project area jointly managed by the local authority and COGEC. This activity should be seen as a contribution to local government capacity-building.
- The important task of increasing awareness of the Jalousie Project among State bodies and international agencies must continue, with a focus on transforming the Project into a showpiece for action to promote social development and establishing or strengthening democratic culture in an urban environment.
- Meetings must be held to carry out collective evaluation and stocktaking in order to give momentum to a research-action process which is still at an embryonic stage. Steps must be taken to arrange a process of collective discussion bringing together all the actors as well as university specialists. Discussions focusing on Project assessment should be conducive to a stocktaking in the form of recommendations regarding future action and an extension of the experiment.

IV. The Cities Project within the dual framework of poverty eradication and democratic culture building strategies

Since the objective of the Cities Project is “to encourage initiatives designed to improve the quality of life and encourage citizens to play their role in the urban environment” there is no need for a choice to be made between a poverty eradication strategy and a democratic culture building strategy. The two strategies are indissociable. This being the case, we recommend that the Cities Project be defined as a development project. This should enable a template for action to be drawn up with the dual aim of improving the quality of life and promoting democracy.

In line with UNESCO’s strategy on development and poverty eradication,¹⁰ the Cities Project appears to be a particularly useful tool with which to develop relevant instruments. Because of its nature as a research-action project it will promote the development of tools which will be shaped by the showpiece effect of its action.

From observation of the two Cities Project pilot sites and experience of development projects in an urban environment it is possible to identify the different types of actors present in most contexts. They comprise: a) local organizations (neighbourhood associations, women’s groups, community schools, dispensaries, voluntary sector restaurants, etc.); b) the State (different levels of government and public institutions); c) the development NGO; d) international organizations (in the present case UNESCO but also other bodies including bilateral co-operation agencies, the other United Nations agencies and various funding sources). As a development project, the Cities Project is under an obligation to draw up intervention strategies within the framework of the power relations that exist within a system of actors.

In all national frameworks the characteristics of individual actors and the relations existing between them follow certain specific patterns. As well as bearing in mind these distinctive features, we recommend that this system of actors and the relations between them should be considered as the general framework for the Cities Project.

The general framework of action for an urban development project is shown in the following two diagrams. The first shows the special contribution made by the Cities Project and the working framework in which it took place. The second shows a general framework that can be used as a design template for all development projects in an urban environment.

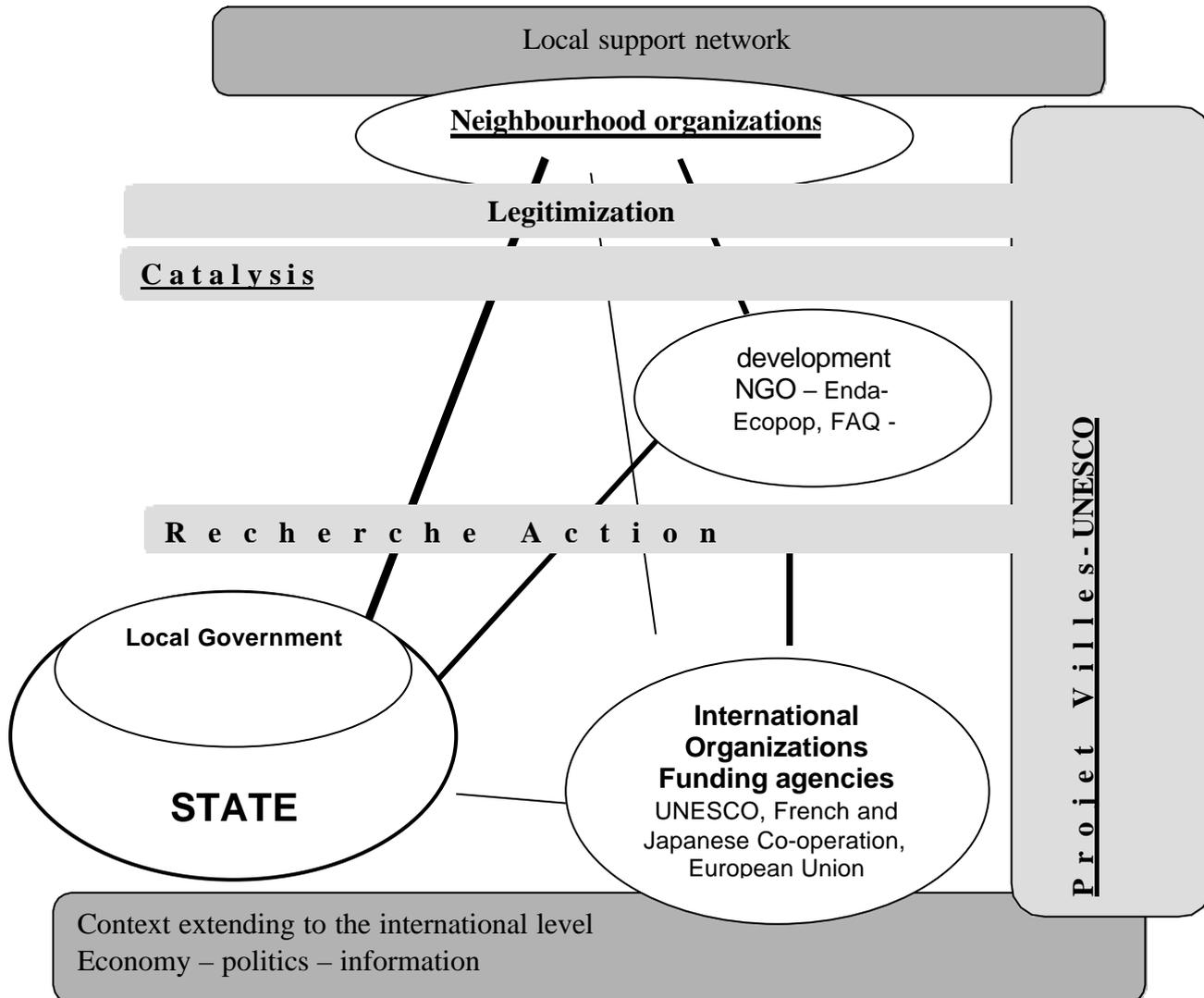
The diagram shows the various types of actors, the positions they occupy and the links between them. In the white bubbles are the main actors. Inside the State bubble is the local government bubble (special link to local organizations). The main State bubble also includes (in view of the general meaning of the word State) the various ministries and other public institutions, and the norms resulting from democratic action.

The dark grey compartments contain the Project’s contexts. Neighbourhood organizations appear as part of the local support network, while the State and international organizations form part of the wider context comprising economic and political relations and information control.

The lines denote relations between the actors. Priority is given to two types of link. The first defines the relationship between neighbourhood organizations and the State, with the aim of promoting a democratic process and further autonomous activities. The second denotes the mediation role which must be the mainspring of the development NGO’s action.

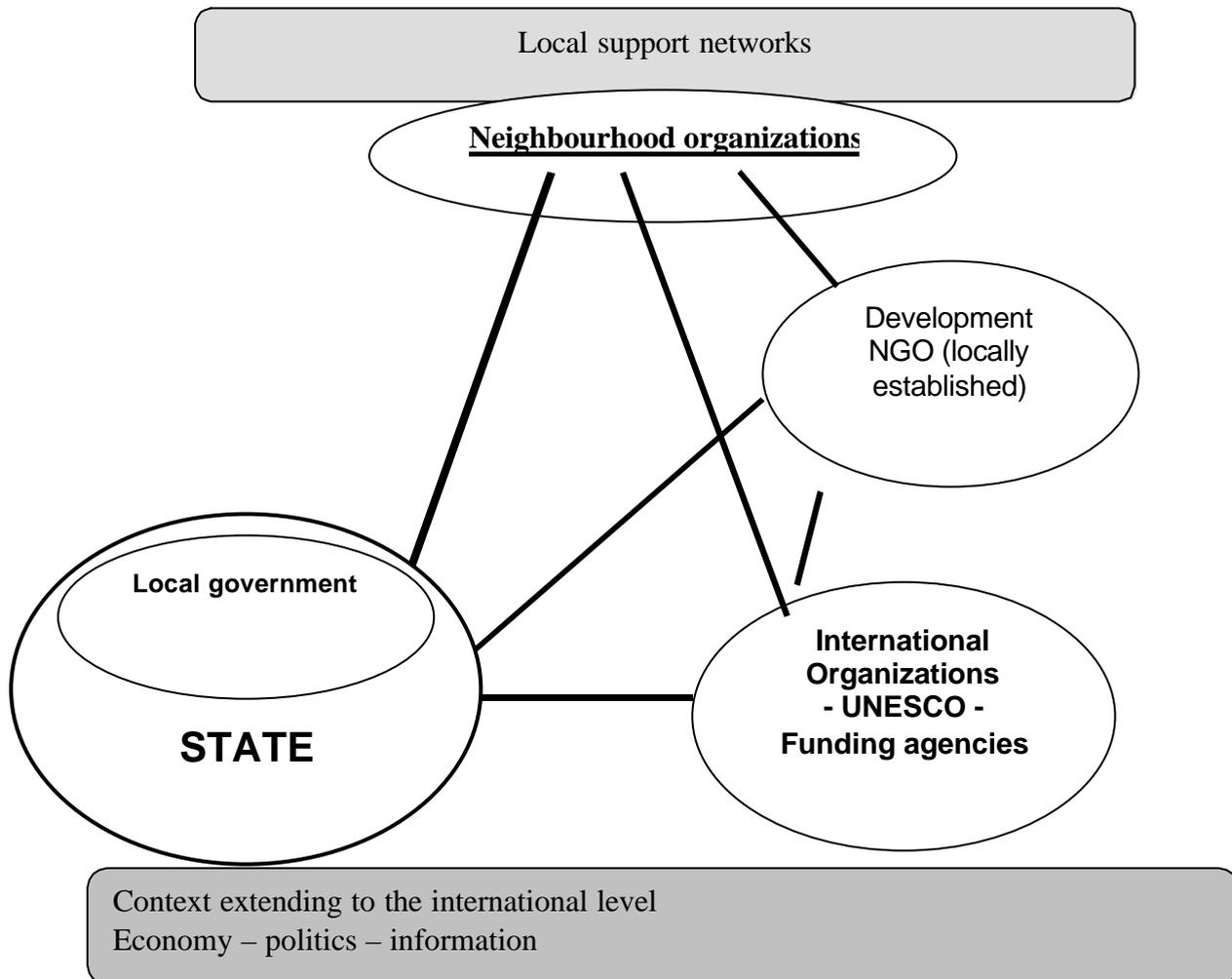
¹⁰ Cf. 160 EX/13: *UNESCO’s strategy on development and poverty eradication*, Paris, September 2000.

Diagram 1: General framework of action undertaken by the Cities Project



UNESCO appears twice. It appears among the international organizations and is also a specific actor (pale grey) as an instigator of catalysis, legitimization and research-action. UNESCO's intervention forms part of an "action/reaction" rationale. Its contribution cuts across the links between all the actors, thereby providing input for the action system in its entirety. The diagram shows a breakdown of the Cities Project as an exercise of mediation between a wider context and the local population structured by its local support networks and represented by its neighbourhood organizations.

Diagram 2: General framework of action for an urban development project



Neighbourhood organizations within the local support network. Some data for an assessment of their capacities and their limitations

Neighbourhood associations are clearly an important factor in promoting social integration, especially in the case of marginal populations in large cities in underdeveloped countries. Many case studies corroborate this view. When other support is scarce or non-existent (e.g., when job opportunities and social welfare facilities are lacking), people find that organizations that are an outcrop of local support networks are their only refuge. And yet the importance of these organizations is not always recognized by the State and officialdom. They are often regarded by governments as troublesome and by technocrats as an obstacle to planning, while political parties consider them as pawns on the electoral chessboard. Neighbourhood organizations deserve support in recognition of their role as actors in development policies and in the promotion of a culture of democracy.

A group of women meeting in Yeumbeul



With this in mind, the Cities Project has given backing to local organizations in its two pilot sites, and this is one of its main contributions. As we were able to observe, the people of Jalousie and Yeumbeul-Malika have developed skills for managing social and environmental problems, and public-spiritedness has increased. In Jalousie, the coalition of grassroots groups in a single body has promoted the empowerment of the people and improved the quality of community life. In Yeumbeul-Malika one noteworthy outcome of the Cities Project is the linkage between neighbourhood associations and the county boroughs.

In a wide range of contexts, neighbourhood organizations have shown a surprising range of skills in upgrading housing and in community organization. A case in point is that of the “asentamientos”, the illegal occupation of land by squatters who, in Buenos Aires and Montevideo, have gone on to build neighbourhoods equipped with high-grade public facilities. Similar developments have occurred in most large South American cities, e.g. the well-known case of the “Villa El Salvador” in Peru. These movements are the outcome of a spontaneous acceptance of collective responsibility, and often promote a high degree of involvement and mobilization as they fight for public recognition.¹¹

As we stated above, apart from a few remarkable success stories these movements have, unfortunately, been regarded with suspicion by governments. In view of this, the Cities Project has made a major contribution by casting neighbourhood associations in a central role in public policies for social and environmental management in an urban environment. For more than a decade now, voices have been raised, especially within NGOs and international organizations, to insist on the potential of neighbourhood organizations. However, such advocacy has not yet brought about any real recognition of this social capital.

This being said, the nature of neighbourhood organizations should be analysed in order to define the role of this type of actor in a development project designed to encourage public-spiritedness within a framework of democratic culture.

We conclude from our observations in Yeumbeul, Malika and Jalousie that these neighbourhood organizations are caught between two kinds of pressure. First, they must take heed of pressures exerted by the community of which they are the public expression. Second, they are involved in an ongoing dialogue with official actors from outside the neighbourhood.

Analysis of these two components of collective action is vitally important for the implementation of a development project. We shall now analyse the first of these in the light of experience acquired in the

¹¹ On the “asentamientos” experience cf. MERKLEN, Denis: *Asentamientos en La Matanza. La terquedad de lo nuestro*, Buenos Aires, Catalogos, 1991. On the Villa El Salvador experience see FRANCO, Carlos: “La experiencia de Villa El Salvador: del arrenal a logros fundamentales a través de un modelo social de avanzada” in KLIKSBURG, Bernardo: *Pobreza, un tema impostergable. Nuevas respuestas a nivel mundial*, Mexico City, UNDP/CLAD/FCE, 1993, pp. 421-432.

Cities Project. The relations between neighbourhood organizations and their socio-political environment will be examined when we analyse the role of the State (cf. infra, 2. Public institutions and the state).

Local support networks: transcending simplistic perceptions

Neighbourhood organizations are the mobilized section of a human group (the neighbourhood) which is underpinned by a local support network. The nature of these bonds of solidarity is a factor that determines the potential of local organizations for action and for their inclusion in any kind of democratic process. Evaluation of the Cities Project in Dakar and Port-au-Prince enabled us to identify some of the main features of these networks.¹²

This fabric of local support characteristic of the urban poor and socially excluded can be represented metaphorically in terms of “social clusters”.¹³ This striking image accurately encapsulates the framework of a local society whose building blocks are groups of various kinds attached by stalks to a common axis. Family, lineage, ethnic groups, neighbourhood associations and brotherhoods are the constituent clusters of neighbourhoods like Yeumbeul and Malika. Within each cluster are “micro-societies” whose ground-rules are traditional or customary, religious, family- or association-focused and which lay down a series of hierarchical procedures. The cluster image is a key to understanding the fragmented yet interconnected nature of local society.

In this context, it must be remembered that individuals have a number of affiliations, i.e., one person may belong to several groups. A young person may, for example, belong to a supportive family, be affiliated to a brotherhood, respect a hierarchy based on custom or lineage and be a member of a local association concerned with children’s education. Involvement in the different types of group that exist in a given area is the most effective rampart against social disintegration. People tend to be affiliated to as many clusters as possible. In economic terms, this is tantamount to a fully comprehensive insurance policy whereby people can cope with sickness, unforeseen expenses, momentary lack of funds or the destruction of their house by fire.

At the community level, the groups overlap like circles in the intersections of a Wenn diagram. This collective expression of the above-mentioned phenomenon of multiple affiliation provides an insight into the role of the various actors and agents in social life. All forms of group action are superimposed, and while each level retains a certain degree of autonomy, a background layer of affiliation to local support networks (often family- or religion-based) determines the complexity of the social fabric. This pattern of community relations constitutes the substance of grassroots interdependence which Robert Castel has defined as “systems of rules which directly link members of a group on the strength of their family, neighbourhood or work affiliations and weave networks based on interdependence without mediation by specific institutions”.¹⁴ The rules are produced on the basis of people’s inclusion in their territory. It is along these lines that territorially-based communities provide welfare for the needy by mobilizing the economic and relational resources of their family and/or local environment. The existence of such roots helps to explain how people survive in societies where poverty is sometimes extreme and widespread.

The traditions and particularities of each people are particularly evident in local support networks. In this context the Cities Project must be ready to show maximum flexibility in the implementation of each project. In Haiti, for example, voodoo is to a large extent a form of social cement, whereas in

¹² Local support networks have often been studied by urban sociologists (cf. the works of the Chicago School) and by anthropologists (cf. the works of Oscar Lewis), but have hardly ever aroused the interest of decision-makers, militants or planners of public policy.

¹³ The image was used by Ndione to describe neighbourhoods on the outskirts of Dakar. Cf. NDIONE Emmanuel: *Dakar, une société en grappe*, Paris-Dakar, Karthala – Enda Graf, 1993, 1st ed. 1987.

¹⁴ CASTEL, Robert: *Les métamorphoses de la question sociale. Une chronique du salariat*, Paris, Fayard, 1995, p. 34.

Senegal this role is played by brotherhoods or ethnic groups, and in Latin America it would probably be assumed by the parishes of the Catholic Church and by networks based on cronyism.

We saw how the ground-rules of community life prevented women's groups in the suburbs of Dakar from playing a full part in the development process. These groups, which are part of a process of circulation and co-operation based on a tradition of mutual assistance funds administered by women notables, pursue a variety of economic activities which are incompatible with the accumulation process which is indispensable for integration into the market. Sooner or later, all the funds injected by various projects designed to promote the economic development of these groups disappear into the maze of grassroots support systems.

At another level, we saw how neighbourhood associations in Jalousie have begun to keep order in the neighbourhood, overtly taking over from the legal system and the police. This development is to a large extent a response to the non-existence of the State (the current situation of Haitian society) but the fact remains that this use of power could well become totalitarian as has often occurred.

It has been observed on many occasions that neighbourhood organizations can exercise power over inhabitants in a manifestly arbitrary way. This is often impenetrable to an outside observer. In some neighbourhoods of the Argentinian capital, for example, we observed forms of community control that were in many respects incompatible with individual freedom in its most basic form.¹⁵ These observations must be taken into account in order to avoid setting forth guidelines for action on the basis of an excessively simplistic image of neighbourhood associations.

Two risks are therefore apparent. First, aid earmarked for a development project may be used by neighbourhood organizations to further their own ends within the community. This happened in the aforementioned case of the Yeumbeul women's groups and it is usually an obstacle that has to be overcome when "hunting" type trends (which will be described below) are very deep-rooted. Second, the project may serve to strengthen organizations run according to guidelines that are incompatible with democratic culture.

The social mobilization which the Cities Project aims to promote and helps to stimulate is caught between two different poles of attraction. On the one hand, there are the cultural traditions and local support networks which are indispensable and irreplaceable in current survival situations. This is what perpetuates the inertia of local participation structures. On the other hand, there are the State and the political system, both of which are going through a difficult period. The participation in community life that is supported and to some extent initiated by the Cities Project is grounded in neighbourhoods that are already organized, both in terms of their more traditional structures and of their grassroots organizations. In Jalousie, COGEC and young people's involvement are to some extent the product of grassroots traditions that have grown up during a history of resistance to and co-existence with a totalitarian authority. In one sense, therefore, the mobilization upon which the development Project depends is bound to be the heir of local support networks, partly resulting from the culture of survival and resistance, partly rooted in community life, partly governed by religious traditions, partly the offshoot of family structures, and partly the product of working-class political traditions. These local involvement structures¹⁶ and underlying legacies are responsible for the vigour of the neighbourhood's community life. But at the same time they may restrict its potential to move towards a culture of citizenship. One possible way in which this legacy and these structures might evolve could be via political involvement (in the sense of becoming part of the public arena). However, the political system and the State often prove unable to counteract the weight of local tradition. When this occurs,

¹⁵ Observation of this type of phenomenon requires a long-term or ethnographic-type approach. That said, similar observations have often been made elsewhere in poor neighbourhoods. Mafia-type organizations have often taken refuge in such forms of social control, as in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro.

¹⁶ They provide "local involvement" in the sense that they give people their foothold in the neighbourhood, and often serve as the mainspring of their social integration.

civil society and the political system are ensnared in authoritarian relational processes. For this reason, the work of a development project must focus on two areas, civil society and political society.

Recommendations

“Support for inhabitants’ initiatives” and backing for local organizations should continue to be central concerns of the Cities Project. Three points will need to be borne in mind, however, if drift towards “community-biased” approaches is to be avoided:

- Objectives, methodology and action must be based on in-depth knowledge of local support networks and cultural traditions. The development NGO will play a preponderant role in this area because of its on-the-ground contacts.
- An effort should be made to promote democratic practice and guidelines for action among neighbourhood organizations. This democratic approach should be promoted along two lines: a) involving local organizations in the public arena; b) relations between local organizations and people living in the neighbourhood.
- The development NGO should handle relations with local organizations, emphasizing the two aspects of culture and development. Promotion of inhabitants’ traditions and projects calls for constant attention to “culture” and its specific features. On this basis of respect for local culture, the promotion of democratic culture demands an ongoing effort to introduce “universal” values so as to avoid simply reproducing local traditions and networks.

Squares built at Jalousie, the only public areas in the neighbourhood

View of one of the squares at night, lit by a street lamp. The square is one of the few public areas where people can socialize after nightfall.



Public institutions and the State: governance and the public arena

The Cities Project throws a direct light on the State's role in development projects, corroborating observations made during other experiments.¹⁷

The first stage of the Cities Project action strategy began with the support for neighbourhood organizations which, as noted earlier, is one of the Project's main features. This process, which we observed in the two pilot sites, was followed up during a second stage by awareness-raising among government authorities and by encouraging contacts between neighbourhood organizations and the State. This second stage was vitally important since it involved institutional recognition of the experiment and marked the start of commitment by the public authorities.

This process took different forms in Haiti and Senegal. In Haiti, the establishment of stable links between local organizations and the State was disturbed by turbulence in the political process which has made the entire institutional system extremely fragile.¹⁸ In the case of Senegal, the county boroughs joined in the Project and became increasingly involved in it.

The approach being tried out by the Cities Project is the right one and is perceived as an innovative alternative. It involves a process that starts at grassroots level via support for initiatives emanating from local organizations, its primary effect being empowerment of these organizations, its subsequent aim being to involve the State and the government.

Evaluation of the two Cities Project sites reveals the State's irreplaceable role in two areas: *regulating social life* and *institutionalizing the public arena*.

In the everyday life of large cities today, institutions provide an indispensable regulatory framework, irrespective of their specific form in each society. State involvement is of vital importance to a development project in an urban environment. First because, as we saw in the case of Yeumbeul-Malika, improving the quality of life involves resources that are managed, or ought to be managed, by public institutions (e.g. drinking water, electricity and refuse collection). More generally, the development of a poor neighbourhood cannot be organized by a community acting unilaterally; it must be dovetailed into a comprehensive blueprint for urban, economic and political integration. Second because a democratic process cannot make headway without State involvement. Observation in Haiti shows that the emergence of neighbourhood organizations as actors in the democratic process is contingent upon the political context and its history, today marked by the disintegration of the State. More generally, participation will not develop unless a broadly-based public arena is formed and in this arena the State's function is irreplaceable.

Examination of the State/neighbourhood relationship (taking both these functions into account) highlights what must be an essential part of the Cities Project: "Encouraging the State to fulfil its due functions".¹⁹

¹⁷ Cf. GRET/IRD: *Pour des politiques publiques de lutte contre la pauvreté et les inégalités*, Paris, duplicated, May 2000. This document provides an overview of development experiments carried out in Africa by GRET and supported by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See also HERMET Guy: *Culture et développement*, Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2000. This book presents an overview of contributions to the "Culture and development Forum" – BID, UNESCO, Sciences Po, Paris, 1999, based on experiments in Latin America.

¹⁸ N.B. This difficulty extends beyond Cities Project efforts to promote linkage between neighbourhood organizations and the State. The determination expressed by all actors to work to establish co-operative State/neighbourhood links is unable to overcome this obstacle.

¹⁹ The phrase was coined by Hermet, 2000.

a) Governance

Institutional regulation is a necessary tool for problem-solving in an urban environment. Problems in connexion with drinking water supply, public transport, refuse collection and electricity supply cannot be solved unilaterally. Desirable though it is for people to play a part in improving their quality of life, it is obvious that the governance of big cities calls for societal regulations that go much further than the community-based environment of individual neighbourhoods.

In Jalousie we observed that, paradoxically, though people were living in extreme poverty, a cohesive community was managing to instil a certain degree of social “order” into the neighbourhood. On the other hand, chaos continued to prevail in the city because of the inadequacies of the State.

Inadequate urban services highlight “by default” the State’s role. In Yeumbeul-Malika we saw how the Project’s sustainability is dependent on the water company (standpipes) and the town hall (refuse collection, emptying cesspools and latrines, etc). These examples illustrate a constraint that affects all development projects involving services and infrastructures in an urban environment. In the search for solutions to problems in such fields as transport, drinking water, drainage, electricity or public health, it is impossible for an individual community to act in isolation.

The technical problems that arise (e.g. a faulty water conduit) are evidence of the fact that rules and regulations for the governance of urban life are non-existent. Urban services are dependent on institutions. A development project must therefore aim to flesh out the relationship between local actors and the institutions representing society as a whole, namely the State.

Apart from the example of services, the question of how institutions actually work leads us to another problem, linked to the identity of the neediest people. In developing countries institutions often either do not regulate important areas of social life at all, or do so inadequately: laws and standards are not respected, there is a parallel economy, urban chaos, inadequate policing, etc. Everyday experience can be summed up as follows: *you work, but half your pay is not declared*. Social welfare provisions may be written into the Constitution but they never actually materialize. Children go to school but they learn no skills that can be regarded as useful. In a city like Dakar, the problem is not that modern institutions do not exist, but that in practice they leave gaps in society which are filled by other kinds of social welfare providers like those found in run-down neighbourhoods where local support networks step in to do the State’s job. In other cases, including that of Port-au-Prince, it is clear that institutions have broken down or simply do not exist.

The fragility of institutions may be the consequence of a low level of economic development, but may also result from a variety of political factors. In the cases that concern us here, institutional fragility is closely linked to the shape of civil society in each national context, i.e. to the attitudes and behaviour of neighbourhood organizations and of members of local support networks. Economic and institutional fragility helps to sustain a “hunting culture” which is typically found in run-down neighbourhoods and exemplifies a type of relationship between individuals and society which is found in cities.

People living in needy circumstances find refuge in their neighbourhoods whence they set off each day into the city, which is regarded as a forest harbouring a wide range of opportunities. In this situation, individual and collective experience can be described as “a search for a niche, for space left free by institutions which are unable to guarantee social integration. In a world dominated by instability and risk, there is no place for the culture of the farmer who must plan his life in tune with the earth’s natural rhythms. So groups and individuals act like hunters, roaming through the city and institutions on the lookout for an opportunity”.²⁰ Perhaps today they will make a good catch: a menial job,

²⁰ The hunter is on the lookout for opportunities, he lives in a Bergsonian perpetual present. His behaviour can be defined as being opposite to that of the farmer who organizes his life in tune with the Earth’s natural rhythms. Cf. MERKLEN, Denis: “Vivir en los márgenes: la lógica del cazador” in M. SVAMPA: *Desde Abajo. La transformación de las identidades sociales*, Buenos Aires, Biblos, 2000, pp. 81-119. See also MERKLEN, Denis: “Más allá de la pobreza: cuando los olvidados se organizan. Las organizaciones locales como capital

assistance for the association from the town hall, a loan from an NGO, a handout from the Church or from a marabout, something to sell on the market, a stroke of luck with a tourist. They see the city as a world where every opportunity must be snapped up. Since planning is non-existent and governance is inadequate, people living in poor neighbourhoods learn to try their luck whenever they see an opportunity offered by gaps in institutions whose areas of operation are ill-defined.

Both neighbourhood organizations and individuals have developed a streetwise culture based on taking their chances, living for the moment and honing skills for living from hand to mouth. They make no attempt to fit in with norms and institutions that work badly. The aim is immediate, practical, tangible gain.

When the State's capacity to regulate social life is weak and it fails to play its role as a safety net for the neediest members of society, it coexists with marginal forms of social behaviour. This institutional situation and the behaviour patterns that result from it influence the long-term evolution and sustainability of development projects. Local support networks patterned on "cluster" societies become by default offshoots of the informal sector and institutional instability. This diagnosis radically modifies the area in which the Cities Project and urban development policies operate. Consequently, what must be eradicated is the causal connexion between the inadequacies of the State and "marginal" culture. This is why a strategy based either on the State or on civil society, as if one option could replace the other, is not relevant.

First, when a development project relies exclusively on the dynamism of civil society, it is very likely to encounter a defensive, mistrustful attitude on the part of the population. Not being dovetailed into institutions, neighbourhood organizations will often tend to make their involvement conditional on the prospect of a more or less tangible profit. This occurs when organizations incapable of achieving autonomy make constant requests for assistance. They only take action when there is a prospect of funding or material support. In this situation projects cannot get off the ground. We saw this when a system of pre-collection of household refuse was set up at Yeumbeul-Malika using horse-drawn carts. When the horse died, all the organizations did was to ask for a replacement. Moreover, when the refuse had been collected in the neighbourhood, there was no functional link with the public refuse collection system.

Second, improvement of living standards cannot be seen solely in terms of access to goods and services. These improvements should be dovetailed into community law via a legal framework and institutional arrangements (under the responsibility of the political power, i.e. the State) that give them a tangible form. Failing this, there is a danger that people will continue to live under various forms of paternalism or even political cronyism.

b) Democracy and the public arena

One of the major problems facing development projects is the all too often observed phenomenon that needy people are suspicious of politics. Whilst at the end of the 20th century democracy is clearly a generally accepted objective, it is also clear that needy people feel "remote from the public domain and community life". This remoteness, which is often the result of political cronyism, an increasingly technocratic State, and a deficit of democracy, has been aggravated by structural adjustment policies and their consequences. "Since the State's resources [are] now limited, access to the State, which was hitherto the speciality of politicians, is no longer such an important issue as it was. It makes more sense to focus one's demands on other areas or to formulate them in different ways".²¹ In this context, the existence of a Project designed to support the organizations of civil society may exacerbate the

social frente a los problemas de integración en barrios marginales", in Kliksberg, B. & Tomassini, L.: *Capital social y cultura: claves estratégicas para el desarrollo*. BID/Fund. Herrera, University of Maryland/FCE, 2000, pp. 245-262.

²¹ The observation made by Coulon in the case of Senegal can be applied elsewhere. Cf. COULON, Christian: "La tradition démocratique au Sénégal" in JAFFRELOT, Christophe: *Démocraties d'ailleurs*, Paris, CERI/Karthala, 2000, p. 85.

weakness which impels populations to turn toward NGOs and international organizations, which are regarded as being more credible and efficient. This further undermines people's confidence in an already-discredited State. When the Cities Project was being set up in Senegal we observed that the amount of money invested in it represented more than ten years' budget of one of the three county boroughs. How is it possible to avoid the feeling on both sides that an NGO and an international organization have arrived to do something the State should have done, but has failed to do? In short, how can a development project in an urban environment avoid aggravating the State's loss of legitimacy?

Past experience shows the dangers inherent in projects geared towards promoting civil society (and against the State, though that is not their declared intent). Non-governmental development actors have all too often confused government with State. They have embarked on the promotion of "anti-State governance", reasoning in terms of micro-governance (Hermet, 200, pp. 159-175). Seeking to counter the negative effects of a vertical, hierarchical exercise of political power, they have eventually undermined even further the State's already-weakened authority. As a result society becomes even more confusingly fragmented.

The State is the only body that can solve conflicts democratically. It is the institutional structure of the public arena, not because it holds a monopoly on this arena or on the general welfare, but because only a strong State (enjoying legitimate authority) can bring actors together within a reformed public arena. Democracy here denotes communication between the State and civil society, in which the State marshals the scattered voices of society and then returns them to society in institutional form.

The Cities Project has managed to circumvent this danger, in Senegal for example, by involving county boroughs and aiming to involve the State. The potential risk has been transformed into a process with a constructive effect on political actors. The Cities Project shows a way out of the inertia that is characteristic of such a situation. It promotes gradual State involvement (in this case in the shape of local authorities) so as to avoid widening the gap between the population and the public arena.

In the case of Yeumbeul-Malika, this tension was initially overcome by action to involve neighbourhood associations, the development NGO and the county boroughs. Transition to a higher level would require that further action should be dovetailed into society's legal framework and that it should constitute a template for public policy. Failing this, the project would remain at best a micro-project that had achieved success but had no major impact on either the political culture or on quality of life.

The preceding remarks call for a comment regarding the State. As part of its function as a social regulator, integrating and protecting poor and excluded people, the State is an institutional system with its own standards and machinery. At this level, the Project must focus on strengthening linkage between neighbourhood associations and local government (e.g., municipalities), certain ministries and public utilities and other public systems (public health and hospitals, and schools). In relation to the public arena and democratic process, the State is represented by government, parliament and political actors. What must be done is to obtain recognition for neighbourhood organizations and development NGOs as actors within the wider public arena. By supporting civil society (associations and NGOs) the development project takes action to strengthen linkage with the State in a strictly "political" way.

Recommendations

The process of building bridges between people and the State put in place by the Cities Project is an important part of the experiments carried out in Haiti and Senegal. In order for this process to be pursued, attention must be given to three points:

- UNESCO has a crucial role to play, simultaneously conferring legitimacy on local organizations and the State, so that each actor is allotted a specific place. This role is incumbent on UNESCO because of its recognized authority.

- Where necessary, support must be solicited from the State in view of its dual role as regulator of social life and safeguard of the public arena. State support will largely be provided by strengthening the capacity of local government.
- Communication mechanisms will be set up between the State (especially but not exclusively local government), NGOs and the population. These mechanisms could be dovetailed into each site's management facilities.

Local development NGOs. Mediation and technical back-up

In the course of the evaluation process, the development NGOs Enda-Ecopop and FAQ proved to be the mainstay of the Cities Project in the field. The role performed by NGOs is a key factor in all aspects of Project implementation because management of a programme concerned with development and the promotion of citizenship needs permanent follow-up among local people and actors. The role of NGOs is to take responsibility for communication between the needs and interests of local people (represented by neighbourhood associations), public institutions and funding agencies. More precisely, the NGOs facilitated a transition from the needs expressed by associations to a development project. The role of development NGOs thus appears, first, inherent in their capacity to support neighbourhood organizations. In the case of Enda-Ecopop in Senegal and FAQ in Haiti, the NGO contribution took the form of:

- Drawing up a development project on the basis of needs expressed by neighbourhood organizations.
- Implementation of training in many fields (technical, management, computing, crafts, politics).
- Empowering local organizations to draw up projects.

Second, NGOs make a decisive contribution to establishing a communications-friendly environment. To this end, Enda-Ecopop and FAQ have performed essential services by creating and strengthening the capacities of local associations. This is done by training members of associations and by setting up Project management facilities in which participation is the keynote of all decision-making.

In the case of Yeumbeul-Malika, the Project management facility is one of Enda-Ecopop's major contributions. A team consisting of the Enda-Ecopop Project Co-ordinator, a secretary (recruited at Yeumbeul) and two organizers (representatives of UFY and ANBEP), all of them full-time employees, works at Project Headquarters in rented premises at Yeumbeul. The infrastructure consists of computer facilities, premises where the different partners can meet and documentation placed at the associations' disposal. The facility is thus structured to be a meeting point for the local actors, the NGO and the other partners (UNESCO during the Cities Project, for example). On the walls of the premises are charts showing the aims of the Project, progress towards achieving them, and the difficulties encountered, as well as maps of the area and summaries of different aspects of the Project. A weekly open meeting is held to keep track of operations. Moreover, the infrastructure and the training activities are boosting the associations' capacities, as could be observed during groundwork for new projects and discussions about the Project's potential.

FAQ's role must be seen against a backcloth of the social dualism that permeates Haitian society, in which the NGO has found a way of performing the role of mediator. FAQ has succeeded in strengthening and improving the population's organizational capacities, notably through the creation of a Management Board (COGEC) grouping neighbourhood associations in a joint management and co-ordination structure. It has also made progress in bringing neighbourhood associations into contact with funding sources and State structures. For example, COGEC played a notable part in recent negotiations with the Port-au-Prince water company about the possibility of supplying Jalousie with drinking water. This was so effective that neighbourhood leaders can explain the progress of all aspects of the negotiations, at both the technical and the political level. These mediation and communication activities have also had an impact on the Project's cultural dimension, e.g. through the

presence in the shantytown of an internationally known artist, Patrick Vilaire. This is how the situation is seen by the inhabitants of Jalousie.

Finally, NGOs make an important contribution by taking part in the research-action process, which constitutes their third role. By virtue of its intermediary position, the development NGO acquires a special insight into the connexion between the various kinds of skills. It acts as a bridge between the skills of the politician, the scientist and the people.

The Cities Project has devolved a special role on the development NGO. The lessons learned from the two pilot sites show that the main value of the intervention of NGOs is communications-related and that it results from the establishment of an arena for dialogue to which all the actors have access. This arrangement offers scope for joint activities, one example of which can be seen in the extension of the Project to new groups and to the county boroughs in Senegal and in the creation of the Central Management Board in Haiti.

The role of development NGOs can be summed up as a mediation function, and this raises the problem of areas for mediation and of the role of intermediaries in societies such as those of Haiti and Senegal. The fact is that the gap between elites and the rest of the population is often so deep that intermediary structures are few and far between. In these conditions, NGOs sometimes come to provide one of the few pathways for connexion and communication between the centre and the periphery.

Development NGOs have been described as “a relatively small group” of intellectuals belonging to a certain “middle class” often with outside training. Progressive by inclination, these people have set up NGOs which endeavour to serve as structures providing mediation between the excluded majority of the population, on the one hand, and international bodies and the machinery of State on the other. As Pouligny points out, these groups “have always found it very hard to stake out a position in relation to the political authorities and the majority of the population, which is organized on bases that are largely outside their grasp”.²²

The Cities Project has succeeded in finding partners who have overcome this obstacle by their thorough knowledge of local populations and grassroots organizations. Enda-Ecopop and FAQ have developed a strong relationship with the “excluded majority of the population” and have at the same time successfully set up lines of communication with State machinery.

²² POULIGNY, Béatrice: “Haiti: recompositions politiques et interventions extérieures ‘en faveur de la démocratie’ ” in JAFFRELOT, Christophe: *Démocraties d’ailleurs*, Paris, CERI/Karthala, 2000, p. 566.

V. UNESCO and the Cities Project

Evaluation of the two Cities Project pilot sites highlights the main roles played by UNESCO in a development project.

a) The role of Headquarters and the role of the Field Office

The roles of UNESCO Headquarters and the Field Offices differed from one pilot site to another. In Senegal, implementation of the Project was largely in the hands of the Cities Project Co-ordinator (Headquarters), whilst BREDA (UNESCO's Dakar Office) provided back-up. BREDA's main contribution took the form of follow-up provided by the Adviser for Social and Human Sciences and of input from the Division of Ecological Sciences via studies on water quality and awareness-raising campaigns carried out at the beginning of the Project. In Haiti, the breakdown of roles was different. In Port-au-Prince, the Field Office played a significant role, complementing the work of Headquarters. Mention should be made of the role played by the Office representative, who used to good effect his position in relation to local elites and international bodies, actively endeavouring to promote the project, to find partnerships and to bring the Jalousie Project to public notice. As a result, neighbourhood leaders in Jalousie acknowledged the importance of UNESCO's role in legitimizing the Project. The assiduous presence of UNESCO field staff and the accessibility of the Office to the people of Jalousie also helped to win local recognition for the Project. In this context, the everyday work of the Social Sciences Sector official at the UNESCO Office is a major asset of the Jalousie Project, backing up the mediation work of the development NGO.

Regarding the role played by Headquarters in the person of the Cities Project Co-ordinator, it should be emphasized that the co-ordinator's field missions to Dakar and Port-au-Prince played a central role in the Project's execution. Regular on-the-ground missions throughout the five-year period of the Project strengthened UNESCO's institutional presence by buttressing the confidence of populations and UNESCO's role in relation to the different partners. The Co-ordinator's missions also raised awareness of the Project at the highest levels of the State in the two pilot sites.

b) The Intersectoral nature of the Cities Project

In the case of the Yeumbeul-Malika site, UNESCO's Dakar Office made a notable contribution in the ecological and social sciences fields, thus complying with the Cities Project's intersectoral mandate. This input, in the form of a groundwater study,²³ brought the Project an objective and indisputable legitimacy which local actors could not have conferred. The study was of considerable value because its scope extended beyond water quality alone. The presence of specialists in the ecological sciences broadened and deepened the Project's original scope by highlighting the connection between access to drinking water and waste water treatment and describing the main environmental problems. It gave input for training and awareness-raising among the population and strengthened the capacity of actors (town halls, NGOs and voluntary associations) by providing a scientific basis for their understanding of local problems. Being intersectoral, the Project confers technical legitimacy and provides a framework for co-operation that should improve mutual understanding between partners. Input provided by specialists in the ecological sciences is a central feature of the Cities Project in societies which often lack the resources to take on board the technico-scientific dimension of social problems.

In the same vein, it is recommended that the education, culture and communication sectors be asked to contribute to the Project. The absence of input from these sectors to the two pilot sites was significant, especially since at Yeumbeul, for example, the core activities of one of the Project's leading partner associations (ANBEP) focus on a community school.

²³ CSI/UNESCO info N° 3: *Groundwater quality in Yeumbeul, Senegal. Field Study*, UNESCO, 1997. The study was carried out in partnership with the Cities Project: Management of Social and Environmental Transformations and Environment and Development in Coastal Regions and in Small Islands (CSI).

Three major roles for the Cities Project within the framework of MOST and UNESCO: legitimization, catalysis and research-action.

c) Legitimization: support for neighbourhood organizations and encouragement for the State to perform its due functions, ethical support for action and for the development project.

When the Cities Project makes contact with a specific area, it does so with the explicit objective of “supporting grassroots initiatives”. This “support” is generally perceived as – and expected to be – financial support, and this is indeed supplied. But UNESCO is not a funding agency and this is not the Cities Project’s main purpose. The chief backing that UNESCO can provide for a development project derives from its authority, i.e. from its nature as an ethical and intellectual organization.

UNESCO thus endorses actions with the stamp of legitimacy which is vital for them, especially micro-projects launched by neighbourhood organizations (which are usually much criticized) and a development NGO.

In each pilot site, this legitimacy has kept the Project firmly focused on the quality and type of the processes triggered by its activities. Initially, UNESCO’s input helped to enhance the status of local organizations and anchor the development Project in the public arena.

The Cities Project has thus managed to avoid falling into a dangerous trap, namely that, given the context of poverty, the sole concern of local actors would be funding. These actors are constantly pressing for larger resources, which could lead to a drift towards welfare dependency and the “hunting” behaviour described above (cf. pp. 26-27). On the contrary, populations in the two pilot sites have shown a growing interest in building a participatory process focussing on democratic culture as a strategy for development. This point is important because experience shows that funding agencies (and here UNESCO plays this role, at least in the eyes of local associations) tend to be seen exclusively as money providers.

UNESCO’s input has been maximized by its contacts with various State bodies. During our evaluation missions to Port-au-Prince and Dakar, we were present at meetings with mayors, Presidential advisers, executives of drinking water companies, and ministers. These meetings were an outcome of work by the Co-ordinator of the Cities Project since the inception of operations. Both in Haiti and in Senegal, the task is to inform the authorities of what is being done and to apprise them of the Project’s objectives, thereby narrowing the gap between them and the population, and seeking to involve them in action.

At a later stage, this action to legitimize the Project in the eyes of the authorities was supplemented by efforts at grassroots level to bring local populations closer to the State. After each contact with the authorities, the neighbourhood associations were informed and encouraged to continue their communication and co-operation work. It must be remembered that governments are often discredited in the eyes of the people and that this disrepute is transposed as a matter of course onto the State and public institutions in general.

UNESCO is particularly qualified to perform a legitimizing role because it stands outside local politics. In the implementation of the Cities Project, UNESCO brings all its authority to bear as it performs its appointed role of legitimizing democratic practices and promoting public-spirited attitudes. Through the Cities Project, UNESCO has sparked a reaction among all partners in this Project, which is designed to have a showpiece effect. The Cities Project has succeeded in doing more than provide funding, going on to promote wider partnerships and self-reliance on the part of local actors in the process. The Project’s material accomplishments (cesspools and standpipes in Yeumbeul; public squares and a retaining wall in Jalousie) are the raw material without which nothing else would have been possible, but it is clear that the Project’s main focus is qualitative.

d) Catalysis: conflict resolution, broadening the field of action and involving public institutions

As a consequence of its authority (and its embodiment of legitimacy) in the two Cities Project pilot sites, UNESCO has also acted as a catalyst.

This is undoubtedly one of the Cities Project's main results. In the Senegalese experiment, which was a joint effort on the part of UNESCO and the development NGO, the pilot project launched in Yeumbeul was extended to Malika. Within five years it grew from a small group of actors consisting of two associations and an NGO to a group of some ten associations, the NGO and the three localities, and it organised awareness-raising activities targeting other State spheres and three international co-operation bodies (including Co-opération Française and the European Union). Among the developments observed in the Haitian experiment were the gradual involvement of different State institutions and an assembly of associations in a single body. This broadening of the range of actors paved the way for growing independence of local actors by reducing dependence on a single funding source, instigating direct relations between partners and by the subsequent introduction of a way of handling and possibly resolving conflicts.

Working along these lines, the Cities Project has played an important role in coping with roadblocks (e.g., conflicts between associations, the county boroughs and the development NGO) which tend to arise at grassroots level when development projects are being implemented. The Cities Project also plays a central role by bringing in state institutions which stand above local quarrels. One common situation is when associations are at odds with local authorities: on such occasions, intervention by UNESCO, backed up by the development NGO, has helped to establish communication, thereby broadening the basis of the partnership and helping to ensure sustainability of actions. The Cities Project has thereby strengthened capacity-building among the populations concerned in the fields of social development and citizenship promotion.

e) Research-action: Designing frameworks and guidelines based on the two-way process inherent in the research-action process

In the two Cities Project sites, UNESCO has played a central role, designing the Project and defining its objectives as well as monitoring its execution. This role is recognized by the other partners partly because UNESCO launched operations by providing funding but largely because of UNESCO's intellectual and ethical authority. UNESCO thus occupies an influential position in the choice of overall guidelines. As part of the MOST programme, the Cities Project is able to compare its own operations with experiments carried out and assessed by other actors in other contexts.

The Cities Project has garnered a rich harvest of experience. In the three evaluation reports we have sought to explain the Project's complex operational situation in each of the two sites and the complexity of analysing the processes triggered by its implementation.

We noted a very high level of inquiry and awareness among all the actors we met in the field during our evaluation missions. The range of actors clearly illustrates the intellectual effort sparked by the Cities Project: members of NGOs and neighbourhood associations, officials at various levels of the State and international bodies, elected representatives, researchers in a variety of disciplines and consultants with the United Nations system.²⁴ Conceptualization of experiments in Jalousie and in Yeumbeul/Malika differed widely, however. In Haiti very little documentation was produced by local actors. In Senegal, on the other hand, the NGO Enda-Ecopop produced a number of documents about several aspects of the Project. In neither case has any written material been produced by government actors. UNESCO's input, in addition to the report on the Project presented at the Global Forum of Cities against Poverty organized by UNDP (Geneva, April 2000) and at various symposia (organized

²⁴ The list of interviewees appears as an annexe to each of the two evaluation reports on the pilot sites.

by UNCHS, OECD, the French Co-operation administration, USLA), is almost entirely contained in mission reports by the Cities Project Co-ordinator.²⁵ These reports contain a wide range of ideas about the major issues raised by the Cities Project and present some of its main output. By their very nature, however (being internal UNESCO reports), they are not the outcome of collective drafting, nor are they suitable as guidelines for actors.

The weak point continues to be stocktaking of input from the collective learning process which should ensue from experience acquired during operational activities. Above all, there is still no review of experiments in documents produced via a collective drafting process. Initially, collective drafting should allow the expression of different viewpoints because a document produced in this way should reflect different positions and the points of conflict resulting from them. Subsequently, a synopsis should be produced incorporating both convergences and divergences, the latter arising not from “ideological” differences but from the positions occupied by the different actors. As this evaluation is being drafted, the experimental work of the Cities Project is moving in the right direction but it is still incomplete in terms of a research-action process.

²⁵ A phase assessment report was produced for Yeumbeul. Cf: BULLE, Sylvaine: *Gestion urbaine et participation des habitants: quels enjeux, quels résultats? Le cas de Yeumbeul, Sénégal*, MOST, Discussion Paper N^o 33, 1999.

VI. Conclusions of the evaluation and general recommendations

A series of lessons about the role of the Cities Project can be deduced from an evaluation of the Project's different stages. Since UNESCO does not perform an executive function, its main role should be defined in terms of three spheres or levels of action: legitimacy, catalysis and research-action. These three dimensions define the added value of the specific contribution UNESCO makes via the Cities Project to "poverty eradication" strategies (Cf. 160 EX/13).

Added value of the Cities Project

The added value of the Cities Project lies mainly in having produced actions in an urban environment as part of a showpiece development project. More specifically, the Cities Project has synthesized a number of recommendations for development policies in an urban environment through specific accomplishments.

The overall results of the Cities Project are crystallized in the dynamic created in each of the pilot sites. As a result of this dynamic we can put behind us a number of controversies regarding development that now appear sterile:

- Micro or macro level? The Cities Project fosters a strategy in support of participation by inhabitants which starts at the micro level but does not rule out action at the macro level. On the contrary, the process stimulated should enable local actors to play a role on the wider stage.
- State or civil society? The experience acquired by the Cities Project shows that acknowledgment of State-civil society tension is a key factor in any project designed to promote citizenship. It shows the inadequacy of simplistic policies that promote initiatives by civil society while completely neglecting the political dimension. The Cities Project is an innovative alternative that regards support for initiatives by local inhabitants and their organizations as a means of restoring links with the State and consequently of revitalizing public authority and the involvement of local people.
- Research or action? By virtue of its research-action dynamic, the Cities Project experience breaks down the barriers between practice and theory which often foment mutual distrust between protagonists. The Cities Project should promote integrated collective learning as part of a two-way process in which practice and learning from experience are aspects of the same activity. In this context, the knowledge acquired must be accessible to everyone.

The added value of the Cities Project can thus be crystallized as dovetailing the development project into a general framework of action comprising a typology of actors incorporated into a complex fabric of relationships, networks and capital (cultural, material, etc.). See the General framework of action for an urban development project, supra, pp. 18-19.

General recommendations

Regarding the distribution of roles between Headquarters and the Local or Regional Office, a precise definition of respective functions is recommended. We have seen (in the case of Jalousie) that co-operation between the Field Office and Headquarters can have a multiplier effect. Where there is daily contact between the Field Office and field workers, the role of Headquarters and that of Field missions can be enhanced and defined more precisely. Instructions should set out clearly the respective roles of the Office and of Headquarters, while leaving open the possibility of management flexibility in response to on-site requirements of implementation of the Cities Project.

Regarding the intersectoral nature of the project. Co-operation with the ecological sciences must be examined and clarified. Positive effects were observed in Dakar, and in Jalousie it was evident that intervention by the Ecological Sciences Division could make a valuable contribution (for example in resolving the refuse problem). It is recommended that UNESCO's Ecological Sciences Division should take part in a joint effort with experts from local universities. Involvement of other Sectors

(Education, Culture and Communication) is also desirable since their contribution cannot fail to have a positive effect. With regard to this, it appears that collaboration between the different Sectors should be promoted by Headquarters and operations controlled in situ by Field Offices.

Regarding financial contributions. The outlay of funds needs to be considerably higher than in the cases of Yeumbeul-Malika and Jalousie. In order for the work to have value as a showpiece and example, there should be a significant improvement in the quality of life in each Project implantation site. Activities carried out within the micro-project context often lose credibility because their impact in terms of real improvement in living conditions is too limited. In the case of Yeumbeul-Malika, for example, the programme to provide access to drinking water was limited to the installation of ten standpipes for a population of nearly one hundred thousand inhabitants. In the course of the evaluation we noted the Cities Project's (successful) effort to involve other partners who, in the case of funding agencies, increased the financial resources available.²⁶ In the same vein, UNESCO's capacity for legitimization, as an organization with high ethical standards, should facilitate a funding input on a par with growing levels of participation. Empowerment of populations must be reflected in a significant transfer of resources.

Regarding UNESCO's legitimizing role. Within the international system, UNESCO performs the distinctive role of ethical and intellectual standard-bearer. The Organization must use the legitimacy which it confers in order to: promote the establishment of the Project in the public arena; support local organizations; help to restore to the State its legitimate role; encourage the building of democratic State-community links of co-operation; and highlight the role of NGOs.

The basis of this legitimacy must be defined as follows:

- a. Supporting neighbourhood organizations, by enlarging their capacity for innovation in social and environmental management and by expanding and enriching the public arena. Promoting a culture of democracy within local organizations by supporting democratic methods of organization at neighbourhood level.
- b. Restoring the legitimacy of the State by taking care not to undermine its authority (as a pillar and safeguard of public life and democracy) and emphasizing the role of public institutions in structuring community life.
- c. Supporting the Project by creating community-State linkage resulting from democratic practice.
- d. Promoting the dual role of development NGOs. First in devising and creating new solutions in the social and environmental spheres and in the sphere of technical support for local organizations. Second as the pre-eminent mediator between the inhabitants and various government authorities: political, technical, economic, informational, etc. The NGO is no substitute for the State. Nor is it a replacement for grassroots organizations.

As a "catalyst". To define UNESCO's role as that of a "catalyst" does not have a solely metaphorical value. In the Cities Project, UNESCO acts through the reactions it triggers simply by its presence; that is, by a process of "action-reaction". From the point of view of the action taken and in comparison with the role of other actors, UNESCO is the "substance" which, added in infinitesimal quantities to the "reactive agents" (the actors), sparks a catalysing process, i.e. a modification (above all an acceleration) of a "chemical" reaction, the outcome of which must be the creation of a democratic process and culture, and the transition from a strategy of poverty alleviation to a strategy of development.

At the research-action level. Each intervention under the Cities Project is a laboratory for research-action. A way must be found to span the often unbridgeable gap between the truth enshrined in a purely practical branch of knowledge and that which corresponds to strictly technical or theoretical

²⁶ Several funding agencies were contacted and some were engaged in the two Cities Project sites. In Senegal in particular this was the case with Coopération Française and in Haiti with the Japanese embassy.

recommendations. In each of its implementations, the Cities Project must try to produce a working model. This entails the conceptualization of practices by all the actors concerned. Such a collective process of conceptualization should produce a synthesis of the different points of view: local inhabitants and State, NGOs and university research workers, UNESCO and other international agencies with experience in the field.

Unlike purely theoretical constructs, the Cities Project must aim to teach by example. Its implementations, though they call for conceptualization, must facilitate the transferability of experiments.

This raises the problem of the level at which interventions take place. In micro-level projects, a continuous monitoring of collective learning techniques is possible. After an initial phase, each project should lead to a transition to the macro level, by transforming the specific project into development policy.

The relevance of City Project actions cannot be evaluated in a single dimension. The Project's inner dynamic calls for an evaluation in terms of "research relevance" in tandem with an evaluation in terms of "policy relevance". Hence, the nature of "research-action" should be seen as a process making possible the co-ordination of these two dimensions.

The 1996-2001 period should end with a symposium for collective stocktaking of the two experiments in the light of the present evaluation. This symposium should bring together all the different actors involved at each pilot site (cf. the General Framework of Action, pp. 18-19) as well as researchers, experts and political decision-makers. This process must be collective. All the actors, ranging from grassroots associations to government officials, not overlooking development NGOs and other international agencies, must be convened to work along two lines: their own evaluation of the operations conducted by each of the actors within the project's framework; and general lines of action which they can propose for an urban development project. To this end, each actor will be invited to speak about the roles of the other actors from his or her own point of view. The symposium should, ideally, bring together the Yeumbeul-Malika and Jalousie projects in a single encounter.

UNESCO must organize the dialogue and the stocktaking process. The stocktaking must serve to prepare a position paper containing two types of guidelines. First, it must set out the principal objectives and working methods for future actions under the Cities Project (or other interventions to be carried out by UNESCO in similar areas of poverty alleviation). Second, the stocktaking process must lead to the preparation of a basic document containing UNESCO recommendations for urban development projects: i.e., a methodological and conceptual framework for this type of project. This document will be addressed primarily to UNESCO Member States, but also to the other international agencies, development NGOs and funding sources. The document should be drafted as a follow-up to the symposium and the Cities Project evaluation. In the synopsis which this evaluation represents, the experiment launched by the Cities Project already contains an indication of the principal topics which should be examined in this comprehensive background document.