

Villes en développement



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Youth, Cities, Employment

«For years, a veil of deceit had been drawn over all initiatives; but it was actually a shroud. We must do away with cheating; we must do away with demagoguery.» (An extract from the inaugural speech delivered by Alpha Oumar Konaré, the President of Mali, at the beginning of the symposium).

When Jean-Claude Faure, head of development assistance at the Ministry of Development, floated the idea of an international symposium on city youth in sub-Saharan Africa, he chose to entrust the management of this project to the cultural department.

In so doing, he acknowledged the multidisciplinary nature and the cultural dimension of the question implicit in the triad «Youth, Cities, Employment» (YCE): what future for Africa's youth? It was also a recognition of the need to get a wide range of experts to confront their views.

A brief flashback to the 1960s might be useful. That was the time when economists were completing their analyses by taking into account the cultural factor. It was not thought necessary to go any further by transposing them to the economies of the South, as the spiral of growth and progress was to be set off by public investment policies and by raising standards of education and training. Urban development, synonymous with progress, would favour the emergence of the Nation-State.

Although a few dissenting voices were heard, the rationalisation of behaviour and the economy were the orders of the day, as well as the «good moral standards» conducive to such ends.

Today, a lot of people are amazed at the optimism of the 1960s, especially when they know that the more and more numerous, impatient and badly-trained youth have never benefited from growth and employment opportunities. Have we not underestimated



Source: Paquita

the cultural dimension to the explanation of the meagre results obtained by adjustment policies? This is a legitimate question to ask when it is thought that Africa «has been refusing to develop» (Axelle Kabou) and when, according to Sony Labou Tansi, we have been witnessing a «cultural struggle» and «environmental disorientation», with delays in meeting the need for democracy and justice.

All these points were raised during the three days of impressive, rich and lively interdisciplinary debate between the representatives of 25 francophone, anglophone and Portuguese-speaking sub-Saharan countries.

The originality of «YCE» was its success in bringing together all the terms of the ambiguous promise of Africa's urban development in a debate between «intellectuals», «scientists», «decision-makers» and «voluntary workers». Such a confrontation occurs sufficiently rarely for it to be mentioned as a positive aspect of the symposium in its own right, even though some participants found that there was a

great «gap» between the organisers' initial aim, at the beginning of 1992, and the actual results. Had it not been decided to explore new channels of cooperation in a difficult field? However, I feel that, thanks to the symposium, the main features of solidarity were defined, the greater importance of political projects compared with management requirements was asserted, and the fundamental influence of the cultural factor was recognised. The symposium also highlighted the significance of clear priorities and messages that reflect the need for democracy and truth.

Perhaps the symposium only revealed the starting-points of new channels of cooperation. But even if this was the symposium's only achievement, it was nonetheless a very positive one.

Michel Monfort (*)

(*) M. Monfort, who was in charge of the «YCE» symposium organising committee, is currently the head of the Mission de coopération et d'action culturelle à Maurice.

Struggle for Success

His mates call him The Truth. Because of a verbal tic, which is almost a moral code, The Truth begins all his sentences with «quite frankly». At 25, he gets by as a car attendant at Adjamé market in Abidjan. Originally from Burkina Faso, he returned to the capital of Ivory Coast two years ago hoping to get the same job he had left a few months earlier. Unfortunately, the baker's shop had closed down. Since then, every day of his life has been a crisis. He now earns only CFA F200 to 300 a day watching over parked cars. Just about enough for two meals and a room in Bolibana, the shanty town that most inhabitants of Abidjan hardly know of.

In Malinké, Bolibana means «the rat race is over». Pointing at the lagoon that borders this district of narrow and insalubrious alley-ways, The Truth humorously says: «When you end up here, if you don't put the brakes on, you go under!»

2000 kilometres away, in Brazzaville, Jacques, Médard and Dominique fuss around 3 mopeds. All three of them have passed the final exam of secondary education. In unison, they repeat the same old story already heard in other capital cities: «It's tough! It's too tough! If you don't do odd jobs, you starve.» Jacques says: «We're turning into potential illiterates. What we studied is of no use to us.» Aged 28, Dominique certainly knows a thing or two about this problem. He has had to switch from studying to be an agricultural technician to being an apprentice learning all about the mechanics of carburettors.

«I see no way out! If you can't rely on nepotism, if you haven't got a well-connected relative, then you're faced with depression, madness or exile.» Three years after having completed a Master's degree in economics,

Djibril, from Dakar, «knocks about the streets», as he puts it. He and his friends, all unemployed graduates, have tried to shake the state up. All their rancour has become focused on the state, which failed to provide them with guaranteed jobs at the end of their higher education and which, unforgivably, «is incapable of fostering the spirit of enterprise or simply of granting credit facilities.»

Despair threatens. Ahmadou, a young unemployed lawyer, confides: «We were better off as students. Today, even our families sometimes reject us because we are of absolutely no use to anyone.» As with many others, this sense of failure makes him think of going elsewhere. His hope: «to resume higher education, get a job in France and maybe stay over there.» Médard in Brazza and Djibril in Dakar are both aware of the international economic climate, structural adjustment plans, commodity prices... Yet, in their view, these are not the fundamental causes of their predicament. «The responsibilities lie with the leaders of this country,» Médard accuses. «If these people really loved their country, the situation wouldn't be so serious.» The same story can be heard in Libreville where Hubert, Freddy and his band of rap singers denounce corruption and nepotism. In the words of one of Hubert's songs: «Loneliness is for them, not for us, as they alone are getting something out of it.»

Eva has been a maid in Dakar since the age of 15. She prefers to withhold her surname because she has had to suffer so many humiliations. She also protests about her country's leaders: «Does the President realise how we live?» In Abidjan, Freddy replies: «I say they're pretending! Pretending to deal with

the problem of young people.» To make himself quite clear, he adds angrily: «You'll never see the children of well-connected persons doing the same as us. You may find them in New York or Paris raving it up. They're just pretending to look after us!»

From Abidjan to Brazzaville via Yaoundé or Libreville, hell on earth is, indeed, the fate of most young people. Rebellious or desperate, they survive, express themselves and sometimes take to building barricades or to demonstrating. Not all of them do so. Those that do are often in the front lines.

«We change. Especially mentally,» says Ida from Brazza. This attractive young Congolese girl plays percussion instruments despite the traditional belief that the breasts of women who play the tom-tom fall on to their stomach. «Other women will follow my example, I hope,» she concludes.

Torn between going into exile, giving up and becoming activists, the youth of African cities are trying to understand the situation, or «to understand themselves», as they say in Abidjan. In Ivory Coast's capital city, Freddy sums up their aspirations in a few simple words. «We're locked in a struggle! A struggle for success», he says. «What is "success"? It's when tomorrow you can dress well, eat well, without stealing or begging. In other words, live decently! That's when you can say: "I've succeeded!"»

Régis Gourillon

**A journalist working for A.I.T.V.
the International Image Agency**

The statements made in this article by the various people named were taken from a report recorded in October 1992 in Abidjan, Brazzaville, Dakar

The French Ministry of Cooperation and Development organised a symposium on «Youth, Cities, Employment» held in Paris from October 26th to 29th 1992. This event was attended by researchers, policy-makers, government department officials and community group leaders of 25 different nationalities, who endeavoured together to deepen their understanding of this somewhat provocative theme. «Villes en développement» has been chosen by the Ministry to provide a quick preliminary summary (not quick enough, however!) of the work done during this symposium. We hope that, by doubling the number of pages and by printing 5,000 copies, this issue will do justice to the 55 hours of work done at the symposium (through two plenary sessions, three round tables and eight workshops). Publication of the official records of the symposium will be advertised in the usual column of «Villes en développement». During the symposium, considerable prominence was given to important subjects and new questions of significance to professional urban planners. Beyond our traditional goals (sites-and-services, urban management and organisation), our reflection and our projects ought to contribute to promoting «city-specific strategies» in the absence of which the life of young people in cities will forever remain hell on earth.

François Noisette, editor-in-chief

And meanwhile...

As one of the organisers, I could do no more than zap from one work session to another, picking up snatches of debate here and there. However, I can report on other things that happened in and around the symposium.

Different kinds of atmosphere...

The Monday morning rush as delegates registered, and were given their badges and information packs. A crowd gathering each time documents were distributed.

The difficulty of finding one person among the 300 delegates seated for the plenary sessions and the permanent manhunt by participants looking for partners.

The joy of welcoming Africans with whom one had been in touch for several months.

The feverishness of speakers and moderators before appearing on the platform.

The gravity and concentration of the editorial committee at its Thursday morning meeting attended by all record-keepers working in groups on the final summaries.

In addition to these brief memories, the following were other events that occurred during the symposium and which were not mentioned by record-keepers and stenographers, who were too absorbed by their important assignments.

The perfect timing of «Captain Jupiter»

This song and dance theatre show, which was performed with great gusto by the Koteba theatrical company, expressed through sometimes virulent humour ideas that were discussed in very intellectual fashion during the first two days of the symposium.

In the opinion of those who had defied the stormy weather in order to go to the theatre that evening, the show was in perfect harmony



Source: Paquita

with the theme of the symposium, while leading it back to the actual experiences lived through by young people on the streets.

Distribution of documents

In a tiny and over-heated organisation room, the speeches given during the day (in both plenary sessions and workshops), as well as the contributions of certain participants, were processed by two computers and one photocopier. Thus, we saw record-keepers working on table-tops in the middle of heaps of notes feverishly writing and then dictating their texts, which had to be input into the computers by 8 pm. That was the deadline set by the Barter Agency for collecting the documents, of which 500 copies had to be printed and distributed by the following afternoon. An average of 35 pages were thus processed every day, representing 20,000 copies!

This daily distribution of documents practically in real time was much appreciated

by the delegates, as they were thus able to leave with written records of what was said during the symposium.

The crew's point of view

The small organising committee composed of staff from the Ministry of Cooperation, the Barter Agency and the international student and trainee centre felt relieved to bring the 600 seat aeroplane in to land without too many bumps.

Although it seems that the quality of the reception at the airport of passengers from Africa was not good enough, the people for whom it was the first visit to Paris enjoyed their stay very much.

After the symposium, the members of the Scientific Committee agreed that the three most positive features of this event were:

- satisfaction that new themes were discussed and new ground covered, albeit at times in cacophonous and unbridled style;
- pleasure at having brought together the players and theorists associated with as yet unidentified practices;
- hope of having initiated a new dynamic.

However, they also expressed concern about the future impact of the work done during the symposium in terms of research and the accumulation of knowledge, on the one hand, and of the Ministry of Cooperation's own approach, on the other (the Ministry having been very discreet during the symposium).

Fanny Chauveau,
The Ministry of Cooperation's assistant
for the YCE symposium

600 registered participants, including about a hundred from francophone and anglophone Africa.

500 meals served per day.

An audience of 400 watched the «Captain Jupiter» show performed by the Koteba company.

An average of 70 participants per workshop.

6 hours' work a day.

4 video productions lasting a total time of 1 hour and 12 minutes based entirely on the symposium, including a video magazine recorded during the event showing its atmosphere and interviews with participants.

3 publishers permanently in attendance.

3 exhibitions.

1 sprained ankle and a few lost kilos...

Interview With Marcel Debarge

After the symposium, Marcel Debarge, the minister of cooperation, kindly accepted to answer questions put by «Villes en développement» (VED).

VED. The symposium on «Youth, Cities, Employment» was organised by the Ministry of Cooperation. Did it achieve all its objectives?

MD. One of the symposium's main objectives was to bring together the people involved in development cooperation who do not usually meet each other (policy-makers, field specialists, researchers, voluntary organisations, institutional partners) to discuss themes which, until now, have been discussed separately: young people, cities and employment. The aim was for the participants to set up a policy framework for analysing current changes and for establishing cooperation programmes that meet the needs of young urban Africans.

The symposium came up to the expectations of those who attended it, and initiated the dynamics required for all interested parties in France and in Africa to set up research and action schemes.

VED. What about employment? Representatives of the economic world were not very visible on the symposium platform or in the conference hall, to put it mildly. What conclusions are to be drawn from this by urban development professionals?

MD. At this stage of reflection and research into methods, it is hardly surprising that most private sector participants in the symposium were design offices and voluntary organisations. When the time comes to prepare large-scale action programmes in a particular city or country, we shall, of course, get the major regional economic actors involved: industrialists, investors, economists, etc.

VED. The symposium revealed the deep disagreement of our African friends with economic adjustment programmes. Yet these programmes drain a big share of French development assistance. Do you think that, over and beyond social support, these programmes need to be slightly reorientated?

MD. Everybody agrees that a country cannot live beyond its means and that the balancing of public finances is indispensable, which is the fundamental aim of all adjustment policies. But may I remind you that, for several years, the adjustment programmes themselves have taken into account the social consequences of the adjustment process. More broadly speaking, the reorientation that we have begun to implement consists of supporting the resumption of development as soon as the adjustment phase begins. And we have been trying to direct an increasing share of adjustment credits to sectorial adjustment and development programmes in specific sectors.

VED. There was a lot of talk at the symposium about the informal sector. The French public authorities have encouraged numerous programmes for socially integrating young people by allowing a «less formal» sector to develop. Can they help African authorities to recognize the importance to social integration and to economic performance of the «not yet formal» sector in African towns and cities?

MD. The public authorities in Africa are perfectly aware of the informal sector's role in urban areas as a factor of social integration, and of its economic importance. They know that, in many cases, the economic survival of a lot of people during the worst phases of the economic crisis has been due to small enterprises in this sector. The only question the African authorities have been wondering about has been whether or not to tax such economic activities. Nobody really knows the answer to this question, because it is obvious that if you tax a precarious sector, you risk killing it off. We shall continue with our partners to seek ways for these firms to contribute as much as possible to the national development process.

VED. At the symposium, participants saw a film entitled «Being Young in Bamako», which gave a vivid account of the ravages of drug consumption by young people in a state of disarray. Is it not to be feared that urban development policies will gradually be determined mainly by security considerations?

MD. Clearly, no urban development policy can be implemented if people cannot feel safe living in towns and cities. The drug problem is one aspect of the security issue. With our partners, we have already acted against drug-taking with the help of the French institutions concerned and within the framework of the appropriate United Nations programme (PNUCIC). Such action has included border surveillance and local preventive measures. Both these approaches clearly need to be developed.

VED. Decentralised cooperation and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have an important role to play with regard to the issue of young people in cities. Is there still any scope for an overall cooperation policy, initiated and implemented at state level? Could you describe it in outline?

MD. Unfortunately, neither the French local government authorities nor French NGOs have made any firm commitments in the field of young people and cities. Indeed, one of the objectives of the symposium was precisely to encourage them to do so, and I think this objective was achieved. But their action will be really effective only if the competent African authorities formulate real national policies on urban development and young people, a still relatively uncharted area which can therefore be the object of an ambitious cooperation assistance programme.

VED. Several African government ministers were present in Paris. What issues did they raise with you?

MD. I had a very interesting exchange of views with African government ministers present in Paris and with representatives of non-government African organisations on all the items on the symposium's agenda. We mainly discussed how to respond pragmatically to the many aspirations of young urban Africans, and notably to their economic aspirations. We must remember that they will soon represent the majority of the population of these countries.

Youth, Cities, Employment: a high-risk triad

Four days of impassioned debate have just been devoted entirely to African youth in towns and cities. It is hoped that from this great confrontation of ideas and experiences will emerge a renewed theoretical framework to shed light on the courses of action to be implemented, reconciling two apparently contradictory requirements: the need for urgent action and the need for scientific rigour.

The urgency of the need for concrete action is hardly beyond doubt: the process of urban decay has been accelerating and, at the same time, the authorities have never seemed so unable to meet the expectations that the younger generations have of social integration, particularly through the job market. The tools that the North has to offer, be they of the social therapy kind or of the repressive sort, do not seem suitable, in their present form, for urban situations in Africa.

The sudden massive appearance of the young on the African urban scene is a recent phenomenon. The population of cities doubled in each of the last three decades, and the weight of the 0-25 age group has continued to increase: it now accounts for about two-thirds of the total urban population! This major demographic reality has completely transformed the question of social and political change.

The young experience urban life with contradictory mental images; on the one hand, cities are associated with the multitude, beneficial loneliness, joy of living and pleasure; but, on the other hand, they also deprive people of the psychological comfort of tradition; they jeopardise the subtle balances between generations and between sexes inherited from the rural origins of most Africans; and they loosen ties with such social «safety nets» as the family and group solidarity. Cities are expected to diversify and to enrich social life. In fact, all they have to offer is the cruel experience of failed modernity. There is no doubt that such an experience is damaging for young people and is conducive to the development of a form of violence which has become less and less metaphorical. Although the enthusiastic expressions of these young people's culture (see the extraordinary creativity shown in the Set setal experiment in Dakar) cannot be explained away simply as means of distraction from existential difficulties, there is no doubt that they do mask a painful sense of lost identity. The hypothesis of a historic change is supported by two signs:

- juvenile delinquency has existed for a long time. But, recently, this transgression of social



Source: ministère de la Coopération et du développement

norms has been the object of a genuine «analytical discourse» which has perhaps too readily presented juvenile delinquency only as a catastrophe. It is true that such delinquency has changed for the worse, with the appearance of new forms of criminality and the consumption of hard drugs;

- we have seen young graduates form a grouping which has been claiming to represent a social category hitherto unknown in African towns and cities: that of the unemployed. This «innovation» is merely the product of the now complete divorce of unsuitable training systems from a shrinking job market. However, we should beware of considering this breakdown of education systems as the cause of the current crisis; it is only one of its most visible symptoms.

On the long road that is supposed to go from training to employment, the usual social reproduction models have revealed their limitations:

- young graduates can no longer be guaranteed public-sector jobs. So they can no longer play their part in the complex clientele-based redistribution system. Worse, within the community-based system, unemployed young people are in competition with the elderly;

- under more and more pressure, the «informal sector» has run out of steam. It is saturated to such an extent that the spirit of initiative, which is inseparable from the

very concept of self-employment, has been perverted by the brazen overexploitation of juvenile labour and by the vagaries of speculation.

Furthermore, whereas people all around them have been brutally made redundant by the implementation of adjustment policies, the young have not benefited from social support programmes. Thus, given that in towns and cities money confers social status, young people have had to display limitless ingenuity to escape from social exclusion. Of course, some people think that the art of «getting by» can be turned into a self-organising capability. Can we really expect the multiplication of «micro-initiatives» to provide most of the solutions, even with technical and financial support? It is most unlikely. More and more people believe there is no sustainable solution other than the resumption of direct foreign investment in Africa. The reasons given for the lack of such investment are well known: insecurity, fiscal and regulatory constraints that reduce the return on capital invested, urban decay and the bad quality of facilities and services... Upgraded city has thus become the means of improving productivity and a factor of economic development. The young seem willing to contribute to this urban «upgrading» effort, by getting involved at local level, or even by accepting to assume responsibility for public service functions. But the fact that, during the symposium, real suspicion was expressed of the labour-intensive urban public works programmes,

implemented with the support of international cooperation, raises a lot of questions.

In any case, the imperative need to get out of the economic vicious circle ought not to result in minimising the social and political risk of having a lot of unoccupied and highly frustrated young people.

Having sparked off the democratisation process, the young now see themselves as the «moral generation» whose members are quick to denounce the abuses committed by the rentier State. But these same young people are prone to plunge into any of a number of temptations: more or less politicised urban violence, fundamentalist or mafioso activities, the idealisation of somewhere else considered as perfect, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary... But no other mobilising utopia is offered to them, because even the most authentically democratic regimes have been forced, by a whole series of constraints, to implement realistically stringent policies. As they are convinced that they legitimately have a major social role to play in the face of change, the young will not accept to behave as those who, in the beautiful words of the Senegalese singer Ismaël Lo, «push the broken down car of democracy only to be left by the wayside when it finally starts up again.»

Young Malians are in the front line of this movement, even though they are exposed to corporatist temptations. The youth of Lomé and Brazzaville are no less ready for action. But what about the disarray of the young people in those countries where the State has been laid waste?

The symposium established an overall framework within which to think and to make proposals. This framework now needs to be refined.

Faced with the triad: «Youth, Cities, Employment», everybody feels somewhat at a loss. We have to understand the process of social change, and more particularly the historic change of which the young are the main actors, if we want to support it better. This is the only way to go beyond the mere juxtaposition of sectorial actions «in favour of the young». For the question of the young to be dealt with seriously, a comprehensive approach, taking into account its social and urban dimensions, is necessary, which implies the lifting of certain constraints. It is difficult to imagine that African countries might be forced to continue sacrificing the now endangered education of their youngest citizens on the altar of «macroeconomic stability». The constraints must also be lifted

on urban policies, and notably municipal development policies. Perhaps these policies would be more popular with young people if their goals were less narrowly economic.

Finally, it appears necessary to foster by all available means the development of voluntary organisations in Africa and to consolidate some of their initiatives. This means, of course, setting up new social «safety nets», but also preparing for a new approach to public affairs. Perhaps the young city-dwellers of Africa, without our being aware of it, have been forging a new relationship between voluntary organisations and political life? Even if this had been the only lesson to be drawn from the Paris symposium, its success would have been ensured... especially if the actions implemented as a follow-up to the symposium help to reinforce certain genuine achievements.

Emile Le Bris,
Orstom-Gdr Interurba
Chairman of the symposium's
scientific committee

* Senegalese singer

Pilot labour-intensive urban works projects: The Agetur experiment (in Bénin)

First, a brief reminder of the conditions in which the Agetur was set up.

Over the last 20 years, rapid urbanisation has been concentrated in cities such as Cotonou and Porto-Novo. The total population of these two cities amounts to over 850,000 inhabitants, and accounts for over 60% of the urban population of Bénin. Such population density in an urban area causes difficulties and increasing economic and social costs. In particular, the infrastructure built in both cities in the 1960s has been neither maintained nor developed to keep up with the needs of a population which has been multiplied by eight in 30 years. Sadly, these two cities seem desolate, with streets in permanent disrepair and uncollected urban refuse.

It was against this background of an insalubrious urban environment, a general economic and social crisis, and the implementation of a structural adjustment programme that the transitional government

of Nicéphore Soglo negotiated with the World Bank in June 1990 a pilot labour-intensive urban works project.

As the need for these works was urgent, the urban works agency (Agetur) was set up to supervise the implementation of this project.

The agency's status and object

The Agetur is an association of the type that is governed by the French law of 1901 and was duly registered as such on October 18th 1990. As the executive contracting authority, it builds urban infrastructures (streets and drains) on behalf of the state and of central and local government authorities. To do so, it calls on small and medium-sized local construction and public works companies. The agency's realm of competence is gradually going to widen so as to include refuse collection and infrastructure maintenance.

The Agetur's general assembly is constituted by representatives of government departments, firms, employers and the disadvantaged sections of the population. This assembly is chaired by Monsignor Isidore de Souza, as representative of the disadvantaged sections of the population.

The relationship between the Agetur and the state is governed by contractual agreements which stipulate the duties and obligations of each party.

Objectives and scope of the pilot project

The essential aims are:

- to improve the urban environment;
- to create jobs and to reduce under-employment;
- to improve the operational capabilities of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Results

By June 31st 1992, the Agetur's six-man executive staff, with the help of 22 SMEs, had completed 51 projects, of which 29 were for street paving, 15 for making paving-stones, 4 for drain flushing, 2 for civil engineering works and 1 for the site-development of a public square. Thus, significant results have been obtained:

- 7,848m of streets and roads have been paved (2,675 in Porto-Novo, 5,173 in Cotonou);
- 2,942m of drains have been flushed in Cotonou;
- 462m of gutters have been built;
- 6 pedestrian bridges have been built;
- site-development of 1 public square has been completed.

The total value of the works carried out by firms from November 1990 to June 1992 (ie, 20 months) amounted to around CFA Fr 1,160,850,000 (not including agency research, supervision and operating costs). The various sources of funds were provided by:

- the World Bank: 54% of financing;
- the French Development Bank: 21.8%;
- the German Ministry of Cooperation: 14.5%;
- the African Development Bank: 7.3%;
- lastly, contributions by neighbouring countries amounted to CFA Fr 21.6 million, ie, 1.9% of the project.

The works carried out by the agency generated 7,265 temporary jobs (130,756 man/days) in both Cotonou and Porto-Novo. These works also contributed to the creation of several hundred permanent jobs, notably through the reorganisation and restructuring of SMEs: permanent posts as skilled technicians, accountants and secretaries.

The agency's swift payment procedures (within 20 days) enabled local private firms to complete the works in very satisfactory technical and economic conditions.

The outlook

The Agetur experiment has been remarkably successful and its objectives have been entirely fulfilled, particularly with regard to urban job creation. Moreover, the works completed have contributed to a significant improvement in traffic and environmental conditions. However, the needs for infrastructure rehabilitation in both cities remain enormous. This agency's support will make it possible to meet such needs little by little.



source: Bernard Desjeux

The Agetur has developed the operational capabilities of SMEs; it has created jobs, thus helping to alleviate the social effects of the structural adjustment programme. Young skilled technicians have formed dynamic enterprises in response to Agetur's markets. The management of such enterprises has been supervised by a technical support unit based at the centre for the promotion of SMEs. The works have intensely used unskilled youths.

The agency has emerged as one of the effective tools for carrying out urban works. Its role as executive contracting authority has been reinforced by its swiftness and efficiency, and by its internal procedures which are quite different from the slow, cumbersome and restrictive mechanisms that penalise SMEs in classic invitation-to-tender procedures for public contracts.

In a second tranche of financing, the French Development Bank and the German Cooperation Ministry will each contribute FCA Fr 300 million.

However, the national budget should support this agency, which must not rely for ever only on external sources of funds. The agency's projects ought to guarantee economic profitability and to contribute to the creation of jobs for young people and to the development of the fabric of SMEs.

So there is no doubt that the permanent and temporary jobs will last, and that the SMEs

will acquire durable know-how in the construction and public works sector. However, to take better advantage of this know-how, the government authorities must change their behaviour with regard to these new procedures.

At the same time, the context in which the agency operates will change. The urban areas of Cotonou and Porto-Novo will play an even greater role, as they will have direct responsibility for financing investments and the maintenance programme. Furthermore, the scope of the agency's activities will broaden to cover the construction sector, infrastructure maintenance and refuse collection. The experience gained by the agency is worth studying particularly closely. Our own government departments are not used to acting as executive contracting authority. The agency's survival will depend on its ability to fulfil its mission successfully in this new social and political environment.

Bachir Oloudé,
General Manager of SERHAU-SEM

The hope of starting a business against all the odds

On Wednesday October 28th, over 80 people attended workshop n° 6 entitled: «The Hope of Starting a Business Even against all the odds».

The fundamental justification for this workshop's title can be summed up in the following elementary considerations. International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank structural adjustment programmes, as they have been implemented in African countries for about ten years, have had a significant impact on the economy as a whole, both in trading and non-trading sectors. They have reduced the number of jobs in both the private and the public or parapublic sectors. At the same time, the number of people seeking employment in urban areas has been increasing steadily for two reasons: population growth and the rural exodus. When the prospect of finding work gets worse, a lot of people, and the young in particular, set their hopes on the informal sector.

On this subject, in their detailed presentation on the evolution of the economic, social and political situation in Ghana over the last 15 years, Marjorie Abidin, Martin Verlet and Max Assimeng indicated that young anglophone Africans were experiencing the same hell on earth as their francophone counterparts. Often, the switch from a pilot project to the real thing represents only a small step. And, indeed, Olivier Hauville, the first person to speak during this workshop, and the coordinator of the «Echoppe» project in Lomé (Togo), mentioned that many young people in this city do not have any spirit of free enterprise. This he attributes to two main factors. On the one hand, the weight of tradition, which does not encourage individual initiative. On the other hand, the strength of the figure of the civil servant in the imagination of these young people. According to Hauville, the only way to instil the new state of mind on which survival depends would be to effect a great change of culture, and one of the main means to that end would be training in entrepreneurship.

Some participants pointed out that it was difficult to reconcile this opinion with the fact that, in most African towns and cities, everybody, but more particularly the young and women, are involved in a multiplicity of activities of all kinds.

But is not this difference of opinion partly due to a difference of scale? Olivier Hauville's benchmark model is the small firm, whereas

his critics are thinking mainly about microenterprises.

Having observed or assumed that most young people are enterprising, particularly perhaps among the most underprivileged, many participants in this workshop went on to wonder what could facilitate the emergence of projects, their subsequent viability and, where necessary, their extension.

In this connection, the provision of technical and financial schemes or structures was stressed. Two such experiments were presented. The first one was the joint intervention of the French Association of Progress Volunteers and the «La Sauvegarde» association in the «Impress-color» silk-screen printing workshop (Médina district, Dakar, Sénégal), which was set up to facilitate the social and professional integration of five physically disabled youngsters. According to the persons present who had been involved in this experiment, this workshop's autonomous sustainability remains an open question. Having said that, important results have already been obtained. For instance, the beneficiaries of this experiment increased their confidence in their own capabilities. The second experiment which was mentioned was the support given by the UN development programme to small and medium-sized enterprises in Guinea. According to this project's current supervisor, what made it particularly original was its integrated nature: it ranged from prospecting for people who had projects they wished to implement to collecting the credits obtained by them. And was followed by getting financial institutions involved right from the project planning stage. The disengagement of public authorities from certain areas of economic and social life as a result of the implementation of structural adjustment programmes has been particularly noticeable in health, education and the environment. As regards action against the deterioration of the environment, two very different experiments were presented during this workshop. The first one was conducted by the Agetur (the Urban Works Agency) in Porto Novo and in Cotonou (Bénin). The participant who presented this experience, architect Bachir Oloude, had to face a lot of criticism, notably from social psychologist Aminata Traoré, who expressed her disagreement with projects of this nature. She made two major criticisms. Firstly, such programmes are initiated by the World Bank

and imposed on African states without the people concerned having been consulted. Secondly, in terms of employment, the results have been inconclusive: the programme has not necessarily benefited the poorest young people; the jobs created have been very temporary.

Two other case studies were discussed. They were much less spectacular, being on a smaller scale, and have so far attracted less attention from the outside world. The two cases involve improvements to neighbourhood living conditions and environment by the inhabitants themselves. The first case, which was presented by Madeleine Ramaholimihaso, involved a district on the outskirts of Antananarivo (Madagascar). It was initiated by a Roman Catholic mission about a decade ago. The second case, which was presented by Francis Benteux, involved the Wakhinane district in the town of Guediawaye, which is part of Dakar (Senegal). It was promoted by an association of the young people from the district. In both cases, the involvement of the local population was part of a broader action programme which can legitimately be described as a local development initiative, as the aim was to include in the economic action those activities that met old or new needs and provided everybody with a place in the social system. The implementation of this programme nevertheless required external financing.

**Francis Benteux,
LAST-CLERSE,
University of Lille 1**

	Unemployment rate (*)	
	15-19 yrs	20-24 yrs
Ghana	1970 33.9	16.9
Nigeria	1983 47.2	28.0
Ethiopia	1984 24.3	19.3
Kenya	1986 47.9	38.6
Zambia	1980 84.9	38.6
Botswana	1984/85 56.4	41.6

(*) Source: BIT, African Employment Report, Addis Ababa, 1989

Urban policies and the social integration of youth

In the face of the changes and upheavals affecting developing countries, which are particularly visible in the towns and cities, the important question is: which urban policies are conducive to the economic and social integration of young people?

A government that has at its disposal a range of financial and social resources is better equipped to answer this question. This is not generally the case in developing countries, however, where fundamentalist and mafia-like forces lie in wait, ready to occupy the space left empty by the disappearance of traditional customs and forms of solidarity, which have been swept away by misery and exploitation.

So most governments in developing countries have no choice but to seek out, analyse and support any local initiatives, notably those taken by young people in search of an ideal, a project, or simply of a way of giving collective expression to the experience of a generation of city-dwellers in the southern hemisphere, whose links with their land, traditions and ancestors have become tenuous. To begin with, let us therefore consider a few of the answers given by young people themselves.

The young build the towns and cities

Most African towns and cities have been built by young people. The mechanism that has produced this is described in P. Canel's book (*Construire la ville africaine*): every trained and/or experienced mason is assisted in his work by from two to five young jobbers, who carry out a range of tasks from making the basic materials, such as cement building blocks (at the rate of between 600 and 800 units a day), to transporting construction parts (frames, sacks of cement) and fetching supplies of raw materials (sand, gravel, water). In order to hedge against the numerous risks involved in construction work (the mason who disappears suddenly taking with him the funds advanced for the purchase of materials; the owner who deserts without paying the mason), the hiring of the jobbers is done through traditional family connections. The owner and his work force are often near kin. So the «cousins» are remunerated in the form of free board and lodging or of introductions to potential employers or of vocational training supposedly leading to salaried employment.



source: Villes en développement

The young build the towns and cities. In return, they expect these towns and cities to integrate them into their economic or cultural networks. Often, a young person's first contact with town or city life is on a building-site, perhaps the site of his or her future home.

The young supply the towns and cities

A lot of ethno-sociological studies have described the essential role played by the young, both male and female, in supplying African towns and cities (see *Nourrir la ville africaine*, by Ph. Hugon). This involves three types of activity: transporting basic foodstuffs (maize, manioc, rice) over considerable distances, generally by bicycle, between the town or city and the homes of relatives who have stayed in «the bush»; market gardening, which makes it possible, in the gaps left by rampant urbanisation, to produce supplementary food crops (leaves, tomatoes and condiments); lastly, the supplying of water, a town or city activity that still takes up a lot of young people's, and even small children's, time.

In certain Sahelian countries, but also in other parts of Africa such as Nigeria, water carrying serves the essential purpose of integrating the young into urban life. Thus, in Mali, during the wintering season, the young from rural areas go to the urban areas to provide a service that is necessary during

the dry season. They often sleep uncomfortably at the doors of family concessions and accumulate savings which may one day enable them to be socially integrated. Most market stall attendants are young people retailing products supplied by an adult «wholesaler» through a well-established network of contacts. Illicit street vending of contraband goods is the most visible part of this activity, which integrates the African consumer into the world economy.

The young bring the towns and cities to life

The dynamism of the voluntary organisations in urban Africa is very variable. Generally speaking, although this is a moot point, the degree to which the non-governmental sections of society, and more particularly the urban young, are organised or structured is very low.

Thus, groupings based on age (the Ton in Mali), tribe, in ethnically sensitive districts (the Lari of Baongo in Brazzaville), religion (particularly central African syncretisms), cultural or sporting interests, are often ephemeral, unstable, manipulated by competing local powers-that-be, and the regular victims of financial and material theft.

In former one-party states, the single authorised youth movements have often rushed to take the place of previously existing

organisations (scouts, lay organisations, etc.), thus exploiting the real need for the young to be managed by structured organisations.

As a result of recent political change in many African countries, there is a real institutional vacuum. This calls for a revival of voluntary organisations and for the creation of community-centred leadership with particular emphasis on the needs of the young. This is a field of activity to which international solidarity organisations should give priority.

Urban growth and the integration of young people

African societies in general, and particularly African towns and cities, which are the homes of the most innovative sections of the population, have entered a period of long-term disequilibrium. African societies have been transformed since the second world war (see the works of G. Balandier) and should continue to do so for several decades.

In the first part of this paper, we described the current process of change in towns and cities. Urban youth have an essential role to play during this period of prolonged disequilibrium. The urban youth bear the brunt of productive activities; the functioning and social unity of urban areas depends on them. So they need to

find an appropriate organisational framework for expressing their collective identity. This would also enable them to play their part as a key factor of integration in African urban society.

What is at stake is the making of «civilised» urban life, which depends, to a great extent, on the young. Like all its counterparts in the rest of the world, African youth believe in the ideal of the struggle to overcome the difficulties of daily life and of living in a tough environment. The building of towns and cities is one of the possible themes that express this ideal, which had been seized on by certain one-party states in the preceding period (cf the slogan «everything for the people» in Brazzaville). The young are the wealth of towns and cities and urban growth is a powerful factor of social integration.

Social engineering policies youth-centered

The aim of youth policy has often been, through youth organisations, to channel the creative energy of the young towards physical and sports activities or into politics. To satisfy the whole range of aspirations of young people, other more productive and more cultural themes and activities must be included.

What is needed is a more open policy rather than a radical change. As we have just seen, this calls for a diversification of themes and also of places. Local organisations must take over from the state and its decentralised offshoots. What has to be encouraged is a policy aimed at fostering local solidarity to cement real social integration through productive, religious, cultural and sports activities based on local initiatives. The framework for this approach can only be genuine social engineering centred on the needs of young people. In the face of minimum state intervention, the most appropriate agents of such an approach are local authorities and, more particularly, the municipalities, at the level of which public and private interests can best be reconciled. It is the natural function of municipalities to play this role. In return, they thereby reinforce the legitimacy of their local action.

French aid, by supporting the «Municipal Development Programme», has already started to contribute to the realisation of this aim.

Xavier Crépin, Chargé de Mission
Ministry of Cooperation and
Development

At the Heart of the Crisis: young city-dwellers

I. The young: a social category

Do «the young» make up a social category, and, if so, which one? It has been said that «the young» is a vague concept. It is difficult to define the biological limits of this category: in Africa, childhood ends early, especially at a time of crisis when children are put to work as early as at the age of nine or ten, shining shoes, attending to cars, selling newspapers and handkerchieves, etc. Conversely, people can be considered as young, as socially junior, for a very long time if they have no work and/or no spouse, which is the case of the long-term unemployed who can be over 30. Moreover, such differences in age (and, of course, in sex) are associated with obvious social distinctions.

II. A marginalised youth

However, providing, in each case, that the particulars are specified (age, sex, social and ethnic origin, level of education or training,

how long he/she has lived in an urban environment), «youth» as a category is sociologically acceptable, because African youth as a whole, beyond its obvious social and cultural heterogeneity, have all been affected by a process of marginalisation made worse by the crisis. As a result, the various sections of this social category occupy common positions:

1. An ill-defined position between the world of economically dependent children living with their families, and the world of grown-ups integrated into global society as a whole by their activities and/or by a recognised social status. The young are also defined as being socially marginal, which is paradoxical given that they represent a majority of the population (50% of Malians are under 20, 70% of the population of Kinshasa is under 25, etc.).

2. Along with women, they make up a traditionally subordinate social group, as they are locked into a rigid and constraining domination-submission relationship between

(socially) senior and (socio-biologically) junior people. Some manage to distance themselves from this type of relationship, and others rebel against it (refusal of early imposed marriages, sometimes leading to prostitution; young street truants running away from home; migration by many young girls and boys to cities, etc.).

3. The position of the young in relation to the state is also rather precarious because, more than any other social category, they are seen as potential vectors of all the dangers that threaten the social order: school and student revolts, delinquency, drug trafficking, theft, prostitution, violent crime, and, more recently, political demonstrations.

4. As the young, more than any other category, come up against the violence of state military police organisations and, more «traditionally», against the constraints of a social order based on «lineage», they have a great capacity for reactive violence and revolt which reveals itself every day by a great potential for indiscipline, which finds expression in different

ways: the use of slang (eg, «nouchi» in Abidjan), rap-style music, radical political activism, delinquency, religious sects.

5. Finally, along with women and the poor, the young are a particularly vulnerable group in times of crisis.

III. Youth with no prospects

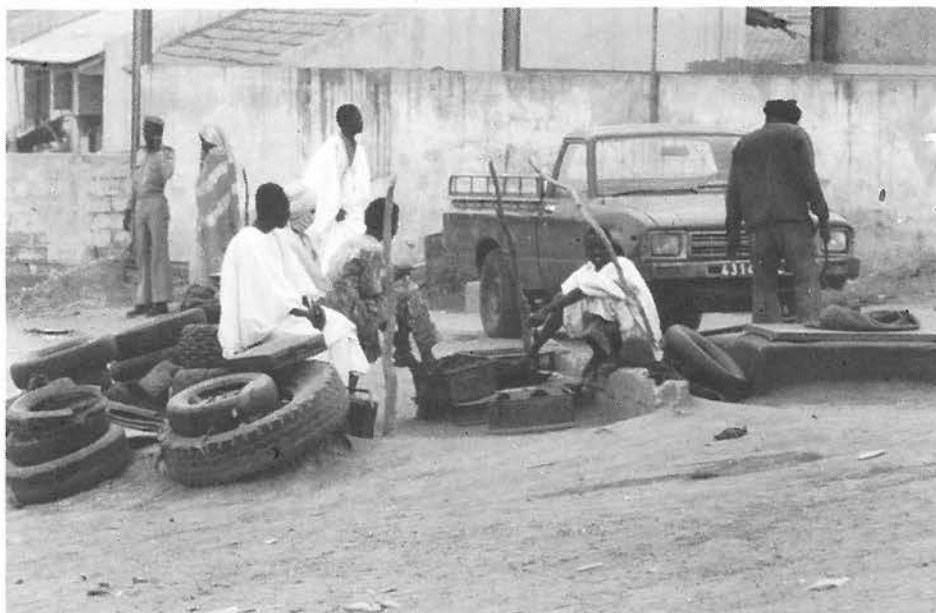
Plant closures, downsizing of the civil service, privatisations accompanied by cuts in the workforce, and redundancies have resulted in a quarter or even a third of the labour force and often 50% of young people being unemployed.

Because all the sectors of the economy (modern and informal, public and private, urban and rural) are interdependent, no field of activity has been unaffected by the crisis. The crisis in the rural economy (fall in the prices of export produce, pressures on the price of land and declining yields in extensive farming systems...) offers no significant prospects for a return to agriculture (despite a few minority experiments which have been more like a temporary return to village life). The self-employed sector, which has itself suffered from a fall in solvent demand as a result of wage cuts and inflation, offers an illusory solution and is, in any case, saturated: although, statistically, the number of jobs in this sector has increased, this has resulted from lower remuneration for work and greater under-employment (indefinite extension of apprenticeships...). In such conditions, for employers, the young are less and less well integrated. Neither training organisations, which are also in a crisis, nor family solidarity can overcome the widespread feeling that there are no prospects for the future.

Faced with this situation, the African state remains only too often a prisoner of its obsession with security and of its cult of violence, the favoured instrument of a «policy of the belly» (Jean-François Bayart) which the ruling classes have been hanging on to despite their sham concessions to democratisation.

Thus, the young city-dwellers embody all the current contradictions affecting African societies and exhibit them as if through a magnifying glass, owing both to their marginalisation and to the repressive reactions of a state which does not know how to speak with young people.

And yet the young people's future lies within African towns and cities (by the year 2000, half of the total population of Africa will be living in urban areas and the young will continue to flock to urban areas, especially to cities with over one million inhabitants), as there are no real prospects in the rural world.



source: Bernard Desjeux

IV. Technical or political solutions?

So, in the short or medium term, it is within the framework of towns and cities - and particularly very large cities - that suitable solutions have to be found to this process of marginalisation and even of social exclusion (by an accumulation of handicaps: truancy + unemployment + forced celibacy + residential instability).

The solutions can be of a technical nature (institutional, financial, managerial). This may mean drawing attention to the twin need for more vocational training, the better to adapt young people to a job market that requires better technical qualifications, and for high-level education to train skilled senior executives, as the integration of African economies is irreversible. Above all, it should be stressed that the real solution lies in the ability of young people to create their own jobs and even, for the most enterprising and the most qualified among them, to set up their own companies, as it is more and more widely admitted today that a country's economic take-off depends on the development of a dense fabric of diversified small and medium-sized enterprises.

For young people, democracy, which they call for in the name of more or less explicit libertarian values, is a prerequisite for development, insofar as it is seen as a liberation of energy, creativity and entrepreneurial spirit. Finally, the inadequacy of more or less humanitarian or social actions has to be underscored, particularly the disorganised efforts of non-governmental organisations, charities or municipalities.

Such micro-initiatives, although admirably generous, selectively necessary and morally justified, are no replacements for an overall policy. Most often, their results are statistically insignificant. A silk-screen printing workshop for young disabled people led to the creation of five jobs in Dakar. In Abidjan, the scout movement has been relatively successful (2,500 young people have joined), and contributes to the struggle against the absence of social values and delinquency. But this scout movement cannot provide vocational training, nor create jobs. Actions organised by voluntary organisations or by cooperative societies keep idle young people busy tidying up the environment, flushing out gutters, planting trees, cleaning out latrines, paving streets, watching over neighbourhoods or painting frescos on the walls (of Dakar). In the end, such actions are forms of child-minding or social work that keep young people out of trouble and give them temporary financial assistance (but a car-keeper can earn ten times as much in the street...). In other words, they are only temporary palliatives of little economic or social significance.

So the question of African youth calls for authentic political modernisation, ie, real democratisation. This is an urgent appeal: various forms of anomic violence, migratory population movements, religious escapism are among the signs that the patience of young people is running out.

Alain Marie,
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Support for Development Projects in the South and Social Integration in the North

A symposium on the prospects for youth in Africa really had to devote at least one workshop to the support given by African migrants abroad, particularly in France, to development projects in their countries of origin, notably solidarity projects initiated by young Africans and others wishing to participate in the development of Africa, and also to certain programmes for their own integration in the rich North.

Hubert Prévot, the French Secretary General for social integration, speaking about African immigrants in France (of which there are 400,000), said they currently had to choose between two difficult options: their own social integration into French society with their families, and the development of their countries of origin. These immigrants are loath to settle for one to the detriment of the other, whereas the French public authorities tend to propose programmes that reflect clear-cut choices: integration implies severing certain links with one's country of origin - it thus comes under social integration policy. Whereas development aid comes under cooperation policy. So the two are quite separate.

Yet a large number of development associations have been set up by migrants in France from the Sénégal river valley. Their members have been working very hard in support of the development projects of their village associations in Africa with which they have kept in touch.

So much so that we often hear people discussing the role of migrants as actors in the development process. What is to be thought of this?

Immigrants as actors in the Development Process

This is an intellectually satisfying rallying-cry, but it needs to be qualified.

True, as Ben Kamara, a journalist for the review «Négropolis» and a member of the «Immigration and Sahel Development» association, reports on his return from a trip to Mali and Mauritania, there have been cases of young African migrants leaving Paris to drive taxis or keep shops in their countries of origin. These new project bearers illustrate young people's ability to find solutions to the «emigrate or develop» alternative.

True, also, that Mr Ebelebe, a Congolese, and other African graduates, have set up an asso-

ciation called «Avenir» («Future» in French) for young Africans who are convinced that their skills must be of use to their countries' development and who help each other to implement their projects there.

But Mr Soumare, of the ENDA Tiers-Monde organisation in Dakar, has also drawn attention to the negative impact of migration on his country's development: the rural exodus to the capital city has adversely affected medium-sized towns, whereas these towns should be centres of initiative and springboards for rural development. He reminds us that an active and productive rural environment is the solution to the problem of youth unemployment. Mr Daum, a social anthropologist working for the Panos Institute, conducted research on 100 village development associations in the Senegal river valley and on the impact of Senegalese emigration to France: he found that emigration had deprived the villages of their life-blood; that the young saw no future for themselves there; and that 80% of family consumption was financed by Senegalese who had emigrated. Only 7% of the 360 projects implemented by these associations with the support, and often at the initiative, of Senegalese migrants were productive.

African migrants are at the crossroads of their aspirations for both developing their country of origin and for integration into French society.

In presenting the objectives of his association, Mr Neu, Secretary General of the Third World Rural Development Research and Action Group, has put forward some solutions based on the following idea: real development projects must be fostered in the river valley thanks to a dual support system in France and in the valley.

In Mr Neu's opinion, migrants can be vehicles for new ideas and actors in the development process, but subject to certain specific conditions. He insists on the need for relations between associations to be better organised and on the importance of inter-village communication in finding solutions and in contributing to the emergence of productive projects that generate new jobs.

Social integration in the North

Given its object, part of the symposium was devoted to consideration of the action initiated within the framework of French social integration policy in favour of and with young

people, and more particularly young African immigrants.

For several years, annual «summer preventive projects» have been organised and financed by government departments: justice, social affairs and integration, youth and sport, city development. Since 1991, the Ministry of Cooperation and Development has also got involved in order to give this policy an international dimension through solidarity projects. The goal: to enable young people, of whatever origin, to conceive, plan and implement projects in Africa in collaboration with young people living there.

Thus, Honoré Djivo in Cergy-Pontoise (near Paris), participated with some African and French young people in the construction of a youth club in Senegal last summer. This experience came as a decisive and beneficial shock to him and his friends, for several reasons: it «renewed his relationship with his culture of origin»; it made them aware of actual experiences; it helped them to put things into perspective; and it made them feel useful. On their return, they founded an association called Dia Moral for the dual purpose of continuing the work undertaken with the young people in Senegal and of working together in France as well.

Amadou Daf of the France-Espoir association has observed that, after such experiences, the young concerned have shown renewed interest in their schoolwork or gone on training and educational courses they would not have been able to go on in the past. Along with Mr Vigouroux of the Val d'Oise county authority in charge of youth and sport, he himself is a member of a «think tank» set up by this authority and composed of elected councillors, local government officers and representatives of voluntary organisations. Its role is to collect information, to come up with ideas and to propose actions conducive to the social integration of young immigrants from Africa in Val d'Oise county.

These examples of concrete action linking support for development in the South with the fostering of social integration in the North open up prospects for further action, but also for analysis, improvement and better targeted projects, if it is really wished to make them effective.

Nicole Martin,
Population and Migration Department,
Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration

The Young Confronted by Urban Policies

The case studies and debates in workshop n° 8 were not as provocative as its theme: «The Young Confronted by Urban Policies». In fact, with the notable exception of the study of the action taken in the district known as «Chaudron» à Saint Denis de la Réunion, where the devastation caused by young people led the authorities to conceive an urban development project based on their needs and their participation, the actions presented during the workshop originated from outside the groups of young people concerned, and even from outside the neighbourhood where they were implemented.

However, these projects illustrate the renewed interest of donors and local authorities in the participatory implementation of district urban and social development projects.

The «Jeunes bâtissons la cité» project in Lomé resulted from a donor's wish to support the transition to democracy by mobilising unemployed or socially handicapped young people in low-class districts by means of work useful to the community: refuse collection, sewerage cleansing, road repairs and the upkeep of community facilities. Six local NGOs were involved as prime contractors for these works.

The Sokoura urban development project implemented in Aboisso (Ivory Coast), which aimed at reorganising the street and road system and the plot layout of a district, was also initiated from outside. The authorities first approached an association of young people «to sell them the project». The dialogue through a group of leaders of the Volunteers of Progress association resulted in the participation of the young in the planning of the development scheme and in its implementation. Paid labour services were generated by this restructuring work.

Such is the economic situation in African towns that «youth projects» attract girls and boys from a wide age group (16 to 25). These young people have to support themselves, and are not engaged in schooling or vocational training or in activities that generate a regular income. Their common overriding concern is to earn money; this is what motivates them collectively and explains why labour-intensive projects are not viewed with suspicion.

Some people say that these labour-intensive projects, which were initiated in response to the endemic unemployment affecting young people, «offer temporary employment but do not create any jobs.» Although the provision

of only temporary income is a significant result and although such projects, which are in the interest of the community, can be perpetuated as part of local structures, it is worth noting that the NGOs involved in them are, indeed, keen to prolong them by creating permanent activities.

Once the active phase of a project is over, by capitalising on their earnings, the young people can take employment initiatives and set up their own businesses. In some cases, construction projects are prolonged by entrusting the young people involved with the management of the facility they have built, such as shelters in market places for young female cooperatives or the rehabilitation and management of public latrines. Other projects, such as the one implemented jointly by the towns of Niort and Atakpame (Togo) have permitted the establishment of a local credit fund to facilitate the starting up of small-scale activities for the young and for women.

In the last analysis, the importance of actions that mobilise young people is their subsequent scope for initiative taking and for responding to community needs.

Grouping young people in various forms of association is conducive to their mobilisation and participation in development projects.

In this respect, the role played by local and international NGOs has turned out to be crucial, at least in the cases studied. In addition to the responsibility for implementing projects, their leadership has permitted a dialogue to be started between groups of young people and the local authorities. They can also facilitate social integration by adding a cultural dimension to the projects in the form of educational activities of an artistic and/or sporting nature.

In this connection, joint cooperative projects, such as the one between Niort and Atakpame, during which exchanges are organised, notably between groups of young people working as partners on common projects, add an international dimension inspired by a sense of solidarity and provide a first-rate framework for mobilising young people and integrating them into their local communities.

Finally, the fundamental question is that of the social integration of neighbourhood development projects. An analysis of the Chodak project (1), which has been in progress in a neighbourhood of Dakar for over 10 years, by an ENDA team has revealed the limitations of neighbourhood development

projects and how difficult it is for local inhabitants to get involved in them. By basing such projects on groups of people who have the same problems (women, the poor, the unemployed, the young...), we fail to realise that such a status as, for instance, that of «unemployed person» or of «young person», does not of itself give rise to a sense of solidarity or of a common awareness between the people who belong to the same such groups. Each individual belongs to networks within which bonds are much closer than such social characteristics. Each individual's attitude towards the proposed projects will be shaped primarily by his or her sense of belonging to such networks.

Moreover, the project management institutions do not escape from the logic of donations and redistribution. They are seen by the inhabitants as having resources to redistribute. To benefit from this, all the local inhabitants have to do is to «show allegiance», as it were, by accepting the project concerned. Faced with the challenge that the project represents, the local population develop their own strategy and set themselves goals which are in many cases different from those of contributors from outside. Beyond what might look like perversions of project aims, we must try to understand what strategies are being implemented by the inhabitants concerned and we must try to accept them as community development aims. These comments on the cultural rooting of the projects in question in no way detract from the value and relevance of participatory neighbourhood development projects. But they do show up their deficiencies and invite us not to isolate the set of problems posed by «youth, cities, employment» from an overall development project.

Claude Baehrel,
Secretary General
of the Catholic Committee Against
Hunger and for Development
(CCFD)

(1) See: *Le don et le recours*, E.S. NDIONE ENDA Dakar, 1992

Symposia

Maastricht - Holland
March 25th-27th 1993

Improving the Environment: New Regional and Urban Development Tasks. International conference organised by the International Federation of Housing and Planning (IFHP).
Contact: IFHP, Congress Section, 43 Wassenaarseweg, 2596 CG Den Haag, Pays-Bas. Tel: 31.70.328.1504/324.4557. - Fax: 31.70.323.2085

Toronto - Canada
June 12th-17th 1993

How to Fortify Our Communities. 31st congress of L'Union internationale des Villes et Pouvoirs locaux (IULA).
Contact: IULA 93, Secrétariat du Congrès, Station 1260, Metro Hall, 55 John Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada - M5V 3C6. Tel: 416.392.8673. - Fax: 416.392.3751

Eindhoven - Holland
June 16th-18th 1993

The Urban Environment in Developing Countries: the Future, Ideas, Trends.
Contact: Secretariat of Building, Habitat and Urban Management International, Eindhoven University of Technology, PO Box 513, 5600 MB Eindhoven, Pays-Bas. Tel: 40.47.3283. - Fax: 40.45.2432.

Book review

Quels hommes pour quelle coopération avec le Sud? (What cooperation with the South and with whom?) Record of the conference held on September 4th 1992 in Paris, organised by the Association of Urban and Cooperation Development Professionals, 1992, 92p.

Representatives of research consultancies, the World Bank, training organisations and French government departments contributed to the debate on trends in demand, supply and career management in the fields of technical cooperation and expertise relative to urban development in the countries of the South.

ADP, c/o Villes en Développement, Arche de la Défense, 92055 Paris-la-Défense Cedex 04 - France

Price: FFr 100 (free for members of ADP)

The Consulting Profession in Developing Countries. A Strategy for Development. By S.S.Kirmani and W.C.Baum - Washington: World Bank, 1992 - XIV, 85p. (World Bank discussion papers, 149).

The quality of national architectural and engineering companies has not risen in proportion to the increase in their number; ineffective government policies and practices, inadequate internal management and not enough staff, the absence of a professional environment have had an adverse impact on their effectiveness.

Banque mondiale: Bureau européen, 66 avenue d'Iéna, 75116 Paris - France. Or: World Bank Publications Department, 1818 H. Street N.W., Washington D.C. 20433, USA
Price: FFr 56.

The water sector in Egypt. A file produced by the economic section of the French embassy in Egypt. Paris: Centre français du Commerce extérieur, 1992, 145p. (Coll. Etudes de Débouchés).

Description of existing hydraulic infrastructures, and of other current and future projects. Analysis of the water treatment market: demand, supply of services and equipment, external sources of funds. In the appendix: list of public-sector organisations, research consultancies and major Egyptian construction and civil engineering companies. Laws on the spilling of liquids into the Nile and its canals.

CFCE: 10 avenue d'Iéna, 75783 Paris Cedex 16, France.

Price: FFr 1,000.

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