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Villes en développement

Self-transformation of the city through its activities: Quito

Globalisation, Cities and Businesses

This subject has already been addressed by two mid-year AdP meetings – in 1996 with industrialists from the «Leading Exporters' Club», and in 1997 with Charles-Albert Michallet and Pierre Veltz.

The article by Pierre Veltz makes us realise how important this subject is. For although it is an established fact that today's markets and businesses work on a global scale, it is quite new to show the linkage between this movement and the economic primacy of metropolises associated, like businesses, into networks. This environment resembles a biological system whose intricacies are skillfully analysed by this article.

Alain Fabry, for Suez-Lyonnaise des Eaux (urban services), and Arsène Schun, for Elf-Atochem (petrochemistry), each illustrate the subject in their own way. A. Fabry observes that urban settlements have to pass thresholds of change in urban management solutions and methods. Both authors stress that at the same time their companies must adapt to the economies and contexts they encounter. They do not reinvent everything afresh at every turn but «translate» methods and processes that have succeeded elsewhere to suit the local situation. They themselves thus become «globalizing factors».

On a different plane, Evelyne Kuoh also illustrates P. Veltz's remarks. A gulf can divide even a big city like Edéa from world-scale business activities established on its soil (how symbolic that Alucam is on an island in the

River Sanaga). And yet we had every reason to believe that siting constraints for some activities (here a reservoir for hydroelectricity) would have been a spontaneous incentive to development in the neighbouring city. Edéa and many similar instances demonstrate that such grafts will not take by themselves. E. Kuoh, with her description of «Gulliver's sons» who run Alucam, and P. Veltz, in his analytical survey, help us to understand the reasons why. For although the roots and radicles of the business network and the metropolis network intergrow, their symbiotic choices are selective. In fact, the globalizing trend has many advantages which it would be foolish to ignore. But this trend can itself ignore or even crush many an individual: people's minds and cultures do not move as fast as economies. In the spirit suggested by P. Veltz at the end of his article, a top prize should go to metropolitan redeployment and consequently to *ad hoc* institutions. Another should go to those political unions whose size and strength enable them to impose ethics on both economic stakeholders and metropolises and thereby prevent deviant or runaway development of globalisation, while endeavouring to make it work for everyone. ■

Jean-Pierre Gérard
Member of the Monetary Policy Council
Chairman of the Club of French Leading
World Exporters (c.f. page 8)

An archipelago of cities and businesses

Pierre Veltz, Director of Research, LATTs/ENPC

Today we are witnessing a real «metropolization» of the world economy. Tokyo's production is comparable to that of the United Kingdom. It is twice that of Brazil. Cities are not only the physical framework of a new global capitalism. They are in no small part its driving force. And they are increasingly leaving their specific social, institutional and cultural footprints upon it.

After the economy of Nation-States, the economy of Cities?

It is a well-known fact that the prime movers of the first capitalistic successes were cities and their networks. They were much more responsive, mobile economies than those based on widespread territories, which were bogged down in their problems of controlling the comparatively vast areas served by the transport systems of those times. Think of the contrast between France and Spain on the one hand, and the «world cities» of early capitalism on the other hand, so well described by Braudel. The territorial States eventually won the fight, by making use of the very instruments (both technical and administrative) that made their territorial efficiency. For a long time, they continued to lean on urban economies by taxing them and controlling them, but without destroying them. However, industrial capitalism finally made these local economies dissolve completely into the national economies. This ascension of the national framework as a basic economic area culminated in our century and it was not until the 1970s-80s that the economy once again achieved the level of internationalization it had reached before the Great World War.

Are we verging on a new city-based cycle?

Probably – even though today's emerging situation is very

different from that described by Braudel. Modern metropolises are no longer self-centred systems but have become powerful hubs, crossroads for globalized flows. And the traditional relations between urban centres and their fringe areas have declined in importance in favour of horizontal networking between these centres. In this «archipelago economy», it is not uncommon to find rapidly-expanding regional or national capitals in regions or countries in recession. But this greatly increases spatial inequalities. The only efficient inter-territorial solidarity mechanisms now remaining are those of the Nation-States, because local budgets only make a very limited redistribution of resources. While the new City-States, relieved of the task of maintaining their hinterlands, are prospering, the Territorial States are organizing considerable transfers of funds from rich to poor areas. It is highly tempting for the most developed urban areas to «go it alone», since they consider their fringe areas as a burden rather than a useful addition (to provide unqualified labour, as outlets for their products, etc.).

Globalized competition, firms and cities

Metropolitan patterns and the ongoing transformation of companies are closely tied to production, trade and competition processes.

Firstly, there is the paradox of the increasing spatial polarization of an economy in which transport costs are plummeting and telecommunication media are exploding – described by «cyber-world» prophets as a flow-driven economy, detached from the concrete territory. In fact, polarization does not mean a return to structures dominated by local trade. By deploying their networks on an international scale, firms are distancing themselves from their traditional «territories». A case in point is the British economic power which now only has a vague link with the national territory. The first hundred British companies have a turnover amounting to 85% of the GDP but they only account for 16% of national employment! The relations between major turnkey developers and their suppliers are less and less organized on a local basis, despite technical constraints such as «just-in-time» production. Pools of suppliers are managed on a centralized basis, made necessary by economies of scale. And there are many more examples of this type. But it must be added that these dissociating logics are heavily counterbalanced by the increasing part played by many local externalities, by the powerful links between economic competitive ability and resources and above all, by strongly territorialized interaction. This can be linked to new forms of competition, which do not centre solely on costs, but on

differentiating factors such as the quality of products and services, responsiveness, variety, innovation capacity (naturally all the more so in countries with strong currencies and a high standard of social welfare). But in this new competitive world, the traditional, heavily compartmentalized, top heavy producer organizations, which rely on the productivity of routinized operations, are becoming less and less efficient. «Global» performance is primarily the result of systemic effects both inside and outside the company. It is achieved through the quality of spontaneous relations between the many stakeholders in the productive system, and often those with the institutional players in the company's environment. For example, the increased reliability of the key technical tools that directly influence industrial production costs is based primarily on the quality of the dialogue between designers and users of these tools, and between users and maintenance specialists. Product innovation depends mainly on interaction between firms and their customers. And the rich, multi-skilled fabrics of cities remain fundamental matrices for the emergence of such relational effects. The second major characteristic of today's economy is its increasing domination by uncertainty and speed (the need to shorten design or order-delivery time cycles). Here again, these factors encourage the metropolizing trend. (a) To be more «responsive», more «flexible», firms are now externalizing an increasing share of their activities and labour. The metropolitan fabric obviously has a special potential for flexibly composing and recomposing variable-geometry systems of values. In this respect, the city acts as an enormous interchange system.

(b) In a speed-driven economy, quick learning is a key factor of success, and frequently of survival. And it is greatly reinforced by the existence of entrepreneurial communities which often have a strong local dimension.

(c) Metropolitan job markets have a powerful minimizing

effect on medium-term uncertainties. Both employees and employers have a much greater chance of finding jobs or specialized skills, and of withdrawing from commitments at a low cost.

The rise of metropolitan economies thus causes eco-

nomie development to remain heavily dependent on social and political relational factors. In particular, the quality of the institutions and territorial public governance is a central factor of success. But metropolitan economies are also forums for the extension of market regulations. The challenge is to

make them genuine areas of solidarity, by not transferring the full burden of such areas onto the slow-trending States. ■

Alucam and the City of Edéa (cameroon)

Evelyne Kuoh, Commercial Department Manager, Socatral

Forty years of parallel living: the past and future in question

Birth of a project

The weight of history cannot just be glossed over when reflecting on the parallel histories of Edéa and Alucam, a city and a company that share the management of an economic area whose scope, horizons and trend patterns have been successively defined by a colonial administration and, after independence, by national planning.

After the German dream of an *African Ruhr* along the River Sanaga, came the French project to develop the river's hydroelectric reserves in the immediate post-second-war period by setting up electrometallurgical industries. The project was made possible by the urgent need for energy and reconstruction and by the reorientation of the colonial pact. On an outstanding site (hydrographic resources, abundant potential agricultural land and labour), the city of Edéa was chosen to receive a dam, and nearby, an aluminium plant, as it was not yet known how to transport electricity cheaply over long distances. This was the context in which *the industrialization*

of the lower Sanaga region came into being.

New opportunities opened up by the project

When world history became part of its destiny, Edéa, the principal town of an administrative area with several thousand inhabitants, was already the centre of an area of market crop farm holdings (palm kernels, rubber trees, cacao trees). Great prospects then opened up for the region and its industrial activity. The scale of projects and land use increased ten-fold. From an industrial point of view, Alucam was an electrolysis plant of the same type as Saint-Jean-de Maurienne in the French *Savoie* region. It had to supply 45,000 tonnes of aluminium per year, which was one third of French output at that time. When the first aluminium ingot rolled out in 1957, it was hailed as the prelude to the entry of Edéa and *«still more of the rural black continent... into the world economy as one of tomorrow's leading suppliers of light metal»*¹

The introduction of electrolysis made it necessary to quadruple the generating capacity of the dam (from 22,000 kw to 120,000 kw). The Territory became an exporter of electric power.

From a local point of view, this development generated new opportunities. Boosted by the supply of energy and by the rail and road networks connecting it to the rapidly-expanding port of Douala, 80 km away, the region became a regional business hub. After the building work which employed a workforce of several thousand people, the presence of large-scale industrial sites was to perpetuate several hundred jobs.

Three decades of parallel destinies

Alucam continued its expansion dictated by the opportunities and constraints of the international environment. It ensured its products were competitive by constantly endeavouring to keep the cost of local factors in check in order to preserve the comparative advantages which had induced industries to become established there. Indeed, its production was intended for sale on the international market where the rules of competition could not be made

subject to cultural, logistical² or other exceptions – the determination of the selling price of its end product was based on global parameters.

Midway through the sixties, Alucam diversified its business by setting up a rolling mill subsidiary, Socatral, on the same site, with a view to absorbing a quarter of its output. At the same time, it was building up a network of regional subsidiaries for second-stage transformation of standard sections, which were to sell their products on the local markets. Then early in the eighties, the electrolyzing capacity was doubled, bringing Alucam up to the critical size of world trading units.

The industrial facility was developing its own infrastructure (particularly for electric power and water supplies), building cities for its own employees and, except for refuse collection, was virtually self-sufficient in terms of urban services.

At the same time, Edéa was evolving at the pace of its region's developing activities. It was able to recoup the economic benefits of Alucam's presence. Indirectly, the communal taxes levied on local businesses and centralized at

national level were channelled back as a communal appropriation from the State. Directly, hundreds of jobs were created and the total payroll was distributed; small-scale local subcontracting was developed (however, the close proximity of Douala, the economic capital, although a considerable asset in other respects, was a disincentive to the establishment of large-scale structures when a service of similar cost and quality could be provided from Douala); self-sufficing agriculture (which was still fragmented) was on the increase to the benefit of the growth and concentration of the populations.

Edéa was controlling its expansion but was unable to harmonize its own rate of growth with the much faster growth induced by the presence of an industrial plant of Alucam's size. The city had particular difficulty in mobilizing the funds it required to meet the cost of social rebalancing. More inhabitants meant a greater need for housing, infrastructure and qualified managerial staff. The city's development was consistent with the revenue it received under the national administrative system of fund allocations to local authorities. In short, for its resources, facilities and business opportunities, both the

evaluation scale and the review procedure were national and were to remain so.

Changing horizons

During the nineties, the leading world industries, after engaging in expensive multiple mergers and acquisitions throughout the previous decade to increase their added value, took stock of their finances and reverted to productivity management aimed at rebuilding their profit margins. At the same time on the aluminium market, there was a massive influx of products from the former Eastern bloc, which undermined the cyclical trends in metal prices. This led to rebalancing through cutbacks in supply engineered by the leading traditional producers. The Alucam group did not escape these international market constraints. It gave in to austerity by shutting down several aluminizing tanks and introducing a multiannual plan called «Challenge», which was implemented in all the operating units of the Pechiney group. This plan aimed firstly to cut costs and then to select markets and products targeted according to profitability criteria. The world system was strengthened by the benchmarking concept³, and little room was left for local particularities. Alucam then

became part of Pechiney's world information system on aluminium metal.

Meanwhile, Edéa was suffering from the backlash of the Cameroonian public finance crisis, which it was trying to resolve through various structural adjustment plans under the funding umbrella of international donors. At the same time, the reform begun early in the decade was restructuring the local administrative units to bring them closer to the people. The commune of Edéa was now managed by a government representative at the head of the executive, backed by an elected legislative body, the municipal council. Hopefully this decentralization will entail a sphere of activity that will broaden the responsibilities of the municipal administration.

Enhanced prospective synergy

Today, the linkage between Alucam and Edéa still seems to be one of parallel rather than cross-linked destinies. Can this change?

Alucam's landmarks extend world-wide, owing both to the circumstances of its inception and to its markets. And today's globalizing trend only goes to strengthen this context. The necessary skills are becoming

increasingly specialized. They are sustained by on-the-job training and executive recruitment, and impose a reference system and corporate culture from outside the region. Alucam cannot elude these constraints without jeopardizing its development or its survival.

The city is also affected by these changes which, although in appearance local, have global origins. Cameroon is not the only «structurally adjusted» country of the South that is driven to «decentralize».

Why then should it be necessary for as-yet parallel destinies to become a little less so and eventually meet? It may be surprising but it is nonetheless desirable. Through elections, the new municipal administration with broader responsibilities will be closer to local citizens. And Alucam, faced with a municipal authority that is a more firmly established and freer in its initiatives, will benefit more from negotiations and local pooling of interests. The outcome could well be greater synergy between business activity and urban life. ■

¹ Le Monde, 3 February 1957.

² A favourable or unfavourable situation compared with a port, for example.

³ A comparative study of the production costs of several similar companies with a view to evaluating their respective positioning

Aerial views of Edéa and the island on River Sanaga around 1952 and in 1991



Around 1952 - Photo: Georges Prunet, courtesy of Alucam

1991 - Photo: Serge Rosello, courtesy of Alucam

Urban services and globalisation

Alain Fabry, International Manager, Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux

The business firm has become one of the agents for change in urban management structures.

Early in the eighties, Lyonnaise des Eaux was a French company that regularly partnered local authorities in the field of water and waste services. This group, which became Suez-Lyonnaise des Eaux in 1997, is now one of the key players in urban management the world over.

It is present from Manila to Buenos Aires, from Indianapolis to Shenyang, including Barcelona, Bucharest and Almaty. It is the world leader in water management (France excluded) and is ranked third for waste (or even first, leaving aside North America where the two leading companies are mainly sustained by their domestic market). It is also ranked second among the private gas and electricity companies in Europe and figures among the leading independent energy producers in the world.

How did the group use the globalizing movement to grow so fast and what role does it play in this process today? What lesson can be learned from its experience to benefit the world's major metropolises? The group's international development took off in the eighties, based on: the realisation that urban growth was accelerating in the world; an intuition that a city with a population of five million inhabitants cannot be managed like one with five hundred thousand; a further intuition that there is a level at which the system must change and that Lyonnaise des Eaux, on the strength of its experience, could play an important role in this change.

As regards urban growth, the facts confirmed this analysis and today's predictions are for an even more powerful movement. We know that the population of Jakarta, Bombay or Karachi is set to double in the next two decades, not to speak of Lagos, which will grow even faster. In 1992, there were fifty cities in the world with more than 5 million inhabitants. In 2010 there will be a hundred. Investment requirements have suddenly become all-important and countries have begun to devote a large part of their resources to them, thanks mostly to bilateral or multilateral aid. However, donors soon realised that it was useless to invest without also changing the management system, and that there was no point in financing a new drinking water treatment plant if, as was usually the case, 50% of the water produced was then wasted in a poorly managed network. Cities that had often retained an administrative structure dating back twenty or thirty years if not more, had no technical services capable of ensuring compliance with the minimum public health regulations. They had difficulty in breaking with outdated bureaucratic practices. The system managed to adjust more or less satisfactorily when a town was growing slowly but it could not keep up with this accelerating urbanization. By delegating the management of technical services to large specialized companies, some of these cities acquired modern technical facilities and could then focus their efforts on areas within their remit such as law and order, safety, education, culture and economic development.

Photo courtesy of Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux



Manila: Mesal plant

It was thus galloping urban growth that sent urban service companies forth to the four corners of the earth, sometimes to most exotic lands. And as the world became a «global village», the successful experiments in Argentina, Malaysia or China were quickly tailored to new climes.

Today, the Suez-Lyonnaise des Eaux group is initiating a global experience. The more it develops, the more it enriches this experience and is able to find solutions for cases submitted to it, which are suited to specific technical, economic, social and cultural contexts. It is becoming one of the key players in the globalizing trend, to the extent that it has developed into one of the agents for change in urban management structure. International financial institutions such as the World Bank (IFC), ADB, IDB and EBRD are now its regular partners. Municipalities call on its services to undertake studies on the future of their water and electricity supplies and their waste disposal.

However, globalisation is not yet fully global. Most countries of the OECD type have long been engaging in delegated

management (the Latin countries) or have recently undertaken to do so (the Anglo-Saxon countries). But Germany is only just beginning to open up to this type of management and it is uncommon in the Scandinavian countries. As regards the emerging countries, South-East Asia and some Latin American countries were among the first to use this type of organization (Argentina, Chile, Brazil), but there subsists a large part of the world where systems still have to be invented to associate the private sector with public administration in a sustainable partnership. Central Europe, the Caucasian countries, Central and South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, the north of Latin America, have remained very largely outside the world movement.

One of the major difficulties in today's society, as Michel Camdessus⁽¹⁾ clearly pointed out recently, is to find the means for developing countries to avoid becoming marginalized, in a world development process that brings together public and private capital. It is up to the policy shapers in these countries to realise that this movement is not just a «new craze» and to



L'Afrique des individus (Africa and the individual). Journeying through cities in contemporary Africa (Abidjan, Bamako, Dakar, Niamey). Alain Marie, editor. - Paris: Karthala, 1997. - 438 p (Hommes et Sociétés coll.).

Through «life stories» of young city-dwellers, small business-men, unemployed workers and street people obliged to fend for themselves, the authors, anthropologists and ethnologists, have devoted close attention to new methods of integration into the social environment of the African city, and have examined the uniqueness of individualization «African-style», which combines individualizing processes with the reconstruction of community solidarity.

Price: FRF 180

→ Contact: Editions Karthala, 22-24 bd Arago, 75013 Paris, France

Beyrouth, Grand Beyrouth (Beirut, Great-Beirut) under the direction of Jean-Luc Arnaud.- Beirut: CERMOC, 1997. - 230 p. (Les Cahiers du CERMOC, 16, Etudes Urbaines coll.).

The importance of Beirut's place in Lebanon is as undisputed as the extent of that city's destruction. There is no doubt as to the centrality of Beirut for understanding issues affecting the entire Lebanese society. The reconstruction of the city therefore concerns the future of Lebanon as a whole together with the national reconciliation process. This document presents the official records of a symposium, organized by CERMOC and its Research Observatory on Beirut and its Reconstruction (ORBR).

Price: FRF 95

→ Contact: Librairie Avicenne, 25 rue Jussieu, 75005 Paris, France.

Les villes secondaires d'Afrique noire (1970-1977) (Secondary cities in Black Africa). Analytical bibliography annotated by Monique Bertrand.- Bordeaux; Centre d'étude d'Afrique noire, 1997.- 133 p. (les Bibliographies du CEAN coll., No. 8).

Studies on secondary cities in Black Africa are currently enjoying a new lease of life. The monograph genre is being replaced by cross-cutting investigations. The 1,200 references presented here under eight thematic headings are grouped together from two angles: the polarization of the African area now being organized by cities in a patchy fashion through flows of people, goods, investments and values; the physical and social urban environment.

Price: FRF 90.

→ Contact: CEAN-Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Bordeaux, B.P. 101, 33405 Talence cedex, France.

take into account the ground rules governing globalization. This is today's new challenge to urban service companies. Suez-Lyonnaise des Eaux has contributed to the globalizing movement, to which it largely owes its own development. It is

therefore ready and willing to continue to play its part. ■

⁽¹⁾ Michel Camdessus, Director General of IMF: «The Challenges of Globalization in an Interdependent World Economy» (page V) - Washington D.C., August 1997.



Township

Villes en développement

Operating in the field

Arsène Schun, Deputy General Manager of Elf-Atochem

Strategy of a world-scale company for cities of the South

Today's major urban metropolises, particularly in the developing countries, have the choice between haphazard and planned development. A world-scale chemical company such as Elf Atochem has already identified several priority requirements to be met in the field of urban planning. This company has the necessary technological knowhow, which it is ready and able to share.

All industrial groups, whatever their sector of activity, focus their strategies on conquering markets. Such conquests cannot be achieved without analysing short, medium and long term needs in order to implement the necessary means. Naturally, each company's solutions will differ according to its line of business. At Elf-Atochem, one of the world's leading chemical groups, we have long been reflecting on the best way to respond to the urban explosion in the emerging countries of the

South. Cities such as Mexico, Bogota, Rio de Janeiro, Dakar, Abidjan, Lagos, Cairo, Bombay, Benares, Calcutta, Bangkok, Manila, Canton, Shanghai, not to mention the East European metropolises, all present challenges for the whole of mankind. This may be for better or for worse, depending on our mobilising capacity.

In an emergency situation, we must go straight to the point. That is why our strategy aims to meet two needs that we consider essential: water and housing. It is a strategy based on the principle of being present in the growth areas.

Water, a vital need

A city is a combination of networks: roads, transport, electricity, telecommunications, but first and foremost, a dual system providing drinking water and drainage.

Failure at this level can seriously jeopardise the health of the inhabitants. According to the WHO, 80% of infectious diseases are transmitted via water.

At the present time, in India alone, 16% of city-dwellers are

not directly connected, nor do they have a reasonably close fountain. And where they do have access to facilities, these tend to be community supply points (wells, fountains) that dispense untreated water, with no guarantee of its potability.

The problem is even worse for waste water. Where drains exist, they are usually open-air systems. And treatment plants are severely lacking.

Yet a solution does exist. It consists firstly in installing an efficient, reliable, sustainable network of pipelines that requires minimal maintenance. This is where Elf-Atochem's plastics, including PVC and polyethylene, come into their own, particularly through the company's pipeline-manufacturing subsidiary, Alphacan.

It also entails the use of a few chemicals which are fully mastered by our company: chlorine, javel water, hydrochloric acid, ferric chloride and caustic soda. These products are all cheap, which is a significant advantage for countries with limited means. The role of chlorine cannot be overemphasised. It is the only product

sufficiently persistent to ensure an efficient bactericidal effect throughout the pipe lines, without being toxic. By neglecting this fact, Peru had to deal with a terrible epidemic of cholera between January 1991 and June 1992, in which 19,000 people died.

Housing: building soundly, quickly and cheaply

The visitor to the South is immediately struck by the urban fringes with their overcrowded, haphazard arrangements of illegally-built dwellings uncontrolled by any technical standards, not to mention safety standards. The heavy, often sharp-edged materials (corrugated sheeting), when used by rule of thumb, can become deathtraps for the inhabitants should the building catch fire, collapse or be blown down.

And these cities are often situated in areas prone to tornadoes, hurricanes or earthquakes.

Here again, the needs are enormous. It will take considerable time, imagination and creativity before success can be achieved. This is a problem we have been examining for several years, with interesting solutions such as that of the Canadian company, Royal Plastics Group.

This company has developed a new building concept that combines many advantages:

- highly modular shapes and colours to harmonise with design and cultural requirements specific to each country.
- quick, easy building that can be performed cheaply by unskilled labour.
- heavy-duty, safe construction to withstand hurricanes and earthquakes.

This construction system, which is based on modular, juxtaposable PVC units (internal and external joinery, facing slabs, etc.) is suitable for many different types of buildings such as individual or multi-family dwellings, office blocks, schools, hospitals and sports centres. It is already highly successful in countries as different as China, Mexico and Russia. Our role, besides supplying the PVC and the basic materials used in this type of building, consists in fostering the development of this technology, more particularly through our strong international operating base.

The key to success: on-the-spot operations

The economic logic requires industrialists to locate as closely as possible to the targeted requirements. The reason is not

so much the transport costs – which are dwindling – nor even the increasing, and what is more, legitimate needs of the developing countries themselves, but simply the fact that it is impossible to sell products, particularly housing products which weigh heavily and durably on household budgets, without such products incorporating a large share of local wages. The opposite approach would be bound to make these products inaccessible to the targeted consumer populations. Over the past ten years, this has led us to intensify our international presence. Today, out of 33,000 people working in the group, nearly 7,000 are based abroad. Thanks to their perfect field knowledge, these local staff are able to adapt the corporate technical knowhow to each country's physical and economic conditions and to the demands of its leaders. They are the key to our future successes. Eventually, a real transfer of technology must be contemplated. A company jealous of its «secrets», refusing to meet this demand over the longer term, would ultimately abandon all hope of penetrating these difficult markets, where the customer base knows increasingly what it wants and how to shop around the market. ■

Royal Plastics Group photo by courtesy of Elf-Atochem - Townhouses under construction in Bogota



Training



Michel de Montaigne University Technological Institute

The Technological Institute of Bordeaux 3 University is organizing a two-year training course on international development and cooperation work, attested by a national DUT diploma, option, social and cultural group activities, special subject «Development Techniques».

→ Contact: IUT Michel de Montaigne, Université Bordeaux 3, Département Carrières Sociales, métiers de l'animation, B.P. 204, 33175 Gradignan Cedex, France, Tel. 33 (0)5 56 84 44 44

Institut Supérieur d'Architecture de la Communauté Française (Institute of Higher Architectural Studies of the French Community)

An international training course in architecture and urban development planning has been organized by the institute every year since 1984, with the joint help of Belgian development Aid and UNCHS (Nairobi habitat). Over a 15-week period, the participants attend seminars during which they can exchange their development-related ideas and experience and receive information on the work and studies being performed in the world by the experts invited to the course.

→ Contact: ISACF-LA CAMBRE - STAGE DAC, 19 place Eugène Flagey, 1050 Brussels, Belgium, tel/fax 32 2 648 65 49, E-mail: archi.urbadev@skynet.be

International workshop at ORSTOM

With support from various research institutes (ORSTOM, CNRS, Socio-Economic Housing and Urban Plan Network, University Institute of Development Studies-IUED), an international workshop will be organized from 2 to 4 December 1998 at the ORSTOM headquarters, 213, rue La Fayette 75010, Paris, on the subject «Metropolises on the move. Interaction between mobility patterns and territorial redistribution, able to withstand international comparison» It is particularly intended for research workers familiar with a multidisciplinary approach to major metropolises in both developing and developed countries, or with experience in planning such cities.

→ Contact: Françoise Dureau, ORSTOM, UMR Regards, Maison des Suds, B.P. 200, 33405 Talence Cedex, tel. 33 (0)5 56 84 68 54, E-mail: fdureau@regards.cnrs.fr

New FAC projects in the urban development sector

Support for participants in the decentralizing process, Guinea

To strengthen the capacities of elected representatives and their teams, and to facilitate their cooperation with the Guinea governmental departments, the project implements two types of action:

- aid in developing a training plan for all local players in seven prefectorial districts (out of 33 in Guinea). These courses will focus on day-to-day practical problems of a legal, technical and financial nature;
- aid in finalizing a legal framework for decentralization. Help will be provided for codifying and circulating basic legislative texts.

Implementing new guidelines for urban development

Recent evaluations of French urban development aid policy and the desire to integrate the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) held in June 1996 in Istanbul, have caused the strategic ministerial guidelines on urban development aid to be revised. A three-year programme will implement the following priorities in several countries:

- aid in setting up partnerships between local authorities and civil society under urban development projects;
- aid in consolidating local expertise and mobilising local resources to finance urban development - follow-up to maintenance policies or urban heritage development, to the detriment of new investment.

This programme will link up with the relevant development aid assignments of Agence française de développement, UNCHS, ISTEED, Cités-Unies France and AIMF.

Historical centres in Latin America

The seminar on the rehabilitation of historical centres in Latin America brought together the policy-makers of 20 cities from this continent. A fortnight of work was devoted to in-depth exchanges illustrated by presentations and discussions with French professionals from different sectors. The rapid scheduling of several more specialized meetings in Latin America gives substance to this new network which includes several projects supported by UNESCO and the Inter-American Development Bank.

→ Contact: *Léo Orellana; Architecture and Heritage Directorate, tel. 33 (0)1 40 15 32 06, fax: 33 (0)1 40 15 33 33, E-mail: orellana@culture.fr. A site can be accessed at: <http://www.archi.fr/SIRCHAL>*

News on cooperation

Urban development aid Course for technical assistants

A course for technical assistants in this sector was organized in Paris on 7, 8 and 9 September 1998 on the new French cooperation policies for urban development. Three main subjects were addressed:

- The economic development of cities.
- The financial autonomy of local authorities.
- Training for local authorities.

→ Contact: *Claude Praliaud, bureau DEV/ILU, 20 rue Monsieur, 75007 Paris, France, tel. 33 (0)1 53 69 41 52, fax: 33 (0)1 53 69 41 64, E-mail: devilu@cooperation.gov.fr*

Development aid reform

The new Directorate-General for international cooperation and development will begin functioning on 1 January 1999. It will comprise five directorates: development and technical cooperation; cultural cooperation and the French language; scientific, university and research cooperation; audiovisual and communications engineering; strategy, programming and evaluation.

AdP Day

The professional association for urban development and cooperation has organized its annual seminar on 4 September 1998 at the Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées, on the subject: «Efficiency of Urban Services».

→ Contacts: *ISTED «Villes en Développement» tel. 33 (0)1 40 81 15 65, fax: 33 (0)1 40 81 15 99.*

Leading World Exporters' Club

The leading world exporters' leaders' club, «Club des N° 1 mondiaux français à l'exportation», is a structure whose role is to group together leading French companies, big and small, on the world export market. It represents 168 companies and 1,200,000 employees, with a turnover of 720 billion francs.

→ Contact: *tel. 33 (0)1 42 92 56 00, fax: 33 (0)1 42 92 56 01*

N-AERUS Network - Association of European Researchers on Urbanization in the South

N-AERUS was created in 1996 in Brussels to mobilize and develop individual and institutional research and training capacities on urban issues in countries of the South. The network now groups more than 100 researchers from 35 institutions in eight countries of Europe.

Membership of N-AERUS is free of charge and open to all researchers, teachers and specialists with expert knowledge of urban issues in the countries of the South, willing to contribute actively to exchanges and information and to joint discussion.

In May 1998, N-AERUS received an appropriation from the European Science Foundation to support a three-year research programme on the subject of «Innovative practices and new urban management concepts in developing countries: a European contribution».

Three European seminars, open to researchers and professionals from the countries of the South, will be organized on the following subjects:

- 1999: Concepts and paradigms of urban management in the context of developing countries»
- 2000: «Sustainable urban development. Interaction between technical innovation and social change»
- 2001: «What responses to informality and illegality in human settlements?».

The first seminar will be held in Venice from 25 to 27 February 1999.

E-mail: naerus@araxp.polito.it

<http://obelix.polito.it/forum/n-aerus>

For information on the European Science Foundation seminars

→ Contact: *Alain Durand-Lasserve; E-mail: adl@dr15.cnrs.fr*

The city and sustainable development

For the assignment entrusted by the prime minister to Mrs Laurence Tubiana on France's international policy on sustainable development, a working group on urban affairs is beginning work based on the joint experience of public and private partners during their preparation of the HABITAT 2 conference.

→ Contact: *Chantal Barbieux, ISTEED, 1 bis avenue de Villars, 75007 Paris, France, tel. 33 (0)1 44 18 63 91, fax: 33 (0)1 45 55 72 82, E-mail: cbarbieux@isted.3ct.com*

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