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**DECENTRALIZATION AND POVERTY REDUCTION:  
AFRICA AND ASIA EXPERIENCE**

**DECENTRALISATION ET REDUCTION DE LA  
PAUVRETÉ: EXPERIENCES DES PAYS AFRICAINS  
ET ASIATIQUES**

**Dakar, Senegal, 1-2 July 2003**



**United Nations**

**Department of Economic and Social Affairs**  
Division for Public Administration and Development Management

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## NOTE

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACAH	Advocacy Committee Against Hunger in Nigeria
ADB	African Development Bank
AGF-V	Fifth African Governance Forum
ARC	Agrarian Reform Community
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CARERE	Cambodian Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration Programme
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CHS	Commission on Human Security
COPE	Community Organization for the Philippine Enterprise
COPODIN	Coalition for Popular Development Initiatives
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DA	Department of Agriculture
DACF	District Assembly Common Fund
DAR	Department of Agrarian Reforms
DDR	Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration
DEC	District Education Committee
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DPADM	Division for Public Administration and Development Management
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographical Information System
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LDF	Local Development Fund
LGMC	Local Government Monitoring Committee
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NCC	National Coordination Committee
NCHUDB	Naga City Housing and Urban Development Board
NEM	New Economic Mechanism
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NHRCM	National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia
NPEP	National Poverty Eradication Programme
OAU/AU	Organization of African Unity/African Union
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPP	Orangi Pilot Project
PDDP	Participatory District Development Programme
PERFORM	Nigerian Poverty Eradication Forum
PO	People's Organization
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
REDP	Rural Energy Development Programme
SACEP	South Asia Centre for Policy Studies
SCC	State Coordination Committee
SPEC	State Poverty Eradication Council

TNA	Training Needs Assessment
UN	United Nations
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCRD	United Nations Centre for Regional Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPAO	Urban Poor Affairs Office
VDCs	Village Development Committees
W3P	Women's Political Participation Project
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
ACDI	Agence Canadienne de Développement International
AGEDECOL	Agence pour le Développement Local
AMB	Association des Municipalités du Burkina
ACODEP	Appui aux Collectivités Décentralisées pour un Développement Participatif
AV	Associations Villageoises
AF	Associations Féminines
APREL	Appui au Programme de Relance des Economies Locales
CCTP	Cadres de Concertation Technique Provinciale
CD	Comité de Développement
CECI	Centre Canadien d'Etude pour la Coopération Internationale
CES	Conseil économique et social
CFA	Franc CFA
CLS	Comité Locaux de Suivi
CND	Commission Nationale de Décentralisation
CNDH	Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme
CPF	Centres de Promotion Féminine
CSLP	Cadre Stratégique de Lutte Contre la Pauvreté
CRD	Communauté Rurale de Développement
CTS	Commissions Thématiques Spécialisées
CVGT	Commission Villageoise de Gestion des Terroirs
DAES	Département des Affaires Economiques et Sociales
DHD	Développement Humain Durable
DSRP	Document de Stratégie de Réduction de la Pauvreté
DAO	Dossiers d'Appel d'Offres
ECVR	Enquête sur les conditions de vie en milieu rural
EMP	Equipe Mobile Pluridisciplinaire
ESAM	Enquête Sénégalaise auprès des Ménages
FECL	Fonds d'Equipement des Collectivités Locales
FDL	Fonds de Développement Local
FIL	Fonds d'Investissement Local
FMI	Fonds Monétaire International
FODECOM	Fonds de Développement des Communes
FODECOL	Fonds de Développement des Collectivités Locales
HCR	Haut Commissariat aux Réfugiés
GIE	Groupements d'Intérêt Economique
GRN	Gestion des Ressources Naturelles
GTZ	Agence de Coopération Allemande
IDH	Indicateur de Développement Humain
IDA	International Development Association

IMDL	Impôt Minimum pour le Développement Local
LIPDHD	Lettre d'Intention de Politique de Développement Humain Durable
LPDRD	Lettre de Développement Rural Décentralisé
PAC	Programme d'Appui aux Communes
PACV	Programme d'Appui aux Communautés Villageoises
PADDEL	Projet d'Appui à la Décentralisation et au Développement Local
PADHD	Programme d'Appui au Développement Humain Durable
PADMIR	Projet d'Appui à la Décentralisation en Milieu Rural
PAI	Plan d'aménagement du terroir
PAIB	Programme d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base
PAMDRE	Plan d'Action du Ministère du Développement Rural et de l'Environnement
PARC	Programme d'Appui et de Renforcement des Collectivités Décentralisées
PDL	Projets de Développement Local
PLD	Plans Locaux de Développement
PLP	Programme de Lutte contre la Pauvreté
PELCP	Programme Elargi de Lutte contre la Pauvreté
PEV/SSP/ME	Programme Elargi de Vaccination, Soins de Santé Primaire et Médicaments
PMI/PME	Petites et Moyennes Entreprises
PMR-CD	Projet de Micro-réalisations et de Coopération Décentralisée
PNB	Produit National Brut
PNGT	Programme National de Gestion des Terroirs
PNDC	Plan National de Développement Communautaire
PNUD	Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement
PNIR	Programme National d'Infrastructures Rurales
PREEL	Programme de Relance des Economies Locales
PPTTE	Pays Pauvres Lourdemment Endettés
MATD	Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et de la Décentralisation
MATDB	Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et du Développement à la Base
MOST	Programme « Management of social transformations » de l'UNESCO
OCB	Organisations Communautaires de Base
OPSC	Organisations de la Société Civile
OP	Organisations Paysannes
QUID	Questionnaire Unifié des Indicateurs de Développement
RENLAC	Réseau National Anti-corruption à l'initiative de la société civile
SED	Secrétariat d'Etat à la Décentralisation
TOD	Textes d'Orientation de la Décentralisation
UCD	Unité Communautaire de Développement
UNICEF	Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'Enfance
USAID	Agence Américaine pour l'Aide au Développement

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## FOREWORD

Poverty alleviation is central to the Millennium Development Goals, MDGs, and to the aspirations of developing countries, especially in Africa. Increasingly, the contribution of public administration to this process is acknowledged both by the UN intergovernmental processes, including the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, and by Member countries. Key to this contribution is the building of capacities of the individual countries, the sharing of experiences among them, and the deepening of an appreciation of the commonality of purpose between different regions and subregions. This publication is the outcome of a two-day workshop on Poverty Alleviation through Decentralization for ten West African countries, organized jointly by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Government of Senegal in July 2003. In preparation for this workshop, considerable effort was made by the individual countries and by the organizers to ensure that all relevant stakeholders, including government and civil society, became effective participants and owners of the process.

The innovative nature of the workshop focused on three areas:

First, the wide representation it sought and solicited from the participating countries, which included government as well as civil society representatives. The participating countries, both English and French-speaking, offered a wide spectrum of experience and progress towards the MDGs;

Second, the sharing of country experiences and the blending of research findings with the practical experience of the participants; and

Third, by bringing the Asia experience to the workshop, the South-South cooperation created an excellent synergy for lessons learned.

What is clearly demonstrated in the papers presented at the workshop is both the unevenness of the process for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and the windows of opportunity that exist through effective partnerships by governments and civil society and by learning from one another. This conclusion was reaffirmed by the Asian experience where the interim performance towards the MDGs is more positive than that of sub-Saharan Africa, due in part to the strength and contribution of civil society organizations and the capacities of governments to lead and to partner. As the workshop demonstrated, knowledge itself is increasingly becoming global, but its application and nurturing is achieved locally, especially in the area of poverty reduction and decentralization.

UNDESA, and in particular the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, is honoured to have been part of such a workshop whose findings and lessons are opportune and immediately relevant to the current state of progress of the MDGs and to the crucial role that Governments and civil society can jointly play in achieving these goals.

Guido Bertucci  
Director  
Division for Public Administration and Development Management  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs

## PREFACE

This report is based on the proceedings of an international workshop on “Poverty Alleviation through Decentralization” held in Dakar, Senegal in July 2003. The event was organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Public Administration and Development Management (UNDESA/DPADM), in partnership with the Ministry of Economics and Finance of Senegal. The focus of design was to provide training and experience-sharing for participants from West African countries (both Francophone and Anglophone). Twenty-eight participants attended from government agencies and non-governmental organizations of eight countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone. Two invited countries, Liberia and Nigeria, were not able to attend – though papers from Nigeria were received and presented at the workshop.

The genesis of the initiative was the realization that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa requires a great deal of rethinking and the re-orientation of development strategies and processes, and a major shift in focus to an improved and decentralized governance. A main purpose of the workshop was to share the experience of poverty alleviation, through decentralization and improved governance, between Asia and Africa. Specifically, the overall objectives were to create an environment of lessons to be learned from each other and also to inform the participants on Asian experiences regarding poverty alleviation and decentralization.

To achieve these objectives, the workshop was organized in six sessions. The opening session included messages from the Ministry of Economics and Finance of Senegal, the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme in Senegal, and the Socio-economic Governance and Management Branch of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management of UNDESA. These messages encouraged participants to gather a holistic view of relationships between decentralization and poverty reduction. The middle sessions dealt with three key papers and nine country-specific contributions. Each presentation was followed by substantive discussions, which led to the formulation in the final session of practical recommendations.

Based on the proceedings, this report has been prepared as follows. At the outset, the summary of findings encapsulates both the content and the organization of the workshop. Chapter I, the Overview, raises key issues in decentralization in West Africa, draws lessons from the Asian experience of decentralization and civil society initiatives in the area of poverty alleviation, identifies factors impeding the growth of civil society in Africa and summarizes key recommendations emanating from the workshop. Chapters 2 and 3 consist of the papers presented at the workshop. The first paper, “Human Security and Decentralized Planning: the Training Experience of Asia”, focuses on the concept of human security and the implications of decentralization, the key elements of the United Nations Centre for Regional Development’s (UNCRD’s) training programmes for human security and examples of projects which contribute to the implementation of the MDGs. The second paper on “The Role of Civil Society in Decentralized Governance for Poverty Reduction: The Experience of West Africa” reviews the decentralization experience in selected African countries and emphasizes the need for greater synergy and coordination between various national and regional initiatives undertaken to meet the MDGs. Country perspectives of the Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone are presented in Annex 1. The part of the report focusing on French-speaking countries consists of two chapters which review the role of community-based organizations in poverty reduction within the context

of decentralization. Chapter 4, the Overview, focuses on the linkage between decentralization and community-driven development (CDD). It assesses the impact of selected experiences in West Africa and identifies key elements that allow community-driven development and decentralized governance to better contribute to poverty reduction. Chapter 5 presents three case studies on how CDD is currently used in the framework of decentralization in order to reduce poverty. Country experiences of Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Senegal are presented in Annex 2.

From the participants' evaluations it became evident that the workshop was well received, which is a tribute to its authors, participants and organizers. I wish to acknowledge the support of the Ministry of Economics and Finance of Senegal in organizing the workshop. Special thanks is due to them for taking keen interest in the workshop and providing logistical as well as substantive support. Thanks are also due to the Governments and participating delegates of Benin, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone for not only presenting the country papers but also making valuable contributions to the workshop discussions. I also thank Nigeria for contributing the country papers.

Rich workshop discussions would not have been possible without the insightful and stimulating lead papers presented by Devyani Mani, Claude Ouatarra and Cornelius Adablah. The initial concept, including the technical note, organization of the workshop, and supervision of consultants, was carried out by Messrs Olympios Katsiaouni and Idrissa Diagne, Interregional Advisers, DESA. Their contribution was greatly valued, and is gratefully acknowledged. Mr. Luis Prugue, the Technical Cooperation Assistant, DESA, supported all the logistical and administrative matters required for a successful workshop. Finally, preparation of this report was a major undertaking. I appreciate the inputs of Aisha Ghaus-Pasha for writing the Overview and editing the English part, and Moncef Kouidhi for writing the Overview and editing the French part of the report.

M. Adil Khan  
Chief  
Socio-economic Governance Management Branch, DPADM/DESA

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

## 1. Background

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Public Administration and Development Management (UNDESA/DPADM), in partnership with the Ministry of Economics and Finance of Senegal, organized an international workshop on “Poverty Alleviation through Decentralization and Social Inclusion: Exchange of Experience with West Africa”, in Dakar, Senegal (1 – 2 July 2003). The workshop was designed to provide training and to share the experience of poverty alleviation, through decentralization and improved governance, between Asia and Africa.

## 2. Workshop Objectives

The objective of the workshop was to share the experience of poverty alleviation, through decentralization and improved governance, both within the West African countries and between West Africa and Asia. In more detail, the objectives were twofold:

- a) To inform selected African countries of developments and experience on the subject of poverty alleviation and decentralization in Asia; and
- b) To enable participants from selected African countries to share their own experiences and progress regarding poverty and decentralized or local governance, and contrast this to the Asian models.

## 3. Workshop Organization and Process

Ten countries were invited to participate in the workshop, through representatives of civil society and government: Benin, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal (host country) and Sierra Leone. Two invited countries (Liberia and Nigeria) were not able to attend the workshop.

In total, there were twenty-eight participants: government officials (9), Civil Society Organizations (12), United Nations officials, including from UNDESA and UNDP (7). UNDESA funded eighteen participants from Development Account resources. The Government of Senegal provided logistical support, including conference rooms, translation facilities, secretariat, photocopies and local hospitality. The Senegalese Government also provided technical support by hiring a national consultant on decentralization.

The two-day programme was introduced by a substantive presentation by UNDESA. In the opening session, M. Adil Khan, Chief of the Socio-economic Governance Management Branch of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, DESA, made the substantive presentation, setting the parameters of the activities and debate. He introduced the themes of the workshop, its participants and contents, highlighted the link between the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) poverty targets, governance and decentralization, focused on the imperatives of the MDGs, decentralization and public administration and shed light on how the UN can assist in these areas. The themes of the workshop included, among others, good governance through decentralization and social inclusion, and an enabling institutional environment that includes among its key components and attributes encouragement of a participatory and decentralized form of governance, an effective and productive interaction

between civil society and public institutions (engaged governance) and capacity-building. According to Mr. Khan, the MDGs are a complex package of goals and targets requiring a great deal of harmonization, reorganization and reorientation of strategies, tools and processes. Decentralization offers a means for a bottom-up approach that enhances participation and mobilization of national resources and helps accountability and transparency to ensure cost effectiveness, which is essential for tackling the issue of poverty.

During the workshop, the following key papers were presented:

- a) Human security and decentralized planning: the training experience of Asia;
- b) The role of civil society in decentralized governance for poverty reduction: the experience in English-speaking West African countries;
- c) Community-driven development and decentralization: the experience in French-speaking West African countries; and
- d) Presentation by national delegations of their experiences on decentralization and poverty reduction.

During the plenary sessions, the discussions were focused on the following points:

- a) Background of decentralization;
- b) History of decentralization in different countries;
- c) Public sector and civil society partnership at national and subnational levels;
- d) Importance of vertical and horizontal coordination within the public sector;
- e) Constraints for full implementation of decentralized processes;
- f) Introduction of varieties of decentralization methodologies for post-conflict rehabilitation and social inclusion, though the actual impacts of these interventions are yet to be fully ascertained;
- g) Parallel systems of community-based structures and decentralization by governments;
- h) Civil society and communities' involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of delivery of public services;
- i) Formulation of PRSPs and their relationships to civil society/government and communities/government;
- j) Actions programme implications at the national, regional and international levels; and
- k) Capacity-building needs.

#### **4. Group Discussions**

Based on the outcomes of the plenary sessions, two working groups were formed. Discussions were based on the following issues:

- a) Capacity-building needs assessment;
- b) Analytical and diagnostic studies and research, aimed at better understanding the decentralization process and its role in poverty reduction and social inclusion, especially in post-conflict situations;
- c) The role of civil society (including NGOs, local communities and the private sector) in decentralized processes; and
- d) The concept of engaged governance and its implications for decentralization, policy dialoguing, pro-poor mainstreaming policy, etc.

The working groups proposed measures that are important for understanding the linkages between decentralization, poverty reduction, and social inclusion, as well as the articulation of

initiatives that are important for deepening the process. They also discussed the introduction of the engaged governance process at the policy level. Finally, they brought the findings and proposals for an action plan to the plenary session.

## **5. Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made:

- a) Undertake researches and studies with a view to: (i) implement the decentralization process (organization, government commitment, role of the main actors, including civil society and local communities); (ii) draw lessons learned from the first generation of the decentralization process; and (iii) define the role of decentralization in preparing and implementing PRSPs;
- b) Improve human resources at the local level by (i) linking deconcentration and decentralization; and (ii) building local institutions capacities. In this regard, UNCRD can play an important role;
- c) Revitalize local economies by (i) undertaking studies aimed at reforming the local tax system; (ii) transferring more resources to local authorities in order to build public infrastructures and attract private investment; and (iii) developing partnerships with private sector organizations;
- d) Institutionalize the participatory process in order to empower local communities and allow Civil Society Organizations to influence public policies; and
- e) Develop activities and research with the aim of strengthening Civil Society Organizations (including institutional and organizational aspects, capacity-building, networking, and proactive agenda, especially in areas of engaged governance).

## **6. Immediate Outputs**

The following immediate outputs were produced:

- a) The documentation and other contributions made by both the presenters and the participants;
- b) A better sense about decentralization, civil society and prospects for the future in West Africa, including the concept of engaged governance; and
- c) The network already established both with the participants and with their organizations.

## **7. Workshop Evaluation**

At the end of the workshop, a questionnaire was given to participants in order to learn their perceptions about the substantive and administrative organization of the workshop. The analysis of the questionnaire shows:

- a) More than 90% of the participants were between satisfied to very satisfied with the hotel accommodation, though some participants said that they were not fully informed regarding administrative issues (DSA, tickets, venue), hotel arrangements and prices;
- b) Most of the participants (95%) thought that the workshop was well balanced between presentations and discussions; and
- c) The participants were very positive about the substantive parts of the workshop. One hundred per cent said that the presentations were between very relevant and useful to relevant and useful. The group discussions were also rated as very successful.

## **8. Follow-up**

DESA envisages the following steps for follow-up to the Recommendations:

- a) Consider how the Asian Civil Society initiatives on engaged governance can be introduced in the context of West Africa and what modifications or changes may be needed to adapt these initiatives (such as SACEPS);
- b) Create a roster of the participants for future reference regarding issues of decentralization, civil society and possible subregional initiatives; and
- c) Maintain professional links with participants, especially in view of further work on engaged governance and the MDGs.

# CHAPTER I OVERVIEW<sup>1</sup>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This overview is based essentially on the papers and discussions at the workshop, without confining itself to a mere recapitulation of the proceedings. The key papers presented by UNCRD and the English-speaking countries at the workshop included:

- a) “Human Security and Decentralized Planning: The Training Experience of Asia” by Devyani Mani.
- b) “The Role of Civil Society in Decentralized Governance for Poverty Reduction: The Experience in West Africa”, by Cornelius Adablah.
- c) Country Perspectives were presented on the following:
  - Decentralization as a Means to Improve Governance and Poverty Reduction: Experience from Ghana, by George Gyan-Baffour.
  - Decentralization and Civil Society Approaches as a Means of Improving Governance and Poverty Reduction: The Gambia Experience, by Kemo Conteh and Sheikh E.T. Lewis.
  - Sierra Leone’s Experience with Decentralization as a Means to Improve Governance and Combat Poverty, by Sao-Kpato Max-Kyne and Abu Brima.
  - Poverty and Social Inclusion in Nigeria, by Makangola Olaseinde Arigbede.
  - Improved Governance and its Contribution to Combating Poverty: Nigerian Experience of Decentralization, by Abdullahi Aliyu.

Based on the above papers and discussions in the plenary and working groups, the Overview chapter aims to: first, define decentralization, trace the relationship between decentralization and poverty alleviation, and discuss the imperatives of decentralization, particularly in post-conflict crisis situations; second, review the Asian experience of decentralization with the view to identify success stories and learn from such initiatives; third, review decentralization efforts in Africa, particularly the workshop countries, and identify their capacity enhancement needs; fourth, to identify potential civil society responses to the problem of poverty, identify good practices from the Asian experience and draw lessons which can benefit development policy makers and practitioners in Africa; fifth, discuss civil society in Africa, highlight impeding factors and the potential role it can play in the poverty reduction strategy; and finally, to summarize challenges and workshop recommendations.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews various forms of decentralization, and attempts to address the crucial question of the link between poverty alleviation and decentralization. Major constraints to decentralization, particularly in a post-crisis situation, are identified. Section 3 discusses the trends and forms of decentralization in Asia, identifying success stories. Section 4 discusses the experience of decentralization in West Africa, and in particular it describes the capacity enhancement needs. The role of civil society in tackling the problem of poverty and the experience of Asia, highlighting good practices, is presented in Section 5, while Section 6 presents a cursory review of civil society in Africa, summarizing its role in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Finally, Section 7 summarizes major challenges and recommendations emanating from the workshop.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was prepared by Aisha Ghaus-Pasha. The author would like to thank Olympios Katsiaouni and Idrissa Diagne for their valuable comments.



## 2. DECENTRALIZATION AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

The concept of decentralization has evolved overtime and has acquired several shades of meaning. “Classic” decentralization, as Mawhood and Davey (1980) described it and which was based on the principle described in Box 1.1, has rarely taken place. Instead, regimes in developing countries modified the term to fit different types of administrative setups. According to the Africa Governance Forum (V) Concept Paper (2002), decentralization is a gradual process and is expected to enhance the opportunities for participation by placing more power and resources at a closer, more familiar, more easily influenced level of government. In an environment with poor traditions of citizens’ participation, therefore, decentralization is perceived to be an important first step in creating opportunities for citizen-state interaction.

Broadly speaking, consensus has emerged that decentralization can take the form of either devolution, deconcentration, delegation, or transfer/privatization/partnership as follows:

*Devolution* is the closest to ‘classic’ decentralization. It implies that responsibilities and resources are transferred to local governments with a high degree of autonomy to decide how to use the resources.

*Deconcentration* refers to institutional changes that shift the authority to make certain types of decisions from the centre to dispersed locations. In this arrangement, staff and resources are transferred from headquarters to lower units of administration, under officers who could take operational decisions without reference to the headquarters.

*Delegation* refers to transfer of authority to public corporations or semi-autonomous bodies or public enterprises. The central government sets the objective of the delegated agencies and transfers resources to them on the basis of approved plans and budgets. However, these agencies have a fair degree of autonomy in performing their functions and may even have autonomous revenue sources.

*Transfer/Privatization/Partnership*, a relatively new phenomenon, refers to transfer of responsibility for public functions to voluntary organizations or private enterprises. The objective is to mobilize the capacity and initiatives of civil society organizations working for social and economic development.

Of the four forms of decentralization described above, deconcentration amounts to the least amount of transfer of power to local people. Delegation also does not by itself transfer power to the locals, although the delegated agencies have the scope for involving local people in their decision-making process. It is the two other forms, namely devolution and privatization, that provide the largest scope for developing a genuine local-level governance based on popular participation. Overall, the general finding of the workshop is that in Africa and Asia,

<b>BOX 1.1</b> <b>“CLASSIC DECENTRALIZATION”</b>
According to Mawhood and Davey (1980), “classic” decentralization is based on the following five principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Local authorities should be institutionally separated from central government and assume responsibility for a significant range of local services (primary education, clinics and preventive health services, community development and secondary roads being the most common).</li><li>▪ These authorities should have their own funds and budgets and should raise a substantial part of their revenue through local direct taxation.</li><li>▪ Local authorities should employ their own staff, although in the initial stage the regular civil service staff could be employed temporarily.</li><li>▪ Councils, predominantly composed of popularly elected representatives, would govern the authorities internally.</li><li>▪ Government administrators would withdraw from an executive to an advisory and supervisory role in relation to local government.</li></ul>

decentralization has, to different degrees by and large, taken the form of deconcentration and delegation (Katsiaouni, 2003).

## **2.1 Benefits of Decentralization**

Why decentralize? How does decentralization contribute to the process of poverty reduction? Answers to these questions are crucial to the subject of the workshop. Many believe that decentralization is more conducive to good governance, which is emerging as a key focal point, both for economic growth and as a means of achieving the MDGs, especially that relating to poverty reduction, as pointed out by Khan (2003)<sup>2</sup>. Participation, transparency, accountability, human rights and equity, the rule of law, empowering and enabling and containment of corruption are all important attributes of good governance. Decentralization increases popular participation in decision-making because it brings government closer to people, making it more accessible and knowledgeable about local conditions and more responsive to people's demands. Central governments, located far away and preoccupied mostly with national and regional issues, fall short of adequately and efficiently providing services essentially local in nature. According to Adablah (2003) and Mani (2003), the case for decentralization can, in fact, be made on a number of grounds as follows:

- a) Local authorities tend to act more in line with local preferences and conditions, and their response to local needs is more expeditious. Decentralization provides opportunities to marginalized segments, such as women, minorities, etc., to participate at the local level, enabling a more sensitive approach to policy formulation and implementation.
- b) Because decentralization tends to enhance transparency and accountability, the amount of money wrongfully diverted away from development often declines. The Human Development Report (2003) reports that in 55 countries, decentralization of government spending was closely associated with lower corruption among bureaucrats and reduced rent-seeking by private parties, leaving more money to spend on basic services for poor people.
- c) Decentralization increases effectiveness in service delivery, such as reducing absenteeism among government employees, for example, in local schools and health clinics because elected officials receive complaints from their constituents and can improve discipline.
- d) Decentralization provides bureaucrats with early warnings of potential disasters, enabling quick remedial action.
- e) Decentralization makes development projects more sustainable and cost effective because local people are more likely to be involved in their design, execution, and monitoring.
- f) Decentralization encourages communities to find solutions to their everyday problems, yielding innovative ideas, which are more attuned to local conditions.
- g) Decentralization provides opportunities for more people, including the underrepresented groups (like women, poor, minorities) to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

In summary, because of a greater degree of accountability, responsiveness and participation, effective decentralization can make a big difference by making the provision of local (social and economic) services more efficient, equitable, sustainable and cost-effective. Through community participation in decision-making, planning, implementation and monitoring and backed by appropriate institutions and resources, it can go a long way in improving the quality of life, particularly of the poorer and marginalized segments of population, thereby alleviating poverty.

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<sup>2</sup> Power Point presentation to the workshop.

## 2.2 Constraints of Decentralization

Does decentralization always work? Unfortunately the answer is no. For the process of decentralization to be complete and for it to be successful, there are certain preconditions, which may not exist in a country at a given time. According to the Human Development Report (2003), these prerequisites include:

- a) Effective state capacity;
- b) Empowered, committed and competent local authorities; and
- c) Engaged, informed and organized citizens and civil societies.

Decentralization requires coordination between levels of government and more regulation – not less – to ensure basic transparency, accountability and representation. Also, the state has to raise adequate fiscal resources to support decentralization. For the above to be achieved, effective state capacity is necessary. Furthermore, to ensure that decentralization effort is not hijacked by the local elites, and there is broad-based participation, both a strong state and a mobilized civil society is required.

As highlighted by Mani (2003), decentralization is influenced by a country's size, population, and its political and institutional inheritance and diversity. These attributes have an important effect on the design and modalities of decentralization, which are crucial for its success. Appropriateness of functions to be decentralized, adequacy of fiscal resources to be transferred to the subnational government, efficacy of administrative and legal setups and sufficiency of technical/skilled personnel at all levels of government are important ingredients for successful decentralization.

Politicians have more often than not used the slogan of decentralization as rhetoric to strengthen their own power base rather than improve governance. In practice, the lack of willingness of the centre to relinquish or share power has been a major impediment to effective decentralization (Katsiaouni, 2003). In fact, the inability to make the transition to a people-centred governance, with its commensurate implications for participation and empowerment, is perhaps a bigger bottleneck in the process of decentralization than legislative changes, which in their own right are also crucial.

Finally, lack of public awareness and an absence of a culture of participation and a weak “voice” of particularly the poor and marginalized sections of population has inhibited the development of: first, a two-way accountability system whereby local

### BOX 1.2 ENGAGED GOVERNANCE

‘Engaged Governance’ is both a process and a form that attempts to link social capital into the development management processes of a country. This form of management goes beyond the realm of public administration and other formal institutions and links itself to civil society organizations to help mainstream citizen or community inputs into the process of policy formulation. Though engaged governance is an emerging concept, there are examples where it has been successfully implemented. For example, in South Africa, citizens’ groups actively participate in budgeting and fiscal policy processes. In Australia, the State Government of Queensland has established an Engaged Government Unit within the Premier’s Department to ensure the community’s inputs into policy deliberations. The concept is finding support in other developing countries also.

DESA supported the South Asia Centre for Policy Studies (SACEP) – a civil society network in South Asia – in drafting and implementing the South Asian Citizens’ Social Charter. It is expected to strengthen the dialoguing process between citizens and governments and help introduce the concept of ‘engaged governance’ as a regular method in development management. Also, DESA has recently secured finances to implement a project in the Gambia that focuses on water resources and alternative energy supplies for poverty alleviation. The strength of the project is that it relies considerably on the social capital found in rural communities, and that it combines both commercial and non-commercial activities whose content and combination will be based on community choice and responsibility.

**Source:** Katsiaouni (2003)

governments are not only supervised by an effective state government from the above but also a strong civil society from below; and second, a local government system which is responsive to the needs of all sections of populations, particularly the poor and the marginalized. The decision-making process is dominated by local elites and government functionaries with little, if any, participation by the masses. As Katsiaouni (2003) puts it, “a process for participation does not ipso facto lead to empowerment, and to be consulted does not mean that one’s voice had weight in decisions taken”. Khan (2003) and Katsiaouni (2003) argue that one way of achieving this is through “engaged governance” whereby an attempt is made, through new forms of collaboration between citizens’ groups and the public sector, to link social capital into the development management process of a country (see Box 1.2).

### **2.3 Decentralization in Post-Conflict Situations**

Turning to decentralization in post-conflict situations, which characterize many African countries and which emerged as an area of concern in the workshop deliberations, the initial conditions are generally as follows:

- a) Prior ceasefire and peace negotiations generally tend to avoid addressing root causes of conflict, like the underlying inequities, and rely more on political deals among the leaders of militias and armies.
- b) The primary characteristic of post-conflict countries is the gap in institutional capacity as well as extreme insecurity manifested in physical, psychological and economic terms.
- c) The fundamental task in transition from war to peace is to create or recreate a functioning government and an accountable political order, including the demilitarization of politics.

Constraints to moving beyond these initial conditions include the following:

- a) Territorial fragmentation of civil wars means that parties will have power bases in some regions but not in others, as such there is danger of *de facto* loss of central control in some parts of the country and possibility of secession.
- b) Severe scarcity of human resources, due to loss of lives in conflict and brain drain of professionals and inability of government, at all levels, to compete with salaries and benefits given by international organizations engaged in relief or reconstruction work.
- c) Weak fiscal capacity in post-conflict situations and the reluctance of central governments to transfer scarce resources to the local level.
- d) Recognition of the need for a strong central authority for security reasons and the enforcement of law and order, basically establishing the ‘writ’ of government. Thus, in post-conflict situations there is a danger that a programme of decentralization may further weaken an already weak government and work against the restoration of national unity.
- e) The presence of technical difficulties such as destruction of old records, lack of primary data and absence of detailed working procedures and guidelines, may lead to institutional ‘chaos’ at the local level.

Nevertheless, the imperatives for decentralization in post-conflict situations are highlighted by, first, the fact that the vital nexus in post-conflict peace-building is the complex challenge posed by the need for demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR). For successful DDR, communities must be involved at the local level and creation of jobs should be the focus. Also, a true reconciliation process to improve the environment for peace can only be conducted at the local level, perhaps better by the traditional local leaders, like heads of clans or tribes, than by leaders of military factions.

Second, the rationale for local governance approach to post-conflict recovery is structured around two dimensions – the political and the developmental. The state cannot be reconstructed without resolving centre-local relations. Local governments provide a powerful mechanism to demilitarize politics. Also, the new leaders who emerge in the post-conflict situation may be aware that decentralization policies can legitimize them, their parties or the state at the local level.

Third, it is perhaps best to begin at the local level, rather than wait for centrally driven politics. The learning by doing approach of the Cambodian Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration (CARERE) programme is perhaps an example of best practice. In the initial stages, building capacity and processes is as important, not just the implementation of projects relating to delivery of services. Unlike Cambodia, however, there was a strong state in Indonesia, and conflict was complex involving ethnicity, religion and culture. The decentralization programme introduced in 1997 failed to create legitimate local institutions, which were not very representative in character or in process.

Fourth, there is the danger that decentralization will lead to an effective state capture of ‘war lords’, whose authority has increased in the power vacuum in the post-conflict period as, for example, in Afghanistan. Therefore, there is a need for local governments to either co-opt or replace these local leaders.

#### **2.4 Imperative for Decentralization in Africa**

What are the imperatives for decentralization in Africa, where most of the important prerequisites for successful decentralization, discussed earlier, are almost non-existent or in very early stages of development and where some countries are emerging or have just emerged from conflict/crisis?

There are a number of reasons why African leadership is promoting decentralization as pointed out in the country papers by Max-Kyne and Brima and Conteh and Lewis (Annex 1). For a long time, worsening poverty levels in Africa were explained in terms of poor economic performance. Emerging evidence, however, shows that economic growth alone is not sufficient to bring about, in a sustainable way, the needed poverty reduction. In fact, for some African countries, GDP growth has come hand in hand with worsening social indicators, validating an established fact that while economic growth is important for poverty alleviation, particularly in the medium and long term, it definitely is not sufficient. In the African context, the lack of responsiveness of poverty to the economic stimulus is attributed in part to problems with governance, especially at the local level.

In pro-poor interventions, one of the primary hurdles is how to effectively target the poor (Aliyu, Annex 1). Proper targeting has generally proved to be elusive. The other challenge is how best to ensure that there is local ownership of the interventions. These considerations bring to the fore the issues of local governance. One of the lessons from past failures of poverty-focused interventions is the importance of avoiding a ‘top down’ approach to project design and implementation, as this invariably results in ineffectiveness of the interventions.

Besides, as Adablah (2003) highlights, concerns regarding central administrative capacity, fiscal constraints and the limited accountability at all levels of government have led African leaders to place increased emphasis on the importance of decentralization and developing local governance capacities. The other supporting argument for decentralization is the need for improved government effectiveness in the delivery of goods and services and revenue collection. Also,

external pressure of funding agencies like the World Bank, the UN, etc., have been important motivations for decentralization in many countries.

Furthermore, a good number of African countries see decentralization as a solution not only to the enhancement of the state's capacity to accelerate local development but also as a way to enhance the poor's voice and power in the continuing fight against poverty, as emphasized by Arigbede, Max-Kyne and Brima and Gyan-Baffour (Annex 1). On the political side, decentralization has been opted for as a solution to political challenges that seem to threaten national cohesion. Countries with a history of tensions (linguistic, ethnic/tribal, religious) have often found the federal approach to national governance as most suitable. Central politicians also tend to support decentralization to appeal to voters and win elections as a means to undercut the power base of rivals.

However, despite the political and developmental motivations, decentralization is perhaps much more of a challenge in Africa than elsewhere in the world. It is, therefore, important that there is consensus on the decentralization policy, which is not centrally or donor driven, and which has a holistic framework, focusing on all levels of government and civil society simultaneously. It should be based on improving the enabling environment and building capacities and not on projects. The need for immediate success and quick results can lead to quick fixes, which are unsustainable. As such, it is important that decentralization is viewed in a long-term perspective. African leadership will have to demonstrate patience, and uninterrupted and determined commitment for the successful implementation of decentralization in the continent.

### **3. THE ASIAN EXPERIENCE OF DECENTRALIZATION**

#### **3.1 Trends**

There has been a progressive and sweeping wave of decentralization in Asia during the last two decades. A cursory review of this process reveals that decentralization reforms have been introduced in countries ruled by a variety of regimes, ranging from military dictatorships, authoritarian presidencies and monarchies through single-party or dominant-party systems to multi-party competitive democracies. It is also apparent that different forms of decentralization appear across most regime types; for example, elected, democratic local governments have been introduced by military regimes, as in Bangladesh in the 1980s and in Pakistan more recently. As opposed to this, technocratic, administrative deconcentration has taken place in otherwise democratic set-ups, as in Indonesia during the late 1990s.

The motivations for decentralization have been diverse and manifold. A movement towards democratic decentralization has been driven by the need to deepen the process of democracy by giving citizens a greater say in matters which impact more on their daily lives. This has been referred to as bringing government to the 'doorsteps' of the people or promoting 'grass roots' democracy. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to the Indian Constitution in 1993, leading to the establishment of the Panchayati Raj (village assembly), can be interpreted as one such move. These village councils were expected to become the implementation agencies for government programmes and include reserved seats for women and the scheduled castes.

As opposed to this, military or single-party governments have opted for elected local governments as a surrogate for broad-based democracy at the national level. This is seen as part of managing the long-term process of transition to a full-fledged democratic system. Multi-party elections for representation in local governments are expected to contribute to nurturing

democratic values and creating future leadership without losing control over the process. This appears to be the motivation behind the local elections at the commune level recently in China and the implementation of an ambitious Devolution Plan by the military government in Pakistan. The latter involves a big move from administrative to political decentralization, with vestiges of colonialism in the form of a powerful bureaucracy at the district level having delegated authority from provincial capitals, being replaced by locally elected representatives.

The fairly common motivation in Asia to decentralize the provision of services, which are predominantly 'local' in character by either state or national governments, is the pragmatic realization that local variations in needs and preferences and associated problems in delivery cannot be effectively appreciated and responded to from central locations. Decentralization offers a way out by giving people an opportunity to manage their own affairs and not hold higher levels of government responsible for any failure. Public administration reforms, especially in transition economies moving from highly centralized systems towards a market-based economy like the Mekong countries (Cambodia and Viet Nam) and Mongolia, have identified central service line ministries as ideal candidates for decentralization. In situations of fiscal squeeze, where the pressure is to reduce the level of public expenditure, there has been a tendency to decentralize or privatize the provision of services on the assumption that greater resources could be mobilized from beneficiaries, thereby reducing the fiscal burden on governments.

In middle-income countries, particularly of the region like the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia, the process of globalization, especially in terms of competition for foreign private investment, has more recently increased the urgency for decentralization and granting of more functions to local jurisdictions, as highlighted by Mani (2003). Local governments are seen as more effective in forming productive partnerships with potential investors by responding more speedily to incremental needs for physical infrastructure and offering appropriate fiscal incentives. This has oriented local governments more towards a developmental role as compared to the traditional political and social functions.

The East Asian financial crisis, which cruelly exposed the vulnerabilities of economies to a high degree of openness to international trade and capital flows, has led to a unique response in Thailand, which favours decentralization. The Government elected in the immediate aftermath of the crisis has laid greater emphasis on indigenous or domestic sources of growth rather than rely, more or less, exclusively on demand in international markets. This has increased the emphasis on increasing the purchasing power of rural populations. Rising local public expenditure has been seen as a quick way of creating a strong programme of fiscal decentralization whereby fiscal transfers have been raised dramatically, such that local governments will account for 35 per cent of public outlays at all levels by 2007. Recent experience, as pointed out by Mani (2003), indicates that in the absence of corresponding enhancements in institutional capacity, there has been greater underutilization or misutilization of resources at the local level.

As some of the Asian countries have experienced internal conflicts, the benefits of decentralization have become more apparent. A pragmatic approach has involved the granting of limited self-governance at the subnational level to counter secessionist tendencies. A prime example of this is Indonesia, a large country characterized by considerable cultural and ethnic diversity. Historically, Indonesia has had a strong central government, with military involvement, to counter any centrifugal tendencies. It has been realized after the transition to a more functional democracy in the late 1990s that greater decentralization is required to manage dissent in different regions. But as highlighted by Mani (2003), the path chosen has been one primarily of administrative rather than political decentralization, which has proved to be inadequate to satisfy demands for autonomy. More recently, talks between the Liberation of Tamil Tigers Eelam, the

dissident ethnic minority, and the Central Government in Sri Lanka have broken down on the extent to which self-governance should be granted in the North and East of the country.

Overall, the Asian experience shows that the political motivations for decentralization have been very diverse and have had a vital bearing on the subsequent outcomes. The basic question is whether political elites at the central level have preferred to co-opt or try to displace existing local elites through this process. At one extreme, we have the example of the state of West Bengal in India. The decentralization reforms carried out by the ruling party in this state, the CPI (M), had a strong ideological motivation. The objective was to replace the semi-feudal elite in rural areas through empowerment and mass support of poor and landless peasants. By sustained commitment to this programme over two decades, the local power structure has been changed and the decentralization outcome appears to be unambiguously positive on both dimensions of responsiveness and social and economic poverty reduction.

More recently, the newly elected district governments in Pakistan which were expected to create new leadership are facing stiff resistance from the provincial bureaucracy and state legislators. In Bangladesh, the decentralized system introduced by the military government of President Ershad in the 1980s was intended to help build the newly created party, the Jatiyo Party, by co-opting the rural land elites and power brokers through generous funding from the central Government. But this system of patronage and corruption eventually collapsed.

The experience of Asia in decentralization reveals a number of impediments and constraints which have retarded successful implementation of this process. By and large, as identified by Mani (2003), political decentralization has been more successful than other forms of decentralization in having an impact on poverty.

### **3.2 Impeding Factors**

The impeding factors include the following:

*Danger of elite capture of local institutions:* This has been a real threat in situations where decentralization has taken place in the presence of a power structure which is highly unequal in character, like the domination by the feudal class in rural areas or the rich, property-owning or trading groups in urban jurisdictions. To avert such capture, legislation on local governments has frequently included reservation quotas for the relatively disenfranchised components of the local community like women, minorities, scheduled castes (in India), peasants and workers. Initially, such seats have generally been occupied largely by surrogates of powerful interest groups, but it has been observed that gradually this has led to a greater participation and assertion of the rights of the underprivileged segment of the population. However, it is essential that higher standards of transparency and accountability are established for monitoring the utilization and distribution of benefits of public expenditure. The reservation of one third of the seats in *Gram Panchayats* to women in India has probably done more to emancipate rural women than any other measure in recent years, and an increasingly large proportion of heads of these village councils today are women.

Social mobilization has also made a contribution to broad-basing the participation in local governments and giving a greater voice to the poor. Mani (2003) highlights the example of the Philippines where the poor have been given an awareness of their rights, provided access to information and empowered to participate by collaboration between civil society organizations and local government to support candidates with an established commitment to a pro-poor agenda. In Nepal, for example, social mobilization at the grass-roots level is seen as a



complementary activity to capacity-building initiatives. Social capital mobilization has also proved useful in post-conflict rebuilding.

*Problems of coordination:* a serious problem which has risen is that of horizontal and vertical coordination between agencies belonging to different levels of government. This has created problems of duplication or gaps in provision, lack of synergy and waste in the utilization of resources. A fundamental problem arises in institutions where a particular service or project is executed by a line agency of a higher (state or national) level of government and subsequently handled for operation and maintenance by local governments. Due to lack of adequate consultations at the planning and execution stages with intended beneficiaries, facilities are frequently over-designed and beyond the affordability levels of local communities to sustain on an on-going basis. Consequently, once constructed, many such projects remain underutilized and depreciate rapidly. These coordination problems are particularly serious in schemes for drinking water and sanitation, irrigation, roads, etc., where the financial requirements and technical complexity require involvement by higher levels of government.

*Lack of institutional capacity:* Lower levels of local government at the village or community level frequently lack the managerial, technical and financial capacity to plan and implement schemes. Their role is restricted to prioritization and designation of target beneficiaries. In effect, there appears to be a trade-off between participation and capacity. This has led to a multi-tiered structure of local governments. In Pakistan, for example, the apex local institution is the District Council, which covers a rural jurisdiction of about one million population on average. This local government provides technical support, through district planning, implementation and monitoring, to the operation of the lowest tier, the Union councils, which essentially operate at the village level. Generally, as highlighted by Mani (2003), local jurisdictions in less developed areas have the greatest problem in recruitment of talent and suffer most from problems of lack of capacity.

*Problem of fiscal decentralization:* There are serious problems with the process of fiscal decentralization, which have not been adequately recognized. An over dependency of local government on fiscal transfers from higher levels of government has seriously eroded local fiscal autonomy and reduced incentives for local fiscal effort. Granting of more fiscal powers to local governments to facilitate the process of political decentralization has exacerbated regional differences in the mobilization of financial resources and has had to be generally combined with fiscal equalization transfers to backward areas. Formulae for such transfers have been politically difficult to arrive a consensus on. Also, in the presence of discretionary transfers, uncertainty has been introduced in the operation of local governments. For example, transfers to municipalities in Bangladesh from the central Government have frequently depended upon whether the particular jurisdiction is governed by members of the ruling party or the opposition. The evolution of proper state-local financial relations has turned out to be a major stumbling block in the process of decentralization in most countries of the region.

### **3.3 Decentralization and Poverty Reduction**

Turning to the relationship between decentralization and poverty reduction in the Asian context, experience indicates that the key issues which determine the contribution of decentralization to poverty reduction are as follows:

- a) How to reconcile the newly decentralized structure of power and governance, which envisage a greater role for the underprivileged and poor, with traditional power structures at the local level?

- b) How can effective social mobilization promote the participation and ‘voice’ of the poor in local governance?
- c) What structures and procedures can be put in place that promote transparency?
- d) While voting and elections are useful, what else is needed to make democracy work at the local level?
- e) How to reconcile the need for fiscal decentralization and autonomy with the need for central support for poorer regions?
- f) How to manage any trade-off between efficiency and equity in the provision of local services?

Beyond this, the impact of decentralization on poverty can be seen in terms of, first, programmes and initiatives which increase incomes of the poor like landless peasants, urban informal sector workers, etc., second, public outlays which expand the provision of basic pro-poor social services like education and health and contribute to human development and, third, allocation of public resources in such a way that it contributes to reduction in spatial inequalities within a jurisdiction.

Some particularly successful programmes of decentralization, which can be seen as ‘best practice’, are described in UNDP (2003).

*The SEILA Programme of Cambodia:* The emerging economic and political environment in the mid-1990s required new approaches to consolidate the fragile peace and lay the foundations of more sustainable development. Development activities centred on the reintegration of combatants through community development activities, under the aegis of the CARERE programme. In time, these activities had to be superseded by a development strategy that would be financially more sustainable, foster ownership, build local capacity and establish effective institutions. The successor Seila programme focused on creating a secure environment conducive to reconciliation between the new government and communities. The Seila programme now covers all of Cambodia’s provinces, comprising 1,621 communes and has become the Royal Government’s platform for implementing its decentralization programme, including the recent commune elections for the first time.

Establishment of development committees at the village, commune and district levels at the earliest stages of the reconciliation process provided an appropriate framework for restoring state authority in formerly war-torn areas. Flexibility in design and implementation was a key element of the programme. This programme has the potential of being replicated in the African context in post-conflict situations.

*The Participatory District Development Programme (PDDP) of Nepal:* This programme aims at empowering the people through decentralization and social mobilization. Its main objectives are the development of local body capacity for planning, programming and management and mobilizing communities into self-governing institutions. District Development Committees were established for this purpose. More than one million people have benefited from social mobilization, with improvements in income levels and quality of life. Social mobilization has emerged as a key element in the 10<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (2002-07). The geographical information system developed at the district level has helped identify villages with the most disadvantaged people. National resources are increasingly being channelled to areas prioritized by the community and local bodies.

*The Women’s Political Participation Project (W3P) of Pakistan:* The unprecedented election of 36,000 women to district, sub-district and union (village) councils in the 2001 local elections in Pakistan, due to the granting of 33 per cent quota, opened a strategic opportunity for women to

make a difference in setting and implementing local agendas. The W3P project, a capacity development project, adopted a 'mentoring and nurturing approach', whereby women councillors taught and learned from each other. To date, 21,000 women councillors have been trained by a pool of 200 lead mentors from among the women themselves. The six-part curriculum focuses on gender-sensitivity, agenda-setting, constituency servicing, advocacy, budgetary allocations and executive-legislative relations. The training is already beginning to have an impact. In many councils, gender-sensitive poverty reduction agenda has been developed and is being implemented. Women councillors have also raised issues relating to water, livelihood, violence against women, rape and honour killings. Some of the lessons learned from the project are the need to also change the attitudes of Mayors and male councillors and also for the involvement of women in needs assessment for training and its delivery.

*The Rural Energy Development Programme (REDP) of Nepal:* This programme was initiated to demonstrate innovative, quick impact, locally-led and socially accountable approaches to rural/renewable energy. It aims at enhancing livelihoods and alleviating poverty primarily by promoting micro-hydro technologies. It is focused on building the capacity of Village Development Committees (VDCs) to plan, implement and manage such systems and promote local entrepreneurship. The REDP intervention methodology is now being replicated through a large \$75 million World Bank Power Development Project.

#### **4. DECENTRALIZATION IN WESTERN AFRICA**

##### **4.1 The Context**

Since their independence in the early sixties, most of sub-Saharan Africa countries have demonstrated minimal improvement in their economic conditions. This has resulted in extreme poverty in the region, engulfing around 46 per cent of the region's population. The picture for West Africa is even more disturbing, especially for countries invited to the workshop. The proportion of population below the US one-dollar-a-day PPP poverty line is over 70 per cent in Mali and Nigeria, 60 per cent in Niger and Burkino Faso, and over 50 per cent for most of the other countries. All, except for three countries (Cape Verde, the Gambia, Togo), have been classified as low human development countries by the UNDP Human Development Report, showing very marginal improvement in the human development index (HDI) over the last decade. In fact, Cote d'Ivoire registered a decline in the value of the HDI over time. Any hope for improvement in the situation in the short run is dampened by the facts that: first, income per capita has not risen much; in fact, it has declined in five of the workshop countries; and, second, the increase has accrued mostly to the richer segments of the population, because of the prevailing extreme inequalities. The Gini index is high for most of the workshop countries (over 40.0), the highest being 62.9, in the case of Sierra Leone. It is therefore not surprising that most of the countries have been struggling to meet the MDGs, as summarized in Adablah (2003, Box 3.3). Almost all of the workshop countries require urgent and extraordinary efforts to meet the goals, particularly the goal of income poverty and hunger. The situation is further exacerbated by the prevailing socio-political conditions. Some of these countries have recently emerged or are in the process of emerging out of conflict/civil strife.

Given these ground realities, the chances of the region improving its human development conditions in the absence of major coherent policy initiatives are remote. One such initiative is to improve governance and to move towards genuinely transparent and open governance systems.

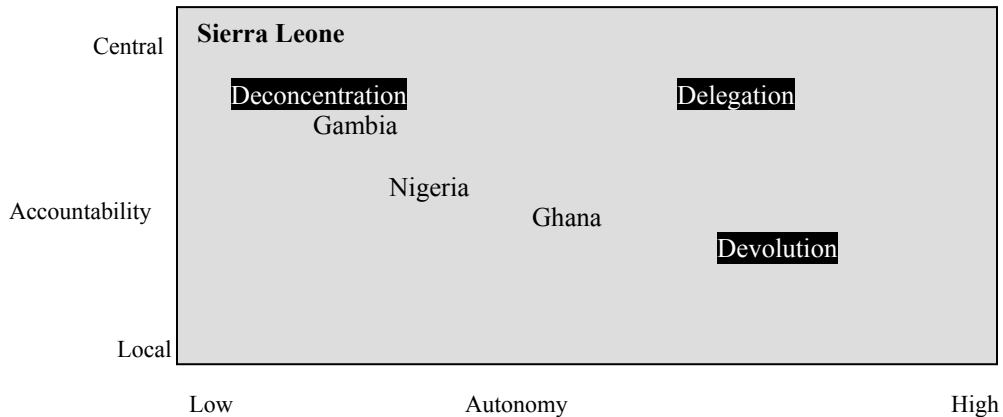
## 4.2 Decentralization in Workshop Countries

Overall, the trend is towards advancement of democracy in the West African region. Although there exist different levels of transparency, legitimacy, accountability and central control, none of the ten countries invited to the workshop could be characterized formally as dictatorships. Also, in general the process of decentralization and the move towards local government have been initiated. The process, however, is being defined and implemented in many different ways, mostly due to the great contextual diversity across nations in terms of level of development, culture, colonial history, degree of ethnic homogeneity, form of government and institutional structure and procedures. In most West African countries, particularly in previously assimilated Francophone ones, the forms of decentralization inherited from the colonial system have remained the mainstay of their administrative structure as highlighted by Adablah. From the five Anglophone countries invited to the workshop, Ghana has major programmes of decentralization currently underway (Gyan-Baffour, Annex 1). Nigeria is strengthening its federal system by further disaggregating the number of states and giving them more functions. The Gambia has promulgated new laws, further empowering local governments (Conteh and Lewis, Annex 1) while Sierra Leone is in the process of reviewing and strengthening its local bodies legislation and administrative set-ups (Max- Kyne and Brima, Annex 1).

Adablah (2003) has described decentralization in two countries, Ghana and Guinea, in some detail. Based on the country papers (presented in Annex 1), we have made an attempt to summarize the decentralization framework for the Anglophone countries in Box 1.3. Country typology of decentralization is presented in Figure 1.1. Significant differences exist in the decentralization structure amongst the workshop Anglophone countries. On the one hand, there is Sierra Leone, where an attempt to revive decentralization is underway but currently there is at best deconcentration whereby subnational institutions are under the administrative control of the central Government. Nigeria is an example of a country where federal and state governments provide most services, even though local government authorities are responsible in principle, because of frequent disbanding of elected local governments by the military (De Muro et al, 1998). The Gambia represents a country where the legislative framework for decentralization exists but most of it takes the form of deconcentration, with little local autonomy. Ghana presents an example of a country where decentralization reforms have brought it closer to the devolution model.

All these countries face major teething problems in their decentralization initiatives as highlighted by Adablah. Important among these are: resistance to change at the central and local government levels; reluctance to concede power by the centre; lack of human resource endowments; and limited capacity of grass-roots organizations to design, prepare, manage and evaluate development projects. These impediments lead us into the realms of issues related to capacity-building needs, which is the main subject of Mani's paper presented in Chapter II.

**FIGURE 1.1  
COUNTRY TYPOLOGY OF DECENTRALIZATION**



### 4.3 Capacity-Building Needs

Creation of adequate capacity at the local government level to undertake larger responsibilities and collaborate with other governmental and non-governmental agencies is essential to the success of decentralization in alleviating poverty. Likewise, the poor need to have a minimum level of education, awareness of their rights, access to information and power to participate if the elite capture of local planning and policy making is to be avoided and decentralization is to be meaningful. Simultaneously, enlightened national government is required which is willing to give up control of power and resources and is capable of coordination required for the attainment of the poverty alleviation objective through decentralization. Therefore, the capacity-building strategy in the West African context needs to be three pronged: simultaneously strengthening the local government, the national government and the non-governmental sectors.

According to Mani, in the case of local governments, some of the areas of concern fall under the categories of institutional structures, personnel management and financial management. Related to the first two categories, common problems are poor interagency coordination and information sharing, lack of qualified personnel and the constrained capacity to recruit, retain, and motivate concerned staff. Problems relating to financial management include lack of capacity for financial planning and budgeting, an inadequate mandate for resource generation and allocation and absence or insufficiency of databases.

As highlighted earlier on in the paper, an effective central government is an important prerequisite of successful decentralization. Central government needs to be strengthened to regulate, coordinate and support different levels of government and different agencies involved in the decentralized structure. Raising of finances for decentralization, setting and monitoring standards of local institutions, developing and disseminating information to all stakeholders, developing an enabling environment for marginalized sections of population to participate in and contribute to policy planning and decision-making are just a few examples of how capacity at higher levels needs to be strengthened.

As far as the non-governmental sector is concerned, there is need for organizing and mobilizing poor communities and of providing a basis and a forum whereby the fragmented civil society sector of Africa is brought to a common platform with poverty alleviation as a priority. Mani (2003) in her paper cites the example of the Philippines (Cebu city) where NGOs have

collaborated with the local government and joined hands to support political candidates with an endorsed commitment to a pro-poor agenda. The effort has resulted in the establishment of an “Urban Poor Affairs” section in the local government to address issues of land tenure security, access to housing finance, service delivery and livelihood improvement. The initiative has led to a significant decline in urban poverty.

On the whole, capacity-building needs of various levels of government in Africa need to be addressed. Both technical issues related to knowledge and skill and new technologies and non-technical issues concerned with attitudes and support, such as acceptance of new technology, openness of information and willingness to cede power, need to be looked into. Efforts for NGOs should focus on not only giving a voice to the poor and the marginalized but also providing them with a forum where they can be heard. Mani in her paper has discussed these in detail and demonstrates how an attempt has been made by UNCRD to achieve this through training.

<b>BOX 1.3</b>	
<b>DECENTRALIZATION EXAMPLES IN WEST AFRICA: SELECT ANGLOPHONE COUNTRIES</b>	
<b>NIGERIA</b>	<b>THE GAMBIA</b>
<p><b>National framework</b>            State: an elected Governor assisted by a legislative assembly runs it.            Local Government Authority (LGA): an elected Chairman and an elected Council head it. They have statutory responsibilities for: roads, sanitation, community development, population statistics (births, marriages and deaths), tax collection, and extension services.</p> <p><b>Fiscal decentralization</b>            Revenues are largely centralized, although 90% comes from the sales of petroleum concentrated in only a few states. Federal Government retains 50% of the revenue.            Redistribution to various states and LGAs follows agreed formulae based on: equalization, population, and social development. Eighty-five per cent of the transfers are unconditional.            State receives 24% of the revenue that covers between 49 and 90% of the states budgetary needs.            LGAs presently receive 20% of the federal revenue, but since 1988 their share has been increasing.            Since the LGAs receive 85% of their needs from the federal Government, there is little incentive to do internal revenue generation. LGAs have various sources of revenue available: property tax, licenses, fees, tariffs, rents, etc.</p>	<p>1997: Constitution of the Republic of the Gambia, emphasizing participatory Democracy and Good Governance.            2002: Gambia Local Government Act.</p> <p><b>National framework</b>            First Democratic Local Government elections. Mayors, Chairpersons and Councillors were elected in all eight Local Govt. Areas.            Administrative framework: 12 Local Authorities, 114 ward Development Committees, 2,000 Village Development Committees.</p>

GHANA	SIERRA LEONE
<p>1988: Local Government Law 1992: New constitution and new government system 1993: New government law</p> <p><b>National framework</b> District Assemblies are Metropolitan, Municipal or District and comprise elected representatives as well as 30% membership appointment by the central Government. The system is four-tier for the Metropolitan (Sub-Metropolitan District Councils, Town Councils, Unit Committees) and three-tier Municipal/District (Zone or Urban/Town/Area Councils, Unit Committees). There are 110 DA, 1,306 urban, zonal and town/area councils and 16,000 unit committees. District assembly functions:     development planning;     social planning;     infrastructure;     justice and security. There is an association of assemblies, but it is under the control of the ministry of Local Government.</p> <p><b>Fiscal decentralization</b> Revenue source may be grouped into 3 categories:     Local generated revenue, rates, fees, licenses, etc.     Central government transfers: financing tied to specific projects, ceded revenue (transfer of fields of tax).     District assemblies' common fund: a percentage (&gt;+5%) of total revenues distributed on the basis of formula.     Transfers according to a formula based on population.</p>	<p>1961: At independence, inherited functioning local government from the British. 1972: District Councils suspended, replaced by Committees of Management appointed by the Government. 2000: Government resuscitated District Councils. Process of review of registration design and modalities of local government in process. Local government elections scheduled for end of 2003.</p> <p><b>National framework</b> Prior to 1972, local governments comprised Free Town Municipality, Town and City Councils and District Councils. Responsible for provision of education, health, environmental sanitation, waste disposal, construction of markets, roads and bridges. City and Town Councils functions include: provision and maintenance of streetlights, markets, cemeteries, public taps, schools, parks/gardens, streets and other public property.</p>
<p><b>Source:</b> Gyan-Baffour, Conteh and Lewis, Max-Kyne and Brima, (Annex 1) De Muro, et al (1998)</p>	

#### 4.4 Impact on Poverty Alleviation

As highlighted earlier, decentralization is generally assumed to facilitate redistribution and poverty alleviation since it brings greater grass-roots level control over resources and their utilization. However, in the African context, as indeed in some of the other regions, experience shows there is nothing automatically pro-poor about decentralization. Decentralization efforts, for example in Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Nigeria have not increased participation by or responsiveness to poor people, nor has there been clear-cut impact on social and economic outcomes for the poor (HDR, 2003). In fact, there may be a worsening of spatial inequalities, as in South Africa and Senegal, further aggravating poverty (Africa Governance Forum - Concept Paper, 2002).

Why? Adablah (2003) throws light on the reasons for this. Interestingly, most factors impeding the poverty-alleviating performance of decentralized governments in Asia are operative in Africa also. The answer to the above question lies in the fact that these countries have had incomplete decentralization whereby among other problems, the power of dominant groups and narrow interests have been reinforced contrary to the spirit of decentralization. In Ghana, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea (like many other African and Asian countries), decentralization has been hijacked by the local elites bringing little respite to the poor (HDR, 2003). Also, decentralization is expensive to institute and sustain, and therefore, in the face of growing poverty and a macroeconomic crunch, the process may be aborted, as in Liberia and Sierra Leone (Katsiaouni, 2003).

Furthermore, limited knowledge and skill constrains performance and capacity-building needs are often ignored and underemphasized. Mani (2003) illustrates examples of how local governments, through social mobilization and training, have had a substantive impact on poverty alleviation even in difficult situations. She cites the example of the Urban Poor Affairs Office (UPAO) in the Naga city government in the Philippines. The Mayor mobilized UPAO, which partnered with civil society and private sector in improving the living conditions in the squatter settlements, providing not only land ownership rights but also basic infrastructure. In the Keo Oudom district in Lao PDR, the district planning office incorporated the project plan, designed by district officers in collaboration with villagers (as part of a training programme), into the district plan and mobilized several villages to implement the projects.

## **5. CIVIL SOCIETY AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION**

Recent years have witnessed a considerable surge of interest throughout the world in the broad range of social institutions that operate outside the confines of the market and the state. Known variously as the ‘non-governmental organizations’ (NGOs), ‘Civil Society’ or ‘third’ sector, this set of institutions include within it a wide array of entities – hospitals, universities, professional organizations, human rights organizations, job training centres and many more.

A growing number of political leaders, community activists and international donors have come to see such civil society organizations as strategically important participants in the search for a middle way between sole reliance either on the market or on the state. In fact, even governments are now increasingly viewing NGOs as an integral part of the institutional structure, particularly for addressing the poverty problem. This is reflected in the poverty reduction strategy put in action by governments in most developing countries in Asia and now increasingly so in Africa.

### **5.1 Response of Civil Society to the Problem of Poverty**

What is the link between civil society and poverty alleviation? What role can NGOs play to help tackle the problem of poverty? Both Adablah (2003) and Mani (2003) address these questions in their papers. Potentially, NGOs, both local and international, can respond to the growing problem of poverty in a number of ways. Their responses can be categorized into the following: advocacy, social mobilization, delivery of social services, providing livelihood programmes, training and relief and rehabilitation. The typology of their responses is presented in Box 1.4.

NGOs, through advocacy, can potentially play a very significant role in influencing economic and political policies that impact upon the poorer sections of population. The agents of an active civil society, for example, can: give useful inputs on the thrust and design of economic policies; bring specific issues of social concern such as the environment, labour rights, gender equality and public health to the public spotlight and in some cases even help to change prevailing social norms; contribute to greater transparency and accountability and thereby curtail patronage, powerful special interests and corruption; ensure that government policies are carried out in a manner intended and thereby significantly contribute to good governance.

Civil society can mobilize the masses, empower them and give them a “voice”, supplement government in the provision of services, particularly social services, design and implement income-generating programmes and micro-credit, improve community skills through technical/vocational and entrepreneurial training, and perform relief and rehabilitation functions. Another, albeit often overlooked, contribution of civil society groups to poverty alleviation is as a potential source of financial support to carry out various poverty alleviation programmes. Much



of the work undertaken by the NGOs is on a self-help basis and financed by philanthropic contributions, a source which otherwise would have perhaps remained untapped.

In conclusion, civil society organizations can potentially play an important role in poverty alleviation in a country.

<b>BOX 1.4</b>	
<b>TYOLOGY OF NGO RESPONSES TO POVERTY</b>	
Type of Response of NGOs	Activities
<b>ADVOCACY</b>	
<i>National</i>	Influencing policy – economic and political; participate in policy process and other mechanisms; promote good governance by enhancing accountability and transparency; raising public awareness.
<i>Local</i>	Influencing local policies; participation in local councils; awareness-raising in the community.
<i>Sectoral</i>	Influencing specific sectoral issues like agrarian reforms, urban poor housing, etc.
<b>ORGANIZING THE MARGINALIZED</b>	
<i>Community Organizing</i>	Establishing community-based groups, assisting them in strengthening their organizations.
<i>Sectoral Organizing</i>	Helping organize labour unions, farmers organizations, urban poor groups, etc.
<b>DELIVERY OF SOCIAL SERVICES</b>	
<i>Health</i>	Implementing health programmes like primary health care, immunization drives, HIV–AIDS prevention, family planning, etc.
<i>Education</i>	Conducting literacy programmes; establishing educational institutions for selected marginalized groups.
<i>Social Welfare and other Social Sectors</i>	Implementing programmes and projects for child labour, women, orphans, etc; implementing neighbourhood programmes like water supply and sanitation, etc.
<b>LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMMES</b>	
<i>Income-generating Projects</i>	Assist and finance small projects for community groups and individuals like women’s industrial homes, etc.
<i>Micro-finance projects</i>	Giving credit and loans to feasible projects and small business individually or collectively (like the Grameen Bank).
<i>Organizing Cooperative</i>	Assist communities and sectors in establishing cooperatives.

<b>TRAINING</b>	
<i>Entrepreneurial</i>	Provide training for building entrepreneurs.
<i>Vocational/Technical</i>	Provide specific skills training.
<i>Institutional Capacity-Building</i>	Provide workshops and seminars for upcoming/grass-roots organizations in basic institutional skills like bookkeeping/accounting, management, etc.
<b>RELIEF AND REHABILITATION</b>	
	Provide emergency services such as temporary shelter, food, etc., after disaster or conflict; community organization for rehabilitation.
<b>Source:</b> Adopted from Aldaba, et al (2002).	

## 5.2 Civil Society in Asia: Success Stories

Recent years have witnessed a significant strengthening of civil society in Asia. Not only have civil society organizations become more numerous, they have widely diversified in their activities and scope of work and have demonstrated substantial improvement in institutional capacity, organization and coordination. Their growth, however, varies substantially across nations, largely due to the prevailing differences in socio-political and economic conditions. On the one hand there is Bangladesh, where NGO activities are estimated to cover 80 per cent of the villages, while on the other, in other countries, the concept of NGOs is new.

Irrespective of the variation in their stages of development, there are a number of examples of successful civil society organizations in Asia which constitute examples of good practices that can provide useful insights to development practitioners, particularly in Africa where civil society is still in the initial stages of its development. The criteria for their success may vary. Success can be seen in the extent to which they are able to make a difference in the lives of their target population, or it might mean the passage of an unprecedented piece of legislation which can eventually lead to improvements in the lives of people. Below are examples of good practices to demonstrate how civil society, either directly or through improved governance is contributing to poverty alleviation (UNDP, 2003).

### Capacity Development: Institutionalizing Human Rights

Mongolia, a vast country, is in its 14<sup>th</sup> year of transition to democracy from the fall of socialism. Despite this, the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission was viewed by some state agencies as an additional threat to their authority in an open and democratic Mongolia, and was therefore not welcomed. However, the human rights civil society organizations had been actively campaigning for it and with active international technical support of the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia (NHRCM) is well on its way to achieving its goal of being a fully self-sustaining institution, functioning in accordance with its mandate and with broad-based support from all sectors of society. Today, Mongolia has an NHRCM that does not shy away from sensitive issues, such as the state of detention centres and the expensive and cumbersome civil registration requirements that impede access to essential social services by migrants to urban centres – for which the NHRCM recently won a Supreme Court petition.

### *Participating in Governance: Empowerment through Social Mobilization*

In a major shift, locally elected bodies were placed at the centre to promote decentralization and community participation in Nepal. At first, leadership by politically elected bodies, which lacked any prior development experience, was both a challenge and a risk. Central government agencies and donors were not very supportive of such a strategy. There was no adequate legal framework to properly guide the decentralization process. Moreover, establishing a new, district-level institution – the Local Development Fund (LDF) – to manage social mobilization and poverty reduction programmes under the overall umbrella of elected local bodies involved risks of the process becoming politicized, as line ministries have vested interests in maintaining the status quo.

Despite these challenges, the Participatory District Development Programme (PDDP) established participatory development and community empowerment processes with a significant positive impact on socio-economic conditions. Local political leaders were committed to institutionalizing many elements of decentralization: participatory planning, monitoring and a Geographical Information System (GIS) – a planning tool for resource mapping and identifying pockets of poverty – and establishing the LDF under District Development Committees.

### *Improving the Quality of Life on a Self-Help Basis: A Local Community Taking Charge*

Disappointed by the lack of basic service provision by the Government, the local squatter-settlement community of Orangi in Karachi, Pakistan, took charge and installed a water supply and sanitation scheme on self-help basis. The Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) was the brainchild of Dr. Akhtar Hameed Khan, a world authority on self-reliance for social development. Through the use of innovative approaches and alternative technologies, taking account of community needs and affordability, OPP installed potable water and sanitation schemes in the community, significantly reducing the incidence of disease and illness. The programme is an example of the strength of social mobilization and the principle of self-reliance. It has been successfully expanded to include microcredit and has been replicated in other parts of the country.

### *Sustainable Livelihoods: Putting Principles to Practice*

The example of the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh in initiating microfinance is a widely quoted one. Following are examples of other institutions that more or less replicate the Grameen experience. The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), PROSHIKA and ASA are examples of large NGOs operating in Bangladesh in the sphere of poverty alleviation through microcredit, skill development and employment generation. Microcredit is provided to the poor, mostly women, for self-employment, income-generating activities, afforestation and other poverty alleviating programmes. The income-generating activities, where substantial microcredit disbursement has been made, include small trade (42 per cent), livestock (18 per cent), agriculture (13 per cent) and food processing (9 per cent).

Up to June 1999, the total number of active members benefiting from the NGOs' operational programmes stood at 8.7 million (85 per cent of which are women). About 95 per cent of the microcredit disbursement was in rural areas in Bangladesh. Therefore, the contribution of these NGOs to the cause of poverty alleviation in Bangladesh is significant.

### *Community-Based Disaster Preparedness: Bracing for the Storm*

The Indian State of Orissa, prone to floods, cyclones and droughts, suffered heavy losses of life and property during the super cyclone that hit in October 1999. The need was felt for reducing the future vulnerability of communities by strengthening the capacity of government functionaries as well as communities to cope with natural hazards. During the June 2001 floods, contingency plans developed under the project came into action, thus significantly minimizing both material

and human damage. The project also mainstreamed stakeholders' participation in disaster management activities, thereby enhancing an integrated and comprehensive response network. These initiatives helped the State Government to develop a state disaster management plan and policy, currently in draft form and due to be placed in the Orissa State Legislature Assembly for approval.

## **6. CIVIL SOCIETY IN WESTERN AFRICA**

Can civil society in Africa play a role similar to the one being played by their counterparts in Asia in tackling the growing problem of poverty? If yes, then why is its impact not as prominent? What are the factors impeding its development? Answers to these questions are critical to the subject of the workshop.

In response to Africa's development crisis, the international community has begun increasingly to recognize and empower NGOs as vehicles for development. As in Asia, the rising popularity of NGOs is largely in response to the widespread disillusionment with the performance of governments in Africa. During the past two decades, the number of NGOs and the resources channelled through them globally has increased substantially. For example, between 1980 and 1993, development NGOs registered with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) increased from 1,600 to 2,970; many other NGOs are not registered. By 1990, an estimated US \$7 billion, equivalent to 16 per cent of total bilateral aid flows at the time, went through NGOs (Chaplowe and Madden, 1996).

Arguments in favour of developing NGOs as vehicles of development in Africa include:

- a) NGOs are perceived as more flexible, participatory and responsive to local needs of the poor – all prerequisites for sustainable development. State bureaucracy and corruption erodes finances and policies are often motivated by institutional, political and even kinship interests. These policies are typically urban based, delivering to politically favoured areas (Lehmann, 1990).
- b) They offer a potential alternative to bureaucratic tangles and corruption that plague national and subnational governments in Africa. Ideally, NGOs work on a smaller scale and are closer to indigenous people and are more sensitive to community values and environmental conditions.
- c) NGOs can potentially foster and support grass-roots organizations to become more numerous, sizable, resourceful, and self-reliant. Also, grass-roots contacts enable NGOs to provide critical information on potential crisis and thus contribute to early warning systems.
- d) Typically, NGOs require less financial inputs than government agencies and therefore are more cost effective, an attribute that is important in a financially constrained Africa.
- e) NGOs can be more resourceful and innovative as they involve local communities in the identification and resolution of development problems which are more cost effective, sustainable and compatible with community values and norms.

Over and above their direct development roles, civil society organizations also have a very important advocacy role to play in promoting effective governance in Africa. However, this fact is not yet fully appreciated due to the weakness of civil society and the dominant role of African governments in comparison in the development process, especially during the 1960s and 1970s.

Two key roles can be identified for civil society organizations in the good governance process. The first relates to their role in propagating democratic values, socializing their members in these

values and defending democratic principles and social justice in the society as a whole. These organizations also serve as mechanisms of social and national integration by recruiting members from a wide background, mobilizing their members for active participation in the political process and helping individuals to meet their basic needs. The other role performed by civil society organizations is more direct and entails serving as a buffer between the state and society, and advocating, monitoring and seeking to consolidate and strengthen good governance and transparency (Arigbede, Annex 1). This, however, does not come easy. Effective civil society involvement at the municipality level, for example, calls for a deliberate effort to reach out to local communities beyond the decentralized structure of subnational authorities. Different models for civil society participation in decentralized governance are discussed in detail in Adablah (2003).

## **6.1 Impeding Factors**

NGOs face formidable internal and external challenges and concerns. NGOs do not always perform as effectively as expected in terms of poverty reach, popular participation, sustainability, cost effectiveness and innovation. “In some instances they have neglected the landless and other marginalized people, thereby failing to reach the poorest of the poor” (Chaplowe and Madden, 1966). This is primarily a result of scarcity of funds and other resources whereby only certain regions are serviced by well equipped NGOs, neglecting other areas more desperately in need. Furthermore, to get access to finances, NGOs have a tendency of changing their focus to services where money is available (like donor funding for humanitarian emergencies) and neglecting longer-term work in institutional development and other aspects of local capacity-building.

In addition, because of lack of communication and coordination among organizations, NGOs run the risk of duplicating services in the same region, as pointed out by Adablah. Also, these organizations have thus far failed to articulate a national framework within which to operate, create coalitions with other groups with identical or converging interests and promote cooperation with civil society organizations at the subregional or regional level. They operate as fragmented groups with a weak strategy and social agenda (Katsiaouni, 2003), essentially as firefighters.

Another important issue for most NGOs, especially with the well-known NGOs, which are often the most effective ones, is the heavy dependence on external sources for financial, organizational and other forms of support. Because of this dependence, they are easily labelled agents of foreign interests, thus undermining their legitimacy. Also, external dependence limits their ability to be responsive to and therefore relevant to the environment in which they operate. Imitating civil society organizations in other countries, they sometimes ignore the differences in the roles and functions incumbent on them. Furthermore, donors may sometimes not be willing to provide the long-term support and careful nurturing needed to attain the local capacity enhancement and gradual qualitative results that characterize successful institutional development. Instead, development activities are often packaged in compressed project cycles, which stress immediate or short-term quantitative targets.

Even though the principle of broad-based participatory development is more attuned to NGOs than government structures, achieving this is not an easy task. Bringing subnational authorities closer to some civil society organizations can risk taking them even further away from others. While this is true in general, but perhaps more so in Africa, not all organizations of civil society are adequately accountable either to their own members or to the public at large. Therefore, while some groups may be quite vocal, the interest they represent may not be widely shared, as indicated by Adablah (2003).

NGOs do not work in isolation. They have to contend with the socio-economic-political realities in which they operate. In many African countries, recent shifts towards political pluralism and decentralization have complicated the political context as one party regime is replaced with fragmented special interests leading to polarization, violence and political paralysis. NGOs are confronted with vested and competing interests from bureaucrats, politicians, multinational corporations, rural elites and others who may oppose attempts to transfer power and resources to the local causes, which NGOs support. Furthermore, government's attempt to control NGOs has created an environment of mistrust and suspicion. Likewise, direct access to international/donor funding of NGOs has given rise to suspicion on the part of government. The existence of an environment of mutual mistrust and even rivalry has hindered the development of civil society organizations, which can potentially be partners of government in development (Arigbede, Annex 1).

However, while ongoing democratization and decentralization in Africa presents political challenges for NGOs in their relation to the state, it also presents new possibilities for negotiations and collaborations, which can be mutually advantageous. On the one hand, NGOs can be genuine partners of government in development, particularly in the attainment of the MDGs they themselves are struggling to achieve. On the other hand, collaboration with government can also be advantageous for NGOs. For example, government may be able to provide valuable technical assistance and research that is typically beyond the reach of NGOs due to their limited budgets and lack of access to scientific and technical information. As such, government can significantly enhance the financial, technical and institutional capacity of the NGOs.

What, therefore, should be the way ahead? Both Adablah (2003) and Mani (2003) shed light on potential mechanisms to strengthen civil society organizations in Africa. In essence, effective participation requires enlightened interventions, including the improvement of the institutional environment in which varying interest groups co-exist. For harnessing an effective civil society, a supportive social, institutional and policy environment must be created, as this is usually required for the development of sustainable social trust that is so fundamental for continued civil society engagement in social welfare issues/interventions. In the absence of a transparent, accountable and fair system of sharing resources and opportunities amongst citizens, the poorer and marginalized sections will continue to remain peripheral to the process.

Simultaneously, civil society organizations in Africa must address their internal weakness, as pointed out by Arigbede (Annex 1). They should endeavour to put their own house in order by promoting internal democracy, accountability and transparency, ensuring that their membership is as inclusive as possible so as to act as genuine instruments of national integration. They should focus on formulating a comprehensive framework of engagement defining their role, functions, responsibilities, areas and types of intervention, and the modalities of their operation. These frameworks should be coordinated and harmonized at the national, subregional and regional levels. Cooperation among civil society organizations should extend beyond elaborating similar or compatible and mutually reinforcing framework of intervention into the exchange of information, experience and expertise, mutual support and, whenever feasible and desirable, joint action.

However, frameworks are not of much use if the capacity to implement them is lacking. Building their capacities to act effectively and efficiently is another task that African civil society organizations must take up conscientiously and in a determined manner. Particular emphasis

should be given to reducing their dependence on external forces and enhancing their legitimacy, support and relevance. A number of good experiences with local governance capacity strengthening exist for possible replication. Mani (2003) has discussed the merits of South-South cooperation. The African leaders can positively benefit from experiences and technology development of other countries.

## **6.2 Role in the PRSP Process**

In line with the requirement of major multilateral aid agencies, especially the Bretton Woods Institutions, Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) need to prepare a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) as the overriding framework for medium to long-term development. This is on the agenda of seventy low-income countries, including all of the workshop countries. Adablah (2003) in his paper has discussed in detail the modalities and benefits of the PRSP participatory process, focusing in particular on two countries: Mali and the Gambia. He also discusses the regional poverty reduction strategy initiative.

Adablah (2003) indicates that development of PRSPs constitutes an important step in promoting and engaging in participatory methodologies in some of these countries. This principle is the most important distinguishing trait of the paradigm shift in development management. Incidentally, it also constitutes the main difficulty for the African countries. Due to their socio-political past, the individual countries' progress on participation has varied depending on: the type of government and the extent of democratic culture; the capacity of national authorities to engage in participatory processes with civil society, public and key stakeholders; and the extent to which civil society groups exist and are active among the poor. The disparities notwithstanding, the records offer a worthy lesson of civil society participation in decentralized governance for poverty reduction.

As Adablah (2003) points out, the merits of evolving PRSPs through broad-based participation enhances the responsiveness of the poverty alleviation strategy at all stages: analysis and diagnostics, formulation, approval, implementation and impact assessment. At the analysis and diagnosis stage, the strategy paper captures the multidimensional nature of poverty and the needs of different groups; at the policy formulation stage, a deeper understanding of the public expenditure impact is created along with broader ownership; at the implementation stage, consensus is developed on the standard for performance, transparency and accountability, along with improved monitoring, efficiency, empowerment of the poor and enhancement of people's awareness of their rights and claims; and finally, at the impact assessment stage, participatory evaluation brings out perceptions of various stakeholders at different levels and their experience of the strategy.

At the regional level, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) embarked on the process to draw up and execute a West African Regional Poverty Reduction Programme. An important objective is to better explore the most effective ways of incorporating the regional dimensions of poverty reduction and to execute them at the regional level. Another initiative, currently at a formative stage, is the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which reflects the commitment of African leaders to address the issue of lack of development and growth and to eradicate poverty and meet the MDGs in Africa.

The true test of the success of all these initiatives, the country PRSPs, the regional PRSP, and the NEPAD initiative, is the ability to translate the envisaged plans of participatory governance into

action, with enhanced civil society involvement not only in policy formulation but also at the implementation and monitoring stages. This is the only way to evolve a truly people-centred, equitable and sustainable path of Africa's development.

## **7. MAJOR CHALLENGES**

A summary list of some of the major issues/concerns raised in the key papers. Key challenges include:

- a) The importance of stimulating local economic development to ensure success of the decentralization initiative. Strengthened local fiscal capacity was considered essential both for successful decentralization and poverty reduction.
- b) Institutional capacity constraints at the local government level were identified as major obstacles, highlighting the need for training and other capacity-building measures (including wider dissemination of local knowledge and best practices).
- c) An insufficient local-centre and local-NGO dialogue was considered a bottleneck, exemplifying the need for improving mechanisms of vertical and horizontal linkages.
- d) The environment of confrontation between government and NGOs is not conducive to collaboration. This needs to be addressed. Also, there is need to diversify civil society activities and strengthen their capacity to play a more effective role in poverty alleviation.
- e) There is resistance to change in the work ethos required for effective decentralized governance. Also, there were concerns of inadequate participation in the preparation of PRSPs.
- f) The impact of market orientation, globalization and conflict needs to be considered while planning for decentralization and poverty alleviation.
- g) Where civil society is weak, unorganized, and lacking credibility, the potential for engaged governance needs to be explored.



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## **CHAPTER II**

# **HUMAN SECURITY AND DECENTRALIZED PLANNING: THE TRAINING EXPERIENCE OF ASIA<sup>3</sup>**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) was established in 1971 to assist and promote regional (subnational) development in developing countries. Over the last three decades, research and training activities at UNCRD have seen a paradigm shift from regional economic planning to human security in accordance with concurrent changes in concepts and practices related to regional development and decentralized planning. The current focus on human security responds to the negative fallout of globalization being experienced as increased vulnerability of individuals and communities to financial crisis and widening gaps between the rich and poor, as well as a social breakdown and cultural erosion caused by resettlement, conflict, migration, and rapidly changing lifestyles.

This paper reviews the recent experience of UNCRD in providing training for human security and decentralized planning, and identifies some key lessons. The paper is divided into three sections. The first provides the scope of discussion on human security and decentralized planning in UNCRD's ongoing training activities and includes the working definitions of terms, interrelationships between decentralization and human security, and identification of training needs. In the second section, the basic elements of UNCRD's training strategies are presented, and the third section offers a description of four projects to illustrate the design and implementation of training strategies for human security and decentralization.

The four projects discussed in the paper demonstrate UNCRD's active contribution to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, and the agendas of the Social Summit held in Copenhagen in 1995 and the more recent World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg in September 2002. These projects are built around mechanisms recommended in the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD such as South-South cooperation to share knowledge and best practices, forming collaborations between government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector, and increasing uses of information and communications technologies (ICTs) for development.

### **2. DECENTRALIZATION AND HUMAN SECURITY: SCOPE OF UNCRD'S PROJECTS**

#### **2.1 Definition**

##### *Decentralization*

Decentralization is understood as the:

Restructuring of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional, and local levels according to the principles of subsidiarity thus increasing the overall quality and effectiveness of the

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<sup>3</sup> This paper was presented by Devyani Mani at the workshop.

system of governance, while increasing the authority and capabilities of sub-national levels<sup>4</sup>.

Three types of decentralization -- political, administrative, and fiscal; and four forms of authority (devolution, delegation, deconcentration, and divestment) are commonly identified.

Political decentralization is concerned with transfer of political power and authority to sub-national levels of government often seen as election and empowerment of lower levels of government. Devolution, which involves full transfer of responsibility, decision-making, resources, and revenue generation to an independent and autonomous local-level public agency, is considered a form of political decentralization. This form of decentralization necessitates the provision of appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks to ensure accountability and transparency while also demanding links with civil society and community institutions.

Administrative decentralization involves transfer of decision-making authority, resources, and responsibility for some public services from central to lower levels of government. This often takes place in conjunction with civil service reform and is implemented as deconcentration, where authority and responsibility are transferred from one level of central government to another, or delegation where the authority and responsibility are transferred to a local unit of government that may not be a branch of the delegating authority.

Fiscal decentralization is resource reallocation to subnational levels of government and may include revenue raising and expenditure. Divestment can be seen as a form of decentralization where planning and administrative authority are transferred from government to voluntary, private, or non-governmental institutions. The World Bank refers to this as “market decentralization” that “allows functions that had been primarily or exclusively the responsibility of government to be carried out by businesses, community groups, cooperatives, private voluntary associations, and other non-government organizations.”<sup>5</sup>

The sequence of the various types of decentralization and the forms in which they may be implemented vary according to the need for decentralization, existing institutional structures, and capacity at lower levels of government. Some demands for decentralization include:

- i. The call for greater regional political freedom, participation, and conflict resolution to resolve latent or manifest ethnic conflicts, or marginalization of minority groups;
- ii. Pressures of global competition as countries or regions within countries make economic progress resulting in pronounced development of certain regions over others;
- iii. Demands for stabilization and “opening up” of economies such as those exposed to exogenous shocks and transitional economies; and
- iv. Demands for greater equity and efficiency in local service delivery.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Robertson Work, “Overview of Decentralization Worldwide: A Stepping Stone to Improved Governance and Human Development,” (2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Decentralization, Federalism: The Future of Decentralizing States? 25-27 July 2002, Manila, the Philippines (Available from [http://www.decentralization.ws/icd2/papers/overview\\_decent.htm](http://www.decentralization.ws/icd2/papers/overview_decent.htm); accessed May 2003).

<sup>5</sup> “Economic or Market Decentralization” Decentralization NET (The World Bank) (Available from [www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/decentralization/market.htm](http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/decentralization/market.htm); accessed March 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Joachim von Braun and Ulrike Grote, “Does Decentralization Serve the Poor?” (Draft paper presented at the International Monetary Conference on Fiscal Decentralization, 20-21 November 2000, Washington D.C.) (Available from [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/seminar/2000/fiscal/vonbraun.pdf](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/seminar/2000/fiscal/vonbraun.pdf); accessed March 2003).

UNCRD's training activities are concerned with political and administrative decentralization according to all four forms depending on the specific context where a project is implemented. Building capacity for fiscal decentralization falls beyond the organization's purview, as this may be best achieved with the injection of funds for local government, as is being implemented by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) in a number of least developed countries (LDCs) in Asia and Africa<sup>7</sup>.

### Human Security

UNDP launched human security as an "integrative" rather than a "defensive" concept in the *Human Development Report, 1994*. Seven interrelated dimensions were identified as economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. The Commission on Human Security (CHS) has further clarified the concept as one that focuses on the individual and seeks protection from threats to human life, livelihood, and dignity, and the realization of full potential of each individual. Human security addresses both conflict and developmental aspects including displacement, discrimination and persecution of vulnerable communities as well as insecurities related to poverty, health, education, gender disparities, and other types of inequality<sup>8</sup>.

Therefore, human security is understood as the ability to withstand threats such as disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression, and environmental hazards. Threats to human security can be economic, ecological, social, and political, and they can occur as sudden shocks, long-term trends, or seasonal cycles. The working definition of human security at UNCRD is the removal or reduction of vulnerability to economic, environmental, social, and cultural threats that undermine sustainable development of communities.

This concept is integrated into local development strategies through a two-pronged approach that entails: (i) a vulnerability analysis to identify vulnerable communities as well as the economic, environmental, social, and cultural threats experienced at the household and village levels, and the corresponding coping strategies of the community; and (ii) assessments of capacity at the village and district levels for integrating the coping strategies of households and villages into planning and project formulation within their jurisdictions. This is in line with the recent report on human security by the CHS that states "human security focuses on shielding people from critical and pervasive threats and empowering them to take charge of their lives."<sup>9</sup>

## **2.2 Decentralization and Human Security: Interrelationships**

While the impacts of decentralization on human security are not sufficiently explored in the literature, there is discussion on the impacts of decentralization on poverty alleviation, which offers us some valuable insights. These are briefly reviewed here followed by UNCRD's training needs assessment (TNA) for achieving human security in the context of decentralized planning.

Decentralization is assumed to have a role in reducing poverty through increased participation of pro-poor groups in local government to influence policy and decisions regarding pro-poor programmes, and improved services for the poor. It is believed that participatory local

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<sup>7</sup> See [www.uncdf.org](http://www.uncdf.org).

<sup>8</sup> Commission on Human Security (CHS), "Introduction to Human Security" (Available from [www.humansecurity-chs.org:80/intro/index.html](http://www.humansecurity-chs.org:80/intro/index.html); accessed March 2003).

<sup>9</sup> CHS, *Human Security Now* (New York, 2003) (Available from <http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/finalreport/index.html>; accessed May 2003).

governments are in a better position to assess needs at the local level, monitor and control development of local communities, and provide more responsive services. Elected local governments may also be more accountable to the community and inclusive of the poor in decision and policy-making. When given greater autonomy, local governments can stimulate economic development that makes best use of local resources.

The Asian experience reveals mixed results. The impact of decentralization varies according to the type of decentralization -- political, administrative, or fiscal; the characteristics of a country such as size, geography, population density, natural resource endowments, cultural and political set-up, interregional solidarity, institutional and managerial capacities; and the causes and patterns of poverty.

Political decentralization is found to have a positive impact on poverty alleviation by virtue of the involvement of civil society in planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of poverty reduction strategies and basic service delivery. The poor in some countries are experiencing benefits. The case of the Philippines stands out where decentralization has:

- i. Encouraged local governments to be entrepreneurial;
- ii. Resulted in transfers of financial resources to local governments, thereby strengthening devolution;
- iii. Encouraged citizens' participation in local governance;
- iv. Increased cooperation between local governments and other government agencies;
- v. Provided national governments the opportunity to reorient their relationship with local governments; and
- vi. Helped local governments recognize and address the impacts of globalization.

The problems that have arisen with devolution are elite capture of resources, insufficient accountability, and graft and corruption at the local level. To counter these, local governments are being encouraged to develop performance standards and indicators to measure their productivity and the quality of services and use ICTs for management and development operations<sup>10</sup>.

Administrative decentralization does not demonstrate positive impacts on poverty. Traditionally poor regions, even when given greater resources and autonomy, are unable to attract investment and talented personnel. They tend to remain poor and have low human resources development even after decentralization.<sup>11</sup> Decentralization of specific services such as health and education has been attempted in some countries through administrative decentralization. In Indonesia and the Philippines, this has increased coverage and improved service delivery but the process has been bumpy with resistance in relocating central staff to local levels through deconcentration, and poor capacity to undertake greater responsibilities at the local levels<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Alex B. Brillantes, Jr., "Philippines: Sustaining the Gains of Decentralization," *Sourcebook on Decentralization in Asia* (Available from <http://www.decentralization.ws/srcbook/phil.pdf>; accessed March 2003).

<sup>11</sup> Martin Ravallion, "Reaching Poor Areas in A Federal System" (Policy Research Working Paper 1901 (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, May 1998) (Available from [www.worldbank.org/publicsector/decentralization/cd/ReachingPoor.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/publicsector/decentralization/cd/ReachingPoor.pdf); Accessed March 2003).

<sup>12</sup> *Decentralization and Health in the Philippines and Indonesia: An Interim Report* (Available from <http://www.sti.ch/pdfs/swap243.pdf>; accessed March 2003).

Fiscal decentralization, when not linked to capacity improvement or revenue generation, has found limited success. In Cambodia, the Seila programme is assisting local government and villagers to develop their capacity to organize and execute local, decentralized development planning—a key component of UNCDF’s Local Development Funds (LDFs). Emphasis is laid on village-level community planning in the “communes,” within which the participation of groups and individuals who do not traditionally have a role in their community’s decision-making processes is encouraged. In Thailand, fiscal decentralization, in the form of guaranteed transfers from central to local governments without local governments assuming increased responsibility for providing public services, has resulted in irresponsible spending at the local level and increased risk to macroeconomic stability<sup>13</sup>.

In general, it is recommended that political and administrative decentralization precede fiscal decentralization to ensure participation and accountability.

Creation of adequate capacity in local governments to undertake larger responsibilities and collaborate with other governmental and nongovernmental agencies is essential to the success of decentralization in alleviating poverty. The poor need to have a minimum level of education, awareness of their rights, access to information, and the power to participate. Decentralization can result in elite capture of local planning and policy-making.

This can be countered by organizing and mobilizing poor communities, as in the case of the Philippines where NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) have collaborated with the local government and even joined hands to support political candidates with an endorsed commitment to a pro-poor agenda. In Cebu City, a new mayor was elected with the support of the urban poor and was committed to establishing an “Urban Poor Affairs” section in the local government to address issues of land tenure security, access to housing finance, service delivery, and livelihood improvement. There has been a significant decline in urban poverty in the city as a result of this effort. Improved service delivery by lower levels of government that are in a better position to determine needs and target the poor is possible only when systems of accountability are well established and sufficient capacity exists in the local governments to undertake these tasks<sup>14</sup>.

Human security is concerned with reducing the threats to development in general and to vulnerable groups in particular. Often, vulnerable groups are also economically and socially marginalized, and are composed of ethnic minorities. Central governments have traditionally attempted to control power ceded to regions populated by minority groups to minimize or control attempts at secession. However, since the last decade this trend has been reversed for equity reasons and to draw minorities into the mainstream, as it is being realized that when minorities are given greater autonomy and opportunities for development, they are less likely to be involved in violent conflict.

To ensure human security, there is a need to identify the vulnerable, economic, environmental, and socio-cultural threats they face, the strategies they use to cope when under duress, and the

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<sup>13</sup> Kanokpan Lao-Araya, “Effect of Decentralization Strategy on Macroeconomic Stability in Thailand” (ERD Working Paper Series No. 17) (Manila: Asian Development Bank (ADB), August 2002).

<sup>14</sup> Anil B. Deolalikar, Alex B. Brillantes, Jr., Raghav Gaiha, Ernesto Pernia, and Mary Racelis, “Poverty Reduction and the Role of Institutions in Developing Asia,” ERD Working Paper No. 10 (May 2002) (Manila: ADB) (Available from [www.adb.org/Documents/ERD/Working\\_Papers/wp010.pdf](http://www.adb.org/Documents/ERD/Working_Papers/wp010.pdf), accessed March 2003).

mechanisms used for conflict management. This is best done at the local level through governments that represent the interests of all groups or through coalitions between government and civil society that allow for wide representation. An example often cited by Amartya Sen is that fewer starvation deaths occur during famine in a democratic versus autocratic regime. Sufficient capacity and access to timely and correct information is integral to this process.

UNCRD's human security assessments in Lao PDR found that higher levels of human security are observed when local governments at the province and district levels have sufficient technical capacity to identify the threats faced by the populations within their jurisdictions and define programmes specific to local needs and inclusive of the traditional and innovative means that communities adopt to cope when under threat of hunger, disease, environmental degradation, or conflict. Where the local governments are poorly staffed and have low technical capacity, they are unable to translate central policy directives for poverty alleviation and local development into programmes suitable for the region<sup>15</sup>.

### **2.3 Training Implications**

In this section, training needs for decentralized planning and human security are discussed, based on the literature and training needs assessment conducted by UNCRD for Lao PDR.

To ensure that gains from decentralization are realized, extensive capacity-building is recommended for lower levels of government. Decentralization calls for transfer of power and resources from central to local levels and from bureaucrats to communities and households. This requires willingness on the part of the centre to hand over power and resources as well as the capacity at the local level to use the newly acquired resources for local development and poverty alleviation. Devolution of power and resources needs to be matched with concurrent increases in capacity at lower levels.

Decentralized planning is often compromised by the lack of willingness to give up control at higher levels and poor coordination among various agencies at the local level concerned with similar development tasks. Other constraints fall under the categories of institutional structures, financial arrangements, and personnel management. Related to the first two categories, common problems are poor interagency coordination and information sharing, and low capacity and inadequate mandates for resource generation and allocation. There are several problems related to personnel management. Many developing countries have long histories of centralized planning and governance. This has resulted in a situation where central governments attract the best qualified human resources while local governments function with less qualified personnel.

More recently, the private sector and multilateral and bilateral agencies engaged in development attract skilled staff away from government by offering higher salaries. Motivation of staff is low because of frequent transfers and low salaries. In terms of skills, local government personnel tend to have poorer qualifications and experience in generation and disbursement of resources for development. They lack sufficient skills in collaborative planning with NGOs and CBOs as well as for participatory planning with communities.

With regard to the additional skills required for planning for human security at lower levels of government, the issues are: receiving inadequate policy directives from central government; lack of capacity to identify threats to development and target vulnerable populations; and limited

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<sup>15</sup> Devyani Mani, "Assessing Human Security in Three Provinces in Lao PDR" (UNCRD: Nagoya, July 2002).

mandate and capacity for conflict resolution. In culturally diverse populations, local government officials often belong to the dominant majority and are not sympathetic to the needs of minority groups. Higher participation of women in government is required for greater gender sensitivity. Local government officials often wield power with the local community and use this to manipulate information and development for the benefit of the particular group they belong to. Unfair access to information plays a key role in increasing inequities and disempowerment.

It is found that local elites tend to capture local government agencies for their benefit when devolution takes place, resulting in limited opportunities for poor and vulnerable groups. Even with legal mechanisms in place for wider representation of economically and socially excluded groups, weaker groups need to be organized and provided with sufficient information to demand their rights and participate in the governance process.

Of particular interest is the increasing trend towards e-government which offers the possibility of standardizing information needs and wide sharing of information between different government agencies, improved service delivery to users and greater transparency and accountability. While this provides several options for improved planning and management of development projects in a decentralized context, a resistance to change is also observed, where government officials do not want to be open about decision-making under all circumstances. In addition to this is the call for e-governance and participatory planning using new ICTs. In areas where ICTs are being used for empowerment and mobilization of communities, it is found that relationships between the government and the community are changing with greater demands for accountability from the people and diminished power of local bureaucrats. Adequate training is required to cope with technical aspects related to the new technologies as well as non-technical issues such as acceptance of the technology, openness of information, and willingness to cede power<sup>16</sup>.

### **3. KEY ELEMENTS OF UNCRD TRAINING STRATEGIES FOR DECENTRALIZATION AND HUMAN SECURITY**

Training strategies at UNCRD are developed based on training needs assessments conducted jointly with target countries for country-specific training courses and through training course assessments during international training courses. Both technical issues related to knowledge and skills, and non-technical issues concerned with attitudes and support from higher levels of government are addressed in the training. These include the new issues arising as a result of the introduction of ICTs for e-government, e-governance, and empowerment of local communities.

From the experience of UNCRD's projects, key elements for training for decentralized planning to enhance human security are summarized as follows:

#### **3.1 Training Needs Assessment and Demand-Oriented Customized Training**

A sound training needs assessment and the creation of an evolving training strategy that meets the demand at provincial and district levels for planning and implementation of human security-oriented programmes is required. At UNCRD, this is done jointly with the concerned planning authority in the target country for country-specific training, and from training evaluations of international training courses held in Nagoya as well as the African and Latin American branch offices.

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<sup>16</sup> See Subhash C. Bhatnagar, "Editorial Introduction" *Regional Development Dialogue (RDD)*, Vol. 23, no. 2., Autumn 2002; Subhash C. Bhatnagar, "E-Government: Lessons from Implementation in Developing Countries" (same issue); and Josefa S. Edralin, Comment on Bhatnagar, "E-Government," (same issue).



### 3.2 Joint Participatory Action Research

Joint participatory action research strengthens capacity in local government to identify the vulnerable and threats to development, and generate strategies that incorporate the coping mechanisms of communities for self-help and self-reliance. For example, human security concerns in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand were identified through participatory action research involving government and non-governmental agencies, and community-based organizations (CBOs) and academe. Joint meetings held with all the stakeholders resulted in a common understanding of human security, identification of human security concerns, and strategies to address these. In Cambodia and Lao PDR, human security assessments were undertaken using joint participatory action research with provincial and district planners to enhance their capacity as well as benefit from their understanding of local conditions. It was found that the exercise substantially strengthened the capacity at provincial and district levels in the locations where the surveys were conducted in not only identifying the vulnerable, but also the shortcomings in implementing programmes for poverty alleviation and reduction of insecurity.

### 3.3 Recognizing the Role of Information

Empowerment with information is integral to improving the planning efforts of local governments, and increasing awareness and access to rights and entitlements within communities to enhance human security and demand accountability in local government. Studies on the effectiveness of decentralization in India have found that although power has been devolved to the *panchayats* (local governments) at district, sub-district (block), and village levels, and effort has been made for the social and political inclusion of women and backward groups through creation of quotas in local government, it does not necessarily follow that local governments become inclusive. *Panchayats* continue to be dominated by the local elite -- the weak while having representation, do not yet have the voice to demand their rights.

The key factor in strengthening weaker and socially excluded groups is education and information on entitlements, and the power to complain against intractable local governments. Movements that have encouraged wider sharing of information have succeeded in bringing socially and politically excluded groups into the mainstream<sup>17</sup>.

With the idea that information is a very important factor in empowering the poor and providing them with opportunities for development, projects have been launched in India that use ICTs in rural areas to provide market information on agricultural produce, advice on agriculture and livestock, information on state poverty alleviation programmes and entitlements, rapid dissemination of documents such as land records and caste certificates to enable access to entitlements, and a window to demand greater efficiency and accountability from local governments through enforced complaint redressal. UNCRD has documented five best practices in India to demonstrate issues in using ICTs for local development in its training programmes for decentralized planning.

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<sup>17</sup> Ruth J. Alsop, Anirudh Krishna, and Disa Sjoblom, "Are Gram Panchayats Inclusive? Reports of a study conducted in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh," (Draft – March 2000, South Asia – Social Development Unit, The World Bank) (Available from <http://www.worldbank.org/wbiep/decentralization/saslib/Alsop.pdf>, accessed March 2003).

### **3.4 Soliciting Support from Policy makers**

Engaging policy makers provides support for dissemination of training to the lowest levels of government. In November 2001, a thematic training course was held on human security and regional development. This course organized training for mid-career professionals and a policy workshop on designing a programme for human security. The combination of technical personnel and policy makers ensured that identification of needs for human security are matched with corresponding policy authority and resource support within an institution or country. This methodology was welcomed and promoted greater interaction, learning, and sharing of ideas and experience among participants. A significant outcome of this training was the commitment from higher levels of government in implementing the action plans of the training participants, and an action framework and proposal for South-South cooperation between Cambodia and the Philippines in designing and implementing human security programmes.

### **3.5 Engaging Stakeholders from Governmental and Non-governmental Agencies**

To incorporate poverty reduction or human security into planning at the local levels, it is essential to engage policy makers at higher levels of government as well as local government and members of civil society. Enhancing collaboration between governmental and non-governmental agencies enables a mutually supportive learning approach and the opportunity to move from confrontation to consolidation of joint development efforts through proper identification of roles and responsibilities, and increases in accountability, particularly downward accountability, to target communities.

A good example is the Human Security and Regional Development Project which culminated in a workshop attended by policy makers from the subnational level, members of NGOs, CBOs, and local government. During this workshop, human security concerns in the three regions of Bicol (Philippines), Nakhon Ratchasima (Thailand), and Yogyakarta (Indonesia) were discussed to arrive at a common understanding of the constraints, the agenda for the future, and the roles and responsibilities of each agency.

It was found that current approaches to poverty alleviation and reducing vulnerability were deficient due to sectoral and fragmented approaches. Convergence integrating partnerships among government, the private sector, and civil society were considered crucial to planning and implementation of policies and programmes. Commitment was made to continue and enhance existing partnerships and give particular attention to good governance, social capital and community empowerment, environmental rights and justice, training on human security, networking for information exchange, and taking specific actions to address the vulnerable in each region. Subsequently, the Philippines and Thailand have launched human security programmes.

### **3.6 South-South Cooperation**

South-South cooperation encourages sharing of experience in poverty alleviation and increasing human security through exposure visits and special training sessions by local experts. Much is to be gained by the interactions and exchange of experience between regions – subnational, national and international. Over the years, UNCRD has accumulated a rich network of professionals in developing countries who have been active proponents of best practices in local development and poverty alleviation. Such partnerships are proving valuable in the transferring of experience on:

- i. Urban poverty alleviation through community mobilization, political inclusion of the poor, creation of appropriate legal instruments at the local levels, and consolidating partnerships between local government and civil society in the Philippines to Cambodia; and
- ii. National strategies and best practices demonstrating the use of ICTs for development such as policies, technology parks, and e-government applications. Concerned government officials from countries of sub-Saharan Africa are exposed to experiences of Malaysia and Thailand in Asia, which have relatively advanced policies and projects incorporating the uses of ICT for development (for details, contact the UNCRD Africa office in Nairobi).

### **3.7 Team-Building, and Strengthening Vertical and Horizontal Linkages**

Team-building and strengthening vertical and horizontal linkages between the various government agencies allow for sharing of information and minimizing overlaps and duplication of efforts. Decentralization requires that linkages between higher and lower levels of government be strengthened and function according to the principle of subsidiarity. However, institutional memories take time and effort to overcome. UNCRD makes effort to strengthen linkages between different levels of government in its training programmes. Conscious effort has been made to create teams between central and provincial, and provincial and district staff to encourage greater communication in the planning and programme implementation processes.

In addition to vertical linkages, horizontal linkages among the various sectoral and other governmental agencies operating at the provincial and district levels are essential for better coordination of mutually supportive development activities. It is often observed that provincial/district sectoral agencies report to their ministries at the central level but have little contact with other agencies at their level. In UNCRD's country-specific training course in Lao PDR, planners from different agencies are brought together. In transitional countries and those emerging from conflict, institution-building and decentralization are being undertaken simultaneously. In such instances, the importance of building teams for planning and development needs to be stressed to generate appropriate strategies for poverty alleviation and judicious use of limited resources.

### **3.8 Linking Training with the Planning Process and Output-Oriented Training**

This ensures that off-the-job and on-the-job training are linked and the time used for training produces results that can be used immediately in time and resource-constrained environments. These links are being established in some of UNCRD's in-country training programmes in Africa (Kenya), Asia (Lao PDR), and Latin America (Bogotá-Cundinamarca).

## **4. UNCRD PROJECT EXAMPLES**

Four examples of UNCRD's projects are described here to illustrate the manner in which the above elements are being integrated to provide training at the provincial and district levels to enhance capacity to address human security. These are the human security and regional development project, the national training programme in Lao PDR, the human security assessments in Lao PDR, and the use of ICTs for human security in local development.

### **4.1 Human Security and Regional Development Project: Phase I – Bicol Region, the Philippines**

The example of the Bicol Region is presented here, as it offers valuable lessons on decentralization and best practices, which illustrate the evolution of partnership between

government and civil society from confrontation to collaboration in poverty alleviation strategies and governance. In joint meetings conducted with government agencies, NGOs, CBOs, and local academics, human security in the region was found compromised by slow agrarian reform, urban poverty, inadequate natural resources management, and high vulnerability to disasters such as typhoons and volcanic eruptions.

Two examples of best practices highlighting efforts to address human security in the Bicol Region are discussed below. The first case of urban poverty alleviation in Naga City has received wide recognition and is being replicated in the Municipality of Phnom Penh in Cambodia. The second case presents the successful establishment of an Agrarian Reform Community (ARC) in a region where agrarian reform is one of the key reasons for low human security. Training sessions with this case have solicited positive response from representatives from African countries dealing with land reforms.

#### Urban Poverty Alleviation in Naga City

Naga City is one of the oldest cities in the Philippines and has been the trading, commercial, financial, educational, and ecclesiastical centre of the Bicol Region since 1575. It is considered progressive in its implementation of the *Local Government Code* of 1991 and in the integration of the urban poor into the mainstream. The partnership between the local government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the people's organizations (POs), and private landowners was institutionalized in the Kaantabay sa Kauswagan (Partners in Development) Programme which received the Philippine Government's Galing Pook Award in 1994 and was selected as a "best practice" by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UN-HABITAT) in 1995.

In the 1995 census, the urban poor in Naga increased from 14.6 per cent in 1980 to 25 per cent in 1994, largely because of migration into the city<sup>18</sup>. The incoming migrants settled in slums and squatter settlements on private lands. As these communities settled here illegally, their main problem has been the lack of secure land tenure. Evictions and demolitions have devastated and further marginalized poor households. Further, due to their illegal status, basic services of water supply, sanitation, health, and education were traditionally not provided to the slums and squatter settlements by local governments.

By the middle of the 1980s, there was worldwide recognition that "slum upgradation" was preferable to "slum clearance" with the rise in the number of NGOs advocating for the rights of the urban poor. Emphasis was laid on the need to stop evictions and demolitions, regularize the status of the poor, and provide them with basic services to ensure their health and productivity. At Naga, the movement of the urban poor began in 1986 with the efforts of the Community Organization for the Philippine Enterprise (COPE) Foundation, an NGO with chapters all over the Philippines, including Naga, which advocates for the rights of the urban poor. COPE began to actively organize the urban poor communities for provision of basic infrastructure such as water, paving, etc. This resulted in community mobilization and acquisition of skills in negotiating and dealing with government agencies.

Subsequently in 1988, during the local election campaign, the federation organized a candidate forum and worked for the election of the candidate who showed commitment to the cause of the urban poor. He won the election with a slim margin. Soon after, the Urban Poor Affairs Office (UPAO) was established within the city government. Concerted efforts were made to engage the urban poor communities and address their issues. They began with smaller issues related to

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<sup>18</sup> UNCHS and Citynet, "Partners in Development".

service delivery, eventually building the community's confidence and trust in the local government.

In 1989, the *Kaantabay sa Kauswagan* (Partners in Development) Programme was launched to empower squatters and slum dwellers in Naga city and thereby improve their housing conditions. The programme emphasizes growth with equity to be achieved by providing socioeconomic programmes targeting the urban poor and widening their role in development. The urban poor are perceived as programme partners as well as beneficiaries and are encouraged to actively participate at every stage of the programme. The programme institutionalized a functional mechanism to address the two major concerns of the urban poor: the absence of security of land tenure; and the lack of basic infrastructure and facilities<sup>19</sup>.

By bringing the three main partners in the city's development together, namely, the city-level and national-level government agencies, the urban poor associations, mobilized by NGOs and private landowners<sup>20</sup>, this programme aspires to arrive at a true consensus and innovative solutions to address the needs of the urban poor.

The partnership in development is also reflected in the Naga City Housing and Urban Development Board (NCHUDB), the body that plays an important role in urban policy-making and providing recommendations to the mayor. Naga City's experience with the urban poor has institutionalized a fair, credible, and effective tripartite mechanism for achieving security. The urban poor have developed from being marginal squatters into rightful owners of land with basic services. They are now organized as a community and have a voice in the political and planning processes of the city.

Much of Naga City's success can be attributed to community organization and empowerment and the creation of an enabling institutional environment that has ensured the sustainability of the programme. The first step was clarity in roles and constructive dialogue among stakeholders. The second step was the creation of the UPAO, which has developed over the years into a strong proactive section of the city government. Finally, the formation of the NCHUDB and the participation of the urban poor in the People's Council have given the urban poor a voice in the city's planning process. These initiatives are further supported by national and local-level legislation.

#### **4.2 The Irosin Agrarian Reform Community**

The Bicol Region in the Philippines is largely dependent on agriculture. Poverty is chronic in the region, partly because of inequitable access to land and low agricultural productivity, resulting from inadequate access to irrigation, market infrastructure, technology and market information. Implementation of agrarian reform programmes are lagging behind other regions in the country due to the region's vulnerability to typhoons, poor peace and order conditions, landowners' resistance, lack of political will, and weak demand from the potential beneficiaries. The slow pace of land distribution has created instability in the land markets. Owners are not planting crops and there is low investment in farming, resulting in decline in the production of the principal crop, coconuts.

Agrarian reform includes basic programmes for physical infrastructure improvement, economic development, and provision of social services in addition to land acquisition and transfers. The

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<sup>19</sup> UPAO Office, *Kaantabay sa Kauswagan (Partners in Development) Program* (Naga City, 1995).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

principal agency responsible for these tasks is the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), through its central and regional offices. Other agencies involved are the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Department of Agriculture (DA). Besides, developing strong and effective Agrarian Reform Communities (ARCs) were considered pivotal in creating a demand for such reforms.

An ARC was established in 1993 at Irosin with the collaboration of a local NGO, LIKAS, and its partner People's Organization, Sandigan ng Magsasaka. Its mandate is to distribute land as well as to promote livelihoods through agro-based industries and sustainable environmental development, empower farmers through human resource development, promote multi-sectoral cooperation, improve basic services, and construct physical infrastructure.

By 1999, land transfer benefited 25 per cent of the total households in the municipality, achieving 79 per cent of the target. For coconut farmers, the land transfers resulted in increases in income. In addition, improvement in skills of farmers and building cooperatives for capital formation have assisted farmers in generating savings. People's organizations and cooperative members have been transformed from passive recipients of agrarian reform to active participants in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Leaders have been created who are skilled in facilitation, proposal preparation, financial preparation, documentation, planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes, project conceptualization and development, advocacy, and conflict management. Also, there has been a significant reduction in maternal and infant mortality and malnutrition and infectious diseases because of improvement in health services including water supply and sanitation. Special attention is given to the poorest families, persons affected by crises and emergencies, disadvantaged groups, and children. Violence against women and children is being addressed. Electricity, roads, drainage and flood control have also been improved. Twelve multi-purpose centres have been set up for improved community interaction.

The success of agrarian reform in Irosin is attributed to the following factors:

- i. Strong political leadership. An experienced NGO worker was elected mayor, who transformed the local government unit into a responsive people-oriented organization. POs were strengthened to become active participants in agrarian reform and rural development.
- ii. Effective partnership among stakeholders. Partnerships between all the actors from the government agencies, NGOs, and POs were institutionalized through the formation of the MARC, and the creation of relationships based on trust and transparency, participatory democracy, and informed decision-making.
- iii. Integrated approach. Agrarian reform activities of land transfer were combined with community building and other rural development activities, thereby strengthening the farmers' capacity to fend for themselves.
- iv. Response to needs. In addition to providing land for the farmers, support programmes were provided, which catered to the needs of the farmers for agriculture support and basic social services.
- v. Clear development direction. Strong leadership along with participatory planning provided a clear vision for the municipality's development that was common to all stakeholders.
- vi. Appropriate institutional arrangements. An appropriate structure was set up for programme management that clearly identified the roles of the government agencies, NGOs, and POs.

### 4.3 National Training Programme in Lao PDR

Lao PDR moved from a centrally planned to a market economy with the introduction of the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) in 1986. In conjunction with NEM, a decentralization programme was introduced, which was declared a failure largely due to the lack of professional planning and management capacity and preparedness for decentralization at the provincial levels<sup>21</sup>.

In 1997, the Government again made a policy decision to promote decentralization with a view to accelerating the pace of market-oriented development while addressing poverty issues. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) encouraged the re-initiation of decentralization. UNCRD's assistance was sought in design and implementation of a national training programme for provincial and district planners. To initiate the activity, a TNA was undertaken that indicated:<sup>22</sup> there was a lack of a long-term vision for provincial development and an in-depth situational analysis; provincial and district personnel were unable to work out project plans that meet the donor agency requirements; project plans are not properly translated into action due to the lack of management skills and knowledge particularly among the district officers; private investments are not sufficiently attracted due to the lack of an appropriate support mechanism; lack of regular training programmes for provincial and district planning personnel; and knowledge and skills acquired by senior provincial planning officials are not effectively transferred to their staff members. There was a need to link off-the-job training with on-the-job training.<sup>23</sup>

A training strategy was proposed with emphasis on the following:

- i. Multiplier-effect through training of trainers;
- ii. Practice-oriented training; and
- iii. Linking “off-the-job” and “on-the-job” training.

Six training workshops have been conducted at the provincial level for mid-career to senior planning officials from CPC, line ministries, and provincial planning departments and district planners. The training provides capacity-building at the provincial and district levels for improved planning and project management, poverty alleviation, and increased human security.

Subsequently, the participants identify development priorities of the villages and match them with those raised by the villages during field work. This process of consultation provides an opportunity for the participants to learn from the villagers and raise awareness of the villagers' own situation. Participants then prepare project proposals for jointly identified development priorities and mobilize villagers to participate in implementing the project as well as seek the commitment and support from participating district planners and sector agency officials. In the Keo Oudom district, the district planning office has incorporated the results of these planning exercises into the district plan and mobilized several villages to implement the projects identified jointly.

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<sup>21</sup> Patrick Keuleers and Langsy Sibounheuang, “Central-Local Relations in the Lao People's Democratic Republic: Historic Overview, Current Situation, and Trends” in Marc Turner, ed., “Central-Local Relationships in Asia-Pacific: Convergence or Divergence” (Canberra: Canberra University, forthcoming).

<sup>22</sup> UNCRD-SPC, *Training Needs in Local Development: The Case of Lao PDR* (UNCRD Training Material Series No. 3) (UNCRD, 1999).

<sup>23</sup> See Kenji Oya, Devyani Mani, and Josefa S. Edralin, “Building Sustainable Planning Capacity in Lao PDR” *Regional Development Dialogue* (RDD), Spring 2001.

#### **4.4 Human Security Assessments in Lao PDR**

In order to assess prevailing human security concerns, it was decided to adopt a two-pronged approach:

- i. A vulnerability analysis that identifies vulnerable communities as well as the economic, environmental, social, and cultural threats experienced at the household and village levels, and the corresponding coping strategies; and
- ii. Capacity assessments at the village and district levels to integrate the coping strategies of households and villages into planning and project formulation within their jurisdictions.

A report was prepared which includes the methodology undertaken for the survey and analysis of the findings, the findings and analysis, and recommendations ([www.uncrd.or.jp/laos/](http://www.uncrd.or.jp/laos/)). The area community, and gender-specific nature of vulnerabilities are highlighted along with recommendations on increasing capacity at the provincial, district, and village levels to address human security concerns.

The report was presented at the capacity-building workshop on human security and regional development. The conclusions of the report were discussed and endorsed during the workshop. Particular emphasis was laid on the role of community organization and mobilization, mobilization of women, provision of credit, and human resources development for alternative livelihoods. Natural resources management was also mentioned as an important element of the strategies. It was found that the strategies of each province were insufficiently gender sensitive. It was decided to document best practices, which would result in the generation of training materials and strategies that are uniquely Lao in character and suitable for the local context.

Key elements of the human security assessments have been integrated into the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NPEP) for Lao PDR.

#### **4.5 Using ICTs for Integrating Human Security in Local Development**

Access to information is one of the most important elements of decentralized planning and includes two aspects: local government agencies having sufficient information about communities within their jurisdiction and their development needs; and communities, particularly the economically, socially, and politically marginalized, being given sufficient information to participate in the planning and development processes.

With regard to human security, ICTs are being introduced to: (i) increase opportunities for poor communities through improved access to their entitlements, creation of new skills, and networking with government agencies, aid agencies, and NGOs; (ii) empower oppressed and exploited groups through increased voice and global support for people's movements; and (iii) create opportunities to mobilize and empower communities through better communication between groups, entertainment, and increased public participation in political, administrative, and institutional activities.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Analysys, *The Network Revolution and the Developing World* (Final Report for World Bank and infoDev; Analysys Report No. 00-216, 3 August 2000) (Available from <http://www.infodev.org/library/working.htm>; accessed June 2001).



An obvious solution to bridging the digital divide is increasing access to ICTs to the underprivileged communities and providing them with the requisite skills to operate and maintain the new technologies for their development. Emphasis is therefore laid on increasing access and provision of technical training along with dispersion of ICTs. However, observations of attempts to bring ICTs to poor and underprivileged communities indicate the need to go beyond supply of the requisite technology and the skills to operate the same (See Box 2.1).

It is essential to address: (i) the development of relevant policy and regulatory frameworks to ensure that projects target the weakest groups; (ii) the use of information for knowledge generation, documentation, and exchange; (iii) the need to prepare for changes in the government-citizen interface and shifting power relations; (iv) the importance of offering locally demanded services and creating content that is relevant to all users, particularly women and youth;<sup>25</sup> (v) the interface with the community; and (vi) the training of intermediaries at the local level with technical as well as participatory planning, entrepreneurship, and leadership skills.<sup>26</sup>

A training needs assessment undertaken from the study of five projects in India using ICTs for development ([www.uncrd.or.jp/ict/](http://www.uncrd.or.jp/ict/)) revealed the need to target the intermediaries between the technology supplier and the community to ensure that ICTs will be used for socio-economic

**BOX 2.1**  
**VILLAGE KNOWLEDGE CENTRES**

The Village Knowledge Centres project launched by an NGO, MSSRF, in Pondicherry in Southern India, is based on local agricultural communities' demand for information on sustainable agricultural practices, credit, and marketing of produce and value addition by agriculture experts. The content on the network is prepared locally, using indigenous knowledge combined with expert information. The project began as an experiment in electronic knowledge delivery to the poor. A hybrid wireless network comprising of desktop computers, telephones, VHF duplex radio devices, and email connectivity through dial-up telephone lines facilitating both voice and data transfer, connected ten villages in Pondicherry initially.

The project is pro-poor, pro-women, and pro-environment in its conception. The content provided is demand-driven based on the needs of the community. The information provided to the villagers is area-specific, such as prices of agricultural inputs and outputs, market information, entitlements, healthcare, livestock care, transport information, and weather. Local volunteers, mostly women, gather the information, feed it into the Intranet, and provide access through nodes in different villages. Value is added to the raw information by using the local Tamil language and multimedia. For example, weather forecasts for fishermen along the Coromandel Coast are downloaded from the Naval Oceanographic Office, which are then translated into Tamil for the intranet as text, as well as audio information that is broadcast on microphones every few hours to the fishermen along the coast.

A formal memorandum of agreement (MOU) is signed by the MSSRF with the villagers indicating that the community has to supply the basic infrastructure such as electricity and the space, and identify volunteers to operate the facility. MSSRF provides three computers and a printer, a wireless device, and a solar panel.

All the volunteers are trained in operating the systems and undertaking basic maintenance and repairs. More than half the volunteers are women and in some villages all the volunteers are women. At the initiation of the project, a gender expert was assigned to build gender sensitivity into the operations. The proportion of women users varies from 34 to 50 per cent and about 16 per cent of the users are from households below the poverty line (the average number of families living below the poverty line is 21 per cent). The content has been created with the active participation of the villagers and to help them identify with the information, culture-specific aspects have been included, such as astrological advice on daily activities.

The remarkable features of this project are the focus on women and the local creation of content. This has resulted in extensive use of the system and a strong sense of ownership among the villagers. The weaknesses of the project are its financial sustainability, as services are provided free of cost to the users and the systems are installed through grants. The success of the knowledge centres has resulted in the Government of Pondicherry replicating the project in all the villages in the Union Territory. To ensure financial sustainability, means of generating revenue are being considered, such as collection of revenues from advertisements on the Intranet of agricultural inputs, such as fertilizers, tractors, and pesticides. Training of kiosk managers, the community participating in the creation of information, and government personnel to deal with system changes brought about by e-governance are identified as key concerns. The role of an intermediary agency in dealing with the community is found useful and important in the success of an area-wide strategy to wire all the villages in Pondicherry.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Ballantyne, "Collecting and Propagating Local Development Content," (Research Report No. 7, International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD), May 2002) (Available from [www.iicd.org](http://www.iicd.org); accessed October 2002).

<sup>26</sup> Don Richardson and Lynnita Paisley, eds., *The First Mile of Connectivity* (Rome: FAO, 1998) (Available from <http://www.fao.org/docrep/x0295e/x0295e00.htm>; accessed September 2002).

development targeting the weakest groups. These intermediaries include the local government, NGOs, and private agencies preparing the community for use of ICTs, and the entrepreneurs from within the community who also serve as the local information agents for the community. The training strategy has to cover a long period of time and be composed of several elements. A combination of training workshops and on-the-job training would have to be established. Much of the training can take place online provided sufficient information is available on the subject and opportunities are created for role-playing among the stakeholders. UNCRD conducted an e-workshop during November-December 2002 ([www.uncrd.or.jp/ict/eworkspace/](http://www.uncrd.or.jp/ict/eworkspace/)) to initiate this process and the material generated is being compiled to create an online training course.

## **5. THE WAY AHEAD**

The above discussion has identified the background of the projects being implemented by UNCRD for human security and decentralized planning in terms of definitions and scope of the terms, and identification of the training needs. Key elements of ongoing training activities are identified as: conducting TNA for demand-oriented customized training; joint participatory action research with local counterparts to identify needs while building capacity; recognizing the importance of information and the potentials of the use of ICTs for decentralized planning and human security; soliciting support from policy makers; engaging stakeholders from government and NGOs for collaborative approaches for human security and local development; South-South cooperation for transfer of knowledge and experiences on best practices; building teams and strengthening horizontal and vertical linkages at the provincial and district levels to ensure consistency and an inter-sectoral approach as well as receive support from higher levels; and linking training with planning processes and outputs.

While the approaches introduced in this paper have succeeded in creating sound training strategies for decentralized planning and human security, further efforts are required to ensure that the impacts of the training are realized in strengthening local governments and reducing vulnerability. Some of these are:

### **5.1 Wider Dissemination of Local Knowledge and Best Practices**

It is found that in the LDCs, knowledge and successful experience in local development exists in select provinces and areas. Opportunities need to be created to document and transfer such experiences within the country. In the case of Lao PDR, UNCRD has launched a parallel effort to identify and document best practices in local development that would be disseminated during the training courses.

### **5.2 Creation of Local Teams for Planning and Development**

Efforts need to be made to ensure that the teams created between members of local government, sector agencies, and NGOs continue to work as a team even after their participation in training workshops. This is a long process that requires considerable skills in collaborative planning and management.

### **5.3 On-the-job Training**

All of UNCRD's training efforts are through workshops, and courses are off-the-job. Participants are encouraged to transfer their experiences to other staff members in their offices. Commitment to this is being requested during preparation of action plans and re-entry plans at the closure of the training courses/workshops. Links must be maintained with key agencies in the field to

ensure that this is taking place and to study the impacts. On-the-job training is compromised by frequent transfers of staff or even by frequent training of staff who keep moving from one training programme to another, leaving them no time to transfer the skills gained. UNCRD must assist the key agencies in delineating means to ensure that transfer of skills takes place for larger benefit from the training.

#### **5.4 Implementing Action Plans**

During ongoing training activities, participants are found to prepare very good action plans for further dissemination of the training and incorporation of the ideas into ongoing development programmes and projects. While effort is being made to follow up on the action plans, this needs to be done in collaboration with other bilateral and multilateral agencies in the field and with greater commitment from the local counterparts in implementing agendas for decentralization and human security.

#### **5.5 Online Training and Distance Learning**

As the time and resources for attending training workshops is reduced and large strides are being made to increase access to ICTs, efforts to conduct online training and provide distance learning need to be further enhanced. UNCRD made a beginning in this direction through an E-workshop on ICTs and Development in November-December 2002. These activities need to be expanded further for wider dissemination of knowledge and increased networking among development practitioners concerned with decentralized planning and human security.

# **CHAPTER III**

## **THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN DECENTRALIZED GOVERNANCE FOR POVERTY REDUCTION: THE EXPERIENCE IN WEST AFRICA<sup>27</sup>**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

“The proportion of global poverty attributable to Africa is rising, and the likelihood is that this will continue unless there are radical changes to policies and performance” (African Poverty at the Millennium, World Bank, 2001). It has become increasingly clear in recent years that the effectiveness of efforts in developing countries to achieve their human development goals hinges largely on the quality of governance in those countries and the extent to which their governments interact with civil society organizations to accomplish these goals.

In the last ten years, the spread of democratic governments and market-based economic systems has unleashed a tremendous debate and effort towards advancing popular participation in governance and development in African countries. The evidence is that central governments have started to allocate more of the national budget to local authorities and are facilitating a greater role for civil society organizations and the private sector in providing improved and more focused support to both central and local government in their pursuit of development.

In addition to national-level efforts, there are major regional and international initiatives to help Africa achieve its development goals. These include, among others, the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the World Bank and IMF-sponsored Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSPs).

This paper examines, through theoretical and case reviews, the purposes, principles, methods and forms of governments’ partnership with civil society in decentralized governance for poverty reduction. The discussion will lead to lessons, which may serve as benchmarks for replication in analogous situations. For the most part, the scope of survey will focus on the West African sub-region.

### **2. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT**

Since their attainment of political independence in the early 1960s, the economic performance in most sub-Saharan African countries has remained at levels which may never take them out of poverty. This is largely attributable to overwhelming deficiencies in their development strategies and policies. The current UNDP Regional Human Development Report for West and Central Africa recaps the African economic debacle as follows: “By 1990, Africa was in the throes of a thirty-year-old economic crisis. Today, over ten years later, the crisis is still present and Africans, guided by their “friends” of the international community, are still on the development battlefield or are fervently groping in the dark in search of the light at the end of the tunnel. At the end of the 1990s, Africa remained the poorest continent in the world, the most backward technologically, the most indebted and the most marginalized. With 12.5% of the world’s population, it only produces 3.7% of the world’s wealth”.

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<sup>27</sup> This paper was presented by Cornelius Adablah at the workshop.

Indeed, at the end of the 1990s, which had been dominated by stabilization and structural adjustment programmes and the market paradigm, the socio-economic condition in the continent had worsened such that 34 out of the then 49 Least Developed Countries were in Africa and nearly 45% of the continent's population lived below the poverty line. Currently, all but three West African countries are classified as low human development countries, almost half of them demonstrating a slide in the development ranking over the last decade (see Box 3.1). The situation with most socio-economic indicators is equally alarming (See Box 3.2). Almost all of the West African countries are struggling to meet the MDGs, (presented in Box 3.3). In particular, most countries are showing little or no progress in the poverty and hunger eradication goal.

<b>BOX 3.1</b>				
<b>HUMAN DEVELOPMENT RANK</b>				
	1999	2000	2001	2002
<b>Benin</b>	155	157	147	158
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	171	172	159	169
<b>Cape Verde</b>	106	105	91	100
<b>Côte d'Ivoire</b>	154	154	144	156
<b>Gambia</b>	163	161	149	160
<b>Ghana</b>	133	129	119	129
<b>Guinea</b>	161	162	150	129
<b>Guinea-Bissau</b>	168	169	156	167
<b>Mali</b>	166	165	153	164
<b>Nigeria</b>	173	173	161	172
<b>Senegal</b>	153	155	145	154
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	174	174	162	173
<b>Togo</b>	143	145	128	141

Source: **Human Development Reports, UNDP**

A major paradigm shift to the concept of “Development with a Human Face” is required to ameliorate the misery that underlies these startling statistics. In this regard, the orientation of development thinking and management is gradually shifting from the market paradigm to approaches which now favour democratic, decentralized, participatory governance with a major role for civil society and the private sector. This new paradigm of development “enables all individuals to enlarge their human capabilities to the full and to put those capabilities to their best use in all fields – economic, social, cultural and political” (HDR 1994).

**BOX 3.2**  
**KEY SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA (2000)**

	Population (Million)	Rural Population (as % of Total)	GDP Per Capita (PPPs)	Life Expectancy at Birth (Years)	Adult Literacy Rate (% age 15 & above)	Per Cent Population with Good Water	Population with income below \$1 a day (1983- 2000) (%)	Population below National Poverty Line (1987-2000) (%)
<b>Benin</b>	6.3	57.7	990 (0.38)	53.8 (0.48)	37.4 (0.40)	63	-	33.0
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	11.5	83.5	976 (0.38)	46.7 (0.36)	23.9 (0.23)	-	61.2	-
<b>Cape Verde</b>	0.4	37.8	4,863 (0.65)	69.7 (0.75)	73.8 (0.75)	74	-	-
<b>Côte d'Ivoire</b>	16.0	56.4	1,630 (0.45)	47.8 (0.38)	46.8 (0.44)	77	12.3	36.8
<b>Gambia</b>	1.3	69.3	1,649 (0.47)	46.2 (0.35)	36.6 (0.39)	62	59.3	64.0
<b>Ghana</b>	19.3	63.9	1,964 (0.50)	56.8 (0.53)	71.5 (0.62)	64	44.8	41.3
<b>Guinea</b>	8.2	72.5	1,982 (0.50)	47.5 (0.38)	41.0 (0.37)	48	-	40.0
<b>Guinea-Bissau</b>	1.2	68.5	755 (0.34)	44.8 (0.33)	38.5 (0.38)	49	-	48.7
<b>Liberia</b>	2.9	-	-	48.1	54.0	-	-	-
<b>Mali</b>	11.4	69.8	797 (0.35)	51.5 (0.44)	41.5 (0.37)	65	72.8	-
<b>Mauritania</b>	2.7	42.3	1,677 (0.47)	51.5 (0.44)	40.2 (0.40)	37	28.6	57.0
<b>Niger</b>	10.8	79.4	746 (0.34)	45.2 (0.34)	15.9 (0.16)	59	61.4	63.0
<b>Nigeria</b>	113.9	55.9	896 (0.37)	51.7 (0.44)	63.9 (0.58)	57	70.2	34.1
<b>Senegal</b>	9.4	52.6	1,510 (0.45)	53.3 (0.47)	37.3 (0.37)	78	26.3	33.4
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	4.4	63.4	490 (0.27)	38.9 (0.23)	36.0 (0.33)	28	57.0	68.0
<b>Togo</b>	4.5	66.6	1,442 (0.45)	51.8 (0.45)	57.1 (0.59)	54	-	32.3
<b>ECOWAS</b>	224.2	60.0	-	49.9	-	-	-	-

Source: Human Development Reports, UNDP

**BOX 3.3**  
**PROGRESS TOWARDS MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

	<b>Income Poverty</b>	<b>Hunger</b>	<b>Primary Education</b>	<b>Gender Equality</b>	<b>Child Mortality</b>	<b>Access to Water</b>	<b>Sanitation</b>
Benin	T	-	-	-	-	-	H
Burkina Faso	H	T	-	-	H	-	-
Cape Verde	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Côte d'Ivoire	T	H	-	-	T	T	-
Gambia	T	T	H	-	-	-	-
Ghana	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Guinea	H	-	-	-	-	H	H
Guinea-Bissau	T	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liberia	N.A.	T	N.A.	-	T	-	-
Mali	T	-	-	-	-	-	T
Mauritania	H	H	-	-	T	-	H
Niger	T	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nigeria	T	-	-	-	T	-	T
Senegal	H	T	-	-	H	-	-
Sierra Leona	T	T	-	-	H	-	-
Togo	T	-	-	-	H	H	T

**Source:** Human Development Report, 2003

T = Top priority. Includes countries that are in crisis for each goal, which require the most attention in the world.

H = High priority. Includes countries that are at medium-starting levels but facing failed or reversing progress or making very slow progress.

N.A. = Not available

### 3. DECENTRALIZED GOVERNANCE

#### 3.1 Governance

Governance comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which collective decisions are made and implemented, and citizens, groups and communities pursue their visions, articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences.

Among other characteristics, UNDP qualifies the concept of good governance by the following attributes:

- a) Participation: i.e., all men and women have a voice in decision-making;
- b) Transparency: i.e., there is free flow of information;
- c) Equity: i.e., all men and women have an equal opportunity to improve their well-being;
- d) Empowering and Enabling: i.e., all have the ability to pursue legitimate goals, be self-reliant, self-organizing and self-managing; and
- e) Partnership: i.e., involvement of stakeholders in conducting the business of governance at all levels.

These qualities must be and are embodied in the various decentralization programmes that distinguish participatory governance from a centralized approach to development.

### **3.2 Decentralization**

Some analysts have described decentralization as the middle road between centralism and anarchy. This is the transfer of authority and responsibility between the central and subnational institutions of governance. Although experience suggests that decentralization is no guarantee of good governance, many believe that decentralizing governance from the centre to the regions, districts, and local communities, is conducive to good governance.

Concerns regarding central administrative capacity, fiscal constraints and the limited accountability at all levels of government have led African leaders and the region's development partners to place increased emphasis on the importance of decentralization and developing capacity for effective local governance. The other supporting argument for decentralization is the need for improved government effectiveness in the delivery of goods and services, the promotion of revenue collection, the benefits of both enhanced popular participation as a means of making the public sector more accountable, and empowering people previously excluded from the decision-making process.

As a result of these motivations, the past two decades have seen efforts at installing various forms of decentralized systems of development as part of major public sector management reforms in Africa. The forms of decentralization in these countries have ranged from those that are comprehensive in scope and are designed to transfer development planning and management responsibilities, as well as revenue collection authority to local units of government, to those that are more narrowly conceived, just delegating, deconcentrating or divesting administrative authority among subsidiary or counterpart units.

In most of West African countries, particularly in the previously assimilated Francophone countries, the forms of decentralization inherited from the colonial system have remained the mainstay of their administrative structures. However, some of the other West African countries, like Ghana and Guinea, have major programmes of decentralization currently underway. Nigeria has strengthened its federal system by further disaggregating the number of federal states and thus empowering them. The Gambia has the legislative framework for decentralization, but most of it takes the form of deconcentration. Efforts are underway in Sierra Leone to revive decentralization.



### **3.3 Decentralization Examples in West Africa**

#### **Guinea**

Guinea initiated institutional reforms in 1986, initially through the delegation of government authority to local subsidiaries. Legislation and regulations enacted in 1986 and 1990 govern the financial and administrative structures of the local government system (i.e., communes and rural development communities). The local government entities are all financially autonomous with deliberative and executive bodies.

Participation of civil society through a variety of grass-roots organizations (NGOs, cooperatives, professional associations, etc.) has reinforced the decentralization process. Currently, Guinea has 690 local NGOs, 78 foreign NGOs and approximately 4,000 cooperatives and associations. Thus, on the surface, it seems that Guinea has the institutional base for decentralized development management.

However, decentralization efforts in Guinea are faced with a number of major impediments. These include:

- a) Resistance to change in central and local governments;
- b) Inadequate capacity of grass-roots organizations to design, prepare, manage and evaluate development programmes and projects;
- c) Lack of financial capacity; and
- d) High gender inequality in the distribution of decision-making positions. Few women have decision-making power in prefectures and sub-prefectures, and none in the higher local government bodies.

In conclusion, decentralized governance, though a main development strategy in Guinea, is faced with major obstacles.

#### **Ghana**

Ghana has chosen to devolve central administrative and fiscal authority to the sub-government levels. This entails:

- a) Fusion of selected governmental agencies into one administrative unit in the regions, districts and communities;
- b) Divestiture of administrative and fiscal policy authority from the central government to the District Assemblies;
- c) Realignment of functions within the District Assemblies;
- d) Realignment of the functions and responsibilities of the various levels of government, i.e., central, regional, district, etc.; and
- e) Strengthening of capacity at all levels of government to support reforms.

To facilitate District Assemblies' financial resource mobilization and management, the following measures have been instituted:

- a) The Central Government Treasuries in the Districts have been merged into the District Assembly Treasuries to enhance fiscal management authority of the District Assemblies;
- b) District Tender Boards have been established under the District Assemblies to empower their financial management authority; and

- c) Payments for contracts up to a defined threshold have been decentralized to the District Assemblies.

Acknowledging further that financial strength is cardinal to effective local government authority, the Government has ceded a number of locally generated revenue items to the District Assemblies. These include:

- a) Rates (basic, property);
- b) Fees (commercial, civil);
- c) Licences (pets, hotels, alcohol sale, lorry parks);
- d) Business Operating Permits;
- e) Rents; and
- f) Trading Services by the District Assemblies.

Depending on the resource endowment of districts, these sources are active or redundant. Furthermore, the Government has other transfers, including:

- a) District Assemblies Common Fund: i.e., 5% of total national tax revenue shared among District Assemblies in quarterly instalments for infrastructure development;
- b) Share of royalties (timber royalties, minerals development fund) from agencies and companies operating in areas of jurisdiction of the District Assembly;
- c) Education Trust Fund;
- d) HIPC relief transfers; and
- e) Social Investment Fund.

These financial empowerment mechanisms, coupled with legal and administrative reforms, are aimed at strengthening the decentralization process in Ghana. However, as in most African countries, decentralization efforts are facing major constraints; these include:

- a) Resistance to change at the central and local government level;
- b) Lack of physical infrastructure and qualified personnel for decentralized administration;
- c) Inadequate budgetary resources; and
- d) Difficulty in making a transition to people-centred approach, with the result that while the essence of decentralization is to bring administration to the doorsteps of the local people, the society and social groups are marginalized from official decision-making.

While decentralized governance seems to be the dominant logic of the current development administration paradigm, the practice does not depict a total willingness of governments for its full deployment. A major question, then, is whether decentralized governance is an approach whose time has come; if yes, then what are the overriding principles by which a country's progress may be assessed?

#### **4. EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE**

Participation is the process by which stakeholders influence and share control over priority setting, policy-making, resource allocation and programme implementation. Active involvement of national stakeholders in the major stages of the design, implementation and monitoring of activities induces commitment and responsibility for results. Transparency of action by leaders build trust, ownership and support among all stakeholders. However, for participation to be effective, it must be conducted with clearly defined outcomes in mind to guide agenda setting and

corresponding actions; and it must be all inclusive, that is, it should be broad-based, factoring the concerns of all into the decision-making process.

In addition to decentralization, participatory governance also requires a major role be played by civil society organizations. Helping civil society to contribute to the maturation of Africa's polity and economy is the continuing aim of the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation. This Charter views popular participation as "a fundamental right of the people to fully and effectively participate in the determination of the decisions which affect their lives at all levels and at all times".

#### **4.1 Benefits of Civil Society in Governance**

What are some of the benefits of civil society involvement in governance? Governments and official institutions alone cannot manage the challenges of good governance and sustainable development. In particular, good governance requires effective decentralized participation by the governed. Civil society organizations can perform the role of complementing and also monitoring the state. By promoting civil society involvement, governments can ensure that citizens have the means to express their preferences, engage in dialogue with policy makers and influence public decisions. Thus the interests of ordinary people, women, disadvantaged minorities, children, the poor, labourers, etc., are properly factored in policy decisions and resources allocation. Once policies have been concluded, civil society organizations demand accountability in the allocation and management of public resources.

Besides these, some of the other advantages of civil society participation in decentralised governance include:

- a) Government institutions become more transparent, accountable and more responsive to needs at the local level;
- b) Local government capacity for effective management and delivery of basic services are complemented and augmented;
- c) People have greater access to government information, leading to improved institutional transparency. Greater transparency and accountability curtails diversion of scarce public funds from development programmes/projects into private pockets, thus reducing corruption;
- d) Local and central governments have access to increased and improved grass-roots information, which is very essential for timely and effective management in case of disaster/emergencies, in particular;
- e) Greater community supervision leads to improved, equitable and more cost effective delivery of services; and
- f) More people vote in local and national elections, and legislatures become more representative.

The above can have a direct bearing on the quality of life of the masses. In particular, they can lead to a reduction in poverty.

There are several ways in which governments can facilitate their relationship with civil society and thereby maximize the above gains. While the particular country situation is a major influence, a few general principles are pertinent:

- a) Governments should promote voluntarism and acknowledge the validity of the role of civil society;

- b) Governments should have appropriate legislation and official procedures for the registration and public accountability of NGOs and registerable civil society organizations;
- c) Governments at all levels should have appropriate frameworks and mechanisms to facilitate communication and consultation with civil society organizations and to utilize the latter's accumulated experience and expertise in the general policy-making process and in the planning and design of relevant development programmes. This relationship must ensure reciprocal transparency, while nevertheless maintaining the freedom and ability of either party to act independently;
- d) Governments should offer a level playing field to facilitate civil society links to increase the chances of their synergy; and
- e) Governments should support, financially and technically, non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations.

Overall, government can provide the enabling environment: legal, regulatory, fiscal, political and institutional, necessary for the effective harnessing of civil society in Africa.

#### **4.2 Organizational Forms of Civil Society Participation in Decentralized Governance**

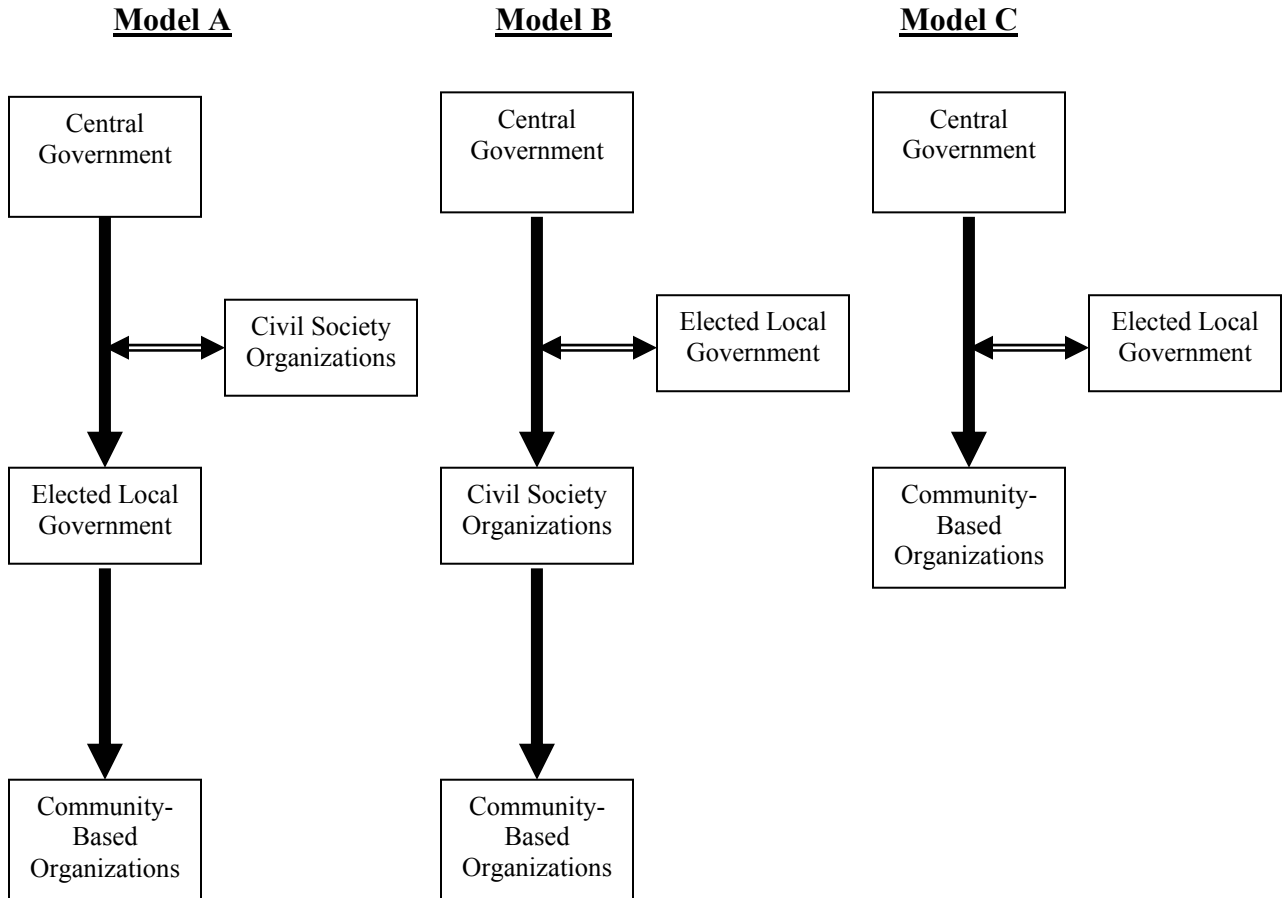
Civil society participation in decentralized governance can take various organizational forms. In addition to the official attitude to civil society and the state of civil society in the country, the main determinant of the participation format is the nature of decentralization adopted. The more notable of these participation arrangements are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

The Figure shows a variety of organizational forms between the central governments or central funding agencies, including donors, local or municipal governments and civil society organizations. In countries where decentralization has become effective, with devolution of resources and functions to local governments, Model A is pre-eminent. In this scenario, development funds flow from the centre to the local governments for onward disbursement to beneficiaries and programmes/projects. Civil society organizations provide support at the community level. This option allows for more coordinated intergovernmental resource transfers and permits resource allocation decisions to be in conformity with broad local priorities. Countries like Ghana and Guinea, which are moving towards devolution, come close to this Model.

Where local government is largely ineffective and civil society is well organized and active, decentralized governance takes the form presented in Model B. Under this arrangement, funds for community development are channelled from the central government or funding agency to civil society organizations, who in turn disburse these resources to community-based organizations or programmes/projects. Civil society organizations have a greater liberty to initiate and implement programmes and activities without necessary recourse to the official structures. Local or municipal governments' role is to provide support in this arrangement. Though this liberal environment may augur well for greater competition among the development organizations, it also has the danger of duplication through overlapping activities, lack of coordination with sectoral plans, non-relevance to national sectoral priorities and possible misapplication of resources. A reflection of this model can be seen in some of the former French colonies, e.g., Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, and Togo. The desertification project in Senegal and the environmental programme in Benin, huge development initiatives, are largely implemented through civil society organizations, with limited coordination from the local government authorities.

**FIGURE 3.1**

**SELECTED MODELS OF PARTICIPATORY ADMINISTRATION**



In Model C, community-based organizations are the major actors in decentralized governance. Grass-roots organizations are involved in consultations, social mobilization and delivery of selected services. This Model mainly applies to major political, economic and security situations, where the direct authority of the central agencies is considered absolutely necessary.

**4.3 Constraints and Limitations of Participation**

Effective decentralized participation does not come easy, especially in nations which do not have the tradition of civil society involvement in matters of power and authority. As such, the participatory process in African countries encounters a number of constraints, including:

- a) The existence of conflicting interests, with differing bargaining powers and limited trust among stakeholder groups;
- b) Insufficient sharing of information between participants in the process, resulting in restrained synergy;
- c) A lack of political will among government agents to allow wide participation due to the fear of loss of power and influence;

- d) Limited time, capacity and finance;
- e) The absence of a culture of participation, in particular the marginalized (women, poor, and minorities) who have no voice either in policy-making or policy implementation; and
- f) A lack of mutual trust between the government/politicians and civil society. Some African leaders view civil society organizations with suspicion, at times as political competitors, and therefore impede their development.

## **5. THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN PRSPS**

### **5.1 Participatory Governance for Poverty Reduction**

A number of poverty reduction initiatives have dominated the development strategies of the region. These span a wide spectrum from policy development, macroeconomic management and programme implementation to monitoring and evaluation. The international community has also embarked on major cross-country initiatives, which aim to define the framework for economic development in the individual countries, with a focus on poverty reduction. These include the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, (PRSPs), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the International Millennium Development Goals, and others. The following discussion demonstrates the implementation of these major initiatives as examples of civil society involvement in decentralized governance for poverty reduction.

### **5.2 Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)**

The new economic development paradigm of the international development community requires all low-income countries receiving debt relief under the highly indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative or concessional loans from the World Bank to develop country-owned poverty reduction strategies as the overriding framework for medium to long-term development. This programme is currently on the agenda of 70 low-income countries, including the majority of sub-Saharan African countries. To date, nearly all sixteen West African countries are at various stages of developing PRSPs. By the end of 2002, the IMF and the World Bank had reviewed either the interim or the substantive PRSPs of Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and a few others in the West African subregion.

The process of developing these blueprints exemplifies a strong commitment to decentralized participatory planning with central roles for civil society. In Ghana, the Government contracted a reputable NGO coalition to lead the participatory process. In Guinea, the Government anchored the process of drafting and implementing the country's poverty reduction strategy on participatory principles. According to the country's Poverty Reduction Policy Statement Letter (February 2000), "participation and ownership are among the key principles that govern the drafting and implementation of the poverty reduction strategy paper". This principle was observed throughout the process. An examination of the PRSPs shows that every country undertook participatory methods in the formulation of their development policies and strategies.

In fact, "participatory methods" is an imperative of the PRSP preparation process. This is expressed in two of its principles as follows:

- a) That the PRSP must be country-driven and owned, basing on broad-based participatory processes for its formulation, implementation and progress monitoring; and
- b) That it must be partnership-oriented, enabling the active and coordinated participation of development partners (bilateral, multilateral, non-governmental) in supporting the country strategy.

These principles are the most important distinguishing attributes of the paradigm shift in development management. Incidentally, they also constitute the main difficulties for the African countries. Due to their socio-political past, individual countries' progress on the two principles has varied under the influence of the following factors:

- a) The type of government and the existence of a democratic culture;
- b) The capacity of national authorities to engage in participatory processes with civil society, the public and key stakeholders; and
- c) The extent to which civil society groups exist and are active among the poor.

The disparities notwithstanding, the experience offers worthy lessons of civil society participation in decentralized governance for poverty reduction. The benefits of the PRSP participatory experience are summarized in Figure 3.2 below.

### **5.3 The Participatory Process of Developing PRSPs**

In this section we describe the participatory process involved in the preparation of PRSPs in two countries, Mali and the Gambia.

#### **Mali**

Mali's PRSP clearly describes the participatory process, which draws from a long tradition of consensus-based policies and strategies. These strategies had hitherto yielded the decentralization policy (1992), the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction (1998), and the National Prospective Study 1999-2025. Participation mechanisms for the PRSP were:

- a) Establishing a broad mechanism for dialogue at both the steering and technical levels;
- b) Involving a wide range of stakeholders representing public administration, civil society, and other development partners;
- c) Making special arrangements to involve representatives of local community administrations;
- d) Conduct of surveys of the poor; and
- e) Organization of seminars, workshops, and video conferences at various stages of the process with different groups on various relevant topics.

The consultation process included two notable elements. First, eleven thematic working groups were established under an overall National Technical Committee to facilitate the participation of sectoral agencies in the PRSP process; and second, national and regional-level consultations were held on the draft PRSP.

Two specific issues emerged early in the participation process: first, insufficient inclusion of civil society concerns, and second, inadequate focus on the private sector's role in generating growth and employment. These were later resolved and incorporated in the PRSP. It acknowledged the need for further work to systematize participation and consensus-building in the management of public affairs and to strengthen and sustain the consultation process with the poor.

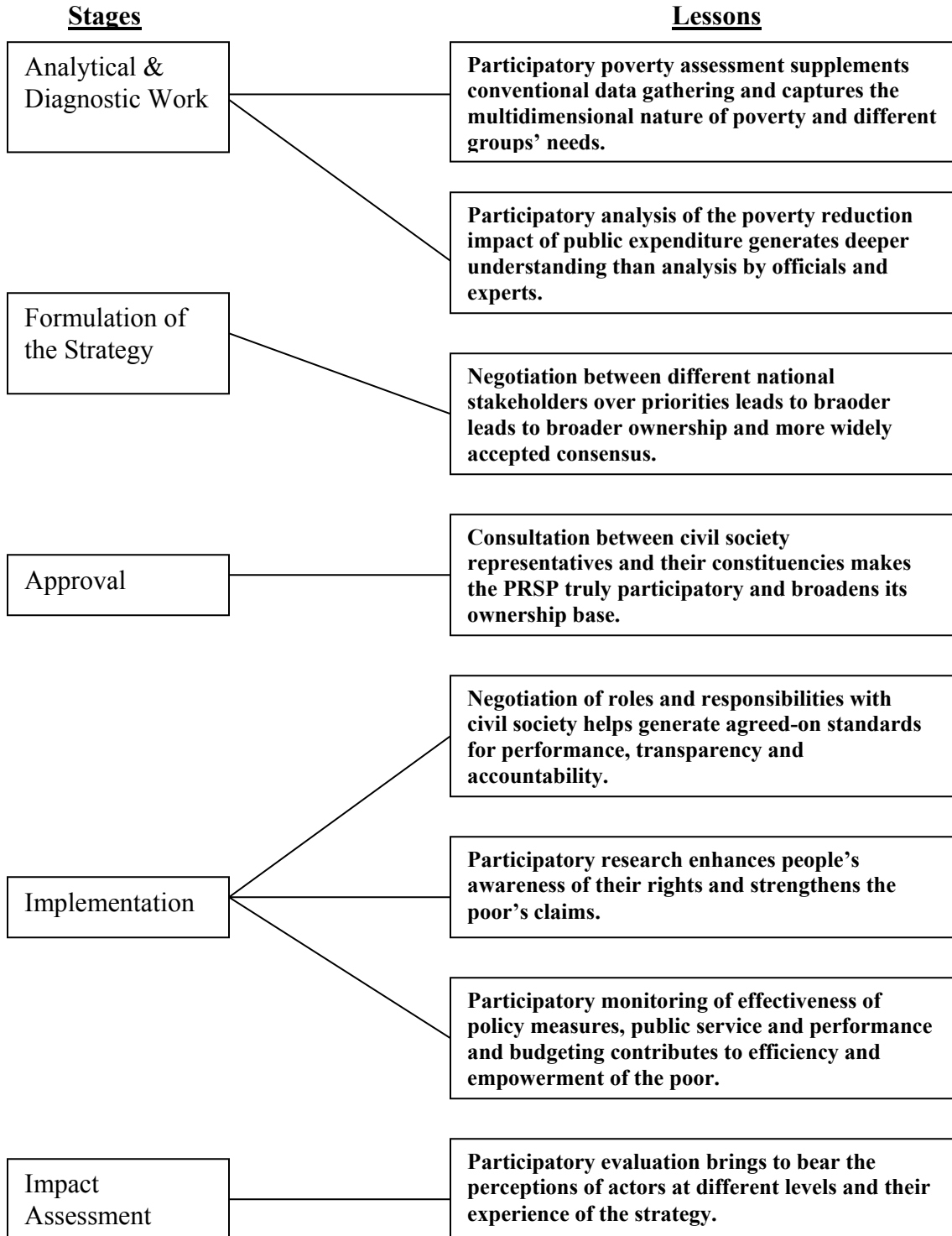
The authorities have started addressing the above concerns by reorienting the working groups and other institutional structures that prepared the PRSP to (i) better incorporate core beneficiary social groups; (ii) strengthen the capacity of civil society to contribute more effectively to sector and macroeconomic policy dialogue; (iii) intensify the consultation process between the

government and civil society and between the government and the private sector; (iv) empower the poor by improving the information, education, and communication programme; (v) extend the PRSP regional committees' mandate to all circles and as many communes as feasible; and (vi) undertake more qualitative surveys, so as to better understand poverty determinants and appropriate strategies from the perspective of the poor. The Government believes that these actions are appropriate for improving the quality of stakeholder participation.



FIGURE 3.2

THE BENEFITS OF THE PRSP PARTICIPATORY PROCESS



## **The Gambia**

The concept of participation in the Gambia is well developed and is seen as an instrument of accountability, empowerment and joint decision-making. The Gambia's PRSP commenced with the launching in November 2000 of a dialogue process to mobilize public participation for preparing the strategy. Among other things, the Gambia's PRSP states that the main objective of participation was "to empower local communities to share control over priority setting in the poverty reduction process". It is important to note that the Gambia's model ensures that the participatory process is not limited to the preparation of the PRSP document only, but also extends to include budget preparation and programme monitoring and evaluation.

Consultation activities for the formulation of the country's PRSP included:

- a) National workshops;
- b) Smaller workshops with non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations;
- c) Direct consultations with the poor through a second round of participatory poverty assessments;
- d) Sector consultative workshops;
- e) Best practice visits; and
- f) A donor roundtable.

A National Dialogue Process, established under an earlier special initiative in 1994, continued to be used as a platform for stakeholders' discussions on poverty. For the first time in the Gambia, the Government held pre-budget consultations with civil society. The results of these consultations informed the 2002 budget. Local authorities facilitated the consultations at divisional, district and ward levels and have been actively involved in discussions on viable alternative poverty reduction programmes within their localities.

The PRSP document acknowledges that although there are still some sensitive good governance issues pending, the level of commitment to participation achieved is an encouraging sign for poverty reduction. Among others, it also admits that the participatory analysis of poverty and social impacts of key policy reforms can assist the Government to design better pro-poor economic policies, more appropriate compensation measures, and promote country ownership of reforms.

### **5.4 Regional Poverty Reduction Strategy**

In recent years, the idea of a regional poverty reduction strategy has engaged the minds of regional bodies. In this regard, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in 2001, embarked on a process to draw up and execute a West African Regional Poverty Reduction Programme. Various consultations have since been held with major stakeholders. Bringing a new dimension into poverty reduction programmes, the initiative aims to:

- a) Give the staff a better understanding of the formulation, content, implementation and monitoring of poverty reduction strategy papers;
- b) Explore the most effective ways of enabling Member States to incorporate the regional dimension of poverty reduction into their national programmes; and
- c) Identify those activities better executed at the regional rather than the national level.

The ECOWAS Secretariat envisages undertaking a number of activities for preparing the regional plan. These include:

- a) Analysis of national poverty reduction strategy papers;
- b) Comparative synthesis of national PRSPs;
- c) Preparation of guidelines on the inclusion of the regional dimensions of poverty reduction in the national PRSPs;
- d) Organization of a meeting of heads of national PRSPs to review progress and fix a time-frame for actions;
- e) Harmonization of concepts and methods for addressing poverty;
- f) Conducting studies to better understand the relationship between regional integration and poverty, and particularly, between integration and economic growth; and
- g) Formation of thematic groups on poverty-related issues.

In effect, the regional strategy directly benefits from the national participatory processes.

### **5.5 New Partnership for Africa's Development and the International Millennium Development Goals**

The next major platform where decentralized participatory methods for poverty reduction have been applied is the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). This initiative reflects the belief of African leaders that they have the responsibility, together with the African people, to address the lack of development and growth in Africa. The main objective is to eradicate poverty by meeting the MDGs.

Currently, NEPAD is at its formative stage. There is vociferous concern about its limited popularization among the African people. Equally of concern is NEPAD's willingness to implement the poverty reduction strategies of the Bretton Woods institutions, when it is evident to most observers that these strategies include the same conditionalities as the dreaded Structural Adjustment Programmes. For NEPAD to be truly home-grown, it must pass the test of popular participation. This is the opportunity to engage the norms of decentralized governance with civil society participation to achieve a truly African poverty reduction framework. It is essential that the African private sector and civil society be mobilized in support of NEPAD. The onus is on the individual African states to popularize NEPAD and create the necessary structures and media for participation in all stages.

Meanwhile, a number of consultative processes have been adopted to develop the organizational and functional structures. Some of these consultative measures are:

- a) Use of leading African knowledge organizations as lead agencies, e.g., ADB, ECA, etc.;
- b) Use of expertise and information of the OAU/AU and its structures;
- c) Engagement of the regional economic communities for identifying priority projects;
- d) Use of identified African expertise;
- e) Utilization of the expertise and information of global knowledge institutions like the World Bank, the IMF, the EU, FAO, UNDP, etc.;
- f) Utilization of existing studies and results of projects and programmes in the various priority areas, which had also been based on the consultative process; and
- g) Organization of workshops and conferences at national, regional and continent levels.

As a result of the above, a fine blueprint, appreciated by the G8, the Bretton Woods institutions and all the donors, may be developed. However, should Africa decide on taking its destiny in its own hands, NEPAD should focus on the establishment of a new social contract based on new alliances of popular forces, including civil society organizations. This will enable the latter to participate in decisions that shape the lives of the poor and achieve people-centred, equitable and sustainable development.

## **6. MAJOR ISSUES AND THE WAY FORWARD**

It is evident from the above discussion that participation, as an instrument of accountability, empowerment and joint decision-making, is gaining grounds in the development management process of West Africa. However, there is need for further work to systematize consensus-building and consultation with the poor.

Though decentralized governance provides the most practical machinery for grass-roots participation in national development, a cross-country analysis reveals a dire shortage of human and physical capacity for a functional decentralization. No amount of intervention by civil society will equate the shortfall, which is a recurrent problem. Governments must therefore make efforts to commit resources to their decentralization programmes.

Having acknowledged social inclusion as essential to decentralized governance for poverty reduction, there is the need to strengthen the capacity of civil society to contribute more effectively to sector and macroeconomic policy dialogue, including determining the initiatives for poverty reduction. However, it has been observed that civil society is still viewed with suspicion in certain areas, and is therefore not fostered by some governments. This attitude must be addressed. What civil society organizations need are legitimization, recognition, consultation, dialogue and political space in which to develop.

The consultative process in decentralized governance for poverty reduction is prudent where there is clarity and understanding of the poverty determinants. For that purpose, governments must commit resources for qualitative surveys, analysis and diagnosis of poverty, which is central to the consultative process.

Women bear the greater brunt of the incidence of poverty in the region. While gender-focused civil society organizations have started to assert themselves in some West African countries, the official bureaucracy is not fully enthusiastic about their agenda. There are a few exceptions. The priorities must begin to be reset to reverse the near exclusion of women from centres of power at all levels of the decentralized strata in economic, social and political spheres.

The effort towards achieving an African blueprint for the continent's renaissance, through PRSPs and NEPAD, is laudable. The fate of this endeavour lies in the extent to which its implementation and advancement will be anchored in the principles of decentralized governance with social inclusion. The future of Africa depends on this paradigm shift.

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# **CHAPITRE IV**

## **DEVELOPPEMENT COMMUNAUTAIRE ET DECENTRALISATION DANS UN CONTEXTE DE LUTTE CONTRE LA PAUVRETE : SYNTHESE DES ENSEIGNEMENTS ET DES ENJEUX POUR LES PAYS FRANCOPHONES DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST<sup>28</sup>**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Les pratiques de développement communautaire et de développement local ont évolué depuis une dizaine d'années. Elles sont de plus en plus liées au processus d'approfondissement du contenu de la gouvernance locale et des stratégies de lutte contre la pauvreté. Elles se traduisent par une plus grande responsabilisation des acteurs locaux de développement (groupements, associations, comités villageois, commissions villageoises de gestion des terroirs, communes, etc.). Le niveau villageois et le niveau communal se sont imposés comme l'échelle de référence pour le lancement et la mise en œuvre des actions de développement à la base. L'approche de développement communautaire qui a été privilégiée pendant plusieurs années semble progressivement évoluer vers l'approche de type développement local, avec l'accélération des processus de décentralisation dans les pays francophones de l'Afrique de l'Ouest. Les approches mises en place sont plurielles et riches du fait de la diversité des outils de planification et du financement décentralisé mis en œuvre dans des milieux naturels différents. Même s'il n'existe pas de pratique unique aussi bien en milieu urbain qu'en milieu rural, la tendance va dans le sens de l'harmonisation progressive (mais de façon timide) des approches en matière de planification et de participation ainsi que de pérennité des mécanismes mis en place pour promouvoir un développement local durable ne marginalisant ni les plus pauvres et ni les groupes minoritaires.

Cette contribution présente une synthèse des analyses présentées par les pays francophones à l'atelier organisé par le Département des Affaires Economiques et Sociales des Nations Unies. Elle met en exergue les éléments de diagnostic et de réflexion sur le développement communautaire engagé dans un contexte d'accélération des processus de décentralisation et d'élaboration des stratégies de lutte contre la pauvreté dans certains pays francophones de l'Afrique de l'Ouest. Elle tente également de dégager les meilleures pratiques de développement communautaire et local et les défis à relever en matière de lutte contre la pauvreté ainsi que l'ancrage de pratiques saines et efficaces de gouvernance locale.

### **2. CONTEXTE SOCIO-ECONOMIQUE DES PAYS FRANCOPHONES DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST**

#### **2.1 Contexte économique et stratégies de lutte contre pauvreté**

La pauvreté urbaine et rurale touche tous les pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest. Les seuils de pauvreté varient d'un pays à un autre. Mais dans l'ensemble, on trouve un peu plus du tiers des populations ouest africaines vivant en dessous du seuil de pauvreté. Cette pauvreté, foncièrement rurale, est souvent synonyme de faible revenu monétaire, de baisse du niveau de l'autoconsommation, de difficultés d'accès au crédit, d'insécurité foncière et de faible couverture des services sociaux.

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<sup>28</sup> Par Moncef KOUIDHI Economiste Consultant auprès des organismes des Nations Unies

Tous les pays se sont dotés, dans une première phase avec l'appui du PNUD, de programmes nationaux de lutte contre la pauvreté et lors d'une deuxième phase (dès l'année 2000) des DSRP dans le cadre des nouveaux rapports de partenariat avec le FMI et la Banque Mondiale.

Les stratégies globales des programmes nationaux de lutte contre la pauvreté au Bénin, au Burkina Faso, au Mali, au Niger et au Sénégal s'appuient fondamentalement sur les politiques sectorielles et visent à mettre en place des actions de proximité qui s'inscrivent dans la problématique de la décentralisation. Certains pays comme le Bénin ont centré leurs programmes sur le développement communautaire. D'autres comme le Sénégal et le Mali ont privilégié l'approche de développement local du fait de la dynamique des processus de décentralisation. Toutes les stratégies adoptées se résument à quatre axes principaux :

- i. Une croissance économique forte et soutenue ancrée sur les systèmes de production des terroirs les plus pauvres et mettant l'accent sur les investissements prioritaires dans le secteur agro-pastoral et dans l'économie urbaine, là où se situent les plus grands potentiels de réduction de la pauvreté.
- ii. Une stratégie d'amélioration et d'élargissement de l'offre des biens et services essentiels aux populations pauvres ainsi que des mécanismes régulateurs d'alerte et de protection des catégories défavorisées de la population. Le problème général à résoudre, au-delà des revenus, est celui de l'élévation du niveau d'alphabétisation, du niveau de scolarisation, et du niveau de couverture des services de santé de base là où se trouvent le plus grand nombre de pauvres (milieu rural et quartiers pauvres du milieu urbain) avec des coûts compatibles avec les ressources des pauvres et celles de l'Etat.
- iii. une maîtrise des instruments de la politique économique basée sur l'utilisation optimale des ressources du budget de l'Etat. Cela implique un effort d'interrogation sur les types de liaison à établir entre les politiques macro-économiques et le développement social. Plus particulièrement, il s'agit d'examiner le budget général, les grandes masses budgétaires de chaque secteur, leur évolution sous l'angle des objectifs sélectionnés pour le développement du bien être des populations, de l'équité sociale et de la diminution de la pauvreté.
- iv. Des appuis pour renforcer les capacités institutionnelles. La complexité de la pauvreté avec ses multiples dimensions entraîne des réponses variées en fonction des groupes, du milieu et des régions géographiques concernées. Cela implique la mise en place d'un système de suivi et d'évaluation simple et efficace.

## **2.2 Les problématiques de décentralisation**

La décentralisation est un phénomène récent en Afrique de l'Ouest et un processus en cours d'approfondissement. Avant 1990, les villes et villages africains, dans presque tous les pays, ont été marqués par le mode de gestion et de régulation de l'Etat qui était omniprésent à tous les échelons du territoire. Dans ce contexte, les collectivités locales disposaient de peu d'autonomie politique et financière. Les évolutions récentes, avec l'accélération des processus de démocratisation ont placé les enjeux de la bonne gouvernance à l'échelle locale. La responsabilisation des acteurs locaux de développement a entraîné une mutation de certaines fonctions de l'Etat. Chacun s'accorde à reconnaître la nécessité d'associer plus étroitement les populations à la gestion des affaires qui les concerne. Cela s'est traduit par le foisonnement de réformes des institutions de l'Etat et des collectivités locales dans tous les pays d'Afrique. Les Cadres Stratégiques de Lutte contre la Pauvreté, élaborés de façon participative, ont renforcé les processus de décentralisation. Mais les réformes touchant les collectivités locales restent encore inachevées et insuffisamment accompagnées de moyens financiers conséquents.

La commune qu'elle soit urbaine ou rurale, a été retenue comme échelon territorial de la décentralisation dans la majeure partie des pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest. Ce niveau qui est supposé être proche des problèmes des populations et qui est confronté à leurs préoccupations et leurs conflits d'intérêt, paraît à même de proposer des stratégies communes aux différents acteurs locaux pour faire converger leurs actions vers l'intérêt collectif. Il constitue le lieu d'apprentissage de la programmation locale et de l'exercice de la démocratie directe dans la gestion des affaires locales.

Les collectivités locales érigées peuvent être classées en deux catégories selon leur degré d'autonomie politique et financière. La première est constituée de communes dotées de la personnalité morale et de l'autonomie financière dont les responsables sont élus au suffrage universel. C'est le cas du Bénin, de la Guinée, du Mali et du Sénégal. La seconde catégorie est constituée de communes n'ayant ni autonomie politique ni financière comme celles du Burkina Faso et du Niger. Toutefois, ces deux derniers pays sont bien engagés dans un processus dynamique d'achèvement de leurs réformes. Pour le Burkina Faso, les textes actuellement en vigueur ont adopté une approche progressive de communalisation du territoire.

Les collectivités locales d'Afrique de l'Ouest ont des compétences inégales selon les pays. Toutefois, elles sont toutes confrontées à des responsabilités de gestion de leur patrimoine et de fournitures des services de qualité aux populations. Elles sont chargées de gérer les infrastructures, les écoles, les centres de santé et les services publics locaux comme la collecte des ordures ménagères et l'entretien de la voirie et des pistes de desserte. A l'exception de certains pays (Sénégal) et uniquement pour certains centres urbains secondaires, les communes ne disposent généralement pas de services techniques propres et autonomes. Elles s'appuient généralement sur les services déconcentrés de l'Etat qui sont eux-mêmes mal préparés aux métiers des collectivités locales. A ces premières contraintes structurelles s'ajoute le manque de formation des élus locaux qui sont livrés dans la plupart du temps à eux-mêmes. En milieu rural, la situation est plus critique du fait du fort taux d'analphabétisme. Malgré la prise de conscience de certains élus de la nécessité de se doter d'organisations propres comme l'Association des Présidents des Communautés Rurales au Sénégal pour défendre leurs intérêts et améliorer leur niveau de formation, les communes restent encore dépendantes des initiatives de l'Etat et des appuis ponctuels extérieurs.

La faiblesse des ressources financières est la règle dans toutes les collectivités locales de l'Afrique de l'Ouest. Leurs recettes comportent des impôts et taxes administrés par les services financiers de l'Etat. Parmi ces impôts figurent la patente et l'impôt foncier qui sont les deux principales recettes des budgets locaux au Sénégal, au Mali et au Burkina Faso.

Les budgets locaux représentent un faible pourcentage, en dessous de 4 %, des finances publiques. Dans certains pays comme le Sénégal ce taux se situe entre 5 et 8 %. Mais le constat général est marqué par la baisse, en termes réels, des subventions de l'Etat depuis le transfert de certaines compétences aux collectivités locales. Ainsi par exemple au Sénégal, les subventions correspondant aux compétences transférées dans les domaines de la santé et de l'éducation ne représentaient en 1998 que le tiers des dotations assurées précédemment par les ministères techniques. L'épargne des collectivités locales est inexistante et leurs recettes couvrent à peine les dépenses de fonctionnement. Les principales contraintes résident dans un système d'organisation et de gestion des ressources des collectivités locales complexe et centralisé, interdisant une maîtrise correcte de leurs recettes et donc une possibilité de mettre en place un système de gestion prévisionnelle.



En matière d'exercice du pouvoir, les relations entre les administrations centrales et les collectivités locales sont encore plus marquées par les missions de contrôle que par celles d'appui-conseil. La tutelle est, dans certains pays, plus forte qu'avant surtout dans les domaines budgétaires où les préfets et les sous-préfets gardent leurs pouvoirs de contrôle a priori. C'est le cas du Burkina Faso, du Niger et du Sénégal.

Par ailleurs, malgré la démocratisation des communes, très peu de contre-pouvoirs ont été établis entre les différents acteurs du développement local. Le tissu associatif est très marginalement associé au processus de planification et de programmation des investissements locaux et à la gestion des équipements collectifs. En milieu rural, leur association s'apparente plus à une consultation des pouvoirs coutumiers ou religieux qu'à un véritable partenariat de développement au niveau local. Il n'existe pratiquement pas de pratiques ouvertes parce que les enjeux de la démocratie locale mettent en scène une pluralité de pouvoirs. Mais cette situation commence à changer depuis 2000 avec la généralisation des approches participatives.

### **3. CADRE CONCEPTUEL DU DEVELOPPEMENT COMMUNAUTAIRE DANS LES PROCESSUS DE LUTTE CONTRE LA PAUVRETE**

Depuis les années 90, avec l'aggravation de la pauvreté dans les pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, les débats sur les méthodes et moyens de lutte contre la pauvreté se sont intensifiés. Plusieurs approches et méthodes ont été mises en avant pour mieux cibler les catégories de populations les plus touchées par le phénomène de précarisation et de marginalisation. Elles se sont succédées ou ont été mises en œuvre de façon concomitante. Parmi ces approches, il y a le développement à la base (à travers la réalisation de micro-projets avec l'utilisation parfois des techniques à haute intensité de main-d'œuvre), le développement communautaire (en mettant la communauté au centre de toutes les décisions), le développement local où les collectivités locales naissantes étaient le pivot de tout le processus de programmation et le développement selon une approche territoire, basée sur une solidarité inter communautaire dans un espace géographique marqué par des bases productives complémentaires. Toutes ces approches ont un point commun qui est la responsabilisation des populations locales dans tout le processus de programmation et de mise en œuvre des actions de lutte contre la pauvreté selon des systèmes d'intermédiation différents (groupements, communauté, collectivité et sous-région). Les projets de décentralisation se sont inspirés de ces approches pour ajuster les outils et les modalités de transfert des compétences et des ressources.

#### **3.1 Contenu et portée du développement communautaire**

L'approche communautaire est fondée sur l'autonomisation des communautés villageoises dans la conduite de leurs actions de développement et d'organisation des services de base. Cette approche vise à offrir de nouvelles opportunités de création des richesses surtout pour les plus exclus des sphères productives et sociales. Elle vise aussi une meilleure efficacité dans la gestion des services de base. Le postulat de départ de cette approche communautaire réside dans le rôle moteur des leaders porteurs de changement au sein des communautés. Cela sous-entend que toute intervention externe doit être appropriée par les forces endogènes des villages selon des méthodes participatives permettant aux communautés d'être responsables de la programmation du développement de leurs localités.

Les concepts de base de l'approche communautaire sont :

- i. La communauté : elle est constituée d'un « ensemble de personnes définies comme groupe social vivant autour d'un idéal et d'intérêts communs ». Son existence est fondée sur une

solidarité d'intérêts et de compromis. A cela s'ajoute la communauté de traditions et parfois la notion d'affiliation de sang. Dès lors plusieurs communautés peuvent exister : communautés villageoises, communauté urbaine, communauté familiale, etc.

- ii. La collectivité : la collectivité suppose une reconnaissance des compétences juridictionnelles, de tutelle, de contrôle et financières. A la différence de la communauté qui exprime la notion de solidarité, la collectivité devient effective sous l'effet de la réglementation. Ainsi la commune peut être définie comme « une collectivité territoriale où s'exerce une bonne partie du Gouvernement local par le système électif ».
- iii. L'unité communautaire de développement : ce niveau (Unité Communautaire de Développement, UCD) correspond principalement au village ou quartier de ville. Il traduit la nécessité de restructurer des réseaux de pouvoir en de nouveaux organes de décisions et de gestion. L'UCD est « une unité de décision dont se doteront les communautés pour une meilleure gestion de leur processus de développement durable ». Son statut juridique obéit aux lois réglementant les associations.
- iv. Le développement communautaire : ce type de développement est défini comme un processus participatif initié par une population ou une unité sociologique pour identifier, planifier et exécuter un ensemble d'activités socio-économiques visant la satisfaction de leurs besoins de base.

Les séquences de la planification communautaire sont basées sur :

- i. L'information et la formation : les premières activités sont centrées sur l'information sur la démarche et les séquences en vue de permettre aux villageois une meilleure appropriation des mécanismes participatifs du développement.
- ii. Le diagnostic communautaire : le diagnostic participatif au niveau des villages est conduit généralement par un planificateur villageois qui assure les responsabilités d'animation, de coordination et d'élaboration des documents de planification. Des ONGs ou d'autres structures apportent des appuis ponctuels aux planificateurs villageois.
- iii. La restitution et la validation : la restitution des documents de planification en langues locales est assurée dans le cadre des assemblées villageoises qui déterminent leurs priorités de développement.
- iv. La mise en œuvre : les modalités de mise en œuvre des micro-projets n'obéissent pas à une formule particulière. Elles sont déterminées en fonction des contraintes d'exécution technique locale.

Plusieurs pays ont accordé une importance capitale à ce développement communautaire sous plusieurs formes. Certains pays comme le Burkina Faso et le Sénégal ont mis l'accent sur les projets de gestion de terroirs. D'autres comme le Bénin ont adopté une approche sous la forme d'un Programme National de Développement Communautaire suivi des projets pilotes dans certaines régions. Tous les projets se distinguent par le caractère glissant de la programmation des actions du fait que les priorités sont ajustées en fonction des évaluations participatives menées annuellement par les populations. L'accent a été mis sur le processus d'appropriation des démarches et outils de développement en vue à la fois d'éviter la marginalisation des groupes vulnérables et d'inscrire les dynamiques communautaires dans un mouvement d'autonomisation durable.

Au cours de ces dernières années, dans plusieurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, les praticiens du développement ont développé plusieurs outils de planification des actions de lutte contre la pauvreté à l'échelle des communautés rurales selon différentes approches participatives. Malgré l'absence d'études d'impact et de capitalisation des meilleures pratiques, les méthodes appliquées peuvent être caractérisées par quatre grandes phases.

La première phase a pour objet d'établir une mise en confiance et de créer les conditions d'un dialogue grâce à un travail de "connaissance participative" du milieu en vue de permettre une "appropriation", par la population, des travaux conduits en commun. Durant cette phase les populations, organisées en groupes homogènes (femmes, jeunes, éleveurs, immigrants, etc.), apprennent à discuter ensemble sur leurs perceptions des problèmes en particulier des causes de régression de leur milieu et de la fragilisation de certaines couches. L'inclusion sociale des couches marginalisées s'amorce lors de cette phase dans la mesure où l'adhésion des populations aux solutions proposées est souvent tributaire du climat de confiance créé.

Au cours de la seconde phase, les médiateurs aident la population à effectuer un diagnostic des divers problèmes qui se posent à la communauté ou à tel ou tel groupement spécifique au sein de la communauté. Ils aident ensuite à analyser les solutions qu'il est possible d'envisager pour affronter les divers problèmes identifiés. Cette phase se conclut par des choix de solutions acceptables par les intéressés.

La troisième phase est celle de la programmation des priorités établies. Les moyens nécessaires sont également analysés et les ressources requises sont évaluées.

La quatrième phase est celle de l'exécution des actions. Elle implique essentiellement des procédures de suivi des contrats relatifs aux diverses actions.

### **3.2 Développement communautaire et décentralisation**

La décentralisation, définie souvent par le transfert de l'autorité et de la responsabilité de l'Etat à des niveaux subalternes ainsi qu'à des communautés, est un moyen efficace pour responsabiliser les populations dans la maîtrise de leur développement local. Les communautés villageoises peuvent jouer un rôle plus actif et bénéficier plus rapidement des retombées des actions de lutte contre la pauvreté si la décentralisation est synonyme de mécanismes participatifs et de prise de décisions effectives dans les choix des priorités des communes. Mais il serait trop ambitieux de prétendre que la décentralisation démocratique peut réduire considérablement la pauvreté que les effets des politiques macro-économiques provoquent. La décentralisation ne peut pas se traduire par un meilleur système de fourniture des services de base si le transfert de responsabilités ne s'accompagne pas d'un transfert des ressources financières correspondantes et d'un développement des capacités techniques locales, avec un mode de gestion qui place les communautés villageoises au cœur du système.

Le développement communautaire peut tirer un grand avantage de la décentralisation dans la mesure où cette dernière peut encourager une participation plus importante à travers des espaces de dialogue et de concertation plus ouverts. La décentralisation peut contribuer à offrir aux groupes exclus du développement des opportunités d'activités nouvelles génératrices de revenus et de reconnaissance sociale.

La décentralisation renvoie aux relations de pouvoirs entre gouvernants et gouvernés dans la gestion des affaires locales. Elle renvoie également à la capacité des communes à garantir les services de base surtout pour les plus pauvres. L'exercice du pouvoir est ainsi inséparable de la question de la pauvreté. En effet, celle-ci découle d'une marginalisation des groupes socio-économiques majoritaires des sphères économique, politique et sociale. Développer des mécanismes de gestion de la gouvernance locale revient, dans ce contexte, à réussir à créer des opportunités nouvelles qui favoriseraient l'accès au pouvoir économique et politique de toutes les catégories de la population. Car la décentralisation aide non seulement à rapprocher du processus de prise de décisions les personnes qui sont les plus marginalisées par la précarité de leur

condition d'existence, mais elle ouvre aussi des perspectives de mise en place des systèmes de planification participative et des procédures de gestion transparente et efficiente des ressources financières.

La question qui se pose est donc : comment la décentralisation, dans laquelle les communautés villageoises sont au centre des décisions, peut contribuer à réduire la pauvreté ? On peut dire que la décentralisation qui institue un mode de gestion de proximité à l'échelle des communautés et un système d'imputation des dépenses peut être efficace si elle respecte au moins trois principes :

- i. le principe de participation à la prise décision : cela va de l'élaboration des projets jusqu'à leur suivi ;
- ii. Le principe du bon fonctionnement de l'institution communale : ce principe implique que la commune se dote d'une organisation administrative et technique interne efficace. Cela devrait se traduire, d'une part, par des réunions périodiques des organes de concertation, de prise de décisions et de coordination des actions de développement, et d'autre part, par des capacités techniques d'offre de services de base de qualité ;
- iii. le principe d'obligation contractuelle : ce principe devrait concerner non seulement les communes mais également les populations locales dans la gestion de certaines infrastructures communautaires. Pour les communes, des contrats-programmes entre les conseils communaux et les communautés villageoises peuvent être des instruments plus appropriés pour assurer la durabilité des services de base.

#### **4. PRATIQUES DE DEVELOPPEMENT COMMUNAUTAIRE ET LOCAL**

Les pratiques de développement communautaire et local sont plurielles dans les pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest. Près d'une cinquantaine de projets répondant aux critères de lutte contre la pauvreté et pour la décentralisation sont opérationnels au Bénin, au Burkina Faso, en Guinée, au Mali, au Niger et au Sénégal. Le volume global des financements mis à la disposition des communautés villageoises ou des communes rurales dans ces pays est de l'ordre de 700 millions de \$ U.S. Le ratio d'investissement annuel par habitant varie entre 0,70 à 6 \$ selon les projets et les pays.

Les niveaux d'intervention et les formes d'appui varient d'un projet à un autre. Leur principal point commun réside dans le choix stratégique du niveau communal ou de la communauté villageoise pour appuyer la maîtrise d'ouvrage locale. Mais les projets et les programmes divergent sur les moyens à mettre en œuvre pour l'acheminement des fonds ainsi que sur les formes d'association et d'implication des acteurs locaux (élus, populations, associations, services techniques, etc.). Les structures de concertation et de planification varient également d'un projet à l'autre. Trois situations peuvent être distinguées. Certains projets ont mis en place des structures extra communales type Comité de Développement Local, Comité Villageois de Développement pour initier le processus d'élaboration et de négociation des actions prioritaires. D'autres projets ont privilégié la mise en place de groupes de travail (Groupe Technique de Travail) à l'échelle de chaque communauté rurale pour initier le processus de planification et réaliser les micro-projets. Enfin, d'autres ont fait le choix de renforcer les organes internes des communes en réactivant leurs commissions spécialisées.

Trois types d'expériences peuvent être distinguées clairement :

- i. pratiques centrées sur les dynamiques communautaires : Bénin, Burkina Faso et Niger ;
- ii. pratiques d'appui au développement communal : Sénégal et Mali ;
- iii. pratiques mixtes (développement communautaire et développement communal) : Guinée.

Dans tous ces pays les pratiques de développement à la base ont été largement influencées, depuis 1996, par le rythme de mise en place de nouveaux textes régissant les collectivités locales. Dans certains pays comme le Sénégal et le Mali, la mise en place d'organes élus des communes a introduit d'autres modes de gestion et l'émergence de nouvelles formes de gouvernance locale. Les communautés villageoises fonctionnant auparavant selon des schémas plus autonomes étaient obligées de se repositionner pour tenir compte des nouvelles compétences transférées aux communes dans la gestion du développement local.

#### **4.1 Burkina Faso**

Pays sahélien connaissant des conditions climatiques incertaines pour ses activités agricoles, le Burkina Faso avec ses 12 millions d'habitants en 2002 se distingue par la vulnérabilité structurelle de son secteur agricole et pastoral qui emploie 90 % de la population. Le pays se caractérise par son faible et fragile niveau de développement humain. L'accumulation des retards dans les secteurs sociaux et la lente évolution des structures socio-culturelles en milieu rural expliquent en grande partie ce faible niveau de développement humain. L'analphabétisme dominant au sein des populations rurales et le faible niveau de couverture en services de santé de base maintiennent une large frange de la population rurale dans des systèmes de production de subsistance. La pauvreté touche massivement toutes les couches de la population. Elle n'a pas cessé de croître passant de 44,5 % en 1994 à 45,3 % en 1998 et à 46,4 % en 2003. Elle correspond à un seuil de 82.672 Fcfa en 2003 contre 72.690 F CFA et 41.099 respectivement en 1998 et 1994. Cette pauvreté n'est pas discriminatoire puisque l'écart entre la pauvreté des hommes et celle des femmes n'est pas très significatif (un point d'écart en défaveur des hommes). Cette pauvreté a progressé plus rapidement en milieu urbain mais est massive en milieu rural. La progression de la pauvreté urbaine varie selon les villes.

Depuis 1991, le Gouvernement a entrepris plusieurs réformes économiques et institutionnelles visant à libéraliser l'économie et à améliorer le fonctionnement des institutions démocratiques. Le Gouvernement a présenté en 1995 à ses partenaires au développement une Lettre d'Intention de Politique de Développement Humain Durable (LIPDHD) pour la période 1995-2005 dont les principaux objectifs visaient le renforcement de la sécurité économique et politique des burkinabè en particulier en milieu rural. Cette orientation a été prolongée en 1999 par le début d'une réflexion approfondie sur l'avenir du pays dans le cadre de l'étude prospective « Burkina Faso 2025 » et l'élaboration du premier CSLP en 2000. Le deuxième CSLP pour la période 2004-2006 est en cours d'élaboration. En matière de gouvernance, le pays s'est doté, en 1999, d'un Plan National de Bonne Gouvernance. La gouvernance locale se focalisant sur la décentralisation a été impulsée par le Gouvernement dès 1993, avec la création de la Commission Nationale de Décentralisation. Elle est marquée fondamentalement par la promulgation des premiers textes organiques en 1998. La décentralisation initiée et encouragée par le Gouvernement se caractérise par le pragmatisme et la progressivité. Enfin, l'appui aux initiatives communautaires a été marqué très tôt (dès 1990) par la promotion des projets de gestion des terroirs et tardivement par les actions d'appui au développement local sous plusieurs formes.

##### **□ Progressivité du processus de décentralisation**

Les collectivités locales au Burkina Faso se sont mises en place par étapes, en fonction du niveau des moyens disponibles et de l'objectif de maîtrise du processus de responsabilisation des populations dans la gestion de leurs affaires locales. Mais le rythme a été lent en raison des réticences de plusieurs administrations et finalement, les ambitions du projet de décentralisation ont été réduites et se sont traduites par la faiblesse des mesures d'accompagnement pour la mise

en place des communes, particulièrement en milieu rural. Toutefois l'état des lieux du processus de décentralisation présente aujourd'hui certaines avancées significatives :

- i. l'adoption par l'Assemblée Nationale de trois Textes d'Orientation de la Décentralisation (TOD) qui créent un cadre d'ensemble permettant la généralisation progressive de la mise en œuvre de la réforme, et d'une Loi de Programmation ;
- ii. la mise en place d'instruments d'appui institutionnel, techniques et financiers aux communes que sont le Fond de Démarrage des Communes (FODECOM) et le Service d'Appui à la Gestion et au Développement des Communes (SAGEDECOM) ;
- iii. la création de 49 communes urbaines, dont 33 sont entrées en septembre 2000 dans leur deuxième mandat ;
- iv. les communes urbaines ont créé en 1996 leur association, Association des Municipalités du Burkina (AMB), pour défendre leurs intérêts et initier des actions de sensibilisation sur la notion de citoyenneté ;
- v. la fixation en 2002 de deux niveaux de décentralisation : la commune et la région (13 régions).

Cependant, d'importantes actions sont encore à initier pour assurer une mise en œuvre cohérente et efficace des TOD. Ce sont notamment l'évaluation des ressources nécessaires à l'exercice effectif des compétences à transférer aux communes et le renforcement de la participation de la société civile et de tous les acteurs de développement présents au niveau local (société civile).

La lenteur dans la clarification des textes et du statut des zones rurales a ralenti le processus d'approfondissement de la décentralisation et de la démocratie locale. Plusieurs questions restent encore en veilleuse comme la notion de commune rurale, le financement du développement local, le partage des compétences et des ressources entre l'Etat, les communes et les régions. La promotion d'une nouvelle citoyenneté apte à favoriser une gestion participative et responsable des collectivités est encore balbutiante.

#### □ Les appuis aux initiatives communautaires

Le cadre de référence pour la promotion des initiatives communautaires et locales en milieu rural est la Lettre de Développement Rural Décentralisé (LPDRD) approuvée par le Gouvernement en 2000 dans le cadre du Programme National de Gestion des Terroirs (PNGT). Il s'inscrit dans une vision prospective du développement rural. Les populations sont appelées à intervenir plus activement dans les processus de prise des décisions relatives aux investissements locaux tout en plaçant la gestion des ressources naturelles à la base des activités productives.

Pour la mise en œuvre de cette stratégie, des principes ont été arrêtés :

- i. la responsabilisation des communautés de base pour la maîtrise d'ouvrage des investissements locaux à travers leurs structures représentatives selon un processus itératif de planification locale où les populations sont appelées à s'exprimer librement sur leurs priorités de développement ;
- ii. le développement du partenariat en impliquant les populations à toutes les phases de la planification de leurs programmes de développement selon le principe du co-financement des projets avec une contribution des populations sous diverses formes (financière, apports en main-d'œuvre) ;
- iii. la dynamisation des cadres de concertation à différents niveaux en vue de limiter les incohérences et rechercher les complémentarités. Cette concertation devra concerner tous

les acteurs : communautés villageoises, communes rurales, services techniques, ONGs, société civile, etc.

- iv. la finalité du développement à la base devrait tendre vers une fongibilité des fonds et des procédures de gestion de tous les bailleurs de fonds.

## 4.2 Bénin

Malgré la croissance économique soutenue de ces cinq dernières années le taux de pauvreté au Bénin n'a pas baissé. Selon les enquêtes ménages de 1995 et 2000, il a connu au contraire une légère augmentation. Le seuil de pauvreté monétaire, évalué à partir des enquêtes sur les dépenses des ménages, se situait à 129.890 FCFA en 2000. La pauvreté touchait ainsi près de 30 % de la population du Bénin. Elle reste fondamentalement rurale avec 37 % de la population rurale vivant en dessous du seuil de pauvreté soit près de 1,5 millions de personnes (22 % de la population totale du Bénin). Si le taux de pauvreté est resté plus ou moins stable entre 1995 et 2000, la sévérité du phénomène s'est accrue, signe d'une plus grande inégalité entre les pauvres. Les départements les plus touchés sont le Borgou (48 %) et le Couffo (47,5 %).

Les déterminants de la pauvreté varient d'un département à un autre. Toutefois certains se retrouvent dans tous les départements en particulier :

- i. la grande taille des ménages : la pauvreté augmente proportionnellement à la taille des ménages. Les ménages de plus de 6 personnes affichent des incidences de pauvreté plus élevées que ceux de moins de 3 personnes ;
- ii. l'âge du chef du ménage : les ménages les plus pauvres sont ceux qui ont un âge supérieur à 35 ans ;
- iii. le faible niveau d'instruction : les ménages ayant un certain niveau d'instruction sont relativement moins pauvres que ceux qui n'ont aucune instruction. En 2000, l'incidence de pauvreté des ménages qui n'ont aucun niveau d'instruction était de 31 % contre 20 % pour ceux qui ont suivi l'enseignement secondaire et plus ;
- iv. le genre des chefs de ménages : l'incidence de la pauvreté était relativement plus faible pour les ménages ayant à leur tête une femme, avec un taux de pauvreté masculine de 49 % contre 38 % pour les femmes dans le Borgou.

Face à l'aggravation de la pauvreté, plusieurs initiatives ont été prises, en particulier l'élaboration d'un Plan National de Développement Communautaire (PNDC), les projets d'appui aux initiatives locales et l'initiative d'opérationnalisation du Développement Humain, avec le concours du PNUD et du DAES, dans la région du Nord du Bénin, le Borgou. Le PNDC, malgré la volonté du Gouvernement de concrétiser toute la stratégie élaborée, n'a pas été mis en œuvre en raison de l'accélération du processus de décentralisation et de la préférence des bailleurs pour une approche spatiale plus large que le niveau villageois. Dans ce cadre précis, une dizaine de projets de type développement local a été initié depuis 1998 à travers tout le territoire du pays. A cela s'ajoute de façon originale le projet « initiative d'opérationnalisation du DHD dans le Borgou ».

Le département du Borgou a été retenu comme la zone de concentration de l'initiative d'opérationnalisation du DHD dans le Borgou en raison de la profondeur et de l'intensité de la pauvreté dans ce département. La pauvreté dans ce département du Borgou touche près de la moitié (48,5 %) des ménages. Cette pauvreté se manifeste par les difficultés de nombreux ménages d'accéder aux produits alimentaires et leur marginalisation des circuits productifs.

Cette initiative s'inscrit dans une nouvelle approche pour apporter de nouveaux éclairages sur les stratégies adaptatives et de survie des pauvres ; elle permet de mieux définir les stratégies et

moyens adéquats pouvant aider les populations les plus pauvres à mieux s'insérer dans le circuit économique et social. L'opérationnalisation du DHD, qui en est dans sa phase pilote depuis juillet 2002, ne s'attaque pas encore à toutes les causes de la pauvreté. Elle vise, d'une part, à accroître les opportunités d'accès des plus démunis au marché et de s'en sortir à partir de leurs potentiels actuels et de leur propre créativité, et d'autre part, à rendre exécutable le DHD en valorisant les initiatives locales.

La stratégie d'opérationnalisation du développement humain durable (DHD) dans le Borgou a deux sources d'inspiration. Avant tout, il s'agit de la dimension humaine du DHD faisant ainsi de la croissance économique, non une finalité, mais un moyen, une étape vers la réduction de la pauvreté. A cette dimension s'ajoute l'exigence de création d'un environnement favorable pour l'élargissement des opportunités des populations pauvres dans le cadre d'un système des choix prioritaires de développement plus participatif. Cette exigence introduit la décentralisation comme un élément important du paradigme DHD. Ensuite, la deuxième source d'inspiration est le bilan-diagnostic "DHD" du département qui a mis en évidence ses forces et ses faiblesses. Les principales faiblesses résident dans le fort déficit en matière d'éducation et une forte dépendance vis-à-vis du coton.

La stratégie de mise en œuvre distingue deux horizons d'actions : le moyen et le court terme.

A moyen terme, la stratégie DHD – Borgou propose de lever les contraintes lourdes qui pèsent sur le Département et constituent des obstacles au DHD. Parmi ces contraintes, il y a les infrastructures, le faible niveau d'éducation qui limite les capacités de création des populations, la faible diversification de la production et la bonne gouvernance au niveau départemental.

A court terme, il s'agit d'abord de résoudre les problèmes pressants qui ne nécessitent pas des investissements lourds et coûteux. Il s'agit principalement de cibler les populations à la fois très démunies et mobilisées pour sortir de leur situation, de promouvoir le développement communautaire, de valoriser les initiatives endogènes réussies et leur diffusion auprès des communautés demandeuses et de diversifier les productions locales.

La démarche globale est fondée essentiellement sur (i) l'identification des initiatives communautaires exemplaires basées sur la participation de tous les membres à toutes les étapes de l'initiative communautaire, (ii) l'autonomie financière pour éviter toute dépendance vis-à-vis de l'extérieur, (iii) la pérennité et la reproductibilité pour les initiatives considérées comme exemplaires, c'est à dire celles qui restent adaptables dans des contextes différents. Cette démarche ne se limite pas au développement d'initiatives productives exemplaires. Elle concerne aussi des initiatives réussies dans des domaines non directement productifs tels que l'éducation, la santé, l'énergie, l'eau et la communication.

La mise en œuvre de la stratégie DHD du Borgou s'appuie sur une équipe départementale d'animation mise en place en juillet 2002 dans le cadre d'une phase pilote dont la démarche consiste à identifier et mobiliser les communautés qualifiées de "demandeuses" qui sont à la fois défavorisées et motivées. Ces communautés dites "demandeuses" sont mises au contact des initiatives réussies et peuvent ainsi établir des liens avec les communautés promotrices de ces initiatives. Il s'agit d'utiliser les capacités créatrices de ces dernières pour mobiliser les communautés demandeuses, de manière à rompre avec la logique d'offre, d'assistance et de dépendance qui caractérise les approches classiques de lutte contre la pauvreté. Au niveau des communautés offreuses, trois types de capacités sont identifiées : (i) les capacités d'organisation, de participation et de gestion dans un cadre communautaire ; (ii) les capacités techniques, c'est à dire, le savoir-faire technique indispensable à la maîtrise des activités productives ; (iii) les



techniques de micro-crédit. Les communautés promotrices d'initiatives réussies sont appelées à transmettre leurs compétences aux communautés demandeuses.

### 4.3 Guinée

La Guinée compte près de 7,5 millions d'habitants répartis inégalement sur un territoire de 246.000 Km<sup>2</sup>. Malgré ses potentialités agricoles et minières ainsi que les efforts de redressement de l'économie nationale depuis 1986, la Guinée reste fondamentalement marquée par un niveau de développement humain faible. En effet, avec un produit national brut par tête de 540 \$ et des indicateurs sociaux en dessous de la moyenne de l'Afrique, la Guinée est classée parmi les pays les plus pauvres. La pauvreté touche près de 45 % de la population. Le taux de scolarisation oscille autour de 52 %, avec des taux plus faibles pour les filles. Malgré cette situation de pauvreté, les indicateurs socio-économiques se sont nettement améliorés durant la décennie 90. Cela s'est également traduit par l'élaboration d'une stratégie de développement humain qui s'est concrétisée dès 1996 par diverses initiatives d'appui au développement à la base comme celle de la Banque Mondiale (Programme d'Appui aux Communautés Villageoises). Auparavant, la Guinée (en 1993) s'est dotée de Plans de Développement Régionaux qui ont servi au Gouvernement pour mobiliser les ressources financières nécessaires aux actions de développement dans les régions.

Au niveau des collectivités locales, après une période de tests de la viabilité du niveau de la Communauté Rurale de Développement (CRD) en tant qu'acteur central pour la fourniture de services socio-économiques de base en milieu rural, des élections locales ont été organisées en 1992 sur l'ensemble du pays. L'organisation territoriale a été structurée autour des CRD qui sont composées de villages et de districts. Mais de nouvelles élections locales n'ont jamais été organisées en raison des tensions socio-politiques au plan interne et au plan extérieur. C'est dans ce contexte économique et socio-politique, marqué par des avancées significatives sur le plan des institutions et de la conception des politiques sectorielles, que différentes initiatives d'appui aux communautés de base ont été lancées sous plusieurs formes, avec l'appui de la Banque Mondiale, l'Union Européenne, le Canada et le PNUD. Une douzaine de projets a touché diversement les communautés rurales et les quartiers de ville en vue de promouvoir des activités génératrices de revenus et d'offrir aux populations les plus démunies de meilleures conditions d'accès aux services de base.

#### □ De l'approche micro-réalisations à la promotion du développement local participatif

L'appui aux communautés de base en termes d'amélioration de la qualité des services sociaux et de création de revenus en Guinée a démarré au début des années 90 sous forme d'initiation aux micro-réalisations dans tous les secteurs. L'approche, basée sur des projets d'utilité locale répondant aux besoins les plus pressants des groupes vulnérables aussi bien en milieu rural qu'en milieu urbain, visait la rapidité et l'efficacité des actions qui sont de nature à rendre les populations plus autonomes dans leur vie quotidienne. L'approche préconisée s'appuyait sur les méthodes participatives pour l'identification des priorités et la gestion des infrastructures réalisées à travers des comités de gestion. La cohérence des actions et la coordination des partenaires étaient assurées au niveau préfectoral et national à travers des antennes régionales et une coordination nationale. Parmi les projets initiés il y avait principalement :

- i. Le programme national de micro-réalisations (1987 – 1990) : avec l'appui du PNUD et sous la supervision du Secrétariat à la Décentralisation, il a été la première expérience de mise en œuvre de la planification contractuelle décentralisée. L'objectif de ce programme était de tester la capacité d'intervention des populations dans le processus de

développement. Les micro-réalisations devaient favoriser l'utilisation des matières premières locales et l'emploi de la main-d'œuvre locale. La participation aux réalisations se faisait sous forme des contributions volontaires en espèces ou en nature. Le programme comportait 178 projets dans les 33 préfectures du pays pour un coût global d'environ 10 millions US \$.

- ii. Le Programme d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base (PAIB) : avec l'appui du PNUD le programme a été lancé en 1994 pour un coût initial d'environ 900.000 \$ US. Son objectif était de renforcer la capacité d'auto-promotion des communautés de base et leur collaboration avec les structures nationales et les organisations non gouvernementales (ONG) impliquées dans le développement local participatif. Ses résultats ont été mitigés pour des raisons de confusion entre les subventions et le crédit et de lourdeur des procédures administratives.

Dès 1997, l'approche communautaire a succédé à l'intervention des micro-réalisations en approfondissant les outils d'appui. Les principales innovations résidaient dans l'introduction de la planification pluriannuelle et contractuelle. Tout en impliquant les Communautés Rurales de Développement, premier niveau de décentralisation dans le processus de programmation locale, les mécanismes initiés accordaient une place prépondérante aux populations dans les choix de leurs priorités en raison de la faible représentativité des élus locaux. Plusieurs comités ad hoc ont été mis en place pour s'assurer du caractère participatif des projets retenus et du suivi de l'exécution des projets. Parmi ces comités, il y a les comités de développement, les comités de suivi des infrastructures et les comités de transparence pour veiller à l'utilisation judicieuse des fonds alloués aux communautés. Cette démarche a créé une nouvelle dynamique d'intérêt des populations pour leurs actions de développement. Elle a aussi amélioré la gestion des fonds d'investissement par les élus locaux du fait que les populations locales, à travers les comités mis en place, pouvaient à tout moment exiger les justificatifs des fonds dépensés selon les prévisions arrêtées avec les bénéficiaires. Parmi ces projets il y a :

- i. Le Programme d'Appui et de Renforcement des Collectivités Décentralisées de Guinée (PARC) : exécuté par l'ONG canadienne CECI, ce projet couvre treize CRD : 12 en Moyenne-Guinée et 1 en Basse Guinée. Son objectif vise l'amélioration des capacités de gestion et de mobilisation des ressources communautaires par des programmes de formation et d'assistance technique répondant aux besoins de chaque CRD ciblée.
- ii. Le Programme d'Appui aux Communautés Villageoises (PACV) : démarré en 1998 et d'une durée de 12 ans, ce programme vise le renforcement du processus de décentralisation au niveau politique, administratif et fiscal ainsi que le renforcement des capacités des Communautés Rurales de Développement à se prendre en charge en participant pleinement à la conception, à l'élaboration, à l'exécution et au suivi des plans de développement communautaire. Il se distingue par son approche participative dans le cadre de l'élaboration des Plans locaux de Développement des CRD. Sa mise en œuvre est assurée par des prestataires de services extérieurs selon une approche contractuelle assurée par les CRD elles-mêmes.
- iii. Le Projet de Développement Intégré en faveur de la femme et de la jeune fille : appuyé par l'UNICEF dès 1994, le projet intervient dans sept préfectures de la Moyenne Guinée et de la Haute Guinée : Labé, Pita, Dalaba, Mamou, Faranah, Dabola Dinguiraye. Il a assisté quarante collectivités décentralisées de base en milieu rural avec comme objectif principal l'amélioration des conditions de vie des femmes en allégeant leurs tâches quotidiennes à travers la mise en place des infrastructures de base (points d'eau, latrines, lavoirs, etc.) et l'équipement des groupements féminins pour la réalisation des activités génératrices de revenus (saponification, teinture, maraîchage etc.).

#### □ Enjeux et défis de la décentralisation

L'approche participative mise en œuvre dès 1998 à travers les projets les plus récents s'avère tout à fait pertinente dans la mesure où elle a su s'adapter progressivement à l'évolution des institutions locales avec l'élection des élus locaux dès 1992. Le changement d'échelle de programmation passant du niveau terroir ou villageois à celui de la CRD (commune) a permis de déplacer toutes les décisions au niveau des organes des CRD au détriment de différents comités. Cette approche a permis (i) de mieux cerner les besoins de tous les villages selon une vision commune de développement de l'espace communal, (ii) de hiérarchiser les priorités villageoises et inter villageoises dans un esprit de solidarité communautaire, (iii) de favoriser de meilleures conditions d'appropriation des programmes de développement et (iv) d'atteindre un certain niveau d'efficacité des actions menées.

Malgré ces avancées, l'expérience de la Guinée reste inachevée du fait :

- i. de l'existence très limitée d'actions pluriannuelles dont le financement est acquis ;
- ii. de la faiblesse des ressources locales pour le financement des micro-réalisations ;
- iii. de la faible articulation entre les activités de l'Administration locale et celles de l'Administration centrale ;
- iv. que la question de la pérennisation des acquis des projets est très faiblement prise en compte.

#### **4.4 Sénégal**

Le Sénégal est l'un des pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest qui a très tôt engagé des réformes institutionnelles visant à mettre en place des collectivités locales plus proches des préoccupations des populations.

Parallèlement à cette dynamique de mise en place des collectivités locales avec des organes élus au suffrage universel, l'Etat a initié en 1998, le Programme de Lutte contre la Pauvreté (PLP). En 2002, le Sénégal a élaboré un Document de Stratégie de Réduction de la Pauvreté (DSRP), selon une démarche participative. Le processus d'élaboration du DSRP a intégré l'apport des régions à travers les consultations régionales. Sa mise en œuvre sera décentralisée et fera l'objet d'un suivi et d'une évaluation au niveau régional.

Ce contexte de clarification institutionnelle concernant les compétences des collectivités locales et l'affirmation de la régionalisation des DSRP a favorisé le développement de plusieurs initiatives de financement des Plans Locaux de Développement centrés sur la lutte contre la pauvreté. L'ensemble des initiatives opérationnelles appuyant la dynamique locale de développement et les initiatives communautaires aussi bien en milieu urbain qu'en milieu rural sont au nombre de 12 mobilisant près de 130 millions \$. Le montant touchant directement les investissements locaux en milieu rural est de l'ordre de 90 millions \$ soit un montant global moyen d'investissement par an de 80.000 \$ par communauté rurale. Pour le milieu urbain, les financements alloués sont de près de 70 millions \$ pour 40 communes urbaines. Les niveaux d'intervention et les formes d'appui varient d'un projet à un autre. Leur principal point commun réside dans le choix stratégique du niveau communal, mais les modalités d'allocation des fonds aux communes et aux communautés diffèrent selon les objectifs recherchés.

❑ Spécificité et profondeur du processus de décentralisation

Un des aspects du processus de décentralisation au Sénégal a été d'instaurer les communautés rurales dès 1972. L'année 1996 constitue un tournant dans le processus de décentralisation, avec la promulgation du dispositif législatif régissant les collectivités locales et la régionalisation. Avec la création de la région ayant le statut de collectivité locale, le Sénégal compte 378 collectivités (48 communes, 317 communautés rurales et 10 régions) locales. Cette évolution répond à deux préoccupations :

- i. adapter, avec l'aggravation de la pauvreté, les institutions aux exigences du développement économique et social. Il s'agit principalement de faire des collectivités locales le cadre de cohérence, de sélection et d'exécution de certains types d'investissements publics pouvant répondre rapidement aux besoins essentiels des communautés de base ;
- ii. approfondir le processus de décentralisation en substituant le contrôle centralisé a priori par le contrôle de légalité a posteriori.

Ce contexte a permis au système de planification d'évoluer pour aider les collectivités locales à disposer des outils nécessaires à la programmation de leurs actions de développement. Le cadre légal de planification locale s'est affirmé au fur et à mesure avec la mise en place des communautés rurales. Le Centre d'Expansion Rurale a accompagné cette dynamique dans le cadre de l'appui de la Fondation Adenauer. La démarche de planification qui a permis la réalisation de près de 320 plans locaux de Développement (PLD) visait essentiellement à rationaliser les investissements locaux et à transférer progressivement la responsabilité de la planification du développement aux élus locaux et aux différents acteurs locaux (sous-groupes socio-professionnels, techniciens, associations, etc.).

En matière de financement du développement local, l'essentiel des ressources propres des collectivités locales provient de la fiscalité locale qui représente 60 % des recettes budgétaires des communes et des communautés rurales. Pour les communautés rurales, la taxe rurale qui constitue la principale recette est soumise à plusieurs aléas en particulier aux fluctuations de revenus des paysans et à la complexité des procédures de son recouvrement. Cette situation les a mises en position de dépendance financière de l'Etat surtout pour les investissements. Toutefois, l'Etat appuie les collectivités locales à travers les dotations de fonctionnement et le Fonds d'Equiperment des Collectivités Locales (FECL).

❑ Impacts des projets axés sur la décentralisation et la lutte contre la pauvreté

L'expérience du Sénégal est riche en pratiques de développement local et communautaire. Trois types de projets peuvent être distingués :

- i. projets de renforcement des capacités des acteurs locaux en particulier les élus ;
- ii. projets de promotion de Fonds de Développement Locaux ;
- iii. projets d'appui aux initiatives communautaires.

Parmi les initiatives les plus connues, il y a :

- i. le Projet d'appui à la Décentralisation et au Développement Local (PADDEL) qui est opérationnel depuis janvier 1998 dans le cadre de l'appui de la Coopération Française. Le PADDEL vise à accompagner les réformes de l'Etat en matière de décentralisation (formation des élus et appui à l'administration locale) ;

- ii. le Programme d'Appui aux Communes (PAC) dont l'objectif est de stimuler l'effort de redressement des communes urbaines et de soutenir leur effort d'investissement ;
- iii. le projet Fonds de Développement Local (FDL) de Kédougou qui a pour objectifs de contribuer au renforcement des capacités de gestion des collectivités locales et d'appuyer les initiatives privées entreprises par des groupements de base à travers des subventions et des micro-crédits ;
- iv. le Projet d'appui à la décentralisation en milieu rural (PADMIR) dont l'objectif est le développement et l'amélioration de la gouvernance locale à travers une augmentation de l'investissement socio-économique et un appui à la réforme du système de planification et du financement décentralisé ;
- v. le Programme national d'Infrastructures rurales (PNIR) dont les objectifs s'articulent autour du renforcement des capacités des communautés rurales, de la mise en place d'un fonds d'investissement local pour financer les infrastructures de base et la mise en place d'un programme d'actions prioritaires.

Tous les projets mis en œuvre utilisent comme outil de planification les Plans Locaux de Développement. Les outils de financement dominant sont les fonds locaux sous forme soit de Fonds d'Investissement Local soit de Fonds de Développement Local. Le ratio de financement varie de 2,5 \$ (PADMIR et PSIDEL) à 5 \$ (PNIR) par habitant et par an.

L'évolution vers la responsabilité des communes et des communautés rurales est marquée par :

- i. la stratégie du PNIR de responsabiliser les communautés villageoises à conduire toutes les opérations de passation de marchés concernant leurs micro-projets ;
- ii. l'attitude de certains projets (PADEL) de confier délibérément la conduite du processus d'élaboration des PLD aux Conseils Ruraux en leur laissant toute la latitude et la responsabilité dans le choix de leurs prestataires de services ;
- iii. la volonté du PADMIR de confier la gestion des fonds d'investissement aux Conseils Ruraux à travers le circuit financier du Trésor ;
- iv. la liberté laissée aux Conseils Ruraux dans le département de Kédougou (FDL Kédougou) de programmer annuellement leurs subventions en fonction de leurs priorités et de leurs capacités à mobiliser la contrepartie financière.

## **5. ACQUIS ET NOUVEAUX ENJEUX DU DEVELOPPEMENT COMMUNAUTAIRE**

Les expériences d'appui au développement communautaire et au développement local avec l'émergence des collectivités locales dans les pays francophones de l'Afrique de l'Ouest sont riches en approches participatives et en défis pour l'avenir du développement communautaire. Les défis majeurs résident dans les mutations des institutions locales et les outils de financement décentralisé, avec la régionalisation progressive des DSRP et l'approfondissement des processus de décentralisation dans la perspective d'une meilleure gouvernance locale. Les DSRP récemment mis en place ont axé leurs stratégies sur le développement des capacités des communautés de base qui sont appelées à intervenir plus activement à toutes les étapes des actions de lutte contre la pauvreté. L'implication des populations dans ce nouveau processus a tendance à prendre plusieurs formes selon les pays. Mais, avec l'accélération du mouvement de décentralisation, les collectivités locales selon des schémas différents s'imposent parmi les principaux acteurs locaux, pour la conduite des processus d'expression des priorités et la mise en œuvre des projets locaux de développement.

Les pratiques de développement communautaire à travers les projets communautaires et les projets de gestion de terroirs ont permis d'affirmer la place des communautés villageoises dans

les stratégies de lutte contre la pauvreté en les plaçant comme acteurs et non comme sujets de développement. Ce changement d'échelle d'analyse et d'intervention a permis le développement des pratiques contractuelles au niveau de l'exécution des projets là où les populations négocient les conditions de mise en œuvre de toute action visant à améliorer leur niveau de vie. Il a également fait émerger des leaders locaux pour la conduite des négociations et la mise en œuvre des actions définies. Enfin, ce changement lié au développement des approches participatives a ouvert de nouvelles opportunités d'insertion des groupes marginalisés dans le circuit de prise de décisions et dans les choix des actions de lutte contre la pauvreté.

Les meilleures pratiques de développement communautaire ont permis aux différents projets de décentralisation (surtout au Sénégal, au Bénin et au Burkina Faso) d'introduire des innovations pour tenir compte de la participation des populations dans l'élaboration des plans locaux de développement. Mais malgré ces innovations, les projets d'appui au développement communautaire et local ont multiplié les organes ou les structures techniques d'intermédiation entre les populations et les élus locaux dans le souci de s'assurer de l'implication effective des populations villageoises dans les choix des investissements locaux. En l'absence de règles claires, la plupart des projets ont dû, pour exprimer leurs besoins, travailler à l'émergence de représentants villageois à l'image des constructions institutionnelles, bâties par leurs différents documents de projets, en vue de garantir une meilleure participation des populations à l'identification des problèmes de développement et à l'établissement de leurs priorités d'actions. La modalité de sélection des représentants des populations est essentiellement l'élection par consensus. L'élection par vote au bulletin secret est rare.

Tous les projets mis en œuvre ont introduit la dimension temporelle dans le système de programmation des micro-projets communautaires ou communaux. Ils ont adopté plusieurs documents de planification : Plans Locaux de Développement au Sénégal, Plans de Développement Villageois/plans communaux au Bénin et Plans de gestion de terroirs au Burkina Faso. Ces Plans de développement, malgré leur faible maîtrise par les élus locaux et par les populations, sont potentiellement un outil de rationalisation des investissements locaux, une plate-forme de mobilisation des ressources et un cadre de référence pour la responsabilisation des acteurs locaux de développement.

Les outils de financement dominant dans les principaux projets sont les fonds locaux sous forme soit de Fonds d'Investissement Local soit de Fonds de Développement Local. Les critères d'accès varient d'un projet à un autre. Le plafond de contribution de la part des bénéficiaires varie selon la nature des investissements et se situe entre 5 et 20 %. En général pour tous les projets la non mobilisation de la contrepartie à temps retarde de plusieurs mois la réalisation des investissements. La situation est marquée surtout par l'absence d'harmonisation des taux de contribution sous forme de code de financement modulant le taux selon la nature des projets et la catégorie des acteurs concernés (collectivités locales, groupements, etc.).

La responsabilité des communautés de base a toujours été timidement acceptée par les projets et les services publics en charge du conseil aux élus et aux producteurs paysans. Aujourd'hui, elle est devenue nécessaire avec les approches participatives et le transfert des compétences au profit des collectivités locales. L'évolution vers la responsabilité des communes et des communautés villageoises est marquée par :

- i. l'attitude de certains projets au Sénégal de confier délibérément la conduite du processus d'élaboration des Plans Locaux de Développement aux Conseils Ruraux en leur laissant toute la latitude et la responsabilité dans le choix de leurs prestataires de services ;

- ii. la volonté de certains projets au Sénégal et au Mali de confier la gestion des fonds d'investissement aux Conseils Ruraux ou communaux ;
- iii. la liberté laissée aux Conseils communaux et villageois au Sénégal, Guinée et Bénin d'instaurer un système d'allocation des fonds selon des critères de performances des communautés et des communes.

Les larges et intenses discussions qui ont été menées par les participants de l'atelier de Dakar au mois de juillet 2003 touchant les principaux thèmes liés au développement communautaire dans un contexte d'accélération des processus de décentralisation en Afrique de l'Ouest ont soulevé plusieurs interrogations liées aux points suivants :

- i. L'implication des populations à travers plusieurs techniques de communication dans les choix des actions de développement communautaire a élargi le champ d'insertion des couches les plus marginalisées. La tendance actuelle va dans le sens de l'émergence d'une maîtrise d'ouvrage locale à travers une plus grande responsabilisation des collectivités locales et des communautés villageoises dans l'élaboration, la maturation et l'exécution de leurs programmes et leurs projets. La participation est au centre des préoccupations de tous les intervenants qui appuient les initiatives à la base. Sa prise en compte, à tous les niveaux, dans tous les processus de planification et d'exécution est une dimension importante pour toute stratégie d'appui au développement à la base. La question qui s'est posée était de savoir comment promouvoir la participation à l'échelle locale ? Cette orientation a besoin d'être mieux précisée par des stratégies de communication adaptées à chaque pays selon les milieux urbain et rural et selon les communautés villageoises concernées.
- ii. Le processus de décentralisation initié dès les années 1990 s'est traduit par des expériences pilotes en matière de gestion municipale en milieu urbain et d'expérimentation de certains manuels de procédures de gestion et d'organisation administrative dans quelques communes rurales. Mais l'appropriation du processus de décentralisation par les acteurs eux-mêmes constitue un défi majeur à relever pour les prochaines années. L'organisation actuelle des communes offre des possibilités aux populations locales d'exercer leurs pouvoirs en matière de gestion de leur développement local.
- iii. Le transfert des compétences n'a pas été suivi automatiquement par de nouvelles ressources financières conséquentes. Les Etats ont commencé à allouer certaines dotations financières correspondant aux compétences transférées ; mais ces transferts sont en deçà des besoins effectifs des services transférés. La perception qu'ont les populations rurales de la vocation et de la mission des institutions communales est très faible. Les populations discernent difficilement le niveau de gestion villageois et le niveau inter-villageois. Les conseillers ruraux ne maîtrisent pas parfaitement le contenu des textes et discernent difficilement leurs attributions spécifiques par rapport aux représentants de l'Etat. L'ancrage de l'institution communale dans la vie quotidienne des populations apparaît comme un axe stratégique pour rendre les communes plus fonctionnelles et responsables de leur développement.
- iv. Le développement local ou communautaire apparaît comme un processus qui met en relation une diversité d'acteurs ayant des stratégies différentes. Cela nécessite la coordination et la concertation de tous ces acteurs. Les espaces de dialogue regroupant le secteur privé et les organisations de base de la population sont presque inexistantes. Pour permettre une vraie responsabilisation de tous les acteurs locaux, ces espaces de dialogue sont nécessaires pour garantir l'efficacité des actions de développement.
- v. La création et le développement des capacités locales constituent des initiatives à généraliser, pour améliorer le niveau de participation de toutes les parties prenantes à la mise en œuvre des programmes de développement et de décentralisation. Il faudrait renforcer les capacités de tous les acteurs du développement local, et promouvoir les projets qui valorisent leur partenariat et le partage des responsabilités.

- vi. La bonne gouvernance locale nécessite une politique de déconcentration plus effective et un approfondissement de la politique nationale de décentralisation en termes de démocratie locale et de moyens financiers conséquents. Elle implique forcément l'obligation faite aux élus locaux de rendre compte de la gestion des affaires publiques.
- vii. L'objectif également pour les prochaines années est de tendre vers une fongibilité des fonds, des procédures de gestion et d'administration simples pour que les maîtres d'ouvrage (communautés villageoises et communes) s'approprient des actions de développement. Actuellement chaque bailleur de fonds met en place son dispositif financier pour acheminer les fonds vers les collectivités locales et les communautés villageoises.



# **CHAPITRE V**

## **DEVELOPPEMENT COMMUNAUTAIRE ET DECENTRALISATION : PRESENTATION D'ETUDES DE CAS<sup>29</sup>**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Depuis le début des années 90, l'accélération des processus de mutations politiques a ouvert des nouvelles voies porteuses d'espoir pour les populations des pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest qui connaissent un niveau de pauvreté de masse. Le legs de la colonisation, marquée par une forte tradition centralisatrice a beaucoup entravé la mise en œuvre de politiques de développement conséquentes et de bonne gouvernance. L'histoire du développement des pays de la sous-région, longtemps caractérisée par des systèmes politiques fermés, nous enseigne que depuis les années 1960, la mise en œuvre des multiples projets de développement a donné des résultats mitigés. Les échecs sont nombreux et les succès rares ou incertains, malgré les potentialités et les importantes ressources financières utilisées. Il a été souvent mentionné que l'absence de responsabilisation effective des populations à la base constituait l'une des principales causes de ces échecs successifs. Tirant les leçons de ces échecs, la volonté politique s'est clairement affichée pour lutter autrement contre la pauvreté à travers notamment la mise en œuvre d'approches participatives. Cette tendance traduit les limites des politiques d'ajustement structurel qui étaient fortement marquées par leur caractère technocratique.

Cette contribution se propose de situer les éléments de débat sur l'approche communautaire et la décentralisation dans une perspective de stratégies nationales de lutte contre la pauvreté. Dans un premier temps, il sera présenté le contexte d'évolution de cette problématique dans les pays francophones de l'Afrique de l'Ouest. Ensuite, un éclairage sur le concept de développement communautaire et de son utilisation dans la lutte contre la pauvreté sera abordé. Cette clarification sera suivie d'une présentation d'études de cas concernant le Burkina Faso, le Mali et le Niger. Enfin, la contribution tentera de dégager quelques leçons utiles pour l'amélioration des approches et des outils qui sont de nature à renforcer les stratégies d'amélioration de la gouvernance et des conditions de vie des populations pauvres.

### **2. CONTEXTE SOCIO-ECONOMIQUE DES PAYS FRANCOPHONES DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST**

Depuis l'indépendance des pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, la majorité des Gouvernements a toujours fait du secteur rural la priorité des priorités. Aujourd'hui on constate que des progrès ont été enregistrés dans le secteur du développement rural mais ils restent néanmoins limités au regard des moyens importants mis en œuvre. En effet, les conditions de vie des populations rurales se dégradent davantage ; ces populations sont toujours confrontées à de multiples problèmes parmi lesquels :

- i. la détérioration des conditions climatiques marquée par la baisse de la pluviométrie, la sécheresse endémique, etc.;
- ii. la dégradation des ressources naturelles se traduisant par une destruction du couvert végétal, la réduction de la fertilité des sols, une érosion intense des sols, etc.;
- iii. la croissance démographique galopante et la forte pression animale entraînant une occupation maximale des terres et la disparition des jachères ;

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<sup>29</sup> Cette contribution a été préparée par le consultant Claude Ouatarra.

- iv. l'occupation anarchique de l'espace, aggravée par d'importantes migrations des populations, source de nombreux conflits ;
- v. les mouvements désordonnés de transhumance du bétail et l'exacerbation de la concurrence pour l'utilisation des ressources naturelles entraînant des tensions sociales ;
- vi. le déphasage entre les législations foncières (coutumière et moderne) et les réalités actuelles du pays ;
- vii. la difficile coordination des actions sur le terrain due au cloisonnement des multiples institutions concourant au développement rural.

La crise économique, les déficits sociaux, l'aggravation de la pauvreté et la crise de légitimité des actions de l'Etat ont conduit les Gouvernements à reconsidérer au début des années 90 leurs politiques et méthodes de gouvernance. C'est dans ce contexte historique que les mouvements de démocratisation de la vie publique ont permis aux populations d'exprimer leurs revendications pour une plus grande participation dans la gestion des affaires publiques. La décentralisation s'est alors imposée dans les débats pour l'initiation d'un autre mode de gestion des actions publiques en vue d'opérer de réels changements dans la vie locale des populations.

### **3. CONCEPT DU DEVELOPPEMENT COMMUNAUTAIRE ET SON UTILISATION DANS LA LUTTE CONTRE LA PAUVRETE**

Selon les sources, les pays ou les courants de pensée, le développement communautaire se décline suivant diverses appellations : développement local, gestion des terroirs, développement rural décentralisé, etc. Toutes ces appellations qui caractérisent des visions différentes dès le départ tentent aujourd'hui de décrire une situation unique, celle de la responsabilisation totale des populations dans la conception et la mise en œuvre des actions de développement. Le développement communautaire n'est pas un concept nouveau (Cf. Katalyn Kolosy, horizon local, 1997). C'est vers la fin des années 1950 que prend forme la théorie du développement endogène (Cf. John Friedmann et Walter Stöhr). Pour ces deux auteurs, c'est une approche volontariste axée sur un territoire restreint, qui conçoit le développement comme une démarche partant du bas, et qui privilégie les ressources endogènes. Cette approche fait appel aux traditions et potentialités locales et insiste particulièrement sur la prise en compte des valeurs culturelles et sur le recours à des modalités coopératives. L'approche du développement communautaire ou local repose ainsi sur une démarche volontaire d'acteurs se réunissant sur un territoire à taille humaine pour envisager l'avenir de leur territoire. Cela est conduit en synergie avec d'autres niveaux d'administration et d'autres échelons politiques de la nation. Les acteurs œuvrent à l'amélioration des conditions de vie de leur territoire, à travers notamment, le développement des activités de production, de santé, d'éducation, d'emploi et d'approfondissement de la gouvernance locale.

Les avancées de la démocratie dans la plupart des pays d'Afrique de l'Ouest et la généralisation dans tous ces pays de politiques de stabilisation macro-économique et d'ajustement structurel, ont mis à l'ordre du jour un retrait progressif de l'Etat. Il s'est traduit par un transfert des fonctions opérationnelles et d'un certain nombre de services d'appui aux niveaux intermédiaire et local, aux organisations de producteurs et aux organisations de la société civile. Ces évolutions ont créé un contexte favorable à une approche participative du développement rural et ont rencontré un accueil très favorable de la part des populations qui souhaitent être les acteurs de leur propre développement en participant activement à la conception, au suivi et à l'évaluation des politiques/programmes/projets au niveau local.

Le retrait de l'Etat a ainsi ouvert un espace pour le déploiement des actions des autres acteurs du développement rural. L'approche du développement communautaire se présente comme l'une des voies les plus sûres pour accompagner le processus de décentralisation. Elle permet à la

collectivité à la base de s'exercer à la démocratie, à la responsabilité et à l'esprit d'initiative. Elle appelle aussi à la réflexion sur la méthode. La réussite d'un tel processus dépend de l'éducation civique assurée aux femmes, aux jeunes et aux adultes.

#### **4. PRESENTATION DE QUELQUES ETUDES DE CAS**

##### **4.1 Le cas du Burkina Faso**

###### **4.1.1 Les outils et moyens d'appui au développement communautaire en milieu rural**

L'un des textes de référence visant à clarifier le cadre légal de développement des capacités de gestion à l'échelon local en milieu rural au Burkina Faso, est la Lettre de Politique de Développement Rural Décentralisé (LPDRD). L'ensemble des projets et programmes de développement du monde rural mis en œuvre dans l'ensemble du pays s'appuie sur cette stratégie. Il s'agit d'approfondir le contenu de la gouvernance locale avec des préoccupations qui visent à mieux responsabiliser les populations locales dans la gestion de leur développement. Parmi ces programmes, il y a le deuxième Programme National de Gestion des Terroirs (PNGT2).

###### **4.1.1.1 Présentation générale du PNGT2**

Le Programme National de Gestion des Terroirs a été initié en 1986. Après une opération pilote (1986 à 1990) qui a permis d'initier des actions en matière de gestion de terroirs et de développement communautaire, la première phase du programme s'est déroulée de 1992 à 1998.

Tenant compte des leçons tirées de cette première phase, ainsi que du contexte politique et macro-économique, le Gouvernement a initié un second programme (le PNGT2) dont l'objectif global a été redéfini dans le sens d'un approfondissement des mécanismes participatifs et des outils d'appui au développement local. Le PNGT2 vise à approfondir les approches d'appui au développement à la base tout en s'inscrivant dans le processus de décentralisation. La seconde phase couvre les 45 provinces du pays en privilégiant deux niveaux : l'échelle des communautés villageoises et le niveau provincial. Il s'inscrit dans le mouvement de décentralisation amorcé dans le milieu rural en vue de contribuer plus efficacement à la réduction de la pauvreté rurale et à la promotion d'un développement durable. A cet effet, le programme conjugue simultanément trois types d'actions :

- i. Le développement des capacités en organisation et gestion des villages et groupes de villages.
- ii. L'amélioration des conditions de vie par des investissements productifs et des infrastructures socio-économiques dans les campagnes.
- iii. La préservation et la restauration des ressources naturelles (eau, sol, végétation et faune).

Le PNGT2 intervient dans les différentes provinces à travers cinq composantes :

- i. Le renforcement des capacités locales (7,5 millions de dollars) vise à donner aux populations rurales les capacités techniques et organisationnelles pour (i) analyser leur milieu, (ii) en dégager les contraintes et potentialités, (iii) planifier et exécuter les activités éligibles au financement du PNGT2, (iv) se structurer au bout d'un certain temps en communes rurales. Des activités de sensibilisation et de formation sont organisées à cet effet à l'intention des communautés villageoises et de leurs organisations.
- ii. Le Fonds d'investissement local (54,4 millions de dollars) est mis en place avec deux guichets :

- Un guichet villageois pour les micro-réalisations dont le montant plafond est de 18 millions de F CFA ; l'exécution est confiée aux communautés villageoises qui assurent la maîtrise d'ouvrage ;
  - Un guichet provincial pour les projets de plus grande taille (jusqu'à un plafond indicatif de 90 millions de francs CFA par projet) dont la maîtrise d'ouvrage est confiée à un opérateur qualifié.
- iii. L'appui et l'accompagnement (26 millions de dollars) comprennent les coûts de formation, d'équipement et de fonctionnement des équipes de terrain et de prestataires de services (protocoles d'accord avec des services publics spécialisés et des Systèmes Financiers Décentralisés, contrats avec des ONG et bureaux d'études, etc.). Il inclut également le coût des activités d'appui à la décentralisation aux niveaux local, provincial et national (renforcement des capacités institutionnelles, humaines et financières, étude et mise en œuvre de la décentralisation budgétaire et financière, autres études et formation). Elle permettra de dynamiser les cadres de concertation technique provinciale (CCTP) et ouvrira la voie à la négociation de l'intégration des divers programmes en une stratégie nationale.
- iv. L'opération pilote de la sécurisation des droits fonciers (3,8 millions de dollars) vise à (i) renforcer la justice et la paix sociale ; (ii) encourager l'investissement et élever la productivité agricole ; (iii) favoriser la conservation et la réhabilitation des ressources naturelles ; et (iv) instaurer la décentralisation.
- v. L'Administration et le support au programme (12,6 millions de dollars) portent sur l'appui à la mise en place et au fonctionnement du cadre national de concertation et du fonctionnement de la coordination du programme.

#### **4.1.1.2 La stratégie d'intervention du PNGT2**

Dans la mise en œuvre du programme, la démarche et les outils utilisés essaient de traduire dans la pratique l'objectif du programme qui consiste à réduire rapidement la pauvreté dans le monde rural. La stratégie de mise en œuvre est basée sur l'implication des populations à toutes les phases du programme. De ce fait, les populations se trouvent mises au centre de tout le processus d'analyse des potentialités, des contraintes et de la recherche des solutions à travers l'utilisation de différents supports, techniques et d'outils de communication. Les principales séquences de la planification locale mise en place se résument en deux étapes :

- i. Diagnostic participatif : le processus est conduit grâce à l'utilisation de plusieurs techniques d'investigation et de communication comprenant essentiellement les outils suivants :
- Les cartes participatives : ce sont des croquis réalisés par les populations pour traduire leur perception par rapport à leur milieu en relation avec un thème donné (santé, éducation, migration, ressource en eau, potentialités en terres utiles pour la production, végétation, contraintes physiques, répartition de l'habitat, vision future du développement, etc.).
  - Le transect : il est défini comme une coupe transversale sur laquelle le parcours d'une portion du terroir complète les cartes participatives et permet de valider certaines informations recueillies à travers d'autres sources (réalisation des cartes, données secondaires collectées par les Commissions Villageoises de Gestion des Terroirs – CVGT-...). L'objectif est d'avoir la perception des populations sur (i) les facteurs de dégradations des ressources, (ii) les solutions initiées et leurs limites, (iii) l'analyse participative des sites potentiels tels que les bas-fonds, les bois, etc.
  - L'enquête-ménage ou la classification par prospérité : en vue de permettre un meilleur ciblage des zones géographiques et des groupes les plus exposés à la précarité, des enquêtes sont conduites pour saisir les propriétés, la base économique, le degré de

- richesse et de pauvreté de tous les membres des ménages. Cet outil permet aux populations de se caractériser par rapport à leur propre environnement et donne des informations très pertinentes sur leur capacité financière.
- L'analyse des capacités organisationnelles des populations avec le diagramme de Venn : il permet, grâce à un croquis, de générer des informations pertinentes sur le degré de cohésion du tissu social, outil indispensable pour entreprendre des actions durables de développement.
  - L'analyse des relations entre le village d'intervention et son environnement proche et lointain. Le diagramme de flux permet d'analyser les échanges et/ou les relations entre ces différentes entités. Il fournit des informations importantes sur le degré de dépendance et/ou de complémentarité entre les localités. Toutes les informations mettent généralement en exergue l'idée que le village n'est pas une entité isolée et son développement dépend aussi des liens avec les autres localités.
  - L'analyse des contraintes et des solutions : l'arbre à problèmes et à solutions permet une visualisation des problèmes, des solutions et des relations de cause à effet. C'est un outil qui permet une meilleure recherche des solutions à chaque type de problème en tenant compte des capacités techniques, financières et organisationnelles des acteurs.
- ii. La planification des activités dans le temps et dans l'espace : les activités identifiées sont programmées dans le temps et dans l'espace en tenant compte de plusieurs critères en particulier la capacité financière des communautés, l'acceptabilité sociale, l'impact sur l'environnement et l'existence de l'expertise locale.

Le programme a touché 1470 villages. Chaque village a mis en place une structure villageoise, la Commission Villageoise de Gestion des Terroirs (CVGT). Elle est chargée de piloter et de coordonner la mise en œuvre des actions de développement en collaboration avec la population prise individuellement ou à travers leurs organisations d'intérêt économique. Plus de 23 % des membres des CVGT ont été alphabétisés et 53 % des membres des communautés savent lire et écrire dans leur langue. Pour l'année 2002, 554 conventions (représentant 1285 micro-projets) ont été signées pour un montant de 2,9 milliards F.CFA. Pour l'année 2003, les prévisions tablent sur les réalisations suivantes : (i) Développement des capacités locales (2,2 milliards F CFA), (ii) Fonds d'Investissement Local (4,5 milliards F CFA) et (iii) Appui accompagnement (3,8 milliards F CFA). Pour les prochaines années, il est prévu la promotion d'investissements inter villageois à travers des structures à créer, les Commissions Inter Villageoises de Gestion des Terroirs.

#### **4.1.2 L'appui au développement communautaire et communal en milieu urbain**

Pour accompagner les nouvelles communes issues des élections de 1995 dans leurs efforts de développement, la Commission Nationale de Décentralisation (CND), a développé en 1996 un instrument d'appui technique et financier aux communes urbaines : le Fonds d'appui au démarrage et au développement des communes (FODECOM), devenu en 2002, Fonds de Développement des Collectivités Locales (FODECOL). Il a pour mission de contribuer à la consolidation de la démocratie par le renforcement de la décentralisation.

Ce Fonds dispose d'une structure opérationnelle légère comprenant deux organes : le Comité de gestion et le Secrétariat exécutif :

- i. Le Comité de gestion est l'organe décisionnel. Il se compose de onze (11) membres dont 6 maires, un représentant des bailleurs de fonds du FODECOL, un représentant du Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, le Secrétaire Exécutif du FODECOL et un représentant du Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et de la Décentralisation. La

- supériorité numérique des représentants des communes au sein de cet organe traduit l'option de conférer aux communes des pouvoirs substantiels dans l'orientation du mandat du FODECOL.
- ii. Le Secrétariat exécutif est la structure technique permanente chargée de l'exécution des tâches opérationnelles. Il se compose d'une équipe légère comprenant un Secrétaire exécutif, deux ingénieurs en génie civil et du personnel administratif.

Le renforcement du savoir faire des communes dans l'optique de l'appropriation et de l'exercice effectif de la maîtrise d'ouvrage par les acteurs constitue le mandat essentiel confié au FODECOL. Il s'agit d'appuyer les communes dans la promotion d'un développement local participatif et autogéré. Pour mener à bien ce mandat, le FODECOL a défini deux grands domaines dans lesquels il inscrit son action :

- i. le financement du fonctionnement des communes et des infrastructures de base ;
- ii. le renforcement des capacités des communes.

Dans sa contribution à la lutte contre la pauvreté au Burkina, le FODECOL a opté pour mettre un accent particulier sur le renforcement des capacités des populations en matière de conception et de gestion des affaires locales. L'objectif est d'accroître la responsabilité des institutions communales dans l'exercice de la maîtrise d'ouvrage et d'inciter les autorités municipales à mieux impliquer les populations locales dans toute la chaîne des réalisations des actions programmées. Ce dispositif permet d'associer l'ensemble des couches sociales et accroît les chances d'une gestion durable des infrastructures. L'appui conseil fourni par le FODECOL s'exerce sous la forme d'une assistance à la maîtrise d'ouvrage locale et s'appuie sur une démarche construite autour de six actions essentielles :

- i. la définition des étapes fondamentales de la chaîne de la maîtrise d'ouvrage ;
- ii. la définition et la production d'outils devant favoriser l'appropriation par les communes et leurs partenaires du contenu des différentes étapes de la maîtrise d'ouvrage ;
- iii. l'appui à la mise en place et au renforcement de structures locales de planification, de gestion ou de contrôle de la gestion des infrastructures locales ;
- iv. la mise à la disposition des communes du personnel technique ;
- v. la définition des principaux acteurs et de leur rôle dans l'exercice de la maîtrise d'ouvrage communale.

A cet effet, les étapes-clés de la maîtrise d'ouvrage communale développées sont les suivantes :

- i. l'élaboration d'un plan local de développement qui constitue le fondement de l'action des partenaires de la commune, dont le FODECOL ;
- ii. l'identification des projets retenus dans le plan local de développement ;
- iii. le montage de dossiers de projets et de dossiers de recherche de financement ;
- iv. la mobilisation des ressources et l'élaboration des dossiers d'appel d'offres (DAO) ;
- v. le lancement, l'ouverture et l'analyse des appels d'offres ;
- vi. l'attribution des marchés et le suivi de l'exécution des chantiers ;
- vii. l'évaluation et la réception des ouvrages ;
- viii. l'exploitation et la gestion des ouvrages.

La stratégie développée par le FODECOL pour renforcer le savoir-faire des acteurs concernés par la maîtrise d'ouvrage communale intègre pour une large part la production d'outils pédagogiques conçus sous forme de Guides thématiques. Ces Guides, élaborés en relation avec les principales

étapes de la chaîne de la maîtrise d’ouvrage, définissent notamment les enjeux et les contenus de chaque étape ainsi que les différents acteurs et leur rôle dans la maîtrise d’ouvrage.

<b>Etapes ou composantes du cycle de la maîtrise d’ouvrage</b>	<b>Outils ou guides produits</b>
• Elaboration du plan local de développement	- Guide de la planification locale
• Formulation des projets	- Guide de formulation de projets
• Recherche de financement	- Guide de recherche de financement
• Appel d’offre, ouverture et analyse des offres	- Guide d’ouverture et d’analyse des offres de travaux
• Rôle de l’entrepreneur local	- Guide de l’entrepreneur local
• Exploitation, gestion et entretien des infrastructures locales	- Guide de l’exploitation, de la gestion et de l’entretien des infrastructures locales
• Maîtrise d’ouvrage communale sur le suivi des chantiers	- Guide de la maîtrise d’ouvrage communale sur le suivi des chantiers
• Suivi Évaluation des projets	- Guide pour le suivi des chantiers communaux

Dans l’optique de renforcer le partage d’expériences entre les communes en matière de maîtrise d’ouvrage, le FODECOL a mis en place une approche visant à faire participer des communes aux opérations de passation de marchés organisées dans d’autres communes. Cette approche a permis de considérer les communes, non plus comme des cibles, mais comme des acteurs-clés du transfert et de l’appropriation du savoir-faire en matière de maîtrise d’ouvrage communale.

## **4.2 Les expériences de décentralisation et de développement communautaire au Mali et au Niger**

### **4.2.1 Les avancées de la décentralisation dans les deux pays**

Les facteurs qui ont accéléré les processus de décentralisation, au Mali et au Niger relèvent pour une grande part du mouvement de démocratisation déclenché au début des années 90. En effet, la crise économique, sociale et les mouvements sociaux ont conduit les Gouvernements à rechercher d’autres modes de gestion économique et de régulation plus efficaces.

Au Mali et au Niger, l’organisation territoriale est restée pendant longtemps caractérisée par une forte centralisation. Mais, avec le mouvement de démocratisation, la décentralisation s’est affirmée comme l’une des voies à explorer pour mieux responsabiliser les populations locales dans les choix économiques et sociaux du pays. Dans l’ensemble, les processus de décentralisation dans ces deux pays ont enregistré des avancées réelles mais ils restent teintés par un mélange confus de déconcentration administrative et de décentralisation. Malgré ces insuffisances, quelques agglomérations urbaines sont véritablement organisées en collectivités locales.

Au Mali, les changements intervenus dans le processus de décentralisation et les modes de gestion des projets locaux ont été plus brutaux, du fait des réformes institutionnelles liées à l’avènement de la Troisième République en 1991. La politique s’est traduite dans un premier temps par une réforme de l’administration régionale et locale. Elle a été élaborée dans le double but de la régionalisation et de la participation des populations. L’objectif à terme était la transformation progressive des arrondissements (circonscriptions administratives de base) en communes rurales (collectivités territoriales décentralisées). Cette option a conduit à la prise de décisions importantes :

- i. La mise en place, d'une part, aux niveaux régional et local des organes de programmation technique, appelés Comités de Développement chargés d'élaborer les programmes et projets, et d'autre part, des organes de participation composés d'élus appelés Conseils de Circonscription pour l'examen et l'approbation des programmes et projets proposés par les Comités de Développement.
- ii. La création du Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et du Développement à la Base (MATDB) chargé d'exercer la tutelle sur les programmes de développement local décidés et exécutés sous l'autorité des organes de participation.
- iii. La création en 1988 d'un Fonds de Développement Régional et Local constitué essentiellement, par les cotisations des populations en vue du financement des projets d'initiative locale.
- iv. La mise en place à travers le Ministère du Plan de toute une série de projets financés par les donateurs (appui technique, formation, logistique) en vue de renforcer les capacités de planification du développement au niveau régional et local.

Toutes ces dispositions ont abouti à la conception et à la promulgation des textes fondamentaux, notamment, la Loi 93-008, le Code des collectivités territoriales, la Loi portant statut des fonctionnaires des collectivités territoriales qui détermine les conditions de la libre administration des collectivités territoriales.

La mise en place des communes a abouti aux élections locales en 1999. Le niveau exécutif de l'arrondissement a été supprimé au profit des conseils communaux dotés de l'autonomie budgétaire. La tutelle de l'Etat a été maintenue, avec des transferts conséquents des compétences et des moyens financiers. La participation populaire a été l'un des traits majeurs de la réforme des collectivités locales puisque le regroupement des villages en communes a été conduit sur une base volontaire. Cette dynamique a conduit, avant tout, à la mise en place aux niveaux régional et local des organes de programmation technique (Comités de Développement) pour l'élaboration des programmes et projets et des organes de participation composés d'élus appelés Conseils de Circonscription pour l'examen et l'approbation des programmes. Au terme de ces différentes lois, le pays a opté pour les trois échelons de décentralisation suivants : (i) la Commune, (ii) le Cercle et (iii) la Région. Celle-ci est administrée par une Assemblée Régionale et un Bureau Régional.

Au Niger la politique de décentralisation a été entreprise avec pour but d'organiser la participation effective et massive des populations aux décisions et activités ayant localement une influence décisive sur le niveau de vie. Il s'agissait de procéder à un transfert de pouvoir de décision et de gestion à des organes régionaux et locaux qui constitueront de véritables pouvoirs décentralisés à fonction délibérante. C'est dans ce cadre qu'a été conçue et promulguée la loi n°9408 du 2 octobre 1994 déterminant les principes fondamentaux de la libre administration des arrondissements et des communes ainsi que leurs compétences et ressources.

Au terme de ces différentes lois, les arrondissements et les communes se sont érigés en collectivités territoriales dotées de la personnalité morale et de l'autonomie financière. Ils constituent de ce fait un cadre d'exécution des tâches relevant de la gestion des affaires locales avec comme responsables le sous-préfet ou le Maire. Ils représentent, d'une part, l'Etat auprès de la collectivité locale, et d'autre part, la collectivité auprès du pouvoir central.

Outre ces organes, on a également le conseil d'arrondissement ou municipal qui est juridiquement l'organe de décision prépondérant de la collectivité territoriale. Il est composé de députés à l'Assemblée Nationale résidant dans la localité et de conseillers élus au suffrage universel direct



pour cinq (5) ans. La commission exécutive d'arrondissement ou municipale est l'organe de préparation et d'exécution des décisions du conseil.

#### **4.2.2 Décentralisation et développement communautaire**

Au Mali comme au Niger, les différents processus de décentralisation sont accompagnés par de nombreuses initiatives de développement communautaire.

##### **4.2.2.1 Cas du Mali**

En matière de lutte contre la pauvreté, le Mali a terminé son DSRP final en 2001 alors qu'il n'a été approuvé par le FMI et la Banque Mondiale qu'en février 2003. Mais le Mali s'est déjà doté, dès 1998, avec l'appui du PNUD, d'une Stratégie Nationale de Lutte contre la Pauvreté (SNLP). Cette stratégie a servi de base à l'élaboration du DSRP.

Les processus de décentralisation et de développement communautaires se sont traduits au Mali par l'élaboration de schémas directeurs du développement rural dont le but est d'analyser les différents problèmes, de synthétiser les options, les choix et les priorités en matière de promotion du monde rural. Ce schéma sert de cadre fédérateur pour tous les partenaires au développement. Ce schéma est opérationnalisé par un Plan d'actions du Ministère du Développement Rural et de l'Environnement (PAMDRE). Conçu comme un véritable dispositif opérationnel, ce Plan d'Action détermine les objectifs prioritaires du développement rural, ses activités, leurs structures de coordination. Le but de cette démarche visait le désengagement progressif des services étatiques et le dépérissement des fonctions qui lui étaient dévolues au départ, hormis toutefois celles qui sont strictement pérennes. Ce processus doit favoriser l'émergence de nouveaux rapports entre l'administration et le monde rural, fondés sur un partenariat efficient et librement consenti.

C'est dans ce contexte que s'exécutent par exemple les expériences en matière de préparation des programmes nationaux de lutte contre la désertification, les programmes de développement humain et le programme d'Appui aux Collectivités Décentralisées pour un Développement Participatif (ACODEP). Le programme Appui aux Collectivités Décentralisées pour un Développement Participatif (ACODEP). Ce dernier programme poursuit comme objectifs :

- i. d'aider les Associations Villageoises (AV) et les Associations Féminines (AF) dans 350 villages à acquérir la capacité de gestion et à prendre en charge elles-mêmes le développement de leur village ;
- ii. d'améliorer les conditions de vie des populations de la zone d'intervention par la formation, l'éducation et l'appui aux activités génératrices de revenus ou à des micro-réalisations.

Les activités prévues dans le programme portent sur :

- i. le développement et le renforcement des structures de base (AV et AF) ;
- ii. l'alphabétisation fonctionnelle et la formation technique en gestion des responsables villageois ;
- iii. le financement et l'appui à la programmation, à l'exécution et à l'évaluation des activités économiques des Associations ;
- iv. la contribution à la réalisation de micro-investissements villageois nécessaires au développement local.

D'autres programmes viennent compléter cette dynamique. Il s'agit, par exemple, de celui de l'Union Européenne portant sur l'appui budgétaire aux communes pour les investissements locaux et celui de la Banque Mondiale qui appuie les initiatives de base.

Les principales leçons tirées des expériences en cours résident dans le rapprochement des démarches et la rationalisation de l'utilisation des subventions financières à travers l'Agence de Financements Décentralisés. Elles mettent en exergue les insuffisances du processus participatif du DSRP. En effet, la société civile a été plus consultée qu'associée à la définition des priorités du DSRP. Enfin, le développement communautaire a tendance à se rapprocher des démarches de type développement local là où les collectivités locales occupent de plus en plus un rôle central dans tous les processus décisionnels des investissements locaux et régionaux.

#### **4.2.2.2 Cas du Niger**

Au Niger, c'est le projet de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles (GRN) qui sert de cadre d'expérimentation de l'approche communautaire. Dans sa mise en œuvre, le projet s'appuie sur des structures locales telles que les Commissions locales de gestion des ressources naturelles (CL/GRN). Elles sont constituées de représentants des différents groupes socio-professionnels, des associations socio-économiques et des dépositaires des coutumes foncières. Selon les zones concernées, les CL/GRN sont constituées des représentants des agriculteurs, éleveurs, pêcheurs, artisans, organisations des jeunes (samaria ou autres), organisations des femmes, associations de producteurs, coopératives, groupements d'intérêt économique (GIE). La composition des CL/GRN, leur mode de fonctionnement ainsi que leurs attributions sont discutés et arrêtés avec les paysans.

Considérées comme les organes de liaison entre la communauté locale (villages, groupes de villages, groupements pastoraux) et tous les intervenants extérieurs en matière de gestion des ressources naturelles, les CL/GRN sont chargées de :

- i. représenter la communauté auprès des services techniques, des autorités administratives ;
- ii. participer au diagnostic et à l'identification des actions prioritaires à conduire dans le cadre de l'aménagement du terroir villageois ou pastoral ;
- iii. arrêter les grandes lignes du plan d'aménagement du terroir ;
- iv. passer un accord avec les autorités concernées par l'exécution du plan d'aménagement du terroir ;
- v. exécuter, avec l'appui de l'équipe mobile pluridisciplinaire (EMP) des services techniques, des ONG et structures privées, le plan d'aménagement du terroir ;
- vi. contrôler la réalisation des actions retenues dans le plan d'aménagement du terroir, les plans et programmes pluriannuels et les plans de travail établis ;
- vii. participer au suivi-évaluation du projet et faire appliquer les recommandations qui en sont issues ;
- viii. gérer, selon les modalités arrêtées, les fonds mis à la disposition de la communauté ;
- ix. participer à la gestion du fonds régional de gestion des ressources naturelles ;
- x. mener des réflexions et concertations sur la meilleure manière de régler les litiges fonciers et faire des propositions aux structures habilitées à le faire.

## **5. QUELQUES LEÇONS APPRISES**

Au croisement des stratégies et politiques nationales de lutte contre la pauvreté et de promotion d'un développement humain durable en milieu urbain et rural, les processus de décentralisation en cours dans la sous région Ouest-Africaine, ont été marqués par des expériences intéressantes,

malgré les nombreuses difficultés perceptibles. Des différentes expériences en cours dans le Burkina Faso, le Mali et le Niger, il se dégage deux grandes conclusions intéressantes : (i) la forte attente des populations en matière de lutte contre la pauvreté et, (ii) l'intérêt marqué par les populations dans la dynamique des processus de décentralisation.

### **Fortes attentes des populations vis-à-vis du processus de la gouvernance locale dans le cadre de la lutte contre la pauvreté**

Une décentralisation qui ne s'accompagnerait pas ou qui ne serait pas porteuse d'un développement économique local visant à améliorer les conditions de vie des populations locales, pourrait provoquer des désillusions, décevoir des espoirs légitimes suscités, se retourner contre les responsables locaux et, au bout du compte, décrédibiliser la décentralisation. Les populations locales jugeront la décentralisation en fonction des transformations qu'elles constateront dans leur vie quotidienne.

Il est ainsi demandé aux pouvoirs locaux d'être avant tout les organisateurs et les promoteurs d'un développement local durable en partenariat avec les communautés de base et la société civile. Le prix à payer par les autorités locales pour améliorer les conditions de vie des citoyens s'exprime en termes d'obligation de résultats et de transparence dans la gestion. Ce sont les acteurs locaux et les citoyens qui doivent apprécier en quoi la décentralisation constitue pour eux une opportunité. Si elle ne rejoint pas leurs préoccupations, ils la rejeteront ou lui opposeront l'indifférence. Mais si elle est dans le champ de leurs intérêts, ils l'investiront positivement.

Sous peine d'être disqualifiées aux yeux de la majorité des citoyens, les autorités locales devront répondre aux exigences de plus en plus pressantes de la mise en place d'une administration de développement. La mutation souhaitée devrait s'opérer d'abord au niveau des attentes légitimes des populations qui ne veulent plus se contenter d'une gestion au jour le jour des problèmes. L'administration locale doit s'attacher à créer les conditions d'un véritable développement local durable à travers notamment :

- i. la promotion des activités socio-économiques ;
- ii. le soutien à la création d'emplois ;
- iii. le développement du civisme fiscal ;
- iv. la protection de l'environnement ;
- v. l'organisation de la solidarité entre habitants et entre communautés ;
- vi. la lutte contre l'exclusion et la promotion de l'intégration

En somme, le changement de perspective qui s'impose désormais à l'ensemble du corps social au niveau local nécessite la création d'un cadre juridique et réglementaire propice à l'initiative privée, individuelle ou associative. L'obligation de résultats interpelle les autorités locales dans le domaine de la gestion des activités, entraînant ainsi de nouvelles responsabilités et missions auxquelles elles ne sont pas préparées.

Les élus doivent éviter de prendre en otage le développement de leurs localités en ne recentralisant pas le pouvoir à leur niveau. Ils doivent plutôt se mettre à l'école de la « gestion déléguée, partagée et participative » et organiser de véritables débats avec les populations et les communautés sur les questions qui les concernent.

Enfin, le rôle et la place de chaque acteur doivent être bien spécifiés : (i) l'Etat dans son rôle de facilitateur d'accompagnement ; (ii) les collectivités locales dans leurs rôle de maîtrise d'ouvrage du développement local ; (iii) les citoyens, communautés de base et société civile, dans leur rôle

de garant de la démocratie locale et de contre pouvoir ; (iv) les partenaires au développement, dans leur rôle d'accompagnement technique et financier.

### **Exigences de la décentralisation et du développement communautaire**

Les expériences réussies enseignent que le développement local est une démarche courageuse et exigeante, où il faut constamment inventer, innover, adapter les outils et les approches dans un souci d'apprentissage mutuel. Il s'agit de construire patiemment une citoyenneté active, où les différentes composantes de la société locale se rencontrent, échangent et édifient ensemble un projet commun.

Il deviendrait, par exemple, illusoire d'augmenter les responsabilités des collectivités locales si l'on ne s'atèle pas à leur transférer les compétences, ressources et personnels nécessaires pour qu'elles puissent s'en acquitter.

Le risque est de penser qu'il suffit d'adopter une loi de décentralisation pour que celle-ci s'applique d'une manière immédiate et cohérente. Il faut au contraire se poser le problème du rythme souhaitable de la décentralisation: ni trop rapide pour permettre les adaptations, ni trop lent pour permettre au processus de décentralisation d'aller de l'avant.

**ANNEX 1**

**Presentations from English-speaking  
countries**

**DECENTRALIZATION AS A MEANS TO IMPROVE GOVERNANCE AND  
POVERTY REDUCTION: EXPERIENCE FROM GHANA**

By

Professor George Gyan-Baffour

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

For over a decade now, Ghana has been grappling with how to get citizens at the local level to be involved in decision-making and financing through a vigorous decentralization process. Decentralization involves devolution of political, administrative, and fiscal decision-making power from central governments to local governments. It creates an opportunity for citizens at the local level to participate in decisions that directly affect their lives. Underlying the rationale for decentralization is the improvement of the governance system of a country by involving citizens at the grass-roots level of society so they can be part of the governing authority and be involved in the social, economic and political decisions that directly affect them, wherever they reside in the country. Since most of the poor in countries such as Ghana live in the rural areas, decentralization allows the poor to be closer to the institutions that make decisions to improve their worth and reduce their level of degradation resulting from poverty. This paper discusses the experiences in Ghana in our effort to decentralize our political, administrative and fiscal structures and systems, and how these efforts have improved the governance of the nation and have affected our goal of reducing poverty.

## **2. THE DECENTRALIZATION EFFORTS IN GHANA**

In 1988, the Government of Ghana embarked on the implementation of a comprehensive policy to decentralize the system of government. The decentralization programme had two main objectives: to create opportunity for the majority of Ghanaians who live in the rural areas in villages and towns to participate in decisions that directly affect their lives and increase their access to political authority; and to promote local development through the involvement of the indigenous people as a way of improving ownership and commitment to enhance implementation, leading to improvement in the living conditions of the local people. The Local Government Law, 1988 (PNDC Law 207) was enacted to give legal backing to the decentralization process. Central administrative authority was to be devolved to the district level. Twenty-two functional areas of government were fused at the subnational and local levels into one administrative unit. The decentralization process was to be total, including political decentralization, administrative decentralization, fiscal decentralization, and planning decentralization.

### **2.1 Political decentralization**

Political decentralization was to include the establishment and empowerment of local government structures, demarcation of administrative boundaries, and the promotion of popular participation of the people at the various levels of decision-making.

### **2.2 Administrative decentralization**

Administrative decentralization refers to devolution of government power, roles, functions and responsibility from the central government to local and sub-local government institutions. It includes restructuring the ministerial institutions, and ensuring an effective and meaningful integration of sectoral programmes, resources and assets into the District Assembly (DA) system so as to promote coordinated development and efficient resource utilization.

### **2.3 Fiscal decentralization**

Fiscal decentralization relates to the division of fiscal responsibilities between central and local governments and the transfer of well-defined financial resource mobilization and disbursement responsibilities from the former to the latter. In essence, fiscal decentralization seeks to make adequate financial resources available to the DAs, and ensures a system of financial relations that would grant the DAs substantial discretion in allocating of expenditures.

### **2.4 Planning decentralization**

Finally, decentralized development planning involves the institutionalization of the bottom-up approach, integrated and participatory development planning processes that facilitate active involvement of all segments of society, including identifiable groups, service providers in the public and private sectors, and non-governmental organizations at all levels of the decentralized system.

## **3. DECENTRALIZATION AND POVERTY REDUCTION**

Poverty still remains overwhelmingly a rural phenomenon in Ghana. About 36% of the people in the rural areas lived below the poverty line in 1999, while only 17% of urban dwellers were considered poor. Various facets of the decentralization process in Ghana facilitate direct targeting of poverty-reducing intervention to the rural folks at the district and sub-district level. The closeness of intervention provided by decentralized structures and features tremendously enhances the effects of interventions on poverty reduction.

First, the political decentralization process in Ghana led to the establishment of 110 DAs, 1,306 Urban, Zonal and Town/Area Councils and 16,000 unit committees. These structures provide institutions for channelling poverty reduction resources closer to the rural communities where most of the poor reside. Second, the administrative decentralization process allows decisions concerning the districts' development to be taken by people at the district level, thus reflecting the real needs of the local people, including the poor. Third, while fiscal decentralization is not yet complete, local governments are now allowed to generate resources internally, which can then be used for local-level development projects. Furthermore, the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) of 5% of government expenditure goes directly to the district level for poverty reduction projects. Finally, a large proportion of benefits from HIPC savings are sent directly to the districts for programmes in health, education, sanitation, and water, the basic needs that the poor in the rural areas lack.

Again, one major dimension of poverty is the lack of capacity to influence social processes, make public policy choices, and participate in resource allocation. It is very clear that all the four facets of decentralization attempt to enhance the capacity of the rural population, a large proportion of which are considered poor. Thus, in addition to the ability of decentralized units in bringing decision-making closer to the poor, decentralization in itself is poverty-reducing, directly attacking a major dimension of poverty by reducing political helplessness among the weak.

## **4. DECENTRALIZATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE**

The concept of governance is defined by the UNDP as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms,



processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their legal obligations and mediate their differences.

The question that needs to be addressed is, does decentralization lead to enhanced governance? First, to the extent that decentralization facilitates the exercise of economic power through fiscal decentralization at lower levels of the society, it increases the volume of power and allows power to be shared among many more people, which pushes governance a step further in the continuum towards governance "by the people". Second, decentralization allows decision-making to be shared by many, reflecting diversity of opinions, which enriches the outcome of decision-making. Third, decentralization increases participation, participation encourages commitment, and commitment increases the likelihood of implementation, thus increasing the performance of governments. Finally, decentralization can reduce the magnitude of excesses in corruption, in rent seeking, and in wanton dissipation of resources at the centre where these anti-social actions of government officials are difficult to detect.

## **5. THE CHALLENGES**

While much has been done, the implementation of decentralization has not been smooth. Quite a number of fundamental issues are still outstanding. There still exist overlapping responsibilities between central and local governments. There is no clarity at various levels of government and within different sectors, ministries and departments regarding how the intended shifts in power, functions and resources should look and how they should be managed. There is inadequate coordination between planning, budgeting and financing at the local level. Another major problem impeding decentralization and its positive effects on governance and poverty reduction is the absence of capacity at the district level to perform the administrative, physical and planning responsibilities devolved to them. For instance, the National Development Planning Commission trained a staff of about 350 in 1987, but many of them abandoned their posts due to lack of administrative, technical and logistical support from the DAs, unattractive conditions of service, and undue delay in salary payments. The Local Government Service Bill is currently before Parliament, which will enable the DAs to employ and retain their own staff.

**DECENTRALIZATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY APPROACHES AS A MEANS  
OF IMPROVING GOVERNANCE AND POVERTY REDUCTION:  
THE GAMBIA EXPERIENCE**

By

Kemo Conteh  
Assistant Director  
Directorate of Local Governance  
Department of State for Local Government and Lands

Sheikh E.T Lewis  
Director  
International Society for Human Rights  
The Gambia

<b>THE FACE OF THE GAMBIA</b> <b>Capital: Banjul</b>	
Area	10,689 Sqkm
Population	1,211,007
Density	113 pers/sqkm
Growth rate (95-2000)	3.1%
<b>Life expectancy at Birth</b>	
Females	57
Males	54
HDI	0.363
Literacy rate (%)-Men	45.3
Women	30.6
Access local government area	2,000 sq km
Urban population	31.8%
Number and levels of local government- LGAs	8
Wards	114
Villages	2,000
Less than 20,000	2,000
20,000 to 49,999	114
50,000 to 99,999	1
100,000 and above	8
<b>Capital city</b>	<b>100,000</b>
Local budget revenues/ Central government revenues	CFA F500m CFA F 4 bn
Local fiscal revenue/central government federal revenue	CFA F 360m/39 bn
Operating revenue /person	CFA F 475 bn
Direct taxation revenue / person	CFA F1.10 bn
Municipal rates / person	CFA F 750
Central government grants / Local Budget	CFA F 0.00
Total GDP (millions US \$)	US \$ 63,344.07
GDP/ person (units of US \$)	US\$ 456
Annual growth (2001)	5.8
Access to drinking water	79% households (1996) Cluster survey
Access to energy	29% households
Primary health	90% of population
Education	29% of population

## **2. THE WILL OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE**

### **2.1.1 1997 A constitution emphasizing aspirations for Participatory Democracy and resolve for Good Governance, drafted in consultation with the people.**

- i. Preamble highlights commitment of the people to freedom of justice, probity and accountability.
- ii. Sovereignty and the authority to govern lies with the people.
- iii. Total separation of powers of the Executive, Judiciary, and Legislature. A Framework for democratic governance, which prohibits the concentration of authority in one person or branch of government.
- iv. Chapter on Human Rights, including rights of women and civic political rights.
- v. Chapter on Directive Principles of State as part of State Policy and basis for Vision 2020.

#### **Innovations: Independent Electoral Commission Conduct and Management of Elections**

##### **Ombudsman**

Address Administrative abuse in Public Service

##### **Autonomy of the Auditor-General's Office**

Auditor-General reports to National Assembly

**Built-in mechanisms to prevent abuse of power, arbitrary rule and encourages respect for rule of law.**

##### **A law Reform Commission**

To remedy constitutional defects and inconsistencies and ensure clarity of constitutional law at all times.

### **2.2.1 National Workshop on Good Governance and Public Service Reform**

Wide-range issues, including Constitutional, Parliamentary, Judicial, Administrative, Decentralization and Local Government Reforms, Women's rights in Participation and Representation, Traditional Rulers, Civic Education and the Political Will for Reforms.

### **2.2.2 National Workshop on Decentralization and Local Government Reforms**

Issues relating to Self Administration, Local Democracy and Development. Beginning of other consultative and consensus-building processes.

### **2.3.1 1998 Programme Management Unit**

#### ***Department of State for Local Government and Lands***

Established to facilitate the formulation and coordination of a process of local government reforms towards decentralization.

### **2.3.2 1998 Stakeholders consultative workshop on a National Governance Policy Framework**

Consensus built on a draft national Governance Policy and Programme.

A governance strategy to consolidate and reinforce the governance.

#### **2.4.1 2002 New Local Government Law; Local Government Act 2002**

To establish and regulate a decentralized local government system for the Gambia.

#### **2.4.2 1<sup>st</sup> democratic local government elections based on decentralization**

Mayors, Chairpersons and councillors were elected in all eight Local Government Areas.

#### **Objective:**

*To ensure that the electorate and people's participation in the process of governance and development are guaranteed.*

The framework for this, as set in 1997 constitution, was pursued through six strategic and interrelated components, which emerged from various consultative processes.

#### **2.5.1 The Six Strategic Components**

- i. Constitutional Review and Reform of the electoral process
- ii. Enhancing Parliamentary structures and processes
- iii. Civic Education
- iv. Reforms of Legal and Judicial Processes
- v. Public Sector Management and Administration
- vi. Decentralization and Local Government Reform

#### **3.1.1 Decentralization and Civil Society Participation**

An important strategy for self-administration, the enabling legislation Local Government Act 2002 provides for the appointment of a proportion of the members of local organs. Councils are heterogeneously composed, each with a Chairman/Mayor and councillors. Apart from the Mayor/Chairman, there are a representative for each Ward (electoral subdivision of a council) elected by universal adult suffrage, and a representative of traditional chiefs, who is elected by the latter. Not applicable to the urban councils of Banjul and Kanifmg are an appointed representative each of the youth and women. And the Mayor/Chairperson appoints a number of representatives. From the economic and socio-professional organizations, based on the proposal of interested organizations, their number may not exceed 1/5 of elected members. The Mayor/Chairman is elected by universal adult suffrage, but must report to the council.

Appointments may infringe on the principle of self-administration; but paradoxically, it helps in ensuring a representation of the sociological diversity of the local government. The strategy is to ensure at least a minimum representation of the youth, women and the socio-economic forces. Further, the law organizes a system of exercise of local competences, which ensures a large participation of local stakeholders in their diversity. As prescribed by the constitution, local contribution to development is an essential component of national development and an important means of achieving good governance.

#### **Goal:**

*To devolve power and authority from the centre to competent and responsive divisional governance subsystems, with genuine participatory approaches at grass-roots level in the political, social and economic decision-making processes of their communities.*

It is expected to increase local participation in decision-making as well as to ensure that local people are accorded the opportunity to take part in the development process.

**Objectives:**

*To extend the process of democratization to the local level by promoting the direct participation of the population in the management of their own affairs.*

*To promote a spatially integrated approach to development which starts from the people themselves.*

**Strategy:**

*Activities to enable citizens, organizations and institutions to achieve their socio-economic goals.*

**This implies capacity-building of these actors**

- i. To effectively perform key functions at various levels of governance and administration;
- ii. Have leaders or persons in positions with authority who can provide vision and commitment to the vision;
- iii. To provide resources with which they can obtain and retain the human resources necessary to fulfil these functions;
- iv. To procure and manage the right mix of material and other input resources;
- v. To facilitate the work of people in the organizations by putting in place appropriate work practices and systems; and
- vi. To minimize external constraints on the performance of the system.

**3.2.2 Target Institutions**

**Central Government**

Department of State for Local Government and Lands, Finance and Economics, Affairs, Agriculture, Education, Health, Social Welfare and Women's Affairs, Works and Communication, Natural Resources and the Environment, Accountant Generals Department, Policy Analysis Unit, Office of the President, Strategy for Poverty Alleviation Coordination Office, Office of the Commissioners, District Chiefs, and Village Alkalos.

**Local Government**

Local Government Authorities, Ward Development Committees, Village Development Committees, Civil Society Organizations, NGOs.

**3.2.3 Summary Plan of Action**

*Linked to capacity-building objectives above*

- i. To build institutional and human resources capacity at local levels to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate their own development initiatives;
- ii. To review the local government system especially the role of central government in relation to the functions of the newly established local government authorities;
- iii. To devolve some central government functions to local government levels. This is underpinned by the devolution of appropriate levels of political and financial responsibilities and accountability at local levels;
- iv. To facilitate community participation and improve public service delivery to communities; and
- v. To build capacity in data management and development planning at local levels.

### **3.2.4 Conclusion**

The Gambia has now established a common arrangement for the viability of decentralization. As provided in the XV law of the 1997 constitution, local government authorities are recognized as separate and autonomous spheres of governance, working alongside the central government, and they are vested with organic powers, roles and functions in accordance with the rule of law.

Local governments are now highly visible. Their role has become recognized as important, complex and diversified. They are full stakeholders in social and economic development and they are expected to fulfil the Government's mission of continuity, presence and proximity in their areas of administration. They are expected to consolidate the spatial and institutional environment for the performance of economic operators, guarantee equal access to social services and ensure the consistency of urban development, social action, the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

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**SIERRA LEONE'S EXPERIENCE WITH DECENTRALIZATION AS A MEANS  
TO IMPROVE GOVERNANCE AND COMBAT POVERTY**

By

Mrs. Sao-Kpato Max-Kyne  
Poverty Expert  
Poverty Alleviation Strategy Coordinating Office (PASCO)  
Ministry of Development & Economic Planning  
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Mr. Abu Brima  
Network Movement for Justice and Development  
Freetown, Sierra Leone



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Decentralization, or decentralized development management, and the promotion of good local governance, have come to be accepted in the development circles as constituting an enabling environment within which effective mechanisms for poverty reduction could thrive. The understanding is that local governance promotes good governance factors such as: participatory democracy and grass-roots or civil society participation in decision-making and resource allocations; transparency and anti-corruption mechanisms; human rights and administrative practice; equitable and fair access to services; a fair, balanced government and private sector and the separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judicial arms of government. Decentralization is increasingly seen as a process of devolving political power to improve service delivery to local communities and increase popular participation in governance, thereby bringing government closer to the people. Local governance processes focus on strengthening the interface mechanism between the central and local government systems, between local administration and civil society as well as the private sector to promote economic growth, wealth creation, equity and transparency.

In many African countries, policies and processes that ensure the separation and coordination of the public and private sectors as complementary channels of development at the local level, and the promotion of NGO, CBO, traditional authorities and civil society organizations as worthy partners in the local development process, are relatively recent and rudimentary. Sierra Leone, however, has a history of having had a good start in the area of decentralization; but today, the country has very little to show for it. Those gains made by the country during the colonial era and the first ten post-colonial years have become stories of squandered hope.

## **2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF DECENTRALIZATION IN SIERRA LEONE**

At Independence in 1961, Sierra Leone inherited diverse administrative and political structures that facilitated not only popular participation but also economic and human development at all levels. The local government system was modelled along the British experience, and it was working. It did have some shortcomings and institutional weaknesses, but these structures provided space for those who were not active at the national level to assume responsibility for running the affairs of the nation at the local level. The structure of local governance in Sierra Leone comprised the 'modern' components of the Freetown Municipality, Town Councils, City Councils and District Councils.

The District Councils comprised representatives from all the chiefdoms in each district, and professional heads such as doctors, engineers, senior civil servants, etc. These councils met periodically to discuss issues on the development of the district as well as the security of the people, and they contributed immensely towards the promotion of quality and affordable education, an effective and efficient health care delivery system, environmental sanitation, waste disposal, construction of markets, roads, bridges, etc. A good number of our present crop of elites got their first western education at District Council schools, commonly known as DEC Schools (District Education Committee Schools); scholarship schemes set up by the Councils also benefited many children who are today contributing enormously to the development of the nation as doctors, lawyers, judges, accountants, journalists, etc. The Chiefdom Councils comprised Paramount Chiefs, Chiefdom Speakers, Section Chiefs, Court Chairmen and other Chiefdom Elders. These councils performed a role similar to that of the District Councils, and served as the anchor for all government policies and development programmes developed at the national level.

In the urban areas, there were the City and Town Councils whose members were elected on party tickets. Their activities focused basically on developing their respective towns and cities; some of their duties included the provision and proper maintenance of streetlights, markets, and cemeteries, public taps, schools, parks/gardens, streets and other public property. Even though these structures appeared to favour the top-bottom approach to a certain degree, they equally created space for the voices of those at the bottom of the ladder. Also, the then central government administration recognized the importance and necessity of building a true democracy with a politically active and engaged citizenry. These institutions fostered the decentralization of political power and socio-economic institutions and accelerated economic growth. In fact, most of our independence-era politicians used the local government structures as a training ground for their participation in the post-independence pinnacle of national politics.

After Independence in 1961, this system continued up to 1972 when the District Councils were suspended by the then ruling All People's Party (APC) under the leadership of the former and late President Siaka Stevens. The suspension was on the grounds that these councils were not appropriately staffed and that they were synonymous with corruption and misappropriation of public funds. Though the reasons were true to some extent, another school of thought saw the move as being politically motivated. It is strongly believed that the then APC saw the local councils as SLPP structures, and that the only way to weaken the SLPP was to disband them. Some even saw the suspension of the District Councils as a move to set the stage for the introduction of a one-party system of government by the APC in order to forestall any would-be opposition to the declaration of a one-party state in Sierra Leone.

After the suspension, the elective aspect of local government in Sierra Leone disappeared. Committees of management appointed by the Government replaced the District Councils. As a result, their loyalty was to the Government and not to the people they were supposed to serve. The affairs of local communities were then being managed by the central Government. This led to neglect and underdevelopment of the rural areas, and a greater part of the eventual introduction of one-party rule in 1978. All local Government institutions rapidly collapsed under the weight of corruption, bad governance, poverty, illegality and other instruments employed by the regime to intimidate the population into submission. The people no longer had the opportunity to elect their leaders and to take part in decision-making. The already-mentioned Government established Committees of Management that were now running the affairs of the local councils, thereby eroding their legitimacy and moral grounds to exist. This may not be isolated from the cause of the civil war in Sierra Leone, during which not only the structures but also local government infrastructure were either destroyed or vandalized.

### **3. THE NEW CHALLENGE**

In his maiden speech after the 1996 multi-party constitutional elections, His Excellency President Alhaji Dr. Ahmed Tejan Kabba, promised to embark on local government reform and decentralization as a means of addressing the existing anomaly and to improve governance and reduce poverty nationwide. In response to that pledge, general consultative workshops were held with major stakeholders as a way of soliciting the views of the people on the type of local government system they would want. It came out glaringly from these consultations that the people are advocating for a non-partisan type of local government elections and for the office of chairman of the local councils to be filled through direct ballot.

In 2000, the Government resuscitated the District Council under committee of management appointed by government, but the ideal way should be by popular participation, which can only be achieved through local council elections. The current Local Government Laws are found in different chapters and in different volumes of our constitution. Most of these laws are now absolute and cannot now measure to the type of local government envisaged. The Ministries of Local Government and Rural Development are in the process of reviewing these legislations with a view to consolidating them into a single local government act.

The Government is also in the process of developing legislation on 'Decentralized administration'. Certain functions and responsibilities performed by the line ministries and departments are to be decentralized to local government bodies, giving them powers to make decisions and implement programmes affecting the lives of the people at the local level. These have to be legislated to make it mandatory on the line ministries and departments to decentralize this function.

The drive towards decentralization is usually not an easy journey, as not many people want to relinquish power. It is a gradual process. A task force has been set up comprising key stakeholders from government, NGOs and civil society to look into issues such as functions to be decentralized, i.e., fiscal decentralization, the local government elections (District and Town Councils) scheduled for the end of 2003, regeneration of local courts, and reconstruction/rehabilitation of local infrastructure, e.g., Court Barrays, etc. Decentralization does not only mean relinquishing responsibilities but also means fiscal decentralization. The task force will be expected to create a report, which will be imputed into draft legislation on local government reform and decentralization and presented to Parliament for ratification. Once this has been legislated, it will then be used as the tool for Government.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The existing local government structures and those to be revived will be instrumental in the preparation of the Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and other poverty reduction initiatives to be developed. These processes required very high levels of participation and consultations with local communities, and it is the local government structures that can best provide the enabling environment for such consultations and community participation in governance and poverty reduction. Decisions taken closest to a local constituency are expected to better reflect the preferences of citizens, especially the poor. As a result, local governments are likely to implement a poverty policy through community participation and social inclusion. The challenge therefore is to maintain a poverty focus at central and local levels, especially given the risks of local governments being captured by local elites and interest groups, and of problems such as corruption and gender bias being replicated at the local level. Decentralization requires a strong central government to regulate, to provide an overall framework to manage the re-allocation of responsibilities and resources in a predictable and transparent way, and to assist local governments build capacities in the early stages. It is hoped that the new Local Government Act and the expected Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper to be produced by the Government of Sierra Leone will address all of these issues and ensure that good, workable local government structures are put in place to facilitate economic growth and reduce poverty.

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**POVERTY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION: THE NIGERIA EXPERIENCE**

By

Dr. Makangola Olaseinde Arigbede  
National Coordinator — COPODIN  
(Coalition for Popular Development Initiatives in Nigeria)  
and PERFORM (Nigeria Poverty Eradication Forum);  
Chairman — ACAH (Advocacy Committee Against Hunger in Nigeria)

I would like to begin by expressing deep gratitude to the organizers of this workshop, on my own behalf and on behalf of my organizations (COPODIN, PERFORM & ACAH) — all of which are, in different but interlocked ways, concerned with the central themes of poverty and inclusion; as well as the entire civil society movement whose perspective I am called upon to project. I sincerely hope that the modest contribution offered in the following pages would — through presenting a civil society understanding of the connection of inclusion with the level and nature of poverty in our society - help to strengthen government, civil society and organized private sector (OPS) collaboration, which is mandatory if poverty is to be successfully overcome. We must, however, clearly state that while we are not interested in 'government bashing,' to explain the pains that civil society feels with regards to the rampant and deepening poverty that assails the majority of our peoples, we need to be candid. We may not be in agreement with others in our perspective of the problem. There cannot be a unanimous 'Nigerian' position on such a contentious issue as poverty alleviation through social inclusion, and we do not think that this is necessarily negative or condemnatory of Government or the OPS in Nigeria. The actual position is that while those who have been privileged to occupy the seat of power would like to think that they have been diligent in seeking to open spaces of participation to the people, those directly affected by the actions or inactions of government see the picture differently. Similarly, while operators in the OPS would like to convince that they have been good corporate citizens, minding the needs of the populace and those of the environment, citizens who are at the receiving end of their profit-making antics might very well tell a different story. Yet, all three must work together, in mutual respect and with transparency and seriousness, or our nation has no chance of overcoming the prevailing impoverishment of the vast majority of our peoples.

As Marc Nerfin of the International Foundation for Development Alternatives (IFDA) states: "... both the governmental lower and the economic power, i.e. the first and second systems, have more often than not proved unable by themselves to offer solutions to the crisis (of nations) and even less to contribute to the search for alternatives. They are more part of the problem than of the solution". It is no longer an issue for debate that governments in Africa have proved unable to respond effectively to the basic needs of their citizens, such as food, security and justice. In the same manner, OPS in Africa is still too preoccupied with profit maximization, at the expense of people and nature, to give much thought to the need of being responsible corporate citizens of their various countries. In these countries, people, exasperated by years of neglect and excesses of their ruling elites, have resorted to violent struggle to take their collective destinies into their own hands. Not much has, however, been achieved. New elites have emerged to take control of mass impoverishment, which exists in our society. It is not enough to simply state that "inclusion" enhances good governance or that "exclusion" nurtures poverty for the majority of the people in society. Rather, it is necessary to closely analyse what each stakeholder would like to call 'inclusion'. Is the token consultation with recognized/sanctioned/safe organizations of citizens, occupational and otherwise, enough inclusion? Or, the casting of votes that never really count since the results of elections are often pre-determined satisfactory inclusion? Or when government, responding to the pressure often exerted by donors or so-called development partners, makes routine gestures of consultation of civil society on programmes whose essential nature and details have been pre-determined by bureaucrats and politicians, are we experiencing the type of inclusion that is able to defeat poverty? Is the 'charitable' concession occasionally made to the 10% or more of citizens who suffer physical and other types of impairment in the form of media-hyped donation of wheelchairs or some food, fighting poverty? Can we seriously offer as example of inclusion the appointment of one woman out of 20 appointees? Is it the type of inclusion that will ensure that we will overcome poverty when experts attend global meetings and sign serious agreements and ordinances that mortgage the agricultural production of our country and the livelihoods of millions of farmers and their families on the altar of economic globalization? Is the political decentralization established in the local government tier of

governance, which does not reflect the traditions, perspectives, history, etc., of each group of communities and is actually homogenized into one single typology of administration, inclusion? Will inclusion lead to poverty reduction if the government does not have a clearly enunciated policy for its relationship with civil society, and national development is left to the mercy of countries and organizations that often introduce different and conflicting ingredients into our national development — because they bring money? Answers to these questions are essential if we want to make a serious effort towards poverty eradication in Africa.

As civil society activists, we recognize that the first step that must be taken by all the stakeholders together is to clearly enunciate a comprehensive vision of social inclusion capable of eradicating poverty. The government, the private sector and the people should collaborate and act in the overall interest of the polity. Only with a combined and concerted effort of all the actors in the development of our countries will we achieve success in fighting poverty in our countries.

My last words are for the members of civil society upon whom a great deal depends if we are to achieve effective poverty eradication through inclusion of citizens in governance and development. Civil society must not exonerate itself from what it demands of the other stakeholders. Only full accountability will help (civil society) to avoid bureaucratization, resist co-optation, keep its role of countervailing power, preserve its capacity for permanent renewal, strive to run itself by imagination and be what it sets out to be – the servant of the people.

**THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE OF DECENTRALIZATION AS A MEANS TO  
IMPROVE GOVERNANCE AND HOW IT CONTRIBUTES TO COMBATING  
POVERTY**

By

Dr. Abdullahi Aliyu

Permanent Secretary  
National Poverty Eradication Programme, Nigeria



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The term "Decentralization" refers to the principle of power-sharing and inclusiveness, where political power, economic and material resources are dispersed from the centre to the periphery. Decentralization is a means of empowering communities by giving them the opportunity to analyse their local situation in a systematic fashion, raising awareness about local problems and about the availability of resources for solving them.

Good governance can be achieved through decentralization. Participation is at the core of decentralization, because grass-roots people know best their local conditions and issues, and are best placed to decide what their priorities are. To be sustainable, political decentralization must be backed by fiscal decentralization, i.e., lower levels of government must be assured of a substantial share of centre revenue, commensurate to their assigned responsibilities. In a three-tier system, such as Nigeria is operating, statutory responsibilities are assigned via the exclusive, legislative and concurrent lists, and this should be backed up by commensurate allocation of resources to the different tiers of government.

## **2. DECENTRALIZATION AND GOVERNANCE**

Nigeria operates a system whereby the federal Government, at the centre, oversees the allocation of resources to the different tiers of government. Because of the prolonged exposure to military rule, the system has been largely unrevised, such that both responsibility and authority have been unduly concentrated at the centre. However, with the advent of democracy in 1999, there has been a loud clamour for a reorganization of the system to devolve both power and responsibility to the state and local government levels. Decentralization is expected to bring government closer to the people, by giving them control of decisions and resources.

Decentralization improves government by opening up governmental institutions and creating better access to information on what government resources are being used for. Newly established democracy is in existence, and people are now in a better position to ask questions and make contributions to how they are governed. To further improve on this, effective decentralization requires elements of empowerment of the grass-roots populace to identify and articulate their demands, and capacity-building of government personnel at the local-government level to meet those demands.

Decentralization gives control of decisions and resources to the targets of government poverty reduction programmes, i.e. the poor themselves. By so doing, it treats the poor and their institutions as assets and partners in the development process. In Nigeria, the democratic Government places great importance on the issue of poverty reduction in the shortest possible time. One of the first acts of the Government when it came into power in May 1999 was to set up a panel to look into the issues surrounding poverty reduction and the existing institutions to address it. A slimmer, more rationalized institutional framework was proposed, and this led to the establishment of the National Poverty Eradication Programme of the Government of Nigeria, (NAPEP).

## **3. DECENTRALIZATION AND POVERTY REDUCTION**

The essence of this programme is to harmonize the poverty reduction effort of the Nigerian Government at different levels, as well as the efforts of NGOs, civil society organizations and donor agencies. This entails the coordination and monitoring of all these efforts with a view to

maximizing their impact, minimizing duplication and overlaps, and facilitating the quick reduction of poverty in Nigeria.

NAPEP utilizes a decentralized structure to achieve its objectives. While the National Headquarters serves as the main secretariat for coordination and monitoring of activities, it has offices in the 36 states and the Federal Capital. It is envisaged that eventually, functional offices will also be established in each of the 44 local government headquarters. The purpose of these decentralized structures is to gather information and data on poverty reduction activities that are going on at these various levels, so that they can be collated, analysed and used as inputs for harmonization of existing and future programmes.

In order to encourage grass-roots participation, several committees have been established at local government and state levels. At each local government headquarters, there is the local government monitoring committee, LGMC, which comprises membership from the civil society, traditional institutions, representatives of NAPEP and any donor bodies active in the area. It is chaired by the local government Chairman.

The state coordination committee (SCC) comprises members from all Federal ministries and agencies that are operating in a state, representatives of NGOs, donor agencies and the state government. This committee is expected to meet regularly to review the activities of member institutions, with a view to harmonizing them, and sending recommendations to the National Secretariat of NAPEP. In addition, it should regularly collate reports from the LGMC for transmission to the National Office.

In addition to the SCC, there also exists the State Poverty Eradication Council (SPEC) in each state. These bodies were established to complement the SCCs by coordinating the efforts of the state government, and are headed by the state governors. The SPEC membership comprises the Governor as chairman; the Secretary to the state Government as its Secretary; a representative from NAPEP Headquarters; NAPEP State Coordinators and Honourable Commissioners of the poverty-reducing ministries, like agriculture, health, education, water, etc. The states' NAPEP Secretary is a member of the SPEC, and therefore is instrumental in harmonizing Federal and State poverty reduction efforts.

At the national level, there are the National Coordination Committee (NCC) and the National Poverty Eradication Council (NAPEC). The NCC is chaired by the National Coordinator of NAPEP, with the Permanent Secretary of NAPEP as secretary and key poverty-reduction ministries as members; these ministries include health, education, water, agriculture, women affairs, power, works, etc. This committee meets regularly to harmonize its activities, identify national priorities and targets, and make recommendations to the National Poverty Eradication Council. NAPEC is the apex national policy-making body for poverty reduction. It is chaired by the President, the Vice President is its Vice Chairman, and the Secretary to the Federal Government (SGF) is the secretary. NAPEP is the secretariat.

In conclusion, with this decentralized structure, NAPEP is able to achieve much more in terms of getting inputs from the beneficiaries of government poverty programmes, creating partnerships between different tiers of government and other stakeholders, and for impacting positively on the poverty situation in Nigeria.

#### **4. POVERTY ALLEVIATION THROUGH SOCIAL INCLUSION**

Poverty, which is a general state of deprivation, is multi-dimensional. It is usually associated with conditions under which people live. Poverty may be viewed in either absolute or relative terms. Absolute poverty is a situation in which a person or group of persons is unable to satisfy their most basic and elementary requirements of human survival in terms of good nutrition, clothing, shelter, energy, transport, health, education and recreation.

#### **5. SOCIAL INCLUSION**

To adequately address the problem of poverty, the concept of social inclusion needs to be understood. The concept implies drawing up programmes or making provisions to adequately address the plight of the poorest of the poor, who are one way or the other discriminated against or excluded by the larger society on account of their social status.

The category of people in this group includes destitute, social deviants, prostitutes, ex-convicts and people who are marginalized on account of an illness such as HIV-AIDS, leprosy etc. They also include groups of people who are shunned by the society due to cultural or religious norms like the caste system in India, or the Osus in Nigeria. Deliberate and conscious efforts must be made by government and NGOs not only to identify projects and programmes that could alleviate and eventually eradicate the poverty of this category of people, but also to bring them back into the fold of society. Such projects require social mobilization within the society to change existing attitudes towards the marginalized groups.

#### **6. IDENTIFYING PROJECTS FOR THE POOR**

Having defined poverty and social inclusion, it is now appropriate to identify the projects that will benefit the poor and the downtrodden of society. It will first be necessary to determine who and where the poor are. A poverty profile for the country can be developed on the basis of quantitative and qualitative sample surveys of individuals, households and communities. This usually involves establishing a poverty line, measuring the incidence, depth and the severity of poverty, examining trends in poverty, and analysing the characteristics of the poor, including their geographical concentration, employment status, relative access to basic economic and social services, sources of income and their demographic, gender and age characteristics.

#### **7. SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS**

These are projects with built-in safety-nets for the alleviation of poverty, which include those on food relief, cash donations, essential materials relief (e.g., clothing and shelter), short-term loans and temporary resettlement and rehabilitation of victims of economic downturn, etc.

While poor people are usually the target of poverty reduction efforts, such efforts have also benefited other classes of people. It is on record that while projects designed for the poor have delivered slightly more than proportional benefit to the poor and the poorest, there have also been significant numbers of non-poor beneficiaries. For the purpose of social inclusion, projects should be designed to deliberately target those identified marginalized groups. For example, micro-credit programmes should be designed to give very small amounts, which would appear unattractive to the non-poor.

In selecting poverty alleviation projects for the poor, the following criteria would be necessary:

- i. The project should target the poor to ensure that its benefits will reach them with minimum leakage to unintended beneficiaries. This requires proper targeting of the poor;
- ii. The project should be demand-driven; that is, the activities of the project should support high-priority needs of the poor as expressed by the poor themselves;
- iii. The project should be sufficiently simple for the targeted communities or groups to participate effectively in its implementation and monitoring;
- iv. The project should be a collective effort between the government and other organizations such as NGOs, CBOs, and the private sector;
- v. There should be adequate institutional capacity to support and manage the project and, thereafter, to sustain it;
- vi. The project should have good prospects of financial support for the implementation;
- vii. The project should be consistent with national development strategies and fit into the country's rolling plan.;
- viii. The project should be cost effective with the prospect of some cost sharing; and
- ix. The project should be environment friendly and sustainable.

**ANNEXE 2 : Présentation des pays  
francophones**

**L'OPERATIONNALISATION DU DEVELOPPEMENT HUMAIN DURABLE  
(DHD) DANS UN CADRE DECENTRALISE AU BENIN**

Par

Dr Georges Lamidé OSSE

## **1. Introduction**

La pauvreté est une des dimensions importantes du concept du Développement Humain Durable développé en 1994 par le Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement (PNUD). Le Bénin, pays côtier de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, s'est lancé en 1999 dans l'opérationnalisation de ce concept dans l'un de ses douze départements, le Borgou. Situé au sud de la moitié nord du pays, ce département regroupe huit communes dirigées par des maires et des conseillers élus lors des premières élections municipales de décembre 2002. Le mouvement coopératif communautaire s'y est implanté depuis plusieurs décennies et demeure très actif en milieu rural, notamment pour la commercialisation des produits agricoles et l'approvisionnement en intrants. Le Borgou se distingue des autres départements du Bénin par ses records dans la production cotonnière, le plaçant au premier rang. Paradoxalement, malgré le niveau élevé de revenus monétaires, grâce à la culture du coton, la pauvreté s'est considérablement aggravée ces dernières années. En effet, l'incidence de la pauvreté rurale du Borgou est passée de 20 % en 1994-1995 à 49 % en 1999-2000.

Devant l'aggravation de la pauvreté, plusieurs communautés se sont organisées et ont décidé de lutter contre les causes les plus profondes de la pauvreté. Cette lutte s'est inscrite dans une nouvelle stratégie d'opérationnalisation du DHD qui se distingue par son caractère largement participatif. En effet, une consultation des populations du Borgou et des autorités locales a été organisée, avec l'appui du PNUD et du Département des Affaires Economiques et Sociales (DAES).

## **2. Présentation de l'initiative d'opérationnalisation du DHD dans le Nord (le Borgou) du Bénin**

L'évolution de la pauvreté dans le département du Borgou montre bien que l'augmentation du revenu agricole, notamment cotonnier, ne s'est pas nécessairement traduite par une amélioration des conditions de vie des populations. Ce constat a soulevé plusieurs questions en particulier les limites de l'approche monétaire de la pauvreté et la nécessité d'adopter une approche plus globale intégrant d'autres dimensions. Le processus d'opérationnalisation du DHD du Borgou s'inscrit ainsi dans une nouvelle approche basée sur le renforcement des capacités des communautés en vue de les doter des moyens de satisfaire elles-mêmes à leurs besoins de base tout en accordant une place de choix à leurs propres préférences. L'opérationnalisation du DHD, qui est dans sa phase pilote depuis juillet 2002, ne s'attaque pas encore à toutes les causes de la pauvreté. Elle vise dans un premier temps à parer au plus pressé, à savoir :

- i. accroître les opportunités d'accès des plus démunis au marché afin qu'ils s'en sortent à partir de leurs potentiels actuels et de leurs propres créativité ;
- ii. rendre exécutable le DHD en valorisant les initiatives locales ;
- iii. montrer que l'opérationnalisation du DHD est possible avec des moyens modestes.

L'accès aux opportunités économiques constitue une porte d'entrée dans l'éventail des domaines prioritaires de l'approche DHD qui comprend l'éducation, la santé, l'eau potable, le micro-crédit, l'emploi, l'habitat, la gouvernance locale, la décentralisation, etc.

La stratégie d'opérationnalisation du développement humain durable (DHD) dans le Borgou a deux sources d'inspiration : (i) la première est le paradigme du DHD qui met au premier plan la dimension humaine du développement, faisant ainsi de la croissance économique, non une finalité, mais un moyen pour réduire la pauvreté. Le DHD doit profiter tant aux générations présentes qu'à celles qui suivront, il fait de la dimension "durable" une question essentielle. A cette dimension s'ajoute l'exigence d'un cadre transparent et démocratique d'épanouissement des organisations politiques et sociales, qui favorise la participation des couches les plus défavorisées aux décisions qui les

concernent. Cette exigence introduit la décentralisation comme un élément important. (ii) La deuxième source d'inspiration est le bilan-diagnostic "DHD" du département qui a mis en évidence ses forces et ses faiblesses. Des indicateurs synthétiques de développement humain calculés pour chacun des départements du Bénin ont montré que le Borgou avait l'indicateur de développement humain (IDH) le plus faible du pays en 1999.

Entre 1999 et 2001, d'importants progrès y ont été accomplis, ce qui a rapproché son IDH de la moyenne nationale tout en restant toutefois en dessous de celle-ci. Cependant, si la situation en matière de santé s'est maintenue à un niveau satisfaisant, les niveaux d'éducation et de revenu sont restés particulièrement faibles. Le taux brut de scolarisation qui était de 57 % en 1999, est passé à 78 % en 2002 pendant que la moyenne nationale passait de 75 % à 95 % entre 1999 et 2002.

Les revenus ruraux annuels moyens sont plus faibles dans le Borgou que dans le reste du pays (74000 F.CFA contre 122000 F. CFA en 1996). La pauvreté touche 45 % des ménages selon la dernière enquête sur les ménages (ECVR 1999-2000), plaçant ainsi le Borgou à l'avant dernier rang des départements. Ces faiblesses s'expliquent par plusieurs facteurs dont deux contraintes principales :

- i. Le fort déficit en matière d'éducation semble avoir trois causes principales : (i) la concurrence entre l'école et les activités productives en milieu rural ; (ii) le coût de l'école ; (iii) la faible qualité de l'enseignement ;
- ii. La place dominante du coton dans la production agricole qui a des inconvénients de plus en plus ressentis : dépendance vis-à-vis des fluctuations des prix ; baisse tendancielle des cours mondiaux ; dysfonctionnements importants de la filière et des organisations paysannes ; impacts négatifs sur l'environnement et faible fréquentation de l'école.

Le département dispose par contre d'atouts non négligeables :

- i. Un fort potentiel agricole: qualité des sols, pluviométrie, cours et retenues d'eau ;
- ii. Des organisations paysannes (OP) puissantes. Si ces organisations paysannes font généralement l'objet de sévères critiques par les populations rurales, elles sont toutefois la marque d'une tradition d'organisation qui concerne pratiquement toutes les communautés rurales. Par ailleurs, les groupements féminins impliqués dans diverses activités génératrices de revenus sont de plus en plus nombreux et ne souffrent pas des maux des organisations liées au coton ;
- iii. Des initiatives communautaires réussies, dont le nombre et la qualité attestent des capacités créatives dans le Borgou.

### **3. La stratégie d'opération du DHD**

La stratégie d'opérationnalisation du développement humain durable (DHD) dans le Borgou distingue deux horizons d'actions : le moyen et le court terme.

A moyen terme, la stratégie DHD – Borgou propose de lever les contraintes lourdes qui pèsent sur le département et constituent des obstacles au DHD. Il s'agit, tout d'abord, des infrastructures (sources d'énergie accessibles, réseau de communication permettant d'acheminer les marchandises à des coûts compétitifs...) Ensuite, les graves insuffisances en matière d'éducation constituent un frein particulièrement important au DHD. L'absence de diversification de la production ne permet pas de dégager de nouvelles opportunités de revenus pour les larges couches de la population rurale. Enfin, la promotion de la bonne gouvernance au niveau départemental suppose le bon fonctionnement du processus de décentralisation.



A court terme, il existe une marge de développement des communautés les plus pauvres qui ne dépend pas de la levée immédiate des contraintes lourdes. L'approche DHD mise en œuvre dans le Borgou vise d'abord à résoudre les problèmes pressants qui ne nécessitent pas d'effectuer des investissements lourds et coûteux. Elle repose sur les principes suivants : (i) tout d'abord, elle cible les populations qui sont à la fois très démunies et mobilisées pour sortir de leur situation ; (ii) ensuite, elle favorise le développement communautaire et la participation ; (iii) de plus, elle valorise les initiatives endogènes réussies et aisément appropriables par les populations et crée les conditions de leur diffusion auprès des communautés demandeuses, (iv) enfin, elle diversifie la production en excluant le coton de ses domaines d'intervention.

La démarche se fonde essentiellement sur l'identification des initiatives communautaires exemplaires dans une perspective de DHD. Il s'agit d'initiatives qui regroupent quatre caractéristiques principales : (i) la participation de tous les membres à toutes les étapes de l'initiative communautaire (identification, mise en œuvre, gestion, prise de décision relative au processus de production et à l'affectation des résultats, etc.) ; (ii) l'autonomie financière : les initiatives retenues sont celles qui ont démontré leur capacité à naître et à se développer sans dépendance structurelle vis-à-vis de l'extérieur ; (iii) la pérennité : les initiatives retenues sont celles qui ont convaincu par leur capacité à durer en se fondant sur leurs dimensions économique, socioculturelle et environnementale ; (iv) la reproductibilité: les initiatives considérées comme exemplaires sont celles qui restent adaptables dans des contextes différents, elles ne doivent pas dépendre étroitement de la levée des contraintes d'infrastructures ou porter sur des marchés solvables trop restreints.

La stratégie d'opérationnalisation du DHD du Borgou ne se limite pas au développement d'initiatives productives exemplaires. Elle concerne aussi des initiatives réussies dans des domaines non directement productifs tels que l'éducation, la santé, l'énergie, l'eau et la communication.

La mise en œuvre de la stratégie DHD du Borgou s'appuie sur une équipe départementale d'animation mise en place en juillet 2002 dans le cadre d'une phase pilote ; la démarche consiste ensuite à identifier et mobiliser les communautés qualifiées de "demandeuses" qui sont à la fois défavorisées et motivées. Ces communautés dites "demandeuses" sont mises au contact des initiatives réussies et peuvent ainsi établir avec les communautés promotrices de ces initiatives (communautés "offreuses") des modèles, des programmes d'échanges et de formations fondés sur l'expertise des communautés promotrices d'initiatives exemplaires. Il s'agit d'utiliser les capacités créatrices de ces dernières pour mobiliser les communautés demandeuses, de manière à rompre avec la logique d'offre, d'assistance et de dépendance qui caractérise les approches classiques de lutte contre la pauvreté. Au niveau des communautés offreuses, trois types de capacités sont identifiées : (i) les capacités d'organisation, de participation et de gestion dans un cadre communautaire ; (ii) les capacités techniques, c'est à dire, le savoir-faire technique indispensable à la maîtrise des activités productives ; (iii) les techniques de micro-crédit. Les communautés promotrices d'initiatives réussies sont appelées à transmettre leurs compétences aux communautés demandeuses. Le processus DHD valorise ainsi les compétences qui existent dans le Borgou auprès des communautés à la base en associant étroitement les administrations, les organisations paysannes, les ONG et autres institutions.

#### **4. Conclusion**

L'expérience du Borgou est relativement peu coûteuse. Elle a l'avantage de bien cibler les communautés concernées par le phénomène de paupérisation et de moduler les appuis nécessaires selon les catégories des pauvres. Elle est donc à la portée des moyens du Gouvernement béninois et des partenaires au développement.

Cependant, en privilégiant la créativité et les expériences locales réussies dans le domaine du DHD, l'approche ne prétend pas résoudre tous les problèmes de développement du Borgou. Elle représente toutefois une nouvelle façon d'aborder les problèmes de développement et se veut à la fois plus pertinente et complémentaire par rapport à d'autres approches plus classiques. L'initiative privée et l'économie de marché constituent des instruments classiques privilégiés pour promouvoir les activités productives. Ainsi, la stratégie DHD du Borgou ne vise pas à se substituer à ces instruments, mais plutôt à appuyer les communautés marginalisées et mal armées par rapport à l'économie de marché. L'idée défendue dans la stratégie de DHD du Borgou est que ces exclus du marché peuvent, en s'organisant et en s'inspirant des expériences réussies, accéder à un autre mode de réalisation des moyens durables d'existence qui répond mieux à leurs aspirations prioritaires, sans les entraîner dans un cercle de dépendance de l'assistance extérieure.

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**REDUCTION DE LA PAUVRETE A TRAVERS LA DECENTRALISATION ET  
L'INCLUSION SOCIALE : L'EXPERIENCE DU BURKINA FASO**

Par

Jean-Baptiste OUEDRAOGO et Admou Idé HASSANE

## **1. Introduction**

La décentralisation, définie comme un processus de transfert de compétences et de ressources au profit des collectivités locales en vue de leur permettre de s'auto administrer pour un développement local durable, pose le problème de la participation et de la responsabilisation des communautés à la base dans le processus de développement local.

L'inclusion sociale, considérée comme une démarche consistant à prendre en compte dans les politiques et stratégies de développement les préoccupations essentielles des couches sociales défavorisées et les plus vulnérables, implique nécessairement des mécanismes efficaces de ciblage des actions de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale.

Le rôle de la décentralisation dans la réduction de la pauvreté peut être appréhendé à travers les efforts de gouvernants pour promouvoir la bonne gouvernance locale dans ses dimensions économique et démocratique. En ce qui concerne l'inclusion sociale, la réduction de la pauvreté à travers cette dimension implique clairement des politiques de gestion des risques et de la vulnérabilité.

Cette contribution s'articulera autour de trois points :

- i. rappel sur le processus et le contenu essentiel du Cadre Stratégique de Lutte contre la pauvreté (CSLP) ;
- ii. présentation d'éléments d'analyse sur les politiques de réduction de la pauvreté à travers la décentralisation favorisant la pleine participation et la responsabilisation des populations dans la mise en œuvre des actions de réduction de la pauvreté ;
- iii. mise en perspective des principaux éléments de la politique d'inclusion sociale dans la stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté en revisitant les acquis de la mise en œuvre et en insistant sur les actions visant à promouvoir la prise en compte des préoccupations des couches sociales défavorisées ou vulnérables.

## **2. Rappel sur le processus CSLP au Burkina Faso**

L'élaboration du Cadre stratégique de lutte contre la pauvreté (CSLP) au Burkina Faso répond au souci de respecter les directives de la communauté des bailleurs de fonds, selon lesquelles, un pays éligible à l'initiative PPTE ne peut bénéficier du gain de l'allègement que s'il dispose d'une stratégie nationale de lutte contre la pauvreté. Le Burkina Faso, tout en s'inscrivant dans cette orientation, se distingue, d'une part, par l'existence de deux enquêtes sur les conditions de vie des ménages réalisées en 1994 et en 1998, et d'autre part, par l'existence d'une stratégie décennale de développement matérialisée par la Lettre d'Intention de Politique de Développement Humain Durable (LPDHD), adoptée en 1995.

Le Burkina Faso, après la LPDHD, s'est doté dès l'année 2000, d'un Cadre stratégique de lutte contre la pauvreté dont la finalité est de permettre : (i) l'accès des pauvres aux services essentiels de base, (ii) l'amélioration des revenus des populations notamment les plus démunies et (iii) la réduction des inégalités. Le contenu du CSLP repose sur quatre axes stratégiques à savoir :

- i. Accélérer la croissance et la fonder sur l'équité ;
- ii. Garantir l'accès des pauvres aux services sociaux de base ;
- iii. Elargir les opportunités en matière d'emploi et d'activités génératrices de revenus pour les pauvres ;
- iv. Promouvoir la bonne gouvernance.

La décentralisation s'inscrit dans une large partie dans l'axe de la bonne gouvernance tandis que les questions relatives à l'inclusion sociale sont transversales et traitées dans l'ensemble des quatre axes.

### **3. La Réduction de la pauvreté à travers la décentralisation**

La mise en œuvre du CSLP au Burkina a permis la réalisation de performances dans divers domaines (macroéconomique, budgétaire, compétitivité, secteurs sociaux, développement rural, bonne gouvernance, etc).

Pour ce qui est de la gouvernance, les performances réalisées portent sur plusieurs résultats couvrant les différents volets : gouvernance démocratique, gouvernance économique et gouvernance locale. Au plan de la gouvernance démocratique, les principaux acquis sont la consolidation et le renforcement du dialogue politique et social et l'amélioration du cadre juridique des institutions. En effet, la consolidation des acquis démocratiques s'est concrétisée par la tenue en 2000 de nouvelles élections municipales et en 2002 d'élections législatives, et par l'ouverture d'un espace de liberté et l'émergence de mouvements de promotion des droits humains.

En matière de renforcement du dialogue politique et social, on note :

- i. l'organisation de la Journée Nationale de Pardon et d'Indemnisation des Victimes de la violence en politique (pour 2,3 milliards FCFA) ;
- ii. la création d'un observatoire économique et social permettant d'envisager un meilleur équilibre du jeu politique et un meilleur exercice de la fonction consultative du Conseil économique et social (CES) ;
- iii. la multiplication des concertations Etat - partenaires sociaux contribuant à créer un climat de paix sociale nécessaire à tout développement ;
- iv. la réalisation d'une étude sur le renforcement des capacités des organisations de la société civile en juillet 2002.

Le cadre juridique national a connu également des actions vigoureuses se résumant par :

- i. la création du Secrétariat d'Etat à la Promotion des Droits de l'Homme en 2000 transformé en ministère plein en 2002 et de la Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme (CNDH) en 2001 ;
- ii. la création et l'installation de nouvelles juridictions supérieures (Conseil Constitutionnel, Cour des Comptes, Conseil d'Etat, Cour de Cassation) ;
- iii. l'assouplissement des conditions d'accès à la justice ;
- iv. la mise en place d'un bureau d'accueil et d'information au tribunal de grande instance de Ouagadougou.

Par ailleurs, au niveau de la gouvernance administrative, il faut noter, d'une part, le renforcement de la gestion de l'administration publique par l'adoption du nouveau statut des agents contractuels de l'Etat, et d'autre part, le reversement à 98% des agents dans la nouvelle grille salariale.

Au plan de la gouvernance économique, les principales actions concernent la création en mai 2001 d'un Comité d'éthique, l'émergence d'un réseau national anti-corruption à l'initiative de la société civile (RENLAC) et la création de la haute autorité de coordination de la lutte contre la corruption.

Enfin, dans le domaine de la gouvernance locale, il faut noter (i) l'approfondissement du processus de décentralisation par la création de 13 régions administratives en 2001, (ii) la consolidation de l'architecture politique et économique locale, (iii) la mise en place d'instruments d'appui institutionnel, technique et financier aux communes (FODECOL et AGEDECOL) et (iv) le démarrage effectif des activités du projet Appui au Programme de relance des économies locales (APREL) en avril 2003. La mise en place de ces instruments vise :

- i. le renforcement des capacités de gestion opérationnelle des élus locaux et des agents communaux ;
- ii. le renforcement des équipements et infrastructures publiques des communes ;
- iii. la consolidation et l'accroissement des ressources financières et fiscales de la plupart des communes ;
- iv. le renouvellement à plus de 80% des équipes municipales couplé d'un relèvement de la proportion des femmes élues conseillères qui passe de 12 à 21% à l'issue des élections 2000.

Il y a lieu de signaler que la dynamique de la gouvernance locale a largement bénéficié de la longue expérience du Burkina Faso en matière de conduite de développement à la base. Plusieurs pratiques se sont succédé évoluant de l'approche projet à l'approche développement local, en passant par l'approche développement rural intégré et les plans quinquennaux. L'approche actuelle intègre la dimension « gestion des terroirs et des ressources naturelles ». Elle fait de la participation et de l'appropriation des plans et instruments par les premiers acteurs un des axes stratégiques à travers les cadres de concertation organisés à l'échelle provinciale. La plupart des régions sont dotées de projets de développement local (PDL) et bénéficient soit directement ou indirectement de l'intervention du Programme national de gestion des terroirs (PNGT 2).

#### **4. La réduction de la pauvreté à travers l'inclusion sociale**

La prise en compte de la situation des couches défavorisées et des groupes vulnérables doit se manifester non seulement à travers la promotion des secteurs sociaux, mais en plus à travers des actions ciblées au profit de ces populations. A cet égard la mise en œuvre du CSLP au Burkina Faso comporte des actions révélatrices de cette préoccupation. Au plan macroéconomique et de l'efficacité budgétaire, malgré une croissance économique moyenne de l'ordre de 3,9% entre 2000 et 2002, les efforts constants ont porté sur :

- i. la mobilisation des ressources au plan interne et externe pour améliorer les allocations des dépenses publiques en faveur des secteurs prioritaires notamment l'éducation : 18,7% en 2002 contre 16,9% en 2000 et la santé : 16,8% en 2002 contre 13,1% en 2000 ;
- ii. la redistribution manifestée particulièrement par la mise en œuvre de programmes d'urgence alimentaire en 2000, les appuis multiformes aux groupes vulnérables (handicapés, orphelins, etc.) et la solidarité au profit des rapatriés de Côte d'Ivoire.

Au niveau de l'éducation, nonobstant les efforts constants visant l'accroissement des infrastructures scolaires et l'amélioration de la qualité et l'efficacité de l'éducation de base, le ciblage des groupes vulnérables et défavorisés a porté sur le renforcement de l'équité des dépenses en leur faveur par :

- i. la dotation gratuite des fournitures et manuels scolaires dans les vingt (20) provinces à faible taux de scolarisation ;
- ii. la mise à disposition de cantines scolaires dans les vingt (20) provinces à faible taux de

- scolarisation ;
- iii. l'exemption des parents d'élèves filles du paiement des cotisations ;
  - iv. la prise en charge au cours de l'année 2001 des cotisations des associations des parents d'élèves pour les rapatriés de Côte d'Ivoire.

Au niveau de la santé, outre l'accroissement des infrastructures sanitaires, le renforcement des effectifs du personnel de santé et l'amélioration de l'accessibilité financière des populations aux services de santé, les populations défavorisées ont bénéficié, entre autres, de : (i) la gratuité de la consultation prénatale et du nourrisson et de la vaccination des enfants, (ii) l'harmonisation des prix des actes médicaux, (iii) la réduction de la marge bénéficiaire de la CAMEG d'environ 32%.

Au niveau de l'accès à l'eau potable, des actions multiformes ont visé essentiellement : (i) la réalisation et la réhabilitation de nombreux forages et points d'eau (réalisation de 737 forages et de 2 mini-AEP, réalisation de 3493 branchements d'eau à des prix promotionnels) et l'amélioration du taux de couverture (environ 70% actuellement).

Dans le domaine du développement rural, les actions spécifiques à prendre en compte dans le domaine de l'inclusion sociale concernent l'amélioration de l'accès au crédit au profit des femmes. Ainsi, en vue de promouvoir l'épanouissement de la femme, 14 centres de promotion féminine (CPF) ont été construits et entièrement équipés, 469 femmes se sont vue octroyer des micros crédits pour développer des activités génératrices de revenus. Dans le but de diversifier les sources de revenus des femmes, environ 4 milliards de francs CFA ont été mobilisés au cours de l'année 2002 par plusieurs sources de financement (FAARF, PSAE/FRC, PPTE, PRPC, fonds pour rapatriés de Côte d'Ivoire, etc.). Ainsi, 5364 dossiers de demandes de crédits ont été traités et 3,12 milliards F CFA ont été octroyés à 90824 bénéficiaires.

Au niveau de l'emploi et de la formation professionnelle, quarante et un (41) projets porteurs de 205 emplois ont été financés par le FAPE en 2002 et 150 micro-projets générateurs de 300 emplois dans les 20 provinces les plus pauvres ont été financés par le FASI.

## **5. Conclusion / perspectives**

Les perspectives en matière de rôle de la décentralisation et de l'inclusion sociale dans la stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté peuvent être analysées à travers l'approfondissement du processus de décentralisation et du développement local, la prise en compte de la dimension spatiale, la promotion de la dimension genre et la prise en compte de nouvelles thématiques dans le CSLP.

### **Le sens de l'approfondissement du processus de décentralisation**

Le Burkina Faso a connu jusqu'au début des années 90 une expérience de décentralisation assez hésitante. Depuis cette époque le pays s'est engagé de façon plus ferme en créant au cours de l'année 1993 une Commission nationale de décentralisation et en adoptant en 1998 les Textes d'orientation de la décentralisation. Les acquis de ce nouvel élan sont nombreux mais le processus devra être poursuivi et accompagné par l'effectivité des communes rurales en tant que collectivité locale et de la région en tant qu'entité administrative (nomination des gouverneurs). Les efforts devront également être poursuivis pour la consolidation de l'architecture politique et économique locale, la mise en place d'instruments d'appui institutionnel, technique et financier aux communes et le renforcement des capacités de gestion opérationnelle des élus locaux et des agents communaux.



Au niveau du développement local, il n'existe pas de pratique unique dans l'intervention des différents partenaires. La recherche d'une durabilité des mécanismes impose l'harmonisation des approches et des outils d'intervention en dynamisant les différents cadres de concertation et en approfondissant la participation pour promouvoir un développement local durable. Cette préoccupation est prise en compte par la Lettre de politique de développement rural décentralisé. Mais elle sera insuffisante si elle n'est suivie rapidement par un système de planification locale harmonisée et un code de financements liant tous les partenaires.

### **La prise en compte de la dimension spatiale**

Antérieurement ressentie comme insuffisance dans le CSLP version 2000, la dimension régionale s'est manifestée essentiellement par l'organisation d'ateliers autour des préoccupations centrales du document.

Deux ateliers régionaux se sont tenus à Ouahigouya et Bodo-Dioulasso le 23 février et le 3 mars 2000 en vue d'informer les acteurs sur les résultats de l'Enquête prioritaire II et de recueillir leurs avis et contributions pour l'amélioration du document de base élaboré par un comité interministériel.

Durant les deux premières années de mise en œuvre, quatre (4) ateliers régionaux ont été organisés chaque année au moment de l'évaluation de la mise en œuvre. Ces ateliers visaient à (i) faire le point sur la mise en œuvre de l'ensemble des mesures envisagées au cours de l'année écoulée (ii) relever les faiblesses et proposer des actions de correction et (iii) accorder les différents intervenants sur une liste minimale de mesures à programmer pour l'année à suivre.

Au cours de l'année 2003, troisième année de mise en œuvre, la démarche a été substantiellement approfondie par la tenue systématique de consultations régionales sur le CSLP. L'innovation réside moins dans la tenue de consultations dans les treize (13) régions du pays que dans l'élaboration de cadres régionaux de lutte contre la pauvreté et la participation effective des acteurs locaux de développement au processus de révision comme l'indiquent les objectifs et principes de la révision. En effet, ces consultations régionales se sont attelées à mieux faire connaître le CSLP et son état de mise en œuvre et à définir pour chaque région les priorités et perspectives d'actions en matière de lutte contre la pauvreté. Des cadres régionaux de stratégie de réductions de lutte contre la pauvreté ont été élaborés pour les 13 régions du pays.

### **La promotion de la dimension genre**

Également critiquée comme insuffisance dans le CSLP, la dimension genre sera prise en compte dans la version révisée. Pour ce faire, les termes de références des consultations régionales ont clairement insisté sur la mise en exergue de la situation de la femme et de l'enfant dans les divers domaines abordés par les cadres régionaux de lutte contre la pauvreté : situation socioéconomique, orientations stratégiques, domaines prioritaires et programme d'actions minimal pour la période 2004 – 2006.

### **La prise en compte de nouvelles thématiques dans le CSLP**

La mise en œuvre du CSLP ainsi que les résultats de certaines études montrent la nécessité d'élargir les domaines prioritaires du CSLP à des secteurs, tels que l'assainissement, l'environnement et la lutte contre la désertification, l'électrification rurale, la promotion de la petite mine, la promotion des PMI/PME, qui ont un impact certain sur la pauvreté. En outre, elle

commande une meilleure visibilité des questions de vulnérabilité dans la définition et la conduite des actions.

**DECENTRALISATION, DEVELOPPEMENT COMMUNAUTAIRE ET  
REDUCTION DE LA PAUVRETE : APPROCHE METHODOLOGIQUE ET  
LEÇONS A TIRER DE L'EXPERIENCE GUINEENNE**

Par

Condé ALHASSANE et Omar T. Barry

## 1. Introduction

Au cours des vingt six premières années de son indépendance, la Guinée a connu un système de planification rigide et fortement centralisé. Au fur et à mesure que les plans de développement (triennal, septennal et quinquennal) se succédaient, les limites de ce système de planification sont apparues et concernaient notamment :

- i. la faiblesse dans l'identification des programmes et projets ;
- ii. les difficultés de mise en œuvre des projets identifiés ;
- iii. la réalisation d'infrastructures ne répondant pas aux besoins des populations ;
- iv. l'absence d'évaluation et de prise en compte de l'impact économique et spatial des projets sur la vie des populations.

Ces insuffisances étaient surtout dues à la faible implication des populations dans l'identification et l'exécution des actions de développement. Pour tenir compte de la nécessité de participation des populations aux choix de développement du pays, une nouvelle démarche de planification décentralisée et contractuelle a été adoptée. L'objectif fondamental était d'instaurer entre le niveau central de l'administration et les collectivités de base un dialogue et une concertation en matière de développement. Il s'agissait d'une nouvelle approche qui supposait la participation effective de la population concernée à la conception, l'élaboration et la réalisation des projets, programmes et plans de développement économique et social.

Il était donc essentiel pour une administration de développement que la participation soit organisée au sein même des collectivités liées à l'Etat selon des rapports de tutelle et de partenariat. En 1985, le Gouvernement guinéen a estimé que la mise en œuvre d'une politique de décentralisation devrait permettre de créer les conditions d'une participation accrue de la société civile en vue d'assurer une meilleure adéquation des programmes aux besoins réels.

Le succès d'une telle réforme, dont l'objectif ultime est la réduction de la pauvreté au niveau communautaire, découle de la volonté, des moyens, mais aussi du sens de l'organisation. La collectivité ne peut plus se contenter de gérer au jour le jour les problèmes de la vie économique. Elle doit s'attacher à créer les conditions d'un développement local durable.

Dans cette perspective la communauté est appelée à jouer le rôle de organisateur et de promoteur du développement local à travers entre autres :

- i. l'existence de programmes de développement annuels et triennaux ;
- ii. l'implication de la population dans la mise en œuvre des investissements ;
- iii. la capacité de gestion des élus ;
- iv. l'entretien des infrastructures.

A travers quelle pédagogie de développement est-il possible de préparer les collectivités décentralisées guinéennes à une politique de programmation pluriannuelle et d'aménagement dans une logique de consultation permanente des citoyens alors que rien dans le passé ne les prédestinait à une telle tâche ?

## **2. L'approche des micro-réalisations : instrument privilégié de mise en œuvre de programmes pilotes de développement local et participatif**

La mise en œuvre de programmes pilotes de développement local et participatif, suivant une approche basée sur les micro-réalisations, a été retenue comme la première étape de la mise en place du système de planification contractuelle et décentralisée. Les objectifs principaux recherchés, à travers ces programmes, ont été :

- i. mettre en place une structure souple, efficace et peu coûteuse pouvant directement contribuer au financement des micro-projets initiés par les collectivités elles-mêmes ;
- ii. tester les formules d'assistance et les modalités de fonctionnement permettant d'adopter les modes d'intervention les plus efficaces pour la promotion des initiatives de base ;
- iii. permettre à plusieurs responsables à divers niveaux d'acquérir une méthodologie et une expérience de l'approche participative.

Dans ce cadre d'intervention, les collectivités décentralisées ont été appelées à jouer un rôle moteur dans la dynamisation du développement local. Les micro-réalisations étaient au cœur du développement local ; à ce titre, elles constituaient un enjeu pour le développement global du pays. Elles se présentaient comme de leviers d'actions appropriés à certains problèmes de développement qui se posaient à la base et offraient des opportunités de participation aux populations.

Les micro-réalisations, synonyme de projets à dimension modeste du point de vue financier et technologique, s'adaptent parfaitement à une échelle d'intervention et aux exigences de participation communautaire. Les collectivités initient des projets d'intérêt local (construction d'écoles, de centres de santé ...) dont le financement peut être supporté par elles seules ou en partenariat avec l'Etat, les ONG et les autres bailleurs de fonds. "L'approche accompagnement" est pratiquée par l'Etat et les partenaires de développement. Cette approche consiste à mettre en place des comités de gestion pour les infrastructures créées et à assister les populations locales, désirant entreprendre un micro projet (de la phase d'identification jusqu'à celles de la réalisation et de l'évaluation). A travers ce mécanisme, l'objectif recherché est de transférer des compétences en matière de programmation et de prise de décision. La cohérence de toutes les initiatives communautaires est assurée aux niveaux préfectoral et national.

## **3. Les programmes de promotion du développement local et participatif mis en œuvre en Guinée**

Depuis l'adoption de la politique de décentralisation en 1985, plusieurs programmes de développement institutionnel et de promotion du développement local et participatif ont été mis en œuvre dans le cadre de différentes initiatives de lutte contre la pauvreté. Plusieurs actions ont été engagées, en particulier le Programme National de Micro-réalisations.

### **3.1. Le programme national de micro-réalisations (1987 – 1990)**

Avec l'assistance du PNUD, le Secrétariat d'Etat à la Décentralisation (SED) a mis en œuvre un programme national de micro-réalisations en faveur des collectivités décentralisées. Le programme national de micro-réalisations (1987 –1990) est la première expérience de mise en œuvre de la planification contractuelle décentralisée. L'objectif de ce programme était de tester la capacité d'intervention des populations au processus de développement ainsi que leur capacité de gestion d'un projet (de l'identification jusqu'à la réalisation). Ces projets devraient répondre aux

besoins exprimés par les populations. La participation de ces dernières était la condition sine qua non pour que le projet soit inscrit dans le programme.

Le SED, département de tutelle, a créé au niveau de chaque préfecture une direction des micro-réalisations qui devait suivre la réalisation des projets des collectivités décentralisées. Les micro-réalisations devaient favoriser l'utilisation des matières premières locales. La participation aux réalisations se faisait sous forme des contributions volontaires en espèces ou en nature. Les associations de ressortissants des localités retenues ont souvent contribué en espèce de façon très positive. Les collectivités décentralisées contribuaient aussi à travers les ristournes sur l'Impôt Minimum pour le Développement Local (IMDL). Le programme comportait 178 projets dans les 33 préfectures du pays pour un coût global de 19 milliards de francs guinéens, repartis entre les partenaires comme suit : collectivités décentralisées (16 %), budget national de développement (13 %) et les partenaires extérieurs de développement (71 %).

### **3.2. Programme d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base (PAIB)**

Le PAIB est le fruit de la coopération entre le Gouvernement guinéen et le PNUD. Il a été lancé en 1994 pour un coût initial d'environ 900.000 \$ US. Son objectif était de renforcer la capacité d'auto-promotion des communautés de base et leur collaboration avec les structures nationales et les organisations non gouvernementales (ONG) impliquées dans le développement local participatif.

### **3.3. Programme d'Appui et de Renforcement des Collectivités Décentralisées de Guinée (PARC)**

Ce projet, exécuté par l'ONG canadienne CECI, concernait treize CRD : 12 en Moyenne-Guinée et 1 en Basse Guinée. Le PARC, sur financement ACDI, visait, entre autres, l'amélioration des capacités de gestion et de mobilisation des ressources communautaires par des programmes de formation et d'assistance technique répondant aux besoins de chaque CRD.

### **3.4 Programme d'Appui au Développement Humain Durable (PADHD)**

Ce programme résulte de la fusion de deux anciens programmes qui ont été mis en œuvre au niveau de la ville de Conakry dans le cadre de la lutte contre la pauvreté et la vulnérabilité en milieu urbain. Il s'inscrivait dans le cadre de l'accord de base signé entre le Gouvernement de la République de Guinée et l'UNICEF en décembre 1993. Le PADHD visait essentiellement la ville de Conakry pour les volets du programme et les préfectures de Kindia, Mamou, Labé Kankan et N'Zérékoré pour le volet "Enfance ayant des besoins spéciaux d'assistance". Le coût du programme était estimé à 2.961.000 \$ US, entièrement à la charge de l'UNICEF.

### **3.5 Programme Elargi de Vaccination, Soins de Santé Primaire et Médicaments Essentiels (PEV/SSP/ME)**

La stratégie d'intervention et de collaboration proposée au Département de la décentralisation est essentiellement basée sur l'encadrement, l'organisation et l'assistance technique aux organes des communautés rurales avec pour objectif :

- i. la mise en place et le fonctionnement d'un comité de gestion au niveau de chaque centre de santé ;
- ii. le suivi des activités des centres de santé ;
- iii. l'information et la mobilisation des populations autour des activités des centres de santé ;

- iv. l'adoption d'un système de recouvrement des coûts et des méthodes de gestion des recettes.

### **3.6 Soutien de la Charente Maritime aux collectivités décentralisées**

Sur la base d'une convention de jumelage-coopération signée en novembre 1991, le Département de Charente Maritime (France) a apporté un soutien aux collectivités décentralisées de Boffa dans les domaines de la formation des élus locaux et des agents administratifs ; il a aussi participé au financement d'infrastructures diverses (écoles, centres et postes de santé, centre d'accueil, etc.). Cette coopération a concerné également l'appui à deux coopératives dans la production du sel par utilisation de l'énergie solaire et l'appui à des groupements d'intérêt public pour l'entretien des pistes rurales.

### **3.7 Soutien de CLUSA/Guinée aux collectivités des Préfectures de Coyah, Dubréka, Forécariah et Kindia**

Clusa-Guinée, antenne en Guinée de la ligue des coopératives Américaines, appuie les collectivités décentralisées ainsi que les groupements dans les préfectures de Coyah, Dubréka, Forécariah et Kindia. Cet appui se concentre sur la formation, dispensée selon une approche participative. La formation est assurée par des jeunes animateurs guinéens.

### **3.8 Soutien de Plan International Guinée aux collectivités des préfectures de Guékédou, Kissidougou et Macenta**

L'antenne en Guinée de l'ONG Plan International accorde un soutien aux collectivités et aux organisations de la société civile des préfectures de Guékédou, Kissidougou et Macenta. Ce soutien a permis à cette ONG de dispenser de l'assistance dans les domaines ci-après : habilitation communautaire et leadership, santé, animation, éducation, moyens de communication et micro réalisations.

### **3.9 Programme d'Appui aux Communautés Villageoises (PACV)**

Le PACV est un programme à long terme qui s'étale sur une période de 12 ans. Il vise le renforcement du processus de décentralisation au niveau politique, administratif et fiscal ainsi que le renforcement des capacités des communautés rurales de développement à se prendre en charge en participant pleinement à la conception, à l'élaboration, à l'exécution et au suivi des plans de développement communautaire. La Banque Mondiale, à travers l'IDA, est le principal bailleur de fonds de ce programme.

### **3.10 Projet de Développement Intégré en faveur de la femme et de la jeune fille**

Ce projet intégré, en faveur de la femme et de la jeune fille, avait été mis en œuvre en milieu rural avec l'appui de l'UNICEF-Guinée à travers l'intervention du Comité National Finlandais pour l'UNICEF. Ayant démarré en 1994, le projet intervient dans sept préfectures de la Moyenne Guinée et de la Haute Guinée : Labé, Pita, Dalaba, Mamou, Faranah, Dabola, Dinguiraye. Le projet assiste quarante (40) collectivités décentralisées de base en milieu rural avec comme objectifs l'amélioration des conditions de vie des femmes en allégeant leurs tâches quotidiennes à travers la mise en place des infrastructures de base (points d'eau, latrines, lavoirs, jarres en ciment etc.) et l'équipement des groupements féminins pour la réalisation des activités génératrices de revenus (saponification, teinture, maraîchage etc.).

### **3.11 Autres initiatives**

Parmi d'autres projets, il y a : (i) le programme pilote de promotion des villes secondaires en Guinée concernant les villes de Boké, Kindia, Kankan et Guékédou, et (ii) le soutien de l'ONG 44 à la commune de Kindia.

## **4. Eléments de bilan et premières tendances**

Les collectivités décentralisées assument de plus en plus d'activités de services (administration, travaux d'entretien et de gestion...) et d'investissement public, dans les secteurs prioritaires de développement humain et de lutte contre la pauvreté (construction, entretien et amélioration, des infrastructures socio-économiques, assainissement, appui aux initiatives de base...). A côté de ces structures décentralisées, interviennent des groupements de producteurs, des associations et coopératives de développement à caractère économique, social et culturel. Des groupes informels (groupes d'âges par exemple) ou des personnes isolées sont également impliquées dans la mise en œuvre de certaines activités. Les ONGs nationales et internationales, les agences bilatérales de développement (USAID, CFD, ACDI GTZ...) ainsi que les institutions internationales (PNUD, FAO, UNICEF, HCR...) assistent les populations dans leurs efforts d'amélioration des conditions de vie et de travail.

En matière de lutte contre la pauvreté et de maîtrise des mécanismes de gestion contractuelle et décentralisée du développement, tous les efforts déployés ont permis d'enregistrer des résultats fort encourageants. Dans certaines localités, les capacités d'analyse et de programmation du développement se sont substantiellement améliorées.

La mise en œuvre des programmes de développement local et participatif a contribué à l'amélioration du cadre et des conditions de vie des populations notamment en milieu rural. Elle a également favorisé la promotion du mouvement associatif et l'émergence d'un partenariat entre les différents acteurs intervenant dans la mise en œuvre des micro-réalisations, instrument privilégié de développement à la base et de réduction de la pauvreté.

Les résultats enregistrés sont néanmoins insuffisants par rapport à l'intensité des besoins et aux déficits sociaux. Parmi ces insuffisances il y a :

- i. l'existence très limitée d'actions pluriannuelles dont le financement est acquis. Les élus et les cadres de plusieurs collectivités n'ont pas encore les capacités requises en matière d'élaboration et d'exécution des programmes et plans locaux de développement ;
- ii. la faiblesse des ressources locales pour le financement des micro-réalisations ;
- iii. les opérations de micro-réalisations interviennent très souvent sans véritable coordination des actions et sans une réelle concertation entre les différents acteurs ;
- iv. la faible articulation entre les activités de l'Administration locale et celles de l'Administration centrale ;
- v. la faible prise en compte de la dimension spatiale du développement par les différentes approches de programmation des investissements publics et des micro-réalisations ;
- vi. la question de la pérennisation des acquis des projets est très faiblement prise en compte ;
- vii. le soutien parfois discriminatoire des organismes de développement, soutien qui accentue davantage les inégalités régionales et communautaires. Ces organismes ne s'implantent ou n'interviennent généralement que dans les zones d'accès facile.



**PAUVRETE ET DECENTRALISATION : LE CAS DU SENEGAL**

Par

Ministère de l'Economie, des Finances et du Plan  
Unité de Politique économique



nationale. La ville de Dakar concentre, à elle seule, plus de 50 % des pauvres vivant en milieu urbain. Cette pauvreté urbaine est marquée par la précarité de l'environnement et du cadre de vie des « quartiers névralgiques ».

Pour faire face à cette situation, l'Etat du Sénégal a initié en 1998, le Programme de Lutte contre la Pauvreté (PLP) articulé autour des axes suivants : le développement des capacités propres ; la promotion de l'auto-prise en charge ; la préférence pour les solutions durables aux interventions ponctuelles et conjoncturelles ; l'élaboration de programmes ciblés en direction des groupes de populations vulnérables.

En 2002, le Sénégal a élaboré un Document de Stratégie de Réduction de la Pauvreté (DSRP) selon une démarche participative. Cette nouvelle stratégie comprend quatre leviers essentiels : la création de richesse, le renforcement des capacités, la promotion des services sociaux de base et l'amélioration des conditions de vie des groupes vulnérables. La nouvelle approche du DSRP se veut participative en donnant la parole aux pauvres à travers des ateliers de réflexion et de validation des grands choix de la stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté. Elle vise également la promotion d'un nouveau cadre de partenariat permettant d'améliorer l'efficacité de l'aide à travers une meilleure harmonisation de l'intervention des bailleurs de fonds.

Par ailleurs, l'Etat a donné une importance plus grande à la promotion du statut de la femme, conformément au rôle stratégique que joue celle-ci dans l'économie et la société, en accordant la priorité à l'éducation de la fille et à l'alphabétisation de la femme. Enfin, l'Etat oeuvre à promouvoir la concertation et le partenariat avec le secteur privé ainsi que l'approche participative par laquelle les populations s'impliquent davantage dans la gestion des affaires locales dans le cadre de nouvelles compétences de la Région.

Le processus d'élaboration du DSRP a intégré l'apport des régions à travers les consultations régionales. Sa mise en œuvre sera décentralisée et fera l'objet d'un suivi et d'une évaluation au niveau régional.

### **3. Expérience Sénégalaise en matière de décentralisation**

La décentralisation dans le but de rapprocher l'administration des administrés est régie par une loi portant code des collectivités locales, en date de mars 1996 et une série de textes subséquents. Avec l'adoption de ce nouveau dispositif légal, le Sénégal a franchi une nouvelle étape dans sa politique séculaire de décentralisation qui s'est traduite notamment par l'existence de 441 collectivités locales, d'égale dignité, managées par 14.352 élus locaux.

L'objectif du processus de décentralisation est de susciter des dynamiques institutionnelles à la base à travers le principe de la libre administration des collectivités locales qui a pour corollaires : (i) une gestion locale démocratique des affaires publiques par des assemblées délibérantes et des organes exécutifs élus. La loi offre aux citoyens des possibilités de participation dans la gestion locale en accédant aux informations sur les budgets locaux et en assistant aux réunions des assemblées locales. (ii) La suppression de tout contrôle d'opportunité sur les actes des collectivités locales, avec toutefois l'institution corrélatrice d'un contrôle de légalité exercé par des agents publics, mais placée sous la supervision d'une juridiction administrative, le Conseil d'Etat, qui seul peut annuler tout ou partie d'un acte émanant d'une collectivité locale ; (iii) le caractère exécutoire des actes des collectivités locales, exception faite d'une catégorie dont la mise en œuvre est subordonnée à l'approbation préalable des fonctionnaires chargés du contrôle de légalité.

Aux côtés de l'Etat qui exerce des missions de souveraineté, d'impulsion et de coordination du développement, la loi sur les collectivités locales a transféré à celles-ci d'importantes compétences de proximité, qui s'ajoutent à leurs compétences générales, pour une meilleure approche du développement local. La mission générale des collectivités décentralisées est de concevoir, de programmer et de mettre en œuvre des actions de développement économique, éducatif, social et culturel, d'intérêt local. Les compétences transférées concernent neuf (9) domaines: (i) la gestion et l'utilisation du domaine privé de l'Etat, du domaine public et du domaine national; (ii) l'environnement et la gestion des ressources naturelles; (iii) la santé, la population et l'action sociale; (iv) la jeunesse, les sports et les loisirs; (v) la culture; (vi) l'éducation, l'alphabétisation, la promotion des langues nationales et la formation professionnelle; (vii) la planification; (viii) l'aménagement du territoire; (ix) l'urbanisme et l'habitat.

Selon un principe consacré par le législateur, les charges transférées aux collectivités locales sont compensées par des dotations de l'Etat. Toutefois, celles-ci demeurent insuffisantes (75% des dépenses de fonctionnement des collectivités locales régionales) pendant que le produit de la fiscalité locale (50% des ressources des communes et communautés rurales) est loin de leur permettre d'assurer leur autonomie financière. Le cumul des budgets locaux n'excède pas 10% du budget de l'Etat. Les communes consacrent en moyenne 70% de leurs ressources ordinaires à leurs charges de personnel, contre 30% pour les communautés rurales dont il est vrai que les budgets sont modiques (97% d'entre elles ont un budget inférieur à 20 millions de francs CFA).

Compte tenu de cette situation, l'action des collectivités locales en matière de lutte contre la pauvreté est encore timide. Aussi, l'Etat avec l'appui des partenaires au développement, a-t-il été amené à mettre en place un certain nombre de projets qui s'appuient sur la décentralisation et l'aménagement du territoire pour mieux structurer la lutte contre la pauvreté. Toutefois, l'appréciation exhaustive des actions menées a souffert jusqu'ici de l'absence d'un système d'information complet et pertinent ainsi que d'une stratégie bien coordonnée.

#### **4. Projets axés sur la décentralisation et la réduction de la pauvreté**

Le Sénégal a connu plusieurs initiatives d'appui à la dynamique du processus de décentralisation et de lutte contre la pauvreté. Trois types de projets peuvent être distingués :

- i. projets de renforcement des capacités des acteurs locaux en particulier les élus ;
- ii. projets de promotion de Fonds de Développement Locaux ;
- iii. projets d'appui aux initiatives communautaires.

Les principaux projets mis en œuvre depuis quelques années peuvent se résumer comme suit ;

- i. Le Projet d'appui à la Décentralisation et au Développement Local (PADDEL) avec pour objectifs d'apporter un appui institutionnel aux acteurs locaux et de mettre en place un fonds de développement local destiné au financement des infrastructures communautaires, des activités de gestion des ressources naturelles et de génération de revenus dans sa dimension de lutte contre la pauvreté.
- ii. Le Programme d'Appui aux Communes (PAC) dont l'objectif est de stimuler l'effort de redressement des communes et de soutenir leur effort d'investissement pour la production et la fourniture des infrastructures, équipements et services prioritaires.
- iii. Le projet de Fonds de Développement Local (FDL) de Kédougou qui est une traduction concrète de l'approche décentralisée de réduction de la pauvreté. Il a pour objectifs de contribuer au renforcement des capacités de gestion des collectivités locales et d'appuyer les initiatives privées par les systèmes de crédit de proximité.

- iv. Le Projet d'appui à la décentralisation en milieu rural (PADMIR) dont l'objectif est le développement et l'amélioration de la gouvernance locale à travers une augmentation de l'investissement socio-économique et un appui à la réforme du système de planification et du financement au niveau décentralisé.
- v. Le Programme national d'infrastructures rurales (PNIR) dont les objectifs s'articulent autour du renforcement des capacités des communautés rurales, de la mise en place d'un fonds d'investissements local afin de financer les infrastructures de base et de la mise en place d'un programme d'actions prioritaires. Il vise également le renforcement des capacités des services du génie rural.
- vi. Le Programme Elargi de Lutte contre la Pauvreté (PELCP) mis en place en 1998 dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre des orientations du Programme National de Lutte contre la Pauvreté (PLP) avec l'appui du PNUD, ce programme a pour objectifs l'amélioration des revenus et des conditions de vie des populations, l'appui à l'amélioration et à la gestion de l'espace rural, la promotion économique des femmes.
- vii. Le projet de micro-réalisations et de coopération décentralisée (PMR-CD), bénéficiant de l'appui de l'Union européenne et d'un financement de 7,9 milliards de FCFA.

## **5. Initiatives de développement de la capacité d'action collective**

Comme cadre propice à la promotion des initiatives locales de maîtrise du cadre de vie et de relance de la production, la décentralisation a rendu possible deux exemples d'action collective respectivement au niveau d'une commune et d'une communauté rurale.

### **5.1 L'expérience du projet de ville de Pikine**

Avec Port-au-Prince en Haïti, la ville de Pikine (banlieue de Dakar) a participé au projet « villes, gestion des transformations sociales et de l'environnement » expérimenté entre 1996 et 2001 par le Programme « Gestion des Transformations sociales – Management of social transformations (MOST) de l'UNESCO. Ce projet a eu pour objectifs :

- i. d'encourager et d'appuyer les initiatives des habitants en vue d'améliorer leurs conditions de vie (accès à l'eau potable, évacuation des déchets, création d'activités génératrices de revenus, création d'espaces publics dans les quartiers et amélioration de l'habitat) ;
- ii. de renforcer les capacités des acteurs locaux, notamment les jeunes et les femmes, à travers des actions de formation ;
- iii. de favoriser le partenariat entre ONGs, organisations communautaires de base (OCB) et autres organisations de la société civile (OSC), citoyens, municipalités, Etat, secteur privé, milieu universitaire visant à renforcer une gouvernance urbaine participative et démocratique.

Trois espaces de concertation et de réflexion ont été créés et exploités : (i) l'organisation de forums de concertation dans chacune des 16 communes d'arrondissement sur les questions d'environnement local, de développement économique et social, d'éducation, de culture et de sports ; (ii) la création de Comité locaux de suivi (CLS) avec pour buts d'élaborer un plan d'action basé sur les recommandations faites, d'encourager l'exécution des activités, de faciliter les relations et échanges entre l'administration de la commune et la population et (iii) l'établissement de Commissions thématiques spécialisées (CTS) sur l'environnement, le développement socio-économique, la bonne gouvernance, le civisme, la communication et l'échange d'informations ainsi que le développement du secteur de l'éducation, de la culture et des sports. Les Commissions thématiques spécialisées ont vu l'implication active de plus d'une

centaine de personnes des services techniques de l'Etat, centres de recherche, ONG et organisations communautaires de base.

Deux séminaires de formation ont été organisés : l'un sur la gouvernance locale et la participation civique à l'intention des employés municipaux et leaders municipaux, l'autre sur le leadership féminin et la mobilisation locale pour les femmes élues et leaders féminins des associations communautaires. Pour la gestion du « Projet de Ville », il a été créé une plate-forme institutionnelle avec un comité de pilotage, présidé par le maire, et comprenant les conseillers et fonctionnaires municipaux, une commission technique et une unité de support technique.

## **5.2 L'expérience des grappes de convergence de la communauté rurale de Sangalcam**

Sous la supervision du Premier Ministre, la Communauté rurale de Sangalcam est en train d'expérimenter la convergence des efforts des groupements de jeunes et de femmes, des élus, de la société civile, du secteur privé, de l'Etat et de ses démembrés et des partenaires à la base, pour mettre en valeur avec la participation de tous les acteurs, les potentialités (la terre) d'une aire géographique donnée. Le Président du Conseil rural assure la coordination des actions.

Comme à Pikine, il s'agit d'une expérience de planification stratégique participative à la base, qui, pour ce cas d'espèce, ambitionne d'avoir un effet immédiat de génération de revenus pour lutter directement contre la pauvreté.