

URBAN DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH PROGRAMME

2001 – 2004

*Incentive concerted action under the Priority
Solidarity Fund
of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, conducted by
GEMDEV and ISTD*



The internationalization of economies and the effects of globalization – deregulation, privatization, relocation – are radically transforming urbanization mechanisms and urban and regional systems in countries of the South. National and local public authorities, “civil society”, as well as major service operators must invent alternative, concerted management systems for urban development. It is a new urban situation that requires fresh scientific research input focusing on actor configurations and new intervention logics. This is the context in which the PRUD programme has been developed.

Programme management:

*Charles Goldblum, Chairman of the Scientific
Committee, GEMDEV*

Annik Osmont, Executive Secretary, GEMDEV

Isabel Diaz, Task Officer for PRUD – ISTD

THE PROGRAMME

PROGRAMME ORIGINS AND OBJECTIVES

In the spring of 2001, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹ (MAE) decided to launch incentive concerted action in the field of urban development research throughout the French Priority Solidarity Zone² (ZSP). This action was the follow-up to a forward-looking review of cooperative urban research by the Groupement d'intérêt Scientifique, GEMDEV, on the request of the MAE Department of Research. ISTED was appointed as the manager-operator of this programme, in partnership with GEMDEV, which has scientific responsibility.

This programme, which focuses on new intervention procedures and the strategies and rationale of urban actors, has three major objectives:

- re-activate urban development research based on the renewal of its issues and themes;
- generate fresh knowledge on urbanization in countries of the South to guide public action in the field of urban development and international cooperation;
- restore or initiate relations for partnerships and exchanges between the French scientific community and scientific communities in countries of the South in the field of urban planning and management.

RESEARCH TEAMS AND STUDY FIELDS

The call for proposals received a hundred replies, not only from French teams or partner countries in the ZSP but also from other European countries. Thirty-two teams were selected by the Scientific Committee. The mandatory bodies are mainly laboratories, university-type research institutes and associations. Most of the teams are of mixed North-South origin and bring together experts and practitioners with the

researchers. The team members are mostly from countries in the South whereas the mandatory bodies tend to be from the North.

Nearly half the selected research projects deal with urban issues in Sub-Saharan Africa and Madagascar, eight relate to cities in South-East Asia, eleven concern cities in countries of the Mediterranean basin and two those of the Caribbean region. Most of these projects use a comparative approach at a regional sub-unit level and some at an intercontinental level. Critical analysis of intervention systems in the observed situations is preferred to a mere description of phenomena.

INTERSECTING VIEWS AND SYNERGIES

The call for proposals has created a context favourable to discussions not only between researchers, practitioners and representatives of civil society within the research teams, but also between the teams themselves, particularly during meetings organized by the teams themselves or by PRUD. At this stage, embryonic networks have been formed, which, if the movement is confirmed, will fulfil one of the main programme objectives, particularly since these were voluntary initiatives meeting a cross-cutting rationale for converging themes and problems. Some of the research work proposes intersecting views between countries and regions situated at the "fringes" of the ZSP – Cuba or the Autonomous Territories of Palestine – or consists of forays into other countries and regions – Central and South America – not included in the geographic area covered by the PRUD.

The closing seminar will be the opportunity to develop and enrich these dynamics.

1. Ministère des Affaires Etrangères

2. Zone de Solidarité Prioritaire

THE REGIONAL MEETINGS

HANOI, RABAT, LA HAVANE ET DAKAR

One of the original features of the Urban Development Research Programme is the scheduling of mid-term regional meetings that each take place in specific conditions and have created an event that will make public authorities, urban actors and non-PRUD researchers more aware of the role of urban planning in development and the importance of, and issues at stake in, research and international cooperation in this field.

CONCEPTION AND ORGANIZATION

PRUD has organized four regional seminars that mobilize all its teams according to the geographic distribution of their study fields. These meetings took place in four cities of the ZSP: Hanoi (November 2002), Rabat (January 2003), Havana (February 2003) and Dakar (April 2003). They were hosted by university institutions or research centres established in the countries. The themes selected to frame the workshop discussions were defined to converge with the main problems addressed in the teams' research work. The exchanges and discussions were made meaningful by this comparative, multi-disciplinary approach, in thematic workshops organized around the core subject of the seminar.

SEMINAR THEMES:

- **Hanoi:** "Intersecting Views of Hanoi: Transition, Urban Specificity and Development Options"
- **Rabat:** "Urban Government, Actors and Local Authorities"
- **Havana:** "Democratic Urban Management: Local Initiatives"
- **Dakar:** "What Actors, what Intervention Systems, for what City?"

SCIENTIFIC INPUT

The discussions that took place during the workshops and round tables highlighted themes differing in either their cross-cutting relationships or their singularity.

A case in point is the identification of the urban planning and management actors, which has revealed a complexifying process accentuated by the emergence of an increasing number of international actors and marked by necessary relationships between the public and private spheres. In many cases, strategic conflicts make us wonder about the efficiency of the regulatory power of public policies. And the advocacy of participatory urban management raises the question of the build-up of civil society. On the whole, the analyses highlight the political dimension of urban development. This is also true for decentralization and local governance in their response to the realities of local authorities and local democracy.

The subject of urban services, which tend to have composite management systems between "formal" and "informal", public and private, and that of regulation were examined in detail, inter alia to measure the social and political impact of the implemented measures.

Specific research questions were asked about the complex relationships between local and international expertise, the place of the informal sector in urban development, and the role of humanitarian action in the management of acute urban crisis situations. In this connection, the three research projects conducted in the Autonomous Territories of Palestine, although they are no doubt the most atypical, are highly instructive on urban management in general.

RESEARCH FEEDBACK AND UTILIZATION

Governing the cities of the south

Challenges for research and action

International Symposium
UNESCO - Paris (France)



5, 6, 7 May 2004

The programme leaders, with the agreement of the Research Department of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, wish to give the final symposium a dimension that will optimize the utilization of the programme and feedback from the research. With this aim in view, policy-makers, local elected representatives, mayors of large cities, and specialists in direct contact with activities and personalities of civil society, will be invited so that an open discussion can take place with the PRUD teams on keynote themes that have emerged from the research.

Through wide-ranging discussion between planning specialists from the North and the South, the aim is both to transcend the geographic limits of the PRUD and to formulate concrete proposals that will build a bridge between research and action in favour of urban development.

The concept of this symposium is resolutely focused towards the identification of cross-cutting relationships through singular situations, with a view to providing better aid for decision-making.

Contact : *ISTED - PRUD, tél. 33 (0)1 40 81 11 65, fax. 33 (0)1 40 81 11 76 E-mail. prud@isted.com*



La grande Arche, Paroi Nord
92055 La Défense Cedex - France
Tel. 33 (0) 1 40 81 24 06
isted@i-carre.net - www.isted.com



Centre Malher - 9, rue Malher
75181 Paris Cedex 04 - France
Tél. 33 (0) 1 44 78 33 15
www.gemdev.org