

HDCA 2014 Annual Conference
"Human Development in Times of Crisis:
Renegotiating social justice"
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Panel Session

Local governance and policy implementation for human development in time of crisis

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Panel Papers:

1. A "policy-enabling space" for Sustainable Human Development at the local level

by Mario Biggeri and Andrea Ferrannini

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by Simon Letonturier and Michèle Pasteur

Panel Outline

Local governance and policy implementation for human development in time of crisis

The human development paradigm – being a people-centred development approach and an agency-based and opportunity-oriented theory – provides an alternative vision of development not only at national level, but also and especially at territorial level, where processes of social exclusion, inequality, conflicts and vulnerability primarily take place.

Therefore, the human development paradigm changes the coordinates of thinking “from per capita GDP to local well-being” (Becattini, 2004), sustaining a holistic, progressive and sustainable view of local development (Pike et al., 2006), and fostering at the same time the pillars of human development – i.e. equity, sustainability, participation and productivity (UNDP, 1996).

However, the complexity of territorial multi-stakeholders and multi-level governance processes and their socio-economic impacts in terms of expansion of people’s capabilities and wellbeing are rarely framed together. In particular, within the theoretical and empirical literature on human development, the *meso* level has still not received a sufficient degree of attention. The relevance of territorial dynamics and procedural aspects for the sustainable expansion of individual and collective capabilities have not been fully captured yet.

In the current time of crisis, local governance and policy implementation may complement resources, competences and initiatives designed at upward levels with the capacity to foster the valorisation of endogenous resources through local stakeholders participation, inclusion and agency. Tailored policy implications and locally suited remedies can be used effectively to remove any identified constraints and tap into unused local potential (Crescenzi and Rodríguez-Pose, 2011). In addition, the potential commitment of local governments and other local actors can help translate national plans and sectoral priorities into local realities that improve public services and reduce socio-economic differences (Biggeri and Ferrannini, 2011), thus contributing to more socially cohesive territorial societies (Harvey, 2000).

This panel therefore discusses theoretical and empirical insights regarding the potential for local governance and policy implementation to challenge standardized place- and time-neutral approaches in order to promote place-based human development processes.

A flexible and tailored place-based policy perspective is therefore explored, leading from the idea that policies should enable local systems function adequately in order to increase local well-being through the expansion of people’s capabilities, starting from the access to services, the reduction of barriers and social disparities and the participation in public scrutiny and deliberation processes.

In particular, the panel focuses both on a) the elaboration of theoretical frameworks able to embrace the structural elements widening/restricting a policy-enabling space to foster sustainable human development at the local level; and b) the empirical experiences of practitioners (the international NGO Oxfam and the Assembly of French Departments – ADF) in emerging and developed countries where local governance mechanisms have contributed to foster the promotion of social inclusion, gender and ethnic equity, collective rights and conflict prevention/management in time of crisis.

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A "policy-enabling space" for Sustainable Human Development at the local level

by
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Extended abstract

Within an international panorama that urgently needs policy innovations to face long-standing processes of crisis and recession, there can be no single model to guide human development policies at the local level. Instead such a model depends on territorial needs, development processes, historical and institutional features, social values and the availability of resources. The ability of scholars and practitioners to debate and rely on integrated visions of development in their policy accounts, going beyond the separation of "economic" from "social" discourse, is undoubtedly crucial (Mehrotra and Delamonica, 2007).

Linking the focus of Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (Sen, 1999) on people with a meso-economic perspective allows placing multidimensionality, diversity, freedom and agency at the heart of dynamic processes of territorial transformation and human flourishing. Within a perspective of Sustainable Human Development (SHD) at the local level (Biggeri and Ferrannini, 2014), central is the following recognition: the interaction among local and extra-local stakeholders (by combining resources, institutions and capacities) feeds and shapes the creation of enabling and disabling factors affecting the evolution of development systems and the expansion of individual and collective capabilities (Ibrahim, 2006)

Nonetheless, affirming that a Sustainable Human Development perspective provides the coordinates for understanding the economic and social evolution of local development systems entails a fundamental policy question. Are development policies able to address locally-determined conversion factors, valorising territorial characteristics and potentialities within a largely endogenous process of SHD evolution and change?

The objective of this paper is to explore a "policy-enabling space" that challenges standardised place- and time-neutral approaches, and embraces a territorial perspective that seeks to maximize local development potential and can help design tailor-made institutions and investments (Barca et al., 2012). Within an SHD perspective, dealing with preliminary and general policy implications entails the very real risk of misunderstanding which interactive processes between polity-politics-policy fundamentally advance the opportunity and capacity of LDSs to design and implement policies for SHD. Therefore, recognizing the recommendations of policy actions for HD and local development have been extensively discussed by scholars and practitioners, this paper focuses attention on the dynamics shaping policy change and the processes driving the evolution of SHD trajectories.

In general terms, the policy objective within an SHD perspective is to enable the local system function in order to increase local well-being through the expansion of people's capabilities, that is, to enhance territorial-enabling systems for human flourishing. Thus, policy design and assessment needs to be related to processes and feedback loops in the constitutive elements of the Sustainable Territorial Evolution for Human Development (STEHD) framework, from resources

(access and distribution), capacities and institutions, to spaces for dialogue, political willingness, participation and accountability. A similar policy perspective thus allows rethinking development policies on equity, sustainability, participation and productivity, as well as on skills or technological upgrading, job creation, innovation and infrastructural provision, to consistently foster active participation and expansion of the capabilities of local citizens, firms and social groups.

It is important to emphasise that this paper does not intend to provide an exhaustive discussion of policy implications at different levels (local, national or international) depending on the context and the circumstances under which the policy is going to be established (Sepulveda and Amin, 2006).

Firstly, the importance of the diversity and heterogeneity of values, interests, policy ideas and discourses within local societies, and of subsequent conflicting dialectics, is recognised, emphasising how its valorisation within boundaries of social justice nurture the creativity underlying policy evolution. Renewal diversity is therefore regarded as the main driver of evolution, together with knowledge creation and diffusion, experimentation and feedbacks loops.

Secondly, a vision centred on pluralistic policy networks and the crucial enhancement of "systemic rationality" in the use of local and extra-local resources and programs (Helmsing, 2001) is embraced.

Finally, it is stressed that processes of public deliberation, institution-building and collective learning (Amin, 1999) constitute the fundamental basis for the inter-temporal construction of a "policy-enabling space" for SHD.

Overall, the central message of this paper is to devote primary attention to the role of (i) diversity and conflict for policy evolution, (ii) the multi-stakeholder and multilevel character of policy networks and (iii) the processes widening or restricting the opportunity for territorial stakeholders to pursue SHD. In situations of prevalent uncertainty, these processes involve a combination of behavioural routines and local experimentation, hybridization and learning, networking capacities and institutional complementarity (compensation and/or reinforcement), and national coordination and global integration. In this regard, Nelson and Winter (1982, p. 31) highlight the 'importance of highly sequential "groping" and of diffuse alertness for acquiring relevant information, the value of problem-solving heuristics, the likely scale and scope of actions recognized ex post as mistaken, and so forth.'

It follows that the construction of tailored place-based policy actions to enhance territorial enabling systems for human flourishing requires strong interaction between the academic and policymaking spheres, combining analytical attention to systemic processes with the articulation of top-down and bottom-up capacities for policy design, monitoring and evaluation.

The paper is structured as follows. After a brief introduction, the second section outlines the key pillars of Sustainable Human Development perspective at the local level. In the third section we focus on how diversity and conflicts drive policy evolution towards – or away from – SHD trajectories. Building on this, the fourth section examines how processes of public interaction and deliberation, institution building and collective learning along horizontal and vertical lines of articulation widen (or restrict) the "policy-enabling space" to remove (or generate) binding constraints and mobilise local potential for SHD. The final section concludes outlining implications for future research.

Keywords

Sustainable Human Development, evolution, public deliberation, institution-building, collective learning

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Authors

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Tackling Capabilities Deprivation Through Decentralisation and Local Governance: Five Concrete Experiences of Oxfam Italy

by
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Abstract

During times of crisis, poor people are the most vulnerable target in terms of economic and social justice. In order to break the cycle of poverty and inequality, it is necessary a radical redistribution of power, opportunities and assets, rather than traditional models of charitable aid. The levers that can drive this transformation are active citizenship and effective states, allowing people to have a voice in deciding their own destiny and claiming for state and private sector accountability (*Sen, 1999; Green, 2012*).

Within this scenario, the objective of this paper is to explore the relevant experience of Oxfam Italy (OIT) in fostering an efficient and effective management of public resources in order to tackle poverty through decentralization and local governance for human development. In particular, this paper critically assesses five initiatives implemented by OIT in the last ten years in the following areas: waste management in Latin America, South Africa and Democratic Republic of Congo; urban and rural SMEs in Bosnia-Herzegovina; social and health care services in South Africa. This case-studies analysis is based on desk-based review, independent evaluations, and interviews with key informants.

Overall, these actions aim at removing bottlenecks constraining the enhancement of individual capabilities and agency by acting on contextual conversion factors (*Robeyns, 2005; Deneulin, 2008; Frediani, 2010*) and institutional capacities of local governments. It is crucial to explore through a cross-country and comparative analysis the conditions enabling the design of pro-poor policies at the local level by fostering active involvement of public, private and civil society stakeholders.

The paper is structured as follows. The first section presents the OIT approach to support bottom-up policy-making processes and to build networks and partnerships for human development and capability expansion. The second section critically discusses the outcomes of the five selected experiences, assessing to what extent OIT interventions have been successful in triggering a change in livelihood conditions, and in expanding individual capabilities and agency. The final section outlines the most relevant conclusions.

1. Introduction

The present analysis aims at systematising and capitalising on the Oxfam Italy (OIT) intervention strategy in developing countries, in order to make it understandable and repeatable within the Oxfam international confederation and other stakeholders. Starting from the case-analysis of five OIT experience, the investigation aims to highlight the strengths of the OIT strategy and the evidence of its effectiveness as well as the concrete tools used by OIT to implement the strategy.

Oxfam Italy, named UCODEP until 2010, has been operating in developing countries for many years and its experience as an international NGO covers countries all over the world as well as several thematic areas. In the last decade OIT led some important projects in urban and rural environments, using a specific approach in tackling local issues such as urban poverty, social inclusion, social conflict and the lack of essential public services. These projects are included in a medium term country strategy of Oxfam Italy.

OIT strategy is based mainly on the assumption that the role of local government is essential to address local issues and that local institutions should work alongside civil society to undertake policy processes oriented towards solving those local issues. For this reason, OIT works to influence local and sub-national policy change in order to make a State more efficient. OIT promotes a bottom-up approach and a participation process involving key stakeholders and civil society. This methodology is more effective and result oriented rather than a confrontational way of work. The evidence of this approach are described in following pages.

Since 2010 it has been a part of the Oxfam International Confederation. Therefore, this work might also represent a contribution by OIT to Oxfam's theory of change, starting from the concrete results achieved by OIT's projects in recent years. Highlighting the OIT intervention strategy will reveal the specific elements which both prove the consistency of the OIT strategy to the Oxfam theory of change and its possible contribution to the theory itself. This effort goes in the direction of improving the OIT intervention as well as the OIT actively participating in the Confederation debate on which role, approaches and instruments are appropriate "to make a difference" in tackling poverty and inequality.

The work is based on the analysis of five OIT projects, two located in South Africa, one located across four Latin America countries, one located in the Democratic Republic of Congo and one in Bosnia Herzegovina. The five projects concern both urban (waste management and support to small and medium enterprises) and rural issues (health service).

The paper is structured in four sections. Starting from an overall conceptual framework of the change that Oxfam wants to achieve, the analysis exposes the main evidence of Oxfam Italy' experiences, the most important features of OIT intervention strategy and the repeatable elements of the OIT work. The conclusive paragraph summarizes the key elements of the research. Annex to the report are included five profiles of the OIT analysed projects.

2. Long-term Goals

2.1 OIT way of working

In the last five years, the "*fil rouge*" of Oxfam Italy programmes is to stimulate the innovation of essential services or of response to inequality and injustice. In order to generate social change, OIT worked in the interactions between effective local authorities and active citizens (*Sen, 1999; Green, 2012*). The involvement of both target in OIT programmes is the real element able to produce the change regardless by the themes (waste management, health, local economic development, etc.).

As described in the fourth section of this paper, the key points of OIT's approach are:

- 1) making the civil society an "active" citizenship by participation;
- 2) influencing sub-national policy change through capacity and institutional building;
- 3) supporting a bottom-up process of policy-making to trigger political leverage, that is, raising local issues to the higher institutional levels to obtain resources and well-addressed national policies.

These actions aim at removing bottlenecks constraining the enhancement of individual capabilities and agency by acting on contextual conversion factors (*Robeyns, 2005; Deneulin, 2008; Frediani, 2010*) and institutional capacities of local governments.

The following diagram shows the OIT way of working and the synergy between Oxfam International and Oxfam Italy influencing experiences.

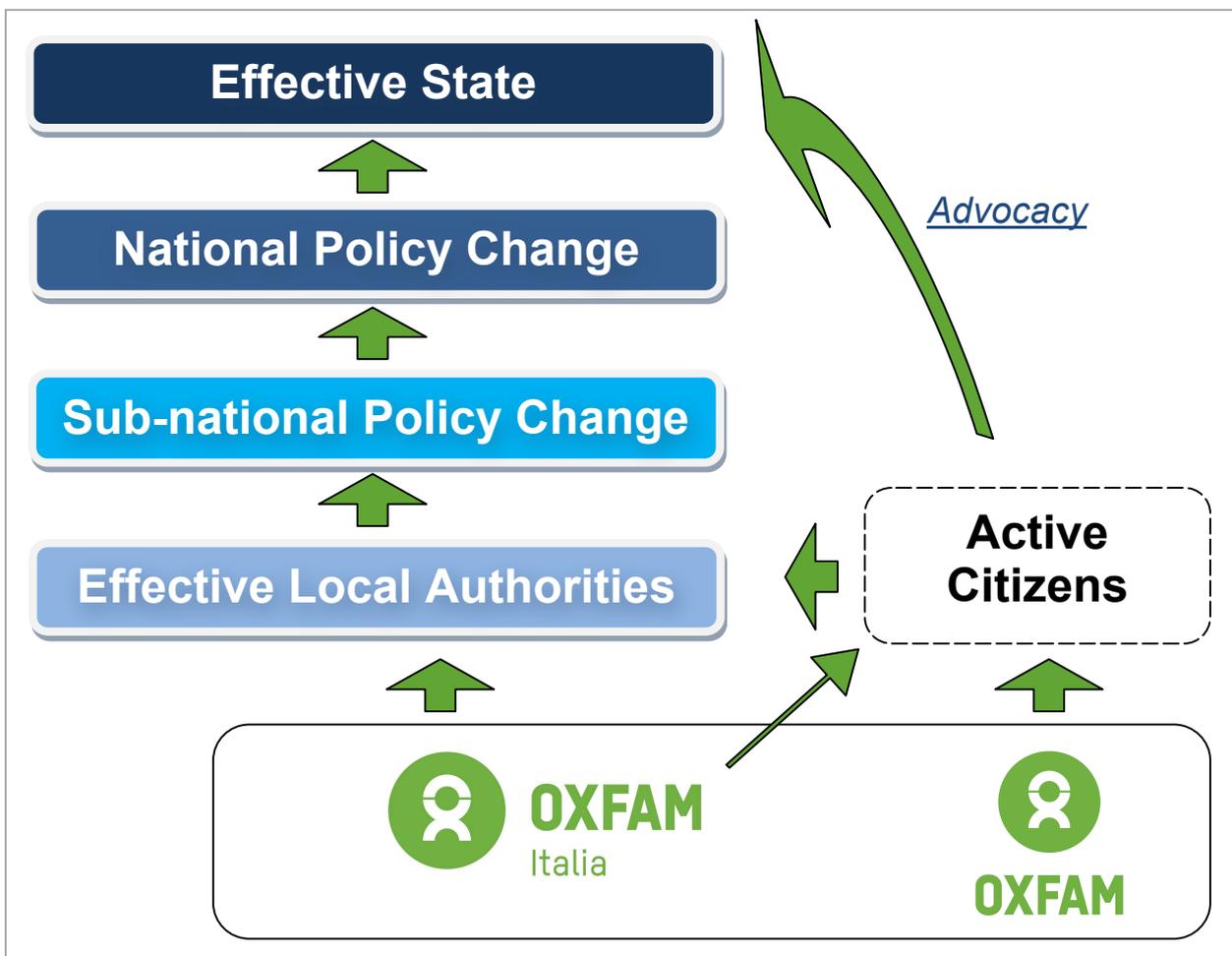


Chart 1 – OIT approach in influencing experiences (Source: Oxfam Italy)

The OIT approach has a relevant interaction with Governance & Citizenship Oxfam Knowledge Hub, but it has several links and transversal elements with other Oxfam strategic themes. **Which are the connecting link within the Oxfam International debate?**

2.2 Oxfam's Theory of Change

«We can end poverty and injustice by mobilizing the power of people against poverty»¹

This seemingly simple sentence embodies the Oxfam International rationale and represents a beacon for each of Oxfam's affiliates in conceiving their intervention strategy.

In recent years Oxfam International has been striving to move towards “One Oxfam” and an agreed intervention strategy among the Oxfam affiliates (Jayawickrama, 2012). A Single Management Structure (SMS) has been conceived and spread within the confederation in order to “*make joint and conscious choices, based on a common analysis of the issues [...] coming to agreement about what intervention points are really powerful, appropriate, and transformational to be pursued by a prominent international NGO like Oxfam*” (Ambler, 2011).

An actual theory of change has led these efforts. The theory essentially relies on Duncan Green's assumption that “*development, and in particular efforts to tackle inequality, is best achieved through a combination of active citizens and effective states*”² (Green, 2012). Citizens, because they are right-holders, are critical to holding states accountable; and states, because they are duty bearers, can guarantee rights and the rule of law as well as being legitimated to design policies and strategies to support the development of society.

Under this vision, citizens, and civil society in general, have to be active in fighting for their rights and in calling for government accountability. This means that they have to be conscious of being rights-holders and aware of the instruments available to claim those rights. On the other hand states must be effective and accountable to citizens as well as able to guarantee their rights.

According to Green (ib.) the relationship between citizens and states requires both a long-term vision and a sort of “social contract” in order to build mutual trust and confidence. Moreover, the private sector has to be included in the active citizenship. It can create empowerment through job creation and know-how transfer as well as being able to influence, on a larger scale, policies and development opportunities.

Using this assumption as a reference point, Oxfam International works hard all over the world to reinforce civil society in its formal and informal representations, that is civil society organisations. The efforts of the Oxfam confederation aim at strengthening awareness of rights, by providing citizens with knowledge of the instruments that they may use to claim respect for their rights, better livelihood conditions and accountability. Oxfam's focal point is the local level, considered closer to the people and also the most suitable to build “active citizens”.

In September 2011, the Oxfam International debate focused on how Oxfam International could and should relate to civil society and to government in combating the root causes of poverty and social injustice (Ambler, 2011 – Discussion note). Concerning the role that the individual affiliate should play in doing that, the 2011 debate indicated that Oxfam should be “transformational” and focused on making transparent and informed choices about how to relate to civil society rather than being a unique role-model. To this end, Oxfam affiliates should have a “*very sophisticated power analysis of the local situation to decide how [they] can be most helpful*” (Ambler, 2011 – Discussion note).

The 2011 confederation debate also focused on the concept of “effective states”, that is on the need to consider government's role as a key agent of change. Ambler states that “the government is both a legitimate target for change, and a legitimate partner in change” (Ambler, 2011 –

¹ From Oxfam International web-site: <http://www.oxfam.org/en/about>

² Green (2012, pg. 10-11) refers to active citizenship as “that combination of rights and obligations that link individuals to the state, including paying taxes, obeying laws, and exercising the full range of political, civil, and social rights” and it refers to effective states as “states that can guarantee security and the rule of law, and can design and implement an effective strategy to ensure inclusive economic growth.

Discussion paper) and its discussion paper describes two ways of viewing government: government as a big part of the solution; government as a big part of the problem. The two are not mutually exclusive, because Oxfam may be allied with a particular government on some issues, while being opposed to that same government's policies on others.

In addition to Ambler's argument, we have to consider that the State is made up of sub-national and local authorities. Influencing the sub-national policy contributes to the building of effective State. In this framework, the sub-national and local authorities are the target of sub-national policy change. In other words, we could say that local authorities are like a "champion" that can do leverage and influencing the policy of the country and make it more effective. OIT believe that the work of sub-national policy change can fit with an advocacy process at national level and can reinforce Oxfam response to inequity and injustice.

Most developing countries have undertaken a decentralisation process, which give power and responsiveness to the local level in answering local needs and in providing basic services. So it is frequent that national government in one country has iniquitous policies which deplete resources and population livelihood conditions more and more, while local government (LG) in the same country acts as an active partner of civil society. Often the decentralization is designed in the National legislation, but there is a period of time (medium term) where this process has not implementation tools. The risk to remain an "empty box" is high. This is a crucial moment to fit and to bring innovation when there are the conditions. In Oxfam Italy experience, local governments can become solid examples of positive action toward citizens. Thanks to bottom-up policy, it could be possible to give concreteness and impulse to the national decentralisation design through a strong influencing strategy.

The OIT projects provide clear evidence of the fact that LG could be a concrete policy spin-off in tackling local issues, trying to make up for national level deficiencies and providing local communities with basic services and better overall livelihood conditions.

As we will explain in the paper, in the OIT vision local government is an essential contributor in confronting local issues. LG is one of the two pillars in development, the first being civil society. Local government has the power to provide public services, set local regulations for local communities, and define policies and intervention strategy. The two pillars have to work together and when one is weak the other may help to compensate.

3. Main Evidence of OIT's Strategy Contribution to the Theory of Change

The analysis has focused on five projects and the investigation has been conducted through the case-study method (mainly: documentation review and interviews with key informants). The cases analysed are as follows:

- 1) Latin America, La Basura Sirve. Part of the Urbal-III programme. Topic: waste management. Years: 2009-2013.
- 2) South Africa, Waste Community Based Organisation (CBOs)/Coops in Ekurhuleni. Part of the Netsafrica programme. Topic: waste management. Years: 2010-2013.
- 3) South Africa, Maternal and Child Health: Local Authorities and Decentralization of services in SADC. Years: 2011-2014.
- 4) Republic Democratic of Congo, Strengthening Decentralized Territorial Entities (ETDs) and Local Associations ETD in the Management of the Local Health Service and Sanitation of the City of Kananga. Topic: waste management. Years: 2011-2013.
- 5) Bosnia Herzegovina, Strengthening the System of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) – Part of the SeeNet 2 Programme. Topic: economic and local development. Years: 2009-2013.

These projects have been implemented in 3-4 years, but they are part of a single medium term country strategy of OIT. The main features of the 5 OIT practices are summarized in Chart 2. The abovementioned experiences have been selected on the basis of following criteria: relevance of practice, focus on urban and peri-urban area of intervention, dissimilarity of the work topics, innovation/added value of OIT experience in comparison to Oxfam's theory of change. The methodology selected for the research was based on case-study analysis. In particular it was been implemented through desk-based review, independent evaluation, baseline and narrative reports (interim and final), and interviews with key informants and stakeholder. An evidence based results has been privileged to others types of rigorous analysis in order to be more pragmatic and close to Oxfam goals.

This approach has been privileged to obtain evidence based results rather than scientific rigour of others types of analysis.

The project analysis shows that the main underlying criteria of OIT interventions is addressing specific local issues (lack of basic services, precarious and unsafe work conditions, social conflicts) through the design of local public policies for triggering **a real change in the livelihood conditions** in poor and marginalized areas.

At the same time the analysis shows that the OIT intervention strategy aims at supporting the creation of a local policy-making process in order to ensure both ownership and sustainability of the results achieved.

Therefore the evidence which arose from the projects can be clustered into two main groups:

- 1) in terms of concrete **improvement of people livelihood conditions** (that is, the direct benefits for the beneficiaries);
- 2) in terms of **policy-making** (that is, the effectiveness of the process)³.

There is much **evidence of the contribution of projects to triggering a change or improving livelihood conditions** in the local context of the action.

³ Each of the five projects achieved several results, which are detailed in the single case-study to which we refer. Here we will focus on the results that better exemplify the OIT intervention strategy.

Chart 2 – Case-Analysis Synopsis

Project Title	General Info⁴	Issue/s addressed	Objectives	Beneficiaries
Waste is Useful: Waste Reduction and Recycling and Environmental Awareness to Build Social Cohesion in Latin America (in Spanish: <i>La Basura Sirve</i> :) - Part of URB-AL III Programme and follow-up of DesUrbal III (2006-2008)	Latin America (Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Peru), 2.401.544,17 Euro, from 2009 to 2013 CA: European Commission CB: Municipality of Arezzo (It) PP: Municipalities of: Lille Metropole (Fr), Arica (Ch), Cuenca and Lago Agrio (Ec), General Pico and Tres de Febrero/Buenos Aires Province (Arg), Santiago de Surco (Peru), Oxfam Italy (technical coordinator)	Deficiencies in waste management services, due to the impact of the rapid population growth and the lack of integrated and sustainable waste cycles. Marginalisation of waste informal workers. Inadequate capacity at local level to implement policy concerning multi-dimension issues, lack of technical know-how and of technology.	<i>General objective:</i> Promoting social cohesion. <i>Specific objective:</i> spreading a new environmental people awareness and introducing/improving an integrated waste cycle management	<i>Direct beneficiaries:</i> waste workers (informal pickers/sorters), city-owned enterprises, students, households, local institutions (political and technical level), policy-makers at local, regional and national level. <i>Final beneficiaries:</i> 800.000 citizens of the five local municipalities partners of the project
Waste Community Based Organisation(CBOs)/ Coops In Ekurhuleni Areas Of Wattville And Actonville (as a part of NETSAFRICA ⁵)	Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality (EMM) in Gauteng Province, South Africa € 504.542,00, June 2010 - 2013 CA: Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs CB: Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality PP: Department of Cooperative Governance; Regional Government of Tuscany; Gauteng Provincial Government; Cispel Confservizi Toscana; ATO Toscana Sud and Toscana Costa; Cooplat	Poor waste management services in Ekurhuleni, due to a lack of political power of low income communities and a lack of technical skills and financial means of local government to serve low income neighbourhoods. Presence of informal collectors/pickers with low and uncertain incomes and exploited by buyers of raw materials. Poor quality of separate collection for recyclable waste.	<i>NetsAfrica general obj.:</i> enhancing the capacity of the EMM in the formulation of policies and the implementation of initiatives to fight poverty and to ensure access to basic services. <i>Project specific objectives:</i> (a) to improve waste management services through the elaboration of a waste management strategy involving CBOs in waste collection and recycling; (b) to promote the creation of job opportunities for disadvantaged groups; (c) to strengthen the capacity of the municipality in strategic planning.	<i>Direct beneficiaries:</i> EMM municipality, specifically the LED(Local Economic Development Unit and Waste Department), waste cooperatives and population of Benoni. <i>Final beneficiaries:</i> population of the EMM

⁴ Legend: CA Contracting Authority; CB Contract Beneficiary; PP Project Partners.

⁵ Support Programme “Decentralisation and Local Development Policies in South Africa - A Network of Tuscan and South African Local Governments”.

**Tackling Capabilities Deprivation Through Decentralisation and Local Governance:
Five Concrete Experiences of Oxfam Italy**

Project Title	General Info ⁶	Issue/s addressed	Objectives	Beneficiaries
Maternal and Child Health: Local Authorities and Decentralization of services in SADC Area <i>Ongoing</i>	Or Tambo district, Province of Eastern Cape (South-Africa) Kondoa District Council in Dodoma Region (Tanzania) Kananga ⁷ (DR of Congo) 1.300.000,00 Euro, 2011-2014, CA: EU CB: Region of Tuscany PP: District of Or Tambo - South Africa, Kondoa District Council – Tanzania, City of Kananga - DR of Congo, Oxfam Italy, CMSR – Italy, COSPE – Italy, SPF - South Africa	Need to implement appropriate health services for the local context, in order to achieve the basic human needs of the most marginalised groups on health care delivery system including the fight against HIV infection and AIDS Limited opportunities on exchange of experiences and shared approaches on HIV/AIDS among different actors Ineffective governance, lack of coordination and multi-sector policies Need of efficient and sustainable actions to be elaborated with the involvement of local authorities and relevant local actors.	General objective: to reduce the morbidity and mortality due to HIV infection in rural areas, enhancing the role carried out by the local authorities in the reduction of poverty and in the quality management of the primary health care services. Specific objective: to facilitate the provision of innovative services on Anti-retroviral therapy and Preventing Mother-to-Child Transmission for infant and mother on rural areas supporting the local authorities in the implementation of their own competences and empowering the communities to play a more meaningful role.	<i>Direct beneficiaries:</i> Local Health Authorities; Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authorities; Community Health Workers; HIV/AIDS patients; Pregnant women; newborn babies; rural communities. <i>Final beneficiaries:</i> at least 300,000 community members: peripheral health workers, existing community structures for whom the benefit consisted of getting organisational and collective skills on how to prevent sanitation and hygiene related diseases at the basic level of the entire society.
Strengthening Decentralized Territorial Entities and Local Associations ETD in the Management of Local Health Service and Sanitation of the City of Kananga	City of Kananga - Province of Western Kasai (Democratic Republic of Congo-DRC) Euro 323.452,44 2011-2013 CA: European Commission CB: Oxfam Italy (OIT) PP: Caritas Kananga, Municipality of Kananga	Deficiencies in waste management and, consequently, risk of epidemics of diseases linked to unhealthy environment (dysentery, tetanus, cholera, typhoid fever, tuberculosis.) Absence of a structured strategy to improve sanitation services. LG do not involved local communities, civil society organisations, private sector to tackle waste issue.	<i>General objectives:</i> (a) improving the livelihood conditions of the population of Kananga through the improvement of salubrity and of hygienic-sanitary services; (b) strengthening the synergy between local actors (LAs) and non-state actors (NSAs) in the management of basic services. <i>Specific objective:</i> strengthening the local hygiene and the basic sanitation services through the involvement and networking of ETDs and civil society.	<i>Target groups and direct beneficiaries:</i> project local state and non-state actors involved in waste management. <i>Final beneficiaries:</i> the city of Kananga population
Strengthening the System of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) – Action 3.B of SeeNet 2	Bosnia Herzegovina € 934.621,00 2009- 2013 CA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy; CB: Region of Tuscany; PP: Region of Emilia-Romagna, Canton of Zenica-Doboj, Canton of Herzegovina-Neretva, Municipalities of Prijedor and of Tuzla	Poor managerial capacity of local governments in order to consolidate their role in the governance of local economic development and of public services. Need of national and international networks to support SMEs markets. (N.B. The subjects touched by the action were: production process (certifications, traceability, standards), marketing, branding and development stakeholders)	General objective: to increase the development potential of the system of SMEs in the areas concerned. Specific objective: to provide support in order to reinforce the networks, to exchange information and good practices and to develop the cooperation among SMEs, institutions and technical agencies.	<i>Direct beneficiaries:</i> local institutions, development agencies, SMEs, local manufacturers and other economic operators interested in local development (<i>indirect beneficiaries:</i> trade associations, industrial districts, Universities, SME incubators). <i>Final beneficiaries:</i> Bosnia-Herzegovina population

⁶ Legend: CA Contracting Authority; CB Contract Beneficiary; PP Project Partners.

⁷ During the implementation of the project, the Ville de Kananga took the place of the Nord Kivu Province partner.

3.1 Evidence on improvement of the livelihood conditions

The results achieved by the projects show that the OIT intervention strategy has been successful in improving the livelihood conditions in the areas where the projects have been implemented (or are being implemented in the case of MATCH in South Africa).

First of all, the OIT experiences have carried out a role of **broker of the innovation** by the improvement or introduction of new basic services. In Latin America (Ceccarelli, 2013) as well as in South Africa and the DR of Congo (Filippi, 2012; Quinci, 2013), waste management has been improved through new treatment plans and the collection of recyclable waste, and therefore the hygienic and sanitary conditions in those marginalised areas are now getting better. Likewise, again in South Africa, the quality and accessibility of the rural health services for HIV-infected mothers and infants has been improved and the exposure to the disease is decreasing in that area (Ngare, 2013; Regione Toscana, 2013). In Bosnia-Herzegovina business-centres, enterprise incubators and other services such as centres for exports and centres of excellence have been created and as a consequence the SMEs are more competitive in national and international markets (Manuelli et al., 2013; Oxfam Italia, 2013).

Secondly, the projects have contributed to an **increase in income** of marginalised groups and to creating new job opportunities. In Latin America (Ceccarelli, 2013) as well as in South Africa (Hugow, 2012; Rossignoli et al., 2012; Oxfam Italia, 2008-2012), the informal waste workers status has been changed from illegal to legal, reducing marginalisation and potential social conflict. The creation and consolidation of waste picker cooperatives increased and stabilised income for those workers, notably for women and young people. The introduction of the collection of separated recyclable waste allowed women and young people to start-up new job opportunities in the DR of Congo (collection of plastic bags to produce plastic tiles for outdoor paving). The working conditions of those employed in sorting recyclable waste have been improved, providing best treatment plans and technical devices (Filippi, 2012; Quinci, 2013).

Thirdly, the projects have been successful in increasing **civil society awareness and participation**. Through a wide set of participation instruments in Latin America (Ceccarelli, 2013), South Africa and Bosnia-Herzegovina, local communities have acquired knowledge of their rights and have been able to cooperate with their local institutions. On the other hand, the LG have been able to elaborate appropriate strategic plans through a participation process. In some marginalised urban areas, waste management after the project intervention has been more efficient because households, students, and single citizens actively cooperate in the collection. In South Africa the involvement of the HIV-infected in awareness campaigns has reduced stigmatization and increased male consciousness of the consequences of unsafe sexual practices (Ngare, 2013; Regione Toscana, 2013). In Bosnia-Herzegovina the SME's have been involved effectively in the local development policy and LG has been taking account of their specific needs in providing support services (Manuelli et al., 2013; Oxfam Italia, 2013).

Finally, the projects show important evidence from the OIT intervention strategy concerning **capacity building**. The five projects have been able to address appropriate targets, notably local civil servants, waste workers, health community workers, and SME's. The capacity building actions have strengthened the technical capacity of local government so that the people at local level started to see it as a possible partner for local community development. The provision of better public services based on good technical arrangements has contributed to reinforcing the "social contract" at local level. The capacity building actions addressed to local stakeholders such as community leaders, cooperatives, workers, and SME's have reinforced their technical capacity to cooperate with local institutions to implement the services at a local level.

Please, see the following chart that summarize the main above-mentioned evidence.

Process indicators	Project evidence
<p>(1) Broker of the innovation by the improvement or introduction of new basic services</p>	<p>Latin America (waste): waste collection service started that enhance the livelihood conditions of the citizens through a significant improvement of their surrounding environment (<i>Ceccarelli, 2013</i>).</p> <p>DR of Congo: two waste treatment centres and 40 garbage bins constructed. A coordination unit established to supervise the people sanitation conditions and for the distribution of equipment kits (<i>Filippi, 2012; Quinci, 2013</i>).</p> <p>South Africa (waste): a more efficient waste collection service implemented. Two waste treatment plants built and operating. The separated collection of recyclable waste launched (<i>Hugow, 2012; Rossignoli et al., 2012; Oxfam Italia, 2008-2012</i>).</p> <p>South-Africa (HIV): quality and accessibility of integrated PMTCT services at decentralized level improved. New tools for quality improvement and service performance monitoring introduced. The 2 new Community-Health Workers (CHW) assigned to each local health facility (benefit for communities and health services) (<i>Ngare, 2013; Regione Toscana 2013</i>).</p> <p>Bosnia-Herzegovina: SMEs performance on national and international markets improved, providing both infrastructures and services. The centres for innovation, and businesses centres provided the 1.020 SMEs enhanced their competitiveness (benefit in terms of new strategies and competences) (<i>Manuelli et al., 2013; Oxfam Italia, 2013</i>).</p>
<p>(2) Increase in income of marginalised groups and to creating new job opportunities</p>	<p>Latin America (waste): the livelihood conditions of informal waste workers improved, which obtained a legal status and new work opportunities in waste collection cooperative and commercialisation of recyclable waste (<i>Ceccarelli, 2013</i>).</p> <p>DR of Congo: about 70 young people employed in public health and sanitation work. New economic opportunities started-up for women and young people, (the collection of plastic bags (youth) and the opening of purchase points of plastic bags (women) for then selling them to the producers of plastic tiles for floors) (<i>Filippi, 2012; Quinci, 2013</i>).</p> <p>South Africa (waste): the livelihood conditions of informal waste workers improved (from an informal status to a formal and recognized one) (<i>Hugow, 2012; Rossignoli et al., 2012; Oxfam Italia, 2008-2012</i>).</p>
<p>(3) Enhance civil society awareness and participation</p>	<p>Latin America (waste): potential social conflicts defuse (<i>Ceccarelli, 2013</i>).</p> <p>DR of Congo: citizen awareness on their role in waste management enhanced (<i>Quinci, 2013</i>).</p> <p>South Africa (waste): citizens awareness of their role in policy-making process increased (<i>Hugow, 2012; Oxfam Italia, 2008-2012</i>).</p> <p>South-Africa (HIV): citizens awareness raised on HIV and PMTCT issues in the communities of Or Tambo District (tackling stigmatization). Increased the integration with the local outreach programs run by the health department, and with SPF pre-existing programs for youth empowerment and sexual education in schools (<i>Ngare, 2013; Regione Toscana 2013</i>).</p> <p>Bosnia-Herzegovina: new methodologies and approaches in local development planning spread and implemented. The national and international network created (<i>Manuelli et al., 2013; Oxfam Italia, 2013</i>).</p>
<p>(4) Capacity building support</p>	<p>Latin America (waste): the civil servants of the local government enhanced their technical know-how leading to an efficient functioning of public treatment plants and the strengthening of civil servant role within their organisations (<i>Ceccarelli, 2013</i>).</p> <p>DR of Congo: officials trained in waste management and tax collection, so that they are able to continue forward with a) the distribution of the service, b) the tax perception has improved, c) a model of tax collection has been creating (replicable for other basic services) (<i>Filippi, 2012; Quinci, 2013</i>).</p> <p>South Africa (waste): The local governments enhanced their technical skill</p>

Process indicators	Project evidence
	and capacity in manage waste treatment (<i>Hugow, 2012; Rossignoli et al., 2012; Oxfam Italia, 2008-2012</i>).
	South-Africa (HIV): Decentralization process in Or Tambo (National Health Insurance) reinforced through investments in the infrastructures, integration of new human resources, re-engineering and intensification of outreach activities that are now bringing CHWs door to door to engage and support the local population (<i>Ngare, 2013; Regione Toscana 2013</i>).
	Bosnia-Herzegovina: The local governments improved their capacities in dealing with the local development issue (<i>Manuelli et al., 2013; Oxfam Italia, 2013</i>).

Chart 3 – Evidence in terms of improvement of livelihood conditions (Source: Oxfam Italy)

3.2 Evidence on policy-making

This aspect is a crucial element of the OIT strategy and relies on the assumption of Green that development needs “active citizenship” but also “effective states” (*Green, 2012*). The way in which states both at national and local level are effective consists mainly of the creation of good policies through an explicit policy-making process (*Ham and Hill, 1993*).

As the next chapter will describe better, on this basis OIT considers it essential to support local governments in undertaking policy-making processes which address local issues. Notably, the policy-making should be bottom-up, that is, it should start at local level and rise towards higher institutional levels (vertical subsidiarity); it should have as high a level of participation as is possible, that is, it should include all local stakeholders in order to ensure awareness and appropriate solutions to those issues (horizontal subsidiarity).

To demonstrate evidence of the project contribution to the policy-making process, we have to refer to specific policy-making **process indicators**⁸, which may prove: (a) the real stakeholders inclusion in the policy-making process, (b) the existence of the policy itself, (c) the activation of both vertical (inter-institutional) and horizontal (public-private) subsidiarity in order to ensure ownership and sustainability.

Indicators for point (a) are mainly represented by the existence of formalised networks of stakeholders, of formal committees, of periodic open-public meetings, of coordination mechanisms between LG and civil society representatives as well as the existence of official occasions where formal and informal local community leaders are requested to express their position (inclusion in the decision-making process).

Indicators for point (b) refer to the existence of strategic plans, regulations, bodies of rules concerning the specific policy topic/issue. They also refer to the concrete creation of services and infrastructures.

Indicators for point (c) refer first of all to the local government leverage towards higher institutional levels in order to ensure vertical subsidiarity and to the LG capacity to implement the national strategy with appropriate resources and means. Therefore the process indicators are the existence of inter-institutional protocols, the redistribution of resources from the higher level towards the local one, the inclusion of local issues in regional or national priorities.

Secondly, indicators for point (c) refer to the capacity for triggering horizontal subsidiarity and therefore for focusing both public and private local stakeholders’ interest on the same issue.

⁸ Process indicators refer to a qualitative aspect unlike output measurement which focuses on a quantitative one.

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Therefore specific indicators are, for instance, the existence of alliances between local government and local stakeholders (stated by agreements), public-private co-management of services, exchange of good practices, provision of private resources to public services.

Please, see the following chart for some of the main evidence concerning the process indicators arising from the projects.

Process indicators	Project evidence
(a) Inclusion of stakeholders in the policy-making process	<p>Latin America (waste): five municipalities included in the partnership network at local, national and international level; open workshops and public seminars and assemblies; formal inclusion of the informal workers in the waste cycle management (<i>Ceccarelli, 2013</i>).</p> <p>DR of Congo: Local management committee (LMC) driven by the Mayor of Kananga and including all local stakeholders and civil society representatives (monthly meetings to coordinate and organise waste management). Seminars involving the City of Kananga urban authorities (Mayors, traditional leaders, community chiefs, police commanders) (<i>Filippi, 2012; Quinci, 2013</i>).</p> <p>South Africa (waste): formal inclusion of the informal workers in the waste cycle management. Waste workers' participation in a study tour in Italy (<i>Hugow, 2012; Rossignoli et al., 2012; Oxfam Italia, 2008-2012</i>).</p> <p>South-Africa (HIV): Steering Committee including local health service representatives (<i>Ngare, 2013; Regione Toscana 2013</i>).</p> <p>Bosnia-Herzegovina: inclusion of local governments and key stakeholders in a formalised network; introduction of Community Based Management; creation of an action plan shared with 14 local stakeholders (<i>Manuelli et al., 2013; Oxfam Italia, 2013</i>).</p> <p>All projects: project objectives have always been formulated including the local governments as the direct implementer or project partner so that they were in the meanwhile beneficiaries and implementers. The projects have been presented to stakeholders and communities (including traditional chiefs where existent) before their start-up and participation actions have been implemented.</p>
(b) Existence of the policy itself	<p>Latin America (waste): Waste Strategic Plans, a set of rules (ordinances) aimed at regulating the whole waste cycle management (from collection, to treatment, disposal and commercialisation); formalisation of the Buenos Aires new waste management model, based on a regional structure (<i>Ceccarelli, 2013</i>).</p> <p>South Africa (waste): integrated waste management strategy involving CBOs; establishment of a Training Unit to support waste workers in starting-up their business (<i>Hugow, 2012; Rossignoli et al., 2012</i>).</p> <p>DR of Congo: introduction of tax collection for providing waste management services (<i>Filippi, 2012; Quinci, 2013</i>).</p> <p>Bosnia-Herzegovina: review of administrative procedures and programs for the support of SME development; strategy plan for the development of SMEs; establishment of business centres; platform for development of business incubators; restoration of buildings, acquisition of new equipment and innovative communication devices (<i>Manuelli et al., 2013; Oxfam Italia, 2013</i>).</p>
(c) Activation of both vertical (inter-institutional) and horizontal (public-private) subsidiarity in order to ensure ownership and sustainability	<p><i>Vertical subsidiarity:</i></p> <p>Latin America: inter-institutional exchanges in the partnership network (<i>Ceccarelli, 2013</i>).</p> <p>South-Africa (HIV): seminar at Pretoria involving all institutional levels (National, Provincial, Local) (<i>Ngare, 2013; Regione Toscana 2013</i>).</p> <p>DR of Congo: Province of Kasai requested the project to participate in the elaboration of the provincial legislation on hygiene and sanitation; the head of the Division of the Environment of the Kasai Province included in LMC (<i>Filippi, 2012; Quinci, 2013</i>).</p> <p>Bosnia-Herzegovina: Herzegovina Neretva Canton undertaking a planning</p>

Process indicators	Project evidence
	<p>process with the support of the municipalities in their territories (<i>Manuelli et al., 2013; Oxfam Italia, 2013</i>).</p> <p><i>Horizontal subsidiarity:</i></p> <p>Latin America: signature of formal agreements between public institutions for the use of a treatment plant by bordering municipalities; public-private enterprise agreements for power provision (<i>Ceccarelli, 2013</i>).</p> <p>South-Africa (waste): exchanges of experience were organised in and outside Guateng Province; inter-municipality synergy (<i>Hugow, 2012; Rossignoli et al., 2012; Oxfam Italia, 2008-2012</i>).</p> <p>Bosnia-Herzegovina: collaboration of actors from the same territory, with the purpose of supporting and stimulating the adoption, implementation and improvement of a local development policy (<i>Manuelli et al., 2013; Oxfam Italia, 2013</i>).</p>

Chart 4 – Evidence concerning the process (Source: Oxfam Italy)

In brief, the evidence on the side of the policy-making process is as follows:

- 1) the creation of a legitimated policy-making process, proved through adoption during the project implementation of strategic plans, bodies of rules, ordinances, official circulars;
- 2) the creation of inter-institution alliances to support the vertical subsidiarity and the creation of public-private partnership to support the horizontal one;
- 3) the reinforcement of civil society's capacity and awareness of how to "make a difference" in the policy-making process (stakeholder inclusion).

Furthermore, it is important highlight two elements of social capital: (1) the cooperation between local government of different countries and (2) the exchange of experience between local governments of the same State. Two relevant indicators of the sustainability.

Besides this positive evidence, the projects analysis also shows some **weaknesses** that need to be considered in order to make the OIT strategy more effective.

In South-Africa and Latin America, the inter-institutional fragmentation hampers the achievements of relevant results in the leverage action of LG towards higher institutional levels. The spoil system and the consequent rapid turnover of civil servants, compromise the good results achieved by all projects with capacity building actions in Latin America, South-Africa and the DR of Congo (*Filippi, 2012*).

The absence of a serious taxation policy and the deficiencies of redistributive systems as well as the lack of citizen awareness about the principle of paying tax as a condition to obtain services, undermines the financial sustainability of the services created during the project implementation.

Finally, an overall consideration concerns the duration of the projects. The satisfactory ownership level observed in the projects is a promising factor for the continuation of the policy-making process. Nevertheless, the average time of three years for projects does not ensure a real consolidation of the policy.

4. Oxfam Italy's Intervention Strategy

Originating from the Green's assumption that active citizenship and states should work together to tackle poverty and inequality (social change), the purpose of OXFAM Italy work is to the change of the country policies to make the State more efficient. Because the sub-national and local authorities are part of the State, influencing the sub-national policy contributes to the building of effective State.

Therefore, in OIT's vision it's crucial to promote actions oriented: 1) to make the civil society an "active citizenship" (participation); 2) to influence sub-national policy change (through capacity building and institutional strengthening); 3) to build a bottom-up process of policy-making to trigger political leverage, that is raising local issues to the higher institutional levels to obtain resources and well-addressed national policies.

The OIT intervention strategy is a result of years of in the field work. Shared experiences and knowledge with private and public partners directly and indirectly contributed to the strategy design. For instance, the presence of the Region of Tuscany and the local stakeholders in three of the five projects, surely contributed to the design of the intervention approach, notably, with regard to network and inter-institution partnership building.

Moreover, there are some other important context variables that seem to have influenced the OIT intervention strategy.

The five projects operated in low-middle income contexts, where pockets of underdevelopment and poverty persist. All the projects addressed local issues, and four of them specifically addressed urban topics. In these contexts the general livelihood conditions of the people are strictly related to local issues. For instance, fast urban growth entails the crucial issue of informal workers and their marginalisation, which causes potential social conflict. Likewise, the lack or deficiency of basic local services (e.g. power and water provision, waste collection, sanitation services) in rural poor areas and in non-regulated urban areas stress the social inequality and increase the mistrust in government ability.

Considering that local issues are strictly related to a specific territory and to local communities, one of the features of the OIT strategy is to operate at the **local level**, in order to build or reinforce the "social contract" between public institutions and citizens.

A second variable is that the five projects operated in developing countries with fledgling **democratization**⁹ processes where the national level, in spite of poor economic conditions and structural limitations, set up a **decentralisation** process to ensure vertical subsidiarity. In some cases this decentralisation process is still fragmented and not well-structured, entailing at local level an inadequate capacity to implement policy concerning multi-dimension issues, lack of inter-institutional links or overlap of institutional responsibilities, as well as lack of technical know-how and technology. In that regard, Green itself (2012, p. 80) clearly argues that "local governments, particularly in poor areas, often have neither the money nor the technical expertise to provide quality services". This creates a large **gap** between the policies and strategies decided at national level and implementation at local level. The gap in turn leads to inequality and disempowerment in the poorest and more marginalised areas. As Green (ib.) clearly states "*decentralisation that assigns responsibilities without matching them with resources undermines the redistributive role of national public spending and may increase inequality, as rich areas find it far easier than poor ones to raise revenue from their inhabitants*".

⁹ Including human rights promotion.

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Nevertheless LG has undoubtedly a potential high leverage towards higher institutional levels and may provide a crucial contribution to filling that gap. According to the vertical subsidiarity principle, because of their closeness to people's endeavours, discontent and civil society pressures, local institutions are generally much more responsive and motivated to address local issues. Likewise, local governments, because of their demonstrated potential to leverage possible solutions to higher institutional levels, are the most suitable level to undertake a policy-making process. Considering this point as an important asset, the OIT intervention strategy considers LG the most effective **entry-point** to support a lasting development process and all the five projects rely on the involvement of local governments, both northern and southern, as direct implementers and/or project partners.

A third variable is related to the fact that, as said, local issues are strictly related to a specific territory and to the local level. Therefore tackling them, according to the principle of vertical subsidiarity, requires the design of local public policies.

The five projects unequivocally indicate that the primary component of the OIT strategy is to support the **policy-making** processes. For instance in Latin America and South Africa, the projects highlighted the added value for local governments in addressing the waste issue as a "policy" not only from the environmental point of view, but also by considering the social and economic issues related to crucial actors (the informal waste workers, etc.).

At the same time, in Bosnia-Herzegovina the project was able to persuade local governments to address the small and medium enterprises issue through an integrated policy approach (local development planning).

Moreover, in order to ensure sustainability and ownership of the policy, the OIT strategy promotes a **bottom-up** approach (that is, a process that originates from the local institutions) and a **participation** process involving key stakeholders and civil society.

In this framework, OIT takes the role of an active partner of public institutions in defining public policies on the basis of the assumption that the improvement of livelihood conditions and the defence of basic human rights are strictly correlated to an efficient and effective management of public resources (policy-making) and to an active involvement of civil society. In other words, the OIT strategy addresses local issues, operating at the local level alongside local institutions to build bottom-up and participatory policy-making processes.

Specifically, the OIT approach aims at providing local partners with technical assistance in supporting the bottom-up policy-making processes and in building networks and partnerships for activating vertical and horizontal subsidiarity.

Considering these primary aspects, the OIT intervention strategy relies on three recurrent components: capacity building in order to strengthen the local institutions' (and in some cases key stakeholders) technical capacity both in managing the policy-making process and providing services; participation, in order to enhance civil society's awareness and capacity to actively contribute to the policy-making process; institutional brokering and networking to include all the relevant stakeholders in policy-making and to activate horizontal subsidiarity.

The following chart provides the specific features and related evidence of the three components of the OIT intervention strategy.

Strategy components	Features and relation with evidence/achievements
<p>(I) Capacity building for local governments in order to reinforce political and technical competences</p>	<p>The five projects implemented a strong action of capacity building, in order to strengthen the local institutions' capacity, both at a political and technical level and then make a contribution to filling the above-mentioned gap between national policy design and local implementation. Training, study tours, handbook elaboration, exchange of experiences and good practice between northern and southern institutions, and visit tours by international technicians were the specific actions of this component.</p> <p>Without capacity building actions, new waste treatment plants (<i>Hugow, 2012; Rossignoli et al., 2012</i>) would not have been built (Latin America, South Africa) and new opportunities for small and medium enterprises would not have been created (Bosnia-Herzegovina) (<i>Manuelli et al., 2013; Oxfam Italia, 2013</i>); without the improvement of institution officers' capacity, the strategic plans, the bodies of rules (ordinances, permits, etc.) for regulating waste collection (Latin America and South Africa) or health care centres (South Africa) would not have been possible (<i>Ceccarelli, 2013</i>); without the specific training addressed to informal workers, their formal inclusion in the waste management, and the legalization of their status, would not have been achieved.</p> <p>The improvement of the capacity of the institutions increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the policies and helped to consolidate (or create) the "social contract" which is the base element to legitimate the public intervention and the role of regulator and provider of basic services.</p>
<p>(II) Participation, as a key factor of the policy-making process</p>	<p>The five projects implemented several actions in order to enhance civil society awareness of and participation in the policy-making process. Relying on the consolidated experience of OIT in mobilizing local stakeholders, awareness campaigns, public assemblies, public workshops, seminars, training for school students and households, national and international study tours involving key stakeholders, and structured local committees including community leader and private sector were organized.</p> <p>Structured participation interventions ensured the activation of civil society and the creation of participatory local policies in the five projects. For instance, the new regulation on waste collection in South Africa (<i>Hugow, 2012; Rossignoli et al., 2012</i>) and Latin America, where the involvement of the households was crucial in order to improve the separated waste collection (<i>Ceccarelli, 2013</i>). In South Africa again, the actions of awareness on HIV prevention were successful in involvement of male sexual partners and in reducing the negative stigma surrounding the issue as well as in promoting an effective dialogue on social and cultural norms and practices that fuel HIV and AIDS (<i>Ngare, 2013; Regione Toscana, 2013</i>). In Bosnia-Herzegovina the participation action directly involved the SMEs in the local development planning as well as ensuring their direct contribution to enlarging markets and partnerships at national and international level (<i>Manuelli et al., 2013; Oxfam Italia, 2013</i>). Essentially, the participation actions were successful in envisaging a direct interest for the stakeholders to contributing to the policy-making.</p>

Strategy components	Features and relation with evidence/achievements
(III) Institutional brokering and networking	The complexity of the local context and the specific issues which the five projects addressed entail a wide policy governance which involves both vertical and horizontal levels. At vertical level local institutions (municipalities) as well as regional, national and international ones (Ministries, Provinces, European project partners) are involved. Horizontally, local communities (citizens, households, students, traditional leaders, enterprises, civil society associations, etc.) are involved. The institutional brokering in the five projects consisted of both attracting potential partners to the projects (local, national, international) and being able to envisage the advantage for each key stakeholder. The main result of this action was the creation of significant networks of partners which supported the project implementation through exchanges of experience, good practices, direct contribution, know-how, and inter-institutional exchange. The analysis of the five cases shows that the exchanges between partners have been continuously encouraged by OIT (networking) as well as the creation of alliances in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness. The presence of these networks encouraged the creation of partnerships (SMEs in Bosnia Herzegovina), public-private agreements (waste treatment plants in Latin America) (<i>Ceccarelli, 2013</i>), exchange of technical expertise (waste cycle management in South Africa (<i>Hugow, 2012; Rossignoli et al., 2012; Oxfam Italia, 2008-2012</i>), HIV prevention and care in South Africa again (<i>Ngare, 2013; Regione Toscana, 2013</i>), Centre for small entrepreneurs in Bosnia Herzegovina) (<i>Manuelli et al., 2013; Oxfam Italia, 2013</i>).

Chart 5 – OIT intervention strategy components (Source: Oxfam Italy)

If these are the key elements of the OIT intervention strategy, the project analysis shows that some essential **conditions** must be granted in order to ensure the effectiveness of the strategy.

The first condition is a **deep knowledge of the local environment (rooting)** in order to properly identify problems and ensure an active key stakeholder participation. In the projects analysed, this condition has been fulfilled because of the good general knowledge of OIT of the intervention countries¹⁰ and because a preliminary preparation phase was carried out (baseline study and a stakeholder analysis).

The rooting and background knowledge also seem to be important to **legitimate** the OIT intervention towards other local, national and international partners. At the same time these elements ensure the successful role of broker played by OIT.

A second essential condition seems to be the **time** dimension: the approach addresses the policy-making dimension and the participatory process. Both of these elements require a medium to long term period of intervention to achieve concrete results in “changing the livelihood conditions”. Four out of the five projects were conceived in a multi-annual framework, where previous actions had been undertaken on the same or similar issues. The Urbal-III Program in Latin America started in 1995, Netsafrica started in 2008 and SeeNet (Balkans) in 2007, several years before the start-up of the projects analysed, which widely benefited the already existent networks and practices. Time is also an essential condition to allow a successful brokering action: meetings, workshops, forums, individual contacts with key stakeholders, involvement of public institutions (with their bureaucratic procedures); all of this is consistently time-absorbing, as stated by all the key informants.

A third condition seems to be the existence of an institutional framework. In all the countries touched by the five projects, a **decentralisation** process was ongoing and even if the local institutions are still fragile, they have however the mandate and the institutional power to take

¹⁰ Four out of the five projects were a part of a wider program (or were the follow-up of a previous project).

decisions and undertake a policy-making process on local issues. On the other hand, in all the countries an overall **legislation** framework on the issues addressed by the projects was already elaborated by the national level of government, so that the project intervention was legitimate to support the implementation of specific actions on these issue.

5. OIT's Experience Capitalisation: the Repeatable Elements of the OIT Strategy

Because the main objective of this work is the capitalisation of OIT's intervention strategy, a part of the investigation has been aimed at revealing those elements that make the strategy repeatable.

The OIT intervention strategy benefited from some favourable circumstances, such as the commitment of Italian national local government (e.g. Region of Tuscany, Municipality of Arezzo), the presence of consolidated stakeholder networks (e.g. the network of the Urban III Program, the Netsafrica Program and the SeeNet Program), the existence of programs concerning the issues that the projects addressed.

Apparently these specificities could represent a bound forward for strategy capitalisation and repeatability. Nevertheless, the project analysis reveals a set of recurrent points that consolidates the strategy and may be repeated in further experiences.

The five projects have a governance structure and some implementation arrangements which have been influenced by the context, the issues addressed, and the nature of the partner network. However, the presence of a sort of **operational secretariat**¹¹ (OS) is a recurring element proved to be essential for the successful implementation of the projects. This function was served by OIT and consisted of providing the projects with qualified staff, organisational arrangements, methodological instruments and, more generally, qualified technical assistance.

In the five projects OIT took over the OS responsibility, staying in the background rather than playing a role as a leading actor. OIT acted in the guise of watchdog for implementing the same strategy in all the countries involved.

The operational secretariat was able to create a space where the stakeholders were encouraged, supported and ultimately reassured by a system of shared and known rules in creating synergies and development opportunities. The OS also provided specific know-how in carrying out participative methodologies which were essential for civil society mobilization.

OIT, through the OS, essentially supported the local governments and stakeholders in undertaking the policy-making process and to this end it has built partnerships with northern and southern local government and has worked alongside them. In some circumstances this position legitimated the OIT intervention as a "third party" or a "neutral" actor intervention in the policy-making process, but it was the bearer of technical competences and practical arrangements which were crucial to attaining achievements.

According to the final evaluation of one project (SeeNet), if the stakeholder partnership was the binding agent of the projects in facing implementation impasses, the OS was the cement of the partnership, keeping it coherent and focused on the Program objectives. The presence of the OS represents a model to repeat in similar programs, also attributing to it the monitoring and capitalisation duties.

On the operational side, the OIT through the OS provided the local partners with qualified technical assistance which supported the public institutions in elaborating official documents (plans,

¹¹ In the five projects this function has different names but the same content and features.

regulations, etc.), in procurement procedures, and in drafting partner agreements. Furthermore, it coordinated the presence of international experts in local contexts to ensure the application and transmission of innovative methodologies. In brief, the OS ensured the best conditions for achieving the sustainability of the process.

Finally, through the OS, the OIT **brokering** and networking actions were legitimate towards the project partners as well as the local stakeholders: the continuous action of stimulating the creation of partnerships and collaborations were perceived as an added value by the target groups and by the beneficiaries. At the same time, through the technical assistance at operational level, OS acted as a concrete **facilitator** during the implementation, providing adequate operational arrangements.

The OS has been successful also for the presence of an OIT **appropriate staff**. Ambler states the need “to staff our offices with people who have the sophistication and local knowledge to understand power dynamics and effective points of intervention on a particular issue. We need to have the skills resident to carefully assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current actors in local civil society, in order to make informed choices about the agendas we choose to support, and those we choose not to” (*Ambler, 2011 – Discussion paper*).

In this direction, OIT ensured qualified staff in all the projects, aligned with the OIT strategy and able to carry out “brokering/networking”. The project managers dealt with the local partners on a day by day basis and worked alongside them, continuously stimulating local partner responsiveness and ownership.

Therefore, the OS is a primary element that could be repeatable in future experiences. However the governance structure of the projects has also been characterised by the wide range of international partners, namely northern local governments and **technical partners**.

The capacity building was a core element of the project strategy and it was implemented through the qualified participation of specialized partners such as CISPEL, Cooplat, Toscana Promozione as well as OIT itself with regard to the participative and local development planning processes. The qualified expertise of these technical partners was essential for the successful capacity building action and the know how transfer in all five projects.

The institutional support ensured by Italian local and regional governments was also an element of the projects in order to provide the local institutions with administrative, normative and policy-making support. Therefore the selection of qualified technical partners could be considered a second important element of repeatability.

The structure of governance in some projects caused delays (MATCH) but in others it ensured a successful **flexibility** in cases of implementation paralysis (*Ngare, 2013*). An emblematic example is the case of the Municipality of Lazarevac (SME project in Bosnia Herzegovina), where political turnover initially entailed a stoppage in collaboration with the regional SME centre. Putting the new political representatives in contact with other representatives of the 3B Action partners was the keystone to overcoming this. Likewise, the drawn-out government crisis in Zenica-Doboj delayed the implementation of the local development policy. In this case, the 3B Action management stressed the relationship with the local associations in order to ensure the prosecution of activities (*Manuelli et al., 2013; Oxfam Italia, 2013*).

A third recurrent element of the strategy is the involvement of the local stakeholders. **Governance through partnership**¹² was the slogan and the underlying theme of the five projects (*Manuelli et al., 2013; Oxfam Italia, 2013*).

The projects involved stakeholders in two ways: as direct partners of the project or as target groups/beneficiaries. In both these ways the OIT strategy was successful in ensuring their active

¹² Definition extracted from SeeNet 3B Action final report.

participation in policy-making.

The local partners of the projects were formally and concretely involved in the direct implementation through the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). They contributed to the preliminary actions, and in some projects to the identification phase. This direct involvement of municipalities and, sometimes, of provinces and regions was a key to success in undertaking the policy-making processes.

The stakeholder involvement is a direct result of the brokering activity of OIT and, notably, the capacity to envisage for each stakeholder a concrete advantage to participate and to identify its best contribution to the implementation of the projects.

The broad networks created at national and international level in four of the five projects were a direct result of the brokering action. The signature of specific partnership agreements, the interchange of good practices, the transfer of know-how, the institutional debates within the Italian local governments and the local governments involved in the projects were the fruits of networks and were essential factors in achieving the most significant results of the projects.

For instance in Latin America, the project approach was based on vertical and horizontal partnerships among partners and worked to stimulate synergy and then to encourage new ideas, practices, and methods (*Ceccarelli, 2013*). To this end, a lot of activities were supported and promoted by the project: thematic seminars, inter-country workshops, study tours, invitation of experts to public assemblies.

As a result of this synergy, the municipalities were able to elaborate Strategic Plans or at least some sets of rules (ordinances) concerning waste management. They also could improve their technical know-how in order to increase the efficiency of the waste cycle management as well as to innovate in relation to the waste economic structure. In fact, they introduced the commercialisation of recyclable waste and legally included the informal waste workers in the waste cycle treatment.

In some cases, the network included different institutional levels, that is Ministries, Regions and Provinces and this allowed the inclusion of the local issue in the national policy agenda. In some other cases, the partnership involved not only a classical decentralized cooperation action (north-south), but also an horizontal interchange between countries sharing similar problems in similar contexts (south – south) and this has been really fruitful in terms of the capitalisation of the innovative methodologies as well as providing technical assistance during the project implementation.

Other local stakeholders were involved as target groups or direct beneficiaries. Households, students, informal workers, traditional leaders, health workers, women living with HIV, small and medium enterprises as well as civil society associations in general played an active role in all five projects. Their direct involvement ensured the start-up of local policies. Student school training, educational campaigns, communication devices, door-to-door awareness actions, open workshops, education days, and public assemblies were key factors both for improving public awareness and guaranteeing the attention and support of civil society to the issue.

The results achieved by the projects are also based on the creation of diversified networks of stakeholders: long-networks including international and multi-country partners; local(short)-networks including local partners; vertical networks including inter-institutional levels of government (from local to national) as well as horizontal ones, including public and private partners interested in the same issue.

These networks stimulated both vertical and horizontal subsidiarity. For instance in South Africa (waste and HIV care centres), the activation of the local communities and the traditional leaders alongside the local governments improved the waste collection service and the quality of HIV prevention (*Regione Toscana, 2013*). Likewise, the SMEs project is a good example of activation

of horizontal subsidiarity because public and private partners worked alongside each other in order to elaborate a shared integrated plan of local development (*Manuelli et al., 2013; Oxfam Italia, 2013*).

Therefore a third element of repeatability of the OIT strategy is the creation of stakeholder networks and the actions to stimulate an inter-change between the network participants.

In brief, there are at least these **recurrent and structured elements** that could make the OIT strategy repeatable: the establishment of an operational secretariat able to carry out brokering/networking and play the role of facilitator, the inclusion of qualified technical project partners, the selection of competent staff, the inclusion of local institutions in the project as partners and direct implementers, and the creation of wide stakeholder networks.

Beside these elements of the strategy, the project analysis also highlighted the existence of a set of recurrent operational instruments that can represent an OIT intervention **toolkit**, which has been crucial for the quality of project results. The instruments are:

- 1) the realisation of baseline studies to identify and define the specific issues the project should address;
- 2) the sharing of the baseline study between the project partners to ensure convergence on the same objectives;
- 3) the realisation of a stakeholder analysis to cluster them on the basis of their interests, features, and position in relation to the project;
- 4) the signature of agreed Memoranda of Understanding by partners, in order to avoid overlaps and misunderstandings concerning roles and the contribution of individual partners;
- 5) the project presentation to the local stakeholders before its official start-up, in order to capture their attention on the project;
- 6) a capacity building action mainly based on documents and physical devices in order to ensure dissemination to other beneficiaries (to avoid the bad effect of a spoil system).

This **toolkit** represents a further element of repeatability of the OIT intervention strategy.

6. Conclusion

The first objective of this work was systematising and capitalising Oxfam Italy's (OIT) intervention strategy in developing countries, in order to make it knowable and repeatable within the Oxfam confederation.

The analysis clearly shows the important evidence of the OIT's strategy contribution in tackling local issues and in improving the livelihood conditions of the local communities involved in the projects. In Latin America (*Ceccarelli, 2013*), South Africa (*Hugow, 2012; Rossignoli et al., 2012*) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (*Filippi, 2012; Quinci, 2013*), informal waste workers have gained a formalised status and waste treatment services have been improved or introduced, so reducing the risk related to poor hygienic and sanitary conditions. In South-Africa rural communities are benefiting from a more effective health service for HIV-infected mothers and infants (*Ngale, 2013; Regione Toscana, 2013*). In Bosnia-Herzegovina SMEs benefited from start-up services, business centres, and exchange of good practice and new jobs were created as well as new trade in national and international markets (*Manuelli et al., 2013; Oxfam Italia, 2013*).

In the five project contexts, civil society awareness on rights and its participation capacity were increased through structured actions. The local institutions strengthened their political and technical capacities due to the project capacity building actions. The analysis also shows that OIT's strategy has been successful in working alongside local institutions in order to stimulate

bottom up and participatory policy-making processes. Notably, the OIT's strategy considered the local governments as an entry-point for its intervention, which has proved to be a strong point which of the strategy.

In this framework, OIT takes the role of an active partner of public institutions in defining public policies on the basis of the assumption that the improvement of the livelihood conditions and the defence of basic human rights are strictly correlated to an efficient and effective management of public resources (policy-making) and to an active involvement of civil society. In all five projects, process indicators show that local stakeholders have been successfully included in the process, that the policies have been really undertaken (and after some time raised from local to national level), that vertical and horizontal subsidiarity have been triggered.

The OIT's intervention strategy to attain these achievements has relied on providing local partners with technical assistance in order to support bottom-up policy-making processes and building networks and partnerships for activating vertical and horizontal subsidiarity. To that end the OIT strategy focuses on three main components: 1) the influence of local and sub-national policy change by capacity building actions; 2) the enhancement of civil society awareness, through participation actions; 3) the continuous involvement of stakeholders and project partners as well as the promotion of information and good practice exchanges, through the creation of very well-connected networks and a constant action of brokering and networking.

These actions aim at removing bottlenecks constraining the enhancement of individual capabilities and agency by acting on contextual conversion factors (*Robeyns, 2005; Deneulin, 2008; Frediani, 2010*) and institutional capacities of local governments.

OIT have acted in the background rather than as a direct implementer which has proved to be a second strong point of the strategy. OIT has been legitimated by local stakeholders for its "neutrality" and for being a bearer of technical expertise. The OIT staff were selected, paying specific attention to this feature.

In regard to the strategy capitalisation, the elements which could ensure repeatability in future action are: the establishment of an operational secretariat able to implement brokering/networking and play the role of facilitator, the inclusion of qualified technical project partners, the selection of competent staff, the inclusion of local institutions in the project as partners and direct implementers, and the creation of wide stakeholder networks. The analysis also revealed a set of recurrent operation instruments, which represent an actual OIT toolkit.

In regard to the OIT's strategy coherence and contribution to the Oxfam theory of change, the evidence drawn from the case-analysis prove that OIT is strongly committed to the theory of change and that its intervention goes in the direction of supporting both civil society to be "active" and states to be "effective" to ensure better livelihood conditions for people.

Ambler states that "*our different affiliate perspectives on civil society should add richness to the analysis that was sometimes lacking before SMS*" (*Ambler, 2011 – Discussion paper*). Therefore, the additional contribution of OIT to the theory of change is the importance of putting the local governments as an entry-point for the process to tackle local issues. In the five projects the central role of local government has been a real success in the achievement of positive results.

The assumption is that local issues should be confronted through a policy approach, that is, a comprehensive strategy involving actions at different levels and different stakeholders. In this framework local government is crucial because it has the potential power to undertake policy through strategic planning, service delivery, regulations and to leverage higher institutional levels (vertical subsidiarity). At the same time, the OIT strategy considers civil society as a pillar of the policy-making process that could provide support and resources to local government in implementing policies (horizontal subsidiarity).

Essentially, OIT's strategy refers to local government as an entry-point in the local context and aims at reinforcing the LG capacity so that the "social contract" envisaged by Green should be signed.

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The policies and instruments deployed by French local authorities in furthering social inclusion and capabilities

by

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Introduction: context and main aim

- *International cooperation of French local bodies with territories around the world*

For more than twenty years, French regional and local authorities have been developing International and European relationships through cooperation projects in all fields related to local development. The latest national figures show that more than 5 000 local bodies are currently specifically involved in sharing a large range of local competencies and various practices regarding their promotion of human development processes, known in France as "decentralized cooperation", (UNDP, 1990; Sen, 1999). Decentralized cooperation is defined as all actions of international cooperation with foreign local authorities that are led by French local authorities and based on conventions (Tulard, 2006). The National Observatory on Decentralized Cooperation declares that at least 13 000 cooperation projects are currently being undertaken with 10 000 foreign local bodies in 147 countries. A majority of them concerns African partnerships.

The scale and duration of the commitment of French local authorities in international cooperation projects is unique in Europe. Most European capital cities and big towns do establish relationships with "twin cities", but the external actions of French authorities are particularly significant: with more than 36000 local authorities (regions, "départements" and cities), France has made decentralized cooperation a key element of its international policy. For this reason, the French government has sought to involve the local authorities in the process of renovation of its international cooperation policy, focusing on economic, social and cultural rights, and in keeping with the framework of the European Union policy on social inclusion (Council of the European Union, 2007). This process, which began at the end of 2012 with the national Conference on international development and solidarity, has culminated in the adoption of an orientation and programming law on international development and solidarity. This law, a first in the history of the Fifth Republic, introduces the concept of coherence between public policies, since different national and local policies may have various effects, positive or negative, on foreign partners and territories.

- *The competency of local bodies to share at the international level: social and economic inclusion*

Social inclusion is defined, in the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union, as a "process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the

opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It ensures that they have greater participation in decision making which affects their lives and access to their fundamental rights" (Commission of the European Communities, 2008). It is the affirmation of the right of each individual to have access to various common institutions, regardless of their characteristics (Chauvière, 2008). Inclusion approaches each person from the professional and economic integration process point of view, but also from one that takes account of social, cultural and civic participation in society (Sen, 2000; Lebrun, 2009). In other words, individual and social empowerment are seen as means for capability set expansion (Sen, 1999) and social inclusion.

In France, the inclusion process relies on a large range of actors, from family members to public or private bodies, at a national or local level. The role of local public bodies is quite crucial, as much for the funding they bring as for the competencies they promote to deal with this question. Every local authorities contribute to the social and economic inclusion process, this being particularly the case for the French "départements", as they are responsible for vulnerable people, from young children and their families to elderly and disabled persons in need of financial support and human care services for their daily life. They are fully competent to accompany and provide help to vulnerable people in a process of social and economic inclusion.

- *Determining the relevance of local authorities' international cooperation projects in the field of social and economic inclusion*

The current global crisis, which increases the number of vulnerable people, spares no country. Within the new guidelines for French solidarity and cooperation policy, French "départements" and their national association - *l'Assemblée des Départements de France* - have decided, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to explore the relevance of cooperation in the field of social and economic inclusion. This approach has three main objectives:

- to contribute positively to the French position within the construction of the post-2015 development agenda, based on field experiences, visions and proposals from local bodies and their partners, French or foreigners, involved in international partnerships;
- to enlighten and strengthen the involvement of French "départements" and their national network, ADF, in association with other levels of French local authorities (region, cities...), in European and international cooperation regarding social and economic inclusion;
- to provide the French and foreign local authorities and their partners with a prospective vision and improve their common capacity of building, implementing and monitoring innovative projects of high quality, promoting sustainable and inclusive local development.

It seems important to note that this study is not the result of academic research, but that it has been realized by practitioners of operational international cooperation projects. In this way, the Assembly of French Departments has decided to create a multi-stakeholder working group. Composed of state officials, local authorities, associations and multi-stakeholder networks, this group aims at providing additional inputs into the analysis of practices, through the expertise and experience of its members. Moreover, since we are aware that this topic will become increasingly important in the coming years, to the point that our work will not be able to cover it completely, this group is expected to progressively become a think-tank on international cooperation on social and economic inclusion, gathering French and international local bodies and actors.

- *Observe and understand the current projects and their stakeholders*

With the technical support of United Cities France (CUF), which has previous experience of capitalizing on the experiences of French local authorities international cooperation (AFD, 2008), we decided to choose a pragmatic methodology based upon semi-directive interviews with various French and foreign project managers, so as to observe existing projects and to identify and report lessons and questions. The study's approach is based on a multi-actor partnership, due to the conviction that only synergies between various categories of stakeholders with complementary statuses, fields of competency and ways of working are most efficient and effective for achieving common aims where human well-being and the empowerment of local actors are central (AFD, 2013).

What is the added value of international cooperation between local authorities in the field of social and economic inclusion?

We answer this question in four parts. In the first part, we will set out the evolution of international cooperation and its new shape in the current context of global crisis. In the second part, we will present a characterization of those current international cooperation projects including French partners that aim to fight against poverty and inequalities at a local level. In the third part, we will present technical recommendations related to the implementation of European and international projects in this field. In the last section the main conclusions and research perspectives will be reported.

I. A current worldwide crisis leading territories to reconsider their methods and means regarding international cooperation

- *The post-World War II cooperation between European local authorities to build a citizen's Europe and its evolution towards the promotion of a world citizenship*

The first international partnerships of French local authorities date back to the post-World War II period, when French and German towns initiated twinning programmes in order to reconcile with the enemy and to promote peace and European construction. The motto of this idealistic movement, which was not affected by political divisions, was "Everything divides the states, everything gathers the towns". (Laignel, 2013). The first decentralized cooperation actions began a few decades later. The great droughts that devastated the Sahel in the 1970s triggered a humanitarian mobilisation towards French-speaking Sub-Saharan Africa. During these early years, international cooperation mostly consisted of sending specialized - and often inadequate - equipment. The commitment of French local authorities in international partnerships developed significantly in the 1980s, and especially after the 1982 and 1983 laws on decentralisation. The areas of intervention diversified towards Asia and Latin America, and the humanitarian approach progressively gave way to a developmental pattern, characterised by providing an answer to "shopping lists", i.e. lists of needs established by the partner local authority, and by infrastructure funding, without overall vision of the territory. In this type of cooperation actions, the partner was not the cooperation project manager.

- *The commitment of French local authorities in development assistance through partnerships with local bodies around the world*

During the 1990s, various theoretical reflections about international cooperation emerged, such as the "new international relations", which analysed the rising power of new transnational actors in direct competition with states (ARRICOD, 2012). The international activity of local authorities was also questioned, and most international projects were slowly re-orientated towards a new approach based on institutional support. From that time, French local authorities began to take into account the challenges that their partners were facing, and to identify strengths and experiences to transfer. For example, since that time, various decentralised cooperation projects with Sub-Saharan local authorities have been focused on

the link between decentralisation and local development, in a context of restructuration of the territorial organisation. Cooperation projects include experience exchanges between territorial representatives and technicians, decision-making aid and support for project preparation.

Nevertheless, very few French local authorities realized that they could also learn from the experiences and practices of their foreign partners. French bodies often see cooperation as a one-way relationship, from the "rich" ones to the "poor" ones. For example, within the study sample, the majority of the projects are set up in a logic of North-South solidarity, and project managers think about reciprocity and mutual interest only as a second step.

- *The awareness of the interactions between territories all over the world in the context of a global social and economic crisis*

It has been claimed for a long time, since UNDP's first human development report, that "developing countries are not too poor to pay for human development" (UNDP, 1990). Following the logic of this statement, international cooperation should not aim to give money for development projects in the "South", but to realise capacity building exchanges. In this way, and in the context of the worldwide crisis of recent years, a new international cooperation paradigm, based on mutual interest, has gradually emerged both in international and French policies. In a context of "globalised" relations, territories around the world become more and more conscious of their interrelated links regarding development. This awareness now requires a shared perspective of the global challenges that every local authority faces: the conservation of public goods, the fight against global warming, improving governance, increasing social and economic inclusion, etc. This new position will be at stake in international development policies going forward, as the post-2015 development agenda focuses on the sustainable development goals, applied to all countries, which will strengthen the position of an international cooperation aiming to cope with common stakes at a worldwide level, no longer from a "North" to "South" perspective. Similarly, the French Government states this orientation through the law on international development and solidarity, which was adopted by the Parliament on June 23rd 2014. Resulting from a long consultation of all French stakeholders regarding international cooperation (NGOs, trade unions, local authorities, companies, associations, universities and foreign partners), this orientation and programming law put emphasis on the urgent requirement "to find shared solutions to common challenges", through international relationships.

Such a position, which is strongly supported both in international and French policies, gives rise to a change in the *modus operandi* of cooperation projects: as national and foreign partners are dealing with similar issues - social and economic inclusion being one of them - international cooperation projects, especially between local authorities and other actors, will aim first of all to exchange practices, to test some solutions which come from the other partner, and if possible, to innovate with answers relevant for all partners.

- *Project implementation methods based on multi-stakeholder partnerships and mutual learning*

Rather than setting up programmes with the aim of teaching the partners, sharing the analysis of the issues and thinking about common solutions and common innovations to implement would be a better course of action. Local authorities should behave this way in their international cooperation projects; but, up to now, this has hardly ever been the reality. However, the cooperation between the French city of Cergy and the city of Thies (Senegal) can be mentioned as an example, since the programme in this case planned to implement shared job integration workshops for young people both from Cergy and from Thies. In line

with the approach taken by the municipality of Cergy, certain French project holders are currently rebalancing their partnerships, so as to pass from a solidarity approach to a mutual exchange approach. Another case in point is Solidarité Laïque's concerted programme for local initiative, "Procopil"¹, a programme of child protection in France, Romania, Bulgaria and the Republic of Moldova. As a first step, this project was designed by the French partners to build capacity within their Eastern European counterparts. However, the partnership has been progressively rebalanced to such an extent that Solidarité Laïque has established a coordination of its members on the question of child protection thanks to the example of Romania, Bulgaria and the Republic of Moldova.

II. Current international cooperation projects fighting against poverty and inequalities at a local level

- *The sample of projects to be examined*

The methodology we have chosen for the study is based upon semi-directive interviews with various French and foreign project managers. The structures selected for the sample are local authorities of different types and sizes - regions, "départements" and cities - and associations that lead international projects in connection with local authorities. Some associations in the sample lead projects that are financed by local authorities; others are technical partners of the decentralised cooperation of a local authority. We have selected the projects of the sample on the basis of various criteria. Firstly, we have chosen to focus on projects in which a local authority plays a role, which could be the direct management of a decentralised cooperation project or the financing of an international project developed by another stakeholder, either on the territory of a partner or not. Secondly, we have decided not to include Community Structural Funds projects, as they follow a general pattern that leaves little room for innovation. Finally, we have selected local sustainable and inclusive development projects; projects that consider every citizen in its relationship with society, and which have:

- a local dimension: the projects are implemented on a local scale, and they call for a multiplicity of stakeholders with different roles and competencies, who have to work in synergy;

- a sustainable dimension: as it has been suggested since UNDP's first Human Development Report (1990), "people cannot be reduced to a single dimension as economic creatures", and "a person's access to income may be one of the choices, but it is not the sum total of human endeavor." Following this statement, we believe that social inclusion projects must have an integrated vision of development, and that social inclusion is the interface between the different "pillars" of sustainable development (economy, society, environment, citizen participation).

- an inclusive dimension: the projects address the issue of capability deprivation and social exclusion, which is, as Sen notes (2000), a combination of deprivations, a process leading to a state in which some people have difficulties to achieve certain "functionings";

- a developmental dimension: we have chosen to study only development projects, and not emergency and rehabilitation programmes.

- *A typology of international social and economic inclusion projects*

Based on the established selection criteria, twenty-two French project holders have been selected for interview: ten associations and twelve local authorities. Among the associations, we have decided to interview not only those structures involved in the social field in France,

¹ Solidarité Laïque is a French international cooperation association which promotes respect for fundamental human rights. Procopil means 'Programme concerté pour l'initiative locale'.

and which occasionally extend their skills internationally, but also international aid organisations that are active in social action. The sample gathers associations of different sizes and levels of influence, from small local associations to national NGOs. Among the local authorities, we also wanted to diversify the types and sizes of structures. As a result, the sample gathers regional councils, general councils and municipalities, both big cities and small rural towns.

The selected projects tackle various issues regarding social and economic inclusion. We may highlight different thematic areas:

- social and economic inclusion projects dedicated to special targets:
 - young people: organization of youth workshops in Thies, Senegal (Cergy) and in Oujda, Marocco (Lille), Cap Insertion project for Mauritanian youth (Association GRET);
 - women: layout of a women's garden in Kayes, Mali (Association Amitié Kayes Mené), emergence of women in Afghanistan programme (Comité Mères pour la Paix Pas de Calais);
 - disabled people: creation of an association for economic and social inclusion of disabled people in Meknes, Marocco (Association Ohé Prométhée), exchange programmes between social workers on the topic of social inclusion of disabled persons (Cotes d'Armor general council);
 - people living in vulnerable and precarious situations: fight against major exclusion by the implementation of a Samu Social in Pointe Noire, Congo (Samu Social International), work on re-inclusion know-how in European railway stations (ANSA), international workshop for social benefit recipients in Aneho, Togo (Yvelines general council).
- integrated projects of capacity building of technicians and elected representatives in the field of social and economic inclusion: support to an agro-ecological development programme in Komki-Ipala, Burkina Faso (Territoire de Belfort general council), inclusive entrepreneurship project in Benin (Picardie regional council), economic support and sustainable development of the territories in Souss Massa Draa, Marocco (Hérault general council).

- *An insufficient investigation regarding foreign partners - to be completed in a second phase*

The material collected through the interviews has proven to be consistent yet insufficient. Indeed, only French institutions have been interviewed, which must be considered a source of regret in the light of the very nature of the subject, linked as it is to international cooperation between partners around the world. However, contrary to what was initially planned, the human and financial resources available for the project have not made it possible to broaden the field of research to the foreign partners. As a result, so as not to stick exclusively to the French experience in such projects, it has been decided to go abroad on a research trip, in order to study projects developed with different partners and under various forms, and to gather testimony from foreign partners. We have chosen Morocco as the sample country, for various reasons. Apart from the relatively easier logistics, in terms of travel expenses and the security situation, we have observed that Morocco has been giving strong consideration to social policy for some years now. In addition to the work done over several decades by the social arm of the Ministry of Social Development, which consists of two major institutions, the Social Development Agency² (ADS) and Entraide Nationale³, in

² Established in 1999, the Social Development Agency is a government agency which carries out activities and programmes to improve the living conditions of economically and socially vulnerable groups. The Agency participates directly in project financing and provides support for ongoing projects (United Nations, 2005).

2005, Morocco initiated the National Human Development Initiative, which is an action plan for the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights. Also, various French local authorities in the sample, such as Loire-Atlantique general council, Hérault general council and the city of Lille, have formed partnerships with Moroccan local authorities. Studying such projects from a Moroccan point of view has allowed us to gain a different perspective on this topic.

III – Main findings and recommendations

The creation, implementation and monitoring-evaluation of international cooperation projects in the field of social and economic inclusion present specific characteristics that project holders take into account, or at least identify as key elements that they may progressively integrate in their projects so as to improve their practices, and as a consequence, their results.

- *Time scale of the projects*

A large majority of the stakeholders interviewed believe that social and economic inclusion projects need a flexible approach. Nevertheless, most international cooperation projects are financed by institutional donors, and as a result, project holders are faced with financial deadlines. Institutional donors should take into account, in their financing plans, a diagnostic stage, which is necessary in order to provide project managers with an overview of the social, economic and cultural context of the territory. This implies an in-depth diagnosis. The study has shown that most projects include this type of analysis. In a context of genuine cooperation, in which partners seek joint solutions to share issues however, the same diagnosis, to be complete, should be made both in the territory of a partner and in the territory of the French local authority. Indeed, it would be appropriate to give the partners the opportunity to observe and study the French social and economic context, yet it is hardly ever the case.

First of all, shared diagnoses would provide the project holders with a good knowledge of the contexts and enable them to co-construct the projects. Once shared with all the partners, they would then become an asset as they enable a constructive hindsight into the context of the local body own context from an outsider's point of view. They would make technicians and elected representatives fully aware of the cross-cultural differences affecting the representations of poverty, vulnerability and exclusion, as well as the policies implemented. Last but not least, such a diagnosis represents the basis to elaborate and implement a precise evaluation process of the project.

To be effective, social and economic inclusion cooperation projects need to be included in broader cooperation agreements between partnering communities. Because cooperation agreements are based on a long time frame, they provide both partners with a general framework in which cooperation contents and forms on specific areas are determined. They ensure sufficient and adequate technical and financial means to consolidate and sustain the projects. In terms of projects funding, it would be beneficial to gather funds provided by institutional donors and funds dedicated to the projects implemented in the framework of the cooperation agreement. Financial donors generally provide high financing to be invested on a short term basis, whereas financial and technical resources mobilised through cooperation agreements, although they are lower, put less pressure on the timing of implementation. If it

³ Established in 1957, Entraide Nationale is a public social welfare agency with a vast network comprising 50 delegations and 1,028 social centres throughout the country that provide assistance to the disadvantaged in rural and peri-urban areas (United Nations, 2005).

were to be taken into account from the implementation of the project, this opportunity of double funding would allow the stakeholders to build projects unaffected by rushed timescales and tight budgets.

- *Complementarity of social and economic inclusion stakeholders*

Economic and social inclusion processes and programmes undoubtedly require a cross-disciplinary approach in order to provide the recipients with integrated solutions. Nevertheless, the reality of things is that stakeholders with different characteristics and backgrounds have difficulties cooperating. Such a complementarity of action is even less common in international development projects: a multiplicity of stakeholders is engaged in international projects in the field of social and economic inclusion (NGOs, Embassies' departments of cooperation, universities, development agencies, etc.), which may give the impression that each of them follows their own agenda and that projects are not coordinated. What role do local authorities play in this complex landscape? As the European Commission suggests, "local authorities are bringing unique added value to development processes. In addition to the concrete actions in developing countries, local authorities are key to mobilising different stakeholders to work together, thus generating collaborative approaches for attaining common development goals and are keen communicators for development (increasing public awareness and rallying additional support for development)" (European Commission, 2008).

In order to promote interaction and cooperation between the various structures and agents involved in this particular field, social and economic inclusion processes have to be considered on a local scale. In most territories around the world, social action is the sole prerogative of one stakeholder, being either the family, the community, civil society, or public institutions. Decentralized cooperation then offers an enabling framework that will help identify and gather local actors in the construction of integrated policies. In France, social and economic inclusion is one of the competencies of local authorities. For instance, French "départements" define and implement welfare policies. They are in charge of child protection, of elderly and disabled care, but also of social and professional inclusion. The experience of local authorities in this field enables them to act internationally, particularly in countries where social action is left to other actors. Decentralized cooperation projects will then have two major impacts: gathering different actors to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the dynamics of inclusion, and enabling local authorities to play their role in the social action system. For example, in many French-speaking African countries, local authorities are not competent to lead social and economic inclusion projects. In a context of decentralisation in most Sub-Saharan countries, decentralisation forces local authorities take their place in a multi-stakeholder social system. It requires capacity building, which decentralised cooperation projects would ensure. The same process is engaged in Eastern Europe: the programme Solidarité Laïque for child protection in Eastern Europe (Procopil) was, in its early years, a partnership between associations from the different countries. But progressively, as an efficient social system requires interactions between various types of institutions, new partners have joined the project: first, state structures - ministries, embassies -, then local authorities, within a capacity building project. This project, named RIAS⁴ (institutional strengthening and social action), was born out of the realisation that the strategic frameworks which rule social action at a local level were weak or inexistent, and that Eastern European local authorities lacked means, human resources and technical expertise in this particular field.

⁴ Renforcement institutionnel et action sociale, RIAS.

- *Citizen participation and integrated policy approach*

This evolution from an association-to-association project to a multi-stakeholder programme which enables to create synergies between state structures, local authorities and civil society, is the real asset of an efficient local project of social and economic inclusion. Collaborative work, the creation of synergies, these are common topics of current discussions, yet they are difficult to implement. Nevertheless, even though dialogue between the various stakeholders is a necessary condition, it is not sufficient. Indeed, a social and economic inclusion project will not work if the citizens are not involved in it. It is a well-known fact that "people must be at the centre of all development" (UNDP, 1990). Solidarité Laïque built its RIAS project on the ground that even if participation structures such as "local councils" and "participatory councils" do theoretically exist, participation does not always happen in practice (Vielajus, 2013). This statement does not only apply for Eastern Europe: in France too, the involvement of beneficiaries in social projects has to be improved. Moreover, French local authorities could benefit from the lessons of participatory experiments, thanks to partnerships with territories where there is less compartmentalisation between citizens and institutions, and where participatory democracy is efficient. In this way, international cooperation projects benefit both foreign partners and the local authority itself, and the projects consolidate the role of the citizens in the formation, evolution and assessment of the system of social and economic inclusion.

Local authorities will thus develop international projects not only with a solidarity purpose, but also because they can profit from the skills and experiences of the partners. Operators who implement national policies have to understand that to engage in cooperation policies is undoubtedly a benefit for national and local policies. Social and economic inclusion is essential for integrated public policies, since an effective social system has to take into account all the rights to which citizens need to access. To achieve this, public policies must be transversal, so that technicians specialised in international relations can gain insight from their counterparts' skills in social action; furthermore, international projects could fuel ongoing reflections on the functioning of local authority among social workers. This way of thinking fosters mutual gains for technicians in local authorities, while cooperation can lead to other synergies between services. However, even if it seems most important to work this way, technicians may have difficulties changing their attitude. To encourage such exchanges between services, decentralised cooperation does not have to be seen as a competence held by local authorities alone, but as a way of converting their competencies into practice. When leading international projects, local authorities should not try to emulate humanitarian enterprises, they should instead focus on acquiring an understanding for different public policies, among which social and economic inclusion. An illustration of it would be the Norman municipality of Ifs which, after Nigerian partners were shown the local retirement home on their official visit, decided to open a nursery within the home. In this case, international cooperation has enabled the municipality to open up to new ways of considering their policies and led to local social experimentation.

Conclusions

Social inclusion is an area of cooperation that challenges players and territories all around the world, since poverty and exclusion spare no country. Leading international cooperation projects in this field should make it possible to provide shared responses, in both "North" and "South", to these common challenges. In this way, international cooperation projects in social and economic inclusion will help improve positive cohabitation between people in our territories. Indeed, these types of projects and exchanges are important supports for local authorities to understand political, social and economic realities of foreign users of the social

and economic inclusion system. This is a means to improve the methods of support through an improved approach and comprehension of their frameworks and behaviours.

Furthermore, international cooperation contributes to changing people's perceptions of foreigners. International cooperation is a source of cultural richness, and people who criticize foreign cultures are confronted with these cultures in their everyday life. Cooperation not only questions the relation between national and foreign citizens, but also the relationship to otherness in general. International cooperation contributes to changing the way that people look at others, whether related to differences of gender, age, sexual preferences, nationality, abilities, etc.

International cooperation projects have progressively switched from a logic of aid to a logic of cooperation. From now on, the challenge is to switch from a logic of cooperation to a logic of alliance. Alliance between the different stakeholders, both institutions and civil society, between citizens and institutions, and between social workers that are, all around the world, faced with the same issue, that of furthering social inclusion and capabilities of the people.

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