

Cordaid - IHS:
An alliance to trigger
pro-poor policies at
the local level

Colophon

Publication

© Cordaid, The Hague, May 2006
(revised reprint of the August 2004 publication)

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Photography

© Cordaid, Jeremy Bean and Leopold Podlashuc,
Observatorio PE.

Design and print

Design: SO creatief, The Hague
Print: Bestenzet, The Hague

IHS is an international institute founded in 1958 and associated to the Erasmus University of Rotterdam. Its mission is to develop human and institutional capacities in urban management, housing and urban environmental planning on a global scale to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life in cities. IHS works with several partners and provides assistance to a number of government and non-governmental organisations.

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Cordaid forms together with Memisa, Mensen in Nood, Vastenactie and Kinderstem one of the biggest international development organisations. Supported by half a million people in the Netherlands, Cordaid is working with more than a thousand partners worldwide for an existence with dignity for poor people and those who are deprived of their rights.

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An alliance for bridging policies and community-based actions worldwide

Cordaid and IHS formed an alliance in 2002 in order to combine the strengths of both organisations. The aim is to help improve the quality of participatory processes and the effectiveness of policies and public investments that benefit the poor and disadvantaged groups of society. Focusing on cities where Cordaid already provides financial support to NGO's and community-based processes, the alliance strives to forge stronger synergies between bottom-up participatory approaches and the traditionally top-down policy directions of local governments.

Disclosing Participatory Channels

In short, the alliance concentrates on preparing situation auditing in cities. It is a stakeholders and institutional analysis and maps processes in order to unveil networks of social actors, institutional frameworks and bottlenecks and potentials for local sustainable development processes. It is an action oriented research that also helps to assess the quality and quantity of the outputs produced by Cordaid's local partner organisations. Selected cities include Recife (Brazil), Lima (Peru), Awassa (Ethiopia), Nairobi (Kenya), Tirana (Albania), Yaounde (Cameroon) and Davao (The Philippines). The work involves locally-based consultative workshops, rapid assessment, working seminars, tailor-made training, meetings, interviews, participants' observation and desktop review of key documents depicting the city's ability to promote civil society participation and participatory decision making.

It goes without saying that process mapping and institutional and stakeholders' analysis help to reveal practical and empirical evidences of the success and failure of particular policies and approaches. The findings of the situation auditing are powerful devices in showing the necessity for change to all those directly involved. The knowledge and information generated through the process mapping is also a powerful cross-fertilisation instrument to on-going activities of local counterparts - mostly NGO's - who are provided with external backstopping and feedback to their programmes. Furthermore the alliance helps facilitate policy dialogue with other urban actors via specific workshops and programme consultations, generating knowledge that helps to strengthen existing co-operation and forge new ones. With that knowledge in hand the alliance intends to promote policies and changes towards empowering local development processes and actors. There is an explicit reciprocity between Cordaid, IHS, local partners and urban stakeholders in the selected cities.

The alliance aims at raising the awareness of policy makers, civil society organisations, poor residents and their grassroots organisations about positive experiences and results achieved by pro-poor policies and measures across the world. Interesting processes and lessons learnt from the different cities will be combined in a publication* for dissemination to a wider public, to Cordaid's local partners and in IHS training programmes.

* 'Knocking at the Mayor's Door: Participatory Urban Management in Seven Cities', a joint publication of IHS and Cordaid, May 2006.



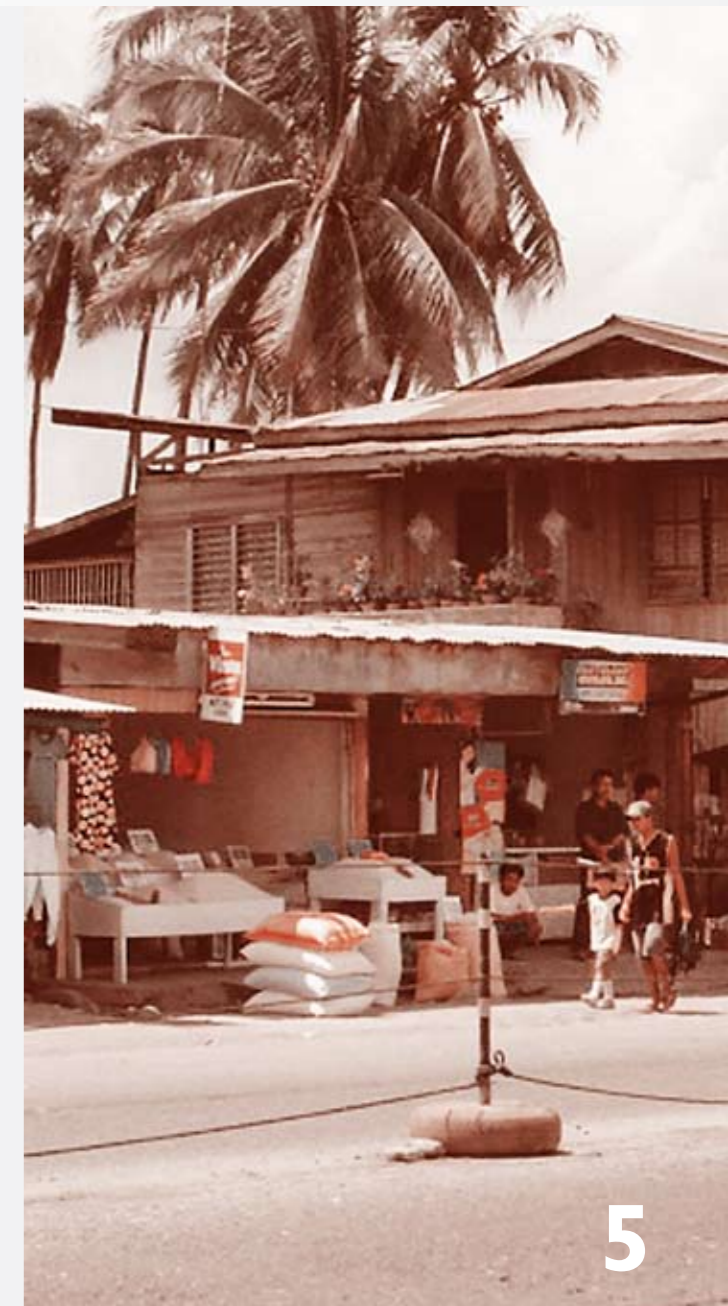
A seminar is planned for 2007 where urban partners of Cordaid, Cordaid and IHS will further elaborate on the findings of the process mappings and on new initiatives that have emerged as a result of these mappings. The following pages will provide a short insight in the outcomes and follow up of two out of the seven process mappings that have been undertaken.

RECIFE

In Recife (1.4 million inhabitants), Brazil, there is currently a very dynamic situation. The city pioneered, in the 1980's, legislation on land tenure regularisation in informal settlements. There has also been strong popular participation through a programme called PREZEIS. Under this programme, which became law in 1988, certain favela's were designated as Special Zones of Social Interest, which meant that urban services would be forthcoming and the favela's residents were protected from being expelled. Currently, the municipal government is attempting to reform PREZEIS but it is encountering resistance from grassroots organisations and NGO's. The municipal government regards 'participatory budgeting' as the channel for participation that is open for all citizens in the city and where decisions about public resource allocation are taken.

The city has a long tradition of NGO's supporting community-based organisations. Interesting forms of articulation and policy dialogues have evolved in Recife showing that there is sufficient room for grassroots organisations and NGO's to get engaged in actual policy making. Some incipient forms of partnership between

Poor quality accommodation in Recife, Brazil



NGO's and local governments are on the way. Working visits and discussions with local stakeholders from the public, private and community sectors took place during 2003 resulting in a preliminary process mapping report.

As a result of the process mapping, a regional workshop has taken place in June 2005 where Cordaid partners and other stakeholders from Recife, Lima and Fortaleza have met to discuss the findings of the process mappings and have drawn up an agenda for action for the future. The discussions proved to be effective for gearing policy towards each other and for mutual learning. The meeting resulted, among others, in a temporary network between the cities of Recife and Fortaleza, consisting of NGO's, Universities and the municipality of Fortaleza, which strives for formal recognition of the favela's in Fortaleza's urban planning, in order to secure certain rights for the favela's residents.

DAVAO

In Davao, The Philippines, there is a large number of NGO's working in support to the poor whose majority lives in informal settlements. In the housing and urban sectors, a great number of the NGO's has been closely associated with the Government sponsored Community Mortgage Programme that provides opportunities for organised communities - with the support from NGO's - to purchase land and secure a place to live in the city.

Street scene in Davao, The Philippines



The programme opened a gateway for NGO's to strengthen community organisation and the setting up of community savings schemes while providing the ground for the implementation of their own development programmes. Several NGO's are now getting engaged in direct purchase of land from landowners. Because of exorbitant land prices and the absence of good land market surveys and monitoring instruments, it is not always possible for NGO's to safeguard the position of the poor in centrally located areas. The federations of the urban poor are also actively involved in savings schemes to purchase the land on which their members live. There is NGO capacity, but there is still need for strengthening their capacities, also in relation with the government.

The process mapping revealed that NGO's in Davao have had a tendency to work on area-based and theme-focused approaches in a relative isolation from one another and were overlooking strategic citywide policy issues. It also illuminated the fact that the municipal government did not have a land policy nor did it have a clear participatory mechanism that promotes policy dialogue on these issues. Stemming from the process mapping a city-based NGO network called Hugpong Dabaw now tries to engage the government in a dialogue while defining a common agenda to establish a local Housing Development Board, as prescribed by national legislation and make participatory development councils operational.

An Ethiopian women washing her hair using a borehole

City Development Strategy – CDS

A general conclusion from the process mappings is that a significant number of local governments are facing substantial difficulties in launching CDS. There are also problems in formulating a strategic vision for their cities that is shared by all citizens and by stakeholders from the private, public and community sectors. One major obstacle is the lack of capacity of local governments to take the lead and coordinate complex operations that involve city consultations, project identification and formulation, resource mobilisation and public support. A similar problem is found at the grassroots level. In order to address this problem, Cordaid and IHS have teamed up with DGIS, the Dutch Habitat Platform and Intervolve to support the Cities Alliance efforts, particularly in Africa. Cordaid and IHS promote legitimate bottom-up processes so that the interests of the poor and disadvantaged groups can be well articulated and placed on the development agenda. Such support has been initiated in Awassa, Ethiopia. The City Alliance Proposal for Awassa focuses on local economic development with an integral housing component.

Fellowships

The Cordaid-IHS alliance also provides opportunities for staff of partner organizations of Cordaid from all over the world who wish to follow specialized training programmes at IHS in the fields of Urban Management, Housing, Land Management and Urban Environment. The main objective is to strengthen the staff capacity and human resources

Street improvement in Tirana carried out by community members, with the support of civil society organisations

development of partner organizations of Cordaid that work in an urban context. Participants are able to get acquainted with a wide range of experiences from different countries and engage in discussions and exchange experiences with knowledgeable and up-to-date professionals from various disciplines and nationalities. All this takes place in the international and multicultural setting of IHS in Rotterdam. Cordaid offers special fellowships to staff of partner organizations. In 2004 and 2005 about 20 Cordaid partners had the opportunity to follow a course at IHS. Cordaid partners can apply for the courses directly via the IHS website www.ihs.nl.





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