

AFRICA SYNERGIES IN URBANIZATION

As should by now be apparent, this strategy is built on a series of synergisms among its strategic and special objectives. For example:

- Strategic Objective One, our D/G objective is centered on linkages in local level democracy/governance activities and AFR activities in education, agriculture, health and natural resource management;
- As has traditionally been the case, our work in agriculture (SO 3) and the environment (SO5) are connected from birth, and our approach to environmental issues and agricultural development issues are inextricably linked.
- Work on financial markets, market liberalization and business development in both economic growth (SO 2) and agriculture (SO 3) will be done in close coordination;
- SO 5, our information objective will be working with, and contributing to, the work of all of our other SOs;
- SO 10, our crisis SO, links activities in D/G. food security and health;
- Our strategic objectives in health, population and HIV/AIDS are all linked in terms of improving integration of all HPN programs;
- In both the agricultural SO and the health SO we will be examining nutrition issues and forging linkages between these two approaches;
- The environmental strategic support objective will also be working across all sectors.

Of particular interest will be the cross-cutting work in urbanization which cuts across the democracy, economic growth, agricultural and population SOs.

The proper management of rapidly growing urban areas in Africa represents a major challenge and need for national decision makers, and an assistance opportunity for donor organizations. Responding to urbanization is not simply a question of expanding urban infrastructure. It has profound implications on the delivery of social services, governing structures, economic policies, and employment needs. While in the past, donors have paid scant attention to the impact of rapid urbanization in Africa, now is an appropriate time for the donor community to respond to this phenomenon. AFR/SD will identify the implications of urbanization for Africa Bureau programs, and address opportunities for cross-sectoral synergies in key areas

of the AFR/SD portfolio, as well as establish and strengthen cross-sectoral synergies between urbanization approaches and programs in key areas in the Africa Bureau.

Urban areas in Africa are a growing concern for national policy makers and donor agencies. Although urban areas have long contributed a disproportionate share to gross national product in most countries, largely because industrialization policies have favored urban centers, Africa has been rural in character. Development assistance has reflected this rural character by supporting rural and agricultural development. However, demographic trends suggest that a reconsideration of national policies and development assistance is necessary. These trends—coupled with important political shifts in fledgling democracies on one hand and social concerns raised by structural readjustment on the other—suggest that developing policies to respond to the growth of urban areas and their governance is critical at this point. USAID can play a leading role.

Unlike many other developing continents, Africa's population has continued to grow at a high rate during the past decade. Natural growth rates, compounded by high rates of internal migration, have resulted in unprecedented rates of urbanization. The United Nations estimates that the percentage of urban population will increase from 33.8% in 1994 to 53.8% in 2025. Policies redressing the degree of urban bias in African economic strategies may slow down the rate of internal migration. Nevertheless, many countries will have a near doubling in this period. For example, Kenya's urban population will grow from 27% to 52%.

The high rate of population growth is not the only concern. In Africa, as in other continents, urbanization is accompanied by a breakdown of traditional networks, kinship patterns, and leadership mechanisms. Ethnic homogeneity of rural areas is replaced by heterogeneity within relatively small geographic areas. Nevertheless, surrogate forms of ethnic groupings and traditional structures have been formed. Clearly the disappearance of traditional structures has led to social breakdown and increased dependence on public governing institutions. However, the surrogate structures and new forms of networks constitute an opportunity that has not been fully appreciated.

Although the primary cities have benefited from high levels of infrastructure investment, generally for industrial and commercial areas and for elite residential areas, they are poorly equipped to manage mushrooming squatter and low income areas that receive much of the incoming migration. With reductions in central government resources for infrastructure investment (and donor financing not realistically existing on the scale that is required), the mobilization of local resources and the development of innovative service delivery mechanisms is

essential. The problem is more acute in secondary cities, also growing rapidly, where the physical, social, and administrative infrastructure is even less developed.

Inadequate infrastructure in squatter settlements and other forms of unplanned urban growth leads to poor environmental conditions that have a severe impact on health and productivity. This relationship and the resulting demand for sanitation services is relatively well understood. On the other hand, the implications for the delivery of other services may be less documented. For example, how should a health service delivery be structured to accommodate more complex work and living patterns and how can primary care services be structured to avoid the heavy demand on secondary care facilities?

Most countries in sub-Saharan Africa are paying renewed attention to decentralization policies. Subnational or local government systems have existed in some form for many decades. Now, with additional support from structural adjustment programs, more attention has focused on devolving responsibility from previously centralized service units, whether in education or urban services, and strengthening the management capacities of local institutions. Strengthening service delivery at the local level is intended to more accurately reflect the preferences of service consumers and to make service agencies more accountable. While there has been much discussion about decentralization, implementing it by creating effective local units remains problematic. Local capacities remain weak and the real willingness of central authorities to relinquish their authority has yet to be proven in many countries. Yet, establishing effective local institutions is imperative if African nations are to successfully meet the challenge of managing urban growth.

USAID and other donors have gained substantial multi-disciplinary field experience in a number of sectors that is directly relevant to tackling the problems of urban management in Africa. Some of the issues in Africa are not unique to urban areas *per se*. However, urban areas need focused, consolidated solutions. From lessons learned through projects such as the successful West Africa Municipal Management Training Program, the Local Government Support Project in Ivory Coast, education policy reform for the Africa Bureau, the Tigray Education Decentralization Study in Ethiopia, the HHRAA Assessment of Urban health and Family Planning, and numerous USAID and World Bank-funded assistance missions throughout the continent, leverage points exist at the policy and institutional levels as well as at the operational level. While some lessons are sector specific, others are cross-cutting, for example relating to governance and finance, and provide a sound base for strategy development.

AFR/SD will:

- build awareness of urbanization trends and issues within the Agency;
- identify the characteristics or requirements of sectoral services that are uniquely urban in nature as well as identify the rural-urban linkages which are some of the most important factors associated with urbanization in Africa;
- identify key issues on which USAID should focus its resources to achieve strategic objectives.