

**ASSESSMENT OF WATER USER ASSOCIATIONS'
CAPACITY FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
IN TUNISIA**

**Toward the Development of the National Strategy
to Create and Monitor Water User Associations**

ISPAN Report No. 47

SPAN

INVESTIGATION SUPPORT PROJECT FOR ASIA AND THE NEAR EAST
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Prepared for the USAID Mission to Tunisia and
the Rural Public Works Department of the
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under (ISPAN) Activity No. 694C

by

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Acronyms and Terms

AIC	Association d'Intérêt Collectif (Water User Association)
AIF	Association d'Intérêt Feminin (Women's Association)
ASDEAR	Association de Développement et d'Animation Rurale
BF	Borne Fontaine (Watering Fountain)
BNA	Banque Nationale Agricole (National Agricultural Bank)
CD	Comité de Douar
CRDA	Commissariat Régionale du Développement Agricole (Regional Agricultural Development Organization)
CRS	Catholic Relief Service (French: CSR)
FOSDA	Fonds Spécial de Développement Agricole (Special Agricultural Development Fund, GOT)
FTDC	Fondation Tunisienne pour le Développement Communautaire
GIH	Groupement d'Intérêt Hydraulique (Governorate-level Water Resources Committee)
GOT	Government of Tunisia
GR	Génie Rural (Rural Engineering Unit, Ministry of Agriculture)
IPPI	Institut de Promotion des Perimetres Irrigués
ISPAN	Irrigation Support Project for Asia and the Near East
ISTI	International Science and Technology Institute
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (German Development Bank)
MSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOH	Ministry of Health
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization (French: ONG)

ODESYPARNO	Office de Développement Sylvo-Pastorale du Nord-Ouest (GOT Integrated Rural Development Program)
PDR	Programme de Développement Rural (Rural Development Program, GOT)
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SCF	Save the Children (now, FTCD)
SONEDE	Société Nationale d'Exploitation et de Développement des Eaux (National Water Agency)
TD	Tunisian Dinar (1 TD = \$0.84 in January, 1992)
UAG	Unité d'Autogestion (Regional WUA Support Unit)
UNFT	Union Nationale des Femmes Tunisiennes (National Union of Tunisian Women)
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WASH	Water and Sanitation for Health Project
WUA	Water User Association



Animatrice de base	Village health worker (female)
Assistant social	MSA field agent
Cellule de promotion des AICs	AIC promotion unit at the governorate level
Conseil d'administration	WUA administrative board
Délégation	District (governorate subunit)
Délégué	District administrator
Hamman	Traditional public bath
Or.da	Village administrator (appointed)
Pompiste	Pump operator
Régisseur, receveur	Fiscal agents

Executive Summary

Since 1986, the Government of Tunisia, with USAID support, has promoted creation of water user associations (WUAs) to increase beneficiary responsibility for rural potable-water systems. The French name, *Association d'Intérêt Collectif* (AIC), implies the potential for AICs to organize around other interests and evolve into broader community development agents. An assessment of AIC capacity to undertake other activities was included in the 1990 Action Plan to develop a national strategy to create and monitor WUAs. This assessment was conducted during January-February, 1992.

Current or future AIC roles are influenced by social and political factors that have shaped rural Tunisia. Weakening of traditional alliances, loss of control over resources, and low investments in agriculture have marginalized the rural world. A strong political and administrative apparatus has been used to channel government assistance to communities, creating a welfare mentality. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have carried out projects in rural areas, but these efforts have not as yet overcome excessive dependence on government.

The many concepts of AICs function shape ideas about their roles. For the Ministry of Agriculture, the priority is water-point management, which also can be an apprenticeship for new activities. Local authorities and AIC officers tend to share this vision. Other ministries see AICs as entry points for development programs, but ways to coordinate efforts need to be defined. NGOs view AICs as local organizing points, currently structured as administrative more than community development agents.

AICs are seen as partners of the State, which is responsible for infrastructure provision. Types, levels, and duration of other kinds of assistance vary among governorates. The Ministry of Agriculture and other agencies have insufficient resources to fulfill support and technical-assistance functions. More investment is needed.

The Current Situation

The team visited 12 AICs (potable-water, irrigation, mixed) in Kasserine, Kairouan, Sfax, and Zaghuan Governorates. Ten had started and two had considered new activities. Most AICs that have started new activities are located in Kasserine and Kairouan; activities have been replicated in other governorates, but efforts are still concentrated on AIC creation and legalization. To date, projects have centered on *infrastructure*: latrines, showers, water-taps, cisterns. They were wholly or partly financed, but provided models (cisterns, latrines) that individuals could copy at their own expense. Home connections are most often requested by beneficiaries. Latrine and shower projects

have faced problems including inadequate technical assistance and lack of community involvement.

Income-generating activities have included battery charging and pay showers. One group bought fertilizer in bulk and sold it at cost, but other AICs have received short-term credit for inputs. Several AICs have had ideas for new activities, including tractor purchase, service cooperatives, a water-bottling plant, and a shop for gas bottles, but face financial constraints.

Service projects were introduced, financed, and sometimes executed by outside sources. The animatrices de base trained in Kasserine all stopped working after stipends ended; women's groups (AIFs) organized around social rather than economic activities stopped functioning after technical assistance ended. Other governorates are adapting the animatrice/AIF model, using local resources and organizing around economic activities.

New Activities

Many ideas are introduced externally rather than by communities; often, these ideas are not based on the interests of community members nor do they adequately involve them in projects. Although externally identified needs may be valid, efforts must be made to ensure community involvement in project planning and execution.

Interest in income-generating activities predominates, although some AICs would like to provide services to members. Total financial cost of an activity is less important than the share assumed by the AIC; larger projects have been subsidized or have remained untried due to credit constraints. Perceived rather than actual financial position seems to influence decisions to start new activities; thus, although priority is given to guaranteeing water delivery, motivated officers often launch new activities before AICs are on firm financial ground.

Most activities have been directly related to the water system, but unrelated economic activities may be justified by their income-generating potential, especially for mixed and irrigation AICs. These groups tend to launch new activities earlier than potable-water groups, but not because they have more income; productive functions provide a logical starting point for new activities. Communities based on family ties reflect a stronger spirit of mutual self-help that may be focused (although not generated) by the AIC. Community cohesion may contribute to acceptance of the AIC but is not enough to ensure the success of new activities. Age and legal status do not seem to influence decisions to start activities, but organizational maturity—some ability to work together and solve problems—plays a role in sustaining them.

The dynamism, stature, and unity of AIC officers play key roles in new projects. Investment decisions are made by the president, sometimes with board members' input, and

this practice can exclude interests of some groups (e.g., women). Good management plays a role also, but some AICs start new activities before management problems are solved.

Thus far, AICs have acted mainly as intermediaries between community and government or donors, transmitting requests or serving as a channel for resources. Such a role reflects capacity to act as a communication channel or a manager, but not as a planning and execution agent. AICs are likely to execute more activities in the future, but still may be more effective as intermediaries in some cases.

Conclusions and Recommendations

AICs should not be pushed to start new projects, but should be encouraged if ideas seem feasible. *In the short to medium term* they are likely to start new activities, but serve mainly as an intermediary between the community and outside sources, remaining focused on water delivery. *In the medium to long term*, a more active community-development role is possible (soliciting ideas from members and mobilizing resources to carry out projects), depending on the interests of AICs and their promoters.

The lack of a unified concept of AICs makes it difficult to determine future roles, but it is important to consider possibilities and resource needs now. More active collaboration with other ministries and agencies will be necessary, as well as partnerships with other groups. In defining roles and possible structures for AICs, no model should be prescribed; *the same flexibility used in AIC creation should apply to AIC evolution.*

At this stage, AICs may be pushed toward self-sufficiency too fast and may need more support. At a minimum they require adequate infrastructure, access to resources, and a clear idea of when they will take on responsibilities. Also community needs must be decided jointly.

Experience to date has provided inspiration for new ideas and models for replication. But conditions for success are site-specific; new projects need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Activities to effect social change need a long time frame and on-site personnel. Projects that use local resources seem to have the best chances of success.

Several actions would support the dialogue on AIC roles in community development, begun during this mission, and help clarify present and future expectations of AICs:

- A working session during the National Strategy Seminar to define AIC roles in rural development
- A national seminar on the role of AIC, to integrate the AIC strategy with other national plans
- Formalized agreements with other ministries on joint actions to support AICs

- A “disengagement strategy” to be developed by each Groupement d’Intérêt Hydraulique (GIH) that defines a timetable for AICs to assume specific functions
- “Contract-plans” to be developed with each AIC that set goals and specify types of State support

Three groups of actions would help ensure the sustainability of new AIC activities:

- *Building the technical-assistance capacity of Génie Rural (GR) and the Commissariat Régionale du Développement Agricole (CRDA) staff* through training seminars and a workshop on strategic planning; exchange visits to AICs that have launched new activities; and monitoring forms that track new activities.
- *Removing obstacles to credit* by providing information on AICs to bank officers and information on bank requirements to AIC promotion agents; including a unit on credit in the training AIC officers receive; granting AICs legal rights to open commercial bank accounts, create revolving loan funds, and invest money; and establishing a special loan fund (e.g., through the PDR).
- *Introducing a strategic-planning process to enable AICs to set goals and carry out actions to meet them* (discussions with members, plan preparation, and approval).

Measures to support a more-active role in community development—if and when it is desired—would include—

- Designing a training unit on community development approaches and techniques for AIC officers.
- Creating a sustainable *animatrice de base* program as a way to provide local community development workers.
- Federating AICs at the delegation and regional levels, as recommended in the Institutional Analysis.
- Creating sectoral “coordinators” or committees within AICs.
- In the long term, restructuring the AIC promotion unit as an interdisciplinary team attached to the governorate.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

Since the mid-1980s, the creation of community associations to manage potable-water supplies has been promoted in Tunisia, with strong support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).¹ Water user associations (WUAs) were conceived as vehicles for transferring operational responsibility for rural water systems from government to beneficiaries. But they also were seen as a means for organizing communities to solve their own problems. If a WUA could solve water problems, why couldn't it solve others as well?

The French name for WUA—*Association d'Intérêt Collectif* (AIC)—is open-ended, allowing for organization around other collective interests.² Thus, a broader concept is suggested, that of an association capable of intervening in one or more areas and possibly evolving into a multifunctional community development organization.

Although AIC promoters have incorporated this broader vision into their concepts to varying degrees, it has never been addressed directly. Should a water user association become involved in other activities, or will it become over extended and unable to fulfill its primary function? Is there a certain point at which new activities become logical? Inevitable?

Such questions led the authors of the *Action Plan to Create and Monitor Water User Associations in Tunisia* to identify “the relationship between WUAs and other community development activities” as a key issue to be examined before launching AIC creation on

¹ The Rural Potable Water Institutions Project (USAID/GOT No. 664-0337, 1986-1991) was aimed at organizing beneficiaries to maintain infrastructure provided through earlier projects. WUA formation was promoted in Kasserine and North Gafsa Governorates and emulated in Kairouan.

² AICs, as they will be called in this report, have existed in the south of Tunisia since the 1920s. These associations were organized to collect fees for irrigation. Existing legislation was adapted to promote potable-water AICs and passed in early 1988 (Décret 87-1262). The stated objective is management of water systems, but the legal text does not prohibit organizing around other interests (groups for forest and pastureland management are being created under the same law), or expanding beyond a single interest or activity.

a national scale (Rosensweig et al. 1990; viii). Consequently, the Action Plan included a scope of work to assess WUA capacity to undertake community development activities.

At the time the Action Plan was developed in 1990, several AICs in Kasserine had embarked on activities that went beyond direct management of the potable-water system:

- Associations d'Intérêt Féminin (AIFs), women's groups attached to the AICs, were being established with USAID assistance. Although these associations were begun as a way to more actively involve women in health and sanitation, some of them also introduced income-generating activities.
- Technical assistance and donor funds supported construction of public showers, home latrines and cisterns, water taps, and watering troughs.
- As part of the USAID project, community-based village health education workers (animatrices de bases) were being trained to communicate health messages through home visits.

These initiatives, some replicated by Génie Rural (GR) staff in Kairouan Governorate, were considered evidence of AICs' capacity to apply the community-organizing principle to other development activities (Rosensweig et al.). Battery charging and AIF income-generating projects, among others, were cited as examples of development activities or "small-scale joint business ventures" (Hopkins et al. 1991). By the end of 1991, the ability to branch into other areas was taken as a fact of AIC life (Grimm and Redgeb 1992). This was reflected in the training for AIC board members, which included a separate session covering expansion of AIC activities.

Were these *ad hoc* events or signs of an inevitable evolution? The need for an assessment to address this question was reaffirmed during the 1991 midterm review of the Action Plan, given "increasing evidence that successful WUAs go beyond the management of the water system and undertake additional community development activities" (Rosensweig and Jennings 1991).

1.2 Scope of Work

The purpose of this mission is to assess AIC experiences in undertaking a range of community development activities. When the scope of work was written in 1990, only a few AICs—almost all in Kasserine—were involved in other activities. A case-study approach was proposed based on four sites in Kasserine, with visits to other governorates suggested (see Appendix A).

In less than two years, the pace of AIC development has changed the field of study. Expansion of AIC activities is, at a minimum, equal in Kairouan and Kasserine, and has

begun in other governorates.³ In addition to earlier activities, new project ideas have been proposed or executed. The number of possible cases has increased—although it remains small—as well as the range of factors influencing site selection. Based on discussions with ISPAN and WASH staff, it was agreed that Kasserine, Kairouan, and one KfW pilot zone should be visited. One governorate receiving no technical assistance was added on the recommendation of Génie Rural/Tunis.

The wider range of variables also argued for a more horizontal approach. In order to address as many issues as possible affecting expansion of activities, the team visited a larger number of AICs than originally planned but conducted fewer in-depth assessments. Interviews focused on AIC officers, the group most directly involved in expansion of activities.

The original scope of work suggested a “success story” approach, which implies that AICs launching new activities have first mastered management of the water system. This assumption presented a hypothesis to be tested in the field: that diversification is evolutionary and follows from water-point management. It also was necessary to determine whether AICs start new activities to benefit the community and also whether activities started earlier had been sustained.

In order to investigate these issues, other types of sites were added: AICs that had not diversified their activities, activities that had not worked, and projects in the planning as well as implementation stage. This approach helped the team focus on lessons for the future and present diversification as an option—possibly never to be exercised—rather than as an indicator of an AIC’s success.

1.3 Team Approaches

The assessment was carried out in Tunisia over a four-week period (January-February 1992) by an American community development consultant and a Tunisian sociologist, who has served as a government and nongovernmental organization (NGO) advisor on rural development issues. Data-collection exercises included—

- Review of project documents and reports to identify activities undertaken to date.

³ Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) pilot zones and areas that have received no technical assistance. KfW had made AIC formation part of its project to establish 80 new potable-water systems. To provide more information on AIC creation, the Action Plan includes a pilot project to monitor a sample of AICs in six zones: Beja, Zaghouan, Siliana, Sidi Bou Zid, Gabes, and Mahdia.

- Meetings in Tunis with GR and other ministries to discuss policy issues and the role of AICs.
- Field visits to Kasserine, Kairouan, Zaghouan, and Sfax.
- Administration of a written questionnaire to members of AIC promotion units attending a training seminar, and a group discussion with several participants.⁴
- Telephone interviews with Commissariat Régionale du Développement Agricole (CRDA) and GR officials in selected governorates to determine whether diversification of activities had taken place.
- Interviews with consultants who have worked on Action Plan activities.

Choices of governorates other than Kasserine and Kairouan were based on discussions with officials from the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA). Zaghouan was chosen as the KfW pilot zone to investigate constraints to new activities; Sfax was picked as a nonassisted zone because of staff support for AIC promotion. The four governorates reflected differing levels of assistance for AIC creation as well as a range of geographic, economic, cultural, and political variations among regions, and differing levels of assistance for AIC creation.

Field visit sites were chosen in consultation with regional GR staff. Choices were influenced by a variety of factors:

- The type of AIC (potable water, irrigation, mixed)
- A representative range of management and financial situations
- The age of the AIC (maximum five years in Kasserine and Kairouan vs. two to three years in other governorates)
- The type of activity (water-related vs. nonrelated; income-generating vs. non-income-generating; various levels of capital investment and technical support)

Choice also depended on definitions of “expanded” AIC activities. Although irrigation represents a new activity for a potable-water AIC, it was not treated as such; mixed and irrigation AICs were visited because of other activities planned or implemented. Although infrastructure improvement might not be considered a diversification beyond water-point management, AICs that had constructed cisterns or water taps and provided household

⁴ Due to the low response rate, questionnaire results are reported only anecdotally. A sample of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix D. Names of discussion participants and other persons interviewed are provided in Appendix B.

and business connections were included, as they reflect responses to expressed community needs.

Priority was given to visiting examples cited in previous reports—showers (3), latrines (1), cisterns (1), battery charging (1), home/business connections (3), group purchasing (1), and AIFs and animatrices de base (2). Twelve AICs were visited in total: five each in Kairouan and Kasserine, and one each in Sfax and Zaghouan. Ten have undertaken new activities; two have considered but not yet realized projects. Where possible, the same type of project was investigated in two governorates.

Conclusions and recommendations contained in the draft report were discussed with GR/Tunis and USAID officials at the team's debriefing. The final report incorporates feedback from the debriefing and draft reviews.

1.4 Scope of Action

From the beginning, the mission was placed in the context of a debate on community development. When asked about AICs' role as development agents, several interviewees posed the same questions. How can a local manager of State property, created by outside forces, build community cohesion and respond to a range of needs? How can a group formed before collective spirit is developed carry out self-help activities—especially when self-help is new to rural Tunisia?

The evolutionary view—that management of the water system will build capacity to respond to other needs—raised other questions. What restructuring, training, and resources are needed to enable an AIC to address multiple needs? To build capacity for integrated development, should AICs be supported by an equal partnership of several ministries instead of one? Shouldn't the national strategy be integrated with other plans for rural development and creation of new community structures?

These questions indicated a need to distinguish between “expanded activities” and “community development,” terms used interchangeably in the Action Plan and subsequent documents. The ability to build latrines may not reflect a capacity to identify, prioritize, and solve local problems; increasing participation in water payment and maintenance may not build capacity to take charge of development.⁵

Field observation helped the team make a distinction between expansion or *diversification*—any activity undertaken by an AIC other than management of the water

⁵ The capacity exists in communities that have built mosques or schools with their own funds (but still may have trouble collecting water fees). In cases such as latrine projects, the AIC may act only as an executing agency for the government or a donor.

system and *community development*, a process of identifying local needs and mobilizing resources to improve community well-being, which is reflected in activities.⁶ Each site and activity was assessed in these terms.

Future AIC roles were approached in these terms as well: for example, AICs can diversify to generate income, while still remaining water-management units, or they can respond to needs in multiple sectors and evolve into community development entities. An uncertain and distant future for the latter role makes this mainly a prospective study. But to address the option, it was necessary to explore related issues with community development agencies and other ministries, widening the team's range and depth of contacts.

Capacity to undertake new activities depends on many factors, including management and financial status as well as administrative and legal constraints. Consequently, the team addressed issues that might be considered outside its scope of work, but which bear directly on AICs' ability to launch other activities. Some recommendations may seem irrelevant to an entity that will be limited to water delivery; some may contradict recommendations in earlier reports. But this report differs in approach and perspective from previous studies, as it focuses on AIC activities *other* than provision of potable water.

The community development debate underlined the need to place AICs within the context of social and political factors and of development programs that affect the community (Chapter 2). Uncertainty about the role of AICs suggested the need to describe differing concepts (Chapter 3). A description of activities observed in the field is presented in Chapter 4, followed by a discussion of characteristics that seem to play a role in the success of such activities and in the success of the AICs undertaking them (Chapter 5). Chapters 6 and 7 present the team's conclusions and recommendations.

⁶ This distinction helps differentiate among activities as well as between activities and a process. "Other" activities in general tend to benefit the AIC or members by generating income, in the process benefiting the community by providing services. Activities expressly aimed at benefiting the community often require investments of income, which may not be repaid in the future.

Chapter 2

Community Development in Context

Present and future AIC roles in the community must be considered within the context of the social and political factors and the policies and programs that have shaped rural Tunisia. This chapter provides a brief background on traditional and political structures that have defined communities, including their mechanisms for meeting needs and their expectations of the State. It also covers rural and community development efforts that have contributed to the capacity of local groups to participate in development.

2.1 Social Factors

2.1.1 Traditional Structures

Traditionally, community life in rural Tunisia has been structured around the extended family. Families formed tribes, which constituted culturally, socially, and economically homogeneous communities. Community interests were addressed by a council of elders, composed of heads of families. A tribal chief elected by the council represented the community's interests in intertribal relations and mediation of conflicts.

Tribes originally were nomadic, covering territories defined by seasonal migration patterns. Colonial land appropriation in the early twentieth century limited migration, thereby contributing to sedentarization of tribes. Settled communities were organized around *douars*, extended families of a same tribe sharing resources and tasks.⁷ Thus, community and the mechanisms of solidarity or mutual aid were defined by family ties.

Colonial needs for labor turned male members of douars, formerly in control of rural territories, into salaried workers. Deprived of ownership or access to farm and pasture lands, social groups in rural areas found their productivity and affluence greatly reduced.

2.1.2 State and National Structures

After independence, the government concentrated on constructing a nation state through the creation of a strong political apparatus designed to replace traditional and community

⁷ These tribal communities were more prevalent in western and central Tunisia than in the coastal areas, which were urbanized.

alliances with ties to a single national party.⁸ Within the new administrative infrastructure, the *omda*, an appointed representative of the Ministry of Interior, became spokesman at the douar or village level. The *omda* serves as intermediary between the community and the administration, communicating needs to the *délégué* and by extension, the governor (the president's representative and highest authority at the regional level).

A political infrastructure was created parallel to the administrative. Party cells were organized at the local level, usually composed of prominent men in the region. These cells, while serving primarily as centers for political organizing, also acted as channels to communicate community needs to local authorities (through regional committees headed by *délégués* or governors). This double role, and the frequent presence of the same actors in both administration and party, confused the two institutions both in practice and in popular perception.⁹

Party structures were reinforced through national organizations created to represent the interests of different economic and social groups: women (l'Union des Femmes de Tunisie, later UNFT);¹⁰ farmers (l'Union Nationale des Agriculteurs de Tunisie); and workers (l'Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens, l'Union Tunisienne de l'Industrie de Commerce et de l'Artisanat). These groups provided lines of communication with authorities and also additional bases for group affiliation.

Party activism helped develop grassroots attitudes and skills needed to play a role in community development: volunteerism, community organizing and representation of community needs. Local capability to lead meetings, organize elections, mobilize citizens, and serve as spokespersons in seeking State assistance for the community usually is found among party leaders and officials.

⁸ The Destourian Party, later the Destourian Socialist Party (PSD), after 1987 replaced by the RCD.

⁹ A confusion that has been transferred to AICs, where officers and board members often are party leaders.

¹⁰ The Tunisian state actively supported a formal structure for organizing women. Party backing, both political and financial, enabled the UNFT to organize its own local cells in rural areas (at the delegation level) and make a contribution to health education, vocational training, social welfare, and family-planning programs. In recent years, the UNFT has become more independent, evolving from a women's wing of the party toward the role of a women's NGO.

2.2 National Policies and Programs

As the previous section suggests, new structures provided means of communicating requests for assistance to authorities. After independence, the State responded to the needs of disadvantaged groups by channelling all aid through the party and its partner organizations, which came to be seen as the solution to all problems. State involvement in economic, social, and cultural aspects of life generated a strong welfare mentality.

At the same time, needs for assistance increased in rural areas. Disintegration of traditional community ties contributed to a reduction in agricultural productivity, spurring a deterioration of living conditions and a rural exodus. The decline was exacerbated by reorientation of public investment from agriculture to sectors generating more short-term returns and hard currency (industry, tourism).

Policies through the mid-1960s oriented the economy toward a socialist model. Most large enterprises were put under State management. Colonial land was reclaimed by the government, and private property was collectivized and redistributed through a system of production cooperatives, which transformed landowners into salaried workers. Political and economic crises in 1969 put an end to the collective experience, but not before its effects were felt in the further splintering and marginalizing of rural Tunisia and the agriculture sector.

The change of political course helped liberalize the economy, encouraging foreign and private investment; however, this investment was directed mostly toward coastal urban areas. The energy crisis of the early 1970s limited public resources for rural investment, setting back the pace of reforms and reinforcing needs for assistance. Over time, splits between rural and urban, west and east, north and south created a sharp division between the developing coastal regions and the overlooked regions to the west.

2.2.1 National Development Plans

In the late 1970s, strategies to address urban-rural imbalances became prominent in national plans. The Fifth Development Plan (1977-1981) set food self-sufficiency as an objective for the agriculture sector, to be achieved primarily through better use of irrigation. Improved rural incomes and living standards were to be realized through programs favoring small farmers, notably the Rural Development Program (PDR) of grants and loans for productive activities. The PDR began as a bottom-up regional development program, with project identification and approval authority conferred on local authorities. The volume of demands overwhelmed local capacity, and the PDR was redesigned to shift program focus and management to the regional level.

The government's limitations as an effective manager of the economy started to be addressed in the Sixth Plan (1982-1986). But the approach to agriculture, a priority in

the plan, still placed the State in charge of promotion and development. Not until elaboration of the Seventh Plan (1987-1991), at the time of economic and political crisis, was the realization that the State could not do everything translated into across-the-board policy. State disengagement became the basis for social, political, and economic reforms. Agricultural reforms focused on increasing the private-sector role in resource allocation, production, marketing, and other aspects of agricultural development.

Drafting of the Eighth Plan (1991-1995) has been based on a national consultative process, to evaluate earlier orientations and develop a national strategy based on regional views and priorities. The strategy depends on mobilization of all human resources in the country, especially women, whose role is explicitly addressed for the first time.¹¹ A comprehensive rural development strategy, coordinated at the regional level, is aimed at achieving food self-sufficiency.¹²

2.2.2 Promoting Self-Reliance

Since the change in government in 1987 and the launching of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in 1988, reforms have focused on encouraging private and community participation in economic and social development. On the one hand, these reforms entail withdrawal of the government from activities better managed by the private sector; on the other, they require support to develop community and nongovernmental capacity to assume roles ceded by the government.

Thus rather than a complete withdrawal by the government, “disengagement” calls for a redefinition of its role from one of manager to one of catalyst of initiatives to develop local resources for self-sustaining development. Administrative and political reforms have been undertaken to this end; since 1988, decentralization increasingly has transferred responsibility for development planning to regional and local authorities. Popular participation has been encouraged through development of local associations.

2.3 The Community Development Setting

Grassroots community-development activities have complemented government programs for rural and agricultural development. This section briefly describes the conceptual and

¹¹ On a national scale, Tunisian women represent about 25 percent of the active population, and provide over 40 percent of agricultural labor.

¹² While local groups are to take a more active part in development, AICs are not explicitly mentioned in drafts of the Eighth Plan (pending development of the WUA National Strategy).

programmatic arena of community development in rural Tunisia and new structures to encourage participation of communities in their own development.

2.3.1 Concepts of Community Development

In rural Tunisia, three factors contribute to definitions of community and affect approaches to community development:

- Western concepts of community development are based on shared interests within the community that generate organizing potential for collective problem solving. Such notions of solidarity are incompatible with social structures in which community interests are represented by leaders or heads of families and exclude women, the poor, or other marginal groups whose interests may thus be overlooked.
- Community bonds traditionally are defined by family ties and allegiances. Actions for mutual self-help and support are largely restricted to family circles; outsiders are seen as competitors rather than as allies.
- Collective problem solving—the basis for “community spirit”—is antithetical to individual survival strategies, which are preferred over uniting to find common solutions to problems. Where solutions are beyond the means of a single person, individuals look to the government rather than to other community members for assistance.

In the face of disappearing traditions, and emergence of new and practices, implementors of community development projects have tried to change attitudes through a message that stresses the need to enlarge concepts of community beyond the confines of family ties; the advantages of collective solutions to shared problems; and the inability of the State to provide the solutions to all problems (emphasized more in recent years). Despite these common themes, no single approach has emerged to guide community development efforts.

Reforms since 1987 have focused the attention of policymakers and community development practitioners on ways of increasing popular participation in development and on appropriate organizational structures. Issues center on defining the government’s role in the community development process and also on identifying priority areas for government intervention (e.g., ensuring sustainable activities through creation of support structures).

2.3.2 Earlier Efforts

Compared with sub-Saharan Africa and other parts of the world, relatively little community-development program activity has taken place in Tunisia. Still, rural areas have served as a laboratory for NGO projects for over 20 years.

In the 1970s, CARE-Medico and Catholic Relief Services (which continued until the mid-1980s) were involved primarily in food-aid¹³ and rural water-point programs. Most of the water points created by CARE are abandoned, due to lack of beneficiary involvement in maintenance;¹⁴ evaluation of the CARE project led to promotion of potable-water AICs.

The Association de Développement et de l'Animation Rurale (ASDEAR), created in 1975, was one of the first NGOs to implement an action plan based on participatory development approaches in rural areas. ASDEAR programs took a comprehensive approach, covering sectors including agriculture, appropriate (traditional) technologies, artisanal production, and health education. Financing difficulties rather than problems of approach hampered ASDEAR's achievement of its objectives.

The Save the Children Foundation (SCF) began working in Tunisia in the late 1970s, concentrating efforts on selected rural communities¹⁵. SCF/Tunisia became a local NGO in 1986, known as the Fondation Tunisienne pour le Développement Communautaire (FTDC). SCF/FTDC has taken an integrated rural development approach, stressing community participation in problem identification and project execution. Following sessions to identify and prioritize problems, regional staff help the community form sectoral committees (health, education, etc.) responsible for project activities. A central committee coordinates these committees and develops action plans.

In general, externally financed projects have provided large amounts of money for short periods of time; high funding levels do not guarantee success if projects are neither managed well nor based on beneficiary needs. On the other hand, efforts lacking enough resources for sustained assistance and follow-up, as often occurs with national projects, cannot succeed. Overall, evaluations of efforts to date have pointed up needs for support and follow-up in a realistic time frame.

¹³ World Food Program (WFP) activities, now managed by local authorities and focusing primarily on school feeding.

¹⁴ The project also faced problems due to poor technology choices (handpumps).

¹⁵ Primarily in the areas of Siliana, Makthar, and northern Kasserine. AICs are forming in several of the rural communities where activities have included water projects.

2.3.3 New Structures for Community Development

Evaluation of government and NGO efforts have shown the importance of mobilizing communities to identify and meet their own needs. In recent years, the Government of Tunisia (GOT) has supported creation of groups that will allow transfer of certain functions from the government to communities. Encouragement of cooperatives, NGOs, and other entities is gaining momentum and should lead to their proliferation in the future.

Starting in the late 1970s, promotion of irrigated and intensive agriculture revealed the need for local organizations to better exploit resources. Formation of service cooperatives was encouraged to transfer responsibility for marketing and input distribution to producers. Legislative requirements are flexible, requiring a minimum of seven members and small contributions (as little as 50 TD per member).¹⁶ The cooperatives legally are entitled to borrow from banks, extend credit to members, and buy and sell for the benefit of members.

Government acceptance of NGOs as necessary partners in local development is reflected in the easing of administrative and legalization procedures in 1988. Although over 2,000 groups have been recognized to date, there are no more than 15 development NGOs. Most have been created through outside initiatives or by Tunisian administrative or political elites, and concentrate on mobilizing resources (from donors and foreign and national private sectors). For example, the Association Tunisienne pour l'Auto-Développement et la Solidarité (ATLAS), created in 1991, serves as an intermediary between communities and funding agencies. However, it also promotes a self-help approach, requiring communities to form beneficiary committees to help formulate and manage projects.

Regionally based NGOs also are starting to appear. Le Fondation Kef, operational for two years, already has served as a catalyst for local NGO development. An association to support community projects in El Alâa Délégation in Kairouan recently was created; it is attached to the Kef Foundation but is working toward autonomy. If encouragement of NGOs continues, it is likely that such local groups will become more common and expand their activities from fund raising to community organization.

¹⁶ In Zaghouan, 30 precooperatives were formed under a recently completed project of the Food and Agriculture Organization. Two, including a group of honey producers, have been legalized. Several interviewees during this mission considered evolution into "cooperatives de service" a logical future for some AICs, especially irrigation groups in predominantly agricultural areas.

Development projects also are generating new structures. Since 1987, the Office de Développement du Sylvo-Pastorale Nord-Ouest (ODESYPANO) in Beja Governorate has followed an “integrated participatory approach” through creation of comités de douar (CDs), which group together 20 to 30 households. The CDs are trained to identify priority needs, design projects with ODESYPANO staff, and develop action plans. Activities include road or school construction, soil and water conservation, rangeland improvement, wells, and livestock or dairy production.¹⁷ Eventually, douar committees may be integrated into AICs. ODESYPANO experience to date indicates that a high level of technical assistance is required to develop the capability of such groups to carry out a range of development activities.¹⁸

Neighborhood committees (comités de quartier) are being formed as urban counterparts to AICs. They are not limited to water management, but face similar questions about capacity to carry out integrated community development.

¹⁷ To date, 80 committees have been formed. The performance of CDs, like AICs, is uneven. According to the director of ODESYPANO, a key actor in AIC promotion since the early 1980s, problems of organization and encouraging community participation may be more difficult for CDs than for AICs, as the CDs lack a “solid core” of organization such as a water point.

¹⁸ The ODESYPANO zone is divided into “centres d’intervention” staffed by agents who provide technical assistance and training. World Bank and German support has enabled the assistance of two full-time sociologists.

Chapter 3

AICs: A Diversity of Visions

Varying concepts of what an AIC can or should be, as well as the many interpretations of the legal text, shape the guidance AICs receive and also ideas about their present and future roles in the community. This chapter examines the diversity of perceptions regarding the role and functions of AICs and their partnership with government, and also differences in approaches to supporting AIC development.

3.1 Concepts of AICs

3.1.1 Ministries

Ministry of Agriculture

“Avant tout, c’est l’eau, mais il faut prospecter”¹⁹ sums up the general view of MOA staff at all levels. The AIC exists to transfer responsibility for water system operation—fee collection and maintenance—to the users: “to lighten the State’s load.” Or, in more social terms, to help communities take “a first step toward self-sufficiency.”

All officials emphasize that this is the beginning of a long process. Organizing, training, and helping AICs to effectively manage water delivery requires a full-time effort for several years. Responses to questions about new activities stressed this point repeatedly, especially in governorates where AIC promotion has just begun. All staff agreed that an AIC cannot take on new responsibilities if it cannot manage its affairs and provide regular supplies of water, a capability that takes at least a year to develop.

Most MOA representatives see the water management process as an apprenticeship for expanding activities. They cite the name (Association d’Intérêt Collectif) as an indicator of a wider scope of action.²⁰ Staff frequently refer to the vision of the late Khemais Alouini, a strong proponent of AICs as structures for integrated community development. However, opinions vary on what kinds of activities are appropriate or legal. In general—

¹⁹ “Water first, but you have to look toward the future” (GR/Zaghouan).

²⁰ Six of the seven GR staff who completed the team’s questionnaire disagreed with the statement that “an AIC should limit itself to managing the water point.”

- GR/Tunis has a vision oriented more toward community development or service provision, with reservations about AICs becoming too commercial. This suggests an NGO structure, but there is no desire to lock into any single model.
- Kasserine and Kairouan AIC promotion staff see AICs as platforms for community development activities *after* sustainability is ensured, which often requires income-generating activities (of any kind).
- CRDA commissioners and GR staff in agricultural areas see productive activities (sale of fertilizer, marketing) as a logical extension of AIC activities, leading toward evolution into “cooperatives de service” if possible (e.g., Siliana, Zaghouan).
- In areas where AIC creation is based on literal interpretation of legal text, activities are likely to remain water-related (household connections, tractor-driven delivery, irrigation), in effect creating a “rural SONEDE”²¹ as in Sfax, for example.

Staff at all levels see AICs as channels, if not providers, of social services and as community-level entry points for other ministries. The Ministries of Health, Social Affairs, and Education are cited most often, based on experience to date with health education and the *animatrice de base* program. Both central and field staff recognize the need to more clearly define the future role of each ministry and, possibly, to restructure support units to promote closer collaboration.

Ministry of Health

In efforts to date, AICs have provided effective contact points for education and hygiene activities, reflected in increasing collaboration between GR and MOH. But it is unclear whether interventions have to be limited to water-related problems. The AIC’s title is general, but its water-management functions are specific; this has created confusion about the identity of AICs at both the central and field levels of MOH.

To MOH staff, AICs presently are structured as management units rather than community development agencies. First, concerns for financial self-sufficiency dictate economic rather than social priorities (e.g., in Kasserine, cutting off water to a school for nonpayment). Second, AICs have been created to respond to a single problem. Third, administrative regulations slow the AICs’ capability for action. Still, MOH staff see a

²¹ In a metaphorical sense. Société Nationale d’Exploitation et de Développement des Eaux (SONEDE), the national water company, operates primarily in urban areas, although for years it has considered creation of a rural network.

wider community development role for AICs that includes serving as the contact point for all community health programs. AICs could mobilize support for clean-up efforts (garbage collection) and campaigns against rabies and diarrheal diseases, and they could serve as construction coordinators in latrine projects.

The animatrice de base program was cited at the central and field level as an indicator of the need to reach a common definition of what an AIC is and to define what each ministry will do.²² This program might have helped AICs evolve in a more service-oriented direction by creating a cadre of local contacts to work with women in education, health, and economic activities. A formula for continued support should have been worked out among the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, and Social Affairs *if* the animatrices were considered important.

Ministry of Social Affairs

The name Association d'Intérêt Collectif clearly indicates that AICs are not limited to water management, but there are questions about whether the current statute legally binds them to water- and forest-related activities. Diversification is considered a probable fact of life: a group organized around one common problem is likely to begin addressing others.

To the Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA), AICs represent a medium for developing communities' capacity to solve their own problems and a channel for introducing community development programs. MSA would like to complement the current AIC technical orientation with social programs that require long-term, ongoing support. AICs also could help reach women, a priority target group for MSA; there is a high level of interest in the potential of AIF development to this end.

At present, too little collaboration takes place at the local level to increase AICs' community development orientation. In Kasserine, agents have been seconded to the Unité d'Autogestion (UAG), providing the unit with a community-organizing capacity. But secondments are temporary and effectively cut communication between MSA and GR, since all contacts take place among members of the promotion unit. Collaboration at the central level is needed to reach agreement both on the role of AICs in community development and on their scope of action, and to formalize sustainable agreements between ministries.

²² The Ministry of Health can provide technical but not financial support (for example, technical studies and construction supervision for shower and latrine projects).

Ministry of Finance

The Ministry of Finance defines AICs in terms of institutional and financial-management attributes. At present, the AIC is designated as “collectivité publique locale,” the equivalent of a municipality (which limits profit-making activities). Thus, AICs are subject to public-sector accounting regulations and other constraining administrative procedures.

Under their present statute, however, AICs are not prevented from engaging in other activities. The law allows for “recettes diverses,” miscellaneous income from unspecified sources and for “dépenses imprévues,” or unexpected expenditures (e.g., loan payments). The AIC can lend and borrow money but cannot set up a separate revolving loan fund (considered extra-budgetary). An AIC engaged in income-generating activities would be treated like a government enterprise, but its scale of activity may be limited by its nonprofit status.

Ministry of Plan

AICs were created to manage water points and to develop a sense of community cohesion; however, cohesion can be generated around points other than water. Thus, AICs are treated as one of many actors in a comprehensive rural development strategy. Needs to diversify activities are considered legitimate as long as they do not compromise an AIC's original purpose.

In drafts of the Eighth Plan, AICs are not mentioned explicitly as vehicles for promoting grassroots rural development. However, 2.8 million TD has been allocated to support their promotion. The period of the Eighth Plan is considered a time for defining the role of AICs, through development of the National Strategy for AIC Creation, before specifying how they will contribute toward rural development strategies.

3.1.2 Local Government

The views of the governor, as president of the Groupement d'Intérêt Hydraulique (GIH), are critical in influencing perceptions at other levels of local government. The two governors and two secretaries general interviewed took an evolutionary view of AICs, suggesting that by learning to manage a water system AICs would be able to “go beyond taking over what the government put in place, to take over development.”

Interviews in Kairouan Governorate reflected more of a community development vision in the long term. According to the governor of Kairouan, AIC creation currently is based on the logic of cost recovery rather than on community development, and on replacing rather than complementing the State. This logic must be reoriented to enable a wider community development role. The AICs need to be given more responsibility in

managing public funds (incentives to invest and increase capital),²³ and members must be trained to rely upon each other rather than on local officials for problem solving.

In Kasserine and Zaghouan, AIC evolution was discussed more in terms of meeting needs. According to the governor of Zaghouan, other structures are in place to provide social services, but there is a need for more structures to promote economic development (e.g., cooperatives).

3.1.3 NGOs

To NGO representatives, AIC creation is not entirely reflective of a community development process because the starting point—water—is defined by the government rather than by the community. In addition, administrative requirements promote the formation of mini-bureaucracies rather than participatory problem-solving groups. These bureaucracies rely too heavily on government resources. NGOs distinguish between AICs as groups and as a legal status conferred, for example, at the end of an organizing process.

NGOs such as FTDC and ATLAS see a potential for AICs to evolve into multifunctional groups, by creating, for example, sectoral subcommittees (e.g., for health and women's activities). Following the FTDC committee model (see Section 2.3.2), the AIC board would assume the role of a central coordinating committee. NGOs could help train AIC promoters in participatory planning and nonformal education as a way to help AICs form committees and develop action plans.

NGOs see AICs as community linkages. In El Alâa, for example, the new development NGO has worked with AICs on studies for water-related projects. In other areas, however, such as housing projects, it works with individual beneficiaries. In the future, the AICs might become the contact point for all work with NGOs, or they might develop partnerships with specific organizations.

3.1.4 AIC Officers and Members

For those closely involved with daily operations—presidents, treasurers, and *pompistes*—the AIC is first and foremost an organization for managing and conserving water supplies. All of the presidents interviewed said they would like to carry out projects to help members. But for now, the challenge of managing the water system is work enough, and funds are insufficient. The evolutionary view is present, if implicit.

²³ Although there is a risk that if AICs become too commercial, members may expect water costs to be covered by other income.

In Kasserine, presidents tend to see themselves—and the AICs—as intermediaries between the community and the government, rather than as direct service providers. This is not surprising, given the number of small, donor-funded projects in which AICs have served as the point of entry to the community, and also to some extent, as project managers.²⁴

Members are not always clear on what the AIC is or what it can do. Men and women interviewed at water sites confused the AIC with the party cell. Those who did identify the AIC as a water agency did not see it as a provider of other services, except for one group of women at Bir Chaabane (who said that if the AIC has extra money, it should be used for projects to help them).²⁵

3.1.5 Project Advisors

Since the early 1980s, a number of Tunisian and American consultants have helped shape a vision of AICs. In Kasserine, where the AIC experiment began, the primary goal was community development (Hopkins et al. 1990). One consultant proposed a wide-ranging evolutionary vision in which mobilization of community resources to resolve water problems is generalized to all other aspects of development. Others have proposed more restrained models, such as water-related activities built around the fountain site (washing platforms, creation of a meeting place for women).

All of these concepts fit into a larger debate about single- versus multipurpose organizations. Opponents of diversification claim that multipurpose groups have not worked elsewhere; when a water user association expands its functions, it becomes over-extended and cannot meet its original mandate. Proponents counter that examples exist (Yemen, Togo, and Belize have been cited) and that water management mobilizes forces of community development that cannot be contained.

3.2 Concepts of Partnership

AIC creation is based on disengagement of the government from areas of inefficiency; this does imply complete withdrawal of support for water provision. To all parties, the concept of the AIC is based on partnership with the government. The terms of partnership, however, are open to question.

²⁴ AICs lend themselves to use as magnets for external funding by legitimizing a claim of “community participation” (e.g., with a letter to request an embassy self-help program). As the need to rely on private resources increases, offers of external funding will become more attractive. AICs will need help in assessing such offers to ensure that proposed projects actually meet their needs (see profile of Bir Chaabane, Appendix E).

²⁵ See Davis 1991 regarding women’s knowledge of WUA activities.

Ministry and local government officials all cite investment in infrastructure as the role of the State. But the high costs of properly equipping irrigated perimeters (estimated 10,000 TD/hectare) may not be feasible. Or, faults in a water system's design may reduce efficiency of water delivery. In either case, an AIC may inherit problems of inadequate infrastructure that bear directly on operations and income.

At the governorate level, the role of the State is seen as one of providing resources to encourage AIC self-sufficiency. But how far should this support go? Should the governor, as GIH president, provide loan guarantees—or loans, grants, or subsidies—to ensure an AIC's viability. Should decisions to withdraw financial support be made before the AIC is able to continue on its own?

Types, levels, and duration of assistance vary among governorates. In Kairouan, a 110,000 TD budget has been allocated this year (1991-92) for tractors and drivers' salaries in water-deprived regions; pompistes' salaries are paid by the PDR. In Kasserine, about 200 animal-drawn cisterns have been distributed per year since 1980 through a program to encourage fruit tree cultivation; the governorate pays most pompistes' salaries and covers large repairs. In Sfax, AICs were given notice from the beginning that fuel would be paid until January 1990, and pompistes until January 1991. In Zaghouan, all AICs now pay for fuel, electricity, and pompistes' salaries. Government pays for large repairs and subsidizes extensions of systems.

Opinions vary on appropriate degrees of support. The extreme, suggested by a UAG member, is full subsidy for five years, to allow the AIC to build a minimum reserve fund. In Kairouan, officials favor heavier short-term investments to enable self-sufficiency in three to four years. In Sfax and Zaghouan, fees expected of AIC members seem a fair trade for the investments in infrastructure. There was general agreement among governorates that more indirect government support is needed to facilitate AICs' access to credit and development programs (PDR, FOSDA).

There also is agreement on the State's nonmaterial support functions: mobilization, guidance, arbitration, and organization. But the MOA lacks material and human resources to fulfill all of these functions. Representatives of the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, and Social Affairs agree on the need for better coordination but differ in their ideas on ways to mobilize interministerial support. GR staff, Ministry of Health agents, and local government officials in Kairouan and Kasserine thought that a unit attached to the governorate would provide more-effective support. In Zaghouan, opinion tended to favor current arrangements (collaboration without detaching staff).

Generally, GR staff agree that “with the means currently available to the AIC promotion cells, it is impossible to support diversification of activities.”²⁶ One UAG member questioned the potential for expansion without adequate support: “Are we talking about AICs starting new activities as they are now, struggling? Or are we talking about AICs starting new activities with all of the proper support in place? These are two different questions, with two different answers.” The answer, as expressed by one GR/Tunis official, is that “L’Etat doit s’engager avant de désengager” (the government should become involved before it disengages).

3.3 Supporting AIC Creation and Follow-up

Concepts of AICs and types of support provided affect the orientations of the groups and, by extension, choices of new activities. This section reviews approaches to AIC creation and follow-up that are relevant to the activities described in the following chapter.

3.3.1 Approaches to AIC Creation

Kasserine is the only governorate that has taken a stated “community development approach.” According to UAG agents seconded from MSA, the approach has been based on dialogue and information: sensitization meetings with water users and AIC officers; training and retraining of officers and members; and ongoing meetings, informal talks, and special events (e.g., clean-up days). However, the approach has been directed toward increasing community participation in management. Although local input was sought for USAID-funded activities, the water point often preceded AIC creation. In some cases, however, community feedback has resulted in design changes.²⁷

New activities, usually introduced by project agents, emphasized improvement of community well-being (health education and formation of women’s groups, latrines, cisterns, and other non-income-generating infrastructure improvement). AICs could afford to undertake these activities because their investments were subsidized by donor funds.²⁸

²⁶ All seven CRDA staff who completed questionnaires agreed with the statement.

²⁷ One latrine-construction project in Kasserine is distinguished as an example of a participatory process where the community chose, paid for, and built the latrines (Rachmett).

²⁸ In Kasserine, availability of funds has created dependency on outside resources; discussions with AIC officers in Kasserine differed from other governorates in expectations for assistance.

In order to introduce a participatory process of needs identification, planning, and project-implementation, agents say both staff and AIC members need training in community development approaches, problem solving, strategy development and setting objectives, and project planning and execution.²⁹

Kairouan describes its approach as a process of “promotion and sensitization,” concentrating first on developing management skills but also promoting community spirit. New activities have been introduced based on models observed in Kasserine, then adapted to rely more upon local resources. This approach enables staff to act as technical advisors rather than as intermediaries between a donor and an AIC. Income-generating activities have been given more attention, but social-service activities are also encouraged.

Sfax has concentrated on adherence to the letter of AIC law and on promoting self-sufficiency. Efforts have been directed toward increasing acceptance of payment and operational responsibility, on the assumption that building AICs will build community spirit (“faire les AICs, c’est faire la communauté”). To staff, activities unrelated to water provision, whether for income generation or community development seem inappropriate (e.g., women’s groups).³⁰

3.3.2 Support and Follow-up

Staff in Kasserine say that support for AICs once they have been created is more critical than approaches to the creation itself. As proof, they claim that AICs in Kasserine were in a better financial position in 1990 than they are today, and doing better also with resolving problems and diversifying activities. They attribute the fall-off to the ending of donor resources that permitted both financial and technical support.

Outside resources enabled Kasserine Governorate to extend its role as provider of infrastructure beyond the water point, to reach households. Funds also enabled support of small income-generating projects for women, a responsibility that otherwise would have fallen on a newly created AIC. Each subsidy enabled service provision without a loss of income to the AIC.

²⁹ One agent cited the need for training members to more actively exercise their rights to resources and information. For example, when a president tells members (e.g., women asking for a washing platform) that there is no money for an activity, they need to ask for an accounting of funds.

³⁰ The staff’s perspective differs from that of the director, formerly the head of GR in Kairouan, who says he has developed a more sociological approach through experience with AIC promotion.

Governorate resources in Kasserine and Kairouan were mobilized for salaries and for some fuel subsidies and repairs, which have helped the AICs build their financial base. Although Kairouan has been more strict than Kasserine about payments and repairs, both governorates have been more lenient than Sfax and Zaghuan in transferring responsibility for operating expenses to the AIC. This observation does not imply that lenience is good; AICs in Kairouan are considered to be in better financial shape than in Kasserine, and Sfaxian AICs are reported to be on more solid ground than those in Kairouan.

USAID funds also enabled Kasserine to create interdisciplinary support structures for advice during the life of the project. Kasserine is the only governorate where collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs was reported; the relationship was formalized by seconding agents to the UAG, who are still there. Ministry of Health (MOH) and MOA staff are working together in all four governorates, but Kasserine was the only governorate to formally structure collaboration. Unfortunately, the regional health education team, like the animatrice de base program, was not sustained after the project ended.

In Kairouan, staff believe the that lack of a formal structure constrains collaboration; in Zaghuan, staff say it makes no difference—in or out of a team, they have too few people and too few vehicles to cover the governorate adequately. In all four governorates, staff cited shortages of human and financial resources, noted earlier in this chapter and in previous reports, as constraints to effective assistance to AICs.

Chapter 4

The Current Situation

Associations in Kasserine, then Kairouan, and now throughout the country, have considered or realized projects beyond their primary mandate. This chapter begins with an overview of actual and planned actions in selected governorates, followed by descriptions of activities observed in four governorates and ideas for activities under consideration.

4.1 Overview at the Governorate Level

Visits, interviews, and questionnaires provided information on 14 of the 23 governorates in Tunisia:

Kasserine. This governorate has 144 AICs: 40 irrigation, 84 potable-water, and 20 mixed; of these, 105 are legalized. New activities for potable-water AICs began in 1985-86, with sale of water for irrigation. Other activities followed:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Number AICs</i>
Latrine construction	4
Pay showers	2
Household connections	3
School water connection and latrines	1
Water-storage cisterns	2
Watering troughs	2
Fountain tap/spigots	1

Thirty-six animatrices de base were trained and six AIFs were started (four with income-generating projects—gardens, poultry raising, rabbits, weaving); neither animatrices nor AIFs are now active. Recently, one AIC joined an existing cooperative; another (Boulaaba) is the site of an MOA pilot project to use geothermal energy for heating greenhouses.

Kairouan. There are 194 functional AICs in Kairouan: (162 potable-water, 4 mixed, and 32 irrigation; 105 are legalized. Based on projects observed in Kasserine, Kairouan staff

encouraged new activities. Two AICs have constructed public showers, two have initiated for-fee battery charging, and three have provided household connections to the water system. Three women's groups have been formed, animatrices have been recruited, and productive projects have been initiated. This year, members of one irrigation AIC made a group purchase of fertilizer.

Zaghuan. Over a two-year period, 51 AICs have been created here—33 potable-water, 15 irrigation, 2 mixed, and 1 sewage (36 are legalized); two recently were created for soil conservation. No new activities are underway, but three AICs have considered them: an irrigation AIC tried to buy a tractor but was blocked by credit problems; a potable-water AIC wanted to create a sales point for gas canisters, but start-up costs were too high; a potable-water AIC looked into renting a piece of state land but did not meet requirements (for large-scale agriculture).

Sidi Bouzid. This governorate has 120 AICs. Based on examples in Kasserine, one women's group has been started (three members) and two more are being organized. GR staff has worked with the Union Nationale des Femmes Tunisienne (UNFT) to recruit members, who serve as volunteer animatrices (health education and encouraging payment of fees). Staff have not introduced economic projects to AIFs due to inadequate transport for follow-up. Transport and financial controls are cited as the main constraints to pursuing new project ideas, which have included household connections, tractor purchase, and creation of a *cooperative de service* (an idea backed by CRDA).

Siliana. Sixty-five AICs have been created here (57 potable-water, 1 mixed, and 7 irrigation). Three irrigation AICs have received government credits for agricultural inputs (tractor rental, fuel, fertilizer); one received a short-term bank loan to buy seed for the planting season. Irrigation AICs are considered better candidates for expanding activities and receiving credit because they are productive, as opposed to potable-water AICs, which are seen as providers of a social service.

Beja. AIC promotion began two years ago, and 61 associations have been created (all but 7 potable-water). No new activities have been executed apart from extensions of water systems paid for by the AICs. No project proposals have been noted.

Sfax. Since 1989, efforts have focused on creating a maximum number of legal, well-managed, self-sufficient AICs (100 created to date). The governorate stopped paying for fuel in 1990 and for pompistes in 1991. One AIC connected businesses to the water system; three have requested home connections, which are under study. One potable-water AIC—the only one in its *délégation*—is trying to acquire a tractor, supported by the *délégué*. New activities are thought appropriate if the AIC is functioning well and if the activities are water-related (tractors, cisterns, household connections).

Le Kef. Seventy-six AICs have been created, and 41 legalized. One AIC has installed house connections.

Tunis, Ariana, Mahdia. No activities have been planned or undertaken. According to members of promotion cells, it is premature even to think about activities beyond creation of functional AICs.

Bizerte. AIC creation has been underway for two years, a “début” focused on organization and management. Of the 90 AICs, 53 have been legalized. Agents of the promotion unit are aware of examples of diversification from Kairouan and Kasserine; AICs have suggested ideas to agents, who say it is too early to act upon them. Irrigation AICs may be ready to start new activities earlier, as they are used to paying for water, but potable-water groups are still in a sensitization stage.

Medenine. Creation of new AICs began two years ago (although irrigation AICs have existed since the 1940s); 20 groups are now functioning. It is too early to act upon diversification, but the topic is being included in a one-day informational campaign to be held for prospective members this month.

Sousse. A total of 88 AICs have been created. No new activities have been launched to date, but several AICs are interested in forming cooperatives. No action has as yet been taken to obtain authorization.

4.2 Activities Undertaken to Date

The following descriptions are based on visits to sites described in greater detail in Appendix E.

4.2.1 Latrine Construction

Kasserine is the only governorate where latrine-construction projects were reported since AIC creation; one site was visited. The project in Bir Chaabane, a poor, isolated community, was introduced and for the most part implemented by a USAID consultant. The masons were unfamiliar with construction requirements, and the model was constructed incorrectly and sited too far from the users' homes. The consultant left before the project was completed: three of the twenty latrines are still unfinished. Still, other families have adapted the model and constructed their own latrines (at a cost of about 600 TD).

Latrine-construction projects in Kairouan were completed before AICs were created. However, MOH field staff claim that an earlier UNICEF project would have been facilitated by AICs, which could have acted as coordinators of construction and training.

4.2.2 Shower Construction

Two shower-construction projects are located in Kasserine (both were visited) and two in Kairouan (one visited). No others were reported.

Guettar El Messiouta (Kairouan) is a close-knit community that has built a mosque and school with its own funds. AIC officers asked the promotion unit for assistance in constructing public showers; funds were provided through the Canadian Embassy (6,500 TD matched by 1,500 TD from the AIC). A member donated the site, and the AIC carried out construction. Serving an estimated 40 people per week, the facility earns 30 TD/month for the AIC. Demand may soon require expansion.

Boulaaba is the site of a shrine and hot sulphur springs. A traditional hammam predates the drilled well, and bathing was free before the AIC was created. Bathers objected to paying, as have AIC members, who find the water undrinkable. Hoping that better facilities would improve the situation, the AIC requested governorate assistance. After nearly two years, the showers are still incomplete due to problems with the contractor and a conflict with the governorate over rights to proceeds.

In **Bir Chaabane**, the community at first wanted to construct a hammam, which is too costly; showers were then suggested by UAG agents and accepted by the community. An outside consultant managed the project. The AIC matched donor funds with over 900 TD and constructed the facility. However, the wrong equipment was purchased, and the consultant left before the situation was rectified. AIC officers say they need an additional 500 TD to finish the project but have no money to invest at present and are wary of spending more on the project.

4.2.3 Fountains, Watering Troughs, and Cisterns

All of the reported projects are in Kasserine and Kairouan. In most cases, construction was financed with donor money (U.S., Canadian, Belgian, or French). Since it was legalized in 1987, the Machrak Echams AIC has built a watering trough, fountain (taps paid for by the AIC), and ten cisterns. Cisterns were built with USAID funds, and the animatrice visited beneficiary households to give advice on water treatment. These visits have stopped, but vestiges of the messages remain; for example, women know they should add bleach, although they but don't know the correct amount. The cisterns have served as models for several other families, who have undertaken construction at their own expense.

4.2.4 Household and Other Connections

Water system extensions to houses and businesses are a priority desire for most AICs, as extensions benefit both individual members and the association (by increasing income as water consumption rises). In Khamouda II, a USAID demonstration project has enabled connections for 171 homes; another 65 families are on the waiting list. Members contributed 20 TD of the installation costs (about 750 TD per household) and paid for labor to dig trenches. The AIC in effect is acting as a community utility company (“la SONEDE rurale”) responsible for reading the meters, transmitting readings to the governorate, distributing bills, and collecting money. The AIC pays an agent to carry out these tasks.

Other systems range from narrow-gauge pipes to above-ground plastic tubing. In Ouled Ali Ben Salem, the AIC does a preliminary review of applications for connections. The connection cost is 120 TD, borne by the beneficiary. In three of the seventeen cases to date, short-term loans were made for up to a one-third of the costs; these have been repaid. The team also visited one AIC (Gonna) where a single farmer had installed a meter for irrigation, and a potable-water AIC in Sfax where a private baker had done the same. In both cases, beneficiaries bore the full installation costs (2,000 TD and 1,100 TD, respectively).

4.2.5 Battery Charging

Two AICs are reported to be charging batteries for a fee, both in Kairouan; one was visited. Ain Zenna in Kairouan is a well-managed potable-water AIC that came up with the battery-charging idea because members had to travel 8 kilometers for recharging. The conseil d’administration discussed the idea with the director of the AIC promotion unit, who was supportive. The charger, which cost 100 TD, earns about 40 TD per month for the AIC by charging two batteries per day 20 days per month. Thus far, money has been used to buy materials to begin a service for small plumbing repairs.

4.2.6 Cooperative Activity

Several forms of group activity have been reported, mostly by irrigation or mixed AICs and those related to agriculture (see Kasserine and Siliana, Section 4.1). In addition, irrigation AICs in Zaghouan have considered uniting to buy seeds and fertilizer. One irrigation AIC in Kairouan, Zlasi, has made a bulk purchase of fertilizer. A member rented his truck to the AIC at a reduced rate, enabling the group to buy 2 MT of fertilizer, which was sold at cost plus transport. All sales were on a cash basis, but the AIC is considering extending credit during the next planting season. Income generation for the AIC was not considered important because officers did not want members to think the AIC was trying to take more money from them.

4.2.7 Animatrice de Base Program

In Kasserine, 36 animatrices de base were trained as village health workers under the Rural Potable Water Institutions Project.¹ Young local women were recruited and trained to transmit simple health messages and record data on household health and hygiene. The project provided a 30 TD/month stipend, which was continued by the governorate for a few months after the project ended. When it was cut off, all of the animatrices stopped working.

Because the program was considered a good model for community outreach, reinstatement was recommended—to be paid for by increasing monthly rates to cover stipends (Davis 1991). Women in participating communities said they would have liked more visits; the animatrice in Boulaaba says that women still come to her for advice, unaware that she has stopped working. None of the AICs have paid for an animatrice; presidents say that at this stage all income needs to be used for operating expenses.

Other governorates are adopting modified versions of the model (Kairouan, Sidi Bouzid). In Kairouan, the animatrices are organizing AIFs around productive projects in addition to making home visits. The director of the AIC promotion unit has worked with three communities to identify animatrices; a stipend has been secured for one from the governor's council and negotiations are taking place on behalf of the others, who are currently working as volunteers. The animatrice in Ouled Ali Ben Salem keeps monthly records of home visits and is working with the AIF to set up a weaving project.

4.2.8 Associations d'Intérêt Feminin

Groups were started in Kasserine to increase women's involvement in USAID project activities.² Over a 14-month period, six AIFs were formed, mostly through the efforts of a USAID consultant. Nearly a year after she left, however, none were active. In Boulaaba, for example, the animatrice lacked the skills to continue a gardening project. UAG staff, AIC officers, and women cite several factors that contributed to the failure of the AIFs, including insufficient preliminary study, a time frame too short for a long-term endeavor, a job unsuited to an outsider, lack of follow-up, and problems of approach.

¹ See Brahman and Rossi 1991 for a detailed description and assessment of the program.

² See Thaddeus 1989, Harrison 1990, and Davis 1991 for background on AIF creation.

The AIFs were created primarily for communication and health education. According to UAG members, however, women want to get together to produce, not to discuss problems. Men did not take the groups seriously, and older women were not interested until a concrete activity was introduced. Functioning groups “had the right” to small microprojects (Harrison 1990) and Davis notes that the projects came to dominate the AIF, which may reflect community priorities. At all sites visited by the team, productive activities for women—especially young women—were cited as a need by local and AIC leaders, men and women.

In Kairouan, AIFs are being built around a core of economic activity organized by local women who remain on-site, using local resources and technologies. In Ouled Ali Ben Salem, the animatrice has lent looms and also work space in her home. The AIC lends money for materials and helps market the rugs, taking a percentage of the sale price in return.

4.3 Possible or Planned Activities

The activities described in the preceding section provide examples for other AICs. Also, new ideas have been considered, which are covered briefly in this section; in the future, several of these may move from proposal to realization.

4.3.1 Tractor Purchase

Purchase of a tractor was considered by five of the twelve AICs visited, either for water delivery or rental for farm work. Tractor owners who transport water from well sites sometimes increase the price of water 500 percent or more for resale and although GR officials try to discourage such speculation, it is a fact of rural life. A tractor would help channel income from speculators to the AIC and would help lower costs for members (if AIC officers keep promises to sell at lower prices).

The price of a tractor (20-25,000 TD) is beyond the means of all AICs at present. Zouagha II applied to a bank and a dealer for credit and was turned down by both. Associations in Sfax and Sidi Bouzid are enlisting the support of local authorities for assistance in acquisition. There are a number of special funds that can support purchases (e.g., FOSDA, which subsidizes 15 percent of a bank loan), but AICs are unaware of them and program managers are not used to dealing with AICs.

4.3.2 Agricultural Activities

Interest in cooperative activities was cited in several governorates, including Sousse and Zaghouan. Activities to date have concentrated on purchase or rental of agricultural inputs and equipment, but local government officials mentioned possibilities for marketing in the future. These actions are likely to be supported by local authorities in agricultural areas, with AICs either forming cooperatives or attaching themselves to existing cooperatives (the case of one AIC in Kasserine).

One AIC in Kairouan plans to start a small nursery and eventually would like to become involved in seed multiplication and storage, an idea echoed by an irrigation AIC in Zaghouan. Greenhouses might be promoted through MOA demonstration projects (although the effort in Boulaaba is site-specific and dependent on hot springs).

4.3.3 Small Enterprises

Few ideas have emerged to date in this area. One is very site-specific; Gonna, in Kasserine, is the site of a source of high-quality drinking water. The AIC president had discussed the possibility of a water-bottling facility with local authorities and was approached by a private entrepreneur from outside the area, whose proposal would have created employment but no income for the community. The proposal was rejected by GR/Tunis in favor of an eventual AIC-owned or -controlled venture. The AIC would like to pursue the idea in the future but has opted to increase its income in the short term through agricultural activities.

Khemaissia, a potable-water AIC in Zaghouan, wanted to create a sales point for butane gas canisters, but preliminary investigations indicated that start-up costs were beyond its means (4,000 TD for a stock of 200 canisters purchased in Tunis). Small sales points near pump or fountain sites are a possibility for AICs but to date have been created only by private parties (e.g., in Machrak Echams, a small shop was built by the pompiste).

Chapter 5

Launching New Activities: What Counts? Characteristics of Activities and of AICs Starting Them

Several AICs have tried similar activities, each with different results. Although the cases described in the preceding chapter are each unique, they exhibit traits suggesting factors that work for or against new activities. This chapter highlights characteristics of activities and of AICs that affect capacity to execute new projects and mobilize resources to meet locally identified needs.

5.1 Characteristics of New Activities

5.1.1 Origin of the Idea

In theory, each activity responds to a need, which in some cases has been identified by the community and in others by outside agents (promotion unit staff, consultants). Cases in the field fall into two categories:

Community Identified

Bathing facilities
Washing facilities
Income generation/AIC
Income generation/women

Externally Identified

Hygiene facilities
Water treatment
Services/AIC
Health education

Strategic responses to needs also may be identified by either source. In some cases they may differ:

Community Identified

Hammam or showers
Battery charging
Tractor
AIF/production unit
Household connections

Externally Identified

Showers
Latrines
Rabbit and poultry projects
AIF/discussion group
Household connections

It also is necessary to distinguish between needs identified by the community or by the AIC. The need for washing platforms emanates primarily from female community members but often is overlooked by AIC officers. The community-identified response to a need for bathing facilities in Boulaaba was a hammam; the AIC's response was showers. Ideas such as battery charging and household connections may be identified or initiated by the AIC but respond to the community's expressed needs. An idea's origin is important in determining the AIC's capacity to listen to, and act upon, community needs. If AICs respond only to externally initiated ideas, they may not develop the capacity to assess, rank, and meet constituent needs.

Externally identified needs can be valid, reflected in community acceptance of proposals; also, the same needs may be identified by different actors in different situations. But externally designed responses may require resources beyond the means of the AIC (e.g., financing, as was the case in all such projects).

If an idea originates externally, it is doubly important to ensure community involvement in planning and execution, both to shape projects to local conditions and to ensure sustainability—especially if an external response differs from the community's preference. The need for community participation is reflected in AIF creation in Kasserine and in the experiences in Bir Chaabane.

5.1.2 Purpose of the Activity

Actual and possible activities fall into two broad categories:

Productive or economic, which generate income for the AIC directly (e.g., fees from pay showers) or indirectly through increased water consumption (e.g., individual meters or cisterns). These include:

<i>Direct</i>	<i>Indirect</i>
Pay showers	Home connections
Battery charging	Irrigation meters
Tractor for water sale	Cisterns
AIF weaving group (AIC is paid a share of sales)	

Social, focused on provision of services that improve the well-being of the community or of individual households. These activities usually do not generate income and may drain funds from the AIC.

Latrine construction

Washing platforms, water fountains, watering troughs

AIF weaving group (AIC doesn't take a share of sales)

Tractor for transporting girls to school

AICs tended to initiate small economic activities on their own (battery charging, group purchases) and to carry out social activities if subsidies were available (latrine and cistern construction). Whether social or economic, large-scale projects (e.g., infrastructure) were not undertaken if the AIC had to bear the full cost. Interest in economic activities predominates at present, although there is some concern for playing a social-service role.

When officers were asked why new activities had been considered or launched, they cited the following:

- A combination of raising money for the AIC and “helping people” at nine of the twelve sites (including Bir Chaabane, one of the poorest sites, and Khamouda II, one of the most affluent).
- Purely financial reasons at two sites (one, Machrak Echams, has carried out subsidized community-service projects to date; the president cited the need for a potable-water AIC to have a productive component).
- Purely to help members at one site (Zlasi, where fertilizer was sold at cost).

Where there is equal concern for benefiting both community and AIC, the potential for the AIC to become active in community development may be greater. As shown above, some activities can be tailored to provide a service or generate income; productive activities become more social when their income-generating potential is not exploited (e.g., fertilizer sale in Zlasi).

5.1.3 Relationship to the Water System

Basically, AIC activities are either related or unrelated to the water system and/or water use. Activities *related directly* to the water system fall into two broad categories:

Infrastructure Extension/Improvement:

Taps, watering troughs, washing stands

Cisterns

Business/school connections

Home connections

Irrigation systems and individual hook-ups

Water-use Extension

Irrigation of fruit trees

Infrastructure improvement or extension are the services most often sought by AIC members. It is not surprising that new AIC activities to date have focused on this category, as it is a logical extension of AIC functions and one that many people do not consider an example of diversification (or community development). In fact, taps, home connections, and other structures may have been provided by the government before or after AIC creation. Expecting such services from the government, AICs might not initiate costly, labor-intensive construction projects unless external assistance is provided.

Activities *not at all related* to water include AIF income-generating projects (poultry, rabbits, weaving, gardening) and projects such as the sale of gas bottles. Such activities could be implemented independently and may not be considered appropriate for an AIC, especially in regions that literally interpret the law; thus, these activities may not benefit from official support. However, the income-generating potential may justify the activity, especially if the AIC is managing its affairs well.

Irrigation and mixed AICs are likely to carry out activities *indirectly related* to water, such as group purchase of inputs to improve agricultural production. Such activities may generate needs for an additional entity, such as a cooperative that is integrated with, attached to, or independent of the AIC. In the long term, AICs will have to determine how to structure other activities. For example, a bottling plant started by the AIC could be spun off as a cooperative or a small enterprise in which the AIC could retain management or financial control.

5.1.4 Costs of the Activity

Financial Investment

Every activity incurs costs, representing investments that can be grouped roughly in magnitude:

<i>0-500 TD</i>	<i>500-2,000 TD</i>	<i>2,000-6,000 TD</i>	<i>6,000+ TD</i>
Home connection (simple)	Home connection (complex)	Pay showers	Tractor
Battery charge	Irrig. meters		Hamam
Garden supplies	Latrines		

Total cost is less significant than the part borne by the individual or the AIC. Larger construction projects all have been subsidized, reducing the cost to the AIC considerably. No activity has represented a cost to an AIC of over 1,500 TD (its share of the cost of a public shower); individuals have assumed costs of over 1,000 TD (business hook-ups, irrigation meters). In general, costs of 150 TD or less were assumed without problem by either party. AICs would like to undertake activities requiring a larger investment, but these have not been tried or have been blocked by lack of credit.

Except for showers, AICs have started no activities with significant recurrent costs (which also may explain the resistance to hiring animatrices). This is not surprising: first, AICs are likely to begin paying their pompiste before taking on another salaried position; second, there is less likely to be government or donor funding for recurrent costs.

Human Investment

There is a considerable difference between the investments of time and energy needed to purchase a battery charger and those needed to construct a public shower facility. A cistern-construction program entails high monetary costs but will occupy the time and energy of AIC members only for a finite period of time. By contrast, the financial investment in AIF creation is small, but the human investment is high if AIFs are properly organized and followed up. Activities can be divided among four categories of investment:

- Low/short-term: small purchases (e.g., battery charger)
- High/short-term: all construction projects
- Low/long-term: simple services
- High/long-term: cooperatives, women's groups, service projects

Two activities in the first category were noted: battery charging and group purchase of fertilizer; it is surprising that there were not more. AICs that participated in construction projects all were able to maintain the needed level of effort throughout the project, except when blocked by technical difficulties (Bir Chaaban). When construction projects become service projects, greater strains are put on human resources (as in the case of

Khamouda II). Formation of women's groups, which require long-term human support, could not be sustained by the AICs alone with present levels of resources.

5.1.5 Individual vs. Group Benefits

Projects also differ according to benefits or to improved access to resources by—

<i>Individual/Household</i>	<i>Group/Community</i>
Household connections	Water taps
Business and irrigation meters	Washing platforms
Household latrines	Public latrines
Individual cisterns	Cooperatives

Projects benefiting individuals represent less of a financial investment for the AIC, as in all cases they require a contribution from the member. The amount has ranged from 10 percent or less (e.g., Khamouda II) to 100 percent for individual business and irrigation meters; loans or subsidies usually were provided for a service to the beneficiary that was social (home hookups) rather than productive (bakery meter). AICs seem more open to projects that require a contribution from individual members.

At the same time, these projects represent a potential source of conflict if distribution of benefits is considered unfair. In Ouled Ali Ben Salem, home connections have been made according to a system understood and accepted by members, and rejections have not been contested; on the other hand, choices in Khamouda II allegedly favor family members of the president, contributing to conflicts among board members.

5.2 Characteristics of AICs Starting New Activities

5.2.1 Organization and Community Cohesion

Communities based on family ties reflect a stronger spirit of mutual self-help that may be focused—but is not generated—by AIC creation. Members of the El Guettar El Messioua AIC belong to a single douar; the community built a school and prayer center with its own funds prior to the AIC shower project. Pre-existing interests and abilities

contributed to project completion. In Boulaaba, however, where there are conflicts between the AIC and members, the absence of such factors contributes to blockages.³

Small AICs that build on family ties or shared interests such as agricultural activities are more likely to fill community-service functions. In Zlasi, for example, which is an isolated area with strong community ties, the AIC (53 members) sold fertilizer at cost. The Farazy AIC provides drinking water free to its 24 members, who are all part of the same extended family, and has subsidized irrigation water for families in need. Strong community spirit has not yet translated into new activities, as the AIC has been hampered by poor irrigation equipment that drains income from the association.

Cohesion contributes to community acceptance of the AIC and the need to pay for water; it provides a basis for organizing new activities but cannot yet ensure their success. In Bir Chaabane, AIC officers reflect a strong spirit of service to their close-knit community; a shower-construction project was as likely to succeed there as in El Guettar, but the AIC lacked control over purchase of the proper equipment. In Zouagha II (13 members), the AIC wanted to buy a tractor to ease workloads but was blocked by credit problems. Despite such obstacles, AICs based on strong community ties are more likely to undertake activities to meet members' needs.

5.2.2 Stage of Development

All but one of the AICs in both Kasserine and Kairouan were created in 1987 or 1988, and legalized two to three years later. The Sfax and Zaghuan associations were created in 1989, and legalized several months afterward. Some AICs began activities before they were legalized, especially those related to improvement of the water infrastructure (Machrak Echams); none of the activities required legal status, as would application for a bank loan.

The age of the AIC (especially on paper) does not seem a significant determinant of the decision to start new activities. It is not relevant where new activities were introduced by external agents and executed according to time frames of outside projects, as in Kasserine. In Kairouan, other activities were introduced within three years of AIC creation. In governorates that started later but were exposed to examples of Kasserine and Kairouan, ideas for new projects appeared within two years of creation, but most have not been acted upon.

³ In Boulaaba, shower construction does not reflect community wishes for a hammam, but serves as a cheaper measure to bring the AIC and users closer by developing an alternative use for water unacceptable for drinking.

Organizational maturity rather than age plays a role in the AIC's ability to sustain projects.⁴ Although new activities often are introduced before all problems are overcome, the AICs that diversified have attained a minimal level of ability to work together, collect fees, and resolve conflicts. At this stage, however, efforts and concerns of all AICs are concentrated on mastering the basic functions of water-point management.

5.2.3 Type of AIC

The mission began with an implied hypothesis that irrigation may play a role in "generating funds for community projects" (see Appendix A). Field observations indicate that characteristics other than income create differences between potable-water AICs, on the one hand, and mixed or irrigation groups, on the other, in determining whether, when, and how to launch new activities.

In the sample reviewed during this study, potable-water associations were in better financial shape than irrigation AICs (e.g., Ain Zenna, with a 3,500 TD surplus vs. Zlassi with 1,100 TD). This pattern is borne out by review of other records; small irrigation and mixed AICs do not enjoy the same strong financial position as do the established irrigation associations of the south.

However, mixed and irrigation AICs tend to launch new activities earlier, which are often related to productive functions. Potable-water AICs, however, are seen as social or service-provision rather than productive entities, with less reason to diversify. Members of all types of AICs, as well as support-unit staff, predicted that irrigation and mixed AICs would be able to diversify more easily for several reasons:

- They are more "organizationally mature," since members are accustomed to the idea of paying for water.
- Their productive function provides a logical starting point for diversification.
- The productive function lends economic credibility that should enable easier access to credit, since members are seen as producers rather than consumers.

5.2.4 Leadership and Management

The dynamism and stature of AIC presidents and officers play a key role in starting new activities and mobilizing resources. Connections to the party and local authorities

⁴ The title of this section was changed from "age" to "stage of development" following discussions with GR/Tunis, to emphasize the importance of operational maturity over years.

contribute to AICs' capacity to secure assistance. In Gonna, for example, the status of officers (retired omda, president of the RCD cell) was decisive in obtaining irrigation equipment and in attracting a potential investor for a bottling plant (a project more feasible for Gonna than for an AIC with a weaker power base).

Leaders determine how an AIC responds to community needs and chooses new activities. Investment decisions seem to be made by the president, sometimes with the conseil d'administration. This can be problematic when projects involve individuals, and choices seem to favor officers' family members. It also can exclude interests of certain groups. For example, women at several sites expressed needs for washing platforms, and these have not been met; presidents cited lack of money in two cases and hygienic problems in others (which can be overcome by building washing sites at a distance from the water source).

Conversely, leaders often take the initiative to meet needs, especially officers who live on-site and are actively involved in AIC affairs. One of the two AICs known to have applied for a loan is headed by a retired military officer who made the efforts to contact banks and dealers for credit. Ain Zenna is led by a president/pompiste whose efforts contributed to a prize for good management (the "prix de Mahdia," awarded at a training seminar) and to bringing battery-recharging services to the community; revenue from this activity has been used to start a small plumbing-repair service.

Unity among officers also contributes to choices of activities and ability to act on them. One of the three Kairouan AICs promoting formation of a women's group has a conseil d'administration that prides itself on a sense of activism; the animatrice is the wife of the secretary general and currently works as a volunteer, like her husband. On the other hand, in Khamouda II, the conseil d'administration is nearly paralyzed and has acted on no ideas for new activities.

Good management plays an uncontested role in carrying out new activities, as illustrated by the example of Ain Zenna. But some AICs start new activities even if they face management problems (e.g., fee collection in Bir Chaabane and El Guettar). And well-managed AICs may be blocked by other problems, such as the inadequate infrastructure in Farazy and Zlasi.

Although sound management may not be a prerequisite for deciding to start new activities, it will affect sustainability. The time needed to meet administrative requirements and resolve problems determines the amount of time and effort that can be devoted to other activities (a constraint cited in Boulaaba). And the incidence of management problems and conflicts affects the continued willingness of leaders to work as volunteers (in Khamouda II, for example).

5.2.5 Financial Position

None of the AICs visited was operating at a deficit, although one, Farazy, had to borrow from members on occasion to pay for repairs. Reported reserves or bank accounts ranged from 50 TD in Bir Chaabane to 5,000 TD in Khamouda II. Seven of the twelve reported reserves of over 1,000 TD.

Perceived rather than actual financial position seems to determine diversification decisions. In general, officers see AICs' positions as precarious, especially given needs to assume more responsibility for operating costs in the future. Spending priority is given to guaranteeing water delivery, but most officers are interested in providing community services once the AIC is on firm financial ground. For example, the president of Gonna says that at present it is more important to pay three guards than to pay two guards and an animatrice, to ensure the income that will allow the AIC to survive and later support social programs.

Although keeping a minimum reserve for repairs (cited as 200-800 TD) is given priority over new investments, in some cases AICs contemplated or launched new activities before steady income was guaranteed by user fees; also, activities have been launched by AICs facing payment problems (Bir Chaabane, El Guettar). In Farazy, new activities are desired for income to offset losses from equipment; in other cases, needs were cited for supplemental income to cover operating costs such as pompiste's salaries.

Interest of officers determines investment choices. In Khamouda II, the president said that a cooperative had been considered but put off until income improved; yet Zlassi, with one fifth of the resources, invested in bulk purchase of fertilizer. The president of one AIC expressed interest in battery charging, but said the AIC did not have money for equipment, which was thought to cost 2,000 TD. No price research had been done (cost in Ain Zenna was 100 TD). In comparison, the Zaghouan AICs did cost estimates and tried to obtain credit before giving up on project ideas.

5.2.6 Role of the AIC

In Gonna, the AIC represented a group of landowner members to the party, asking for assistance with irrigation equipment. This type of intermediary role was cited by several presidents as the most appropriate for AICs.⁵ Direct response to community needs through projects financed and executed by the AICs are beyond their means for all but small activities, such as battery charging. Thus, to date AICs mainly have acted as intermediaries between the community and government or donors, transmitting requests

⁵ It is also the only role assumed by local structures, especially those most familiar to party and local government officials.

and serving as channels or coordinators for outside resources. In observed cases, AICs have acted as—

<i>Intermediary</i>	<i>Coordinator/Manager</i>	<i>Executive</i>
AIFs/Kasserine	AIFs/Kairouan	Battery charging
Showers/Bir Chaabane	Showers/El Guettar	
Latrines/Bir Chaabane	Cisterns/Machrak Echams	

An intermediary role involves the AIC to differing degrees. In Boulaaba, the AIC transmitted a request but remained relatively uninvolved in project execution. Bir Chaabane transmitted a request and became partially—but not adequately—involved in planning and execution. El Guettar chose a project and worked with authorities to secure funds, but coordinated resources and project execution. The appropriate role depends on the activity; in construction projects, an intermediary role provided insufficient control over the project.

Intermediary roles reflect capacity to act as a manager rather than as a planning and execution agency in cases where the AIC is not actively involved in design and implementation. They do not indicate capacity to function as a community development agency, especially in cases where the AIC is communicating interests of the officers rather than the community or accepting projects that do not respond to community needs. AICs are likely to execute more activities in the future, but an intermediary role still may make more sense for some projects: AICs will not be able to meet all community needs themselves. For example, AICs might be more effective as intermediaries than as executives—and make better use of their human and financial resources—through demonstration instead of full-scale projects. In this case, the AIC would build a model cistern or latrine, leaving replication to community members—as has happened spontaneously in Bir Chaabane and Machrak Echams—and then perhaps provide construction loans.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

6.1 The Present Situation

Although AICs have undertaken activities beyond the direct management of potable-water systems, their number and kind are still limited; actions do not reflect a change in the role of the AIC as a water user association. New activities are aimed at improving the functioning of the AIC—for example, through increased income or beneficiary acceptance. At present, officers' concerns, efforts, and investments focus on ensuring sustainability of AICs as water-delivery agents. Almost all actors involved in AIC promotion and operations consider technical, administrative, and economic management of the water point a prerequisite for any wider role in the future.

New activities have focused on meeting immediate, water-related needs through infrastructure improvement: extension of the water-delivery system and development of irrigation capacity; provision of public facilities (water taps, showers); and provision of private facilities (cisterns, household and business hook-ups). Although these actions often respond to expressed local needs, they are not necessarily a diversification of AIC activities. Infrastructure usually is provided by government and is always subsidized to some extent by government or donors.

Although AICs are interested in providing services to members, ideas that originate from the associations are aimed mainly at meeting income needs. A few income-generating activities have been launched, notably battery charging and pay showers. The number of AICs considering these and other ideas is growing steadily, especially among irrigation and mixed AICs interested in production-related activities. Choices and pursuit of activities often reflect the interests and drive of AIC officers.

Ideas for income generation represent coping strategies—for example, to offset management problems; state withdrawal of support; members' reluctance or inability to pay for water; and administrative constraints to use of funds. Construction of showers in Bou'aaba was undertaken to resolve problems of beneficiary acceptance of unsavory drinking water. Thus, AICs tend to start new activities before, not after, mastering water-point management; new activities represent catalysts in an evolutionary process, to help remove obstacles to AIC growth.

Most new activities do not necessarily reflect application of community-organizing principles and have not fostered AIC capacity to act as community development agents. Projects such as latrine construction and AIF formation were not based on members' interests and did not adequately involve the AIC or the community in planning and

execution. Most “social” projects were introduced, financed, and sometimes executed by outside sources. The AIC tended to play the role of an intermediary between the community and government or donors, to transmit needs or channel outside resources. Most activities, especially in Kasserine, could not be sustained by the AIC due to a lack of resources and/or interest.

The approach taken to AIC creation has focused more on increasing beneficiary participation than on organizing and mobilizing resources to solve problems. In order for AIC leaders to organize people around a common interest, they must be able to carry out a process of needs identification, prioritization, planning, and project implementation. The techniques of dialogue and sensitization developed in Kasserine, Kairouan, and other governorates provide a good basis for developing this capacity in the long term.

6.2 Future Prospects

The replication of activities in Kasserine and Kairouan and the proliferation of new ideas in other governorates indicate that diversification may be a fact of AIC life. This does not mean that AICs have to start new activities or that they should be pushed to do so. But it does mean that they are likely to consider ways to generate income or provide services to members; they should be encouraged in this if ideas seem within their means.

Two scenarios can be extrapolated from the current situation:

- AICs continue more or less as they are. They start new activities on an *ad hoc* basis, mainly responding to income needs, member requests, problems, or outside initiatives. They serve mainly as intermediaries between the community and outside resources but remain focused on water delivery. This is the probable scenario for the *short to medium term* (five to ten years).
- AIC officers actively solicit ideas and needs from members, then together with them start new activities that may be outside the realm of water-point management, and may orient the AIC toward a more active role in agricultural, economic, or community development. This scenario is possible in the *medium to long term*.

The second scenario is not inevitable. It depends on the interests of AICs and their promoters and on development of AICs’ administrative and organizational capabilities. First, the AIC needs to meet basic conditions: adequate water (quality and quantity) and equipment to ensure delivery; acceptance of payment for water and regular payment of fees; technical ability to ensure operation of the system; and a solid administrative and financial position. Second, officers need to develop skills for listening to member needs and for planning responses and mobilizing resources to carry out projects.

If there is a desire to actively promote new orientations, training could be provided to AIC presidents and board members. Or, evolution could be left up to the AICs, letting officers and members determine whether associations broaden their scope of activity. The lack of a unified concept of AICs makes it difficult to determine possible future roles. But if a broader role is desired, even in the distant future, it is important to consider possibilities and resource needs now.

More active collaboration with other ministries and agencies will be necessary if AICs assume a multifunctional role, as they will need to work in partnership with other actors to meet community needs. At present, there are few grassroots community-development structures in rural Tunisia, but new policies are encouraging creation of NGOs and other entities. It may not be possible to define partnerships between AICs and other structures now, but an integrated approach at the central level will pave the way for such relationships in the future.

New activities may lead AICs to evolve into other structures. The form—cooperative, NGO, rural commune, or other—is not important. No single model should be prescribed; *the same flexibility that has been used in AIC creation should apply to their evolution.* The government's role should be to support development that makes the most sense for the AIC through—

- Creation of AICs' capacity to decide what they want to become and how to realize their goals.
- Legislative and financial flexibility to grow and adapt to economic, social, and other conditions.
- Adequate technical support and follow-up.

6.3 Sustainability of New Activities

6.3.1 Self-Sufficiency of AICs

An AIC's ability to meet needs on an ongoing basis, first, for reliable supplies of water and second, for other services, depends on its having enough resources to manage its affairs. At this early stage in a long-term process, AICs may need more support than they are being given, in order to build a solid foundation and grow. At a minimum they require—

- Adequate infrastructure, which requires state investments in appropriate equipment for pump operation (e.g., electrification), irrigation, and water delivery.

- Access to resources, by easing financial controls, enabling use of the commercial banking system, and facilitating linkages with special funds, credit institutions, NGOs, and donor agencies.
- A clear idea of expectations well in advance, so that AICs know when they will take on given responsibilities and can prepare themselves in advance.

AICs may be pushed toward self-sufficiency too fast. On the one hand, AIC creation is an acknowledged long-term process; on the other, communities with little experience in organization and self-management are expected to assume increasing responsibility for operations within two to five years.

If AICs are expected to pay for themselves, support in the early years might include assistance in developing activities to increase income. State support need not be financial; for example, actions to remove obstacles to commercial credit (an information campaign for banks, assistance with loan applications) would promote self-sufficiency as much as direct lending.

Before AICs can become more active in community development, they need to become more active in their own development. The partnership between the AIC and the government needs to move from a manager-patron relationship to a process of negotiation between equals: AICs need to be asked what they want and need, rather than being told what they must do. And they need to be helped in getting—and sometimes may even need to be given—what they ask for.

6.3.2 Factors Working For and Against New Activities

Several factors seem to favor AICs in launching new activities:

- Dynamism of AIC leadership and local authorities, coupled with minimal conflict among AIC officers
- A basic level of management capability and operations (e.g., nondeficit position)
- A productive component of AIC activity (as in irrigation and mixed AICs)
- A perceived need for income or service

All of the AICs visited have either considered or implemented new activities and have been blocked by factors such as:

- Tenuous financial position, both actual and perceived
- Uncertainty regarding activities that are and are not permitted

- Failure to obtain adequate resources (e.g., credit)
- Administrative requirements that drain time and energy (e.g., the need for several *pro forma* invoices)
- Inadequate technical support from ministry staff and local government.

As the list indicates, internal factors are not the only determinants of AICs' capability to diversify. For example, access to credit is a serious constraint, and although AICs are legally allowed to borrow, they are an unknown quantity to banks. Potable-water AICs without a productive component face even greater difficulties in being seen as credit-worthy.

6.3.3 Lessons for the Future

The activities observed in the field are serving as a small core of models for replication and as inspiration for new ideas. The list of new ideas is starting to grow and become more varied, ranging further from the AICs' water-related mandate in some cases. Before AICs invest time or money in project possibilities, they need to know if there are any limitations on their scope of action; it is important for decisionmakers to agree on parameters, if any.

Conditions of implementation are site-specific: a project that worked in one place was blocked in another. Showers, battery charging, water-bottling plants, and other ideas are exciting, and the temptation to replicate them may be strong. But these ideas must be presented carefully. AIC promotion staff and AIC officers need to consider new project ideas on a case-by-case basis, to make sure that they are appropriate and sustainable with the association's resources.

Lessons from past efforts are providing a basis for new attempts to respond to community needs—for example, through adaptation of the animatrice/AIF model. Experience indicates that activities to effect social change need a longer time frame for capacity building; on-site personnel for organization and follow-up; and arrangements to guarantee continuing support. The activities with the best chance of success use local human, financial, and technical resources as much as possible. When outside resources are used, greater care in planning is needed to avoid draining AIC resources by starting projects that cannot be continued.

Chapter 7

Recommendations

In what context should AICs exercise the option to start new activities? The preceding chapter suggests two scenarios: one in which AICs remain focused on water management but start some new activities; another, more prospective, in which AICs play a broader role in community development. The aim of the team is not to promote one over the other, but to highlight the need for decisionmakers to agree on current and possible future roles for rural AICs and on ways to support them. This chapter suggests measures to address questions of identity, to help ensure that AICs starting new activities can succeed, and to support—if and when it is desired—capacity building for a more active role in community development.

7.1 General

Field interviews and debriefing opened a debate on the role of AICs within GR/MOA and with other ministries and agencies. In order to reach preliminary agreement on AICs' scope of action and role in rural development, five actions are recommended:

- Dedicate one working session during the National Strategy Seminar to defining the role of the AIC in rural development, now and in the future. A ten-year prospective, and broad consensus on what AICs can and should do, would help orient the efforts of MOA staff and other ministries. If possible, a small working group of decisionmakers from the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, and Social Affairs could meet prior to the seminar to address this question.
- Organize a national seminar within the next year on the AIC role in the rural world, to integrate the AIC strategy with other national actions for rural development and with the Eighth Plan. Participants could include representatives of the Ministries of Agriculture, Interior, Plan, Health, Education, Social Affairs, and Finance; UNFT and RCD; and NGOs and major donors. The seminar should address AICs' role in community development as well as interaction with other structures being created in the rural world.
- Following adoption of the National Strategy, formalize agreements with other ministries on joint actions to support AICs, including guidelines for interministerial collaboration. Negotiations should include a mechanism for supporting joint programs and for ensuring adequate resources for technical assistance.

- Encourage each GIH to develop a “disengagement strategy,” in collaboration with AICs. It is important, while maintaining a flexible approach to AIC creation, to still define limits and expectations. The strategy should provide guidelines for AICs’ scope of action and a timetable for AICs to assume certain functions (e.g., paying pompistes’ salaries by 20 percent increments over five years).
- In addition to a general strategy, consider negotiating specific agreements with each AIC. AIC promotion agents and officers together might develop a type of “plan-contrat” that sets goals for the AIC and specifies the support the government will provide (and when it would stop). The document would serve as a strategic-planning tool, subject to periodic review and revision.

7.2 Regarding Diversification of AICs’ Activities

The few AICs that have tried other activities are being joined by many considering new projects. In order to contribute to the sustainability of AICs and new activities, three groups of actions are proposed.

7.2.1 Building Institutional and Staff Capacity

These measures include training and other activities to enable GR and CRDA staff to effectively provide technical assistance:

- Devote at least one session of future *seminars* to “AIC evolution” and diversification of activities⁶. Sessions should cover characteristics of AICs likely to succeed, ideas about “appropriate” activities, notions of feasibility assessment, and information about credit and special programs (e.g., through guest speakers).
- Develop a *workshop* on strategic planning for AICs (two or more days) structured as a training-of-trainers to enable promotion units to train AIC officers in developing long-term and business or project plans.⁷ It should include goal setting, feasibility study, planning, and other issues (e.g., credit).

⁶ The questionnaire given to participants at Sidi Thabet might provide guidelines for discussion.

⁷ It is important to make the distinction between business and project plans. Small enterprise start-up often is treated as a project, using as subsidies donated resources that are often withdrawn before the venture can cover its costs.

- Encourage AIC promotion units to organize *exchange visits* to AICs that have launched new activities. Sites could be identified during seminar sessions or by developing a list at GR/Tunis. Include visits to Beja (ODESYANO) and Zaghuan to observe how different types of rural groups are interacting.
- Include diversification information on *monitoring forms* (activity, when started, cost, etc.), to enable future assessment of performance.

7.2.2 Removing Obstacles to Credit

Facilitating access to credit, rather than actually providing it, is one way that government can help reduce AICs' dependence and contribute to their growth.

- Provide bank officers with adequate information through (a) a fact sheet (a one-page summary of what AICs are, their legal attributions, sources of income, and available financial records); and (b) informational meetings (through GIH meetings or contacts with the *délégué*).
- Provide AIC promotion officers with information on banking requirements and on how to assist AIC officers in preparing loan applications.
- Incorporate a unit on credit into training for presidents and treasurers (preferably inviting bank representatives as speakers).
- In revising legal texts, enable AICs to open commercial bank accounts, create revolving loan funds, and invest money.
- Consider a special AIC loan fund for income-generating projects (e.g., through the PDR).

7.2.3 Introducing a Strategic Planning Process

To enable AICs to set goals and define actions to meet them, the following set of actions is proposed:

- Expand the session on diversification in the current training for officers to include strategic planning and feasibility study.
- Initiate a process that consists of (a) preliminary discussion groups with members, including women; (b) an *assemblée générale* to discuss the future (where do we want to be in five years?); (c) development of a plan (e.g., general for five years, specific for one); (d) ratification by the *assemblée*.

7.3 Regarding Community Development

If AICs are to take a wider role in community development, their capacity to elicit and respond to members' needs, possibly in multiple sectors, must be developed. The first three of the following actions may be useful whether or not any change is desired in the role of AICs.

- Expand the session on participation for AIC officers into a one-day unit on community development approaches and techniques, including problem identification, priority setting, and action planning.
- Explore possibilities for supporting a sustainable animatrice de base program with other ministries, to create a cadre of locally based community-development workers who would be trained to promote health education and social and economic development activities (it seems logical to house the program within the Ministry of Social Affairs).
- Act on the recommendation in the Institutional Analysis to federate AICs at the delegation and regional levels. The federation would be a natural partner with regional NGOs in the future.
- Structure AICs to respond to multisectoral needs by appointing members of the conseil d'administration as sectoral "coordinators" for health, education, etc. If programs grow, the coordinator could work with other members as an AIC subcommittee. The same coordinator/committee model could be used for specific activities such as cooperative buying. A women's coordinator/committee should be included, which would entail naming a woman to the conseil d'administration.
- In the long term, restructure the AIC promotion unit as an interdisciplinary team attached to the governorate. This is a logical placement, since the governor is the head of the GIH. The governor can recruit staff from other ministries and is in the best position to mobilize regional resources. At a minimum, the cell should include agents from MOA, MOH, MSA, and UNFT and have the flexibility to change composition as needed. The unit would have the same basic functions as proposed in the Institutional Analysis.

Appendix A

Scope of Work

Assessment of WUA Capacity for Community Development

General Background

A key component in the national strategy for creating viable and sustainable Water User Associations (WUAs) is the capacity of WUAs to act as a platform for other development activities. In the USAID-financed project in Kasserine Governorate, a number of legally formed WUAs are functioning well and beginning to undertake other community development activities such as construction of latrines and baths. USAID technical assistance has been provided to assist in this process and to help develop local women's associations as a counterpart to WUAs in which male community members participate. In other governorates such as Kairouan, the degree to which WUAs are beginning to undertake other development activities is less clear.

The purpose of this study is to assess WUA progress in undertaking a range of community development activities. The study will be a rapid assessment of experiences gained in the USAID-supported project in Kasserine as well as other governorates. It will result in a review of progress to date, identification of feasible community development activities for WUAs, and recommendations for successful methods to broaden the range of such activities.

Tasks

1. In collaboration with the WUA Coordinating Committee and the Community Organization Specialists in Kasserine, the consultants will identify WUAs that have demonstrated a capacity for undertaking community development activities, and will select four WUAs for a rapid assessment. At the time of this study, the consultants may also consider visiting WUAs in other governorates, depending on the degree of successful community development activities elsewhere. The consultants should consult the WUA Coordinating Committee for suggestions.
2. The consultants will visit each WUA during one day. The field visits will identify the potential impact of community development activities on the long-term sustainability of WUAs and reasons why some WUAs have successfully initiated community development activities. The consultants may pay particular attention to the role of irrigation in generating funds for community projects. Other issues to be addressed will include the types of activities WUAs are engaged in, future trends, and their financial capabilities to fund community activities. The assessment will also examine

progress in forming community-based women's groups and their contribution to viable and sustainable WUAs.

3. The consultants will also spend time discussing the approach to community development taken by project staff, particularly the Community Organization Specialists in each of the governorates visited. The level of effort and financial assistance required to foster a range of community development activities will need to be determined.
4. The consultants will prepare a descriptive report that assesses achievements to date and identifies reasons for success. The final report will also recommend actions on a national scale that are needed to develop WUA capacity for undertaking a range of community development activities.
5. The findings and conclusions will be presented for discussion at a meeting with GR/Tunis, CRDA/Kasserine, and USAID/Tunisia and a final report submitted in English and French.

Personnel

1. Expatriate with social science background and extensive hands-on experience working with beneficiary participation in community development; experience with potable water projects in Tunisia or elsewhere in Africa or Asia preferred; fluency in French or Arabic required.
2. Tunisian expert in community development with experience in rural research in development project context.

Level of Effort

The required level of effort for this assignment will be approximately six weeks, depending on recommendations about visits to governorates outside Kasserine. Following a one-day TPM in Washington, the expatriate will join the Tunisian expert in Tunis and spend the first two days there planning the field visits and reviewing documents. Two weeks will be spent conducting rapid appraisals at field sites. The remaining three days will be spent writing a final report.

Appendix B

List of Contacts and Persons Interviewed

WASH/ISPAN

Fred Rosensweig, Associate Director, WASH
Peter Reiss, Deputy Director, ISPAN
Kathy Alison, HRD Program Director, ISPAN

USAID/Tunis

Eugene Rauch, Chief, Implementation Systems Office (ISO)
Hafid Lakhdar, Project Officer, ISO

Peace Corps/Tunisia

Chedli Zarg El-Ayoun, Associate Peace Corps Director

Government of Tunisia/Tunis

Ministry of Agriculture:

Abdelkader Hamdane, Director General, Génie Rural
Mahmoud Baccar, Chef du Service des AICs

Ministry of Health:

Salaheddin Shniti, Director of Rural Hygiene and Protection of the Environment

Ministry of Social Affairs:

Salah Triki, Minister's Attaché

Ministry of Plan:
Faiza Kefi, Director of Human Resources

Tunisian NGOs

Association Tunisienne pour l'Auto Développement et la Solidarité (ATLAS):
Lassad Osman, President

Union National des Femmes Tunisiennes (UNFT):
Neziha Mezoud, President
Moufida Goucha, Vice President

Fondation Tunisienne du Développement Communautaire (FTDC)¹:
Aïssa Hidoussi, President
Mongi Guaddoua, Program Officer

Organisation pour le Développement de El Alâa:
Mahfoudi Nasreddine, Board Member

Kasserine Governorate

Génie Rural/Unité d'Autogestion:
Hadji Mosbah, Director
Abidi Lazhar, IPPI Engineer
Taoufik Gharsalli, CD agent
Mokhtar Aouiti, CD agent/Sbeitla
Mnasri Ramadan, Adjoint Technique

Local Government:
Amar Khouildia, Governor's Secretary General
Abdelkrim Maouia, Délégué de Fossana
Jalloul Sahraoui, Régisseur des recettes/Sbeitla

Ministry of Social Affairs:
Ridha Derballi, Chef de Division, Promotion Sociale
Habib Zghidi, MSA/Tunis, FTDC/Kasserine Consultant

¹ Formerly Save the Children

Ministry of Social Affairs:

Ridha Derballi, Chef de Division, Promotion Sociale
Habib Zghidi, MSA/Tunis, FTDC/Kasserine Consultant

Ministry of Health:

Abdelmalak Cherif, Regional Public Health Director
Mahmoudi Belgacem, Chief, Regional Basic Health Services
Health Educators (former RHET): Ammar Mrahi
Fatma Guessmi
Mohsen Felhi

Ministry of Finance (Economic Affairs):

Youssef Ben Salem, Regional Délégué

UNFT: Mannoubia Godbani, Regional Délégué

Peace Corps Volunteers:

George & Dorothy Burt, Sbeitla
Andrew Alspach, Bir Chaâbane

AICS²:

Boulaaba (Kasserine Nord Délégation):	Brahim Gehry, President Hasnia Mansouri, Pompiste Zakia Hajji, animatrice
Machrek Echams (Sbeitla Délégation):	Mohamed Chehbi, President Zioudi Namer, Pompiste
Gounna (Sbeitla Délégation):	Youssef Rmili, President Ribia Rmili Efaoui, Member ³
Bir Chaabane (Fossana Délégation):	Moustapha Gafsaoui, President Gafsaoui Abdallah, Treasurer

² In several cases, specified officers were joined by other members whose names were not taken. Names of women and household members interviewed in groups (which often gathered spontaneously) also are not included.

³ the sole member to have installed a metered irrigation system.

Khamouda II (Fossana Délégation): Ahmed Bin Mohammed Salah Djedli,
President
Wife of President

Brij (Kasserine Sud Délégation): Sadik Ben Ali Mounawar, President

Kairouan Governorate

Génie Rural:

Ali Abdelhamid, Chef d'Arrondissement
Moncef Hajji, Director, Cellule de Promotion des AICs
Mohammed Mejri, Engineer, cellule member
Chourabi Essahli, Controlleur Technique/Sbikha

CRDA:

Abdelhamid Ghali, Commissaire

Local Government:

Salem Mekki, Governor
Secretary General
El Alâa: Abdellatif Grhaba, Délégué
Khafsia Jaballa, UNFT Representative
Ali Kachiouti, Régisseur

Ministry of Health:

Abdullah Khal, Chef de Service, Rural Health
Nasr Mejri, Surveillant Régional
Mohammed Bouhajeb, Assistant Engineer
Amal Sultane, Documentaliste Medicale

AICs:

Ain Zenna, (Haffouz Délégation): Saâdaoui Abdelrahman,
President and Pompiste
group of 4-5 members

Sidi Ali Ben Salem: Abdelhamid Selmi, President

(El Alâa Délégation) Selmi Mongi, Pompiste
 Boubaker Selimi, Secretary General
 Mariam Selimi, animatrice

El Gattar Messioua (El Alâa): Mohammed Salah Zannouni, President
 group of 10-15 members

Farazi (Nasrallah Délégation): Fethi Khil, President
 Abdelaziz Jedeji, Treasurer

Zlasi (Sbikha Délégation): Beldi Mahmoud, Pompiste
 3 members

Sfax Governorate

Génie Rural:

Moncef Abdelhedi, Chef d'Arrondissement and Director, Cellule de Promotion
 Salah Mejdoub, Engineer, Cellule Member
 Abdelaziz Baklouti, Ingénieur Adjoint, Cellule Member

Bir Boujarboue AIC (Menzel Shaker Délégation):

Menah Kashida, President
 Emnah Kashida, Wife of President
 Abdelhamid Djerbaoui, AIC Member⁴
 Ahmed Djerbouï, Omda
 Menar Baccouche, RCD President
 Mohsen Djerbouï, RCD Official
 Baccouche Najmeddine, Rural Council Member

Zaghouan Governorate

Génie Rural:

Zayane Hamada, Chef d'Arrondissement
 Slimi Ali, Engineer, Cellule Member
 Mbarek Ferchichi, Division Chief,
 Forestry & Soil Protection
 Akermi Maamar, Cooperatives Advisor

⁴ owner of one of two private businesses connected to the water system.

CRDA:

Amari Brahim, Commissaire

Local Government:

Dhaou Maïz, Governor

Mehdi Chebbah, Secretary General

Ministry of Health:

Fadhel Sghair, Regional Director

Souad Il Mannoubi, Rural Health Service

Tiouiri Abdelhalim, Rural Health Service

BNA, El Fahs: Moncef Farah, Chef d'Agence

AIC Zouagha II: Salah Cherif, President

Telephone Interviews

Haj El Arbi N'Cib, Chef d' Arrondissement, Beja

Mohammed Taieb Kahouli, Chef d'Arrondissement, Siliana

Habib Najjari, Chef d'Arrondissement, Medenine

Hani Essayed, Cellule Member, Sidi Bouzid

Rachid ben Ahmed, Cellule Member, Bizerte

Bagdadi Khelifa, Cellule Member, Sousse

Mouldi Smida, Cellule Member, Le Kef

Ridha Fekih, ODESYANO Director/Forme CRDA Kasserine

Participants in Group Discussion, Sidi Thabet Seminar

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Lazhar Abidi, Kasserine

Ali Ben Slouma, Mahdia

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Appendix C

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Appendix D

Questionnaire for Seminar Participants

Ce questionnaire a pour objectif de collecter une information de base concernant:

- les possibilités de diversification des activités des AIC,
- les conditions objectives de ces diversifications,
- les différents types de besoins exprimés tant par les présidents de AIC que par les bénéficiaires eux mêmes.

Nom :

Fonction

Gouvernorat:

1. a) Parmi les AIC en fonctionnement combien à votre avis ont pu arriver à maîtriser leur autogestion ? (nombre ou pourcentage approximatif des AIC)

- Maîtrise technique:

- Adhésion des bénéficiaires:

- Solde non déficitaire:

b) Pouvez vous nous citer quelques noms de ces AIC?

c) Pourquoi ont elles réussi?

2. Quelles sont à votre avis les activités, autres que la gestion des points d'eaux, que les AIC peuvent entreprendre ;

Maintenant :

Dans l'avenir :

3. Quelles sont les activités de ce genre qui ont été effectivement mises place?

4. Combien d'AIC ont pu réaliser chacune des activités citées en question 3?

5. Quelles sont les conditions (matérielles, financières, organisationnelle, politiques....) de la réalisation de ces activités ?

6. Dans votre région, quelles seraient les conditions pour qu'une AIC puisse réussir à répondre aux besoins de ses bénéficiaires?

7. a) Classez par ordre d'importance les principaux problèmes rencontrés par les AIC:

b) quel est l'impact de ces problèmes sur les possibilités des AIC d'élargir leur champ d'action?

8. Réagissez aux positions suivantes:
(accord, réservé, pas d'accord) en expliquant votre attitude.

a) Une AIC doit se limiter à la gestion du point d'eau.

b) Les AIC doivent rendre service à ses bénéficiaires même à perte financière.

c) Les AIC doivent entreprendre des activités lucratives pour augmenter le revenu de l'Association.

d) Les AIC diversifieront leur activités selon leurs besoins et même sans soutien de l'administration.

e) Avec les moyens mis à la disposition de la cellule de promotion des AIC, il est impossible de soutenir la diversification des activités

Appendix E

Profiles of AICs Visited

Name:	Ain Zenna	Governorate:	Kairouan
		Delegation:	Haffouz
# Families:	87 ¹	# Paying:	“most”
Year Created:	1988	Year Legalized:	1990
Type of Zone:	Dispersed	Type of AIC:	pot. water
Type of System:	Mazout		
Fee structure:		1.2 TD/month	
		3 TD/cistern	
Financial position:		3,500 TD in bank	
Leadership:		Saadaoui Abdellrahman, President and Pompiste ² (former driver)	

Background. Ain Zenna is 8 km. from Haffouz. This AIC received the “prix de Mahdia” (during a seminar in the town of the same name) for the best-managed association in its Governorate. The president cites good management, good “sensibilization” of families and careful water management as reasons for success. Although people complain when there are interruptions in water—up to two months when tractors break—they continue to pay (e.g., there was no trouble raising fees from 1 to 1.2 TD). The pump-house serves as an office, which is orderly and houses necessary records. The AIC is able to meet its operating costs (30-75 TD/month according to the

¹There are also 6 regular purchasers of tanks at 3 TD.

²GR staff note that AICs where the president is pompiste (about 5 in Kairouan) are better managed.

season). The pompiste buys bleach in bulk (30 liters/month for 25 TD), and treats the water himself.

Activities Undertaken:

The idea for battery-charging originated with the conseil d'administration, was approved by the General Assembly and GR staff. The battery charger cost 100 TD, and works about 20 days/month; it can charge 2 batteries/day (24-hour period). The AIC charges 1 TD/battery, compared to 1.5 TD in Haffouz, and the president claims that people come to Ain Zenna because of the lower price. With proceeds from the battery charging, the AIC purchased materials to do small plumbing repairs.

Activities Planned or Desired:

1. A washing site was requested by women, but rejected to avoid pollution of the water point.
2. Construction of showers was discussed, but funds are insufficient.
3. There has been a request for a training center for female school-leavers. The idea has been discussed with the RCD, and the representative promised to provide an instructor if the AIC found a site. The President is willing to try to find one, and would also consider lending women money for wool for weaving.
4. When electricity comes to the region, the demand for battery-charging will decrease; there is interest in finding new sources of income, but no specific projects have been discussed (except for showers).

Name:	Bir Chaabane	Governorate:	Kasserine
		Delegation:	Fossana
# Families:	117	# Paying:	2/3
Year Created:		Year Legalized:	
Type of Zone:	Dispersed	Type of AIC:	pot. water
Type of System:	Electrified		
Fee structure:	2 TD/month/family (unlimited water)		
Financial position:	50 TD surplus		
Leadership:	Mustapha Gafsaoui, entrepreneur		
Staff:	Pompiste paid by Government		

Background. Bir Chaabane is about 5 km. off the paved road, about 20 km. from Kasserine. It is an isolated, extremely poor area, with a high incidence of birth defects from intermarriage. Although there has been an elementary school since 1987, there is poor access to social services: the dispensaire was built a year ago and still doesn't function, and no visits from family planning or other MSA programs were reported.

The president is a dynamic volunteer (a farmer and entrepreneur involved in rosemary distilling), who sees a role for the AIC in responding to ideas that originate from members to improve their lives. But the financial position of the AIC is tenuous, since a lot of families don't pay (an estimated 1/3, including one whole branch; defaults are high in winter, and overall are attributed to poverty). The AIC depends on sale of tanks of water, but cannot remain viable according to the president, if it is to depend solely on payments for potable water.

A Peace Corps volunteer is working as a carpenter/bee-keeper/mason, and is introducing rabbit-raising.

Activities Undertaken:

1. A latrine construction project was proposed by an outside consultant. Belgian and French embassy funds supported construction costs. A single model was provided by the consultant, who was not a technician (and according to GR staff did not work with staff engineers); the model latrine was built incorrectly

and too far from houses (it belongs to the AIC treasurer, who uses it for a storeroom). It was modified and 17 of 20 were completed.

Construction stopped after the consultant left (according to the current Peace Corps volunteer, local masons do not know how to construct or finish latrines), and workers have not been paid for the remaining latrines. However other families have copied the model and built latrines with their own funds (approximate cost: 600 TD).

2. The community wanted a hamman, which is a high-cost project. Shower construction was proposed by GR staff and undertaken by a USAID consultant. The AIC constructed the facility, but the consultant purchased the equipment (allegedly without consulting MOA and MOH technicians). The equipment—over 900 TD of materials paid for by the president—is inappropriate for the site (requiring high consumption of bottled gas), and cannot be connected; it is lying in a heap in the shower room. An estimated 500 TD is needed to complete construction, but the AIC is hesitant to invest more money.

Activities Planned or Desired:

1. Both men and women request irrigation water.
2. Women request health services and projects to help increase income (women interviewed asked if the AIC could provide loans for wool).

Name:	Boujarboue	Governorate:	Sfax
		Delegation:	Menzel Shaker
# Families:	390	# Paying:	390
	4 individual meters		
Year Created:	1989	Year Legalized:	1989
Type of Zone:	Rural agglomeration & dispersed	Type of AIC:	pot. water
Type of System:	2 existing wells; one being added		
Fee structure:	1 TD/month ³		
Financial position:	to be determined after annual dues		
Leadership:	Menah Kashidi, farmer		
Staff:	Pompiste paid by AIC		

Background. Boujarboue is 40 km. from its governorate seat. It is an agricultural village, where local and party leaders have been closely involved with, and strongly supportive of AIC promotion. The president was elected because of his stature as an active community member. He says his work has increased steadily, but he "can't refuse" to assume the responsibility even as a volunteer. He is committed to investing time (sometimes whole days) in the beginning, in order to turn over leadership when the AIC is working smoothly.

To date, hookups to the school, dispensary and slaughterhouse have been provided; in 1990, a connection was approved for a new bakery (the 1,100 TD cost borne by the owner). The concept of the AIC has been accepted, but there have been difficulties collecting fees during lean months. As a result, membership has agreed to pay yearly rather than monthly (as of 1992).

³Standard for the governorate, as are tank prices:

5,000 liters	3.000 TD
3,000 liters	2.000 TD
500 liters	0.300 TD
200 liters	0.100 TD

Local leaders cite a number of community needs including extension of the water system, electricity, roads, a school, a pharmacy and programs to assist women who cannot find work. If integrated development projects would be developed, local government, the party and the AIC could work together.

Activities Undertaken:

Since AIC creation, hookups to the slaughterhouse and bakery (owned by a member of the conseil d'administration). The request was made prior to construction, and hookup paid with part of a bank loan; the owner could not have started the bakery without the connection (as a result, bread is available locally for the first time).

Activities Planned or Desired:

The AIC considers itself at the beginning, but as its resources grow, would like to consider:

- house connections (requested by women and men)
- tractor purchase (which has been discussed in the conseil d'administration)
- in the longer term, creation of a poultry-raising unit or other income-generating project.

Name:	Boulaaba	Governorate:	Kasserine
		Delegation:	Kasserine Sud
# Families:	145 potable water 15 irrigation	# Paying:	123
Year Created:		Year Legalized:	1989
Type of Zone:	Rural agglomeration & dispersed	Type of AIC:	mixed
Type of System:	Mazout Potable water: Irrigation: Baths:	Fee structure:	0.5 TD per year 1.0 TD per month 2.5 TD per hour 0.100 TD/person
Financial:	500 TD surplus		
Position:			
Leadership:	President, Brahim Gehry Works for Direction des Fôrets; RCD		
Staff⁴:	Pompiste, paid 70 TD/month by Government Ticket distributor, paid 18 TD by AIC		

Background: Boulaaba is located 10 km. from Kasserine, in rough, hilly terrain. It is the site of sulphurous hot springs (traditionally used for bathing (it is a holy place that draws pilgrim/bathers from as far as Algeria). An open-air hamman predates the well, but there was no charge for bathing before creation of the AIC.

The mineral content of the water makes it unacceptable to the local population for drinking (although the MOA claims it is potable and has asked for MOH verification); it is used for washing and bathing, but is not appreciated for these purposes, either. Women and girls get drinking water from a number of springs, including one on a hill above the community that is privately owned (see Boukraa; 1990). Women interviewed claimed they still spend up to two hours fetching drinking water.

The AIC is able to pay for fuel, repairs and the woman who distributes tickets for water. However, the president says water sale is insufficient to make the AIC viable, given the number of families can't or won't pay.

⁴Both are women. The pompiste is a widow whose husband was owner of the well site; she took over from him two years ago.

Activities Undertaken:

1. Showers. A strong request was made to the Governorate for new showers. Work began 1 1/2-2 years ago, and is still not finished due to problems with the contractor that must be resolved by the Governorate. Also, there are conflicts with the Governorate over rights to the profits (the Governorate expects to get the proceeds).
2. Irrigation was begun last year, for a 30-hectare area serving 15 farmers. According to interviews, farmers use the water for irrigation, but not drinking, and consider it the essential service MOA could provide (the availability of tractors and fertilizer is not considered a problem this close to Kasserine).
3. Animatrice de base. Boulaaba has one of the 36 animatrices trained by the USAID project; she stopped working when she stopped being paid. She says she was well-received in her home visits, and women still come to her home for advice, not understanding that she has stopped work. She would begin again if paid, but does want to be a volunteer.
4. Association d'Intérêt Féminin. An AIF was begun by the USAID consultant, and is no longer functional. According to the president, it was an amusement for young girls (although the mother of the animatrice claims that men just didn't like the idea of women getting together; however, she did not think the AIC was an effective way to solve problems). According to the pompiste, there was little interest in the group ("each woman has her own work and her own problems"), but there was interest in the income-generating projects, especially among the older women. A garden project stopped when the consultant left (before plots were fenced); the animatrice did not continue, feeling she lacked the technical skills.

Activities Planned or Desired

1. Experimental heating of greenhouses. Based on experiences in southern Tunisia, two greenhouses have been constructed by the MOA (cost: TD 15,000). They are to be heated geo-thermally, and the cooled water to be used for irrigation. Operations have not yet begun, but if they are successful, loans will be made to farmers to purchase individual greenhouses (up to 40 will be available).
2. The AIC would like to do battery charging, but is under the impression that the cost of the charger is prohibitive. The president is afraid to invest money that might be needed for repairs (citing recent expenditures of nearly 500 DT), and hesitant to take on extra work, since current financial regulations keep him busy enough (e.g., getting three estimates before every purchase).

3. Women would like: (1) a place to wash clothes, but there is little response on the part of leadership; (2) a women's group, but led by someone from the community.
4. Other ideas that have come up in the conseil d'administration or been proposed by members include purchase of a tractor to sell water, and household connections. But an AIC with no "dynamique economique" can't do anything, according to the president.

Name:	Farazy	Governorate:	Kairouan
		Delegation:	Nasrallah
# Families:	24	# Paying:	24
Year Created:	1988	Year Legalized:	1990
Type of Zone:	Rural	Type of AIC:	mixed
Type of System:	Electrified		
Fee structure:	2.5 TD/hour irrigation drinking water is provided gratis		
Financial position:	no surplus, sometimes has to borrow		
Leadership:	Fethi Khili, President Abdelaziz Hedeji, Treasurer (farmer)		
Staff:	Pompiste paid by AIC 150 TD/month		

Background. Farazy is a small, homogeneous community; members of the AIC in effect comprise an extended family. There is a strong sense of community, reflected in the provision of free drinking water (“to our own families”) and irrigation water to a needy family (first by the AIC and now by the president). Members requested creation of an AIC in hopes of developing a 185-ha. irrigated perimeter (80 hectares are irrigated). A reservoir was not built at the time of drilling, and temporary irrigation equipment was provided (used sewage pipes) until permanent infrastructure was put in place by GR. Last year, the Minister of Agriculture visited the site and promised that work would begin, but nothing has happened to date. The pump is overworked, and often breaks down; the piping is old, and leaks are causing serious water losses.

This winter the system is working at 50% capacity, and is steadily losing money. The AIC is able to pay its pompiste and most repairs (e.g., 250 DT circuit-breaker), but in the past year has had to borrow money from members for repairs. At this rate, officers estimate that the AIC will not be able to function for another year. The group has considered other income-generating activities, but has been blocked by lack of funds and financial assistance. There is a growing sense of frustration, and feeling that the government has not kept its part of the bargain (“we organized, we paid, but help us get on our feet”); members have considered demonstrating en masse at the Governorate.

Activities Undertaken:

None to date.

Activities Planned or Desired:

1. A piece of cleared land next to the pumping station was earmarked for a nursery, but nothing was done pending GR approval (given on the spot at the time of the site visit).
2. Several agricultural activities have been considered, including a seed-multiplication center, a centre de traitement or some other type of service cooperative. The ideas have not been pursued because of costs (estimated 5,000-6,000 DT/activity); application for a bank loan was discouraged for lack of collateral.

Name:	Gonna	Governorate:	Kasserine
		Delegation:	Sbeitla
# Families:	200 potable 21 irrigation	# Paying:	167
Year Created:	1987	Year Legalized:	1989
Type of Zone:	Dispersed	Type of AIC:	mixed
Type of System:	Electrified; three branches		
Fee structure:	2 TD/month potable water		
Financial position:	2,000 TD surplus		
Leadership:	Youssef Rmili, elected in 1989 (retired omda, member of GIH)		
Staff:	Pompiste is paid by the government (President of RCD cell) 3 guards paid by the AIC (60 TD/month each)		

Background. Gonna is located 20 km. from Sbeitla. The association faced numerous problems at the beginning, mostly conflicts over use and prices (and difficulties of the conseil d'administration). Mr. Rmili is the second president, a recognized local leader who has helped unify the AIC.

In 1991, irrigation of a 15-hectare perimeter was made possible through a Presidential project, in response to a collective request made to the RCD cell. Distribution of parcels was made "democratically and equally" to groups of landowners close to the system, and there are no reported conflicts according to the president.

The water is of exceptionally high quality, inspiring ideas for a bottling facility (see below). Gonna has a relatively high financial surplus, yet cites financial constraints to pursuing the bottling idea. The priorities of the AIC are to guarantee a more sound future, and raise income in the short-term through agriculture. To illustrate, the AIC pays three guards from its funds; although the president thinks health programs are important, at this point, he would not be willing to pay two guardians in order to pay an animatrice ("guardians d'abord, ou il n'y aura pas d'argent dans l'avenir").

Activities Undertaken:

1. In 1991, at the request of members, irrigation was initiated, funded through a Presidential project. Homogeneous groups of landowners ("regroupements fonciers") close to the system were chosen, and there are no reported conflicts. Fifteen hectares are irrigated, serving 21 farmers.

2. The first individual meter was installed for a user (cousin of the president), to irrigate 7 hectares next to the pumping station (2,000 DT for studies and materials was assumed by the beneficiary).

Activities Planned or Desired:

1. The idea of a bottling facility was discussed with local authorities. A private entrepreneur made a development proposition which would not have involved community ownership; the offer was turned down by GR/Tunis. The AIC still wants to pursue the project, but does not have the resources.
2. The primary needs and desires are related to agriculture. The first interest is in changing the pump to allow more irrigation; purchase of a tractor and other agricultural equipment also have been discussed.
3. Requests from members, transmitted from the pompiste to the president, include home connections, which are under study; an organization for helping young women; and health services (the president sees the AIC's role as a liaison to the MOH rather than a direct provider of services, for example through an animatrice de base).

Name:	Guettar El Messiouta	Governorate:	Kairouan
		Delegation:	El Alaa
# Families:	300 ⁵	# Paying:	200
Year Created:	1987	Year Legalized:	1990
Type of Zone:	Agglomeration and dispersed	Type of AIC:	pot. water
Type of System:	Mazout; part of system covering 33 km. over 3 sectors		
Fee structure:	1.5 TD/month 0.30 TD/shower		
Financial position:	over 1,000 TD surplus		
Leadership:	Mohammed Salah Zannouni (Secretary General, RCD cell)		
Staff:	2 Pompistes for the entire system, paid by the Government Guard paid by the AIC		

Background. This is one AIC in a federation sharing a 33-km. water system that dates from 1982. El Guettar El Messiouta is 18 km. from El Alaa, and composed of a single douar. Family ties have forged a strong community spirit; local funds were mobilized to build a school and a masgad (prayer center) independently of the AIC. The AIC is primarily concerned with water management, including health issues. There is a complementarity between the AIC and the RCD, with members of both agreeing that it is not important which entity brings in projects, as long as the population is served.

Activities Undertaken:

The AIC requested assistance in construction of public showers. GR staff made contact with the Canadian Embassy, which provided 6,500 DT, matched by a 1,500 DT contribution from the AIC. A two-shower facility is now functioning, reserving morning hours for men and afternoons for women. An estimated 5-8 persons use the facility per day, but at times numbers require that patrons wait; the present facility already is considered insufficient. The pompiste is in charge of selling tickets and maintaining the premises; he estimates that after paying gas and water expenses, the operation is netting about 30 DT/month.

⁵In the agglomeration; there are 5,000 families using the 33-km. system, of which approximately 100 do not pay.

Activities Planned or Desired:

1. The primary interest revolves around improvement and extension of the water system (electrification of the pump and metered home connections).
2. Officers claim to have discussed formation of an AIF with beneficiaries, although there is no membership list as yet. Formal recognition from GR will be requested.
3. The AIC originally wanted to construct a traditional hammam rather than showers, but the cost was too high; this remains a long-term aspiration.
4. Poor maintenance of the fountain site is recognized (animals back up to the taps while cisterns are filled). The conseil d'administration has discussed running pipes a safe distance from the fountain, but hasn't done so (although the cost would be under 50 TD).

Name:	Khamouda II	Governorate:	Kasserine
		Delegation:	Fossana
# Families:	171	# Paying:	171
Year Created:	1987	Year Legalized:	
Type of Zone:	Agglomeration (peri-urban)	Type of AIC:	pot. water
Type of System:	Electrified (171 house connections; 4 BF no longer used)		
Fee structure:	0.5 TD membership card 20.0 TD per family membership at beginning to build up capital for home connections old system: 1 TD/month new system: 0.200 TD/liter		
Financial position:	4,000-5,000 TD in account		
Leadership:	Ahmed Bin Mohammed Djedli (farmer, schoolmaster and RCD officer)		
Staff:	Pompiste Meter reader paid by AIC		

Background: Khamouda is about 15 km. from Kasserine, with habitation concentrated along the road. The site started with four BFs, which were poorly maintained. USAID funded a pilot project of home connections ("style nouvelle mexique"), including construction of an office for the AIC.⁶ In March, 1991, the BFs were disconnected and the new system was put into operation. To date, 171 families have been hooked up to the system and another 65 have requested connection.

At first, each family paid a 20 TD fee, which represented its contribution to the home hook-up (estimated at 750 TD per household). This, plus the 0.5 DT membership fee and labor to dig trenches (e.g., 5 TD for the president) comprises the beneficiary contribution.⁷ It is considered sufficient, as infrastructure provision is seen as the role of the state. Even though receipts have increased appreciably since meters were put in, officers do not think that the AIC should assume a share of installation costs. Nor should

⁶The owner of the site is the meter reader, who receives a salary of DT 70/month, which seems to complicate the political situation.

⁷Beneficiaries are not aware of the actual cost; the president, for example, estimated the total cost of each home connection to be 100 DT.

the AIC be expected to assume salaries at this point; the growing surplus should be allowed to grow, and provide a safety net for the system to operate.

Home connections have changed social patterns at Khamouda II. Before, women met at the spring; now everyone stays at home to do washing. None of the women interviewed lamented this fact, since their lives had been made much easier by home connections (and, they point out, there are other opportunities for getting together). Water-related household improvements have been noted including showers and toilets (about 5 households) and small gardens (about 10 families).⁸ Despite the change in their lives, women are not aware that the AIC is more than a collection of individuals “that take care of water.”

The connections also have changed the AIC, which in effect is working as a rural water company (reading meters, distributing bills and collecting payments). In fact, some members think that the metered system should be under SONEDE, that it cannot work under an AIC run by volunteer managers. There have been conflicts over priority given to families for connection (the AIC drew up a list; cases were subjected to GR technical studies). The conseil d'administration has been divided between supporters and detractors of the president, and is virtually paralyzed. Some members want the president to resign, and he says he wants to give up the position: it has become a full-time job with too many problems (and unnecessary work generated by administrative regulations, requiring frequent trips to Kasserine). If it is to be a job, then it should be paid.⁹

Activities Undertaken:

none aside from home connections

Activities Planned or Desired:

1. Extension of the home-connection program to waiting-list families.
2. Women have asked for loans for wool, but the president says the AIC can't afford to extend credit at present.
3. Requests have been made to use water for irrigation, and to form a buying cooperative, but these have not been acted upon (the focus remains on extending home connections).

⁸Women and men interviewed considered showers and toilets private initiatives that do not does not involve the AIC. According to the president, the role of the AIC is to facilitate bringing water to the household.

⁹The General Assembly was to have met during the consultancy to vote on a change, but attendance was too low to make a quorum.

Name:	Machrak Echams	Governorate:	Kasserine
		Delegation:	Sbeitla
# Families:	400 potable water ¹⁰ 13 irrigation	# Paying:	
Year Created:	1987	Year Legalized:	1989
Type of Zone:	Dispersed rural	Type of AIC:	mixed
Type of System:	Mazout		
Fee structure:	1.5 TD/month 1.3-2.5 TD/cistern 3 TD/hour irrigation		
Financial position:	is able to maintain 800 TD to guarantee functioning of pump		
Leadership:	Mohammed Chehbi, retired school director (ex-Secretary General RCD cell)		
Staff:	Pompiste (paid by Governorate)		

Background: Machrak Echams is community of dispersed households located km. from Sbeitla. M. Chehbi is the second president, the first was not well-accepted. The AIC has proven its capacity to execute small projects, reflected in construction of a fountain, watering trough and underground cisterns. The cisterns built with donor funds have provided a model for other families to build on their own initiative (noted in the visit to one douar where another had been constructed). Additional activities have been discussed by the AIC, but not acted upon; it is difficult to mobilize people due to distance between families and poverty (which is the reason given for people not wanting to pay for water).

In 1991, the pompiste constructed a small shop next to the pump-house with 600 DT of his own funds.

Activities Undertaken:

1. A drinking trough was constructed in 1987, and a fountain in 1988. The AIC purchased the taps.
2. A total of 10 underground cisterns were constructed with USAID funds. The households are far from the water point, and buy water from private entrepreneurs. About 2-3 tanks per week averages to 20 TD/month.

¹⁰15 buy cisterns monthly.

3. A 30-hectare perimeter is irrigated, serving 13 families (but the income from this water is not considered significant; much more comes from sale of potable water).

Activities Planned or Desired:

The president says there are two types of activities requested:

- productive (mostly for irrigation; the conseil d'administration also has discussed buying animals and a tractor)
- social (mostly suggestions from women, including a washing platform and latrine at well site).

There is a strong feeling that if the association is to take care of itself, it needs to think of productive, not social services (which may explain why women's requests have not been met without donor funds).

Name:	Ouled Ali Ben Salem	Governorate:	Kairouan
		Delegation:	El Alaa
# Families:	192	# Paying:	“almost all”
Year Created:	1988	Year Legalized:	1991
Type of Zone:	Rural	Type of AIC:	pot. water

Type of System: Original forage and BF supplemented by household connections since 1991.

Fee Structure: 1 TD/month
1.2 TD/month
3 TD/tank
0.15 TD/cu. meter

Financial position:

Leadership: Addelhalim Selmi, Director of Cooperative de Service Agricole (Member, RCD cell)

Staff: Pompiste working since 1988 (paid by Government)

Background. Aouled Ali Ben Salem is a small community located about 10 km. from El Alaa. The AIC has been working provisionally since 1988, and the president took office after legalization. The six-member board and Secretary General work closely with the President. The pompiste was working at another water point before coming to this site; he keeps all records and takes responsibility for bleach treatments.

Activities Undertaken:

1. Following legalization, the AIC began a program of house connections, to respond to members' requests, reduce waste at fountain sites and increase income for the AIC (the well is working at about half capacity). Based on technical studies, GR gave approval. To date 17 requests have been studied and 14 approved. The AIC conducts the first review, and approves it based on distance and the feasibility of connection. Officers say that because criteria are clear, rejections have been accepted without problem.

Costs of connection are about 120 TD, and are borne by the family (compared to an estimated 600 TD for connection to a SONEDE system). In a few cases, the AIC has made a partial loan to families (about 1/3 of the total, repaid in

3-6 months with no interest). The pompiste reads meters monthly, and the AIC bills members.

2. Based on activities observed in Kasserine, the director of the AIC promotion cell proposed formation of an AIF. In 1990, the wife of the Secretary General began working as a volunteer animatrice de base. She has a primary-school education, but has received on-site training. She carries out door-to-door health education visits, covering about 10 families/month. Work is recorded on a form developed by the cellule de promotion (Appendix G). She says that gaining entry to households is difficult, and suggests that eventually AIF members could work informally to help spread health messages.

Until now she has not been paid (the director of the promotion cell is seeking money from the Governorate), but continues to work; she says if her husband is a volunteer Secretary General, she can be a volunteer animatrice.

She and her husband have made space available in their house and lent looms to a group of six young women; the AIC has made a small loan for wool, recovered through the sale of finished products. The group has just begun production.

Activities Planned or Desired:

Since the nearest hammam is in El Alaa, there is a need for public bath or shower facilities. Shower construction has been discussed but is considered too expensive. The AIC would be interested in a co-financing arrangement (e.g., secured through the Ministry of Health).

Name:	Zlasi	Governorate:	Kairouan
		Delegation:	Sbikha
# Families:	53	# Paying:	53
Year Created:	1990	Year Legalized:	1991
Type of Zone:	Dispersed	Type of AIC:	irrigation
Type of System:	Mazout irrigating 40 ha.		
Fee structure:	0.15 TD/month membership 0.30 TD/hour irrigation		
Financial position:	1,100 TD in bank		
Leadership:	President (entrepreneur, lives outside)		
Staff:	Pompiste paid by AIC (0.3 TD/hour)		

Background. Zlasi is about 5 km. off the paved road, about 20 km. from Sbikha. The well was drilled in 1960. It is a close-knit agricultural community, which receives visits from MOA agents, but rarely from members of other ministries (health, social affairs). The AIC's major preoccupation is resolution of water problems. There is enough water to irrigate only 40 of 120 hectares; electrification of the system is the most pressing need.

Activities Undertaken:

This year, at the suggestion of the director of the AIC promotion unit, AIC members bought fertilizer together. One member provided his truck at a reduced rate (6 DT instead of 10 DT); two metric tons of fertilizer were purchased, and resold in 50 kg. sacs; 30 of the 40 sacs have been sold to date, all for cash. The sale price covered cost plus transport; members claim that a profit margin would have been inappropriate, counter to the original idea of helping members. However, a short pricing exercise showed that they could add a 4-5% mark-up and still provide the product cheaper than private vendors selling locally, while benefitting the AIC. A mark-up may be considered for the next season, when sale on credit is planned.

NB: members do not consider this group purchase a conscious effort to begin a cooperative.

Activities Planned or Desired:

Concerns for resolving water problems have limited discussion of new activities, but:

- women have asked for a washing area, but the AIC wants to discourage washing near the water point.
- battery charging has been considered, since it requires a relatively low investment.

Name:	Zouagha II	Governorate:	Zaghouan
		Delegation:	Nadhour
# Families:	13	# Paying:	3/4 regularly
Year Created:	1989	Year Legalized:	1990
Type of Zone:	Rural agglomeration	Type of AIC:	irrigation
Type of System:	Electric		
Fee structure:	0.4 - 0.5 TD/cu. mtr.		
Financial position:	2,000 TD surplus		
Leadership:	Salah Cherif (retired military officer)		
Staff:	Pompiste (paid 100 TD/month by AIC)		

Background. This is one of four irrigation AICs in Zouagha; it serves 13 farmers working 70 hectares. Despite some members having difficulty paying fees during low seasons, the AIC has managed to cover the pompiste's salary, electricity (300-500 DT/month) and repairs.

Last year, the group decided to buy a tractor, to generate rental income to help lower water costs. The president calculated that a 22,000 TD tractor, rented at 7-8 TD/hour for 250 days/year would be paid off in four years. No formal study was done, but an application was filled out with the help of the MOA agent. The president went to the local BNA agency, and was told that banks had no experience with AICs; without collateral, there was no point in asking for a loan. He also contacted a dealer in Tunis, offering a down payment of 6,000-8,000 TD; he was rejected in favor of clients who could pay the full purchase price. For now he has given up; although lack of a tractor has not hurt the AIC, it has constrained its potential for growth.

The bank manager did not remember the president, and thought he may have met a teller. He said AICs are unknown to banks, and the lack of collateral does present a problem. After asking a number of questions about AICs' legal attributes, he said that the associations might be able to borrow if they presented: (1) proof of legalization; (2) documentation of a designated representative able to borrow and guarantee repayment (process verbal); (3) a technical study of the activity.

Activities Undertaken:

Coordination of transformer maintenance with the other three irrigation AICs, which resulted in a savings of about 20% per group.

Activities Planned or Desired:

Based on the experience of shared maintenance, the four irrigation AICs, and possibly potable-water AICs in the area, are planning to jointly purchase seed and fertilizer. In order to do so, it will be necessary to raise capital and secure storage space.