

Moving towards Local Agenda 21 in Rufisque, Senegal

By
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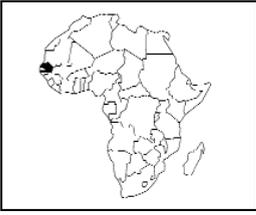
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SUMMARY: *This paper describes the consultation processes in Rufisque, Senegal that have laid the foundations for a Local Agenda 21. These consultations have helped to establish new relationships between municipal government, community organizations and the private sector and have encouraged a range of initiatives to address local economic and environmental problems. New community-level and district committees have developed to bring different stakeholders together to identify problems and develop responses. The success of a development committee formed in Chérif, a district within Rufisque, has led to a similar approach being extended throughout Rufisque. There are also various community-based and NGO programmes underway to address environmental problems and improve health care and education, and various initiatives by local businesses to help address environmental problems. The paper also describes how decentralization in Senegal has encouraged this, although local authorities remain weak because the decentralization of responsibilities has not been accompanied by measures to ensure local financial capacity to meet them. In addition, local authority staff still need to recognize the validity of work undertaken by other groups locally and to learn how to work in partnership with them.*

I. INTRODUCTION

RATHER THAN EXAMINING formal Local Agenda 21 (hereafter LA21)⁽¹⁾ activities and evaluating their consequences, this report examines those activities in Rufisque that LA21 can build upon, and explores how these activities are being, or could be, integrated into a more formal LA21. This is necessary since no integrating plan of action has yet emerged from LA21 in Rufisque. Equally importantly it allows a more bottom-up perspective on LA21, recognizing the importance of local interests and local contexts.

This report begins with a very brief review of Rufisque's geography and some of the urban problems it now faces. This is followed by an account of the context for LA21, emphasizing the ongoing process of decentralization, and the opportunities and constraints it poses. The next section turns to the current status of LA21 in Rufisque, beginning with a review of what has already been done on the initiative of the municipality (anticipating spatial or thematic components of Agenda 21) and then documenting some of the activities of other sectors (which need to be developed and brought under the municipality's wing). The final section

examines the prospects for LA21 in Rufisque's future. The district of Chérif is starting to establish integrated LA21-type activities and this process is described, however at the time of writing there was no overall LA21 in existence covering the whole of the town.

II. BACKGROUND TO RUFISQUE AND ITS PROBLEMS

RUFISQUE LIES 25 kilometres east of Dakar on the same latitude and forms part of the Dakar Urban Authority. The town stretches for three kilometres along the Atlantic coast and is situated in a rift valley below sea level, making it vulnerable to predicted sea level rises. It has a rainy season from July to September (during which the rainfall has been regularly decreasing), followed by a nine-month dry season. The low coastline exposes some districts to damage from coastal erosion. Some adjoining communities have already been re-housed and several buildings have been lost. Also, despite relatively low rainfall, the impermeable ground leads to flooding during the rainy season with all the attendant health hazards.

Rufisque was a prosperous port in the colonial era but its economic importance declined as port activity transferred to Dakar. Nevertheless, for over a century Rufisque's population has tended to double every 20 years. In the 1998 census, Rufisque municipality had about 120,000 inhabitants.

The town itself is characterized by two different types of settlement, planned and unplanned. The planned settlements consist of regular layout grids. Some of the unplanned areas also have regular street patterns but mostly, they are irregular.

A 1991-92 survey showed that almost 75 per cent of households in Rufisque should be classified as poor – i.e. members did not have 2,400 kilocalories available per day per person. In 1994, the CFA franc (the currency of Senegal and 13 other African countries) was devalued, resulting in impacts on nutrition, health and poverty which have yet to be fully assessed. It seems likely that the amount of food consumed by the poorest and most vulnerable households has decreased as a result. Unemployment is estimated to be 23.4 per cent, which is lower than that of Dakar itself, due to the presence of agricultural activities and animal husbandry in the rural areas.

Sanitation is a major issue in Rufisque, mainly because of the high groundwater level and the absence of any adequate drainage system. Rufisque has 14 kilometres of open sewers that cause many problems, with water stagnating in the middle of town, foul smells and the potential risk of disease. People often dispose of rubbish as well as wastewater in these open sewers, causing blockages. This lack of a sewerage network is severely damaging to the town's environment. Channels along the pavement and stagnant water expose people to pollution and degrade the roadway.

Economically, the primary sector is substantial, with fishing and market gardening predominating. The secondary sector has experienced problems, made worse by a deficient electricity grid and poorly maintained facilities. There are few industries operating in the municipality but those that do use local labour. The tertiary sector is large but problematic in that street peddlers and stalls along the main road cause traffic

worked in Rwanda on developing human rights education in schools.

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1. Local Agenda 21 comes from the Rio Summit of 1992, where it was acknowledged that solutions to urban problems must be designed at local level. Agenda 21 covers all environmental and development activities which need to be undertaken to ensure sustainable development into the twenty-first century. It is thus a plan for each country to carry out in order to ensure a better quality of life for its people, according to its own circumstances and priorities. Local versions of Agenda 21 represent the response to these major challenges at a local level, encouraging involvement and debate amongst all stakeholders.

congestion at peak times. A proposed new market facility should alleviate this, provided it serves its intended purpose. There is informal activity throughout the town, which is not coordinated – only a few craftsmen use the official craft village. Tourism is underdeveloped due to the lack of infrastructure and poor road conditions.

III. THE CONTEXT FOR LOCAL AGENDA 21 – THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS OF DECENTRALIZATION

SENEGAL IS IN the process of territorial and administrative reform, creating both opportunities and obstacles for local governance and environmental management in Rufisque.

In 1996, the number of local authorities in Senegal was substantially increased to 48 municipalities (*communes*) and 320 rural communities. In Dakar region itself, specific towns and cities, including Rufisque, are now counted as municipalities, sub-divided into smaller wards (*communes d'arrondissement*).

In 1997, a policy of decentralization followed, leading the state to define new relationships between the various stakeholder groups (public authorities, local councillors, private sector and civil society).

In August 1999, the Municipal Development Agency, established by the government with support from the World Bank, signed a contract with the municipality of Rufisque. With this agreement, Rufisque, like other towns in Senegal, is to undergo the rigours of structural adjustment within its local authority. Compliance with the municipal finance recovery package is supposed to lead to increased investment in public social amenities and basic services and hence to an improvement in living conditions for the citizens. However, the World Bank raised similar expectations with the structural adjustment initiatives that they supported in the 1980s. This time, again, the mechanisms of structural adjustment would seem to be maintaining poverty rather than creating wealth.

Over the last two years, Senegal has also opted for a gradual, cautious decentralization policy – a policy generally favourable to LA21. Unfortunately, new responsibilities have been passed to the municipalities without commensurate increases in financial and other resources. The state is currently in the process of reforming the local tax system and widening the local tax base in order to generate more revenue for municipalities. New state grants and subsidies are due to be mobilized from a specially set up “decentralization subsidy fund”. Revenues are likely to remain extremely low, however. Moreover, the decentralization process is straining the capacities of councillors and other municipal technicians who are not familiar with the new governance system and often lack the skills to cope with new demands.

The need for decentralization can be an opportunity to introduce an LA21 or, conversely, introducing an LA21 can help to manage decentralization (political or administrative); after all, LA21 is grounded in principles of consultative local governance. The stakeholder consultation and planning processes characteristic of LA21s are by their nature decentralized. Thus, in Senegal, enforcement of the law on decentralization has created at least some favourable conditions for the implementation of an LA21, by giving to local authorities responsibilities that were previously held by central government, and which LA21s can help them to fulfil.

In the right circumstances, decentralization can also help to avoid undue strain on the local authority's own resources. Resources for local governance can be generated locally through increased stakeholder involvement. They can also be generated nationally or even internationally through partnership with other municipalities or external agencies. The lack of resources in Rufisque and similar towns is sufficiently serious, however, that the decentralization of responsibilities may be transferring more problems than capacities to local authorities.

Working with decentralization locally requires the local authority to focus more on social dynamics and exchanges with the community than in the past, when institutional support and training of council extension workers in operational tasks were deemed to be more important. This implies a more inclusive system than previously – more concerned with urban social development, strengthening citizenship and promoting dialogue between civil society and public authorities. This form of cooperation is more likely to cultivate the involvement of communities and community institutions in projects initiated by the municipality, and also to develop new capacities amongst municipal officials as well as involving them and stakeholders in developing new rules of governance. Some of the more interesting initiatives in Rufisque fit into this mould.

External cooperation is also taking place. Rufisque and the city of Nantes in France signed a friendship and cooperation agreement in 1992, deciding to cooperate in the fields of education, health and urban development. With the help of Nantes, a seminar was organized in Rufisque in February 1999 on decentralized cooperation to which all stakeholders – public and private sectors, grassroots community-based organizations (hereafter CBOs) and non-governmental organizations (hereafter NGOs) – were invited to participate in, initiating the implementation of an LA21 in Rufisque. This venture was successful and allowed the municipality enough information on which to draw to start the process. Further information on this seminar can be found below.

The municipal re-organization accompanying decentralization at least formally supports decentralization. Town councils now stand alongside the state as political players in their own right despite not having financial resources equal to this stature. The additional freedom that they have been given is intended to bring administration closer to the people and ensure economic, social and cultural development in each community.

The town council in Rufisque is made up of 92 councillors, elected for five years by direct public vote, who work mostly in the field of planning and programming of local development in line with national policy. There are 20 technical committees on which councillors sit and whose mandates may overlap. These committees cover all aspects of life and development in the municipality. Part of their remit is to generate resources to finance municipal activity.

Despite the law on decentralization, the administrative organization and management of the municipality remain fairly conventional. No appreciable innovation appears to have taken place in their operating procedures and existing officials cannot be described as participatory, let alone popular. There are new relationships between central and local government but relations between local government and citizens are only beginning to change through, for example, wider consultation.

The local authority may decide freely on its own local development policy but the state checks compliance with legal requirements, particularly in the financial field, and is also involved in developing and moni-

toring budgets. Due to inadequate resources, local authorities have difficulty in meeting their operating expenses and investments and this means that the state often interferes with the management of local authorities. This is one reason why some municipalities, like Rufisque, have chosen to seek financial resources beyond the state.

IV. CURRENT STATUS OF LOCAL AGENDA 21 IN RUFISQUE

AN APPROPRIATE OBJECTIVE for an LA21 in Rufisque is to draw the local authorities into existing local initiatives, providing better support, direction and coordination. There have been precursors to an LA21 in the form of cross-sectoral activities set up in response to needs expressed by the community, after agreement with the town council. There is also a growing awareness of the need to ensure overall consistency between the various initiatives and how this can be met by means of an LA21. In the seminar on decentralized cooperation (held in February 1999), additional activity resulted in sustainable urban development projects being worked out individually by the private sector and CBOs. These activities needed to be coordinated. The NGO Enda Tiers Monde (hereafter Enda) has been providing methodological support to the municipality to do this, and the process of consulting the various stakeholders is already underway.

Enda organized a series of meetings with various stakeholders (private sector and CBOs) to determine procedures for implementing an LA21 process based on existing projects and plans of action developed in the town. This dialogue and consultation process draws on existing initiatives for lessons on which procedures have been most successful. It also aims to develop a framework for early trials of the process. Key objectives will include clarifying the LA21 concept, methods, objectives and expectations as well as identifying and prioritizing the main environmental problems of each new administrative area.

a. Municipal initiatives

The seminar on decentralized cooperation in February 1999 was attended by representatives of all stakeholders – some 200 people in all. The intention was to analyze the situation in Rufisque and come up with short-, medium- and long-term plans of action covering three broad topics:

- urban development, sanitation and environment;
- health and education; and
- promotion of the informal sector in the local economy and decentralized cooperation, neighbourhood dynamics and the role of grassroots and community organizations.

The working groups on each topic were given the task of prioritizing the problems, identifying actions to address these problems and making specific recommendations. These are discussed, in turn, below.

The working group on urban development, sanitation and the environment identified the priority problems as inadequate sanitation (particularly drainage and the disposal of wastewater and solid waste), coastal erosion, unplanned urban settlement and industrial pollution of the atmosphere.

A number of activities were identified, such as the self-management of sanitation and sewers, and the rehabilitation of existing public toilets and

the building of new ones, to be managed locally. However, most of the points established during the activity part of the workshop fell more under the category of recommendations. These included, for example, involving all stakeholders – grassroots associations, town council, NGOs, private sector, local government services – in development processes, relaxing planning procedures, using well-tested alternative technologies, and linking new and existing initiatives to a sound investment programme. There was also an emphasis on decentralized, simple and easy-to-maintain solutions. A tax on polluting industries was suggested, as was involving the private sector – particularly industrialists – in the town's planning processes, and promoting participatory management.

In their recommendations, the group again emphasized developing and sustaining an inclusive approach as well as increasing technical and managerial capacities. It was also recommended that activities be designed to be as labour-intensive and income-generating as possible, and that all activities should be seen within the framework of a comprehensive long-term plan for Rufisque town.

The working group on health and education discussed health care problems mostly in relation to a pre-existing programme on health, hygiene, nutrition, women and the environment (which is discussed in more detail in the section below on NGO-supported activities). Among the problems identified were inadequate coverage of the costs of outreach workers, poor project coordination (e.g. between two similar projects operating simultaneously), under-equipment of health facilities and safety issues. The solutions suggested were training of trainers, increased provision and maintenance of equipment and the establishment of a technical committee on safety. A planned emergency centre with fire-fighting facilities and an ambulance was announced.

The education debate focused on three issues. First, the establishment of a municipal library, for which plans exist, but without a clear link to educational needs. Second, school-to-school correspondence between Rufisque and Nantes, which is ongoing but which could be managed more efficiently to become an even more effective teaching tool. And third, the issue of teacher training which, it was felt, was linked to the first two issues as teachers could benefit from more educational material as well as teacher exchanges and study tours.

The working group on the informal sector, decentralized cooperation, neighbourhood dynamics and CBOs divided their discussions into informal sector issues and other issues. The informal sector discussion focused on fishing, crafts and market gardening/agriculture. The problems were identified as: limited access to credit; lack of training, apprenticeship and assistance to young people, newly established workers and women; inadequate equipment, infrastructure and premises; and (unique to fishing) lack of storage, sales problems, rising sea levels and over-fishing. Proposed solutions were to establish a municipal office or semi-public company to promote employment and productive activity as well as holding a wider debate on institutional, economic and social mechanisms in the informal sector. Also suggested was the provision of greater support in setting up local schemes for increased access to credit, increased support and training, and possibly a municipal strategy to support crafts. In the agricultural sector, it was suggested that land should be set aside for agriculture and market gardening and access to water should be increased.

The group also discussed decentralized cooperation, neighbourhood

dynamics and the role of CBOs in these. The priority problems were identified as: a lack of funding; inadequate technical capacity of CBOs; insufficient social and educational infrastructure; and the lack of a forum for dialogue and cooperation with municipal institutions. Proposed solutions were: to establish fora for dialogue between elected councillors and inhabitants; strengthen social and educational infrastructure; and establish a system for regular evaluation of development cooperation and citizen participation (in both Nantes and Rufisque). It was also suggested that a support fund could be established for local initiatives and that increased support should be given to organizations helping people improve their living conditions.

Following the workshop separate meetings were held with the council and CBOs to ratify the plans drawn up during the seminar. These meetings were also meant to get feedback on the workshop, to give an opportunity for stakeholders to air their points of view on the proposed planning and local management processes and, if necessary, to clarify the LA21 concept and the role of environmental management planning.

V. PRE-EXISTING LA21-TYPE ACTIVITIES

VARIOUS GROUPS HAVE initiated activities to improve living conditions and the environment. These include the municipality, NGOs, CBOs and the private sector, either separately or in partnership (some have experienced problems with implementation). Various plans of action have been drawn up at different levels, including long-term projects aimed at improving the urban environment of Rufisque.

Very few NGOs operate in Rufisque and those that do engage in mainly *ad hoc* activities. Enda is one that has attempted to develop innovative approaches to an integrated management of the urban environment in Rufisque, thus playing a part in strengthening community organizations and civil society. Activities in which Enda is involved are undertaken at the request of the municipality, with the council as the contracting authority. So, although Enda may occasionally be the main project manager, citizens or government departments are the actual managers, with Enda simply providing methodological assistance.

a. NGO-supported (managed) activities

Health, Nutrition, Hygiene, Women, Environment Programme

This is a programme managed with the aid of Enda that enables women to receive training in health, hygiene and nutrition so that they can pass on the knowledge that they have acquired to other women and women's groups, with trainees acting as outreach workers. The intention is to promote health through nutrition, particularly to improve the health of children aged nought to three and pregnant and breastfeeding women, as well as to achieve better overall environmental health and improved living conditions.

The government services departments provide the core management for this project and they include: the district health authority; the public health service; the women's technical education centre; the community development service; and the social promotion and rehabilitation centre. These services represent the Ministry of Health, Women and Children, the Ministry of Vocational Training and the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

However, project supervision is undertaken at the district rather than national level. Methodological assistance also comes from the city of Nantes, particularly the preparation for launching a project on nutrition.

There were several phases in the training of health and nutritional education outreach workers. Initially, there was a pre-training and data collection seminar, which was followed by the actual training of the outreach workers by the district health authority. Before starting activities in any district, a baseline survey was conducted to determine the current status of social and health indicators. This will be repeated during and after the programme in order to assess impact. After the survey, various outreach health promotion activities were initiated, including training and information exchange; health and nutrition; environmental health and hygiene; home economics; and the organization of women's groups. As part of this series of activities, the results of the surveys and the fieldwork will be disseminated and communicated.

This initiative is necessary because Rufisque does not yet have a health centre which brings together the usual services on one site. Health facilities are scattered between the central dispensary, the hospital, the polyclinic and various other facilities. The district authority already had 11 health posts and a further 12 have been constructed as part of a health improvement initiative as well as two rural maternity units and one health centre. Currently, the district health authority carries out national health policy including all curative and preventive activities. There is also substantial community participation through health committees, which have existed in all new and old health facilities since 1996.

The programme is managed by a group of representatives of all the stakeholders. A monitoring and steering committee reports on the programme's progress to the *préfet* of Rufisque; a scientific secretariat deals with medical or technical issues; management and financial monitoring are undertaken by Enda and the entire project is supervised by the *préfecture* of Rufisque. The mayors of Rufisque and Nantes provide sponsorship.

Overall local neighbourhood development

The first area to establish an integrated LA21-type activity was Chérif district. In 1990, the whole population of Chérif district mobilized with the help of the NGO Aide et Action to build three classrooms. Out of this initiative, a development committee, CODEC, was established which provides a coordination and decision-making centre for initiatives conducted in Chérif either by residents or by outside agencies. Since 1994, it has developed a broad range of skills responding to needs identified in the community, which include economics, infrastructure, human resources, development and training, youth, sport, leisure and environment. Box 1 shows a plan of action for Chérif district developed by local residents.

The development of CODEC represented a positive response to a difficult socio-economic situation and the realization that the state and municipality were providing less and less support to those under their administration. It also allowed the community to take charge of finding solutions to its own problems (with NGO technical support). As a result of an initiative to consider issues and activities relating to improving living conditions, a district development plan was drawn up which involved intensive information work, consultation and dialogue, in-depth research, writing up and feedback in various phases over a period of

Box 1: Plan of action for Chérif district

In accordance with the conclusions of various studies and meetings, the inhabitants of Chérif met on 14 June, 1995 to determine material and financial means of promoting overall development within the district to the benefit of the community.

After much sharing of ideas, they came up with specific objectives achievable in the short, medium and long term, in accordance with investigations carried out by the various working groups set up by the development committee. The following statement was issued:

“Having regard to the order of priorities identified in plenary session by the majority of representatives of the various sections of the population of Chérif at the seminar on 12 March, 1995, viz:

- combating unemployment;
- supplying drinking water, electricity and proper sanitation;
- providing the neighbourhood with appropriate social and educational facilities.

Having regard to the investigations carried out by the various working groups responsible for preparing a budget to meet the targeted needs for:

- all community initiatives and small economic projects;
- water supply;
- providing Chérif with a technical training centre for women;
- providing a vocational and technical training centre;
- building two classrooms to increase the capacity of the existing elementary school and building a nursery.

Having regard to the notorious lack of financial resources at local level and the inadequacy of resources already mobilized.

Having regard to the short-, medium- and long-term targets set by stakeholders and their partners.

Through its representatives, Chérif district recommends:

- That the committee should remain the main driving force in development and the vector for all local community initiatives or action.
- Mobilization of resources and adequate backup by finding as many partners as possible to provide us with various types of assistance.
- That small, viable development projects generating income for the working population should be the committee's primary aim.
- That those initiating small projects or any local community initiative should make greater efforts to locate material, technical and human resources while awaiting foreign assistance.
- That all the working groups of the district committee should continue their efforts so that:
 - Chérif may have a market – the most suitable and favourable place for all types of small trading – in accordance with the wishes expressed by a large number of groups prior to November 1995.
 - Like all other districts of Rufisque, Chérif may be comprehensively supplied with drinking water by the end of February 1996.
 - This time-limit should also apply to the establishment of small-scale projects (urban farming, commerce, etc.) which could substantially reduce the unemployment rate affecting all social sectors.
- That the infrastructure and equipment and human resources working groups should continue their hitherto successful activities so that a women's technical education centre and a nursery may be constructed by May 1996^(a).
- Despite the undoubted difficulties besetting us, that the extension of the electricity grid be completed by the end of May 1996 and Chérif no longer be cut off from the rest of the town^(b).
- In order better to achieve the objectives, that monthly assessment meetings be held to monitor the progress of each recommendation and produce reports on each occasion to be sent to all our partners.”

(a) In this regard, the committee suggests starting straight away with the means available, pending acquisition of improved infrastructure and teaching materials.

(b) The development committee should approach the relevant government and municipal authorities to identify appropriate solutions.

several months.

The development committee then expanded and took up several major challenges that had been identified as outstanding local problems by a survey and various seminars. These included launching small-scale income generation projects; establishing a credit fund; extending piped water supply throughout the district; combatting the lack of hygiene; and acquiring social and educational facilities.

The approach used in Chérif (the local development plan) and the committee-type approach towards local development is now being extended throughout Rufisque, thus maintaining the important principle that representative fora must be established at several levels. At the district level, a local development committee brings together representatives of various interest groups and community organizations as well as local political figures. Local residents with useful skills may also participate. Its role is to identify problems in the district and seek solutions, with external support where necessary, or prepare and implement activities directly, if appropriate.

At the next level up, in the *communes d'arrondissement*, the district committees are brought together for consultation and dialogue. The intention at this level is to foster dialogue, negotiation and the exchange of experiences between districts, as well as to strengthen the coordination and monitoring of local activities, technical services and contracting and managing financial resources allocated to development activities.

At the municipality level, the coordinating committees set up by the *communes d'arrondissement* make up a permanent structure responsible for coordinating activity throughout the town, promoting exchanges of experience (in order to strengthen local and international partnerships) and ensuring that activities throughout Rufisque are consistent. These committees also monitor programme implementation and ensure that activities are carried out lawfully.

b. CBO Programmes with social and environmental improvement aims

Two community organizations are currently involved in environmental and waste-related activities. Both are engaged in the management of liquid and solid wastes and promote the recycling of household waste.

In DEFSI (which translates as “integrated waste collection training and services”), the five members have as their main objective the improvement of the urban environment, particularly in Rufisque. It is also involved in awareness-raising and environmental education, recycling household waste through composting, local urban waste management and managing a wastewater treatment plant.

The second organization consists of seven people and is known as GIE DAC (“Diokoul, sanitation and composting”). Its activities extend from collection, disposal or recycling of household waste to reforestation.

The municipality is working together with both of the above organizations and provides them with equipment for excavation work in the districts as well as two sites for wastewater treatment plants. Enda provided supervision and training for members and is giving technical support as well as preliminary financial support for the launch of some programmes. The water and forestry service provides support for reforestation.

The Development Association for Women and Children (ADFES)

works to assist women and children to improve their living conditions and is concerned with ensuring that women's needs are taken into account, their socioeconomic position is improved and that children, including girls, go to school and get an education.

The Local Grassroots Network (RELAB) links together 40 grassroots associations in Rufisque in order to establish solidarity and mutual aid between associations. It also aims to act as an interface between the municipality, development partners, NGOs and communities, and to improve community living conditions.

Several CBOs would like to develop long-term projects aimed particularly at awareness and education, but there are difficulties with monitoring as well as with material and financial resources and with gaining access to municipal resources. The community organizations need to involve local people to a greater extent in selecting technical or operational options and in establishing development priorities and environmental policy in their district.

c. Private sector initiatives in social and environmental improvement

In May 1999, a consultation was arranged with various private sector stakeholders in order to build on their experience of environmental improvement and to inform them about the implementation of an LA21 in Rufisque.

The companies expressed a variety of needs and listed activities which they had undertaken themselves (see Box 2). A local shoe factory expressed the desire to develop better systems of waste discharge, which it had been unable to do, and described a health and safety committee developed for its workers which also held environmental awareness classes; a local cement works also had a health and safety committee. Other initiatives reported by the private sector companies included cleaning-up operations (fish-trading centre, cement works, petrol station) or proactive environmental activities such as tree-planting (cement works); and support of or provision for better public services (cement works, fish-trading centre). Amongst the latter projects were the provision of a drinking fountain, the provision of water to schools and for sale by disabled people, support for the local football team, the supply of carts for household waste collection and providing waste bins for schools.

Several of the companies reported experiencing environmental problems, for example dust from other industries interfering with their machinery or local open sewers degrading their immediate surroundings. The local power station also reported that seawater used for cooling sometimes contained algae, rags and plastic bags drawn in from the sea, which obstructed the cooling system and reduced output.

Some of the companies stated that they were hoping to become more widely involved in environmental issues in Rufisque. The cement works will be setting up an environmental department and the pharmaceutical company (which has had problems with an open sewer) is hoping for a solution to its environmental problems so that it does not have to move away. The shoe factory is too new to have an environmental policy but it intends to draw one up in cooperation with all stakeholders as well as with specialists. It can be broadly assumed that the private sector is willing to play an effective role in the town's planning and management processes.

Box 2: Private sector initiatives in Rufisque

The New Team shoe factory

This was opened in 1998 and currently has about 100 employees, 80 per cent of whom live in Rufisque. The factory generates wastewater, residues from sheep, goat and bovine skins and chemicals used in washing animal skins which are passed through a sedimentation system and then piped out to sea. The factory would like to have a much more efficient system to protect the marine environment. The company uses water from the Senegalese Water Company (SDE) for cooling machinery but, due to high costs, it is planning to sink wells at the factory with a pump to extract groundwater which, in this area, is close to the surface.

The factory has a health and safety committee with 20 members who have received training from the fire brigade and the social security fund. Members of the committee also hold meetings on environmental awareness for the factory workers.

The fish-trading centre in Rufisque (*Centre de Mareyage*)

Opened in 1983, the centre has about 31 employees (permanent and casual) and exports fish to the hinterland. The centre is jointly managed by the Rufisque fishery administration and industry professionals (fishermen, wholesale fish merchants, etc.). Between 1994 and 1997, Rufisque council was represented on the centre's management committee. Monthly meetings are organized by the various committee members to improve management.

Some activities have already been carried out to improve facilities at the Ndeppe landing area, for which the centre provides the Rufisque *préfecture* with 100 litres of diesel per month. The factory also has an ice-making plant producing about ten tonnes of ice per day. Market fish sellers bring in unsold products for storage on-site or purchase tubs of crushed ice (FCFA 1,000 each) to preserve fresh fish. Tubs of ice are regularly provided to the disabled people's association in Rufisque for the sale of cool water and the centre also provides ice to preserve mortal remains being despatched from Dakar to other regions for burial. At the request of the Rufisque social promotion and rehabilitation centre, the centre also stores the sheep carcasses sent by Saudi Arabia for a yearly festival. In addition, the centre makes a financial contribution to the Rufisque football teams every year.

Other local environmental initiatives include organizing clean-up sessions at the landing area – in cooperation with the fishermen, wholesale merchants and young people from the surrounding districts – and funding a public drinking fountain at the beach for use by the fish trade. At the request of teachers from the nearby elementary school, the centre has rebuilt the school wall and provides cool boxes containing fresh water for pupils at daily break times as the taps at the school have been shut off.

The centre has no clearly defined environmental policy but is keen to cooperate with other stakeholders to provide a better quality product and improve the environment in Rufisque.

The cement works (SOCOCIM Industries)

The SOCOCIM cement works, located on the outskirts of Rufisque town, has four units:

- the **dust-laying** unit which uses jets of water from SOCOCIM's wells to reduce the amount of dust in the vicinity;
- the **waste recovery** unit which deals with the waste produced by the factory;
- the **green lung** unit which has established a 75-hectare wood lot with 55,000 trees, employing about 100 piece workers on a daily basis to maintain the area;
- the **neighbourhood unit** which pays particular attention to the districts around the factory (Gouye Mouride, Colobane and Arafat). The company has already undertaken some activities in these districts and seven horse-drawn carts have been delivered to the three district representatives for the collection of household waste. At the request of the local people, the factory also provides equipment such as spades, wheelbarrows and masks for days of environmental action organized in cooperation with neighbourhood associations. The cost to the cement works of these activities can be as much as FCFA 1 million.

These units are coordinated through an informal central structure, the Coordination, Extension and Advertising Committee (CCVIP). The factory also has a health and safety committee.

Other activities undertaken by the factory to improve the quality of the environment include the installation of a system to reduce vibration from explosives used in SOCOCIM's quarries and – at the request of schools, the Ministry of Defence and others – the factory has supplied waste bins.

Employee health is taken care of by a full-time senior nurse, while three specialists (a paediatrician, a gynaecologist and a dermatologist) hold weekly consultations.

The petrol station

The station has established a system to deal with used motor oil. The liquid waste is carried through a system of channels to the five sedimentation tanks, each of which is 1.2 metres wide, 3.0 metres long and 1.0 metre deep. After sedimentation, the oil is recovered by an oil-recycling company.

The power station

The power station at Cap des Biches efficiently generates 45-50 per cent of the electricity generated in Senegal every year.

VI. PROSPECTS FOR LA21 IN RUFISQUE'S FUTURE

OVERALL, CONDITIONS ARE favourable for the emergence of a successful LA21 in Rufisque provided certain economic and institutional constraints are addressed. The partnership approach of LA21 is quite new to most stakeholders in town but they are beginning to engage in the process and, as a result, acquire ownership of it. Consultation with the private sector and community organizations, in cooperation with the municipality, has enabled Rufisque's environmental problems to be identified and short-, medium- and long-term plans to be discussed. On the negative side, there have been a variety of organizational problems, often compounded by bureaucratic problems, poor coordination and a general lack of resources. Some preliminary initiatives have not been properly institutionalized (and are therefore not being given the priority they might deserve). On the positive side, however, many problems are being addressed. Workers are being trained, there are regular fora involving communities, groups, the municipality, Enda and others, and there is an increasing sense of partnership among the different stakeholders.

There remains a need for capacity-building among local authority staff if they are to work effectively with the wide range of local stakeholders. Partnership between the municipality and the private sector has been tentative and, historically, the private sector has not been involved in urban planning even though the willingness of some local businesses to be involved is encouraging. The council has also tended to steer clear of the initiatives of other stakeholders, either because it has not been asked or because it did not consider it appropriate. It now seems that the municipality has taken the decision to become involved, but it will inevitably take time for its operating procedures to adapt accordingly.

This review of LA21 in Rufisque has highlighted the role already played by the wider community in municipal governance. LA21 can strengthen this role by adopting an approach to implementation that emphasizes:

- Partnerships between the various groupings in the environmental equation (public authorities, private sector, civil society/community, NGOs, GCOs, scientists/academics, media).
- Cross-sectoral approaches to environmental problems, recognizing that they are often complex and cut across political, economic, statutory and other boundaries; and
- Locally rooted concepts of sustainability, recognizing that interactions exist on a wider geographical and social scale but prioritizing local concerns.

For LA21 to achieve its potential in Rufisque, it is also important to keep in mind that:

- Disadvantaged communities constitute the majority stakeholders in Rufisque and must not only take part in all stages of the process but must also be reassured that their living conditions will improve as a result of the socioeconomic spin-offs from LA21 activities in the short-, medium- and long-term.
- The potential role of the private sector in urban environmental improvement must be acknowledged. As both the driving force behind national and local economies, and the source of various environmental problems, the private sector is critical to the success of local environmental initiatives.

- Good governance is intimately linked to partnership, which is a springboard for the optimum use of the socioeconomic resources of each individual actor as well as those of the community as a whole. In particular, it gives the majority a way of making a more significant contribution. This long-ignored reality is increasingly recognized as a principal criterion for sustainable action.
- The voluntary sector has played a critical role in developing partnerships in the past and should continue to do so in the future. It is therefore also important to acknowledge the new stakeholders in the voluntary sector, to whom civil society is now handing responsibilities and from whom they are increasingly demanding results.
- Enjoying a healthy, sustainable environment should be a right for everyone. This should not be understood as merely a legal issue but, above all, as a set of strategies to be implemented; one of which should aim to allow communities to manage their immediate environment and give them the resources to do so.

Implementing a sustainable development project, initiated within the framework of an LA21, should provide an opportunity to overcome difficulties, find new ways forward and try out new procedures. Towns and cities setting out along this road can be seen as laboratories.

As we move into the twenty-first century, the socioeconomic and environmental disruption experienced by our cities calls upon us to mobilize and to come up with a unified vision of the future of our planet. Innovative strategies need to be adopted in order to achieve current and future objectives. LA21 should provide a favourable framework for drawing up projects and action plans at city level. Rufisque may not provide a model for everyone to follow but it certainly provides lessons that many can learn from.