

# exPost ExPost



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## Support to local socio-economic revitalisation in cities undergoing crisis

*ExPost* summary notes report lessons on specific components or interventions gleaned from evaluation and capitalization experiences. They are specifically intended for AFD teams and their partners of the North and South, but more generally, for professionals involved in development actions which bear some similarities with the reviewed projects.

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Reconstruction in Port-au-Prince. Photo credit: Marc Lee Steed for AFD



AFD is regularly called upon to support urban development projects in areas recovering from crises, be they natural or political. Above and beyond the simple reconstruction of buildings, such requests bring us to question issues regarding the sustainable regeneration of social and economic dynamics. A recent study conducted by the Ecole d'urbanisme de Paris<sup>1</sup> examined thirty projects in the sectors of construction and essential services that had been undertaken by AFD and partnering sponsors in Haiti, the Central African Republic, and other countries between 2005 and 2015. Grouped under the headings of economic revitalisation and reinforcement of social dynamics, this report presents a few of the most significant actions.

## SUPPORT ECONOMIC REVIVAL

In the emergency “crisis relief” stage, few projects attempt to contribute to economic vitality over the long term, as such a goal would seem too ambitious. Temporary help at the government or household level is most often the intervention of choice. Nonetheless, many disaster relief projects have resulted in positive gains in terms of employment and economic activity. What long-term effects have been noted?

### ● High labour-intensive public works

Many projects undertaken for the social good call upon high labour-intensive public works as their model. These works employ hundreds and even thousands of people for short periods of time; examples are the Disaster Waste Management Programme by the United Nations and the Sanitation and Water Supply Initiative in Bangui, the Central African Republic, by the African Development Bank. In addition to the goal of creating employment, another significant goal can be returning stability to the region, as has been done in projects such as KATA (*Konbit Ak Tet Ansanm*) by the United States Agency for International Development and the Cooperative Housing Foundation International (CHF International) in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and the Côte d'Ivoire Post-Conflict Assistance project in Abidjan, by the World Bank. Some of these projects have provided employment opportunities for war veterans and unemployed youth in areas that have been affected by violence.

In Bangui, the “Guide THIMO” put out by the government in collaboration with its partners has made an inventory of best practices for satisfactory conditions for employment and for social assistance for workers, most notably through access to financial resources and vocational training programmes.

<sup>1</sup> The study was conducted in 2015–2016 by a group of students in the Master 2 Urbanisme et expertise internationale programme at EUP, under the direction of associate professor Benjamin Michelon, and lecturer Armelle Choplin ([m2urbasud@googlegroups.com](mailto:m2urbasud@googlegroups.com)).

### ● Assisted reconstruction

In post-crisis situations, reconstruction projects risk being assigned to foreign companies alone. Certain projects, such as *Rekompak* in Indonesia, financed by the World Bank, or the Integrated Development of Informal Settlements in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, financed by AFD, have thus put in place a support service for households to either reconstruct their own housing, or to have access to the work of local artisans (see Box 1). In Bangui, the “Guide THIMO” encourages contracting authorities to work primarily with local companies from the Central African Republic.

#### Box 1. Assisted reconstruction in Port-au-Prince (Haiti)

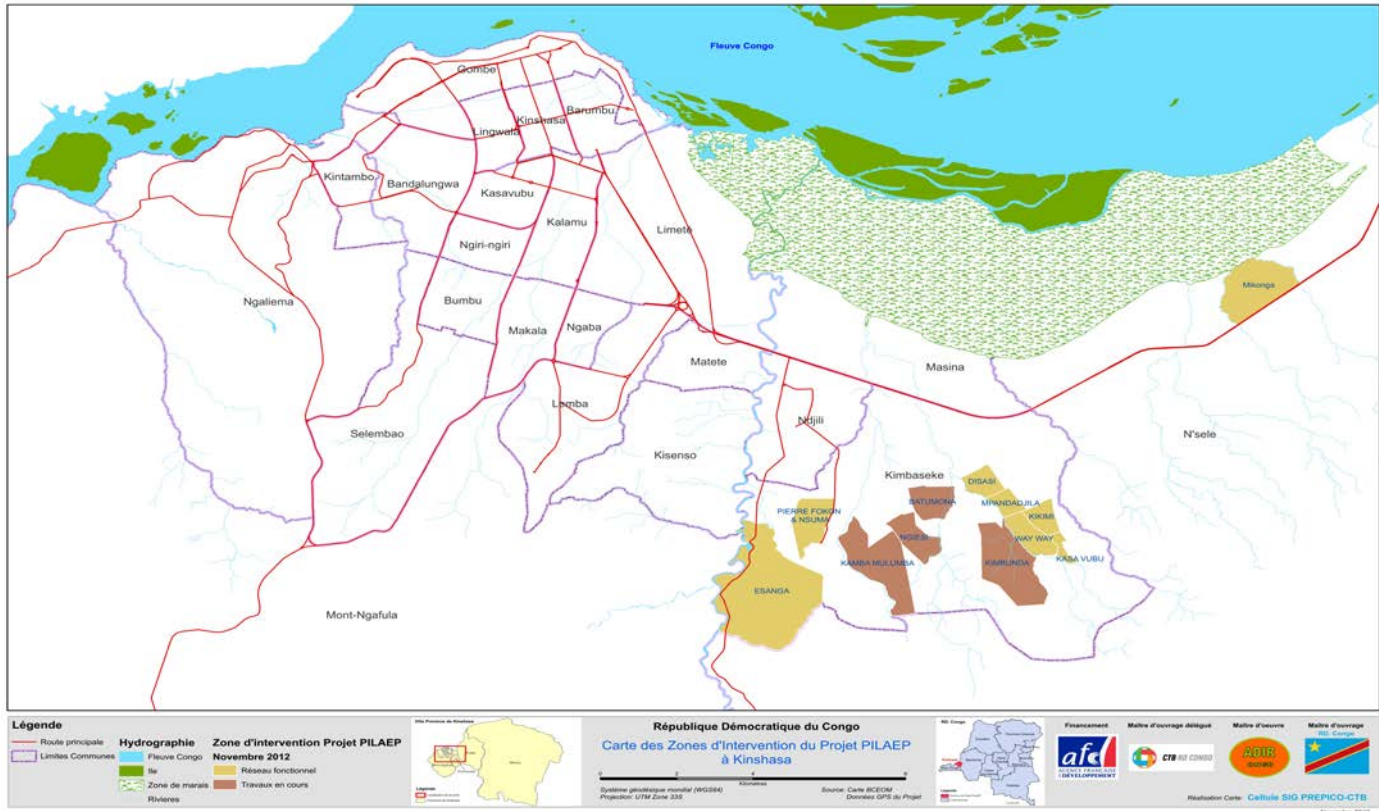
The earthquake of 12th January 2010 gave Haitian authorities the opportunity to intervene in some precarious neighbourhoods that had long been neglected, and also to improve building practices so as to protect their inhabitants against future crises. Assisted reconstruction is an aid mechanism for homeowners that provides training opportunities, controls implementation, allocates grants as the construction progresses and gives administrative assistance so as to ultimately create a legalized housing stock. This way of operating brings together home-owning households, local masons trained in earthquake-resistant construction techniques and the artisans who produce masonry blocks. As for the Community Reconstruction Centres (CRCs), these are eventually to become branches of the city hall thereby facilitating the durable recovery of the public authority. A total of around one hundred dwellings are to be built using this approach in the Port-au-Prince neighbourhoods Baillergeau and Martissant under the AIQIP programme funded by AFD.

### ● Training

In largely informal employment sectors such as construction and services, trade schools and certified training programmes enable workers to improve their skills. Nonetheless, the World Bank's Education and Skills for Productive Jobs (ESPJ) Project in Côte d'Ivoire has reported observations of the limited impact of such efforts. It seems appropriate to accompany technical programmes with courses on entrepreneurial management and on how to respond to tenders, and to provide financial assistance for start-ups. Small companies can be encouraged to form cooperatives in order to share both the associated risks and potential gains.



## PILAEP project intervention zones in Kinshasa (DRC)



Source: SIG PREPICO-CTB Unit © AFD

### ► Lessons learned

Often, interventions that seek to spur economic activity focus solely on the process of reconstruction financed by external actors. And this is certainly a limiting factor. Other means and ways could be explored, for example, support for income-generating activities only indirectly linked to reconstruction. Furthermore, assistance should not simply be limited to physical investment, but rather act on the underlying conditions of economic revival including the reconstitution of social capital within households (professional skills, relational networks and income, but also psychosocial reconstruction), the reorganisation of institutions and companies that have been affected by natural disaster, and the strengthening of public authority and good governance.

## REINFORCE SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY DYNAMICS

Many development projects employ a “community-driven” approach (recommended in the *2011 World Development Report* by the World Bank), in the form of participatory processes, community services management, or even community project ownership and mechanisms for collective

decision-making. That said, “community” cohesion is often lacking in post-crisis situations: parts of the population are displaced, groups of people can come into conflict with each other, and refugees are given temporary accommodation—these are all factors that may have unsettling effects on the social structure.

### ● Community-based services management

In some situations, public authorities are unable to assure the provision of services across the entire city, be it due to lack of financial and human resources, or to stark increases in population numbers. Sometimes, they simply do not want to do it and refuse to regularise informal settlements. Neighbourhood associations in many metropolises have risen to the challenge (as described in Box 2), providing their own services, sometimes with assistance from donors. In Port-au-Prince, the “*komités dlo*” committees that had been established in 1995 in order to manage the supply of drinking water later formed the basis for the management of household waste in 2012, as part of the *Jeyson fatra Kafou Fey* project (JEFAKAF) financed by the European Union and AFD.



## Box 2. Community-based management of the water supply in Kinshasa (the Democratic Republic of Congo) and in Port-au-Prince (Haiti)

Urban growth has made it difficult to rapidly extend water supply infrastructure in Kinshasa. In order to supply informal settlements on the periphery, an efficient model was instituted in 2006 by the Congolese NGO ADIR in conjunction with AFD and other funding bodies: water fountains that are collectively managed by a water network users' association (ASUREP) constitute a system that has been operating in Port-au-Prince since 1995. Its employees are recruited from the neighbourhood. Users pay according to consumption, but the price is lower than what the water carriers had previously been charging. In Port-au-Prince, payment options (such as discounts and differed payment plans) are available to the poorest users. Profits from the service are reinvested in new projects and community amenities.

Community-based services management schemes such as this one have had the effect of increasing social cohesion in areas that have been left to their own devices, even making them more resilient in the face of future challenges. In 2015 in Kinshasa, services benefited 600,000 inhabitants in twenty-seven neighbourhoods. A second phase (2015-2020) has been launched in order to extend the model, keeping in mind the coherence of the programme with local urban and water resource policies.

### ● Community project ownership

Sometimes, as in the case of the projects AREBA/AIQIP in Port-au-Prince and *Rekompak* in Indonesia, "community" mobilization stretches beyond simply managing services. Groups of inhabitants may be allocated a budget by the City so that they themselves can be in charge of or even carry out the reconstruction of public spaces. The *Rekompak* project in Indonesia (the islands of Aceh, Nias and Java) is a case in point: support teams put together by the Ministry of Public Works are available to assist community project owners. Decisions are taken by the community regarding the choice of beneficiaries, spatial planning, priorities regarding infrastructure and amenities, organisation of maintenance, and so on. In the AREBA/AIQIP projects in Baillergeau in Port-au-Prince, this assistance was provided by the international NGO GRET.

### ► Lessons learned

It is important not to advocate the "community-driven" development approach on mere principle. Questions need to be asked from the outset about the composition of the groups involved and the project's scope. That said, the approach can be used to reinforce social linkages at many scales: within the neighbourhood when this is home to different population groups, at city scale, and above all between the inhabitants and institutions.



Community-based management of the water supply in Kinshasa (DRC), in the context of the project PILAEP (Haiti)

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1 Do no harm

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, one of the internationally recognised guiding principles of post-crisis development work (put forth mainly by the UN, OECD, and French Cooperation) is to “do no harm” to local society. However, actors intervening in crisis situations bring services and products free of charge, making it difficult for users to later return to a pay-per-use system, which is an essential lever for creating opportunities and the financial independence of private enterprise. “Community-based” approaches can, for their part, lead to the creation of opportunistic associations whose aim is to capture aid money, or to the appropriation of local administrations by international NGOs, which disturbs the social structure.

The main issue is thus to foresee the long-term consequences of interventions, so as not to harm development at the local level. Furthermore, projects should be supervised and monitored throughout their implementation, taking into account their evolving contexts and unexpected impacts. Projects must be flexible and changeable.

## 2 Undertake diagnostic assessment even during emergencies

The necessity of reacting quickly must not hamper the in-depth execution of social, institutional, economic, and environmental assessment that should take place before projects have begun. Designing an organisation chart for the actors at all the different scales (neighbourhood, city, region), with their skills (either theoretical or real), their resources, and their interrelations can prove extremely useful. It is also useful to understand the factors that could weaken the efficacy of the project, by referring to pre-crisis research reports. Key economic sectors—both existing and potential—must also be identified.<sup>2</sup> Attention paid to the *underlying conditions* of economic revitalisation is also a key element of the diagnosis (see previous page).

## 3 Encourage a regional approach

The neighbourhood seems to be a suitable scale for effective intervention. The sphere of action can of course be widened to that of an entire agglomeration, but it seems appropriate to demarcate functional areas within that. In the city, this means observing lived-in spaces that have specific characteristics (such as income levels, ethnicity, and social practices), or those that have been particularly affected by the crisis. Inside the identified zone, multi-

sectoral and integrated interventions are preferred: these include physical reconstruction as well as environmental protection and risk prevention, revitalisation of economic and social dynamics, support and strengthening of public and private entities, and local governance. In doing so, the relationships between the action areas and their immediate surroundings, the agglomeration and the wider region are taken into consideration, as are the relationships between the inhabitants and the public authorities.

## 4 Involve local actors in the planning of projects

In a post-crisis context, the act of defining priorities for action can gain from being thought through by the inhabitants of a place (including refugees), local authorities, and companies, because they have the most detailed knowledge of the needs and resources of the area. In the case of the *Rekompak* project in Indonesia, it was the inhabitants themselves who did the job of making the spatial planning maps.

So as to anticipate the end of the aid period, the actors and organisations able to take over the management and financing of the services and economic activities need to be identified well upstream.

## 5 Favour local companies

Calling on international construction companies to carry out reconstruction work creates immense competition for local actors, which are already under strain. Agencies coordinating the effort must prioritize national entities, or when a tender is awarded to an international enterprise, require that a certain proportion of the contract be subcontracted to local firms.

## 6 Emphasise governance issues

During the emergency stage, actors for international cooperation often focus their efforts on individuals and households, all the while bypassing political authorities. Sometimes they do this in an effort to remain neutral, and sometimes it is because of the weak capacities of these authorities. Such decisions are not without their risks: the choice of beneficiaries can be perceived negatively, social tensions can increase, cronyism can develop, and most of all, the power that the public authority may have can be weakened even further. Instead, it is advisable to reinforce the legitimacy of the authorities. This does not interfere with the allocation of project ownership and decision-making mechanisms to civil service organisations, as long as the dialogue between the two spheres is encouraged.

<sup>2</sup> Operational and field guides can be used to identify these sectors, such as: [www.ungana.org/IMG/pdf/afd-guide-developpement-economique-local.pdf](http://www.ungana.org/IMG/pdf/afd-guide-developpement-economique-local.pdf) Last accessed 04 October 2016.

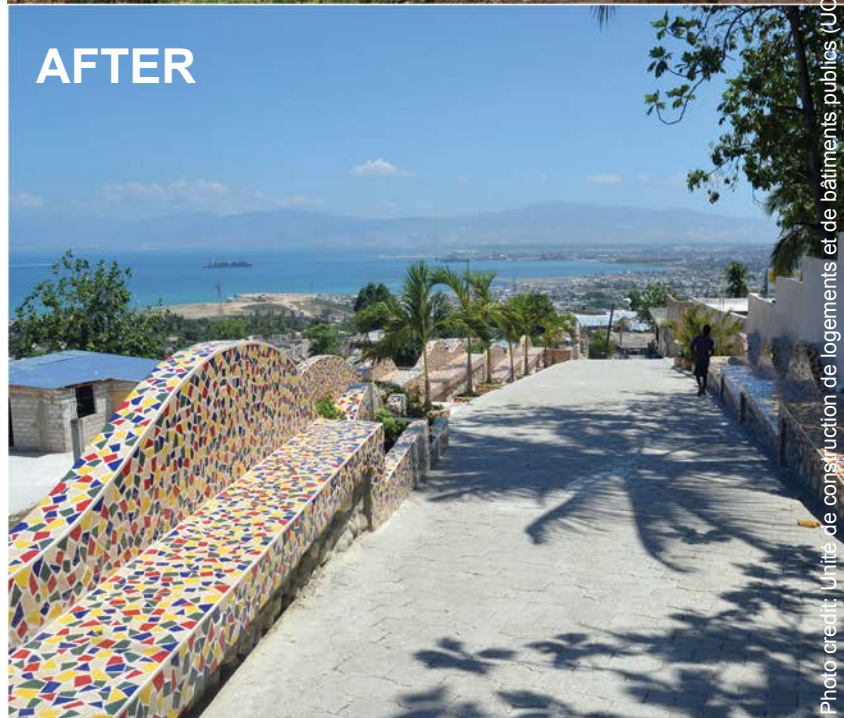


Fairly traditional methods of strengthening the capacities of governments and institutions can be applied. Many different instances of discussion can be reactivated or created, such as community platforms.

In the AFD-funded Programme for Economic and Social Reconstruction in Urban Areas (PRESU) in Bangui, dialogue was encouraged right from the emergency stage between each level of governance (neighbourhoods, municipalities and government). A steering committee was set up associating several ministries, the Public Works executing agency that ensures delegate project management, and the NGOs in charge of social and urban project management. In addition, technical monitoring is carried out together with neighbourhood leaders at quarterly meetings.



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

## 7 Adopt a sequenced approach, if necessary

Sometimes, the sheer multitude of needs and emergencies calls for a sequenced approach for project development, as in the case of the PRESU project in Bangui. Priorities are defined along with the government and civil society, and the first measures are financed quickly. At the same time, an in-depth diagnostic assessment is undertaken in order to suggest long-term actions that can contribute to sustainable social and economic reconstruction. In the later stages, the public authorities, central and local, retain project ownership.

## 8 Improve financing potential for economic activities and services

Incentive for the creation of companies can come from easier access to credit. Strengthening the local banking system appears to be a key lever. Programmes for the micro financing and insurance of small and medium-sized businesses can also play a significant role.

In that regard, it is also important to note that increased local and central fiscal revenue and improvements in public finance are part and parcel of economic revitalisation—if not a prerequisite.

In order to re-establish basic services and to ensure their longevity, before facilities are built, it is important to evaluate operating costs, in addition to both available and potential financial resources.

Road rehabilitation as part of the AIQIP project (AFD), Place Unité, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

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