



## > EDITORIAL

The partnership between member cities and the United Cities against Poverty has one aim; to help the cities of the south with the local politics of development in fields deemed to be priorities by their people. Thus mirroring the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations (MDG).

Whether it be in Yaoundé, Bamako, or upcoming in Porto Novo, the organization's aim is to promote better 'local governance' and to allow municipalities to better respond to the expectations and needs of their people. Our teaching skills and experience in the field is made available to the partner cities for this purpose.

Such an example is our Centre for training and urban job skills in Ouagadougou, which, in an annual program, organizes training which consists of six sessions. It is the aim of this Newsletter that we can make the practical issues and implications of our intervention better known.

**Philippe Di Loreto**, Secretary General, United Cities against Poverty

## > INTERVENTION BY THE UCP

### ■ YAOUNDE IV / The micro-financing program

In 2003, the mayor of Yaoundé IV (Cameroon) created in his municipality a micro finance institution in partnership with the United Cities. This 'Credit for Mutual Development' (CMD) although a simple initiative, is an essential notion to grant easy access to financial credit to a local population and is integral to the role of a mayor whose goal is to provide qualitative local services. In order to ensure durability of the scheme the CMD expressed a need for professionalism in its roll out and administration. PlaNet Finance provided a number of interventions to this end at the behest of the United Cities. The intervention of PlaNet Finance provided invaluable tools and procedures in the management of the scheme culminating in its recognition in January 2006 as the government's preferred partner at the expense of over 205 other institutions, which were closed.

The experience of Yaoundé is not an isolated one and the example is acting as an example of how municipalities may become involved with micro finance. The last annual conference of the AIMF (association of French speaking municipal authorities) which took place in Madagascar in November 2005 had as its main theme 'Cities and Micro-Finance'.

There is a growing consensus among the municipalities of the southern cities that they can play an important role in the development and promotion of micro-finance. They are clearly in touch with their constituents whilst at the same time occupying a privileged position as go-between at the local, national and international level. Of course financing institutions need to remain independent in their structure but the role of municipalities is nonetheless crucial in initiating, selecting and working with micro-enterprises as well as ensuring probity, providing expertise and external financing.

To help ensure success, it is clear that the municipalities of the north have strong decentralized contribution to make. Who better than they to partner municipalities of the south over the long term? Who better to offer technical assistance in key areas such as good governance, enterprise creation, expertise and international financing? The north has the capacity to tap the energy of its citizens including the migrant workers in each of their constituencies.

PlaNet Finance is convinced that they have a crucial role to play in the sustainable development and well being of the people with whom they interact.

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### ■ PORTO NOVO / A new partner

**Tourism** and local economic development are the twin goals of **Porto Novo**, capital of Benin, which has a population of some 300,000 inhabitants in eight districts. Since June 2005 these districts have been re-classified into a 'Community of Districts of Ouémé' (one of Benin's departments). This new structure allows inhabitants to tackle their joint problems and issues in the framework of a global development project. With the improvements expected in urban services, economic development aided by a boost in tourism is the goal of elected local officials.

At the end of November 2005, around a hundred participants took part in a working seminar in Porto Novo. Guests included: elected officials, businessmen, development association members and international partners who were present and defined a strategic tourist development plan.

United Cities decided to support the Community of Districts' aim in creating a mission for tourist development next to the President of the Community of Districts and in addition to support the creation of Tourism and Heritage office sited in one of the restored Afro-Brazilian houses.

## ■ ROSARIO - Argentine / A first evaluation mission

**Rosario**, the second largest city in Argentina with 1.3 million inhabitants runs a best practice local government. The mayor, Mr. Miguel Lifschitz, his staff, the town services, municipal employees and the inhabitants are collectively engaged in their own development. Especially in education, housing, public health and local democracy, they represent an ideal model to follow for the United Nations Development Programme in Argentina (see the publication of the UNDP 2003: Example of good governance, Rosario).

United Cities gave help in the field of public health. The system of public health had failed and private organizations which grew up in the 1990's under successive liberal governments were guilty of excessive pricing. Therefore, the municipality of Rosario decided to take care of public health which today takes 30% of the total budget of Rosario and employs 3,800 of the 9,000 municipal employees.

Ciudades Unidas financia estudios que permiten a las autoridades locales de Rosario obtener unos elementos orientativos para su política de sanidad destinada a mujeres jóvenes víctimas de prácticas abortivas clandestinas. El 30% de los fallecimientos de las mujeres sometidas a abortos son debidos a cuidados "rudimentarios". Los estudios entre la población de riesgo (mujeres y adolescentes) son llevados a cabo por médicos y profesionales de la salud que han participado en sesiones de formación continua organizadas por la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS), en Ginebra.

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## ■ BAMAKO / A consolidation phase

The new agreement between the 'City of Bamako and United Cities' reached its first year of application.

From the first pilot program within the district of **Sogoninko** cooperation with Bamako has centered on a Municipalities Funds for urban cleansing through the construction of mini-sewers, bringing together the work of the local population, municipalities, the state (HIPC-Heavily Indebted Poor Country Funds) and other partners.

This experience will allow consolidation and the knowledge capitalization for the associations and training institutes involved. The upcoming creation of an Observatory for town cleansing and of Houses for local initiatives will allow much greater participation from the local population in future cleansing projects whilst at the same time allowing for technical solutions to be found within the economic means of the local community.

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## > PARTERSHIP

### ■ Programme Solidarité Eau (PS-Eau) / Partner network for access to water in developing countries

Partner network for access to water and wastewater disposal in the countries of the south, PS-Eau coordinates and spreads information on the subject. Their web site includes numerous technical documents, studies and practical information on projects in drinking water supply. This network regularly issues details of the particular needs of such projects as defined by the sponsors and backers of the schemes.

PS-Eau informs us that the EU Council decided to consider allocating a total amount of Euro 500 million for an ACP-EU Water Facility and that the **2nd Call for Proposals of the ACP-EU Water Facility** is expected to be launched by mid-March 2006. A second tranche of Euro 250 million has been made available for the building of water infrastructures to improve access to drinking water. This call for proposals can be downloaded from: <http://europa.eu.int/waterfacility>

► To know more: [www.pseau.org](http://www.pseau.org)

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## > UPCOMING EVENTS

📍 **Valencia** (Spain). Between the 29th and 31st March 2006 the 5th forum of the World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty (WACAP) will be held. **Web site**: [http://mirror.undp.org/switzerland/wacap/fr/forum\\_valencia/index.htm](http://mirror.undp.org/switzerland/wacap/fr/forum_valencia/index.htm)

📍 **Geneva** (Switzerland). From the 18th to the 20th May 2006 an international meeting of cities will be held on the theme "Cities and Quality of Life. Global Challenges, Local Solutions". **Web site**: [www.qualitedevie.org](http://www.qualitedevie.org) - **E-mail**: [info@qualitedevie.org](mailto:info@qualitedevie.org)

► The **Forum's Programme** 

📍 **Vancouver** (Canada). The third session of the World Urban Forum (WUF III) will be held from 19-23 June 2006. The main theme of this session is "Our Future: Sustainable Cities - Turning Ideas into Action". **Web site**: <http://hq.unhabitat.org/wuf/2006/Organization.asp>

📍 **Nairobi** (Kenya). The Africities 4 Summit i.e. the fourth Pan-African edition of local government days will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 18-24 September 2006. The proposed theme for the Summit is: "Building local coalitions for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in African Local Governments". **Web site**: [www.africities2006nairobi.org/fr/index.asp](http://www.africities2006nairobi.org/fr/index.asp)

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