

Forum

Festival sur le Niger

Ségou, Thursday 01 February 2007

10h00 in the Meru Ba room

Contents:

Programme

Concept

Résumés of the talks and CVs of the speakers

Those who would like to receive the complete texts of the talks and/or the summary of the forum, should make a request to info@festivalsegou.org

Programme

- 10h00 – 11h00 :** **Opening of the Forum**
- 10h00 – 10h05 : Welcoming speech by Mr Mamou Daffé, the Director of the Festival
- 10h05 – 10h10 : Welcoming speech by Mrs Liesbeth Daffé, Forum coordinator
- 10h10 – 10h20 : Welcoming speech by the governor, Mr Abou Sow
- 10h20 – 10h30 : Introduction of the theme by Mr Mamadou NDiaye, Forum organiser
- 10h30 – 10h45 : Introduction of the Festival's guest of honour, Dr Mamadou Fabta Simaga, former Deputy Mayor of Ségou.
- 10h45 – 11h45 :** **First series of talks**
- 10h45 – 11h05 : Fighting poverty through work, in the context of globalisation, by Mr Dramane Haidara
- 11h05 – 11h25 : Adapting training and education to skill requirements by Mr Mamadou Ismaila Konaté
- 11h25 – 11h45 : Tourism: A source of sustainable employment? by Boubacar Doumbia
- 11h45 – 12h45 :** **Debate on the first series of talks**
- 12h45 – 14h15 :** **Lunch Break**
- 14h15 – 15h15 :** **Second series of talks**
- 14h15 – 14h35 : Microfinance: miracle solution to the problem of unemployment, by Dr Bassary Touré
- 14h35 – 14h55 : The problem of child labour in Africa, and HIV/AIDS, by Kouakou Ronsard Yao
- 14h55 – 15h15 : Culture and employment, par M Idrissa Ly
- 15h15 – 16h15 :** **Debate on the second series of talks**
- 16h15 – 16h30 :** **Closing** of the Forum, by Mr Mamadou NDiaye, Forum organiser

Concept of the forum

Theme: "Youth and Employment"

The mission of the millennium is to reduce poverty by half, by 2015. It is widely accepted that work is the best means by which to tackle poverty and that the global unemployment crisis is one of the greatest threats to our security today. If we continue as we are today, the world risks serious division, protectionism and conflict.

Therefore, everything must be done to create employment, particularly for young people, because the youth of today will create the foundations of our future economy. Productive and secure jobs allow young people to realize their aspirations, to improve their quality of life and to participate actively in society. This reinforces the economy by creating a contingent of young consumers and taxpayers who, in turn, will create the right conditions to attract local and foreign investment. This will also benefit society by reducing the costs linked to social problems, in particular the issues of drugs and delinquency. Persistent unemployment of young people is a hindrance to economic and social development, perpetuates the cycle of poverty from one generation to the next and leads to higher rates of crime, violence, economic crises, drug addiction and political extremism.*

The solution, however, is not just to create jobs, but to find secure and sustainable employment for young people, because social security has a profound impact on all levels of society. It offers workers and their families' access to healthcare and protection against loss of income. Social security offers elderly people a guaranteed income during retirement. Children benefit from social security programs designed to help families to cope with the costs of education. In the case of businesses and employers, social security helps to maintain stable working relations and the productivity of the workforce. Social security can also contribute to social cohesion, through economic growth and overall development of a country, in relation to living standards, by protecting people against the effects of structural and technological changes and by forming the basis for a more positive approach to globalisation.

Its obvious what is at stake, but where do we stand today?

Around the world, human beings are confronted by a lack of stable and sustainable employment through unemployment and underemployment, unproductive and poor quality work, insecurity of work and income, denial of workers' rights and inequality between male and female workers, exploitation of migrant workers, a lack of representation or avenues through which to express workers' opinions and insufficient protection and support for the sick, disabled and elderly.

Close to 200 million people are unemployed – more than ever before. Half of the world's working population lives on less than two dollars a day. More than half the population of Africa is under 18 years old and is hard hit by unemployment. In many economies, young people are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults. Young people represent around 60 percent of the unemployed population in Africa, and the percentage of unemployed young women is particularly high in all countries. Moreover, only 5 to 10 percent of new arrivals to the labour market can be integrated into the formal economy. Young people are

* Source: ILO

over-represented in the informal economy and only 5 to 10 percent of the working population of sub-Saharan Africa benefit from any form of social security.

In Mali, the employment situation has been deteriorating since 1987. The national rate of unemployment was 9 percent in 2004, and 12 percent amongst young people. Unemployment is equally apparent in rural areas as in towns and cities.

We can therefore conclude that *the world is confronted by an increasingly serious crisis of unemployment, and particularly youth unemployment.*

How have the problems concerning youth employment become so serious and what are the possible solutions?

During the Forum, which will take place in Ségou on Thursday 1st February 2007, the speakers will discuss the causes and consequences of the lack of sustainable employment, and the possible solutions, placing an emphasis on the Malian context.

The Talks

Fighting poverty with work, in the context of globalisation

By Mr Dramane Haidara

Today, although the world of work offers possibilities to certain people, for too many others, it is synonymous with poorly paid work, unemployment and poverty.

v The global workforce increases by 50 million people every year, in a marketplace with a far greater number of arrivals than departures. This increase is essentially the product of developing countries (97 percent).

v Around half of the billion people in developing countries living on a dollar a day, or less, are of working age (15 – 64). The frequently long and arduous workdays barely allow them to earn enough to ensure the simple survival of themselves and their families.

v There are 180 million unemployed people around the world, of whom half are less than 24 years of age.

The participants at the UN Millennium Summit decided to “form and apply strategies which would give young people around the world a real chance to find decent and useful work”. To ensure decent work for the youth of today and tomorrow it is important to make full employment a primary objective of the global social and economic strategies as well as in national politics.

The main messages of the International Labour Organisation

60 years ago, the member states of the ILO adopted ‘the Philadelphia Declaration’ which includes visionary declarations such as “work is not a product” and “poverty, where it exists, poses a threat to the prosperity of all”. Long before the term ‘globalisation’ had been invented, the declaration had underlined the fact that countries don’t live in isolation and that the destinies of their populations are interconnected.

The UN Millennium Summit adopted the Millennium Development Goals. World leaders are committed to halving extreme poverty by 2015. The ILO believes that this aim can only be achieved if individuals have work. Work is the best means for overcoming poverty and, therefore, we need to place employment at the centre of national politics and strategies for reducing poverty. The report “Fighting Poverty with Work” suggests how this could be achieved.

The structure of the talk

Mr Haidara’s talk will discuss:

1. **The challenge we face in order to exterminate poverty and promote sustainable employment :**
 - a. *To work out an employment schedule*
 - b. *To build a more integrated global economy*
 - c. *To forge partnerships*
 - d. *To build bridges*
 - e. *To inspire trust*

- f. *To work together*
2. **Analysis of poverty**, in relation to the deficit of sustainable employment and to the life cycle, allows us to identify some of the main reasons why people are entrenched in the multiple hardships of poverty, and it allows us to:
 3. Lay the foundations for **poverty reduction strategies based on the creation of sustainable employment**. The three challenges we have to overcome are:
 - a. Increasing demand for workers and raising productivity and income of those who live and work in poverty;
 - b. Integrating socially excluded communities into the labour market and overcoming discrimination, of which women and young girls are the most common victims;
 - c. Improving the conditions of developing countries trading with richer countries and attempting to attract investment.
 4. **The actions of the ILO:** The principal actions undertaken by the ILO emphasise *the interaction between training, investment, business and financial measures and social integration*, taking into account the priorities of impoverished communities.
 5. **Institutional support** for sustainable employment and poverty reduction.
 6. **The need for a coherent international policy.**
 7. **The fight against HIV/AIDS**
 8. **Political coherence and PRSD** (Poverty Reduction Strategic Documents)

Mr Dramane Haidara, principal BIT specialist in development strategy and policy, is the Assistant Manager of the sub-regional office of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Dakar.

Adapting training and education to skill requirements,

by Mr Mamadou Ismaila Konaté

The questions of training, employment and appropriateness of employment pose a real challenge for African decision-makers.

All employment policies, in particular those aimed at young people, implemented directly by national authorities or in conjunction with development partners or financial backers have failed. This failure is noted in the growing number of unemployed young people, for the most part applicants for low grade jobs or untrained and looking for their first professional experience.

According to foreign investors in Mali, the problem is not a lack of available work or posts, but more a problem with the very limited capacity of human resources on the market when compared with needs and demands expressed by company bosses. This is an opinion widely shared by analysts who cite the poor quality of both formal, or professional, training and apprenticeship training, as the reason underlying the lack of work.

Our country, like its neighbours, inherited the colonial school system. Schooling in our country is extremely restricted and very little has changed in the prescribed training and learning content. Now, as during colonial times, the real function of schools is linked to their political and economic uses; the training of pupils was justified then, as it is today, by a school system restricted in terms of both its manpower and its materials, which is more or less limited to the teaching of reading, writing and calculation in the language of the former colonial power.

After independence, schools were not subject to reconsideration taking into account the needs of the newly independent states. They continued to train people to become civil servants and to work in the public sector with a strong state presence as the only economic animator.

Although the Socialist State promised state welfare, this ambition very quickly became an illusory notion. The demographic explosion, famine and drought led states to accept the 'structural adjustment' plans proposed and implemented by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

These draconian programmes were denounced by the people and then the governments of these countries, but it soon became clear that money devoted to the construction of schools and universities, and to ensure teachers' salaries, no longer had anything to do with the Minister of Education, but only concerned the financial backers. Education and training were thus the first victims of the slashing budget cuts.

The end of 1990 was marked by strong political and social demands, often led by discontented and restless youth. Mali could not escape this movement and the old regimes, which had been in place for decades, were removed by a revolution craving democracy.

National territories became part of an economic community. National identity has given way to community citizens. The law which is now standardized applies to the entire extent of the community. The market runs from Senegal to Benin, and is made up of tens of millions of

individuals. Jobs are now won following serious competition. In the name of democracy and community engagement, with the help of globalisation, opening of our borders obliges us to align ourselves and take part in competition. Competition is the instrument of quality control of human resources.

Returning to the specific topic, here is a brief recall:

- The socio-educational context ;
- The prevailing lack of labour;
- The imbalance between the demand and availability of qualifications;

Finally, we will discuss possible solutions.

Mr Mamadou Ismaila Konaté, Business lawyer, member of the Malian Bar Association, co-founder of the Bamako Jurifis Lawyers Consult Cabinet since 1998. He is particularly interested in employment questions, more precisely in youth employment. He is currently concerned with the question of legal work for young lawyers. During his professional career, Mr Konaté has taken part in the writing and updating of "Doing Business" for African States.

Tourism: a source of sustainable employment?

By M Boubacar Doumbia

In order to create employment that would protect cultural identity and promote tourism in Ségou, we have tried to adapt a Bamanan tradition to a working project. In creating this project, we were inspired by:

1. **The Ndomo**, which is an initiation ceremony for Bamanan youths. What interested us about this tradition was the aspect of getting young people together and teaching them so that they can better integrate into the adult world. For this reason, we have kept the form of the five-horned Ndomo mask, because *“The five-horned mask is a reminder that human beings are creatures that need to work to survive. The five appendages relate to the fingers on a hand, essential tools and indispensable for any kind of physical work”* (Dominique Zahan).
2. **Segou architecture**: which is characterised by a Sudano-Sahelian style with an outer coat of red earth. This type of architecture is disappearing.
3. **Natural dye techniques** which are a strong Bamanan tradition.

The Creation of the Ndomo Structure:

With the three sources of inspiration cited above, the structure was designed and implemented.

1. It is a Segou-style adobe building
2. The doctrine of Ndomo education revolves around the Ndomo mask, so we have incorporated the five horns of the Ndomo in the architecture.
3. With regards to the activities which take place in the Ndomo structure, there is a strong emphasis on promotion of natural dying techniques promoted by the Kasobané group since 1979.

Today, the return to cultural values and related innovations have had the effect that the Ndomo structure has been much appreciated in terms of cultural tourism. In 2006, the Ndomo structure registered **2446** visitors.

The adaptation of certain cultural values to meet our needs:

Certain Bamanan cultural values were adapted for organisation and implementation of the Ndomo project. In this way we have:

- In terms of designations
 - The structure **ndomo**
 - The promoter **ndomotigi**
 - The workers **ndomodew**
 - Those responsible **ndomojolokotigiu**
- Production was organised with the idea of getting Bamanan-based work going again. This is made up of:
 - **Forobabaara** (collective work)
 - **Jonforobaara** (individual work)
 - **Jatigidon** (support work)

For the well-being of the workers, an emphasis has been placed on mutual assistance: **DAMA**

The Ndomo: An economic tool for cultural, social and tourism development

Economic Function

A group of independent artisans with a communal working environment at their disposal, brought together on the same site and working together in:

- production of material which has been dyed and decorated using natural dyeing techniques
- exhibition of the created collections
- marketing, management and sale of their products.

A permanent concern is balancing **quality** and **creativity** with **efficiency**.

Social Function

Simply creating employment isn't enough. In order to beat poverty with meagre incomes, it was necessary to find a formula that would allow young people to do their share and to achieve their aspirations. For this, it was necessary to have:

- The built-in incentive of a single, collectively-managed fund.
- The incentive to work and make individual effort in return for solidarity and effective management

A permanent concern is to take into account the **cultural values** of Malian society

Development Function

In order to continue what had been started, it was necessary to come up with a development strategy including the following:

- Research on natural colours and their dyeing techniques.
- Creation and innovation using traditional dyeing techniques
- Marketing
- Continuous training of Ndomo artisans and artists
- Ecology i.e. planting trees and plants used in making dyes and recycling used leaves and bark
- Promoting natural dyeing activities to the general public.

Instruments

1. Organisation of production whereby the means have been brought together to ensure:
 - a. **Collective work** (large orders, fairs and exhibitions) Taking part in this type of work allows each artisan to be sure of a decent and regular income.
 - b. **Individual work** planned in advance, allowing each artisan to supplement basic income.
2. A small amount of the money earned through both collective and individual work is used to pay for running costs for the building (taxes, telephone bills, etc.)
3. Programmed **remunerated work** enables the artisans to support certain social and cultural elements of the programme.
4. **Constant activity** with meetings to raise concerns and make decisions.
5. **An individual savings account** is obligatory for each member. This account is added to gradually over time.
6. Installation of a social security fund for healthcare and retirement.

7. **DAMA mutual assistance** in realising projects for the well-being of members (purchase of housing plots and their construction, living costs, furniture)
8. The encouragement of management planning (planning notebooks).
9. **Conservation** of natural dyeing techniques.
10. **Continuous creation of a collection** for sale
11. **Training programmes** and assistance programmes (women's associations)
12. **Cultivation of plants used for dyeing** (encouraging the villagers to take part)
13. **Recycling leaves and bark**
14. **Organisation of visits** to the site

All within a Strategic Development Plan, drawn up by the group leadership

Insight into the creation of employment through other projects:

We have just looked at a classic example in our own Ndomo structure. Along with this example, Ndomo has been involved, with the support of DED and PSIC, in the creation of permanent jobs within the two Ségou women's associations. These associations benefit from a training programme offered by Ndomo and soon, also, from a bogolan tour of Ségou. The tour will allow them to focus on the creation of other permanent and temporary jobs related to bogolan

Mr Boubacar Doumbia, a graduate in design and plastic arts from the National Institute of Malian Arts, is a founding member of the Kasobané and Segu-laben artists' collectives. He has several publications to his name, including the Bambara manuscripts "Dondala" (1979) and "Dinye latigè" (1980), which won the first and second prizes respectively at the national language literature competition, and the book "The Evolution of Natural Dyes" (2003)

Microfinance: miracle solution to the problem of unemployment?

By Dr Bassary Touré

The concept of microfinance covers the whole range of financial products: micro-credit, micro-insurance and different savings products. Generally speaking, micro-credit is the best-known aspect. Micro-credit allows the less fortunate, particularly women, to obtain small-scale loans that traditional banks wouldn't grant.

It is only right to pay homage to the man who is considered to be the inventor of the micro-credit system, the Bangladeshi Muhammad Yunus, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize 2006, recognised as the man behind the concept and success of micro-credit. Mr Yunus bypassed the obstacle of loan guarantees, by basing the system on trust and the guarantee of jointly-liable micro-entrepreneurs in place of the traditional collateral demanded by banks. The system has since spread, first of all because it is a product well adapted to this section of the population, but also because of the high recovery rate (over 90 percent). Thanks to the Grameen Bank, a bank aimed specifically at the less fortunate, several million people have been rehabilitated into the formal financial system and this has inspired the whole world.

The impact of microfinance on poverty reduction

Those with access to microfinance now have the chance to earn much more. Instead of simply thinking of day-to-day survival, they can start to make plans for the future. They can invest in food, homes, healthcare, education for their children, etc. In other words, they have a chance to escape the vicious cycle of poverty. In this way, micro-credit is an effective weapon against poverty and hunger. It is a way of getting the best out of their ideas, energy and way of seeing things. It is a way of supporting productive enterprises and, thus, to help these groups to prosper.

Microfinance is an essential way to both fight poverty and insecurity and to help local development at the same time. Without a system for financing promising projects for economic growth, there is no growth and, therefore, no long-lasting reduction of poverty. All policies for fighting poverty require the population to have increased access to financial services with a view to removing one of the strongest constraints on economic and social development for the most impoverished areas and to introduce financial capital.

Microfinance: a panacea?

Even though we believe that microfinance offers an opportunity for small-scale investment and the creation of employment that comes with it, and that it is an effective instrument for the reduction of poverty, we do not believe it is a panacea. Microfinance is not a miracle solution but it is an important tool in the fight against poverty and, in the same way, in the creation of employment.

Microfinance must be supplemented by other measures: the proper regulation of economic and social activity by the public authorities, development of infrastructure, reinforcement of capacities and general financial support of the economy through public aid for development.

New employment is created as the result of economic growth, but not all types of economic growth actually contribute to the reduction of poverty. It has to be a redistributive growth in

incomes, growth based on domains where the majority of people are less affluent, such as the rural sector. Growth needs a good macro-economic programme and steady inflation, increasing resources and controlled spending in order to maintain a manageable deficit. It requires the implementation of structural measures such as a good business environment. Complex regulations are often synonymous with inefficiency and corruption. It also requires the reform of key sectors such as water, electricity and even telecommunications. In Mali's case, growth requires the reform of production networks, such as the cotton industry. It requires effective decentralisation and structural reform of the health and education sectors. Microfinance has proved to be effective but it is an instrument that must be integrated into a joint strategy, in this case with macroeconomic policy.

Microfinance in Mali

The microfinance sector has, over the course of the last few years, seen relatively favourable development, characterised by the upward trend of the main indicators of activity notably installation of companies, the level of penetration, the value of deposits and loans totals and, moreover, a relative improvement in the quality of the loans portfolio. Microfinance services are, nonetheless, still confronted by structural difficulties such as governance issues linked to the functioning of administrative organs, management and supervision, or even practice, of bad credit management. Microfinance has specifically made a significant contribution to poverty control in Mali. The overall value of loans granted had reached 50.395 billion in 2005. The loans have been used for:

1. financing private schools, construction companies and public works ;
2. financing agricultural equipment (motorised cultivators, threshing machines, tractors, etc.) particularly in the Office du Niger (rice) and CMDT (cotton) zones.

Interest rates generally vary between 12 and 27 percent (the statutory limit according to the law). This limit is often ignored by certain, uncontrolled organisations. The question of fixed price scales for financial services offered by decentralised financial systems is something that needs to be reviewed. A study of this is currently underway in partnership with BCEAO. This will make concrete proposals for fixing interest rates, taking into account, on the one hand, the real costs of services offered and, on the other, the economic capacity of those using these services. The recovery rate is in the satisfactory range (95 percent). DFS[†] are still focussed on areas of relatively high economic potential, such as Sikasso, Ségou, Mopti, Kayes and the district of Bamako, rather than the disadvantaged regions of the north (Gao, Tombouctou and Kidal) which are hardly touched. In terms of employment, the microfinance sector has created 3000 permanent jobs in Mali, or 9 percent of the manpower in the Malian administration. DFS cover 698 of the 703 Malian Communes and one in six Malians over 15 years of age benefits either directly or indirectly from the services offered by more than 800 outlets. The number of indirectly created jobs is not known, but it is high.

Constraints

The constraints on youth employment are still linked to credit access and cost, problems with product circulation, poor qualifications of human resources, a poor level of organisation and inability to meet demand. The creation of jobs must be backed up by coordination or support structures specifically aimed at youth and by better adaptation to the offer of financial services.

[†] Decentralized Financial Systems

Challenges to overcome

In order to reinforce microfinance in Mali there is a Government-led plan of action 2005-2008. This aims to:

1. improve access to financial services for the least fortunate;
2. make the sector more professional; and
3. provide and maintain further microfinance structures

With regards to the surveillance of DFS, the government continues to increase the capacity of the watchdog in charge of surveillance and control of DFS. One important observation is the poor functioning of administrative, management and control areas, particularly amongst affiliate groups or those outside any network. It would be wise to correct this tendency.

Recommendations

The constraints which continue to weigh heavily on the development of micro-credit are: illiteracy, lack of infrastructure (roads, telecommunications, etc.) and inadequacy of the business environment. It should be pointed out that financial exclusion is the characteristic most commonly shared around the world. More than half of the world's population still has no access to basic financial services. In the UEMOA economic area, more than 82 percent of the active population is excluded from the banking system. Traditional banks still don't have much involvement in microfinance activities. This tendency will abate. Already, more than 100 million people around the world benefit from microfinance and 500 million people could potentially benefit, but microfinance activities cannot be established in a sustainable way, or on a large scale, unless financial services aimed at the less fortunate are incorporated into the general financial system. This is also an opportune moment for banks and investors to take over public financing. Public institutions must play the role of catalyst.

Mr Bassary Touré has a PHD in Development Economics (University of Paris I). He was Assistant Director General of Mali's International Cooperation, first advisor to the Malian Ambassador to Bonn and General Manager of the Caisse Autonome d'Amortissement, before becoming Economy and Finance Minister of Mali (1991-1992). He is also the GTZ/CEPIA consultant for the Strategic Team for Poverty Control in Mali.

The problem of child labour in Africa, and of HIV/AIDS

By Mr Kouakou Ronsard Yao

Children are the future of the world, should they not learn to work? If so, under what conditions? According to recent estimates, at least 250 million children, or 16 in every 100, around the world work in order to earn a living in developing countries (working in mines, with chemical products and pesticides in agriculture or around dangerous machines, etc.) of whom more than half work full time. At least 60 million children around the world are exploited and work under intolerable conditions, enslaved to pay off debts or forced into prostitution. Child labour, and not training, is, by all considerations, a violation of human rights. At the same time both a product and a cause of poverty, it is a prison which is a strain on children's capacities and reduces their potential. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 48 million child labourers. Nearly one in every three children under the age of 15 works (29 percent).

Mr YAO, Kouakou Ronsard, will clearly explain the difference between child labour and training, or apprenticeship. Training children is a tradition in African villages. The women teach the girls how to do housework, whilst the men teach the boys how to work, depending on the setting this could be agriculture, fishing, stock raising, etc.

This is a matter of active apprenticeship, and the work given to children is adapted to their age, maturity and intelligence. School has taken nothing away from this traditional education. The introduction of formal schooling means the child follows both the school programme and their traditional rural programme, according to their sex.

Child labour is different to training

The participation of children in economic activity can be beneficial, provided it does not harm their health, their development or their education. Under the conditions listed above, children are allowed to work from the age of 12 according to International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 138. What types of work are not included? This is more strictly defined and applies to children working under conditions which don't meet the conditions listed above. This includes all children less than 12 years old working in any branch of the economy, children between 12 and 14 years old engaged in activities harmful to their health and any children engaged in the worst forms of child labour. The worst forms of child labour include children reduced to slavery, forcibly recruited, subjugated to prostitution, victim to the slave trade, forced to take part in illicit activities or carrying out dangerous work.

Children in need

Children in need can be in their situation due to problems with work, housing, food, medical healthcare, drugs, prostitution, sexual exploitation, armed rebellions, etc...

In family life, the most common problems for children concern their education and well-being, because more and more parents are failing to fulfil their obligation to ensure a good level of education, care, nutrition and health for their children. The consequences of this can be seen in the frequent disputes between parents and children, which can create disharmony, disunity and, eventually, family disintegration. There are, equally, children who have no family life. This includes street children, child labourers, exploited children, handicapped children, displaced or refugee children, child delinquents and children in prison. But these children are not all delinquents or drug addicts. Many of them work to survive.

These children need their important economic role to be recognised. They demand authority, respect and the right to organise themselves. They need someone to listen to them. (Study published in 1996 by the Ministry of Social Affairs in Abidjan)

Adults exploit them economically, often paying them less than the minimum wage (SMIG) and they don't benefit from any kind of social security. These premature workers want limited working hours, the right to rest, to leisure time and to be paid according to SMIG or SMAG (for agricultural work). They need education, literacy and medical care. These child labourers can also be found in villages, working as farmers and confronted by a lack of land. In order to tackle this problem, the governments of our respective countries should reconsider land rights, to give children the opportunity to benefit from cultivable land and, therefore, limit flight of rural populations to towns. There are also children in prison, abandoned by everyone, because they have been classified as delinquents. Often, they are abandoned to their own fate, suffering from various medical problems. Rehabilitation programmes have been organised in prisons but don't work properly.

Government action (in the case of Côte d'Ivoire) consists of the regulation and repression of violence committed against minors. Administrative structures were created to try and help young people; the Ministries of youth promotion and civic service, family protection, security, employment, social provision, health, justice and public liberty. These Ministries were given portfolios concerning children in need and, above all, illegality concerning them. In Côte d'Ivoire, a plan of action has been in place since 1992 for the protection, survival and development of children. The background is social at the disposal of young people. On an international level, the government has the support of certain international organisations.

There are cooperation programmes signed by Côte d'Ivoire with organisations such as UNICEF, ILO, UNESCO and ONUDC. UNICEF-CI has planned programmes in the sectors of healthcare, water, sanitation and education. Planning programmes to improve the situation of children in need, and that of women. UNICEF considers: "Education is an effective means to avoid child labour. Educated children are less likely to be victims of exploitation. In addition, working children who have the opportunity to continue their studies have the best chance to see an improvement in their situation".

Mr Yao agrees with the last sentence, but not with the first two. Consider that, in Côte d'Ivoire and certainly in the majority of sub-Saharan African countries, 70 percent of educated children live outside the family environment, because there aren't appropriate education facilities in their family's area, or there is a shortage of schools. For these children, the question of guardianship poses a problem. Often they live alone, with no electricity and barely able to feed themselves. From a very young age, these children must take charge of their own lives. Under these conditions, most of them are ready for anything.

To get out of the mire of child labour, our countries need to introduce some bold policies for poverty reduction. The so-called developed countries have been through what we are currently living. They were able to escape it through willpower and out of concern for the creation and sharing of wealth. Solidarity funds for young people should be encouraged. It will be necessary to come up with different policies, because it isn't enough to just give, as is often the case, but there must also be returns for the state so that it can re-inject them into supporting the creation of jobs for young people.

HIV/AIDS and employment

According to BIT estimates, HIV/AIDS has, to this day, deprived the active population of the world of 28 million workers, and this number will only increase if we do not take sufficient measures to tackle it. At this rate, the active population will lose a further 48 million workers between now and 2010, and a further 26 million on top of that by 2015. The direct losses are further aggravated by the incapacity of millions of workers in the final stages of the disease. Other workers then have to carry the economic burden in order to meet the needs of their families, and of the other people of working age who are both an economic and social burden through the need for healthcare and aid.

The active population suffers from both the quantitative and qualitative losses. We will also mention, more specifically, the loss in capacity of human resources because of the rupture in the transmission of knowledge and skills, both formal and informal, which is normally ensured by parents, advisors, older workers and teachers. The ILO also estimates that the affected countries lost 25 billion dollars annually between 1992 and 2002.

The informal economy

In developing regions, the informal economy makes up more than half the total workforce, and in many countries it is much more. Businesses in the informal economy generally rely on one or two operators. If one worker falls ill or dies, these small enterprises often find it very difficult to keep going, and the precariousness of employment in the informal sector, the lack of social protection and the limited access to healthcare only aggravate the impact of the epidemic on workers. Migrant workers are also often very exposed to HIV.

The example of Côte d'Ivoire

The prevalence of HIV amongst the sexually active population between 15 and 49 years old was estimated to be around 7 percent at the end of 2003. As is the case around the world, young adults represent the main victims of the AIDS epidemic in Côte d'Ivoire. This situation has a baneful impact on several sectors. For example, in the education sector, five teachers die every school week due to AIDS. The sick teachers are unavailable, and, from 1997 to 2000, there were at least 71 655 children, aged 6 to 11, who could not be educated due to HIV/AIDS.

In the agricultural sector, which is the foundation of the Ivorian economy, the area of cultivation has been reduced by the same amount as the workforce (25 percent), which is partly due to the fact that the man/woman ratio of AIDS-related deaths between 1986 and 1992 was 6 to one, and that the workforce in the industrial sector is mainly male. The hypothesis is therefore that this sector would be particularly affected by the HIV infection, when compared to other, more feminine urban activities, and that this has caused enormous dysfunctions.

Description and evolution of the impact of HIV/AIDS on business

The choice of a health policy by a business has its cost, but it also has its advantages, notably that of reducing absenteeism for health reasons, which is also a problem.

The absence of effective treatment for HIV/AIDS in Africa indirectly affects the economic sphere, because treatments would prolong the life expectancy of people infected with HIV and would influence the rate of mortality and the morbidity of personnel and, therefore would influence turnover and the subsequent decisions based on it. However, what could be done in terms of a medical response hasn't been applied; too few businesses participate in health insurance schemes for their employees, with the exception of the public sector. It can be said, moreover, that the proposal of setting up healthcare systems within businesses presents, essentially, three limits:

1. The installation of a healthcare system, even if it implies expenditure and therefore available cash flow for expenses that have often not been anticipated. is gradual,
2. Public and private sector employees, and their families, represent only a minor part of the active population and this context excludes those active in the informal sector.
3. This policy accentuates the often paternal role of employers in Africa. It would seem necessary for employers to consider these healthcare aspects not as a favour to employees, or as a secondary aspect of economic activity, but as an economic tool in personnel management.

Beyond the limits listed here, the application of this policy by businesses could lead to some interesting possibilities, because there is a training effect linked to the bringing together of imbalances, like those which exist between the formal and informal sectors. Many business employees are not interested in working in the formal sector because they don't wish to pay taxes. However, the apparition of new advantages in the formal sector could be an element in favour of the formalisation of informal establishments. The enlargement of the formal sector would precede the improvement of work productivity, favour job security through respect for standards, increase state revenues through taxation and, therefore, increase public resources and means for intervention. The development of medical care systems in the working environment would represent another network for distributing medication and treatments, which could be important once treatments or vaccines against HIV/AIDS become available in Africa. This is particularly true in countries where healthcare systems are defective, saturated or barely performing. Company healthcare would become a lever of support for national healthcare policies and an effective tool in HIV control in terms of both economic planning and public health.

Mr YAO Kouakou Ronsard, an Ivorian with a degree (CAPES) in biological science and technology, is the Director of the Interministerial Committee for Drugs Control (CILAD) in Côte d'Ivoire, which has given him the opportunity to work on the situation of children on coffee, cocoa and rubber plantations in his country, in relation to drug use.

Culture and Employment,

by M Idrissa Ly

Today, the question of employment is the biggest challenge our countries are confronting and all avenues should be explored to find a solution.

Marginalized for a long time, certain sectors of active life such as culture were absent in economic discussions and the level of their economic weight and their contribution to poverty control were ignored by public authorities. Given its dynamism and potential, it seems clear that the cultural sector and its derivatives are the most promising in African countries and particularly in this country whose cultural riches are extolled throughout the world.

This communication, without claiming to be exhaustive, will revolve on the following:

To start with, we will explain why culture has for so long been treated as a marginal sector of the economy and why it was not recognized as a productive domain and source of employment. This enables us to raise the difficult relationships between culture and economy, a duo which was brought together as the basis of a “forced marriage”.

Second, we will try to prove that « the contribution of culture to the economy is a far from negligible; the cultural sector which has been industrialized for decades, is today at the cutting edge of creating wealth, added value and numerous jobs, direct and indirect.

From a statistical basis, we will present the present face of the sector and show that current world economy and that of our countries are making a strategic error in failing to consider as essential the economy and employment in the “creative industries” as essential. This will take place from a basis of the statistics of African countries which have made significant progress in the field of cultural industries.

The third point of the communication will contain some concrete examples in Mali.

Structured and unstructured Malian cultural areas, professional and amateur are developing, creating vocations and numerous jobs – the music industry, the cinema, plastic arts, photography, design... It is the same for sectors such as amateur performances, festivals and cultural events

This platform also enables us to highlight the difficulties and the major obstacles to promotion of « full employment » in these areas close to our major available assets.

The communication ends on good perspectives: new avenues of reflection, objectives to reach in the medium term to revolutionize the cultural sector, attract significant funding, alert decision makers, heighten the awareness of creative individuals, facilitate development of national, regional, sub-regional markets, improving the offers of cultural goods and services.

It is interesting to highlight that what is most important has already been done: the economics of culture has carved out for itself a role in the general economy. It is in our country’s interest to promote its creation and its creativity because it requires no imports of raw materials in this domain. These talents, both already discovered and emerging are readily available. An important market exists and is far from being saturated. “The stage is set, it’s up to us to play!”

Monsieur Idrissa Ly, titulaire d'un DESS en Gestion des Institutions Culturelles, a fait son mémoire sur « Politique culturelle et décentralisation, quelle décentralisation mettre en œuvre pour démocratiser la culture ? (Comparaison système français et cas malien) ». Actuellement il remplit la fonction de Chargé des projets des industries culturelles, du développement culturel et de la politique de décentralisation, au Ministère de la Culture du Mali. Parallèlement à cette fonction il est Coordinateur de l'Agence pour la Promotion des Industries Culturelles, et Président de l'Association pour la Promotion des Industries Culturelles (APIC- Mali), où il est en charge de structurer le secteur des industries culturelles pour qu'elles servent de levier de développement économique, de professionnaliser le domaine afin que les biens et services culturels soient mieux connus, de renforcer les capacités des opérateurs culturels par la formation des acteurs, et de développer des politiques culturelles qui intègrent le contexte de décentralisation et la dimension économique du secteur. Il est également professeur vacataire chargé de cours de technique d'expressions et communication à l'Institut Universitaire de Gestion (IUG) de Bamako. Il fut rédacteur en collaboration de plusieurs numéros de « Echo des lettres », bulletin de liaison des professeurs de français au Mali, rédacteur en chef d'organe du MPR, « la Voix du Tigre » depuis sa création, et rédacteur en collaboration du Magazine « Donko » du Ministère de la Culture du Mali.

Mr. Idrissa Ly who holds a DESS in Management of Cultural Institutions, wrote his dissertation on "Cultural policy and decentralization: what decentralization should be put in place to democratize culture? (Comparison between the French system and the Malian situation.) He currently holds the lead position for cultural industries and decentralization policy at the Ministry of Culture. In addition to this role he is Coordinator of the Agency for promotion of Cultural Industries, and President of the Association for the Promotion of Cultural Industries (APIC-Mali), where he is in charge of structuring the cultural industry sector to serve as a lever for economic development, to professionalize the domain so that good and services become better known, capacity building of cultural operators through stakeholder training, and development of cultural policy that integrates the context of decentralization and the sector's economic dimension. He is also a temporary lecturer with a course on techniques for expression and communications at the University Institute of Management of Bamako. He was collaborative editor of several editions of "Echo des Lettres", the news-sheet for French teachers in Mali, editor-in-chief for the MPR publication "The Voice of the Tiger" since its inception, and collaborating editor of the magazine "Donko" of the Malian Ministry of Culture.