Acacia Policy Influence Study/SENEGAL

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

The policy influence of projects financed by IDRC's Acacia program

Information & Communication Technologies for Development (Acacia): The Case of Senegal

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACACIA : African Communities and the Information Society
ADF : African Development Forum
ADM : Municipal Development Agency
APROFES : Association for the Advancement of Women
ART : Telecommunications Regulatory Agency
CNDST : National Centre for Scientific and Technical Documentation
CONGAD : Council of Development NGOs
IDRC : International Development Research Centre
DAF : Records Administration Division
ELSA : Evaluation and Learning System for Africa
ENDA : Environment and Development in the Third World
ENS : Ecole Normale Supérieure [Senior Norma School]
ENSUT : Ecole Supérieure Universitaire de Technologie [University Technology School]
FLE : Family Life Education
UNFPA : United Nations Population Fund
GEEP : Groupe pour l'Etude et l'Enseignement de la Population [Group for Study and Education of the Population]
IGEN : Office of the Inspector General of National Education
MEN : Ministry of National Education
MICOM : Ministry of Communication
MINT : Ministry of the Interior
MRST : Ministry of Scientific and Technical Research
NEPAD : New Partnership for African Development
OSIRIS : Observatory on Information Systems, Networks and the Information Highway in Senegal
PDEF : 10-Year Education and Training Plan
PFR : Regional Focal Point
UNDP : United Nations Development Programme
SAS (SNAS) : (National) Acacia Strategy for Senegal
SENTEL : Mobile Telephone Company
SONATEL : Société Nationale des Télécommunications [National Telecommunications Company]
SAFEFOD : African Society for Education and Training
PS : Permanent Secretariat
ICTs : Information and communication technologies
UCAD : Université Cheikh Anta Diop
UDEN : Syndicat Unique et Démocratique des Enseignants [Single and Democratic Union of Teachers]
UNESCO : United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID : US Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Acacia program has been underway in Senegal since 1997, in a context that has seen growing empowerment of development players as the State has withdrawn from productive activities. Local governments are taking increasing responsibility, and several policy areas have been transferred to them: education, health, governance, etc.

The process of preparing the Senegal Acacia Strategy (SAS) was highly participatory, thanks to which the program has indeed taken account of people's expressed needs, but within an overall framework of development priorities identified by the authorities, consistent with the sectoral approach of the country's development strategy. These priorities relate essentially to education, employment and entrepreneurship, natural resource management, governance, and health. The Acacia program therefore reflects the sectoral approach to development in Senegal, through its focus on these key sectors, with due regard, of course, to the needs and priorities expressed by the people themselves.

The Government of Senegal had no coherent framework for introducing information and communication technologies (ICTs), despite the existence of some of Africa's most highly developed telecommunications infrastructure, despite the fact that the authorities were well aware of the importance of ICTs for the country, and despite the many players involved in the field of ICTs.

This setting therefore offered IDRC the opportunity to influence policies, in particular sectoral policies such as those for education and health, consistent with the sectoral planning approach to economic and social development that Senegal has adopted, but reflecting, as well, a more holistic view, i.e. an effort to encourage the authorities to adopt a coherent ICT strategy.

It must also be noted that, despite the interest in ICT issues on the part of government and even of the private sector, there was a glaring lack of expertise in this field, particularly when it comes to research.

All the same, such a context, generally speaking, was quite conducive to implementing the Acacia program, with the likelihood that it could have an influence on policies.

Nevertheless, while one of IDRC's main objectives is to influence development policies through the results of research, most Acacia projects were not designed with the specific objectives of influencing government policies. That said, the Acacia projects that we have studied in the context of this report show that the kinds of activities they support lend themselves well to influencing policy: the most relevant factors are listed below.

- First of all, Acacia has relied on community groups and civil society organizations that are exerting increasing influence on sectoral policies in Senegal.

- Acacia has supported initiatives and projects aimed at establishing a coherent framework for joint action among players involved with ICTs. The Senegal Acacia Strategy (SAS) thus has a Permanent secretariat (PS), as well as mechanisms such as the coordination forum, regional focal points, and sectoral groups (thematic groups). Besides providing opportunities for thinking and discussion about the role of ICTs and about mechanisms for appropriating and institutionalizing ICTs as development tools, these bodies foster interchange and partnership among various development players, including members of the public sector.

- The projects supported revolve around community development issues, primarily in the areas where responsibilities are being transferred to local governments or that require involvement of the private sector: education, health, entrepreneurship, governance, gender, etc. Projects seemed to follow an integrated approach, as called for in the program, and sought as well to serve as models that communities could use in providing universal access to ICTs.

- Acacia has supported research, as well as outreach activities to make the results of that research known to players in the public sector.

- The program has also supported awareness and information activities about the role of ICTs for development.

The players involved in the activities supported by Acacia are essentially the administration and its components (Ministry of Communication, Ministry of Scientific and Technical Research, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of the Interior), local governments, associations of local elected officials, SONATEL, NGOs and development associations, women's organizations, human rights organizations, labour unions, development partners (IDRC, UNFPA, USAID, the World Bank, etc.). It is noteworthy that civil society organizations have predominated in field initiatives.

Thanks to its participatory approach, Acacia has been able to exert influence of various kinds, directly or indirectly, on public policies in Senegal.

- Acacia projects have influenced the development of a new approach to ICT policy in the country, one that takes an integrated and organized vision. The establishment of the Telecommunications Regulation Agency (ART) is one illustration. Acacia encouraged this move in order to achieve greater social equity in the process of democratizing access to ICTs.

- Acacia's influence in Senegal, however, was essentially secondary or indirect, and consisted of:

    - Strengthening the capacities of policymakers and development players, thereby directly or indirectly influencing policies at the local and national levels.

- Providing a reliable database on actual experience with the use of ICTs, in order to create conditions for partnership.
- Encouraging opportunities for interchange and learning.

- In some cases, Acacia succeeded in bringing about changes in the way sectoral policies and programs are introduced, and even within certain programs, such as those for information, awareness and dissemination of research results:

  - The project on youth cyberspaces in the secondary schools (*"Expérimentation d'espaces cyber jeunes dans l'enseignement moyen et secondaire au Sénégal*) sought, both in its approach and through its results, to help the education ministry authorities to prepare a program for introducing ICTs into the schools.

  - Thanks to a broad awareness campaign for publicizing the research results under the project for using ICTs in support of gender equality (*Les TIC à l'appui du programme des femmes pour l'égalité de genre*), the Government of Senegal has introduced legislation to modify the Family Code in order to achieve greater gender equity.

  - The Acacia project on the role of ICTs in implementing decentralization policy (*Le rôle des TIC dans la mise en œuvre de la politique de décentralisation*) has produced applications and contents of use to local governments and people involved in decentralization, and should help to facilitate implementation of the decentralization policy, by providing access to information on decentralization policy and making these local governments more effective.

  - In the health field, the Government of Senegal is currently supporting projects based essentially on experience with the Acacia project on telemedicine, in rural and remote areas of the country.

- Acacia has also made a significant contribution to raising awareness about the importance of ICTs for development. Many players have seized upon these technologies for use in the service of human development, and have worked together to strengthen their ability to make progress on socioeconomic issues (such as reducing the costs of ICTs in order to improve communication, the role of ICTs in promoting gender equity, etc.) and in politics (participation by individual candidates in municipal and rural elections). ICTs have broadened the outlook of members of these organizations through the international exchange of experience, and have offered them greater possibilities to bring their projects to a successful conclusion with support from abroad.

- The effects of ICTs on grass-roots communities, as documented by the Elsa team, have changed the perception of international cooperation agencies such as

UNFPA, and have broadened their programming horizon for applying ICTs in such fields as education, health, reproduction and the advancement of women.

- The information compiled through Acacia projects has been useful to individuals and members of organizations in various fields: civil society associations, NGOs, students, government researchers, the press, cooperation agencies active in the field of ICTs, local governments, and members of project executing organizations, who have drawn upon experience and information on the use of ICTs in a given field of application, or for targeting impacts at a specific group.

- The projects have heightened the understanding of those who have been in contact with their research results, in particular policymakers, researchers and IDRC.

In the research field, Acacia counted upon Elsa to exert influence on policies for establishing a database on ICTs, using the results of research projects. It must be recognized that research was not an important focus of Acacia projects in Senegal. Elsa activities were not programmed at the start of the program, and even after startup Elsa was not systematically integrated into the projects, as had been hoped. Nevertheless, the few studies that were conducted provided useful knowledge through the debates they inspired, and through their contribution to greater awareness of the issue of ICTs for development among key players and policymakers.

By involving national researchers in certain studies, Acacia has helped to strengthen national research capacities on the issue of ICTs and development.

In terms of the gender dimension, this was not a systematic concern of Acacia in Senegal, and indeed the gender dimension did not figure among the objectives of the projects proposed through the sectoral groups (health, education, environment and natural resource management, governance, employment and entrepreneurship). Nevertheless, the SAS tried to correct this focus by supporting projects specifically devoted to women (for example, "ICTs in support of gender equality"), and by commissioning a study on how to integrate the gender dimension into projects (a study that has not yet been completed).

Despite the positive perception of IDRC among development partners (a sound strategy of development assistance, through capacity building and through streamlining procedures for obtaining grants and monitoring research activities, empowering researchers and partner institutions, etc.), however, the SAS could have left a greater mark on policies if it had distanced itself from the image of IDRC and transformed itself into a true national strategy that would attract other donors, within a coordinated framework organized around the principal issues of development, consistent with the general policy guidelines of the Government of Senegal. Moreover, the changes that occurred within the program in 2001 have been felt in the activities of the SAS, and particularly in the functioning of these different bodies.

Introduction

1.1. The overall context

For several decades, Senegal has been pursuing liberal policies in its economic and social development strategy. The corollary of this liberalism has been the State's withdrawal from productive sectors and its replacement by an increasingly empowered private sector. Telecommunications is the sector that has been most affected by the wave of liberalization and privatization.

State withdrawal from productive activities led to the creation of local governments [*collectivités locales*], thereby strengthening the decentralization process, in an effort to improve administrative organization and thereby lay the basis for sustainable and harmonious economic and social development.

At the same time, civil society has become increasingly active in economic and social life at the local, national and international levels, and through its actions, discrete but often highly visible, it has managed to influence the State in its definition of national strategic priorities.

1.2. National policy on the new information and communication technologies

The Senegalese authorities were quick to recognize the importance of the new information and communication technologies (ICTs) for economic and social development. This importance was confirmed by the Prospective Study: Senegal 2015, which foresaw the emergence of the communication society based on the development of information technologies, and which proposed as a strategic objective "strengthening and facilitating access to information and promoting social communication".

Nevertheless, the beginnings of what we might call a national policy for ICTs were apparent as early as 1985, with establishment of the National Telecommunications Company (SONATEL), reflecting the determination of the Government of Senegal to give priority to development of the telecommunications sector.

It was only in 1996, however, that the government issued its first statement on telecommunications development policy (1996-2000).

In its 9th Economic and Social Development Plan (1996-2001), published in 1997, the government set forth a strategy for achieving the strategic objective of the prospective study (see above) and declaring that "information and communication technologies can no longer be regarded as a luxury for the elite, but must be seen as an absolute necessity for development". This strategy put the emphasis on improving infrastructure and human resources and on adopting incentives to encourage participation by the public and private sectors, and to put ICTs to use in the different sectors of economic and social life.

Yet this strategy was still no more than a vision of the future: there was no real, official national strategy for introducing and using ICTs to resolve the country's economic and social development problems. This fact was recognized by the Ministry of Scientific and Technical Research (MRST), which published a document on strengthening national capacities to use ICTs in April 1998, stressing the need to create or reinforce institutional mechanisms for taking the necessary actions "within the framework of a comprehensive, coherent and previously defined policy, led by a body with the necessary authority and prerogatives for promoting information and communication technologies". It was in this context that the Acacia program was launched in 1997, consistent with the official strategy reflected in the Prospective Study: Senegal 2015.

The national and international context relating to ICTs has changed considerably, with growing awareness of the role of ICTs in development, and increasing efforts to introduce ICTs into key development sectors.

With the change of political regime[1], we find various indicators of a determination to institutionalize ICTs in the national economy:

- A Minister of Communications was appointed, a computer expert by training, who had set up the parliamentary network on ICTs (with help from Acacia) in 1999.
- The President of the Republic suggested that the costs of telephone service should be reduced, and his ICT Counsellor announced that the mobile telephone market would be opened to an independent operator.
- On July 20, 2000, the Prime Minister, Moustapha Niassa, declared the government's intention to use ICTs to communicate more closely with the citizens, and he announced that the process of implementing an administrative information and communication system would be accelerated.
- In September 2000, Minister Diop Decroix announced the main features of a national policy for democratizing access to ICTs.
- The new Constitution of Senegal refers to ICTs, and contains provisions to ensure the confidentiality of electronic correspondence.
- The President of the Republic took part in the 2001 Internet Festival.
- In August 2001, the new Prime Minister, Mame Madior Boye, confirmed the important place of ICTs in sectoral policies.
- In March 2002, the Telecommunications Regulation Agency (ART) was created, as an independent regulatory body responsible for ensuring fair and healthy competition for the benefit of consumers, telecommunications operators, and the Senegalese economy in general, and for accelerating the development of telecommunications. It is interesting that Acacia was quick to suggest and support such a structure, so that universal and democratic access to ICTs could become a reality in Senegal.

[1] Source: *Esquisses numériques : Chroniques de la Société de l'information au Sénégal d'août 1999 à octobre 2002* by Olivier Sagna, (draft paper)

- In May 2002, the President of the Republic attended the preparatory meeting, held in Bamako, for the World Summit on the Information Society, planned for 2003 in Geneva and 2005 in Tunis.

ICTs are also accorded an important place in NEPAD (the New Partnership for African Development), reflecting the vision of development championed by the Government of Senegal, which is responsible, among other things, for the ICT aspects of NEPAD.

It must be recognized, however, that the task of implementing a true ICT policy in Senegal is complicated by institutional instability, in particular by changeovers of senior personnel (change of ministers) and changes in administrative and political organization (elimination of the Ministry of Telecommunications and ICTs), the lack of follow-up through initiatives in this field, as called for in the 1999 study on telecommunications services commissioned by the former government, and the failure to pursue systematically the preparation of the national strategy that was initiated by the Ministry of Communication and ICTs with Acacia support.

Thus, despite the favourable policy indicators and the fairly coherent view of the role of ICTs in development, Senegal does not yet have a coherent and integrated ICT policy. The emphasis is still on a sectoral approach. Moreover, implementation of these sectoral policies themselves appears to have stalled, although the education sector seems to be making progress in integrating ICTs into the education system, and the Ten-year Education and Training Plan (PDEF) assigns an important place to these technologies.

Key dates and events along the road to the Information Society

The following events seem to have influenced the Government of Senegal to introduce a true national strategy for ICTs

February 1995	Conclusions from the G-7 interministerial conference on the information society, held in Brussels
April 1995	Press release from the African Regional Seminar, "Telematics for Development". The seminar dealt with key issues in telematics, i.e. the convergence of information technologies, telecommunications and radio broadcasting, and recommendations concerning universal access to ICTs.
1995	Policy declaration on development of the Senegalese telecommunications sector (1996-2000)
May 1995	Resolution 795, implementing the Information Highway in Africa. Conference of African ministers responsible for economic and social development and planning.
December 1995	Heads of State and of Government of countries sharing French as a common language, meeting in Cotonou

May 1986	Declaration from the Midrand Conference on the Information Society and Development (ISAD)
October 1996	Final Declaration from the Meeting on "Africa and the New Information Technologies", *Rencontres du Devenir,* Geneva
May 1987	Montreal Declaration on the Information Society
July 1997	Dakar Declaration on the Internet and the African Media (Panos/PANA seminar, Dakar)
February 2000	Action Plan and Final Declaration, resulting directly from the work of the 2000 Bamako Meeting.
July 2000	The G7/G8 Summit of Heads of State and Government (Okinawa, Japan), the Okinawa Charter on the World Information Society and the Okinawa Declaration, recalling the importance of national strategies concerning ICTs for development.
September 2000	Final communiqué from the second African Internet Summit, Afrinet 2000; ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja, Nigeria; this meeting sought to provide African governments with the opportunity to define policies for removing constraints on affordable access to the Internet.
August 2001	General policy statement by the Prime Minister, Mame Madior Boye, before the National Assembly.
December 2001	Adoption by the 56th Session of the U.N. General Assembly, of Resolution A/RES/56/183 on preparation and organization for the World Summit on the Information Society (2003 in Geneva and 2005 in Tunis).
December 2001	Adoption of Law 2001-15 of December 27, on the Telecommunications Code.
May 2002	Bamako 2002: preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society
June 2002	G8 Summit in Canada. Announcement by the Canadian Government of funding for an institute for connectivity in Africa

KEY PLAYERS IN ICT POLICIES

[Outer circle, clockwise from top:]

International interest groups

Donor foundations.
Embassies and consulates.
Government agencies.
IDRC.
African Union/NEPAD.
Consultants.
International forums.
International organizations (ILO, World Bank, European Union, UNDP, AUF, UNRISD…).
Foreign corporations.
International civil society and union organizations.

[Middle circle, clockwise from top:]

Community institutions and organizations

OSIRIS.
OPF.
NGOs and civil society organizations.
National Youth Council.
Producers' associations (CNCR).
Private sector/associations (CNP, CNES, UNACOIS).
Union organizations (UDEN, CNTS, UNSAS…).
The media.
Chambers of commerce and industry.
Consultants.
Tradepoint Foundation.
Local governments.
SENTEL.
SONATEL. Research centres.
Universities and institutions of higher earning.

[Inner circle, clockwise from top:]

Government and public institutions.

President/Cabinet of the President.
Cabinets.
Government Ministerial Departments (DIE, SG, CNDST, ART, DAST, DTAD).
National Assembly.

1.3. Acacia in this context

In adopting a liberal policy that reduces its role to creating a favourable institutional environment, the State has opted, first, for the establishment of essential institutions and the development of appropriate infrastructure.

The decision to create SONATEL led to introduction of an emergency catch-up plan for the national telecommunications network, in order to remedy the infrastructure situation.

Moreover, as noted in the introduction, the Government of Senegal has supplemented this liberal approach with a systematic policy of decentralization and empowerment for local players (local leaders, NGOs, civil society, local governments, etc.). These players are therefore expected to play increasingly important roles in the process of formulating, developing and implementing public policies, at the local and national levels.

It is in this context of decentralization, empowerment for local government, and community participation in the development process, that the Acacia program has conducted its activities in the country, through various components of civil society (NGOs, local governments, GIEs [*groupements d'intérêt économique*], community organizations, etc.. Acacia has also initiated projects dealing with problems of development for these communities. These civil society institutions, in fact, must be regarded as a strategic entry point for national appropriation of ICTs, with a view to inducing the authorities to place ICTs on the development agenda, and in this way to construct a comprehensive national strategy for ICTs, in a context where many and varied experiments for introducing ICTs are taking place.

Some key dates in the process of implementing the SAS

October 96	Ottawa meeting on the preparatory phase of Acacia: presentation of Senegalese contribution. Recruitment of consultants and an exploratory study on the popular perception of ICTs in Senegal.
November-December 1996	Study on the status of ICTs in Senegal: institutional framework, infrastructure and perceptions.
January 5-7, 1997	National workshop meeting in Saly to adopt the SAS and to review the report for contribution to the prospectus for submission to the IDRC Board of Governors.
March 1997; June 1997	The Acacia program is approved by the IDRC Board of Governors. A meeting is held among representatives of key sectors to prepare an implementation strategy for the Acacia program. It is decided to implement partnership mechanisms: various working groups are established (transverse group, sectoral groups).

End of June 1997	Each group holds a meeting and appoints a coordinator.
November 1997	Decision to include NGOs and other players from civil society, on the advice of consultants working on the initial document.
December 1997	First forum of players, with a wide-ranging and in-depth discussion of the new ICT environment.
1997/98	Approval and implementation of the first Acacia projects.
April 1998	The consensus-building process is interrupted by a change of management in Acacia; a new program administrator is appointed to replace the one who had initiated the process.
May 1998	The former program administrator recommends establishing a Permanent Secretariat to reduce IDRC's involvement in the process of implementing the SAS and to accelerate its appropriation.
1999-2000	Another change in administration of the program in Senegal: the former administrator returns to the program, and his replacement leaves. Installation of the Elsa team and startup of activities.
2001	Acacia becomes a program initiative.

Chapter 2. Methodology

2.1. The study

A look at the objectives of many IDRC projects and programs suggests that research funded by the institution is expected to guide or influence policies. This suggests that the Centre needs to clarify what it means by "policy influence", and how these projects and programs are supposed to impact on local and national policies.

This is the mandate for the present strategic study commissioned by the client, the IDRC Evaluation Unit, which seeks answers to the following three questions:

1. Judging from IDRC experience, what constitutes influence on public policies?

2. To what extent has IDRC-funded research influenced public policies, and how?

3. What factors and conditions have promoted or diminished the potential of IDRC-funded research projects to influence public policies?

IDRC has undertaken several initiatives in the context of the study on a "Strategic Assessment of the Policy Influence of Research", in order to answer these questions. That study covers a series of case studies in several countries where IDRC is active. These questions will serve a dual objective: to provide lessons for improving the design of projects and programs in light of their strategic objectives, and to contribute to IDRC's institutional planning process.

The case studies will explore not only the work undertaken by IDRC, but also the changing context in which that work is pursued, and the procedures used. The study will cover a broad array of cases. The cases will provide a detailed accounting of the way policies are influenced. This will be done using collected documents, project reports, interviews with project leaders and participants, including people who may be influenced, and IDRC staff members involved.

The case study explores not only the work undertaken by IDRC in Senegal, but also the changes to the context in which that work is conducted, and the procedures used.

2.2. Definitions of policy influence

In this study, which seeks to assess the way IDRC, through the Acacia program, has been able to influence policies, the concept of policy influence is approached, first of all, using Lindquist's definition, which identifies three kinds of influence that an intervention can have on policy: expanding policymaking capacities, broadening policy horizons, and influencing political regimes. The principal activities listed by Lindquist for identifying these influences are detailed below:

- Expanding policymaking capacities:

- Improving the knowledge or the data available to certain players.
- Helping beneficiaries to formulate innovative ideas.
- Improving the capacity to communicate ideas.
- Creating new research and analytical talents.

- Broadening policy horizons:

- Offering possibilities for networking or learning within the level of competence, or with colleagues elsewhere.
- Presenting new concepts for guiding debate, inserting ideas in the program, or stimulating public discussion.
- Educating researchers and other people who arrive at a new post, by helping them to understand the major issues.
- Fostering productive dialogue among decision-makers and among researchers, and between these two groups.

- Influencing political regimes:

- Amending existing programs and policies.
- Fundamental overhaul of programs and policies.

It is through these different activities that policies and programs can be modified, improved or reformed. Moreover, this concept of policy influence also takes account of the way key respondents understand the concept. In the course of collecting data, respondents were interviewed about their own understanding or definition of policy influence, and these surveys show that policy influence, in Senegal, is generally regarded as being the result of:

- Awareness campaigns, lobbying and advocacy, and public information, and in the particular case of Acacia, information on research results.
- Strengthening the capacities of civil society and local governments, reinforcing grass-roots community participation in policy preparation and implementation, strengthening participation by decision-makers in project activities.
- Networking with different institutions and initiatives in the field of ICTs for development.

Generally speaking, however, these activities must, as the respondents saw it, lead either to a change of policies, or to the adoption of new policies.

2.3. Sampling

It should also be noted that, in contrast to similar studies conducted in South Africa, in Mozambique and in Uganda, the Senegal study was not focused exclusively on projects that were designed specifically to influence ICT policies.

The study was intended to look at the framework and the overall approach of the program in Senegal, where the Acacia strategy is focused essentially on horizontal issues of community development.

The analysis of policy influence, then, besides using the Lindquist typology, is based on the program implementation structure in Senegal. The Senegal Acacia Strategy must be viewed from two different angles: an organizational and strategic view, and a more operational, programmatic one.

a) In an effort to encourage appropriation of the Acacia strategy by national players, IDRC has supported the introduction of several operating mechanisms that involve these players actively. Thus, the Permanent Secretariat and the 10 regional focal points were established together with several coordination bodies, including the Players' Forum, the Transverse Group and the sectoral groups, bringing together different players and policymakers.

b) The other facet of the SAS is more internal to IDRC, and consists of programming and implementing research projects in accordance with the general strategic thrusts of the Acacia program.

The sampling approach therefore took account of this strategic structure of the program in Senegal. Moreover, secondary criteria were applied in selecting projects: first, the potential policy influence of the projects, and second, the degree of project maturity or completion.

On the basis of these criteria, four projects were selected: the Permanent Secretariat Acacia/SN, ICTs in Support of Gender Equity in Senegal, Experimentation with Youth Cyberspaces in Secondary Schools in Senegal, and the Role of ICTs in Implementing the Decentralization Policy in Senegal. These projects appear to have exerted influence on policies relating to education, decentralization, gender relations, ICTs, and others.

2.4. Data collection method and tools

Data collection was based on a questionnaire provided by the client and validated during a workshop held in Ottawa, April 15 to 17, 2002. A collection of documents (project documents, activity reports, mission reports, correspondence) was also compiled before and during administration of the questionnaire.

Administration of the questionnaire was adapted to fit the project stage in which the interlocutor had participated. Thus, some individuals were interviewed only about project execution and post-project activities, while others were asked about all three stages of their project.

Some of the interviews were recorded on tape, but this was not done systematically, because some interviewees refused to be recorded.

2.5. The stages of the assessment

The assessment involved the following stages

- Initial information session on the mission, and signature of the contract.
- Testing the questionnaire.
- The questionnaire validation workshop in Ottawa.
- Data collection.
- Recording and processing data.
- Summarizing results by project, and drafting a report.

Data collection was conducted as follows:

1. Collection (project documents, activity reports, mission reports, correspondence)

2. Interview with project leaders and participants.

3. Interview with people who might be influenced.

4. Interview with IDRC staff members involved.

In total, thirty-two (33) [sic] people were interviewed, nine of whom were women (see annex 1, listing individuals, functions and contracts).

2.6. Problems encountered

- Some people who might have provided information were not available, because of the election campaign (April 21 to May 19) or travel.
- Other key individuals could not be interviewed because of last-minute scheduling conflicts, or because they had left their functions (former technical advisers and local elected officials who were replaced with the change of regime in 2000).
- With the change of regime in 2000, all ministers of the former government were replaced; local mayors, too, were replaced after the May 2002 elections, and so we were unable to meet with most of these former elected officials.
- Activity reports were unavailable from the Permanent Secretariat.

Problems with collection tools

- Generic questionnaire.
- Length of questionnaire.
- Certain questions were inappropriate.

Chapter 3. The Acacia Strategy in Senegal and its Permanent Secretariat

The Acacia initiative, approved by the IDRC Board of Governors in March 1997, was designed to promote the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in African communities, in order to prevent them from being increasingly marginalized from the information society, and also to help them achieve their development objectives.

The Acacia program seeks to establish a reliable knowledgebase by identifying the most appropriate policies, techniques, applications and contents, approaches and methodologies for promoting the appropriation of ICTs by disadvantaged communities, and in particular by young people and women, by providing ready access to these tools and putting them to effective use.

According to Mr. Alioune Camara, program officer in Dakar, the strategic aspect of Acacia was the decision to make ICTs available to communities, in particular poor communities, and to see how these ICTs could contribute to their development.

In the specific case of Senegal, preparation of the Senegal Acacia Strategy (SAS) began in October 1996, under the aegis of IDRC, and at the instigation of Mr. Camara, in his capacity as program officer, with the participation of various institutions, national and local, representing government and civil society, researchers, and development players. This consultation process for preparing the SAS was completed in March 1997, at which time the initiative was approved by IDRC.

The SAS seeks to foster coordinated activity in policymaking, infrastructure, technologies, and applications and contents, in order to promote a true national strategy for using ICTs for development. The objective was to encourage establishment of an independent framework for concerted action in the field of ICTs, a framework that would provide the political authorities with a solid basis for their ICT policy.

The SAS was based essentially on a series of experimental demonstration projects. These pilot projects were undertaken in order to verify the hypotheses underlying the Acacia program, as well as to derive lessons that could be applied on a broader scale, and that would be of use to policymakers.

Several projects were undertaken in the main priority fields of action, namely education, health, governance, natural resource management, employment and entrepreneurship.

3.1. The intention to influence policies

In Senegal, Acacia sought to encourage a national strategy for adopting and integrating ICTs in support of development. The SAS thus became part of the institutional framework for decentralization and empowerment of development players, in a context where decisions regarding the introduction of ICTs were haphazard and were not coordinated by the authorities.

At the programming level, the Acacia initiative is participatory, and it has a two-pronged strategy. First of all, it seeks to influence policies by supporting introduction of a regulatory body and an independent framework for coordinating ICT activities.

On the other hand, as a research program, Acacia seeks to develop scientific arguments that policymakers can use for integrating ICTs more thoroughly into the country's economic and social fabric.

Underlying the strategy was the idea of pursuing sensitization and advocacy activities at the same time as community-based action-research, and in this way to produce results that could be used to raise awareness about the role of ICTs for development, with the State as the primary target. It must be remembered that SAS projects have generally been designed to address the major development concerns of poor and isolated communities.

But the idea was also to lay the conditions whereby the research results could be appropriated and used by local and national decision makers (see table 1 and 2).

Table 1

Senegal Acacia Strategy (SAS): Strategic Guidelines
▪ Information and awareness campaign among government officials, communities, associations, the private sector, on information society issues. ▪ Lobbying for the spatial and social expansion of ICT use. ▪ Training in ICT use, through formal and informal structures. ▪ Equipping grass-roots communities, through research, experimentation and demonstration, with equipment, technologies, tools and applications that meet their needs. ▪ Facilitating consensus and partnership between government and other players through these new mechanisms. ▪ Promoting cooperation with other bilateral and multilateral agencies pursuing similar initiatives in Senegal

Table 2

Permanent Secretariat for the SAS: Mission
▪ Raising public awareness of ICTs and their impact on development. ▪ Helping identify needs in terms of ICT research and development projects. ▪ Providing information and support to coordination mechanisms instituted by the SAS

As one example, projects were initiated that involved government departments (in particular the Ministry of Communication) directly. The project for policy and institutional reform in telecommunications fits in this category. This project was designed to provide institutional support to the government in reforming its

telecommunications policy, through creation of the Telecommunications Regulation Agency, capacity development within government regulatory bodies, and dissemination among legislative and regulatory players in the telecommunications sector.

Thus, the strategic structure, components and scope of activity of the SAS and the PS show that they were intended to foster awareness of the role of ICTs in development, and thereby to induce policymakers to take appropriate steps, on the basis of information and data obtained from research, to adopt a true national strategy for integrating ICTs. In this way, the activities and the operational mechanisms of the SAS offered real opportunities for influencing policies.

Moreover, according to Mr. Zongo, former executive director of Acacia, "from the beginning, the question of policies was the key topic of debate: regulation, incentives, access issues were addressed, as well as the role of the private sector".

Types and mechanisms of policy influence

If we apply the Lindquist definition to the survey results, we find that the SAS employs the following strategies in conducting its activities.

Building policymaking capacities

- Conducting studies and research to clarify actions, establish a knowledgebase, explore new possibilities and opportunities offered by ICTs for community development, in particular:
    - awareness and advocacy campaigns to enlist development players in a new culture for collecting, processing and disseminating information using computers and the Internet.
    - Sensitizing government officials and grass-roots communities (civil society, associations, NGOs, the people at large) and the private sector about the opportunities that ICTs offered for development.
    - Lobbying for the expansion of ICT use, on the basis of successful examples.

- Documenting and disseminating project results: creating a newsletter and a web site as ways of sharing knowledge.
- Capacity building for NGOs and civil society organizations that are actively engaged in policy formulation and development:
    - Training in the use of ICTs (associations, civil society, etc.).
    - Introducing ICT equipment (computers with Internet access) through projects in grass-roots communities.

Expanding policy horizons

- Organizing coordination forums among players, hosting meetings of the SAS coordination mechanisms (horizontal group, sectoral working group, RFP.

- Introducing networking for SAS players (PS, RFP) and posting research results online.
- Regular meetings with ministers responsible for ICTs in Acacia's countries of concentration, meetings in which Senegal's ministers have participated (Serigne Diop, Mamadou Diop Decroix).

Thus it is clear, using the Lindquist approach, that the SAS and PS had the intention to influence policies.

According to the Permanent Secretary of the SAS, the strategic objectives were aimed at persuading the different players to appropriate ICTs and use them for development. He cites the following principal channels for exerting this influence:

- Creating knowledge.
- Awareness, lobbying and advocacy campaigns.
- Capacity building.
- Dissemination of research results that can be used by various players interested in issues relating to ICT use for development.
- Involving administrative and political figures in SAS activities.

Note that these channels cited by the Permanent Secretary are comparable to those found in the Lindquist typology.

3.2. Policy influence

In attempting to classify the results in terms of policy influence, using the Lindquist typology, we may identify two broad categories: expanding policy making capacities, and broadening policy horizons. By the very nature of the SAS, however, it is difficult to separate these two dimensions, recognizing that they interact.

1. Acacia has focused on capacity building through training, equipment, awareness and advocacy campaigns, and disseminating research results to give players the capacity to help implement a true national strategy for ICT use and a coherent framework for coordination among ICT policy players. Generally speaking, and recognizing that ICTs are a relatively new field, the capacities to use equipment and conduct research in this area are fairly weak, and so most projects contain a significant training component to equip players and researchers with the tools for analyzing the role of ICT use in development.

2. Along with the research projects, specific studies and research have been carried out within the SAS, although the SAS is little involved in implementing them. Thus, Acacia supported a major study on teleservices, at the request of the Government of Senegal. According to Cheikh Tidiane Ndiongue, Director of Studies and Regulation of Posts and Telecommunications in the Ministry of Communication of Senegal, which commissioned this work, the study continues to serve as a source of information and a reference point for researchers and policymakers in their strategies for implementing sectoral policies in

the field of ICT. This study, it should be noted, was conducted by a mixed team of consultants from Senegal and Canada.

3. The SAS has favoured the participatory approach in implementing its strategy and research projects. Thus the SAS has organized coordination and partnership mechanisms to ensure maximum involvement by the major players concerned, either directly or indirectly, in the program's activities, remembering that the program is supposed to be based on continuous and mutual learning. These coordination forums involve the Permanent Secretariat (which is itself a project), the regional focal points, and the sectoral and horizontal groups:

- The coordination forum [*forum de concertation des acteurs*], the umbrella steering and deliberation body, covers a nationally representative base of players involved in implementing the strategy. The agreement between IDRC and the Government of Senegal, in fact, was signed in December 1997 with Mr. Serigne Diop, Minister of Communications at the time, at the first meeting of this very forum. Its sessions have provided an ideal opportunity to discuss the major issues concerning ICT use for development, bringing together players from many different levels and origins (ranging from the Minister to a lowly telecentre operator, and including researchers, etc.).
- The five sectoral working groups (health, education and training, employment and income generation, natural resource management, governance), are standing forums for consideration and discussion among agencies and individuals: each group is supposed to oversee the research priorities in its respective field.
- The horizontal working group, a standing supervisory body that evaluates recommendations and activities proposed by the forum: it includes all coordinators from the sectoral working groups, SONATEL, UCAD, and other players with coordination or horizontal responsibilities.
- The regional focal points (RFP), which are housed in the regional units of CONGAD, serve as liaison with the ten regions of Senegal, and lend a close ear to the concerns of Acacia's target groups.
- The SAS Permanent Secretariat, which was set up in 1998 in light of the SAS mission to foster partnership in introducing and appropriating ICTs for development in Senegal.

In the opinion of Mr. Camara, the Acacia program officer, the PS was supposed to facilitate implementation and appropriation of the SAS by national decision-makers, in the central government and its agencies, and in local governments.

Rounding out the SAS mechanisms, the PS seeks to provide it with the instruments needed to keep its coordination mechanisms running independently, and to exert real and visible leadership in the conduct of the SAS. Thus, the PS has established regional focal points that serve as regional antennas providing liaison between the PS and the various regions of the country. Each focal point is equipped with computers and an operating budget that is used, among other things, to help cover communication costs. These regional focal points are supposed to disseminate and relay the vision of the SAS at the

subnational level. They also conduct awareness and information sessions and foster coordination among the different local players. In most cases, their activities have led to production of a local development strategy for ICTs, as input to development of a national ICT strategy.

According to Mr. Malamine Savané, coordinator of the SAS horizontal group, "this strategy followed by the SAS means taking account of the concerns of players in Acacia projects, and lobbying for them so that the government and members of Parliament will integrate them into their policies".

An especially important point is the profile of the members of the various SAS structures. These members come from different key sectors of the country (universities, private sector, NGOs, civil society), and are involved in research, the economy, health, governance etc. These are supposed to be people who have the capacity to exert direct or indirect influence on policies, or who are aware of the usefulness of ICTs for development. In the opinion of key respondents, several individuals and institutions have been influenced by Acacia, partly through training and partly through the opportunity to access the new knowledge conveyed by ICTs.

4. Key respondents consider that many players capable of exerting policy influence have themselves been influenced.

Mr. Diagne, the Permanent Secretary of the SAS, believes that political figures and senior officials have been influenced: for example, the three successive ministers responsible for communication, during the period 1997 to 2001. These three ministers all attended ministerial meetings organized by Acacia, where the research results and ICT priorities were presented, and in this way they were gradually made aware of the results of research and of world developments in the field of ICTs.

In this specific case, the interviews conducted with Mr. Mamadou Diop Decroix, the current Minister responsible for relations with national, regional and African Union parliamentary institutions, and former Minister of Communications, confirmed what the PS had said. In fact, Mr. Diop, a computer expert by training, said that he had been in contact with Acacia at two different times: first, when he was simply a member of the National Assembly, where Acacia helped to strengthen the ICT parliamentary network by hosting a training and awareness seminar for members of the Assembly on the role of ICTs, in August 1999. According to Mr. Diop, it was this seminar, sponsored by Acacia/IDRC, that sparked the interest of deputies in ICTs. Mr. Diop noted that, after receiving this training, all deputies expressed the need for still further training in ICTs, and for computer equipment as well. As he sees it, it is thanks to the pressure that deputies brought on the government, after attending the seminar, that the National Assembly has now been computerized (at a cost of nearly CFAF100 million, financed by the UNDP). As well, deputies have changed their attitude to ICTs: before the seminar, 97 percent of deputies did not know how to work with a computer, but after the seminar, in which 120 of the 140 deputies participated, they have become more interested in

computers, and many of them now have e-mail addresses and are regular Internet users, a fact that has served to inform and improve their participation in parliamentary debate.

In May 2000, Mr. Diop became Minister of Communications and NICT, and has continued to cooperate with IDRC. The principal activity is the project for preparing the National ICT Development Strategy (consistent with SAS objectives), with a team of local researchers financed by Acacia/IDRC. The strategy paper is now available. Meanwhile, however, Mr. Diop has switched portfolios, and although that paper is available, the national strategy has not yet been put in place. During his time as Minister of Communication, however, Mr. Diop helped to set up a unit for monitoring foreign information on Senegal: the head of the unit keeps a running collection of newspaper articles mentioning or dealing with Senegal, and distils them into a newsletter that is distributed to members of the government. This newsletter is still being published. In his new position as Minister of relations with national and regional parliamentary institutions, Mr. Diop hopes to continue cooperating with IDRC, to provide access for local governments and rural communities.

The influence of the SAS can be seen in fields such as telemedicine, which the government now considers, thanks to its experience with the Acacia project in this field, to be an important sector, and a government project is now underway in a rural part of Senegal (Kedougou). Through the various presentations and communications by the Acacia project leader on telemedicine, the authorities have recognized the opportunities that ICTs offer in the field of public health and, thanks to the commitment of the wife of the Chief of State, this experiment has been replicated, with funding from other donors.

According to Mr. Diagne, the influence on decision-makers can be seen in their policy statements, which show that they are increasingly aware of the importance of ICTs for development. Several senior officials have been in contact with Acacia projects in various fields, and most of them hold positions of senior responsibility where they can influence public policies, and are aware of the need to take decisions to facilitate access to ICTs (pricing policy, etc.). One example (provided by the PS), is the establishment of an independent telecommunications regulatory body for Senegal (ART): aware of the importance of establishing a telecommunications regulatory agency, Acacia financed a visit by several senior officials to the Canadian Radio and Television Commission (CRTC) in Montreal in 1998, which helped to speed up the process of instituting this body. Moreover, according to the Permanent Secretary of the SAS, the current Director of the ART was involved in producing a major document during the process of preparing the SAS.

In the opinion of Cheikh Tidiane Ndiongue, Director of Studies and Regulation of Posts and Telecommunications in the Ministry of Communication, Acacia contributed indirectly to the changes recorded in the regulatory sector (speeding up implementation of the telecommunications regulatory agency, a study on teleservices), thanks to the equipment it provided (a computer network), and the exchanges that it facilitated between national experts responsible for telecommunications reform and their Canadian counterparts.

As well, project leaders and direct partners have been influenced by their participation in implementing the strategy. This is not very well documented, however. It would be interesting to see how this influence was exerted, and what effect it has had on policies.

Some key respondents, like Mr. Savané, coordinator of the SAS horizontal group, believe that those who exert indirect influence on policies, such as NGOs, and organizations like the association of telecentre managers, have themselves been influenced. Through their participation in activities sponsored by Acacia, such as the coordination forum, various players have been influenced and have the in turn exerted influence on other people or institutions. For example, the association of telecentre managers, fresh from the experience acquired through participation in the forums and workshops organized by SAS, negotiated with SONATEL for certain favours, such as controlling the number of licensed telecentres, and enforcing the 500-metre separation between telecentres, in order to keep their businesses running. According to respondents, this illustrates the capacity-building activities of the SAS, which has strengthened the negotiating power and argumentation base of these players.

5. Periodic forums have been organized through the SAS, involving government ministers, to exchange ideas and discuss ICT issues in Senegal. It was at the first such forum, involving SONATEL and consumers, that the first discussions took place about the ICT environment in Senegal. It was that forum that recommended to the government the establishment of the Telecommunications Regulatory Agency (ART), as called for in the 1996 telecommunications law, in light of SONATEL's dual role as "judge and party" in this sector. The creation of an independent regulatory agency is viewed by most experts as an essential condition for effective development of ICTs. And it was in follow-up to this forum that Acacia, together with the Minister of Communications of the time, launched the project in support of institutional and policy reform in telecommunications.

6. Regular meetings have been held, involving participation by ministers responsible for ICTs in Acacia's countries of concentration, and Senegal's ministers have attended all these meetings.

The Permanent Secretary of the SAS also attended these meetings. As he reports, they offered occasions for advocacy at the African level, but they also allowed the SAS to pass messages to the highest decision-making levels in the ICT domain in Senegal, through the Minister of Communications.

As several respondents pointed out, participation in these meetings by ministers also influenced their view of ICTs, and led them to take decisions for putting the SAS on a permanent footing. Deputy Mamadou Diop Decroix, for example, set up and coordinated a parliamentary network on ICTs as an initiative at policy integration. According to Mr. Alioune Camara, as Minister of Communications Mr. Diop had requested Acacia support to help the government prepare an overall national strategy for ICT development, and an action plan for the years 2001-2006, using a participatory and consensus-based approach.

In May 2001, however, Mr. Diop was named to another ministerial department, and the Ministry of Communications and ICTs was abolished: this explains why these initiatives failed or are now dormant.

7. The influence of Acacia has also been observed in the process of preparing the NEPAD, particularly in the field of ICTs. In February 2002, Mr. Khamathe Sène and Mr. Zongo took part in the NEPAD commission on ICTs, and described their experience with the Acacia program during the meeting of Ministers of the West African Economic Community (ECOWAS) devoted to NEPAD. Their contribution dealt with the selection of projects for NEPAD: they added to the analysis of the African context for ICTs, and proposed improvements to several NEPAD projects, proposals that were welcomed by the authorities.

8. In terms of the sphere of influence of the SAS, Mr. Camara noted Acacia's role in preparing national plans for information and communication infrastructure development in the countries of West and Central Africa (Burkina Faso, Benin, Mauritania, Cape Verde, Guinea, Ghana, Gabon), in cooperation with the ECA (Economic Commission for Africa). The program for Benin has now been approved.

We must note, however, that it is not possible to determine how this influence on decision-makers has translated into policy influence, in terms of the adoption and integration of ICTs at the national level. This is an aspect that remains to be documented.

Conclusion

Most respondents felt that the Acacia program has been a determining factor in instilling an ICT culture in Senegal. Yet, as some said, these changes cannot be attributed to the SAS alone: they are linked to a number of factors, including activity under other projects and initiatives for introducing ICTs. This aspect was raised by the former Minister of Scientific Research and Technology, Mr. Balla Daffé, in this context it is difficult to attribute any direct influence to the SAS in the development of an ICT culture within the Government of Senegal, but it is highly likely that the SAS played a considerable role here.

According to the Permanent Secretary of the SAS, "the organization of the SAS is different from that in other Acacia countries, because it did not seem to be a government priority. Moreover, there were problems in terms of the scattering of decision-making centres, and we were never sure whom we should be dealing with. It was also difficult to get the key ministers to participate, in this case the Minister of Communication and the Minister of Scientific and Technical Research." He noted as well that the PS was slow in getting off the ground, and this was another constraint on achieving objectives.

It must be noted that Senegal was quick to recognize the importance of ICTs for development. The Acacia program was launched in 1997, at a time when the Government of Senegal seemed committed to laying the basis for a more coherent ICT policy. Yet the plethora of players and the many uncoordinated international initiatives

for introducing ICTs seem to have thrown the government off track, and to have caused problems of organization and direction. To this we must add the institutional instability that prevailed among government bodies responsible for ICTs.

We must also note that most participants in the SAS were not directly involved in politics, nor were they from the traditional research community. Acacia projects were essentially action-research projects, rather than basic research, and they involved primarily the private sector and civil society (NGOs, associations), even if some of them required government endorsement to win IDRC approval. Thus there was no clear linkage between the SAS, which was essentially independent and close to civil society organizations and the political world, and the research community, particularly because Elsa, which was supposed to play a key role in knowledge dissemination, was unable to do so because it was introduced late, and its activities were disrupted. Paradoxically, then, research (in the strict sense) had little role in influencing policies.

From the same perspective, the coordinator of the SAS horizontal group feels that the coordination forum, which was in a sense the nerve centre of the SAS, was composed of technical people who were not accustomed to the kind of discussion conducted in that forum, and who did not always understand the spirit of the SAS. Moreover, the heavy presence of IDRC did little to encourage autonomy for the SAS. In fact, the SAS was striving to create an independent partnership framework, but with heavy government involvement, a framework in which ICT players should coordinate their activities and where the broad thrust of government policy on ICTs should be decided. It was for this reason that IDRC established the PS, with a progressive strategy for empowering local players and accelerating the process of appropriation of the SAS.

Chapter 4. The youth cyberspace experiment in secondary schools in Senegal

Introduction

The project on "youth cyberspaces in secondary schools in Senegal" was implemented by the Group for Study and Education of the Population (GEEP) in partnership with IDRC/Acacia, UNFPA, and a Canadian NGO, “2/3 Canada”. The project was conducted under the authority of the Minister of National Education of Senegal.

GEEP is a Senegalese NGO consisting primarily of teachers in the country's public schools.

Aware that little attention was being paid to problems of the environment and reproductive health in the country's school system, GEEP initiated "family life education” (FLE) clubs in several schools. These clubs are run entirely by the school community (students and teachers). They are scattered throughout the country, and thus face major communication problems, so that the different clubs tend to be unaware of each other's experience and activities.

Table 3

Youth cyberspaces in secondary schools in Senegal (No. 98-8150-01) OBJECTIVES
General objectives ▪ To improve the learning, motivation and awareness model used by the FLE clubs for issues relating to population, environment and sustainable development, by introducing ICTs through the establishment of Internet access in intermediate and secondary schools in Senegal. Specific objectives: ▪ To set up 12 youth cyberspaces through the national network of FLE clubs. ▪ To capitalize on the work of the FLE clubs and establish networking between FLE clubs and 2/3 Canada members. ▪ To help the FLE clubs become more open to the community. ▪ To promote use of the interdisciplinary model of distance education. ▪ To study the impact of ICT access on activities of the FLE clubs and on students' academic performance.

4.1. The intention to influence policies

The project seeks to use ICTs to improve the learning, motivation and awareness model of the Family Life Education Clubs (FLE) on issues relating to population, environment and sustainable development, to promote the use of an interdisciplinary model for distance education, to help young people become more open to the community, and to

encourage interchange between clubs and between young people. The project also seeks to study the impact of ICTs on club activities and on students' academic performance.

The project therefore seeks to equip students who are organized and committed to combating scourges such as environmental degradation, drugs and sexually transmitted diseases (including AIDS), with communication tools so that they can share their experiences.

A reading of the project objectives as described in the project document, and reproduced in table 3, shows that the project was intended from the outset to influence education policy by introducing ICTs in the schools. Moreover, with the participatory approach taken by the GEEP team, consistent with the Acacia strategy, it was hoped to change the attitude of the school community towards innovation. This project fits within the two strategic thrusts of Senegal, which are to strengthen the education system by introducing ICTs and to upgrade human resources and counter unfavourable demographic trends (by improving preventive and reproductive health) consistent with the Ten-year Education and Training Program.

According to Mrs. Khadidiatou Tall Thiam, one of the project leaders, influencing policies requires activities such as:

- Participating in policy guidelines of the Ministry of National Education and in introducing ICTs in the school (influencing the policy regime).
- Influencing members of the national education inspection commissions.
- Helping to strengthen student capacities and the quality of teaching.
- Changing the approach to learning.

Types and mechanisms of policy influence

Applying the Lindquist typology to the results of the survey and the declared objectives of the project, we can classify the expected influences under the three following categories: expanding policymaking capacities, broadening the policy horizon, influencing policy regimes.

Expanding policymaking capacities

- Disseminating project information and results through documentation and through the GEEP newsletter, or through publications aimed at the public authorities and partners.
- Equipping the FLE clubs with computers.
- Strengthening the capacity of the education community to use ICTs by allowing some of its members (students, teachers, administrators) low-cost access to ICT services (training, Internet, word processing, etc.).
- Strengthening the capacities of FLE clubs and teachers' associations (teachers of French, geography, natural sciences, etc.) by training their members in the use of

ICTs, instituting networking for the clubs and for GEEP, access to external computer resources.
- Creating contents (web page) for publicizing the interdisciplinary model for education in population problems, and the "peer" education model developed in cooperation with UNESCO.
- Strengthening the capacities of GEEP researchers through ICT training and experimentation with alternative teaching models.

Broadening policy horizons

- Networking the school community to allow for better circulation and sharing of information and mutual reinforcement.
- Organizing vacation “cyber camps” for popularizing ICT applications, sensitizing people by putting them in direct contact with ICTs, exchanging and sharing experience among members of the university community and members of the communities that are home to the schools where the youth cyberspaces are installed.
- Organizing vacation cyber camps to popularize ICT applications for public awareness, by putting people in touch with ICTs, and through discussions among participants, the results of which are published.
- Cooperation and participation by government departments and personnel, particularly those in education (inspectors, planners) in project activities, and involving ministry of education officials who are looking for appropriate ways to introduce ICTs in the school.

Influence on policy regimes

According to Mr. Habib Camara, one of the key players in the project, "the goal was to influence education policy in accordance with the framework legislation, which is increasingly subject to influence by NGOs in education policy, particularly since certain education fields were transferred to local governments. The project is therefore supposed to play a pioneering role in educational monitoring. As teachers, we have decided to experiment and to capitalize on this experience". Mr. Camara’s statements suggest that the ultimate purpose here was to influence education policy and school programs so that the country's schools could keep pace with the current and future changes brought about by ICTs.

However, we must note that this intention to bring direct influence to bear on educational policy appeared [only] during the course of project execution, particularly with the adoption of the participatory approach and involvement of the major stakeholders in the project, including education ministry officials.

4.2. Policy influence

Consistent with the overall Acacia strategy, the youth cyberspaces project followed a participatory approach, based essentially on strengthening the capacities of direct partners in the project, namely students and teachers.

The project strategy, which called for training and introducing the school community (from students to administrators) to computers, organizing and participating in international seminars and meetings, documentation and publicity on project activities, and involving the ministerial authorities, allowed the project to exert some influence, both on individuals associated directly or indirectly with policy decisions, and on public institutions such as the Ministry of National Education, and international organizations such as UNFPA, in Dakar.

An analysis of the data shows that the major influences observed were due primarily to the approach taken by the main players in the project, and the equipment supplied by IDRC. In fact, although the equipment was a significant contribution, it was generally limited to providing an Internet terminal, and we must remember that the goal was not the mass outfitting of cyberspaces, but rather to introduce the equipment needed for research.

In terms of influencing policies, then, it was primarily the information, advocacy and awareness activities and the sharing of experience and knowledge (in particular the research results) that allowed the GEEP team to influence policies in Senegal.

1. First of all, the project had an influence on the team itself. Project players feel that the intervention and research capacity of GEEP was reinforced, through participation in events such as the vacation camp in Kenya, conferences of the African Development Forum in 1999 in Addis Ababa, the International Conference in Ankara ("Technical Seminar on Advocacy and ICTs"), organizing demonstration sessions and participating in exhibitions, such as during the youth conference organized by the U.N. in Dakar, and participation in Elsa activities.

2. According to Mr. Fall, the project leader, "teachers involved in the project now know that ICTs can revolutionize information, and that knowledge is not limited to textbooks", and "the GEEP team are now aware that the field of ICT application is very diversified, and they have confirmation that some groups can be instruments of change".

3. These activities also served to disseminate, nationally and internationally, the results of research conducted under the project. At the national level, this has led to a growing interest on the part of the MEN authorities in the problems of introducing ICTs in the schools, thanks in part to their awareness of the project results. According to GEEP leaders, there is increasing evidence of quality improvement in teaching and in academic performance, thanks to the introduction of ICTs. In the opinion of Mr. Moustapha Diouf, coordinator of the MEN commission responsible for introducing ICTs in the school, "the youth cyberspaces project has acquired a wide following among the political and administrative authorities, and inspectors, directors and the MEN cabinet are all aware of GEEP's contribution to improving education, particularly through the project's

contribution to improving the quality of instruction and reinforcing knowledge through teaching supports".

Among the policy makers who were frequently involved in project activities, respondents refer to Mr. André Sonko, a former minister of national education, who was particularly eager to introduce ICTs in the schools, and who encouraged the involvement of GEEP staff in establishing general education guidelines. He also facilitated participation by his own staff in GEEP activities.

4. It must be recalled that the GEEP team consists essentially of teachers at the secondary and advanced levels, who are thoroughly familiar with the education situation in Senegal. Thanks to their great experience in working with NGOs, the government and international institutions, they enjoy great credibility with their colleagues in the MEN.

5. It was on the basis of these results that the MEN confirmed its intention to make use of GEEP's experience with introducing ICTs in the schools, by setting up a commission consisting of 5 members, including GEEP, to prepare a strategy paper. This commission co-opted GEEP to draw on its know-how in deploying ICTs in the schools.

Following the example of GEEP, Mr. Diouf, the commission's coordinator, notes that "we have introduced policies step-by-step, because the education system is very conservative, and we are going to empower students and teachers in order to decentralize training in ICTs". In other words, ICTs will be introduced in the schools using the GEEP approach. The work of this commission will set the course for government policy in this field.

6. The youth cyberspaces have brought about changes in the approaches to awareness, family life education and in the school environment. The use of ICTs for teaching students and for administrative activities in the schools is something of great interest to the MEN authorities, who have noted that the project provides an innovative model for integrating ICTs into the daily work of teachers.

7. The project has caught the attention of the authorities, and during the award ceremonies for the General Competition chaired by the President of the Republic in 2001, he referred to the GEEP experience, as did the professor who gave the keynote address.

8. The new interest on the part of the authorities is demonstrated by the encouragement that the MEN has given to expanding the FLE network in the schools. At the initiative of the MEN, FLE clubs are being set up now in the primary schools, thanks in part to the success of the cyberspaces introduced by GEEP.

9. In a similar vein is the sponsorship of the "Schoolnet" agreement signed by SONATEL with GEEP and WorldLink, which has served to reduce the cost of Internet connections for schools.

10. This new interest on the part of the authorities has sparked renewed debate in the school community about the best way to take advantage of ICTs. The President of the Republic himself launched this debate, by asking players to "bring forth proposals on how to introduce ICTs into the schools". The question boils down to choosing between two approaches: the "introduction" approach, preferred by GEEP on the grounds that it leaves more initiative to the individual, and the "utilization" approach. This debate may well result in selection of a model. What is certain, however, is that it marks a turning point in the adoption of ICTs in the national education system.

11. It is in this setting that we must view the creation of a computer services section within the Intermediate and Secondary Education Division, for introducing ICTs into schools, and the preparation by the MEN, under the leadership of the inspector-general of national education, of a program for extending ICTs to all schools, in partnership with GEEP and WorldLink, as well as negotiation of the agreement between GEEP, WorldLink and the ministry on establishing the Schoolnet in Senegal, for using ICTs in education.

12. Moreover, GEEP's participation in international bodies and the inclusion of some of its members in other international structures should help to expand the project's influence.

We should note that the project has also exerted influence not only on individuals and institutions who are directly involved in setting policies, but also on people who are indirectly involved in national education policy, including teachers and students in the FLE clubs, school administrators, parents' associations and teachers' unions, local partners like WorldLink, donors (UNFPA, IDRC) and partners in other African countries.

Conclusion

The shift in perceptions and the decisions taken by the public authorities are due in large part to the continuing flow of information that the project team has been providing the authorities on the results of the project and, of course, to the fact that the project is contributing to meeting government policy objectives in this sector.

It is because the project team belongs to the school system, and is highly familiar with it, and because of its openness to innovation and its strategy of developing a diversified partnership, that it has been able to achieve these results and to exert a surprising degree of influence on national education policy.

On the basis of GEEP's experience, then, we may say that disseminating research results, with the help of a relatively dense network of partners, facilitates the exercise of influence on policies.

Chapter 5. ICT support for the gender equality program in Senegal

Introduction

Women's participation in all spheres of economic and social life is a central priority of Senegal's National Action Plan for Women, prepared in light of the Beijing World Action Plan for the Advancement of Women.

This participation is currently constrained by family law (the Family Code) some provisions of which, relating in particular to familial authority, are seen as discriminating against women, despite the fact that Senegal has signed all the international conventions on gender equality. It must also be noted that most of these international provisions are not applied.

The idea of the project for using ICTs in support of gender equality in Senegal is to explore the potential of these instruments for giving women the means to exert pressure on the authorities to respect their commitments on behalf of women, and in particular to amend the Family Code to replace the notion of paternal authority by that of joint parental responsibility. As currently drafted, the law makes the man (the husband) the head of the family, and consequently places him in charge of the family and of decisions concerning family life, unless he chooses to renounce this responsibility, a rare occurrence in light of prevailing cultural attitudes.

5.1. The intention to influence policies

According to Marie-Hélène Mottin Sylla, the project leader, "the immediate goal of the project was not to change the Family Code, but to change public opinion and design methods for accelerating the process of amending family legislation, through the use of ICTs".

According to Mrs. Safiétou Diop, President of the Siggil Jigeen network, a strategic partner in the project, "the project was intended to provide ICT training for members of the network and in this way to help demystify ICTs, as well as to furnish the means for lobbying and exerting pressure on the authorities to amend the Family Code".

In light of the expected results of the project (see table 5.1) and statements by the primary players in the project, the Lindquist typology shows that there was certainly an implicit, although undeclared, intention to influence policies.

Two dimensions of this intention have been identified: expanding policymaking capacities, and broadening the policy horizon.

5.2. Strategies for influencing policies

Expanding policy capacities

The approach of the project, consistent with the general spirit of the SAS, is to sensitize, train and inform women and other players engaged in the struggle for gender equality about the role that ICTs can play in this regard.

The according to Dior Fall Sow, the senior consultant for the project, "the project sought to develop a solid argument for replacing the concept of paternal power by that of parental authority. We adopted a strategy based on several elements, including sensitization, documentation, and information dissemination. We prepared a status report on discrimination against women, we developed arguments to show the ineffectiveness of excluding women and to persuade religious leaders that women's empowerment was not contrary to any religion, and we also developed a rationale for bringing the State to respect its commitment to women, and to make family legislation more equitable".

This was a case of using the communication means and techniques offered by ICTs, specifically the Internet, in support of lobbying and awareness campaigns in order to create a pressure group that could bring the authorities to revise the provisions of the Family Code, to replace paternal power with joint parental authority. In other words, the intention was to create the conditions needed for bringing in new legislation that would revoke all the legislative provisions enforcing paternal authority, in order to institute parental authority, and thereby reinforce the position of women in taking decisions, specifically within the family unit. If we push the analysis a bit further, we may say that the project will have an impact on gender relations, specifically on the power relationships within the family. Women will acquire greater decision-making power within their household, and these changes will therefore affect men as well as women. By way of example, if the law as amended in response to pressure exerted through the use of ICTs, women will be able to participate in the choice of the matrimonial domicile, and in strategic choices concerning the household and its members, so that they can take charge of the family in cases where the husband is incapacitated, since the woman will then be "head of the family" on the same basis as the husband. Under this scenario, a working woman will have the same possibility as a working man to take medical responsibility for family members, including the husband and children, which is currently not the case.

Broadening policy horizons

The following mechanisms were used in this project: awareness, advocacy and lobbying; training and capacity building, communication targeted at the government and other political players and civil society. Several workshops and forums were held, bringing together players who have the potential, through mobilization and pressure, to influence policymakers in order to take better account of women's interests. These players include civil society, NGOs, unions and women's organizations that have taken on the following roles: expressing women's needs, proposing actions, implementing the awareness, training and information strategy.

Table 4

ICTs in support of the gender equality program in Senegal. The goal and expected results
Project goal The project seeks to use ICT resources currently available to women's groups in Senegal to transform public opinion in preparation for an amendment to the legal status of women in Senegal, as it relates to the question of parental authority. Expected results • Production and publication of reference documents on Senegalese law regarding parental authority, in two languages (French and Wolof) in written and audio formats, and online. • Training for individuals and networks (members of Siggil Jigeen, women's organizations, human rights groups, communicators) in the design and maintenance of websites, and in audio/Internet liaison, including people qualified to provide training in radio/Internet liaison. • An electronic information/discussion list. • The sensitization of resource persons and organizations and strategic public services (Parliament, public authorities and cooperation organizations), relating to ICTs for development and the issue of parental authority, and the use of ICTs for promoting gender equality. • Creation of a database and a network of contacts on parental authority in the world, and specifically in Africa. • Production and distribution of evaluation reports. • Creation of expertise for launching subsequent or complementary actions.

5.3. Policy influence

Thanks to the strategy, there has emerged a greater awareness among women's organizations and leaders of civil society about the issue of joint parenting, and this has helped to mobilize women into action in all phases of economic and social life, with the goal of making gender equality a reality in Senegal.

According to the people interviewed, the project has filled an information gap for the authorities on the question of joint parental authority, through the documentation prepared and the information supplied by the various means of dissemination (traditional media and ICTs). Many people felt that, with all the media attention, the administration and the government must now surely know something more about the issue.

The possibility of using ICTs for raising awareness about the joint parenting issue is recognized, but its effectiveness is limited by problems of access to the Internet and the lack of e-mail addresses. The Internet training provided was elitist, i.e. it was focused only at people with some education: the great majority of the population are illiterate (in French) and have no connection to the Internet.

Several key respondents felt that these influences were generally limited to access to information and to awareness activities: there is no clear evidence as to how decision-makers have treated this information. We may note, however, that the project has been underway for a relatively short time (15 months), and has not yet been able to launch major activities. Moreover, its main objective was to explore how ICTs could be used for pressing women's demands.

1. Among the authorities who have been informed about project activities are:

- The President of the Republic: a message was addressed to the President's Chief of Staff and a project member was received by the President's Special Adviser on ICTs.
- The General Secretary of Government met with the project team: the Minister of Justice, the Minister Responsible for Relations with the National Assembly, and the Minister of National Solidarity received a message on the project.
- The President of the National Assembly, his chief of staff and his legal adviser met with project personnel and were sent documentation on it.
- Female members of Parliament and influential deputies (such as Ablaye Faye, First Vice President of the National Assembly) received a message on the project and have held discussions with the president of Siggil Jigeen. In particular, the President of the Women Parliamentarians' Group was invited to two meetings.
- Political parties have received information on the project, and some (And-Jeff, AFP, PDS) have participated in project activities.

2. The project team worked with an experienced female consultant who had the ear of the authorities and of women's organizations in Senegal, as President of the Women Jurists' Association, in preparing the reference documents on joint parenting.

3. The team has involved other major women's organizations and human rights groups and the media in validating its results, and in particular the reference documents, and the lobbying arguments. The success of the project, indeed, depends on the quality of these documents.

In short, we may say that, thanks to this project:

- The ground has been laid for a national debate on the issue of joint parental authority. Public debate has been intensified (radio and television broadcasts, newspaper articles, public meetings) and a number of activities have been undertaken by participants in the debate.
- A draft law on the Family Code, which would replace paternal authority with parental authority, has been drafted by the government and tabled in the National Assembly. It is now under discussion, and it was the subject of a seminar with the Human Rights Institute in February 2002. This draft law, if adopted, should help to correct gender inequalities, in ways that will affect both women and men, and will have an impact on gender relations within the family.

- It is too soon to say whether the new law will be adopted, because revising the code takes time. Given the number of women's organizations that have been informed and the number of officials who have been made aware of the project's results and the documentation distributed, it is possible that the draft law will take these results into account during this phase of discussion and validation.
- The project's influence would have been greater if the administration had been directly involved in project activities.

Conclusion

Women's organizations have a heightened awareness of their rights, and are ready to do battle on the issue of joint parental authority

The project has succeeded in laying the ground for public debate on the issue of gender equality, and may therefore lead to the achievement of greater gender equality in Senegal. Draft legislation to modify the provisions of the Family Code concerning spousal rights has been tabled by the government. On this occasion, it is the government itself that has taken the initiative, after a broad media campaign on the issue of joint parental authority.

Another important factor is the emergence of ICTs as an effective means of campaigning for the recognition of women's rights. ICTs have allowed other African women in general (through the electronic forum) to share in achieving this demand of Senegalese women.

However, there are a number of negative factors, such as female illiteracy (a disadvantage for a sensitization project of this kind), the hostility of certain religious leaders, and a segment of the population that still seems insufficiently sensitized to questions of gender equality.

Moreover, the small number of women with Internet connections is an obstacle to accessing information that is available over the Internet. In the opinion of several respondents, the gender equality issue in Senegal owes its following and popularity less to the use of ICTs (Internet) than to the conventional media such as radio and the press.

Chapter 6. The role of ICTs in decentralization policy

Introduction

Since independence, Senegal has been committed to a policy of decentralization that seeks to empower local government. This policy is also designed to ensure participation by people and their representatives in the management of public affairs, and this participation should be enhanced as these levels of government become progressively more independent vis-à-vis the central power. Yet there are many obstacles to the effective transfer of these powers. Most local elected officials have no access to legal texts, and they have neither the means nor the capacity to play their roles fully.

These constraints prevent them from clearly understanding the legislation on decentralization and empowerment of local government. This situation is of particular concern because the working instruments (codes, regulations, laws, decrees) are in the French language, the country's official language, while most local officials are illiterate.

In the face of this situation, SAFEFOD launched a project on the role of ICTs in decentralization policy, with financial support from IDRC/Acacia, in order to inform and sensitize local officials and the government about the role and impact of ICTs on decentralization policy.

6.1. The intention to influence policies

An analysis of the interviews and documentation on the project highlights three major mechanisms included in the project for influencing decentralization policy:

1. Capacity building

This involves:

- Producing knowledge: producing applications to meet different management and organizational needs generated by decentralization (software for local government management, local budget management, civil registry management, etc.).
- Publicizing the results and outputs of the project among local officials.
- A study on implementing a decentralization observatory.

2. Broadening the project's influence

This is to be done essentially by publicizing information and documentation on decentralization by:

- Posting online the major legislation and regulations governing decentralization, and information on the field of local government.

3. Sensitization and information for local officials

- When it comes to sensitization and information for local officials, the project seeks to summarize the major laws and regulations governing decentralization, translate them into national languages, and post them online.
- The results are to be disseminated by demonstrating the products to organizations and potential users.

The principal players involved are:

- Associations of local elected officials: Association of Rural Community Presidents, Association of Mayors of Senegal, Association of Regional Council Presidents.
- Administration: Local Governments Directorate.
- Civil society organizations interested in civil rights.
- The SAS Working Group on Governance.
- Resource Persons

Involvement of these players is expected to result in appropriation of the approach and the outputs of the project, with a view to improving implementation of the decentralization policy. Project managers indicate that their research program is designed to provide the local authorities with instruments for managing local government. It will be up to these authorities to decide how to use these instruments. An example might be a government decision to adopt the tools (budget and civil registry software) developed by the project for local government management. Project managers believe that with this strategy, the decentralization policy will become more effective over time, because those responsible for implementing it will be better equipped.

Moreover, the government, elected officials, and civil rights organizations are expected to participate in identifying the ICT needs of local governments, and subprojects that will be subjected to laboratory tests, the results of which will be published.

6.2. Policy influence

The main objective of this project was to explore how ICTs could help local officials improve local government management, and to broadcast the results of this research. These local governments, it must be remembered, are answerable to the central government, and must apply policy measures decided at the national level. Moreover, the local level must adapt these policy measures to the conditions in the communities they represent.

The project has involved various players in the decentralization policy, who can be differentiated in light of the degree of their involvement in the policy preparation process. Policymakers are ranked within this category, as politicians or officials.

Thus, the Minister of the Interior, following a successful test in the Records Automation Division, proposed use of the civil registry program that was one of the products of the

project. In the words of the Director of Local Government at the time, Mr. Mamadou Diouf, "the civil registry software is a good product that should be made available to the communes". No steps have been taken as yet, however, to follow through with this initiative.

The chief of staff of the Minister of Scientific and Technical Research went so far as to ask that SAFEFOD products be incorporated into the government's "voice and data" project in late 1999, but this did not happen, in part because of changes in the political regime in 2000.

Associations of local officials welcomed the products, and the mayors of Joal and Kaffrine have tested the budget software. The Agency for Municipal Development (ADM) even asked its donor, the World Bank, to authorize purchase of the budget software for the communes. This recommendation has not been followed up.

Thus, many authorities have been in contact with the products developed by the project, nationally and even internationally, on the occasion of visits, tests and demonstrations.

Among the products we may note the voice server that can be used to access a database with administrative, economic, political and cultural information on various local governments. A number of players and political authorities have used the voice server or have consulted the project's web site:

- The Prime Minister (prior to 2000), Mr. Mamadou Lamine Loum, and the Minister of Decentralization visited the experiment, accompanied by the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Jean Chrétien.
- The Local Government Division and the Records Automation Division of the Ministry of the Interior took part in project feedback and demonstration seminars.
- The Chief of Staff in the Ministry of Scientific and Technical Research also participated in the project's activities.
- Associations of local officials (presidents of rural communities, presidents of regional councils, and the mayors of Senegal) were involved in selecting subprojects and in validating their results.

All of these authorities and policymakers found the project's products to be useful. However, although national and local decision-makers were informed of the applications developed during the project, and some of them attended the demonstration sessions, there is no evidence yet that the project has influenced policies, according to the people interviewed. In fact, products of the project are not systematically used in the daily activities of local government. Yet during the interview with Minister Mamadou Diop Decroix, he expressed an interest in examining these products to see how useful they might be for local governments.

The results of the surveys failed to identify project influences on public policies relating to decentralization. According to the Acacia program officer, the project' objective was

not to amend the decentralization law, but to show how ICTs can help improve its implementation, through partnership between the government and the various players.

This was confirmed by the project leader: "The project was not intended to influence decentralization policy directly, but to develop tools that, if used by local officials, could lead to changes in that policy, specifically through transparent management of local budgets, and through access to official documents on decentralization".

Nevertheless, we may say that, even if the project was not intended to influence decentralization policy directly, it has produced tools that, if put to use, could improve its implementation, something that is a strategic development objective of the government.

Conclusion

This project was based essentially on creating an application and contents that could be used by local decision-makers at the municipal level to help bridge the communication gap and provide access to useful information. It was not aimed directly at changing policies, and yet the use and adoption of its products could help local decision-makers to take better account of the needs of their voters, particularly in terms of sound planning.

According to Mr. Lô, National President of the Rural Community Presidents' Association, and one of the key players in decentralization policy, the products and results of the project have not been used with any noticeable impact on public policies at the local level, reflecting in part the communications gap, and the absence of public activities for disseminating those results and products.

According to Mr. Lô, "we still have to improve communication in all directions (grass-roots communities, government, development partners), educate local elected officials (literacy problems), associate ICTs with traditional means of communication". Yet he is confident that the potential effects of the project on public policies should become evident with installation of the new local leaders elected in 2001, who are more open to innovation, especially through instituting the civil registry software in all municipalities in Senegal.

Chapter 7. The gender dimension of Acacia

The gender dimension in the Acacia strategy in Senegal must be appreciated from two angles, first at the global and strategic level, and then at the sectoral or project level.

5.1. The strategic place of gender

The gender dimension is considered in the Acacia program itself as a horizontal issue, and indeed women are one of the specific target groups of Acacia. Within the SAS, consistent with the strategic framework of the Acacia program, the gender dimension is also viewed as a horizontal issue. According to Mr. Alioune Camara, some key players, essentially women (Marie-Hélène Mottin Sylla, Fatoumata Sow), have from the outset of the program been warning their colleagues not to overlook the gender dimension. It was important to avoid reproducing, in the SAS, the patterns of exclusion that are widely found in development programs, and that lead to marginalization of women. As well, the idea of integrating the gender dimension involved understanding, through research, the gender-based differentiations in the effects of introducing and using ICTs for development.

As Mr. Camara sees it, most players have recognized the relevance of these observations, and provisions were made in the coordination mechanisms to make sure that the gender dimension was really integrated into Acacia. Thus, the SAS horizontal group included gender within its strategic framework.

On the operational level, a project was approved in October 1997 to investigate specifically how to integrate the gender dimension into the SAS and its programming framework. This project, "integrating the gender dimension into the SAS", is coordinated by Mrs. Fatoumata Sow, who was awarded a one-year Pearson Fellowship by IDRC to work on gender issues.

The project had three aspects. The first was to identify the status quo and establish women's needs and priorities: the idea was not to rely on the perceptions of players who might have pre-fixed ideas about these issues, but to begin with the reality in the field. The second aspect involved producing an analytical matrix showing how the gender dimension is taken into account in Acacia projects; and the third aspect was to implement an action plan for integrating the gender dimension, as a supplement to the Acacia strategy document for Senegal.

For this research, data were collected in nearly all regions of the country, and young female researchers were heavily involved in the work.

Preliminary reports on these three aspects have now been produced, and some results, such as the analytical matrix, have been validated by experts.

However, the project has not yet run to completion, and the project leader, Mrs. Fatoumata Sow, has yet to submit all the final documents, which should serve as a source

of reference and methodological support for taking account of the gender dimension in Senegal.

5.2. The gender issue in Acacia projects

IDRC's framework for assessing research proposals includes a gender criterion, and normally all projects approved must meet this requirement.

However, this framework merely verifies the intention to include the gender dimension in projects, and in fact there is no mechanism, provision or mandatory clause to ensure that this dimension is effectively integrated into the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects. Within the SAS, the analytical matrix on integration of the gender dimension was supposed to fill this gap. But it has still not been used (see .5.1 above) because it is not yet complete. The SAS has sought to correct its focus by funding projects targeted directly at women, and led by women, but this must still be regarded as a partial approach, because it places the emphasis on women and not on gender.

Individual projects have taken different approaches to appreciating and pursuing the problem of integrating the gender dimension into their strategies and activities. In some projects, the main activity has affected men and women differently (the battle over joint parental responsibility) and the gender dimension is explicitly referred to in the objectives. In other projects, it is essentially the secondary aspects of activities that have a differential impact on men and women and that influence gender relations, and consequently their objectives generally do not make explicit reference to the gender dimension (youth cyberspaces in the schools, the role of ICTs in decentralization).

As to the project on youth cyberspaces, we must note that the locus, the nature and the very strategy of the GEEP's intervention make it obligatory to pay attention to this dimension. Yet this attention is implicit and diffused throughout project activities. Generally speaking, GEEP is active in the campaign for reproductive health, which is targeted essentially at girls (prevention of premature pregnancies, etc.) and consequently girls are integrated into the GEEP strategy. Moreover, the evaluation of this project showed that in the cyberspaces, gender equity and parity are respected, in a sense naturally: in fact, women and girls often are the managers and the main users of these cyberspaces.

The project on joint parental responsibility, which is led by a woman, targeted gender equality specifically, but in the sense of rebalancing gender relations, to the benefit of women. Its activities have been of benefit essentially to women's organizations and women's rights groups and have sought to improve the status of women by eliminating discriminatory provisions in the Family Code. As well, since a proposal to amend the Family Code has been tabled in the National Assembly, the project has broadened the scope of action for women by posting online resources about joint parental responsibility, and establishing a worldwide network on the issue. It is clear, however, that while the focus of the project is on women, gender relations are strongly represented in it, since its primary aim is to amend the provisions of the Family Code to strengthen the decision-

making power of women, who until now have been allowed to assume the role of "head of family" only if the husband renounces that right (choice of matrimonial domicile, involvement in decisions concerning the education of children, the possibility for working women to take medical responsibility for family members), and this will necessarily have repercussions on power relationships between spouses.

The gender dimension is only implicit in the project on the role of ICTs in decentralization. According to Mr. Camara, the research proposal had clearly identified the marginalization of women at the local decision-making level, and the high rate of illiteracy among women seeking election to local government. The products of the project could therefore contribute indirectly to overcoming the exclusion of women at the local level. But the inclusion of women will necessarily have repercussions on gender relations, a concept that goes far beyond the relationship between men and women and embraces other dimensions such as the perceived role and place of women in society.

Conclusion

The gender dimension is an important aspect of the entire Acacia strategy. Efforts are being made in Senegal to translate this importance into concrete actions. The horizontal group, which in a sense reflects the programming framework for Acacia in Senegal, has introduced a gender component in its programming areas, and projects targeted directly at women and led by women have been submitted and financed.

Nevertheless, if the gender dimension is to be effectively integrated into projects and into the program, specific provisions and mechanisms must be established. Despite the efforts being made, it must be recognized that there are few signs of the gender dimension in Acacia projects in Senegal. In fact, corrective efforts have generally been limited to sponsoring projects specifically devoted to women.

In the research frameworks proposed for most projects, for example, there are no provisions for analyzing the impact of a given activity on gender relations. Yet we may hope that, if the products of the gender integration project are finalized and put to use, the situation could improve.

CONCLUSION

If we apply the Lindquist typology to these results, all the dimensions of this concept can be clearly observed: capacity building in the policy field, broadening policy horizons, and influencing policy regimes. We must stress, however, that it is difficult to classify certain activities conducted by project players (advocacy, lobbying, propaganda, etc.) within this typology.

The projects have contributed to guiding government policy in the sector concerned. The project on youth cyberspaces in the schools has influenced the direction of State education policy, the project on the role of ICTs in decentralization has the potential to influence implementation directly, and policy indirectly, while the project on ICTs in support of gender equality may also contribute to improving the integration of the gender dimension in development policies.

The players involved are essentially the administration and its components (Ministry of Communication, Ministry of Scientific and Technical Research, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of the Interior), local governments, associations of local elected officials, SONATEL, NGOs and development associations, women's organizations, human rights organizations, labour unions, and development partners (IDRC, UNFPA, USAID). It is noteworthy that civil society organizations have predominated in field initiatives.

Without being able to quantify the scope of influence exerted on the authorities, it is clear that the projects have had some influence, either directly or indirectly, on political players, on those responsible for preparing policies, on those who must vote legislation, on researchers, and on those charged with carrying out public decisions.

Thus, many officials of the ministries of national education, decentralization and youth, the Government Secretariat and the Prime Minister's Office have had direct contact or have used the results of the projects. They are aware of the benefits of ICTs, and this has helped to modify their public statements, in which they now recognize the positive role of ICTs in development. What is more difficult to evaluate is the move from words to action, a process that is less obvious, and that may be taking place beyond the sphere of influence of Acacia projects.

At the sectoral level, the results include ongoing pursuit of the program for extending ICTs to all schools, inspired by the Acacia experiment (youth cyberspaces), the existence of decision-making tools in the area of decentralization, and the use of ICTs as a means of advancing the status of women. To this we may add the appropriation of ICT by economic and social players who are using them through their networks to press demands in the political and economic fields, as well as the integration of ICTs in the program of certain donors such as UNFPA.

Thanks to the Acacia program, all players (decision-makers, researchers, donors and civil society organizations) are more familiar with ICT applications in their respective field of

activities, and the possibilities that ICTs offer for strengthening their intervention capacities.

IDRC itself is now more convinced of the positive correlation between ICTs and development, and it has greater expertise in financing projects in the ICT field, as well as new knowledge that can be used to broaden and reinforce its programs.

Influence of this kind has been made possible through the projects' use of a range of influence mechanisms: action-research, the coordination forum, documentation and dissemination of results, potential users' exposure to ICTs, advocacy and lobbying.

Moreover, the following factors have contributed favourably to these influences or effects: the dynamism of the management team and project players, the level of participation by the central and local governments in project activities, the quality of the outcomes, the achievement of project objectives, and the perception that players have of IDRC. We must also note that the favourable environment (the openness and support shown by the government, the willingness of SONATEL to help, international competition) has been a factor facilitating the influence exerted by Acacia projects on policies, particularly sectoral ones. At the same time, an appropriate technological environment has made it possible to conduct ICT experiments in the communities.

It should be noted that the projects have had a greater effect on national policies than on local policies, even though most of these projects have been implemented at the local level. Moreover, while individual projects are approved within the SAS framework, they are implemented largely outside the SAS coordination mechanisms, and the project teams have each developed a strategy based on their own networks and capabilities, and in their own sphere of influence.

Surprisingly, the fact that the project's Permanent Secretariat was located within the government had little impact on policy influence. Moreover, the delayed intervention of Elsa diminished the potential policy influence of the Acacia strategy. Research results did not provide for a sufficiently clear understanding of the gender and ICT problem, and therefore could not influence policies regarding women by integrating this new dimension.

Finally, the image of IDRC as a "deep-pocketed donor" hampered efforts to transform the SAS into an independent national strategy that might have left more of a mark on policies.

As a final word, we may note that among the factors favouring policy influence, the ability of researchers to link research and dissemination of its results, within a participatory approach for putting those results to use, has helped Acacia to exert policy influence in Senegal. In fact, by including in their project activities people or institutions with the potential capacity or opportunity to influence policies either directly or indirectly, the researchers are laying the ground for making use of research results which

should lead to changes in the perceptions, capacities and behaviour of these people or institutions, and should thereby help to move policies in the right direction.

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18 *Esquisses numériques : Chroniques de la Société de l'information au Sénégal d'août 1999 à octobre 2002* [Digital sketches : Stories of the Information Society in Senegal], by Olivier Sagna, (draft paper)

Annex : List of persons interviewed

NAME	FUNCTION	DATE & TIME	CONTACTS	OBSERVATIONS
SAS/Permanent Secretariat				
Fadhel DIAGNE	Project leader		821 51 63	
Mansour DIOUF	Former communication officer	26/04/02 at 15:30	834 25 12 (home)	At IDRC
Malamine SAVANE	Chair, Horizontal Group	26/04/02 at 9:00	865 12 00/636 76 06	At ARD
Amacodou DIOUF	AHDIS, PFR of Diourbel	17/05/02 at 11:30	971 17 16/ 973 60 93 (fax) ahdis@telecomplus.sn	At CONGAD
El H. Malick CISSE	Former communications officer at Congad	03/05/02 at 11:00	636 28 94/825 13 19 psicfed@telecomplus.sn	PSIC Headquarters
Gaston ZONGO	Former project manager	06/05/02	638 48 56 fax 824 28 90 email : gzongo@sentoo.sn gzongo@hotmail.com	
Samba SENE	Networks Director, SONATEL	14/05/02 at 17:30	839 21 00	SONATEL Médina
Binta SARR	APROFES	16/05/02 at 17:30	941 44 11/635 58 78	APROFES HQ Kaolack
Balla Moussa DAFFE	Mayor of Sédhiou, former Minister of RST	17/06/02 at 12 noon	637 32 13	Maison des Elus Locaux
Cheikh FALL	PFR Kaolack	16/05/02 at 17:30	941 44 11	APROFES HQ Kaolack
Malick NDIAYE	Government Web Site	06/06/02 at 12:30	malick@primature.sn 638 40 72/849 18 53	Prime Minister's Office
Cheikh Tidiane Ndiongue	Director of Studies and Regulation of Posts and	04/12/02 at 10:00	823 10 65	Ministry of Communications Dakar

NAME	FUNCTION	DATE & TIME	CONTACTS	OBSERVATIONS
	Telecommunications, Ministry of Communication of Senegal			
Mamadou Diop Decroix	Minister of relations with national, regional and African Union parliamentary institutions	07/01/03 at 11 :00	842 31 83	Ministry of relations with national, regional and African Union parliamentary institutions
JOINT PARENTAL AUTHORITY				
Hélène Mottin SYLLA	Project leader	27/03/02 9:45-11:45	Bd de la République	
Safiétou DIOP	Pres. Siggil Djigéen	05/04/02 at 10 :00	636 23 65/825 00 56 Colobane	
Dior Fall SOW	Project Consultant, Pres. of Femmes Juristes	29/05/02 at 10 :00	839 13 62/ 637 09 19	SONATEL, Rue Vincent
Mame Bousso SAMB	Member of Parliament	24/05/02 at 10 :30	642 31 59	Assemblée Nationale
Mame Seye SECK	UDEN unionist	23/04/02 at 10:00	646 86 95/825 32 61	UNSAS HQ Liberté 5
Ousmane NDIAYE	ENDA TM	03/05/02 at 15 :00	821 60 27	ENDA TM headquarters
Marième DIOP	Coordinator, Cellule Genre, MFPE	30/05/02 at 15 :00	822 27 04	Imm Yoro Basse, Fann Hock, near the Pharmacy
YOUTH CYBER-SPACES				
Khady Tall THIAM	DAF of GEEP	27/03/02 16 – 18 :00	824 48 77	Meeting at GEEP headquarters
Doudou GAYE	Professor Technical Liaison	08/04/02 at 10 :00	822 32 88/821 46 95	Meeting at Lycée M. de Lafosse
Babacar FALL	Project Manager	29/04/02 at 10 :00	820 72 11 (home)/632 04 99	At GEEP headquarters
Abib CAMARA	GEEP researchers	24/04/02 12:15	824 66 85/634 11 70	
Olivier SAGNA	Senior Project Manager	24/04/02 at 15 :00	635-92-93	Digital Campus AUF
Adama DIAKHATE	ESP student	09/05/02 at 10:30	835 42 20	N° 44B, ENSUT
Samba	Coordinator,	14/05/02	644 46 47	17, Bd de la

NAME	FUNCTION	DATE & TIME	CONTACTS	OBSERVATIONS
GUISSE	Worldlink	at 12 :30		République
Younous DIAW	'IGEN Coordinator	04/06/02 at 11 :00	822 41 23/821 40 17	IGEN : Inspection Générale de l'Education Nationale, MEN
Moustapha DIOUF	Pres. Commission Informatique de l'Ecole CAERENAD/ENS	18/05/02 at 10 :30	825 44 92	
SAFEFOD				
Libasse HANE	Documentation and Publications Officer	07/06/02 at 11 :00	yero@safefod.org 824 44 06/640 79 38	SAFEFOD
Yéro SYLLA	Project leader	27/06/02 at 16 :00	824 44 06/824 14 59	SAFEFOD headquarters at Amitié II
Aly LO	Former Pres. APCR	11/06/02 at 12 noon	638 64 81	Maison des élus locaux
Balla Moussa DAFFE	Mayor of Sédhiou, former Minister of RST	17/06/02 at 12 noon	637 32 13	Maison des Elus Locaux
SP/ACACIA Senegal				
Alioune CAMARA	P.O ACACIA Senegal	18/07/02 at 16 :00	864 00 00, ext.	IDRC, Dakar