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Understanding the dynamic of the assistance brought to the seniors' associations in Côte d'Ivoire concerning socio-cultural activities: the case of the organizations affiliated to the department of leisure

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Abstract

Owing to longevity, elderly peoples' caring needs have increased in Africa. In fact, ageing well implies many conditions. These conditions consist in maintaining a satisfactory degree of autonomy, controlling and responsibility for events, having good capacities of adaptation, maintaining quality affective relationships, remain engaged in society, having sufficient incomes and giving meaning to one's life (De Ladoucette, 2011). To date in Côte d'Ivoire, these conditions are not yet met. Seniors are still struggling to meet many challenges such as the management of their spare time and leisure activities. In order to cope with this situation, many seniors' associations have been created. They cooperate with the Department of Leisure which helps them implement their action plan. The support of the Department of Leisure is in line with its logic of using socio-cultural activities based on the pedagogy of leisure (Nahrstedt, 1990, p.11). This paper is based on a qualitative approach. In this respect we have carried out a semi structured interview with eighteen seniors from four associations and also three key persons from Department of Leisure. This article aims at showing the impact of the pedagogy of accompaniment implemented by the Department of Leisure on seniors' associations from 2013 to 2019. This survey shows clearly that the great majority of the interviewed seniors' associations are now able to undertake their own socio-cultural and leisure activities.

KEY WORDS: longevity, seniors' associations, pedagogy of leisure, pedagogy of accompaniment

I. INTRODUCTION

Ageing issues in Sub-Saharan Africa have become a major concern today. Indeed, the "World Economic Forum" states that the last ten countries with low life expectancy are all in Africa, with Swaziland closing the gap at 48.9 years (Sergeur, 2018). Côte d'Ivoire's life expectancy was 53,58 years in 2016, with a projection of 55,16 years in 2019 (World Outlook, 2019).

African countries are also undergoing a demographic transition. The increment of life expectancy, improved health conditions and changing lifestyles has led to a reconfiguration of the health pyramid with a greater number of elderly people. Urbanization, and the social dynamics that it entails, are helping to redefine the place and role

of the elderly and, consequently, intergenerational relations (HANE, 2011, p. 840).

Despite these advances in the development process of the African continent, facts highlighting the vulnerability of the elderly are legion in everyday life.

Indeed, if in the past, they were considered as owners of cultural values and, as such, occupied an important place in traditional African society, today this is no longer the case. In fact, "development, the social change observed in Côte d'Ivoire, have contributed to the desacralization of the elderly to such a point that they are no longer the center of interest of communities and family groups. They are desacralized in such a way that they are considered as «soul eaters", witches." (TANO, 2007).

So as not to abandon the seniors to their fate and thus compromise the sustainable human development of the country, the Ivorian government often takes actions to support them. One of these measures is the involvement of local authorities in this process, through the adoption of Law N°2003-208 of 7 July 2003 on the transfer and distribution of State competences (Article 15, N°16 of this law stipulates: the following competences are attributed to the municipalities: the implementation of social actions and promotion of elderly people...; the sensitization and education); the creation of a ministry in charge of vulnerable populations (the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection). This Ministry observes every year the International Day of Older Persons, the twenty-seventh edition of which took place on 9 November 2017 in Grand Bassam. However, some of these actions often do not lead to the expected results.

This is for example the case of the above-mentioned law, which was not followed by local authorities because of cash flow difficulties. Likewise, few seniors' organizations are aware of this law and claim it (GALA & BINI, 2015).

Owing to this situation, the Leisure Department, whose missions include the sensitization of all



social strata with regard to leisure activities for their wellness, has organized support activities for the associations of elderly people every year since 2013.

The understanding and scope of this intervention, which focuses on the leisure activities of senior citizens in a socio-cultural animation approach, are examined during the present study. But first, the relationship between socio-cultural activities and leisure time should be scientifically analyzed.

Animation, in its broadest sense, covers a set of activities, measures and interventions (Michels, 1995). It is *stricto sensu* defined as a deliberate intervention which aimed at organizing and modifying the impact of the social and material environment on the experience and behavior of individuals, especially in group situations (Michels, 1995, p. 24-25).

Pierre Besnard (1986, p.15) defines socio-cultural animation as "*a set of practices, activities and relationships*". He goes on to note that "*these practices and activities concern the interests manifested by individuals in their cultural life and more particularly in their free time, whose interests can be classified as follows (according to Joffre Dumazédier): artistic, intellectual, social, practical, physical. These practices respond to the needs for initiation, training and action, which are not met by existing institutions. They satisfy the functions of relaxation, entertainment and development.*"

Based on the functions of socio-cultural activities described above, it can be seen that this concept is closely linked to leisure which Joffre Dumazédier (1962, p. 29) defines as: "*a set of occupations to which the individual can indulge in voluntarily, either to rest, or to amuse himself, or to develop his information or disinterested training, his voluntary social participation or his free creative capacity after freeing himself from his professional, family and social obligations*".

For OPASCHOWSKI (1996): "*animation is the conceptual matrix of leisure pedagogy*". In other words, it is through animation that leisure education can be carried out.

The origin of the concept of leisure education is the increment of leisure time. Its mission would therefore be to develop time management skills in individuals so that leisure does not lose its emancipatory and liberating dimension and fall entirely under the yoke of the consumer society (NAHRSTEDT, 1990).

The relationship between socio-cultural animation and leisure pedagogy being thus established, this article seeks to understand and evaluate the strategy put in place by the Leisure Department to support associations and NGOs of elderly people in Côte d'Ivoire.

II. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The methodological framework of the study is based on the following points: the study scope, the sampling, the survey tool and the method of analysis.

II.1 Scope of study and sampling

The study took place in the district of Abidjan. Indeed, almost all the organizations of older people active on the national territory have their headquarters in Abidjan. About twenty senior citizens' associations are grouped together in a federation called FARECI (Federation of the Retirees' Association of the State of Côte d'Ivoire).

A non-probability sampling technique was chosen for the selection of persons to be interviewed. This is the technique of reasoned choice. Indeed, all these associations have experience in socio-cultural animation and leisure activities. This same technique was also used for the selection of respondents from the Leisure Department.

The size of the entities targeted for the study was composed as follows:

- From the universe of twenty associations and NGOs of elderly people who have often benefited from the support of the Leisure Department, a sample of four (04) organizations was selected. These were UNARCI (the National Union of Retired Persons of Côte d'Ivoire, Yopougon-Abidjan section) for 08 respondents; NOVISMA (the New Vision of Seniors and the Third Age of Marcory) for 03 respondents; the NGO HOUKABENIA for 03 respondents and FARECI for 04 respondents, i.e. eighteen (18) respondents for four (04) associative structures of older persons;
- Finally, the deputy director of the popularization and development of leisure activities and two other agents of the leisure department, i.e. three (03) persons, were questioned on their experiences in supporting the elderly.

The total sample size for this study is twenty-one (21) individuals.

The choice of these associations is explained not only by the fact that they are among the beneficiaries of the annual action plan of the Leisure Department, but also because each of them, in return, provides a report on their activities.



II.2 Type of survey/ survey tools

For this qualitative study, two semi-directive interview guides have been designed (one for the organizations and the other for the Leisure Department). The guide for the organizations of elderly people is structured around the following indicators: presentation of the respondent (03 questions), dynamization and mobilization (05 questions), creative life (03 questions), support brought to the associations of elderly people (04 questions). As for the one addressed to the Leisure Department, it includes four (04) open questions including the presentation of the respondent, the context of the intervention of the Leisure Department, the nature of this assistance and experiences with seniors.

On the whole, the representatives of the associations and two agents of the Leisure Department were subjected to a focus groups. As for the deputy director in charge of the popularization and development of leisure activities, she was interviewed individually.

In addition to these interviews, some activity reports of these associations and NGOs were analyzed.

II.3 Method of analysis

Dialectical method and content analysis were chosen for data analysis.

III. Data analysis

The analysis of the collected data will be made in four points: presentation of the structures involved in the study, the assistance brought by the leisure department, the impact of this support on senior citizens' organizations and the obstacles to the use of socio-cultural activities by senior citizens.

III.1 Presentation of the structures involved in the study

III.1.1. Organizations of the elderly

- FARECI

This federation of associations of the elderly was created in 2010 and currently includes eleven (11) associations (National Union of Retired Public Servants and State Agents of Côte d'Ivoire, Association of Retired Military and Gendarmes of Côte d'Ivoire, Union of Retired Women of the Treasury of Côte d'Ivoire, Association of Retired Preschool and Primary Education Inspectors of Côte d'Ivoire, Côte d'Ivoire retired police personnel mutual, Collective Retired Civil Servants who have achieved Thirty Years of Service, Organization of Female Retired Public Servant and State Agents

from Côte d'Ivoire, Association of Retired Social Workers of Côte d'Ivoire, Association of Retired of Cocody, Association of Retired Ambassadors of Côte d'Ivoire and Union of the Former Civil Servants and agents of the Post and Telecommunications).

The president of this federation says: *"it is all our difficulties that prompted us to form an association. Indeed, when Seraph and I were retired in 1994, we no longer had a civil servant's registration number. We had to wait for the General Retirement Fund for State Employees-CGRAE to give us a pensioner's number before we could receive our pension. Faced with such difficulties, we thought it would be useful to join forces to plead our case together and ensure that future pensioners would be prevented from the difficulties we went through. As a result of our fight, there is now only one service number that follows a civil servant from the period of employment to retirement"*.

It is in order to deal effectively with the difficulties of pensioners that the eleven associations mentioned above have joined forces. FARECI therefore aims at improving the living conditions of retired civil servants and agents of the State of Côte d'Ivoire who adhere to its vision (FARECI statutes, 2015).

In general, this federation organizes a set of activities to fight against sedentariness among senior citizens. To this effect, the President of FARECI notes:

"First of all, we have to be active because sclerosis kills, isolation kills. We organize outings. As an example, we have a delegation of people who will go to Canada this year. We also have a duty to set up FARECI delegations inside the country".

- UNARCI-Yopougon Chapter

This association was created on September 10th, 1999. And its section, which is part of this study, was created on January 23rd, 2003, with the aim of bringing together the retired people from Yopougon and creating social cohesion among them, according to the president of the said association.

With regard to the objectives of UNARCI, its General Secretary stated: *"To promote the social, moral and physical well-being of retired persons from all social strata; to improve the quality of social life of senior active retirees; to defend their interests; and to enhance the status of the elderly"*.

These objectives are in harmony with those already mentioned by FARECI.



As for the main activities of this association, its president lists them below: " *it consists of socio-cultural animation based sports, tourist, leisure activities, as well as monthly meetings.*"

- NOVISMA

The creation of NOVISMA was motivated by an experience from which its president benefited outside Côte d'Ivoire, when she was still active. She states it in these terms:

"It must be said that I am a retired professor. When I was in service, I took part in a study trip to the United States. During that trip, I saw some older people who were still very vigorous and doing their activities. So I realized that you can be of a certain age and still be active. From that time, I made the resolution that when I retire I will create an association that will encourage people of my age to be active; because being active makes you healthy".

In the words of the General Secretary, "NOVISMA is made up of people over fifty years old. It works for the well-being of its members. Likewise, it participates in the full development of young people and children".

It has the particularity of carrying out various activities, including those intended for other generations.

To this end, the President notes: "We organize different activities every year. This year, we held an Ivorian cultural day where we made an exhibition of some crops and their derivatives. For example, we exposed cassava and its derivatives such as: *attoukpou*, *attieke*, *tapioca*, *gari*, *coconde*. We also exposed rice, we noticed that there is a black rice which is very nourishing for the elderly, especially diabetics, and so on. Then we organized a health talk. Furthermore, we recognize that we have a responsibility towards children. Parents are currently driven by profit motive. Children, even at the age of two, are inclined to use mobile phones, but they cannot cook an egg. So we have made a commitment to introduce them to cooking by organizing a culinary competition for them every year during the past four years. This contest brings together children of both sexes, aged from 10 to 15...and we also organize a grandparents' day every year."

In short, the experiences acquired since their professional life are highlighted by these elderly people: knowledge of cultural varieties, culinary art, sports practice, tribute to grandparents and initiation of young people.

- HOUKABENIAN

On January 25th, 2015, the NGO HOUKABENIAN was created. It is a term deriving from the local language which means: help them and you will see. (Statutes of HOUKABENIAN, 2015, p. 4).

The president of this NGO claims that she was inspired both by her father's life story and by the inadequacy of structures in charge of the caring needs of the elderly. She said: "The case of my father inspired me a lot. He was very valiant. But, as he grew older, he became weak and turned into a dependent person, and this affected me very much. At the level of the State level, there is no structure that can take charge of these people. It is to this challenge that this NGO has been designed to address. In fact, all metabolic illnesses show up about the third age."

Regarding its main activity, the general secretary of HOUKABENIAN said: " the "KORODAYS" is a fair dedicated to the elderly".

The expression KORODAYS derives from two notions: "KORO" which is an expression in the local language and which means "elder", "old" and DAYS, an English word. So KORODAYS aims at honoring the seniors.

For example, the president of HOUKABENIAN said that during the 2019 edition, "there will be sports, teachings about the elderly health, environmental issues, financial rights and beauty issues concerning them".

III.2 Assistance brought to senior citizens' associations by the Leisure Department

III.2.1. Comments by respondents from the Leisure Department

In response to the question related to the context in which the Leisure Department supports the senior citizens' organizations, Mister H., who is responsible for sports activities in the said department, stated that:

"The Leisure Department cooperates with the associations of elderly people for their well-being and also to promote leisure activities among them. The aim is to show them that leisure is important. It must be understood that many elderly people are retired. At this stage of their lives, most of them are inactive. It is therefore to give them the zest for life that the recreation department helps them. It is to tell them that retirement is not an end in itself. Through leisure activities, they have an opportunity to thrive".



For Ms. B., in charge of planning leisure activities within the said department, *"this intervention is linked to the fight against sedentary lifestyles among seniors"*.

In short, the contribution of the Leisure Department to the care of the elderly in Côte d'Ivoire is made both in a framework of the promotion of leisure activities and the fight against the precariousness of life of this social stratum. This intervention is in harmony with the motivations behind the creation of the various senior citizens' associations involved in this study.

Furthermore, it is important to know that the support provided by the Leisure Department to senior citizens' organizations in the field of socio-cultural and leisure activities are carried out according to two approaches. The first is to organize activities for them and the second is to meet the senior citizens' associations that request it.

III.2.1.1. The organization of leisure activities for senior citizens (first approach)

According to this first approach, the Deputy Director in charge of the promotion and development of leisure notes: *"leisure department often organizes capacity building workshops for their leaders. During these workshops, we discuss with them the challenges they face, as well as the ways and means to meet them"*.

She goes on to say: *"We also organize an annual recreation day for them. This day is called: senior's leisure day. It is held in conjunction with the International Day of Older Persons. To date, we are at the seventh edition"*.

With regards to this leisure day, Mister. H. said: *"It is an annual outing for them. During this day, several leisure activities are offered to them; they are methodically organized: health walks, fitness, board games, dancing in the dust talks and debate or a panel discussion on issues of ageing, gerontology, leisure and sport"*.

These activities aim not only to cheer up the elderly, but also, and above all, to make them aware of how to reproduce them in their different structures.

Finally, on the recommendation of the Minister of Sports and Leisure, the Department of Leisure organized a reunion day for senior citizens on the eve of the end of the year celebrations, from 2015 to 2017. To this end, the investigated deputy director indicates below the activities which were programmed there: *"humorous activity, the ball in the dust, special recognition to the couples having more than fifty years of marital life, gift to each*

senior invited to this ceremony and a meal for all participants.

III.2.1.2. The organization of activities according to the second approach

With this approach, the Leisure Department is at the disposal of senior citizens' associations that request it. R.K. notes to this effect: *"when these associations organize their own annual activities, they ask the Leisure Department to provide them technical, material and sometimes financial support"*.

Generally, the Leisure Department supervises them, or even organizes their sports activities (health walks, gymnastics of maintenance), talks-debates, conferences and sometimes offers or lends equipment of leisure (board games). It provides sometimes financial support (comments collected from Ms B.).

For example, during an African cultural day, organized by NOVISMA in 2017, the head of the leisure department gave a lecture on the place of the elderly in society (NOVISMA, 2017, p. 14).

The other example concerns the forum that the association of retired pre-school and primary education inspectors organized from August 23rd to 26th 2017 at the CAFOP in Grand Bassam (Côte d'Ivoire). The summary of the report of this forum indicates that the theme entitled: the place of sport and leisure in the life of the senior citizen, was delivered by the director of leisure department (AIEPRECI, 2017, p. 8).

Moreover, in all the sports activities (walks and fitness), that these senior citizens' associations organize they ask the Leisure Department to supervise and animate.

III.2.2. Critical view of senior citizens' associations on this support

In addition to the initiatives of the leisure department in favor of senior citizens' organizations, it is advisable to take into account the feedbacks of the beneficiaries.

Thus, in response to the question of how they view the Leisure Department's intervention, we have presented below the opinions of each of the associations surveyed.

- For FARECI

The general secretary said: *"what the leisure department does for us, I don't know if any other public structure can do the same. It's the only organization that really cares for us"*.



In Côte d'Ivoire, the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection is responsible for taking care of the elderly. However, because the promotion of leisure activities at the national level must be inclusive, the Leisure Department organizes activities every year for different social strata, while focusing on the most vulnerable populations, including the elderly.

The general treasurer of this federation puts a particular emphasis on the activities that best met their expectations: *"really, we must say that we enjoyed the relaxing outing to the Banco National Park last year. I also liked the outing to the Bingerville Botanical Garden in 2016. »*

But beyond the outings, the seniors like also the leisure activities which are focused on intellectual activities, dance of the 50s or 60s, the discovery of the environment and the food offered, as the assistant secretary general of FARECI stated below: *"I have always appreciated the conferences during the outings, also the ball with the various demonstrations of dances of old days. I also appreciate the environment, the good food during the outings and the good wine".*

- For the NGO HOUKABENIAN

The president says, *"Without the Leisure Department, we would be disoriented. So if it didn't exist, we would have had to create it. Indeed, it takes an active part in all our activities, more specifically the KORODAYS which started in 2017. Last year, during this activity, the director of this department talked about the benefits of sport and leisure for the elderly".*

Moreover, in a critical sense, she notes: *"the leisure department has a lot of potentialities that she should put at the service of the population".*

- For UNARCI

The General Secretary says: *"The leisure department provides us with financial, logistical and material support (board games). We are totally satisfied with this support. Because this support contributes to the creation of a climate of trust, even confidence between us."*

If these three above-mentioned structures are positive about their relationship with the leisure department, this is not the case with NOVISMA.

- For NOVISA

Based on a painful experience that occurred during the day of special recognition to the elderly in 2018 in Côte d'Ivoire (organized by the ministry in charge of seniors), the president of this association noted: *"on October 1st, 2018, we were invited to*

this ceremony, but we were shocked by the quality of the organization. Older people that you transport without any minimum! We couldn't admit that. We were asked to be on the site at 7 o'clock, yet there was nothing planned to properly receive the elders, some of us were under medical treatment. If you didn't plan anything for us, it was because you regarded us as cattle".

From this incident, she generalized her criticism even towards the support that the leisure department has been offering to seniors for seven years. She concluded: *"You do not accompany us."*

This reaction, although severe, nevertheless deserves a sociological analysis of the strategies of care that government structures put in place for seniors.

III. 3. Impact of this support

After the overview on the support offered by the leisure department to senior citizens' associations and the feedback from the latter, this section will attempt to measure this impact in three sub-points: the dynamics of mobilization of senior citizens, the activities created by these associations and their expectations.

III.3.1. The dynamics of mobilization of seniors

The dynamic of the support set up by the leisure department has contributed, among other things, to the creation of several organizations of elderly people in Côte d'Ivoire. The president of FARECI stated:

"It should be noted that our structure includes eleven associations of elderly people".

It is advantageous to be affiliated to our structure because it is based on the principle of good governance and solidarity, as the previous surveyed person declared:

"Good governance and rigorous management should not be neglected. The decisions taken by the FARECI board are extended to the presidents of the associations who are members of our structure. It is always cohesion and sociability that prevail in our way of doing things".

This last argument is important because it concerns the elderly whose vulnerability is known to the whole society. If they freely join an association, it is because they are looking for solidarity and conviviality.

III.3.2. The activities initiated by these senior citizens' associations

These are a number of innovations that senior citizens' associations are implementing as a result



of the support they receive from the leisure department.

- For FARECI

The president of this federation said: *"We encourage the associations, especially those who want to write novels and poems to do it, because these types of activities prevent the brain of the elderly person from sclerosing"*.

As for FARECI's assistant general secretary, he notes: *"We first produced a newspaper that is published every three months. We also made a diary. We also encourage our members to produce literary works. Similarly, we organized a trip to Benin and Togo. Finally, we often organize conferences and relaxing outings"*.

All in all, it is about a variety of tourist activities, literary works, art, etc.

- HOUKABENIAN

The general secretary of this NGO notes: *"The elderly have, during their childhood, lived in the village. As such, they know things we don't know. They can teach to others traditional games. This is the case with awalé, which is a game of intelligence and self-control"*.

As for the president of the NGO, she said: *"the activity that has brought us into contact with the elderly is the Korodays. They are happy to know that we are able to bring them together in one place and carry out activities with them that correspond to their needs and aspirations"*.

As an innovative activity, this NGO intends to focus on traditional games whose main stakeholders are the elderly. They can share this knowledge with others as it is the case with the Korodays, already mentioned in the presentation of the associations.

- NOVISMA

On this concern, the president of NOVISMA said: *"We often organize relaxing outings. We have already visited the botanical garden. We went to the Museum of Civilizations of Grand Bassam and the Plateau. We are planning to go to the Bonoua Tree climbing Park because there are things to learn there"*.

It is essentially about outings and discovering the wonders of nature.

- UNARCI

Finally, the president of UNARCI states on this subject: *"to avoid the sedentariness, we have been celebrating Mother's and Father's Day jointly for*

the past two years. In the same way, now we have decided to promote tourist trips, relaxing outings and board games and traditional games such as awalé. »

In short, this seniors' association focuses on community holiday celebrations, tourism and games. It is important to mention that the survey of this association was realized during one of its relaxing outings on the beach of Assinie, south-east of Abidjan.

III.3.3. The expectations of the elderly

When asked what they are looking for in carrying out the above-mentioned activities, the FARECI secretary says: *"I, for example, participated in the trip to Benin with ARECO. This trip strengthened the links between the members of the associations. It was a pleasure trip, but at the same time, we learned a lot. Likewise, when we went to the Banco National Park, we learned extraordinary things. We didn't know exactly what was going on in that forest. Sometimes, on these occasions, we met comrades we haven't seen for a long time. It's so beautiful! We are moved and reenergize "*.

The president of the NGO HOUKABENIAN says: *"What we are looking for is a balanced, harmonious society, the well-being of parents, grandparents and all social strata. It is within this framework that we intend to organize a party called: Happy birthday grandpa and grandma. It is about celebrating older people of both sexes, following the example of father's and mother's days"*.

"Through these activities, we seek conviviality, help and fulfilment," says the president of UNARCI.

Finally, the president of NOVISMA notes: *"Well-being because when you go to Europe, you will see elderly people who are settled and who are still healthy. It is because they follow a wellness and health program. For example, you can organize a tourist trip to Yamoussoukro to visit the Basilica. Such an activity contributes to the seniors' well-being"*.

The main expectations of the elderly is therefore a permanent quest for social cohesion and even wellness.

But what are the obstacles to the regular practice of socio-cultural activities by the elderly? And what suggestions could be made regarding these obstacles? The last section of this work attempts to answer these two questions.

III.4 Obstacles to the process of supporting older people's organizations and suggestions



III.4.1. Obstacles

The difficulties encountered by the structures surveyed are presented below.

- At the level of the leisure department

The first obstacle to this assistance is the inadequacy of the budgetary allocation. To this end, the deputy director in charge of popularization and development of leisure activities noted: *"with only five million we can only organize one annual relaxation outing for only two hundred participants. The senior citizens' associations usually want us to increase this number, but without additional resources, it would be difficult to meet this request"*.

The second obstacle mentioned by those involved in this direction is the incapacity to meet, on a permanent basis, all the needs of these organizations. The person in charge of planning leisure activities stated: *"When we talk to the elderly, they most often ask for support in terms of health and even material needs. Because for them, beyond the leisure day dedicated to them, there is nothing else on the horizon. They often ask themselves: What is the state doing for us, apart from our retirement pension?"* She continued: *"Certainly in 2017, the Leisure Department organized a consultation workshop with the heads of senior citizens' organizations, where discussions focused on the diagnostic of the problems seniors are exposed to, as well as their needs and expectations. But this kind of activity is not permanent."*

- At the level of senior citizens' organizations

There are problems to subsidize activities that meet their expectations and needs. Generally speaking, organizations of older people claim that they do not have the opportunity to travel inside and outside the country; and also that they do not have access to infrastructures for sports activities. In fact, those that exist are expensive. These difficulties are mentioned below by the President of NOVISMA:

"There is no space for us. If we want to recreate, where can we go? However, it is recommended that we practice sports. There is no free gymnasium; everything has to be paid for (even at the National Institute of Youth and Sports). But at our age, what means do we have? When it comes to pay for the membership fee, no one reacts. So we are a bit handicapped because we don't benefit from any state subsidy. For example, for the senior citizens' ball that we often organize, we are obliged to rent

Hostel of the Youth in the municipality of Marcory. So if there was a leisure area dedicated to the elderly, as well as a subsidy, we would do a lot of things».

III.4.2. Suggestions

In response to the above-mentioned difficulties, the following suggestions were made.

- At the level of the leisure department

The budget allocation for supporting the organizations of older people should be significantly increased, because the challenge is great. It is about contributing to their wellness. However, while waiting for this dream to become reality, the Leisure Department should seek partnerships with companies, local authorities and economic operators in order to collect additional resources to better support the elderly in their quest for happiness. However, in order to achieve this, it would be advisable to set up appealing projects whose feasibility does not suffer from any incongruity.

Similarly, the Leisure Department should have the time to listen regularly to seniors' organizations in order to take their needs and aspirations into account in the design, implementation and evaluation of projects concerning them (comments by Ms. B.).

- At the level of seniors' organizations

The greatest dream of senior citizens' organizations is that through support, they will achieve independence and more mobility. The president of FARECI states it in these terms: *"Our dream is to make sure that the association can have a certain autonomy of movement allowing it to organize trips at least inside the country. The spirit of discovery is on everyone's mind. We discover ourselves first, and then the other"*.

This desire for mobility both inside and outside the country is shared by all the other older people's associations surveyed.

Similarly, for the NGO HOUKABENIAN, socio-cultural activities or leisure activities are a means for caring for the elderly. This is why its president declared that: *"Concerning the accompaniment, we would like the Leisure Department to make us discover all the leisure activities that exist in Côte d'Ivoire, so that by practicing them, the elderly no longer feels isolated, but they realize that at all levels their needs are taken into account. For the practice of leisure activities can ensure their well-being."* Of course, this requires a governmental subsidy.



The secretary of this NGO agrees, but put a particular emphasis on traditional games: *"We want that they put the stress on traditional leisure. As society evolves, people tend to forget traditional leisure activities. These games can be promoted. But first of all, we need to carry out investigations on leisure activities practiced in each region of the country in order to set up a data bank to be promoted through education"*.

Finally, the president of the NGO clarifies the aims of these traditional games: *"the elderly can assimilate them and communicate them to young people during the intergenerational activities that we organize. Indeed, the intergenerational activities are of interest to both seniors and young people"*. From this point of view, one can be said that leisure or socio-cultural activities can serve as mediation between the generations.

IV. Discussion

The Leisure Department plays three roles of the socio-cultural animator in senior citizens' organizations: designer, mediator and organizer (Favre, 2011, p. 17). Its intervention has a didactic purpose. It is to ensure that these organizations are able to take charge of themselves in the long term using their own resources. It is a strategy of intervention that ORTIZ de URBINA & RICHELLE (2013, p. 62) call "actions that give ideas to others".

Likewise, these authors who used animation to show how experimentation at the local level can be extended, generalized in the city (ORTIZ de URBINA & RICHELLE, 2013, p. 62), the Leisure Department often initiates activities such as capacity building workshops for the leaders of senior citizens' organizations so that can implement it in their respective structures. This is the reason why it organizes an annual outing for 200 older people from at least 20 associations. According to the authors mentioned above, this is a diagnostic work, where the activities allow for information, consultation, dialogue, construction and, above all, participation (ORTIZ de URBINA & RICHELLE, 2013, p. 64). This approach can be observed in the support that the Leisure Department offers to organizations of elderly people in Côte d'Ivoire.

Furthermore, the study reveals that there is a link between the logic of intervention of the Leisure Department and the motivations behind the creation of the different associations of elderly people concerned. The overall aim is to prevent seniors from living in precariousness.

With regards to the activities carried out, the study generally reveals that older people prefer mobility

activities and the discovery of historical sites. Indeed, the botanical garden and the Banco National Park are structures from the colonial period.

- **The definition of socio-cultural activities**

Concerning animation, Opaschowski (1979, p. 47), notes: *"A key concept in the world of leisure, culture and education, animation refers to action aimed at motivating, encouraging and stimulating by non-directive methods in open situations. Animation promotes communication, unleashes creativity, stimulates the formation of groups and facilitates participation in cultural life"*.

Two comments can be made on the similarity of this definition to the subject of this study. The first is that socio-cultural animation takes into account the leisure world of older people's organizations. The second is that through the support offered by the leisure department during the past seven years, senior citizens' organizations have been endowed with the abilities to create leisure activities. They developed for instance a liking for literary works and tourist leisure activities (FARECI), traditional games and Korodays (HOUKABENIAN), going out and discovering (NOVISMA) and the celebration of father and mother's day, tourism and games (UNARCI).

- **Expectations of seniors' organizations**

The study shows that these organizations of older people seek social cohesion and psychological well-being. Through the leisure activities they engage in, one can say that these senior citizens' organizations aim at hedonism and their social reintegration. All in all, these are factors of longevity. The healthy physical and even social environment is a major contributor to longevity.

In short, these expectations fall within the vast field of the functions of socio-cultural animation, i.e.: the integration function, the participation function, the networking function, the time management function, the educational function, the enculturation function, the resource mobilization and socio-cultural balance function, the criticism and solidarity function and the prevention function (Moser et al., 2004).

- **Socio-cultural animation, a factor of intergenerational mediation**

Among the proposals made by the senior citizens' organizations interviewed, one was related to a monographic survey on traditional games. The promotion of these games study could be entrusted to senior citizens'. The merit of this proposal is that



it is in line with one of the four domains of intervention developed by Moser et al., (2004, p. 95-160). This domain is called: mediator and it consists in creating a link. In the case of this study, it consists in creating a link between the elderly, children and young people through leisure activities.

Conclusion

In view of the difficult living conditions of senior citizens, which are reflected in their vulnerability, some voices are raised to promote them through support strategies. In Africa, although governments most often show good intentions for the senior citizens, the reality is that initiatives concerning them still do not meet their expectations. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, although they are under the responsibility of another Ministry, this does not prevent the Leisure Department from initiating activities aimed at supporting them every year since 2013. This study aims at understanding and evaluating this assistance by interviewing the

stakeholders. Thus, after successively presenting the intervention approach of this department, the study examined the reaction of these organizations to the support provided, and a significant trend emerged: most of these organizations are satisfied.

The study also revealed that the impact of this support has a real impact on the associations of elderly people. They are all engaged in the dynamics of mobilization which is expressed through their creative activities as and also their expectations. The study focused, among other things, on the strategy of intervention proposed by ORTIZ de URBINA & RICHELLE (2013, p. 62) in terms of "actions that give ideas to others", "the definition and functions of socio-cultural animation" and "intervention positions"; all in the light of our empirical results. This work has allowed us to understand, both theoretically and empirically, the relationship between leisure and socio-cultural activities in an intervention with associations of elderly people.

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