

THE COURIER

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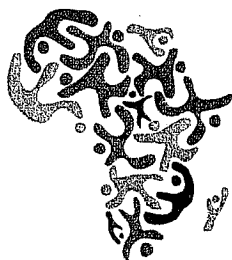
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Andrea Marchesini Reggiani

FONDAZIONI4AFRICA: the new frontier of international cooperation

FONDAZIONI 4 AFRICA

Fondazioni4Africa's logo



For the first time, four Italian banking foundations – Compagnia di San Paolo, Fondazione Cariparma, Fondazione Cariplo and Fondazione Monte Paschi di Siena – have teamed up in a joint humanitarian action in Senegal and North Uganda.

Since 2000, four Italian banking foundations have individually supported development projects in the South, closely guarding their autonomy. Today, following a lengthy exchange of ideas, they have decided to pool their experiences to launch a common project in favour of the refugees of North Uganda and the rural populations of Senegal. Scheduled to last three years, *Fondazioni4Africa* will have a budget of €10.5M, plus €600,000 financed by the Foundation Umano Progresso. International foundations have also expressed their interest in an initiative that could benefit from their support.

The thinking behind this project is subsidiarity. Each organisation and institution invests on the basis of the economic resources, managerial capacities and know-how it has acquired over the years, in the belief that a project's success requires partnerships.

Fondazioni4Africa started up in 2007 at the time of organising work sessions with NGOs already present in the field and that made available to foundations their privileged relations with local partners. Together they identified the sectors and forms of intervention before finally deciding to set aside humanitarian operations so as to intervene in territories with a certain stability conducive to a long-term project.

North Uganda is distinctive for the presence of a weak associative network and the predominance of institutional actors such as the county and subcounty. In the field, *Fondazioni4Africa* intervenes in the framework of a Ugandan

Government strategic plan that is designed to encourage persons housed in camps for displaced persons to return to their former villages, towns or transit camps in order to promote peace and development in the districts of Gulu, Kitgum, Amuru and Pader.

Work began officially on 1 October 2008. The field of action also implies both the development of rural areas and of economic activities plus water, health, education and the management of a sustainable environment. The project adopts a multi-dimensional and integrated approach to development that the promoters believe will be better suited to meeting the socio-economic challenges of North Uganda, namely bringing peace and reconciliation to the populations, establishing a solid community and social structure, and finally reintegrating former combatants (often child soldiers) into their communities. The principal Italian organisations involved in the project are: the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF), Associazione Volontari per lo Sviluppo Internazionale (AVSI), Cooperazione e Sviluppo (CESVI), and the Consortium CTM – Altromercato (with the stated objective of promoting the sale of local products in Italy and Europe).

In a second initiative that started up last November in Senegal, the principal protagonists are associations of Senegalese immigrants resident in Italy. The involvement of these migrants is part of the diasporic philanthropy's concept, a new field of intervention that the foundations are promoting. The choice of Senegal is not by chance: the Senegalese are

the largest sub-saharian African community in the regions of origin of the four Italian foundations. The project aims to improve the economic and social conditions of the populations living in a rural and semi-urban environment and this in key sectors for the development of Senegal, such as responsible tourism, micro-finance, fishing, production processes, fruit processing and marketing, and dairy products. This initiative also seeks to understand what could be the most appropriate types of aid and organisational methods for ensuring the smooth running of projects within which migrants associations become a factor for co-development alongside the NGOs. The former were involved from the initial phases of drawing up the project, showing particular interest in responsible tourism, the promotion of typical Senegalese products, the fish processing industry and, in Italy, activities for development education that include inviting Senegalese instructors to schools and colleges.

Finally, the foundations are setting great store on the possibility of understanding and strengthening the link between the provision of funds and micro-finance activities, especially in a rural environment. ■

Keywords

Banking foundations; Italy; Compagnia di San Paolo; Fondazione Cariparma; Fondazione Cariplo; Fondazione Monte Paschi di Siena; migration; Senegal; rural world; North Uganda; refugees; conflicts.