# Local human development in crisis contexts

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this article is to present the results of research carried out by the research group on human security and local human development of the Hegoa Institute since 2007. It aims to further the understanding of the processes of local human development, proposing analytical categories for this purpose and showing their application to the study of concrete cases.

**Design/methodology/approach** – To this end the experiences of the reconversion of the sugar industry of Holguín (Cuba) and the development of the Saharan population in the refugee situation of the Tindouf camps were selected. The methodology applied includes three dimensions. On the one hand, the analytical framework, which includes a comprehensive framework of local human development processes. Furthermore, research techniques applied have been qualitative techniques considering them the best approach to study the complexity of social processes. Finally, the paper contrasts the opinions and views expressed in research with the results obtained during evaluations conducted by the institutions responsible for implementation, as well as bibliography of reference.

**Findings** – Main conclusions refer to the collective capacity of the two societies to take control of their development model, the collective capacity of resilience and to the contradictions in processes of appropriation of local human development.

**Originality/value** – This work synthesises and sets out the main conclusions drawn both from analysis of the latest approaches to the theoretical framework of human development, and from the two case studies dealt with in the field work.

**Keywords** Self development, Cuba, Western Sahara

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Introduction

Local development strategies appear as a response to globalisation, but, beyond the fact of their being circumscribed to spaces below the state level, there are substantive differences in the form of understanding that response. On the one hand, there are those that opt for this smaller field because it is easier to adapt to the international setting, but they accept the homogenisation of policies imposed by globalisation.

Others reject the dependency of globalisation because it hinders, or denies, real development opportunities to societies and they opt for the strengthening of the societies' own resources. Strategies of local development have been formulated from

the perspective of endogenous development that have an integral vision, an essential part of which includes the strengthening of the institutions, as well as a change in education and training that should lead to the necessary technological change[1].

Our research is inserted in this line, but with a component that identifies it: the determined inclusion of the normative dimension as a constituent element of local development, understood from the perspective of human development. This is a question of analysing whether there are spaces where local societies design and execute sustainable alternative economic policies.

The research aims to study the processes of local human development in two contexts involving adverse circumstances: the reconversion of the sugar agro-industry in the eastern region of Cuba and the Saharan refugee camps in Tindouf (Algeria). By local human development is understood the set of processes by which a society autonomously determines a desirable and possible future for itself, namely, the wellbeing it considers to be of value. This is understood as the widening of opportunities for individuals, social groups and small- and medium-sized territorially organised communities, as well as the mobilisation of their capacities and resources for common and equitable profit, taking account of gender equality in economic, social and political terms evaluated from the perspective of human development. The research seeks to identify those processes to analyse the conditions in which they emerge and their evolution towards consolidation or debilitation, and to evaluate their results in terms of human development.

## 2. The theoretical framework of the research: the capacity development and collective capacities

Human development introduces the normative dimension into the very definition of development, which implies a revision of the concept of wellbeing. It is precisely the concept of wellbeing, based on the space of capacities that qualifies this as an alternative proposal (Ul Haq, 1995; Alkire, 2005).

This concept of wellbeing is a dynamic and relational concept. Its contents are defined both from the perspective of the results in persons and in the society, and from the perspective of the processes for achieving those results (Deneulin and Shahani, 2009, pp. 24-32). The inclusion of collective categories in the concept of wellbeing implies that the social results form part of it and must be evaluated in terms of individual and collective achievements. On occasion attention is paid almost exclusively to individual capacities as if they were the only reference. This research is resolute in its adoption of a conception of wellbeing that includes collective capacities, since without them human development is restricted in its potentiality for creating an operative alternative (Deneulin, 2006).

The proposal of capacity development (CD) is the central theoretical and political tool for the analysis and practice of the collective aspects of local human development[2]. It represents an advance with respect to earlier formulations of the capacity focus as it considers that the attainment of aims of human development depends on the existence of capacities in people, organisations and societies for transforming the situation[3]. The suitability of the CD process as a valid analytical tool for working on processes of local human development is supported by the two basic principles that best express its character and its applicability to our purposes: appropriation and complexity (UNDP, 2007, pp. 16-24, 2008a, pp. 9-16, 2009, pp. 3-6; Baser and Morgan, 2008b, pp. 2-7).

Appropriation is the capacity of a society to take decisions on its future, expressed in a real and tangible way. It means that each community decides autonomously

on its preferences and priorities; this demands new forms of participation where the local agents play a leading role. Collective appropriation requires that the people who form part of that society should also themselves appropriate, but this personal appropriation cannot be done individually. The personal capacity of choice is realised within common life structures; the exercise of human freedom cannot be separated from the choice of the human community. On the other hand, appropriation of its future by each society leads to a deep change of the rules of the game of globalisation, which must create a framework that permits the harmonious coexistence of that plurality of emerging futures.

Complexity is the result of appropriation, since a process in which there has been real participation by all the agents supposes changes in the roles and responsibilities of the latter that guarantee their effective participation in decision-making. As a result, the CD process is not limited to formal or technical questions of the capacity of organisations, but instead implies a strategy of effective inclusion of different groups and interests in order to produce a common vision of the future, which affects the society's structure of power.

The concept of collective capacity is fundamental in the CD process, which requires a definition that makes it possible to establish precise objectives and to design policies[4]. Our proposal is based on those formulated by UNDP (2008a) and Baser and Morgan (2008a).

The UNDP proposal distinguishes between transversal functional capacities and technical capacities. The former constitute the centre of the definition. These are the capacities that are found in every private or public group, whatever their complexity or the territorial level at which they act, without their relating to any particular sector or issue. They are the capacities of management needed for formulating, implementing and revising public policies, strategies, programs and projects[5]. Technical capacities refer to particular areas of professional sectors or of knowledge. The diversity of technical capacities is immense and they depend in their application on functional capacities, since without the latter they would not be operative.

The UNDP identifies five types of transversal functional capacities (UNDP, 2009)[5]. It is a proposal conceived as a methodology for projects of development cooperation viewed from the perspective of CD. That does not stop each of the capacities from being considered for purposes of formulating and executing development strategies. Amongst the five that it proposes, the most outstanding is the capacity of an organisation or society to diagnose the situation in which it finds itself and to create a vision of the future[6]. Having this capacity means analysing the capacities desired for the future against present-day capacities; this generates an understanding of the set of capacities and needs that makes it possible to provide an answer to the question of which capacities should be developed.

The concept of collective capacity of Baser and Morgan (2008a, p. 25) is located on the same line, as it defines this as the collective skill or aptitude of a system or organisation to carry out a particular function or a process, within or outside the system. For a system to function it is essential that collective capacities should exist, function and interrelate with each other. Their proposal for identification is more substantive than that of the UNDP, as it does not condition this to a concrete process. The basic collective capacities it proposes are those of:

- engagement and attraction;
- realising logistical tasks or functions, offering services and techniques;

- entering into relations and obtaining support and resources;
- adaptation and self-renewal; and
- balancing coherence with diversity.

On the other hand, as in the previous case, these capacities draw strength from other technical or logistical capacities.

The research considers a proposal of collective capacities that brings together both visions, taking that of Baser and Morgan as a reference, due to the abovementioned reasons of its greater ambition than that of the UNDP, which is excessively procedural. On the other hand, the majority of the capacities proposed by the UNDP can be integrated into those of Baser and Morgan[7]. Only the capacity for analysing a situation and creating a vision of the future does not fit into that list, which is why, given its special relevance, it will be taken into consideration together with the previously mentioned capacities.

As we have indicated, local human development is the capacity of a group to define and develop its future, which involves a collective process of functioning that permits the creation and development of that capacity. This capacity is defined by Baser and Morgan (2008a, p. 34) as the global ability of a system to create public value, or, the emergent combination of collective and individual capacities that permits a human system to create value. From our point of view, we say that this added value, or public value, is obtained when it responds to the normative criteria of human development.

In order to understand the production process of the results of that public value, it is essential to determine the interactions that take place within each level (individual, organisational or structural) and amongst the levels. Nonetheless, analytical frameworks are required that make it possible to study those connections and to consider the complexity of the system. It is essential to have available a focus that permits such analysis, since without it one loses a central aspect of the alternative vision of wellbeing, which is not limited to the results in people, but instead takes in the very functioning of the society.

The framework of our research is based on the model of wellbeing regimes proposed by the Well Dev program of the University of Bath (Copestake and Wood, 2007; Newton, 2007; Wood, 2009). This model was adopted as a referent as it adapts to the aims and characteristics of our research; some modifications have been introduced in order to integrate our particular emphases on the processes of local human development.

The fundamental sections of that analytical framework necessary for determining the dynamic of local human development are as follows. First, the processes of obtaining wellbeing, which include the social or collective and individual or private processes that lead to the results of wellbeing characteristic of human development. The starting point is to consider the state, the market, the community and the household as the principal sources for providing goods and services. It is a question of identifying the relations between people and the different institutions that provide the goods and services that constitute the materials of wellbeing. Those relations are not understood in an isolated manner within each institution, instead they form an interrelated set. Second, the conditioning factors or socio-political framework, in order to determine the socio-political structures and their dynamic in decision making that affects the collective and has a bearing on the determination of its future. Analysis of governance of the local society, understood from this broad perspective, will be one of the central tasks. In the third place,

identification and analysis of the processes of local human development, especially the elaboration of development strategies paying attention to the degree to which they are appropriated. A particular aim is to identify and analyse the processes that occur in the space of the solidarity economy.

The three sections must be related to each other and evaluated with a view to obtaining the results of wellbeing characteristic of human development. It is not a case of making a neutral consideration of the processes identified, but of evaluating them according to their suitability and efficacy for obtaining those results. For this purpose, the direct links in each of the sections with the wellbeing results constitute a central question in the utilisation of the framework. Finally, consideration is given to the three categories that must traverse the analysis of the four preceding sections: the focus of gender, the environment and collective capacities. Without doubt, the focus of gender is the most relevant and special attention will be paid to this.

## 3. Case studies

### 3.1 The program of local human development and sugar sector reconversion in Cuba

The program of local human development (*Programa de Desarrollo Humano Local* – PDHL), which has been developed in Cuba since the year 1997 is a strategy led by the UNDP to contribute to the articulation and harmonisation of international cooperation working in support of local development and decentralisation (PDHL, 2007, p. 3).

In Cuba, the processes of achieving wellbeing are inserted in the context of a planned economy, where the state is: the main, and almost exclusive, agent providing goods and services; the main employer[8]; what offers universal and free health and education services to the population (Drain and Barry, 2010, p. 572; Álvarez, 1997, p. 126); what provides housing[9]; and, what provides basic alimentation through the "shopping basket"[10]. In this context, the role of the market or of society (community and household) is relegated to a second level, and only a certain availability of goods due to the remittances of emigrants can be considered (González Corzo, 2010, pp. 1-4).

The processes of local human development in Cuba are conditioned by different factors: geographic factors[11], social and especially political factors, such as the international context in which its economy has developed since the 1960s (North American policy towards Cuba and the disappearance of the Soviet bloc at the end of the 1980s), or the political and social structure itself[12] (Zaldivar, 2003, pp. 58-117; Marquetti, 2006, pp. 221-5; Gobierno de Cuba, 2007, p. 5).

The processes of appropriation of the agents and institutions that have taken part in the PDHLs present contradictory dynamics, since while there is a persistence of habits and resistances that hinder the understanding and assimilation of the principles and mechanisms characteristic of local development, there are other elements that contribute to strengthening and consolidating them. Amongst the former are a scarce understanding, in the political and institutional spheres of the meaning and real scope of local development. This can be observed in the existence of; unsuitable legislation that does not sufficiently recognise the role of local development managers; highly centralised and fairly inflexible structures of commercialisation; and a low level of entrepreneurial culture (Caño, 2002, p. 165; Méndez, 2004, p. 249).

At the same time, there are other strengths that contribute to shoring up the processes of appropriation, such as: the availability of qualified human capital; the initiatives of political and administrative decentralisation adopted from 1976 onwards, in which

the present politico-administrative design was defined; the firm commitment of the Cuban Government to the PDHLs in the second half of the 1990s; the adoption in state companies, following the Vth Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, of policies to improve entrepreneurial capacities; or, the firm commitment by the government to confront gender discrimination and achieve greater equity between men and women (Álvarez, 1997, pp. 119-20; Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas de Cuba, 2009, pp. 9-12; Guzón, 2004, p. 10; PDHL, 2007, p. 3; PNUD, HEGOA, 2008, p. 24; de la Cruz, 2009, pp. 4-5; CEDAW, 2004).

With respect to development results, in general terms, throughout the process of sugar reconversion there has been an improvement in the levels of training and qualification of both men and women, although not in the same fields, thanks to the training initiatives contained in the PDHLs. Attention should be drawn to the different editions of the training diploma of managers for the process of agro-industrial reconversion in the context of local human development, because it has introduced the content of the new approaches to development (human development, on the one hand, and content referring to sustainable development, endogenous development, regional development and local development, on the other). This has been a fundamental tool for understanding the conceptual foundations on which the PDHLs applied to the reconversion of Holguín rest. On the other hand, it has made possible the acquisition of specific technical tools for planning and managing the new initiatives of economic and productive development, both local initiatives and those proceeding from international collaboration.

The workshops on gender and development are also outstanding, because they have made it possible:

- to have conceptual and methodological tools available for work on local development projects with a gender perspective;
- to revise the gender focus applied to development projects; and
- to redirect transversalisation towards the focus of gender in development.

Another outstanding initiative, external to the PDHL but closely related to the process of apprenticeship and training, is the inter-apprenticeship program of the Mundukide Foundation[13]. This provides training in cooperative business management and technical assistance to projects in order to support the generation of economical-productive initiatives in the fields of food sovereignty and sugar restructuring, as well as to create a methodology that is effective and adapted to the Cuban economic context.

In the field of collective capacities and leadership, the lack of a clear policy of creating and strengthening leadership can be perceived. Styles of leadership can be observed that are hardly suitable. These are frequently based on attitudes of acceptance and blind obedience to the directives proceeding from central political instances, without the necessary constructive critical spirit, seeking institutional approval rather than defending the needs and requirements of the collective. Facing this, a new type of leadership is being demanded by different collectives; one that arises from below, with the capacity to generate enthusiasm, to motivate, engage and organise the capacities and resources that exist in the municipalities and institutions; people with a spirit of community and commitment to the community and the country, with the resolve to include men and women. However, it must be pointed out that a guarantee of stability in their functioning must transcend personal attitudes of commitment and dedication in those who have assumed leadership, while the latter must be founded on good organisation and planning, so that the final result does not depend on specific persons but on institutional functioning.

This aspect acquires special importance in a context where changes in responsibilities are determined and agreed upon from central instances, which do not always take account of local needs and work with other criteria and priorities.

With respect to levels of participation, the PDHLs have contributed to improving these, both with respect to men and to women, even at the leadership levels of institutions and organisations; although in the case of women this has been at the cost of a double or even triple workday. It is considered an urgent necessity and a challenge to start to change gender stereotypes in the agro-industrial sector of sugar, and to incorporate women into productive tasks and leadership positions, as well as to involve men in domestic tasks, responsibility for which generally falls to women.

The policies of local human development have contributed to improving the levels of women's empowerment and to greater gender equity, because they have helped to give greater visibility to the existence and persistence of gender inequalities in Cuban society and in the province of Holguín. This has been possible thanks to the workshops on gender and development, the training plans on gender issues and the identification studies carried out by some organisations like the Cuban Association of Animal Production and the University of Holguín (González Martínez and Díaz Leyva, 2008; Viadero and Rodríguez, 2006).

Nonetheless, there continue to be limitations and obstacles to the advance of empowerment and gender equity in the communities subject to reconversion, which are expressed in: an appreciable ignorance concerning gender issues, which creates serious difficulties to modifying behaviour that is deeply rooted in the society; the reproduction of roles in the new activities generated by the reconversion programs; inequalities in access to and control of resources; pronounced inequalities in salaries, resulting from the inequalities in the social division of labour; differences with respect to participation by women in training activities; or the confirmation that the domestic sphere continues to be a space of inequality.

Finally, one should note the relevance of international collaboration in the adoption of concerns regarding gender inequalities, from a double perspective. On the one hand, because a high percentage of the actions developed in the province have been motivated by cooperation for development projects, which have demanded consideration of the strategic line of gender. On the other, because international collaboration has promoted gender studies in the country, thus contributing support to the efforts underway, to the recognition of their importance, and to the political will of the country's institutions to go beyond discourses and overcome the resistance of part of the citizenry and certain instances of power at different levels.

### 3.2 The Sahrawi refugee population: development in the refugee situation

The case of the Sahrawi refugee situation is an unusual example of the application of development strategies. Although there are other experiences of productive projects in the context of protracted situations (Cavaglieri, 2005; Jacobsen, 2002), the evolution of international cooperation in this case holds great potential for the analysis of CD and the processes of obtaining wellbeing described in the theoretical framework.

The Western Sahara conflict has been closely linked to international cooperation since its outbreak in 1975[14], and in the course of its evolution different development approaches have been tried out. Initially, the policies of construction and promotion of individual capacities were conditioned by the open war with Morocco and Mauritania

and the recent creation of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). Subsequently, the ceasefire and peace negotiations opened a new stage in the development of collective capacities and strengthening of institutions, in the interests of imminent return to the territory of the Western Sahara.

The peculiarity of the Sahrawi refugee situation resides in what is known as development in the refugee situation. This was promoted by the Polisario Front and the government of the SADR at the end of the 1990s, resulting from the situation of "neither war not peace" established in the camps (Beristain and Lozano, 2002). The experiences in attaining wellbeing of the population in the Sahrawi refugee camps therefore present a series of characteristics that make them into an example of the application of development models in the context of protracted refugee situations[15] (Loescher *et al.*, 2008).

The absolute leading role of the Sahrawi state in the processes of attaining wellbeing is evident. The SADR has developed a public health and education system that has enabled universal access of the population to these goods. Besides, it has achieved an equitable distribution of the resources provided by international cooperation. Nonetheless, this leading role is strongly conditioned by external political factors, such as the armed conflict itself and the refugee situation, the dichotomy between the SADR and the Polisario Front, the political stagnation of the Front itself or the lack of cadre renewal[16]. In this respect, the state's political determinants become mixed with the economic determinants that, although to a lesser degree, hinder its work in guaranteeing the population's access to wellbeing. The economic determinants have a greater repercussion on access to the processes of wellbeing through the market. While at a certain time the weakness of the economic system and external dependence made access to wellbeing through the market impossible (Sánchez Díez, 2007), recent economic changes, especially, the implantation of productive projects and microfinances have provided the Sahrawi population with another access route to wellbeing. However, its weakness is evident and it needs to be regulated in an innovatory way if the advances are not to be hindered by the inequalities and difficulties that the market entails.

Whereas political and economic factors condition access to wellbeing through the state and the market, social determinants constitute an important factor in access to wellbeing through the household and the community. In this case, the social consequences deriving from exile itself are what hinder access to these processes, as Sahrawi society has had neither the time nor the space needed for assimilating the depth and quantity of changes that have occurred in a relatively short space of time. What must be emphasised is the enormous qualitative leap that has occurred in Sahrawi society in barely 30 years, in the context of the refugee situation; it has passed from being a traditional nomad society to become a modern society that requires a modern state for its management. This transition has involved social restructuring, which has become one of the most noticeable characteristics of the Sahrawi revolution, together with the gender dimension. This social redistribution has found expression in two social dimensions: the generational dimension and the tribal dimension (Caratini, 2006).

Another of the essential aspects observed is the role played by Sahrawi women in social changes, as well as in designing strategies of access to the processes of wellbeing. Sahrawi society has achieved significant advances with respect to other North African Islamic societies (Juliano, 1998); this has been due both to its nomad and Bedouin tradition and to the circumstances deriving from exile and conflict. Mention must be made of the work of the National Union of Sahrawi Women (NUSW) in this respect and its determination

to defend the achievements obtained (López Belloso and Mendia Azkue, 2009). Women have become active agents in promoting subsistence strategies. This is due to the conviction that the high vulnerability of the refugee population cannot be reduced solely with humanitarian aid (the provision of food and medicines), if this is not accompanied by the promotion of autonomous processes and programs of sustainable production. With respect to certain attitudes of international cooperation, the women face the challenge of "broadening (their active role) on the basis of a wellbeing focus", so that they are not considered as passive recipients of aid but as active agents of change and dynamic promoters of social transformations (Sen, 1999, p. 189).

Women have played a key role as active agents in broadening capacities in the refugee situation. They have made outstanding efforts in the creation of capacities and leadership in sectors like education and training, health, camp management and logistics, production, food distribution, and justice and social affairs. Through the NUSW they have played a leadership role in the development of their community that has rarely been achieved in other protracted refugee situations. This experience poses the convenience of having available a notion of CD that recognises the centrality of the collective dimension in human development (Morgan, 2006). This collective dimension is particularly relevant in the action of women, who tend to prioritise the search for collective answers to common problems instead of individualised solutions. Saharan women have not only helped to improve and develop the capacities of the refugee population as a whole, but have also worked on their own individual and collective empowerment. This process has been facilitated by the predominance of an Arab-Berber tradition that had historically valued and respected the autonomy of Sahrawi women and their socio-economic influence. In this case, the importance of the traditional dimension shows the need for a greater knowledge and understanding of cultural aspects and anthropology by the international humanitarian and development actors (Voutira and Harrell-Bond, 1995), in order to better promote development within the camps.

Although the work done by Sahrawi women, both individually and collectively through the NUSW, is unquestionable, many aspects remain to be strengthened, such as gender equality and a greater assumption of responsibilities by women. Above all in the spaces of political decision-making and the assumption of collective responsibilities, where, despite the fact that greater levels of development have been achieved than in other countries of the region, there continues to be no guarantee of equality of access to the processes of wellbeing. Besides, there is a long way to go in the domestic field if an equitable division of tasks is to be achieved and traditional social taboos are to be overcome.

The process of appropriation of wellbeing in Sahrawi society presents characteristics that make it an example for protracted refugee situations and that differentiate it from other experiences of the application of development approaches in refugee contexts[17]. Development in the refugee situation (Beristain and Lozano, 2002) represented a clear commitment to local human development, understood as an integral process in which each society autonomously determines the future it considers desirable and possible.

Finally, from the analysis of the wellbeing results obtained at both the collective and individual levels, a positive evaluation can be made in spite of the determinants, difficulties and weaknesses mentioned above. Two aspects are outstanding amongst them: the educational level[18] and the question of gender.

Awareness of the importance of a certain conception of wellbeing, together with achieving self-determination and returning to the occupied territory form the social,

economic, political and, above all, motivational driving force of the struggle to achieve the rest of the results of wellbeing. This collective capacity to determine the priorities of their future, linked to resilience[19] (Rutter, 1993), developed by the refugee population so as to adapt to the losses and general difficulties generated by the war and exile are the two essential characteristics that have made the abovementioned results possible. The Sahrawi population has not only acquired the capacity of resilience in its resistance facing the military conflict, but it has also developed a capacity of adaptation to the medium and to the difficulties deriving from the context of the refugee situation; this has been translated into a proactive approach to circumstances, generating and developing social initiatives.

From the relational point of view, another of the relevant capacities developed by Sahrawi society is solidarity, understood in its internal and external facets. Internally, Sahrawi society has developed mechanisms of solidarity that have enabled the community to guarantee access to the goods and services for necessary for its wellbeing. The empathy developed by the Sahrawi in the context of the refugee situation has enabled them to better adapt to the medium and made it possible for them to offer access to goods and services through the community itself and through the household. From the external point of view, they have managed to generate a feeling of solidarity with their situation and with the conflict that they are immersed in, which has guaranteed the presence of international aid and enabled them to establish links with European families, a circumstance that in its turn strengthens that aid.

## 4. General conclusions

The central aim of our research, involving the case studies of the eastern region of Cuba and the Sahrawi refugee camps in Tindouf (Algeria), was to identify the existence of processes of local human development that would enable us to offer some initial hypotheses on the behaviour of both societies in achieving collective human development results. Similarly, research on the ground made it possible to test the operational value of our theoretical and methodological proposal, if not in its full scope, at least with respect to some key categories, such as collective capacities.

The conclusions we present are provisional ones, but they make it possible to draw the general conclusion of the utility of the approach for analysing collective processes of local human development. This opens up the possibility of designing an agenda for future research, both to go more deeply into the cases studied and start others, and to advance in developing the methodology.

The first conclusion refers to the collective capacity of the two societies to take control of their development model. Starting out from the definition presented of local human development as the capacity of a collective to define and develop its future, both Cuba and the SADR present collective processes that show a deep and real appropriation of their objectives, which, moreover, they are able to implement in situations in which they confront serious internal and external constraints. These are not cases of mere programmatic assertions, but of their effective application and realisation. While this first formulation of the conclusion does not imply, in principle, any evaluation of the quality of the model, it must be added that in both cases the development model they propose has a strong normative dimension, with collective wellbeing aims that are valuable for human development.

In both cases the internal and external determinants have an important influence on the appropriation and adaptation of the development models, especially the political,

economic and socio-cultural factors. The research undertaken shows that they have developed collective capacities for overcoming those determinants: the collective capacity of resilience that corresponds to the capacities of adaptation and self-renewal and of balancing coherence with diversity, to which the theoretical framework referred. Thus, in the case of Cuba, the PDHLs are facing up to the crisis generated by the massive closure of sugar plants in the eastern region; and, in the Sahara, development is being implemented in the refugee situation (Beristain and Lozano, 2002), as a strategy to face the difficulties of the war and protracted exile.

The processes of appropriation of local human development, observed in the case studies, show contradictions as there are factors that facilitate them and, at the same time, others factors that delay and hinder them. In the Cuban case, on the one hand, serious limitations can be observed in the political and institutional fields in the understanding of the scope and implications of local development. Examples of this are the lack of suitable legislation or the existence of a low level of entrepreneurial culture, which reduces the opportunities for the emergence of innovative undertakings in the local sphere.

At the same time, there are elements that contribute to those processes of appropriation, such as: the availability of qualified human capital, resulting from the attention paid historically by the Cuban revolution to the training and academic and technical qualification of the population; the initiatives of political and administrative decentralisation, adopted from 1976 onwards; the firm commitment to the PDHL initiative in the latter half of the 1990s; or the government's firm institutional commitment to confront gender discrimination, which is shown in the incorporation into the constitutional juridical-political framework of the principles of equality and non-discrimination between men and women on the political, economic, social, cultural and family levels.

In the case of the Sahrawi camps, the processes of appropriation of wellbeing and local development have gone through different situations, resulting from the internal conditions and the evolution of the international context. A situation of provisional refuge, where an approach involving basic needs was applied, gave way to one in which there were expectations of return; that, in its turn, gave way to a situation involving a protracted stay, posing the need for development in the refugee situation.

The processes of obtaining wellbeing that are in effect in the two cases make evident the state's importance facing the market and society (household and community). In Cuba, this is due to the existence of a planned economy, where the state is the principal, and almost exclusive, agent providing goods and services, employment, housing and basic foodstuffs. In the case of the Sahrawi refugee situation, this is due to the effort and capacity shown by the government of the SADR in developing a public system of health and education that has made universal access of the population to these goods possible, and has contributed to an equitable distribution of the resources achieved through international cooperation.

In both cases, access to wellbeing through the market is of scarce importance. In the first case, this is limited to the entrance of money sent by relatives from abroad, which, while it is not a great quantity in relative terms, make it possible to acquire goods and services at the margin of the state, and this in its turn generates internal distortions and inequalities. Also in the Sahrawi case, access to resources sent from abroad by the families who take in children in the summer season (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh *et al.*, 2005) enables them to have additional goods and services, which of course, generates new inequalities. In the Sahrawi case, the recent local development initiatives have made

access to certain goods and services through the market possible, especially due to the implantation of productive projects and microfinances (Sánchez Díez, 2007).

The case studies show that the policies of local human development have contributed to making the existence and persistence of gender inequalities visible. On the one hand, this is due to the incorporation of the principles of equality and non-discrimination between men and women in the juridical-political and constitutional framework. On the other, this is due to the role of the respective women's organisations, the Federation of Cuban Women and the NUSW.

In spite of the improvements observed, there are limitations and obstacles to the advance of empowerment and gender equality in both societies. These are expressed in: the difficulties of altering behaviour patterns that are deeply rooted in society; the inequalities in access to, and control of resources; the pronounced inequality in salaries, resulting from the inequalities existing in the social division of labour; the differences in the participation of women in training activities; the verification that the domestic sphere continues to be a space of inequality in the equitable distribution of tasks; and, in the traditional social taboos.

## Notes

1. For a synthetic view of the main proposals on local development, see PRISMA (2008), which is a monographic issue dedicated to "the local and its challenges" (Arocena, 2001; Vázquez Barquero, 2001; Madoery, 2007).

2. The proposal of CD was associated from its origin with aid or technical assistance, but it has progressively acquired a wider content that has a special bearing on the key collective processes of society. In this respect, Fukuda Parr *et al.* (2002), where its evolution is explained and OECD/DAC (2006) which sets out its present content.

3. UNDP (2008a): CD is the process by which people, organisations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capacities for establishing (defining) and obtaining their own development objectives over time.

4. There is at present an incipient debate on collective capacities within academic sectors linked to the capacities focus: Dubois (2008) and Cortina and Pereira (2009). For an account of the different definitions of collective capacity (Taylor and Clarke, 2008; Table I).

5. The capacities identified by the UNDP are those of:
   - undertaking a dialogue amongst all interested parties;
   - analysing a situation and creating a vision;
   - formulating policies and strategies;
   - budgeting, managing and implementing; and
   - controlling and evaluating.

6. UNDP (2008b), consistent with its appreciation of the relevance of this capacity has elaborated a very precise methodology for realising such evaluation which, in fact, becomes the central element for understanding its proposal and its vision of collective capacities.

7. Following the enumeration of capacities of the UNDP, the adaptation is as follows: of the UNDP (undertaking a dialogue amongst all interested parties) with the capacity of engagement and attraction; formulating policies and strategies with the capacity of balancing coherence with diversity; budgeting, managing and implementing with the capacity of realising logistical tasks or functions, offering services and techniques; and controlling and evaluating with the capacity of adaptation and self-renewal.

8. www.one.cu/aec2008/esp/07_tabla_cuadro.htm

9. www.one.cu/aec2008/esp/12_tabla_cuadro.htm

10. The state food ration.

11. The particular geographic position of the island and the impact of the successive cyclones that traverse it periodically. See www.met.inf.cu and Alicia (2008).

12. In Cuban society, there is a centralist political culture that while it has advantages for guaranteeing a certain degree of equity between persons and regions, leaves little room for initiatives that might emerge from the micro and meso levels, thus hindering the empowerment of local structures. Similarly, one can observe the deep social rootedness of a culture of dependence on state welfare and paternalism, which generates inactivity, a loss of the capacity for initiative and passive attitudes. These inhibit habits of thought, creativity, organisation, conscious social participation and the willingness to play a leading role in the processes.

13. www.mundukide.org/

14. For a more detailed description of the conflict of Western Sahara and its evolution see Bontems (1984), Boukhari (2004), Briones (1993), Firebrace (1992), Hodges (1983), Hoover (1983).

15. "Protracted refugee situations" have been defined by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as those situations where "refugees are found in a state of limbo of long duration that it is difficult to resolve. Their lives might not be at risk, but their basic and essential economic rights, social and psychological needs continue to be unfulfilled after years in exile. A refugee in this situation is unable to free herself from forced dependence on external assistance" (ACNUR, 2006).

16. The permanence of the conflict and the refugee situation of the population on Algerian territory have undeniable repercussions on the capacity of the state to guarantee access to basic goods and services. This political factor presents the greatest difficulty for the SADR when it comes to being able to design policies that permit and guarantee access to the processes of wellbeing. On the other hand, the dichotomy between the Polisario Front and the SADR conditions the position of the state, not only with respect to Sahrawi society itself, which can become lost in the complex institutional framework created to manage that duality, but also with respect to the actors of the international community, which address themselves to one or the other depending on their relation to, and recognition of the conflict. For the purposes of this research what is of greatest interest are the administrative and bureaucratic difficulties that can derive from this dichotomy when it comes to managing the systems created for the refugee population to have access to processes of wellbeing. Another factor that significantly conditions the access of the population to the processes of wellbeing is the state's proactivity or reactivity in the formulation of development policies, as well as cadre renewal through the incorporation of trained personnel thanks to educational agreements. In this respect, the Polisario Front and the SADR have been unable to satisfactorily overcome this limitation, although this has to a large extent been due to the political determinant of the conflict and the stagnation of the peace negotiations. This weakness of the state is equally linked to the dependence of the Sahrawi state on external alliances, and especially on international aid.

17. Also notable is the Polisario Front's commitment, in the first decades of the conflict to the implantation and creation of systems of health, education and income, even before the appearance of the human development paradigm. These policies, which coincided with the hardest period of the military confrontation, correspond to the components that were later incorporated into the human development focus created by the UNDP.

Later, with the ceasefire of 1991, a series of expectations of return to the occupied territories were created that gave rise to an impasses in the process of appropriating the human development discourse. From 1998 onwards, with the second failure in the organisation of a referendum and the stagnation in the peace process, Sahrawi society and the Polisario Front decided to take a new leap in their development strategies. The development perspective was taken up again, this time with the application of what has been called development in the refugee situation (Beristain and Lozano, 2002), which has characterised not only the situation of the refugee population, but also the protracted refugee situations (UNHCR/WFP, 2006).

18. From the individual point of view it is clear that it would be hard to equal the achievement of the SADR government and the Polisario Front, not only in similar contexts involving a refugee situation, but also in comparison with other developing African countries. Besides, one must add the fact of their having set out from a situation inherited from colonialism, which did not promote training and education for Sahrawi society. On the other hand, also from the collective point of view, an effort has recently been made in the collective preparation of cadres and the Sahrawi institutions.

19. In the concept of resilience a distinction is drawn between two components: resistance in the face of destruction, that is, the capacity to protect one's own integrity under pressure; and, on the other hand, beyond resistance, the capacity to construct a positive vital behaviour in spite of difficult circumstances. The concept includes the capacity of a person or social system to confront difficulties appropriately, in a socially acceptable way (Vanistendael, 1994).

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