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International Programming, Local Development, and Youth: An Experience in Northeast Brazil

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Introduction

This article is based on three Portuguese-language publications written by W. K. Kellogg Foundation staff and consultants at the tail end of a 10-year program in Northeast Brazil (Jordan, 2009b; Landim and Trevisan, 2009; Toro, 2009). The program aimed to reduce poverty and inequality in seven sites in Northeast Brazil by funding and supporting integrated initiatives for local development. It was innovative in its focus on multisector alliances, the centrality of territory in local development, the conceptualization of youth at the very center of local development initiatives, and the extent of support available to projects and organizations.

The books present theoretical concepts and their practical application, empirical evidence of successes and difficulties, and honest and critical reflection on the Kellogg Foundation's role. The authors deal with broad and complex themes that are relevant to any initiative for social and economic change, including the role of an international funder in local development processes in impoverished settings; the relationship that funders can build with local actors; the limits to a funder's involvement in local processes; the long-term sustainability, beyond funding, of development processes and outcomes; and the dissemination of successful approaches and strategies beyond the initial locality. Each author followed a different methodology for research. Their writings are based on their accumulated knowledge in the field complemented with analysis of secondary data, questionnaires and interviews with local

Key Points

- The W. K. Kellogg Foundation funded a 10-year program of local development work in selected geographic areas in Northeast Brazil from 1997 – 2007.

- This article reports on program achievements and difficulties, and examines the ways in which the practices of the foundation facilitated and obstructed advances in the local development initiatives.

- Two main strategies were used: direct funding granted to organizations in the targeted regions and the creation of a comprehensive support system (e.g., youth projects funds, capacity-building in leadership and evaluation, and transfer of expertise from organizations).

- A team of foundation staff and consultants worked closely to create "learning communities," using a coaching approach.

- Successes include the creation of public spaces by and for youth, increased collaboration, and the strengthening of interaction between public and civil sector organizations.

- The greatest lesson was the fundamental importance of intentional strategies to bring all three sectors together, to attract and facilitate public and private sector involvement in civil society projects for local development and poverty reduction.

actors, and the materials and reports produced by each project.

Like the books, the principal aim of this article is to share information and analysis that can be useful to both international funders and local

development-oriented organizations. The article presents background information about Northeast Brazil, the program framework for change, and programming strategies and resources. It reports on program achievements and difficulties to date, and then examines the ways in which the practices of the Kellogg Foundation facilitated and obstructed advances in the local development initiatives.

Common throughout the region are high levels of poverty and income inequality, economic stagnation, high concentration of land ownership, poor coverage of public services, and limited local government capacity.

The Context: Brazil and the Northeast Region

Brazil is classified by the World Bank (2010) as an "upper middle income" country and recognized as one of the most powerful "developing" nations, economically and politically. But it is a country of huge socioeconomic inequalities, with great regional disparities and pockets of deep poverty.

The Northeast region of Brazil is a vast area of nine states composed of diverse climates, ecological conditions, and cultural identities. Common throughout the region are high levels of poverty and income inequality, economic stagnation, high concentration of land ownership, poor coverage of public services, and limited local government capacity. These translate into some of the lowest indicators of social development on the South American continent, with average life expectancy of 59 years at birth, literacy at 63.5 percent, and an infant mortality rate of 121.4 per 1000 live births (Jordan, 2009b). Brazil's Human Development Index (HDI)[1] stands at 0.813, ranked 75th

in the world; the HDI in the Northeast is 0.575, equivalent to the Yemen, ranked 140th (UNDP, 2009).

These conditions have been aggravated by neoliberal structural adjustment programs of the 1990s which, while generating low inflation, positive growth, and greater foreign investment, failed to curb the growth of poverty in absolute terms, due to the reduction in state intervention in economies and the removal of public services and subsidies in the poorer sectors of society (Thompson, 2009).

Despite these difficulties, or perhaps because of them, Brazil boasts a vibrant and creative civil society, which emerged and matured largely in the struggle for democratization in the 1980s and the formulation of the 1988 constitution (Cordeiro, 2009). The constitution paved the way for a shift in political culture from purely representative democracy to a more participatory style of democracy. It decentralized governance to the local level, made municipal governments responsible for basic social services and local employment and economic development, and opened up channels for popular participation in local government from the formulation of public policy to the delivery of public services (Haddad, 2009; Azeredo, 2009). In so doing, it set the scene for an important reorientation in focus that privileged local governance and local development. Over the last 30 years, the work of civil society organizations has largely been supported by international funders and national "socially responsible" corporations. But the recent withdrawal of a significant part of international support and cooperation has threatened its survival and diminished its vibrancy (Cordeiro, 2009).

It was against this backdrop – growing poverty and income inequality, poor quality public services with insufficient coverage, and the withdrawal of international support – that the Kellogg Foundation set about promoting local development aimed at strengthening local democracy, regenerating local economies, and improving social indicators in Northeast Brazil.

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[1] Based on life expectancy, education, and gross domestic product.

FIGURE 1 Change Framework for Local Development
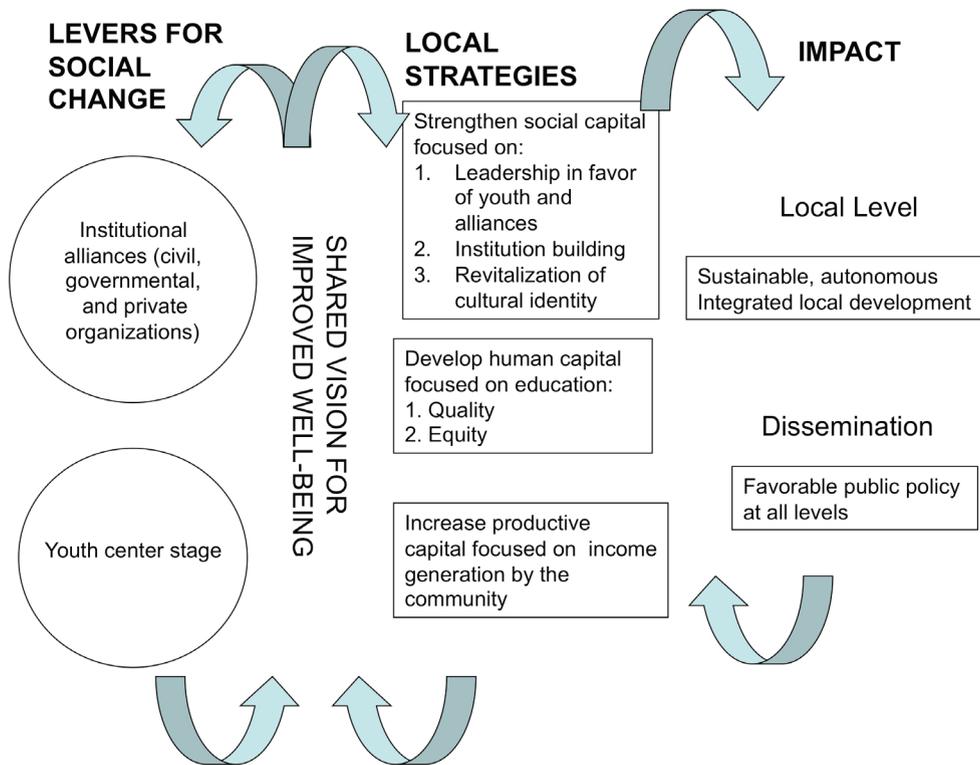
Change Framework
Conceptual Underpinnings

At the very heart of the initiative was the promotion of sustainable social and economic development in a given locality or "territory," as a strategy to tackle poverty and inequality. The change framework underlying the program is shown in Figure 1. Two core assumptions lay at the center of the model (Jordan, 2009b).

The first assumption was that since poverty is reproduced across generations, intergenerational initiatives that capitalize on youth leadership and participation are essential to alleviating poverty and promoting sustainable development. Youth were positioned center stage as change agents among peers and in their families, communities, and organizations, rather than as passive beneficiaries of youth programs or as "products" of educational processes (Cordeiro, 2009).

The second assumption was that given the multidimensional nature of poverty – economic, social, and cultural – initiatives to tackle poverty must be comprehensive and multisectoral, based on collaborative, inter-institutional alliances. Such "strategic alliances," conceived of as "pacts" with long-term horizons (Nascimento, 2009), should include actors from all three sectors of society – civil society and the public and private sectors – and include organized youth. The involvement of youth and the establishment of strategic alliances were conceived of as levers to promote local development and social change.

"Local development" was conceived of as a set of strategies to improve the quality of life of the poorer sectors of society, based on the recognition of local resources in any given territory (Jordan, 2009a). The framework proposed three core strategies for local development. The first was the strengthening of social capital and cohesion in

the territory by building local leadership in favor of institutional alliances and youth participation, strengthening local institutions and inter-institutional relationships, and revitalizing cultural identity, thereby creating the conditions for the empowerment of social actors. The second was the development of human capital by ensuring equitable access to quality education, formal and informal, particularly among youth (Filho, 2009). The third was to increase productive capital and promote economic development by focusing on the generation of work and income, capitalizing on the resources and competitive advantages that existed within each territory. The concept of local development dictated that these strategies were multisectoral, combined and integrated into systemic approaches, the characteristics of which were specific to the identity and needs of each territory (Jordan, 2009a).

> *A CC was a group of organizations committed to coordinate and integrate joint efforts for local development within their territory with the active leadership and participation of youth.*

The broad, long-term impact expected of this developmental model was two-fold (Jordan, 2009b). First, integrated and autonomous local development processes that were permanent, self-sustaining and capable of reducing poverty and inequality would be set in motion. Second, the intervention model's approaches and strategies would be consolidated and sustained by their recognition and protection in public policies, and their reproduction and institutionalization in public and private programs and practices in the territory, and their dissemination and adoption in other contexts beyond the initial territory and beyond the foundation funding period.

Comprehensive Clusters and Territories
The formation of so-called "comprehensive

clusters" (CCs) was at the center of this local development initiative. A comprehensive cluster was envisioned, at one level, as a virtual platform or forum, a democratic space where a range of individuals and entities – community-based organizations and movements, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), local government, private enterprises, educational institutions, and other funders – could debate ideas, construct visions, and create action plans to generate sustainable development and improve the quality of life in their territory. At a more concrete level, a CC was a group of organizations committed to coordinate and integrate joint efforts for local development within their territory with the active leadership and participation of youth.

The notion of territory (also called microregion) was only loosely defined at the outset of the initiative. A territory could be a political-administrative unit, an environmental bioregion such as a valley or hydrographical basin, or an area defined by a common economic activity or cultural identity determined by the institution(s) presenting the proposal. The only requirements were that it be an area with a high concentration of poverty, yet have sufficient local resources to sustain local development without permanent reliance on external resources; and that it be a large enough area to involve local and regional decision-makers, yet small enough for a group of organizations to coordinate efforts across the territory (Jordan, 2009b).

Program Strategies and Resources
Two main strategies were used to leverage programming. One was direct funding granted to organizations in the CCs. The other was the creation of a comprehensive support system, which included a youth projects fund, capacity-building in leadership and evaluation, and transfer of expertise from organizations. These are described briefly below.

Direct Funding of CCs
The Kellogg Foundation invested almost $14.5 million in the development of seven CCs in six Northeast states from 2000 to 2010. In four of the seven clusters, a single organization or a group of organizations was invited to present a proposal

for the development of a CC. Foundation staff and consultants selected these organizations on the basis of a prior positive grantmaking experience, along with a belief in their capacity to expand their activities from a single, localized project to a larger, coordinated initiative involving multiple organizations over a larger geographical area (Thompson, 2009). These organizations were generally NGOs, municipal government agencies, and federal universities. The other three successful proposals were developed out of a leadership development program designed to prepare leaders and organizations in four Northeast states in which the foundation did not have grantmaking experience (Nascimento, 2009).

The organizations presenting proposals defined the territories where they proposed to work. All but one of the eventual clusters covered multiple municipalities with populations of between 100,000–300,000; the smaller cluster covered one municipality with a population of about 26,000 (Cordeiro, 2009). The CCs were funded for periods of five to 10 years depending on when they first received a CC grant from the foundation.

Support System

The foundation spent $7.5 million – close to 35 percent of the full program budget – on strategies to leverage and reinforce the direct investment made in the CCs. The strategies began as piecemeal approaches to support the CCs, but were eventually "joined up" into a comprehensive and complex support system (Thompson, 2009). Underlying the system was the concept of a "learning community," in which opportunities were created for participants from the CC territories, support project experts, consultants, and foundation staff to interact and learn with each other, to create knowledge collectively, and to feed learning back into practice and policy (Filho, 2009). The most important components of the system were:

Core program team and the coaching methodology. A permanent, structured team of staff and consultants, present throughout the initiative and in permanent contact with the CCs, was central to the initiative. The core team developed a "coaching" methodology, adapted from the sports and business worlds (Jordan, 2009b), to

help groups and organizations to reflect and learn collectively, thereby empowering their members to tap into their full potential to create innovative solutions to old and new problems. As this was the first time that coaching had been used in socially oriented projects, the approach was constantly monitored and adjusted.

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Support projects. The foundation contracted a number of highly respected organizations from around Latin America to provide specialist knowledge and innovative approaches to the CC organizations "on demand" in education, information technologies, art and culture, and sports and leisure.

Support funds. A Youth Project Support Fund was established in 2006 to fund youth-led social and productive projects closely integrated with the local development objectives of the CC. An Exchange Fund, set up at the same time, allowed CC participants to travel to other CCs and to other projects with similar objectives to exchange experiences and ideas.

Leadership development. Two leadership programs were developed to prepare local leaders, particularly youth, to promote collaborative initiatives for local development, and study grants were offered for short- and long-term educational programs.

Evaluation. An external organization evaluated the processes and results in the CCs of Northeast Brazil, and local capacity in participatory evaluation was developed in a series of evaluation workshops.

> *In many senses, this framework required adopting new roles and confronting new challenges. relating to groups of institutions and projects instead of single organizations and projects. The new "place-based" program dictated the geographical integration of efforts in a given territory.*

The Foundation's Role

In one sense, the role of the Kellogg Foundation within this framework for change was not new. Given the limitations on its resources relative to the complex and pervasive problems of poverty, its role was to invest in the development of models to demonstrate and communicate "how to" do something. In this case, that was how to break the cycle of poverty and communicate that to key permanent actors and institutions in the locality with greater resources at their disposal – principally the public and private sectors (Thompson, 2009). This is the role that most philanthropies play, usually by making grants to organizations with socially oriented development projects.

But in many senses, this framework required adopting new roles and confronting new challenges. First, the foundation's grantmaking had mainly been organized around themes and sectors, like rural development, education, and health; the new approach demanded the integration of sectors and disciplines. Second, the new initiative meant relating to groups of institutions and projects instead of single organizations and projects. Third, the new "place-based" program

dictated the geographical integration of efforts in a given territory. And fourth, the foundation was poised to move beyond grantmaking to a more holistic, hands-on programming approach, with significant investment of energy, time, and financial resources in a comprehensive support system. These new roles required the development of new kinds of activities, new competencies, new relationships with other organizations, and new judgements – technical and ethical – about the potential benefits of, and necessary limitations on, the involvement of an external actor in local development processes. In so doing, the foundation positioned itself as one of a multiplicity of partners in any given territory, theoretically equal to others but never completely so, given the imbalance of power engendered by its control over financial resources (Thompson, 2009).

Program Achievements and Difficulties

We have grouped programming achievements and difficulties into four dimensions that are cornerstones to the long-term impact and sustainability of the initiative: youth involvement, strategic alliances, local development, and public policy. These areas are assessed principally in terms of the processes launched by the initiative, rather than in concrete, measurable products. Such processes include the creation of a variety of initiatives and spaces by youth; the evolution of strategic alliances, with the participation of civil society and the public and private sectors, to provide the institutional bases for dialogue, cooperation and collaboration; the construction and integration of the three types of capital – social, human, and productive – central to local development within any territory; and the creation and strengthening of public spaces for interaction between civil society and government, principally at the local level, to ensure sustainability and scalability.

Youth Leadership and Participation

The CC initiative in Northeast Brazil represents one of few experiences in youth empowerment globally that acknowledge the centrality of youth to local development and the reduction of poverty. The core team placed a huge amount of trust in the capacity of youth to take on new roles and responsibilities, which had the simultaneous

effect of increasing youths' own self-confidence. This also enhanced the confidence of adults in youth, encouraging them to share responsibility and power (Toro, 2009). Youth were given space and the opportunities to play positive roles in intergenerational initiatives for local development, they were encouraged to voice their opinions, and were heard.

Many young people stepped up to the challenge. They took on key leadership and management roles in CC projects and organizations, and created and directed their own projects and organizations supported by grants from the Youth Support Fund. The fund itself was managed by youth, from day-to-day administration to the allocation of funds. Youth brought a desire for change, the optimism and energy required for change, and the imagination and openness to create solutions to old and new problems. The typical isolation of youth in their families and communities, and the negative image of youth as a social problem, began to break and youth were able to form more positive relationships within their families and communities (Haddad, 2009).

Some programs were promoted *for* youth – leadership development programs, vocational education, and training as multipliers and change agents. But much of the new youth mobilization was independent and autonomous: youth running their own clubs and associations, with social and political objectives, and participating in new democratic local spaces like youth forums and conferences (Jordan, 2009b). Youth activity was especially strong in culture and the arts. A youth-run research project mapping social experiences with art and culture was instrumental in identifying the wealth of talent among youth in the Northeast and its potential as a means for social transformation; and the Brazilian Youth Transforming With Art exhibition provided emerging young artists the opportunity to meet professionals and hone their own skills to professional levels (Jordan, 2009b).

Some youth took up roles in politics and policymaking. In some territories, youth began to debate with and challenge municipal powers, in others, youth joined local political parties and

stood as candidates for municipal councillors. Where youth were present, democracy tended to be stronger (Toro, 2009). Youth were also active in establishing new businesses and entrepreneurial activities.

> *There was considerable resistance among adults to the incorporation of youth in leadership and decision-making roles, especially in those CCs with a higher level of organizational consolidation.*

Progress in working with youth was not uniform across the CCs, nor was it linear in any given CC. The role of youth in the CCs was an ongoing debate, and the idea that youth empowerment, leadership, and participation are essential to local development was not uniformly accepted (Cordeiro, 2009). There was considerable resistance among adults to the incorporation of youth in leadership and decision-making roles, especially in those CCs with a higher level of organizational consolidation. Such resistance was embedded in a conservative view of youth as passive beneficiaries, the existing balance of power in favor of adults, and the limited presence or voice of youth organizations. These difficulties were manifest in the establishment and management of the Youth Project Support Funds. In the absence of formally constituted youth organizations, the funds were granted to non-youth organizations; the latter tended to resist transferring the resources to youth organizations. In some cases, even the youth involved in decision-making demonstrated a certain reticence to grant funds to youth organizations. These same dynamics meant that in some CCs the youth projects failed to become central to local development processes, their potential diminished by the resistance of adult leaders.

As a consequence, youth voice and perspective were not adequately included in local visions of development, nor were they incorporated into

demands for policy change (Jordan, 2009b). So, while the CC initiatives advanced intergenerational relations for development more than other similar initiatives, there were still significant obstacles (Cordeiro, 2009). These shortcomings threaten the long-term sustainability of local development.

> *New organizations were formed in every CC, with different names and formats – forums, councils, alliances, collectives – but the same central objectives: to enable dialogue, cooperation, and collaboration.*

Strategic Alliances

Strategic alliances built on cooperation among civil society and the public and private sectors were conceived of as a key lever of local development and poverty reduction. Alliances were seen as relatively stable unions, as forums for the interaction of actors from all three sectors, both local and external to the territorial development scenario. They were composed of local actors exploiting local resources and making decisions in favor of inclusive and democratic local development. Their interaction with external actors, ensuring a two-way process whereby institutions, policies, and resources created a favorable environment for local development, while local development experiences informed polices, thereby creating systemic change (Nascimento, 2009).

Without exception, the CCs focused on the formation and strengthening of alliances within civil society, including community-based and youth organizations, and successfully so. New organizations were formed in every CC, particularly youth organizations, creating a broad plurality of interests and concerns. In one CC a community foundation was created – an organizational form designed to bring diverse local and external actors together to improve the quality of life in a given territory, it perhaps represents the most quintessential of alliances (Nascimento, 2009). New organizations were formed in every CC, with different names and formats – forums, councils, alliances, collectives – but the same central objectives: to enable dialogue, cooperation, and collaboration. Many CC organizations and leaders are recognized as competent and credible facilitators of local development, and have the visibility required to disseminate new approaches beyond their territories. The construction of alliances within civil society was not, though, without problems. Cooperative relations frequently revolved around the institution that had given origin to the CC, and there was resistance to the sharing of power and resources among civil society organizations (CSOs) with limited resources, especially in the climate of declining external support (Thompson, 2009).

The difficulties surrounding the formation of alliances between civil society and the public and private sectors were greater. Some CCs established working relations with local public sector agencies and influenced the content of their policies and practices. But the partnerships created were generally for specific purposes or activities, and new policies or practices tended to be of the government of the day, lacking the permanence and sustainability of state policies (Azeredo, 2009). Many municipal councils established to enable popular participation in local governance lacked the skills to challenge the frequently powerful hold of municipal governments over local political life, and were regularly co-opted as no more than a rubber stamp for the approval of governmental plans, negating their potential as spaces for the exercise of real citizenship (Nascimento, 2009).

The formation of strategic alliances with the private sector was the biggest challenge of all. The sparse cases of involvement consisted of paternalistic, sporadic support for specific events and activities, with no recognition on the part of businesses of their social responsibility to the local context and the actors therein (Nascimento, 2009).

The difficulties forming alliances with the public and private sectors reflected the extent to which each sector is suspicious and mistrustful of the others; many social movements and organizations grew of historical struggles in opposition to state and the market (Jordan, 2009a; Nascimento, 2009). They also reflected a reluctance to confront conflictive issues – human rights, ethnicity, gender, and land, for example – which would necessarily arise in the process of constructing shared visions of local development among sectors (Nascimento, 2009). But without the active participation of the public and private sectors, civil society efforts for local social, economic, and political development are neither viable nor sustainable (Thompson, 2009).

Local Development

The concept of territory-based local development was embraced in the CCs. For some the territory already formed their point of reference; for others it was new. The importance of working to simultaneously strengthen social, human, and productive capital was also acknowledged. The development of social capital was, without doubt, the area in which the CCs performed best. There are clear indicators that local leadership and institutions are stronger. There are signs that in many instances new institutional cultures have developed that favor dialogue, interaction, exchange, and cooperation, and that new institutional arrangements – relationships, partnerships, alliances, and networks – are providing the environment for more integrated and multisector approaches to local development and the empowerment of social actors (Jordan, 2009a).

There were a large number of initiatives to develop human capital, particularly among youth. Initiatives to improve formal schooling included the consolidation of a consortium of former and present-day educational secretariats engaged in policymaking and program design in 11 municipalities; the creation of Centers for Secondary and Professional Education ("Cemps"), providing integrated high school education and professional training in seven municipalities that had not previously had a high school; and the incorporation of key elements of an innovative educational proposal for sustainable local development in the school curriculum. Informal educational programs included new professional education courses in areas like agroecology, environmental management, information and communication technologies, computing, tourism, nursing, communications, sports, and art and culture frequently imbued with an ideological component to encourage political and civic engagement (Filho, 2009). Activities to expand the cultural horizons of youth, like community cineclubs, cinematic exhibitions, libraries, and Internet cafés, were set up, usually by youth.

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The development of social and human capital is the natural territory of most CSOs. Few, however, had any significant experience in developing productive capital; they were required to move out of their "comfort zones" to plan new kinds of activities, and create new relationships with private and public sector actors in order to promote job creation, income generation, and economic

development (Jordan, 2009a). Youth were active in generating new businesses and entrepreneurial activities, sometimes in collaboration with public and private sector entities. These included cooperatives to cultivate and market organic produce, a fruit-processing plant, a rural restaurant supplied by a community vegetable garden, an incubator for early-stage business development, and a microcredit provider for small businesses. Their undertakings revealed creativity and the eagerness to learn and adopt new technologies such as new agroecological production techniques, and use of the Internet for marketing organic produce (Jordan, 2009a). All are recent initiatives; it remains to be seen if they will be profitable and sustainable.

> *Collaboration with the private sector was at best sporadic, and the impact on local economies, job creation, and opportunities for income generation was extremely limited.*

But the development of productive capital was the area in which least progress was made in all of the CCs, without exception. Collaboration with the private sector was at best sporadic, and the impact on local economies, job creation, and opportunities for income generation was extremely limited (Thompson, 2009). Efforts to kick-start small businesses were hampered by the absence of public policies and programs providing essential services for startups not provided by the market, like infrastructure, training and technical assistance, information systems, and access to credit (Jordan, 2009a). Youth and informal employment remained high, and what was achieved was insufficient to curb high levels of youth out-migration in search of work (Jordan, 2009a).

Furthermore, the concept of territory, and the importance of integrated policies and programs

to develop social, human, and productive capital within a territory, remained largely unrecognized in the public sector at all levels, and the fragmented nature of public policies and programs reduced the effectiveness of the work of the CCs to promote integrated local development (Thompson, 2009; Azeredo, 2009).

Public Policy and Practice

The development of integrated, multisector public policy and practice for local development was seen as the way to help consolidate and sustain local development in the territories beyond foundation funding, and to disseminate new policies and practices beyond the initial territory (Azeredo, 2009).

Significant change in the public sector of the kind sought by the initiative will take many years. There have nevertheless been promising early results, both within and beyond the territories where the CCs worked. They include a state government initiative to expand a Youth Centers model to small municipalities throughout the state in collaboration with each municipal government; the creation of new public structures, like the municipal youth secretariats set up in five states; the adoption by municipal education secretaries of a new pedagogic proposal, developed in an informal education program, to support sustainable development; the statewide dissemination of a program to train youth as multipliers of agroecology farming techniques; the creation of new programs, such as a statewide Organic Agricultural Program; state and federal government funding for training programs to enhance youth employment; and a successful microcredit program for small businesses now poised to become an intermediary between small businesses and a large national bank. Key to these efforts was the quality of the CSOs involved in the CCs: their credibility and legitimacy, built on long-term involvement in social and political struggles; their accumulated knowledge and technical competence; and their tireless efforts to enter in dialogue with the public sector and encourage the adoption of new ways of working (Azeredo, 2009).

Underlying these successes was a central strategy: the creation and strengthening of new public spaces for interaction between civil society and government, particularly participatory councils, along the lines of local participatory democracy and governance provided for in the 1988 constitution, and use of these spaces for participation in the formulation of public policies, plans, and programs (Azeredo, 2009). In some areas new organizational arrangements emerged to facilitate such interaction, such as an intermunicipal network of councils in which more experienced councils offer support to newer ones, the provision of infrastructure for local councils to meet, and, most recently, a state Forum for Regional Development with a mandate to develop integrated policies for territorial development.

But these examples of change in policy and practice were isolated and generally sectoral, targeted at youth as a population or in the fields of education, income generation, or agricultural development. Municipal governments in Northeast Brazil are largely paternalistic and clientelistic, especially in small municipalities like those in which the CCs operated (Azeredo, 2009); they fall far short of the vision of local government agents as catalysts of development processes and facilitators of participatory spaces (Jordan, 2009b). The public spaces and mechanisms of local democracy created by the constitution are incipient and lack, as yet, legitimacy and credibility within the public sector (Azeredo, 2009). And the failure to allocate any part of the funds available to the CCs for the development of leadership or institutional capacity in the public sector, a major contradiction in program design, fueled resentment on the part of the public sector, adding to longstanding mistrust and prejudice between CSOs and the public sector (Azeredo, 2009).

The Foundation's Role in Local Development

A number of aspects of the foundation's practices were key to the achievements described in the last section. The main ones, described below, were the volume of resources invested in projects and support activities, the focus on youth as strategic actors, the design of a sophisticated support system,

and the unconventional relationship developed between funder and recipient.

The first was the sheer volume of resources directly invested in each of the CCs – ranging from just over half a million dollars to more than $4 million – and the long-term commitment made, with direct funding spanning from five to 10 years. This level of commitment is unusual among funders in Brazil (Azeredo, 2009).

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The second was the conceptualization of youth as both important in their own right and as strategic actors capable of promoting change in their environments rather than as passive beneficiaries, and the condition that youth groups be integral to the CCs and the processes of local development. The trust placed in youth by the core team was central to the increased self-confidence of youth to voice their opinions and to their incorporation into management and leadership roles.

The third was the nature of the challenge issued by the foundation, pushing organizations to develop new competencies, to reach larger geographical areas, and to work in new, collaborative ways across sectors.

But the single most important factor may have been the nature of the support available to the CCs: the scale and sophistication of the support system and the volume of resources allocated to supporting strategies. Key elements of the system were the permanent and active involvement of the core team in ongoing, close contact with the CCs; the continuous processes of experimentation, reflection, learning, and adjustment engaged in by the team members (Landim, 2009); the practical and emotional support provided by the coaches and the confidence demonstrated by the coaches; the creation of spaces and mechanisms for open dialogue and the willingness to deal with conflict if it arose; investments in the development of local leadership and institutional capacity; and the availability of a range of expertise in the support projects and thematic coaching.

All of the foundation's resources, financial and technical, were focused on strengthening CSOs; none were invested in the modernization, capacity-building, and development of new agendas in the public sector at municipal level.

The nature of the Kellogg Foundation's support represented an authentic effort to create a new kind of relationship between funder and recipient, one in which the potential benefits of the proactive involvement of an external actor – the introduction of alternative ideas and fresh perspectives, of innovative practices and methodologies, and the visibility and credibility conferred by its presence – are not outweighed by the effects of hierarchical relations so often produced by the provision of financial resources in impoverished settings, with the potential to distort local demands, destabilize local relations, and create competition for resources (Sena & Wittkamper, 2009).

Several characteristics of the support system were central to the desire to modify conventional relationships. At the heart of the learning community was the principle that learning is a permanent and collective process in which all can learn and all can teach (Haddad, 2009). Related to this was the coaching methodology, in which the coaches put their own expertise and ideas to one side and listened to local ideas, insisting that local people had the capacity and resources to find their own solutions (Toro, 2009). For the same reasons, the foundation circumscribed the degree of its involvement carefully, opting to keep out of political and strategic negotiations in the territories in which local organizations should be the protagonists, and avoiding involvement in local spaces designed for the interaction of local actors (Sena & Wittkamper, 2009). The flexible nature of some of the funding – decisions about the allocation of the Youth Project Support Funds and the Exchange Funds were made locally – also helped to transfer some of the control over financial resources to the CCs. The effectiveness of these approaches relied heavily on the personal relationships built over time and the ability of the core team to develop a high level of trust with local people (Toro, 2009).

The reflections of the core team members toward the end of the initiative indicate their growing awareness of some of the weaknesses in the foundation's approach, of the ways in which the foundation obstructed rather than facilitated positive developments in the CCs. One of these was the inadequate attention paid to strategies for the engagement of all three sectors of society in alliances for local development. All of the foundation's resources, financial and technical, were focused on strengthening CSOs; none were invested in the modernization, capacity-building, and development of new agendas in the public sector at municipal level. The foundation also did too little to create strategies, or to encourage the development of strategies in the CCs, to engender a sense of local social responsibility among businesses and promote their active involvement in local development processes. There was also a growing awareness that the nature of the support provided to the CCs was defined mainly by foun-

dation staff and consultants, and was not always aligned with the local needs, interests, or developmental phase of each CC (Sena & Wittkamper, 2009).

There were other shortcomings in the practical application of the support system. In practice, the learning community fell short of its theoretical purposes: there was limited continuity in learning and reflection between face-to-face meetings, participants at meetings often failed to socialize new knowledge and learning on return to their home organizations, and practices of continuous critical reflection and learning were not reproduced in most of the CC organizations (Jordan, 2009b). The evaluation conducted by an external institution was designed without any knowledge of or input from the local contexts, thereby losing the potential to generate real insights into the successes and difficulties of each CC (Sena & Wittkamper, 2009). And in all but one CC, the activities to build local evaluation capacity failed to instill the culture of regular evaluation and learning processes (Jordan, 2009a).

Final Reflections: International Programming, Local Development and Youth

The extent to which poverty and inequality have been reduced and the intergenerational cycle of poverty broken in the territories covered by the seven CCs remains to be seen. The sustainability and dissemination of local development over time, within and beyond the territories, and without Kellogg Foundation funding is also uncertain. But there is no doubt that the foundation program has contributed to the creation of favorable environments for local development and poverty reduction by setting in motion irreversible forces for local development; by empowering youth and others to find the power within themselves and use it to make things happen (Toro, 2009); and by contributing to the creation of the next generation of leaders and citizens with reaffirming experiences in their territories, new capabilities and perspectives, and values of cooperation, integration, social equity, and respect for the environment (Jordan, 2009a).

Key to these results were foundation practices based on trust, transparency, and open communications, the modeling of participatory democratic procedures, demonstration of a deep belief in local capabilities for problem-solving and self-determination, and carefully designed strategies to offset the inherent imbalance of power between funder and recipients. These were the practices that underlay highly successful efforts to build the capacity of organizations and individuals – social and human capital – in alliance with local actors in the territories.

> *There is no doubt that the foundation program has contributed to the creation of favorable environments for local development and poverty reduction by setting in motion irreversible forces for local development.*

Perhaps the most important lesson that foundation staff and consultants have taken away from this experience is the fundamental importance of intentional strategies to bring all three sectors together, to attract and facilitate public and private sector involvement in civil society projects for local development and poverty reduction. To do so creates sustainable, large-scale economic development and regeneration and favorable institutional and policy environments within and beyond their territories. Without this, the initiatives of civil society in isolation have little chance of impacting the deep-rooted and pervasive problems of poverty and inequality (Thompson, 2009).

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