Open statistical data and mapping:

Share information and generate knowledge for equitable development
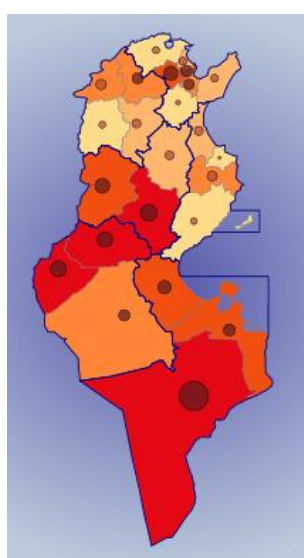
A project to tool up the Tunisian civil society

Project driven by the TFSC[1] Tunisia, El Ghorba and Altercarto in France

Partnership with: TFES[2], THRL[3], GULT[4],

Scientific sponsorship: (Hafedh Chkir, Abderazak Haj Zekri, Hassen Kassar)

Origin of the Project.

The formalization of the project have been the result of a series of meetings between different actors of the Tunisian civil society (Workshop in the World Social Forum 2013, Meeting with many NGO's especially from Sfax Jerba and Tunis, Meeting at the University of Tunis of Urbanism and architecture, TFSC, Maghreb Social Forum…) and in France (FORSEM + Altercarto + TFSC).

These meetings have driven the TFSC to organize a foundation seminar in Tunis in the 7th of February 2014, to which attended these organizations/ personalities: GULT, TFES, EMNHR[5], THRL, Hafedh CHkir, Abderazak Haj Zekri

Purpose of the project

The following organizations joined the project later: UNFT, Younga Solidaire, TFCD

Unemployment rate in 2012

The transitional period successive to the Tunisian revolution and the role played in it by the civil society emphasizes on the importance of reinforcing it in all its components (intermediate body, networks of local initiatives, activist networks in action for democratic progress and for economic, cultural and social emancipation of women and men, and for the reduction of inequalities and equitable development), not only in its capacity to take initiatives but also in angling the public policies and to innovate in the ways of building new forms of civil action conducting these policies.

But there can be no democratic and efficient public policies without the production of public statistical data as detailed and localized as possible, and without a reasoned access of citizens and organizations of civil society to this data. The production of detailed and localized data is necessary to the evaluation and conduction of policies to reduce inequalities and to the sizing of the efforts and strategies necessary regarding the situated needs. The reasoned public access is as important to build and sustain the citizen participation to the economic, social, environmental and cultural equitable development. The civil society needs such data not only to build a solid position discussing public policies, on all scales, but also to

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[1] TFSC : Tunisian Federation for a two Shores Citizenship
[2] TFES : Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social rights
[3] THRL : Tunisian Human Rights League
[4] GULT : General Union of Labour in Tunisia
[5] EMNHR : Euro-Mediterranean Network for Human Rights

orientate its own actions. In this way, statistical detailed public localized data represents a public good that needs to be generated and shared in the same time.

- Territorial inequalities, eradication of poverty in the internal regions and also in the new urban girdles, and in the same time the consideration of extraterritorial dynamics of economic and social development on a local and national scale (internal and external immigration, dynamics of urban attraction especially in the coastal regions) appear as key challenges for Tunisia.
- The implementation of institutional reforms consecutive to the adoption of the new constitution, mainly the decentralization and the introduction of elected municipalities across the Tunisian territory, is the institutional immediate key challenge on the short and medium term.

It's on these challenges that the partners united around this initiative and committed in a long term project that aims to contribute in tooling up the Tunisian civil society on two operational levels:

- Level 1: collecting and sharing the existent statistical localized data (mainly from the new census/ National Institute of Statistics)[6], the mapping of this data at different scales and the equipping of the civil society networks with this production. This can be done through workshops of shared analysis (civil society actors, researchers and experts and also the administration and local communities), by the diffusion of interactive and pedagogical support and by the training of the NGO's networks on the reasoned use of public localized statistical data.
- Level 2: coaching of localized initiatives (in urban popular areas, and rural areas) of economic and social development based on common action between civil society and public local communities, in the mindset of inventing the local democracy (shared diagnosis, collaborative investigations equipped by mapping localized statistic data).

The development of such an initiative is also an opportunity to mobilize in a project of collective utility different networks of actors in the civil society often dispersed: associations, intermediate body (unions' socio-professional organisms), researchers and experts, technicians (computing, statistic, development engineering…)

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[6] And/or negociate to have access to this data: ministries, agencies…

Orientation of the Project

Two major orientations underline this initiative:

Axis 1 – Building a new relation between data producers of public localized statistic data and its users in the civil society and public local communities

If the realization of this project implies to actively contribute to a large opening and sharing of public data to the civil society, it situates this objective in a perspective of instituting a fruitful relation between the producers of public statistic data and it's users in the civil society and public local community.

1.1 Looking for the good analysis levels for the good evaluation of needs.

When approaching the issues of inequalities or the process of socio-economic exclusion of resources, of services and equipments, and more generally of the effective equality before the law, or of the socio-economic and socio-demographic dynamics, the mastery by the society of the tools and practices of democratic assessment of the common needs and resources is at the center of the process of equitable development. It is at the same time the question of presenting the information and sharing it, articulating the scales of approaches of the problems and the challenges in order to equip the society with a deliberative capacity pluralist and pragmatic. (Equipping the civil society to the formalization the issues, setting the terms of the arbitrage, building of the assessment criteria, discussing the action modalities of the stakeholders and equipping them).

The relationship Producer-User of public statistic data is one of the strategic levers for the implementation of such a social capacity. It is also to train at once the civil society and the organisms producing data to this deliberative practice based on mediation of the public statistic data.

1.2 For a public and local scale detailed statistic geography

In this perspective, in Tunisia, it appears more than necessary to work towards the development of a public local scale statistic geography as detailed as possible and in respect with civil liberties, and applied as much as possible to the public statistic production of studies (census, …) and common law (social and economic rights, education, equipment and services) in a way that leads to wide public apprehension to the socio-economic inequalities between the rural and urban territories, of the mobility, of the mutation dynamics, and thus articulating different scales (interdependencies, regional dynamics, mutations of the relations between the rural and the urban …)[7], in order to establish democratic and public frameworks to the elaboration of solutions to the issues considered.

1.3 For an active accountability : take part in the process of local democracy serving development

The shared apprehension by the civil society and the public institutions on local, regional and national scales needs an equipping process (tools and methods, collaborative work…) and concentration of actor networks to promote the extensive use of this information and governance tools. Such a process will be more and more important as Tunisia engages deeper in an institutional rebuilding process through decentralizing and especially the institutionalization of the local democracy through a municipal election

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[7] For example, see the IRIS geography developed by the National Geography Institute and the INSEE in France

process all over the Tunisian territory during the year 2015. The success of this process, in terms of democracy and development, will be based mainly on the capacity of the new collectivities on relying on the local civil society to orientate their action in an equitable and sustainable way. From this perspective, the equipment of such a process by an apparatus of localized and open data, shared and stable over time, by visualization tools (cartography in particular) that are accessible, seizable, and largely diffused, is a crucial challenge for a pragmatic new open governance, where the civil society is to play a key role.

1.4 The share of civil society in accountable governance.

From such a perspective, and keeping clear the roles of the different stakeholders, the bipolar scheme opposing civil society and public institutions has to be relativized: in such a process of reinvented governance, the civil society is an active stakeholder and can not be limited to the roles of representing, consulting or a defending. More so, an important number of the civil society organizations are already or will soon become more and more producers of goods and services, with public loans or by the help of international foundations and organizations. In a democratic context, these goods and services also fall under pragmatic open governance. Along this way, civil society organizations have to work the development of public information about their action (accountability).

1.5 Civil society as a producer of open data

The civil society can be also a producer of open data, independently or in cooperation with national public authorities, regional or local, by its capacity to conduct inquiries, but also by its capacity to produce instruments of independent observation and alertness that can (or not) eventually integrate the normative public apparatus (see in this theme the realized initiatives in other countries on public budgets, gender budget, on price monitoring, on spotting the not counted / homeless, poor…, or also victims of mistreatment, the initiatives on handicap issues…)

Axis 2 – Equipping civil society with tools and know-how of development, by the collaborative mapping of localized data

2.1 In the heart of the concentration approach : learning in order to act better

From the side of civil society, whether they are local or thematic NGO's, the networks of representation or the intermediate body (unions, professional organizations, social solidarity economy, …), or the associations' movements offering services and help, the question is developing the knowledge for action, by favoring the practices (tools and methods) of sharing the information and analysis, by relying in particular on the efficient mediation of the mapping of statistic data when it is possible and useful.

2.2 Collaborative production and sharing of knowledge in the heart of the common action practices

The collaborative production of information and their sharing is a mean by which NGO's can structure themselves in a network. But this practice is also a mean to mobilize society on a local level and even above, and also, by the appropriate tools and methods, grant populations and social groups the participation to local process' tempting their experience, their knowhow and their own knowledge. It is the condition of the social appropriation of data, and the building of a common lecture faculty aware of the experience of the populations and local actors. The following step is the collective formalization of the challenges and thus the collective deliberation on the modes and finalities of the action.

2.3 Contextualization of the approaches

Then, the question of anchoring the collaborative diagnosis and the analysis of the needs in local societies by proposing the practices to the population and/or social groups does not only come from the dogma of the necessity of participative practices, but also comes from the capital issue of contextualizing the production of information taking into account the local challenges, and in particular the information produced by the populations and social groups (youth, women, socio-professional backgrounds, minorities,…)

From this point of view, every situation is specific and the contexts are results of the objectification of the factors through data and analyzing the practices of the different stakeholders (populations, social groups, but also administration, local collectivities, NGOs,…). Indeed, practicing the collaborative analysis of contexts leads to exploring not only the social and economic indicators, but also the local actors system. This way, collaborative work with mediation supports like mapping of data appears to be a powerful lever to renew the relations between the actors, invent new ways of tackling problems, and giving credit to minority situations.

2.4 Comparing situations and articulating scales

Putting in perspective peculiar contexts about other territories or articulating different scales is also a way rethinking issues, bringing up fruitful insights and permitting stakeholders to situate their contexts in relation to one another, to identify the controllable factors on local scale and those who need other forms of action on different scales.

2.5 Supporting the emergence of initiatives aiming to structure local contexts

Naturally, even if the institutional structures are what structures the territory and the conditions of existence of the citizens, the public action program and other socio-economic or political factors, are occasions to initiate practices of coproduction and sharing of knowledge backed by mapping of statistic data or other methods. Such process' can not be decided from above. The actors that can initiate such process' on local scale are always the best placed to decide their engagement motive. Whether they seek to give continuity to an indignation movement, to expand a solidarity approach, to propose a democratic approach of development, to reproduce an experience that happened elsewhere, these actors can not be constructed from outside.

The project of equipping the civil society actors with the tools and methods based on localized statistic data mapping and other methods have to rely also on a pragmatic cooperative work, more horizontal than vertical, for the objectives of the local actors and reinforcing the whole network at the same time.

It is not also a question of limiting the project to delivering tools, methods and prefabricated information. Even if this is a necessary step, the question is to constitute a plural network, available to the actors holding initiatives and having the capacity to support them in their undertaking of collaborative production and sharing of knowledge for the local collective action.

Implementation strategy and management of the project

From the foregoing reasoning follows a strategy based on the combination of two logics of action:

First logic of action: it concerns the accessibility, the appropriation and the diffusion and the use of the localized statistic data in society.

The practical objectives, the ways to achieve them and the timeline of implementation, short term (1 year) and mid term (5 years), are determined at first by its implantation in the ongoing institutional process of municipalization and decentralization. In this framework, the major challenges of development in Tunisia are : local democracy and the role of civil society, fighting poverty, equality before the law, local and regional disparities, taking into account internal migration (interregional, rural/urban) and external migration (immigration, emigration, returning) that will play a key role in the regional dynamics.

Three operational axis can be derived from this first logic of action:

1. Contribute to the establishment of a cooperation framework and/or of negotiation between the civil society and the producers of data for this timeline and challenges. And this around two specific challenges:
   - The construction of a public statistic geography detailed on a local level, including the infra urban level, for the construction step by step of a public statistic apparatus that will make approaching local governance challenges easier, especially for infra urban disparities (rings of poverty, isolated districts, ...)
   - The selection of data panels useful to produce and make public by the different institutions (ministry, National statistic institute, collectivities…), in a sustainable way, to equip public action and civil society in the perspective of a sustainable development.
2. Produce (coproduce) thematic supports, on localized statistic data mapping, for educational format, and diffuse them with the suitable support to equip local and national NGOs to tool up their contribution to the projects of the new collectivities. This step is particularly important in the pre-electoral period for the tooling up of the relations with the institutions on a regional scale. To this, we have to form networks of local NGOs that will use these tools, through a system of decentralized animation (4 or 5 NGOs volunteer in each region to be head of the network).
3. Initiate and animate on Tunisian national level a network of cooperation between NGOs, intermediary body,… for the construction of a common system of problematization in order to organize the coproduction of the statistic mapping tools of the project. Different understandings of the challenges of equitable development have to be taken into account, in particular the reports between the economic actors, wage workers and others, inhabitants, and also the generation reports, educational and socio-cultural issues, health, also the reports between companies and the territories (planning policies, taxes and subventions, social and environmental responsibilities of companies)… this is where orientation of the statistic mapping supports will proceed with a pluralist exploration of the challenge : *how to combine the economic and social Tunisian development with a perspective of human rights in a pragmatic*

way (in a sense of attachment to people's experience)?. This axis of work constitutes one of the major support points of the contribution of the project to the establishment of a fruitful relation: Producer of public data – Users from the civil society.

The second logic of action: Availability and support of the impulsion of local and thematic initiatives of appropriation of the collaborative diagnosis tools and methods. Also the initiatives of production of localized data (collaborative design of the public space or of the social space, of the environment, urban and rural mapping statements with methods like Open Street Map...).

So it is a question of visualizing the project also as a system of training from the experiences and redistribution of knowhow built in the management of collaborative and participative process of territorial diagnosis involving civil society or supported by its own organizations or activist groups.

The projects can indifferently concern challenges such as the reconversion of regions dependant of a mono-industry (phosphate...), projects of urban planning, initiatives of social development in the popular neighborhoods, approaches of territorial social dialogue between unions, companies, local collectivities and local civil society, projects of spreading networks of solidarity and mutual help, initiatives linked to development programs.

Other than the tools and methods of the project, the contribution of the project will consist here on supporting the initiatives and putting them in relation with universities, with close initiatives from other regions or other countries or also assist the teams of these projects in their fundraising.

The implementation of the project will concern:

- The capitalization and diffusion of experiences,
- The transfer of knowhow
- The training of actors (training engineering in partnership with training actors, universities...)

Organization, regional network team, tools

The support structure

TFSC

Scientific sponsorship

Hafedh Chkir, Abderazak Haj Zekri, Hassen Kassar

Direction committee

It will be composed of representatives of the organizations members of the founding network, a support project group of NGOs of the civil society, of a group of qualified personalities.

A team

- A coordinator of the project

- A training and transfer officer, qualifications: masters degree, in command of the collaborative and participative process of diagnosis and action.
- Two computing technicians, qualifications: Bachelor degree, in command of the manipulation of numbers and/or web development, in charge of the production for the network and the technical support to the initiatives.

Technical support

The project is mainly based on the tools and methods of statistic mapping of the SuiteCairo (http://suitecairo.fr) available on free license GNU-GPL[8].

Initial formation of the team:

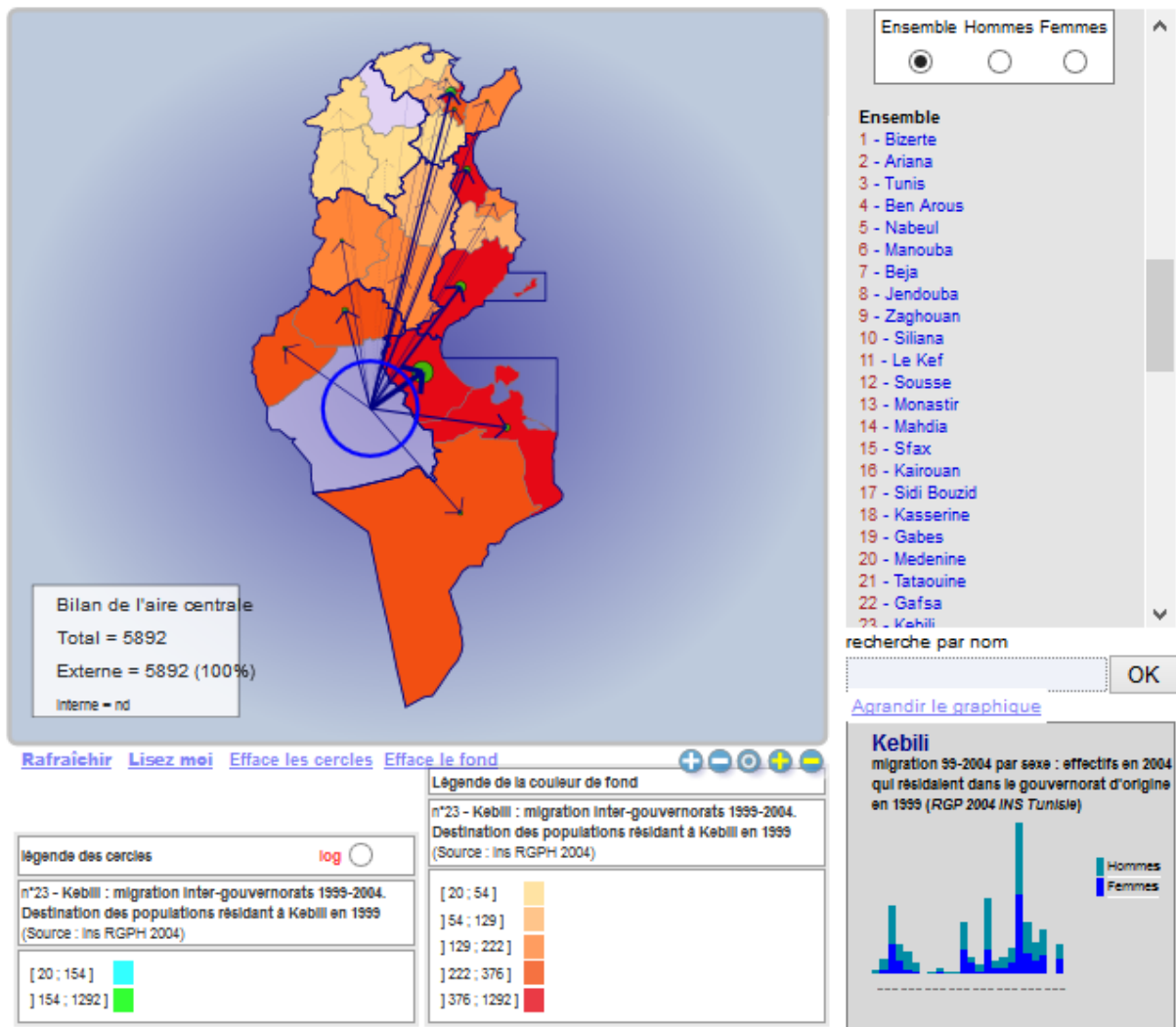The program was developed by the scientific board of altercarto

- Support on project management
- Training in the statistic mapping tools SuiteCairo and in the methodology of collaborative inquiery
- Support during the first months

Regional deployment

Training of 4 or 5 NGOs per region who will animate a regional network of diffusion (first logic of action) and of support to initiatives linked to the project team, with logistic support from the regional offices of the GUTL (logistic support).

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[8] Internet platforms of collabortive realization in statistic mapping ; mutualization system, exchange and localized data visualization system online, Interactive thematic mobile mapping diffusion kit (USB devices or web).
The launching of the project on this base does not exclude the use of other tools (Like computing-development tools or the OpenSource tools like the OpenstreetMap…) or the development of specific tools for the Tunisian project.

Extracted from the model of the project: inter regional residential mobility 1999-2004 (source: census INS)