



PEKEA

Political and Ethical Knowledge on economic Activities

Local Governments' Club

Call to build A CLUB of LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

1 – A call launched by PEKEA

PEKEA is an acronym for a *Political and Ethical Knowledge in Economic Activities* that reflects the commitment of PEKEA to construct this knowledge.

This project, launched in 2001, has been defined step by step, through several conferences organized by an association that received a consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN in 2006. Its headquarters are located in Rennes; information on the structure and operations is available on the website¹. This particular project is carried out by a network of more than 1000 researchers representing more than 60 countries. Trained in various disciplines in the human and social sciences, these researchers wish to reconsider how economic issues must be addressed.

PEKEA's *raison d'être* is to build another approach to economic activities and the economy, based on an analysis of a **set of relationships between people**, individuals, groups and collectivities, each rooted in their own social history and who draw their resources from territories endowed with their own specific characteristics. This approach is radically different from the approach that addresses economic activities and the economy that is based on the theory of a **set of relations between things** where these relations are reduced to the circulation of things in markets.

This objective of this PEKEA project, to analyze the relationships between people, reflects its « acronym ». The relationships between people, groups, are, on the one hand, determined by influence and power and are situated the « **political** » field. On the other hand, these relationships are determined by what counts for individuals and groups that correspond with their values, and are situated in the « **ethical** » field.

¹ The URL of the PEKEA website (tri-lingual, English, Français, Español) : <http://www.pekea.org>. The association is registered under the French Law stated in 1901 with a Governing Board. The president is Yves Franchet, retired after serving as an International Civil Servant (Eurostat, World Bank and Interamerican Development Bank).

One of the first outcomes of this PEKEA project was to emphasize the necessity to make clear the necessity to give content to the concept of « **societal value**² ». This means not allowing the market, which claims to steer clear of references to *ethics and politics*³, have the monopoly of determining the price of everything, but on the contrary, to contain its role and to give society the control over the value of things and over societal value.

To be sure, in order to understand this societal value, we cannot turn only to economists . We must also invite « *specialists* » on **societal questions**; it is even better to search beyond the circle of disciplinary « specialists » because society, in a democratic logic, is the business of all citizens. First of all this concerns the power they have conferred on those who organise and administer their immediate surroundings – **the local governments** - and that of their spontaneous collective associations which are referred to as **civil society**.

2 – Why a Club of Local Governments?

Economic activities are always localised and crucial matters are first a concern for localised societies, communities installed in a territory. The ambition of PEKEA is to mobilize the analyses of researchers on concrete issues on the ground, namely local governments, their elected representatives and their staff. Local governments, as well as civil society, have developed the necessary experience to implement decisions to assure a well functioning society.

However, they often encounter difficulties to get the support of researchers with relevant expertise; this is principally due to the fact of the division of research between disciplinary fields and because economic experts have their main competence in the field of relationships between things.

The PEKEA Local Government Club project seeks to help researchers address these concrete issues and to facilitate the capacity of Local Governments to work with experts committed to their preoccupations and ready to build the relevant analytical tools.

The priority for Local Governments is to improve the well-being of the members of their communities. That is to say, these Local Governments need to make decisions and design policies able to improve this well-being, or to increase **global societal value**.

The convergence is clear between this first PEKEA project to give content to the concept of « **societal value** » and assist Local Governments wishing to have a better understanding of the level of well-being of their local communities for which they are responsible. Attaining this objective will increase the capacity to select appropriate policies that will increase this level of **societal well-being**.

² The concept was proposed during the launching conference in 2002 in Santiago by M Kazumi Shimizu, and become the theme of the PEKEA conference in Rennes, in December 2003.

³ The market of the economic theory must be like that it was expressed into the project for a European constitution where any market must enjoy a « free and fair competition » not tainted by any power effects.

3 – The working of a Local Governments' PEKEA Club

The Club of Local Governments, partners of PEKEA, must contribute to the development of methods and procedures that are common to all Local governments, even though the design and the implementation of procedures will correspond with specificities and needs of individual Local Governments.

It is also an opportunity to begin a discussion about these methods between Local Governments, elected representatives, executives of the local administration and researchers.

We may expect that a few Local Governments will ask the pluri-disciplinary teams of the PEKEA network to produce studies, make contributions, provide expertise, that are necessary and useful to design and to carry out public policies according to new perspectives. With the endeavour to develop a **political and ethical** approach of economic activities, the work and expertise built within the PEKEA network could contribute significantly to restoring the place of the political dimension in all economic matters.

Rennes Métropole has undertaken the initiative to discuss this proposition of a Club with elected representatives from several Local Governments in France :: Paris, Lille, Nantes, Département d'Ille et Vilaine, Région de Bretagne. Many other Local Governments (Cities, départements, régions) have indicated their interest.

Formally, three Local Governments created the club in 2006 : **Rennes Métropole, Département d'Ille et Vilaine and Région Bretagne** ; they were joined in 2007 by **Région Nord Pas-de-Calais**. Along with their participation in the club, they have paid a membership-fee to PEKEA.

The work by PEKEA for the club of Local Governments, at the general level, consists of a contribution to mobilise and to build tools to appreciate the societal value in a localised or territorialised context.

This may be done by gathering researchers and decision makers at the international level in international meetings.

A first international seminar was organised in Rennes in November 2006. You will find the programme and the principal contributions in our website (<http://fr.pekea-fr.org/?p=9>)
A second conference will take place in Rennes 30-31 October 2008, with the support of the OECD, the Council of Europe and Région Bretagne.

At local levels, work is being carried out or is already completed for local partners by PEKEA members inside the Club and also for Local Governments which will certainly join soon.

One of the objectives of PEKEA would be that any Local Government have the use of a synthetic index of human development so as to expand the vision about the local

performance from an emphasis on GDP alone, towards something different that will result in the construction of indexes of localised societal well-being through participative procedures.

Precise modalities are clearly to be defined through the interaction between Local Governments and participants to the PEKEA network.

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Annex

The PEKEA project is supported by important people, initially, in Rennes, in France where it was first established, but also at the international level. To be sure we cannot cite all of them. We have more than 800 academics, trained in 15 or more disciplines, who back this project and who participate in its activities, some closely, others from a distance. The full list of all our more than thousand supporters is on our website and these network members receive a quarterly electronic newsletter. Some of them organize thematic or local working groups. A few workshops and seminars have been organised, for example, in Santiago de Chile, in Tokyo, in Mexico, in Rennes, soon in Delhi, etc.

A few important people from the academic world :

At the international level : Aminata Traoré, Jose Antonio Ocampo, Elmar Altvater, Robert Reich, ,Noam Chomsky, Henry Mintzberg, Richard Nelson, Jan Art Scholte, José Luis Coraggio, Christopher Freeman, Ronald Dore, Bengt Ake Lundvall, Christos Pitelis, Ada Cavazzani, Adelino Torres, Pierre de Senarclens, Omar Aktouf, James Galbraith, Mauricio Langon, Yoshihito Shimada, Robert Cox, Marguerite Mendell, Jacques Chonchol, Carlota Perez, Jun Nishikawa, Fidèle Nze-Nguema, Masahiko Aoki, Yonding Yu, etc.

In France : Edgar Morin, Alain Touraine, Julia Kristeva, Alain Caillé, Jean Paul Fitoussi, René Passet, Patrick Viveret, Jean-Louis Laville, Jacques Généreux, Charles Albert Michalet, Catherine Paradeise, Bruno Mattéi, Jacques Sapir, Pierre Salama, Jean Louis Le Moigne , Gérard de Bernis, Jean Marc Bouissou, Pascal Petit,etc.

In Rennes : Yves Morvan, Alain Even, Marc Gontard, Michel Gervais, Pierre-Jean Simon, Guy Baudelle, Jean Paul Maréchal, Armel Huet, etc.

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