

In an «*Approche territoriale intégrée versus lutte à la pauvreté ?*» (*An integrated territorial approach vs. the struggle against poverty?*), an article published in *la Revue vie économique*<sup>1</sup>, Jean-François Aubin ponders over why certain organizations with the mission to fight poverty were so quick to oppose the concept of an integrated territorial approach. His wish was to initiate a debate. This article, the French version of which was published in the RVE (June 2011, Vol.2 no.4), is a reaction to his call for this debate. Let the debate begin !

<sup>1</sup> *Revue vie économique*, May 2010.

## COUNTERARGUMENT

### Does struggling locally against poverty really produce « inspiring practices »? <sup>2</sup>

In March 2007, « le Réseau québécois du développement social (RQDS) » (*the Québec network for social development*) sponsored a research project designed «*to draw up an inventory of initiatives which are fighting poverty throughout Québec, to analyse these initiatives, to quantify the results (and) to underscore certain impressive approaches....* ». The mandate to produce this study was given to researchers Pierre-Joseph Ulysse (Université de Montréal) and Lise St-Germain (La corporation de développement économique communautaire de Trois-Rivières (ÉCOF), Trois-Rivières).<sup>3</sup>

The study carried out by these two researchers is important since it is part of a small body of work upon which the Québec government bases its often repeated affirmation that the territorial struggle against poverty is producing promising results.<sup>4</sup> The Ulysse/St-Germain study concludes that the territorial approach produces “*inspiring practices in the struggle against poverty*».<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Revue vie économique*, volume 1, numéro 4 (May 2010).

<sup>2</sup> A more detailed version of this article is available at:

<http://www.trovepo.org/documents/Lutte territoriale seesalapauvretedespratiquesinspirantes.PDF>

<sup>3</sup> Ulysse, Pierre-Joseph et Lise St-Germain, *Pratiques et initiatives de lutte contre la pauvreté par le développement social intégré au Québec (Rapport synthèse), 2007* (*Practices and initiatives in the struggle against poverty through integrated social development in Québec*) available at : <http://www.crdcs.centre-du-quebec.qc.ca/client/uploads/44/42689072711429.pdf> (site consulted the 24/04/11). The research project is announced in *la Revue développement social* (March, 2007) and the synthesis is contained in a special publication of *la Revue* (December, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Government of Québec, *Rendez-vous de la solidarité*, Le cahier de consultation régionale, 2009 pp .15 et l'Annexe 2. Available at : [http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/ADMIN\\_cahier\\_consultation\\_Rendez-vous\\_regions\\_2009.pdf](http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/ADMIN_cahier_consultation_Rendez-vous_regions_2009.pdf) (site consulted on the 23/04/11). English versions of the government's two poverty action plans are available at : [http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/plan-action/index\\_en.asp](http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/plan-action/index_en.asp) (Site consulted on August 17, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> A word about the « territorial approach ». Québec has adopted a neoliberal approach to fighting poverty. Consistent with neoliberal principles, as the State withdraws from certain responsibilities

The Ulysse/St-Germain study identifies nine « incubator s» located in various administrative regions of Québec. These incubators have generated 105 concrete «spin-off projects » associated with the fight against poverty. We analysed the 105 projects by grouping them under twelve themes. For each of the themes, we tried to answer the following questions:

1. *If poverty is fundamentally a violation of human rights, how do the projects identified with this theme seek to redress human rights violations?*
2. *How does the territorial approach (as exemplified by the projects from this them) reduce the poverty of Québec citizens?*
3. *How does it attack the causes of poverty?*
4. *Does it really serve to assist the poorer population or is it more inclined to assist professionals and their organizations?*

This article does not pretend to be comprehensive. It does not analyse all the regional projects in Québec that claim to fight poverty but rather limits its analysis to those mentioned in a research study sponsored by the RQDS, an organization which is well respected in those circles which promote the “territorial approach” as part of the solution to reducing poverty.

Finally, a clarification of our starting point is required. Poverty is fundamentally a violation of human rights, and this is the basic premise on which this analysis is based. Poverty is a violation of the right to adequate housing, the right to a decent standard of living, the right to proper nutrition. This premise motivates us to want to understand how the territorial fight against poverty makes it possible for citizens to better enjoy those human rights entrenched in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – ICESCR\UN to which the Québec government claims to have adhered as early as 1976. Our choice of this UN treaty as a measuring stick by which to judge Québec’s poverty strategy is not accidental: the Government itself vaunts its compliance in the «*2010-2015 Government Action Plan for Solidarity and Social Inclusion.*»

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(revenue transfer to poor people, for example), it offloads expectations to new partners (private, municipal and community-based). In Québec, it is these “territorial actors” – regional, municipal, local- who are assuming an increasing role in the so-called “fight against poverty.”

# Analysis of the Ulysse/St-Germain Study (105 initiatives organized by 12 themes)

## (A) THEMES ASSOCIATED WITH HUMAN RIGHTS

*Poverty is fundamentally a violation of human rights. It would be reasonable to believe that a « territorial struggle against poverty » would attempt to redress a certain number of these violations. Here is a series of themes that could potentially involve the area of human rights.*

### 1. HOUSING

*The «right to housing » is a right formally recognized under the ICESCR as specified in Article 11 (the right to a sufficient standard of living).*

Municipal authorities have a big responsibility in the area of housing. Since poorer people often experience serious housing problems, it is not surprising that housing is a privileged area for territorial intervention.

Three of the projects catalogued by the Ulysse/St-Germain study could make it possible to redress violations to the right to housing. The awareness campaign on fire prevention, if focussed on tenant protection, might prove interesting. Similarly, territorial interventions targeted on improving substandard housing units (especially through *Habitat santé* programme) could make it possible for local stakeholders to intervene with a human rights perspective. Furthermore, the idea of collective fire insurance for poorer people is attracting attention in the ACEF (consumer rights network) and this concept could be put in place as an initiative which would be compliant to our obligations under the ICESCR.

Other projects included under this theme seem to be much more problematical as concerns the right to housing, specifically those targeting “risk populations”: youth and single- parent families. In fact, the *Le Phare* project in Valleyfield is highly disturbing because it seems more conducive to social control than to promoting human rights. By forcing residents to sign a « therapeutic lease », and then forcing them to respect it as a condition for maintaining social housing, *Le Phare* would seem to be well on its way to implementing a form of social management.<sup>6</sup>

Although it is unlikely that any of the people touched by projects classified under this theme end up being less poor as a result of a territorial intervention, a certain number of these projects – including one where housing conditions for the elderly were improved – do perhaps help to further the cause of human rights.

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<sup>6</sup> See Ligue des droits et libertés, *L’Exercice des droits, un projet de société?*, 2010, p. 49.

## 2. HUNGER

*Article 11 of the ICESCR specifically guarantees the right to sufficient food.*

Questionable food safety, an evergrowing issue in Québec, has characterized a number of interventions using the territorial approach in the fight against poverty. Certain projects inventoried by the Ulysse/St-Germain study twin a practical aspect (cooking) with a training aspect (learning more about a healthy diet). Certain interventions, such as community gardens, even go so far as to make it possible for the people living in disadvantaged districts to produce their own food.

Under the right conditions, a group kitchen (cuisine collective) can facilitate a certain transfer of knowledge while producing good quality food at a good price. If it is successful in consciousness-raising, a group kitchen can help in advancing the right to sufficient food. The “consciousness” aspect, however, is the dimension that is most difficult to maintain in this type of activity where there is always the risk that it will be seen as an opportunity to produce cheap food or as a social activity.

Furthermore, group kitchens appeared well before the territorial fight against poverty, with the first ones setting up shop in 1982 in Montréal. Community gardens are also put in this category: in a good year with a good crop, they can be of assistance, for a few months at least, to alleviate the effects of poverty. And these gardens may prove useful as a group experience. But, as is the case for group kitchens, the community garden concept, while alleviating some of the symptoms of poverty, will never really get at the actual causes of poverty.

## 3. EMPLOYMENT

*The ICESCR confirms the right to freely chosen employment. Article 6, which enshrines this right, also outlines the right to adequate job training. Article 7 entrenches a series of labour rights including the right to work in a safe environment, to healthy working conditions and to a fair compensation for work. Article 8 confirms the right to unionize.*

The government’s poverty strategy is perhaps best summed up in its second action plan :  
«*Employment represents one of the best means to allow people to get out of poverty in a sustainable manner and to improve their living conditions.* »

While at first glance such an affirmation rings true, many studies demonstrate that the « new poor » are workers earning small salaries and occupying precarious positions. Since work confines certain persons to poverty, the door could be open for territorial interventions which focus on advancing the human rights of poor workers.

Ulysse/St-Germain catalogue a number of territorial initiatives in the area of employment. Of these, a certain number create jobs and others support local entrepreneurship initiatives or put

job seekers in contact with job providers. However, we have not been able to identify any « spin-off » activities aimed at improving the working conditions for workers or at informing the “poorer” workers of their rights. It almost seems as if it is more important to put the poor to work than to be preoccupied by the conditions of their employment. In any case, we found no “territorial initiative” which expressed a preoccupation for workers’ rights or for the state of their workplace.

We note the use of the territorial approach to support « lending circles » and start-up loans to micro-enterprises as means to fight poverty. Although such initiatives may assist certain people to take control of their situation by creating their own jobs or companies, this type of initiative often proves to be a measure leading to increased indebtedness. Far from attacking the “causes” of poverty, increasing access to micro-credit or loans may well end up by making a poor person even poorer.

Ironically, to the extent that poverty is closely linked to insufficient income, increased access to micro-credit and low interest loans are the only two territorial measures catalogued in the Ulysse/St-Germain study that deal even remotely with the « income » aspect of the poorer person.

#### 4. TRAINING AND EMPLOYABILITY

*Closely linked with employment is the related training component, a right set forth in the ICESCR.*

Although employment training is partially under the jurisdiction of public institutions, the Ulysse/St-Germain study inventories only community group initiatives.

Whereas training doesn’t guarantee any one an escape from poverty, certain conditions may be put in place to facilitate this result. If training produces a recognized result that is applicable and transferable when moving from one workplace to another, if it produces a stable and decent job and includes learning about workers’ rights, then these conditions are in place. The fact is that, since the public system (school boards, community colleges) issue recognized and transferable diplomas, they represent the best guarantee that a worker will be able to exercise his/her right to freely find a job.

In this sense, the type of training catalogued by the Ulysse/St-Germain initiative raises certain questions since all the examples cited are offered by « community » entities involved in the dismantling of a public service. Furthermore, to the extent that these training efforts are certified by Emploi-Québec (the provincial public employment agency), an agency more interested in quantitative results (the number of beneficiaries removed from social welfare rolls) than in the qualitative aspect (the number of citizens escaping poverty), this type of training producing non-transferable skills tends to be occupational in scope. Its tangible contribution to the elimination of poverty is marginal at best.

## 5. THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

*The right to education is guaranteed under Article 13 of the ICESCR.*

In the wake of the Estates General on Education (1995-96), the « Chantier de l'école montréalaise» identified poverty as a major obstacle which prevents Montreal children from attaining « academic success ». Shortly thereafter, the Ministry of Education applied the same conclusion to all school territories and produced a provincial “map of the underprivileged”. The school system thus became a prime stakeholder in the “new” struggle against poverty. Ulysse/St-Germain inventoried a certain number of examples wherein the anti-poverty struggle takes place within the local school.

Although academic tutoring may indeed assist in producing better academic results or even lead to a parent's better understanding of the expectations and functioning of the school system, it has never helped anyone get out of poverty. Similarly, it is no doubt important to encourage students to volunteer in their community. Volunteerism makes for better citizens. It may even be interesting that students who volunteer be compensated with academic credits. But where is the link between this initiative and the struggle against poverty?

Again, two of the initiatives inventoried by the researchers (both of which provide poor parents with financial assistance to purchase school supplies) are actually measures geared to sugar coat and make more palatable the violation of a fundamental human right (the right to a free primary education as set forth in the ICESCR) . Parents should not have to buy up to 150\$ of school supplies (per child) as a condition for public school education. Such is, however, a widespread practice in Québec.

Lastly, a number of measures that have been in place for some time are now inventoried as being associated with « the fight against poverty ». Le *Festival de la lecture* reproduces what a number of popular literacy groups have been doing for ages. *Espace-Québec* has been intervening to counter violence in schools since 1985 and *les Maisons des jeunes* have long been involved in an attempt to counter the effects of gangs and taxing : the project *Vers le Pacifique* project deals with very similar issues. But where exactly is the link with « *the struggle against poverty* »? Unless of course the presupposition is that poor people have a propensity for violence...

## 6. «SERVICES FOR POOR PEOPLE»

Under this heading are included a number of projects, some of which have much in common with the charitable interventions associated with the Saint-Vincent de Paul or the Salvation Army. In addition, several measures classified under this theme adopt a green recycling or Voluntary Simplicity – Simple Living approach.

The advancement of human rights is nowhere to be found among the initiatives inventoried under this heading. At best, these measures alleviate poverty by making the lives of poor people a little easier. None of the initiatives is inspired by a human rights logic, none directly attacks the causes of poverty nor do these initiatives end up by making people less poor.

On the other hand, «activities to promote the development of personal and parental skills» - and there are several inventoried here - conjure up visions of social control if not outright «accountability of the poorer». These highlight a certain vision of community social profiling which occasionally emerges in the territorial approach to fighting poverty: since you are poor, your need parental training; since you are poor, you tend to be violent; since you are poor, you need help finishing school...

## 7. TRANSPORTATION

Transportation issues are crucial on a number of levels : ecological, environmental, physical exercise and to counter urban sprawl. Since municipalities in Québec are responsible for seeing that the transportation needs within the territories are met, it is not surprising to find transportation as an issue in the analysis of the territorial initiatives to combat poverty. Specifically, the lack of accessibility to public transit curbs employability thus representing a major obstacle in the government's anti-poverty strategy which, as we have seen, largely consists in putting people back to work.

In fact, it is a lack of income often prevents poorer people from using public transit. We have not observed one single project catalogued by Ulysse/St-Germain which aimed at reducing the cost of public transit. Nor have we observed any component within the territorial approach to fighting poverty that calls for weighted rates to assist poor people in meeting their transportation needs, whether this need be in the area of alternative transit, adapted transit or public transit. And, despite the commendable features of the « Vélos de quartier » (neighbourhood bicycles) initiative, is there any real connection here with eliminating poverty?

At this point of our text, we have dealt with approximately thirty-nine (39) of the one-hundred and five (105) territorial initiatives inventoried by the Ulysse/St-Germain research.
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## **(B) TOWARDS A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF THE NOTION OF STRUGGLE...**

*The themes around which we chose to group the projects inventoried by the Ulysse/St-Germain study make it possible to illustrate that the «territorial approach» modifies the very nature of the « struggle against poverty ». While the first part of our text identified a certain number of themes which have some relationship to human rights concerns, the « concrete and inspiring initiatives » which follow are of a quite different nature.*

*To avoid unnecessary repetition, here are a few conclusions regarding the sixty-six remaining projects identified in the Ulysse/St-Germain research: none of the remaining initiatives present positive answers to three of the four questions outlined at the beginning of our study. 1) None help people to escape poverty. 2) None advance a human right, nor rectify a violation of a human right. 3) None address the causes of poverty. As for the fourth question, namely who benefits from the territorial struggle against poverty, some answers will soon emerge!*

### **8. BRINGING TOGETHER THE « MILIEU STAKEHOLDERS »**

The very idea of a concerted territorial approach is based upon the concept of « *territorial synergy* », the end result of grouping together both the stakeholders and the resources in a particular area with the goal to attain common objectives. It should not be surprising that a number of the projects catalogued by Ulysse/St-Germain involve the creation of arenas or forums to channel the “dynamic forces” of the milieu in question. And while the discussions facilitated by such arenas or forums are often productive, there is an old organizational principle stating: « those who do not want to act, convene.»

Furthermore, this is the first heading which indicates the extent to which the struggle against poverty has become « professionalized ». Virtually all the initiatives catalogued here consist in “setting up” a committee, a forum or a coalition. In this regard, it is worth noting that the heading is entitled “Bringing together the milieu stakeholders” and not “Organizing the Poor of the Milieu”, a major distinction as pertains to the nature of the «struggle» proposed under the integrated territorial approach. The ITA struggle is waged by “poverty professionals”.

### **9. STUDYING THE MILIEU**

To struggle against poverty in 2010, we apparently need to be able to measure. In order to “struggle”, we need first of all to circumscribe the “object” of study, namely poverty. Portraits of the object need to be produced, data to be extracted and analysed, results to be validated, targets to be set and attained, results to be measured. Despite the fact that territorial poverty has already been examined from every angle ((see the regional and local socio-economic data collected by health agencies, employment services and school boards and add to this data the territorial breakdown of still other data by the national *Institut de la statistique du Québec*), a number of projects catalogued by Ulysse/St-Germain are seeking to obtain still new territorial-



specific information. These projects include doing a portrait of the milieu, a health inventory, a strategic planning initiative.

Very few people will end up less poor for all of these studies. Nevertheless, while these different studies do not transfer revenue directly to poor people; they do transfer revenue - to the agencies carrying out the different studies, to those organizing the forums to discuss the results of these studies...

## 10. STRUCTURING THE TERRITORY

Given that everyone wants to live in a milieu that is inviting and peaceful, all initiatives to upgrade run-down neighbourhoods or districts should be welcomed. Indeed, the political future of a mayor or municipal councillor often hangs on precisely this issue, a factor that cannot be ignored in understanding the appeal of a territorial approach to the struggle against poverty.

A number of the projects catalogued by the Ulysse/St-Germain team fall into the « revitalization of the downtown core » category, a fancy expression for the gentrification of working-class districts, a movement already witnessed in the past in the redevelopment of the Saint-Roch (Québec City), Centre-Sud (Montréal) and Vieux-Longueuil (Montérégie) districts. Of course, the state of certain districts calls out for a form of “urban revitalization” but gentrification rarely does anything to alleviate poverty. By increasing the rents, modifying the nature of the businesses and dispersing the traditional population to other areas, the poverty “problem” is merely shifted and not resolved. In actual fact, the expulsion of poor people through the gentrification process is often effected in violation of their most fundamental rights.

Thirty or so initiatives under this heading would certainly make their respective milieu more attractive. The creation of *maisons de quartier* (neighbourhood centres), spaces where neighbours can gather, is praiseworthy and could strengthen citizen involvement in local life. A «dog-walk» may well be practical, the revitalization of inner-city alleys can contribute to making a community cleaner and safer, photo exhibits and community festivals are no doubt activities that improve community life : but what does all this have to do with the “struggle against poverty”?

Furthermore, certain activities involved in structuring the milieu actually seem to be inspired by a wish to “control the milieu.” Restructuring, to better control – might that be the logic behind anti-poverty initiatives such as the building of skate-parcs (highly coveted by the younger crowd) far from down-town areas and well away from spaces where «skaters» might annoy others? Or the establishment of “a social gymnasium” for poor people in a poor neighbourhood While the creation of a separate recreational infrastructure for one particular community might conjure up the word ‘ghetto’ in the minds of some, for others it is a highly effective way of keeping “undesirables” at a distance from their own recreational facilities.

## 11.« MAYBE WE CAN FINANCE OUR FINE PROJECT UNDER THE **STRUGGLE AGAINST POVERTY** PROGRAMME... »

Schools to train circus performers, guided tours of the various districts, rallying people against the arrival of a *Wal-Mart*, the promotion of the fair trade concept, of a laundry-café... Some ten projects are included under this heading which would lead one to believe that the new territorial struggle against poverty is a real catchall.

Since local authorities do not have the mandate or the authority to redistribute wealth, no action can be taken at the “territorial level” against the fundamental problem of poverty which is the lack of income for poor people. Unable to act to correct poverty in its first, economic sense, territorial stakeholders do their best to respect their new mandate “to fight poverty”, albeit within the limits of their constitutional authority. We will come back to these points in the conclusion.

## 12. STRUCTURING THE TERRITORIAL STRUGGLE AGAINST POVERTY

This is the final thematic heading and it goes right to the heart of the territorial approach to the struggle against poverty. Before initiating any measures against poverty, a territory must be organized. Indeed, many of the projects under this final theme could have been combined with those already referenced under the headings “Bringing together the Milieu Stakeholders», “Studying the Milieu» as well as part of “Structuring the Territory” to form a super heading that would have been entitled: **“Find the tables, chairs and a power point machine, prepare the coffee: today the partners are mobilizing to fight poverty!»**

The ten or so results catalogued here highlight the role of the “regional stakeholders” in fighting poverty. These “partners” include community group professionals, community organizers from the local health agency, employment professionals, municipal functionaries, community development leaders, United Way analysts... When these professionals gather, it is in many ways a gathering of the local elite which wields tremendous influence in the choosing and funding of territorial anti-poverty initiatives.

Who ends up being the prime beneficiary of the territorial struggle against poverty? Since the “integrated territorial approach » was first announced in *Reconciling liberty and social justice (the first government action plan against poverty)*, a new ‘Made in Québec’ poverty industry has grown up. Comprising “territorial poverty professionals », this industry has given rise to a myriad of community organisations, employment groups, public service working groups, round tables, agencies and entities that thrive on the territorialized strategy to “fight poverty”. Studies, contracts, pilot projects and analyses fund these professionalized anti-poverty activists

all seeking to better understand the “object” in question. In the meantime, poor people remain poor, and just as poor as they were.<sup>7</sup>

### **C. IN CONCLUSION**

Without a doubt, the territorial, concerted approach to the «struggle against poverty» has been successful in «mobilizing» various milieus. In this respect, the Ulysse/St-Germain study proves convincing. The idea of a territorial struggle against poverty has caught on with groups, it keeps organisations busy, it has been the pretext for countless meetings and discussions around boardroom tables.

On the other hand, the territorial approach does not offer solutions to the related issues of low-income and the redistribution of wealth. Since territorial stakeholders are unable (or unwilling) to take measures to correct poverty in its economic sense (a lack of revenue), they can only act and carry out their new responsibilities within the limits of their authority and competency. So, they develop their territory and embellish it; they organize activities; they recycle and compost; they analyse transportation needs and try to control the quality of the environment... They call meetings, form committees, carry out studies, prepare plans and measure the results which often conclude that other studies are necessary.

To these lists, at least in the Québec context, there is one new item which needs to be added. Since the publication of its second action plan, the government is allocating substantial budgets to « territorial » authorities to fund « the struggle against poverty ». With these budgets comes a wide discretionary authority as to their use. Having given the mandate to the territorial stakeholders (which we have already identified as the local elite) to identify the needs of “the milieu”, there seem to be few limits to financing “what the milieu wants”. In other words : is funded what the local elites want funded. Meanwhile, poor people remain poor, welfare rates remain frozen, legal aid is non-existent, unemployment insurance is unavailable to more than half the workers who pay into the system...

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<sup>7</sup> Poor people are not just those who subsist on welfare. But it should be noted that in Québec, since the adoption of the Law to Combat Poverty (2002), welfare rates have not been increased at all, and indeed, from 2002-2009, benefits for those welfare recipients who were judged “employable” were not even indexed to the cost of living. As for low-income workers, the minimum wage is presently set at 10,25 \$, whereas to attain what the UN considers the beginning of a break from poverty, it would need to be at least 10,88\$ (Au Bas de l'échelle).



## **Could this have happened any other way?**

Is it possible to imagine a territorial struggle against poverty on a completely different basis? Could this struggle be used to advance human rights, rectify violations of the latter and to attack the economic causes of poverty?

Could a courageous territorial committee (because in Québec, all regions must now create “Solidarity Coalitions” to determine the allocation of the recently devolved “anti-poverty budgets) contribute the total amount of its provincial funding directly to poor people within its territory? Could it, for example, divide this sum directly among those on social assistance (who can, without any penalty, earn a monthly amount of \$200)? Could it be use this allocation to increase the minimum salary paid to workers in the territory ? Any of these acts would be aimed at reducing the poverty of poor people in a way in which the current initiative is not.

To further advance the right to housing, could these committees funnel this money to municipal authorities to fund inspectors to check the safety and cleanliness of housing? Or used to provide low-income households with rental allowances? To facilitate the right to work, could a territorial committee decide to fund allowances aimed at reducing the cost of urban transit? People with hearing problems, as well as certain immigrants, have a great need for interpreters : could a territory decide to use provincial money to pay for the interpreters necessary for the effective implementation of the right to health or the right to education To advance the right to free schooling, could the committee compensate those school boards that abolish the previously-mentioned school-related expenses imposed upon parents.

Not a single one of the projects inventoried by Ulysse/St-Germain enables citizens (whether they be poor or not) to find out more about their rights as workers. Why not, in the name of the « struggle against poverty», organize and fund workshops on the rights of non-unionized workers? Why do community groups, quick to claim their share of the monies that flow abundantly into the territories, not propose initiatives to challenge local employers to increase the low wages which are at least partly responsible for poverty on the local level, a challenge which could be issued in the name of a respect for fundamental human rights?

It is not ideas that are lacking. Before concluding that the problem is systemic, and that the territorial stakeholders cannot react in any other way, maybe we should raise questions about. As many of the organisations and individuals who promote the “territorialized” approach to fighting poverty are also social justice advocates, let us send the ball back to them and ask : Why so much enthusiasm to jump into « a struggle » that does not help the poorest of citizens to escape their poverty? Why abandon strategies involving resistance, protests and political struggle? Because, from a human rights perspective, the manner in which the current “territorial struggle” against poverty is being waged, it opens itself wide-open to resistance and protest.

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[quebec.qc.ca/client/uploads/44/42689072711429.pdf](http://www.crdc-centre-du-quebec.qc.ca/client/uploads/44/42689072711429.pdf)

Footnotes

1)A more detailed version of this article is available at:

[www.trovepo.org/documents/Lutteterritorialiseealapauvreteedespratiquesinspirantes.PDF](http://www.trovepo.org/documents/Lutteterritorialiseealapauvreteedespratiquesinspirantes.PDF)

2)With thanks to Stéphanie Morin (student, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa), Michel Gagnon (ROM-Mauricie) and Josée Harnois (ROVEP-Montérégie). Vincent Greason is active as a member of *la Table ronde des OVEP de l'Outaouais (TROVEPO)* and participates in a project launched by the Community-University Alliance on Human Rights. As a fellow with the Low Foundation of Ontario (2010/2011), he is also a visiting scholar with the Human Rights Research Education Centre at the University of Ottawa.

3)*Revue vie économique*, vol. 1, no. 4 (May 2010)

4) Ulysse, Pierre-Joseph and Lise St-Germain, *Pratiques et initiatives de lutte contre la pauvreté par le développement social intégré au Québec – rapport synthèse (Practices and initiatives in the struggle against poverty through integrated social development in Québec – a conspectus)*.

Available at <http://www.crds-centre-du-quebec.qc.ca/client/uploads/44/42689072711429.pdf> site consulted 24/04/11. The research project was announced in the *Revue développement social* (March 2007) and the conspectus was published in a special edition of the *Revue* (December 2007)

5) Government of Québec, *Rendez-vous de la solidarité*, Le Cahier de consultation régionale, 2009, p. 15 and Appendix 2. Available at :

[http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/admin\\_cahier\\_consultations\\_Rendez-vous\\_regions\\_2009.pdf](http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/admin_cahier_consultations_Rendez-vous_regions_2009.pdf) (site consulted the 23/04/11). The government's action plans available on the site of *le ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, Concilier la liberté et la justice sociale* (2006) and *La solidarité et l'inclusion sociale* (2010)

6) See *Ligue des droits et libertés, L'Exercice des droits, un projet de société? (Exercising one's rights, a societal project?)*, 2010, p. 49