



THE PICK AND SHOVEL MEN OR BAYE PELLE OF DAKAR

Dakar - SENEGAL

Dakar: population 2,000,000 - 1,000 CFAF = US\$ 1.60

SANITATION IN DAKAR

- A quarter of households are connected to the sewerage system run by the Senegal National Sanitation Office (ONAS).
- Half the population hire manual cleaners or private suction trucks. The remaining households organize family members to maintain sanitary facilities.

AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE IN PERI-URBAN AREAS

Most households in the peri-urban areas build their own latrines or septic pits and hire manual cleaners to shovel out the sludge.

These pick-and-shovel men

- provide this service to 30 to 50 percent of households (80,000 to 120,000 households),
- earn 20 percent of the total volume of business in the sanitation sector, and
- constitute 58 percent of those employed in the sector (800 to 1,200 manual cleaners).

THE NAME BAYE-PELLE: "OLD SHOVEL MAN"

The latrine cleaning trade was first practiced in Dakar by aging manual laborers seeking income between construction jobs, who would wander the streets with their shovel over their shoulders. This is the origin of the nickname baye pelle, or "old shovel man". Nowadays it is a trade of younger men, aged 30 to 40, who often work in teams of two.

A DEMAND-DRIVEN SERVICE

Manual cleaners can do several kinds of work:

- removal of all or part of the sludge from septic pits or latrines,
- burial of the sludge elsewhere on the lot or their removal by handcart or truck,
- pit and latrine repair.

Their charges vary depending on the amount of work and the nature of the terrain where they must dig – CFAF 3,000 to 15,000 per visit – and credit arrangements are possible.

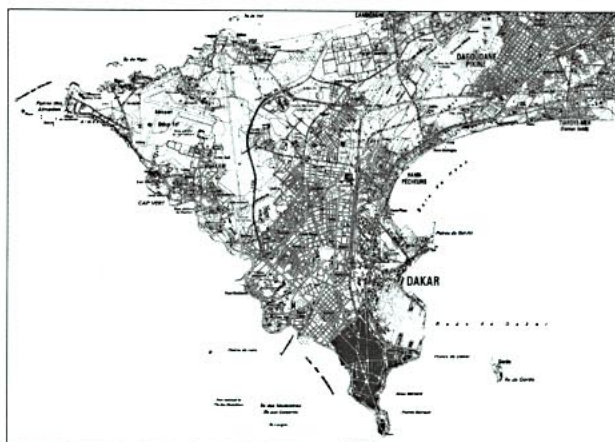
They generally do about 20 jobs a month, for monthly earnings of CFAF 40,000 to 60,000.

Well-known within the neighborhoods where they work, they also attract new clients with the street cries they use to signal their passage, and by referrals from regular customers. A third of the shovel men also act as agents for the suction truckers, putting them in touch with interested customers for a commission of about 10 percent.

NEXT STEPS

Looking beyond the current teamwork in pairs, the manual cleaners are considering forming an association in order to

- share the risk of accidents and work-related illnesses, and
- gain access to public sanitation works contracts put out by ONAS and the municipal authorities.



The city of Dakar is rapidly extending inland from the peninsula where it began, with benefit of urban planning in some areas and not in others, leaving the sewerage network far behind



For less than CFAF 9,000, a latrine cleaner can buy the equipment he needs to go into business for himself: bucket, rope, pick and shovel



Cost of maintaining an 8-m3 household latrine pit CFAF 15,000 a year



For pit cleaning, the work of the pick and shovel men complements that of the suction trucks, which are equipped with a simple pump