



EQUI  
POP.  
ORG

2016  
2017

# Annual Report

Équilibres & Populations works to empower women and improve their lives, thereby fostering equitable and sustainable development. Three complementary activities underpin our mission: sparking change, mobilizing, and empowering.

**Équilibres & Populations**  
[www.equipop.org](http://www.equipop.org)  
[info@equipop.org](mailto:info@equipop.org)

**Headquarters**  
22 rue du Sergent Bauchat  
75012 Paris - France  
Tel: +33 (0)1 74 01 71 24  
Fax: +33 (0)1 74 01 71 25

**West African Office**  
09 BP 1660 Ouagadougou 09  
Burkina Faso  
Tel/Fax: + 226 25 36 73 73

# Editorial

The year 2016 began with a terrorist attack in Ouagadougou in January and ended with the election of Donald Trump in the United States. Around the world, the rise of religious fundamentalism and reactionary right-wing conservatism augurs badly for women's rights. In fact, these rights have taken serious blows in recent months. Three days after his inauguration, President Trump reinstated and strengthened the so-called global gag rule, also known as the Mexico City policy. Under this measure, applied by Republican presidents since 1984, foreign recipients of U.S. family-planning funding cannot provide safe abortion services, information, or referrals, nor may they advocate for abortion law reform. President Trump expanded the Mexico City policy, widening the ban beyond organizations supporting family-planning programs to all organizations receiving American global health assistance. In more concrete terms, this means that organizations that both receive U.S. funds for anti-HIV/AIDS programs and manage clinics providing abortion (funded by non-US sources) will have to make an impossible choice: they can either refuse to condone this anti-choice ideology and continue providing family-planning and/or abortion services, thereby leaving AIDS patients without treatment, or they can choose to treat people living with AIDS and thereby deny women access to a fundamental health service. We foresee disastrous human-rights and health consequences.

Faced with these attacks on women's rights, we must not give up. Instead, we must mobilize our assets and bolster our alliances. And we are doing so, as are others who share our concerns: the Women's March in January 2017 - one of the largest demonstrations ever - drew more than 4.5 million participants worldwide. The Dutch government launched the "She Decides" initiative, an international fund that aims to mitigate the USD 600 million minimum annual deficit that will result from the American global gag rule. Furthermore, local projects and individual resistance continue to shape societies on a daily basis.

More than ever, Equipop has squarely aligned itself with this movement. Beyond saying "NO" to all rollbacks, we say "YES" to collaborative actions and social creativity - the grounds for equitable and sustainable development. Our organization will continue to advocate for urgently needed policies and vital women's health and rights funding in France, Europe, and internationally, including at the United Nations through its newly acquired consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). As always, we will work in partnership with many other civil society organizations, and with researchers, journalists, lawmakers, civil servants, and other stakeholders. In West Africa, we will continue to work closely with change agents, giving them a voice through campaigns such as "FP Generation" and strengthening their ability to lead projects that can make a difference. In Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, and Senegal, we will help organizations working on behalf of women and youth, and those specializing in sexual and reproductive rights and health. One thing is certain: our differences and our complementarity will enrich us, allowing us to make progress together and produce effective and lasting solutions.

**Aurélié Gal-Régniez**, *Chief Executive*  
**Alain Marié**, *Chairman*

## Alain Marié, Chairman of the Board of Directors Équilibres & Populations



*You have served as chairman of Équilibres & Populations for the past three years. During that time, what major changes have you observed and supported?*

First of all, my greatest satisfaction comes from seeing Equipop expand its operations significantly in West Africa, despite organizational changes and the passing of its founder, Marie-Claude Tesson-Millet. I am also pleased that Equipop has gained much more recognition from national and international institutions.

While much remains to be done, we have begun to evolve. New executives and board members have joined Equipop; this has increased our employees' ability to work with volunteers, creating, for instance, a large-donor task force and a trend-forecasting committee. We have solid plans to increase our capital funding, and are already seeing results from our actions. However, Equipop needs a higher profile in France; the emphasis on our work abroad has led to less visibility at home – something we now have to improve.

*What international challenges must Equipop address?*

The greatest challenge lies in defending women's rights. We must fight to realize new rights for women, here in France and everywhere else in the world. But we must also fight to prevent the rollback of existing rights; advances we had thought of as settled may prove not to be, which means that our fight must continue.

Equipop also faces a geographical challenge. Until now, we have focused on Francophone West Africa, where the needs are the highest. Without questioning this as a priority, Equipop must also address its capacity to operate in other countries and on other continents.

In addition, Equipop's evolution poses a third challenge. We have increased our numbers in staff and partnerships, but that means we need more funding, especially for our own capital base. Equipop must also work on breaking through its own glass ceiling and increase public awareness about its work.

*What strengths will help Equipop meet these challenges?*

Équilibres & Populations has one undeniable strength: its savoir-faire. Those working in the civil-society world, as well as officials from France and West African countries, all acknowledge our employees' excellence in this regard. Our second strength derives from our way of approaching women's rights; we use the prism of sexual and reproductive rights – particularly a woman's right to control her own body – while recognizing that women's rights remain indivisible and start with access to education. As our third and final strength, Equipop can rely on highly-motivated volunteers – in growing numbers we hope!

# 01

## Sparking change

Partnering with local stakeholders and working closely with targeted populations, Équilibres & Populations sparks social change dynamics.

**page 8**

# 02

## Mobilizing

Équilibres & Populations mobilizes government officials and other decision-makers to create institutions, policies, and laws that build human capital and empower women and girls.

**page 18**

# 03

## Empowering

Équilibres & Populations helps its development partners by strengthening their capacities.

**page 28**

# 04

## Learn more about us

In 1993, just prior to the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, a team of doctors and journalists created Équilibres & Populations to empower women and improve their lives, thereby fostering equitable and sustainable development.

**page 38**



# 2016-2017 Highlights

**Equipop**, the Ouagadougou Partnership, and West African health organizations mobilize West African lawmakers and other decision-makers to support universal access to family-planning services.

Excision: **Equipop** begins training change agents in France on strategies for ending female genital mutilation.

**page 14**

After several years of **Equipop** advocacy work, France finally publishes a formal SRHR strategy.

**page 24**



Developing civil-society organizational capacities: **Equipop** expands its consulting services and assistance.

**page 30**

Decentralized cooperation: **Equipop** and the mayor of Paris help Francophone West African mayors strengthen municipal family-planning and sexual- and reproductive-health services.

**Equipop** launches an awareness-raising campaign: “FP Generation: Let’s Choose the Future Together”.

page 20

Following their work in Benin, Niger, and Togo, **Equipop** responds to a call from UNFPA Mali to address adolescents’ health.

page 34



Solthis and **Equipop** enter into a partnership to improve young people’s health in Mali and Niger.

page 10

**Equipop** expands to Côte d’Ivoire with six new women’s rights and health-oriented partnerships.

International advocacy: **Equipop** achieves consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC).



01

## Sparking change

Partnering with local stakeholders and working closely with targeted populations, Équilibres & Populations sparks social change dynamics.







## **The Solthis and Équilibres & Populations partnership benefits young people's health in Niger and Mali**

The JADES Project (Jeunes et Adolescent·e·s En Santé [Healthy Youth and Adolescents]) aims to reduce new HIV infections, unintended pregnancies, and youth morbidity and mortality in Niger and Mali. The three-year project launched at the beginning of 2016, via a partnership between Equipop and Solthis (Solidarité Thérapeutique et Initiatives pour la Santé [Therapeutic Solidarity and Initiatives for Health]), an international civil society organization.



In Mali and Niger, adolescents between 10- and 19-years old make up one-fifth of the population. While these countries have relatively low HIV rates, young people, especially young women, remain at-risk populations: according to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), young women account for 75% of new HIV/AIDS infections among 15-24 year olds. Too often, youth access to HIV/AIDS prevention and care is stymied by gender inequality, insufficient or inappropriate information, and the sensitive, taboo, and coercive character of sexual practices and discourse. These factors also hinder the adoption of less risky behaviors. Consequently, young people have a higher rate of exposure to infections from HIV and other sexually-transmitted diseases; they also run high risks of early and/or unintended pregnancy.

### **A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO YOUTH HEALTH**

The JADES Project, coordinated by Solthis, involves Equipop and a consortium of three African nonprofit HIV/AIDS service organizations: Lafia Matassa operates in Niamey and Maradi (Niger); Walé will operate in Ségou (Mali); and ASDAP (Association de Soutien au Développement des Activités de Population [Population Activities Support and Development Association]) will take action in Bamako (Mali). The project combines the expertise of Solthis in public health and HIV/AIDS with that of Equipop in social-change communication and youth leadership. Those assets, combined with local CSO knowledge and ability to mobilize target communities that our African partners bring to the table, will allow us to simultaneously work on supply and demand, on information and services. By creating a favorable environment, we can remove obstacles to youth access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Another goal of the partnership is to strengthen the obvious link between fighting HIV/AIDS and promoting sexual and reproductive health, particularly the prevention of unintended pregnancies.

### **OUR CORE STRATEGY CENTERS ON THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH AND STAKEHOLDERS**

In each participant country, in addition to our local partners, officials from relevant national ministries (such as health, education, and/or population), took part in the diagnostic and planning phases of the project. Equipop and its CSO partners set up JADES centers within the Nigerien and Malian Offices of Health and Reproduction to encourage synergies and in-country ownership. Next, in every project location, we mobilized, trained, and assisted leaders and stakeholders, including social and healthcare workers in youth centers and clinics, as well as teachers, administrators, and parent groups in schools. Finally, we fully involved young people, the program beneficiaries. In all, we identified and trained about one hundred youths who could act as relays to their peers, thus strengthening local youth capacity to lead health and rights efforts.

### **A CLEAR, AMBITIOUS GOAL: CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR OPEN, UNASHAMED DISCUSSION OF CHANGE**

Following the diagnostic and planning phase with all stakeholders, we initiated in 2016 work with each class of participant. Training courses helped social and healthcare workers to build and refine their skills in approaching young people. Other courses enhanced teacher knowledge of SRHR and helped them interrogate their own approaches to teaching reproductive health. Selected young people underwent an initial training course to learn how to intervene with their peers at school, as well as at “grins” or “fadas” – informal neighborhood meeting places in Mali and Niger respectively, where various age groups gather to chat and share news among themselves.

Through these venues, trained young people can share correct information about prevention and can encourage others to use existing youth-oriented services. In the coming months, these young people, health-care workers, adults from schools, and other leaders will work together to create the conditions for more open, unashamed discussions of sexual health in their neighborhoods and communities.

### **History of the Equipop and Solthis partnership**

After meeting several times at French civil society advocacy and advisory meetings over the years, Solthis and Équilibres & Populations chose to partner on SRHR in West Africa, in response to a 2015 call for proposals for France's "5% Initiative" — a project to adapt healthcare programs to the specific needs, expectations, and constraints of girls and youth.

#### **• How does Equipop take action?**

Equipop provides strategic advice; it also designs and conducts comprehensive gender, social-change, and leadership training courses for girls and youth, aimed at promoting their rights and access to sexual and reproductive health services.

#### **• Who are the beneficiaries?**

The JADES Project involved 100 young people, six schools, six health clinics, eight youth centers, and workers from Solthis and the Malian and Nigerien HIV/AIDs service organizations.

#### **• What is the rationale?**

It is crucial to mainstream HIV/AIDS and SRHR services, while also removing social and cultural obstacles to sexual/reproductive health and rights. By strengthening youth and adult leadership capacities, we can address the barriers hindering youth access to rights and services, particularly among girls.



## INTERVIEW

# Stanislas Dakono engages young people in development projects

Stanislas Dakono oversees JADES Project activities for ASDAP (Association de Soutien au Développement des Activités de Population [Association to Support the Development of Population Activities]), a Malian nonprofit that has partnered with Solthis and Equipop in the JADES Project.



*Can you tell us about yourself and your work with ASDAP?*

When I was a university student, ASDAP recruited me to raise awareness about safe sex practices. The organization then hired me to lead groups, raising awareness in schools and “grins” (neighborhood youth hang-outs). I talked with young people and gave them information about their sexuality, discussing topics such as how to use condoms to avoid HIV infections, unintended pregnancies, and sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs). I also led workshops on these topics for women and minors in prison.

In addition to my education as a psychologist, ASDAP trained me in HIV/AIDS counseling and screening, so that I could help the doctor working at a youth counseling and care center. It provides counseling about rape, unintended pregnancy, HIV, and STDs to young girls and boys who need someone to listen to them without judgment or lecturing.

*What role does ASDAP play in the JADES Project?*

ASDAP acts as the implementing nongovernmental organization. We lead activities with local partners – community listening posts, youth associations, and household helpers. We organize HIV screening sessions, discussion groups, mass awareness-raising messages, and radio shows. We also work with our teacher-peers; the JADES Project trains them to spread awareness across communities. We target out-of-school youth and drop-outs in Bamako.

*Why involve young people in something like the JADES Project?*

It would be hard to get results without involving youth in activities that affect them. We cannot understand youth behavior, or make decisions for them, without their involvement. In the JADES Project, young people make the decisions about the kinds of activities to pursue and the best way to do them.

How is the JADES Project innovative?

First of all, the project gives young people ample space to plan and execute activities, at every level. Second, the project views gender as a central issue. When conducting activities, we pay close attention to gender issues and parity between boys and girls – something that not all projects do yet.

*What points should be kept in mind as the project continues?*

One of the strong points of the JADES Project is youth involvement at all levels of activities. However, we might not have defined our target well enough to meet screening goals; we should focus more on “at-risk” populations. For example, we have already conducted two HIV screening sessions without finding any HIV-positive cases. On the other hand, we’ve seen many cases of unintended pregnancy, and should certainly continue raising awareness about it. Generally speaking, young people need this type of project, one designed with and for them where they participate in all the activities.



## Working to end female genital mutilation in Africa and Europe

Last year, Equipop intensified and diversified its efforts to combat the practice of female genital mutilation. Working simultaneously in Mali and in European countries, Equipop created bridges between the two continents to foster a movement against female excision.

For many years, Equipop has worked toward ending female genital mutilation (FGM) – a core concern, since its eradication would improve the health of women and girls and promote their rights. In 2016-2017, Equipop enlarged the scope of its efforts, comprehensively tackling this complex scourge by creating bridges between its West African and European actions.

## **THE TREND TOWARD ENDING FGM ACCELERATES IN MALI**

In 2016, Equipop conducted an evaluation of its principal anti-FGM project, reviewing several recent years of interventions in Kayes Region (Mali). The evaluation showed the soundness of Equipop's strategy; it also found a need to continue comprehensive interventions in Mali and other West African countries. The movement toward change has consolidated, and the entire Kayes Region health district is gradually abandoning FGM, even beyond the villages where Equipop operates. More specifically, in 2016, 41 more villages declared that they would end FGM and child marriage; this brings the total number of villages banning the practices to 148 out of the 152 involved in the anti-FGM project.

Among Equipop actions launched in 2016, we will highlight three that we designed to create synergies. In the first, Equipop organized 18 inter-village meetings where communities committed to ending FGM encountered reticent peers and villages outside the project. The meetings allowed the anti-FGM communities to take increased ownership of the movement toward change, while allowing the others to shift toward ending the practice more quickly than they would without the exposure to anti-excision attitudes.

In our second example, Equipop collaborated with eight Malian community radio stations in the area covered by the project (and beyond); each broadcast information about FGM specifically, and about sexual and reproductive health and rights more generally.

Our third example features 27 women who received Equipop-funded medical treatment for FGM injuries; they, in turn, have become spokeswomen for the organization's anti-FGM project. They talk about the relationship between FGM and their own health problems and loss of rights. The medical treatment has allowed them to emerge from their isolation; some have even returned to work outside the home.

## **COMMITTED CHANGE AGENTS WORK IN FRANCE AND EUROPE**

Last year, Equipop also participated in a project coordinated by Terre des Femmes, a nonprofit women's rights organization. The project, which took place in France, Germany, Holland and Portugal, aimed to help end excision by building oppositional capacity within FGM-practicing diasporas. In France, Equipop trained six change agents over seven sessions during 2016: four women and two men originally from Mali, Mauritania, Guinea, and Senegal.

Since January 2017, each of the six have produced awareness-raising events in their communities during informal discussions, tontines, and movie screenings followed by debates. Some of these change agents became ambassadors for the "End FGM" network (Equipop is a European member) and received advocacy and media training. Since expatriate and migrant support for anti-FGM efforts can significantly affect attitudes and practices in country-of-origin villages, Equipop invited the Malian End FGM ambassadors to participate in the ceremony celebrating the end of female circumcision in the Kayes Region health district.

CREATING BRIDGES BETWEEN EUROPE AND AFRICA

Equipop has partnered with two other civil society organizations, AIDOS (Associazione Italiana Donne per lo Sviluppo) and GAMS Belgium (Group for the Abolition of Female Genital Mutilations), for a project jointly financed by UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The project will create bridges between Europe and Africa for the anti-FGM movement. Contributing experience gained through its other projects, Equipop has produced an online documentary about ending FGM in Mali. In 2017, Equipop will be in charge of airing programs about FGM on African-community radio stations in France.

In the future, Equipop intends to continue supporting the movement to end FGM in Mali and to begin such efforts in other African countries. It will also focus more of its FGM-related activities on young people and increase its anti-FGM efforts in France and Europe, particularly through the French network “Excision, parlons-en!” and the European chapter of “End FGM.”

• How does Equipop take action?

Equipop designs operational strategies, coordinates and oversees projects in tandem with local teams, provides managerial assistance for operations and budgets, finds project funding (over €600,000 since 2014), conducts awareness-raising campaigns about its projects, and facilitates institutional ties among stakeholders.

• Who are the beneficiaries?

152 village communities in Kayes Region, Mali

• What is the rationale?

Protecting girls and women from excision and child marriage enforces their fundamental rights and creates lasting improvements in health – both their own and that of their future children.

Protecting the next generation: key numbers

250 TOTAL  
VILLAGES  
in Kayes Region, Mali

152 VILLAGES  
REACHED  
by the Equipop anti-FGM project

148 VILLAGES  
(93% OF THE PROJECT GROUP)  
HAVE ENDED FGM  
SINCE THE PROJECT BEGAN



## INTERVIEW

# Soumalia Sissoko, change agent for CHANGE Plus

Soumalia Sissoko, educated as a legal expert, works as a job-placement counselor for professionals. An anti-FGM activist for 17 years, he has spent 29 months working with Equipop.



*You have worked with Equipop for the past few years, speaking out against excision. Can you tell us what motivated you to become a CHANGE Plus change agent?*

My initial motivation came when Kadiatou Diabira [a Malian activist in Paris] talked to me about CHANGE Plus. She knew that I was already campaigning to end excision, and any project she was promoting had to be relevant. Secondly, I decided to commit myself because, to me, female genital mutilation is a matter of life or death. I could not stand by watching girls and women suffer. Women can die during childbirth because of practices based on old beliefs.

Because of my legal studies, I was already against excision; I often discussed the subject with my friends and relatives, trying to convince them that it was bad for girls' health. By joining CHANGE Plus, I have obtained the tools that I needed to raise awareness among my family, friends, and acquaintances in Europe who still have this mentality.

*Can you explain why you intervene in communities living in and around Paris?*

I belong to a community-centered mutual-aid association: we come from the same village and meet once a month at the [Projets-19 local-development] incubator on the rue Mathis in Paris, getting together, talking about things, and sharing ideas. I plan to use one of the meetings to talk about excision. I am also going to talk to my wife's tontine group. In both cases, I'll try to have other change agents join me, so that we can work together. We try to go beyond talking only to our own community; we want to open up and reach other FGM-practicing communities.

*What messages do you disseminate during your awareness-raising activities?*

In general, we begin by trying to understand our audience - whether they know about excision and its consequences. We use a video produced by Equipop; it shows examples of women who have undergone circumcision in Africa, and what they go through afterwards. After showing the video, we lead a group discussion. We prompt exchanges between people and show them the consequences, making them understand. We always try to adapt our message to our audience so that we don't shock them, taking it step-by-step.

*As a change agent, what do you think men can do to help end FGM?*

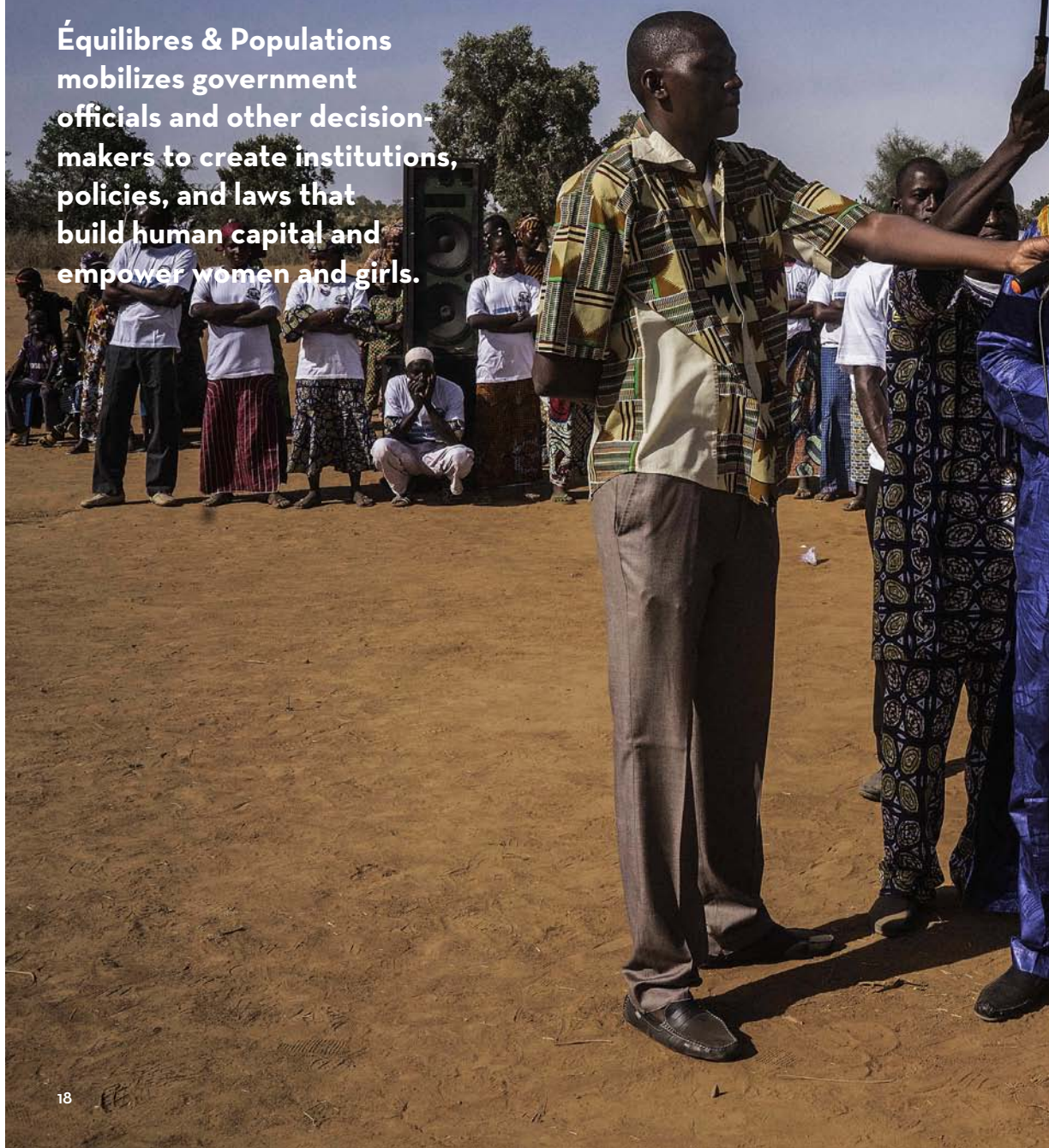
Men have a very important role to play, because one of the justifications women use for excision is that they do it for the men. As males and heads of our households, what we say is respected. We should become more involved, showing that this practice no longer matters to us and prompting women to realize that they must not do it for us.

However, I think that it's important that both women and men act as change agents: some women feel more at ease with other women, just as some men prefer male change agents. We achieve our goal when people can talk freely about the issue, without shame and without reserve.

# O2

## Mobilizing

Équilibres & Populations mobilizes government officials and other decision-makers to create institutions, policies, and laws that build human capital and empower women and girls.









## **The “FP Generation” campaign promotes family planning for young West Africans**

Since its inception, political mobilization has been at the heart of Equipop’s work. We remain convinced that to achieve lasting policy reform, citizens must become advocates for change and spread the word themselves.



This conviction leads us to invest strongly in awareness-raising and information campaigns in the countries where we operate. The awareness-raising campaign, “FP Generation: Let’s Choose the Future Together!” best illustrates this strategy; it is coproduced by Equipop and Alliance Droits et Santé, a civil society network active in Burkina Faso, Benin, Mali, Niger, and Senegal.

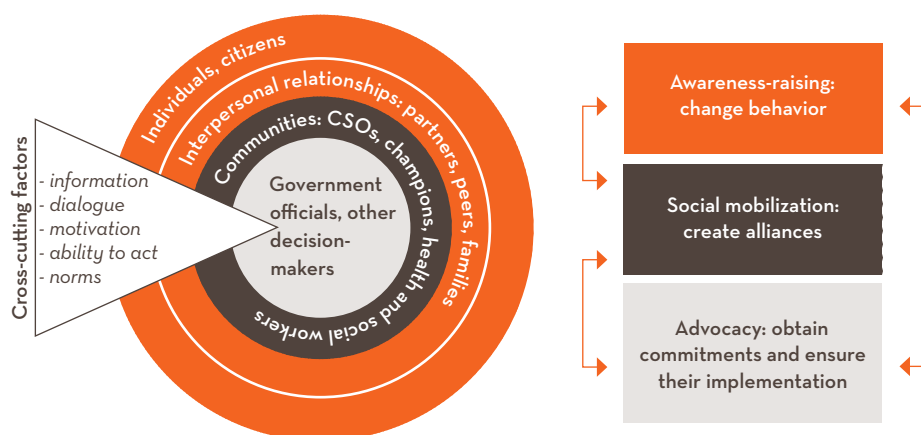
## AN INNOVATIVE AND FAR-REACHING CAMPAIGN FOR FAMILY PLANNING

With the “FP Generation” campaign, Equipop and the Alliance strengthen the linkage between policy and social mobilization. The campaign promotes sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Francophone West Africa, focusing particularly on youth access to family-planning (FP) services. The campaign deploys advocacy messaging through multiple communication channels, creating a more positive image and acceptance for family planning. It also makes government officials aware of the issues entailed and the Alliance’s work. The initial phase of the campaign features two successive messages: the first one highlights young people and the importance of providing more resources to meet their specific family-planning needs. The second one will call for accountability from government officials: promises made must be kept at all levels!

### The “FP Generation” campaign goals:

- ▶ Amplifying the voices of those who support family planning while showcasing good practices. We have identified one hundred family-planning “champions” (public advocates) and recorded their testimonials for broadcast through social media, a website, and printed publications. Simultaneously, we have created a photographic exhibition about good family-planning practices; it will show both in France and in Francophone West African countries.
- ▶ Creating space for discussions about reproductive health and family planning through radio shows in each country.
- ▶ Creating and facilitating youth communities through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.
- ▶ Taking advocacy messages to highly-placed government officials, using petitions, marches and other forms of social mobilization – calling, for example, for inclusion of family planning as a line-item in municipal budgets, or for the enactment of promised sex-education initiatives.

### Socio-ecological Model of Change



## The FP Generation Five-Point Manifesto

*I join my voice to those of FP Generation and Alliance Droits et Santé members, asking government officials to support youth family planning actively and concretely, through the following means:*

- 1 -** Taking into account the specific needs of young people in family-planning policies and programs.
- 2 -** Improving youth family-planning services and ensuring they remain free of cost to users.
- 3 -** Providing comprehensive sex education for young people.
- 4 -** Ending child marriage.
- 5 -** Ensuring that youth systematically participate in designing policies and programs that affect them.

## THE FIRST RESULTS ARE IN

Since it began, the “FP Generation” campaign has successfully spread its message, mobilizing the entire region:



**9 signatory countries:** Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo



**120 family-planning champions**



**56 interviews with champions**



**1 Internet site**



**More than 18,500 Facebook fans**



**504 petition signatures**



**460 Twitter followers**



**25 radio shows in five countries, for 104 total hours of programming**

The first campaign message (advocating youth and adolescent family planning) demonstrated the challenges of large-scale mobilization in a still-developing environment. Such mobilization, we believe, will succeed best when organized through solid local civil society and media partnerships. Equipop and Alliance Droit et Santé member organizations will use online media to deploy the second campaign message, focused on accountability, building on the first and further mobilizing society for policy change. Our goal: to demand that government officials, mayors, and other authorities actually deliver on the family-planning and SRHR-related promises they have already made.

### • How does Equipop take action?

Equipop supports Alliance Droits et Santé members in family-planning advocacy strategy design and implementation; it also coordinates the awareness-raising and citizen-action campaign “FP Generation: Let’s Choose the Future Together.”

### • Who are the beneficiaries?

Alliance Droits et Santé member organizations, government officials, and communities.

### • What is the rationale?

Effective and lasting change in SRHR policies requires citizen advocacy for family planning.

## TESTIMONIAL

# Safia Aminami, champion committed to the “FP Generation” campaign

Safis Aminami,  
a performing artist and  
singer, represents women  
in Niger. She joined  
Equipop in 2016 to work  
on behalf of the “FP  
Generation” campaign.



I was one of seven children in my family. When my mother told us the seventh was on the way, we – all her children – decided to sulk and cold-shoulder our parents: we did not want another sibling – there were enough of us already! As I was growing up, I swore I would never have so many children. When I began singing, I knew that I would address the issue.

I went to university in Morocco. When I returned to Niger, I saw how freedom for women differed in the two countries. Here, if you go outside wearing trousers, you will be called insulting names. Or if you are peacefully driving your car, a taxi may take over the middle of the road so that you cannot pass it.... because to do so would insult the driver’s manhood. I won’t even mention genital mutilation, forced and child marriage, forced sex, unwanted pregnancy, and so forth.

Women receive no consideration. Nearly everyone prefers that women stay at home rather than going to school, because educated women create too many “problems.” Therefore, a woman’s entire life remains controlled by others. She must put up with men looking at and judging her; she must also endure the small-mindedness of women, the first to gossip about each other. So for mentalities to change, you have to tell it like it is: I sing about it.

I began my career with a group called Kaidan Gaskia 2. Our songs talked about everything that undermines our society and political world – bad government, gender problems, HIV, et cetera. We joined other musician-singers, the “United Artists for African Rap,” to create a hip-hop musical. Its songs told the stories of those known as “the Poto-Poto children.” We each played the role of a Poto-

Poto child – a forcibly-married girl, a woman impregnated at a very young age, and other similar parts.

When I began my solo career, the songs on my first album spoke about women and what they go through in their lives. That led to my meeting and working with NGOs on such subjects, often with other artists. That is how I came to record a song with four other Nigeriens and a Senegalese about spacing births: the chorus ran, “The tears and suffering are over, we will space our pregnancies for our health.” Contraception is not a duty; it’s a right. Every woman should have contraceptive access if she wants it, for her own well-being and that of her family.

In spite of the law, this right is not universally recognized. Even today, when a young woman asks for the Pill, a female pharmacist, shocked by the request, will often refuse to sell it. Why be judgmental? Even if we don’t always agree, we have to adapt to ever-changing youth culture. Yes, sexual activity starts earlier than before, even out in rural areas. Why not accept reality? Both sides need to act responsibly. Elders can try to convince young people about the risks they take, but should we older people actually prevent youths from protecting themselves? Young people have to understand that it’s not a game and that their choices will have repercussions on their future. We have to move beyond taboos and ignorance!

*Extract from an interview available in its entirety  
(in French) on [generationpf.equipop.org](http://generationpf.equipop.org).*



## Enhancing France's defense of SRHR throughout the world

In 2016-2017, Equipop worked to push sexual and reproduction health and rights (SRHR) to the forefront of French foreign-aid policy. We note two main results: an official, published strategy that represents a major institutional step forward, and strengthened French diplomatic pressure in defense of SRHR, in an international context of increasing hostility towards women.



Equipop advocates towards French foreign-aid authorities as a way of bolstering its work in West Africa. The year 2015 proved a pivotal one, with the United Nations' adoption of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), some of which include aspects of SRHR. French development aid will operate within the SDG framework until the year 2030. Equipop therefore focused last year's efforts on three fronts: (1) advocating for SRHR as a priority in French aid policy, (2) helping to create a pro-SRHR diplomatic offensive, and (3) facilitating French and West African government collaboration on SRHR issues.

## A NEW SRHR STRATEGY PAPER

On 4 October 2016, André Vallini, the French secretary of state in charge of development, presented a strategy entitled, *France's Foreign Actions for Population and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Challenges 2016-2020*. In a public gesture of commitment to SRHR, Laurence Rossignol, the French minister for women's rights, also participated in the presentation.

The strategy paper publication represented the culmination of a long process. Equipop had participated in official consultations more than a year prior, but the work we had undertaken even earlier proved crucial. We contributed significantly to the SRHR policy eventually adopted by the French government, in particular highlighting concerns that had remained secondary under the prior focus on maternal and infant health. The new approach represented a fundamental change, because SRHR – a necessarily societal approach – now puts the individual as the locus of intervention. Only an all-encompassing approach can consistently address challenges as diverse as unintended pregnancy, child marriage, female genital mutilation, and mother and infant mortality.

The SRHR document has thus set the basis for French strategy over the next four years, with implementation beginning at once. Under former President François Hollande, the French government had announced two initial funding measures, renewing a €10 million

contribution to the French Muskoka Fund and committing €1 million to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). However, these resources remain very insufficient relative to the ambitions outlined in the strategy paper. The new Macron administration should make the resources commensurate with the ambitions; Equipop and its partners will continue to monitor the government's promises and commitments.

## FRANCE DEFENDS SRHR AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Equipop's second major effort targeted French diplomatic stances. As it does every year, in 2016 Equipop helped prepare two major United Nations meetings, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Population and Development. In New York in March and April, Equipop ensured direct collaboration between civil society experts and French government officials, always focusing on the same goal: helping France promote SRHR more effectively during UN negotiations.

Such work has become even more crucial than in past years: since the arrival of the Trump Administration, the United States has turned into an ally of conservative countries, upsetting the balance of power within the United Nations. In addition, the United States withdrew its annual \$70 million contribution to the United Nations Population Fund and withdrew funding for international civil society organizations under an extended "Global Gag Rule," leaving a \$600 million annual deficit in funding for women's health and rights. In response, on March 8 2017, the French president delivered the so-called "Paris Oath" (*serment de Paris*). Then-President Hollande reaffirmed France's vocation to defend women's rights throughout the world, prioritizing a "universal right to sexual and reproductive health." At the same time, many countries committed funding to the "She Decides" initiative, launched in Brussels in March 2017.

## STRENGTHENING FRANCE-WEST AFRICA PARTNERSHIPS

Equipop has worked to facilitate collaboration between French public authorities and their counterparts and civil society partners in Francophone West Africa. In June 2016, a multi-country family-planning delegation arrived in Paris for a week of advocacy meetings and a conference at the French Academy of Sciences on 8 June. After several meetings with Equipop, the French secretary of state in charge of development and the minister for women's rights made an official visit to Niger to discuss SRHR; during the trip they met with an Equipop partner organization, Lafia Matassa. During the 2017 UN Commission on Population and Development, Equipop coproduced an event aimed at deepening this collaboration, in honor of Célestin Compaoré, a senior program officer for SOS/Jeunesse et Défis, a member-organization of Alliance Droits et Santé (see interview on facing page).

### • How does Equipop take action?

Equipop contributes expertise to United Nations meetings, informs French lawmakers and other decision-makers, helps construct government SRHR policies and programs, and monitors political and financial commitments.

### • Who are the beneficiaries?

Officials and authorities in France, Europe, and the rest of the world, and ultimately for all the girls and women who benefit from national and international development programs.

### • What is the rationale?

Guiding SRHR policies and ensuring funding allows women to make their own life choices, one of the keys to societal development.



*The multi-country family planning delegation in Paris, June 2016.*

## INTERVIEW

# Célestin Compaoré, Alliance Droits et Santé UN attendee

Célestin Compaoré, a senior program coordinator, works for SOS/Jeunesse et Défis, a Burkinabe member-organization of Alliance Droits et Santé. Equipop arranged for him to attend a United Nations commission – his first – this year.



*This year you attended the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Commission on Population and Development. Can you tell us about the role that West African countries play in negotiations?*

African nations take part in UN negotiations as the “Africa Group.” This group, like the European Union or the “Arab Group,” represents many countries and therefore has a strong influence on negotiations. Unfortunately, West African countries often remain underrepresented in the Africa Group’s preparatory meetings and negotiations. It also seems that African countries sometimes promote positions at the UN that may differ from those held by their governments in capital cities – as with SRHR, for example. This may have something to do with the diplomats living far from their home countries [and thus being less in touch with needs on the ground], especially when it comes to promoting SRHR and strengthening youth access to reproductive health services.

*What can West African civil society do within the UN commissions?*

West African civil society could play an important role within UN negotiating bodies, such as the Commission on Population and Development (CPD). Civil society organizations could assist national delegations and explain the issues to them. This year, we needed to discuss national SRHR realities – the needs and policies – and the real problems our populations face, to get UN missions and their government counterparts on the same page, with a common understanding of the situation.

Civil society could also help with decision-making, by participating in Africa Group discussions and negotiations prior to commission meetings. By explaining what certain concepts entail, for example, civil society could help African negotiators understand the importance of SRHR issues and counter erroneous beliefs.

*What did you learn from your participation in the CPD?*

I learned how diplomacy and international negotiations work. I met diplomats from my country and made valuable contacts for the future. I also had the chance to meet peers from other NGOs that work on SRHR all over the world.

*How will your participation in the CPD affect your work when you return to Burkina Faso?*

In addition to improving my grasp of the articulation between population issues and sustainable development, I now have a genuine understanding of civil society’s role in promoting SRHR. I will try to involve new civil-society organizations in UN processes by writing and presenting a summary of the CPD session; I’ll also set up a way to monitor national commitments made at the CPD.

03

## Empowering

Équilibres & Populations helps its development partners by strengthening their capacities.





que par  
bonalef





## **Equipop enriches and enlarges capacity-building assistance for CSOs**

Ever since Equipop began working in West Africa more than 15 years ago, it has pursued a single strategy: working with local civil-society organizations as they promote sexual and reproductive health – whether on innovative prevention actions, or in mobilizing social and policy changes. Several years of collaboration have led us to conclude that we must do more than simply provide operational support: just as crucially, we must help develop CSO capacity. Equipop has always kept this in mind when monitoring and assisting its partner CSOs.

Equipop remains certain that West African civil society can play a vital role in creating a positive environment for SRHR and ensuring universal access to quality services. Over the past five years, Equipop has offered innovative forms of capacity-development assistance to about twenty partner CSOs through an initiative called “Mobilizing for SRHR: an Alliance for African Women and Girls” – a project cofinanced by AFD, the French development agency, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. While providing capacity-building and consulting services, Equipop has also carried out social and political mobilization activities. Equipop structures its capacity-building assistance around three major domains: organizational development, resource mobilization, and administrative and financial management.

### **HIGH-QUALITY ASSISTANCE DRAWS ON A MULTI-PARTICIPANT ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT**

When building capacity for organizational development, Equipop favors continuous quality-improvement strategies that bolster outcomes and overall performance. To achieve the desired result, Equipop adapted the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) excellence model. This model allows nonprofits to conduct an organizational self-assessment covering five practice and four outcome areas; it also identifies the three highest priority areas for improvement projects. The iterative approach creates progress over time; once the organization achieves a desired outcome, it can then launch a new improvement project.

### **SPECIAL HELP FOR RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Equipop offers a specific type of resource-mobilization assistance to help West African CSOs diversify funding sources and access international funds. Techniques include watching for opportunities, preselecting calls for proposals according to organizational fit, tailoring training sessions, providing advice

during the proposal drafting phase, and sharing “tricks of the trade” to quickly read project specifications and write convincing responses.

Progress in resource mobilization requires that administrative and financial management tools simultaneously improve and evolve, to keep pace with increased activity and funding; they must also meet the standards and specific requirements of technical and financial partners. In an environment that draws extensively on informal practices, this type of formalized assistance can make a critical difference. When needed, Equipop can also support the information and communication technologies that underpin resource mobilization and management functions. In this way, its partners can take on the latest tools and software to share information and communicate internally, externally, and with technical and financial partners.

### **CAPACITY-BUILDING SERVICES EXTENDED TO MORE PARTNERS**

Having developed capacity-building assistance for CSOs in the Alliance Droits et Santé network, Equipop intends to offer its services to other networks, platforms, consortia, and programs led by CSOs or international donors and institutions. In 2016, Amplify Change, a SRHR-dedicated fund, asked Equipop to design and host beginner-level classes on organizational development for West African funding recipients. The Spanish chapter of Doctors of the World also called on Equipop to design a training session for its implementing partners, aimed at strengthening their technical abilities (see Box).

The Equipop approach rests on a team of assistance officers specializing in specific areas. Equipop tailors its training sessions to the context, needs, and means of each partner, while following industry standards in technique and pedagogy. Assistance officers use a variety of complementary tools and media onsite or remotely: participative individual or group classes, webinars, factsheets, and on-demand access and support for targeted tools and resources.



### Made-to-measure assistance for two partners of Doctors of the World Spain

In 2016, Equipop provided training to ACD/Naangue and Khoolesmen, two implementing CSOs for a project to combat malnutrition in Burkina Faso. The capacity-development program took place over three phases. The first phase featured a six-day training course for personnel from both organizations. Participants designed an organizational self-assessment and learned practical tricks of the trade for finding funding and identifying administrative and financial weaknesses. The CSO personnel also learned how to create administrative and funding action plans. After this initial session, an Equipop team of assistance officers – one trainer per area of expertise – spent the next six months providing remote assistance and answering specific questions for each CSO. After that period, the third and final phase featured a four-day onsite training session. Participating personnel learned to evaluate work progress, deepen their knowledge in some areas, and think of new steps that could start a cycle of continuous quality improvement.

*“The training was practical because it targeted what we really needed. We felt that we were truly solving our problems. Now we have everything we need to get on the ‘improvement train’.”*

**Abdoulaye Soura**

ACD/Naangue president

#### • How does Equipop take action?

Equipop builds capacities for comprehensive organizational development, resource mobilization, and administrative and financial management among developing Francophone West African civil society organizations.

#### • Who are the beneficiaries?

West African civil society organizations working to improve the lives of girls and women in the region.

#### • What is the rationale?

More highly-skilled civil society organizations have the best chance of conducting long-term actions that will improve the health and rights of West African girls – particularly in contraceptive access.

## INTERVIEW

# Nourou Adjibade, founding member of Alliance Droits et Santé

Nourou Adjibade is the director of CeRADIS, a partner of Équilibres & Populations for nearly 20 years.



### *How did you meet Equipop?*

Équilibres & Populations and CeRADIS (Centre de Réflexions et d'Actions pour le Développement Intégré et la Solidarité [Thinking and Actions for Integrated and Inclusive Development Center]) met after an international conference in 1999. At the time, CeRADIS was already working on population issues, and Equipop included several of our articles in its publications. Our NGO quickly became integrated into an Internet project promoting grassroots actions in Mali and Senegal. After this project, we gained Equipop's trust; over the nearly 20 years since, our partnership has constantly evolved and strengthened.

### *What has the partnership with Equipop done for your organization?*

Without Equipop, we would have never reached this level of professionalism. We are a living example of what Equipop can hope to achieve for African civil society organizations. We benefitted from all of the technical assistance that Équilibres & Populations could offer for advocacy actions, but also for reaching international donors, accessing training sessions, and other forms of organizational help. Equipop also instilled a networking and partnership reflex in us, teaching us to always seek out others with whom we could work. Today, CeRADIS is one of the four most influential NGOs for sexual and reproductive health in Benin, and we are the only local one of the quartet. We are an advocacy NGO, considered a resource center by West African civil society at large, and we are now eligible for funding in the €2-3 million range. That is partially thanks to Equipop.

### *You are a founding member of Alliance Droits et Santé. What relationship do you have with other member-organizations in Benin?*

In Benin, we still have a lot of work to do to create a cohesive group. CeRADIS has benefitted from Equipop's assistance for years, unlike the other members. That makes us want to move rapidly, but we should first create a group dynamic. That means we have to respect the specificities and skills of each member NGO. The way we work together can't depend on prior funding; we strive first for advocacy, which will have a greater and more rapid reach with many partners. And for finding new financing that can make our partnership come alive.

### *How do you think that the Alliance partnerships will change in the future?*

The Alliance in Benin will need to make adjustments for greater efficiency. That means we will have to communicate more, both between Alliance members and with Equipop. I know that everything possible will be done to make the Alliance partnerships fruitful. As for the relationship between Équilibres & Populations and CeRADIS – we're not ready to see it end anytime soon!



## **UNFPA Mali calls on Equipop expertise to benefit the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young Malian women**

In 2016, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Mali asked Equipop to analyze Mali's national youth SRHR policies, laws, and programs. The study aimed to identify opportunities and challenges in continuing and accelerating Muskoka Initiative reforms, targeting girls and young women. This study was the fourth of its kind for Equipop, since it had already conducted similar analyses for Benin, Niger, and Togo.

In 2012, UNFPA took the lead on a regional workshop in Cotonou (Benin), co-produced with three other UN agencies: UNICEF, UNWomen, and the World Health Organization. The workshop aimed for concrete ideas to ensure that West African young women benefit from sexual and reproductive health programs. The most practical and effective proposals would become part of action plans funded by the French Muskoka Initiative a project dedicated to reducing neonatal, maternal, and child mortality. Several delegations from countries in Francophone Africa (including Mali) took active part in the workshop, which produced both concrete conclusions and participant commitments.

Five years later, on behalf of UNFPA Mali, Equipop conducted an analysis of Mali's policies, laws, and programs as they pertained to young women's SRHR. The questions that guided the analysis included: which impacts merit support in tailoring healthcare and services to the specific needs of young women? What actions create effective social change that benefits young girls, and their health and rights, over the long term? How can UNFPA help Malian policies and programs increase the attention paid to national specificities, and how can it promote them while supporting and strengthening the programs of other organizations?

### **EQUIPOP'S ASSIGNMENT: IDENTIFY GAPS, HIGHLIGHT GOOD PRACTICES, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Young Malian women often undergo unintended pregnancies and risky abortions for a variety of reasons: they become sexually active at an early age, lack access to family planning information and services, and their lives remain subject to a number of economic, social, and cultural factors.

According to the fifth *Demographic and Health Survey of Mali*, Malian women get married/form unions early: among women 25-49 years old, one in five (20%) had already entered a union before age 15, and 21% had sex for the first time before they were 15 years old, compared with only 5% of men in the same age group (25-49).

Given this situation, the Malian government, CSOs, and technical and financial partners began a number of national initiatives. UNFPA Mali tasked Equipop with making a list of existing efforts, identifying their gaps, and making ten recommendations on how to improve the integration of young women's SRHR in Mali.

### **A KEY STUDY TO HELP FAST-TRACK YOUNG WOMEN'S SRHR**

The study findings and strategic and operational recommendations proved decisive in developing new approaches and revising current and future programs. All the stakeholders agreed to prioritize the promotion of young women's SRHR. Moving forward, this means increasing program-planning speed and effectiveness, encouraging government and SRHR advocacy organizations to adopt and mainstream the recommendations in their own actions. When Equipop presented the results of the study in April 2017, key actors in the field of young women's SRHR responded with a strong, unified commitment to implementing the recommendations.



**A COMPLEMENTARY STUDY  
ON EDUCATING THROUGH PEERS  
AND RADIO SHOWS**

During Equipop’s Mali study on young women’s SRHR, UNFPA Mali also asked for an analysis of two related efforts: peer education in youth centers in the Sogoniko district of Bamako, and informational programming on the radio show “Youth Voices”. These adjacent efforts formed part of a major initiative in Mali, the “Youth Project,” cofinanced by UNFPA and the Malian Ministry of Youth and Citizenship Construction. This second Equipop study aimed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the two outreach strategies, with an eye to improving their effectiveness and scope. Equipop delivered the study conclusions and recommendations in June 2017.

**• How does Equipop take action?**

Equipop surveys SRHR initiatives for young women in Mali, identifying opportunities and gaps, and making operational and strategic recommendations.

**• Who are the beneficiaries?**

UNFPA Mali, the Malian government, and more generally, the girls and young women who will benefit with the adoption of Equipop recommendations.

**• What is the rationale?**

Malian policy, laws, programs, and culture could do better in serving youth SRHR.

*Three initial recommendations drawn from the education study*

01

**Set up and promote sex education in schools and in external venues** (for example, through informal literacy programs), to provide a complete education in sexual rights, health, and procreation.

02

**Make community health clinics more accessible to young people throughout Mali,** especially the northern regions of Gao, Timbuktu, and Kidal.

03

**Expand and strengthen the use of hotlines and remote assistance by adapting these services to the specific needs of young women and men,** especially services that address rape and child marriage.

## INTERVIEW

# Cheikh Mbengue, UNFPA Mali deputy representative

Cheikh Mbengue, deputy representative of UNFPA Mali, commissioned the Equipop study on integrating young women and men's SRHR into Malian policies, laws, and programs.



*Can you tell us why you wanted to do this research study?*

This study, commissioned by UNFPA within the framework of the French Muskoka Fund, falls right in line with the missions and mandate of UNFPA relative to young women's sexual and reproductive rights and health. It also aligns with the UNFPA 2014-2017 Strategic Plan and the 7<sup>th</sup> Mali Cooperation Program. For UNFPA, young people constitute a special target, given their number and share of the total population in most low-income countries. Mali has one of the highest fertility rates in Africa, with six children per woman. It also has an HIV prevalence rate of about 1%, young women beginning childbearing early and ending it later, and enormous disparities in basic social services – healthcare, education, and employment. The risk of youth radicalization is also high, given the country's political and security situation.

In assessing how well or poorly Mali's policies, programs, and strategies consider the needs of youth, this study will locate gaps in youth participation and leadership, the better to inform policy formulation. It will also identify endogenous and inclusive solutions for comprehensive care in youth sexual and reproductive rights and health. The study also summarizes all national youth SRH-oriented initiatives, particularly those using the Internet, mobile phones, and social media. The study will help Mali implement the African Union's "Agenda 2063" and its vision for youth; it will also contribute to the "Roadmap for Harnessing the Demographic Dividend" and the SDGs.

*What will you do next after this study?*

UNFPA has shared the report with the government, national agencies, and all national-level stakeholders. Now we will work together toward an organized response plan to mobilize financial and human resources; these will make it possible for youth to access needed SRHR information and services. We will have to emphasize family planning issues and fight gender-based violence and HIV by setting up comprehensive sex education programs, in close collaboration with opinion leaders, religious leaders, and civil society.

*Can you tell me about your partnership with Equipop? What value does it add to your work?*

Beyond our partnership, the presence of Équilibres & Populations in West Africa, particularly Mali, is a genuine asset for UNFPA. Its mission and mandate align with the 1994 Cairo Agenda, so naturally we turned to Equipop to conduct this study. Having already done this type of research in other West African countries, and having worked in Mali for years, Equipop had the necessary network of contacts. It also has the network required to move forward on young people's sexual and reproductive health in Mali, and beyond its borders. We hope this partnership will prove fruitful.

# O4

## Learn more about us

In 1993, just prior to the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, a team of doctors and journalists created Équilibres & Populations to empower women and improve their lives, thereby fostering equitable and sustainable development.





Équilibres & Populations currently has twenty-two employees, fifty-seven Equipop Members who provide financial and other support, an annual budget of €1.49 million, a head office in Paris, and a regional office in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

## Our vision and values

Équilibres & Populations firmly believes that sustainable development cannot be achieved as long as women – half of humanity – are left behind. Empowering women and improving their lives – especially ensuring stronger sexual and reproductive health and rights – both herald and contribute to development.

We base our vision on these core values:



### RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Équilibres & Populations calls for universal recognition of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. This must be achieved for everyone, everywhere, through political and social participation and people making such rights their own.



### WELL-BEING, FREEDOM, AND RESPONSIBILITY

Équilibres & Populations believes that economic indicators alone cannot determine human well-being; it also depends on each individual's ability to make informed and autonomous choices, while also accepting his or her responsibility towards society.



### EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Équilibres & Populations advocates for equitable, inclusive human development that provides equal social, political and economic opportunities to everyone, irrespective of age or gender. In today's world, success should not come at the expense of future generations, or of half the population.

# Our guiding principles reflect our values



## ENABLING STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

Équibres & Populations systematically promotes and enables stakeholder participation, the better to ensure high-quality accountability, ownership, sustainability, integration, empowerment, and legitimacy.

We do this through sustained dialogue that brings our actions close to our stakeholders: civil society partners, health and social workers, lawmakers, government officials, other decision-makers and, of course, our target populations.



## COLLABORATING WITH PARTNERS

Rather than expanding internally, Équibres & Populations has moved to increase its adaptability and responsiveness, and the range and quality of its actions, through alliances and partnerships with civil society, lawmakers, journalists, researchers, civil servants, technical experts, and many others.

For over ten years, we have worked alongside Francophone West African civil-society organizations that share our vision.

These partners use their finely-grained and thorough knowledge of their communities and cultural dynamics to promote change in their respective countries. Over the years, we have established trusting relationships with them; our complementary skills and assets allow us to jointly create programs for local populations, and to conduct social and political advocacy campaigns tailored to local situations.



## WORKING WITHIN NETWORKS

Équibres & Populations has also successfully created or joined synergistic development-oriented networks made up of international solidarity organizations (ISOs), research and academic institutions, public agencies and offices, corporations, and other stakeholders in France, Europe and Francophone West Africa.

We are involved at various levels – collaborating on projects, making joint decisions, coordinating working groups, or sitting on civil society organizations' boards of directors.

# Our mission and actions

Our organization aims to empower women and improve their lives, thereby fostering equitable and sustainable development. In Francophone West Africa, we have gradually shifted some of our actions from women to benefit girls, particularly those that most policies and programs fail to reach.

Building on our specific expertise in sexual and reproductive health and rights, we have progressively developed a broader project that spans health, education, and economics, always using a gender-based approach.

Équilibres & Populations carries out its mission in Francophone West Africa, Europe and North America by working with:

- civil society organizations with whom we have close partnerships
- traditional leaders, women's groups, and youth groups
- CSO coalitions and platforms
- healthcare workers
- technical and administrative experts
- researchers
- academics
- journalists
- lawmakers and other decision-makers
- administrators and government officials

## Three complementary activities underpin all our actions



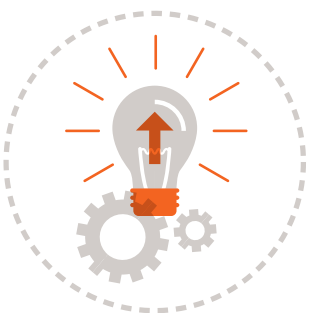
### Sparking change

at the very heart of communities, by creating and implementing pilot projects in collaboration with local partners



### Mobilizing

leaders to create more favorable institutional and legal environments



### Empowering

development partners by strengthening their capacities

# Our knowledge base and expertise

Through the years, we have enriched our knowledge base and expertise by drawing from fields as diverse as political science, public health, medicine, sociology, anthropology, economics, and demography. We systematically try to blend knowledge from these domains, crafting as comprehensive an approach as possible. Our knowledge base serves as a significant asset in helping us understand the communities in which we work, along with their leaders, healthcare professionals, government officials, and our partner organizations.

**We base our work on these six primary domains:**

## **POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC POLICY**

Équilibres & Populations has gained expertise in advocacy, targeting government officials responsible for international cooperation policy and implementation. We draw on a solid knowledge of the actors and mechanisms that underpin public policies; we also understand policy implementation.

This means that we can inform, influence, and raise awareness among decision-making officials working at all levels of government – local, national and international; including mayors, high-level civil servants, ministers and presidents – pushing them to support specific programs. We also encourage policy reform and its effective implementation. In addition, we have developed expertise that lawmakers recognize and seek out.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICINE**

Équilibres & Populations draws on its knowledge of public health issues. Our employees and partners have a cross-disciplinary understanding of the ways that healthcare systems operate, particularly in Francophone West Africa, and in-depth expertise in subjects such as family planning, emergency obstetric care, fistula injuries, and female genital mutilation.

We use this expertise to focus on prevention: providing health education, reducing risks, and changing social norms, among other efforts. We also improve healthcare services delivery: training medical workers, soliciting patient opinion, integrating HIV/AIDS care, and mainstreaming reproductive health.

## **SOCIAL SCIENCES AND GENDER**

Équilibres & Populations also draws upon the social sciences through a gender-based approach, the better to meet the diverse needs and interests of the populations we serve. This approach does not target women as a separate group; rather, it looks at how social position and dominant gender and family models influence the ways that individuals act, react, and interact.

Our analysis emphasizes how gender status in any given society results in socially-constructed roles – roles that call for understanding and interrogation, if we hope to drive social change.

A critical tool for promoting new behaviors, the gender-based approach requires both the empowerment of women and the participation of men.



Positioning gender at the core of our actions achieves two objectives – one political, the other social and economic. It brings balance and fairness to male-female power relationships, while building a genuinely sustainable foundation for development, one engaging both halves of the communities we serve.

**We collaborate closely with our partners to implement our projects, mobilizing three main types of expertise:**

### **PROJECT PLANNING AND COORDINATION**

Équilibres & Populations has developed project-planning, steering, and coordination capacities and can act either as the lead organization or within a consortium. We can jointly identify needs, plan intervention strategies, define gender-based participative methodologies, mobilize resources, manage technical and financial oversight, conduct project evaluations, assess outcomes, and capitalize on our experience.

### **INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY**

Équilibres & Populations facilitates knowledge and understanding of the issues that motivate our mission. We take care to increase the visibility of social needs and to use the expertise and knowledge of local activists and other stakeholders. We influence and monitor public policies and programs by producing events, study tours, awareness-raising campaigns, and documentaries, while responding to enquiries from journalists, experts, lawmakers, and other decision-makers. In addition, we collect and critically analyze laws, programs, and policies, write and disseminate position papers, initiate and/or participate in institutional consultations, and lead or attend study groups.

### **CAPACITY-BUILDING**

Équilibres & Populations strengthens capacities among our development partners and encourages them to share their experiences. We provide consulting services and technical support – conducting joint assessments, leading meetings, supervising and assisting fieldwork, creating innovative pedagogical materials, and designing and presenting training sessions.

# Partnerships

## Roland Adja, a new Equipop partner in Côte d'Ivoire

Roland Adja is the chief executive of ONEF (or National Child, Woman and Family Organization), an Equipop partner-CSO in Côte d'Ivoire since 2016.



### *How did you meet Equipop?*

Équilibres & Populations approached our organization at the end of 2016. We did not have to think too hard about working with them: our SRHR-related missions are similar and we quickly understood and liked the way Equipop worked. We joined forces, even before signing a partnership agreement, working together closely to finalize this project — covering every detail, from the timeline to the budget allocated for each activity. Equipop's way of working impressed us; they not only partnered with us but promoted our leadership of joint actions with two other civil society organizations in Côte d'Ivoire.

### *What type of partnership did you create with Equipop?*

Our partnership rests on the affinity, openness, and availability of project personnel. Throughout this partnership, Equipop supports us so that we can strengthen various capacities. And that goes beyond this project. For example, Equipop's financial-management assistance allowed us to revise our procedures manual; it also gave us management tools and tricks that create positive effects through the entire organization. The Equipop assistance officers also build our advocacy capacity through webinars and consulting missions; these sessions prove very useful. Equipop's resource-mobilization assistance puts the icing on the cake. Thanks to their quick response, relevant input, and the strategies that they shared, we currently have four project proposals in the World Bank's final selection round. We will send a present to the team who helped us when we receive the World Bank's response!

### *In your opinion, how does the Equipop partnership differ from others?*

This partnership provides us with made-to-measure assistance, with one-hundred-percent-available assistance officers. Even if they do not have an office in Côte d'Ivoire, we feel as though Equipop stands right next to us! In addition, the project gives us some financial flexibility; it allows us to go after some opportunities that we could not finance on our own. This partnership has allowed us to expand without financial worries.

### *How do you think the partnership will evolve in the future?*

We intend to go beyond this project together. We would like to build on this partnership and jointly respond to other proposal calls. We have already identified European Union funds that could underwrite future joint actions. Equipop has the resources needed to oversee large projects, and we can implement them in the field with Equipop's support. Today, I want to congratulate Equipop and its personnel for their availability, expertise, and commitment. Our joint project will conclude at the end of the year, but that won't be the end of our partnership with Equipop!

## Our partner networks

Équilibres & Populations has always believed that collective efforts are powerful vectors of change. In 2016, we strengthened collaboration with several civil society organization networks in France, Europe, and Francophone West Africa, including:



Alliance Droits & Santé  
Réseau d'ONG pour les femmes d'Afrique

### **Alliance Droits et Santé**

**[www.alliancedroitsetsante.org](http://www.alliancedroitsetsante.org)**

Alliance Droits et Santé, a network of French and West African civil society organizations, works to improve the empowerment and health of women and girls in West Africa.



### **Coordination Sud**

**[www.coordinationsud.org](http://www.coordinationsud.org)**

Coordination SUD serves as the national coordinator for French international solidarity organizations, supporting and representing them through dialogue with public and private institutions worldwide.

COLLECTIF  
SANTÉ  
MONDIALE

### **Collectif Santé 2015**

**[www.collectif-sante-mondiale.fr](http://www.collectif-sante-mondiale.fr)**

Collectif Santé 2015 brings together nine French CSOs: Action Against Hunger, Équilibres & Populations, Global Health Advocates France, Médecins du Monde, One, Oxfam France, Family Planning France, Sidaction, and Solthis. These groups have joined forces to counter successive decreases in France's health-aid budget and its gradual withdrawal from international solidarity activities.

**EFQM** 

### **EFQM**

**[www.efqm.org](http://www.efqm.org)**

The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) is dedicated to providing common benchmarks for organizations, helping them move towards operational excellence.



### **EndFGM**

**[www.endfgm.eu](http://www.endfgm.eu)**

End FGM, a network of European CSOs, promotes European actions to end female genital mutilation.



### EuroNGOs

**[www.eurongos.org](http://www.eurongos.org)**

EuroNGOs is a group of European nongovernmental organizations specializing in sexual and reproductive health and rights.



### Excision, parlons-en !

“Excision, parlons-en!” is a not-for-profit secular and apolitical civil society organization that promotes dialogue and unity among stakeholder organizations and individuals; their common aim is to end female genital mutilation. Since 2015, Equipop has served on its board of directors.



### F3E

**<http://f3e.asso.fr>**

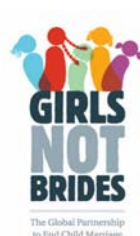
F3E (Fonds pour la Promotion des Etudes Transversales, des Etudes Préalables et de l’Evaluation, or Fund to Promote Cross-sectoral Research, Preliminary Studies, and Evaluations) is a French network of local-government and nongovernmental organizations dedicated to improving the impact and quality of international solidarity actions.



### Genre en action

**[www.genreenaction.net](http://www.genreenaction.net)**

Genre en Action (Gender in Action) is an international network that promotes awareness of gender inequality within development policies and programs.



### Girls Not Bride

**[www.girlsnotbrides.org](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org)**

Girls Not Brides is a global partnership of more than 500 civil society organizations committed to ending child marriage and encouraging girls to realize their full potential.



### Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition / SECONAF

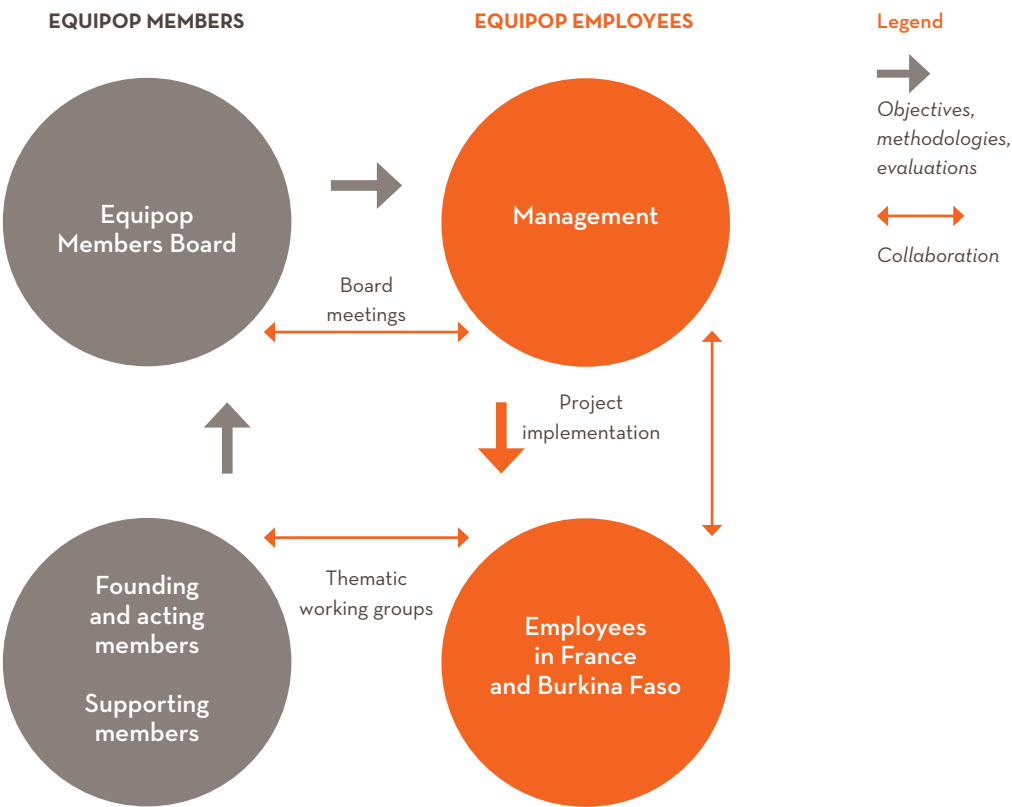
**[www.rhsupplies.org](http://www.rhsupplies.org)**

The Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition, a global partnership of public and private organizations, works to improve women’s sexual and reproductive health by ensuring their access to affordable and high-quality contraceptives.



# Our employees and Equipop Members support our actions

As of 2016, Équilibres & Populations counted 57 Equipop Members – doctors, journalists, development and strategic-public-relations professionals – who provide financial and/or other support. They meet at least once per year, joining forces with our team of 22 salaried employees.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Dr. Alain Marié**  
*Chairman*

**Dr. Claude Dumurgier**  
*Board member*

**Mai Tran**  
*Board member*

**Dr. Annick Schwebig**  
*Treasurer*

**Pierre Foldes, PhD**  
*Board member*

**Daphné Tesson**  
*Board member*

**Jacques Milliez, PhD**  
*Secretary*

**Luc de Bernis**  
*Board member*

*The board meets every  
three months, on average.*

## 2016 STAFF

### Management

**Aurélie Gal-Régniez**  
*Chief Executive*

### Employees\*

**Marguerite Bannwarth**  
*Project Officer*

**Sanije Hoxha**  
*Administrative and  
Financial Officer*

**Nicolas Rainaud**  
*Advocacy Project Manager*

**Elisa Blin**  
*Knowledge Capitalization  
Officer*

**Sibiri Koné**  
*Liaison Officer*

**Kristy Romain**  
*Public Relations Intern*

**Estelle Breton**  
*Advocacy Intern*

**Juliette Manaud**  
*Program Assistant*

**Nicolas Schlegel**  
*Accountant*

**Elsa Burzynski**  
*Advocacy Intern*

**Rémi Minoungou**  
*Project Officer*

**Brigitte Syan**  
*Advocacy Officer*

**Erell Chardon Ouedraogo**  
*Advocacy and Resource  
Mobilization Assistant*

**Om Kouloum Ouedraogo**  
*Advocacy Officer*

**Caroline Traoré**  
*Organizational  
Assistance Officer*

**Aurélie Desrumaux**  
*Project Officer*

**Nathalie Perrotin**  
*Public Relations Officer*

**Julie Van der Smisen**  
*Partnerships Administrative  
and Financial  
Assistance Officer*

**Sokhna Fall Ba**  
*Project Manager*

**Dominique Pobel**  
*Program Manager*

**Claire Veyriras**  
*Resource Mobilization  
Officer*

**Elise Fouillet**  
*Program Assistant*

**Kadidia Rabo**  
*IT Manager*

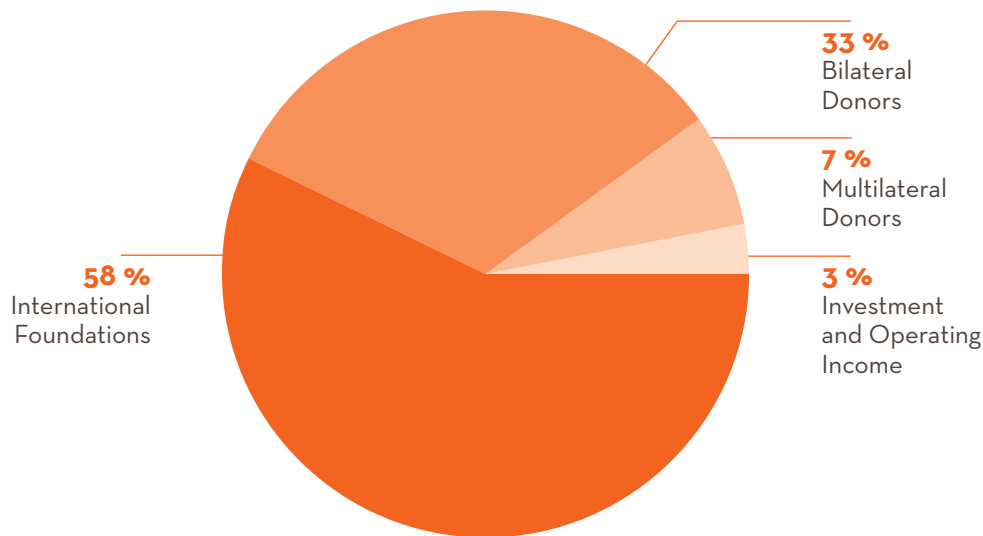
TO CONTACT US: **INFO@EQUIPOP.ORG**

\* in alphabetical order

# Équilibres & Populations 2016

## Budget

In 2016, we spent 89% of our funding on program-related and mission-fulfilling expenses. Overall, revenue increased by 50% over 2015, and we ended the year with a cash surplus.



*Équilibres & Populations Funding Sources (2016)*

## REVENUES

Équilibres & Populations revenue reached €1,622,009 in 2016, a 50% increase over 2015 (€1,081,581). The increase came primarily from resources obtained during 2015 and spent over the 12 months of 2016, and from new funding earmarked for the expansion of civil society support in Côte d'Ivoire. We also diversified the partnerships receiving our technical expertise in advocacy or sexual and reproductive health.

Nearly 58% of our revenue comes from international foundations, chiefly American ones, including the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Institutional sources of funding accounted for 39% of revenue this year, 33% of which came from the bilateral French development agency, AFD (Agence Française de Développement), and 6% from multilateral United Nations agencies.

Équilibres & Populations continues to strengthen and develop new technical and financial partnerships, encouraging the collaborations crucial to project success.

## EXPENDITURES

Équilibres & Populations allocated 89% of its funding to program- and mission-related expenses. Administrative and overhead expenses remain stable and controlled. In 2016, Equipop expenditures reached €1,494,917, a notable 43% increase over 2015 (€1,045,845).

The increase in expenses stems from the acceleration of the Alliance Droits et Santé project, initiated in 2015, and its extension to Côte d'Ivoire. As five new organizations joined the Alliance, expenditures for this project increased nearly 45% over the previous year. At the same time, we maintained our support for African civil society organizations by mobilizing resources for them and raising funds from new donors. While maintaining partnerships initiated in 2015 with Pathfinder, FutursGroup, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), we also developed new ones with nonprofits and civil society organizations such as Solthis, Marie Stopes International, Doctors of the World Spain, and Aidos, an Italian nonprofit.

Our human resources budget increased 25% over 2015, due to higher levels of project activity and recruitment. At fiscal year-end, we had a €127,091 surplus; it will increase our reserves. We have a medium-term objective to increase our capital funding so that we can cover possible project financing gaps while preserving internal expertise. We also want to professionalize the organization's administrative functions and expand its capacity for intervention in new, innovative areas.

Équilibres & Populations' annual accounts are audited by Mazars SPCC, certified public accountants. The annual accounts for 2016 and the accountants' report appear in their entirety (in French) on [equipop.org](http://equipop.org).



## Luc de Bernis, Équilibres & Populations Board of Directors member

Now retired from the United Nations after a long international career, Luc de Bernis joined the Equipop board of directors in 2016.



As a child, Luc de Bernis acquired his taste for travel and for life in developing countries from his father, an economics professor and ministerial advisor during the African independence movement. Luc felt compelled to study medicine so that he could work on world health problems. Learning about maternal mortality issues around the world, he decided to specialize in obstetrics.

After he received his medical degree, Luc flew to Chad, where he worked for the French Cooperation Agency (now AFD) and started his family. After the civil war, as head of the N'Djamena Hospital maternity ward, he witnessed severe complications on a daily basis. He realized that reducing maternal mortality rates depended on understanding – and acting upon – what happens before and during pregnancy.

Luc returned to France, where he studied public health and worked at the Centre International de l'Enfance (International Child Center [1949-1997]). He then returned to West Africa; in Senegal he worked as a technical advisor, based in a suburban Dakar hospital that had a high rate of maternal mortality. His experiences in Chad and Senegal convinced him that without data, no proper analysis of the situation would be possible, let alone credible or suitable solutions. For this reason, upon his return to France, he decided to publish the world's first statistics on maternal mortality in African hospitals; he presented his findings at the 1988 International Congress on Maternal Health in Paris, the first Francophone conference on the subject.

The World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva recruited Luc de Bernis in the early 2000s. From there, he went to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), working first in Addis Ababa as the senior maternal

health advisor for Africa, and then in New York, followed by a return to Geneva. Continuing his statistical work, Luc contributed to maternal health standards, guides, and recommendations – for example, acting as editor for *Making Pregnancy Safer* and a report on *The State of the World's Midwifery 2014*, among other publications.

Luc sees intermediary healthcare workers, such as midwives, as holding a crucial role in maternal care. He remains convinced that care standards alone do not suffice: he argues that clinic hospitality and respect for patient choice also make important contributions to good outcomes. This calls for a multidisciplinary approach that combines social sciences with statistics and epidemiology.

Luc consults for United Nations agencies on the subjects of maternal health and healthcare-related human resources. He also advises the International Confederation of Midwives, which named him an honorary midwife!

Luc believes that maternal health stands at the center of women's health, and therefore public health, but that it is also a question of rights: gender-based violence, child marriage, and a lack of family-planning services affect women's health and their fundamental rights. Following his impressive work in the field and reflecting his strongly-held beliefs, Luc de Bernis joined the board of Équilibre & Populations. He contributes strategic thinking and connects Equipop with other organizations and individuals in France and West Africa. Regretting France's lack of leadership on SRHR issues, Luc de Bernis intends to work alongside Equipop to push France towards a stronger position on the international scene.

# Acknowledgements

Équilibres & Populations draws on the support of many people and organizations who share its convictions and support its actions in order to achieve its mission. We offer our warmest thanks to all of them for the trust they have placed in us: volunteers and Equipop Members who work for the association; donors and financial partners, whose support makes projects into reality; our CSO partners,

with whom we enjoy close-knit, solid and lasting relationships; experts and civil servants who help us co-design policies and programs; journalists and Internet users who relay our messages and news – thank you! This report aims to update you about the impact of our work.

*We especially wish to thank:*



# Follow Équilibres & Populations daily news



## **On the Internet**

[equipop.org](http://equipop.org)

To learn more  
and take action.



## **On Twitter**

[@Equipop\\_Ong](https://twitter.com/Equipop_Ong)

For real-time news about  
us and SRHR.



## **Through our newsletter**

For a periodic summary  
of our news highlights.



## **On Facebook**

[facebook.com/Équilibres.  
Populations](https://facebook.com/Équilibres.Populations)

For exclusive content  
and for sharing with  
our community.



## **On Instagram**

[@Equipop\\_Ong](https://www.instagram.com/Equipop_Ong)

For behind-the-scene  
photos of Equipop.



## **On YouTube**

[Équilibres & Populations](https://www.youtube.com/Équilibres&Populations)

For videos about us  
and SRHR.

## **Credits**

This report is also  
available online:  
[www.equipop.org](http://www.equipop.org)

## **Design and production**

### **Editor-in-chief:**

Aurélie Gal-Régniez

### **Chief copy writer:**

Marguerite Bannwarth

**Copy writers:** Aurélie Hamelin-  
Desrumaux, Aurélie Gal-Régniez,  
Annaëlle Gateau, Sanije Hoxha,  
Nathalie Perrotin, Dominique  
Pobel, Nicolas Rainaud,

### **Copy editors:**

Garance Dauchy, Elise Fouillet,  
Nathalie Perrotin & Nicolas  
Rainaud

### **Design and lay-out:**

Jean-Luc Gehres  
[www.welcomedesign.fr](http://www.welcomedesign.fr)

### **Photography:**

Olivier Maurel, Christophe  
Abramovitz, Ananias Lekî, Equipop,  
Riccardo Venturi

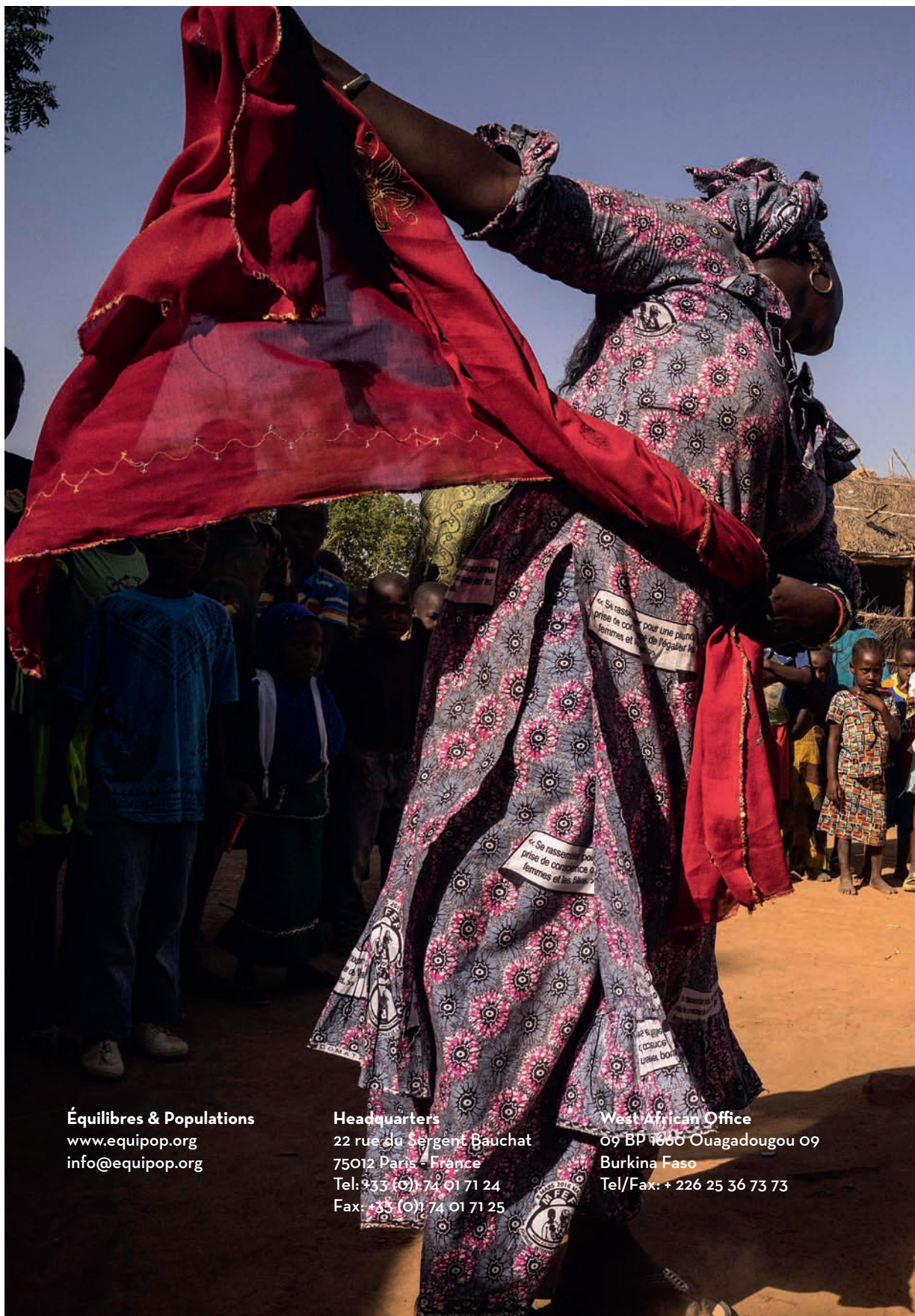
### **Printing:**

Simon Graphic, Ornans

### **Translation from French:**

BlueSky International  
This document was printed on  
certified paper.





## Équilibres & Populations

[www.equipop.org](http://www.equipop.org)

[info@equipop.org](mailto:info@equipop.org)

## Headquarters

22 rue du Sergent Bauchat

75012 Paris - France

Tel: 33 (0) 1 74 01 71 24

Fax: +33 (0) 1 74 01 71 25

## West African Office

09 BP 1865 Ouagadougou 09

Burkina Faso

Tel/Fax: + 226 25 36 73 73