

## **Annual activity report**

Équilibres & Populations works towards the improvement of women's social status and living conditions, which are a crucial lever of fair and sustainable development. Our action is threefold, and all three components are complementary: sparking change, mobilizing leaders and empowering people.

#### Équilibres & Populations

www.equipop.org info@equipop.org

#### Headquarters

75, rue des Saints-Pères 75006 Paris - France Tél.: +33 (0)1 53 63 80 40 Fax.: +33 (0)1 53 63 80 50

#### West Africa Office

o9 BP 903 Ouagadougou 09 Burkina Faso Tél. / Fax.: +226 50 36 73 73



In partnership with local actors, Équilibres & Populations sparks social change dynamics at the very heart of the populations.

### Mobilizing Mobilizing

Équilibres & Populations mobilizes leaders to create a more favorable institutional and legal environment for human development, and more particularly for the improvement of women and girls' status.

## **Empowering**

Équilibres & Populations empowers its development partners by strengthening their intervention capacities.

## 2013 at a glance

**Equipop** has worked in 6 West African local communities in order for girls who are housemaids, street vendors, who were married early and for unmarried adolescent mothers, to fulfill their rights and have access to improved health. 400 girls directly benefited from a pilot empowerment program and the awareness of more than 10,000 young people was raised.

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**Thanks to Equipop**, the most left behind African adolescent girls made their voice heard in the publication and the web documentary "Young African girls: stories that count".

Equipop had an impact on French development policy by encouraging France to adopt a strong position on sexual and reproductive health and rights, particularly at the 57th Session of the UN's Commission on the Status of Women.



**Equipop** relaunched a threeyear project to convince the 300,000 people living in the health district of Kayes in Mali to say NO to female genital mutilation! At least 1,000 women suffering from complications will receive appropriate care and management.

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**Equipop** took an active part in the implementation of the Ouagadougou Partnership in Francophone Africa. In Burkina Faso, Equipop coordinated civil society's efforts to accelerate the implementation of governmental commitments. More generally, in the subregion, Equipop worked in order for women and girls to have access to contraception.

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**Equipop** has expanded and given structure to its partnerships. 11 NGOs from Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal decided to join forces for women and girls of Francophone Africa in Alliance Droits et Santé.

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**Equipop** carried on empowering Burkinabe NGOs to help them mobilize more European funds. The Goal? Increase the funding by 25 million dollars to reinforce the actions in favor of reproductive health in Burkina Faso.

**Equipop** has improved the quality of its actions by professionalizing itself.

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**Equipop** has worked on NGOs' capacity building to reinforce the impact of their actions.

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**Equipop** has studied the possibility of developing projects on unsafe abortion. Equipop has also carried out exploratory missions in Benin in order to assess what would be the best way to end obstetric fistula.





# Adolescent girls' health and rights in West Africa: three years to spark change



Improving adolescent girls' reproductive health, rights and status is the challenge taken up by Équilibres & Populations and three of its Afrian partners, Asmade in Burkina Faso, CeRADIS in Benin and Lafia Matassa in Niger. During three years (2010-2013), they carried out two complementary projects, "Défi Jeunes" (Youth Challenge) and "Protéger les adolescentes" (Protecting adolescent girls), which were funded by the French Development Agency (AFD) and the European Union. In each country of intervention, a rural and

an urban locality were selected. The project teams carried out a participatory analysis of the situation, which fully involved the adolescent girls, as well as community actors and health providers, to identify the most relevant solutions. An action plan was then tested and developed. The winning combination: adolescent girls' empowerment, the creation of a favorable environment and matching supply and demand of services.

66 Equipop and its partners have developed a very astute knowledge of the challenges adolescent girls in situation of vulnerability are facing. They gained precious know-how that must now be reinvested on a wider scale in collaboration with other actors. ??

Dominique Pobel, Défi Jeunes project officer

#### **EMPOWERING ADOLESCENT GIRLS**

Knowing your body and your rights, how to communicate and manage violence: these are the goals identified with the adolescent girls during the awareness sessions. They then benefited from training sessions to learn practical skills such as computer science and the fundamentals of management. According to their specific needs, they were enrolled either in a professional apprenticeship, in school or in literacy classes. They all obtained identity documents, opened bank accounts and were able to join a healthcare mutual.

#### CREATING A FAVORABLE ENVIRONMENT

For a sustainable evolution of the social norms unfavorable to girls, older women, men and boys also took part in theater plays, debates and radio shows. Simultaneously, social mediation actions were carried out to neutralize conflicts in the households and prevent violence towards adolescent girls.

## MATCHING SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF SERVICES

Based on a participatory approach, on the gender approach and on skill building, the project triggered many changes, for both the communities and the adolescent girls.

The young girls who took part in the project acquired new knowledge and developed skills such as public speaking. They gained self-confidence! They are now more aware of what they are able to do and how. Within the communities, more open spaces for dialogue were created. Adolescent girls can now express themselves more freely and don't fear the judgment of others as much as before. Thanks to this project, the health workers understand adolescent girls' needs in terms of sexual and reproductive health better. Their care and management was widely improved.

The changes undertaken are undeniable. However, they are not irreversible and must be extended to other sites. Drawing on the success of this project, Equipop and its partners must carry on their actions for West African adolescent girls.

#### PROJECTS AS VECTORS FOR CHANGE

By adopting a strategy relying on participation, the gender approach and capacity building for all, the project generated positive change for the adolescent girls, the communities and the professionals involved in the actions.

We feel more comfortable, we have a new vision, and we know things other girls don't. We've understood that we can have national identity cards like the other girls.

Street vendor, Burkina Faso

Before the program, I didn't believe in my potential, and I had no initiative or ambition. With the awareness and literacy activities, and with the job I learnt, I want to fulfill myself. With my husband's consent and support, I want to create my own company. Teenage mother, Benin

Thanks to the project,
I understood the use of prenatal
consultation, delivery, maternity,
pregnancy tests, birth spacing,
otherwise I was ignorant.
Young street vendor, Benin

The children have learnt a lot, they've learnt computer science, cooking, knitting, sewing, and a doctor comes to see them every week.

A young girl's father, Niger

Now the girls themselves go to the authorities with their parents not to get married. A girl refused to get married because she saw girls her age who got married and who had many problems afterwards. Mother, Niger

Before, if a girl came to me and said "I've had sexual relations" or "I'm scared", I would get mad. But now, I see things differently. It's normal, except we have to help them manage this sexuality. Health worker, Burkina Faso

We have noticed a clear improvement in terms of attendance levels at the center. Before, the delivery rate was of about 40 per month, now we sometimes deliver up to 70 babies per month. For the family planning service, if you come in the morning, there are a lot of people, and it's the same thing for the weigh-ins. Health worker, Burkina Faso

If we look at the statistics, the STI cases used to begin at 25, but we now see more and more patients between 15 and 19 years old.

Health worker, Burkina Faso

# Grace, extract from the publication: "Young African girls: stories that count"

Grace is a young girl who lives in the rural area of Burkina Faso. She tells us her experience with the Défi Jeunes project.



Some girls are gullible. They don't know how to deal with men and their evil intentions. Many of them agree to go out with men in exchange for food or clothes. These girls need better support; they should have access to the type of advice we're given at the center. I don't think giving advice to the boys would be very useful. They don't care. Pregnancy is not for them to worry about. I never take money from men. Once. a client gave me 200 francs for a bag of bissap and he told me to keep the 100-franc change (0.15) euros). I refused, because I thought that if he got used to my accepting money, he would ask for something in exchange. He got really angry. He took his money back and told me to keep the bissap. I don't talk to local boys either. I'm ashamed. I don't want a boyfriend before I turn 18. He would trick me and get me pregnant. I'll be more mature when I'm 18. I get on well with my mother. She's never beaten me or insulted me. I can share a lot of things with her. However, she never gives me the sort of advice we receive at the center. When I first got my period. I didn't know what it was. I got really scared. I thought I was ill. My mother found out three days later. She didn't explain what it was: she just said that from then on. I was not to fool around with them. So I thought I could get pregnant from just greeting or touching a man.

At the center, I learnt what sexual intercourse was. So I'm not scared anymore, I know that you can't get pregnant just like that. The center is the place where I feel the most comfortable. I have a lot of friends there. When I'm at the center I never want to leave.

There's this woman, Tantie Pauline. She is a "mère éducatrice" at the center. With her, I can talk about all the things I'm too ashamed to tell my mum about. When I told her that my period was very painful, for instance, she told me I should go to the healthcare center. The facilitators also told me I could go to the healthcare center to get information about AIDS. I thought healthcare centers were only for adults and that they would throw me out for being too young. When I decided to go, to obtain information about AIDS transmission modes, I was still a bit concerned I would get told off. But a staff member invited me to come in I wanted to know better the risks related to transfusion. I mean, you never know. If you get ill you might have to be transfused. In the case of sexual transmission, it's different. The facilitators told us to use condoms.

## 2013, a new step for the abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation in Mali



Since 2006, Équilibres & Populations and its Malian partner, AMSOPT, have been developing the project "Protecting the next generation". The goal of this pilot and integrated project is to promote the collective abandonment of female genital mutilation (FGM) in the health district of Kayes in Mali. More generally, it is a way to improve women's health and rights in this region.



Map of the health district of Kayes in Mali

actions for the abandonment of FGM and of violence against women, thanks to the French Development Agency's funding of 600,000 euros, which allowed us to launch a three-year phase. But we still have to mobilize a great deal of the co-funding. Convincing the donors to support this project, which is essential for women's health and rights in Kayes, will be our challenge for the months to come.

Aurélie Hamelin-Desrumaux, Protecting the next generation project officer

#### **CHANGE IS ON ITS WAY**

Late 2012, the project reached an intervention area of 100 villages. This step, which was a key moment in the project's evolution, led to the first external evaluation. The final restitution of the evaluation took place in September 2013 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The evaluation's conclusions are clear: change is on its way. Out of the project's 100 villages. 80 have signed letters for the abandonment of FGM. Even though it isn't the only indicator that can be taken into account, these letters show a strong community commitment. On top of these 80 villages, 14 are about to abandon this practice. Even in the most reluctant villages, awareness-raising activities on health were carried out.

## STRENGHTENING THE INTERVENTION METHODOLOGY

These results were obtained thanks to interventions based on a now strengthened methodology.

#### Our intervention is threefold:

1. Community facilitators carry out communication actions for behavioral change. Every day in the villages, they organize debates, answer women's particular concerns - particularly in terms of health and reproductive issues - and can intervene in the families to solve conflicts. They also help the communities in the development of solutions to put an end to the practice. Eventually, each village makes its wish to abandon FGM public;

- 2. The health part consists in making the identification of patients and the care and management of complications due to FGM easier. Training the health workers and strengthening the referencing enable us to reinforce the existing health systems;
- **3.** By involving migrants in France, we allow them to become actors for the promotion of the abandonment of FGM and we prevent little girls going to Mali from undergoing FGM.

#### **Eight intervention principles:**

- 1. A non-judgmental and non-coercive approach, the goal of which is the respect of human rights, and women and girls' empowerment;
- **2.** Making the communities aware of the harmful consequences of FGM:
- **3.** Common decision-making to abandon FGM in a group linked by marriage;
- **4.** A public and explicit announcement on the abandonment decision, by the communities that made that choice:
- **5.** A methodic communication process to promote the abandonment decision from one community to another:
- **6.** A gender approach in all the stages of the project:
- 7. A gradual integration of the villages;
- 8. A favorable institutional context.

## THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION, THE PROJECT'S TOOL FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Even if the results are encouraging, Equipop has adopted a continuous improvement approach by taking into account the evaluation's recommendations. That is to say by reorienting some of the project's activities, when deemed necessary, and adapting them as much as possible to the field and the context. In 2013, in accordance with the recommendations, Equipop decided to reinforce its action within the 100 villages, rather than extending its activities to the 250 initially planned.

It also put in place more specific and differentiated training sessions depending on the public (women, religious and traditional leaders, men, young people). Equipop and AMSOPT have also developed dialogue between the villages, and public stories, which are two essential levers for social norms change. In order to turn FGM into a true public policy issue and for the project's dynamic to trigger change at national level, it was necessary to mobilize local radios even more and to put them in relation with decision-makers in Bamako. Last but not least, we intensified our work with the migrants in France, in collaboration with Entraide et Espoir.

#### FUNDING: THE CHALLENGE FOR 2014

Parallel to the refining of its intervention methodology, Equipop has carried out a significant work to mobilize funds. These works led to the support of new donors. That is how the French Development Agency (AFD) granted 600,000 euros over three years to Equipop, whereas UNICEF granted the project 87,000 euros, and collaborative funding initiatives helped us raise 37,000 euros via the website Catapult.

However, the challenge remains for 2014. The AFD's 600,000 euros were granted provided that we obtain the same amount in co-funding. Equipop and its partners now have to collect 400,000 more euros in 2014, which is a real challenge given the harsh global economic context.

## Kadiatou Diabira, a volunteer working with the diaspora for the abandonment of FGM

Kadiatou Diabira is in charge of the migrant's support in the association Entraide et Espoir, one of Equipop's partners for the project "Protecting the next generation" (PPG in French).



## Kadiatou, why are you committed to the abandonment of FGM with Equipop?

My personal story brought me to dedicate myself to this cause. In my family, FGM has done a lot of harm. I have undergone FGM; one of my sisters died from it and another was a victim of this practice twice. Then I discovered Equipop's project in 2009 through FECODEV – a women's network Entraide et Espoir is part of – when the migrants were associated to it.

## According to you, what changed over the last years in the way FGM is considered within the migrant community living in France?

I am proud to say that the way FGM is considered in the community has truly changed in a positive way. The migrants are much better informed on the practice's harmful consequences, and the taboo on the word "FGM" is broken.

I don't need to avoid the subject by talking about the question of women's health to get people to come to the awareness meetings. Today, both men and women aren't surprised anymore when I call them and they always answer, even when they aren't ready to abandon FGM.

## What have been the highlights of the migrants' mobilization since the beginning of the project?

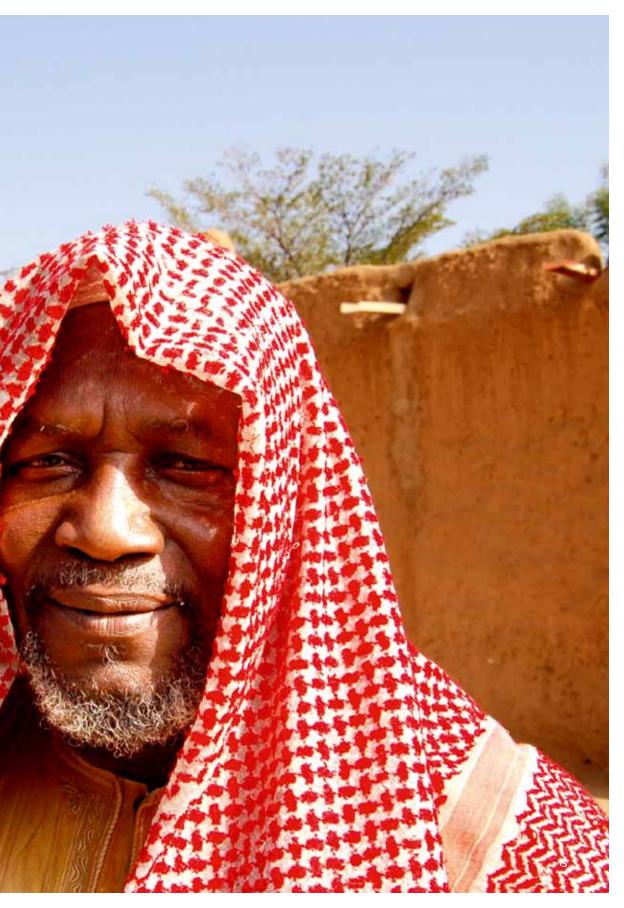
Each awareness meeting is an important moment because the participants - both men and women - are numerous and take an active part in it. The migrants' participation to abandonment ceremonies organized in Mali, in the village Toumaré, three years ago, was also a mobilization turning point. When they came back, they were even more motivated, because they had been able to see the concrete consequences of their mobilization in their native villages. The breakfast organized by Equipop with associations, partners and journalists, - including l'Humanité - helped us gain more visibility. After this event, people from the community started to call me to congratulate me on the action we were carrying out.

## Change is on its way, but what remains to be done?

We need to keep organizing awareness meetings, but outside of Paris' 19th arrondissement. We should go to other cities and departments to talk directly to people in public places, such as city halls or neighborhood associations. I've noticed that physical presence is more effective. Awareness raising is key, because many migrants don't really know what FGM consists in, and they have to know that in order for mentalities to change.

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# Post-2015: promoting women's rights with French decision-makers, on national and international scenes



In 2012, through its advocacy actions, Équilibres & Populations had contributed to laying the foundations in order for France's progressive voice to be better heard. Goal for 2013: France needs to adopt a strong position on the sexual and reproductive health and rights issue, on both European and international levels. The Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs) deadline is approaching, and the pace for the post-2015 development agenda's redefinition is accelerating on all levels.

#### SHARING INFORMATION THANKS TO EURONGOS, IN ORDER FOR FRANCE TO BE MORE VOCAL ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

EuroNGOs is a European network of 87 NGOs, through 42 countries, which work on sexual and reproductive health and rights issues. Equipop has taken an active part in it, particularly thanks to Serge Rabier, who has been its president since October 2012, for two years. The association has adopted the role of go-between to establish a link between European civil society organizations working on these issues and the French

In 2013, Equipop has worked hand in hand with its French and European partners to make women's rights a true development issue for the years to come. In the future, we will carry on working in order for France to make women's rights a transversal priority of its diplomacy actions. ??

Nicolas Rainaud, advocacy officer

government. Equipop has undoubtedly been able to transfer European considerations, disseminated by the various members, in an intelligent and effective way. This information sharing helped France take a strong position in its development policies, as well as within the international negotiations on post-2015.

## INFLUENCING FRANCE'S POSITION ON THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Millennium Summit, September 2000: the 189 UN member States adopt the Millennium Declaration, which states eight MDGs covering large humanitarian goals, such as the improvement of maternal health and the promotion of gender equality. The deadline of these goals is September 2015. The member States agreed on the necessity to elaborate a post-2015 development agenda and to define Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this regard, late 2012, the UN General Secretary gathered a High Level Panel in charge of advising him on the elaboration of the post-2015 development framework and of assessing the MDGs. On several occasions Equipop met Jean-Michel Sévérino, a member of this Panel who contributed to the

elaboration of the report, that was published at the end of May 2013. This report lists gender and sexual and reproductive health and rights as priority themes for a truly sustainable development.

## MOBILIZING DEVELOPMENT ACTORS IN ORDER FOR FRANCE TO PROMOTE THE RESPECT OF WOMEN'S SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR)

On top of focusing its advocacy actions on the post-2015 development agenda, Equipop campaigned for the integration of SRHR in France's development policies. Historically, Equipop's actions have always included a gender approach and are more specifically directed towards adolescent girls. As a natural consequence, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) entrusted Equipop with the monitoring of France's Muskoka commitments on the field. Equipop acted as a watchdog of the commitments made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In order to carry on working with the government and to mobilize French parliamentarians, Équilibres & Populations, Le Planning Familial,

and Médecins du Monde collectively organized a conference at the National Assembly in September 2013. This conference, opened by MP Catherine Coutelle and closed by Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, former Minister for Women's Rights, focused on contraception and unsafe abortion in developing countries. Before more than 150 civil society actors, the minister reaffirmed her commitment to "[promote] sexual and reproductive health and rights at international level", proving our advocacy actions were successful.

Driven by this conference's success, and with the wish to establish a link between field actions and advocacy, Equipop organized a breakfast to talk about its publication "Young African girls: stories that count" on October 11th, 2013, gathering French development decision-makers. The goal? For young girls to systematically be taken into account in all the public programs and policies.

## ENCOURAGING FRANCE TO ADOPT STRONG POSITIONS ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS WITHIN THE UN

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) are annual UN events of great importance for women's rights. These two commissions are both dedicated to the defense of gender equality, and were a turning point in the acknowledgement of women's SRHR. Equipop took part in these commissions' preparatory meetings and worked hand in hand with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order to promote a European progressive voice in terms of Family Planning and SRHR. In 2013, France took strong positions on these issues, and more particularly at the CSW, through the Minister for Women's Rights' speech during the plenary session. We now need to make sure that France remains a major actor on SRHR issues in the vears to come.

## Hilde Kroes, an advocate for sexual and reproductive health and rights in Europe

Hilde Kroes is an advocacy officer at Rutgers WPF (in the Netherlands), a member association of the European consortium Countdown 2015 Europe. This consortium, made up of 16 European NGOs including Equipop, is carrying out active advocacy actions towards European governments. The goal is to increase their commitment in favor of Family Planning in developing countries.



## In 2013, what was France's position in the international negotiations?

There are two fundamental events in which I saw France taking initiatives to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The first would be the 2013 Commission on Population and Development (CPD), the theme of which was migration. And during this Commission, the French, within the European Union (EU), pushed forward for the integration of strong human rights language, in order to guarantee the respect of migrant women's sexual and reproductive rights.

The second was during the EU negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. The EU's position was made public through the EU council conclusions, which were published in June 2013. France then took a leading role in order to push the EU to adopt a strong position on SRHR issues in the next development agenda.

## Has France's position changed over the last few years?

Yes it has! My personal view is that, over the last couple of years, France has become more vocal on SRHR, on the international scene and within the EU. I think it is a very positive stance. The Nordic countries are usually expected to promote SRHR in the international negotiations, so it's very refreshing to see France, as well as other more southern countries, step up on these issues.

France has also been very committed to the ICPD+20 (International Conference on Population and Development) review process for the past three years.

First of all, I can see that the people working

#### Why has France's position changed?

these processes and events.

on these SRHR, within the government, and more particularly in the Ministry of Foreign affairs, are very dedicated and motivated. Équilibres & Populations has also been very active on working with the French government on the international processes such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Commission on Population and Development (CPD), etc. It has strongly helped increase France's participation in

Thanks to the consortium Countdown 2015, of which Equipop is a member, more information is shared between what happens both in the member countries and on the various international levels. To consistently push forward France's actions, Equipop was able to use intelligently and efficiently the tools offered by Countdown 2015.

## 2013: Successful advocacy for Family Planning in West Africa



For two years, Équilibres & Populations' advocacy actions in West Africa have fallen within the dynamic of the Ouagadougou Partnership. This partnership for the improvement of Family Planning services was launched in February 2011. That is how Equipop contributes to the concrete implementation of the commitments then taken by the countries of the sub-region, in order for women on the field to have access, if they wish, to Family Planning (FP), a major lever for their health and status. Among the various goals of the Ouagadougou Partnership, ensuring equity for all the populations, including the youngest and poorest, wherever they are, is key. In 2013, the NGO contributed by supporting FP decentralization and price decrease of products and services.

66 Even if advocacy is a long-term endeavor, we are on the right track for family planning because decision-makers are receptive and request our help. Our voice is being heard and our expertise acknowledged. ??

Rémi Wendlassida Minoungou, project officer

#### **OUAGADOUGOU PARTNERSHIP**

The Ouagadougou Partnership was launched during the Regional Conference on Population, Development, and Family Planning that was held in Ouagadougou in February 2011 with 9 West African governments and their technical and financial partners. The goal was to accelerate progress in the use of FP services in Benin, Burkina Faso, the Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

The Ouagadougou Partnership is based upon two principles. It builds on an improved coordination between donors as well as on cooperation at national and regional levels. The key group of partners is composed of the French Development Agency (AFD), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the French ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United Nations Fund for Population and Development (UNFPA) and the West African organization for health (OOAS).

## MAKE THE OUAGADOUGOU COMMITMENTS A REALITY IN THE LOCALITIES

One of the commitments made by the governments of the Ouagadougou Partnership was to demedicalize, decentralize and popularize reproductive health/family planning (RH/ FP) service. But how can these words be put into action? In Burkina Faso, Equipop took an active part in the implementation of the national community health policy in order for RH/FP to be a key component of it. This policy also explicitly mentions health services' supply in the most remote localities through community-based health workers (CBHW). Equipop hence campaigned for their capacity building in terms of FP, as they are often the first, and even the only ones, to provide health care to remote populations. Once the principle was acquired, Equipop worked with the Ministry to improve these workers' profile and motivation and to redefine the community-based health care activity package. Similarly, Equipop worked with its Alliance Droits et Santé partners in municipalities in order for them to seize the challenges of FP and of the improvement of adolescent girls' health and status in Burkina Faso and Niger. Concrete results have already been obtained and several municipalities have included these issues in their municipal development plans.

## MAKE CONTRACEPTIVES MORE AFFORDABLE

The high price of contraceptives (implants, condoms, injectable) being one of the main barriers of the access to FP, Equipop advocates for these costs to decrease and, eventually, for these products to be free. In 2013, this goal was achieved in Burkina Faso and in Benin, thanks to the intervention of Equipop and its partners.

Burkina Faso announced the decrease by at least 50% of the price of FP products by 2014. A joint Ministerial Order of the Ministry of Health and of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Traditional Arts and Crafts, made this decision official. This financial effort makes the First Lady's international commitment, at the London Summit FP2020, in June 2012, a reality.

Benin also made commitments to address this point during the adoption of its FP national plan, in which Equipop took an active part in November 2013. The government announced that all contraceptive products would be free by January 1st, 2015. Through this measure, Benin's stated goal is to increase the contraceptive prevalence rate by 20% by late 2018, thanks to the allocation of 250 million FCFA, or 380,000 euros, for the purchase of contraceptives.

#### IN ADVOCACY, UNITED WE STAND

To make a difference on these issues in West Africa, Équilibres & Populations mobilizes several actors (ministries, parliamentarians, journalists, researchers) and relies on a network of NGOs it reinforces. It keeps these various intermediaries updated on issues linked to FP and relays the populations' needs and concerns all the while reminding the decision-makers of their commitments. It also participates actively in consultation meetings and in the elaboration and implementation of policies and programs by providing its technical expertise on reproductive health, which is now widely acknowledged.

## Jean-Gabriel Zerbo, the kingpin of parliamentary involvement

Jean-Gabriel Zerbo is a parliamentary assistant with the population and development parliamentarians network, one of Equipop's partner networks at the Burkinabe national Assembly.



## How did your collaboration with Equipop start?

As assistant of the population and development parliamentarians network (RPPD in French) in the Burkinabe National Assembly, I happened to collaborate with Équilibres & Populations. The network is one of Equipop's partners and we have been developing close links for three terms of office now, on issues linked to Reproductive Health and Family Planning.

## What does your work with Equipop consist in within the network?

I regularly work with Equipop and I must admit that our collaboration is very enriching and smooth. Equipop speaks with me before carrying out activities with the RPPD. Together, we elaborate information workshops and training sessions on population and development in order for them to be as relevant as possible. At least one workshop with about 40 parliamentarians is organized per year, on issues linked to reproductive health.

## What is the goal of these workshops and what do they consist in exactly?

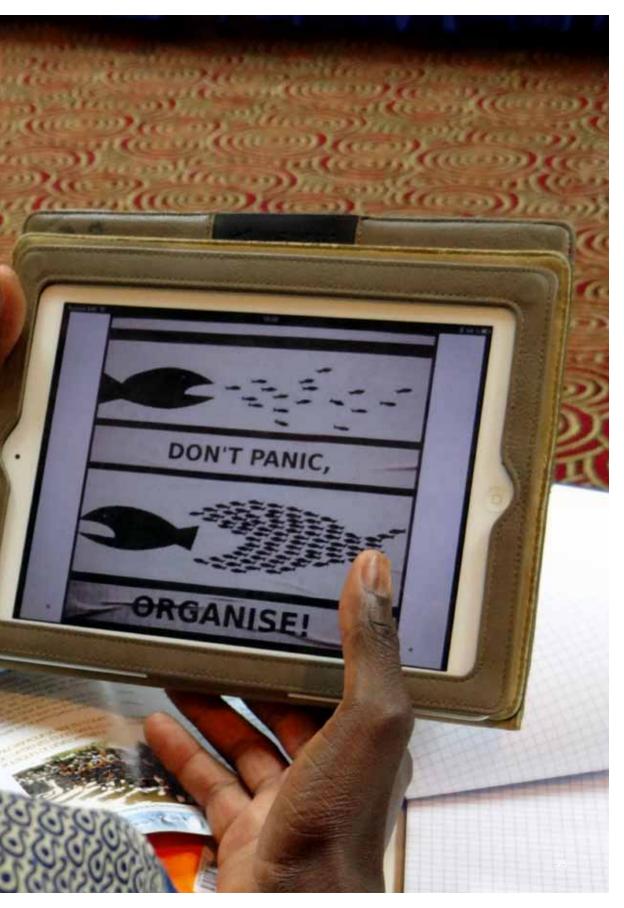
These workshops are very important because they contribute to training parliamentarians and keeping them updated on populations' needs. They sometimes also lead to official commitment declarations in favor of reproductive health.

They are usually made up of a presentation of the situation in the country, following with debates and questions to better understand the issues at stake. The workshops are facilitated by experts such as university professors, and also by civil society organizations that deal with these issues, such as Équilibres & Populations.

## More generally, what do you get out of your work with Equipop?

My collaboration with Equipop, the training sessions and workshops I attended have been very positive – and for the other members of the network as well – because they are a great source of information and knowledge on the reproductive health and family planning situation. As a member of the administration, this enables me to be the institutional memory of the deputies who change with the terms of office. I hence hope, and think, that this collaboration with Equipop still has a bright future.





# Taking action for Francophone sub-Saharan West African women and girls: a new alliance that will make the difference.



### THE CREATION OF ALLIANCE DROITS ET SANTÉ

In 2013, Équilibres & Populations decided to strengthen and extend its partnerships in Francophone sub-Saharan Africa. Its goal? To reinforce the impact of its partners' actions in favor of women and girls' health and rights, and more particularly in terms of Family Planning and Reproductive Health.

Local actors identify populations' needs, relay them to decision-makers, monitor political commitments and contribute to the implementation of programs. No legitimate and sustainable development can be achieved

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without mobilizing and strengthening the latter. Rather than opening up an office in all its intervention countries, Equipop decided to fully play the partnership card. That is how Alliance Droits et Santé was born and gathers, on top of expert organizations on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, women and young people's movements that were selected for their representativeness and potential. For the moment, eleven associations from Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal chose to join forces on the long term.

46 The creation of Alliance Droits et Santé is a demanding and ambitious strategic option from Equipop. We are hence making the choice of relevance and wish to focus our actions on the long term. We think that, very quickly, the Alliance members' complementarities will help us increase our impact in terms of political and social mobilization for West African women and girls.??

Aurélie Gal-Régniez, deputy executive director

#### **A STRONG IDENTITY**

In July, the eleven NGOs gathered for the first time in Ouagadougou to lay the foundations of their shared identity. Solidarity, respect and equality were identified as the network's key values.

The members also share the wish to bring out local expertise, to continuously improve the quality of its actions, and to improve by, more particularly, making the most of the digital and the media's potential.

#### **CLEAR AMBITION AND GOALS**

The July meeting was also the opportunity to define the framework of their actions for the months to come. Their ambition was collectively identified: to play a decisive role in favor women and girls' Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in West Africa.

Two more precise goals were established on the medium term:

- follow up the implementation of the Ouagadougou Partnership commitments in terms of Family Planning;
- promote an improved integration of adolescent girls' sexual and reproductive health, rights and needs.

In order to achieve these goals, Alliance Droits et Santé will rely on its members' shared know-how in terms of social and political mobilization, that it will endeavor to continuously improve in order to make the difference. The Alliance members will hence carry out awareness-raising actions and training sessions. The goal is to involve the populations to encourage their participation to change, to make the appropriation of the stakes easier, and to trigger debate. Simultaneously, the Alliance members will monitor the commitments made by political decisionmakers and international donors. Particular attention will be given to the complementarity with other existing initiatives and to the reinforcement of national collaboration platforms and mechanisms.

### BUILDING THE MEMBERS' CAPACITY FOR MORE IMPACT

In order to keep their promises, it is essential that the network's member associations keep developing and reinforcing themselves, motivated by the wish to continuously improve the quality of their actions. That is why Équilibres & Populations put organizational development at the heart of its partnership approach (for more information, please see the following pages). In a similar dynamic, it will also be necessary to seize the opportunities offered by new technologies.





**Alliance Droits et Santé** gathers eleven NGOs from Benin, Burkina Faso, France, Niger and Senegal: Asmade, CeRADIS, CONGAFEN, Équilibres & Populations, Lafia Matassa, Le Bacar, Marche Mondiale des Femmes, RAES, Scoutisme Béninois, Scouts du Niger and SOS/Jeunesse et Défis.

For more information: www.alliancedroitsetsante.org

## Nourou Adjibade, a director convinced that the Alliance holds a bright future

Nourou Adjibade is the director of the NGO CeRADIS in Benin, a member of Alliance Droits et Santé. This NGO created in 1998 makes sure that women and girls in Benin are respected, and focuses its advocacy actions towards the promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health.



#### What motivated CeRADIS to join Alliance Droits et Santé?

Our motivations are inherent to CeRADIS's mission and goals: we wish to take part in the construction of a better world, by contributing to the promotion of adolescent girls' reproductive health. That is why we base our strategy on advocacy actions and on the gender approach, which perfectly matches the Alliance's strategy. For all these reasons, CeRADIS is in perfect harmony with the Alliance's vision, values, and mission.

#### What did the Alliance bring you?

Three great advantages stand out. First of all, thanks to the Alliance, we were able to make new allies at national and sub-regional level in order to unite our energies and achieve our goals more efficiently. We were also able to reinforce our capacities, on both a technical and a programmatic level. We have learnt a lot! Above all, the Alliance helped us gain visibility, with the populations, the decision-makers and the donors. It is mainly thanks to the actions we carried out with the other member NGOs in Benin, which were supported by the Alliance, such as the radio shows. And this work is still ongoing!

### What were your 2013 achievements with the Alliance?

We took part in the repositioning process of the Family Planning plan in Benin. Thanks to the Alliance, we participated in this process from end-to-end, beginning at the elaboration, up to the finalization. We were involved to show the Ministry of Health that taking into account adolescent girls' Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in public policies is essential. We have noted consistent progress on these issues thanks to the Alliance, such as free contraceptive products by 2015 for young people and the allocation of 250 million FCFA budget, or 380,000 euros, to contribute to it and increase the contraceptive prevalence rate by 20% by 2018. We have carried out advocacy actions in order to make adolescent girls' health a priority.

## What do you expect from the Alliance in the future?

We are going to monitor the commitments made by the government in Benin, as regards Family Planning, and we count on the support of the Alliance with this monitoring work.

One of the Alliance's great strengths is its members' complementarity. In the future, we all need to draw from the experience of the others. We also expect help from the Alliance to mobilize funds, to put into effect CeRADIS's actions, which aim at the promotion of women's rights.

## Organizational development: Equipop adapts the EFQM methodology for West African associations



To improve the quality of its actions, Équilibres & Populations has adapted the EFQM Excellence model (European Foundation for Quality management) and supports Alliance Droits et Santé in this process. The Alliance is a network of West African NGOs of which Equipop is a founding member. The goal is to ensure the durability and credibility of these associations thanks to continuous organizational development, i.e. via the elaboration of a methodology both flexible and adapted to capacity building. In fine, the quality of the actions in favor of women and girls will be improved.

## EQUIPOP HAS A GO AT ASSOCIATIONS' CAPACITY BUILDING

After more than fifteen years of collaboration with NGOs, Equipop is well placed to know that their low structuring level often has negative impacts on the quality of the projects carried out and limits the efficiency of the invested budgets. Even if Equipop, in all its partnerships it has carried out so far, has always tried to include a "technical support" component, the NGOs' organizational development requires a dedicated approach. After having started its own professionalization process, it decided to develop a specific tool

The EFQM model facilitates the sharing of good practices between organizations. By questioning the work division within each organization, it triggers a process that increases accountability. The associations see EFQM as a mirror that allows them to assess their strengths and weaknesses and, eventually, improve the quality of their activities.

Caroline Traoré, in charge of organizational development

to support its partners in the same process, starting with the members of the network Alliance Droits et Santé. It is a way to strengthen the Alliance, through its members' reinforcement. More generally, participating in the development of reliable and efficient local actors will increase the impact of reproductive health investments in the sub-region and will benefit the whole community working on this issue.

#### **EQUIPOP ADDS VALUE TO EACH STEP**

After having recruited experimented staff in terms of organizational development, Equipop started to look for adapted tools. That is how it carried out a real benchmarking of the various existing approaches, to eventually adopt the EFQM model. This model was created for for-profit European companies, and Equipop adapted to the partner NGOs' specific needs. With the help of a consultant, it translated all the tools in order for the vocabulary and the concepts to be easily understandable by our sector's actors.

Equipop hence brought its own added value to the model. Then, after having trained its teams, Equipop progressively extended the training sessions to all Alliance Droits et Santé members. For the Alliance members, the first step consisted in a self-assessment in order for them to analyze their own organizational strengths and weaknesses. The NGOs then drew lessons from it and defined specific action plans to improve. The EFQM frame of reference is refined throughout the training sessions in order to adapt to each NGO's obligations and singularities as much as possible. In order to give value to this tool, once all the network members are trained. Equipop wishes to offer it to other organizations in the region. In 2013, three organizations benefited from the training sessions in Niger (Scouts du Niger, Congafen and Lafia Matassa). In 2013. these sessions will be extended to Benin and Burkina Faso.

#### **EFQM'S FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS**

The below-mentioned fundamental concepts are the basis of any organizational culture, which is the goal of the EFQM approach. They are also used as a common language by the senior management.

## populations and donors Excellent organizations

Bringing value to

Supporting remarkable
results
Excellent organizations obtain sustainable remarkable results, by answering their stakeholders' long and short-term needs, within the framework of their

## Creating a sustainable future

Excellent organizations have a positive impact on the world around them when they improve their performance, all the while developing the economic, environmental and social conditions within the communities they work with.

## Developing organizational capacities

operational environment.

Excellent organizations improve their capacities by efficiently managing change within and without the organizational limits.

## Succeeding thanks to co-workers' work

Excellent organizations give value to people and create an empowerment culture to achieve personal and organizational goals.

#### Managing with agility

Excellent organizations are largely renowned for their capacity to identify and efficiently react to opportunities and threats.

## Managing with vision, inspiration and integritý

Excellent organizations are managed by people who build the future and make it a reality, by acting as models in terms of value and ethics.

## **Encouraging creativity** and innovation

Excellent organizations create more value and better performance levels through continuous improvement and automatic innovation, by making the most of their stakeholders' creativity.

## Mariam Dop, the EFQM driving force within the Scouts

Mariam Diop is a training commissioner within the Scouts du Niger. She took part in the "EFQM Excellence model" training sessions provided by Equipop in December 2013.



## Mariam, you participated in Equipop's training session to the EFQM model, what did you learn?

I learnt a lot, just like the four other volunteers of the association who took part in it. We didn't know anything about the EFQM approach, but it will be very positive for the Scouts du Niger who quickly adopted it. It consists in a self-assessment, and not in an external and imposed assessment, and this contributed to tightening the links internally and establishing a climate of trust. Internal communication was reinforced, and we were able to talk about our strengths and weaknesses more freely.

## What are the practical applications of the EFQM model for the Scouts du Niger?

We became aware of the obsolescence of several of our texts: some of our rules and procedures, organizational process, and missions hadn't been updated since at least 20 years. Before the training, we more or less made the best of it, but we don't want to go along with it anymore, as we now know which texts to review and how.

In order to involve all our regional commissioners in this reviewing process, each and every one of them was in charge of writing up proposal that will then be approved by the General Assembly to update the texts identified as obsolete. It is a collective commitment for the quality of our actions and our association's sustainability.

Beyond the internal applications, how will the EFQM model enable the Scouts du Niger to reinforce its action towards young people? The EFQM model is a certification that

The EFQM model is a certification that reassures the donors, it is a guarantee of quality. We now obtain funding faster, which will allow us to completely carry out a comprehensive educational program for young people. This project was still pending for lack of sufficient funds, even though it was an essential one. The adoption of the tool also made us aware of our complementarity with other Alliance members. We are going to work in collaboration to carry out larger actions that cover all of our issues, because they all aim at improving young people, adolescents and girls' living conditions and health

## What are the next steps and how is Equipop supporting you?

Equipop supports us by following up almost on a daily basis the projects that should enable us to improve. It also helped us orientate, write and correct them according to EFQM criteria – which are complex – in order to refine the actions we need to carry out. Their implementation is the next step that awaits us, a step during which Equipop will also support us. As for the next stages, we wish to go even further by welcoming an expert on the Alliance's EFQM tool within our association.

## 04

## Learn more about us

Équilibres & Populations was created by a team of doctors and journalists in 1993, in the context of the then upcoming International Cairo Conference on Population and Development. Équilibres & Populations works towards the improvement of women's social status and living conditions, which are a crucial lever of fair and sustainable development.

Équilibres & Populations currently has sixteen employees and fifty members and runs on an annual budget of €1.5 million. Our headquarters are located in Paris and we also opened a subregional office in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, five years ago.

## Our vision and values

We, at Équilibres & Populations, firmly believe that sustainable development cannot be achieved as long as the female half of humanity is left behind. Improved social status and living conditions for women, and improved sexual and reproductive health and rights in particular, are both a lever and an indicator of development.

Our vision is based on a number of core values:

## **RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

Équilibres & Populations calls for the universal recognition of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. This must be achieved for everyone, everywhere, through political and social participation and appropriation.

# WELL-BEING, FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

Équilibres & Populations considers that the well-being of a people is not measured only by economic indicators but also by the ability of individuals to make enlightened and autonomous choices, while also accepting their own responsibility towards society.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS

Équilibres & Populations stands up for a conception of human development that gives everyone the same social, political and economic opportunities. We want a development that cares about fairness and solidarity, especially between genders and generations, for the success of the present days must not be achieved to the detriment of part of the population or of generations to come.

# These values are reflected in our guiding principles

## **COLLABORATIVE APPROACH**

At Équilibres & Populations, we systematically adopt a collaborative approach in our action. We see such an approach as a guarantee of quality in terms of ownership, accountability, sustainability, rooting, empowerment and legitimacy.

This collaborative approach implies the establishment of a sustained dialog and aims to closely associate the various stakeholders to our action: our partner associations, health and social workers, parliamentarians, decision-makers and of course the populations of our target zones.

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

Instead of expanding internally, Équilibres & Populations has chosen to develop the range and the quality of its actions through a strategy of alliances and multi-actor partnerships (CSOs, parliamentarians, journalists, researchers, civil servants, technical experts...). This structure relies on the complementary nature of our various know-hows and increases adaptability and reactivity.

For more than ten years now, we have maintained a continuous collaboration with West African associations with which we share a common vision. Building upon their subtle and thorough knowledge of the communities and of their dynamics, these partners promote change in their respective countries. Through the years, we have established trusting relationships based on these complementary assets that enable us to build and carry out together programs for the populations and advocacy activities that are adapted to local sociopolitical situations.

## **NETWORKING**

Équilibres & Populations has also successfully created or joined synergies between development actors: international solidarity organizations (ISOs), research and academic institutions, public entities, corporations...

We collaborate with ISO networks in France, in Europe and in French-speaking Sub-Saharan Africa. We are involved at different levels: collaborating to collective work and decisions, coordinating working groups, participating to collective organs (Boards).

## Our mission and actions

Our organisation works towards the improvement of women's living conditions and social status, which is a crucial lever of fair and sustainable development.

In French-speaking Sub-Saharan Africa, part of our action has progressively shifted to focus on girls, and more specifically on these girls and young women whom existing policies and programmes do not manage to reach.

Building on our specific expertise on sexual and reproductive health and rights, we have progressively developed a broader project that involves various action fields (health, education, economy) and systematically includes a gender-based approach.

In order to carry out our mission in Frenchspeaking Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as in Europe and North America, we work with a number of actors, including:

- civil society organisations with which we maintain a close partnership bond;
- traditional leaders, women groups, youth clubs;
- NGO coalitions and platforms;
- · health professionals;
- technical and administrative experts;
- researchers:
- academics:
- · journalists;
- parliamentarians;
- · political and administrative decision-makers.

Our action is threefold, and all three components are complementary:

**Sparking social** change dynamics at the very heart of the communities through creating and implementing pilot projects in collaboration with local partners;

**Mobilizing** leaders to create a more favourable institutional and legal environment;

**Empowering** development partners by strengthening their capacities.

# **Expertise and know-how**

Through the years, we have enriched our knowledge and know-how by drawing from diverse fields: political science, public health and medicine, sociology, anthropology, economy, demography. We make sure to systematically intertwine these various perspectives in order to promote as integrated an approach as possible, which is a significant asset in the comprehension of the logics of the various actors we work with: men or women from the communities in which we work, community leaders, partners, health professionals, decision-makers...

Our work is based on three main fields of expertise.

# PUBLIC POLICIES AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Équilibres & Populations has acquired a thorough experience of advocacy towards political actors in international cooperation. We rely on a solid knowledge of the actors and mechanisms that underline public policies and their implementation.

At the local, national and international levels, this enables us to inform, influence, and raise awareness amongst decision-makers (governments, ministry cabinets, high-level civil servants) so that they support specific programs, defend political reforms and make sure they are efficiently implemented. Our expertise is now acknowledged and soughtafter by parliamentarians.

### PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICINE

Équilibres & Populations has a renowned expertise in the field of public health. More specifically, our team has acquired transversal knowledge on the way health systems work in West Africa and in-depth expertise on specific issues such as family planning, emergency obstetric care, fistula, or female sexual mutilation.

The association uses knowledge to focus on prevention (health education, harm reduction, shifts in social norms...) but also on the way health services are organized (health personnel training, users' participation, HIV/ AIDS and sexual and reproductive health integration).

## **SOCIAL SCIENCE AND GENDER**

Équilibres & Populations draws its approach from the field of social science. We seek to meet the needs and interests of all members of the communities we work with, which is why we adopt a gender-based approach. This does not mean targeting women as an isolated group but rather focusing on the way individuals act, react and interact according to their gender and social position under the influence of dominant sexual and family models. Our analysis highlights the fact that being a man or a woman in a given society implies socially built roles that need to be understood and questioned if one is to trigger social change.

The gender approach is a decisive lever to promote new behaviours. It requires both women's empowerment and men's participation. Taking gender into account contributes to reaching a twofold objective. Firstly, a political objective: rebalance relationships between men and women for greater justice. Secondly, a socio-economical objective: build the foundations of a development that is truly sustainable because it involves both halves of the populations.

In order to implement our project, and in close collaboration with our partners, we mobilise three main types of know-how:

## **PROJECT ENGINEERING**

As a leader organisation or within consortiums, Équilibres & Populations has developed planning, piloting and coordination capacities. Together with our partners, we identify needs, plan strategies of action, define collaborative and gender-sensitive methods, mobilise resources, manage technical and financial monitoring activities, carry out evaluation of the process and outcomes and capitalise our experience.

### INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY

Équilibres & Populations facilitates the access to knowledge and the understanding of the issues related to our mission with a permanent will to make social demand more visible and to bring forward local capacities. We also have an influential role in the shaping and monitoring of public policies and programmes through activities such as: event planning: study tours: awareness campaigns: creation and edition of documentation materials; individual response to solicitations from journalists, parliamentarians or experts; collection and critical analysis of legal documents and public policies or programmes: shaping and diffusion of position papers: creation of or participation to institutional consultation mechanisms: facilitation of or participation to study groups.

## **CAPACITY BUILDING**

Équilibres & Populations helps strengthening the capacities of the various development partners and facilitates experience sharing amongst them. We implement support and consulting activities, co-conduct joint diagnoses, facilitate meetings, supervise or support our partners on the field, participate to the elaboration of didactic tools and design and carry out training sessions.

## **Partnerships**

# Dr. Issa Sabo Gado, president of the NGO Lafia Matassa



We first met in Bamako, in 2000, for the project Cliniques itinérantes (mobile clinics) in schools, on AIDS prevention and treatment. At the end of this project, we shared a lot on our experience and have been working together ever since.

What were the milestones of this partnership? There were three of them. The first corresponds to the school program I mentioned before. Young people were telling us they didn't have any adapted place they trusted where they could see a doctor. We hence put in place consultation tables in 10 schools with available doctors. They came forward and they became aware of the fact that they needed to be protected against HIV. This project marked Lafia Matassa's history as it helped us gain visibility and acknowledgement within schools. The second milestone was the K-pote Kiosque project, with two ministries (of Youth and of Health). It enabled us to develop an identity of our own in the capital. This project was particularly successful because Equipop created the conditions for this youth center to ensure its own management and support, even after the project ended! After this project, others began to support us. The third milestone was our first joint partnership with the European Union for the project Protecting adolescent girls: it truly revolutionized our relations! It enabled us to become the leader association in Niger in terms of young girls' care and management.



What are the advantages of this partnership? Our partnership with Equipop was very advantageous, and not only from a financial point of view.

First of all we gained notoriety because Equipop is a solid reference. When we apply to calls for proposals, we systematically mention this partnership. It is a very important aspect. Today, thanks to the young girls project, donors trust us, such as the UNFPA, which granted us 300 million FCFA fro 5 years.

The last project we carried out with Equipop, Alliance Droits et Santé, allowed us, through organizational development, to become aware of our difficulties and to identify solutions by ourselves. We have also become aware of our capacities.

What are your expectations for the future?

Undoubtedly the development of new joint programs, such as the project Protecting adolescent girls. This kind of project allows us to work together on the long term and to share. We also want our partnership with Equipop to help us with capacity building. It started within the Alliance and we need to keep working on it, and particularly on the EFQM frame of reference.

## **Networks**

In 2013, Équilibres & Populations carried on with its involvement in several networks. The network EuroNGOs¹, of which Equipop was the president through its executive director, gathers expert European NGOs on sexual and reproductive health and rights. The Genre en Action² network - Equipop is a member of its board of directors - encourages development policies and programs to take into account gender inequalities. These two networks focused their activities on the preparation of the post-2015 agenda. But, in this report, the emphasis will be put on the work Equipop carried out with Coordination SUD³ to push forward gender equality.

# ONE YEAR TO PUSH FORWARD GENDER EQUALITY WITH COORDINATION SUD

Coordination SUD (C SUD) is the national coordination gathering 140 French international solidarity NGOs. For several years, Equipop has decided to fully get involved in this group that offers efficient support services for the professionalization of French NGOs, and which represents a decisive advocacy lever in France, in Europe, and throughout the world. Equipop is very active in various working groups and is involved on several issues: official development assistance, health, and governance, among others. In 2013, Equipop stepped up more specifically on the gender issue. This substantive work was made possible more particularly thanks to two key mandates held by the NGO through Nicolas Rainaud, leader of the gender commission, and Aurélie Gal-Régniez. gender referee at C SUD's board of directors. During the summer of 2013, the French government adopted the "Gender and Development 2013-2017" strategy. In 2012, Équilibres & Populations, through C SUD's gender commission, had already taken an

# Why take gender into account in development?

The goal of a project that takes into account the gender approach is to fight gender inequality. Gender equality is an essential lever for a fair and sustainable development. The policies and projects are then more effective. relevant and sustainable, via an analysis of the balance of powers and of the gender social roles. Taking into account the challenges linked to gender enables to avoid potential negative effects on women's situation, as they often face specific difficulties and discriminations. That is why Equipop promotes the gender approach, in both its field and advocacy actions!

active part in the reassessment of the first strategic orientation document (DOS in French) on the same subject. In 2013, the organization and the commission worked with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to rewrite this strategy, through multiple exchanges and consultation meetings.

The first one was held in April 2013, and gathered around forty French development actors' representatives (French Development Agency, local authorities, civil society, etc.). A written contribution, stating C SUD's recommendations, had been handed out beforehand to the ministry. Main recommendation: to be more efficient and operational than the previous one, this strategy would have to benefit from consistent human and financial means.

The "Gender and Development" strategy, adopted by the Interministerial committee for international cooperation and development (CICID in French), was put into effect in August 2013, for four years. This strategy reflects France's strong positions on gender issues on the international scene. This text is pioneer in terms of gender integration in public development policies. It is an innovative roadmap that, beyond the sole development sector, could be used as an example for French public policies in general. Thanks to this strategy, all the stakeholders became aware of the importance of taking into account the gender approach in all aspects of the French development policy.

This strategy makes gender equality a priority, a political and development goal in its own right. Gender hence becomes a transversal issue of France's foreign action.

In the strategy, a total of seven goals were identified, and the main objective is: "Putting gender equality transversally at the heart of the French development policy". In its action principles, the new strategy more specifically recommends targeting adolescent girls, and that "special attention should be paid" to them.

In order for gender to be better taken into account in development, the text puts in place an approach divided into sectors.

Important element: the first sector concerns women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and puts the emphasis on early marriage and pregnancy, as well as on unmet Family Planning needs.

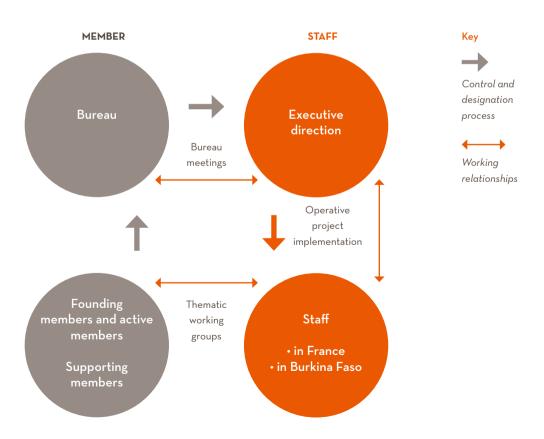
Adolescent girls' specific needs and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights are at the heart of Equipop's actions. The fact that this new strategy identifies these issues as priorities shows that Equipop's advocacy has been more than effective, more particularly thanks to its work within the gender commission.



- 1. www.eurongos.org
- 2. www.genreenaction.net
- 3. www.coordinationsud.org

# Civil activism and professional commitment

Équilibres & Populations can count on 50 members (doctors, journalists, development professionals) who meet at least once a year in a General Assembly. The General Assembly elects a Bureau every three years. Our project is implemented by a multidisciplinary team currently composed of sixteen staff members.



## **OUR BUREAU**

Dr.Marie-Claude Tesson-Millet

Chairwoman

Pr. Jacques Milliez Secretary-general

Dr. Claude Dumurgier Ordinary member

Dr. Annick Schwebig

Vice-Chairwoman and

Treasurer

Pr. Claude Sureau Ordinary member

Dr. Alain Marié Ordinary member

Bureau meetings are usually held on a guarterly basis.

## **OUR STAFF**

#### Direction

Serge Rabier Executive Director Aurélie Gal-Régniez Deputy Executive Director

## Team\*

Nouhoun Bakayogo

Resources Mobilization Officer, West African office

Magali Doisy

Intern

Sylviane Evide

Accounts and payroll

Administrator

Aurélie Hamelin-Desrumaux

Project officer

Saniie Hoxha

Administrative and Financial Project officer Sibiri Koné

Liaison officer, West

African office

Rémi Wendlassida

Minoungou

Project officer, West

African office

Rodrigue Ngouana Ngoufo

West Africa Office

coordinator

Nathalie Perrotin

Communications officer

Dominique Pobel

Senior Program officer

Nicolas Rainaud

Advocacy officer

Eva Razafinarivo Project officer, West African office

Ludovic Tantin

Intern

Isabelle Thimbault

Financial Manager

Robert Toubon

Institutional Relations officer

Caroline Traoré

Organizational Development officer, West African office

TO CONTACT US: INFO@EQUIPOP.ORG

<sup>\*</sup> Alphabetical order

# Managing the association: from change to professionalization

The year 2012 was an important turning point in the association's development. Indeed, Equipop has undertaken a collaborative audit of the structure, which involved the members and the staff, thanks to the support of a strengthening fund (FRIO) managed by Coordination Sud, and of the Hewlett Foundation. This consistent work enabled it to redefine its associative project by identifying seven management priorities for the years to come. The team rapidly went into action on these priorities and the year 2013 was already marked by concrete progress for the structure's professionalization.

More particularly, the communication strategy was examined, the graphic identity redesigned and new tools were created to better highlight field actions and to mobilize in a more effective and global way. The website is now regularly updated and the organization's presence on the social networks is effective. In terms of human resources, Equipop benefited from a pro-bono initiative that allowed it to precisely identify its formal areas for improvement and conformity. Simultaneously, Equipop started redefining the job profiles and processes as well as the collaboration between the various staff members.

As for the information system, Equipop has developed precise specifications to get equipped with an intranet, and has identified a project management tool adapted to its activity (the software SIGMAH).

In terms of management control, the department was reorganized and Equipop welcomed new skills that enabled it to redefine internal processes to meet the requirement of international donors, who are more and more numerous, all the while supporting our African partners more efficiently.

As for governance, new charters were adopted and a working commission was created on fistulas, gathering the staff and the members.

Last but not least, the capital stock question was raised within the bureau and several development leads were identified.

## 2012-2017 management priorities, following the collaborative audit

- 1. Building capital stock.
- 2. Reinforcing the association's visibility.
- **3.** Improving the current control management system.
- **4.** Asking for (external) support in terms of management and HRM.
- **5.** Establishing the association's operational reactivity.
- **6.** Getting equipped with an information system and the technological hardware adapted to our actual needs.
- **7.** Developing the associative life and adapting the governance modes.

# Équilibres & Populations' budget

### **RESSOURCES**

Equipop's 2013 resources amount to 1,475,116 euros, which represents an increase of 7% compared to 2012.

The share of private funding represents 60% of our resources, thanks to our international donors' trust in us, who are essentially Americans and our historical partners. More particularly, in 2013, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation supported us for an ambitious project aimed at the sustainability of the Francophone West African civil society's commitments for Reproductive Health / Family Planning / Gender (Alliance Droits et Santé).

This year, institutional sources represent 39% of our funding: 31% from French bilateral cooperation institutions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, French Development Agency), and 8% from multilateral cooperation institutions (European Union, UN agencies).

Equipop pays close attention to diversifying its resources, which has been a goal in itself for the past several years. It is both a condition for its financial balance on the medium term and a proof of its ability to raise public funds. Initially funded by private foundations, the NGO tried to enhance a leverage effect through these funds, in order to mobilize public money for its programs in West Africa.

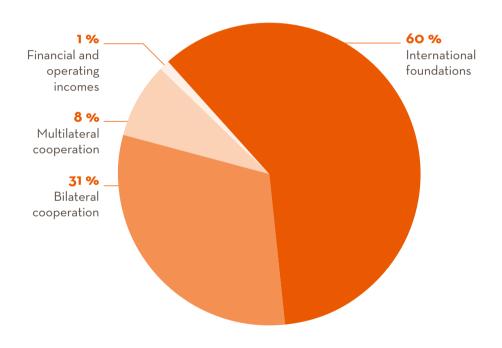
### **EMPLOYMENT**

79% of the resources are allocated to the NGO's social missions. The structural costs are managed and steady. The total costs for 2013 amounted to 1,456,116 euros, and increased by 5% compared to 2012.

Despite the termination of the European Union project dedicated to adolescent girls in situation of vulnerability, which ended in February 2013, the noticeable increase of the activities can be explained by the implementation, at the beginning of the year, of a project supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Alliance Droits et Santé). The human resources budget has slightly increased, mainly because of the implementation of the Alliance Droits et Santé project. as said above. The surplus of the financial year amounts to 19,001 euros. In spite of the difficulties to secure a more significant surplus, the goal remains the same: increasing this stock in the three years to come.

Équilibres & Populations draws up annual accounts that are audited by Mazars SPCC, external auditors. The 2013 annual accounts as well as the external auditors' report are available in full on www.equipop.org.

In 2013, 79% of our resources were allocated to our social missions. In spite of a harsh economic context that affects many organizations, Équilibres & Populations has succeeded in maintaining its budget and financial balance, ending the year with a surplus.



Équilibres & Populations' resources in 2013

## Perspectives for 2014

2014 will be marked by an important event for both Équilibres & Populations and the international community: the twentieth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, September 5th-13th, 1994).

Through this Conference's progress and the achievements of its Plan of Action, the States, international agencies, private donors (foundations and corporations) and civil society organizations gave more visibility to population challenges, and to the importance of fulfilling Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights as well as Gender Equality.

Équilibres & Populations, which was created within the framework of the Cairo Conference, will reinforce its commitments by taking part and preparing, with its French, European, and West Africa partners, this anniversary's two key moments: the Commission on Population and Development in April and the United Nations' General Assembly in September.

2014 will also be marked by concrete achievements for Equipop and its partners' professionalization: galvanizing external communication, implementing an intranet for the association, reworking the project management processes and operationalizing the organizational and computer science audit for Alliance Droits et Santé partners.

These new tools and working methodologies will enable us to improve the quality and impact of our actions, and contribute even more efficiently to the elaboration the post-2015 development agenda.

## Credits

The annual report is also available online: www.equipop.org

## Conception

Coordination:
Aurélie Gal-Régniez
Editorial board:
Clémence Schricke
and Claire Veyriras
With the participation of:
Marine Casaux-Bussière,
Sanije Hoxha, Rémi Minoungou,
Caroline Traoré, Serge Rabier
and Nicolas Rainaud
Publishing board:
Nathalie Perrotin with the help

Marine Casaux-Bussière

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