

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Closing conference
of the program
28 > 30 october 2013
Ouagadougou

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Many thanks to the participants to the closing conference of the Demographic Trends Program.

I. Context and background

The closing conference of the DEMTREN program was held on October 28–30, 2013, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. This conference made it possible to take stock of the main results of the studies carried out over a 3-year period by the researcher teams supported by the program.

The objectives of the program are based on the desire to develop knowledge on the determinants and consequences of population and reproductive-health dynamics in sub-Saharan Africa.

- Transitions in Fertility, Schooling, and Work of Young Women in Africa: Identification of Determinants and Consequences (Senegal, Madagascar)
- Health Risks and Migration (Nigeria, Tanzania)
- Migration, Labor Market, and Demographic Dynamics in Sub-Saharan Africa (MIMADEM) (Senegal, Mali, Cameroon).

The projects selected and carried out as part of the DEMTREN program were given support by the Agence Inter-établissements de Recherche pour le Développement (AIRD), the French Development Agency (AFD), and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

The following seven projects were presented:

- Consequences of Family-Building Strategies and Household Composition on Schooling and Child Labor in Urban Burkina Faso (Burkina Faso)
- Education, Information, Sexuality and Fertility Among Adolescents (Cameroon, Ghana)
- Poverty and Unmet Needs in Reproductive Health of Adolescents and Youth in Central Africa (Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, DR Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Chad)
- Migration and Development: Comparative Analysis of Remittances, Investments and Return Migration in Senegal and DR Congo (MAFE - CoDev) (Senegal, RD Congo)

The conference was an opportunity to share these results with peers from various regions of the globe (Africa, Europe, North America) and to deal with the issue of promoting and disseminating the results among civil society and public decision-makers. The discussions enriched reflection on what strategies to adopt so that these research findings can be used in advocacy actions by civil society in such a way that they back up the latter's arguments and influence decision-making bodies.

At the closing of the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, 189 Member States adopted the Millennium Declaration, which set out the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Since then, a global movement based on new dynamics adapted to the realities and the changing needs of the world of the 21st century has been put into motion. These goals are as follows:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

However, it must be noted that most sub-Saharan African countries cannot hope to reach these goals by 2015, meaning that acceleration of the action plans would seem necessary. There is an obvious relationship between these goals—to which public decision-makers have made commitments—and the effects of demographic tendencies on economic development. Indeed, the issue of demographic transition and especially demographic dividend in the developing countries is a core concern not only among state leaders and international and sub-regional organizations, but also among civil society and the private sector.

In order to be able to determine and take up the challenges presented by these issues, it is essential to study and analyze the phenomena that influence demographic evolution and to use the results of research in advocacy actions targeting decision-makers.

It is within this background that the present document reports on the issues and subjects raised, expounds on the reflections of the participants, and proposes recommendations whose aim is to reinforce the impact of a program such as DEMTREN on the concrete actions established by politicians.

II. Discussion issues and topics

The opening ceremony and an initial discussion in the plenary session gave an opportunity for the organizers and donors to present their expectations from the DEMTREN program, as well as for the participants to express their points of view, the challenges they face, and the solutions they consider to meet these challenges.

It would seem appropriate here to give a brief presentation of the sessions, in order to provide an account of their main themes. Each study was the subject of a scientific presentation by the researchers. It was then followed first by a more technical critical reading by a peer, and then by an intervention by a “candid” participant (generally a member of civil society) to highlight the points that can be used as arguments and issues in the advocacy actions.

Prior to the presentations, an introduction presented the DEMTREN program’s reasons and concepts, based on the observation by donors, researchers, and civil society.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the last region in the world to carry out its demographic transition. This latter is characterized by strong population growth, even if a slight decrease in fertility can be noted. However, big regional differences can be found between rural and urban areas in particular and among socio-economic strata. The results of this include impediments to economic development, population movements, a younger population, and an intensification of human mobility.

Nevertheless, Africa’s demographic challenges do show signs of hope because there is the possibility of reaping the benefits of a demographic dividend, which would translate into an economic takeoff that would fight effectively and sustainably against poverty.

In order to take up the challenges facing Africa, it seems essential to develop partnerships and interdisciplinarity in research and to orient young African researchers in this direction.

One of the major issues is that of dissemination of results—especially to political decision-makers—and to ensure follow-up for this dissemination. The strategy that should be adopted is that of using research for which one of the foremost goals is to back up advocacy targeting political decision-makers. The purpose here is to convince the latter of the crucial importance of taking an interest in issues of family planning and reproductive health, all the while taking into account the intrinsic and related problem of protection of the environment and natural resources.

“Population dynamics in the national policies of the Ouagadougou partnership”

The Ouagadougou Partnership initiative was launched on February 10, 2011, during the Ouagadougou Conference, which brought together nine governments (Senegal, Mali, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin, Togo, and Mauritania) and a group of donors and partners (the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, USAID, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the French Development Agency, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNFPA, KfW, and WHO). These states and organizations work to make family planning play a more important role in the economic and social landscape of countries, to accelerate the implementation of family planning strategy in these countries, and to coordinate their efforts at least up to 2015.

The Partnership has made it possible to put family planning on the political agenda of governments and of international cooperation agencies, especially in French-speaking West Africa. The Ouagadougou Conference insisted on the necessity for provision of products and services as well as of efforts to make to further demand for family planning. At the end of the Conference, the national delegations came to a consensus on the need to take concrete measures to increase the use of family planning in their respective countries, in particular through the development of specific national plans.

The DEMENTREND Program and the Ouagadougou Partnership share similar strategies of supporting and increasing political commitment to promote action programs linked to family planning. Further, they focus their activities on a common geographical area, even though that of DEMENTREND is broader, covering all of sub-Saharan Africa. These initiatives could thereby share knowledge and learn lessons from one another in order to identify good practices and strengthen the implementation of family planning strategies.

Plenary session reflections to fuel discussions: Jaques Charmes, Jean-François Kobiane, Jean-Pierre Guengant

The projects selected for the DEMENTREND program having been designed to further partnerships, many agreements were made with pilot organizations and partners from various countries. The themes covered by these projects are population dynamics, sexual health and reproduction, and migration.

To implement the projects, a number of instruments were created. These included scholarships for PhD students in the South in order to encourage theses to perpetuate the projects, as well as “collaborative chairs,” i.e. programs that bring together two experienced researchers or teacher-researchers, one from the North and the other from the South.

The advantages for the researchers in this program are:

1. regular meetings between research teams, and research sojourns in the partner institutions;
2. training, capacity building, and funding for the researchers (PhD students);
3. expansion of networks, including PopPov (Population and Poverty) and multidisciplinary bringing together economists, sociologists, and other experts.

However, to encourage the sustainability of such a program, it would be good to review certain aspects such as research funding over the long term (operating costs, wages, support teams), especially for researchers from the South), and the duration of the program, whose first results start to emerge after three years.

The Ouagadougou Conference was an important starting point that highlighted networking matters and collaboration between the United States and France on issues regarding the populations of French-speaking West Africa. It dealt with determining how to speed up the demographic transition and have an increase in contraceptive prevalence, thereby obtaining a reduction in the economic cost of a too-rapid population growth. Some states used the services of major consulting firms, such as McKinsey, in order to evaluate their family planning plans for 2012-13, with very ambitious objectives, which are going to be revised. To

reach their objectives by 2020, the countries still have two-thirds of the way to go before reaching a contraceptive revolution.

Governments can be seen to want to make progress on these themes, but these latter remain sensitive politically. We can see an example in how the term “women’s reproductive rights” was eliminated from the conclusions of the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development.¹ This was a setback for defenders of human rights and gender equality, as the existence of a link between reproductive rights and demographic control, especially in developing countries, has been widely acknowledged.

Discussion with the audience

Many stakeholders at the conference spoke up to give their point of view and their contribution to the discussion. The main theme of reflection dominating these exchanges was that of the relationship among researchers, civil society, and political decision-makers, which is characterized by the importance of identifying the needs of populations thanks to research, by problems of funding, and by promoting the results of the research.

The discussion underlined the pertinence of the relationship among researchers, civil society, and political decision-makers. Concerning the relationship between research and political decision-making, it is acknowledged that decision-makers must call on researchers to identify the needs of populations. But researchers do not ask the same questions and do not have the same outlooks. Politicians are concerned with the short-term, up to the next election. Even though states seek the help of researchers, the results that the latter wish to obtain must appear quickly, even though only long-term work makes it possible to obtain satisfactory research results. To be able to respond to politicians, researchers must be able to anticipate their questions, and thus carry out basic research and not only research determined by targeted funding.

In view of this analysis, it thus seems preferable to build a bridge between the research world and the world of political decision-makers. A government takes decisions, and it must be aware

of their risks. Yet, sometimes the researcher is not the right person to talk to. It also happens that the government refuses the results of the research. An interdisciplinary junction must thus be found between the two spaces that are the time for research and the time for decision-making. The creation of a multidisciplinary space is an exercise other than that of research. Researchers must not only appeal to decision-makers and international institutions; they must also turn to civil society so that it takes over in terms of advocacy.

In this respect, researchers have adopted an approach still in its embryonic stages, for developing mediation by civil society between researchers and governments. This approach is reflected, for example, by public decision-makers and members of civil society being invited to the presentation of research results. The interest that this stirs up among civil society is notable, but we must also encourage governments to make longer commitments in order to enable continuity in research. Starting up dialogue among researchers, civil society, and political decision-makers is a first step in responding to the needs of populations. But for the process to work, it is also preferable to work in developing data and making them more accessible.

It is very difficult to make forecasts and to interpret signs regarding demographic transition. At the political level, many factors must be included, such as the need for children’s schooling; there can be no certainty with regards to change in society. An essential element for this evolution is to take into account demand. As indicated above, it is necessary to carry out research based on collection and analysis of relevant data in order to identify this demand, which expresses the needs of populations.

Demographers analyze the dynamics, but the question is to know how to use this research afterwards. Such research represents instruments upon which the correct political decisions can be made. But for these results to be used by the public decision-makers, they must be made accessible. This first of all implies a significant effort in training in demographics and economics, but also adaptation to the cultural context in order to be persuasive about the importance of research and thus its funding.

The funding and reinforcement of partnerships is one of the issues of advocacy targeting actors

of civil society and decision-makers of countries. For the researchers, it is important to feel the leaders' desire to take action at the national level, by including funding for research in their development plans as a priority, rather than relying on international agencies. The relationship between research and political decision could thus be reinforced if the research project is planned beforehand and incorporated into the decision-making process.

To promote the statistical tool as a tool to help in decision-making, we must encourage good governance, i.e. encourage results-based management and the setting up of monitoring mechanisms. After the research results are presented, we must be able to reach the decision-makers so that they respect their commitments. In this context, the challenges are to know how civil society can play a support role and to deal with the difficulties of continuity, monitoring, social mobility (within ministries, etc.), and lack of transparency—this keeping in mind that in some countries the people in charge of these issues can change often or not be the most apt to be responsible for them, given political instability and/or problems of corruption and co-optation.

Qualitative surveys are generally programmed to go more in depth into the results of quantitative surveys. Yet, qualitative surveys are often sacrificed. While this is linked to lack of funding for analysis, good-quality research requires a certain cost. Without suitable systems to motivate and pay researchers, a basic problem remains. The special advantage of the DEMENTREND program is the very positive way that it always associates a quantitative survey with a qualitative survey.

1. The Rio +20 United Nations Conference was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 20 – 22 June 2012. The conference was the occasion to review the implementation of and to follow up on the 1992 Earth Summit.

III.

Presentation of the projects and advocacy elements targeting political decision-makers

Project 1

Consequences of Family-Building Strategies and Household Composition on Schooling and Child Labor in Urban Burkina Faso

Country

Burkina Faso

Presentation

Jean-Francois Kobiane, ISSP

Scientific discussant

Philippe Hamelin

Talks

• *Family Size and*

Educational Social

Inequalities within the

Family in Ouagadougou.

Lachaud, J., LeGrand, T.,

Kobiané, J-F. & Adjiwanou, V.

• *Fertility Decline and School*

Enrollment of Children in

Urban Burkina Faso: What

Causal Relationship? Moussa

Bougma, Thomas K. Legrand,

Jean-François Kobiane

• *Being Ahead or behind*

in School and the Role of

Siblings in the Educational

Strategies of Families

(Ouagadougou, Burkina

Faso). Nolwen Henaff,

Marie-France Lange

Summary

Contrary to the rather mixed results observed in other contexts in Africa with regards to the nature of the relationship between fertility and children's schooling, the results of the research project revealed that there is indeed a negative effect on schooling depending on the number of siblings of the child. This effect becomes stronger as the child advances in the school system. It also comes out that families are extremely active in their children's schooling, in particular through support from the extended family. Large families are those that have the greatest chances of benefiting from this expanded family support; however, this does not seem to compensate the higher levels of schooling observed in small families.

Analysis of intergenerational transmission of education reveals that granddaughters whose grandmothers have been to school or who have learned to read have more chances, like their mothers, of having access to education. Moreover, the level of education of the mother remains a determinant in the child's probability of having access to different levels of teaching. Finally, the research results show that a large proportion of children enter school late, after age 6, and that moreover these children have a greater risk of repeating a grade during their school years. In terms of political implications, the zoning of schools at the city level must be reviewed, to enable better distribution of the school provision and to increase the preschool provision

for the positive effects expected from the latter on the children's advancement in school. Finally, the strengthening of literacy programs and schooling beyond the primary level, as well as the development of reproductive health policies, can contribute to better health for mothers and children, accentuate the fertility decline, and generate better family investment in schooling.

“Candid” approach and discussion with the audience: Mr. Nourou Adjibade, ONG CÉRADIS

The points of interest as advocacy issues are dual in nature: first, revision of the population policy, especially concerning reproductive health and family planning in Burkina Faso, and secondly the use of the results of the study throughout all of Burkina Faso for the advocacy.

The results highlight the pertinence of a number of national policy choices. All the while showing the interest of the policies, we must show that they should be reinforced with regards to the educational provision, and to the demand in terms of reproductive health.

Project 2

Education, Information, Sexuality and Fertility Among Adolescents

Country

Cameroon, Ghana

Presentation

Elise Huillery, PSE, Poverty Action LAB & Odile Mbadi, IRESCO

Discussant

Gervais Beninguisse

Summary

The objective of the study was to determine the compared impact of prevention campaigns targeting young girls in the 8th grade, on risk behaviors. The test dealt with both the message content (information on the average risk of contamination, or rather on the relative risks according to the partner's age) and with the issuer of the message (specialized personnel from outside the school versus the teachers).

The survey, after information sessions, covered 2840 girls as well as 384 girlfriends and 490 sisters of the girls who attended the sessions. The results show that, whatever the type of message issued or the type of speaker, the results are different depending on the urban or rural environment and the region. This suggests that the local contexts are essential ingredients to take into consideration when designing prevention campaigns. The positive point is the spreading of the message among the social network of the adolescent girls.

“Candid” approach and discussion with the audience: Mrs. Nora Le Jean, ONG Lafia Matassa, Niger

Some key messages were noted that can be utilized for advocacy:

- The message from the consultants, who use “modern” communication tools, is remembered better;
- The importance of complementarity between the consultants and persons who can pass on the message (school personnel, parents, etc.);
- Young people show selective attention, focusing on messages that mean the most to them;
- Girls talk among themselves about new messages: those that mean the most to them.

Girls were the target of the study, because they have a much higher prevalence of HIV. Even though data for boys were collected, it was not possible to process and analyze their data. The study gives an impression of incompleteness, because it does not seek to identify and analyze the factors responsible for making the rate of HIV prevalence much higher among girls than boys. This shows that we are unaware of certain gender-related difficulties, and in particular the problem of relations of power and inequalities in terms of gender in the study, which are nonetheless key issues for the advocacy messages.

From the same point of view, there were not enough questions on the social norms in the basic survey. The gender inequalities reflect realities of societies that perpetuate practices, traditions, and customs in conflict with women's rights. Providing numerical data is very useful in helping people involved in advocacy put these into question and fight the in-depth causes of gender inequality that impede women's economic and social empowerment. These data can be used to show the interests states have in supporting the evolution of social norms and the improvement of the status of girls and women. Gender is a crosscutting issue at the heart of the debate on demographic transition, and not a secondary issue. Women must have the same opportunity as men and contribute equally to the demographic transition and development of the country.

Project 3

Poverty and Unmet Needs in Reproductive Health of Adolescents and Youth in Central Africa

Country

Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, DR Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Chad

Presentation

Gervais Beninguisse, IFORD
Scientific discussant
 Alice Mesnard

Talk

• *Parents and Sex Education of Adolescents and Youth in Yaoundé.* Alice Tchoumkeu, Gervais Beninguisse, Nathalie Sawadogo, Crispin Mabika Mabika

Summary

The overall objective of the project is to analyze the links between unmet reproductive health needs and poverty among youth and adolescents in nine Central African countries. The study is based on a supplementary analysis of secondary data (EDS) and of original data coming from biographical, qualitative, and situational surveys collected in Yaoundé (Cameroon) and Brazzaville (Congo). It has revealed significant results with obvious political implications, a sample of which is as follows:

- Central Africa is characterized by early sexual initiation. According to EDS data, the proportion of girls age 15-19 who have already had a sexual relation varies from 46% in Sao Tomé in 2009 to 70% in Gabon. Sexual initiation among boys occurs later.
- Premarital sexuality is presently frequent among the age 15-24 group. Over the period observed, which starts at age 10 and goes up to the date of the survey, 57.6% of interviewees in Yaoundé and 63.1% in Brazzaville were already sexually active.
- Girls who are sexually active non-users of contraception and who do not or no longer desire children, or those who become pregnant at an unsuitable time, are considered to have unmet needs for family planning. Over the observation period, the frequency of unmet needs in family planning (FP) in Yaoundé is 47.0% among unmarried respondents and 44.6% among married. In Brazzaville, these figures are 63.7% among unmar-

ried and 52.6% among married. Poverty stands out as a factor behind the prevalence of high-risk sexual behavior and of unmet needs in FP.

- Among girls having had at least one pregnancy during their life, 16.4% have ended up in termination of pregnancy, including 9.4% induced abortions. Adolescents and youth largely perceive the causes of induced abortions as the fear of parental disapproval of premarital sexuality and procreation, the rejection of paternity by the biological father, the desire to continue schooling, and social stigmatization.
- Parents do not talk enough about sexuality with their children despite the fact that the latter think that parents represent a credible source of information about sex education.
- The majority of adolescents and youth begin their sexual life with mistaken information about the phenomenon and the risks they take. For example, many think that the first sexual encounter cannot lead to pregnancy. Others think that a late start to female sexuality can lead to difficulties in conception. Still others think that condoms diminish sexual pleasure or cause harmful secondary effects.
- The analysis reveals a gap between the existence of official health policies that include the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and youth on the one hand, and their effective implementation, which proves to be insufficient, malfunctioning or non-formalized in the health-care facilities. In particular, there is a lack of

services adapted to the specific needs of adolescents and youth in public hospitals. Only some private hospitals that are part of the non-profit (NGO) world have specific centers for young people.

“Candid” approach and discussion with the audience: Mr. Serge Rabier & Mrs. Delphine Barry

In a survey on this theme, the researchers could enrich the studies by collecting and analyzing data with a gender-sensitive approach. If these data do not exist, what can be done to encourage states to take into account, in public policies, the problems of young girls? Girls acknowledge that their first sexual intercourse is often imposed by the boy, who refuses to wear a condom. The survey was concerned with girls who wanted to respond, but it should have explored what was hidden behind refusal. The three explanations of sexual behaviors call out to us because they ignore social norms, gender norms, and violence. The work of the researchers is an essential contribution with regards to the determinants related to the sexual and reproductive behaviors of adolescents in vulnerable situations, such as: the difference between men and women in the sexual commitment (finding a spouse, support vs. sexual needs); the issue of weaker decision-making power for girls; or the lack of knowledge and information held by girls, who also rather lack the legitimacy to look for it. Further work must be done to go more in depth into the problem of the status of the young girls. Their social status does not allow them to negotiate the terms of sexual relations with their partner well.

We may then wonder what strategies to establish so that the research program takes more into account what is not visible or is ignored, i.e. the problems of young girls age 9 to 16, and through this the public policies.

Concerning sexual and reproductive health provision as well as the associated rights, the large number of players (media, classes, friends, association, etc.) involved complicates coordination for analysis and intervention. We would have liked to have had more information on the real costs of pregnancy and of sexual and reproductive health care, and to know the outlook of health workers faced with the young girls (risk of stigmatization).

The main question we should ask ourselves is as follows: “Why, in spite of the increasingly broad provision, and the fact that the level of knowledge about reproductive health is better now than in the past, are the indicators in the matter less good?”.

The survey would have been more relevant if it had explained that the rate of pregnancies among adolescents in developing countries is much too high² and causes rates of fertility and maternal mortality to rise. Fixing this situation would lead to many benefits: improvement of the health of the mother and child, a greater number of young women finishing their education, equality of rights and opportunities, greater productivity and more jobs for women, and the fulfilment of full potential by girls and women (“the capabilities” according to the works of Amartya Sen). In order to reach these results, we can identify the following as ideas for action:

- working towards the empowerment of girls and changing the balance of power between men and women;
- dialoguing with communities for changing behavior with regards to gender norms and relationships, in particular developing advocacy targeting religious and traditional leaders so that there is strong involvement by parents in the sexuality of youth, because parents act as models for their children;
- adapt the provision of care services, and develop and diversify the information channels on sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and youth by using new messages to reach young people, within the formal framework of school or elsewhere.

². About 19% of young women in developing countries become pregnant before the age of 18. Source: *Motherhood in Childhood: Facing the challenge of adolescent pregnancy*, State of World Population 2013, UNFPA.

Project 4

Migration and Development: Comparative Analysis of Remittances, Investments and Return Migration in Senegal and DR Congo (MAFE - CoDev)

Country

Senegal, RD Congo

Presentation

Bruno Shoumaker, UCL

Scientific discussant

Yves Charbit

Talks

• *The Effects of Male*

Migration on the Status

and Role of Women and on

the Schooling of Children

in Senegal: the Case of

Parcelles Assainies in Dakar.

Papa Sakho & Rosalie Diop

• *The Effect of Post-Return*

Institutional Support on the

Reintegration of Migrants

in Their Countries of Origin.

Marie-Laurence Flahaux

Summary

Since the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), the role of migrants in the development of the countries of origin has emerged as a given in political discourse and plans of action. The objective of the MAFE-CoDev project is to put into question this political “given”: Are international migrants really the vectors of development that African and European politicians hope and pray for? The research has been carried out in two parts: **1.** analysis of the political discourse and plans of action that associate international migrations and development, in order to identify the hypotheses that have led to them, and **2.** an empiric examination of several of these hypotheses, using quantitative data from MAFE surveys in Senegal and DR Congo.

The measures to promote ties between migration and development are based on hypotheses that are largely qualified by this research. First of all, the African migrations receive attention that seems disproportionate compared to their statistical importance: contrary to generally accepted ideas—that are frequently related in political documents—these migrations are highly selective and are not made up of destitute people. Nor does the economic role of migrants necessarily correspond to expectations. For example, while migrants do participate in investments in the real estate sector, they do not necessarily do so in the

way we expect; they in fact especially invest for rental purposes. The choices and strategies of return migrants are above all based on decisions in the interest of the migrants and their family and friends, and the aid-for-return mechanisms seem effective only if they coincide with the individual interests of the migrants. Various results of this project, which was carried out in urban areas, indicate that migration responds more to individual and private reasoning than to ambitions for development on the part of the migrants.

“Candid” approach and discussion with the audience: Mr. Nuhoun Bakayogo - EQUIPOP

The study indicates that what enables success in reintegration after return is not institutional support but rather preparation time. It can be noted that the best prepared people are the most educated. This observation leads us to think that the issue of poverty remains crucial.

We can observe disillusion between the expectations of migrants benefiting from assisted voluntary return (ARV) and reality in the field. ARV can be seen to have weak impact on migrants not prepared for the return to their country of origin and who have a strong desire to return to Europe. Among the difficulties observed in migratory tendencies, we can note that the assistance proposed by governments and international organizations such as the IOM³ is not always

appropriate. As researchers, what suggestions can we make to help work out migration-related policies (return, remittances)?

Several institutional measures have been developed by states to enable investment by migrants, but these measures must conform to the latter’s expectations in order to succeed in being productive investments.

We must come up with clear suggestions for research into the advocacy to be carried out by civil society actors. The results of the studies must be clear, with aspects that can serve as a base of discussion with politicians. A distortion can be felt between political discourse and decisions on the one hand and the reality that comes out of the research on the other. The idea is to make political decision-makers come face-to-face with empirical data. Indeed, we cannot neglect the responsibility of politicians, because the migratory question is not just an ECOWAS issue, but also a North/South issue. Policy recommendations could come out of the presentations of the research, with results based on indicators. But the researchers often do not seem able to give this type of recommendation. It would be good if the political world itself would consult with researchers to obtain suggestions.

The survey indicates that, for a woman, being the head of the household does not really represent an advantage, due to the social complications and the monetary dissatisfaction that this generates. But this observation remains very superficial, and the in-depth causes must be highlighted in order to be able to use this observation in advocacy. Even though this aspect of the study is crucial, it received scant coverage in the presentation of the results.

3. International Organization for Migration: Created in 1951, IOM is the leading intergovernmental organization on the migratory scene.

Project 5

Transitions in Fertility, Schooling, and Work of Young Women in Africa: Identification of Determinants and Consequences

Country Senegal, Madagascar	Talks • <i>Cognitive achievement production in Madagascar: a value-added model approach.</i> Frédéric Aubery, David Sahn	• <i>Madagascar Young Adult Transitions Survey.</i> Harivelo Rajemison, Faly Rakotomanana
Presentation Frédéric Aubery, CERDI		
Scientific discussant Jacques Charmes		

Summary

The decisions that young people and their family take regarding the transition from school to professional life, marriage, or reproduction affect their well-being. The surveys conducted have provided two significant contributions: **1.** the obtaining of individual data on Senegal and Madagascar covering the beginning of primary school up to adult age and making it possible to deal rigorously with problems of causal inference, and **2.** statistical analysis of the transitions of youth, which sheds light on the evaluation of the importance of family, community, and political determinants of life behavior during youth, including dropping out of school (which concerns young women at the secondary school level most), entering the job market, migration, marriage, and pregnancy. The investments made will contribute to enriching the literature on poverty, population, education economics, and the job market.

“Candid” approach and discussion with the audience: Mrs. Juliette Compaore - ONG ASMADE

The study provides a significant quantity of data that highlight the possible interactions among education, health, and the socio-economic living conditions of families, with regards continuation of school education and the orientation and transition of young people.

A reading of the survey data reveals a significant reversal in trends in school enrollment of girls and boys from the secondary level in Madagascar and a significant reduction in the number of girls who finish their studies and thus of those who

could participate in all the decision-making levels in the country's construction.

This brings up questions about political choices in development matters and the role of women and gender in public policies and the interrelations that must be strengthened among the country's various ministerial departments.

The data also bring up questions on the weight of tradition, the means invested by the parents/ their roles in schooling, keeping girls at school, continuation of studies for girls and boys, and also their influence on the choice of transitions for youth.

Two phenomena act as an impediment to the education of young girls. First, secondary schools in isolated regions are located far from their homes, and insecurity and distance pose problems. Further, the parents sometimes decide that the advantages of sending girls to school are too weak compared to the investment, thereby reinforcing gender discrimination in access to jobs.

Project 6

Health Risks and Migration

Country Nigeria, Tanzania	Talks • <i>Risk Sharing and Internal Migration.</i> Joachim de Weerd, Kalle Hirovonen.	• <i>Quality, accessibility and the demand for health care in Nigeria.</i> Elisa Cavorta, Alice Mesnard, Wendy Janssens	• <i>Migration and The Equilibrium Prevalence of Infectious Diseases.</i> Alice Mesnard, Paul Seabright
Presentation Alice Mesnard, IFS			
Scientific discussant Gervais Beninguisse	• <i>Asymmetry of Information within Family Networks.</i> Joachim de Weerd, Garance Genicot, Alice Mesnard	• <i>Socio-economic status, gender and health expenditures in rural Nigeria: The financial burden of chronic and acute illnesses.</i> Wendy Janssens et Al.	

Summary

The research on health risks and migration had three parts: health care access in rural areas in Nigeria, migration and sharing of risks in Tanzania, and migration and contagious diseases. It seeks to understand peoples' various strategies for obtaining health care or not, according to the costs and provision of health care. In the rural areas of Nigeria, we can see that more than one-third of people do not seek treatment in the case of chronic or acute illness. When treatment is sought, the cost is very high and represents more than a third of per-head household consumption; thus, the poorest receive treatment less. There is also a big difference between men and women: Women receive treatment less, and when they do receive treatment they spend less. The migrants finance the treatments for those who have not migrated but self-insure with other migrants. The results of this second study suggest that pressure to give explains migrant remittances better than do altruistic motivations. Finally, the third study concludes that migration does not have an effect in terms of epidemiology of infectious diseases and should not be limited.

“Candid” approach and discussion with the audience: Mrs. Caroline Traore - EQUIPOP Afrique de l'Ouest

The different projects present the barriers faced by people in terms of access to treatment, as well as the differences in the latter accord-

ing to the social strata. Given the responsibility governments have in granting protection to the most vulnerable, civil society has an important role to play in influencing states to remove the barriers that prevent populations from enjoying their rights to the accessibility of health care. The results can also be used to show public authorities the challenges that remain to be taken up to reach the MDGs and to respect their commitments in public health matters.

The advocacy actions must urge governments to bring health services as close to the populations as possible, and in particular to meet the needs of poor households that do not have access to quality health care. Rather than opt for subsidizing health care for certain poor families, which is not a sustainable solution, the research and advocacy must be oriented towards solutions for developing health insurance or mutual benefit societies.

The study has included the gender approach, by showing that women seek treatment less than men. Nevertheless, the fundamental reasons for this observation are not explained. This question is worth going into deeper in order to provide information that might fuel advocacy targeting public authorities to have them fight gender inequalities in the right to health care.

Project 7

Migration, Labor Market, and Demographic Dynamics in Sub-Saharan Africa, (MIMADEM)

Country

Senegal, Mali, Cameroon

Presentation

Anne-Sophie Robilliard, DIAL

Scientific discussants

Jacques Charmes & Philippe Hamelin

Talks

• *The impact of fertility on household economic status in Cameroon, Mali and Senegal.* Mathias Kuepié & Hamadou Saïdou

• *The effect of the number of siblings on education in sub-Saharan Africa: evidence from a natural experiment.* Mathias Kuepie & Michel Tenikue

• *Impact of Fertility on the Economic Activity of Women in Three Sub-Saharan African Countries.* Ada Nayihouba & Anne-Sophie Robilliard

• *Determinants of labor market gender inequalities in Cameroon, Senegal and Mali: the role of human capital and of fertility burden.* Mathias Kuepie, Dzossa Anaclet & Samuel Kelodjoug

• *Contextual and Individual Determinants In the Integration of Young People into the Labor Market in Cameroon, Mali, and Senegal.* Samuel Nouetagni & Roland Moodjom

Summary

The MIMADEM project set out to re-examine the relationships between demographic dynamics and economic dynamics in Africa through the notion of demographic dividend, by emphasizing the role of the labor market. Above and beyond the results of a methodological nature, an initial set of research concerned itself with the issue of impact of fertility on poverty. All the results suggest a negative impact from fertility on the economic status of households on the one hand and on the school results of children on the other. Another set of research concerned itself with the issue of the economic activity of women and their integration into the labor market. The results indicate firstly that the participation by women in the three countries since the 1970s is characterized by an upward trend, which is nevertheless marked by many changes in tendency that are difficult to explain. Moreover, the results suggest on the one hand that fertility does not seem to have significant impact on the participation of women in the labor market, whatever the country, social background, or age group considered. On the other hand, concerning insertion, the results show that, even if they had the same level of

education as men, women showed less chance of entering the upper echelon segment because education is less effective for them.

Two other research projects concern themselves with the integration of young people into the labor market. Initial research indicated that the individual determinants of the status of integration of young people vary according to the country. A second analytical research project conducted on biographical data shows that young people from privileged backgrounds have a greater chance of becoming salaried employees than their fellow youth from underprivileged backgrounds.

“Candid” approach and discussion with the audience: Dr. Issa Sabo, ONG Lafia Matassa - Niger

Youth employment is a crucial issue in sub-Saharan Africa, because of the large size of the young population there and because of its arrival in the labor market. Sub-Saharan African youth face the lack of adequate framework and policy for regularization of the labor market, whose consequence is lack of economic evolution that can absorb this labor.

Civil society thus has a key role to play in advocacy to make the adoption of national policies for youth employment national priorities. The researchers could support this idea by providing political decision-makers with recommendations for the development of an employment framework inspired by the prospects stemming from the results of their studies.

Even if actions are carried out at the national level through a policy of integrating young people, these latter should be targeted in order to take into account regional specificities, or gaps depending on socio-economic background, in order to give rise to better integration into the labor market.

Work by women is another traditional theme studied by this research. Contrary to the traditional hypothesis according to which work and motherhood are incompatible, the research indicates that the relationships observed between employment and female fertility are mixed. In order to be able to utilize such results in advocacy, we must first consolidate the knowledge and analysis of the determinants that influence women's access to the labor market and their empowerment, especially in economic terms.

Many women work in the informal sector or exercise non-income-generating activities. In order to influence policies in this field, it would be good to use qualitative indicators and to determine which types of jobs women have, and at what level.

IV.

Input on three-way dialogue and advocacy (researchers – civil society – donors)

“The Demographic Transition in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel: Challenges and Prospects”

Jean-Pierre Guengant

demographer and director emeritus of research at Institut de recherche pour le développement

Mr. Guengant focused his presentation on the link between economic growth and demographic growth in Africa and in the world, the demographic transition in Africa and in the world, and, lastly, on the determinants in close relation with fertility.

His analysis reveals that the demographic evolution of sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel is very exceptional due to its demographic growth, which is three times higher than in Europe. It has continued for 50 years and hindered increase in the per capita gross domestic product (GDP).

To this is added the fact that very few countries of sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel have completed or are going to complete their fertility transition. This implies a very high percentage of married women subject to many pregnancies and thus with risks for their health. At the same time, the rates of maternal mortality and infant mortality are decreasing. However, the percentages of children suffering stunted growth still remain too high.

Moreover, compared to the determinants in close relation with fertility, Mr. Guengant notes that the contraceptive revolution is far from complete in sub-Saharan Africa. In this context, the period total fertility rate is lower in urban than in rural areas, whereas the rate of prevalence of contraceptives is weaker in rural than in urban areas. These gaps are more pronounced in sub-Saharan Africa than elsewhere in the world.

In conclusion, faced with the slow pace of fertility decline, the political decision-makers must use two levers of change: promoting use of contraception and making socio-cultural norms evolve (change in the ideal number of children). To do so, it is necessary to improve services, stimulate demand, and create an environment (in political, social, and religious terms) that is more favorable to family planning. Without this, the sub-Saharan Africa countries will not be able to open the window of opportunity needed to capture the demographic dividend. In any event, continuing current trends is not sustainable because of their non-negligible cost on the economy, on health, and on the environment.

The discussion following Mr. Guengant's presentation was marked by divergent positions and reactions between researchers and the actors of civil society.

Some participants endeavored to emphasize the importance of investment in girls' education in order to lower fertility. Girls who go to school tend to get married later and thus to create a family when older, thereby lowering the rate of fertility and the possibility of negative consequences after giving birth. Often, the only possibility for girls who do not go to school is marriage. Education for girls has a real impact on raising the age of the beginning of fertile life, starting from middle-school age. Studies have also shown that the more educated girls are, the more receptive they are to the practice of contraception.

The participants consider that change in social norm is endogenous to society and that the link with education is also found at this level. Before dealing with the issue of contraception, we must raise the age at which girls marry. Indeed, even though the level of prevalence of contraception is very low, we can see a decrease in fertility, which can be attributed among other things to

less frequent early and forced marriages. This will continue to decrease if efforts are made in various fields such as education and health care, etc. The majority of the participants of the South are more favorable to reinforcement of and actions in education and reproductive health that are likely to intensify the demand for family planning, than to a policy focused on the provision of massive family planning.

We can observe that the prevalence of contraception remains very weak and that spacing births is the most widely used method for birth regulation. We must thus ask ourselves what factors make use of contraceptive methods so weak even though family planning has existed for 20 years.

In Senegal, despite a campaign on spacing of births and encouraging family planning policies for the last several years, health workers notice little change in behavior. Post-partum fertility is an important element, but it should be accompanied by a supplementary contraception method. In view of this observation, it would be good to look for solutions so that the family planning messages reach the target populations—especially young people—more broadly. In order to have them know about family planning in addition to post-partum, we must take advantage of the opportunity provided by the use of educational channels.

Moreover, in order to reinforce family planning and lower the rate of maternal mortality, it is especially important to improve the living conditions and status of women, especially in rural areas. The role of policies is to encourage men to consider women better than at present, in certain milieus. This is because the problem is that access to health care or to contraception often relies on the man's decision to let his wife go, or to accompany her, to a health center.

Africa is not yet fully benefiting from the demographic dividend because the demographic transition has not been completed there: Even if there are changes towards lower fertility, population growth still remains high.

The continent's political decision-makers do not yet give population policies sufficient priority within the framework of national development, and in a great majority of cases the funding of PF policies is still left to external donors. But when this funding stops, so do the policies.

To meet these different challenges, a family-planning strategy should be worked out through multiparty dialogue involving the various stakeholders, as much from civil society as from among the representatives of traditional and religious bodies. The strategy should be included in national development plans in order to promote the government's ownership of the issue and its accountability in the matter.

The participants from the Northern countries agree that education for young girls is a priority. But for all that, investment in education must not substitute for family planning, all the more so because we will have to allow for at least a decade for all the young girls to be effectively enrolled in school. Furthermore, we must not neglect the women not in school, who must also have the capacity for assimilating information. The rise in the age of marriage is positive, but for now the fertility decline is occurring slowly. Studies have also shown that, at a similar education level, there are more desired children in sub-Saharan Africa than in the rest of the world. This observation takes us back to social norms and to the socio-cultural contexts that must be taken into account to promote changes in society and behavior among people. Determining what factors are behind the higher number of desired pregnancies is necessary in order to work out an effective family planning policy. It would be helpful to work on family planning by dealing on the one hand with the question of low demand and on the other with the question of the reasons why an existing or expressed demand cannot be satisfied.

In order to benefit from a demographic dividend, we must activate all the levers of development: no lever must be ignored or given priority over another. The demographic dividend (DD) requires five simultaneous conditions: accelerating the transition, improving human capital, savings and investment, good governance, and highly productive jobs.

Today, economists have a very optimistic outlook for the economic prospects of Africa, but they do not sufficiently take into account the other factors of human development, especially recognition of women's sexual and reproductive rights, even though currently one out of five women use a method of fertility control. The transition

must be accelerated at the macro-economic and women's-rights levels. But analyzing the status of women with statistical variables seems tricky.

Commitment by authorities (both political and religious) to better access to education, health care, and jobs, as well as to providing a representation/model for the size of the ideal family represent the fundamental investments that should be implemented by African leaders.

Roundtable closing discussion: John May, Gervais Beninguisse, Yves Charbit, Jean-François Kobiane

“The avenues of dialogue between researchers and political advocacy actors”

In examining the dialogue between political decision-makers and advocacy actors, points of convergence emerge for taking action targeting the decision-makers. The main themes of reflection here are:

- identifying ideas to have research institutions start reflecting on their contribution to political decision-making;
- dialoguing with advocacy actors, by inviting them to reflect on post-2015 (post-MDG) development architecture;
- and finding out about the viewpoint and motivations of the donors, their partners, and the beneficiaries themselves.

Introduction

“Research: An Essential Contribution to the Decision-making Process on Population Dynamics”

John May - Population Reference Bureau

A wind of optimism is blowing in Africa, with its strong economic growth and the hope of reaping the possible benefits of a demographic dividend. Nevertheless, the demographic evolution of the continent is a concern. Indeed, despite Africa's strong economic growth, its demographic evolution remains slow and must speed up because the demographic growth is absorbing a large proportion of the economic growth, making rapid elimination of poverty difficult. The demographic dividend explains up to 40% of economic growth in Asia. In this region, the demographic dividend made it possible to invest in education, health care, the economy, the environment, as well as to reduce poverty. When accompanied by gender equality measures, the demographic dividend

enables rapid development and reduction of inequalities.

From the point of view of donors, and taking into account their expectations for having an impact on the political sphere, there are three zones of tension. Firstly, there is the slowness of research and the impatience of politicians. Research takes time, but the responses must be fast for the changes that must be made. Secondly, it is important to communicate the research without distorting it, which boils down to giving an account of its complexity in a simple way but without simplifying it too much. The objective of this approach is to make political decision-makers take up the issues. Finally, research must be put back into a general framework of development: Few political leaders have the required knowledge and hindsight to give a more in-depth dimension to these demographic evolutions that must be put back into their context. This requires a broad outlook that is multidisciplinary, quantitative, and qualitative.

Two conditions are required for researchers' contributions to have real impact: first, the capacity of obtaining the funding from the donor, and next that of carrying out studies in an interdisciplinary framework.

The first question that comes back most often for researchers, and especially those of the South, is that of research funding and state commitment to it, even though the states themselves ask for or commission many studies.

The case of IFORD (Institute of Demographic Training and Research) is an example of these contradictions. IFORD was created by the United Nations in 1971 with the goal of meeting the needs of states with regard to population questions. Its main missions are training, research, and technical support. Two types of research are carried out: operational research (action research), in order to respond to the problems states have in the field, and basic research, which nevertheless represents an extremely small share. A 5-year research plan is approved by taking into account the concerns of states. Many studies are the result of an institutional request, such as censuses and their analysis, the monitoring of the emergence and working out of advice on policies to reap the benefits of a demographic dividend, data to meet assistance and protection needs, or on the impact of migration on development.

Even though they are aware of the advantage of possessing research on their population, states do not always have the resources. International donors, whose restrictive procedures may pose difficulties, fund a large share of the studies. From this angle of diversification of funding, American foundations, which are showing a growing interest in French-speaking Africa and the Sahel, represent an important component, as they wish to intensify their direct funding to research programs of the South (institutions and/or researchers). The scale, diversity, and specificity of the studies to carry out require capacity building for research. The long-term objective is to be able to eventually have a breeding ground of experts to inform decision-makers and pass on to them the needs of populations (in partnership with the CSOs).

The donors thus wish to encourage partnerships, be they geographical or theme-based, as the interdisciplinary dimension contributes to improving the research. Multidisciplinarity is conducive to furthering the donors' trust, as long as the interest of the study and a clearly defined partnership among disciplines are demonstrated.

Capacity building in communication for researchers is necessary, so that they can pass on the results of their studies and dialogue with civil society and decision-makers. A communication and public-relations unit that works towards popularization (in the positive sense of the term) is a real advantage for research institutes. We must also initiate the students of journalism and political science schools, or those seeking high-level administration careers in demographics, because they will be able to pass on the research results to decision-makers and civil society.

Generally speaking, reaching the media is the way to make the voices of researchers heard and to share their analyses and ideas. Occasions must be sought on a case-by-case basis for writing op-ed articles or being interviewed by the media. Many journalists do not know population issues well, and few are trained in such issues. Nevertheless, in Africa we can observe a trend for experts in communication and for journalists to be trained in assisting researchers in disseminating their research results.

Besides the media, we must also approach members of parliament and the technical and financial partners of development cooperation bodies, be they state actors or otherwise (NGOs, United Nations agencies, GIZ, USAID, etc.).

Finally, an interesting method for having the researchers join in a field program is the use of social marketing, with the aim of leading the public target to accept, reject, modify, or voluntarily reject a behavior according to its interest, the interest of a group, or the interest of all of society.

It is by adopting these strategies that researchers can hope to assert themselves as development actors and have influence on political decision-making. It is up to researchers to become agents of change. Even though not all researchers have the desire to participate in political decision-making, it is up to those who want to stimulate discussions to show the way and demonstrate that it is possible to impose a theme both in the national arena and on the international arena.

V. Focuses for reflection and capitalization

Generally speaking, what ensued from this conference were recommendations to improve the effectiveness of a future program that would be part of the same approach as the DEMTREN program, which is based on the issues of population and migration in sub-Saharan Africa.

We also note that it is necessary to go deeper into certain focuses for reflection and to capitalize the lessons drawn from the various presentations. Several focuses for reflection among the stakeholders came out and were covered more in-depth along with the following observations and recommendations:

Researchers – political decision-makers dialogue: Are researchers agents of change?

It is crucial to make sure that research results are disseminated in the most appropriate way possible to political decision-makers. Accessible results, dialogue with influential advocacy actors, and innovative channels for dissemination are the guarantee that the decision-makers will take the research results into account better. In general, most researchers do not approach political decision-makers directly because they do not think they are or do not wish to be a discussion partner. They prefer to rely on collaboration with international organizations (NGOs, UN agencies, bilateral cooperation programs), civil society, and members of parliament to give political clout to their findings. To make this dialogue richer, researchers must provide accessible and relevant data to the other development stakeholders that will act as a source of information and decision-making by politicians in the improvement of peoples' living conditions and well-being.

Researchers – civil society dialogue: Is action research an advocacy tool?

Researchers have been criticized for being cut off from the world and working out of step with the challenges of the populations observed. Dialoguing with and listening to civil society is an issue that must be integrated into building the research project. This collaboration will further exchange on the specific needs and constraints of each stakeholder.

Determining as specifically as possible the challenges of civil society and providing them localized and comprehensible responses requires interaction with a not-for-profit world that is capable of transmitting people's concerns, by giving voice not only to traditional and religious authorities, but also to those who generally do not speak out. A committed approach that combines social demands and economic policy is a guarantee that the results be taken up by all the actors and be usable by the political sphere.

Finally, in order to respond to these concerns, the stakeholders of future programs are encouraged to expand their work horizons and to interest themselves in work methodologies such as action research. This concept of "action research" represents a specific approach in social studies that is based on a deliberate action to transform reality. The goals of an intervention using action research are to:

- bring together actors who together determine the set of problems concerning a common situation (in this context, the researcher is not considered as someone "outside" the process);
- produce continuously, with involvement by the stakeholders in all the stages of knowledge that are agents of transformation;
- characterize the essential dimensions of the situations encountered and reveal the aspects that are impossible to obtain by traditional methods;
- have the stakeholders join in working out the solutions to implement;
- propose active and participative pedagogy that encourages the acquisition of new skills (analyzing a context and setting forth the issues with one's own words);
- rely on the creativity of individuals and groups to propose innovative solutions.

The advantage of this approach is that it enables local communities to themselves identify the changes needed. This involvement furthers better identification of the problems encountered and makes it possible to share the research and the perfection of solutions between researchers and the community. This method allows the populations concerned to acquire ownership of the research and to be actors of change, this based on the use of reliable data.

Researchers – researchers dialogue: towards greater multidisciplinary?

Gaps (in terms of the nature of the disciplines concerned and of the options given priority) among researchers are acknowledged; these have a strong impact on the operational capability of work. The challenge remains to pool the differences and to take advantage of the diversity in order to make the studies richer. Four focuses for improvement have been identified:

1. Putting into question research methods requires determining a clearly defined working environment applicable to all. The great number of opinions based on geographical, theoretical, and methodological differences could stimulate dialogue beforehand, and this could determine a strict working framework necessary to promote the diversity of contributions.
2. Multidisciplinary within the working groups is a solution to open up paths of research on several angles. Multidisciplinary and the complemen-

tarity of domains of expertise (demography, sociology, anthropology, economics, law, environment, public health, etc.) and the emergence of cultural diversity in the domain of knowledge are an inestimable source of enrichment for the research, as well as a means to make sure that a subject is treated holistically.

From this angle, the research would benefit from consideration of crosscutting subjects such as gender or environment. The gender-sensitive approach was not very much included in the carrying out of studies presented at the closing conference of the DEMTREN program. Different social norms perpetuate the discriminations based on gender and the unequal balances of power between men and women, and they hinder women's access to means to regulate (their) fertility. It would be beneficial if the studies could analyze demographic tendencies in the light of the status and rights of women in society with regard to existing social and legal norms. As revealed by the UNFPA State of World Population 2013 report "Motherhood in Childhood: Facing the challenge of adolescent pregnancy," there are major challenges to take up concerning girls facing such situations, especially for girls in vulnerable situations.

Faced with the persistence of gender inequalities, gender issues should thus be included in the calls for tender and the terms of reference of future programs dealing with these subjects (prerequisites and indicators of monitoring and evaluation).

3. Networks of researchers could be approached to support and give orientation to the work teams: The Population and Poverty Research Network (PopPov) and the International Network of Participatory Action Research (PAR) are two examples of reflection, action, and support groups that also work on the theme of demography.

The environmental context, the problems related to natural resources (food and energy), water access and treatment, and the confrontation between infrastructure needs and urban growth stimulated by attachment to individual housing are all challenges that highlight the need for dialoguing within the research community.

The current debates on "degrowth," an ecologist movement that advocates the establishment of immediate measures to reduce environmental impact and carbon footprint, are also being taken up by the research world and are having an effect on population issues⁴.

4. Emphasizing research whose results are less academic and more easily usable for civil society, political decision-makers and donors requires data analysis that takes into account existing social norms and that endeavors to defend certain positions and ideas before the public decision-makers. Multidisciplinarity and collaboration among researchers, as well as involvement by actors of civil society when preparation of the research starts, are the first stages towards committed actions.

Researchers – donors: Create a “win-win” relationship?

The researcher is the meeting point between the issue in the field and the donor funding his/her work. It is thus essential to reinforce a “win-win” relationship.

From the donors’ point of view the issues of operational capability and difficulty of comprehension of results are the most frequent reproaches made and are thus the most urgent to rectify.

Some recommendations have been put forward to motivate donors and build up their loyalty:

- Give more opportunity to mixed-method studies that combine qualitative and quantitative, for in-depth comprehension of the logics of the phenomena studied;
- Provide for precise tools for monitoring the processes of research (observatories) in order to provide real-time information on progress or difficulties encountered, and to discuss possible program adaptations;
- Propose new calls for tender, with clear and precise definition of expectations in terms of promotion of family planning and the publication of results in magazines and specialized or general-public websites.

Research results: new dissemination opportunities

To facilitate the dissemination of research results, the various modern communication tools should be taken advantage of. We now all have the means, via Internet (either individually or via reflection groups) to share ideas without having to expect journalists to do everything. Social networks and the blogosphere are tools accessible to all and that allow one to remain independent.

They go hand-in-hand with popularization of studies, to reach a broader public.

Think tanks are becoming more credible, with broader fields of action. They can be places where research is promoted among an expanded base of influential actors, through articles, studies, conferences, and forums.

Social marketing is also one of the innovative tools and works with an approach focused on the target public. This is why it is important for researchers to make their writings readable and adapted to a specific demand.

4. cf. Global Footprint Network, an international think tank measuring ecological sustainability through the Ecological Footprint, a compatibility tool that measures the quantity of natural resources available at a country, continent, or global scale; how much are used; by whom; and which.

VI. Conclusion

The DEMTREN program closing conference was rich in lessons. These will help the donors better understand not only the difficulties and constraints of research, but also the positive results that can be used as a base to develop new ideas and solutions for future programs.

During the conference, all the participants agreed to conclude that over-sustained population growth in Africa risks compromising the development of the continent. Nonetheless, a rather lively discussion occurred between those who supported a sustained family planning policy to curb this growth and those who upheld taking prolonged action on the determinants in close relation with fertility (i.e. education and reproductive health). The former maintain that the growth is too fast to allow for development and that working on its determinants would take too much time. The latter affirm that, as progress has been made in educational and reproductive-health matters, the demographic transition is bound to accelerate; it thus seems to them more appropriate to work to stimulate demand rather than provide a significant family planning provision, for which there is no assurance that the population will respond positively.

Should we work on provision or on demand? It seems difficult to choose between these two positions. However, the results of the different research projects carried out within the DEMTREN program show that action on demand is relatively effective, on the condition that it be accompanied by a policy of provision of family planning that responds to it.

The research projects note that progress has been made in terms of education and health care in Africa over the last decade. They shed very interesting light on the African continent’s demo-

graphic trend. In particular, they highlight three key points for the demographic evolution enabling the continent to benefit from the demographic dividend for its development, in order to thereby reduce extreme poverty. Education, health care, and the taking into account of gender for adolescents are the fundamental points that emerge from their various studies carried out as part of the program. On the other hand, there was seen to be a lack of reliable data to study the evolution of the population in detail, especially in rural areas.

Education

Initiated in 2000, the United Nation’s Education for All (EFA) has helped in very significantly reducing illiteracy. The ISSP project in Burkina Faso shows a relationship between fertility and schooling. It observes the negative effect of the number of siblings on children’s schooling. The MIMADEM project (Senegal, Mali, Cameroon) for its part shows a negative impact from fertility on the socio-economic status of households and on the school results of children. The education of children has an important role, but progress remains to be achieved from the point of view of quality, chiefly for preventing young girls from dropping out of school, as observed by the studies in Burkina Faso and Madagascar.

Health care

Despite a significant decline, infant mortality still remains high and mother/child health has made progress (though less than in the rest of the developing world). On the other hand, the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents (boys and girls) remains a significant problem, as shown by the study conducted by IFORD in Central Africa. Adolescents are not very informed or have mistaken information about risks during sexual intercourse, both in terms of exposition to sexually transmittable diseases and of pregnancy. There is no specialized health center for adolescents, and the dissemination of information targeting them must be adapted to each context, as shown by the Iresco project (Cameroon, Ghana).

The gender dimension

Gender is an implicit variable of the studies carried out as part of DEMTREN. The results show that young girls drop out of school early, that women with the same qualifications as men have less qualified jobs, and that women seek health care less than men—and when they do, they spend less. Gender has such importance that it should be incorporated in studies systematically and explicitly, and even be subject to specific studies.

To conclude, the DEMTREN program provides results that must support advocacy (a) and open up paths for new research actions/programs (b):

a. advocacy

The necessity of keeping young adolescent girls in the school system and of improving education in sexual and reproductive health as much at school as in the health centers dedicated to taking care of adolescent girls and boys are very important points highlighted by the DEMTREN program. This observation must be the subject of advocacy that targets authorities, in order to reinforce the school system so that young girls between 11 and 16 do not drop out. It must also stimulate the setting up of information systems and specialized structures dealing with the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents.

b. new paths for research

In rural areas, there are no studies that allow us to understand why the demographic transition is lagging behind so much. We must thus intensify the research effort in this field. Action research is becoming a necessity for perfecting suitable methods for disseminating messages adapted to the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents, and also for proposing contraceptive methods that best correspond to each woman/group of women, for example.

Africa is a very diverse continent, and if we want the demographic transition to progress rapidly, we are going to have to adapt the population policies to each socio-cultural context, be they religious, economic, or generational. Being able to carry out more numerous and more diversified research is going to be required, and the two priorities will be to provide capacity building for research institutions themselves and to train many new researchers about and for the continent.

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