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## (THE) POLITICAL:

As a forum for debate and action to bring about what we collectively deem fair and desirable, the political focuses on the ways in which we forge connections. As such, it involves every level of social life, from relationships between couples to those between nations. For an issue such as social justice, or gender equality, to become a political matter, several conditions must be met: knowledge of the issue; agreement on how things should be; mobilisation by the community or social groups; and proposed solutions. Feminist movements, from ecofeminism to decolonial feminism, contribute to political ideas and constructions with a view to justice and social well-being.

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## Editorial

It has been impossible to ignore recent demonstrations by an ultra-nationalist, reactionary patriarchy that have been taking centre stage around the world. Backed by substantial funding, disparate groupings of states, far-right organisations, religious fundamentalists and the wealthy conservative elite continue to shape an anti-gender, anti-democratic agenda. They are infiltrating decision-making and discussion forums, even inviting themselves to gender equality rallies, as demonstrated by the attendance of the former Hungarian president, and poster child of the anti-rights movement, at the latest Women Deliver conference in Kigali.

In 2023-24, Equipop focused much of its efforts on deciphering this threat and on calling for action by publishing studies, calling on the media, and leading public debates. For there is no ready-made solution to counter this onslaught, rather simply a conviction: one of a political way forward, where each and every person and organisation has a part to play. Neutrality is not an option. It is more vital than ever for us to give thought to how we organise our societies and build a common world. In terms of ideas, this means countering the fatal temptation to withdraw into nationalist ideas, taking action against ultra-commodification, and shining a light on our interdependencies. The universal remains without question our desired outcome, but we must bear in mind this cannot happen by decree, and remains work in progress, through dialogue fed into by the array of struggles around the world. In terms of mobilisation, aside from a magical meeting of minds, it is about forging broad, transnational alliances focused on common goals, that combine a range of approaches (advocacy, social media campaigns, legal action, occupying public spaces, etc.). We should be guided by respect for our differences, a mindful approach to the power imbalance that inevitably influences how we come together, and awareness of the connections between sexist, racist and economic inequalities.

Feminist movements and organisations play a crucial part in implementing this roadmap, and do so everyday. They provide invaluable critical insight to help understand the complex nature of contemporary issues, and have come up with many highly practical solutions. That is why Equipop is so proud to have provided financial support to 44 front-line organisations in 10 countries, especially in West Africa, which has gone from crisis to crisis. This support has enabled activists to secure premises, take care of their volunteer staff, set up their own media outlets, raise awareness among young people about gender-based violence, lobby decision-makers to introduce more ambitious policies in support of sexual and reproductive health and rights, and work with researchers to produce knowledge. We are also very proud to have facilitated meetings and partnerships at a regional and international level. By working together, we have upheld a progressive agenda in several political arenas, including opening doors for activists who have limited access to such places of power. Finally, back in the field, we have worked alongside grassroots movements, social and healthcare professionals, organisations and researchers to try out potential solutions to social problems.

All this work can only be achieved through working relationships based on trust, and a clear ambition to contribute together to a fairer, more sustainable world. Thank you for being part of this community of action!

Aurélie Gal-Régniez  
Director

Sisterhood support Partnership Mobilization  
Building feminist alternatives Building feminist alternatives



# In 2023

resources Mobilising our feminist resources Mobilising our feminist resources

## We cemented our support to women's rights organisations and campaigners

- 82 new grants awarded to 52 partners in 10 countries, totalling over €3.3 million (up 52% compared to 2022).
- New partnerships developed with nine organisations and movements.
- Co-facilitation of the second Feminist Agora in Benin, which brought together almost 65 feminist campaigners from West and Central Africa, the MENA region and Haiti.

## We ensured policy makers heard the voices of young people and feminists

- Conferences organised on the issues of gender equality and SRHR, involvement in UN processes across three continents: in Cotonou, Lusaka, Dakar, Paris, the Hague, Geneva, and New York.
- Letters, signed by hundreds of organisations working actively in several dozen countries, sent to policy makers and diplomats to uphold the rights of women and LGBTQIA+ people.
- Support provided to a community of 400 young people working for 'comprehensive education and information' in partnership with UNESCO, who were empowered through a cycle of webinars to help fuel their own advocacy work in various arenas.
- A delegation of 25 young feminists from West Africa given support to attend the Women Deliver conference in Rwanda and advocate for a transformative approach to SRHR.

## We promoted, produced and shared knowledge

- Continuation of the 'Feminism & Health' and 'Francophone Sisterhood' discussion series, during which we addressed issues such as a feminist approach to SRHR, online violence, creating and transforming spaces with the media, joy and anger in campaigning, training future care givers in the fight against SGBV, upholding access to healthcare for all in response to anti-rights movements in hostile environments.
- Publication of the report: 'Pushing back against masculinist discourses online: recommendations to the European Union and its Member States to fight sexist and lgbtphobic cyberviolence' in association with the Gender in Geopolitics Institute.
- Publication of the report: 'One step forward for the far right, one step back for women's rights - 2024 European elections and gender equality'.
- Capitalization on the Youth on Alert project 'Towards democracy in healthcare! Effective healthcare accountability through the significant and inclusive participation of young people', in association with our partners (BURCASO, SOS JD, RAES, JED), based on the experience of the Youth on Alert project auditors.
- Facilitating the symposium 'Finding a space of our own between campaigning and research to talk about a feminist approach to SRHR!' in Benin, which brought together 40 researchers and activists from 14 countries in West and North Africa, as well as Europe.



# Equipop's partners in West Africa

## BEN

### BENIN

- Association Barika
- REPSFECO
- WANEP
- Jeunesse Regard et Actions (JRA-ONG)
- Association Yonba
- Jeunes Médiateurs du Bénin
- Le réseau Social Watch Bénin
- Maison de la société civile
- Jeunes Médiateurs pour la Paix (JMP)
- Osnia GBANKOTO
- CeRADIS (Centre de réflexions et d'actions pour le développement intégré et la solidarité)
- Filles en Action
- Fondation des Jeunes Amazones pour le Développement
- GRAFED-Ong (Groupe de recherche d'action et de formation en épidémiologie et en développement)
- Jeunes Filles Actrices de Développement
- Le BACAR (Bureau d'Appui-Conseils d'Afrique pour les Réalisations)
- OSV/Jordan (Organisation pour le Service et la Vie)
- ROAJELF Bénin (Réseau Ouest Africain des Jeunes Femmes Leaders)
- Scoutisme Béninois
- Women in Power Association
- Association des Femmes pour une Relève Orientée (AFRO BENIN)
- RESCUE AND HOPE
- Ecran Bénin

## BFA

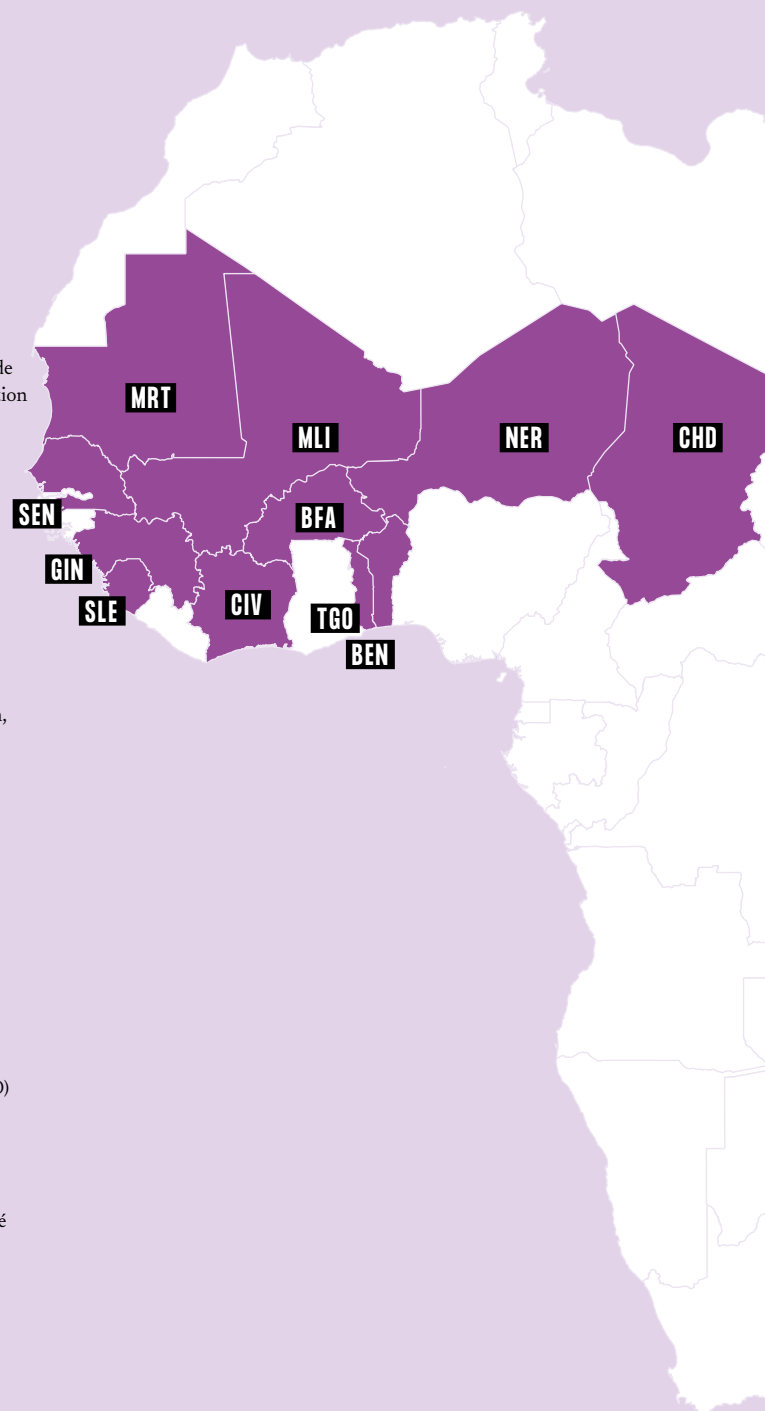
### BURKINA FASO

- ASMADE (Association Songui Manégré / Aide au développement endogène)
- BURCASO (Conseil burkinabé des ONG/OBC et associations de lutte contre les IST / VIH / sida)
- WOMA Média (nouveau nom de Emma L Infos)
- Femin-in
- IPBF (Initiative Pananetugri pour le bien-être de la femme)
- MMF/ANBF (Marche Mondiale des Femmes / Antenne Nationale du Burkina Faso)
- SOS/JD (SOS Jeunesse & Défis)
- Taafé Vision
- Voix des Femmes Burkina
- Women in Global Health
- Association des Femmes Juristes du Burkina Faso
- Diakonia - Burkina
- Collectif des féministes du Burkina Faso
- ADDAD Burkina Faso
- REPAFER BURKINA
- AGMS (Aucune Grossesse en Milieu Scolaire)

## CIV

### IVORY COAST

- Actuelles
- AFJCI (Association des femmes juristes de Côte d'Ivoire)
- ASAPSU (Association de Soutien à l'Autopromotion Sanitaire et Urbaine)
- CPDEFM (Citoyennes pour la promotion et défense des droits des enfants, femmes et minorités)
- Gouttes Rouges
- LEADAFRICAINES
- Ligue Ivoirienne des Droits des Femmes
- MESSI (Mission des jeunes pour l'Education, la Santé, la Solidarité et l'Inclusion)
- ONEF (Organisation nationale pour l'enfant, la femme et la famille)
- SOS Village d'enfants - Côte d'Ivoire
- Stop au chat noir
- RIJES
- WOMAN AFRICAN FREEDOM (WAF)
- Réseau paix et sécurité des femmes de l'espace CEDEAO (REPSFECO)
- Réseau des Médiatrices de paix
- RJPS
- Opinion éclairée
- Plateforme de la Société civile pour la Paix et la démocratie en Côte d'Ivoire (PSCPD)
- Organisation pour la Réflexion et l'Action Féministe (ORAF)
- Engage and Share
- Tell' Arts



## GIN

### GUINEE

- CAM (Club des Amis du Monde)
- CODD Guinée
- Club des Jeunes Filles Leader de Guinée
- OSH - Guinée (Organisation de Secours aux Handicapées de Guinée)
- WAFRICA Guinée
- POSSAV (Plateforme des organisations de la société civile appui à la vaccination)
- ONG SARA (Structure d'Appui aux Réseaux d'Agriculteur-trice-s)

## MLI

### MALI

- ADDAD (Association de défense des droits des aide-ménagères et domestiques)
- AJCAD (Association des Jeunes pour la Citoyenneté Active et la Démocratie)
- AMSOPT (Association malienne pour le suivi et l'orientation des pratiques traditionnelles)
- Citoyenneté-Elles (C-Elles)
- Groupe Pivot Droit et Citoyenneté des Femmes

## MRT

### MAURITANIA

- Initiative Santé de la Reproduction
- Voix des femmes

## NER

### NIGER

- Cellule Nigérienne des Jeunes Filles Leaders
- COJEFIL (Comité des jeunes filles leaders)
- Congafen (Coordination des organisations non gouvernementales et associations féminines nigériennes)
- Hayatoune
- Lafia Matassa
- ONPSME/Baani (Organisation nigérienne pour la promotion de la santé de la mère et l'enfant)
- Scouts Niger
- DIMOL
- Femmes Actions et Développement - FAD
- Ligue Nigérienne des droits des femmes
- AJFSR (Association des jeunes Filles pour la Santé de la Reproduction)
- SOS Village d'enfants - Niger

## SEN

### SENEGAL

- ANJ SR-PF (Alliance nationale des jeunes pour la santé de la reproduction et la planification familiale)
- Collectif Plus jamais ça !
- ENDA santé
- GESTES (Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches Genre et Sociétés)
- JED (Jeunesse et développement)
- JGEN Sénégal
- LARTES- IFAN (Le laboratoire de recherche sur les transformations économiques et sociales)
- ONG 3D (démocratie, développement local, droits humains)
- RAES
- ROAJELF Sénégal (Réseau ouest-africain des jeunes femmes leaders)
- Solthis Sénégal

- Warkha TV
- YWA (Youth Women for Action)
- Gorée Institute
- Réseau Siggil Jiguéen
- ABOYA (And Bokk Yaakaar)
- BANDO
- Réseau des Féministes du Sénégal
- Sénégal Actions Féministes

## SLE

### SIERRA LEONE

- Purposeful

## CHD

### CHAD

- Ligue tchadienne des droits des femmes

## TGO

### TOGO

- WANEP-Togo (West Africa Network for peacebuilding)
- SOS Village d'Enfants - Togo
- Dimension Humaine
- ONG ALAFIA
- Réseau des femmes pour le développement du Togo/Savane (REFED)
- Negresses Féministes
- Groupe de réflexion et d'action femme, Démocratie et Développement (GF2D)
- ADCF
- Association appui au développement local (2ADL)
- ONG La Colombe
- Club des femmes des savanes
- Eugénie Gadedjisso-Tossou

# Networks

Equipop has always believed that working together acts as a powerful driver for change. In 2023, the organisation furthered its commitments to a number of networks in France, in Europe, and in francophone sub-Saharan Africa. These include:



## ALLIANCE DROITS ET SANTÉ

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

This network of French and West African civil society organisations works to improve the status and health of women and girls in West Africa



## AWID

AWID (Association for Women's Rights in Development), set up in 1982, is an international, feminist, non-profit organisation that supports movements fighting for gender justice and women's rights worldwide



## COLLECTIF PRÉVENIR & PROTÉGER

[@preveniretproteger](https://twitter.com/preveniretproteger)

This collective comprises 14 French organisations that work to safeguard the rights of children and further the rights of women and teenage girls.



## COLLECTIF SANTÉ MONDIALE

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

This collective includes nine French organisations (Action Against Hunger, Equipop, Global Health Advocates France, Médecins du Monde, One, Oxfam France, Planning Familial, Sidaction and Solthis) which advocate to make global health a French priority.



## COORDINATION SUD

Coordination SUD provides national coordination for French aid, emergency, and development NGOs and is dedicated to supporting and representing their positions before public and private institutions in France, in Europe and worldwide.



## COUNTDOWN 2030 EUROPE

[countdown2030europe.org](http://countdown2030europe.org)

The Countdown 2030 Europe network comprises 15 organisations that work to make sexual and reproductive health and rights a priority issue in the development policies of European and EU countries.



## ENDFGM

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

EndFGM is a European network of NGOs which fosters European action to end female genital mutilation.



## EXCISION, PARLONS-EN!

Excision, Parlons-en! aims to help bring together organisations and other legal entities, as well as individuals, around the issue of female circumcision in France and worldwide.



## F3E

[f3e.asso.fr](http://f3e.asso.fr)

F3E (fund for the promotion of crosscutting studies, preliminary research and evaluation) is a French network of NGOs and local authorities dedicated to improving the impact and quality of international aid workers' action.



## IBP

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

With over 100 member organisations representing international nongovernmental organisations (NGO), local civil society organisations (CSO), and universities among others, the IBP network brings partners together to share best practice, experiences, and tools in order to support family planning and reproductive health programmes. Its work focuses on supporting knowledge sharing, documentation, and research into implementation.



## NOUSTOUTES

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

NousToutes is a feminist collective open to all, made up of volunteer activists whose aim is to put an end to the sexist and sexual violence to which women and children are massively subjected in France. The collective has two main objectives: to demand effective public policies against gender-based and sexual violence in terms of budget and methods, and to raise public awareness of the facts and mechanisms of genderbased and sexual violence through actions, communications and training.



## LE CENTRE ODAS

[centre-odas.org](http://centre-odas.org)

ODAS is a regional partnership mechanism dedicated to empowering the safe abortion movement across French-speaking Africa. ODAS offers training opportunities, shares best practice, coordinates strategies, mobilises funding, and facilitates networking.



## PARTENARIAT DE OUAGADOUGOU

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

The Ouagadougou Partnership was launched in 2011 during the Burkina Faso Regional Conference on Population, Development and Family Planning, by the governments of the nine francophone West African nations and their technical and financial partners, in order to spur progress on the use of family planning services in these countries.



## PLATEFORME DROITS HUMAINS

[plateformedh.fr](http://plateformedh.fr)

The Human Rights Platform is a group of French NGOs working internationally to advocate and champion human rights. It offers French NGOs focusing on this issue at international level a permanent space to share and collaborate. This enables members to raise their profile, increase their representation, connections and mutual support.



## RÉSEAU DES JEUNES FÉMINISTES D'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST

[@FeministesAO](https://twitter.com/FeministesAO)

The Human Rights Platform is a group of French NGOs working internationally to advocate and champion human rights. It offers French NGOs focusing on this issue at international level a permanent space to share and collaborate. This enables members to raise their profile, increase their representation, connections and mutual support.



# MOBILISING

**Mobilising policy makers and citizens to uphold women's rights and more broadly, to ensure feminist approaches inform how our societies are built.**



# OPPOSING INWARD-LOOKING ATTITUDES BY STANDING UNITED TO UPHOLD THE RIGHTS OF EACH AND EVERY INDIVIDUAL

Across all lands, feminist movements are taking action to build an equal society, and stem the tide of the backlash against the rights of women and LGBTQIA+ people. Equipop supports these efforts by conducting analysis, encouraging and taking part in collective initiatives, and casting light on feminist issues in institutional processes. Time to look back at a very busy year!





**B**acklash refers to the way in which conservative movements have responded to advances in the rights of women and LGBTQIA+ people, including both the strategies implemented by these conservative movements, and the tools they draw on to threaten, curtail, and flout such rights. This phenomenon is taking place to varying degrees worldwide.

In response to this, Equipop has channelled its resources into the collective efforts of feminist movements to build egalitarian, peaceful societies, and uphold the rights of each and every person through an intersectional approach. Quite naturally, this covers a range of issues, including action against sexual and gender-based violence, promoting comprehensive sexuality education, and involving women in decision-making. Providing increased financial support to feminist movements is a key part of its advocacy work, as feminist activists in all their guises are the most legitimately placed and most capable of bringing about change. Finally, the concept of 'feminist foreign policy' is used as an objective to guide international transformation.

**Equipop's advocacy work could be summarised simply as: reflecting on issues together, joining forces, and setting out to influence those in positions of power.**

## Advocacy based on collective thinking

Advocacy requires constant analysis of the issues at stake and the balance of political power. Alongside our civil society partners, through regular strategic discussions, and dialogue with the authorities - at the right distance, with each entity sticking to their role - we strive to update our understanding of the national, regional and international context, following elections, coups, deadlock at the UN,

etc. Our analysis also covers topics such as SRHR through a symposium (see page 50) and democracy in healthcare (see page 51).

Following on from its drive to document encroachments upon women's rights and gender equality, which led to the publication of a report on backlash last year, Equipop has published two new reports: 'One step forward for the far-right, one step back for women's rights - 2024 European elections and gender equality' (see box), and 'Pushing back against masculinist discourses online'. Co-written with the Gender in Geopolitics Institute, this report deciphers the online operating procedures of masculinist movements: what they say, how they behave, and how they wield new technology to strike out at women and LGBTQIA+ people. It calls out Big Tech's contribution to proliferating and disseminating this discourse online, and presents a series of recommendations to the European Union and its member states to counter these movements.



## Fuelling collective mobilisation

Reflection and collective mobilisation are very closely connected. Undoubtedly the best illustration of this is the 'Feminist Agora', which Equipop has facilitated since 2022. Entitled 'Cultivating our alliances and changing the system!', the 2023 Agora saw 65 feminist campaigners from various French-speaking arenas (West Africa, the Maghreb, the Caribbean) come together in Cotonou, Benin.

The campaigners focused their discussions first and foremost on the political vision of each of their movements. In order to move beyond the urgency-based stance and develop a long-term approach, they drew on work by emancipatory, feminist intellectuals to structure guiding principles and values, including intersectionality, anti-capitalism, patriarchy, sisterhood, decolonisation, and collective care. Feminist movements boast a broad range and diversity of members, so the Agora also acts as a place to express different and opposing ideas, as Zipporah Ndione, a Senegalese participant, describes:

**"What I like about the Agora, is comparing ideas and mindsets. We enjoy and accept the fact that we all use different tools, and difference means, to wage our battles. It adds fuel to our fight, and gives weight to what we do."**

Zipporah Ndione, Senegalese participant

Three topics in particular were covered: campaigner safety, well-being, and bodily autonomy for women and girls. While this year marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Maputo Protocol, access to safe abortion clearly remains paramount to feminist struggles - and there are sometimes victories to celebrate, like in Benin.

Equipop contributes towards collective action in West Africa in many other ways, including by involving more young people, especially young feminists, in processes related to comprehensive sexuality education at a national level - for example in Guinea and Ivory Coast - but also by working with UN agencies such as UNESCO and UNFPA. In addition, Equipop supports the advocacy work of the Rights and Health Alliance network. This network, which brings together 22 West African organisations working on sexual and reproductive health and rights, aims to establish itself as a major regional player on this issue.

There is also a great deal of collective action to combat sexual and gender-based violence. In West Africa, Equipop supported a campaign called 'Compter pour toutes' (Every woman accounted for) to include this issue in budgets. A wide range of initiatives were organised during the 16 days of activism campaign in November 2023. In Paris, Equipop attended the demonstration on 25th November, and regular feminist mobilisations were held more generally throughout France. These led not least to the constitutionalisation of abortion on 8th March 2024, a world first.

Equipop is still actively involved in a number of networks and consortia that advocate collectively: Coordination SUD and Collectif Santé Mondiale in France for international solidarity; the Human Rights Platform for human rights issues; and Countdown 2030 Europe for SRHR. This year saw the launch of the 'Walking the Talk' programme to promote the implementation of true feminist foreign policies and an increase in the development aid budget devoted to gender equality - all within highly changeable and sometimes unfavourable political contexts. Equipop is the French representative of this consortium, which is also active in Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, and at EU level. The essence of this project is to link up the demands of feminist campaigners around the world to European foreign policies. This means, for example, presenting the findings of the Feminist Agora to ministries and agencies in Paris.



## Making sure our demands are heard by those in positions of power

The main aim of joining forces is to be able to influence political decision-making at an international, regional and national level. While work goes on every day, especially in dealings with parliamentarians, it centres around a number of key moments: events in which we take part, or that we initiate. These include preparations for the UN Summit of the Future (in Nairobi), the various steps leading up to the 30-year anniversary of the ICPD, the 1994 Cairo conference, which enshrined the rights-based approach (meeting in Lusaka, meeting in New York to work with UNFPA on indicators related to reproductive agency) and the conference on feminist foreign policy in The Hague.

Four of Equipop's own initiatives are also worth mentioning: facilitating advocacy meetings in Paris in April 2024 between a delegation from 'Feminists in Action' and French policy makers (see box); the sending of joint letters to the French President to prevent budget cuts to feminist organisations supported directly or indirectly by France: organising the 'Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights in multilateral spaces in the face of backlash'

conference in Geneva in November 2023, which was attended by around one hundred participants. Finally, these multi-stakeholder alliances were further reinforced in New York in March 2024 at the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Equipop was behind the initiative there to send an open letter signed by one hundred organisations to progressive governments urging them to uphold without compromise the rights of women and LGBTQIA+ people faced with conservative lobbies and states.

The political challenges around gender equality will remain vast over the coming years, and Equipop is determined to continue working with its partners at every level to act as a springboard for feminist solidarity.



French delegation at the CSW for the family planning side event on constitutionalising abortion

## Feminists in Action: top-level political meetings to safeguard France's support to feminist organisations

In April 2024, a delegation of seven African and Latin-American activists met with several senior French policy makers in Paris. This initiative was supported by the six partner organisations that make up 'Feminists in Action'. For Equipop, which led this activity, it was a key moment in the process of strengthening transnational feminist solidarity. It was set against a backdrop of massive budget cuts, which Equipop and its partners have been fighting over recent months: from putting French aid to Burkina Faso and Mali on hold, to announcing cuts in the development aid budget. Campaigners put forward three requests: sustainable funding for feminist organisations commensurate with the issues at stake and real requirements; support for the involvement of campaigners in decision-making forums; and assurance of campaigner safety. These messages were received and since then, Equipop and its partners have been monitoring the situation. For the coming years, we urge the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the French Development Agency (AFD) and the French Ministry for the Economy and Finance, to provide multi-annual funding to projects supported by the French Fund for Feminist Organisations, to ensure continued intermediate funding, and to safeguard feminist funding from budget cuts. Finally, we call on members of parliament to pass a new multi-annual law to guarantee an increase in the gendered ODA budget.



## One step forward for the far-right, one step back for women's rights

Ahead of the European elections in June 2024, Equipop published a report (in French) warning of the dangers of the rise of the far-right in Europe, especially for gender equality and the rights of women and LGBTQIA+ people. Entitled 'One step forward for the far-right, one step back for women's rights', this report leads on from two previous publications, on backlash, and on masculinist discourses. It highlighted two series of recommendations, calling on the media not to normalise the far right, and to include feminist analysis in election coverage. Political parties, for their part, were reminded of their responsibility to understand the feminist issues at stake in these elections and to fully incorporate these perspectives into their programmes and action. The outcome of the European elections sadly confirmed that the threat to hard-earned feminist gains is more newsworthy than ever. While the political balance at the European parliament has not drastically tipped, the far right won a record number of seats in some countries. As predicted in the report, these European elections have had immediate and long-term consequences on national political contexts. In France, Equipop therefore continued to campaign against the far-right, by getting involved in the Alertes Féministes collective, which developed a series of online and street action at the time of the early parliamentary elections. A follow-up to the report is in the pipeline for autumn 2024, offering post-electoral analysis and ideas to advance gender equality in this new European political context.



One step forward for the far-right, one step back for women's rights, 2024, 28 pages. Available (in French) on equipop.org

# EMPOWER



**Empower activists and organisations by providing financial and technical support, by raising their voices, and by bolstering transnational collective action.**





# REVITALISING WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER JUSTICE CAMPAIGNERS AND ORGANISATIONS

Among other things Equipop is a feminist fund, which awarded 82 new grants amounting to €3,345,000, across ten countries. This financial support is coupled with bespoke technical assistance, as well as collective empowerment measures, a particularly important area of work for the organisation.

## 4 FINANCIAL MECHANISMS

### Strategic Partnership Fund (SP)

The Strategic Partnership Fund helps organisations to plan for the long term, rather than on a project basis, so that they can develop strategic activities, strengthen their operations, and build their implementation capacity. It is part of the strategic partnership forged between Equipop and an organisation.

1. A long-term relationship based on trust is formed between Equipop and a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) with which it shares common values;
2. Equipop and the CSO or network in question establish the framework and content of their collaboration, then sign a partnership agreement;
3. The organisation disposes of the funds and Equipop and the organisation stay in regular contact;
4. An amount between €20,000 and €60,000.

**INTENDED FOR** Medium-sized CSOs that have developed a relationship with Equipop based on trust and share common values and objectives.

**CYCLE** 2 to 5 years

**EXAMPLE** The Ivorian Women's Rights League has been forging a strategic partnership with Equipop since 2020. It decided to allocate part of the funding to human resources, and has thereby improved the distribution of duties and responsibilities, consolidated its financial and administrative organisation, and boosted its expertise in psychological care for sexual and gender-based violence survivors.

### EllesAct Fund (or ad hoc funds)

The EllesAct Fund provides feminist organisations with financial, and sometimes technical support, on a specific, ad hoc, fixed-term basis to assist with implementing initiatives related to women's rights and gender justice.

1. Limited call for proposals sent to feminist organisations identified by Equipop, or direct request made to Equipop by a feminist organisation; Equipop and the CSO quickly formalise the content and amount of financial and technical assistance, then sign a partnership agreement;

2. The CSO implements the EllesAct funding, carries out the activity, and receives support from Equipop;
3. An amount between €2,000 and €5,000.

**INTENDED FOR** Small and medium-sized feminist CSOs.

**CYCLE** 1 to 3 months

**EXAMPLE** During the 16 Days of Activism campaign in 2023, ADDAD Burkina used EllesAct funding to implement a series of awareness raising sessions at markets, at the homes of traditional community chiefs and local religious leaders, on the rights of domestic helpers and workers.

### Organisational Development Fund (OD)

The OD Fund provides support and funding to help civil society organisations with structural consolidation.

1. A training workshop on self-assessment (using the SCAN tool) is arranged, which goes over all the components of a CSO. Each CSO then sets out their priority areas for improvement (PAI) based on this;
2. A campaign is set up to allocate OD funding to CSOs that took part in the workshops. Each organisation can submit a proposal, and several PAIs can be combined within a single project;
3. Once the funding is secured, the CSOs implement the projects identified in the self-assessment. Tailored support is available from the Equipop team on demand.
4. An amount between €3,000 and €6,000.

**INTENDED FOR** Small and medium-sized CSOs.

**CYCLE** 6 months to 1 year

**EXAMPLE** The Nigerian Women's Rights League was granted OD funding in November 2022, despite the fact that its legal status was still hanging in the balance. This enabled it to identify the core priority action points for the organisation, such as drafting a two-year action plan and a procedures manual, and to implement them.

## CollectivAct Fund

The CollectivAct Fund supports CSO consortia that co-create and implement collective initiatives: these may be political and/or social mobilisation activities, research or awareness raising projects.

1. A consortium of CSOs is identified, which determines the issue on which the CSOs wish to take action;
2. Members of the consortium and experts attend an incubation lab where the project's issues, objectives and activities are identified. The framework is set for the consortium's operating procedures, as well as the technical support provided by Equipop. One or more partnership agreements are then signed;
3. CollectivAct funding is then granted and the activities and Equipop's support are implemented;

4. (optional) A capitalisation process to learn lessons from the collective project by the members of the consortium and those involved in the process.
5. An amount between €50,000 and €150,000, distributed among several different organisations.

**INTENDED FOR** Medium-sized CSOs that have developed a relationship with Equipop based on trust, and share common values and objectives.

**CYCLE** 6 months to 2 years

**EXAMPLE** Developed during a Lab session in April 2023, the #CompterPourToutes (everyone counts) campaign was launched in March 2024 over social media and across seven countries. It aimed to raise awareness among policy makers in these countries, as well as professionals along the care chain of SGBV victims, about the need for high-quality data on cases of SGBV in order to improve care planning and preparation in this area.

## 2 TYPES OF SUPPORT

### Bespoke support on demand

Partner organisations of one of the four funds can also call on Equipop for specific support, depending on their requirements, such as gender mainstreaming, mobilising resources, administrative and financial management, and advocacy. Equipop also shares with them its findings from monitoring the sector's latest news and opportunities.

**EXAMPLE** Equipop set up a support plan with the CSO Aboya for the duration of their first partnership. This support was provided both in person, for example three training sessions delivered one year on administrative and financial procedures, and remotely via email and telephone to keep in regular contact and deal with any difficulties or requirements, all of which made for a successful partnership.

## Facilitating collective movements and spaces

Equipop instigates and facilitates online and on-site collective spaces for feminist movements. These spaces take different forms, bringing together feminist campaigners, experts, members of civil society organisations, and researchers, with the steadfast aim to bolster movements, share practice and knowledge.

**EXAMPLE** Since late 2022, Equipop has been the impetus behind the Feminist Agoras, which it co-facilitates, with a steering committee made up of West African feminist campaigners. These Agoras, organised in Cotonou and Niamey, bring together 40 to 60 West African feminist campaigners over several days to discuss ideas, co-build projects, and also recharge batteries.

**EXAMPLE** On 8th March 2022, Equipop organised media training on a feminist approach to communications on abortion. All Equipop's feminist partners were sent invitations by email, and some thirty took part in the two-hour webinar, which included group work and plenary discussions on how to talk about the right to abortion in a feminist way.



# Listening to what women and girls have to say: feminist tours for community dialogue

Since January 2022, some forty feminists from Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal have been organising tours to promote dialogue in rural and suburban parts of their countries, with the support of Equipop. These offer a chance for feminists to talk to local women and girls, and listen to what they have to say about their own experiences and their views on inequalities. The findings of these encounters will be used by feminist campaigners to give greater consideration to the needs and specific circumstances of all women in their work.

## Considering and applying intersectionality

The feminist campaigners designed these tours as a way of developing dialogue with women and girls in their countries, especially those who are marginalised. It was particularly important for them to work on inclusivity, by reaching out to women with diverse experiences, listening to them to understand their realities and needs, and integrating these better into feminist movements. Before setting off, the campaigners involved spent time reassessing their own privileges, and any biases these may entail. They sought out women who are often overlooked and excluded by public policies and organisations and the different contexts brought them into contact with women who had been displaced, rural women, and women with disabilities. These discussions shed light on the specific nature and dovetailing of discrimination suffered by women according to their different statuses.

## Maintaining that violence is everywhere

All the women and girls encountered, without exception, talked about their experiences of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). This only serves to confirm what feminist activists already know, and what they are campaigning against: SGBV is everywhere. The tours also corroborated the fact that women and girls who experience intersecting oppressions face specific forms of violence, such as police brutality in the case of sex workers, or especially high levels of sexual violence in the case of women with disabilities. As well as accumulating different types of discrimination, these women also struggle to find a solution to the violence they experience, as many of them are overlooked by public services and campaigners alike. It is important to note, however, that evidence points to the fact that women's and feminist organisations are the main source of support for survivors of SGBV, in the face of inadequate public services.



# Francophone Sisterhood, getting together to create and share feminist ideas



Since 2021, Equipop has worked with RJFAO and other West African feminist campaigners to organise online conferences for French-speaking feminist campaigners. Each time, three or four feminist experts from different French-speaking arenas are invited to discuss a particular topic, either online or in person. The sessions are co-moderated by Equipop and West African feminist campaigners.

## Harnessing expertise and securing space to build dialogue and action

At a time when feminist campaigners are under greater threat than ever from the rise of anti-rights movements, and are struggling to find opportunities to take transnational action, Francophone Sisterhood provides a safe space for the international community of campaigners. At each meeting, feminist campaigners and experts from different parts of the French-speaking world share their own experiences and perspectives, to help unite as a movement and build momentum on a particular topic. Comparing different experiences and contexts makes it possible to move away from a purely Western-centric viewpoint when dealing with subjects.

## Taking time to produce and disseminate feminist ideas

Spaces like Francophone Sisterhood provide an opportunity to take time to reflect on and produce ideas on the issues that really spur feminist campaigners. The first stage is to consider a subject from a feminist perspective, then to mobilise the panelists' knowledge and experience to get to the bottom of the issues, set the framework for reflection and put forward feminist analyses of the topics under discussion. Each time, moderators and panellists make reference to feminist thinkers in an attempt to ground the discussions in feminist theory. The wealth and diversity of geographical origins among contributors also means they can share a range of innovative practices and experiences related to the topic in question. To address the challenge of how to share feminist theories among campaigners, the Francophone Sisterhood conferences are now available as podcasts.

# Senegal



## JGEN: The 1<sup>st</sup> West and Central African feminist summer school

**C**o-founded in 2016 by five young women - Senegalese legal advisers and social entrepreneurs - JGEN is a feminist organisation combating gender-based violence. It promotes women's economic empowerment, encourages leadership among girls, and advocates policies in favour of equality. Its voice represents that of young people at every level: local, regional and national. In 2024, JGEN moved its headquarters to Kaolack. To date, the organisation comprises 20 active members, 16 of whom work full time, and some sixty volunteers who operate at grassroots level. JGEN is also a forerunner in co-building a vast French-speaking feminist network that takes the diversity of each individual into account.

### Collective deliberation

One of the objectives of the very first West and Central African Feminist Summer School, organised in Dakar in August 2023 by JGEN and the Senegal Feminists Collective, was to build cooperation and reinforce feminist ranks. Over the course of three days, this Pan-African event brought together over 150 participants, policy makers, researchers, feminist campaigners, academics, technical and financial partners to discuss the topic 'From theory to feminist action in West and Central Africa: using research to guide strategies and co-construct our activist identity'.

The Feminist Summer School helped to create a diverse space to debate ideas and co-construct a strong feminist movement in French-speaking West and Central Africa, by examining different intersectional feminist theories. More specifically, it aimed:

- to highlight the state of feminist research in French-speaking Africa and analyse how this interplays with activism;
- to draft documents and create teaching resources on feminist issues;
- to disseminate tools to reinforce inclusive and accessible fundraising practices.

“The Summer School aims to address the challenges and issues around feminist research in Africa, which remains under-funded and lacks investment, especially for women academics.”

Maïmouna Astou Yade, President of JGEN Senegal

### Sisterhood support from Equipop!

Since 2022, Equipop has been assisting JGEN in its structural and organisational development. The latter is of the NGO's initiatives to raise the voices of young West African feminists. In 2023, funding was provided to nine campaigners from Ivory Coast, Chad, Burkina Faso, and Cameroon to take part in the Feminist Summer School. Buoyed by its initial success, a second summer school was held in Saly, Senegal, from 1st to 3rd August 2024.

### Forum for reproductive justice

The first National Forum on Women's Rights and Reproductive Justice was held in Dakar from 25th to 26th June 2024. The event, initiated by JGEN, brought together young people, feminist campaigners, media professionals, healthcare professionals and political leaders. It provided an opportunity to address the role of the media in the fight against backstreet abortions, and to highlight the arguments put forward by religious leaders in favour of regulating medical abortion for victims of rape and incest.

### FOCUS ON ABORTION ACCESS IN SENEGAL

It is illegal to terminate a pregnancy in Senegal, even in cases of incest and rape. Senegalese women are only entitled to an abortion if their life is in danger. However, the conditions to do so - securing the agreement of three doctors and providing a medical certificate - make it extremely restrictive. In desperation, some women resort to illegal abortions. According to the African Human Rights League, this practice accounts for around 8% of the maternal mortality rate. The Senegalese government committed to allowing victims of rape and incest to terminate a pregnancy, by ratifying the Maputo Protocol in 2005. Yet since then, no legislation has been passed.

### Watch this space

JGEN remains determined that abortion should cease to be a taboo subject in Senegal. It aims to raise awareness among local communities (religious leaders, village chiefs, young people, etc.) so that they align themselves with campaigners, and the authorities enact the draft legislation on safe abortion championed by feminist organisations.





# Senegal



## ROAJELF: putting an end to GBV in universities

It all began back in 2009, spurred by a group of young women leaders from West Africa who were determined to ensure better representation for themselves and their sisters. How? By coming together as a network to deal with the issues affecting them. With assistance from the ECOWAS Centre for Gender Development, they set up a meeting space to undertake regional action in support of women and girls. The West African Network of Young Women Leaders (ROAJELF) was born. This female-only network, whose membership ranges from 18 to 35 years old, went on to develop a Senegalese branch in 2011. Its aim is to build capacity and leadership among young women so that they can play an active part in their country's socio-economic and political development.

### Making universities aware

The university environment is not immune to gender-based violence. In Senegal, attrition rates among female students are on the rise, fewer and fewer are enrolling on postgraduate courses, and increasing numbers are dropping out. In 2021, female professors at Assane Seck University in Ziguinchor, Senegal led protests against serious forms of violence, including sexual harassment. In order to put an end to GBV in universities, ROAJELF/SENEGAL began major work within two of the country's universities in 2023, as part of the Feminist in Action project. "We succeeded in raising awareness and informing students, gathering data, and above all drawing the attention of the administrative authorities to the issue of GBV. The term itself is still overused and ignored, even in university circles," observes Zipporah Ndione, President of ROAJELF/SENEGAL.

"Some of these students may one day become our country's leaders. It is vital to raise their awareness of GBV during their studies so that they can take action afterwards in full possession of the facts."

Zipporah Ndione, President of ROAJELF/SENEGAL



### Inclusive sisterhood

The project led to the adoption of a pact against GBV in both universities. ROAJELF/SENEGAL advocated for a legal framework to protect female students as well as monitoring for victims. The project enabled female students to find out about their rights and where to seek help in the event of being subject to GBV. Their heavy involvement in capacity building, listening, and advocacy activities reflects one of the network's primary missions: to foster young women's involvement in policy making and governance.

### Sisterhood support from Equipop

This support is not limited to financial aspects, but includes technical and structural support that enabled ROAJELF/SENEGAL to address the issue of GBV in universities, where it is generally difficult for civil society organisations to gain authorised access. In the wake of the project the organisation gained legitimacy, joining a national technical committee to combat GBV, and contributing to the drafting of an action plan. A strategic partnership has also enabled the network to extend its operations nationwide, with branches now spread across 12 of Senegal's 14 regions.

### FOCUS ON THE POLITICAL PLEDGES MONITORING TEAM

"Our governments make a lot of pledges. But there is no real monitoring of their implementation," laments Zipporah Ndione. In 2022, ROAJELF/SENEGAL started advocating the establishment of a team to monitor political pledges. The first working meetings began in 2023. In 2024, following the election of the new President of the Republic of Senegal, Bassirou Diomaye Faye, the network drafted a manifesto to reiterate the new government's pledge to be 'inclusive and respectful of human rights'. "Women's rights are human rights. However, the law on gender equality is being challenged. Its effective implementation is still contested in some regions."

### Watch this space

The new Senegalese President has replaced the Ministry for Women with the Ministry for Families and Solidarity. "We are going to ensure that the gains we've made are safeguarded, while at the same time waging new battles," states Zipporah Ndione. In May 2024, with the support of Equipop, the network launched the 'Our body, our health' project to take action against gynaecological and obstetric violence (GOV). This widespread problem is struggling to gain recognition as a real public health issue.

# France



## FILATIONS: raising awareness among the next generation of feminists

**P**revention is better than cure. That is the guiding principle behind Filations. It was established in 2005 through the merger of two organisations (VIFF and FIL) that provided support to women and their children who were victims of violence. Their key question was how to take early action to tackle the root causes of this scourge, and thereby reduce the number of victims. Their solution: prevention. VIFF and Fil set up Filations, an organisation dedicated to preventing gender-based and domestic violence through a range of awareness raising activities, training for professionals, public information initiatives, and mobilisation to change the behaviour ingrained in our patriarchal society. Since the very beginning, Filations has been a member of the National Federation for Women's Solidarity.

Based in Lyon, it has regional reach thanks to five staff members - including four prevention officers - and two civic service programme participants, as well as a network of 100 volunteers.

### Youth prevention

As part of the Feminist Generations project, run by Filations and Equipop in Lyon since 2023, the organisation works in five pilot schools to raise awareness among 12 to 25 year-olds of gender-based and domestic violence through educational workshops and interactive games. For example, the games 'Let's talk about romantic relationships' and 'Let's talk about masculinity' use cards with written statements on which players have to give their opinion and debate. Filations has also worked in university circles with student unions.

Through role plays related to their own environment and to the associated violence that can occur (induction events for freshers, attacks among union members, etc.) participants had to identify ways to rectify this, and were made aware of the resources available to create a safer, fairer environment.

“Our educational workshops offer a space where young people can be kind to each other, and wish each other well in their relationships. It's a beacon of hope.”

Pénélope Goueslard, Prevention Officer at Filations

### Long-term commitment

The educational workshops have helped to raise young participants' awareness. Filations is also delighted to have signed an agreement with the Feminist Generation project's five partner schools. This three-year commitment will enable the organisation to continue working in school settings, to bring the teaching teams onboard with preventing gender-based and domestic violence, and to raise awareness among even more young people on this matter.

### FOCUS ON THE 'BREAKING THE SILENCE' FESTIVAL

This festival was held throughout the city of Lyon from 13th to 28th November 2023. It offered the general public some twenty events, shows, and encounters to talk about gender-based and domestic violence, the people it affects, and the keys to combating it. Five secondary school classes also got the chance to watch the play 'You're not my type'. The performance ended with an opportunity for the actors and pupils to share their views on the issue of consent and gender-based and domestic violence.

### Sisterhood support from Equipop

Bringing the Feminist Generation project to fruition reflects Filations' and Equipop's shared ambition to work together to promote equality. This association also offers Filations international solidarity prospects, by forging ties with other feminist organisations that Equipop supports, especially in West Africa. The aim is to organise a round table discussion to compare and contrast measures used to prevent gender-based and domestic violence in different countries and socio-economic contexts.

### Watch this space

Filations hopes to mobilise young volunteers on equality issues so that they can become the driving force behind projects in their own school setting. Concerned about the rise of masculinists, who are striking a chord among young people through social media, the organisation also intends to take preventive steps on this, by deconstructing this discourse, which disseminates fake anti-feminist ideas.





# Niger



## LA LIGUE NIGÉRIENNE DES DROITS DES FEMMES: a feminist library for free expression

**T**he Nigerien Women's Rights League is a trailblazer: it is the first organisation in Niger to proclaim itself officially feminist, all the way down to its statutes. Established in December 2022 by around 20 women campaigners, the League was given formal recognition in May 2023. Six members were elected to the management committee for a three-year term. With the support of 81 volunteers, the organisation plays a crucial part in promoting women's rights in Niger, by working for a fairer society, and by offering vital support to women in need. It campaigns to enable survivors of violence to speak out, be believed, and access confidential care and treatment.

### Women's stories

The League's management committee in Niamey, the capital of Niger, has become a refuge for vulnerable women and girls. "We have set up a space where they can rest, find out about their rights at our legal clinic, and get SRHR kits (pills to relieve menstrual pain, reusable sanitary pads, soap, etc.). Our main beneficiaries (young women aged 20 to 35) have taken our initiatives on board. They now invite other women along, and put forward their own ideas for activities," explains Souwaiba Ibrahim, President of the Nigerien Women's Rights League.

To mark its first anniversary, the League inaugurated a feminist library in May 2024. It offers young Nigerien women a peaceful place to meet and discuss issues such as bodily autonomy and SRHR. Every month, a publication is selected by the book club; the first one was *All About Love* by bell hooks. "Every feminist current and source are welcome here!", adds Souwaiba Ibrahim.

### Reduction in FGM

Thanks to the mobilisation of human rights organisations, the prevalence rate of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is falling in Niger, and currently stands at 2.1%. This is welcome progress, and offers a glimmer of hope. However, "We must continue to deconstruct the misleading beliefs that are used to justify FGM, and lobby governments to pass and enforce the law rigorously," insists the League.

### Sisterhood support from Equipop

The founding members of the League originally met at a feminist coffee morning organised by Equipop in 2021. Through financial support they were able to recruit a consultant to help them structure their work, rent office space, and purchase equipment to set up a feminist library. Equipop also released emergency funds following the 2023 coup d'état which led to the suspension of a large amount of foreign funding.

"Equipop understands our reality, and has been very flexible. It is the first NGO to place its trust in us. Without its support, we wouldn't be where we are today."

Souwaiba Ibrahim, President of the Nigerien Women's Rights League

### FOCUS ON 'A SPACE OF OUR OWN'

The League took part in a symposium organised by Equipop in Cotonou, Benin, from 4th to 6th March 2024, entitled 'Finding a space of our own between campaigning and research to talk about a feminist approach to SRHR!'. Funded by AMC as part of the Foundation project, this event brought together 40 campaigners and researchers from 14 countries to reflect on how to repoliticise health and SRHR issues from a feminist perspective, and ideas to take action against anti-rights movements.

### Watch this space

The League is seeking a strategic partner to secure long-term funding. This would enable it to employ at least three full-time staff members and put its ideas into practice. Niger is also experiencing a backlash, with the military abolishing the Ministry for Women, and withdrawing its troops from insecure areas where women and girls are kidnapped daily by terrorist groups. Against this backdrop of political instability, the League fully intends to see to it that the social and legal gains made in the country are safeguarded, and to continue taking action to ensure the voices of Nigerien women are heard.



# Benin



## FILLES EN ACTIONS: documenting, informing and raising awareness of period poverty

They dreamt of a society where they, their sisters and brothers could live in dignity and fulfil their potential. To make this dream a reality, in 2018 four young graduates from Benin (three girls and one boy) set up Impact Women, now known as Filles en Actions (Girls in Action). Its aim is to take action against sexism, girls' school drop-out rates, and forced marriage, as well as to empower women so that they can become agents for development in their own communities. Filles en Actions is now the largest feminist network in Benin, with seven staff members (six women and one man) on the board of trustees. The organisation boasts 105 volunteers and covers the country's 12 departments through the Voix Capitales clubs, which bring together some 520 girls and 120 boys aged between 10 and 28 years old.

Since 2024, it has set up 'Positive Masculinity' clubs to rally young men to the feminist cause.

### Data-driven action

In Benin, one rule endures: periods are a taboo subject. To break the silence, Filles en Actions set off on a nationwide tour to document the situation of girls in terms of period healthcare, poverty and management. Around 400 women and girls aged 8 to 28 were able to share their experiences during training sessions organised. The resulting report produced by the organisation in 2023 showed that in Benin: 80% of girls were never taught that their bodies would undergo a transformation during puberty; one in ten female students has to resort to makeshift sanitary pads due to a lack of funds (made from toilet paper, handkerchiefs, socks, etc.). Access

to drinking water and soap is also lacking. "There is no social policy to subsidise free sanitary products," laments Brian Marilyse Sossou, President of Filles en Actions.

"Without data, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of existing policies, devise new strategies, or allocate the resources needed to combat period poverty."

Brian Marilyse Sossou, President of Filles en Actions

### Dignity for all. Period.

In this report, presented to the authorities in 2024, the authors put forward their recommendations to ensure every woman and girl goes through their menstrual cycle with dignity. These include free access to sanitary products in schools, sisterhood clubs to discuss personal issues, and training centres run by unmarried mothers, or girls who have dropped out of school, where they can learn to make soap and reusable sanitary products which would then be distributed free of charge to girls in rural villages. Filles en Actions has begun implementing these points and is setting to work on policies to bring about lasting, systemic change.

### Sisterhood support from Equipop

Filles en Actions has received organisational, structural and financial support from Equipop. This enabled it to organise a 'Feminists in Action' camp in August-September 2023, where young participants discussed ways of improving access to their rights. During a multi-stakeholder dinner event, they were able to present their recommendations directly to policy makers. The mayor of Ouidah committed to having suitable toilets built for girls to manage their periods, and to lobbying other mayors in Benin to do the same.

### FOCUS ON THE 'JE M'ENGAGE' PLATFORM

This platform, set up in late 2023, is managed by the Filles en Actions champions, young women and girls trained in SRHR issues who provide accurate information at grassroots level, discourage girls from resorting to backstreet abortions - as despite changes in the law, access to abortion remains difficult in Benin - and refer them to the 'Sista, tell me everything' helpline, which puts them in contact with private clinics and partners completely anonymously.

### Watch this space

Rolling out! This is the name of the game for Filles en Actions' 2024-2027 strategy. The NGO aims to expand into 10 countries in French-speaking Africa to raise the impact and voices of African feminists. It plans to organise a forum on the status of young African girls, and an international festival on feminist climate justice and menstrual dignity every three years. In early 2024, Filles en Actions launched Benin's very first feminist media outlet, 'Use your voice'. So, everyone can keep abreast of their forthcoming news!





# Mauritania



## INITIATIVE POUR LA SANTÉ DE LA REPRODUCTION: championing girls' health through art

Initiative for Reproductive Health (IRH) is an organisation that was founded in 2018 based on the observation that young people in Mauritania have access to very little information on SRHR. It offers a listening service and advice, and organises training courses and awareness raising campaigns to bring about changes in behaviour and practices. Female genital mutilation and forced marriages are still widespread. "Mauritania is a patriarchal country. The problems that women and girls face are linked to this system," says Dieynaba N'Diom, member of the organisation which also works to raise feminist awareness.

Around ten young women volunteers form the basis of this organisation, and they work actively at grassroots level to bring its missions to fruition.

### Every voice matters

Spurred on by IRH and in association with the artist and painter Amy Sow, several Mauritanian artists took part in two concerts on 3rd and 5th May 2024 in Nouakchott, the capital, to raise awareness of women's rights. This event sparked the 'Art for Reproductive Health' project. The aim is to break the taboos surrounding period poverty, maternal mortality, FGM, and rape (in Mauritania no-one knows what actually constitutes rape, as there is no law to define it) through the voices of those to whom young people listen. "We did a lot of awareness

raising work with rappers, because many of them spread misogynous messages. We thought it might be an opportunity for them to change their tune and sing about equality instead, which is what they did." The artists also shared information about SRHR via video clips posted on the organisation's Facebook page. Some painters also came onboard, producing paintings conveying purposeful messages about GBV. Their works were presented at a major exhibition.

"Our main victory in Mauritania has been to set a small feminist revolution in motion through art."

Dieynaba N'Diom, member of the Initiative for Reproductive Health

### The art of doing good

Part of the proceeds from the concerts and the sale of works of art will go towards making reusable sanitary towels. Crafted by young Mauritanian women, they respect and protect women's health. Due to the lack of sanitary facilities and information, menstrual hygiene is a real problem in Mauritania. "In rural parts, some girls resort to torn-up old clothes, while others use chemical, disposable pads," laments Dieynaba N'diom. Periods are a natural part of life. Every woman should experience them in a dignified manner."

### Sisterhood support from Equipop

As part of the Art for Reproductive Health initiative, Equipop provided financial support to help organise and publicise the two concert dates. Funding an assessment workshop with a Mauritanian consultant, as well as the purchase of two computers, also enabled the organisation to draw up strategic documents to help raise funds and secure its development.

### FOCUS ON THE #COMPTERPOURTOUTES (EVERYONE COUNTS) CAMPAIGN

IRH also launched the #CompterPourToutes (everyone counts) campaign to gather data on sexual and gender-based violence. Without accurate data, it is difficult to devise new strategies and to allocate sufficient resources to combat this scourge. On 24th and 25th April, IRH organised a meeting on this issue involving policy makers, the police chief, Hindou Cheikhna, and victim support professionals. The Finance Ministry has pledged to set aside a budget for this campaign. IRH is continuing to press for these commitments to be turned into action.

### Watch this space

In Mauritania, there is a legal vacuum when it comes to laws on violence against women. Since 2017 draft legislation has been coming up against opposition from conservative political and religious authorities. "Without a legal framework, it's like we have no purchase," hammers home Dieynaba N'Diom. IRH is determined to continue waging this battle.



# Burkina Faso



## WOMA Media: Raising the voices of women and LGBTQ people

**W**OMA Media is a digital platform which was set up in 2016 to raise the voices of women and LGBTQ people in French-speaking West Africa and Cameroon. It aims to answer their questions, uphold and champion their stories and life experiences, which are often disregarded and misrepresented. WOMA Media focuses on reproductive and sexual justice, action against GBV, legal protection, the rights of women and LGBTQ people, as well as their well-being and mental health. The platform encourages leadership and empowerment among these communities, while fostering individual experiences. 11 young women work on the advisory board and the executive committee. Four women from WOMA Media also host an internet radio station, ATKRADIO (Our lives, our voices) which you can tune into on [www.atkradio.org](http://www.atkradio.org).

### United we stand

In 2023, WOMA Media increased the number of training workshops and talking therapies it organised to bring together women with different life experiences and profiles, who nevertheless face the same issues, such as vulnerability, safety, physical and mental health, etc. *"We brought together transgender women, sex workers, drug users, lesbians, bisexual and queer women to discuss our priorities as women, for training on advocacy and civic engagement. They were able to talk openly about their problems, suggest courses of action, and forge alliances, both with others in the group and around their different spheres of life. We are in the process of developing an inclusive women's network, details of which will be announced very soon."*

*Why work in a compartmentalised way? By setting up intersectional spaces for reflection we can turn minorities into a majority!"* says, Miss Lylie, Executive Director of WOMA Media.

"The anti-gender movement doesn't only affect minorities, but society as a whole, through its conservative and reactionary positions. Deconstructing prejudice and helping to ensure the safety of all women is our biggest challenge."

Miss Lylie, Executive Director of WOMA Media.

### Sexual Freedom Festival

WOMA Media decided to attend the Utopia Festival for the first time. This annual event celebrating sexualities was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in November 2023, on the theme of 'Sexual Utopias'. *"Our mission was to gather information for an audiovisual compilation telling the story of this great adventure. There is a vast LGBTQI+ community in Africa, and we can take inspiration from other countries in the fight for human rights,"* maintains Miss Lylie.

### Sisterhood support from Equipop

WOMA Media has received financial and organisational support. Consulting services enabled the team to analyse its strengths and weaknesses, and to define a strategy to raise funds and achieve its objectives over a five-year period. Funding covered the purchase of microphones to provide media coverage of several artistic and cultural events through its internet radio station, ATKRADIO. *"We can now go out and record at events, and are able to limit and control people coming in and out of our headquarters. This is reassuring for people, given the unsafe environment and the movement's work."*

### FOCUS ON 'DES VOIX AUTHENTIQUES' (AUTHENTIC VOICES) PODCAST

*"When, as a child, I first realised my own sexual orientation, I had no-one in whom I could confide or ask questions. I had to fend for myself,"* laments Miss Lylie. So, in early 2024, WOMA Media decided to launch a podcast, called Authentic Voices, produced with and for LBQ teenage girls from five French-speaking West African countries and Cameroon. How can they recognise and be open about lesbian, bisexual or other feelings in unfavourable and unsafe contexts? How do they imagine relationships? How often do they go for gynaecological check-ups? For once, this diary full of helpful intimate secrets is one we can share with others.

### Watch this space

In Africa, several countries have decriminalised homosexuality, unlike Ghana, Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Nigeria where it remains punishable by law. Despite this, even in countries where it is permitted, the LGBTQI+ community is regularly subject to insults and gender-based violence (both physical and online). As a media outlet for the LGBTQI+ community, WOMA Media strives to deconstruct prejudice and campaign for governments to put in place legal protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation.



# Ivory Coast



## LIGUE IVOIRIENNE DES DROITS DES FEMMES: the legacy of Ivorian women

**E**stablished in 2019 by eight young Ivorian women from a range of professions (communications, sociology, law, philosophy, agronomy), the League began its campaigning over social media. They were first united in action to uphold the case of a battered woman in the commune of Yopougon, Abidjan, which brought them to the fore. With over 50 volunteers, including 10 members of the executive committee, the League is the first organisation in Ivory Coast to boast a feminist ideology. Their motto: what is virtual is also real. An online petition launched by their General Secretary, Désirée Dénéo, which amassed over 5,000 signatures, and a sit-in organised in front of a national TV station, contributed to the suspended sentence given to a journalist who, in 2021, re-enacted a live sexual assault. The League also initiated

the country's first ever March against Femicide. These events have helped write the history of Ivorian feminism.

### “I can say no!”

It is common parlance for men in Ivory Coast to talk about ‘their nursery’ to refer to girls who have just come of age that they single out and pursue in order to go out with them. “At the League, we use the same word to refer to the teenage girls that we mentor on the issue of consent,” explains Meganne Boho, its President, for whom education is one of the best ways to prevent violence against women. In May 2024, a number of these girls took part in a reading contest on consent, and read aloud a quote from the children's book ‘I can say no!’ by Jenny Simmons (pub. Nouveaux Horizons).

The League's nursery is located in Grand-Bassam, a historic town where in 1949 local women organised a march to say ‘no’ to French colonial rule. “*There are the founding fathers of Ivory Coast, but also the founding mothers, who get forgotten. We teach our pupils about this female heritage to inspire them.*” Intergenerational encounters are held with these trailblazing women, including former minister, Constance Yaï, and Georgette Zamblé, author of ‘The woman of my dreams’, an autobiographical tale of a young girl who said “no” to a system that sought to limit her.

“Feminism has always existed in Ivory Coast. We are its daughters and successors.”

Meganne Boho, Co-founder and President of the Ivorian Women's Rights League

### The 2024 Simone de Beauvoir award

Despite facing intimidation and threats, the League has gained national and international recognition and legitimacy. One of its co-founders, Marie-Paule Djegue Okri, even received the 2024 Simone de Beauvoir award for women's freedom. As an agronomist, she trains rural Ivorian women in eco-friendly farming techniques, and supports their economic empowerment.

### Sisterhood support from Equipop

The League has received a number of grants from Equipop. This support has enabled the team to procure their own premises, to fund projects, including renting plots of land for their eco-feminism activities, and to recruit psychologists for survivors of GBV. The League has also been able to open a feminist library, named after Constance Yaï.

### FOCUS ON FEMZEN, MENTAL HEALTH-CENTERED ACTIVISM

In Ivory Coast, feminist activists, especially in rural areas, face many challenges, including cyber-bullying, social pressures, insecurity and political repression. These unpredictable conditions have a negative impact on their mental health and emotional wellbeing. So, the League, in association with AWDF, decided to organise Zen'Fem week from 27th May to 1st June 2024, to promote wellbeing and a team spirit among campaigners through various activities (bookclub, art therapy, massage sessions, etc.).

### Watch this space

The League's ambitions include securing its premises, and obtaining long-term funding to sustain its projects and to build up a team of staff. The League also hopes to recruit a lawyer to contend with the impunity of GBV perpetrators. While laws are in place, sexism and corruption often stand in the way of their application. In the run-up to the 2025 presidential elections, the League will be examining the candidates' manifestos in terms of women's rights, and working to ensure that no women are obstructed from voting so that they can write this new chapter in the country's history.



# France



## INSTITUT DU GENRE EN GÉOPOLITIQUE: turning feminist foreign policy into an advocacy tool

Set up in February 2020, the Gender in Geopolitics Institute (GGI) is the only French think tank to examine geopolitics from a gender perspective. Its two young co-founders, Alice Apostoly and Déborah Rouach, came to the conclusion that French institutions often ignore gender issues, leading to a lack of data and inequality in political decision making. The institute analyses the situation of women, LGBTQIA+ discrimination and gender norms to promote a more inclusive world. Its objective is to raise awareness among civil society, provide advice, remind policy makers of their commitments, and put forward recommendations.

In the long term, the GGI aims to hold a recognised advisory capacity with a view to promoting feminist foreign policy and strengthening France's influence in the field of gender in geopolitics.

### Countering the rise of the far right

In the run-up to the 2024 European elections, the Institute produced and distributed several publications explaining the political ties between the French Rassemblement National (RN) party and their European counterparts and allies, and by extension, their political ideas. These resources included an infographic on the European elections showing the level of investment by French candidates in feminist and LGBTQIA+ rights.

Unsurprisingly, the far-right candidates were in the red, with the RN most often against, or absent, on abortion rights, press freedom, and workers' rights. The GGI also provided information following the announcement of new parliamentary elections to be held in France on 30th June and 7th July 2024, to help raise awareness among civil society, provide resources to the media and politicians, and thereby counter the rise of far-right parties in France, and in Europe, more effectively.

“While the rights of women and the LGBTQIA+ community are regularly targeted by far-right, conservative, reactionary movements, gender issues are often neglected, or even forgotten, when it comes to the challenges of the future.”

Alice Apostoly, Co-Founder and President of the Gender in Geopolitics Institute

### Supporting the authorities

Thanks to its expertise, the GGI was called on to help draw up the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs' next international strategy, published in 2024. Its volunteers ran working groups on the transformative potential of feminist diplomacy. “*Geopolitics today is all about defence, the military, protecting national interests, and overpowering neighbouring countries. It's high time we deconstructed this virile vision based on domination,*” argues Alice Apostoly.

### Sisterhood support from Equipop

Equipop and the GGI co-wrote the ‘Pushing back against masculinist discourses online’ report, published in October 2023. Thanks to wide media coverage, it highlighted the increase in online violence against women and LGBTQIA+ people, compounded by masculinist discourse. The report advocates tightening laws against sexual and gender-based violence, making these issues a mainstream part of digital public policy, and regulating Big Tech to help counter this phenomenon.

### FOCUS ON FEMINIST FOREIGN DIPLOMACY

This strategic approach aims to make gender a mainstream part of national policies and international action. In practice, this means supporting feminist campaigners in countries where their rights are under threat, releasing funding not least through the Fund to Support Feminist Organisations, while taking into consideration their local contexts and restrictions to avoid adopting a neocolonial approach, and publicly condemning discriminatory laws and policies, such as anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation, at international summits.

### Watch this space

While there is increasing awareness of feminist foreign policy, this matter is rarely covered, if at all, as part of university courses. The GGI is hoping to offer courses to students as well as international relations professionals. Alice Apostoly remains steadfast: “The earlier people are made aware of such issues, the more they realise the importance of gender in geopolitics”. These courses will enable the Institute to be less dependent on fundraising, to put its team on the payroll, and to establish its expertise.



# SPARKLING CHANGE



**Equipop works in association with local stakeholders to drive forward social change at different levels, and helps to produce and disseminate knowledge by building bridges between campaigning, research and advocacy.**



# MOVING TOWARDS COLLECTIVE THINKING

The issues surrounding sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) lie at the heart of the struggle for emancipation, and are regularly challenged by conservative movements, even in international negotiations on gender equality.

**D**espite the progress made, there is no place where SRHR are fully enshrined. Too often reduced simply to a biomedical or public health issue, SRHR mask their true meaning: that of fundamental, individual rights, and freedom of choice, which is a particularly critical issue for women's relationships with their own bodies. It is vital to safeguard them from being exploited for political, pro-natalist, or Malthusian purposes, and to establish their status as inalienable human rights. The revival of the global feminist movement, buoyed by the momentum of the #MeToo movement, offers an historic opportunity to put full recognition of SRHR back on centre stage. This will require the whole range of progressive, feminist forces to unite. It is therefore vital that we breathe new life into our collective thinking and action on these issues. Bolstered by this firm belief, Equipop is helping to provide more spaces for dialogue among different circles, and to promote the production of multiple forms of knowledge.





## The need to forge alliances

Building an emancipated world requires a high level of individual and collective mobilisation wherever these issues arise. So, Equipop seeks to facilitate and sustain alliances among those raising their voices about SRHR: campaigners, researchers, healthcare providers, politicians, and citizens, especially those on the fringe of society (gender minorities, the working classes, young people of today and the future). Equipop draws on a continual process of cross-referencing knowledge to foster collective, multiversal discussions, providing a forum for a far-reaching range of perspectives. Equipop's approach is to recognise and respect the singular nature of people's experiences and oppression. It aims to find a joint way of identifying which priorities to uphold together, and to build a commonly sought outlook in response to hegemonic, anti-rights discourse. While struggles may take different forms in different contexts, the battle ultimately remains the same: to fight against all forms of domination, especially patriarchy, and to ensure respect for SRHR.

## Collective thinking and action: different tools to uphold SRHR

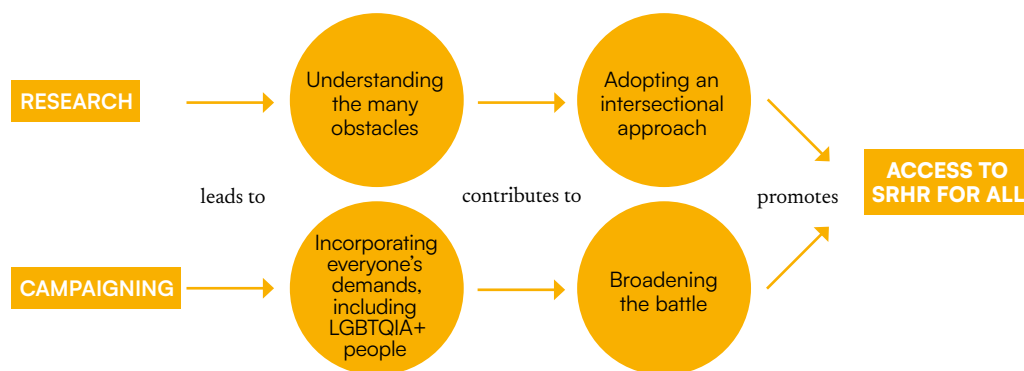
These struggles require a variety of approaches and action. Equipop and its partners have therefore tested different tools to come together and build spaces for political and feminist thinking, sharing knowledge and experience, reappropriating feminist and feminine narratives, with the aim of imagining alternatives around these rights.

A key focal point this year is decompartmentalising academic and activist knowledge, and recognising experience-based learning, placing the spotlight on real-life experience.

In practice, this took the form of a symposium bringing together researchers and activists from different geographic areas, to build bridges between these places through common issues, and to explore the possibility of multiversal cooperation on SRHR. Following on from a side-event organised at the Women Deliver conference in Kigali entitled 'Our bodies, our rights, our voices: a feminist approach to SRHR', this symposium emerged as both a place shaped by the singular nature of what identifies and drives each person, and a space powered by a common resolve to listen, understand and support each other (see box). Building dialogue this way helped to root theoretical ideas in real-life experience, and in turn to provide robust foundations for action and advocacy in the field, from an intersectional, feminist perspective.

The 'Feminist and Health' series of meetings also provides a forum to debate feminism's contribution to health as well as any practical implications. These discussions open up a dialogue among the different women involved in this subject, and fuel our advocacy on health issues. This year, an event organised in Lyon by our partner, Filaction, as part of the 'Break the silence' festival, brought together medical students, a clinical psychologist, and a historian to examine 'how to make future healthcare professionals firm allies in the fight against sexual and gender-based violence?' within a context where current medical training perpetuates stereotypes

## Coming to a better understanding of SRHR by combining research and campaigning



and even violence. Another discussion between campaigners and researchers focused on how to safeguard access to SRHR for all in a hostile context and in response to anti-rights movements. The link between research and activism highlighted two important aspects: on the one hand the need for an intersectional approach to understand the many obstacles faced by women and LGBTQIA+ people. On the other hand, the need for feminists to broaden their collective struggle, by bringing on board the demands of LGBTQIA+ people, and by joining forces with civil society organisations and women's movements to advance the health rights of all marginalised groups. The relevance of combining different forms of knowledge is clear to see here.

A number of action research experiments are also being conducted, for example in Senegal. As coordinator of the GOV-Senegal consortium, Equipop is running a project there on gynaecological and obstetric violence. This involves discussion groups and the rewriting, 20 years on, of the 'Our body, our health, women's sexuality in sub-Saharan Africa' handbook by West African women researchers, based on experiential knowledge, medical advances, legal progress in the field of SRHR, and current feminist issues. This approach underlines the importance of such knowledge as a practice of self-care and liberation for women.

Recognising experience-based knowledge is also central in empowering young people. Whether in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mali, Niger, or Senegal, Equipop supports young women taking action, who are well aware of the need to take charge of their own health in order to assert their rights. Listening to what they have to say and involving them in the project capitalisation process is a priority. This knowledge, often deemed by institutions to be from laypeople and therefore invalid, is in fact vital as it comes directly from the people affected. It involves giving a voice to the women in question, and sharing this in an accessible format (podcast, booklet, animated film, etc.) that conveys the emotions and experiences to come out of the discussion groups. Young people are the focal point of this process, and their experiences are listened to, heard and valued. There are several examples of this: i) policy brief workshops combining data from research and knowledge from civil society organisations in Senegal; ii) round tables organised with a range of stakeholders on healthcare democracy related to projects being led in Burkina Faso and Senegal; iii) the production of a capitalisation guide for the Youth on Alert project (see box).

This capitalisation work bolstered Equipop's thinking on feminist healthcare democracy, how the issue of 'knowledge' lies at the heart of our approach, and lessons learnt on decolonial issues. This is based on individual and collective empowerment, raising community awareness, as well as social and political mobilisation. Healthcare democracy approaches challenge the notions of 'expertise' and 'knowledge source'. They aim to foster dialogue among all stakeholders (patients, caregivers, decision-makers) by working together on procedures and knowledge validation criteria. In this way, it helps to create forums where young people can see themselves as ethical subjects, within a system of accountability leading to civic awareness.

All this knowledge is fed into the feminist resource centre run by Equipop. These processes of circulating knowledge between academic and activist circles help to spur social change and raise people's voices so they are heard by the authorities.

## How to work together in the future

Fuelling our approaches and action with different forms of knowledge is a critical issue that raises many questions around how we work together in the future: how can we include those on the margins? How can we disseminate knowledge differently to make it inclusive? Who puts forward ideas, who takes the floor, who is heard, who decides, analyses, interprets and shares the findings, and more broadly, to whom does this knowledge belong? It is also a question of seeing disagreement as a real opportunity to make collective progress, as well as continually challenging our privileges in relation to this knowledge, from the standpoint of epistemic justice. Sisterhood and a caring approach are proving to be key tools in facilitating these discussions.

These alliances offer an unprecedented opportunity to dream up a feminist alternative, a utopia of political and social transformations. By bringing on board an ever-increasing range of viewpoints, by seeking to broaden this feminist front, and by uniting our struggles, we can give new political meaning to SRHR.

# Creating a 'space of our own' between campaigning and research to repoliticise SRHR

**W**ith a view to building collective momentum on SRHR issues and how to uphold them, Equipop worked with a committee of experts to organise a symposium entitled 'Finding a space of our own between campaigning and research to talk about a feminist approach to SRHR!'.

40 campaigners and researchers from 14 countries came together in Cotonou from 4th to 6th March 2024 to examine together one of the issues that comes up time and again in feminist forums around the world: who owns women's bodies?

Five panels were organised to address this question:

- Knowledge-based action: comprehensive sexuality education from the lifecycle perspective;
- From discussion groups to the women's liberation handbook: different perspectives on the value of experiential knowledge;
- Our bodies, our choice, our right: bodily autonomy and reproductive justice;
- Gynaecological and obstetric violence and inequalities in healthcare;
- Intersecting oppressions: how to uphold access to SRHR for all in the face of anti-rights movements in hostile environments?

Cross-cutting discussions were also held on how to foster dialogue between academic and activist circles, and the need to take care of campaigners as a means of fighting to abolish the patriarchy.

These discussions were punctuated by three key moments: the screening of 'We are coming', a documentary reporting the story of a feminist revolution, including an interview with Nina Faure, the director; an art therapy session with painter Salimata Kaboré; and a discussion group with participants on how our feminist work affects our private lives.

The discussion points brought up at the symposium were turned into a publication, available on Equipop's website, which spotlights the key SRHR issues for feminists that are the driving force behind their current struggles and acts of resistance.

This feminist symposium brought together some inspiring, creative, and powerful people who capitalised on the forum to turn it into a real 'space of our own', and to build knowledge collectively to fuel the advocacy work of Equipop and its partners over the years to come.



# Capitalising on Youth on Alert through experiential knowledge: at the heart of feminist health democracy

**R**ecognising and mobilising experiential knowledge lie at the heart of the Youth on Alert project. Run in Senegal and Burkina Faso by Equipop, JED, RAES, SOS JD and BURCASO, this project has just come to an end. Its aim was to improve young people's access to high quality, mainstream, sexual and reproductive health services tailored to their needs, and respectful of their rights.

Involving those people who use health services, especially young women, is a central part of the project's strategy:

- showcasing and recognising their experiential knowledge;
- promoting core feminist values (tolerance, care, listening, solidarity, intersectionality, and sisterhood);
- creating forums for dialogue among different stakeholders, including caregivers, patients, healthcare system decision-makers and funders.

The capitalisation work on this project led to the publication of a guide entitled 'Towards democracy in healthcare!', which tells the story of the young girls empowered through this project, and makes the issue of knowledge sharing central to developing inspiring practices. This guide, in addition to the auditors' interviews, explains their journey to having their healthcare needs heard by decision-making bodies. For each key stage in implementing feminist healthcare democracy projects, the young auditors share specific questions to help prepare activities, as well as practical advice to take action.



The auditors' involvement in the citizens' watch project helped them to co-build tools, to gather and produce data to raise the alarm about problems in accessing high quality services, and to make their case as activists. They were also able to lead collective social and political action alongside healthcare providers to demand commitments from the authorities, such as opening hours and venues tailored to young people, free sexual and reproductive healthcare, and improved compliance with SRHR.

This project - and the capitalisation process implemented - has contributed towards a paradigm shift, which is challenging institutional and organisational cultures within healthcare facilities. Youth on Alert has thereby helped raise civic awareness as part of a true process of empowerment.



# Find out more about Equipop

## Vision & Values

**T**oday, Equipop has around 40 employees and 50 members, and an annual budget of €5.8 million. The organisation has two offices in West Africa, in Ouagadougou and in Dakar, and a European office in Paris.

This vision and these values are embodied in Equipop's work:

- Empowering activists and organisations by providing financial and technical support, by raising their voices, and by bolstering transnational collective action.
- Sparking concrete transformation through projects that generate knowledge.
- Mobilising policy makers and citizens to uphold women's rights and more broadly, to ensure feminist approaches inform how our societies are built.



RESPECT FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS



WELL-BEING, FREEDOM &  
RESPONSIBILITY



SOCIAL JUSTICE &  
EQUITY



SUPPORTING



SPARKING  
CHANGE



Building  
partnerships



Participatory  
approach



Working  
in a network



MOBILISING

Equipop is driven by feminist values, and the vision of a fair, sustainable world where the rights of all human beings, including sexual and reproductive rights, are respected without any sexual or gender-based discrimination!

Our priorities lie in contributing to trans-local collective action and providing flexible, long-term support to campaigners and organisations. Social creativity, supporting partners and collective learning dynamics are therefore central to the organisation's overall strategy and projects.

# Equipop's lifeblood

To define and implement its mission, Equipop relies on a fourteen-strong Board of Directors and a multicultural, multidisciplinary team of some forty employees. Some sixty members meet once a year at the Annual General Meeting.



## Micheline Kabore

Executive Director of the Pananetugri initiative for women's well-being, Equipop trustee.

The main reason I decided to join Equipop's board of trustees was to be part of a space for learning and sharing experiences, as a sister organisation upholding the rights of women. I was also eager to be a voice for the communities we represent, to share their expectations and needs with the board, which works in our region. This ensures that the needs of these communities are taken into consideration on an ongoing basis in Equipop's work, and that our work is based on the issues that are most important to them.

I also felt there was a vital need to act as an intermediary to influence strategy and improve the integration of local priorities in project implementation, taking into account both Equipop's areas of work and geographical coverage.

For the country I represent (Burkina Faso), three strategic issues currently stand out. The first is sexual and reproductive health in times of security crises. In the Sahel regions, families, and especially young girls, bear the brunt of violence, especially

sexual and gender-based violence. Providing them with substantial support is therefore a matter of necessity.

The second is protecting and promoting the rights of women and girls. We are witnessing a rise in anti-rights movements which threatens the gains we have made, and it is crucial to raise these concerns beyond our region to alert international opinion, particularly of the violence inflicted on women and girls.

Thirdly, we face a shortage of resources at a time when needs are increasing. The paradox is that while violence is on the rise and rights under threat, donor support is being withdrawn. Some donors do not cover our region, despite the urgency of the situation. So, it is vital to mobilise more funds to support local organisations and address communities' expectations.

For over ten years, our region has been affected by a combination of security, political, health, and humanitarian crises. Women and girls feel the full force of these crises, and represent almost 90% of the two million internally displaced people in Burkina Faso. They are subject to violence which is exacerbated by ruthless extremism. The humanitarian response, while present, is insufficient to cover basic needs and the political crisis, particularly, has led to the suspension of crucial funding.

Urgent action is required, yet we are often powerless faced with the dwindling resources available. Local organisations are facing a true fundraising crisis, and donors are gradually withdrawing. Yet, the needs of women are glaringly obvious, especially in a context where resources are increasingly scarce.

Over recent years, we have tried to raise internatio-

nal awareness and to call for solidarity among sister organisations to ensure the voices women in the Sahel and West Africa are heard. It is our duty to draw attention to this situation, despite the crises also affecting other parts of the world.



## A tribute to Luc de Bernis

Our colleague and friend, Luc de Bernis, passed away on 6th April in Montpellier hospital. It is with great sadness that we learned of his passing, and we join his family in their grief. As a very active member of Equipop's board since 2016, Luc was an invaluable support and a faithful companion. We shared many values and beliefs, among which the idea that healthcare is a political issue. Having spent many years fighting for the eradication of maternal and neonatal mortality within several UN agencies, Luc firmly believed in the importance of uncovering the social and economic mechanisms behind healthcare inequalities, both between individuals and at a global level. A trained obstetrician and gynaecologist, he practised his profession in many contexts, both in West Africa and in France, where he continued to work in two sexual health centres in Villeneuve-sur-Lot. This experience as a care giver regularly led him to express his indignation at the deterioration in access to services, especially abortions. For him, campaigning alongside women to uphold their right to bodily autonomy was an obvious choice. We will remember Luc for his sense of community and social justice, his sensitive intelligence, and that rare ability to listen, to be there for others, and to be moved by emotions. He was a bridge-builder, reaching out to different worlds to foster connections wherever possible. We would often talk about his love of theatre, and Maison Auriolles, where he lived and hosted artists and researchers in residence. He cultivated critical thinking, and encouraged us to work together to decipher some of the complex aspects of reality.

Mindful of the challenges in the field, never one to give lessons and ever supportive, he rowed alongside us, in the same boat. Ever the realist, he would keep repeating that his feminism was developing with us, and constantly challenge his role as an ally to the battles waged by women across the world. At Equipop's last General Assembly, he began his bid to reapply as a trustee by saying: *"I am a white man, who is well over 50 years old, trying to be a feminist every day, and to support the feminist movements, which is why I am so committed to Equipop and its mandate. I am prepared to continue this commitment if I have your trust and confidence"*. Today, we extend once again our deep commitment and eternal trust and confidence in him.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Trustee
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Trustee
- **Khadidiatou Sy**  
Trustee

*The board meets on average once per quarter.*



# The team



**Josette Aisse**  
Gender and knowledge  
management officer



**Ndeye Khadi Babou**  
Programs  
manager



**M'bèna Bakole**  
Innovation and  
support officer



**Fatiha Baghrar**  
Administrative assistant



**Siré Hermann Barro**  
Administrative, financial  
and organizational  
development  
support officer



**Hasiatou Barry**  
Innovation and  
support officer



**Priscille Bansé**  
Communication  
officer



**Jacqueline Bougouma**  
Partnership animation  
and support officer



**Lou Bossis**  
Advocacy intern



**Souguirimp Combari**  
Administrative, financial  
and organizational  
development  
support officer



**Coline Chaptal**  
Advocacy intern



**Lucie Daniel**  
Advocacy and  
studies manager



**Clara Dereudre**  
Advocacy officer



**Jade Delcourt**  
Programs intern



**Maïmouna Diop**  
Communication intern



**Ndeye Marième  
Ly Diagne**  
Senegal programs  
manager



**Pape Ababacar Diouf**  
Driver & Administrative  
assistant - Dakar  
office logistics



**Astan Doumbia**  
Management and  
administration  
support officer



**Perrine Duroyaume**  
Capitalization and  
evaluation referent



**Chams Fares**  
Advocacy intern



**Macoumba Fall**  
Institutional financing  
manager



**Jocelyne Faye**  
West Africa  
advocacy intern



**Elise Fouillet**  
Innovation and  
support officer



**Jeanne Fournier**  
Innovation and  
support officer



**Camille Frouin**  
Communication officer



**Aurélie Gal-Régniez**  
Executive director



**Cina Gueye**  
Skills transfer and  
capitalization officer



**Louis Guinamard**  
Communication officer



**Hafsa Imane**  
Administrative assistant



**Pascal Ilboudo**  
Organizational  
development  
technical Advisor



**Maëlle IMBERT**  
Communication associate



**Floriane Jazon**  
Advocacy intern



**Sibiri Koné**  
Administrative and  
logistique assistant



**Victobelle Kpetemey**  
Innovation and  
support officer



**Faty-Ly Lame**  
Innovation and  
support intern



**Marion Lambert**  
Communication officer



**Philippine Lambert**  
Advocacy officer



**Nora Le Jean**  
Innovation and  
support manager



**Hélène Ménard**  
Co-manager for Programs  
and Development



**Solenn Lorre**  
Partnership animation  
and support officer



**Sophia Manuel  
De Condigny**  
Mission officer



**Cécile Maurin**  
Administrative and  
financial technical advisor



**Ramatoulaye Mballo**  
Innovation and  
support officer



**Aminata Mbengue**  
Partner management  
and support officer



**Sarah Memmi**  
SRHR technical referent  
— support officer



**Kadidia Rabo**  
Support Functions  
Manager, Ouagadougou  
Office



**Ambroisine Mendes**  
Support Functions  
Manager, Dakar Office



**Tara Mukeyu-Cilolo**  
Communication officer



**Maimouna Ndoeye**  
Gender and Feminist  
approaches Adviser



**Nathalie Perrotin**  
Communications manager



**Elise Petitpas**  
Innovation and  
advocacy expert



**Dominique Pobel**  
Manager for Programs  
and Development



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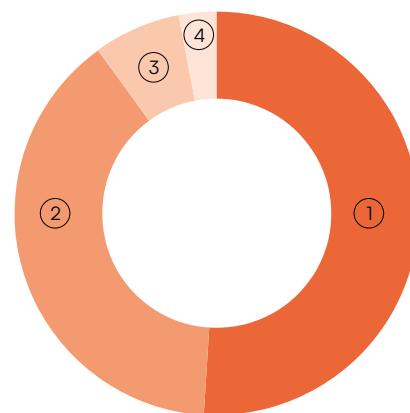
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# Budget

In 2023, 91% of Equipop's expenditure was allocated to its social missions. Equipop's budget increased by 49% from the previous year, and ended the year with a surplus.

## SOURCE OF FUNDS

- Equipop's 2023 budget came to €5.8 million, up by 49.5% from 2022 (€3.88 million).
- 54% of this year's budget came from private funds, including international foundations and organisations. Institutional funding amounted to 46% this year, 39% from French bilateral cooperation institutions (mainly the Agence Française de Développement) and 7% from multilateral cooperation institutions (United Nations agencies, West African Health Organisation).
- Equipop continues to strengthen and develop new technical and financial partners, and to foster collaboration, which is key to driving forward projects.
- Alongside this, we have increased our support to civil society organisations by working hard to mobilise resources for the latter as well as targeting new donors.



**€5.8 MILLION**

- ① **51.8 %**  
French and international private funds
- ② **38.8 %**  
Bilateral cooperation
- ③ **7.14 %**  
Multilateral cooperation
- ④ **2.3 %**  
Financial and operating income

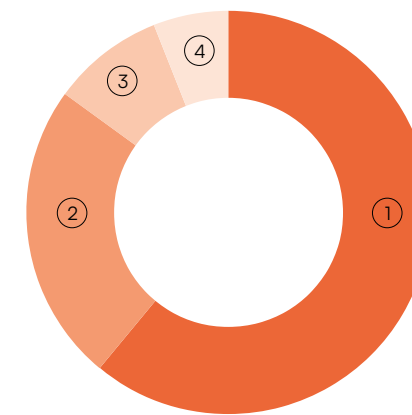
## USE OF FUNDS

- Spending reached €5.67 million, up 46.6% from the previous year. 94% of Equipop's expenditure was allocated to the organisation's social missions through 25 projects.
- In line with the sector's criteria, overhead costs are low.
- In 2023 Equipop continued, indeed stepped up, its implementation of activities pertaining to projects from previous years, including, Consolidating Young Feminist Movements in West Africa, Youth on Alert, Feminists in Action Fund, DEMSAN, Women's Health and Rights in Burkina Faso, Countdown 2030, and SANSAS.

- Building our own funds helps the organisation to cover working capital requirements, to implement innovative activities, to invest in supporting its organisational development, to respond to co-funding requirements, and to weather the unpredictable nature of project funding.

*Equipop draws up annual accounts which are audited by Mazars SA statutory auditors. The 2023 annual accounts, as well as the auditor's report are available in full on [equipop.org](http://equipop.org).*

- Seven multi-year projects began in 2023, including: Féministes Paix Sécurité, Se défendre, building the capacity of women and their organisations to fight against sexual and gender-based violence, Walking the talk Gender Equality Hub in Europe, Générations Féministes: Lyon and its metropolitan area as a stronghold for equality, Resource centre for feminist policies and practices in international solidarity, C'est la vie phase 2 Sexual and Reproductive health for teenagers in West Africa and Action against gynaecological and obstetric violence (GOV) from a gender perspective in Senegal (Muskoka).
- Aid granted to partner civil society organisations went up 92% in 2023 to €2.3 million, through support funds: EllesActent, CollectivAct, Organisational Development Fund, Strategic Fund.
- Alongside this, we have continued our support to African civil society organisation by working hard to mobilise resources for the latter.
- The year-end result shows a surplus of €131,237.69
- This surplus has increased the organisation's own funds, which is one of its medium-term objectives.



**€5.67 MILLION**

- ① **61 %**  
to support civil society partners
- ② **24 %**  
to spark change through pilot projects
- ③ **9 %**  
overhead costs
- ④ **6 %**  
to mobilise policy makers and citizens



# Communications

## Promoting feminist communications

The expert reports, published by Equipop and its partners, have raised Equipop's profile as a reference on feminist issues in international solidarity. This sharp increase in exposure, particularly in high-profile media, has prompted Equipop to fine-tune its strategy and strengthen the processes in place to ensure activists and members of the organisation can speak out safely.

## Developing reference resources

Working more closely with the media enables us to encourage journalists and newsrooms to take a more feminist approach to reporting. This approach aims to integrate feminist perspectives and values into the production and dissemination of information.

As a journalist, being a feminist means recognising and fighting gender inequalities in society and in the media, while striving to promote fairer, more inclusive media coverage that respects diversity. This means questioning the power balance, inequalities, discrimination, and gender-based violence that affect the sources, subjects, content, and readers of information. It also implies challenging the stereotypes, prejudice, gender norms and hierarchies which influence editorial decisions, angles, formats and journalistic styles.

Equipop plans to equip newsrooms and journalists with better tools for feminist communications that deconstruct the patriarchal norms which generate and perpetuate violence against women and girls.

## Publications produced by Equipop with its partners

- *Pushing back against masculinist discourses online; recommendations to the European Union and its Member States to fight sexist and homophobic cyberviolence.* (Available in English and French.)
- *One step forward for the far-right, one step back for women's rights*
- *Towards democracy in healthcare! Effective healthcare accountability through the significant and inclusive participation of young people.*
- *How to take a feminist approach to the commitments on sexual and reproductive rights?* Main findings from the symposium: 'Finding a space of our own between campaigning and research to talk about a feminist approach to SRHR!'

Followers on social media  
(45,000 in 2022-2023)

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## Media coverage in France and internationally from July 2023 to June 2024 (inclusive)

- 61 media appearances in 2022-23
- *More infos: [equipop.org/revue-de-presse](https://equipop.org/revue-de-presse)*

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## Episodes of the Francophone Sisterhood podcast adapted from the similarly titled tour, since April 2024.

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## Examples of media support offered to feminist activists.

- Feminist media training delivered to partner feminist activists.
- Connecting feminists with journalists.
- Attendance at high-profile events and forums.

# 6

## Events organised as part of the 'Feminism & Health' and 'Francophone Sisterhood' series.

- 18 July 2023 / Francophone Sisterhood special edition at Women Deliver in Kigali - Our bodies, our rights, our voices; a feminist approach to SRHR
- 13 September 2023 / Francophone Sisterhood - Coming together to respond to online violence
- 14 November 2023 / Feminism & Health - Action against sexual and gender-based violence: training future care givers (Lyon, France)
- 22 February 2024 / Francophone Sisterhood - Media and Feminism: creating, transforming and imagining our spaces
- 6 March 2024 / Feminism & Health - Intersecting oppressions: how to uphold access to health for all in the face of anti-rights movements in hostile environments? (Cotonou, Benin)
- 18 April 2024 / Francophone Sisterhood - Joy and anger in campaigning: emotions at the heart of our struggle

# Acknowledgements

In order to carry out its mission, Equipop relies on the support of many individuals and organisations that share its convictions and support its work. To all the members and volunteers who contribute to the organisation, the partners that offer financial support, without which our projects could not be implemented, the NGOs and local organisations

with which we have developed strong, long-lasting partnerships, the experts and civil servants with whom we co-build policies and programmes, the journalists and internet users who disseminate our information and messages, we would like to extend our warmest thanks for your support and loyalty.

We would like to give special thanks to:



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equipop.org

To find out more and take action.



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To receive a regular summary of our news highlights.



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**On Threads**  
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To follow our news in real time.

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The activity report is also available on our website: equipop.org

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Equipop is a feminist international aid organisation working to improve the rights and health of women and girls worldwide, focusing particularly on their sexual and reproductive rights and health. Equipop champions feminist values and places the gender approach at the heart of its work. Equipop is an evolving organisation with some forty staff across its offices in Dakar, Ouagadougou, and Paris. It supports and works with over one hundred different partner organisations and feminist activists in 12 countries.

Partnership ||| Mobilising our feminist resources ||| Mobilising our  
sisterhood support ||| Partnership ||| Mobilization



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