Networks of action and parity are emerging throughout the world, instigated by women to advance their statutory position and movements for better access to resources. Women’s networks claim for greater recognition, visibility and representation in decision-making bodies. Relying on feminine leadership that we strengthen through training and workshops, we respond with our efficient tools to institutional demands of expertise focused on the issue of the struggles against gender inequality and women’s poverty.

The Chairwoman

JULY / AUGUST 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NGO RESO-Femmes International 1

The Mopti Pilot-Project 2

Systematization on 6 Centers with the “Water – Sanitation – Food” Project 2

The “Gender & Empowerment ” Training Program 3

Capitalized Skills 4

Mission and Objectives of our Programs 4

If the "cause of women" is said to be universal, the feminization of poverty is global.

NGO RESO-Femmes International

International NGO and Institute for Research and Expertise, RESO-Femmes builds bridges between North and South and develops "Gender and Empowerment" trainings that structure our programs, designed to help women develop formal employment and to position themselves in politics. Our policy of action, so far focused on development projects to help forming our first groups of Mali and Burkina Faso, is evolving as from next September. Indeed, our issues will be the opening of five additional centers by the end of 2012, the "Gender and Empowerment" training and the ensuing investigations. A center of expertise and research (IAG, Institute of Anthropology of Globalization) specializes in the expertise of:

- global policies emanating from International Institutions and promoting the transversal dimension of their participation in all areas targeted by the programs since the Beijing Conference and more recently in the context of the MDGs;
- regional policy looking for tools and
methodological outlines so as to better orientate their public policies and better help their people.

We will carry on, thanks to our Projects and Programs Management Department, the actions initiated in Mopti and Ouagadougou, under the command of the Research and Project Management Assistant, who has specialized in the "Water - Sanitation - Food" project and in communicating with public authorities as well as institutional partners as part of our programs and media expertise (our network of Swiss councils and more recently the federal coordinations as well as the International Institutions).

Beside the Department, the Research and Expertise Unit, made up of “experts-researchers” conducting a survey of the International Institutions based in Geneva, help us expand our areas of activity and train students who wish to narrow down their knowledge on Gender and MDGs issues. Professional researchers will strengthen our team this winter and start up a continuing education program open to those who wish to specialize, from our experiment of West African networks, on a qualitative approach and on new tools, helping organizations in their search for transversal dynamics needed since the plans set first by Beijing and then by the 8 MDG goals.

Finally, our Media-dialogue Unit will launch, from our headquarters, into the publication of articles and modules that will be freely available to women and their networks in the South, and supported by partners in the North. Indeed, by providing our assistance only to networks that produce tangible results for the emancipation of their members and that provide us reports of their progress, we will contribute to better guide global policies in their concrete practices with the countries of the South and to encourage expected consensus on sensitive issues such as violence against women, their election, security in warship contexts etc.

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The Mopti Pilot-Project Experience

The experimentation of the pilot-project enabled RESO-Femmes to learn from the successes and constraints that were met along the path and therefore to capitalize them towards more effective tools and strategies of action. These experiences have been confirming that a long-term success requires integration into the formal space and thus to gather our leaders and local public authorities through joint training sessions (Step 3 of our programs for the guarantee of their autonomy).

Such collaboration between women leaders and authorities is used to collect relevant data from their local capabilities and to use them into the holistic approach of our actions. The prospect of systematization of our programs will meet the institutional needs of our partners (since the recent governance has been established in the South) and the necessity for coherence and unity, expected especially by the International Organizations on which our ethnographies have been initiated.

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Systematization on 6 centers through the « WSF » Project

The "Water - Sanitation - Food" project is our most recent as it is based on the achievements of our West African women's leadership of the two centers currently operating in Mali and Burkina Faso. It was designed to meet the economic, social and political training needs of our members of the southern countries (we cover 7 areas through our Research-Action Program) and is part of an institutional process of handing over the relay to local authorities.

The project "WSF" is unique in its way of turning our leadership into professional intervention groups, who expose to local authorities the disparities of access to clean water and vital infrastructures among the populations of the poorest suburban areas and villages.

Women thus become the essential intermediates for a dialogue of pacifist expression between people's needs
This training grew out of the requests expressed by women on the field of Mopti in Mali and of the results corresponding to their real needs. We have designed this course in a transversal approach to "gender and empowerment," towards the visibility of their political movements fighting against the feminization of poverty and in the quest for sustainable solutions for their status and professionalization.

Innovation workshops are oriented towards the development of social projects and the mobilization of reliable partners. These innovative economic strategies enable leaders to reinforce their status among both populations and authorities, and enable their associations to form up into networks.

The courses of the "Gender and Empowerment" Program aim the target of fostering female leadership in access to political sphere (parity in the community, elected women) and economic sector (jobs as development officers, heads of businesses).

Made aware by our trainings of the opportunities available to them since the global plans and the evolutions of regional governance, they access more directly the resources of globalization and thus can enhance their electorate and entrepreneurship.

We train them to manage conflict resilience and prevention and to initiate innovative social projects that will lead them to subtle strategic choices combining economic female interests and long-term statutory priorities.

The Training Module-Canvasses

To carry out the "Gender and Empowerment" Program, 5 training canvasses were elaborated in Geneva:

- information, communication and outreach (lobbying and advocacy from international programs)
- political education and citizenship (institutional coaching to leaders)
- associations management (networking)
- training of trainers (inspired by Unesco programs)
- preparation to election campaigns

The Approaches

The approaches we have developed are designed in a spirit of coherence with our partners and unity of our programs.

8 scientific approaches combining theoretical and practical assets have been identified from our anthropological surveys on the Malian field since 2001 and from our capitalized knowledge of African networks and their movements since 2005. These approaches thus correspond to a "bottom-up" design and give the opportunity to make the gender norms operational and to establish durable learning centers of male / female parity in the southern localities.
Capitalized Experience

Nadège Chell
Chairwoman and Programs Developer
Africanist Anthropologist, specialist of Gender & Empowerment questions and of politic stakes

Through her academic work and international institutional expertise, particularly that of the Beijing Conference (1995), the chairwoman is the maker of the RESO-Femmes programs and the initiator of the training canvasses tailored to the needs of our female members, with the view of their diffusion. Coaching exclusively women leaders for councils and feminine associations, her purpose was not to isolate them from the rest of the population but to raise their consciousness on the fact they are the first victims of the inequalities of access and on the effects of stereotypes limiting their participation, their energy and their action to be represented in formal jobs or to become elected.

She is the author of numerous publications, reports and articles providing a better understanding of plural feminisms and of African issues of women's participation in large-scale humanitarian and humanist programs (social projects, collective struggle for women's rights, fight against poverty). Her current works focus on identifying the breaches opened by the measures and the new planetary plan taken by International Organizations in favor of women’s power, associating them with the concrete possibilities of their global action.

She participated in several collective publications and many conferences dealing with the effects of global violence on the overall participation of women, on the inclusion of minority groups and on the traditional practices harmful to their status or limiting their awareness and collective solidarity. Her more recent works deal more specifically with issues raised by political parity and the perspectives that have been emerging, since the new global / local governmentalities (Foucault concept), for elites and movements rising in the regions since the political changes and the upheavals in their traditional institutions.

She is currently working on an upcoming release: The Matriarchal Vocation of West African elected women: their mediation in the global issues at stake and the contemporary directions of development, while carrying on training and regularly attending the teams at the headquarters and those of the two centers in West Africa, where she goes on missions to lead their meetings and prepare their autonomy. By intervening among the groups and providing them visibility them from our headquarters, her activism and her talent as a speaker are designed primarily to influence the decision process of the United Nations.

Camille Perrin-Blanc,
Research and Projects Management Assistant

Mission and Objectives of our Programs

In designing our mission and our goals from several departments, we wanted to make the coherence and synergy of our programs and projects clearer and more transparent.

The Projects and Programs Management Department

It is overseen by the chairwoman, managed by her assistant and supported by several interns whom we train with our methods so as to encourage their employment after an often-intense experience on our programs. The department is responsible for grant applications, administrative follow-ups and accounting and especially the development and overall monitoring of programs. It manages the application of programs and modules destined at our beneficiary members. On the field, the "Gender and Empowerment" program is not limited to basic training for our women leaders. By including the "training of trainers", the intent is to pass on the knowledge from leaders to their members. More recently, the joint training sessions "consciousness" gather agents of local authorities and leaders in a common approach to the "WSF" network project.

This “WSF” project, developed primarily to design practical tools for our members, enables us to capitalize tangible results in terms of gender parity
and autonomy by promoting, in our case, their formal employment at the very core of regional authorities.

Only women initially strengthened in the knowledge of themselves and of the relationships with other groups can advocate effectively for the defence of their rights and their access to resources. Serving as intermediaries to the people’s speech and framed into a network, they are more efficient to undertake relationships with elected officials, traditional leaders and international development partners. The “WSF” project contains the various tools and participatory approaches that we develop in our programs (a total number of 8 approaches, crossing each of the objectives of the MDGs). Therefore, leaders become more independent and know how to activate and select strategic partners to effectively improve their status and their social and political advancement.

The Research and Expertise Unit

In the context of global fight against poverty with the 2015 deadline imposed by the MDGs, it appears that the institutional approaches and tools are sometimes inadequate to the beneficiaries’ demand for social and political training.

Thus, our Global / Local data collections contribute as much to the knowledge of the international reality since the plans of action for women and the policies of the MDGs as to the collect of materials on issues that have been at stake since the planetary plan to fight poverty in West Africa.

With our conjunction of qualitative approaches with a few quantitative tools, we strive to provide to International Organizations, through our training, targeted expertise and specific tools for the implementation of the MDGs. These expertise are also capitalized into knowledge for our program of continuous training. Awaiting for financial support, this program should hopefully be open this coming winter to multidisciplinary researchers and students who want to specialize on Gender and MDGs topics or receive an education in Anthropology of Globalization directly related to the issue of governance and women's networks in the South.

The Media-diffusion Unit

The experimental training, the base on which we structure part of our module-canvasses, meets the specific needs of our groups in terms of empowerment, of training and of conflict prevention for an equal access to resources.

Local networks of NGOs and associations are pools of energies and skills deployed to improve living conditions and achieve the positive transformation of society. Yet, their work requires resources that partners hardly ever target at minority groups as they still suffer from stereotypes of poor management and from a reduced representation due to their poverty. This keep them limited in their ability to effectively take charge of social projects whereas we know that these women from the most sensitive areas are the ones who structure the future of their societies and of the generations.

To help them more effectively, our Media-diffusion Unit will circulate articles, publications and modules accessible through the internet. They will be charged in the North and free for the leaders, members and disadvantaged people in the South where access to such resources is lacking. These modules will be beneficial to all the women who build up feminine networks and organize women's associations in sustainable networks, supervised by our headquarters.

Since 2006, our experience has proved that our courses encourage women’s formal and independent employment (general reports 2009 and 2010). Our website and the information openly disseminated may have also contributed to the common plan undertaken in 2000. Finally, we rely on the rapid growth of such an entity as UN Women to speed things up and meet the various vocations of women leaders from the South who are expecting proficient tools to ensure their social, economic, political and cultural emancipation and empowerment.