Title of the Project: Book on Women’s Sexuality in Senegal

Project Duration: Jan 2004 – Dec 2005

Project Manager: Codou Bop, GREFELS’ Coordinator
Background information on GREFELS

The Groupe de Recherche sur les Femmes et les Lois (GREFELS) is a Senegalese feminist group which is a partner of the International Network on Women Living Muslim Laws.

GREFELS’s general commitment is to work for the transformation of the structural social inequalities in particular gender inequalities. It’s specific objective is to research on gender issues and more specifically on women and religion, women and sexuality, violence against women in particular female genital mutilations.

GREFELS’ other important objective is to support, through campaigns, advocacy and lobbying women whose human’s rights are violated on religious grounds. Its main activities are research, advocacy and gender and leadership training.

GREFELS is composed of a core group of 10 women who are active in research and advocacy on women’s human rights. The Group is not a membership association but it works in partnership with several Senegalese women’s associations who are active in various areas such as women’s leadership, violence against women, peace building and activities with displaced women and in income generating groups.

GREFELS coordinated books on women’s reproductive and sexual health such as the book on “Women of the World : laws and Policies Affecting their Reproductive Lives, Francophone Africa. Several members of the Group including its President and Coordinator are the authors of a book titled : Our Bodies Ourselves ; a book on Francophone Women’s health and sexuality »

II The Project on the Book on Sexuality

1 Justification

In Francophone Africa, and particularly in Senegal, researches, programmes and writings about sexuality and more specifically women’s sexuality are quite rare. Only one project located at the University of Dakar is concerned with the issue of sexuality in a context of medical ethnology. Sexuality is still considered as a taboo subject, and even national programs on reproductive health hardly mention it. If at all sexuality is examined, it is more likely when concerning sexually transmitted infections or HIV/AIDS, or when in the context of religious or social debates. This means that it is only the medical and/or “moral” aspects that are dealt with.

The objective of the book is to contribute to bridging this gap by providing information regarding women’s experiences, and how women live their sexuality, how sexuality is socially constructed in the Senegalese different ethnic groups, and the existence and experience of homosexuality and lesbian identity.

The expected output of the research is to increase knowledge on women’s sexuality and to bring the topic in the agenda of researchers, policy makers, activists on human rights and more specifically women’s rights activist.
2 Content of the book

The book is intended to include 11 chapters:

Chapter I introduces the book by conceptualizing sexuality, eroticism, seduction and reproduction.

Chapter II deals with sexuality (female as well as masculine) as a social construction, and how we are socialized to sexuality. Issues such as how women enter into sexual life (early marriage and place and role of coercion) will be raised.

Chapter III examines the social evolution of images of the Senegalese female body. It will look at how and which part of women’s body are sexualized, and issues relating to make up, traditional tattoos, hairdressing, clothes, skin bleaching and the ideal of whiteness or looking like coloured African American women. In this chapter traditional and modern erotic underwear, and other traditional erotic practices such as massage and aphrodisiacs will be described.

Chapter IV looks at feelings, love, sexual desire, pleasure, women’s experience and socially expected behaviours according to ethnic group and location (rural or urban setting).

Chapter V deals with social control of women’s sexuality as expressed in mandatory virginity before marriage, mandatory fecundity in marriage, female genital mutilations, rites and violence in widowhood and menopauses.

Chapter VI deals with the state and sexuality: how this institution controls women’s sexuality through laws (for example different age of marriage for men and women, regulations of marriage, regulation of prostitution, non enforcement of laws banning domestic violence or authorization of polygamy etc.) and through governmental programs on reproductive health. In addition even though Senegal signed and ratified all international instruments on women’s human rights, including their sexual rights, the State does not enforce them. This chapter will include an advocacy plan of action intended to lobby the State in partnership with other women’s groups and associations for the defence of human rights and other civil society’s actors.

Chapter VII is interested in women’s homosexuality and the social vision about it. It will try to find out whether there are lesbians in Senegal and know about their experience and their expectations about questions such as love, maternity, marriage and family.

Chapter VIII is concerned with portrayal of sexuality in media, art, songs and literature. It will include a content analysis of a corpus of press articles, radio and TV programs and songs in order to examine thematic related to sexuality and their impact on the social construction of women’s body, attitudes and behaviours as far as expressing and making love are concerned.

Chapter IX deals with sexuality and religion including traditional religions. Religious discourses will be studied as well as their impact on women’s body image in particular the new trend of veiling, and on sexual attitudes and behaviours. Issues such as sin and zinna (fornication and adultery in the Islamic Law), Catholic nuns and priest’s sexuality as well as that of Muslim ulammas, will be looked at.
Chapter X is interested with health issues in sexuality through analyses of sexually transmitted infections (SITs), HIV/AIDS, family planning and violence against women (rape, paedophilia, sexual harassment etc.) and programs implemented to deal with them.

Chapter XI deals with prostitution and related sexual violence, in particular trafficking in women, child prostitution and rape. The book’s conclusion will sums up the main issues developed in the book and will reflect on the theory and practices of women’s sexual rights in Senegal, and women’s struggle for the respect and advancement of their rights.

3 Methodology

For the data collection, several methods will be used. They are:

* Literature review (religious books, research reports on sexuality and health, the family code and other national laws, governmental programs on reproductive health, etc) and pictures and paintings exhibited in the women’s museum
* Interviews and focus groups of women (from different class, age, location) et of key informants, of sexual workers and policemen, and religious and traditional authorities.
* Participant observation where erotic devices (underwear and aphrodisiac) are prepared and used

4 Research Plan

The duration of the research and drafting of the articles is two years. It will start in January 2004 and end in December 2005.

* From January to March 2004: The literature review will take place and the research tools will be prepared, tested and corrected. OBS! Seminar??
* From April to October 2004 the data collection using above described method will take place. It is relevant to plan the data collection over several months as rural areas are targeted and the rainy season goes from June to October.
* From November 2004 to March 2005: Analyse of data and drafting of the articles
* From April to June 2005: Meeting of authors to harmonize content and share with other African and foreign specialists on sexuality. OBS! Seminar??
* From June to September 2005: Finalizing the book and sharing the final product with other Senegalese women’s groups and partners
* From October to December 2005: Finding a publisher with the support of the Sexuality, Gender and Society in Africa programme at the Nordic Institute. Publication of the book

III Researchers

MS Codou Bop, GREFELS’ Coordinator is the principal researcher and responsible for the research and publication. The research will be carried out by a core group of GREFELS’ members and Prof Fatou Sow, President of the GROUP will also play an important role in the research. Dr Cheikh Ibrahima Niang a leading researcher in the field of sexuality is willing to contribute one article.

Cf researchers’ CVs annexed.
IV  Budget

Research (stationary including recorders, tapes and paper,)  $1,000

Training of research assistants :  $800

Pre-test of interview guides :  $350

Trips to site of data collection
   Renting of a vehicle :  \[75 \times 50 \text{ days} = 3,750\]
   Bed and breakfast and other food  \[30 \times 5 \times 50 \text{ days} = 7,500\]

Typing of recorded tapes (from interviews and focus groups and radios, TV programs and songs)  $800

Dissemination and sharing of findings with women’s groups :  $1,000

Researchers honorarium :  \[1000 \times 5 = 5,000\]

Institutional expenses (water, electricity phone, internet, watcher)  \[200 \times 24 \text{ months} = 4,800\]

**TOTAL BUDGET :**  $25,000
ANNEX: Researchers’ CVs

1 Fatou SOW
Email: fatousow@sentoo.sn and fatousow@hotmail.com
Education: Doctorate III Cycle in Sociology, University of Paris-Sorbonne, France
Professional Experience: Research Director in Sociology, University Paris 7 Denis Diderot, France; Chair of the Department of Social Sciences of Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire, University Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar; Lecturer at the Departments of Philosophy and Sociology: Sociology of the family and gender relations, gender studies, University Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar
Collaboration with several organisations, such as the French Institute of Public Opinion, UNESCO, UNDP, USAID, URTNA, BCEOM, ILO, World Bank, Ivorian Institute of Public Opinion, etc. Member of several international scientific committees: She extensively published on gender issues; social sciences; land issues; reproductive and sexual health and rights and women and Islam.

2 Oulimata GAYE
Email: ouligaye@hotmail.com
Education: Masters in Law
Professional Experience
Director of the Legal Information Center for the African Network for Sustainable Development and President of the National Committee to end Violence against Women. She is in charge for legal programmes, providing women with information on Senegal modern laws and providing victims of domestic violence with lawyers, and working with women in prison. She has published on Women and Religious and Traditional Norms and on violence against women

3 Madeleine Deves SENGHOR
Email: sengma2000@yahoo.fr
Education: Master in Law and Certificate in Legal Ethnology, Specialist of Family Law and Sexual and Reproductive Health

4 Rokhaya Gaye
Email: rogaye@hotmail.com
Education: Masters in Law
Professional Experience: Legal Adviser at the African Network for Sustainable Development. Specialist on family laws. Works at the grass root level to provide women with information regarding their rights and providing them with lawyers when needed.

5 Awa Diop Fall
Email: awafalldiop@hotmail.com
Education: Expert in communication
Professional experience: Teacher and researcher on girl’s education. Publications on gender barriers to girl’s education in Senegal and on leadership and communication for villagers.
6 Codou Bop
Education: Journalist and anthropologist
Professional experience: Research Program Officer with the International Planned Parenthood Federation, with the Population Council and with the Association of African women for research and Development (AAWORD).
Carried out researches and published on many topics such women (religion, health, sexuality, access to land, poverty, politics). Has been an Humphrey Fellow and a Fellow of the Religion and Human Rights Programs with Emory University.