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WOMEN'S LEGAL RIGHTS INITIATIVE
OF THE WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT IQC

BENIN TRIP REPORT: MARCH 12-29, 2005

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SECTION I

Travel Dates, Destinations and Purposes

A. Travel dates and destination

Lyn Beth Neylon, legal specialist for the Women's Legal Rights Initiative (WLR), and Yung-Ting Kung, project manager, traveled to the Republic of Bénin, West Africa, from March 12 to 29 and March 21 to 29, 2005, respectively.

B. Purposes of travel

The general purposes of this trip were: 1) for the legal specialist to participate in and observe the WLR Benin public launch of the new training manual and public awareness materials; 2) to attend and observe four public education "roundtable" meetings in rural Benin on the new Benin Family Code; 3) for the legal specialist to review the Benin action plan and budget with the WLR Benin coordinator and identify priority activities for the remainder of fiscal year 2005; 4) to meet with USAID/Benin Mission staff, update them on WLR Benin activities, and solicit suggestions and feedback; and, 5) for the project manager to review WLR Benin records and review USAID and Chemonics International accounting and administrative procedures with the administrative staff.

SECTION II

Trip Results

A. WLR Benin materials launch

Following the official opening of the WLR Benin office on August 27 and the launch of activities with a September 1-3 training in 2004, the WLR Benin local coordinator, Elvire Ahounou Houenassou, organized a materials development workshop with our local NGO partners: Association des Femmes Juristes du Bénin (AFJB); Women in Law and Development in Africa/Benin (WiLDAF/Benin); Droits de l'Homme, Paix, et Développement (DHPD); and Centre Beninois pour le Développement des Initiatives à la Base (CBDIBA). These groups, working for a week with a facilitator and WLR Benin staff, developed a training manual for paralegals and a public awareness booklet explaining important provisions of the new *Code des Personnes et de la Famille* (Benin Family Code). The Family Code public awareness materials were written in simple, easy-to-understand text, with color illustrations, and painstakingly translated into four local languages, two that are common in the north, and two that are common in the south of Benin. The text emphasizes changes in the laws governing marriage (especially the elimination of polygamy), divorce, succession and inheritance, and the requirement to officially register or “declare” a child’s birth.

To assure that as many people as possible learned of the availability of these materials, the WLR Benin field office planned a well-publicized event to officially present the materials to government officials, our NGO partners, and event attendees. The event was held at the Chamber of Commerce building on Wednesday, March 16, 2005. The invitation list included government officials, international and local NGOs working on issues of importance to women, members of the judiciary, USAID/Benin, and interested others. A five-minute video was produced (in French) to introduce WLR Benin, our local partners, and the materials, and to inform the audience that USAID is funding the project. Banners were made, with the proper USAID branding; the media was contacted; and a children’s “folklorique” group was engaged to dance and to do a sketch with a story based on the Family Code.

The panel included US Ambassador Wayne Neill; USAID/Benin Director Rudolph Thomas; Minister of Justice Dorothé Sossa (and after he left, his representative Secretary General Pamphile Koukou); Minister of Commerce (formerly Minister of Family, Social Protection, and Solidarity) Madame Massiyatou Lauriano Latoundji; President of the High Court of Justice Madame Clotilde Medegan Nougbo; WLR Benin Coordinator Elvire Ahounou Houenassou; and WLR Legal Specialist Lyn Beth Neylon. After the speeches, the panelists were presented with a packet of Family Code materials, including the training manual in French and the public awareness booklets in French and four local languages (Adja, Baatonou, Dendi, and Fon). Then the officials presented each of our NGO partners with a packet of materials and a certificate stating how many copies of each booklet they were entitled to receive from WLR Benin for their public awareness activities (to be picked up at the office later). Unfortunately, the electricity was out in our section of Cotonou for the entire launch event, so we were not able to show the video. Because there was no air conditioning and it was very hot, we cut some of the dances to shorten the program.

The WLR Benin materials launch was covered by 5 newspapers, as well as the national government television station, and the privately-owned TV station LC2. The launch coverage ran on the local news on both stations, and repeated several times a day for several days.

B. WLR Benin public education “roundtables”

To celebrate International Women’s Day, and to ensure the greatest impact of the public awareness booklets on the improvement and reinforcement of the rights of rural Beninese women, WLR-Bénin, in collaboration with its local partners, organized four public education “roundtables” in rural areas of Benin. These were community training and discussion events, which, under other circumstances might be called “town hall meetings,” but there was not always a town or a hall. These four public education roundtables were held in Mono, Zou, Borgou, and Atacora, areas that are seldom chosen for public awareness activities. Each meeting was held in the local language of the area, and pre- and post-meeting questions were posed to individuals as a way for WLR to evaluate the effectiveness of this kind of public education.

All the roundtables lasted for approximately five hours, except the last one in Djougou. Because of the extra time needed for double translations and for prayer breaks, the WLR team left after five hours, but the meeting was on track to continue another hour or two. At all the meetings, local political, traditional, and religious authorities were invited to attend and participate, with varying success. The general script was similar for all the public education roundtables: some people were already present when we got to the meeting site, but many came after seeing the car pull up; there was drumming, music, singing, and/or dancing to start the event, followed by short speeches in the local language or French from the panel, which usually consisted of the president of the host NGO, several local officials, the WLR Benin coordinator, and the WLR legal specialist. There were generally several facilitators/presenters/trainers who explained the most important parts of the Family Code, using WLR Benin materials. Literate individuals read sections and the short scenarios from the public awareness materials in the local language. Many questions were asked and answered. Finally, after more singing, dancing and thanks, everyone received a sandwich and soda, and the public education roundtables concluded.

One element common to all the roundtables was that a group of women and men who are literate in their local language (uncommon, as French is the only language taught in schools) were identified before the event, given WLR Family Code t-shirts and public awareness materials, and placed prominently in the front of the audience. At every roundtable, these women and men read sections of the materials, so that the first information that most of the people present heard about the Family Code was from a known, local person, in their own language. This emphasized that the Family Code is a law that was developed and advocated by the people of Benin, and it was passed by the people’s representatives in the National Assembly, not imposed from the outside. Benin is still a fledgling democracy, and this was an important point to make.

The first public education meeting was held in Klouekamey, in the *département* of Couffo, in the Mono region, about a 3-hour drive from Cotonou. It was hosted by AFJB on Thursday, March 17, 2005 at the local youth center, and the languages used were Adja and Fon, although most of the presenters spoke only French. There were approximately 130 attendees, more than the

organizers anticipated. The local mayor, Mr. Christophe Mègbédji, a strong proponent of the Family Code, led the opening ceremony and much of the discussion. The WLR team arrived at about 9:30 a.m., but the presenters did not come until 11:00 with banners. After dancing, drumming, and introductions, the presenters began by asking several people questions developed for pre-event evaluation purposes. Several literate women then read sections of the public awareness materials in Adja that explained the main provisions of the Family Code. The presenters also explained the new requirements of the law. After much explanation and many questions asked and answered, and most of the people who asked questions were men. At about 3:30 p.m., the AFJB workers passed out copies of the public awareness materials to the crowd. Some members of the audience left angry because the AFJB ran out of materials and sandwiches and not everyone got something.

The second roundtable was held in Zounzonmè, in the community of Za-Kpota, in the *département* of Zou, about a 2-hour drive from Cotonou. This public education event was hosted by CBDIBA on Friday, March 18. It was held outside under the trees, approximately 250-300 people attended, and the language used was Adja. A local singer/storyteller/bard, Sounzin Atandjo, greeted the speakers and local authorities, and summarized what was being said at various points in the program. The CBDIBA trainers worked with him in the weeks before the roundtable to teach him about the Family Code, so he was able to effectively turn the discussion into a story, encourage the local people to learn about the Family Code, make funny comments about it, and explain what they should and shouldn't be doing now that the law is changed. It was a wonderful way to reinforce the information for an illiterate population unfamiliar with the new requirements. Many local religious and traditional leaders (including Protestant, Voodoo, and "Celestial Christianity" leaders) and political authorities attended. Daniel Azoga, the mayor of Za-kpota, sat with the WLR team. The CBDIBA presenters were knowledgeable about the Family Code, and easily engaged the audience, who responded positively. They asked many questions, mostly about inheritance, marriage requirements (consent, age, bride price), and divorce. At the end of the event, the bard sang about the innovations of the Family Code in a song specially conceived for the roundtable, and he praised the Code as "an instrument of lasting human development."



WLR public education meetings drew large crowds who wanted to learn about the new Family Code. (Left Parakou, right Zounzonmè).

The third public education roundtable was held in the second district of the town of Parakou, in the Borgou-Algori region, about a 7-hour drive north from Cotonou. It was hosted by *l'Association pour l'Eveil de la Femme et l'Epanouissement de la Famille* (“*Doom 'Kpa*”), a member of the WiLDAF NGO network, on Tuesday, March 22. The presentations and speeches were in the language Baatonou, and the gathering was held in the Centre d'Alphabetisation (Literacy Center) in Parakou. The panel included the director of the Department of Family, Social Protection, and Solidarity (DDFSPS); the Coordinator of WiLDAF-Benin; the *Chef de 2e Arrondissement* (the head of the local administrative region, in charge of, among other things, presiding over marriages); the director of Literacy and Adult Education; and the Coordinator of WLR Benin. Two important local kings attended the roundtable, as did Imam Wakaya, an important local religious leader in this predominantly Muslim area. The traditional chiefs and religious leaders blessed the session and promised to popularize the Family Code in churches, mosques, during casual discussions, to the assemblies, and everywhere there is a need. Approximately 150 people attended this roundtable. Interestingly, most of the people who asked questions in this group were women. Questions were similar to the ones asked at other roundtables, e.g.: How can one prevent polygamy in a context where there are more women than men? When a man who has five wives under customary law gets legally (civilly) married to one of them, what will be the fate of the others? Does the Code apply to people living in the villages and rural parts of Benin? Can one re-marry after a divorce? What happens under the Code to the children born in the marriage or outside the marriage? What are the rights of a widow if she and her husband had a customary marriage but didn't register a civil marriage? Polygamy has existed for centuries, won't it be difficult to ask men to marry only one woman? (See Annex II for performance data on the roundtable in Parakou.)

These and other questions were answered satisfactorily: the law applies to all Beninese without exception; the Code applies from the time of its passage and in the future, but doesn't apply to past acts, so valid customary and polygamous marriages are still valid marriages; the Family Code protects the Beninese family, especially children; and the content of the law was voted on by the National Assembly after years of discussion, and conforms to the constitution, and it is the duty of all citizens of Benin to follow the law. The presenters emphasized the legal necessity to record births, deaths, and marriages, which are new requirements.

The fourth roundtable in the tiny hamlet of Djougou, in the *département* of Donga, about a 2-hour drive from Parakou (or 9 hours north of Cotonou), was hosted by DHPD on Wednesday, March 23. It was held in the *Place de l'indépendance*, a large park in the center of Djougou. Common local languages here are Dendi, Lokpa, and Yom, which necessitated double and sometimes triple translations. Presenters used the WLR public awareness materials in Dendi, but often spoke in another local language. Donga is an agricultural area, and the predominant religion is a conservative branch of Islam. Three local women's organizations were invited to come and participate in the public education meeting, and they in turn invited others, so that there was a large turn-out. There were approximately 150 people at the beginning of the meeting, but the number grew as more people came by to listen. Because the gathering was held in a large public place near the market, many people, including vendors, walked by and listened for a long or short time. Children let out of school also appeared, and seemed very interested; some volunteered that they were able to read both French and Dendi, and asked for copies of the public education materials. The WLR team and other guests and presenters were introduced by a

representative of the mayor. The DHPD facilitators were very familiar with the Family Code, and after the presentations, continued answering the many questions long past the time when we expected the event to end.



Local women reading from the Dendi language Family Code materials in Djougou.

Interestingly, participants in this roundtable discussion asked virtually the same questions in each of the meetings. Questions about the validity of civil and customary marriages entered into before the law was passed, about what happens to the the second/third/fourth wife in a polygamous marriage now that polygamy is no longer a legal marriage option, and specific concerns about the inheritance of children inside and outside the marriage were common. There was always some man who declared that Benin has more women than men, so the law must allow polygamy so these women can marry. This is, in fact, untrue; while a slightly larger percentage of boys are born, by the time they reach the usual age of marriage, because of a higher death rate, there are approximately equal numbers of men and women in Benin. (When it was pointed out that in Mali there are more men than women, so using their logic, Malian women should be allowed to have more than one husband, the men always dropped that line of reasoning.) (See Annex II for performance data on the roundtable in Djougou.)

The public education roundtables were quite a success, and the WLR team was continuously invited to come back to hold additional meetings. People seemed to feel empowered because we thought they were important enough to hold these gatherings in their communities. WLR Benin reached well over 700 people directly, and there is no doubt that the literate individuals who were urged to share their materials with others in their communities, and the religious, traditional, and political leaders who attended the roundtables will continue to educate others about the Family Code. The “town hall” meetings will have a ripple effect at the grassroots in these areas.

In addition to the direct benefits of personal participation in public education events in under-served areas, the information gathered at these roundtables will be invaluable to WLR for future planning. Knowing what issues concern people the most, what questions people have, and what parts of the Family Code need to be clarified will help WLR Benin to focus our activities. We will use this information to create new, less expensive, more targeted materials and messages to educate the public about the Family Code, particularly the legal rights of women.

C. WLR Benin action plan activities for the remainder of FY 2005

In less than seven months, the WLR Benin team has implemented, with our partners, five trainings on the Family Code, one training follow-up (at six months), the materials development workshop, the translation and production of a paralegal training manual and public awareness booklets on important provisions of the Family Code, and four public awareness “town meetings.” In addition, WLR has hosted several well-publicized and well-attended events to generate public awareness and interest in our activities as a USAID project, including the WLR Benin office opening, the official WLR Benin launch, the materials development workshop, and the recent Family Code materials launch. There has also been local coverage of our four rural public education roundtables, and several radio and television call-in shows with the WLR Benin coordinator. The project has had a successful start, and now it will move into the next phase with adjustments and new activities.

USAID/Benin: To support and complement USAID/Benin’s work around the girls’ education, WLR Benin will begin work on providing support for drafting legislation prohibiting sexual harassment. The sexual harassment of girls in school is one of the primary reasons for low enrollment and retention of girl students, and is extremely psychologically damaging to the girls, as well as undermining the education system of Benin. The WLR team had a lively discussion with USAID staff as to what the scope of a sexual harassment law should be, the question being whether there should be a general law against sexual harassment, with sections covering students at school, and other sections covering, for example, employees at their workplace, or should the law be focused only on the prevention and punishment of sexual harassment of students at school, leaving the protection of workers for another time? We discussed the problem, the needs of women and girls in Benin, the resources WLR Benin will be able to provide, a possible timeline, and the pros and cons of each approach.

The WLR team and USAID staff also discussed how a sexual harassment law should be introduced, whether through the National Assembly (*projet*), through the executive branch Ministries (*proposition*), or through an Executive Order from the President. We came to an agreement that the best strategy is to educate the Deputies of the National Assembly about the sexual harassment problem, and then give them legislation to introduce, which will encourage more discussion and public debate on the issue. The WLR Benin coordinator, Elvire Houenassou, proposed that WLR might support a sexual harassment law development workshop, using a West African model law on sexual harassment developed by WiLDAF as the basis for a law specific to Benin. Everyone present agreed that this would be preferable to a product by one single consultant, because it will allow for a variety of viewpoints and input from stakeholders.

Ms. Houenassou will work with the USAID/Benin Democracy and Governance, Basic Education, and Gender Teams to develop a Scope of Work in the coming months for a sexual harassment legislation development workshop. We will ask the advice of USAID/Benin staff on who should be included in the workshop, who among the governmental officials understands and is sympathetic and who in the government needs education on the issue of sexual harassment. We may also ask USAID/Benin staff to share with us the most recent statistics they have on sexual harassment in schools, and perhaps most importantly, to use the strength and connections of USAID/Benin in whatever ways are appropriate to increase the chances of the National Assembly successfully passing legislation against sexual harassment.

D. WLR Benin budget and administrative procedures review

WLR home office and field office staff spent hours reviewing the FY 2005 Benin budget, as the project was on track to be significantly over-budget. Some of the spending decisions were deliberate choices, made by following the general priorities set out at the beginning of the project. Many of the costs of running an office in Benin were significantly higher than expected when the project commenced (internet charges, office supplies, hiring a car and driver for a number of days every month), and unanticipated costs (the declining value of the dollar, legal fees to review and modify employment agreements and lease, payment to the media to cover events) necessitated a review of the budget and cutting planned activities. This was a difficult process, and led to a discussion on fundraising and looking for other partners to share the costs of activities. The WLR Benin coordinator has been very careful when spending WLR funds, and is a skilled and knowledgeable negotiator. Nevertheless, the costs of our planned activities for 2005 exceeded our funds, so we cut or postponed several important activities to balance the WLR Benin budget. Ms. Houenassou is very concerned about what can be accomplished with the budgets for FY 2006 and 2007, which at this time are projected to be less than half the current WLR Benin budget.

To ensure successful administration of project activities by the WLR Benin field office, the field office administrative assistant Justeciel Houzanme received trainings on essential Chemonics and USAID policies and regulations during the last trip to Benin in August-September, 2004. On this trip, the WLR project manager for Benin, Yung-Ting Kung, reviewed the WLR Benin field office records and accounts since that time, and provided a general review to Ms. Houzanme on project accounting, payroll, employment agreements, fixed price subcontracts, travel procedures, filing procedures, procurement guidelines, wire transfers, timesheets, and general USAID approval requirements. The WLR home office team found no significant problems with the accounts or procedures of the field office.

SECTION III

Next Steps

A. Partner changes

WLR Benin is very satisfied, for the most part, with our NGO partners: Women in Law and Development in Africa/Benin (WiLDAF/Benin); Droits de l'Homme, Paix, et Développement; and Centre Beninois pour le Développement des Initiatives a la Base (DHPD); and Centre Beninois pour le Développement des Initiatives à la Base (CBDIBA). However, the work of l'Association des Femmes Juristes du Bénin (AFJB) has not been the highest quality, and we are reconsidering how we will work with them in the future. Their trainers and facilitators seem to be inexperienced, they do not understand monitoring and evaluation, and their president, who is an extremely knowledgeable and talented attorney, is running for President of Benin in 2006 and cannot devote as much time to the organization as she previously did. The WLR team got the impression that the AFJB leaders seem to be only interested in doing large, expensive projects, and do not want to provide the discrete, inexpensive trainings and public education meetings that WLR Benin supports. The report from AFJB's first training of intermediate judicial sector workers was unsatisfactory; the WLR Benin Coordinator asked the AFJB trainers to re-write it because it lacked information we need, but they have not done so.

Of the four Family Code public education roundtables that the WLR team attended on this trip, the one hosted by AFJB was the only one that was not well-prepared: the speakers arrived late, the banners announcing the meeting were not put up ahead of time, the facilitators lost control of the meeting and people began to talk among themselves and leave, and worst of all, the facilitators were not knowledgeable about the Family Code requirements and gave incomplete or misleading information. Although we came only as observers, the situation deteriorated to the point that Ms. Houenassou intervened and began to speak about the Family Code herself (in Fon). Her obvious expertise and engaging public speaking style quieted the crowd, people returned to their seats, and she single-handedly salvaged the roundtable. It is the legal specialist's impression that the AFJB leaders had not adequately trained their local staff in the Family Code provisions, and had not passed on important information about WLR's requirements for the public meeting. For example, Ms. Houenassou had to explain to them the pre- and post-meeting questions (which WLR supplied weeks in advance) as a monitoring and evaluation tool, when we had been assured that AFJB understood and was completely familiar with donor requirements for assessing trainings and events. The local trainers were very nice, and treated the WLR team very well, but they did not run the public education roundtable competently, and WLR will probably not partner with AFJB on trainings or public awareness events any more. We will assess their capabilities to participate in other kinds of activities, such as the sexual harassment legislation development workshop, in the future.

The WLR Benin team had planned to partner with Cinéma Numérique Ambulant (CNA), an NGO that travels in vans to rural and remote areas of Benin with generators and equipment to show movies, while also engaging in community discussions on local human rights issues. CNA uses films to draw audiences into a shared experience, presenting entertaining and educational films on such issues as health, women's rights, female genital mutilation, and child exchange, and then facilitating a community discussion. WLR Benin wanted to partner with CNA to

provide information on the Family Code to the remotest areas of Benin, as most people there have never heard of the law and have no idea of their rights and responsibilities under it. WLR would like to work with CNA, however, given project budget considerations, WLR Benin is postponing, and perhaps canceling, these activities.

WLR Benin had also planned to work with *L'Amazone du Golfe*, an established magazine dedicated to articles of interest to women and/or about women. The WLR field office worked with *L'Amazone* to develop a Scope of Work for a series of articles on the Family Code trainings and public awareness activities of WLR Benin and our NGO partners, translated into local languages. However, *L'Amazone's* founder and director took a full-time job with an international NGO, and the current manager, in WLR's opinion, does not have sufficient initiative or experience to run the magazine. Also, it seems the enterprise has run into financial difficulties and may close. Therefore, WLR Benin will not be working with *L'Amazone du Golfe* on public awareness activities in this fiscal year.

WLR Benin will probably work with *Union des Femmes Methodistes du Bénin* (UFM), a Methodist Church women's organization. WLR home office staff first met with UFM on February 17, 2004, during our assessment visit to Benin. UFM members do community work outside the cities, going to the villages and people's homes and churches, explaining women's rights to men and women and helping them resolve disputes. UFM has worked with other local women's associations (including AFJB), international NGOs (Global Ministries), and receives in-kind and volunteer support from their members and churches. WLR Benin will also continue to work with *Echos de la Capitale* theatre troupe on developing skits or radio programs with themes depicting provisions of the Family Code. Ms. Houenassou is in discussions with UFM and *Echos de la Capitale* about partnering on Family Code public awareness activities.

B. General management and administrative oversight

The WLR home office will continue to supervise and assist the WLR Benin field office team through daily email reports and weekly telephone conferences. We anticipate only one more trip to Benin in fiscal year 2005, as the project is running relatively smoothly. WLR has the utmost confidence in the abilities and expertise of the local coordinator and administrative assistant. The next trip to Benin is tentatively scheduled for late summer of 2005.

Ms. Neylon and the WLR home office will continue to monitor WLR Benin activities and budgets, and provide guidance, administrative, and technical support. WLR Benin will continue to cooperate with USAID/Benin to develop and implement activities that enhance their existing programs, to take advantage of their expertise, and to keep them informed of upcoming events and the implementation of action plan activities.

SECTION IV

Key Meetings

The first two weeks of this trip were focused on the Family Code materials launch on March 16, and the four public awareness meetings on March 17, 18, 22, and 23, the latter two being a day's travel from Cotonou. Because of spending time on the launch, internal discussions on the budget, planning sessions, and the public education roundtables (including travel), the WLR team scheduled only half a day for meetings with USAID/Benin.

The WLR team did talk with our NGO partners, government officials, and others during the public events, but the discussions were general in nature. Lyn Beth Neylon and Elvire Ahounou Houenassou met with the following staff members at USAID/Benin to share information on WLR Benin activities and plan future efforts:

- 3/25/05** USAID/Benin Program Officer **Barbara Dickerson**, and **Project Development and Gender Specialist Bernice Noudegbessi**, for information update and debrief of Family Code materials launch, at USAID/Benin, 01 B.P. 2012, Cotonou; tel: (229) 30-05-00; bdickerson@usaid.com.gov, benoudegbessi@usaid.gov
- 3/25/05** USAID/Benin Project Development and Gender Specialist **Bernice Noudegbessi**, **Jacqueline Ahouansou**, **Gender Team member**, and **Basic Education Team member Cosme Quenum**, to discuss the possibility of a WLR-sponsored sexual harassment legislation development workshop to write a law against sexual harassment in Benin, at USAID/Bénin, 01 B.P. 2012, Cotonou; (229) 30-05-00

SECTION V

Program for Materials Launch and NGO Partner (CBDIBA) Certificate

Programme Définitif

Lancement officiel des outils de formation et de sensibilisation par WLR-Bénin

Mercredi 16 mars 2005

Lieu : Salle de Conférence du Chambre du Commerce et d'Industrie du Bénin (CCIB)

Horaires	Activités	Responsables
08H00 – 09H00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrivée et installation des artistes, des invités et des médias • Distribution du programme • Accueil des invités officiels • Animation par le groupe folklorique 	Assistante administrative/ Hôtesse Agence de communication
09H00 – 09H10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocution de bienvenue 	Représentante Directeur WLR-Bénin
09H10 – 09H20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocution de l'Ambassadeur des USA 	Ambassadeur/USA
09H20 – 09H30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocution du MFPSS 	MPSFS
09H30 – 09H50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Présentation des outils • Remerciement des Rédacteurs et Prestataires 	Coordonnatrice WLR-Bénin
09H50 – 10H00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocution de lancement officiel du MJLDH 	Ministre MJLDH
10H00 – 10H15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remise des outils au gouvernement et aux différents partenaires 	Gouvernement/USAID/ WLR-Bénin
10H15 – 10H30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sketch sur le Code des Personnes et de la Famille 	Troupe théâtrale/Agence de communication
10H30 – 10H45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocutions de remerciement des récipiendaires 	Récipiendaires

10H45 – 11H00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animation par le groupe folklorique • Distribution des plaquettes aux autres invités 	Hôtesse Agence de communication
11H00 – 11H30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rafrachissements 	Hôtesse



U.S. Ambassador Wayne Neill handing a set of Family Code public awareness materials produced by WLR Benin to Justice Clotelde Medegan Nougboide, president of the Benin High Court of Justice, at the materials launch, held by WLR Benin at the Chamber of Commerce building in Cotonou on March 16, 2005.

NGO Partner CBDIBA Certificate (example)

BON



WLR- BENIN

Pour le retrait par CBDIBA de:

400 exemplaires de « Mon manuel d'animation juridique »

600 exemplaires de « La loi sur les personnes et la famille : Que dois-je retenir ? » (Version française)

300 exemplaires de « La loi sur les personnes et la famille : Que dois-je retenir ? » (Version fon)

150 exemplaires de « La loi sur les personnes et la famille : Que dois-je retenir ? » (Version adja)

150 exemplaires de « La loi sur les personnes et la famille : Que dois-je retenir ? » (Version baatonou)

WLR- BENIN est un projet de



ANNEX I

Monitoring and Evaluation for Education Roundtables

In order to gather stories from the field related to WLR, contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of the Benin country program, and build the capacity of local NGOs, Ms. Kung worked with Ms. Houenassou to design qualitative monitoring and evaluation questions for the public education campaigns. Collaborating with DHPD and WILDAF, Ms. Kung and Ms. Houzanme asked a series of pre and post questions to selected participants at both the Borgou and Atacora roundtables. The responses are presented below.

WILDAF Roundtable– Parakou

Summary

The WILDAF public education event took place on the afternoon of March 22, 2005 in a meeting hall in the town of Parakou. WILDAF had prepared several copies of the pre and post test and chose the participants for the questionnaires ahead of time. Though some of the questions were slightly modified, they generally followed the questions prepared by Ms. Kung and Ms. Houenassou.

Seven participants, six women and one man, took part in the pre-test. The male participant translated for several of the female participants who did not speak French. Though each person was questioned individually, they all sat together on a bench and therefore heard each other's responses. At times, the noise of the dancers and drummers made it difficult to hear answers. Ms. Houzanme recorded responses in either French and/or English, and Ms. Kung recorded responses in English. The pre-test is a compilation of their notes.

The post-test took place immediately after the public awareness event ended. As there were many questions during the event, it was quite late (7:00 p.m.) before they could begin the post-test. One participant left before they could question him, so they added a new participant to the post-test. Many women were in a hurry to get home and others wanted to stay in the meeting hall to have refreshments. As a result, many did not give very detailed responses to the post-test. Two teams were formed to administer the post-roundtable questions quickly. The WILDAF representative and Ms. Kung were one team, and Ms. Houzanme administered the questions on her own. People standing nearby translated from the local language when necessary. The post-test responses are a compilation of all of their notes.

Questionnaire

Identification

1. Nom et Prénom (Name and First Name):

- a. GOBI Gmonmori
- b. MELE Colette
- c. BADOGO Mamatou

- d. SOULE Abiba
- e. BOURU Yanki
- f. KADE Florence
- g. SUANOW Dama Philippe
- h. BAWOROU Alidou

2. *Profession:*

- a. Commerçante (shopkeeper)
- b. Couturière (I am learning dressmaking)
- c. Ménagère (Housewife)
- d. Vendeuse (vendor/retailer)
- e. Commerçante (shopkeeper)
- f. Etudiante (student)
- g. Director of private secondary school
- h. Did not do pre-test

3. *Age:*

- a. 60
- b. 21
- c. 70
- d. 35
- e. 34
- f. 19
- g. 55
- h. Did not do pre-test

4. *Situation matrimoniale (Marital situation):*

- a. Mariée (married)
- b. Célibataire (single)
- c. Mariée (married)
- d. Mariée (married)
- e. Mariée (married)
- f. Célibataire (single)
- g. Marié (married)
- h. Did not do pre-test

5. *Avez-vous des enfants? Si oui, combien de filles? (Do you have children? If so, how many are girls?)*

- a. 7 enfants, 3 filles (7 children, 3 girls)
- b. Non (no)
- c. 7 enfants, 4 filles (7 children, 4 girls)
- d. 4 enfants, 2 filles (4 children, 2 girls)
- e. 4 enfants, 1 fille (4 children, 1 girl)
- f. Non (no)
- g. 6 enfants, 2 filles (6 children, 2 girls)
- h. Did not do pre-test

6. *Etes-vous allé(e) à l'école? Si oui, jusqu'en quelle classe? (Did you go to school? If yes, until which class?)*

- a. Non (No)
- b. Oui, CMI 5 (Yes, 5th grade in primary school)
- c. Non (No)
- d. Yes, primary school
- e. Oui, quatrième (Yes, until the 3rd year of the first cycle)
- f. Oui, troisième (Yes, until the 4th year of the first cycle)
- g. Oui, université (Yes, university)
- h. Did not do pre-test

Pre-Test

7. *Comment avez-vous été informé de cette séance de lecture-débat /sensibilisation? (How did you learn about this roundtable/public awareness campaign?)*

- a. I was invited.
- b. I was sent an invitation.
- c. I received an invitation.
- d. I was invited.
- e. I received an invitation card for a meeting on human rights and the family.
- f. I received an invitation.
- g. Par invitation (By invitation).
- h. Did not do pre-test.

8. *Pourquoi etes-vous venu(e) à cette séance de lecture-débat/sensibilisation? (Why did you come to this roundtable/public awareness campaign?)*

- a. I don't know.
- b. I don't know.
- c. I don't have a specific reason for coming.
- d. I don't know.
- e. Because the family code will be translated into the local language.
- f. I don't know why I came.
- g. Pour etre informé sur le Code des Personnes et de la Famille. (To learn a little about the Family Code).
- h. Did not do pre-test.

9. *Que savez-vous au sujet du Code des Personnes et de la Famille? (What do you know about the Family Code?)*

- a. Nothing. I have never heard of the Family Code.
- b. Did not answer question.
- c. Did not answer.
- d. Did not answer.
- e. The Family Code deals with women and their relationship to their husband. It also deals with inheritance benefits for the wife after the husband dies.
- f. Did not answer.

- g. Monogamie, heritage, égalité entre hommes et femmes (monogamy, inheritance, equality between men and women).
- h. Did not do pre-test.

10. *Est-ce qu'il y a une situation ou une question particulière sur laquelle vous aimeriez discuter au cours de la séance? (Is there any particular situation or issue that you would like discussed?)*

- a. Did not answer question.
- b. Did not answer question.
- c. Did not answer.
- d. Did not answer.
- e. Did not answer.
- f. Did not answer.
- g. I do not have any particular questions.
- h. Did not do pre-test.

Post-Test

11. *Qu'avez-vous appris de nouveau et d'utile après la séance d'aujourd'hui? (What new or useful piece of information did you learn today?)*

- a. La monogamie (I was interested in learning about monogamous marriage).
- b. My father had reasons for taking 2-3 wives. If he gets divorced from one of them, then there are still others to take care of him. Women are also sometimes right to want a divorce.
- c. Nous avons compris le contenu du code et éduquerons nos filles en conséquences pour qu'elles ne souffrent pas dans la polygamie. (We learned the content of the family code, and as a result we will educate our daughters about it so that they will not suffer in a polygamous marriage).
- d. La monogamie est une bonne chose dans le Code. (I think that monogamy is an excellent part of the Code).
- e. Les relations dans le mariage. La manière de vivre entre les femmes et les hommes dans la famille. Le fait que les femmes sont plus protégées est une bonne chose. (I learned about marriage relations and the manner in which women and men should live together in the family. The fact that women are more protected under the Family Code is a good thing. Men can not just divorce women without a reason).
- f. I learned that there is equality between men and women.
- g. Did not come to post-test.
- h. La monogamie, le mariage à l'Etat Civil, la déclaration des naissances. (Monogamy, civil marriages, birth registrations).

12. *Quel effet pourra avoir le nouveau code des Personnes et de la Famille sur votre vie ou sur celle de votre famille? (How will the new family code affect your or your family's life?)*

- a. Le code a un effet positif sur moi à cause des messages qu'il véhicule. (The code will have a positive effect on my family because of the good information it contains).
- b. I learned how to understand and collaborate with my husband when I get married.
- c. Effet positif (It will have a positive effect).
- d. Effet positif sur ma vie. (The Code will have a positive effect on my life).

- e. Il y aura la compréhension dans la famille. (There will be understanding within the family).
- f. I will not be in a polygamous marriage.
- g. Did not come to post-test.
- h. Un effet positif (a positive effect).

13. *Qu'aimeriez-vous changer sur le Code des Personnes et de la Famille? (What would you like to change about the Family Code?)*

- a. Rien est à changer dans le Code. (I would not change anything about the Code).
- b. I liked everything that I learned about the Family Code.
- c. Rien (nothing).
- d. Rien est à changer dans le Code. Je voudrais meme que les dispositions soient plus dures. (I would not change anything about the Code. I would even like the clauses of the law to be more stringent).
- e. Je veux le Code tel qu'il est. (I would not like any articles of the code to be changed).
- f. Everything is interesting. It will be a good thing if the code can be implemented.
- g. Did not come to post-test.
- h. Rien. (Nothing).

14. *Croyez-vous que votre communauté appliquera le Code des Personnes et de la Famille? (Do you think that your community will abide by the Family Code?)*

- a. Oui, mais il faut beaucoup de séances de sensibilisation. (Yes, with force and repetition, people will follow the Family Code. With only one meeting like this, there will be hesitation. So, we need to have several public awareness meetings).
- b. Yes.
- c. Tous ceux que ont la volonté l'appliqueront; mais d'autres certainement pas. (Those who have the desire, will follow the Family Code. Those who don't have the desire, will certainly not follow the Code).
- d. Toute personne consciente appliquera le Code (All those who are aware of the Code will apply it).
- e. Oui, je crois que grace au sensibilisation, tout sera bien. (Yes, I think that because of the public awareness, everything will be good).
- f. Some will abide by the Code and some won't.
- g. Did not come to post-test.
- h. Oui, mais avec quelques reticences car les gens étaient déjà trop habitués à la polygamy et non au mariage civil. (Yes, but with some hesitation, as people are already very accustomed to polygamy and not accustomed to civil marriages).

15. *Selon vous, à qui ce nouveau Code de la Famille profitera le plus? (Who do you think will benefit the most from the Family Code?)*

- a. Les femmes profiteront plus. (The women will benefit the most).
- b. The code is good for everyone, but it is best for women.
- c. Les femmes (women).
- d. Aux femmes (women).
- e. Le code profitera plus aux femmes. (The code will benefit women the most).
- f. Everyone in the family.

- g. Did not come to post-test.
- h. Toutes les couches sociales (All social classes).

16. *Quelle est la meilleure façon pour sensibiliser la population sur le Code des Personnes et de la Famille? (What is the best way to increase awareness of the Family Code?)*

- a. Je pense que la façon dont la sensibilisation est bonne. Peut-être, à la longue on trouvera d'autres façons de sensibiliser. (I don't really know about strategy. I think that the method of awareness used was good. Maybe in the future, we will find other ways of increasing public awareness).
- b. I will inform other people about the Family Code.
- c. La méthodologie d'aujourd'hui est bonne. (The method used today is good).
- d. Il faut beaucoup d'information et de sensibilisation. (There needs to be a lot of information disseminated and more public awareness campaigns should be done).
- e. Je pense que c'est la meilleure façon. (Yes, I think using literate women is the best way, but we need educators in the field who can explain things to everyone).
- f. Information.
- g. Did not come to post-test.
- h. On peut organiser débats télévisés et sur la radio, les crieurs publics, les séances dans les événements scolaires. (We should organize debates on the television and radio. We could have public criers go around the village from house to house and announce the new family code. We could also discuss this topic at school events).

17. *Quelles sont vos impressions sur cette séance qui vient de se dérouler? (What are your impressions about the meeting we just had?)*

- a. J'ai été satisfaite de la séance et je partagerai les enseignements reçus aujourd'hui. Cette séance a été une grande expérience pour moi. (I am happy with the meeting, and I am going to share the information from today with others. The meeting was a great experience for me).
- b. Bonne chose (It was a good thing.)
- c. Bonne chose. Satisfaction (It was a good thing. I am happy with the meeting).
- d. Je suis satisfaite de cette séance et je remercie les organisateurs. (I am happy with the meeting, and I would like to thank the meeting organizers).
- e. La séance m'a beaucoup plu et j'ai reçu beaucoup de leçons. (The meeting made me very happy, and I learned lots of lessons).
- f. It was a good idea.
- g. Did not come to post-test.
- h. J'ai des bonnes impressions. Je souhaiterais qu'elles se répètent. (I have good impressions. I hope that they repeat the meeting).

DHPD Roundtable– Djougou

Summary

The DHPD public awareness event took place on the morning of March 23, 2005 at the Place de l'Indépendance in the town of Djougou. DHPD had not prepared for the monitoring and evaluation questions and no participants had been pre-selected. Ms. Kung and Ms. Houzanme

were eventually directed to a group of women to question. These were the women who were literate in the local language and had been chosen to read from the public awareness booklets, unfortunately making the participant group less diverse than ideal. DHPD did not participate in any part of the pre or post test.

The pre-test was administered by a local language translator when necessary and by Ms. Houzanme when the participants spoke French. Both Ms. Houzanme and Ms. Kung took notes of the participant answers, and the responses below are a compilation of both their notes. It was extremely loud, like at the WILDAF event, and at times it was very difficult to hear responses. However, they were able to administer the pre-test individually to each participant, so that no one heard another participant's answers.

The post-test was administered before the end of the public awareness event. This occurred for several reasons: the event lasted longer than anticipated, Muslim women had to leave to pray, and many women were leaving for market day. As a result, DHPD had to take a break during the public awareness event and wait for women to return before the final game was played. During this break, Ms. Houzanme and Ms. Kung administered the post-test to the women who were remaining. They were able to interview two new women, in addition to the four that participated in the pre-test. However, many of the women were in a rush to get to various destinations and one did not finish the post-test. Ms. Houzanme administered the post-test in French, and a local girl volunteered to translate for those who did not speak French. Most women were interviewed individually, although a few answered the questions together. Ms. Kung and Ms. Houzanme took notes for every participant and the responses below are a compilation of their notes.

Questionnaire

Identification

1. *Nom et Prénom (Name and First Name):*

- a. ALAZA Sani Zeynasou
- b. ATAKORA Babatchenin Mounantaratou
- c. SALIOU Youfoussou Yari
- d. AZIM Rafiatou
- e. DJIBRIL Rachidatou
- f. SAIDO Raima

2. *Profession:*

- a. Ménagère (housekeeper)
- b. Ménagère (housekeeper)
- c. Ménagère et enseigne l'Arabe (housekeeper and teaches Arabic)
- d. Did not do pre-test
- e. Etudiante (student)
- f. Vendeuse (retailer)

3. *Age:*

- a. 45

- b. 38
- c. 29
- d. Did not do pre-test
- e. 17
- f. 15

4. *Situation matrimoniale (Marital situation):*

- a. Mariée (married)
- b. Mariée (married)
- c. Mariée (married)
- d. Mariée (married)
- e. Célibataire (single)
- f. Célibataire (single)

5. *Avez-vous des enfants? Si oui, combien de filles? (Do you have children? If so, how many are girls?)*

- a. 6 enfants, 3 filles (6 children, 3 girls)
- b. 1 enfant, 1 fille (1 child – a girl)
- c. Non (no children)
- d. 2 enfants, 1 fille (2 children, 1 girl)
- e. Non (no children)
- f. Non (no children)

6. *Etes-vous allé(e) à l'école? Si oui, jusqu'en quelle classe? (Did you go to school? If yes, until which class?)*

- a. Yes, primary school and schooling in typing and reading
- b. Yes, 4th year of 1st cycle
- c. Non (no schooling)
- d. Yes, 3rd year of 1st cycle
- e. Yes, 1st year of 1st cycle
- f. Non (no schooling)

Pre-Test

7. *Comment avez-vous été informé de cette séance de lecture-débat /sensibilisation? (How did you learn about this roundtable/public awareness campaign?)*

- a. I received an invitation from the president of AMAEDCO.
- b. J'ai reçu une invitation pour lire (I received an invitation to read in the local language).
- c. Invitation.
- d. Did not do pre-test.
- e. J'ai été informée par mon frère (My brother told me about the meeting).
- f. Invitation.

8. *Pourquoi êtes-vous venu(e) à cette séance de lecture-débat/sensibilisation? (Why did you come to this roundtable/public awareness campaign?)*

- a. Lecture des plaquettes et corriger les fautes de traduction. (I came to read from the booklets and to correct some translation mistakes that are in them).

- b. Répondre à l'invitation (I came to reply to the invitation).
- c. Répondre à l'invitation (I came to reply to the invitation).
- d. Did not do pre-test.
- e. Did not do pre-test.
- f. Pour lire (I came to read the booklet. I am one of the literate women).

9. *Que savez-vous au sujet du Code des Personnes et de la Famille? (What do you know about the Family Code?)*

- a. Ca parle de la femme, la santé, et le mariage. (The code discusses women, health, and marriage).
- b. Rien. (Nothing).
- c. Rien (Nothing).
- d. Did not do pre-test.
- e. Did not do pre-test.
- f. Rien (Nothing).

10. *Est-ce qu'il y a une situation ou une question particulière sur laquelle vous aimeriez discuter au cours de la séance? (Is there any particular situation or issue that you would like discussed?)*

- a. Venue à la sensibilisation. (I just came for the public awareness).
- b. Did not respond to question.
- c. Did not respond to question.
- d. Did not do pre-test.
- e. Did not do pre-test.
- f. Rien (Nothing).

Post-Test

11. *Qu'avez-vous appris de nouveau et d'utile après la séance d'aujourd'hui? (What new or useful piece of information did you learn today?)*

- a. Déclaration et naissance à l'hôpital. (I learned about forced marriages and the importance of giving birth at the hospital and registering the baby).
- b. On a appris des déclarations, la naissance, la monogamie, plus de mariages forcés, plus de l'événement. (We learned about registering the baby when it is born, monogamy, not to have forced marriages, and that there is no need for a widow to marry an uncle or brother-in-law if her husband dies).
- c. On ne doit pas forcer les filles pour le mariage. Les hommes ne doivent pas prendre beaucoup de femmes. Plus de polygamie. (We should not force girls into marriages. Men should not be polygamous and take lots of wives. Girls should have a voice in choosing their husbands).
- d. Plus de polygamie, déclaration de naissance, satisfaction sur la question de l'héritage. (I learned that men should not marry several wives, that we must register our babies when they are born, and I am very satisfied with the law on inheritance).
- e. On ne doit pas forcer les mariages. Les parents doivent bien éduquer les enfants. (There should not be forced marriages. Parents should educate their children well).
- f. Plus de mariage forcé, accouchement à l'hôpital (There should not be anymore forced marriages. Women should give birth at the hospital).

12. *Quel effet pourra avoir le nouveau code des Personnes et de la Famille sur votre vie ou sur celle de votre famille? (How will the new family code affect your or your family's life?)*

- a. Je vais bénéficier et ma famille aussi grâce à la plaquette en on va se corriger. (My family and I are going to benefit from the family code because we have the public awareness booklet and we will understand the basics of the family code and what we should correct in our behavior).
- b. Beaucoup de choses importantes. On a compris qu'il faut déclarer les enfants et la nécessité d'accoucher à l'hôpital. On ne doit pas forcer les mariages. On va avoir l'entente dans les foyers. (We learned many important things. We understand that we must register our babies when they are born and that we should give birth in the hospital. We should not force our children into marriages. We will have understanding in our homes).
- c. On a compris qu'on doit attendre 18 ans. (In my village, a fourteen year old girl got pregnant and so she was married. Generally all girls in my village are married by the age of 15. Now we are going to wait until our girls are 18 before they are married).
- d. Same as (b) above. And using our literacy work, we will continue to inform others.
- e. Je sais ce qu'il est bon de faire maintenant. (I know the correct/good things to do now).
- f. J'ai compris qu'il n'y a plus de mariages forcés. (I understand that forced marriages are no longer allowed).

13. *Qu'aimeriez-vous changer sur le Code des Personnes et de la Famille? (What would you like to change about the Family Code?)*

- a. Rien. Le code reflète la réalité. (Nothing, the code reflects reality).
- b. Rien (nothing).
- c. Rien (nothing).
- d. Rien (nothing).
- e. Rien (nothing).
- f. Rien (nothing).

14. *Croyez-vous que votre communauté appliquera le Code des Personnes et de la Famille? (Do you think that your community will abide by the Family Code?)*

- a. Oui, nous appliquerons le Code (yes, we will abide by the code).
- b. Certains vont respecter – la majorité – mais d'autres ne vont peut-être pas. (The majority of people will respect the Code. But others will not).
- c. Ceux qui sont venus à la sensibilisation vont informer d'autres. (Those who came to the public awareness meeting will inform others).
- d. Yes, I will teach my husband.
- e. Oui (yes).
- f. Oui (yes).

15. *Selon vous, à qui ce nouveau Code de la Famille profitera le plus? (Who do you think will benefit the most from the Family Code?)*

- a. Les femmes et les enfants, les filles et les garçons (Women and children, both girls and boys).
- b. La femme et le mari et toute personne qui va l'appliquer. (Wives and husbands, and all people who will apply the Code).

- c. Les femmes (women).
- d. Did not respond.
- e. les jeunes (youth).
- f. Ceux qui sont venus à la sensibilisation. (Those who came to the public awareness meeting).

16. *Quelle est la meilleure façon pour sensibiliser la population sur le Code des Personnes et de la Famille? (What is the best way to increase awareness of the Family Code?)*

- a. C'est bon, mais une seule fois, c'est pas trop. Il faut poursuivre et faire plusieurs fois. (It's good, but one meeting is not enough. We need to continue to do public education meetings several times).
- b. C'est bon (It's good, but if you can think of anything else to do, then that might be better).
- c. Sensibilisation. Lecture/débat, ce qu'on a fait est bon. (Public awareness. The reading and debate that we did were good).
- d. Did not respond.
- e. Bonne sensibilisation (good public awareness).
- f. C'est bon (It's good).

17. *Quelles sont vos impressions sur cette séance qui vient de se dérouler? (What are your impressions about the meeting we just had?)*

- a. J'ai une bonne impression. On est très satisfait. (I have a good impression. We are very happy with the meeting).
- b. Bon (good).
- c. C'est bon (It's good).
- d. Did not respond.
- e. C'est bon, mais je souhaite qu'on revienne. (It's good, but I wish that we will do it again).
- f. C'est bon. (It's good).