



## Senegal

# Mobilizing Rural Women as Reproductive Health Advocates

*Since 2001, the ENABLE project's work in Senegal has focused on mobilizing women to become leaders and advocates for improved reproductive health in rural areas.*

## CEDPA Uses a Multi-Pronged Approach

CEDPA incorporates various components to achieve improved reproductive health (RH), including:

- Development of training materials;
- Training workshops;
- Advocacy and dialogue sessions with local health administrators;
- Income-generating activities;
- Communication skills; and
- Community care activities.

All of these components are closely coordinated and organized in sequence so that training material development leads to an organized training program. Skills imparted in the training programs lead to better advocacy, social mobilization, and communication.

## Development of Training Materials

Working with non-governmental organization partners, Cooperating Agencies, the U.S. Agency for International Development, gender/women's leadership specialists, and representatives of the Ministry of Health and Prevention, CEDPA developed six training manuals on advocacy, gender and development, democracy, good governance and citizen participation, leadership devel-



opment, and gender and reproductive health. Two flipcharts were developed to help facilitate discussion on RH, gender issues, and women's empowerment. These products are now being used in Senegal and will be published soon for wider use.

## Training

In the first nine months of the ENABLE project, CEDPA trained 500 people, including women and youth leaders, local elected officials, peer educators, literacy facilitators, and theatre artists. Training has covered gender, RH, health decentralization, leadership, advocacy, and social mobilization. The trainees' new skills are being applied to programs and follow-up activities.

## Advocacy and Dialogue

To increase women's organizations' involvement in the decision-making process within decentralized health



institutions, a strategy of advocacy and dialogue was implemented. CEDPA trained more than 200 women leaders, local elected officials, and peer educators from nine health districts and 25 villages on these issues. Following the training, participants organized 28 dialogue and advocacy sessions with people in charge of local administrations, including health services and women's groups. The problem of maternal mortality and related issues such as lack of gynecologists, midwives, health centers, equipment, and blood supplies were discussed. Women's groups were established to discuss these problems with local officials. In response, women's groups in the commune of Kaolack committed themselves to organize a monthly blood drive.

### Income Generation to Improve Health

CEDPA supported the Association Rurale de Lutte Contre le SIDA (Rural Association Fighting Against HIV/AIDS - ARLS) and the Association Sengalaise pour le Bien Etre Familial (Senegalese Association for Family Welfare - ASBEF) to set up mill machines and savings

and credit lines for women in seven villages in the Kaolack and Theis regions. The mills not only generate income, but also reduce the burden of women's domestic chores. Women's groups involved in the program contribute five percent of their income from the mill machines and interest generated by the credit lines to the rural health centers. In return, a health component is included in the benefits, assuring them of free health services.

### Public Education Activities

CEDPA supports ARLS, ASBEF, and the Association Pour la Promotion de la Famille Sénégalaise (Association for the Promotion of Senegalese Families — APROFES) to provide public education in the areas of RH promotion, including safe motherhood, prevention of unplanned pregnancy, HIV/AIDS prevention, women's empowerment, and the relationship between women's empowerment and RH. In three months, peer educators and literacy facilitators reached 1,720 people (1,415 women, 90 men, and 215 youth) through discussion groups; 3,010 people (2,010 women, 100 men, and 900 youth) through home visits; and 365 people (357 women and eight men) through literacy classes on these topics. APROFES and ARLS are using theatre as a medium to communicate these messages.

### The Future

Initiated in 2001, CEDPA programs have already accomplished a great deal. Programs are currently expanding, both horizontally to include more Senegalese, and vertically to deepen the impact on program beneficiaries.

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