



# Strategic Approaches for Engaging Religious Leaders in Family Planning in Senegal



### CRSD

Founded in July 2014, the *Cadre des religieux pour la Santé et le Développement* (Group of Religious Leaders for Health and Development, CRSD) is an interfaith association that brings together the religious families (of the Sufi orders), the Islamic associations, and the Catholic and Lutheran churches of Senegal.

#### CRSD aims to:

- Promote dialogue between Senegal's religious families/communities to further the country's development;
- Promote all actions that seek to improve maternal and infant health in Senegal, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Action;
- Provide social aid to the population, particularly for the most vulnerable;
- Take action to build peace and strengthen social cohesion in the country.



### CRSD in 2016: The Year in Review

- Obtained association status in Senegal
- Realized a monitoring and evaluation program (quantitative and qualitative)
- Two exchange visits to Mauritania and Guinea
- Two regional workshops on religion and birth spacing (Kaolack and Diourbel)
- Launched a media partnership with SenTV
- Launched of website and social media accounts
- Organized two Ramadan workshops (Kaolack and Dakar)
- Radio show on *Allô Docteur* to discuss religion and family planning
- Expanded program of activities for women to include 6 regions
- Continued collaboration with the DSRSE
  - Participation in meetings of the Family Planning Technical Committee and the Technical Validation Workshop for the Strategic Family Planning Framework 2016-2020
  - Submission of contributions of the Family Planning Strategic Plan 2016-2020
  - Meeting on the role of religious leaders in promoting the use of the *Carnet de Santé de la Mère et de l'Enfant* (Health Record Book for the Mother and Child)

### What do Senegalese say about religion and family planning?

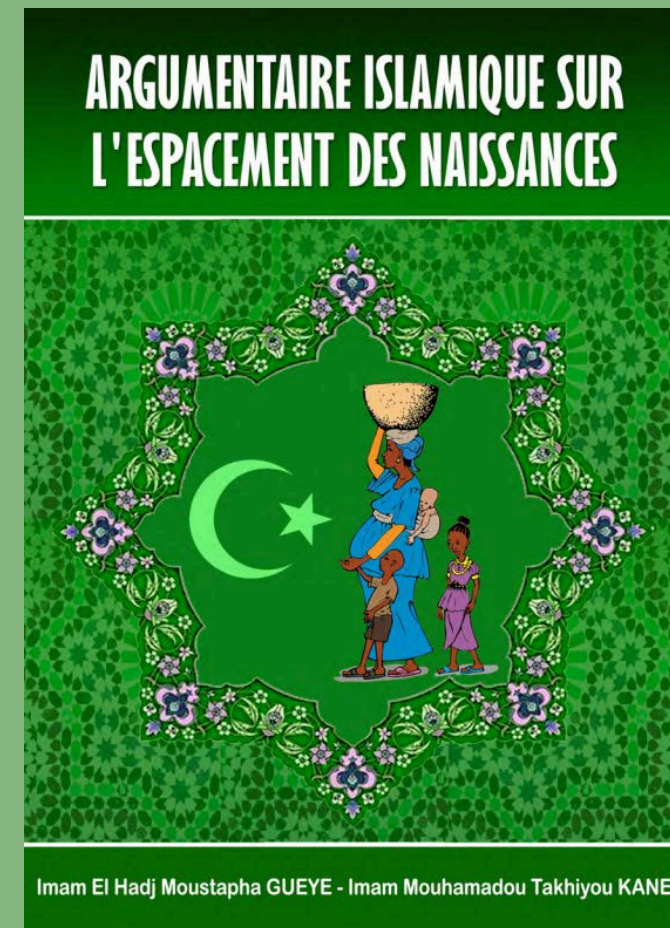
*I was there for a situation where a religious leader acted as a mediator so that a husband would let his wife practice family planning. It just happened that the religious leader came to the house and found the husband and wife arguing about the question. So, he discussed with them and gave the wife advice on the behavior she should have toward her husband, but he also addressed the husband and let him know that his wife want to practice family planning to help him to spend less money. He told him to let her practice family planning. – Woman, Thiès*

*Without good health, no one is able to respect God's recommendations as required. If birth limitation seeks to keep women in good health and allow the infant to breastfeed for two years as recommended by Islam, there cannot be differences of opinion among religious leaders. – Imam, Kédougou*

*Religious leaders must be informed because people go to see them in order to know if planning is permitted in Islam or not. And if they say no based on their simple experiences relating to what they have learned? It is time, in my opinion, for there to be a harmonization in order to silence the divergences that exist in interpreting the Qur'an with respect to family planning. This would allow laymen to have the correct information. – Man, Thiès*

*The Church advocates for responsible sexuality [...] It benefits no one to bring children into this world without being able to feed them or educate them. – Abbé, Sédhiou*

### ISLAM AND BIRTH SPACING: THE ARGUMENTAIRE

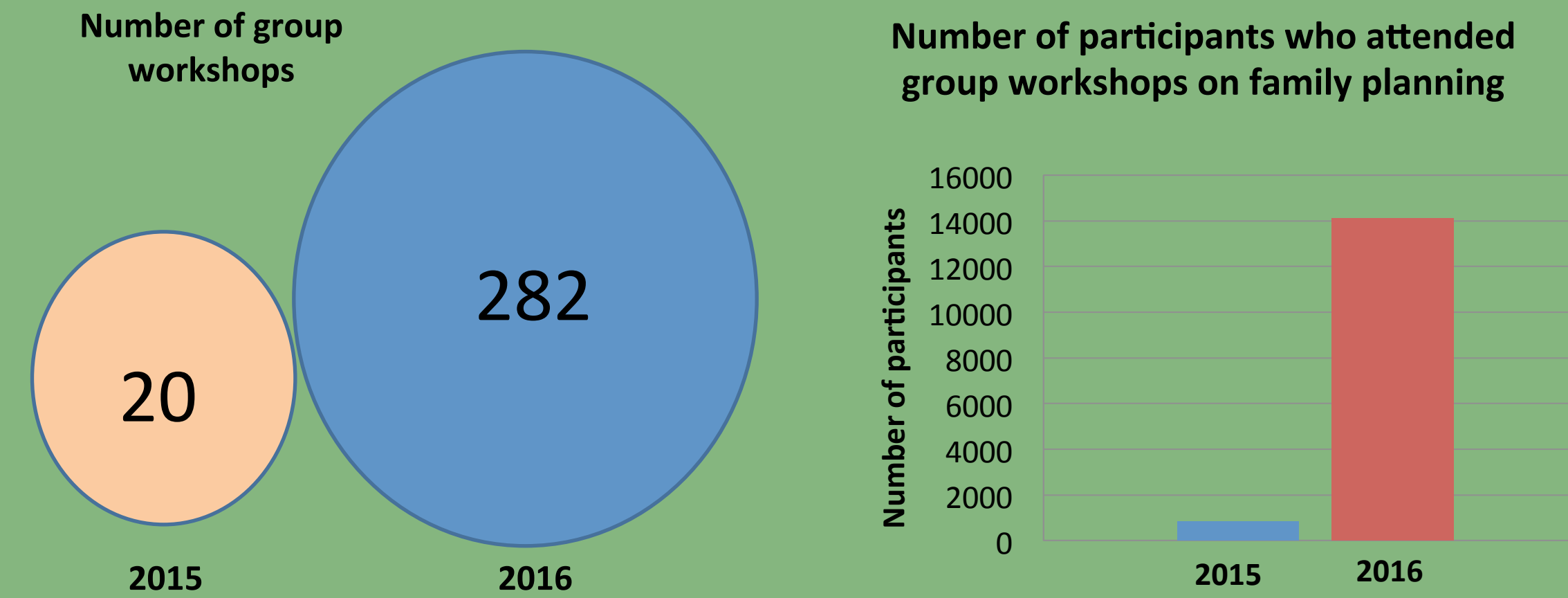


The *Argumentaire islamique sur l'Espace des Naissances* (Islamic Arguments of Birth Spacing) is a local work of family planning author by two Senegalese experts. Imam El Hadj Moustapha Guèye, the current president of the Association of Imams and Ulama of Senegal is a widely respected scholar on Islamic recognized for his knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence. He was a founding member of the Network on Islam and Population, where he served as its first president. His coauthor is Imam Mouhamadou Kane, the current Imam Ratib of the Mosque of Kaolack and recognized expert on family planning in Senegal.

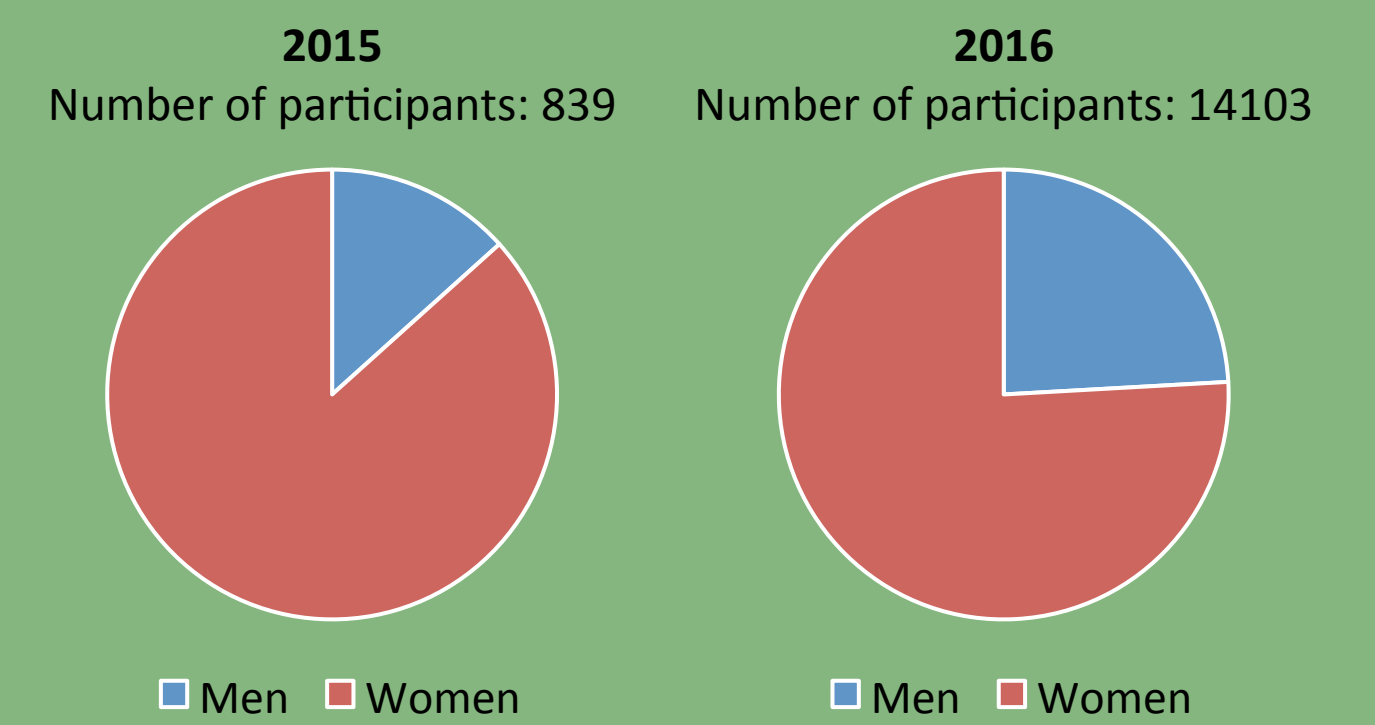
What differentiates this document from previous *argumentaires* is that it is a document that addresses traditional methods of family planning in Senegal and their limits, as well as contrasting the positions on family planning in Senegal, citing the arguments of those who are in favor, those who are against, and those favorable to the principle but opposed to the methods. It provides recommendations tailored to the Senegalese context for promoting family planning in Senegal.

Today, this document is recognized for its authenticity and serves as a reference. It has been widely distributed in Senegal, as well as in the sub-region during CRSD's exchange visits within Ouagadougou Partnership countries. It serves as the principal tool used by Muslim CRSD members in training workshops and other events on family planning in Senegal.

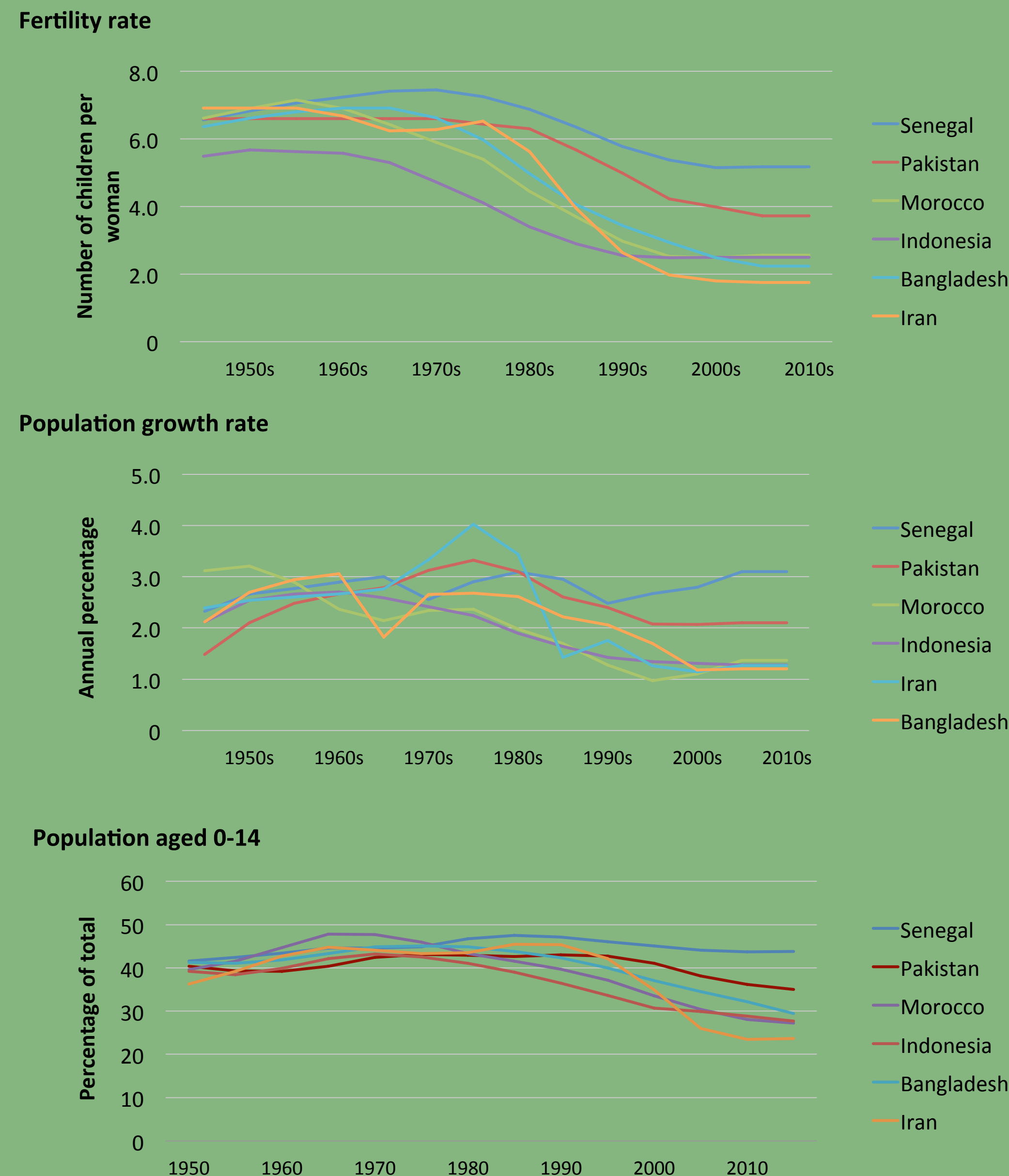
### WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES



#### Gender of participants



### ISLAM AND FAMILY PLANNING BY THE NUMBERS



### EXCHANGE VISITS

**Morocco**

- November 2014
- Number of meetings: 5
  - Rabita Mohammadia of Ulama
  - UNFPA Morocco
  - Minister of Health, Division of Family Planning
  - Ulama at the Rabita des Oulémas
  - Moroccan Association of Family Planning

**Guinea**

- November 2016
- Number of meetings: 9
  - Secretariat General of Religious Affairs
  - Ministry of Social Action, Women's Promotion, and Childhood
  - Division of Reproductive Health
  - USAID
  - Islamic Council of Guinea
  - UNICEF
  - UNFPA
  - Christian Council of Guinea
  - Union of Ulama of Guinea

**Mauritania**

- April 2016
- Number of meetings: 8
  - Embassy of Senegal
  - National Program of Reproductive Health
  - Association of Imams
  - Association of Ulama
  - Network of Parliamentarians for Population and Reproductive Health
  - UNFPA Mauritania
  - Cultural Complex Cheikh Sidy el Moutar Kinty
  - Ministry of Social Affairs

• Each delegation composed of:
 

- 1 representative of DSRSE
- 8 members of CRSD
- 2 representatives of WFDD