



**HEALTH  
POLICY  
PROJECT**



*Caravan of religious leaders against AIDS*

*November 2005*

*Advocacy for birth spacing*

*National Muslim Women's Association, June 2006*



**Example of successful practice:**

**The involvement  
of religious leaders in health issues  
in MALI**

*An original and exciting process!*

# More than 10 years ago

**There were many religious leaders:**

➤ **who ignored that health issues were within their mission**

**and**

➤ **who had no clear and detailed information on health issues**

# Involvement Phase

**Given the devastating effects of HIV pandemic, Futures Group, through Policy Project:**

- **approached religious leaders to involve them in the fight,**
- **strengthened their capacity in advocacy and policy dialogue,**
- **supported the creation and expansion of religious networks in many districts .**

# Networks created include:

- **RNILS (National Islamic Network for the Fight against AIDS, 2002-2004)**
- **Alliance of Muslim and Christian religious leaders, October 2004)**
- **RIPOD (Islamic Network for Population and Development, November 2004)**
- **RISE (Islamic Network for Child Survival, July 2007)**
- **UNAFEM (National Union of Malian Muslim Women, April 1996)**

# Tools produced for advocacy and policy dialogue (1)

**By extracting verses and Hadiths from the Holy Quran and the Holy Bible, religious leaders produced the following tools:**

- **AIM (AIDS Impact Model) in Islamic and Christian versions**
- **RAPID (Resources for the Analysis of Population and its Impact on Development) on birth spacing in Islamic and Christian versions**

# Tools produced for advocacy and policy dialogue (2)

- **National policy of Muslim and Christian religious leaders for the responses to HIV and AIDS**
- **PowerPoint Presentation on Pregnancy, Malaria and Islam**
- **Islamic sermon on malaria**

# How do religious leaders make the link between Faith and Health?

## **Sample Holy Verses and Hadiths in birth spacing**



# Breastfeeding, as a means of birth spacing in Islam

**The Prophet (PSL) said:**

**“Nothing is better for the infant than his mother's breast”**

**He also said: “The survival of the infant is in the breasts of its mother: in one it has his drink, in the other his food”**

*Reported by Aboû Daoud*

# Breastfeeding in Christianity

We have **Biblical texts that highlight and promote breastfeeding:**

***Exode 2:7:* “Then the child's sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter: “do you want me to go and get a nurse among the Hebrew women to nurse this child?”**

***Esaie 49:15a:* “Does a woman forget a baby she is breastfeeding?”**

***Luc 11: 27:* “While Jesus was so speaking, a woman, raising her voice from the middle of the crowd, said to him: “Blessed is the womb that bore you! Blessed are the breasts that nursed you!”**

# **The joint OIC-USG-GOM Project: “reaching every mother and baby in OIC with emergency care”**

**An outmost opportunity for religious leaders:**

- **To apply/use the tools they have been developing for years and,**
- **To improve the wealth of their followers**

**Pilot area: the district of Kita**

**Collaborating Project: MCHIP**

# Why this Project? ... Facts & Data ...

**In Mali,**

- ✓ **Maternal mortality is 464 per 100,000 live births,**
- ✓ **Neonatal mortality is 46 per 1000 live births,**
- ✓ **Almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of births are spaced less than 36 months,**
- ✓ **Only half births are attended by a skilled provider,**
- ✓ **At age of 18, half of adolescents are pregnant or have at least one child**

# Project objective

**To manage this “silent emergency” that causes over 30,000 preventable deaths of mothers and newborns each year in Mali:**

**Religious leaders will promote positive attitudes, beliefs and practices through advocacy and policy dialogue in the whole district of KITA (Muslim and Christian)**

# Policy dialogue session on birth spacing by religious leaders in the district of Dioila, February 28, 2009



# Religious leaders on the way to the health center, April 2009





# Thank You!

[www.healthpolicyproject.com](http://www.healthpolicyproject.com)

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