



REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL  
Un People – One Goal – One Faith

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MINISTRY OF HEALTH  
AND MEDICAL PREVENTION  
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## TECHNICAL NOTE ON The « badiene gokh » initiative

### **Introduction**

Although suggested by a political authority, the initiative is not political. On the contrary, it is part of the development policy that covers any population – related issue in which the «*badiene*» can be used. It is therefore a policy, that is a strategy that heads of programmes need to qualify, characterize and use accordingly.

This precision is vital, as a pejorative understanding would reduce the scope of the initiative, while its various dimensions, social, intellectual and managerial places it at a strategic level in the re-adaptation of the health system to that of the mother and child.

### **At social level**

In all societies, all over the world, old people are considered as a reference, example, and wisdom value. This makes of old people, like the Head of State, a first class resource person, a particular character in any culture. His opinion on any society issue is, if not welcome, at least expected; he delivers historical and socio anthropological orientations which make it possible to understand better population issues.

Thus based on its social position and its role, the « *badiene* » is key in the socialization of the two sexes, and the construction one's personality. It symbolizes the mechanical solidarity expected from the group in all the hard situations involving women; she is one of the persons through which the later is defined.

«*badiene* » therefore responds to a social reality in which its role is mediation, facilitation, accompaniment, help and assistance. This makes it a genuine and potential actress in mother and child health.

## **At intellectual level**

The issue of mother mortality is serious In Senegal, the issue of mothers' mortality is serious in Senegal and in the region Africa; it is a concern for every citizen-oriented mind. Due to its persistence, in spite of the efforts made, its stops being the private area of health professionals and becomes a matter of national security. Thus, the intellectual elite is the first to be accountable. With this in mind, the initiative is easy to understand as it comes from a scientist, a high level academician doubled with a leader with a legitimacy granted by the people and who is concerned with their health state.

It highlights the nature of the relationship between the patient and the doctor. It allows in fact going beyond appearances between these two actors to identify and overcome every social obstacle that would hinder the implementation of the social objective planned in any project/programme dedicated to the woman, new born, child and adolescent.

The idea makes it possible to have a different look at a patient, as well as a different way of doing things: not to stop at the level of the disease, but to be interested in the person who is sick, that is the individual as a whole. It compels thus to a global vision of healthcare, which means having another representation of health, non according to the medical paradigm, but to health.

Following the WHO criticism which condemns the « medical model » and recommends the « health model», the idea to involve «*badiene*» within the health of women is worth some consideration. As a strategy, the initiative has in fact two main advantages that make it possible to fight efficiently against the plea of mother mortality:

1. It implies the global treatment of the patient. In this way and extend to any pregnant woman, it is the pillar to universal access to quality service and care;
2. it guaranties the affectivity of care and its continuity, and structures the final result.

In sites where the initiative is being tested, here is satisfactory learning on issues which are mandatory for the achievement of the objective. Among these, the need to have a correct operation of healthcare institutions, the continuum in care provision, the necessary relationship between the various actors of mother and child health (MCH), etc. To be scalable, these lessons should be translated into scientific assertions and « *badiene* » to be a research-based evidence.

## **At managerial level**

On the basis of a relevant questioning in relation to the social context, a general theory and hypothesis formulated according to the context, a research-action is necessary, including, establishing the « selective and central » nature of the « *badiène* » « element » into the local SMI system.

The lessons of this research will benefit any system that faces a social system like ours. This means that any context known for the control over all aspects of women's life by men, and in which the roles assigned to « *badiène* » or an equivalent person help achieve the expected sociological objective in the similar project/programme.

## **Conclusion**

The idea to involve a key person to the live of the woman and her child is worth considering. The « *badiene* » has an attributed intermediation, help and assistance function, and is the symbol of the mechanical solidarity that any women is to expect from her group.

In the personal and private area of the life of each individual, particularly women, it is capable of playing singular roles, to be a faithful and trustworthy assistant of the health service. Assigned roles make it possible not only to guarantee effective and continuous care until their final result, but also to raise people's « *sanitary awareness* » in order to « *promote healthy behaviors* ». As recommended by the Ouagadougou Declaration of 30 April on primary health care

As a structuring element of a process based on the principles ruling MCH, the initiative contributes to building a health system the efficiency of which can be presumed in the fight against mother mortality.

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