

THE FRANCOPHONE NETWORK

A MID-TERM EVALUATION ¹



(April 2014)

¹ *This report is the result of a collaborative effort. Its conception and the design of the survey were based on discussions between the Hewlett Program, the IUSSP, and the FraNet's Panel. The survey itself was administered from IUSSP by Paul Monet, who also conducted key preliminary analyses and drafted one first report in French. The present report builds on that first draft, adding further analyses by Sarah Giroux and data from focus group discussions. The focus group discussions were led and transcribed by Vincent de Paul Onguene and Pie Marie Belibi. Archival documentation was provided by Habibou Ouedraogo and Sandrine Mbele, and the report incorporates the thoughts and insights of various Panel members. All these contributions were assembled by Parfait Eloundou-Enyegue and Sarah Giroux. The Panel thanks the IUSSP and Hewlett Foundation for their support, as well as the network participants for their time and detailed feedback. The Panel bears responsibility for any error in fact or interpretation of the data.*

Table of Contents

I. BACKGROUND	7
II. THE FRANCOPHONE NETWORK	9
II.1. The IUSSP Panel Structure	9
II.2. Theory of Change	9
II.2.1. Pedagogy	9
II.2.2. Adoption of innovative practices	10
II.3. Main Activities	10
II.3.1. Methodological Workshops	11
II.3.2. Other Activities	11
III. A MID-TERM ASSESSMENT	13
III.1. The Need for An Evaluation	13
III.2. The Evaluation Process	14
III.2.1. Online survey	14
III.2.2 Focus group interview	14
IV. MAIN FINDINGS	16
IV.1. Participants' Evaluation of Training Workshops:	16
IV.1.1. Overall Review	16
IV.1.2. Individual Workshops:	17
IV.2. Focus Group Results	23
V. SUGGESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE	25
V.1. Workshops	25
V.2. Other Priority Areas	26
V.3. The Network's Membership and Scope	26
V.4. An Africa-based Directorate	27
VI. SUMMARY AND LESSONS	28

SUMMARY

This project was designed to reinforce the institutional capacity to conduct advanced demographic research and policy communication within Francophone Africa, as a means to inform the region's economic planning. There was particular urgency to this effort, given Africa's opportunity to reap a demographic dividend and concurrent challenges in meeting Millennium Development Goals, mitigating inequality and containing the growing pressures associated with on-going population trends.

Boosting capacity both quickly and cost-effectively required innovative approaches. We directed our efforts towards a carefully-constructed program of intensive, week-long, hands-on workshops to train (and/or retrain) the region's demographers in advanced quantitative methods of demographic analysis and policy communication with policy-makers, non-governmental organizations, and the broader public. Post-workshop support was developed to assist the trainees' effort to apply the methods in their research and regular teaching.

After four years of operation, it is time for a full evaluation. This report summarizes the results of this evaluation. It is based on a survey and focus group conducted among participants between February and April 2014. It also draws from archival information and observations by Panel members, as self-critical assessments were necessary in areas where participants had limited insight.

Overall, the combined evidence from these four sources shows great interest in the network's program, as well as a high programmatic output, mostly in terms of the numerous methodological workshops offered during the grant period. The majority of participants were successful in acquiring new methodological skills and applying them to their research and, to a lesser extent, teaching. Participants also report to have benefited in subtle and unexpected ways, including learning about the skills, interests, and research experiences of other network members, and getting encouragement to stay productive. At the same time, participants underscore a few areas where progress is needed, including planning a steady rotation of workshops, following up on the writing projects, and clearly communicating the selection processes. Additionally, we found that many potential network members have yet to have an opportunity to participate in a workshop. These central conclusions are discussed in some detail below.

- (1) **Interest and participation:** The network's activities have generated great interest and enthusiasm among demographers and social scientists in the region. This was clear from the consistently high number of applications for open calls, and it is confirmed by this survey's results. However, this enthusiasm comes with concern over selection criteria and more systematic

communication about the network's activities. Over half of the respondents to this survey have yet to participate in a workshop, largely because few applicants (20-35) can be accommodated per workshop but also since some of the workshops are follow-up activities that require participation in a prior workshop. The FraNet must re-examine its trade-off between quantity and quality, and the viability of its initial plan to focus on a small cluster of institutional participants from whom the training would trickle out to other colleagues. It must also communicate, via a stronger web presence, the details of the network's operation, the program of activities, and the outcomes of its activities.

(2) Volume of activity: FraNET has been most active in organizing and conducting methodological workshops. In the nearly four years from August 2010 to April 2014, it organized and supported fourteen (14) training activities, drawing an estimated total of 400 person-participations from a large and diverse set of countries and institutions.² We covered a range of quantitative methods, included multilevel analysis, longitudinal analysis, decomposition methods, and geographic information methods. As these methods had not been adequately covered in local curricula, and are currently featured prominently in top scientific journals, they added considerable value to the training of the region's demographers.

Contrary to the actual workshops, some of 'upstream' and 'downstream' activities require more attention. The training can be made more effective if more is invested in 1) preparing the data that will support training and 2) supporting participants after the workshop in their efforts to complete the research writing projects initiated during the workshops. Nonetheless, some of the participants have managed to apply some of the new methods in their research. The Panel can learn from these success stories to bolster the application of new methods. The evaluation --as well as discussions within the Panel-- also recommends a more systematic and predictable scheduling of events, perhaps to create a standard rotation that makes it easier for trainers and trainees to plan participation.

Also contrary to the workshops, there has been less systematic activity on some of the other planned activities such as web-based training, policy communication or policy briefs for instance. The Panel must reexamine the continued relevance of these activities, and if relevant, it must find ways to boost activity on these fronts as well.

² Countries where workshop participants have come from have included: Algeria, Belgium, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Djibouti, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, France, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo, and Tunisia.

(3) **Impact:** The training activities are beginning to have an impact. Most respondents were able to learn the methods. Although a smaller proportion report full confidence in teaching these methods to their peers, the vast majority have applied these methods in their research- either Masters/doctoral theses, journal articles, or conference papers (extensively used in UAPS, PAA, and IUSSP meetings). The addition of these methods into the local curriculum is in progress at IFORD and ISSP but also reportedly in Ivory Coast and the Congo.

Qualitative comments suggest that the workshops have helped build a community of scholars among professionals working in the region on similar topics. Through these regular encounters, participants have been able to share their experiences; exchange information and advice; learned how to collaborate and work as a team; and broaden their research horizons by learning about different settings and cultures.

(4) **Suggestions for the future.** The main suggestions for the future cluster around the following:

- **Workshops:** the suggestions here were to plan a steady, predictable rotation that might involve more locations than Yaoundé and Ouagadougou; to be more transparent in the selection process; to be longer (2 weeks), if feasible; to devote more time to practice and application; to feature greater support after the workshop for the writing exercises begun during the workshop; to include additional themes such as program evaluation.
- **Priority activities:** the priority topics listed included classic focus on population growth, education, health, migration but participants also expressed great interest in the demographic dividend, a popular issue for contemporary African nations. Priority activities in the realm of **teaching**, included support in producing teaching materials (Power Points, brochures), and improving teaching skills (pedagogy). Priority activities in the realm of **research**, included continued training in advanced methods, but also post-workshop support in data analysis, writing articles, and writing research grants. In **policy dissemination**, the activities suggested included support to the production of research briefs, organization of dissemination events, and contacts with policy makers.
- **Other needs:** the network members also need support in other aspects of their professional development including grant writing, policy communication, consulting work, and teaching. The extent to which FraNet can integrate these activities into its efforts would greatly raise its impact among its audience.

- **Scope and composition of the network.** Respondents to the evaluation survey are quite divided over whether membership should be expanded far beyond training, research and technical institutions, and beyond formal and social demographers. For some, the network's comparative advantage at this point is to offer solid training to demographers, arguing that only later can this pave the way for broader engagement and collaboration with wider audiences.
- **Africa-based directorate.** In the event that the network's administrative office is located in Africa, the criteria suggested by respondents were many. The most important, however, were the country's security and stability and the host institution's scientific reputation and its human/physical infrastructure. Respondents also noted that the network itself must remain broader than, and independent, from the host institution.

Together, these suggestions provide a solid platform from which the Panel can chart a new course that builds on past achievements and challenges, but also on new opportunities since 2010, whether as a result of momentum from the Panel's activity or other developments in the field. Regarding the Panel's momentum, the recent workshop on the demographic dividend made it possible to take stock of the network's growing influence and visibility, as well as capture buy-in from network members', key training institutions in the region, and interested national (i.e. Ministry of Planning) and international (i.e. UNFPA) actors. Regarding field developments, today's interest in the demographic dividend, the post Millennium Development Goals and Africa's quest for economic emergence offer a unique opportunity for demographic research to play a central role in the region's planning. The network can grow to play that role.

I. BACKGROUND

The FraNet was designed to improve the capacity for demographic research and policy communication in Francophone Africa. The region was facing a historic opportunity to harness a demographic dividend, advance its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), mitigate inequality, and ease growing pressures in educational, health and employment systems. To seize this opportunity, its economic planning had to integrate population factors, but this integration required a strong local capacity to conduct and communicate rigorous, relevant, and timely research on current population issues.

This capacity was weak and in need of upgrading. The region had to expand the pool of experts well-versed in the use of rigorous research designs and cutting-edge statistical methods. These cadres then could support economic planning processes by (a) developing, implementing, and evaluating population programs (b) generating reliable evidence on local population trends, their causes and consequences, and (c) converting detailed statistical findings into summary implications for national policy.

To build this capacity quickly and cost-effectively, a new strategic approach was required. To date, international support to demographic training in the region had come in the form of either direct support to a few regional institutes or international training at European or North American universities. Both approaches raised the number of trained African demographers, but the latter was cost-ineffective while the former did not easily keep up with the field: the classic training within the region had focused on formal descriptive study of basic demographic rates and determinants. Furthermore, linguistic barriers restricted the extent to which locally-trained demographers could keep up with technical advances in demographic research. Finally, few were explicitly trained in conducting in policy-relevant research and policy communication. In short, the region had substantial expertise in formal demography but not enough in the kind of research needed to reliably inform integrated planning in population and development.

It is against this background that we proposed the FraNET's network-and-panel structure. The network was to provide a flexible structure to build the capacity for demographic research. The FraNET was to directly serve two main constituencies, including (1) the pool of existing researchers in the region and (2) local training institutions. The network's activities would support researchers who already had some graduate training in demography, worked at a demographic institute in the sub-region, and could benefit from the training. Most importantly, it would target researchers who could themselves extend the training to students or colleagues. By so doing (and through other activities) the network would support local training institutions in ways that increase their visibility and their capacity for training graduates in research, policy communication and outreach.

To serve the researchers, the network's training would focus on advanced methods of demographic analysis. This would be done *via* week-long workshops and other activities such as web-based training, individualized follow up, support to trainers at participating institutions, and expansion of policy communication opportunities. To support local institutions, the network would specifically mentor some of the trainees into becoming instructors for the new methods. In addition, it would seek to integrate these methods in the existing curricula.

One end-goal envisioned as a product of the network's activities was to build a large cadre of trained experts well equipped to inform the development, implementation, and evaluation of population policies and programs. This cadre would drive improvements in population training programs and in integrated policy planning. In the near-term, intermediate outcomes sought by the end of this project included:

- Teachers and students in the network would have been exposed to, and become familiar with, advanced methods and best policy communication.
- Lecturers in participating institutions will have acquired greater competency in advanced research methods of demographic analysis;
- Key faculty teaching research methods at these institutions will have expanded their syllabus to include advanced research methods;
- Students will have begun to apply some of these advanced methods in their research;
- Faculty at participating institutions will have had opportunities to develop and communicate policy implications from their current research to policy institutions and mass media;

Four years into this project, how well are these goals attained? The present report attempts a midterm evaluation. First, we describe the FraNet concept, its logic, activities and main goals. Then, we summarize the basic methodology followed in the evaluation before discussing the main results.

II. THE FRANCOPHONE NETWORK

II.1. The IUSSP Panel Structure

The Franet's activities over the last four years were conducted under the IUSSP Panel structure. These panels are a primary vehicle through which the IUSSP carries out its work, especially to address an emerging or critical population issue or (as was the case here) to develop and improve training and research in the discipline. They bring together a small international group of high-level experts, and are typically designed to function for a limited period of time. Given this panel's focus on training, its main activities included workshops and the development of training materials.

This specific panel focused on demographic training in Francophone Africa, specifically training a network of demographers working in the region and interested in improving their research and policy communication skills. The Panel was designed to coordinate the training activities of the network. In addition to coordination and advice, panel members contributed their expertise (methodological, technical and teaching), contacts or resources.

Panel members were selected to cover key institutions that had historically trained African demographers, such as the University of Montréal (Canada), Louvain-la Neuve (Belgium), IFORD (Cameroon) and ISSP (Burkina Faso). During its first two years, the panel was chaired by Parfait Eloundou-Enyegue and included Jean Francois Kobiane (ISSP), Gervais Beninguisse (IFORD), Anne Calves (U Montreal) and Bruno Schoumakker (Louvain-laNeuve). The 2011-13 slate added Valerie Delaunay, Richard Marcoux, and Philippe Bocquier, with two previous members rotating off. Throughout, the panel was advised by IUSSP Council member Cheikh Mbacke.

II.2. Theory of Change

The theory of change undergirding this program can be captured in a few assumptions about training pedagogy and adoption/diffusion of innovative research practices.

II.2.1. Pedagogy

The pedagogical approach was **learning-by doing**. The training was to begin with theoretical presentations but quickly shift to real-world and immediate application to research questions of interest to participants and the region. Rather than sit passively through seminars, participants would be expected to (a) bring their own

data sets (b) begin an actual data analytic project during the workshop and (c) seek support after the workshop, in order to complete their research projects and (d) for those employed as teaching staff, seek support in incorporating workshop or web material into their own courses. In short, the pedagogy called for hands-on, applied, adopted, and transmitted learning.

II.2.2. Adoption of new methods

To facilitate the adoption of new research methods, the strategy was to target individuals who were presumably most likely to embrace these methods, for instance faculty teaching methods and statistics, junior faculty, doctoral students and research associates. Advanced students were also expected to be effective trend setters, as subsequent cohorts tend to follow the most successful students in earlier cohorts. By supporting early adopters, one could later rely on them to spread the innovation more broadly to others. Diffusion could also be facilitated by careful scheduling of the workshops, and by ensuring the professional recognition of those embracing the cutting edge methods (e.g., through research awards or support for participation to international conferences).

II.3. Main Activities

The FRANET's choice of activities was informed by a preliminary assessment of needs, opportunities, and advances (NOA) conducted in 2009. This assessment sought to answer questions about emerging development issues in the region and their population roots; areas of population research where Francophone sub-Saharan Africa was lagging behind; new techniques of demographic analysis to introduce in the region; existing and useful but under-used data bases available in the region; key sources of funding and initiatives that might support population research in Francophone Africa.

To answer these questions, we triangulated information from an online survey, a content analysis of local curricula, and expert assessment. The survey –conducted among would-be network participants- helped map the existing training landscape, in terms of topics emphasized, data used, and methods applied. Archival research on past student research at IFORD and ISSP helped corroborate the survey evidence. These investigations, along with discussions among Panel members, helped identify the methodological techniques that needed immediate attention, and the range of activities to be considered by the Panel.

At the end of this process, the activities selected included (1) workshop training, (2) web-based training, (3) support to faculty teaching methods and statistics, (4) policy communication training and opportunities; and (5) efforts to raise the visibility of local training institutions.

II.3.1. Methodological Workshops

General idea: The idea here was to teach advanced techniques of statistical/demographic analysis to members of the FraNet. Specific techniques to introduce were chosen by panel members based on their perceived usefulness, newness, and level of complexity (neither too basic nor too difficult). In addition, the Panel considered the availability of high-quality instructors for the method. Language barriers restricted the pool of possible instructors, but we could use our networks to find good French-speaking instructors, and could draw from the Panel's expertise as well.

Methods covered: The technical methods covered over the last four years included multilevel analysis, GIS, event history analysis and decomposition analysis. These methods are regularly employed in scientific articles published by prominent journals in demography, economics and sociology. Other methods envisioned but not yet covered included causal analysis, evaluation methods, and grant-writing. We also incorporated training in skills such as policy communication and basic projection tools.

Pedagogy: The training was expected to be hands-on and directed toward immediate application and diffusion. In that light, there is a clear intent from the start to turn some of the trainees into trainers. To facilitate this process of turning trainees into future trainers, we planned two complementary activities. One was to make documentation available to participants. The other was to hold specific workshops, during which the future trainers were groomed to take on the training. These workshops involved supervised training exercises during which the trainees were put in a classroom environment and tasked with introducing the method.

II.3.2. Other Activities

Other activities included in this first four years include some web-based training, support to faculty that would teach research methods, and policy communication opportunities, as well as efforts to raise the visibility of local institutions training students in population sciences.

Web-based Training. Teaching modules will be developed by selected resource persons and they will target researchers and students at major demographic training institutes in Francophone Africa as well as recent graduates of these institutions; in that vein, and as a way to draw the public and younger students' interest in demography, we designed a tool called "who wants to be a demographer" and it was modeled after the TV game "who wants to be a Millionaire?"

Support to faculty. We sought to support the local faculty who teach research methods and statistics. FraNet's activities would help them build

their syllabi with the goal of incorporating advanced methods of demographic analysis.

Policy communication opportunities: There was also interest in boosting network members skills in PowerPoint presentation and communication with journalists and policy makers. Few participants had received training in these skills as part of their formal education (a fact that is unfortunately evident at many professional conferences). The participants' enthusiasm for this training was clear, and there were significant improvements in presentation clarity and quality by the end of these workshops.

Institutional visibility: In addition to workshops, other web-based activities were designed to support the visibility of host institutions whether via high-profile conferences, or creating opportunities for local training of demography to play a leading role vis-à-vis sister disciplines. For instance, the GIS workshops can serve as a forum where demographers build bridges with geographers. The panel also worked together to share its international contacts and connect our partner institutions with programs that they may not have previously worked with.

III. A MID-TERM ASSESSMENT

III.1. The Need for An Evaluation

The time is opportune for a mid-term assessment. This assessment is warranted by the number and diversity of activities since 2010 , as well as the sheer passage of time and the emergence of key strategic opportunities within Africa. To be sure, a few evaluations had been conducted after individual workshops and at the conclusion of the first grant cycle. The feedback we were receiving directly or indirectly was that there was great demand for the training, as suggested by the consistently large number of applications; learning seemed to occur, perhaps in part because the selection process tended to recruit the best prepared applicants. Trainees often needed some technical support after completing the training but this support was difficult to offer to all and in timely manner; there were attempts to incorporate aspects of the training into the curriculum but full adoption required a great deal of push and support from the network. Of course, we kept track of the main workshops conducted (Table 1). Still, we did not get the kind of comprehensive feedback sought with the current evaluation.

Table 1. Summary of Workshop Activity

Date	Location	Topic	Instructors	Participants
Aug 25-26	Yaoundé	Decomposition methods	P. Eloundou G. Beninguisse	60 IFORD students
Oct 25-31, 2010	Yaoundé	Multi-level analysis and decomposition	F. Vermeylen P.Eloundou	
Jan 10-15	Yaoundé	Research writing	G.Beninguisse JF Kobiane P. Eloundou	
Sep 19-25	Marrakech	Multilevel analysis	F. Vermeylen	
	Marrakech	Decomposition methods	P.Eloundou	
	Marrakech	GIS methods	Scott Sanders	
Dec 3-4	Ouagadougou	Research communication	(ISSP)	
June 18-23	Ouagadougou	Longitudinal analysis	JF Kobiane	
Aug 20-25		Decomposition methods (training the trainers)	Eloundou Giroux	
June 17-21	Dakar	GIS methods	R. Marcoux	
Aug 26	Busan, Korea	Policy communication	P. Eloundou	
Nov 25-30, 2014	Ouagadougou	Demographic dividend	Eloundou Zinvi,.....	
Mar 25-30	Yaoundé		R. Marcoux	
Mar 31-Apr 4 2014	Yaoundé	Demographic dividend	Eloundou Tenikue	

III.2. The Evaluation Process

This evaluation combined an online survey and a focus group discussion with selected participants. Each of these methods is discussed below. (it also incorporated general observations and discussions after workshops and during various meetings between panel members).

III.2.1. Online survey

An online survey was mailed to 666 past and prospective participants to the Panel's activities. The mailing list included participants to previous training activities but also IUSSP members from Francophone Africa, as well as respondents to the first call to participate in the network's activities that had been issued in 2010. The survey was fielded from February 25 to March 18. A total of 248 responses was received, out of which roughly 45% had previously participated in the network's activities. Responses were anonymous but those respondents who had not participated in previous activities had the option to include their address and name, so the Panel would have reliable information for future contacts. Optional questions were asked about the respondents' education levels and current affiliation.

Reflecting the composition of the overall pool of demographers in the region, the respondents were predominantly male (74%) and, the vast majority (85 %) came from Francophone Africa. Of these, (78%) came from sub-Saharan Africa and the rest from the Maghreb. The top participating countries *in the survey* included Cameroon (35) Burkina Faso (25) Morocco (25), Algeria (18) Cote d'Ivoire (16), France (16), Senegal (14), Togo (13), Benin (11) Niger (11) mais data showed a remarkably wide range of countries of current residence (India, Haiti, ...). in terms of educational attainment, virtually all respondents had at least a Master degree (97%) with 37% holding a PhD. Most were currently employed in their country's civil service (40%), university (28%) or research institution (26) with a trickle of others still currently in school earning their Masters of PhD (14%) or working with NGOs.

III.2.2 Focus group interview

A focus group discussion was organized in early April 2014 to add qualitative insights to the survey data. The discussion, which lasted about 1h 45 minutes (from 5:45 pm to 7:30) and was led by Mr. ONGUENE FOU DA Vincent-de-Paul (Ministry of Higher Education, Cameroon) and Mr. BELIBI Pie-Marie (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Cameroon), sought to elicit further discussion about the relevance of topics selected in past workshops, the pedagogy used, the trainer's performance, the relevance and usefulness of case studies used, the selection of host countries for the training, and suggestions to improve future workshops.

The participants (15) represented the broad spectrum of countries and institutions that participated in the workshop since the network's inception. Participants were briefed in the basic rules of focus group conversation (respect of different viewpoints, confidentiality, and broad participation). A recording of the discussion is available with the focus group leaders, and the present report will only include a brief synthesis of the content of these discussions.

IV. MAIN FINDINGS

IV.1. Participants' Evaluation of Training Workshops:

IV.1.1. Overall Review

A series of 12 workshops were reviewed. Not included in the review are the very first mini-workshop conducted at IFORD in August 2010 and the latest workshop on the demographic dividend conducted in Yaoundé in April 2014. Table 1 shows the workshop topics, dates, and locations, as well as the number of participants who completed the assessment survey. Policy communication and research dissemination workshops focused on boosting the network members' skills in PowerPoint presentation and communication with journalists and policy makers. Few participants had been trained in these skills as part of their formal education (a fact that is unfortunately evident at many professional conferences). The participant enthusiasm for this training was clear, and we saw significant improvements in the clarity of presentations by the end of the workshops. We also offered a workshop focused on substantive questions surrounding the study of the demographic dividend. Researchers and policymakers (Ministries of Planning, Education) expressed great interest in this training.

Table 1. Summary of Workshop Topics, Dates and Location	<i>N</i> <i>Responses</i>
A. Advanced Statistical Methods , Yaoundé, Cameroon, 25-31 October 2010	41
B. Article Writing , Yaoundé, Cameroon, 10-15 January 2011	14
C. Multilevel Analysis Marrakech, Morocco, 19-25 September 2011	13
D. GIS , Marrakech, Morocco, 19-25 September 2011	8
E. Decomposition Methods , Marrakech, Morocco, 19-25 September 2011	16
F. Research Communication Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 3-4 December 2011	11
G. Longitudinal Analysis Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 18-23 June 2012	26
H. Teaching Decomposition Methods , Yaoundé, Cameroon, 20-25 August 2012	27
I. Spatial representation of Census Data Dakar, Senegal, June 17-21 2012	19
J. Communicating Research Results Busan, South Korea, Aug. 26, 2013	16
K. Demographic Dividend , Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 25-30 November 2013	22

Overall, survey results indicate that participants have been highly satisfied with the quality of workshops. The biggest challenges across all workshops have been about the duration of training (too short) and participants wanting more time to for practice and application of training topics. If the duration is not amenable to change, the Panel should encourage future trainers to 1) send the training material before-hand so that the trainers arrive fully ready, 2) when relevant, work with

successful applicants to design the individual databases that will be used during the applied phase of workshop instruction, and 3) explicitly plan to devote a larger portion of training effort to “hands-on” application.

IV.1.2. Individual Workshops

The charts in Appendix 1 highlight the findings from each workshop. Below is a brief summary of assessments from the survey findings.

A. Advanced Statistical Methods Workshop

IFORD, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 25-31 October 2010

This first international workshop on advanced statistical methods was hosted by IFORD and taught by Parfait Eloundou-Enyegue and Francoise Vermeyley, Director of the Cornell University Office of Statistical Consulting. The first instructor covered basic decomposition methods, while the second covered multilevel analysis.

About 94% of respondents felt that the instructors in this workshop mastered their subject and 83% were familiar with the data and examples she chose to present. The majority of respondents' felt that the training was good mix of theory and practice (72%) and was taught at the right level of difficulty (87%) By completion, 89% of participants agreed that method was useful for their work. 64% felt they had a basic understanding of the method, while another 34% reported full comprehension.

After completing the workshop, 53% of respondents have used these methods in their work 1 or 2 times, while 36% report that they use the approach often. 91% would recommend this course to their colleagues and more than half (56%) reported that they would feel comfortable teaching this methods to peers at their home institutions. The biggest perceived critique of this workshop was that it was too short (53%), with insufficient time devoted to practice (61%). Despite not having a formal survey after this workshop, there was a general sense this might be a problem, and we attempted to adjust future workshops accordingly.

B. Article Writing Workshop

IFORD, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 10-15 January 2011

The article writing workshop was hosted by IFORD, with Drs. P Gervais Beninguisse (IFORD) John Francois Kobiane (ISSP) and Parfait Eloundou-Enyegue (Cornell University) leading the instruction. For this workshop we selected promising candidates from the advanced statistical methods workshop, and invited them back to provide guidance as they moved from conducting their analyses to writing journal articles. This model of conducting a workshop, providing participants time to engage the method on their own, and then inviting them back to deepen their knowledge of the method and provide support as they apply the method, been a guiding force within our training.

93% of respondents felt that instructors were well qualified to teach this subject, and 93% were familiar with the data and examples he chose to present. The majority of respondents' felt that the training was good mix of theory and practice (79%), was taught at the right level of difficulty (71%), and used familiar examples (93%). By completion, 100% of participants agreed that this workshop was a useful experience. 43% felt they had a basic understanding of how to write journal articles, while another 57% reported full comprehension.

Post workshop, respondents reported drawing upon the skills learned in the workshops often (54%) or at least once or twice (46%). 79% would recommend this course to their colleagues and more than half (64%) reported that they would feel comfortable teaching this methods to peers at their home institutions.

Participants were relatively satisfied with the duration of the training (80%), but only 60% felt that the time devoted to practice during the workshop was adequate. This likely stemmed from the fact that giving detailed feed- back to each author, while also providing a generalized training, provided to be a substantial amount of ground to cover over the course of a week. Beyond the respondents reporting, the quality of the papers that were generated by the end of the week also pointed to a successful workshop.

C. Multilevel Analysis Workshop

Marrakech, Morocco, 19-25 September 2011

In September of 2011, we held three workshops simultaneously in Marrakech. The workshop featured perhaps the largest group of participants and these were divided into three different rooms. The first of the series was a multi-level methods workshop taught by Dr. Françoise Vermeulen (Cornell University). 90% of respondents felt that Dr. Vermeulen was a master of this subject and 70% were familiar with the data and examples she chose to present. The majority of respondents' felt that the training was good mix of theory and practice (80%) and was taught at the right level of difficulty (90%) By completion, 90% of participants agreed that method was useful for their work. 70% felt they had a basic understanding of the method, while another 30% reported full comprehension.

Post workshops, 30% of respondents have used these methods in their work 1 or 2 times, while 53% report that they use the approach often. 90% would recommend this course to their colleagues and half reported that they would feel comfortable teaching this methods to peers at their home institutions. The biggest perceived critique of this workshop was that it was too short (50%), with insufficient time devoted to practice (40%).

D. GIS Workshop

Marrakech, Morocco, 19-25 September 2011

The GIS workshop was taught by a then Cornell graduate student (now Professor at Brigham Young University), Scott Sanders. Dr. Sanders had taught several GIS

classes at Cornell, and was able to secure free training books and trial software licensing for all participants.

Overall, however, participants reviewed this as slightly less successful than other network workshops. Only 37% of respondents felt that Dr. Sanders was a master of this subject and a mere 44% were familiar with the data and examples he chose to present. The majority of respondents' felt that the training was both too theoretical (56%) and too advanced (33%). As an adjustment, a new instructor was found for the next GIS training. In fairness, it is noteworthy that this particular workshop attempted to introduce an English-speaking instructor who was supported by Power Point slides translated in French. The attempt was not successful and this warrants continued focus on French-speaking instructors. The length of training was again an issue, with 46% reporting that it was too short, but respondents were most troubled by the insufficient time devoted to practice (78%).

On the positive side, by completion, 89% of participants agreed that method was useful for their work. 67% felt they had a basic understanding of the method, while another 11% reported full comprehension. Post workshops, the majority of respondents (53%) report that they use the approach often., while another 30% of respondents have used these methods in their work 1 or 2 times. 78% would recommend this course to their colleagues and 30% reported that they would feel comfortable teaching this methods to peers at their home institutions.

E. Decomposition Workshop

Marrakech, Morocco, 19-25 September 2011

The decomposition workshop was taught by Dr. Eloundou-Enyegue (Cornell University). 97% of respondents agreed that Dr. Eloundou-Enyegue was a master of this subject and 93% were familiar with the data and examples he presented. The vast majority of respondents' felt that the training was good mix of theory and practice (87%) and was taught at the right level of difficulty (62%) By completion, 86% of participants agreed that method was useful for their work. Half of the respondents felt they had a basic understanding of the method, while another half reported full comprehension Overall, 75% agreed that the duration of the training was perfect, but the majority (67%) would have liked more time devoted to practicing the method.

Post workshops, 50% of respondents have used these methods in their work 1 or 2 times, while another 31% report that they use the approach often. 93% would recommend this course to their colleagues and more than half (56%) reported that they would feel comfortable teaching this method to peers at their home institutions. The biggest of this workshop was that there was insufficient time devoted to practice (46%). Interestingly however, qualitative comments suggested that this method was by far the one that had been subsequently applied in the participants' research studies.

F. Demographic Research Communication Workshop

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 3-4 December 2011

The demographic research communication workshop focused on how to effectively present research findings. ISSP hosted the workshop, with Dr. J F Kobiane leading the training. 92% of respondents felt that Dr. Kobiane was a master of this subject and all (100%) were familiar with the data and examples used in the training. The majority of respondents' felt that the training was good mix of theory and practice (67%) and was taught at the right level of difficulty (69%) By completion, 85% of participants agreed that these skills would be useful for their professional careers. 62% felt they had a basic understanding of the method, while 38% reported full comprehension.

Post-workshop, 54% report that they use techniques acquired in the training often, while 38% report using these skills once or twice. All participants would recommend this course to their colleagues, and half reported that they would feel comfortable teaching a course on research communication to peers at their home institutions. The biggest perceived limitation of this training was that it was too short (64%), with insufficient time devoted to practice (62%).

G. Longitudinal Analysis Workshop

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 18-23 June 2012

ISSP hosted the longitudinal data analysis workshop, with Dr. Kobiane (ISSP) providing the instruction. ISSP was an ideal host for this specific training, as they had recently launched a demographic surveillance project, creating new longitudinal data. In a region where most students are trained in, and only have access to, basic cross-sectional data, we wanted to expand network participants skills in event history analysis.

82% of respondents felt that Dr. Kobiane mastered this subject and 86% were familiar with the data and examples used in the training. The majority of respondents' felt that the training was good mix of theory and practice (53%) and was taught at the right level of difficulty (64%) By completion, 86% of participants agreed that this method would prove useful for their professional careers. 82% felt they had a basic understanding of the method, while only 14% reported full comprehension.

Post workshops, 27% report that they use techniques acquired in the training often, while 37% report using these skills once or twice. A full 36% report never using this method, but this may be driven by a lack of access to longitudinal data. A large majority (86%) of participants would recommend this course to their colleagues, but only 38% reported that they would feel comfortable teaching a course on research communication to peers at their home institutions. The biggest

perceived drawback to this workshop was that it was too short (68%), with insufficient time devoted to practice (77%).

H. Teaching Decomposition Methods Workshop

Yaoundé, Cameroon, 20-25 August 2012

In an effort to continue to provide a more holistic and integrated training program, the network organized a workshop to provide training on how to teach demographic decomposition methods. IFORD hosted this workshop, and high-performing participants from the previous demographic methods workshops were invited back to 1) further develop their skills in the method and 2) learn how to effectively teach this method. To further this second goal, we ended the workshop with the participants providing mini-training courses to IFORD masters students.

Dr Eloundou-Enygue (Cornell University) led the training, with support from Dr. Sarah Giroux (Cornell University). 96% of respondents felt that the instructors were masters of the subject and 89% were familiar with the data and examples used in the training. The majority of respondents' felt that the training was good mix of theory and practice (73%), was taught at the right level of difficulty (85%), and was a perfect length (75%). By completion, 89% of participants agreed that this training would prove useful for their professional careers. 52% felt they had a basic understanding of the method, and 48% reported full comprehension.

Post workshops, 50% report that they use techniques acquired in the training often, while 46% report using these skills once or twice. Nearly all (92%) of participants would recommend this course to their colleagues, and 81% felt confident in their ability to teach a course on demographic decomposition methods at their home institution. This represents a significant gain from the 50% of respondents who reported feeling comfortable teaching the method after the initial workshop. The largest perceived drawback to this workshop was that there was insufficient time devoted to practice (46%).

I. Quantum GIS Software: Spatial representation of Census Data

Dakar, Senegal, June 17-21 2012

Dr. Richard Marcoux (Laval University) led the QGIS training. All of the respondents felt the instructor mastered the subject and 80% were familiar with the data and examples used in the training. The majority of respondents' felt that the instruction included a good mix of theory and practice (81%), was taught at the right level of difficulty (85%), and was a perfect length (75%). By completion, 88% of participants agreed that this training would prove useful for their professional careers. 75% felt they had a basic understanding of the method, and 25% reported full comprehension.

Post workshops, 31% report that they use techniques acquired in the training often, while 50% report using these skills once or twice. 100% of participants

would recommend this course to their colleagues, but only a relatively small number (44%) felt confident in their ability to teach a course on QGIS methods at their home institution. The largest perceived drawbacks to this workshop were the duration of training, with 75% of feeling it was too short, and insufficient time devoted to practice (67%).

J. Policy Research Communication

Busan, South Korea, Aug. 26, 2013

In an effort to capitalize on the presence of many network members at the IUSSP meeting in Busan Korea, the panel organized a one-day training on communicating research results to policymakers. Dr. Eloundou-Enyegue (Cornell University) led the training, drawing upon his work as a PRB Policy Communication Fellows program advisor. Not surprisingly perhaps, 58% of respondents felt that the duration of the training was too short. However 92% agreed that Dr. Eloundou was a master of the subject and 75% were familiar with the data and examples used in the training. 100% of respondents' felt that the training was good mix of theory and practice (73%), and a majority agreed that the training was taught at the right level of difficulty (67%), By completion, 84% of participants agreed that this training would prove useful for their professional careers. Half felt they had a basic understanding of the method, and half reported full comprehension.

Post-workshop, 46% report that they use techniques acquired in the training often, while 36% report using these skills once or twice. Nearly all (91%) of participants would recommend this course to their colleagues, and 75% felt confident in their ability to teach a course on demographic decomposition methods at their home institution. The largest perceived drawback to this workshop was that there was insufficient time devoted to practice (67%).

K. Demographic Dividend in Africa

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 25-30 November 2013

Dr Eloundou-Enyegue (Cornell University) led the training, with support from Zinvi Dossou Firmin, Charles Moute, Justin Dansou, and Floriane Kamgaing (CARE-IFA). 100% of respondents felt that the instructors were masters of the subject and 88% were familiar with the data and examples used in the training. The majority of respondents' felt that the training was good mix of theory and practice (76%) and was taught at the right level of difficulty (81%). By completion, 100% of participants agreed that this training would prove useful for their professional careers. 62% felt they had a basic understanding of the method, and 38% reported full comprehension.

Post workshops, 24% report that they use techniques acquired in the training often, while 47% report using these skills once or twice. Nearly all (94%) of participants would recommend this course to their colleagues, and 47% felt

confident in their ability to teach a course on demographic dividends methods at their home institution. The largest perceived drawback to this workshop was that there was insufficient time devoted to practice (59%) and duration of training being too short (59%).

IV.2. Focus Group Results

Focus group discussions generated complementary insights about several of the topics covered in the survey but also other general questions about the general operation of the network's activities. The main insights from these discussions are summarized below :

On the selection of topics/methods. focus group participants found the methods selected to be quite appropriate but will recommend addressing the following issues: (i) investing in the trainee-to-trainer development as well as in improving the skills of the research assistants that had diligently supported the training during the four years, often under difficult conditions; (ii) evaluating the extent to which the methods learned are adequately taught in the home institutions where these methods are being adopted.

On workshop pedagogy. the focus group participants request that the duration of these workshops be extended to two weeks to improve learning by all participants. At the same time, the trainers must also endeavor to send the training material beforehand so as to give the future participants a head start in the learning process. Likewise, the participants recommend using a single data base for all trainees in order to facilitate discussion and interaction among the trainees. Our initial impulse/vision had instead been to work with individual participants and have them create their personal data base. This important recommendation from focus group participants must be followed carefully.

On the trainers' performance. focus group participants were unanimous in their appreciation of the interactive and hands-on approach to the training, which they saw as essential to effective learning. Nonetheless, they recommend a longer duration for the workshops, earlier announcements of the date and logistics of the workshops in order to help trainees get a head start, and the research assistants get adequate time to prepare the workshop materials. Along similar lines, they also suggested a closer follow-up and support of the trainees' post-workshop efforts to apply the methods learned. They expressed great appreciation for the work done by the research assistants and recommended that they be hired on a full-time basis by CARE_IFA.

On the relevance of case studies/datasets used during the workshops.

The participants indicated that learning was greatly facilitated when the illustrative examples and supporting data sets were close to the experiences of trainees. They connected with the material better when the examples were familiar. This remark must be taken into consideration. This, according to participants, does not preclude the use of information from other regions (data about the Asian Tigers are clearly relevant when studying the demographic dividend).

On the selection of host countries. The countries/institutions that have hosted the workshops thus far have included Cameroon (IFORD), Burkina Faso (ISSP) and to a lesser extent Morocco. Understandably, countries must meet minimum infrastructure requirements in order to host a workshop but networks members from other countries are eager and willing to host a workshop in the future. Several stated that they stand ready to make the necessary arrangements with their institutions in order to make this happen. Specific countries that stepped forward included Cote d'Ivoire, Algéria and Tunisia.

Other suggestions. Focus group participants recommended taking full stock of the expertise available within the network so that local expertise is considered before one attempts to draw from outside expertise; raising the duration of training to two weeks; include the research assistants as full members of the network; make the findings from the FraNet's various activities available to decision makers; build greater collaboration with, and seek greater support from the UNFPA offices; edit and publish in timely manner the research drafts begun during the workshops; and timely communication of workshop logistics to the research assistants so they have more time to prepare the workshops.

V. SUGGESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE

This chapter reviews the main suggestions made by participants in the survey and focus group discussions. There is little attempt here to assess the feasibility of these recommendations.

V.1. Workshops

A number of recommendations about the workshop clearly come throughout the survey and focus group discussions. Perhaps the first and foremost is the recommendation of greater inclusion expressed by all those who have yet to be selected to participate in any of the workshop. To these respondents, the rules of the games seemed unclear. The Panel will need to clarify again the process by which participants have been selected, as well make decisions about the extent to which it elects to focus on a smaller pool of individuals rather than a broader segment of potential participants. If the former, it will have to examine how the training of the first cadre of participants trickles out to the rest of the region's demographers interested in advanced training.

Another common theme expressed by participants and non-participants alike, was to raise the duration of these workshops, perhaps to two weeks. The main reason for this suggestion is that week-long seminars do not appear to give students enough time to apply and become intimately familiar with the methods.

The pedagogy used as well as the trainers' competency were appreciated. Assuming that training would move beyond the areas covered thus far, the respondents suggested a number of substantive and methodological areas to be covered in the near future. Among the substantive problems that deserved urgent attention, the respondents listed a) education/schooling, migration/youth unemployment/child and maternal mortality/the demographic dividend. While this list may reflect the specific preferences of the individuals who participated in the survey, they nonetheless give an indication of topics that have wide appeal.

Among the methods required more attention, there was a demand for advanced demographic methods, policy communication, techniques of data collection, as well as program evaluation. In that light, the Panel could build on the wealth of experience accumulated in evaluation studies based on randomized trials.

They also recommended, as had also been the IUSSP recommendation, an earlier planning and perhaps a steadier rotation of workshops slotted during a regular time period in the year, so as to give the participants greater flexibility in planning their participation. Upstream, they also recommended post-workshop support to the trainees, in the form of assistance during the data analysis phase of their projects

but also during the first review and edits of their drafts so they could submit cleaner papers for publication. A number of participants expressed a desire to see the location of workshops rotate even more widely beyond the few cities that had been covered thus far. In light of all these suggestions, one possibility would be to plan three activities annually. These would include one training workshop, one writing retreat, and one policy dissemination event.

One of the goals of workshops is to turn some of the trainees into trainers. When asked about the kinds of support needed more broadly in helping the participants in their training mission, the respondents indicated a need for support in creating lecture notes, in acquiring textbooks and course packets, in improving their pedagogy, and perhaps some institutional support in supervising the students at their institutions.

V.2. Other Priority Areas

In addition to the quantitative analysis emphasized during the first period (and still considered the top priority) respondents indicated a need to provide training/support in a few other areas that include grant writing, access to recent publications, survey data collection, qualitative methods, consulting work. Some of these needs (e.g. access to recent publications may be easily accommodated at a time where new search opportunities have become available for independent researchers or those based at small institutions.

A major area of where needs were expressed (and a central goal in the initial Panel plan) is in the dissemination of research findings. The top needs in this area included assistance in designing research briefs, supporting research dissemination events, and facilitating contact with policy-makers, media outlets and NGOs.

V.3. The Network's Membership and Scope

At major question raised was whether/how much to extend participation beyond the current focus on demographers working in teaching, research, and very technical units. Respondents were quite divided on this question. Some felt that the initial effort should focus on advancing demographic expertise among demographers. Only later can it usefully be extended so that demographers can collaborate with other disciplines from a position of strength. Other respondents listed a great many potential partners, a summary of which included the following:

- Universities in Francophone Africa that offer training in demography or the social sciences in general ;
- National Statistical Institutes; Public and Private research institutes working on development issues
- NGOs working on population questions

- Technical Ministries (including Planning, Health, Education, ..)
- UN agencies (UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, PAM, UNESCO) and other international organizations (Banque mondiale, HCR, FMI, etc.) including those specializing in population and development issues.
- PanAfrican Development Institutions (Banque Africaine de Développement) as well as subregional institutions (UEMOA, CEDA0...) that value scientific analysis of development questions.
- Targeting a number of well-established institutions [CEFOP, URD, CERED, INSEA, INS- NIGER, INED, BUCREP, INSD, ANSD, IRD, GIZ, AFRISTAT, INSEE, ISSEA, APHRC...]
- Mass media, parliamentarians, religious institutions and their leaders

V.4. An Africa-based Directorate

In the event that the network moved in a direction of having a field base that manages its operations, survey participants were asked about the key criteria they would most value in selecting the host country and host institution. This question generated detailed responses but there was a clear clustering around two main criteria for the country and host institution, respectively.

The ideal host country had to be (1) safe and politically stable, then (2) internationally accessible (flights and visas) in addition to (3) supportive of the network, demographic training, and research in general. A myriad of other, sometimes conflicting suggestions were added. Some included criteria of good governance, central geographic location. Most debated was the issue of official language, with suggestions ranging from favoring an English-speaking country so as to force participants to make the jump into English, but others seeing a French-speaking country as the only possibility, and yet others calling for a bilingual country. Altogether, the institution had to be scientifically credible, stable and willing to offer additional support the network's activities. Respondents specifically mentioned the availability of computers and internet access, the international orientation of the institution, the sound administrative and financial management of the institution, a solid cadre of potential trainers, a reasonable number of trained and known scientists, and financial autonomy. As far as disciplinary focus, there seemed to be a clear preference for a population institute, whether its focus was on training or research. Ideally, the institution should be seen as dynamic, reliable, experienced, with great international visibility and a capacity to collaborate with other and able to collaborate with other research institutions. Being embedded in a larger university was also seen as a plus.

Nonetheless, the participants seemed to also clearly stress that the network would remain independent from the host institution and that it would continue to serve the entire region.

VI. SUMMARY AND LESSONS

This project was designed to reinforce the institutional capacity to conduct advanced demographic research and policy communication within Francophone Africa, as a means to inform the region's economic planning. Given the pressing concerns surrounding Africa's opportunity to reap a demographic dividend, challenges in meeting Millennium Development Goals, rising inequality, and growing pressures associated with on-going population trends, the region requires a pool of substantively informed and technically skilled researchers.

After four years of operation, our evaluation suggests that we have been relatively successful in boosting regional capacity, both quickly and cost-effectively. Through our series of week-long, intensive, hands-on workshops we have substantially increased the percentage of region's demographers trained in advanced quantitative methods of demographic analysis and policy communication. Overall, the combined evidence from our four sources highlights substantial interest in the network's program, as well as a high programmatic output, mostly in terms of the numerous methodological workshops offered during the grant period. We evaluated the program outcomes within three realms: 1) *interest and participation*; 2) *volume of activity*; and 3) *impact*. Findings suggest positive developments in each of these realms:

- 1) Regarding *interest and participation*, evaluation findings suggest that the network's activities have generated great interest and enthusiasm among demographers and social scientists in the region. This was clear from the consistently high number of applications for open calls, and it is confirmed by this survey's results.
- 2) When considering the *volume of activity*, we find that FraNET has been most active in organizing and conducting methodological workshops. In the nearly four years from August 2010 to April 2014, it organized and supported fourteen (14) training activities, drawing an estimated total of (400) participations from a large and diverse set of countries and institutions. We covered a range of quantitative methods, included multilevel analysis, longitudinal analysis, decomposition methods, and geographic information methods. As these methods had not been adequately covered in local curricula, and are currently featured prominently in top scientific journals, they added considerable value to the training of the region's demographers.
- 3) Turning to *impact*, we find that most respondents were able to learn the methods. Although a smaller proportion report full confidence in teaching

these methods to their peers, the vast majority have applied these methods in their research- either Masters/doctoral theses, journal articles, or conference papers (extensively used in UAPS, PAA, and IUSSP meetings). The addition of these methods into the local curriculum is in progress at IFORD and ISSP but also reportedly in Ivory Coast and the Congo. Qualitative comments suggest that the workshops have helped build a community of scholars among professionals working in the region on similar topics. Through these regular encounters, participants have been able to share their experiences; exchange information and advice; learned how to collaborate and work as a team; and broaden their research horizons by learning about different settings and cultures.

At the same time, our evaluation also suggests some direction for future growth and improvements that could be useful in each realm.

- 1) Regarding *interest and participation*, there remain concerns over selection criteria and more systematic communication about the network's activities. Over half of the respondents to this survey have yet to participate in a workshop, largely because few applicants (20-35) can be accommodated per workshop but also since some of the workshops are follow-up activities that require participation in a prior workshop. The FraNet must re-examine its trade-off between quantity and quality, and the viability of its initial plan to focus on a small cluster of institutional participants from whom the training would trickle out to other colleagues. It must also communicate, via a stronger web presence, the details of the network's operation, the program of activities, and the outcomes of its activities.
- 2) Regarding *volume of activity*, contrary to the actual workshops, some of 'upstream' and 'downstream' activities require more attention. The training can be made more effective if more is invested in 1) preparing the data that will support training and 2) supporting participants after the workshop in their efforts to complete the research writing projects initiated during the workshops. Nonetheless, some of the participants have managed to apply some of the new methods in their research. The Panel can learn from these success stories to bolster the application of new methods. The evaluation --as well as discussions within the Panel-- also recommends a more systematic and predictable scheduling of events, perhaps to create a standard rotation that makes it easier for trainers and trainees to plan participation.

- 3) Regarding *impact* out work needs to continue to monitor the end goal- i.e. producing high-quality scientific research that finds its way to informing policy and planning processes.

Moving forward the evaluation highlighted several other issues that will be important in our future planning, specifically addressing the structure of workshops, how to prioritize future activities, what the scope of the network should continue to look like, thoughts about an African based directorate, and other issues.

- 1) **Workshops:** Future workshops need to follow a steady, predictable rotation that might involve more locations than Yaoundé and Ouagadougou; be more transparent in the selection process; be longer (2 weeks), if feasible; devote more time to practice and application; feature greater support after the workshop for the writing exercises begun during the workshop; and include additional themes such as program evaluation.
- 2) **Priority activities:** Priority topics moving forward will continue to cover classics such as population growth, education, health, migration but also issues such as the demographic dividend, a popular issue for contemporary African nations and among network members. Priority activities in the realm of **teaching**, will support producing teaching materials (Power Points, brochures), and improving teaching skills (pedagogy). Priority activities in the realm of **research**, will include continued training in advanced methods, but also post-workshop support in data analysis, writing articles, and writing research grants. In **policy dissemination**, the activities need to support to the production of research briefs, organization of dissemination events, and contacts with policy makers.
- 3) **Scope and composition of the network.** Respondents to the evaluation survey are quite divided over whether membership should be expanded far beyond training, research and technical institutions, and beyond formal and social demographers. For some, the network's comparative advantage at this point is to offer solid training to demographers, arguing that only later can this pave the way for broader engagement and collaboration with wider audiences. Panel members will need to consider this issue as we move forward.
- 4) **Africa-based directorate.** In the event that the network's administrative office is located in Africa, the criteria suggested by respondents were many. The most important, however, were the country's security and stability and the host institution's scientific reputation and its human/physical

infrastructure. Respondents also noted that the network itself must remain broader than, and independent, from the host institution.

- 5) **Other needs:** the network members also highlight that they would appreciate support in other aspects of their professional development including grant writing, policy communication, consulting work, and teaching. Future FraNet efforts will begin to integrate these activities into its efforts, raising its impact among participants.

In sum, the Panel was pleased with the activity level and overall positive review of the past four years work. We look forward to drawing upon these recommendations as we chart a new course that builds on past achievements and challenges, but also on new opportunities. As the region grapples with the demographic dividend, the post Millennium Development Goals and Africa's quest for economic emergence, we believe that network members will play an increasingly important role.

