

# IREDA

*Inventaire des  
Recensements et Enquêtes  
Démographiques en  
Afrique*

## ORIGIN OF IREDA

### **D**istant roots

The IREDA project is the result of a long process of reflection on demographic observation through the experiences of Francis Gendreau and Françoise Gubry, two demographers whose career paths have crossed several times.

Francis Gendreau, former demographer of the Office de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique Outre-Mer (ORSTOM), now the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD, [www.ird.fr](http://www.ird.fr)), began his research career in Madagascar where he carried out various demographic collection projects. He was the first director of the Institut de Formation et de Recherche Démographiques (IFORD, [www.iford-cm.org](http://www.iford-cm.org)) in Yaoundé, created in 1972. Françoise Gubry taught demography at IFORD in the 1980s. Theoretical and practical training in demographic collection operations was and remains one of the strong points of the students' training programme.

### **T**he GDA and CEPED

Francis Gendreau and Françoise Gubry then joined the Centre français sur la Population et le Développement (CEPED, [www.ceped.org](http://www.ceped.org)) created in 1988, the first as director and the second, after further training as a documentalist, to set up the library.

CEPED was the heir to the Groupe de Démographie Africaine (GDA) in the activities of which Francis Gendreau had participated between 1965 and 1985. The GDA, which informally brought together researchers from the French Institut National d'Études Démographique (INED), the French Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques (INSEE), ORSTOM and the French Ministry of Cooperation, had attached great importance to topics related to the collection and analysis of demographic data and had devoted numerous publications to these subjects. Thus, in parallel with other research activities carried out at CEPED, great attention continued to be paid to all matters relating to demographic data. CEPED first publications often concerned demographic data collection and dissemination of results.

The CEPED library was the repository of the GDA archives and of many documents related to various demographic operations, such as printed reports of African censuses, which were carefully collected by Pierre Cantrelle, demographer of IRD.

The documents of this library, closed in 2014, have been added to the holdings of the library of INED, now merged into the Grand Équipement Documentaire (GED) of Campus Condorcet, and the Bibliothèque Universitaire des Langues et Civilisations (BULAC). The bibliographic catalogue was available online from 2001 to 2014, as well as the catalogue of technical documents that makes up the 'collection of forms' (now archived at the GED Condorcet). These various documents (questionnaires, manuals, slips, etc.) were subject to an adequate typology and were classified by country and by operation; These specific holdings, well documented for the collection operations of French-speaking African countries, has made it possible to start a collaboration with the IPUMS-International project (Integrated Public Use



Microdata Series, International) of the Minnesota Population Center which endeavors to preserve and make comparable census microdata from around the world.

## **The creation of IREDA**

The 7<sup>th</sup> Scientific Days of the Réseau Démographie of the AUF (Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie) were an opportunity to enhance this experience and they were the triggering factor of the IREDA project. Indeed, the theme of these Days, which took place at Laval University in Quebec City (Canada) in June 2007, was 'Memories and demography: crossed glances in the South and in the North' ([www.pulaval.com/produit/memoires-et-demographie-regards-croises-sud-nord](http://www.pulaval.com/produit/memoires-et-demographie-regards-croises-sud-nord)). They ended with the adoption of the 'Quebec City Declaration Regarding the Recognition, Protection and Development of African Censuses' ([www.odsef.fss.ulaval.ca/sites/odsef.fss.ulaval.ca/files/declaration\\_qc\\_2007\\_en.pdf](http://www.odsef.fss.ulaval.ca/sites/odsef.fss.ulaval.ca/files/declaration_qc_2007_en.pdf)). Francis Gendreau and Françoise Gubry had written a joint paper for the Conference, inventorying the major national demographic operations in Africa, entitled 'Demographic observation in Africa. Lessons from the past, prospects for the future, preservation and enhancement of the operations'. The preparation of this paper enabled them to realize that a simple list, with their date, of national demographic operations that had actually taken place, was not easy to establish and that it was also relatively difficult to find precise demographic information going back more than ten years on the websites of the statistical offices.

The association of a demographer-researcher and a demographer-documentalist gave rise to the beginning of a project to compile an inventory of national demographic operations in Africa. Initially, in their minds, it was a validated list of the operations that really existed, with their collection dates. Each operation had to be accompanied by the list of official publications, but also by a list of works the researchers carried out with these data. Many of these documents were available at CEPED library and others at its partners who are also stakeholders in this inventory. This project received the support of the International Household Survey Network (IHSN) as well as other organizations such as INSEE, IRD, AUF and the association "CESD-Statisticiens pour le Développement", which enabled it to be more ambitious in its objectives and to be better integrated with other statistical data archiving projects.

The dynamic of archiving statistical surveys in Africa is now well under way in National Statistical Offices and international databases. The IREDA project ends in 2020, with the certainty that it has contributed to publicize and preserve older demographic operations in the process of being forgotten, with their associated documents.

