



## Spring Newsletter 2019



# Local Impact, Global Awareness: Supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Senegal

At the Center for Renewable Energy and Appropriate Technology for the Environment (*CREATE!*), we believe that meeting basic human needs and responding to the effects of climate change go hand in hand. Our philosophy is that solutions to the challenges faced by rural villages in Senegal do not need to come at an environmental or social cost. Instead, responsible and long-lasting changes can be made that benefit local communities as well as the local environment. With the “think globally, act locally” mindset, our work directly relates to and supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

SDGs are essentially a worldwide “blueprint” to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all<sup>1</sup>. These 17 interconnected goals address global challenges such as poverty and environmental degradation, that, if met by each country could make for a better and more peaceful world. *CREATE!* is proud to take part in this exciting and innovative global movement!

**Our work in Senegal supports these seven SDGs in an effort to develop peace and prosperity starting at the village level:**

**1 NO POVERTY**



**2 ZERO HUNGER**



**5 GENDER EQUALITY**



**6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION**



**7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY**



**11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**



**13 CLIMATE ACTION**



**This year, we'd like to highlight our success in these three SDGs:**

**Zero Hunger:** Within the first few months of 2019, *CREATE!*'s partner communities have already harvested over four tons of vegetables! Through *CREATE!*'s agriculture program, community members learn and utilize sustainable agriculture techniques to create and maintain year-round cooperative community gardens. With the availability of vegetables year-round, families will always be able to put food on the table thus improving food security and nutritional outcomes.

**Clean Water & Sanitation:** Through well-rehabilitation, the installation of solar-powered pumping systems, and construction of above ground water storage, two new *CREATE!* communities gained access to clean, abundant water in late 2018. This year *CREATE!* plans to partner with two more communities, helping over 2,000 more people gain access to clean water!

**Affordable & Clean Energy:** Here in the desert, the sun is an abundant source of energy. So instead of using fossil fuels to run the water pumps, *CREATE!*'s partner communities use solar power technology! Another way villages are utilizing clean energy is with *CREATE!*'s improved cookstove. The improved cookstove is built from free, organic, and locally available materials. By using less firewood, improved cookstoves save trees and benefit the local environment. It also cooks food faster which saves women time and money.

1. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

# Voices from Senegal:

In Senegal, there's a Wolof proverb that goes “**Xamxam dafay weey, xaalis dày jeex.**” Essentially, this means that **you can't take away knowledge**. We believe in teaching skills and helping communities gain new knowledge so that they can develop self-sufficiency and sustain their communities as well as the environment generation after generation.



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES  


**“I stay in my community because I have a job without leaving my family. Through CREATE!’s programs, we have changed our life conditions, and even our children can benefit from the sustainable development.”**

- Ndeye Mageuette Thiam, Fass Koffe



13 CLIMATE ACTION  


**“Now, we have a good climate in the village thanks to our tree planting campaign. We have many trees in the site and there are shadows where we can sit to rest and have meetings.”**

- Nogaye Diallo, Thienaba

## Protecting the Heart of Her Home: Introducing Improved Cookstoves

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



The kitchen is often referred to as the heart of one's home. It's where families and guests gather together to share meals and conversation, and children commonly play while their parents prepare food. Ali Thiam, a mother of ten, prepares a meal for her family over her improved cookstove in the village of Santhie. She stirs a delicious meal in her favorite cooking pot and smiles as her children run in and out of the hut. “With the improved cookstove, we live in safety in the community,” she tells us. But it didn't always used to be this way.

Ali used to cook meals over a “three-stone fire”, a traditional open fire where a cooking pot would rest atop three stones above the open flames. Open fires often use an excessive amount of firewood and are hazardous to children and animals. “The traditional fire methods are inefficient, and my kitchen used to be very dirty,” Ali explains. She also notes the damage open fires had on her health and the environment. “It contributed not only to climate change and environmental degradation but also negatively impacted women and children’s health.”

However, things changed when Ali decided to build her own improved cookstove for her kitchen. Ali and her village learned to build improved cookstoves from free, organic, and locally available materials with the training they received from CREATE!’s technicians. Improved cookstoves are safer and use less firewood, which saves women time and money, while benefiting the environment. Ali tells us, “I no longer need to waste time collecting wood in the forest because I only need a few pieces for cooking.”

Now, Ali has more time to do what she enjoys, like tending to her garden block and spending time with her children. Thanks to the participation and hard work of Ali and her community, her family and generations to come can enjoy cleaner, safer cooking in the heart of their home as well as a healthier and richer environment!



# Welcome, Merhbe, Bienvenue Michael Carson!

## Friends of *CREATE!*,

With the start of 2019, *CREATE!* is beginning a new phase in its development! At the end of 2018, co-founders Barry Wheeler and Louise Ruhr both retired from *CREATE!* to explore new avenues for the next phases of their lives. The Board of Directors profoundly appreciates the vision, commitment, and hard work of both Barry and Louise that moved *CREATE!* and its participatory development model from conception to reality. Their development strategy resulted in sustainable improvement to the lives and livelihoods of participating villagers in rural Senegal. Every Board member is proud to have been on this journey with Barry and Louise. Organizational transitions like this, when the founders retire, leave a big hole to fill. The Board recognizes this, but at the same time it wishes them well and hopes that *CREATE!* will figure in their futures.

To lead *CREATE!* into this next phase, the Board is pleased to announce the appointment of an outstanding candidate, Michael P. Carson, to the position of Executive Director beginning January 22, 2019. During his 25-year career in development in Africa, Michael has been effective at providing strategic advice and access to capital that has transformed agriculture enterprises, community-led health clinics and schools, and small businesses in emerging economies. As a non-profit executive focused on economic and social development, Michael has worked in all the sectors *CREATE!* supports. As a Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya, he worked extensively with women's groups in small business development. Water and wells were central to his work with Africare in Tanzania and Senegal. Renewable energy, solar water pumps and solar technology featured in his work in Zimbabwe. Additionally, he has experience promoting income generating activities, agricultural projects, and intense tree planting. Michael previously lived and worked in Senegal for nearly five years, and in the past few years has worked throughout the African continent.

Michael is committed to ensuring the continuity of *CREATE!*'s unique development approach. He and the Board are excited about developing new partnerships and new sources of funding to grow *CREATE!*. The *CREATE!* Board and Michael are committed not only to continuing the vision, philosophy, and mission of this superbly successful integrated development project, but also to helping it expand to ever more villages and beneficiaries.

The Board looks forward to working with Michael and the talented, technically capable teams in Senegal and Eugene to advance *CREATE!*'s mission. We are grateful to you for your invaluable contribution to helping *CREATE!* reach this point. We are counting on your continuing support to make this next phase of *CREATE!* a sustainable success.

Sincerely,



Ronald E. Taylor, Chairman of the Board of Directors

**“ I am excited to join *CREATE!* and re-engage in Senegal, where I previously lived and worked, and to collaborate with our board and staff to learn more about how our approach and activities can serve more communities in Senegal. ”**

**- Michael Carson, *CREATE!* Executive Director**



# Staff Spotlight: Charlotte Odille Diedhiou

Charlotte Odille Diedhiou has always had a passion for agriculture and has been described as a natural humanitarian. This is one of the reasons she chose to work at *CREATE!* over a year ago. Charlotte is very enthusiastic about her work in the communities and says the other technicians at *CREATE!* have become like a second family to her.

**"As a technician, I do my best to give community members the skills and knowledge they need to be self-sufficient,"**

Charlotte tells us. She trains *CREATE!*'s partner communities in the use of different appropriate technology methods such as building improved cookstoves, sustainable agriculture techniques, and financial literacy. "*CREATE!* intervenes in areas where weather conditions are difficult," Charlotte describes. "[My work] helps rural communities improve their living conditions through environmental protection programs."



Charlotte explains that she sees much of the younger generation having to leave their families and villages in order to find income generating opportunities. But through the training that she and the other technicians provide, community members are turning their fate around. "They have the possibility to stay with their family and work in the community garden," Charlotte says. She hopes that for the future, villages will continue to pass on this information from generation to generation, "Communities will be able to teach their children so that they can continue the activities in the future."

## Meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals One Community at a Time in Rural Senegal

**1** NO POVERTY



This is our first goal.

We strive to reduce poverty through developing community self-sufficiency with our environmentally sustainable projects.

**2** ZERO HUNGER



**98%** of women in our active communities achieved minimum dietary diversity, a verifiable nutrition indicator, in the first quarter of 2019.

**4+ tons** of nutritious vegetables produced in total during January and February of 2019.

**5** GENDER EQUALITY



**90%** of women from active communities participate in Voluntary Savings and Lending Associations (VSLA).

**CFA 10916** (\$20) is saved on an average per month by each woman.

**6** CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



**70% +** members are using water from rehabilitated wells for household use.

**100 liters** of water is available daily for personal use by each household.

**7** AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



**80%** reduction in firewood consumption on an average through the use of improved cookstoves.

**603** households have well-maintained cookstoves as of February 2019.

**13** CLIMATE ACTION



**15** partner communities use solar technology to gain access to water.

**20,000+** trees planted through our reforestation campaigns in 2018.