



CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

CREATE!

Center for Renewable Energy
& Appropriate Technology
for the Environment

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Fall Newsletter 2020 - 10th Anniversary Edition



Turning Dreams into Reality: Ten Years of Empowered Development with Women as the Drivers of Change

For the last 10 years, we have been honored to know a great number of women in our partner communities in rural Senegal who are uplifting each other and creating lasting change in their communities. Women who dream big, make those dreams a reality, and inspire the next generation of women to dream even bigger. With the uncertainty created by COVID-19 this year, the perseverance and tenacity of our programs and the women who lead them have become evident. Now more than ever, people are turning to their local leaders for support and information. CREATE!'s Community Garden Presidents are taking it upon themselves to ensure their community's safety and resilience. As our Agricultural Technician, Nogaye Loum tells us, she is inspired by the active role taken by women like Ndeye Diop, the Community Garden President in Mboss. Nogaye explains, "She [Ndeye Diop] is more united and more dynamic than ever because she knows that the disease spares no one and that the food can run out, which is why she is taking care of the site more seriously to meet the food needs."

Continued

Turning Dreams into Reality, Continued:

Having women in leadership roles is inspiring to other women and young girls. Codou Gadji, one of CREATE!'s agricultural technicians, hopes that she can lead by example in her role as a female agricultural technician. "The women are very motivated when they see a woman doing this kind of work," she says. "They realize that it is possible to do this work because they have a woman technician, and now they can see that there are many women on the CREATE! team." At CREATE!, our mission goes beyond community development through appropriate technology, it is about women empowering women to believe in their abilities to transform their own lives. CREATE!'s programs build a foundation but the women take these skills to the next level with their leadership and entrepreneurial mindsets. With their leadership, they make their dreams a reality. In Wereyane, Arame Diop has dreams of bringing in more infrastructure into the villages. In Gagnick Mack, Teningne Youme has dreams to build a fully equipped health center. In Ouarkhokh, Codou Fate dreams of owning and managing her own bakery. In Walo, Bigué Diouf dreams of developing a regional market in her community. These dreams can be a reality as we have seen with Anta Baba Kane of Thieneba, who started a small market in her community. As Cooperative Garden president and a mother of eight Anta says, "I always encourage them to keep working because with CREATE!, we have sustainable development."

As we celebrate our 10th anniversary in rural Senegal, we want to thank you for making our work possible and supporting women in actualizing their dreams for the last 10 years. We look forward to more successful decades with you, and supporting women like Arame, Teningne, Codou, Bigué, and others make their dreams a reality.



The first photo shows Santhie in June, after the drip irrigation system was first installed. The second photo shows the lush garden in July after just one month of consistent watering.



Taking the Initiative: Santhie Installs a Drip Irrigation System in Their Cooperative Community Garden

Located in the northern dry Louga region of Senegal, CREATE!'s partner community of Santhie is no stranger to droughts, heatwaves and desertification. Santhie faces intense challenges in its day to day living. Maintaining a 2.5-acre community garden that provides food for the village and markets can put a strain on the women who regularly water, transplant, and care for the crops. In an area that remains dry for nine months out of the year, women must hand-water the vegetables twice per day. This means that they haul heavy watering cans from the garden's basin to each plant.

However, in May of 2020, Santhie's cooperative garden group collectively decided to install their own drip irrigation system. Using the money they earned from produce sales as well and their VSLA (Voluntary Savings & Lending Association), the group hired a drip irrigation technician to help with the installation of their new system. The drip irrigation system cuts down the labor and uses gravity to sufficiently water the vegetables, even the ones in the farthest corners of the garden! By cutting down a large portion of the work when it comes to maintaining a community garden, women are saving time and energy that they can put into other areas of need.

"We welcome the initiative of the participants as well as their commitments to want to improve the site," says Country Director, Omar Ndiaye Seck. "We always encourage those initiatives which show that the community takes into account their own development process." Community members of Santhie have shown what can be accomplished using the philosophy and approach that CREATE! strives to achieve with its partner communities.



Celebrating Ten Years of Lessons Learned: Stories from Our Staff in Senegal

CREATE! is composed of compassionate individuals who share a passionate commitment to working with rural village populations in Sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere in the world to alleviate the impact of climate change. We spoke with six of our staff members who have been with CREATE! for nearly 10 years. Read three of the stories below. To read more stories, please visit: <https://www.createaction.org/blog/stories-from-our-staff-in-senegal/>



Omar Ndiaye Seck (CREATE! Country Director): "CREATE! has allowed us to grow personally and professionally through respect for the local knowledge. Professionally, we have to be the change we want for ourselves. The rehabilitation of the Back Samba Dior well inspired me. We had already installed the infrastructure and the well did not have enough water for the gardening activities. The CREATE! team had done their best and dug the well again so now there is bountiful water for the activities. It shows that **you should never give up, always believe that hard work pays off.** I've always believed that it could be done and time has proven me right; that's why I never give up with challenges, we will always overcome them."



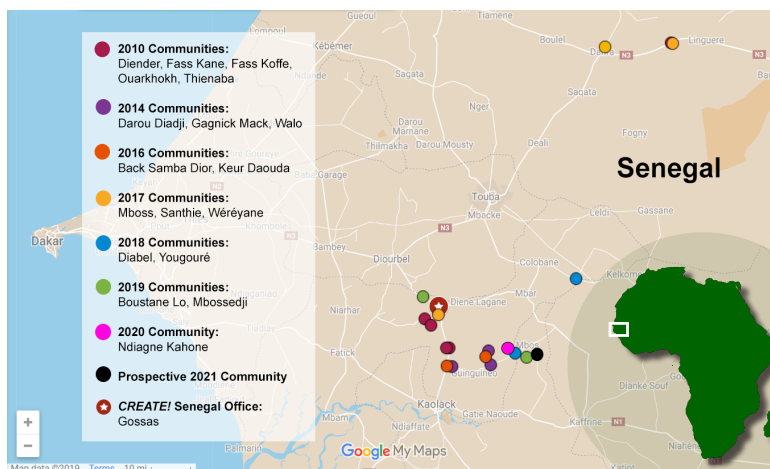
Amadou Diouf (CREATE! Field Coordinator): "When I was a technician in Ouarkhokh site and I first started working at CREATE! I found the site in a very bad condition and the participants as well as the residents had in mind that some speculations could not be grown in that place. So, I launched two challenges which are: 1. Redesign the site and step up production. 2. Grow the speculations they thought they could not produce in the area. Once I had successfully completed these challenges, I let them know that **nothing is impossible and that it is only will power followed by determination.**"



Codou Gadji (CREATE! Agricultural Technician): "I have evolved since I joined CREATE!, I learned to be a humanitarian woman and personally I am happy to help other women who are from the rural communities. **What inspired me to work with CREATE! is the fact of helping people in need by giving them the necessary means to be independent.** One day one of the participants of a group that I managed was sick and the others decided to buy her prescription with the money from the solidarity fund of their VSLA program. This story really inspired me. That is to say that CREATE! has taught them to help each other."

"It is exciting to serve as CREATE!'s Executive Director as we celebrate our 10th anniversary. I am very proud of our staff and board's dedication to supporting community-led development with women as the drivers of change. In our second decade, we plan to continue and gradually expand our climate action work with women's groups in more villages, with a greater emphasis on improving nutrition and increasing vegetable production through drip irrigation technology, while continuing our solar-powered water supply, income generation, renewable energy and reforestation initiatives."

- Michael Carson, CREATE!'s Executive Director



By the Numbers: Community Snapshots Over the Last 10 Years

Over **900 women** are participating in our sustainable projects.

We have a total of **18 partner communities** and are continuing to add more each year.

Four communities have graduated from our programs and **three will graduate soon.**

Eleven communities are currently **on their way to graduating** to self-sufficiency!

Across our partner communities, there are a total of **30 Voluntary Savings & Lending Association groups.**

All **18** of our communities, have **access to abundant, clean water.**

Across our partner communities, there are a total of **18 community gardens.**

Across our partner communities, there are a total of **16 poultry sheds.**

So far, **5 drip irrigation systems** have been installed in village community gardens.

Without you, the success of our partner communities over the last 10 years would not be possible. On behalf of our staff and community leaders, thank you to all of our supporters.