



CREATE!

**Center for Renewable Energy and
Appropriate Technology for the Environment**

NEWSLETTER

132 East Broadway
Suite 416
Eugene, OR 97401

Spring 2017

CREATE! Cookstoves Spread Across Senegal

Improved cookstoves are the centerpiece of *CREATE!*'s sustainable development programs in Senegal and we lead dozens of cookstove trainings yearly in rural communities. In February, *CREATE!* field technicians traveled over 300 miles to the region of Kolda in southern Senegal to introduce our clay-sand improved cookstoves to a new part of the country.

While women learn how to build clay-sand improved cookstoves, *CREATE!* technicians emphasize the economic and environmental benefits of switching to these efficient cookstoves from the traditional method of cooking over smoky and dangerous three-stone fires. *CREATE!*'s fuel-efficient improved stoves use up to 75 percent less firewood than traditional open fires. Thanks to improved cookstoves, women and girls no longer need to walk long distances to collect firewood for cooking, thereby freeing time, reducing labor, and increasing the likelihood that girls will be able to remain in school.

Training in the construction of clay-sand improved cookstoves is also the gateway through which *CREATE!* introduces our model of appropriate technology and community sustainability to potential partner villages. As we prepare for a significant

expansion in several regions of rural Senegal, these cookstove trainings help us lay the groundwork for new and successful community partnerships.



In Kolda Region, CREATE! field technicians taught dozens of women to build fuel-efficient improved cookstoves out of free, local materials.

Looking to the Future

Demand for *CREATE!* programs is growing across Senegal, as more villages struggle to balance the challenges of climate change and high rural unemployment. More than two dozen communities have sought our partnership, as knowledge of the benefits of *CREATE!*'s approach spreads in rural areas.

After years of experience working in the Fatick and Kaolack Regions of Senegal, *CREATE!* is excited to expand our sustainable development projects to Senegal's Louga Region, where we have conducted a pilot project in the community of Ouarkhokh since 2010.

Building on the regional partnership that we have established through our work in Ouarkhokh, *CREATE!* will partner with two new rural communities in Louga Region in 2017 to train men and women in skills they need to be sustainable and self-sufficient.

Eager to help communities in the greatest need, our field team has the courage and drive to pursue new opportunities

continued on page 2



With access to clean, abundant water and a drip irrigation system, the cooperative group in Ouarkhokh can now grow vegetables year-round.

Looking to the Future, cont.



In CREATE!'s newest partner community of Mboss, women are meeting to organize into cooperative groups.

for *CREATE!* collaborations in rural regions where few, if any, NGOs are currently working. There are several unique challenges to partnering with communities in Louga Region. Located in north-central Senegal, Louga Region has a very hot, desert-like climate and receives very little rainfall. Water tables are deep and difficult to access. Many villages also experience frequent dust storms during the dry season.

Even with these difficulties, several potential partner communities have demonstrated their commitment to *CREATE!*'s philosophy of self-development by starting their own dry season gardens on land donated by community leaders. We plan to formalize our partnerships with two of these villages in May, following discussions of community needs, goals, and contributions.

Our field technicians continue to hone their project management and social mobilization skills in a variety of settings. Thanks to their experience, *CREATE!*'s Senegalese field team now has the confidence and expertise needed to facilitate *CREATE!*'s expansion and adapt our training programs to meet the unique challenges of communities in Louga Region.

The ultimate goal of our Senegal team is to expand *CREATE!* training programs to every region of the country. They see themselves as working on the forefront of the movement for a "new Senegal" that mobilizes citizens to improve their own future using shared skills and knowledge. To spread these ideas and knowledge about *CREATE!*'s programs in Senegal, the team is ramping up their in-country outreach efforts, including appearances on local television and radio.



Cooperative members in the village of Keur Daouda are learning how to create seedling nurseries for vegetables such as lettuce.



CREATE! Field Technician Codou Gadji says, "I am very optimistic about the future of Senegal. Young women know they can help develop their country."

Letters from **CREATE!** Leadership

Dear Friends,

When we first visited rural Senegal in 2010 to prepare for the launch of **CREATE!**, we met women and men who were striving to support their families while coping with the effects of climate change. They struggled with drought, unpredictable rainfall, water scarcity, decreased food production, desertification, and erosion. Rural villagers saw how lower crop yields led to malnutrition, poor health, and reduced economic opportunities—and how all of these issues spurred migration to Europe. These communities craved knowledge and skills that could help them maintain their rural way of life especially during these times of significant environmental challenge.

Since its debut in 2010, **CREATE!** has progressively established partnerships with 13 rural communities in Senegal, seeking to respond to these critical problems and needs. **CREATE!**'s founding design principles integrate holistic human needs-based interventions that are both culturally and technically appropriate and sustainable. The process is participatory, and the skills that our field technicians teach are self-perpetuating. Once villagers gain this knowledge, it is theirs to use and to share forever. It is truly empowering!

Those villages that we first visited seven years ago have become models of sustainable development in rural Senegal. Three of **CREATE!**'s original five communities have graduated from our integrated programs and the other two villages are scheduled to graduate at the end of 2017. As we partner with new communities in Senegal, our technicians remain committed to the success of our graduated villages and continue to provide support as needed. We are touched by the words of our beneficiaries, including Aida Dieng of Fass Koffe, who appreciates the lasting benefits of **CREATE!**'s holistic training programs. She says, "**CREATE!**'s technicians really know how to help people develop skills that they can use to improve their lives forever."

We are proud of what **CREATE!** has accomplished with our partner communities in Senegal. We are now working with our field team—15 Senegalese professionals employed by **CREATE!**—to expand our programs to new villages across the country. We are establishing a second office in Louga Region to facilitate our expansion in northern Senegal. The **CREATE!** team is excited to begin this new chapter of our work.

None of these successes would be possible without your ongoing support for **CREATE!** We appreciate your dedication to our continued success. We love hearing your comments, questions, and suggestions.

Best wishes,



Barry

Barry R. Wheeler
Founder
barry@createaction.org



Louise

Louise Ruhr
Executive Director
louise@createaction.org

Our Mission: **CREATE!** collaborates with rural villagers in Senegal to help them build a sustainable future for their families as they cope with water, food, and fuel shortages resulting from the impacts of climate change on their communities.



Teningue Faye of Gagnick Mack says, "CREATE! gave me an occupation. I can now grow fresh vegetables to feed my children."



Before



After

"From literally nothing—barren land, no organized cooperative groups—these communities have completely transformed! Our cooperative groups have persevered, learned, and worked extremely hard for over five years in realizing their own empowerment and self-reliance, vastly improving the conditions of their lives and their families, gaining tremendous confidence and improving their own self-esteem."

CREATE! Founder Barry Wheeler, describing the evolution of our programs in the graduated communities of Fass Kane, Fass Koffe, and Diender

Meet Mohamed Diagne and Ousmane Diallo

CREATE! Field Technicians

As agricultural technicians for *CREATE!*, Mohamed Diagne and Ousmane Diallo train community members in sustainable crop cultivation, improved cookstove construction, and poultry production. They also monitor the solar pump and gravity-fed irrigation systems in the gardens. Both technicians have spent time working in Ouarkhokh, helping cooperative members meet the unique challenges of gardening in hot, dry Louga Region.

Motivated by his desire to protect nature and the environment, Mohamed received his diploma in horticulture and farm management from the Center for Vocational Training in Camberene, Senegal. He appreciates working as a team and finds direct contact with community members to be especially moving. "With *CREATE!*'s programs, we teach agricultural techniques and the use of appropriate technologies to help people improve their lives and preserve the environment."

A love of plants and geography inspired Ousmane to study agriculture in Bignona, Senegal, where he received his diploma in Leadership and Management of Agricultural Operations. Ousmane likes working as a team and connecting with community members. He appreciates *CREATE!*'s use of appropriate technologies and says, "*CREATE!* came along at just the right time. Rural communities and the environment need the programs offered by *CREATE!*" He hopes that *CREATE!* can continue to expand to other villages in rural Senegal.



Mohamed Diagne (left) and Ousmane Diallo (right) enjoy the challenge of working in the extreme conditions of Ouarkhokh, Louga Region.

Map of *CREATE!* Expansion

