

## CASE STUDY: Sédhiou Region, Senegal

# Supporting Integrated Farming Businesses Promotes Community Well-being and the Protection of Natural Resources

Global Programme on Making Migration Work for Sustainable Development (M4SD)

**KEY WORDS:** environment, integrated agriculture, rural development, food security, responsible consumption, community support, youth, returning migrants

## MEET ABABACAR

Aged 33, Ababacar grew up in a small rural town named Djibabouya in the village of Marsassoum Santo, located in Casamance in the south of Senegal in the Sédhiou region. Faced with the region's high unemployment rate<sup>1</sup>, many of his friends have already left for cities or across the border in search of work. In this small isolated village in a tropical climate, agricultural yields are severely affected by climate change. When young people in his village take over their family farms or set up their own businesses, they feel discouraged because it is difficult to obtain financing and practice sustainable farming techniques.

Ababacar decided to stay in his village and train in agroecology. He became the manager of an integrated agricultural farm<sup>2</sup> on land inherited from his father. Ababacar is constantly running between chicken coops, bell pepper plantations, lemon trees and fish ponds. Helped by four employees and two interns who also live on the farm, he does not have a minute to lose between livestock breeding, market gardening, fruit arboriculture, fish farming and lemon processing. He wants to propose an organic farm with interdependent activities: the water from the nitrogen-rich fish ponds is used to water the lemon trees; the hens' droppings or the leftover lemons are used as fertilizer for the garden. By doing this, he will ensure that the farm does not use any chemical fertilizers in order to protect the environment as well as consumer health. Every evening, as the animals fall asleep and the plants settle down, he sits down to do his bookkeeping. This dynamic and ambitious young man is eager to expand his activities and recruit more young people to support them and to train them in these environmentally-friendly techniques.



## THE SOLUTION?

To combat unemployment and support socially and ecologically committed businesses with strong growth and job-generating potential, the Sédhiou Regional Development Agency (ARD) supports youth, women and returning migrants. Selected business owners benefit from training to improve their knowledge in business management and also receive equipment to increase their productivity or diversify their activities to ensure a responsible approach to resource management. By creating the conditions for sustainable growth that respect the environment and the well-being and health of communities, this approach enables everyone, including migrants and returnees, to be advocates for an inclusive and responsible society.



*“To overcome challenges such as access to finance for entrepreneurs (especially high collateral requirements), this project has supported small businesses by providing them with equipment to boost their activities. These investments will promote the employability and attractiveness of the region in the future.”*

**M. Nfaly BADJI – Director of the Sédhiou ARD**

<sup>1</sup> By 2021, one in every four people was unemployed in the region of Sédhiou.

<sup>2</sup> The principle of the integrated farm is based on the fact that several activities overlap and are interdependent: fish farming, poultry farming and agriculture complement each other to reduce the impact of input use (e.g. fertilizers) and reduce waste while preserving resources and the environment.

# HOW IS IT DONE?

## 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

TARGET 17-16



ENHANCE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

This is a whole-of-government approach involving multiple partners: **regional and local authorities** ([Sédhiou ARD](#), including the Help Office for Migrants, Office of Reception, Orientation, and Follow-up for Senegalese Living Abroad (BAOS) and the Sédhiou Departmental Council), **national authorities** ([Directorate General of Support for Senegalese Abroad](#)), **civil society** ([Grdr Migration-Citizenship-Development](#)), various **institutions involved in promoting employment** ([ANPEJ](#), [DER](#), [3FPT](#), [ADEPME](#), etc.) and the support of **UN agencies** ([International Organization for Migration](#) and [United Nations Development Programme](#)) to serve **local businesses**.

## 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

TARGET 10-2



PROMOTE UNIVERSAL SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INCLUSION

Particular attention is paid to young people, women and returning migrants, with the aim of nurturing their **social and economic integration**.

## 14 LIFE BELOW WATER

TARGET 14-7



INCREASE THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS FROM SUSTAINABLE USE OF MARINE RESOURCES

## 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

TARGET 8-3



PROMOTE POLICIES TO SUPPORT JOB CREATION AND GROWING ENTERPRISES

**29 individual businesses or economic interest groups** (27 men and 2 women, including 24 returning migrants) have benefited from equipment designed to strengthen their activities in priority areas for the region, such as agriculture, fishing, livestock breeding and crafts. This equipment helps to boost the productivity and income of these small rural businesses, stimulating their growth and their ability to create decent jobs in the region.

## 2 ZERO HUNGER

TARGET 2-4



SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION AND RESILIENT AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

This approach provides financial and technical support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with high growth potential. It contributes to promoting **resilient agricultural practices** that enhance the **sustainability and viability of local food production**. This approach aims to increase their **capacity to adapt to climate change while improving food security** in the country.

## 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

TARGET 6-3



IMPROVE WATER QUALITY, WASTEWATER TREATMENT AND SAFE REUSE

## 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

TARGET 12-2



SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

This project supports **responsible production and consumption** in the service of community health by selecting projects like integrated farms that promote **sustainable and strategic resource management** without using chemicals or hazardous materials.

# SUCCESS FACTORS

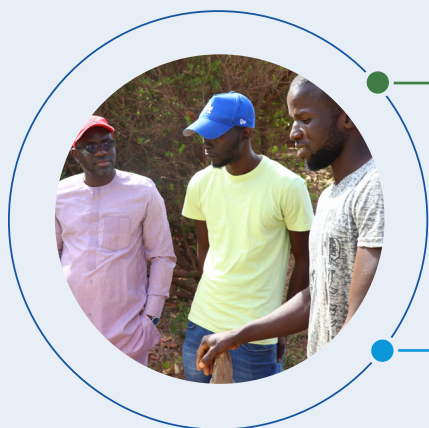
**TIP 1: Support promising local businesses with positive and sustainable economic, social and environmental impacts.** By supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with high growth potential, the project contributes to the development of income-generating activities in the region's priority areas: agriculture, fishing, livestock breeding and crafts. Technical and financial support contributes to strengthen the ability of these businesses to combat unemployment and poverty in the most remote areas of the region. However, one key success factor was selecting companies not solely on the basis of their economic performance, but also on their social and environmental impacts, i.e. their ability to generate sufficient resources autonomously and sustainably for the well-being of their communities.

**TIP 2: Recognize and support the key role of young people, women and returning migrants in rural development, resource conservation and the fight against climate change.** By specifically targeting young people, women and returning migrants, local governments recognize and value their empowerment, involvement in local communities and commitment to agriculture and rural development. Their work is not only vital for strong food systems, but also for preserving the planet's resources, promoting responsible production and consumption, strengthening the well-being and health of communities and combating hunger.

**TIP 3: Strengthen the capacities of regional and local players to help ensure local support.** ARD Sédhiou staff carry out follow-up visits prior to the final selection of businesses to make sure that their projects meet the selection criteria. This close monitoring enables ARD Sédhiou to increase its knowledge of the activities carried out in the area, to provide personalized support to these companies and to network with them, so that they can exchange ideas on similar challenges and access future business opportunities.

**TIP 4: Train the teachers of tomorrow!** To qualify for financing, selected small and medium-sized enterprises must complete two training programmes: business planning and administrative and financial management. The business owners acquire knowledge that enhances their skills and supports their growth, while benefiting the whole community. In fact, the managers who completed training voluntarily shared the knowledge they have acquired with their employees, as well as with neighbouring businesses involved in similar activities, thus helping to multiply the positive impact.

## These activities have improved the lives of Ababacar's village in the Sédhiou region

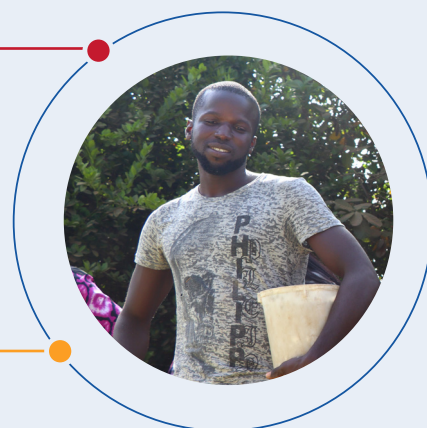


Ababacar heard about a call for projects launched by ARD Sédhiou through a friend. After carefully detailing his project's social and environmental commitment and explaining the key role of agricultural ecosystems in mitigating climate change, he travelled to Sédhiou to submit his application (SDG 13 – Climate action).



He was delighted to learn that he had been selected to receive financial support to buy hens and tools such as irrigation equipment to continue to sustainably manage the water resources of his integrated farm (SDG 6 - Clean water and sanitation).

He received training in administrative and financial management, enabling him to reflect on his business plan and deepen his knowledge of accounting and human resources management (SDG 4 – Quality education).



During this training, he met other young people from the region who, like him, are involved in livestock breeding, market gardening, fish farming or agriculture. These exchanges enabled him not only to share his technical knowledge, but also to learn from their experiences. Sharing is an essential value for Ababacar: he wants to pass on what he has received. In fact, he regularly organizes training courses on agroecology for members of his community who have set up or wish to set up an integrated farm (SDG 11 – Sustainable cities and communities).



He takes advantage of these courses to raise awareness among participants, his family and friends about the importance of producing quality food while respecting the land and preserving its richness (SDG 12 – Responsible consumption and production).



When the farm becomes too busy and he runs out of hands, he does not hesitate to ask his childhood friends to come and help, especially those who have returned to the village after crossing the border. He keeps telling them: ***“It's up to us to develop our own Senegal. Especially us young people - we have a very important role to play”*** (SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth).

[Watch the video about M4SD in Senegal](#)

These activities are made possible by the IOM-UNDP Global Programme on [“Migration for Sustainable Development \(M4SD\)”](#), which has been implemented in 11 countries between 2019 and 2023. The programme is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). To find out more about the work in Senegal, click [here](#).

This publication was issued without formal editing by IOM, IOM Publications Unit (PUB) approval for adherence to IOM's brand and style standards, or official translation by TRS Unit.

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