



EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURE

Newsletter

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A periodic publication of the Education and Research in Agriculture (ERA) Project in Senegal

Women’s Entrepreneur Groups Showcase their Products, Videos & More at FIARA

Professionally packaged products, high-definition video demonstrations and fresh hot foods attracted hundreds of visitors to the USAID/ERA project booths at the Foire Internationale de l’Agriculture et des Ressources Animales (FIARA), the annual agricultural fair hosted by the government of Senegal in Dakar. For the third year in a row, women agro-business owners across Senegal showcased products and recipes made from local fruits and cereals that were produced through value-added food processing.

Since 2011, USAID/ERA has joined together the expertise of university researchers with the women’s entrepreneur platforms in an effort to strengthen human and institutional capacity in agriculture.

U.S. Acting Ambassador to Senegal Martina Bousanti also stopped by the booths where entrepreneurs representing the various platforms sold packages of food products



Acting Ambassador Bousanti (l) and Anne Williams with USAID Senegal (2nd from l) speak with Ms. Nafy Gueye (r), president of a women’s platform, about the value of food processing partnerships.

that were processed using best practices in processing, packaging, hygiene and marketing of products. The Ambassador also viewed the fact sheets that the entrepreneurs developed in collaboration with university researchers, which highlighted nutritional information and various uses for the products.

For the first time, USAID/ERA’s booth also featured a mini-restaurant in which guests could taste fresh foods produced by the entrepreneurs. The entrepreneur’s booths also included a television monitor that played videos in which select entrepreneurs demonstrated how to prepare recipes using locally-grown products.

Universities Make Progress on Formalizing Community Engagement Law

In 2014, the government of Senegal adopted a new law requiring universities to adopt community engagement (*service à la communauté*) as part of their mission. Thanks to the assistance of ERA, the country is one step closer to formalizing community service across all universities in Senegal.

Since the law was implemented, ERA has been helping the

country’s institutions to operationalize the concept of community service. In June, ERA continued meeting with university leaders to assess their current means and methods for performing community service.

Inspired by USAID/ERA’s efforts to promote teaching, research, and outreach, the new law is expected to strengthen ties between universities and the communities in which they serve.

Sweet Corn: Farmers participate in field day to learn how to grow corn with high economic potential



As part of ongoing efforts to maximize the potential of value-added crops and to promote knowledge sharing among farmers, USAID/ERA hosted a field day for corn producers in June at the *Centre de Formation Professionnelle en Horticulture*. Thirty corn producers participated in the field day and received training in practices for growing sweet corn.

Sweet corn is gaining popularity in Senegal. Through an innovative Collaborative Research and Outreach Partnership (CROP) led by Institut de Technologie Alimentaire (ITA), ERA is contributing to the **sterile production and processing of canned sweet corn for the first time in Senegal**. Based on the initial results of market research, the canned sweet corn has been flying off the shelves.

According to the Government of Senegal, sweet corn offers a **promising niche with high potential**. Recognizing a need and opportunity to close the economic market loop and to satisfy demand, USAID/ERA has worked with ITA to train farmers throughout Senegal in growing, processing, and packaging sweet corn.

In addition to the field day, outreach efforts include: a documentary film on sweet corn production and processing; two technical sheets on the production process; and a scientific article that is pending publication.



Senegalese farmers learn about the best practices for growing sweet corn, an economically viable alternative to field corn.

US Congressional Staff Visits ITA, learns more about ERA

Five congressional staff members from the U.S. House of Representatives visited the Institut de Technologie Alimentaire to learn more about international development and USAID/ERA's role in developing the agricultural sector.

Organized by World Vision, the visit featured a tour of ITA, and congressional staffers spoke with ITA faculty about job-skill readiness; connection to U.S. universities; and putting

other US land grants in touch with local organizations for sustainable development.



(left) U.S. Congressional staff pictured with ITA staff; (above) Dr. Djibril Traore, senior scientist at ITA, talks with visiting staff about millet processing

Aligning Student Training & Student Employment

Tracer Studies Provide for Improved Student Support Services

When students graduate from institutions of higher learning, typically their primary goal is to find a job that is aligned with their academic training. Thanks to tracer studies that have been supported by USAID/ERA, students from five institutions in Senegal will be better positioned to achieve their career goals.

In May 2017, USAID/ERA hosted a national meeting that culminated the completion of a **three-year pilot project** designed to identify ways to **monitor and evaluate employment and training outcomes** of university graduates. During the pilot phase of the project, USAID/ERA coached and supported five AETR institutions (ISFAR, LTAEB, ENSA, UASZ, and UGB) on ways to develop and complete a tracer study that would evaluate the quality of training based on employment outcomes. Each institution presented the results of their studies during the workshop.



Preparing students for employment is a top priority in Senegalese institutions.

Attendees at the two-day workshop included several key representatives from Senegal's Ministry of Vocational Education, five AETR institutions, alumni networks, private sector representatives, and the USAID/ERA Agreement Officer Representative Ronit Gerard, who is also the

Deputy Director of the Economic Growth Office.

Representatives from each of the five institutions presented the findings of the tracer studies on their respective campuses.

Participants also discussed the key aspects of ensuring the alignment between agricultural training

programs and the job market such as:

- Graduate employment rate
- Length of time before finding employment
- Number of graduates who are self-employed as entrepreneurs

To further strengthen student support, an operational guide designed to help AETRs develop student intern and career placement offices is complete and is being disseminated to the institutions.

“

We must have a group to keep doing the work—to reflect and think about action in the future.

GRAAS will make sure the work continues.

”

Dr. Kandioura NOBA

Directeur, Institut Supérieur d'Agriculture et
Entreprenariat
Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar

GRAAS Meetings Resume to Address Senegal's Agricultural Challenges

A group of Senegal's most knowledgeable and dedicated experts in the public and private sectors have reconvened to exchange and reflect on key issues about agriculture in Senegal. Known as the *Groupe De Réflexion et d'Action Sur L'Agriculture et l'Agro-alimentaire au Senegal*, GRAAS is an inter-institutional group comprised of representatives from teaching and training institutions, research institutes, state structures, NGOs, and farmer organizations from the private sector.

Through USAID/ERA, GRAAS reinforces the role of the university as the core for strengthening the agricultural system.



First National 4-H Senegal Meeting

On May 8, USAID/ERA hosted the first national 4-H meeting that included key stakeholders representing the 34 4-H Clubs in Senegal, including AETR institutions, club leaders, partner organizations and 4-H members. Participants discussed ways to further develop and scale up the 4-H program.

Additionally, USAID/ERA is working on plans to launch new 4-H clubs in Dakar.



(right) 4-H leaders exchange ideas about 4-H programming.

Scaled-up Trainings in Value-added Food Processing



Women entrepreneurs are trained on the proper methods for packaging foods.

Since 2011, ERA has joined together university expertise with women's economic empowerment groups in value-added processing of local fruits and cereals. The bulk of this activity has taken place in the Dakar region through MOUs agreements between UCAD and women's food processing platforms.

As part of its efforts to expand knowledge of best practices in processing, packaging and marketing food products, ERA has scaled up trainings for women throughout the country. Workshops were held during June for women's economic groups in St. Louis and Casamance to promote harmonization, consolidation and eventual validation of food processing.

USAID/ERA Welcomes New COP

Dr. Demba Farba Mbaye has been promoted to Chief of Party for the USAID/ERA project. Since the beginning of the project, Dr. Mbaye has played a key role in facilitating applied research and technology transfer collaboration efforts.

His previous roles within the program management unit include Research and Outreach Coordinator and Deputy Chief of Party. Prior to joining ERA, he served as principal Plant Pathologist on cereals and horticulture crops at Senegalese Institute of Agricultural Research (ISRA). Congratulations, Dr. Mbaye!



Dr. Demba Mbaye speaks during a meeting at the Centre National de Formation des Techniciens des Eaux et Forêts, Chasse et des Parcs Nationaux.

USAID/ERA

MAKING A STRONG IMPACT



Strengthening Applied Research and Outreach

1,143

New syllabi created

531

Faculty trained
in developing syllabi

64

Faculty & students
trained in business
plan creation

Strengthening Agricultural Education and Training

578

4-H members
in Senegal

11

Technical data sheets
created for women's
food processing groups

34

4-H Clubs in Senegal

163

Leaders and
volunteers trained
to aid 4-H program

17

Products approved for
commercialization

Strengthening Project Management and Policy Support

17

Self-assessments completed

9

Programs accredited



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

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