

# Youth as Agents of Peace and Stability in Fragile Zones

## The Case of Senegal

Annual Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES)  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
March 11-15, 2013

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## Senegal



Source: U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, World Fact Book, 2011; retrieved from [https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/maps/refmap\\_political\\_africa.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/maps/refmap_political_africa.html)

## Facts about Senegal

- Sub-Saharan country with scarce resources
- Widening gap between rich and poor, and between rural and urban populations
- Surrounded by unstable nations (Mali, Mauritania, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau)

## USAID/Education Priorité Qualité (EPQ) Brief Overview

- 2010-2014
- 4 components targeting middle school sector: Decentralization of teacher training; whole school approach; basic competencies in math and French; and youth employability
- Youth component pilot program 2010-2012

## Youth Issues

- Increased unemployment (48%)
- Youth bulge: 43% of the population is 15 years or younger
- Disparity between skills needed and skills taught has negative impact on employment and investment
- High dropout rate in some areas
- Youth view emigration as solution to their problems

## How to Address the Issues

- Identify some of the short-term solutions that could have major impact (pilot program just two years long)
- Identify zones where it could have greatest impact

## Zones

- Casamance & Kédougou
  - Politically volatile
  - Mining industry
  - Among poorest and most isolated in Senegal



## Multipronged Approach

- Work with ministries at national level to address policies to promote youth employability
- Work with local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and local government entities, training them to better serve the youth population
- Mobilize communities to support the youth programs

## National level

- Identified ministries involved: youth; education; civic service agency
- Carried out study of what currently was offered by Senegal government, and identified capacity-building needs and possible policy changes
- Held roundtables to discuss results and recommendations of study

## Regional and Local Levels

- Carried out youth training needs assessment (focus groups, surveys, interviews, etc.)
- Assessment showed youth wanted to be trained in: employability, agribusiness, business planning, market opportunities, and life skills

## Designed Training Programs

- With local NGOs and government representatives, designed youth training programs
  - targeted to the Senegalese context; and
  - addressed youth training needs
- With government and NGOs, designed community mobilization activities (forums, radio messages)



## Training

Trained teachers and local NGO/CBO and local government partners to be trainers



## Youth Training

- Then, trained youth on employability, life skills, market opportunities, business planning, agribusiness



## Mobilized parents and other community members



## Broadcast radio messages



## Implemented community-service projects



## Started microenterprises



## Results

- Changed behavior of youth and trainers (reported fewer strikes and absences at school; greater interest in community development)
- Built capacity of local NGOs and local government partners to better serve youth
- Provided entrepreneurship opportunities
- Improved communities (more stable, greater local employment opportunities)

## Keys to Success

- Consulted youth in designing program content
- Involved communities—radio, community-service projects, community forums
- Provided real entrepreneurship opportunities—didn't remain just theoretical training

## Thank you

For more information, please  
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