



Théo Martin (France) during a fact-finding mission intended to support the planting of vegetables in the peanut growing basin as part of the Farmer-Field-School and Climate Resilience Project. (FAO, 2017)

A "farmer-field-school" approach to ensure adaptation to climate change in Senegal

As a trained agronomist, I have been volunteering for the United Nations in Senegal since October 2016. I serve in a project by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) aimed at reducing the vulnerability of farmers to climate change. The project supports technical and organizational innovations and is based on the concept of climate resilience.

The Global Environment Facility project on which I am working endorses the "farmer-field-school" approach to train farmers in how to adapt to climate change. It is an outdoor school where learning and sharing takes place through hands-on practical training.

According to a number of studies, Senegal is particularly affected by reduced rainfall and increasing temperatures. The seasons are changing, with increasingly irregular patterns of rainfall. These elements are exacerbating the problems which rural people already face in

providing for the needs of a growing population and make this project that much more relevant to the country's immediate needs.

“ As part of a project focused on increasing agricultural knowledge and techniques, my main role is to ensure its monitoring and evaluation. More concretely, I am developing a method to see if the project is being conducted effectively.

By using various tools such as geomatics, rural sociology, as well as statistics, I am trying to understand the living conditions of farmers and measure the impact the project has on them. The purpose of my research is to understand the changing conditions faced by these farmers. The environment in this context is both physical (agro-ecological and climatic), as well as socio-economic.

Immersed in a rich learning environment, I am working with collectives of producers, as well as NGOs and government-based structures. I am part of a very experienced multi-disciplinary team and am learning a great deal with my four Senegalese colleagues.

My responsibilities include developing tools and analyzing data that is aggregated from many sources, including my own fieldwork where I discuss and observe with participants and partners of the project. One week of every month, I also participate in the training of farmer-field-school practitioners. In collaboration with these partners, I am also learning the specifics of sylvo-pastoral agriculture, as well as methods of participatory training. I also visit the peanut growing basin and cotton fields on a regular basis. It is a wonderful training ground.

Throughout my time as a UN Volunteer, I can honestly say that it is the human context which enriches my experience the most.

This article was translated from French by [UN Online Volunteer](#) Marguerite McMillan.



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