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UN Community Volunteer Abdoulahat Ngom (second from right) and an accompanying delegation from the Food and Agriculture Organization engage with participants in reforestation activities carried out at Ndiob elementary school.

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UN Community Volunteers spearhead resilience and reforestation in Senegal

In Senegal, an ambitious and transformative project is taking root thanks to the efforts of UN Community Volunteers. The Resilience and Intensive Reforestation Project for the Safeguarding of Territories and Ecosystems in Senegal (RIPOSTES), known as Dooleel Aalam in Wolof, is a joint project of the Ministry of Environment, European Union and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It aims to restore 10,000 hectares of degraded lands and create 8,000 green jobs in Senegal.

At the heart of this community-driven initiative are three UN Community Volunteers assigned to FAO: Fatoumata Ka, Abdoulahat Ngom and Amadou Fall.

Fatoumata Ka is a 39-year-old UN Community Volunteer based in the Kaffrine region, in the central-western part of the country. As a Communications Officer, she has strengthened

social cohesion among women associations and sensitized her community on reforestation techniques and plant nursery production. Fatoumata has sensitized 25 per cent of the 1,500 agricultural producers to abandon slash-and-burn practices, with 10 per cent now practicing assisted natural regeneration, a process that enables native vegetation to recover naturally.

As a result, farmers now protect about 5,000 forest plants annually, contributing to increased agricultural yields by more than 5 per cent.

“ Before, I barely harvested 700 kg per hectare from my peanut farm. Thanks to the project, my harvest now yields over 1,200 kg per hectare. Previously, my agricultural produce could only meet my family's nutritional needs for six months; now, we're covered for eight.
--Ablaye Thiogane, a farmer from Diounto village in Kaffrine and project participant



Meanwhile, in Lougere Thioly, a rural community in eastern Senegal, Community Liaison Officer Amadou Fall (30) navigates a complex landscape of local actors and project

partners. He coordinates local efforts, ensuring all parties are on the same page and working in harmony.

Amadou has been instrumental in mobilizing local actors for the RIPOSTE project, raising awareness and contributing significantly to field activities, from reforestation initiatives to data collection. He promotes rural engagement and assists in the development of community-based non-timber forest product projects (fruits, nuts, mushrooms, medicinal plants, etc.), and groundwater discharge, the process by which water moves from underground water sources to the surface, both important aspects of sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation.

“ As a UN Community Volunteer, I view my role not only as a professional responsibility, but also as a personal challenge. For me, volunteering is not just about serving; it's about being part of local solutions alongside local actors. Being a young beneficiary of the system, I feel a strong call to give back to my community and my nation. --Amadou Fall, UN Community Volunteer Community Liaison Officer in Lougere Thioly

Abdoulahat Ngom, a Community Outreach Officer for the FAO, diligently works to assess and map out local resources in Ndiob and Diakhao, located in the centre-west. The 29-year-old UN Community Volunteer's role extends beyond implementing project objectives. He also fosters a strong relationship between the community and the FAO.

Abdoulahat's coordination efforts during FAO field visits have facilitated meetings and discussions with host communities. His decision to become a UN Community Volunteer aligned with his dream of contributing to the United Nations' noble cause of promoting peace, fighting poverty and mitigating climate change.

Currently, 26 UN Volunteers are serving with FAO in West and Central Africa, including eight in Senegal.

 <https://www.fao.org/africa/news/detail-news/en/c/1621854/>

 <https://www.unv.org/Partners/unv-partnering-fao>



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