



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Women in Senegal Increase Food Production with Pearl Millet Tools



CTI

Aissatou Ly, from the Louga region of central Senegal, uses a grinder developed by CTI. Pearl millet, a key staple crop in the African Sahel region, is particularly important to the food security of smallholder farmers. Yet virtually all of West Africa's 3.9 million farmers still rely on basic hand tools to process this crop into edible flour, resulting in post-harvest losses of up to 20 percent. Without proper mechanized tools, women – who make up the majority of pearl millet producers – toil under inefficient, labor-intensive conditions.

With support from Feed the Future Partnering for Innovation, Compatible Technology International (CTI), a nonprofit organization that designs and distributes post-harvest storage and processing implements for smallholders, introduced its pearl millet tools in Senegal in 2013. Designed to reduce women's labor and increase their ability to produce high-quality pearl millet, CTI's tools include a manually operated thresher and grinder. The thresher alone allows women to process one kilogram of grain in three minutes, less than half the time it takes using a mortar and pestle. It also captures more than 90 percent of the grain, significantly reducing food waste.

CTI employs a women-centric approach to design. For example, women farmers participated in focus groups and field testing, and suggested a more streamlined process for threshing millet. Applying this feedback, CTI reengineered the thresher, combining three parts into a single unit to better fit women's needs. In the process, CTI discovered that the grinder component works well for groundnuts, and has been selling it separately to women's groups to produce peanut butter.

Aissatou Ly, a 46-year-old entrepreneur from Lende, a village in Senegal's Louga region, sells peanut butter that she makes with the grinder in the local market. "The grinder is simple," Ly says. "It's durable. I don't need help to fix it, and I don't have to face the need to find gas."

In order to reach more farmers, CTI is developing a partnership with SISMAR, a Senegalese manufacturer with a regional marketing presence. Manufacturing the pearl millet tools in West Africa could reduce the sales price up to 35 percent, as well as create employment that will help ensure CTI's products become a sustainable part of local and regional economies.

After only a year of investment from Partnering for Innovation, CTI's tools are being used in more than 1,000 farming communities and cooperatives, where they reach nearly 14,000 people, 90 percent of whom are women. As the market for these products increases, hundreds of thousands of smallholders in Senegal and throughout West Africa stand to benefit.