



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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A Female Entrepreneur Pays It Forward in Senegal



Feed the Future FPL

The extruder, a novel technology for making instant flours, being tested at a research facility in Senegal.

Madame Astou Gaye Mbacke owns a cereal processing facility in central Senegal that produces high-quality processed foods for the national market. In partnership with the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Processing and Post-Harvest Handling, she has received training on—and will soon introduce other entrepreneurs to—food technologies that have made her business, the Touba Darou Salam Cereal Processing Unit, a success.

Because of Mbacke's partnership with Feed the Future, her facility now has a food extruder, which gives it the technological capacity to turn cereal grains into instant enriched flour—a process that cuts the work of preparing grains for porridge from hours to minutes. Not surprisingly, the flour is popular with women, who are freed from laborious meal preparation and can train other family members to add water to the instant flour for a nutritious porridge. But its popularity doesn't end there. Within a month of introducing it, Mbacke was contracted by three mayors in Senegal to provide 2 million tons of the instant flour products, mostly for feeding programs. What's more, demand for her products is expected to exceed production capacity by the end of the year.

Mbacke's facility also creates jobs. She employs 115 people, most of whom did not previously have steady work, and some who once depended on handouts to eke out a living. Her employees now have the income to send their children to school, pay for school fees and supplies, and even upgrade their traditional huts into solid concrete houses.

In addition, all of her employees have received U.S. Agency for International Development-funded training from the Dakar-based Institute for Food Technology (IFT). As a result of this training, they have gained skills in the new technologies, which make them highly valuable workers in the food processing industry.

Mbacke channels her entrepreneurial energy into other productive enterprises: She leads a 3,000-member association of Senegalese women who are engaged in agro-processing businesses and provides loans to entrepreneurs to create food distribution businesses to serve local and national markets.

Purdue University, which leads the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Processing and Post-Harvest Handling, has helped support local entrepreneurs in Senegal, mostly women, to produce high-quality, market-competitive flour products. The program also offers women business and management skills training to improve existing businesses or build new ones. Some women processors, like Mbacke, have adopted new food technologies and are operating their businesses with continued technical support from IFT.

Plans are underway for Mbacke's facility to be an incubator for other women entrepreneurs, and select processors will receive IFT training in workshop settings on the extrusion. The partnership offers a unique opportunity to rapidly and effectively disseminate advanced food processing and nutrition technologies and has created a model for future scale-up to the other regions.