FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE TRADE IN SENEGAL
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Situated on the westernmost edge of Africa’s Atlantic coast, Senegal is at the maritime crossroads of Africa, Europe and America. This particular situation has exposed the country for centuries to the intrigues and greed of slavery. Senegal is often cited as a good pupil. Despite the persistence of ethnic, social and religious divisions, the country has benefited since its independence of remarkable political stability through which could emerge a vibrant civil society and strong social and economic activity.

In addition, the role of women in entrepreneurship in Senegal may explain the particular development of a social economy and the emergence of very original fair and sustainable trade initiatives.
A SHORT PRESENTATION OF SENEGAL

FROM THE TRIANGULAR TRADE TO A MODEL OF INDEPENDENCE

DIVERSITY OF LANDSCAPES, DIVERSITY OF CULTURES

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

THE MAIN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES
The colonial conquest of the land that would become Senegal begins with the discovery of these shores in 1442 by the Portuguese who soon engage in the slave trade and compete with British, Dutch and French slave traders. The latter eventually prevail and, while the Dutch founded a trading post on the island of Goree, France established one in 1659 at St. Louis, which is to become the first capital of Senegal. The colonial order is affirmed in the second half of the nineteenth century with Faidherbe, governor of Senegal, extending French influence into the heart of the continent and establishing the port of Dakar, which in 1902 became the capital of French West Africa, a major French colony in Africa.

Native troops had been integrated into the French colonial army since 1857 to address the lack of French staff. They formed the Senegalese Tirailleurs, a corps that later paid a heavy toll in the two World Wars. Until 1905, these regiments were made up mainly of slaves bought from their owners and of local prisoners of war. On August 20, 1960, Senegal declared its independence as a democratic republic established on the French political model of 1958. The first president was Leopold Sedar Senghor, a charismatic leader and renowned poet. Between 1982 and 2004, sporadic clashes opposed government forces and separatists from the southern Casamance, mostly Christians. In late 2010, further incidents again highlighted the instability in that area.

Another conflict, between Casamance and Guinea Bissau, erupted in April 2007. Despite these incidents, Senegal is often cited as a model of stability in Africa.
Senegal is situated at the western-most edge of Africa’s Atlantic coast. It is at the maritime crossroads of Europe, America and Africa.

**DIVERSITY OF LANDSCAPES, DIVERSITY OF CULTURES**

Senegal is bounded by Mauritania to the north, by Mali to the east, by Guinea and Guinea Bissau to the south, and by a 500-km Atlantic Ocean shore to the west. Gambia forms a virtual enclave within Senegal, penetrating more than 300 km inland.

Senegal has a very varied geography and climate with in the west, one of the most important ports in Africa (Dakar) and to the east, an arid desert climate that is regularly affected by drought.

The population is overwhelmingly Muslim (90%) and approximates 11 million people. It is composed of many ethnic groups (mostly Wolof, Fulani, Serer). In the cities there is a strong presence of Lebanese, Europeans and Chinese².
SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Senegal is still a very poor country despite being one of the largest development assistance recipients in Africa. Life expectancy is about 51 years and infant mortality remains high. There is a significant divide between the cities and the countryside. The population has long been more concentrated on the Atlantic seaboard. Rural-urban migration has only increased inequality behind this divide. Now, one Senegalese in four lives in the peninsula of Cape Verde, whereas the capital is on the verge of suffocation. Education is free up to university level but more than a third of the population is illiterate and the costs associated with education (transportation, books, etc.) remain prohibitive for many families. The country’s public healthcare system is rather basic and diseases (including malaria) and malnutrition are still major causes of mortality. Various factors combined make it difficult for the state to support the existing public services: in particular an ubiquitous informal sector (estimated at 70 to 80% of economic activity) limiting the tax base and austerity measures imposed by international organisations.

THE MAIN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Originally, the French colonies were to supply only raw materials and free labour under the principle of industrial bans enacted by Colbert: “That not one nail was to come out of the colonies”\(^1\). Despite this legacy, Senegal has the third largest economy in the sub-region of West Africa after Nigeria and Côte d’Ivoire. Given its geographical location and political stability, Senegal is one of the most industrialized countries in Africa, attracting mainly French and to a lesser degree American multinational businesses.

Its main trading partners are France, India and Italy. However, over the years China has become a major partner as evidenced by the China-Africa summits.

The main agricultural products of Senegal are peanuts and cotton, rice, millet and vegetable crops. Compared to other African countries, Senegal has few natural resources; its main revenue originates from fishing, tourism and agriculture.

Fishing remains an important activity in coastal areas, but fish stocks are dwindling with the increasing number of trawlers fishing off the coast of Senegal\(^2\) (cf. page 36).
Fair Trade was born from a simple observation: The wealth gap between the populations of the richest countries and the poorest countries is not getting any narrower despite the amounts invested in development aid.

THE ORIGINS OF FAIR TRADE

Wars, natural disasters, failing infrastructure and corruption are among the causes of this imbalance; however, structural economic problems also play a major role. Speculation in raw materials, the debt spiral, subsidised competition from producers in industrialized countries; all these mechanisms constitute obstacles to the sustainable growth of the poorest countries that are unable to control their development.

Although these commercial inequalities have been apparent since the nineteenth century (in particular with the publication in 1860 of the novel Max Havelaar by the Dutchman Eduard Douwes Dekker), it was only in the post-war years that the first fair trade project appeared, promoted by US and British organisations (Ten Thousand Villages in the US and Oxfam in the United Kingdom).

It was in 1964, at the United Nations Conference on Trade & Development (UNCTAD), that the concept of fair trade was defined for the first time with the founding principle of “Trade, not Aid”.

The first fair trade shops opened in Europe in the 1960s, while the cooperatives and producer associations who were to benefit from these fairer trading exchanges, initially in crafts and agriculture, were being set up in developing countries.
WHAT IS FAIR TRADE?

In 1999, the main international organisations for fair trade (the World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO), Fairtrade International (FLO) and the Network of European World Shops (NEWS)) agreed on a common definition:

«Fair trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, which seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalised producers and workers – especially in the South.

Fair trade organisations, backed by consumers, are actively engaged in supporting producers, awareness-raising and campaigning for changes in the rules and practices of conventional international trade.»

In practice, fair trade guarantees producers in the poorest countries more remunerative purchase prices than world prices as well as relative price stability and the establishment of favourable payment periods and terms (and the possibility of advance financing), which means small farmers and craftsmen are no longer obliged to virtually give away their products or resort to loan sharks.

The fair price must cover all costs, including environmental costs, and guarantee the producers a decent standard of living.

In addition, buyers of fair trade undertake to pay additional premiums that are used for productive investments and/or social programmes (literacy, access to care, etc.).

To support the implementation of this economic system, these organisations list 11 main principles to be respected:

1. Creating opportunities for economically disadvantaged producers
2. Transparency and accountability
3. Capacity building
4. Promoting fair trade
5. Payment of a fair price
6. Commitment to gender equity and to freedom of association
7. Providing decent working conditions
8. Preventing child labour
9. Protect the environment
10. Encouraging trading relations based on trust and mutual respect
11. Promoting respect and the dissemination of cultural identity involved products and production processes (new principle)
Since 1988 and the creation of on the one hand the WFTO, the World Fair Trade Organisation (called IFAT, the International Fair Trade Association until 2009) and on the other hand the launch of the Max Havelaar label, two main fair trade regulation systems have emerged and coexisted: the ‘integrated’ system (in particular WFTO and EFTA – the European Fair Trade Association) and the ‘labelled’ system (in particular Fairtrade Max Havelaar).

**THE LABELLED SYSTEM AND THE INTEGRATED SYSTEM**

The main characteristic of the historic method of fair trade organisation, the integrated system, is the fact that all the players participating in the creation and marketing of the product (producer, processor, importer and points of sale) are committed to fair trade and comply voluntarily with its principles.

With its 400 member fair trade organisations (most from the South) representing all the links in the fair trade sector (producers, processors and distributors), the World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO) has been regarded since its creation in 1989 as the main coordinator of organisations in the integrated system.

Recently, the advocates of this model have started developing a system that would enable these production chains to be formally certified (see below). Specifically, compliance with this voluntary WFTO Fair Trade System standard certifies that an organisation has established a set for good social, economic and environmental management practices and procedures.

The labelled system relies on the certification of the marketed product. The businesses producing these products undertake to comply with defined specifications and to source their products from organisations of producers in developing countries (often cooperatives) who have been approved by the labeling organisation, an independent organisation that certifies the compliance with the criteria of the label.

The labelled products can then be marketed at any point of sale, including conventional supermarkets. The Fairtrade label is the best known among labels, but there are also others (namely Fair for Life, Fairwild, Ecocert EFT, Naturland Fair) with their own approach or logic.

The coexistence of these two systems illustrates the existence of different concepts of fair trade, pertaining in particular to the type of relationship to be established with the private economic players (multinationals, supermarkets) and to differing views on development (and denunciation of international trade) on the one hand, and a business outlook based on voluntary commitment, on the other.
AFRICAN FAIR TRADE

The fair trade organisations in Africa are mostly brought together under umbrella organisations that represent them internationally.
The Cooperation for Fair Trade in Africa, COFTA, was founded in 2004. It is the regional chapter of the World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO). On this account, the African organisation, headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, brings together and represents the producer members of the WFTO in 24 countries of the continent, which are mainly active in handicrafts (80% of the network) and aim at eliminating poverty through fair trade.

Since its establishment, COFTA has fought for a strong and independent continent by strengthening the technical and commercial capacity of African smallholders and by developing new markets. Along with coffee and fruits, crafts were one of the first sectors to benefit from fair and sustainable trade. The attention paid by major organisations of the sector to traditional know-how and heritage has long provided support to social initiatives in developing countries.

But the fair trade market for crafts has evolved and, with less than 20% of the market share, the African crafts(wo)men are experiencing a continuous decline in their income, whereas Asian and Latin American producers see steady growth. Such is the finding of COFTA, which points among the specific causes of this crisis, to the difficulties encountered by the African producers to meet quality and performance standards (deadlines, volumes and prices) imposed by importers, as well as the fact that the main fair certification systems are inadequate for the African realities.

**COFTA and the WFTO Fair Trade System**

In response to requests from many of its members around the world (including Africa), the WFTO has developed its own certification system, the WFTO Fair Trade System, described as "a comprehensive, effective and light certification system, designed to transform any economic activity into a fair and sustainable activity."

This new certification has some obvious advantages for cooperatives, value chains, enterprises and associations of producers in developing countries. Indeed, unlike the Max Havelaar Fairtrade label (for example), it applies to the entire organisation and all its products and services. It should allow targeting both local markets and export markets. After a successful audit, conducted by an independent third party, the product sold by the certified organisation may bear a label certifying that its origin and production are consistent with the principles and practices of fair trade.

The World Fair Trade Organisation has launched an international consultation procedure to clarify the criteria for this new certification system, which is in its second version now. The finalisation of the WFTO Fair Trade System depends on recommendations made following pilot studies in Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America.
In Africa COFTA steers the design work for the new WFTO Fair Trade System certification. To do this, the fair trade organisation has set up an integrated work programme to raise awareness among African producers to project issues, to contribute to trials planned by the World Fair Trade Organisation and to support the first organisations that wish to start in this process.

The programme is first implemented in five African countries (South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Senegal) through case studies that will eventually qualify the needs of craftsmen and producers.

**With the support of BTC’s Trade for Development Centre**

This large-scale mission entrusted to COFTA is part of a project that is supported by the Trade for Development Centre of BTC, the Belgian development agency. The stakes are major. Indeed, the African organisation wants to ensure «support for the African producers who without a voluntary programme to improve their competitiveness will be left far behind and will lose an even larger market share. Moreover, certification requires producers to invest resources that are not available to most small producers in Africa.»

The goal of the project supported by COFTA is clear: to ensure that African producers take up the new certification system. To do this, COFTA must raise awareness and identify the specific needs of African producers so the WFTO take their needs into consideration in the final stages. Afterwards COFTA will have to deploy and coach technical support structures across the continent for small producers who want to start the certification process.

With the financial support of BTC COFTA can carry out all programmed activities: identification of organisations of artisans and producers wishing to evaluate the new certification system, conducting workshops in the five countries selected, assessment of the activities, presentation of recommendations made by the producers at WFTO conferences, preparation and implementation of a first series of training session for interested groups.

The project can meet these challenges. This is to give African producers and artisans technical and commercial instruments that will enable them to become part of the vast progress that fair and sustainable trade is witnessing today.

«Our vision sees a continent that is stronger thanks to fair trade. COFTA considers fair trade a movement in which the African crafts(wo)men and farmers can together undertake to access a sustainable and dignified life.»

COFTA

To know more about it:
www.cofta.org
www.befair.be
www.btcctb.org
**FAIRTRADE AFRICA**

Founded in 2004 in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia as the Africa Fairtrade Network (AFN), Fairtrade Africa is an independent organisation that represents all Fairtrade (FLO Max Havelaar) certified producers in Africa.

As such, Fairtrade Africa’s main function is bringing the producers together with the governing bodies and certification organisations of Fairtrade International.

Fairtrade Africa is a member of Fairtrade International, the world body that brings together the networks of producers of three continents (Fairtrade Africa, CLAC Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia NAP) and 21 labelling initiatives across Europe, Japan, North America, Mexico, Australia and New Zealand.

Fair trade Africa operates through three regional networks: Eastern Africa Network (FTA-EAN) based in Nairobi, Kenya; West Africa Network (FTA-WAN) based in Accra, Ghana and Southern Africa Network (FTA-SAN) based in Cape Town, South Africa. A new regional network should be established soon in North Africa.

*To know more about it:*
www.fairtradeafrica.net

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**WEST AFRICAN FAIR TRADE NETWORK – WAFN**

**FAIRTRADE AFRICA - WEST AFRICA NETWORK (FTA-WAN)**

To adopt common positions within the certification committees and to encourage national initiatives, fair trade certified producers in West Africa met in Ghana in October 2005 and established the West African Fairtrade Network (FTA-WAN) with the financial and technical support of Fairtrade International.

The West Africa Network is part of Fairtrade Africa, which mobilizes its members across the African continent.
SOCIAL ECONOMY AND FAIR TRADE IN SENEGAL

SOCIAL ECONOMY IN SENEGAL

ALDIANAWO

«Developing fair trade practices»

A PRACTICAL APPROACH, TOWARDS A PARTICIPATORY AND OPERATIONAL CERTIFICATION OF AFRICAN FAIR TRADE
Senegalese civil society is distinguished by the number and size of organisations (associations, social movements, NGOs, etc.) that are involved in economic and social development, especially for farmers.

SOCIAL ECONOMY

This dynamism in the third sector in Senegal has long suffered from a historic lack of coordination among different stakeholders who for a long time failed to adopt common positions in their relations with international institutions.

Things have changed significantly since the mid-2000s, especially at the Third International Meeting on the Globalisation of Solidarity held in Dakar in November 2005. With the aim to provide an opportunity to «Africa to share its vision of social economy»9, this event marked a milestone for the Senegalese organisations that are operating at the national level and quite active within cooperation organisations and within international coordination.

The World Social Forum in Dakar in February 2011

In February 2011, the World Social Forum in Dakar provided the opportunity for exchanges on important social economy and fair trade issues.

The debates on these themes in particular confirmed the willingness of Senegalese players to build «an emancipatory social economy, with sustainable patterns of production and consumption and a fair trade system that puts the needs of people and respect for nature at the core of its priorities and that guarantees global redistribution with an international tax system and without tax havens. »10

Despite difficult conditions, the Dakar Forum allowed many guests to get to know Senegalese cooperatives involved in this movement. These meetings have especially helped to address a particular theme that is very dear to the operators of the country: the establishment of fair certification systems and South-South fair trade networks. On this occasion, the participants recognized «the need to strengthen local and regional trade in developing countries to reduce their dependence on Northern markets, find new markets, maintain local production that responds to a local culture and to local needs.»11
These meetings of African social economy actors really enabled the organisations of the continent (associations, producers, NGOs, etc.) to give their vision of fair trade and its meaning for the continent. The rationale for this project is the obvious will of the Senegalese and African actors to gain ownership over the fair trade concept by highlighting the inadequacy of existing systems for African realities, or as the representatives of Enda explain, «in the South, particularly in Africa, fair trade is not well known, not only by producers but also by the governments, whereas these are supposed to provide ‘better trading conditions by guaranteeing the rights of producers and marginalized workers’.

This is the paradox noted by a wide range of national actors (associations, federations, EIGs, NGOs, public authorities) involved along with Enda and the consultancy cooperative Tukka in the approach “to develop fair trade practices in Senegal”.

The exchanges that took place over the last two years between about forty actors brought together in this national initiative suggest that current systems of certification actually exclude the most destitute smallholders. Indeed, producers involved in fair trade initiatives, which are mainly South-North initiatives, face high certification costs and need to meet the requirements of the compliance certification procedures.”

«For Africa and especially for Senegal, the road opened by fair trade is the appropriate response to the success of projects to develop local crafts as well as agriculture and consequently domestic trade.»

Alioune Diouf, Senegal Director of Internal Trade

It took nearly a year and a half to complete the first phases of this project that led to the development of a platform of values and a Charter of Commitment to Fair Trade, which were officially presented at the World Social Forum in Nairobi, Kenya, in January 2007 and at the World Social Forum in Dakar in 2011.

The platform of values helps identify the values of fair trade as envisaged in Senegal. It deals with social, environmental, economic and ethical issues, and clarifies the concepts of a fair price, of child labour, of the premium for development as well as the gender issue. The Charter of Commitment to fair trade aims at promoting local values in and through African fair trade.

Designed as a tool to help promote justice, it includes a commitment to fair trade, an ethical foundation, social commitment and a commitment to the environment, and economic practices.

These founding documents were approved by all fair trade actors at a meeting in Ndayane in January 2008.
A PRACTICAL, OPERATIONAL AND PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

After this group validation the second phase of the project was launched with the ultimate goal of developing a local system of fair trade certification.

The method adopted to carry out this ambitious project demonstrates the maturity of the Senegalese organisations involved. Indeed, the partners involved were relied on «the implementation of pilot production projects in four activity clusters (cotton/textile, food, welding crafts/ recycling, medicinal plants). This second step is to initiate work for the definition of specifications for the four pilot production projects and to set up a local label system that is compatible with international systems. Future work should lead to a certification of approaches and actors at all stages of production (from raw material to finished product) for every value chain and should bring new partners in order to move from a process that involves a focused group to the establishment of a national fair trade platform.»

As the people in charge of the project see things, this is to introduce a method that will work towards real ownership of these issues by all stakeholders. All data collected during trial activities will then give rise to capitalisation with the creation of a Resource Centre for producers, processors and support structures. Ultimately, this resource centre will aim to produce the tools needed to develop a local guarantee system.

TOWARDS AFRICAN FAIRTRADE CERTIFICATION

The experiment conducted by Senegalese organisations is even more ambitious as it wants to significantly contribute to the larger project of developing an African fair trade certification as an alternative to existing systems that were designed and formalized by Europeans and Americans.

To do this, the project partners «continue to work towards bringing together the initiatives that have been developed in the South to show that it is possible to establish fair South-South and South-North relations, and impact international trade with these efforts.»

The progress of this project has been presented on various occasions in Africa and led to the study of «the process in Senegal, the actors, the methodology used to arrive at the development of a charter of commitment to fair trade, the activities conducted so far, the results obtained and perspectives on national and international levels». It was also an opportunity to «show that Africans are in a process of rethinking the whole of fair trade in order to gain ownership of fair trade and adapt it to the social, economic and cultural context.»

When asked about the issue of aligning the Senegalese initiative with projects of international fair trade organisations, Abdourhamane Gueye, one of the leaders of Enda believes that «it should go further. We rethink the basics, we bring our own strengths and foundations. However, we went to Fairtrade. Not with expectations but with proposals». The project «Developing fair trade practices in Senegal» presents itself as an important contribution of Senegalese players in the development of new certification systems that are being developed by international fair trade organisations.

Senegal insists on providing its position on these issues. Today, the project «Developing fair trade practices in Senegal» is implementing the pilot initiatives in the four selected activity clusters. Some of the fair trade initiatives involved in this programme are presented in the following pages.
FAIR TRADE PLAYERS IN SENEGAL

ENDA TM

PEACE ACTION SOLIDAIRE
Environmental Development Action in the Third World (ENDA TM) was created in 1972 in Senegal as a joint initiative of the United Nations Environment Programme, the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, before being established in 1978 as an international not-for-profit association (NGO).

**ENDA TM**

**Environmental Development Action in the Third World**

ENDA TM’s main mission is the fight against poverty and for that it deploys significant resources in various fields ranging from entrepreneurship support to awareness of policy makers. ENDA activities are roughly directed half in direct actions in the field (health, agriculture, sanitation, alternative education, young workers, etc.) and half in research, advice, consultation, training, publication and information.

In 1982, Enda TM established Enda Pronat, a new entity to perform the following specific tasks:

- The promotion of alternative agricultural production systems
- The development and facilitation of farmers’ organisations
- The protection of the gene pool
- Food sovereignty
- Environmental education
- The marketing and processing of agricultural products
- Access to inputs

At the subregional level, Enda Pronat and its partners drive the design project of a local model of fair trade certification and monitor pilot projects implemented in the four value chains selected. Founded in Dakar, ENDA TM is now present in six countries in Africa, in Latin America, in Europe and in Asia.

**PEACE SOLIDARITY ACTION**

Network present in seven African countries (Senegal, Burkina Faso, Benin, Mali, Cameroon, Gabon and Ghana), the Platform of African Students for Fair Trade (PEACE) / Solidarity Action is a youth association that aims to «bring young people at national, regional and international levels to create a hype about fair trade and sustainable development, build relationships with stakeholders in civil society and offer leadership to members.»

To know more about it:
www.peaceactionsolidaire.org
www.au-senegal.com
FAIR TRADE INITIATIVES IN SENEGAL

FAIR TRADE COTTON AND TEXTILE

PILOT FIAR «COTTON / TEXTILE» FAIR

YAKAAR NIANI WULLI FEDERATION

UNION ASSOCIATION OF PRODUCER GROUPS OF COTTON (US-GPC) DE KÉDOUGOU

INTERFACE TRADING

THE «NETWORK SELL DIFFERENTLY» AND PRODUCING MEDICINAL PLANTS

ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGERS OF NDEM (NGO AVN)
Grown in over 100 countries on about 2.5% of arable land in the world, cotton is one of the most common staples in the world. It provides jobs and income to hundreds of millions of people around the world.

FAIR TRADE COTTON AND TEXTILE IN SENEGAL

Major stakes

As a cash crop, cotton production has very direct effects on the population’s food security, especially in Francophone Africa. When it is integrated in traditional production systems, cotton contributes to modernisation and to productive investments (purchase of cattle and farm equipment, distribution of organic manure) from which crops rotating with cotton (usually cereals) benefit.

But since the 1980s, the international cotton trade is experiencing a major crisis that particularly affects producers in developing countries. The causes of this breakdown of the global market are related mainly to support policies set up by industrialized countries (which make African producers lose 200 million euros per year) the competition from synthetic textiles and the monetary imbalance that slows downs exports of many African countries due to the weakness of the dollar against the euro to which the CFA Franc is linked.

In Senegal, nearly 500 000 people live from producing and trading cotton.

Fair trade cotton in Senegal

In response to this crisis and the threat it poses to millions of families in West Africa, the fair trade organisations have initiated the establishment of a fair cotton value chain in the region since 2003.

It was not only to offer a credible and innovative economic response to the problems of the cotton crisis, but also to fight against environmental and health damage caused by the crop that “holds the sad record of environmental damage and harm to farmers because of the chemicals it requires.” Cotton cultivation uses 24% of pesticides sold in the world for only 2.5% of arable land worldwide. Yet, extensive studies on the effects of these pesticides have shown that “the accumulation of organochlorines in fat is responsible for various diseases: cancer, infertility, diabetes, neurological problems.”

In Senegal the first trials with organic cotton production were launched in the 1990s in Koussanar in the Tambacounda region in the centre of the country. So, it were producers of this region that the organisation Enda Pronat turned to implement its “cotton/textile” project conducted as part of the programme to develop fair trade practices in Senegal.”
Processes implemented in the project are:

- Cotton is grown by producers of Koussanar in compliance with the rules of organic farming and fair trade.
- After harvesting, ginning (removing seeds) is performed by SODEFITEX, the cotton company that manages the entire process of processing and marketing of Senegalese cotton.
- The cotton fibre is then spun by women in villages to produce pellets, which are then woven in narrow strips of fabric.
- To dye fabric, women use of natural indigo produced by the Yakaar Niani Wulli Federation.
- The strips of beige or indigo fabric are sewn by hand or machine to make blankets, cushion covers and accessories. The prototypes are made in Dakar in collaboration with local tailors and mass production is done in Koussanar.
- Revenues for each link in the chain are distributed to meet the principles of fair trade.
- The finished products are then clearly labelled «handmade», organic, fair trade and dyed with natural dyes in order to make social and environmental benefits of this production explicit to the consumer.

Initiated by Enda Pronat, this project involves the partnership of the Yakaar Niani Wulli Federation and the company CSM Ltd (Micamisa).
After a productive period of several years, soils showed signs of exhaustion, farmers went into debt due to the worldwide agricultural crisis and health problems associated with pesticides appeared (poisoning, skin diseases, etc.). To explain the loss of agricultural productivity in Senegal, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) evoked climate reasons (rainfall dropped by 30% on average due to deforestation) whereas the decline in soil fertility was due to population pressure (increased cropping intensity) and especially the poor management of natural resources.

With these findings, the producers of Tambacounda, supported by Enda Pronat, created the Yakaar Niani Wulli Federation in 1197. It brings together producers who are committed in an agroecological vision of developing their land. At the start, the Federation had a hundred organic cotton producers who were financially and technically supported by Enda Pronat.

Between 2003 and 2004, the Federation went through a major crisis due to market saturation and internal problems that led to its reorganisation and a greater involvement of farmers in its operation.

In 2004, the organisation starts a certification process that allows it, a year later, to obtain legal recognition as an association and, in 2006, to obtain fair trade certification (Fairtrade, cotton only). The Yakaar Niani Wulli Federation is the first organization in Senegal to produce organic (Ecocert) and fair cotton. It now has nearly 2,000 farmers in 85 villages of the Department of Tamba. In addition to participating in the project to develop a local fair trade certification system, the Yakaar Niani Wulli Federation has undertaken many actions that meet the agroecological vision of its founders:

- Development and promotion of organic farming (cotton, fonio, sesame, indigo, etc.)
- Artisanal processing of cotton (spinning, weaving, cutting and natural dyeing)
- Protection of the gene pool (conversation/distribution of local seeds and the fight against the introduction of GMOs)
- Provision of seed banks in villages
- Training of farmers and establishment of field schools

As it enjoys international recognition for its involvement in the local fair trade certification project but also for its performance in terms of monitoring organic crops, democratic governance and efficient and transparent management, the Yakaar Niani Wulli Federation now seeks to achieve greater financial autonomy to ensure independence and sustainability.
Optimize production and develop marketing with the support of BTC

Today, the production process is fully operational. It should now become a viable operation by marketing its products in international markets.

To do this, a project was designed with the assistance of Enda Pronat and financial support from the Trade for Development Centre of BTC, the Belgian development agency, which aims at capacity building within Federation in management, the design and development of new products and the growth of fair trade partnerships.

Complete overhaul of the communication tools (website, brochures, etc.), participation in fair trade and organic exhibitions and fairs in France, prospecting targeted to the shops of solidarity networks. The comprehensive programme that is supported by the Trade for Development Centre has a clear goal: the establishment of many solid business partnerships.

To know more about it:
www.yaniwulli.org
http://ynw.jarinio.sn
http://lizcooper.blogspot.com

MiCamisa

Founded in 2005 in Dakar as part of Senegalese-German cooperation, MiCamisa is the trademark of the company MSC Ltd. It manufactures custom-tailored shirts and clothing accessories «blending the oft-cited German care for technological perfection with outstanding Senegalese craftsmanship».

The choice of the company is clear: It aims to provide «handcrafted, custom tailored shirts at a reasonable price» within a fair trade approach.

Committed to a process to support the local economy, CSM Ltd participates in the «cotton/ textile» pilot project initiated by Enda Pronat by working (on trade aspects) with the producers of Koussanar.

CSM Ltd. became a member of the World Fair Trade Organisation on its own by conducting a self-assessment with a strong involvement of its employees.

Liz Cooper

English designer and stylist, Liz Cooper travels the world studying the traditional methods of manufacturing textiles and «put her skills and creativity to the service of development projects.»

From January 2008 to March 2010, as a designer and communications officer for Enda Pronat, she follows, accompanies and supports the producers of the Yakaar Niani Wulli Federation in their projects fair textile manufacturing projects. She ensures the creation of prototypes, contributes to the communication of the Federation and provides style training to women.

This member of the working group of the «cotton/ textile» pilot project set up by Enda Pronat as part of the programme to develop fair trade practices in Senegal shares, explains and illustrates her experience in the Koussanar region through her blog:

The first results

Soon, the project led by Enda has produced economic, social and environmental results that are visible and meaningful for the cotton producers of the Yakaar Niani Wulli Federation:

- The Fairtrade certification ensures higher incomes for producers (see table).
- Women’s position evolves in the direction of greater equality and they hold more important jobs in the Federation.
- Literacy and social support activities are implemented through the specific premiums.
- Local traditions are maintained (for weaving, indigo-dyeing and home-manufactured crafts).
- The use of organic farming techniques can eliminate health risks associated with pesticide use.
- Local integrated production considerably reduces transport-related pollution.

Moreover, as an organisation, the Yakaar Niani Wulli Federation took advantage of the project to improve its functioning and to adopt more transparent, democratic and efficient practices and structures.

That said, this project has highlighted a number of major issues related in particular to the certification, which could be barriers to the dissemination of virtuous practices implemented in the region of Koussanar.

Indeed, as Liz Cooper put it, «the high costs of certification and the need for specialized knowledge and expertise mean that a real support partner is essential for groups of small producers. The adoption of a certification system as such is therefore not an option for all farmers. With the establishment of a more affordable local certification system and increasing global demand for fair trade and organic cotton, we can expect that these methods and practices become more widely applicable in the future.»

These initial results seem about to confirm the initial diagnosis made at the project’s start.

In addition to cost issues (particularly related to the financing of external inspections), it appears that «some of the criteria set by the European certification are not adapted to African realities.»

The establishment and formalisation of an adapted local certification system (that is internationally recognized) is required so the benefits of fair trade can be effectively extended to other communities in Senegal and Africa.

To know more about it:
www.yaniwulli.org
http://lizcooper.blogspot.com

<table>
<thead>
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<th>COST FOR 1 BAG</th>
<th>Conventional F CFA</th>
<th>Euros</th>
<th>Our Business Trade Senegalese F CFA</th>
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</table>
UNION ASSOCIATION OF GROUPS OF COTTON PRODUCERS (US-GPC) OF KÉDOUGOU

Located in the Casamance region in the far southeast of Senegal, in the department of Kédougou (one of the poorest of Senegal), the Union Association of Groups of Cotton Producers (US-GPC) of Kédougou now includes more than 4000 members in 122 Groups of Cotton Producers (GPCs). The involvement of the US-GPC of Kédougou in fair trade goes back to 2004 when the top three groups of cotton producers were certified by Fairtrade. Since the number of certified continues to grow. Today, of the 122 Groups of Cotton Producers, nearly half are fair trade certified.

US-GPC cannot sell their cotton directly to customers. Indeed, cotton trading in Senegal remains under SODEFITEX monopoly. Of the 20,000 tons sold this way, nearly 2,000 tons are produced and sold as fair trade.

By ensuring a stable price and secure markets for cotton produced in the region of Kédougou, fair trade enables small farmers to increase their income, to invest on the long term in their exploitation and to strengthen their share of the market by having a closer relationship with their customers and by contributing to the development of impoverished rural communities.

To know more about it:
www.altereco.com
www.laboequitable.fr

INTERFACE TRADING - DISTRIBUTORS OF AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

After seven years as the Commercial Director of the African Network for Integrated Development (RADI), a pan-African development NGO, Moctar Fall is familiar with the ins and outs of multilateral trade negotiations (WTO, UNCTAD, regional agreements, etc.) and he knows the injustices they cause.

In his capacity, he witnessed very questionable practices of transnational corporations who held a monopoly in Senegal in the provision of agricultural inputs to small farmers. These companies asked prohibitive retail prices that weighed heavily on the growth potential of the peasants.

To counter these practices and provide an alternative, Moctar Fall founded Interface Trading in 1994 to provide agricultural inputs (seeds, phytosanitary products, fertilizers) at fair rates (35% cheaper) to groups of small producers in Senegal. The company also offers them advice, training and research tools.

In 2000, Interface became the main distributor of agricultural inputs in Senegal. Other projects have followed in vegetable and fruit production for the local market and for exports to European markets (France, Belgium, the Netherlands).

Interface Trading is a company founded on strong ethical principles with a «mission to help small farmers in their daily efforts to escape poverty by strengthening their production capacity and by providing business opportunities.»

In the field of fair trade, Moctar Fall supports and represents producers and artisans in production and in export to Europe, the United States and Australia. He is also a founding member of the national chapter of Transparency International in Senegal and a member of the Board of Directors of the World Fair Trade Orangisation (WFTO) where he represents Africa and COFTA.

«The inherent problems of Fair Trade certification schemes can only be addressed within a framework of wide-ranging, inclusive consultations which involve all stakeholders, in particular producers, in establishing standards, implementation strategies and support measures. Fair Trade is a partnership approach and it must remain so.»
Moctar Fall - Interface Trading

Seed sale in Senegal - Photo credit: USAID / Richard Nyberg
**THE «NETWORK FOR SELLING DIFFERENTLY» AND THE WOMEN–PRODUCERS OF MEDICINAL PLANTS**

**TRADITIONAL MEDICINE AT THE SERVICE OF THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY**

Founded in 1987 as a specialized entity within Enda, Enda Medicinal Plants is specifically involved in the coordination of health programmes and the development of economic value chains in the areas of traditional medicinal plants, phytosanitary research and herbalism.

Starting in 1995, Enda Medicinal Plants initiated a partnership with the University of Dakar to evaluate the efficacy of plants used in traditional medicine for the treatment of the most common diseases in Senegal. So, specific herbal medicines had to be identified, tested and selected to study their therapeutic value.

To exploit these research results and to ensure their ownership by the people, village communities were involved in the process. Producer groups, mostly women, were asked to grow these traditional medicinal plants, and especially the most threatened ones, for their recognized values. The first trials highlighted the obstacles to be overcome to develop a viable business (procurement, packaging, and training) and emphasised the economic and social significance of the project.

The programme is implemented gradually. Enda Medicinal Plants assists and supervises participants throughout the process of cultivation by fencing fields, providing appropriate materials and organising training. Also the cultivation of medicinal plants has become an important economic activity for populations of the areas concerned by these projects. Experience has shown that the culture of Cassia Italica, which is harvested and sold year-round, allows women to cover the costs of essential items.

**FAIR HERB TRADE**

In parallel with this action with women producers, Enda Medicinal Plants since 2002 has supported the establishment of a network of herbalists with the aim to support the marketing of herbs and plants grown and prepared in the villages and communities.

With adequate facilities for conservation and storage and with a training in packaging and marketing, these herbalists are now brought together in an association called «Network for Selling Differently» with over 80 members in Dakar and nearly a hundred in Touba.

The impact of this initiative is evident at several levels:
- Increased financial capacity of producers
- Valuation and classification of plants and methods of traditional medicine
- Better protection of the environment
- Job creation in rural communities (especially for women and youth) and, consequently, decreased rural exodus
- Provision of a validated and accessible pharmacopoeia for the people

That said, herbalists of the Network for Selling Differently are aware of the obstacles they face in developing the marketing of their products on a scale larger than the local level. It is for this reason that the Network has joined “medicinal herbs” pilot project set up by Enda as part of the programme to develop fair trade practices in Senegal.
THE ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGERS OF NDEM (AVN)

In the mid-1980s, the region of Djourbel in the northwest of Senegal went through a major crisis due to the climate and deteriorating economic conditions. This led to a major rural exodus. Drought prevented farmers from cultivating their land, leaving them destitute. Men were forced to leave women and children and seek work in the big coastal cities. In these particularly difficult times, Babacar Cissé and Aissa Mbow came to the area in 1984 after spending years in France. On their return, they find that “villages are dying, left by people who are driven away by living conditions that have become too harsh and have migrated to urban centres.”

There was almost nothing in the village except a few houses and women and children living in poverty. All the men were away working in Dakar.

By mobilizing village communities, the young French-Senegalese couple initiated the establishment in the village of community projects to improve the lives of local people and enable them to benefit from their land by creating jobs and basic social services. Priority is given to education, health and access to water potable. That way, in 1985, the Association of Villagers of Ndem (AVN) is established. Its development project is part of a spiritual quest inherited from Senegalese traditions, as explained by its founder and president Babacar Mbow: “Our religion (the Baye Fall movement) advocates values of tolerance, work and respect. It guided our actions. We have built this community around these beliefs and values, and they are driving the association. They have allowed us to move forward despite the difficult conditions.”

After years of efforts, a first well finally allows villagers access to clean water in 1996, providing significant work time savings thanks to which the men and women of the village can get involved in new activities. The actions of the Association of Villagers of Ndem, which became an NGO in 2006, are embedded in an integrated development project with the overall objective to enable people to again find local satisfactory living conditions and thus curb the exodus.

To achieve this goal, seven major areas of action have been implemented:

Access to water: From the beginning, the association has aimed at achieving a sustainable drinking water supply to the villages. Today, two wells supply 11 villages and allow the irrigation of community fields in the dry season.

Health: In this poor region, access to basic health care was quickly identified as a priority. Over the years, infrastructure and the necessary teams for monitoring and care of the populations have been put in place. Thus, a dispensary and a maternity hospital were created and public health campaigns are regularly conducted in the field. The NGO is planning to establish a mutual insurance company to further reduce the healthcare costs of the villagers.

Education: Considered a key means to curb the rural exodus and generate economic activity, education is an area in which the Association of Villagers of Ndem has invested heavily in creating classes from kindergarten to the end of primary school. In the early years the teachers were volunteers. Recently, they have been replaced by state teachers.

Agricultural production: Very quickly, the drinking water wells allowed the development and diversification of the agricultural production in the villages of the Ndem region. Today, the infrastructure not only ensures the livelihoods of the populations but it is also a source of additional income for villagers.

Microcredit: In order to encourage the creation of new economic activities, the Association of Villagers of Ndem has set up a savings fund through which microcredit can be provided to the villagers.

Alternative energy: To curb deforestation, officials of the NGO have set up an innovative project; the «Bioterra» project is to manufacture a new type of environmentally-friendly fuel made from natural clay and shell residues.

Job creation: The overall project of the Association of Villagers of Ndem clearly aims at the economic and social development of the area, which involves employment-generating activities. Thus the Centre for Careers of N’Dem was established. It includes a dozen craft workshops, which manufacture more than 400 types of products. This social enterprise enables nearly 300 artisans and employees to work in and around Ndem. They benefit from wages that allow living in good conditions and from services implemented in other areas of the project.
Now, the two main fields of activity are crafts and textiles. The textile value chain includes workshops for weaving, dyeing, tailoring, accessories and furnishings (sheets, tablecloths...).

The crafts value chain includes workshops for leather, calebasses or wood, for making figurines and beads and for metal recovery, basketry and pottery. It also includes the production of embroidery and patchwork. The majority of artisans works in the textile value chain and in basketry and nearly 60% of the artisans are women.

The Crafts Centre located in Ndem houses all workshops except those for pottery and basketry, which allow women of more remote villages to work at home. A significant part of the production of the Association of Villagers of Ndem is sold on the fair trade market through the organisation Artisans du Monde whose management discovered the Senegalese NGO through their Parisian store where Aissa Mbow Cissé’s mother worked. In the mid-1990s, appealed by the project and the voluntarism of the management of the Senegalese Association, they offer them to become a part of the Artisans du Monde circuit.

Today Aissa is the vice-president of the Association of Villagers of Ndem. She recalls, «We chose to employ artisans under good conditions of pay, as part of a collaborative project to achieve our initial objectives. We did not know we were doing fair trade. They came and told us!»

If the orders of Artisans du Monde, and Oxfam-Magasins du monde in Belgium, contribute effectively to secure employment in crafts and textile value chains, they are not considered an exclusive track by the management of the association. One of the goals of the association is to increase local sales in order not to depend entirely on the international market.

Although perfectly suited to fair trade channels and designed in accordance with the deepest values, the productions of the Association of Villagers of Ndem are not certified. The management also does not particularly want to obtain certification.

«The notion of solidarity is an important value, but trade relations should be complemented by cultural and spiritual exchanges because that is what really makes up the richness and interest of international trade.»

Babacar Mbow, founder and president of the NGO Association of Villagers of Ndem

To know more about it:
www.oxfammagasinsdumonde.be
www.planete-responsable.com
WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE TRADE?

The International Institute for Environment and Development defined sustainable trade in 2000 as follows:

Sustainable trade takes place when the international exchange of goods and services yields positive social, economic and environmental benefits, reflecting the four core criteria of sustainable development:

1. It generates economic value;
2. It reduces poverty and inequality;
3. It regenerates the environmental resource base;
4. It is carried out within an open and accountable system of governance.

Fair trade and organic are specific models of sustainable trade.

Located in a geographical area of transition between the Sahelian zone and the humid tropics, Senegal faces major demographic imbalances and must deal with a multitude of environmental challenges. Threats, such as pesticides in the Senegal River delta, lead pollution of rivers, deforestation of inland areas, the crisis of fisheries resources and coastal retreat weigh heavily on the country’s future. But, as we shall see, many innovative projects are initiated in Senegal to develop economic activities that respect the environment and human beings.
"With 700 kilometres of coastline and a wide continental shelf of 23,000 square kilometres, the sea and its resources are the primary asset of Senegal. With 70% of protein from fish, the fisheries sector plays a fundamental role in ensuring food security for the Senegalese. Fishing holds a strong position in the national economy and represents an important source of income for the poorest, particularly women, who are traditionally active in the processing and marketing of fishery products."

For nearly 40 years, Senegalese waters have been over-exploited by local fishermen and also by European, American and Asian fleets plying the coast of West Africa.

Drawing attention since the 1990s, the crisis of fisheries resources highlighted how the role of the fleets of northern countries but also inequitable trade relations of the European Union with third countries in Africa, not only threaten marine biodiversity, but also the food security of a large proportion of the population.

The Senegalese government decided in 2006 to focus on food security for its people and not to renew its fishing agreements with the European Union saying that «its concerns and the development dimension of the agreements were largely pushed aside by the European Commission.»

But this decision does not, unfortunately, stop the European fleets from plundering Senegalese marine resources. To maintain their presence in these waters, operators of the North use abusive practices (such as the acquisition of licences and quotas, the creation of facade companies or the «Senegalisations» of vessels) and even engage in pirate fishing and take advantage of the limited control resources of the Senegalese government.

"In 25 years, Senegal’s fisheries resources have declined by three quarters. Young fishermen are increasingly forced into exile using the same boats that were providing a livelihood to their ancestors."

The issue of fisheries and marine resources is vital to the economy of Senegal. Faced with this crisis, the country has been committed since 2000 in a number of actions to ensure food security for its people, to protect biodiversity and to put the economy on a path of sustainable trade.
THE MARINE PROTECTED AREAS AND INDIGENOUS AND COMMUNITY CONSERVED AREAS

The concept of Marine Protected Area (MPA) was initiated in 1995 at the Convention on Biological Diversity to protect threatened marine and coastal areas and to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss with specific measures\textsuperscript{54}. Presented as a buffer against overfishing, Marine Protected Areas are defined as «areas reserved by law where animals, plants and cultural and historical resources are protected.»\textsuperscript{55}

In November 2004, the Senegalese government, sensitized by environmental NGOs, especially the WWF and Océanium, adopted a decree that created the first five Marine Protected Areas in St. Louis, Kayar, Joal-Fadiouth, Abene and Bamboung\textsuperscript{56}.

As a founding political act, the decree states that «the promotion of Marine Protected Areas is a definite advantage for the conservation of the structure, functioning and diversity of ecosystems and their rehabilitation in the event of damage and for the improvement of fishing yields and social and economic benefits for local communities.»\textsuperscript{57}

However, the Marine Protected Areas as originally designed were «based on (...) a great distrust of the first occupants of the premises, if not total disregard for their legitimate interests.»\textsuperscript{58}

Initial assessments have indeed shown a certain sidelining of local people even though the management of coastal ecosystems and the protection of the environment are rooted in the ancestral habits of coastal communities.

In response to this criticism, Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCsAs) were created. They are based on a participatory approach to conservation that is fair, effective and «allows local communities to regain control of their threatened natural areas. They are an alternative to protected areas that are established and managed by states.»\textsuperscript{59}

Confronted with sometimes mixed results of the five Marine Protected Areas, fishing communities in Senegal put a lot of hope in these Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCsAs).

THE MARINE PROTECTED AREA OF BAMBOUNG, A SANCTUARY FOR BIODIVERSITY

With a surface of 7,000 hectares, the Marine Protected Area of Bamboung is located south of Dakar in the Sine Saloum delta, on the lands of the Serere, a seafaring people. Pushed by Océanium, a Senegalese environmental NGO, its creation is the result of a genuine desire of local people to better manage resources and preserve biodiversity. Since April 2003, the area is marked and volunteer ecological guards from the surrounding villages who have established a Management and Supervisory Committee.

It is a sanctuary for endangered species and allows many species of fish, birds and marine mammals (dolphins and manatees) to grow and reproduce in harmony in the tangle of mangrove roots that line the banks of the marine channels. Underground springs reduce salinity while making water more transparent\textsuperscript{60}.

These specific conditions are particularly favourable for the development of flora and fauna. Since the establishment of Marine Protected Area, the species found have increased and the average size of individuals increases and the scientists responsible for monitoring the fish population have also observed the emergence of 23 new species and a growing number of large predators (sharks, barracudas).

To know more about it : www.oceanium.org - www.lafiba.org - www.terre-citoyenne.org
If in Europe (and the West in general), organic production is mostly popular among consumers for its health qualities, it should be noted that these modes of agricultural production have a positive impact on the people who adopt them, on their development and on their environment.

As defined by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), organic agriculture «includes all agricultural systems that promote the environmentally, socially and economically sound production of food and fibres. These systems seek to consider soil fertility is key to successful production.»

By respecting the natural capacity of plants, animals and landscape, they aim to optimize quality in all aspects of agriculture and the environment. Organic farming dramatically reduces external inputs by refraining from the use of chemo-synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and pharmaceuticals. Instead, it allows the powerful laws of nature to improve both yields and disease resistance.»

Labels and complementary standards

Fair trade, sustainable trade and organic agriculture are based on similar approaches. The main differences concern especially the emphasis on social and environmental dimensions of economic activity and the highlighting of a particular criterion in these areas. Overall, if sustainable and organic certification systems focus on the environmental dimension of the project to be labeled, they also fully incorporate the desire to develop the well-being of producers. Thus, to IFOAM, social justice and social rights are an integral part of organic farming. These different types of certification are also likely to converge while seeking to enhance their complementarities. Thus, IFOAM, International Fairtrade and the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) worked together in 1999 to the founding of the Association for International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling (ISEAL), which also served as a reference framework for the development of the new standard in the Fair Trade System of the WFTO, the World Fair Trade Organisation.

This initiative has made it possible to specify the social criteria of sustainable certifications and to establish the conditions «for a mutual promotion of the complementary systems of organic farming and fair trade among members.»
Organic, a production model

In many southern countries the degradation of the environment profoundly affects the lives of people and impedes their development prospects. This is also the case in Senegal where agricultural yields have suffered a steady decline for over 15 years due mainly to human activities. Faced with this situation, farmers’ organisations are rediscovering the virtues of organic farming and are reclaiming production models that were abandoned decades ago under pressure of the French colonial authorities.

Since about fifteen years, the government of Senegal has been withdrawing from production to the advantage of farmers’ organisations that use organic farming techniques to fight against the drop in yields observed in most value chains. Forced to get into debt to obtain ever more expensive seeds, fertilizers and pesticides at the beginning of the season and confronted with the slow withering of their land, the farmers got organized with the support of international agencies to break this vicious circle and to get involved in sustainable development by going organic.

What about the banana?

With worldwide production estimated at 100 million tons, the banana is the fruit most widely produced in the world. Nearly 90% of production is consumed locally, which makes this fruit with its many nutritional benefits the staple food in many developing countries as it contributes to food security of populations.

Since the 1970s, the Senegalese banana sector has continuously grown in terms of volume but demand is such on the domestic market that much of the amount consumed is imported, mainly from Côte d’Ivoire. The development of the value chain in Senegal faces problems of quality, marketing, preservation, processing, transport and storage of the product.

Organise the value chain

The Association of Growers of the Valley of the Gambia (APROVAG) was created in the region of Tambacounda in 1988 at a difficult time that was marked by recurrent droughts, disappearing ground cover and food shortages that became ever more menacing. To address this situation, the rural farming communities of Missirah, Dialacoto and Ntéboulou, with support of African and Canadian development agencies, founded APROVAG to allow local producers to benefit from new revenue by massive investments in the banana crop. For years, the farmers’ organisation has worked to organise the local value chain by strengthening the mechanisms of participatory governance, educating producers in community management of natural resources and transforming the local cooperatives in Economic Interest Groups (EIGs).
Organic bananas from Senegal

The APROVAG teams are supported by Veco Vredeseilanden, a Belgian organisation that helps rural communities. They help the 1,250 members (in 11 EIGs) to master the organic farming techniques. Adopting these new practices has been quite difficult due to the heterogeneous situations, fragile infrastructure and few resources available to the producers. Each stage requires creativity to find natural alternatives in order to improve soils and to fight the many parasites that threaten the plantations.

Now, most of these objectives have been achieved and 4,000 tonnes of bananas produced by APROVAG growers meet the organic agriculture criteria. So, the time has come to make a profit from this work. Indeed, although the crops respect organic standards, the APROVAG banana production is not certified yet. In addition, more efforts are required in terms of product quality and, especially, in terms of marketing on domestic markets (considering the Ivorian rival) and for exports to Europe.

Access to markets

Since the establishment of the organisation, APROVAG teams have done a great job to bring together peasant communities threatened by poverty, soil depletion and climatic disorders. In just over 20 years, an agricultural value chain has been organised, collective structures have been established and new production models have been implemented and adopted.

To finally reap the fruits of these efforts, APPROVAG and the Belgian NGO Veco Vredeseilanden launched a new project at the beginning of 2011. It aims at strengthening the banana value chain in Tambacounda, at certification of its production and at improving product quality. An integrated action programme is set up with the financial support of the Trade for Development Centre of BTC, the Belgian development agency, with the purpose to significantly increase producer revenue and to incorporate the value chain in the European organic (and later fair) market circuits. To do this, means are mobilized to increase yields of farms and set up technical teams and infrastructure that will manage this growth. At the same time, substantive action is taken to achieve certification: informing producers, formalisation of procedures, preparation and organisation of audits (organic and Fairtrade), etc. To achieve these objectives, modules to strengthen the APROVAG teams are implemented, especially in commercial, marketing and logistic fields. This general approach will provide the Senegalese rural organisation with resources enabling Tambacounda producers to regain domestic market shares and to enter into organic banana market segments with high added value in Europe.

Ultimately, the approach taken by the APROVAG and its partners is the only one that has any chance of success.

The only way to care for Senegalese soils and to make the land rich and fertile again is making local people responsible. It is important to support these rural communities as they seek to improve their living conditions by adopting new sustainable development models that are more respectful of natural and human resources.

In concrete terms, this is the real challenge of the XXIst century.

To know more about it:

www.aprovag.org
www.vredeseilanden.be
CONCLUSION

Between loss of fisheries resources, demographic imbalances and desertification, threats to Senegal are many and complex. To cope with these dangers, the civil society of this great country of West Africa got organised, involved itself and took stances that are both original and proactive with the ambition to build solutions for the African continent.

Fair trade and sustainable trade are now fully integrated into this model of African development that is courageously advocated by the Senegalese.

Strong voices rise from Senegal to draw a fairer and greener future for the continent.
SOURCES ET REFERENCES

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TRADE FOR DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Trade for Development Centre is a Belgian Development Agency (BTC) programme.

We believe that fair and sustainable trade are a way to decrease poverty. It gives smallholders in the South the opportunity to develop in a sustainable way. We work around three main themes:

> **Trade Support**

**Financial Support**

As part of the Trade for Development Centre (TDC), the Producer Support Programme aims at identifying smallholder organisations (cooperatives, associations, businesses) that develop fair and sustainable trade projects and at providing financial support to them as well as financial management and marketing expertise.

**Marketing Support**

The Centre is expert in «marketing and sales». It supports BTC-projects who want to bring their consumer products and services on the market. We offer:
- Advice in business and marketing
- Analysis of the market
- Coaching in marketing

> **Expertise on fair and sustainable trade**

The Trade for Development Centre is a centre of expertise that keeps track of the evolution of fair and sustainable trade. The TDC tries to inform consumers, authorities, producers and other economic actors as objectively as possible about existing labels and guarantee systems, among other things.

We disseminate information via our website, newsletters and various publications. We also participate to seminars about fair and sustainable trade.

> **Raise awareness**

The Trade for Development Centre organises campaigns to encourage consumers, economic stakeholders and Belgian public authorities to eat, drink and use fair and sustainable products from developing countries.