



A Garden: More Than the Sum of Its Parts

It is always very satisfying to see a beautiful green garden spring seemingly out of nowhere. It's easy to see the initial benefit, but it can be difficult to understand the other positives that a garden brings to a community. Every once in a while, however, we get a glimpse into the deeper value these gardens bring to their communities.

Belel Kelle is one of our newest gardens, near Senegal's northern border with Mauritania. One of the hottest regions of the country, it's hard to believe that anything could grow here. To say that people here are tough is an understatement. Most make their living as nomadic herders, traveling with their livestock for much of the year. Having a garden in a fixed location is new for the village, but

the women here took to it with determination, and in less than a year their garden is yielding harvests that rival established gardens with many more years of experience. It's so successful that many of the women are choosing to stay in the village year-round rather than leaving with the men to tend the livestock!

“Because there are no resources during the dry season, the majority of the population moves to feed their cattle, but this year, because of the garden, many children stay with their mothers to

continue their studies. The school is full of students compared to last year! The garden has brought a big change in this village of Belel Kelle.”

-Omar, Garden Technician

We never know what changes a garden will bring or how communities will use the resources they create from it. Students staying in school is a huge benefit that we never anticipated but are thrilled to see. The people of Belel Kelle are doing a great job, and we are proud to give them the resources to forge their own path to a more prosperous future.

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It's hard to believe that anything could grow here - this is Belel Kelle garden before. See the after photo at the top of this page.



Children now stay in school rather than leaving the village with their families to tend the livestock.



One of the hottest regions in the country, this thermometer shows the ground temperature at over 120 degrees F.

From the Team

We had the rare pleasure of having three of our US-based staff in Senegal at the same time! This allowed us to dive deep with our team on the ground there and make BIG plans for the future.

Keur Soce High School is finishing up its first year of classes, and with enrollment increasing we finalized plans with the administration to construct an additional two classrooms to meet their current need. We also discussed the possibility of adding a school garden in the future with an attached science classroom to help boost their science curriculum.

In the gardens, we got to witness the first fish harvest from our pilot aquaculture program! The women and technicians have worked so hard to learn this new skill, and we couldn't be happier to celebrate their success with them.

In Podor we met with local leaders to plan a permanent tree nursery which will allow us to grow thousands of beneficial trees where they are desperately needed.

These are just a few examples of the amazing things our team is working on, and we are so excited to see these programs continue to grow and thrive.

From all of us, “Jéréjéf!” – Thank You!



A rare moment when three of our US-based staff (Lewis, Garrison, and Crystal) are in Senegal at the same time.



We were honored to help cut the ribbon at the official opening ceremony for Keur Soce High School!



After only six months since launching the aquaculture program, the fish are big enough to harvest. Each of the pilot gardens received advanced training, which will help them move towards self-sufficiency and reap the maximum benefits from the project.



Fresh fish is hard to come by in these arid regions of Senegal. But now garden participants enjoy the nutritional benefits of fresh fish while also seeing their gardens bursting through the use of water from the fish ponds for their plants.



These trees will become live fencing that will protect gardens from animals and wind. Over time metal fencing deteriorates, but live fencing is sustainable and provides long-term protection while helping to improve the soil.

Meet Seynabou, Garden Technician

Continuing in our series, we would like to introduce you to another member of our team. We think they are pretty amazing and are sure you will agree.

Seynabou Ndao joined our team in 2019. She comes from a large mixed family and is the oldest of her immediate siblings, with two sisters and three brothers. She grew up in the village of Sagatta Djioloff, in the northern region of Senegal, near Podor.

Seynabou attended both elementary and junior high school in her village where she was always among the top students. However, there was not a high school in her village, so she moved in with her aunt and uncle nearby in Louga where she excelled and completed high school.

Drawn to the sciences, Seynabou continued her education at University Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar where she studied physics and chemistry. Her



Seynabou joined the Andando team in 2019.

program included a six month internship, and she was given a list of partner businesses and nonprofits to choose from. This is how Seynabou first heard about Andando, and we were her first choice for her internship!

Moving to Keur Soce was a great adventure: the way of life was different, the food was different, the ethnic groups and languages spoken in rural villages were different. But that didn't stop Seynabou. She made quick friends with the staff and garden

participants and became a great asset to the team.

After completing her internship and graduating from university, we asked if she would continue on with us as a Garden Technician --she said yes!

“What attracted me to the women is the way they integrate themselves, the familiarity. I am free, and I really enjoy working with them.”

Seynabou is incredibly social and loves spending time with people. You might find her displaying some of her gymnastics skills. She's also a bit of a jokester and will perform comedy bits much to the amusement of others. Your support enables Seynabou to help her fellow citizens. Thank you for investing in their future!

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Seynabou as a young girl, about 6 years old.



At university with some of her classmates (Seynabou is second from left with blue scarf).



Working alongside the women, the gardens Seynabou manages are lush and very productive.



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27

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