

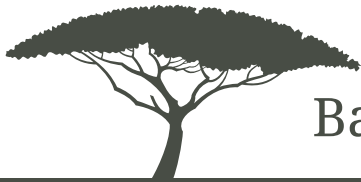
WOMEN'S COOPERATIVE GARDENS

ANDANDO'S AGRICULTURE PROGRAM IN SENEGAL



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Background: Why garden in the Sahel?

Andando works in some of the poorest areas of rural Senegal. Malnutrition and food scarcity in these communities have roots in poverty, lack of resources, geography, and a harsh climate, intensified every year by climate change.

Andando's women's garden participants typically have little to no access to other income generating activities, making gardening the family's only source of income and nutrition during the oppressive dry season. Many of the children in these villages exhibit stunted growth, and health records indicate that roughly 13% suffer from acute malnutrition.



For over 15 years, Andando has led programs in water, sanitation, agriculture, education, health, and microfinance in two rural regions of Senegal: Kaolack and Podor.

Our agriculture program has established 40 women's cooperative gardens in these regions. The results have been astounding - both in the physical transformation of degraded landscapes and the economic prosperity achieved by thousands of women.



Before: The site of the Keur Wack women's garden before construction.



After: The Keur Wack garden 5 years later, after establishing over 800 beneficial trees.



Project Overview

Andando gardens average 2-acres in size and utilize solar well pumps to fill watering basins distributed throughout the space. Crops are watered by hand, avoiding the costly and unsustainable upkeep of irrigation systems. For the first two years of production, Andando pays for 100% of expenses while the group works to establish the garden and begins contributing 15% of sales to their savings account. Removing financial pressure during this establishment phase gives garden members time to build their savings, learn new techniques, and establish the forest garden structure, a form of permaculture utilizing intensive tree planting.



Cost

It takes approximately **\$50,000** to start one cooperative garden. Costs include:

- Solar water pump infrastructure
- 5000 L elevated water tank
- 6 concrete watering basins
- 2 acres of perimeter fencing
- Sanitary latrine
- Garden tools/supplies/seeds
- Daily garden technician for 2 years

After 2 years, the garden sustains itself, with no more outside funding.



Each Andando garden establishes at least 500 native trees. This acacia melifera live fence on the left creates an impenetrable barrier, protecting the garden while enriching its soil and sequestering carbon.

Social Impact: Food Security & Financial Security

Each garden transforms the daily life of **100-200 rural Senegalese women**. Women who once had few, if any, economic opportunities are now successful market gardeners. Participants see on average a 25% increase in household income.

Approximately **1000 people** in each community gain access to nutrient dense organic produce, along with increased income to pay for school fees, medical needs, and other entrepreneurial ventures.

Environmental Impact: Mitigating Climate Change in the Sahel

Andando teaches our partner communities **regenerative permaculture** techniques that improve soil fertility and sequester carbon. This process involves unlearning many damaging colonial agriculture practices that encouraged deforestation and chemically intensive monocrop production.

The forest garden system substantially increases annual rainy season recharge of aquifers and mitigates ground water loss during the hot dry season.

Timeline: 5 months to lay the groundwork



Begin construction using local materials and skilled contractors



Participants begin training on market gardening and financial literacy



Month 1

Month 2

Month 3

Month 4

Month 5

Hold village meetings and sign collaborative agreements



Provide garden tools, supplies, and the first year of seeds to the women's group



The women plant their first seedlings in the garden!

Walking Together: The next two years and beyond

Mastering any new skill takes time. Andando provides each garden with a trained agricultural technician to work with them daily for the first two years of production. These local experts live alongside our partner communities, speak their language, understand their culture, and help the women to master the skills needed to become expert market gardeners.



Andando garden technician Sall greets the Nguendar women's cooperative that he worked with for 2 years.

Long term sustainability:

Each garden maintains a savings account at a local bank. By the end of the two years of subsidized support, garden profits are sufficient to cover all yearly expenses. The cooperative continues to grow their savings, for infrastructure maintenance and future repairs. At this point the women are fully managing and sustaining their garden on their own.

Permanent partners:

There is no limit to the number of years that these gardens can operate, but materials will wear out over time. To ease this challenge Andando remains in contact with all gardens so that we can help to identify problems and facilitate repairs. No matter what happens in the future we want to ensure that all Andando supported gardens can continue to operate for the benefit of their communities.



Testimonials from the field:

“My husband has just passed away, but what I gain from the garden, I feed my children from it. As of now I am playing the role of father and mother, because their father is no longer with us.” — Racky Ndiaye



“It has allowed me to gain a sense of freedom since I am making more income. I am able to pay for many things – especially for my children – that was not possible before.” — Kardiata Ba

“There is potential that sleeps in us. The garden has allowed me to acquire a new spirit of entrepreneurship now that I can be more productive during the nine months of the dry season in Senegal. This garden has increased my income and given me hope.” — Dieynaba Ba



In the Wolof language “Andando” means “walking together”



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We are committed to walking with our partner communities for the long haul, through a holistic approach that addresses the root causes of poverty. We believe in our partner communities’ ability to change their own lives. We have seen it happen for over 15 years!

Contact info@Andando.org to learn how you can support this and other Andando programs in rural Senegal.



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