



## Andando - June 2015

### Mbouma School Finished!

March 19th, 2015 was a very important day for the town of Mbouma, Senegal, and a very important day for Andando as well. The town of Mbouma officially opened the brand new Mbouma Junior High School and it is now open and filled with happy students!

By partnering with local builders, school administrators, parents, happy students – and all our donors around the world!!! – we are very proud to be a part of this milestone for this rural farming town in southern Senegal. Starting last summer, we asked many of you to join us in building this landmark structure for this community in need, and you responded.

Working hard over the last 8 months, we walked together with the people in Mbouma in creating a safe and healthy learning environment that will be the home to future generations. They previously met in harsh conditions, which prompted some parents to pull their children from school thinking it was just not worth it. Now they have a place they can be proud of and a foundation to use as a building block for future successes.



The town marked the occasion with a big ceremony where everyone was invited. The village chief, the principal, the teachers, parents, and students were all there, as well as some regional dignitaries representing various government ministries. As is the case in Senegal, *everyone* makes a speech and the event is marked with much fanfare. They concluded by the first official raising of the Senegalese flag – an important symbol for each school – the singing of the national anthem, and some refreshments for everyone.

We were excited to be able to be a part of this and we hope you will share in that excitement with us. This is also the first school construction project that Andando has done, and we hope it is just the first of many more to come! Thank you again for all who helped make this a reality!

### Save the Date:

Andando will be hosting our first annual fundraising celebration and we would love for you to come! Mark your calendars for **Thursday, October 29, 2015 at Willamette Valley Vineyards in Turner, Oregon**. There will be great food, wine, music, an auction, and other special events. Please join us to hear more about what we have accomplished together, and where we're headed in the future. More details to follow as the date approaches.

## We Are No Longer Unemployed, We Are Gardeners

Andando has worked hard over the last several years to establish thriving vegetable gardens in the arid peanut region of Senegal. Working with local groups, we installed wells and solar-powered pumps to irrigate gardens run by women's cooperatives. They have responded by working hard and dedicating themselves to the success of the garden and the hope it can give for a better future. Beyond the initial investment, our Garden Technicians work with them on a daily basis to provide technical assistance, special training workshops, and other support.



We recently sat down with Kardiata Ba – one of the women in the co-ops – to discuss what the project has done for her and the changes she has felt, both in herself and in her community.

*- What have you learned as a member of the Keur Soce women's garden project?*

The vegetable garden has strengthened my abilities and my confidence. Of course, before this market garden, I tried to practice gardening but it didn't succeed. We have learned much and now I know how to move forward.

*- How has your participation in the project changed what you believe about yourself?*

It has allowed me to gain a sense of freedom and pride since I am making more income. I am able to pay for many things – especially for my children – that was not possible before. The garden has made the community more united and organized. Working together empowers the whole community and we are becoming more successful.

*- How has the project changed what you spend your time on?*

There is awareness of the importance of time. Indeed, we have discovered that time is investment capital. Before, we spent a lot of time and hard work in the savannah looking for tamarind, jujube, or picking up a few handfuls of peanuts left in the field, but were left with very little. Now, with the effort we put in here, we are making strides.

*- What else are you doing differently?*

With the money we contribute each month into our group savings, we believe that tomorrow we can achieve a degree of financial autonomy for the budget of our activities especially for things like tools, seeds, and maintenance. It has made me believe that rural women can actively participate in the development of the community.



*- How does this make you feel about the future?*

The entire community knows that we are no longer the unemployed. We are gardeners.

*- How has the project changed the future of the community?*

The development of the community can benefit from the support of partners such as Andando. The women working here consider themselves to have two major advantages: the economic and nutritional aspects. With these tangible benefits things are improving, and we encourage Andando to accompany us yet for new challenges.

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## Looking Forward to the Rest of 2015

On top of building the capacity of those already in the program, we are currently building two additional solar pump systems to irrigate two more market gardens like the ones described above. Two additional schools will be rehabilitated and given enhanced educational opportunities and materials affecting over 700 eager students. We are also continuing to develop our training center and conducting a series of classes to equip villagers to help themselves in the areas of new agricultural techniques, small business training, health and sanitation, and basic reading and writing skills.

These programs are making a real impact in Senegal and we are excited about the direction we are headed together. But to do even more, we need your help! *Please consider making a donation to Andando today.* We rely on the generosity of our supporters to keep these vital initiatives going. Andando is a certified 501(c)(3) organization which means every dollar you give to The Andando Foundation is completely tax-deductible!

**To partner with us in walking together with the people of Senegal, go to [www.andando.org/donate](http://www.andando.org/donate). Thank you!**