

Feed the Future Senegal Youth in Agriculture (YIA)

A program at the Center for International Research, Education,
and Development





Feed The Future
Senegal Youth
in Agriculture
Project

\$4 million

5-year project

INCREASING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN SENEGAL'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

Nestled in the western corner of Africa is a nation brimming with opportunity, life, and hope – hope for better futures.

Senegal, renowned for its vibrant culture and growing economy, relies heavily on the agricultural sector. Like in many parts of the developing world, youth constitute the largest demographic with 60 percent of the population under 25 years of age. Considering that many youth live in rural areas where food insecurity and malnutrition is typically high, it is vital to provide them with the essential skills to be active participants in their country's economic development.

It is in this context that the Youth in Agriculture project aims to make a difference.

Launched in 2018, Youth in Agriculture (YIA) builds the capacity and supports the institutionalization of positive youth development (PYD) and vocational training systems that create dynamic and profitable entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for youth, focusing especially on agricultural value chains and markets.

Funded by Feed the Future and supported by USAID/Senegal and managed by Virginia Tech's Center for International Research, Education, and Development (CIRED), the project has two components:

- Establish and institutionalize a national positive youth development program, building on the 4-H Senegal Positive Youth Development program started by USAID/Education and Research in Agriculture (ERA), the project that CIRED managed
- Improve vocational training and business development services by testing innovative approaches to strengthen training institutions' connections with private sector actors and markets

2015 4-H Launches in Senegal

578 4-H Senegal Members

182 Trained 4-H Leaders

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

In developing countries, youth can be viewed as threats as opposed to resources. Un- and under-employment can lead to issues such as social unrest, illegal immigration, political instability, radicalization, crime, and poverty. Youth in Agriculture opens the doors to new opportunities that channel governmental, institutional and community resources into programs that help develop a new generation that will spur economic growth.

Positive youth development (PYD) focuses on engaging youth as well as their families, communities, and governments so that youth are empowered to reach their full potential. PYD programs help youth gain the skills, knowledge, and support they need to function well in their environments: leadership, teamwork, self-esteem, critical thinking, problem solving, goal setting, cooperation, empathy, and resiliency.



Youth in 4-H clubs participate in a variety of hands-on activities such as composting, laboratory trips, planting and selling, and sports.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET)

Positive youth development alone is not sufficient to produce improved youth employment and entrepreneurship outcomes. There is also a need to catalyze innovations in vocational training, to ensure that young people gain both 'soft' and 'hard' skills that are relevant and in-demand by labor markets that are in their areas.

TVET helps to fill the skills gap by ensuring that these future employees gain skills demanded by private sector labor markets.

Youth in Agriculture serves as both a convener and catalyst—using trainings, curricular co-creation workshops, and collaborative innovation platforms supported via small sub-awards—to put innovators, educators, entrepreneurs, employers, investors, and other stakeholders together in structured, facilitated encounters to address curricula, training, funding, and other issues in new ways.



INCREASING EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Showing how PYD and TVET are linked through YIA, this teen in the Fatick region is learning metal-working skills with his 4-H club.



The project connects Virginia Tech's expertise in positive youth development and technical and vocational training with the Government of Senegal's efforts to improve the TVET systems. With strong partnerships, experienced program administrators, and promising results from Virginia Tech's work in Senegal for nearly a decade, Youth in Agriculture is expected to strengthen the country's systems to yield lasting impact, empowering youth and placing them squarely at the center of Senegal's community development and economic growth.

Youth in Agriculture TVET activities

- National study of TVET institutions and programs
- Training of trainers on youth employment and entrepreneurship
- Co-creation of curricula by instructors and private sector representatives
- Networking and exchange events for youth, employers, and investors
- Establishment of public private partnerships between Senegalese partners and national and international firms and foundations
- Small-grant program for innovative TVET practices
- Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education



Students and faculty at the Training Center for Horticultural Professionals discuss internships and employment prospects in Senegal's horticultural value chains. YIA works closely with this and other TVET centers on both PYD and TVET innovation strengthening.



A young member of the Toubacouta 4-H club explains the methods his club uses to establish nurseries of fruit tree seedlings, demonstrating his vocational skills in agriculture.

Feed the Future Senegal Youth in Agriculture (YIA) Project Goal:
Increased youth engagement in Senegal's economic growth

Component 1:

The Senegal national youth program is established and institutionalized

Result 1:1

The national youth program governance structure is embedded within the Government of Senegal

Result 1:2

The national youth program is financially sustainable

Result 1:3

The national youth program uses evidence-based pedagogical materials and approaches

Component 2:

Vocational training and business development services are improved

Result 2:1

Institutions have tailored programs that address the needs of local communities

Result 2:2

Institutions develop, use, and share training materials to address skills mismatch for youth

Result 2:3

Institutions serve more individuals with tailored programs and training materials

A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH

Two of the key principles of Youth in Agriculture are **sustainability** and **ownership**. Youth in Agriculture is supported by the Government of Senegal and other institutional partners, including universities, communities, and the private sector.

The national project office is embedded with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation and the regional offices of the national PYD program within universities. The project is also well aligned with partner ministries, especially the Ministry of Vocational Training, Apprenticeship, and Skilled Crafts.



Senegal's Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation has expressed its support of the 4-H program, given the potential benefits to thousands of Senegalese youth.

4-H SENEGAL

One of the primary goals of the project is to scale up, improve, and formalize the 4-H Senegal Positive Youth Development program.

Originating from the land-grant universities and cooperative extension models in the US, 4-H promotes the active participation of universities and agricultural training centers in developing a new generation of agriculturists. The program links agricultural institutions and their pedagogical expertise with local youth who seek valuable knowledge and experience in agriculture.

For more than 100 years, the U.S. 4-H model has provided youth with experiential learning activities while increasing their life skills such as entrepreneurship and leadership. The 4-H (head, hands, heart, and health) program encourages youth development, youth entrepreneurship, and agricultural education in social and economic life. In the United States, there are nearly six million members.

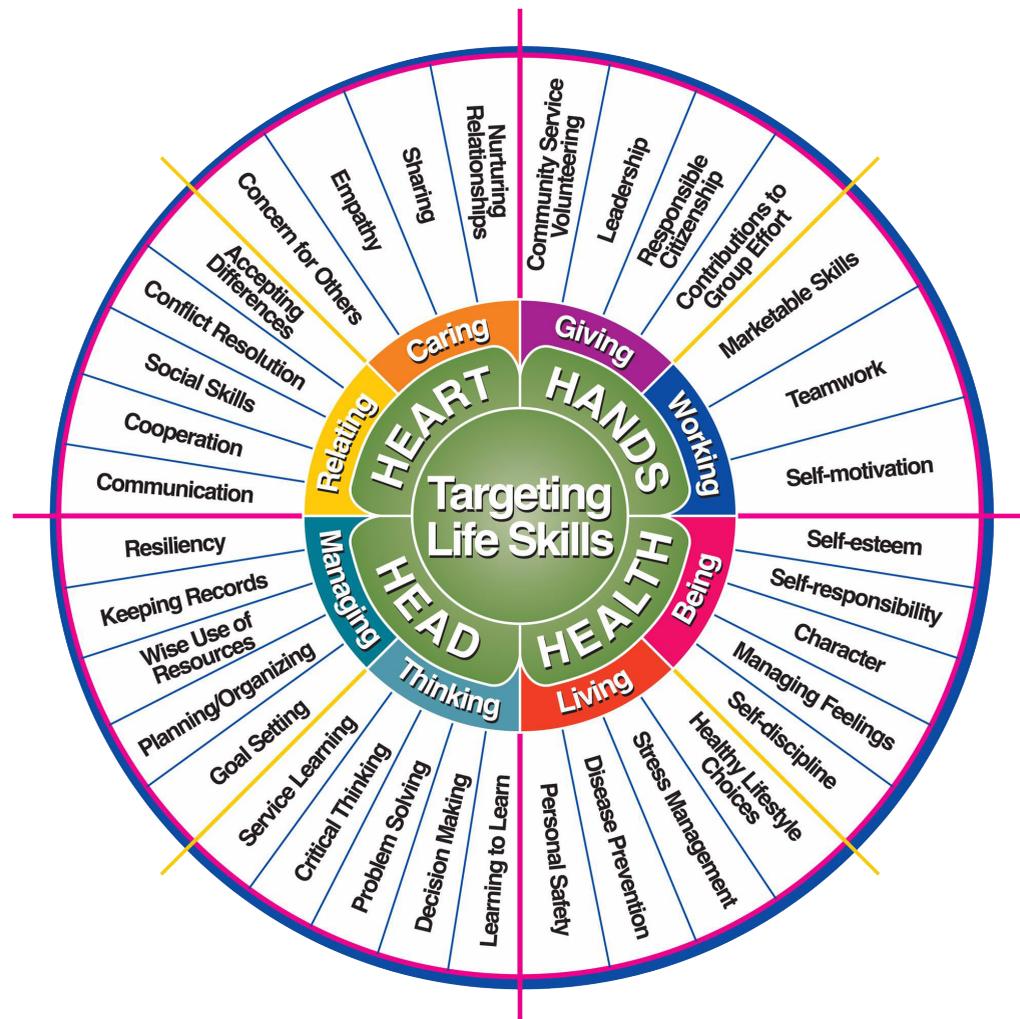


I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service, and my health to better living, for my club, my community, my country, and my world.

-4-H pledge

In March 2015, the Education and Research in Agriculture (ERA) project – an eight-year project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development and managed by Virginia Tech’s Center for International Research, Education, and Development – launched a rural positive youth development program based on the U.S. 4-H model. Three pilot clubs were established in Toubacouta, south of the capital of Dakar—marking the first time a 4-H club has been established in francophone Africa.

TARGETING LIFE SKILLS MODEL FOR 4-H



Hendricks, P. (1998) "Developing Youth Curriculum Using the Targeting Life Skills Model" <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4H/skls.eval.htm>



AIDA'S STORY

For Aida Dieng, 4-H represents community, inspiration, and education.

In March 2015, three representatives from Virginia Tech – Bineta Guisse, Kathleen Jamison, and Tom Archibald – traveled to Senegal and trained a group of community leaders, local and Peace Corps volunteers, faculty from Senegalese partner institutions, and government officials. The overall objectives were to create programs to help youth develop life skills and to establish a safe and positive learning environment for youth to develop self-efficacy in meeting the needs of the community. Aida's father, Mr. Dieng, was among the first group of people to receive this training.

Following the training in 2015, Mr. Dieng and Aida helped to start one of three pilot 4-H clubs in the small village of Toubabcouta. Aida, who was 14 years old at the time, and other club members began meeting and participating in a variety of activities such as composting, fundraising, sports, and community clean-ups. The 4-H program was also designed to help children and youth learn new agricultural practices.

Initially, Aida's club lacked the space to practice their gardening skills.

Recognizing an opportunity to not only help his daughter but also to help the community, Mr. Dieng volunteered to start a community garden next to their home. Each month, Aida and other 4-H club members used the garden for hands-on activities such as plantings and irrigation methods.



The 4-H program also helps to boost confidence and empower youth. Aida had begun experiencing difficulty and considered dropping out of school prior to joining 4-H. Aida said, "During the first month, 4-H encouraged me to continue my studies. It encouraged me to work hard."

Aida began taking on leadership roles, including club president, and 4-H leaders and volunteers encouraged her to persevere. Eventually, she successfully passed her exit exams for high school.

Today, Aida is enrolled in college in Dakar, where she studies transportation logistics. During vacations, she is still involved in her old 4-H club in Toubacouta, mentoring the next generation of youth leaders in Senegal.

Miriam Kane, a 4-H member in Southern Senegal, introduces herself during a 4-H training.

"Thanks to 4-H, I have a lot of knowledge. I intend to stay involved in 4-H for the rest of my life." - Aida



4-H clubs help youth throughout Senegal to stay engaged with their communities.

4-H Partner Institutions

-  University partners
- 4-H centers
-  TVET institution partners





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