

May 2021 Sustained Grantee Spotlight: Grandmother Project

As Grandmother Project continues its work in Senegal to end child marriage and FGM/FGC, the strengthened connections between grandmothers, mothers, and daughters are bearing fruit. Grandmothers are gaining confidence in their roles as advisors and advocates, even as younger women are learning more about their rights. The “change through culture” approach is a powerful one in the fight to ensure that all women and girls can reach their potential.

This March 2021 update from Grandmother Project reflects the power of leadership across generations:

Many participants spoke of life before and after grandmothers began to collaborate with the schools. Malang Sagna, Director of l'école 3, noted that when he arrived at the school in 2013 there were many teen pregnancies.

“But after the grandmothers began intervening in the school, we never had another teen pregnancy,” Sagna said.

Teacher Abdourahmane Sylla expressed how much he appreciates the work of the grandmothers: “Thanks to them, every year we have excellent exam results because they supervise the children at home and motivate them to go to school regularly.”

Others spoke of their excitement in reintegrating some traditional practices that had once been lost. In discussing the game, Dippi, Grandmother Leader Téning Mballo explained that Dippi is a traditional game played by young girls at night.

“Dippi is taught by grandmothers and requires stamina and energy from the teenage girl. Dippi is often used as a strategic way for grandmothers to keep an eye on young girls. Indeed, if a girl is pregnant, she will not be able to support the rhythm of Dippi because she will get tired very quickly,” Mballo said.

Adja Tounkang Baldé said that “the songs of the Dippis convey educational messages that help shape the adolescent.”

The power of the Dippi is now being harnessed to both educate girls about the danger of teen pregnancy and also provide them with a safe and fun social activity.

