



*Center for Renewable Energy and Appropriate
Technology for the Environment*

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**18-Month Program Progress Report
Dining for Women
April 2015**

A. Organization Information

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>CREATE! Center for Renewable Energy and Appropriate Technology for the Environment</i>
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<i>Organization Website:</i>	http://www.createaction.org
<i>Program Title for grant request:</i>	Self-Sufficiency for Village Women
<i>Grant Amount requested:</i>	US \$50,431
<i>Two-year grant:</i>	Yes

B. Program Objective and Description

Program Objective:

***Provide a brief description of the program objective pertaining to your DFW program grant request.
Describe any changes to your objective from the Letter of Intent (LOI) previously submitted.***

Consistent with the Millennium Development Goals, the objectives of our program are to reduce poverty, promote self-sufficiency, and improve opportunities for women and girls in the village of Thieneba in Southern Senegal by using appropriate and sustainable technologies and participatory methods to provide protected access to potable water; establish a community garden for year-round crop production; reduce firewood consumption; create income-generating opportunities; and develop the leadership capacity of women and girls.

Program Description:

Provide an overview and brief description of your program and describe any changes to the Letter of Intent (LOI) previously submitted:

To achieve the objectives of our program as described above, we will work with the community of Thieneba to install a solar powered pump and gravity fed irrigation system to access, store, and distribute ample quantities of free, potable water from a hand-dug well at the cooperative garden site; provide fencing, materials, tools, and training in sustainable year-round crop production in cooperative community gardens, using locally provided, non-GMO seeds, organic fertilizers, and compost; teach women and girls to build their own fuel-efficient cookstoves from free local materials, thereby reducing firewood consumption by at least 50 percent; teach women to plant and maintain fruit and nut trees for income generation; provide materials and training for a poultry raising project; and conduct leadership training to support self-sufficiency for women and girls.

Progress Report Content

Please answer the questions as completely as possible:

1. *A brief description of what has been accomplished so far, including progress on the goals and objectives of the program DFW is funding. What impact has been made through DFW's funding?*



Cooperative members care for vegetable seedlings in nurseries before transplanting them into the garden site.

CREATE! programs in Thieneba, Senegal are thriving thanks to funding from DFW. This report describes the progress of *CREATE!* programs in Thieneba during our eighteen months of funding from DFW. With access to clean and abundant water, the community's 2,500 square meter vegetable garden continues to flourish. Since August, cooperative members have grown tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, African eggplant, okra, cucumbers, carrots, watermelons, onion, and lettuce. Women have sold about 1,500 kilograms of eggplant at local markets during the past few months. In January, the Thieneba cooperative harvested and sold their crops of mint and lettuce, both of which are rarely found in rural markets. Nearly 200 women participate in Thieneba's agricultural cooperative. Cooperative members work in groups of 45 and divide watering and weeding responsibilities, making the labor very manageable with respect to the members' other household commitments. *CREATE!* field technicians have also worked with cooperative members in Ouarkhokh to develop and test an organic insecticide made of *neem* fruit. Mixed with compost and spread around plants, this insecticide has successfully protected vegetables from caterpillars and nematodes.



Mere Top, cooperative president in Thieneba, has built two cookstoves in her home.

Women in Thieneba now regularly use improved cookstoves that they build for their households, resulting in a reduction in demand for firewood from local trees. Many cooperative members are now expert cookstove trainers, and have assisted *CREATE!* technicians in leading training sessions in other communities.



Cooperative members plant fruit and nut trees, trees for firewood, and trees for shade and windbreaks.

During the autumn rainy season, Thieneba cooperative members planted 45 tree seedlings in the garden site and around the elementary school and mosque. These trees, including acacia, papaya, mango, *neem*, and cashew, will shade the garden and the village and provide additional sources of food, income, and firewood in the future. The cooperative also distributed 115 tree seedlings to community residents. Each household in Thieneba received at least one tree to plant in their family compound.



At a VSLA meeting in Thieneba, women use stamps to record their contributions. Participants will use the funds to make small loans to group members.

Since July 2014, Voluntary Savings and Lending Associations (VSLA) in Thieneba have been meeting weekly. Association members save small amounts of money each week and then make loans to each other to cover business, personal, and household costs. Each VSLA developed its own procedural rules, elected officers, and set an initial share price. In March 2015, members of VSLAs in Thieneba met to conclude their first savings and lending cycle. VSLAs used a portion of their savings to successfully reimburse *CREATE!* for the initial start-up costs (notebooks, pencils, lockboxes, stamps) for their associations.



The poultry shed in Thieneba is already home to 100 growing chickens!

In January 2015, Thieneba cooperative members worked with *CREATE!* field technicians to construct a poultry shed in the cooperative garden site. This well constructed shed will protect growing chickens from heat and hungry predators. With knowledge and support from *CREATE!*, cooperative members will be able to produce and sell 100 adult chickens every 60 days. In Thieneba, the poultry cooperative installed its first 100 chicks in late February. Women will be able to supplement their families' diets with this important protein source and will be able to sell poultry for profit in local markets.

All of the accomplishments described above and shown in the accompanying photos have been made possible thanks to funding from DFW. At the end of this report, you can read testimonials from cooperative members in Thieneba.

2. *Has anything changed in regard to the original program goals and objectives? If the budget has changed, please include the new program budget.*

Nothing has changed with respect to the original program goals and objectives or to the budget since our proposal was submitted and approved.

3. *Have you experienced any significant challenges or obstacles in implementation? If so, how are you addressing them?*

As with any project in rural Africa, *CREATE!* programs met some challenges since our last progress report. In each case, *CREATE!*'s Senegalese field technicians were able to work with beneficiaries to find creative solutions to these obstacles. *CREATE!* trains our staff to ensure that they are able to successfully meet any challenges head on.

The agricultural cooperative in Thieneba has been so successful that they would like to expand their community garden to accommodate increased vegetable production. *CREATE!* is currently working with community leaders in Thieneba to identify and prepare additional land for an expanded garden site. Because community approval is needed to move forward, this process may take several weeks.

Generally, these types of challenges are motivating for *CREATE!* field technicians and beneficiaries. Through *CREATE!* training, staff and cooperative members feel prepared to confidently address and resolve any programmatic issues.

4. *Has the timeline for the program changed from the original funding application?*

Our original project dates were shown in the budget as 7/1/13-7/31/15; however, these dates were modified to 8/15/13-8/14/15 to coincide with the timing of the disbursement of grant funds. Please note that we actually received our check on September 3, 2013, and began implementation immediately.

5. *Has funding changed for this program? For example, have you received unexpected funding from another source?*

Funding for this program has not changed.

6. *How much of the original DFW restricted funds have been disbursed and how much remain?*

Of our total two-year grant request of \$50,431, we received \$25,215 in September 2013 for the first year of implementation. Of these funds, all \$25,215 was disbursed by August 31st, 2014. We received the remaining

\$25,215 in September 2014 for the second year of project implementation. Of these funds, approximately \$15,000 has been disbursed through April 1st, 2015.

7. *Is your organization or program situation different than presented in the approved proposal? For example, new executive director, significant program staffing changes or NGO affiliation, loss of large funding, or other significant changes?*

Our organization and program situation are substantially the same as presented in the approved proposal and one-year progress report. In October 2014, *CREATE!* received a grant from the Vibrant Village Foundation to expand our comprehensive programs to three new communities in the Guinguineo District of rural Senegal. Three additional communities, where *CREATE!* has led programs for five years, have improved their livelihoods and achieved a level of self-sufficiency where they no longer need *CREATE!*'s assistance or oversight. There are many villages, however, that have expressed interest in participating in *CREATE!* programs and are eager for this opportunity. When additional funding is available, *CREATE!* would like to continue to expand our operations to meet this demand.

Additional Project Information

Photos of current participants and personal experiences from anyone involved in the program.

Aminta Fall, 28, is a cooperative group member in Thieneba. She recently attended an improved cookstove training session and built herself a stove from clay, sand, millet stalks, and water. She now only needs two small sticks to cook all of the day's meals for her family. "The improved cookstove," Aminta says, "saves money and maintains our environment."



A VSLA participant counts group shares. Women use small VSLA loans to support their household or expand their business.

Aminta Fall also praises the training that *CREATE!* provides in economic literacy and income generating activities. She says, “*CREATE!*’s income generating programs are useful and appropriate for us and our needs.” By participating in one of the community’s VSLAs, Aminta has been able to save money. She believes that the cooperative’s new poultry project will significantly increase their profits. “Participating in *CREATE!* training,” she says, “has awakened in me a desire to work and improve my skills and knowledge.”



By participating in VSLA, Aminta Fall is able to save money for her household.

“Even though many men have left Thieneba to look for more lucrative work,” Aminta Fall adds, “our community is still thriving thanks to training from *CREATE!*”

“*CREATE!*’s programs have brought enormous changes to Thieneba.” Seynabou Diop, 35, adds, “improved stoves allow us to save wood and time in food preparation.” Seynabou is an active participant in Thieneba’s garden cooperative and appreciates that she now has easy access to fresh vegetables and a way to make money to support her family.

Seynabou decided to participate in *CREATE!* programs because of the need in her community for training and development for women. Her four years of training and work with *CREATE!* have been invaluable for her and her neighbors. She loves the “solidarity and bravery of female workers” in Thieneba.

A blog-style summary of impact to be used in our communications.

With a DFW grant of \$50,431, *CREATE!* is helping women and girls in the village of Thieneba establish cooperative community gardens that produce tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, potatoes, and lettuce year-round for home use and sale. Garden cooperative members now have access to abundant quantities of affordable water pumped using renewable solar energy. Cooperative members use basins and a gravity-fed irrigation system to maintain the adjacent 2,500 square meter vegetable garden. *CREATE!* has also provided training to women in Thieneba on the construction and use of fuel-efficient cookstoves - these stoves have helped women reduce their firewood use by half. Women are also caring for thousands of tree seedlings that they will plant, with the assistance of *CREATE!* field technicians, during the rainy season this year. Through Voluntary Savings and Lending Associations (VSLA), women in Thieneba are able to save some of their profits they make by selling produce grown in their vegetable garden.

Any message you would like us to convey to our membership and donors about the impact our grant is having on those being served and/or your organization and its mission.

The mission of *CREATE!* is to help rural populations in the developing world cope with water, food, and fuel shortages resulting from the impact of climate change on their communities. In the village of Thieneba, *CREATE!* is using a participatory approach to meet the needs of local women in the areas of water, food, and fuel resources. After *CREATE!* provided access to clean water through the rehabilitation of an existing well, Thieneba residents have initiated several programs to contribute to their own development. Village women, with guidance from *CREATE!* agricultural technicians, have established a 2,500 square meter vegetable garden. For the first time ever, year-round vegetable cultivation is possible with access to a reliable source of affordable water pumped using renewable solar energy. The vegetable garden produces tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, potatoes, and lettuce that will improve nutrition and provide income generation opportunities.

CREATE! field technicians have also trained women in the construction, use, and maintenance of fuel-efficient cookstoves. These stoves, which cost nothing and are constructed from local materials, reduce firewood consumption by half. In addition to improving the health and safety of the home, the use of these cookstoves allows women to avoid daily searches for firewood and the high costs of purchased firewood. *CREATE!*'s programs are sustainable because our staff members include beneficiaries at each stage of the development process, including planning, implementation, and monitoring. By empowering women to fully participate in development programs, *CREATE!* ensures that beneficiaries "own" the project in perpetuity.



In January, Ron and Pam Taylor visited the garden site in Thieneba. This photo also depicts four of the garden's water basins and the solar array for the site's solar-powered pump.

During a January 2015 visit to Senegal, *CREATE!* Board Member Ron Taylor noted that *CREATE!*'s partner communities, "were reaching a tipping point where they realize that all of their effort in the cooperative gardens is not so much about gaining access to vegetables but more about rising out of poverty towards economic freedom." *CREATE!*'s escalating development programs in Thieneba have helped women reach this level of success and self-sufficiency.

This winter, *CREATE!* introduced additional income generating projects and leadership training for women and girls. *CREATE!* worked with cooperative members to build a chicken shed and initiate a poultry production program for improved nutrition and income generation.



Using VSLA training, cooperative members are able to save money to expand their gardens and income generating activities in Thieneba.

After eighteen months of successful agricultural, cookstove, and financial literacy programming, *CREATE!* still has work to do in Thieneba. *CREATE!* field technicians will continue to provide ongoing training and assistance for Thieneba cooperative members to deepen and strengthen their knowledge and skills base.

CREATE!'s field team has done exemplary work in Thieneba, realizing the vision and bringing the philosophy, theories, and goals of *CREATE!* into action. With the assistance of our field staff, women in Thieneba are empowered to improve their lives and the lives of their families. Community residents are so pleased with the success of the project so far that village leaders are currently planning to expand the gardens and other programs. This renewed commitment will permit the expansion of existing cooperative groups — allowing more women to participate — and will ensure that *CREATE!*'s programs in Thieneba will thrive for years to come.

High-resolution JPG formatted photos

We have attached to this document high-resolution JPG formatted copies of the photos that we embedded in this report.