



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

*132 West Broadway, Suite 416  
Eugene, Oregon 97401  
www.createaction.org*

**Program Completion Report  
Dining for Women  
December 2015**

***A. Organization Information***

*Organization Name:* CREATE! Center for Renewable Energy and Appropriate Technology for the Environment

*Program Title:* Self-Sufficiency for Village Women

*Grant Amount:* US \$50,431

*Contact Name:* Louise Ruhr  
*Contact Title:* Chief Operating Officer  
*Contact Email and Phone number:* [louise@createaction.org](mailto:louise@createaction.org)  
541-335-9941 (US)  
+221 770 309 428 (Senegal)

*Organization Website:* <http://www.createaction.org>

*Organization Address:* 132 East Broadway, Suite 416  
Eugene, OR 97401

***B. Program Goals***

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

***C. Findings and Overall Outcomes***

1. *Tell us what the program actually achieved. How does it compare to the proposed outcomes?*

Over the past two years, CREATE! field technicians have worked with volunteers in Thieneba to protect access to water; establish a community garden for year-round crop production; reduce firewood use; create income-generating opportunities through the sale of produce and poultry; and develop the leadership capacity of community women. All of these programs have both met and exceeded our proposed outcomes.



*With access to abundant water, cooperative members can now grow vegetables throughout the year.*

Working with volunteers, *CREATE!* field technicians rehabilitated a community well in Thieneba. They also installed a solar powered pumping system and a gravity-fed water distribution system consisting of a 5,000 liter water storage tank and four 4,000 liter aboveground basins. Cooperative members can now easily fill their watering cans at the basins so that they can water their crops. In addition, a new water tap provides clean, affordable water for households throughout the community.



*Thieneba cooperative members tending crops growing in their garden site.*

*CREATE!* field technicians also mobilized and organized 117 women and two men into cooperative groups. These cooperatives helped to clear and fence the 2,500 square meter garden site and prepare it for planting. *CREATE!* field technicians have been training cooperative members in sustainable agricultural techniques. Cooperative members work in groups and divide watering and weeding responsibilities. In the past two years, cooperative members have grown and sold thousands of pounds of tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, African eggplants, okra, cucumbers, carrots, watermelons, onions, lettuce, and mint. Women use profits from the sale of vegetables to expand and improve their garden operations.

Women in Thieneba now regularly use improved cookstoves that they have built 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.

During the recent autumn rainy season, Thieneba cooperative members planted 266 tree seedlings in the garden site and around the community's elementary school and mosque. These trees, including papaya, mango, acacia, and *morenga*, will shade the garden and the village and provide additional sources of food, income, and firewood in the future. The cooperative also distributed tree seedlings to community residents. Each household in Thieneba received at least one tree to plant in their family compound.

Since July 2014, Voluntary Savings and Lending Associations (VSLAs) 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. Community VSLAs are now participating in their second savings and lending cycle.

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 protects 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. The cooperative has sold more than 300 chickens and are now working to expand their production capacity. Poultry cooperative participants are now able to supplement their families' diets with this important protein source and are able to sell poultry for profit in local markets.

With training and support from *CREATE!*, women in Thieneba now have secured access to clean water and improved cookstoves. They know how to cooperatively grow vegetables and raise chickens for both sale and home use. Women are also able to manage their profits in VSLAs and support each others' business ventures. In Thieneba, women are now empowered to sustain themselves and their families.

2. *What challenges were encountered when implementing the project? What actions were taken to address them? Include information about any new collaboration with other NGOs, CBOs, or governmental groups.*

*CREATE!* encountered few challenges when implementing this project. Prior to the initiation of project activities in Thieneba, community residents were not familiar with participatory, grassroots development projects. Decades of colonialization and misguided development programs have disempowered many living in rural Senegal. This culture of dependency results in many communities expecting to receive handouts from nonprofits. Because of this history, *CREATE!* field technicians had some difficulty initially in motivating project participants.

Our field technicians met with village chiefs, imams, and educational leaders to discuss the importance of community participation and self-sufficiency. Staff members also met with cooperative members weekly to discuss *CREATE!*'s project procedures and participatory approach to development. Ultimately, these discussions led to the drafting and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between *CREATE!*, the Thieneba cooperative president, and village leaders. This MOU outlines the financial and participatory commitments of all signers.

By requiring both physical and financial participation in activities, *CREATE!* helps produce community ownership of projects. *CREATE!* programs help communities gain knowledge to help themselves become self-sustaining and break the cycle of dependency.

These agricultural and economic training programs empower women to provide for themselves and their families by selling produce, nuts, fruits, and chickens at local markets. In addition, VSLA training helps cooperative members manage their savings and invest in each other to produce community-based, cooperative change.

In Senegal, we collaborate with representatives of the Senegalese Department of Agriculture, Ministry of the Environment, Department of Rural Development, and the Department of Water and Forestry to conduct trainings in improved cookstove construction, tree planting, and sustainable agriculture. *CREATE!* partners with local civil administrative officers in Senegal to ensure that our beneficiaries have the full support and confidence of local authorities.

3. *Describe unexpected events and outcomes, including unexpected benefits.*

As with any project in rural Africa, *CREATE!* programs met some unexpected challenges over the two-year project period. In each case, *CREATE!*'s Senegalese field technicians were able to work with beneficiaries to find creative solutions to these obstacles. Many of these challenges led to both learning opportunities and unexpected benefits.

In the first year of project implementation, *CREATE!* was unable to excavate a new well in the village garden site after well diggers encountered an impenetrable layer of hard rock about 100 feet down. Instead, the *Marabout* (a highly influential local religious leader) graciously agreed to donate a fully functioning well and adjacent land to the *CREATE!* project. As a result of this donation, *CREATE!* has built a strong relationship with the *Marabout*, who now acts as a cheerleader for our partnership with the community of Thieneba.

In spring 2014, many communities in rural Senegal suffered crop loss from hungry locusts. *CREATE!*'s field technicians engineered an ingenious solution to combat locust infestations in Thieneba. The cooperative garden in Thieneba is especially tempting for locusts because it is a green oasis in Senegal's arid landscape. Most farmers treat locusts with chemical pesticides, but our staff found that recycled mosquito nets are very effective locust deterrents. Cooperative members and their neighbors recycled their old mosquito nets, or purchased nets from a local health clinic, and used this netting to cover garden plots. Mosquito nets are a locally and culturally appropriate solution to protect crops from pests. Once community members put the mosquito nets in place, the locusts abated and left the region without causing major damage to crops in *CREATE!* community gardens.

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.

4. *Did you change your strategy as a result of obstacles you encountered? How will you address these challenges in the future?*

Due to our initial challenges in motivating beneficiaries, *CREATE!* has now modified our approach to partnering with beneficiary communities. *CREATE!* field technicians now hold extensive discussions about participation and commitments with community leaders and participants prior to initiating project activities. *CREATE!* now always signs a mutual MOU with community leaders before implementation begins. This new approach has ensured the dedication and motivation of project participants at every stage of program implementation.

5. *Approximately how many lives have been touched, both directly and indirectly, by the program?*

In the community of Thieneba, 117 women and two men directly participated in *CREATE!* agriculture and poultry training and cooperatives. About 119 households in Thieneba (approximately 1,000 people) participated in improved cookstove training or received other indirect benefits from *CREATE!* programs in their community.

6. *What was the overall impact, both direct and indirect, in the lives of women, children, and the community at large?*

Thanks to funding from Dining for Women, women and children in the community of Thieneba now have secure access to clean water to use at home and to water crops in their cooperative garden. This new water source is purer and less saline than the water previously consumed in the community. As salty water can cause health complications for the elderly, children, and pregnant women, access to clean water has improved health in the community.

With training in sustainable vegetable production, cooperative members in Thieneba can now grow their own fresh vegetables for sale and to use in their own homes. Now that women no longer need to walk to neighboring villages to buy lower quality vegetables, families are consuming more healthful foods. All those living in the community benefit from improved access to healthy, inexpensive, and high-quality vegetables. With access to water, cooperative members can ensure that fresh vegetables are now available throughout the year. Cooperative members are also able to earn an income to support their families through the sale of vegetables in the village market.

In addition, women who use improved cookstoves have reduced their consumption of firewood by 50 to 70 percent. They also save money as they no longer need to buy as much firewood and save time because they do not need to walk long distances to collect wood for cooking meals. The enclosed design of improved cookstoves also helps prevent fires and burns.

The reforestation program in Thieneba has helped to moderate the local climate through the addition of shade trees. In just a few years, these trees will also provide fruit, nuts, and a source of firewood for everyone in the community.

Members of Thieneba's poultry cooperative now have a sustainable source of income to support their families. Now that they know how to properly raise and manage poultry in cooperative groups, some women may decide to build their own poultry sheds at home. In several of *CREATE!*'s partner communities, poultry cooperative members have built a local market for their chickens by providing consistent and easy access to high-quality meat for their neighbors and friends. Community members now prefer to purchase their meat from *CREATE!* cooperatives rather than buying lower quality imported meat. Cooperative members in all of our partner communities are now expanding their production to meet this local demand.

Members of VSLAs in Thieneba can now manage their profits and make loans to their fellow members. Participating in a VSLA can help a woman pay for household expenses or expand a business such as a market stall. VSLAs empower women to sustainably and independently manage their money and plan for their future and the future of their children.

7. *What are the measurements used to monitor success and how was this information measured (surveys, observation, etc.)? Be specific and include measurable results.*

*CREATE!* mostly relies on interviews with beneficiaries to monitor the success of our project activities. Each month, field technicians select two beneficiaries at random to discuss various aspects of the program and its impact on the community. Those surveyed include cooperative members, cooperative presidents, project volunteers, and community leaders. *CREATE!* staff then compile these interviews and share them with our donors and board members.

*CREATE!* field technicians also track the following information: (1) vegetable production, (2) vegetable sales, (3) poultry production, (4) poultry sales, (5) well output, and (6) VSLA share outs. As an example, here are the amounts of vegetables produced during the two-year project period. Please note that vegetables are still in production in the Thieneba garden and that late fall is the most productive growing season.

Vegetable	Amount Produced in 2014	Amount Produced in 2015
Lettuce	919 bunches	
Tomatoes	728 pounds	
Eggplants	1530 pounds	60 pounds
Cucumbers	16 pounds	53 pounds
Okra	23 pounds	24 pounds
Turnip		55 pounds
Peppers		7 pounds
Onions		280 pounds

8. *If program is ongoing, provide plans and expected results, including projected timeframe.*

CREATE!'s programs in Thieneba remain ongoing. Our field technicians will continue to provide training and support for cooperative members for the next two years, when we anticipate that beneficiaries will be prepared to assume full management of project activities. During this time period, CREATE! field technicians will also work with cooperative members to expand the garden site and boost vegetable production. At the end of two years, cooperative members will have the skills and funds necessary to successfully manage the cooperative garden and poultry programs in perpetuity.

#### **D. Budget**

9. *Provide a timetable with detailed budget line items (itemized expenses), activities, and outcomes.*

Semester	Funds Spent	Activities Completed
<b>Semester One:</b> September 2013 – February 2014	\$9,116.38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rehabilitated well</li> <li>- Installed solar panels, solar-powered pump, gravity-fed irrigation system, and concrete water basins in garden site</li> <li>- Cleared and fenced garden site using community labor</li> <li>- Recruited women to participate in training in sustainable agriculture and organize themselves into cooperatives</li> <li>- Held at least weekly training sessions in sustainable and culturally appropriate agricultural techniques</li> <li>- Held at least weekly training sessions in choosing seasonal and market-appropriate crops for year-round vegetable gardens</li> <li>- Held training sessions in the construction, use, and maintenance of fuel-efficient improved cookstoves</li> </ul>
<b>Semester Two:</b> March 2014 – August 2014	\$13,625.40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Held at least weekly training sessions in sustainable and culturally appropriate agricultural techniques</li> <li>- Held at least weekly training sessions in choosing seasonal and market-appropriate crops for year-round vegetable gardens</li> <li>- Cooperative garden producing fruits, vegetables, and nuts in sufficient quantities for both home use and sale</li> <li>- Established tree nursery and planted about 150 tree seedlings during the rainy season</li> <li>- Held Voluntary Savings and Lending Association (VSLA) training session and helped participants establish their own VSLAs</li> </ul>
<b>Semester Three:</b>	\$16,283.74	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Held at least weekly training sessions in sustainable and culturally appropriate agricultural techniques</li> </ul>

September 2014 – February 2015		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Held at least weekly training sessions in choosing seasonal and market-appropriate crops for year-round vegetable gardens</li> <li>- Cooperative garden producing fruits, vegetables, and nuts in sufficient quantities for both home use and sale</li> <li>- VSLAs continue to meet weekly</li> <li>- Constructed poultry shed</li> <li>- Recruited women to participate in poultry cultivation and led training sessions in poultry management techniques</li> </ul>
<b>Semester Four:</b> March 2015 – August 2015	\$11,405.88	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Held at least weekly training sessions in sustainable and culturally appropriate agricultural techniques</li> <li>- Held at least weekly training sessions in choosing seasonal and market-appropriate crops for year-round vegetable gardens</li> <li>- Cooperative garden producing fruits, vegetables, and nuts in sufficient quantities for both home use and sale</li> <li>- VSLAs continue to meet weekly</li> <li>- Planted about 250 tree seedlings during the rainy season</li> </ul>

10. *Tell us specific ways the funds from Dining for Women were used – Planned and Actual.*

	PLANNED EXPENSES	ACTUAL EXPENSES
Personnel Expenses	\$15,953.00	\$21,721.51
Travel Expenses	\$0.00	\$697.66
Program Services and Supplies	\$30,500.00	\$16,353.36
Non-Personnel Expenses	\$3,978.00	\$11,658.91
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$50,431.00</b>	<b>\$50,431.44</b>

11. *If DFW donations did not cover the entire cost of the program, what percentage did the funds cover?*

Our initial budget indicated that our grant from Dining for Women would cover 74 percent of project expenses. Following grant implementation, an accounting of expenses showed that our grant from Dining for Women did cover approximately 74 percent of the total project costs.

***E. Sustainability***

12. *How has the impact of this program provided for long term change for the beneficiaries in the community?*

Thanks to funding from Dining for Women and training from *CREATE!* field technicians, women living in Thieneba are building a sustainable future for their community.

Before this project, the village of Thieneba did not have access to clean water. Now, families in the community have secure access to clean, affordable water. This water, which is not as salty as that from local commercial sources, will continue to positively improve the health of community members.

Cooperative members, and members of the Thieneba community, now have access to locally produced, high-quality vegetables and chickens throughout the year. Local diets have improved and women no longer need to walk long distances to purchase inferior vegetables and meat. Prior to *CREATE!*'s intervention, many families could not afford to regularly eat meat and vegetables.

Through the sale of meat and vegetables, cooperative members now have a sustainable source of income to support their families. Those who participate in VSLA can also grow their savings and receive small loans to support their families and small businesses.

Improved cookstoves produce less smoke and save time and money for those that cook with them. When women in Thieneba still used traditional open fires, they spent a lot of time searching for firewood. Now, women use 50 to 70 percent less wood. Improved cookstoves also prevent fires and burns.

13. *Are the results sustainable?*

Women in Thieneba have the skills they need to sustain these projects long after *CREATE!* ceases operations in their community. After two years of training from *CREATE!* field technicians, cooperative members are very knowledgeable about sustainable agriculture and poultry production.

Throughout the course of this project, *CREATE!* field technicians have been working to put in place systems to promote long-term project sustainability. In each community, technicians collaborated with participants to establish management committees. These committees are composed of cooperative leaders who are very well trained in agricultural production and poultry care and management. After *CREATE!* training ceases in these communities, these leaders will continue to train other women in sustainable agriculture and in poultry rearing techniques and care. By ensuring that community members will continue to receive training and support, *CREATE!* believes that participating villages will be able to maintain the cooperatives in perpetuity.

Our participatory approach also ensures that projects are sustainable for many years to come. After signing a MOU and participating both financially and physically in each stage of project implementation, cooperative members and community leaders feel invested in project success. To those living in Senegal, the cooperative garden is a Thieneba endeavor, not a *CREATE!* project. By creating ownership in the project, *CREATE!* has ensured that participants will continue to succeed even without direct oversight from our staff.

14. *What long term changes would you expect to see after 3-5 years as a result of this grant?*

After three to five years, *CREATE!* anticipates that both poultry and vegetable production in Senegal will increase. Cooperative members are already working to expand the size of their garden plot and there is a community leader who is willing to donate land to the endeavor. As participants continue to plant tree seedlings, Thieneba will become a true oasis in the dry Senegalese landscape. In addition, the poultry cooperative has been reinvesting their savings into expanding production to meet the growing demand for chicken in both Thieneba and in surrounding communities. The VSLAs will continue to thrive as women are able to save more and more money through successive savings and lending cycles. As a result, many women will be able to use their savings to start and expand businesses and to send their children to school longer. Over time, women will continue to grow their skills and expand their leadership capabilities through cooperative participation.



## *F. The Women and Girls Served*

15. *Include several stories, experiences, and quotes from women/girls, preferably in their own words, whose lives were altered by the funded program. Embed photos of current participants or those involved in the program.*



*Thieneba cooperative President Mere Top poses next to her well-constructed improved cookstove.*

Thieneba cooperative President Mere Top is very appreciate of *CREATE!*'s programs in her community, noting, "Before *CREATE!* installed the pump we women would spend from morning until afternoon drawing water by hand. Now we all come to the garden site in the evening and take water to our homes just by turning on the tap. We are so happy!"

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."

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."

"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.



*Colle Ngom is a member of the Thieneba agricultural cooperative.*

Colle Ngom, member of the Thieneba cooperative, discusses the benefits of the community’s vegetable garden: “Learning how to grow vegetables is new for us. The trainings gave us knowledge. We learned all the techniques for growing vegetables and how to grow trees. The garden is good for us – we can grow vegetables there during the rainy season. When the well is finished we will be able to grow a lot more vegetables because we will be able to grow vegetables in the dry season too.” Colle Ngom tells us that “*CREATE!*’s programs are very important because they help me improve my life and improve the life of my community.”

Residents of Thieneba are thrilled to participate in *CREATE!*’s programs. Ngone Diouf, Thieneba Cooperative Secretary, says that residents “are very happy to be among the first villages to participate in *CREATE!*’s program.” Women are also happy with their new improved cookstoves. Coumba Diop claims, “Now I only use one stick of wood to cook a meal, and I’m no longer afraid of fire breaking out in my kitchen.” Ngone Diouf boasts, “We know how to build an improved cookstove that saves so much firewood. I built one stove, and I use it all the time. The improved cookstoves help us and benefit the environment too. Also, we know how to teach others to build improved cookstoves. I plan to teach my sister who lives in another village how to build her own improved cookstove.”

Aida Diop, 26, has been active in *CREATE!* programs in Thieneba since activities in the community commenced four years ago. Aida says, “I am happy that I have learned gardening techniques, which I always wanted to master.” She adds, “I have a lot of fun working in the garden site with my friends and neighbors.”

Nogaye Diallo says, “I love working in the cooperative garden.” She is also happy that the community now has access to clean, less salty water. Thieneba’s old water source had high sodium content, which exacerbated her father-in-law’s diabetes.



*Deguène Diallo holds an eggplant that she grew in the Thieneba cooperative garden site.*

Deguène Diallo is the head of a garden cooperative group in Thieneba. She has been active in *CREATE!* programs for more than four years. She is very happy that her cooperative is able to harvest fresh vegetables to sell in the community's market. Deguène also believes that she has "gained a lot of knowledge about gardening, collective group management, and environmental protection" through her participation in *CREATE!* programs. Deguène says, "This project is a great opportunity for women who have no other source of income. We can now manage our garden and meet our needs without support from our husbands." She adds, "I have a big thank you to all those who have contributed to the success of this project in our community."

Anta Baba and Ndeye Top, both members of the agricultural cooperative in Thieneba, are pleased with the progress of their cooperative garden. Anta told us, "Through *CREATE!*, we can see our savings grow and our living conditions improve with the sale of vegetables." Ndeye added, "With the help of *CREATE!* technicians, we have the training and practical experience to manage garden activities ourselves."

Beneficiaries in Thieneba also appreciate the security and ease of the *CREATE!* VSLA program. Awa Diouf notes, "VSLA is participant-focused and really addresses the needs of women in our community. I also appreciate the added security of the lockbox and three separate key holders."

### ***G. New Opportunities***

16. *Did this grant and relationship with DFW assist your organization in obtaining other funding, partnerships with other organizations, or public recognition in some capacity?*

*CREATE!* was able to leverage this grant and our relationship with Dining for Women to obtain additional funding sources. Dining for Women served as a reference for several of our recent applications for grant funding. Our applications for funding from One Day's Wages and the Vibrant Village Foundation both resulted in new and significant funding opportunities for *CREATE!*

### ***H. Organizational Information***

17. *Is your organization or program situation different than presented in the approved proposal? For example, new executive director, change in your mission and or vision statement, 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 grant proposal. We

have since added three new members to our Board of Directors and promoted one of our Senegalese staff members to the position of Country Representative. We have also made progress in our efforts to add women to our professional staff in Senegal by hiring Codou Gadji, a graduate of the Center for Professional Training in Horticulture in Camberene, Senegal, as an Agricultural Field Technician. *CREATE!* has also recently hired Djibil Diop, Ousmane Ismaël Diallo, and Mouhamed Diagne as Agricultural Field Technicians. We also just hired Fatou Ndiaye to serve as our Communications Assistant in the field.

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.

18. *Dining for Women is focused on the empowerment of women and girls. How is your commitment to empowering women reflected in your organizational structure?*

*CREATE!* is dedicated to empowering women both within our organization and as part of our program activities. Since receiving this grant from Dining for Women, we have added one woman to our Board of Directors. In addition, we promoted a young woman from unpaid intern to full-time staff member. Three of the six current members of our Board of Directors are women. In addition, three of our four United States-based staff people are women.

In Senegal, we have made progress in our efforts to add women to our professional staff in Senegal by hiring Codou Gadji as an Agricultural Field Technician. Codou has worked for *CREATE!* for two years and, thanks to her dedication and hard work, we have promoted her from trainee to full technician. We also just hired another young Senegalese woman – Fatou Ndiaye - to manage communications at our office in Senegal.

*CREATE!*'s program activities empower rural Senegalese women to build a sustainable future for their families through cooperative agriculture and poultry production. By participating in *CREATE!* programs, these women gain the skills they need to seek employment.

19. *What lessons have you learned about the functioning of your own organization through this program? What is working? What might you change?*

*CREATE!* has had the opportunity to learn and grow as an organization through the implementation of this grant program. *CREATE!* received this grant from Dining for Women three years after we initiated program activities in several rural Senegalese communities. When we partnered with the community of Thieneba, *CREATE!* field technicians leveraged their knowledge and experience to streamline and improve the implementation process. As a result, community members in Thieneba have been very engaged with program activities throughout the past two years.

*CREATE!* field technicians will continue to build their knowledge, skills, and capacity as they work with community members in Thieneba and in *CREATE!*'s other partner communities.

### ***I. Next Steps***

20. *What are the next steps/future directions for your organization?*

*CREATE!* has continued to expand our program operations to additional communities in rural Senegal. In late 2014,

we initiated program activities in the communities of Walo, Gagnick Mack, and Darou Diadji in Guinguineo District. Today, these communities have access to clean, abundant water and are cultivating vegetables year-round in cooperative gardens. They are well on their way to achieving self-sufficiency.

In coming years, we hope to partner with additional villages in this region and others to bring them the skills they need for long-term sustainability and self-development in their communities. As our programs grow, we hope to continue building our Senegalese field staff by hiring through local educational institutions. In particular, we plan to hire additional female staff members to support our program expansion.

### ***J. Comments and Recommendations***

21. *Is there anything else you would like our members to know about this program, or your organization?*

*CREATE!* thanks Dining for Women and its members for their generosity and support for our programs in rural Senegal. With this grant, hundreds of women now have the opportunity to participate in empowering, life-changing programs that promote community self-sufficiency and environmental protection.

### ***K. Message to our Membership and Donors***

22. *Would you like us to pass on any message in summary with our members and donors about the impact our grant has had on those served and/or your organization and its mission?*

*CREATE!* collaborates with women in rural Senegal to help them build a sustainable future for their families as they cope with water, food, and fuel shortages resulting from the impacts 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 cook stoves. 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 summer 2014, *CREATE!* introduced additional income-generating projects and leadership training for women and girls. *CREATE!* field technicians helped cooperative members establish fruit and tree nurseries – thereby introducing other means of income generation. In addition, *CREATE!* staff members held trainings on Voluntary Savings and Lending Association (VSLA) procedures. VSLA permits women to help each other save money and make small investments in various community endeavors.

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.

In January and February, *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.

After two years of successful agricultural, cookstove, and financial literacy programming, the community of Thieneba is well on its way to achieving self-sufficiency. *CREATE!* field technicians will continue to provide ongoing training and assistance as needed 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.

23. *Do you have a specific story or quote you would like us to share with them?*

Moussa Gueye, former chief of Thieneba, praises the impact of *CREATE!* programs in Thieneba. “*CREATE!* gives people knowledge,” he says. “Even after *CREATE!* leaves our community, the people will continue to use and benefit from the knowledge that they have gained.”

Arame Ndiaye says, “I have great pride in the work of the women in my community.” She adds, “We would never have such a gem of a community garden without investment from *CREATE!* We welcome this initiative and praise its importance.”

#### ***L. Impact Summary***

24. *Provide a brief summary of the program and its impact which can be used on our website and in other communications, such as an article for the monthly newsletter.*

With a Dining for Women grant of \$50,431, *CREATE!* is collaborating with women in Thieneba to help them build a sustainable future for their families as they cope with water, food, and fuel shortages resulting from the impacts of climate change on their community. After *CREATE!* worked with community volunteers to provide access to clean, abundant water using solar power, cooperative members are now able to grow vegetables year-round in a 2,500 square meter garden site. *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 50 to 70 percent. 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. *CREATE!* field technicians also worked with cooperative members to help them initiate a poultry production project in their garden site. Through Voluntary Savings and Lending Associations (VSLAs), women in Thieneba are able to save and invest some of the profits that they make by selling produce and chickens in local markets.

25. *Provide a 2-3 sentence summary of the impact to be used by DFW for social media.*

*CREATE!* is collaborating with women in Thieneba to help them build a sustainable future for their community. With secured access to water, women can now grow vegetables throughout the year and support their families by selling vegetables and poultry in local markets.