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Design for Sustainability



Final Report

EDE Senegal



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Gaia Education
Ecovillage
Design Education
Programme



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Course Overview:

In the Cachouane region, local young people have been sent solar equipment from the Government through national park employees, however they have not been taught how to manage the equipment they have been given. Quite naturally, none of the ecovillages now have functioning solar appliances. This programme involved working with Abdoulaye Toure, the first and only one in Senegal to systematically teach his villagers how to make solar ovens and sets of solar lamps.

Where this EDE process is different is that large sets of pictures were used as the teaching method. This is something successful that have been trialled last summer when young people were taught about climate change, how to plant Permaculture, etc. using these methods. The advantages are that these pictures are attractive and easy to understand by persons who are literate and also by those workers who are pre-literate.

Participants:

The project works with young people, aged under 35 in Cachouane village. Many of the youth are illiterate or pre-illiterate.

Course rhythms:

The Ecovillage Training Group, ISEDE, arrived in Cachouane on September 11th, 2018, with preparations to assist with four useful approaches.

1. Training in Solar repair. We brought Abdoulaye Touré as our solar system repair teacher who assists villagers in becoming independent in managing solar power in their villages. Since more than half of the village families have and use smart phones to contact their neighbors and families living at long distances, most already understand how to charge them using solar panels. However, the persons sent by government to install solar lighting are National Park Service employees who do not train villagers in using solar energy. As a result, for this next step of training we needed. Abdoulaye Toure. He brought with him a five-bulb lamp post and started helping a total of about 35 young men from the village with how to install the lamps he brought after we arrived. Their first target was to install the entire lamppost in the local unit of the village's maternity ward to provide light for women delivering their children at night. But this building already had a solar lamp that worked. So they put 3 lamps on the lamppost in a large crossroads of the village, and added the other two to the maternity building, and everyone was happy.



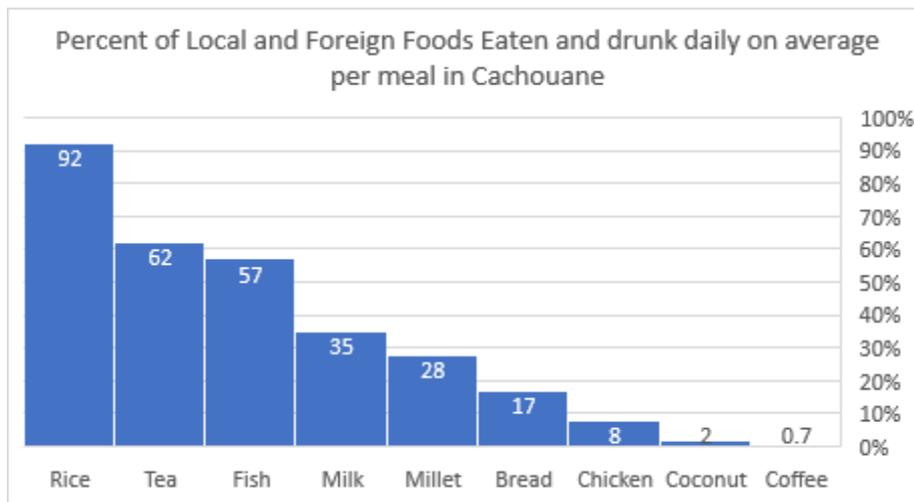
2. Ecovillage Design Education. Myself, and a Senegalese partner in Dakar, had provided the contents of the images following Gaia Education materials. Our Permaculture specialist, Khaly Mbengue and his EDE experienced Senegalese partner, Dou Dou Mbodj, explained the pictures in Wolof and Jola to the villagers (24 images of the EDE, each one meter squared, surrounding the inner wall of the youth building). They explained first to 50 older men in the village, and second to a group of 35 younger men, who worked with us throughout our stay; and also, to about 35 women in separate sessions. The EDE images covered all aspects of ecovillages, as can be seen by observing them. And they were quickly learned. We tried to give each group of villagers 3 sessions with the images, with discussions included. The women spent most of the day tending the growth of their rice crop, which is the main staple food of Cachouane, but were present with us during important sessions.

3. Permaculture Plantations. We brought with us, with the help of one of Senegal's environmental service centers, a variety of types of Permaculture plants that we hope will grow into many large trees, plus lemon trees and thousands of large pointed mangrove seeds to create more trees along the water's edge. This planting was village group work, which many persons joined, to allow these trees, which are mainly made of carbon and CO₂, to reduce the heat in the air left by CO₂ coming from fuel oil, and plastics. We planted as many as possible. One advantage is that the trade winds surrounding Senegal give this country the power to cool other parts of the planet. The pictures show a wide variety of destruction of the earth caused by global warming.

4. Learning to Use Microcredit. The women, who were unhappy about needing to carry out the bulk of the farm work, decided they could manage their limited funds better, by using the CAF Microcredit system with money they had been given, which led them to persuade Dou Dou to teach them how to use this profitable type of microcredit.



A precious Ancient Community Family Structure: This community is virtually independent in their diet, eating only the food they grow themselves, with 2 exceptions. There are a group of about 360 family members, (when older children are away at school), who eat together, but rarely use money to purchase food. Only 17% of the population each ate a piece of American bread. And 62% drank tiny glasses of Chinese green tea. This is an ancient family structure, which follows Dunbar's rules for large families.



Khaly and I spent 19 full days in Cachouane. Dou Dou Mbodj stayed until October 12th to complete teaching the women how to use of CAF microcredit system. He also administered the evaluation questionnaire to the entire group. Men and women each had about 35 people, with a group of younger and older men. Older men spent more time visiting the images, while the younger ones planted more trees.