

EMPOWERMENT: ONE WOMAN AT A TIME

Meet Salma Mame Coumba, a 46 year-old member of one of the more recently enrolled micro-credit groups into API's programs. API started working with the group in Dakar in April 2017.

Salma is a mother of 6 children: 3 boys and 3 girls. Her husband is a retired police officer. He retired in 2016.

Salma operates a breakfast restaurant business in Camp Sekou Mballo, a police family community in Dakar, Senegal's capital city. She has been in this business for 10 years.



Figure 1 Salma in Her Restaurant

Like you may already know, Culturally Senegalese women carry heavy economic burden: providing food for their families, clothing, school fees payment for children and other needs.

Salma, like other Senegalese women, has to grapple with that challenge of providing for the family.

What do the men do? This is a question I have been asked on numerous occasions. Many Men work in both public and private sectors of the economy. However, many of the women enrolled in API's programs are either divorced or have retired/unemployed husbands and have, on the average, 5 children to take care of. This makes these women the most economically vulnerable segment of the society. They are API's main target: the underprivileged.

With her husband bringing home little income and having to take care of teenage children, Salma became the main bread winner of her family.

Her business cash flow was often disrupted. She needed to expand her business but lacked additional capital to do so.

All that is changed now as Salma has received additional capital from API through her group. API gave her group an initial \$1,500 US for business development.

With new capital Salma bought more supplies for her business.



Figure 2 Salma, serving breakfast to customers

She told API's Director, who visited her business that her business had significantly improved: more supplies, more profits. Her turnover (sales) had jumped from an average of \$24 US to \$50 US per day.

She added that, with her increased profits, she is better able to cope with the needs of her family.

Salma expressed profound gratitude to API for its continued support to her group and other underprivileged Senegalese women groups.

In Other News.....

Do you know that:

1. 63% of the world's Adult illiterate population consists of women.
2. Half a billion women can't read this: "Poverty is Sexist".
3. Women and girls make up 60% of hungry people in the world
4. If women farmers have the same access to resources as men, the number of hungry people could be reduced by up to 150 million. (API has a history of supporting women farmers)

