UNAAM KAYRAAY: ENGAGING CIVIL SOCIETY
FOR PEACE IN THE CASAMANCE

Established in 1989, PartnersGlobal is an international non-governmental organization that works through a global network to transform conflict, strengthen democratic institutions, and achieve sustainable development. As part of realizing its mission, PartnersGlobal is working with a consortium of local organizations – Partners West Africa Senegal (PWA-S), Tostan, and La Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (PFPC) – to implement Unaam Kayraay, a USAID-funded peacebuilding project in Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, and the Gambia. Through strengthening the resilience of civil society— particularly women—to use nonviolent means to resolve conflict, the project is contributing to more peaceful communities.

PartnersGlobal and our local partners train communities across the Casamance region in Senegal and cross-border areas of Guinea-Bissau and the Gambia on conflict prevention and resolution skills, which help to mitigate low-level intra and inter-village conflicts, and cross-border conflicts with the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. Our team has also been working to establish dialogues between civil society, local authorities, and security forces to break down existing barriers to collaboration; create a common agenda for peace in the sub-region across diverse stakeholders; and establish the Senegambia Forum, comprised of women from all countries to advocate on behalf of women’s interests in the region.

After the second year of implementation, the project is continuing to reach civil society and key actors from local governments, the security sector, and national institutions in Senegal, the Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau, through various trainings, roundtables, dialogue sessions, and other activities dedicated to raising awareness of peace and security concerns in the region.
In September of 2019, the project saw the realization of the National Gathering for Peace in Casamance, led by women and with the participation of civil society, the consortium, and members of the Senegalese government. The event brought together over 2,500 people, including artists and musicians who shared songs and artwork dedicated to peace. The culmination of the gathering was the presentation of a Livre Blanc (“White Paper”) to civil society and the Minister of Women, who accepted it on behalf of the Senegalese government. The paper synthesized civil society’s peace and security priorities and offered concrete recommendations for how different actors (national governments, civil society, technical partners) can support a more peaceful and prosperous Casamance and sub-region. Through a strategy of collective action, PartnersGlobal, PWA-S, Tostan, and PFPC expect that Unaam Kayraay will contribute to peace and lasting social change.

**MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- **Increased role for women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.** Women comprise the majority of members on peace committees and Community Management Committees (CMCs) in Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, and the Gambia, which have successfully mediated hundreds of conflicts and sensitized thousands of community members on peace, security, and human rights.
- **Improved community-level resilience to shocks and changing dynamics.** Trainings on anti-trafficking and the provision of micro-loans foster community development and social cohesion, and offer alternatives to illicit streams of revenue like human, arms, and narcotics trafficking.
- **Enhanced collaboration between civil society, security forces, and government.** Dialogues on inclusive security management, roundtables, and the implementation of action plans enable civil society, security forces, and local authorities to work together to address common concerns related to resource exploitation, trafficking, criminality, and sustainable development.
- **Creation of national and international networks of women advocates for peace in Casamance.** Through consultation frameworks, such as the Senegambia Forum and dialogue forums for women from all three countries, the project has expanded networks of female civil society leaders to advance the call for peace, security, and development in the Casamance and beyond.

**Mamadou’s Story**

Mamadou Dialo is a resident of Saré Moudou Dialo village in the Basse region of The Gambia, where he lives with his two wives and children. For seven years, Mamadou feuded with his younger brother over the inheritance of their family land. Mamadou filed charges against his brother, who was then sentenced to pay fines equivalent to the economic losses suffered by the family and to serve time in jail. After his release, Mamadou's brother settled down in a different village and the two ceased speaking to each other.

A friend brought Mamadou to one of the Peace and Security Initiative trainings, where he learned about the importance of maintaining peace in the family and village. Inspired by these sessions, Mamadou joined his village’s peace committee, sought out his brother, and asked for forgiveness. This gesture resulted in their reconciliation. Mamadou reflected on the experience, noting: “thanks to what I learned through the [Engaging Peace in the Casamance] program, our families were reconciled with each other after seven years”.

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