

December 3, 2022

## BD4FS partners with disabled food entrepreneurs through food hygiene training

For Food Enterprise Solutions (FES), every day is a day to support persons with disabilities. But on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022, FES joined with the international community to celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities with the theme “Transformative solutions for inclusive development: the role of innovation in fueling an accessible and equitable world.”

Feed the Future Business Drivers for Food Safety (BD4FS), funded by USAID and implemented by FES, works to improve food safety at a local level by offering specialized technical assistance to food entrepreneurs. BD4FS builds the capacities of Growing Food businesses in Senegal, Nepal, and Ethiopia through training and technical assistance to sell safer food.

Despite progressive Senegalese policies and laws to promote the rights of people with disabilities, this constituency remains underrepresented in the business community and decision-making bodies. BD4FS actively promotes inclusion in local food systems by partnering with disabled food entrepreneurs to participate in food safety trainings, receive technical assistance, and provide business advice. Training curricula are adapted to be accessible to all food entrepreneurs, including non-readers. Sign language is used by trainers where appropriate, and training venues are wheelchair accessible.

BD4FS Senegal has built a strong partnership with the Senegalese Federation of Associations of Disabled Persons, especially the Women’s Committee. Founded in 1999, the Women’s Committee works toward the effective socio-economic integration of women with different types of disabilities. The Committee includes 27 women’s sections in 14 Senegalese cities.

BD4FS and the Women’s Committee co-organized four training sessions for over 200 disabled women entrepreneurs in the Senegalese food sector. The trainings were based on prerequisite programs (PRPs), which are the safety control measures, actions and procedures that must be performed to produce a product that meets consumer needs. BD4FS helped the women entrepreneurs to better understand the concept of food safety, hygiene and product quality, microorganisms and how they proliferate, and how to add value to local foods through more appropriate processing and preservation. The trainings were facilitated by BD4FS technical experts with visual aids, role plays and practical exercises to convey the messages.



*Aminata Mariane, Boury Poumane and Kadiatou Faye. GIE Handi Fem of Pikine, preparing ginger-based sweets. Photo Credit: Moustapha Thiam*



*Mrs. Coumba Ndiaye President of the GIE Handi Fem of Pikine, processing local fruits, standing next to the finished products Credit Photo: Moustapha Thiam*

The technical information and business orientation allowed members of the Women’s Committee to improve their food handling practices with better hygiene and quality management of their product and better knowledge of regulatory aspects and labeling, which will improve their access to markets. Most of the participants reported that they were able to measure the knowledge gap between their handling practices before and after the training and were more aware of the good practices to ensure they produce and sell safer food. They came out of the training with strong resolutions to apply the lessons learned and to educate their other colleagues on the importance of food safety. With the knowledge gained, some of the Women’s Committee members are already planning to develop new food products using the skills they learned in the training to increase their income.

Ms. Fatou Mbaye, one of the training participants stated, “The training session really met our expectations as some of our colleagues, as soon as they returned home, called me to attest to the interest and the great value of the training which allowed us to learn a lot of things, especially on hygiene practices.”

BD4FS will continue training the Women's Committee and providing technical assistance to those who are interested in earning the BD4FS pre-HACCP verification badge, which is an affordable preparatory step for smaller firms to align with their national regulatory body mandates about food safety.

**Learn more about FES and BD4FS activities at <https://www.foodsolutions.global/> and <https://agrilinks.org/activities/business-drivers-food-safety>; and follow us at:**



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