



UGPM
ACTIONS LOCALES

SYNDIAYE
CULTURE DESIGN



CAPITALISATION REPORT

IMPACT REDUCTION STRATEGY

FOOD INSECURITY :

HARVEST-BRIDGING CONTINGENCY GRANARY

ugpm.org





UGPM
ACTIONS LOCALES

The Union des Groupements Paysans de Meckhé (Union of Rural communities of Meckhé (UGPM) was set up in 1985 in response to a changing environment that was making life in rural Senegal increasingly harsh. The UGPM's territorial project has four objectives:

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- Managing and restoring the environment ;
Development of income-generating activities ;
- Combatting the rural exodus ;
Enhancing identity and strengthening solidarity and mutual aid. UGPM' vision is "social development" whereby the economic dimension is not an end in itself, but one of several means of contributing to the development of local families and societies.

UGPM has over 4,500 male and female members in the communes of Meckhe, Koul, Meouane, Mérina Dakhar and Ndande.

CAPITALISATION METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVES

Given the food insecurity in most of Senegal, UGPM wanted to capitalise on and share the strategy of harvest-bridging contingency granaries to UGPM member groups and other farmers' organisations in Senegal and elsewhere.

To carry out this capitalisation, the UGPM consulted various members of farmers' groups directly or indirectly involved in these granaries.

Three village groups were involved in this capitalisation work: Tabby, Keur medoune and Ngankal.

Various methods were used:

- Individual interviews with members and non-members;
- Focus groups with members of the 3 granaries;

A joint workshop bringing together all these individuals;

A literature review;

A joint validation workshop

The non-members interviewed said that they did not know how the granaries worked in the three villages where they were interviewed.

The aim of this capitalisation is therefore to spread the knowledge that has emerged from this capitalisation, as well as the lessons learned from this process.

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1 INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE HARVEST-BRIDGING CONTINGENCY GRANARIES

THE CONTEXT OF THE INTER-HARVEST PERIODS BETWEEN 2000 TO 2010

Following a farmers' study on the inter-harvest period¹ in 2003, after several meetings with UGPM farmers to talk about the inter-harvest period between 2000 and 2002, it was found that family farms were unable to cover their food needs. **This was essentially due to three factors:**

- 1 The decline of agricultural yields due to low rainfall, poor quality seeds and reduced fertility of the soil ;
- 2 The wrong policies implemented by the leaders which do not take into account the concerns of farmers and rural communities;
- 3 The poor management of harvests with waste during religious and family ceremonies, as well as changes in eating habits eating habits and behavioural habits.

As a result, the heads of family farms were unable to look after the family's food requirements properly, as the inter-harvest period lengthened.

To combat food insecurity, UGPM has introduced a strategy that consists of providing security stocks of food in the villages. **The contingency granary is a village facility for storing and preserving cereal crops.** Stocks are built up in three ways:

- Voluntary savings in kind (each family, depending on its production, can make savings which will only be withdrawn during the winter period) enabling families to devote themselves to work in the fields;
- The purchase of cereals by the group from its own funds or a loan;
- Products from collective fields.

The group uses its own funds to build up stock and profits from the sale of good quality seeds. Various sales operations are also carried out to build up stock.

The establishment of contingency granaries meets a number of objectives, the main one being to contribute to food security for humans and animals.

(1) This is the time of year when previous harvests are exhausted and the current year's harvests are not yet available. It generally coincides with the winter period (the rainy season).

More specifically, this involves :

- Securing and managing harvests: conserving seeds, avoiding crop wastage.

The aim is to make better use of harvests by means of secure, quality storage to ensure that family farms have food available during the inter-harvest-period (between July and September).

- Preventing impact of the inter-harvest period; freeing up time for field work during the inter-harvest period.

The inter-harvest period coincides with the rainy season, and the family needs its strength to look after the fields, not search for food.

- Avoiding decapitalisation and usury of family assets during the inter-harvest period.

It's the perfect time for loan sharks to make advance loans available to producers to buy agricultural produce at very low prices as a result of their debt and selling at a loss.

- Strengthening solidarity between the inhabitants of the village.

Solidarity is the basis for living together in the village. Social cohesion remains a priority for the groups, as does the participation of the most disadvantaged.



THE ROLE OF UGPM IN SETTING UP AND RUNNING THE GRANARIES

In order to achieve all these objectives, UGPM makes itself available and supports groups wishing to set up this initiative. The training sessions organised by UGPM have enabled group members to become aware of the importance of contingency granaries and to take part in this self-protecting activity.

The members of the management committees are **trained in tool maintenance**. UGPM has organised workshops on tool production and technical stock management. The area coordinators are responsible for **ongoing monitoring of stock levels**. They lead discussions within the groups to mobilise stakeholders and define new strategies to combat food insecurity and promote local development.

Visits are also organised to **enable** groups to **exchange experiences** and improve their operations. Thanks to UGPM, the groups have been able to repair or build storage warehouses. This involves financing up to 50% of the construction or renovation of the storage facility.

Finally, a credit fund for the purchase of cereals has been set up to boost granary stocks.



2 OPERATION OF A CONTINGENCY GRANARY

The operation of the inter-harvest contingency granaries is based on the involvement of its members. Granary members take part in collective activities that enable the granary to capitalise on funds to build up stocks.



A The management system

Inter-harvest contingency granaries are made up of members who join voluntarily. The smooth running of the granaries relies on various organisations and applications:

- **Management committees** are set up in the granaries, and these committees have management tools at their disposal. Committee members are chosen on the basis of their respectability and commitment. The committee is generally made up of five women and two men. Indeed, women make up the majority of the groups and are considered in control of marketing strategies for local products. The women are assisted by the men when they have to do heavy physical work. Management tools have been made available to them following training in their use by UGPM. These tools are used to monitor stocks and manage the purchase and sale of cereals. The management committee monitors the situation on a weekly basis and reports to the group's managers. The committee is responsible for buying and selling stock. It oversees the conservation of the stock to maintain the quality of the products.

- **The group office** oversees all the granary's activities. Regular meetings are held between the group office and the granary management committee.

- **Codes of conduct** are set up within the granaries. The code of conduct is drawn up with the support of the group leaders and with the participation of the group members. They define the procedures for storing, preserving, withdrawing, selling as well as strategies for taking care of the most disadvantaged. This is an essential element in maintaining cohesion within the granary. The code clarifies the roles and responsibilities of each member, as well as the relationship between the committee and the group's managers. It guarantees transparent management.

General Assemblies (GA) of the granary are organised to ensure transparent management. There are four for each crop year.

1 The first meeting is dedicated to preparing purchases. This meeting is used to set the purchase prices and the organisation of the collection, and the revision of the code of conduct.

2 The second takes place after the purchase and allows the stock to be taken to determine the cost price.

3 A third meeting is used to prepare the sales. This meeting is used to determine the selling price, once the market prices and the terms of sale are established.

4 The fourth meeting takes place after the sales to evaluate and define strategies for the next campaign.

These regular AGMs are important to encourage member participation and give visibility to the work of the committee. The AGMs are open to all members of the group and supporters of the granary.

B Taking part in life of the granary

The best way to increase members' involvement in the granary is to set up a collective field² because, in addition to the community aspect, this guarantees harvests that will enable the sale of quality seeds to build up the stock.

More generally, participation has two dimensions.

Economic dimension

- The members participate financially and physically in the refurbishment of the storage facility. In fact, 50% of the refurbishment or construction is subsidised by UGPM and the remaining 50% comes from the financial participation and/or human investment of the group's members during the work.
- Members contribute to stock maintenance costs by paying 50 CFA francs per bag. Members' financial participation in the conservation of their crops also provides the group with funds for stock maintenance.

Organisational dimension

Granary members are also directly involved in strategic planning for the smooth running of the attic and at general meetings.



⁹ (2) The collective field is a community-based agricultural activity that brings together all the members of a village group.

3 THE ADVANTAGES/BENEFITS OF GRANARIES

Advantages and benefits for villages

Cereals (usually millet) are always available in the village, and whenever a member is in need, he or she can turn to those in charge for credit in kind, repayable after the harvest.

This means that family farmers no longer need to take out loans with loan sharks.

The group capitalises on a fund that enables it to have millet permanently available in the village.

The village shop serves as a storage area for the granary and for securing the family harvest. Thanks to the shop, selling off and waste have been greatly reduced. Since the granary was set up, the lean inter-harvest period and debt are a thing of the past in the villages.

New forms of solidarity are emerging. Families who have produced more than they need for their families give credit in kind to those who are in deficit, to be paid after the harvest. Solidarity is developing in the village between members and non-members of the groups.



During the lean inter-harvest season, the granary also gives credit to non-members. They can use the granary to store their crops. Traders can no longer sell or buy in the village at elevated prices.

The group always offers a better price, whether for buying or selling. The group has a fund that enables it to make an investment to avoid the premature sale of harvests to usurers.

Thanks to the granaries, horse and donkey owners/users are able to maintain the nutritional status of their animals. As with humans, millet boosts the physical strength of horses and donkeys.



TESTIMONIAL BY NDIAKHATE NDIAYE

A resident of the village of Ngankal who used to work as a driver in Mbour.

"After twenty-five years in the business, I had a traffic accident that meant I couldn't continue. So I decided to return to the village.

As soon as I arrived, what excited me the most was the harvest-bridging granary as a strategy for integrating the village community, particularly the most disadvantaged. The aim is to develop a participative approach that allows everyone to protect themselves during the lean inter-harvest season.

I wasn't a member of the group, but I was able to benefit from all the services provided by the granary, both for my savings in kind and for the credit that the group gives.

In light of all these advantages, I simply had to apply to join the group.

4 DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT



→ The smooth running of the contingency granaries is limited by the repeated poor agricultural campaigns.

→ The lack of quality seeds remains a major limitation.

Replenishing stocks is a problem when families no longer have crops to keep in the shop.

- The absence of a common field is a major limitation.
- Only millet is allowed in certain shops (Tabby village).



Non-members of the granaries also point out that the fact that the shop is closed during the week is an inconvenience, as the head of a family may have an emergency on a Sunday, in which case, he or she can't access the product.

At a workshop attended by members of three granaries, the following difficulties emerged, and the members suggested ways of improving each one:

Product quality control. Shops do not have the necessary equipment for quality control and there is a lack of knowledge about quality standards.

Recommendations:

- Product packaging and wrapping
- Traceability of products (coding)
- Quality control training for management committee members
- Integrating the common field into granary activities

The need for adequate storage space. Shops are not built to storage standards. In order to have a well-equipped storage area to receive and preserve the products, the members of the granaries have made the following recommendations:

- Refurbishment and development of shops
- Maintenance (cleanliness and hygiene)
- Equipping shops with equipment and maintenance
- Purchase of pallets and storage materials
- Training on product standards and product quality

Problems with product preservation. Warehouses do not systematically comply with construction standards. In other words, a well-ventilated shop with air circulation, passageways for regular stock maintenance and the equipment needed to maintain the stock.

Recommendations:


- Compliance with standards
- Training in preservation techniques

Correct maintenance of management documents. Reliable management tools are essential.

The high illiteracy rate means documents aren't properly processed. The documents are drawn up in French and few people, especially the women who are heavily involved in management, are not literate in French.

Recommendations:

- Simplify management documents
- Organise training sessions on tool maintenance
- Translate documentation into Arabic³



(3) It is quite common for villagers to have made Koranic studies and therefore learnt Arabic.

Problems relating to the **operation of management committees**. The low level of participation by some committee members is a hindrance to smooth running. They become disengaged and leave all the tasks to the committee chairman.

Recommendations:

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of each committee member
- Define member profiles
- Clarify the links between committee members and group managers

- Define a remuneration system for committee members
- Set up a schedule for regular committee meetings and information sharing with Attic members

- Define a set of internal rules or a democratic governance charter for all Attic members

Difficulties in **repaying loans**. The social nature of the granary means that loans are given to the most needy and in the event of poor production, they have difficulty honouring their commitments. Families are also dependent on contributions from non-residents, so they feel any difficulties caused by non-residents.

Recommendations :

- Define criteria for granting credit

- Set up an agreement for penalties

5 CONCLUSION / LESSONS LEARNED

Following interviews, discussions and information gathering on the strategy to combat hunger and debt by setting up a harvest-bridging contingency fund, five essential conditions emerged:

1

To have clear objectives and guidelines so that people share the same vision and all members participate in the smooth running of the granary.

2

Provide storage facilities and maintenance and operating equipment.

3

Stocking products : To have agricultural produce available in the shop (voluntary savings and purchases).

4

Have a code of conduct and a management committee.

5

Have working capital.



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