

## Gender Responsive Agriculture Systems Policy (GRASP) Fellowship

### Fellow Profile



#### Position

Coordinator of the Private Sector and Civil Society Organizations within the United States Agency for International Development's Agricultural Reform and Policy Support Program

#### Institution

IPAR

#### Country

Senegal

#### Education

MSc Finance, Pierre and Marie Curie University, France, 2004

#### Mentor

Cheikh Oumar BA, Executive Director of the Agricultural and Rural Prospective Initiative

#### Research Area

The adoption of sustainable, healthy, and resilient food systems in Senegal, the empowerment of women, the facilitation of access to land, as well as the preservation of these lands to encourage the employment of young people and women in the sectors agro-silvo-pastoral and fisheries

### Ndeye Astou Kebe

2023 AWARD Policy Fellow

*"Agricultural development is vital to a country's development."*

Ndèye Astou Kebe grew up in an agricultural environment. She has fond childhood memories of planting peanuts and picking vegetables in the garden and fonder ones still of helping her paternal grandmother work in her orchard.

In 2006, Ndeye Astou began a career in finance. Having obtained a degree in Mathematics, with a specialization in Finance, from Pierre and Marie Curie University in Paris, she spent over ten years in asset management. Upon returning to Senegal in 2013, she worked as a Risk and Engagement Manager at the Guarantee Fund for Priority Investment. "I worked with farmers, visited their farms, and better understood the challenges they face," she says. It was an opportunity to "work with communities and help find solutions to improve their standard of living. It was a profoundly human experience."

In 2020, Ndeye Astou joined the Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale, a Senegalese think tank for

agricultural and rural policy in Senegal and the West African region. She has worked on a policy support program for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for the past three years. Her job puts her at the core of national agricultural policy: she works with the Senegalese Government, the private sector, and civil society organizations to elaborate, implement, and monitor policy and reforms in order to achieve inclusive agricultural growth in Senegal.

As Private Sector and Civil Society Coordinator for the USAID program, which aims to strengthen the Senegalese agricultural and food policy system, Ndeye Astou focuses on access to funding for agro-silvo-pastoral and sea fishing activities, improvement of land governance, and youth employment. She collaborates with the Council for Concertation and Rural Cooperation, a platform that includes around 40 farmer organizations in Senegal.

“Agricultural development is vital to a country’s development. In Senegal, this is possible through women’s empowerment in family-run farms,” she enthuses.

Ndeye Astou heard about the GRASP Fellowship call for applicants from her line manager. Its focus on empowering women to play a role in gender-responsive agricultural policy particularly caught her attention. “I want the agricultural policy to consider gender, especially regarding youth employment in agro-silver-pastoral systems, sea fishing, and healthy, sustainable, and resilient food systems.”

Ndeye Astou hopes that GRASP will enhance her knowledge of agricultural systems and gender issues and give her suitable tools to influence agricultural policy in Senegal significantly.

*Ndeye Astou Kebe is among a growing number of women selected for the Gender Responsive Agriculture Systems Policy (GRASP) Fellowship. GRASP Fellowship is a career development program growing a pool of confident, capable African women to lead the design and implementation of gender-responsive policies in Africa. The Fellowship is an initiative of African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).*