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**Ukanal-Fé, Oussouye, Senegal.** Young people develop their community in Senegal.

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# Young people develop their community in Senegal

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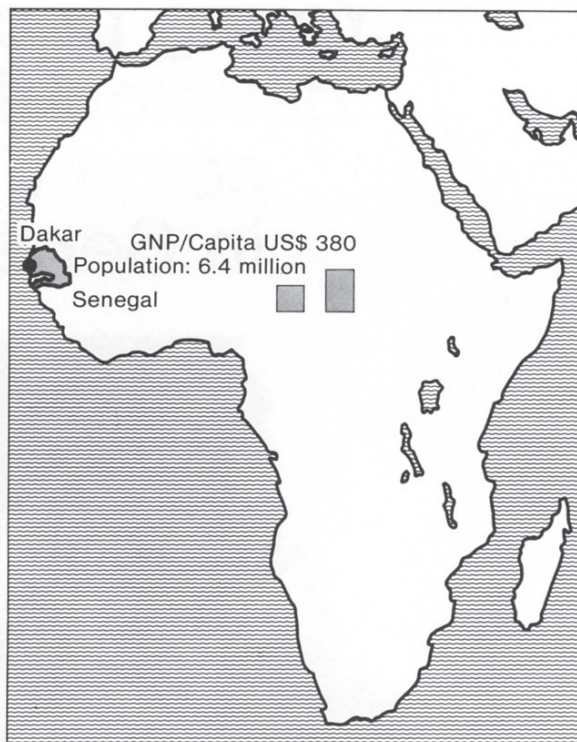
## Ukanal-Fé

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Population Oulouf: 6,000  
Population Oussouye: 4,000



Senegal

Oulouf plateau consists of six villages:

Community of Oussouye:	Oussouye Kalobone
Rural Community of Oukout.	Sengalene Kahinda Djivant Ediongou

85% of people in Oulouf, the majority, earn their living from agriculture. The remaining 15% are in the public service, work as artists or in commercial enterprises.

Abbreviations and names:

ENDA-TM	Environment Development in the Third World
ILO	International Labour Office
Ufulal	Let us go out
Ukanal-Fé	Let us achieve everything

**'Don't be astonished'**

In 1961, a group of young people still at school in Oussouye decided to gather together in their free time. This initiative soon brought together all the young people of the village, irrespective of religion, into the association 'Djacoume Djidiahale' which means 'Don't be astonished'. Its main function was to organize dances and other social events.

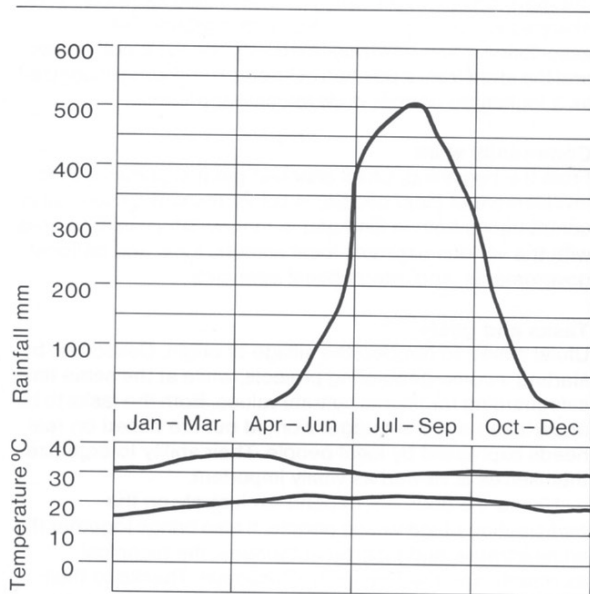
A year later it changed its name to 'Umentalal' (Hope), and opened branches in Ziguinchor and Dakar, where migration takes many of Oussouye's young people. Apart from organizing leisure activities, the group had a role in assisting those families who had remained in Oussouye.

**1973: Ufulal**

During a seminar in Dakar, the group changed its name to 'Ufulal' (Let us go out), in honour of a great sorcerer who had resisted colonial penetration. This signified a new and more

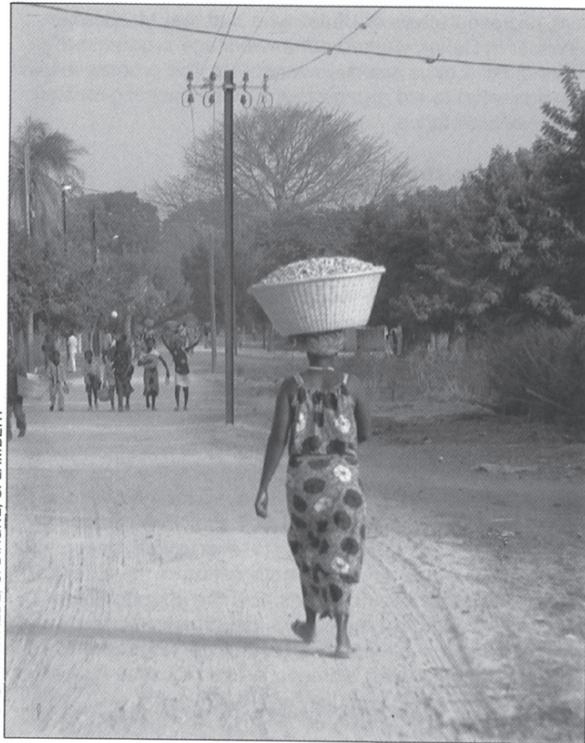


Oussouye



Climate Graph Oulouf

PHOTO: M. AYALDE, C. DIAGNE, C. LAMBERT



UKANAL FÉ

open approach. Ufulal became an association with a statute, internal regulations and an elected board. On February 16, 1973, Ufulal was officially recognized by the Ministry for Internal Affairs of the Republic of Senegal. On that occasion, Ufulal undertook to make educational and recreational facilities available to everyone.

#### 1976: Becoming aware of the aims

Seminars in Oussouye and Dakar revealed the determination of the young people of Ufulal to go beyond mere social and cultural events, and to direct their efforts toward development activities. In order to meet the needs of the women of Oussouye, the association and its supporters mobilized to find the funds necessary for setting up a kindergarten.

#### 1978: First concrete results

During the rainy season, the first kindergarten, using the rooms of the primary school, opened its doors to welcome 130 children. The results were startling: infant mortality, which had been between five and ten children per rainy season, fell to zero. This decisive success persuaded the women to set up their own group 'Aidjidjo', to take on the job of running the kindergarten. They also began to cultivate the market gardens and collective fields of the village, providing both finance for the project and more nutritious food for their children.

#### 1979-1986: Ukanal-Fé

Ufulal's main aim was to bring everyone together in an on-going alliance: women and men, old and young, people from the village and from Dakar, and to help the whole village community to accept the challenge of progress. With this





aim, representatives of Ufulal, who had met Mr. Barbier-Wiesser in Dakar, worked out a two-stage programme: 'Ukanal Fé' (Let us achieve everything). The programme will be presented to aid organizations when applying for their financial assistance.

#### **Uniting to be strong**

In the course of seven years, numerous projects were brought to fruition. Villagers were mobilized for the construction of community facilities (kindergarten, camp, workshop), to work out a suitable building plan and to initiate income-generating schemes. The intentions were twofold: to meet the needs of the community and to 'prime the pump of development' by creating jobs and enterprises whose profits would then be re-invested in the village.

#### **Yesterday's social life**

Traditionally, the young people met only to work in the fields, to hold popular festivities and to pray with the local fetish sorcerer. Since World War II, the young men have gone to secondary school in Dakar and St. Louis. Even if the young women do not study, they still go to town to work as servants. The consequences are the disintegration of the extended family, neglect of the rice fields, and the abandoning of certain traditions. On the other hand, those who leave the village to work usually send part of their earnings back to their parents, so there is an increase in cash income.

#### **Today's youth**

The influence of city life, especially on the young, seems to be the reason for the proliferation of small associations or clubs for the young. They bring together practically all the youth of Oussouye, both male and female. Their experiences in Dakar have widened their social contacts, transcending religious divisions.

### **Ufulal: from dance to development**

#### **Setting up Ufulal**

Ufulal was especially successful in bringing together young people from Oussouye who are now in Dakar. A recreational atmosphere is provided where members can meet, funds for leisure activities are raised, and members can organize to help each other during the rainy season. But very soon, the association began to devote itself to community activities in Dakar as well as in Oussouye, with a view to improving living conditions of the village community.

With official recognition in 1973, Ufulal's members decided to re-organize the association, structuring it to carry out more formal community work. This also increased their chances to obtain project funding and grants. The association could now negotiate with the local authorities and the state from a position of strength and was recognized as a legitimate partner in development projects.

#### **Community work**

From the beginning, Ufulal attached great importance to the involvement of local people: in voluntary work as well as in contributions both in kind and in money. Ufulal formed links with the various partners: local leaders, local and national governments, and international agencies.

#### **Tasks and goals**

Ufulal aimed to develop the village of origin, Oussouye, by starting income-generating projects, while at the same time safeguarding traditional cultural values. Both the tasks to be undertaken and the budget worked out are based on real needs expressed by local people. Their ability to organize themselves is viewed as vitally important.

Ukanal-Fé does not depend exclusively on the participation of the village people. It also brings together the administrative and political authorities, the technical assistants and the Friends of Oussouye. Thanks to their involvement at various levels, all aspects of the project were successfully achieved.

#### **The kindergarten**

The usefulness of an association such as Ufulal was better appreciated in 1978 when the kindergarten was opened in Oussouye.

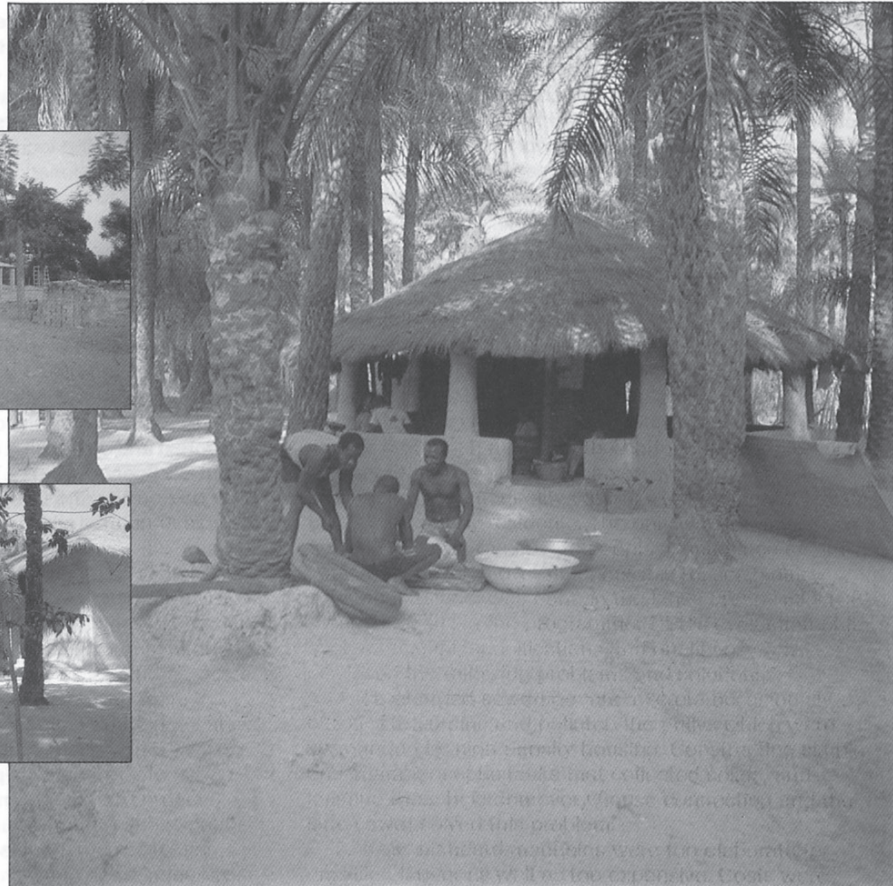
Mothers of very young children could now work in the rice fields with an easy conscience, knowing that their children were being well cared for. In that year, the women came together to form their own association, 'Aidjidjo', in order to play an active part in the organization of the kindergarten and in the cultivation of the community plots used as market gardens. Parental contributions supported the daily functioning of the kindergarten, either in the form of money (a subscription) or in the form of food (niebe beans, rice, palm oil, sweet potatoes, honey, or peanuts). The kindergarten's longer term finances were met from members' cash subscriptions, the proceeds from benefit theatrical performances and dances organized by Ufulal and gifts from the village or from a Dakar group, 'Partage' (Sharing).



*The tourist camp.*



*The workshop.*



*The kitchen of the tourist camp.*

### Construction begins

In 1981 the association began constructing the new kindergarten building. It was both an example of the dynamic quality of local life and a demonstration project for the use of local materials. Completing this project required a combination of local participation, help from the authorities and financial aid from FAC (French Fund for Help and Cooperation) of the United States, and from ENDA.

### The camp

With a second grant from FAC and with help from the State Board of Tourism, Ufulal began building the ninth integrated tourist camp in the Casamance. The system of building teams (mutual aid) was once more successful. From the start, the older people took an active part in the construction of the large, traditionally styled building. The camp has earned substantial profits which are then re-invested in local small businesses.





#### **Productive activities**

This next phase of the project was financed by the Overseas Mission Secretariat, an NGO. Several projects were set up simultaneously: a carpenter's shop equipped with two machines supplied by the ILO and financed by the camp's profits; the manufacture of furniture for the kindergarten; the construction of the welcoming house; and a fishing project. Work teams produced all these results, combining collective production and individual responsibility.

#### **Housing and village lay-out**

The building techniques which had proved successful in the construction of the kindergarten and the camp were to be disseminated in this phase.

At the request of the Ministry for Town Planning and Housing, ENDA and Ufulal co-operated with the residents of Oulouf in re-examining the town planning project of Oussouye village.

The plan put forward a new way of organizing the area, taking into account both current conditions and traditional concepts such as land rights, respect for traditional meeting places, and holy forests. Intensive discussion was required with the older inhabitants who knew the old land rights.

#### **Change takes its own time**

Ufulal has been working as a community development association for fourteen years, with many concrete achievements to its credit. Community initiatives are sometimes short-lived but Ufulal owes its healthy survival to patience, an old fashioned virtue. Sufficient time was allowed by Ufulal for new ideas to take root and to become understood and acceptable to local people. The lesson to be learned is that patience is of the utmost importance if community development projects are to succeed.

#### **The Friends of Ufulal: a decisive factor**

Ufulal membership is open to everyone regardless of nationality, creed, race, sex or age. Ufulal's strong desire to meet people produced great benefits in the form of the experience and energy of its technical collaborators. Help was also given by the local authorities (Town Hall and Prefecture) and by donations from fourteen organizations who responded to their appeal: four from France, two from Canada, one from USA, three from Belgium plus Oxfam Belgium, one from Groupe Partage, Dakar, one from the Senegal Government, and one from the Friends of Ufulal organization.

#### **Ukanal-Fé: a worthwhile investment**

Local job creation is the first aim of Ukanal-Fé programmes. At first sight the ratio of jobs generated to the large amount of money invested may seem low. But viewing Ukanal-Fé in its own context and over time, it is clear that the local economy is based on indigenous values. The transformed attitudes of the village community and the good use made of both local people and material resources are the key to the project's success.

The drop in infant mortality, improving the lives of women and children along with working conditions in the fields, helping the young adults to return to the village, building facilities and new homes: these offer concrete proof of the development project's worth.

#### **Alternative tourism: a question for the future**

Compared with the increasingly dominant form of tourism in Africa, the integrated camp provides an interesting alternative in rural development. Local resources create an opening for international tourism which brings in the foreign currency necessary to make the project self-financing. The symbolic and demonstration value of the Oussouye tourist camp far outweighs the single factor of financial viability alone.