



USAID and Sagal representatives meet with a women's group. Photo credit: Oliver Subasinghe/USAID

In Senegal, Sanitation Means Dignity

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Like many of us, Fatou Badji balances a hectic schedule. She is the chairlady of a women's group that sells onions and other essentials. She is also on the frontlines of addressing the global sanitation crisis.

Today, [six in 10 people lack proper sanitation](#), costing economies \$260 billion annually. Poor sanitation leads to the deaths of more than a quarter-million children annually, and affects the safety of women and girls.

On my recent trip to Senegal, I had the privilege to meet Fatou and her group members who are working to increase access to sanitation services in the region of Ziguinchor. Despite significant progress made on drinking water access, Senegal still faces [sanitation](#) challenges. To address the lack of affordable and appropriate sanitation options, USAID/Senegal is promoting [market-based approaches](#) to create viable

and local sanitation businesses that harness global innovations and engage the private sector. This promising approach has the potential to reach the billions of people who are not connected to centralized sewer systems worldwide.

Building Up Senegal’s Sanitation Entrepreneurs

In 2018, USAID/Senegal’s [ACCES](#) project [Senegal’s Assainissement — Changement de Comportement et Eau pour le Sénégal] launched a branded sanitation solution called Sagal. In the Wolof language, the word [Sagal](#) translates as a “a sense of pride in one’s dignity.” This model connects customers to sales agents, masons, and financing for improved household latrines.

Fatou, a Sagal sales agent trained by the project, is a crucial partner in this supply chain. She was initially attracted to Sagal as a way to diversify her income.

Her pitch to potential customers focuses on Sagal’s health and cost benefits with the overarching goal of providing quality latrines for everyone, so that everyone will be healthier. Prior to Sagal, Fatou’s customers relied upon poorly constructed open pit latrines that attracted flies and smelled, or they practiced open defecation. She markets her improved latrines as a preventative health measure akin to an “inoculation.” For those harder-to-convince customers, she shows a photo of a woman bitten by a snake while trying to find a spot to relieve herself in an open field.

After Fatou wins over a new client, she makes a follow-up housecall with a trained mason to scope out the installation of the latrine, sign the purchase order, and collect a downpayment. Sometimes the latrine is purchased through a microloan from a local financial provider. Then the mason returns to install the family’s new latrine. ACCES has trained masons on properly installing the Sagal latrines, including developing a detailed [handbook](#) that ensures quality standards are met. In some cases, 10 percent of the final payment is withheld until the client is satisfied and a technical specialist confirms that the latrine meets construction standards.

Fatou sees a growing market for Sagal. Her goal is to expand the brand to her entire commune and ensure everyone has access to affordable sanitation services.

Local Needs, Global Innovation

A key component to Sagal’s brand centers on [Lixil’s SATO Pan](#), a line of affordable, hygienic, and odor-free latrines for lower income households. A tiny self-closing flap at the bottom of the SATO Pan blocks odors and keeps away flies. This gives users peace of mind that their latrine is hygienic, and it makes using a latrine a more dignified experience.

The SATO Pan’s maker, Lixil, is a home products and building multinational company that sees addressing the global sanitation crisis as both a business opportunity and a social good. The company sees the low-cost latrine as the first rung of its global sanitation product line of latrines and toilets, having integrated the SATO fully into its business model. Based on ACCES’s customer research, the SATO was the right product for the right market to build Sagal’s brand.

Sanitation Solutions that Last

In Senegal, the Sagal brand has shown promising early results. Since its launch in March 2018, more than 3,600 Sagal latrines have been installed — with 40,500 people gaining basic sanitation access. Early success is largely thanks to both product quality and a concerted marketing campaign that combined a road show with radio and TV spots.

The success we have seen in Senegal to date is impressive, but there is more to be done. Less than half of the country's population has access to at least a basic sanitation facility, which makes scaling the market for sanitation products and services critically important, and that takes [patience and adaptability](#). In particular, financing and supply-chain constraints need to be addressed for sanitation businesses to be viable. Equally important are sound public policies that create incentives that both grow sanitation markets and reach low-income households.

From [Ghana](#) to [Indonesia](#), USAID's market-based sanitation approaches take different forms. Each country has its own context and business environment. But in all contexts, we recognize the tremendous value of [engaging with the private sector](#) — whether it is a global multinational company, local firm, or entrepreneur like Fatou. They help test and scale solutions that can continue long after USAID's assistance has ended.

By Jennifer Mack, USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Bureau for Food Security and Global Water Coordinator



Additional Resources:

- [U.S. Global Water Strategy](#)
- [USAID Senegal ACCES Project](#)
- [Evaluation Report: Millennium Water and Sanitation Program \(PEPAM/USAID\) Ex-Post Evaluation](#)
- [Gaming for Profit: Using a Game to Learn About Market-Based Sanitation](#)

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