



RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

M.Ed. In TESL Program Country Informational Reports

Produced by Graduate Students in the M.Ed. In TESL Program
In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

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A photograph of a person in a small wooden boat on a body of water. The person is standing in the boat, holding a long pole. To the left and right of the boat are two tall, thin vertical poles. In the background, there is a floating structure with two white mounds on it. The water is a light brown color, and the sky is overcast.

Senegal

Informational Report

Flavia S. Molea Baker

Spring 2013

Location

- Western Africa -

- **Bordering with:** The Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, and the North Atlantic Ocean.
- **Comparative measure to the U.S.A.:** slightly smaller than South Dakota.



- **Climate:** tropical; hot, humid; rainy season (May to November) has strong southeast winds; dry season (December to April) dominated by hot, dry, *harmattan* wind.
- **Terrain:** generally low, rolling, plains rising to foothills in southeast. Numerous coastal islands, including Gorée Island just south of Cape Verde, one of the earliest European settlements in Western Africa.

The Senegalese People

IMPORTANT FACTS

| | |
|---|---|
| Population | 13 million (approx.), with an annual growth rate of 4.6%. |
| Languages | French (official), Wolof (<i>lingua franca</i>), Pulaar, Jola, Mandinka. |
| Ethnic Groups | Wolof 43.3%, Pulaar 23.8%, Serer 14.7%, Jola 3.7%, Mandinka 3%, Soninke 1.1%, European and Lebanese 1%, Other 9.4%. |
| Poverty Headcount Ratio at National Poverty line (% pop.) | 46.7% (2011) |

HEALTH ISSUES

| | |
|--|--|
| Life Expectancy at Birth | total population: 59.8 years |
| Major Health Threats & Health Assistance | Preventing and treating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. Reducing maternal and child mortality. Preventing food and waterborne diseases. |

Historical Facts and Politics

Republic of Senegal

- A former French colony, Senegal declared independence in June 1960.

The official Independence Day is April 4, 1960.

- The civil law system is based on French law.
- The government is a democratic republic with a president.
 - The President of Senegal has executive power and is the head of the State.
 - The Prime Minister is the head of the government.
- In the early 1980s Senegal attempted to form a confederation with The Gambia, but the integration of the two economies did not succeed.
- Senegal has since gone through a series of economic, political, and military difficulties, but the central government has remained stable.
- In 2004, after a long internal conflict between the central government and separatist factions in the Casamance region (south of The Gambia), a peace deal was signed. However, as of late 2009 violence has increased and trouble continues in the region.





Education



- The government allocates the majority of its funds to primary and elementary public schools. The education system relies strongly on international contributions.
- Pilot primary schools such as *La Maison des Tous Petits* are examples of modernization of the school system and offer multidisciplinary approaches to education.
- International Humanitarian Organizations support rural schooling to educate children and adults in villages far from the major cities.
- Koranic border schools (called *Daaras*) are the primary source of education for many children. These schools focus on rote memorization of the Koran and are now opening their curriculum to include some technical and professional training.
- Public secondary schools observe a state-wide curriculum.
- Private secondary schools are international schools offering either French or English language based curricula. These schools may also include the International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement Programs.

Students and Literacy



Today, 66% of Senegalese youth aged 15-24 do not complete primary school and find themselves without basic qualification. This equals a total of 1.7 million people, 73% women and 59% men.

In Senegal, 94% of women in rural areas aged 15-24 have less than a lower secondary education, compared to 87% of the men.

LITERACY RATE: 42% (2006 est.)

| Primary Education Enrollment | | | Transition from Primary to Secondary | | Secondary Education Enrollment | | | Adult Literacy (15 and older) | |
|------------------------------|-----|------|--------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------|-----|------|-------------------------------|-----|
| M | F | GPI | M | F | M | F | GPI | M | F |
| 72% | 74% | 1.04 | 62% | 57% | 34% | 27% | 0.79 | 62% | 39% |

- Nearly 60% of the population is illiterate.

Teachers

Qualification Required*

Primary School: Certificate of End of Middle School (BFEM) and one year of pedagogy courses for the Elementary Certificate of Pedagogical Aptitude (CEAP.)

Elementary School: BFEM and two years of pedagogy courses for the Certificate of Pedagogical Aptitude (CAP), grades 1-6.

Middle School: Diploma of Bachelor of Secondary School Education and three years of Pedagogy courses for the Certificate of Aptitude for Lower Secondary Teaching in Middle School (CAECEM), grades 7-10.

Secondary School: University Diploma of Literary Studies, one year to be 'Licentiate' and one more year for the Certificate of Aptitude for Secondary Education (CAPES), grades 11-13.

** Volunteer teaching is still a reality at all school levels.*

Schools and Curricula



| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Compulsory years of education: | 6 (approx.) |
| Ending age of compulsory school: | 12 years old |
| School life expectancy (years): | 7.52 (approx.) |

Disciplines included in the State Curricula:

○ Elementary School:

Literacy and Mathematics.

○ Middle School:

French, History, Geography, Mathematics, Biology, Home Economy, Physics.

- Other languages: English, Spanish, German, Arabic, Portuguese, Latin, and Greek.

○ High School offers also:

Economy and Philosophy.

- **International Private Schools:** offer curricula that are aligned and equivalent to the standards of their foreign counterparts.
- **Vocational schools:** the government is presently supporting vocational schools and engaging in a modernization of the technical educational sector.

Classroom Settings



- Primary and elementary schools have average class sizes ranging from 40 to 50 students. Sometimes, class sizes can reach numbers up to 80.
- Secondary school class sizes are variable both in is public or private institution.
- Classroom materials are a luxury; sometimes schools are deprived of such basic resources as electricity and water for the entire course of the school day.
- Parents and donors are often responsible for paying water and electricity bills.
- Books are insufficient and libraries are extremely rare.
- In both urban and rural settings, schools tend not to have the required infrastructures.

Child Labor & Social Issues

- It is very common for girls to be forced to drop out of school by the young age of 10 to become domestic aids to support their families.
- A 2010 Human Rights Watch report documented abuses and economic exploitation of children by teachers and traditional leaders at Senegalese Quranic Schools.
- Senegal ranked 144 out of 169 countries assessed by the 2010 U.N. Human Development Index.



- A 2009 U.S. State Department Human Rights report stated that Senegal “generally respected citizens’ rights,” although cited problems include: corruption; violence and discrimination against women; child abuse, child labor, and child marriage; and human trafficking.
- In 1999, the Penal Law outlawed domestic violence and female genital mutilation; however, both are still reportedly widespread.

Challenges in Higher Education

“Despite some improvements since 2000, the higher education system in Senegal struggles to cope with several challenges.”

-- Hassana Alidou, Chief of the Basic to Higher Education Section at UNESCO Dakar.

1. Over-abundance of students at the University of Dakar (UCAD).
2. Proliferation of unregulated private institutions in higher education.
3. Uneven quality of results due to faulty system (low performance and the inadequacy of training in relation to national needs).
4. Inequality of access between genders.
5. Fraudulent acquisition of university degrees.

Note: the Senegalese government is investing in a new system for higher education. However, until now, the majority of funds for school support come from foreign donations and humanitarian aid.

Views and Attitudes

“Senegal → U.S.A.” and “Senegal → English”

| 2012 Pew Global Attitudes Project | |
|---|-----|
| Favorable Opinion towards the United States | 69% |
| Favorable Opinion towards American people | 67% |
| Favorable Opinion towards American ideas and customs spreading in Senegal | 32% |

- ***A 1980 research project: “Attitudes of Senegalese Secondary School Students Towards Traditional African Way of Life and Western Way of Life”*** showed that nearly half the students interviewed wished to preserve traditional values of the Senegalese culture.
- ***A 2009 research project: “Attitudes toward Speech Communities in Senegal: a Cross-Sectional Study”*** showed that Senegalese attitudes toward the English language were far superior to the French official language or any other national language spoken in Senegal.

“The attitudes towards the English speech community can be described as more than satisfactory.” -- Dr. Ibrahima Diallo

Immigration

The number of African immigrants in the United States increased from just under 200,000 to almost 1.5 million in thirty years.

In 2009 about two-thirds of African immigrants to the U.S.A. were from Western Africa.

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Naturalization rates for the African born immigrant to the US from Senegal. | 26.2% (2009) |
|---|--------------|

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Senegalese immigrant men outnumbered women. | 63.7% (2009) |
|---|--------------|

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Limited English Proficiency of immigrants from Senegal* | 52.4% (2009) |
|---|--------------|

- In 2009, the largest communities of African-born populations lived in metropolitan areas in the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, California and Georgia.
- In 2009, 41.7 percent of African-born adults in the U.S.A. age 25 and older had a Bachelor's Degree or higher.

*Rates of English proficiency vary substantially by African country of origin, due in part to the variety of languages spoken across African countries.

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