

**Senegal**

**VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION**

**Agroforestry**



Since 1961.

**Program:** Agro Forestry

**Job Title:** Agro Forestry Extension Agent

**Dates of Service:** December 4, 2015 – December 4, 2017

**Staging Dates:** September 25-26, 2015\*  
**(in the USA)**

**Pre-Service Training**

**(in Senegal):** September 27, 2015 – December 4, 2015\*

\*dates subject to change

AA117 = 3058BR  
AA100 = 3059BR



This document is intended to give an overview of the project you are invited to work on in the Peace Corps. For more detailed information about SENEGAL and living there, please read the Welcome Book via the link included with your invitation and check out the related Web sites referenced in the welcome book.

For further information about serving as an Agro Forestry Extension Agent in Senegal, call the Country Desk Officer for Senegal at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C., (9AM to 5PM, EST):

Toll-free: 1-855-855-1961, press 1, then extension 2261;  
or directly at (202) 692-2261  
or via email at [SENEGAL@peacecorps.gov](mailto:SENEGAL@peacecorps.gov)



## A NOTE FROM THE PROGRAM MANAGER

*Dear Invitee,*

*I hope you will accept this invitation to join the Peace Corps Agroforestry program in Senegal.*

*Working with us will give you the unique opportunity to join the thousands of Americans who through the Peace Corps have promoted peace, cultural exchange, mutual understanding and development. Furthermore, the Peace Corps offers you the opportunity to be served while serving, to learn while teaching, to socialize while working, to make friends, laugh, have fun (and perhaps cry sometimes). At the end, you surely will grow as a person in so many areas.*

*As the Associate Peace Corps Director (APCD) for Agroforestry and as a Senegalese, I will be honored to have you accept our invitation to work in this ever-growing field of interest for a more sustainable agricultural practice and environment protection.*

*By doing so, you will contribute to Senegal's efforts to increase poor rural populations' standards of living while increasing their individual and organizational capacities.*

*I look forward to working with you in the near future. If you have any questions about Peace Corps/ Senegal please visit our website [www.pcsenegal.org](http://www.pcsenegal.org).*

***Demba Sidibe***  
**Program Manager**  
**Agro Forestry Project**

## PEACE CORPS SENEGAL HISTORY

*Peace Corps began its long and productive history of collaboration with Senegal when the first group of 15 English teachers arrived in 1963. Since then, more than 2,500 Volunteers have worked in Senegal in various fields of social and economic development.*

*Senegal's best known program was Rural Animation, a cross-sector project that lasted for 24 years. The project's objective was to assist and encourage villagers to organize themselves, so that they might better solve local problems through their own grassroots actions.*

*In the late eighties, Peace Corps/ Senegal decided to break up its program into sector-specific areas corresponding to Senegal's development priorities. Peace Corps/ Senegal now works in health, agriculture, small enterprise development, eco-tourism, environmental education and agroforestry.*

*Peace Corps/ Senegal's interventions in the natural resource sector go as far back as 1980 to the rural animation Volunteers. However, the first agroforestry project was implemented from 1988 to 1998. The final evaluation of that project was undertaken in April 1997. It concluded that the project spread itself too thin, which did not allow for good follow up and quality work. The main recommendation was to keep working on agroforestry but by narrowing down the work zones, reducing the number of villages to be covered by each PCV and focusing on the agroforestry extension process rather than on the output (tree planting). In October 1997, a workshop involving forest service officials, non-governmental organization (NGO) members, Peace Corps staff, Volunteers and counterparts was held in Dakar to design the current agroforestry project plan for the period 1998-2008.*

*The goals and objectives of the current projects were re-written in 2000 according to the new Peace Corps project framework that focuses on capacity building. A new memorandum of understanding between Peace Corps and the forest service is about to be signed and will constitute the cadre within which the agroforestry project will be implemented. In 2009, Peace Corps/ Senegal entered into a four-year program with USAID to enhance food security across Senegal. This program provides Peace Corps Volunteers and their communities with resources far beyond what has ever been available before. Read more about the food security program at: <http://pcsenegal.com>.*

*It is an exciting time to be a Volunteer in Senegal!*

## YOUR PRIMARY DUTIES

The purpose of the PC Senegal Agroforestry program is to promote agroforestry as a means to increase agricultural production and generate income. The expected outcomes of your work have already been defined and agreed upon by the Government of Senegal and other work partners and you are expected to work towards these predefined outcomes and monitor and

report your work and outcomes accordingly. For detailed information on the activities and expected outputs and outcomes of your work go to [www.peacecorpssenegal.org/invitees](http://www.peacecorpssenegal.org/invitees) and click on the AgFo project framework icon.

Agroforestry volunteers focus on:

- **Multi-purpose tree species** that enhance soil fertility, reduce soil erosion, protect fields against animals and provide forest products to the farm;
- **Fruit tree propagation and orchard management** to produce quality fruit (mainly mango, citrus and cashews) to be sold in local markets or consumed by families improving their diet especially during the hungry season;
- **Gardening** is also a growing field of interest for both family consumption and local market. It helps for promote food security;

As an Agroforestry extension agent your main role will be to assist local farmers to acquire the technical skills they need to establish their own tree nurseries and out-plant the seedlings produced. To this end, you and your counterpart will organize formal trainings, one-on-one instruction and demonstrations for other farmers.

You will monitor and evaluate the work conducted by your farmers through field visits and surveys, and report your findings to your program director (APCD) by means of Volunteer Reporting Tool.

You don't need to be a forestry expert to carry out this job, though you will need basic technical skills that you will acquire during your pre and in-service trainings in Senegal. Your main role is as a facilitator, a catalyst, a liaison and a resource person for your farmers. This will require a great deal of interpersonal and community-entry skills.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR SECONDARY/ COMMUNITY PROJECTS

You may initiate your own secondary activities based on your interests and an exploration of your community with its members. These activities may be in sectors outside of your primary assignment of promoting Agroforestry techniques. Examples of such activities are numerous, but just to give you an idea, Volunteers are currently engaged in gardening, well construction, bee-keeping, nutrition education, family planning awareness activities, literacy/ numeracy training, latrine construction, field research, girls' education and empowerment etc. These activities should be authorized by your APCD, who will ensure that they will not conflict with your primary assignment or other duties as a Volunteer, and who can also advise you about potential project problems and pitfalls.

## WORKING CONDITIONS

### **Available Resources:**

The primary resource available to you in your work is your own motivation, resourcefulness and commitment to contribute to food security efforts in the Sahel. Peace Corps will provide you with a bicycle if required, to enable you to travel to the villages within your work zone. Simple visual aids and manuals are available to aid you in your extension work. In addition, you may apply for additional funding that will enable you to organize formal nursery and fruit tree training. Generally, Volunteers are encouraged to organize informal village-based trainings.

Various funding mechanisms are available, as necessary, to allow you to obtain modest levels of supplies to assist you with your work (seedling bags, improved seeds, small tools, etc.). You may also be able to get material assistance from your local government forestry office or Institutions, projects and from local NGOs.

### **Location of Job:**

Currently, Agroforestry Volunteers are assigned to the Thiès, Kaolack, Fatick, Kaffrine, Tamba, Kedougou and Kolda, Saint-Louis, Matam regions that correspond to the southern peanut basin, the agro-sylvo-pastoral and the forestry eco-geographical zones. We are also expanding sites in the Northern part of the country to increase the Agroforestry presence there. You will be posted in a village and will be part of a work zone comprising Agroforestry, agriculture, health and community economic development Volunteers. In your zone, you will be working under the local forest service official who is located in the district capital. Sometimes Volunteers will be placed near a forestry agent who is working in the local community in a forestry extension capacity; as such, he will become your official counterpart.

### **Working Hours:**

You are expected to work at least 40 hours per week actively talking with Senegalese farmers, visiting fields, inspecting tree plantings, collecting seeds, planting trees, writing reports, meeting with your Senegalese forestry colleagues, etc. Civil servants in Senegal work approximately 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. While the farmers you work with do not necessarily follow this schedule, you are expected to organize your work according to these hours to the extent possible.

Peace Corps Volunteers are expected to undertake their work duties in a professional manner. The activities in your job description are not rigidly structured or defined beforehand. You will not have a direct supervisor constantly telling you what to do, although you will be accountable to your local forest service. You must be willing to take responsibility and initiative to implement projects on your own, to make your own work plans, and to show well-developed skills as a self-starter. You can and will work with other Volunteers on some or all of these activities, but others cannot provide you with the motivation and drive to get your own projects started. That is entirely up to you.

### **Cultural Attitudes and Customs in the Workplace:**

More than 90% of Senegalese are Muslim, making Islam a major cultural influence in Senegal. However, the Islam practiced here differs significantly from that in the Middle East. The Muslim religion in Senegal has developed a particularly African character over the last century or two, and society here is considerably more tolerant than in Islamic countries elsewhere in the world. You will find that the major Islamic religious events become important events in your life and work in rural Senegal.

Cross-cultural sessions during your pre-service training will prepare you to integrate into your new environment. You will learn about the major cultural differences and Senegalese customs.

### **Dress Code:**

Senegalese pride themselves on being well-dressed and clothing is very important in this society. A neat and dignified appearance will say a lot about your desire to be accepted as a colleague. Certain training events also require more than casual dress. Ties are not required for men, nor is the standard business suit worn in the U.S. necessary. Though most villagers will accept western women wearing modest pants (nothing tight-fitting), many female Volunteers prefer long dresses (below the knee) because they are cooler than pants. Wearing clothes that cover shoulders and legs is considered more respectful of the culture. Senegalese men rarely if ever wear shorts except for exercising or fieldwork. Living in a traditional culture means you will need to adapt yourself to local standards if you want to be an effective worker. Your overall good grooming will show your respect for others. Extravagance is not necessary, but cleanliness and neatness are essential elements of a professional appearance.

## **TRAINING FOR YOUR JOB**

During the 27 months that you will live in Senegal, you will participate in trainings on-the-job and in formal training sessions, special workshops and seminars. Prior to becoming a Volunteer, you will attend a nine-week pre service training program, followed 2-3 months later by a two-week intensive in service training at the Peace Corps training center in Thiès, Senegal.

The focus of the pre service training is on building language and cross-cultural skills as well as basic technical Agroforestry/Agriculture and extension skills such as hands-on tree/crop production and on building skills to conduct a needs assessment and community-building skills. Another important component of training involves building or improving your skills of perception, awareness, and communication, factors which are perhaps just as important as technical skills when working with Senegalese farmers.

The follow up In-Service Training, which takes place after you have had a chance to get to know your community and improve local language skills, will focus more on advanced technical skills that you will need to fulfill the objectives of the program.



Training for this program is very intense and will require your most serious participation. The 24 months of service does not include time spent in pre-service training.

In addition to group trainings and mentoring, PC Senegal encourages on demand training through the use of PC-produced YouTube videos, case studies and peer to peer sharing.

PC Senegal website: <http://www.peacecorpssenegal.org>

PC Senegal YouTube Channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/pcsenegaladmin>

## LIVING CONDITIONS

Volunteers will be placed with host families. To ensure a certain amount of privacy, we will look for rooms inside family compounds to give you the best of both worlds. Essentially, this living situation is set up to promote your use of local language, increase your awareness of your community's culture, needs, and issues, and guarantee your security in urban areas where you can be a target for theft and harassment.

Most likely you will live with a prominent family in the village. You will live in a room or a hut made of mud bricks or cement with a grass, wood, or metal roof. Your room or hut will be located within your host family's compound and will include a private latrine and shower area.

Living in a Senegalese family, you will be able to sharpen your language skills, to establish a network of local contacts, and to get to know the local social and cultural environment. However, you will have to go through a period of adjustment that may be intensely challenging but pays great dividends for your future work through your mastery of the language and your understanding of local village society.

In most cases, you will have neither electricity nor running water. Staple foods in rural Senegal consist of rice and millet with vegetables and fresh or dried fish. Meat is a rarity. Senegalese dishes are tasty, but some Volunteers find the diet challenging, as there is usually less variety than Americans are accustomed to having. Vegetarians have been able to make arrangements to maintain their diet, though a vegetarian diet in Senegal can be monotonous. (You will have opportunities to get into town now and then for something different.) Most water comes from wells, which must be treated before drinking. Most first year Volunteers eat meals with their Senegalese family, although this depends somewhat on your own food preferences.

Communication systems are improving throughout Senegal. You will have a cell phone and most district centers are starting to set up Internet access.

## POTENTIAL CHALLENGES & REWARDS

Please reference the [Welcome Book](#) for more detailed information regarding diversity and cross-cultural issues, and safety and security in the Peace Corps.

Peace Corps is not for everyone. More than a mere job, it requires greater dedication and commitment to serve than do most other jobs. It is for confident, self-starting, concerned individuals who are interested in assisting the world's poor and increasing human understanding across cultural barriers. The key to satisfying work as a Peace Corps Volunteer is the ability to establish successful human relations at all levels. This will require patience, sensitivity, and a positive attitude.

You will be required to be a self-starter. The feeling of a lack of direction or encouragement from colleagues can be discouraging. Basic supplies deemed essential by U.S. standards are lacking. Your ability to work successfully with your counterpart and community partners will be critical to the success of the program. Peace Corps has learned over the years that change in a traditional system is a long-term process and requires a long-term commitment by individuals, communities, the Senegalese government, and development assistance organizations. Therefore, you will be building upon previous efforts and will be expected to lay further foundations for those who will come after you. Your background and training will prepare you for the job, yet you will be required to transfer and interpret your knowledge to the local situation, conditions, relationships and available resources. Heavy demands will be placed on your awareness, sensitivity to others, and ability to communicate; all of which are central factors in job satisfaction and success. You will be expected to emphasize local participation over western efficiency and speed, encouraging your work partners to use local resources as much as possible. You can anticipate hard work and plenty of frustrations, but if you are interested in working with people, willing to explore and accept different values and customs, you will find your service a unique and rewarding experience.

How will living and working in communities affected by HIV/AIDS affect Volunteers? The AIDS pandemic strikes across all social strata in many Peace Corps countries however, Senegal's AIDS infection rate has remained relatively low for several years. AIDS is not yet the social and health menace that it is in central, east and southern Africa, and we are doing all we can to keep it that way.

The romance and excitement of working in a developing country wear off quickly. Homesickness, the need to adapt culturally, and the lack of amenities usually taken for granted in the United States will discourage those who join without having the required commitment. If you have the personal qualities needed to accept the challenges described above and demonstrate them in two years of service to Senegal, you will have a rewarding, enriching experience, while at the same time making a much needed contribution to the people with whom you work.

## COMMENTS FROM VOLUNTEERS

*Greetings and welcome to the Agroforestry Team! You are all about to embark on an adventure that will take you to all corners of Senegal, from the forests of the South, to the savannahs of the central and northern regions, to the delta region of the West. Your work is essential to the health and productivity of all of agricultural systems across the board. If our sectors name doesn't already give it away, our main functions are to plant trees, create and maintain fruit tree orchards, and extend improved agricultural techniques. That being said it does not limit us in our activities or projects in the slightest. As an Agfo volunteer, you can have a hand in every sector, at every level of projects imaginable, be it cooperating with an Aggie to establish a windbreak or live fencing in a farmers field to consulting with Health or CED volunteers on what trees to plant in a women's community garden for improved nutrition, increased economic opportunities, or both!*

*As you will notice Senegal faces many environmental issues, most notably over grazing, deforestation, and desertification. In order to combat these issues you will also need to focus on field protection, restoration, and methods of soil improvement. Agfos roam far and wide through the bush, looking for seeds of the thorniest tree species to plant hedges protecting croplands from over grazing. Restore local soils with nitrogen fixing species from across Senegal, or prevent their loss through plantings of windbreaks and erosion controls. To help aid you with you work in village, as well as any larger projects you may undertake, every Agfo volunteer is assigned a community counterpart and is put in contact with representatives from governmental branches such as Eaux et Foret (Senegalese Forestry Dept). I know this may seem like a daunting task but if it was easy everybody would be doing it!*

*In short, as an Agfo there are no limits to what you can accomplish. If there is a project or an idea you have read about, try it, document it in your field notebook, and report on the results. Support staff in Dakar, your PCVL, other PCVs, and your community counterparts will never be more than a phone call or bike ride away, and will be more than willing to help out. What more can one ask for? You'll be out in the sun every day, dirt under your nails and between your toes, and you'll have all the work you can find (yes, you have to find it on your own). No matter the successes or challenges you face I guarantee this will be one of the most unbelievable times of your life, and we're excited to have you as part of our team.*

***Ben Kramer "Mamadou Sabaly"***  
***Foulamory Demba, Kolda Region***  
***Agroforestry PCV 2011-2014***



*Congratulations on being accepted as an Agfo Volunteer in Senegal! This is certainly a stellar program with excellent training to invitees entering with all levels of prior forestry experience. As with everything in the Peace Corps each of our experiences are unique. Each site, region, and volunteer work varies on the community's interests, needs, and capabilities.*



*You will spend several months getting the adequate language training needed to effectively work with your community on a whole range of agro-forestry possibilities. From mango, cashew and papaya fruit production to installing and maintaining thorny acacia live fences to grafting improved fruit varieties to make farmers' trees more prolific, profitable and at times nutritious. You have the option to work on integrated pest management techniques perhaps making mango fly catchment traps that emit mango fly pheromone scents saving mangoes from one of their most tenacious enemies.*

*You can work with individual farmers to improve the soil quality of their fields by planting nitrogen-fixing trees as wind breaks. Or you can pair yourself with women's groups producing and harvesting nutritious leaves like that of moringa oleifera eaten for dinner. The agro-forestry program gives you the skills to then go out into the world of Senegal and find a way to meaningfully work with, teaching to and simultaneously learning from Senegalese.*

*You come with a new fresh set of ideas, experiences and backgrounds that complement the vast knowledge that many Senegalese farmers behold. Together you create designs and ideas working alongside host country nationals in the way that best suits them.*

*The Peace Corps finds you a home, in a world so often removed and detached from much of the Western world allowing you a truly unique experience. In the long hot hours of the day after sweaty moments in the fields we're given a unique opportunity to delve into cultural practices, beliefs, learning about the people who have become our new family, friends, and community. It is often both at times trying and difficult yet ultimately fulfilling and rewarding.*

***Eli Terris***

***Second Year PCV***

***Madjaly, Tambacounda Region***