



Project Japalé Gouné

A school lunch program in Dakar, Senegal

Making a Difference

The school has reported several measurable positive outcomes due to the project, including:

- Significant reduction in absences.
- Visible increase in energy level of students.
- Increased solidarity among students of all socioeconomic classes.
- Improvement in the performance of students.

Senegal Facts

- Life expectancy is 59 years.
- Literacy Rate is almost 40%.
- GNP per capita: \$1,700 (2004 est.).
- Senegal is West Africa's oldest democracy.
- 70% of the labor force works in agriculture.

Increasing Access to Education

Project Japalé Gouné began as a partnership between three Rotary Ambassadorial Scholars living in Dakar and a local school. The goal was to provide increased access to education for poor students. At the school, there was an obvious correlation between midday lunch and overall academic achievement: those that went without lunch often did worse than their peers. The low performance of these hungry students was often mistakenly attributed to a lack of intellectual capabilities instead of an empty stomach. Motivated by Rotary International's motto, "Service Above Self," the three scholars set out to eliminate the barrier that hunger can create for students, in order to help them build a foundation of academic skills.

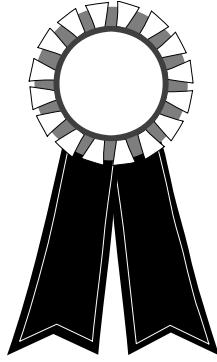
Feeding Hungry Minds

Through the generous financial support of friends, family, and interested Rotary Clubs, an entire cafeteria and lunch program has been established, feeding nearly 200 poor students each week since 2004. Without the lunch program, these students would be returning to classes in the afternoon, struggling to concentrate on an empty stomach. Extra funds have gone towards building capital in the school library such as books, globes, and maps. Teachers have reported increased energy levels, improved health, and higher performance in the participants of the lunch program. Most importantly, the director of the program at the school has reported that lunch is sometimes the only meal these children eat all day.

Our Mission: To increase access to education in Senegal by addressing hunger and providing students with tools for academic success.

Accountability and Recognition

In order to ensure the program's success, there has been a focus on accountability from the beginning. The school contributes 30% of the total cost for the program to create a sense of ownership for the project. In addition, they submit quarterly budget and participation reports. Surprise audits have been performed in Dakar by colleagues of the project, in order to track financial integrity.



The project founders maintain strong ties to Dakar, both to the school and to the Rotary Clubs there. Since the project began, they have returned to Senegal annually, to maintain contact with the school staff both on a personal level and for the project.

The Weidemann Foundation has partnered with Project Japalé Gouné in order to streamline donation collection and fund dispersal to the school. The partnership also guarantees that all donations are tax-deductible.

- In 2005, the Senegalese Minister of Education wrote a letter of support for the project, and the lunch program has since served as a model for neighboring schools.
- In 2006, Massachusetts Institute of Technology funded a market analysis/feasibility study to support a business plan for the project's expansion.

Service Above Self

Rotarians have contributed 81% of all support for Project Japalé Gouné.

The grassroots program was not only developed by Rotary Scholars, but also inspired by and based on the motto of Rotary International, "Service Above Self."

Since the program's beginning, Rotary Clubs have provided a backbone of support. For clubs looking to expand their service to the international community, the project is a perfect fit.

- \$10 feeds one student for a month.
- \$80 feeds one student all year.
- \$300 buys a year's supply of pens for all students.
- \$940 outfits one class with textbooks and school supplies for the academic year.

How You Can Help

Project Japalé Gouné is an ideal match for Rotary Clubs interested in serving the international community. The volunteer-run project keeps overhead costs low and stretches your gift far. Gifts can support:

- The lunch fund
- School supplies
- Physical education materials
- Library Materials

All gifts are tax-deductible. Checks should be written to Weidemann Foundation and earmarked Project Japalé Gouné.

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