

Project Update August 2025

Rufford I.D.: 44745-1

Project Title: Ethnobiology in Rural Senegal: Studying Culturally Significant Plants, Conservation Methods, and Their Impact on Community Empowerment and Health

Update: After the initial months focused on community meetings, informal research, and building relationships with local ethnobotanists and experts, we've entered a more action-filled phase of the project. The community has collectively designated a plot of communal farmland for medicinal plant preservation. This space holds future potential—for example, if we pursue another grant—to establish native plant plots and small-scale processing to support local livelihoods.

Over the past few months, we've also begun an extensive plant inventory in Thiafoura. We're documenting which species are present, their most common traditional uses, and which are disappearing or have already vanished. Based on this "living list," we've initiated a medicinal tree nursery, currently being cared for by two community members. There are various stakeholders (the village Committee for Community Development, the Woman's Group, the Thiafoura Youth Association, partners NGO CREATES and Association Brada Bi, the Department for Ecovillage Development and the Forest Department, etc., who are all actively involved in conversations about how to advance in a sustainable, just way.

Below are some recent photos, with captions. Photo credit for all photos is collectively to research team (Alisa Hove, Berta Gielge, Keaton Scanlon and Aziz Doukoure).



1) Team members involved in a tree inventory in the Woman's Community Forest space in Thiafoura.



2) A "walk in the woods" interview with Mr. Thombe, a Thiafoura elder and knowledge keeper of plant medicine.



3) A stakeholder meeting to discuss clear conservation goals for the rainy season.



4) Collecting plants for a herbarium, which will be sent to the Botanical Department of the Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire (IFAN) for identification.



5) A semi-structured interview with one of the members of the local Women's Group.