

## Senegal

### Strengthen Rehabilitative Services for People with Disabilities

**Implementing Partner:** Handicap International France

**Funding Period:** March 2004 - March 2007

**Amount:** \$1,000,000

**Purpose:** Improve the lives of people disabled by mine accidents and other causes, and implement educational activities to prevent further accidents.

#### Objectives

- Improve the quality of care in orthopedic surgery and rehabilitation in the Ziguinchor region
- Help people with disabilities—mine victims or others—rejoin their communities
- Consolidate the mine education and awareness program by turning it over progressively to the local population

In 1982, supporters of the Democratic Forces Movement of the Casamance demanded that the Government of Senegal grant independence to the Casamance region, an isolated section of southwestern Senegal. This event sparked an eighteen-year conflict, whose repercussions included armed movements in Guinea Bissau and the dislocation of populations in Gambia. The situation worsened in 2000 when armed groups began leaving behind rings of antipersonnel landmines to cover their retreat. Landmines have affected the population and have hampered donor and NGO efforts in the region. Handicap International statistics indicate that of its approximately 1,300,000 inhabitants, the Casamance current has close to 700 landmine victims, 230 abandoned villages, and 30,000 displaced persons.

In July 2001, USAID began to provide funding to Handicap International to support its program to assist victims of landmine accidents and to raise awareness of the dangers of mines and unexploded ordnance.

The program facilitated the rehabilitation of people with disabilities in the Casamance, including the regionalization of orthopedic services. It also supported local associations that assist people with landmine injuries and other disabilities during their treatment and eased their return to families and communities. In addition, the program conducted training to integrate mine awareness messages into school curriculums and disseminate these messages throughout villages in the region.

Under a new agreement signed in March 2004, rehabilitation efforts will be extending into the region of Ziguinchor, an area also hard hit by the conflict. Moreover, Handicap International is piloting a community relay agent program in the landmine-affected zones of Niaguis, Nyassia, and Diouloulou. Agents assist in identifying and supporting people with disabilities in these communities.