



Réseau Siggil Jigéen (RSJ)

Founded in Dakar in 1995, Réseau Siggil Jigéen (RSJ) is a coalition of 18 Senegalese organisations advancing women's rights, political participation, and sexual and reproductive health. In Wolof, 'Siggil' means to enhance, rehabilitate, promote and defend; 'Jigéen' means women, and by extension family and society. For three decades, RSJ has campaigned for the legal and institutional reforms that underpin gender equality in Senegal — from the 1999 Law on the Suppression of Violence against Women to the 2010 Parity Law to the ongoing reform of the Family Code.

As an Equal Measures 2030 (EM2030) coalition member, RSJ has used the SDG Gender Index, the Data-Driven Advocacy (DDA) curriculum, and EM2030's convening platforms to translate a strong legal framework into measurable change for Senegalese women. Under the leadership of Executive Director Fatou Ndiaye Turpin, RSJ has built a national network of trained advocates, secured commitments from mayors and ministries, and led the national launch of the 2024 SDG Gender Index in Dakar.

30

years of feminist
advocacy since 1995

146

advocates trained in
data-driven advocacy

50K+

people reached through
online campaigns

20

DDA alumni in the
national advocacy
committee

THE JOURNEY

From a strong legal framework to lived equality

Senegal has long been considered a regional leader in women's rights legislation — ratifying CEDAW in 1985, the Maputo Protocol in 2005, and passing the 2010 Parity Law that brought women to over 48% of seats in Senegal's parliament. But for RSJ, the persistent challenge has never been the law on the page; it has been the gap between law and lived reality.

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“Yes, we have laws, but the problem lies in their application and implementation. Laws are important, of course, but they are often passed only to end up at the back of a drawer. That does nothing to help families in Senegal.” -Fatou Ndiaye Turpin, Executive Director, RSJ

That diagnosis — a strong legal framework undermined by uneven implementation, discriminatory provisions and limited public understanding — has shaped RSJ's strategy across three decades of work. The partnership with EM2030 gave RSJ a new tool for that mission: rigorous, credible, locally translatable data that could turn implementation gaps into measurable advocacy targets.

Between 2021 and 2024, RSJ ran five rounds of virtual Data-Driven Advocacy training reaching 146 advocates from across Senegal — RSJ's own network members, national and local CSOs, and youth groups. A Training-of-Trainers model meant participants could replicate the methodology in their own contexts. Several RSJ network members who had never previously engaged in advocacy began approaching policymakers using EM2030 tools. In 2022, following the launch of the 2022 SDG Gender Index, 20 alumni from these trainings formed a national advocacy committee — a standing body that continues to deliver DDA training, present Index findings to policymakers, monitor Senegal's Generation Equality Forum (GEF) commitments, and run radio, workshop and digital campaigns. A WhatsApp group called “Data tracking in Senegal” keeps the alumni network sharing data and coordinating advocacy in real time.

THE COALITION EFFECT

The partnership equipped RSJ with the tools, platforms, and resources it translated into national policy and community-level change.

The SDG Gender Index provided RSJ with a globally credible evidence base that policymakers could not easily dismiss. By combining Index findings with national statistics, RSJ brought attention to issues such as unequal marriage age, secondary school dropout, and gender-based violence, reframing them as accountability questions. Following workshops with legislators after Senegal's elections, parliamentarians committed to integrating RSJ's data into policy planning.

Equal Measures' Data-Driven Advocacy (DDA) curriculum trained 196 advocates across five rounds. One of the most durable institutional outcomes of the partnership was the emergence of a 20-member national advocacy committee drawn from diverse CSOs. The committee has become a standing body that delivers DDA training, presents Index findings to policymakers, monitors SDG commitments, and conducts community outreach. Several organizations that had previously become inactive were re-engaged in national advocacy through the training process.

RSJ also translated global evidence into Senegalese contexts. The organization adapted the Index into a Senegalese national factsheet and campaigned in local languages, making global data accessible to communities, journalists, and local officials. The factsheet became a core advocacy resource shared with CSOs, youth groups, journalists, line ministries, and regional authorities.

Equal Measures' support enabled RSJ to pilot an innovative financing approach for gender equality through the Hackathon model. By combining data evidence, community diagnosis, and private-sector funding, the model contributed to shifting conversations around gender equality financing towards local ownership, sustainability, and the reduction of reliance on external donors.

Through the wider Equal Measures coalition, RSJ expanded its participation in global advocacy spaces. The organization contributed to preparations for CSW67, participated in Twitter Spaces with global feminist data partners, and co-authored blogs that brought country-level evidence to UNGA, CSW, and HLPF processes. Coalition relationships also created opportunities for cross-regional learning, including early exploration with GROOTS Kenya on community data dashboards, connecting two organizations rooted in community-led approaches.

Flexible support enabled RSJ to invest in the infrastructure needed for ongoing collaboration. This included establishing the WhatsApp-based "Data Tracking in Senegal" group, which continues to connect advocates and sustain collaboration beyond individual projects. These investments strengthened the relationships and systems that allow advocacy efforts to continue, adapt, and grow over time.



RSJ translated the SDG Gender Index into Senegalese languages and contexts, producing a national stimulus factsheet that became one of the most widely shared advocacy resources of the partnership. Index data was correlated with national datasets to highlight urgent gaps in health, education and clean energy. Ten radio programmes carried Index findings into communities across the country. Two online campaigns on gender-based violence and gender equality, co-designed with youth, reached between 50,000 and 100,000 people on Facebook and Twitter.

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Data is very important because it allows us to give credibility to the work we are doing. The data lets us understand the gaps, and the data also strengthens our advocacy arguments. It is not always easy to have data on gender — hence the real importance of the work we are doing to visualise it” - *Fatou Ndiaye Turpin, Executive Director, RSJ*

In October 2024, RSJ led the Senegal national launch of the 2024 SDG Gender Index in Dakar under the theme “A Gender Equal Future in Crisis.” Over 200 participants attended — parliamentarians, mayors, ministry officials from Health, Women and Justice, civil society leaders, journalists and youth activists. The launch translated headline Index findings into concrete commitments: budget commitments for gender-responsive education, and integration of gender perspectives into local government development plans.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

→ **Local authority funding for adolescent health.** RSJ organised several data-driven meetings with the mayors of Dieuppeul-Derklé and Pikine Nord, during which it presented evidence highlighting gaps in sexual and reproductive health (SRH) provision for adolescents. Both mayors committed to allocating municipal funds to projects led by local communities focusing on menstrual hygiene management and the prevention of early pregnancies — projects which are now owned and managed by the local communities.

→ **The private sector is committed to funding initiatives that promote gender equality.** A two-day hackathon brought together community leaders, local councillors, young participants and private companies to carry out a community assessment of adolescents’ sexual and reproductive health using RSJ data tools. Three local companies — none of which had previously funded gender equality programmes — committed to providing financial support for the community projects arising from this assessment.

→ **The Directorate for Gender Equality is incorporating RSJ data into official planning.** Following sustained advocacy work and as part of the GEF process, Senegal’s Directorate for Gender Equity and Equality (DEEG) has committed to promoting and using the SDG Gender Index and the RSJ national factsheet in its own activities. RSJ has been invited to participate in the development of the action plan aimed at implementing the commitments made by Senegal within the GEF Action Coalition and will lead the working group tasked with taking this forward.

→ **Multi-stakeholder working group on gender data.** The Directorate of Economic Policy Planning at the Ministry of the Economy has requested RSJ’s ongoing contribution to national monitoring of the SDGs. A multi-stakeholder working group on gender equality and gender data has been established, bringing together the DEEG, the relevant ministries and civil society organisations around a common evidence base.

→ **Commitments made at ministerial level during the launch of the index in Dakar in 2024.** The ministries responsible for Women, Health and Education committed to creating safe spaces in schools, advancing the implementation of the law on sexual and reproductive health and rights, and strengthening strategies to combat gender-based violence. Budgetary commitments were secured in support of gender-sensitive education at sub-national level.

→ **Discussions on reforming the Family Code.** RSJ took part in national debates on the revision of Senegal’s 1972 Family Code, particularly regarding the unequal minimum age for marriage (16 for girls, 18 for boys) and provisions relating to inheritance and child custody, which continue to disadvantage women.

LOOKING AHEAD

Building the next generation of Senegalese feminist advocates

One of the most distinctive features of RSJ's EM2030 work has been its sustained investment in young women advocates. Youth trainees from the DDA cohorts moved from training into active policymaker dialogues throughout the GEF process — using data-based arguments to engage Senegal's Directorate of Gender Equality, line ministries and local mayors. RSJ's analysis of the Index data points consistently to one of Senegal's sharpest equality gaps: the loss of girls from secondary classrooms. Adolescent girls are a national priority in Senegal and represent a major challenge shared by the state, civil society organisations and international bodies in order to remove gender-related barriers and stimulate the country's development.

The major challenges facing adolescent girls in Senegal

To ensure this priority becomes a reality, the country is focusing its efforts on removing several structural barriers:

- **Sexual and reproductive health:** Tackling the high rate of early pregnancies.
- **Gender-based violence:** Breaking the cycle of child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM)
- **Education and school attendance:** Ensuring girls remain in school beyond primary level.
- **Access to hygiene:** Facilitating safe menstrual hygiene management in schools.

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“The progress we have seen in primary education falls away at secondary level. Girls become adolescent and face FGM, forced and early marriage, the lack of menstrual hygiene management, the absence of SRH information. The policies we have for women do not always reach these girls. It is time for young people to pick up the torch. Teenage girls must be part of the critical mass that is needed to help this country develop.” -Fatou Ndiaye Turpin, Executive Director, RSJ



Senegal scored 55.2 on the 2022 SDG Gender Index — ranked 113 out of 144 countries globally and 10 of 36 in sub-Saharan Africa — but was among the top 10 fastest-moving countries overall, with progress of nearly 5 points since 2015. The 2024 Index now provides a sharper picture: where parity in parliament coexists with very poor scores on workplace equality, banking access, and women's ministerial roles. RSJ is using the 2024 Index to push for adolescent-girl-focused investment, Family Code reform, and digitalization of gender-disaggregated data — the gap Fatou Ndiaye Turpin sees as the next frontier.

RSJ's trajectory — from Beijing 1995 to Dakar 2024 — is one of the clearest demonstrations in the EM2030 coalition of what sustained, locally rooted feminist advocacy can do when paired with rigorous data: turn a strong legal framework into measurable change in women's lives. As Fatou Ndiaye Turpin puts it, *“we can't do this alone — it takes a strategy based on collaboration that is built up over many years.”*

Learn more about RSJ's work: