



## PHOTO & CAPTION

### Nurturing a Passion for Learning

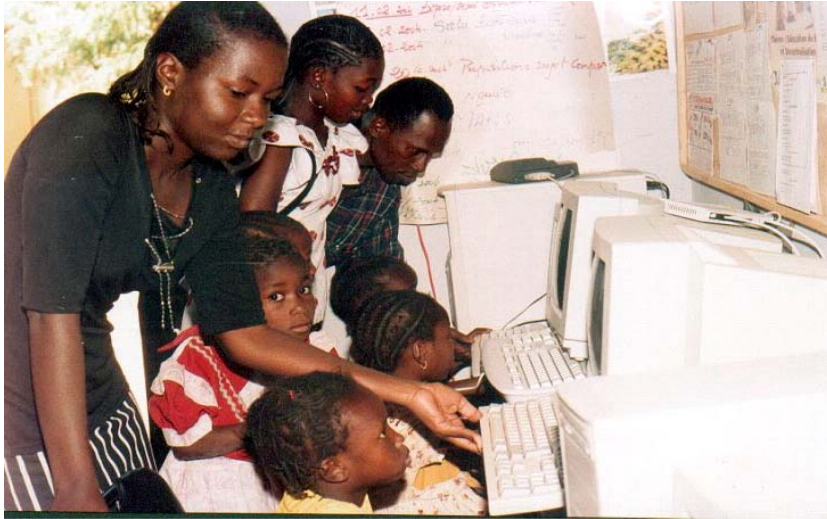


Photo: USAID

***Aissata Ba is a high school graduate with honors and beneficiary of a USAID scholarship program. She says her proudest experience was the opportunity to share her passion for computers with a group of primary school students.***

Aissata Ba is nothing if not resolute. A high school graduate with honors and beneficiary under the Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Program, she exemplifies the saying, "Where there's a will, there's a way."

As a 7-year-old Aissata persuaded her parents to allow her attend the new primary school in her village of Aéré Lao in northern Senegal. In high school, she developed a passion for computers, after a USAID scholarship program offered her an opportunity to learn the technology.

The program provides scholarship recipients like Aissata with tuition, books and school supplies. It also pays for Internet connectivity and arranges tutors, exam preparation and leadership training. Recipients from around Senegal also attend regional workshops with their mentors to discuss peer pressure, gender stereotypes, self-esteem, self-awareness, HIV/AIDS and communication. USAID's scholarship program has financially supported and mentored 425 girls like Aissata. In 2004, 344 of them — 82 percent — passed the high school exam, which is double the national average of 41 percent.

Aissata is now 19 and in her first year at the Gaston Berger University in Saint Louis, Senegal. She's finding her way in life, with a passion to succeed.