

Concern



Universal

## Case Study of Ebrima Jawara (from subsistence farming to commercial enterprise)

Four years ago, Ebrima Jawara was like any other young man in the hundreds of small villages in Gambia's North Bank Division; helping his family with their traditional activities, struggling to make ends meet, and wondering how he could ever be able to support them. But now life is very different for him, as one of a new breed of entrepreneurial young farmers who, with our support, have successfully made the transition from subsistence farming to commercial enterprise.

At first it was not easy to persuade his father to let him leave the village to join our 'Train a Farmer' program. As the family's only son, it was difficult for them to see how they would cope without his help for so long. But after much deliberation he eventually left, and after nine months training he returned and started cultivating their land.

"I was the first boy to go in for gardening in this area." says Ebrima, "Before then it was only the women who used to go in for it, growing traditional crops like bitter tomato and hot peppers for the local markets." A brief look around Ebrima's garden now show just how far he has come, with an abundance of different varieties including tomatoes, sweet peppers and courgettes. With the help of Concern Universal's own vegetable marketing initiative these vegetables are sold to The Gambia's tourist hotels and restaurants. The difference in income has been substantial.

"I cannot even compare today with back then. The only way I can say it is that if then I was travelling at 50 kilometres per hour, now I am travelling at 100. Last year I bought one pack of tomato seeds for 600 dalasis. When I finished harvesting I had earned 22,000. I still have the receipts."



Seeing his success, and with training and marketing support from us, many others have since followed Ebrima's example, and now the whole area has been transformed into a place with a growing reputation for horticultural excellence.

"In other villages the youths have all left to try and find money in the city. Here this does not happen any more. They can see that it is possible to earn good money and stay with their families."

Ebrima is now in the position where he is able not only to support his family and expand his garden, but also to sponsor two local children, who he is encouraging to follow in his footsteps. When visitors come to his garden the first thing he shows them is the concrete well he dug himself, into which are carved the words 'To work hard is to achieve success.'