



Survivor Stories

Mamady Diamanka: Uncle rescues his nephew from street begging slavery

Story by Madiop Gueye & Terry FitzPatrick

He had traveled 500 miles to see slavery for himself, unaware that he would find a member of his own family trapped in a street begging gang in Senegal. Without hesitation, he rescued the boy, 12 and brought him home.



Mamady Diamanka with nephew | Photo: ENDA Jeunesse Action

Mamady Diamanka serves as president of his village's community child protection committee (CAPE). These groups, established by Free the Slaves and our Senegalese partner organization *ENDA Jeunesse Action*, alert parents in rural areas to the risks of sending their children away to religious boarding schools in faraway cities.

Many villagers in the Kolda region send children to the city of Saint-Louis to learn the Quran. But many children fall target there to unscrupulous traffickers, who force children onto the street to beg.

Diamanka agreed to travel to Saint-Louis as part of a delegation of CAPE leaders. Their mission: see firsthand the conditions that befall trafficked children. ENDA activists brought the delegation to a bus terminal

where a "listening point" had been established. These safe-spot gathering places allow trafficked children to ask for food, shelter and support.

That's when Diamanka saw the frightening sight. His own nephew, who had been sent for spiritual instruction, was instead barefoot on the street begging for survival.

"I thought that children were well-taken care of in Saint-Louis," Diamanka said. "I didn't know that a family member was in that situation. This visit opened my eyes."

Diamanka lifted his nephew into his arms, away from danger, and helped return him to his parents. Diamanka has vowed to spread the word.

"Now, I know of the harmful practice of some *marabouts* (religious instructors) on children and I pledge once again to fight against the phenomenon," he said.



Kolda region delegation visits Saint-Lois Listening Point | Photo: ENDA Jeunesse Action

The episode underscores the value of bringing rural representatives to urban settings to witness what can happen when children are trafficked. In this case, one boy was rescued immediately. But the lesson his uncle learned will be shared with many families.

"I would like to thank *ENDA Jeunesse Action* and FTS," Diamanka said. "Thanks to you, my nephew will find a normal life next to his parents."

Learn more online about our innovative *Aar Sunu Xaleyi* (Protect Our Children) program in Senegal: www.freetheslaves.net/senegal.