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# CHARACTERISTICS, DYNAMICS AND DRIVERS OF RURAL MIGRATION IN SENEGAL

## Case study in Kaolack and Matam

### Key messages

- Migration concerns one third of households and 8.8% of the rural population of Kaolack and Matam. The Matam region is strongly characterized by international migration. Despite this, internal migration remains dominant in both regions.
- Most migrants are male (82%), of young age 15-34 (61%), and are slightly more educated than the average population.
- Migrant families are generally less engaged in agriculture, except for the families of seasonal migrants.
- Families with migrants, especially international, are better off than the average.
- The search for better job is the main reason for migration (60-70% of all the reasons).
- In order to provide an alternative to distress migration, Senegalese public policies should aim at increasing the participation of young people in the local economy, ensuring that they have access to well-paid activities in both farm and non-farm sectors, and exploiting the development potential of migration.

### Intervention areas



Source : Green Eyez Design



## Context

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Although migratory flows from rural areas are a common phenomenon in most developing countries, we possess little information on their characteristics, dynamics and determinants. Rural migrations are poorly studied by researchers and rarely addressed by governments' development strategies. It is in this context that in September 2017, in the framework of the project FMM/GLO/115/MUL "Productive investments to create decent rural youth employment in migration-prone areas in Senegal", FAO and the Senegalese National Agency for Statistics and Demography (ANSD) conducted a household survey in two rural regions of Senegal. The purpose of this survey is to generate information on migration phenomena taking place in rural areas. The survey was conducted among 1 000 households in 67 rural census districts in the Kaolack and Matam regions. This survey's results contribute to broadening the available knowledge base on the causes and dynamics of rural migration and aim to inform sectoral economic policies, youth employment and rural development policies.

"Productive investments to create decent rural youth employment in migration-prone areas in Senegal"





## Volume of rural migrations

In the two surveyed areas, 8.8% of the population were migrants, of whom 3.3% were returnees (over 12 months), 0.9% were returnees (less than 12 months), 3.7% were migrants living outside the household at the time of the survey, and 0.9% were seasonal migrants (Figure 1). Migration concerns 7.6% of the population or 28% of households in Kaolack, and 10.7% of the population or 36% of households in Matam. Our analysis groups together in the same “migrant” category people who were currently living outside the household at the moment of the survey, seasonal migrants and those who returned less than a year prior to the survey, since these people are supposed to be more influenced by the households’ socio-economic characteristics over the last 12 months before the survey.

The Kaolack region is strongly characterized by internal movements, with over 90% of migrants moving within the country’s territory. On the contrary, the Matam region, located in the Senegalese River Valley, is characterized by more important flows of international migrants because of the migratory tradition dating back to the colonial times (Figure 2). Despite this, internal migration is still dominant.

Migrants from these two regions, either internal or international, mainly go to urban areas (at least 60% of all migrants). Dakar, the capital, is the most attractive area for internal migrants from both regions. This city is the destination of 55.9% of all internal migrants. The second most popular destination is their own regions. In fact, the internal migrants of Matam and Kaolack tend to migrate within their own region, and often to the urban centre. The most popular foreign destination for migrants from Kaolack is Gambia (54.5% of its international migrants), due to the geographical proximity to that country, while Matam migrants are spread over a larger number of countries such as Gabon (18.9% of its international migrants), France (16.8%), Congo (16.7%), Mauritania (12.1%) and Ivory Coast (11.4%). Seasonal migrants move mostly within their own regions or in neighboring regions and countries.

Only 6.0% of migrants reported that they had passed through a transit destination where they prepared the papers and collected the money needed to reach their final destination. More than a third of migrants received financial and non-financial assistance to migrate, including 83% from the family of origin and 13% from the family at destination. Migrants financed their trips mainly thanks to their own savings (52.2%) and those of their families (28.9%).

Figure 1. Percentage of migrants in the population

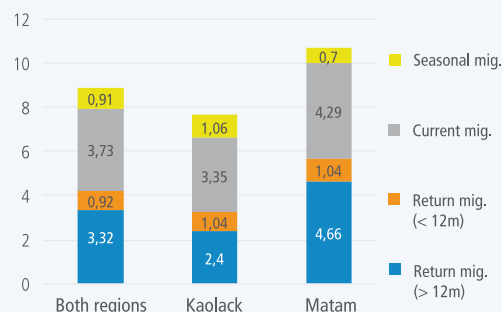
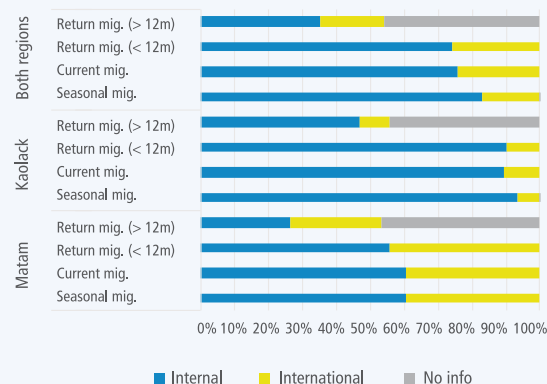


Figure 2. Percentage of internal and international migrants



# Characteristics of migrants



Senegal is characterized by a very young population (more than 40% is less than 15 years old). Most migrants are also of young age: between 15-24 years old (27.5%) and between 25-34 years old (33.2%) (Figure 3).

In both regions, migration is a predominantly a male phenomenon, with 82% of migrants being men (Figure 4). This proportion is even more pronounced when we look at international movements. This illustrates the fact that women are more likely to migrate within short distances. More than 60% of the migrants are the sons or daughters (and often the elders) of the head of the household. The majority of migrants are monoga-

mously married (46.4%) or single (38.3%). They have a higher level of education than the average population aged 15 and above (only 66.6% without education compared to 75.2% on average). The proportion of migrants with a university degree is 9.1% compared to 1.6% on average.

Before migrating, half of the migrants were employed in agriculture. After migrating, they mainly occupy non-agricultural jobs (Figure 5). Most seasonal migrants, on the other hand, do not abandon their occupations in agriculture.

Figure 3. Age of migrants

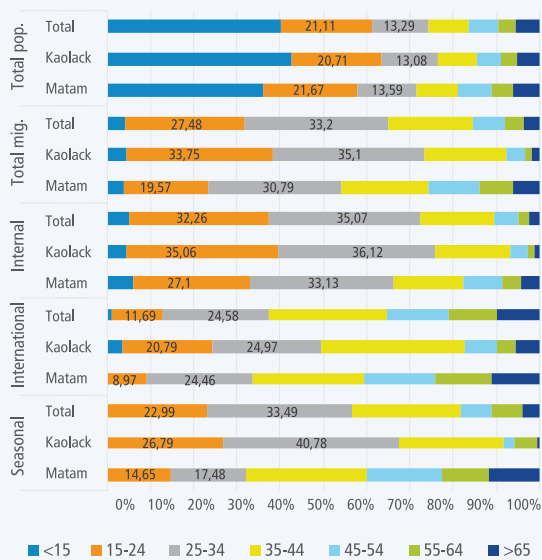
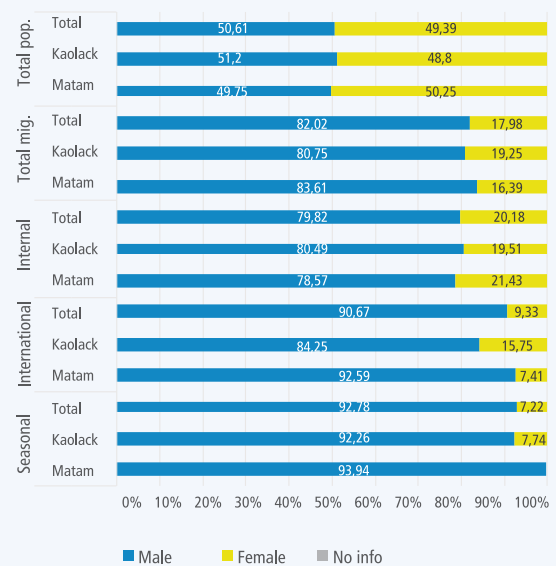


Figure 4. Sex of migrants





## Characteristics of households with migrants

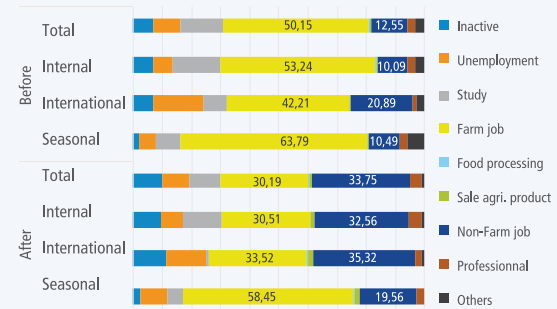
Migrants come from larger families (they have on average 17 members including the migrants compared to 15 members in the average family), partly due to the fact that they tend to be part of households whose heads are polygamous (42.0% of families with migrants have household heads married in polygamy, against 37.8% in families without migrants). Migrant families are generally less engaged in agriculture.

Compared to the average, they have fewer members over the age of 15 who work in agriculture (*Figure 6*), have less land to cultivate, have fewer varieties of crops and livestock, and the contribution of agriculture to their annual gross income is lower (*Figure 7*). The exception is among seasonal migrants. Compared to the average of households with migrants, those with seasonal migrants are much more involved in agriculture.

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Families with international migrants are less vulnerable to food insecurity (*Figure 8*), and are better off than the average (*Figure 9*). Households with international migrants are also better served by public transport (measured by time to the nearest public transport stop). This confirms the existence of a financial

**Figure 5. Employment before and after migration**



constraint linked to international migration, which is often more costly.

Families with migrants are more likely to have had a migrant in the past. At the same time, they tend to live in districts with higher migration rates. This suggests the existence of a network effect that facilitates migration.

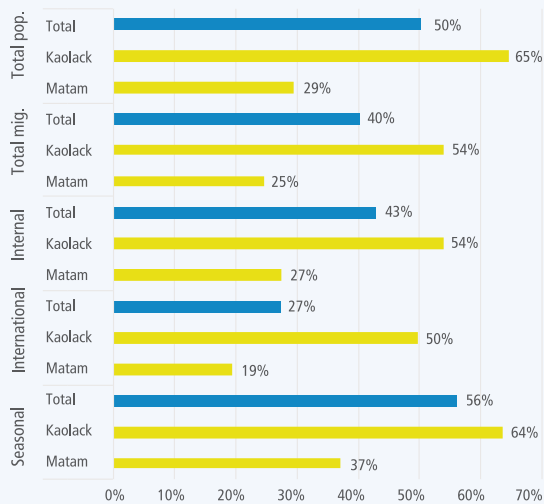




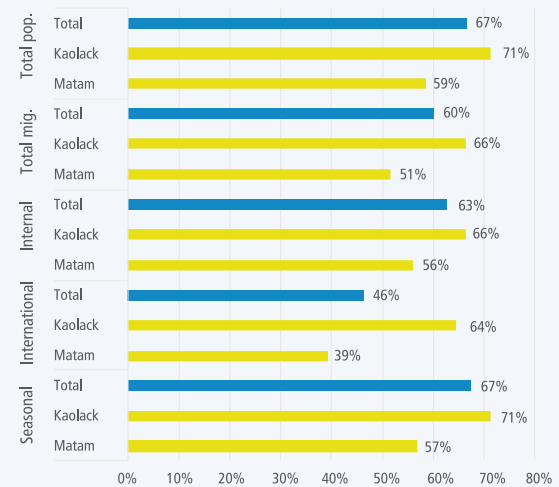


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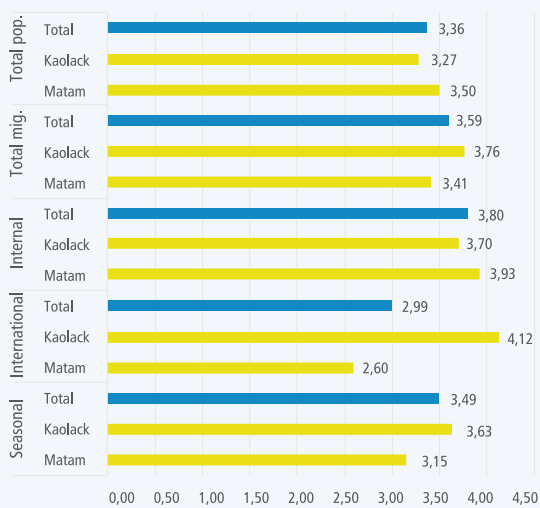
**Figure 6. Percentage of family members engaged in agriculture, <15 years old**



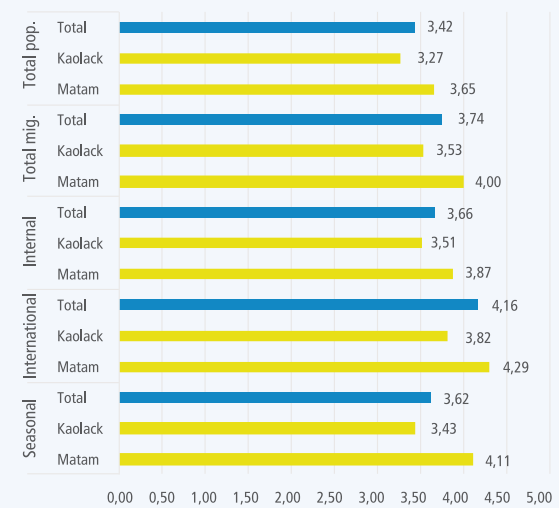
**Figure 7. Share of agriculture in gross annual income**



**Figure 8. Food Insecurity Experience Scale**



**Figure 9. The wealth index**



## Looking for a better job as the main reason for migration

Figure 10. Reasons for migration of the migrants

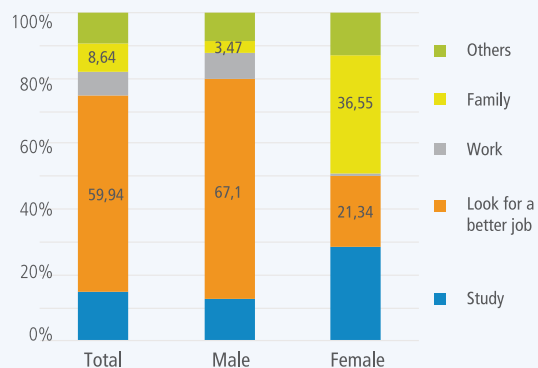
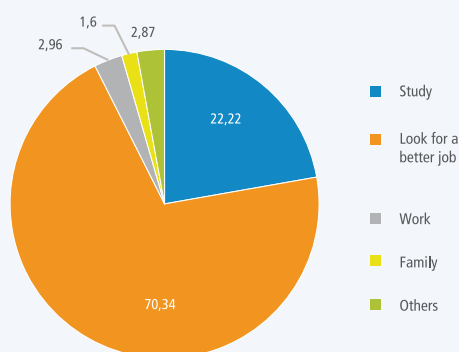


Figure 11. Reasons for the desire to migrate of the non-migrants



Migrants leave their home mainly for the purpose of finding a better job (60% of the reasons), followed by study and work opportunities. For women, the major cause of migration is related to family reasons (36.5%) (Figure 10). Figure 11 also shows that among those who have a desire to migrate (10.14% in the

whole sample), 70.34% are motivated by seeking a better job, but 90% of them say that they have not yet migrated because of limited financial resources. In addition, being unemployed or employed in agriculture significantly affect the desire to migrate among the non-migrants.





## Conclusion



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Econometric estimates show that the most statistically significant variables for the probability of migrating are being young (15-34), being single or married in monogamy, and coming from well-off families. Yet these results must be interpreted with some caution because of the endogenous effects of migration with wealth. However, one thing is clear: the search for a better job is the main driver behind the desire of the rural population in Senegal to migrate, especially among young people.

In Senegal, FAO works to strengthen coherence between migration, agricultural and rural development policies. Policies should be more targeted at young people in rural areas. As the search for economic opportunities is a major determinant of rural emigration, this indicates a lack of economic opportunities. Therefore, young people should be supported to find decent jobs in their region of origin.

Policy responses should be coordinated with innovative initiatives to increase youth participation in agriculture. By supporting a new generation of agro-entrepreneurs, Senegal can minimize the negative impacts of massive emigration, limit pressure on urban labour markets and harness the development potential of a young and growing population. Giving priority to job creation and agro-entrepreneurial opportunities cannot only contribute to enhancing food security and reducing rural poverty, but also to address the adverse drivers of distress migration.

At the same time, the development potential of migration should be exploited. Return migrants and the diaspora have better access to knowledge, information and financial resources that could be used to invest productively in the rural economy, supporting job creation and development in their regions of origin. FAO is committed to support governments in the design and implementation of evidence-based policies to harness the potential of migration for the development of rural economies.



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