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RURAL EMPLOYMENT

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Addressing rural youth migration at its root causes: A conceptual framework

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Addressing rural youth migration at its root causes: A conceptual framework

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by Laura Deotti and Elisenda Estruch, Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division

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Table of contents

Acknowledgements	V
Executive summary	VI
Acronyms	VIII
1 Introduction	1
2 Rural youth migration and employment: facts and figures	4
3 A conceptual framework for distress migration of rural youth	9
3.1 Determinants of distress migration of rural youth	9
3.1.1 Context determinants	10
3.1.2 Household determinants	13
3.1.3 Individual determinants	14
3.2 Impact of rural out-migration on rural livelihoods	16
3.2.1 Positive impacts of youth migration on rural areas of origin	18
3.2.2 Negative impacts of youth migration on rural areas of origin	21
3.3 Potential policies and programmes	24
3.3.1 Collect evidence and factor in gender- and age-disaggregated analysis of rural distress migration	25
3.3.2 Integrate distress migration and rural labour mobility aspects in ARD policies and programmes	26
3.3.3 Promote specific measures for youth employment creation in both farm and non-farm rural activities, in line with aspirations	28
3.3.4 Support migration that is informed, voluntary and within legal/formal migratory channels	34
3.3.5 Promote measures to maximize the positive impact of migration	35
4 Conclusions and final recommendations	40
Bibliography	43
Glossary	55

List of figures

1. Determinants of distress migration of rural youth	10
2. Factors determining the direction and intensity of migration impacts	16
3. Positive impacts of youth migration on rural areas of origin	21
4. Negative impacts of youth migration on rural areas of origin	23
5. Impact of policies supporting gender- and age-disaggregated analysis of distress migration	26
6. Impact of policies integrating distress migration and rural labour mobility into ARD policies and planning	27
7. The Junior Farmer Field and Life School approach	31
8. Impact of policies including specific measures for youth employment creation in farm and non-farm rural activities	33
9. Impact of policies supporting informed, voluntary and regular migration	35
10. Impact of policies contributing to maximize the positive effects of migration	37
11. Summary of potential policies to reduce distress migration of rural youth and maximize its benefits for agriculture and rural development	38

List of tables

1. Impact of migration on agriculture and rural development	18
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List of boxes

Elements of success for public-private partnership (PPP) models	29
Key actions to promote SMAEs	30
FAO's Junior Farmer Field and Life School (JFFLS) approach	32

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Executive summary

Migration is a common livelihood strategy for households across sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and North Africa. Despite structural differences, these two regions are facing major migration and youth employment challenges. The literature has mainly concentrated on international migration. Similarly, migration policies have mainly tried to mitigate the potential risks and/or maximize the benefits of international migration. However, a much greater number of people migrate inside their own country, and mainly out of rural areas. If the root causes of migration remain unaddressed, an increasing number of rural households will revert to migration out of distress.

The number of young migrants increased from 23.2 million in 1990 to 28.2 million in 2013 (UNICEF, 2014). At household level, young members may move to work elsewhere as part of the household's risk diversification strategy but also in response to the household's expectation of higher returns in the future or to personal aspirations. In particular, **rural youth are those more likely to migrate** in response to the lack of gainful employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in agriculture and related rural economic activities. Rural youth in SSA and North Africa are particularly disadvantaged. Relatively low official youth unemployment rates in SSA mask endemic underemployment and the large number of poor quality informal jobs. On the other hand, youth unemployment rates in North Africa are among the highest in the world.

This paper develops a conceptual framework about how agricultural and rural development policies can reduce the need for distress migration of rural youth; and how rural youth migration and remittances can contribute to sustainable agriculture and rural development, poverty reduction and food security in the areas of origin.

The conceptual framework recognizes that **distress migration is a complex phenomenon requiring integrated approaches** which both **address the root causes** of distress migration and **emphasize the positive impacts** of migration for rural areas. Indeed, a wide range of issues and situations determine the decision to migrate, including local factors and stages of structural transformation, as well as household and individual characteristics. Likewise, the impacts of migration on the rural areas of origin can vary enormously.

Based on available evidence, it may be concluded that within the ongoing processes of sustainable agricultural intensification and structural rural transformation in SSA and North Africa, the root causes of distress migration of rural youth need to be addressed by offering **more and better on-farm and off-farm employment opportunities**. The subsequent **reduction in rural poverty** and **improvement of food security** can contribute to **ease migratory pressures**.

This **conceptual framework** identifies a number of key areas for intervention at **policy** and **programme** levels:

First, obtain a better **understanding of the drivers and impacts of distress migration of rural youth**, through improved data and increased evidence to subsequently inform policies and programmes. At present, there is only limited data available about the propensity to migrate of rural youth in SSA and North Africa and about the impacts of migration on agriculture and development in rural areas of origin. Comprehend the effectiveness of interventions to address the phenomenon at policy and programme level. A rigorous understanding and sound evidence are instrumental to raise awareness at global level by working in partnership and disseminating lessons learned.

Second, ensure that **agriculture and rural development (ARD) policies and strategic planning processes account for migration, labour mobility and remittances**, while ensuring **policy coherence**. This calls for an integrated set of actions, for example: (i) increase awareness on migration patterns, its determinants and impacts; (ii) provide technical support in strategic planning processes to address the root causes of migration, especially in terms of employment creation for rural youth; and (iii) develop the capacities of governments and rural stakeholders to mainstream migration aspects into ARD strategic planning.

Third, implement **ARD programmes explicitly targeting rural youth** to create viable **on-farm and off-farm employment opportunities**, which are productive, decent and in line with youth aspirations. There is an urgent need to engage youth in agriculture and to allow them to realize their full productive and innovative potential. Therefore, programmatic interventions should accelerate the growth of agricultural and rural sectors and value chains with high value added per worker and create decent job opportunities for rural youth, combining on-the-job training, employment-centred agro-investments (both in-farm and off-farm activities) and promotion of small and medium agro-enterprises (SMAEs). Innovative mechanisms establishing facilities to support migrants' investments in agriculture, through remittances and diaspora funds, should also be piloted and scaled up.

Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
ARD	Agriculture and rural development
ATM	Automated teller machine
AVR	Assisted Voluntary Return
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRE	Decent rural employment
EAAE	European Association of Agricultural Economists
ESP	Social Policies and Rural Institutions (FAO)
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAOSTAT	Corporate Database for Substantive Statistical Data
GDP	Gross domestic product
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
GMG	Global Migration Group
HH	Household
ICA	International Cooperative Alliance
ICT	Information and communications technology
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
ILO	International Labour Office
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
IRD	Institute of Research for Development
ITC-ILO	International Training Centre of the ILO
IUF	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers Associations
IZA	Institute for the Study of Labor (Germany)
JFFLS	Junior Farmer Field and Life School
LSE	London School of Economics and Political Science
LSMS	Living standards measurement study
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIJARC	International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth
NELM	New Economics of Labour Migration
OAS	Organization of American States

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSH	Occupational safety and health
PO	Producers' organization
PPP	Public-private partnership
RYM	Rural Youth Mobility
SENAR	National System for Rural Apprenticeship
SMAE	Small and medium agro-enterprise
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNU-ESH	United Nations University – Institute for Environment and Human Security
USP	University of the South Pacific
VICOBA	Village Community Bank
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
YBI	Youth Business International



1 Introduction

In 2015, the number of international migrants reached 244 million (UNDESA, 2015). However, a considerably higher number of migrants – 740 million – moved within their countries, mainly from rural to urban areas or from one rural area to another (UNDESA, 2013a). This figure is expected to rise. The Department for International Development of the United Kingdom Government (DFID) estimates that in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) 50–80 percent of rural households include at least one migrant member (DFID, 2004). In some areas, remittances have overtaken agriculture as the main source of income for rural households (Vargas-Lundius *et al.*, 2008; UNDP, 2009; WB, 2011a; Faye, 2012).

To date, the focus has been on the management of international migration to moderate its impact on receiving, developed countries. However, international and internal migration are closely interrelated (Otoi *et al.*, 2014; King *et al.*, 2008). International migration can stem from internal migration, which may be directed towards urban or rural areas. Rural migrants in particular engage more frequently in temporary or circular migration, traditionally linked to the seasonal calendars of **agriculture**, the **backbone of rural economies**.

Migration is a **complex phenomenon** and a **key component of livelihood strategies in rural households**, which focus on minimizing risks and diversifying household income. There are many reasons for migration and they are interrelated at various levels (national, local, household and individual). Although civil unrest, war, ethnic conflicts and violations of human rights are certainly among the causes of migration, in many cases migrants decide to leave their community for **economic and sociocultural reasons** to seek work elsewhere. The situation is compounded by **increasing population pressure** and a **deteriorating natural environment**.

In this paper, “**distress migration**” refers to all migratory movements made in conditions where the individual and/or the household perceive that the **only viable livelihood option** for moving out of poverty is to migrate. Such distress is usually associated with lack of livelihood options, given the limited economic and employment opportunities, as well as drought, crop failure and food insecurity.

Distress migration is particularly acute among rural youth. For most of them, migration is not an informed and voluntary choice but the only perceived option for improving their employment and life prospects and meeting their particular aspirations and needs.

Agriculture and rural development are central to the rate of rural out-migration to urban areas. The agricultural sector needs to rejuvenate and engage youth in order to increase global food production by 60 percent by 2050 (FAO, 2012a). In doing so, agricultural transformation can balance out-migration from rural areas and thus contribute to stable growth (FAO, 2004a).

The migration of young adults to the cities can result in a shift in the age structure of the population towards older ages, with clear implications for labour markets, agricultural production and food security.

Source: FAO Reviewed Strategic Framework, Conference, Thirty-eighth Session, Rome, 15–22 June 2013

In turn, migration can have both **positive and negative impacts on rural livelihoods and food security** (de Haas, 2010). Migrants are a potential resource for agriculture and rural development as well as poverty reduction in their areas of origin. However, distress migration of rural youth can result in the loss of an important share of the most vital and dynamic part of the workforce, with obvious consequences for agricultural productivity. Moreover, migration is reshaping the traditional social and economic structure of rural areas mainly dependent on agriculture.

Hence, a **policy for the promotion of agriculture and rural development must consider migration and labour mobility**. In particular, policies aiming to reduce distress migration of rural youth should factor in the need to generate viable options for rural youth in farm and non-farm activities.

The objective of this paper is twofold: (i) **review the root causes** of distress migration of rural youth and focus on how transformation processes in agriculture and rural areas influence migration patterns; and (ii) **develop a conceptual framework** about how rural youth out-migration and remittances can contribute to rural development, poverty reduction and food security. On the basis of country-level diagnostics, the conceptual framework can be tailored to different contexts, identifying **entry points** and **key policy options** at country level to reduce youth's propensity to migrate out of distress and providing examples of **approaches** and **programmes** to help maximize the developmental benefits of migration for the areas of origin.

The paper has been prepared within the project “Youth mobility, food security and rural poverty reduction: Fostering rural diversification through enhanced youth employment and better labour mobility” (GCP/INT/240/ITA – shorter title: Rural Youth Mobility – RYM), funded by the Italian Government. The project aims to mitigate distress economic mobility in African countries (with a special focus on Ethiopia and Tunisia) by promoting innovative mechanisms and rural development strategies to generate productive employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for rural youth. The paper will contribute to achieving Outcome 1 of the project: “Improving knowledge and awareness on how to harness the potential of migration and economic mobility to promote youth employment in agriculture”.



2 Rural youth migration and employment: facts and figures

Migration patterns are complex; they vary greatly between countries and depend on stages of structural transformation, as well as household and individual characteristics. Moreover, there are **limited data and evidence** specifically related to the distress migration of rural youth and its determinants. Similarly, little is known of the extent and role of domestic remittances and skills transfer in terms of agricultural development and rural livelihoods in the areas of origin. Nevertheless, the available evidence about migration and its impacts in SSA and North Africa provides the following key facts:

- **Young people account for the bulk of migration flows** (Gingsburg *et al.*, 2014; Awumbila *et al.*, 2015; Msigwa, 2013). Young migrants aged 15–24 years account for one-eighth of migrant workers and are moving mainly in search of better livelihoods (UNICEF, 2014). Data collected in 150 countries and territories suggest that more than a quarter of young people are willing to locate to another country (ILO, 2014a). The same can be said for internal migration (Potts, 2008).
- **Young people usually move out of rural areas towards urban areas**, looking for employment in sectors other than agriculture (Ginsburg *et al.*, 2014; Awumbila *et al.*, 2015). This is the case of rural Morocco, where rural youth usually move to the big cities to overcome the economic difficulties of their households (UNICEF, 2007). In rural areas, young women and men do not have sufficient access to quality education and decent livelihood opportunities. In contrast, the expanding urban informal sector becomes attractive to a large number of rural youth (Deshingkar and Grimm, 2005). In some cases, youth seek short-term seasonal employment to supplement their income in periods of the year when agricultural work is not available. In other cases, youth wish to move to urban areas for a longer period, attracted by the differences in expected returns and income (Harris and Todaro, 1970).
- **Women account for an increasing proportion of migrants** (GFMD, 2015). In Africa, there are 101 female migrants under the age of 20 for every 100 male migrants (UNDESA, 2013b). This figure is confirmed by in-country studies, such as those conducted in Ethiopia (Bezu and Holden, 2014) and Nigeria (Internal Migration Survey 2012, [International Organization for Migration \[IOM\] Nigeria](#)), which show that women migrate to various parts of their country over and above their male counterparts; or the study in Mali (Lesclingand, 2004), which shows that an increasing number of women migrate for work-related issues.
- **Rural poor most often undertake temporary migration, especially seasonal migration.** Migration entails costs; certain types of migration may not be feasible for the poorest, due to their limited resources, skills, networks and market intelligence (IOM, 2005; WB, 2011b). Seasonal migration is the most affordable, especially for the landless; it allows households to supplement their income, smooth consumption and protect their asset base during the lean season (UNDP, 2009; WB, 2007).

- **Young people engaging in distress migration are more vulnerable and at a greater disadvantage than older migrants.** They tend to move alone, and the likelihood of migrating independently increases with age. Rural youth may lack important skills and resources to be competitive in formal labour markets, both in rural areas of origin and urban areas of destination. They have insufficient economic assets, savings and human capital, social capital (i.e. the ability to make use of networks) and cultural capital (i.e. language, customs) (WB, 2011b). Out of their rural areas of origin, they usually end up living in informal settlements (McKay and Deshingkar, 2014) and are at risk of being trapped in low-income or informal employment, hazardous work, unemployment or underemployment (WB, 2011b). In general, young migrants (especially those in irregular situations, who are under-age and travelling alone) are particularly vulnerable to discrimination, social exclusion, violence, abuse and exploitation (UNICEF, 2014).
- **Remittances are a sizeable source of income for poor rural households in SSA and North Africa.** Globally, migrant remittances are estimated to be around USD 550 billion annually, which is more than twice the volume of aid (WB, 2013). Remittances are also more stable than private debt, portfolio equity flows and official aid flows (WB, 2015a). Official data on remittances may however underestimate the actual size of remittances, especially because they do not include domestic remittances and those sent through informal channels.¹
- **The sex and age of the sender of remittances influence the volume, frequency and endurance of sending over time.** Several studies confirm that, despite the difficulties encountered in entering local labour markets in destination areas, young migrants do remit money and their remittances make a difference to their source family in a small but significant way (UNICEF, 2014). Women tend to send smaller amounts more frequently, but they have less decision-making power regarding how the money is used (Petrozziello, 2013; Anich *et al.*, 2014).
- **Environmental degradation is a key driver of rural distress migration.** The Human Development Report (UNDP, 2015) recognizes that in many developing countries, internal migration from rural areas to cities is set in motion at least in part by natural disasters, land degradation and desertification. A study in Burkina Faso shows that while drought is associated with increases in short-distance migration, it is also related to decreases in long-distance migration (Henry *et al.*, 2004).

The above overview indicates that a large proportion of **younger workers leave rural areas and agriculture principally to look for better income and employment opportunities.**

While the drivers of rural distress migration are manifold and often interrelated, (► [see section 3.1](#)), in the case of youth the lack of access to decent employment and the need for more and better services are particularly relevant factors. It is therefore important to understand the current employment situation of rural youth in SSA and North Africa for the purposes of the conceptual framework. In particular:

- **SSA has the youngest population in the world**, with young people aged 15–24 years accounting for over 60 percent of the total population and 45 percent of the total labour force (African Economic Outlook, 2008). In order to accommodate the rapid population growth and demographic transition, in the period 2010–2035, SSA

¹ The financial sector in rural areas across sub-Saharan Africa is usually weak, with low penetration and coverage levels; hence, migrants may opt for informal channels to send remittances. Moreover, the prevailing type of migration is internal and intraregional, therefore rarely captured by official statistics.

countries need to generate on average 18 million new jobs every year (IMF, 2015). Creating high-productivity jobs in the agricultural sector and related non-farm rural economic activities is likely to be the biggest challenge.

- **Youth are the most likely to be unemployed** (ILO, 2011a). According to official data, in 2014 the youth unemployment rate was highest in North Africa, where it increased from 29.7 to 30.5 percent between 2012 and 2014 (ILO, 2015a). Globally, the unemployment rate is three times higher for youth than for adults (ILO, 2015b) and 92 percent of young people are working poor (ILO, 2015a). The incidence of long-term unemployment among youth is 60.6 percent in North Africa and 48.1 percent in SSA (ILO, 2015a).
- **Youth are the most likely to be underemployed or employed in part-time, seasonal, low-paying and precarious jobs** (ILO, 2011a, 2015c). Rural labour markets present a high level of informality, with a prevalence of multiple job-holding and casual work arrangements, labour force fragmentation, information asymmetries, and gender- and age-based inequalities (FAO, 2012b). The jobs available in rural areas are associated with low and insecure incomes, poor occupational safety and health (OSH) conditions,² gender inequalities in pay and opportunities, and scarce access to basic formal social protection (FAO, 2013a). Three out of four working youth are in vulnerable employment as own-account workers or contributing (unpaid) family workers, predominantly in the agricultural sectors (ILO, 2015a; AfDB, 2012). The share of rural youth in vulnerable employment ranges from 68.1 percent in Zambia to 93.7 percent in Benin (Elder *et al.*, 2015).
- **The current “employment issue” in Africa is a symptom of little structural change** (Arbache and Page, 2009). Approximately 90 percent of rural households and more than two-thirds of young people who work in rural areas are engaged in agriculture. Considering the trajectory of structural change in most of SSA (McMillan and Rodrik, 2011), little change is expected over the next 10 years: rural areas will be home to the majority of the SSA population and agriculture will remain the largest employer.
- **Land degradation and fragmentation hinder decent employment opportunities in agriculture.** A total of 1.5 billion people are affected by desertification and land degradation globally (UNCCD, 2014). Indeed, 52 percent of agricultural land is either moderately or severely degraded and 12 million ha are lost every year due to desertification (*ibid.*). The demographic growth has not been counterbalanced by an increase in agricultural productivity; the subsequent overcultivation and overgrazing of land result in increasingly insecure livelihoods for rural youth.
- **In rural areas, youth have limited opportunities to add value to their crops or to start agribusiness or agricultural entrepreneurial activities.** The curricula of post-primary agricultural technical and vocational education and training (TVET) do not respond to the needs of the labour market in rural areas and are not sufficiently directed towards innovative farm practices and agribusiness development. Rural youth are also held back by poor infrastructure, lack of processing and storage facilities, and limited access to necessary services.

² At least 170 000 agricultural workers are killed each year (ILO, 2011b).

- **Rural youth lack organization, capacity and representation.** In rural areas, social structures tend to be hierarchical and youth are usually disadvantaged in terms of social dialogue (UNICEF, 2014). They have poor trade union representation (FAO *et al.*, 2007), lack connections with markets and private sector partners (IFAD, 2011), and are rarely organized in producers' organizations and cooperatives. As a result, they have few opportunities to access grants and support to buy farm equipment and inputs.
- **Female youth are at a particular disadvantage.** In North Africa, the unemployment rate of young women exceeds that of young men by 20 percentage points (ILO, 2015a). Young girls are more likely to drop out of school and be restrained by cultural norms limiting their options to early marriage, motherhood and unpaid domestic work (WB, 2008a). They are subject to discrimination in terms of access to productive assets and rural labour markets (Quisumbing *et al.*, 2014), have fewer chances of obtaining paid work and are more likely to be contributing family workers (12 percent vs 21.4 percent of young men) (Elder *et al.*, 2015).
- **Rural youth are not attracted to low productivity, subsistence agriculture.** In general and across different contexts, youth are reluctant to consider farming as an employment option (Leavy and Hossain, 2014). Agriculture is often associated with low returns, drudgery, hard work and low social status (Levy and Smith, 2010; FAO, 2014a). At school, the curricula are not relevant to rural needs and children are not encouraged to consider agriculture as a future career (FAO *et al.*, 2010). The aspirations of rural youth are dominated by formal sector employment and modern urban lifestyles (Leavy and Hossain, 2014).



3 A conceptual framework for distress migration of rural youth

This section presents the conceptual framework for distress migration of rural youth. The framework focuses on the migration of rural youth (aged 15–24),³ who account for a large proportion of migrants and are a particularly vulnerable group. The framework comprises three sections.

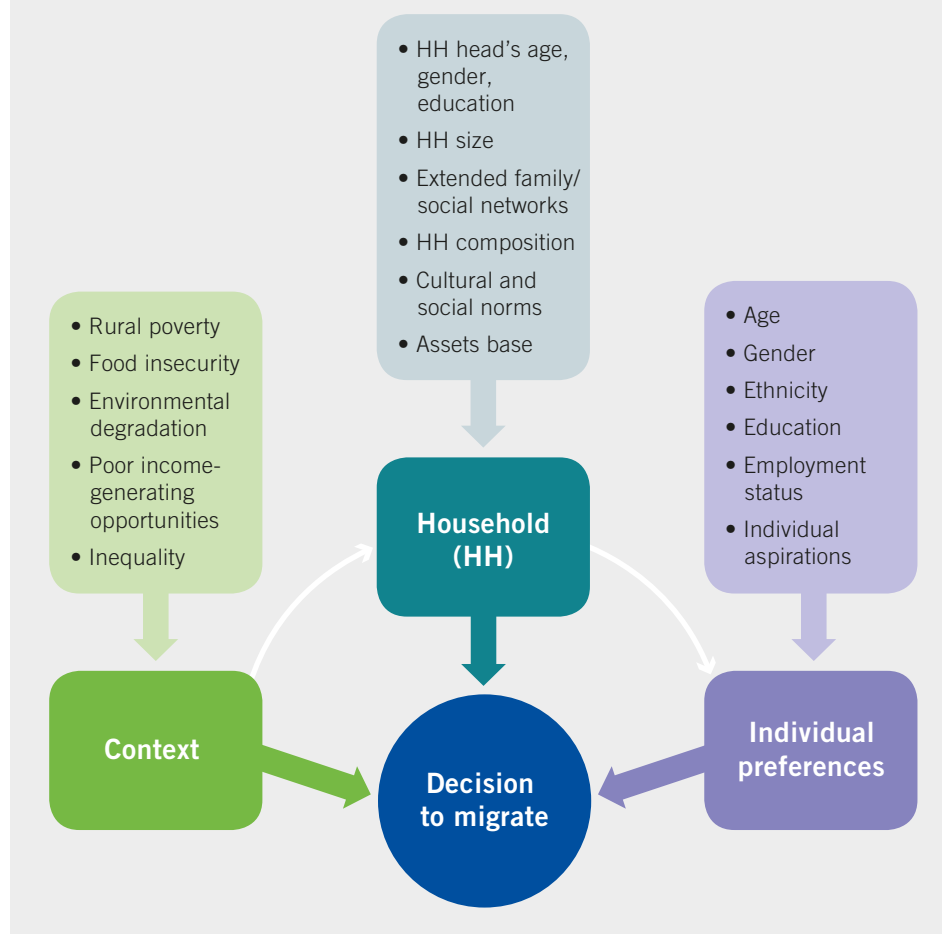
1. Analysis of the main factors determining the propensity of rural youth to migrate out of distress, at country, household and individual level.
2. Assessment (based on the available evidence) of the likely impacts of distress migration of rural youth in terms of agriculture and rural development for local areas of origin.
3. Illustration of the most promising policies and programmes to reduce distress migration of rural youth and maximize its developmental benefits for the communities of origin (UNDP, 2009; DFID, 2007; Castles and Delgado Wise, 2008).

3.1 Determinants of distress migration of rural youth

The conceptual framework builds on the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) model, which assumes that the decision to migrate reflects both the socio-economic characteristics and aspirations of the individual, and the composition, wealth and main livelihoods of the individual's household (Stark, 1991; Taylor, 1996, 1999). In rural areas, households face labour and financial market constraints, and migration is a strategy to diversify income sources and cope with risks (WB, 2006a; Herrera and Sahn, 2013). Therefore, in line with NELM, the framework presupposes that the decision to migrate is subject to a set of determinants, which vary according to the local context and stage of structural transformation, as well as the household typology and individual characteristics of the migrant (► [see Figure 1](#)).⁴

3 The age group considered for the purposes of this conceptual framework is in line with the UN definition of youth, namely 15–24 years. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that, in many countries, particularly developing countries, the upper age limit is higher. Several UN entities, instruments and regional organizations apply different definitions of youth, which the UN secretariat recognizes (e.g. African Youth Charter: age 15–35; UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA/UN-HABITAT: age 15–32). FAO adheres to the general UN definition. Nevertheless, at an operational level, FAO may apply the age range for youth in a more flexible manner, adapting to national or regional definitions and to the specific requirements of the given intervention. Ultimately, such flexibility also acknowledges the fact that youth are a highly heterogeneous group and targeting mechanisms at operational level may need to account for such heterogeneity, for example, with regard to gender issues and the 15–17-year age group. A particular focus is needed on the 15–17-year age group, because those who are burdened by work as children, especially if exposed to hazardous work, are less likely to have the necessary competencies and skills to secure decent work later in life (ILO, 2015c).

4 The focus is on the main determinants at household and individual level confirmed by available evidence. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that data on migration have certain limitations and complexities and thus there may be other (unobservable) factors that determine migration at individual and household level and which may be important to differentiate the various types of migration and their respective impacts.

Figure 1. Determinants of distress migration of rural youth

3.1.1 Context determinants

The stage of agriculture and rural development in the area of origin has a strong impact on rural youth mobility. In particular, there is evidence that unemployment and underemployment in rural areas are among the principal drivers of migration of youth (UNICEF, 2014; Young, 2013; Van de Glind, 2010; FAO, 2004a). This is especially the case when there is coexistence of underdeveloped rural areas and more advanced urban areas offering better chances of employment and higher wages.

However, the lack of decent employment opportunities in rural areas – in both on-farm and off-farm self-employment or wage employment – is the direct consequence of a number of other context-linked factors, which can be referred to as the **root causes of migration**, namely:

- **Rural poverty:** More than 75 percent of the world's poor reside in rural areas and depend on agricultural production for subsistence (FAO, 2014b). However, agriculture can only absorb a certain proportion of the labour force (Mutandwa *et al.*, 2011), given the persistently low agricultural productivity, the poor use of technology and the limited purchasing power in rural areas. Rural labour markets do not function well; furthermore, the seasonal nature of agricultural labour results in strong fluctuation in wages and employment opportunities and in poor working conditions, especially

for youth. The rural poor have insufficient access to resources and services, due to a low level of investment in market-oriented and social infrastructure (e.g. roads, agricultural water management, storage, assembly, wholesale and retail markets, as well as schools and hospitals) (FAO *et al.*, 2010). They also have poor access to social protection programmes.

- **Food insecurity:** In the Horn of Africa, 40 percent of the population are undernourished and almost half live in areas prone to extreme food shortages. The same can be said for West Africa and the Sahel and other African subregions (FAOSTAT). A recent study by the World Food Programme (WFP) and IOM (2015) in Latin America revealed positive correlation between food insecurity and migration. Indeed, assessments conducted in drought-affected areas in 2014 highlighted that migration was a widely implemented coping strategy for dealing with deteriorating food security, adopted by 5–12 percent of all households interviewed. Yang and Choi (2007) found similar results for the Philippines, with young adults migrating in response to weather shocks.
- **Increased competition for natural resources and environmental degradation:** While it is hard to gauge whether environmental factors can be the sole driver of migration, there is no doubt that they have some influence by acting on the range of economic, social and political drivers that directly affect migration (Foresight, 2011). To mitigate climate-change-induced hazards and demographic growth pressures, rural communities sometimes adopt detrimental management practices, which degrade the land and water systems (FAO, 2011a); they may also resort to migration once their traditional livelihood strategies have been significantly eroded. In the online global survey conducted within the project “Facilitating youth access to agricultural activities”, supported by IFAD and FAO in 2012 (MIJARC *et al.*, 2012), approximately 52 percent of young farmers cited access to land as the greatest challenge to farming. In a similar study in Ethiopia, almost 80 percent of respondents described the shortage of land as the major reason for migration (Zeleeke *et al.*, 2008). Youth’s principal means for accessing land is inheritance, but prevailing inheritance laws and customs, as well as increasing life expectancy, are a hindrance. Moreover, the increasing fragmentation of family land can result in economically unviable parcels.
- **Limited income-generating opportunities:** In rural areas, there are limited opportunities to engage in off-farm activities and few more attractive job prospects due to lack of investment and the scant socio-economic infrastructure. Youth lack the necessary training to improve their entrepreneurial, administrative, technical and social skills, and have only limited access to programmes comprising opportunities for credit, savings, insurance and matching grants. Existing small and medium agro-enterprises (SMAEs) are mostly small, informal and family-based (FAO, 2012b).
- **Inequality:** Most of the policies aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity and food security have failed to prioritize equality. They tend to benefit large-scale producers and neglect the heterogeneity of and constraints faced by small-scale agriculture (FAO, 2013b; IFAD and UNEP, 2013). This is the case, for example, of the Near East and North Africa region (FAO, 2015). Several studies reveal major rural–urban inequality in terms of wages and employment opportunities, household endowments, and social infrastructure (Giroux, 2008; Ravallion *et al.*, 2007; Nguyen *et al.*, 2007). As a result, rural populations are more at risk of spatial poverty traps (Bird *et al.*, 2010; UN-HABITAT, 2010). Moreover, because of existing structures in households and societies, in SSA and North Africa young women face more constraints than men

in accessing productive resources and services, such as land, credit, extension and social protection (MIJARC *et al.*, 2012; WB, 2009). They also face wage discrimination in the rural labour market (FAO, 2011b).

These root causes are mainly the consequence of **contextual conditions specific to rural areas**, in particular:

- **Low or stagnant farm productivity:** SSA is the only region in the world where per capita agricultural productivity has remained stagnant over the past 40 years (Jama and Pizzarro, 2008). It lags behind other developing regions in terms of the adoption of new technologies. Additional major constraints are market inefficiencies (Jack, 2011) and high transaction costs (Kirsten *et al.*, 2013), preventing SSA farmers from making productivity-enhancing investments. Moreover, aggregate data from 151 countries demonstrate that there is a wide “productivity gap” between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors (Gollin *et al.*, 2013). Actual yields are considerably lower than potential yields, mainly due to climate change and rural population growth, which lead to overutilization and fragmentation of land. This situation is not compensated by increased use of improved seeds and fertilizers or adoption of drained irrigation systems (IFAD, 2010); on the contrary, to compensate, family members engage in long working hours, limiting any opportunities to acquire new skills.
- **Remoteness and weak capital markets in rural areas:** Migration stabilizes household income in a context of weak or absent financial and insurance markets; this is especially so in cases of temporary migration strategies (Schrieder and Knerr, 2000). The poor rural infrastructure and wide dispersion of the population result in increased transaction and information costs for the provision of services in rural areas. The expected returns are also poor, given the low purchasing power of rural populations. Youth are particularly disadvantaged with regards to accessing services, in particular:
 - a. **Financial services:** There is a shortage of financial services in rural areas and existing products do not usually account for the needs and capacities of rural youth (FAO *et al.*, 2014) nor for the higher risk factors inherent in agriculture.^{5,6} Youth have limited land ownership to offer as collateral. They rarely know how to design bankable business plans and have low levels of financial literacy in general. In addition to their age-related disadvantage, young women sometimes face constraints accessing finance, as their legal, social and economic position in the community often differs from that of men in terms of, for example, property rights and control over assets; cultural norms and family responsibilities; institutional discrimination; and behavioural differences (Fletschner and Kenney, 2011).
 - b. **Transport services, processing and storage facilities:** Rural smallholder producers operate within loosely structured value chains, which are not profitable for value-adding companies (Growth Africa Secretariat, 2014). Furthermore, rural communities and production markets are often disconnected from input-output markets.
 - c. **Extension services:** Agricultural extension staff encounter mainly technical and logistic challenges in rural areas, such as insect pest invasions, outbreaks of serious diseases, increasingly severe climatic effects and natural disasters, and intensive campaigns for an increase in agricultural production (Qamar, 2003).

5 For more information see: <http://www.fao.org/ag/ags/agricultural-finance-and-investment/en/>.

6 In general, agricultural activities are associated to high risk and therefore to higher interest rates, in view of their seasonal nature, as well as long production cycles and vulnerability systematic default from covariant risks, related to weather and pests.

- d. **Safety nets/social protection:** Less than 20 percent of agricultural workers have access to basic social protection (ILO, 2011c). In particular, the young in vulnerable employment lack the social protection and safety nets to guard against times of low economic demand and are often incapable of generating sufficient savings for themselves and their families to offset these times (African Economic Outlook, 2012).
- e. **Social infrastructure:** Rural-urban differentials in the availability of social infrastructure (in particular roads, schools and hospitals) influence migration from rural to urban areas (Herrera and Sahn, 2013; Katz, 2000).

3.1.2 Household determinants

Migration is primarily a household-based strategy; this is especially the case for youth, who often depend on family support to cover the costs associated with migration. Moreover, the migration decision process is related to the larger family system and the family may exert authority and oversight over young migrants through explicitly stated expectations, periodical personal visits or monitoring via extended social networks (WB, 2006a; Konseiga, 2005; Akhter and Bauer, 2014).

The main household-level determinants of the decision to migrate can be summarized as follows:

- **Household head's age, gender and educational level:** The head of a household (HH) with at least one migrant is usually older and more educated than the head of a household without migrants (Akhter and Bauer, 2014; Ferrone and Giannelli, 2015; Herrera and Sahn, 2013). The older the head, the more s/he is able to diversify income and allocate farming and family responsibilities across the household's members (both within the household farmland and outside). Similarly, the more educated the head, the more s/he is able to gather and process the information required to migrate. In Nigeria, households with heads aged 21–40 years were found to be more prone to migrate (Osawe, 2013). In Ghana, the probability of sending a migrant increases by about 8 percent for each additional year of schooling of the household head (Ratha *et al.*, 2011b). On the other hand, female-headed households have lower earning capabilities than male-headed households, and for this reason may be more driven to become migrant households (Ackah and Medvedev, 2010). Evidence of this has been found in Ethiopia (Gray and Mueller, 2012) and in Senegal (Kusumawardhani, 2012).
- **Household size:** Larger households are more likely to resort to migration. As the size of the family increases, its per capita income decreases, and family members may migrate to seek work elsewhere. According to Thorat *et al.* (2011), an increase of one unit in family size produces an increase of 8.7 percent in the probability of migrating. Moreover, a study conducted in Kenya revealed that large households with numerous dependents are more likely to consider migration as a livelihood strategy (Agesa and Kim, 2001). Similarly, the surveys conducted in Ghana, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Nigeria under the African Migration Project found that the larger the household, the greater the probability that a household member emigrates (Ratha *et al.*, 2011b).
- **Household composition:** The share of **active members and dependents** (0–14 years and the elderly) influences the income-generating capacity of a household, and hence its propensity to migrate. Taylor (2001) provides evidence that when the number of children in a family is high, families tend to encourage younger members to migrate, as they have higher earning potential and they are more likely to remit money. Youth

with younger siblings are more likely to migrate, as there is someone to substitute them in their labour force work (men) or household responsibilities (women) (Herrera and Sahn, 2013).

- **Social or extended family networks:** Family and community networks play a key role in determining migration, especially in terms of lowering migration costs (Dolfin and Genicot, 2010). They can provide information about opportunities in potential destinations and arrange jobs for migrants prior to their arrival. Moreover, migrants often rely on networks once they reach their destination, especially for food, shelter and advice about customs and language (de Brauw and Carletto, 2012). Data from rural Mexico show that migration rates are higher among households that are part of family networks (Angelucci *et al.*, 2009). Family-related motives may also determine the migration decision. For example, evidence from Ethiopia shows that for rural youth aged 15–24, living with family is the main reason for migrating to rural areas and the second main reason for migrating to urban areas, with no significant gender differences (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2013). In contrast, almost 40 percent of young women moving to another rural area do so to get married, compared with 2.1 percent of men. For migrants to urban areas, the percentages are lower: 11.7 percent of young women and 0.4 percent of young men moving to marry (*ibid.*).
- **Cultural and social norms:** In many African societies, migration is considered a “rite of passage” through which youth can acquire recognized adult status within society. This is the case, for example, in northern Somalia (Rousseau *et al.*, 2001) and Morocco (UNICEF, 2007). Moreover, according to data collected from Ethiopian returnees under IOM’s Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) programme, peer influence and social and cultural norms are important push factors for migrating (IOM, 2014a). Zeleke *et al.* (2008) record that in some villages in Ethiopia, the wives of the non-migrants urge their husbands to migrate and earn income like their fellow villagers. Several studies show that young women often decide to migrate to escape social control and gender discrimination and practices, such as forced and early marriage (Herrera and Sahn, 2013; Petrozziello, 2013; IOM, 2014a).
- **Assets base:** Ownership of productive assets (i.e. land, livestock, machinery and equipment, plantation crops, financial savings) determines whether a household needs to pursue livelihood diversification through migration, and whether it can afford the financial cost of migrating (Waddington and Sabates-Wheeler, 2003). The larger a household’s assets base, the lower its vulnerability and the less the propensity of its members to migrate out of distress (Berhanu, 2012). In particular, the larger the farm size, the more family labour is needed and the greater the potential constraint on the decision to migrate. The propensity to migrate among those with their own land and farm assets is lower than among the landless (Kok *et al.*, 2006).

3.1.3 Individual determinants

The decision of rural youth to migrate also depends on individual characteristics. Understanding the role of these individual factors is challenging, as it requires the collection of specific data (Carletto and de Brauw, 2007).⁷

⁷ The authors acknowledge nonetheless that, ultimately, the decision to migrate is a personal decision that reflects, for example, an individual’s risk tolerance and propensity for adventure – factors which are often unobservable in empirical analyses. Herein, the focus is on main individual factors for which there is evidence in the literature.

- **Age:** The propensity to migrate is **highest among young adults** and decreases with age, as a result of the combined effect of cultural norms, traditions and economic opportunities (Bell and Muhidin, 2009; Bell and Charles-Edwards, 2014). In Ghana, Ackah and Medvedev (2010) found that the probability of being a migrant rises until a person turns 36 years old and then it begins to decrease.
- **Gender:** The propensity to migrate **differs between men and women**, but there is wide variation across different contexts. According to some studies, women are less likely than men to migrate because of their reproductive and care responsibilities and financial and decision-making constraints (Awumbila *et al.*, 2015). On the contrary, Herrera and Sahn (2013) reported that rural women were 6.4 percent more likely than men to move to rural areas, because they have limited access to productive resources and are more vulnerable. In some cases, women migrate to solve economic disparities and escape restrictive gender roles and social norms (Zachariah *et al.*, 2001; UNFPA and IOM, 2006).⁸
- **Ethnicity:** The propensity to migrate **varies among ethnic groups**, depending on their sociocultural characteristics or the level of development in the areas in which they are concentrated (Amin, 1974). Mberu (2005) identified ethnicity and religion as key independent predictors of internal migration in Nigeria. This is supported by further evidence, especially among women in sub-Saharan countries (Brockhoff and Eu, 1993). For example, in Senegal, Herrera and Sahn (2013) reported that belonging to the Serere group decreased by 17 percent the likelihood of migrating to urban areas, while belonging to the Wolof group decreased male migration to urban areas by 12 percent.
- **Education:** Individuals who are **more educated tend to be more mobile**; they seek work that matches their higher skills and expectations, and which pays returns on education costs incurred (Ackah and Medvedev, 2010; Richter and Taylor, 2006). Also relevant for rural youth is **migration for education purposes**, which depends on two main factors: (i) the potentially high returns on investment in education through access to more skilled, better paid job opportunities; and (ii) the persistent scarcity of quality education institutions in rural areas, especially at secondary or higher level. Evidence of the role of education in migration decisions varies considerably between countries: it is almost negligible in Morocco and Senegal, but is central (especially for young women) in Egypt and Ghana (European Communities, 2000).
- **Employment status:** **Unemployed youth are more likely to migrate.** Mutandwa *et al.* (2011) show this to be the case in Rwanda, and Besharov and Lopez (2015) demonstrate that **underemployed youth** in North Africa, Central Africa and the Horn of Africa are significantly more likely to migrate than employed ones.⁹
- **Individual aspirations:** Youth in rural areas can feel **socially and politically excluded**; they may have no participation in family decision-making processes or civic life, despite their significant contribution to family production (Porter *et al.*, 2010). According to UNICEF (2007), the majority of Moroccan youth make the decision to migrate at an early age: they desire emancipation and wish to escape oppressive social and gender

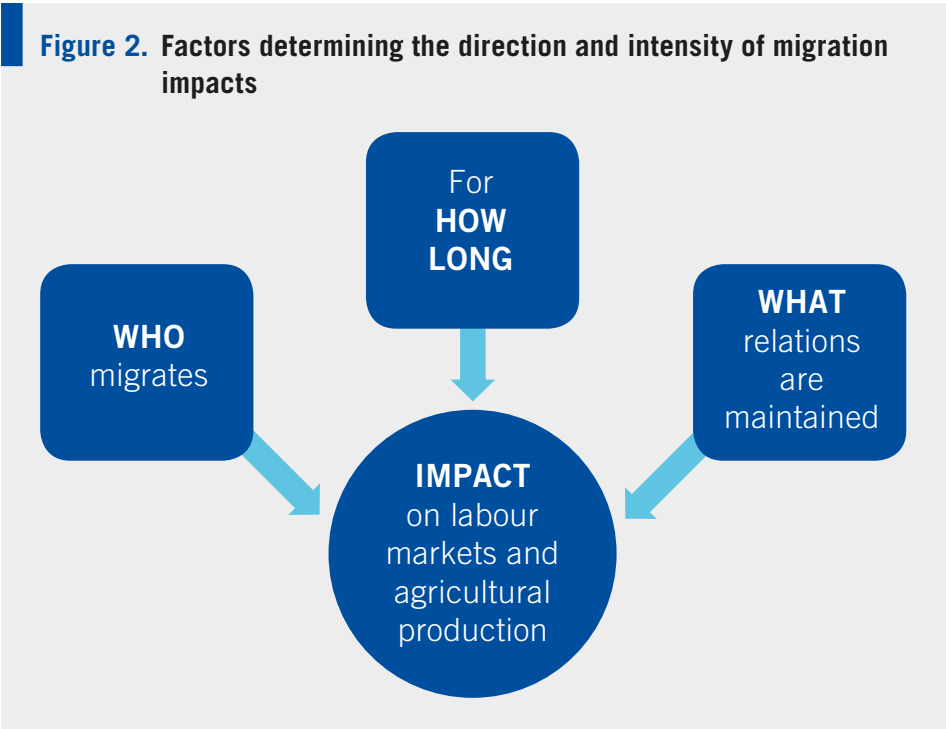
⁸ This paper focuses on the economic reasons for migration but acknowledges that often it is hard to extricate the main factors influencing the decision to migrate. For example, women might frequently migrate for family/marriage reasons (e.g. in Senegal – Safir, 2009), but then they may also work upon arrival at destination.

⁹ Employment status can also be an endogenous variable, as youth inclined or under pressure to migrate might not search for a job in their rural area of origin, or they may reduce their work on the farm until migration eventually occurs.

relations that sometimes persist in rural areas. The frustrations generated by heavy workloads, surveillance, youth exclusion and immobility push them to move away from their places of origin (and out of the agricultural sector), usually towards an urban context, where they believe they will access decent employment, stabilize their income and have a stronger voice and greater engagement in society.

3.2 Impact of rural out-migration on rural livelihoods

Migration has significant impacts on the **life of the migrant**. In destination areas, there might be more attractive employment, education and vocational training opportunities as well as better access to services. However, negative experiences can affect youth more than adult migrants because of their greater vulnerability: they are less experienced and might have different social roles, and thus have limited access to social networks. In particular, rural youth migrants might not be competitive in urban job markets, and they risk ending up in informal and low-paid work, with no job security and unsafe working conditions. Once far from the informal safety nets of their social networks and traditional culture, young men and women can easily end up being socially excluded, they may become human rights victims (UNICEF, 2014) or might even be subject to radicalization. There can also be significant gender disparities: given the gendered household roles and cultural norms (discussed above), parents may be willing to invest more in the education of sons than in that of daughters. Distress migration of rural youth can also affect **rural livelihoods in the areas of origin, in both positive and negative terms**.¹⁰ Moreover, impacts may be immediate or medium-term, and their direction and intensity depend on a variety of factors (Figure 2):



10 This paper does not focus on the potential impacts of rural migration in destination areas (including urban areas).

- **Who migrates:** The gender, age, education, skills level and occupation of those who migrate have a significant impact on the transfer and end-use of remittances. Women tend to send higher remittances to source areas, but due to social and moral codes surrounding gender relations, they may not have full control over their use (Skeldon, 2003; Tacoli, 2002). Younger household members are also more likely to remit money (Taylor, 2001). A cross-country comparison of six SSA countries shows a positive correlation between the number of household members with a secondary education and the receipt of international remittances (Ratha, 2013). In Nigeria, the percentage of households receiving remittances from rural-urban migrants varies from 20.7 percent in Imo State to 81 percent in Abia State, where the heads of rural households are not educated and depend strongly on remittances (Ajaero and Onokala, 2013).
- **For how long:** The duration of migration can influence the quality and quantity of skills acquired and brought back to the place of origin. Long-term migration may offer greater scope for cumulative learning (Amin and Matoo, 2007). In Ethiopia, Zeleke *et al.* (2008) showed that seasonal migrants do not acquire new skills, because the work is similar in the sending and receiving areas and the stay at destination is short. Similarly, the duration may influence the propensity to remit, but the direction depends on the context. In Senegal, Mercado and Usmani (2015) noted a decline in remittances over time in the case of internal migrants. On the other hand, migrants from Ghana remitted regularly and over a long period, without a decline (Orozco, 2005), while in Morocco remittances actually increased with the length of duration of migration (Fadloulallah *et al.*, 2000).
- **What relations are maintained:** Migrants can transmit technical know-how and new norms, values and ideas to non-migrants. This transfer of knowledge may take place on return to their place of origin, through contacts with relatives, or indirectly through networks connecting diasporas with groups in the areas of origin (Beine *et al.*, 2011). Young migrants might send remittances to their households.¹¹ The stronger and more frequent such relations are, the higher the case is for circulation of knowledge and skills, as well as remittances and investments through diaspora and return migration. For example, seasonal migrants have been found to continue their agricultural activities and maintain strong linkages with their community of origin, while taking advantage of opportunities available in rural areas (Skeldon, 2003).

► **Table 1** summarizes the main impacts that distress migration of rural youth can have on agriculture and rural development, based on the literature desk review. The impacts identified are described in detail in the subsequent sections. The controversial findings reported confirm that the direction and entity of the final impact of migration are strongly influenced by the characteristics of the local context, households and individual. This provides scope for policy interventions to shape the final outcome. Moreover, it is acknowledged that, given the endogeneity of migration decisions, few empirical studies can demonstrate a causal relationship between migration and (positive or negative) changes in income, food security and inequality outcomes in the areas of origin. Nevertheless, the evidence reveals very interesting correlations useful for designing and implementing policies aimed at better managing rural youth migration and harnessing its potential benefits for the rural areas of origin.

¹¹ Young migrants may also receive financial support from their households of origin, especially when migration is a costly multi-year investment (e.g. for education). Consequently, for a certain period, there may be reverse remittances to cover living costs until settlement is economically sustainable (Mazzucato, 2011).

Table 1: Impact of migration on agriculture and rural development

	Positive impacts		Negative impacts	
	Impacts	Evidence	Impacts	Evidence
Labour productivity	Less pressure on local labour market: More efficient labour allocation and increased labour productivity	Medium	Loss of the most productive workforce: Shortage of skilled agricultural labour and lower agricultural yields	Medium
HH income and resilience to shocks	More stable income through remittances and increased HH capacities to face production and other shocks	High	Remittance dependency and increased vulnerability of remittance receivers to fluctuations in labour demand and sudden shocks	Low
Income inequality	Less inequality at community level when it is the poorest and landless households receiving remittances	Low	Greater inequality at community level when it is not the poorest and landless households receiving remittances	High
Skills and technology transfer	Increased number of people in communities of origin aware of new agricultural skills and knowledge	Medium	Brain drain: Decrease in human capital stock and slowdown in innovation and agricultural transformation	Low
Protection of the most vulnerable HH members	Use of remittances to pursue educational opportunities and increase access to social services	Medium	Increased work burden for those left behind and disruption of traditional care arrangements for children and elderly	Medium
Land degradation/ environmental impacts	Reduced person–land ratio and environmental improvements	High	Remittances used for the purchase of non-essential goods with high energy consumption	Low

3.2.1 Positive impacts of youth migration on rural areas of origin

Youth migration can have **immediate positive effects** on agriculture and rural development in the areas of origin. In particular, rural youth migration entails the following:

- **More efficient allocation of rural labour and higher wages:** The departure of jobseekers eases the pressure on local labour markets, resulting in more employment opportunities and higher wages for those who remain (Lucas, 2015). Seasonal migration means that youth who would otherwise be unemployed during the agricultural lean season can find employment in towns or other areas, leading to better distribution of labour.
- **Remittance in-flows towards the area of origin:** International remittances to developing countries account for a significant share of the gross domestic product (GDP) and represent a relatively stable and countercyclical source of income (WB, 2015a). However, low-skilled, internal migrants tend to remit more per capita than high-skilled migrants (Adams, 2009).

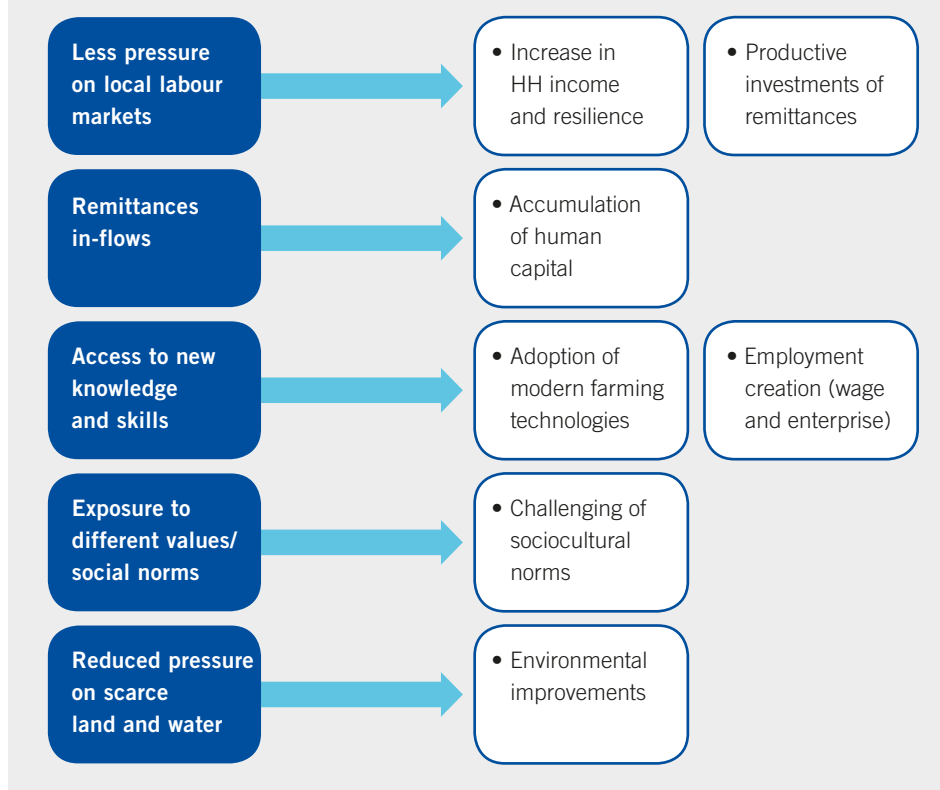
- **Less pressure on land and water resources:** Migration reduces the person–land ratio and those remaining in rural areas can benefit from the increased availability of resources. Household agricultural plots may be subdivided among fewer siblings, thereby reducing the risk of overfragmentation of the land (Bilsborrow, 2002).
- **Transfer of norms of behaviour, values and expectations (social remittances):** According to Levitt (2008), young migrants might not only transmit new norms and values (e.g. importance of education, lower rate of reproduction), but they may also interpret and adapt them to their original context. There is evidence that young migrants who have studied abroad can have influence in their home societies, fostering pro-democracy attitudes (Spilimbergo, 2009). In Morocco, one low-status ethnic group was able to acquire higher social status thanks to remittances; it subsequently rejected traditional authoritarian structures (Ilahiane, 2001; Otte, 2000).
- **Technology and knowledge transfer:** According to Wahba (2007), migrants returning to Egypt have higher levels of human capital than non-migrants and they are more likely to be entrepreneurs. Siar (2011) has shown that knowledge transfer will only succeed if the areas of origin are receptive to learning and knowledge exchange.

In the **medium–long term**, these immediate impacts could have further repercussions:

- **Increase in household income and resilience:** International and internal remittances have important effects at micro level, as they increase household income and act as safety nets against external shocks (Shen *et al.*, 2010; Adams and Page, 2005). They can smooth consumption (de Haas, 2010) and improve household living conditions. They also produce multiplier effects on the local economy, by increasing the local purchasing power (Vargas-Lundius and Lanly, 2007). Internal remittances seem to have the greatest impact on the poorest households in the countries of origin (Housen *et al.*, 2013).
- **Accumulation of human capital (“brain gain”):** Studies show that remittances are used primarily to better sanitary conditions, advance educational attainment and improve healthcare (Amuedo-Dorantes, 2014; Ratha *et al.*, 2011a; Valero-Gil, 2008). In particular, Adams (2005) found that households receiving internal and international remittances spend 45 and 58 percent more, respectively, on education than non-migrant households. There is also some evidence that migration may affect school achievement in some places where people view further schooling as a means to creating better opportunities for migrating later once they have completed their education (Böhme, 2015; Batista *et al.*, 2012).
- **Use of remittances for productive investments in agriculture:** Remittances can be used to buy agricultural inputs and improved seeds, or to fund productive investments, including the start-up of new entrepreneurial activities (Ratha, 2013). De Haan *et al.* (2003) report that in South Africa and Botswana, where rural financial markets are almost absent, cash remittances are essential to finance the purchase of agricultural inputs. The extent to which a migrant’s success in accumulating capital and skills translates into higher investments in the area of origin depends on other factors, including the migrant’s degree of education, and the capacity to access local assets and the business environment (Hull, 2007; McCarthy *et al.*, 2006). A study in Egypt reveals that 80 percent of migrant-sending families do not engage in investment, mainly because of previous financial constraints and the high risks involved (IOM, 2010a).

- **Increased adoption of modern farming technology:** Despite the existing barriers to the transferability of skills and qualifications (ILO, 2015d), the increasing financial capacity and entrepreneurial inclination of many migrants can influence the nature of peasant agriculture, producing a gradual shift from subsistence to more commercial farming. Migrant households are more likely than non-migrant households to use new farming technologies to improve agricultural productivity (Mendola, 2006). Moreover, as remittances may reduce credit and insurance constraints in rural areas, remittance-receiving households can undertake riskier but higher-return agricultural activities. For example, Veljanoska (2014) demonstrates that in Uganda remittances led to crop specialization for credit-constrained households.
- **Creation of innovative employment opportunities:** Diaspora or return migrants can invest productively in their place of origin, creating new employment opportunities for other villagers and inspiring others to start up enterprises (Nielsen and Riddle, 2010; Lowell and Gerova, 2004). While away, migrants may learn new skills, gather savings and build foreign networks – all of which can alleviate the constraints to starting a new enterprise upon return (Marchetta, 2012). Using data from Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, Black and Castaldo (2009) find that return migrants are more likely to start a new enterprise when they have accumulated savings and stayed abroad longer. Wahba and Zenou (2012) analysed migration data from Egypt and found that loss of social capital as a result of absence from the country is outweighed by the benefits of finance and experience in starting up a firm.
- **Challenging of gender norms and sociocultural factors discriminating youth:** Migrants can act as catalysts in their place of origin, leading to changes in values and attitudes towards gender and youth roles within households and society (Ghosh, 2009). For example, they may stress the importance of girls' schooling and call for a higher age of marriage (Fargues, 2006).
- **Environmental improvements and increased availability of land:** Out-migration can lead to agricultural de-intensification and reduced pressure on natural resources, due to a decline in the available labour force combined with an increase in income through remittances (Qin, 2010; Rudel *et al.*, 2005). There is less tendency to overuse the land, with positive impacts on agricultural productivity and soil fertility. In Ghana, van der Geest (2011) showed that the vegetation trend is more positive in districts with a higher level of out-migration.

Figure 3. Positive impacts of youth migration on rural areas of origin



3.2.2 Negative impacts of youth migration on rural areas of origin

Distress migration of rural youth can also have negative impacts on food security and rural livelihoods. Some **impacts** are **immediate**, such as:

- **Loss of the most productive agricultural labour force:** Migration out of rural areas can result in the feminization of agriculture and a shortage of skilled agricultural labour, with potentially negative effects on farm productivity and the household food supply (Dugbazah, 2012). Evidence from Kenya associates migration and the subsequent loss of labour with negative effects on crop income, not offset by remittances (Sindi and Kiriimi, 2006). In Morocco, there is indication that the rural exodus has led to agricultural decline or even abandonment of agriculture (De Mas, 1990). According to Adaku (2013), in Ghana a household member engaging in temporary migration significantly reduces household production by 55.4 percent, while the permanent migration of a household member results in an insignificant increase in household production of 8.8 percent. In Mexico, rural households with labour migrants were found to have lower agricultural productivity than those without migratory workers (Schmook and Radel, 2008).
- **Loss of innovative and better-educated community members:** Youth have a greater capacity for innovation and entrepreneurship than adults (FAO, 2012b). The long-term migration of youth can cause households to lose a vital and potentially dynamic share of their workforce. For example, it has been found that the high rate of migration of skilled Ethiopians towards western and Gulf countries or to southern Africa translates into a lack of skilled work force in Ethiopia, especially in rural areas (Berhanu *et al.*, 2004).

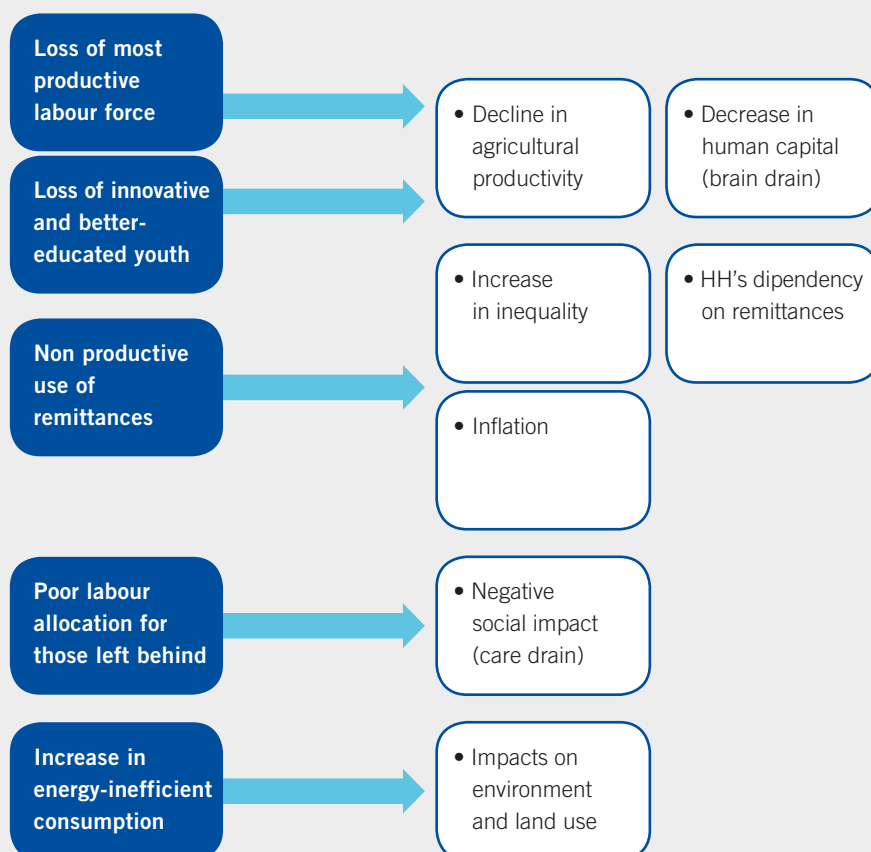
- **Non-productive use of remittances:** Recipients can sometimes use remittances to purchase non-essential luxury goods, often not produced locally. Furthermore, in many areas, remittances are destined for unproductive uses, such as housing (Yaseen, 2012).
- **Detrimental labour allocation for those left behind:** Dugbazah (2012) reports that the migration of male youth out of African rural areas caused women's agricultural workload to increase by 80 percent. This burden and the related pressures have a negative impact on the well-being of women (Zontini, 2004). In some cases, women and other family members revert to negative coping strategies, such as forcing children to work to increase the household's income or pay off debts. In some instances, remittances are dedicated to small family businesses relying on child labour (Van de Glind, 2010).
- **Increase in energy-inefficient consumption:** Remittances can produce alterations in the consumption patterns of receiving members, who may choose to purchase non-essential goods, which may be produced outside the local community and require increased use of energy. There may be additional negative impacts for the global environment (Amuedo-Dorantes, 2014).

These immediate impacts may have other **medium-long-term effects:**

- **Decline in agricultural productivity in rural areas of origin:** The migration of young men and women can affect agricultural productivity by: (i) destabilizing traditional farming systems at household and community levels; (ii) leading to a significant ageing of the rural labour force and thus to a reduction in labour productivity and farm income; and (iii) adopting land intensification practices, such as shorter fallow periods and increased weeding, to counterbalance the loss of labour productivity (Vargas-Lundius and Lanly, 2007). For example, Tuladhar *et al.* (2014) showed that migration in Nepal negatively affected agriculture yields.
- **Increased inequality between remittances recipients and non-recipients:** Monetary and social remittances might not reach the poorest of the poor. Migration can thus exacerbate disparities in income and living standards between recipient and non-recipient families, leading to new subclass divisions and social tensions (de Haas, 2003; Adams, 2011). For example, in most of rural Morocco, migration has contributed to the creation of new social stratification (Fadloulah *et al.*, 2000) and more than one-quarter of international migrant households have purchased agricultural land, compared with less than 10 percent of non-migrant households (de Haas, 2003).
- **Inflation:** The economic behaviour of recipient households tends to increase the prices of goods, including land, and services in local domestic markets, potentially affecting the entire community. In Cape Verde, the consumption actions of recipients of remittances contributed to an increase in local prices (Adams, 2011; European Union, 2014).
- **Household dependency on remittances:** Receiving households can become confident that the migrants' income will continue and remain stable. A survey in Angola revealed that 16 percent of households rely entirely on remittances for income (Alvarez-Tinajero, 2010). However, remittances are highly dependent on an individual's personal inclination to remit and subject to changing bargaining power within the family. Remittance-dependent households and communities are thus more vulnerable to fluctuations in labour demand and economic crises; moreover, they might be tempted to withdraw from labour markets (Vargas-Lundius and Lanly, 2007). Remittances can also lead to a strong disincentive for domestic savings, with consequent depletion of the domestic resource base for investment (Kireyev, 2006; Mitchell, 2006).

- **Decrease in human capital (“brain drain”):** Migration may be characterized by out-migration of the most skilled and innovative in the community. This positive selection process for migration can lead to a fall in human capital stocks. This can only be balanced through education and training, which require long-term efforts: the result is a delay in the process of agricultural transformation and commercialization. Rural areas and the agricultural sector become trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty (Uma *et al.*, 2013). This is the case of southern Africa (Crush, 2000). Nevertheless, the brain drain in Africa appears less significant than in Central America and the Pacific region (Maria and Strykowski, 2009; Beine *et al.*, 2008).
- **Social impact on those left behind (“care drain”):** Migration can disrupt traditional care arrangements for children and the elderly, and there is no compensation through increased use of remittances for social purposes (Kunz, 2008; Wong, 2006). There may be a drop in the time available for and quality of child care, and the youth left behind are sometimes forced to drop out of school to undertake responsibilities previously assumed by other adults. Similarly, young women and men may have less time available to seek employment that matches their skills and aspirations.
- **Changes in land use and environmental impacts:** Remittances can increase the demand for valuable land, resulting in changes in land use. For example, remittance-supported land purchase has fuelled the transition from agricultural land to residential areas in West Africa, with soaring land prices (FAO, 2004b). Moreover, several studies in southern Africa show that out-migration has led to the ecological degradation of origin area farms (Bilsborrow, 2002).

Figure 4. Negative impacts of youth migration on rural areas of origin



3.3 Potential policies and programmes

There is a wide range of policy interventions to address distress migration of rural youth, reflecting its numerous root causes. Building on McKenzie and Yang (2014), this section provides a review of the interventions that have proved effective in shaping rural economic opportunities for youth and harnessing the development benefits of internal migration, mitigating the connected risks. For the purposes of this conceptual framework, the focus is on rural youth migration and **agriculture and rural development (ARD) policies and programmes**.

ARD policies and programmes have to date failed to include migration issues for several reasons, including: (i) the lack of relevant data and indicators; (ii) the unavailability of capacities, expertise and financial resources to address the link between migration and rural development; and (iii) the complexity of institutional structures at country level, given that migration and ARD often fall under the responsibility of different government line ministries and departments.

The conceptual framework presents those interventions which seem most promising. In order to prevent the negative effects of a sizeable loss of the most dynamic share of the rural workforce, ARD policies and programmes need to offer youth concrete and viable opportunities in their rural areas of origin, which will contribute to their development. Policy interventions are identified and classified based on how they relate to: (i) the main determinants of migration (► [see section 3.1](#)); (ii) potential impacts on rural livelihoods (► [see section 3.2](#)); and (iii) FAO's comparative advantage and its work to date on rural migration and decent rural employment (DRE) for youth. Similarly, innovative approaches are proposed to facilitate the transfer of remittances and the circulation of new skills, knowledge and values.

In general, ARD policy interventions should be conceived as a nationally driven process of change, accompanying ongoing policy processes and providing support wherever needed, and leveraging local and international partnerships (FAO, 2014c). In consideration of the above, policy interventions to address the root causes of distress migration should:

- be evidence-based, and support gender- and age-disaggregated analysis of rural distress migration;
- integrate distress migration and rural labour mobility aspects in ARD policies and programmes;
- promote specific measures for youth employment creation in both farm and non-farm rural activities, in line with aspirations;
- support migration that is informed, voluntary and within legal/formal migratory channels; and
- promote measures to maximize the positive impacts of migration, including productive investment of remittances in agriculture and rural areas.

3.3.1 Collect evidence and factor in gender- and age-disaggregated analysis of rural distress migration

In order to effectively address the root causes of distress rural migration, ARD policies and programmes need to be based on sound and timely data and evidence. This could be achieved as follows:

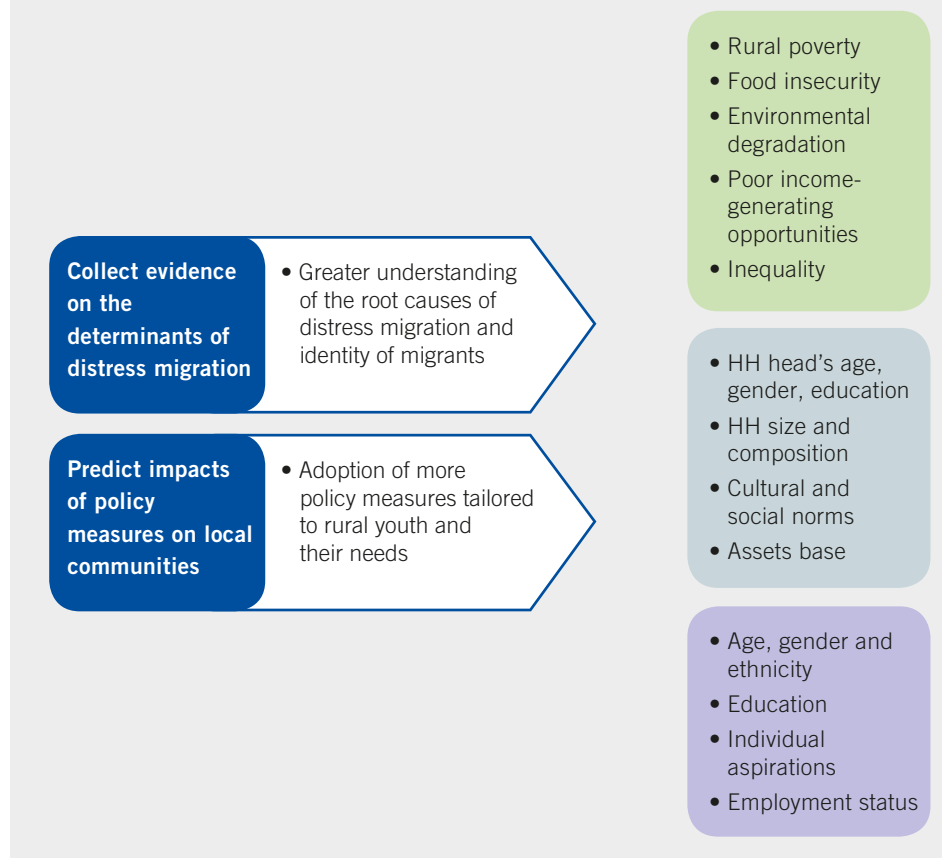
- **Generation of evidence on the determinants of distress migration of rural youth:**

ARD policy decisions need to be informed by and responsive to country needs. Hence, specific diagnostics are required to understand the determinants of distress migration of rural youth and to anticipate its impacts on agricultural performance in rural areas. ARD policies should be based on evidence of **who migrates** (sex and age); with **what skills**; from and to **which areas**; for **how long**; and **why**. There are major data and evidence gaps when it comes to rural youth migration. Moreover, young migrants may be difficult to identify in population-level data, as they may not appear in household rosters, especially if they are domestic workers or living on the streets, or if their residence is wrongly identified. Existing surveys might also overlook circular and seasonal migration. Various initiatives can be taken to support national policy-makers and rural stakeholders in the collection of this information. For example, already during the design phase of policies and programmes, it is important to gather the necessary data to understand the youth employment situation and rural labour migration dynamics in the relevant contexts. Similarly, national statistics offices can perform ad hoc migration surveys; alternatively, they can include a module on rural migration, with a specific focus on young migrants, in already planned surveys (e.g. rural population censuses, household surveys or labour force surveys). For example, integration of migration information into the living standard measurement study (LSMS) enables analysis of the relationship between migration and a number of variables, including agricultural activities and household composition, or in some cases social networks (if modules at community level have been included) (de Brauw and Carletto, 2012). The collection of longitudinal data should also be improved to enable the comparison of characteristics of young men and women before and after migration, and over time.

- **Policy impact assessments to evaluate the impacts of relevant policy measures in terms of rural migration:**

Evidence is needed to understand the effectiveness of policy interventions, in particular to capture the impacts achieved in terms of rural youth migration and rural youth employment creation. Countries and relevant stakeholders should invest in systematically generating evidence through *ex ante* and *ex post* impact assessments. Moreover, specific information should be collected on how local communities – and especially local youth – view migration. For example, in Kiribati, Tuvalu and Nauru, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), ILO, the United Nations University – Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-ESH) and the University of the South Pacific (USP) collected information on local perceptions of climate change and migration and used it to model future migration patterns and develop national action strategies.

Figure 5. Impact of policies supporting gender- and age-disaggregated analysis of distress migration



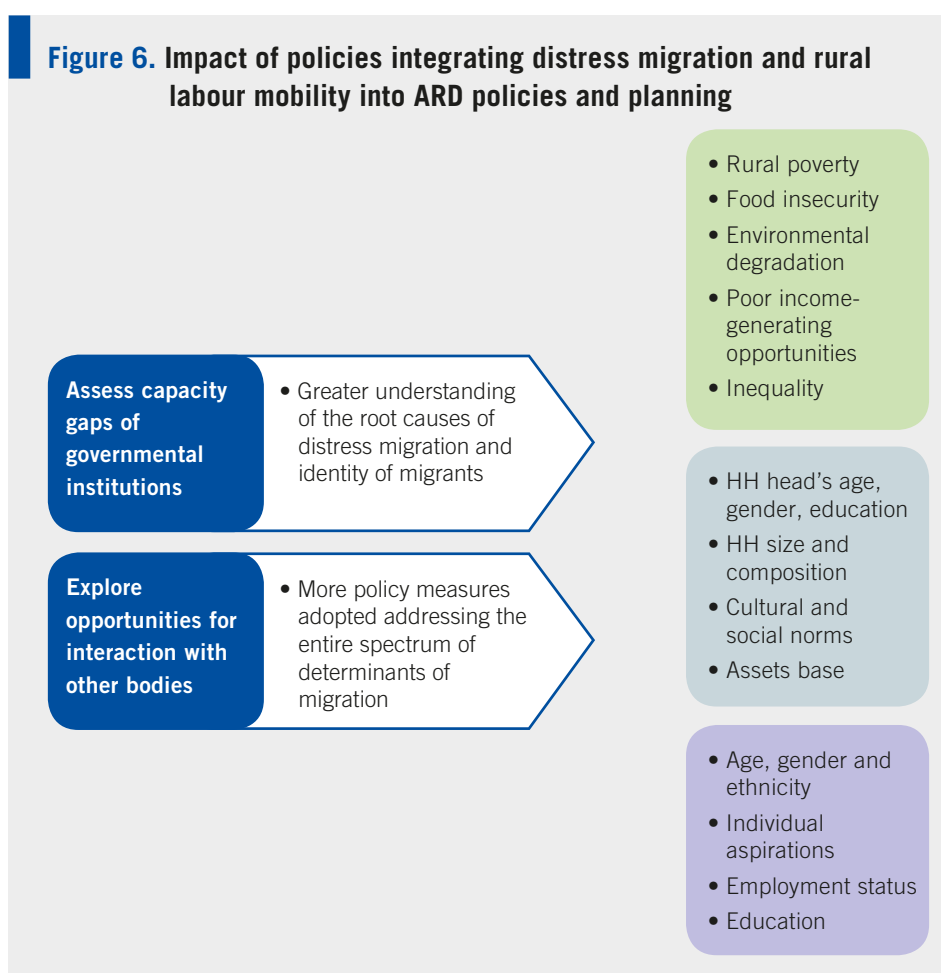
3.3.2 Integrate distress migration and rural labour mobility aspects in ARD policies and programmes

Local and national ARD institutions, including agricultural line ministries, producers' organizations (POs) and local government authorities, should incorporate migration issues in their planning. To achieve this, the institutions require support, which may be provided in various ways:

- **Assessment of eventual capacity gaps of governmental institutions:** The government is the key actor to address rural youth migration and promote decent, country-specific and sustainable rural employment opportunities for youth. However, agricultural stakeholders often lack the capacity to integrate migration into ARD policies and programmes. Capacities are required at different levels (i.e. enabling environment, institutional and individual). For example, the FAO Capacity Needs Assessment on DRE has been useful in assessing the capacities to develop and implement rural employment and decent work (policies and strategies). It is important to identify committed champions of migration or rural youth employment within the ministries of agriculture, youth, labour and social affairs.
- **Exploration of opportunities for interaction with other actors and prioritizing capacity development:** Strong partnerships at different levels and with different stakeholders are indispensable. The various actors need to undergo tailored capacity development to guide them in the design and implementation of policy interventions

that take into account existing migration pressures and impacts. The government should map other actors working on migration-related issues, in order to provide them with relevant capacity development support and identify opportunities for collaboration, while clarifying the respective roles and responsibilities. Relevant actors include: existing networks of migrant associations; representatives of rural workers and employers' organizations; POs; leaders of rural youth organizations; and other actors from the private sector and civil society. For example, in Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania, FAO conducted capacity development workshops and tailored training on DRE not only for agricultural line ministries, but also for academic and research institutions, private sector entities and civil society organizations, including POs and youth groups. These integrated capacity development activities facilitated and strengthened nationwide partnerships between farmers/POs and the local authorities, and enabled a wide range of local actors to actively participate in the definition of the national rural youth employment programmes (FAO, 2014c).

Figure 6. Impact of policies integrating distress migration and rural labour mobility into ARD policies and planning



3.3.3 Promote specific measures for youth employment creation in both farm and non-farm rural activities, in line with aspirations

Evidence suggests that if policy outcomes for labour and social protection were more favourable, many young women and men from rural areas would choose to stay (UNICEF, 2014). In recent years, FAO and other development partners have tested a range of strategies to create new employment opportunities for rural youth. The main approaches are outlined below:

- Implementation of concrete measures to improve the performance of the agricultural sector:** Agriculture needs to be more dynamic and appealing. By investing in **new and sustainable agricultural technologies**, agriculture will become increasingly productive and capable of absorbing the growing workforce. Indeed, sustainable farming practices are relatively labour-intensive, compared with conventional farming (Herren *et al.*, 2012). According to the ILO, the **green economy** could create an additional 60 million jobs, with higher net employment gains in developing countries (ILO, 2013a). Local programmes and measures should aim not only to create green jobs through sustainable farming practices but also to make them equitable in terms of access and wages for youth, especially in migration-prone rural areas. Value chain analysis conducted in a participatory way can help identify those crops that provide more scope for innovative entrepreneurial experiences and are more attractive for youth. It is also important to reduce the hardship associated with and hazardous nature of many agricultural activities, promoting the adoption of OSH measures for the rural workforce, including small producers and informal wage workers, through community-based risk assessment mechanisms and the promotion of **safer and labour-saving technologies** to protect rural workers (FAO, 2010a, 2012b).
- Fostering of strategic public-private partnerships to promote youth employment:** The **private sector** is leading the process of agricultural transformation and offers excellent **potential for job creation**. The private sector can also have a pivotal role in facilitating youth's access to land, finance and markets. It needs to be involved in the promotion of a broad set of services, such as: (i) value chain development and agribusiness development services; (ii) innovation and technology transfer; (iii) market infrastructure development; and (iv) skills development. In particular, by promoting stronger public-private partnerships, national institutions could multiply the opportunities for more – and more equitable – employment for all, especially for youth. Greater efforts are required in migration-prone areas with a focus on selected agricultural value chains with more job potential for rural youth. For example, FAO's **public-private partnership (PPP)** model for decent rural youth employment involves collaboration between the public and private sectors (POs, credit unions and private companies) to transfer climate-friendly agribusiness skills and provide access to land, credit and markets (FAO, 2014d).
- Prioritization of youth in accessing inputs and land, water and natural resources' management skills:** Access to productive and sufficiently sizeable land parcels can provide youth with the means to gain a sustainable income in their rural areas of origin. If access to inputs is accompanied by training in new technologies, they will achieve increased yields, reducing food insecurity and rural poverty. Long-term solutions to the land tenure insecurity of youth may include: (i) targeted legislation and legal services, protecting youth from discrimination; (ii) innovative mechanisms, such as land rental markets and group leases/purchases, giving older community members incentives

Elements of success for public-private partnership (PPP) models

In 2010, based on 70 case studies of public-private partnerships for agribusiness development, FAO identified the following key elements for success:

1. Baseline study for PPP arrangements prior to implementation, taking into account the macro- and microeconomic characteristics and demography of the country and subsector.
2. Capacity of partners and government to deliver.
3. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure effectiveness in achieving the purposes and outcomes of the arrangements.
4. Enhanced cooperation among different institutional actors.

For further information: FAO, 2013c.

to transfer; and (iii) promotion of off-farm economic activities (Bennel, 2010). For example, in Mexico, 80 percent of the young people selected as beneficiaries for the Young Rural Entrepreneur and Land Fund Programme have obtained access to land through leasing transactions or purchase (FAO *et al.*, 2014).

- **Inclusion of youth in farmer-based organizations and POs:** Inclusion in new or existing POs and cooperatives allows youth to gain in terms of productivity, income and contacts in modern value chains. If adequately trained, they can also raise awareness in their communities of their specific challenges. Small youth producers require guidance to produce, plan and market collectively and to network with other similar realities. It is important to develop their capacities to mobilize capital and negotiate better prices for seeds, fertilizers, transport and storage. If POs and cooperatives adopt good governance principles and practices, youth can also give a stronger voice to their specific needs. For example, the ILO Syndicoop programme, implemented in Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and South Africa, successfully involved formal workers in the design and implementation of local job creation schemes (Smith, 2006).
- **Optimization of job creation in rural non-farm economic activities around value chains linked to sustainable agriculture, extension services and agribusiness development:** Support to small and medium agro-enterprises (SMAEs) can have a huge impact, linking farmers to markets and creating non-farm employment opportunities for the rural poor. This in turn reduces household food insecurity and inequality, while meeting youth's aspiration of economic independence and innovation. Local agricultural institutions and support services require capacity development, to enable them to pilot innovative SMAE projects. The traditional knowledge of local communities in terms of ecosystem management and sustainable use of natural resources is a valuable resource. Business incubator models, such as the Agribusiness Entrepreneurial Incubator Center in Mali, have proved effective in reducing start-up costs, improving service provision and connecting with the existing network of entrepreneurs. Capacities should also be built to plan information campaigns to inform youth of available employment and entrepreneurship opportunities (including awareness of the skills needed and available training; legislation, regulation and policy; available contacts).

Key actions to promote SMAEs

Regional “Agribusiness Roundtables” with SMAE managers in developing countries allowed FAO to identify the main challenges to SMAE development. To address these challenges, it is recommended to prioritize the following actions:

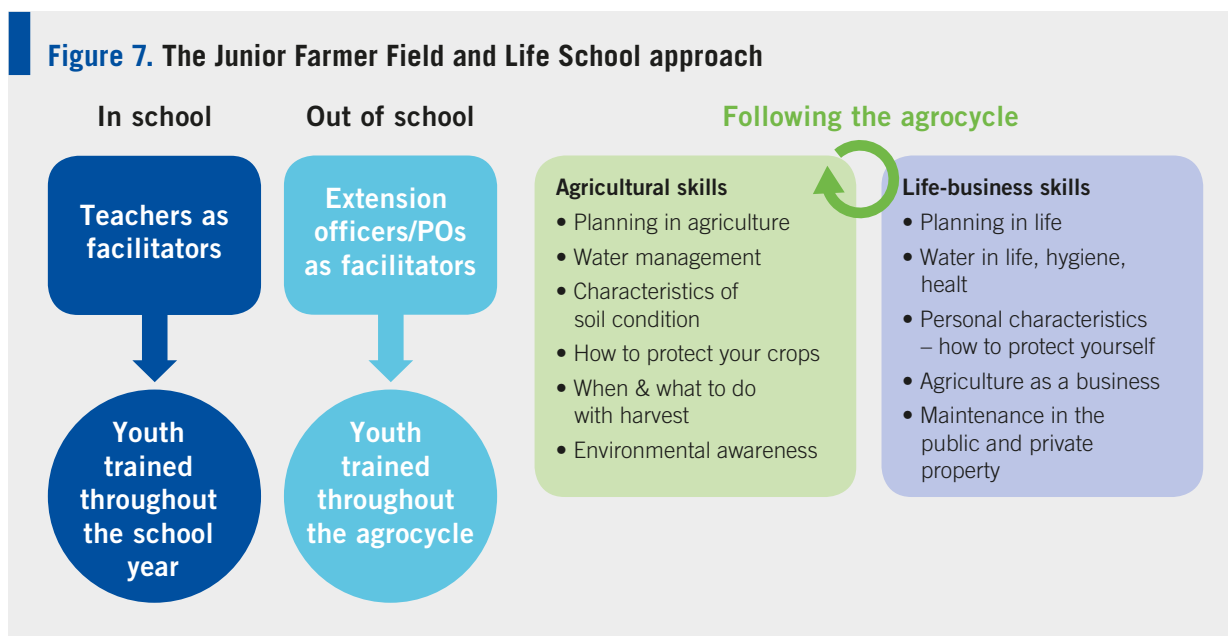
1. Increase access to and reduce the cost of rural financing.
2. Avoid over-regulation and rationalize bureaucracy.
3. Improve youth farmers’ ability to produce, plan and market collectively, creating networks with small firms.
4. Establish locally customized quality management schemes to guarantee competitiveness and a minimum standard quality product.
5. Provide support to post-harvest and logistics issues, reducing operation and transport costs.

For more information: FAO, 2012c.

- **Development of financial products tailored to rural youth:** When provided with financial products specifically responding to their needs and potential, rural youth are more inclined to borrow money to fund productive activities and increase their resilience. The impact is maximized when the provision of loans and savings is matched with financial and youth enterprise training. There should be incentives for financial institutions to reach rural areas, and develop and test new financial products more suited to agriculture, with the emphasis on youth ownership. Financial schemes targeting rural youth should offer integrated packages of inputs (credit, training, advisory support), adapted to the specific context. For example, priority could be given to: (i) the creation of a Village Community Bank (VICOBA); (ii) the creation of locally owned financial services associations, such as those provided by the IFAD-supported Rural Finance and Community Improvement Programme in Sierra Leone; or (iii) the adoption of ad hoc microfinance or bank instruments.
- **Prioritization of innovation and sustainability in service delivery in rural areas:** Innovative service delivery schemes with potential for scale-up could provide rural youth with access to roads, markets and extension services. Youth could then pursue income-generating activities or become service providers themselves. ARD programmes should improve the **rural socio-economic infrastructure**, either through direct public sector investment programmes and financial support or by adopting public-private investment models. The capacities of state actors to develop innovative models for service provisions, targeting rural youth, should be enhanced. There should be incentives to **involve the private sector** in service delivery in rural areas, especially in the development of technologies more relevant to youth. This is the case of the Peru National Programme “Youth at Work” and its Geographic Information Systems for Entrepreneurs, which provides potential entrepreneurs with market analysis information on existing businesses by geographical area (MDG-F, 2013).
- **Development and implementation of TVET adapted to rural youth’s needs:** Investing in youth education and training programmes linked with rural farm and non-farm businesses can expand the range of livelihood opportunities for rural youth, by

increasing the chances of finding employment or of starting their own microenterprises. It is necessary to upgrade rural education and vocational training in technical and business skills in rural areas, taking care to match the aspirations of rural youth with actual labour requirements. In this regard, FAO has developed the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) methodology, which enhances youth's agricultural, life and entrepreneurial skills through various topics, including agriculture as a business (e.g. modern and climate-smart agriculture), based on a context-specific agro-ecosystem analysis. Employers and entrepreneurs should be involved in the design and delivery of training and apprenticeship programmes, as with Brazil's National System for Rural Apprenticeship (SENAR), managed by the employer's association, Confederação Nacional da Agricultura. It is essential to improve skills, but how these skills are rewarded (i.e. skills price) is also important; this can vary across locations and socio-economic groups, with a potential effect on rural youth migration (Tigau and Bolaños Guerra, 2015; Rosenzweig, 2006, 2010).

Figure 7. The Junior Farmer Field and Life School approach



- **Promotion and monitoring of youth's access to information and communications technology (ICT) in rural areas:** Providing youth with ICT skills can foster their entrepreneurial spirit and contribute to the development of new ICT applications for agriculture in areas most in need of rural ideas. Youth can keep up to date about markets and existing employment or training opportunities. Agriculture then becomes more attractive with a positive impact on youth's aspirations. The availability of relevant education and increased access to media and communications technology can positively alter young people's perceptions of rural life (Sumberg et al., 2012). In summary, ICT can attract youth to the agricultural sector, while also providing up-to-date information and ICT-based agricultural solutions.¹²

¹² ICT can have a considerable impact on the decision to migrate: it facilitates an informed decision and makes a potential migrant more aware of the actual opportunities at destination. ICT can also improve the access of rural youth to social capital within migration networks, which helps reduce the costs and risks that migration entails (Dekker and Engbersen, 2012).

FAO's Junior Farmer Field and Life School (JFFLS) approach

The Junior Farmer Field and Life School methodology was field-tested in Chimoio, Mozambique and in Bondo, Kenya in 2004. The Mozambique Government decided to build on the success of JFFLS pilot projects by incorporating the tenets of this methodology into its national school curricula.

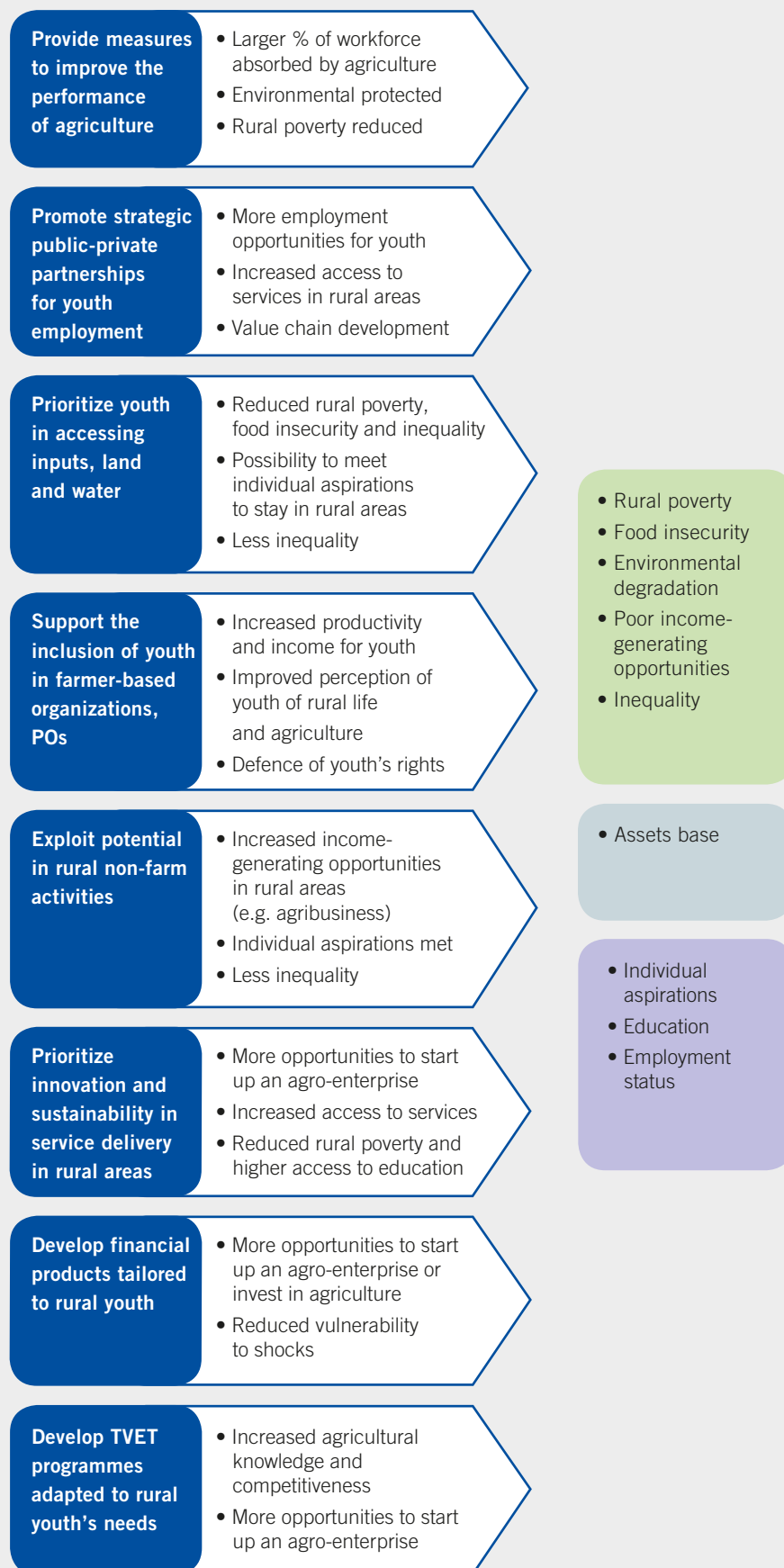
The goal of the JFFLS approach is to empower vulnerable youth, and provide them with the livelihood options and gender-sensitive skills needed for long-term food security while reducing their vulnerability to destitution and risk-coping strategies. Another major objective is to enable youth to exercise the same roles and responsibilities regardless of gender and develop their capacities to critically assess relationships and understand the risks and resources in their communities.

By 2013, more than 25 000 young women and men graduated from Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools in over 20 countries and territories, from Uganda to the Gaza Strip.

The strength of JFFLS lies in their unique learning methodology and curriculum, which combine agricultural and life skills, building the self-confidence of young farmers. The schools have provided youth with the possibility and capacity to take advantage of advisory and training/information from which they are otherwise excluded. They ensure that youth gain access to and control over natural resources, while the income generation aspect ensures that youth get the opportunity to take advantage of local output markets. Moreover, the JFFLS methodology allows youth to voice their concerns and participate in informal decision-making and local governance processes.

For more information: FAO, 2012c.

Figure 8. Impact of policies including specific measures for youth employment creation in farm and non-farm rural activities

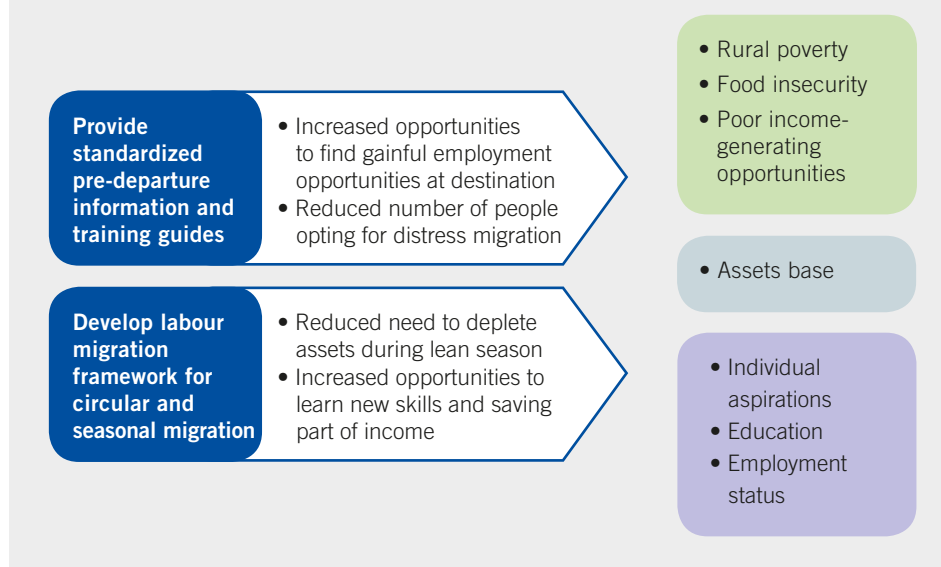


3.3.4 Support migration that is informed, voluntary and within legal/formal migratory channels

In order to make a voluntary and informed decision about migration, rural youth should have access to relevant and up-to-date information about the costs entailed. They need to understand the available options in the areas of origin, in terms of employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. It is necessary to take action in the following priority areas:

- Provision of systematic and standardized pre-departure information and training for migrant workers:** When fully aware of the risks involved in irregular migration and of the opportunities available at home, rural youth at risk of distress migration can make informed decisions. To this end, tailored pre-departure training and information campaigns should be conducted through local radio, on-site sessions and social media. They should provide information on: (i) employment and income-generating opportunities in the areas of origin; (ii) useful tools for seeking work when migrating; (iii) specific job-related skills and languages required in the main destination areas; and (iv) migrants' rights. The evaluation of pre-departure orientation and training for international migration conducted in the Philippines, Indonesia and Nepal reported a significant impact on the knowledge of non-migrants (McKenzie and Yang, 2014). Efforts are required to improve national labour market information systems and ensure they reach rural areas.
- Development of labour migration framework and projects to maximize the transfer of skills and knowledge from circular and seasonal migrants:** Circular and temporary migration, if adequately supported, can counterbalance the brain drain and provide an additional source of income during the lean season. Implemented in synergy with ARD policies and programmes in the areas of origin (FAO, 2013d), seasonal employment policies could help overcome the well-documented occurrence of seasonal labour shortages in agriculture (Ellis, 2000). Positive experiences of international migration may prove relevant for internal migration. Beam *et al.* (2013) showed, for example, that large beneficial migration flows have taken place through circular migration agreements, with the cooperation of governments or employers in the destination area to provide assistance for recruitment, health assessment, preconsular facilitation and pre-departure orientation training. Above all, circular policies should secure the human rights of migrants by providing for decent work contract standards, safe and cost-effective remittances, and the right to take home entitlements (e.g. pensions) accumulated while working abroad. There should also be opportunities for skills upgrading (Constant *et al.*, 2012).

Figure 9. Impact of policies supporting informed, voluntary and regular migration



3.3.5 Promote measures to maximize the positive impact of migration

As argued by de Haas (2012), migration is likely to be beneficial if governments and institutions create attractive investment environments and trust in political and legal institutions in the areas of origin. To this end, ARD policies and programmes should include specific measures:

- **Improved access to safe, reliable and affordable remittances' services in rural areas:**

A reduction in remittance transfer costs can have a positive impact on the amount and frequency of remittances received in rural areas (Ambler *et al.*, 2014; Aycinena *et al.*, 2010; and Gibson *et al.*, 2006). Tailored support to provide financial literacy and inclusion contributes to alleviating information asymmetries and improving migrants' ability to compare remittance transaction fees; this then translates into lower remittance costs (McKenzie and Yang, 2014). As a result, household income increases, there are fewer constraints on liquidity, and productive investments may be made. Similarly, policies should aim to improve access to professional remittance services in rural areas, with lower transaction costs and a faster service. Market research needs to be carried out to identify delivery systems most suited to the needs of rural areas; for example, mobile money transfers could be an attractive option for remote rural areas where cell phones are widespread among remittance recipients.¹³ PPP collaboration agreements could be established with service providers to develop financial services at affordable prices in rural areas.

- **Facilitated investment of remittances in agriculture and in the rural non-farm economy:**

Governments can provide information and incentives to optimize the use of remittances for productive investments in agriculture and to stimulate off-farm business, with a positive impact on income, similar to that of public transfers. By promoting channels for the investment of remittances in employment-intensive

¹³ When speaking about "internal migration remittance flows", it is important to consider the payment system (cheques, debit cards, account-to-account transfers, electronic transfers, person-to-person transfers etc.) and the technology used (fax, email, mobile communication, automated teller machines [ATMs] etc.).

activities, governments can reduce the risk of remittances exacerbating existing inequalities. It is essential to have a clear understanding of how remittances are used in the areas of origin. Any intervention should include a combination of general measures to improve the overall investment climate and ad hoc finance facilities for agriculture-related activities carried out by migrant families (e.g. remittance-linked loans and diaspora bonds). Financial literacy programmes for migrants and remittance recipients have resulted in significant increases in savings in the origin household (Doi *et al.*, 2014); such programmes should be developed with the participation of a wide range of actors, from government officials, banks and microfinance institutions, to trade unions and diaspora associations. Finally, awareness-raising campaigns can highlight the important role of remittances in local development.

- **Provision of incentives for migrants to maintain links with sending areas:** The stronger the links maintained with the community of origin, the more knowledge and technology transfers are promoted to the benefit of fellows in the areas of origin. Consequently, there is increased likelihood that modern farming technologies will be adopted and agro-enterprises will be created and managed. Several interventions to exploit the potential of international diaspora could be adapted to internal migration (ILO, 2015d), including mentor-sponsor programmes, joint research projects, virtual returns and short-term visits and assignments (Ratha and Plaza, 2011). Other interventions include the development of infrastructure, transport services and communication networks, as well as the creation of associations of groups of migrants coming from the same community and promoting collective investments in the common areas of origin.¹⁴ According to Beauchemin and Shoumaker (2009), villages in Burkina Faso with a migrant association are 4 times as likely to have a health centre, almost 3 times as likely to have primary school and 2.6 times as likely to have a road, suggesting that these migrant associations help build those social infrastructures.
- **Fostering of return migration of potential agro-entrepreneurs:** By returning, migrants can help increase agricultural and business skills in their communities of origin; they may bring new market opportunities for local products and challenge traditional norms, encouraging an increasing number of fellows to start their own enterprise and invest in education. Measures to re-integrate workers into local labour markets take full account of the scope and nature of return migration. Although there is no evidence of the effectiveness of voluntary return programmes (Naudé *et al.*, 2015), measures to favour the return of migrants to their areas of origin could include the offer of tailored training opportunities (in, for example, SMAE creation and management), financial products, start-up grants and equipment at subsidized prices.
- **Creation of synergies with social protection initiatives, to reduce the detrimental impact of migration on those left behind:** By implementing tailored social protection interventions, governments can counterbalance the negative impact of migration on youth and women left behind (UNICEF, 2010). If women left behind are empowered, they can decide to invest remittances in human capital of children and youth, or to use remittances for productive activities of their own. Tailored measures should be designed to provide women and youth left behind with entrepreneurial opportunities, referral to education and training services, and psychosocial counselling. Social protection policies and programmes in areas of origin, providing, for example, cash

¹⁴ For example, Mexico's 3x1 programme foresees that every USD 1 donated by the diaspora is matched by USD 1 from the Federal Government, the relevant State Government, the Municipal Government and Western Union, and used to support the implementation of sustainable projects at local level with concrete business plans (www.ilo.org).

transfers to low-income households, can reduce the pressure to migrate, as has been the case with Mexico's "Progresa" programme (Niño-Zarazua, 2011). Moreover, local teachers and social service providers should be prepared to support children and youth left behind in rural areas and their families (Migration Policy Institute, 2015).

Figure 10. Impact of policies contributing to maximize the positive effects of migration

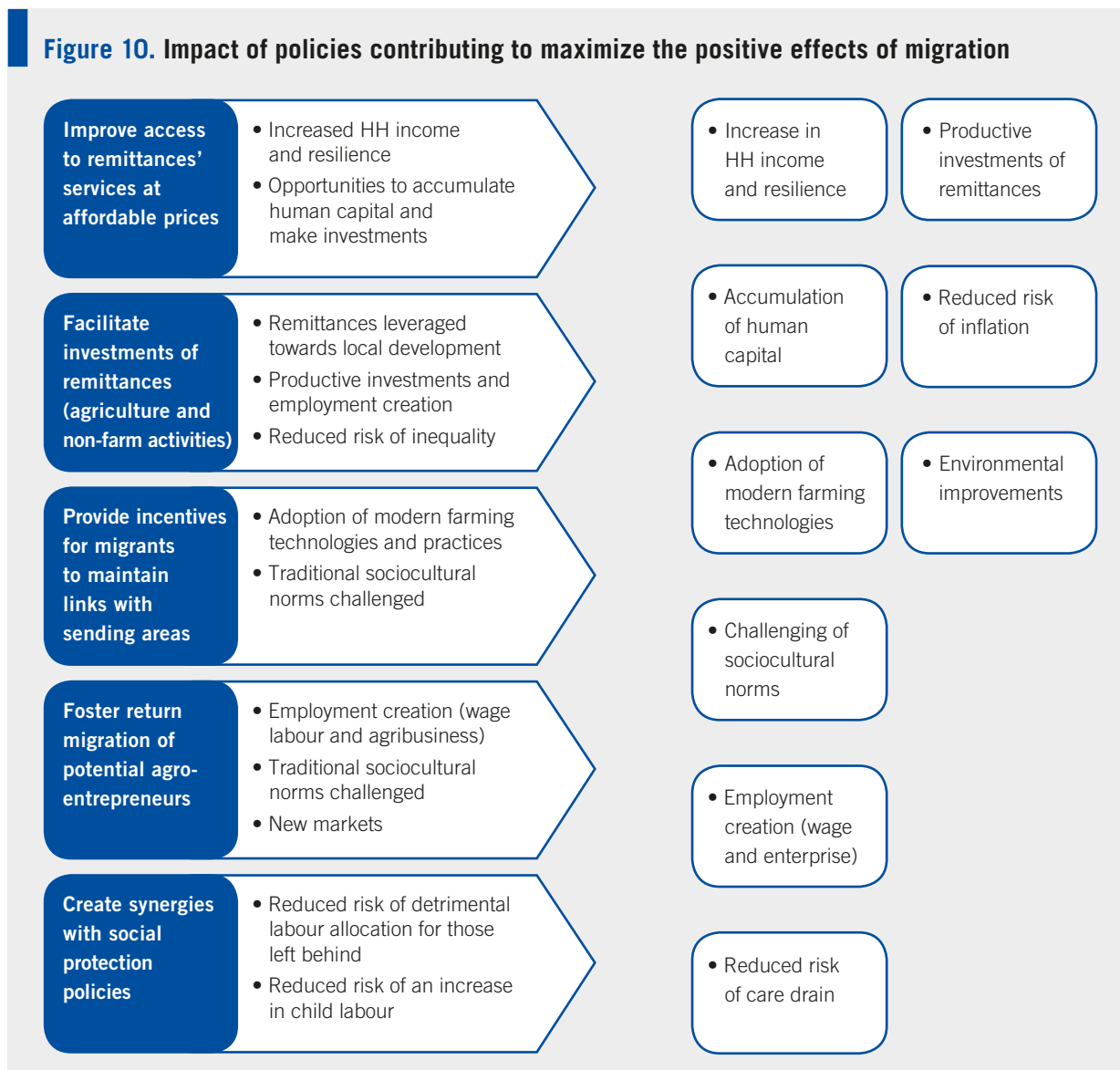
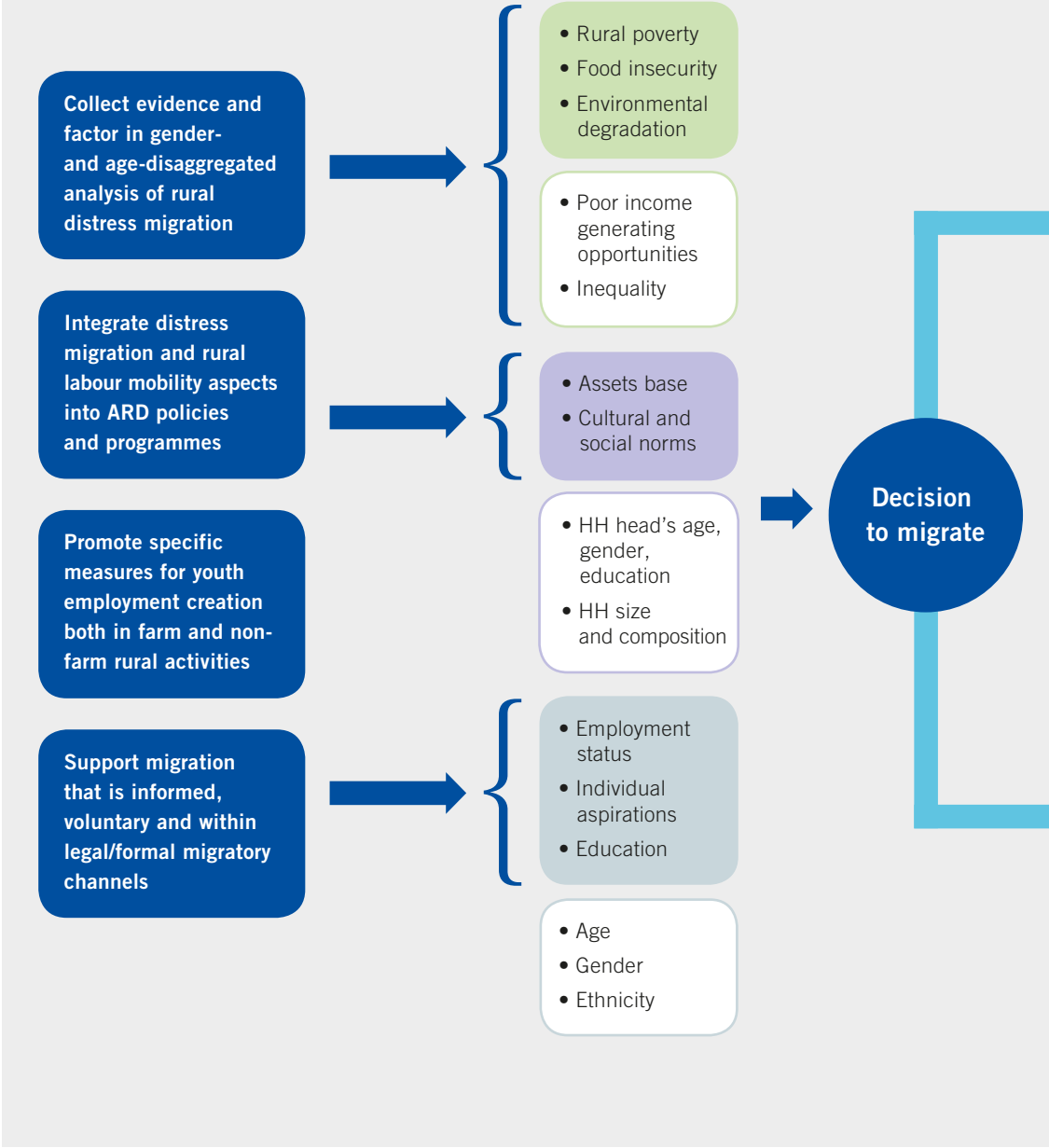
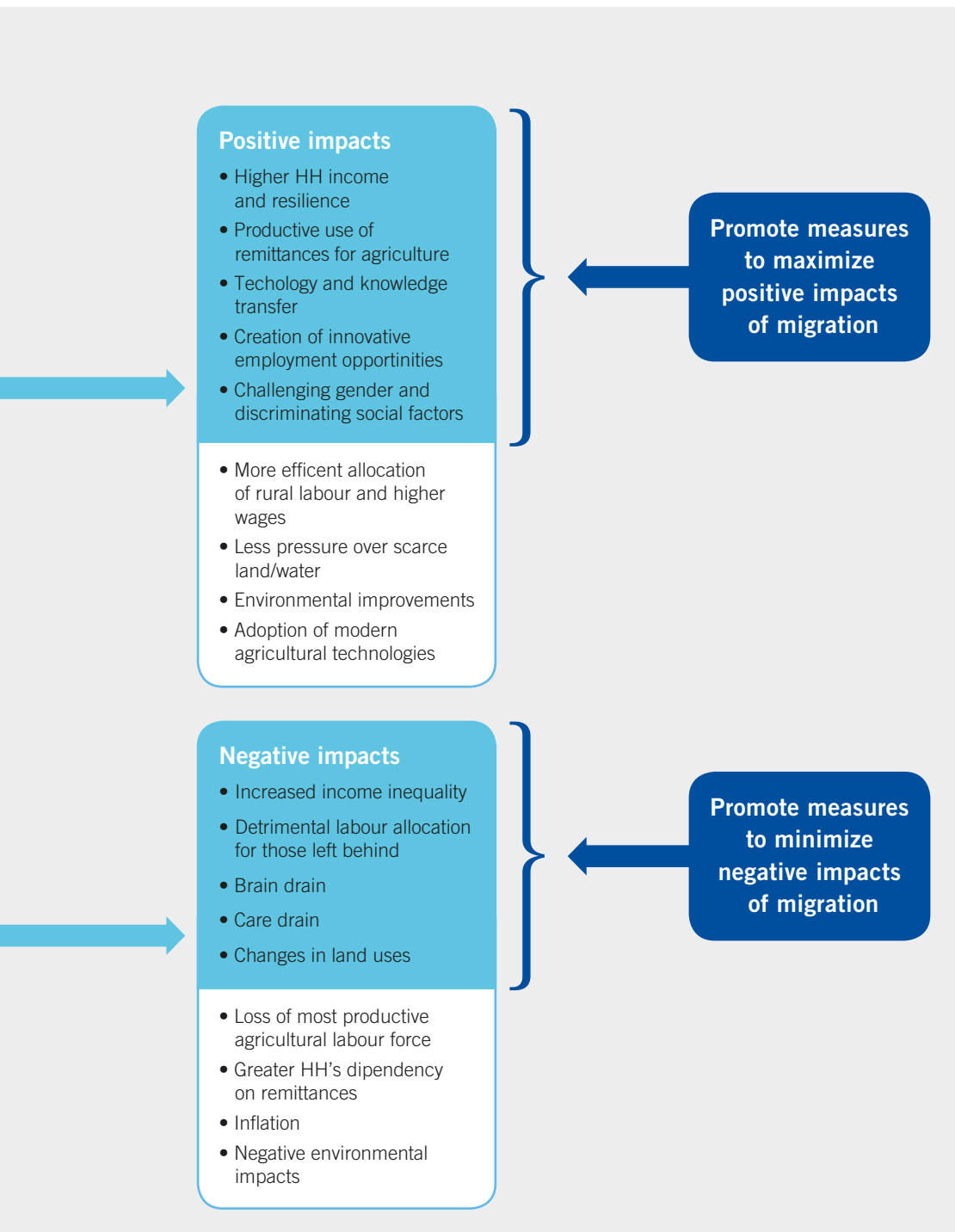


Figure 11. Summary of potential policies to reduce distress migration of rural youth and maximize its benefits for agriculture and rural development





4 Conclusions and final recommendations

This paper has developed a conceptual framework to simultaneously **address the root causes of distress migration of rural youth** and **leverage the potential of migration to reduce rural poverty and improve food security**, with the overall objective of **contributing to agriculture and rural development** in migrants' areas of origin and migration-prone regions.

Migration decisions are driven by a **variety of root causes** (i.e. poverty, food insecurity, inequality, poor income-generating opportunities and increased competition for scarce land and water resources); they are strongly context-specific and depend on individual and household characteristics. The root causes of distress migration of rural youth, its impacts on the agriculture and rural development of the areas of origin as well as its patterns **differ according to the context**. Furthermore, migration can have both **positive and negative impacts in the rural areas of origin**. For example, the migration of skilled young workers raises concerns with regard to the ageing and feminization of rural populations and the increased work burden of those left behind. These challenges are compounded by land degradation and climate change, which pose serious threats to agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods in Africa. However, migration can also ease the pressures on local labour markets, reduce household liquidity constraints, foster capital investments and assistance (from diaspora, returning migrants or remittance-receiving households) and increase local human capital through transfer of skills, technology and know-how and by means of social networks.

Given the interconnected nature of development and migration, **ARD policies are fundamental** in making migration just one option to be considered alongside the pursuit of other viable agricultural and rural livelihood opportunities. The conceptual framework has identified key areas for policy intervention. However, for the developing countries concerned, translating this framework into concrete action at country level can represent a major challenge. Therefore, it is essential to increase the dialogue and collaboration between the relevant ministries (agriculture, labour and youth), producers' and farmers' organizations, the private sector and research institutions, with the objective of conceiving tailor-made and integrated policy interventions.

Based on this conceptual framework, it is possible to identify areas where **FAO can actively contribute to address the root causes** of distress rural youth migration. **FAO has a comparative advantage** in exploring the linkages between migration, agriculture and rural development. As such, FAO can play a considerable role in leveraging its potential through skills development, employment and investments. In particular, the analysis conducted in this paper shows that investing in agriculture and rural development in rural areas to create productive employment opportunities and upgrade the quality of existing ones, particularly for youth, is one of the most effective means of reducing distress migration and maximizing its developmental benefits for the communities of origin. If youth are to have viable options other than distress migration, they need more business advice, services and representation, as well as specific initiatives geared towards increasing their involvement in agriculture.

Therefore, **FAO can contribute** as follows:

- **Strengthen global partnerships and address the existing knowledge gaps regarding internal migration and its contribution to agriculture:** In collaboration with government institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), researchers and international organizations, FAO can work to **identify specific migration dynamics** and ensure the compatibility of ARD policies and programmes. This involves collecting and analysing data on: (i) the root causes of distress migration of rural youth; (ii) rural youth employment and existing labour market conditions (including part-time and seasonal occupations); (iii) the amount and frequency of remittances, as well as the channels used to send them; and (iv) the impacts of migration on young people's livelihoods, rural development and rural youth employment (e.g. technology transfers and use of remittances). Impact assessments should be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of ARD interventions; lessons learned can be used to contribute to global cooperation mechanisms, such as the Global Migration Group (GMG).
- **Support strategic planning at policy level, by mainstreaming migration into national policy agendas and increasing policy coherence:** FAO can contribute to the **development of national capacities** to: (i) systematically address the linkages between youth employment promotion and rural labour promotion in the course of ARD strategic planning; (ii) adopt territorial approaches for the supply of services and employment creation (e.g. to enable intersectoral synergies, urban–rural linkages); (iii) include the specific needs and aspirations of youth in ARD policies and planning, including rural youth's access to education and information; and (iv) develop and incubate the potential of remittances, diasporas and returning migrants, to enhance their contribution to development. Given its wide country experience, FAO is in a position to facilitate consultative, multi-stakeholder processes, bringing together different stakeholders (government, civil society, private sector, development partners and youth) and ensuring that migration and youth-related priorities are aligned with the country's overall development vision and objectives.
- **Scale up innovative approaches across different contexts:** To achieve a large-scale impact, it is necessary to: (i) incentivize and support demonstration policies and pilot projects to test different approaches and draw conclusions on what could work and under which conditions; (ii) use this information to inform adjustments needed to policies, processes and the legal framework at national level; and (iii) promote innovative partnerships for implementation and scaling up. Pilot mechanisms to be tested include measures to: channel remittances to support youth agro start-ups; foster investments in sustainable agriculture and green jobs; promote productive investments of remittance-receiving households, diasporas and return migrants in sustainable agriculture and green jobs; and promote safe, remunerative and regulated seasonal labour migration schemes.



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Glossary

Agricultural off-farm employment: Agricultural wage employment and non-farm employment (WB, 2008b).

Agricultural on-farm employment: Self-employed farming, including crop and livestock production (Valdés *et al.*, 2009).

Assisted voluntary return: Administrative, logistical, financial and reintegration support to rejected asylum seekers, victims of trafficking in human beings, stranded migrants, qualified nationals and other migrants unable or unwilling to remain in the host country who volunteer to return to their countries of origin (www.iom.int).

Asylum seeker: Someone who claims to be a refugee and seeks international protection from persecution or serious harm in his or her home country. Every refugee is initially an asylum seeker, but not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee. While they are waiting for their claim to be accepted or rejected, they are called asylum seekers (UNHCR | Glossary).

Brain drain: Emigration of trained and talented individuals from an area of origin to another area resulting in depletion of skills resources in the former (adapted from www.iom.int).

Circular migration: Fluid movement of people between different areas, including temporary or long-term movement which may be beneficial to all involved, if occurring voluntarily and linked to the labour needs of areas of origin and destination (adapted from www.iom.int).

Decent rural employment: Any activity, occupation, work, business or service performed by women and men, adults and youth, in rural areas that: (i) respects the core labour standards as defined in ILO Conventions, and therefore: a) is not child labour; b) is not forced labour; c) guarantees freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining and promotes organization of rural workers; d) does not entail discrimination at work on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, social origin or other; (ii) provides an adequate living income; (iii) entails an adequate degree of employment security and stability; (iv) adopts minimum occupational safety and health (OSH) measures, which are adapted to address sector-specific risks and hazards; (v) avoids excessive working hours and allows sufficient time for rest; and (vi) promotes access to adapted technical and vocational training (FAO, [DRE Applied Definition](#)).

Decent work: Summary of the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for productive work that delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families; better prospects for personal development and social integration; freedom for people to express their concerns, to organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men. Within this framework, decent work is captured in four strategic objectives or pillars: (i) employment creation and enterprise development; (ii) social protection; (iii) standards and rights at work; and (iv) governance and social dialogue (ILO, 2006).

Distress migration: Movements from usual place of residence, undertaken in conditions where the individual and/or the family perceive that there are no options open to them to survive with dignity, except to migrate. Migration is distress if it is motivated by extreme economic deprivation, natural and environmental disasters, or forms of gender and social oppression perceived to be intolerable (Mander and Sahgal, 2012).

Economic migrant: A person leaving his or her habitual place of residence purely for financial and/or economic reasons. Economic migrants choose to move in order to improve their quality of life. This term is often loosely used to distinguish from refugees fleeing persecution, and is similarly used to refer to persons attempting to enter a country without legal permission and/

or by using asylum procedures without bona fide cause. It may equally be applied to persons leaving their areas of origin for the purpose of employment (adapted from www.iom.int and UNHCR I Glossary).

Environmental degradation: Deterioration in environmental quality as a result of ambient concentrations of pollutants and other activities and processes such as improper land use and natural disasters (OECD). Main measures of rural environmental degradation are: (i) deforestation; (ii) declining soil quality (including soil desiccation); and (iii) loss of biodiversity (Bilsborrow, 2002).

Environmental migrants: Persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move within their country or abroad (IOM 2011).

Farming system: Population of individual farm systems that have broadly similar resource bases, enterprise patterns, household livelihoods and constraints, and for which similar development strategies and interventions would be appropriate. Depending on the scale of analysis, a farming system can encompass a few dozen or many millions of households (Dixon *et al.*, 2001).

Food security: State in which all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (World Food Summit of 1996). Food Security has 4 main dimensions: 1) physical availability of food; 2) economic and physical access to food; 3) food utilization; and 4) stability of the other 3 dimensions over time (FAO, 2008, available at www.fao.org).

Green economy: Economy that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. In this connection, a green economy can be thought of as one that is low carbon, resource-efficient and socially inclusive (UNEP).

Green jobs: Jobs that help reduce negative environmental impact ultimately leading to environmentally, economically and socially sustainable enterprises and economies. More precisely, green jobs are decent jobs that: (i) improve energy and raw material efficiency; (ii) limit greenhouse gas emissions; (iii) minimize waste and pollution; (iv) protect and restore ecosystems; and (v) support adaptation to the effects of climate change (ITC-ILO, 2015).

Informal employment: The following types of jobs (among others): (i) own-account workers employed in their own informal sector enterprises; (ii) employers employed in their own informal sector enterprises; (iii) contributing family workers, irrespective of whether they work in formal or informal sector enterprises; (iv) members of informal producers' cooperatives; (v) employees holding informal jobs in formal sector enterprises, informal sector enterprises, or as paid domestic workers employed by households (where they exist, employees holding formal jobs in informal sector enterprises should be excluded from informal employment); and (vi) own-account workers engaged in the production of goods exclusively for own final use by their household, if considered employed (FAO, 2012b; ILO, 2013b).

Internal migration: Movement of people from one area of a country to another area of the same country for the purpose or with the effect of establishing a new residence. This migration may be temporary or permanent. Internal migrants move but remain within their country of origin. Internal migration includes: (i) rural to urban migration; (ii) rural to rural migration (e.g. seasonal migration linked to agricultural calendars); (iii) urban to rural migration; and (iv) urban to urban migration (IOM 2011).

International migration: Movement of persons who leave their country of origin, or country of habitual residence, to establish themselves either permanently or temporarily in another country. An international frontier is therefore crossed (IOM 2011).

Labour migration: Movement of persons from one state to another, or within their own country of residence, for the purpose of employment. Labour migration is addressed by most states in their migration laws. In addition, some states take an active role in regulating outward labour migration and seeking opportunities for their nationals abroad (www.iom.int).

Livelihood: The capabilities, assets (human capital; social capital; natural capital; physical capital; financial capital) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base (Chambers and Conway, 1991).

Long-term migrant: Person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence. From the perspective of the country of departure, the person will be a long-term emigrant and from that of the country of arrival, the person will be a long-term immigrant (IOM 2011).

Migrant household: Household with at least one member who has migrated (internally or internationally) in a certain period in the past (Ünalán, 2005).

Migrant worker: Person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in an area different from that of origin. The term “migrant” should be understood to cover all cases where the decision to migrate is taken freely by the individual concerned, for reasons of “personal convenience” and without intervention of an external compelling factor. It includes refugees, displaced persons and uprooted people as well as economic migrants (UN Convention on the Rights of Migrants).

Migration: Movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a state. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification (IOM 2011).

Migration costs: Costs traditionally including: (i) transport costs for moving; (ii) costs of living and adjustment, such as food and housing costs in the area of destination; (iii) costs of education required to succeed in job markets; (iv) information costs, resulting for example from lack of experience and unavailability of contacts; and (v) opportunity costs (Lucas, 2015).

Migration management: Numerous governmental functions within a national system for the orderly and humane management of cross-border migration, in particular the management of the entry and presence of foreigners within the borders of the state and the protection of refugees and others in need of protection. It refers to a planned approach to the development of policy, legislative and administrative responses to key migration issues (www.iom.int).

Occupational safety and health: The science of the anticipation, recognition, evaluation and control of hazards arising in or from the workplace that could impair the health and well-being of workers, taking into account the possible impact on the surrounding communities and the general environment (ILO). In 1950, the ILO-WHO Joint Committee on Occupational Health considered that occupational health should “aim at the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of workers in all the occupations”. The realization of this aim requires a risk assessment and an OSH management system (ILO, 2009).

Private sector: Enterprises, companies or businesses, regardless of size, ownership and structure. It covers all sectors of the food, agriculture, forestry and fisheries systems from production to consumption, including associated services: financing, investment, insurance, marketing and trade. FAO considers the private sector as encompassing a broad array of entities that range from farmer organizations, cooperatives and SMEs to the largest international corporations. This also includes private financial institutions; industry and trade associations; and consortia that represent private sector interests. Academia, research institutions and philanthropic foundations are not included in this definition (www.fao.org).

Refugee: According to the 1951 Refugee Convention, a person who is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable or unwilling to avail him- or herself of the protection of that country, because of a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions. Similarly, the 1984 Cartagena Declaration states that refugees also include persons who flee their country because their lives,

security or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violations of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order ([IOM 2011](#) and [UNHCR I Glossary](#)).

Remittances: Private, voluntary monetary and non-monetary (social or in kind) transfers made by migrants and diaspora, individually or collectively, to people or to communities not necessarily in their areas of origin. They can be cross-border or in country (European Union, 2014).

Return migrants: Persons who return to their country of citizenship/area of origin after having been migrants (whether short-term or long-term) and who are intending to stay in their own country/area for at least one year (UNSD, 1998).

Rural employment: Any activity, occupation, work, business or service performed by rural people for remuneration, profit, social or family gain, or by force, in cash or kind, including under a contract of hire, written or oral, expressed or implied, and regardless of whether the activity is performed on a self-directed, part-time, full-time or casual basis. Rural employment comprises agricultural employment and non-agricultural employment, and it includes production of economic goods and services for own and household consumption (www.fao.org).

Rural-rural migrants: Internal migrants who move from one rural area to another, consisting also of both short and longer distance movements of traders, pastoralists and agricultural workers ([IOM 2011](#)).

Rural-urban migrants: Internal migrants who move from rural to urban areas, often in response to poverty, low agricultural incomes, low productivity, population growth, shortages, fragmentation and inequitable distribution of land, environmental degradation, and the relative lack of economic opportunities in rural areas ([IOM 2011](#)).

Seasonal migration: Migration for employment, dependent on seasonal conditions and performed only during part of the year (Art. 2(2)(b), International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990). Seasonal migrants are members of the household who left for part of the year to work, but are still considered household members (de Brauw and Harigaya, 2007). Seasonal migration seems to be less costly than other forms of migration, especially for the landless, and it is linked to different seasonal calendars in agriculture. Therefore, seasonal migration provides opportunities to households to supplement their incomes, smooth consumption and protect their asset base during the agricultural lean season (UNDP, 2009; WB, 2007).

Short-term migrants: Persons who move to a country other than that of their usual residence for a period of at least three months but less than a year, except in cases where the movement to that country is for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends or relatives, business or medical treatment ([IOM 2011](#)).

Small and medium agro-enterprises (SMAEs): Non-subsidiary, independent firms which employ fewer than a given number of employees. The definition varies according to the country's economic structure and business environment. Small farms are generally family-run, may be subsistence-based or market-oriented, use few or many external inputs, work manually or with machinery, and tend to be more labour-intensive. Medium and large agro-enterprises are mainly urban-based because of the requirements for economies of scale and infrastructure. Large enterprises are often dominated by multinational corporations that have consolidated through vertical and horizontal integration (FAO, 2012b).

Small-scale producers: There is no unified definition of "small-scale producers". Using farm size as a criterion, farmers with less than 2 ha of land are usually characterized as small-scale. However, the distribution of farm sizes can vary widely among countries. However, this criterion ignores a number of other dimensions. Therefore, FAO adopts a broader definition of small-scale producers and includes those who produce low quantities and yields, have low capital and education levels, and lack the skills to participate in markets, produce primarily for home consumption and rely heavily on family labour. Indeed, it is generally understood to involve production units that rely essentially on family workforce and only occasionally on casual labour (FAO, 2012b).

Social capital transfer: Competencies, skills, knowledge, practices, ideas, informal networks, membership transmitted by migrants to their areas of origin (IRP and UNDP, available at www.unisdr.org; IOM 2011).

Sustainable agricultural development: The management and conservation of the natural resource base, and the orientation of technological and institutional change in such a manner as to ensure the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generations. Such development conserves land, water, plant and animal genetic resources, is environmentally non-degrading, technically appropriate, economically viable and socially acceptable (FAO). Sustainable agriculture: (i) must nurture healthy ecosystems and support the sustainable management of land, water and natural resources, while ensuring world food security; (ii) must meet the needs of present and future generations for its products and services, while ensuring profitability, environmental health and social and economic equity; (iii) requires major improvements in the efficiency of resource use, in environmental protection and in systems resilience; and (iv) requires a system of global governance that promotes food security concerns in trade regimes and trade policies, and revisits agricultural policies to promote local and regional agricultural markets (FAO).

Sustainable land management (SLM): Land-use systems and management practices which enable to maximize the economic and social benefits from the land while maintaining or enhancing the ecological support functions of the land resources (TerrAfrica as in FAO).

Temporary migrant worker: Skilled, semi-skilled or untrained worker who remains in the destination area for definite periods as determined by a work contract with an individual worker or a service contract concluded with an enterprise. Also called contract migrant workers (www.iom.int).

Underemployment: Underutilization of the productive capacity of the employed population, including those who arise from a deficient national or local economic system. It relates to an alternative employment situation in which persons are willing and available to engage. Labour that falls under the underemployment classification includes workers who are highly skilled but working in low-paying jobs, workers that are highly skilled but working in low-skill jobs and part-time workers that would prefer to be full-time (ILO).

Unemployed: A person who, during the specified short reference period, was (i) without work, i.e. not in paid or self-employment; (ii) currently available for work, i.e. available for paid employment or self-employment; and (iii) seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps to seek paid employment or self-employment. A person is also considered unemployed if they are not currently working but have made arrangements to take up paid or self-employment at a date subsequent to the reference period (OECD -ILO).

Unemployment rate: Unemployment as a percentage of the total labour force (employed + unemployed). The indicator is widely used as a measure of unutilized labour supply.

Voluntary return: Assisted or independent return to the country of origin, transit or another third country based on the free will of the returnee (IOM 2011).

Vulnerable employment: The sum of unpaid contributing family workers and own-account workers. Contributing family workers and own-account workers are less likely to have formal work arrangements and often carry a higher economic risk, which allows for the usage of the indicator on vulnerable employment in an assessment of decent work. If the proportion of vulnerable workers is sizeable, it may be an indication of widespread poverty. Vulnerable employment shares are indicative of informal economy employment, particularly for less developed economies and regions. Nevertheless, vulnerable employment numbers should be interpreted in combination with other labour market indicators, such as unemployment and working poverty (ILO, 2009).

Vulnerability: Probability of falling below a certain threshold within a time period. The degree of vulnerability is determined by a situation of insecurity caused by (i) exposure to risk; and (ii) the unit's ability to face the shock through risk management instruments and strategies. Risk, in particular, is understood as any uncertain event that can damage well-being. This uncertainty is determined by the timing and/or magnitude of the event (even predictable events, e.g. seasonal changes in weather, can be uncertain as to their potential severity). In addition to the

characteristics of the risk and risk exposure, the likelihood that a shock will result in a decline in well-being is also said to be a function of the household's asset endowment and insurance mechanisms (WB, 2001).

Youth: The UN defines “youths” as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years (without prejudice to other definitions by Member States). The definition was endorsed by the General Assembly (see A/36/215 and resolution 36/28, 1981). For the purposes of legal age for employment, the ILO Minimum Age Convention adopted in 1973 is to be considered. This Convention specifies that the general minimum age for admission to any employment should not be lower than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, no less than 15. Where the economy and educational facilities of a country are insufficiently developed, it may be initially reduced to 14. The main exceptions to this general rule are: (i) light work, which is permissible on a set of conditions and for which the minimum age may be set at 12 or 13 years; and (ii) hazardous work for which a higher minimum age is required (18). While for the agricultural sector, the provisions of the Convention shall be applicable as a minimum to plantations and other agricultural undertakings mainly producing for commercial purposes, a temporary exclusion can be justified for family and small-scale holdings producing for local consumption and not regularly employing hired workers (FAO, 2012b).

Migration is a complex phenomenon and a key component of livelihood strategies in rural households, which focus on minimizing risks and diversifying household income. In many cases, migrants decide to leave their community for economic and sociocultural reasons to seek work elsewhere. The situation is compounded by increasing population pressure and a deteriorating natural environment.

This paper focuses on distress migration from rural areas, meaning all those migratory movements made in conditions where the individual and the household perceive that the only viable livelihood option for moving out of rural poverty is to migrate. Distress migration is particularly acute among rural youth.

Migrants are a potential resource for agriculture and rural development as well as poverty reduction in their areas of origin. However, distress migration of rural youth can result in the loss of an important share of the most vital and dynamic part of the workforce, with obvious consequences for agricultural productivity. Moreover, migration is reshaping the traditional social and economic structure of rural areas mainly dependent on agriculture.

Hence, a policy for the promotion of agriculture and rural development must take into account migration and labour mobility. In particular, policies aiming to reduce distress migration of rural youth should factor in the need to generate viable options for rural youth in farm and non-farm activities.

The objective of this paper is twofold: (i) review the root causes of distress migration of rural youth and focus on how transformation processes in agriculture and rural areas influence migration patterns; (ii) develop a conceptual framework about how rural youth out-migration and remittances can contribute to rural development, poverty reduction and food security. On the basis of country-level diagnostics, the conceptual framework can be tailored to different contexts, identifying entry points and key policy options at country level to reduce youth's propensity to migrate out of distress and providing examples of approaches and programmes to help maximize the developmental benefits of migration for the areas of origin.

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