



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

# Promoting decent rural employment



## GUATEMALA

Participatory performance  
evaluation on the cultivation  
of maize.  
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Promoting policies and investments that support the creation of decent employment opportunities in rural areas is crucial to generating livelihoods for the world's poor. Rural people depend on agriculture and their own labour to earn a living; yet, rural employment opportunities are often scarce, informal, hazardous and poorly remunerated. Having inadequate access to productive resources, financial credit and training exacerbates the lack of economic opportunities.

To meet the world's Sustainable Development Goals and eradicate poverty and hunger by 2030, FAO aims to support countries in building lasting policy changes that foster rural employment. By supporting countries in the development of strategies and programmes that create more and better jobs, especially for women and youth, FAO helps governments stimulate both

the agricultural and the rural, non-farm economies. FAO's support includes promoting the application of international labour standards, particularly for eliminating child labour in the agriculture sector, and partnering with national stakeholders to build human capital by improving access to vocational and entrepreneurial training and strengthening the capacity of rural organizations.

Unemployment, together with food insecurity, conflicts, climate change and natural disasters, is a major issue that often pushes people to migrate. FAO helps countries address the root causes of distress migration by boosting decent employment opportunities in rural areas, while building resilience and risk management mechanisms to protect rural livelihoods.



## Mitigating distress migration in Guatemala

**In migration-prone areas of Guatemala, FAO provides around 300 rural young women and men with support and coaching to define their employment trajectories and contribute to the development of their communities.**

Through the flagship programme *Integrated Country Approach (ICA) for promoting decent rural employment*, FAO advocates for the need to harness the untapped employment potential of agriculture and for the active engagement of youth in rural development processes.

In **Guatemala**, ICA supports the development of a model to identify and harness the market potential of rural territories for the promotion of rural youth employment. By partnering with public and private actors, FAO seeks to empower youth and mobilize investments.

The National Employment System in Guatemala works through employment windows, which are distributed across the country and support labour information and

intermediation. FAO and the Ministries of Labour and Economy have piloted a rural-friendly window model in the Department of San Marcos to enable rural youth to access information on job offers, but also on agriculture support services and entrepreneurship. The outreach of the windows is increased through the use of social networks, collaboration with local extensionists and frequent visits to communities. In three months, since March 2017, more than 200 youth have benefited from the windows' services – 37 percent of them accessed training, 3 percent found a dependent job and 26 percent started or strengthened a business.

In addition, FAO directly supported around 40 Guatemalan youth in strengthening their own agri-enterprises, by facilitating their access to credit and helping them establish alliances with the public sector and civil society organizations. Mini-cluster models are also being explored. Around 75 youth from the Departments of Huehuetenango, Quetzaltenango San Marcos and Totonicapán have been trained to develop 75 bankable mini-cluster projects for their communities, becoming promoters of local development and rural entrepreneurship. Each mini-cluster is composed of 15 micro agri-enterprises and benefits an average of 50 families in each community, generating between 1 100 and 1 650 direct jobs. All 75 projects have a strong agriculture-basis, engage communities from production to transformation, and open up to other sectors of intervention (eco-tourism, renewable energies, reforestation, etc.).



## Introducing contract farming to prevent child labour in Malawi

**With FAO's support, Malawi has become the first African country to adopt a national, contract-farming strategy that addresses child labour.**

The continued use of child labour in agriculture affects millions of children around the world, damaging the agricultural sector and perpetuating poverty. In Malawi, 37 percent of children aged 5 to 15 are put to work and 53.5 percent of them work in agriculture. Because almost half of the population of Malawi lives below the poverty line, children work to help provide food for their family. When children are forced to work, their opportunity to attend school significantly decreases. This lack of schooling and missed opportunity to develop other skills can hinder their ability to access decent employment later in life.

FAO supported the country in 2015 to reduce child labour practices in agriculture through a nation-wide awareness raising campaign. Two key stakeholders embarked with FAO in this effort: the National

Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development.

The campaign aimed at highlighting the role of child labour in the vicious cycle of poverty and to stimulate debate on how to reduce child labour despite harsh rural poverty. Twelve radio programmes were produced and broadcasted and about 23 000 leaflets and posters were designed, printed and widely disseminated. A 15-minute video documentary on child labour in agriculture was also produced and screened in targeted villages where child labour is rampant. Over 10 000 rural women, men and youth viewed the documentary and engaged in a debate in eight districts over the country. This spurred village representatives to adopt local by-laws as a deterrent for the use of children in tasks that are unsuitable to their age.

Also thanks to these efforts, and with the support of the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture (which brings together FAO, ILO, IFAD, IFPRI, IFAP and IUF), in the same year Malawi adopted a contract farming policy to enhance commercialization of agriculture and reduce child labour in agriculture. The new policy adopted ensures a minimum and regular income for the farmer. This strategy is expected to benefit 2 million family farms in the country, who very often resort to child labour to provide food for their families or to meet unexpectedly high production requests.





## Creating lasting change in Senegal

**In 2016, FAO supported the government of Senegal in developing a National Rural Youth Employment Policy meant to support the creation of some 150 000 jobs per year.**

The policy is the result of an inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue on youth employment promotion, facilitated by FAO. It aims to generate more and better employment opportunities for young rural people and foster entrepreneurship in agriculture, while increasing youth engagement in policy dialogue. FAO is contributing to the implementation of the policy by strengthening the capacities of national and district level institutions, as well as public, private and civil society institutions to

support disadvantaged rural youth. A guide on *Integrating youth employment in local planning* has been finalized and is being used for local trainings.

Youth themselves are already benefitting from and directly contributing to the implementation of the pilot actions prioritized in the Policy. For instance, six platforms are being piloted as a model for the provision of proximity agri-business development service for the rural youth. The platforms are small hubs built around existing youth integrated farms created by the Ministry of Youth. These hubs aim at expanding the services provided to youth, train them in production, market and business aspects, and support them in strengthening group cooperation and ensuring the economic viability of their business. The first 2 inception platforms incubate around 60 beneficiaries (30 each), but also provide support to other 300 youths in the neighboring areas.



**SENEGAL**

Gathering samples of cotton for examination in farmers field school.

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**NIGERIA**

A poultry farmer feeding chickens.

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## Youth Employment in Agriculture Programme in Nigeria



**To tackle the growing level of youth unemployment, FAO and the Government of Nigeria launched the Youth Employment in Agriculture Programme, which is expected to create 750 000 jobs for youth in the agricultural sector over a 5-year period.**

In 2014 FAO and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Nigeria launched the national Youth Employment in Agriculture Programme (YEAP). YEAP is designed to provide a framework for supporting targeted State-level investments to complement and leverage on-going programmes for youth employment in agriculture.

The Programme focuses on decent employment creation and innovative enterprise development for youth along priority value chains in targeted local economic areas.

YEAP is mostly financed by the Nigerian Government via oil revenues funds and aims at creating 750 000 jobs for youth in the agricultural sector, over a 5-year period. The core beneficiaries of the YEAP are expected to be around 18 500 agripreneurs and 740 000 market-oriented youth producers. To make sure that their needs are properly addressed, young people and their organizations have been actively involved in every step of the design process.

At its initial phase, the programme has already trained and provided starter packs to a total of 6 618 rural youth in the country (3 893 female and 2 725 males) to help them start their agribusinesses. Young women and men have been trained in different value chains, such as: rice, aquaculture, poultry, maize, tomato, wheat, sorghum, and apiculture.

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