



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Building resilience in the Sahel region through job creation for youth

Innovatively supporting youth's access
to decent employment and green jobs in
agrifood systems



Building resilience in the Sahel region through job creation for youth

Innovatively supporting youth's access to decent employment and green jobs in agrifood systems

Required citation:

FAO. 2023. *Building resilience in the Sahel region through job creation for youth – Innovatively supporting youth's access to decent employment and green jobs in agrifood systems*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc7163en>

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

ISBN 978-92-5-138040-6

© FAO, 2023



Some rights reserved. This work is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO licence (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO; <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo/legalcode>).

Under the terms of this licence, this work may be copied, redistributed and adapted for non-commercial purposes, provided that the work is appropriately cited. In any use of this work, there should be no suggestion that FAO endorses any specific organization, products or services. The use of the FAO logo is not permitted. If the work is adapted, then it must be licensed under the same or equivalent Creative Commons licence. If a translation of this work is created, it must include the following disclaimer along with the required citation: "This translation was not created by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). FAO is not responsible for the content or accuracy of this translation. The original [Language] edition shall be the authoritative edition."

Disputes arising under the licence that cannot be settled amicably will be resolved by mediation and arbitration as described in Article 8 of the licence except as otherwise provided herein. The applicable mediation rules will be the mediation rules of the World Intellectual Property Organization <http://www.wipo.int/amc/en/mediation/rules> and any arbitration will be conducted in accordance with the Arbitration Rules of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).

Third-party materials. Users wishing to reuse material from this work that is attributed to a third party, such as tables, figures or images, are responsible for determining whether permission is needed for that reuse and for obtaining permission from the copyright holder. The risk of claims resulting from infringement of any third-party-owned component in the work rests solely with the user.

Sales, rights and licensing. FAO information products are available on the FAO website (www.fao.org/publications) and can be purchased through publications-sales@fao.org. Requests for commercial use should be submitted via: www.fao.org/contact-us/licence-request. Queries regarding rights and licensing should be submitted to: copyright@fao.org.

Cover photograph: ©FAO/Guimarães Almeida



© FAO/G. Umarates Almorita

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	iv
Abbreviations and acronyms.....	v
Overview of the Group of Five for the Sahel	1
Building resilience in the Sahel region through job creation for youth – Project’s approach.....	5
Components, main activities and results achieved.....	7
Global component	9
Regional component <i>Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger.....</i>	13
Activities of the regional component.....	14
Country component <i>Mauritania.....</i>	22
Activities of the country component.....	24
Lessons learned and conclusions	31
Appendix I Products and news items of the project.....	35

Acknowledgements

This case study has been developed by Francesca Dalla Valle, Programme Officer at the Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division (ESP).

Many thanks for the exceptional support in the project's implementation go to Beatriz Guimarães Almeida (ESP) and Oumou Niang (FAO Mauritania), and to Peter Wobst (ESP) for his overall supervision.

We would like to express our gratitude for supporting selected components of the project's implementation to Madi Savadogo (FAO Burkina Faso), Hilaire Nare Mallah, Yannick Kouboutoloum, Guy Djasra Noudjikouambaye (FAO Chad), Issa Keita and Seriba Konare (FAO Mali), Bachir Maliki and Abdou Salifou (FAO Niger) as well as to all the FAO Representatives of those countries.

Special thanks go to all the FAO Mauritania Office for providing constant and attentive support, in particular, Alexandre Huynh (FAO Representative), Mohamed Sarr (Assistant FAO Representative), Mohamed Maouloud Moussa (Assistant FAO Representative Programme), as well as to Rama Sall, Aminetou Dia, Wahba Malloum, Alioun Dia, Abdoulaye Diallo, Zakaria Dieng, Diamilatou Ba and Anne Cheikh.

Thanks also goes to all the governments' representatives, local authorities and partners of selected activities of the project, as well as to the the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) Secretariat for the constant support and participation in regional activities.

Deepest gratitude for supporting FAO to pilot this innovative approach, goes to the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) of the Federal Government of Germany as financial partner of this project.

Thanks go also to Marco Fiorentini (ESP) and studio Pietro Bartoleschi for the support in the design.

Finally, our sincere appreciation goes to all the young women and men involved in the project for their enthusiasm, participation and meaningful contribution.

Abbreviations and acronyms

APIM	Mauritania Investment Promotion Agency
AUC	African Union Commission
BL	better life
BMEL	Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture of the Federal Government of Germany
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CVE	countering violent extremism
ECODEV	Eco-développement (Mauritania)
ENFVA	École nationale de formation et de vulgarisation agricole (Mauritania)
ESP	Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division (of FAO)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
G5 Sahel	Group of Five for the Sahel
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HDP	humanitarian–development–peace nexus
ICT	information and communications technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
LNOB	leave no one behind
MSMEs	micro, small and medium enterprises
Naforé	Association Naforé pour la protection de l’environnement (Mauritania)
NEET	not in education, employment or training
OSH	occupational, safety and health (standards)
PPA	Programme Priority Area

PVE	prevention of violent extremism
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TECHGHIL	Agence nationale pour l'emploi (Mauritania)
UNDAF	United Nations Devevelopment Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNISS	United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel
WFP	World Food Programme

Overview of the Group of Five for the Sahel



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these map(s) do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries. Dashed lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement.

Source: Elaborated from United Nations Geospatial. 2022. Map of the World. <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/map-world>. Cited on July 2023.

The Sahel region is nowadays facing many challenges, including insecurity, rising extremism, lacking of economic prospects and decent employment opportunities, besides also experiencing poor access to education, vocational training and overall basic services. Within this context, climate change is weakening the whole region further.

The number of young people in the region is unprecedented, with over 60 percent of the population below 25 years of age. Two thirds of them live in rural areas, often lacking access to employment, skills, financial services, inputs and technology (World Bank, 2018). Although the region's youth population is expected to grow, and a youth bulge could potentially turn into a dividend, if employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for youth remain limited, young people will continue to remain in a vicious cycle of food insecurity and deep poverty.

Further, tensions in the region are intensified by the instability and insecurity that currently affect the Sahel and the continued violence is leading to large-scale displacement, affecting 4.9 million people (United Nations, 2018). As stressed in FAO's *Corporate Framework to Support Sustainable Peace in the Context of the 2030 Agenda*, people may resort to violence when their human security, including food security, is threatened, especially when there is a dearth of formal and informal institutions that are capable and willing to mediate different risks. Conflict may arise due to a loss of assets (including access to resources), threats to livelihoods, and/or other forms of economic and political marginalization. Food insecurity may be one among other causes for conflict, and may become a channel through which wider socioeconomic and political grievances are also expressed.

The absence of alternative employment opportunities can also make violent extremist organizations an attractive source of income, and in some cases, the only one (in certain areas within countries). Up to 41 million young people under 25 years of age in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger alone are considered at risk of radicalization or migration, given that the region is both the departure point for migrants and a key corridor of different migration routes. If no action is taken to improve access to education, vocational training and quality employment, the Sahel could potentially become a hub of mass migration and for recruitment and training of radical groups (United Nations, 2015).

It becomes therefore evident that the economic transformation of rural areas and the creation of jobs for millions of rural young people are pre-conditions to stability in the Sahel. In such a context, investments in rural economies, diversification within and out of agriculture and a structural transformation, are key to unleashing the potential for economic growth and quality employment creation for rural youth. Improving the access of youth to productive resources while pursuing strategies aimed at making agriculture more productive and greener and supporting small-scale producers and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to cluster and shift into higher value-added activities in the supply chain, can have significant potential to generate decent jobs, reduce poverty, increase resilience, contribute to social cohesion and address selected drivers of migration out of necessity.

Today the agricultural sector in the overall African context, attracts 1 percent of students, but employs 70 percent of all Africans and this overall percentage is also comparable to the Sahel countries.¹ The food sector is the backbone of the economy in the Sahel and it is the biggest employer, generating more than 80 percent of the

¹ Deloitte – Africa CEO Forum



jobs in various countries of the region.² Of these jobs, three quarters are in agriculture specifically. Yet, while food production in the region is growing, the share of people exposed to food and nutrition insecurity remains high and it is increasing. Poverty levels remain among the highest in the world, and food prices, at comparable income levels, are also among the highest (OECD, 2021).

Food systems around the world are nowadays facing a triple challenge. They have to ensure food and nutrition security for a growing global population, provide livelihoods for people working in food supply chains, and build environmental sustainability while adapting to and helping to mitigate climate change (OECD, 2021).

Further, in the African continent, including in the Sahel countries, imports have exceeded exports for more than a decade. Local, regional, and global demand for food is increasing due to a growing population, urbanization and rising households income. Sahel's agricultural produce is still being exported in unprocessed form, while it continues to import its food and many other finished products.

Another challenge assessed in most countries, including the G5 Sahel ones, is the increasing of the average age of farmers. The agricultural sector needs to rejuvenate and engage youth in its transformation, if global food production has to be increased by 60 percent by 2050 (FAO, 2012).

To reverse all these various challenges and trends and foster the creation of added value and jobs across the G5 Sahel countries, a profound process of change, while including young people in it, is urgent and essential.

² For example in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and the Niger.

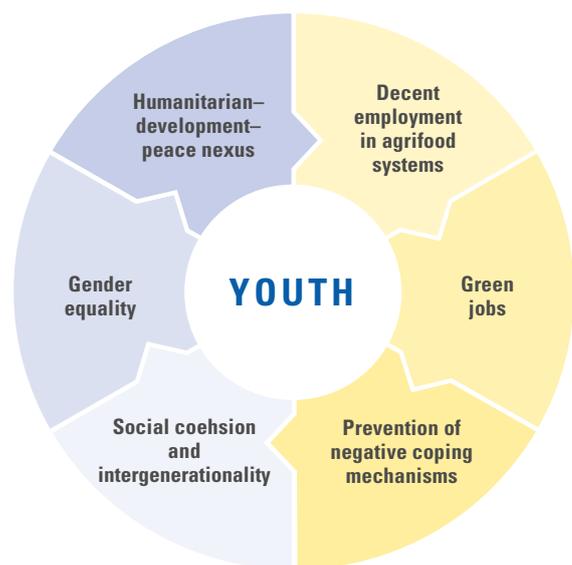
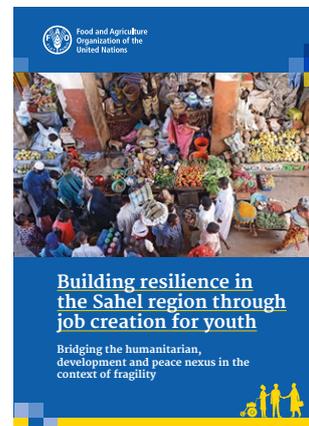


Building resilience in the Sahel region through job creation for youth – Project's approach

The overall aim of the project was to build resilience and social cohesion among youth through improving their livelihoods' stability and increase their access to decent employment opportunities in agrifood systems.

Given the region's extreme vulnerability to climate change, a strong emphasis has been given to green jobs and green practices in agriculture. Further and central to the approach, in all its components, has been the equal visibility, empowerment and participation of both sexes, while also assuring the inclusiveness of concerns from various vulnerable or marginalized youth groups, in line with the leave no one behind (LNOB) principle.

The approach also aimed at bridging the humanitarian–development–peace (HDP) nexus within project's activities, initiating both quick recovery and fast-gain short-term employment schemes and more development-alike long-term ones. Further, social cohesion was also been embedded in the approach organizing regional fora and national youth dialogues where young people were provided a safe environment to discuss their needs, opportunities and express their grievances to their governments' officials.





Components, main activities and results achieved



In order to achieve its overall impact **“rural youth in fragile contexts access sustainable employment opportunities, which leads to increased resilience, stability and enhanced social cohesion”**, and its outcome **“rapid youth employment is generated for economic stabilization while the enabling environment is enhanced to foster coordination among different interventions along the humanitarian–development continuum towards decent and green job creation for rural young women and men in the Sahel”**, the project was structured in 3 different components.

The 3 components, global, regional and (pilot) country, had different aims within, in order to converge into the overall impact and outcome (see table 1), while also aiming at leveraging a set of FAO’s core functions. Namely: i) policy support and social dialogues (within all three components); ii) technical support and capacity development (within its regional and national components); iii) knowledge generation (within its regional and national components); iv) partnerships (within its regional and national components); and, v) advocacy and communication (within all three components).

PROJECT'S COMPONENTS AND AIMS WITHIN

GLOBAL COMPONENT

Contributing to the implementation of selected SDGs, global strategies, policies and frameworks related to food security, youth employment in agrifood systems and young people's engagement and leadership in dialogues.

REGIONAL COMPONENT (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger)

Strengthening local, national and regional capacities, including by sharing experiences.

Facilitating dialogues' platforms for G5 Sahel governments and rural youth to discuss priorities related to agrifood systems in the region.

Developing quality regional studies.

COUNTRY COMPONENT (Mauritania)

Strengthening capacities of rural youth in selected value chains and green practices in agriculture, while facilitating their entrance in the markets.

Strengthening local and national capacities to support youth in their entrance in agrifood systems.



GLOBAL COMPONENT

Contributing to the implementation of selected SDGs, global strategies, policies and frameworks related to food security, youth employment in agrifood systems and young people's engagement and leadership in dialogues.



Source: Elaborated from United Nations Geospatial, 2022. Map of the World. <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/map-world>. Cited on July 2023.

CONTRIBUTION TO SDGs IMPLEMENTATION



CONTRIBUTION TO GLOBAL STRATEGIES

- [Youth2030 UN Strategy](#)
- [CFS Policy Recommendations on Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems](#)

CONTRIBUTION TO FAO'S CORPORATE STRATEGIES AND FRAMEWORKS

- [FAO's Strategic Framework 2022-2031](#)
- [Rural Youth Action Plan \(RYAP\)](#)
- [FAO migration framework](#)
- [FAO framework on ending child labour in agriculture](#)
- [FAO Policy on Gender Equality 2020-2030](#)
- [Corporate framework to support sustainable peace in the Context of the 2030 Agenda](#)

In its global component, the project aimed at contributing to the implementation of selected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), global strategies, policies and frameworks related to food security, youth employment in agrifood systems and young people's engagement and leadership in dialogues.

Specifically, the project contributed to the implementation of selected targets of SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). Further, the project also contributed to the implementation of the [United Nations Youth Strategy Youth2030](#) in its five priority areas.



Youth2030 priorities	Projects' activities in support of the priorities
First priority: Engagement, participation and advocacy	The project supported young people, at regional and national level, in amplifying and reinforcing their voices via educational learning routes and regional and national dialogues.
Second priority: Support young people's greater access to quality education and health services	Capacity development has been a key component of the project. Young women and men, as well as national institutions tasked with supporting them, have strengthened their capacities in decent employment opportunities in agrifood systems, green jobs, agricultural mechanization, technology and various value chains techniques.
Third priority: Economic empowerment through decent work	Strengthening decent work opportunities and green jobs in agrifood systems has been a main objective of the project. Specific capacity development was provided not only through different employment schemes in Mauritania but also via the participation to a regional learning route organized for participants from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger.
Fourth priority: Protect and promote the rights of young people and support their civic and political engagement	Via regional and national fora, young people were provided a safe space for expressing their needs, their wishes and their grievances to their governments' officials allowing them to be key agents of change in terms of economic growth in their countries, as well as agents of peace.
Fifth priority: Support young people as catalysts for peace and security & humanitarian action	

The project also supported, via different activities, the implementation of all the recommendations of the [Committee on World Food Security \(CFS\) Policy Recommendations on Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems](#).

CFS policy recommendations	Projects' activities in support of the recommendations
Recommendation 1: Provide an enabling environment for youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems	Via regional and national fora, as well as through dedicated social media groups, young people were provided platforms to discuss their specific needs, as well as challenges, when trying to enter in the agrifood systems. A specific example in this, comes from the regional forum Building resilience and social cohesion of Sahelian youth through their inclusion in agrifood systems , where priorities for their inclusion in the rural development of their territories were identified with the youth from the region jointly with the G5 Sahel countries' governments.
Recommendation 2: Secure dignified, attractive and rewarding livelihoods for youth	As part of the country component, in Mauritania, young women and men were provided updated and new skills on different value chains along with being exposed to best practices from the region in order to also rebrand the vision of the sector. Mentorship was provided all along, in collaboration with the ministries of agriculture, employment and local authorities involved in the initiative. Facilitated access to inputs, land and markets was also provided.
Recommendation 3: Increase equitable access of youth to resources, infrastructure and markets	
Recommendation 4: Enhance equitable access to knowledge, education and skills of youth	Within its regional and country components, the project provided capacity development on a variety of topics (e.g. climate change adaptation and mitigation, agroecology, green practices in agriculture, technology, mechanization etc.) besides also sharing and discussing local good practices related to rural youth employment and resilience via a regional learning route.
Recommendation 5: Foster sustainable and inclusive innovations for youth	The project not only introduced quick gains for young people suffering from food insecurity and lack of decent employment opportunities, but also link them with medium to long term mentoring so to provide a more sustainable path to stability and wellbeing. Further, activities introduced various innovations related to green practices in agriculture to strengthen not only youth's skills, but also the national institutions supporting them.

Further, the project was in line, and contributing to, all of the five action areas highlighted by the [United Nations Food Systems Summit](#), namely: i) nourish all people; ii) boost nature-based solutions; iii) advance equitable livelihoods, decent work and empowered communities; iv) build resilience to vulnerability, shocks and stresses; and, v) accelerating the means of implementation. Activities were also in line with the 2022 Global Food Security Roadmap.



At FAO corporate level, the project contributed to the implementation of various strategies and frameworks, like the [Corporate framework to support sustainable peace in the Context of the 2030 Agenda](#), [FAO migration framework](#), [FAO framework on ending child labour in agriculture](#), [Rural Youth Action Plan \(RYAP\)](#) and the [FAO Policy on Gender Equality 2020–2030](#). Besides contributing to the implementation of FAO's Strategic Framework 2022–2031, in particular via its Programme Priority Area (PPA) *better life 2 – inclusive rural transformation*, as well as to the principles of mainstreaming all of the FAO cross-cutting themes: youth, gender and inclusion.

Project's activities have also been included as a good practice in various publications, among others, the [Investment Guidelines for Youth in Agrifood Systems in Africa](#) and the [Hear it from the Countries – Rural Youth Employment Action Plan Good Practices](#), besides being presented in various conferences and events.

Further visibility to the project's approach has been given at global level via numerous news items and social media pieces produced by FAO and partners in the initiative along the project lifespan (see Appendix I for a detailed list).

REGIONAL COMPONENT

BURKINA FASO, CHAD, MALI, MAURITANIA AND THE NIGER

- Strengthening local, national and regional capacities, including by sharing experiences
- Engagement of youth and governments in dialogues
- Regional analysis and research



Source: Elaborated from United Nations Geospatial, 2022. Map of the World. <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/map-world>. Cited on July 2023.

CONTRIBUTION TO REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND UN COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS

- European Union Integrated Strategy in the Sahel
- Rome-based agencies plan of action for the Sahel (2021–2027)
- United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel
- Sahel Alliance priority fields of actions
- Burkina Faso United Nations Development Assistance Framework
- Chad United Nations Development Assistance Framework
- Mali United Nations Development Assistance Framework
- Mauritania United Nations Development Assistance Framework
- Niger United Nations Development Assistance Framework

At regional level the project supported the implementation of selected strategies and frameworks, like the *European Union integrated strategy in the Sahel*, *Sahel Alliance priority fields of actions*, in particular, the agriculture, rural development and food security one, and the education and youth employment, while also contributing to the field action related to energy and climate. Selected project's activities also contributed to the implementation of the *United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel (UNISS)*. Lastly, activities also supported the *Rome-based agencies plan of action for the Sahel (2021–2027)* and the implementation of all the five countries' *UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs)* in several of their targets within.

In its regional component, which included Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger, project's activities had a triple aim: i) strengthening local, national and regional capacities, including by sharing experiences; ii) facilitating dialogues' platforms for G5 Sahel governments and rural youth to discuss and exchange on priorities related to agrifood systems in the region, and; ii) developing quality regional studies.

Activities of the regional component

1. Strengthening local, national and regional capacities

In order to strengthen capacities on youth employment and resilience matters, at local, national and regional level, FAO organized in collaboration with Procasur, a regional learning route.

The learning route took place in Burkina Faso and Mauritania and gathered more than 80 participants from all the G5 Sahel countries, of which 50 of them were rural young women and men. The experience was also enriched by the presence of around 30 representatives from the ministries of agriculture, livestock, employment, environment, youth and gender of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger.

The learning route used a hybrid method, with on-site participants in Mauritania and Burkina Faso and online attendees from the other countries. Both the Mauritanian and Burkina Faso legs of the Route fostered a rich exchange between participants and local good practices' initiatives coordinators, and allowed to strengthen the capacities, innovations and ideas on different youth employment opportunities in agrifood systems in those local contexts.

Hear it from **Jeyd Daye**, a 31 years old Mauritanian young participant in the regional learning route and founder of "Greenhouse" a small agribusiness focusing on hydroponic horticulture.

“Participating in the Route has been extremely useful. We understood that we are not alone! We had the opportunity to share ideas and challenges with other youth in the region who are in the agrifood systems and learn about potential solutions. The cases that we analyzed and learned from during the Route helped us to innovate our agribusiness models.”



Different local good practices were analyzed and discussed by the participants with the respective coordinators of those good practices, namely:

- ▶ *Promotion de l'Emploi et de l'Insertion Professionnelle en Milieu Rural (PELIMIR)* in Mauritania.
- ▶ *Programme Sécurité Alimentaire–Formation–Insertion–Résilience–Emploi (SAFIRE–Brakna)* in Mauritania.
- ▶ *La Maison de l'Entreprise* and the *Rural Entrepreneurship Resource Centers (CREER)* in Burkina Faso.

Besides the above, as part of the Route, three additional capacity development windows were also organized and attended by all the Route's participants online. Three major themes were chosen by the participants themselves to further discuss and analyze as per below list:

- ▶ How to strengthen rural youth networks, where the case of the *Réseau National des Jeunes Ruraux pour le Financement Inclusif de l'Entreprenariat Rural* in Mali was analyzed.
- ▶ How to facilitate access to land for rural youth, where the case study of *Mobile Application to Secure Tenure (MAST)* was assessed.
- ▶ How to use of information and communications technology (ICT) to re-brand agriculture for rural youth, enriched by the experience and collaboration with *Agribusiness TV*.

A case study on the regional learning route was produced, and presents in detail all the experiences and activities within this initiative. The case study, in French, can be accessed at the following link: [Stimuler la création d'emplois pour les jeunes grâce à la route d'apprentissage du G5 Sahel–Expériences au Burkina Faso et en Mauritanie](#).

Further, also two videos have been produced and give a visual perspective of the activity while providing a few testimonies from involved participants, below links to access them:

- ▶ [Promouvoir des emplois décents pour les jeunes ruraux grâce à la Route de l'apprentissage du Sahel](#) (long version).
- ▶ [Renforcer la création d'emplois pour les jeunes à travers la route d'apprentissage au Sahel](#) (short version).

Evaluation of the activity– Perspectives from participants

The evaluation undertaken on the Regional Learning Route’s activities, assessed that 100 percent of the participants valued it as useful, with 80 percent of them rating it as excellent and 20 percent as very good. All the participants highlighted the utility in being provided with an initiative to exchange ideas with experts from the region, learning from good practices in similar contexts, while also being able to interact with rural young women and men from the G5 Sahel countries involved in agrifood systems.

Further reading on the Regional Learning Route

FAO Decent Rural Employment website. G5 Sahel Regional Learning Route. Strengthening the resilience of the G5 Sahel region through the creation of jobs for rural youth ([EN](#) and [FR](#)).

Procasur website. [G5 Sahel Regional Learning Route](#).

Agence Mauritanienne d’information. [Lancement de la Route d’apprentissage régionale dans les pays du G5 Sahel](#).

2. Engagement of youth and G5 Sahel governments in dialogues

Besides organizing the regional learning route, which also fostered dialogues among governments and youth of the G5 Sahel countries, a regional forum titled *Building resilience and social cohesion of Sahelian youth through their inclusion in agrifood systems* was organized.

The forum was organized in collaboration with the G5 Sahel Secretariat and with technical support by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Labour Organization (ILO), Mauritania Investment Promotion Agency (APIM), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). **Attended by over 80 participants from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger and by 15 technical experts, the forum had two main overall objectives: i) identify young people’s most urgent needs in order to facilitate social cohesion and their inclusion in the rural development of their territories; and, ii) identify existing opportunities to strengthen youth inclusion in agrifood systems.**



FAO. 2022

Five thematic round tables were organized to allow youth and their governments' representatives to discuss different challenges faced by young people while agreeing on overall priorities to be uptaken by their governments, development partners and youth organizations in respect of:

- ▶ Youth access to education, vocational education, resources and policy dialogues.
- ▶ Youth access to decent rural employment in fragile contexts.
- ▶ Youth role in peacebuilding.
- ▶ Youth access to financing mechanisms.
- ▶ Investments in agriculture and youth inclusion in the private sector.

From the forum's discussions it became evident that capturing the demographic dividend in the Sahel is a human and economic imperative, with significant implications for the future of the region. Without it, the projected growth of its youth population will far surpass the job-creating potential of the region's economy (Population Institute, 2017). Further, youth are a heterogeneous group and the effective inclusion of all their diverse and specific needs, for example the ones of young women, young migrants, young refugees, Indigenous youth, young people living with disabilities, besides the ones of the various ethnic and religious minorities, is essential to ensure that their intersections are addressed.

From the discussions at the forum, it was also clear that the decentralization of certain government services, for example the ones connected to land, finance and employment, is a crucial issue for the flourishing of rural areas while also facilitating young people's access to assets and resources. In all this, **rebranding agriculture is key to attract young women and men in the sector.** This requires more targeted investments in education and skills development, while promoting and facilitating access to information and technical assistance, land, finance, markets and overall decent jobs opportunities.

A guidance note was produced further to the regional forum and presents all the proceedings and deliberations agreed by youth with their governmental stakeholders from all the G5 Sahel countries. The guidance note, available in English and French can be accessed at the following link: [Building resilience and social cohesion of Sahelian youth through their inclusion in agrifood systems – With and for the youth.](#)

Evaluation of the activity – Perspectives from participants

The evaluation undertaken on the activity highlighted that 100 percent of the participants found the participation at the forum as useful. In respect of government representatives, 80 percent of them strongly agreed and 20 percent agreed, that the forum provided a good opportunity to hear the needs and views from the youth themselves. One-hundred (100) percent of them asserted to be paying more attention to youth's views further to the participation in the forum. Further, 80 percent of them strongly agreed, and 20 percent agreed, on being more youth inclusive in their activities at their ministries from then onwards. Lastly, all of them expressed the strong will to advocate for young people's representation when developing national policies and strategies in their countries.

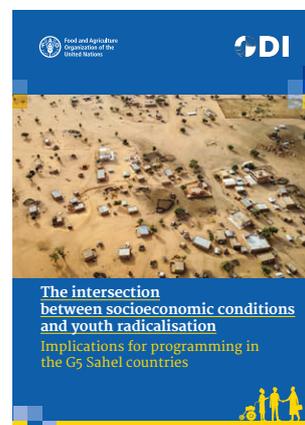
Further reading on the regional forum

FAO Decent Rural Employment website. 2022. G5 Sahel regional forum on youth resilience through their inclusion in agrifood systems – For and with the youth ([EN](#) and [FR](#)).

3. Development of regional studies

Besides conducting in-depth assessments at regional level and in each of the G5 Sahel countries in order to map all the ongoing initiatives related to rural youth employment, the project produced two researches in collaboration with ODI (formerly known as Overseas Development Institute) in order to further study selected key challenges of the G5 Sahel territories which may implicate also challenges to food security and young people entrance in the agrifood systems.

The first study produced by the project, titled *The intersection between socioeconomic conditions and youth radicalization – Implications for programming in the G5 Sahel countries*, intends to provide an evidence-based analysis of the drivers of youth radicalisation in the Sahel while distilling what this means for programming which aims to address that concern. Based on a review of over 50 studies on radicalisation in the Sahel and the evidence from selected countering violent extremism (CVE) or prevention of violent extremism (PVE) programmes implemented in the region, the study found that the drivers of radicalisation in the region are geographically specific and therefore need



Mayhew, L., McCullough, A., El Taraboulsi-McCarthy, S., Allen, A., Levine, S. 2022.

to be considered spatially, rather than aiming to produce a ‘typical’ profile of youth that are vulnerable to radicalisation. In fact, the profiles of combatants and reasons for joining an armed group vary to such an extent that it is difficult to determine overall patterns of individuals or groups that are at risk of being radicalised.

The evidence within the report has generated the following key learning points for programming that seeks to address youth radicalisation in the Sahel:

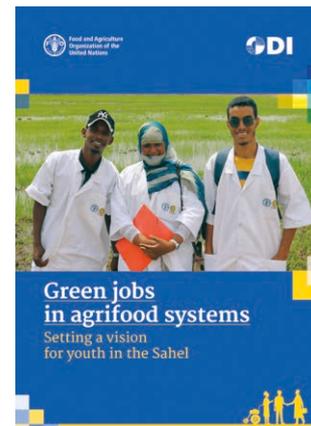
- ▶ **Drivers of radicalisation dynamics in the Sahel are geographically specific.** This applies not only to differences between countries, but also sub-regions within the Sahel. The dynamics that lead to radicalisation very often involve socioeconomic factors interacting with locally specific political factors.
- ▶ **Women experience, participate and combat radicalisation in ways that warrant closer attention and examination.** While the literature covering the Sahel acknowledges that women in the region do engage with armed groups, this does not always translate into sustained engagement within P/CVE programmes.
- ▶ **The state can be part of the problem but is also critical in addressing the drivers of radicalisation.** Although the P/CVE programming reviewed highlighted that buy-in from the state was critical to a sustainable long-term impact, it is clear that state actions and policies are also contributing to radicalisation in the Sahel.
- ▶ **Common framings used to address and counter radicalisation processes can be ill-suited to the Sahel.** The focus of radicalisation can often be centred around individual pathways. However, evidence from the Sahel shows that joining an armed group is more about collective mobilisation linked to the community than a simple individual choice.
- ▶ **The devil is in the programmatic details.** The very fact that there is no single ‘risk’ profile for radicalisation means that programming needs to consider a variety of pathways and profiles which lead to people or communities joining or supporting an armed group.
- ▶ **Consistency and a long-term vision are necessary to reap the rewards of a counter-radicalisation programme.** Evidence shows that short-term interventions, including P/CVE programming, may struggle to change the deeper structural conditions which contribute to radicalisation in the Sahel.

The study, available in English and French, can be accessed at the following link: [The intersection between socioeconomic conditions and youth radicalisation – Implications for programming in the G5 Sahel countries.](#)

The second study produced by the project, developed like the first one in collaboration with ODI, analyses in depth two important connected issues for the region. One is about creating jobs, decent jobs and green jobs specifically, in order to meet the demand of a growing and young population. The other issue analyzed, is on how to transition from economies that are not environmentally sustainable to economies that are sustainable, hence “green” economies. The study, titled *Green jobs in agrifood systems. Setting a vision for youth in the Sahel*, through available literature and key informants interviews (undertaken in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger), identified a set of six axes of transition which are in common in all of the G5 Sahel countries: i) rural solar energy; ii) irrigation; iii) environmentally sustainable and climate-smart agriculture; iv) restoration of collective lands; v) fisheries and aquaculture; vi) recycling of rural waste.

For four of the six main axes considered (namely, rural solar energy, irrigation, environmentally sustainable and climate-smart agriculture, and restoration of collective lands), the study assessed that more than 8 million jobs may be created for young people in the coming years. Five main key points also stand out in the study:

- ▶ **Most of the changes needed are already underway to some extent.** The transition does not depend on radically new activities requiring skills and competencies scarce in the Sahel. The need is not to start new things, but to accelerate what is (in some places), already in progress.
- ▶ **For some activities, the people of the G5 Sahel countries are already leaders in innovation, even if this is not always widely known or renowned.** In seeking guidance and expertise to take such measures of transition, learning from the best and most innovative farmers, and from local leaders, should provide lessons and inspiration.
- ▶ **In various other aspects, the Sahel has the potential to lead the world, above all with solar energy.** Some hydroplants are running in the region, and solar panels are becoming quite common in towns and villages. The potential for hydroplants is though limited due to issues related to the availability of suitable sites on rivers, instead, the potential for solar energy is large and widespread, given the abundant sunlight that the Sahel receives.



Wiggins, S., Newborne, P., Benoudji, C., Diarra, M., Kane, N., Kiebré, M.B., Sangaré, S. Green jobs in agrifood systems - Setting a vision for youth in the Sahel. Rome, FAO.

- ▶ **Many of the changes required for a transition, do not necessarily require central direction by the state or large-scale public funding**, with one notable exception. Key drivers of change will be a demand from rural households accompanied by private firms seeking business and profit, solar energy and irrigation being excellent examples. Rather than try to drive (or control) such change, the state would need to accompany, monitor and nurture it, acting where it needs to act: to resolve problems of collective action and to provide public goods.
- ▶ **The exception comes with land restoration**, where some of the value for improvements, accrues as public goods and externalities, whose benefits reach well beyond the field or village boundary – biodiversity and carbon capture being global public goods. These benefits also persist well beyond the usual horizon of business planning, whereby returns are expected within five or so years. A strong case can be made for public investment in these activities. Moreover, given that some benefits are international, they should be funded in considerable part by international agencies and funds.

The study also explores employment and prospects for youth in connection to the axes. Of the 8 million jobs estimated, the great majority involve work on the land and in the fields. The skills needed are largely those familiar to anyone raised on a farm, in a village. Those skills are largely tacit skills that older generations need to pass on to youth. The danger is that youth, who may be easily distracted by novelty and ideas from across the world, may be unwilling to learn from their elders, disparaging such knowledge as something from a bygone age. Ways must be found to counter this and rebrand the agricultural sector. Lastly, some other jobs of the 8 million estimated will instead require new technical skills hence young people could be in a good position, once adequately skilled, to access those new jobs.

The study, available in English and French, can be accessed at the following link: (<https://doi.org/10.4060/cc7033en>).

Further reading on the regional studies

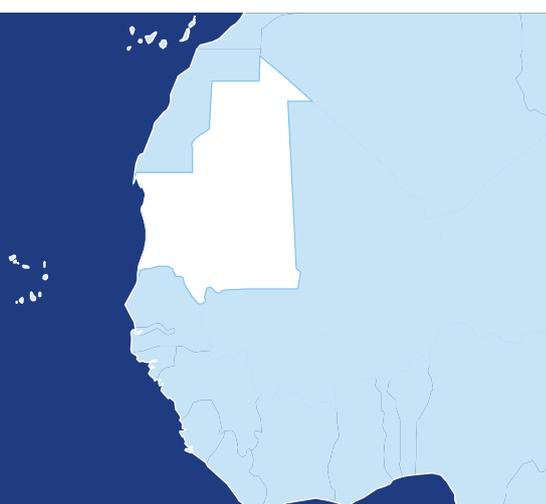
FAO and ODI. 2022. Building resilience and employment opportunities for youth within rural economies in the Sahel | ODI: Think change ([AR + EN + FR event versions](#)).

FAO Decent Rural Employment website. 2022. A virtual discussion on the intersection between socioeconomic conditions and youth radicalization in the G5 Sahel ([EN](#) and [FR](#)).

COUNTRY COMPONENT

MAURITANIA

- Capacity development and support to national programmes and government stakeholders
- Employment schemes and mentorship for rural youth
- Green jobs in agrifood systems
- Engagement of youth and government in dialogues at national level



Source: Elaborated from United Nations Geospatial, 2022. Map of the World. <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/map-world>. Cited on July 2023.

CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND FRAMEWORKS

- Mauritania United Nations Development Assistance Framework
- Plan national de développement agricole
- Stratégie Nationale de Sécurité Alimentaire pour la Mauritanie aux horizons 2015 et vision 2030
- Stratégie définissant la politique nationale de la Jeunesse
- Stratégie nationale de l'emploi
- Strategie nationale de croissance acceleree et de prosperite partagee scapp 2016-2030
- Plan d'action de promotion des emplois verts et de transition vers la durabilité environnementale
- Stratégie nationale d'institutionnalisation du genre

Mauritania is one of the poorest countries in the world (Human Development Index, 2023). The country is vulnerable to hazards such as droughts and flooding and most of the population's livelihoods derive from traditional agriculture and livestock farming. The impacts of climate change have resulted in the past years in unpredictable seasonal rains, desertification, and other critical climactic conditions. This is increasingly exposing the population to cyclical food insecurity and malnutrition, land degradation, poverty and disrupted livelihoods.

Mauritania's population is also predominantly young with more than 60 percent of the total population being under the age of 25 (Alliance Sahel, 2023). Youth between the ages of 15 and 24, as per UN ageframe definition, are instead 40 percent of the overall population (World Bank, 2017). **Young women and men in the country face poor labour market conditions due to a variety of reasons, such as a lack in employment opportunities, limited access to credits, and insufficient**

skills development and education opportunities. Consequently, a large share of young Mauritians fail to successfully transition into employment, remaining unemployed or largely inactive in the labour market.

The project's country component has been piloted in Mauritania, and supported the implementation of selected country policies, strategies and frameworks, namely, the National Employment Policy, National Youth Strategy and the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity (SCAPP). The project also supported the implementation and inclusion of agriculture in the following national programmes: *Mon Projet, Mon Avenir, Nano Slef Mon Métier*, both coordinated by the Ministry of Employment. Further, the project also contributed with its implementation, to two of the President of Mauritania initiatives, and specifically, the TAAOUDATTI/Mes engagements, and the President's Expanded Priority Programme (PROPEP).

The component had the overall aim of strengthening capacities of rural youth in selected value chains and green practices in agriculture, while facilitating their entrance in the markets. In order to do this, two employment schemes were initiated (and are described below).

Further, at institutional level, selected national government officials from the ministries of agriculture and employment, national employment agency and the national school of training and agricultural extension, were also supported in strengthening their capacities on matters related to agriculture and green jobs in order to adequately include them in national programmes specific for youth.

As part of the country component, a national youth dialogue has also been organized to discuss with rural youth and their representatives their challenges, needs and role in the agrifood systems.

A preliminary assessment undertaken by the project in its inception phase, also determined a major lack in training materials related to climate change mitigation and adaptation in agriculture. Hence, within the country component, **specific capacity development materials on climate change adaptation and mitigation, agroecology and green practices in agriculture, were developed in collaboration with Eco-développement (ECODEV) and Association Naforé pour la protection de l'environnement (Naforé), which also supported the trainings of rural youth and national institutions.**



Activities of the country component

1. Short-term employment scheme

The short-term employment scheme aimed at providing quick gains to rural youth residing in territories which had been assessed by the Mauritanian government, as “at risk”, be it in respect of high levels of youth migration due to lack of economic opportunities, or with increasing rates of youth radicalization due to a variety of factors. Further, the selected territories of implementation were also being assessed as areas of with high rates of food insecurity and youth unemployment.

Young women and men participating in the short-term employment scheme were selected following an eligibility criteria: i) had to be between 18 and 30 years of age; ii) not in education, employment or training (NEET); and, iii) belong to a vulnerable household, in terms of lack of adequate sources of income of the localities of Rosso, Breen, Dieuk, Takesh Coumba and Pk10 of the Trarza region.

The short-term employment scheme, implemented in the municipality of Rosso, in the Trarza region, in collaboration with the ministries of agriculture and employment and vocational education through the Training center for rural producers (CFPR), graduated 200 young women and men as part of the scheme (achieving a 50:50 gender inclusion ratio) and a spillover effect, thanks to youth sharing their knowledge to other young peers in their rural districts, to further 800 youth.³

³ The spillover effect has been estimated using a median of 4 additional youth (or family members) re-trained in the new skills (for both employment schemes) as per evaluation’ survey’s reply.

The scheme's hub of activities in Rosso, was established within Ferme Mpourié, a renowned communities cooperatives' initiative, and consisted in a two-month support programme, where youth were provided trainings on climate change mitigation and adaptation, agroecology, occupational, safety and health (OSH) standards, technology, green practices in agriculture, and, agro techniques in different value chains. During the 2 months period, youth were also providing 20 hours of remunerated work per week within the cooperatives affiliated with Ferme Mpourié. Further to the 2 months period, youth have been continuously supported via a mentorship phase and facilitated by national partners with access to land, while also creating "economic interests groups" in order to facilitate their access to finance and inputs.

Further, all the youth have been integrated into the national employment agency platform for additional employment opportunities arising in the agrifood system. Besides having supported youth in their self-employment agribusiness activities, further to the graduation from the scheme, some of them have been recruited as waged workers in local private sector agribusinesses, thanks to their newly acquired skills in agroecology.

A further outcome of the scheme was a strong intergenerational exchange. As asserted by the young graduates, learning from their mentors at Ferme Mpourié, about ancestral indigenous techniques (besides new ones), instilled in them a proudness in belonging to their territories and care for their environment.

Hear it from
Asta Mamadou Anne,
 25 years old graduate from the short-term
 employment scheme in Mauritania.

“Most of us knew about agriculture only from a “consumer” perspective but knowledge is powerful! Further to the enrollment and involvement in this activity in Mauritania we see a strong economic opportunity and feel much more confident for our future.”



2. Long-term employment scheme

The long-term employment scheme was designed and aimed for young people which are already in the market, hence have their own small agribusinesses and wish to strengthen their activities, so to also possibly create in the future further employment opportunities. This scheme was implemented in collaboration with the ministries of agriculture and employment and vocational education, national employment agency (TECHGHIL) and the national school of training and agricultural extension (ENFVA). Trainings were undertaken with support from two local NGOs, Eco-développement (ECODEV) and Association Naforé pour la protection de l'environnement (Naforé).

Young people participating in this scheme were selected among the applicants that requested support to strengthen their agribusinesses via the national programmes “*Mon Projet, Mon Avenir*” and “*Nano Slef Mon Métier*” managed by the ministry of employment and vocational education.

The scheme supported the growth of 390 youth enterprises, 195 run by young women, with a spillover effect, due to youth sharing their knowledge to other young peers, to further 1 170 youth. The scheme also strengthened the capacities of 120 government facilitators from nine regions of Mauritania: Assaba, Brakna, Hodh Ech Chargui, Hodh El Garbi, Gorgol, Guidimakha, Tagant, Trarza as well as Nouackchott. As part of this scheme, as it was including also youth enterprises from the southeast of Mauritania, where the Mbera refugee camp is located, some Malian young refugees' agroenterprises were included and supported.

Hear it from

Mapate Ousmane Ndiouck,

27 years old from Mauritania

“This activity is very important for us. Through it we have further learned that if we take care of these lands, the lands of our ancestors, we can stay here instead of going abroad, and be able to work close to our families and environment.”



Like in the short-term employment scheme, trainings were aimed at strengthening capacities on climate change adaptation and mitigation, agroecology, green jobs in agriculture and technology, besides also mechanization.

An action plan to support the commitment of ministries to environmentally friendly youth enterprises part of this scheme was discussed and agreed with all the involved partners. Youth will continue to benefit from long-term mentoring via youth network groups, besides also being supported by TECHGHIL's future mobile training courses and business incubation initiatives.

3. Engagement of youth and governments' stakeholders in dialogues at national level

Mauritania's rapidly growing population, besides being disadvantaged in terms of entrance in the agrifood system, is also vulnerable to social exclusion. **Ensuring that young people can engage in national debates and feel a sense of ownership in processes, is key to social inclusion and overall social cohesion, in particular in a context characterized by pockets of conflicts.**

In order to support young people's engagement in national processes, a national youth dialogue was organized in collaboration with the Mauritanian Government and with support from Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale (IPAR). The national dialogue gathered together over 30 youth representatives from different regions of Mauritania, as well as 20 representatives from the Mauritanian Government, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), ILO, UNDP, World Food Programme (WFP), and various experts on youth related matters from Mauritania and the G5 Sahel at large.

Four central themes were discussed during the consultation:

- ▶ Challenges and opportunities related to the empowerment and inclusion of rural youth in the agrifood system.
- ▶ The importance of information on labour demands in agriculture and outreach to rural areas.
- ▶ Youth involvement in emergency plans, peace building and social protection interventions.
- ▶ The role of rural youth in the design and implementation of inclusive policies and programmes that promote green jobs for youth.

The dialogue proved to be an excellent intergenerational platform, while also allowing participants to exchange views on how agricultural initiatives, when designed jointly with youth and not only for them, are more adequate to their needs.

Evaluation of the pilot country component

Project's approach. The evaluation revealed that 91 percent of the government institutions involved in the project, assessed the approach and its activities, as highly adaptable to the COVID-19 pandemic evolutions and to the overall instability of the territories in the Sahel (the remaining 9 percent did not respond). Further, 100 percent of them asserted that activities were fully in line with both regional and national policies, strategies and country needs.

Government facilitators. On rating the quality of materials, they had been trained on, 14 percent of the government facilitators rated them as excellent, 50 percent as very good and 9 percent as good (the remaining percentage did not reply). Ninety (90) percent of them also asserted to have started to use them to re-train further youth to perpetrate the activities (the remaining percentage did not reply).

Youth. Youth rated the new skills learned as excellent (55 percent), very good (31 percent) and good (12 percent), while the remaining percentage did not reply. Ninety-four (94) percent had already shared the new knowledge with young peers in their villages and within their households. On this, all of the youth stressed the importance of empowering young people and to replicate the trainings and approach on a larger scale. Surveys also assessed that 73 percent of the youth asserted that at one point of their life they had thought about migrating, either internally or internationally, due to lack of economic opportunities. A remaining 23 percent instead never had intention to migrate and the remaining percentage did not reply. Surprisingly, as it is usually reported in literature that young men tend to migrate more than young women, 44 percent of the ones that asserted to have “thought” about migrating, were young women. Although this cannot be used as a rule and possibly “thinking” of migrating do not necessarily translate effectively in migrating, the outcomes of the survey, could make rethink the usual narrative reporting a “feminization of agriculture” due to men migrating elsewhere for economic opportunities as indeed young women think about it. Further to the inclusion in the initiative, nearly all of them asserted to feeling more equipped and skilled to remain in their residing rural communities thanks to the opportunity provided. Ninety-nine (99) percent of the youth also asserted to have experienced big positive changes in their agribusiness activities in terms of: i) increased income; ii) improved access to markets; iii) increased household food security; iv) increased access to financial mechanisms; v) increased access to long-term employment opportunities; and, vi) increased access to mentoring structures.



©FAO/Guimarães Almeida

Further reading on the country component activities

FAO, 2023. La Mauritanie et la FAO. [Partenariat en faveur de la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle durable](#). Nouackchott, Mauritanie.

ECODEV. June 2022. [Reportage de la TVM sur la Formation des jeunes sur les filières de l'économie verte hier à Kaédi, organisée en partenariat avec la FAO au profit des... | By Ecodev | Facebook](#)

Rim-Rural. July 2022. [Soutien au Programme 'Mon Projet, Mon Avenir' à travers le renforcement de capacités des jeunes](#).

Naforé. August, 2022. [Atelier de formation](#).

FAO. 2021. [L'inclusion économique des jeunes pour l'emploi rural décent](#). Rome, Italy.

FAO. 2021. [La FAO aux côtés de la Mauritanie face à la covid-19](#). Nouackchott, Mauritanie.



Lessons learned and conclusions

The implementation of the project provided a big body of lessons learned as well as good outcomes, and also different mitigation strategies in relation to challenges faced along the lifespan of activities. **Overall the project's implementation, a pilot in its approach, reached all of the envisaged targets, while overachieving various ones, besides producing more deliverables and products than foreseen at its design phase. The project also used a fully integrated modus operandi to address different challenges.**

Activities started its implementation during the initial major waive of the COVID-19 pandemic, furthermore the instability in the G5 Sahel is and remains a major threat, foremost to the populations of those countries, but also potentially to the implementation of activities. The G5 Sahel countries remain majorly threatened by the effects of weak state structures which have difficulties in supporting the populations in their day to day life. During the implementation of the project there were three coup d'état (one in Burkina Faso and two in Mali) and several scale up of national security alerts (due to different reasons, mostly connected with terrorism) in various countries with consequent complete blockage of internet and communications. Albeit those major impediments, which could have hampered activities of the regional component, the project's implementation managed to run smoothly and kept all participants engaged, while also organizing additional activities unforeseen in the initial plan. During different security alerts, regional activities were promptly re-organized so to continue the process of strengthening capacities and exchange of experiences in relation to youth in agrifood systems.

Access to internet remains a major issue in the G5 Sahel countries and out of reach rural youth, risk of remaining invisible due to the lack of connection in their areas or lack of funds to buy online time for their mobile phones or equipment,

hence holding back their participation. To overcome this, the project put in place different mitigation measures. In some cases internet time was provided, in order to participate in online activities when security alerts could not allow in-person participation. While in some other cases, a safe place with internet connection (e.g. hotels, lodges, vocational training centres) was made available in each country, where youth could gather to participate in forums, learning activities and dialogues.

The project also aimed at addressing the HDP nexus within it, so to address the very urgent needs of young people in order to prevent certain negative coping mechanisms or youth migration due to lack economic opportunities, besides also addressing the more long-term development aims. In doing so, as earlier described, both a short-term employment scheme (for quick gains) for youth at risk, and a long-term one, were initiated in the pilot country component (Mauritania). In relation to its short-term employment scheme, it was initially foreseen to use an already ongoing activity in the country, for example some cash+ programmes implemented by FAO or others, and within them including the youth component. Further to in-depth assessments during the inception phase, it was evaluated that for the overall aim of the project, the ongoing (at the time), cash+ initiatives were not suitable for the scope. Cash+ initiatives mapped during the inception phase were mostly targeting only women with unconditional cash transfers or, in other occasions, both sexes were beneficiaries of in-kind distribution of livestock. Both typologies of initiatives were evaluated as of high risk and inadequate for youth which may be at risk of migration or negative coping mechanisms due to lack of economic opportunities. Due to this, a very specific and innovative short-term employment scheme was created with support from the government which has been evaluated as very successful by both the government and beneficiaries in Mauritania. The “peace” component of the HDP nexus, connected also to social cohesion, has been taken forward organizing different dialogues at both regional and national level. While the HDP should not be intended as a “project” but as a way of working in a more coordinated manner among humanitarian–development–peace actors, and despite the awareness of the relevance of the concept, its implementation still poses major challenges for the stakeholders involved. Different mandates, approaches and funding logic, as well as a lack of cooperation mechanisms among the different stakeholders from those sectors, still lead in many cases, to the poor integration of interventions and often compromised efficiency and effectiveness. In general terms, the project’s implementation, including both urgent needs and more development-alike ones has proven that it is possible to address both, although, more “urgent” needs really need to be tailored to the different population targets and needs, as what works for women using, for example, unconditional transfers, cannot work for youth at risk of migration or negative coping mechanisms.



©FAO/Mauritania

In relation to gender, the gender gap in the Sahel region remains the widest, with an average of 31.9 percent, which is below the continental average of 48.4 percent (African Development Bank’s Gender Equality in Africa Index, 2021). The project, embedded in its approach, within all its components, the equal visibility, empowerment and participation of both sexes, while also assuring the inclusiveness of concerns from various vulnerable or marginalized youth groups, in line with the LNOB principle. The project in this achieved a 50:50 gender ratio participation and inclusion in all its activities. In relation to young women, it is extremely important to define their specific needs and challenges, which are different from adult women. An important observation also comes from the evaluation of the project, as youth were asked if at one point of their life they had thought about migrating, either internally or internationally, due to lack of economic opportunities. Of the 73 percent that replied yes, 44 percent were young women, hence the majority. As explained earlier, although this cannot be used as a rule, the outcomes of the evaluation in this, should make us possibly rethink the usual narrative, reporting a “feminization of agriculture” due to men migrating for economic opportunities. Indeed young women think about migrating, and this would need an urgent attention as there may be a shift in the paradigm with the young generations.

Given the many challenges posed by the Sahel region, including insecurity, rising extremism, lacking of economic prospects and employment opportunities, environmental degradation, poor access to education and trainings, and overall access to basic services, supporting young people in their entrance in the agrifood systems in this region requires specific and integrated approaches as assessed by the project's implementation. It is essential to address, in an integrated manner, all youth's vulnerabilities. Capacity development should always be accompanied by a mentorship phase, as included in the project's activities. Further, the inclusion of climate change mitigation and adaptation techniques and green practices in agriculture, is essential to strengthen young people's capacities to cope and see their agribusinesses grow. Activities in the project, also strengthened the capacities of government facilitators, so to being able, in the medium term, to carry out trainings at larger scale and support larger groups of population.

Exchanges and learning from best practices in similar contexts has proven to be extremely successful. Both rural youth and government stakeholders participating in the regional learning route, mentioned a higher level of understanding while learning from countries with similar contexts, increasing also a sense of fragility to fragility (countries) cooperation in the G5 Sahel.

A further successful outcome of the project was also the fostering of collaborations between the ministries of agriculture, employment national employment agency and the national school of training and agricultural extension in the country pilot component in Mauritania. Activities also further strengthened the national employment agency in Mauritania (formerly focusing its activities mostly in urban areas), and increased its presence in rural villages while including opportunities given by the agricultural sector. The national employment agency was also further strengthened in supporting the incubation of young agropreneurs in selected sites in the country.

Lastly, given youth's vulnerability to the ongoing insecurities of their territories, besides rural youth reduced opportunities to be part of regional and national debates, it is essential to integrate within activities, as done by the project, their adequate inclusion in social cohesion processes and overall strategic processes. Meaningful relationships based on mutual understanding between generations are also indispensable for social integration and cohesion. The project adopted an intergenerational approach within several of its activities. This resulted in continuous beneficial exchanges among the youth, their mentors, and elders in the villages. As assessed in the evaluation, this renewed in them a feeling of proudness and care for their territories, ancestral lands and also for local indigenous techniques, applied with new and innovative lenses, in their agribusiness activities.

Appendix I

Products and news items of the project

Publications and videos produced by the project

Wiggins, S., Newborne, P., Benoudji, C., Diarra, M., Kane, N., Kiebré, M.B. & Sangaré, S. 2023. *Green jobs in agrifood systems – Setting a vision for youth in the Sahel*. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc7033en>.

FAO & Procasur. 2023. *Stimuler la création d'emplois pour les jeunes grâce à la route d'apprentissage du G5 Sahel Expériences au Burkina Faso et en Mauritanie*. Rome, Italy, FAO.

FAO. 2023. *Building resilience and social cohesion of Sahelian youth through their inclusion in agrifood systems. With and for the youth*. Rome, Italy, FAO.

FAO. 2022. *Building resilience in the Sahel region through job creation for youth. Bridging the humanitarian, development and peace nexus in the context of fragility*. Rome, Italy, FAO.

Mayhew, L., McCullough, A., El Taraboulsi-McCarthy, S., Allen, A., Levine, S. 2022. *The intersection between socioeconomic conditions and youth radicalisation – Implications for programming in the G5 Sahel countries*. Rome, Italy, FAO.

FAO. 2021. *Building Resilience in the Sahel Region through Job Creation for Youth*. Rome, Italy, FAO.

Video

FAO & Procasur. 2023. *Promouvoir des emplois décents pour les jeunes ruraux grâce à la Route de l'apprentissage du Sahel*. [Cited 15 June 2023]. www.youtube.com/watch?v=IN4qTiRuQTo

FAO & Procasur. 2023. *Promouvoir des emplois décents pour les jeunes ruraux à travers la Route de l'apprentissage du Sahel*. [Cited 15 June 2023]. www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_dH_NFA_BI

Publications where the project has been featured

- FAO. 2023. [Hear it from the countries – Rural youth action plan. Good practices](#). Rome.
- FAO. 2023. La Mauritanie et la FAO. [Partenariat en faveur de la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle durable](#). Nouackchott, Mauritania, FAO.
- UN Youth2030. 2022. [A Global Progress Report](#).
- FAO & AUC. 2022. [Investment guidelines for youth in agrifood systems in Africa](#). Rome.
- FAO. 2021. [L'inclusion économique des jeunes pour l'emploi rural décent](#). Rome, Italy. FAO.
- FAO. 2021. [La FAO aux côtés de la Mauritanie face à la covid-19](#). Nouackchott, Mauritanie. FAO.

News items

- FAO & ODI. February, 17, 2022. *Building resilience and employment opportunities for youth within rural economies in the Sahel* | ODI: Think change. [Cited 10 June 2023]. <https://odi.org/en/events/building-resilience-and-employment-opportunities-for-youth-within-rural-economies-in-the-sahel/>
- ECODEV. June 2022. *Reportage de la TVM sur la Formation des jeunes sur les filières de l'économie verte hier à Kaédi, organisée en partenariat avec la FAO au profit des...* | By EcODEV | Facebook. [Cited 10 June 2023]. https://www.facebook.com/Ecodev-411970092917749/videos/1227346824702703/?extid=WA-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN_GKoT-GK1C
- Rim-Rural. October 2021. *Atelier de consultation sur les défis et les opportunités pour l'emploi et la résilience des jeunes ruraux en Mauritanie du 28 au 29 Octobre*. [Cited 10 June 2023]. <https://rim-rural.org/2021/10/29/atelier-de-concertation-sur-les-defis-et-opportunités-pour-lemploi-des-jeunes-ruraux-en-mauritanie-du-28-au-29-octobre/>
- FAO Decent Rural Employment website. December 2021. *G5-Sahel Regional Learning Route – Strengthening the resilience of the G5 Sahel region through the creation of jobs for rural youth*. [Cited 10 June 2023]. <https://www.fao.org/rural-employment/resources/detail/en/c/1458939/>
- Agence Mauritanienne d'information. November 2021. *Lancement de la Route d'apprentissage régionale dans les pays du G5 Sahel*. [Cited 30 May 2023]. <https://ami.mr/fr/Depeche-61237.html/>
- FAO Decent Rural Employment website. February 2022. *A virtual discussion on the intersection between socio-economic conditions and youth radicalization in the G5 Sahel*. [Cited 30 May 2023]. www.fao.org/rural-employment/resources/detail/en/c/1473666/
- PROCASUR. 2022. *G5-Sahel Regional Learning Route*. [Cited 25 May 2023]. <https://procasur.org/en/g5-sahel-regional-learning-route/>
- FAO Decent Rural Employment website. April, 2022. *Near East and North Africa: Promoting youth inclusion in FAO and their engagement in agrifood systems*. [Cited 20 May 2023]. www.fao.org/rural-employment/resources/detail/en/c/1505610/
- Rim-Rural. July, 2022. *Soutien au Programme 'Mon Projet, Mon Avenir' à travers le renforcement de capacités des jeunes*. [Cited 18 May 2023]. <https://rim-rural.org/2022/07/04/soutien-au-programme-mon-projet-mon-avenir-a-travers-le-renforcement-de-capacités-des-jeunes/>

Naforé. August, 2022. *Atelier de formation*. [Cited 13 May 2023]. <https://nafore.org/2022/08/15/atelier-de-formation/>

FAO Decent Rural Employment website. March 2022. *Learning Route – Strengthening the resilience of the G5 Sahel region through the creation of decent jobs for rural youth*. [Cited 10 May 2023]. www.fao.org/rural-employment/resources/detail/en/c/1500203/

FAO Decent Rural Employment website. June 2022. *G5 Sahel Regional Forum on Youth Resilience through their inclusion in agro-food systems – For and with the youth*. [Cited 08 May 2023]. www.fao.org/rural-employment/resources/detail/en/c/1539156/

Decent Jobs for Youth (Global Initiative). 2022. *Working with youth to build resilience and social cohesion through job creation in the Sahel region*. Decent jobs for youth blog. [Cited 5 May 2023]. www.decentjobsforyouth.org/resource-details/Blogs/1116

Agence Mauritanienne d’information. October 2021. *AMI – Démarrage d’un atelier de consultation sur la résilience des jeunes ruraux en Mauritanie*. [Cited 5 May 2023]. <https://fr.ami.mr/Depeche-60958.html>

FAO Decent Rural Employment website. November 2021. *Mauritanie: Consultation nationale sur les défis et les opportunités pour l’emploi et la résilience des jeunes ruraux*. [Cited 3 May 2023]. www.fao.org/rural-employment/resources/detail/en/c/1456349/

FAO Decent Rural Employment website. December 2021. *Discussing ‘‘Socio-economic triggers of youth radicalization and negative coping mechanisms’’ at the ISP Virtual Model United Nations Conference*. [Cited 3 May 2023]. www.fao.org/rural-employment/resources/detail/en/c/1458937/

TV segments:

TVM Mauritanie. November, 2021. *Journal Télévisé en Français 15-11-2021*. [Cited 2 May 2023]. www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qe3Io1Ao-iA

TVM Mauritanie. November, 2021. *دورة تكوينية لصالح شباب دول الخمس بالساحل تقرير العربي زيدان*. [Cited 2 May 2023]. www.youtube.com/watch?v=odMXSQoSrIY

Building resilience in the Sahel region through job creation for youth

Innovatively supporting youth's
access to decent employment and
green jobs in agrifood systems



**Inclusive Rural Transformation and
Gender Equality - Division**
Economic and Social Development
www.fao.org/rural-employment

**Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations**

Rome, Italy



ISBN 978-92-5-138040-6



9 789251 380406

CC7163EN/1/08.23