



THE RURAL YOUTH MOBILITY PROJECT: METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS



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A PROJECT ADDRESSING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND MIGRATION IN RURAL AREAS

Rural youth, and especially skilled youth, are increasingly leaving the agriculture sector. They do not aspire to work in agriculture and in rural-related activities because they do not find them attractive.

Main reasons for this are: low pay employment which is considered marginal, with low productivity, and ultimately with low social status; prevalent precarious and seasonal employment patterns; informal contracts of employment and commercialisation with no social protection measures (in terms of access to social security and other benefits); difficult and hazardous working conditions. Such migration, however, is often undertaken under severe structural constraints.

The The Rural Youth Mobility (RYM) project contributes directly to the following Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere); SDG 2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture); SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls); SDG 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all); and SDG 10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries; and specifically target 10.7: Facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies).

THE RURAL YOUTH MOBILITY [RYM] PROJECT

PROJECT TITLE: Youth mobility, food security and rural poverty reduction: Fostering rural diversification through enhanced youth employment and better labour mobility (in short RYM project)

CODE: GCP/INT/240/ITA

COUNTRIES: Tunisia and Ethiopia

DURATION: 2.5 years (2015-2018)

BUDGET: USD 2.5 million

DONOR: Italy

MAIN OBJECTIVE: To address the drivers of rural migration, by:

- i. generating knowledge and increase awareness on rural migration,
- ii. promoting innovative mechanisms for rural employment opportunities and enhancing the positive impact of rural migration on areas of origin, and
- iii. building capacity and promoting policy coherence between migration and rural development.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ With 763 million internal migrants, internal migration flows are much larger than international ones, which account 258 million migrants. In other words, for every three internal migrants there is one international migrant.
- ▶ Youth are the category with the highest propensity to migrate: a third of all the international migrants in the world has between 15 and 34 years of age.
- ▶ A large share of migrants originates from rural areas, where the majority of the poor and food-insecure live. Around 40 per cent of international remittances are sent to rural areas, reflecting the rural origins of a large share of migrants, and the potential for rural development if these remittances were invested productively.

TUNISIA AND ETHIOPIA AS TARGET COUNTRIES

In both Tunisia and Ethiopia, rural outmigration, especially of youth, is a reality challenging rural development and transformation, although in different ways. Ethiopia and Tunisia present marked structural differences. The share of

employment in agriculture, skills levels and the prevalence of extreme poverty and food insecurity, on one side, and migration trends and patterns, as well as migration policies (including the coordination between migration and development policies), and agriculture and rural development issues and policies, on the other side, offer a different backdrop to similar demographic profiles and challenges in promoting self- and wage employment for rural youth.

TUNISIA is a middle-income country with high skills endowments and among the highest unemployment levels worldwide. Between 2007 and 2012, the unemployment rate of young people aged 15 to 29 increased from 25 per cent to 35 per cent, with similar rates in urban and rural areas. In addition, one young Tunisian out of three is out of education or employment (NEET), including because of discouragement, while women's labour market participation rate, at 24 per cent (ILO, 2017) is very low. It is not surprising therefore that rural outmigration rates towards richer areas of the country or abroad are on the increase.

Internal migration is a widespread livelihoods strategy, especially considering the differences in terms of development between coastal and internal areas, with data indicating that about 70 per cent of internal migrants are youth. As for international migration, remittances and direct investments of the diaspora constitute an important part of GDP, however recent data shows that only 3 per cent of direct investments concern the agricultural sector, while the majority goes into construction. In recent years, Tunisia is also increasingly becoming a country of destination and transit for migrants from sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb, which further complicates the context in which rural migration takes place.



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ETHIOPIA is a developing country with one third of the population living in extreme poverty and two thirds below the poverty line. Ethiopia has enjoyed sustained double digits growth for over a decade, driven by the service sector, however with uneven developmental benefits. Agriculture remains the main economic sector, accounting for 42.3 per cent of the GDP and 75 per cent of total employment, which is consistent with the fact that rural areas account for about 80 per cent of the population.

Migration dynamics are characterized by very important movements of internal migration, with rural-rural migration still accounting for 34.5 per cent of the total migration population, with a marked seasonal dimension linked to agricultural calendars. Internal rural-urban mobility is on the increase. Ethiopia is also facing the issue of integration of migrant populations, hosting the largest refugee population in Africa, as well as increasing flows of returnees.

In this context therefore, the challenges were to provide viable alternatives to rural outmigration and thus making migration a voluntary choice rather than a necessity. At the same time, there is much potential for reinforcing the positive linkages between migration and rural development, through the engagement of diaspora and the reintegration of returnees, including by supporting their productive investment in agricultural and rural activities.

MAKING MIGRATION WORK FOR ALL

To respond to these challenges, the objectives of the RYM project were to address the adverse drivers of migration, while at the same time enhancing the positive impact of rural outmigration of youth on food security and rural development in rural areas of origin. The project also aimed at improving the understanding of rural migration by filling evidence gaps on the determinants and impacts of rural migration and at promoting better policy integration between migration, agriculture and rural development, including by building capacity and fostering dialogue between agriculture, migration and labour stakeholders.

COUNTRY-LEVEL AND GLOBAL ACTIVITIES

The main axes structuring the RYM project are:

1. Knowledge generation on drivers and impacts of rural migration,
2. Capacity building on migration and rural development,
3. Piloting of innovative mechanisms for employment as an alternative to rural outmigration for youth,
4. Enhancing the contribution of the diaspora, and
5. Contributing to policy coherence between migration and rural development.

Table 1: Main results of the RYM project in Tunisia, Ethiopia and at global level

	MAIN RESULTS IN TUNISIA	MAIN RESULTS IN ETHIOPIA	MAIN GLOBAL RESULTS
1 Knowledge generation on drivers and impacts of rural migration and awareness creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Study on drivers and impact of rural youth migration in areas of origin and destination. ▶ Video on project approach and results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Study on drivers and impact of rural youth migration, with a specific focus on internal, seasonal and non-seasonal migration. ▶ Video on project approach and results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ FAO corporate conceptual framework on migration: <i>Addressing Rural Youth Migration at its Root Causes: A Conceptual Framework</i>. ▶ Infographic: <i>Addressing rural youth distress migration</i>. ▶ Communication materials for World Food Day 2017.
2: Capacity building on migration and rural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tailored assessment of capacity needs on promoting policy coherence on migration and rural development and country-level capacity development workshops on migration and rural development to address the identified capacity needs. ▶ Country-tailored training materials. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Capacity development guidance materials: <i>Migration and rural development. A handbook for preparing, running and evaluating a capacity development workshop</i>.
3: Piloting of innovative mechanisms for employment as an alternative to rural outmigration for youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Pilot test of an innovative process for the creation of rural employment opportunities through the support of individual and group-based small and medium agro-enterprises. The agro-enterprise projects were selected through a Call for proposals which aimed at identifying projects with the highest potential in terms of: i. creating direct and indirect employment; ii. promoting innovative products and processes; and iii. enhancing the positive linkage between migration and rural development. This mechanism allowed to support 49 agro-enterprises, under the patronage of the Incubators of agricultural enterprises in the North-West and South-East regions. The enterprises received tailored coaching by the "Accompagnateurs agricoles" (agricultural coaches) and in-kind contribution, and resulted in the creation of 89 full time direct jobs (43 men and 46 women); 83 direct occasional jobs (34 men and 49 women); additionally indirectly benefitting more than 400 rural workers and producers. ▶ Guidance material on the <i>Process for the selection and support of innovative agricultural projects in a context of migration</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Pilot test of an innovative process for the creation of rural employment opportunities through the establishment and support of group-based agricultural activities. The youth groups were selected and supported through training and start-up equipment by the decentralised offices of the Ministry of agriculture and natural resources in close consultation with the local communities. This mechanism allowed to support the establishment and training of 38 youth groups (25 in Oromiya and 13 in Amhara), with the creation of a total of 454 jobs of which 250 in Oromiya (177 men and 73 women) and 204 in Amhara (144 men and 60 women). 	
4: Enhancing the contribution of the diaspora to rural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Pilot test of an innovative mechanism in six steps to engage the contribution of the diaspora through investment and technical support to agricultural enterprises. More than 50 per cent of the agricultural enterprises supported by the RYM project benefitted from a financial and technical contribution of the diaspora (initial target of 30 per cent). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ In consultation with government partners, the engagement of the diaspora was not considered a priority in the project implementation in Ethiopia. Capacity development activities addressed this gap, by providing tools and skills to national stakeholders and policy makers to further mobilize the diaspora's investments in agriculture and contribution to rural development. Many returnees were helped to reinsert in their rural areas of origin through the creation of rural employment opportunities in Amhara and Oromiya. 	
5: Promoting policy coherence between migration and rural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Policy context analysis. Technical advice to the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fishing in the systematisation and accreditation of the profession of <i>accompagnateur agricole</i> (agricultural coach), including their role as agents of change in a context of migration, through the development of a <i>Referential guide</i> which is being annexed to the Investment Law (2016), and of a practical toolkit for the profession. ▶ Integration of rural development in the thematic working groups established for the operationalization of the new National Strategy on Migration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Policy context analysis. Technical advice for the development of the <i>National Rural Job Opportunity Creation Strategy (2017)</i>, led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, in response to the government priority of promoting rural youth employment, including the integration of migration as an important dimension of rural development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dissemination of lessons learned and contribution to global level processes such as the Global Migration Group (GMG).

The project included global and country-level activities, which were closely integrated. At the global level, the project aimed at raising awareness, generating knowledge on rural youth migration and filling evidence gaps, at providing conceptual and policy guidance and capacity development, and at disseminating findings and lessons learned from country-level and global activities. The country-level components of the project were tailored to country demands and capacity development needs through diagnostics as well as continuous consultations with national partners. Activities in Tunisia and Ethiopia included research, technical advice at policy and programme level, piloting innovative mechanisms for the creation of youth employment opportunities for the rural youth, and capacity development to better address migration issues in the context of rural development and rural development in the context of migration.

1. Knowledge generation on drivers and impact of rural migration

Challenges

Lack of data on migration determinants, patterns, and impact on areas of origin, is one of the main challenge to sound and evidence-based policies on migration and rural development. Major data gaps regards in particular migration from rural areas and internal and seasonal migration.

Approach and results

To address such gaps, a study on “Drivers and patterns of rural youth migration and its impact on food security and rural livelihoods in Tunisia” was undertaken in collaboration with the European University Institute/Migration Policy Centre (EUI/MPC). The research develops and tests a methodology to analyse rural out-migration of youth, with a special attention to the drivers of migration and mobility and their relative importance in determining the propensity of rural youth to migrate. The study also analyses the diversity of rural youth migration patterns, the types of movement and its impacts on household and individual food security and livelihoods, as well as labour dynamics in the areas of origin in Tunisia. The survey uses a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, and interviews to households in Tunisia and Italy.

The research “Migration and seasonal mobility: A global perspective and Ethiopia case study” was undertaken in collaboration with the MMA Development Consultancy (MMA). The study collected primary data on characteristics, trends and determinants (drivers, patterns, age-structure) – including with respect to employment opportunities – of internal and international, permanent and seasonal migrants in Ethiopia and the impact of migration on rural livelihoods. Furthermore, the research analyses good practices on international and national seasonal labour migration schemes, legislation and policies in agriculture and rural areas, as well as programmes of reintegration of migrant returnees in agriculture and rural areas, and assessed their adaptability to Ethiopia, in the context of existing policy and legislation, and to other African countries. Finally, the report provides policy recommendations concerning the management of labour migration and the employment opportunities in agro-related

areas that can best be linked to seasonal migration schemes, particularly for youth, globally and in Ethiopia.

Both studies used a mixed methods approach of quantitative and qualitative data collection. The methodology allowed to analyse rural migration drivers and impacts in rural areas, combining household level and individual data both in origin and (internal and international) destination contexts. Furthermore, the data allowed comparison between migrants and non-migrants; internal and international migration; older and more recent migrants, and permanent and seasonal migrants.

The RYM project also substantially contributed to conceptualise and raise awareness on the nexus between migration and rural development. It supported the development of the FAO corporate conceptual framework on migration: *Addressing Rural Youth Migration at its Root Causes: A Conceptual Framework*; and of the related infographic *addressing rural youth distress migration*.

The project developed videos to document the impact of the project in Tunisia (in [French](#), English and Italian) and Ethiopia (in [English](#) and [Italian](#)) through the testimonies of selected young beneficiaries and creating awareness on the linkages between employment, migration and rural development. The materials developed and the experiences of the RYM project have featured in the [FAO corporate promotional material of the 2017 World Food Day \(WFD\)](#), which was on the theme of migration (“Change the future of migration. Invest in food security and rural development”). Life stories of project beneficiaries were published on the WFD FAO website (for Tunisia: [Said Touati](#); for Ethiopia: [Yimam Ali](#), [Mohamed Seid](#) and [Zinetemam Adem](#)) and similar short video stories were produced (for Tunisia: [Aymen Blagui](#), [Mohamed Baaka](#) and [Said Touati](#)). All these stories are available on the communications webpage of the [WFD 2017](#).

2. Capacity building and awareness raising on migration and rural development

Challenges

While the public debate and the policy interventions on migration and development have mainly focused on migration management, brain drain, diaspora engagement, migrants’ rights and remittance-enhancement, rural development remains an area mostly neglected by stakeholders. Furthermore, **migration and rural development are often not addressed in a coherent manner** as there are important gaps in terms of 1) the capacity to integrate migration, employment and agricultural and rural development policies and strategies (*Policy and Normative Capacity*); 2) the capacity to access, generate, and apply relevant knowledge (disaggregated by sex, age and area of origin rural/urban) (*Knowledge Capacity*); 3) the capacity to advocate and engage in relevant networks and partnerships (*Partnership Capacity*); and 4) the capacity to manage and implement migration and rural youth employment programmes (*Implementation Capacity*).

Approach and results

To address some of these capacity gaps and strengthen implementation capacities the RYM project developed tailored capacity building activities on migration and rural development, with a focus on youth, as follows.

The first activity consisted in the **assessment of capacity needs on migration and rural development and employment** in Tunisia and Ethiopia, addressed to government and non-government institutions working on agriculture/rural development, migration and employment. The objective of the assessment was to identify training needs and key learning and capacity building priorities in order to adapt training materials to national needs and specificities. The needs assessment included an on-line questionnaire and focus group sessions with national stakeholders.

Based on the respective results of capacity needs assessments, two **capacity development workshops** were organised in Ethiopia and Tunisia, tailored to specific national contexts and to the needs and priorities identified in the capacity assessments. These workshops aimed to strengthen the capacity of the stakeholders to coherently address migration, rural development and employment issues, by establishing links with relevant national strategies and policies and existing good practices. Target participants included key government stakeholders and development partners in the areas of migration, agriculture, rural development and rural employment.

Finally, a **capacity development manual** titled *Migration and rural development: A handbook for preparing, running and evaluating a capacity development workshop* was developed

drawing from the experience of the RYM project at large and on its capacity development activities in Tunisia and Ethiopia. The handbook includes guidance on the methodological, strategical and organizational issues related to the phases of capacity needs assessment, preparation and evaluation of the workshop; and present training modules on specific dimensions of the migration and rural development nexus. The training modules provide key definitions, concepts and background information on migration, rural development and employment, using practical examples, case studies and group activities.

3. Piloting of innovative mechanisms for employment as an alternative to rural outmigration for youth

Challenges

Rural youth unemployment is one of the main drivers of migration. The key challenges that affect the productive potential of youth in rural contexts are access to land, finance, equipment, information and skills. In addition, youth often feel discouraged from engaging in agriculture due to these challenges, and dream of urban jobs and lifestyles.

Approach and results

To respond to these challenges, the RYM project piloted innovative mechanisms for the creation of rural employment opportunities and address the barriers that hinder youth's engagement in agriculture. Despite addressing similar issues, the approach was declined differently in Ethiopia and Tunisia, responding to specific challenges and potentialities (see Box).

BOX 1: PILOTING INNOVATIVE MECHANISMS FOR RURAL EMPLOYMENT IN TUNISIA AND ETHIOPIA

In **Ethiopia**, in close partnership with the decentralized bureaus of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources in Amhara and Oromiya, the approach followed to pilot mechanisms to **create rural employment opportunities centred on the establishment of youth groups** and in addressing the constraints that youth face in undertaking agricultural activities. Conditions for participation to the project as beneficiaries in Ethiopia included the willingness to work together in a youth group, to participate in agricultural job employment activities, to take technical trainings and the possibility to contribute with from 5 per cent to 20 per cent of start-up capital for the intended investment issued by their own or by their family.

In **Tunisia**, considering that educated youth in rural areas are among the categories with the highest unemployment rate, and also taking into account lessons learned from previous experiences in creating rural youth employment, the selected approach was to promote rural entrepreneurship, focusing on educated youth, and support selected agricultural projects through a **Call for proposal**. The call aimed to select agricultural enterprises ideas with the highest potential in terms of: **innovation, enhancement of the positive linkage between migration and development, and contribution to (direct or indirect) employment generation**. Additional criteria were, gender balance and environmental impact (among others). Eligible individuals were youth resident in the target regions (North-West and South-East), of less than 40 years of age, and with an educational level of high-school diploma or above. The final list of retained projects, out of the 107 proposals received through the call for proposals was selected by the regional selection committees of the North-West and South-East incubators of agricultural enterprises, following a three-step process: (i) Eligibility of the proposals, regarding the submission date and the compliance of the attachments; (ii) Selection of a shortlist based on the project ideas presented in the concept notes; and (iii) Final selection based on candidates' interviews. The selection process followed the guide elaborated by the RYM project, which included detailed a evaluation matrix according to the criteria of the call for proposals.

The project adopted a **participatory approach**, from the selection of beneficiaries to the implementation of its activities, by including a wide range of actors, from the federal/national to the community level. Main actors and stakeholders were involved through preparatory and consultative meetings involving the implementers and beneficiary leaders. Furthermore, various local stakeholders, such as local governments, the civil society and private actors, were involved in supporting the rural youth beneficiaries. In **Ethiopia**, for instance, the Woreda administration provided construction materials such as cement, nails, wire, and iron sheets, the villagers provided wood and other materials for the construction of houses, while the youth participated in the construction of working houses. Colleges assisted the local government in facilitating the technical training for the youth members and provided classrooms and accommodation for free. Additionally, local colleges provided tractors and other technologies required by the youth in horticulture businesses. In **Tunisia**, the patronage of the regional Incubators of agricultural enterprises provided continuous proximity support and will ensure sustainability of project results.

Furthermore, the RYM project applied a **context-sensitive approach**, by identifying the local problems and emerging challenges during the meetings and by adopting solutions in agreement with local actors, in matter of required technology provision, access to finance, access to land and technical backstopping.

Targeting of project beneficiaries represented one of the innovative components of the project, responding to the need of prioritizing areas and population categories more affected by migration dynamics, to ensure the effectiveness of the impact of the project in terms of providing alternatives to migration and revitalizing areas affected by migration. Careful targeting of beneficiaries, communities and geographical areas is key to ensure that the project / intervention has the intended impact on migration, for example by generating alternatives to migration. In order to maximize their impact, policies and interventions on migration-prone youth and rural areas with a high prevalence of outmigration should target in particular:

- ▶ **geographical areas with high rates of outmigration and/or high rates of remittances received;** characterized by high unemployment (especially among rural youth); affected by natural shocks and climate change causing migration; and with potential in terms of agricultural production and other rural activities that could create jobs.
- ▶ **youth that are likely to migrate** because of individual characteristics (age, sex, education level, employment and marital status) or perceptions and actions (willingness to migrate, having taken steps to migrate, having migrated and willingness to return, lack of positive expectations towards staying in their areas of origin).

Taking into account the different priorities and contexts in Tunisia and Ethiopia, the targeting for rural employment creation was based on the criteria in **table 2**.

Firstly, the project facilitated **access to land**. In **Ethiopia**, unused land was made available to each beneficiary group, supplied by the local governments. In **Tunisia**, the project supported the youth in requesting credit to purchase land and in leasing land, including from diaspora members.

Second, to overcome the challenge of **access to finance and equipment**. In **Ethiopia**, group savings were encouraged as a condition to participate in the programme and to cover running costs (such as fuel for water pumps); while in Tunisia, youth were accompanied in accessing credit available for small and medium enterprises and agricultural projects from national institutions. To provide youth with start-up equipment to initiate a productive activity, the RYM project provided the required technologies in kind, to youth groups in Ethiopia, with equipment provided that included irrigation material, food processing units, greenhouses and tree nurseries, as well as livestock to start animal production activities. In **Tunisia**, the selected 49 agricultural enterprise projects benefitted from in-kind grants in the form of

equipment (in the order of USD 2,000-3,000). Out of these 49 projects, the most promising 10 received an additional in-kind contribution for an amount equivalent to USD 10,000. The agricultural enterprises supported cover a wide range of agricultural sectors and activities and reflect differences in regional contexts. Among the activities are natural sheep breeding, tree nurseries, beekeeping, food processing, valorization of oasis waste products, agricultural services (such as soil and water analysis), camel milk production and processing, agricultural services.

Third, in order to address lack of **information and skills**, theoretical and practical technical training was provided in **Ethiopia** to group members on technical skills in agriculture (such as dairy, fattening, horticulture, beekeeping, poultry production), as well as on soft skills, entrepreneurship, access to social protection. In Ethiopia, this was done through technical group trainings, which also included entrepreneurship skills, in collaboration with local colleges and training centres. Capacitating the youth through technical training helped

Table 2: Targeting criteria in Tunisia and Ethiopia

	TUNISIA	ETHIOPIA
Regions	<p>High unemployment rates</p> <p>Low regional development index</p> <p>High prevalence of outmigration (Net migration rate)</p> <p>Importance of agriculture (contribution to the economy and land use)</p>	<p>High unemployment rates</p> <p>Prevalence of poverty</p> <p>High prevalence of outmigration (Net migration rate)</p> <p>Importance of agriculture (contribution to the economy and land use)</p>
Selection process	<p>Agricultural project (individual youth and associations) selected through a Call for proposals, based on the criteria of: innovation, enhancement of the positive linkage between migration and development, and contribution to (direct or indirect) employment generation.</p> <p>Additional criteria were, gender balance and environmental impact, and the soundness of the agricultural enterprise idea and financing scheme (among others). Selection by the Committee of the Regional Agricultural Enterprises Incubators</p>	<p>Youth selected in collaboration with the target rural communities and decentralised offices of the ministry of agriculture</p>
Beneficiaries	<p>Unemployed rural youth (or associations with prevalence of unemployed youth) proposing innovative agricultural projects (as selected by the call for proposals)</p> <p>Youth aged less than 40</p> <p>With completed diploma or higher degree</p> <p>Resident in the target regions of North-West and South-East</p>	<p>Unemployed rural youth from with proven willingness to: join a youth group; participate in agricultural activities; participate in technical trainings; and contribute with between 5 and 20 per cent of start-up capital for the intended investment (either own investment, or family support)</p> <p>Youth aged less than 40</p> <p>No particular education requirement</p> <p>Resident in the target regions of Amhara and Oromiya</p>



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them to acquire the necessary skills and confidence to engage in productive activities independently. In **Tunisia**, the capacity building took a more complex form under the patronage of the Agricultural enterprises incubators (of the Ministry of agriculture) and the reinforcement of the process of “agricultural coaching” (*accompagnement agricoles*). The agricultural enterprises were coached through four phases: (i) Guidance and orientation to transform the idea in a project; (ii) Detailing the project, including through the business plan, market study, financing; (iii) Implementation of the project; and (iv) Management and development of the agricultural enterprise (including post-creation and marketing) to fulfill the full potential of the agricultural enterprises. The *Accompagnateurs agricoles* have a very important role as agents of change. They provide both technical guidance in agricultural techniques, and motivational coaching and encouragement, which is fundamental to build the confidence and self-esteem to succeed as an entrepreneur. Youth project beneficiaries have been encouraged by the RYM project to remain in their rural areas of origin and invest in agricultural activities, providing viable alternatives to migration.

4. Enhancing the contribution of the diaspora to rural development

Challenges

The **diaspora is a key actor in migration and development**. However, diaspora’s engagement in agricultural and rural development is limited. The main **challenges** to diaspora engagement in that regard include:

1. Rural populations are more dispersed, as are their diasporas; it is difficult to find strong diaspora associations for specific rural areas.
2. Rural areas are remote; channelling contributions towards agriculture and rural development projects is risky (in terms of outcome), costly, and requires more organization and support to access information and investment opportunities.
3. Networks and partnerships between rural development institutions (e.g. ministry of agriculture) and diaspora associations are limited.

Approach and results

In Tunisia, the RYM project addressed these challenges by piloting an innovative mechanism for the engagement of the diaspora to enhance its positive contribution to rural areas of origin. As a result, more than 50 per cent of the agricultural enterprises supported by the RYM project benefitted from a financial and technical contribution of the diaspora (initial target set was 30 per cent). Such positive outcome was the result of awareness raising and capacity building covering all the phases of selection and support of the agricultural enterprises implementation. Ad hoc assistance, including mediation between young producers in Tunisia and diaspora members and support to establishing business communication was provided to projects financed by Tunisians living abroad. This innovative diaspora engagement process covered various stages of the RYM project and included the following steps:

- Step 1: Selection criteria in the call for proposals.** During the call for proposals for agricultural enterprises to be supported by the RYM project. Three of the selection criteria for funding of the submitted projects were related the co-funding or technical support raised from a diaspora member (often a relative or a friend of the applicant) and to the direct contribution of migration. Filling these criteria increased the score of the submitted project.
- Step 2: Raising awareness for the call for proposals.** During the advertising of the call for proposals, through the Incubators of agricultural enterprises of the Ministry of Agriculture, campaigns and meetings were held to raise awareness on the potential of the diaspora's contribution. In particular, these highlighted the importance of the diaspora participation, the possible modalities of engagement and potential contribution to agricultural projects, and the methods to solicit the engagement of the diaspora member to support the candidate to the call for proposals.
- Step 3: Formalisation of the engagement of the diaspora member.** During the process of the projects' application, and once the candidates

were pre-selected, they were asked to provide a certificate of engagement signed by the member of the diaspora who agreed to support to the project. This formal engagement specified the nature and scope of the technical or financial support to be provided.

- Step 4: Training of agricultural coaches on diaspora mobilization.** A module on migration and development was integrated into the training plan for the agricultural coaches supplying tools and skills for mobilizing and engaging the diaspora.
- Step 5: Tailored support to the young agricultural entrepreneurs benefitting from diaspora's contribution.** To strengthen the positive and constructive collaboration between the youth and the migrant abroad, individual tailored support was provided by the agricultural coaches to ease communication, maintain commitment and enhance problem solving.
- Step 6: Organisation of Diaspora days.** Once the diaspora support to selected agricultural enterprises had concretized, two Diaspora days were organised in the North-West and South-East regions in July – August (the time of the year when the migrants abroad return for their Summer holidays) bringing together diaspora members, agricultural entrepreneurs, central and regional government institutions and the general public. Diaspora Days represented an opportunity to motivate and sensitize young people on the potential of Tunisians living abroad in financially and technically supporting rural and agricultural enterprises, and were also aimed at revitalizing interest in agricultural investments among the diaspora members. In addition, these Diaspora days, which were very well attended and mediatized, showed the engagement of centralized and decentralized offices of the ministry of agriculture, member of the diaspora and agricultural producers, in creating partnerships for the promotion of agricultural projects for the development of the communities of origin.

Figure 1: The steps of the diaspora engagement process in agricultural enterprise projects



5. Contributing to policy coherence between migration and rural development

Challenges

The limited policy coherence between migration and agricultural and rural development represents one of the main challenges to the design, planning and implementation of coordinated interventions in these domains. As a consequence, institutional frameworks dealing with migration issues at national level are generally disconnected from the administrations in charge of agriculture and rural development strategies. Likewise, agricultural and rural development policies are often not migration-sensitive.

Approach and results

In Tunisia, the project contributed to **policy coherence between migration and rural development**, by providing support in the systematisation and accreditation of the profession of *accompagnateur agricole* (agricultural coach), including its role as an agent of change in a rural migration context. This was achieved through the participatory development of a *Reference guide* to the profession *accompagnateur agricole* which is being annexed to the Investment Law (2016) and a *Toolkit for the coaching of agricultural enterprises*. The project also supported the integration of rural development in the thematic working groups for the operationalization of the new National Strategy on Migration.

In Ethiopia, the project has contributed in creating new partnerships between the decentralized governments and ministries of agriculture, training institutions and communities, which have contributed to a sense of ownership and engagement to sustain the creation of agricultural enterprises for rural jobs creation. Furthermore, the project was closely engaged in the development of the *National Rural Job Opportunity Creation Strategy*, led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources on future job creation activities in rural Ethiopia. This Strategy, which integrates migration as an important dimension of rural development, aims at engaging unemployed and underemployed rural youth, in the creation of decent rural jobs, thereby contributing to the growth and transformation of Ethiopia by 2025, and beyond.

At the global level the RYM project significantly contributed to disseminate lessons learned on the nexus between migration and rural development and to inform global level processes such as the Global Migration Group (GMG).

THE RYM IN PERSPECTIVE

The RYM project has been the first experience of FAO in addressing in an integrated manner the dimensions of migration, rural youth employment and agriculture and rural development. Hence, the experience gained through the RYM at global and country level has allowed to develop some of the approaches that can be replicated in other contexts.

In particular, lessons can be learned from the RYM project experience in Tunisia and Ethiopia, in terms of targeting of project beneficiaries and geographical areas, creation of employment opportunities as an alternative to migration, enhancing the contribution of diaspora to rural development through sustaining investments, mainstreaming and integration of migration in agricultural strategies, regulations and programmes. The RYM project has been the first experience of FAO and collaborating Ministries of Agriculture in Tunisia and Ethiopia, in addressing the dimensions of migration, agricultural and rural development and rural youth employment. The RYM has also supported the forging of new partnerships between national stakeholders in the fields of agriculture, migration and labour.

The RYM project has conceptualized and operationalized innovative mechanisms to harness the positive impact of rural youth migration on food security and agricultural and rural development, while mitigating its negative impacts and the drivers of migration.

At country level, many of the strategic actions and pilot initiatives implemented generated catalytic effects, mobilized complementary national resources and have great potential for intensification and scalability.

Examples are:

1. In Tunisia, the RYM project contributed to the institutional reinforcement of the “agricultural coaches” as proximity support to discouraged rural youth, by developing a referential guide which is being annexed to the Investment Law (2016). Furthermore, agricultural coaches were essential both in sustaining the engagement and successful establishment of innovative enterprises by rural youth and in promoting reciprocal awareness and trust-building between the rural population and the diaspora abroad, as partners of joint investments and businesses in Tunisia.
2. In Tunisia, the capacity building workshop gathered stakeholders and decision makers in the field of migration and rural development. While the workshop addressed knowledge and skills gaps, it had at the same time a key outcome to support the process of integration of rural development as a key issue in the thematic working groups for the operationalization of the new National Strategy on Migration.
3. Regarding the recognition of the potential contribution of the diaspora to agricultural development in Tunisia, through the specific elaboration of the Call for proposal to select pilot agricultural projects, which prized the contribution of the diaspora, and the targeted training and coaching by the *accompagnateurs agricoles* to ensure the concretization of this contribution, more than 50 per cent of the selected projects have a formalized agreement for financial or in-kind support by a member of the diaspora, which is a first-time experience for FAO and for the Ministry of Agriculture of Tunisia.



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4. In Ethiopia, close participation of the decentralized bureaus of the Ministry of Agriculture and the involvement of the target communities in addressing land, savings and training needs of the youth was a clear factor of success. The innovative mechanisms set up by the project are being adopted by the local and national authorities as reference for future support for youth job creation in migration-prone areas, especially in the context of the operationalization of the National Strategy for Rural Jobs Opportunities Creation and Food Security.
5. With respect to the piloting of innovative mechanisms for the creation of employment opportunities as alternative to migration, in Tunisia and Ethiopia, after the selection of the youth beneficiaries and the starting of their activities, it was clear that their engagement in agriculture and perception towards their future had changed in the positive. In many cases youth that were previously discouraged, had regained hope and confidence in their capacity to work and be productive in their areas of origin
6. Concerning the engagement of the Ministries of Agriculture, and their interest in addressing the issue of migration, and lack of awareness about migration among agricultural and rural stakeholders, both Ministries in Ethiopia and Tunisia showed a full engagement and interest on migration, acknowledging the direct link between the rural economy and the propensity to migrate, and at the same time the positive and negative impact that outmigration can have on the rural areas of origin, what can be done to enhance the positive impact while minimizing the negative impact.

LINKS AND RESOURCES

The webpage of the RYM project, which includes all the documentation produced under the project (<http://www.fao.org/rural-employment/work-areas/migration/rym-project/en/>) is available in English and French.

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