



Youth Employment in Mali

Generating job opportunities to strengthen resilience of rural young populations

→ Context

In Mali, 40 percent of the population is aged between 15 and 40 and youth unemployment rates are extremely high in the rural areas which represents a clear threat to social cohesion and food security within the communities.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is working with the Ministry of Agriculture to implement *Youth at Work: Reducing Rural Poverty* (2014-2016), a programme which aims at generating attractive and decent job opportunities for rural youth with a specific attention to girls and young women, a key contribution to strengthening resilience for food security and nutrition and reducing rural poverty in Mali.

→ Approach

The programme is supporting the creation of 400 new decent work opportunities and the improvement of 1 000 existing jobs in the regions of Kayes and Mopti, through different segments of six agricultural value chains (livestock fattening, milk production and collection, fisheries, vegetable, rice and poultry production).

The programme is based on an innovative approach to skills development (both technical as well as life and entrepreneurial skills) and the promotion of self-employment for young people in rural areas: the "Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools" (JFFLS) methodology, which adopts a holistic approach to facilitate young people's access to credit, productive resources, markets and producers' organizations (see box page 2). It builds on FAO's successful experience in Tanzania with the innovative model of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) for youth employment promotion. PPPs create a win-win situation: private sector actors (including producers' organizations) gain new skilled young members while the public sector reduces the rate of unemployed, underemployed and precarious youth.

Youth at Work addresses the major constraints faced by rural youth in Mali to access decent employment, by (i) proposing environmentally friendly agribusiness skills development, which fits the rural labour market demands; (ii) enhancing access to land, credit, and markets; and (iii) fostering the inclusion of youth in policy dialogue and the mainstreaming of rural youth employment related issues in national development policies and programmes.



Key facts

Location → Mali regions of Kayes, Mopti, Segou, Sikasso

Creating Jobs → 600 new jobs to be created - 1500 existing jobs to be improved

Target group → Youth aged 15-35 in the targeted rural areas



FAO's experience in Tanzania

<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4118e.pdf>

FAO's work on Decent rural employment

<http://www.fao.org/rural-employment/en/>

A video overview of the project's approach is available at :

<http://www.fao.org/rural-employment/resources/detail/en/c/387950/>

→ **Replicability and upscaling**

The approach has recently been replicated in a pilot project specifically targeting young Mauritanian refugees in the region of Kayes. Building on achievements to date, FAO has also started replicating and upscaling the model in the south center of Mali (in the regions of Segou and Sikasso) from January 2016, now featuring new activities to address the specific barriers to employment (including self-employment) faced by rural youth under 18, particularly in the rice, sesame and fonio value chains. 200 sustainable jobs will be created and 500 existing jobs will be improved.

→ **Youth and resilience: FAO's experience in Mali**

Since 2012, FAO actively partners with several UN agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, ILO, WHO, UNICEF and UNESCO) to implement a joint programme on *Youth and resilience* in Bamako and the North regions. Since early 2016, FAO also participates to the implementation of the joint programme "Support to human security in North Mali by the promotion of community-based initiatives for the resilience of youth and women".

What is the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools methodology?

FAO has developed the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) methodology to address the challenge of youth unemployment. JFFLS is a tested approach, through the guidance of facilitators, that trains vulnerable rural youth in agricultural, business and life skills needed to earn a decent living, and to become more productive and active members of their communities. For instance, students may learn about protecting their crops from diseases, and then use this as a basis for learning about how to protect themselves from human diseases that can similarly threaten their livelihood and well-being.



→ **More information**

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