Internal migration appears as a massive phenomenon, exceeding international migration as there are around the world 740 million internal migrants compared to 214 million international migrants (UNDP 2009). Many internal migrants originate from rural areas, and one could assume many of them are youth, given their higher propensity to migrate. In fact, the World Bank (2007) notably argues that young people are 40 percent more likely to move from rural to urban areas or across urban areas than older individuals.

Overall, there is a general lack of reliable and comparable data on internal migration which does not allow to fully comprehend the internal migration patterns of youth, neither its determinants nor outcomes. Much of the available evidence is at country level and comes from case studies. For instance, the World Bank (2007) finds that more than half of the 4 million internal migrants moving across provinces in Vietnam over the period 1994-1999 were young people (aged under 25 years), with a highest migration rate within the 20-24 years old category. According to the World Bank (2011a), in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal, internal migrants are in average younger than migrants moving towards other African and OECD countries. For Burkina Faso, the World Bank 2009 survey (2011a, p. 27), finds that nearly all internal migrants were farmers in their original place of residence.

Through earlier contributions to the preparation of the GMG Joint Thematic Report on Youth and Migration, FAO (2011) has provided arguments explaining the higher propensity of rural youth to resort to internal migration. The most important is undoubtedly the lack of decent employment opportunities for youth in rural areas, and the high incidence of vulnerable employment and poor working conditions among youth. In addition, work in the agricultural sector suffers from a negative perception i.e. it is often associated with low returns, drudgery and demanding work but at the same time low social status (Leavy and Smith, 2010). In South Africa for instance, teenage girls experiencing farm life have a negative opinion of it, i.e. they associate it with low wages, low social status, lack of privacy and social isolation (Kritzinger, 2002). As a consequence, Juma (2007, p.2) stresses that in Tanzania agriculture is perceived by young people as the “employer of last resort”.

Ultimately, it is important to note that migration among young adults may be also determined by decisions within the family level, as part of household livelihood strategies. This is particularly true in contexts of lack of social safety nets and weak capital markets, such as rural areas (NELM, Hoddinott, 1994). In such contexts, migration is often a strategy to escape situation of distress due to severe livelihood constraints (Waddington and Sabates-Wheeler, 2003). Those who engage in ‘distress migration’ may lack important resources that migration might necessitate, such as economic assets like savings and also various forms of capital such as human capital, social capital i.e. the ability to make use of networks, or cultural capital i.e. language (World Bank, 2011b). The poorest are less likely to migrate than individuals from the middle and upper end of the income distribution or might migrate but only to access to activities with lower returns and more risks (World Bank, 2011b). For instance, poor and rural migrants may be more likely to migrate to urban areas and to neighbouring countries. For instance, in Nicaragua, they are more likely to migrate towards Costa-Rica while better-off migrants are more likely to migrate towards the United-States (World Bank, 2011b).

Improving the ability of poor people, and especially youth, to benefit from migration might necessitate for instance to increase the availability of information on employment opportunities and labour rights at destination. In China for instance, McGranahan and Tacoli (2006) argues that

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1 Data from Plaza et al. (2011) refer to the average age of the middle fifty percent of the sample.
increasing the rights of migrants, i.e. removing the status of ‘illegal’ or ‘unregistered’ migrants, would enhance the access of migrants to more adequate and safer working conditions and fairer pay conditions. It is also important to promote access to innovative financial instruments that decrease transfer costs of remittances, as well as investing in improved infrastructure (World Bank, 2011b). More importantly, policy measures are needed to promote decent employment opportunities for rural youth. In this area, FAO is extremely active by promoting integrated approach to promote employment in agriculture and related activities, also accounting for opportunities emerging from more dynamic rural-urban linkages as rural areas transform.

Considering the above, FAO has contributed with more detailed inputs to UN Joint Thematic Report on Youth and International Migration:

Part I: Challenges

a. Why youth?

- Children and youth constitute the main share of population in many developing countries, accounting for almost half of the rural population. Almost 72% of households living in extreme poverty, on less than US$ 1.25/day, live in rural areas, where the majority of the working poor and food insecure households are also found. Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa are among the regions with highest shares of rural population, incidence of extreme poverty in rural areas, working poverty, and employment in agriculture.

- Young people leave mostly because of lack of opportunities at home. Unemployment and under-employment are major issues youth face, along with high economic insecurity, poverty and pronounced decent work deficits. Agriculture is the main sector of employment of rural people. However, rural youth generally are under-represented in development policies and they lack access to adequate education opportunities and productive assets. All this impedes them accessing decent employment in rural areas and represents a push factor of migration.

- Unemployment rates for youth are almost 3 times higher than adults ones in all regions of the world, ranging from nearly 2 times in Sub-Saharan Africa to 5 times in South-East Asia (ILO 2010). In 2008, people aged between 15-24 made up nearly 25% of the working age population, but accounted for 40% of total unemployment (ILO 2010).

- Young workers represent about 24% of the world’s working poor and are often employed in agriculture (ILO 2010). It has been estimated that 152 million young workers were living below the US$ 1.25 a day poverty line in 2008, accounting for about 28% of all young workers (ILO 2010).

- While unemployment is a major problem for urban youth, rural young people are particularly vulnerable to working under poor conditions. Rural youth are often found in unpaid family work, especially in agriculture, or employed as own-account, wage casual and seasonal workers in the informal economy, where they earn low wages, have limited job security and insufficient access to social protection.

- Migration is seen by youth as a strategy to cope with limited employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas. Research on impacts of the global food crisis, and recently food price volatility, has also shown increased in migration for work in half of the countries surveyed. In some cases, like in Nepal and Yemen, almost 10% of households reported an

\[2\] ‘Decent work has been defined by the ILO and endorsed by the international community as being productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Decent work involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income; provides security in the workplace and social protection for workers and their families; offers better prospects for personal development and encourages social integration; gives people the freedom to express their concerns, to organize and to participate in decisions that affect their lives; and guarantees equal opportunities and equal treatment for all’ (ILO 2007:ii). The Decent Work Agenda comprises four pillars, namely: employment creation and enterprise development; social protection; standards and rights at work; governance and social dialogue.

increase in migration, and in Nepal the share reached about 30% in rural areas (Compton et al. 2010). 

- Rural out-migration, particularly migration out of agriculture, is also associated with rural youth aspirations and perceptions. Most youth seems to have a negative perception of farm life, linked to the type of work performed, and to the limited profits, lack of mobility and low status associated to working in agriculture (Leavy and Smith 2010).

- In a globalised world, the ability to absorb the growing youth workforce is a crucial challenge, which will affect migration patterns. The failure to address youth employment and entrepreneurship development, particularly in rural areas, may have negative effects on the stability and sustainability of economic development, and the efforts made in reducing poverty and food insecurity.

b. Facts and Figures: international migrant youth and adolescents

- According to the World Bank (2006), a third of total migrants from developing countries are aged 12 to 24. The overwhelming majority of international migrants moves within the same region or to neighbouring countries. This is particularly true for most youth moving out of rural areas, which tend to engage more frequently in temporary forms of migration. In an analysis of 29 developing countries, young people were found 40% more likely than older people to move from rural to urban areas or to move across urban areas (World Bank 2006).

- According to the UNDESA-Population Division (2010), while migrants in developed countries have a median age of 43 years, in the least developed countries the average age is 29 years. Indeed, nearly 60% of international migrants under the age of 20 reside in developing countries, and, among all the regions, Asia hosts the largest number of youth migrants (about 39% of total migrants).

- All these figures point toward the need to emphasise the role and impacts of youth South-South and inter-regional migration, as well as internal migration and rural-urban linkages.

c. International migration and human rights: children, adolescents and youth

- Child migration is particularly important in relation to child labour prevention and the reduction of the worst forms of child labour. Children may be affected by migration in two ways: children who migrate themselves and children affected by the migration of their parents. It is necessary to stimulate the collaboration among different stakeholders to promote a better understanding of child migration and translate these findings into policy interventions.

- Migrant children represent one of the most vulnerable categories of overall migrants. Children may be vulnerable to trafficking, abuse and exploitation, and they often encounter various difficulties in accessing basic social services, such as healthcare or education. Children not in school may become more vulnerable to exploitation and to engage in the worst forms of child labour. It is important to highlight that 60% of total child labour is in agriculture, 59% of total hazardous child labour is also found in agriculture. A gender-sensitive approach is to be taken, as different strategies may be necessary to get girls out of work and into school than with boys.

- Concerning children left behind in rural areas, while remittances may provide additional resources to the household, children may suffer from the separation and may also be required to take on family or working responsibilities.

7 UN-DESA (2010), “Population Facts”, No 2010/6, United Nations
• Adopting a rights-based approach is also fundamental to guarantee young people the right to food and to work under decent conditions. Youth face considerable decent work deficits: they are often employed under informal, low-paid and casual contracts, and they have limited access to social protection measures, as well as limited voice and rights.

d. Gender dimension of migration
• Gender and age, including gender discrimination in access to resources and employment opportunities, and the exclusion of women and girls from land inheritance, may affect migration patterns. Women and young girls’ migration has increased over time; nowadays half of the total migrant population is female, albeit significant differences across countries are to be considered. Female migration has been driven by the demand of labour in certain sectors and industries. Yet women face discriminations in terms of job quality and earnings, and rural women continue to face many mobility constraints. Nevertheless, there are also examples of young women who move for longer distances and for longer periods of time than young men, usually engaged in seasonal and temporary migration (Tacoli and Mabala 2010).
• Migration can provide women and young girls with new opportunities, changing gender roles and responsibility, ad increasing their economic independence through the engagement in non-farm activities. However, migration can also negatively impact those who stay behind, including children and youth, increasing their work burdens and exposing them to new vulnerabilities (FAO 2010). At community level, migration can also bring to considerable social and structural changes.
• Policy options need to provide viable alternatives to rural out-migration, addressing push factors in a gender sensitive way, but also ensuring that migrants can access decent work opportunities and equal standards of protection and services. It is also necessary to support the creation of migrant associations, a better integration of returnees and the productive use of remittances to maximise the benefits of migration, particularly in terms of gender equality and development.

Part II: Opportunities

a. Opportunities at home and abroad: Towards a governance of labour migration
• Migrants often maintain close linkages with their communities of origin and they can contribute in creating new employment opportunities, compensating, through remittances and transfer of knowledge and expertise, for the negative impacts of migration in terms of brain-drain and labour shortages. It is therefore necessary to emphasise the migration-development nexus and create synergies between agriculture/rural development and migration policies, promoting better opportunities at home and abroad. In this regard, FAO, in collaboration with ILO, strategically works to mainstream rural employment and decent work into national policies. Considering the linkages between youth employment and labour mobility, labour migration policies should take into consideration the four pillars of the decent work agenda, namely employment creation and enterprise development, social

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8 The right to adequate food is realized when every person has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement. The right to food refers directly to the right to work, as the most sustainable and dignified means of food procurement (both in terms of production and economic accessibility).
protection, standards and rights at work, and governance and social dialogue\textsuperscript{11}. The Decent Work Country Programmes for the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) of Tuvalu and Kiribati, for instance, refer to the regulation of seasonal migration of temporary workers to New Zealand under the Recognised Seasonal Employment (RSE) policy, which allows seasonal workers to be employed in plantations during the agricultural growing season\textsuperscript{12}. Ways to better manage these schemes considering synergies with agricultural and rural development programmes back in the areas of origin of seasonal workers could be further explored.

- FAO stresses also the need for rural youth to have access to vocational training and education. To respond to this need, in 2004 the Junior Farmer Field School (JFFLS)\textsuperscript{13} approach was developed, and the programme is now implemented in several countries in Africa, Asia and Middle East. JFFLS combine support to vocational educational training opportunities with employment promotion. The schools have a unique methodology and curriculum, providing agricultural, life and entrepreneurship skills in an experiential and participatory learning approach. Using the agriculture growing calendar as a model for life, youth learn agricultural skills while developing corresponding life lessons such as setting goals, importance of personal space for growth, and teamwork. The youth are encouraged to develop healthy and positive skills using cultural activities to keep local traditions alive. Providing a safe social space for boys and girls, the schools address gender sensitivity, child protection, psychological support, nutrition, education, and business skills. By developing agricultural skills, youth learn the importance of sustainable farming practices and the environment.

- The JFFLS are linked to an employment-oriented component through which JFFLS graduates organize themselves in Youth Farmers’ Associations (YFAs) and, after receiving specific agro-business trainings, are linked with markets and rural finance institutions and facilitated access in farmers’ organizations.

- The JFFLS-YFAs has also been included as one of the main activities in the UNJPs for “Youth Employment and Migration” in Malawi, Mozambique and Sudan, as well as in the UNJP Jobs for Peace in Nepal. The approach and mechanism adopted demonstrated to be an excellent tool to reduce and manage migration and promote youth employment in rural areas, while proving to be highly flexible to adapt to country-specific contexts and needs. JFFLS-YFAs is going to be promoted in Tunisia in a forthcoming FAO project in response to the recent crisis, which has had significant impacts in terms of youth and migration.

b. Social and Economic Integration of young migrants

- The concept of co-development (improvement of social conditions both in source countries and countries of residence) promotes a better integration of young migrants in host countries, and wishes for a more active engagement of diaspora communities for the promotion of youth employment and productive activities in countries of origin. Migrant networks and associations play an important role not only in reducing the risks of migration, facilitating the integration of the newly arrived, but also in fostering local development, through collective remittances and participation in development projects.

c. Youth, migration and the international remittances agenda

- At household level, remittances\textsuperscript{14} are a crucial supplement of regular income, particularly in rural areas. They contribute in reducing vulnerability and help poor households coping with income shortages and smoothing consumption. Increased disposable income allows people not to take on low-paid and exploitative activities, thus substantially contributing in improving well-being and employment conditions.

\textsuperscript{12} http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/program/dwcp/countries/index.htm
\textsuperscript{13} http://www.fao-ilo.org/fao-ilo-youth/fao-ilo-jffls/en/
\textsuperscript{14} See also IFAD and FAO (2008), “International migration, remittances and rural development”, IFAD, Rome
• Evidence suggests that remittances usually improve education and school attendance, improving youth opportunities to access decent jobs. Remittances may also help in compensating labour shortages, particularly of male and youth members, enabling poor households to hire new labourers. Money sent from migrant workers can also have positive impacts on employment in rural areas when remittances are used for productive investments in farm and non-farm activities, creating new job opportunities for rural youth.

• The role of diaspora networks and migrant associations needs also to be emphasised, considering their potential in gathering collective and social remittances to support youth.

• To maximise the benefits of migration, it is necessary to provide information and incentives to optimize the use of remittances in rural areas of origin, facilitating access to financial institutions and encouraging youth to use formal remittance channels.

Part III: Capabilities

a. Migration, education and health: Challenges and opportunities

• It is necessary to secure youth access to education and health both in countries of origin and destination, in order to build long-term benefits for migrants and their communities. The role of the diaspora networks and returning migrants is particularly important in this context in terms of transfer of human capital, including know-how, technological, professional and entrepreneurial skills, from which local communities can benefit from.

b. Mainstreaming migration into national development planning from a youth lens

• FAO recommends focusing also on the implications of migration on sending areas, particularly on rural communities, harnessing the potential benefits for youth in terms of employment and access to decent work opportunities and hence promote agricultural and rural development. To achieve this objective, it is important to include youth and youth migrant associations in decision-making processes, enhancing social dialogue in order to better take into consideration young people’s views and aspirations.

• It is necessary to support governments\(^{15}\) in promoting initiatives which provide migrant workers with pre-departure information about their rights and protection, as well as potential risks. Pre-departure skills trainings for youth may also positively contribute to the success of the migration experience, with positive spillovers also on the areas of origin.

c. Environmental change, youth and migration

• Climate and environmental changes may negatively affect food-insecure households, especially in rural areas, increasing the propensity to migrate. The linkages between rural youth and migration in the context of a changing climate point out the need to focus on rural development issues, including agricultural development, food security, volatility and high food prices.

References


