



## Enabling Alternatives for Irregular Migration: Broader Training and Income-Generating Opportunities

### About us



The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is part of the United Nations system and the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. IOM supports migrants across the world, developing effective responses to the shifting dynamics of migration.

**IOM Guinea** is the leading organization working to support the voluntary return and sustainable reintegration of migrants in the country. It partners with relevant government agencies and CBOs/NGOs to implement programmes in Migrant Protection and Assistance (MPA).

The most updated data, presented by the World Bank in 2016, shows that Guinea's emigrant stock in 2013 consisted of 398.5 thousand people, accounting for 3.3% of its population.<sup>i</sup>

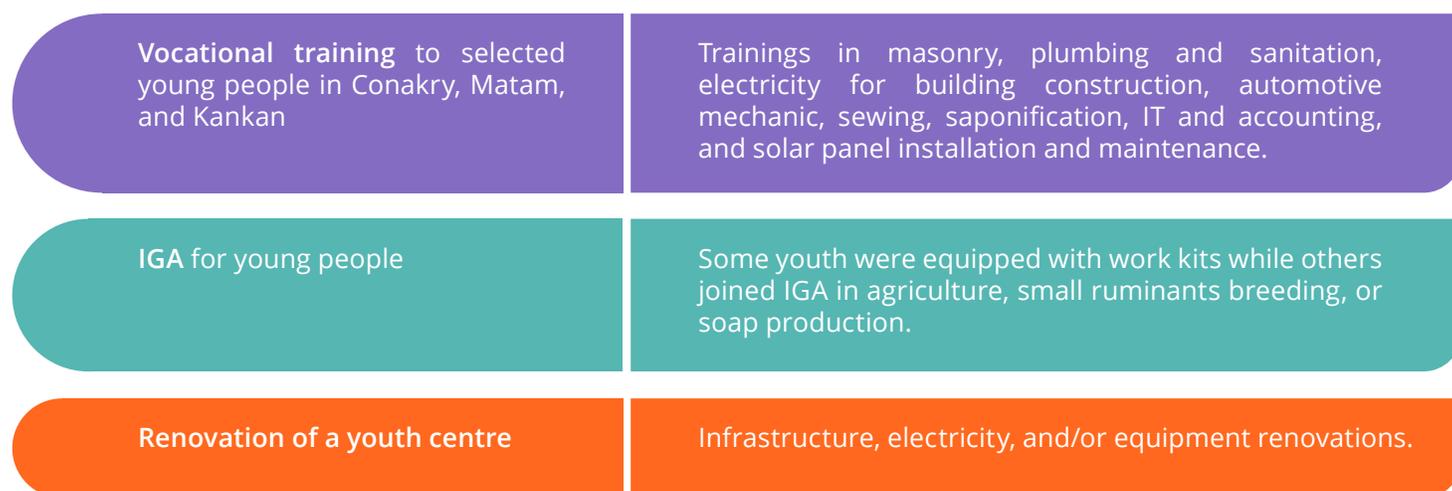
In Guinea Conakry, there is no recent and up-to-date data on migration flows. However, the country is a point of origin and transit for many irregular migrants.<sup>ii</sup>

Both internal displacement to the main cities, as well as the regular and irregular migration from Guinea Conakry are strongly motivated by economic factors, mainly to achieve job stability. While the vulnerability of the economy to climate change (impact of droughts, floods, high temperatures, and high winds in agriculture), socio-political crises, and the underdeveloped infrastructure are also push factors of migration, the economic factor seems to be the one that predominates.<sup>iii</sup>

Along with youth unemployment, underemployment seems to be another cause of migration for economic reasons.<sup>iv</sup>

In line with our commitment to contributing to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals—including ‘Reduce inequality within and among countries’ and ‘Decent work and economic growth’—IOM Guinea has implemented some activities under the SLED project to improve access to vocational training and income-generating activities (IGA) in Conakry, Matam, and Kankan.

### Diagram 1. Examples of solutions implemented by IOM Guinea and its partners through the ‘Supporting local economic development in The Gambia, Guinea Conakry and Guinea Bissau’ (SLED) project



### Overview of key achievements

Some of the key achievements of our work in this period include:

- CECOJE Youth Centre supported in Matam.
- A Professional Training Centre enhanced in Kankan.
- Nine training sessions in partnership with institutes from the public and private sectors.
- Three partnerships with the private sector.
- 200 young people received vocational training.
- 200 young people targeted with IGA (30 IGA + 170 toolkits).

### Enabling alternatives for irregular migration: our contribution to impact in Guinea Conakry

#### Improved knowledge and professional skills of young people

Through vocational training and internships, some young people acquired knowledge and developed and strengthened skills that could help increase their chances of obtaining a job.

### Meet Aicha\*\*

Aicha is 23 years old. She lives in Kankan, the largest city in Guinea. She participated in the training on basic software information and accounting offered by the Centre d'Ecoute, de Conseil et d'Orientation pour Jeunes (CECOJE) under the SLED project. Just like other young people who attended the training, Aicha recognizes the usefulness and value of the activities in which she participated months ago *'I never had a computer, or even worked with one. Now, thanks to this project, I got a computer. I also learned basic software, and I don't have to go the cyber anymore to pay money to do something for myself. I also received accounting knowledge, which means I can manage my own accounting. These activities are really important to me.'*

Like the rest of her peers, Aicha recognizes that irregular migration is a phenomenon that affects many young people in her community. *'[...] Today there are many young people who migrate because they have nothing to do.'* However, thanks to the project, she has reassessed her options. *'[...] After this training, I personally do not want to travel illegally anymore. My only objective is to concentrate on my training.'*

*'[...] I know that many of my friends also want to follow the training so that they can work here in Guinea.'* With this in mind, since the end of the training she has been working on the establishment of an association to train other young people in data processing and notability. She looks forward to receiving support to consolidate her project.

### The experiences of other participants

*'We participated in the training on electricity, plumbing, masonry, solar panel installation, and in the advanced training courses in the field. These could lead to jobs. In fact, I now have a three-month contract. Most of the students got an internship and others got permanent jobs.'*

*'This project has taught me to be a worker, because thanks to this project I have become a worker, we are in an underdeveloped country, for it to be developed we need skilled workers. If God gives me a long life, this little 6-month training will last.'*

*'This training helped me a lot. In Guinea, plumbing is considered an activity for men. Since I started this training, sometimes people invite me to come and help them if they have plumbing problems. Before I used to spend all my time following the boys, but now I don't have that time, because my free days I spend them for my internship or for the repair work. This training was perfect for my needs as a woman.'*

### Improved conditions for young people to establish an IGA

The provision of training and seed capital allowed some young people to start their own businesses. The young people who benefited from this strategy were concerned about the sustainability of their projects, but they were also optimistic about being self-employed.

### Meet Moussa

Moussa is 28 years old and also lives in Kankan. He underwent a professional training in livestock and agriculture and obtained a grant for the implementation of his livestock project.

As part of the project, Moussa received funding to supply his own IGA. *'We have obtained 20 goats, 13 sheep, 1 motorcycle tricycle, barbed wire, basic food for sheep and goats, feeding and watering troughs, sanitary materials, fuel and service costs and accompaniment or subsistence costs.'* Likewise, he acquired knowledge to maximize the productivity of his business. *'Before, I had no notion of the reproduction of goats and sheep, nor the number of times in the year they can give birth. If we base ourselves on the new techniques of reproduction that we learned, each goat will be able to have 3 births in 13 months. Thanks to this training, I have received the knowledge about this technique.'*

In addition to his livestock project, Moussa decided to venture into agriculture, following his parents' legacy. *'The methodology of the training encouraged me to do agriculture for myself, I'm applying agroforestry in my village and all this thanks to this training. [...] Our parents used to farm extensively, every year we had to clear and burn a new area, but we have learnt that with intensive agriculture we can farm the same area for years using chicken droppings and goat and sheep dung.'*

Moussa found in these activities a source of employment and a way to improve his livelihood. *'These activities are very important, they will be useful even beyond this project. The training we received, the funding we got, and the certificate, all this will be useful for us in our daily life.'*

\* This case study is not the result of an impact evaluation. It captures the voices of participants regarding their perceptions about the effects of the activities. Therefore, the changes presented cannot be entirely attributed to the project.

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<sup>ii</sup> Maastricht Graduate School of Governance (2017). Study on Migration Routes in West and Central Africa: Guinea Migration Profile. Retrieved from: <https://www.merit.unu.edu/publications/uploads/1518182884.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> IOM (n.d.). Guinea Conakry. Retrieved from: <https://www.iom.int/countries/guinea>

<sup>iiii</sup> Maastricht Graduate School of Governance (2017). Study on Migration Routes in West and Central Africa: Guinea Migration Profile. Retrieved from: <https://www.merit.unu.edu/publications/uploads/1518182884.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> Mansare, Sekou (2019). Youth's Decent Employment in Guinea Enabling Factors and a Holistic Approach - IREX

July 2019. School for International Trading. Retrieved from:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334318932\\_Youth's\\_Decent\\_Employment\\_in\\_Guinea\\_Enabling\\_Factors\\_and\\_a\\_Holistic\\_Approach\\_-\\_IREX](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334318932_Youth's_Decent_Employment_in_Guinea_Enabling_Factors_and_a_Holistic_Approach_-_IREX)



## Enabling Alternatives for Irregular Migration: Engaging Diaspora Members in a Skills Transfer Strategy

### About us



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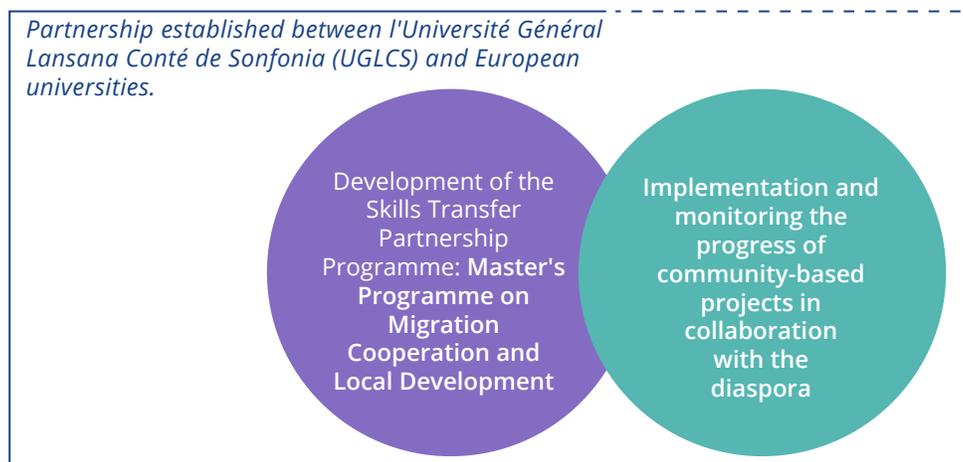
The 2008 National Education Conference identified certain challenges, including poor school enrolment; regional, gender, and income inequalities; and persistent and high illiteracy rates. Based on these issues, Guinea Conakry has been working on improving the school enrolment rate in primary and secondary education; building on the capacity of teachers, trainers, and researchers; and investing in the development of technical and vocational education.

However, tertiary education seems to be concentrated in the agricultural sector, the mining sector, and the health sector as they are considered priority sectors. This has left aside the development of knowledge and skills focused on national development and even more on migration issues.

In line with our commitment to contributing to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals—including 'Reduce inequality within and among countries', 'Quality education', and 'Decent work and economic growth'—IOM Guinea has implemented

some activities under the SLED project to engage diaspora members in promoting capacity-building actions to increase young people's knowledge on how to link migration to local development and to enable alternatives for irregular migration.

## Diagram 1. Examples of solutions implemented by IOM Guinea and its partners through the 'Supporting local economic development in The Gambia, Guinea Conakry and Guinea-Bissau' (SLED) project



## Overview of key achievements

Some of the key achievements of our work in this period include:

- Master's Programme on Migration Cooperation and Local Development.
- 25 students enrolled in the Master's programme (15 men and 10 women).
- Five community-based projects mentored by diaspora members.

## Skills Transfer Strategy: our contribution to impact in Guinea Conakry

### **Greater knowledge of the link between migration and development among young people and strengthened community-based projects through the knowledge transfer with the diaspora**

The Master's Programme on Migration Cooperation and Local Development expanded young people's knowledge about the relationship between migration and development and it developed their skills to strengthen said link. On the other hand, the support and guidance of the experts from the diaspora has boosted some youth-led community-based projects.

### **Meet Ibrahima\*\***

Ibrahima is 25 years old and lives in Conakry. He was enrolled in the Master's Programme on Migration Cooperation and Local Development. Ibrahima highlights how important his participation in the project was in the context of the pandemic. *'In 2020 everyone was involved in the fight against COVID-19 but the best thing I got was the achievement of this master's degree which allowed me to learn a lot of new things.'* He enthusiastically

acknowledges all the benefits he gained from the project, *'thanks to this master's degree I expanded my network, I met new friends, and obtained a new profession; being a farmer. [...] Today I can develop and submit a project to a donor, and I learnt that if local development opportunities are promoted then young people will stay here to work.'*

In addition to the knowledge he gained through his master's degree, Ibahima received training in business management and entrepreneurship and was awarded a grant for the establishment of a layer poultry farming project. Through the training he learned to conduct a market analysis, present his project to local authorities, manage financial resources, and complete legal forms. And through the grant, he received supplies to start his business. *'I received a TVS motorbike, 3,500 laying hens, 50 starter drinkers, 50 adult drinkers, 70 starter feeders, 70 adult feeders, 50 nest boxes, 2 thermometers, transport of equipment, food for chicks, and payment of services.'*

Regarding his project, beyond the inputs, Ibrahima highlights the follow-up by experts that he received throughout the entire process. He stated, *'The advice they [experts from the diaspora] gave us was very useful as it allowed us to think about the economic model we want for our project and reoriented the various awareness-raising and information-sharing mechanisms that we wanted to put in place.'*

These were the aspects that Ibrahima most valued from his experience as part of the project. In his own words, *'What I appreciate most is first of all the support that would allow me in the coming months to be independent since I would not need to be employed by someone else. Then, the master's programme and business management training, in addition to the support we received from the diaspora.'*

### Meet Sekou

Sekou is 27 years old and as Ibrahima, he lives in Conakry.

He was part of the Master's Programme on Migration Cooperation and Local Development. This, according to him, *'is something huge since there was no master programme in this field here in Guinea.'*

Like the other young people who were part of the programme, Sekou acknowledges that the classes provided him with information that he did not have. He remembered that *'before the classes I had no idea about the concepts of migration, how Guinea can manage migration, and how the diaspora can contribute to invest in the country.'* But now, after having completed the Master's programme, Sekou understands the importance of encouraging the participation of the diaspora in the development of their countries of origin. *'If we can get the African diaspora to take an interest and invest in the development of their locality, then we will be able to better promote the development of young people and of our communities.'*

In addition to the master's degree, Sekou attended a business management training and received funding to start a micro-project. He proudly points out that his business does not contribute to environmental degradation and that it has provided employment to two more people in his community. Sekou looks forward to the future and is grateful to IOM.

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## About us



The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is part of the United Nations system and the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society.

IOM supports migrants across the world, developing effective responses to the shifting dynamics of migration.

Having established an operational presence in 2001, **IOM The Gambia** officially became a country office in July 2017. It implements an extensive range of programmes in Migrant Protection and Assistance (MPA). IOM works closely with the Government of The Gambia and with national and local partners to build their capacities to protect migrants, promote their rights, and better manage migration.

The Gambia has made significant progress in strengthening its migration governance. This is crucial considering the urgency of controlling migration flows to and from abroad, especially in the context of demographic trends shaping the country, such as rapid population growth. On the one hand, The Gambia has ratified most of the international, regional, and subregional migration-related conventions as a member State of both the African Union and ECOWAS. On the other hand, it has progressively developed a policy and legal framework that regulates immigration, emigration, refugee status, irregular migration, and human trafficking, among others.

However, with an estimated 118,000 Gambians living abroad, migration has taken on a greater role in Gambian society.<sup>1</sup> As a consequence, the need to integrate migration-related issues into national development policy has become increasingly urgent. This synergy requires the strengthening of capacities within the government institutions involved in migration since their internal ability to develop and implement effective policies on migration and development (M&D) has been a major challenge.

In line with our commitment to contributing to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (including 'Reduce inequality within and among countries'), the SLED project has allowed IOM The Gambia to implement various activities to engage national and local stakeholders in promoting migration policies that include the link between migration and development.

## Diagram 1. Examples of solutions implemented by IOM The Gambia and its partners through the 'Supporting Local Economic Development in the Gambia, Guinea Conakry and Guinea Bissau' (SLED) project

—→ **Capacity building for the Diaspora Directorate under (MOFA)** through the provision of Information Technology (IT) equipment, the development of a website and diaspora data portal, and the engagement of embassies and the diaspora regarding investment opportunities.

—→ **Delivery of Migration and Development capacity-building training** to national and local authorities.

—→ **Diaspora mentorship programme for government institutions** in identified priority areas to involve diaspora members in creating alternatives to prevent irregular migration in their countries of origin.

## Overview of key achievements 2019–2021

Some of the key achievements of our work in this period include:

- 2 capacity-building trainings in Migration and Development to national and local authorities.
- 70 national and local authorities trained on Migration and Development (M&D).
- 4 diaspora mentorship activities for government institutions with 51 officials (29 men and 28 women).

The project activities influenced the achievement of some progress in integrating migration into national development policy and debates:

- Development of the Labour Migration Strategy.
- The Labour Market Information System was updated to a Labour Market and Migration Information System.
- Dissemination of the National Migration Policy for The Gambia and of the Labour Migration Strategy.
- Discussions on how to incorporate migration-related issues into the draft National Development Plan 2022.
- Development of the Diaspora Data Portal and website.

## Context-sensitive migration policies: our contribution to impact in The Gambia

### **Increased availability of tools that provide reliable data and information to integrate migration-related issues into policy.**

According to government officials and the IOM team, tools such as the Diaspora Data Portal and the updated Labour Market and Migration Information System, which were developed as part of the SLED project, will provide data that will drive evidence-based decisions on how to mainstream migration-related issues into national development policies and local development strategies.

Key stakeholders highlighted the following aspects:

- According to interviewees, the Labour Market and Migration Information System that has been developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment, is a platform that will allow different governmental institutions to provide and access reliable data to analyse the linkages between labour and migration. For example, the Ministry of Higher Education can supply information on the number of people that have graduated from college while the Ministry of Trade works in anticipating the number of people that will need jobs. The information collected from crossing the data from different institutions can be useful to inform public policy decisions and development strategies.
- The Labour Market and Migration Information System and the Diaspora Data Portal will help to understand the profile of the people who want to migrate or who have migrated. According to the interviewees, these platforms collect information that answer the following questions: how are people migrating internally and externally? where are they going? what skills do they gain when they migrate? why are the people migrating? what jobs are Gambians doing abroad?

Having a clearer profile of the people who want to migrate or who have migrated will allow government officials to understand the demands and gaps in the country. This information will be useful to make informed decisions about how to discourage irregular migration and how to integrate the diaspora into national development strategies.

- The Diaspora Data Portal is the first portal that seeks to bring together the government of The Gambia and Gambians in the diaspora. Through the publication of investment opportunities, information on remittances, training, and job opportunities, people from the diaspora will be encouraged to contribute to the development of their country of origin. At the same time, the Ministry of Trade and its government counterparts will gather information about the diaspora and identify opportunities of collaboration.

### **Increased interest, knowledge, and interministerial dialogue on the contribution and need to integrate migration issues into the country's development policy.**

The capacity-building trainings on Migration and Development and the inter-ministerial discussions within the framework of the Technical Committee have contributed to making migration more prominent in policy discussions.

Key stakeholders highlighted the following aspects:

- According to key informants, the SLED project opened spaces for high-level conversations about migration coordination mechanisms, labour migration, and diaspora engagement in The Gambia.
- Through trainings, government officials acquired knowledge and capacities to develop a Labour Migration Strategy and they also learnt how to work with other governmental entities from different levels.

- The SLED project brought planners from different ministries together to understand how migration can contribute to national development. This was crucial since, according to key informants, in the planning of State policies, migration was not even considered for budgeting.
- Planning for vulnerable migrants in the community—including victims of trafficking—is new to development planners. Before SLED, this was seen by many officials as a responsibility of international organizations.

### Strengthened migration governance framework

The development of the Labour Migration Strategy plus the dissemination of the National Migration Policy for The Gambia and the discussions on how to incorporate migration-related issues into the draft National Development Plan 2022 represent an important advance in migration governance.

*'The project allowed to do things that are much, much focused on setting up a structure in place for migration management and immigration governance. So, for us, it was very important to have this project to be able to, for example, help the government in launching a national migration policy, which is the first standalone migration policy in this country. This is a highlight since this policy provides guidelines for the government to be able to manage migration better. [...] Not only that, but the project was also able to really engage the diaspora in national development efforts. I think these are just sort of foundational structural setup.'*

-IOM official

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<sup>i</sup>IOM The Gambia (n.d.). Facts and Figures. Retrieved from: <https://gambia.iom.int/>



## Enabling Alternatives for Irregular Migration: Broader Job Opportunities and Stronger Employment Services

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More than 35,000 Gambians arrived in Europe by irregular means between 2014 and 2018.<sup>i</sup>

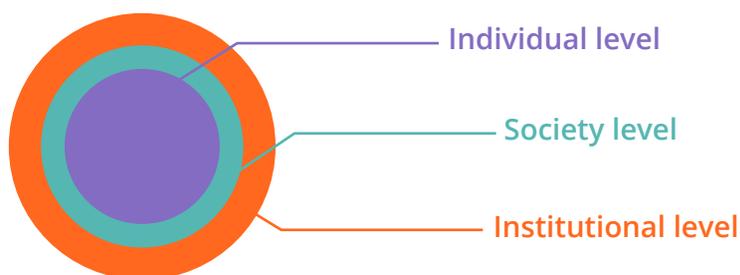
According to the report *'Migration in The Gambia; a country profile (2017)'*, irregular migration from The Gambia is on the rise, especially among youth. The main migration-related pressing issues are demographic and economic pressures caused by a high population growth rate, high poverty rates, an economy highly vulnerable to external shocks, and a national unemployment rate that affects over 30% of the population.<sup>ii</sup>

In this context, young people bear a disproportionate share of the unemployed (40% of young people who are currently economically active are unemployed) either due to low educational level, lack of skills, or mismatch between the skills they possess and those demanded in the labour market.<sup>iii</sup> Therefore, many young people undertake irregular migration pursuing socioeconomic advancement and, thus, exposing themselves to great risks along the way.

In line with our commitment to contributing to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals

(including 'Reduce inequality within and among countries', and 'Decent work and economic growth'), the SLED project has allowed IOM The Gambia to implement different strategies to improve youth's access to employment services and job opportunities in Brikama, Gunjur, Kerewan, Farafenni, and Basse.

## Diagram 1. Examples of solutions implemented by IOM The Gambia and its partners through the 'Supporting Local Economic Development in the Gambia, Guinea Conakry and Guinea Bissau' (SLED) project



### Individual level

- Training and mini grants—in the form of work kits—for youth to develop income-generating activities in different areas including fashion, general merchandise, animal husbandry, horticulture, cosmetics and design, general service delivery, tailoring, hairdressing, food and beverages, poultry, and gardening.

### Society level

- Awareness-raising activities in five selected communities on alternatives to irregular migration to offer information about the risks and implications of irregular migration and on the opportunities available in The Gambia.

### Institutional level

- Capacity-building training for the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MoTIE ) on job counselling and labour market information services to improve their skills to guide young people to access the labour market with adequate information.

## Overview of key achievements 2019–2021

Some of the key achievements of our work in this period include:

- 5 awareness-raising activities on irregular migration involving authorities, community and religious leaders, and families.
- 300 people reached through awareness-raising activities (161 men and 139 women).
- 1 capacity-building training for MoTIE on job counselling with 21 participants (13 women and 8 men).
- 150 young people (89 women and 61 men) trained and supported with mini grants for the development of income-generating activities.

## Our contribution to impact in Guinea-Bissau

### Increased awareness of the risks and implications of irregular migration and of the opportunities available in The Gambia

According to the young people who participated in the different awareness-raising activities, the testimonies shared by the Migrants as Volunteers helped to debunk the misconceptions young people often have about living abroad. Likewise, information about the dangers and risks that people face on the journey (*'back way'*) may have contributed to discouraging irregular migration for some of the participants.

#### Meet Omar\*\*

Omar is 18 years old, he lives with his mom and his younger siblings in Brikama, the *'Satey Ba'* (meaning *'big town'*), one of the largest cities in The Gambia. Despite being the youngest participant in the session, he speaks enthusiastically and remembers the legacy of his older brother, who lost his life in his journey to Europe. Aware of the danger of following in his brother's footsteps, he participated and encouraged his friends to get involved in the awareness-raising activities organized by the SLED project. Omar knows very well the situation of young people in his community and the reasons why many decide to embark on the trip abroad, the *'back way'*. He explained to us [...] *the conditions here are very challenging. The youth are very talented in my country but when you talk about the resources and opportunities they have, they are very limited and for that reason, so many people have left. [...] People will run to go out because through the internet you will see what the people abroad have, they are making real money and here we are not having anything, so you are forced to go.'*

Omar enjoyed the project activity in which he participated, and particularly appreciates the testimonial of the returnee [...] *when the returnee was giving his story, that was the best.'* However, he emphasizes the need for young people to have access to real opportunities. [...] *The story was terrifying; we were all terrified and we don't intend to go there but now the best part of the story is the opportunities he had. So, we just want to see the opportunities in real life for us.'* Beyond his claim for real opportunities, Omar acknowledges the contribution of the SLED project [...] *I think the project is very important because it has changed many people's minds. I have many friends who were planning for the bad way and after hearing about the project many changed their minds.'*

### Meet Nadia

Nadia is a 26-year-old teacher, she lives in a rural community near Kerewan. She and her colleagues attended an awareness-raising activity on irregular migration. The session, which was organized by the SLED project, was very useful for them. Nadia appreciates the information shared by a young returnee about her experience abroad as there is an erroneous belief in her community that irregular migration only affects men. In her own words *[...] People think only men are involved in this migration. But, if you look at it, even women get involved. So, the activity helped both men and women.'*

In addition to the experience of the Migrant as Volunteer, the participants also received information about the opportunities available in The Gambia. Nadia describes this part of the activity as encouraging, she hopes that her students will not have to go to other countries in search of a better future.. *[...] There are a lot of job opportunities that we can access without going to Paraguay. [...] The IOM came in and told us a lot about their opportunities. They shared the job and training opportunities that they have because they train people on different jobs that you can engage on.'*

Finally, Nadia left a message for IOM: *'I will just want them to bring more and more projects in The Gambia so that more youths will benefit from it. I am sure a lot of young women want to take part of it because in The Gambia here we have a lot of dropout students that are married, and their husbands cannot meet all their needs. So, they will love to have a job for themselves and their families.'*

### Meet Ebrima

Ebrima is a young man who lives in Brikama. He saw his older brother travel to Italy. Unlike him, Ebrima hopes to become a businessman to stay in his country. He attended an awareness-raising activity organized by the SLED project and was very inspired by the testimonial of the returnee who received support from IOM to start his own business. He is optimistic that he will be able to receive this support in the future but in the meantime he has decided to start on his own. He has started reselling cement. *'[The project] changed my mentality, it changed me. Before, when I had any small amount of money I used to go and misuse it. The mentality I have now is that any small amount of money I have, I use it into business. Now I said ...let me just go and buy something and resell it back so that I can have a small amount of profit along the line. So, this IOM session I attend gave me hope, let me always concentrate on business.'*

## Improved skills of the MoTIE and its partners on job counselling

Through the capacity building training for MoTIE on job counselling and labour market information services and the construction and equipment of the Job Centre, the SLED project may have contributed to improving the youth employment systems in the country.

*'It is very crucial for the Department to have vocational counselling and guidance. Our aim as job counsellors is to ensure that young people choose good careers and are informed about what is happening in the labour market. [...] It [the training] was very useful, interesting, and educative; we learnt a lot! The facilitators are experts in their areas and could expose us to different scenarios, lessons, approaches, and perspectives that broaden our understanding of the subject matter. We now have a wider view of how to conduct job counselling, invite job seekers, counsel and guide them through researching and reconsider their decisions when choosing their career path. The training equipped us with the skills to guide the youth to access the labour market with adequate information and skills. The training has really strengthened the day-to-day running of our job and contributed to our career development by providing us with more tools. For us, this training is a plus for the public employment services.'*

- Official of the Department of Labour of MoTIE.

*'Two Job Centres were launched in this region where the youth can go and connect with employers, they will be able to share their CVs, and they could also see available job applications to apply especially in this region [Upper River Region] where the rate of irregular migration is high. [...] Sometimes young people find it difficult to find available employment opportunities and, of course, the rate of irregular migration is related to the lack of employment.'*

-Official of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

*'The project worked on renovating a Job Centre in Basse. Before, there was no place for young people to find out what opportunities were available or whether there was training or funding opportunities. At the centre now youth can access job counselling sessions and develop skills such as writing CVs, communication skills, basic ethics, among others.'*

-IOM official.

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<sup>ii</sup> IOM (2017). Migration in the Gambia: a country profile 2017. Retrieved from: Page not found | Dakar Regional Office for West and Central Africa (iom.int)

<sup>iii</sup> Ministry of Youth and Sports (2019). National Youth Policy of The Gambia 2019 – 2028 Retrieved from: <https://nyc.gm/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/National-Youth-Policy-of-The-Gambia-2019-2028-Final.pdf>



## NGOs Working in Partnership with OIM to Provide Broader Job Opportunities in Guinea Bissau

### About us



The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is part of the United Nations system and the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society.

IOM supports migrants across the world, developing effective responses to the shifting dynamics of migration.

IOM's collaboration with NGOs is defined in Article 1(2) of its constitution, according to which the organization 'shall cooperate closely with international organizations, governmental and NGO, concerned with migration, refugees and human resources in order, inter alia, to facilitate the co-ordination of international activities in these fields. Such cooperation shall be carried out in the mutual respect of the competencies of the organizations'.

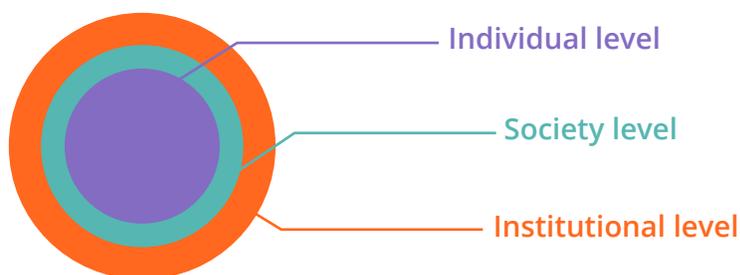
An estimated 18 thousand Guinea-Bissau nationals arrived in Europe as of 2018.

Irregular migration remains prevalent in West Africa. Migration from Guinea-Bissau is mainly economically motivated and predominantly affects young men. The lack of opportunities for a secure and fulfilling future—particularly among male youth whose unemployment rate hovers around 30%—often drives these youth to embark on dangerous migratory journeys in search of a better livelihood. According to data from the Migration Data Portal,<sup>ii</sup> the number of migrants is almost 1% of the population. Based on a study conducted among the Guinea-Bissau diaspora in Italy, about one-third (34%) of migrants reported the presence of war or conflict as the reason for leaving Guinea-Bissau. Another third (32%) reported having left because of economic reasons, and the last third left the country due to having poor or no access to essential services.<sup>iii</sup> A large proportion had no formal education or had only completed primary level and were unemployed when they left the country. Many migrant workers were in the low-skilled sectors, including domestic work, informal trade, and agriculture.<sup>iv</sup>

The prospects of young people of finding employment were limited either due to a low educational level, lack of skills, or mismatch between the skills they possessed and those demanded in the labour market. There is no vocational training plan at the government level. The gap in vocational training is partially filled by initiatives led by NGOs.

In line with Guinea-Bissau's commitment to contributing to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals—including 'Reduce inequality within and among countries' and 'Decent work and economic growth'—IOM Guinea Bissau has implemented different strategies through the SLED project to improve youth's agency and employment. IOM Guinea-Bissau partnered with three NGOs, Anadec, Caritas, and ADIC Na FaYE. The partnership with these community-based organizations, which are respected in the communities of intervention, facilitated the trainings and supported the professional insertion of youth in the regions of Gabu, Oio, and the Autonomous Sector of Bissau.

### Diagram 1. Examples of solutions implemented by IOM Guinea-Bissau and its partners through the 'Supporting Local Economic Development in the Gambia, Guinea Conakry and Guinea Bissau' (SLED) project



#### Individual level

- Training and support for entrepreneurship activities for youth to develop income-generating activities (IGA)

#### Society level

- Awareness-raising activities targeting 18 communities particularly affected by irregular migration in Gabu, Bafatá, Oio/Cachéu, and Bissau/Biom to offer information about the risks and implications of irregular migration and the opportunities available in Guinea-Bissau.

#### Institutional level

- Construction and equipment of a job centre.

## Overview of key achievements 2019–2021

Some of the key achievements of our work in this period include:

- Six training sessions in partnership with community-based NGOs.
- One partnership with the private sector. The partnership allowed 40 young people (20 women and 20 men) to participate in training and a professional internship in the installation and maintenance of solar panels.
- Vocational training and IGA targeting 203 youth (123 women and 80 men).
- 170 toolkits provided to young people.

## Our contribution to impact in Guinea-Bissau

**According to the testimonies of the young people who benefited from awareness-raising activities, community-based projects, and IGA, the project contributed to improving their employability, which may increase their prospects for remaining in Guinea-Bissau.**

According to the young people who participated in the different awareness-raising activities, community-based projects and IGA activities were effective in offering relevant and useful information and in providing tools for skills development.

### Meet Aminata\*\*

Aminata is a 25-year-old young woman from Bissau. With her colleagues, she attended an awareness-raising activity on irregular migration. The session, which was organized by the SLED project, was beneficial for them. In addition, she received training in poultry and participated in an internship with a local organization to practice her newly acquired skills. Moreover, she was trained in accounting, marketing, and computer skills.

*‘The activities I participated in were very important; I learned a lot of things, especially how to manage a poultry shop and handle chickens. For example, I am already taking care of our family chickens in my house, although our chickens are much more resistant than the incubator chickens. Even in the time of COVID, things usually went well; the organization responsible for the training continued providing the activities respecting social distance and requesting the used of masks. I learned about these activities through social networks and fliers in the shops in the community.’*

Finally, Aminata left a message for IOM: *‘I would recommend these trainings to other youth because we must improve our knowledge to get better opportunities in the job market. I hope there are more and similar opportunities for more young people in our community.’*

### Meet Cris

Cris is a 25-year-old man who lives in Gabu. He participated in training on renewable energy, assembly, and repair of solar panels and motor pumps, and he attended a one-month internship. In addition, he attended awareness-raising activities organized by the SLED project and was inspired by the information about the challenges faced by people who embarked in irregular migration.

*'The activity I participated in was critical because a young person without a profession is not valuable for society. I learned about the course through a friend; I was out of Gabu when I arrived, I went right away to Adic Na Faye to sign up, and I was on the waiting list. Then, someone dropped out and they called me. I passed the test and I was approved. The course allowed me to get a job; now I can set up a panel, I know the skill. I know I don't have much practice yet, but I can already do some work in this area of electricity and renewable energy. When I receive the diploma, I will find a job more easily. Many young people could drop the idea of migration if they had space and development opportunities to practice their profession. For example, the group who attended the training are thinking about starting our own company to begin work. My life has changed a lot, I have a different CV now, I never thought of emigrating and even less now, only if it is by legal way and for some time only. I think the skills learnt will last, the skills are needed in the market. I believe that after the company starts working, I will conquer the market.'*

The implementing partners were an important part of the strategy. One of them said the following:

*'Working with youth and training them on employability alternatives is not easy when they do not have an education nor employment. The most critical issue is motivating youth who do not have expectations for the future. The role of the NGOs was also motivational. The project brought youth the possibility to change their life situation. Youth want to leave the country; this is a feeling at an internal level. Most of the time, they do not have relatives or anyone in the country they want to go to, but they want to change the condition, and therefore they want to migrate. At the beginning of the project, most of the youth wanted to migrate, but at the end of the training, they had a skill, a new expectation, and were making little money with their new activities.'*

### Improved youth employment system

Through the construction and equipment of the job centre, the SLED project could contribute to improving the youth employment systems in the country. The president of the youth centre explained the potential of the centre and gave some recommendations to IOM:

*'The project worked on renovating a job centre in Bafatá. The youth centre was designed to include all people, including access for people with disabilities. The articulation of the centre's operation with government policies and young people's empowerment are all foreseen in the government's strategic plan. We anticipate that the good management of the centre can create conditions for creating employment opportunities for young people. The centre will have various services, such as vocational training, document collection, information technology that can develop skills for young people, and offer sewing services for girls, cooking, etc. All of which can create jobs for young people. We will also include psychosocial rehabilitation, especially for returned migrants.'*

*'I would put more funds to support awareness-raising actions, to change mindsets and create awareness about the risks of irregular migration, invest in infrastructure, for example, youth hostels and possibilities to hold large-scale social events, accommodation for young people where they can interact, and develop academic activities.'*

\* *This case study is not the result of an impact evaluation. It captures the voices of participants regarding their perceptions about the effects of the activities. Therefore, the changes presented cannot be entirely attributed to the project.*

\*\* *The names of the participants were changed to protect their identity.*

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<sup>i</sup> ILO 2012- Data taken from SLED project proposal submitted to Italian Cooperation

<sup>ii</sup> [https://www.migrationdataportal.org/data?cm49=624&focus=profile&i=stock\\_abs\\_&t=2020](https://www.migrationdataportal.org/data?cm49=624&focus=profile&i=stock_abs_&t=2020) accessed January 15, 2021

<sup>iii</sup> International Organization of Migration. 2019. Diaspora Mapping Profile of the Gambia, Guinea, and Guinea Bissau in Italy

<sup>iv</sup> Idem