

# Irregular migration

## Context

Migration across both national and international borders has notably risen in the past decade, with an estimated 740 million national migrants in 2009 and an estimated 258 million international migrants in 2017.<sup>1</sup> This is a significant increase in international migration, which was an estimated 155 million people in 2000. In 2015 and early 2016, approximately 1.2 million migrants and refugees arrived in Europe alone.<sup>2</sup> Over 16,000 migrants between 2014 and 2018 have either gone missing or lost their lives<sup>3</sup>, while crossing the Mediterranean on their way to Europe. In most instances cross border migration occurs under regulatory norms, in recent years, irregular migration has gained international attention and been deemed a high priority public policy issue.<sup>4</sup>

Food insecurity, lack of livelihood opportunities, and conflict over scarce natural resources are widely recognised as being among the key root causes of irregular migration. Degraded landscapes caused by deforestation and climate change can often lead to an exacerbation of these root causes. In extreme cases it can force families and individuals to cross national borders in search of pasture land, economic opportunities and food security.<sup>5</sup> Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration directly contributes to addressing food insecurity, lack of livelihood opportunities and conflict over scarce natural resources.



Farmers inspecting their fields, Niger

## Root causes of irregular migration targeted through FMNR

- Food insecurity
- Lack of livelihood opportunities
- Conflict over scarce natural resources

## How Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration contributes to reducing irregular migration

### Food security:

Land restoration through FMNR has proved to have a significant impact on improving the natural conditions needed for better crop yields. The integration of food security programming into FMNR amplifies these benefits by contributing to increased and less variable crop yields, increased livestock production, and increased and diversified food options. Food security programming consists of activities related to agroforestry and climate smart agriculture, including the introduction of climate adaptive seed varieties. Agroforestry has been shown to have a notable positive impact on crop performance. Trees can buffer extreme climatic conditions that affect crop growth, such as varying air and soil temperatures, and wind and solar radiation. Tree products also play an important role in assuring food security, especially in the 'hunger months' when grain stores are low and farmers are waiting for the next harvest.<sup>6</sup> Restoration of trees can often result in restored water cycling in the landscape and can increase opportunities for

1. International Organization for Migration, 2017, "World Migration Report 2018" & United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs "International Migration Report 2017 [Highlights]"
2. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017, Europe
3. International Organization for Migration, 2018, "Missing Migrants", Global Migration Data Analysis Centre
4. International Organization for Migration, 2017, "World Migration Report 2018"
5. Mbow, C., Smith, P., Skole, D., Duguma, L. and Bustamante, M. 2014, "Achieving mitigation and adaptation to climate change through sustainable agroforestry practices in Africa. Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability". Pp.6, 8-14
6. Faye M.D., Weber J.C., Mounkoro B., and Dakouo J.M. 2010, "Contribution of parkland trees to farmers' livelihoods: a case study from Mali", Development in Practice. Pp20, 428-434.

greater intensification and diversification of agriculture. Through irrigation and planting of new crops, the process further contributes to food security. In Niger, farmers produce 500,000 more tons of cereal per year than in the 1970s and 1980s due to FMNR<sup>7</sup>. As a result, 2.5 million people are now more food secure.<sup>8</sup> In World Vision's Senegal Beylene Sen Tol project, 61 percent of respondents reported an increase in agricultural productivity (mostly millet, maize, peanuts

### Improved livelihood opportunities:

Regenerating trees through FMNR increases the quality and quantity of crop yields, tree products and Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) such as forage, fruits and nuts. Integrating Market Systems Development programming into FMNR allows smallholder farmers to more consistently sell this produce, thereby increasing and diversifying their income, making them more resilient to economic shocks. Market Systems Development programming includes improving smallholder farmer linkages with other value-chain actors and improving their access to markets, information, technology and training. Household resilience is further scaled up through the introduction of financial inclusion initiatives such as savings groups or microfinance. The increased net total of timber and NTFP also reduces household expenditure on these products.

**“Before the project started, I used to buy firewood. But since 2012, I don't need to buy wood anymore thanks to the technique of pruning trees in my field where I practice FMNR. Now I have wood available regularly. In addition, thanks to the reforestation of eucalyptus, I can also sell wood. Revenues from the harvesting of wood increased from 25,000 CFA francs to 100,000 CFA francs (US\$45 to US\$170) between 2012 and 2014.”**

– Female farmer, Mbella Senegal SFLEI project

In some World Vision projects, selling carbon credits has become an additional source of income for communities. World Vision's Humbo Community-based Natural Regeneration project in Ethiopia is Africa's first large-scale carbon trading forestry project developed under the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). The project regenerated 2,728 hectares of degraded forests, which is expected to generate about \$US760,000 in the first ten years of the project through the CDM.

### Increased natural resources:

As the net total of trees and shrubs increase through FMNR, it can help evade potential conflict over these natural resources. Restored vegetation, increased fertile soil and re-immersion of springs further decreases the scarcity of these resources. It enables men to stay close to home, rather than leave in search of pasture land or economic opportunities. This increased natural resource base not only contributes to addressing cross border migration, but also addresses national migration. This is especially true in areas such as West Africa, where men are more likely to migrate to urban centres during the dry season.

**“My husband would be absent from home many times in the year because he would have to go and ensure the animals get pastures and water ... FMNR came as a saviour to us. With the land that we have regenerated, the animals are able to graze as new grass is coming up”**

– Beneficiary of an FMNR project in Uganda



Farmer Alem Desta Gebre

**Farmer Alem Desta Gebre has been involved in World Vision's DryDev project, in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF). Gebre expressed, “as a young man, I went to Saudi Arabia for work as I saw no future here” due to insufficient harvest yields and livestock production for his family. However, he notes that, “today this is like Saudi Arabia to me ... my kids and I will not leave this valley again. We all do well here, so we can stay”.**

7. Reij, C., Tappan, G., Smale, M. 2009, “Agro-environmental transformation in the Sahel: another kind of “Green Revolution””, IFPRI Discussion Paper 00914. International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington DC

8. ibid