

CASE STUDY: Region of Saint-Louis, Senegal

Including rural communities: creating employment opportunities and improving livelihoods through coordination and partnerships between national and local players

Global Programme on Making Migration Work for Sustainable Development (M4SD)

KEY WORDS: inclusive rural development, coordination mechanisms, national and local partnerships, employment, entrepreneurship, young people, returning migrants, women, equal access

MEET FATMA

Fatma is originally from and lives in the municipality of Rosso, Senegal, which is in northern Senegal in the Saint-Louis region. This rural municipality, made up of a little more than 10,000 inhabitants, is situated next to the Senegal River which separates Senegal and Mauritania, and is accessible by a simple ferry. To complete a training course in business administration, Fatma had to travel to the city of Saint-Louis, more than three hours away. Back in Rosso, Senegal, at the age of 29, she had difficulty finding a job. She struggled to support herself and her family by selling goods at the market, but her income fluctuated. Despite her education level, she feels helpless in her job search and explains that she doesn't know where to start looking for jobs in the area. She dreams of working in fish farming here in her local community. She sometimes sadly considers crossing the border into Mauritania in hopes of finding a job there, as some of her childhood friends have done.



THE SOLUTION?

Accessibility of public services in rural territories, notably information on job opportunities, is a challenge shared by all public service organizations, whether local or national. National and local players must strengthen coordination mechanisms to capitalise on existing services and bring them closer to rural communities. This bridging role is currently performed by the Bureau of Local Employment Information and Promotion, or the “Bureau d’Information et de Promotion de l’Emploi Local” (BIPEL), set up in Rosso, Senegal in 2022 by the Saint-Louis Regional Development Agency (ARD). BIPEL provides local information, exchange, guidance and support for youth, women, returning migrants and potential migrants in the Saint-Louis region in their entrepreneurial or job-seeking projects. The municipality of Rosso Sénégal is one of three pilot municipalities in the Saint-Louis region (along with Ross Béthio and Fanaye) that now have this advice and guidance tool for youth, women and returnees in favour of skills training and employment.



“Bureaus of Local Employment Information and Promotion were the State’s missing link in reducing inequalities in access to information on employment, training and work placements for young people living in rural areas”.

M. Mamadou DIOP, M4SD Programme Focal Point, Saint-Louis ARD

HOW IS IT DONE?

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

TARGET 17-14



ENHANCE POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The fight against unemployment and underemployment remains a major concern for the Senegalese authorities as part of the fight against poverty, as demonstrated by the mechanisms put in place within the **National State-Private Employers Agreement to promote Youth Employment**. By capitalising on existing mechanisms without duplicating or subsuming them,

BIPELs **strengthen coordination and promote policy coherence** by ensuring the integration of young people, women and returning migrants into the labour market nationwide.

TARGET 17-17



ENCOURAGE EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

This is a whole-of-government approach bringing together multiple partners: **the regional and local authorities**¹ (the Saint-Louis Regional

Development Agency and the Bureau d'Accueil, d'Orientation et de Suivi), the national authorities in conjunction with civil society, and the various **institutions involved in promoting employment**², with the support of **UN agencies** (the International Organisation for Migration and the United Nations Development Programme) in the service of employment and training for **young people, women and returning migrants**.



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

TARGET 11-A



STRONG NATIONAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

By **providing access to government employment and training services** in the most remote areas of the country, BIPELs help to **improve equality**

between urban, semi-urban and rural areas. By connecting communes to the services offered by the State, these BIPELs strengthen positive economic and social links, regardless of where young people, women and returning migrants live, and provide a concrete response to the rural exodus.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

TARGET 8-3



PROMOTE POLICIES TO SUPPORT JOB CREATION AND GROWING ENTERPRISES

283 people (170 men and 113 women) in 11 communes of the region (including 6 in Podor, 5 in Dagana and 1 in Saint-Louis) applied for **financial (94%) or technical (6%) support** to enable them to access employment or create/strengthen their business. Of these 283 people, 63% are under 35 years old and 20% are migrants (53 men and 5 women). These requests for support target the following areas of activity: agriculture (63%), livestock farming (22%), services (5%), among others.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

TARGET 4-4



INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH RELEVANT SKILLS FOR FINANCIAL SUCCESS

Since the BIPELs were introduced (2022-2023), **187 people** in 20 municipalities in the region (76 men and 111 women) have **applied for training**.

The applicants for training are very young, with 96% aged under 35. They mostly requested training directly related to local needs, namely agriculture, livestock farming, fishing/fish farming, catering and mechanics. The results show that almost all of the applicants want to go into salaried employment, with 68%, compared with 32% who want to start their own business. Moreover, local authorities respond to 68% of the training requests made to BIPELs, (25% for training requests linked to salaried employment and 43% for training requests linked to self-employment).

TARGET 8-5



FULL EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK WITH EQUAL PAY

Since the introduction of BIPELs (2022-2023), **237 people** (136 men and 101 women) **registered with the BIPELs as looking for salaried employment (70%, or 165 people), or self-employment (30%, or 72 people)**. Of the 237 people who said they were looking for work, 93% are under 35 years of age.

¹ The national authorities involved in this programme include but are not limited to the Director of Support for Senegalese Abroad; the Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, Apprenticeship, and Integration; the Ministry of Youth; and the Ministry of the Economy.

² The main employment institutions include, but are not limited to: Job centers, ANPEJ, DER, 3FPT, ADEPME, etc.

SUCCESS FACTORS

TIP 1: Offer local employment and training in rural areas to facilitate access to information for all.

In rural areas, one of the main challenges linked to the employment of young people, women and returning migrants is the difficulty of accessing information on employment opportunities, training, etc. Although guidance and support mechanisms exist for young people, whatever their migratory status, they do not always have the opportunity or the means to travel, sometimes more than 300 km from their place of residence. To strengthen territorial equity, the BIPELs are located in the most remote towns, as close as possible to rural communities, and act as gateways at local level. Several options are given; register your application on the [Sunuxey.com](https://www.sunuxey.com), online platform, go to the BIPEL office to talk to a member of staff who can also help you register on the platform; or meet the BIPEL administrator at neighbourhood forums. This proximity strengthens the accessibility of the services offered by the State and other partners for employment and training for young people, women and returning migrants. This accessibility also strengthens the confidence of workers in the institutions and their ability to take into account and respond to their expressed needs.

TIP 2: Gather data on employment and training needs in a unified way across the country.

The BIPELs collect data from across the country using a single form. This data, broken down by gender, age, level of education, migratory status and geographical location, provides better control over territorial information. By identifying employment and training needs, national and local authorities can improve their understanding of the issues and challenges faced by young people, women and migrants returning to rural areas. The availability of data improves the effectiveness of institutions, as authorities are able to develop policies in the light of this data to better respond to the needs identified by communities in practice, ultimately helping to ensure that no one is left behind.

TIP 3: Strengthen coordination between public institutions and private sector players: alone we go faster, together we go further!

BIPELs act as facilitators by strengthening coordination and partnerships between public institutions with a mandate for the training and employment of young people, women and returning migrants. However, this coordination is only effective if it is accompanied by a proven knowledge of the needs of private sector players at local level. To achieve this objective, the Saint-Louis Regional Development Agency has mapped the private sector to identify the main employment sectors in the region and thus effectively guide young people, women and migrants towards occupations with job opportunities. This mapping was also shared with private sector players at a seminar aimed at raising their awareness of the possibilities offered by the State to facilitate the recruitment of migrants.

TIP 4: Learn from the experiences of the three pilot BIPELs to replicate them more effectively and ensure their sustainability.

The BIPEL model has demonstrated its relevance and effectiveness for both workers and local authorities, who now have access to reliable, harmonised data on the employment and training needs of youth, women and returning migrants.

Based on the results of the three pilot BIPELs, the Saint-Louis Regional Development Agency has capitalised on the model to scale up BIPELs in other communes, notably Gaé, Galoya, Bokhol and Mboumba. Saint-Louis Regional Development Agency has also obtained funding to install BIPEL in the five other communes of the departments Saint-Louis, Gandon, Fass Ngom, Ndiébène Gandiol and Mpal. These new BIPELs will benefit from the lessons learned from the three pilot BIPELs in ensuring that they meet the two main challenges already identified: (i) the response to needs for funding for business start-ups and (ii) support for women. To address these challenges, Saint-Louis Regional Development Agency is looking at setting up a seed capital fund, carrying out a diagnostic of youth employment support schemes and planning to create new synergies with institutions specialising in the inclusion of women. By capitalising on the lessons learned from the three pilot BIPELs, Saint-Louis Regional Development Agency is ensuring the continuity and sustainability of its actions in support of young people, women and returning migrants.

These activities have improved the lives of Fatma and her neighbours in Rosso Senegal

Fatma discovered the existence of BIPEL in Rosso, Senegal, thanks to a forum organised in her neighbourhood. (SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities)

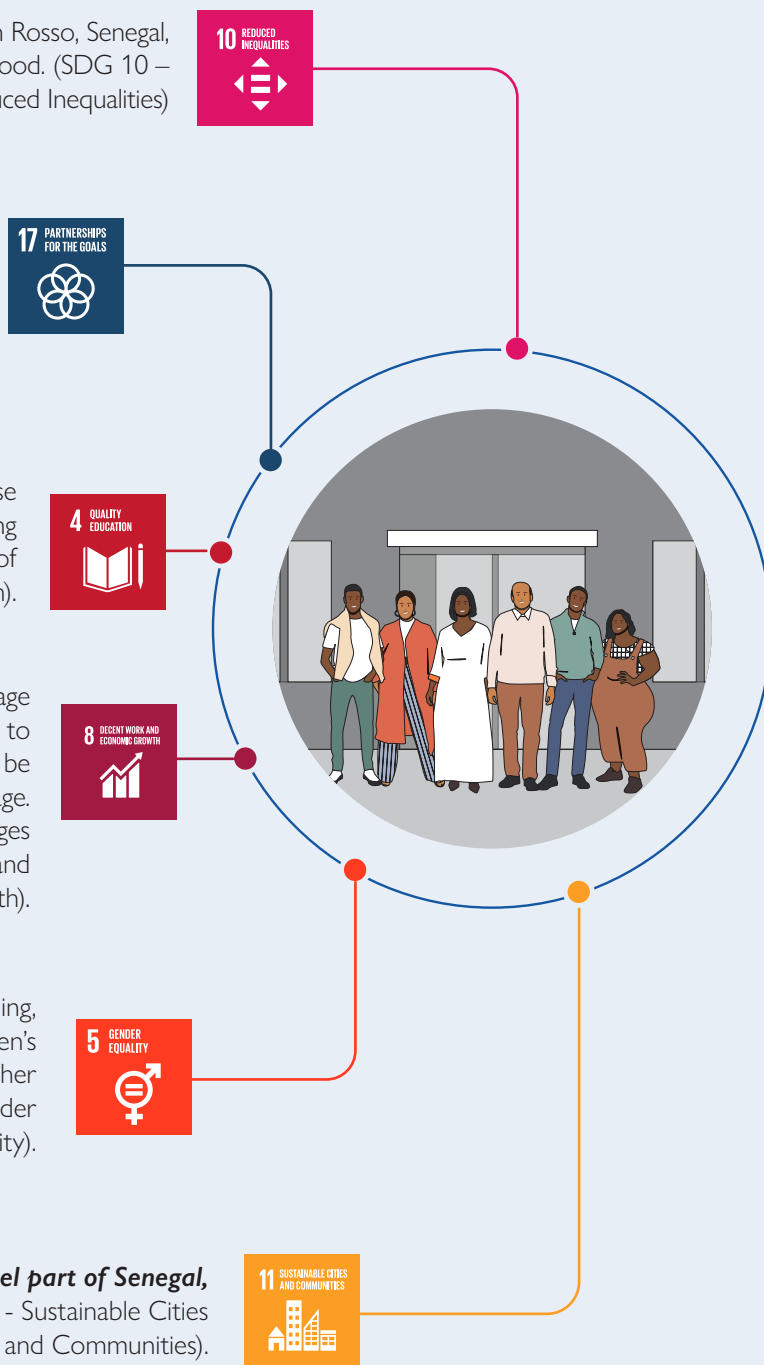
There she met the BIPEL administrator, who helped her register on the [Sunuxey platform](#) to express her desire for training in fish farming. Once her request had been registered, her request for training was shared with all the organisations offering training in this field (SDG 17 - Partnerships for Achieving the Goals).

Fatma quickly followed a 3-month training course during which she learned to build her first fish-breeding cage herself, which broadened her initial knowledge of business administration (SDG 4 - Quality Education).

She recently obtained permission to install the cage in the Senegal River basin. In the future, she plans to continue selling on the market and is delighted to be able to diversify her income thanks to her new cage. She is already planning to build and install other cages to expand her business (SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth).

She would also like to train her friends in fish farming, with a view to eventually setting up a women's cooperative and contributing to the development of her community here in Rosso, Senegal (SDG 5 - Gender Equality).

She added: **“With the BIPEL, I really feel part of Senegal, even if I don't live in a big city”** (SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities).



[Watch the video about M4SD in Senegal](#)

These activities are made possible through the [IOM-UNDP Global Programme on Making Migration Work for Sustainable Development \(M4SD\)](#), a global programme operating in 11 countries from 2019-2023. The Programme is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). [Read more about Senegal's activities.](#)

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