



International
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FAIRWAY Programme

 ETHIOPIA  KENYA  MOROCCO  NIGERIA  UGANDA



 BAHRAIN  JORDAN  KUWAIT  LEBANON

————— Countries of origin in Africa —————

————— Countries of destination in Arab States —————

Donor: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
 Timeframe: December 2019 – November 2023
 Budget: 10.9 million CHF
 Beneficiaries: Migrant workers from Africa and Asia, working in the Middle East
 Cross cutting themes: Migrant workers from Africa and Asia, working in the Middle East



Strategy and objectives

The FAIRWAY Program is a four-year inter-regional development cooperation initiative that aims to improve conditions of labour migration across migration pathways from Africa to Arab States of the Middle East (hereafter 'Arab States') and to better protect all migrant workers in vulnerable situations within the Arab states region, thereby enabling migrant workers to contribute more fully to sustainable development in both countries of origin and destination.

What are the issues the project aims to tackle?



Inadequate policy, regulations, and enforcement frameworks: Fragmentation of governance frameworks leaves migrant workers exposed to significant protection gaps, especially due to a lack of oversight in recruitment processes and restrictive sponsorship laws that tie workers to the employer.



Need to sensitize local and regional companies on decent work in countries of destination: Companies – prompted by consumer awareness as well as tightening legislation on modern slavery – need to take proactive action on eliminating risk of forced labour and ensuring decent work in their supply chains.



Practical barriers preventing low-skilled workers from enjoying their existing rights and accessing opportunities: Migrant workers have limited access to information on safe recruitment, employment options, administrative procedures and complaints procedures and compensation schemes. Migrant workers are limited in their ability to speak out against abuses, and negotiate collectively for better working conditions



Uneven bargaining power between countries of origin and destination and insufficient cooperation within and across regions: Improving labour migration outcomes requires greater cooperation and dialogue across migration corridors. Existing bilateral labour agreements may omit key rights or protection issues and require re-negotiation and implementation mechanisms.



Discrimination and xenophobia towards migrant workers in some destination countries: In discussions on migration, preconceived notions often trump empirical evidence, and the reality is often skewed by misinformation. Discrimination is also visible in policies that reflect entrenched perceptions of workers' abilities based on their gender, ethnicity and nationality.

The project is addressing underlying causes of decent work deficits at their source through national-level interventions in selected countries of origin in East Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda), West Africa (Nigeria) and North Africa (Morocco).

In the Arab States, the project provides continuity to interventions in countries of destination in the Arab States initiated under Fairway Middle East (2016-2019), targeting low-income migrant workers from all regions.

Focusing primarily on key sectors in which migrant workers in vulnerable situations are engaged - including the domestic work and construction sectors - the project seeks to address the interlinked structural, behavioural and practical barriers to improved labour migration outcomes through four objectives:

- 1 Private sector, employers' and workers' organizations engaged for decent work for migrant workers
- 2 Gender-responsive policy frameworks are developed or strengthened for fair recruitment and decent work and regulatory compliance
- 3 Discriminatory attitudes towards women and men migrant workers are diminished; and
- 4 Migrant workers have improved access to information and support services throughout the migration cycle.

Training workshop for recruitment agents Kenya

Courtesy Teresa Wabuko - COTU / KUDHEIHA



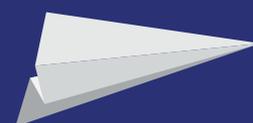
A range of decent work deficits remain a reality for many migrant workers, including deceptive, fraudulent and abusive hiring practices and debt bondage, cases of abuse and exploitation, poor working conditions, and limited voice, representation, and access to justice.



Returning home, migrant workers can also face difficulties in reintegrating into local labour markets or moving out of low-skilled jobs, at times pushing them to re-migrate. These issues have their roots in a combination of governance, institutional, and social challenges, including:

What is FAIRWAY doing to support change and reform?

- Companies, and recruitment agencies have been sensitised to the decent work agenda through the development of practical tools such as the ILO-IOE Guidance Tool for Construction Companies in the Middle East. Research with employers on the impact of COVID-19 on skills gaps (in Kuwait), has shed light on the importance of migrant workers to many sectors, and the need to promote internal labour market mobility.
- Trade unions and migrant workers' associations are being mobilized to advance migrant workers' representation, organization and to provide services to potential and current migrant workers. Bilateral and tripartite regional and inter-regional exchanges have fostered the establishment of important networks and strategies of collaboration. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the trade union organizations in Nigeria and Bahrain, and another is being negotiated between the union organizations in Kenya and Lebanon, to ensure a coordinated approach to migrant workers' rights protection.
- The Programme is addressing structural governance issues by supporting gender-responsive, evidence-based and inclusive policy and regulatory reform, particularly in countries of origin. This includes supporting the operationalization of the gender component of the Nigeria labour migration policy, advising on the Kenya Labour Migration Management Bill, providing technical support towards the creation of the Kenya migrant welfare fund and the strengthening recruitment regulations in Uganda. In countries of destination, FAIRWAY is supporting incremental reform of the sponsorship system, particularly to ensure that domestic workers and other low-wage migrant workers are not left behind from possible sponsorship reforms.
- Building on existing and emerging opportunities for exchange between African and Arab States, FAIRWAY, together with the African Union Commission, supported the first inter-regional tripartite technical meeting between Africa and the Arab States in November 2021 and will continue to support constituents toward greater inter-regional collaboration.
- By harnessing behavioural change strategies and insights, FAIRWAY has helped to promote intersectional exchanges between migrants and nationals in Kuwait, through grassroots 'community meet ups' that promote a shared vision for change.
- The FAIRWAY Programme has supported the development and improvement of Migrant Resource Centres in Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda. These centres and related capacity building support enables labour administrators and social partners to effectively deliver information and assistance to migrant workers, including prior to departure and upon return. Through work with country of origin governments and consular officers in targeted countries, the Programme is working to ensure that African workers are better protected whilst in the Arab States.
- By developing referral networks to offer support to migrant workers in migrant countries of origin, the programme will contribute to ensuring improved access to information, support services as well as improved protections throughout the migration cycle.



Project background

Migrant workers play an essential role in labour markets in the Arab States, making up 41.4 per cent of the labour force. The majority of migrant workers in Arab States come from Asia, though numbers from African countries are on the rise.

The search for decent work and livelihood opportunities is a key driver of migration around the world, with 69 per cent of working age international migrants considered migrant workers, according to the latest ILO estimates (ILO, 2021). On the African continent too, a combination of demographic pressures, a growing workforce, wage differentials, and poor employment prospects at home are key drivers of young African women and men to seek work abroad.

The projected growth of labour migration and mobility from both Asia and Africa creates an imperative to continue to tackle some of the major risks of migration and decent work deficits. The key to leveraging the economic opportunities opened by low and medium skilled labour migration from Africa to Arab States is to ensure that migrant workers are in situations of safety and decent work throughout the migration cycle.

SDC Visit to Kenya Migrant Resource Center - April 2022
Courtesy NEA





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