



CONSTRAINTS TO PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT FACED BY SAFETY NETS BENEFICIARIES IN THE SAHEL

Results of a multi-country qualitative assessment

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ACRONYMS

AIBP	Agro-Industrial By-Products (<i>Sous-Produits Agro-industriels</i>)
ASPP	Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Program (<i>Programme de Protection Sociale Adaptative au Sahel</i>)
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FGD	Focus Group Discussion (<i>Focus Group Discussion</i>)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO/BIT	International Labor Office (<i>Bureau International du Travail</i>)
ILO/OIT	International Labour Organization (<i>Organisation internationale du travail</i>)
KII	Key Informant Interview (<i>Entretien avec un informateur clé</i>)
MDG	Millennium Development Goals (<i>Objectifs du millénaire pour le développement</i>)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PPP	Purchase Power Parity
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WDR	World Development Report

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was developed as part of the Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Program (ASPP), co-financed by The World Bank, DFID, and the participating countries. The methodology used for the qualitative assessment was initially developed by Gwendolyn Heaner. The fieldwork was conducted by the following teams:

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The authors would like to thank warmly all the researchers and consultants involved in the data collection for their excellent and rigorous work, the World Bank teams, the government counterparts coordinating Safety Net programs in the different countries, and all the participants in the Focus Group Discussions and individual interviews for their time and fruitful contributions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the Sahel subregion, which extends over Central and Western Africa, low labor productivity poses a challenge to poverty reduction, economic growth and social stability. Social Safety Net Projects target the poorest households who derive their livelihoods from low-productivity activities. As such, they have the potential to improve labor productivity (Filmer et al., 2014). As part of the Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Program, The World Bank supports the design and implementation of productive accompanying measures for Safety Nets beneficiaries. This report sets out the results of a qualitative assessment of the constraints to productive employment that was conducted in the Social Safety Net project areas, across five of the six countries covered by the ASPP: Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Chad.¹ This assessment identified the main challenges to productivity growth in farm and non-farm sectors and, jointly with other surveys and local and regional consultations, helped define accompanying measures to safety nets programs aimed at increasing current employment productivity and generating more productive jobs.

Poverty and Safety Nets in the Sahel

Despite two decades of sustained economic growth in the region, extreme poverty is increasingly concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa. In a context where the working-age population is expected to more than double over the 2015-2050 period, enhancing employment quality and incomes is one of the most pressing challenges faced by Sub-Saharan countries. Besides, the region records the highest vulnerable employment rate in the world and most of its workers are engaged in low-productivity activities.

Social Safety Nets have the potential to increase productivity and reduce poverty in the medium and long term by targeting poor and vulnerable people whose living conditions are often contingent upon the incomes they derive from low-productivity activities. One of the key objectives of the ASPP is to increase poor and vulnerable people's productivity in order to strengthen households' resilience and reduce poverty.

This report sets out the results of a qualitative assessment conducted in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger, and Senegal on the constraints to enhancing farm and non-farm productivity in the Safety Nets intervention areas. Its main objective is to help define a package of accompanying measures and support their effective implementation to ultimately improve cash transfer beneficiaries' productivity.

The challenge of productive employment

In the Sahel countries of Central and Western Africa, the working-age population will grow significantly over the next decades. According to ILO/BIT's estimates, young people aged 15-34 are expected to account for over half of the working age population in the five countries under consideration. Their employment rates are relatively high but vary across countries. In 2014, Burkina Faso recorded the highest employment rate, followed by Chad, Mali, Niger, and Senegal².

¹ Mauritania is also covered by ASPP, but the qualitative constraint assessment could not be implemented there for logistical reasons.

² Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) 2015 (International Labor Office).

<http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/research-and-databases/kilm/lang-en/index.htm>. Accessed on November 23rd, 2016.

With relatively moderate unemployment rates, these countries' main employment concern is to increase their labor productivity, which remains low and far below the Sub-Saharan countries' average. Although essential to increase productivity, the workforce's education level remains low too. Besides, jobs are concentrated in agriculture, in which productivity is hindered by a lack of infrastructure and by other constraints. The services sector is the second-largest sector in several countries under consideration.

Recent available data show that wage employment accounts for a small share of the total employment in all the countries under consideration, with the exception of Senegal. Own-account work prevails, followed by family employment (such as family helps in household enterprises). The share of vulnerable employment – own-account work and family employment – accounts for over half of the total employment in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Chad. Labor participation is lower among women (whose share in family employment is higher than men's), because women experience additional constraints, including lower education levels.

Methodology

A structured research guide combining Focus Groups Discussions (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KII) was used to conduct the assessment. Previously developed to assess constraints to productivity among own account workers and household enterprises, the guide was tested in Liberia (Weedon and Heaner, 2016a, 2016b) and then in Ivory Coast (Bouaki, 2016) before being adapted to the Sahel countries. Data collection was jointly undertaken by national teams based in each country, in coordination with an international research team as well as with World Bank teams and government counterparts coordinating national Safety Net programs in each country.

The first stage of the study consisted in conducting a literature review to understand the countries' employment situations as well as the constraints faced by households. This literature review identified key issues to be further explored in the qualitative assessment and thus served as a basis to develop the qualitative research guide.

The research manual provides interview guides for FGDs and KIIs, as well as a qualitative database meant to facilitate data management and analysis. The interviews aim at: (i) identifying and understanding households' livelihoods in the Safety Net projects areas; (ii) understanding the role of people's aspirations on their employment decisions; (iii) identifying and prioritizing the constraints to productive employment; (iv) identifying the types of potential interventions to be considered to improve farm and non-farm productivity and to increase households' or individuals' resilience to shocks.

In each country included in the study, a purposive sample of five communities located in the intervention areas of the (current or forthcoming) Social Safety Net projects was selected to represent the geographic and socioeconomic diversity of the project intervention areas (or in the country in the case of national programs). The sample includes rural and urban communities.

In each selected community, Focus Group Discussions convened male and female participants (stratified between poor and more productive households), as well as community leaders. The participants were selected in consultation with the local authorities in accordance with local poverty criteria, in particular in the context of the study people's ability to meet their basic needs throughout the year. Individual interviews were also conducted with poor and more productive individuals, leaders, NGO members, province and municipal authorities, agricultural extension workers and other

persons purposely selected by the national research teams. The Key Informants' selection was meant to enrich the data collected during the Focus Group Discussions.

The interview guides include a Constraint Ranking Matrix, a Participative Diagnostic Tool to identify and prioritize the constraints to productive employment. This tool helps rank constraints through pairwise comparisons of constraints, asking the participants to pick the more severe challenge within each pair. This tool systematically ranks and identifies the major productivity challenges reported by the respondents.

Key results

Livelihoods in the study areas

The livelihood analysis in study areas shows that the labor force mostly consists of farmers or non-farm independent workers, as such reflecting the employment situation in the Sahel countries. However, non-farm activities are also widespread in rural areas, where the non-farm sector is far from being marginal.

In urban areas, most workers are engaged in handicrafts and retail trade. Wage employment is more prevalent in urban areas but only accounts for a very small proportion of jobs. The data collected also shows a clearly gendered division of labor which seems to be linked, at least partially, to social norms and beliefs among the surveyed communities.

Diversification of income-generating activities is quite widespread in the study communities, particularly in rural areas. According to the respondents, diversification is a response to low productivity of local employment (the income earned from a single activity is inadequate to meet the needs of a whole family) and to the serious risks faced by households, including in the agricultural sector.

Perceptions and aspirations

In study areas, the employment situation is globally perceived as poor among the respondents, although it is slightly more positive in easily accessible communities. The country-specific data analysis shows a mixed perception in Niger, which could be explained by some degree of fatalism or low aspirations among the respondents.

Consistently with the extent of self-employment in the study areas, the perception of the "employment situation" seems to reflect the numerous challenges experienced by the respondents in their respective activities rather than their difficulties to find a job. Almost all the FGD participants mentioned (farm and non-farm) self-employment as the best form of employment in their communities. Asked about the reason for their choice, they cited the income level as their main criterion to define an activity as a good form of employment.

Conversely, very few jobs are systematically regarded as "bad". In line with the characteristics attributed to "good" jobs, "bad jobs" are those considered as arduous with respect to the income earned, such as activities such as daily worker in the construction sector, or illicit activities.

People who have succeeded in farm or non-farm activities are mainly perceived as possessing specific behavioral skills or as having received financial support from relatives (essentially family members) or other acquaintances, which facilitated investments in one or several activities. In terms of behavioral skills, they are essentially described as hard-working, determined, courageous and serious persons; although honesty, integrity and generosity are also regarded as crucial qualities to be successful in an

activity. Comparatively, (basic or technical) education is hardly cited as being a key determinant of success.

In the study areas, the respondents clearly aspire to develop or diversify their current (farm and non-farm) activities to increase their income. However, the respondents' employment objectives also vary according to their characteristics: compared with "more productive" respondents, poor respondents report more frequently wishing to diversify their activities. The country-specific data analysis also reveals important disparities: in the Senegalese and Chadian communities included in the study (which are not representative of their national situations), a significant proportion of respondents reported feeling rather pessimistic or helpless about the future.

Challenges to raise productivity

In the study areas, the respondents face multiple risks and constraints to developing their current activities or shifting towards more productive and profitable activities. These risks include climate-related risks, biological hazards (mainly affecting agriculture), but also health-related risks or the non-payment of debts affecting non-farm activities.

The major productivity constraints cited by the respondents include the lack of financial capital, the lack or poor quality of infrastructure and productive assets (e.g. roads or markets), the lack of clients, competition, etc. In the farm sector, the lack of access to modern agricultural inputs (e.g. fertilizers, pesticides or cattle fodder) is the most frequently mentioned challenge, followed by the lack of access to capital, which is the first challenge to non-farm activities. However, the respondents did not cite the lack of basic education as a major challenge (for either agricultural or non-agricultural activities).

The constraints faced by respondents vary according to their place of residence and to their characteristics. Regardless of their characteristics, however, the lack of access to agricultural inputs and the lack of access to capital are ranked first for farm and non-farm activities respectively.

Strategies to overcome constraints to increasing productivity

Although often feeling helpless, the respondents report implementing multiple strategies, both at the individual and household level, to overcome the challenges they experience. Depending on the constraints and respondents' characteristics, they resort to different strategies that often prove costly in the medium to long term.

Diversification of income-generating activities is the most common strategy among respondents, especially in rural areas. Among more productive individuals, diversification is often an opportunity to raise income. Among poorer individuals, diversification is mainly a survival strategy.

Temporary migration is also a common strategy among households, especially in rural areas. Migrants are mostly young men moving to cities, gold mining sites, other farming areas, or neighboring countries.

The urban respondents, especially the more "productive" individuals, also cite credit as a strategy to overcome the challenges they face. The rural respondents report accessing capital by selling assets such as livestock, especially during the lean season, when animal prices tend to decrease, and staple food prices tend to increase.

Solutions suggested by the respondents to improve employment productivity

The respondents were asked to give examples of effective interventions to reduce or remove the challenges they face in their current activities or to access more profitable activities. Their replies

intrinsically reflected their own perception of what were the most profitable activities. The three main interventions desired by the respondents are: promoting access to financial capital, subsidizing productive assets and building infrastructure or repairing/maintaining existing infrastructure.

Accessing financial capital in the form of credit, provided the credit conditions are deemed acceptable, seems to be positively perceived by the respondents. Most of them would invest this financial capital in two sectors perceived as particularly profitable: livestock and trade. Since activities are seasonal, accurately timing this possible financial support would also be crucial, as it could impact the development of both farm and non-farm activities.

Towards interventions to raise employment productivity in the Sahel

Multiple constraints and suboptimal strategies

The populations surveyed in the Sahel countries are facing multiple constraints that directly or indirectly affect their productivity. These constraints vary according to their sector (farm or non-farm sector) and social status (poor or more productive individuals). To overcome the multiple constraints they face, the populations surveyed (especially the poorest) can resort to suboptimal strategies such as selling their productive assets when prices are at their lowest, possibly selling at a loss.

Multiple constraints require multi-faceted interventions

The multiple constraints faced by the populations living in the study areas can likely only be effectively addressed through a set of interventions that simultaneously: (i) reduce the poorest households' exposure to risk and vulnerability; (ii) improve their capacity to cope with shocks and manage risk in the short to medium term; (iii) enable them to acquire and accumulate productive assets; (iv) enable them to develop their skills; (v) build an enabling environment in which vulnerable individuals can "transition" towards more productive jobs or enhance the productivity of their current activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. General background

Despite two decades of sustained economic growth in the region, extreme poverty is increasingly concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa. Recent years have seen a rapid reduction in extreme poverty across the world: in 2012, 12.7 percent of the world's population was living below the poverty line (USD1.90 per day, PPP 2011), compared with 37.1 percent in 1990 and 29.1 in 1999. However, comparing the trends prevailing in the three regions that concentrate most of the world's poverty – Sub-Saharan Africa; East Asia and the Pacific; and South Asia – reveals significant regional disparities. The Sub-Saharan region benefitted from the lowest poverty reduction, 40 percent of the world's extreme poor lived in Africa in 2012 (Beegle, et. al., 2016; Cruz et al., 2015; World Bank, 2016).

Enhancing employment quality and incomes is one of the most pressing challenges faced by the Sub-Saharan countries to achieve poverty reduction and more broadly development (World Bank, 2013 Filmer et al, 2014). The Sub-Saharan population is expected to double between 2015 and 2050, rising from 962 million to 2,1 billion inhabitants. Its working-age population (15-64) accounted for 54 percent of the total population in 2015 and is expected to increase by around 150 percent over the 2015-2050 period, rising from 518 million to 1.3 billion inhabitants (United Nations, 2015).

Economies in the region will have to generate enough quality jobs to absorb this growing labor force. In the region, the average employment rate is high (70.2 percent of the population aged 15 and over in 2015³) and the unemployment rate is moderate (7.4 percent of the total labor force in 2015). These figures have remained relatively stable since the 1990s⁴. In the absence of social protection systems with sufficient coverage to enable individuals to better manage risks and protect them in the event of an income shock, most people have to work (World Bank, 2013; ILO/BIT, 2009). However, the region records the highest rate of vulnerable employment – the share of own-account workers and unpaid family workers in total employment – in the world (ILO/BIT, 2014). Besides, six workers out of ten lived below the poverty line (USD2 PPP) in 2014, which highlights the low productivity and income level of most jobs (ILO/BIT, 2015a).

Despite its constant decrease, the share of agriculture in the total employment remains very high in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially in low-income countries, where agricultural employment accounted for around 66 percent of total employment in 2015. The share of industrial employment remains low, with less than 10 percent of the total employment in 2015. The share of the services sector has increased, accounting for around 31 percent of the total employment in 2015 (without implying a similar increase in labor productivity). Agriculture is a major sector in most economies of the region; however, it is not very diversified compared with other developing regions and its productivity growth is driven by the expansion cultivated areas (IFAD, 2016).

³ ILO estimates. Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) 2015.

⁴ These average rates conceal diverse situations, e.g. the average employment rate in low income countries in the region reaches 78 percent of the labor force (compared with 57.4 percent in middle-income countries), which is higher than the rates recorded in most of the countries. Unemployment is lower than the regional average and affects on average 5.5 percent of the labor force, according to ILO/BIT estimates (Key Indicators of the Labour Market 2015, available at <http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/research-and-databases/kilm/lang-en/index.htm>. Accessed on November 23rd, 2016.).

Box 1: Definitions

- **Unemployment:** all persons above a specified age who during the reference period were without work, but available for work; and seeking work.
- **Employment:** activities that generate actual or imputed income, in cash or in kind, formal or informal.
- **Self-employment:** activities where the remuneration is directly dependent upon the profits (realized or potential) derived from the production of goods or services (where own consumption is considered to be part of profits).
- **Employers:** persons working for their own account or with one or more partners, who hire one or more person to work for them as ‘employees’, on a continuous basis.
- **Labor force:** persons either in employment or in unemployment.
- **Working population (or labor force):** persons either in employment or in unemployment.
- **Employed labor force:** persons in employment.
- **Working-age population:** population aged 15 and above.
- **Own-account workers:** workers who, working on their own account or with one or more partners, are self-employed, and have not hired on a continuous basis any employees to work for them.
- **Employee:** persons engaged in paid employment jobs, holding implicit or explicit (written or oral) employment contracts which give them a remuneration that is not directly dependent upon the revenue of the enterprise for which they work.
- **Family workers:** own-account workers in a market-oriented household enterprise operated by a relative living in the same household.
- **Labor force participation rate:** proportion of a country’s working-age population that is in the labor force.
- **Unemployment rate (total):** number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the labor force.
- **Vulnerable employment rate:** share of own-account workers and unpaid family workers in total employment.
- **Working poor:** proportion of the employed population living in households with per-capita income that is below the national poverty line defined in the country.

Source: World Bank, 2013; Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM), 2015.

1.2. Promoting productive employment – What is the role of Safety Nets?

Promoting productive employment is currently at the center of the strategies addressing poverty and inequalities in African countries (ILO/BIT, 2009; World Bank, 2013). Added in 2007 as a core MDG 1 objective, the promotion of productive employment and decent work has grown increasingly important in the political and institutional decisionmakers’ agenda, becoming a fully-fledged Sustainable Development Goal in 2015.

Safety Net programs⁵ (such as cash transfers or labor-intensive public works, THIMO) in Sub-Saharan African aim at reducing vulnerability and poverty by increasing the poorest households’ consumption level and by ensuring their access to basic social services (Grosh et al., 2008; Monchuk, 2014). In

⁵ The expression “Safety Nets” refers to cash or in-kind non-contributive benefits targeting poor and vulnerable people (for further details, see Grosh et al., 2008).

addition, an increasing number of Safety Net programs in the region include productive components such as training, savings support, accumulation of productive assets, etc. (Monchuk, 2014; World Bank, 2013). Social Safety Nets have the potential to increase productivity and reduce poverty in the medium and long term by targeting poor and vulnerable people whose living conditions are often contingent upon the income they derive from low-productivity activities

One of the main objectives of the Sahel Adaptive social protection program – ASPP, which is financed by the Multi-Donor Trust Fund administered by the World Bank, is to help strengthen households’ resilience and reduce poverty by fostering, inter alia, the productivity of employment and economic activities. More concretely, this program covers six Sahel countries of Central and Western Africa (hereinafter “the Sahel countries”) and combine existing cash transfer programs with productive accompanying measures to address the constraints to productive employment faced by poor and vulnerable households.

In the Sahel countries, poor and vulnerable people’s productivity can be hampered by many factors, such as individual factors (e.g. lack of basic education, lack of technical skills or lack of network) and contextual factors (e.g. lack of access to infrastructure and financial services, climate hazards, etc.) (Filmer et al., 2014). There are two key questions to promote productive employment through Safety Nets in these countries: what are the major constraints to improving productivity among the poorest? What are the most suitable interventions to reduce these constraints while meeting the needs of the poorest? To answer these questions, The World Bank and its partner Governments conducted consultations and a regional diagnostic study in the six ASPP countries. The objective of this diagnostic phase was to provide the information needed for the design and implementation of efficient interventions fostering productive employment in the Sahel. The outcomes of this diagnostic phase include the qualitative assessment results described in this report. In addition, quantitative studies and in-depth consultations were also undertaken to complement the information basis that was provided to the national authorities in order to help them design their own programs.

This report sets out the results of a qualitative assessment conducted in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger and Senegal on the constraints to farm and non-farm productive employment in the intervention areas of the Social Safety Net projects⁶. This assessment was conducted to complement other analytical activities to help identify a set of productive accompanying measures to enhance cash transfer beneficiaries’ productivity.

This report draws on data collected through fieldwork with the objectives to: (i) identify and understand households’ livelihoods in the Safety Nets areas; (ii) understand the role of aspirations in people’s employment choices; (iii) identify and prioritize the constraints to productive employment; (iv) identify the potential types of interventions to be considered in order to improve farm and non-farm productivity and increase households’ and individuals’ resilience to shocks.

The report is structured as follows: Section II describes the employment situation in the countries under consideration⁷; Section III outlines the methodology adopted; Section IV describes the results of the assessment; Section V draws conclusions and discusses possible solutions emerging from these field surveys to promote productivity through Safety Nets.

⁶ For logistical reasons, the data collection could not be conducted in Mauritania.

⁷ In this report, the countries under consideration refer to the five following countries: Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Chad.

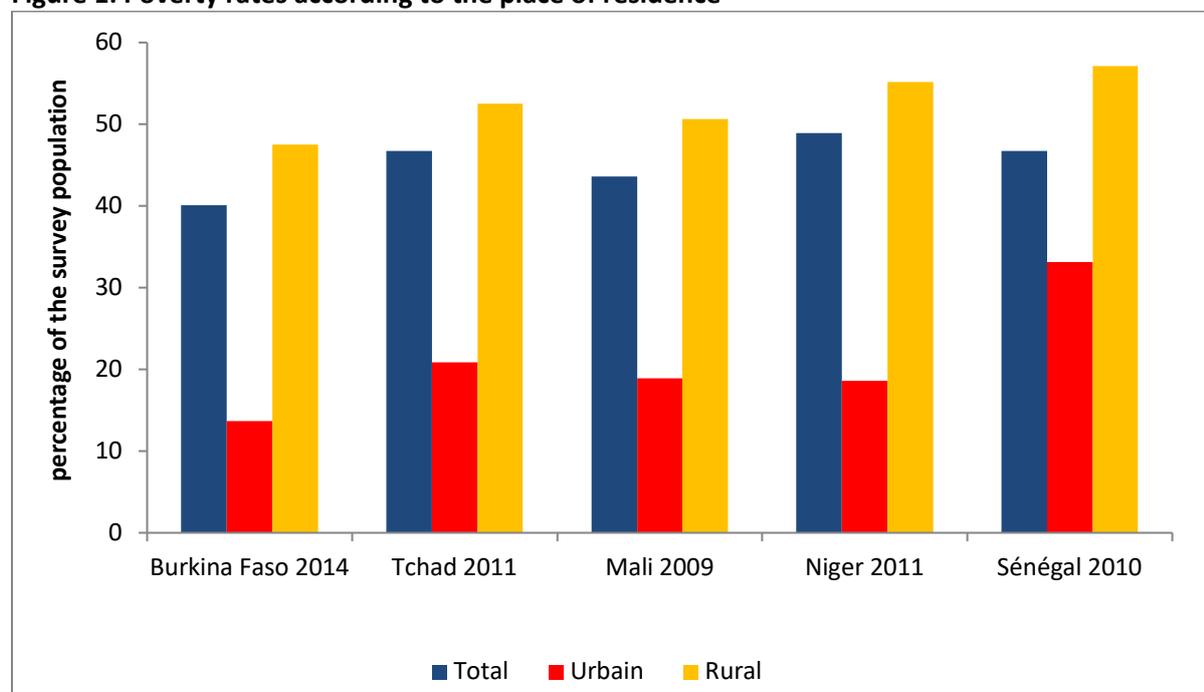
2. THE CHALLENGE OF PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT IN THE SAHEL

This Section describes the population structures and employment situations in the Sahel countries. Its objective is to highlight the challenges faced by these countries in terms of employment and to understand how enhancing employment productivity and income could help reduce poverty and increase resilience in these countries.

2.1. Poverty and population growth

Particularly vulnerable to climate-related shocks, the Sahel countries are among the poorest countries in the world and belong to the low human development category (as measured by the Human Development Index – HDI)⁸. According to the latest available data, over 40 percent of the population live below the national poverty line in the Sahel countries. The incidence of poverty is higher in rural areas, where inhabitants particularly depend on agriculture (Figure 1). Urban poverty rates are over 30 percentage points lower than rural ones, with the exception of Senegal, where the urban poverty rate (33 percent) was 24 percentage points lower than the rural one in 2010.

Figure 1: Poverty rates according to the place of residence



Source: World Development Indicators 2016.

Note: Poverty rates with respect to national poverty lines.

In terms of poverty evolution in the Sahel countries, the population living with less than USD1.90 per day (2011, PPP) has decreased since the beginning of the 1900s, according to World Bank estimates⁹.

⁸ The HDI is a composite index focused on three fundamental human development dimensions: the probability to lead long and healthy lives, as measured by life expectancy at birth; the possibility to acquire knowledge, as measured by the average and expected duration of schooling; and the opportunity to enjoy a decent standard of living, as measured by the gross domestic product *per capita* (United Nations Development Program, 2015).

⁹ It is important to note that poverty may have declined faster in African countries than suggested by the estimates, but the lack of data from rigorous and comparable surveys has hampered effective follow-up of the poverty evolution on the continent (Beegle et al., 2016).

The proportion of people living with less than USD1.90 per day decreased by over 20 percentage points between 2003 and 2011 in Chad, falling from 63 percent to 38 percent¹⁰.

Despite the significant decrease of share of poverty in the population, the number of poor people has remained virtually unchanged since the 1990s due to the rapid population growth. According to United Nations estimates, Niger records the highest annual population growth rate over the 2010-2015 period, with 4 percent (Table 1), and its population is still due to increase threefold by 2050. In the other countries, the population is also expected to double between 2040 and 2050. This rapid population growth also has important implications in terms of the working age population's employment insertion.

Table 1: Population in the Sahel countries

Country	Total population in 2014 (thousands)	Total population in 2050 (thousands)	Annual population growth rate			
			1995-2000	2000-2005	2005-2010	2010-2015
Burkina Faso	17,589.2	42,788.8	2.80	2.90	3.05	2.94
Mali	17,086.0	45,403.6	2.72	3.07	3.27	2.98
Niger	19,113.7	72,237.7	3.63	3.67	3.78	4.00
Senegal	14,672.6	36,222.5	2.48	2.67	2.79	3.10
Chad	13,587.1	35,130.9	3.51	3.76	3.34	3.31

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision.

Note: United Nations estimates.

2.2. Employment rates and education levels

In the Sahel countries, the working-age population (aged 15 and over) in 2014 varied between 49.6 percent of the population in Niger and 56.2 percent of the population in Senegal (Table 2). According to United Nations estimates, it should still increase more than fourfold by 2050 in Niger and more than threefold in Mali and Chad. The 15-34 age group is expected to account for over 50 percent of the working-age population in all the Sahel countries. Niger has the youngest population and its 15-34 age group is due to account for around 62 percent of the working-age population.

Table 2: Proportion of the working-age population in 2014

	Burkina Faso	Chad	Mali	Niger	Senegal
Total	54.2	52.0	52.5	49.6	56.2
Men	53.3	51.7	52.0	48.9	54.9
Women	55.1	52.4	53.0	50.3	57.5

Source: Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM), 2015.

Note: ILO/BIT estimates.

In the Sahel countries, according to ILO/BIT estimates, the employment rates vary between 83.5 percent of the working-age population in Burkina Faso and 56.9 percent in Senegal (far below the Sub-Saharan countries' average of 70.1 percent). The employment rates are higher among adults aged

¹⁰ The World Bank. World Development Indicators.

[http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=World percent20Development percent20Indicators](http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=World%20Development%20Indicators), 2016. Accessed on December 28th, 2016.

35-54: in Burkina Faso, around 92 percent of this age group are active in the labor market. Women’s labor participation rates are lower than men’s (Table 3). In Niger, the gap between men and women’s participation rates reaches 49 percentage points. Women’s low participation is partly due to social norms and their low level of education.

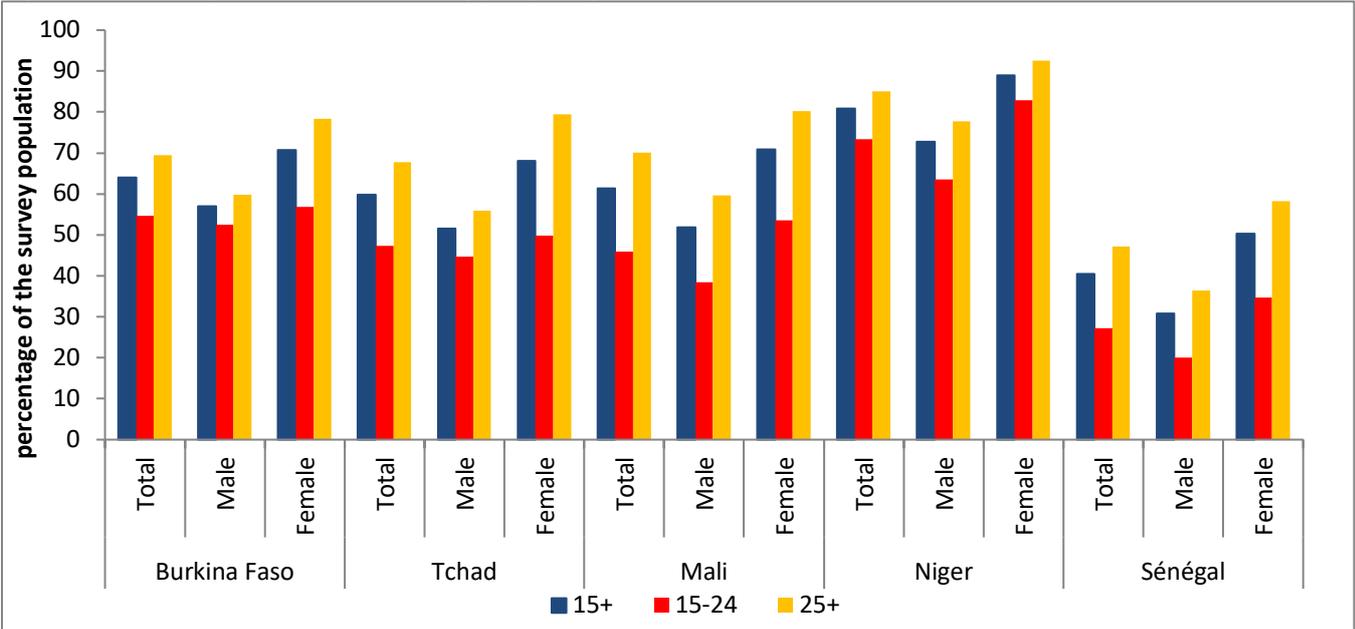
Table 3: Labor force participation in 2014 (percent of the working-age population)

	Gender		Age group					Total
	Men	Women	15-24	25-34	35-54	55-64	64+	
Burkina Faso	90.7	76.7	77.6	90.2	91.8	79.9	49.5	83.5
Chad	79.3	64.0	56.4	80.0	85.4	81.5	64.7	71.6
Mali	82.2	49.8	59.0	70.9	74.4	63.9	49.9	66.0
Niger	89.5	40.2	57.3	67.7	73.6	69.8	46.1	64.7
Senegal	70.0	44.9	41.7	66.0	73.8	57.4	25.2	56.9

Source: Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM), 2015.
 Note: ILO/BIT estimates.

Access to basic education is fundamental to enhancing employment productivity but remains a challenge in the Sahel countries¹¹. As shown in the Figure below, the illiteracy rate among people aged 15 and over in 2015 was 40 percent higher in the Sahel countries. Moreover, illiteracy is higher among female workers than among male workers.

Figure 2: Illiteracy rates in 2015 among people aged 15 and over; 15 to 25; and 25 and over



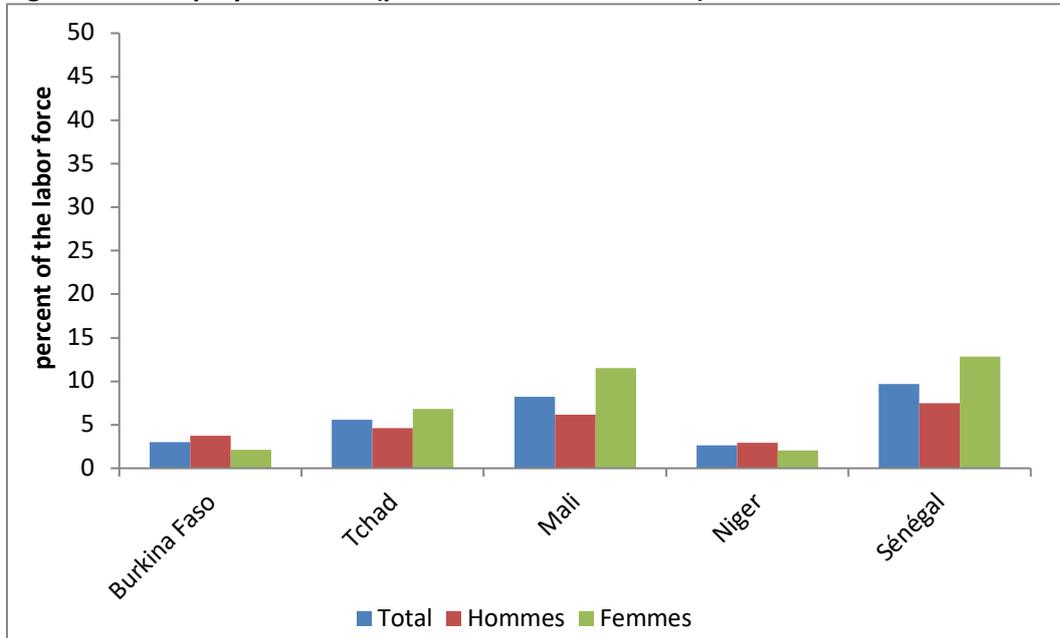
Source: Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM), 2015.
 Note: Estimates from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

¹¹ For a discussion on the fundamental role of human capital in enhancing employment productivity in Sub-Saharan countries, see Filmer et al., 2014.

2.3. Unemployment

According to ILO/BIT estimates, unemployment is relatively low in the Sahel countries. In 2014, 10 percent of the labor force was unemployed in Senegal, 8 percent in Mali, 6 percent in Chad and only 3 percent in Burkina Faso and Niger (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Unemployment rate (percent of the labor force) in 2014



Source: Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM), 2015.

Note: ILO/BIT estimates.

In three out of the five Sahel countries under consideration, unemployment is higher among women than among men. In Senegal for instance, 13 percent of the female workers are unemployed, compared with 7 percent of the male workers. By contrast, women's employment is lower than men's in Niger and Burkina Faso.

These low unemployment rates clearly show that low labor productivity remains the major employment challenge in the Sahel countries and in the broader Sub-Saharan context, especially in sectors like agriculture, which employs most of the labor force (Filmer et al. 2014). According to recent survey data available for several Sahel countries, unemployment is mainly concentrated in urban areas and particularly affects people with a higher level of education¹².

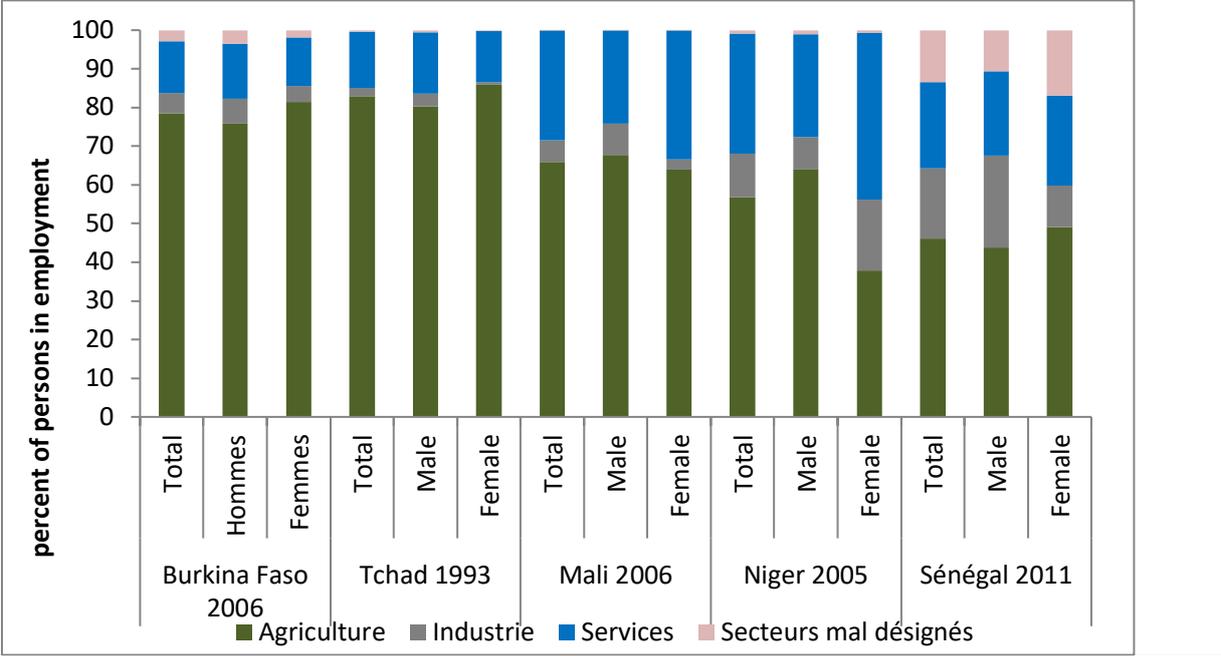
2.4. Sectors and types of employment

According to recent data, agriculture remains the first employment sector in the countries under consideration, suggesting a slow structural transformation of production. The agricultural sector accounts for less than 50 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the countries under consideration, with the exception of Chad, where agriculture contributed around 52 percent of GDP in 2015 (World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2016). Besides, the share of non-farm sectors – industry and services – in GDP over the 1990-2016 period remained relatively low or decreased. In

¹² See for example World Bank (2012)

Niger for instance, the services contribution to GDP significantly decreased, falling from 49 percent to 37 percent, whereas the share of industry slightly increased, rising from 16 to 18 percent.

Figure 4: Employment rates by sector

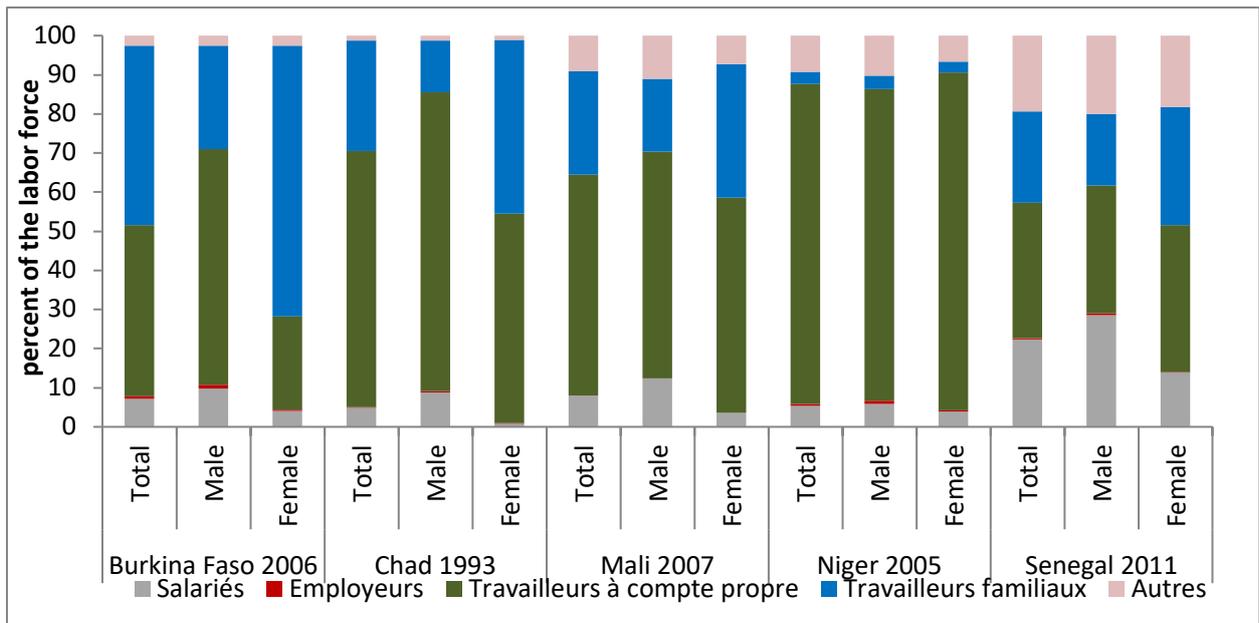


Source: Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM), 2015.

Note: Data from national surveys.

Most of the jobs in the Sahel countries are precarious and can be characterized as vulnerable. The vulnerable employment rate is above 80 percent of total employment in all the Sahel countries, with the exception of Senegal, where it reaches 58 percent of total employment. In all these countries, with the exception of Burkina Faso, own-account work prevails, followed by family work. In Burkina Faso, own-account work and family work respectively accounted for 44 percent and 46 percent of total employment in 2006. Family work is mainly performed by women and 69 percent of the female workforce are family workers. In Niger, own-account workers accounted for over 81.7 percent of total employment and 86 percent of the female labor force in 2005 (Figure 6).

Figure 5: Employment status



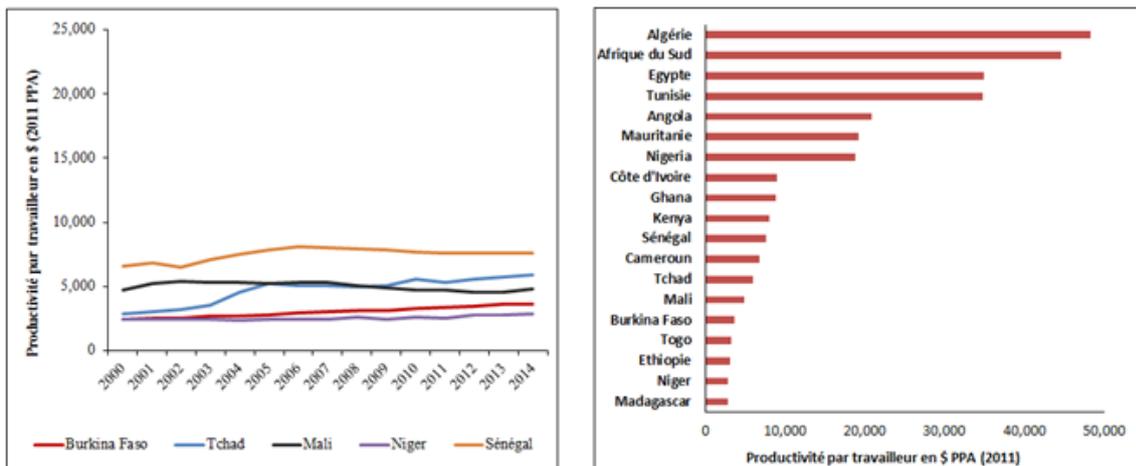
Source: Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM), 2015.

Note: Data from national surveys

2.5. Labor productivity

Labor productivity, as measured by GDP per worker¹³, is low in most Sahel countries and has remained virtually unchanged over recent years. According to ILO/BIT estimates, labor productivity in the countries under consideration was below the Sub-Saharan average (USD9,305 PPP 2011) in 2014, with the lowest rates in Niger and Burkina Faso.

Figure 6: Evolution of the productivity per worker in the countries under consideration and productivity per worker in several African countries in 2014



Source: Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM), 2015. Note: ILO/BIT estimates

¹³ Own-account workers and family workers. See ILO/BIT (2015) for further details about the construction of this indicator.

3. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main objective of the assessment is to identify a package of accompanying measures and support their effective implementation to ultimately improve cash transfer beneficiaries' productivity. The methodology draws on earlier works conducted on constraints to productivity faced by household enterprises and own account workers in Liberia (Weedon et Heaner, 2016a, 2016b) and later Ivory Coast (Bouaki, 2016). The same methodology was applied to all the countries – Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Chad.

The study relies on structured research guides combining Focus Groups Discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews (KII). Previously developed to study constraints to household enterprises and own account workers's productivity, the guides were adapted to the Sahel countries' context, mainly on the basis of a review of the literature on vulnerability and constraints to productivity in farm and non-farm employment in the Sahel countries. The development of the interview guides took the national contexts into account, including, inter alia, based on pilot data collection that was conducted in the different countries.

3.1. Research guides

The guides detail the different stages of the qualitative research, from the survey design to the data analysis and the description of the results (see in Annex)¹⁴. This methodology was tried and tested in other African contexts (Liberia and Ivory Coast) and adapted to meet the needs of the assessment conducted in the Sahel countries. The research guides provide interview guidelines for FGD and KII, as well as a qualitative database meant to facilitate the data management and analysis. These different elements are articulated around the key study questions:

1. What are the main economic sectors in the study? Are poor and productive workers engaged in different types of activities? Are men and women engaged in different types of activities? How diversified are the activities? Why?
2. How do individuals perceive the employment opportunities available in their locality? What are their employment aspirations? What are the individuals' aspirations? Are people's behaviors influenced by perceptions and aspirations? What about youth?
3. What are the main constraints to improving productivity among the poorest? What is the role of risks? What is the role of human capital? Is the lack of basic or technical skills a major constraint? Is access to capital a major constraint? In what way?
4. What strategies are individuals using to overcome the constraints they face? What are their implications?
5. What interventions could be considered to remove or relax the main constraints faced by the poor? How?

To answer these questions, the research guides describe, inter alia, the activities to be conducted by the national research teams and provides criteria to select the communities and individuals to be

¹⁴ The Annex of this report contains some tools in the research guide. This includes "Constraint Ranking Matrix". The full research guides are available on request.

surveyed through Focus Group Discussions and individual interviews. A purposive approach was adopted to select the communities, according to the criteria listed below. In each of the selected communities, Focus Group Discussions were organized with:

- Women from poor households (hereinafter “poor women”)¹⁵;
- Women from relatively more productive households (hereinafter “productive women”);
- Men from poor households (hereinafter “poor men”);
- Men from relatively more productive households (hereinafter “productive men”);
- Community leaders (traditional leaders, State authorities, representatives from various organizations) (hereinafter “leaders”).

Besides, individual interviews were conducted with poor and productive people, leaders, stakeholders, NGO members, agricultural extension workers, province and city authorities, agricultural extension workers and other persons purposely selected by the national research teams.

The interview guidelines include questions that are common to all types of respondents (community members, poor and productive persons, leaders, stakeholders, etc.), as well as questions specific to each group. The Focus Group Discussion guidelines also include participative tools, including a seasonal calendar of risks and risk-coping strategies, as well as a “Constraint Ranking Matrix” (see Annex 1).

3.2. Selection of the communities surveyed in each country

In each study country, a sample of five communities was chosen. It was located in the intervention areas of the Safety Net projects where these projects were operating (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger), or in the planned intervention areas in the other countries (Senegal and Chad¹⁶). A purposive approach was adopted to select the communities to represent the geographic and socioeconomic diversity of the project intervention zone¹⁷. As such, the study is not representative of the Sahel countries’ as a whole, but rather provides an overview of the variety of situations in these countries.

The communities located in the (potential) intervention areas of the Safety Net projects were selected according to the following criteria:

- Being located in the intervention areas considered for the accompanying measures’ implementation¹⁸ ;
- Access to market (as measured by the distance to a larger city) and transport infrastructure conditions;
- Main types of activities of the selected communities based on the livelihood areas¹⁹.

¹⁵ The respondents’ selection criteria are detailed in Section 3.3.

¹⁶ Chad is the only country where the Safety Net project field implementation had not started yet when the survey was conducted. In the case of Senegal, where the Safety Net project was already implemented, the communities were selected in the areas prioritized for the future implementation of productive accompanying measures.

¹⁷ The purposive selection of communities was also determined by other considerations: the possibility to conduct the research within a reasonable time and other logistics factors such as the researchers’ safety.

¹⁸ This criterion was defined in consultation with the World Bank’s and partner Governments’ teams.

¹⁹ The livelihood areas were identified from maps drawn after the model established by the Famine Early Warning Systems Network – FEWS NET – of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

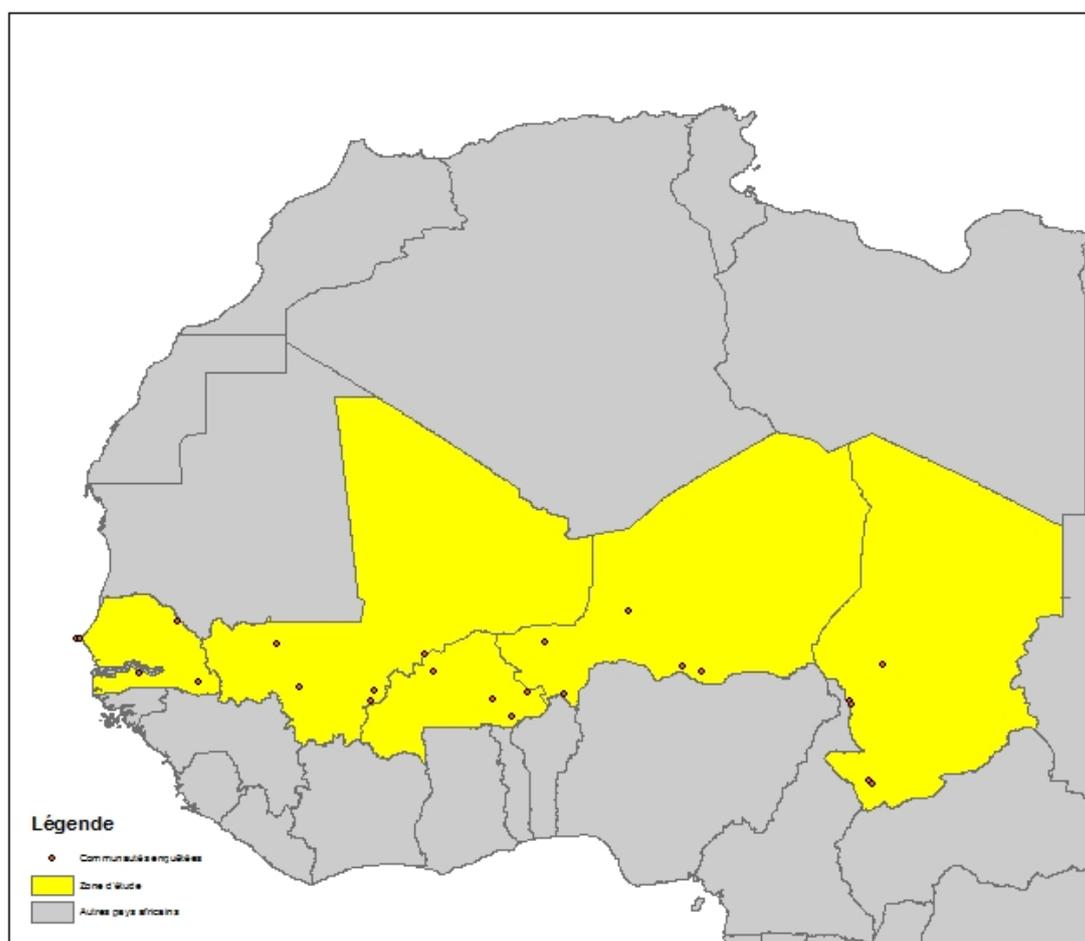
The Table below summarizes the selected communities by country. Figure 8 shows the location of the communities in the countries under consideration.

Table 4: Characteristics of the communities

Country	Region	Community	Area	Remoteness (accessibility)*
Burkina Faso	East	Kalkouri	Rural	Hardly accessible
		Kantchari	Rural	Easily accessible
		Kompienga	Rural	Easily accessible
	North	Sanh	Rural	Easily accessible
		Sikendé	Rural	Hardly accessible
Mali	Bamako	Samé	Semi-urban	Hardly accessible
	Kiffosso	Faconi	Rural	Easily accessible
	Ourikela	Palasso	Rural	Hardly accessible
	Dianguirde	Sagaraba Morib	Rural	Easily accessible
		Dianguirde	Rural	Hardly accessible
Niger	Tillabéry	Amirou Gata (Awini Gata)	Rural	Hardly accessible
	Dosso	Alpha Koira	Rural	Easily accessible
	Maradi	Kona	Urban	Hardly accessible
	Zinder	Katambajé	Rural	Easily accessible
	Tahoua	Amolal Ismaghiul	Rural	Easily accessible
Senegal	Dakar	Djidah Thiaroye Kao	Semi-urban	Easily accessible
		Rufisque Nord	Semi-urban	Easily accessible
	Matam	Kanel	Rural	Hardly accessible
	Kédougou	Kédougou	Urban	Hardly accessible
	Kolda	Médina Yoro Foulah	Rural	Hardly accessible
Chad	Bahr El Gazel	Moussoro	Rural	Hardly accessible
	Logone Occidental	Doyon	Urban	Easily accessible
		Déli	Rural	Easily accessible
	Ndamena	Walia	Urban	Easily accessible
		Koundoul	Semi-urban	Easily accessible
*Considering the distance to the capital city and the conditions of the transportation network.				

Beyond the selection criteria, the sample includes rural and urban communities. While the place of residence was not taken into account for the selection, but it is an important characteristic of the communities under consideration and potentially plays a role in explaining the results of the assessment.

Figure 8: Location of the communities under consideration



3.3. Selection of the Key Informants and Focus Group Discussions participants

To identify the poor and productive households for “community member” respondents, the research team used the Safety Net projects targeting data, when available²⁰, and on the local leaders living in the surveyed communities. Before collecting data, the research teams introduced themselves to the communities’ leaders. When targeting data existed, researchers verified the « status » of the previously identified persons in order to confirm they were Safety Net project beneficiaries.

In the absence of targeting or registry data, it was necessary to identify poor and productive persons. Local criteria were used to proxy households’ ability to meet their basic needs throughout the year. Based on this criterion, the households who could generate regular and adequate income to meet their own needs were regarded as productive households, and those who could not were regarded as poor households.

As the assessment sought to improve poor households’ labor productivity, the second criterion was the presence of individuals able to work in the households. Table 2 shows the standard questions asked

²⁰ In Burkina Faso and Niger, where poor households were pre-identified from the Safety Net project targeting, their status was checked with Key Informants such as local leaders. See Table 5 for further details on the questions asked by the researchers to identify poor and productive households.

to local leaders by the research teams to identify poor households (profile of potential Safety Nets beneficiary) and productive households within the surveyed communities.

Table 5: Identification of poor and productive households to be surveyed in the communities under consideration

Identifying poor/beneficiary households		Identifying productive households
Available targeting and registry data	Based on the list (when available), on the presence of members able work, on distribution of men/women, etc.	“Which households can derive a regular income from farm or non-farm activities?”
No targeting or registry data available	<p>“Among the village/community households, which ones are facing greater difficulties to meet their basic needs throughout the year?”</p> <p>“Among the households facing greater difficulties to meet their basic needs throughout the year, which ones include members who are able to work?”</p>	

After identifying the households, the second step consisted in identifying potential respondents according to activity and age criteria. To collect data relevant for youth in the absence of Focus Groups exclusively composed of young members, it was decided to form the Focus Groups in such a way that individuals aged 18-35 would account for half of the respondents. Special attention was also paid to the distribution of the activity types within the Focus Groups in order to collect relevant information about several activities in the communities.

The selection of Key Informants was meant to enrich the data collected during the Focus Group Discussions based on the Key Informant categories previously defined in the research guides. For productive persons’ individual interviews, the research team along with the local leaders tried to identify individuals who had lifted themselves out of poverty and whose story could therefore inform the assessment research questions. The following section provides further information about the fieldwork and outlines the respondents’ main characteristics.

3.4. Fieldwork and respondents’ characteristics

The data collection was conducted by local teams in each country in collaboration with an international team. Five days were dedicated to each selected community between May and August 2016 (when the collection ended in Niger).

Five Focus Group Discussions and seven individual interviews were conducted on average in each surveyed community²¹. Before each interview, the following data were collected: respondent’s name,

²¹ The research guidelines recommended Focus Groups Discussion of 6-8 (up to 12) participants. Out of 125, one Focus Group Discussion consisted of four participants and three consisted of five participants due to specific field difficulties.

age, gender, occupation/activity type, education level, additional training, number of children, ethnic origin²².

In total, data were collected for 1,121 persons across the five countries under consideration – 954 Focus Group participants and 167 Key Informants.

Table 3 summarizes the respondents' characteristics. As specified in Section 3.2, it is worth noting that the respondents' statistics cannot be regarded as representative of any of the countries. The number of Focus Group participants ranges from 167 in Chad to 207 in Senegal. In all the countries under consideration, each population type – poor men, productive men, poor women, productive women and community leaders – accounted for around 20 percent of the Focus Groups. Around 50 percent of all respondents were women, with the exception of Mali, where 60 percent of the respondents were men. However, the average age varies across countries, ranging from 33.7 years old in Chad to 42.5 years old in Mali. The average age also varies according to gender in Mali and Niger (46 and 37.6 years old in Mali and 45.3 and 37.5 years old among men and women, respectively) but not in the other countries. The vast majority of respondents in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger report being married (93 percent or 94 percent); the situation is quite similar in Senegal and Chad, although a minority also reports being single (15 percent and 18 percent). Likewise, between 77 percent and 85 percent of the respondents in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger are engaged in agriculture, whereas Senegal and Chad have much lower agricultural employment rates (10 percent and 26 percent respectively). The highest proportion of respondents in these two countries are engaged in handicrafts and services (49 percent and 30 percent respectively). Finally, the respondents from Senegal and Chad have a higher average education level than the respondents in the other three countries. Over half of the respondents in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger have no education (63 percent, 73 percent and 83 percent respectively) and the respondents who report having no education are only 39 percent in Senegal and 16 percent in Chad.

As far as individual interviews are concerned, the number of respondents ranges from 29 in Mali to 43 in Senegal. Between 21 percent and 23 percent of them are women, depending on the country. The "agricultural extension workers or producer organization leaders" are the most represented among respondents in Burkina Faso (30 percent of the respondents); the "stakeholders (province and city authorities, Government, NGO, etc.)" are the most represented in Niger (30 percent), Senegal (30 percent) and Chad (26 percent), together with the "community leaders".

²² Before collecting these data, the respondents were informed that their answers would be kept confidential and could choose to only provide their first name.

Table 6: Respondents' characteristics

		Burkina Faso	Mali	Niger	Senegal	Chad
Focus Group Discussions						
	Total number of respondents	198	186	196	207	167
	Respondent types					
	Poor men	17 percent	20 percent	20 percent	19 percent	20 percent
	Productive men	21 percent	18 percent	20 percent	19 percent	18 percent
	Productive women	22 percent	19 percent	20 percent	22 percent	22 percent
	Poor women	21 percent	22 percent	20 percent	21 percent	20 percent
	Community leaders	20 percent	22 percent	19 percent	19 percent	20 percent
	Respondents' characteristics					
	Gender					
	Men	54 percent	60 percent	49 percent	50 percent	53 percent
	Women	46 percent	40 percent	51 percent	50 percent	47 percent
	Average age	39.8	42.5	41.3	38.5	33.7
	Men	40.1	46.0	45.3	38.0	33.2
	Women	39.5	37.6	37.5	39.0	34.2
	Marital status					
	Married	93 percent	94 percent	93 percent	77 percent	74 percent
	Single	3 percent	5 percent	4 percent	15 percent	18 percent
	Widow/widower	4 percent	2 percent	4 percent	8 percent	8 percent
	Employment					
	Agriculture, livestock, fishery, forestry	85 percent	77 percent	83 percent	10 percent	26 percent
	Trade	9 percent	5 percent	5 percent	26 percent	25 percent
	Handicrafts and services	6 percent	9 percent	5 percent	49 percent	39 percent
	Other	0 percent	9 percent	8 percent	15 percent	11 percent
	Education					
	Formal school – primary education	13 percent	0 percent	11 percent	23 percent	23 percent
	Formal school – secondary education	10 percent	20 percent	6 percent	24 percent	43 percent

	Formal school – higher education	0 percent	6 percent	0 percent	6 percent	13 percent
	Koranic school	4 percent	1 percent	0 percent	8 percent	5 percent
	Literacy classes	11 percent	0 percent	0 percent	0 percent	0 percent
	None	63 percent	73 percent	83 percent	39 percent	16 percent
Individual interviews						
	Total number of respondents	30	29	30	43	35
	Respondent types					
	Agricultural extension workers or producer organization leaders	30 percent	28 percent	20 percent	23 percent	14 percent
	Community leaders	20 percent	34 percent	23 percent	23 percent	26 percent
	Stakeholders (province and city authorities, Government, NGO, etc.)	20 percent	7 percent	30 percent	30 percent	26 percent
	Poor people or cash transfer beneficiaries	13 percent	0 percent	13 percent	12 percent	14 percent
	Relatively more productive persons	17 percent	21 percent	13 percent	12 percent	20 percent
	Other	0 percent	10 percent	0 percent	0 percent	0 percent
	Gender					
	Men	77 percent	79 percent	77 percent	79 percent	77 percent
	Women	23 percent	21 percent	23 percent	21 percent	23 percent

4. LIVELIHOODS IN THE SURVEYED COMMUNITIES

The employment situation in the study areas reflects the broader situation in the Sahel countries. The livelihood analysis gives a first overview of the employment opportunities available to the respondents and provides information, inter alia, about job quality and about the respondents' motivations to shift towards specific activities. This analysis is based on the respondents' answers, and more particularly on their activity type(s) and broader employment information collected in the surveyed communities.

4.1. Main activity sectors

According to the data collected, the vast majority of the labor force living in the study areas are farmers or self-employed workers in non-agricultural activities. Agriculture²³ is the main occupational sector, especially in rural areas, followed by retail (grain, food supplies, etc.), handicrafts, construction and services to individuals such as hairdressing or transportation. It is worth noting that the non-farm sector is far from being marginal in rural areas, as non-farm activities are widespread, confirming the findings of studies dedicated to the non-farm sector in rural areas (see for instance Losh et al., 2013; Nagler and Naudé, 2017; World Bank, 2017).

Conversely, most of the urban jobs are concentrated in handicrafts and retail. Wage employment is more common in urban areas but only accounts for a very low proportion of jobs. The FGD participants' wage jobs are mostly temporary or casual (unskilled jobs like caretakers, daily laborers in the construction sector, or domestic workers).

A gendered division of labor prevails in both urban and rural areas. Not surprisingly, women are particularly active in retail and local products processing activities, whereas construction, mechanics or carpentry are male-dominated sectors. This gendered division of labor can partly be explained by social norms or beliefs among the surveyed communities. As a group of leaders explained in Koundoul (Chad), "It is all about customs. Here, certain activities are reserved for certain people. For instance, selling vegetables can only be performed by women and butchery by men." Besides, in several surveyed communities, certain activities are reserved to certain casts, based on traditions and on the "social labor division inherited from ancestors", as a leader explained in the Kanel community (Senegal).

4.2. Employment status

In the areas under consideration, the share of own-account workers and unpaid family workers varies according to the place of residence. Although self-employment prevails overall, the share of unpaid family workers is higher in rural areas, where agriculture is the main activity. Besides, not surprisingly, family work seems to be mostly performed by women and young people²⁴.

Due to the agricultural labor organization in the study areas, women and young people first and foremost work on family farms controlled by household heads. Depending on the context, and more specifically on social norms (related to fertility or mobility, institutions such as tenure rights, or the household head's goodwill), the interviews suggest that women and young people can engage in farm

²³ In this report, unless otherwise specified, « agriculture » encompasses crop production activities, animal production (breeding), fishery and forestry.

²⁴ As a reminder, the assessment defines young people as the 18-35 age group.

activities (crop production, livestock)²⁵ or in independent non-farm activities (trade, handicrafts for young men). In this case, it is worth noting that in some contexts, women and young people must contribute to the household income by redistributing part of their own income. For instance, a group of productive men in Palasso (Mali) explained:

“In addition to agriculture, and beside their collective farm activities, some young people from our village [...] have also engaged in and dedicated their spare time to trade and handicrafts. [...] They could do so because their household heads allowed them to. Some are supported by their household heads, but most of them are brave and determined young people who have decided [...] to earn money and support their family.”

In rural areas, some respondents also reported working as task-rate agricultural workers in others' farms. Although the data collected cannot be used to measure the magnitude of this activity type, poor people often report that they or their relatives are working as agricultural workers paid in cash or in-kind in their communities or in relatively remote localities, especially young people.

4.3. Activity diversification

Engaging in two or more activities, simultaneously or successively throughout the year, is a nearly universal practice in the communities under consideration, especially in rural areas. The importance of diversification in rural areas is mainly due to the low productivity of agriculture and to the risks (especially climate-related risks) faced by the agricultural sector. Asked about why they had chosen to diversify their activities, the FGD participants replied that it was mainly because the income derived from a single activity was inadequate to meet the household's needs. In rural areas, the risks (mainly climate-related risks such as droughts or floods) and their impacts on farm activities were the second reason cited by the FGD participants to explain why they simultaneously or successively engage in several activities throughout the year. It is also worth noting that the existence of diversification opportunities is relatively rarely mentioned by the FGD participants, but more frequently mentioned by productive people than by poor people.

In rural areas where the main activity is agriculture, and more specifically crop production, intra-sectoral diversification is the most widespread form of diversification. The survey results also reveal that a vast majority of FGD participants diversify their activities within farm and non-farm sectors. In the farm sector, livestock is cited as the activity most frequently combined with rain-fed crop production. Other activities are also performed during the dry season, such as market gardening, retail, as well as services and handicraft activities like sewing or carpentry.

Activity diversification occurs both at individual and household levels. Household activity diversification (i.e. when all members engage in different activities in a coordinated way) is also an important characteristic of activity diversification in rural areas. In some rural communities, this type of diversification implies, inter alia, growing different crops in collective plots (controlled by household heads) and individual plots (controlled by households' members, especially women). As noted previously, the household members can also engage in independent activities such as trade or livestock, but they must generally contribute to the household's income.

²⁵ Beside social standards and institutions, other factors affect women's and young people's possibility to engage in independent farm activities, like pressure on land. Women's access to individual plots is limited in practice.

Box 2: Diversification – a widespread practice among the surveyed communities

“I grow crops, I breed hens and I engage in retail trading. When one of these activities’ flounders, I switch to another one.” (Poor woman in an FGD in Kalkouri, Burkina Faso).

“No single activity is sufficient in itself, so we have to combine them.”

“All non-farm workers engage in several activities depending on the period. During wintering for instance, there is a lot of masonry work, but masons are also stone cutters or metal workers on building sites. They try to figure out which activity is the most cost-effective.”

“Many activities are temporary. Our job changes with the season.”

(Community leaders in an FGD in Samé, Mali).

“Men grow millet and local beans during the rainy season. Women grow small land parcels in their husbands’ fields and produce okra, sesame seeds, groundnuts and squashes. During the dry season, women engage in market gardening to collect additional food supplies and financial resources to meet their households’ current needs.” (Poor woman in an FGD in Amirou Gatta, Niger).

5. PERCEPTIONS AND ASPIRATIONS

Abilities (i.e. behavior and personal skills), aspirations and preferences are crucial to understand people’s occupational choices (World Bank, 2014). A growing number of research studies highlight the influence of factors such as individual abilities, perceptions and aspirations on training or activity choices, and on investment- or savings-related decisions (e.g. Heckman et al., 2006; Wydick et al., 2013; Leavy and Hossain, 2014; Bernard, et. al., 2014; Pasquier-Doumer et Risso Brandon, 2015). Another field of literature also studies the lack of aspirations among the poor or the aspirational gap between the rich and the poor (Ray, 2006; Bernard, et. al., 2011; Dalton et al., 2016).

This section particularly delves into: (i) the way accessible opportunities and required skills are perceived; (ii) and the respondents’ employment aspirations (i.e. their motivations to develop their activities or enhance their incomes or ambitions in the medium to long term)²⁶. It is worth noting that various internal and external factors influence the individuals’ perceptions and aspirations. Besides, aspirations and perceptions (of skills, opportunities, etc.) influence each other.²⁷

5.1. Perception of employment opportunities

In the study areas, the employment perception is globally negative among the respondents. When asked about the “employment situation” in their communities, around 80 percent of the FGD participant say it is “poor” or “very poor”, but this perception is slightly more positive in easily accessible communities.

The country-specific result analysis shows that all respondents in Senegal and over 80 percent of the respondents in Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad regard the employment situation as being “poor” or “very poor”. This perception is illustrated by comments that were collected in a FGD with productive men in Moussoro (Chad): “Sales are worse every day.” “The market has become hypothetical for us, traders. In the morning, I leave my house hoping I will make some profit, but at night I come back empty-handed because I had no client.” “Over the last five years, things have evolved negatively here: young graduates cannot enter the job market nor afford to start a business, so they become social burdens for their families.”

In Niger, the employment situation is perceived in a more heterogeneous way: 47 percent of the FGD participants describe the employment situation as “poor” or “very poor”, whereas 53 percent of them regard it as “satisfactory”, “good” or “excellent”. Women are much more likely to describe the employment situation as being rather positive (67 percent of women, compared with 37 percent of men).

Table 7: Country-specific perception of the employment situation in the areas under consideration

Pays	Employment situation	Proportion
Burkina Faso	Excellent	0 percent
	Good	2 percent
	Satisfactory	16 percent
	Poor	80 percent
	Very poor	3 percent

²⁶ See Bernard and Seyoum Taffesse (2014) for a definition and a discussion about the aspiration measurement indicators.

²⁷ See for example Kosec et al., 2012.

Mali	Excellent	4 percent
Pays	Employment situation	Proportion
	Good	9 percent
	Satisfactory	2 percent
	Poor	21 percent
	Very poor	64 percent
Niger	Excellent	3 percent
	Good	15 percent
	Satisfactory	35 percent
	Poor	32 percent
	Very poor	15 percent
Senegal	Excellent	0 percent
	Good	0 percent
	Satisfactory	0 percent
	Poor	100 percent
	Very poor	0 percent
Chad	Excellent	2 percent
	Good	9 percent
	Satisfactory	5 percent
	Poor	36 percent
	Very poor	48 percent

Source: Focus Group Discussions

Although the question could have been misunderstood, partly explaining its results, two factors could account for this rather positive perception. On the one hand, some respondents mentioned “profitable” employment opportunities and “the assistance provided by projects” and NGOs, helping them to face difficulties:

“In my opinion, the situation is excellent because the actions developed have enabled us to pull through.” (Productive woman, FGD, Kona, Niger)

“The situation is excellent because we derive an adequate income from our activities to ensure our livelihoods throughout the year.” (Productive women, FGD, Katambajé, Niger)

“The village went through a very positive evolution. We only had one school, and now we have eight. Once a small village, Kona has turned into the administrative center of a *commune* that has experienced a strong growth thanks to the projects undertaken to support the population.” (Leaders, FGD, Kona, Niger)

“The development of several projects and infrastructure (health, school, roads) have generated positive changes over the last five years.” (Poor women, FGD, Kona, Niger)

On the other hand, this positive perception could also be explained by some degree of fatalism and low aspirations or expectations from the activities performed, especially the high-risk ones. Some respondents actually seem to be resigned to their difficulties and to have accepted that they cannot do much to make a difference. As a group of productive men explained in Alpha Koiria (Niger), “It is possible to work and sometimes earn nothing.” This relative satisfaction could also be explained by the

low level of aspirations among some respondents and by the “positive” or “acceptable” gap between reality and these low aspirations. A poor man in Amirou Gata (Niger) said: “I am doing well because in any situation, I can find an activity and feed my family.” The other men in his group added: “the employment situation is good because our activities ensure our livelihoods [...] We manage to meet our food needs without leaving the village.”

Overall, the perception of the employment situation seems to reflect the numerous challenges faced by the respondents in their activities (see the following Section) rather than their difficulties to find jobs, as most of the respondents are self-employed. A male participant in a FGD in Kalkouri (Burkina Faso) declared:

“We have access to employment. Everybody has access to employment, this is not the problem. The real difficulty is how to develop one’s activity.”

When asked about the “good” and “bad” jobs in their respective communities, almost all the FGD participants cite farm and non-farm self-employment as the “best” type of employment. In terms of non-farm self-employment, trade comes first, followed by handicrafts or transportation services, depending on the context. Not surprisingly, non-farm self-employment opportunities are particularly regarded as the best ones by the urban respondents (65 percent) and often described as the best ones by the rural respondents (40 percent). When disaggregating these results by respondents’ characteristics, we see that women tend to regard non-farm self-employment as the “best type of employment” in their communities, just like productive persons (over half of them).

Agricultural self-employment (mainly crop and animal production activities) is regarded as the best type of employment by 56 percent of respondents in rural areas. Comparatively, farm self-employment is only regarded as the best type of employment in their communities by around 17 percent of the urban respondents.

Box 3: Desirability of agricultural employment

The question of the desirability of agricultural employment, especially among youth, is very important in a context where agriculture will continue to absorb a vast part of the labor force over the next decades (Key Indicators of the Labour Market, 2015). Although agriculture offer potential opportunities to youth (Filmer et al., 2014), research studies conducted in other African contexts reveal that young people show little interest in this sector (e.g. Leavy and Hossain, 2014).

In the study area, the interview analysis suggests that many workers are engaged in the farm sector, especially in crop production, due to a lack of alternatives and to the accessibility of this sector. As explained by a group of poor men from Médina Yoro Foulah (Senegal), “We have nothing but agriculture, but this sector employs most of the population [...] All of us can grow crops, as long as we accept to work hard.” According to poor women from a hardly accessible community in Burkina Faso, “agriculture is our main activity because it feeds us and it is the most accessible activity.”

As far as young people’s aspirations are concerned, and more particularly their perception of agriculture, the Key Informants’ Interviews suggest that rural young people show little interest in agriculture and would rather start an own account activity, particularly in the trade sector. The Key Informants provide several reasons explaining this lack of interest. The most frequent reasons are the risks associated with farm activities, and more particularly with the arduousness of crop production, which are mainly due to constraints such as difficult access to financial and physical capital (see next Section).

Permanent wage employment is hardly cited as the best type of employment in the surveyed areas (less than 5 percent of the respondents' answers). It accounts for around 14 percent of urban respondents' preferences and is particularly popular among young graduates. Besides, the country-specific result analysis shows that permanent wage employment accounts for around 12 percent of the Chadian respondents' preferences, compared with 6 percent and 3 percent of the Malian and Senegalese respondents. Permanent wage employment is not mentioned at all in the areas under consideration in Burkina Faso and Niger.

Asked about the reasons for their employment preferences, the respondents mentioned profitability (relative to the context), financial resource availability and security.

The income derived from activities seems to be the main criterion to consider them as "good" activities. Hence, the income generated and the possibility to mobilize it in case of a problem are mentioned by those who describe non-farm self-employment as the best type of employment in their communities. As explained by a participant in a FGD organized with poor men in Amirou Gata (Niger), "Trade is the best type of employment, in my opinion. Several villagers engaged in trade and quickly became rich." According to a poor woman in Kona (Niger), "Trade is the best type of employment because its income enables us to easily solve our problems." This last comment concurs with that of a respondent in Moussoro (Chad): "The best activity is trade [...], because one can always make at least some little money."

The rural respondents regard farm self-employment as the best type of employment in their communities due to food security reasons and to the fact that agriculture is a "springboard" to develop other activities with the money from selling agricultural products:

"Agriculture offers the best employment opportunities. After wintering, a good season enables us to harvest and sell." (Productive women, FGD, Kompienbiga, Burkina Faso)

"Agriculture is a good sector, as one part of the harvest can be sold, and the other part can be consumed." (Poor women, FGD, Déli, Chad)

For the respondents who consider permanent wage employment as the best type of employment, income security and regularity seem to play a decisive role in explaining their preferences:

"The best jobs here in Walia are [...] wage employment opportunities. Permanent wage workers earn a regular income, even when they do not go to work, whereas others are paid by working day, regardless of their health conditions. For instance, when one is sick and does not go to do the cleaning work, the employer deducts these days from the pay. At the end of the month, one is told they have not made money and can sometimes be waiting for up to one month." (Poor woman, FGD, Walia, Chad).

"The best jobs are in public service and large-scale projects." "Civil servants always earn an income to meet their needs, providing them some security. It relieves the mind. » (poor men, FGD, Samé, Mali)

But it is worth noting that the respondents, including those regarding permanent wage employment as the best type of employment in their communities, acknowledge that this type of employment is hardly accessible.

Very few employment opportunities are systematically described as "poor", as shown by these comments (poor women, Alpha Koiria, Niger): "All the jobs in the village are good. There is no bad job, such as selling drugs or alcohol." A poor man from the Kédougou (Senegal) community said: "There is

no such thing as a bad job. Any activity that feeds its worker is good. Only stealing and scamming are bad.” However, in line with the reasons associated with “good” jobs, the few “bad” jobs are regarded as arduous with respect to of the income earned (e.g. working as a daily laborer in the construction sector or engaging in illicit activities such as “selling drugs”). Poor men participating in the FGD in Samé (Mali) explained why they considered being a laborer as a “poor” job: “A daily construction worker performs a very arduous work from the morning to 4pm and only earns 1,500 or 2,000 francs.”

5.2. Perception of the conditions and skills required for success

People described as “successful” in farm or non-farm activities are mainly perceived as having specific behavioral skills or having received financial support from close relatives (essentially family members) or other acquaintances, which facilitated investments in one or several activities. Successful individuals are describes as having behavioral skills such as being hard-working, determined, courageous and serious persons. Asked about the determinants of their success, 42 percent of the respondents mention the importance of hard work, perseverance and courage, described as essential qualities to “progressively” gather enough money and scale up one’s business or farm or to diversify one’s activities by investing in new ones. This vision of success hardly varies according to the place of residence and respondents’ characteristics. Honesty, integrity and generosity are also regarded as important qualities to successfully engage in an activity (11 percent of the determinants cited by the FGD participants). A poor man from Amirou Gata (Niger) explained: “Becoming rich requires qualities such as honesty and generosity, so God can help us thrive.”

“Relationships” are also regarded as an important determinant for success (14 percent of the answers). According to several stories told in the FGDs, the financial support provided by close relatives and acquaintances is often described as the first source of financing for the farm or non-farm activities carried out by successful community members. As explained in a group of productive men from Sikendé (Burkina Faso), “A single hand is not enough to collect flour. Working alone [...] or supported are two different things [...] Some people in Mali or Ivory Coast work on their own; others receive some support and invest in agriculture [crop production] and livestock.” Similarly, “family heritage” – agricultural lands, livestock or other goods – is also regarded as a determinant of success (9 percent of the determinants cited), especially in rural areas and mostly among women.

However, to explain success, poor people give more weight to network and family heritage than productive persons. Besides, most of the respondents regarding network and family heritage as important determinants of success also regard hard work and courage as essential qualities to “make one’s capital yield a profit”, as explained by a productive man in Kanel (Senegal).

(Basic or technical) education is hardly cited as being a key determinant of success (6 percent of the determinants cited). Education is much more cited by productive persons and by men than by poor persons and women. The other determinants mentioned to explain success include “luck”, “God’s help”, “few dependents”, etc.

The country-specific results analysis shows that behavior skills (hard work, perseverance and courage) are important determinants of success in all surveyed countries, and more particularly in Senegal, Chad and Mali. Network is perceived as particularly important in Burkina Faso (19 percent of the determinants of success cited), Mali (20 percent) and Niger (15 percent). In Burkina Faso and Niger, the role of family heritage is also cited as an important factor of success. Education is more cited in Mali (14 percent) and less cited in Chad (less than 1 percent).

In all the countries under consideration, respondents put more weight on (basic or technical) education as a determinant of young people’s success. Besides, in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, the financial

support provided by families or other acquaintances is important to young people to achieve success, more than for the other community members. In all the countries under consideration, young people's behavior, and more particularly hard work and courage, are perceived as the first determinants of success, although a bit less in Mali (52 percent of the success criteria cited for successful community members and 30 percent for successful young people), consistently with the heavier weight given to education and network. A poor male FGD participant from Palasso (Mali) declared: "Even working hard, one cannot achieve success without support."

5.3. Employment aspirations

In the study areas, the respondents clearly aspire to develop their (farm or non-farm) activities or to diversify their activities in order to increase their income. Asked to assess their current situation and their five to ten-year objectives, less than 5 percent of the respondents reported being satisfied with their current situation. The proportion of satisfied persons varies across countries. In Senegal, none of the respondents reported being satisfied with their current situations, compared with 13 percent in Chad.

Around 49 percent of the respondents reported wanting to develop their current activities, 21 percent to diversify their activities, 14 percent to change activity and 2 percent to migrate to find a job. Rural respondents are more likely to want to diversify their activities. This could partly be explained by the risks they face, as most of them are agricultural workers, since activity diversification reduces risk exposure (as mentioned above).

The respondents' employment objectives also vary according to their characteristics. Although most respondents, regardless of their status, report wanting to develop their current activity, this answer is more frequent among productive respondents than among poor respondents. Compared with productive respondents, poor respondents more frequently want to diversify their activities.

The country-specific results also reveal some important disparities. For instance, 65 percent of the Senegalese respondents wish to develop their current activities, whereas only 7 percent of them wish to diversify their activities. Besides, around 26 percent of them report feeling pessimistic and helpless about the future; all of them are productive persons "hoping" to find a wage job, including in the public service, or feeling helpless "without any financial support". In Chad, 13 percent of the respondents' report feeling helpless or hoping to find a wage job.

6. CHALLENGES TO IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY

In the study areas, the respondents are facing multiple risks and constraints to developing their current activities or shifting towards more productive and profitable activities. Due to the nature of their activities (i.e. self-employed farm or non-farm activities), most of them report facing risks and constraints affecting their households and activities.

This Section distinguishes between the risks and constraints faced by the FGD respondents in the study countries, based on two elements: on the one hand, some constraints arise from or can be aggravated by risks related to the respondents' activities; on the other hand, these risks can be hard to manage due to constraints related to the environment in which farm and independent activities operate. As this analysis is based on the factors mentioned by the respondents, however, it is important to bear in mind that this distinction is not reflected in the data collected. Instead, the risks are included in the main challenges to improving productivity cited by the FGD participants.

6.1. Risks

Risks are ubiquitous in the areas under consideration. In the absence of effective coping strategies, they can affect farm and non-farm labor productivity, including through the populations' activity choices and decisions to invest or not in these activities. This Section describes the main risks faced by the respondents in the study areas.

In rural areas, where agriculture is the main activity, the major risks cited by the respondents include climate-related risks (rainfall), biological hazards (i.e. pest invasions, plant diseases, etc.) and risks affecting livestock (including diseases and mortality). According to a group of poor women from Kantchari (Burkina Faso), "Poor rainfall is the main risk affecting our activities. If it does not rain, our earnings will entirely sink into food purchases", "Also, disease-related spending regularly threatens our activities."

Health-related risks are the second most cited risk among rural respondents, whereas urban populations have better access to health infrastructure. Although health-related risks are not directly linked to their activities, the respondents explain that these risks can involve expenses (in the case of diseases) or costs (in the case of inability to work):

"Diseases are risks for workers engaged in any activities. They are frequent during winter, in particular malaria. When one gets sick, everything stops." (Poor men, Kantchari, Burkina Faso)

"Some diseases also affect our activities, abruptly preventing us from working in the fields." (Poor men, FGD, Déli, Chad)

In urban areas, the results reveal a greater diversity of risks, partly due to the greater diversity of urban activities. In both urban and rural areas, climate-related risks are the main type of risks cited by the respondents. The importance of climate-related risks could be explained by the practice of agriculture, in particular market gardening, in semi-urban areas. The five main risks cited by the urban respondents include the non-payment of clients' debts (or the non-payment of temporary workers' wages) and the risk of poor sales (goods and services). Both risks appear to be particularly important to the respondents working in retail. Among the major risks, the respondents also mentioned: (i) the risk of being expelled or seized one's goods by municipal officers/the police in charge of freeing public spaces from street vendors or mechanics; (ii) the risk of work accidents affecting laborers, carpenters, moto-taxi drivers, etc.

Table 8: Five key risks depending on the place of residents

Risks	Rural areas	Urban areas
1	Weather conditions (droughts, flooding, delayed rainfall)	Weather conditions (droughts, flooding)
2	Livestock diseases	Non-payment of clients' debts
3	Diseases (malaria, injuries, etc.)	Poor sales: lack of clients/competition
4	Pest invasions, plant diseases, etc.	Loss of (fragile/perishable) goods
5	Price variations (goods, services, inputs)	Being expelled or seized one's goods by municipal officers

The major risks mentioned by both urban and rural respondents also include stolen products or equipment. In the farm sector, stolen livestock is a very important risk; in the non-farm sector, traders and craftsmen (carpenters and mechanics) mainly mention stolen goods and equipment, respectively. The survey did not include a ranking of activity based on their relative risk and profitability, but it is possible to distinguish between high-risk/highly profitable and relatively less risky/profitable activities based on the data collected about the “best” employment opportunities, the success stories and the main risks.

Farm activities – crop and livestock production – are associated with the higher risks among respondents' activities. However, livestock, in particular cattle-fattening, is regarded as a potentially very profitable activity. A productive man in a FGD in Palasso (Mali) explained: “I think fattening is a good activity, as one can earn a good living from it if there is no problem.” Depending on the crops (vegetables, cereals or cash crops like cotton or sesame) and on the context, the other agricultural production activities are also regarded as relatively profitable.

Less risky than farm activities (according to the analysis of the main risks faced by the respondents), non-farm activities – retail and handicrafts, mostly performed in urban areas – are also regarded as profitable activities, depending on the context. However, the respondents insist that most workers do not have access to the most profitable activities (or products) due to other challenges in this sector.

Do risks vary according to the respondents' characteristics?

Unlike aggregated risks such as climate-related risks, individual risks vary according to the respondents' characteristics and ability to provide for themselves and their families. The results of the assessment reveal that livestock diseases and non-payment of debts are more likely to be considered by the productive respondents as major risks for their activities, whereas health-related risks and biological hazards are more frequently mentioned by the poor respondents. These results reflect the diversity of the respondents' activities, as well as their unequal capacity to manage certain risks, which also depends on the other constraints they face. This particularly applies for biological hazards: the participants in a Focus Group Discussion in Senegal explained their vulnerability to such risks by referring to their “lack of phytosanitary products to neutralize them” (Poor men, FGD, Kanel, Senegal). Hence, the lack of access to capital or inputs seems to explain, at least partly, poor people's greater exposure to certain risks.

Gender differences mainly reflect occupational differences. Non-payments of debts and poor sales are more frequently cited by women as major risks, whereas livestock diseases, being expelled or seized goods are more frequently cited by men. Moreover, work accidents are exclusively mentioned by men, confirming women's low participation in construction, carpentry and passenger transportation. In the absence of additional information, however, it cannot be excluded that such gendered differences could be related to other factors. In the case of the non-payment of debts for instance, both women

and productive persons (see Box 4) could actually have to face a greater social pressure and show generosity, increasing the probability of granting credits to their clients.

Box 4: Productive persons' exposure to the risk of non-payment of debts and its implications

The non-payment of clients' debts is regarded as an important risk by both poor and productive people, although the latter are more likely to mention it. Why would productive persons be more exposed to this risk? This result can be explained by differences in employment sectors between poor and productive persons; besides, this risk seems to particularly affect traders. Based on the Focus Group Discussions, however, another factor seems to contribute to productive people's greater exposure: the duty of solidarity towards the other community members, in particular the poorest. This factor was mentioned, inter alia, during a Focus Group Discussion with poor men from Mali:

"Traders can be prejudiced by credit defaults. For instance, when a villager asks a trader if he can buy cereals on credit, the trader feels morally obliged to help him and sell his cereals on credit."

Besides, the results suggest that generosity is regarded as an important quality to achieve success and that successful people are expected to be generous. A poor woman from Kona (Niger) said:

"I know a woman who has achieved success thanks to her husband's support and by engaging in livestock activities. Throughout the years, she grew her single goat into a herd of cattle. She would sometimes sell part of her cattle to buy groundnut bags that she would sell on credit to women, and this is how she thrived. She is honest and generous and has never asked women to reimburse their debts in case of delayed payments. She always patiently waits until the client comes to her and repay the credit."

As mentioned in Section 4.1, the risks faced by the respondents can affect their choice of activity portfolio and labor productivity. In the case of non-payment of debts, productive women from Palasso (Mali) explained:

"Selling on credit hampers our activities: as long as we do not get paid, we cannot move forward" (Productive women FGD, Mali). Still about the non-payment of debts, a man explained: "I can be regarded as an example. [...] I started teaching in the Arabic school of the village and I was paid 15,000 francs per month. In parallel, I started retailing various items – tea, sugar, milk, etc. As this trade developed, I decided to fully devote to it and stop teaching. At some point, I went bankrupt because of unpaid credits, so I engaged in other activities in the village for two years [2006 to 2008], growing groundnuts, beans and okra, and producing coal. I thus built up a business capital (75,000 francs) and resumed my business, selling the same items plus iron. All these activities enabled me to open a really successful shop."

6.2. Constraints to increasing productivity

The major constraints to increasing productivity cited by the respondents include the lack of financial capital, the lack or poor quality of infrastructure and productive assets such as roads or markets, the lack of clients, competition, etc. The six major constraints²⁸ faced by respondents were listed as part of the FGDs, producing a clear constraint ranking by activity sector, place of residence and respondents' characteristics.

Constraints by activity sector

²⁸ See Annex 1 for a description of the methodology used to rank the constraints faced by the FGD respondents.

Tables 9 and 10 respectively show the challenges – constraints and risks – mentioned by the FGD participants in the farm and non-farm sectors. As mentioned earlier in the report, the respondents experience diverse constraints that affect their activities either directly or indirectly (for instance through their effects on their households).

In the farm sector, the lack of access to agricultural inputs (such as fertilizers, pesticides or cattle feed) and modern agricultural equipment is the most frequently cited constraint. Sometimes aggravated by the remoteness of certain areas, this problem hinders access to quality inputs and equipment, as well as the ability to access them “at the right time”.

As explained by a poor woman in an FGD in Palasso (Mali), “We grow rice, but we do not make profit because of the poor quality of the fertilizers we buy on the market.” A productive man from the same community said: “Here for instance, we grow an early variety of corn. With poor fertilizer, it does not grow enough, leading to a drop-in cost-effectiveness.” As far as timing is concerned, a poor man from Kantchari (Burkina Faso) explained that, despite State subsidies, timely access to fertilizer remains limited: “The State-subsidized fertilizer is cheaper, but it is inadequate and always comes too late.”

The lack of access to capital is the second most frequently cited challenge. According to the respondents, it particularly hinders animal production, which requires some start-up capital, especially cattle breeding. As reported by the respondents, however, recurrent climate-related shocks are also reinforcing the importance of accessing capital for crop production (e.g. to purchase inputs and equipment).

Table 9: Main challenges to agricultural activities cited by FGD participants

Ranking	Challenge
1	Lack of access to agricultural inputs or equipment (quality fertilizers, phytosanitary products, veterinary products, cattle feed, agricultural equipment)
2	Climate-related risks (drought, flooding)
3	Lack of access to capital (lack of own resources, lack of access to credit due to safeguard requirements or to high interest rates)
4	Lack or poor quality of infrastructure and collective facilities (roads, markets, drilling facilities, warehouses)
5	Risks of production loss due to animal diseases/mortality, thefts, animal damages in the fields
6	Biological hazards (pest invasions, plant diseases)
7	Environment/natural resources (land degradation or poor soils, lack of pasture)
8	Lack of technical skills
9	Limited access to land due to population growth and lack of land tenure rights
10	Health-related risks
11	Lack of assistance provided by the State or by other development stakeholders
12	Lack of access or poor quality of public services (veterinary services for farm animals)
13	Lack of access to markets (lack of clients, competition)
14	Market risks (price fluctuations)
15	Lack of access to information
16	Family expenditure (food, health, education – children)
17	Lack of basic education
18	Lack of access to the workforce
19	Social standards (lack of time/leisure)

The lack of financing means seems to be a particularly important constraint among non-farm workers (trade, manufacturing, mechanics, carpentry, etc.). The respondents mention a lack of means (start-up capital and working capital) and a lack of access to credit, partly due to the required guarantees and high interest rates.

Table 10: Main challenges cited by the FGD participants in the non-farm sector

Ranking	Challenge
1	Lack of access to capital (lack of own resources, lack of access to credit due to guarantee requirements or to high interest rates)
2	Lack or poor quality of infrastructure and collective facilities (roads, markets, retail spaces/workshops)
3	Lack of access to markets (lack of clients, competition)
4	Family expenditure (food, health, education – children)
5	Lack of management skills/financial education (lack of management knowledge, non-payment of clients' debts)
6	Risks of production loss (thefts, fires)
7	Market risks (price fluctuations)
8	Lack of access to equipment for handicrafts and services
9	Lack of technical skills for handicrafts and services activities
10	Policies and regulations (high taxes, "hassles" related to the police or municipal administration)
11	Corruption
12	Poor quality of public services (electricity cuts)
13	Social standards (lack of time/leisure)
14	Poor working conditions
15	Risk of goods being seized by the police or customs
16	Perceptions/behaviour
17	Lack of assistance provided by the State or by other development stakeholders
18	Lack of basic education
19	External shocks (fluctuations of the Nigerian currency - <i>Naira</i>)
20	Lack of access to the workforce
21	Lack of access to information
22	Lack of network
23	Health-related risks
24	Lack of organization of the areas of activity
25	Activity-related expenditures
26	Default risks (non-payment of the creditors/suppliers)
27	Difficult supply of goods
28	Risks (poor quality of the goods)

The constraint ranking analysis also suggests that the 10 or 15 major challenges cited by the respondents regardless of their employment type (farm or non-farm) do not include the lack of basic education, whereas the lack of technical skills is included in the 10 major challenges mentioned by the respondents for farm or non-farm activities.

Box 5: Vulnerability and seasonality of agricultural activities

In the study areas, especially in the rural ones, the households' activities, incomes and consumption are seasonal. This seasonality is both a cause and a consequence of the poorest households' low productivity.

The data collected in the rural communities show an increase in inactivity and seasonal migration²⁹ during the dry season, after harvesting the rain-fed crops. Despite this inactivity, most of the individuals are engaged in a secondary (farm or non-farm) activity during the dry season, as outlined in Section 4.1.

During the dry season, the activities most individuals are engaged in (excluding seasonal migration) vary according to the available resources or infrastructure. In the communities with agricultural facilities (very unusual in the surveyed communities) or with lowland swamps, market gardening seems to be a widespread practice mainly performed by women and young people after the rainy season. However, as emphasized by FGD respondents, market gardening is highly dependent on water access and suffers from the shortened rain season and increased rainfall variations. Likewise, although widespread, dry season livestock breeding is also reliant on water and pasture access. Although less dependent on natural resources, the non-farm activities conducted in the areas under consideration can also be affected by seasonality, in particular among poor workers. Some activities performed by women (e.g. retail trade of processed agricultural products) are often exclusively financed by agricultural income. Handicraft activities (construction, mechanics, carpentry, etc.) performed by a minority of male workers during the dry season also suffer from a low demand related to the population's low purchase power, according to the FGD participants.

In such conditions, activity diversification seems to be essentially used as a coping strategy by poor households, who often earn low incomes. The lean season – the period between the previous agricultural season and the harvests of the current season – is often a synonym of higher debts and cattle sales (for cattle owners) to purchase food supplies, whose prices also increase over this period. Such strategies enable households to (partially or fully) meet their food needs, but they can negatively affect farm and non-farm productivity during the following season due to asset loss or lower investment capacity involved by debt repayment³⁰.

²⁹ Seasonal migrations are an important strategy to cope with activity seasonality and meet the households' needs during the dry season. Young men in particular migrate to cities, gold mining sites or agricultural areas where they can work as agricultural workers in market gardening.

³⁰ Timber logging and trading are also performed by many workers, especially during the dry season. This activity enables them to cope with daily expenses in the short term, but proves to be particularly harmful for the environment and to aggravate land degradation.

Constraints by place of residence

Not surprisingly and considering the importance of farm activities in rural areas and non-farm activities in urban areas, the lack of access to financial capital is the most frequently cited constraints in urban areas, followed by the lack of clients and competition, according to the analysis of the constraints by place of residence. The other major constraints experienced in urban areas is the lack of space dedicated to craftsmen, the burden of *commune* taxes and the electricity cuts.

The major constraints mentioned by the respondents in rural areas include: the lack of quality infrastructure, like roads and markets (remote rural areas); diseases (malaria and other diseases); the lack of arable land; land degradation or poor soils; the lack of drinking water and water for food production (including market gardening). These different constraints can have important implications on the respondents, including on the time they dedicate to productive activities. For instance, the absence of a water source nearby is cited as a constraint in view of the physical effort involved by water transportation and more importantly the time wasted to go for water.

Constraints by respondents' characteristics

Tables 11 and 12 respectively show the rankings of the main challenges to improving farm and non-farm activities' productivity according to the respondents' characteristics. The ranking and frequency of the constraints vary according to the respondents' characteristics.

In the farm sector, regardless of the respondent type (men, women, productive and poor people), the major constraint is the lack of access to inputs and equipment. It is worth noting, however, that it is more frequently cited by women than by men, and equally cited by poor and productive people.

In terms of constraint ranking differences between men and women, the lack of quality infrastructure is the second most important constraint for women engaged in non-farm activities, but the sixth constraint for men. As far as constraints exclusively cited by men or women are concerned, only men mention the lack of basic education as a major constraint for farm activities and only women mention social standards (see Box 6).

Table 11: Main challenges to farm activities according to the respondents' characteristics

Challenge	Ranking			
	Women	Men	Poor people	Productive people
Lack of access to agricultural inputs or equipment (quality fertilizers, phytosanitary products, veterinary products, cattle feed, agricultural equipment)	1	1	1	1
Climate-related risks (droughts, flooding)	3	2	4	2
Lack of access to capital (lack of own resources, lack of access to credit due to safeguard requirements or to high interest rates)	4	3	2	4
Lack or poor quality of infrastructure and collective facilities (roads, markets, drilling facilities, warehouses)	2	6	6	3
Challenge	Ranking			

	Women	Men	Poor people	Productive people
Risks of production loss due to animal diseases/mortality, thefts, animal damages in the fields	5	4	3	6
Biological hazards (pest invasions, plant diseases)	6	7	7	5
Environment/natural resources (land degradation or poor soils, lack of pasture)	7	5	5	7
Lack of technical skills	9	8	8	8
Limited access to land due to population growth and lack of land tenure rights	8	10	9	9
Health-related risks	11	9	10	13

Note: NC stands for “not cited”

As far as non-farm activities are concerned, the lack of capital is ranked first, regardless of respondents’ gender or social status. Not surprisingly, however, the lack of capital is more frequently mentioned by women, which is partly due to their particular involvement in retail. Similarly, although household expenditures are among the five major challenges mentioned by both men and women, this constraint is more frequently cited by women, partly because women are often responsible for children’s health and education expenditures and often have to “tap into their business capital” to cover them. As for differences between men and women, constraints such as the lack of access to labor, the lack of organization of the areas of activity and health-related risks are exclusively cited by men, whereas the risk of non-payment of a loan (from suppliers, for instance) is exclusively mentioned by women.

As for differences between productive and poor people, the lack of equipment/materials for some activities (e.g. mechanics, carpentry) is a greater constraint for productive people (it is ranked sixth by productive people and twelfth by poor people engaged in non-farm activities), as their activities have reached another level of development and thus require other types of investments. Besides, constraints such as the lack of network and supply difficulties are exclusively mentioned by poor people.

Table 12: Main challenges to non-farm activities according to the respondents’ characteristics

Challenge	Ranking			
	Women	Men	Poor people	Productive people
Lack of access to capital (lack of own resources, lack of access to credit due to safeguard requirements or to high interest rates)	1	1	1	1
Lack or poor quality of infrastructure and collective facilities (roads, markets, retail spaces/workshops)	3	2	3	2
Lack of access to markets (lack of clients, competition)	2	3	2	3
Family expenditures (food, health, education – children)	4	5	5	4
Challenge	Ranking			

	Women	Men	Poor people	Productive people
Lack of management skills/financial education (lack of management knowledge, non-payment of clients' debts)	5	4	4	5
Risks of production loss (thefts, fires)	6	7	6	6
Market risks (price fluctuations)	7	12	8	9
Lack of access to equipment for handicrafts and services	NC	6	12	7
Lack of technical skills for handicrafts and services activities	9	9	10	8
Policies and regulations (high taxes, "hassles" related to the police or municipal administration)	14	11	11	12
Corruption	NC	8	7	21
Poor quality of public services (electricity cuts)	8	16	15	10
Social standards (lack of time/leisure)	12	13	9	NC

Note: NC stands for "not cited"

Box 6: Social norms and individual activity development

The study reveals that social constraints take various forms and are a major challenge, especially for women and young people.

In Mali, in cotton-growing areas, women and young people report feeling "obliged" to work in the cotton fields owned by the head of their household. Engaging in an individual activity requires the prior permission of the household head and is only possible after the cotton harvest – at the end of the rainy season. Besides, gains from cotton sales are not systematically divided between the household members, and the repartition largely depend on the household heads' goodwill.

"Young people from families with little workforce are not allowed to do so by their household head." (Productive men, FGD, Palasso, Mali)

"Even if we could engage in market gardening, our husbands only allow us to do so during the dry season." (Poor women, FGD, Faconi, Mali)

Besides, according to the FGD participants, the segregation of activities by gender or cast partly explains why they cannot develop more productive activities. In the Chadian context for instance, the respondents reported that the "lowest casts" are often relegated to more arduous and less cost-effective activities.

"As far as social burdens are concerned, belonging to certain classes or casts limit our access to certain activities." (Leaders, Moussoro, Chad)

7. WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT PRODUCTIVITY?

7.1. Strategies used to cope with constraints to productivity

The respondents implement different strategies, both at individual and household level, to overcome the challenges they face. Asked about the strategies implemented to tackle the major challenges cited above, depending on the challenges and respondents' characteristics, they resort to strategies that can often prove costly in the medium to long term. It is worth noting, however, that respondents often report feeling helpless about certain constraints, such as the lack of infrastructure (lack or poor quality of roads, lack of drilling facilities, etc.), the lack of inputs and equipment and the lack of clients/competition.

Table 13 below lists the most frequently cited strategies to address some of the major challenges. Some of these strategies, such as transhumance during the dry season or the renting of agricultural equipment, are exclusively implemented by rural respondents.

Table 13: Constraint and risk management strategies

Strategies	Constraints
Activity diversification (within the farm sector or shifting towards non-farm activities)	-Lack of access to capital -Various risks
Migration (of the respondent or a household member) during the dry season, or permanent migration	-Lack of access to capital -Seasonality of the agricultural activities -Lack of access to agricultural land
Selling livestock products, cereals and timber to finance trade activities or cover various expenditures	-Lack of access to capital -Risks
Resorting to the savings made over time	
In-kind credits (goods/inputs) from traders or cash credits from relatives or microfinance institutions (very unusual)	
Renting agricultural equipment like ploughs (in exchange for working days)	-Lack of access to agricultural inputs and equipment
Purchasing small quantities of fertilizers/pesticides with the income from animal sales (sheep, goats and poultry) in local markets	
Using traditional soil fertilization techniques based on the use of available natural resources	
Lowering product prices (e.g. market gardening products)	-Lack of clients/competition
Doorstep selling (often travelling long distances for entire days)	
Transhumance during the dry season	-Lack of pasture
Collecting and conserving crop residues (millet stems, bean pods, bean leaves, bran, etc.)	

Among the strategies implemented to tackle challenges to improving productivity, activity diversification is the most used by the respondents, especially in rural areas, to address the lack of financial capital and risks, in particular climate-related risks. Diversification often offers an income-enhancing opportunity to productive people with significant financial capital, whereas it is mainly a survival strategy for poor people.

Although less common than diversification, temporary migration is also an important strategy for households, especially in rural areas. Migrants are mostly young men moving to cities, gold mining sites, other farming areas or neighboring countries. Productive women in a FGD in Sanh (Burkina Faso) elaborated about financial constraints:

“The young have to go to gold mining sites during the dry season to hopefully find something. Some of them go to Ouahigouya to work on the market gardening sites. Others go to other regions to dig wells in order to collect water during the rainy season. Those who earn a bit more invest in livestock, trade and primarily in agricultural assets.”

Credit from family members, friends, suppliers or other local traders are also mentioned by the respondents as a strategy to manage the challenges faced. It is worth noting, however, that resorting to credit is more frequently cited by urban residents, in particular productive people. Besides, not surprisingly, women cite less frequently credit as a strategy implemented to overcome challenges. These results are consistent with those of the previous Section on constraints to productive employment.

Finally, selling livestock enables households to invest in farm or non-farm activities or to cover expenditures in case of shocks or during the lean season. In rural areas, livestock is a way to save money and protect oneself against risks and shocks. Selling livestock can prove costly, however, as it involves losing assets and because livestock prices fluctuate and are often lower during difficult times for the poorest households, especially during the lean season.

7.2. Proposed solutions to address constraints to productivity

The data collected about respondents’ “solutions” or means to reduce or remove challenges can inform the design of future interventions aimed at improving productivity among the poorest households. However, it is important to bear in mind that the interventions suggested by the participants reflect their level of information and knowledge about the existing options. Hence, these data provide information about acceptability – social and cultural feasibility – of some interventions, as well as a (partial) assessment of the respondents’ and their circle’s exposure to a number of interventions.

The results show that the solutions suggested by the surveyed populations are intrinsically linked to their perception of the activities they are familiar with or engage in, and more particularly to their perceived cost-effectiveness. The three main interventions suggested by the participants are: (i) measures to access financial capital; (ii) productive asset subsidies; (iii) building infrastructure or repairing/maintaining existing infrastructure such as drilling facilities, market gardening wells, cereal banks or roads.

For a vast majority of respondents (regardless of gender or social status) who suggested this solution, the access to financial capital mainly takes the form of “low-interest credits”. It is important to specify that the respondents were not asked if they preferred to receive a grant or a credit, as the result could have been different if this question had been asked³¹. Some comments actually suggest that the respondents’ wish to obtain a credit is partly based on the belief that obtaining a grant is impossible. Poor men in a FGD in Sanh (Burkina Faso) explained:

³¹ Unfortunately, the data collected during the survey does not clarify whether the respondents prefer to receive a grant or a credit.

“We want to have access to microcredits adapted to our working context [...] Some credit structure exists but mostly work with women. The structures that are open to men offer onerous conditions. We know that we cannot receive money for free, but these conditions have to help us pull through instead of creating more problems.”

As for the potential use of this financial capital, the respondents report intending to invest it mainly in livestock and trade. This result is confirmed by the type of productive assets they would like to receive, as agricultural equipment (tractors, carts, plough, etc.) and livestock are the two main assets cited by the respondents who would like to receive productive asset subsidies (mainly rural respondents).

Hence, in the absence of information about other potentially profitable activities in the respondents' environment, these results suggest that massive investments in livestock and trade could be expected if access to financial capital were facilitated, with potential impacts on prices, *inter alia*³².

As far as infrastructure construction is concerned, the type of required infrastructure naturally depends on the constraints faced by the respondents. For instance, road infrastructure is logically crucial for respondents living in hardly accessible areas. A productive man in a FGD in Medina Yoro Foulah (Senegal) explained:

“Here in Médina Yoro Foulah-Kolda, we are suffering so much that every day we implore God to help us build that bloody road. It is all the more incomprehensible that Médina Yoro Foulah is the only Senegalese *département* without a single centimeter of tarmac. If this project were to be launched, the rest could wait.”

The other interventions suggested by the respondents include input distribution, agricultural technique training (for farmers), food assistance (mainly asked by poor people), management capacity building and occupational training (mostly young urban people). Savings support and the creation of product marketing organizations were also raised during the FGDs. It is worth noting that a lack of information about some existing mechanisms could probably explain that certain interventions were hardly or not mentioned at all. About helping the creation of a savings group for instance, a poor woman from Kalkouri (Burkina Faso) said: “I repeatedly asked women to get organized to create a tontine, but they do not understand the way forward and they lack motivation.”

³² A market analysis (supply and demand analysis) would help to highlight the potential effects on prices of a cash injection in a particular context.

8. CONCLUSION: TOWARDS PRODUCTIVITY-ENHANCING INTERVENTIONS IN THE SAHEL

Increasing employment productivity is a challenge with important implications in terms of poverty reduction and social cohesion in the Sahel countries. This report sets out the main results of a qualitative assessment of the constraints to employment productivity in the areas of the Safety Net projects in five Sahel countries: Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Chad.

Although not representative of the situation in each country, this qualitative assessment shows that the surveyed populations in the Sahel countries are facing multiple constraints that directly or indirectly affect the productivity of their activities. These constraints vary according to the respondents' sector (farm or non-farm sector) and to their social status (poor or productive people). When distinguishing between farm and non-farm sectors, the results suggest that the lack of access to capital is the main constraint to non-farm productivity and the third constraint faced by the surveyed populations working in agriculture. To overcome this constraint, the surveyed populations resort to different strategies, including activity diversification, asset selling, migration, loans from relatives or credits to suppliers. Very few respondents report having accessed formal credits, partly due to safeguard requirements and high interest rates.

Not surprisingly, the lack of access to quality agricultural inputs and equipment is a major constraint to improving the productivity of agricultural activities, according to the surveyed populations. When asked about strategies to address this problem, the respondents reveal that they often resort to suboptimal strategies such as buying small quantities of poor-quality fertilizers on local markets. The other constraints faced by these populations, like access to capital, seem to limit their ability to implement more efficient solutions, contributing to increasing their vulnerability.

Besides, the surveyed populations are particularly exposed to risks due to the nature of their activities, as they are mostly self-employed. Those working in the farm sector experience various types of risks, including climate-related risks, biological hazards or production loss. Although exposed to fewer risks, those working in the non-farm sector are still vulnerable. According to the respondents, the market risks prevent them from increasing the productivity of their non-farm activities.

These results have several implications in terms of designing programs or policies to increase employment productivity among the poorest in the intervention areas of the Safety Net projects in the Sahel. Before discussing these implications, it is worth recalling that self-employment prevails in the areas under consideration and their populations mostly aspire to develop self-employment activities. In this context, there is a clear role for programs or policies to increase the productivity of farm self-employment (rain-fed crop production, animal production, market gardening, etc.) and more importantly of non-farm activities in both urban and rural areas.

The results of this qualitative assessment (which is not representative of the national situations) have multiple implications in terms of program and policy design. Firstly, a set of combined interventions to address multiple constraints faced by the surveyed populations is likely necessary. In line with recent studies conducted in African countries and other developing contexts³³, the results suggest the presence of multiple mutually-reinforcing constraints that prevent populations from escaping poverty. Introduced by the NGO BRAC before being successfully replicated in other developing countries (Banerjee et al., 2015; Vilas et al., 2017), the "graduation/economic inclusion approach" appears to

³³ See for example, Christiansen and Premand (2017) for an analysis of employment in Côte d'Ivoire.

have a strong potential to increase employment productivity while reducing poverty in the Safety Nets intervention areas in the Sahel.

On the other hand, the results suggest that any intervention combination will have to consider how to improve populations' risk-management capacities. Risks are ubiquitous in the study areas and are difficult to overcome by the surveyed people. An initiative that could be part of a wider combination due to its proven positive impact on resilience is the provision of regular cash transfers to the most vulnerable people (Angelucci et al., 2009; Macours et al., 2012). In the areas under consideration where Safety Net projects are active (or about to be, e.g. Chad) the results of this qualitative assessment suggest that the initiatives already conducted as part of these projects, especially cash transfers, are an effective basis to build on. It is worth noting, however, that several elements are needed for cash transfer programs to play a role in enhancing employment productivity and increasing the poorest's resilience in the study area. These elements include, inter alia, the transfer level (which has to be adequate to ensure beneficiary households' consumption over the transfer period), as well as the timing and regularity/frequency of the transfers. Recent studies on the impact of cash transfer programs show that the regularity of the transfers enables their beneficiaries to plan ahead and increase their belief in the future. The timing of the transfers can also boost some activities or spending, considering the seasonality of certain productive activities (e.g. farm or construction activities), including in children education. Another important element in the design of cash transfer programs is the choice of the individual recipient among household members. The assessment results suggest that, regardless of this choice, it can prove fruitful for the program success to associate other adult members, like household heads. The Focus Group Discussions organized as part of this qualitative assessment actually showed "frustrations" among men, who were complaining that "the assistance" was always focused on women.^{34,35}

In terms of interventions that could be combined with a cash transfer program, the results show the importance to address capital constraint faced by the populations in the areas under consideration. The initiatives that could be implemented include the provision of credits or cash/in-kind subsidies (such as productive assets distributions). However, in the areas under consideration where the poorest household are particularly vulnerable and only have very few (or no) assets, subsidizing could be relatively more efficient than providing credits in order to address the capital constraint experienced by poor and vulnerable households. To determine whether to provide cash or in-kind subsidies, the local context (supply and demand for certain assets, products, etc.) and the logistic constraints to providing such subsidies will have to be considered.

In order to reduce risks and capital constraints faced by the surveyed populations, the cash transfer programs could also be combined to saving mechanisms. Indeed, savings can serve as insurance help households manage risk, thus reducing households' vulnerability, and could also solve the capital constraint in the medium term. A recent study conducted in Niger on the impact of the Safety Net program in Niger suggests that combining cash transfers and saving mechanisms can have a positive impact on asset accumulation in the beneficiary households (Stoeffler et al., 2019).

Another intervention that could prove to be crucial in the areas under consideration consists in developing skills, and more particularly behavior and life skills³⁶. Several recent studies showed the

³⁴ See Monchuk (2015) for an analysis of the Safety Nets situation in Africa and for recommendations to improve existing initiatives.

³⁵ See Bastagli et al. (2016) for further details about the whole range of modalities to take into account for the development of cash transfer programs and for a review of the literature on cash transfer impacts.

³⁶ According to the United Nations, life skills are defined as "a group of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively,

importance of life skills such as perseverance to overcome major challenges to enhancing farm and non-farm productivity (Campos et al., 2017; Montalvao, et. al., 2017). In each of the communities under consideration, the surveyed populations gave examples of “successful” people. According to the assessment results, these “successful” people possess the following behavior characteristics: perseverance, determination, courage and seriousness. In line with available evidence, these results suggest that the surveyed populations could benefit from life-skill training. It is worth noting, however, that the question of which household members would benefit the most of this type of training remains open. Our results suggest that it could be women and young people, especially in rural areas, but rigorous studies are necessary to improve the state of knowledge on this subject.

Although social standards do not explicitly appear in the ranking of the major constraints to productivity established by the surveyed persons, the results of this qualitative assessment suggest an important influence of social norms both on the “choice” of the respondents’ activities (depending on their gender or age), but also on their access to certain productive resources such as arable land and social capital. In the absence of evidence about effective means to promote enabling social norms for women and young people’s productivity, rigorous studies considering local contexts are necessary to identify which initiatives to implement in order to address this constraint.

Finally, in the study areas, the surveyed populations face structural challenges such as the lack or poor quality of infrastructure and collective facilities (roads, markets, etc.), the degradation of arable lands (a major constraint for farmers) or the lack of access to markets (a major constraint for non-farm workers). The ability of social protection programs to address such structural factors is limited. Still, their consideration in broader policy discussion and in the coordination of inter-sectoral development approaches remains desirable.

communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathise with others, and cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner.”

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10.ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: RESEARCH GUIDES – CONSTRAINT RANKING MATRIX³⁷

Exercises such as rankings are used as a quick means to discover the challenges experienced by the individuals and/or their preferences³⁸. Several tools are available to rank individuals' challenges. The "constraints ranking matrix" ranks individuals' challenges after identifying them.

The Research guidel provide researchers with the following instructions:

1. The facilitator shall start by identifying all the individuals' challenges and write them down on a board.
2. The facilitator shall then validate with the participants a list of key challenges (6 to 8), asking them to specify the reasons for their choices.
3. The facilitator shall finally pick pairs of challenges and ask the participants: "*Which of these two challenges is the more serious?*" The results shall be transferred into a matrix. To facilitate comparison, the facilitator shall use paper cards/sheets with one challenge written on each them. Two cards/sheets shall be simultaneously shown to the participants during each round.

It is worth noting that, as part of this assessment, two "constraint ranking matrices" were developed when relevant. Depending on the FGD participants' employment diversity, the constraints to increasing farm and non-farm productivity were separately identified and ranked.

Figure A.1 outlines the results of a challenge ranking exercise conducted in a FGD with "productive" women in Kantchari (Burkina Faso).

Figure A 1: Results of a challenge ranking exercise based on a Challenge analysis matrix in Burkina Faso

³⁷ Adapted from: Rietbergen-McCracken, J., & Narayan-Parker, D. (1998). Participation and social assessment: Tools and techniques. Washington, D.C: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank.

³⁸ FAO (2002). Guidelines for participatory diagnosis of constraints and opportunities for soil and plant nutrient management.

Notes:

Problèmes	Matrice de classement des problèmes					
	1. Manque de moyens financiers	2. Manque de matériel de transformation	3. Manque d'eau pour la production maraîchère	4. Difficultés d'accès aux crédits	5. Les dépenses du ménage (charges)	6. Le manque de clients
1. Manque de moyens financiers	1					
2. Manque de matériel de transformation		1				
3. Manque d'eau pour la production maraîchère			3			
4. Difficultés d'accès aux crédits				4		
5. Les dépenses du ménage (charges)					4	
6. Le manque de clients						5

A partir de la matrice de classement des problèmes, les problèmes sont classés par ordre d'importance dans le tableau ci-dessous :

Problèmes	Nombre de points
Manque de moyens financiers	05
Manque d'eau de production pour la production maraîchère	04
Difficultés d'accès aux crédits	03
Manque de matériel de transformation	02
Les dépenses du ménage (charges)	01
Le manque de clients	00
Total	15

To obtain the final result, the number of times each challenge was considered more important than others was counted. In the example above, the FGD participants in Burkina Faso identified the lack of financial resources as the main constraint, followed by the lack of water for production, etc.

ANNEX 2: RESEARCH GUIDES – SEASONAL CALENDAR OF RISKS AND RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES³⁹

The “Seasonal calendar of risks and risk management strategies” aims at collecting information to identify higher vulnerability periods and understanding the different strategies implemented by households/individuals. A single seasonal calendar was established per community as part of the Focus Group Discussions. This exercise was carried out with the first Focus Group Discussion; the information collected was then be complemented/verified by subsequent Focus Group Discussions.

The research guides provide researchers with instructions to develop the seasonal calendar. The guidelines specify that the seasonal calendar shall use a familiar time scale for the participants. In the case of the Sahel countries, the twelve-month calendar seems to be suitable. The seasonal variables that were identified include (see below): unemployment/inactivity, debts, disease, migration, etc.

For each of these variables, the facilitator shall ask the FGD participants to specify:

- Whether the variable (event or activity) is important to the community members (take note of the potential differences across groups);
- - The months when the variable occurred;
- - The variable intensity on a 1-3 scale, where 1 refers to a weak intensity, 2 to a medium intensity and 3 to a strong intensity. If the community members are affected by malaria for several months in the year, for instance, ask in which month(s) the disease incidence was weak, medium or strong.

Table A 1: Seasonal calendar of risk management actions and strategies

Local benchmarks	Importance to community members (yes/no)	Main harvest			Dry season					Rainy season			
		Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Augt	Sept
Unemployment/inactivity													
Timber logging and trading													
Livestock transhumance													
Seasonal migration													

³⁹ Adapted from: Rietbergen-McCracken, J., & Narayan-Parker, D. (1998). Participation and social assessment: Tools and techniques. Washington, D.C: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank.

Selling livestock													
Local benchmarks	Importance to community members (yes/no)	Main harvest			Dry season					Rainy season			
		Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Augt	Sept
Buying food for domestic consumption													
Debt													
Repaying debts													
Lean months													
Rains													
Malaria													
Other:													
Other:													

ANNEX 3: RESEARCH GUIDES – QUALITATIVE DATABASE

The objective of the qualitative database is twofold: simplifying data management and helping researchers to organize and analyze data by classifying them in the following categories:

- General topic (general employment issues);
- Constraints;
- Interventions;
- Aspirations.

Data entry

After collecting the data and transcribing the interviews, the first step for the researchers consists in capturing these data with a structured tool available to them in Excel. The following Figure is a screenshot of the database filtered by answers to Basic question 1.1 only, in all the FGDs across 5 communities.

Figure A 2: Screenshot of the qualitative database “General topic” tab

Com. #	Date	FGD Type	# in FGD	Gender(s)	Module	Question Code for Sorting / Comparing Groups	Thème	Première question / [ligne directrice]	Choix de réponses	# Choose Answer	Notes par réponse choisie. Indiquer les différents répondants en labellisant par a), b), c) pour chaque réponse.	Notes complémentaires ne correspondant pas aux choix de réponses.	
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,1	Sujet général	Quelle est la situation de l'emploi ici ?	a. Excellente				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,1			b. Bonne				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,1			c. Satisfaisante				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,1			d. Mauvaise				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,1			e. Très mauvaise				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,2	Sujet général	Quels sont les meilleurs emplois occupés par les membres de cette communauté ? Quels sont les plus mauvais emplois ?	a. Salarié permanent				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,2			b. Entrepreneur individuel				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,2			c. Exploitant agricole (non salarié)				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,2			d. Ouvrier à court terme -agricole				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,2			e. Ouvrier à court terme -non agricole				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,2	f. Autres (préciser)						
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,3	Contraintes	Quels sont les principaux risques qui affectent la mise en œuvre de votre activité / la génération de revenus ? Ces risques affectent-ils votre choix d'activité et/ou le lieu où vous menez votre activité ? Comment ?	a. Conditions climatiques (sécheresse, inondations)				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,3			b. Maladies (paludisme, blessure, etc.)				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,3			c. Maladies du bétail				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,3			d. Perte d'un actif de production				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,3			e. Perte de l'emploi				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,3	f. Variations des prix des intrants et/ou des produits commercialisés						
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,3	g. Autre (préciser)						
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,4	Sujet général	Certaines personnes (ou ménages) dans cette communauté exercent-ils plusieurs activités en même temps ou à la suite dans l'année? Quelles sont les activités secondaires exercées? Quelles sont les raisons qui expliquent que certaines personnes mènent plusieurs activités?	a. Revenus insuffisants				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,4			b. Récoltes insuffisantes (sécheresse, inondation, etc.)				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,4			c. Chocs inattendus (maladie d'un proche)				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,4			d. Opportunités de diversification				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,4			e. Autre (préciser)				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,5	Sujet général	Pouvez-vous me parler des personnes au sein de votre communauté qui ont réussi dans leur activité (agriculture, commerce, construction, etc.) ?	a. Travail acharné / fiabilité / effort				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,5			b. Bonne éducation et formations				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,5			c. Liens sociaux – capital social				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,5			d. Héritage du patrimoine familial				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,5			e. Honnêteté, intégrité, bonne attitude				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,5	f. Autres (préciser)						
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,6	Sujet général	Certains groupes de jeunes sont-ils mieux/moins bien lotis que d'autres? Pourquoi certains groupes de jeunes sont-ils mieux/moins bien lotis que d'autres ?	a. Travail acharné / fiabilité / effort				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,6			b. Bonne éducation et formations				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,6			c. Liens sociaux – capital social				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,6			d. Héritage du patrimoine familial				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,6			e. Honnêteté, intégrité, bonne attitude				
1		CM - Pauvres		Male		1,6	f. Autres (préciser)						

Table A 2: Fields of the qualitative database and Research guidelines’ instructions to the researchers to complete the fields

Field	Column title	Description
Community code	A	Capture the community code (to distinguish between Community 1 or 2) (project-specific coding).
FGD/KII date	B	Capture the date of the data <i>collection</i> .
Type of FGD	C	This fields refers to the group participating in the FGD (existing sole proprietorships, potential sole proprietorships, etc.). This field is pre-filled. Be careful when capturing the data and make sure the fields relate to the same FGD.
Number of participants in the group	D	Capture the total number of participants in this particular FGD (in principle between 6 and 8).
Gender	E	This field refers to the FGD participants’ gender. It is pre-filled.
Module	F	This field refers to the (common or group-specific) module in relation to which the data are captured. it is pre-filled.
Question number	G	This field refers to the number of the question. It is pre-filled. Be careful when capturing the data and make sure the fields relate to the same FGD.
Topic	H	This field refers to the general topic of the question, which will be reflected in every question to facilitate the reading. In some cases, “General” can be captured to specify that the question encompasses several topics to be included in the relevant parts of the thematic analysis.
Text of the question	I	This field contains the main question (printed in bold in the field forms) to which the answer coding relates.
Answer type	J	This field provides with the answer types specified in each field form. For open-ended questions, the forms contain in principle an estimate of the answer type distribution. For blind-voting or closed-ended questions, the forms specify in principle the exact number of persons giving a certain type of answers to help you write down the number of participants giving a specific answer.
Number of participants selecting this type of answer type	K	In this field, write down the total number of participants (count the marks and capture the corresponding number next to each respective field of the column). If a given answer type has not been selected by anyone, capture “0” (do not leave blank cells).
Notes corresponding to this answer type	L	In this field, copy the transcription of the notes related to each answer type. This is when excellent notes prove to be useful: if the notes specify that a participant selected answer a), for instance, copy his/her explanation and everything he/she said opposite the field of answer a), in the Q column. If the notes are not excellent and do not contain what a participant said, but if it is possible to “interpret” his/her declaration and establish the type of answer he/she gave, then think about it and fill the relevant cell with the adequate coding. If another person starts speaking and gives the same type of answer, specify this respondent change by distinguishing each declaration with (a), (b), (c), etc. If a given answer type has not been selected by anyone, then leave the adjacent field blank.
Additional follow-up notes	M	In this field, copy the transcription of all the notes that do not directly relate to the answer types following the question that was asked (Column N). Here, you can capture additional information or notes that might not relate to any of the provided answer types. This field must not contain any information related to other answer types – i.e. even if the note taker has not given any indication in this regard, the answer has to be captured in one of the cells of column M if its content clearly relates to this answer type.

It is worth noting that the database for each topic also contains several individual tabs where the researchers shall capture the transcript of each Key Informant Interview conducted in each community. Their format is similar to the one used for the Focus Discussion Groups; however, the answer distribution is not documented, as there is only one respondent.

Analysis tabs

The analysis is conducted per topic (general employment questions; constraints; interventions; aspirations). Each tab corresponds to one subject and already contains tables and formulas to help researchers generate a “summary” of the data captured in column L (number of persons selecting an answer type, proportion of the total number of FGD participants). The following Table gives an example of what several communities’ data summary looks like for question CM2 (the rest of the communities do not appear on the screenshot due to the table width).

Figure A 3: Screenshot of the Summary analysis tab for communities 1, 2 and 3

CM.2																	
Quels sont vos objectifs en termes d'emploi et de moyens de subsistance ? Comment imaginez-vous votre situation dans 5 ou 10																	
	Community 1					Tout	Community 2					Tout	Community 3				
	CM - Pauv	CM - Pauv	CM - Prod.	CM - Prod.			CM - Pauv	CM - Pauv	CM - Prod.	CM - Prod.			CM - Pauv	CM - Pauv	CM - Prod.	CM - Prod.	
	M	F	M	F			M	F	M	F			M	F	M	F	
a. Je suis satisfait de la situation actuelle	0	0	0	1		1	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	
b. Je veux développer mon activité actuelle	2	2	5	3		12	4	2	2	4		12	3	3	4	5	
c. Je veux diversifier mes activités	4	3	4	3		14	3	3	3	2		11	3	7	2	2	
d. Je veux changer d'emploi	0	4	0	2		6	1	1	0	0		2	0	0	0	3	
e. Je veux aller ailleurs	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	4	0		4	0	0	3	0	
f. Autres (préciser)	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	
TOTAL in FGD	6	9	9	9		33	8	6	9	6		29	6	10	9	10	

The Figure below contains the total numbers for the 5 communities, ventilated by FGD types and by respondents’ genders.

Figure A 4: Screenshot of the Analysis summary tab for all the communities

Tout											
CM - Pauv	CM - Pauv	CM - Prod.	CM - Prod.		CM - Pauv	CM - Prod.		M	F	Tout	Tout %
M	F	M	F								
0	0	0	1		0%	1%		0%	1%	1	1%
18	17	23	26		47%	58%		55%	51%	84	53%
14	15	11	11		39%	26%		33%	31%	51	32%
2	9	0	5		15%	6%		3%	17%	16	10%
0	0	7	0		0%	8%		9%	0%	7	4%
0	0	0	0		0%	0%		0%	0%	0	0%
34	41	41	43		75	84		75	84	159	100%

ANNEX 4: RESEARCH GUIDELINES – DATA COLLECTION AND COLLECTION TOOLS

The Table below summarizes the actions conducted by researchers in each of the communities and lists the tools that were provided to them to do so.

Table A 3: Actions conducted in each community and collection tools

Action	Participants	Tool
Focus Group Discussion Men	Poor/Cash Transfer Beneficiaries	Focus Group Discussion basic guidelines
Focus Group Discussion Women		Community members' module (CM)
Focus Group Discussion Men	Relatively productive persons	Focus Group Discussion basic guidelines
Focus Group Discussion Women		Community members' module (CM)
Focus Group Discussion (Men+Women)	Community leaders	Focus Group Discussion basic guidelines
		Leaders' Module (LD)
Key Informant Interviews	Poor/Cash Transfer Beneficiaries	Key Informant Interviews (KII) basic guidelines
		Community members' supplement (CM)
	Relatively productive persons	Key Informant Interviews (KII) basic guidelines
		Community members' supplement (CM)
	City and province authorities, Stakeholder NGOs/partners	Key Informant Interviews (KII) basic guidelines
		Stakeholders' supplement (SH)
	Community leaders	Key Informant Interviews (KII) basic guidelines
		Community leaders' supplement
	Agricultural extension workers, devolved technical services/producer organization leaders	Key Informant Interviews (KII) basic guidelines
		Agriculture supplement
Other	Main KII guidelines	
	(Select the most appropriate supplement)	

Please note that before each Focus Discussion Group, the researchers fill out a fact sheet about the participants. This fact sheet provides valuable information about the respondents (name, age, gender, occupation/type of activity, education level, additional training, number of children, ethnic origin). It also enables researchers to ensure a good distribution between the different occupation types, genders and ages within the FGD before launching the discussions.

Table A 4: Data to be collected from the participants during each Focus Group Discussion

Name	Gender	Age	Employment (in the case of sole proprietorships specify the type of activity/role)	Education level	Additional training /years	Marital status	Number of children	Ethnic origin	Telephone number (to be contacted in the future)

