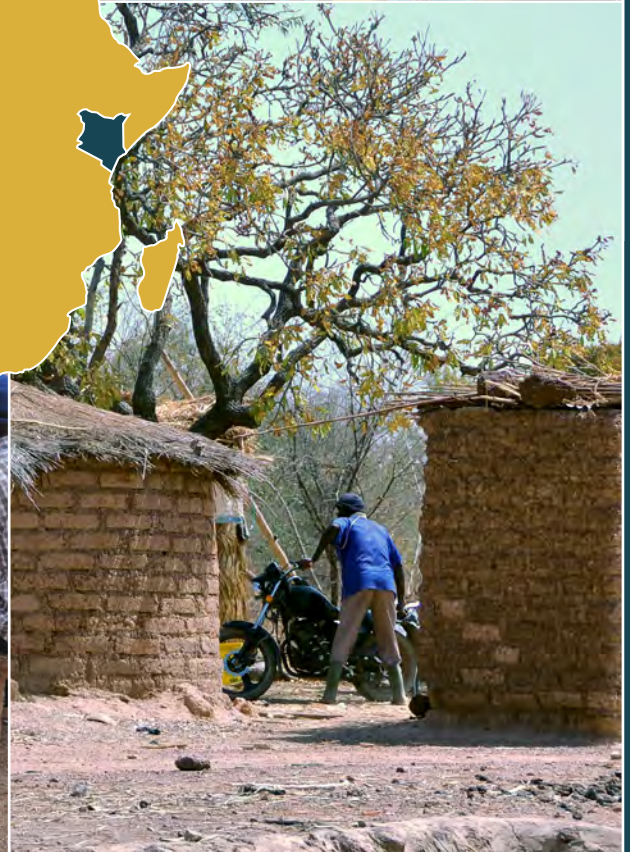




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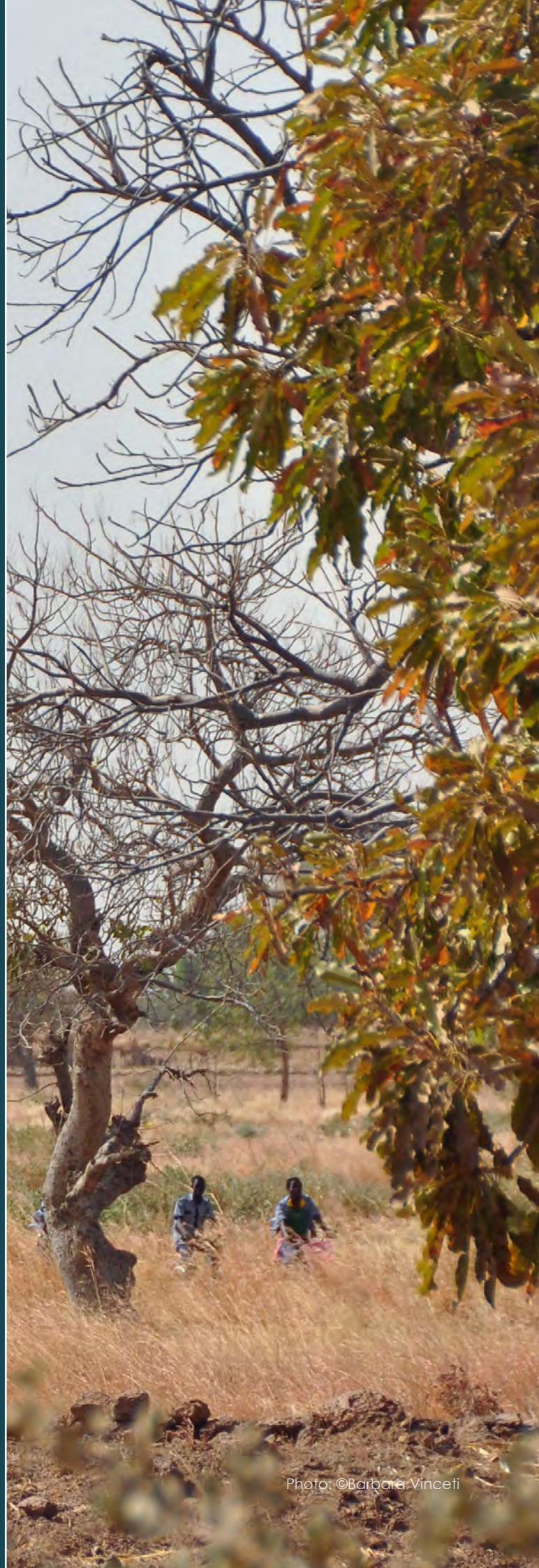
Exploring the effects of migration on smallholder farm households in Kenya and Burkina Faso



01.

About this brief

This brief brings together insights from a cross-country comparative study exploring the effects of rural outmigration on smallholder farm households in Eastern **Kenya** and the Central Plateau of **Burkina Faso**. It sheds light on the context-dependent nature of migration and how different types of migration can have different effects on gendered labour relations and households' capacities to invest in farming and manage the farm.



02.

Why look at migration?

Around the world, rural livelihood diversification in the form of permanent or temporary migration is more relevant than ever. These trends are closely shaped by globalization, limitations to smallholder farming, and the consequences of climate change (*Deere 2009; Slavchevska 2016; Pattnaik et al. 2018*). In farming communities, the impacts of rural out-migration on sending households vary by numerous factors, including who migrates within the household, where they go, and whether migration is permanent or temporary (*Mercandalli et al. 2020*). The consequences of outmigration on household members 'left behind', most commonly women, children, and elders, remain largely under examined. Important questions remain on how migration is redefining roles and responsibilities, on the farm and in the household, including gendered impacts and outcomes. Although these patterns are critical for rural development policies and programmes, there is a lack of empirical evidence on the effects of rural outmigration on gender and social dynamics (*Doss et al. 2020; Spangler & Christie 2020*), including with respect to agricultural management, knowledge and capacities, decision-making, and labour patterns.

In both Eastern **Kenya** and the Central Plateau of **Burkina Faso**, male outmigration is a common and longstanding livelihood strategy (*Ilboudo Nébié & West 2019; Tiffen et al. 1994*). Using a common methodology, our comparative study aimed to better understand the impacts of rural outmigration on sending households in these two regions.

Specifically, we asked:

- 1 What are the major migration trends in each location? Who is migrating, where and why? And
- 2 How do these trends affect decision-making, knowledge, labour, and other investments in farming?

03. Study sites



In Eastern **Kenya** and the Central Plateau of **Burkina Faso**, migration is thought to be linked to environmental factors. For example, the constraints that soil degradation, climate change, and rainfall variability pose for smallholder agriculture are encouraging rural outmigration (*de Longueville et al. 2019; Ifejika Speranza 2006*). In both countries, our studies focused on households engaged in on-farm land restoration activities.



In Kenya, the study built on a land restoration project that worked with farmers across Makueni, Machakos and Kitui counties in Eastern **Kenya** to test and compare promising land restoration options on their farms (World Agroforestry, 2020). Through working with these households and hearing women's stories about their increasing role as farm managers in the absence of husbands and sons (*Crossland et al. 2021a, 2021b*), we wanted to take a closer look at outmigration and its impact on the household's capacity to invest in farming.

Characteristics of study households



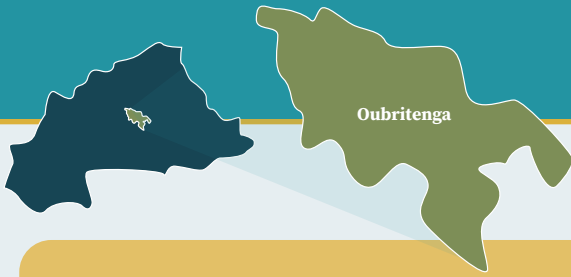
1028
Households
studied



5.6 people
Average
household size



5.6 hectares
Average area of
cultivated land



In Burkina Faso, the study was conducted in collaboration with Association tiipaalga, a local NGO which supports land restoration activities, including in Oubritenga Province of the Central Plateau. A reported challenge to restoration activities in the region was an apparent disconnect between those who own and make decisions about the land (male household heads), those who provide labour for the demanding processes of land restoration (including male migrants), and those whose capacities are strengthened through the organisation's interventions (increasingly, rural women, when men are not present).

Characteristics of study households



192
Households
studied



10.97 people
Average
household size



2.92 hectares
Average area of
cultivated land



04.

A shared methodology

In each study site, we used multi-method data collection to understand migration patterns and their impact on rural households (**See below**). Although the specifics differed in each country, this common methodology comprised a household survey to capture household characteristics, details of migrant household members and their migration patterns; interviews or a survey with women

from migrant-sending households to explore how migration impacts farm labour, remittances, knowledge sharing and decision-making; interviews or a survey with migrants to hear their views on migration; and focus group discussions and key informant interviews to provide background information on communities and local migration and land restoration trends.

In Kenya

All households participating in the restoration project in 2019 were surveyed



1028

Household surveys conducted with participating farmers (of which 424 households had migrant members)



37 Women

Interviewed in-depth from households with migrants



9 Men

Interviewed who are temporary migrants



7 focus group discussions

3 Conducted with men only; 4 with women only. Groups included a mixture of participants from households with and without migrants

In Burkina Faso

Households from 12 villages were selected through stratified random sampling (16 households per village) to include an equal number of households with and without migrants



192

Household surveys conducted with the household head (96 of which had migrant members)



79 Women

Surveyed from households with migrants



14 Men

Surveyed who are temporary migrants



10 focus group discussions

4 conducted with men only, 4 with women only, and 2 with both men and women. 5 Groups consisted of participants from households with migrants and 5 of participants from households without migrants



12 community profiles

Key informant interviews with NGO staff, civil servants, and community leaders among other community members used to develop community profiles

Summary of key findings



KENYA

BURKINA FASO

Migration patterns



Longer-term, non-seasonal movers: Mainly men (household head or son) leaving for urban centres, such as Nairobi and Mombasa, to earn income to support their family. Most take non-agricultural jobs, and only return home for a few days every month or during holidays to see their family. Migrants rarely return specifically to work on the farm. Migration is increasing due to poverty and unreliable rainfall.

Shorter-term, seasonal movers: Mainly young men (sons) migrating for a few months of the year to work in horticulture or gold panning and returning home during the agricultural season to work on the farm. Migrants are primarily from households with more members and with larger landholdings. Migration is being driven by a combination of economic, environmental, and socio-cultural factors.

Remittances



Most households receive remittances. These remittances are considered extremely important and used primarily for food and school fees but also for hiring farm labour, buying agricultural inputs and assets such as livestock, water tanks and building permanent housing.

Approximately 60% of households receive remittances, however remittances are quite small, and households hope for larger amounts in the future. Remittances are primarily used for buying food for the family, followed by health costs, tuition fees, and agricultural inputs.

Labour & farm management



The main burden to households with migrant members is loss of farm labour. Since migrants rarely return specifically to help on the farm, women have taken on activities that their sons and husbands had previously assisted with, such as fencing and ploughing with oxen.

Migration has caused a reduction in labour availability, as most migrants do not maintain their labour contributions from before. However, many households cope by drawing on the labour of other members and reducing cultivated areas.

Decision-making



Although migrant members remain involved in decisions while away (via mobile phone), women with migrant husbands have increased control over farming decisions. Nevertheless, this increased autonomy comes with increased workloads, emotional stress, and loneliness.

As most migrants are young men, often the son of the household head, their level of involvement in decision-making prior to migrating was not as high. Those who were involved in decision-making, particularly temporary migrants, try to maintain these contributions over the telephone or during seasonal visits to the farm.

Aspirations



Women's aspirations focus on farming, likely reflecting their new reality as farm managers. Agricultural opportunities have increased in recent years due to training and development projects but remain constrained by increasingly unreliable rainfall.

While many youths are reportedly less interested in agriculture, their parents and older respondents anticipate farming to be integral to future livelihoods. Future investments in the farm and training in land restorative techniques are projected to help with production constraints and to increase youth interest in farming.

05.

Characterizing migration trends

In both cases, migration was largely male-dominated, and the most common form of migration was temporary - where migrants leave for multiple weeks or months of the year (Table 1). Yet, both studies found great

diversity in who leaves, where they go, what they do, when they leave, and for how long. Comparing our two study areas demonstrates further regional variation.

Both studies discerned between two main types of migrants:

Temporary migrants

Household members who leave the homestead for multiple weeks up to several months of the year, after which they return to the homestead.

Permanent migrants

Household members who have left the homestead over the past five years and who no longer eat or live in the household, excluding women who have left the household for marriage.



Households with migrant members by migrant type

Table 1

KENYA (n = 424 households)		BURKINA FASO (n = 96 households)
69% (294)	Temporary migrants only	64% (61)
17% (71)	Permanent migrants only	27% (26)
14% (59)	Both permanent & temporary migrants	9% (9)

In Kenya, most temporary migrants are men (75%) and either the male household head or the son of the household head (**Table 2**). These migrants typically leave for urban centres (81%), such as Nairobi and Mombasa, and take jobs outside of agriculture, for example, working as security guards, mechanics, and construction workers. Temporary migrants typically return to the homestead for a few days each month or during school holidays to visit family (**Graph 1**), but few return specifically to work on the farm during peak times. Most permanent migrants are also male (83%) and the son of the household head (**Table 2**). While most permanent migrants have moved to urban areas (70%), compared to temporary migrants, a higher percentage have gone to live in rural areas (19% and 30% of temporary and permanent migrants, respectively) (**Table 3**) and work in agriculture (4% and 15% of temporary and permanent migrants, respectively).

“[Temporary migrants] come home regularly because they have a family left behind and other responsibilities. Even if someone does not have fare to come home, they borrow it from friends. In most cases their health does not look good because they don’t eat well, they are paying school fees and carry most of the family responsibilities.” -
Women’s focus group, Kenya



In Burkina Faso, most temporary and permanent migrants (96% and 90%, respectively) in the study are men. In contrast to **Kenya**, most temporary migrants are the son of the household head and only a minority are the male household head (**Table 2**). Given the lack of water for farming during the dry season and a lull in agricultural tasks, temporary migrants leave for several months to pursue wage

labour, gold panning, and horticultural opportunities. Most migrants return home at the start of the agricultural season to farm with their families (**Graph 1**). In the **Burkina Faso** case, 17% and 57% of temporary and permanent migration respectively are international, primarily to Côte d'Ivoire (**Table 3**). In contrast, in **Kenya**, international migration accounted for less than 1% of all migration.

“Children no longer find their way into agriculture. They do not want to continue cultivating anymore because of the fact that unemployment persists and that there is nothing to be done after the work in the fields. There is no water to practice off-season crops. They have many projects and secondary needs that agriculture is not able to satisfy. This is the case, for example, for those who want the money to buy motorcycles, smartphones, etc.” - Men's focus group, Burkina Faso



Photo: ©Barbara Vincati

Who leaves?

Table 2

KENYA

Temporary migrants (n = 503)	Permanent migrants (n = 178)
38%	7%
1%	0%
4%	1%
37%	74%
19%	15%
0%	1%
<1%	2%
1%	1%

Male household head

Female household head

Wife of the head of the household

Son of the head of the household

Daughter of the head of the household

Brother of the head of the household

Other male relation

Other female relation

BURKINA FASO

Temporary migrants (n = 97)	Permanent migrants (n = 49)
15%	4%
0%	0%
2%	0%
60%	65%
8%	4%
14%	27%
1%	0%
0%	0%

Where do migrants go?

Table 3

Temporary migrants (n = 503)	Permanent migrants (n = 178)
19%	30%
81%	70%
<1%	0%

Rural domestic

Urban domestic

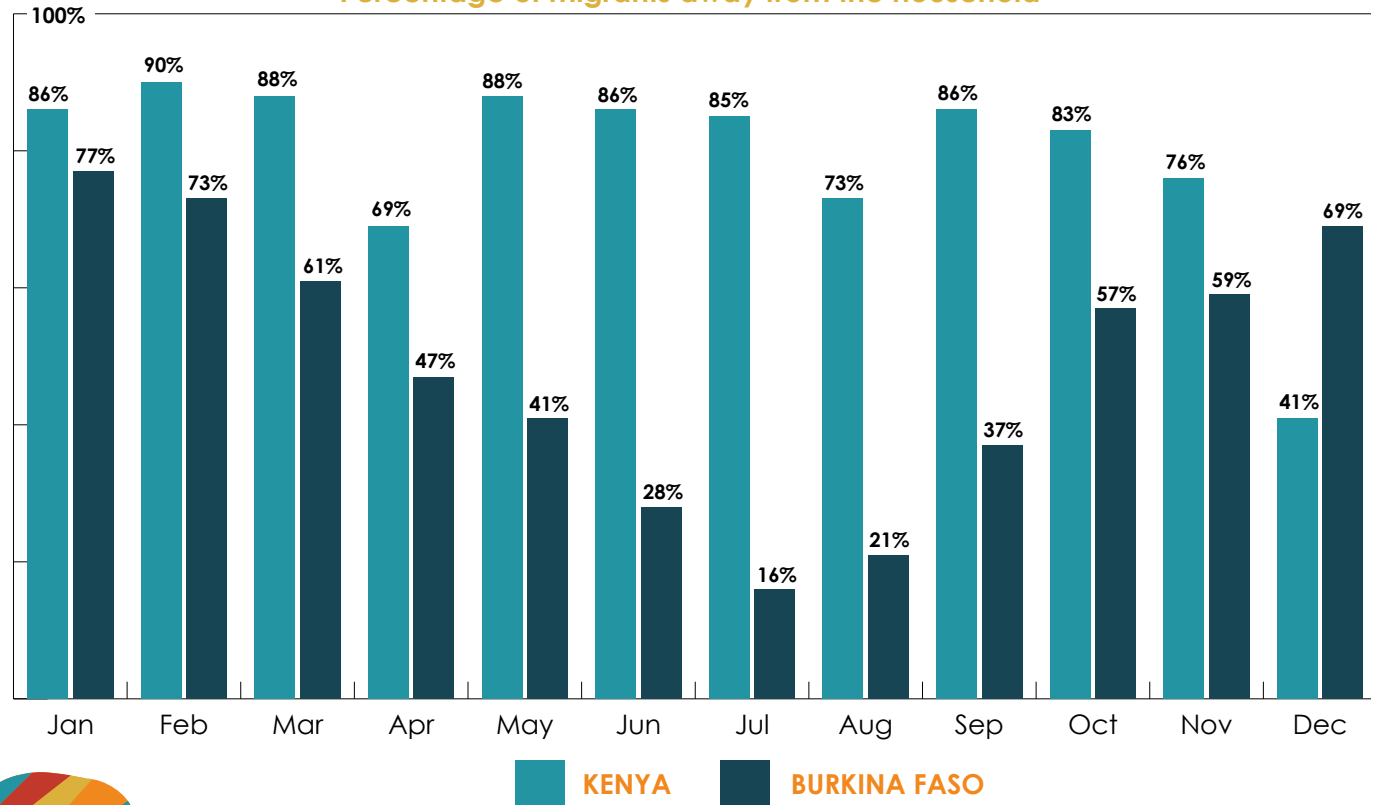
International

Temporary migrants (n = 97)	Permanent migrants (n = 49)
30%	2%
54%	41%
17%	57%

When do temporary migrants go?

Graph 1

Percentage of migrants away from the household



Women's increasing migration

Although a higher percentage of migrants are women in **Kenya** (23%) compared to in **Burkina Faso** (8%), in both cases, cultural norms and expectations limit women's capacities to migrate. In **Kenya**, women are thought to have fewer opportunities to migrate compared to men since they are expected to look after the home and children. Focus groups also reported safety concerns over women migrating and fears that unmarried women may get pregnant, and that married women may find another husband. Similarly, in **Burkina Faso**, women's migration was widely viewed as culturally unacceptable:

“Migration is good for young men only. Women should not participate in temporary or permanent migration. Women have to take care of the children and they have to take over for the man when he is not there.”

- Men's focus group, Burkina Faso

Nevertheless, participants believed that the number of women migrating in search of work is increasing. In **Kenya**, the number of young unmarried women leaving to urban centres in search of work, for example, as maids, hairdressers, and waitresses, was reported to have increased in recent years. In **Burkina Faso**, a minority of respondents noted that women are slowly beginning to migrate despite societal expectations, as men are recognizing the economic contributions these women can make.

Why do migrants leave?

In both studies, temporary migration was reported to have increased in recent years in response to multiple interconnected factors, including environmental, socio-cultural, and economic drivers.



Photo: ©Kelvin Trautman



Economic drivers

Consistent between the **Kenya** and **Burkina Faso** cases is a strong economic motivation for outmigration. In **Kenya**, the main reasons given by women interviewees for the migration of their male family members was to earn additional income to feed and support the family and to pay for school fees. In **Burkina Faso**, participants often discussed the need to generate income amid poverty, increasing living costs, and a lack of local income generating opportunities, as a primary motivation for migration. In both sites, the decreasing availability of land associated with population growth was reported to further encourage the migration of young men.

“There is an increase in the population which also decreases arable land. In addition, we are faced with an increase in the phenomenon of land sales and this is gradually reducing our usable area.” -

Men's focus group, Burkina Faso

“We sat down to discuss and saw that farming does not have a lot of income and we needed money for school fees too. So, we decided [my husband] would go out and look for work so that we can cater to our needs. If we put money from farming and the money he gets from doing his work, we can pay school fees. We have children in three different schools.” - *Women interviewee, Kenya*

For many respondents in both countries, migration was seen as part of a household strategy, with a migrant's decision to migrate often discussed and decided on as a household. In **Kenya**, several women had even funded their son's migration using their savings or through selling livestock.



Environmental drivers

Changing environmental conditions, particularly insufficient or unpredictable rainfall, were reported to further drive migration in these two contexts. Participants explained how land use and environmental constraints are interwoven with poverty and economic drivers discussed above. In both sites, there was a general perception that agriculture alone cannot meet household needs and farming is increasingly challenging due to unpredictable rainfall.



“Permanent migration has increased. This is because we cannot be content with agriculture alone; we do not achieve subsistence levels ... It’s because of poverty, famine. It is also because of the irregularities of rainfall.”

- Women’s focus group, Burkina Faso

“There is an increase in migration because the fact that migrants come back with money and buy luxury items like motorcycles encourages non-migrants to try the adventure too.” - Men’s focus

group, Burkina Faso



Socio-cultural drivers

In both sites, increasing rates of migration, and of youth in particular, was associated with their family’s inability to pay for their everyday needs and education, and a social expectation that young men must acquire assets and save up to establish their own household. It was also reported that younger generations are less interested in agriculture.

06.

Impacts of migration on sending households

Remittances and agricultural investment

The majority of both the **Kenyan** and **Burkinabè** households receive remittances from their migrant members and use this cash to cover household expenses and support farming activities back home. Yet, remittances seem to play a more important role for households in **Kenya**, with cash often used for larger investments such as buying livestock and water tanks.

In Kenya, remittances play a central role in determining whether migration is perceived as a net drain or net gain for the household, and influence the household's ability to off-set labour losses through hiring labour. Most households with migrants receive remittances (**Table 4**). This cash was perceived to be extremely important by 78% of households receiving remittances from temporary migrants and only 38% of households with permanent migrants, perhaps indicating that remittances from

permanent migrants (often the son) may be smaller and/or less frequent than those from temporary migrants (often the husband). Remittances are primarily used for purchasing food for household use and paying school fees, but also seasonally for hiring farm labour and purchasing farm inputs (e.g., improved seeds, fertilizer, pesticides). Several women reported having reinvested remittances in the farm, for example, through purchasing water tanks, buying livestock, and fencing their farm.

“When the farming season approaches, I send money for farming. If I find the fence is weak, I send money for fencing and if there is something that needs to be repaired, I send money for the same.” - Male migrant interviewee, Kenya



Reinvesting and returning to the farm

Although male migrants in **Kenya** may be “stepping out” of farming and pursuing non-agricultural activities, they are often still supporting and investing capital back into the farms they will one day return to or inherit. Women often reported that their migrant sons had sent home money for building houses and even purchasing land, with the intention of one day returning. It is also common for migrant husbands to return to the farm following their retirement.

“[My children] helped me because before they started working, I did not have chairs, they helped me and I was able to afford chairs to sit on, household dishes, animals like goats... I also built a house for the boy, he helped me buy stones and I was able to build it for him. We worked together to make that happen, I told him I had taken out a loan, so he helped me pay it back, we were able to take another loan and I managed to build him the house. I even bought iron sheets.”

- Women interviewee, Kenya



Photo: ©Barbara Vinceti

In Burkina Faso, remittances are also important, though to a lesser degree. Approximately 60% of migrants (61% and 59% of permanent and temporary migrants, respectively) sent remittances to their rural household (**Table 4**). In contrast to the **Kenyan** respondents, only 66% of temporary migrants' household members in **Burkina Faso** considered these remittances to be extremely important for the household and family farm. Focus group participants

explained that this was because migrant incomes, and therefore the amount of money they could send home, were often too low. More similar to the **Kenyan** findings, remittances to **Burkinabè** households are used primarily to purchase food and to cover expenses such as health costs and tuition fees. Buying agricultural inputs and hiring farm labour are also common uses, and from temporary migrants, remittances were frequently used to purchase clothing.

Remittances from temporary and permanent migrants

Table 4

KENYA

Temporary (n = 300 households)	Permanent (n = 125 households)
96%	78%
78%	38%

**Migrants send home
remittances**

**If yes, remittances
considered to be extremely
important to household**

BURKINA FASO

Temporary (n = 95 migrants)	Permanent (n = 49 migrants)
59%	61%
66%	Not available

* Questions asked at household level in Kenya and at the migrant level in Burkina Faso.

Labour and farm management

Results from both countries revealed that the impact of migration on labour availability and household capacities to manage the farm depends on who leaves, when they go and how long for, but also who remains at the homestead. Given its non-seasonal nature, temporary migration in **Kenya** has a bigger impact on farm labour compared to **Burkina Faso**, where migration is more seasonal and most temporary migrants return during the agricultural season to contribute to farm production.

In Kenya, one of the greatest burdens to households with migrant members was reported to be the loss of farm labour. Since migrants rarely return specifically to help on the farm, women have taken on activities that their sons and husbands had previously assisted with, such as ploughing and fencing. Only 27% of temporary migrants are reported to be available to work on farm when needed, and 53%

of households said they have insufficient labour to manage the farm productively while temporary migrants are away. Some households had reduced their cultivated area following their migrant's departure. However, this was often due to multiple factors, including poor rains, having fewer mouths to feed, and ill health, not just a lack of labour.

Burkina Faso: Compared to **Kenya**, outmigration was not reported to have as severe of an impact on labour availability for **Burkinabè** households. Unable to pay for labourers, most households made up for their absence by reducing the cultivated area or with the labour of other household members, typically the wives of permanent migrants or younger siblings of temporary migrants.

However, of migrants who did previously contribute to farm production, the vast majority were no longer able to maintain

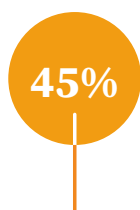
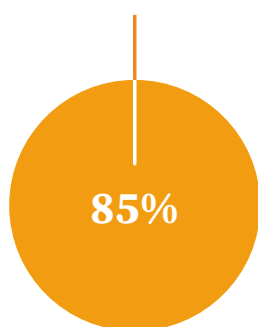
their contribution levels, thereby still having impacts on labour availability **(See below)**. For temporary migrants, this was very seasonal: while often absent for field preparation (and to a lesser extent, harvesting), they tended to return to the farm to contribute to the bulk of the labour-intensive agricultural periods of sowing, weeding, and where possible, land restoration activities. Beyond the farm, the absence of migrant absences in **Burkina Faso** was reported to create tensions within the household and constraints to communal labour.

Labour contributions of temporary migrants to the family farm in Burkina Faso

(asked about each migrant in the household survey)

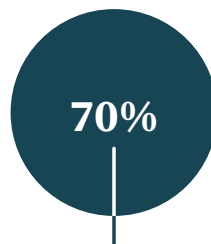
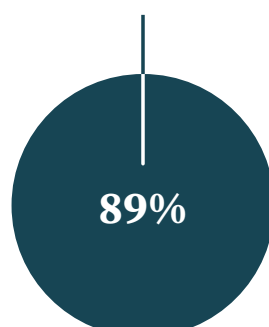
Temporary migrants (n=96)

Before migrating, migrant used to contribute labour to field preparation



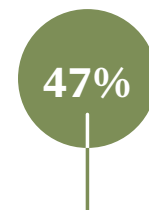
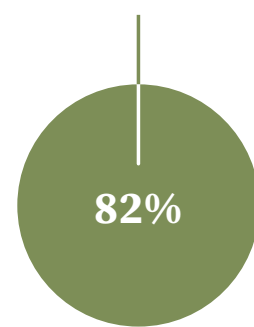
If yes, migrant still contributes labour to field preparation

Before migrating, migrant used to contribute labour during agricultural period



If yes, migrant still contributes labour during agricultural period

Before migrating, migrant used to contribute labour to harvesting



If yes, migrant still contributes labour to harvesting

“The farm belongs to us so I can decide to go prepare the [planting basins] without telling [my husband] or even I can go and plant without his knowledge, so I don’t have to be told what to do.”

- *Women interviewee, Kenya*

“We involve [our son] when it comes to buying medicine for our livestock. If it is farming he sends money for the inputs. We also buy him livestock. If we decide on selling things, for example livestock, we inform him so that if he has some money he sends it to us, instead of selling the livestock.”

- *Women interviewee, Kenya*



Photo: ©Kelvin Trautman

Changes in decision-making

Changes in women's participation in decision-making vary across the two studies, reflecting differences in who leaves and the temporal characteristics of migration.

Kenya: Most households with temporary migrants (79%) reported that their migrant members are still involved in farming decisions. Migrant husbands and even sons often talk to their wives and mothers daily over the phone. Migrants' continued involvement in decision-making is often tied to the fact that they are the ones providing the capital for farming activities. Nevertheless, women with migrant husbands tend to have increased freedoms and control over certain decisions, for

example, what to plant on the farm, where and when. Women consider themselves to be the most knowledgeable, engaged and interested in farming since they are the ones on-farm, attending training events and gaining the most experience. Migrants are also typically supportive of women's farming activities, encouraging their wives and mothers to learn about new innovations and entrusting them with day-to-day decisions over the use of remittances and running of the farm.

Yet, women's increased autonomy in farming decisions often came with increased responsibilities, workloads, and emotional stress. Several women spoke of the emotional strain of making decisions by themselves and the loneliness, especially when husbands migrate, leaving them to

look after young children alone. Similarly, depending on who else remains within the household, migration can bring challenges with attending workshops and women's mobility, since an adult member is often required to remain on-farm for security reasons.

“Life alone is not easy. You see, he is there, I am here. You know there are conflicts when you’re alone with the in-laws.” - Women interviewee, Kenya

“When [my husband] was in Mombasa, I was burdened with so many decisions to make. When he came back he would help me and make things easier for me.”
- Women interviewee, Kenya



Photo: ©Kevin Trautman

“Back then I was doing everything on my own. My husband was in the city. My son was away at school, and I have a third child that is disabled. So I was really alone. My son and his wife came to live with me after they got married. There was a lot of work to be done. I used to hire help for my farm work.” - Women interviewee, Kenya



Decisions over remittances

In **Kenya**, control over the use of remittances varied depending on whether these were sent to a mother or a wife, and whether or not the wife was living with her in-laws. For instance, older women receiving remittances from migrant sons often had greater autonomy over decisions than younger women who still lived with their in-laws.

Burkina Faso: In contrast to **Kenya**, changes in women's participation in decision-making due to outmigration in rural **Burkina Faso** are less evident. Most migrants are young men and sons meaning that their departure has limited impacts on women's involvement in decisions. Men who stay on the farm, typically the household head, remain primary decision-makers.

Nearly half of migrants contributed to decision-making before they began migrating, however only 36% and 16%

of temporary and permanent migrants respectively are reported to still be involved in decision-making since they began migrating (**See below**). This level of involvement remains higher among temporary migrants, as they are either able to contribute to decisions by phone or during temporary returns to the homestead. In contrast, permanent migrants are viewed as more separated from the household, and therefore very unlikely to maintain involvement in farm or off-farm decision-making.

“When it is the head of the household [who migrates], it causes a lot of difficulties in the management of the family farm, since he is very important in decision-making, monitoring and executing decisions.”
 - Women interviewee, Burkina Faso

While many respondents noted that in their household, the male household head undertakes the decision-making independently, some explained how their household made decisions by consensus.

Women's survey respondents also explained that in cases where the temporary migrant is the son of the

household heads, he is not involved in decision-making before he leaves and therefore his absence does not affect decision-making processes. Two thirds of women survey respondents felt that they had been involved in the decision for the migrant to leave, suggesting that migration is embedded in broader negotiated household portfolios.

Burkina data for temporary migrants (asked at individual migrant level)

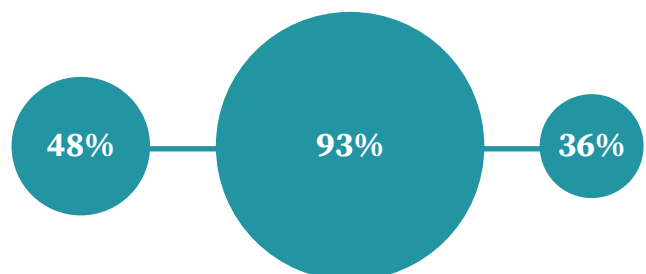
Migration affected knowledge/skills for production

Migrant shares new production information with household

Before migration, migrant contributed to decision-making

If yes, migrant played an important role in decision-making

Migrant still contributes to decision-making



Rural futures and aspirations

Kenya: In Kenya, most women from households with migrants and migrants themselves report that migration has overall been positive for their household.

“It is helpful because when [my husband] was at home there was a lot of poverty but since he went to look for work there has been a lot of improvements in our lives. There is peace as our needs are being catered for. Life has greatly improved and become better.” - Women interviewee, Kenya

“On my side, migration has had a great impact since I have managed to get money to build a new house, educate my children, manage the farm and improve the living standards of my family.” - Male migrant interviewee, Kenya



Photo: ©Kelvin Trautman

While some women visit their migrant husbands at their destination, none of the women interviewed planned to permanently join them, and only one woman wished to migrate to another location.

“I would love to, but my husband does not like the idea of migrating. We have different plans for the future. He does not see the reason as to why I want to migrate. I would like to migrate to an area where the soils are fertile.” -

Women interviewee, Kenya

“No! That is another world! I don’t think I can survive in Nairobi.” - *Women interviewee when asked if she planned to join her migrant son, Kenya*



“Opportunities in farming have increased. Before, there were no platforms where people could get educated or trained on better farming practices. Nowadays there are so many platforms where people can get educated about agriculture and how to improve their farming practices.” - Women interviewee, Kenya

“In our area there are so many challenges. Without the rains people will eventually stop farming. We spend so much time on the farm for nothing. Nothing grows due to lack of rain.” - Women interviewee, Kenya

Asked whether opportunities in farming had changed in recent years, two themes emerged (Crossland et al. 2021b). On the one hand, increased training in new farming practices has improved opportunities, especially for women since they are the ones involved in farming and who attend training events. On the other, farming conditions have deteriorated due to increasingly unreliable rainfall. Women had benefited the most from increased opportunities in agriculture and now see farming as a way to earn income and provide food for their families. Their aspirations for the future included gaining access to water for commercial production of vegetables, poultry farming and starting small shops to sell their produce.

Burkina Faso: Asked about their hopes for them, 63% of women surveyed indicated that they would like their migrant household member to continue migrating and sending remittances home, whereas only 16% wanted them to return home permanently. Like women in **Kenya**, only a minority of women (4%) indicated that they would like to join migrants at their destination. More than half (56%) of women's survey respondents expect their household's off-farm income-generation to continue to grow over the next decade, while 48% anticipate a reduction in the area of land they cultivate due to decreasing labour availability stemming from outmigration. In looking forward, many respondents felt constrained by the increasing challenges to smallholder farming, and being unable to meet the growing costs of living.

Subsequently, many respondents expressed desires for their children to be educated and to be able to obtain off-farm work. Nevertheless, a third anticipate increased investments in new agricultural practices and techniques, such as zaï pits, stone bunds, composting and mechanization, in part due to anticipated future increases in the amount of remittances the household would receive, from temporary migrants in particular.

Participants were also interested in receiving technical training in new agricultural and land restoration techniques, and in adopting promising practices on their farms, suggesting farming will continue being integral to households' overall livelihood strategies. As reported by interviewees, innovative and restorative land cultivation practices go hand-in-hand with smallholder viability, due to ongoing and increasing economic, environmental, and socio-cultural barriers to farm production.

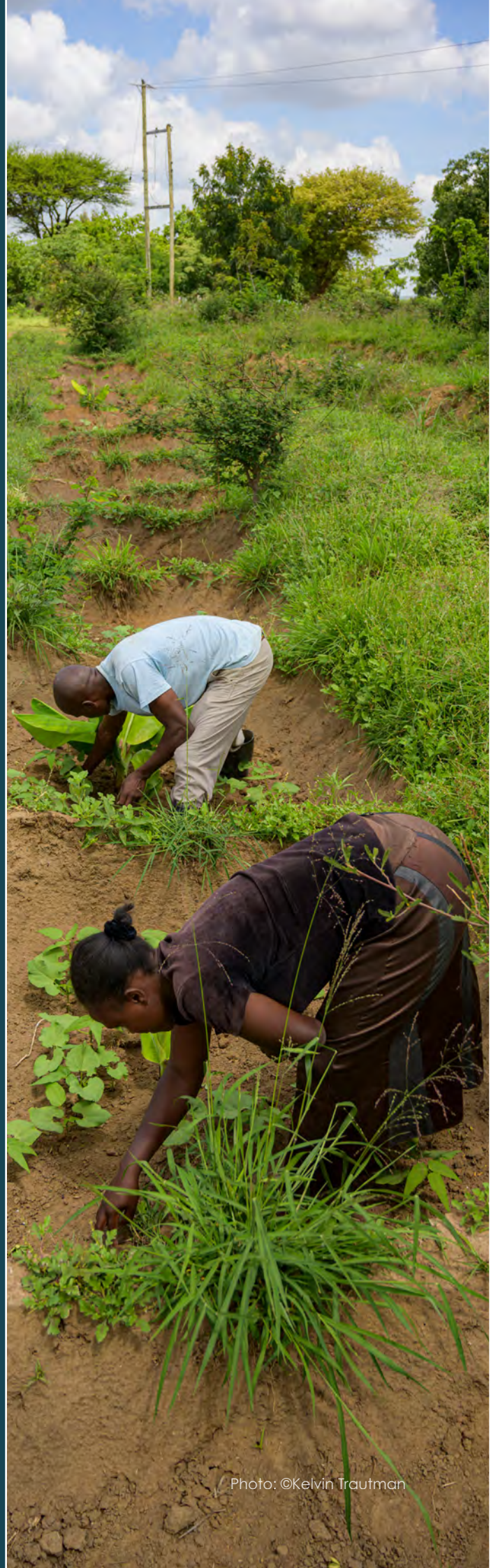




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07.

Implications for understanding rural transformations



Migration is a complex and diverse process

The various similarities and differences between our two case studies highlight the need to recognize multiple types of migration and their varied outcomes on smallholder agriculture, rather than conceptualizing migration as a homogeneous phenomenon. Different types of migration have different effects on a household's capacities to invest and innovate in farming. As such, a nuanced understanding of the diversity of migration and sending household's situations is needed

to understand how migration dynamics shape the organization of smallholder households and their production systems. Our study reveals multiple, often interrelated factors that influence the situation of sending households and the household members, particularly women, who remain. The degree to which migration influences their access to labour, knowledge, capital and farming decisions varies with who leaves, when and for how long they go, and who stays.



Synergies between migration and farming

Both studies highlight the dynamic nature of migration and how migration is often an extension of the household over geographical location, rather than a clear separation or rupture of the household. Migration and family agriculture are often synergistic rather than opposing household livelihood strategies. Migrating individuals are often able to support the family farm, whether through remittances, knowledge and skills, or seasonal labour contributions.

In **Kenya**, male migrants “stepping out” of farming and pursuing non-agricultural work, often still invest capital back into the farms they will one day return to or inherit. Similarly, in **Burkina Faso**, while migration often leads to reduced cultivation areas, a portion of remittances is used to purchase agricultural inputs and hire farm labour, demonstrating continued investments in the farm alongside migration.



Impacts on gender relations

There is a contrast in the impact of migration on women's involvement in farming between the two cases. In **Kenya**, migration is opening up opportunities for women in agriculture. Although these may create conditions for increased independence for women, they may also come with the price of increased stress and responsibility without sufficient access to the resources required to act, with women remaining dependent on remittances. In **Burkina Faso**, we find that although male outmigration causes changes in labour relations and the social organization of

smallholder farms, and particularly drops in the migrant's contributions to field preparation and harvesting, decision-making remains in the hands of men, both the household head (who typically does not migrate) and male migrants either through phone communication, or for temporary migrants, during seasonal returns to the farm. In both countries, social norms continue to limit women's likelihood of migrating, constraining their off-farm opportunities and limiting their options to mainly agriculture-related activities.

08.

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Alliance



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Cover Photos: ©Barbara Vinceti, Top right: Member of the women's group 'Relwende' in Gantodogo (Sanmatenga province, Center-Nord region, Burkina Faso).

Bottom left: Researchers interacting with a rural community near Gantodogo (Sanmatenga province, Center-Nord region, Burkina Faso).

Bottom right: Mobility in rural areas of Burkina Faso is largely relying on the use of motorbikes (Sanmatenga province, Center-Nord region, Burkina Faso).

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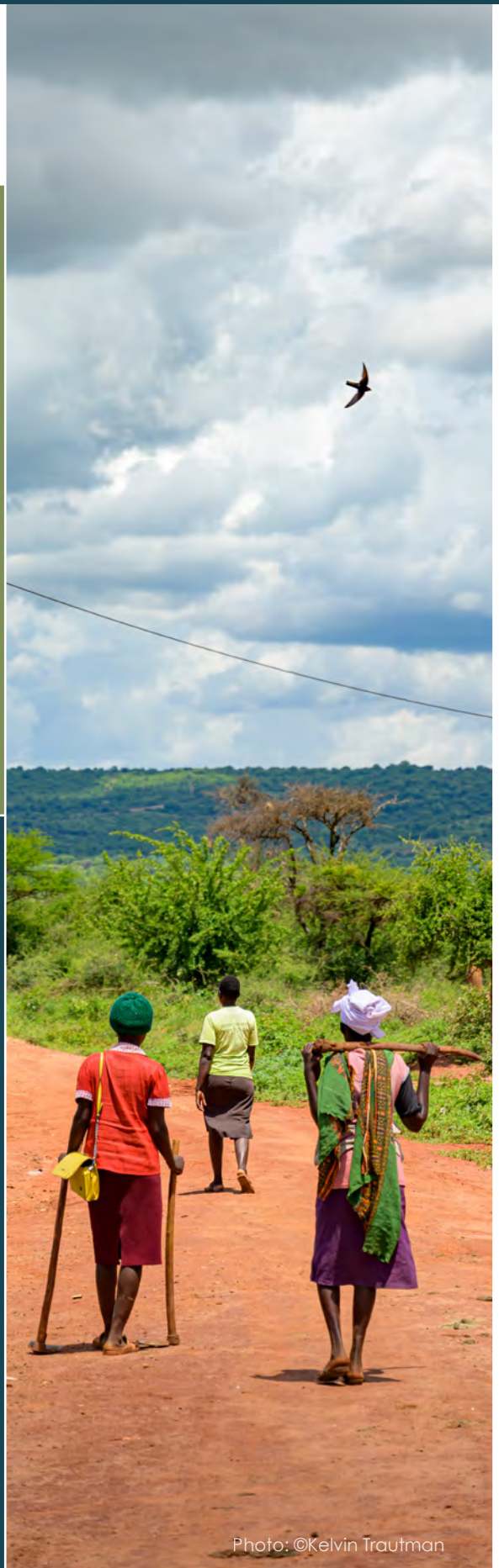


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