Supporting Children and Young People on Migration Routes: The EJM



Project with MAEJT

The **EJM Project for Children and Youth on Migration Routes** operates across West and Northwest Africa, focusing on Tunisia, Mali, Niger, Guinea, and Morocco. Coordinated by Helvetas since 2022, the project addresses the needs of children and young people navigating migration routes, ensuring their protection, education, and socio-economic integration. A key partner in this initiative is **MAEJT (Movement for African Working Children and Youth)**, which plays a vital role in empowering young migrants and fostering peer-led solutions.

Why This Project Matters

Migration has been a part of life in West and Northwest Africa for centuries. Among the estimated 40-45 million migrants in this region, over five million are children and youth under 24. Many migrate due to extreme poverty, lack of educational opportunities, conflict, violence, or environmental challenges. Girls, who make up 25-50% of these child migrants in some areas, face unique vulnerabilities due to socio-cultural inequalities.

The EJM project prioritizes addressing these inequalities while supporting young migrants in building autonomous, stable lives in their source or host communities.

Key Themes of the EJM Project

Protection

- - Creation of protective assistance schemes for children and youth.
- - Focus on risk prevention, community protection, prevention of gender-based violence, and human trafficking.
- - Cross-border case management and reintegration efforts.

Education

- - Integration of children and young migrants into existing education systems.
- - Provision of tailored educational programs, including bilingual, accelerated, and online learning courses.
- - Emphasis on digital tools to enhance learning opportunities.

Socio-economic Integration

- - Support for vocational training aligned with regional economic realities.
- - Guidance for sustainable integration into labor markets and communities.

- - Empowerment of youth to achieve their aspirations while contributing to their environments.

Youth Engagement

- - Recognition of young people as valuable assets with untapped potential.
- - Advocacy for their inclusion in decision-making and labor markets to prevent marginalization.

Migration

- - Neutral stance on migration as a livelihood strategy, focusing on the well-being and autonomy of migrants.

The Role of MAEJT

The Movement for African Working Children and Youth (MAEJT) is instrumental in the EJM project, leveraging its grassroots network to ensure the inclusion and empowerment of young migrants. Key contributions of MAEJT include:

- - Peer-led Support: Facilitating the formation of youth groups where children and young migrants can voice their concerns, share experiences, and develop collective solutions to their challenges.
- - Awareness and Advocacy: Raising awareness about the rights of young migrants, particularly addressing gender-based violence and promoting gender equality along migration routes.
- - Training and Capacity Building: Equipping young people with the skills to navigate their environments, access services, and build sustainable livelihoods.
- - Collaboration with Authorities: Working with local, regional, and national authorities to strengthen child protection systems and advocate for migrant-friendly policies.
- - Community Integration: Supporting reintegration efforts for returnees and creating pathways for harmonious inclusion in host communities.

Our Approach

The EJM project builds on existing regional, national, and transnational systems, strengthening health, education, and child protection structures rather than creating new ones. By identifying barriers to services and working with local and regional authorities, the project ensures children and youth have access to essential support such as housing, education, healthcare, and vocational training.

MAEJT's involvement ensures a child-centered, peer-led approach, empowering young migrants to overcome challenges and thrive in their environments. Together

with Helvetas, the EJM project equips young people with the skills and resources to build a better future for themselves and their communities.