Irregular migration is a **complex issue** in communities of origin, combining elements such as conflict, poverty, family pressure or the illusion of a *Golden Europe*. However, the **real dangers of the journey are ignored,** such as the mafias that use extortion and torture, and the deadly Mediterranean. And, if migrants arrive at their destination alive, they do not know the difficulties of integration in Europe and the terrible living conditions to which their irregular migration status will subject them.

Having as a fundamental premise that **migration is a fundamental right**, the #Origin project wants to **support local organisations and civil society** to be **engines of change in the mentality** of their communities of origin. It is about providing **truthful information** about migration, promoting **digital trainings** and favouring the **creation of work networks** at the local and national levels, thus transforming the collective imaginary. #Origin wants for **the decision to migrate** to be **an informed and free decision** that takes into account the existing alternatives where they exist.
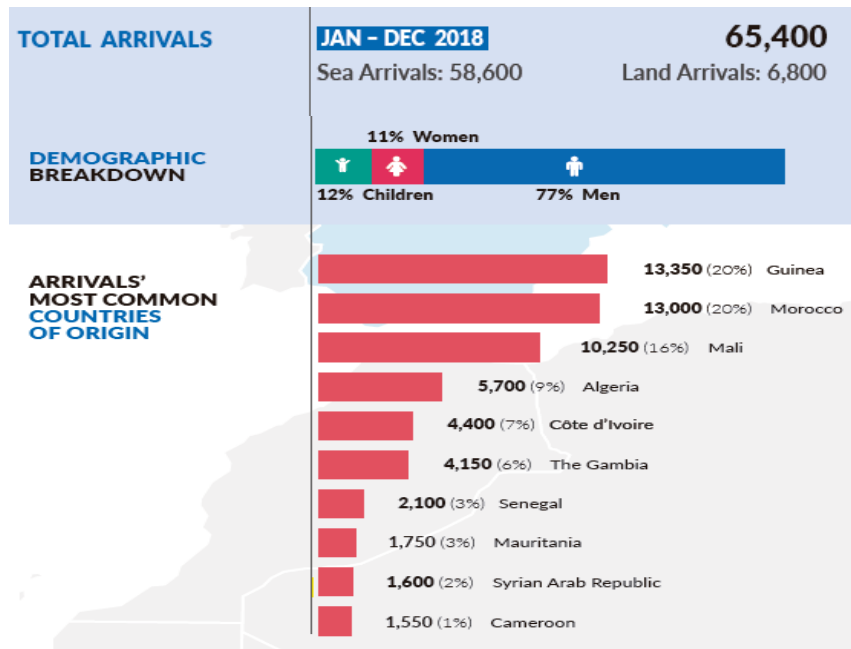
(In)formation saves lives.

1. The routes of irregular migration

According to the IOM, **in 2017, 186,768** individuals arrived in Europe by sea irregularly (92% of total arrivals in Europe).
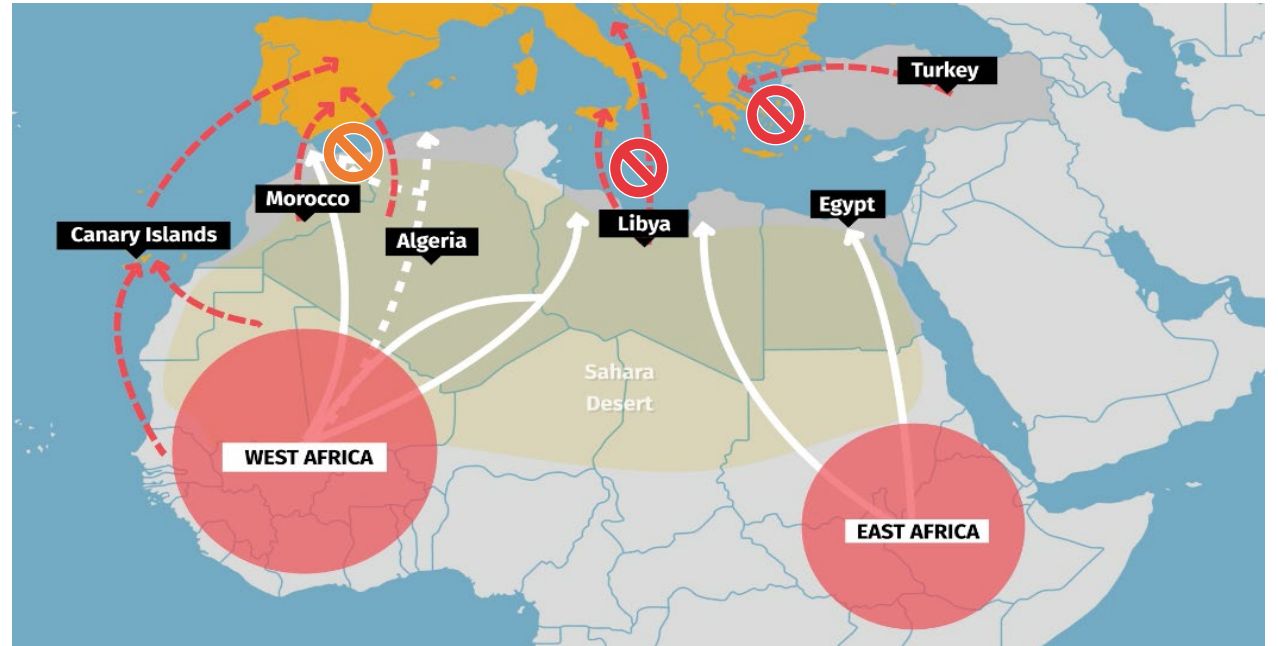
In 2018, the number of irregular arrivals by sea was **150,114 persons** (-27% from 2017), of whom **148,121 were returned.**

Irregular arrivals to Spain 2018

TOTAL ARRIVALS	JAN – DEC 2018	65,400
	Sea Arrivals: 58,600	Land Arrivals: 6,800

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN
- 11% Women
- 12% Children
- 77% Men

ARRIVALS' MOST COMMON COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN
- 13,350 (20%) Guinea
- 13,000 (20%) Morocco
- 10,250 (16%) Mali
- 5,700 (9%) Algeria
- 4,400 (7%) Côte d'Ivoire
- 4,150 (6%) The Gambia
- 2,100 (3%) Senegal
- 1,750 (3%) Mauritania
- 1,600 (2%) Syrian Arab Republic
- 1,550 (1%) Cameroon

Source: UNHCR 2018

Current map of the main migration routes to Europe

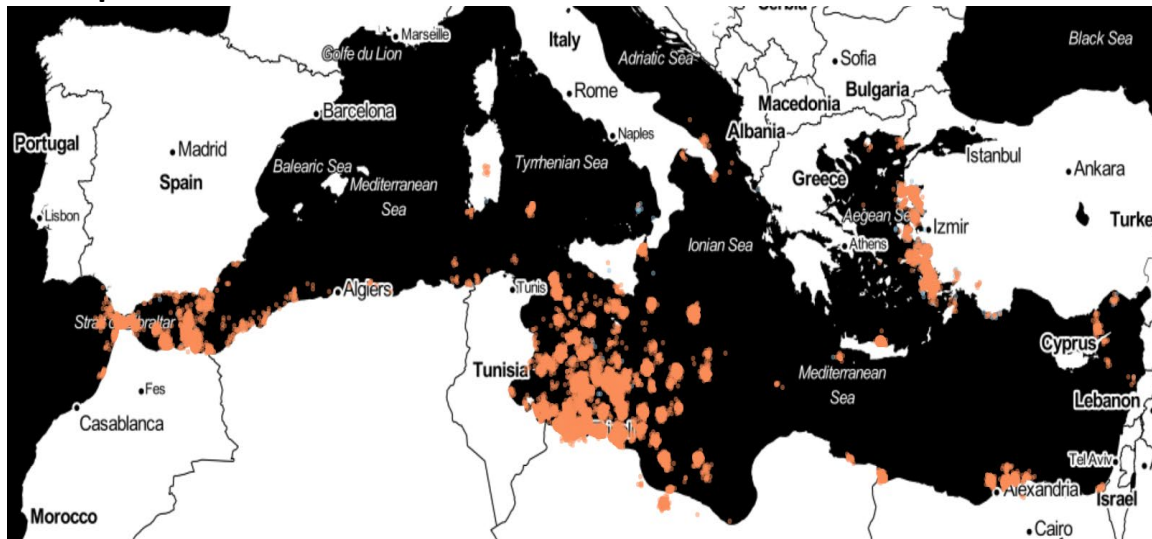| Route	Atlantic	Mediterranean	Aegean
Path	- Canary Islands - Strait of Gibraltar	- Central Mediterranean	Aegean Sea
Port of Departure	Senegal, Mauritania, Morocco	Libya	Turkey
Origin	West Africa	West Africa, Horn of Africa	Middle East, Asia
Port of Arrival	Spain	Italy, Malta	Greece
Immigration policy	"Open" with hot returns and bilateral return agreements	Closed by Italy and Malta	Closed by the EU-Turkey Deal

Source: IOM; Elaboration by Open Arms

2. The dangers of irregular migration in the Mediterranean

Although it is impossible to know the exact number of people who have drowned in the Mediterranean, **more than 18,000** drowned bodies have been recovered since 2014. According to UNHCR, **2,2260 people died or disappeared in 2018 while trying to reach Europe.** As of July 2019, **683 deaths** have already been recorded in the Mediterranean this year.

To this figure, we must add the thousands of migrants who **have died in the desert** and whose bodies have not been found. According to United Nations sources, the figure may be **much higher** than the number of people who have drowned at sea.

The closure of European borders and the **resulting disappearance of the options of regular migration routes** to Europe have:

- Increased the number of **irregular immigrants**;

- Led to the **appearance of mafias** along the entire route to Europe;

- **Dramatically worsened** conditions for migrants.

Map of the deaths in the Mediterranean

Source: HCR, IOM, Joe Brew

90% of arrivals have suffered various types of violence (sexual, psychological, physical)
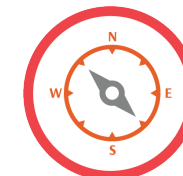
1 of 18 persons dies by drowning

More than 34 000 people have drowned since 1993

Fewer than 25% of asylum applications are accepted in Spain

Mafias monopolize the route ruining entire families.

Thousands of people live in an irregular situation with the physical and psychological consequences of such situation

3. The example of irregular migration from Senegal

Due to Europe's entry restrictions, 64% of the visas requested from Senegal were rejected in 2017, according to Frontex. As a result, many people decide to migrate irregularly, putting their lives at risk.

The youth, who have access to the internet, see a promised land in Europe without thinking about the real dangers of the journey. And if they arrive at their destination alive, they are unaware of the difficulties of integration in Europe and the terrible living conditions to which **irregularity subjects them.**

The European Myth

In the imaginary of traditional and patriarchal families, having children or husbands in Europe means better living conditions and improving their social status. While the family and potential migrants know that the road is dangerous, they do not know what lies behind these (potential) remittances and the reality of the journey, since the **mafias sell them a story that does not reflect reality** (abuse, slavery, sexual assault, death).

The reality is that the **myth of Europe does not correspond with the reality of the migrant** who, if he is in the minority that is lucky enough to arrive alive in Europe, lives undocumented in a Europe that does not recognize his rights.

"My daughter is in Senegal and believes that just because I am in Europe I am already rich" says Mor Mbaye (elPeriódico, 31/07/19)

They completely ignore how the laws upon arrival might limit their opportunities in Europe instead of protecting them. For example, the Spanish immigration law, which is considered one of the most "lax" in the EU, does not allow an irregular immigrant to get a job if they have not been registered for three years. Instead, you can present a full-time one-year contract and demonstrate your integration through courses and membership in associations as described in the immigration laws.

The impact of social media posers and media

Between **appearances and frustrated expectations**, the media, social media networks, the mafias, and migrants themselves (refusing to acknowledge failure) perpetuate the false image **of a European "El Dorado"**

The people who have suffered harassment in their journey to Europe – whether they arrive or they stay in an intermediary country – rarely admit to having been victims of these crimes, because they feel ashamed and they fear what people would say. In this way, the mafias' deception is enforced by the social dishonor that comes with the recognition that a migrant has experienced these violations of their rights, in addition to the fact that the media does not make reality visible.

To return from Europe "without anything" or without having got to Europe is a shame for the person and their family, so many of those who do not achieve their goal do not return to their communities. They prefer to stay in intermediary countries, like Mali or Mauritania, out of fear of their families, who have invested a great deal of effort and money in their migration.

Youth unemployment, lack of adapted training resources and school dropout are the main causes of emigration among Senegalese youth who do not consider their country as an option for the future, despite record economic growth rates (7% in 2018).

The youth, who have access to the Internet, see a promised land of easy money and facilities, ignoring that, if they arrive at their destination alive, the difficulties of Europe and the terrible living conditions to which irregularity subjects them will not be what they expected.

On the other hand, the lack of support from institutions, and a certain colonial fatalism, hides what their real possibilities of growth in their country of origin would be, where numerous success stories do show that it is possible despite the difficulties.

Profile of the migrants

Migration from Senegal is mostly male and, in a large number of cases, it is composed of **young people without higher education but with productive capacity**. Many youths take the initiative to emigrate without the agreement of their parents, aware of the dangers but convinced that education is the best way. They are often encouraged by the image of success transmitted by people who have emigrated and who use their remittances to finance the construction of family homes and religious and/or community infrastructures.

The emigration of these young people creates a significant **flight of labor,** and labor is a key element for national development. In addition, economic dependency is created by **timely and unproductive remittances** that are quickly consumed between relatives and friends, creating a non-productive economy.

The Senegalese Entrepreneur

Mamadou Sall, creator of the startup Bay Seddo and ambassador of the #Origin project
https://www.bayseddo.com/

This is the case of the self-taught Yama N'diaye and Korka Diaw, successful entrepreneurs in agriculture and transformation ambassadors of the #Origin project… Or of Mouhamet Sene, doctor at Saint Louis Regional Hospital and "poor" student of one of our local partners in the periphery of Dakar… And many and many more stories which, little by little, **break the myth of a sad and miserable Africa** and **drive a young and creative continent.**

The impulse to migrate at any price

Young people leave their country of origin because of the lack of or poor condition of education and training facilities, the lack of professional training that responds to the labor market, social and family pressure, and the place reserved for girls in society.

Although individual entrepreneurial initiatives are promoted, these are precarious, poorly-known and most are in the informal sector.

It is a complex and multi-causal reality.

In West Africa, including in Senegal, **misinformation** about the dangers of irregular migration, the **lack of professional training,** and the **perceived lack of opportunities** for the future in their communities, push many people – especially young people – to migrate in an irregular manner to Europe.
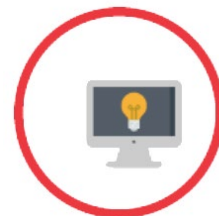

IF THEY HAD KNOWN, MANY PEOPLE WOULD NOT HAVE TAKEN THE JOURNEY

We seek to **empower** communities through information and training.

The decision to migrate, if people wish to, must be an informed and free decision that takes into account the existing alternatives, including taking full advantage of our proposed digital training resources.

(In)formation is power and it saves lives.

OE1: Through groups of youth trained as community references, **deconstruct the imaginary** about migration to Europe through information campaigns and community reflection about their alternatives.

OE2: **Improve the capacities** of the community and its young people by facilitating access to digital pedagogical tools and digital trainings for youth, in booming work areas such as ICT.

OE3: Create networks of collaboration and work with the private sector to **promote labor integration,** adapted to the needs of the national labor market.

7. Community participation and gender impact

The project's co-formulation process has a social foundation at the local and national levels that reinforces its relevance and potential, while ensuring its sustainability and viability. We have held numerous participatory meetings on the ground and with organisations to shape a national program for local implementation.

The fact that the project is essentially both informative and formative allows us to ensure its sustainability, since the benefit (impact) of the project will be **in the hands of the beneficiary population**. Therefore, the involvement of local associations and the community, including the active participation of the municipality, has been fundamental in designing the activities and reflecting on project's impact in the short term, long term, and everything in between.

The information captains are part of the community and, once the project is finished, they will continue to have a leading role in the field of migration and in widening access to information and trainings, setting an example themselves and spreading information throughout their communities.

The computers of the CCCDs, contributed by the Polytechnic University of Catalunya (UPC), will become part of a remote monitoring and sustainability circuit called "e-reuse," implemented by the UPC.

At the European destination, we will continue working to **publicize this situation and its solutions** with associations, institutions and allied entities. Throughout all of this, sustainability is a key focus, both in the project's development and in the analysis of its future viability.

Traditionally, women in Senegal have been tasked with managing the home, having children, and obeying her husband and her parents, without her opinion holding the same weight as the men's opinions in family decisions.

For young women, the pressure is also very strong to take care of the house and to find a good husband to bring money home. In many cases, mothers borrow money so that their husbands or children can migrate to Europe irregularly. They then remain at the mercy of their creditors and their family, without feeling independent or empowered.

The project aims to strengthen the **capacities of women** by addressing this at the individual level, through the training of information captains. Women will represent at least 50% of the group, training women as community leaders and thereby strengthening the presence of women in the public sphere as community references.

Also, we will specifically include women in the project's community talks, promote their opportunities to speak, and, in some cases, set up talks for groups of women exclusively.

To work hand-in-hand with local institutions and civil society organizations in the origin that want to be a part of **positive and constructive change.**

1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE (GO)

GO: Promote socio-economic alternatives in communities of origin through information campaigns, innovative community trainings, and labor integration through collaboration with the private sector and public institutions.

3 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES (SO)

SO1: With empowered young leaders, and in coordination with local authorities, deconstruct the imaginary of migration to Europe through information sessions and community reflection about the reality of migration and the alternatives in the communities of origin.

SO2: Provide knowledge and learning spaces ("Community Centers of Digital Knowledge" – CCCD, for the acronym in Spanish) for community access to open and online training, as well as certified trainings for young people (face-to-face and semi-face-to-face format), in booming areas such as entrepreneurship, lifeguards, or ICT (audiovisual, programming, etc.).

SO3: Increase employment and support labor market integration, especially for youth, through networks that foster a greater connection between young people, training opportunities, and the private sector, and reinforce the advocacy capacities of local organizations.

8 MEASURABLE RESULTS

SO1. Youth and information

R1: Train groups of youth as community references ("Information Captains")

- Creation of pedagogical material adapted to the local context, language and needs;
- Interactive trainings in topics such as communication, social networks, migration, environment, development and advocacy;
- Exploratory trip to Barcelona to see the reality of the destination;
- Documentary about positive experiences and success stories at the origin

R2: Community information campaigns, with a focus on rights, migration and local development

- Creation of informative material accessible to the public (written, online, radio);
- Interactive information sessions with the community led by "Information Captains";
- Socio-anthropological study on the imaginary of migration

R3: Campaign to raise awareness in Spain about migration and co-development

- Co-creation, with human rights organizations, of an awareness campaign about migration and co-development;
- Informative and interactive sessions in public spaces with civil society;
- Joint creation of a collection of comics about migration to share with the public

SO2. Community knowledge and digital training centers

R4: (Re)Enabled Digital Knowledge Community Centers (CCCD)

- Arrangements for acquiring spaces for the CCCDs;
- Enabling the CCCDs with informational materials and equipment;
- Personalized pedagogical support for the CCCDs;
- Arrangements for the operation of CCCDs with authorities (taking into account sustainability)

R5: Community receives basic courses online and offline at the CCCD

- Participatory definition of needs and opportunities for interactive trainings;
- Development of a training plan offered to the community, with
  - Basic face-to-face trainings and
  - Basic online trainings;
- Presence of trainers and educators in the CCCDs

R6: Young people access professional trainings online/offline, which relate to the labor market and booming professions

- Study conducted on labor market needs;
- Participatory definition of professional trainings to be taught;
- Face-to-face trainings (for lifeguard training, up-cycling, etc);
- Semi-face-to-face and online trainings (for programming, web page design, etc.)
- Arrangements with local institutions for certification/validation

SO3. Employment and the creation of labor networks

R7: Employment and alliances with the private sector

- Negotiation of agreements with companies for the employment of young people we have trained;
- "Seed" awards and support for young people trained with successful business ideas;
- Mapping of the training offers (private and public), employment opportunities, success stories and mentors, for the…
- Creation of a platform (Mentapp) to support young people, including through opportunities for trainings, geolocated work opportunities, and access to mentors

R8: Strengthened capacities of partner organizations and advocacy campaigns

- Creation of a training plan and materials for local organizations (on communication, migration, advocacy, social networks, etc.);
- Advocacy meetings with local organizations (including DGSE);
- Strengthening of a network on the theme of citizens' rights and migration, for actors already working in this field and for civil mobilization;
- Co-creation of advocacy material to increase visibility and mass awareness

PHASES OF THE PROJECT				
2019				2020
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
SO1 ➤				
		SO2 ➤		
			SO3 ➤	

- Open Arms coordinator based in Senegal for support and follow-up
- Initial baseline (pre- and post-evaluation)
- Participatory and visual monitoring and evaluation plan
- Open Arms follow-up visits and exchange meetings
- National pedagogic advisor in support of the Origin project

10. Alliance of actors

Polytechnic University of Catalunya (UPC)

In March 2019, Open Arms signed a collaboration agreement with the Polytechnic University of Barcelona (UPC) in relation to the #Origin project, to support us technically in some key technological activities. The UPC has been involved with the technical development of this project regarding digital training, which is an essential element for the strong development of the Origin project and its impact.

Dunia Kato Association

Since October of 2018, Open Arms has been collaborating with the Dunia Kato Association (''World of the Perservering'' in Wolof) whose president Malamine Soly arrived from Senegal by dinghy in 2006.

Dunia Kato is fully involved in the creation of the project's pedagogical materials in Senegal and is our ally there to create our awareness talks.

Local Partners

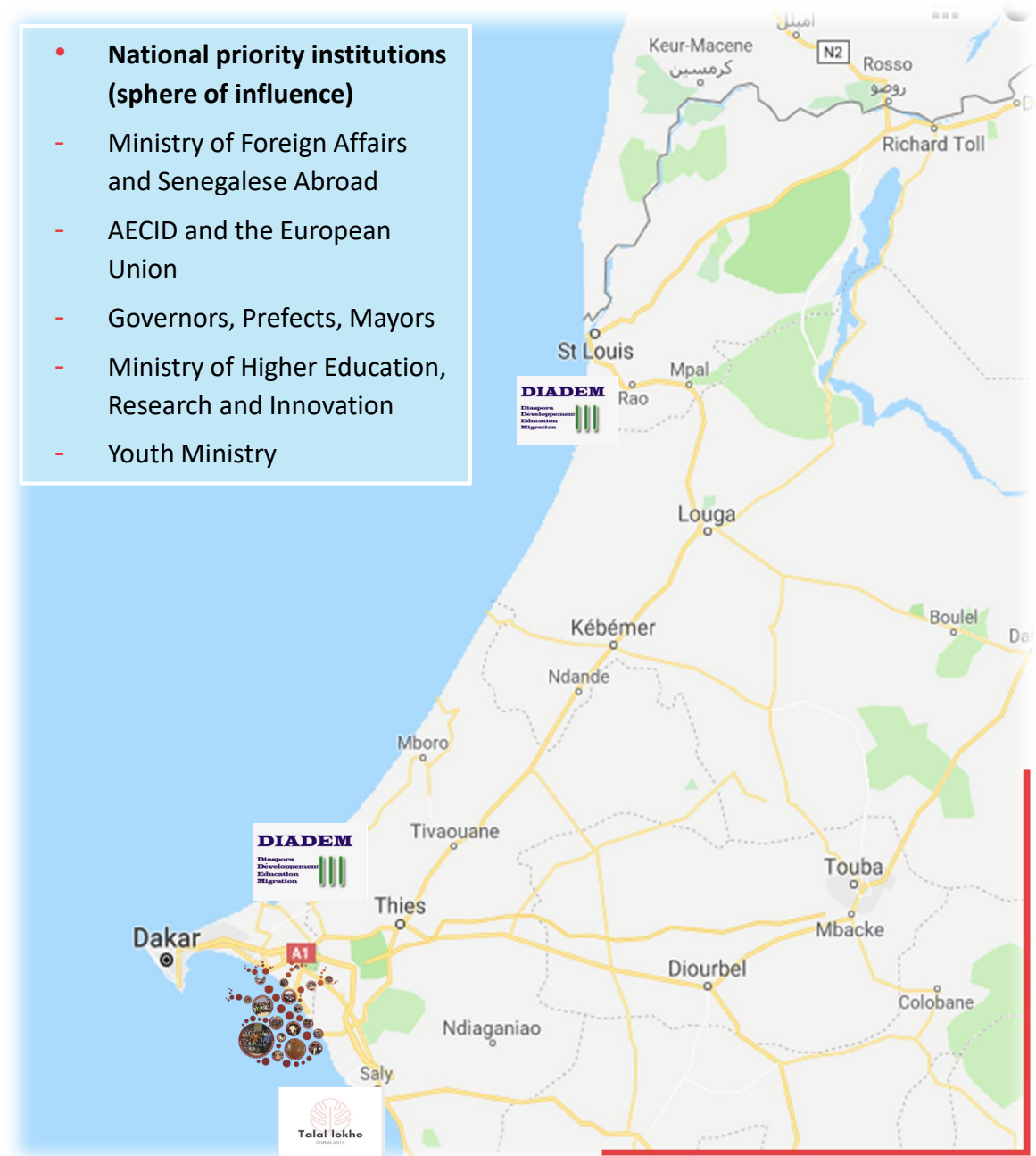- Diaspora Development Education Migration (DIADEM)

- Solidarity Education Association (AES)

- Talal lokho

- **National priority institutions (sphere of influence)**
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad
- AECID and the European Union
- Governors, Prefects, Mayors
- Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation
- Youth Ministry