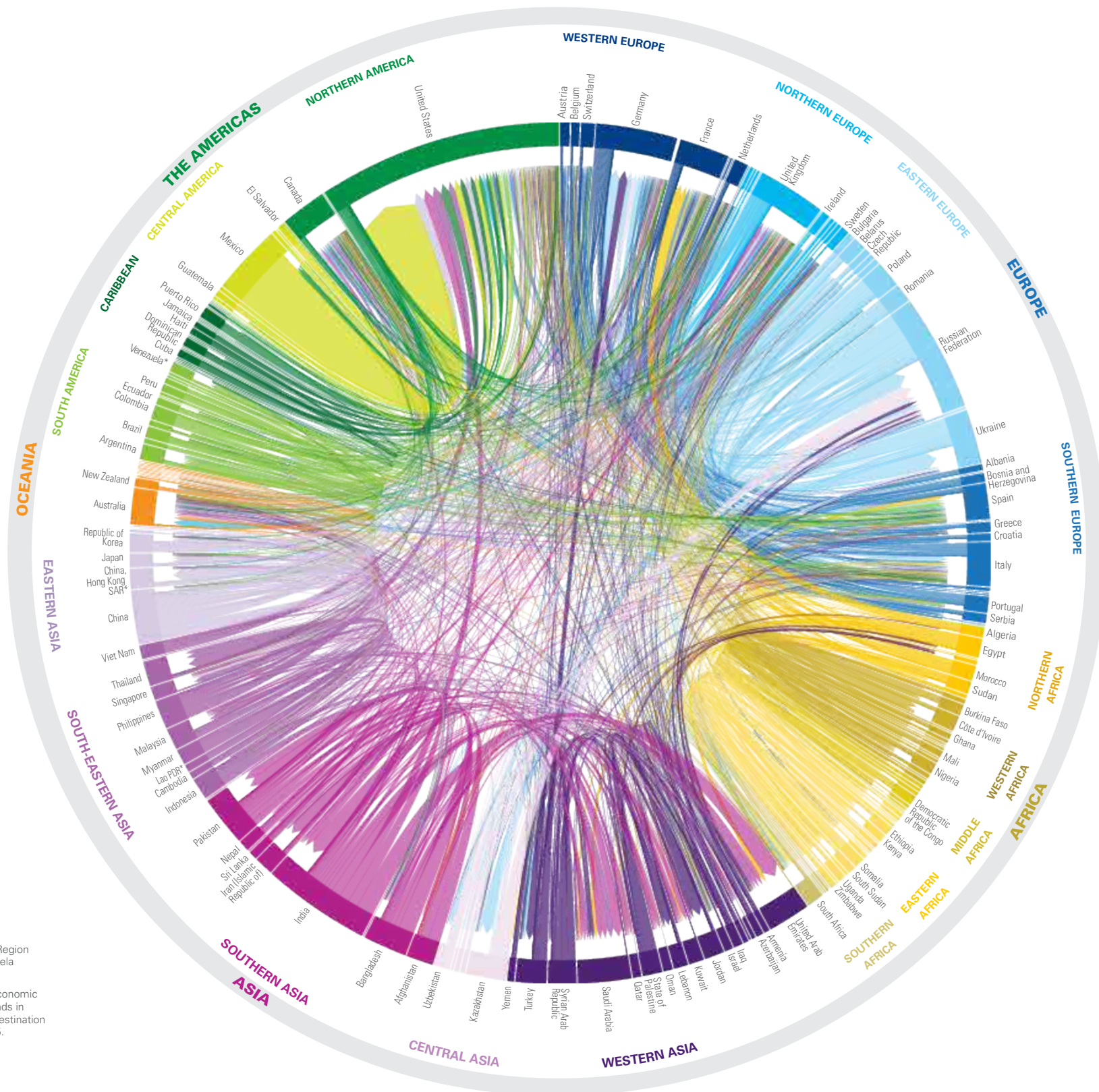


# Uprooted

THE GROWING CRISIS FOR REFUGEE  
AND MIGRANT CHILDREN

unicef    
70 YEARS FOR EVERY CHILD

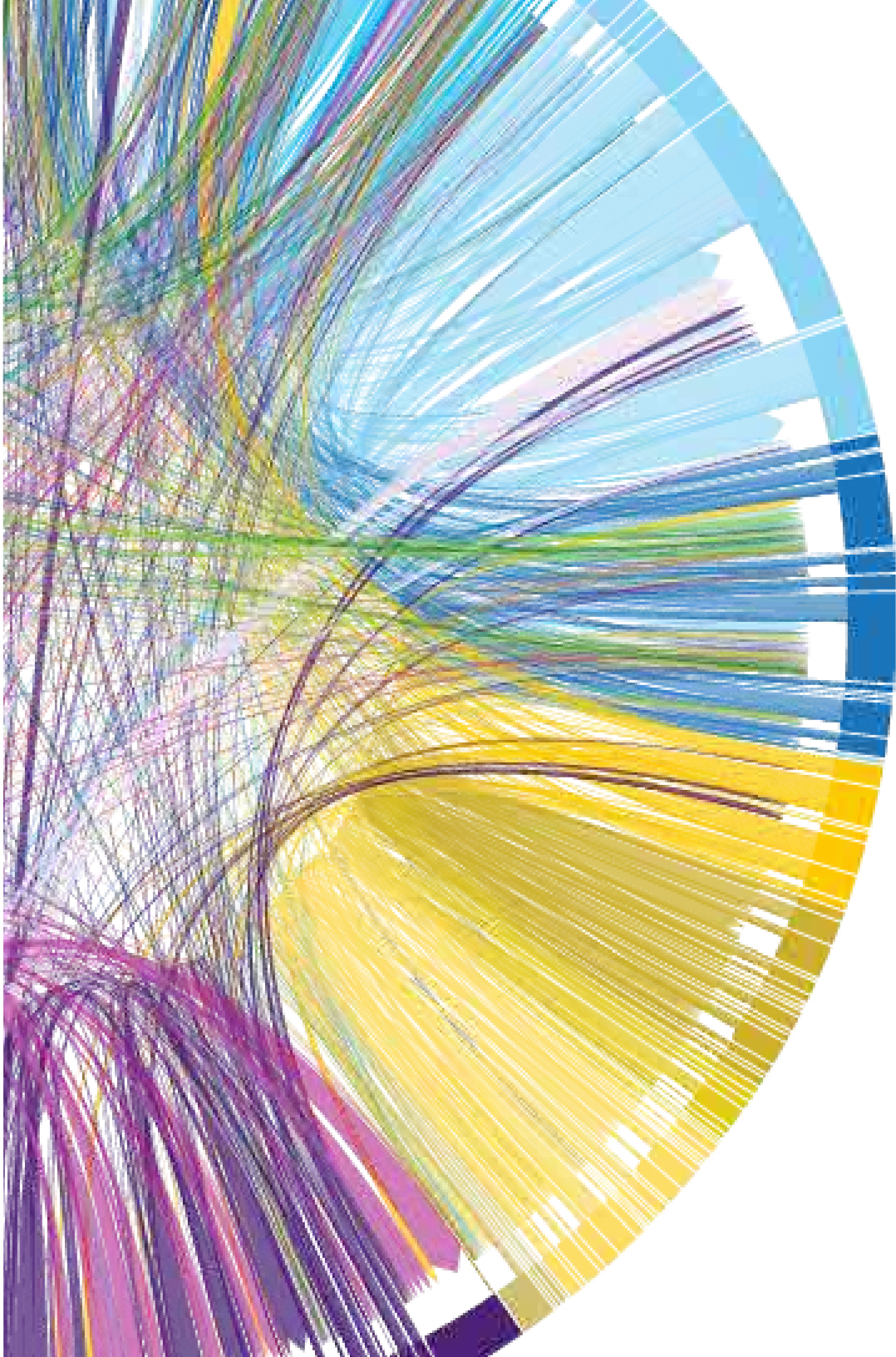
Migration – both forced and voluntary – is bringing the world ever closer together. Among the 244 million international migrants whose journeys are reflected in this diagram, there are 31 million children. Every one of these children – as well as those uprooted within their own borders – deserves to be protected and to enjoy their full complement of rights.



**Note:** Countries or areas with more than 1,000,000 immigrant and emigrant populations are labelled. Migration arrows have no gaps at origin, but do have gaps at destination. A more detailed explanation on how to interpret the chord diagram is on page 26.

\*Full country or area names:  
China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
Lao People's Democratic Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

**Source:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin, United Nations, New York, 2015.



# Uprooted

THE GROWING CRISIS FOR REFUGEE  
AND MIGRANT CHILDREN

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Note on maps: All maps included in this publication are stylized and not to scale. They do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or area or the delimitation of any frontiers. The dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. The final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined. The final status of the Abyei area has not yet been determined.

Cover photo: In May 2015, Addis, holding his 30-month-old son Lato, sits in a cell at the Alghaiha detention centre on the north-western coast of Libya.

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**PEACE**



## FOREWORD

Some things, once seen, can never be unseen.

A toddler's small body washed up on a beach after drowning at sea.

A mother's terror as she passes her baby over a barbed wire fence at a border crossing.

A holding room in a detention centre, filled to overflowing with adolescent children, many fleeing forced participation or retribution by violent street gangs.

A small child sitting in an ambulance, bloody, exhausted and stunned into silence after the building where he and his family lived was destroyed in a brutal attack.

Such indelible images command the world's attention and invoke its compassion.

But only one image, one child at a time.

The moment passes – the news cycles move on. But the danger and desperation that drive so many children and families to flee their homes are not moving on. Lately, they seem only to get worse.

So we must not forget that each child, each picture, represents many millions of children in danger at home – and many millions of children who have left their homes. This demands that our compassion for the individual children we see be matched with urgent – and sustained – action for all child refugees and migrants.

*Uprooted: The growing crisis for refugee and migrant children* presents new data that paint a sad and sobering global picture of the lives and situations of millions of children and families affected by violent conflict and other crises that make it seem safer to risk everything on a perilous journey than to remain at home.

Around the world today, 50 million children have migrated across borders or been forcibly displaced within their own countries. More than half – a shocking 28 million – have been uprooted by horrific conflicts. As this report shows, the number of child refugees jumped by roughly 75 per cent between 2010 and 2015. It's no coincidence that the same time period saw 15 conflicts either break out or reignite – from the Syrian Arab Republic to South Sudan, from Yemen to Afghanistan.

Many are trapped in horrific conflicts in their home countries – forgotten or, often, beyond the reach of humanitarian assistance.

Ahmad, 14, lives in the Kawergosk camp for Syrian refugees, just west of Erbil, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

© UNICEF/UN013169/Alaoui

And it's difficult to overestimate the peril of the millions of children on the move ... beyond their borders ... the barriers they face ... their extreme vulnerability.

Travelling in often-desperate circumstances, without adequate food, clothing or temporary shelter. Detained at borders, possibly separated from their families in the confusion there. And, all too often, travelling alone, without caring adults to shield them from abuse and the worst forms of exploitation.

The danger doesn't stop at the journey's end. Nor the deprivations.

Though many communities and people around the world have welcomed refugee and migrant children, xenophobia, discrimination, and exclusion pose serious threats to their lives and futures. Language barriers make it difficult for children and their families to seek the help they need. Legal barriers can prevent them from accessing education, health care and other services. These obstacles are magnified for the 70,000 children who are born stateless every year, often as a result of their parents' migration.

What can the future hold for these children – denied so much of what they need?

Were we to follow the future lives of some of the children – those who have survived – in the pictures that so move us today, what would we find?

The answer depends on what we do today.

Many of the youngest refugees have known only conflict and deprivation in their short lives. If we fail to provide them – and all child refugees and migrants – with opportunities for education and a more normal childhood, how will they be able to contribute positively to their societies? What price will we collectively pay for that failure?

But if young refugees are accepted and protected today, if they have the chance to learn and grow, and to develop their potential, they can be a source of stability and economic progress.

When pathways are safe and destinations are welcoming, migration can be a positive force: expanding opportunity, and strengthening, not tearing, the social fabric of societies.

And by protecting these children, we preserve our deepest values and fulfil our highest duty: to nurture the next generation – and thus the future of the world.

We must meet this moment. For every time the eyes of the world focus on an image of a child refugee – and nothing changes for that child and for millions more – the eyes of history are on all of us.



Anthony Lake  
Executive Director, UNICEF

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Around the world, nearly 50 million children have migrated across borders or been forcibly displaced – and this is a conservative estimate. More than half of these girls and boys fled violence and insecurity – 28 million in total.

These children may be refugees, internally displaced or migrants, but first and foremost, they are children: no matter where they come from, whoever they are, and without exception.

Children do not bear any responsibility for the bombs and bullets, the gang violence, persecution, the shriveled crops and low family wages driving them from their homes. They are, however, always the first to be affected by war, conflict, climate change and poverty.

Children in these contexts are among the most vulnerable people on earth and this vulnerability is only getting worse. The number of child refugees under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) mandate has more than doubled in just 10 years – this shocking statistic is simply unacceptable.

*Their world is no place for a child.*

Migrating and displaced children are at risk of some of the worst forms of abuse and harm. Often dependent on human smuggling, they can easily fall victim to traffickers and other criminals. Many are subjected to extreme forms of abuse and deprivation during their journeys.

*The violations have to stop.*

When, and if, these children reach destination countries, the threats they face do not disappear. Despite extraordinary and generous actions to help them in many places and by many people and organizations, children and their families struggle to gain a foothold. Refugee and migrant children disproportionately face poverty and exclusion at a time when they are in desperate need of essential services and protection.

Supporting displaced and migrant children at home and globally is a shared responsibility – shared because no one is untouched by the impacts of the multiple crises in the world.

Children's voices, their plight and the issues they face must become the focus of international debates on migration and displacement.

This report presents, for the first time, comprehensive, global data about these children – where they are born, where they move, and some of the dangers they face along the way. The report sheds light on the truly global nature of childhood migration and displacement, highlighting the major challenges faced by child migrants and refugees in every region.

## Action for children cannot wait

Based on the findings of the report and its work in the field, UNICEF has developed six goals and practical suggestions to protect child migrants and refugees and provide them with hope for the future:

**>> Protect child refugees and migrants, particularly unaccompanied children, from exploitation and violence**

Introduce measures to strengthen child protection systems, including the training of social and child workers and working with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and professional groups. Clamp down on trafficking, not only through enhanced law enforcement, but also by providing better support to migrant children through the systematic appointment of qualified guardians; better access to information regarding their own situation and the management of their cases; and access to legal assistance. Governments should also develop clearer guidance for case officers when determining the migration status of children, to prevent the return of children and families to persecution, dangerous or life-threatening situations, using the best interest of the child principle to guide legal decision-making in all cases.

**>> End the detention of children seeking refugee status or migrating**

Introduce practical alternatives to detention wherever children (or their families) are involved, given the negative impact of detention on a child's development. Children are particularly vulnerable to physical and psychological violence. Examples of alternatives to detention include: the surrender of passport and regular reporting requirements; guarantors or bailees who may be family members or community supporters; foster care and supervised independent living for unaccompanied and separated children; and compulsory registration with authorities.

**>> Keep families together as the best way to protect children and give children legal status**

Develop clear policy guidance to keep children from being separated from their parents during border control processing and any migrant legal processes. States should speed up procedures and make it easier for children to reunite with their families, including with their extended families in destination countries. States should pursue all practical measures to reunify children with their families. Children born to migrant parents need legal identity for their future well-being. Governments should provide birth registration and/or other identity documents to enable children to access services and avoid statelessness.

**>> Keep all refugee and migrant children learning and give them access to health and other quality services**

An increased collective effort by governments, communities and the private sector is needed to provide education, health, shelter, nutrition, water and sanitation, and access to legal and psychosocial support to these children. This is not only a collective responsibility, it is in all societies' common interests. A child's migration status should never represent a barrier to accessing essential services.

**>> Press for action on the underlying causes of large scale movements of refugees and migrants**

Address the root causes of conflict, violence and extreme poverty in countries of origin. This should include increasing access to education and social protection; expanding opportunities for family income and youth employment; and fostering more accountable and transparent governance. Governments should facilitate community dialogue and engagement towards peaceful conflict resolution, tolerance and a more inclusive society; and should take measures against gang violence.


**>> Promote measures to combat xenophobia, discrimination and marginalization in countries of transit and destination**

Coalitions of NGOs, communities, private sector, religious groups and political leaders should take responsibility for influencing public opinion to prevent the rise of xenophobia and discrimination towards refugees.

## KEY FINDINGS

Nearly

# 1 in 200

children in the world is a child refugee 

Nearly

# 1 in 3

children living outside their country of birth is a refugee 

# 2x

 as many child refugees\* in 2015 than in 2005

## The global perspective

**The story of child migrants and refugees is a global story, not one confined to a single region**

### Child refugees

- > 31 million children live outside their country of birth, including 11 million child refugees and asylum-seekers.
- > Nearly one in three children living outside their country of birth is a refugee; for adults, the proportion under UNHCR's mandate is less than 1 in 20.
- > In 2015, just two countries – the Syrian Arab Republic and Afghanistan – accounted for nearly half of all child refugees under UNHCR's mandate; about three-quarters of all child refugees under UNHCR's mandate came from only 10 countries.
- > Today, nearly 1 in every 200 children in the world is a child refugee. Between 2005 and 2015, the number of child refugees under the UNHCR's mandate more than doubled. During the same period, the total number of all child migrants rose by 21 per cent.
- > Approximately 10 million child refugees are hosted across the world, primarily within the regions where they were born.
- > Girls and boys are equally represented among registered refugees, although children's risk of specific protection violations – such as recruitment by armed forces and armed groups, or sexual and gender-based violence – may differ between girls and boys.
- > Overall, the refugee population is much younger than the migrant population. While a clear majority of the world's migrants are adults, children now comprise half of all refugees.
- > The 10 countries hosting the largest numbers of refugees are all in Asia and Africa, with Turkey hosting by far the largest total number of refugees under UNHCR's mandate. Although complete age-disaggregated data are not available for refugees in Turkey, its substantial share of total refugees makes Turkey likely the host of the largest number of child refugees in the world.

#### Data about children are crucial to decision-making but are incomplete

Children are too often relegated to the fringes of the world's debates about migration and displacement. One reason is the lack of hard numbers to support the case for children. Without reliable data, evidence-based debates and policymaking are hampered.

Global estimates are incomplete and do not tell us the whole story. We do not know where all the world's child refugees and migrants were born, how old they are, or whether their migration was forced or voluntary. There are even fewer comprehensive and comparable indications about how child migrants fare in their countries of origin, transit and destination.

This report is an effort to bring together the best data that are available, but effectively addressing the rights and needs of children requires concerted action to fill the gaps that remain.

\*Under UNHCR's mandate

### Internally displaced children

- > By the end of 2015, some 41 million people were displaced by violence and conflict within their own countries; an estimated 17 million of them were children.
- > By the end of 2015, 19.2 million people were internally displaced by violence and conflict across Asia, a staggering 47 per cent of the global total for similar internal displacements.
- > Together, the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and Yemen accounted for nearly one-third of the world's total of conflict-induced internal displacements by the end of 2015.
- > There were 12.4 million people internally displaced by violence and conflict across Africa in 2015.
- > Four countries in Africa – Nigeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic and South Sudan – were among the top 10 countries globally for new, violence-induced internal displacements in 2015.

### Child migrants

- > Globally, three out of every five international child migrants live in Asia or Africa.
- > Since 1990, the proportion of international child migrants within the global child population has remained stable at just over 1 per cent, but a rising global population means that the absolute number of child migrants has increased significantly in the past 25 years.
- > Today, 1 in every 70 children worldwide lives outside their country of birth. Like adults, most children who move migrate primarily within their own geographical region.
- > When girls and boys move across international borders, they do so in almost equal numbers. This pattern is contrary to adult migration, where there are pronounced differences in the proportion of men and women by region.
- > Half of all the world's child migrants live in just 15 countries, led by the United States of America, which is home to 3.7 million child migrants.

Around the world

**1 in 8** migrants is a child



Around the world

**28 million**

children have been forcibly displaced



And there are

**20 million**

other international child migrants



## The regional perspective

### Childhood migration and displacement look different in each region of the world

More than half of all international migration is composed of movements within regions, and the three largest migration movements in the world are all intra-regional. Refugee movements are even more concentrated within regions than they are with general migration.



#### Africa

- > Some 86 per cent of African refugees find asylum in other African countries.
- > 5.4 million refugees originate from African countries and children are disproportionately represented among them.
- > Approximately one half of African refugees are children – nearly 3 million children who have been forced from their own countries and are confronting the world's harshest realities.
- > Africa has one of the world's lowest rates of child migration, with just 1 in 90 African children living outside their country of birth.
- > While the total rates of migration are low, the share of children among Africa's migrants is the largest for any region. Nearly one in three African migrants is a child, more than twice the global average.



## The Americas

- > Four out of five child migrants in the Americas live in just three countries: the United States, Mexico and Canada.
- > The Americas are home to 6.3 million child migrants – 21 per cent of the global total.
- > One in 10 migrants in the Americas is a child, but that average masks two distinct realities: children make up a relatively small proportion of migrants living in Northern America, South America and the Caribbean (8, 15 and 15 per cent, respectively); and children comprise 43 per cent of all migrants living in Central America.
- > There is a high and increasing number of vulnerable children moving on their own within the Americas – often fleeing violence in their homes and communities.
- > Dramatic increases in the number of children apprehended by immigration authorities at the southern border of the United States reflect underlying challenges for children in their countries of origin and underscore the importance of United States' migration legislation, policy and enforcement decisions for children throughout the region.

The Americas are home to

**6.3 million**

child migrants, 1/5 of the global total





### Asia

- > Nearly 12 million of the world's international child migrants live in Asia. This represents 39 per cent of all international child migrants, well below Asia's 56 per cent share of the global child population.
- > As a result of its large overall population, Asia is home to the largest total number of child migrants in the world. However, a relatively low proportion of its children migrate: just 1 in 110 of Asia's children live outside their country of birth.
- > Saudi Arabia hosts the largest number of child migrants in Asia and the second highest number of child migrants in the world.
- > Other Asian countries hosting large numbers of child migrants – which include Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan and Turkey – all host large numbers of child refugees. This reflects the continuing toll of conflict rather than a trend of voluntary child movement.
- > The five countries and territories hosting the largest numbers of refugees in the world are all in Asia.
- > In 2015, around 45 per cent of all child refugees under UNHCR's mandate had origins in the Syrian Arab Republic and Afghanistan.

## Europe

- > At the end of 2015, Europe hosted approximately one in nine of all refugees under UNHCR's mandate, a total of 1.8 million people. An additional 1 million asylum-seekers in Europe were also awaiting the outcome of their asylum applications.
- > Data availability and disaggregation vary widely across the region. Among the European countries hosting the largest numbers of refugees, only Germany and Serbia publicly report comprehensive numbers and percentages of children in their overall totals of refugees.
- > More than twice as many children applied for asylum within the European Union and free movement zone in 2015 compared to 2014; in the first half of 2016, nearly 70 per cent of children seeking asylum in the European Union and free movement zone were fleeing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan and Iraq.
- > The 5.4 million child migrants in Europe are just 7 per cent of all the region's migrants. This is the lowest share of children in a total migrant population for any region. Approximately one in six of the world's child migrants lives in Europe.

\*European Union and free movement zone



# 7 in 10

children seeking asylum in Europe\* in 2016 were fleeing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan and Iraq



Oceania is the destination for nearly

**7 million**

migrants  
from outside  
the region



## Oceania

- > Child migrants constitute a high proportion of all children in Oceania. Six in every 100 children in the region are migrants.
- > The 670,000 child migrants living in Oceania represent 2 per cent of child migrants in the world.
- > Children represent a relatively small proportion of the migrant population in Oceania, making up just 8 per cent of all migrants in the region.
- > Between 1990 and 2015, the total number of child migrants increased in Oceania from 430,000 to 670,000, but overall migration rose faster, meaning that children now make up a slightly smaller proportion of the migrant population than they did 25 years ago.
- > Just over 48,000 refugees live in Oceania. While disaggregated data on the number of children in that total are not available, recent reports indicate that children seeking refuge in the region face serious danger as they attempt to reach safer shores.

Two young asylum-seekers look at a map on the wall at a reception centre in Sicily, Italy. Asylum-seekers should be transferred from the centre after 72 hours, but due to overcrowding of the system, children are often there for one to two months.



## INTRODUCTION

Around the world, 31 million children are living outside their country of birth, including 11 million child refugees and asylum-seekers; another 17 million children have been displaced within their own countries by violence and conflict.

They make their way to new homes by land, by air and by sea.

Some are in search of safety and security; some are rejoining family members; others are pursuing new opportunities. Nearly all have multiple reasons for moving.

Some move with their families and others are alone; some have planned their journeys for years while others must flee without warning.

All are seeking a different future from the one they have left behind.

No matter why they move or how they arrive, children are at the centre of the world's population movements. Whether they are migrants, refugees or internally displaced, they are always children: entitled to protection, support and all the rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

### Children at the centre

Children have the most to gain and the most to lose when decisions are made

about migration and displacement, and they deserve a place in every discussion on these issues. When children and their families have safe, legal routes for migration, it can offer tremendous opportunities for both the children who migrate as well as the communities they join. When safe pathways are not available, migration and displacement continue, but with much greater risk. In these situations, it is children who face the most immediate dangers and most profound consequences.

Wherever they are and regardless of their migration status, children have a right to be protected, to keep learning and to receive the care and services they need to reach their full potential. Every child has the same rights, and they retain those rights no matter where they are.

Fulfilling the rights of these children and their families is both a moral and a practical imperative. The Convention on the Rights of the Child – the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history – obligates ratifying countries to respect and protect the rights of all children within their territories, regardless of a child's background or migration status. While the legal framework protecting refugee and other migrant adults is fragmented, the CRC outlines a clear and solid set of protections for every child, taking into account their particular

## KEY TERMS IN MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT

**Migrants** are individuals who are moving or have moved across an international border or within a state away from their habitual place of residence, regardless of: (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is.

While the term 'migrant' is sometimes also used to refer to people who move either within their own countries, unless otherwise noted, the term refers exclusively to international migrants in this report. Throughout this report, data about migrants include refugees as a subset of the migrant population.

**Refugees** are, in accordance with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (and its 1967 Protocol), individuals who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, are outside the country of their nationality and are unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of their former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

For statistical purposes, since 2007 the refugee population has also included people in refugee-like situations facing the same protection concerns as refugees but whose refugee status has not been formally ascertained. In this report, refugee totals generally include both individuals under the protection of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as well as those registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

**Internally displaced persons (IDPs)** are individuals or groups of people who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of, armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border. For statistical purposes, since 2007, the population of internally displaced persons has also included people in an IDP-like situation.

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In line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the terms 'child' and 'children' in this report refer to all people below the age of 18.

Throughout the report, 'displacement' and 'forcible displacement' are used interchangeably to reference movement that is not voluntary. It is not meant to have a specific legal definition, but rather to capture all people forced to move across international borders, without specific regard to their legal status. All references to displacement within the borders of a particular country are noted as 'internal displacement'.

vulnerabilities. For a global community committed to reaching the children left furthest behind, the double vulnerability of being both a migrant and a child makes the equity case for protecting children all the more urgent.

The practical benefits of addressing these issues are equally compelling. Evidence from multiple contexts clearly demonstrates that child refugees and migrants – and the generations that follow them – live better lives and are more able to contribute to society when they have opportunities to learn and advance wherever they are.<sup>1</sup> Migrant children also play an invaluable role in linking their older family members to new societies and accelerating their engagement and inclusion. When children have opportunities to thrive, both the countries they leave behind as well as the countries they settle in can benefit from their skills, creativity and diverse perspectives. In an increasingly mobile and integrated world, policymakers, businesses and their partners in the global community cannot afford to ignore either the needs of these children or the opportunities they present.

To bring children to the centre of ongoing discussions about managing the movement of people around the world, this report outlines the best available data about children, migration and displacement. It highlights the global trends related to children and migration and explores some of the specific dynamics of migration and displacement in each region of the world. It concludes with an agenda for action, identifying the areas where children's rights are most endangered by current migration practices and the steps that must be taken to protect children. The report is intended to begin closing the data gaps on children, migration and displacement, inserting essential facts into discussions too often influenced by other factors.

Throughout the report, the data are broken down into many categories and children are variously referred to as asylum-seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons or migrants. Those terms have specific and important legal meanings, but they can mask a simple reality: they are all being used to describe children. Ultimately, it is always about a child – a boy or girl, in search of a different and more promising future.

The report brings together data about children who move for many different reasons and under widely varying circumstances. Some of those children are realizing the promise of migration while others are confronting its perils. Each of these children is entitled to the same rights and protections, but the report places particular emphasis on those children most likely to face difficulties, discrimination and danger as they seek and settle into new lives outside their homelands. The report frequently focusses on the needs of children who have been recognized as refugees, although they are far from the only vulnerable children in these contexts. Children who migrate for other reasons – especially those without recognized legal status – may encounter the same dangers and require the same protections. The children most in need of protection are the primary focus of this report for just that reason: their needs require immediate attention.

As migration and displacement intensify across the world, the responsibilities and the opportunities of migration will continue to grow. For the 31 million children already outside their homelands, there is no time to waste. They rely on immediate global action to protect their rights, meet their needs and open pathways to brighter futures. Millions more children will follow in their footsteps in the decades to come. The decisions taken today will determine whether those journeys offer safe refuge or continue to be fraught with unacceptable dangers. The choice is ours and the time for action is now.

## WHY A DATA-DRIVEN REPORT?

The world is seemingly awash in information about children and migration. From heart-breaking tales of violence and loss to uplifting accounts of successful integration, there is no shortage of stories about the promise and perils of migration for children. There is, however, a very serious gap in data that paint the larger picture of childhood migration and displacement. Without reliable data, evidence-based debates and policymaking are hampered.

There are many understandable reasons why this data gap exists: people are difficult to track when they move; families with uncertain legal status are often missed in official statistics; and some of the worst violations of children's rights are regularly un- or under-reported. When data about children are available, they are frequently for just a small, compartmentalized subset of children. These challenges remain, but they cannot become an excuse for inaction.

This report is an effort to bring together the best data that are available and to address the gaps that can be filled. Many data shortcomings remain, but the information presented here is intended to bring the faces of children into clearer focus in the global picture of migration and displacement.



# THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

A young girl stands outside her tent after fleeing with her family to a temporary camp in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan.

© UNICEF/UNI167881/Zaidi



# 1

## The Global Perspective

Between 2010 and 2015, an estimated 36 million people moved from one country to another,<sup>2</sup> an average of 20,000 people every single day. Individual decisions, some made over the course of years and others in just hours, combine to create the global picture of migration and displacement. This chapter puts children at the centre of that global picture, outlining the demography, geography, drivers and implications of childhood migration and displacement.

### WHO: The demography of childhood migration and displacement

In 2015, there were 244 million people worldwide living outside their country of birth; 31 million of them were children (Figure 1.1).<sup>3</sup> Among the world's migrants are more than 21 million refugees – some 10 million of whom are children – who have been forcibly displaced from their own countries.<sup>4</sup>

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IN 2015, THERE WERE 244 MILLION PEOPLE WORLDWIDE LIVING OUTSIDE THEIR COUNTRY OF BIRTH; 31 MILLION OF THEM WERE CHILDREN

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Ashley, 8, stands in an area inhabited by migrants, where she lives with her grandmother, in the settlement of Cole Bay in Sint Maarten.

© UNICEF/UNI120045/LeMoyne



Since 1990, the proportion of international child migrants as part of the world's child population has remained remarkably stable at just over 1 per cent, but a rising global population means that the absolute number of child migrants has increased in the past 25 years. The same is true for the overall international migrant population, which has remained around 3 per cent of the total population. In 2015, there were 244 million international migrants, compared to 153 million just 25 years before.<sup>5</sup> Recent trends have made the numbers much starker for children forcibly displaced across international borders: today, nearly 1 in every 200 children in the world is a child refugee. In 2005, the ratio was roughly 1 in every 350 children.

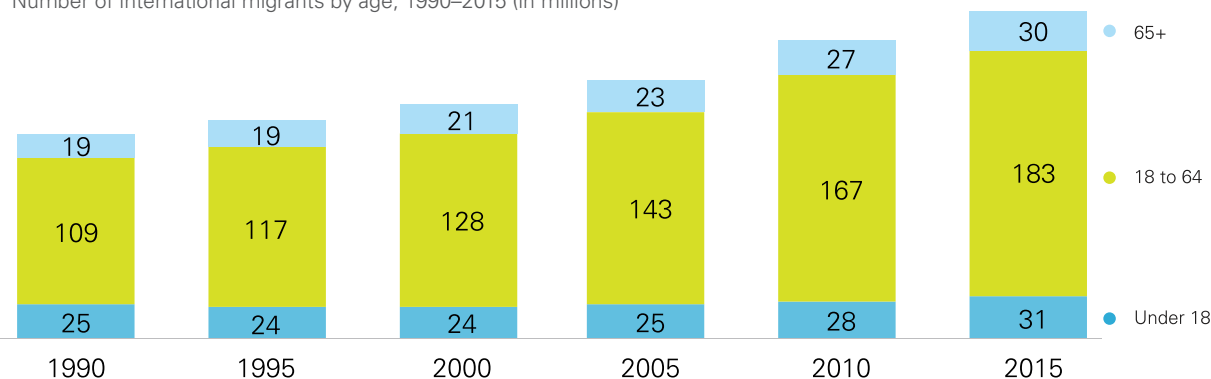
Worldwide, nearly 28 million children have been forcibly displaced. This number includes some 10 million child refugees, approximately 1 million asylum-seeking children and an estimated 17 million children displaced within their own countries by violence and conflict (Figure 1.2). Yet more children have been displaced by natural disasters and other crises, though they are not included in this total.

In the ten-year period between 2005 and 2015, the global number of child refugees under the protection of UNHCR more than doubled from 4 million to over 8 million. In just the five years between 2010 and 2015, the number of child refugees under UNHCR's mandate shot up by 77 per cent. By comparison, the total number of child migrants rose by only 21 per cent during the decade between 2005 and 2015.<sup>6</sup>

FIGURE 1.1

In 2015, the number of international migrants reached 244 million; 31 million of them were children

Number of international migrants by age, 1990–2015 (in millions)



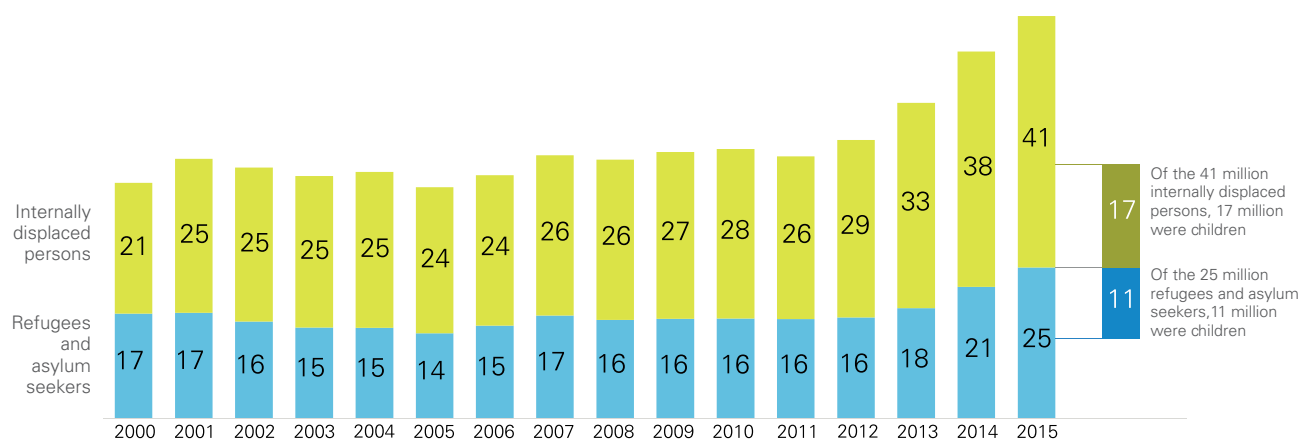
**Note:** 'International migrants' refers to people living in a country or area other than where they were born. In cases where information on the country of birth was not available, it refers to people living in a country other than that of their citizenship.

**Source:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by age and sex*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

FIGURE 1.2

Both internal and international forced displacements have been rising rapidly over the past five years

Number of displaced persons, 2000–2015 (in millions)



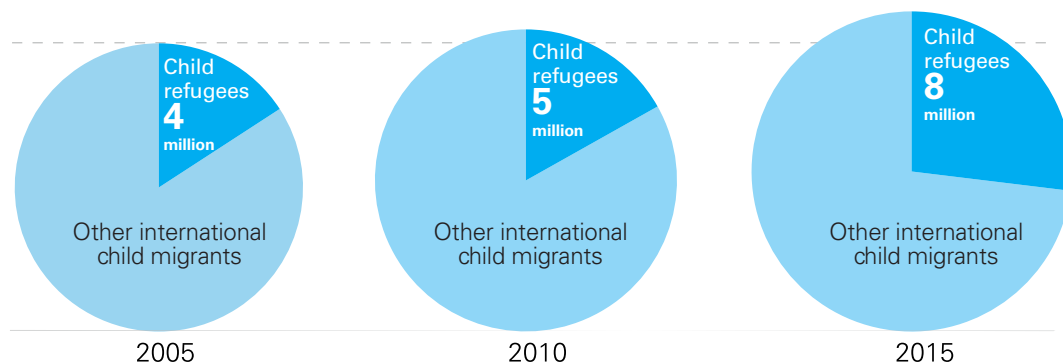
**Note:** These numbers include refugees under UNHCR's mandate, Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA and asylum applications that had not yet been adjudicated by the end of a given reporting year. Internally displaced persons are as reported by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). Since 2007 the refugee population category also includes people in a refugee-like situation, most of whom were previously included in the 'others of concern' group.

**Source:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2015*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2016; United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), 2016; and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), 2016. The number of displaced children in 2015 comes from UNICEF analysis based on aforementioned sources.

FIGURE 1.3

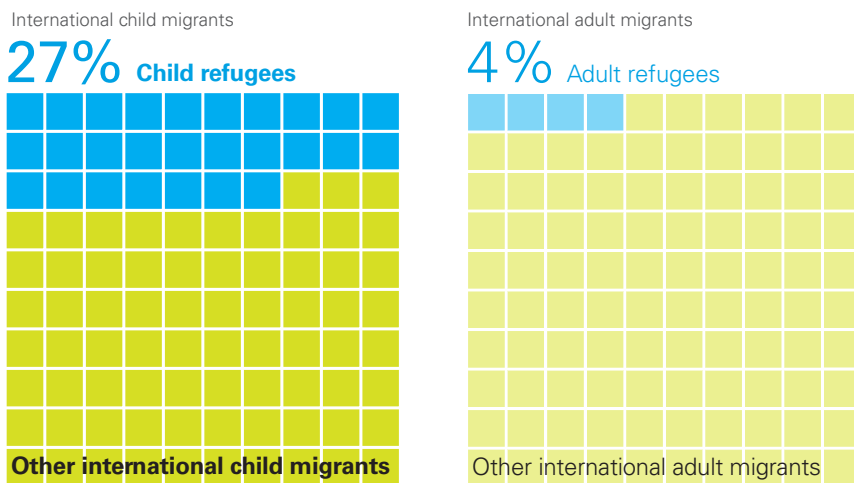
### Nearly one-third of children living outside their country of birth are refugees

A. Distribution of international migrants under 18 years of age by status, 2005, 2010 and 2015 (in millions)



**Note:** This figure refers to child refugees under UNHCR’s mandate. If children registered with UNRWA are included, there were approximately 10 million child refugees in 2015.

B. Distribution of child and adult international migrants by status, 2015 (percentage)



**Note:** Refugees under UNHCR’s mandate. An additional 5.2 million Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA are not included.

**Source:** UNICEF analysis based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by age and sex*, United Nations, New York, 2015; and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2015*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2016.

Children are dramatically over-represented among the world’s refugees. Children make up less than one-third of the global population, but they constituted 51 per cent of the world’s refugees in 2015.<sup>7,8</sup> Today, nearly one-third of children living outside their countries of birth are child refugees; for adults, the proportion is less than 5 per cent (Figure 1.3).

#### INTERPRETING THE DATA

The analysis in this report is based on the most recent, comparable global migration data available. Unless noted otherwise, data related to international migrant populations are based on estimates from the United Nations Population Division. Data related to refugee populations are drawn from both UNHCR and UNRWA, as applicable. Other sources are cited as relevant throughout the text.

International migrant population data include both refugees as well as other migrants who move across international borders for other reasons. The refugee population is part of the broader international migrant population.

This report draws heavily on what are known as international migrant stock data, which reflect the total number of people present in a country who have ever changed their country of residence. This is different from identifying the number of people who move over a specific period, which are generally referred to as migration flow data. Unless otherwise noted, migrant and refugee populations reflect the total numbers of people who have moved over time, not only those who moved within a specific time frame.

FIGURE 1.4

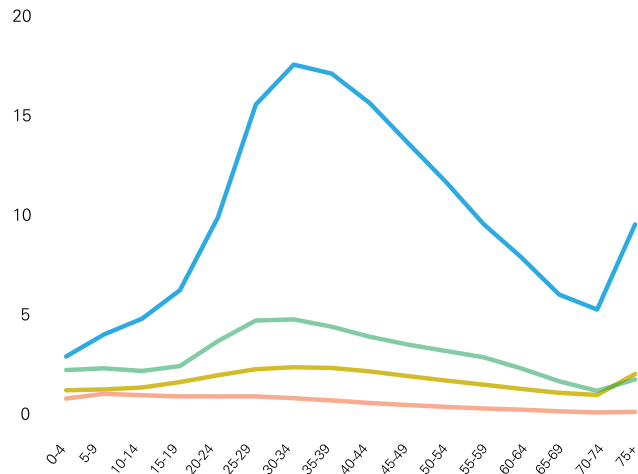
### Migrants living in low-income countries tend to be younger than in high-income countries

Age distribution of international migrants by income group of country of residence, 2015

- High income
- Upper middle income
- Lower middle income
- Low income

**Source:** UNICEF analysis based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by age and sex*, United Nations, New York, 2015. The national income classifications follows the World Bank income classification. The detailed classification can be found at: <<http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications/country-and-lending-groups>>, accessed 13 July 2016.

A. International migrants (in millions)



B. Percentage

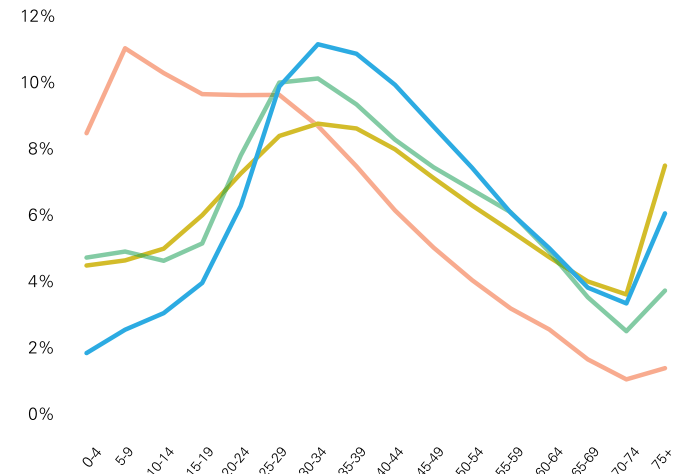


FIGURE 1.5

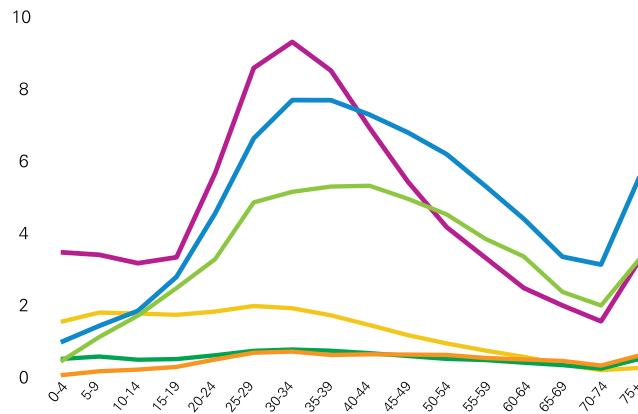
### Africa has the highest proportion of children in its migrant population

Age distribution of international migrants by region of country of residence, 2015

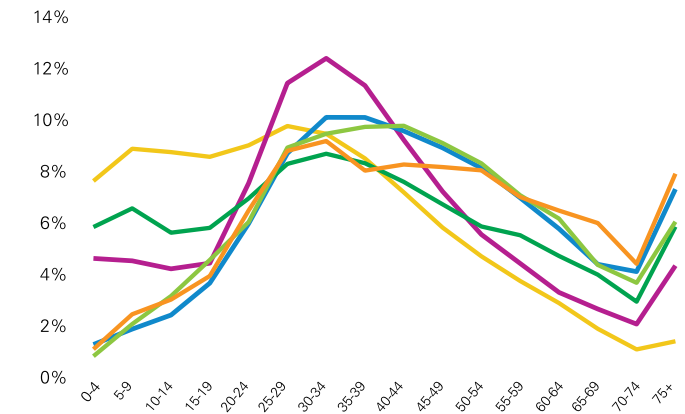
- Africa
- Asia
- Europe
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Northern America
- Oceania

**Source:** UNICEF analysis based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by age and sex*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

A. International migrants (in millions)



B. Percentage



## Gender and age dimensions of migration and displacement

When boys and girls move across international borders, they do so in almost equal numbers at both global and regional levels. This is notably different from adult migration, in which there is rough global parity, but there are pronounced differences in the proportion of men and women by region.

While there are widespread references to the feminization of migration, this trend is not evident by looking at global migration totals alone. At a global level, women have been nearly equal participants in international migration with men for decades. As discussed above, the total number of both male and female migrants has increased significantly in recent decades, although their share of the global population has remained steady. At a global level, the same is true of the sex ratios within that total number: in 1960, 47 per cent of international migrants were women. By 2000, that share had risen to 49 per cent before falling slightly to 48 per cent by 2015. While the overall ratios are relatively stable, the dynamic of migration that has changed more noticeably is the tendency of women to migrate either on their own or as part of a family, but with independent economic goals.<sup>9</sup>

Boys and girls are equally represented among registered refugees, reflecting the reality that the forces pushing families from their homes endanger the well-being of girls and boys alike.<sup>10</sup> While boys and girls are equally represented among refugees, their risk of particular protection concerns – such as recruitment and use by armed forces and armed groups or sexual and gender-based violence – may vary by sex.

The age at which people leave their home countries varies substantially with the circumstances under which they migrate. Globally, ages for voluntary migration show somewhat predictable patterns – there is relatively little voluntary movement among young children (who generally move with their parents), followed by an uptick among adolescents and young people pursuing higher education or job opportunities. After that peak, the likelihood of voluntary migration continues to decline until retirement age, when some adults choose to return to their native countries.<sup>11</sup>

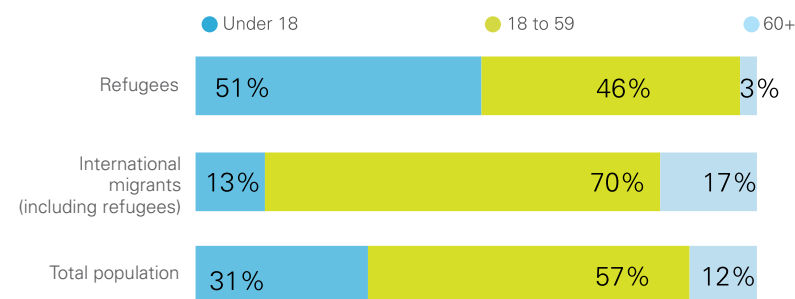
This pattern holds when analysing migrant destinations by most national income classifications, as shown in Figure 1.4. In low-income countries, however, the total migrant population is notably younger. This is likely driven by a combination of two factors: a larger percentage of refugees (a group where children are over-represented) in the total migrant population in low-income countries, as well as the generally younger populations in low-income countries.

Departures from the general age pattern are also evident when analysing the migrant population by destination region. Globally, half of all migrants were under

FIGURE 1.6

### The refugee population is much younger than the overall migrant population

Age distribution of refugees, international migrants and total population, 2015 (percentage)



**Note:** Refugees under UNHCR's mandate. An additional 5.2 million Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA are not included.

**Source:** UNICEF analysis based on United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2015*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2016; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by age and sex*, United Nations, New York, 2015; and United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2015 revision*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

the age of 39 in 2015. In Africa, the migrant population was considerably younger, with a median age of 29, followed by Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean (35 and 36 years, respectively). In contrast, migrants in Europe, Northern America and Oceania are older, with median ages all at 42 or above.<sup>12</sup> In Africa, as in the low-income grouping above, the relatively high proportion of refugees within the region's overall migrant population moves the median age downward (Figure 1.5).

The age distribution of refugees is markedly different from that of international migrants: the refugee population is much younger than the overall migrant population (Figure 1.6). While a clear majority of the world's migrants are adults, children are roughly half of all refugees. Children's large and rising share of the refugee population is further evidence of the fact that they continue to bear the burdens of decisions and disasters far beyond their control.

As the world debates the path forward for addressing the challenges that refugees and other migrants face, these figures make it clear that children must be central to the discussion.

## WHERE: The geography of childhood migration and displacement

In every region of the world, children are profoundly impacted by migration and displacement. The maps and data that follow highlight where migrating and displaced children begin their journeys and where they move.<sup>13</sup>

### Migrant journeys

Today, 1 in every 70 children worldwide lives outside the country of his or her birth. Like adults, most children who move migrate primarily within their own regions. Globally, more than half of international migrants have moved to another country within the same region where they were born.

Approximately one-quarter of all the world's migrants were born in Asia and live in a different country within Asia; another 17 per cent of international migrants are Europeans who have moved within Europe. Owing in large part to its substantial share of the total population, Asia is also the region of origin for the highest number of migrants who leave their region of birth. In 2015, there were 40 million international migrants born in Asia but living outside Asia.<sup>14</sup> Their movements and other large population movements are mapped in Figure 1.7.

The breakdown of international migration within, versus outside, a given region varies substantially by continent. In Europe, for example, two-thirds of all European-origin migrants have moved within Europe; in Asia, the proportion of intra-regional migration is quite similar, at 60 per cent. A staggering 85 per cent of migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean move within the Americas.

**Note:** This figure does not include 9.8 million international migrants with origin classified as other or unknown.

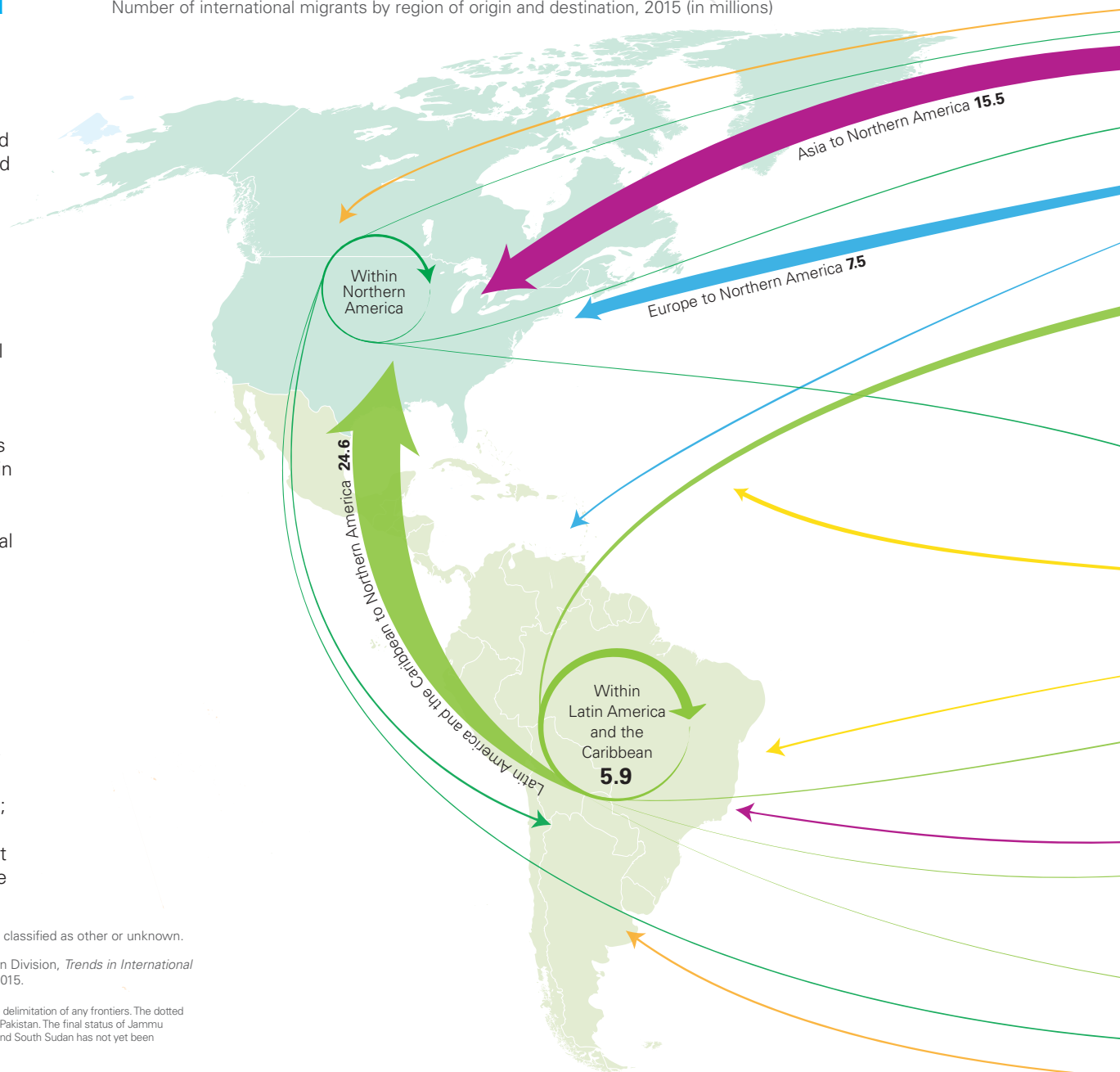
**Source:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. The final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined. The final status of the Abyei area has not yet been determined.

FIGURE 1.7

### Migration within regions accounts for more than half of all international migration

Number of international migrants by region of origin and destination, 2015 (in millions)



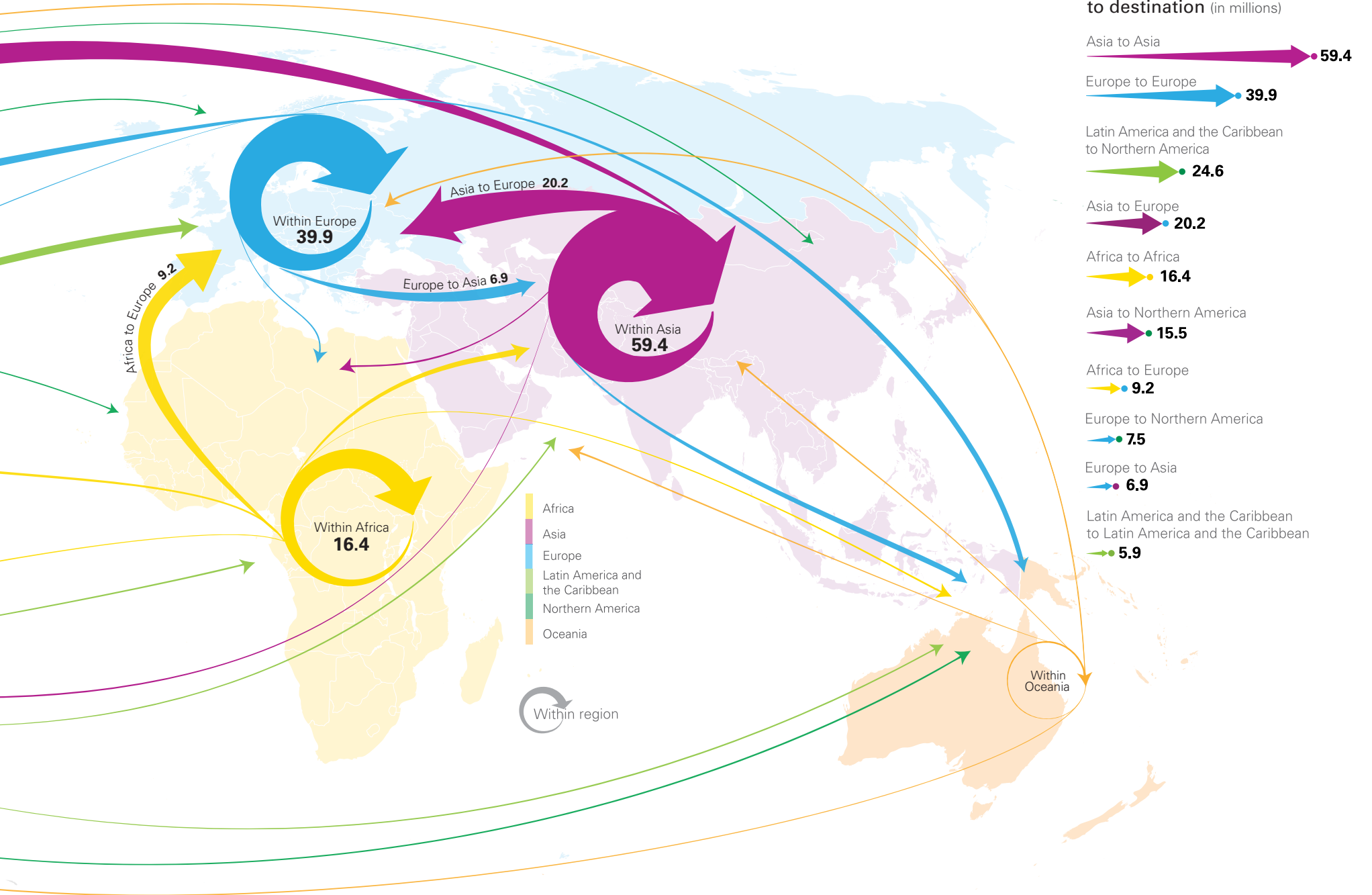
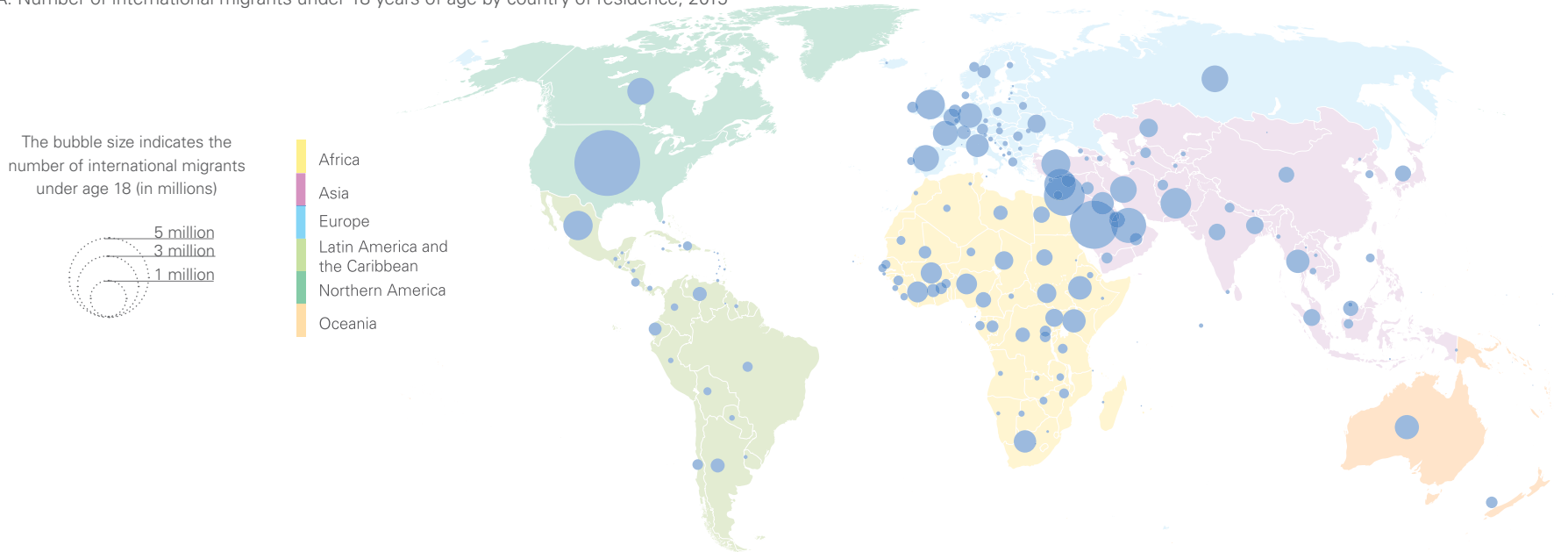


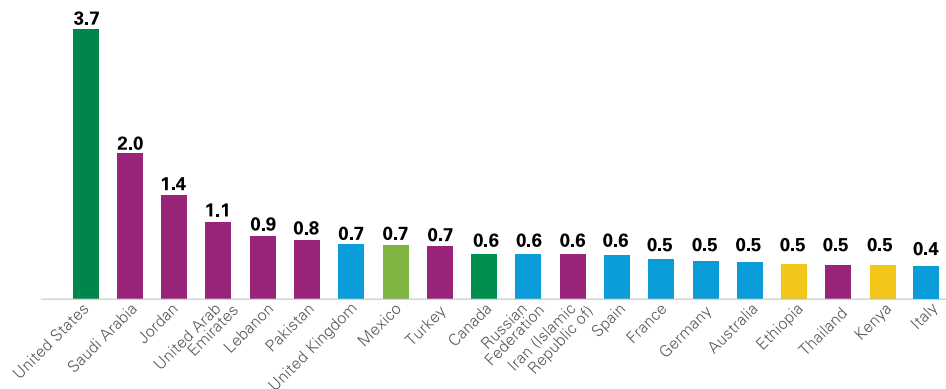
FIGURE 1.8

### Together, Africa and Asia host three out of every five child migrants

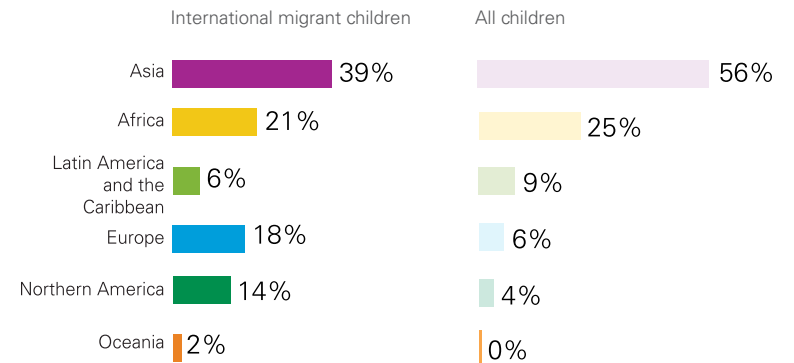
A. Number of international migrants under 18 years of age by country of residence, 2015



B. Top 20 hosting countries of international migrants under 18 years of age, 2015 (in millions)



C. Distribution of international migrant children and all children by region, 2015 (percentage)



Source: UNICEF analysis based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by age and sex*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. The final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined. The final status of the Abyei area has not yet been determined.



These numbers – like most others used in this report – refer to the migrant stock: the total number of people living outside their country of birth. The migrant stock is a long-term measure of migration that reflects the sum of both recent and older migration movements as well as mortality patterns for migrants. Migration flows, in contrast, capture the number of migrants moving from one country to another over a specific period of time. Migration flow data are not widely available, but estimates show that the migration flows over the past few decades have shifted a higher share of the world's international migrants towards Asia, highlighting the region's growing importance in global migration.<sup>15</sup>

### Where the world's child migrants live

Nearly 12 million of the world's international child migrants live in Asia. This represents almost 40 per cent of all migrant children, although it is actually much lower than Asia's proportion of global child population (56 per cent of all children). Africa's proportion of child migrants most closely matches its share of the global child population (21 and 25 per cent, respectively). Together, Africa and Asia host three out of every five child migrants (Figure 1.8).

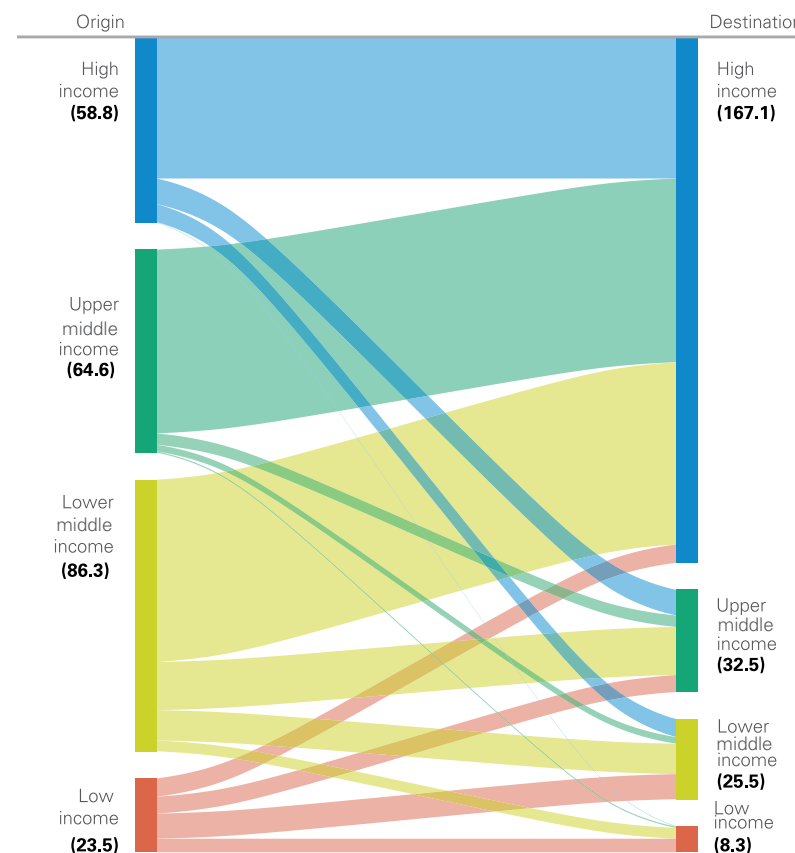
Half of all the world's child migrants live in just 15 countries, led by the United States of America, which is home to 3.7 million child migrants. The countries with the highest numbers of child migrants generally share one of two characteristics. Some countries, including Lebanon, Jordan and Mexico, have high proportions of children in their overall migrant population (43, 46 and 62 per cent respectively).<sup>16</sup> In others, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Canada and the United States, children comprise a relatively small percentage of the migrant population, but those countries' overall migrant populations are so large that the total number of migrant children is still quite high.<sup>17</sup>

Across the world, roughly 8 in 10 migrants move to a country with a per capita gross national income at least 20 per cent higher than in their country of birth.<sup>18</sup> While 72 per cent of the world's migrants live in high-income countries, the origins of those migrants are mixed. As shown in Figure 1.9, migrants in high-income countries come in roughly equal measure from high-, middle- and lower-middle-income countries. Only 3 out of every 100 migrants in high-income countries were born in a low-income country.<sup>19</sup>

FIGURE 1.9

### International migrants tend to move to higher-income countries

Number of international migrants by income group of country of origin and country of destination, 2015 (in millions)



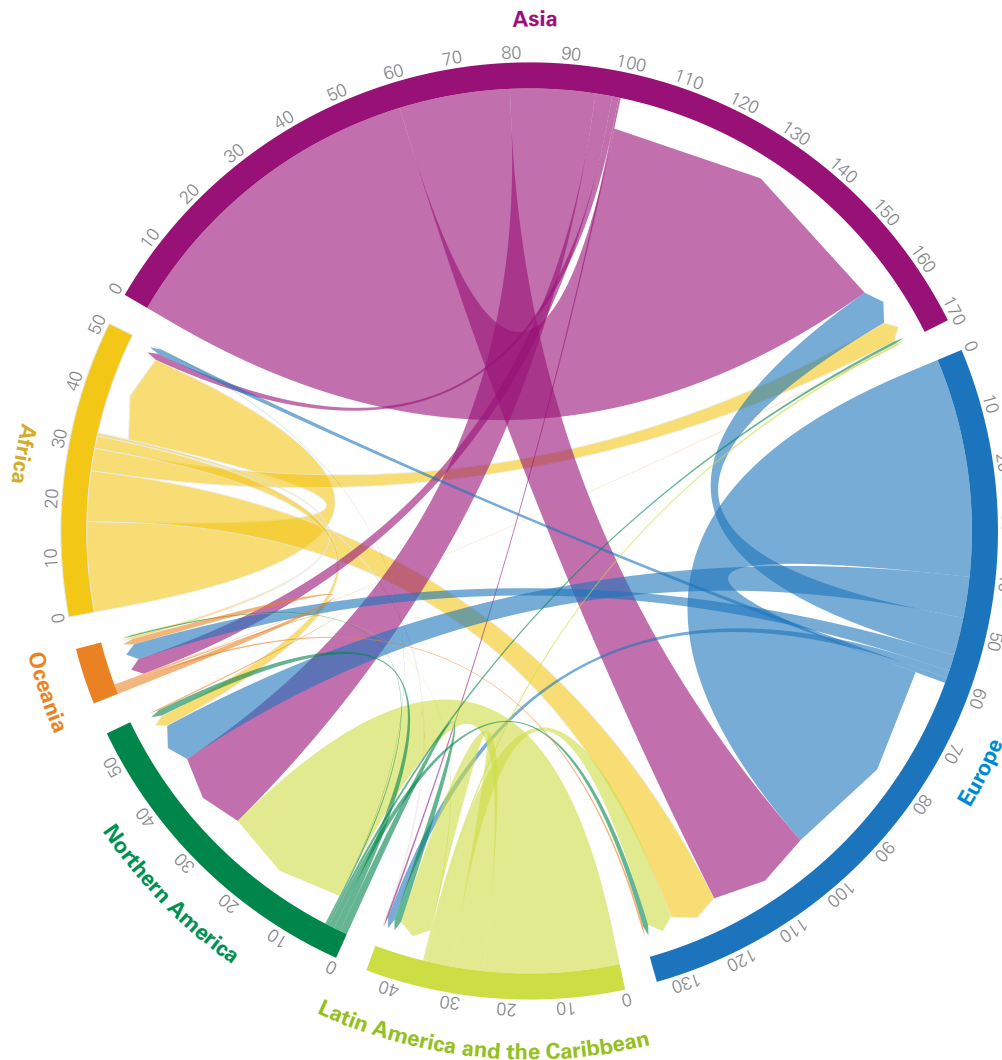
**Note:** This figure does not include 9.8 million international migrants with origin classified as other or unknown.

**Source:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015. The national income classification follows the World Bank income classification. The detailed classification can be found at: <<http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications/country-and-lending-groups>>, accessed 13 July 2016.

FIGURE 1.10

### Five out of 10 international migrants move within their region of origin

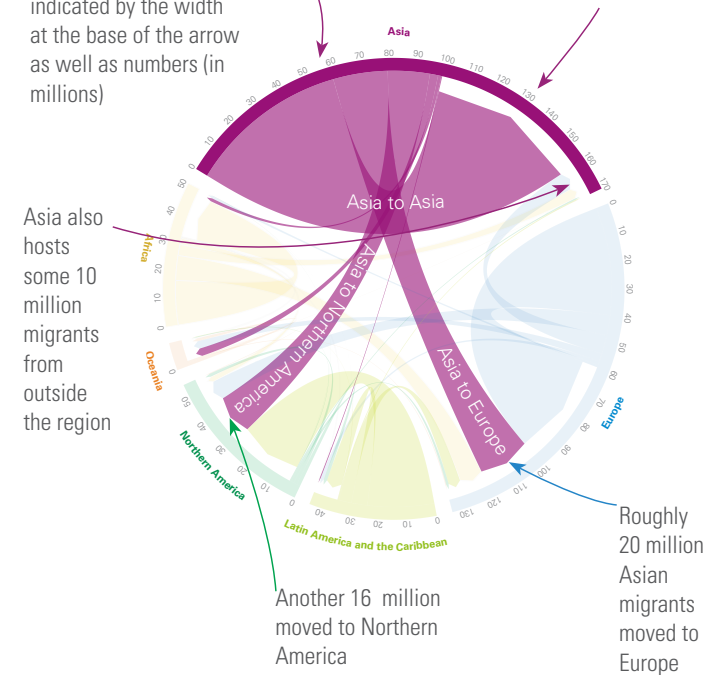
Number of international migrants by region of origin and destination, 2015 (in millions)



### How to read a chord diagram

The purple arrow with no gap indicates the Asian migrants who have left their country of origin, nearly 100 million people, indicated by the width at the base of the arrow as well as numbers (in millions)

About 60 million of those people moved to another country within Asia, shown here by the purple arrow with the gap



244 million international migrants worldwide

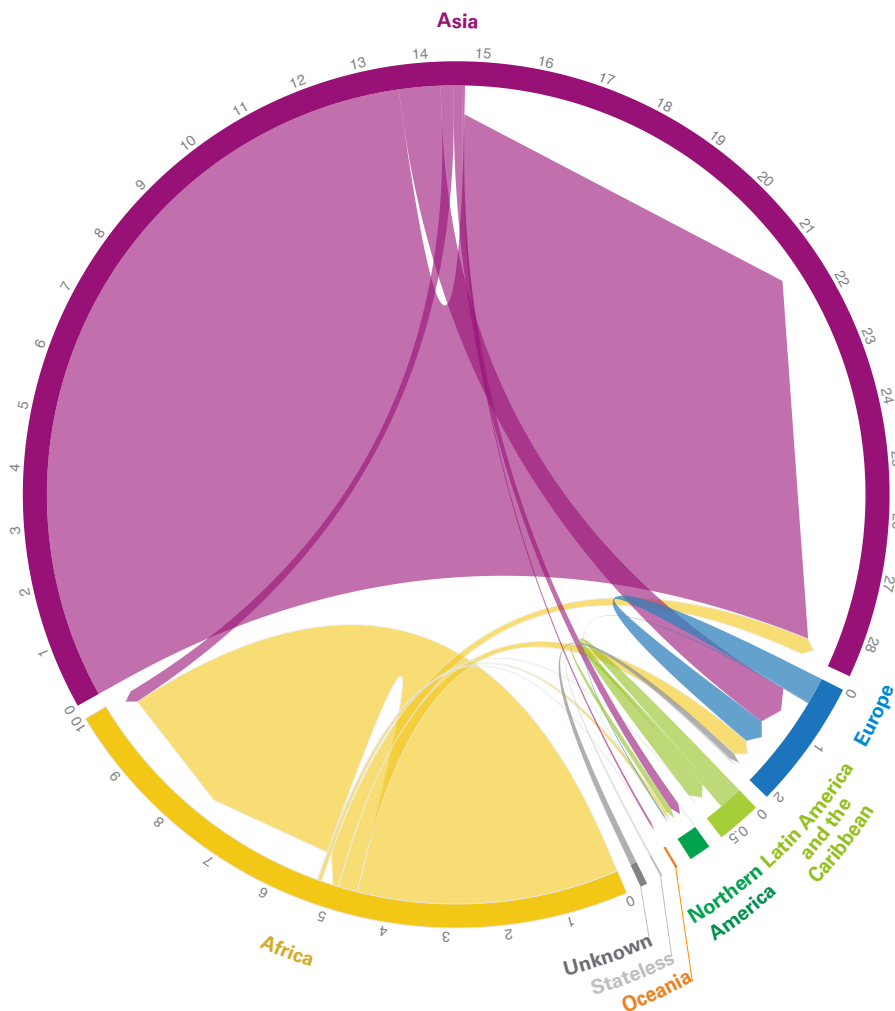
**Note:** This figure does not include 9.8 million international migrants with origin classified as other or unknown.

**Source:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

FIGURE 1.11

## Nine out of 10 refugees across the world find asylum within their region of origin

Number of refugees by region of origin and destination, 2015 (in millions)



21.3 million refugees worldwide

**Source:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2015*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2016 and United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, *Annual Operational Report 2015 for the Reporting Period, 1 January – 31 December 2015*, UNRWA, 2016.

When refugees and other international migrants move, they tend to find new homes within their regions of origin. Globally, more than half (53 per cent) of all international migrants settle in a different country within their region of origin (Figure 1.10). As discussed in more detail in the regional sections of this report, this intra-regional migration is often facilitated by regional agreements on free movement and shaped by linguistic and historical ties between regional neighbours.

### Forced journeys

The concentration of refugees within their regions of origin is even more pronounced than among other international migrants. Worldwide, 90 per cent of all refugees find asylum within their own region; just 1 in 10 of all the world's refugees find asylum outside their region of origin (Figure 1.11). This regional clustering is reflected in the high concentration of refugees hosted in countries neighbouring the major origin countries for refugees.

While planned and voluntary journeys can offer new opportunities to the children and families who undertake them, forced migration often intensifies the vulnerability of children who are already in precarious situations. Violence and conflict are the hallmarks of too many childhoods and are a common denominator in nearly all the countries of origin for large numbers of child refugees. In 2015, just two countries – the Syrian Arab Republic and Afghanistan – accounted for nearly half of all child refugees under UNHCR's mandate; three-quarters of child refugees come from only 10 countries (Figure 1.12).

## BOX 1.1 SAME BORDERS, DIFFERENT FUTURES: INTERNAL MIGRATION

While international migration receives substantial attention in the research and policy dialogue, it is only a small portion of overall population movements. A much higher percentage of the world's population movements takes place within borders rather than across them. According to the most recent global estimates, by 2005, upwards of 760 million people had migrated within their own countries since birth, nearly four times as many people who had migrated internationally.<sup>20</sup>

Comparable, comprehensive global estimates on internal migration are extremely limited, making it difficult to assess the scale, trends and impacts of internal migration on children at a global level. This major gap in global migration data leaves researchers and policymakers to rely on piecemeal studies and data sets. Looking at the available information from the world's two most populous countries (China and India), however, the scale and policy implications of internal migration for children are clear.

In China, there were an estimated 245 million internal migrants in 2013. This followed an explosive growth in internal migration since the turn of the century – in 1982, there were only 6.6 million internal migrants in the country.<sup>21,22</sup> This surge in migration, combined with the design of China's household registration

system (*hukou*), has complicated the migration of children together with their parents. In part because *hukou* can make it difficult to enrol children in urban schools or take advantage of the public health care system after migrating, many internal migrants leave their children behind when they move.<sup>23</sup>

In 2010, almost 70 million children in China stayed behind when their parents migrated. Another 36 million children moved with their parents. Combined, these totals exceed 100 million children, meaning that two out of every five children in China were directly affected by migration. Because of the rural-to-urban nature of most internal migration in China, nearly 90 per cent of children who were left in the care of others when their parents migrated were in rural areas, meaning that 4 in 10 children in rural areas were living without one or both parents because of migration.<sup>24,25,26</sup>

An estimated 326 million people – more than a quarter of the national population – had moved within India by 2007–2008.<sup>27</sup> That same year, 15 million children in India were estimated to be living as internal migrants within the country.<sup>28,29</sup> This number is more than half the number of international child migrants in the world during that period, underscoring just how vital continued analysis of and dialogue about internal migration is for the well-being of children.

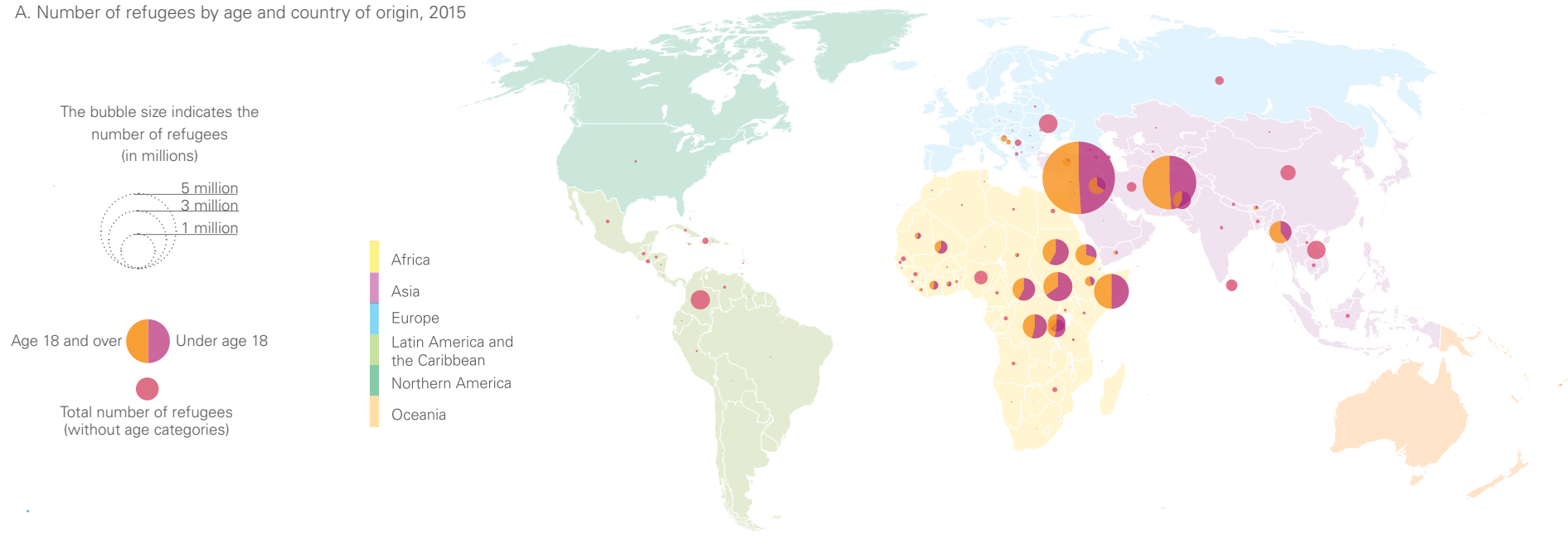
The map at right, laying out major countries of origin for the world's child refugees, is also a vivid illustration of the world's major conflicts. While recent progress in places like Colombia offers glimmers of hope for some displaced children and families, protracted and deepening crises in other parts of the world continue to hold back progress for the world's children. Children will continue to shoulder these unsustainable burdens unless concerted action is taken to address both the proximate and underlying causes of these conflicts.

Climate change, economic crises, rising inequality and natural disasters are also pushing people to make homes in new countries, often against their will. Children and families who move for these reasons are not offered a distinct legal status, meaning that they are indistinguishable from other migrants within the global data. While there is a growing international recognition that these vulnerable migrants are in need of stronger legal protections, the lack of data about them continues to hamper efforts to effectively address their rights and needs. As the issues that drive families from their homes worsen, this data gap will become more glaring.

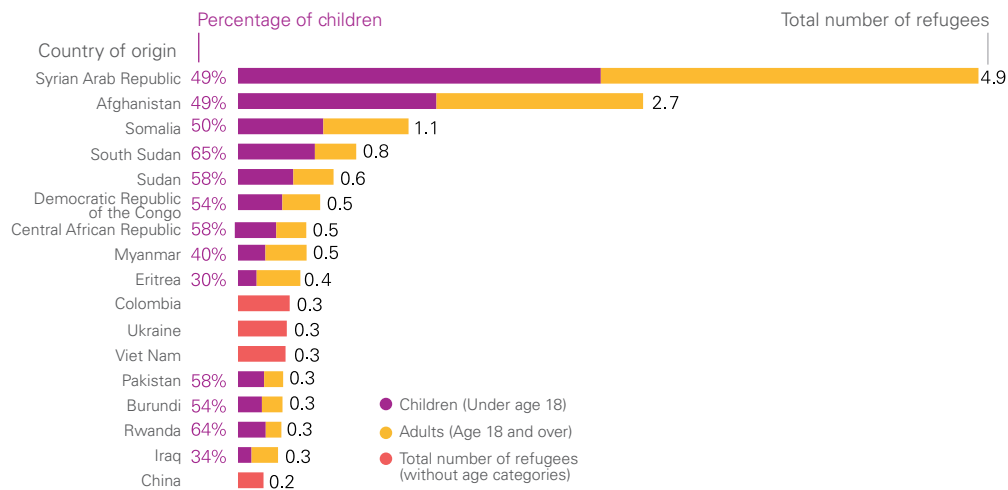
FIGURE 1.12

### In 2015, just two countries accounted for nearly half of all child refugees under UNHCR’s mandate

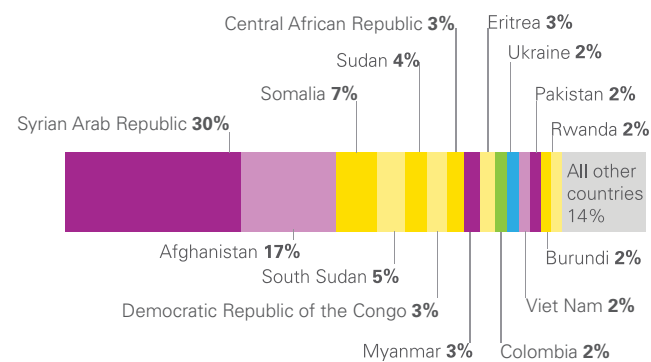
A. Number of refugees by age and country of origin, 2015



B. Largest refugee populations by age and country of origin, 2015 (in millions)



C. Distribution of refugees by major countries of origin, 2015 (percentage)



**Note:** Refugees under UNHCR’s mandate. An additional 5.2 million Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA are not included or plotted. Age categories shown for countries with information on age for at least 50 per cent of the population, with the exception of the Syrian Arab Republic, with information on age for 45 per cent of the population. A total of 117,000 refugees from Western Sahara are included in the total number of refugees but not plotted here.

**Source:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2015*, UNHCR, 2016. Unpublished data table, cited with permission.

This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. The final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined. The final status of the Abyei area has not yet been determined.

## Where the world's refugees live

The 10 largest hosts of the global refugee population are all in Asia and Africa, with Turkey hosting by far the largest total number of refugees (Figure 1.13). In 2015, one in six of all refugees under UNHCR's mandate lived in Turkey. Although complete age-disaggregated data are not available for refugees in Turkey, its substantial share of total refugees makes Turkey likely the largest single host of child refugees in the world.

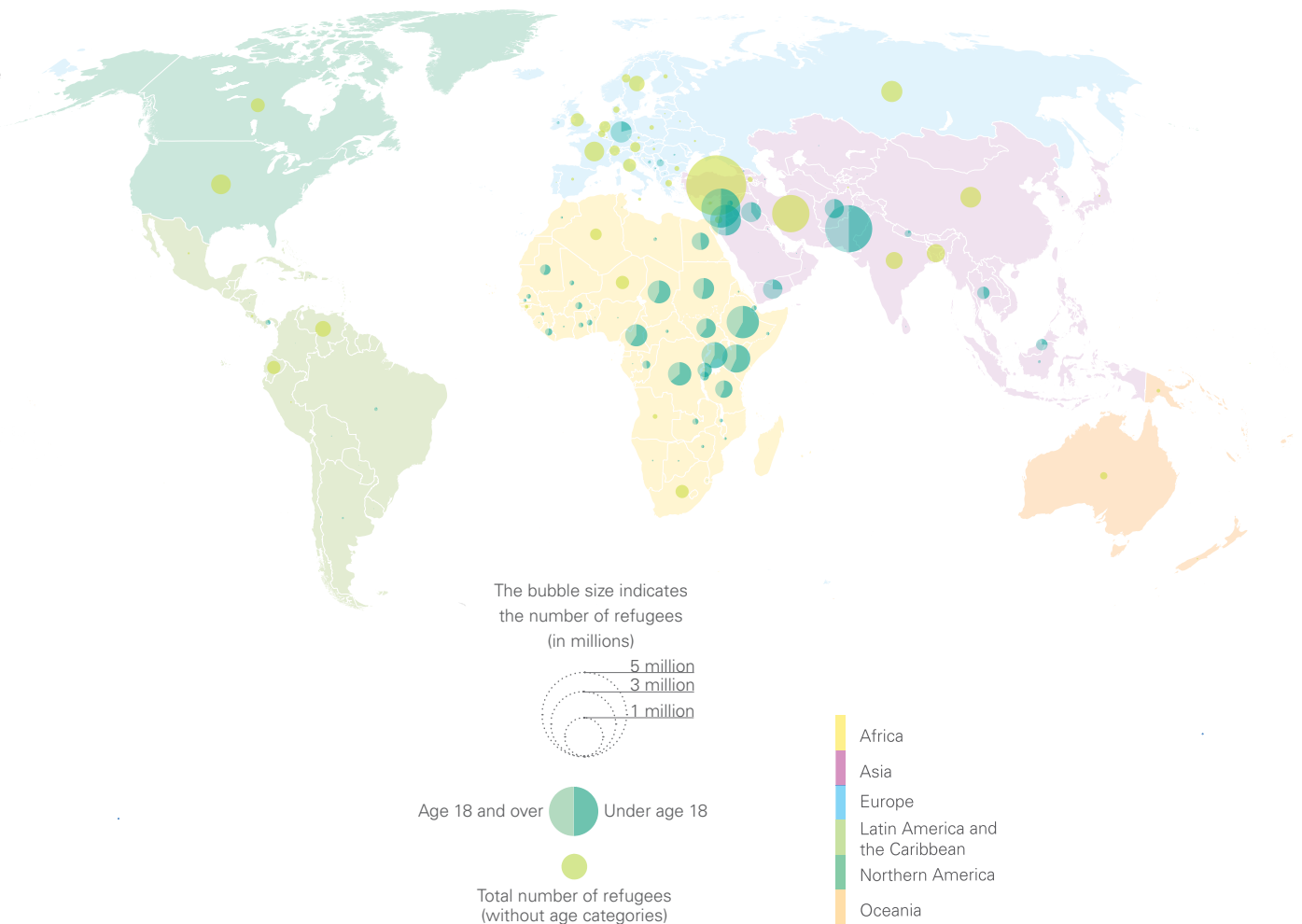
By an overwhelming margin, Lebanon and Jordan host the largest number of refugees relative to their populations and the highest density of refugees relative to their territories (Figure 1.13).<sup>30</sup> Today, nearly one in five people in Lebanon is a refugee under UNHCR's mandate. By comparison, the comparable ratio for the United Kingdom is roughly 1 in 530; for the United States, it is approximately 1 in 1,200. When the nearly 500,000 Palestinian refugees registered in Lebanon and the more than 2 million Palestinian refugees in Jordan are added to this total, the contributions of these countries to global refugee responsibility-sharing are even more pronounced.<sup>31</sup>

When considering refugee-hosting countries by income level, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Pakistan host the highest concentration of refugees relative to their resources.<sup>32</sup> By this same measure, the 20 countries hosting the largest number of refugees relative to their resources are all in Africa and Asia.

FIGURE 1.13

## The 10 countries hosting the largest numbers of refugees are all in Asia or Africa

A. Number of refugees by age and country of residence, 2015 (in millions)

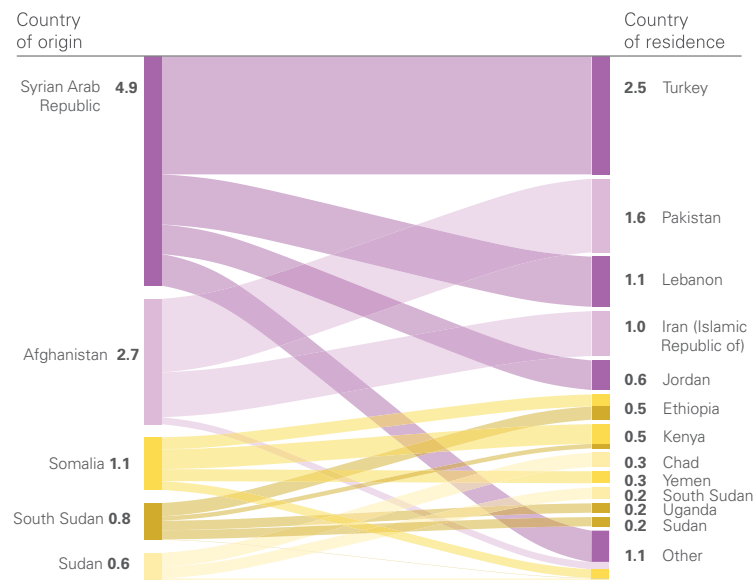


**Note:** Refugees under UNHCR's mandate. Additional 5.2 million Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, State of Palestine and Syria are not included. Age categories shown for countries with information on age for at least 50 per cent of the population.

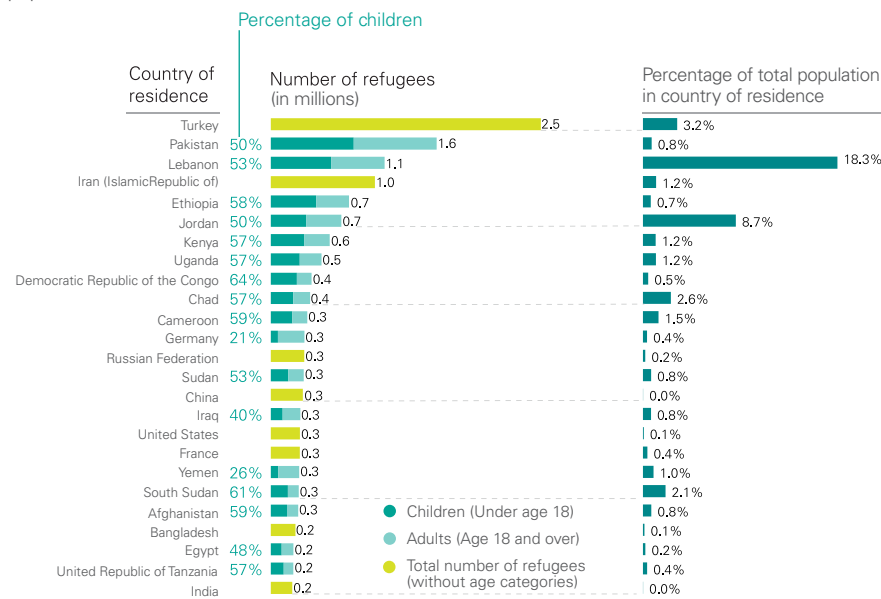
**Source:** United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 2016, *Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2015*; and United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Population Division, World Population Prospects: The 2015 revision*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. The final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined. The final status of the Abyei area has not yet been determined.

B. Top five countries of origin for refugees by country of residence, 2015 (in millions)



C. Largest refugee populations by age and country of residence and as a percentage of total population, 2015



D. Refugees per 1,000 population in countries hosting over 10,000 refugees, 2015



**Note:** Refugees under UNHCR's mandate. An additional 5.2 million Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, State of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic are not included. Age categories shown for countries with information on age, for at least 50 per cent of the population. The number of refugees does not include applicants for asylum whose refugee status has yet to be determined. At the end of 2015, there were 3.2 million asylum applications pending worldwide.

**Source:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2015*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2016; and United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2015 revision*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

### **Palestinian refugees**

A total of 5.2 million Palestinian refugees are registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.<sup>33</sup> Individuals whose “normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict” may qualify as a Palestine refugee, along with their descendants.

Today, refugee status has extended into a fifth generation for many Palestinian refugees, making them part of one of the world’s most protracted refugee situations. For a variety of reasons, many calculations of the total number of global refugees do not include Palestinian refugees, although they are legally entitled to international protection like all other refugees.

The 5.2 million Palestinians registered as refugees with UNRWA live in five locations throughout the Middle East – 2.2 million in Jordan, 500,000 in Lebanon, 450,000 in the Syrian Arab Republic, 790,000 in the West Bank and 1.3 million in the Gaza Strip.<sup>34</sup> Children and youth are a large part of this population, with 38 per cent of all Palestinian refugees aged between 15 and 24. At the beginning of 2015, almost 30 per cent of the Palestinian refugees (including other registered persons) lived in 58 camps administered by UNRWA; the rest live in communities within host countries.<sup>35</sup>

While many families are now integrated within host communities, too many Palestinian refugees continue to bear the burdens of both immediate hardship as well as multi-generational displacement. Palestinian refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic have been particularly hard hit. Of the 560,000 Palestinian refugees registered there before the crisis, 110,000 have left the country, finding refuge in Lebanon (42,000), Jordan (18,000) and outside the region (50,000). Of those who remain, 60 per cent have been internally displaced within the country.<sup>36</sup> Multiple displacements and ongoing conflict continue to render Palestinian refugees – especially children – intensely vulnerable.

Children make up a majority of the world’s total refugee population, but their proportion as part of the overall refugee population varies substantially depending on the country where they live. In Germany, children are just one in five refugees, while they represent three in five refugees living in both South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.<sup>37</sup> The large differences in the percentage of children in the refugee population in any given destination country are not easily explained by a single factor. They are likely influenced by a number of variables including the distance and difficulty of the journey between countries of origin and destination, the basic age structure of refugee origin countries, migration and asylum policies and practices in destination countries, and the social and financial capital of families making the journeys.

Just as children’s journeys are shaped by migration and asylum policy and practices, so too are their futures. The opportunities that refugee and migrant children have in these destination countries vary considerably based on both national policy and practice about topics including family reunification, services such as health and education, and social inclusion. While good policy is a necessary condition, it is not a sufficient one – the administrative capacity and the political will to implement policy are essential to provide children with the protections and opportunities they deserve. Access and inclusion can provide lasting benefits for children and communities, while exclusionary policies and practices can squander the potential of an entire generation. The decisions made in national capitals and regional bodies today will dictate which future today’s 10 million child refugees face.



## BOX 1.2 IN DANGER WITHIN BORDERS: INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

Even when children do not cross their national borders in search of safety, they can face tremendous danger while seeking security within their own country. Notably, nearly all people who eventually become refugees begin their journeys with internal displacement.<sup>38</sup>

By the end of 2015, some 41 million people were displaced by violence and conflict within their own countries – nearly 9 million of them displaced that year alone (Figure 1.14). Disasters including earthquakes, tsunamis and flooding uprooted another 19 million people within their own borders.<sup>39</sup> Like many aspects of data related to migration and displacement, most information about internal displacements is not broken down by age, making it difficult to provide a reliable estimate of the number of children included within these larger totals.<sup>40</sup>

Assuming that the proportion of children among persons internally displaced by violence is the same as the proportion of children in the national population, an estimated 17 million children were displaced within their own countries by violence and conflict at the end of 2015.<sup>41</sup> If children are over-represented in internal displacement numbers in the same way that they are in refugee numbers, that total would be even higher. Including children internally displaced by disasters would send the number higher still.

This report does not focus extensively on children affected by internal displacement, but they are highlighted here because many of the challenges that children face when they are forced to leave their homes are the same, regardless of whether they cross borders. Like refugees, many internally displaced children face violence, exploitation, disrupted social services and education, and separation from their families. The longer displacements linger, the more lasting their negative consequences can be.

Most of the policy prescriptions for these challenges are also the same as those for child refugees – protection of children's rights, support for family reunification, continued access to schooling and other services, and equal treatment and consideration under the law. Accurate information about, and protection for, internally displaced persons are essential to all of these policy responses. The lack of specific protections and monitoring for internally displaced persons in most contexts leaves many of the worst effects of internal displacement under-reported and under-addressed. Whether children are uprooted within their borders or beyond them, governments have a responsibility to fulfil both their needs and their rights.

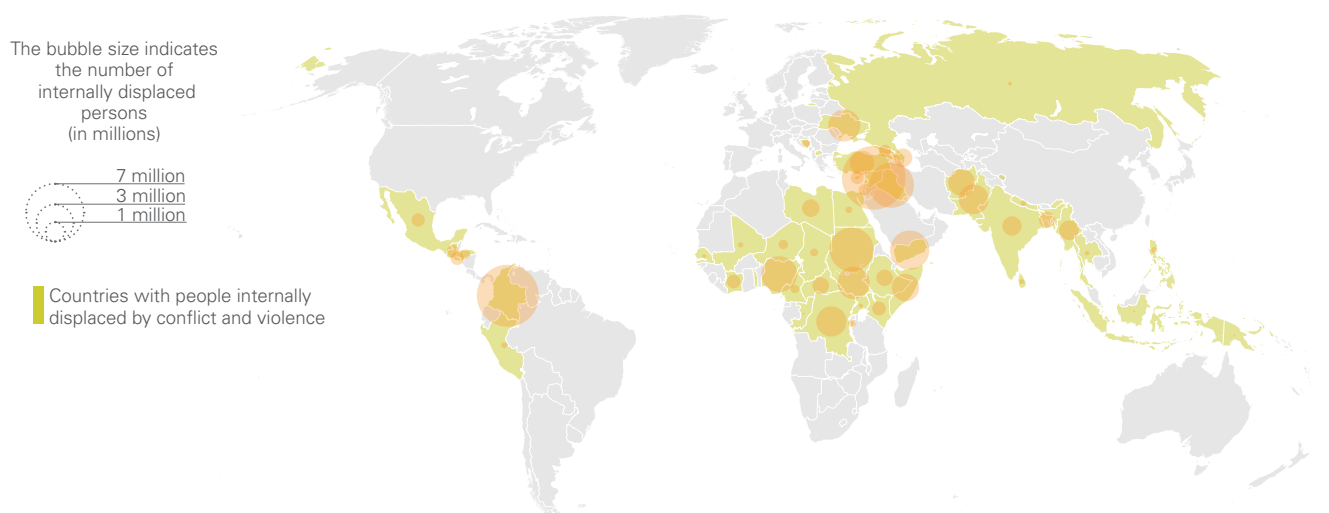
### The challenges of estimating internal displacement for children

Limited age-disaggregated data are available regarding the ages of internally displaced persons. In the few countries where this information is available, there is not a clear trend to support reliable global estimates. Consider the examples of Haiti and Nigeria:<sup>42</sup> in Haiti, roughly one-third of the people still internally displaced from the 2010 earthquake are children. This is notably lower than the percentage of children in the overall population. In Nigeria, by contrast, data indicate that more than half of internally displaced persons are children. This number falls squarely between the percentage of children in the general population and the percentage of children in the Nigerian refugee population abroad.<sup>43</sup> Each case supports a different set of assumptions for compiling a global estimate, making it challenging to produce a reliable global total for internally displaced children.

FIGURE 1.14

### Conflict displaces even more people within their own borders than beyond them

Number of conflict-related internally displaced persons, 2015



**Note:** Based on the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre's annual monitoring of internal displacement, Colombia remains among the five countries with the highest number of people displaced by conflict. While internal displacement is a major issue within Colombia, the available data reflect all people who were estimated to have been displaced over the course of more than five decades of conflict, even if they are deceased or no longer believed to be displaced, meaning the estimates are likely to be significantly overstated. These data should be interpreted with caution.

**Source:** Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Global Internal Displacement Database, 2015

This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. The final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined. The final status of the Abyei area has not yet been determined.

## WHY: Factors that influence migration and displacement

Every year, in every part of the world, children and families make the decision – sometimes freely and sometimes under duress – to move. These decisions are influenced by a wide range of factors about both their present conditions as well as their future aspirations. Difficult conditions at home – conflict, poverty, violence, natural disasters, unemployment, discrimination and more – often weigh heavily in the decision to move. Brighter prospects in other countries – security, family reunification, education, higher standards of living and jobs – also shape decisions about where and when families migrate.

Children and families rarely make the decision to move for just one reason: many factors are usually involved and the importance of any given factor may change over time. Nakisha's story (at right) provides a clear illustration of this. Her decision to move is about both the things she wants to leave as well as those she hopes to find. She is keenly aware of the danger of the journey and the difficulties she will face if she takes it with an uncertain legal status. Despite this, Nakisha still feels that her future is in a new country.

At a global level, the interplay of positive and negative factors is just as complex. While it is clear that major issues including conflict, economic instability and environmental disasters continue to influence large-scale movements of people, they are far from the only factors. Other issues – including community traditions, aspirations and the desire for new opportunities – continue to shape large movements as well. Tackling the negative forces that drive people to leave their homes is essential for addressing a wide range of human rights, economic, environmental and political problems. They should be addressed for those reasons, rather than as a strategy for migration control.

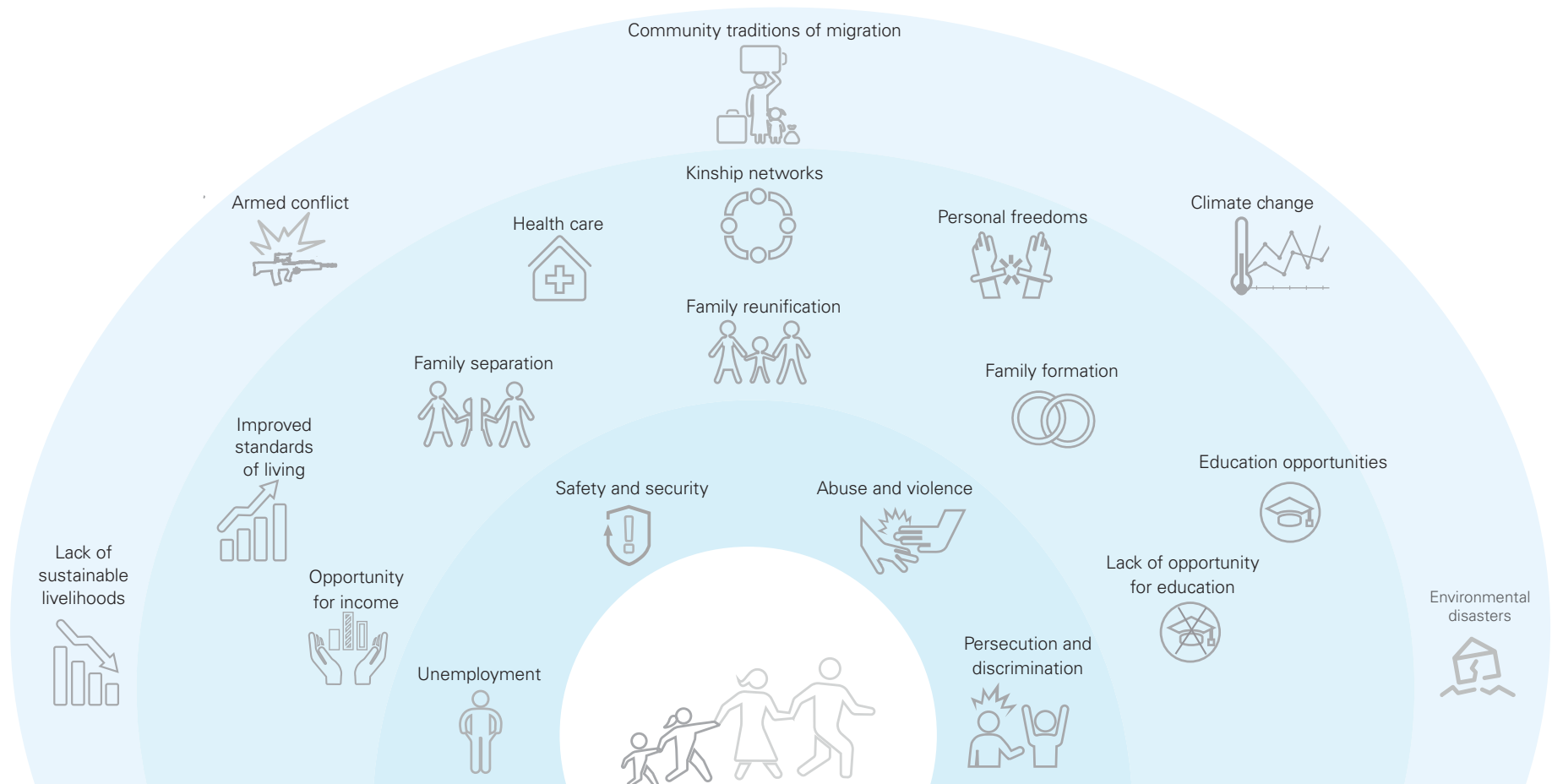
### STORY 1.1 NO PLACE FOR A CHILD

At the age of 15, Nakisha Martinez – a member of Honduras' minority Afro-Caribbean community – is accustomed to acting as a parent to her two younger siblings. Her single mother is often out of the house, working in neighbouring countries or making her way to the United States – a journey she has attempted at least four times.

The situation at home is dire. "Where I live there are gangs.... They're the ones who rule here," says Nakisha. "They look for children from the community to bring them into their gang. I have a cousin who converted, he's in the gang now – he's only 12 years old. Now they're looking for him to kill him.... A friend of his was just killed."

Nakisha wants to escape it all, study and get a job as a nurse to support her family, but says she is too scared to make the perilous journey to the United States again. She tried it once, in 2014, with her mother, her 3-year-old brother, 8-year-old sister and a cousin. They were attacked on a couple of occasions and narrowly escaped arrest several times. They eventually made it across the Rio Grande that separates Mexico from the United States, only to be sent back by immigration authorities. "I won't do this again. I want to go one day but with the proper papers.... I want to go, because of high school, college and all that."

## A WIDE RANGE OF FACTORS INFLUENCE CHILDHOOD MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT



## WHAT HAPPENS: The promise and potential peril of migration and displacement for children

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“MIGRATION IS AN EXPRESSION OF THE HUMAN ASPIRATION FOR DIGNITY, SAFETY AND A BETTER FUTURE. IT IS PART OF THE SOCIAL FABRIC, PART OF OUR VERY MAKE-UP AS A HUMAN FAMILY.”

Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General, in remarks at the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, October 2013

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### The promise

A high-level scan of the evidence about migration makes a powerful case for its potential: migrants who move from countries with a low Human Development Index (HDI) value to a country with a higher HDI value experience, on average, a 15-fold increase in income, a doubling in education enrolment rates and a 16-fold reduction in child mortality.<sup>44</sup>

Countries, too, benefit from migration. Remittance flows to migrant-sending countries proved very resilient during the financial and economic crisis and remained stable at a time when foreign aid remained flat and foreign direct investment declined sharply.<sup>45</sup> Remittances can also provide households with the capital needed to invest in new businesses, raising incomes across the economy.<sup>46</sup> When migrants return home, they bring new skills, assets and perspectives to their homelands.

In countries that receive migrants, the benefits are even more pronounced. An analysis of migration impacts in high-income countries found that migrants contributed more in taxes and social payments than they received; filled both high- and low-skilled gaps in the labour market; and contributed to economic growth and innovation in hosting countries.<sup>47</sup>

Recognizing the importance of migration and its potential for individuals and nations alike, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include a commitment to facilitating “orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.”<sup>48</sup>

Whether individual children or families benefit from the potential of migration, however, is a much more difficult question to answer. The one clear conclusion of research on migration and children is that context matters in determining individual-level impacts of migration.

Family conditions and the circumstances of migration are critical in determining whether the outcomes of relocation are positive or negative for children: the type of migration; the underlying reasons for migration; and the situation of children in countries of origin, transit and destination all determine outcomes. The empirical research on child migrants, especially children who migrate independently of their parents, is limited and, because of the importance of context, is very difficult to interpret outside its original setting.

Where data on children and migration exist, different studies frequently point in different directions – an inconsistency often attributable to distinctions between contexts.<sup>49</sup> The holistic impacts of parents migrating without their children are similarly murky. Evidence

from many countries links remittances from parents abroad with poverty reduction and improved access to essentials such as education, health and housing. Other evidence – often even from the same contexts – links parental absence with increased behavioural problems and other detrimental psycho-social impacts on the children who remain behind.<sup>50</sup>

### **The potential peril**

The “orderly, safe, regular and responsible” migration envisioned in the SDGs can offer children and families the futures they seek. Those conditions of migration are, however, still aspirational for too many. Children continue to face grave dangers as they move and resettle in new homes. Even when migration is planned and voluntary, these dangers are present, but they are profoundly exacerbated by both forced displacement and irregular migration. Uncertain legal status, language barriers, limited social networks and active xenophobia can all compound the initial dangers of the journey itself. The risks are most acute for children travelling without their families. These risks are not an inevitable part of migration – but they persist in the absence of needed reforms.

The following section examines some of the most severe consequences that children and families may face as they seek security and stability outside their home countries. Comprehensive data about the number or proportion of migrant and refugee children affected by these issues are not available, but the best available evidence is presented for each topic.

### **Violence, exploitation, abuse and trafficking**

Children, particularly those who travel on their own or become separated from their families, are at risk of many forms of violence and exploitation throughout their journeys. For some, those dangers persist even after they have reached their destinations.

Violence may come in the form of state action (particularly during migration enforcement or detention), the general public (in the form of xenophobic attacks), employers (in various forms of child labour), other children (including bullying and abuse in schools) or within families (in the form of domestic violence, which can be worsened by prolonged and extreme stress related to displacement).

While violence is most often described in physical terms, its impacts extend far beyond the physical dangers, including long-standing

psychological and social effects on children’s well-being. Even when children do not directly experience violence, the process of displacement and resettlement itself takes a lasting toll on the mental health of children and their caregivers.<sup>51</sup>

Reliable global data about the extent of violence against refugee and other migrant children are not available, but individual assessments and studies make it clear that the problem is pervasive.<sup>52</sup> Many forms of violence against children are under-reported among all child survivors, but fear of detention, deportation or other state action against children within uncertain legal status may keep refugee and migrant children in particular from seeking help and are likely exacerbating problems of under-reporting.

One of the most widely discussed forms of violence against children is trafficking. According to the most recent available data, as of 2012, one in three detected victims of trafficking is a child.<sup>53</sup> Girls and boys are both affected, although nearly twice the number of girls have been detected as trafficking victims.<sup>54</sup> These numbers reflect a rise in the percentage of children among trafficking victims in recent years. While data are not yet available for 2012 onwards, the recent swell of irregular and forced migration has likely increased the number of both smuggling and child trafficking victims as well.

This report, like most global reporting on trafficking, uses percentages of detected victims in various categories, rather than presenting raw numbers on the estimated number of trafficking victims. This is primarily because trafficking is unevenly detected and under-reported. Even the ratios presented here may be skewed by the visibility of commercial sexual exploitation, especially prostitution, compared to other trafficking issues that affect children, such as domestic labour. Work continues in refining data estimation in this area so that every child can be counted.

Trafficking is a concern in every region of the world: victims with 152 different citizenships were identified in 124 countries between 2010 and 2012.<sup>55</sup> Globally, the vast majority of detected trafficking is for either sexual exploitation (just over half) or forced labour (40 per cent), although there is notably more trafficking for sexual exploitation in Europe and Central Asia and more forced labour trafficking in East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific.<sup>56</sup>

## STORY 1.2 NO SAFE HARBOUR

Lovette – age 16 – left her home in Nigeria to earn money in Europe. Her trip was arranged by a fixer in Lagos who told her she would pay the travel costs through unspecified ‘work’ in Libya and then Italy. Upon arriving in Libya, she was arrested along with a group of other migrants and refugees for not having proper identification and spent several months in prison. Lovette shared a cell with a number of women and girls, enduring gruesome conditions. Guards would beat them when they complained, and they only received three meals per week. “There was nothing to do, just sleep and think about many things,” says Lovette.

Osarugue, also 16 years old and from the same part of Nigeria as Lovette, describes a similar work-for-travel scheme, which she agreed with a Nigerian fixer in order to reach Italy. Once she made it to Tripoli in Libya, Osarugue was shuttled for weeks between different houses or sites – again for unspecified reasons – until she was eventually put on a boat bound for the Italian island of Lampedusa. She and many others were crammed into the boat’s dark hold without water for hours. “I thought, ‘this is how my life ends’,” Osarugue says. Fortunately, they were rescued by the Italian coastguard after more than 12 hours at sea.

Italian social workers have reported that many of the girls who arrive from countries in Western Africa are not asked to pay upfront costs to smugglers for their travel into Libya and across the Mediterranean. Girls are typically told they will repay the money later through domestic work, but often end up forced into prostitution in Libya, Europe or both. This practice has resulted in shocking cases of sexual exploitation and abuse that have been documented by Italian medical doctors providing care at reception centres for refugees and migrants.

When asked in interviews about their experiences in reaching Italy, refugee and migrant girls are understandably reluctant to provide substantive information, as the physical and emotional trauma of their ordeal remains so fresh.

Dr. Pietro Bartolo, the Medical Director for Lampedusa, reports that he and his team have treated many refugee and migrant girls who have arrived pregnant after being raped in Libya or in need of medical care from sexual abuse. “It is horrific what these women and girls have been through,” he says.

Smuggling is an even more pervasive issue for children travelling both with and without their families. Distinct from trafficking, smuggling begins as a commercial transaction between a smuggler and migrant, in which a smuggler agrees to arrange illegal passage for a migrant into another country in exchange for financial or material benefits from the migrants. While that relationship may change over the course of a journey, sometimes resulting in violence or turning into trafficking, it is different in nature than trafficking, which always implies the threat of force or coercion.<sup>57</sup> Children travelling on their own are particularly vulnerable to the most dangerous aspects of smuggling – including dangerous routes of passage, abandonment by smugglers, and inhumane treatment – making it an issue of ongoing concern for the well-being of child refugees and migrants.

While adults face many of these same dangers, children are uniquely vulnerable to two other forms of exploitation – child labour and child marriage. Sometimes a choice of desperate families, these conditions can also be the result of intentional exploitative behaviour. Child labour, in particular, has substantial financial benefits for employers, while both do long-lasting harm to children (see box).

### Family separation

In 2015, nearly 100,000 unaccompanied or separated children filed claims for asylum in 78 countries.<sup>59</sup> This startling total – primarily composed of Afghan, Eritrean, Syrian and Somali children – represented nearly a three-fold increase over

#### Compounding danger: Risky coping mechanisms

In addition to the direct dangers that children face during or because of migration and displacement, they are also at increased risk of dangerous coping mechanisms such as child marriage and child labour. Families in crisis may turn to these measures because they feel they are the only option for safeguarding a child’s future or supporting a family’s immediate needs. Confronted with the crushing economic burdens brought on by protracted displacement or limited work opportunities, some refugee and migrant parents – and often children themselves – are pushed into decisions they would never have chosen freely.

For the children involved, these coping mechanisms have dangerous short- and long-term implications. In the immediate term, child labour and marriage both put children at increased risk of physical and emotional abuse. Both practices also reduce the likelihood that a child will complete schooling, a reality that can have cascading negative repercussions throughout a child’s life, including earlier childbearing, worse health outcomes and lower income.

the previous year and the highest number of applications since UNHCR began compiling these data in 2006.<sup>60</sup> While the total number of applications for asylum are increasing for many vulnerable groups, applications from unaccompanied and separated children are an increasing share. These children's applications made up just over 2 per cent of all applications in 2013; by 2015 they had nearly doubled to 5 per cent.<sup>61</sup>

Whether children choose to travel on their own or are separated from their families over the course of their journeys, their vulnerability is heightened as long as they remain alone. They are not only exposed to the same types of dangers as children who travel with their families, but unaccompanied children also shoulder all the other burdens of financial support, navigating legal systems and establishing reliable social networks to protect themselves.

Once children reach their destinations, they may encounter a different array of obstacles, including migration detention, extended family reunification processes (when they are available at all), discriminatory treatment while in state care, limited social services, education and career opportunities and uncertain legal status. Compounding these challenges, older children who choose to migrate may be pressured to begin sending remittances home as quickly as possible, even as many must repay substantial debts related to their journeys.

### **Migration detention**

Worldwide, more than 100 countries are estimated to detain children for migration-related reasons.<sup>62</sup> The exact number of children who face detention solely because of their migration status is not known, but detention's lasting consequences for children are clearly documented. Children subjected to immigration detention experience both physical and psychological trauma, shaping their immediate well-being as well as their lifelong prospects.<sup>63</sup> Court rulings in multiple countries have made it clear that migration-related detention is not appropriate for children, including as a deterrence mechanism.<sup>64</sup> In 2012, the Committee on the Rights of the Child emphatically condemned the practice, arguing that "Children should not be criminalized or subject to punitive measures because of their or their parents' migration status. The detention of a child because of their or their parent's migration status constitutes a child rights violation and always contravenes the principle of the best interests of the child."<sup>65</sup> The Secretary-General has recently echoed this sentiment, calling on governments "to consider alternatives to detention for purposes of immigration control and to adopt a commitment never to detain children for this purpose."<sup>66</sup>

### **Data, displacement and disability**

In crisis and non-crisis situations alike, estimates about the number of children living with disabilities are essentially speculative; they are dated, widely varying and based on sources with inconsistent quality. In the context of migration and displacement, the data gaps are even more glaring.

There is no worldwide estimate of the number of child migrants or refugees with disabilities, but a recent study of refugees in Jordan and Lebanon found that nearly one-quarter of refugees there were living with some form of impairment.<sup>58</sup> While this study was not specific to children, the large and rising number of child refugees makes the lack of information about childhood displacement and disabilities a growing cause for concern.

In the midst of emergencies and throughout already-dangerous journeys, threats to the safety and well-being of children with disabilities are further compounded. Urgent action is needed to gather information about the well-being of these children and – more importantly – to translate data into action for the inclusion and protection of child migrants and refugees who are living with disabilities.

### Disrupted education

Educational opportunity is a major driving factor for many children and families who choose to migrate, but refugee and migrant children frequently face multiple barriers to beginning and continuing their education, often because of restrictive migration policies. Worldwide, only half of child refugees are enrolled in primary school and less than one-quarter are enrolled in secondary school. Overall, a refugee child is five times more likely to be out of school than a non-refugee child.<sup>67,68</sup> These numbers represent just a portion of the children whose education is disrupted by displacement – internally displaced children far outnumber those officially registered as refugees and are not accounted for in these totals. Both protracted crises and the increasing frequency of natural disasters will only intensify the importance of this issue in coming years.<sup>69</sup>

A wide variety of factors influence children's ability to access education in the midst of or following migration and displacement. In situations of ongoing conflict or natural disaster, the basic functioning of education systems may be compromised or may make schools unsafe. As children move between locations, they may not have the legal right to attend school (especially if they have irregular status) or may be prevented from learning because of language or social barriers. When they settle in new homes, legal and language barriers, fear of immigration enforcement, inability to transfer their previous school work and xenophobia are all common factors that keep children out of classrooms. All these issues are further complicated by the immense economic pressures that often confront newly resettled families, forcing too many children into work rather than classrooms.

Although education is under threat in many of these contexts, it remains an extremely high priority for both children and their families. When children were asked in two recent surveys about their priorities after an emergency, education was their top concern. In those and additional studies, adults consistently ranked education among their top three priorities, alongside basic necessities such as food, water, shelter and health care. Other studies have shown that this prioritization is borne out in daily family decision-making. Across a variety of contexts, when families are given unrestricted cash transfers in the wake of an emergency, education is consistently a top spending category for parents.<sup>70</sup>

There are comparatively more data available about education in these contexts, but other essential services are also routinely interrupted as children and their families move. All aspects of health care, nutrition, water and sanitation, and social protection are routinely disrupted or halted altogether as children and families move or spend extended periods in displacement. Each of these can have devastating effects on individual families as well as the larger communities in which they live.

### Social exclusion and discrimination

Whether their new homes are temporary or permanent, the future success of migrating and displaced children relies heavily on whether they are welcomed in those new homes. Research indicates that children are most likely to directly encounter discrimination in school settings, often in the form of insults, unfair treatment, exclusion and threats.<sup>71</sup> Children who face these forms of discrimination and exclusion experience a range of direct repercussions such as distrust, hopelessness and problematic behaviours, as well as negative longer-term attitudes about schooling and their own potential.<sup>72</sup>

Outside the classroom, migrant and refugee children and families can be subject to a wide array of discriminatory practices and behaviours that hinder their ability to settle into a new home. In many contexts, legal barriers continue to prevent migrant and refugee children from receiving services on an equal basis with other children. Even when legal barriers are removed, misinformation, prejudice and xenophobia continue to stand between children and the services they are entitled to receive. These problems can be intensified by formal and informal separation of refugee and other migrant families from host communities, making it more difficult to acquire relevant language and cultural skills or employment to overcome intense poverty.

In the worst cases, xenophobia may escalate to direct attacks. According to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, asylum reception centres throughout Europe have been repeatedly subjected to direct attack. In Germany alone, the Government tracked 850 attacks against refugee shelters in 2015.<sup>73</sup>

### Statelessness, lack of legal identity and legal status

Even after the immediate dangers of travel have passed, children can face a lifetime of discrimination and disenfranchisement if they are unable to obtain or prove their identity and citizenship. This can happen any number of ways: citizenship papers lost in the midst of travel; parents unable to pass their citizenship on because of national citizenship laws; or births not being registered during the migration process. Regardless of the cause, the consequences are damning for children. Without a legal identity or the right to one, children can be denied essential services including health care, social protection and education. They may be restricted in their future movements and unable or unwilling to seek protection when they need it.



In the case of statelessness, these problems can be passed from generation to generation – parents without legal identities are frequently unable to obtain them for their children.

At least 70,000 new stateless children are born every year in the 20 countries hosting the world's largest stateless populations, compounding the urgency of the issue.<sup>74</sup> While this intensifying problem is not exclusively linked to migration and displacement, children and families who move between countries are more susceptible to it and more profoundly affected by it.

Without strong action to curb statelessness and promote the right to birth registration and legal identity, children will continue to inherit this harmful legacy.

Children and families in irregular migration situations confront many of these same obstacles, both during their journeys and once they reach their destinations.<sup>75</sup> While not technically stateless, lack of legal status can impose insurmountable obstacles for accessing identity documentation as well as the range of services for which that documentation may be necessary. Fear of migration enforcement may also make children and families more susceptible to labour and other abuses because of their limited options for legal recourse.

### **Disappearance and death**

In the worst cases, migrants never reach their new homes. The International Organization for Migration's Missing Migrants Project recorded more than 15,000 dead and missing migrants from 2014 through July 2016.<sup>76</sup> While ages are not recorded for the vast majority of these individuals, one-third of the deaths in the Aegean Sea crossing in 2015 were estimated to be children.<sup>77</sup> Since 2014, roughly two-thirds of all recorded migrant deaths have occurred in the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean route has captured the most global attention, although migrants have lost their lives moving through every region of the world and other routes are even more lethal on a proportional basis.

These numbers represent an absolute minimum number of fatalities; the true toll is much higher. Although the dangers are well known to many migrants, limited options for safe and legal migration and increasingly strict enforcement along many borders continue to drive desperate men, women and children along treacherous routes.

#### **Making every child count by counting every child**

While not a direct threat to any specific child, all migrant and refugee children are affected when children are not accurately counted in operational or official statistics. These data sources – often used to plan future services for children and shape policy responses – need to be regularly updated and disaggregated by key dimensions including age, sex, country of origin and migration status. Their collection must be sensitive to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of children, particularly those most likely to be missed by traditional collection methods.

## **BOX 1.3 WHEN PARENTS MIGRATE AND CHILDREN STAY HOME**

*Children do not need to migrate themselves in order to be profoundly affected by migration. Children who stay home when their parents migrate as well as children born to migrant parents in a new country face distinct challenges.*

One consequence of restrictive migration and family reunification policies is the rise in the number of families where one or both parents have migrated, leaving children in the care of extended family members or friends.

When parents leave home to find work elsewhere, the impacts on children can be both positive and negative. In many cases, increased remittances from a parent working outside the country can offer additional finances for school fees, housing and other household necessities. Those benefits, however, may not always be secure. Changes to family life and family structure may also be detrimental to children. Substitute care or lack of care can cause problems for some children's emotional well-being and psychological development.<sup>78</sup> Many children in these situations also face social stigmatization as a result of their parents' absence.

To date, the overall evidence about the impacts of parents migrating without their children is remarkably mixed.<sup>79</sup> Recent improvements in data collection and disaggregation are now making it possible to dig deeper into these impacts, and future research will be able to more accurately assess the short- and long-term impacts of migration on children who are left in the care of others when their parents migrate. To address the impact of migration on child welfare, governments must adapt their human development and social policies and capacities for responding to the realities of migration and the vulnerabilities of these families.

## BOX 1.4 CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANT PARENTS

Whether they are migrants themselves or not, the future prospects of the children of migrants vary substantially depending on the backgrounds of their parents and the conditions in the countries where they settle. Some children face challenges at the most fundamental level: their right to an identity and nationality. Children born to immigrant parents can face severe obstacles in obtaining birth certificates in many transit and destination countries, which can, in turn, affect their right to a nationality. Children of undocumented parents face some of the greatest challenges in obtaining identity documents and legal protections, often for fear of triggering migration enforcement actions.<sup>80</sup>

Even with a legal identity, children of migrant parents may struggle to access appropriate and inclusive services. Many countries of destination lack intercultural policies to facilitate social integration.<sup>81</sup> In some countries, restrictive immigration policies prevent children of immigrant families from accessing social services, including social protection and free education. Other children are excluded from school by barriers such as fees, language and lack of documentation. When schools, hospitals and other public services become places of immigration enforcement, undocumented children and children of undocumented parents face even greater obstacles to accessing these services.

Early childhood education is especially important for children of immigrant parents: studies in Germany found that young children attending care facilities benefit in cognitive, social, emotional, physical and linguistic development, and that preschool contributes to the educational accomplishments of children in immigrant families.<sup>82</sup> Access and quality, however, remain crucial: research on Turkish immigrant children in Germany indicates that Turkish children enter preschools later than their native-born peers and have less favourable learning conditions than those peers once they are in school.<sup>83</sup> A review of evidence in the United States showed that young children in migrant households were less likely to be in centre-based childcare, giving them less exposure to early childhood development programmes likely to support their school readiness.<sup>84</sup> Legal and practical access to these services is essential for every child because it can have profound impacts on migrant children's long-term success.

While these challenges are very real for children of immigrant parents, there is evidence that these obstacles may fade with time if the right policies are enacted. According to 2014 data from the Child Trends Databank, 28 per cent of first-generation immigrant children in the United States lived in poverty, compared with 25 per cent of second-generation children and 19 per cent of non-immigrant children.<sup>85</sup>

## STORY 1.3 FUTURE UNKNOWN

Ali and his younger brother Ahmed arrived in an overcrowded raft of refugees and migrants landing on Lesbos, Greece, in October 2015. The pair – 17 and 16 – were making their way to Germany. Their family in Lebanon had sent them on their own, hoping to protect the boys from threats at home.

The boys were eventually settled into a group home in the town of Peine, near Hannover, Germany, where they have become wards of the German state until they turn 18. By the spring of 2016, Ali and Ahmed were attending intensive German-language courses in a new school, learning to express themselves in a new language and a new country.

In class, Afghans, Syrians, Iraqis and children from other countries interact with one another for the first time using a common language. The boys' teacher, Ms. Ute Zeh, speaks fondly of seeing her students begin to come into their own. "Sometimes they're loud, sometimes they're troubled, sometimes they're crazy – like when they see a German girl," she says, smiling. "But they're boys, you know. In school though, they're so enthusiastic, that on Sundays, when I'm at home, I can't wait for Monday to come and teach. I love it so much."

Back at their group home, Ali and Ahmed reflect on their experience as refugees and how it might be shaping them.

"My identity hasn't changed—I've always been a refugee," says Ali. "First as a

Palestinian living in Lebanon, and now I'm probably going to become a refugee in Germany. As a refugee, there is always a sense of feeling inferior to others. You don't always get opportunities in life according to ability. I mean, why should I go to school if I can't become a doctor? My father is a professor, but he hasn't taught in years because he's a refugee. Here in Germany, that's different. Here they treat you as a human."

At just 17, Ali is now playing the role of father figure to his younger brother Ahmed, pushing him to seize the opportunities available in Germany.

"Of course I would love to be a teenager and just enjoy life here in Germany, but by doing that I would be jeopardizing not only my brother's future, but my own too. I know that every day I would be out partying or smoking, I would also be compromising that." A burgeoning hairstylist while he was still in Lebanon, Ali has started an apprenticeship at a local salon near the group home, while Ahmed started regular classes at the local secondary school after excelling in his German language courses.

"Things have been lining up in a weird way," says Ali. "I feel really blessed that I've met good people along the way. Before this, I had only seen Germany on TV, so being here, living here, learning the language, it seems...almost unreal."

In May 2016, their asylum claim was denied. The brothers have appealed the decision.



## BOX 1.5 FOCUS ON ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

In 2015, 37 million international migrants were between the ages of 10 and 24.<sup>86</sup> Youth migration is an increasingly important phenomenon, as young people migrate in search of survival, security, improved standards of living, education and opportunity. In the coming decades, both adolescent and youth migration could grow dramatically as a result of global trends including urbanization and climate change.

Adolescent and youth migration is influenced by many of the same factors that motivate younger children and families: poverty and inequity, discrimination, conflict and persecution, humanitarian crises and natural disasters. Young people also migrate to increase their opportunities: to find work, increase income and education, improve their standards of living, or to get married and reunite with family. Youth migration for education is on the rise, with 4.1 million students studying abroad in tertiary institutions in 2013, up from 2 million in 2000.<sup>87</sup> For young migrants in search of a better life, unemployment is both a driver and a potential risk faced when leaving their country of origin. While youth unemployment has stabilized in recent years, it remains at around 13 per cent, above its levels before the 2008 financial crisis. More than 73 million youth were still unemployed in 2014.<sup>88</sup>

Youth migration has the potential to benefit both countries of origin and destination. The migration of young people born in low- and middle-income countries – which are expected to be the birthplace of the majority of the world’s next billion people – could fill looming labour needs in higher-income countries that have ageing populations.<sup>89</sup> Remittances from diaspora youth can be sources of family support, technological transfer and investments at home.

Too often, the potential of youth migration is not fully realized because of limited safe and legal pathways for young people who want to migrate. While adolescent and youth migration continues in the absence of safe alternatives, it does so with increasing risks. Undocumented adolescents and youth and those with an irregular status are most exposed to dangers during their journeys and the denial of basic rights when they reach their new homes. Young women often face triple discrimination based on their gender, age and migration status.

Adolescent and youth migrants are at risk of becoming invisible demographics. While basic data show that these components of migration are significant, comprehensive and comparable data disaggregated by age are still needed. Legislative and policy reforms, informed by timely and accurate data, are required to allow these young people – and their countries of origin, transit and destination – to see the benefits of their endurance and aspirations.

The Ramos siblings from Guatemala are among millions of children worldwide whose lives are impacted by migration when their parents seek work abroad.

## A better path: Responding to the dangers of migration and displacement for children and families

**The dangers that children and families face along their journeys and once they find new homes are not inevitable. They can be mitigated, and there is ample evidence of successful efforts to do so from around the world. Effective examples include:**

All children are entitled to the same protections, regardless of their migration status. In the United Kingdom, local authorities assume responsibility for, assess and address the needs of unaccompanied children as they would any other child without parental care. Many other states lag behind on this issue, subjecting migrant children to differential treatment on the basis of their migration status.<sup>90</sup>

Children – particularly those travelling without their families or separated from them – have specific vulnerabilities and needs that require specialized services. In Zambia, government authorities have a process for identifying vulnerable child migrants and referring them to services.<sup>91</sup>

Providing birth registration for all children – regardless of the conditions or place of their birth – is an essential step towards preventing statelessness. Both UNICEF and UNHCR promote birth registration of refugee and displaced children in camp and non-camp settings, and UNICEF partners with governments in more than 80 countries to strengthen national systems for registering every birth.<sup>92</sup>

The Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees children a right to be heard in decisions affecting their lives. In Spain, the Constitutional Court has affirmed this right for unaccompanied children facing deportation, including the right to information about their options and the potential consequences they face.<sup>93, 94</sup>

Children who face migration enforcement should be assisted by agencies and workers that understand the specific needs and rights of children. Mexico has trained a group of child protection offices in its National Migration Institute, strengthening child-sensitive migration procedures in the country. Unaccompanied and separated children in South Africa are assigned social workers to support their care.<sup>95</sup> Determining whether a particular action is in the best interest of a child – a core tenet of the Convention on the Rights of the Child – requires assessing the needs of each child, taking the child's perspective into account. France, Belgium and Argentina have all established such best-interest determination procedures for children.<sup>96</sup>

Children are particularly vulnerable to both physical and psychological violence while in detention, making it a threat to their well-being. A growing number of countries, including both Panama and Mexico, bar the detention of child migrants.<sup>97</sup> The Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016–2021) outlines a commitment to “make every effort to end the placement of children in immigration detention facilities.”<sup>98</sup> Yemen has adopted a community-driven approach, with small-group alternative care homes for child refugees and asylum-seekers.<sup>99</sup>

Continual access to health, education and other social services is vital to both the immediate and long-term well-being of refugee and migrant children. Migrant children in Argentina are explicitly guaranteed access to services on the same basis as other children.<sup>100</sup> Cities across the world – including Seoul, Nairobi and Geneva – ensure that service providers are not obliged to report on the immigration status of their clients, making it easier for migrants with any legal status to seek and receive the services they need.<sup>101</sup>

When children return to their countries of origin, they often need specific support to address their needs, including reintegration into their families, their schooling and their communities. In Ethiopia, children who return to the country voluntarily are provided with family tracing, reunification and reintegration support.<sup>102</sup>

### **Data gaps about childhood migration and displacement must be addressed**

While this report brings together the best available data about children, migration and displacement, vital information is still missing. To date, comprehensive global data are either unavailable or incomplete for issues including:

- > Where the world's child migrants originate;
- > The number of children who move – voluntarily or by force – within their own countries;
- > The number of children left in the care of others when their parents migrate;
- > The number of children moving between countries within a given time period;
- > The number of child migrants in crisis who are not classified as asylum-seekers or refugees; and
- > Where the world's child refugees begin their journeys and where they find refuge. Although some information is available, these data are incomplete for many countries with large numbers of refugees.

In addition, there is only piecemeal evidence about the journeys and longer-term well-being of child migrants and refugees. To address the challenges children face before, during and after they move, more comprehensive and comparable evidence is needed about:

- > The specific routes that children and families take from their home countries;
- > Access to justice for children in the context of migration, including the length and conditions of migration detention, and whether children are afforded due-process protections or the right to be heard;
- > The extent and conditions of child labour and other forms of violence and exploitation connected to forced and irregular migration. Although the consequences are well studied, comparable and complete global data are missing; and
- > Access of child migrants and refugees to essential services such as health, education and social protection, especially in low- and middle-income countries.

Without new commitments to close these data and evidence gaps, efforts to identify and reach some of the world's most vulnerable children will continue to be hampered.

## Key legal protections related to children, migration and displacement

### The Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) incorporates the full range of human rights that must be protected, respected and fulfilled for every child. The CRC covers all children, but is a particularly important instrument for children in contexts of migration and displacement. It is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history. Four articles in the Convention are particularly relevant to children involved or affected by migration and displacement: the principle of non-discrimination (Article 2); best interests of the child (Article 3); right to life and survival and development (Article 6); and the right to child participation (Article 12). Parties to the Convention are obliged to respect and ensure all CRC rights for every child within their jurisdiction, without regard to a child's migration or other status.

### Other key protections

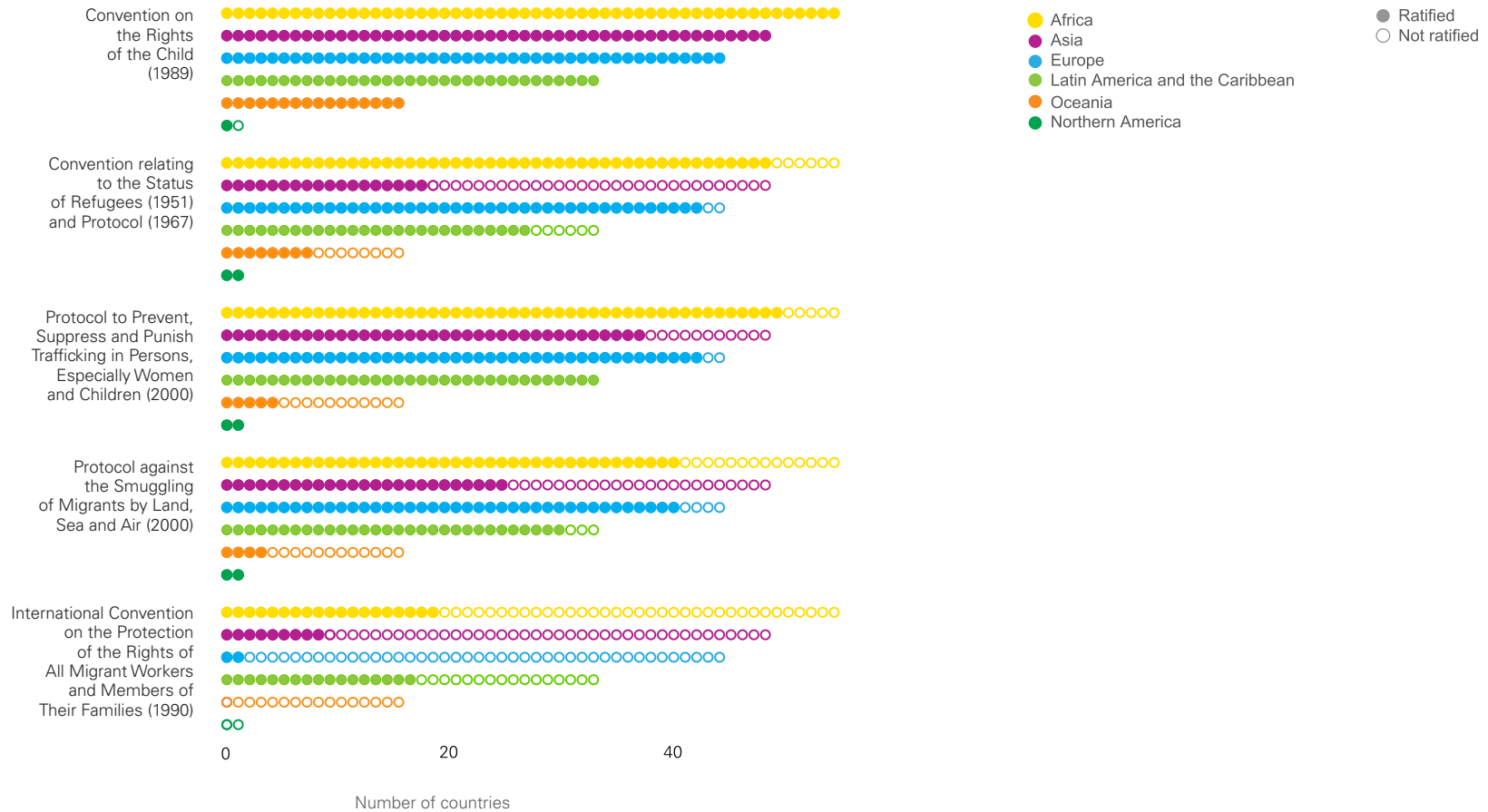
- The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol provide protection to refugees, including protections against discrimination, non-penalization for seeking refuge and non-refoulement. Article 31 of the Convention declares that States "shall not impose penalties, on account of their illegal entry or presence, on refugees who, coming directly from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened in the sense of article 1, enter or are present in their territory without authorization, provided they present themselves without delay to the authorities and show good cause for their illegal entry or presence." Article 33 prohibits States Parties from returning any refugee to "territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."
- Two of the Protocols supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime relate to child migration: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children; and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.
- The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families covers the rights of the children of migrant workers in both regular and irregular situations during the entire migration process.
- Other elements of international human rights law and domestic laws are critical for the protection of internally displaced persons, especially in the context of armed conflicts. While not legally binding, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement also establish clear standards for the protection and treatment of internally displaced persons.

Together with regional and national frameworks, these global instruments create a comprehensive set of protections for children.

FIGURE 1.15

### A robust legal framework to protect migrant and refugee children exists, but ratification of some elements is lagging

Number of countries that have ratified key human rights instruments, by region, July 2016



Source: United Nations Treaty Collection; see <<http://treaties.un.org>> (status as of 13 July 2016).

6-year-old Maksim, who has been displaced from the city of Bryanka, in Ukraine, sits in a room at an accommodation centre for people displaced by conflict.

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# THE REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

A young girl in Markazi  
refugee camp, Djibouti.

© UNICEF/UNI191321/Matas

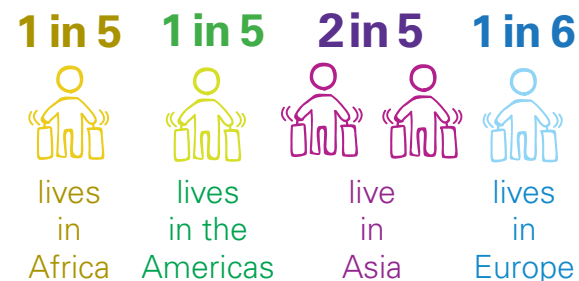
# The Regional Perspective

The story of global migration is largely a story of intra-regional migration. More than half of all international migration is made up of movements within regions, and the three largest migration movements in the world are all intra-regional.

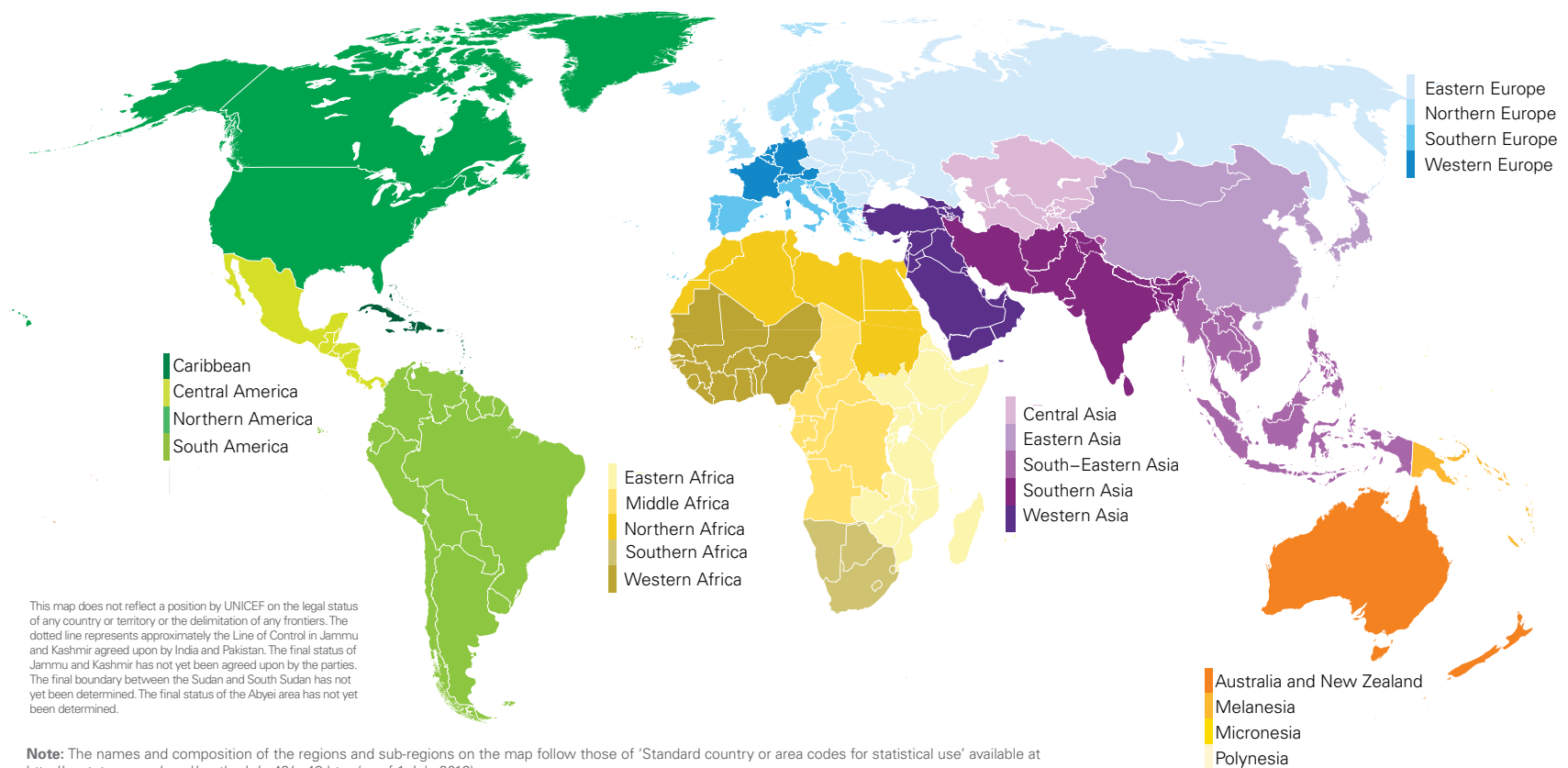
Refugee movements are even more concentrated within regions than general migration. Africa and Asia together account for the overwhelming majority of the world's refugees; they also host the overwhelming majority of the world's refugees. Today, 9 out of 10 Asian refugees are hosted in Asia and a similar proportion of African refugees are hosted by other African countries.

This chapter analyses the highly regional nature of child migration and displacement in more detail, identifying the dynamics that shape migration and displacement in each of the world's five major regions and reviewing some of the most crucial implications for children.

Of the world's child migrants about



About 1 in 50 of the world's child migrants lives in Oceania.



- **Eastern Africa**  
Burundi  
Comoros  
Djibouti  
Eritrea  
Ethiopia  
Kenya  
Madagascar  
Malawi  
Mauritius  
Mayotte  
Mozambique  
Réunion  
Rwanda  
Seychelles  
Somalia  
South Sudan  
Uganda  
United Republic  
of Tanzania  
Zambia  
Zimbabwe

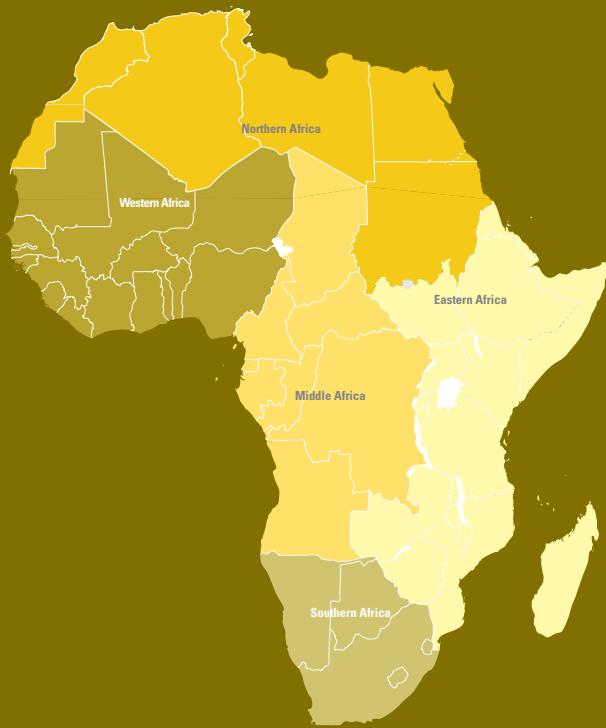
- **Middle Africa**  
Angola  
Cameroon  
Central African  
Republic  
Chad  
Congo  
Democratic  
Republic  
of the Congo  
Equatorial  
Guinea  
Gabon  
Sao Tome  
and Principe

- **Northern Africa**  
Algeria  
Egypt  
Libya  
Morocco  
Sudan  
Tunisia  
Western Sahara

- **Southern Africa**  
Botswana  
Lesotho  
Namibia  
South Africa  
Swaziland

- **Western Africa**  
Benin  
Burkina Faso  
Cabo Verde  
Côte d'Ivoire  
Gambia  
Ghana  
Guinea  
Guinea-Bissau  
Liberia  
Mali  
Mauritania  
Niger  
Nigeria  
Saint Helena  
Senegal  
Sierra Leone  
Togo

# 2 Africa



All maps in this section do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined. The final status of the Abyei area has not yet been determined.

**1 in 3**   
African migrants is a child

Africa is home to  
**1 in 5** of the world's  
child migrants



In Africa  
**3 in 5** refugees are children



# Migration in Africa

FIGURE 2.1

**African migrants move within the continent and beyond it in almost equal numbers**

International migrants from Africa by region of destination, 2015 (in millions)

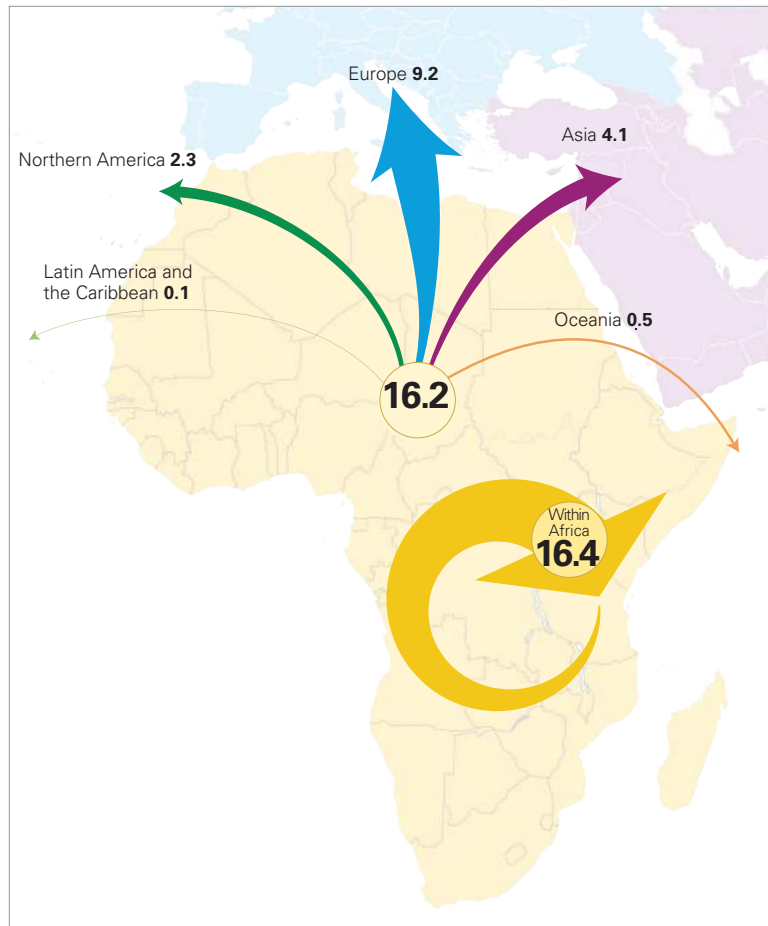
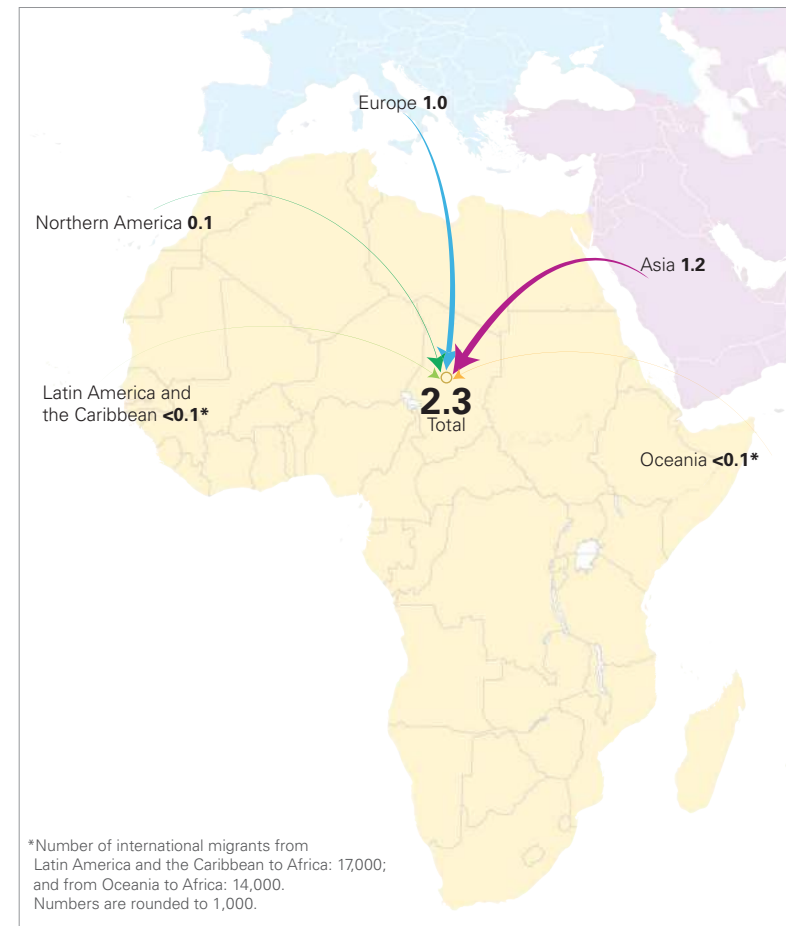


FIGURE 2.2

**Africa has the smallest number of immigrants of any region**

International migrants into Africa by region of origin, 2015 (in millions)



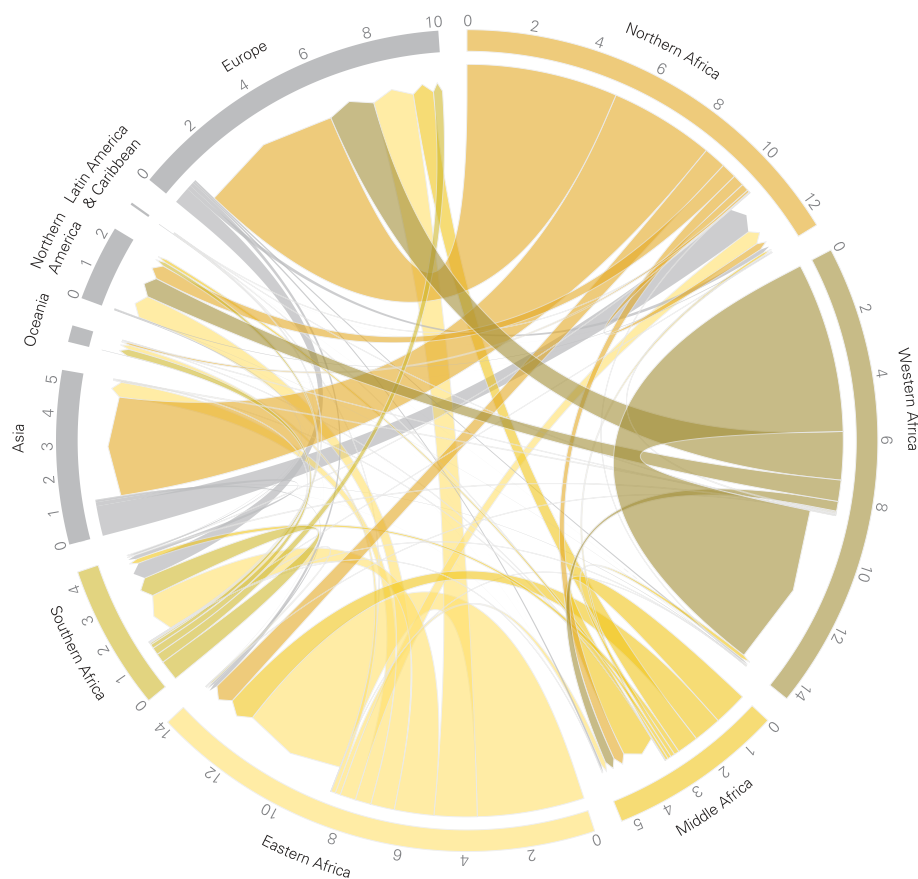
**Note:** Globally, there are 9.8 million international migrants with origin classified as other or unknown; 1.9 million of these are living in Africa. Migrants of unknown origin are not included in these figures.

**Source:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

FIGURE 2.3

### Migration in Western and Eastern Africa usually stays within the same sub-region

International migrants by region of origin and destination in Africa, 2015 (in millions)



**Note:** Globally, there are 9.8 million international migrants with origin classified as other or unknown; 1.9 million of these are living in Africa. Migrants of unknown origin are not included in this figure. See page 26 for a detailed explanation on how to interpret the chord diagram.

**Source:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

Africa's modern migration story is equally divided between movements within the continent and those beyond it (Figures 2.1 and 2.2). More than 16 million Africans are living outside the country of their birth but still within the continent. In reality, the migration is even more closely concentrated than that: as seen in Figure 2.3, in both Eastern Africa and Western Africa, migration is primarily contained within the sub-region. In Western Africa, much of this movement has been facilitated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) free movement protocol.

An additional 16 million Africans have migrated from the continent since birth. The bulk of these migrants have gone to Europe (57 per cent) and Asia (26 per cent). By a clear margin, more migrants from Northern Africa leave the continent than from any other African sub-region. This emigration is led by Egypt, where emigrants primarily move to Gulf States, and Morocco, whose emigrants largely go to Europe (Figure 2.4).

The countries with the highest percentage of emigration by population are Cabo Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, Lesotho and Comoros.<sup>103</sup> The prominence of Small Island and Developing States (SIDS) on this list is in line with the experience of other regions, reflecting the ongoing sustainability challenges that many SIDS face.<sup>104</sup>

Of all the world's regions, Africa is home to the smallest number of immigrants from other regions. Fewer than 3 million non-Africans are estimated to be living on the continent.

These different patterns of movement have important implications for the well-being of children. A high concentration of movements within the same geographic area (as in Western Africa) is often enabled by regional agreements, meaning that protective measures for children are most likely to be successful if aligned with the structures of those regional agreements. A high level of movements out of the region – as in the case of Northern Africa – requires very different arrangements for safeguarding children, including agreements and coordination with authorities outside the region.

The demography of Africa's migrants is complex. Overall, Africa has one of the world's lowest rates of child migration, with just 1 in 90 African children living outside their country of birth. This is similar to rates in Asia, but notably lower than in Europe and Oceania (with rates that are three and five times higher, respectively). The low rates of child migration are in sync with Africa's overall low rate of migration.

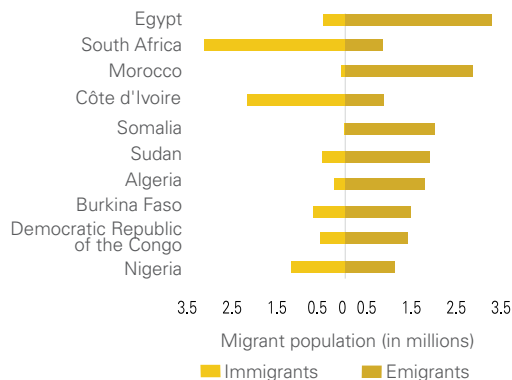
While comparatively few Africans migrate, the people who do move are younger than migrants in the rest of the world. Africa has the largest share of children among its migrant population – nearly one in three immigrants in Africa is a child, more than twice the global average. Numbers from Middle and Western Africa are particularly notable: Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Chad are three of only four nations in the world with a majority of children in its immigrant population.<sup>105</sup> With most of the world’s population growth in this century expected to occur in Africa, the already youthful face of migration in Africa is likely to remain.

Many of the current drivers of movement within African countries and beyond them – a rising population, the need for livelihoods, a changing climate and intensifying conflicts – show few signs of abating. Combined with the continent’s expected population growth, migration will become an increasingly pressing issue for Africa. The best way to capture the opportunities of Africa’s young and mobile population, while protecting children from its potential dangers, is by preparing now.

FIGURE 2.4

**South Africa and Côte d’Ivoire host the most immigrants; the largest numbers of emigrants come from Egypt and Morocco**

A. Top 10 countries with largest numbers of immigrants or emigrants in Africa, 2015



**The largest numbers of child migrants live in Ethiopia and Kenya**

B. Top 10 countries hosting the largest numbers of international migrants under 18 years of age in Africa, 2015 (in thousands)

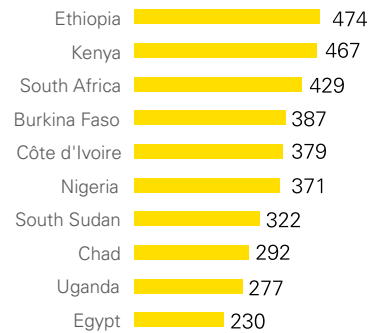
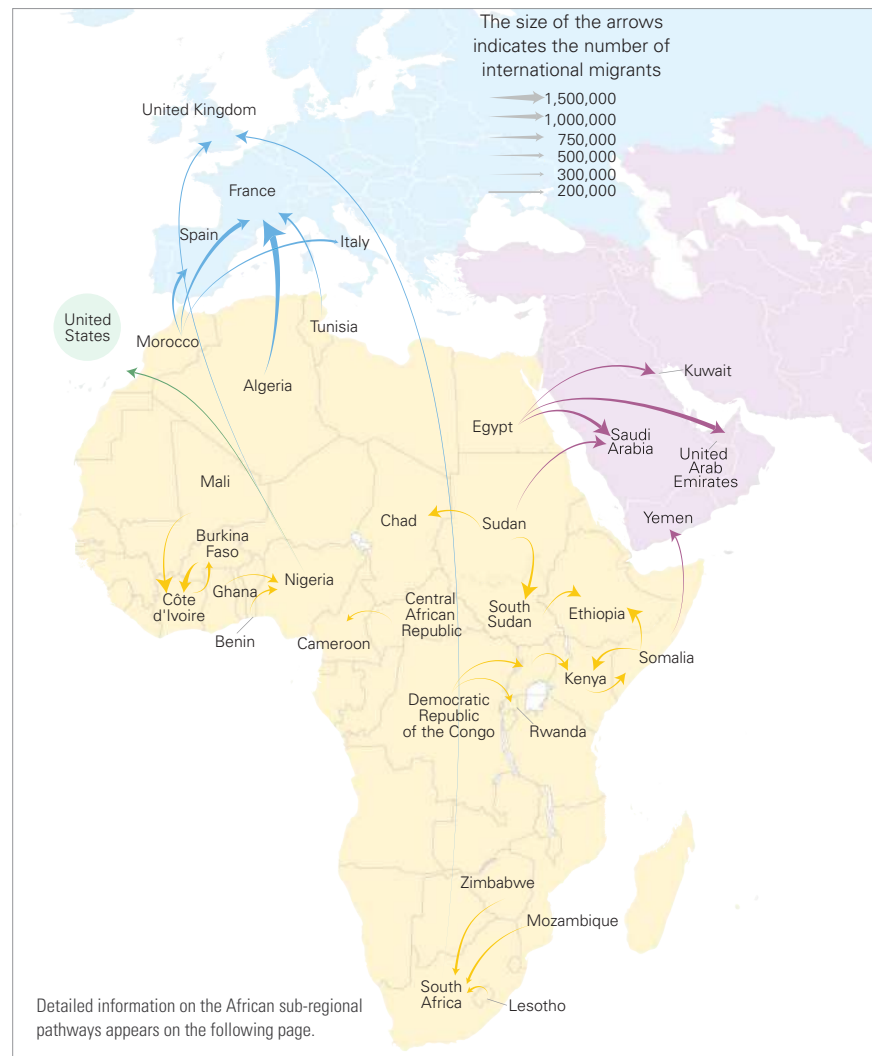


FIGURE 2.5

**Key migration routes within Africa are shaped by conflict and linguistic ties**

Thirty largest populations of international migrants from a single country or area of origin in Africa living in a single country or area of destination, 2015



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015; and UNICEF analysis based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by age and sex*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

## Migration pathways within Africa

Many migration pathways within Africa reflect both the continent's regional and linguistic groupings as well as its history of protracted humanitarian crises (Figure 2.5).

West Africa's most-trafficked corridors, enabled by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) protocol on free movement, largely follow anglophone and francophone groupings.

Southern Africa's primary routes are into South Africa, a primary destination for migrant labour. South Africa is also a common destination for education migration, with studies showing that nearly one-half of mobile students within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are studying there. This is distinct from education mobility elsewhere in the continent, which is generally directed towards Europe and Northern America.<sup>106</sup>

In Eastern and Central Africa, protracted instability and conflict in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo shape the major movement routes.

The primary pathways of movement out of the continent reflect three prevailing realities: Egypt's high emigration rate to the Middle East, movements from the Horn of Africa into the Arabian Peninsula and Northern Africa's position as both an origin and transit point for routes into Europe. (See more detail on inter-regional movement through the Mediterranean in Figure 5.6 on page 93.)

Notably, the available data include only countries of origin and final destination for migrants. The actual routes that migrants traverse are much more circuitous.<sup>107</sup> There is evidence of increasing use of irregular routes within Africa – particularly to Northern Africa and sometimes onward to Europe – with Western African cities serving as intermediary points during extended journeys further north.<sup>108</sup> Libya, in particular, has a major movement of migrants (see Issue in Focus later in this section) and its political turmoil has made conditions for migrant children there more precarious. For children born as their parents are migrating, or stranded in countries they did not intend to stay in, access to even the most basic services is severely restricted.<sup>109</sup> As these journeys or relocations stretch from months to years, both the immediate well-being and future opportunities of children are at risk. The particular dangers of these routes require dedicated attention for all countries of origin, transit and destination.

## Displacement and forced migration in Africa

Africa is both the origin and the host of roughly one-third of all refugees under UNHCR's mandate. Approximately 5.4 million refugees come from African countries, and children are disproportionately represented among them. Some 53 per cent of all African refugees are children – nearly 3 million children forced from their own countries and confronting the world's harshest realities.

Long-standing conflicts and instability are driving forces behind the largest refugee movements in Africa. The largest number of African child refugees comes from Somalia, followed by South Sudan, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic (See Figure 1.12). Conflicts in each of these countries of origin have become protracted threats to the well-being of children, whether those children stay within national borders or flee beyond them.

African countries take on much of the responsibility for hosting Africa's refugees (Figure 2.8). Some 86 per cent of African refugees find asylum in other African countries.<sup>110</sup> Five of the largest refugee populations in the world are hosted in Africa, led by Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda (See Figure 1.13). The protracted nature of crises in sending countries means that some of these host countries have shouldered responsibilities for more than two decades (Figure 2.6). Multiple generations of displaced children have been born in some of the longest-standing camps.

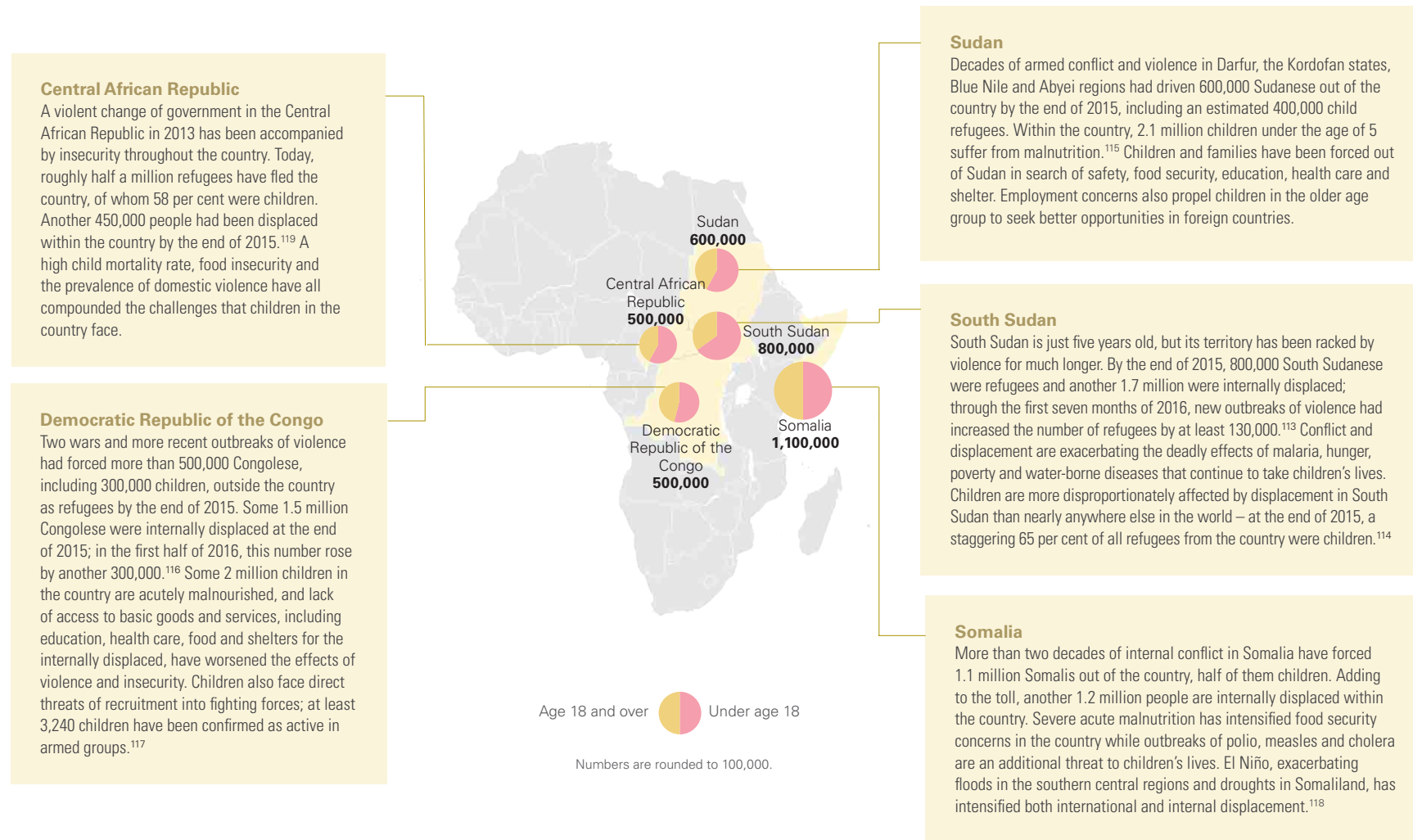
The countries that take on hosting responsibilities do so with some of the most limited resources of all destination countries. Of the ten countries with the highest number of refugees relative to national resources, seven are African, led by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Uganda.<sup>111</sup> In some destination countries, the economic and social pressures of refugee hosting threaten to uproot refugees once more. In May 2016, Kenyan authorities announced plans to close all its refugee camps, including Dadaab, the world's largest. By August, the timeline for any closure remained uncertain, but if the Government follows through on this plan, more than 600,000 people could be displaced yet again.<sup>112</sup>



FIGURE 2.6

## Protracted conflicts are responsible for Africa's largest refugee populations

Refugees from Africa, by country of origin, 2015



**Note:** Map shows the countries of origin within Africa with the largest numbers of refugees at the end of 2015.

**Source:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2015*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2016.

## BOX 2.1 INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN AFRICA

Internal displacement in Africa compounds the devastating human toll of the continent's protracted crises. Four countries in Africa – Nigeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic and South Sudan – were among the top 10 globally for new, violence-induced internal displacements in 2015.<sup>120</sup> In those four countries alone, 1.7 million people were newly displaced in 2015 by conflict and violence, accounting for nearly one-fifth of such displacements in the world. In total, more than 12 million people have been internally displaced by conflict and violence within Africa – more than twice the number of African refugees (Figure 2.7).

Each year, disasters add to this toll. The numbers of people affected by disasters varies considerably from year to year, but Africa remains highly susceptible to disaster-related internal displacements. In 2013, flooding across the region displaced more than 1 million people, often in places already struggling to cope with violence-related displacement.<sup>121</sup> Disaster-related displacements in Africa were lower in 2014, but the underlying vulnerabilities to hazards persist – evidenced by a rising number of displacements again in 2015.<sup>122</sup>

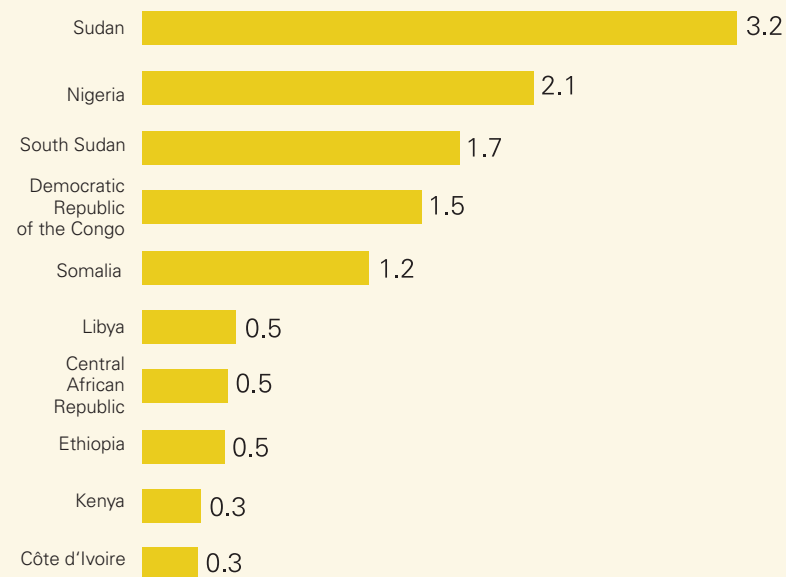
Continent-wide numbers for children affected by internal displacement are not available, but data from the Government of Nigeria and the International Organization for Migration make clear the toll that internal displacement is taking on children. As of mid-2016, more than 2 million Nigerians were internally displaced, the vast majority due to conflict that is spreading across the Lake Chad Basin. Of that number, 55 per cent are children, meaning that an estimated 1.1 million children in Nigeria have been forced from their homes; an additional 390,000 children are displaced in neighbouring Cameroon, Niger and Chad.<sup>123</sup> More than 80 per cent of displaced Nigerians are living in host communities, with the balance in camps for internally displaced persons. While community settlements can offer greater freedom of movement and employment opportunities, services in host communities must be augmented to provide for all children and families.

These internal displacements are closely tied to the larger discussion of international migration and displacement in Africa. Children and families displaced internally endure many of the same threats as refugees, including violence, disrupted health services, education and livelihoods, and deteriorating housing and health conditions. Upticks

FIGURE 2.7

### There are more than 12 million internally displaced persons in Africa

Conflict-related internally displaced persons in Africa by country, 2015 (in millions)



**Note:** Figure shows 10 countries with largest populations of internally displaced persons in Africa.

**Source:** Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Global Internal Displacement Database, 2015.

in violence, crop failures or cessation of services can all send large numbers of already displaced people across borders with very limited notice, straining the capacity of response mechanisms. Most important, multiple displacements compound the dangers that children and families face. After risky journeys, people who have been displaced multiple times are more likely to end up in informal and more dangerous settlements. Frequent movements also make these families harder to count, compounding the difficulties of providing the protection and services they need.<sup>124</sup>

Unless the underlying drivers of internal displacement are directly addressed, they will continue to compound both the consequences of, and number of people affected by, internal and international displacement.



Zenabou, 7, at a site for displaced civilians in Diffa, Niger. Her family came from Baga, Nigeria, and has been at the site for eight months.

© UNICEF/UN029285/Phelps

FIGURE 2.8

In 2015, African countries hosted 4.8 million refugees, nearly one-third of all refugees under UNHCR's mandate

Fifteen largest populations of refugees from a single country of origin in Africa living in a single country of destination, 2015



Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2015*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2016.



## ISSUE IN FOCUS

### Migration detention in Northern Africa

A 2015 report from the North Africa Mixed Migration Task Force estimates that, in Libya alone, somewhere between 5,000 and 10,000 migrants and refugees were held in detention facilities in 2014. The percentage of children in that population remains unknown, but nearly four dozen interviews with former detainees attest to the virtual absence of basic services and due process for people facing migration detention in the country. According to interviewees in the country, women were at particular risk for sexual violence and abuse by guards, and sub-Saharan African migrants faced greater risk of detention than migrants from other regions.<sup>125</sup>

As with many of the worst dangers that children face when they migrate, documenting the extent and details of migration detention is exceptionally difficult. Individual testimonies must often tell the stories when numbers cannot. Together, the individual experiences of children detained because of their migration status offer a devastating view of the larger picture of child detention.

12-year-old Sagga, from Eritrea, sits with other adolescent boys and men in a crowded cell at the Zawiya detention centre near Tripoli, Libya. Sagga, together with two friends, left his homeland in the hope of finding work in Europe to support his family and have a better life. Their journey to Libya took 10 months.

## The promise and perils of migration and displacement for children in Africa

As in other regions, when children and families in Africa choose to migrate, they move with the hope that new homes will offer new and better opportunities. For some families, those aspirations materialize. For others, especially families that have been forcibly displaced, movement and resettlement come with additional dangers for their well-being.

Evidence about the long-term impacts of migration on children in Africa is extremely limited and the effects are mixed, largely dependent on family circumstances and the reasons behind a family's or child's decision to move. The immediate and long-term well-being of refugee and other migrant children also hinges on the migration legislation, policies and practices in place in their countries of origin, transit and destination.

Whether migration provides a net benefit to the education of child migrants (or children of migrants), for example, can vary substantially based on which parent was a migrant, whether the migration was temporary or permanent, a child's age at the time of migration and whether a child moved with family or alone.<sup>126</sup> Further study on health outcomes – particularly psychological and behavioural impacts – for child migrants and children affected by migration in Africa is required.

Evidence from other regions suggests that, as with education, the effects of parental migration without children are likely to be mixed. While remittances may provide much-needed income to pay for school fees and other household expenses, whether children benefit from that income depends largely on the care arrangements they have.<sup>127</sup>

While the impacts made by voluntary migration on health and education require further research, the devastating impacts of conflict and forced displacement for children in Africa are readily apparent. In addition to the direct threat of violence as a result of conflict, children forcibly displaced by conflict face a wide array of health dangers including inadequate access to water and sanitation, outbreaks of disease, limited access to nutritious food, interrupted vaccine schedules and long-term psychological trauma. In education, too, the impacts are clear: 24 million children in conflict zones

worldwide are out of school.<sup>128</sup> Three long-standing conflicts in Africa are exacting an even higher toll on education for children: well over one-third of primary and lower-secondary school aged children in South Sudan, Niger and Sudan are all out of school.<sup>129</sup> All children in these contexts depend on and deserve concerted action to put an end to these conflicts.

In Africa – as in other regions – children can face a wide range of dangers when they move across borders. These risks are particularly acute for children moving on their own, in the midst of crises and on irregular journeys. In Western and Northern Africa, there is evidence of an uptick in smuggling and trafficking networks, with their accompanying threats to children, including violence, abuse and exploitation.<sup>130</sup> In Northern Africa, children travelling without legal status are frequently subjected to extended and harsh periods of immigration detention (see Issue in Focus on page 60).

Across the continent, children and families who move without legal status are also subject to deportation and return. As the global economic crisis wreaked havoc on many economies in 2008, children and families sought economic security across borders. That year, more than 280,000 people were deported from South Africa, a key destination for many seeking stability.<sup>131</sup> While the absolute number has declined notably since the height of the crisis, the trend continues elsewhere.

Deteriorating conditions in the Horn of Africa have also led to increases in children travelling alone to the Middle East in search of opportunity. Like unaccompanied children in other regions, these children face both perilous journeys as well as the possibility of return to dangerous conditions in their home countries.<sup>132</sup>

Across the continent, much work remains to help children realize the benefits of voluntary migration and find greater stability and opportunity when they are forcibly displaced. Tackling the underlying drivers of forced migration, maintaining safe and legal pathways for movement, and adopting inclusive policies and services for all children are essential elements of this agenda.

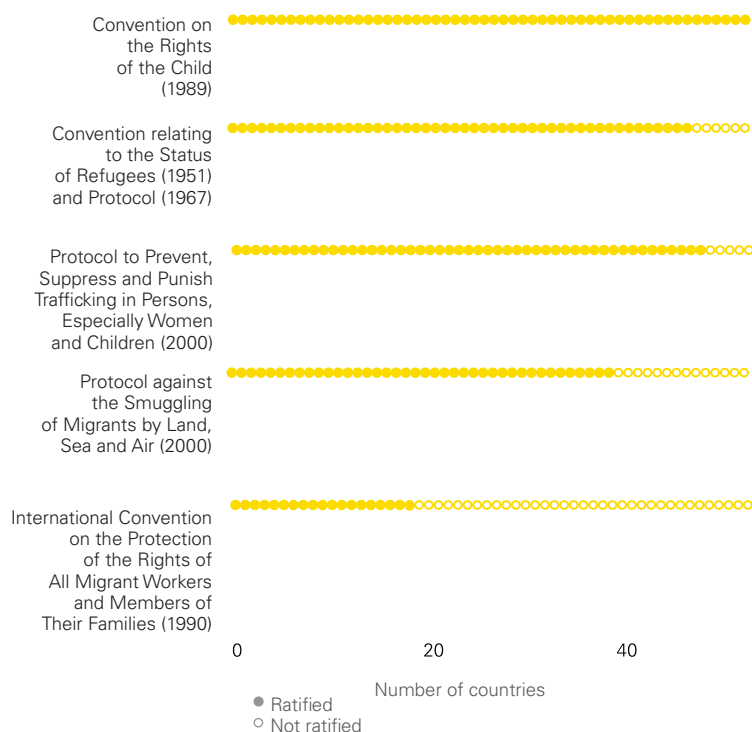
## Legal frameworks

### to protect the rights of child migrants and refugees in Africa

In every region, children's rights are protected by a robust framework of international human rights instruments, though ratification of some elements is uneven. Of these instruments, the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Their Families has been ratified by the fewest countries across Africa (Figure 2.9).

FIGURE 2.9

Number of countries in Africa that have ratified key human rights instruments, July 2016



Source: United Nations Treaty Collection; see <<http://treaties.un.org>> (status as of 13 July 2016).

### Regional legal frameworks

In addition to these global instruments, the rights of children in Africa are covered under various regional and sub-regional frameworks, notably:

- > The 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the 1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which lay out a broad range of human rights. Other regional and sub-regional texts provide protection for the rights of children, such as the African Youth Charter (2006), ratified by 38 African countries to protect the human rights of youth.
- > The Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (1969) outlines States' humanitarian responsibilities towards refugees. The Cairo Declaration in 2000 confirmed the African Union's commitment to a human rights approach to migrants, refugees, displaced persons, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and child rights.
- > The 2009 Kampala Convention (The African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa) commits national governments to the provision of legal protection for the rights of internally displaced persons. It was the first independent legally binding regional instrument to impose on States the obligation to protect and assist those who have been internally displaced. The Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (2006) established a legal framework for the incorporation of guiding principles into domestic law.

In October 2015 in South Sudan, Nyayjaw, 8, kisses her baby sister Nyagua, whom she is meeting for the first time after being reunited with her family. For two years, the family was separated by conflict.

© UNICEF/UN014006/Rich



**Caribbean**

- Anguilla
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Aruba
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba
- British Virgin Islands
- Cayman Islands
- Cuba
- Curaçao
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Grenada
- Guadeloupe
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Martinique
- Montserrat
- Puerto Rico
- Saint-Barthélemy
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- Saint Martin (French part)
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Sint Maarten (Dutch part)
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Turks and Caicos Islands
- United States Virgin Islands

**Central America**

- Belize
- Costa Rica
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Mexico
- Nicaragua
- Panama

**Northern America**

- Bermuda
- Canada
- Greenland
- Saint Pierre and Miquelon
- United States

**South America**

- Argentina
- Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
- Brazil
- Chile
- Colombia
- Ecuador
- Falkland Islands (Malvinas)
- French Guiana
- Guyana
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Suriname
- Uruguay
- Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

# 3 The Americas



All maps in this section do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers.

## 1 in 10

migrants in the Americas is a child



## 4 in 5

child migrants in the Americas live in just three countries: the United States, Mexico, and Canada



The Americas are home to

## 6.3 million

child migrants, 1/5 of the global total





# Migration in the Americas

FIGURE 3.1

Four out of five migrants with origins in the Americas move within the region

International migrants from the Americas by region of destination, 2015 (in millions)

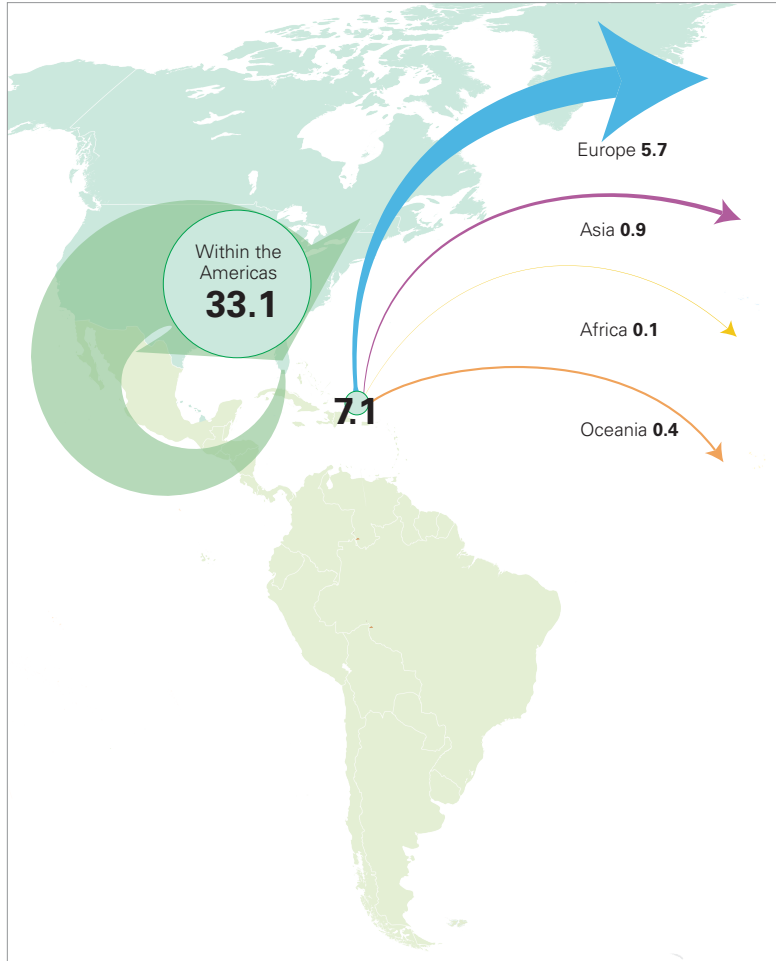


FIGURE 3.2

More than 27 million migrants have moved into the Americas from outside the region

International migrants into the Americas by region of origin, 2015 (in millions)

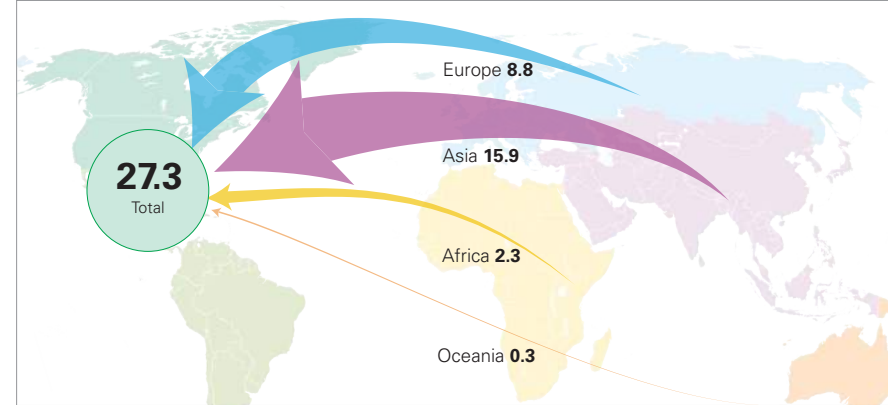
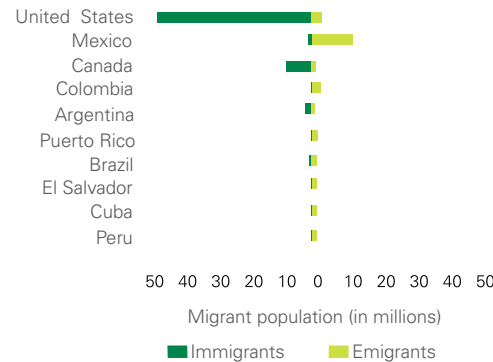


FIGURE 3.3

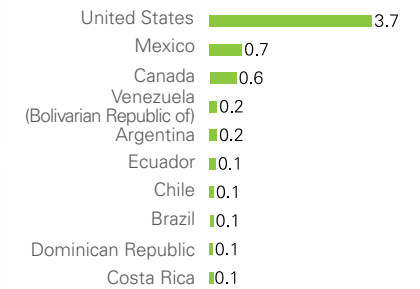
The United States and Canada receive the most immigrants; the largest numbers of emigrants are from Mexico and Colombia

A. Top 10 countries with largest numbers of immigrants or emigrants in the Americas, 2015



The largest numbers of child migrants live in the United States and Mexico

B. Top 10 countries hosting the largest numbers of international migrants under 18 years of age in the Americas, 2015 (in millions)



Note: For Figures 3.1 and 3.2: Globally, there are 9.8 million international immigrants with origin classified as other or unknown; 3.4 million of these are living in the Americas. Migrants of unknown origin are not included in these figures.

Source for all figures: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015; and UNICEF analysis based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by age and sex*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

FIGURE 3.4

**Most migration within the Americas ends in Northern America**

International migrants by region of origin and destination in the Americas, 2015 (in millions)



**Note:** Globally, there are 9.8 million international immigrants with origin classified as other or unknown; 3.4 million of these are living in the Americas. Migrants of unknown origin are not included in this figure. See page 26 for a detailed explanation on how to interpret the chord diagram.

**Source:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

Migration in the Americas is more highly concentrated within the region than in any other part of the world (Figures 3.1 and 3.4). Four out of five migrants from the Americas move within the region. In total, 33 million people have moved within the continent, making intra-American migration the third largest population movement in the world (following intra-Asian and intra-European movements). Much of the movement within the region ends in Northern America, including a clear majority of Caribbean migration and nearly all Central American migration. South American movements are the exception to this pattern; migrants in South America move in roughly equal proportion within the sub-region, to Europe and to Northern America.

Just over 7 million migrants have left the Americas for other regions. Europe is by far the most common destination for migrants from the Americas; it is home to 80 per cent of migrants who leave the Americas. By a clear margin, a greater proportion of South American migrants leave the Americas than migrants from any other sub-region.

Overall, the United States and Canada host the two largest migrant populations in the region, respectively. When measured relative to population, that ordering is reversed, with Canada hosting the largest proportion of migrants in its overall population. By total number, the largest number of emigrants are from Mexico and the United States. By proportion of the population, however, the largest emigrant-origin countries are primarily Caribbean islands, led by Puerto Rico and Jamaica.<sup>133</sup>

The Americas are also a major destination region for migrants, hosting more than 27 million migrants from other regions (Figure 3.2). More than half of migrants coming into the Americas are from Asia and roughly one-third are from Europe. The overwhelming majority of migrants coming to the Americas settle in Northern America.

The age of the migrant population in the Americas looks very different across sub-regions. Overall, 1 in 10 migrants living in the Americas is a child, but that average masks two distinct patterns. Children make up a relatively small proportion of migrants living in Northern America, South America and the Caribbean (8, 15 and 15 per cent, respectively). In marked contrast, children make up 43 per cent of all migrants living in Central America. While the total number of migrants in Central America is much smaller than in Northern America, its immigrant population is rising faster.<sup>134</sup> When combined with the very high proportion of children in the overall migrant population in Central America, this trend will have increasingly large implications for child well-being in the region.

Overall, international migrant children in the Americas are a relatively small proportion of all children. Just 2 per cent of children in the region live outside the country of their birth. Again, this average masks different sub-regional realities: 1 in 100 children is a migrant in Latin America and the Caribbean, while the ratio is five times that in Northern America.

In total, the Americas are home to 6.3 million child migrants, 21 per cent of the global total. As in all other regions, boys and girls are equally represented in that total. Four out of five child migrants in the Americas live in just three countries – the United States, Mexico and Canada (Figure 3.3). These countries host 59, 12 and 10 per cent of the region's child migrants, respectively.

In addition to hosting the largest number of child migrants within and from the region, the United States hosts the largest number of child migrants of any country in the world – some 3.7 million children. As with overall migration in the region, the large number of child migrants in the United States means that the migration legislation and policy decisions made there have repercussions throughout the world.

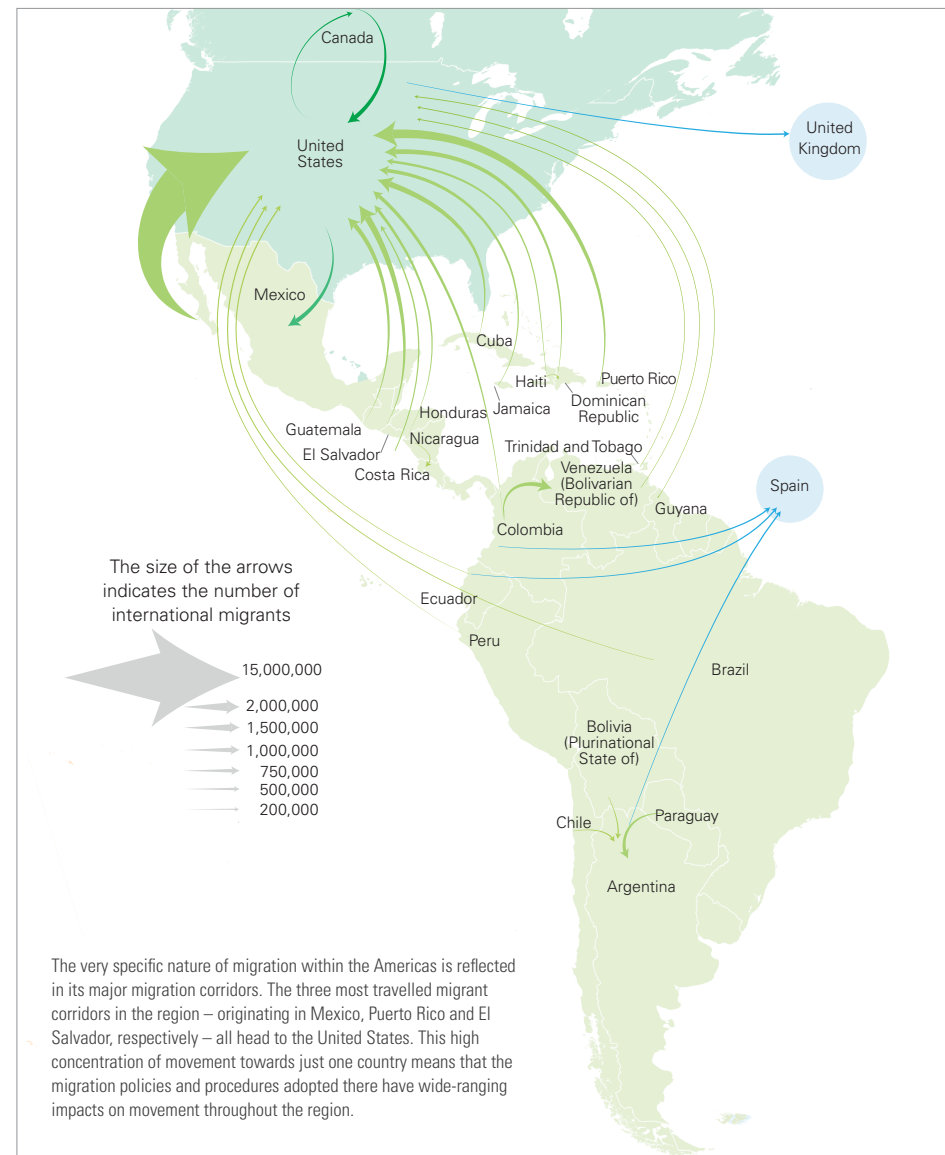
Much of the migration in the Americas is driven by both positive and negative factors that are common to many regions. These include aspirational goals of family reunification, better work, education and livelihood opportunities – as well as negative motivating factors including poverty, violence, inequality and discrimination in their countries of origin. There is, however, a distinctly dangerous trend for children in recent migration patterns within the region – a high number of vulnerable children moving on their own, often fleeing violence in their homes and communities. This issue is discussed in more detail below, but is also highlighted here because of its relevance as part of the overall pattern of migration in the region.

**Source:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

FIGURE 3.5

### The most travelled migration corridors in the Americas all head towards the United States

Thirty largest populations of international migrants from a single country or area of origin in the Americas living in a single country or area of destination, 2015



## Displacement and forced migration in the Americas

### Refugees

By the end of 2015, there were more than 453,000 refugees from the Americas. Three-quarters of all those refugees came from Colombia,<sup>135</sup> a result of five decades of internal conflict that began in the mid-1960s. Promisingly, the Colombian Government signed a peace accord with the country's largest insurgent group in August 2016, marking tremendous progress towards a permanent resolution of the conflict and igniting hope that many of those displaced by the conflict may be able to return home. The second largest origin country for refugees in the Americas is Haiti, with nearly 35,000 refugees. Children made up half (approximately 170,000) of Colombian refugees, and much smaller proportions of refugees from the other origin countries in the region.

As in other regions, most refugees in the Americas have found new homes within the same region. Three-quarters of refugees from the Americas have received asylum in Latin America and the Caribbean (primarily in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and in Ecuador); an additional 100,000 refugees from the Americas have settled in Northern America (primarily in the United States and Canada).<sup>137</sup>

As of the end of 2015, nearly 747,000 refugees from all regions lived in the Americas: approximately 273,000 of those refugees had settled in the United States and another 136,000 in Canada (Figure 3.6). An additional 286,000 people are awaiting decisions on their asylum applications in the United States, meaning that the proportion of those applications that are eventually granted could significantly alter the number of refugees in the country. Overall, the Americas currently host just under 5 per cent of all refugees under UNHCR's mandate.

#### Deportation and the risk of statelessness in the Dominican Republic

A 2013 Constitutional Court ruling in the Dominican Republic reversed the country's long-standing recognition of Dominican citizenship for children born in the country to immigrant parents. The ruling poses serious threats to the well-being of primarily Haitian-origin families living in the country. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Court's action had profound impacts on the children of Haitian immigrants, denying them birth certificates and identity documents.<sup>136</sup> Since the ruling, requirements for the regularization of immigration status have been implemented and deportations have been initiated for people whose status has not been regularized. Other legislative changes, promoted by the Government since the ruling, have reduced the number of potentially affected people.

### Internally displaced persons

More than 7.3 million people are considered internally displaced by conflict in the Americas. As with refugees within the region, the clear majority of internally displaced persons within the Americas are from Colombia (6.3 million, 86 per cent of conflict-induced internal displacements in the region). These numbers, however, must be interpreted very cautiously. While internal displacement remains a major issue within Colombia, the available data reflect all people who were estimated to have been displaced over the course of more than five decades of conflict, even if they are deceased or no longer believed to be displaced. This means that the estimates are likely to be significantly overstated.<sup>138</sup>

Other countries in the region with large numbers of conflict-related internal displacements include El Salvador (289,000), Guatemala (251,000), Mexico (287,000) and Honduras (174,000). The violence in these four countries is significant, not only for internal displacement, but also because these four countries are the origin of the most unaccompanied and separated children apprehended by immigration authorities at the southern border of the United States.

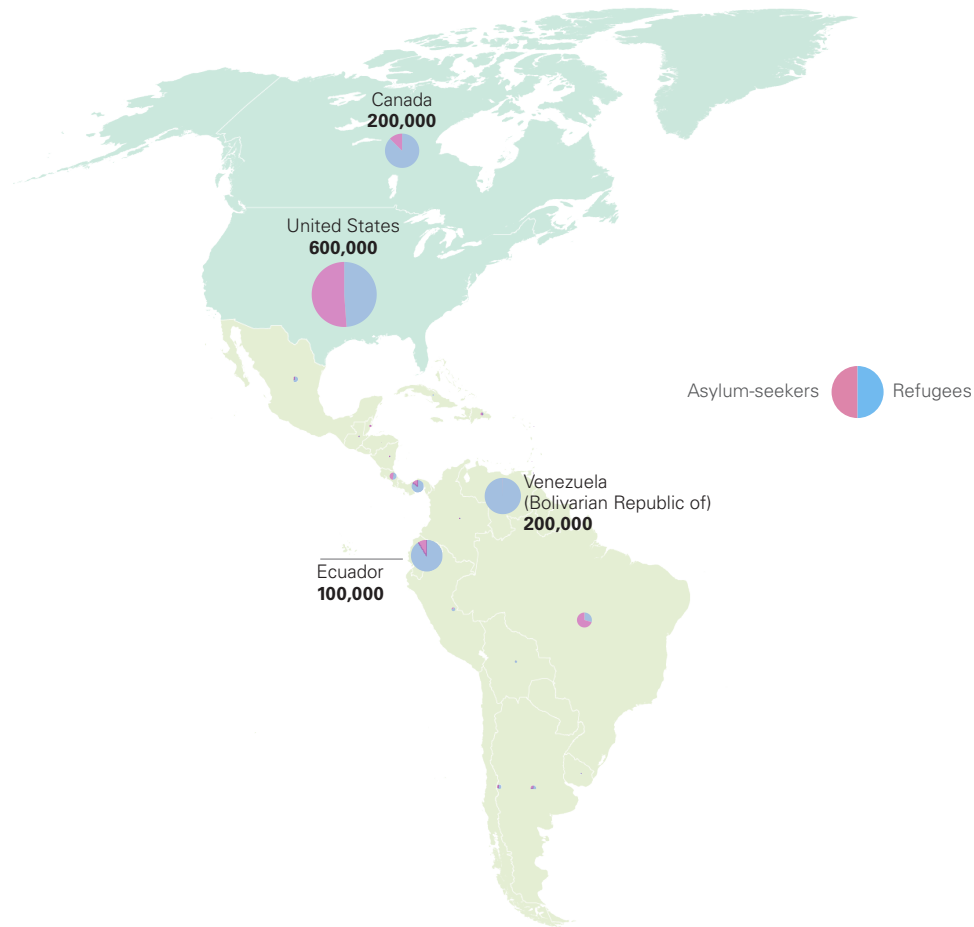
The Americas are also susceptible to natural hazard-induced internal displacements from a wide range of disasters including earthquakes, tsunamis and hurricanes. The number of individuals whose lives are disrupted by such causes varies substantially year to year, but 1.5 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean were internally displaced by natural hazards in 2015 alone.<sup>139</sup> Although internal disaster displacement can be shorter term than internal conflict displacement, it is not always necessarily the case. In Haiti, more than 62,000 people internally displaced there by a major earthquake in 2010 are still living in internal displacement camps, exposed to health risks, violence and extreme deprivation.<sup>140</sup>

A five-year-old boy and his foster mother, Jules, stand outside their home on Haiti's north-eastern border with the Dominican Republic. Jules, who used to cross daily into the Dominican Republic to buy and sell goods, found the boy naked and alone, possibly abandoned or lost while being smuggled across the border. Jules took him to the Haitian Police and waited for his parents to find him. No one came, so she was permitted to take him home to live with her.

FIGURE 3.6

In 2015, there were approximately 750,000 refugees and roughly 350,000 asylum-seekers throughout the Americas

Refugees and asylum-seekers in the Americas, by country of destination, 2015



**Note:** Numbers are rounded to 100,000.

**Source:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2015*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2016.



## ISSUE IN FOCUS

# Unaccompanied and separated children on the move in the Americas

Between October 2008 and July 2009, just over 3,300 unaccompanied and separated children from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador were apprehended by immigration authorities at the southern border of the United States. Between October 2013 and June 2014, that number had skyrocketed to nearly 52,000.<sup>141</sup> While this number fell the following year, with a rise in immigration enforcement measures, current trends indicate that the number of children attempting to cross into the United States alone is rising again.

This rise in the number of children fleeing desperate circumstances in their home countries is a threat to the well-being of children in the Americas. There is little disagreement among experts about why these children are moving. According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, migration experts agree that “a combination of crime and violence, economic concerns, poor educational systems, and the desire for family reunification” are behind the large numbers of children seeking new futures further north.<sup>142</sup> Children face particularly high risks of gang-related recruitment, violence and extortion in many countries.

There is ample evidence to support this consensus, based on both the conditions in the sending countries and the testimonies of children themselves. According to testimony given in 2014 by the President of Honduras before the U.S. Congress, more than three-quarters of unaccompanied child migrants from Honduras came from the country’s most violent cities – a simple but damning statement about the conditions children are leaving.<sup>143</sup> The pull of family reunification is also clear – among children crossing the border of the United States on their own, significant portions from all major sending countries had at least one parent living in the United States (in 2013, 22 per cent of children from Mexico, 49 per cent from El Salvador, 27 per cent from Guatemala and 47 per cent from Honduras).<sup>144</sup> Overall, 58 per cent of the 404 children interviewed about their journeys indicated that they had been forcibly displaced from their homes because they had suffered or were under threat of harm.<sup>145</sup> Nearly half of the children interviewed had been subjected to some sort of violence outside the home while one in five children had been abused by a caregiver or someone else in the home.<sup>146</sup>

## STORY 3.1 A DREAM DENIED

At the age of 16, Alexis and a cousin packed their meager belongings and headed north, hoping to escape the bitter poverty in which they were raised. Like tens of thousands of other children from Central America, they hoped to make it to the United States. For Alexis, the journey ended in Mexico, when he fell off a freight train and lost his right leg – not an uncommon injury on the notorious route.

Now, he is back home – a wood and corrugated iron shack built on a slope that turns into mud every time it rains. His mother and his teenage siblings work odd jobs when they can find them, harvesting chilies, taking care of other people’s children or helping out in food stalls. Getting to the United States was about more than just “an American dream,” says Alexis. “It’s about getting out of the country, which has so much poverty. I wanted to get there and work and help my brothers and my mother.”

Alexis is convinced his own siblings will eventually try to head north just as he did. “For the same reason I left here, my brothers and sisters could do the same one day, because of poverty, because you sometimes spend days without eating. There’s not enough money to go to college, only to primary school, then it’s over.” He fears for the future: “That things continue the way they are. That my siblings continue to live this way, with this poverty. It would be horrible.”

For too many children, the threats they face do not end when they leave their home countries. As they make their way north – often paying their way through dangerous routes by using exploitative smuggling networks – children are subject to further violence, abuse and exploitation. Evidence indicates an increase in both girls travelling alone as well as both boys and girls travelling alone at younger ages,<sup>147</sup> intensifying their vulnerability both along the route and upon arrival.

When children do make it to the border and are apprehended by immigration authorities, they are not assured protection. Despite the dangerous conditions many of these children are escaping and their legitimate protection concerns, few are granted refugee status. When unaccompanied children are apprehended in the United States, their legal recourse depends on their country of origin. Unaccompanied children from Mexico or Canada can be almost immediately deported unless they are able to establish a claim for protection within 48 hours. Children from non-contiguous countries are legally entitled to see an immigration judge to petition for humanitarian relief from removal.<sup>148</sup> In practice, severe deficiencies have been identified – including by the U.S. Government Accountability Office – in the way vulnerable children’s rights are addressed at the border.<sup>149</sup> Those deficiencies have included extended periods of detention while awaiting immigration proceedings and limited access to legal representation for unaccompanied children.<sup>150</sup> Just one-third of unaccompanied children have had legal representation during legal proceedings, significantly lowering their chances of successfully navigating the system.<sup>151</sup> Whether a shortcoming of policy or of practice, it is vulnerable children who pay the price.

**Three siblings from Honduras travel north, expecting to cross the border to the United States to reunite with their family.**

© UNICEF/UNI176266/Ojeda

## STORY 3.2 THE ANGUISH OF NOT KNOWING

“He was an intelligent boy. He was always first in school...he loved to draw.” Francisco Salguero speaks of his youngest son, Erick, in the past tense, but says he is convinced the boy is alive. He holds back his tears as he recalls how he allowed Erick to travel from El Salvador to the United States, with the help of a coyote – a human smuggler – eight years ago. The boy was supposed to join his mother who lived in the United States.

“I let him go because I wanted a future for him, but it turned out not to be a future, but a nightmare.” A few weeks after leaving El Salvador, Erick called his father to let him know he made it safely to Mexico City. That was the last time Salguero spoke to him. He was later told the boy had “stayed behind” in the harsh desert leading to the US border. “One feels bad thinking ‘where could he be? What might have happened?’”

In 2009, one year after Erick had disappeared, Salguero travelled with other parents from Central America looking for children who had disappeared on the way to the United States, but found no clues about the fate of his son. Every year, parents of missing migrants form a bus caravan across Mexico to look for their loved ones. Human rights groups say thousands of migrants disappear every year in Mexico, victims of the desert, of violent crime, or of human trafficking. Occasionally a relative who had simply failed to communicate with his family is tracked down. Salguero is convinced that will be the case for his son. “I trust that our Lord has him in good hands. I believe he is alive and that God will give us an answer.”

## The promise and perils of migration for children in the Americas

Children and families in the Americas – just as in other regions – face both opportunity and, for too many, danger when they decide to move. Those dangers are especially pronounced for families that have been forcibly displaced or are travelling with uncertain legal status. The issues outlined below highlight small pieces of a much larger body of evidence about the ways in which children and families in the Americas are affected by migration. Many of those impacts are influenced by the specific situations of families – although all are shaped by the migration policies, legislation and practices in place in the countries where children begin, continue and end their journeys.

### Negative impacts of migration enforcement

The border between Mexico and the United States is a crucial hub of migration activity within the region and the policies and enforcement procedures in place there have cascading impacts on children throughout the region. A notable rise in the number of families as well as unaccompanied children attempting to cross into the United States in recent years has driven up the total number of children impacted by these policies, whether they are stranded by smugglers in a border area, detained on arrival or returned to their countries of origin.

Between fiscal years 2009 and 2013, more than 20,000 children were returned from the United States to their countries of origin.<sup>152</sup> Other children and families returned by their own choice. The impacts of those returns varies, depending in part the conditions under which migrants return, their age and time spent in the host country, experience having lived in a 'home' country, familiarity with return-country language and return-country services for returning migrants.<sup>153,154</sup> The experience of forcible return among Mexicans in the United States – either children who are deported or those who remain in the country following the deportation of a parent – has been found to place a range of burdens on a child including: both short- and long-term economic instability, emotional distress from separation and possible disassociation with immigrant heritage.<sup>155</sup>

Research on children whose parents have been arrested or detained during migration enforcement shows negative impacts to children's emotional well-

being and behaviours, with more than two-thirds of children experiencing changed eating or sleeping patterns. Near-majorities of children reported increased fear and anxiety as a result of enforcement actions against their parents. The long-term impacts on children depended on several factors including the length of time of a parent's detention.<sup>156</sup>

Children in Mexican immigrant households have described fear about the stability of their families as well as confusion about immigration and the impact of their legal status on their lives.<sup>157</sup> Deportations are found to permanently affect these children even if they continue to live with both parents.<sup>158</sup> However, despite some reported problems of educational documentation for children residing in Mexico who previously attended school in the United States, other research has found that these students are able to successfully transition to schooling in Mexico.<sup>159</sup> At a practical level, children whose parents are detained or deported must often fend for themselves, fighting legal and practical battles no child should ever face.

### Different outcomes from different beginnings

As a region, the Americas are both a major origin of migrant children as well as a major host of migrants from other parts of the world. In the United States and Canada, two major recipients of migrants from outside the region, there is considerable evidence showing different outcomes for migrants and migrant children from different backgrounds and regions. In Canada, for example, there is research showing that first-generation migrants from many parts of Asia and Africa attend post-secondary education at higher rates than native-born Canadians, often in spite of key factors that traditionally limit access to higher education. First-generation migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean, however, attend at lower rates.<sup>160</sup> Similar results came from a 2005 study in the United States, where children of Mexican, Laotian and Cambodian immigrants had the most significant disadvantages in education while those from China and other Asian backgrounds had better results.<sup>161</sup> Notably, the research showed that even though some groups of second-generation students have yet to catch up, much of the gap that remains can be attributed to the socio-economic status of their parents. Irregular legal status, barriers to services and discrimination can all weigh in against children's chances of catching up.

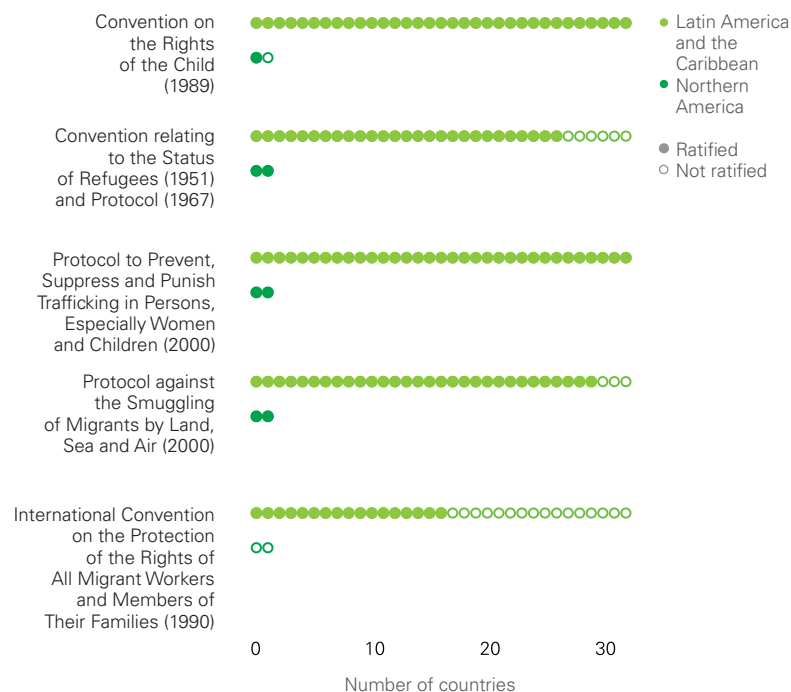


## Remittance benefits from parental migration

Evidence from the Americas paints a more uniformly positive picture of the benefits of migration than the evidence from some other regions. In some cases in Latin America, remittances have been shown to benefit children who remain at home while their parents migrate, raising their standard of living and increasing access to social services.<sup>162</sup> In Ecuador, research found a positive effect of remittances on short-term and middle-term nutritional status of children.<sup>163</sup> A study in the Dominican Republic showed that remittances result in an increase in girls' school attendance, with secondary school-age children and younger siblings gaining the most from the receipt of remittances.<sup>164</sup> As in other regions, it is likely that some of these remittance benefits are offset by the negative effects of parents being absent from the home while working abroad. Changes in guardianship arrangements have been shown elsewhere to influence both negative behavioural patterns as well as schooling and subsequent bonding with parents.

FIGURE 3.7

Number of countries in the Americas that have ratified key human rights instruments, July 2016



Source: United Nations Treaty Collection; see <<http://treaties.un.org>> (status as of 13 July 2016).

## Legal frameworks

### to protect the rights of child refugees and migrants in the Americas

In every region, children's rights are protected by a robust framework of international human rights instruments, although ratification of some elements is uneven. The United States – the host of the largest number of migrant children in the region and globally – remains the only country in the world that has not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Across the Americas, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families has been ratified by the fewest countries (Figure 3.7).

#### Regional legal frameworks

in addition to the CRC and other key global instruments, regional legal frameworks within the Americas include:

- > The Americas Declaration on the Rights and Duty of Man, which was adopted in 1948 and covers civil and political rights, includes three labour and social rights: the right to health, education and work. Similarly, the American Convention on Human Rights (1978) focusses on civil and political rights.
- > Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 'Protocol of San Salvador' (1988) provides for economic, social and cultural rights. Article 15 covers the rights to formation and protection of families (children's health) and Article 16 specifically covers the rights of children (the rights to protection, family unity and education).
- > The Inter-American Court of Human Rights Advisory Opinion (2014): Rights and Guarantees of Children in the Context of Migration and/or In Need of International Protection, reiterates that child rights "should prevail over any consideration of her or his nationality or migratory status." The Advisory Opinion also refers specifically to unaccompanied or separated children, noting that "States may not resort to the deprivation of liberty of children who are with their parents, or those who are unaccompanied or separated from their parents, as a precautionary measure in immigration proceedings." The Court's Advisory Opinion on Juridical Condition and Rights of the Undocumented Migrants (2003) on the Legal Status and Rights of Undocumented Migrants declared that "States cannot discriminate or tolerate discriminatory situations to the detriment of migrants."
- > The Cartagena Declaration (1984), adopted by the Colloquium on the International Protection of Refugees in Central America, Mexico and Panama, goes beyond the scope of the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, by including "persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order."

- Central Asia
  - Kazakhstan
  - Kyrgyzstan
  - Tajikistan
  - Turkmenistan
  - Uzbekistan

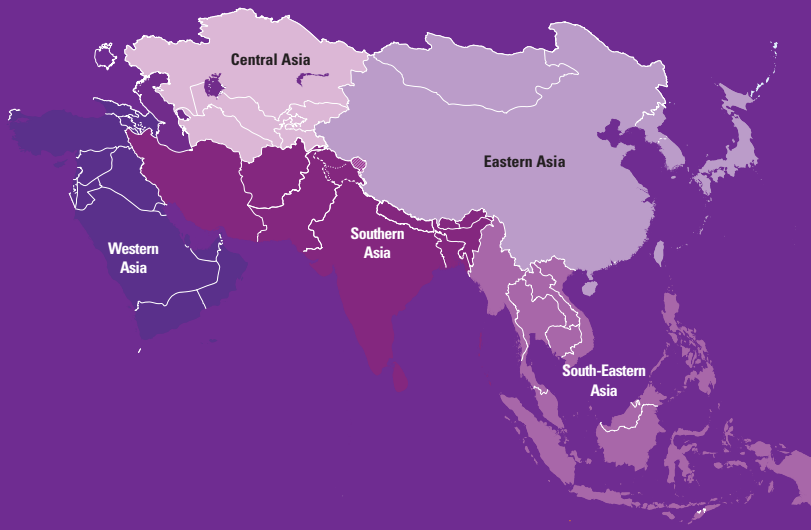
- Eastern Asia
  - China
  - China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
  - China, Macao Special Administrative Region
  - Democratic People's Republic of Korea
  - Japan
  - Mongolia
  - Republic of Korea

- South-Eastern Asia
  - Brunei Darussalam
  - Cambodia
  - Indonesia
  - Lao People's Democratic Republic
  - Malaysia
  - Myanmar
  - Philippines
  - Singapore
  - Thailand
  - Timor-Leste
  - Viet Nam

- Southern Asia
  - Afghanistan
  - Bangladesh
  - Bhutan
  - India
  - Iran (Islamic Republic of)
  - Maldives
  - Nepal
  - Pakistan
  - Sri Lanka

- Western Asia
  - Armenia
  - Azerbaijan
  - Bahrain
  - Cyprus
  - Georgia
  - Iraq
  - Israel
  - Jordan
  - Kuwait
  - Lebanon
  - Oman
  - Qatar
  - Saudi Arabia
  - State of Palestine
  - Syrian Arab Republic
  - Turkey
  - United Arab Emirates
  - Yemen

# 4 Asia



All maps included in this section are stylized and not to scale. They do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or area or the delimitation of any frontiers. The dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.

**1 in 6** Asian migrants is a child



Asia is home to

**2 in 5** of the world's child migrants



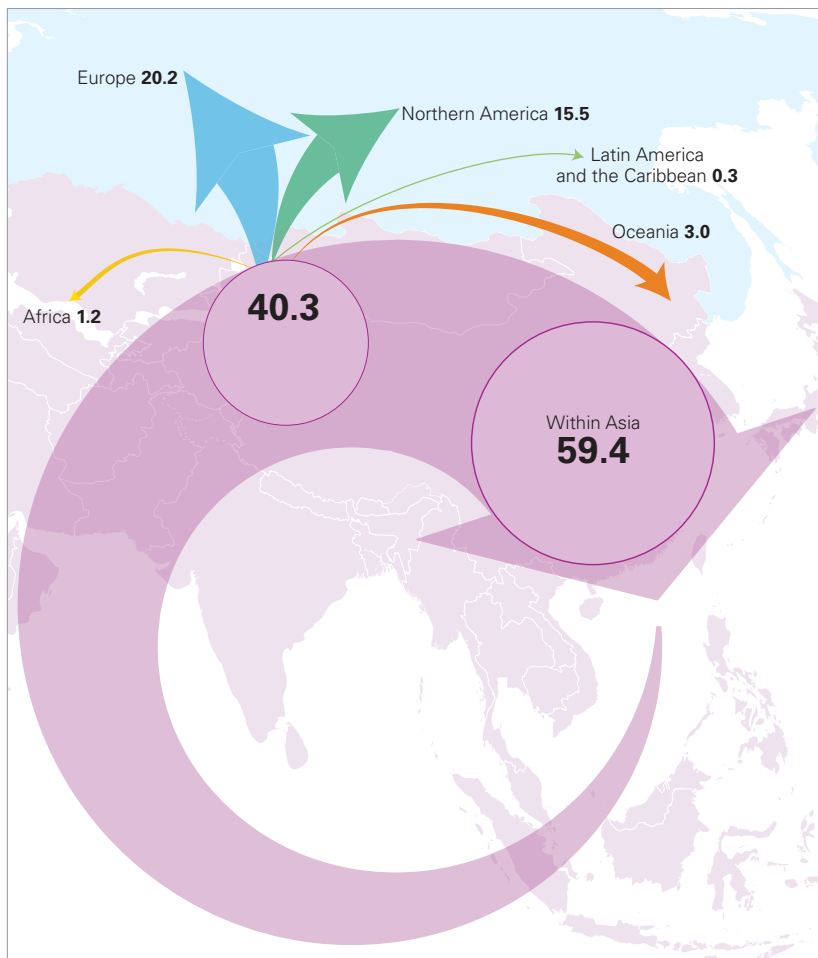
**9 out of 10** refugees from Asia find refuge within Asia



# Migration in Asia

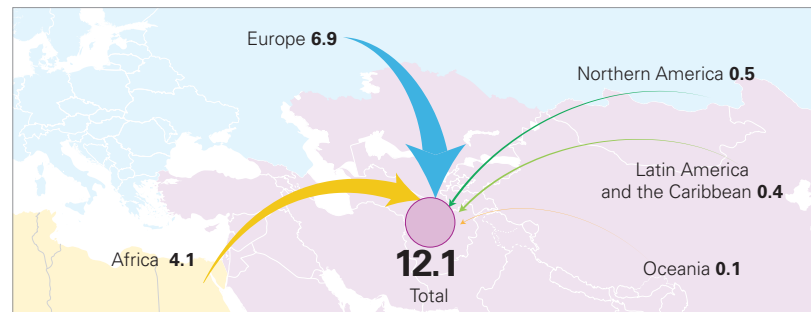
**FIGURE 4.1**

**Nearly 60 per cent of all Asian migrants move within the region**  
International migrants from Asia by region of destination, 2015 (in millions)



**FIGURE 4.2**

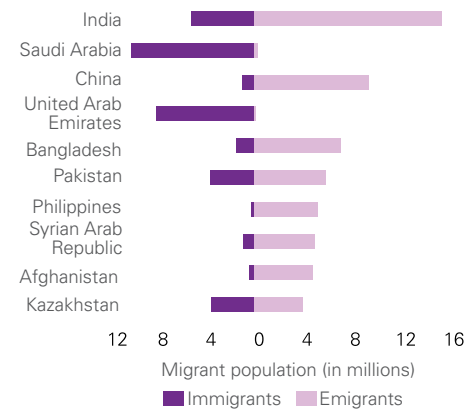
**More than 90 per cent of migration into Asia comes from either Europe or Africa**  
International migrants into Asia by region of origin, 2015 (in millions)



**FIGURE 4.3**

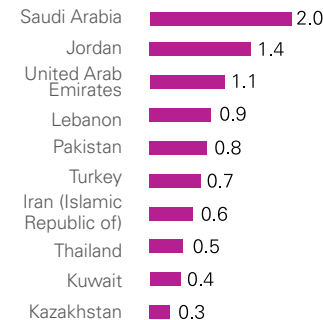
**Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates receive the most immigrants; the largest numbers of emigrants come from India and China**

A. Top 10 countries with largest numbers of immigrants or emigrants in Asia, 2015



**The largest numbers of child migrants live in Saudi Arabia and Jordan**

B. Top 10 countries hosting the largest numbers of international migrants under 18 years of age in Asia, 2015 (in millions)



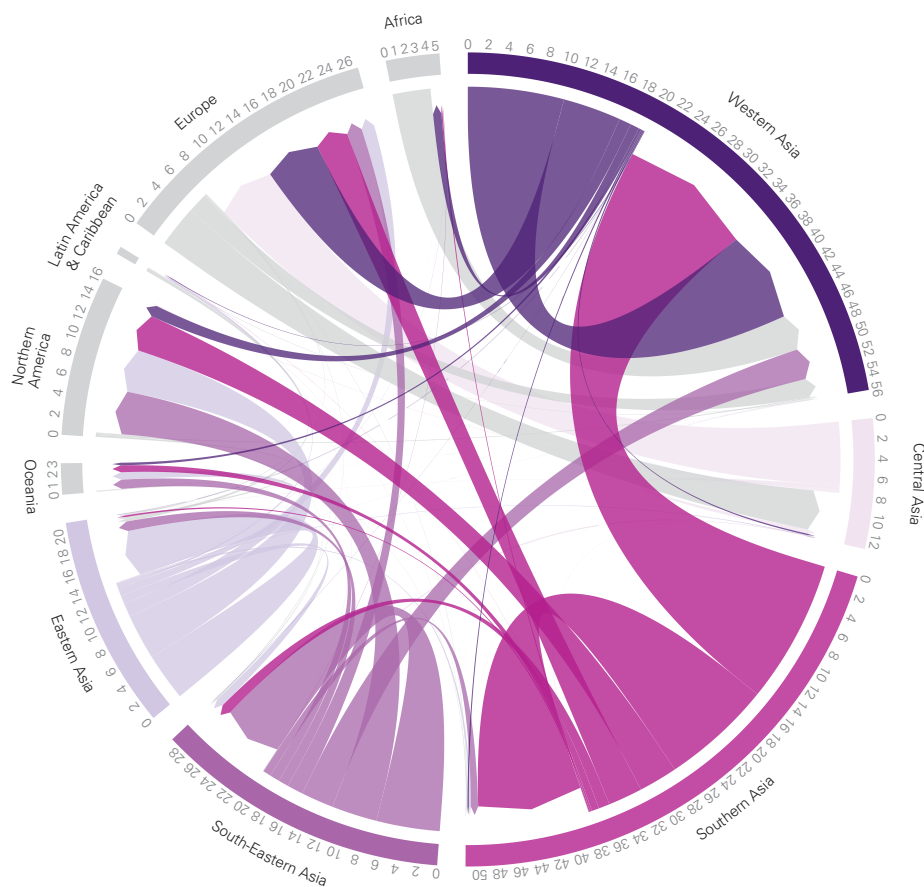
**Note:** For Figures 4.1 and 4.2: Globally, there are 9.8 million international migrants with origin classified as other or unknown; 3.6 million of these are living in Asia. Migrants of unknown origin are not included in these figures.

**Source for all figures:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015; and UNICEF analysis based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by age and sex*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

FIGURE 4.4

### Half of all Asian migrants who move within the region live in Western Asia

International migrants by region of origin and destination in Asia, 2015 (in millions)



**Note:** Globally, there are 9.8 million international migrants with origin classified as other or unknown; 3.6 million of these are living in Asia. Migrants of unknown origin are not included in this figure. See page 26 for a detailed explanation on how to interpret the chord diagram.

**Source:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

Asia is the birthplace of 43 per cent of all the world's migrants – some 104 million people as of 2015. As in other regions, the majority of Asian migrants move within the region (Figure 4.1). More than 59 million Asians are living outside the country of their birth, but still within the continent. Despite Asia's wide geographic spread, there is a considerable amount of movement between sub-regions, with the largest single movement of people within the continent moving from Southern Asia to Western Asia.

The substantial population, wide variety of contexts and geographic expanse of Asia make it particularly difficult to find generalizable patterns in the region's migration. While Asia does have intensive rates of intra-regional migration, these same factors may still contribute to under-researched cultural barriers to integration even in the context of movements within the region.

In line with their large total populations, India and China are the Asian countries with the largest absolute numbers of migrants living abroad (Figure 4.3). Proportional to their population, the State of Palestine, Armenia and the Syrian Arab Republic have the largest percentage of their populations living outside their current borders.

More than 40 million Asian migrants have found new homes outside the continent. Half of these migrants move to Europe, making up the world's second largest movement of people between major regions. An additional 15.5 million Asians have moved to Northern America.<sup>165</sup> There is a strong sub-regional pattern in these movements – migrants from Eastern, South-Eastern and Southern Asia are much more likely to move to Northern America, while migrants leaving Central and Western Asia are more likely to find new homes in Europe (Figure 4.4).

Just over 12 million migrants have moved from other regions into Asia. Nine of ten migrants coming into the region are from either Europe or Africa (with 6.9 and 4.1 million migrants, respectively) (Figure 4.2).

Because of Asia's large overall population, its child migration numbers point in two seemingly contradictory directions: it is home to the largest total number of child migrants in the world, but its children migrate at one of the lowest rates of all major regions. There are a total of 12 million child migrants living in Asia, 16 per cent of all migrants in the region. While these 12 million children make up 39 per cent of the world's child migrants, this proportion is notably below Asia's 56 per cent share of the global child population.

The gap between these shares is driven by the relatively low rates of migration for Asian children: just 1 in 110 of the continent's children live

outside the country where they were born. This is approximately the same rate of child migration as in Africa, and well below the rates in Oceania, Northern America and Europe. Regardless of the proportion of children migrating in Asia or beyond it, the total number of children who are moving makes child migration an issue that the region cannot ignore.

The primary destinations for migrant children in Asia are indicative of two large trends influencing overall movement in the continent: labour migration and conflict-related displacement. Saudi Arabia hosts the largest number of child migrants in all of Asia and the second-highest number of child migrants in the world, after the United States. Two other Gulf States, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, are also among the top hosts of child migrants in Asia. The large numbers of child migrants in these countries is in line with their very high levels of labour migration, although more data are needed to understand how these children are connected to the sub-region's labour migration.<sup>166</sup>

Other Asian countries hosting large numbers of child migrants – including Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan and Turkey – are all hosts to large numbers of child refugees, pushed out of their homes by conflict and violence in places including the Syrian Arab Republic and Afghanistan. The high numbers of overall child migrants (which includes child refugees) in these host countries is a reflection of the continuing toll of conflict rather than a trend of voluntary child movement.

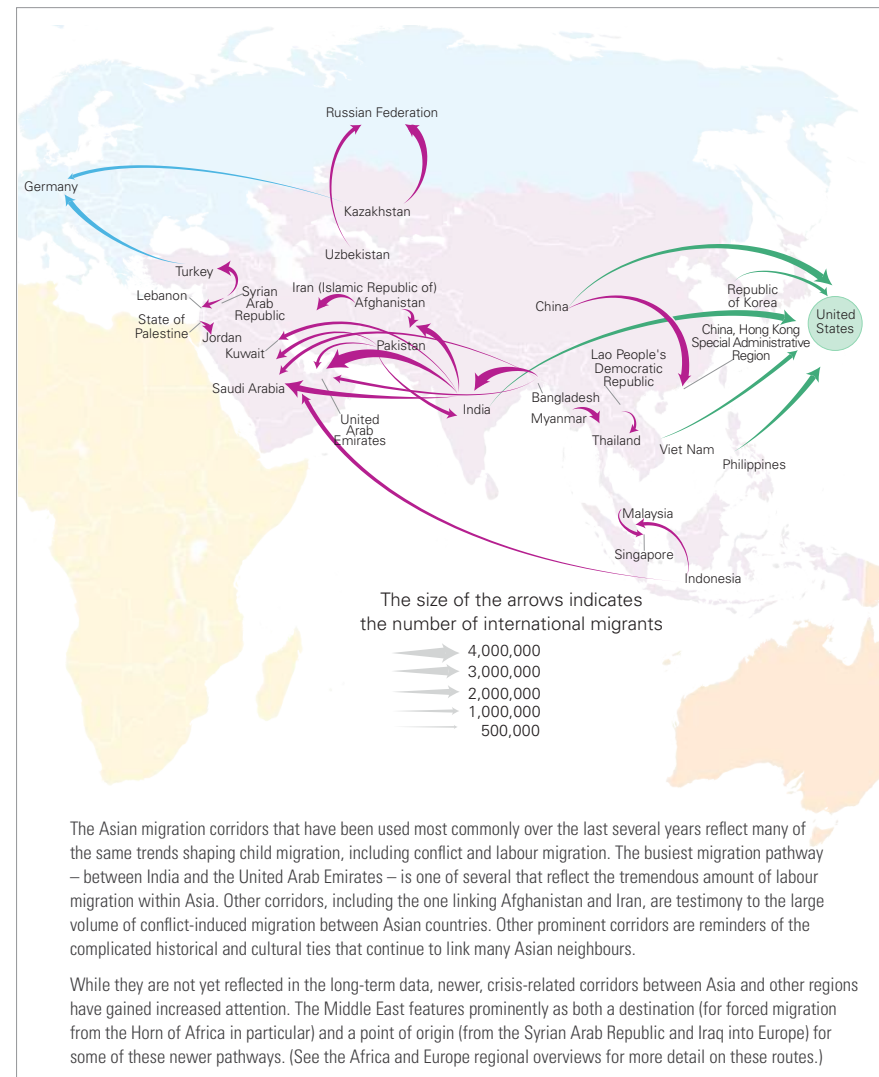
While labour migration and forced displacement have complicated implications for child well-being, there is one final trend in Asian migration with much clearer, better impacts for young people: education migration. Asian students now account for more than half of all students studying abroad worldwide, with the largest numbers of students coming from China, India and the Republic of Korea. Students are also coming into Asia for tertiary education. The share of mobile students studying within the Arab States more than doubled between 1999 and 2013, rising from 12 to 30 per cent.<sup>167</sup>

In Asia, as in other regions, moving to a new country can offer great opportunity or tremendous peril for children. Whether Asian children are able to benefit from the great potential of their own education migration or their parents' labour migration – or if they feel only the harsh effects of forced migration – depends on the decisions of today's leaders. Decisive action to tackle the root causes of conflict, strong and enforceable protections for labour migrants and their families, and enhanced cooperation for education migration are just three of the elements needed to make sure that migration benefits children and young people.

FIGURE 4.5

### Key migration routes within Asia are shaped by labour migration, historical ties and conflict

Thirty largest populations of international migrants from a single country or area of origin in Asia living in a single country or area of destination, 2015



## Displacement and forced migration in Asia

Asia is both the origin of and host to more than half of the world's refugees. The three largest groups of refugees in the world – Palestinian, Syrian and Afghan – are all from Asia. In total, there are 14.8 million refugees from the region – 9.6 million under UNHCR's mandate and an additional 5.2 million Palestinian refugees under the mandate of UNRWA.

A small number of Asian countries shoulder a tremendous portion of the global responsibility for hosting refugees. Five of the six countries hosting the largest number of refugees in the world are in Asia – led by Turkey, Pakistan and Lebanon. Lebanon and Jordan also host the world's highest percentage of refugees relative to their own populations.<sup>168</sup> Nearly one in every five people in Lebanon is now a refugee under UNHCR's mandate. As in Africa, many of the countries hosting large numbers of refugees have been doing so for decades, making their contributions to global responsibility sharing even more pronounced. In total, nearly 90 per cent of Asia's refugees find asylum in other parts of Asia (Figure 4.8).

Protracted conflicts and long-standing political crises are responsible for the situations faced by most of Asia's refugees (Figure 4.6). From decades of both chronic and acute violence endangering Palestinians to the past five years of open conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, children continue to suffer devastating effects from Asia's crises. Children make up 48 per cent of all refugees<sup>169</sup> from Asia, including half of all Syrian and Afghan refugees, and somewhat lower proportions from Myanmar and Iraq (40 and 34 per cent, respectively).<sup>170</sup> Children make up 58 per cent of all refugees from Pakistan, the highest proportion in the region.<sup>171</sup>

Turkey is the largest host of refugees under UNHCR's mandate in Asia and in the world, but age-disaggregated data about refugees hosted there are not available, making it difficult to reliably calculate the exact number of child refugees living in Turkey or Asia more generally. Likewise, information about the precise number and percentage of children among registered Palestinian refugees is not publicly available, further complicating efforts to arrive at a regional total. Filling these and other data gaps are crucial steps to effective monitoring of the well-being of children throughout the region.

A young girl holds a railing outside her family's partially destroyed home in Gaza City.

© UNICEF/UNI188295/EI Baba

### STORY 4.1 SEARCHING FOR SAFER SHORES

"My name is Mira\*, I am 15 years old. These are my sisters Alma\* who is 14, and Seemal\*. She is 13," the oldest girl explains.

The sisters come from a small village in Myanmar, where their parents still live. They have made their way to Indonesia through one of the world's most dangerous sea voyages. "Our parents sent us away to save us, because the military threatened us, they wanted to rape us," Alma says, adding that she and her sisters had to abandon school for fear about their safety.

The girls are among the 112 unaccompanied Rohingya children who landed on the shores of Aceh in 2015, after their boats were pushed out of Malaysian and Thai waters.

"We thought the journey would be easy," Mira says. They had initially

hoped to make it to Malaysia, where they wanted to seek help from fellow Rohingyas who had reached there earlier. In the end, they spent several months at sea.

"We wanted to go to school, our parents said we must have a good future but we couldn't go to school [at home]. Can we go to school here?" asks the youngest sister, Seemal.

"We are happy to be in Indonesia, people [here] are good to us and they don't try to hurt us," Mira says, adding that she wishes they could find a way to let their parents know that they are safe. Just mentioning her mother and father is overwhelming the 15-year old. Covering her face with her scarf she starts to cry, she says "I don't want to return to Myanmar but I hope I'll see my parents again."

\*Not their real names



## BOX 4.1 INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN ASIA

Conflicts in many Asian countries, high susceptibility to natural hazards and a large population all contribute to the huge toll of internal displacement within Asia. 19.2 million people have been internally displaced by violence across Asia, a staggering 47 per cent of the global total for similar internal displacements (Figure 4.7). Together, the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and Yemen account for nearly one-third of the world's total of conflict-induced internal displacements.

Other parts of the region are highly vulnerable to internal displacement caused

by natural disasters. While the number of people internally displaced by natural disasters varies significantly by year, the general trend of disproportionate impact in Asia does not. In 2015, East Asia and the Pacific and Southern Asia had 85 per cent of all disaster-related internal displacements. Given the global average of more than 25 million disaster-related internal displacements per year,<sup>172</sup> Asian children will continue to confront internal displacement and its attendant dangers each year unless dramatic action is taken to curb climate change, improve urban planning and address disaster risk reduction.

## STORY 4.2 WAITING FOR 'BEFORE'

"I miss home. I miss school. I miss everything there," 14-year-old Elias Jameel sums up the challenge of living in a makeshift settlement at the outskirts of Sana'a, the Yemeni capital, after being displaced because of intensive fighting in his home in Taiz, about 230 kilometres away.

Elias was in grade four when the fighting reached his hometown last year. "We were really scared," he said. "Everything closed down, we could not get food or even water." During a short lull in the fighting, Elias's parents decided to leave Taiz and headed towards Sana'a. Though they had nowhere to stay in the

city, they just boarded a car and came.

They have since made a new home in a temporary settlement on the outskirts of the city. He says they keep piling wood and stones on top of the tent so that it is not blown away by heavy winds. "Home was much better than this place," he says, "because there we have our own things but here we have nothing."

Elias's single wish is for peace to come so that he and his family can return home. "I want peace so that I can go to school again. I want the good food and the good water just like before."

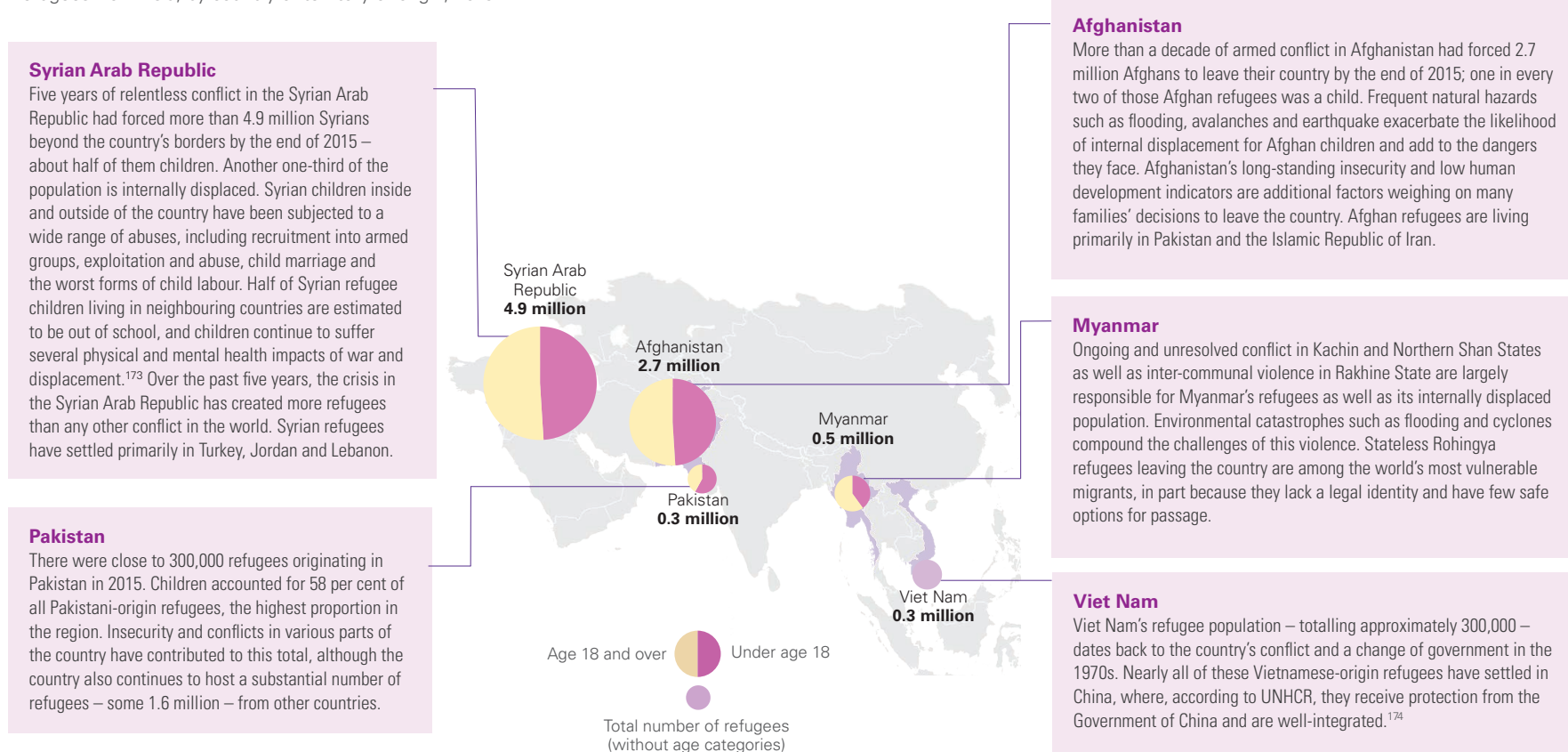


Elias, in August 2016.

FIGURE 4.6

## Protracted conflicts are responsible for Asia's largest refugee populations

Refugees from Asia, by country or territory of origin, 2015



**Note:** Map shows the countries and territories of origin in Asia with the largest numbers of refugees at the end of 2015. Age categories shown for countries with information on age, for at least 50 per cent of the population, with the exception of the Syrian Arab Republic, with information on age for 45 per cent of the population.

**Source:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2015*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2016.

### Palestinian Refugees

A total of 5.2 million Palestinian refugees are registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Individuals whose "normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict" may qualify as a Palestine refugee, along with their descendants. Today, refugee status has extended into a fifth generation for many Palestinian refugees, making them part of one of the world's most protracted refugee situations. For a variety of reasons, many calculations of the total number of global refugees do not include Palestinian refugees, although they are legally entitled to international protection like all other refugees. The 5.2 million Palestinians registered as refugees with UNRWA live in five locations throughout the Middle East – 2.2 million in Jordan, 500,000 in Lebanon, 450,000 in the Syrian Arab Republic, 790,000 in the West Bank and 1.3 million in the Gaza Strip.<sup>175</sup> Children and youth are a large part of this population: nearly two-fifths of all Palestinian refugees are between the ages of 15 and 24.



## ISSUE IN FOCUS

### Fighting for their futures – education for displaced children in Asia

A total of 8.4 million Syrian children – four out of every five – have been affected by the conflict, either in danger inside the country or forced outside it as a refugee.<sup>176</sup> The dangers they confront have been described in heart-breaking detail – loss of schooling, child labour, child marriage, recruitment by fighting forces, injury and violence. With movement and potential separation from family, their vulnerabilities multiply.

While this generation of children in the region faces incredible challenges, they also possess immense potential to build a new and different future for their countries. Recognizing this potential, a broad coalition of organizations and governments have come together under the banner of the No Lost Generation Initiative, working together to address the rights and needs of these

children. Helping children realize their right to education is an essential part of that commitment. In early 2016, increasing numbers of child refugees drove the total number of out-of-school Syrian children in the region to its highest levels ever.<sup>177</sup> More than half of Syrian refugee children living outside the country were out of school in March 2016. Refugee children face many challenges in accessing and succeeding at school, including the denial in access to school because of legal barriers, lack of documentation, discrimination and language barriers. Most pressing for many families, however, is the need for income. According to a 2015 report in Jordan, nearly half of all households rely in part or entirely on income brought in by a child.<sup>178</sup> Without further progress in getting children back to learning, their futures – and that of their region – will continue to suffer.

In the Syrian Arab Republic, children, women and men go about their daily lives in the Tishreen camp for displaced persons in Aleppo.

© UNICEF/UNI174969/Rashidi

FIGURE 4.7

### More than 19 million people have been internally displaced by conflict in Asia

Conflict-related internally displaced persons in Asia by country, 2015 (in millions)

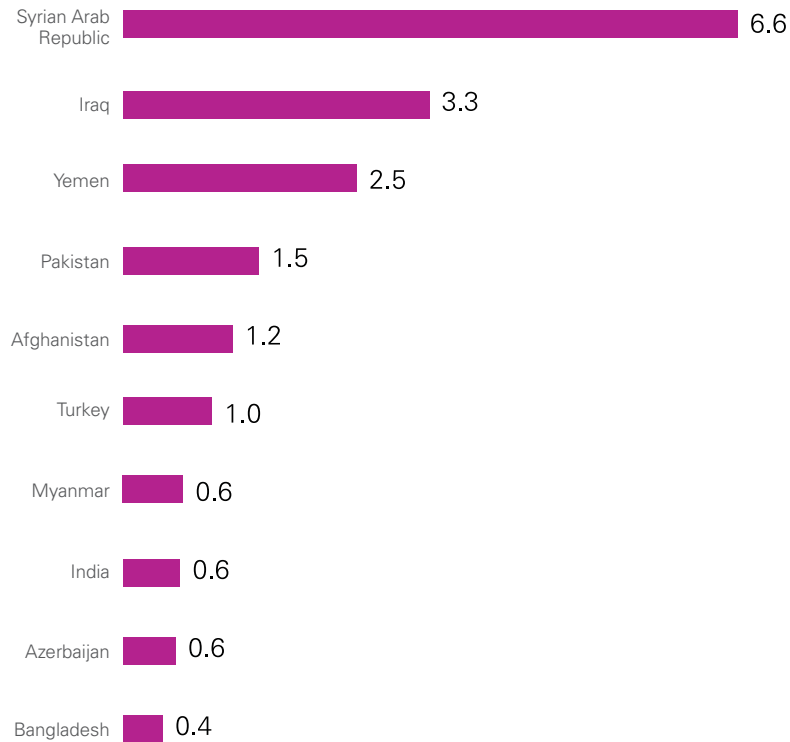
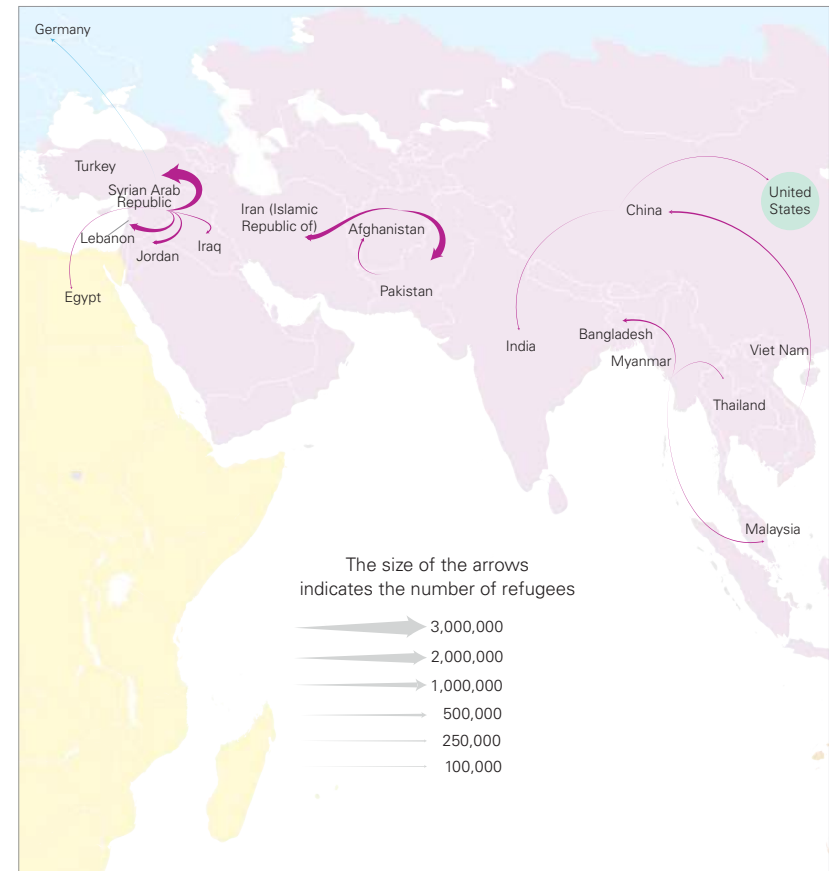


FIGURE 4.8

### Nearly 90 per cent of Asia's refugees find asylum in other parts of Asia

Fifteen largest populations of refugees from a single country of origin in Asia living in a single country of destination, 2015



**Note:** Figure shows 10 countries with largest populations of internally displaced persons in Asia.

**Source:** Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Global Internal Displacement Database, 2015

**Note:** Refugees under UNHCR's mandate. Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA are not displayed. Nearly all refugees from Viet Nam have settled in China, where, according to UNHCR, they receive protection from the Government of China and are well-integrated.

**Source:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2015*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2016.

## The promise and perils of migration and displacement for children in Asia

Asia is the origin of more international child migrants than any other region in the world. These children move for a wide range of reasons and with varying results. For millions, migration offers abundant opportunities. For too many, however, both journeys and destinations put children in danger.

Evidence from Asia is more abundant than in other regions, and the wide variety of contexts within the region makes it very difficult to make conclusive statements about the dangers or opportunities that migration can offer children and families. As in other regions, however, one overarching conclusion is clear: the prospects of migration for children are shaped by family circumstances and the reasons behind a family or child's decision to move. As in all contexts, the migration legislation, policies and practices in place in countries of origin, destination and transit also play a disproportionate role in shaping the way that migration and displacement ultimately affect children and their families.

### Perilous journeys

Children leaving Asia by sea face some of the most dangerous journeys in the world. In 2015, one-third of the deaths in the Aegean Sea crossing – used primarily by Syrian, Afghan and Iraqi refugees to seek safety in Europe – were estimated to be children.<sup>179</sup>

Although a smaller number of people attempt the journey, the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea journey is estimated to be three times as deadly as the Mediterranean routes into Europe.<sup>180</sup> An estimated 58,000 people attempted a difficult and risky passage in 2014, generally from Myanmar and Bangladesh to various countries in Southeast Asia.<sup>181</sup> The journey is estimated to have claimed the lives of 2,000 Rohingya and Bangladeshis between 2012 and 2015.<sup>182</sup> The proportion of women and girls making the journey is increasing, and they now account for 15 per cent of all passengers.<sup>183</sup> In addition to the dangers of the journey itself, children and others attempting the voyage face high risks of exploitation by smugglers, sexual and gender-based violence and lethal disease.<sup>184</sup>

### Exploitation of child labour

In addition to the many vulnerabilities faced by labour migrants, the age and inexperience of young labour migrants puts them at heightened risk of exploitation and many of the worst forms of child labour.<sup>185</sup> According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), recent national surveys from seven

South Asian countries estimate that there are almost 17 million in child labour and 42 million children out of school.<sup>186</sup> As child migrant labourers are severely disadvantaged by their status, they often end up in the informal sector<sup>187</sup> or working as domestic servants, where it is particularly difficult to monitor and protect their well-being. An ILO summary of evidence related to child labour makes it clear that working migrant children are the worst affected among these: “amongst child labourers it is migrant children who receive less pay, work longer hours, attend school less frequently, and face higher death rates at work in comparison to local children.”<sup>188</sup>

### Uneven health outcomes

Depending on the context, migration can have mixed impacts on child health. A 2005 UNICEF study with evidence from the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand found that parental migration appears to improve the material conditions of children who remain behind, which likely translate into changes in children's health and schooling.<sup>189</sup> In contrast, other research has shown that migrant children and families often face difficulties in accessing health care for a variety of reasons, including their legal status, fear of deportation, unfamiliarity with navigating the health systems and language barriers.<sup>190</sup> Migrant workers, including child migrants exploited for labour, face some of the most direct health repercussions, including the physical dangers of work, poor adherence to occupational health and safety standards among employers and lack of health insurance.<sup>191</sup> There is evidence that, over time, health outcomes for migrant children normalize to the same levels as those of other children in their host countries – for better or for worse. Asian adolescents born to migrant parents in the United States were more than twice as likely to become obese than their first-generation counterparts born outside the country.<sup>192</sup>

### Mixed impacts of parental migration

As a region, Asia is deeply affected by the labour migration of parents, particularly when children do not move with their parents. In Nepal, for example, more than 500,000 overseas work permits were issued in 2013–2014 and more than one-quarter of the country's gross domestic product comes in the form of remittances.<sup>193,194</sup> The region also has one of the best bodies of evidence about the impacts of parental labour migration on children. The conclusions of that research – consistent with other regions – is mixed. A wide range of studies conducted in 2006

found positive economic and educational impacts of parental remittances on improving schooling and health and reducing child labour. Girls, in particular, seem to benefit.<sup>195</sup> Other, generally older studies are less clear about the implications of parental migration on education, particularly for older children. When both parents migrate, children have been reported to struggle more with behavioural and caregiver issues.<sup>196</sup>

Many of the parents who migrate from or within Asia for work are subjected to particularly difficult and often exploitative conditions, especially if they are irregular migrants. If they are injured or die while away, children and surviving family members can face extreme hardship. In some countries with large numbers of emigrant labourers, existing programmes offer valuable lessons for similar contexts. The Philippines Overseas Workers Welfare Administration is a long-standing example of a worker-protection agency, providing a wide range of services for Filipino workers abroad.<sup>197</sup> The more recently established Migrant Workers' Welfare Fund in Nepal covers compensation for workers injured abroad, provides access to education and health services for the children of migrant workers and protects workers during crises in the countries where they work.<sup>198</sup> If well-implemented, programmes like these can provide substantial benefits for both migrant workers and their children.

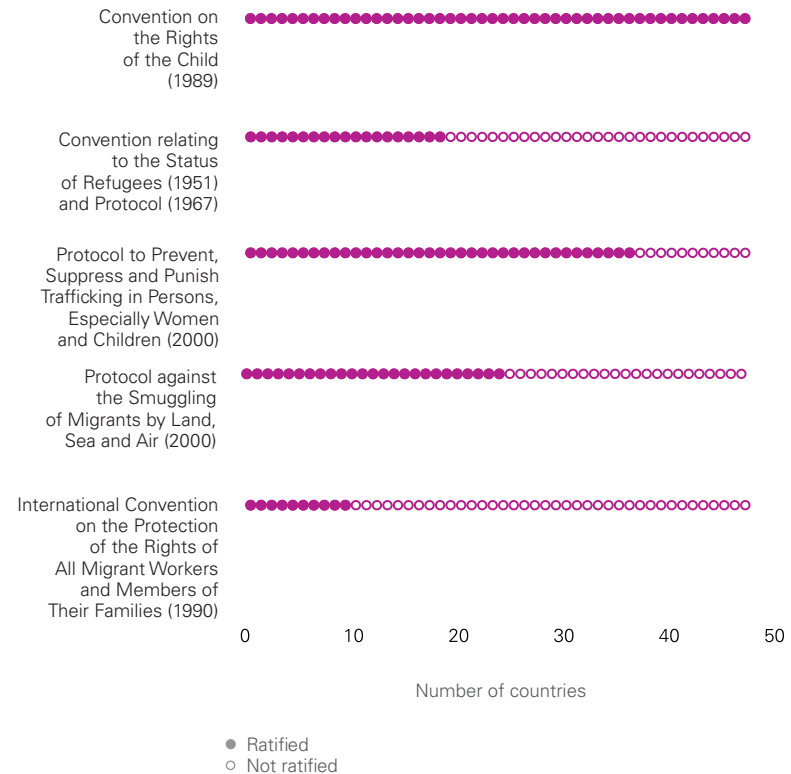
### Opportunities for new futures

Evidence from the United States brings optimism about the potential for child migrants and the children of migrants to thrive, given the right conditions. In self-assessments, second-generation Asian Americans indicate higher standards of living than their parents at the same point in life. They are much more likely to speak English – key to educational and economic success – and to have diverse friends and social networks.<sup>199</sup> Surveys of Asian migrant parents indicate that these are many of the factors that influence their decisions to migrate, citing better economic opportunity, greater political freedoms and preferable conditions for raising children when compared to their home countries.<sup>200</sup> While these outcomes are likely to be highly influenced by the relative wealth of Asian migrants able to settle across the Pacific – as well as the laws and policies they encounter – they are important indicators that reinforce the aspirational nature of much migration for and with children.

## Legal frameworks to protect the rights of child refugees and migrants in Asia

In every region, children's rights are protected by a robust framework of international human rights instruments, although ratification of some elements is uneven. Across Asia, ratification of four of the five major instruments lags behind most other regions (Figure 4.9).

**FIGURE 4.9** Number of countries in Asia that have ratified key human rights instruments, July 2016



Source: United Nations Treaty Collection; see <<http://treaties.un.org>> (status as of 13 July 2016).

### Regional legal frameworks

There are no regional Asia-wide conventions to protect human or child rights, although there are several sub-regional instruments.

#### In East Asia

- > The Bangkok Declaration on Irregular Migration (1999) saw 18 East Asian and Asian Pacific countries and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region adopt a commitment and framework to address irregular migration (including human trafficking) and provide irregular migrants with humanitarian treatment.
- > The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Children provides for the strengthening of protective policies and measures for stateless, migrant and asylum-seeking children.
- > The ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers was adopted in 2007 based on the principle that states of origin and destination would strengthen and promote the rights of migrant workers. A framework instrument is currently being drafted in order to implement the declaration.
- > Six governments have agreed to The Joint Declaration of the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT Declaration) and two subsequent declarations related to trafficking.

#### In South Asia

- > The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia reaffirms commitments to the CRC while laying out specific regional priorities for protecting the rights of children, including an emphasis on non-discrimination, prevention of child labour and registration of all births.
- > The SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution was adopted in 2002.

- > The Kathmandu Declaration issued at the 18th SAARC Summit (2014) called on Heads of State/Governments to reinforce preventative measures against trafficking and exploitation of women and children.
- > The SAARC Kathmandu Declaration (2014) covered an agreement on labour migration management from South Asia “to ensure safety, security and wellbeing of their migrant workers in the destination countries outside the region.”

#### In the Middle East

- > The Arab Charter on Human Rights (2004) has been adopted by the League of Arab States and recognizes most of the universally accepted civil and political rights, as well as specific economic, social and cultural rights; the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (1990), a declaration by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (now the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation), provides an overview of human rights from the Islamic perspective.
- > The Declaration on the Protection of Refugees and Displaced Persons in the Arab World (1992) reaffirms the need for humanitarian action for refugees and displaced persons (with specific reference to the needs of Palestinians); the Arab Convention on Regulating the Status of Refugees in the Arab Countries (1994), adopted by the League of Arab States, reaffirms the provisions of universally accepted human rights frameworks relating to refugees.

#### In Central Asia

- > The Almaty Declaration (2011) recognizes the protection needs of refugees within migration flows in Central Asia and the importance of acceding to and complying with international law, particularly in establishing fair asylum procedures and ensuring non-refoulement.

A boy living in Harsham Camp for internally displaced persons in Iraq walks along a muddy street in the camp.

© UNICEF/UN06343/Anmar





**Eastern Europe**

- Belarus
- Bulgaria
- Czech Republic
- Hungary
- Poland
- Republic of Moldova
- Romania
- Russian Federation
- Slovakia
- Ukraine

**Northern Europe**

- Åland Islands
- Channel Islands
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Faeroe Islands
- Finland
- Guernsey
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Isle of Man
- Jersey
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Norway
- Sark
- Svalbard and Jan Mayen Islands
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

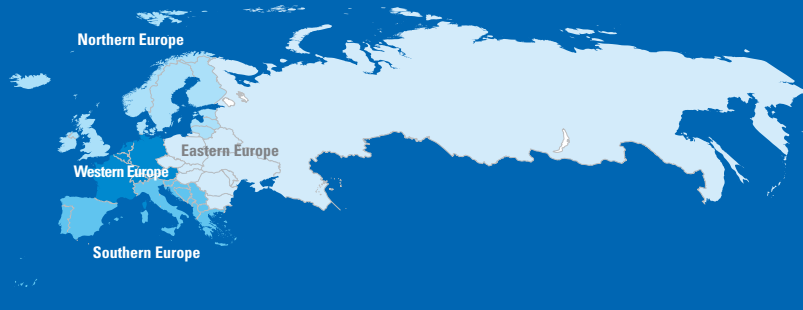
**Southern Europe**

- Albania
- Andorra
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Croatia
- Gibraltar
- Greece
- Holy See
- Italy
- Malta
- Montenegro
- Portugal
- San Marino
- Serbia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

**Western Europe**

- Austria
- Belgium
- France
- Germany
- Liechtenstein
- Luxembourg
- Monaco
- Netherlands
- Switzerland

# 5 Europe



All maps in this section do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers.

## 7 in 10

children seeking asylum in Europe\* in 2016 were fleeing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan and Iraq



Europe is home to

**1 in 6** of the world's child migrants



In 2015, more than

**2x**

as many children applied for asylum within Europe compared with the year before



\*European Union and free movement zone



# Migration in Europe

FIGURE 5.1

**Intra-European migration makes up the second largest population movement in the world**

International migrants from Europe by region of destination, 2015 (in millions)

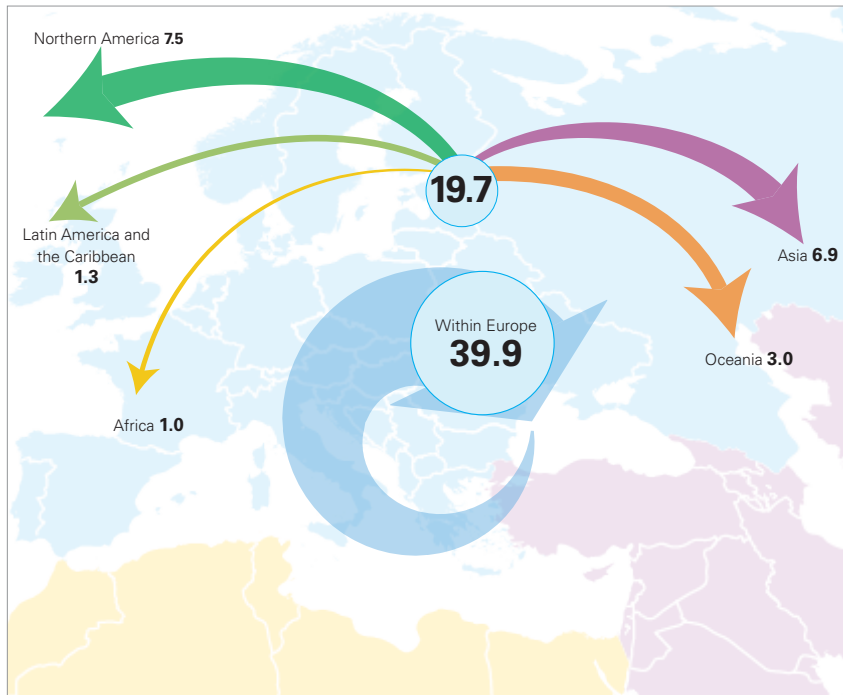
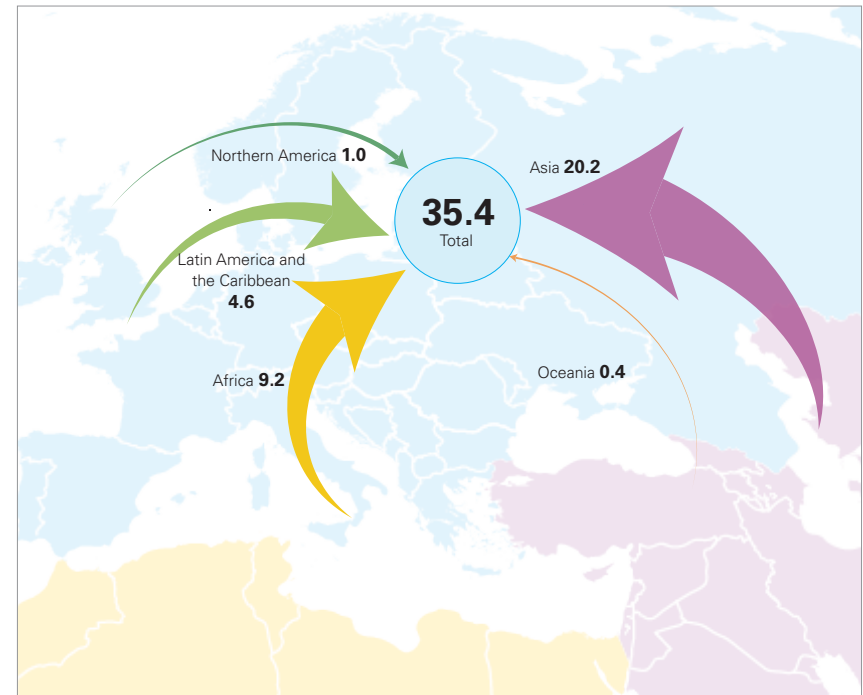


FIGURE 5.2

**The largest movement of migrants into Europe comes from Asia**

International migrants into Europe by region of origin, 2015 (in millions)



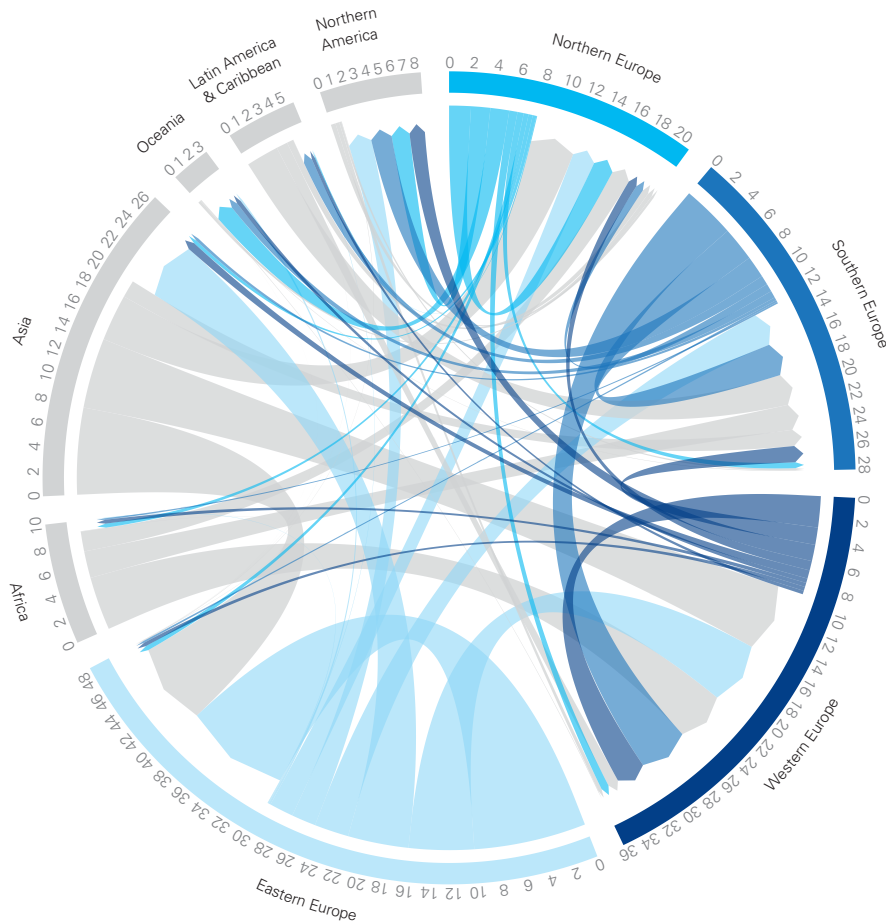
**Note:** Globally, there are 9.8 million international migrants with origin classified as other or unknown; 0.8 million of these are living in Europe. Migrants of unknown origin are not included in these figures.

**Source:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015; and UNICEF analysis based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by age and sex*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

FIGURE 5.3

### Most migration that begins in Europe stays within Europe

International migrants by region of origin and destination in Europe, 2015 (in millions)



**Note:** Globally, there are 9.8 million international migrants with origin classified as other or unknown; 0.8 million of these are living in Europe. Migrants of unknown origin are not included in this figure. See page 26 for a detailed explanation on how to interpret the chord diagram.

**Source:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

In 2015, 76.1 million international migrants were living within Europe, nearly one-third of all the world's migrants. As in other regions, much of the migration in Europe is intra-regional, made up of the movements of Europeans within the region. Just over half of all migrants in Europe are Europeans living in a different European country from the one in which they were born. Much of this movement is enabled by and is a consequence of the European Union (EU) policy of free movement for EU citizens.

Within Europe, Eastern Europe has the largest number of migrants living in other countries in the same sub-region (Figure 5.3). Just over one-quarter of migrants in Europe come from Asia and the balance were born in other regions of the world (Figures 5.1 and 5.2).

An additional 19.7 million Europeans have left the continent to make homes in other parts of the world (Figure 5.1). European migrants who live outside the region live in roughly equal proportions in Northern America and Asia (13 and 12 per cent of all European migrants, respectively). Eastern Europe has the largest number of migrants leaving the continent, primarily to Asia (Figure 5.3). The countries with the largest emigrant populations are the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Figure 5.4). The countries that receive the largest numbers of migrants are Germany, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom.

Children make up a smaller share of migrants in Europe than in any other region of the world. With a total population of 5.4 million, children are just over 7 per cent of migrants living in Europe. This is just below the share of children among migrants living in Northern America and roughly half the proportion of children among migrants living in Asia (8 and 16 per cent, respectively). As in other regions, girls and boys are nearly equally represented among migrant children living in Europe.

While children are only a modest proportion of the total migrants in Europe, child migrants in the region are still a sizeable proportion of the world's child migrants: today, approximately one in six of the world's child migrants lives in Europe. The largest number of migrant children in Europe lives in the United Kingdom, followed by the Russian Federation, Spain, France and Germany. These five countries host 56 per cent of all migrant children in Europe.

In Europe, as elsewhere in the world, child migrants are not the only children affected by migration. When parents move abroad without their children, both the countries and the children they leave behind feel the effects, both positive and negative. A recent review of evidence from Moldovan and Ukrainian parental migration found both substantial numbers of children affected as well as large remittance flows into the countries. In

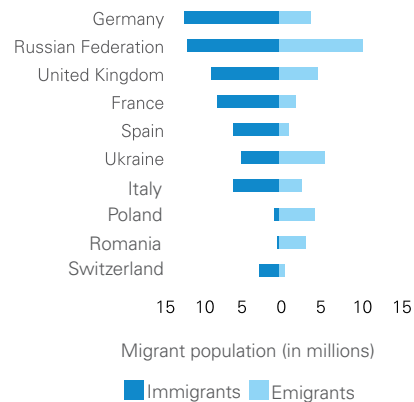
Moldova, 2014 estimates identified some 100,000 children left without the care of one of both parents because of migration and nearly US\$2 billion in remittances; in Ukraine, the numbers were even larger: 200,000 children and US\$9 billion in remittances.<sup>201</sup> The effects of these separations on children – as in other regions – are mixed. While remittances provide a vital form of income for a substantial portion of families with migrant parents, alleviating poverty and allowing children to afford school fees and obtain health services, other evidence shows that children with absent parents may have worse educational performance and suffer from care deficits, although quantifying those impacts is particularly challenging.<sup>202</sup>

Whether children are part of migration movements or left in the care of others when their parents move, they remain a core constituency in European migration debates. Their rights to health and social services, education and, later, employment, are all implicated by current migration debates across the continent. As those discussions continue, meeting the rights and interests of children is crucially important.

FIGURE 5.4

**Germany and the Russian Federation receive the most immigrants; the Russian Federation and Ukraine have the largest number of emigrants**

A. Top 10 countries with largest numbers of immigrants or emigrants in Europe, 2015 (in millions)



**The largest numbers of child migrants live in the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation and Spain**

B. Top 10 countries hosting the largest numbers of international migrants under 18 years of age in Europe, 2015 (in thousands)

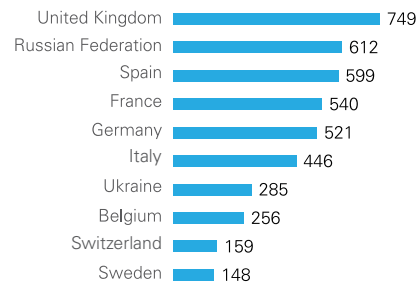
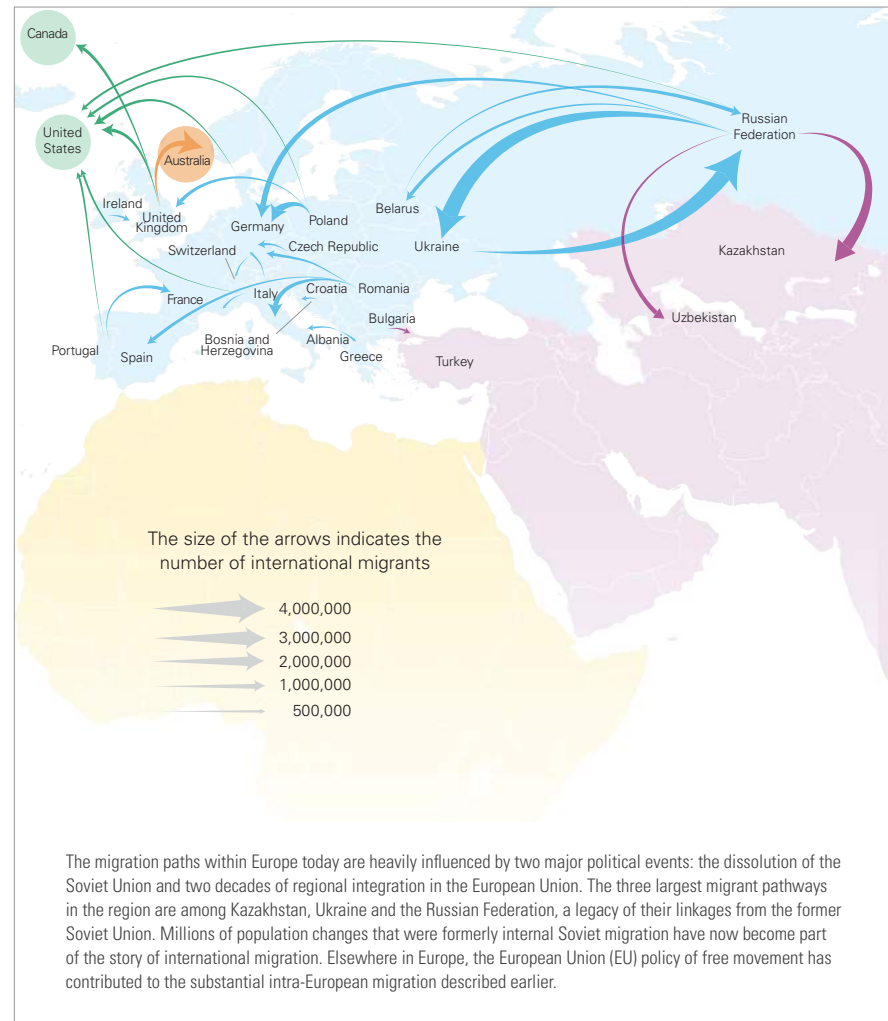


FIGURE 5.5

**Key migration routes within Europe are shaped by historical and political ties**

Thirty largest populations of international migrants from a single country or area of origin in Europe living in a single country or area of destination, 2015



Source for all figures: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015; and UNICEF analysis based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by age and sex*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

## Displacement and forced migration in Europe

By the end of 2015, Europe hosted approximately one in nine of all refugees under UNHCR's mandate, a total of 1.8 million people (Figure 5.7); an additional 1 million asylum-seekers in Europe were also waiting for a decision on their asylum applications. As those claims are reviewed, the number of people officially recognized as refugees is expected to rise.

Unlike other parts of the world that host large numbers of refugees, data on refugees in Europe are primarily under the domain of national authorities, meaning that data availability and disaggregation vary widely across the region. This creates challenges for tracking the number and fates of child refugees in Europe. Among the European countries hosting the largest numbers of refugees, only Germany and Serbia publicly report complete information on the number of children in their overall totals of refugees. By the end of 2015, one out of every five of the over 316,000 refugees in Germany was a child.<sup>203</sup>

For the rest of Europe, comprehensive and comparable data on the destinations of child refugees are not available – a major gap that can prevent effective monitoring of the well-being of some of the most vulnerable children in the region. This gap is partially driven by the different systems for and different levels of priority given to maintaining child-specific data across the region.

There is, however, more comprehensive data available about people seeking asylum.<sup>204</sup> For every 100 asylum-seekers in Europe in 2015, 30 were children. A total of 389,000 children applied for asylum in 32 European countries in 2015, more than twice the number of child applicants from 2014.<sup>205</sup> Applications from the first half of 2016 look similar to those from the year before – about 30 per cent of applications are from children, with over 165,000 applications filed for children by the end of June.<sup>206</sup>

Nearly 70 per cent of children seeking asylum in Europe in the first half of 2016 were fleeing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan and Iraq (38, 18 and 14 per cent, respectively). About two-thirds of all children seeking asylum in Europe sought safety in Germany, while the balance of applications were submitted in Austria, Hungary, Sweden, France, Greece and Italy and other countries in Europe.<sup>207</sup>

Much of the global attention on displacement and forced migration in Europe has focussed on Europe's role as a destination for asylum-seekers from Africa and Asia. There are also, however, roughly half a million refugees who come from within Europe, just over 3 per cent of refugees under UNHCR's

mandate. Some 318,000 refugees – nearly two-thirds of all refugees from the region – come from Ukraine, driven largely by political upheaval in the country since late 2013. Adding to this toll, more than 1.6 million Ukrainians had been internally displaced by early 2016, including more than 215,000 children registered as internally displaced persons.<sup>208</sup> The large-scale internal displacement in Ukraine has put children at risk of both direct conflict-related injuries as well as the knock-on effects of conflict, including disruptions to clean water and appropriate sanitation and disease outbreaks, including polio.

Of the 1.8 million refugees who had already found asylum in Europe at the end of 2015, most were divided in nearly equal measure among Germany, the Russian Federation and France (17, 17 and 15 per cent of refugees in Europe, respectively).<sup>209</sup> In 2015, more than one-third of the refugees living in Germany were from the Syrian Arab Republic, with smaller proportions from Iraq and Afghanistan (38, 17 and 10 per cent, respectively). Nearly all of the 315,000 refugees hosted in the Russian Federation by the end of 2015 were from Ukraine.

By the end of 2015, Germany had become the world's largest recipient of new individual applications for asylum – receiving more than twice as many as the next closest country. Children represented nearly one-third of asylum-seekers in Germany in 2015 – a notably higher proportion of children than among Germany's already-recognized refugees.<sup>210</sup>

### Shifting passages to and through Europe

In 2015 alone, more than 1 million people reached Europe by sea. The journey was treacherous for all and lethal for too many – more than 3,700 people died en route or were reported missing in the Mediterranean Sea. In the first 11 months of 2015, one in every three people who lost their lives in the Eastern Mediterranean was a child.<sup>211</sup>

In both 2015 and the first half of 2016, a clear majority of Europe's arrivals by sea came into Greece, with nearly all the rest entering through Italy. There is a far higher percentage of children entering Europe through Greece than through Italy. Thirty-eight per cent of all the migrants and refugees arriving in Greece in the first half of 2016 were children; in Italy, just 16 per cent of the new arrivals were children (Figure 5.6). While the total number of children reaching Italian shores are doing so alone. In the first seven months of 2016, more than 13,700 children – 90 per cent of all migrant and refugee children arriving in Italy – either were travelling without their families or had been separated from them in transit.

The difference between these two rates reflects the different origins and situations of the children undertaking these treacherous voyages. In Greece, almost 90 per cent of all arrivals in the first seven months of 2016 came from the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan and Iraq. In Italy, that same proportion came from sub-Saharan Africa. The different backgrounds of children arriving in Italy versus Greece will inform both the vulnerabilities of these children as well as the services needed to address them. Regardless of their background, they are all entitled to the same protection as children.

Two major shifts in migration policies have changed the pathways by which migrants and refugees have reached Europe over the past year. The first shift was the rise in national migration control responses along the Western Balkans route into Europe. As more and more families sought safety in Europe over the course of 2015, some European Union Member States implemented national migration control responses, erecting legal – and in some cases, literal – barriers to movement for those seeking passage into Europe. Border closures and migration policy changes along the Western Balkans route beginning in late 2015 have changed the paths that families are forced to tread, often pushing them into more dangerous and desperate journeys along different routes.<sup>212</sup>

The second major change in movements was the result of an agreement reached between the European Union and Turkey in March 2016. As part of the agreement, Turkey will take steps to prevent new routes of irregular migration; individuals arriving in Greece from Turkey who do not file for asylum or whose asylum claims are rejected will be returned to Turkey. In exchange, European leaders committed to resettling one Syrian directly from Turkey for every Syrian who is returned to Turkey from Greece.<sup>213</sup>

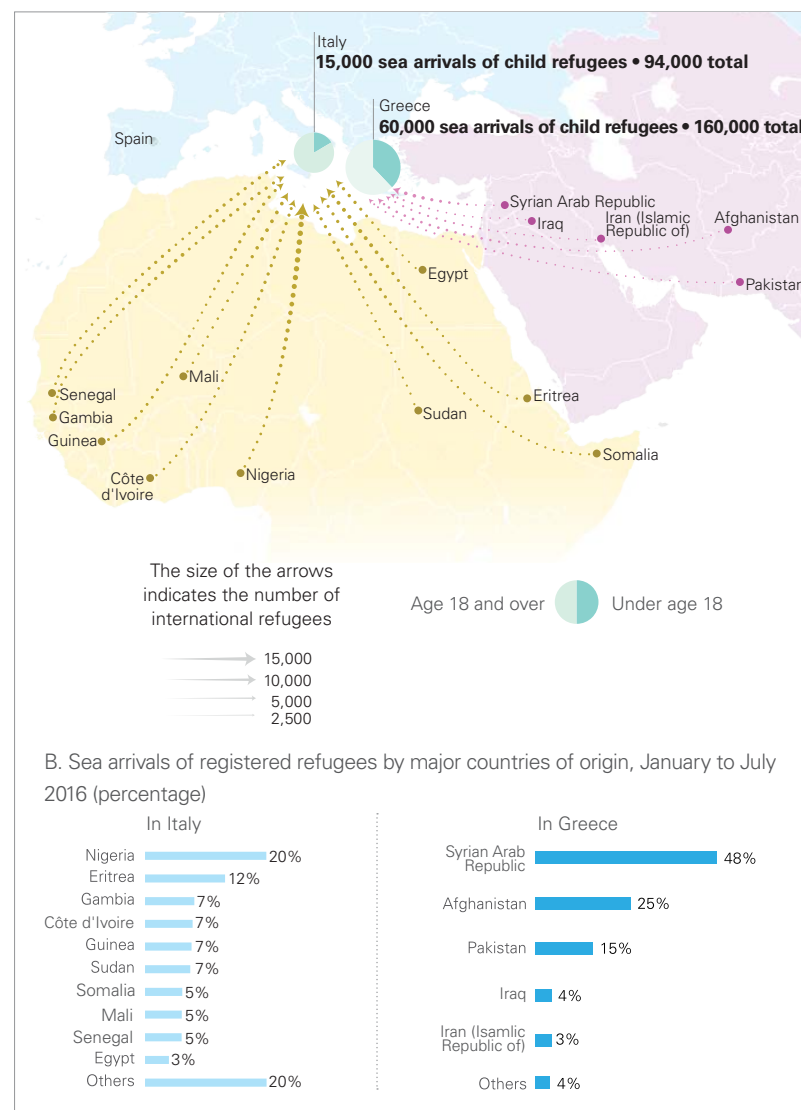
While overall arrivals by sea into Greece have fallen dramatically compared to 2015,<sup>214</sup> by June 2016, some 57,000 refugees and other migrants were dispersed across Greece following the EU-Turkey agreement,<sup>215</sup> with children making up nearly 40 per cent of new arrivals in the country in the first half of the year.<sup>216</sup> Authorities continue to struggle in meeting the needs of children, and the increasing use of migration detention has caused some humanitarian organizations to withdraw from working in some so-called hotspots.<sup>217</sup>

Border closures and the fear of being turned back have intensified the dangers that children face in reaching Europe, whether they travel with family or on their own. While reliable data are not available to track trends in migrant smuggling, trafficking and other crimes, testimonies collected by UNICEF and other United Nations agencies provide a glimpse into the dangers that children face along every step of their journey.<sup>218</sup> Urgent action is needed to protect children whether they are on the move, in administrative limbo or trying to start new futures when they reach their destinations.

FIGURE 5.6

### Children made up one-third of the million refugees and other migrants arriving in Europe by sea in the first seven months of 2016

A. Sea arrivals of registered refugees in Europe, January to July 2016



**Note:** Numbers are rounded to 1,000. Figures are provisional and maybe partial and subject to change.

**Source:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <data.unhcr.org/Mediterranean/regional.php>, accessed 1 September 2016.

## STORY 5.1 GOING IT ALONE, TOGETHER



In September of last year, twin brothers Aimamo and Ibrahim Jawnoh left their village of Kombu Brikam in Gambia after their father divorced their mother. Left with little means to support her children, the boys' mother sent them on the journey to Europe in order to work and send money home. She introduced them to a man who agreed to help them, on the condition that their journey be paid for through labour upon arrival in Libya.

Aimamo and Ibrahim travelled from Gambia to Senegal, then on to Niger where they stopped in the desert near the city of Agadez. From there, the brothers were shuttled onto a flatbed truck along with other refugees and migrants from West Africa.

They drove northward for days until they reached the town of Saba, where their group was arrested for not having proper documentation. "In Saba, they threw us in jail," says Ibrahim. "We were beaten and kept there for a few days until the driver came and paid the police to let us all out."

Aimamo and Ibrahim were eventually driven to Tripoli, Libya, where they were taken to a farm and forced to do manual labour around the property. There they joined about 200 other African men and boys.

Aimamo and Ibrahim, in May 2016.

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"If you try to run they shoot you and you die," says Aimamo, "And if you stop working, they beat you. It was just like the slave trade." According to Aimamo, he and his brother were forced to work from 9AM to 7PM every day. "Once I was just resting for five minutes, and a man beat me with a cane. After working, they lock you inside."

Aimamo and Ibrahim don't know exactly how long they worked on the farm, but guess it was two or three months before they were given cash and the details of a secret location where they were to board a smuggling vessel bound for Italy. They boarded a dinghy in the middle of the night and set off across the Mediterranean. "It was very uncomfortable but at least we had open air," says Aimamo.

The engine cut out sometime the next day, leaving the boat and its passengers to drift in the open water until they were eventually rescued by a European coastguard vessel and taken to the Italian island of Lampedusa.

The brothers were eventually transferred to a Government-supported shelter for unaccompanied minors near Trabia, Sicily. At the shelter, Aimamo and Ibrahim are provided with food, medical care, education and support for their asylum claims. They are also able to call their mother back home in Gambia once a week. "She's happy now that we are safe, she was worried when we were in Libya and couldn't call her," says Ibrahim, adding that while their journey has been difficult, making it together with his twin brother has made it easier. "Since we started, we have always been together and that has helped a lot."

## STORY 5.2 NOT YET DARING TO DREAM



Sajad Al-Faraji, 15, and his family made the weeks-long trip from their home in Basra, Iraq through Turkey, across the sea to Greece and up through the Balkans before reaching their final destination in Austria.

The journey is an incredibly difficult one for any family, but it was especially hard for Sajad, who has been paralyzed from the waist down since he was an infant. Sajad faced mobility issues during his entire journey, arriving in Vienna exhausted and ill with a respiratory infection. At times, the family had to buy four tickets to get on a train only to find there were no seats. Sajad had to sleep in the aisle, and the family had to put luggage on top of him.

The family made the decision to leave Iraq, in part, because they hoped that Sajad would have more opportunities in a country like Austria where he could benefit from better support and services

for children with disabilities. Sajad's sister, Houda Al-Malek, confirms that there was no system in place to empower children with disabilities in their home community. This clearly took its toll on Sajad who is still reluctant to be hopeful about his future – "I have no dream whatsoever," he says.

Houda says, "My mother took the risk and decided to leave Iraq.... She told me she was ready to die in the sea, but the most important thing was that I take my brothers to the country I choose... [we came because] here there is security, but back in Iraq there is no security. Iraq is full of bad things."

"Certainly he will have a better life here.... He is still not that open-minded, but I believe he has a better chance here," his sister says.

The family, although safely at their final destination, must now go through the complex process of claiming asylum so that they can become legal residents of Austria and build a new life for themselves.

Sajad, in December 2015

© UNICEF/UN08734/Gilbertson VII



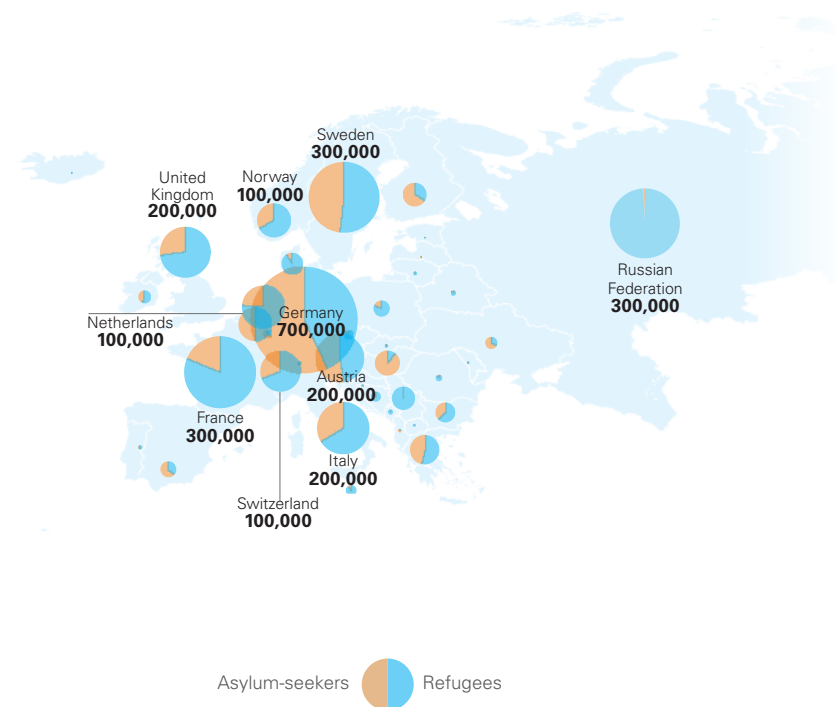
15-year-old Shaimae from Halab, the Syrian Arab Republic, prepares to pass through a transit centre in Serbia.

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FIGURE 5.7

## In 2015, there were 1.8 million refugees and 1 million asylum-seekers throughout Europe

Refugees and asylum-seekers in Europe, by country of destination, 2015



**Note:** Numbers are rounded to 100,000.

The numbers presented here do not include new applications for asylum in 2016, which totalled approximately 560,000 between January and the end of June for countries in the European Union and free movement zone. Children made up approximately 30 per cent of all applicants. During the first six months of the year, Germany alone received 390,000 asylum applications. As those claims are reviewed, the number of people officially recognized as refugees is expected to change.

**Source:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2015*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2016.

## The promise and perils of migration for children in Europe

Children and families move within and into Europe with the same aspirations they have all over the world – the hope of a brighter future. That hope has translated into reality for many children. Free movement within the EU has facilitated access to education, vocational training and other opportunities. For many years, Europe has welcomed large numbers of refugee and migrant children from other regions and provided them with opportunities to grow, develop and contribute to European society. There is a strong civil society movement advocating for equal rights and fair treatment of refugee and other migrant children in Europe and many European states have invested and continue to invest in helping refugee and migrant children integrated.

There has, however, been a recent increase in voices challenging such policies. Migration and refugee laws and policies have been revised in some contexts, limiting rights and access to services for children based on their migration status. Children seeking asylum and those in irregular migration situations have been the most affected, with some European states denying them full access to even basic services.<sup>219</sup>

All children have a right to protection, equal access to services and a safe environment in which to thrive. Investing in the systems to realize those rights is a moral and legal imperative. It is also a sound investment in the future of Europe. As a region, Europe is ageing and its child population is contracting. This makes the successful education and integration of its migrant children crucial to the region's future prospects – these children will be a key element of Europe's growth in the decades to come. Investing in children, especially refugee and other migrant children, is an investment in Europe's future prosperity.

Despite enhanced efforts to support children from many countries across the region, child migrants and refugees continue to confront both new and old challenges as they travel to and settle in new homes.

### UNEVEN ACCESS TO PROTECTION MEASURES AND RESETTLEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Many governments across Europe have undertaken measures to protect and support refugee and migrant children, including enhanced search-and-rescue operations at sea, increased investments in personnel and financial resources, and commitments to relocation and resettlement. However, governments have also often given priority to migration control interests, without focussing sufficiently on the specific rights and needs of refugee and migrant children. To date, the promised durable solutions have reached very few children awaiting resettlement. By mid-July 2016, roughly 3,000 people had been relocated from Italy and Greece, out of the 160,000 agreed in September 2015,<sup>220</sup> while fewer than 800 people were resettled from Turkey into the EU during the first 90 days of the EU-Turkey agreement.<sup>221</sup> For refugee and migrant children, these delays mean prolonged stays in closed centres and limited access to basic services.

The majority of refugees and migrants who arrived in Europe in 2015 through mid-2016 are accommodated in different settings: informal camps, centres, hotels, hostels, private houses and flats.<sup>222</sup> Many of them are staying in transit centres and informal settlements for too long, in overcrowded conditions and with limited privacy and access to crucial services including education and health. Refugee and migrant children do not always receive timely information about their situation, legal options and related procedures. Restricted legal options and lack of information about them expose children to risks of abuse, violence and exploitation.

### FAMILY SEPARATION

Throughout Europe, procedures for family reunification, including transfer of asylum claims for family reunification, can be extremely long, exposing children to risks of violence, abuse and exploitation while they are separated from their families.<sup>223</sup> The legal definition of family does not always correspond to the social and cultural reality of children in their countries of origin, complicating efforts to reunite families. Some States have further limited entitlements to family reunification, differentiating between refugees and other persons granted protection. Ineffective guardianship systems for unaccompanied and separated children hinder processes for determining the best interest of each child, including resettlement, relocation and durable solutions.<sup>224</sup>

### IMMIGRATION DETENTION AND ENFORCEMENT

In many parts of Europe, there are good practices on alternatives to immigration detention of children. There is also a clear commitment by the Council of Europe and some countries in the region to work towards ending the detention of children for migration control purposes. Despite these positive examples, asylum-seeking and migrant children and families routinely encounter migration and detention realities that do not match up with national commitments. In 2014, 17 EU Member States reportedly detained unaccompanied children and 19 detained families with children.<sup>225</sup> Similarly, the Asylum Information Database indicates that, while asylum-seekers are guaranteed access to legal assistance in all EU Member States, actual practice for assistance and representation varies widely.<sup>226</sup>



## RESTRICTED ACCESS TO SOME HEALTH SERVICES

When migrant children can make use of health services in the places they settle, they may well see improved health outcomes. To realize those benefits, however, children must have the right and the means to access health services. While most countries within the region allow undocumented migrant children to access emergency health services, they have very uneven access to general health services. According to a recent survey conducted in 33 European countries, “only eight EU Member States grant all undocumented migrant children the same level of health care as the children of its own citizens; six totally restrict their entitlements to emergency care only; and 12 allow undocumented migrants limited access to specialist services like maternity care, treatment of HIV and/or infectious diseases.”<sup>227</sup> Even when children do not cross borders, internal displacement as a result of conflict can significantly increase their health risks, as seen in recent evidence from Ukraine.<sup>228</sup>

## CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND XENOPHOBIA

Ongoing recession, uneven economic recovery and a divisive political discourse have intensified the economic and social marginalization that some migrants face during their journeys and once they reach their destinations. In a recent survey across the European Union, approximately one-fifth of young migrants reported belonging to a group that was discriminated against. This form of discrimination is encountered not only by newly arrived migrants, but also by European-born children of migrants. Roughly the same percentage of young people born to migrant parents reported that their ethnic or national-origin group was discriminated against.<sup>229</sup> Discrimination and social exclusion can prevent children and families from accessing the services to which they are entitled, from attending and engaging in schools and other community forums, and from overcoming economic disadvantages they may have had when arriving in their new homes.

## UNEVEN OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION

The promise of better educational opportunities for children is a key factor in many families’ decision to migrate to Europe. While many children are able to benefit from improved schools and social stability, the results for other children are mixed. From the outset, the ability of all migrant children to access education is uneven across the continent. According to a recent survey, only 10 EU Member States explicitly recognize the right of undocumented children to basic education. An additional five states explicitly exclude them from free schooling.<sup>230</sup> Early childhood development opportunities for young migrant and refugee children as well as education for adolescents are particularly limited in many countries across Europe. As the number of children arriving in Europe has increased, governments have not responded with proportional increases for their educational needs.

## HOUSEHOLD POVERTY

Children from migrant backgrounds in Europe often live in households that must confront challenges including long-term unemployment, overcrowded living conditions, anxiety and stress. In Greece, Spain and France, between 45 per cent and 55 per cent of children of migrants live in relative poverty, twice the rate of poverty among children born to non-migrant parents.<sup>231</sup> This problem, unfortunately, is not a new one linked to recent crises. As countries slowly emerged from the 2008 recession, children in migrant families were left behind. Evidence from across the continent showed that in many countries, “child poverty increased faster (or fell more slowly) for children in migrant households than for other children.”<sup>232</sup>

## UNCERTAIN WORK PROSPECTS AND CONDITIONS

Among 15–to 24– year-olds, young migrants and children of migrants are disproportionately more likely to be out of employment, education or training than their native-born counterparts.<sup>233</sup> Among those finding work, the type of jobs found by these young migrants and children of migrants are more often short-term and prospects for a permanent post or career advancement are limited. It is not only young migrants into Europe who face these challenges. Since the 2007/2008 economic crisis, young people within the European Union are also moving in search of better prospects, especially from countries such as Greece and Spain, where, at over 50 per cent in 2013, youth unemployment is significantly higher than elsewhere in Europe.<sup>234</sup>

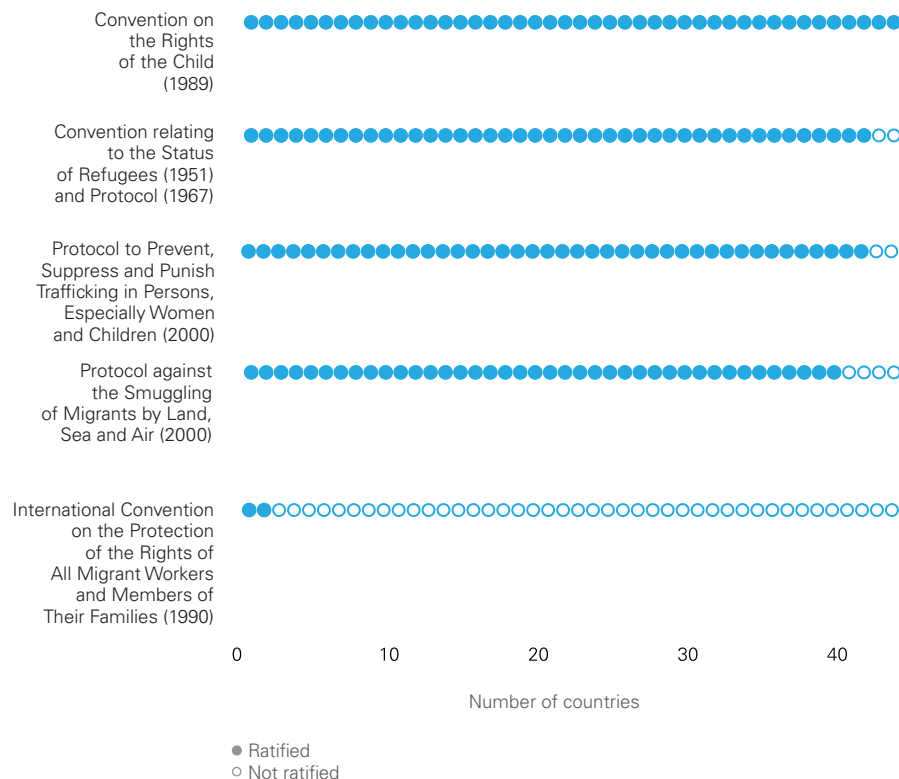
## Legal frameworks

### to protect the rights of child refugees and migrants in Europe

In every region, children’s rights are protected by a robust framework of international human rights instruments, although ratification of some elements is uneven. While ratification of the 1951 Refugee Convention is near-universal in Europe, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families has been ratified by just two countries in the region (Figure 5.8).

**FIGURE 5.8**

Number of countries in Europe that have ratified key human rights instruments, July 2016



Source: United Nations Treaty Collection; see <<http://treaties.un.org>> (status as of 13 July 2016).

### Regional legal frameworks

- > The European Convention on Human Rights (1953) comprises an international treaty to protect human rights and freedoms in Europe, including the right to freedom of movement and to non-discrimination.
- > The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000) brings together the fundamental rights protected in the EU. The Charter recognizes the rights, freedoms and principles set out hereafter and contains rights and freedoms under six titles: dignity, freedoms, equality, solidarity, citizens’ rights and justice. The European Union Agenda for the Rights of the Child aims to ensure EU compliance with the provisions of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and focusses on several concrete actions in areas where the EU can bring added value, such as child-friendly justice.
- > The European Social Charter (1965) is designed to protect the fundamental social and economic rights of all individuals, with a specific emphasis on the protection of vulnerable persons, including children and young people.
- > The Common European Asylum System is composed of a legislative framework via directives, of which several are relevant to children in regular and forced migration.
- > The Dublin Regulation is an EU law outlining Member State processes and responsibilities for examining and acting on applications for asylum. The regulation and the larger EU asylum framework are currently under review.

Vika, who was displaced from the city of Horlivka in Ukraine, stands in a corridor at an accommodation centre for people displaced by conflict.

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**Australia and New Zealand**

Australia  
New Zealand  
Norfolk Island

**Melanesia**

Fiji  
New Caledonia  
Papua New Guinea  
Solomon Islands  
Vanuatu

**Micronesia**

Guam  
Kiribati  
Marshall Islands  
Micronesia (Federated States of)  
Nauru  
Northern Mariana Islands  
Palau

**Polynesia**

American Samoa  
Cook Islands  
French Polynesia  
Niue  
Pitcairn  
Samoa  
Tokelau  
Tonga  
Tuvalu  
Wallis and Futuna Islands

# 6 Oceania



All maps in this section do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers.

Oceania is the destination for nearly **7 million** migrants from outside the region



There are **670,000** migrant children in Oceania



Just over **48,000** refugees live in Oceania



# Migration in Oceania

FIGURE 6.1

More than half of migration that begins in Oceania also ends within the region

International migrants from Oceania by region of destination, 2015 (in millions)

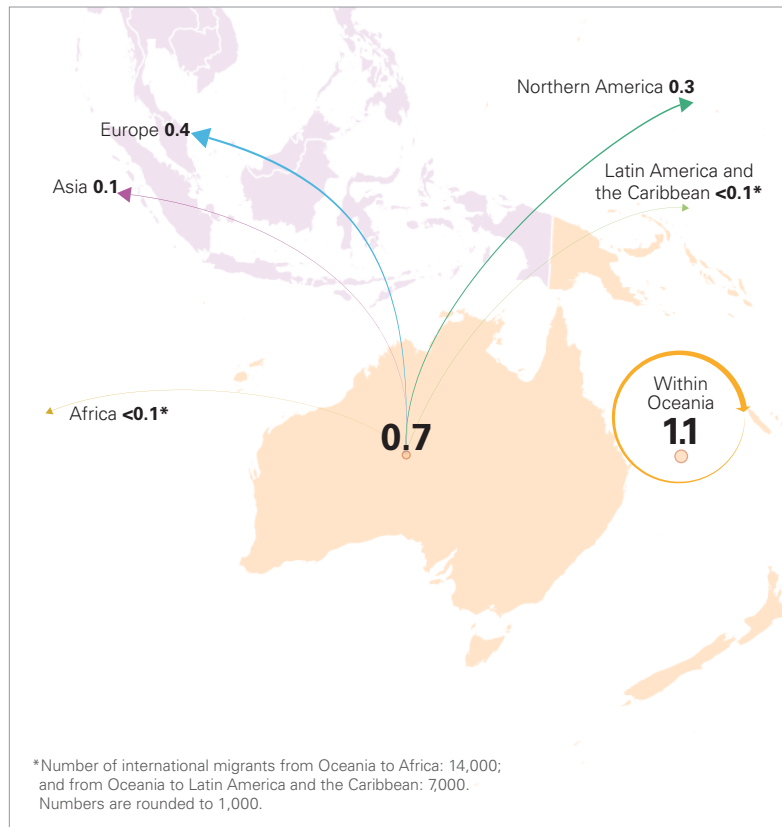
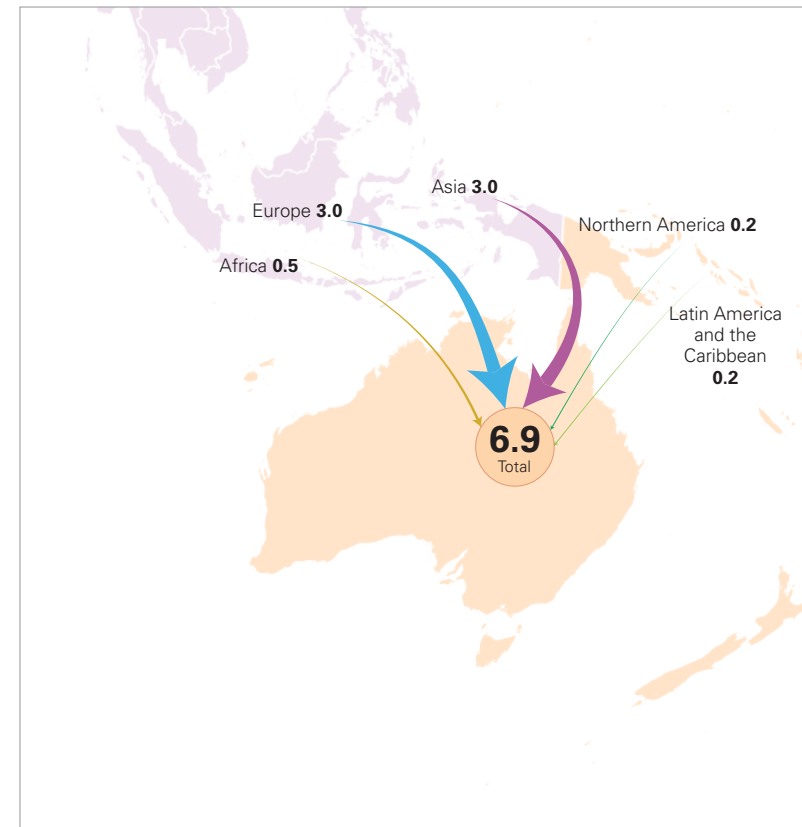


FIGURE 6.2

Oceania is the destination for nearly 7 million migrants from outside the region

International migrants into Oceania by region of origin, 2015 (in millions)



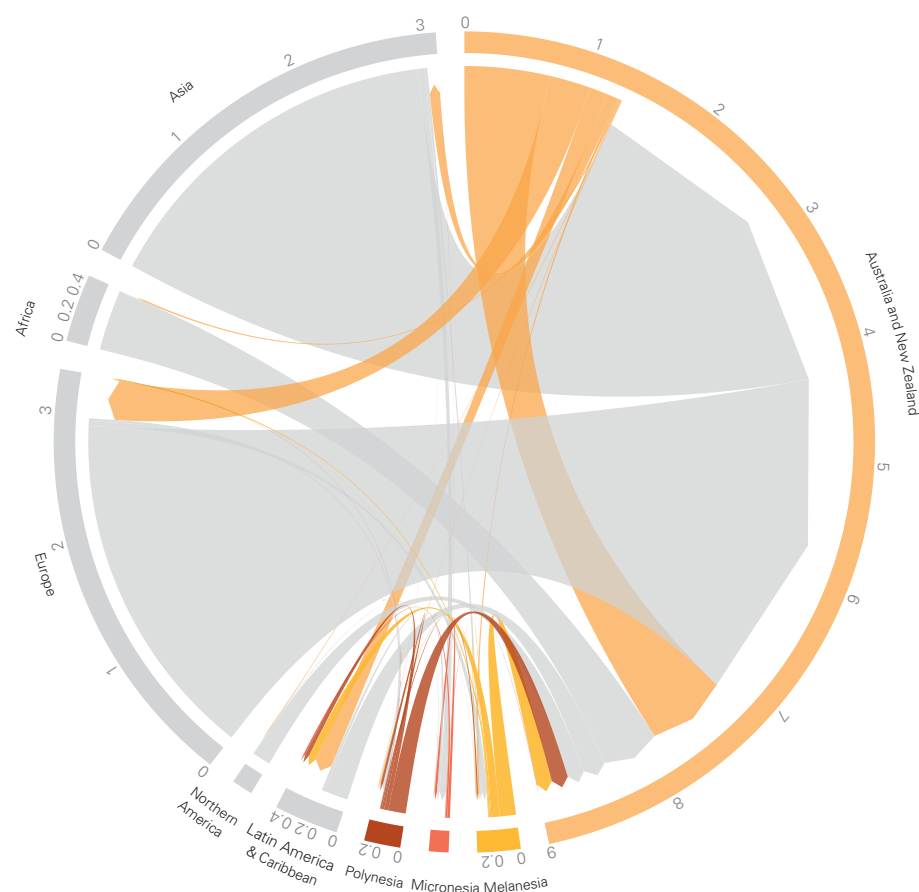
**Note:** Totals may not sum due to rounding. Globally, there are 9.8 million international migrants with origin classified as other or unknown; 0.1 million of these are living in Oceania. Migrants of unknown origin are not included in these figures.

**Source:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

FIGURE 6.3

### Movements to and from Australia and New Zealand dominate migration patterns in Oceania

International migrants by region of origin and destination in Oceania, 2015



**Note:** Globally, there are 9.8 million international migrants with origin classified as other or unknown; 0.1 million of these are living in Oceania. Migrants of unknown origin are not included in this figure. See page 26 for a detailed explanation on how to interpret the chord diagram.

**Source:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

A total of 1.8 million people from Oceania are living outside the country in which they were born. Of these, 1.1 million are living within the region but in a country other than their birthplace. As in every other region, most movement that begins in Oceania also ends there (Figure 6.1).

Fewer than 800,000 people born in Oceania are living outside the region, the smallest number for any region, but reflective of Oceania's comparatively small population as a region. Half of those Oceania-born migrants live in Europe, just under 40 per cent live in Northern America and the balance live primarily in Asia (Figure 6.3).

Oceania is home to 6.9 million migrants from outside the region, more than nine times as many migrants as leave the region (Figure 6.2). Three-quarters of all migrants in Oceania come from Europe and Asia – roughly 3 million from each region. The balance of migrants in the region come from Africa (approximately 500,000) and the Americas (approximately 400,000).

Just three countries in the region (Australia, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand) make up more than 90 per cent of the entire population of Oceania, meaning that their migration patterns dominate regional trends based on raw numbers (Figure 6.4). By population alone, Australia and New Zealand have both the largest numbers of immigrants and emigrants. A majority of Australian migrants go to four English-speaking countries – United Kingdom (26%), United States (15%), New Zealand (12%) and Canada (5%), while four out of five New Zealanders who have migrated live in Australia. As a proportion of total population in countries with at least 50,000 inhabitants, Samoa and Tonga have the highest share of emigrants. By that same measure Guam and American Samoa are home to the highest proportion of immigrants relative to their total populations.

Children are a relatively small proportion of the migrant population in Oceania, making up just 8 per cent of all migrants living in the region. The roughly 670,000 child migrants living in the region are 2 per cent of all child migrants in the world. As in all other regions, boys and girls are equally represented in these numbers, each making up roughly half of the child migrant population.

The overall population of child migrants increased in Oceania between 1990 and 2015 (from 431,000 to 667,000), but overall migration rose faster, meaning that children now make up a smaller proportion of the migrant population than they did 25 years ago (8 per cent in 2015

compared to 9 per cent in 1990). Three-quarters of all child migrants in the region live in Australia and an additional 17 per cent live in New Zealand.

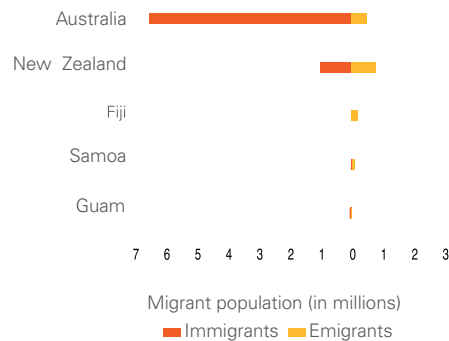
Despite this relatively low proportion of migrants in the region, child migrants are a notably high proportion of all children in Oceania. Six in every 100 children in the region are migrants, compared with just 1 child in 100 globally.

Migration trends for many of the region's smallest countries are shaped by a confluence of challenging factors common to many Small Island Developing States, including limited livelihood opportunities (particularly for youth) and climate change. These issues are explored in more detail later in this section.

FIGURE 6.4

### Australia and New Zealand host the most immigrants

A. Top 5 countries with largest numbers of immigrants or emigrants in Oceania, 2015



### The largest numbers of child migrants live in Australia and New Zealand

B. Top 10 countries hosting the largest numbers of international migrants under 18 years of age in Oceania, 2015 (in thousands)

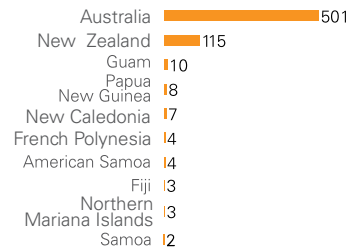
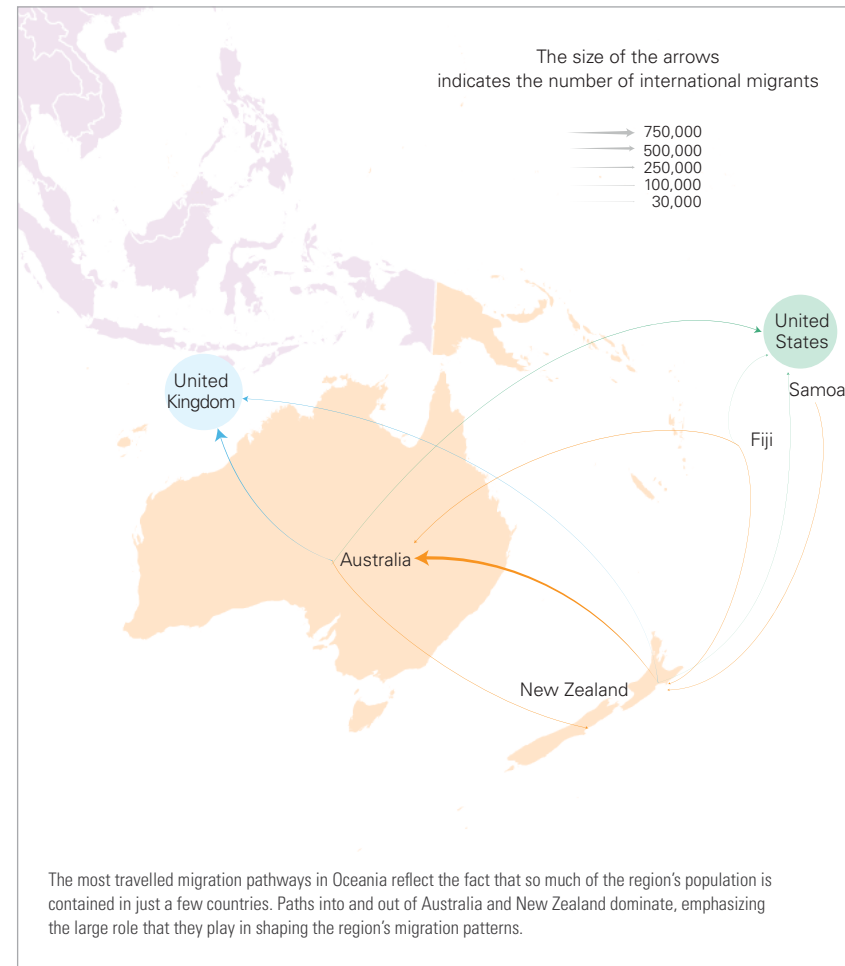


FIGURE 6.5

### Major migration routes within and from Oceania reflect historical ties and population sizes

Ten largest populations of international migrants from a single country or area of origin in Oceania living in a single country or area of destination, 2015



Source for all figures: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015; and UNICEF analysis based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by age and sex*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

## Displacement and forced migration in Oceania

Fewer than 1,400 refugees have origins in Oceania, by far the smallest number for any region in the world. The region hosts just over 48,000 people living as refugees or in refugee-like situations, less than 1 per cent of the world's total. An additional 22,000 asylum-seekers are awaiting a determination of their status as refugees.

The largest refugee movements into Oceania all come from Asia: 9,300 Indonesian refugees live in Papua New Guinea, 7,800 Afghans have found refuge in Australia and 5,200 Iranians are living as refugees in Australia.

While data are not available about the number of children among recognized refugees in Oceania, recent reports indicate that children seeking refuge in the region face serious danger. Long and treacherous sea journeys are required to reach Australia – the region's main destination for asylum-seekers. Since late 2013, the Australian Government has implemented a policy of interception and pushback at sea for migrants attempting to reach the country on irregular journeys. Boats that are pushed back are often in serious disrepair and unequipped for an extended journey, putting all those aboard at serious risk both during the journey and on whatever other shores they may reach.<sup>235</sup>

Under the Regional Resettlement Agreement, migrants who are intercepted have been transferred to neighbouring countries for processing and, in some cases, detention in Regional Processing Centres in Papua New Guinea. Shortly before the Agreement was reached, 3,300 children were being held in some form of either immigration or community detention as a result of their migration status.<sup>236</sup> There are no longer children in so-called held facilities within Australia, which is a positive development, although concerns about the well-being of children in other forms of care remain.<sup>237</sup>

The Regional Settlement Agreement and its implementation have come under harsh and repeated criticism. The Australian Human Rights Commission has documented a large number of these critiques, including, most pointedly, one from the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, who argued that "... by failing to provide adequate detention conditions; end the practice of detention of children; and put a stop to the escalating violence and tension at the Regional Processing Centre, [Australia] has violated the right of the asylum seekers, including children, to be free from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment."<sup>238</sup>

These and other reports about maltreatment, poor mental health and self-harm of children, men and women in immigration detention make it all the more urgent that children and all others seeking refuge be afforded all of their rights under international and domestic law – both in principle and in practice.

Pupils sit inside a tent being used as a temporary school structure in Vanuatu.

© UNICEF/UN011415/Sokhin





## ISSUE IN FOCUS

### Children, climate change and migration in Oceania

The intersection between climate change and migration is one of great interest in many regions, but reliable estimates of climate-induced migration remain elusive. The International Organization for Migration reports that, globally, estimates for the number of migrants moving due to environmental causes range between 25 million and 1 billion people by 2050, with 200 million people being the most commonly cited figure.<sup>239</sup>

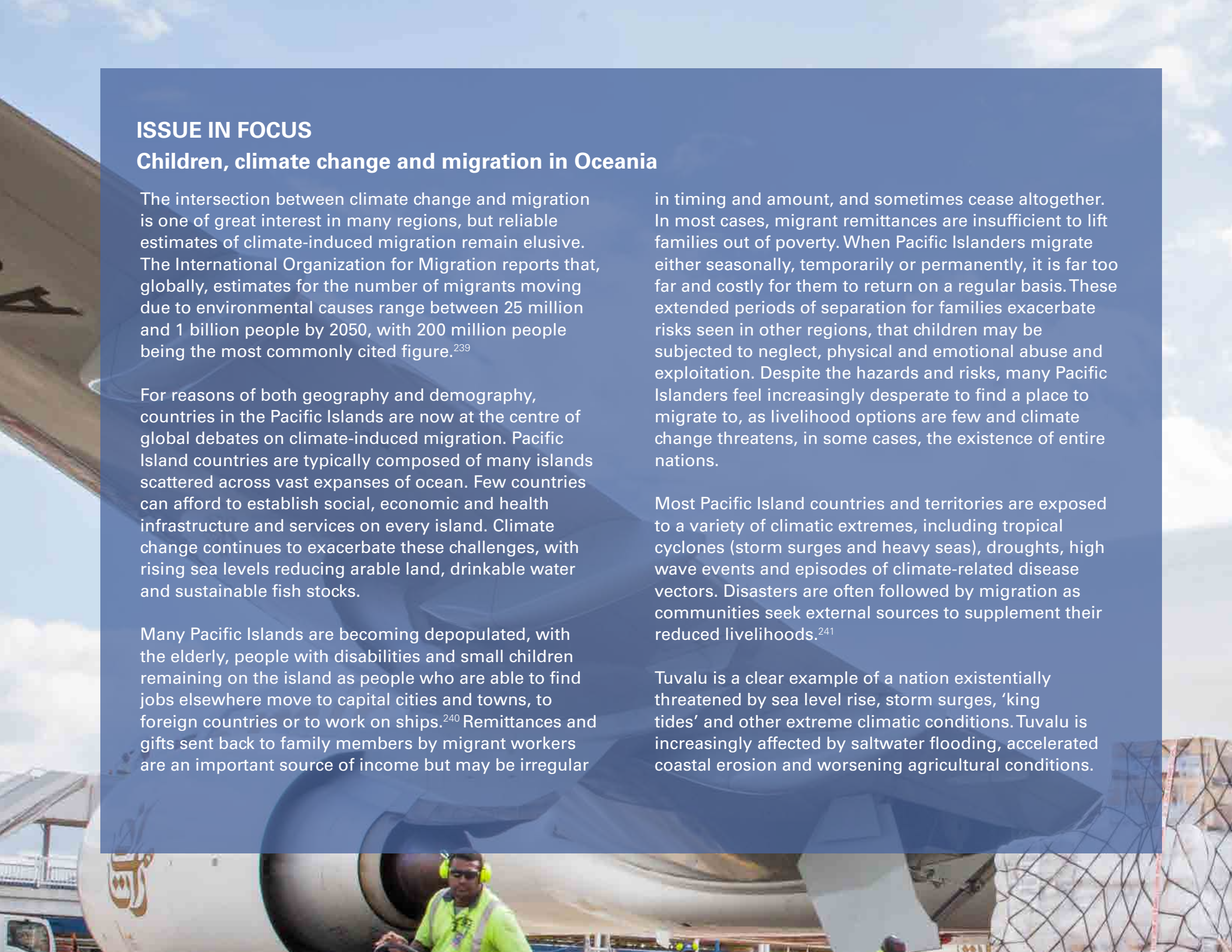
For reasons of both geography and demography, countries in the Pacific Islands are now at the centre of global debates on climate-induced migration. Pacific Island countries are typically composed of many islands scattered across vast expanses of ocean. Few countries can afford to establish social, economic and health infrastructure and services on every island. Climate change continues to exacerbate these challenges, with rising sea levels reducing arable land, drinkable water and sustainable fish stocks.


Many Pacific Islands are becoming depopulated, with the elderly, people with disabilities and small children remaining on the island as people who are able to find jobs elsewhere move to capital cities and towns, to foreign countries or to work on ships.<sup>240</sup> Remittances and gifts sent back to family members by migrant workers are an important source of income but may be irregular

in timing and amount, and sometimes cease altogether. In most cases, migrant remittances are insufficient to lift families out of poverty. When Pacific Islanders migrate either seasonally, temporarily or permanently, it is far too far and costly for them to return on a regular basis. These extended periods of separation for families exacerbate risks seen in other regions, that children may be subjected to neglect, physical and emotional abuse and exploitation. Despite the hazards and risks, many Pacific Islanders feel increasingly desperate to find a place to migrate to, as livelihood options are few and climate change threatens, in some cases, the existence of entire nations.

Most Pacific Island countries and territories are exposed to a variety of climatic extremes, including tropical cyclones (storm surges and heavy seas), droughts, high wave events and episodes of climate-related disease vectors. Disasters are often followed by migration as communities seek external sources to supplement their reduced livelihoods.<sup>241</sup>

Tuvalu is a clear example of a nation existentially threatened by sea level rise, storm surges, 'king tides' and other extreme climatic conditions. Tuvalu is increasingly affected by saltwater flooding, accelerated coastal erosion and worsening agricultural conditions.



The background image shows an airport tarmac under a blue sky with scattered clouds. In the foreground, an orange forklift is positioned on the left. In the background, the white fuselage of a large aircraft is visible, featuring a prominent red and white diagonal stripe. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a clear day.

People are migrating to Funafuti, the atoll that houses the capital, and to New Zealand and Fiji, as their adaptive capacity is exceeded. Uncertainty about the future is proving a key factor in migration: almost all migrants interviewed for a 2009 study in New Zealand cited climate change and rising sea levels as contributing to their decision to migrate.<sup>242</sup>

Every aspect of children's lives can be impacted by climate change, including by the threat of physical injury from storms, the psychological stress of disasters, and interruptions to essential services including health care, education and appropriate nutrition.<sup>243</sup> Prior UNICEF research has shown that children from poor households or geographically remote areas are most likely to be cut off from social services, meaning that they will bear brunt of these impacts of climate change.<sup>244</sup>

Evidence from specific Pacific Island nations brings these dangers into sharp relief. According to a 2007 study, sea levels are rising at a rate of 3.9 millimetres per year in Kiribati and 5.6 millimetres per year for Vanuatu.<sup>245</sup> Research focussing on the potential impacts of climate change in those countries has identified a broad range of threats to children's well-being, including increased exposure to climate extremes, with all the attendant dangers to health, education, nutrition, hygiene and protection.<sup>246</sup>

As in many other contexts, this research suggests that sea level rises in Kiribati and Vanuatu will first affect families who lack the resources to avoid the worst impacts. The majority of facilities in Kiribati of importance to children – including their homes, health facilities, schools and recreational areas – are in close proximity to the coast, making them particularly vulnerable. The situation has become so acute that Kiribati recently made global headlines for becoming the first nation to purchase land to resettle its population in the face of climate change.<sup>247</sup>

The combined impact of climate change and migration dynamics is already affecting children and young people in many Pacific Island nations. Data from a 2008 report for the Pacific Islands show high emigration among youth, including between one-fifth and two-fifths of youth populations from countries including Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, the Cook Islands and the Marshall Islands.<sup>248</sup> Without dramatic action to curb the impact of climate change, the future of these nations – and their children – is in jeopardy.

Emergency supplies for the 350,000 Fijians, including 120,000 children, affected by Cyclone Winston were flown in from the UNICEF global supply hub in Copenhagen, Denmark.

© UNICEF/UN012416/March

## The promise and perils of migration and displacement for children in Oceania

Movement into and within Oceania happens for many of the same reasons and with many of the same aspirations as in other regions. The issues outlined below highlight small pieces of a much larger body of evidence about the ways in which children and families are affected by migration in the region. These issues – and the migration legislation, policies and practices in place in each country – have lasting impacts on whether migration ultimately benefits children and their families.

### Treacherous journeys

UNHCR reports have found that, during irregular migration by boat through the wider Asia-Pacific region, children were underfed, with limited sanitation and at times were kept in confined spaces below deck.<sup>249</sup> This same reporting has found instances in which smugglers, under pressure to meet quotas, have abducted children at departure points commonly used for passage to Oceania. With limited refugee protections in some countries within the region, asylum-seekers and other migrants are vulnerable to exploitation and other abuses throughout their journeys, including exploitation and abuse by police and other officials.<sup>250</sup>

### Threats from immigration detention and enforcement practices

By the end of March 2016, approximately 300 children were in some form of immigration detention under the control of the Australian authorities, consisting of either immigration detention facilities, community detention or alternative places of detention.<sup>251</sup> These are far fewer than their peak in summer 2013, but the duration and conditions of detention pose serious threats to the well-being of children. More than 40 per cent of all people in Australian immigration detention are held for over a year. Among those in community detention, more than half are held for over a year, with more than a third held for at least two years.<sup>252</sup> Migrants, including children, have limitations on their freedom of movement while in detention and reported feelings of insecurity and lack of safety in the detention facilities.<sup>253</sup> Interviews with children and young people in detention have revealed that these negative impacts are worsened by the conditions and length of detention.<sup>254</sup> Other researchers have found that migrants grapple with a lack of formal identity documentation, including passports for children born in the country while in detention in Papua New Guinea.<sup>255</sup> On the island of Nauru – used by the Australian government for off-shore processing of asylum-seekers, refugees and other migrants – children and other vulnerable people are at risk of sexual and physical abuse, especially without an independent authority on the island to monitor service provider care or to assess the well-being of the detained.<sup>256</sup>

While these processes continue in some parts of the region, elsewhere there have been important developments with regard to immigration detention. In April 2016, the Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea declared that the off-shoring arrangement between Australia and Papua New Guinea to detain asylum-seekers in the country was unconstitutional and called for an end to the detention of asylum-seekers.<sup>257</sup> On the day of the decision, the Government of Papua New Guinea announced plans to close the detention centre on Manus Island. In August 2016, the Australian Government confirmed that the processing centre on the island will be closed but that those detained there will not be allowed to settle in Australia.<sup>258</sup>

### Uncertain employment outcomes

Young migrants, including children, come largely to Australia and New Zealand through migration arrangements for work, family or humanitarian relocation, for seasonal labour or as students, but there is little research into the labour market experience and outcomes for these young people after they arrive.<sup>259</sup> In New Zealand, research suggests that lower employment rates and lower wages for Asians and Pacific Islanders compared with native workers are due to their migration status rather than their ethnicity.<sup>260</sup>

The issue of sustainable youth employment is particularly pressing for Pacific Island nations, as youth – the most mobile portion of the population – are expected to rise in number. While noting the limited ability of local labour markets to absorb this youth bulge, the World Bank has identified a potential mutually beneficial labour market match: other, higher-income countries in the Pacific Rim have a growing need for labour that will not be matched by available domestic supplies.<sup>261</sup> If the right policies are put into place, both the youth and economies of Oceania can benefit.

### Impact of migration on children's mental well-being

Young immigrants may experience anxiety as a consequence of the stress associated with migration and resettlement. Promisingly, however, these effects do not necessarily linger. Evidence from a 2003 study in Australia indicates that, within a generation, the children of a migrant parent often exhibit no mental health issues associated with migration, and no longer differ in their mental well-being from the children of Australian-born parents.<sup>262</sup> A different study of 97 refugee youth in Australia showed that, young refugees' subjective well-being was heavily shaped by whether they are socially included or excluded upon arrival. The study confirmed both the negative ramifications of exclusion as well as the benefits to children of inclusive social and community conditions.<sup>263</sup>

## Legal frameworks to protect the rights of child refugees and migrants in Oceania

In every region, children's rights are protected by a robust framework of international human rights instruments, though ratification of some elements is uneven. Oceania lags behind many other regions in ratifications of key elements, especially the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Figure 6.5).

FIGURE 6.6

Number of countries in Oceania that have ratified key human rights instruments, July 2016



Source: United Nations Treaty Collection; see <<http://treaties.un.org>> (as of 13 July 2016).

### Regional legal frameworks

There are no comprehensive regional human rights frameworks specific to Oceania, but some key elements are incorporated into the Pacific Plan (2005), the overarching plan for regional cooperation and integration. Additionally, key processes and domestic legislation regarding refugee and migrant children include:

- > The Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, which brings together many governments within Oceania and beyond for cooperation around irregular migration, smuggling and trafficking issues. The Bali Process is co-chaired by Australia and Indonesia.
- > Ministers from 13 countries (including Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea) signed the non-binding Jakarta Declaration on Addressing Irregular Movement, affirming the commitment of signatory governments to share responsibility and a protection-sensitive approach to cooperation on irregular migration.
- > In March 2016, ministers from around the region endorsed the Bali Process Declaration on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. The Declaration recognises the growing importance of the issues within the Asia Pacific region and the necessity of comprehensive strategies for addressing exploitation and expanding safe, legal migration pathways.



# THE POLICY PERSPECTIVE

Children play at dusk in the Protection of Civilians site near Bentiu, in Unity State, South Sudan.

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## AN AGENDA FOR ACTION

# On children, migration and displacement

Whether they are running from immediate violence or voluntarily moving with their families, children belong at the centre of every debate on migration and displacement. When conflicts force families from their homes, it is children who suffer the most and will continue to suffer the longest. When restrictive policies fore-close legal pathways for migration, it is children who feel the worst impacts of the perilous journeys that follow. The evidence is clear and the time for action is now.

## UNICEF calls on all actors to respect the rights and needs of children impacted by migration and displacement. Putting children first means committing to:

### >> **Protect child refugees and migrants, particularly unaccompanied children, from exploitation and violence**

Introduce measures to strengthen child protection systems, including the training of social and child workers and working with NGOs and professional groups. Clamp down on trafficking, not only through enhanced law enforcement, but also by providing better support to migrant children through the systematic appointment of qualified guardians; better access to information regarding their own situation and the management of their cases; and access to legal assistance. Governments should also develop clearer guidance for case officers when determining the migration status of children, to prevent the return of children and families to persecution, dangerous or life-threatening situations, using the best interest of the child principle to guide legal decision-making in all cases.

### >> **End the detention of children seeking refugee status or migrating**

Introduce practical alternatives to detention wherever children (or their families) are involved, given the negative impact of detention on a child's development. Children are particularly vulnerable to physical and psychological violence. Examples of alternatives to detention include: the surrender of passport and regular reporting requirements; guarantors or bailees who may be family members or community supporters; foster care and supervised independent living for unaccompanied and separated children; and compulsory registration with authorities.

### >> **Keep families together as the best way to protect children and give children legal status**

Develop clear policy guidance to keep children from being separated from their parents during border control processing and any migrant legal processes. States should speed up procedures and make it easier for children to reunite with their families, including with their extended families in destination countries. States should pursue all practical measures to reunify children with their families. Children born to migrant parents need legal identity for their future well-being. Governments should provide birth registration and/or other identity documents to enable children to access services and avoid statelessness.

**>> Keep all refugee and migrant children learning and give them access to health and other quality services**

An increased collective effort by governments, communities and the private sector is needed to provide education, health, shelter, nutrition, water and sanitation, and access to legal and psychosocial support to these children. This is not only a collective responsibility, it is in all societies' common interests. A child's migration status should never represent a barrier to accessing essential services.

**>> Press for action on the underlying causes of large-scale movements of refugees and migrants**

Address the root causes of conflict, violence and extreme poverty in countries of origin. This should include increasing access to education and social protection; expanding opportunities for family income and youth employment; and fostering more accountable and transparent governance. Governments should facilitate community dialogue and engagement towards peaceful conflict resolution, tolerance and a more inclusive society; and should take measures against gang violence.

**>> Promote measures to combat xenophobia, discrimination and marginalization in countries of transit and destination**

Coalitions of NGOs, communities, private sector, religious groups and political leaders should take responsibility for influencing public opinion to prevent the rise of xenophobia and discrimination towards refugees.

Refugee and migrant families walk near the Gevgelija transit center, on the Macedonian border with Greece. Child and Family Support Hubs, known as "Blue Dots," provide a safe space for children and their families, vital services, play, protection and counselling in a single location.







# APPENDICES

16-year-old Ararsh, from Afghanistan, at the Karlshorst emergency housing estate, near Berlin, Germany,zzz in May 2016.

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## APPENDIX I | A CALL FOR BETTER DATA

Comparable, reliable, timely, disaggregated and accessible data are essential for understanding and addressing the implications of migration for children and their families. Data need to cover a range of key questions, including who migrants and displaced persons are, how old they are, where they come from, when they move, where they move, why they move and how they fare.

A first step towards closing the data gaps about child migrants and refugees is identifying who and where those children are. Accounting for migrant children – especially refugee children – is fundamental for their protection. Beginning more than a decade ago, the UNHCR declared unequivocally that “the registration of children should always be a priority when registering persons of concern to UNHCR.”<sup>264</sup> More consistent efforts to identify the origins and destinations of child refugees are also needed, including through the adoption of consistent and reliable techniques for determining the ages of children who arrive without documentation. Population registers and censuses are essential tools for closing some of these gaps, particularly for non-refugee migrant children. As the predominant data source on international migration, every census should collect information on the country of birth, the country of citizenship and the country of previous residence for respondents.

A second and equally important step towards closing data gaps is improving information about the well-being of children affected by migration and displacement. Outcomes related to water and sanitation, education, gender, child protection, social inclusion and health need to be assessed for migrant and refugee children and considered in relation to the outcomes to native-born children. Data disaggregated by migratory status will be particularly important for measuring progress for vulnerable children and families across the Sustainable Development Goals. To bolster the overall quality of information about the well-being and progress of migrant children, pertinent administrative data should be more accessible and household surveys should be adjusted to include relevant migration questions. New technologies and data sources also have tremendous potential to improve current knowledge about migration movements. Data from social media, mobile phones and other sources can provide geo-spatial and temporal information about population movements in real time, facilitating timely and relevant responses for people on the move. Continued investment in both new and traditional data sources will be essential to effectively meet the rights and needs of children and families in the years to come.

### Data sources and data limitations

Data on international migration and displacement are incomplete and policymakers often rely on estimates for the total number of international migrants and the number of migrant and displaced children. No global estimates are available with the full details of who the world’s child migrants are – including not just their age, but also their place of birth, sex and whether their migration was forced or voluntary. Eighty-one per cent of the 232 countries and territories included in United Nations reporting had at least one relatively recent data point on the country of origin for their population, and 75 per cent had at least one data point on the age of their international migrant population since the 2000 census round.<sup>265</sup> For refugee numbers – published by UNHCR at the end of 2015 – age-disaggregation was available for 58 per cent or 10.9 million refugees (out of the 16.1 million total refugee population under UNHCR’s mandate).<sup>266</sup> Age-disaggregated details were available for less than one-quarter of internally displaced persons (8.4 million out of the total 37.5 million internally displaced persons protected or assisted by UNHCR). At the country level, 29 per cent of the countries hosting refugees under UNHCR’s mandate had no reliable information (age coverage greater than 50 per cent) on the age of the refugees. The age coverage was particularly low for countries in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern America and Oceania.

Apart from the magnitude and recent trends in population movements and basic demographic information of international migrants, even less globally comparable information is available to monitor how voluntary and forced migrants fare in their

countries of transit and destination or how migration affects children left in the care of others when their parents migrate.

Data on international migrants and refugees are derived from registers, censuses, administrative data and surveys. Population registration systems that record movements into and out of a country, internal movements, births and deaths are essential for reliable data on migration. If maintained properly, these systems can be used to produce timely information about migration flows by origin, age, sex and location. Most countries, however, lack such systems: in 2015, annual data on recent migratory movements were available for just 23 countries.<sup>267</sup>

Even when systems are in place, there can be considerable delays between the time a person enters a country and the time he or she shows up in the population register. National censuses are typically conducted at ten-year intervals, limiting their usefulness as a source of timely trend data. Additionally, the questions asked in censuses do not necessarily prioritize migration or refugee movements. An analysis of the 150 census questionnaires from the 2010 census round revealed that 80 per cent contained questions on place of birth, but only 17 per cent included questions on the reasons for international migration and just 7 per cent addressed forced displacement.<sup>268</sup> Other data sources can play a valuable role in filling data gaps, including administrative data about first-time arrivals into a country, residence and work permits, and border surveys. Household surveys can offer further detail still, providing more in-depth information about the impact of migration and displacement on children.

## APPENDIX 2 | ENDNOTES

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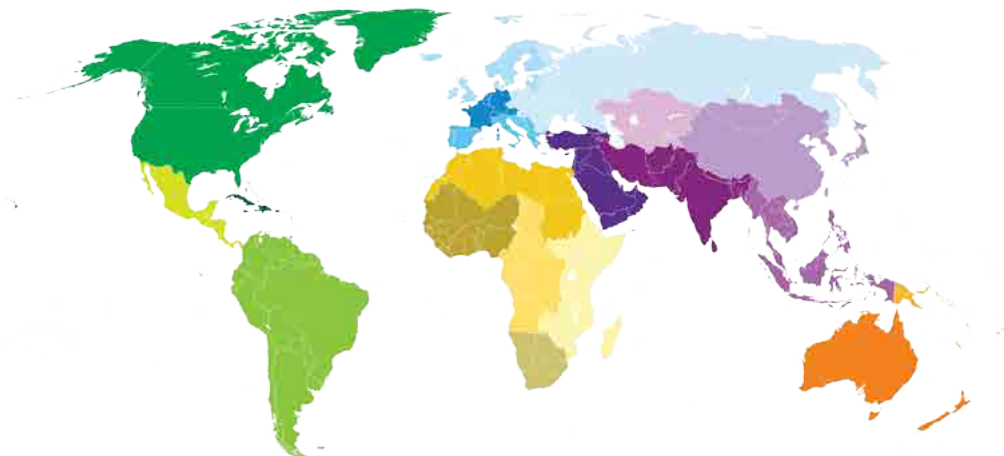
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## APPENDIX 3 | REGIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

- Caribbean
- Central America
- Northern America
- South America

### THE AMERICAS

#### Caribbean

- Anguilla
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Aruba
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba
- British Virgin Islands
- Cayman Islands
- Cuba
- Curaçao
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Grenada
- Guadeloupe
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Martinique
- Montserrat
- Puerto Rico
- Saint-Barthélemy
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- Saint Martin (French part)
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Sint Maarten (Dutch part)
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Turks and Caicos Islands
- United States Virgin Islands

#### Central America

- Belize
- Costa Rica
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Mexico
- Nicaragua
- Panama

#### South America

- Argentina
- Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
- Brazil
- Chile
- Colombia
- Ecuador
- Falkland Islands (Malvinas)
- French Guiana
- Guyana
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Suriname
- Uruguay
- Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

#### Northern America

- Bermuda
- Canada
- Greenland
- Saint Pierre and Miquelon
- United States

- Eastern Africa
- Middle Africa
- Northern Africa
- Southern Africa
- Western Africa

### AFRICA

#### Eastern Africa

- Burundi
- Comoros
- Djibouti
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mauritius
- Mayotte
- Mozambique
- Réunion
- Rwanda
- Seychelles
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Uganda
- United Republic of Tanzania

#### Southern Africa

- Botswana
- Lesotho
- Namibia
- South Africa
- Swaziland

#### Western Africa

- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Cabo Verde
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Gambia
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Liberia
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Saint Helena
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone
- Togo

#### Middle Africa

- Angola
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Congo
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Equatorial Guinea
- Gabon
- Sao Tome and Principe

- Eastern Europe
- Northern Europe
- Southern Europe
- Western Europe

### EUROPE

#### Eastern Europe

- Belarus
- Bulgaria
- Czech Republic
- Libya
- Hungary
- Poland
- Republic of Moldova
- Romania
- Russian Federation
- Slovakia
- Ukraine

#### Northern Europe

- Åland Islands
- Channel Islands
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Faeroe Islands
- Finland
- Guernsey
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Isle of Man
- Jersey
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Norway
- Sark
- Svalbard and Jan Mayen Islands
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

#### Southern Europe

- Albania
- Andorra
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Croatia
- Gibraltar
- Greece
- Holy See
- Italy
- Malta
- Montenegro
- Portugal
- San Marino
- Serbia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

#### Western Europe

- Austria
- Belgium
- France
- Germany
- Liechtenstein
- Luxembourg
- Monaco
- Netherlands
- Switzerland

- Central Asia
- Eastern Asia
- South-Eastern Asia
- Southern Asia
- Western Asia

### ASIA

#### Central Asia

- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan
- Uzbekistan

#### Eastern Asia

- China
- China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
- China, Macao Special Administrative Region
- Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- Japan
- Mongolia
- Republic of Korea

#### South-Eastern Asia

- Brunei Darussalam
- Cambodia
- Indonesia
- Lao People's Democratic Republic
- Malaysia
- Myanmar
- Philippines
- Singapore
- Thailand
- Timor-Leste
- Viet Nam

#### Southern Asia

- Afghanistan
- Bangladesh
- Bhutan
- India
- Iran (Islamic Republic of)
- Maldives
- Nepal
- Pakistan
- Sri Lanka

#### Western Asia

- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Bahrain
- Cyprus
- Georgia
- Iraq
- Israel
- Jordan
- Kuwait
- Lebanon
- Oman
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- State of Palestine
- Syrian Arab Republic
- Turkey
- United Arab Emirates
- Yemen

- Australia and New Zealand
- Melanesia
- Micronesia
- Polynesia

### OCEANIA

#### Australia and New Zealand

- Australia
- New Zealand
- Norfolk Island

#### Melanesia

- Fiji
- New Caledonia
- Papua New Guinea
- Solomon Islands
- Vanuatu

#### Micronesia

- Guam
- Kiribati
- Marshall Islands
- Micronesia (Federated States of)
- Nauru
- Northern Mariana Islands
- Palau

#### Polynesia

- American Samoa
- Cook Islands
- French Polynesia
- Niue
- Pitcairn
- Samoa
- Tokelau
- Tonga
- Tuvalu
- Wallis and Futuna Islands

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNICEF concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The assignment of countries or areas to specific groupings is for statistical convenience and does not imply any assumption regarding political or other affiliation of countries or territories by UNICEF.

For more details on the classification of countries or areas please see 'Standard country or area codes for statistical use' available at <<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49.htm>>.

## APPENDIX 4 | ACRONYMS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
EU	European Union	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
HDI	Human Development Index	SIDS	Small Island and Developing States
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IDP	internally displaced persons	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
ILO	International Labour Organization	UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
NGO	non-government organization		

## APPENDIX 5 | TABLES: CHILDREN, MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT

### DEFINITIONS OF THE INDICATORS

**International migrants:** Persons living in a country or area other than their country or area of birth.

**Refugees:** Persons who are outside their country of nationality or habitual residence, who cannot return due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. This number only accounts for those who have been recognized as refugees, or find themselves in refugee-like situations.

**Asylum-seekers:** Persons whose application for asylum or refugee status is pending at any stage in the asylum process. If granted asylum, persons are regarded as refugees.

**Internally displaced persons:** Persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of, armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border. Data presented in this table refer only to persons displaced due to conflict and violence.

**Ratification of key human rights instruments:** Number of legal instruments related to children and international migration ratified by each country. The legal instruments refer to: (a) the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child; (b) the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees; (c) the 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; (d) the 2000 Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; and (e) the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

### MAIN DATA SOURCES

**Total population by country:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2015 revision*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

**International migrants by country of destination:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2015 Revision*, United Nations, New York, 2015. Share of persons under 18 based on UNICEF analysis using data from United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by age and sex*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

**International migrants by country of origin:** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

**Refugees by country of asylum:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2015*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2016.

**Refugees by country of origin:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2015*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2016. Share of persons under 18 from UNHCR unpublished data table, cited with permission.

**Asylum-seekers:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2015*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2016.

**Internally displaced persons (IDPs):** Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Global Internal Displacement Database, IDMC, 2015.

**Ratification of key human rights instruments:** United Nations Treaty Collection; see <<http://treaties.un.org>>, accessed 13 July 2016.

### NOTES

Refugees refer to those individuals under UNHCR's mandate. An additional 5.2 million Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East are not included in these tables. Age categories shown for countries with information on age, for at least 50 per cent of the refugee population, with the exception of the Syrian Arab Republic, with information on age for 45 per cent of the refugee population.

- Data not available.

Countries and areas*	International migrants, 2015**			Refugees, 2015				Asylum-seekers, 2015		Internally displaced persons, 2015***	Ratification of key human rights instruments		
	International migrants by country of destination			International migrants by country of origin		Refugees by country of asylum		Refugees by country of origin				Asylum-seekers by country of asylum	Asylum-seekers by country of origin
	Total (thousands)	As percentage of total population (%)	Share of under 18 among total international migrants (%)	Total (thousands)	As percentage of total population (%)	Total (thousands)	Share of under 18 among total refugees (%)	Total (thousands)	Share of under 18 among total refugees (%)			Total (thousands)	Total (thousands)
Afghanistan	382	1	25	4,843	15	258	59	2,666	49	<1	259	1,174	3
Albania	58	2	15	1,123	39	<1	32	10	-	1	42	-	5
Algeria	242	1	19	1,764	4	94	-	3	-	7	8	-	5
Andorra	42	60	6	8	11	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	1
Angola	107	<1	20	555	2	16	-	12	-	30	3	-	4
Anguilla	5	37	22	2	16	<1	0	<1	-	-	-	-	-
Antigua and Barbuda	28	31	13	65	71	<1	0	<1	-	-	<1	-	4
Argentina	2,086	5	8	940	2	3	8	<1	-	1	<1	-	5
Armenia	191	6	9	937	31	19	-	11	-	<1	9	8	4
Australia	6,764	28	7	527	2	37	-	<1	-	21	<1	-	4
Austria	1,492	17	7	576	7	72	-	<1	-	80	<1	-	4
Azerbaijan	264	3	11	1,147	12	1	35	10	-	<1	5	564	5
Bahamas	59	15	13	40	10	<1	0	<1	-	<1	<1	-	4
Bahrain	704	51	12	56	4	<1	32	<1	-	<1	<1	-	3
Bangladesh	1,423	1	18	7,205	4	232	-	12	-	-	31	426	2
Barbados	34	12	14	98	35	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	3
Belarus	1,083	11	5	1,485	16	2	-	4	-	<1	1	-	4
Belgium	1,388	12	18	531	5	35	-	<1	-	36	<1	-	4
Belize	54	15	16	60	17	<1	29	<1	-	1	<1	-	5
Benin	245	2	31	616	6	1	32	<1	-	<1	1	-	4
Bhutan	51	7	10	44	6	-	-	18	35	-	<1	-	1
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	143	1	39	800	7	1	19	1	-	-	<1	-	4
Bosnia and Herzegovina	35	1	9	1,651	43	7	18	19	7	<1	7	98	5
Botswana	161	7	20	58	3	2	38	<1	-	<1	<1	-	4
Brazil	714	<1	12	1,544	1	9	14	1	-	21	2	-	4
Brunei Darussalam	103	24	17	46	11	-	-	-	-	-	<1	-	1
Bulgaria	102	1	15	1,176	16	17	-	1	-	9	<1	-	4
Burkina Faso	705	4	55	1,453	8	34	55	2	-	<1	3	-	5
Burundi	287	3	35	284	3	53	55	293	54	3	27	99	4
Cabo Verde	15	3	15	166	32	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	5
Cambodia	74	<1	50	1,187	8	<1	8	13	-	<1	<1	-	4
Cameroon	382	2	53	329	1	343	59	11	-	5	7	124	4
Canada	7,836	22	8	1,286	4	136	-	<1	-	20	<1	-	4
Central African Republic	82	2	31	441	9	7	52	471	58	<1	11	452	4
Chad	517	4	56	208	1	370	57	15	54	3	3	107	3
Chile	469	3	21	612	3	2	2	1	-	1	<1	-	5
China	978	<1	22	9,546	1	301	-	213	-	1	58	-	3
Colombia	133	<1	36	2,639	5	<1	16	340	-	<1	7	6,270	4
Comoros	13	2	19	117	15	-	-	1	-	-	<1	-	1
Congo	393	9	31	221	5	45	47	15	-	4	4	8	2
Costa Rica	422	9	15	133	3	4	-	<1	-	3	<1	-	4
Côte d'Ivoire	2,175	10	17	850	4	2	39	71	52	1	14	303	3

\*Data are listed for 197 countries. Other countries and areas are included in the aggregates but not listed here.

\*\*Additionally, there are 4.6 million international migrants in countries or areas not listed here and 9.8 million international migrants from an unspecified origin.

\*\*\*Additionally, there are 99,000 internally displaced persons in countries or areas not listed here.

Countries and areas*	International migrants, 2015**					Refugees, 2015				Asylum-seekers, 2015		Internally displaced persons, 2015***	Ratification of key human rights instruments
	International migrants by country of destination			International migrants by country of origin		Refugees by country of asylum		Refugees by country of origin		Asylum-seekers by country of asylum	Asylum-seekers by country of origin		
	Total (thousands)	As percentage of total population (%)	Share of under 18 among total international migrants (%)	Total (thousands)	As percentage of total population (%)	Total (thousands)	Share of under 18 among total refugees (%)	Total (thousands)	Share of under 18 among total refugees (%)	Total (thousands)	Total (thousands)	Total (thousands)	Number of instruments ratified
Croatia	577	14	3	865	20	1	-	33	9	<1	<1	-	4
Cuba	13	<1	5	1,426	13	<1	7	7	-	<1	2	-	3
Cyprus	196	17	9	177	15	7	-	<1	-	2	<1	272	4
Czech Republic	405	4	5	933	9	4	-	1	2	1	<1	-	4
Democratic Republic of the Congo	546	1	33	1,404	2	383	64	541	54	1	76	1,500	4
Denmark	573	10	9	251	4	27	-	<1	-	3	<1	-	4
Djibouti	112	13	31	16	2	19	46	1	-	3	1	-	4
Dominica	7	9	27	70	96	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	4
Dominican Republic	416	4	17	1,304	12	1	30	<1	-	1	2	-	4
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	48	<1	19	113	<1	-	-	1	-	-	<1	-	1
Ecuador	388	2	37	1,102	7	122	-	1	-	12	10	-	5
Egypt	492	1	47	3,269	4	213	48	18	-	38	12	78	5
El Salvador	42	1	20	1,436	23	<1	6	15	-	<1	31	289	5
Equatorial Guinea	11	1	20	81	10	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	3
Eritrea	16	<1	25	500	10	3	57	411	30	<1	63	-	2
Estonia	202	15	2	198	15	<1	19	<1	-	<1	<1	-	4
Ethiopia	1,073	1	44	753	1	736	58	86	43	2	78	450	4
Fiji	14	2	22	205	23	<1	8	1	-	<1	<1	-	2
Finland	316	6	11	295	5	13	-	<1	-	24	<1	-	4
France	7,784	12	7	2,146	3	273	-	<1	-	63	<1	-	4
Gabon	268	16	27	63	4	1	35	<1	-	2	<1	-	3
Gambia	193	10	31	90	5	8	48	8	-	-	13	-	4
Georgia	169	4	13	838	21	2	32	6	-	1	9	239	4
Germany	12,006	15	4	4,045	5	316	21	<1	-	421	<1	-	4
Ghana	399	1	37	802	3	17	43	23	64	2	11	-	5
Greece	1,243	11	6	872	8	30	-	<1	-	26	<1	-	4
Grenada	7	7	33	66	62	<1	0	<1	-	-	<1	-	3
Guatemala	76	<1	20	1,018	6	<1	15	10	-	<1	27	251	5
Guinea	228	2	36	427	3	9	45	17	-	<1	18	-	5
Guinea-Bissau	22	1	45	102	6	9	-	1	-	<1	2	-	3
Guyana	15	2	19	460	60	<1	27	1	-	<1	<1	-	4
Haiti	40	<1	21	1,195	11	<1	0	35	-	<1	9	-	4
Holy See	1	100	0	<1	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Honduras	28	<1	23	649	8	<1	17	7	-	<1	19	174	5
Hungary	450	5	9	596	6	4	-	1	-	37	1	-	4
Iceland	38	11	16	38	12	<1	-	-	-	<1	<1	-	3
India	5,241	<1	5	15,576	1	201	-	10	-	6	25	612	3
Indonesia	329	<1	24	3,877	2	6	21	14	-	8	3	6	4
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	2,726	3	22	1,123	1	979	-	85	-	<1	57	-	2
Iraq	354	1	38	1,480	4	278	40	264	34	7	237	3,290	3
Ireland	746	16	14	882	19	6	11	<1	-	5	<1	-	3
Israel	2,012	25	3	343	4	39	-	1	-	7	<1	-	3
Italy	5,789	10	8	2,901	5	118	-	<1	-	60	<1	-	4

\*Data are listed for 197 countries. Other countries and areas are included in the aggregates but not listed here.

\*\*Additionally, there are 4.6 million international migrants in countries or areas not listed here and 9.8 million international migrants from an unspecified origin.

\*\*\*Additionally, there are 99,000 internally displaced persons in countries or areas not listed here.

Countries and areas*	International migrants, 2015**			Refugees, 2015						Asylum-seekers, 2015		Internally displaced persons, 2015***	Ratification of key human rights instruments
	International migrants by country of destination			International migrants by country of origin		Refugees by country of asylum		Refugees by country of origin		Asylum-seekers by country of asylum	Asylum-seekers by country of origin		
	Total (thousands)	As percentage of total population (%)	Share of under 18 among total international migrants (%)	Total (thousands)	As percentage of total population (%)	Total (thousands)	Share of under 18 among total refugees (%)	Total (thousands)	Share of under 18 among total refugees (%)	Total (thousands)	Total (thousands)	Total (thousands)	Number of instruments ratified
Jamaica	23	1	37	1,067	38	<1	17	2	-	<1	1	-	5
Japan	2,044	2	11	797	1	2	-	<1	93	14	<1	-	2
Jordan	3,112	41	46	700	9	664	50	2	-	25	2	-	2
Kazakhstan	3,547	20	8	4,076	23	1	31	2	-	<1	2	-	4
Kenya	1,084	2	43	456	1	554	57	8	-	40	3	309	4
Kiribati	3	3	26	5	4	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	3
Kuwait	2,866	74	15	188	5	1	66	1	-	1	<1	-	3
Kyrgyzstan	204	3	10	761	13	<1	36	3	-	<1	2	-	5
Lao People's Democratic Republic	22	<1	15	1,345	20	-	-	7	-	-	<1	-	3
Latvia	263	13	2	338	17	<1	-	<1	-	<1	<1	-	4
Lebanon	1,998	34	43	798	14	1071	53	4	-	12	6	12	3
Lesotho	7	<1	31	364	17	<1	16	<1	-	<1	1	-	5
Liberia	114	3	41	277	6	37	56	10	35	<1	2	-	4
Libya	771	12	23	142	2	9	26	6	-	27	6	500	4
Liechtenstein	23	63	13	4	10	<1	-	-	-	<1	-	-	4
Lithuania	136	5	4	544	19	1	-	<1	-	<1	<1	-	4
Luxembourg	249	44	9	61	11	1	-	<1	0	2	-	-	4
Madagascar	32	<1	17	170	1	<1	0	<1	-	<1	<1	-	5
Malawi	215	1	23	303	2	9	55	<1	-	14	6	-	4
Malaysia	2,514	8	8	1,835	6	94	26	<1	-	60	3	-	2
Maldives	94	26	17	3	1	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	1
Mali	363	2	38	1,006	6	16	58	154	58	<1	10	50	5
Malta	41	10	8	103	25	7	-	<1	-	1	<1	-	4
Marshall Islands	3	6	23	7	13	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	1
Mauritania	138	3	49	119	3	77	56	35	58	<1	7	-	5
Mauritius	29	2	5	168	13	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	3
Mexico	1,193	1	62	12,339	10	3	-	11	-	1	46	287	5
Micronesia (Federated States of)	3	22	20	19	<1	0	-	-	<1	<1	-	2	2
Monaco	56	7	29	76	<1	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	4	4
Mongolia	1	10	59	2	<1	0	2	-	<1	4	-	3	3
Montenegro	13	9	138	22	2	41	1	-	<1	3	-	4	4
Morocco	<1	19	2,835	8	4	43	2	-	2	6	-	4	4
Mozambique	1	38	714	3	6	48	<1	-	15	2	-	5	5
Myanmar	<1	22	2,882	5	-	-	452	40	<1	61	644	3	3
Namibia	4	14	146	6	2	45	1	30	1	<1	-	4	4
Nauru	31	20	2	23	1	-	-	-	<1	<1	-	4	4
Nepal	2	16	1,629	6	33	19	9	-	<1	9	50	1	1
Netherlands	12	7	981	6	89	-	<1	-	28	<1	-	4	4
New Zealand	23	11	802	18	1	-	<1	-	<1	<1	-	4	4
Nicaragua	1	35	639	11	<1	30	1	-	<1	1	-	5	5
Niger	1	34	357	2	125	-	1	-	<1	1	153	5	5
Nigeria	1	31	1,094	1	1	36	168	-	<1	52	2,096	5	5
Niue	35	42	5	333	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	1	1

\*Data are listed for 197 countries. Other countries and areas are included in the aggregates but not listed here.

\*\*Additionally, there are 4.6 million international migrants in countries or areas not listed here and 9.8 million international migrants from an unspecified origin.

\*\*\*Additionally, there are 99,000 internally displaced persons in countries or areas not listed here.

Countries and areas*	International migrants, 2015**					Refugees, 2015				Asylum-seekers, 2015		Internally displaced persons, 2015***	Ratification of key human rights instruments
	International migrants by country of destination			International migrants by country of origin		Refugees by country of asylum		Refugees by country of origin		Asylum-seekers by country of asylum	Asylum-seekers by country of origin		
	Total (thousands)	As percentage of total population (%)	Share of under 18 among total international migrants (%)	Total (thousands)	As percentage of total population (%)	Total (thousands)	Share of under 18 among total refugees (%)	Total (thousands)	Share of under 18 among total refugees (%)	Total (thousands)	Total (thousands)		
Norway	14	11	193	4	50	-	<1	-	25	<1	-	4	4
Oman	41	7	21	<1	<1	36	<1	-	<1	<1	-	3	3
Pakistan	2	22	5,935	3	1561	50	298	58	6	64	1,459	1	1
Palau	27	13	3	12	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	1	1
Panama	5	13	143	4	17	40	<1	-	3	<1	-	4	4
Papua New Guinea	<1	33	5	<1	10	-	<1	-	<1	<1	6	2	2
Paraguay	2	17	845	13	<1	21	<1	-	<1	<1	-	5	5
Peru	<1	28	1,410	4	1	-	4	-	<1	2	60	5	5
Philippines	<1	31	5,316	5	<1	8	1	-	<1	2	62	5	5
Poland	2	11	4,450	12	14	-	1	3	3	<1	-	4	4
Portugal	8	6	2,306	22	1	-	<1	-	1	<1	-	4	4
Qatar	75	13	26	1	<1	26	<1	-	<1	<1	-	2	2
Republic of Korea	3	4	2,346	5	1	17	<1	-	5	<1	-	4	4
Republic of Moldova	4	14	889	22	<1	17	2	-	<1	3	-	4	4
Romania	1	35	3,408	17	3	27	2	-	<1	1	-	4	4
Russian Federation	8	5	10,577	7	315	-	67	-	2	28	27	4	4
Rwanda	4	24	316	3	145	51	286	64	<1	11	-	5	5
Saint Kitts and Nevis	13	27	39	70	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	4	4
Saint Lucia	7	26	55	30	<1	0	1	-	<1	<1	-	2	2
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	4	21	60	55	-	-	2	-	-	<1	-	5	5
Samoa	3	43	113	59	-	-	<1	-	<1	<1	-	2	2
San Marino	15	12	2	7	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	3	3
Sao Tome and Principe	1	17	36	19	-	-	<1	47	-	<1	-	4	4
Saudi Arabia	32	20	270	1	<1	34	1	-	<1	1	-	3	3
Senegal	2	27	587	4	14	55	21	-	3	14	24	5	5
Serbia	9	3	965	11	35	7	39	-	<1	53	-	4	4
Seychelles	13	9	12	12	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	5	5
Sierra Leone	1	33	145	2	1	46	5	-	<1	4	-	4	4
Singapore	45	10	314	6	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	2	2
Slovakia	3	10	342	6	1	18	<1	-	<1	1	-	4	4
Slovenia	11	5	140	7	<1	15	<1	-	<1	<1	-	4	4
Solomon Islands	<1	19	4	1	<1	0	<1	-	-	<1	-	2	2
Somalia	<1	36	1,999	19	8	48	1,123	50	10	57	1,223	2	2
South Africa	6	14	841	2	122	-	<1	-	1,096	1	-	4	4
South Sudan	7	39	635	5	263	61	779	65	1	4	1,697	1	1
Spain	13	10	1,251	3	6	-	<1	-	11	<1	-	4	4
Sri Lanka	<1	38	1,637	8	1	38	121	-	1	15	44	3	3
State of Palestine <sup>†</sup>	5	20	3,551	76	-	-	98	53	-	4	221	1	1
Sudan	1	46	1,891	5	310	53	629	58	13	45	3,182	3	3
Suriname	9	30	268	49	<1	0	<1	-	<1	<1	-	4	4
Swaziland	2	20	96	7	1	36	<1	-	<1	<1	-	4	4
Sweden	17	9	333	3	170	-	<1	-	157	<1	-	4	4

\*Data are listed for 197 countries. Other countries and areas are included in the aggregates but not listed here.

\*\*Additionally, there are 4.6 million international migrants in countries or areas not listed here and 9.8 million international migrants from an unspecified origin.

\*\*\*Additionally, there are 99,000 internally displaced persons in countries or areas not listed here.

<sup>†</sup>For refugees by country of origin, this refers to Palestinians under UNHCR mandate only.



Countries and areas <sup>1</sup>	International migrants, 2015**					Refugees, 2015				Asylum-seekers, 2015		Internally displaced persons, 2015***	Ratification of key human rights instruments
	International migrants by country of destination			International migrants by country of origin		Refugees by country of asylum		Refugees by country of origin		Asylum-seekers by country of asylum	Asylum-seekers by country of origin		
	Total (thousands)	As percentage of total population (%)	Share of under 18 among total international migrants (%)	Total (thousands)	As percentage of total population (%)	Total (thousands)	Share of under 18 among total refugees (%)	Total (thousands)	Share of under 18 among total refugees (%)	Total (thousands)	Total (thousands)	Total (thousands)	Number of instruments ratified
Switzerland	29	7	665	8	73	-	<1	-	33	<1	-	4	4
Syrian Arab Republic	5	19	5,012	27	21	47	4,873	-	5	246	6,600	4	4
Tajikistan	3	6	590	7	2	-	1	-	<1	1	-	5	5
Thailand	6	12	854	1	108	47	<1	-	8	1	35	2	2
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	6	13	516	25	1	40	2	-	<1	15	0	4	4
Timor-Leste	1	26	37	3	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	5	5
Togo	4	43	447	6	22	60	9	34	1	2	3	4	4
Tonga	5	30	57	53	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	1	1
Trinidad and Tobago	4	18	363	27	<1	13	<1	-	<1	<1	-	4	4
Tunisia	1	19	651	6	1	32	2	-	<1	2	-	4	4
Turkey	4	24	3,114	4	2541	-	60	21	212	12	954	5	5
Turkmenistan	4	8	243	5	<1	0	<1	-	-	1	-	4	4
Tuvalu	1	23	3	35	-	-	<1	-	-	<1	-	2	2
Uganda	2	37	736	2	477	57	6	-	36	6	30	3	3
Ukraine	11	6	5,826	13	3	-	321	-	7	23	1,679	4	4
United Arab Emirates	88	13	137	1	1	31	<1	43	<1	<1	-	2	2
United Kingdom	13	9	4,917	8	123	-	<1	-	46	<1	-	4	4
United Republic of Tanzania	<1	31	295	1	212	57	6	-	2	2	-	4	4
United States	14	8	3,024	1	273	-	5	-	286	<1	-	3	3
Uruguay	2	19	347	10	<1	23	<1	-	<1	<1	-	5	5
Uzbekistan	4	8	1,991	7	<1	36	4	-	-	3	-	2	2
Vanuatu	1	24	9	3	-	-	<1	-	<1	<1	-	1	1
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	5	12	606	2	174	-	7	-	<1	15	-	4	4
Viet Nam	<1	15	2,559	3	-	-	313	-	-	4	-	2	2
Yemen	1	30	1,013	4	267	26	16	40	10	10	2,509	2	2
Zambia	1	18	238	1	26	45	<1	-	2	<1	-	4	4
Zimbabwe	3	13	856	5	7	52	21	-	<1	57	-	3	3
<b>Regions</b>													Average number of instruments ratified
Africa	20,650	2	30	32,600	3	4,811	55	5,393	53	1,367	660	12,388	4
Asia	75,081	2	16	99,760	2	8,695	44	9,609	45	397	1,147	19,267	3
Europe	76,146	10	7	59,609	8	1,820	4	507	27	1,084	180	1,821	4
Latin America and the Caribbean	9,234	1	21	35,790	6	338	41	448	43	45	178	7,332	4
Northern America	54,489	15	8	4,345	1	409	-	5	68	306	1	0	4
Oceania	8,101	21	8	1,812	5	48	-	1	3	22	1	6	2
World	243,700	3	13	243,700*	3	16,121	51	16,121+	51	3,220	3,220*	40,814	4

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\*\*Additionally, there are 4.6 million international migrants in countries or areas not listed here and 9.8 million international migrants from an unspecified origin.

\*\*\*Additionally, there are 99,000 internally displaced persons in countries or areas not listed here.

<sup>1</sup> Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers with origins listed as other, unknown or stateless are included in the global aggregate but not in the regional aggregates, making the global total larger than the sum of the regional totals. Globally, there were 9.8 million international migrants with an unspecified country of origin. Among all refugees, there were 120,000 refugees with unspecified origin and 37,000 stateless refugees. Among all asylum seekers, the country of origin was unspecified for 1 million persons, and 19,000 were stateless.



Addis and Lato in May 2015

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Around the world, nearly 50 million children have migrated across borders or been forcibly displaced. No matter why they move or how they arrive, children are at the centre of the world's population movements. Whether they are migrants, refugees or internally displaced, they are always children: entitled to protection, support and all the rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.



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