



Migration Youth and Children Platform Global Compact for Migration Regional Reviews

Youth Consultations - Global Overview

Youth under 25 years old represented approximately 22 percent of the international migrant stock in 2020, a proportion that rises to 31 percent when including migrants aged 29 and under¹. Many organisations working on migration at the global level as well as the main migration governance processes have acknowledged the importance of listening to youth priorities, challenges and needs.

The Migration Youth and Children Platform (MYCP), also known as Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY) Migration Working Group, is a youth-led organisation² created in response to the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration (GCM) negotiations. It aims to advance the engagement and meaningful participation of children and youth in policy spaces related to migration at the global, regional and national levels. Following the adoption of the GCM in 2018, one main track of the organisation's activities focuses explicitly on its implementation, follow-up, and review.

In 2020-21, ahead of the first GCM Regional Reviews, MYCP conducted consultations with youth-led and youth-focused organisations, as well as youth and young migrants themselves, in five regions (Europe and North America; the Middle East and North Africa (MENA); Asia and the Pacific (APAC); Latin America and the Caribbean; and Africa). Led by MYCP's regional teams, consultations on GCM objectives inquired about the experiences of and impacts on youth. The consultations predominantly focused on Objectives 2, 4, 7, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18, previously identified as key for young people. Overall, 381 youth-led organisations and young migrants were reached, representing and serving over 556,000 youth across 36 countries. This global policy brief summarises the critical challenges and opportunities highlighted by young respondents around the world, as well as recommendations and good practices stemming from these consultations.

Youth Priorities

Four main themes emerged from the regional consultations as key priorities for youth with regards to the GCM implementation. (1) Discrimination and social cohesion, (2) employment and skills development opportunities, (3) access to education and recognition of qualifications, and (4) access to services and information, were emphasized as critical needs for young people on the move, whether in countries of origin, transit or destination.

1. Discrimination and Social Cohesion

¹ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/international-migrant-stock>

² Youth is defined by MYCP as those aged 30 years and under.



Migration Youth and Children Platform Global Compact for Migration Regional Reviews

Globally, youth call on governments to promote evidence-based public discourse and fight discrimination and xenophobia. State actors should also promote the social mobility and participation of migrant youth in public life, with specific attention to vulnerable communities such as unaccompanied children, differently-abled persons, LGBTQI+, women and girls. Particularly in the area of education and culture, consultations have suggested that **the role of local governments and organisations is key in providing spaces and opportunities for exchange between migrants and local residents**. The organisation of community events should also be encouraged to increase interactions between the two populations.

Youth Initiatives

- Implementing **buddy systems** in schools to connect migrant children and youth to local peers.
- Fight discrimination and xenophobia by creating spaces for discussion and integration such as **workshops, sport activities and cultural events**, which encourages the development of relationships between migrants and local communities.
- Implementing **mentoring programs** in schools to provide integration support and assist children with their homework.
- Creating a **public campaign and direct action against discrimination and racism**, focusing on key spaces of exclusion such as schools (e.g. Moving Beyond Hate, Japan).

2. Employment and Skills Development Opportunities

For young people, equal access to employment and skills development opportunities is one of the most critical aspects shaping their experiences of migration. Youth call on governments to reduce the administratively-burdensome processes imposed on migrants to access employment. Skills or competency-based requirements should also be standardised by industry, at a minimum on a regional basis and ideally on a global basis. The adoption of skills acquisition guidelines and frameworks by governments and industry would be a positive step in that regard. **Youth also urge governments to implement more pathways to obtain legal residency and status to enable migrants, including undocumented migrants, to access employment opportunities and contribute to the development of their host society.**

Beyond administrative barriers, youth prioritise opportunities to develop their skills and call on governments to support them in accessing such activities. Key examples mentioned by the young people consulted included access to language classes, apprenticeships and traineeships, networking events, as well as workshops on key abilities (writing CV, computer skills, financial literacy, cultural awareness, etc.). Such opportunities need to be available to youth, regardless of migratory status. Additional funding is needed for youth-focused and youth-led organisations to continue implementing skills development activities. This is key not only for youth to contribute



Migration Youth and Children Platform Global Compact for Migration Regional Reviews

effectively to the economy, but also to ensure their personal development and long term social mobility.

Youth initiatives

- Providing **volunteer and work opportunities** for young migrants inside youth organisations, allowing them to gain local experience.
- Implementing **training in skills and trades** (aesthetics, baking, etc.) aimed at young people between the ages of 16 and 25 with the objective of enabling them to position themselves in the labour market.
- Supporting migrants' economical and social inclusion through **soft skills-building programs** and **employability support**, as well as **intensive language training** matching their chosen areas of work and study.

3. Access to Education and Recognition of Qualifications

The recognition of previous education and diplomas is a major issue for migrant youth and children. Inflexible and burdensome requirements on documentation that do not take into account the situation of home countries mean that many migrants are unable to pursue their education or contribute to their host communities by working in their trained professions. When they have the correct documentation, the high costs associated with the transfer of qualifications are still a major impediment. **Young people ask governments and educational institutions to prioritise the streamlining of recognition of foreign qualifications and certifications as well as reduce the fees associated with overseas qualifications transfer.** Alternate qualification routes should also be available to assess a person's skill set when official certificates or diplomas cannot be accessed or provided. Young migrants bring with them incredible talent and potential - let's stop wasting it!

Youth initiatives

- Establishing programs to **identify children in situations of vulnerability**, including migrants and providing them with the ability to return to school (e.g. Youth Advocates Ghana).
- Providing **alternative education and language competency classes** for migrant children and youth (Disha Foundation, India).
- **Funding digital devices and networks access costs** for displaced children for them to continue their online education during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. Sekolah Islamiah and Sekolah Alternatif, Malaysia)



Migration Youth and Children Platform Global Compact for Migration Regional Reviews

4. Access to Information and Services

Young migrants identify the lack of communication between the different levels of government, non-governmental organisations and other organisations delivering services to migrants as a core issue in navigating the migration system. **Youth ask governments and civil society to provide simplified versions of key documents and information regarding the migration process, especially with regard to the level of language used. Important information on migration policies, visa, employment opportunities, available financial support, access to health care and education, etc. should be centralised and easily accessible through an integrated platform, as well as translated in the main languages spoken by the migrant population. This would avoid information being spread across several sources and ensure quick access to reliable information.**

Youth initiatives

- Creating organisations to **assist migrants in accessing resources such as career planning and education advice, visa assistance, and mentoring** (e.g. *Bridging Us*, Australia)
- Building initiatives to link migrants with “**local facilitators**” who can help them navigate existing bureaucratic channels and provide access to local support systems, such as enrollment in local schools.

Youth are already taking action. We call on governments and all relevant stakeholders to increase their efforts in implementing the Global Compact on Migration with youth priorities in mind and support the activities implemented by youth-led and youth-focused organisations.