



unicef 
for every child

A RIGHT TO BE HEARD

Listening to children and young people on the move

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication was developed by the UNICEF Data and Analytics Section, Division of Data, Research and Policy in collaboration with the Office of Innovation and the Division of Communication.

Conceptualization, project management and coordination:

Claus Hansen, Danzhen You

Polling: Christopher Brooks, James Powell, Hira Hafeez ur Rehman and U-Report offices globally

Analysis: Jan Beise

Writing and editing: Tara Dooley, Timothy Ledwith

Reporting: Melanie Sharpe, Christopher Tidey, Codi Trigger

Fact checking: Xinyi Ge, Yasmine Hage

Copy editing: Natalie Leston

Design and data visualizations: Sinae Lee

Thank you

This report was made possible by the many thousands of children and young people around the world who actively engaged with UNICEF as U-Reporters and participated in the poll. You helped us better understand your concerns and opinions. Thank you.

Special thanks go to the young migrants who reviewed the poll questions and the report to make sure we remained focused on your concerns.

The poll would not have been possible without support, implementation and outreach provided by UNICEF Country Offices and National Committees, in particular: Bangladesh, Brazil, the Central African Republic, El Salvador, France, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Uganda, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

This report benefited from valuable inputs and support from many colleagues. Particular thanks go to: Laurence Chandy, Director, Division of Data, Research and Policy; Mark Hereward, Associate Director, Division of Data, Research and Policy; Paloma Escudero, Director, Division of Communication. Essential inputs and support were provided by Marta Arias, Verena Knaus and Yanhong Zhang. Many colleagues throughout UNICEF provided valuable inputs including:

Anshana Arora, Noela Barasa, Giovanna Barberis, Saskia Blume, Diana Escobedo Lastiri, Attila Hancioglu, Karoline Hassfurter, Laura Healy, Karima Lahrach-Maynard, Christine Nesbitt, Behzad Noubary, Harriet Riley, Thierry Schlaudecker, Melanie Sharpe, Cecilia Silva Venturini, Ayano Suzumura, Turgay Unalan, and colleagues in Regional Offices, Country Offices and National Committees.

Thanks also go to the following partners for their support: the Office of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for International Migration, United Nations Major Group of Children and Young People, the Global Forum for Migration and Development, International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Organization for Migration's Global Migration and Data Analysis Center (GMDAC), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Detention Coalition (IDC), Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts.

Cover: An 18-year-old travels to a training programme from Za'atari Refugee Camp in Jordan. © UNICEF/UN0216407/Herwig

Photo credits:

Page i: © UNICEF/UNI181864/Sokhin

Page 2: © UNICEF/UN0255467/Moreno Gonzalez

Page 3 - 4: © UNICEF/UN028382/Rich

Page 7: © UNICEF/UN0179490/Sokol

Page 8: © UNICEF/UN051561/Tremeau

Page 11: © UNICEF/UNI200019/Gilbertson VII Photo

Page 14: © UNICEF/UN043094/Rich

Page 16: © UNICEF/UN067195/Vas

Page 17: © © UNICEF/UN027448/Volpe

Page 19: © UNICEF/UN058508/Vas

Page 20: © UNICEF/UN063091/Gilbertson VII Photo

Page 21: © UNICEF/2018/Prinsloo

ISBN: 978-92-806-4997-0

© United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), December 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	ii
INTRODUCTION	1
Portrait: Harold	2
THE POLL: HOW THE INFORMATION WAS GATHERED	3
POLL RESPONDENTS: YOUNG MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES	5
Age and sex	5
From around the world	5
KEY FINDINGS	6
Portrait: Tasmin	7
THE JOURNEY	8
Leaving home	9
Forced to leave?	9
Reason uprooted	10
Family support for journey	10
On the way	12
Sources of help	12
Accompanied, unaccompanied or separated	13
Medical services	14
Education	15
Destinations	17
Divided opinions	18
Moving on	18
VOICES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	19
Portrait: Ideeya	21
CONCLUSION	22
AGENDA FOR ACTION	24
ENDNOTES	25



Pupils in a tent used as a school after Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu.

FOREWORD

After almost two years of consultations and negotiations, world leaders are on the verge of formally adopting the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The compact is the first-ever intergovernmental agreement on a common approach to every dimension of migration. It provides a platform for international cooperation to protect the human rights of all migrants while respecting national sovereignty. It also underscores the urgent need to safeguard the most vulnerable – a category that very much includes children and young people.

Right now, millions of migrant and refugee children around the world are living in precarious circumstances, disproportionately exposed to hardship, discrimination and abuse. Many of them continue to be placed in detention despite its grave and lasting effects on their health and development. Others have been deprived of security and legal identity, and are excluded from access to medical care, education and other essential services.

These young people should not – must not – continue living in the shadows. As the global compact is launched, it will be critical to frame migration and refugee policies in ways that consistently uphold children’s rights and best interests. To that end, it is important to listen to the voices of young people themselves, including nearly 4,000 who responded to UNICEF’s recent global youth poll. Their responses comprise the heart and soul of the report that follows.

Let us heed the insights of children and young people on the move today and keep them at the forefront of our work tomorrow. They own their personal experiences, needs and aspirations, and they are fully invested in their future. They have demonstrated incredible resilience in the face of daunting challenges. And they will be key partners – along with governments, civil society, the private sector and the United Nations – in successfully implementing the Global Compact for Migration, as well as the Global Compact on Refugees.

Regardless of their migration and refugee status, all children deserve an education and a peaceful future. Given the opportunity, they will make that future a reality.



Henrietta H. Fore
Executive Director, UNICEF



Louise Arbour
United Nations Special Representative for International Migration

INTRODUCTION

For many uprooted children, the journey from home can be profoundly lonely and plagued by challenges that put their health, education and futures at risk.

Nearly 40 per cent of migrants and refugees aged 14–24 who participated in a new poll said they received no help at all during their journey in search of a safe and a better future – not from family, not from friends, not from institutions.

About 40 per cent said they travelled alone. Nearly half reported that they did not see a doctor when they needed one. Eighty per cent of those who were forced to migrate because of war, conflict or violence described missing valuable time in school.¹

“You can’t trust anyone,” said a 17-year-old boy from Egypt. “And no one will help you for free and you always must be careful.”

These insights were provided as part of a poll conducted in September and October 2018 by UNICEF through U-Report, a social messaging tool for young people. The questions were sent digitally to U-Report users around the globe, and about 4,000 migrants and refugees aged 14–24 responded. The goal of the poll was to encourage children and young people to speak out about their experiences so their voices could be heard and heeded.

Globally, 30 million children lived outside their country of origin in 2017.² About 12 million children were refugees and asylum seekers.³ Millions more have been affected by international migration. For example, some are stateless because they were born outside the borders of their parents’ home country. Others experience family disruption when their parents migrate.⁴

Far too often, millions of uprooted children and young people are invisible in data.⁵ They face discrimination and isolation as they seek to make new lives for themselves. Many do not have access to national or local services and fall through the cracks of child protection systems as they cross borders. Indeed, data are scarce, and little is known about their health, their education, or how migration affects their futures.

Too often, they are talked about, but rarely are they listened to.

This new poll provides an opportunity to listen.

The results do not capture the typical experiences of all migrant and refugee children and young people because the results were not drawn from a representative sample. But the insights presented in these pages highlight some of the challenges and triumphs children and young people face when they leave their homes in search of a better future.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize the importance of migration for countries of origin, transit and destination. The SDGs also acknowledge the role good migration management can play in creating a more peaceful, prosperous and sustainable planet.⁶ Sustainable development is also a driving concern of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, two frameworks aimed at addressing the challenges faced by migrants, refugees and host communities. To achieve the goals of these international agreements, the participation of children and young people will be essential.

The two global compacts include strong commitments to children and young people. They embrace the principle of acting in the best interest of the child and pledge protection and respect for their rights. They also acknowledge that international migration has been a “source of prosperity, innovation and sustainable development in our globalized world.”⁷

As implementation of the global compacts begins, it is essential to remember that children and young people are a significant part of international migration. If their vulnerabilities and needs are not addressed with concrete commitments backed by investment, implementation of the global compacts will fail.

With the right support, however, uprooted children and young people can drive success. Millions of young migrants and refugees have the potential to be great innovators, job creators, skilled workers and pillars of families and communities around the world. Connecting them with the information and services they need to start off in a new home – including education, health care and protection – is an investment in their future and the future of nations around the world.



“It is hard to be a foreigner...You are never from here and you are not from there anymore. The accent always betrays you.”

– 23-year-old male, Brazil⁸



Portrait: Harold⁹

17, from Venezuela

Harold is travelling to Lima, Peru, to start a new life. When packing to leave, he discarded many things that did not fit in his bag. But he did pack one special object: his high school medal. The medal, he hopes, represents the first of many achievements in his life.



THE POLL: HOW THE INFORMATION WAS GATHERED

As part of an effort to listen to the voices of uprooted children and young people, UNICEF worked with U-Report to ask a series of questions in September and October 2018. Most of the questions were multiple choice, but one allowed for open-ended responses.

Using SMS and social media platforms, the poll reached out to more than 320,000 people, and about 45,000 responded. More than 8,000 of the respondents said they were migrants or refugees. About half of these migrants and refugees were aged 14–24.

The respondents are not a representative sample of all migrants and refugees, because they do not come from a full range of demographic groups, countries of origin or current geographic locations. In addition, the poll respondents are not representative because they have access to the internet or mobile phones, and they have at least basic skills with technology, which is not true of all refugees and migrants.

It is also important to note that participants in the poll sign themselves up for U-Report and are responsible for providing accurate information about their age and sex, and the country where they are registering to participate – information that is not independently verified.

While the poll results are not representative of all migrant and refugee children, they provide valuable testimony from thousands of children and young people and offer insight into experiences too often hidden from public view.

Though the poll collected information from respondents 14 and older, the responses presented in this report focus on children and young people aged 14–24, a group considered old enough to respond to the questions UNICEF asked. As noted above, the report focuses on respondents in this age group who self-identified as migrants or refugees.

Box 1. U-Report: Responses in real time

U-Report is a free social messaging tool that allows anyone from anywhere in the world to speak out on the issues they care about. UNICEF and partners developed the platform to capture a range of voices on critical development issues. U-Report also encourages citizen-led development, facilitates responses to humanitarian emergencies and magnifies local voices globally to create positive change.

U-Reporters can join the platform by SMS or on social media, allowing them to respond to polls, report concerns, support child rights and work to improve their communities. Currently, there are more than 6 million U-Reporters present in over 50 countries.¹⁰

To sign up, U-Report members register their age and sex, and where they live. Once they register, U-Report sends them SMS messages and alerts about polls or updates from ongoing campaigns. U-Reporters' responses are analysed in real-time, providing an immediate snapshot of the situation.

For more information on U-Report, visit <https://ureport.in/>.

Box 2. Poll questions

Once U-Reporters self-identified as migrants and refugees, they were asked nine multiple-choice questions and one open-ended question:

1. Were you forced to leave your home country?
2. What is the main reason for leaving your home country?
3. Who did you move from your country with?
4. Did your family agree to your journey before you left your country?
5. Have you seen a doctor when needed since you began your journey?
6. How many years of education have you lost as a result of moving?
7. Knowing what you know now, would you advise your family members or friends to move, too?
8. Did you receive any help (legal, health, shelter or other services) during your journey?
9. Where do you see yourself in the future?
10. What are the most important things you have learned from your journey?

Box 3. Definitions¹¹

Migrant, refugee and unaccompanied are terms with specific meanings that correspond to an individual's status in a country. In the U-Report poll, respondents self-identified as migrants or refugees; their status was not independently verified.

Migrant: Individuals who are moving or have moved across an international border or within a state away from their habitual place of residence, regardless of whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary.

Refugee: A person who lives outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence and is unable to return because of persecution or fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.

Unaccompanied: Someone who has been separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult legally responsible to do so.

Uprooted: A general, non-legal term used in this report for people who have left their place of origin for any reason.



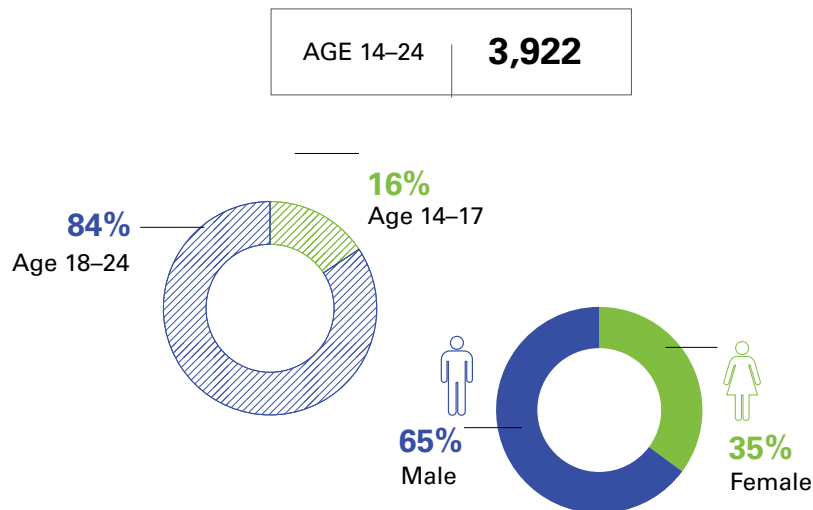
Dusk at the Protection of Civilians (POC) site in South Sudan.

POLL RESPONDENTS: YOUNG MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Though more than 8,000 respondents who self-identified as migrants or refugees answered the questions in the poll, the results presented in this report come from the 3,922 aged 14–24.

Age and sex

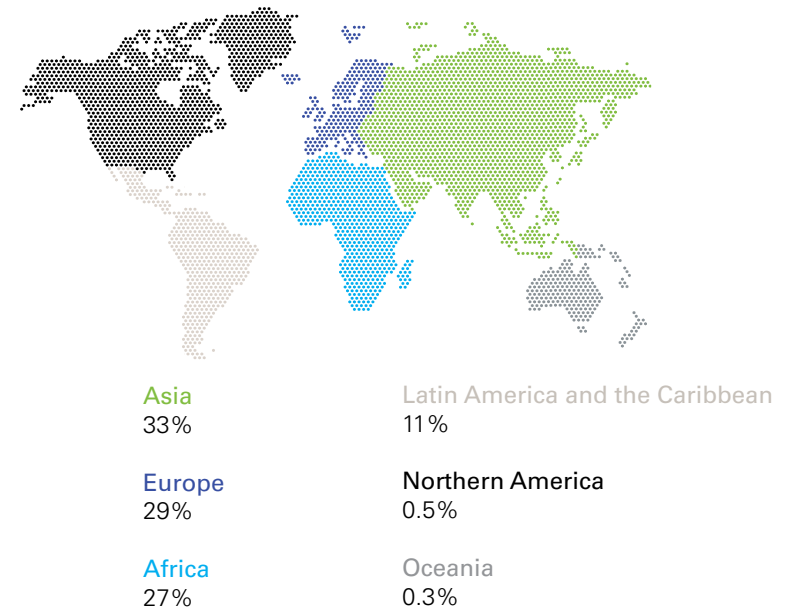
Percentages of self-identified male and female migrants and refugees from the 3,922 polled



About 65 per cent of this group said they were male, and 84 per cent said they were aged 18–24.

From around the world

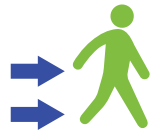
Geographical distribution of the 3,922 poll respondents who said they were migrants and refugees aged 14–24 by percentage in regions



Nearly 90 per cent of the young migrant and refugee respondents said they were located in Africa, Asia and Europe. These regions include countries of origin for migrants and refugees, such as the Syrian Arab Republic and Ukraine. They also include countries that host migrants and refugees, such as Germany, Turkey and Uganda.¹² In contrast, far fewer of the poll participants responded from Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern America and Oceania.

Key findings

Percentage based on poll respondents who self-identified as migrants and refugees aged 14–24



67%

of respondents were forced to leave for any reason



57%

of respondents left home country specifically because of war, conflict or violence



44%

of respondents left home country alone



65%

of respondents' families agreed to their journey



49%

of respondents did not see a doctor when needed



58%

of respondents lost 1 or more years of school



50%

of respondents would advise their family or friends to move, too



38%

received no help from anyone – family, friends, institutions



Portrait: Tasmin

14, a Rohingya refugee

Tasmin holds her favourite book of poetry. She is a refugee at the UNICEF-supported Kutupalong camp in Cox's Bazar District, Bangladesh. "When I take a decision for myself, like deciding to read a Bengali poem at home, I feel strong," she said.

THE JOURNEY



“The journey is like a book: You open it while you start walking. The best things the journey taught me is how to deal with difficult situations and how to survive.”

– 17-year-old male, Afghanistan

Migration has been part of the human experience throughout history. For some children and families, leaving home is an adventure. Others migrate because of educational or work opportunities or to reunite with family members. However, many children and families are forced from their homes by war, persecution or disaster.

When children and young people move from their homes, regardless of the reason, they embark on a journey. It starts in their country of origin and continues as they transit within nations or across borders. When they arrive at their destinations, they are granted permission to stay, pushed towards new lands or returned to their country of origin. Many children and young people arrive in new destinations with paperwork in order. Others face lengthy legal procedures or decide to stay without the proper documentation.

No matter where they are, children and young people have rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.¹³ These rights do not stop at the border. For governments to protect the rights of children and young people as they move, it is essential to understand the challenges they face.



A 15-year-old from Mali sits outside her family's shelter in the Mangaize refugee camp in Niger.

To hear about their experiences directly, UNICEF asked refugee and migrant children and young people about their reasons for migration, the services they received in transit and their experiences when they arrived at a destination.

Leaving home

The reasons children and young people move – and the circumstances surrounding their departure – can have a significant impact on their experiences and the outcome of their travels.

Two thirds of the migrants and refugees aged 14–24 who responded to the U-Report poll said they were forced to leave their homes. Nearly 60 per cent said they were driven away by violence, war or conflict. For others, the search for education or relief from poverty played a significant role in their decision to move.

Past research indicates that many children and young people who travel alone or with friends often do not consult their parents about their plans.¹⁴ But 65 per cent of the children and young people who participated in this poll reported that their families agreed with their decision to leave.

Still, 10 per cent did not discuss their plans with their parents, 13 per cent did not know their families' opinions about the move and 12 per cent had families that did not approve. Without approval from family, children and young people often have less support, which can affect the course of their journey and its outcome.¹⁵



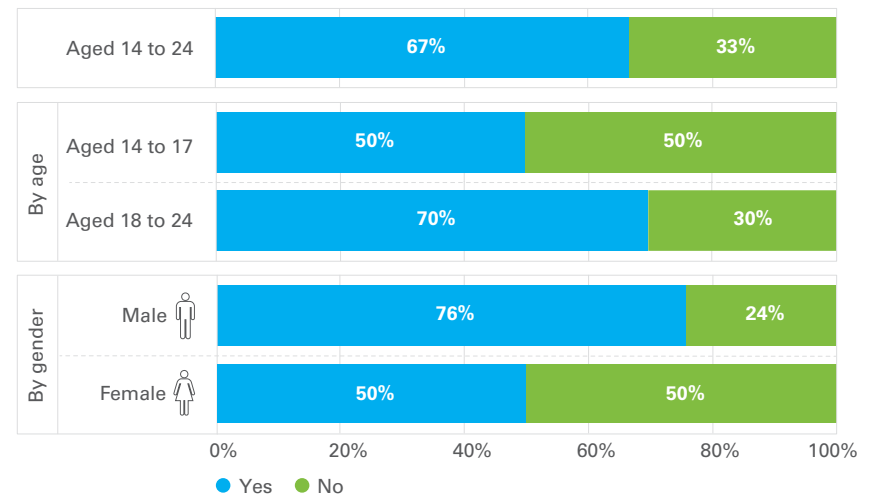
“Life is short. You have to realize your dreams as long as you can, whatever the danger.”

– 20-year-old, Ghana

Forced to leave?

Question: Were you forced to leave your home country?

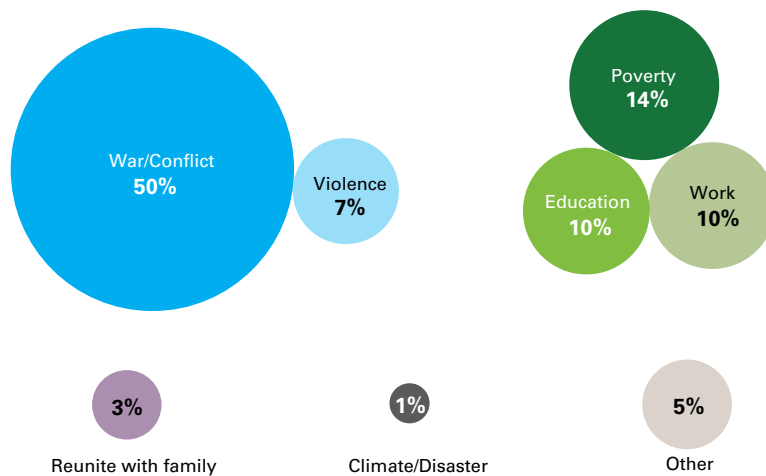
Fig 1. Percentage of respondents aged 14–24 forced to leave their country of origin



Reason uprooted

Question: What is the main reason for leaving your home country?

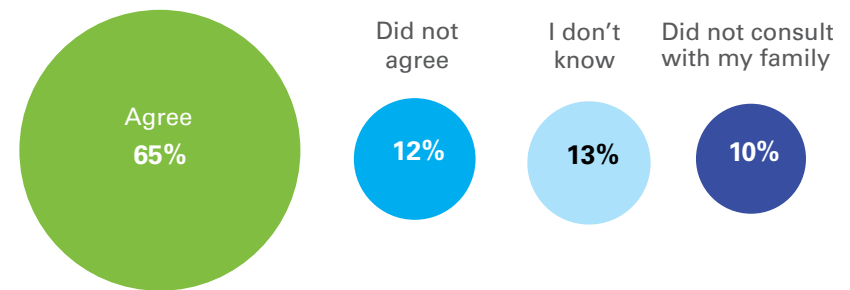
Fig 2. Percentage of respondents aged 14–24 by reason they left their home country



Family support for journey

Question: Did your family agree to your journey before you left your country?

Fig 3. Percentage of respondents aged 14–24 by family's support for journey



Brothers who said they left violence at home
for safety in Germany.



On the way

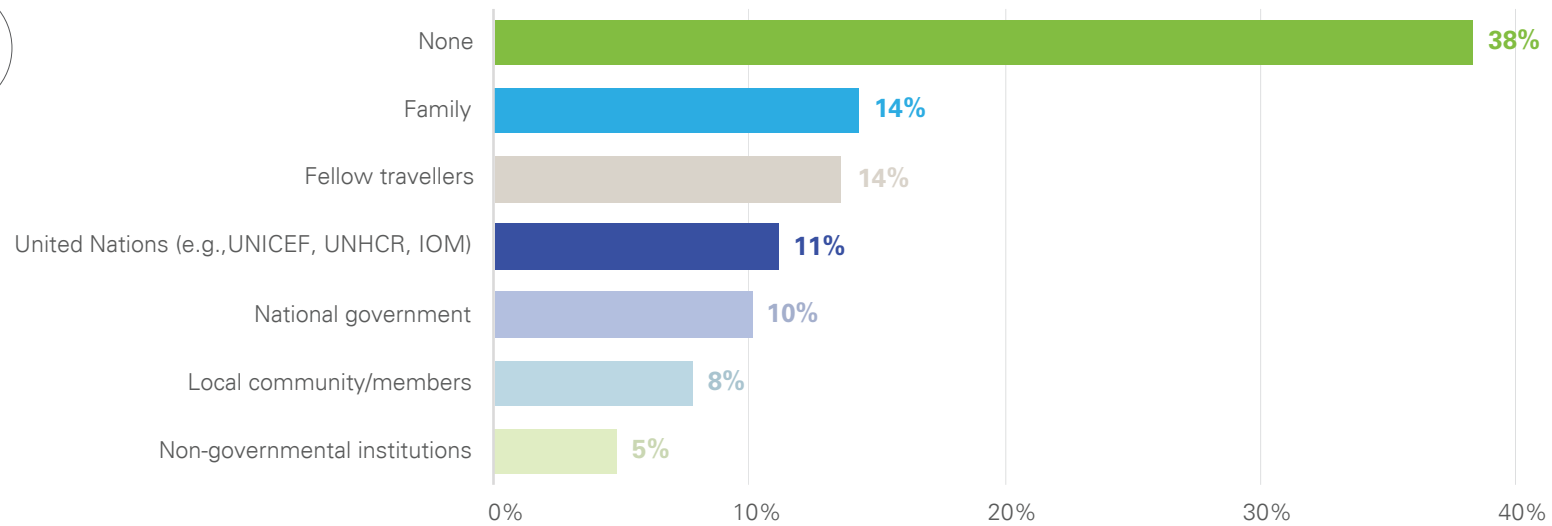
Various factors affect children and young people as they move from their homes to new destinations: age, health, level of education, how they travel, and the services that are available to them on their journey. Many respondents to the U-Report poll expressed a sense of loneliness and desperation. Nearly 40 per cent of the migrants and refugees aged 14–24

said they received no help during their journey. About 30 per cent said they relied on personal networks of family and fellow travellers for help. Only about 20 per cent said they received help from national governments or the United Nations. More than 10 per cent said they received help from local communities, individuals and non-governmental institutions.

Sources of help

Question: Did you receive any help (legal, health, shelter or other services) during your journey?

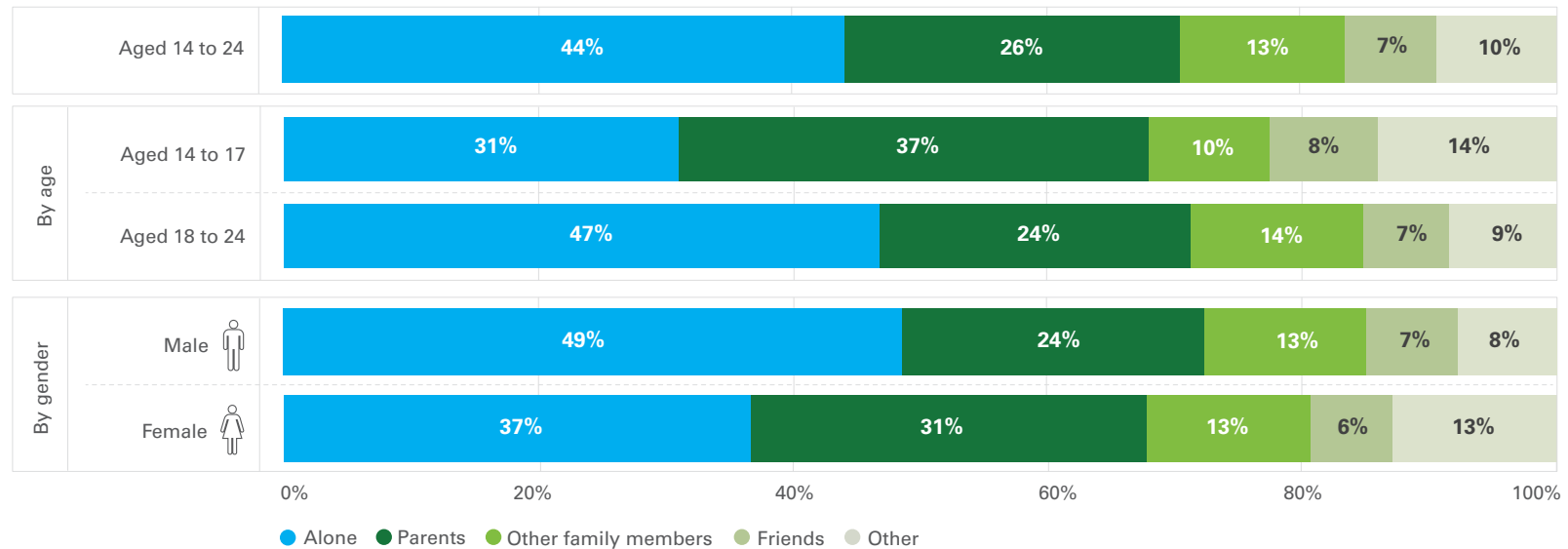
Fig 4. Percentage of respondents aged 14–24 by source of help received



Accompanied, unaccompanied or separated

Question: Who did you move from your country with?

Fig 5. Percentage of respondents aged 14–24 by travel companion



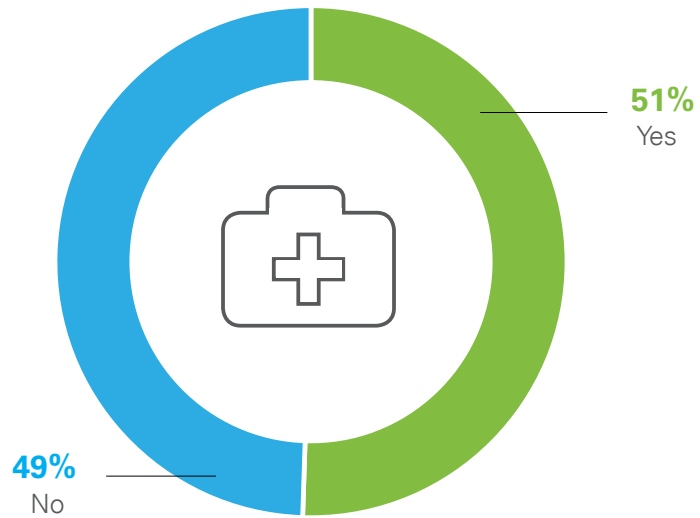
Many were truly alone. Indeed, more than 30 per cent of 14- to 17-year-olds, and nearly 50 per cent of 18- to 24-year-olds, said they travelled on their own.¹⁶ Among the migrant and refugee boys and young men aged 14–24, 49 per cent reported travelling alone; among the girls and young women aged 14–24, 37 per cent said they travelled alone.

The breakdown by sex corresponds with research indicating that, in general, families are less likely to allow girls to travel alone because they face higher rates of abuse and exploitation, especially when they travel without documentation.¹⁷ However, rather than just protect girls, this restriction may also limit mobility for girls and women who would prefer to leave difficult home situations.

Medical services

Question: Have you seen a doctor when needed since you began your journey?

Fig 6. Percentage of respondents aged 14–24 reporting access to a doctor



When asked about access to services, half of respondents said they did not see a doctor when they needed one. This alarming lack of medical care can have serious implications for children's and young people's mental and physical health.¹⁸

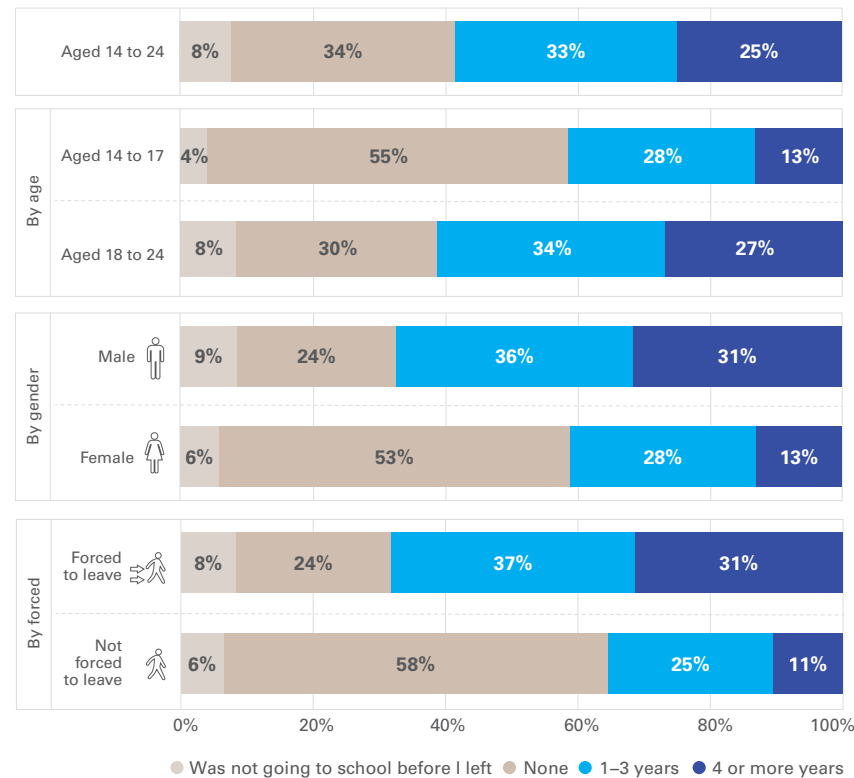


Brothers who sought refuge from the violence in the Syrian Arab Republic by moving to Jordan.

Education

Question: How many years of education have you lost as a result of moving?

Fig 7. Percentage of respondents aged 14–24 who reported missing out on education



Among children and young people who left their homes because of **war, conflict or violence**:

8 in 10 lost **1 or more** years of school

4 in 10 lost **4 or more** years of school

In addition, 58 per cent of the migrant and refugee poll respondents aged 14–24 said they had lost one or more years of education. For children and young people forced to leave their home countries for any reason, 68 per cent said they lost one or more years of education. Shockingly, this proportion increased to 80 per cent for those who left their home countries because of war, conflict or violence. Some 40 per cent of these children and young people said they had lost four or more years of education.

Further, boys and young men were more likely to miss years of school than girls and young women, according to the poll.

Though the right to education is often recognized on paper, it is not always realized in schoolrooms. For example, in the two years since the landmark New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in 2016, refugees have missed 1.5 billion days of school.¹⁹

For uprooted children, the loss of education can be profound for individuals and nations. Without education, children lack the skills and knowledge

they need to build their adult lives, support their families and provide for the future. Without the skilled workforce and engaged citizenry that high-quality education helps create, communities and economies falter.²⁰

There are multiple reasons for the feelings of desperation expressed by young migrants and refugees. For some, a lack of information about their rights and support services may leave them feeling vulnerable. Barriers such as language, culture and lack of income also make it hard to fit in. Fear of detection, detention and deportation can also keep children and young people from seeking protection against violence and taking advantage of basic social services.²¹ And the extraordinarily difficult circumstances of their journeys can compound all of these feelings.



“You are born alone and you die alone. Family is everything.”
- 18-year-old female



| A girl from Afghanistan attends a school for refugees in Serbia.



A 15-year-old from Guatemala outside a shelter for migrants and refugees.

Destinations

In destination countries, migration and refugee asylum have become contested and sometimes divisive topics in recent years. Not surprisingly, the children and young people polled for this report had strong opinions about the experience as well – and their opinions were also divided.

In general, only half of 14- to 24-year-olds would advise loved ones to migrate. Among the other half, some felt they were in such danger or had been so disappointed by the experience that they would steer family and loved ones away from making the same mistake. Some did not know whether they would advise it or not, suggesting that they were not overwhelmingly convinced about the benefits of migration. Of the respondents who left home in search of education, work or relief from poverty, 58 per cent said they would recommend the experience to family and friends.

It is important to note that these attitudes may be particular to the specific group of young migrants and refugees polled.

The reasons for their ambivalence are complex. For many migrants, the journey is not a straight line from origin to destination. Especially for children and young people who travel without the proper paperwork, complications arise from a range of circumstances, including active conflict, border closures, detention and the threat of being returned to their country of origin. The journey may also involve a push towards a country that was not in their original travel plan.²²



“I think home is still the best place. No matter how comfortable and how beautiful the place you are living right now, there is still no place like home.”

– 16-year-old female, the Philippines

When asked where they saw themselves in the future, 28 per cent of respondents said they wanted to return home, 29 per cent said they wanted to stay in their current location and 43 per cent said they wanted to live somewhere else.

For many migrants and refugees, though, returning home is not an option.²³ Indeed, assuring the safe and orderly management of migration and protection of refugees requires that children and young people do not return to the situations that drove them to undertake dangerous journeys in the first place.²⁴ For many, home may bring its own dangers,

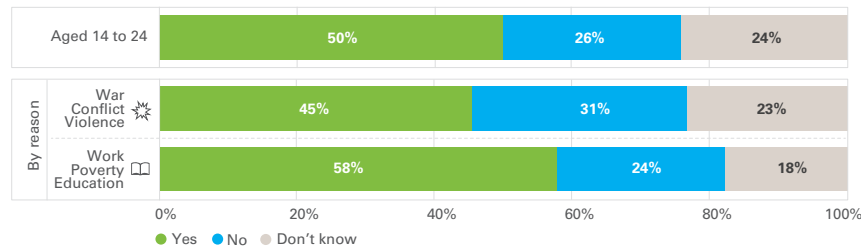
including conflict, disaster, persecution, violence, child marriage and forced recruitment into gangs or armed groups.²⁵

Return to the country of origin or a third country can be a viable option when it is deemed to be in the best interest of a child. However, due diligence is required to ensure that the rights of children and young people are always respected. This due diligence often requires finding family members and making sure that children and young people are not harmed by the return. It also requires consultation with the child or young person in making the decision.

Divided opinions

Question: Knowing what you know now, would you advise your family members or friends to move, too?

Fig 8. Percentage of respondents aged 14–24 who would recommend migration by age and reason for leaving home

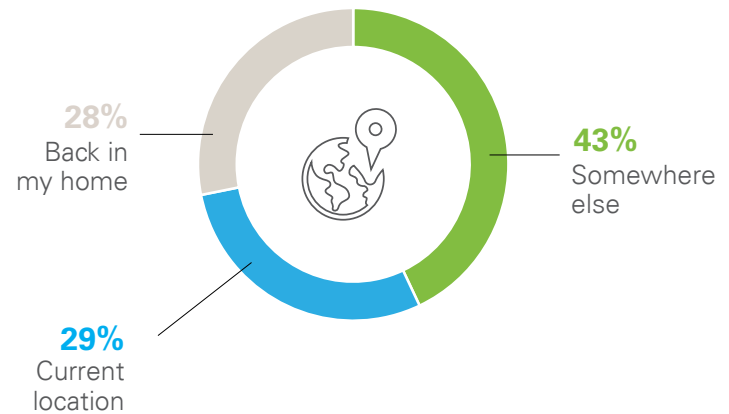


Note: Due to rounding, the percentages do not reach 100.

Moving on

Question: Where do you see yourself in the future?

Fig 9. Percentage of respondents aged 14–24 who say they would return home, stay in their current location or move somewhere else in the future



VOICES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The final question in the U-Report poll asked migrants and refugees to reflect on their experiences. What were the lessons learned?

Some of the children and young people expressed hopelessness and distrust; others offered humility, respect and solidarity. Many talked about pride in their achievements and exhibited fortitude and resilience as they confronted the challenges of leaving home.

Here are some voices:

“Education is the most valuable thing in life to change you and take you to another level.”

– 23-year-old, South Sudan

“You have to fight for what you want and live in a place where you are not repressed by your thoughts.”

– 22-year-old female, Brazil

“I have learned how to respect the old people.”

– 15-year-old male, Kenya



Adolescents who attend classes at a centre in Serbia that teaches English and Serbian to refugee and migrant children.

“At the moment, I am working with a countryman, who is helping to legalize me, so that I can work more peacefully.”

– 22-year-old female, Brazil

“It is useful to help and to let others help you.”

– 19-year-old female, Romania

"I learned that there are bad and good people and others that take advantage of immigrants to steal money, or for other things."

- 23-year-old female

"The hardest is the discrimination they do, knowing that they are humiliating you for a plate of food or for a roof."

- 17-year-old female, Nigeria



| From Italy, an 18-year-old from the Ivory Coast keeps in touch with his family.

"I am just used to suffering and now I view it as normal."

- 24-year-old, Kenya

"I learned tolerance to harsh conditions and hope."

- 20-year-old male, South Sudan

"Xenophobia and the phobia of poor migrants are a barrier at the labour level, even when you are young and qualified academically."

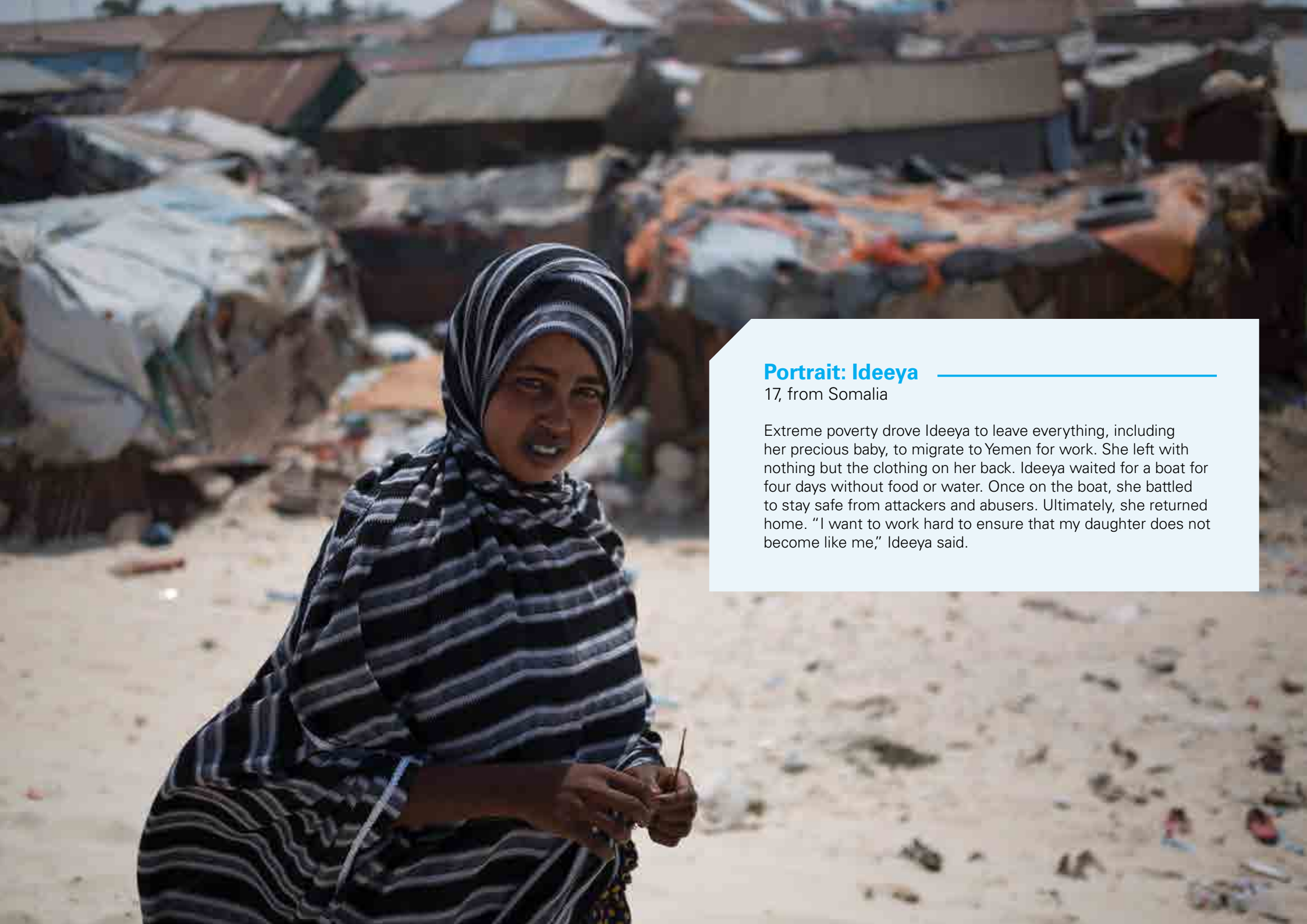
- 19-year-old male

"I learned the taste of pain and injustice."

- 24-year-old male, Lebanon

"Do not talk too much, so no one can feel the pain you feel."

- 21-year-old, Syrian Arab Republic



Portrait: Ideeya

17, from Somalia

Extreme poverty drove Ideeya to leave everything, including her precious baby, to migrate to Yemen for work. She left with nothing but the clothing on her back. Ideeya waited for a boat for four days without food or water. Once on the boat, she battled to stay safe from attackers and abusers. Ultimately, she returned home. "I want to work hard to ensure that my daughter does not become like me," Ideeya said.

CONCLUSION

In their responses to the U-Report poll, uprooted children and young people from around the world describe journeys marked by loneliness, loss of education and a lack of health care and other essential services. They tell of life-changing experiences determined by circumstance and imperfect options.

Protecting and caring for uprooted children and young people requires listening to their voices. It demands new efforts to shine a light on the dangers children and young people face, the services they need, and the effect migration can have on their futures.²⁶

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees recognize the importance of addressing the vulnerabilities of children and young people as a key component of managing international migration. They also recognize that investments in services for children and young people – regardless of their migration or refugee status – will benefit communities, economies and nations. In addition, leaving no child or young person behind is a central aim of the Sustainable Development Goals.

But unless concrete commitments, investments and action follow, the compacts – and the broader development agenda – will not achieve their goals. Fortunately, success is possible, and work is already under way.

In Lebanon, for example, a comprehensive programme is providing quality education to refugee children and children from host communities.²⁷ In the United Republic of Tanzania, community-based health workers are delivering services to refugees and communities.²⁸ The Government of Greece has made incremental steps towards providing alternatives to detention for uprooted children and young people.²⁹ Ecuador recently approved measures to protect migrant and refugee children and young people.³⁰ And the Economic Community of West African States is working across borders on referral mechanisms to protect children.³¹

Municipalities around the world are also involved in addressing the needs of uprooted children and young people.³² In Palermo, volunteer guardians provide support to unaccompanied migrant and refugee children.³³ The Indian city of Siliguri trains teachers, school administrators and border patrol officials about child trafficking and child labour.³⁴

Still, as the U-Report poll shows, there is much more to do. The voices of children and young people from the poll highlight the critical need to:

1. Invest in data on the movements and welfare of uprooted children and young people – data that are disaggregated by sex and age and that clearly describe the services required to address their vulnerabilities.
2. Reach migrant and refugee children and young people with essential services including education and health care – services that unlock their potential. Achieving this goal requires investment in national and local education and health-care systems so they can meet the needs of migrants and refugees.
3. Improve cross-border cooperation in protecting children's rights and caring for children and young people when they consider leaving their country of origin, as they travel, when they reach their destination, and if they return home. As children move, their rights move with them. As a result, effective migration and refugee management requires seamless cooperation across borders.
4. Engage with uprooted children and young people as active partners in the implementation, monitoring and review of the migration and refugee compacts – globally, regionally, nationally and locally. Listening is important, but it is not enough; children and young people must also have a seat at the table.

The voices heard in this poll expose the gap between the needs of migrants and refugees and the services required to reach them. Bridging this gap will demand partnerships between local and national authorities,

individuals, communities and organizations. These partners must be equipped financially and technically to identify vulnerable migrants and refugees and reach out to them with health, protection, education and other services.

Many of the children and young people who shared their perspectives in this poll expressed feelings of loneliness and loss. However, many also expressed pride in their ability to overcome challenges and change their lives. They talked about learning languages and embracing new cultures.

These children and young people have a right to be heard as they speak about their experiences, both good and bad. What they say can guide efforts to reach out to young migrants and refugees with essential services that will help them build better futures – for themselves and for us all.



“The most important thing I have learned is to fight alone against adversity and always find a way out.”

– 20-year-old male, Brazil

Box 4. Global Compacts

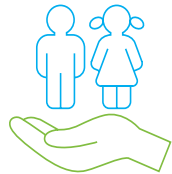
With the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in 2016, world leaders committed to protecting the “human rights of all refugees and migrants regardless of status.” The result was two global compacts: the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.³⁵

United Nations Member States are expected to adopt the two compacts in December 2018.³⁶

The global compacts commit to being child-sensitive and affirm the principle of acting in the best interest of the child when making decisions about migration.³⁷ They address issues including education, gender, health and the protection of vulnerable children and young people, including those unaccompanied or separated from family.

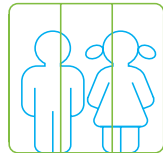
In particular, the Global Compact for Migration calls for cross-border cooperation and emphasizes the importance of providing access to comprehensive social services. The compact also supports efforts to end child detention and ensure “accessibility of a viable range of alternatives to detention in non-custodial contexts” – with an emphasis on community-based care and access to education and health care.³⁸

As world leaders implement the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, UNICEF reminds them of its six-point agenda, which puts the rights of children and young people at the heart of international cooperation on migrant and refugee issues:



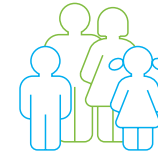
Protect child refugees and migrants, particularly unaccompanied children, from exploitation and violence

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.



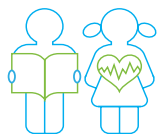
End the detention of children seeking refugee status or migrating

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 wellbeing. Governments should provide birth registration and/or other identity documents to enable children to access services and avoid statelessness.



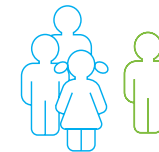
Keep all refugee and migrant children learning and give them access to health and other quality services

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, food insecurity, disaster, climate change 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.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ UNICEF analysis based on a poll of children and young people in cooperation with U-Report.
- ² United Nations Children's Fund, 'Snapshot: Data gaps and mixed migration between West and North Africa and Europe', UNICEF, New York, September 2018, p. 2, <<https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Data-gaps-and-mixed-migration-snapshot.pdf>>.
- ³ United Nations Children's Fund analysis based on data in Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2017*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2018, <www.unhcr.org/5b27be547.pdf>.
- ⁴ United Nations Children's Fund, *Uprooted: The growing crisis for refugee and migrant children*, UNICEF, New York, September 2016, p. 41, <www.unicef.org/videoaudio/PDFs/Uprooted.pdf>.
- ⁵ 'Snapshot: Data gaps and mixed migration'.
- ⁶ Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, 'Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', A/RES/70/1, 25 September 2015, <http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E>.
- ⁷ Permanent Missions of Mexico and Switzerland to the United Nations, Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, Final draft, 11 July 2018, <https://refugeemigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180713_agreed_outcome_global_compact_for_migration.pdf>.
- ⁸ The quotes in blue boxes throughout the report come from U-Reporters who participated in the poll and self-identified as migrants or refugees aged 14–24.
- ⁹ The photo portraits in this report are drawn from Uprooted Journeys: The role of an object, a photo exhibition UNICEF produced in advance of the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in December 2018. The photos show uprooted children and young people with objects that they carried on their journeys. Some photos show how these belongings helped uprooted children and young people maintain a sense of personal identity. In others, the belongings are tokens of grief or desperation – or testaments to strength and courage.
- ¹⁰ U-Report, Voice Matters, <<https://ureport.in/>>, accessed 19 November 2018.
- ¹¹ United Nations Children's Fund, *Beyond Borders: How to make the global compacts on migration and refugees work for uprooted children*, UNICEF, New York, December 2017, p. 4, <<https://uni.cf/2AVX2Y5>>.
- ¹² *Uprooted*, p. 24.
- ¹³ *Uprooted*, p. 14.
- ¹⁴ United Nations Children's Fund and REACH, *Children on the Move in Italy and Greece*, UNICEF and REACH, New York, June 2017, pp. 33–35, <www.unicef.org/eca/sites/unicef.org/eca/files/2017-10/REACH_ITA_GRC_Report_Children_on_the_Move_in_Italy_and_Greece_June_2017.pdf>.
- ¹⁵ Ali, Nimo-ilhan, 'Going on Tahriib: The causes and consequences of Somali youth migration to Europe', Rift Valley Research Paper 5, Rift Valley Institute, Nairobi, 2016, p. 8, <www.unicef.org/somalia/resources_18762.html>.
- ¹⁶ This result is disproportionately higher than what we usually see in mixed migration movements.
- ¹⁷ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Population Fund and Women's Refugee Commission, *Initial Assessment Report: Protection risks for women and girls in the European refugee and migrant crisis – Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, UNHCR, UNFPA and Women's Refugee Commission, Geneva, January 2016, p. 7, <www.unhcr.org/569f8f419.pdf>.
- ¹⁸ Mishra, Abhisek, et al., 'Health Concerns of Migrants and Refugees', *International Journal of Biomedical and Advance Research*, vol. 7, no. 12, 2016, pp. 558–561, <<https://ssjournals.com/index.php/ijbar/article/view/3739/2593>>.
- ¹⁹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2019: Migration, displacement and education – Building bridges not walls*, UNESCO, Paris, November 2018, p. 266, <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002658/265866E.pdf>>.
- ²⁰ United Nations Children's Fund, *Education Uprooted: For every migrant, refugee and displaced child, education*, UNICEF, New York, September 2017, p. 6, <www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_Education_Uprooted.pdf>.
- ²¹ UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, 'Protected on Paper?: An analysis of Nordic country responses to asylum-seeking children', Innocenti Research Report, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, 2018, p. 62, <www.unicef-irc.org/publications/940-protected-on-paper-an-analysis-of-nordic-country-responses-to-asylum-seeking-children.html>.
- ²² *Beyond Borders*, p. 2.
- ²³ United Nations Children's Fund, *A Child is a Child: Protecting children on the move from violence, abuse and exploitation*, UNICEF, New York, May 2017, p. 20, <www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_A_child_is_a_child_May_2017_EN.pdf>.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 32.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²⁶ United Nations Children’s Fund, the United Nations Refugee Agency, International Organization for Migration, Eurostat and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, *A Call to Action: Protecting children on the move starts with better data*, UNICEF, New York, February 2018, p. 3., <https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Migration_advocacy_brief.pdf>.

²⁷ *Beyond Borders*, pp. 26, 29, 48, 16, 20.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

³⁰ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘UNICEF welcomes new protocol to protect uprooted children in Ecuador’ Press release, UNICEF, Panama City, 6 November 2018, <www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-welcomes-new-protocol-protect-uprooted-children-ecuador>, accessed 23 November 2018.

³¹ *Beyond Borders*, pp. 26, 29, 48, 16, 20.

³² *Beyond Borders*, p. 42 and see Endnote 32.

³³ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe’, Humanitarian Situation Report, No. 27, UNICEF, Geneva, January–March 2018, p. 4, <www.unicef.org/appeals/files/UNICEF_Refugee_and_Migrant_Crisis_in_Europe_Humanitarian_SitRep_March_2018.pdf>.

³⁴ World Vision, ‘Cities for Children: Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming’, Case Study: India, World Vision, Middlesex, 31 July 2013, <www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Urban%20CoE%20Case%20Studies%202014-%20Siliguri.pdf>, accessed 26 November 2018.

³⁵ Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, ‘New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants’, A/RES/71/1, 19 September 2016, p. 6, <www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_71_1.pdf>.

³⁶ The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Published by UNICEF
3 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017, USA

ISBN: 978-92-806-4997-0

www.unicef.org

Permission is required to reproduce any part of this publication. Permission will be freely granted to educational or non-profit organizations.

© United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
December 2018

#ChildrenUprooted and #AChildIsAChild

unicef  | for every child

