Children, abuse and exploitation: the IOM perspective

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Summary

Child migration

Challenges and opportunities

IOM approach and response
Child migration: facts and figures

- Children make up over half of all persons affected by crises;

- UNICEF estimates 50 million children are on the move today (across border or within the same country);

- Reasons for their migration range from escaping violence, war and persecution to search for education, better socio-economic opportunities and migration as part of a wider family project
Child migration: focus on crisis contexts

- During crises, children face increased risk of all forms of violence and exploitation. Crises exacerbate pre-existing protection concerns and create new ones.

- Recurring protection concerns faced by children in crisis:
  - Dangers and injuries
  - Physical violence and harmful practices
  - Sexual violence
  - Psychosocial distress and mental disorders
  - Association with armed forces or groups
  - Family separation
  - Weak or lack of justice for children
EU migrant and refugee crisis

Data for Greece and Italy 13/11/16
Data for Spain 30/9/16

363,808 arrivals in 2016
4,271 dead/missing
Published 12:30 CET 14 November
1,011,712 sea arrivals in 2015

Migration.iom.int/europe
Missingmigrants.iom.int/Mediterranean

** As of 30 September 2016.
## Trafficking and exploitation

- 6.5% out of 4500+ respond indicated yes to at least one indicator of trafficking and exploitation
- 0.5% knew of offer of cash in exchange for organs, blood or body parts

## Adolescents

- Sample of over 2000 adolescents between 14 and 17 years old
- Mostly travelling alone
- Paying on average between 1000 and 5000 USD for travel (more than adults)
- No first line relatives in countries of destination
- Germany and Italy as the top destination
Libya: a migration crisis-focus on children

34 Detention Centers active in Libya

Migrants are detained due to their irregular migratory status

IOM and partners are striving to assist them and identify humane solutions
Challenges

- Migration is not always in the best interests of the child;
- Negative coping mechanisms (child recruitment, child marriage, child labor and trafficking) are on the rise;
- Identification of children is difficult: not always sex and age disaggregated data are available;
- Border closures increase exploitation and trafficking opportunities.
Opportunities

- National authorities are rethinking their approach to the hosting and processing of migrant children – faster and in line with evolving needs;
- Development and humanitarian actors working together on the child protection dimension;
- Children are enablers of their family resilience and agents of their own socio-economic development;
- Age-appropriate safe migration opportunities should be fostered for them.
IOM approach and response

IOM ensures that all IOM activities integrate child protection considerations

IOM implements specialized child protection activities
IOM approach and response: examples and tools

- Special Measures for the Evacuation of Migrant Children Reference Check-list
- Good practice of cooperation and referral of children released from armed groups
- Inter-agency field handbook on unaccompanied and separated children
Conclusions

Understand children’s vulnerabilities, including among those who are on the move

Work to overcome challenges and build on opportunities

Adopt a multi-stakeholder and joint approach to solutions for children

By not focusing on the vulnerabilities of children on the move, the international community is neglecting the potential of the next generation, as a result, we will have a “lost generation” of young individuals.