Young and on the move in West Africa

Contents

Glossary of Terms

Asylum seeker: A person who seeks safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than his or her own and who awaits a decision on their application for refugee status under relevant international and national instruments. In case of a negative decision, the person must leave the country and may be expelled, as may any non-national in an irregular or unlawful situation, unless permission to stay is provided on humanitarian or other related grounds.[1]

Child: Every human being below the age of 18 years.[2] In this report the word adolescent will be used to refer to children above 12 years old. Some of the sources quoted in the report present data according to the definition of child in the sense of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), while others present data that include both children and young people over 18 (specified in the text).

Children involved in mobility:[3] Refers to three profiles of children whose life, conditions and fate are closely related to migration and displacement, including:

> 1) Potential children on the move who live in areas with a high prevalence of child mobility and whose existence, even when sedentary, is influenced by the mobility of other children and by the logic and representations underlying mobility.

> 2) Temporarily or permanently settled children, who see their lives determined or at least influenced by their experience of mobility. In West Africa, child mobility often takes place in cycles, with alternating periods of mobility and non-mobility and this situation often extends throughout the period of youth (period after adolescence).

> 3) Children whose relatives (parents, siblings, caregivers) are mobile, and who are either influenced by the success of their relatives migration or affected by their absence or departure.

Children on the move: Children moving for a variety of reasons, voluntarily or involuntarily, within or between countries, with or without their parents or other primary caregivers, and whose movement, while it may open up opportunities, might also place them at risk (or at an increased risk) of inadequate care, economic or sexual exploitation, abuse, neglect, and violence.[4]

Circular migration: the movement of people between countries, including temporary and long-term movements which may be beneficial to all involved, if occurring voluntarily and linked to the labour needs of countries of origin and destination.[5]

Displacement: A forced removal of a person from his or her home or country, often due to armed conflict or natural disasters.[6]

Internally displaced persons: Persons or groups of persons 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.[7]

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1 IOM, 'Glossary on Migration. International Migration Law' (Second edition, Geneva, 2011)
2 'UN Convention on the Rights of the Child' (1989).
3 Plan WARO, Enda Jeunesse Action, AMWCY, ILO, Terre des Hommes foundation, IOM, Save the Children Suède, UNICEF WCARO, 'Project of Joint Regional Study on the Mobility of Children and Youths in West Africa. Which Protection for Children Involved in Mobility in West Africa', 2011, 12.
4 Daniela Reale for IOM, 'Protecting and Supporting Children on the Move: Translating Principles into Practice, in "Children on the Move"', 2013.
5 IOM, 'Glossary on Migration. International Migration Law'.
6 IOM, 'Glossary on Migration. International Migration Law'.
7 'Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, UN Doc E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2', n.d.

Irregular situation: The status of a person who, owing to unauthorized entry, breach of a condition of entry, or the expiry of his or her visa, lacks legal status in a transit or host country. The definition covers inter alia those persons who have entered a transit or host country lawfully but have stayed for a longer period than authorized or subsequently taken up unauthorized employment (also called clandestine/undocumented migrant or migrant in an irregular situation). The term "irregular" is preferable to "illegal" because the latter carries a criminal connotation and is seen as denying migrants' humanity.[8]

Migrant: The United Nations defines migrants as individuals who have resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes (voluntary or involuntary), and the means (regular or irregular) used to migrate. Under such a definition, those travelling for shorter periods as tourists or for business are not considered as migrants. However, common usage includes certain types of shorter-term migrants, such as seasonal farm-workers who travel for short periods to work in the planting or harvesting of farm products.[9]

Migration: The movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification.[10]

Mixed migratory flows: Mixed migration includes irregular migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers (forced migrants), victims of trafficking (involuntary migrants), stateless persons, unaccompanied and separated children and other vulnerable persons on the move. The mixed migration nomenclature does not normally include Internally Displaced People (IDPs) but this study includes them, in recognition that today's IDPs are often tomorrow's migrants (forced, involuntary or otherwise).

Refugee: A person who, "owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country".[11]

Separated children: Children who have been separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members.[12]

Smuggling: The procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, for the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.[13]

Trafficking of children: The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons under 18 for the purpose of exploitation[14]

Unaccompanied children on the move: Children who are not accompanied by a parent, guardian, or other adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for them.[15]

Youth: While the category of youth is somewhat subjective and understandings of who falls into this category may be different in differing demographic, financial, economic and socio-cultural settings, this report relies on the definition of youth and young people used by the UN Secretariat to refer to those aged 15-24.[16]

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8 IOM, 'Glossary on Migration. International Migration Law'.
9 IOM,"Glossary on Migration. International Migration Law'.
10 'Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, UN Doc E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2'.
11 'Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees', § Art. 1A.2 modified by the 1967 Protocol (n.d.).
12 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
13 'UN Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime', § Art. 3 (a) (2000).
14 'UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the UN Convention Against Organized Crime', § Art. 3 (a) (2000).
15 IOM, 'Children on the Move - Préface', 2013, 3.
16 United Nations. (n.d.). Definition of youth. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf.

Chapter 1
Introduction

This report aims to offer a better understanding of child mobility in West Africa in the context of mixed migration movements. It provides an up-to-date overview of the routes that children move along in and from the region, the reasons that children move, and risks that they face whilst on the move, with a particular focus on Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal. The report also examines the legal frameworks affecting child mobility in the region. The research entailed an extensive literature review, as well as primary data collection in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Senegal, during which the participation of children was encouraged.

Migration patterns in West Africa are diverse and vibrant, with people moving in different directions for a variety of reasons and with various goals along the same routes. In the region, child mobility is deeply embedded within broader population movements and includes families traveling with children and/or family members seeking reunification, as well as unaccompanied and separated children traveling alone. Children on the move can be divided into many categories due to their varied profiles, reasons for leaving and goals. Indeed, even if "children on the move" has been traditionally considered as a category within mixed migration, it should also be considered a mixed category in itself.

This report is published at a time when international actors are increasingly concerned by the increase in the number of, and the risk for, children on the move arriving to Europe from African countries, and from West Africa in particular. Despite this, most of the movements that concern children in West Africa occur within the region. However, due to a lack of accurate data, the exact number of children on the move within West Africa is unknown. It remains that intra-regional and domestic movements of children are generally under-reported, the focus on children is scarce in available data (which are not, in general, age-disaggregated), and children often choose invisibility when undertaking their journeys,[1] thereby also increasing their risk of exploitation and abuse.[2]

The report concludes by examining the regional legal framework and highlighting that the protection of children on the move must be guaranteed through reinforced national protection systems, and through better coordination between systems at the transnational level.

Conceptual framework

Analysis of the phenomenon of child mobility has recently undergone some significant changes. For many years, child mobility was generally perceived to result from conflict, abuse, and poverty or to be directly linked to parental movements,[3] and before the mid-2000s, research on child mobility largely focused on the issue of child trafficking. However, as the limitations in interventions to combat child trafficking have become clear,[4] more recent

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1 Daniela Reale for IOM, 'Protecting and Supporting Children on the Move: Translating Principles into Practice, in "Children on the Move"', 68.
2 IOM - UNICEF, 'Harrowing Journeys - Children and Youth on the Move across the Mediterranean Sea, at Risk of Trafficking and Exploitation', September 2017, 45.
3 Iman Hashim, Dorte Thorsen, 'Child Migration in Africa' (The Nordic Africa Institute, 2011), 14.
4 Terre des Hommes, 'The Added Value of Protective Accompaniment', 2014, 10.

research on child mobility has broadened this focus. Increasingly, child mobility is viewed as a multi-faceted phenomenon, whereby the primary goal of interventions for children on the move is to uphold the fundamental rights of children. According to this view, child mobility is not only understood as a source of increased risk of exploitation and abuse, but also as a source of opportunities,[5] and children are increasingly seen as actors, rather than merely as victims. In this sense, child mobility is both a matter of migration and of child rights. If the mobility of a child can lead to increased vulnerability, it can also be a source of opportunities to reduce vulnerability. Hence mobility per se is not the problem, but rather how mobility in the context of mixed migration may increase the vulnerability of children.[6]

The term child mobility[7] broadly refers to the movement of children between various geographic and social areas, as well as the experiences of children while on the move and in the various segments of their journey.[8] Accordingly, children on the move largely intersects the broader category of children involved in mobility.[9] It is important to note that children's movement can be both voluntary or forced, with several degrees in between, indeed in many cases regarding children the distinction between forced and voluntary mobility is often tenuous.[10]

Methodology and scope

This research has used qualitative techniques to collect first-hand information from children, communities, and actors involved in child mobility programmes. Primary qualitative data was complemented by information and statistics from secondary sources to provide a macro-level understanding of child mobility in the region.

The report does not purport to be exhaustive, but rather to act as a preliminary study which identifies some of the key trends, characteristics and issues, in order to highlight areas that would benefit from further attention and to contribute to future programme design. Accordingly, while this research is intended to encompass the West Africa region as broadly as feasible, with the literature review covering as many countries as possible, primary data has been focused in four countries, selected on the basis of their relevance for mixed migratory flows in the region and to complement other ongoing research, namely, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Senegal. Due to the wide diversity and complexity of the cultural landscape and the migration patterns in the region, it is difficult to generalise the findings from the primary data collection in the target countries to the region as a whole. Fieldwork was carried out in June 2017 for a total of four weeks.

Data collection and participants

The research employed qualitative methods for primary data collection including, semi-structured interviews with key informants, focus groups with children and communities, and the

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5 Iman Hashim, Dorte Thorsen, 'Child Migration in Africa', 14.
6 Plan WARO, Enda Jeunesse Action,AMWCY,ILO, Terre des Hommes foundation, IOM, Save the Children Suède, UNICEF WCARO, 'Project of Joint Regional Study on the Mobility of Children and Youths in West Africa. Which Protection for Children Involved in Mobility in West Africa', 2011, 4.
7 A milestone in the conceptualisation of child mobility is: 'Which protection for children involved in mobility in West Africa?', a 2011 publication by the Regional Platform on Child Mobility, based on experiences and evidence from child mobility work in four countries of West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Togo. The approach used in this document could be interestingly adapted to other regions of the world, within a context of lack of information and data to analyse child mobility.
8 Plan WARO, Enda Jeunesse Action, AMWCY, ILO, Terre des Hommes foundation, IOM, Save the Children Suède, UNICEF WCARO, 'Project of Joint Regional Study on the Mobility of Children and Youths in West Africa. Which Protection for Children Involved in Mobility in West Africa', 12.
9 See Glossay of terms.
10 Plan WARO, Enda Jeunesse Action,AMWCY,ILO, Terre des Hommes foundation, IOM, Save the Children Suède, UNICEF WCARO, 'Project of Joint Regional Study on the Mobility of Children and Youths in West Africa. Which Protection for Children Involved in Mobility in West Africa', 8 and following. Moreover it can fall into two additional categories: aware mobility or unaware mobility, indicating the child's level of knowledge and preparation about the migratory process.

collection of children's life histories.[11] Information was also gathered through participant observation during fieldwork.

During the research the authors conducted a total of 58 semi-structured interviews with key actors in French. Including, nine with governments at the national level, 15 with UN agencies, 14 with international organizations and 20 with local civil society organizations.[12]

The authors conducted focus groups with children on the move, children in their country of origin, and children involved in mobility, as well as with youth, families and other community members. In total, 16 focus groups and two group interviews took place, including 13 with children (both international and internal migrants) and five with community members, including one with intermediaries. In total, 107 children (48 girls and 59 boys) and eight youth[13] participated in focus groups and group interviews. A total of 53 adult members of the community (40 women and 13 men) also participated in focus groups (including five intermediaries in Mali).[14]

Country	Number of participants		
	Girls	Boys	Total participants
Burkina Faso (Bobo-Dioulasso)	10	7	17
Mali	3	19	22
Niger	21	18	39
Senegal (Dakar and Kaolack)	14	15	29
Total	48	59	107

Table 1. Focus groups and group interviews carried out with children and youth during fieldwork.

In addition, the authors collected 26 life histories with 24 with children and youth (six in Burkina Faso, three in Mali, five in Niger and 10 in Senegal), and two life histories with adult women.

The authors ensured equal representation of girls and boys and different age groups of children on the move in their selection of participants for the focus groups and life histories. Some children in their country of origin were mobilized through the African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY) groups. Save the Children and other partners (such as ENDA Jeunesse Action in Senegal and Mali and Association TIE in Burkina Faso) actively contributed to the mobilization of participants, both children and adults.

To complement interview data, the authors also conducted participant observation in places where children on the move were present. This involved visiting two bus stations, one in Mali and one in Niger. The authors also spoke with a number of girls working in several maquis,[15] including two survivors of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

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11 A research technique based on asking interviewed people to tell about their life, in order to obtain information from the point of view of the person. Life histories carried out with children affected by mobility provided an overview of the child's life, reasons for mobility, risks undertaken, factors of vulnerability, expectations of mobility, available protection resources from a child perspective, forms of self-protection, etc.

12 List of interviewed actors by country in annex 1.

13 Youth here means starting from 18 years.

14 In Senegal, 3 mothers of Senegalese children in international migration have also been interviewed.

15 Local restaurants which are often open air.

All activities with children during fieldwork were grounded in ethical research methods to ensure child safeguarding. The researchers adhered to and applied the nine basic requirements of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009) for effective and ethical child participation.[16] Child-friendly tools were used for data collection with children.

Limitations

The main research constraint was the scarce availability of data on child mobility in secondary sources and statistics. It was not always possible to quantify the numbers of children on the move in and from the West Africa region for all types of migration and displacement identified during the research.

Additionally, security restrictions in Mali and Niger limited the possibility of visiting rural areas and important migration hubs for primary data collection. As a result, it was difficult to meet internationally mobile children on the move (namely, in transit) or children intending/preparing to depart for internationally as originally planned.

Finally, the vastness of the region and the undeniable heterogeneity of West Africa does not permit the research to be equally representative of all countries in the region, and limits generalizability of the findings of the fieldwork to other countries. Despite such limitations, the number of secondary sources that were consulted, and the primary data collected, does provide a solid base of evidence to anchor the findings of this research.

16 Transparent and informative, voluntary, respectful, relevant, facilitated with child-friendly environments and working methods, inclusive, supported by training for adults, safe and sensitive to risk and accountable.

Chapter 2

Children on the move within and from West Africa

Mixed migration dynamics in West Africa

West Africa has long been a region of free movement and many ethnic communities living in the region still perceive socio-cultural identity and space before national borders.[17] Currently, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)[18] promotes regional integration through the Free Movement Protocol, which grants citizens of ECOWAS countries the ability to move between ECOWAS states visa free, provided they have ECOWAS state issued identify documents.[19] Migration is not historically perceived as a problem in West Africa and is deeply integrated into people's ways of life. Traditional mobility patterns reflect strong social perceptions whereby other places are perceived as sources of opportunity and mobility is considered an important life stage for many people.[20]

While these perceptions have been mainly applied to adults, children's movements cannot be understood in isolation; rather they are embedded within broader population movements.[21] Consequently, in West Africa children also adopt the idea of other places as sources of opportunity.[22] In this research, few local actors used the word "migration" to explain child mobility, rather using expressions such as "to go on an adventure" or "to go on an exodus".

The wider political context surrounding migration in the region also has an impact, not only on the way in which children move, but also on the perception of children's movements. Thus, while mobility is generally encouraged in West Africa, recent attempts to more closely regulate the movements of people between West and North Africa, as well as onwards to Europe, have the potential to affect not only the way children move, but also the perception of children's movements. As migration is increasingly associated with clandestine movements, this affects the perception of migrants within countries in the region.

West Africa is a dynamic economic space encompassing two main pan-West African commercial patterns which can be simplified as follows: the coastal area with large port cities, mainly in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria, historically constituting the job-creating area due to mineral and agricultural resources, and the hinterland, corresponding to the traditional

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17 Including for instance, the Haussa (30 million in Niger and Nigeria), the Peulhs (25 million across West Africa), the Mandé (15 million across West Africa), while ethnic groups such as the Soninké (of Mauritania, Mali and Senegal), the Mossi (Burkina Faso) and the Dogons (Mali) have traditionally seen short-term migration as a rite of passage, or as an important part of personal development. Other circular migrations also exist, such as the Iklans in the Touareg society (between the Niger river in the Bankilaré zone and Abidjan) and the Brong (Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana) (source: Anne Sofie Westh Olsen for Danish Institute International Studies, Reconsidering West African Migrations- Changing Focus from European Immigration to Intra-Regional Flows, 2011, 7).
18 ECOWAS is an intergovernmental organization of 15 countries dedicated to promoting greater regional economic integration and political cooperation. It includes: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo, along with Cape Verde, while Mauritania withdrew from ECOWAS in 2000. Source: Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC), Forced Migration in the OIC Member Countries: Policy Framework Adopted by Host Countries, COMCEC Coordination Office, October 2016, page 40.
19 Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC), 'Forced Migration in the OIC Member Countries: Policy Framework Adopted by Host Countries, COMCEC Coordination Office', October 2016, 40.
20 CD-BE for Caritas Morroco and Médecins du Monde Belgium, 'Mineur-e-s Non Accompagné-e-s, En Recherche d'avenir', Avril 2016, 24.
21 Iman Hashim, Dorte Thorsen, 'Child Migration in Africa', 12.
22 Interview KII7-MA, carried out in Bamako (Mali). Civil society organization. 30-06-2017.

labour-exporting areas, mainly Burkina Faso, northern Guinea, Mali and Niger.[23] Urbanization also plays a major role in influencing migration patterns in West Africa, which has the heaviest concentration of expanding cities in Africa, cities that are increasingly part of a complex web of migration between countries.[24]

The context of general instability in the region is also a basis for fluid and volatile movements. Uncertain political and security environments, coupled with environmental problems (droughts, desertification, deforestation, coastal erosion, and flooding) and lack of economic opportunities cause different forms of displacement.[25] Migration movements in West Africa are therefore mixed, driven by factors such as political instability and low-level violence, including persecution, environmental factors, and lack of economic opportunity, whereby forced and voluntary migration intertwine.[26] The distinction between "forced" and "voluntary" migration is particularly tenuous in the West Africa region.[27]

This challenging political and economic context also impacts the fulfilment of child rights. Poverty is generalized, and mortality and birth rates are high. Indeed, West Africa has a very young population in areas with very low human development indicators,[28] and children are perceived as both an asset to the family and a potential source of income through domestic labour, agriculture, and/or other activities. Child migration is often seen as a strategy for poor families to help mitigate risk and enhance economic opportunities.[29]

Data on conflict-related displacement shows that many of the top refugee-producing countries are also home to the highest numbers of IDPs, as in the case of Mali and Nigeria.[30] IDPs may become refugees or migrants, [31] and refugees returning to their countries of origin risk becoming internally displaced again if their return is premature, involuntary or unprepared, and if they return to conditions of insecurity and inadequate livelihoods.[32] In West Africa, the movement of migrants and displaced populations, including internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum-seekers, returnees (both refugees and IDPs), is interconnected, and their geographical trajectory is often determined by the fluidity of their legal status vis-à-vis international legislation and protection capacity. Within this complex context, it can be difficult to determine who qualifies for international protection, particularly as a large number of forced migrants and displaced people do not meet the criteria for refugee status under the 1951 Convention, yet are highly vulnerable for other reasons.[33]

23 Anne Sofie Westh Olsen for Danish Institute International Studies, 'Reconsidering West African Migrations- Changing Focus from European Immigration to Intra-Regional Flows', 2011, 8.
24 IOM, 'World Migration Report 2015. Migrants and Cities: New Partnerships to Manage Mobility', Geneva 2015, 52.
25 Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC), 'Forced Migration in the OIC Member Countries: Policy Framework Adopted by Host Countries, COMCEC Coordination Office', 35–36.
26 Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC), 35.
27 Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC), 36.
28 Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC), 36.
29 Anne Kielland, 'Child Mobility as Household Risk Management. Forum for Development Studies 36(2)', 2009, 257–73.
30 Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, 'Global Report on Internal Displacement 2017', n.d., 50.
31 Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, 49.
32 'Http://Www.Internal-Displacement.Org/Global-Report/Grid2017/#on-the-Grid, Accessed 31 August 2017', n.d.
33 Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC), 'Forced Migration in the OIC Member Countries: Policy Framework Adopted by Host Countries, COMCEC Coordination Office', 35.

Data collection of children on the move

Studies on child mobility consistently mention significant challenges in collecting and reporting data on children involved in mobility.[34] Common themes with relevance to the West Africa region include:

- Children on the move are often included in data on migrants, indicating that their status as migrants generally prevails over their identity first and foremost as children.

- The limited available data on children on the move includes the few reported cases of child trafficking, child refugees/asylum-seekers and children migrating to Europe. Indeed, the availability of data reflects governments' and donors' main interest in monitoring flows towards Europe, pointing to the fact that data collection is selective and guided by a specific agenda, thus limiting a more comprehensive description of the varied types of child mobility prevailing in West Africa.

- Data on internal child mobility are rarely captured in data collection or demonstrated statistically; for example, this is often the case for data on rural-urban migration of children in the region.

- The focus on children is rarely adopted in data collection related to migration, including in existing mixed migration monitoring systems. Data are not always disaggregated by age and is sometimes inconsistent across countries and studies.

- Data provided by national governments in Europe is sometimes incomplete.[35]

- International migrant stocks only provide information on the foreign population residing in a country and is usually or mostly based on population census. Data on unaccompanied children on the move cannot be extrapolated from such sources.

Data on children on the move in and from West Africa is rare and incomplete, and even when available should be taken with caution given the uneven quality and synchronisation of census data across the region.[36] It is nearly impossible to obtain comprehensive figures on the number of children on the move in the region. This lack of data does not reflect the importance of the issue of child mobility and displacement, nor the scale of child movements within mixed migratory flows in and from the region.

While statistics can provide macro-level insights, in their absence and given that child migration is inherently multi-faceted, it is also important to examine the lived expertise of children on the move. Therefore, while this report draws upon statistical data where available, it does so with caution.

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34 Daniela Reale for Save the Children, 'Away from Home - Protecting and Supporting Children on the Move', 2008, 13.
35 An exception is the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. Within the framework of this research, the authors attempted to obtain datafrom the Spanish government, currently unavailable; as a consequence, a query will be tabled in the coming weeks to discuss this matter in the Spanish Parliament.
36 RMMS WA 'Mixed Migration in West Africa: Data, Routes and Vulnerabilities of people on the move: Extended Summary' 2017, 4

Intra-regional child mobility trajectories

"If each movement were represented by an arrow on a map, West Africa would be entirely covered".

This statement, made by an informant participating in the research, suggests that each West African country is a country of origin, transit, and destination for children on the move, in line with literature stating that most African countries are today both countries of immigration and emigration.

Regional child mobility dynamics identified in this research suggest that children move for a variety of reasons along the same migratory routes in West Africa, and that children generally move along the same mobility and displacement routes used by adults. Sometimes movements concern both children and adults, including, for instance, migration towards plantations and mining sites, in cases of sexual and labour exploitation, and migration towards Europe. Thus adding the factor of mixed age to the heterogeneous mixed migration context of the region. However, other types of movement identified in this research exclusively concern children, particularly in the case of talibé boys, young Guinean brides, and children abducted and recruited by armed groups (see below).

Child mobility in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal[37]

The countries that make up the focus of the fieldwork for this report, namely, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal, present lively child mobility patterns, with each being a country of origin, transit, and of destination for children on the move. This includes both children moving internally in each country and within and from the region. The main routes in the region include those between Senegal - Guinea Bissau - Guinea Conakry - Gambia and Mauritania; Mali - Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire, and finally, between Niger and Nigeria. In general terms, the research findings also permit the delineation of the prevalence of some forms of child mobility in these four countries. In Burkina Faso, Mali, and Senegal, internal mobility is the predominant form of child mobility (involving both boys in search for employment and girls working as domestic aids). Burkina Faso, Mali, and Senegal are also destination countries for children to work in mining sites and in urban centres, as well as plantations in the case of Burkina Faso, however this type of international mobility seems less prevalent. As will be discussed in more detail later in the report, in 2017, Mali and Senegal demonstrated some of the highest numbers of unaccompanied migrant children in international migration towards Europe from West Africa, based on arrival figures in Italy.[38] Burkina Faso and Niger do not contribute significant numbers of unaccompanied migrant children toward Europe, however, children from all of these countries do emigrate internationally within the region, and within various sub-regions in particular. All countries are key transit routes for children on the move internationally, and, while Niger has traditionally been the main transit hub in the West Africa region, there is recent evidence that the transit routes between West and North Africa are diverting both within and around Niger. All the visited countries host refugee and asylum-seeking children, with little reported onward movement of refugee children during this research. The ongoing conflict in Mali and insecurity in the Diffa region of Niger continue to cause the displacement of adults and children and further compound these countries mixed migratory profiles.

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37 From insights collected during field work in these countries. This report is partly based on evidence collected in four these four regional countries: Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Senegal, visited in June 2017.
38 UNHCR, 'Italy - Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) Dashboard December 2017'

Data on West African child and adolescent migrants (0-19 years)

In 2015, according to UNDESA data, there were 2.3 million child and adolescent migrants (e.g. aged 0 to 19 years) in West Africa, representing 34.7% of all international migrants in the region.[39] The prevalence of child and adolescent migrants in the region is considerably higher than the global average of 15%.[40]

UNICEF indicates that among the top ten countries hosting the largest numbers of migrant children (including refugees) in Africa, Burkina Faso ranks 4th (387,000 children), Côte d'Ivoire 5th (379,000) and Nigeria 6th (371,000).[41] Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Chad are three of only four nations in the world where children form a majority in their immigrant population. For Chad and Cameroon, this can be explained by the fact that their migrant populations are composed primarily of refugees (a population in which children are highly represented). While no explanation is provided for Burkina Faso, which has a small percentage of refugees among its migrant population,[42] as Burkina Faso is the main manufacturer of cotton on the African continent,[43] it is possible that children (together with their parents or alone) are involved in agricultural work in cotton fields, although further research is needed to corroborate this assumption. Another hypothesis is that the government of Burkina Faso has been able to collect reliable data from its population census, therefore providing more accurate information than other countries in Africa. Finally, it should be clarified that UNICEF's data refers to the international migrant stock in Burkina Faso, not including per se unaccompanied children on the move; fieldwork for this research indicates that Burkina Faso is not a main country of destination for unaccompanied migrant children in the region, but mostly a country of origin and of transit

The distribution of child and adolescent migrants is fairly even in West Africa: 0-4 years 22.1%, 5-9 years 25.8%, 10-14 years 25.3% and 15-19 years 26.9%,[44] and the region shows a median age of its migrant stock considerably younger than the global average: 27 years in West Africa against 39 years worldwide, and even younger than the average median age for the whole of Africa at 29 years (by far the lowest of all continents).[45]

From a gender perspective, in West Africa 51.4% of all international migrants aged 0-19 years are female,[46] a figure higher than the global average of 48.6%. By country, however, differences are considerable, and range from 58.8% in Cote d'Ivoire to 43.4% in Mauritania.[47]

West African children moving towards economic hubs in the region

An important form of children mobility in West Africa involves children moving towards informal economic hubs in main cities and/or to areas in which child workforce is in demand, and where children can engage in menial work with the goal of acquiring cash, clothes and

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39 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2015). Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Age and Sex Table 6, Table 24, Table 30 (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2015). The list of countries included in West Africa region: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, island of Saint Helena, Senegal, Sierra Leone, São Tomé and Principe, Togo.

40 Ibid.

41 UNICEF, 'Uprooted: The Growing Crisis for Refugee and Migrant Children', 55.

42 Ibid. 55.

43 An estimated 4 million people depend on this activity in Burkina Faso. See for instance; Meta Krese, '"Quanto Costa Il Cotone a Buon Mercato" in "Internazionale"', 7 April 2017.

44 UNDESA data only provide figures for the age group 0-19 years.

45 'Http://Www.Un.Org/En/Development/Desa/Population/Migration/Publications/Wallchart/Docs/MigrationWallChart2015.Pdf', n.d.

46 The prevalence of female migrants is consistent for all age sub-groups in the range 0-19 years, if with variations: while for the sub-groups 0-4 and 5-9 years the percentage is only slightly above 50% (50,5% and 50,6% respectively), the difference becomes more acute from the sub-group 10-14 years (51,6%) to reach the highest proportion of female migrants in the age sub-group 15-19 years (52,5%) (source: authors' calculations based on data in: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2015). Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Age and Sex Table 6, Table 24, Table 30 (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2015)).

47 Authors' calculations based on data in: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2015). Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Age and Sex Table 6, Table 24, Table 30 (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2015).

goods.[48] This involves both domestic rural-to-urban migration and international migration between countries within the region. Identified forms of child mobility, that also have geographic specificities, include:

Mobility towards large capitals such as Abidjan, Accra, Bamako, Dakar, Lagos, Niamey, Ouagadougou, and to other urban centres, to work in the service sector (domestic work, car cleaning, hotels), in tourism or in the commercial sector (shops, markets).[49] Indeed, child mobility in Africa generally is highly influenced by fast paced urbanization and by the late 2030s, Africa is set to have a higher population living in urban than rural areas, and a large proportion of urban populations are likely to consist of children.[50] West Africa in particular has the highest concentration of expanding cities in Africa.[51] Boys move looking for menial jobs (as shoeshine boys, nail-cutters) or in markets. Girls search for jobs as domestic workers, in restaurants and bars, or as vendors in the streets or markets. For example, a distinctive phenomenon in the market of Adawlato, the great market and slaughterhouse (abattoir) situated in Togo, concerns girl porters, aged even below 12 years, from large families of traders.[52]

Girls working as domestic aids, the majority being internal rural-to-urban migrants (but girls from neighbouring countries are also present) represent a considerable proportion of children seeking opportunities in cities (see Box 1).

Mobility towards plantations and farms, including cacao plantations in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, and cotton plantations in Burkina Faso and Benin.[53] Plantations in Côte d'Ivoire are a destination for numerous children (often including trafficked children) from Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone.[54] In general, boys are more likely to move searching for job opportunities in plantations; however, around plantations, such as those in Côte d'Ivoire, girls are often sexually exploited.

Mobility for seasonal work in the dry season, children usually go to and cross borders between Niger, Nigeria and Benin and between Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mali to work in plantations and livestock farming.[55]

Mobility to mining sites, in interviews and the wider literature the 'Gold Belt' (Guinea-Senegal-Mali-Niger[56] and Burkina Faso) emerged as a key destination for children, both for internal and international child migrants, alone and with their families. Other well-known destinations are the Abeokuta quarries in Nigeria and the diamond mines of Kono in Sierra Leone.[57] In and around mines, trafficking of children for purposes of both economic and sexual exploitation (amounting to worst forms of child labour as per the ILO Convention 182 of 1999)[58] is a common corollary to mining activities.

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48 Abdou Dao, 'Anthropological Approaches to Studying the Mobility of Children in West Africa, in "African Migrations Research" (Edited by Mohamed Berriane and Heine de Haas)' (Africa World Press, 2012), 243.

49 Abdou Dao, 237.

50 Save the Children, 'Jozi Lights: How to Protect Children Engaging in Rural to Urban Migration. A Participatory Study with Migrant Children from 6 Cities in Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe.', 2015, 5.

51 IOM, 'World Migration Report 2015. Migrants and Cities: New Partnerships to Manage Mobility', 52.

52 Observatoire ACP sur les Migrations, 'Migration of Girls in West Africa: The Case of Senegal', 2012, 13.

53 Abdou Dao, 'Anthropological Approaches to Studying the Mobility of Children in West Africa, in "African Migrations Research" (Edited by Mohamed Berriane and Heine de Haas)', 242.

54 Anne Sofie Westh Olsen for Danish Institute International Studies, 'Reconsidering West African Migrations- Changing Focus from European Immigration to Intra-Regional Flows', 11.

55 Interviews carried out in Burkina Faso and Niger with civil society organizations. From 12 June until 23 June 2017.

56 This includes the Dilaberi gold mines in Niger, and Sadiola, Morila or Yatela gold mines in Mali, mines in the region of Kedougou in Senegal.

57 Groupe Etudes Africaines Université Autonomade Madrid (with contributions by Manuela De Gaspari and Serena Zanella) for Save the Children, 'First Draft of Les Enfants En Mobilité: Bilan de La Situation En Afrique de l'Ouest', June 2016, 14.

Mobility of girls to work in maquis: Girls move between countries in the region to work in maquis. For instance this research identified that many girls from Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo go to Burkina Faso (Ouagadougou, Bobo-Dioulasso, Banfora), Niger (Niamey) and Mali (Bamako, Gao) to work as waitresses in maquis. Sexual exploitation is common and, in many cases, these girls are victims of trafficking (with Edo State and Lagos in Nigeria, main points of origin).[59]

Box 1: Girls working as domestic aids

Girls working as domestic aids represent a considerable proportion of the children seeking opportunities through migration across the region. These girls are often adolescents from 10 to 17 years old when they first become domestic aids. Girls who engage in international migration from neighbouring countries also exist amongst domestic aids, but are often much less numerous than girls within their home countries. In Senegal, it has been reported that, if to a much lesser extent than girls, boys are also engaged in work as domestic aids.[60]

In general, girls move from rural areas to large cities, and have low levels of formal education, having not been to school or having left school to look for work.

Girls can decide voluntarily to seek employment in the city, to earn money to buy a dowry before marriage, to help their families, or because they prefer to live out of the family (for example, in cases of girls fleeing gender-based violence). Generally, they move within a network of contacts that facilitate their mobility and placement in a house.

The pattern of mobility for girls on the move who become employed as domestic aids appears to be different between countries in the region. For instance, key informants in Senegal indicated that, generally, girls employed as domestic aids in Senegal travel in groups, and already have someone to go to from the point of departure. The role of the extended family in accompanying girls' migration also appears to be very important in this context. In contrast, in research conducted in Mali, girls working as domestic aids spoke of their experiences of being unaccompanied during their migration journeys and at their destinations; some of them found jobs on their own, and others were placed by a female intermediary who did not play a supportive role.[61] The fact of living in the home of the employer, and the roles of the intermediaries, are important factors influencing these girls' vulnerability.

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59 Information gathered through KII and field visits in maquis in Burkina from 18-06-2017 to 27-06-2017.
60 Interview KII10-SE, carried out by skype. Governmental organization. 23-06-2017.
61 Serena Zanella for Save the Children, 'Analyse de La Situation Des Droits de l'enfant Au Mali', February 2015, 58 and following.

Box 2: Boys' and girls' roles in mines

Boys' and girls' roles in mine areas are often considered to be very different, with boys working in mines and girls working more as vendors or servants in restaurants and bars in the surrounding areas. However, research on girls in mining sites conducted in Ghana, Niger, Tanzania and Peru challenged the general understanding of gender roles in small-scale mining communities, and suggested that the involvement of girl child labour in mining is much more frequent and far-reaching than was previously recognized. Indeed, the research found that girls are not only involved peripheral mining-related jobs such as selling food and supplies to the miners but are engaged in the extraction, transportation and processing stages of mining as well. In fact, girls are involved in increasingly hazardous occupations deeper into the interior of the mines, while concurrently expected to maintain their traditional female responsibilities in the home. The result is that girls in mining communities are forced to balance their domestic tasks with other paid or non-paid work. Often, girls are performing equally hazardous tasks as boys, working longer hours, with a greater workload, and often with a lower chance of schooling, withdrawal or rehabilitation.[62]

Other typical examples of child mobility in West Africa

Talibé children: young boys who move in order to learn the Koran. They are often entrusted by their families to a religious master (called a marabout) and live in a sort of boarding school, called a daâras. These boys are de facto separated from their family of origin and become talibé at young ages, in extreme cases as young as 3-4 years old. This type of mobility involves both internal and international migration. In Senegal, boys usually originate in rural areas in the central and southern regions and travel to big cities including Dakar and Saint Louis, the main cities of destination for talibé in the region. Internationally mobile talibé children come from Gambia and Guinea Bissau. Other countries of destination for talibé children include Mali (Bamako, Mopti, Gao), Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger. Boys from Niger also travel to Nigeria or to Mali, largely depending on their region of origin. For example, movements of talibé children occur between the region of Tilláberi in the north of Niger and Mali, primarily Mopti and Gao. Talibé children are often highly vulnerable to abuse by their religious masters, and, according to Human Rights Watch, an estimated 50,000 boys live in daâras and are forced to beg for daily quotas of money, rice or sugar by their marabouts across Senegal.[63]

Children living in the streets: these children are easily found in many cities in West Africa and their harsh living conditions are strongly influenced by their status of mobility. As one informant commented "… street children come and go all the time…".[64] They can be talibé children who ran away from daâras, escaping from abusive situations, but also children who ran away from their family because of violence or behavioural issues; children lacking familiar protection who spend most of the time in the streets; and children who decide to migrate individually and find themselves in a difficult situation, unable to find a place to stay (this may include unaccompanied children who cannot benefit from the support of their extended families).

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62 ILO, 'Girls in Mining. Research Findings from Ghana, Niger, Peru, and United Republic of Tanzania', 2007, 1.
63 Human Rights Watch, 'I Still See the Talibés Begging. Government Program to Protect Talibé Children in Senegal Falls Short', 2017, 1.
64 Interview KII4-BF, carried out in Bobo-Dioulasso (Burkina Faso). Psychologit in a center for street children., 20 June 2017.

Young Guinean brides: these girls migrate to Senegal to join their husbands, who are often vendors in the food trade.[65]

Young children guiding beggar adults: this type of mobility includes children moving as guides for often elderly women who beg on the streets. Two main routes concerning this type of migration were identified during fieldwork.

The first includes children moving from Kantché in the region of Zinder (Niger) to Algeria as guides of old beggar women. Young boys and girls are equally involved in this route and, according to a research carried out by UNICEF, most children affected by this kind of mobility are under 12 years old, and can be as young as 5 years old.[66] Another study by IOM on the "Kantché phenomenon"[67] indicates that young children are highly sought after for this kind work, as people feel pity for them, seeing them as young and vulnerable, and this results in higher revenues.[68] The same source indicates that this phenomenon can be considered trafficking as children are often recruited after the payment of an agreed sum of money to the family.[69] The second route concerns young girls from Mali, Niger, and Mauritania moving to Senegal (Dakar, Thiès, Saint Louis), placed by their parents there as guides of blind beggar women.

Box 3: Children searching for better life opportunities

Whether they decide to leave for economic reasons or "to go on an adventure", these children, in general, voluntarily decide to leave home.

Profiles of children in this group are very diverse and include both girls and boys, children concerned by early migration (aged below 13 years, or even below 10 years), children involved in internal and international mobility, children with different backgrounds and levels of education, from those who migrate during school breaks, to others who have never been to school.

According to information collected during fieldwork in four countries, within this group, children involved in international voluntary migration, within the region but also to other regions such as Europe, are mostly boys over 14 years old, a majority likely being in the age range of 16-17 years. Girls over 14 and younger boys are more commonly involved in internal movements.

65 Observatoire ACP sur les Migrations, 'Migration of Girls in West Africa: The Case of Senegal', 15.
66 UNICEF, 'Analyse de Situation: Enfants et Migration Irrégulière Vers l'Algérie Dans Le Département de Kanché', 2017, 40.
67 IOM, 'Des Femmes et Des Enfants de Kantché Sur La Route de l'Algérie. Analyse Socio-Anthropologique d'un Phénomène Mal Connu.', 2016, 8.
68 Ibid, 32.
69 Ibid, 31–34.

West African children in conflict-related displacement

Refugee, asylum seeking and internally displaced children

Globally, children are overrepresented in refugee populations. At the end of 2016, UNHCR estimated that children made up 51% of the global refugee population, against 31% of the total world population, with 10 million child refugees around the world.[70] In 2016, UNCEF estimated the total number of children internally displaced by conflict or violence was 17 million.[71] In West Africa, a significant proportion of those displaced by conflict and violence are children.

Since the 1960s, conflicts induced by multiple factors have been a major cause of displacement in West Africa. The Biafra War (Nigeria, 1967-1970), the conflict in Casamance (Senegal, 1982-2014), the brief outburst of violence in Guinea Bissau (1998-1999), the Mano River conflicts (Liberia, 1989-1997, 1999-2003 and Sierra Leone, 1991-2002) and, more recently, conflicts in Côte d'Ivoire (2011-2012), Nigeria (2014 — ongoing) and Mali (2012 — ongoing) and the upsurge of political violence in The Gambia, have all caused displacements of children to varying scales both internally and across borders.[72] Two areas currently concentrate the bulk of conflict-related child displacement; the Lake Chad region, centred around the Boko Haram insurgency in northern Nigeria; and Mali, Niger, Mauritania and Burkina Faso, centred around the ongoing conflict and insecurity in northern and central Mali, following the 2011 insurgency.

In Nigeria, the insurgency by Boko Haram has led to mass internal displacements and a large number of people seeking refuge in neighbouring countries in the Lake Chad Basin. IOM estimates that, as of January 2018, there are 1.7 million IDPs in the six worst affected states in northern Nigeria, close to one million of whom are children, accounting for 56% of the total IDP population.[73] There are a further 130,000 IDPs in the Diffa region of Niger who have been internally displaced by incursions of the Nigerian conflict across the border into Niger since 2015.[74] In May 2017, UNCEF estimated that there were 85,000 internally displaced children in the Diffa region of Niger.[75]

In addition to internal displacement, UNHCR estimates that there are around 200,000 Nigerian refugees living in neighbouring countries, including 108,000 in Niger, 90,000 in Cameroon and 9,000 in Chad.[76] While age disaggregation is not widely available for displaced populations in the area, UNICEF estimated in February 2017 that there were 1.3 million children displaced across the Lake Chad Region, out of a total of 2.3 million displaced people.[77]

The ongoing conflict in northern Mali has also generated significant displacement, both internally and across borders into neighbouring countries including Burkina Faso, Niger and Mauritania. The Malian Direction Nationale du Développement Social [78] reported in May 2017 that children represented 56% of the 51,961 IDPs in Mali, equivalent to 29,098 children at the time (with a gender ratio of 58.9% girls — 41.1% boys).[79]

70 UNHCR 'Global Trends in Forced Displacement in 2016' Available at: http://www.unhcr.org/5943e8a34.pdf
71 UNICEF, 'Uprooted: The Growing Crisis for Refugee and Migrant Children', 2016, 7
72 Fresia, Marion. 'Forced Migration in West Africa' in 'The Oxford handbook of refugee and forced migration studies', edited by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, and Nando Sigona. Oxford University Press. Oxford. pp. 5.
73 IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix: Round XX Report – December 2017, Nigeria. Available at: http://www.globaldtm.info/nigeria/
74 UNHCR 'Country Operation Update: October 2017, Niger' Available at: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/60848
75 UNICEF, 'Niger Humanitarian Situation Report', 31 May 2017..
76 Lasted data available at: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/nigeriasituation. Consulted December 2017
77 UNICEF, 'UNICEF's Response to the Lake Chad Basin Crisis 2017' available at: https://www.unicef.org/wcaro/OSLO_LCB_Advocacy_Note_Final_Low_Res.pdf
78 Direction Nationale du Développement Social du Mali, 'Matrice de Suivi Des Déplacements (DTM)', May 2017, 3.
79 Authors' calculations based on data provided in Direction Nationale du Développement Social du Mali, Matrice de Suivi des déplacements (DTM), Mai 2017,

UNHCR estimates that there are some 135,000 Malian refugees in neighbouring countries, including 57,000 in Niger, 52,500 in Mauritania and 24,000 in Burkina Faso.[80] Children also represent the majority of Malian refugees in neighbouring countries, with Malian refugee children representing 64% of Malian refugees in Burkina Faso and Niger, equivalent to some 15,400 Malian refugee children in Burkina Faso[81] and 37,000 in Niger.[82]

In addition to these conflicts, in the first half of 2017, Gambia and Burkina Faso have also experienced new internal displacements due to conflict and violence.[83]

Unaccompanied and separated children are the most vulnerable amongst refugee and asylum-seeking children and they often have difficulties accessing protection services, and lack awareness about UNHCR procedures. However, data on unaccompanied or separated children amongst refugee/asylum-seeking populations in the region remains limited. During the research UNHCR indicated that no separated or unaccompanied refugee/asylum-seek-ing children are registered in Senegal, while only one unaccompanied refugee child is registered in Burkina Faso and one in Mali.[84] This is an area that could benefit from further attention.

Box 4: Onward migration of refugee children in West Africa

The majority of West African refugees are hosted by neighbouring countries.[85] Upon filing a request for asylum, people are granted permission to stay in the country, waiting for their refugee status to be determined, which may take several years. The stay permit does not allow applicants to leave the country nor, in many cases, to legally work. Therefore, refugees and asylum seekers may encounter problems covering basic needs in the host country, which can become an impetus for the onward migration. Lack of resources in the family may also force children to leave in search of better conditions, as reported during interviews.[86] However, reliable data or information about onward migration of refugees in and from West Africa does not exist.[87] In the specific case of Senegal, UNHCR reported during a field visit for this research that some refugee youth (aged 18-25 years old) leave from Senegal, along with Senegalese nationals, towards Europe or other African countries, while refugee/asy-lum-seeking children in Senegal are not generally engaged in onward mobility.

page 3.
80 Lasted data available at: http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/malisituation. Consulted December 2017
81 UNHCR 'Synthèse Globale des données des réfugiés maliens au Burkina Faso: 1-Oct-2017' available at: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/down-load/60706
82 UNHCR 'Synthèse Globale des données des réfugiés maliens au Niger: 31-Oct-2017' available at https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/60826
83 'Http://Www.Internal-Displacement.Org/Assets/Country-Profiles/Mid-Year-Update-2017/GMB-Conflict.Pdf'.
84 Interviews with UNHCR in Burkina, Mali and Senegal in June 2017.
85 Details on refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees (refugees and IDPs), stateless persons, and others of concern to UNHCR by country/territory of asylum and origin, by mid-2016, are available in http://popstats.unhcr.org/en: mid-year statistics table 1.3. Additionally, information on asy-lum-seeking West African children believed to be unaccompanied in the EU is provided in section 5.3.3.
86 Interviews KII4-Skype interview-Regional Actor, 5/07/2017 and KII3-Skype-interview-Regional Actor, 27/6/2017.
87 However, RMMS affirms that it is possible that, as conflict and insecurity in northern Mali and the Lake Chad region become more protracted, and continue to prevent returns, secondary movement of refugees and asylum-seekers may become more significant (source: Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat West Africa, Before the Desert Conditions and Risks on Mixed Migration Routes through West Africa. Insights from the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4Mi) in Mali and Niger, n.d., page 13).

Children recruited by armed groups

Children recruited by armed groups are usually abducted, separated from their families and communities, and transported to other regions or countries. In West Africa, this problem principally affects Mali, due to active jihadist groups in the north, and Nigeria, due to the insurgency by Boko Haram. According to the United Nations report on children and armed conflict, armed groups recruited over 400 children in Mali and Nigeria in 2015 and 2016.[88]

Children are recruited by armed groups to prepare food, as messengers, to man check-points, and as spies. Girls are often victims of sexual violence. Boko Haram also uses boys and girls for suicide attacks, not only in Nigeria but also in Cameroon and Chad. In 2017, UNICEF expressed particular concern about the rise in the number of children used in sui-cide bomb attacks in Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon, with 27 attacks involving children in the first three months of 2017, compared with 30 in the whole of 2016.

In Mali, a total of 442 cases of recruitment and use of children by armed groups were re-ceived in 2016, with 78 cases verified.[89] This represents an increase compared with the 127 cases received and 30 verified in 2015, which may be attributed to renewed fighting and improved monitoring in Mali in 2016.[90] Children identified in Mali were Malians but were also from Niger.[91] According to interviews in Bamako, when the conflict in the north of Mali began in 2012, many marabouts fled the area and abandoned talibé children who were then recruit-ed by armed groups, and later rescued by French forces as part of Operation Barkhane.[92]

In 2016, the United Nations confirmed the recruitment and use of 225 children in Nigeria (143 boys and 135 girls) by Boko Haram, and the abduction of 53 children by the Civilian Joint Task Force fighting against Boko Haram.[93] Additionally, in Niger, Boko Haram has abducted both Nigerien children and those from Nigeria, however their exact number is unknown.[94]

88 United Nations General Assembly Security Council, 'Children and Armed Conflict. Report of the Secretary - General. A/70/836–S/2016/360' (2016), 16.
89 United Nations General Assembly Security Council, 'Children and Armed Conflict. Report of the Secretary - General. A/72/361–S/2017/821 (2017), 17.
90 United Nations General Assembly Security Council, 'Children and Armed Conflict. Report of the Secretary - General. A/72/361–S/2017/821 (2017), 17
91 Interview KII10-MA, carried out in Bamako (Mali). United Nations Agency. 29-06-2017
92 Interview KII10-MA, carried out in Bamako (Mali). United Nations Agency. 29-06-2017
93 United Nations General Assembly Security Council, Children and armed conflict. Report of the Secretary - General. A/70/836–S/2016/360, 31.
94 United Nations General Assembly Security Council, 'Children and Armed Conflict. Report of the Secretary - General. A/70/836-S/2016/360', 2016, 31 and following.

West African children on the move towards North Africa and Europe

Since the beginning of the 21st century, migration from Sub-Saharan countries to Europe has become more visible, with an increase in the number of migrants attempting to reach Europe by irregular means, largely in response to the tightening of visa regimes in Europe. Since 2011, with the crisis in Libya and its effects in the Sahel region, the number of migrants attempting to reach Europe through Libya and across the Mediterranean has increased. However, these forms of West African migration are actually relatively small in comparison to intra-regional migration, despite the overwhelming focus on them in public narratives in Europe.[95]

Migrants and refugees from West Africa attempting to reach Europe by sea move along the central Mediterranean route, linking Libya and, to a lesser extent, Egypt and Tunisia, to Southern Italy, or the Western Mediterranean route, connecting Morocco to Spain through the Strait of Gibraltar and the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Over time, the central route through Libya has consistently captured the biggest share of sea crossings by West Africans, while the Western route has steadily represented between 2 to 8% of the total identified crossings, with people almost equally crossing to Spain by land (through Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco) or by sea.[96]

Both unaccompanied and accompanied children from West Africa on the move towards North Africa and Europe are often invisible during their transit through Niger and Mali, on their way to Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, and Libya.[97] The number of unaccompanied migrant children along these routes is unknown, with only fragmented data available, which cannot provide a comprehensive picture of unaccompanied children in these northbound mixed migratory movements.

Research on unaccompanied migrant children in Italy published by REACH in July 2017, in which the vast majority of respondents were children from West Africa, indicated that the most commonly reported final destination children had in mind when departing their country of origin was Italy.[98] One fifth of respondents had first planned to go and stay in North Africa, including Libya and Algeria, while 12% had planned to stay in neighbouring countries, including Mali, Senegal, or Burkina Faso. Among children who planned to travel to neighbouring countries in West Africa, the hope of finding work was more often coupled with the wish to join friends or family, while children planning to go to Libya usually wanted to work there.[99]

95 Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC), 'Forced Migration in the OIC Member Countries: Policy Framework Adopted by Host Countries, COMCEC Coordination Office', 35–36.
96 RMMS WA 'Mixed Migration in West Africa: Data, Routes and Vulnerabilities of people on the move: Extended Summary' 2017
97 Main agencies involved in data collection and analysis of mixed migratory flows from West Africa towards North Africa and Europe, consulted for this report, are: - RMMS that does not include children in their 4Mi sampling (see: Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat West Africa, Before the Desert Conditions and Risks on Mixed Migration Routes through West Africa. Insights from the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4Mi) in Mali and Niger, n.d.); - IOM Displacement Tracking Monitoring and Flow Monitoring reports in Niger, Mali and Libya that provide some data on unaccompanied and accompanied child migrants yet not a comprehensive analysis by country of aggregated data over the period of implementation of their DTM programme started in 2016; - UNHCR arrivals to Europe by sea across the Mediterranean in January-June 2017 that do not provide specific gender and nationality details of children amongst all arrivals, and report errors on the fact-sheet (see UNHCR, Refugees and migrants arrivals by sea to Europe Jan-June 2017, n.d).
98 While the sample in the REACH study conducted in Sicilian reception facilities was pre-dominantly from West Africa, the demographics of children in reception centres nation-wide in Italy differs somewhat from the sample of the study. Nationwide in Italy, Egyptian UASC make up the majority of UASC in reception centres, or 16% and Gambian children make up 13%, however, in the sample for the study in Sicily, Egyptian children make up 4% and Gambian children 29%.
99 REACH, 'Children on the Move in Italy and Greece', May 2017, 31.

Mali

Of all migrants recorded in Mali by IOM between July 2016 and December 2017, some 5,000 were children, representing 7% of the recorded migrants.[100] Some travel accompanied while others travel alone.[101] No details are provided by IOM on the nationalities of origin and the gender of migrant children in Mali, but it appears as though almost all migrants in Mali are from West Africa, with a far greater prevalence of males than females.[102]

Niger

IOM DTM flow monitoring has recorded approximately 4,195 children, both accompanied and unaccompanied, amongst the migrants transiting through Niger during the period January 2017 – November 2017,[103] representing some 2.5% of the total number of migrants recorded in this time.[104] IOM reports that the large majority of children recorded transiting through Séguédine on their way to/from Libya are accompanied (82%), with the majority of those transiting through Arlit on their way to/from Algeria are unaccompanied (67%).[105]

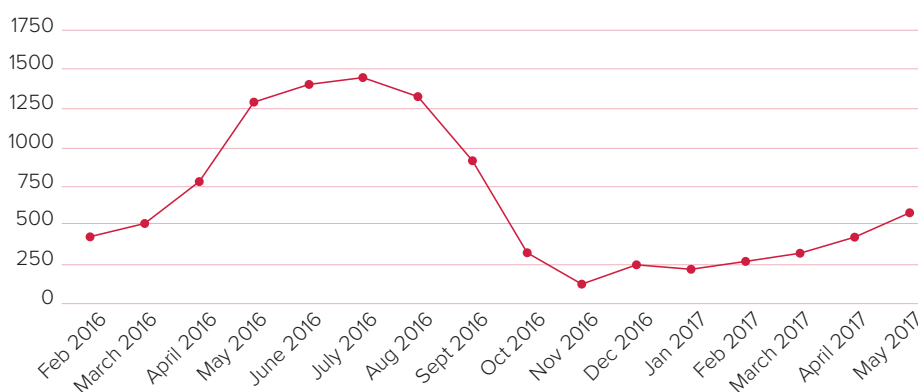The monthly trend of recorded children during February 2016 – May 2017 is as follows:

Chart 1. IOM monthly trend of recorded children in Niger during February 2016 – May 2017, source: IOM, 2017

No details are provided by IOM on nationalities of origin and gender of migrant children in Niger, but it appears as though the vast majority of migrants in Niger are from West Africa, with a greater prevalence of men.[106]

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100 IOM, 'DTM Flow Monitoring Results Snapshot #23 MALI, 30 June 2016 – 31 December 2017' n.d.

101 IOM, 'DTM Flow Monitoring Results Snapshot # 18 MALI, 30 June 2016 – 31 July 2017', n.d.

102 Data collected by IOM DTM between July 2016 and December 2017 in Mali counted a total of 73,031 migrants, the vast majority (88%) from Guinea, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Gambia; citizens of other countries including Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Togo and Burkina Faso were also identified (source: IOM, DTM Flow Monitoring Results Snapshot #23 MALI, 30 June 2016 – 31 December 2017). The proportion of Malian, Guinean and Ivorians in outgoing flows has increased and now constitutes a majority of the movements, compared to previous years in which Senegalese and Gambians were the dominant nationalities (source: IOM, DTM Flow Monitoring Results Snapshot #23 MALI, 30 June 2016 – 31 December 2017). Of all migrants in Mali, 7% are females (source: IOM, DTM Flow Monitoring Results Snapshot # 23 MALI, 30 June 2016 – 31 December 2017).

103 IOM, 'Population Flow Monitoring Niger-Overview, Dashboard #5, Period: November 2017'.

104 Authors' calculation based on data provided in IOM, Population flow monitoring Niger - overview, Dashboard #5, Period: November 2017, n.d., page 1.

105 For the period January – November 2017, see; IOM, 'Population Flow Monitoring Niger-Overview, Dashboard #5, Period: November 2017'.

106 Data collected by IOM DTM Flow Monitoring system between February 2016 and November 2017 in Niger counted a total of 602,792 migrants transiting through Niger, however, there has been a marked decrease in the number of migrants recorded by IOM in 2017 and the nationalities of migrants has varied considerably compared with 2016. In Séguedine, from where migrants leave Niger on their way to Libya, 2017 data show a large prevalence of Nigeriens (94%). In Arlit, from where migrants leave Niger on their way to Algeria, 2017 data show a variety of nationalities: Nigeriens are the prevalent (32%), yet many are migrants from Mali (10%), Nigeria (8%), Guinea (8%), Cameroon (7%), Burkina Faso, Senegal, Chad, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau. (source: IOM, Population flow monitoring Niger - Overview, Dashboard #5, Period: November 2017, n.d., page 1 and 2).

Libya

Data from IOM's DTM in Libya from December 2017 indicates that 9% of identified migrants in Libya are children, amounting to an estimated 55,953 children.[107] Of those recorded, 41% or nearly 23,000 are considered unaccompanied.[108] No details are provided by IOM on the nationalities of origin or the gender of migrant children in Libya.[109]

Morocco

In absence of official statistics, Caritas and Médecins du Monde Belgique carried out a study in Morocco in 2016 to identify the main profiles of sub-Saharan children in Morocco. Findings suggest that the number of boys migrating to Europe is higher than the number of girls, and this was reflected in the sample for the research which was made up of 76% boys and 24% of girls. The boys were mainly from Guinea Conakry (areas of Conakry and Mamou), Cameroon (Douala and Yaoundé), and Côte d'Ivoire (Abidjan). While the girls, were primarily from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Côte d'Ivoire. The average age of both girls and boys was 16 years and 11 months.[110] Out of a total sample of 102 girls and boys, 51% transited through Mali and 38% through Niger before arriving in Morocco.[111]

Box 5: Assisted return for migrant children in 2016 under the framework of IOM's assisted voluntary return and reintegration programme (AVRR)

159 children (106 boys and 53 girls) returned from Niger to their country of origin, representing 3.12% of all returnees. For all returnees, including children, the main countries of origin were Senegal, Guinea Conakry, Gambia, and Guinea Bissau.[112]

In 2016, IOM Senegal assisted 48 unaccompanied migrant children to return to Senegal from Niger, Morocco, and Libya, of which 15 were girls. The assisted children were all between 14 and 17, with the majority being around 16-17 years old.[113]

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107 IOM, 'Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Libya's Migrant Report Round: 16 December 2017', n.d., 7.
108 Ibid., 7.
109 However, data from IOM for all the 621,706 migrants identified in Libya in December 2017 indicates that nationals of sub-Saharan African countries accounted for 63% of all identified migrants (source: DTM Libya Round 16 Migrant Dataset December 2017). IOM DTM report also indicates that of all migrants in Libya, 11% are females (source: IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Libya's Migrant Report ROUND 16 December 2017).
110 CD-BE for Caritas Morocco and Médecins du Monde Belgium, 'Mineur-e-s Non Accompagné-e-s, En Recherche d'avenir', 47–48.
111 Ibid. 72.
112 IOM Niger, 'Mécanismes de Ressources et Réponses Pour Migrants', 2017.
113 Interview KII12-SE, carried out by skype. United Nations Agency. 05-07-2017.

Unaccompanied West African children in Europe

Italy

In 2016, 25,845 unaccompanied or separated children arrived in Italy by sea, representing 92% of the total number of children arriving via the Central Mediterranean route. Unaccompanied children also accounted for 14% of the total number of migrants and refugees who arrived in Italy in 2016, doubling the percentage of unaccompanied children amongst arrivals compared with 2015 (7%).[114] In 2017, this trend continued with unaccompanied children representing 13% of the total number of sea arrivals in Italy, despite an overall decrease in number.[115] The percentages of children arriving in Italy are much higher than those recorded by IOM transiting through both Mali and Niger, highlighting the invisibility of children on the move in mixed migration movements towards Libya, particularly given that many children do not make the onward journey from Libya to Europe.

In both 2016 and 2017 West African unaccompanied and separated children have represented the majority of children arriving in Italy by sea. In 2017, most originated from Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Gambia, with significant numbers also arriving from Nigeria, Mali, and Senegal.[116] Amongst West African arrivals, relatively higher proportions of unaccompanied and separated children were recorded amongst those from Gambia (24%), Guinea (22%) and Côte d'Ivoire (17%), although the overall number of unaccompanied and separated children from Gambia decreased by 56% compared with 2016.[117] Most unaccompanied and separated children arriving in Italy by sea are boys[118] aged 16 and 17 years old.[119]

The number of unaccompanied children hosted at reception centres in Italy[120] between 2014 and 2017 has consistently increased: from 10,536 in 2014,[121] to 18,508 in November 2017.[122] The number of children from West African countries has grown considerably from 25,2% of all foreign unaccompanied children in 2014, to 45,5% in 2017, when there were 3,562 unaccompanied children hosted at reception centres in Italy.[123] The majority of unaccompanied children hosted in reception centres in Italy were aged 17 (60%) and 16 (23.4%).

The presence of girls amongst unaccompanied children in reception centres in Italy has been below 7% since 2012, but reached its highest figure at the end of 2017, when 1,291 girls were hosted in reception centres, representing 7% of children at the time. This has remained relatively steady compared to 2016, but has more than doubled the number of girls from 2015, when they represented 4,6% of the total.[124] The number of West African girls increased significantly between 2015 and 2016[125] from 25% to 55% of all girls.[126] In November 2017,

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114 UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM, 'Refugee and Migrant Children- Including Unaccompanied and Separated Children - in the EU Overview of Trends in 2016', April 2017, 1.
115 UNHCR, 'Italy - Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) Dashboard December 2017'
116 ibid
117 Ibid
118 UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM, 'Refugee and Migrant Children- Including Unaccompanied and Separated Children - in the EU Overview of Trends in 2016', 2.
119 UNHCR, 'Italy - Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) Dashboard December 2017'.
120 Data from the Italian Ministry of Labor and Social Policy provides details on the unaccompanied migrant children hosted at reception centres for children by a given date (monthly or quarterly). Data are cumulative and only refer to those unaccompanied migrant children in the reception centres at the time of census. Of all registered foreign (migrant) children, some may not eventually be hosted at reception centres if disappearing before reaching the centres or at one point during their stint. As at 31 December 2016, 6,561 unaccompanied foreign children were missing, the majority from Egypt (22.4%), Eritrea (21%) and Somalia (19.1%) (source: Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche sociali, 'I Minori Stranieri Non Accompagnati (MSNA) in Italia- Report Di Monitoraggio - Dati Al 31 Dicembre 2016', n.d., 3).
121 Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche sociali, 3.
122 Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche sociali, 2017, 2
123 Authors' calculations based on data provided in: Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche sociali, I Minori Stranieri Non Accompagnati (MSNA) in Italia- Report Di Monitoraggio - Dati Al 31 Dicembre 2016, n.d., page 3, and in Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche sociali, I Minori Stranieri Non Accompagnati (MSNA) in Italia- Report Di Monitoraggio - Dati Al 31 Dicembre 2015, page 3.
124 Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche sociali, 'I Minori Stranieri Non Accompagnati (MSNA) in Italia- Report Di Monitoraggio - Dati Al 31 Dicembre 2016', 6.
125 Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche sociali, 7.
126 Authors' calculations based on data provided in: Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche sociali, I Minori Stranieri Non Accompagnati (MSNA) in Italia- Report Di

West African girls represented 50% of all girls hosted in Italy. Girls aged 16 and 17 years represented the vast majority of all unaccompanied migrant girls hosted in Italy at end of 2017.[127] Nigerian girls have consistently been the most numerous of all unaccompanied West African girls hosted in reception centres in Italy and, at the end of 2017 represented 42.8%.
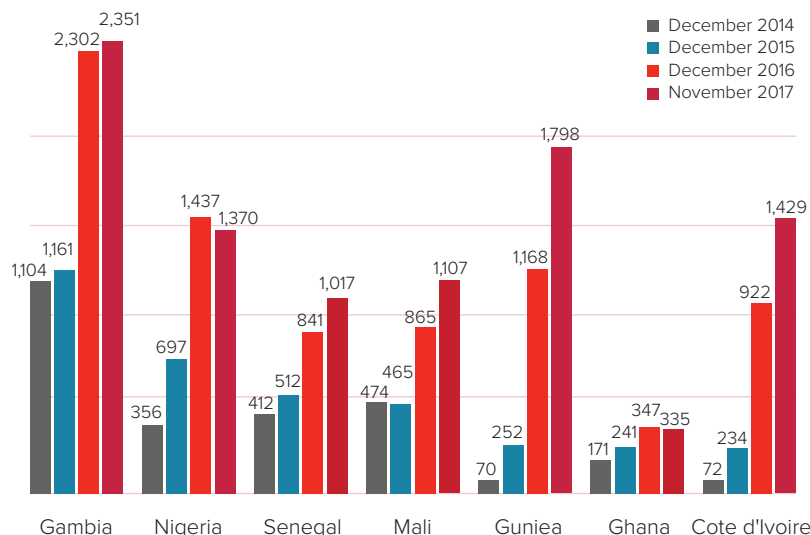

Chart 2. West African children hosted in Italian reception centres by end of 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 Source: Authors' calculations based on Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies 2015 - 2016[128]

Spain

Lack of rigorous data on unaccompanied and separated children who have arrived in Spain makes it impossible to draw a comprehensive picture. The Fiscalía del Estado data for 2016 indicates that 588 unaccompanied and separated children arrived in Spain in 2016, which represents an increase from 2015 (414) and 2014 (223). Out of these children, 37% are from Algeria, 31% from Morocco, 10% from Côte d'Ivoire, and 5% from Guinea. The gender breakdown of the 2016 arrivals is 95% boys and 5% girls. At the end of 2016, there were a total of 3,997 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) registered to the state social services of Spain (3,470 boys and 527 girls).[129]

According to UNHCR, children represented approximately 12% of all arrivals by sea to Spain in January-June 2017. [130] However, no details are provided on the nationalities of origin and gender of children who arrived in Spain by sea in 2017.[131]

Monitoraggio - Dati Al 31 Dicembre 2016, January 2017, page 7.
127 Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche sociali, 'I Minori Stranieri Non Accompagnati (MSNA) in Italia- Report Di Monitoraggio - Dati Al 31 Dicembre 2016', 6.
128 Children from other West African countries might be present amongst those classified as "Others" in the statistics provided by the Italian Ministry of Labor and Social Policies, amounting to approximately 5% of all foreign unaccompanied children hosted in reception centres in Italy by end of 2014, 2015 and 2016 (see Ministero del Lavoro e dellePoliticesociali, I MinoriStranieri Non Accompagnati (MSNA) in Italia- Report Di Monitoraggio - Dati Al 31 Dicembre 2016, n.d., page 3. And Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche sociali, I Minori Stranieri Non Accompagnati (MSNA) in Italia- Report Di Monitoraggio - Dati Al 31 Dicembre 2015, page 3).
129 Fiscalía General del Estado, 'Memoria Presentada Al Inicio Del Año Judicial', 2017, 539–40.
130 UNHCR, 'Refugees and Migrants Arrivals by Sea to Europe January-June 2017', n.d., 2.
131 REACH, 'Children on the Move in Italy and Greece', 66.

Unaccompanied West African children seeking asylum in Europe

Concerning the 28 EU countries, 4,620 West African children believed to be unaccompanied claimed asylum in 2017.[132] Data comparison for the years from 2014 to 2016 shows a sharp and constant increase in the number of asylum claims filed by unaccompanied West African children in the EU, totalling 14,375 claims over the three years.[133]

For all West African countries of origin of unaccompanied migrant children filing asylum in the EU, the period 2014-2016 shows a constant yearly increase, with particularly sharp increases for Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea Conakry, and Nigeria:
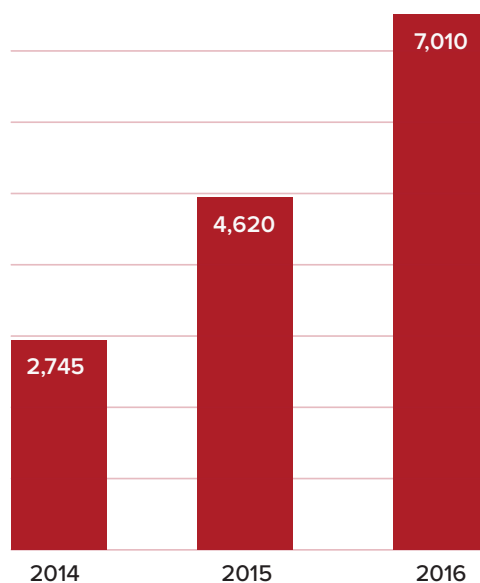
Chart 3: Asylum claims by West African children believed to be unaccompanied migrants in the 28 EU countries. Source: Eurostat, 2017

2014	2015	2016
2,745	4,620	7,010

Chart 4. Number of asylum claims filed in the 28 EU countries by unaccompanied migrant children from Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea Conakry, and Nigeria from 2014 to 2016. Source: Eurostat, 2017.

Gambia: 1,065 — 1,510 — 2,330
Nigeria: 400 — 890 — 1,085
Guniea: 235 — 440 — 1,165
Cote d'Ivoire: 70 — 260 — 555
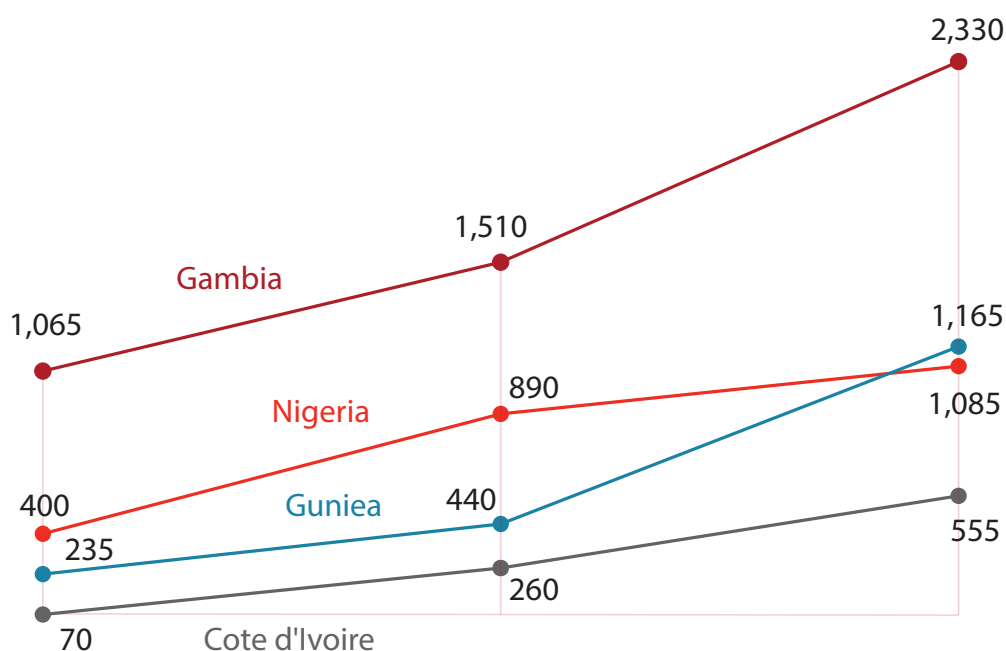
132 Countries of origin are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.
133 European Union, 'Http://Ec.Europa.Eu/Eurostat/Data/Database, Accessed on 16 November 2017', n.d.

Chapter 3
Reasons for Child Mobility

Understanding the reasons for child mobility entails comprehending not only the interaction between the factors that influence a child's decision to leave home, but also how these factors are embedded into the social structure, traditions, beliefs, and organisation of families within their surroundings.[134] While child's agency[135] in the decision-making process has been typically underestimated,[136] more recent studies on child mobility stress that the decision to leave is often the child's own,[137] especially in the case of teenagers. However, a child-led decision to leave can be influenced by many factors and external opinions, primarily those of parents and extended family.[138]

The decision to leave rarely depends on only one reason, but is rather a combination of different circumstances, as highlighted in the different life histories of children collected during fieldwork for this research. Moreover, reasons for mobility can shift during the migratory process and affect the migratory routes, and are therefore also influenced by the conditions of the journey, and the opportunities and risks that the child faces along the way.

In alignment with relevant literature on this topic, the reasons for child mobility identified during the research are presented in this chapter in six main categories: a) economic reasons, b) education-related reasons, c) reasons linked to social context, d) family-related issues and violence, e) children lured into mobility, and f) conflict and environmental issues.[139]

While the reasons that children move are here grouped in categories for ease of analysis, individual reasons, personal life stories and experiences make every child's mobility experience unique. Therefore, these categories should not be understood as fixed or mutually exclusive but are, in practice, mixed, as children may have multiple reasons for leaving, and their reasons may change over time in response to a variety of factors.

Searching for better life opportunities

Both primary and secondary sources consulted for this research unanimously mentioned searching for better life opportunities as the main reason for the mobility of children.[140]

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134 Iman Hashim, Dorte Thorsen, 'Child Migration in Africa'.
135 Plan WARO, Enda Jeunesse Action, AMWCY,ILO, Terre des Hommes foundation, IOM, Save the Children Suède, UNICEF WCARO, 'Project of Joint Regional Study on the Mobility of Children and Youths in West Africa.Project of Joint Regional Study on the Mobility of Children and Youths in West Africa. Which Protection for Children Involved in Mobility in West Africa', 2011, 8.
136 Iman Hashim, Dorte Thorsen, 'Child Migration in Africa'.
137 See for instance Iman Hashim and Dorte Thorsen, Child migration in Africa, the Nordic Africa Institute, 2011; Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF, Child Domestic Workers. Evidence from West and Central Africa. Briefing paper No. 1, 2012; Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF, Children Begging for Qur'anic School masters. Evidence from West and Central Africa. Briefing paper No. 5, 2012; Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF, Child Domestic Workers. Evidence from West and Central Africa. Briefing paper No. 1, 2012; and others of the same author (see Bibliography).
138 Plan WARO, Enda Jeunesse Action, AMWCY, ILO, Terre des Hommes foundation, IOM, Save the Children Suède, UNICEF WCARO, 'Project of Joint Regional Study on the Mobility of Children and Youths in West Africa. Which Protection for Children Involved in Mobility in West Africa', 8.
139 Daniela Reale for Save the Children, Away from home, 2008.
140 To learn more about this: Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF, 2012. Child Domestic Workers. Evidence from West and Central Africa. Briefing paper No. 1, 2012; Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF, Children working in Commercial agriculture. Evidence from West and Central Africa. Briefing paper No. 2, 2012; Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF, 2012. Children working in the Urban Informal Economy. Evidence from West and Central Africa. Briefing paper No. 3, 2012; Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF, Children Working in Mines and Quarries. Evidence from West and Central Africa. Briefing paper No. 4, 2012; Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF, Children Begging for Qur'anic School masters. Evidence from West and Central Africa. Briefing paper No. 5, 2012; Terre des Hommes, Etude sur les enfants concernés par la mobilité entre le Ghana et le Togo, Juillet 2016.

In West Africa, child mobility is strongly influenced by the wider context of poverty, as well as social and familial structures that oblige children to support their families. Thus, child migration is strongly influenced by parents and social norms; in the context of widespread poverty, children are perceived to have an obligation to support their families, often through their mobility.

This obligation has a gendered, and to some extent age-related aspect. Older children, and particularly boys, feel a stronger responsibility to support their families, especially the oldest boy in the family.[141] While girls also move for economic reasons, the obligation of supporting the family is a social role that applies mainly to boys.

In the case of girls, mobility is not always well accepted, and community and family reactions change from context to context. In Niger, marriage is the only reason to justify the departure of a girl from her home,[142] indeed, generally in Niger, a girl who leaves home is socially punished for becoming more independent, and can face social ostracisation. Conversely, in some communities in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Senegal, girls' mobility for economic reasons is to some extent accepted, and in some cases, seen as a necessary experience before marriage.[143] Indeed, leaving home can also make girls more attractive to men. In some contexts in Burkina Faso, for instance, it is mainly the capacity to be autonomous which makes girls more "appreciated" by men wanting to get married[144] and gives girls a sort of "added value".[145]

Boy 1: "*[Reasons of child mobility] sometimes depend on problems between the child and the father.*"
Boy 2: "*Problems between the child and the family. The child wakes up and the father says: you are here just eating from me! Your friends left, and you are still here doing nothing.*"
Boy 1: "*Parents do not have money to pay for school.*"
Focus group with boys 15 to 18 years old in Bobo-Dioulasso (Burkina Faso).

Girl 1: *"girls and boys do no move in the same way."*
Boy 1: *"they are so disturbed in the family. Parents disturb them. Maybe this influences them. Friends do something, the child does nothing... there are parents who can hit their children because of that, because they bring nothing to the family."*
Focus group with boys and girls 14 to 21 years old in Bamako (Mali).

Moderator: *"Let's imagine a case in which a girl left and she had success. Would family take the money?"*
Man 2: *"no, no, we cannot..."*
All women: *"no, no, no, it is not possible"*
Woman 1: "*you don't know how she gained this money. You cannot take it.*"
Man 1: *"you don't know what the child did. She went further than the borders!"*
Women at the same time: *"you cannot take it... you don't know..."*
Focus group with adult women and men in Niamey (Niger).

However, in many contexts in the region, gender inequality is still marked and the female role that defines becoming a wife as the most important step for a girl prevails. In focus groups with adults and girls in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, ideas concerning girls' mobility were often linked to potential "bad behaviours"; meaning having extra-marital relations and/or becoming a "prostitute" (in a figurative or real sense). Consequently, at present, even if in some contexts girls' mobility is socially accepted, gender inequality continues to limit the possibilities for girls to migrate.

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141 Focus groups carried out with boys in Niger and Burkina. From 13-06-2017 to 28-06-2017.
142 Focus group with adult women and men in Niamey (Niger)., 13 June 2017; Focus group with adult women in Niamey (Niger)., 15 June 2017.
143 Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF, 'Child Domestic Workers. Evidence from West and Central Africa. Briefing Paper No. 1.', 2012, 5.
144 Interview KII2-BF carried out in Bobo-Dioulasso (Burkina Faso). Civil society organization. 19-06-2017 and interview KII10-BF carried out in Ouagadougou. International organization. 22-06-2017.
145 Terre des Hommes, 'The Added Value of Protective Accompaniment', 23.

Education-related reasons

The education systems of many West African countries have considerable barriers for accessing (quality) education for a high number of children. This applies both to boys and, to an even greater extent, to girls. Lack of school infrastructure and qualified teachers (especially in rural areas), the high cost of educational materials, and lack of support courses to achieve the different grades, are a few of the factors that impede access to and push children out of schools in West Africa.[146]

Children out-of-school find themselves in need of jobs, and may decide to travel and look for opportunities.[147] Moreover, sometimes children on the move contribute to the education of their siblings by relieving their family through financial independence, and/or by bringing/sending back money.[148] An additional reason for mobility for boys and girls that is linked to both education and economic factors, involves temporary migration to cities in order to find jobs during school-breaks to buy books and materials to use during the following school year.

Thus, lack of educational opportunities for children encourages early mobility. In parallel, lack of access to secondary level education in many rural locations, as in the case of Senegal, is a cause of child mobility for those who can afford to attend secondary school but need to move elsewhere. According to UNICEF, in Liberia, girls, more than boys, are being sent from rural homes to live in Monrovia, partly for educational reasons.[149]

Woman 1: *"the girls now want to go to the school. It is not like before anymore."*
Woman 2: *"women are waking up."*
Woman 3: *"girls try to help their family."*
Moderator: *"and this is general? The girls who leave for economic reasons?"*
Men 1: *"it is not everywhere. It is mainly for the girls of Sourou, in the southeast."*
Woman 1: *"it is an obligation; girl has to contribute to the dowry for the marriage."*
Man 1: *"In this area, it is the man who does that."*
Focus group with adult women and men in Banfora (Burkina Faso).

Lack of access to education in certain areas is also linked the fostering of children, a practice typical of the region.[150] When parents are not able to cover school expenses they may decide to entrust their children to another person,[151] usually a person within the extended family or having some sort of family link with the child, who will take charge of the child's education.[152]

In addition, the talibé phenomenon can also be linked to lack of access to education. If the main reason for the mobility of talibé boys is informal education (learning the Koran),[153] information gathered during fieldwork suggested that these reasons can also be part of an economic decision on the part of the family, who do not have enough money for school fees and thus send their children to a daâra so the child can pursue cheaper Islamic studies. The education of talibé boys also has an economic factor, particularly in cases where the boys are exploited by a marabout, who demands sums of money and food from them on

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146 Unesco, 'Sub-Saharan Africa 2012 EFA Report', 2012, 15 and following.
147 All interviews in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger carried out from 12-06-2017 to 30-06-2017.
148 Plan WARO, Enda Jeunesse Action, AMWCY, ILO, Terre des Hommes foundation, IOM, Save the Children Suède, UNICEF WCARO, 'Project of Joint Regional Study on the Mobility of Children and Youths in West Africa. Which Protection for Children Involved in Mobility in West Africa', 18.
149 UNICEF, 'The Situation of Children and Women in Liberia - from Conflict to Peace', 2012, 68.
150 Plan WARO, Enda Jeunesse Action, AMWCY, ILO, Terre des Hommes foundation, IOM, Save the Children Suède, UNICEF WCARO, 'Project of Joint Regional Study on the Mobility of Children and Youths in West Africa. Which Protection for Children Involved in Mobility in West Africa', 18.
151 Interviews carried out in Senegal, Burkina Faso and Niger from 06-06-2017 to 28-06-2017.
152 See also: Cati Coe, 'Child Circulation and West African Migrations', 2015.
153 Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF, 'Children Begging for Qur'anic School Masters. Evidence from West and Central Africa. Briefing Paper No. 5', 2012.

a daily basis.[154] In some instances, parents are unaware of the conditions in the dâaras, or pretend to be uninformed. In other instances, boys' families of origin agree to share part of the revenue of the child's begging activity with the marabout, which is the main reason why they initially choose to send their children to the marabout. For parents, sending a child to a dâara can, therefore, represent two different strategies, on one hand, it may imply a shift of focus from providing an education to the boy, to source of revenue for the family through the exploitation of the child.[155] On the other, Koranic education can represent a means of diversifying children's educational paths when the family cannot afford to send all the siblings to formal schools.[156]

Reasons related to social context

In West Africa, migrating[157] is often considered part of a "maturity ritual" for young boys. As one interviewee in Burkina Faso commented; "in the life of a man, if you did not go on an adventure, if you did not come back, if you do not have things, you are not socially valued. You will have more problems to have a woman than someone who went to Côte d'Ivoire, the girl will choose the other man who knows life. Mainly if he came back with something. This is a generalized idea. It is like to affirm yourself, show that you are able to take care of yourself".[158] There is, therefore, a strong link between conceptions of mobility and constructions of masculinity in the region, since traveling and looking for better opportunities is often considered an important part of becoming a 'man'.[159]

Boy 1: *"Senegalese who work abroad can build houses here"*
Boy 2: *"Migrants drive beautiful cars"*
Focus group with talibé boys 7 to 17years in Dakar (Senegal)

This social conception strongly applies in the cases of teenagers from Senegal, Guinea Conakry and The Gambia transiting through Mali and Niger to reach North African countries on their way to Europe, who are strongly influenced by the "desire/will of discovery". While this factor is mostly applied in relation to boys, and is not often associated with girls' mobility,[160] this is an area that could benefit from further research.

Peer pressure is also a significant factor in the decisions of children to migrate.[161] When friends of the same age go abroad and demonstrate their successes (either real or fake), other children feel pressured to do the same. Success can be shown upon returning to the village of origin with new clothes, some money or a motorcycle, or on social media through photos, etc.[162] Thus, children's decisions to migrate can be influenced by their connections to the diaspora through social media.

The social structure in West Africa also affects child mobility, and in particular, ideas around the responsibility for raising children as shared among family members, with children seen as 'belonging' to everyone in the family.[163] In this sense, children have "many parents", and thus children often move between family members in several locations.[164]

154 Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF.
155 Several interviews, carried out in Senegal during 06-06-2017 to 14-06-2017.
156 Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF, 'Children Begging for Qur'anic School Masters. Evidence from West and Central Africa. Briefing Paper No. 5', 7.
157 The expression used by interviewed persons is "leave on an adventure" or "go on an exodus": "partir à l'aventure", "aller en exode" in French.
158 Interview KII2-BF, carried out in Bobod-Disoulasso (Burkina Faso)., 19 June 2017.
159 Gary Barker and Christine Ricardo, 'Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa:Implications for HIV/AIDS, Conflict, and Violence. Social Development Papers. Conflict Prevention & Reconstruction. Paper No. 26 / June 2005', June 2005, 5.
160 Marie Diop pour UNICEF, 'Migration Des Enfants Non Accompagnés de l'Afrique de l'Ouest', January 2013, 51.
161 Terre des Hommes, 'Etude Sur Les Enfants Concernés Par La Mobilité Entre Le Ghana et Le Togo', 2016, 24.
162 CD-BE for Caritas Morocco and Médecins du Monde Belgium, 'Mineur-e-s Non Accompagné-e-s, En Recherche d'avenir', 64.
163 Confiange in French.
164 Iman Hashim, Dorte Thorsen, 'Child Migration in Africa', 10.

The case of talibé boys is another example that responds to specific social factors: many families sending their children to daâras strongly believe that this kind of education is a good option for the child because the boy will learn about "hard life conditions" from an early age, thus helping him to better face his adulthood.[165] It is also believed that a good Islamic education needs to be developed away from home, which means that enrolment of a boy in a daâra implies separation and mobility.[166] In Senegal and its neighbouring countries, interviewees mentioned the prevalence of Peuhl boys amongst the talibé,[167] which is also indicative of an ethnically-influenced element.[168]

Boy 2: "For the boys there are friends who come back with big motorbikes and it makes you as if you want also to go out...."
Boy 3: "there are others who come back without anything...."
Boy 5: "one cause is the 'the taste of the adventure'."
Boy 4: "friends who come with motorbikes after being in gold mines."
(....)
Boy 4: "there is also the 'taste of the adventure',"
Boy 2: "if my brother returns from Côte d'Ivoire, well dressed, it makes me feel like going too ..."
Focus group with boys from 15 to 18 years old in Bobo-Dioulasso (Burkina Faso).

Family-related issues and violence

Family-related issues are an important cause of child mobility in the region.[169] In many cases, unable to find solutions to family problems, children decide to leave home. Violence, together with the lack of institutional protection policies, are key factors in many children's' decisions to move away from their family and community of origin.[170]

Family issues may range from disagreements between children and parents, to cases of physical and sexual violence. In other cases, lack of family and protective environment causes child mobility, as in the case of some orphaned children. In addition, social interactions based on gerontocracy, strongly present in the West Africa context, contribute to the lack of opportunities for a child, who can feel repressed by adult authority.[171]

Violence against children in the family context can also be gender-specific. Information collected during fieldwork indicates that a significant number of girls in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Senegal move in order to flee from forced marriage or excision.[172] Others flee after having survived sexual violence, which also happens in the case of boys. In other cases, a girl may be disowned by her family as a punishment for what are considered "bad behaviours", as in the case of girls who become pregnant.[173]

In the case of children on the move, violence can be a cause of departure, but also a consequence of mobility, particularly for the most vulnerable children. In this case, children on the move may be victims of violence, and this may overlap with their original reasons for leaving. For instance, ENDA mentioned that up until approximately 2007, a large majority of children living on the streets in Senegal said they were victims of violence at the family level;

165 Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF, 'Children Begging for Qur'anic School Masters. Evidence from West and Central Africa. Briefing Paper No. 5', 5.
166 Interview KII10-NI carried out in Niamey (Niger). Public institution. 16-06-2017.Interview KII3-SE, carried out in Dakar (Senegal). Civil society organization. 12-06-2017.
167 Interviews KII3-SE and KII4-SE, carried out in Dakar (Senegal). Civil society organizations. 12 and 13-06-2017.
168 Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF, 'Children Begging for Qur'anic School Masters. Evidence from West and Central Africa. Briefing Paper No. 5', 3–4.
169 An interlocutor specialized in assistance to separated vulnerable children in Dakar highlights how identifying/classifying cases of children who have run away from their family owing to violence is not easy for operators, as many children would not admit to that situation and lie during interviews.
170 Abdou Dao, 'Anthropological Approaches to Studying the Mobility of Children in West Africa, in "African Migrations Research" (Edited by Mohamed Berriane and Heine de Haas)', 248.
171 Abdou Dao, 'Anthropological Approaches to Studying the Mobility of Children in West Africa, in "African Migrations Research" (Edited by Mohamed Berriane and Hein de Haas)', 249.
172 Interviews in Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal carried out from 06-06-2017 to 30-06-2017.
173 Focus groups with children and youth carried out in Bobo-Dioulasso (Burkina Faso), 20-06-2017.

Box 6: Story of Mira, a 13 year-old girl who was a victim of violence in Kaolack (Senegal)
Nationality: Senegalese
Educational level: 3rd level primary education

Mira is from Kaolack, in Senegal, but her mother (separated from her father) lives in Dakar with the rest of her family. She ran away from home because her father raped her, but is unable to recall when exactly she left home. She remembers she took a car to go to Dakar to join her mother, but her mother told her to go back to Kaolack the very next day. Her mother paid for the vehicle upon arrival and also paid the return trip. Once back in Kaolack, she did not return home to her father but remained in the street, where a woman found her and gave her shelter. She stayed a week with the woman, then ENDA brought her to her current foster family, where she has been living for the past 8 months. She likes it and wishes to stay, and also carry on studying until secondary school, then one day become a soldier (her father is apparently also a solider).

When she first arrived in Dakar she had not told her mother what her father had done to her, because her father had threatened her. Eventually she spoke with the woman who rescued her, and to her foster carers. After this she was able to tell her mother too.

however, more recently it is estimated that the streets are largely populated by talibé children who have run away from abusive situations in the daâras.[174] In this case therefore, violence can be a reason for secondary mobility for the most vulnerable children.

Children lured into mobility

In some instances, the child's decision to leave may be conditioned on false information. In this case the decision to become mobile is taken by the child, and/or the family, based on some type of proposition that may be related to employment opportunities. This may be the case for children recruited by traffickers who propose travel for work purposes directly to the child or to the family, only for the child to later find themselves in forms of exploitation including forced labour and sexual exploitation.[175] This is also the case for child victims of fraud, who migrate based on false promises and who are stranded after having had to pay for their travel.

Box 7: The football players fraud

A peculiar case concerns children lured into mobility on the false promise of becoming a football player in Europe or other countries, with most cases being detected in Côte d'Ivoire. Young boys (and also girls, but in lower number) playing football in their country of origin receive a proposal from a recruiter to go play in foreign countries, usually outside the region (Europe, Morocco, Egypt, Turkey, Dubai, etc.). Children and families are persuaded by this intermediary, with the intermediary asking for a sum of money to arrange travels and the contract with the football team. However, once at the destination or in the country of transit, children are abandoned, and end up stranded.[176]

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174 Interview KII2-SE, carried out in Dakar (Senegal). Civil society organization. 06-06-2017.
175 For instance, see Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF, Children Working in Mines and Quarries. Evidence from West and Central Africa. Briefing paper No. 4, 2012.
176 CD-BE for Caritas Morocco and Médecins du Monde Belgium, 'Mineur-e-s Non Accompagné-e-s, En Recherche d'avenir', 53.

Conflict and environmental issues

Ongoing conflicts in West Africa, particularly in Mali and Nigeria, are both direct and indirect causes of displacement in the region. Schools are often the target of attacks by jihadist groups' in the Sahel,[177] as is the case in Mali and Burkina Faso. When schools are closed down, damaged, or even destroyed in armed attacks or used by armed groups, forcing teachers to flee, children's education is interrupted. Because there is a strong link between children being in school and child mobility, children pushed out of school due to conflict, or its consequences, may become mobile. This is an area that could benefit from future research.

Additionally, as has been discussed, in situations of armed conflict armed groups may abduct children, with Boko Haram in Nigeria being one of the groups identified as abducting a very high number of children in West Africa.

Concerning environmental issues in West Africa and mainly in the Sahel, mobility is heavily influenced by environmental change and degradation, which is having a lasting effect on ecosystems, and causing soil infertility, drought, or flooding.[178] Key informants in Niger stated that water scarcity has reduced agricultural production, which has in turn reduced family incomes. Lack of production and cultivation possibilities can lead to children leaving in search of other opportunities to support their families. Children in this situation often mention the "malfunctioning climate," and one possible solution seems to be moving elsewhere.[179]

Link between domestic and international mobility of children

While the link between the domestic and international mobility of children is complex and context specific, a number of insights from interviews conducted with key actors highlighted some relevant issues during the research.

Firstly, the difficulty in identifying children who are preparing to depart or are already on the move internationally is indicative of the "invisibility" of children on the move internationally, especially unaccompanied children. Children who are intending to move internationally, and particularly out of the region, may choose not to disclose their plan for several reasons. Most notably in the context of West Africa, measures to control the movement of people through West Africa to Libya and onward to Europe, may prompt children not to disclose their final intended destination.

Secondly, the migratory experience of children often occurs on a step-by-step basis. While most children participating in this research reported a lack of interest in international migration, this may not exclude them from becoming international migrants at some point in the future. Indeed, less than half of children who arrived in Italy and were interviewed by REACH reported that they had left home with the goal of reaching Europe.[180]

A number of respondents indicated that it is possible that children who have migrated internally, towards capitals or other large urban centres, may later move internationally. It could be expected that children get involved in internal migration when they are younger, but later move on to international migration. However, the case for internal mobility as a first step

177 RMMS, 'West Africa Monthly Mixed Migration Summary', March 2017.
178 UNICEF, 'In Search of Opportunities - Voices of Children on the Move in West and Central Africa', July 2017, 5.
179 Abdou Dao, 'Anthropological Approaches to Studying the Mobility of Children in West Africa, in "African Migrations Research" (Edited by Mohamed Berriane and Heine de Haas)', 243.
180 REACH, 'Children on the Move in Italy and Greece', 66.

toward international migration does not necessarily explain all scenarios of child migration. For instance, in a study conducted for Caritas Morocco and Médecins du Monde Belgium on child mobility from Sub-Saharan Africa to Morocco, children and youth interviewed as international migrants in Morocco frequently identified it as their first migration experience (e.g., they had not experienced previously domestic migration).[181]

The information collected during this research indicates that a number of factors including available economic resources, social networks, and gender influence children's decisions to move internally or internationally.

"Risk can motivate the choice: where do I have less possibilities of failing? After there are the contacts with relatives, friends, near persons that would motivate the choice. Then you have the privileged migrants, those having enough money to go to Europe, they have ambition, they cannot be satisfied with just Africa. If you really want to make a fortune, you cannot stay in Africa; there is a big difference of incomes".
Interview KII7-MA, carried out in Bamako (Mali). 30-06-2017

Economic resources are first and foremost important to fund transportation, and therefore act as a key determinant of the destinations available to children on the move. In this sense internal migration to work in cities may be a first step towards earning money to fund international migration. However, most interviewees maintained that the youngest children do not embark on unaccompanied international journeys. With the obvious exception of children who live in border towns, due to the proximity of international borders.[182]

Another factor contributing to a child's decision to migrate, no matter whether nationally or internationally, is the presence of family members or friends. The availability of social networks is a key determining factor in a choice of destination. Social networks also influence a child's ability to access information. According to a recent study, children who arrived in Italy used a range of information sources to decide on their destination, but primarily relied on personal advice from their families in the country of residence, travel companions or people/children met during their journey, followed by family at the destination and traditional media, such as television and radio.[183]

International social networks can help explain the international migration of Senegalese, Gambian, and Malian children to Europe. Senegal, for example, is a country that has experienced emigration to Europe for decades (to countries such as France, Spain, and Italy), and family and diaspora networks can be contributing factors in a child's decision to migrate to Europe. Related to the fact that many West African nationals live abroad (including in long-term diasporas), another compounding factor is the idea of success, often falsely passed on by nationals living abroad.

"[...] for us one has to travel to be successful".
Senegalese mother of 3 children in Italy, Dakar

Networks are especially important in the case of girls, and particularly in their migration towards Europe. Even if many girls decide to leave alone, most of them actually travel within a network of contacts, often recommended by the family, who could help them at their destination. The contact with an intermediary is, therefore, a key element in determining the final destination.[184]

181 CD-BE for Caritas Morocco and Médecins du Monde Belgium, 'Mineur-e-s Non Accompagné-e-s, En Recherche d'avenir', 51.
182 Save the Children, 'Jozi Lights: How to Protect Children Engaging in Rural to Urban Migration. A Participatory Study with Migrant Children from 6 Cities in Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe.', 33.
183 REACH, 'Children on the Move in Italy and Greece', 35.
184 Focus group with five intermediaries in Mali. 30-06-2017.

Finally, the destinations that children choose are influenced by their gender. While boys move both internally and internationally, girls' movements are mainly from rural to urban areas within the borders of their own countries. While this protects them from exposure to the risks of international migration, it can also be a form of "social control",[185] to avoid family dishonour.[186] According to interviews children's movements are also linked to expectations and ambitions and international movements are associated with the possibility of earning more money. Boys have greater social pressures and higher expectations placed on them relative to girls, and tend to be more ambitious in regards to income. In the case of girls, it appears as though expectations are lower since the responsibility to help the family is not always theirs, with the result that internal mobility is often preferred.

Box 8: How do children move? [187]

When a child begins a migratory journey, they may already know their destination or may improvise as they travel.

Children travel by bus, through regular transport connections between cities, and by taxis. In the case of children travelling through the desert, children use pickup trucks along with adult migrants.

The trip is often funded by the child thanks to money earned in menial jobs carried out before departure. Other children admit to having stolen the necessary money from their parents or from other family members. In some cases, (extended) families provide children with money after having sold jewellery, livestock, or plots of land. For example, in research on unaccompanied migrant children hosted in Italy, in which the majority of respondents were from West Africa, children who arrived in Italy travelled for one year and two months on average, as the journey was often intertwined with the children's need to work to finance the trip.[188]

There are children who decide to leave alone and without telling anyone, but others travel in groups with other children, or with adults who are relatives or from the same community. In the above-mentioned research, nine out of 10 children embarked on the journey to Europe alone, and most reported making the decision to leave themselves without their families.[189]

Girls are generally less impacted by unaccompanied mobility, as they usually travel with another person, normally chosen by the family to take care of them, and/or have someone to go to from the point of their departure.

185 Miriam Teman, Mark Montgomery, Sarah R. Engebretsen, Kathrin M. Barker for the Population Council, 'Girls on the Move: Adolescent Girls and Migration in the Developing World. A Girls Count Report on Adolescent Girls.', n.d., 37.
186 Interview KII10-BF, carried out in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso). International Organization, 22-06-2017.
187 Information collected in focus groups with children and community members in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal.
188 REACH, 'Children on the Move in Italy and Greece', 66.
189 REACH, 66.

Chapter 4
Risks and Opportunities

Risks for boys and girls on the move in West Africa

Children face multiple threats to their physical and psychological wellbeing while on move in West Africa, particularly in the case of unaccompanied children who have left a familiar protective environment and who travel alone. Whilst on the move, children may also suffer from a lack of access to basic needs such as food, health services, clothing, water, sanitation, education, and proper accommodation, as well as lack of access to social networks en route and at destination. Risks are treated here in separated sub-sections, even if, in practice, they are often intertwined.

General security and well-being

Security is generally a serious concern for children on the move, particularly when unaccompanied children leave without sufficient information or awareness about their journey. Children find themselves in unknown territory, where they can easily become victims of attacks or taken advantage of by adults. Risks can also include attacks by bandits, kidnappings, and even use of children for sacrificial rituals.[190]

Migrant children who have been abused sometimes run away and end up living on the street. This is the case for abused talibé boys or domestic aid girls, and child victims of violence at the family and/or community level. But the risk of becoming street children can also apply to children on the move who departed for other reasons (such as in search of opportunities). Moving alone and without connections or without correct information, extended family, or other networks means that children may get lost or separated.

"The law of the strongest prevails, and children are the weakest"
Interview KII3-SE, carried out in Dakar (Senegal). Civil society organisation. 12-06-2017.

Unhealthy practices such as consumption of drugs or alcohol, and perpetration of acts of vandalism and robberies, exacerbated by unhygienic life conditions, very poor nutrition, and barriers to accessing health services are also likely to occur within the context of mobility, particularly for boys living on the street. Prevalence of delinquency, alcohol and drug addiction and prostitution among child migrant labourers has been also noted.[191] As a consequence of these practices, children may end up in conflict with the law.

Lack of access to healthcare and education

Lack of access to healthcare and education is a widespread issue in the region for all children and this is particularly the case for children on the move, including refugee children. Indeed, even if legal frameworks in West Africa recognize the rights of children on the move

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190 Terre des Hommes, 'Flux Migratoire Des Enfants et Jeunes Le Long de La Côte Ouest Africaine', Juin 2016, 17.
191 Hans van de Glind-Anne Kou for IOM, 'Migrant Children in Child Labour: A Vulnerable Group in Need of Attention in "Children on the Move"', 2013, 37.

to access health care, education, and protection, they are de facto excluded by the generalized limitations in the health and education systems across the region. Therefore, effective access to fundamental rights for children on the move is challenged by a lack of specific provisions, and a lack of national action plans for facilitating access for children on the move, coupled with the inadequacy or absence of community-based alternatives, such as family-based foster care.

Most of these challenges are related to the costs of medical care and education, lack of means to ensure proper care of all children, and lack of synergy between actors. In addition, children on the move, particularly if unaccompanied, may lack comprehensive knowledge regarding access to health and education.

According to UNICEF, access to education is one of the major challenges for children in the region. This also applies to child refugees (worldwide, only 50% of child refugees are enrolled in primary school).[192] Unaccompanied children on the move are often excluded, because enrolment in school requires adult accompaniment, and/or a birth certificate, which they often do not have access to.

"The social action here is the structure that is responsible for the protection of children. The associations are those supporting governmental structures. Social action manages shelters. We are private structures coming to support them. In Burkina Faso, protection is the responsibility of the state, and we are partners to support them."
Interview KII2-BF, carried out in Bobo-Dioulasso (Burkina Faso). Civil society organization. 19-06-2017

Accessing health services is less difficult for children on the move already in contact with service providers. However, due to system weaknesses access remains challenging.

Civil society organizations and child rights organizations play a key role in supporting national institutions in the promotion and fulfilment of child rights. Across West Africa, a growing number of organisations support children on the move, some of which are constantly improving their protection strategies and mechanisms to guarantee the most effective interventions. This includes child-led organisations providing peer-to-peer support for children on the move.[193]

Physical and sexual violence

As previously outlined, violence is both a cause of departure and a consequence of mobility, especially for the most vulnerable children on the move. Indeed, violence (psychological, physical or sexual) is the main threat to children on the move. According to a 2017 UNICEF publication examining the journeys of children towards Europe, three quarters of the 40 interviewed children (totalling 25 boys and 15 girls) stated that while travelling, they experienced violence and aggression at the hands of adults; three quarters reported verbal aggressions and half reported physical abuse or beating. Girls reported higher incidences than boys.[194] Children interviewed in this research confirmed that many children on the move in the region are at risk of violence, however there are no comprehensive figures.

Talibé children are particularly at-risk of violence, with reports of talibé boys being beaten, chained, bound, and subjected to other forms of physical or psychological abuse amounting to inhumane and degrading treatment.[195]

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192 UNICEF, 'Uprooted: The Growing Crisis for Refugee and Migrant Children', 40.
193 Ibid, 40.
194 UNICEF, 'A Deadly Journey for Children - The Central Mediterranean Migration Route', February 2017, 4.
195 Human Rights Watch, 'Https://Www.Hrw.Org/Report/2017/07/11/i-Still-See-Talibes-Begging/Government-Program-Protect-Talibe-Children-Senegal, Consulted',
17 July 2017.

Box 9: Story of Daud, a 15-year old run-away Talibe' boy in Kaolack (Senegal)

As a young child, he was entrusted to a marabout by his mother, but ran away from the daâra due to abuse. On the move, he spent time in the streets, met another runaway boy and together, they decided to go to Gambia hoping to be safer there, where no one would take them back to the daraa. The two boys' trip together only lasted a short time, as the other boy stole their money and left Daoud alone. Luckily, a kind man rescued him, took him in, and sheltered him for three years before helping to find his family of origin, finally returning him. During that time, Daoud worked in the fields with the foster family, but completely lost contacts with his family of origin.

His story is typical of many talibé (or former talibé) boys who run away from the daraa as victims of violence, and become separated street children once on the move. His decision to move to a neighbouring country was not motivated by specific reasons, other than following another child and thinking he would be safer, fearing he would be returned to the daraa (another common fear for run-away talibé boys), where he expected to suffer even more abuses by the marabout as revenge for having run away. Being with another child on the move proved again quite unsafe, as the other child even stole the little money he had. His story as talibé also features another very typical aspect: complete rupture of contact with the family, to the point that for three years he was unable to provide any useful information on his origin and family, which delayed reunification. His permanence with a voluntary foster family appears to be a very lucky coincidence. This case of family reunification seems successful, as both the boy and his parents appeared happy to be together again. Joint work of the CAP, AEMO and ENDA is therefore a valid example of the importance of linking grass-roots child protection structures with the governmental system and the assistance of civil society organizations.

Sexual violence is a particularly acute risk during mobility. Reportedly, some girls working as domestic aids become victims of physical and sexual abuse at the hands of their employers.[196] Occasionally, talibé boys are also victims of sexual violence. In a UNICEF publication containing interviews with migrants who had arrived in Italy, many women and children stated they had experienced sexual violence, mainly at checkpoints and borders, at the hands of men who wore uniforms or appeared to be associated with armed forces. One third indicated that this happened in Libya.[197] During fieldwork, cases of rape at borders and during the journey were also reported, and in those cases the aggressors were bus drivers.[198]

Box 10: Dangerous conditions for migrant children in Libya

According to research by REACH on the arrival of unaccompanied children in Italy in 2015-2016, almost all children reported staying in Libya for more than one month. Children spoke about their stay in Libya as the most traumatizing experience of their journey: they reported spending days without food, water and a safe place to sleep, to having experienced systematic discrimination, and exploitative working conditions, as well as violence by adults. The majority of children reported having stayed in Libya against their will, due to kidnapping or imprisonment for ransom, or arrest. Many children further reported staying in Libya to work, often under exploitative conditions.[199]

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196 Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF, 'Child Domestic Workers. Evidence from West and Central Africa. Briefing Paper No. 1.', 8.
197 UNICEF, 'A Deadly Journey for Children - The Central Mediterranean Migration Route', 5–6.
198 Interviews carried out in Bobo-Dioulasso (Burkina Faso). 19/20-06-2017.
199 REACH, 'Children on the Move in Italy and Greece', 39–40.

Child trafficking and exploitation

A variety of secondary sources highlight the risk for children on the move of becoming victims of trafficking, both economic and sexual.[200] The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 2016 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons states that the majority of the detected victims of trafficking in Sub-Saharan Africa are children: two thirds of the 5,500 victims detected between 2012 and 2014 were underage.[201] In the same reporting period, Guinea and Nigeria were the two West African countries where trafficked children were primarily detected.[202]

According to the same source, in general, trafficking flows in Sub-Saharan Africa are mostly domestic (83%), although victims from Sub-Saharan Africa (the majority of them from West Africa) have also been detected or repatriated in over 55 countries outside the region.[203]

In West Africa, the main forms of exploitation in the region are trafficking for forced labour and child soldiers, which typically affects boys and makes them more easily detectable. In 2014, in 11 (unspecified) countries in the region, 25% of the detected victims of trafficking were girls, while 39% were boys, while the gender of the remaining adult victims was not reported.[204]

Information gathered during this research indicated a high number of girls in situations of sexual exploitation, including many girls on the move.[205] Most girl victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation identified during fieldwork in Burkina Faso came from Nigeria, specifically from Edo State and Lagos.[206] In Senegal, the anti-trafficking unit also confirmed cases of Nigerian girls in prostitution in the country.[207] Girls from Ghana and Togo could also be victims, according to information provided by key actors in Burkina Faso.[208]

In Mali and Burkina Faso girls are often trafficked in maquis in major cities such as Bamako, Banfora, Bobo-Dioulasso, Gao, or Ouagadougou,[209] where they are forced to work as servants and to prostitute themselves. Other hotspots for the exploitation of girls are around mining sites in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Senegal, and near big plantations in Côte d'Ivoire.

According to the definition of child trafficking in the Palermo Protocol,[210] talibé boys exploited for begging could be considered trafficked, because children are recruited and forced to beg. This is also the case for many girl domestic aids who are recruited for the purpose of exploitation.

In Mali, cases of sexual exploitation committed by UN peacekeepers were reported by some

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200 For instance, UNICEF, The situation of Children and Women in Liberia - from conflict to peace, 2012, pag 2 and Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF, Children working in the Urban Informal Economy. Evidence from West and Central Africa. Briefing paper No. 3, 2012.
201 UNODC, 'Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016', 2016, 112.
202 Ibid. 113.
203 Ibid. 115–16.
204 Ibid. 112.
205 Interviews carried out in Burkina Faso and Mali from 18-06-2017 to 30-06-2017.
206 To learn more: Tim S. Braimah.Sex Trafficking in Edo State, Nigeria: Causes and Solutions.Global Journal of HUMAN SOCIAL SCIENCE Sociology & Culture Volume 13 Issue 3 Version 1.0 Year 2013 Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA) Online ISSN: 2249-460x & Print ISSN: 0975-587X
207 Interview KII10-SE, carried out by skype. Governmental organization. 23-06-2017.
208 Interviews carried out in Burkina Faso from 18-06-2017 to 27-06-2017.
209 Interviews carried out during field work in Burkina Faso and Mali 18-06-2017 to 30-06-2017.
210 'Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Adopted and Open for Signature, Ratification and Accession by General Assembly Resolution 55/25 of 15 November 2000.' (n.d.).

of the interviewed actors.[211] Two interviewed organizations mentioned that girls move into areas where the MINUSMA operates,[212] as their earnings may be higher than in other areas.[213] This was reinforced by a report of the UN General Assembly Security Council on children and armed conflict in which the UN General Secretary expressed his concern about "cases of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by United Nations peacekeepers and civilians and non-United Nations international forces".[214]

According to analysis by IOM, 75% of the 1,600 children aged 14-17 years who arrived in Italy from North Africa in the second half of 2016 reported experiences of being held against their will or forced to work without pay at some point: indicators that they might have been trafficked or exploited. A small percentage reported having been offered arranged marriage or even cash for blood, organs, or parts of the body.[215]

Box 11: The case of trafficked Nigerian girls

Young Nigerian girls enslaved into the sex trade in Europe represent one of the largest groups of child victims of trafficking. In 2016, 11,009 Nigerian women and 3,040 unaccompanied Nigerian children reached the shores of Italy by sea.[216] IOM estimates that 80% of women and girls from Nigeria arriving in Italy by sea in 2016 were likely to have been victims of trafficking.[217] Continuing this trend, in 2017, 5,425 women and 1,228 unaccompanied children from Nigeria arrived in Italy by sea, although data on the number of unaccompanied girls arriving is not available. In 2017, IOM noted a significant increase in the number of Nigerian adolescent victims of trafficking arriving in Italy by sea, and highlighted that many young Nigerians declaring themselves adults are actually children.[218] These children comply with traffickers instructions and falsely declare themselves adults in order to be transferred to adult facilities where they will avoid child protection services and thus be easier for trafficking networks to pick up.[219]

According to Save the Children, Nigerian girls arriving in Italy via the Central Mediterranean route are aged 15-17 on average, although in 2016 they noted an increased number of 13 year olds.[220] These girls come from mainly rural areas, and are solicited into trafficking by acquaintances in Nigeria. They make deals with their recruiters in which they agree to pay back a debt of up to 50,000 Euros.[221] These deals often involve a potential threat to family members or friends as assurance of cooperation. These girls are subjected to abuse at the hands of their traffickers and others throughout their journeys, and upon arrival in Italy are forced into sex work under conditions of slavery until they have paid off their debt, a period which can last from three to seven years.[222] According to Save the Children: "As a result of the ongoing violence, these children have signs of physical and psychological trauma that is often irreversible".[223]

211 Interview KII10-MA carried out in Bamako (Mali). United Nations Agency. 29-06-2017.
212 United Nations peace mission in Mali.
213 Interview KII10-MA carried out in Bamako (Mali). United Nations Agency. 29-06-2017.
214 United Nations General Assembly Security Council, Children and conflict. Report of the Secretary - General. A/70/836–S/2016/360, 3 Paragraphe 10.
215 UNICEF, 'A Child Is a Child - Protecting Children on the Move from Violence, Abuse and Exploitation', May 2017, 35.
216 IOM, "Human Trafficking through the Central Mediterranean Route: Data, Stories, Information Collection by the International Oganisation of Migration", 2017.
217 Ibid.
218 Ibid, 9
219 Ibid, 9
220 Save the Children Italia, 'Tiny Invisible Slaves', 9
221 Save the Children Italia, 'Tiny Invisible Slaves', 9
222 Save the Children Italia, 'Tiny Invisible Slaves', 9
223 Ibid. 10-12.

Health issues

Violence, exploitation, and unhealthy practices can manifest as physical and mental health issues (trauma, injuries, sexually transmitted infections, skin diseases, etc.), exacerbated by unhygienic life conditions and barriers to accessing health services.

Even when a child does not experience violence, displacement can take a lasting toll on their mental health.[224] Indeed, the effects of mobility on mental health were mentioned by key informants as one of the main negative consequences of mobility. Studies conducted in Spain since the 1990s have highlighted that migrants (including children and youth) are prime candidates to suffer from chronic and multiple stress associated with the "Immigrant Syndrome". This syndrome is linked to the seven dimensions of mourning existing in migration processes (from missing one's family to risks for one's health and life.[225]

"I fix my problems by myself"
14-year-old Gambian domestic aid girl, Kaolack (Senegal).

Separated and unaccompanied children on the move can lose contact with their families;[226] and may no longer be able to trace their origins. This is particularly the case for children who are separated at early ages. This situation may lead to severe psychological repercussions and, although it is not often explored in research or in response programmes, unaccompanied/separated children who are on their own lose emotional connections with their family and have no adult guidance.

Self-imposed and socially imposed pressure on children on the move in order to succeed is also a strong influence on the psychological state of a migrant child. Fear of failure and fear of family and community rejection upon return (if unsuccessful) negatively impacts the psychological wellbeing of children while they are on the move.

Boy 2: *"without money parents are unhappy...."*
Boy 1: *it is heart breaking,"*
Boy 2: *"there are people who don't speak to their children... they can mistreat them, they can prevent child from speaking."*
Girl 1: *"they can say: you went and you gained nothing. Things that are going to stay in the head of the child until he is old."*
Focus group with boys and girls from 14 to 18 years old in Bamako (Mali).

Sexual violence is common against girls on the move in the region. In a study carried out in Ghana and Togo, a majority of those girls interviewed who had been adversely affected by their migration experience had at least one child. Indeed, sexual violence and sexual exploitation are two of the main causes of unwanted and early pregnancies and may result in unsafe and forced abortions, and gynaecological issues.[227]

Danger to life

The Mediterranean crossing, with 2,856 deaths in 2017 and 4,578 deaths, including approximately 700 children, in 2016, is without any doubt one of the deadliest journeys for a child.[228] Equally, even if no official statistics exist regarding the number of children who have died in the desert, reported information points to a high number.[229] In fact, the journey is often the most perilous and risky phase of the migratory trajectory.[230] Border crossings are especial-

224 See also: REACH, 'Children on the Move in Italy and Greece', 67.
225 Joseba Achotegui, 'Estrés Límite y Salud Mental: El Síndrome de Inmigrante Con Estrés Crónico y Múltiple (Síndrome de Ulyses)', Revista Norte de Salud Mental de La Sociedad Española de Neuropsiquiatría V n.21 (2005): 39–52.
226 For instance, all the children in the focus groups of this research in Senegal have no or limited contact with their family of origin. For the children who do have contacts, in most cases these are limited to phone calls, rare are cases of children who meet with their parents, even though some return home once a year for the Tabasky holidays.
227 Terre des Hommes, 'Etude Sur Les Enfants Concernés Par La Mobilité Entre Le Ghana et Le Togo', 5.
228 UNICEF, 'A Child Is a Child - Protecting Children on the Move from Violence, Abuse and Exploitation', 15.
229 IOM - UNICEF, 'Harrowing Journeys - Children and Youth on the Move across the Mediterranean Sea, at Risk of Trafficking and Exploitation', 10.
230 UNICEF, 'Uprooted: The Growing Crisis for Refugee and Migrant Children', 4.

ly dangerous points, where children on the move (along with adult migrants) may face the additional risk of detention on grounds of irregular immigration. Whilst cases of detention on such grounds were only reported in Agadez[231] during interviews in the ECOWAS region, in Libya, agencies frequently report the detention of migrants, including children.[232]

If ECOWAS is a relatively safe migration space, West African children are confronted with especially dangerous situations when crossing into North African countries. In interviews, the main dangerous points identified for children on the move in the region are Gao and Kidal in the north of Mali, and the desert-crossing from Agadez in Niger to Libya and Algeria

Intensified patrolling at main crossing points may result in children taking alternative routes, putting them at greater risk. Since the implementation of the 2015 anti-smuggling law in Niger, for instance, there is evidence that migrants and refugees traveling towards Libya with the assistance of smugglers are increasingly diverted onto more remote and precarious routes through the desert in order to avoid authorities.[233] These remote routes place those on the move at greater risk of getting lost, having accidents or being abandoned in the desert by smugglers and being exposed to adverse weather conditions and areas of insecurity and violence.[234]

Man 2: *"Libya, woow, it is horrible."*
Woman 2: *"Togo and all the nearer countries are ok, that is easy."*
Man 1: *"Arabic countries are the problem."*
Focus group with adults in Niamey (Niger).

Social discrimination

Children, particularly in cases of international migration, may face social exclusion and discrimination, racism and xenophobia at their destination and while in transit. North African countries have been shown to be especially hostile for West African children on the move, and the situation is often described as particularly bad in Libya, with general insecurity accompanied by widespread discrimination against sub-Saharan African migrants.[235] Cases of racism against sub-Saharan migrants in Mauritania, Algeria and Morocco are also documented.[236]

Factors of vulnerability

While being on the move exposes children to risks, certain factors may increase their vulnerability. Unaccompanied mobility may emphasize the vulnerability of children, as they are likely to be exposed to more risks when travelling alone. Other factors including the child's physical and psychological capacities and capacity for resilience, the knowledge of their migratory project, levels of information, as well as their level of awareness about their rights, are all factors that may influence their vulnerability.[237] Further, factors such as country of origin, age, gender, level of education, and the type of travel arrangement may influence their exposure to specific risks and their vulnerability while moving.[238] The two main factors of vulnerability identified in this research are gender and age.

In general, girls are exposed to greater risks while on the move in West Africa, primarily of

231 Interview KII5-NI, carried out in Niamey (Niger). United Nations Agency. 12-06-2017.
232 UNICEF, 'A Deadly Journey for Children - The Central Mediterranean Migration Route', 6–7.
233 European Commission, "Fourth Progress Report on the Partnership Framework with Third Countries under the European Agenda on Migration," (Strasbourg: European Union, 2017), 4; see also IOM 'Population Flow Monitoring - Niger Overview. Dashboard #6 December 2017...
234 J. Bergmann, J. Lehmann, T. Munsch, W. Powell (November 2017) 'Protection Fallout: How Increasing Capacity for Border Management Affects Migrants' Vulnerabilities in Niger and Mali' Global Public Policy Institute, Danish Refugee Council, Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat West Africa, 40
235 IOM - UNICEF, 'Harrowing Journeys - Children and Youth on the Move across the Mediterranean Sea, at Risk of Trafficking and Exploitation', 38.
236 Choplin Armelle, Lombard Jérôme, '« Migrations et Recompositions Spatiales En Mauritanie. «Nouadhibou Du Monde». Ville de Transit... et Après ?», Afrique Contemporaine 4/2008 (N° 228), p. 151-170. Available at Www.Cairn.Info/Revue-Afrique-Contemporaine-2008-4-Page-151.Htm.', n.d.
237 Terre des Hommes, 'Capitalisation Des Expériences En Matière de Protection Des Enfants Migrants et/Ou Travailleurs Au Burkina Faso', 25.
238 IOM - UNICEF, 'Harrowing Journeys - Children and Youth on the Move across the Mediterranean Sea, at Risk of Trafficking and Exploitation', 29.

sexual violence, sexual exploitation, and trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.[239] While girls are more likely to be victims of sexual violence and exploitation, boys can also be affected by sexual violence, but are often more difficult to identify as victims due to gender stereotypes and discrimination. The cultural constructions of masculinity, based ideas around strength, virility, and invulnerability[240] often make it difficult for boys to report sexual violence.[241]

Parallel to this, the social construction of masculinity increases boys and men's willingness to pay for sexual services, as reported in interviews and focus groups carried out in Burkina Faso and Mali. Demanding prostitution services appears to be quite a frequent practice for men and boys working in mines, and indeed, according to Terre des Hommes, this is reinforced by the children's belief in the link between the discovery of gold and the practice of sex with virgin girls.[242]

Gender also limits opportunities for mobility. Girls and boys participating in focus groups for this research believe there are differences in the variety of options for girls and boys when migrating. The influence of social and gender stereotypes is mainly reflected in the variety of jobs that boys and girls hope to find. As girls and boys imagine options for girls' employment to be more limited, chances for increased income are also reduced.

Girl 1: *"Yes, it is dangerous, something can happen."*
Girl 2: *"There are consequences."*
Girl 5: *"You can die."*
Girl 2: *"There are bandits."*
Girl 1: *"You can be ill and not be assisted"*
Girl 5: *"There are kidnappings"*
Moderator: *"Are risks the same for girls than for boys?"*
Girl 5 : *"Yes"*
Girl 1 : *"No, it is different (the other agrees)"*
(Silence)
Girls 1: *"Girls can be raped"*
Focus group with girls from 8 to 15 years old in Bobo-Dioulasso (Burkina Faso)

Girl 3: *"boys can be construction workers, girls cannot do that."*
Girl 4: *"boys can work in garages"*
Girl 5: *"no, there are girls who can also work in garages"*
Girl 4*: "the grinding machine..."*
Girl 5: *"no! There are also girls who do that"*
Girl 3: *"drive a camion. Girls cannot do that"*
Moderator: *"all girls?"*
Girl 4: *"no, not all girls"*
Girl 2: *"girls can also have some occupations... as trade..."*
Girl 1: *"but also... mmm... the other... prostitution." (Said quietly to the translator)*
Focus group with girls from 9 to 13 year old in Niamey (Niger)

The age of the child is the second main factor of vulnerability mentioned by interviewees during this research. Children involved in early mobility are considered more vulnerable due to their insufficient maturity and resources to face hardships.

Other identified factors that impact child vulnerability

Solo travelling and the length of the travel

A major factor increasing vulnerability of children is the lack of a supportive network in case of need. Weak child protection systems increase children's isolation and makes supporting them much more difficult. Girls travelling unaccompanied are particularly vulnerable to risks. Length of travel also influences risks: the longer the journey, the higher the risks are for children.[243]

239 Teman, Miriam et al., 'Girls on the Move: Adolescent Girls & Migration in the Developing World. A Girls Count Report on Adolescent Girls.' (Population Council, n.d.), 9.
240 Oscar Guash for J.M. Valcuende del Rio and J.Blanco López, 'Ancianos, Guerreros, Efebos y Afeminados: Tipos Ideales de Masculinidad in "Hombres, La Construcción Cultural de Las Masculinidades"' (Talasa Ediciones, 2003).
241 UNICEF, 'A Child Is a Child - Protecting Children on the Move from Violence, Abuse and Exploitation', 15.
242 Terre des Hommes, 'Capitalisation Des Expériences En Matière de Protection Des Enfants Migrants et/Ou Travailleurs Au Burkina Faso', 2012, 25.
243 IOM - UNICEF, 'Harrowing Journeys - Children and Youth on the Move across the Mediterranean Sea, at Risk of Trafficking and Exploitation', 34.

Availability of financial resources

Children with enough funds to finance their travel are generally less at risk. Inability to pay travel costs can cause children to become stranded, increasing their vulnerability. In the case of West Africa, small-scale corruption and dysfunction in state apparatuses, especially along the routes to and through Niger, greatly impact children's' capacity to fund their journey and avoid becoming prey to organized crime networks.[244]

Education level

As previously stated, out-of-school children are those more likely to become mobile, and particularly to be involved in mobility at a young age. The child's level of education, and his or her capacity to understand languages when moving to foreign countries, affects his or her level of vulnerability. According to IOM and UNICEF, 90% of adolescents without any education moving toward Europe via the Mediterranean Central route reported exploitation, compared with about three quarters of those with primary or secondary education.[245]

Availability of information

Lack of information about the reality of the migration journey to inform a balanced understanding of the risks and opportunities, can be an issue for both children and their families.[246]

Availability of documentation

Stateless children or those traveling without documentation may incur higher risks, particularly of extortion or detention when crossing borders due to a reliance on clandestine means and may face increased difficulty in accessing support or services both inside and outside their country of origin. They also face increased difficulties contacting or finding their families if they become separated.

Country of destination

Children travelling greater distances or to places of different cultures and languages may be exposed to greater risks than those migrating internally, and those migrating within the ECOWAS space.[247]

Child's capacity of resilience

The child's capacity for resilience, understood as the child's ability to overcome serious hardship and adverse experiences early in life also impacts the child's level of vulnerability.[248]

Displacement

Displaced children are particularly vulnerable. Instances of abuse against children are common in refugee and IDP camps throughout the West Africa region. In the context of Lake Chad Crisis, UNHCR reports that women and children are targeted for abduction, forced marriages, rape and use as suicide-bombers.[249] Inadequate humanitarian assistance in camps and newly accessible areas in Nigeria also results in a high level of sexual abuse and exploitation, with reports of sexual extortion by authorities, with many women reportedly coerced into resorting to survival sex in order to obtain food for themselves and their chil-

244 Julien Brachet, 'From One Stage to the next: Transit and Transport in (Trans) Saharan Migrations, in "African Migrations Research" (Edited by Mohamed Berriane and Hein de Haas)' (Africa World Press, 2012), 100–101.
245 IOM - UNICEF, 'Harrowing Journeys - Children and Youth on the Move across the Mediterranean Sea, at Risk of Trafficking and Exploitation', 33.
246 Observatoire ACP sur les Migrations, 'Migration of Girls in West Africa: The Case of Senegal', 17.
247 UNICEF, 'Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Nigeria, 2011 Update', 116.
248 'Http://Developingchild.Harvard.Edu', n.d
249 UNHCR 'Nigeria Situation: Sumpplementary Appeal - January to December 2017', 7-8.

dren or to be able to move in and out of the camps.[250] In Cameroon children are increasingly likely to engage in early or forced marriages. Finally, children risk being separated from their parents, or orphaned due to conflict.[251]

Opportunities for boys and girls in mobility

In cases of children seeking better economic opportunities, mobility may result in increased incomes and help satisfy their needs (buying food, clothing, paying education fees, school material, or sending remittances to their families) as well as those of their families.[252] In the specific case of girls, increased income can also form the basis of their empowerment and reduction of economic inequalities related to gender.[253]

Mobility can also be a means for children to improve their level of education, to learn skills and to acquire professional capacities that may increase their incomes, as well as self-employment opportunities.[254] This is not just about learning professional skills, but also concerns "managing money and getting by in an economy characterized by shifting economic possibilities and reliance on social relations".[255]

"Migration is not bad. There are opportunities. It allows discovering, forge your personality, build up your capacities, the self-protection. Children can find a remunerated job for their needs and also their family's needs, if the job is not dangerous and in a formal framework".
Interview KII7-BF Ouagadougou.. Civil Society Organization.

Mobility is also a means of accumulating a wider range of options, particularly in cases of children moving from rural to urban areas.[256] New cities and countries can offer children social status and new professional skills that their villages of origin cannot, due to social and economic limitations.[257]

Concerning personal development, consulted actors unanimously consider the migratory process as a way for children to gain self-confidence and knowledge while learning about new realities, cultures, and languages, and acquire information about health and education.

Migration is also an opportunity to expand a child's social network. This is particularly important for girls, because social roles attributed to them generally limit their capacity to create and develop networks that facilitate their integration in public life. Migration can, in this sense, be considered as a strong mechanism of empowerment for girls, in cases where they are aware of their rights and possess a support network.[258]

In general, girls and boys on the move can become agents of innovation in their communities, through the transmission of knowledge from one generation to another, from young people to elders.[259]

Lastly, migration, when successful, can increase boys' social recognition in their community of origin. This is also true in cases of girls from cultures that encourage them to leave in order to gain their dowry, or for girls sending remittances to their families.

250 Ibid.
251 Ibid.
252 Observatoire ACP sur les Migrations, 'Migration of Girls in West Africa: The Case of Senegal', 17.
253 Observatoire ACP sur les Migrations, 17.
254 Interviews carried out in Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali and Senegal from 06-06-2017 to 30-06-2017.
255 Dorte Thorsen for UNICEF, 'Children Working in the Urban Informal Economy. Evidence from West and Central Africa. Briefing Paper No. 3', 2012, 10.
256 Abdou Dao, 'Anthropological Approaches to Studying the Mobility of Children in West Africa, in "African Migrations Research" (Edited by Mohamed Berriane and Heine de Haas)', 249.
257 Terre des Hommes, 'Capitalisation Des Expériences En Matière de Protection Des Enfants Migrants et/ou Travailleurs au Burkina Faso', 23.
258 Miriam Teman, Mark Montgomery, Sarah R. Engebretsen, Kathrin M. Barker for the Population Council, 'Girls on the Move: Adolescent Girls and Migration in the Developing World. A Girls Count Report on Adolescent Girls.'
259 UNICEF, 'Uprooted: The Growing Crisis for Refugee and Migrant Children', 12.

Box 12: Story of Aime, a 13-year-old girl in Burkina Faso fleeing forced marriage
Nationality: Malian
Educational level: 3rd level primary education

Amie is a 13-year old girl from Bamako, in Mali, who has been living in Burkina Faso for two months. Until she left she was living in the family home with 11 people. She is the youngest child and has three older sisters and two older brothers. Her mother sells spices in the streets and her father is a nurse. He is married to two women.

She went to school until she was 12, but was then forced to quit as she did not have enough money to pay for fees. She then started to sell drinks in the house, after which she accompanied her mother and started trading.

Her father wanted to marry her out, but she refused and that is why she decided to leave. According to her, there were no other options, if she refused marriage she had to leave. She moved to Burkina Faso because she had a sister living there, and she called her upon arrival. She said that she knew how to travel because of the people she knew from working as a trader in the streets and that people had helped her to arrive safely. She is now working with a girl who sells dried fish.

Aime said that she does not want to return; she is in contact with her family and they are not angry, but she feels well in Burkina Faso. According to Aime, her life has changed a lot, as here she works and does not feel mistreated as in Mali. In Mali she had to wake up at 4 in the morning to work the whole day helping in the house.

She says she would like to continue working, sewing, in Burkina Faso. She says that she has met other Malian girls here.

Chapter 5

Overview of the legal framework on children on the move in West Africa

International conventions on the rights of children on the move

A wide range of international instruments enshrine the rights of all children, including children on the move. These include the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990), the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000), the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2000) and relevant International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child states in its General Observations n. 6 on the treatment of unaccompanied children and children separated outside of their country of origin (2005) that: 'State obligations under the Convention apply to each child within the State's territory and to all children subject to its jurisdiction' (Art. 2). The principle of non-discrimination (Art. 2) 'applies in respect to all dealings with separated and unaccompanied children', the best interest of the child (Art. 3) must prevail during all stages of the displacement cycle and respect of the views of the child must be ensured (Art. 12).[260] General Comment n. 6 also states that unaccompanied and separated children should not, as a general rule, be detained, and detention cannot be justified solely on the basis of their migratory or residence status.[261]

In September 2017, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families adopted complementary joint general comments on (a) the general principles regarding the human rights of children in the context of international migration and (b) on state obligations regarding the human rights of children in the context of international migration in countries of origin, transit, destination and return.[262] The comments were launched at a side event during the Global Compact on Migration stocktaking meeting in New York in December 2017.

The four countries visited during this research are party to practically all international instruments to protect and promote the rights of children and of children on the move (see Annex 2)

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260 Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'General Comment n.6, Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside Their Country of Origin', 2005.
261 Some other rights guaranteed to children on the move through these legal instruments are: right to non-discrimination, the right to development, the right to have a name and a nationality, the right to family reunification, the right to health and medical care, the right to education and the right to special protection measures.
262 Available online at: a) http://www.refworld.org/docid/5a1293a24.html; b) http://www.refworld.org/docid/5a12942a2b.html

Regional policies concerning mobility

Freedom of movement and initiatives within the ECOWAS space

Nationals of any of the 15 ECOWAS member states, in possession of valid travel documents and an international health certificate, can enter any of the member states without a visa for up to 90 days. Two instruments were adopted by ECOWAS member states to enhance cross-border movements, in 1985, a standardised ECOWAS travel certificate, and in 2000, an ECOWAS passport. Nevertheless, this complete freedom of movement is not yet fully realised, owing to the domestic laws in some member states that contradict the protocol, frequent harassment at border crossing points, a lack of information among citizens, a lack of access to ECOWAS travel documents and inadequate border management, in terms of both control, structure, and resource management. As a consequence, although the ECOWAS region is an area of free movement, a large number of border crossings are undertaken irregularly simply by avoiding – intentionally or not – the official border crossings.[263]

In 2008, the ECOWAS Commission approved the ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration Process, with member states reaffirming their commitment to remove obstacles to the free movement of persons as well as the benefits of migration for citizens of ECOWAS member states, their political will to protect people within their territory from any kind of human trafficking, their defence of the rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees and their willingness to develop regional mechanisms to deal with these issues. Furthermore, the region is looking to harmonise policies on migration, and the ECOWAS Commission is developing a draft regional migration policy (Free Movement and Tourism Directorate).[264]

In most ECOWAS member states, migration policy frameworks remain underdeveloped. Only a few countries, such as Mali and Nigeria, have adopted National Migration Policies. In general, the implementation of free movement between the member states is challenged by the lack of a clear institutional framework for border management, as well as a lack of coordination mechanisms, within and outside of ECOWAS.

Other migration/mobility-related initiatives in the ECOWAS space

In 2011 ECOWAS adopted a plan of action to combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Its main focuses are policy development, protection to victims of trafficking, prevention and awareness raising, exchange and analysis of information, specialization and training, travel and identity documents, and monitoring of the action plan. Implementation of the plan is ensured by a unit, established in 2005, for the coordination of the efforts to combat trafficking in persons within the ECOWAS Secretariat.

ECOWAS and UNHCR adopted the world's first action plan to end statelessness, which aims at eradicating it in West Africa by 2024.[265]

In 2016 a Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA) took place, in which representatives from 15 members of ECOWAS and Mauritania, along with representatives from EU member states, Switzerland, IOM and the UN met. The summit focused on the impact of free movement and migration challenges.[266]

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263 Altai Consulting for IOM Nigeria, 'Irregular Migration between West Africa, North Africa and the Mediterranean', December 2015, 20.
264 ECOWAS Commission, 'ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration', June 2007, 4 and following.
265 RMMS, 'West Africa Monthly Mixed Migration Summary', May 2017.
266 RMMS, 'West Africa Monthly Mixed Migration Summary', September 2016.

ECOWAS, in partnership with the Regional Child Protection Working Group, is finalising the draft of a child protection policy and framework documents to be launched in the coming months.

EU Policies influencing child mobility in West Africa

The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), adopted in 2005, represents the overarching framework of the EU external migration and asylum policy. It defines how the EU conducts its policy dialogues and cooperation with non-EU countries, based on defined priorities and embedded in the EU's overall external action, including development cooperation. Within the GAMM framework, the EU is running a broad dialogue with countries on the African continent on migration and mobility at bilateral, regional and continental levels.

At the bilateral level the EU has specific political agreements with various African states. At the continental level with the Africa-EU Migration and Mobility Dialogue, which allows for a dialogue on migration at the continental level, with the African Union Commission as the main interlocutor. At the regional level with policy dialogues with countries along the western migratory route (Rabat Process) and the eastern migratory route (Khartoum Process).

The Rabat Process, the Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development, was launched in 2006 when a dialogue was initiated between countries concerned by the West African migration route to Europe. The first declaration and action plan was adopted in Rabat in July 2006, and in 2008, during the second conference held in Paris, the State parties committed to cooperate on the issue of unaccompanied children on the move, prioritising prevention, protection, return, and reintegration.[267] Later, the Dakar Strategy (November 2011) approved ten objectives, one referring to the protection of vulnerable groups and aimed at working on child mobility, taking into account the best interests of the child and reinforcing national and regional policies against human trafficking.[268]

Nearly ten years later, the process is still ongoing, and the latest strategic framework, the Rome Declaration and Programme, was adopted in 2014. It identifies preventing and fighting against irregular migration and related crimes as one of the main priorities for future action, namely trafficking in human beings and smuggling of persons. It also introduced international protection as one of the four base pillars of cooperation.

Migration between Africa and the EU was also discussed at the Valletta Summit on Migration held on November 2015, with five priority domains.[269] The EU Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displaced persons in Africa, formally constituted during this Summit, is the financial tool to fulfil the objectives and implement the Valletta Action Plan. The Valetta Summit Action Plan includes several references to children, including:

- Under pillar 1, Development benefits of migration and addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement: Support resilience, in particular to the

267 Altai Consulting for IOM Nigeria, 'Irregular Migration between West Africa, North Africa and the Mediterranean', 57 and following.
268 Marie Diop pour UNICEF, 'Migration Des Enfants Non Accompagnés de l'Afrique de l'Ouest', 42 and following.
269 Address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement; enhance cooperation on legal migration and mobility; reinforce the protection of migrants and asylum seekers; prevent and fight irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings; work more closely to improve cooperation on return, readmission and reintegration.

benefit of the most vulnerable, in particular women and children, and communities hosting protracted refugee populations, including through rural development, food and nutrition security, health, education and social protection.

• Under pillar 4, Provide protection, support and/or assistance to stranded/vulnerable migrants, refugees and victims of trafficking: Special attention should be given to vulnerable groups, notably women and children, and;

• Support regional initiatives on children at risk, in order to ensure comprehensive and sustainable child protection to prevent and to respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children.

• Under pillar 5, return, readmission and reintegration: Pay special attention to unaccompanied minors taking into account the principle of the best interest of the child. Child protection systems in countries of origin and transit should be supported so as to offer a safe environment for vulnerable children including unaccompanied minors upon their return.[270]

Migration Policies and child rights

An unaccompanied child on the move encompasses different statuses at once: being under the age of 18, being a migrant, and being alone. While unaccompanied children on the move must be protected in accordance with international legislation on child and human rights, they are commonly denied this protection as their status as migrants prevails over that of being children. Consequently, 'they choose invisibility as a form of protection, becoming even more exposed to exploitation and abuse'.[271] Geographical mobility leads to a sort of legal mobility as the administrative status of the child changes along the journey, as the child crosses borders, moving from one country to another. International legislation does not recognize the extent of such legal mobility and primarily focuses on the protection of child victims of trafficking.[272] References to the protection of children on the move in international conferences and agreements between Europe and Western African countries concerning migration are scarce.

270 Valetta Summit Action Plan, 11-12 November 2015. see: Save the Children and RMMS East Africa and Yemen (September 2016) 'Young and on the Move Children and youth in mixed migration flows within and from the Horn of Africa' 64
271 Marie Diop pour UNICEF, 'Migration Des Enfants Non Accompagnés de l'Afrique de l'Ouest', 21.
272 Marie Diop pour UNICEFUNICEF, 34.

Chapter 6
Conclusions

Child mobility in West Africa is intrinsically linked to the general socio-economic context of the region, with high birth rates, a very young population, high unemployment rates, low school enrolment rates and widespread poverty, as well as conflict. In a region where the fulfilment of the rights of children is threatened, child mobility often becomes a solution responding to structural vulnerabilities. Child mobility is therefore seen by communities and families as a solution to support family economies and a way for children to self-develop and seek new opportunities.

Knowledge of the exact numbers of children involved in mobility in West Africa remains limited due to the scarcity of comprehensive and disaggregated data, however, as this research has demonstrated, children on the move in West Africa comprise a variety of profiles, and their reasons for mobility and experiences of life reflect the complexity of child mobility within mixed migratory movements. Talibé boys, girls working as domestic aids, street children, child victims of trafficking, children moving towards and into Europe and children looking for better life opportunities, refugee and asylum-seeking children, internally displaced children, and children recruited by armed groups are all children moving within and from the region. Attempts to categorise children and young people in mobility and displacement situations often do not reflect the great variety of individual experiences, as children may belong to more than one category at once or easily shift from one category to another. In this regard, "children on the move" is not only a category within mixed migratory flows, but can also be seen as a mixed category in itself.

Routes and patterns of child mobility in West Africa reflect this variety. Many bidirectional and multidirectional movements take place across the region, inside countries or across international borders. Both girls and boys move, with girls more involved in internal mobility, while boys move more across borders. Children become mobile at difference ages, with Talibé boys and girls working as domestic aids notable for the young age at which they become mobile. The vulnerabilities and needs of children on the move therefore vary, together with the opportunities available to children through mobility. If migration is understood as an integral part of many societies across the region, more than as a problem to solve,[273] child mobility in particular should always be seen in terms of the best interest of the child.[274]

While recognising the link between wider structural vulnerabilities, such as lack of access to education, and a higher risk of dangerous migration for children, programmes addressing the needs of children on the move should take into account the specific needs that arise throughout various stages of children's journeys and the variety of profiles of children within mixed migration movements. This should be complemented by reinforced interregional co-ordination between different national child protection systems in West Africa, to ensure the protection of the child at all stages of their journeys. Adopting a holistic approach to target children involved in mobility, in a comprehensive way and without reference to specific categories, would ensure the encompassing of all stages of the mobility cycle: origin, transit and

273 Stephen Castles, 'Methodology and Methods: Conceptual Issues', in African Migration Research (Edited by Mohamed Berriane and Hein de Haas), n.d., 2
274 Crépeau François, 'The Rights of All Children in the Context of International Migration. Preface', in Children on the Move, IOM (Geneve, 2013), 2

destination, with the goal of reducing vulnerabilities and enhancing opportunities.

At the global level, UN member states made a number of significant commitments to migrant and refugee children in the New York Declaration in 2016, including the commitment to 'protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all refugee and migrant children, regardless of their status and giving primary consideration at all times to the best interest of the child'.[275] In 2018, through the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Safe Orderly and Regular Migration, Member States have the opportunity to reaffirm and operationalize these commitments. To this end, the Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts has set out the provisions to be included in the Global Compacts to ensure that the rights of children on the move and other children affected by migration are respected and fulfilled.[276] These provisions are grouped around six key areas of child rights; namely, non-discrimination, best interest of the child, child protection, child immigration detention, access to services and sustainable solutions.[277]

The Zero Draft of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration upholds 'the best interests of the child at all times, as the primary consideration in situations concerning girls and boys in the context of international migration' including in responses to mixed movements and includes commitments to establish procedures to ensure that the principle of the best interests of the children is appropriately integrated, consistently interpreted and applied.[278] The Zero Draft also outlines commitments to protect unaccompanied and separated children at all stages of migration, as well as provide access to their rights to health, education, legal assistance and to be heard in administrative and judicial proceedings. It also contains commitments to end the practice of child detention in the context of international migration, and provide alternatives to detention that include access to education, healthcare, and allow children to remain with their family members of guardians in non-custodial contexts, including community based arrangements. The Global Compacts represent an opportunity for West African states to develop plans to implement the concrete actions and recommendations of the Compacts to ensure the protection of the rights of children on the move in the region.

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275 United Nations (September 2016) 'New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants' A/RES/71/1 6.
276 See http://www.childrenonthemove.org/
277 See; Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts (June 2017) 'Child Rights in the Global Compacts: Recommendations for protection, promoting and implementing the human rights of children on the move in the proposed Global Compacts. Working Document'. Available online: http://www.childrenonthemove.org/resources/
278 Zero Draft: Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, Febuary 2018, available online: https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180205_gcm_zero_draft_final.pdf

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Annex 1

Interviews and focus groups

Table 1. Number of interviews carried out during the research by type of actor.

Country	Public institutions	UN agencies	International organizations	Local civil society organizations	Total
Burkina Faso	2	2	4	5	13
Mali	1	3	1	8	13
Niger	3	3	3	3	12
Senegal	2	3	3	4	12
Skype interviews with regional actors	1	4	3	0	8
TOTAL	9	15	14	20	58

Table 2. Focus groups and group interviews carried out with children and youth during field work.

Country	Description of the target	Number of participants			
		Ages	Girls	Boys	Total partici-pants
Burkina Faso (Bobo-Diou-lasso)	Girls in the coun-try of origin affect-ed by mobility (nationals)	8 - 15	10	0	10
	Boys in the coun-try of origin affect-ed by mobility (nationals)	15-17	0	7	7
Mali	Boys moving to work in gold mines (nationals)	16-17	0	3	3
	Talibé boys (foreigners, from Niger all of them)	6 - 17	0	11	11
	Boys and girls in the coun-try of origin affected by mobility	14 — 21	3	5	9
Niger	Girls in the coun-try of origin affect-ed by mobility (nationals)	9 - 13	14	0	14
	Boys in the coun-try of origin affect-ed by mobility (nationals)	13 - 18	0	11	11
	Boys in the coun-try of origin affect-ed by mobility (nationals)	13 - 17	0	3	3
	Girls and boys in the coun-try of origin affected by mobility (na-tionals)	14 - 22	7	4	11
Senegal (Da-kar)	Domestic aids girls (na-tionals and foreigners).	10 - 17	7	0	7

	Domestic aids girls (na-tionals)	13-16	7	0	7
	Talibé boys (nationals)	10-17	0	8	8
Senegal (Kao-lack)	Talibé boys (for-eigners)	5-15	0	7	7
Total		48	60	108	

Table 3: Interviews with the following key informants carried out during field work

Burkina Faso	Mali
Direction de lutte contre les violences faites aux enfants du Ministère de la Femme, de la solidarité nationale et de la famille	Direction de la promotion de la femme, de l'enfant et de la famille
Direction Régional de la Femme de la Solidarité Nationale et de la Famille à Bobo – Disoulasso	IOM
IOM	UNCHR
UNCHR	UNICEF
Save the children Ougadougou et Bobo – Disoulaso	Save the children Bamako
Service Social International Afrique de l'Ouest	Centre d'écoute communautaire de Saba-libougou
Terre des Hommes	MAEJT - Bamako
ECPAT France	ARACEM - Association des rapatriés d'Af-rique Centrale au Mali
MAEJT – Ouagadougo et Bobo Disoulaso	ENDA Mali
Association Tié – Bobo Dioulaso	Foyer Kanuya
Association TON	Mali enjeu
Association Keoogo	IMIGRAD Initiative Migration et Dévelop-pement
Association Ounoogo	
Niger	**Senegal**
• Unité de la femme et l'enfant - Police nationale	• Direction des Droits et de la Protection des Enfants et des Groupes Vulnérables du Ministère de la Femme, de la Famille et de l'Enfance
• Agence Nationale de Lutte contre la traite	• Cellule Nationale de Lutte Contre la Traite des Personnes en particulier des Femmes et des Enfants
• OIM	• UNHCR
• UNCHR	• UNICEF Senegal
• UNICEF	• OIM Senegal
• Save the children – Niamey	• Save the Children Senegal
• DRC	• ENDA JEUNESSE ACTION

• Handicap International	• Plan International
• MAEJT – Niamey	• CISV
• CONAFE	• CARITAS P.A.R.I.
• ANTD	• Empire des Enfants
	• Centre Guinddy

Regional actors by skype
• Terre des Hommes
• Enda Jeunesse Action
• IOM
• UNICEF
• UNHCR
• OHCHR - Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme

Annex 2

International Treaties: Focus Countries

Table 1: Focus countries party to international instruments to protect and promote the rights of children and of children on the move

Treaty	Burkina Faso	Mali	Niger	Senegal
Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989)	1990	1990	1990	1990
Additional Protocol on the Involve-ment of Children in Armed Conflict (2000)	2007	2002	2012(a)	2004
Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2000)	2006	2002(a)	2004	2003
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Mi-grant Workers and Members of their Families (1990)	2003	2003(a)	2009(a)	1999(a)
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990)	1992	1998	1999	1998
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951)	1980(a)	1973(d)	1961(d)	1963(d)
Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Espe-cially Women and Children (Supple-ment-ing the UN Convention to Combat Transnational Organized Crime) (2000)	2002	2002	2004	2003
Protocol against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air, sup-plementing the unit-ed nations con-vention against transnational orga-nized crime (2000)	2002	2002	2009 (a)	2003
ILO Convention n.182 on Worst forms of Child labour (1999)	2001	2000	2000	2000
ILO Convention n.97 concerning Migration for Employment (Revised 1949)	1961	Not ratified	Not ratified	Not ratified
ILO Convention n.143 concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equal-ity of Opportunity and Treatment of Mi-grant Workers (1975)	1977	Not ratified	Not ratified	Not ratified
ILO Convention n.189 concerning decent work for domestic workers (2011)	Not ratified	Not ratified	Not ratified	Not ratified

ILO Convention n.138 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Em-ployment (1976)	1999	2002	1978	1999

Table 2: Selected Bilateral and Multilateral agreements between countries in West Africa

Multilateral agreements
Multilateral agreement for the fight against child trafficking in West Africa between Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Togo (signed in Abidjan, 2005);
Multilateral agreement of regional cooperation for the fight against trafficking in persons, especially women and children, in West and Central Africa (signed in Abuja, 2006);
Multilateral agreement on trafficking between Benin, Gabon and Togo;
Multilateral agreement on child mobility and the fight against trafficking between Benin, Burkina Faso and Togo (ongoing, not signed yet). In this case, the focus won't be only on traf-ficking (as in the most of the instruments mentioned) and, finally, a comprehensive vision on child mobility is envisaged through this instrument.
Bilateral agreements
Agreement against child cross-border trafficking between Côte d'Ivoire and Mali (2000);
Agreement on trafficking between Mali and Senegal (2004);
Agreement on the fight against child trafficking between Benin and Democratic Republic of Congo (2011);
Agreement against child cross-border trafficking between Burkina Faso and Mali (2011);
Agreement against child cross-border trafficking, between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire (2013);
Bilateral agreement for protection of children on the move between Mali and Guinea Cona-kry (ongo-ing);
Agreement signed between Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana to combat the trafficking of children and the worst forms of child labour (November 2016).