



Lifting Barriers to Education

Improving Education Outcomes for Migrant and Refugee Children
in Latin America and the Caribbean

Kim Caarls, Victor Cebotari, Despina Karamperidou, Maria Carolina Alban Conto,
Juliana Zapata and Rachel Yang Zhou

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Glossary of terms

Children with a migration experience/migration background or migrant children: Refers to three profiles of children whose life experiences are shaped by international or internal migration and/or displacement:

1. **Children at destination:** Temporarily or permanently settled children in a place other than their country/ place of origin.
2. **Children who stay behind** (otherwise known as children left behind): Children whose relatives (e.g., parents, siblings, caregivers) have migrated while children stay at the country/place of origin.
3. **Children on the move:** Mobile children, who are moving for a variety of reasons (e.g., for labor, refuge, asylum, trafficking, internally displaced) either voluntarily or involuntarily, within or between countries, with or without their parents or other primary caregivers.

Migration: The movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a state or country. It encompasses any kind of movement of people, regardless of its length, composition and cause. It includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification (Save the Children, 2013).

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.

Refugee: A person who lives outside the country of nationality and is unable to return because of persecution or fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion (UNICEF, 2017).

Internally displaced person (IDP): A person who fled his or her home, but not their country, as a consequence of armed conflict, violence, disaster or a violation of human rights.

Child: Every human being until 18 years of age. The word adolescent refers to children above 12 years of age. Some of the sources quoted in this report present data according to different definitions of a child, including both children and young people over 18 years of age. In these cases, it has been specified in the text.

Emergency context: A crisis situation caused by violent conflict, natural disaster or both.

Executive summary

Children migrate with their families and independently. According to the most recent global estimates, the total number of child migrants is approximately 31 million. Thirteen million children are refugees and 936,000 are asylum-seekers. Meanwhile, 17 million children have been forcibly displaced inside their own countries and are considered internally displaced persons (IDPs). Access to inclusive and equitable education is a major challenge for these children.

Currently, the Latin America and Caribbean region is experiencing the largest external displacement crisis in its recent history – the Venezuelan refugee and migrant crisis. By the end of 2019, at least 4.8 million refugees and migrants had left Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). At least 25 per cent of the Venezuelan refugees and migrants are children and adolescents many of whom are experiencing school disruptions. It is estimated that the crisis has caused over 1 million children to drop out of school in 2018. Moreover, 3.9 million Venezuelans were living in other Latin American and Caribbean countries by the end of 2019, generating significant resource and capacity challenges to educational systems across the region.

The COVID-19 pandemic poses additional challenges. By November 2020, 137 million boys and girls across the region were missing out on their education, due to the prolonged closure of schools. While in other parts of the world, schools have gradually reopened, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the majority of classrooms remain closed with no immediate prospect of reopening. The implications are troubling, especially for migrant and refugee children.

Through a systematic review of the empirical literature, this study collates evidence from Latin America and the Caribbean and across the world to facilitate a better understanding of the multifaceted linkages between education and migration. The study leverages global and regional evidence to: (i) estimate gaps in educational outcomes between migrant/refugee children and children from local communities; (ii) identify structural barriers to education for migrant/refugee children at the macro-level (educational system), the meso-level (school organization and local communities), and the micro-level (individual and interpersonal characteristics of children and parents with a migration background); (iii) detect promising practices in migrant/refugee education, and (iv) inform relevant policies and practices in Latin America and the Caribbean, in the COVID-19 era and beyond.

How does migration impact on education outcomes?

Globally, migrant children, refugee/asylum seeking children, and children left behind while their parents migrate, are largely in a disadvantaged position when it comes to educational outcomes compared to their native-born peers. Children affected by migration are less likely to enroll in/attend school and more likely to drop out of school and to have worse academic performances. In Latin America and the Caribbean, children with a migration experience face significant difficulties that affect their school access, attendance and completion. Nevertheless, empirical evidence suggesting positive effects of parental migration on the educational outcomes of left behind children also exist, as remittance-receiving households in the region are more likely to invest more resources in education.

What barriers do children with a migration experience face in accessing equitable education?

At the **macro-level**, restrictive immigration policies and heavy legislative requirements hinder the fulfilment of the right to education for migrant/refugee children globally, including in Latin America and the Caribbean. Strict documentation requirements such as apostilled (authenticated) school records are especially problematic, as they often prevent migrant and refugee children from enrolling in school. The integration of migrant/refugee students into formal education systems is further hampered by the lack of critical resources and the absence of sustainable investments that are necessary to support students in protracted displacement. High costs for education (e.g., school fees and auxiliary costs, like the costs of school supplies and transportation) also discourage migrant, refugee or asylum-seeking families from sending their children to school. This is particularly concerning for secondary and higher education participation.

At the **meso-level**, global evidence suggests that teachers are unprepared to teach a diverse, multicultural and (often) multilingual student population. Research in Latin America and the Caribbean has specifically highlighted that teachers lack training on working with migrant children and have limited experience in dealing with issues pertaining to displacement and diversity. Several studies also indicate that children with a migration background are more likely to be affected by teacher shortages. Discrimination by native-born educators and peers, as well as the lack of educational material that acknowledges the culture of origin of migrant and refugee children, can further impact the self-esteem and self-image of children with a migration background and their educational outcomes.

At the **micro-level**, cultural differences, language barriers, and lack of knowledge and information about host education systems are all barriers that hinder migrant/refugee children's access to education and learning in all world regions, including Latin America and the Caribbean. The individual characteristics of migrant/refugee children, such as their educational background, age and gender, are also closely associated with their academic performance.

What are the promising practices and potential recommendations for policymaking?

For governments of host countries and their partners:

- **Create a supportive legal framework that encourages the inclusion of migrant/refugee children into formal schools.** This includes adopting flexible documentation requirements for school enrollment. Empowering decentralized education officers as well as school directors to make enrollment and placement decisions, and to organize support measures necessary for undocumented migrant/refugee children, will further lift barriers to school enrollment.
- **Explore solutions that improve migrant/refugee students' access to school and encourage their enrollment** without exacerbating chronic challenges that host education systems may face. In countries where refugee and migrant children are concentrated in certain areas, host governments may be able to encourage a more even distribution of the migrant population (across their territory) in order to relieve the burden of schools in high concentration areas. Lowering costs associated with education (e.g., transportation, uniforms, school supplies, etc.) will further encourage migrant and refugee students to attend school.
- **Ensure that teachers are equipped to work in a diverse classroom.** It is critical that national education policies ensure that pre-service training and continuous professional development programmes effectively equip teachers with intercultural competences, linguistic support and awareness competences, as well as the ability to reflect on their own beliefs, cultural and socioeconomic differences.

- **Develop accelerated education programmes and provide linguistic support for children** who have experienced significant disruptions to their education and who face serious language barriers. This is especially important in the post COVID-19 environment as learning losses due to prolonged school closures are expected to be significant, with some estimates suggesting immediate effects on the acquisition of foundational skills. Amending national curricula to be more culturally inclusive and removing content that is politicized and discriminatory can further improve the self-esteem of children with a migration background and subsequently their academic performance. Finally, there is a need for more integrated mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) as part of education programmes that cater for migrant children, especially for those who have experienced forced displacement.
- **Provide alternative educational opportunities for children who are unable to enroll in the formal education system** through online learning platforms and other digital tools. Low-cost after-school programmes and supplemental classes, especially on language and cultural support, can help children with a migration experience to better integrate into school and society. The use of digital tools holds a special promise for the provision of education services during COVID-19. However, it is important that education technology tools can function adequately in places where internet connectivity may be low.
- **Invest in school supplies, school meal plans and support parents.** A large body of evidence from across the globe suggests that the provision of school meals and school supplies encourages low-income families, including migrant and refugee families, to keep their children in school. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in Latin America and the Caribbean, 80 million children are currently missing out on what, for many, is the healthiest meal of the day, placing them at risk of developing nutrient deficiencies. In this context, welfare programmes that support children's caregivers are reliable channels to ensure quality care and better learning outcomes for migrant children.

For donors:

- **Ensure reliable multi-year funding.** Protracted displacement is frequently a multi-year, sometimes decades-long process. Supporting the needs of migrant children therefore requires investment that is sustained. Achieving positive education outcomes for migrant and refugee children necessitates bridging short-term humanitarian and long-term development education programming. This, in turn, requires ensuring sustainable education funding at the start of humanitarian migration crises that are likely to evolve into longer-term protracted crises spanning the humanitarian-development nexus.

For host schools and communities:

- **Support migrant/refugee children and their families to foster social ties** with schools and local communities, for instance, by organizing parental social events, ensuring equal participation in school management boards, and offering access to intercultural mediators, social interpreters and translators.
- **Encourage migrant/refugee children to become part of their school and wider communities** by helping them learn new languages, understand new cultures, and by providing information about the educational system and the school enrollment process to their parents and caregivers. Organizing awareness raising activities to reduce stigma and discrimination is also important for improving the educational outcomes of children with a migration background.

For future research:

- **Further explore the role of education in migration.** There is a particular gap in understanding how children and their families weigh education as a key migration driver, and whether the search for educational opportunities is tied to cyclical migration patterns (i.e., children's plans to return to their country/community of origin after gaining an education in a host country). This has relevance for informing where to invest in certain avenues of curricula development, particularly around equipping migrant children with skills and knowledge tailored to their home markets, in anticipation of their subsequent return.
- **Support the collection and use of large-scale longitudinal data on child migration, education, and well-being.** Current research relies primarily on snapshots of evidence to explore various aspects of the education of children in different migration settings. Large scale longitudinal data is needed to better unpack the dynamic effects of educational outcomes as well as the needs of migrant children.
- **Include displaced children with disabilities.** While there is growing international agreement on the importance of providing inclusive education services for children with disabilities (Mont and Sprunt, 2019), existing research largely overlooks disabled children and youth in the context of migration. In-depth, qualitative studies are needed to better understand the role of legislation, school capacity, financial limitations, programme availability and teachers' qualifications in the provision of inclusive education.
- **Include children and youth migrants' voices.** Existing research relies almost exclusively on adult perceptions, which may ineffectively capture the complexity of the educational needs and the challenges children with a migration background face. Ensuring that children and youth migrants' own voices are better consulted is important to understand their subjective challenges, motivations, and decision-making rationales in engaging in education.

1. Introduction

1.1. Context and rationale

Migration is a global phenomenon and children have been significantly involved in this process. According to the most recent global estimates (IOM, 2020), the total number of child migrants is 31 million. There are approximately 13 million refugee children, 936,000 asylum-seeking children. Meanwhile, 17 million children have been forcibly displaced inside their own countries and are considered internally displaced persons (IDPs). In 2018, about half of refugees globally were children under 18 years of age (UNHCR, 2019a). In 2019, 14 per cent of the world's migrants were under the age of 20.

Even though migration is a global phenomenon, migration flows vary considerably between countries and regions (*see Annex for a detailed description of migration flows in different world regions*). In Latin America and the Caribbean, most migration corridors in 2019 were to the United States of America (USA), with the rest within the region. With around 12 million Mexicans living abroad, Mexico is the largest emigration country in the region and the second largest migrant origin country in the world, after India (IOM, 2020). Mexicans moving to the United States is the largest country-to-country migration flow in the world. Many countries in Central America (such as El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras) and in South America (such as Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil and Peru) also have large migrant populations in the United States. Within the region, Argentina was hosting the largest foreign-born population in 2019, with over 2 million migrants mainly from neighboring countries.

Over 20 per cent of migrants in the region are under 20 years of age (IOM, 2020). There are no accurate statistics on the number of children who are undocumented labor migrants, those who return to their country of origin, and those who stay behind while their family members migrate. However, estimates suggest that a large proportion of children in the region have been affected by migration. Using nationally representative census and survey data that covers eight Latin American countries and Puerto Rico (USA), DeWaard, Nobles, and Donato (2018) showed that between 7 per cent and 21 per cent of children live in transnational families where parents are absent as a result of migration.

While migration is not a new phenomenon in Latin America and the Caribbean, since 2018 the region has been experiencing the largest displacement crisis in its recent history and the second worst migration crisis after Syria – the Venezuelan refugee and migrant crisis.¹ The crisis was triggered by years of economic and political mismanagement, and by the impact of a sharp decrease in oil prices (between 2013 and 2016) on the nation's oil-dependent economy. These issues led to widespread poverty, violence, and chronic shortages of food, medicine and a lack of essential services (Wilson Center, 2019). As a result, by the end of 2018, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) had submitted over 340,000 new asylum claims and was the largest source country of asylum claims in the world during that year (IOM, 2020). By the end of 2019, at least 4.8 million refugees and migrants had left Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and an estimated 3.9 million Venezuelans were living in other Latin American and Caribbean countries (Selee and Bolter, 2020). Most displaced Venezuelans moved to neighboring countries, such as Colombia,² Peru, Ecuador, Argentina, Chile and Brazil, although an increasing number are also moving to countries in Central America and the Caribbean.

1 In 2018–2019, between 80,000 and 100,000 Nicaraguans have also fled to Costa Rica (since April 2018), when the Nicaraguan government began repressing political protests in that country.

2 Over 1 million Venezuelans lived in Colombia at the end of 2018 (IOM, 2020).

Over 25 per cent of the Venezuelan refugees and migrants are children and adolescents³ many of whom have experienced serious school disruptions.⁴ In 2018, it was estimated that over 1 million children were out of school as the result of the crisis. In 2019, UNICEF reported an estimated 1.5 million children who required access to education in the region. In Trinidad and Tobago alone, more than 75 per cent of the Venezuelan school-aged children had no access to formal education more than a year after their immigration (IOM, 2018). In countries like Colombia and Peru, where a large number of migrant and refugee children have been enrolled in public schools, the mass and unpredictable migration flows have created new challenges and exacerbated chronic inefficiencies within the education systems, which were already struggling with school capacity limits.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, which resulted in widespread and prolonged school closures in the region, is posing additional challenges. According to UNICEF (2020), the number of children in Latin America and the Caribbean receiving no education whatsoever (in class or remotely), has increased sharply in recent months from 4 to 18 per cent. A global analysis of the potential reach of remote learning policies that were initiated since the onset of the pandemic revealed that in Latin America and the Caribbean at least 9 per cent of children had not been reached by August 2020 (UNICEF 2020b).⁵ Projections also show that across the region, 3.1 million children may never return to school. Meanwhile, school enrollment of first-time students may decline by more than 1.8 per cent (UNICEF, 2020a). It is expected that children from marginalized communities, including migrants and refugees, will be the most severely affected.

This study aims to map global evidence on migration and educational outcomes through a systematic review of the empirical literature. The study collates evidence on the impact of migration on educational attainment, barriers to equity and education for children with a migration experience, as well as promising practices in addressing these barriers. This review can serve as a knowledge base for further action in the areas of policy, programming and research in the Latin America and the Caribbean region and beyond.

The study is both crucial and timely. It coincides with the finalization of two important international agreements on migration that emphasize the need to address migrant children's educational requirements: The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and the Global Compact on Refugees,⁶ together with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4) on education.

3 The Venezuelan crisis has also caused nearly 1 million children to be left behind as their parents were forced to migrate.

4 Venezuelan Crisis, Plan International. <https://plan-international.org/emergencies/venezuelan-crisis>

5 However, this does not mean that 91 per cent of children in the Latin America and Caribbean region were reached. In fact, UNICEF offices in several countries in the region (including in Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Panama, Paraguay and Ecuador) have conducted telephone or online perception surveys of families with children and adolescents. The results reveal large gaps in access to electronic devices like computers or mobile phones, and to internet connections or other modalities for distance education, particularly in poor and rural areas (UNICEF 2020b).

6 The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration conveys a generally positive message of education as an opportunity to make the most of migratory flows and addresses a wide range of issues related to access to education, as well as education beyond schooling and skills recognition. The Global Compact on Refugees renews the commitments made in the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, but it goes further to promote the inclusion of refugees in national education systems, calling for more coherent planning in crises and protracted displacement.

1.2. Research objectives

The key objectives of the study are to:

- Examine **gaps in educational outcomes** between children affected by migration (i.e., migrant, refugee, asylum seeking children and children left behind) and their native counterparts.
- Identify **structural barriers** for children with a migration experience to education, at the 1) macro-level (educational system); 2) the meso-level (school organization and local communities); and 3) the micro-level (individual and interpersonal characteristics of children and parents with a migration background).
- Recognize **promising policies and practices** in addressing barriers to education for children affected by migration and inform policy making in the Latin America and Caribbean region and beyond.

1.3. Methods and limitations

This report is the result of a global literature review to consolidate evidence on what works in existing programmes, and the principal barriers/challenges for equitable education for children with a migration background. Examples from both emergency and non-emergency settings are used with a focus on countries that have received a high influx of migrant and refugee children in recent years. Traditional recipient countries in Europe and the United States, which have a long history of receiving children with a migration background, were also included. Similarly, the more silent aspects of migration are also reflected in this review – these include labor migrants or children left behind in transnational families.

The materials included studies published in peer reviewed journals and online sources, books and chapters. Also reviewed was grey literature, including reports from governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector education bodies, and bilateral- and multilateral-funding organizations, relevant evaluations, and selected data sources (e.g., from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)). Although there were a few exceptions, articles published between 2000 and 2020 were mainly included.

To narrow down the literature search, hundreds of articles were manually reviewed using the criteria shown in Table 1. As a result, the search yielded over 245 relevant references.

Table 1. Criteria used to assess the quality of the literature

	Criteria	Sub-categories	Description
1	Conceptual coherence	Introduction	Topic, purpose and study rationale are clearly stated.
		Literature review	The relevant conceptual underpinnings of the issue are fully explained.
		Research questions	Research questions and/or hypotheses are well-defined and drawn from sound evidence-based theoretical or conceptual framework.
2	Appropriate methods	Methods	The research design and sampling are appropriate for the study. The study includes a well-articulated rationale.
		Data	Relevant data have been employed. Where survey data are used, the sample is well-described and clearly appropriate for the task at hand.
		Analyses	The procedures and measures have been selected correctly and applied correctly.
3	Scientific validity	Results	The results of the statistical/empirical tests are fully and correctly interpreted. Basic statistical information, such as probability statistics, sample sizes, etc., and coherent explanation of findings are included – avoids overstating the study's importance and generalizability.
4	Ethics⁷	Ethical review	If the research involves primary data collection and/or the use of sensitive secondary data, ethical considerations are described in the study. For example, the article might include details of the procedures followed to ensure the ethical review of data, an indication that the study received the proper oversight from review board, or any mitigation strategies.

Having reviewed the quality of the available evidence, the literature rarely considered multiple dimensions of schooling. The most frequently used indicators to measure educational outcomes were access to education, participation in education, and academic performance.

Furthermore, the available empirical research on migration and the educational outcomes of children faces various challenges:

- The availability of (quality) data is strongly biased towards English-speaking destination countries (mostly Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries).
- The quality of the data is often limited due to small sample sizes, lack of longitudinal datasets, and the definitions of migration/migration status that are being used, which differ by survey, and by country.
- Establishing causality is always challenging, but migration and education research is particularly affected by issues of endogeneity, selectivity and omitted variables. This is because migration is typically a selective process and related decisions or remittance allocation are often made simultaneously with education decisions.
- There are also a multitude of indirect and interrelated effects that mediate the impact migration has on education, such as the effect of social remittances or the psychological impact of migration for children left behind.

⁷ The ethics dimension, although exceptionally important, was not a requirement for acceptance.

1.4. Report structure

The report is structured as follows: Section 2.1 presents findings on the impacts of migration on educational outcomes. Findings are reported separately for three different categories of children affected by migration: (1) migrant children, (2) refugee/asylum seeking children, and (3) children left behind. Section 2.2 discusses structural barriers to education. Barriers are analyzed at three levels: (1) the macro-level (e.g., educational system), (2) the meso-level (school organization and local communities), and (3) the micro-level (individual and interpersonal characteristics of children and parents with a migration background). Barriers faced by children in emergency contexts are also considered. Section 2.3 presents practices that hold promise for addressing the education barriers that children with a migration experience face. Section 3 summarizes key findings and considers their implications for policy making, focusing specifically on the Latin America and Caribbean region.

2. Findings

2.1. Children affected by migration and their educational outcomes

Evidence from across the globe, including the Latin America and Caribbean region, suggests that children affected by migration are less likely to enroll in/attend school, and more likely to drop out of formal education, and to have worse academic performances compared to host community children. These effects tend to last over time, permanently affecting earnings negatively in later life. Poor educational outcomes may also result in negative effects for future generations due to hampered social mobility and intergenerational poverty (Ahad and Benton, 2018).

2.1.1. Educational outcomes of migrant children

Migrant children are more likely to leave school early (EU, 2013, 2018; SIRIUS, 2014). For example, in the European Union, 22 per cent of migrants aged 18–24 leaved school and training early compared to only 9 per cent of the native population (Eurostat, 2019). Likewise, Gindling and Poggio (2010) found higher drop-out rates for immigrant children of Central American and Mexican origin in the United States, particularly after a period of separation from their parents, due to migration.

Furthermore, migrant children have lower educational attainment (Alba and Silberman, 2009; Abrego and Gonzales, 2010; De Valk, Noam, Bosch and Beets, 2009; Drachman, 2006; EU, 2018; Gindling and Poggio, 2010; Gonzales, 2011; Lemmermann and Riphahn, 2018; Save the Children, 2018; Yoshikawa and Kalil, 2011). Repeating a grade is twice as likely for migrant students compared to those from the host community. This can lead to further inequities between the two student groups (OECD, 2018).

Academic performance is also, on average, lower among migrant children (Borgna, 2015; Bruckauf, Chzhen and Toczydlowska, 2016; Cebolla-Boada et al., 2013; Condron, 2009; De Valk et al., 2009; Driessen and Merry, 2011; Dustmann and Glitz, 2011; EU, 2013, 2018; Heckmann, 2008; Janta and Harte, 2016; Ohinata and Van Ours, 2012; OECD, 2006, 2015; Schnepf, 2007; Simms, 2012). According to the 2015 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study, 49 per cent of 15-year-old migrant students achieved at least level 2 proficiency in reading, mathematics and science, compared to 72 per cent of 15-year-old host community students (OECD, 2018). Only 20 per cent of these academic performance gaps are explained by migrants' lower socioeconomic status (ibid.).

Children with an irregular immigration status are even more likely to have lower educational attainment. For example, undocumented children in the United States have legal access to public high schools, but not to tertiary education (Abrego and Gonzales, 2010; Drachman, 2006). Research on undocumented migrant children in Southeast Asia has similarly shown that these children have limited or no access to public services, including education (Bryant, 2005). The undocumented status of parents may also result in denied or limited access to education for their children (Bernhard, Goldring, Young and Wilson, 2007). In general, studies reveal how children's undocumented status results in limited or no access to education, lower educational attainment, or lower enrollment (Abrego and Gonzales, 2010; Drachman, 2006; Gonzales, 2011; Greenman and Hall, 2013; Save the Children, 2018; Yoshikawa and Kalil, 2011).

2.1.2. Educational outcomes of refugee/asylum seeking children

Refugee education is also in crisis. Access to education is limited for refugee children, particularly for girls, and their school attendance is generally low (Dryden-Peterson, 2011; Hek, 2005; Norwegian Refugee Council, 2018). Limited access to education affects not only refugee children at the individual level, but also has negative repercussions at the national level. Research has shown that when access to education in a country is low, particularly when combined with high levels of inequality, the risk of conflict is high. For example, regions studied over a period of 21 years, where educational rates were very low, had a 50 per cent chance of experiencing violent conflict (UNESCO, 2016).

While refugee children themselves consistently mention education as their top priority (UNICEF, 2016b), available estimates are disconcerting (De Hoop, Morey and Seidenfeld, 2018; UNHCR, 2016). Primary enrollment rates are low, with 50 per cent of refugee children attending primary school, compared to 91 per cent of all children globally.

Globally, access to primary and secondary education is not equally guaranteed for refugee children (Crul, Lelie, Keskiner, Schneider and Biner, 2019; FRA, 2017; Koehler, 2017; Save the Children, 2018). Only a small minority of refugees are settled in western countries, but even this group faces educational disadvantages (UNICEF, 2017), often due to protracted stays in camps (Taylor and Sidhu, 2012). Refugee children have limited access to formal education in parts of Germany, Greece, and Hungary, putting at risk their right to education (FRA, 2017). Refugee children who are educated in parallel school systems, instead of being included in regular classes, also fare worse in terms of educational outcomes, having higher drop-out rates, or not attending school at all (Crul et al., 2019).

In the Latin America and Caribbean region, a 2018 survey in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Panama, showed that 35 per cent of displaced, school-aged Venezuelan children were not enrolled in school in their host countries (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2019).⁸ According to a 2019 survey of Venezuelan children in several Peruvian cities, 51 per cent of those surveyed were out of school (UNHCR, 2019b). Even worse, in 2018, more than 75 per cent of Venezuelan children who had been in Trinidad and Tobago for more than a year had no access to formal education (IOM, 2018). In countries such as Colombia and Peru, refugees' access to education is less restricted.⁹ This is a major concern, as prior to the Venezuelan crisis, these countries had little experience with integrating a large number of foreign-born students into their education systems. And while Venezuela-born students are relatively evenly spread across Colombia, in Peru, 70 per cent of Venezuelan school children are concentrated in the capital city of Lima (Selee and Bolter, 2020). This has further burdened the Lima's already overcrowded public school system, raising serious questions about the quality of education provided.

Children who are seeking asylum are also not faring well. Asylum-seeking children across Europe face insufficient education or restrictions to accessing education (AIDA, 2014, 2018; FRA, 2017; Hek, 2005; Koehler, 2017). In particular, access to education for children in detention is problematic, and often not legally guarded (AIDA, 2018; FRA, 2017). Consequently, countries such as Austria, Bulgaria, Sweden, Cyprus, Denmark, parts of Germany, Greece, Hungary, Finland, France, Poland, and the United Kingdom have no or very limited provisions for education for detained children (AIDA, 2014; FRA, 2017). Another problematic example comes from the Netherlands where children often experience multiple transfers to

8 Although Colombia and Peru technically recognize the majority of Venezuelans within their borders as migrants, most Venezuelans who have left the country in recent years are likely refugees, as defined in the 1950 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Also, the vast majority of those who have been forcibly displaced from Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) meet the refugee definition in the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. This Declaration adds to the definition of refugees as: "persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order". This is because the primary reasons for flight from Venezuela are the ongoing humanitarian crisis, generalized violence, and widespread violations of human rights. Source: https://www.tent.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Tent_VenezuelanReport_Eng.pdf Accessed on 14 May 2020

9 By mid-2019, Colombia and Peru had enrolled 200,000 and 50,000 Venezuelan students in their public school system, respectively (Selee and Bolter, 2020).

different reception centers during their stay. This has a negative impact on their educational development (ibid.). In Turkey, Syrian asylum-seeking and refugee children face huge barriers to education (Bircan and Sunata, 2015), particularly when they are staying outside of camps. While about 80 per cent of Syrian children (aged 6–17 years) in camps attend school, only 27 per cent of their peers in host communities attend (Dorman, 2014).

Access to education in emergency contexts is also significantly restricted. Violent conflicts or wars destroy schools, school systems, and physically and emotionally damage both students and teachers (Burde, Kapit, Wahl, Guven and Skarpeteig, 2017; UNICEF, 2012, 2017). School enrollment rates drop significantly (Lai and Thyne, 2007; UNICEF, 2017), as does school attendance (UNICEF, 2012, 2017). This typically holds true more for girls' education than for boys' (Bekalo, Brophy and Welford, 2003; Burde and Linden, 2013). This is often related to the distances that need to be travelled, threats to girls who attend school, or because girls need to work at home to compensate for family losses.

2.1.3. Educational outcomes of children left behind

In the context of migration, children can experience separation from one or more family members who have migrated abroad. Which family member has migrated is an important covariate as studies often point to the absence of children's primary caregiver, the mother, as having a negative effect on their education and well-being (Cortes, 2015; Parreñas, 2005; Jordan and Graham, 2012). In Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), an estimated 1 million children have been left behind in recent years by displaced parents who either cannot afford or do not want to put their children through the upheaval of displacement (The Guardian, 2020).¹⁰

While academics and policy makers have extensively studied the effects of parental migration on the educational outcomes of children left behind, evidence is still inconclusive. In particular, several studies from across the globe have shown that remittance-receiving households are more likely to invest more resources in children's education (Adams and Cuecuecha, 2010; Brown and Poirine, 2005; Yang, 2008). The main educational outcomes for children left behind that are positively associated with parental migration include increased school enrollment;¹¹ increased school attendance and attainment;¹² higher academic performance;¹³ reduced grade repetition;¹⁴ and reduced dropouts.¹⁵ A few studies have found neutral effects of parental migration on the educational outcomes of children left behind, such as school attendance, education performance, school enjoyment, educational attainment and cognitive ability.¹⁶ However, several other studies have found negative effects of parental migration on various educational outcomes for

10 Whether this figure differentiates between parents who have migrated abroad due to displacement versus pursuit of livelihood or other opportunities is unclear.

11 Acosta, 2011 (for primary school girls); Bennett, Clifford, and Falkingham, 2013; Bredl, 2011; Bryant, 2005; Calero, Bedi and Sparrow, 2009 (focus on girls and children living in rural areas); Edwards and Ureta, 2003; Gassmann, Siegel, Vanore and Waidler, 2013 (when mothers migrate); Morooka and Liang, 2009; Sarma and Parinduri, 2016 (when fathers migrate and mothers stay behind).

12 Antman, 2012 (for girls); Alcaez, Chiquiar and Salcedo, 2012; Edwards and Ureta, 2003; Curran, Cadge, Varangrat, Chung, 2001 (for girls only); Gatskova, Ivlevs and Dietz, 2019 (for young girls); Intemann and Katz, 2013; Kuhn, 2006).

13 Antman, 2012; Bryant, 2005; Cebotari, Siegel and Mazzucato, 2016 (in the case of migrant fathers in Moldova); Cebotari, 2020 (when parents migrate internationally and send remittances); Kandel and Kao, 2001.

14 Cebotari, 2018 (especially for girls); Edwards and Ureta, 2003; Davis and Brazil, 2016 (for children in school, remittances offset the negative effect of father's migration).

15 Nobles, 2011 (for children with migrant fathers); Lu, 2012 (especially girls). In addition to these positive educational outcomes, studies also indicated higher levels of school enjoyment (Cebotari et al. 2018) and increased educational aspirations (Böhme, 2015) (of parents of children); Kandel and Kao, 2001.

16 Jason (2018), who looked at school attendance and grade-for-age progression, Lu and Treiman (2011) who found no effect of remittance-receipt on school attendance for Whites in South Africa, and Pilarová and Kandakov (2017), who similarly found that remittances have an insignificant effect on high school attendance of youth left behind in Moldova. Likewise, Cebotari and Mazzucato (2016) found no effects from parental migration, and remittances on educational performance of children in Ghana, Nigeria, and Angola. In South-east Asia, Jordan and Graham (2012) found no effect on the school enjoyment or performance of children left behind. Additionally, Antman (2012) found no effects from parental internal migration on the educational attainment of children left behind. Finally, Lara (2015) found no effect of sibling and parental migration on the cognitive ability of children left behind, as well as no effect on school attendance of girls left behind.

children left behind, including school enrollment;¹⁷ educational attainment;¹⁸ school attendance;¹⁹ educational performance;²⁰ dropping out;²¹ and grade repetition.²² Explanations for these negative outcomes are varied, although they mostly pertain to a lack of parental input due to their absence (i.e., the amount and the quality of time parents can devote to their children, the emotional support, and the overall guidance during the children's schooling period). Who takes care of the child and the stability of the care arrangement also affect the educational outcomes (Cebotari and Mazzucato, 2016; Gassmann et al., 2013; Gatskova et al., 2019). Additionally, several studies also point towards a 'culture of migration'-effect, which decreases educational aspirations as children see migration as an alternative to education (Davis and Brazil, 2016; Kandel and Kao, 2001; McKenzie and Rapoport, 2011).

Research in the Latin America and Caribbean region has also produced inconclusive findings. Many studies have found negative effects of migration on various educational outcomes for children left behind. Davis (2018) has shown that the migration of Nicaraguan parents to Costa Rica helped depress school enrollment among children left behind. Family member migration also has a negative effect on educational completion leading up to post-secondary school among non-migrant youth in Mexico (Halpern-Manners, 2011). Furthermore, McKenzie and Rapoport (2011), have found negative effects of living in a household affected by migration in rural Mexico, on school attendance and completed years of schooling, with a stronger effect on 16–18-year-olds. Finally, Lahaie, Hayes, Piper and Heymann (2009) found that households with one migrated caregiver was more likely to have at least one child with academic, behavior, and emotional problems than non-migrant households in high emigration communities within Mexico. However, a few studies have also noted positive effects of parental migration on the educational outcomes of children left behind (Bredl, 2011; Edwards and Ureta, 2003; Alcaraz et al., 2012; Edwards and Ureta, 2003; Intemann and Katz, 2013; Kandel and Kao, 2001; Nobles, 2011). Using nationally representative household data from Guatemala, Adams and Cuecuecha (2010) showed that remittance-receiving households are more likely to invest more resources in education.

2.2. Principal barriers to education for children affected by migration

Students with a migration background are often more motivated to be successful in their education (Hek, 2005; Koehler, 2017; Liebkind, Jasinskaja-Lahti and Solheim, 2004; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Svensson and Eastmond, 2013). At the same time, these students tend to perform less well academically, suggesting that structural barriers hamper their learning opportunities (Cebolla-Boado, González-Ferrer and Soysal, 2013; Nilsson and Bunar, 2016; Van Maele and Poeze, 2018). This section discusses the main structural barriers that children affected by migration face in accessing education in host countries. Barriers at the macro-, meso-, and micro-level are considered. Barriers faced by children in emergency contexts are also briefly discussed (*see Box 2*).

17 Acosta, 2011 (for secondary school-aged children); Bennett et al., 2013 (for the migration of remittance-sending siblings); Bredl, 2011; Bryant, 2005; Calero et al., 2009; Davis and Brazil, 2016; Edwards and Ureta (2003); Gassmann et al., 2013 (when fathers migrate); Jampaklay, 2006; Jason, 2018 (for paternal migration); Koska et al., 2013 (when both parents migrate); Kroeger and Anderson, 2014 (for young children (especially boys)); Morooka and Liang, 2009; Sarma and Parinduri, 2016 (when the mother migrates and the father stays behind).

18 Antman, 2012; Curran et al., 2001; Intemann and Katz, 2013; Kuhn, 2006; Lu, 2012, 2014; McKenzie and Rapoport, 2011.

19 Amuedo-Dorantes and Pozo, 2010; Gatskova et al., 2019 (for girls aged 12–17 years); Giannelli and Mangiavacchi, 2010; Lara, 2015 (only for young left-behind boys); Lu and Treiman, 2011 (only for Black children in South Africa); McKenzie and Rapoport, 2011.

20 Cebotari and Mazzucato, 2016 (for children left behind in Ghana and Nigeria); Cebotari et al., 2016 (for fathers' migration in Georgia); Cebotari, 2020 (for girls, especially when parents migrate internally and do not remit); Kong and Meng, 2010; Lahaie et al., 2009; Meng and Yamauchi, 2017; Robila, 2014.

21 Cortes, 2015 (in the case of migrant mothers); Creighton, Park and Teruel, 2009; Giannelli and Mangiavacchi, 2010; Halpern-Manners, 2011).

22 Davis and Brazil, 2016.

2.2.1. Macro-level barriers

Policies and legislations

Several conventions ensure children's right to education, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Article 28). The 1951 United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees and the 1954 Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons also guarantee the right to education for refugees and stateless persons. Similarly, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families recognizes the right to education, specifically for migrant children regardless of their immigration status (Article 30). Yet only one in four countries worldwide have ratified it to date.²³

In practice however, restrictive immigration policies often hamper the fulfilment of the right to education for migrant/refugee children (see *Box 1*). While most countries do not have formal barriers, the extent to which migrants and refugees are integrated in formal education systems varies greatly, and in most countries, the barriers to accessing education remain significant (UNHCR, 2016). Educational inclusion often depends on factors such as the length of residence, financial means and legal status/citizenship (Krasteva, 2012; Dreby, 2012; Landale, Hardie, Oropesa and Hillemeier, 2015; Perreira and Ornelas, 2011; Van Maele and Poeze, 2018). Strict documentation requirements also hamper access to education. School enrollment may require national identification papers, proof of residency, birth certificates or credentials of prior education (UNESCO, 2018). Such documents are often difficult to obtain or not available to migrant/refugee children, and these children are often excluded from education based on refusal of host governments to recognize diplomas from the country of origin (Krasteva, 2012). Bureaucratic complications make it extremely difficult and time-consuming for migrant/refugee children to access national educational systems (Koehler, 2017). Furthermore, the lack of a legal migration status exposes children to increased uncertainty and undermines their future well-being. Several studies have shown that an irregular migration status leads to lower educational attainment (Abrego and Gonzales, 2010; Drachman, 2006; Gonzales, 2011; Yoshikawa and Kalil, 2011, Dreby, 2012; Landale et al., 2015; Perreira and Ornelas, 2011; Van Maele and Poeze, 2018).

Box 1. Migration and education legislation around the world

In **South Africa**, the constitution guarantees the right to education for all children – irrespective of their legal status; however, the Immigration Act of 2002 prevents migrants without legal documentation from enrolling in school (UNESCO, 2018).

In **Australia**, access to education is linked to those with legal residence, which makes it difficult for undocumented migrants and rejected asylum seekers to access education (Christie and Sidhu, 2006; UNESCO, 2018).

In **Jordan**, the Ministry of Education has enforced a 'three-year rule', which makes children who academically lag behind more than three years ineligible for school admission (Human Rights Watch, 2016). While this holds for all children in Jordan, refugee children are disproportionately affected by this rule, as their education is more often hampered. Consequently, only 7.2 per cent of all secondary school-aged students in Jordanian refugee camps were enrolled in secondary education in 2015 (ibid.).

23 Predominantly migrant producing countries.

In **Spain**, despite constitutionally granting access to both legal and undocumented migrants, children have been denied access to school due to the lack of valid passports or identity cards (UNESCO, 2018).

Nordic countries have the most progressive legislation that provides access to education for migrant and refugee children. Yet even in these contexts, important shortcomings remain. For example, in Denmark and Finland, education is only guaranteed for children until the age of 16, and the law in Iceland does not guarantee education to older children either (UNICEF, 2018). Furthermore, across Nordic countries, the widespread failure to formally recognize school and/or college certificates and vocational qualifications acquired in refugees' individual countries of origin has seriously hampered migrants' and refugees' access to higher education (ibid.).²⁴

In the **United Kingdom**, the so-called dispersal policy has serious consequences for the education of asylum-seeking and refugee children, even though these children legally have access to education (Arnot and Pinson, 2005). The dispersal policy determines the location and the nature of asylum-seeking and refugee children's education, with these children typically being housed away from their social networks to mostly economically and socially deprived areas. Consequently, these areas typically do not have schools with adequate resources or experience to address the educational needs of this group of children.

In the Latin America and Caribbean region, migrant/refugee children face considerable legal obstacles in accessing education. In the Dominican Republic, proof of nationality is required to register in the national database and sit in national examinations for secondary school admission. A copy of a national identity card may also be required for students who have reached 18 years of age in order to graduate and obtain a diploma (UNESCO, 2018). Approximately 5.6 per cent of the Dominican Republic population are immigrants, 88.5 per cent of whom are originally from Haiti (Dominican Republic National Statistical Office, 2018). Haitian immigrants have been denationalized,²⁵ despite of the fact that many of them had been registered properly at birth and possessed national identity cards, voter cards or passports (UNESCO, 2018). As a result of the documentation barriers, many stateless Haitian children in the Dominican Republic are systematically excluded from education. According to a 2012 national immigrant survey, the primary school net attendance rate of children aged 6 to 13 was 52 per cent among those born in Haiti, 79 per cent among those born in the Dominican Republic to immigrant parents, and 82 per cent among those born in other countries (Dominican Republic National Statistical Office, 2013). In Mexico too, many unaccompanied migrant minors are held in detention centers without access to formal education (HRW, 2016).

For Venezuelan children residing in various host countries across the Latin America and Caribbean region, legal and documentation requirements have become a major barrier to education access. In Trinidad and Tobago, the immigration law prohibits schools from enrolling non-residents unless they are issued a student permit by the head of the immigration office. Venezuelan children have no access to school as they are neither residents nor possess the required permit (Selee and Bolter, 2020). In Uruguay, students must present permission for enrollment from both parents, including an apostilled (authenticated) statement of approval if one parent is absent before school enrollment. In Peru, the country hosting the second largest population of Venezuelan children in the region, students are required to provide apostilled copies

24 Moreover, the validation of education is not homogenous across these countries. In Finland, for example, there is no legal procedure for validating children's education and in Sweden, it is up to the individual school to evaluate the child's skills and previous experience (UNICEF, 2018).

25 Law No. 285 of 2004, Constitutional Court decision 168 of 2013 and Central Electoral Board decisions. Denationalized refers to when individuals are deprived of national rights from the country of origin.

of their school records in order to enroll (*ibid.*). Although students in Colombia, the country with the largest Venezuela-born population, may take an exam for enrollment, there is a strong preference for students to also provide an apostilled certificate of previous studies. Barriers to accessing the Colombian higher education system, include the requirement for student visas that limit the flexibility of universities to enroll students, as well as inconclusive admission and degree recognition frameworks.²⁶

Education system governance and strength

Education governance plays a key role in how support for non-native children is organized (EU, 2013). Decentralized education systems typically provide schools with more freedom to organize the support practices they deem necessary to effectively integrate migrant/refugee children.²⁷ However, an important side effect of decentralized educational systems is the lack of a central database. The lack of such a database to monitor the educational development in the mainstream education of children with a migration background makes these children and their progress largely invisible (Arnot and Pinson, 2015; Crul et al., 2019). On the other hand, this lack of monitoring may also protect them from negative responses in the school admission process (*ibid.*).

The lack of sufficient financial resources is another well-documented obstacle to school systems providing inclusive education (De Hoop et al., 2018; Dryden-Peterson, 2011; Van Maele and Poeze, 2018). Integrating migrant/refugee children into educational systems requires serious investments and schools often lack resources to offer the additional support that students in protracted displacement typically require. Additionally, funding is often project-based and therefore limited and time-bound. This puts the sustainability of migrant educational projects at risk, since these projects mostly end when funding runs out (Van Maele and Poeze, 2018). As a result, even countries with appropriate legislation in place to include migrant children in their educational systems, are rarely prepared for a large, sudden influx of migrant children. For instance, schools in many European countries such as Bulgaria, Germany, and Greece faced shortcomings in the enrollment and support of the thousands of migrant children who arrived in Europe during the 2015–2016 school year (Ahad and Benton, 2018). Language barriers, discrimination and inappropriate teaching methods further hampered the participation of migrant/refugee students in European school systems and may have even resulted in early school drop-outs (UNESCO, 2018).

In the Latin America and Caribbean region, the design of most national education systems does not take refugee or forced migrants into consideration. For example, students in Ecuador take placement tests to determine their grade level. These tests require country-specific knowledge in history and geography, which newly arrived migrant/refugee children often lack (Selee and Bolter, 2020). In Colombia, internally displaced children²⁸ have some admission support at public higher education institutions; however, this support has not been extended to the Venezuelan refugee community.²⁹

School overcrowding is another challenge faced by many education systems in the region. According to a UNHCR survey in Peru (UNHCR, 2019b), the most common reason reported by Venezuelan students for not attending school, was the lack of space in the education system. In Brazil, school capacity limits have also been documented as a major obstacle in enrolling migrant/refugee children. A 2018 survey of school-aged Venezuelan children in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Panama, showed that more than half of the surveyed students who were not enrolled in school, have been discouraged by the lack of space in schools (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2019). In Colombia, where the education system was under-resourced and

26 University World News. (2019). Challenges for Venezuelan students in Colombia, May 25, 2019. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190520151933871>. Accessed on May 17, 2020.

27 Although this may lead to great variation within countries.

28 According to UNHCR, there are an estimated 7.4 million internally displaced people in Colombia, due the country's prolonged instability and war-torn history.

29 University World News. (2019). Challenges for Venezuelan students in Colombia, May 25, 2019. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190520151933871>. Accessed on May 17, 2020.

overburdened even before the influx of Venezuelan children, the simultaneous arrival of so many of them³⁰ has exacerbated shortages of space, teachers, educational materials, and other resources, leaving schools unable to accommodate new students (Ibid).

Education costs for families

High costs for education also discourage migrant, refugee or asylum-seeking families from sending their children to school (De Hoop et al., 2018; Dorman, 2014), particularly when it comes to secondary or higher education (AIDA, 2018; UNHCR, 2016). Educational costs include school fees, but also auxiliary costs, such as the costs of school supplies and transportation.

Access to school is an issue especially (but not exclusively) for children living in reception centers. Many reports indicate that the remoteness of reception centers leads to longer travel times (AIDA, 2018; Dorman, 2014; UNESCO, 2018; Van Maele and Poeze, 2018). Travel to distant schools can be further hampered by the absence of good, reliable and affordable public transportation systems. This often results in low or spotty school attendance and in parents with a migration background choosing schools not based on inclusive teaching methods, but on distance only (Van Maele and Poeze, 2018).

Recent evidence from the Latin America and Caribbean region confirms that for migrant and refugee Venezuelan families who struggle to afford basic necessities for survival, the cost of school supplies and uniforms is prohibitive. The need for education remains secondary for many Venezuelan children in families that struggle with poverty and hunger. Many have quit school to help support their families' incomes. In Colombia alone, 350 Venezuelan children have been identified as victims of child labor between March and June 2018.³¹

The closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted many vital school feeding programmes and is also threatening children's right not only to education but also to adequate food and nutrition. Globally, more than 39 billion in-school meals have been missed since the start of the pandemic (Borkowski, Ortiz-Correa, Bundy, Burbano, Hayashi, Lloyd-Evans, Neitzel and Reuge, 2021). In the Latin America and Caribbean region, 80 million children are currently missing out on what, for many, is the healthiest meal of the day, placing them at risk of developing nutrient deficiencies (UNICEF, 2020).

2.2.2. Meso-level barriers

Teachers and educational materials

Teachers play a central role in the lives of children and youth, and are crucial in transmitting social norms, values and support. The relationship between teachers and children with a migration background can either promote or hamper their educational integration (Oikonomidou, 2010; Van Maele and Poeze, 2018). Teachers are important also in refugee education; even in the absence of a school building or effective school administration, at the very least, a teacher is needed to ensure the availability of and access to education (Dryden-Peterson, 2011).

Despite the increasing diversity of classrooms around the world, global evidence suggests that in most countries the teaching force remains largely homogenous (European Commission, 2019). Teachers in various national settings have indicated that they often feel unprepared to teach a diverse, multicultural, and often multilingual student population (Koehler, 2017; Siarova and Tudjman, 2018). Research in the

30 In April 2019, there were at least 327,000 children from Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) living in Colombia. Approximately 130,000 Venezuelan children were enrolled in school, including about 3,000 who crossed from Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) daily to attend classes.

31 Terre des Hommes. (2018). Venezuelan crisis boosts trafficking risk for women and children (30 August 2018). <https://www.tdh.ch/en/press-clippings/venezuelas-crisis-boosts-trafficking-risk-women-children-experts>

Latin America and Caribbean region has specifically highlighted that teachers lack training on working with migrant children and have limited experience in dealing with issues pertaining to migration and diversity (Selee and Bolter, 2020, Novaro, 2012).

Empirical evidence also suggests that children with a migration background are negatively affected by teacher shortages and by the absence of teachers with a migration background. In a cross-country comparative study that included 16 OECD destination countries and 35 origin countries, Dronkers and Heus (2012) demonstrated that the degree of teacher shortages at destination schools has a negative effect on the academic performance of migrant students. Research also supports that the presence of teachers with migration backgrounds has a positive impact on the educational performance of migrant and refugee students (Schofield, 2006; Farley, 2005).

Differences concerning the educational performance of children with and without a migration background can also be related to teacher expectations (Farley, 2005; Pit-ten Cate and Glock, 2018; Sprietsma, 2013). These expectations result from teacher bias and belief in stereotypes, which result in lower expectations towards students with a migration background. Low teacher expectations can negatively influence the education outcomes of migrant/refugee students through various, often reinforcing ways. For example, by affecting teachers' evaluation of students' educational performance (e.g., through grading), by influencing decision-making regarding students' educational pathways (e.g., school tracking), and through self-fulfilling prophecies (Pit-ten Cate and Glock, 2018). On the contrary, when teachers are unbiased and trusted, it can benefit children's educational equity and excellence (Dewulf, Van Braak and Van Houtte, 2016).

Finally, in most destination countries across the globe, available teaching material overlooks or limits reflecting the cultures of origin of children with a migration background. The instructional content can also be highly politicized and discriminatory (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). The relative absence of adequate educational materials may negatively impact the self-esteem and self-image of children with a migration background. This in turn has been found to have a negative impact on their educational performance (Farley, 2005; Heckmann, 2008).

Discrimination and peer relationships

A major challenge for schools that work with children with a migration background is addressing the negative images that might be associated with these children. How children with a migration background are treated by society has repercussions in schools – especially on how teachers, parents, peers, and communities respond to them (Arnot and Pinson, 2005). Schools have the challenging task of offering a safe space for these children to promote their educational development, even if this is only temporary. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Refugee children, for example, experience more ethnically based bullying by their peers and prejudices by both teachers and peers (Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Hek, 2005; Oikonomidou, 2010).

Discrimination and prejudice can have serious consequences on the well-being and educational outcomes of children with a migration background. Global evidence suggests that discrimination is a major barrier to the educational integration of migrant and refugee students (Adair, 2015; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Tannock, 2011). For example, in Belgium, Flemish students with a migration background, who report teacher discrimination, feel a greater sense of academic futility³² (D'hondt, Van Praag, Van Houtte and Stevens, 2016). In Finland, surveyed Vietnamese students reported having more difficulties adjusting to school when they perceived discrimination based on their migration background (Liebkind et al., 2004). Finally, research on refugees in the United Kingdom has shown that refugee children fear that the racism and bullying they experienced in school will damage their educational chances, particularly when they lack protection from teachers (Hek, 2005).

32 The feeling of having no control over success or failure in the school.

In the Latin America and Caribbean region, there is great concern over reports of xenophobia and discrimination against children with a migration background, and the absence of protective policies that put these children at a higher risk for discrimination.³³ Even in Colombia, where communities have largely welcomed Venezuelans, stigma in classrooms is still an issue. Venezuelan parents report being turned away from schools when trying to enroll their children, while children who do go to school are often bullied (Refugees International, 2019).

2.2.3. Micro-level barriers

Language of instruction

Lack of knowledge or proficiency in the language of instruction in recipient countries constitutes one of the most significant challenges for migrant/refugee children (OECD, 2012). Language barriers demotivate non-native students, hampering their educational trajectories, and increasing the risk of discrimination, bullying, and low self-esteem, which negatively influence learning outcomes (AIDA, 2018; Crul et al., 2019; Dorman, 2014; Dryden-Peterson, 2015; UNHCR, 2016; UNICEF, 2018; Van Maele and Poeze, 2018, Leavey, Hollins, King, 2004; OECD, 2018).

Even when the mother tongue of migrant/refugee children coincides with the language of instruction at the destination, evidence suggests that the linguistic competence of immigrant students is significantly inferior to that of local children (Vila, 2006). Furthermore, while learning the language of instruction is important, schools typically overlook that proficiency in the first language facilitates the learning of a second language, as well as the overall educational development of children affected by migration (Cummins, 2001; Hek, 2005; Janta and Harte, 2016; Taylor and Sidhu, 2012). Some schools prohibit the use of mother tongues that differ from the language of instruction in schools, which may severely damage the educational development of migrant/refugee students (Oikonomidou, 2010; Van Maele and Poeze, 2018).

The proportion of immigrant students who receive language support and the regulations regarding languages used in classrooms vary by country (Crul et al., 2019). For instance, in OECD countries, an average of 50 per cent of first generation immigrant students have been receiving language support in recent years, but there are important variations between countries. For example, only 13 per cent of immigrant students receive this support in Slovenia and 80 per cent receive this support in Finland and Sweden (Huddleston, Joki, Vankova, 2015).

In terms of the language used in schools, practices also differ between countries. In Denmark, migrant and refugee children are taught almost exclusively in Danish and lessons in the child's native language are provided as a secondary subject (UNICEF, 2018a). This is also the case in Finland, although a recent study found that almost half of students from immigrant backgrounds had not been able to master Finnish, hindering progress in their studies and risking the completion of their basic education (ibid.). In Sweden, a revision of the education law in 2016 gave children the right to receive lessons in their native language if they felt they could not follow the curriculum in Swedish, and the same option has been put in place in Norway (Crul et al., 2019; UNICEF, 2018a). Syrian refugees face huge language barriers in Lebanon, as they are required to follow the same curriculum as Lebanese students, whereby several subjects are taught in French or English (Crul et al., 2019). Likewise, Turkish language barriers are among the main challenges for Syrian children in Turkey (Dorman, 2014).

In the Latin America and Caribbean region, overcoming language barriers is a common struggle for Venezuelan children, especially in host countries where Spanish is not the dominant language, for example in Brazil (Portuguese), and Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago (English). In Brazil, the language barrier can also complicate formal school participation, depending on the state. Some states require students to have their school records translated into Portuguese in order to enroll, while others are more lenient. Once students

33 UNICEF LACRO press release, 4 April 2019. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/press-releases/Venezuela-migrant-crisis-1.1-million-children-across-the-region-will-need-assistance>

enroll, language barriers hinder learning, especially in schools where there is no strategy in place for helping newcomers and educators to overcome these barriers.

Students' educational background, age and gender

Previous research has shown that difficulties faced by migrant children result, to a large extent, from differences in educational and social background, instead of specific ethnic inequalities (Kristen, Edele, Kalter, Kogan, Schulz, Stanat and Will, 2011). For example, children who did not attend school in their country-of-origin face difficulties with learning general school skills (Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Van Maele and Poeze, 2018). Even if they did attend school in their country of origin, the differences in school practices may pose serious challenges for their integration in host country schools. Additionally, children without a diploma, or without the right diploma, are typically prohibited from accessing higher educational levels (*ibid.*). Cultural misunderstandings can also fuel prejudice and discrimination, causing students with a migration background, who might already be struggling with a new language and culture, to also deal with the impact of negative attitudes (McBrien, 2005).

The educational needs, opportunities and outcomes of migrant children are also greatly determined by the age at which the migration took place. Students who migrate at a later age have worse educational outcomes. For example, 40 per cent of Mexican migrants who arrived at age 7 into the United States did not complete secondary education, compared with 70 per cent of those who arrived at age 14 (UNESCO, 2018). A rich body of literature covering various contexts, including countries in Latin American and the Caribbean, have also reported higher school dropout rates, less years of schooling, and lower levels of educational attainment and performance among migrant students who moved when they were older (Aoki and Santiago, 2018; Bausela Herreras, 2017; Beck, Corak and Tienda, 2012; Böhlmark, 2008; Chiswick and DebBurman, 2004; Cohen-Goldner and Epstein, 2014; Gonzalez, 2003; Hermansen, 2017; Lee and Edmonston, 2011; Lemmermann and Riphahn, 2018; Ohinata and Van Ours, 2012; Schaafsma and Sweetman, 2001). Moreover, age at arrival can affect migrant/refugee children's educational attainment indirectly. For example, arriving at later ages has negative impacts on proficiency in the language of the host country (Bleakley and Chin, 2010; Myers et al., 2009). Migration can also hamper the important transition from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn', as well as the acquisition of basic skills for the development of mathematical thinking (Bausela Herreras, 2017; Beck et al., 2012).

Students with a migration background may also face gender-specific challenges, as within certain cultures parental educational expectations differ for sons and daughters. Parents can be more protective towards girls or have more traditional ideas about the future of their daughters. This may mean that girls are not allowed to participate in activities outside the household and that their educational careers are less, or not, valued (Van Maele and Poeze, 2018). In many contexts, girls are more likely than boys to compensate for labor shortages that result from the migration of family members, which may have effects on girls' school attendance and educational outcomes (Whitehead, Hashim, and Iversen, 2007). The daughters of migrants are also less likely to benefit from remittances sent back home, including when remittances are invested in education (Behrman and Knowles, 1999; Cebotari, 2020). On the other hand, traditional gender roles for boys might result in them dropping out of school in order to find employment to financially support their families (*ibid.*). There are also gender disparities in education access, although these differ significantly across regions, and for refugee children, between camp and urban settings (Dryden-Peterson, 2011). There are instances, however, when girls benefit from migration more than boys. In contexts such as Mexico and Tajikistan, research shows that the education of girls benefits when family members migrate (Antman, 2012; Cebotari, 2018, Gatskova et al., 2019; Nobles, 2011). In Ghana, the perception of migration and migrating among girls was also found to be more favorable when compared to boys (Cebotari, Mazzucato and Siegel, 2017).

Parents

Parents with a migration background generally try to be supportive of their children in school. Yet cultural, language, or system-knowledge barriers can hinder participation and involvement in their children's school lives (Ahad and Benton, 2018; Scholfield, 2006; Van Maele and Poeze, 2018). According to the Van Maele and Poeze (2018), parents with a migration background experience several challenges with respect to school involvement, resulting in parents not coming to school (e.g., at parent evenings) or not being involved with school at home. This can be because migrant and refugee parents do not (sufficiently) master the language of instruction and are unable to help their children with their homework. An additional barrier is that these parents often experience trauma, grief, stress or insecurity with respect to their new situation.

Studies from across the globe suggest that migrant/refugee children are less likely to partake in pre-school education than their native peers (Borgna, 2015; FRA, 2017) and cite the lack of adequate information on the value of early childhood education and language barriers of parents as key explanatory factors (FRA, 2017; Van Maele and Poeze, 2018). Also, immigrant parents often face information and resource constraints that prevent them from successfully navigating education choices in recipient countries and enrolling their children in appropriate schools (EU, 2013).

In many Latin American and Caribbean countries, the school enrollment process is not well understood by parents with a recent migration experience. For example, migrant/refugee students in Colombia are permitted to enroll in school without necessarily fulfilling all of the official documentation³⁴ requirements. Yet, a 2018 study showed that 44 per cent of surveyed Venezuelan migrants in the border regions of Norte de Santander and La Guajira believed that they had to present documentation (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2019). The lack of previous experiences and the absence of clarity around enrollment rules also affects the decision making of migrant/refugee parents, school directors and lower-level government officials, further hindering educational access. In Ecuador, for instance, there is anecdotal evidence of school officials demanding student transcripts and identification documents of parents, even though migrant/refugee children can enroll in school by taking a placement exam (and without providing additional documentation) (Selee and Bolter, 2020). Similarly, parents wishing to enroll their children in Peruvian public schools, are sometimes directed by school officials to the Ministry of Education, as school directors are not always up to speed with the constantly changing regulations on migrant education (ibid.).

34 ID, school records, school report cards, etc.

Box 2. Barriers to education in emergency contexts

Education is one of the first services families and children ask for in emergency contexts. However, it is also the first service postponed and one of the last to restart (UNICEF, 2017). NGOs and UN agencies organize or support educational interventions through so-called 'education in emergencies' programmes to protect children from further harm and to stimulate their cognitive and psycho-social development (Burde et al. 2017). These interventions are needed to ensure the right to education for children in emergency contexts, thereby protecting children from physical harm and exploitation by offering 'safe spaces' for learning (Aguilar and Retamal, 2009; Anderson, Hofmann and Hyll-Larsen, 2011).

Nonetheless, schools and educational systems in emergency contexts are often severely damaged or destroyed by violent conflict or natural disasters, and students and teachers are attacked or intimidated by combatants, preventing access to schools (Burde et al., 2017). Moreover, in these settings, schools are typically underfunded, unsupported by national policies, understaffed, unsafe, have overcrowded classrooms, and are lacking adequate educational materials (UNICEF, 2012).

In Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), where the government can no longer afford school maintenance and basic supplies and utilities, such as tables and chairs, functioning toilets and electricity, educators have either fled the country or abandoned the teaching profession en masse (The Guardian, 2020a). According to the national teacher union, thousands of the country's 550,000 teachers did not return to work after the 2019 summer vacation; this includes up to 60 per cent of teachers in Venezuelan most populous state, Zulia (ibid.). Remaining teachers have to teach all subjects and to combine classes, while schools enlist volunteer parents and shut down partially or completely. Hunger has been a major driver behind 3 million Venezuelan children dropping out of school as parents can no longer afford the cost of food and schools have stopped providing meals (The New York Times, 2020). The transportation system has also failed, causing additional barriers to school access and attendance.

Globally, barriers to education in emergency contexts include: attacks on schools leading to school closures, safety concerns about the journey to school, lack of staff, and destroyed facilities, all of which reduce school attendance and learning (Save the Children, 2013; UNICEF, 2017). Also, Child labor, where children are pressured to work to help reduce their family's financial burden (NRC, 2018; UNICEF, 2017). And bureaucratic challenges, such as non-transferable qualifications, language barriers, and unwelcome environments all hinder school access, attendance and the learning of children in emergency settings (UNICEF, 2017). Additionally, refugee education is often carried out by teachers who are refugees themselves. While these teachers are often grateful for reclaiming a professional identity, they also feel frustrated and powerless towards the educational barriers around them (Adelman, 2019).

3. Promising practices

Several good practices for providing inclusive education for children with a migration background were identified in the literature. Some of these practices, especially those coming out of Latin America and Caribbean countries, are presented in this chapter by considering the same three levels as the previous chapter, i.e., the **macro-level** (educational system), the **meso-level** (schools and communities), and the **micro-level** (individual and interpersonal characteristics). A special section on promising practices to guarantee education access for children in emergency contexts is also included in this section (see Box 5).

3.1. Promising practices at the macro-level

Enrollment policies and legislations

Governments across the globe have recently taken important steps in addressing macro-level barriers, such as strict documentation and legislation requirements for school enrollment and higher education participation. The Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education was adopted by UNESCO's General Conference in November 2019.³⁵ The Global Convention is the first United Nations treaty on higher education with a global scope and is expected to facilitate academic mobility, and to ensure transparent and non-discriminatory recognition of higher education qualifications. In 2019, UNESCO also launched a Qualification Passport, targeting specifically vulnerable refugee children and migrants.³⁶

Some Latin American and Caribbean countries have also created a legal framework that promotes the educational inclusion of children with a migration experience. In 2002, the Colombian Constitutional Court instructed municipal education authorities to treat internally displaced children preferentially in terms of access to education (UNESCO, 2018). In Argentina, a 2004 migration law and the subsequent *Patria Grande* programme, protect the admission of undocumented migrants to educational institutions (UNESCO, 2018). In Chile, regulations in force since 2005 dictate that no child can be denied school enrollment based on their immigration status. Since 2014, the Chilean government has also been implementing a programme called *Escuela Somos Todos*, aiming at processing and delivering visas to migrant students and exempting them from financial proofs (Joiko and Vásquez, 2016).

More recently, and in response to the Venezuelan migrant and refugee crisis, Chile and Colombia have started issuing unique identification numbers to children who lack identity documents when they enroll in school. Prior to January 2017, non-native students in Chile were issued an identification number that was internal to the school they were attending, and not unique across the country. This prevented migrant/refugee students from taking the national university selection test or having their studies certified. The reformed system grants students a number that is unique across the country, thus expanding their access to the country's education system (Selee and Bolter, 2020). In 2018, Colombia established a similar system to encourage the enrollment of children without valid identification documents. Children in irregular immigration statuses are issued a unique identification number, as long as their parents declare that they are in the process of regularization. While this system has greatly expanded the inclusion of migrant/refugee children in Colombian public schools, the ability of some parents to eventually regularize their children remains a challenge, due to the limited regularization options available to those entering the country illegally. This affects the ability of students with irregular statuses to graduate from high school and to take full advantage of the education system (ibid).

35 UNESCO. (2019). What is the Global Convention on Higher Education? <https://en.unesco.org/news/what-global-convention-higher-education>

36 UNESCO. (2019). Qualifications Passport for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants. <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-emergencies/qualifications-passport>

While most countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region officially request that students and parents provide identification documents and official transcripts of past studies for school enrollment, some have recognized that this is not possible for all immigrant families and authorities have adopted flexible documentation requirements. In Colombia and Ecuador, students without records of past studies can take a placement exam to determine their grade level and to enroll in school (Selee and Bolter, 2020). In Uruguay, children without documentation can enroll in school for one year and they can have their studies certified on a case-by-case basis, even if they fail to provide the required documentations during that first year (Ibid.). In Peru, parents can sign a sworn declaration to enroll their children without identity documents in school and children can often remain in school even if parents do not provide the identity documents later (Ibid.). In Costa Rica, children without a certificate of past studies can enroll with a proof of age or a sworn declaration of the child's age signed by parents, along with a placement exam (Ibid.). Nevertheless, apostilled (authenticated) copies of school records are still a strict requirement for school enrollment in some countries in the region. Until recently, the only way for Venezuelans living in these countries to obtain an apostille was to request it in person from the Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, as of June 2019, the Venezuelan government began allowing its citizens to request and receive these copies electronically, making it easier for them to meet this enrollment requirement.³⁷

Education system capacity

Long before the recent surge in migration, many Latin American and Caribbean communities were struggling with school overcrowding. In recent years, vacancies for new students have become even scarcer. Nevertheless, a few countries in the region have taken decisive action in addressing capacity shortages in their school system. Peru stands out in this regard. Faced with a massive surge in the demand for vacancies in its capital city, in 2019 the government decided to expand the afternoon shift of the school day in 112 schools in Lima, and is currently exploring the option of opening schools at night to accommodate even more students (Selee and Bolter, 2020).³⁸ Furthermore, under the campaign 'Lima learns – not a child without studying', launched in April 2019 to boost school enrollment among out-of-school children and adults who had not completed basic education, 10,000 additional slots were created in 94 schools across the country. As a result, according to a UNHCR survey, the out-of-school rate among Venezuelan children has decreased from 69 per cent (in January 2019) to 51 per cent (in November 2019) (Ibid.).

3.2. Best Practices at the meso-level

Teachers and educational materials

Teachers with an immigrant background can help immigrant children by establishing positive role models. In this regard, teacher exchange programmes have been found to be successful (De Paola and Brunello, 2016). A prime example is the Binational Programme of Migrant Education (PROBEM) that was initiated in 1987 by Mexico and the United States. One of the principal components of the programme, which was designed to support the education of migrant children, was teacher exchange (García, 2014). However, as Mexican teachers were assigned to federal migrant education programmes, without interactions with educators in regular schools, their understanding of the operation, curricula and pedagogies of the US educational system as well as the impact of the programme were limited (Gándara, 2008).

Teacher training programmes aimed at increasing interculturality and improving the accessibility of education content in the classroom can also help boost the educational attainment of migrant/refugee children (De Paola and Brunello, 2016; Melis, 2018; Van Maele and Poeze, 2018). It is worth highlighting the Basic

37 Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela, Ministerio del Poder Popular par Relaciones Exteriores. (2019). Updating the online apostille system guarantees transparency and agility of the process. <http://www.mppre.gob.ve/en/2019/06/17/online-apostille-system-agility/>

38 Cronkite News. (2019). Schools in Peru are under added pressure from wave of Venezuelan migrants. 3 May 2019. <https://cronkitenews.azpbs.org/2019/05/03/venezuela-migrants-education/>

Education Without Borders Programme (PEBSF), an initiative developed by the Mexican government to promote teacher trainings on the creation of intercultural learning environments, innovative language and communication practices, and pedagogical interventions using less routine teaching methods (García, 2014). However, a large body of evidence also indicates that one-off isolated training courses on any topic are not sufficient to bring about lasting behavioral change in educators. Rather, there is a need for ongoing and continuous support for planning, development and practice, in order to break old habits and to help teachers establish multicultural and intercultural approaches in the classroom. Evidence from across the globe also suggests that paying attention in general to the origin cultures of students with a migrant background throughout the school will foster their integration (see *Box 3*). This can be achieved by, for example, the provision of halal food, or the wearing of religious symbols at school (Van Maele and Poeze, 2018).

Discrimination

To facilitate the integration of migrant/refugee students in schools, countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have been promoting inclusion and working against xenophobia. For example, Mexico has been expanding the nation's educational inclusion efforts to also cover migrant/refugee children. Several initiatives have been developed under the Educational Inclusion and Equity Programme (PIEE), a national strategy to allocate resources aiming at improving education for children in vulnerable situations. The initiatives help migrant/refugee children overcome the risk of educational exclusion and marginalization through support with educational materials, teacher recruitment and training, as well as school and classroom infrastructure (García, 2014).

Non-Spanish speaking countries, such as Brazil as well as Trinidad and Tobago, have also been actively addressing the consequences of the fastest-escalating displacement crisis in the region, and welcoming migrant/refugee students from Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (UNESCO, 2018). Even at the municipal level, São Paulo, in Brazil, launched an awareness campaign and established a Municipal Council for Migrants to promote the political participation and rights of immigrants, including access to education (Ibid.).

Box 3. Integration, identity construction and the role of the school

The integration of immigrant children into host school systems and societies, and its relationship with identity construction, is a recurrent theme in the Ibero-American literature. According to Juliano (2002), schools play a key role in promoting the integration of immigrant children in host societies, but also in strengthening cultural ties with their country of origin, allowing them to freely develop a unique identity. More recently, Pozzo (2013), who investigated the process of identity formation by migrant students in Argentina, confirmed that misconceptions and bias held by teachers towards immigrant populations translate into inequitable learning opportunities. Nock (2019) reported a positive impact on self-esteem and confidence of a school-based intervention targeting Mexican immigrant children in California, which, through playful workshops, sought to motivate children to share their migratory experiences and to freely express their anguish or discontent.

Research has also highlighted the importance of incorporating multicultural or intercultural elements into school curricula. Multicultural teaching and attention to cultural sensitivity in school reduce discrimination and ethnic prejudices among native students (Van Maele and Peoze, 2018). The role of physical education classes in facilitating the interaction between immigrant and native children is also highlighted in the literature (Carter-Thuillier, López-Pastor, Gallardo-Fuentes and Carter-Beltran, 2017; Ruiz-Valdivia, Molero-López Barajas, Zagalaz-Sánchez and Cachón-Zagalaz, 2012). The effectiveness of these practices depends on the educational context, including factors such as a global vision and mutual respect of other cultures, a value system based on tolerance and non-discrimination, and the development of common cultural elements.

Alternative educational opportunities

For migrant and refugee children who are unable to enroll in public education systems, the provision of educational alternatives is critical. Recognizing this need, many organizations and recipient governments have invested in education and technology (EdTech) solutions (*see also Box 4*). In Trinidad and Tobago, where schools are not allowed to admit non-citizens or non-residents,³⁹ organizations have launched online learning platforms to meet the educational needs of Venezuelan refugee children. In 2019, a coalition of international organizations (UNHCR and UNICEF) and local NGOs (Living Water Community and TTV Solidarity Network) launched an online high school program for Venezuelan migrants/refugees aged 15 years and above (Selee and Bolter, 2020). The programme is free, complemented with some in-person support, and offers a high school diploma certified by the Venezuelan Ministry of Education upon completion, but has strict documentation requirements for enrollment. Another initiative offers an online programme for children aged 5 through to 17 with no documentary requirements to enroll (Selee and Bolter, 2020). The programme follows Trinidad and Tobago's education curriculum and is therefore offered in English with support for students who speak other native languages. It results in a certification from the Caribbean Examinations Council. By the end of October 2019, a total of 888 children had been enrolled and were making use of the two online platforms (*ibid.*).

In Peru, a non-profit initiative, called the Light and Leadership Initiative, offers free after-school programmes and supplemental classes including in English, art and sports for children aged 7 to 17 years.⁴⁰ The initiative started in 2008 in the Huaycán region, where many Venezuelan refugees live. Furthermore, UN agencies have been working on setting up protective learning spaces for Venezuelan refugee children and incorporating them into formal education. In 2019 UNICEF ran an awareness campaign and enrolled 824 children and adolescents living in shelters into formal schools in Roraima, Brazil; meanwhile, 3,200 children were reached by emergency education activities carried out in 10 learning spaces. UNICEF is also working on the possibility of recognizing learning spaces as part of formal education in the state.⁴¹

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Latin American and Caribbean region, governments (in collaboration with UNICEF) have organized and delivered a range of alternatives to school-based education to ensure learning continuity. Since April 2020, 42 million students in the region have been receiving distance and home-based learning delivered through 'take home' paper-based packages, radio, TV, internet, and other platforms (UNICEF 2020a). Even so, 137 million children and adolescents in the region are currently not in school. Recognizing that refugee and migrant children find it harder to access virtual schooling and other alternative educational opportunities than children from local communities, in Brazil, UNICEF partnered with local radio stations in Boa Vista, Manaus and Belém. Through this collaboration, an educational audio programme was developed in three languages (Portuguese, Spanish and Warao), focused on refugee/migrant children and adolescents (*ibid.*).

39 Unless they possess a student's permit issued by the head of the immigration office.

40 <https://cronkitenews.azpbs.org/2019/05/03/venezuela-migrants-education/>

41 UNICEF Brazil. Crise migratória venezuelana Crise migratória venezuelana no Brasil. <https://www.unicef.org/brazil/crise-migratoria-venezuelana-no-brasil>

Box 4. Learning passport

The Learning Passport is an innovative UNICEF-led digital education project that combines a digital platform developed by Microsoft with an education model designed by Cambridge University. The project allows vulnerable, primary school level children who have experienced education disruptions to continue learning online through a customized platform featuring textbooks, videos and interactive content in their national language. Digitized curriculum is curated at the country-level in collaboration with national and local governments in order to best serve learners' and educators' specific needs. The Learning Passport also captures a record of each student's progress. So, no matter what happens in a child's life, they will always be able to prove their education record, allowing them to pursue further study and obtain jobs in the future (<https://www.learningpassport.org/about-learning-passport>).

3.3. Best Practices at the micro-level

Language of instruction

While it is obvious that schools should facilitate second language learning for those whose mother tongue is different, it is typically overlooked that a good mastery of a first language helps students to learn a second language, and improves educational development more broadly (Cummins, 2001). Better educational outcomes can be gained by encouraging migrant students to use their mother tongue and allowing this to be the official second foreign language in their curriculum (Crul et al., 2019).

In some countries, students with a migration background can enroll directly into mainstream education, receiving introductory classes and language support at the same time (e.g., in Austria, Italy, parts of Germany, Greece, Sweden and Poland) (Crul et al., 2019). In Finland, the United Kingdom, and in some schools in the Netherlands, migrant and refugee students are able to follow individually designed curricula (ibid.). In Sweden, it is mandatory to have a qualified support person in each school. Extra support for schoolwork is also offered in EU countries such as Austria, Germany, Finland, France, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands and Poland (Koehler, 2017). In Bulgaria, multiple stakeholders are involved in addressing the needs of refugee students, and schools in Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, and Sweden organize special programmes and rituals to welcome refugee students (Koehler, 2017). Schools in Brazil have also developed Portuguese language classes targeted to meet the needs of Venezuelan students and offered Spanish-language training to teachers and staff (Selee and Bolter, 2020).

Increasing parental awareness of educational opportunities

Educational systems across the globe are trying to overcome information barriers to education access. For example, schools in several European countries (e.g., Belgium, Germany, Sweden) organize group sessions to inform refugees about the education system (Koehler, 2017). In Sweden, the assessment of students' qualifications is done together by parents, teachers, students and interpreters (ibid.). The Colombian Ministry of Education has also recognized that raising awareness among immigrant communities about the school enrollment process is a key priority (Selee and Bolter, 2020).

Box 5. Promising practices in emergency contexts

Burde et al. (2016) have reviewed and summarized best practices in improving educational outcomes for children in emergency settings. According to their evaluation, community-based education has proven to be a strong intervention for improving access to education in an emergency context, especially for girls in primary schools. For example, the These Inspiring Girls Enjoy Reading (TIGER) programme in Jordan is a community-led mentoring scheme that encourages adolescent girls to stay in school (UNHCR, 2016). Other promising interventions include girls-only schools, female teachers, tailored training for teachers with limited qualifications, distance learning and accelerated learning programmes. For example, Ethiopia's Accelerated Education Programme facilitates a faster and smoother transition into formal education and has resulted in the enrollment of over 12,800 refugee children in 2016 (UNHCR, 2016).

Digital learning can also support education in crisis settings, as long as it does not replace face-to-face teaching (UNHCR, 2016). For example, UNHCR and the Vodafone Foundation connect refugees with existing classrooms through Instant Classroom Kits in Kenya, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the United Republic of Tanzania. Meanwhile, the Teachers for Teachers programme connects refugee teachers to their professional peers worldwide for guidance and support. The Ideas Box programme provides a portable multimedia cultural center globally. The Connected Learning Consortium for Higher Education for Refugees programme combines digital access to courses worldwide with face-to-face learning. Over 5,000 refugees across nine countries have successfully attained an accredited degree in higher education through this connected learning programme since 2004. Recently, research on the Akelius Digital Language Learning Course, targeting migrant and refugee children in Greece, found positive effects on language learning when used in a classroom setting and in a blended manner (Karamperidou, Theodorou, Dreesen, Brossard, Kamei and Ortiz-Correa, 2020). The course is associated with improvement in learning outcomes, by comparison with similar students in similar classes but without the Akelius course, varied across language skills domains. The study reports an 8 per cent improvement in listening, 9 per cent in reading, an impressive 25 per cent in speaking, and 34 per cent in writing skills (ibid.)

In post-conflict contexts, Ager, Akesson, Stark, Flouri, Okot, McCollister and Boothby (2011), who studied internally displaced children in Northern Uganda, found a significant positive effect of the Psychosocial Structured Activities (PSSA) programme on children's well-being and school enjoyment. The programme improved children's resilience progressively in 15 class sessions through structured activities such as drama, movement, music and art, while simultaneously addressing parental support and community involvement.

In Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), non-profit organizations have been providing food and school supplies to motivate children to stay in school. For example, the Cuatro Por Venezuela Foundation has sent 58,000 pounds of food and provided school supplies for more than 350 families; Pasi3n Petare also provides a daily meal for 2,000 students. UNICEF and its partner organizations have provided educational kits for 150,000 children and supplied food and water for children in schools. Fe y Algeria, a Catholic relief organization, provides free education to 170 schools across the country and has implemented a food programme for children in school. Furthermore, UNICEF has partnered with Fe y Algeria and reached more than 100,000 people through radio communication with information to help children continue their education.

4. Policy and research recommendations

This report reviewed empirical evidence on the barriers to equitable education faced by migrant/refugee children and promising practices for addressing these barriers. Drawn from the literature review, broad policy recommendations are formulated below. To meet the specific needs of migrant/refugee children in different contexts, suggested measures need to be carefully contextualized and prioritized by actors involved in migrant education. The section concludes with recommendations for future research on the nexus of migration and education.

4.1. Recommendations for governments of host countries and their partners

- **Create a supportive legal framework to encourage the incorporation of migrant/refugee children into formal schools.** Residency status and documentation requirements should not be barriers for migrant/refugee children to enroll in school, follow national curricula, sit for national exams or to earn recognized qualifications. Standardized placement exams can be used to determine the grade level of migrant/refugee students who lack records of past studies and/or proof of age. Establishing a system issuing unique student identification numbers, similar to those developed by Chile and Colombia, can also lift barriers to school enrollment for undocumented migrant and refugee children, allowing them to enjoy the full benefits of host education systems. Empowering decentralized education officers (including school directors) to make enrollment/ placement decisions and to organize support measures necessary for migrant/refugee children, based on their own capacities and the specific needs of the target population, can also produce positive results in the short run.
- **Explore solutions that improve school access and encourage enrollment of migrant/refugee students** without exacerbating chronic challenges of the host education system. In countries where refugee and migrant children are concentrated in certain areas only, host governments may be able to encourage a more even distribution of the migrant population (across their territory) in order to relieve the burden carried by schools in high concentration areas. Governments that are already facing capacity concerns can replicate Peru's action to expand the school day in the capital city of Lima as a means of accommodating additional students. Lowering the costs associated with education (e.g., transportation, uniforms, school supplies, etc.) will further encourage migrant and refugee students to attend school.
- **Ensure that teachers are equipped to work in a diverse classroom.** It is critical that national education policies ensure that pre-service training and continuous professional development programmes effectively equip teachers with intercultural competences, linguistic support and awareness competences, as well as the ability to reflect on their own beliefs, cultural and socioeconomic differences.
- **Develop accelerated education programmes and provide linguistic support for children** who have experienced significant educational disruptions and face serious language barriers. This is especially important in the post COVID-19 environment as learning losses due to prolonged school closures are expected to be significant, with some estimates suggesting immediate effects on the acquisition of foundational skills (Alban, forthcoming). Amending national curricula to be more culturally-inclusive and removing content that is politicized and discriminatory can further improve the self-esteem and self-image of children with a migration background and subsequently their academic performance. Finally, there is a need for greater integrated mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) as part of migrant-contextualized education programmes, especially for children who have experienced forced displacement.

- **Provide alternative educational opportunities for children who are unable to enroll in the formal education system**, through online learning platforms and other digital tools. Low-cost after-school programmes and supplemental classes, especially on language and cultural support, can help children with a migration experience to integrate into school and society better. Other interventions that have proven to be effective in emergency contexts include community-based education, accelerated learning programmes, psychosocial structured activities, and digital learning combined with face-to-face learning. The use of digital tools holds special promise for the provision of education services during COVID-19. However, it is important that organizations implementing education technology solutions design their tools to be sufficiently lightweight to adequately function in low connectivity settings. Making educational content downloadable and usable offline can also increase the use of digital learning tools among migrant and refugee children (Karamperidou, et al, 2020).
- **Invest in school supplies, school meal plans and support parents.** A large body of evidence from across the globe suggests that the provision of school meals and school supplies encourages low-income families, including migrant and refugee families, to keep their children in school. The closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted many vital school feeding programmes, threatening children's right to adequate food and nutrition as well as their education. According to the World Food Programme, in the Latin American and Caribbean region 80 million children are currently missing out on what, for many, is the healthiest meal of the day, placing them at risk of developing nutrient deficiencies (UNICEF, 2020). In this context, welfare programmes that support children's caregivers are reliable channels to ensure quality care and better learning outcomes for migrant children. Children rely on family support for integration, learning, and well-being, and a stable care arrangement benefits the education of children in migrant families.

4.2. Recommendations for donors

- **Ensure reliable multi-year funding.** Protracted displacement is frequently a multi-year, sometimes decades-long process, and efforts to support those facing these situations require sustained investment. Therefore, achieving positive education outcomes for migrant and refugee children necessitates bridging short-term humanitarian and long-term development education programming. This in turn, requires ensuring sustainable education funding at the start of humanitarian migration crises that are likely to evolve into longer-term protracted crises spanning the humanitarian-development nexus.

4.3. Recommendations for host schools and communities

- **Support migrant/refugee children and their families to foster social ties** with schools and local communities, for instance, by organizing parental social events, ensuring equal participation in school management boards, and offering access to intercultural mediators, social interpreters and translators.
- **Encourage the community and educational integration of migrant/refugee children** by helping them learn new languages, understand new cultures, and by providing information about the educational system and the school enrollment process to their parents and caregivers. Organizing awareness raising activities to reduce stigma and discrimination is also important for improving the educational outcomes of children with a migration background.

4.4. Recommendations for future research

- **Further explore the role of education in migration.** There is a particular gap in understanding how children and their families weigh education as a key migration driver, and whether the search for educational opportunities is tied to cyclical migration patterns (i.e., children's plans to return to country/community of origin after gaining education in the host country). This has relevance for informing where to invest in certain avenues of curricula development, particularly around equipping migrant children with skills and knowledge tailored to their home markets, in anticipation of their subsequent return.
- **Support the collection and use of large-scale longitudinal data on child migration, education, and well-being.** Current research relies primarily on evidence snapshots to explore various aspects of the education of children in different migration settings. Large scale longitudinal data is needed to better unpack the dynamic effects of educational outcomes as well as the needs of migrant children.
- **Include displaced children with disabilities.** While there is growing international agreement on the importance of providing inclusive education services for children with disabilities (Mont and Sprunt, 2019), existing research largely overlooks disabled children and youth in the context of migration. Recent studies have indicated that minimum inclusive education standards for displaced children with disabilities are generally not met in recipient countries (Muhaidat, Alodat and Almeqdad, 2020). Nevertheless, the specific social and physical barriers that migrant and refugee children with disabilities confront in various displacement settings remain poorly understood. In-depth, qualitative studies are needed to better understand the role of legislation, school capacity, financial limitations, programme availability and teachers' qualifications in the provision of inclusive education.
- **Include children and youth migrants' voices.** Existing research relies almost exclusively on adult perceptions, which may not effectively capture the complexity of the educational needs and the challenges children with a migration background face. Recent studies have indicated that adults and children report differently when assessing education outcomes, with adults tending to over-report on educational performance and participation (Cebotari et al., 2016; Jordan and Graham, 2012). Ensuring that children and youth migrants' own voices are better consulted is important to understand their subjective challenges to, motivations, and decision-making rationales for engaging in education.

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Annex

1. Migration flows across the world

According to the recent estimates, there were 272 million international migrants worldwide, or 3.5 per cent of the global population (IOM, 2019a).⁴² Of these, 111 million reside in high income countries and 30.5 million in upper middle-income countries. In some countries, such as the ones in the Gulf States (e.g., Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates), international migrants constitute the majority (UNDESA, 2019). Of all global migrants, 14 per cent are under 20 years of age – with the exception of forcibly displaced migrants. Among this group the percentage of migrants under 20 years of age is higher (UNDESA, 2019). In fact, according to the most recent International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates, 52 per cent of the global refugee population (25.9 million in 2018) were children under 18 years of age (IOM, 2019a).

Even though migration is a global phenomenon, the size and composition of these flows vary greatly between countries and regions. While there has been much attention on South-North migration in academic and policy circles, it is important to highlight that nearly half of all migrants from developing countries reside in other developing countries, so-called South-South migration (Gindling, 2009; Ratha and Shaw, 2007). For instance, the majority of migrants born in Africa, Asia, and Europe migrate within their region of birth (IOM, 2019a). At the same time, most migrants from Latin America, Caribbean, and North America migrate outside their regions of birth, while Oceania retains about half of migrants within its region (*ibid.*). Notably, internal migration is a significant phenomenon in many developed and developing contexts. For example, in countries such as China, internal migration involves large distances and similar mechanisms of child separation when compared to international migration in other contexts (Lu, 2014; Wu and Cebotari, 2018).

While the following sections (1.1 and 1.2) will deepen the understanding of migration flows in different regions and contexts, it is important to note that estimating the number of families or children that have migrated and/or are affected by migration is difficult. There are a number of methodological challenges. These include a dearth of data on migration in general, as well as poor quality of data (including the absence of large scale, longitudinal and national representative data). At the same time there are major differences between countries in the documentation of migration as a result of the lack of standardized data collection methods. Finally, another challenge is the undocumented nature of some forms of migration and the insistence of certain recipient states to deny internationally displaced individuals their refugee status (and any associated rights). While these challenges pertain to migration data in general, they are further compounded when estimating children affected by migration. Children are often not recorded as a separate category from adults, and if they are, there is typically no distinction made between the many ways in which children can be affected by migration. In policy circles, there is a tendency to focus on vulnerable children, such as those trafficked, refugees or asylum seekers, which obscures information about other types of children with a migration experience.

42 Although the absolute number of migrants increased over time, the percentage of international migrants of the global population has remained fairly constant: it was 3.1 per cent in 1960 compared to 3.4 per cent in 2017 (World Bank, 2018). However, it is important to realize that these estimates refer to official statistics and are an underestimation of the actual number of people who migrate, as many migrants are undocumented or unregistered (see e.g., Cebotari et al. 2018 for an example of official and unofficial discrepancies in the estimates of Ghanaian migrants abroad).

1.1. Regional differences

Differences in migration flows across regions are stark, both in absolute and relative terms (see Table 2). For example, Europe and North America together host almost 50 per cent of all global migrants, compared to 4.3 per cent in the Latin America and Caribbean region (UNDESA, 2019). There are also big differences when considering the relative size of the share of migrants compared to the total population. For example, while Oceania hosts only 3.3 per cent of global migration, migrants represent 12.4 per cent of the total population in the region.

Table 2. Overview of the share of migration by region, 2019

Region	International migrants (in millions)	% of global migrants	% of the total population
North America	58.6	21.6	16.0
Northern Africa and Western Asia	48.6	17.9	9.4
Sub-Saharan Africa	23.6	8.7	2.2
Latin American and the Caribbean	11.7	4.3	1.8
Oceania	8.9	3.3	12.4
Europe	82.3	30.3	11.0
Eastern and South-Eastern Asia	18.3	6.7	0.8
Central and Southern Asia	79.6	7.2	1.0

Source: UNDESA, 2019

The distribution of migrant children also differs by region. Table 3 shows the share of migrant children in each region, distinguishing between the total share of children and youth aged 0-19 years and the share of children from 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, and 15-19 years of age. Worldwide, almost 25 per cent of all global migrants are children between 0-19 years of age, representing 37.9 million children. The estimates from Table 3 show that the share of children under 20 years of age is largest in Northern Africa and Western Asia, where this group represents 6.9 per cent of all global migrants, followed by sub-Saharan Africa, where the corresponding figure is 4.2 per cent.

Table 3. Overview of migrant children by region, 2019

	0–4		5–9		10–14		15–19		0–19	
	N*	%†	N*	%†	N*	%†	N*	%†	N*	%†
World	7.6	5.0	9.0	5.9	9.4	6.1	11.9	7.7	37.9	24.7
North America	0.6	0.4	0.9	0.6	1.4	0.9	2.3	1.5	5.1	3.4
Northern Africa and Western Asia	2.7	1.8	2.9	1.9	2.5	1.6	2.4	1.5	10.5	6.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	1.6	1.0	1.7	1.1	1.5	1.0	1.6	1.1	6.4	4.2
Latin American and the Caribbean	0.5	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.7	0.4	2.5	1.7
Oceania	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.3	1.0	0.6
Europe	1.0	0.6	1.6	1.1	1.9	1.3	2.7	1.8	7.3	4.7
Eastern and South-Eastern Asia	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.9	0.6	2.4	1.6
Central and Southern Asia	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.9	0.6	2.6	1.7

* in millions; at mid-year; † % from all global migrants, at mid-year
Source: UNDESA, 2019.

1.1.1. The Latin America and Caribbean region

The majority of migration from the Latin America and Caribbean region is directed towards North America. The number of Latin American and Caribbean migrants in North America has increased significantly over the last decades, from an estimated 10 million residing there in the 1990s to approximately 26.6 million in 2019 (IOM, 2019a). The largest migration corridor involving Latin American and Caribbean people is between Mexico and the United States, covering more than 11 million migrants (ibid.). The second largest destination is Europe, which hosted 5 million of the region's nationals in 2019 (ibid.). At the same time, in 2019, around 3 million migrants from other regions lived in Latin American and the Caribbean, mostly citizens from European countries and North America (ibid.).

In 2014, a humanitarian crisis in Central America (including countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras) caused large flows of unaccompanied minors leaving their homes, most of them fleeing to the United States through Mexico (UNICEF, 2016a). The major reason why minors embarked on their dangerous journeys was to escape the violence in these countries. For example, countries such as El Salvador and Honduras ranked highest for the number of homicides in the region (UNICEF, 2016a). Increasingly tight border controls in both Mexico and the US have not stopped these children from trying to reach North America, but it has increased the demand for smugglers, making these children extra vulnerable for abuse, exploitation, kidnapping and extortion (ibid.). There are currently up to 6 million migrants under 18 years of age in the Americas (UNICEF, 2019).

Although finding accurate numbers remains challenging, estimates indicate that children left behind due to the migration of one or both parents is a substantial phenomenon in this region. For example, Cortes (2015) found that 36 per cent of migrant mothers and 40 per cent of migrant fathers left their children behind in Ecuador. The Mexican Family Life Survey revealed that around 7 per cent of all children in Mexico have a migrant father (mostly living in the United States) (Creighton et al., 2009; Nobles, 2011). Using national surveys, Nobles (2013) demonstrated that one in five Mexican children currently experience father absence

due to migration by age 15. A comparative study by DeWaard et al. (2018) showed that parental absence due to migration ranges from affecting 7 per cent of children in Peru to about 21 per cent of children in the Dominican Republic.⁴³

More recently, the crisis in Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) has led to additional migration challenges for countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region, particularly for children. By mid-2019 more than 4 million people had left the country due to violence and insecurity coupled with an unprecedented economic crisis – where inflation was estimated to have reached 1 million per cent by the end of 2018. Levels of migration since 2015 have made Venezuelans one of the largest displaced groups in the world (IOM, 2019b; Werner, 2018). The largest share of people have migrated to Colombia, then Peru, Chile, Ecuador, Argentina and Brazil. Many have also made the journey to Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean (in particular Trinidad and Tobago), the United States and elsewhere (Spain and Italy) (IOM, 2019b). Children and adolescents make up 25 per cent of those who have fled Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). While many children have made the journey with their families, many others have done it alone, putting themselves at risk of being denied their right to education.

1.1.2. Northern America (Canada and the United States)

Northern American migration is mostly characterized by the arrivals of other nationals into the region. In 2019, an estimated 59 million migrants were living in Northern America, of which 51 million were living in the United States and 8 million in Canada (IOM, 2019a). However, while these migrants represent 15 per cent of the United States' population, the share of immigrants in Canada's total population was considerably higher, at over 21 per cent. Many of these migrants originate from the Latin America and Caribbean region (27 million), mostly Mexico, followed by Asia (17 million) and Europe (7 million) (ibid.). Compared to other regions such as Asia or Africa, where intra-regional migration is widespread, more Northern Americans lived outside the region (3 million) than moved within the region (1.4 million) (ibid.).

Children represent a large proportion of the immigrant population in North America. In the United States, the number of children with at least one immigrant parent was 18 million in 2017, of which 88 per cent were born in the country (Migration Policy Institute, 2017). While this is a heterogeneous group in terms of origin or socioeconomic status, the majority of these children have parents originating from Mexico or Latin America (Mistry, Biesanz, Chien, Howes and Benner, 2008). Unaccompanied children make up a large portion of the migration flow to the United States, with about 54,000 unaccompanied children entering the country in 2018 (Bialik, 2019). The large inflow of immigrant children into the United States has also changed the 'demographic makeup' of public schools. The number of foreign-born children in public schools has increased by more than 40 per cent in the period from 1990 to 2010, from 1.54 million to 2.18 million (Murray, 2016). In Canada, approximately 2.2 million children, or 37.5 per cent of all children living in the country, have a migration background, and almost half of these children are from Asia, or with parent(s) from Asia (Statistics Canada, 2017).

In 2018, the United States and Canada hosted over 1 million and 190,000 refugees and asylum seekers, respectively (IOM, 2019a). In the United States, up to 28 per cent of the total refugee population arriving in the country are children under 14 years of age (Migration Policy Institute, 2016). In Canada, there were over 40,000 refugees in 2016, and 39 per cent of this population were children under 14 years of age, with a further 25 per cent aged 15 to 29 years (Statistics Canada, 2016).

While children with an immigrant background have their rights to education guaranteed by both the United States and Canada, their performance in schools differ substantially in the two countries, when compared to non-immigrant children. In the United States, more than one third of all 15 year-old first-generation immigrant children have not reached an adequate proficiency in reading compared to 17 per cent of

43 The other countries studied by DeWaard et al. (2018), and the accompanying percentages of children experiencing parental absence, were: Colombia (9.5 per cent), Costa Rica (8.6 per cent), El Salvador (15.7 per cent), Guatemala (13.9 per cent), Mexico (16.2 per cent), Nicaragua (16.6 per cent), and Puerto Rico (USA) (15.6 per cent).

non-migrant children (UNICEF, 2018b). However, in Canada, first-generation immigrant children and their non-migrant counterparts perform equally well in schools, with only 10 per cent of children in each group unable to achieve an adequate proficiency in reading by the age of 15 years. Furthermore, second generation immigrant children in Canada tend to slightly outperform non-migrant children on the reading score.

1.1.3. Asia

Asia was the origin of about 40 per cent of the world's international migrants in 2019, and more than half of these were residing in other Asian countries (IOM, 2019a). Demographic changes, with low fertility rates and rapidly ageing populations, particularly in Eastern Asia, have prompted governments in countries such as Japan and South Korea to reconsider their restrictive immigration policies and successfully promote (temporary) foreign labour migration. On the other hand, large outward migration flows have made Asian countries one of the largest remittance receivers in the world. In fact, in 2018, India and China were the top two remittance-recipient countries in the world, with the Philippines and Vietnam being placed fourth and 10th, respectively (IOM, 2019a).

Countries in both Southern Asia and South-East Asia are familiar with large migration flows, which are typically directed either to countries within the sub-region (e.g., Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand) or to countries in the Gulf region (IOM, 2019a). While India and Pakistan were the origin countries of most migrants in the Gulf region, currently most temporary workers come from Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh. Outside the region, popular migration destinations include European countries and the United States (*ibid.*)

Migration from countries in Central Asia takes place mostly to the Russian Federation. Intra-regional migration flows are also substantial, and several countries have changed from sending to transit or host countries, such as Kazakhstan, which attracts labour migrants from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan (*ibid.*). As a consequence of these massive migration flows, countries in this sub-region are also major remittance-receiving nations. When calculating remittances as a percentage of GDP, Kyrgyzstan (34 per cent), Tajikistan (31 per cent), and Nepal (28 per cent) were among the top five remittance receiving countries in 2018 globally (*ibid.*).

Internal migration is also a significant phenomenon in most East Asian countries, most notably in China (*ibid.*). China has a long history of both internal migration, with people moving from rural areas to urban areas, and international migration.⁴⁴ According to national statistics, there were 247 million internal migrants in China in 2015, which represent about 20 per cent of China's population (Wu and Cebotari, 2018). While internal migration used to be typically seasonal, this has gradually changed with migrants moving more permanently to urban areas and bringing their families along. Yet, the Chinese *Hukou* system, which assigns citizens a residence status at birth, places many barriers to internal migrants in the cities, as they lack urban residence status. This system severely affects the lives of migrant children, as they are either left behind or sent back to rural areas for their education; or they stay with their parents and give up on their schooling (Hu, 2013; Kong and Meng, 2010; Montgomery, 2012; Wen and Lin, 2012).

Migration of adults also affects the lives of children who stay behind in the place of origin. Data on children left behind in Asia are largely incomplete. Nonetheless, estimates suggest that a substantial number of children live separated from their family members due to migration. For example, between 3-6 million Filipino children, around 1 million Indonesian children, and 500,000 Thai children have been left behind (Bryant, 2005; Cortes, 2015). In Sri Lanka, approximately 1 million children are left behind by their mothers (Save the Children, 2006). In Tajikistan, as many as one third of all children lived in households where at least one family member has migrated abroad (Cebotari, 2018). In China, more than 61 million children have been left behind in rural counties by their parents who migrated to urban areas (Wu and Cebotari, 2018).

44 Considering international migration, China is both an origin and destination country. There were 10 million migrants from China living abroad, and approximately 1 million international migrants living (registered) in China (UNDESA, 2017).

Additionally, parents can bring their children along when they migrate, often with an undocumented status. Estimates show 100,000 undocumented migrant children from Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos in Thailand, and hundreds of thousands of Indonesian children without documents in Malaysia (Bryant, 2005). Undocumented migrant children are vulnerable as they often live in severe poverty and have limited or no access to public services, such as schooling (ibid.). In China, up to 36 million children have migrated with their parents to the cities and faced restricted access to education due to the *Hukou* system (Wu and Cebotari, 2018). Children also migrate unaccompanied and attempts in 2004 to regularize the migrant status in Thailand resulted in over 93,000 children under the age of 15 years that registered with authorities (West, 2008).

1.1.4. Africa

Migration is historically deeply embedded in people's ways of life in Africa. Migration is typically viewed as beneficial, and mobility is considered an important element in people's life course (Save the Children, 2018). The increase in international migration can mostly be attributed to migration from Africa to other regions, predominantly to Europe (IOM, 2019a). In fact, in 2019, there were up to 19 million international migrants originating from Africa living in different regions of the world (ibid.). At the same time, there were 21 million Africans living in another African country in 2019 (ibid.). While migrants from North Africa travel mostly to Europe and the Gulf states, for migrants from countries in West and Central Africa, intra-regional migration is much more common due to visa-free movement among the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) members and the strong networks among many ethnic groups scattered across the region. For instance, Cote D'Ivoire is the destination country of more than 2.5 million migrants, while Nigeria hosts more than 1 million migrants (UNDESA, 2019). Countries in Eastern and Southern Africa are characterised by high intra- and extra-regional movement due to emigration, immigration and forced displacement. In Eastern Africa, Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia, each country hosted more than 1 million immigrants in 2019 (ibid.). Similarly, South Africa remains the main destination of immigration on the continent, with around 4 million migrants residing in the country in 2019 (ibid.).

Given that mobility is ingrained in people's lives, children in Africa often view migration as a source of opportunity (Save the Children, 2018). However, the wider political context negatively impacts the images of migration, with migration being more restricted and associated with clandestine movements and practices (ibid.). Instability in various African countries also results in volatile and involuntary migration. For instance, displacement due to conflict in Africa is widespread, with South Sudan producing the highest number of refugees (2.3 million), with most hosted in neighbouring countries such as Uganda (1.2 million) (IOM, 2019a). Large streams of refugee populations have also originated from Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Eritrea. Environmental change and natural disasters also produced a trail of displacement across the African continent. Drought-related displacements have affected more than 850,000 people in Somalia and contributed to the severe malnourishment of more than 1.2 million children in the country (UN Environment 2018). In 2019, cyclones Idai and Kenneth left a trail of disaster in Zimbabwe and Malawi and displaced more than 130,000 people in Mozambique (IOM, 2019a).

Overall, migration in Africa can be regarded as a mixed phenomenon, driven by violence, instability, environmental factors, and the lack of economic opportunities. Child migration is often considered as a family strategy to mitigate risks and improve household income. This is also reflected by a much higher prevalence of child migration in the region, compared to other regions, as shown in Table 3. There are no accurate data on the number of children on the move within and from Africa, but estimates suggest that one in five of the world's child migrants are from Africa (UNICEF, 2016a) and up to half of all refugees from the continent are children (UNHCR, 2019).

When parents and family members migrate, children often stay behind in fostering arrangements, a widespread practice in many African countries (Goody, 1982). Such fostering norms have traditionally facilitated the migration of parents within the region and beyond. It also results in a large proportion of children who live without a least one biological parent due to migration. There are no precise statistics on the number of African children who stay behind due to migration but evidence from national representative

data suggests that 41 per cent of Ghanaian children, 22 per cent of Nigerian children, and 14 per cent of Angolan children living in urban areas, excluding orphans, may live without a biological parent (Cebotari and Mazzucato, 2016). It is unknown if this is entirely due to migration.

1.1.5. Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

When looking specifically in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, migration dynamics are substantial, as countries in this region are both host and origin countries of a substantial number of migrants.⁴⁵ At the same time, international migrants in the MENA region substantially increased, reaching 34.5 million migrants (including refugees) in 2015, indicating a 150 per cent increase since 1990 (compared to a 60 per cent increase in the global number of migrants) (IOM, 2016). These migrants are partly composed of the largest numbers of temporary labour migrants in the world (IOM, 2018). Many of these migrants are workers who most often leave their families behind because of the temporary nature of their work and the volatility of migration.

International migration is a defining factor of population change in the MENA region, and especially in the Gulf states. Due to cultural proximity, many migrants arriving in the Gulf states originate from North African countries and many others come from within Asia and from outside the region. These migrants make up a large proportion of the Gulf states' populations. For instance, in 2019, migrants accounted for a large part of the total national populations in United Arab Emirates (88 per cent), Qatar (79 per cent), Kuwait (72 per cent), and Bahrain (45 per cent) (UNDESA, 2019).

Estimates indicate that the MENA region hosts over 45 per cent of all refugees globally (IOM, 2018). At the same time, in 2015, over 6 million refugees originated from the MENA region, making this "the largest producer of refugees worldwide" (IOM, 2016). Due to the Syrian conflict, Lebanon is hosting one of the largest flows (per capita) of registered refugees in the world, of which approximately 500,000 are Syrian children aged between 6 and 14 years old according to 2016 estimates (De Hoop et al., 2018). Jordan is also severely affected by the Syrian crisis. UNHCR (2018) registered over 666,000 refugees there, of which 48 per cent are children.

The proportion of children involved in the process of migration in the MENA region is hard to monitor because of the transit status that many countries of the region hold and the volatility of peace in the region. A qualitative study on migrant children's profile in the MENA region showed that a majority of children (65 per cent) are on the move because of economic reasons, followed by targeted violence and persecution (30 per cent) and for other reasons (5 per cent) (IOM, 2019a). Many of these children had their intended destination as Europe (47 per cent), Libya (20 per cent), Sudan (9 per cent) and unknown (23 per cent).

1.1.6. Europe

Approximately 82 million international migrants lived in Europe in 2019, and half of these originated from other European countries (IOM, 2019a). The migrant population from non-European countries were around 38 million in 2019 (ibid.). However, the migration influx is not uniform across European countries. Between 2009 and 2019, the European countries that had experienced large proportional population increases due to immigration are Luxembourg (24 per cent), Norway (11 per cent), Switzerland (11 per cent) and Monaco (11 per cent). At the same time, other countries experienced a steep decline in their populations. For example, Lithuania, Bosnia and Latvia lost more than 10 per cent of their population due to emigration during the same period of time (IOM, 2019a). Countries in Eastern Europe such as Russia (7 per cent), Ukraine (14 per cent), Poland (11 per cent), Belarus (16 per cent), and Romania (19 per cent), also have had high proportions of their population emigrate within the region or beyond (UNDESA, 2019).

45 Countries in the MENA region refer to IOM's definition of the region including Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (IOM, 2016).

In Europe, the share of children with a migration background has been rising steeply, with an estimated 7.3 million child migrants in Europe in 2019 (UNDESA, 2019). One out of five 15-year-old students in most OECD countries are either migrants themselves or have a migration background (OECD, 2016). The share of children with a migration background has increased particularly in urban areas. For example, more than 60 per cent of the children living in the major urban areas of the Netherlands have a migration background (CBS, 2018). This is in part due to the opportunities available in urban centres as well as the links that migrants might have built before arriving.

The proportion of children in migrant families varies across European countries. The highest share of migrant children can be found in Luxembourg, where 71 per cent of all children live in a migrant household, followed by Austria, Cyprus, Ireland, and Switzerland, where one in three children have an immigrant background (Toczydlowska, 2016). At the other end of the spectrum, children in migrant households in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia represent 5 per cent or less of the total child population in the country (Toczydlowska, 2016). The first-generation immigrant children in Europe are overall less likely to do well in school compared to non-migrant children. For instance, about half of all first-generation immigrants in Greece and Austria have not reached an adequate level of proficiency in reading, compared to 24 per cent and 18 per cent of Greek and Austrian non-migrant children, respectively (UNICEF, 2018b). Similar disproportionate school performance rates are found in all European Union countries. In addition to education, the children of migrants residing in European countries are also overrepresented in the bottom bands of income distribution, and they report lower levels of health and life satisfaction when compared to their native counterparts (Bruckauf et al., 2016).

In addition to these inequalities, many migrant children – including a significant number of unaccompanied minors – are traumatized from their journeys and require specialized services. In 2018, up to 15 per cent of all immigrant arrivals in Italy were unaccompanied minors (IOM, 2019a). At the same time, the increasing diversity in children's background has resulted in fierce and intensified debates about the balance between accommodating difference and fostering a sense of common values in public spaces (e.g., schools). In many European societies, xenophobia is on the rise, combined with greater political fragmentation (Ahad and Benton, 2018). Ensuring that the school remains a safe space and able to address the needs of all children is important and has been explored in the report.

1.1.7. Oceania

Oceania hosted about 8 million migrants in 2019, mainly from Asia (49 per cent) and Europe (38 per cent). They were typically residing in Australia or New Zealand (IOM, 2019a). Intra-regional migration is also prominent. For example, 22 per cent of the 1.1 million migrants (of which 12 per cent were children) residing in New Zealand in 2019, originated from the region's countries such as Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, and Australia (UNDESA, 2019). Similarly, 50 per cent of Australia's 7.5 million migrants (of which 11 per cent were children) were nationals of Oceania's countries. The proportion of child migrants in the total child population in Oceania is high, in that six in every 100 children in the region were migrants in 2019 (ibid.).

In 2019, Oceania hosted around 110,000 refugees and asylum seekers, with Australia (96,300), Papua New Guinea (10,000), New Zealand (1,900), and Nauru (1,100) being the top receiving countries for refugees in the region (ibid.). In 2018, around 3,000 migrants from Oceania, mostly from Papua New Guinea, have been seeking asylum internationally (IOM, 2019a). While there are no disaggregated data on the number of children in the total refugee population in Oceania, the reports point to increasing number of children and youth facing major risks as they attempt to reach safer shores in the region's countries (UNICEF, 2016b).

There are also a large number of internally displaced persons in the region who have fled natural disasters. The widespread bushfires in Australia in late 2019 and early 2020 have been the worst on record in the country and responsible for the displacement of entire communities in large parts of the nation. Climate change refugees are increasingly fleeing hazards associated with the rise of global sea levels and mostly felt by island nations such as Oceania's Kiribati. In 2018, there were almost 100,000 recorded displacements across Oceania's nations caused by events such as earthquakes, bushfires, volcanic activity, violence and conflict (IOM, 2019a).

Children who move to the region's countries such as Australia and New Zealand may face challenges that directly or indirectly affect their education. Recent data show that first-generation immigrant children in Australia and New Zealand tend to do less well in school when compared to children of non-migrants. For instance, 21 per cent and 18 per cent of 15-year-old first-generation immigrant children in Australia and New Zealand, respectively, did not reach the needed level in reading proficiency, compared to 17 per cent and 15 per cent of non-migrant children, respectively (UNICEF, 2018b). Notably, in Australia, second-generation migrant children fare better in school compared to non-migrant children, which may reflect a successful pattern of school integration in the country.

1.2. Emergency contexts

According to the recent data on 35 crisis affected countries,⁴⁶ 476 million children aged 3-15 live in countries affected by crises such as violence and conflict (Nicolai, Hine and Wales, 2015). Of these children, an estimated 65 million are severely impacted by (protracted) crises (Nicolai et al., 2015; Save the Children, 2013). These crises are happening in low-income countries (20 countries) or middle-income countries (15 countries), and half of these countries are in Africa, followed by the MENA region (Nicolai et al., 2015). The five most affected countries, where over 4 million school-aged children experience the impact, are: Nigeria, Guinea, Yemen, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and Syria (ibid.).

Many people residing in countries affected by crises become refugees by seeking internal or international protection. The ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic has displaced more than half of the country's entire population, with almost 7 million becoming refugees and 6 million IDPs, many of whom are children, according to 2018 statistics (IOM, 2019a). In 2018, there were 26 million refugees globally, and 52 per cent of them were children under 18 years of age (UNHCR, 2019). Unaccompanied refugee children amounted to 98,000 in 2015, although this number may severely underestimate the real scale of migration involving this group of children (ibid.).

There are different types of emergency contexts and they impact the education of children affected by these crises differently. The majority (just under 50 per cent) of emergencies are related to conflict, 17 per cent are related to natural disasters, 9 per cent are public health emergencies, and 23 per cent are considered complex emergencies with multiple causes (Nicolai et al., 2015). While many children in these countries are not in school, those still in school, are at a higher risk of dropping out or experiencing major disruptions in their education. Additionally, these children face severe psychosocial and protection challenges resulting from living in a country affected by crisis.

46 Based on the UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) list (2015), in Nicolai, Hine and Wales (2015).

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