



Children and Migration: Applying Human Rights for Effective Policy-making

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Mainstreaming Migration in Strategic Policy Development
International GFMD Policy Seminar

Chisinau, Republic of Moldova 12-13 October 2011

How does migration affect children?

- Children themselves migrate:
 - With parents
 - On their own
- Children left behind by migrating parents
 - Temporarily/seasonal
 - Long-term/permanent

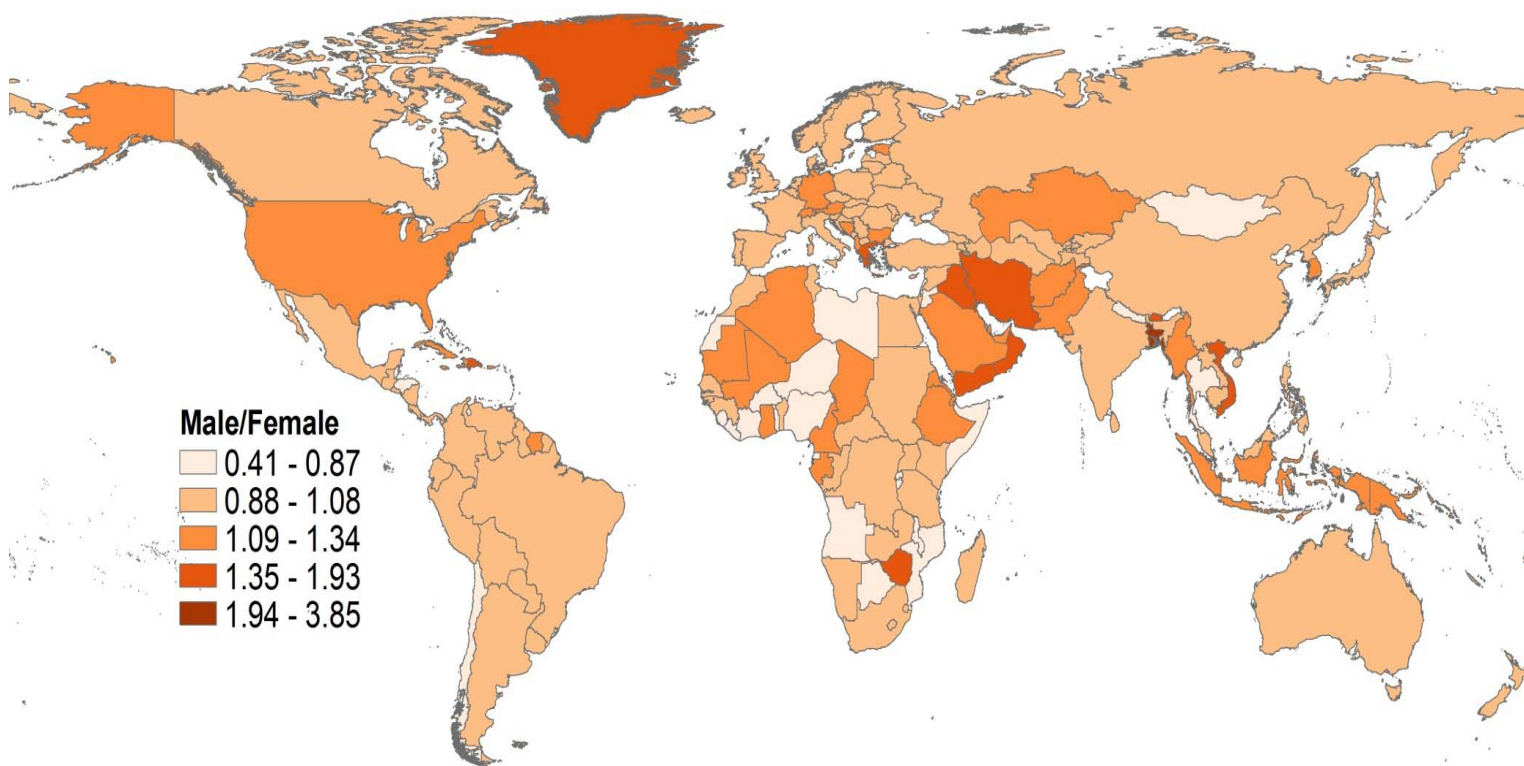


Children Left Behind by Migration

- In the Philippines studies estimate that between 5.8 and 9 million children, or around 27% of the total youth population, live apart from one or both parents (Kakammpi, in Parreñas 2005). A similar proportion is found here in Moldova
- In 2002, 13% of Mexican and almost 22% of Salvadoran immigrants living in the U.S had children under 18 left behind in their home countries. (Cortina & de la Garza 2004)
- Research in Pakistan, Mexico and the Philippines, show that children in remittance-receiving households are more likely to attend school in comparison to children in non-migration affected households (Hildebrandt & McKenzie, 2005). Moldovan data shows a similar positive effect – but with question marks on achievement

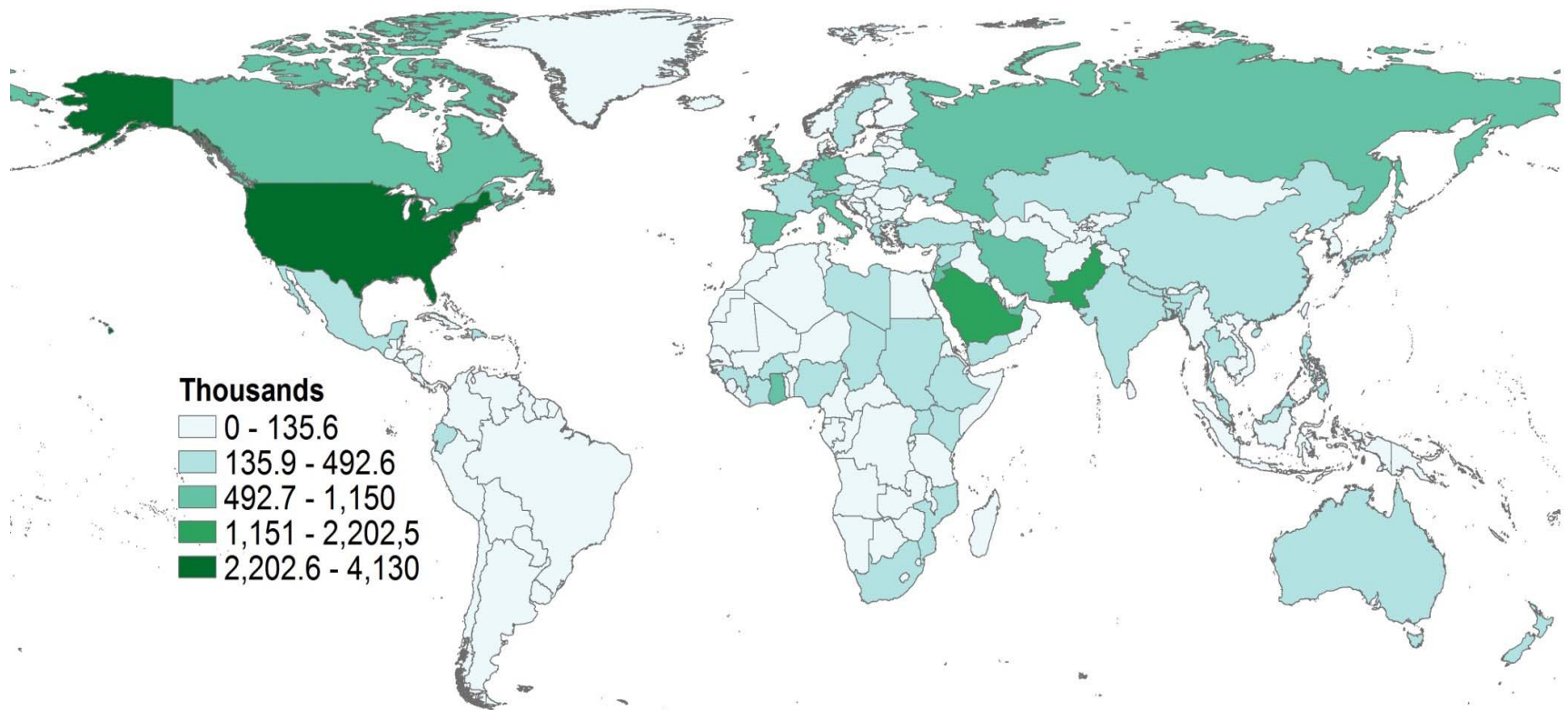
Children Left Behind by Migration

Sex Ratio of Migrants



Child Migrants

International Migrants under the Age of 20



Children Left Behind– Policy Challenges

- Ensuring Guardianship
- Supporting care-givers
- Social protection – education, health, social assistance
- Increased child vulnerability and adolescent risk-taking
- Child labour – including domestic work
- Gender disparities
- Family reunification



Child Migrants – Policy Challenges



- Providing protection and avoiding detention
- Social integration – fighting xenophobia
- Access to social services
- Family reunification
- Best interests of the child – especially unaccompanied minors

Applying Child Rights Principles

- “The enjoyment of rights...is not limited to children who are citizens of a State party”
 - CRC Committee
- “Consider the impact of migration on children in ...national development frameworks, poverty reduction strategies, human rights plans of action... “
 - Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants
- “Promote holistic approaches that take into account the causes and consequences and challenges and opportunities of migration and full respect of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants, with due regard for the specific needs of children in vulnerable situations, such as unaccompanied children, girls, children with disabilities and those who may be in need of international refugee protection. “
 - Human Rights Council (2009)

Recommendations: Countries of origin, transit and destination

- Ensure a comprehensive rights-based approach to migration and development policies, including a child, gender and non-discrimination perspective
- Include adequate provisions in general laws to ensure that all children have an equal right to protection and support, regardless of their nationality or immigration status and in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and
- Build up or strengthen data on international migrants, including gender and age dimensions

Recommendations: Countries of origin

- Tackle root causes of migration, including irregular migration, taking account of child and gender dimensions
- Address the specific vulnerabilities of children and adolescents left behind within broader efforts to protect the all children's economic, social and cultural rights and their right to development
- Ensure participation of children and adolescents left behind in policies affecting them, including their right to reunite with their parents in the host country.

Recommendations: Countries of destination

- Ensure family reunification of unaccompanied children and adolescents, either in the country of origin or destination, according to their best interest
- Guarantee the economic, social and cultural rights of migrant children and adolescents, as well as their right to a family
- Ensure the inclusion of migrant children in childhood policies
- Prevent detention and criminalization of migrant children and adolescents
- Avoid deportation of children and adolescents, either unaccompanied or travelling with their parents, as a punitive measure

Recommendations: Countries of destination

- Create regularization policies to facilitate family reunification;
- Involve child protection officers, trained in a HRBA, in migration policies that may affect children and adolescents, both unaccompanied and with their parents
- Develop indicators on migrants' rights within the enforcement of migration control policies
- Address discrimination, including racism and xenophobia

Thank you for your attention!

