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## **PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING CHILDREN ON THE MOVE**

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REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN ON  
THE MOVE

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**BARCELONA  
5th-7th OCTOBER 2010**

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Global Movement  
for Children



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Production and text:

Lydia Rodríguez, Cintia Alegre and Gonzalo de Castro



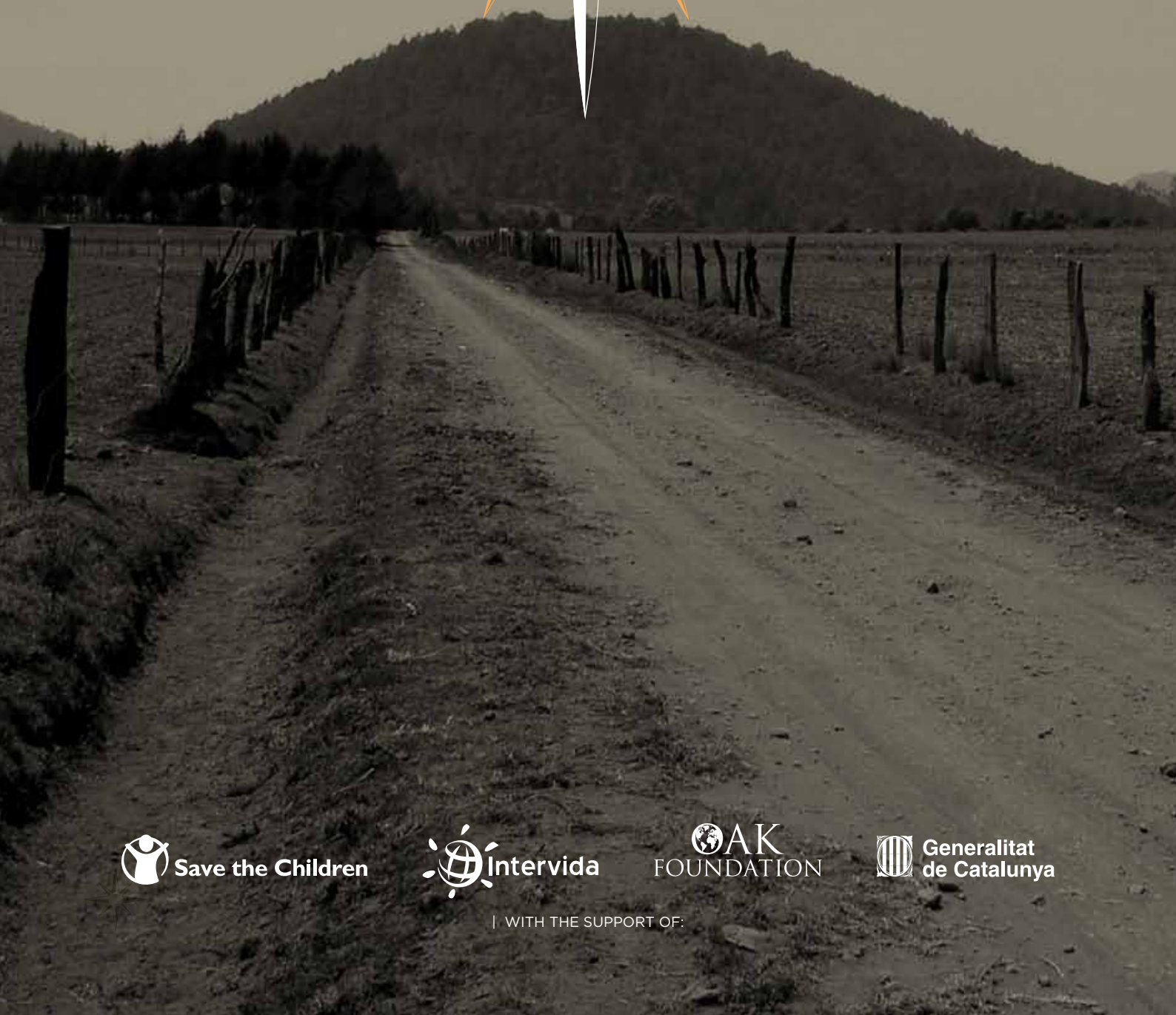
Movimiento Mundial  
en Favor de la Infancia  
Álaba, 140-146, 6è



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I DIDN'T  
WANT  
TO COME  
BUT  
POVERTY  
FORCED  
ME OUT

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| WITH THE SUPPORT OF:



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# INTRODUCTION

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Prevention does not stop migration, but it does stop exploitation. Or is it that not emigrating and being confined to the place of origin is a necessary condition for protecting children? The delegates at the GMFC conference, numbering in excess of 120 from more than 60 countries, analysed the current situation of child migrants based on the lack of, or directly, the non-existence of rights before, during and after the migration process.

The construction and scope of the concept of child migrants, or ‘Children on the Move’ to give it its full English title, and the wide range of life situations and the individual journeys that this embraces, the different forms of migration ‘mobility’ as a growing phenomenon, the risks and vulnerabilities children face before, during and after the process constituted the bases upon which the representative ideas and practices of governments, international organisations, NGOs, researchers and agents working for children’s movements were debated and exchanged.

It is precisely the active participation of children whose accounts of lives that have been marked by migration in the different fields of work that marked a difference in the assessment of strategies and viable alternatives of protection, awareness and advocacy programmes, as well as the necessary construction of new questions which help reset the course of the current actions designed to defend their rights.

The accent on prevention and protection in relation to exploitation also revealed a shared understanding of immigration by participants who critically questioned the current paradigms maintained by national and international public policies that focus on the “immigration problem” and not on the deep-seated and growing social inequalities and that frequently confuse protection with detention.

Children currently play an important role in movements within the world’s population. This is a phenomenon that will probably intensify over the coming decades due to globalisation, organised crime, conflicts, climate change, a lack of access to protection systems, health and education services, and the lack of opportunities. Thousands of children, either on their own initiative or encouraged by their families, go and seek a better life and opportunities to help build a future for themselves.





Najat M'Jid  
UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.



Elisabeth Dahlin  
Secretary General, Save the Children Sweden.

There are a great number of different forms of “mobility”, which may be done voluntarily, determined by others or by force. Children move inside a country or across borders on their own or accompanied by members of their family, by intermediaries or with other companions. Certain forms of mobility are inherently criminal, such as child trafficking, the main aim of which is to sell them. Other common forms of mobility also include seasonal migration, fugitives fleeing their homes, and migratory movements due to cultural factors, such as initiation “rites or passages” in certain societies.

The aim of this Conference Report is to act as a route map for topics of debate initiated at the Barcelona meeting with a view to building local, state and international work agendas. From analysis of innovative protection and support actions regarding the defence of rights, such as the drive towards mobile devices or ongoing prevention and protection, the challenges posed by the construction of the ‘Children on the Move’ concept and those posed by the dominant values in the so-called “ambivalent societies” in which we live, to structural problems which relegate the necessary global and local social transformations that benefit people.

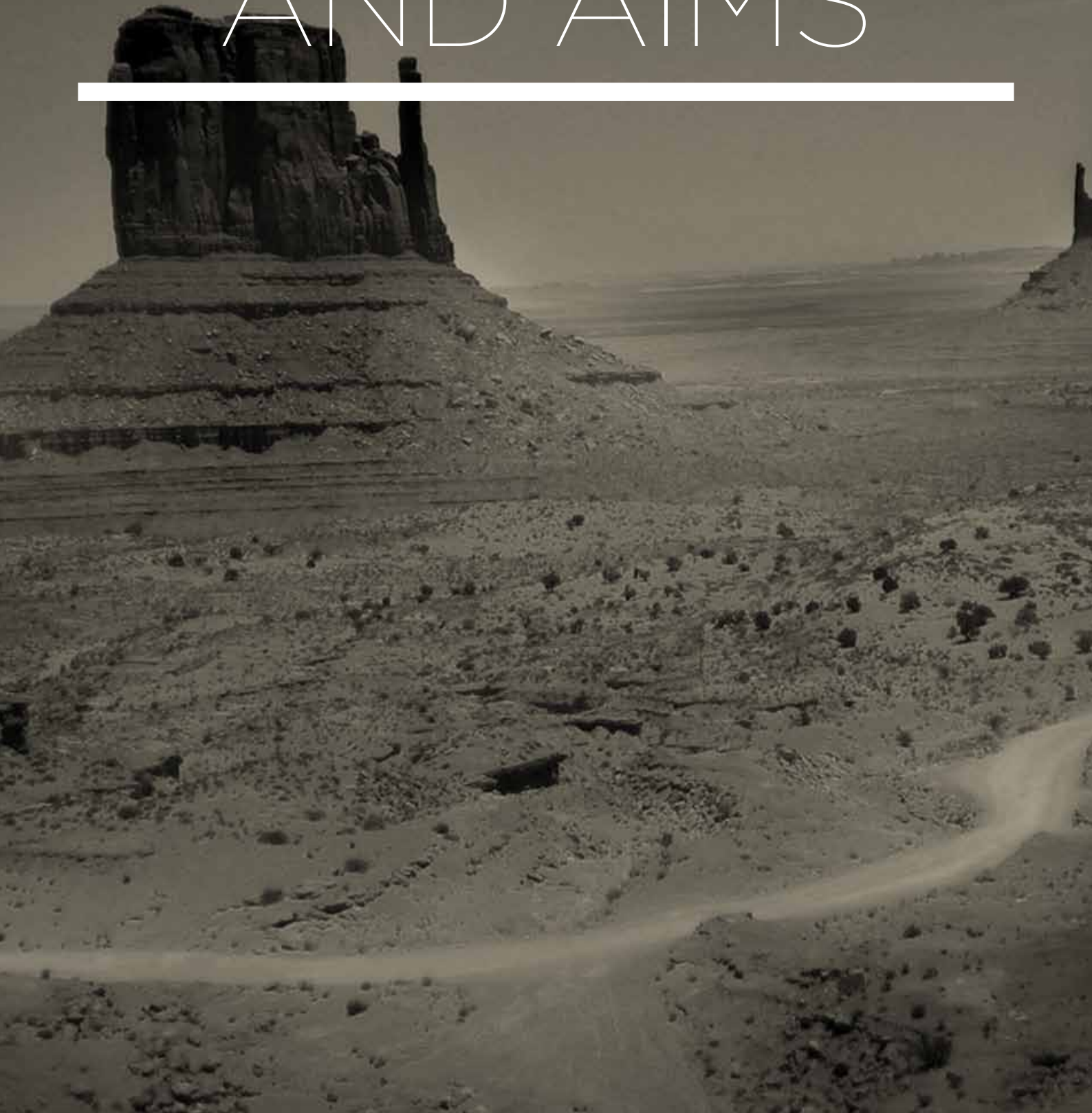
Complex problems in complex societies, and in the middle of it all, migrant children or children affected by migration.



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# TARGETS AND AIMS

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The International Conference entitled “Child Migration Movements: Protection and Support Measures” was held in Barcelona from 5 to 7 October 2010 and was attended by 120 participants from 63 countries.

Participants included representatives of international institutions such as the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF; representatives of state and sub-state governments with responsibilities for migration and childhood; representatives of international, continental and national NGOs; researchers and academics and representatives of children’s movements.

The Conference established three main aims to be achieved through different work areas, such as papers, panels of experts, participation by child migrants and round tables concerning different the aspects of this issue.

The **first aim** was to promote an exchange of ideas, knowledge and practices in an interaction space containing experts, experienced individuals and child migrants working on the problems and challenges of protecting and supporting children on the move, all in the best interests of the child. This aim established the need to improve and unify the criteria of the concept of Children on the Move – CoM.

The **second aim** was to explore a new holistic and integrating approach to mobility that reaches beyond the current fragmented framework by identifying and promoting actions from the perspective of categorisation (traffic, work and child sexual exploitation, refugees and displaced and stateless children and child marriages).

However, the Conference acted as a space in which to analyse the good practices developed from this current category-based approach with regard to improving the protection and vulnerability prevention of children on the move. The aim was to unify prevention criteria and actions, protection and support systems in the three states of child mobility: pre-mobility, mobility and post-mobility.

The **third aim** was to foster mobility and advocacy mechanisms regarding the issue of children on the move on the international public agenda of governments and international agencies, taking into account the relationship that this has with the development of policies to combat poverty, social vulnerabilities and the lack of opportunities.







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# PART 1

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## **CHILDREN ON THE MOVE:** STATE OF THE QUESTION

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From left to right: Fabrice (Burundi), Gustavo (Venezuela), Gloria (Albania), Sévérine (Benin), Ali (Eritrea) and Moussa (Niger).

*In 2010, international migration reached a total of 215 million people<sup>2</sup>, and the number of people migrating to so-called 'developed countries' has doubled in just 35 years. Given what experts are saying, this trend will continue to rise, and not just in terms of current receiver countries, as we are already seeing greater mobility in every corner of the world. This rise in national and international migrations will also grow in the younger segments of every society<sup>3</sup>. If we look at the trend for the last 50 years, international migrations had over 75 million people in 1960, in 2000 there were more than 150 million, and in 2005 the figure stood at 191 million.*

*Despite this rise in international migration figures, we are now seeing a tendency towards greater diversification in terms of destination countries. If we take the 2010 data, the current top ten destination countries receive a lower percentage of total migrants compared to 2000<sup>4</sup>.*

*Many countries in the so-called 'global south', such as sub-Saharan African countries are 'young countries', where 44% of the total population is not over 15 years of age. Several reports (World Bank, 2007; ILO, 2010) show a strong correlation between rapid rates of population growth and the rise in internal and international migrations, a trend to which the existence of around 81 million of young people aged between 15 and 29 in the world who are currently unemployed should be added.*

*Although we see a growing trend in international migrations, the phenomenon is gaining even more ground within state borders. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2009 data, internal migration annually totalled 740 million people.*






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# MIGRATIONS AND CHILDREN

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The dimension of child migration as part of this global phenomenon poses difficulties in carrying out a correct analysis that are related to the insufficient gathering of reliable data, as well as the problems of extent and scope of the concept of 'Children on the Move'.

On the one hand, insufficient data can be seen in the invisibility of certain types of migration and internal movements of children, be it due to its irregularity, as is the case of trafficking for work and sexual exploitation reasons, the non-existence of data (which go beyond micro-studies) for annual, seasonal and temporary internal migration flows, the lack of birth records, as in the case of stateless children, and the reticence of national and international bodies and agencies to share and/or coordinate their databases.

Given the information above, current projections are based on partial data, of either a geographical or a themed nature. In terms of the first, we have examples such as ILO studies which state that 42% of migrants from the Cambodia-Thailand border are children, or in Tanzania, where 23% of families have a son who has migrated, and 17% of families have a daughter who has migrated. Examples of partial data relating to categories held by UNICEF for street children at world level reveal a total of no less than 10 million, but this may reach 100 million, or case studies showing the existence of one million children under 15 in India who are continuously on the move on a seasonal basis, a percentage that rises to 25% for children aged between 15 and 18.5

Besides this, understanding the 'Children on the Move' concept creates problems when interpreting and assessing the cases that it covers. As the following section explains, as well as the millions of children on the move within their own country or beyond its borders, with or without their parents, many other children are "left behind" by their parents when they emigrate to work in their own country or abroad, but they are not abandoned. This and other factors emphasise the importance of strengthening the conceptual clarity proposed from the perspective of 'Children on the Move'.

Children in fact constitute a significant part of world population movements and this phenomenon is likely to grow considerably over the coming decades, due to globalisation, organised crime, conflicts, climate change, a lack of access to protection systems, health and education services and a lack of opportunities. In the latter scenario, there are children, who, either themselves or encouraged by their families, decide to go and seek a better life and opportunities to help build a future for themselves.

These different forms of “mobility” may be voluntary, determined by others or forced mobility. Children move inside a country or across borders on their own or accompanied by members of their family, by intermediaries or with other companions.

Certain forms of mobility are inherently criminal, such as child trafficking, the main aim of which is to sell them. Other common forms of mobility also include seasonal migration, fugitives fleeing their homes, and migratory movements due to cultural factors, such as initiation “rites or passages” in certain societies.

The movement of children makes them extremely vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, coercion, deception and violence. However, we should not forget that migration also offers opportunities to access education, contribute to the family income, develop new skills, achieve aspirations or simply survive.

For the majority of these types of “mobility”, political answers do not offer sufficient protection for ‘the best interests of the child’ either nationally or transnationally, despite the mobilisation of resources and the work of many actors in the field of child welfare to achieve integrated and fully accessible management to all children without discrimination of any kind and in any location. As Jacqueline Bhabha stated in her explanation, understanding the “ambivalences” that underpin public policies related to this social question is one of the keys to progress for effective protection based on ‘the best interests of the child’.






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# CHILDREN ON THE MOVE: SCOPE AND LIMITS OF THE CONCEPT

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The ‘Children on the Move’ (CoM) concept was a central theme to the work of the International Conference held in Barcelona. Although the concept seeks an integrating understanding to achieve prevention and a protection system for child migrants, the debates were used by the conference to learn about the concept, establish its limitations and demarcate them.

One starting point is the definition of ‘CoM – ‘Children on the Move’ as “children, who for different reasons, be they voluntary or involuntary, inside or between countries, with or without their parents or guardians, and whose movements may lead to risks or an increased risk of economic or sexual exploitation, abuse, negligent treatment or violence”<sup>6</sup>. The advantage of this definition is its aim to use a category-based approach and its focus centred on vulnerabilities, risks and lack of protection for children on the move. As Susu Thatun, UNICEF Child Protection specialist reflected, it was encouraging to observe participants at the Conference agreeing on the need to move from a traditional issue-based approach to a systems-based approach, based on child protection. However, Thatun warned that although there was agreement on the need to adopt a new approach to create actions, there is not sufficient conceptual clarity as to what CoM stands for and what it comprises.

Thatun stated that since we have moved from the restricting definition of children as victims of trafficking, we see that ‘Children on the Move’ is definitely a more inclusive concept. However, the specialist warned that “we should learn the lesson in terms of approach by considering trafficking, which, as a result of its lack of conceptual clarity, has led to several of its initiatives failing.”

Harvard University researcher Jacqueline Bhabha also highlighted what has been dubbed the concept’s “challenge to integration”. The specialist referred to the importance of a new conceptualisation of the issue, as until now it has acted separately from child migration in mutually exclusive categories, with its own specialists and institutional frameworks, such as the voluntary or forced migration, illegal migration, trafficking, asylum and economic migration of children on their own, or their regular and irregular migration. All this, says Bhabha, hides the multidimensionality and inherent fluidity of the process.

One issue that still remains for Susu Thatun is to determine whether the ‘Children on the Move’ concept provides a holistic answer regarding the protection of all children, or whether it only covers those who suffer the impact of migration. It also leaves unsolved questions as to whether ‘Children on the Move’ is in fact a category in itself, or whether this concept is definitively more inclusive than those currently in use.



This search for an appropriate conceptualisation was a point on which the different participation spaces at the Conference agreed and it plays an important role in achieving the so-called 'category-based approach', which provides an integrating vision capable of acting in the different states of mobility. From this new point of view, the complexities of child migration remain untold and unanalysed stories that make it possible to create new questions to determine new actions. As Jacqueline Bhabha<sup>7</sup> said in her explanation, "we have not asked the important questions. We have not asked why these children emigrate, nor who makes (or should make) the decisions that concern them. We have not asked child migrants any questions, nor have we listened to their answers (i.e.) the complex stories that they tell about the lack of opportunities at home, their family responsibilities, discrimination, exclusion, violence, exploitation, hope, enthusiasm, ambition, determination and desire."

Fleeing poverty, violence, abuse and discrimination within the family, at school or in the community and fleeing natural disasters, armed conflicts and the consequences of problems caused by HIV and Aids. These are all answers obtained by Lena Karlsson, Director of the Child Protection Initiative of Save the Children, to the question why children migrate. Karlsson also discussed the issue of children who migrate to explore new opportunities, including education, employment and entertainment, or also as a "rite or passage" into adulthood, a subject common to many societies.

Several experts, including the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and use of children in pornography, Najat M'jid, and child trafficking specialist from the International Labour Organization (ILO), Hans Van de Glind, stressed that "prevention does not stop migration, but it does stop exploitation." This issue was discussed in depth by expert Mike Dottridge in his paper to the CoM Conference, in which he asked "is not emigrating and remaining in their place of origin a priority for protection (of children)?" Dottridge said that some organisations are rather reluctant about giving advice as to the precautions that should be taken on behalf of child migrants when they migrate for fear of their organisation being criticised if the precautions are ineffective. He asks "can we make the journey safer?" "Do we have the mechanisms to ensure the best interests of the children?" or "Does the interest of organisations come before child welfare?"

Mike Dottridge also asks why there are some nations or communities that, under the same circumstances as others, develop better protection mechanisms. "What is it that makes them work? Research is an integral part of protection," he says.

One final important question to emerge during the Conference, which relates to the scope and concept of 'Children on the Move', is terminology. Thatun explained an initial problem in that some experts use fragmented approach terminology to refer to issue-specific responses, and others refer to it as the vertical approach. However, while a more or less universal system-based approach to child protection is being developed, the need for an issue-based specialisation will continue to prevail. In addition, depending on the specialist, referring to issue-specific actions, such as the fragmented approach, sends a negative message regarding the importance of adopting specialist approaches that are also considered necessary in the broader response systems that are to be built.

A second question concerns the so-called "children left behind", whose parents emigrate to work in their own country or abroad, leaving then in their place of origin, but without abandoning them. These children have been affected by migration, and, although they are not On the Move, they are exposed to greater risks and vulnerabilities. According to Thatun, this connotation is extremely negative and hurtful to these children, as is the use, in terms of trafficking, of the expressions "victims" and "survivors". Thatun feels that it is advisable that as the subject-based agenda of 'Children on the Move' progresses, the process should be accompanied by a review of key concepts and terminology. "This will help create greater conceptual clarity in terms of what we are trying to do," says Thatun, "and the fact that it was raised during the donor round table also provides greater commitment by the key actors involved, such as states, donors and international organisations."






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# THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD

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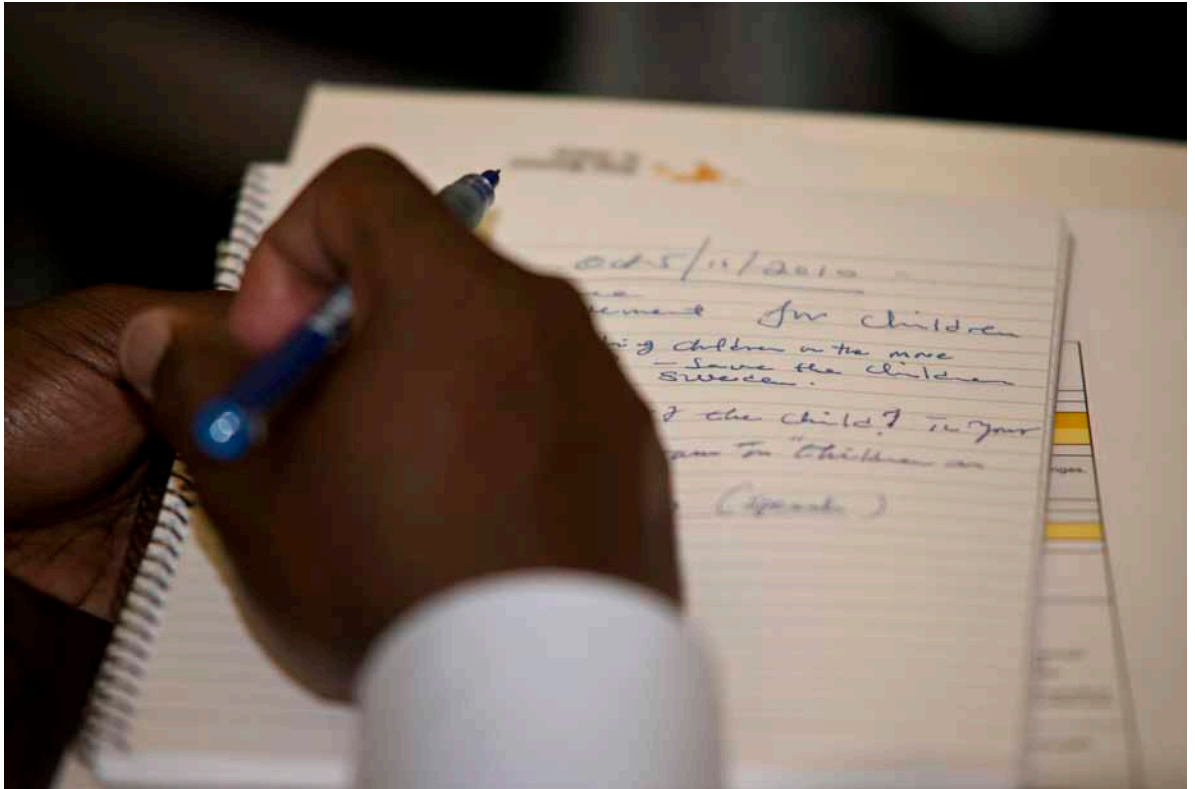
The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child states in Article 3 that “the best interests of the child will be a fundamental consideration that will be observed in all aspects concerning children.” Although this consideration determines the action of all measures concerning children taken by public or private social welfare institutions, the courts, administrative authorities and legislative bodies, what do we mean when we talk about the best interests of the child?

According to UN directives for refugees (UNHCR), the term “best interests” generally refers to the welfare of the minor. This welfare depends on numerous personal circumstances, such as age and degree of maturity, whether the parents are present or not, the minor’s environment and their experiences. They must be interpreted and applied in accordance with CRC regulations and other international legal standards, and also adhere to the directives of the Committee of the Rights of the Child in General Observation No. 6 (2005) regarding the treatment of unaccompanied and separated minors outside their country of origin. The CRC does not provide a precise definition of the best interests of the child, nor does it explicitly outline its common elements, but it does state that, firstly, the best interests must be the determining factor for specific actions, especially the adoption (Article 21) and separation of the minor from their parents against their will (Article 9). Secondly, that the best interests must be the fundamental (although not the only) consideration for all other actions which affect the minor, be they undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of justice, administrative authorities or legislative bodies (Article 3).

Experts recognise that there is no completed definition of “the best interests of the child” and many doubt that this should exist as every child is unique given their circumstances. Therefore, given this, agencies such as the UNHCR foster decision-making within a well-defined procedural approach.

However, although the Convention of the Rights of the Child states in Article No. 1 that a child is any person under the age of 18, this poses a challenge regarding the operating of the ‘Children on the Move’ concept, according to Jacqueline Bhabha, as small children are grouped together with mature teenagers in a single policy-construction category. “We work with very different social actors,” Bhabha recalls, for whom the “best interests of the child (...) has no linear answer, or at least not a positive linear answer” and “the phrase is normally used mechanically to justify deporting unaccompanied child migrants back to their places of origin,” with reuniting families only one of the aspects considered when making the decision.

The Harvard researcher highlights where agreements do exist concerning “short negative answers.” In this sense, prison is not in the best interests of the child, which is very often justified as protecting child migrants from trafficking networks, or as a way of keeping the children together with their parents instead of deportation. Bhabha also adds that neither is it in the best interests of the child to take digital fingerprints, arguing that this allows them access to education, or sending them automatically to their place of origin, even when this is termed “voluntary return” of children who are the victims of international trafficking.



However, the answers are also not that clear and rather controversial in contexts that should ensure that the rights of the child are respected, as in the case of the judge or decider insisting on questioning the child during asylum pleading processes. Others argue that this practice is correct and adheres to CRC Article No. 12, while others argue the opposite based on an asymmetry of the parties involved. “Have any of those present ever attended a collaborative forum on this issue, or for a systematic comparison of the impact of these practices on the protection of children?” asks Bhabha. Similar problems arise in terms of the different practices when offering unaccompanied minors an allowance to help them live independently, or sending them to reception homes irrespective of their age, situation or interests. Also in relation to employment, as Bhabha asks whether good practices exist that can be generalised for this where the fiction of pretending that child migrants cannot work does in fact mean that their lives move towards precarious working situations and/or exploitation in the informal economy “such as harvesting tomatoes in southern Italy, sexual exploitation on the streets of Amsterdam or Hamburg, informal work on the streets of Barcelona or London, or begging in Turin or Madrid.

Jacqueline Bhabha presents further dilemmas concerning the best interests of the child, such as separate classes for child migrants, with occasional immersions in the communal classroom, or the possibility of taking classes with specialists dedicated to their teaching needs. There is also the case of children who are victims of sexual or employment trafficking, where the expert asks if it is in the best interests of the child to increase police controls concerning departures from the country to reduce this risk, or whether this simply raises the costs of this illegal immigration which in turn increases the debt that has to be paid to get out of this situation. “We have not taken our obligation seriously of protecting and listening (to the children),” says Bhabha.





# CHILD MIGRANTS AND 'AMBIVALENT SOCIETIES'

We see child migrants in today's societies as both 'poor and innocent children' and in turn "not really our children." According to Jacqueline Bhabha, we see states as guarantors of the rights of the most vulnerable children, with obligations to protect them, and at the same time we expect protection from the state against threatening, rebellious foreigners and we even believe that national security may prevail against the children. We live in societies with ambivalent perceptions and, as Bhabha highlighted during the CoM Conference, this is important when it comes to analysing the bases of public policies concerning child migrants which coexist at national and international level.

The Harvard University researcher uses this approach of ambivalence to explain how Italy's Silvio Berlusconi and France's Nicolás Sarkozy have been able to publicly display their concern for the rights of the child in relation to education, a home and a decent life, and at the same time support the destruction of the homes of the most vulnerable children, or the imprisonment of their parents by summary processes.

In today's societies we see child migrants exploited in factories and farms, and vagrant children and young people whose status is illegal detained, with the public display of the abuse committed and also vigorous legal battles regarding the legality of these practices.

It is therefore of little concern to us that in some countries children who are the victims of trafficking are removed from brothels or other contexts of exploitation and abuse to receive scant support, guidance and opportunities, and also with the serious risk of eventually being returned to their country of origin, to their 'home', without any attention paid to what 'home' means to them.

For Bhabha, this ambivalence also explains why children who have been trafficked often abscond from the state institutions where they were sent to later be 'rescued' and subsequently returned to their traffickers. "The fact of children who are the victims of trafficking returning to their traffickers does not justify any lack of action," states Bhabha, "but it does raise serious doubts as to the effectiveness of current interventions."

The researcher refers to these unresolved problems as 'legal insecurities', where we find specialist child protection agencies do not offer the children who come to them the necessary and long-term support and the almost non-existent channels for regularising their legal status. Deportation or living in limbo as an illegal immigrant end up being the long-term options. A recent study conducted by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) showed how specialist trafficking victim support agencies do not consider long-term international protection as an option; only 1 in 10 countries analysed sent these victims to the agency in charge of processing applications for asylum.

"When asked, children who are identified as victims of trafficking request access to the same rights and protections as other citizens," says Bhabha, highlighting among these requests good opportunities for education, developing professional skills, a home and possibilities of work. However, the reality is in fact deportations, the pressure to testify against their traffickers and "rescues" in the form of returning "home" instead of solutions relating to their expectations and interests. "From the perspective of children who have survived," says Bhabha, "the best interests of the child has very little to do with the anti-trafficking agenda."



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# PART 2

SEEKING LONG-LASTING  
SOLUTIONS TO MAKE IT  
SAFE FOR CHILDREN ON  
THE MOVE

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## *“The meaning of life is crossing frontiers”*

RYSZARD KAPUSCINSKI

“**Prevention does not stop migration, but it does stop exploitation**”, stressed the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and use of children in pornography, Najat M’jid, at the close of the CoM Conference in Barcelona. M’jid stated that the prevention, protection and support for child migrants must progress along the action coordination path to reduce the vulnerabilities in the three stages or phases of the process: **pre-mobility, mobility** in itself and **post-mobility**.

This approach to understanding immigration, shared at the Conference by child migrants, by representatives of international organisations, of civil society and of the academic world, critically questions current paradigms maintained by national and international public policies that focus on the “immigration problem” and not on the serious and growing social inequalities, and which frequently confuse protection with detention. The refreshing concept of “**ambivalent societies**” discussed at the Barcelona Conference, or, for example, the gap detected between **advances in the methodology to Determine the Best Interests (DBI)** of the child and the problems involved in activating state mechanisms to make the rights established in the 1989 Convention effective, throw up political questions and flag up the need to strengthen advocacy mechanisms.

The construction of new paradigms is also important to add to the image of immigration, which is based on risks and opportunities, the necessary guarantees to exercise the freedom of movement determined by a rights-based approach. “We must stop talking about migration control and security,” says Roberta Cechetti of Save the Children. To achieve this, the great challenge facing agencies and donors is to find protection and intervention solutions during movement, i.e. “to adapt the protection systems to the mobility of children. It is ‘relatively’ easy to protect children before and after mobility, but the devices during mobility have been badly defined,” says the specialist. Cechetti recommended **parallel actions both to protect children and in advocacy to achieve strategic changes in policies and practices**.

“Frontiers are wide open to trade, to transfer money, goods and other operations, but not to people seeking protection and compassion,” said the UN Special Rapporteur on modern forms of slavery, Gulnara Shahinian. “And children are no exception,” explained the UN representative. “All too often, countries that have ratified international agreements on the rights of the child, documents which also contain the right to freedom of movement, turn to immigration legislation and face the restrictive concept of state security vs. child protection, with direct and dreadful consequences for children.”



### What do we mean by ‘Children on the Move’?

The CoM Conference in Barcelona acted as a work space in which to make progress in determining the scope and extent of the concept. A number of experts and child migrants highlighted the need for progress in terms of the **conceptual clarity** required, not only to improve protection and support actions, but also to offer certainty to stakeholders, be it in their coordination or in the formulation, design and assessment of strategies and actions.

The idea that **‘Children on the Move’ is not a new category** of children, such as children who are the victims of trafficking, refugees or unaccompanied children, has gained ground at the Conference debating spaces. This consensus is in response to the work carried out by international agencies and NGOs in the **construction of a new systems-based approach** which provides coherence to prevention and protection mechanisms for child migrants during the three phases of the migration process already described. Experts in formulating and executing programmes and projects in this field agreed that going beyond the category-based approach offers new opportunities for focusing attention on vulnerabilities, risks and the lack of protection in the different parts of the journey. For this, Roberta Cechetti stated the need that any adjustments to the concept must be able to tackle three key aspects of the question: vulnerabilities, interventions and the actors who should take part.

Although specialists recognise that moving from the restricting definition of children who are the victims of trafficking towards ‘Children on the Move’ makes it more likely that action cases and dimensions will be included, she warns that “we must learn the lesson of the traffic-based approach, which, since it lacks conceptual clarity, has seen many of its initiatives fail.”

The construction of an integrating approach also provides greater coherence for a **joint and coordinated action by actors, be it in relation to the implementation of efficient protection mechanisms based on information exchange, research and data analysis, on the creation of prevention and awareness strategies and programmes and on monitoring actions during all stages of the process**. Special mention was made in reference to the strategic alignment of donors’ agendas. If a new point of view defines new aims, why earmark more funds for ‘categories’ rather than strengthening social services (why not on universalisation parameters) that make the rights of the child effective? Or why not, in terms of coherence, also finance projects in destination countries and question current public policy paradigms? One of the provocative topics raised by the Conference is the importance of analysing the **donor’s agenda and official aid** while constructing a new paradigm for a coherent practice-based approach. To achieve this, the Conference devoted a working group session to introduce this agenda. The group presented the vertical and segmented perspectives of current funding sources and the need to carry out coordinated actions in the field, with information feedback mechanisms that help improve this coordination and accountability at all levels.






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# A CHALLENGE OF INTEGRATION

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In this sense, ‘Children on the Move’ refers to a group of children under 18 who have aims, motivations and different life circumstances and which transcends categories. These children are in a pre-mobility, mobility and post-mobility situation, they are even ‘children left behind’ by their parents or guardians, who, without abandoning them, have emigrated for work within their country of residence or abroad.

Another issue analysed was that of stateless children, who also suffer the risks and vulnerabilities of mobility. A workshop on this subject and the presentation of the life of Thanat, a child currently living in Thailand, comprised the agenda at the Barcelona Conference with this question. Although the conclusions emphasise the duty of states to have identification systems for these children and the importance of the register of births to act as a path towards nationalisation or citizenship, long-lasting solutions stress the importance of developing three channels. The first involves designing campaigns to oblige states to take on responsibilities for children within their borders (2011 will be the 50th anniversary of the Convention on stateless children). Secondly, the mobilisation of local agents and communities to collaborate on the design and implementation of long-lasting solutions, such as awareness of the discrimination that these children suffer, or support for identification and registration systems. The third determined the need to establish a global network of agencies working in this field.

The new conceptualisation put forward by ‘Children on the Move’, which we have shown refers to the development of a new paradigm, contains new interpretative frameworks, i.e. sets of beliefs and meanings aimed at action and make certain activities and ways of proceeding legitimate. In the case of ‘Children on the Move’, these new frameworks, make the generation of new questions legitimate, on the one hand, and, on the other, expand and improve the participation of all those involved in the construction of solutions. “We have not asked the important questions,” said researcher Jacqueline Bhabha in relation to both issues, stating, for example, that “we have not listened to child migrants (...), nor have we listened to the complex stories that they tell about the lack of opportunities at home, their family responsibilities, discrimination, exclusion, violence, exploitation, hope, enthusiasm, ambition, determination and desire.” Policy, programme and project coherence plays an important role in the construction of these new questions that guide the action and in which participation by child migrants is not just necessary, but also essential.

A central question relating to the “challenge of integration” of Children on the Move at the Barcelona Conference revolved around the need to accompany this conceptual development and review of practices by improving and expanding lines of research.

The first step was to determine the importance of the lives of the child migrants themselves, a subject which has emerged as an important information-gathering tool with regard to new questions, not only for personal, origin and destination details, but also for expectations, interests, motivations and participating actors in the decision to migrate and the quality of available information.

The second step was to monitor the risk and vulnerability factors in the different contexts and phases of the mobility processes. This included the importance of political and international relations analysis, armed conflicts, natural disasters, issues of equality in societies regarding the mobility process, access to and quality of basic social services, as well as the generation of opportunities.

Representatives of government bodies spoke on this subject, including the Children's Champion of the Government of Catalonia, Imma Pérez-Rovira, who stressed that "the fact of not having access to a decent education, culture, basic health services, means not having opportunities, not having a future, not having a childhood. It is a cycle of exclusion to which they are condemned." The Director General of the Catalan Development Cooperation Agency (CDCA), David Minoves, made direct mention of the need "to systematically reduce inequalities and to educate to achieve development, as cooperation and development are clearly related to migration."

The Director General of Social, Family and Children's Policies at the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Spanish government, Juan Carlos Mato, stated the importance of concentrating efforts "on international cooperation (...) and strengthening international legal instruments and their mechanisms" as great axes of transformation. In the case of Spain, Mato highlighted the important demographic changes in recent years and the importance of the work by the unions, NGOs and public organisations to advance the public's understanding "of immigration as a natural and enriching phenomenon (...) and the need for us all to find a space for co-existence and understanding."

The third step was analysis of the environment of the child migration process, with particular emphasis on the family (issues of abuse, violence and resources) and communities (situations of exclusion, racism, social services, work opportunities, local leaders and women's groups). It was at this point where the question as to why some nations and/or communities, under the same circumstances as others, have better protection mechanisms that do in fact work.



With regard to the above, one topic discussed at round table debates was “mobile protection devices”. Experiences in this concept, such as those presented by Terre des Hommes in West Africa, Enda Tiers - Monde (Enda TM) and the African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY), show the potential and abilities of these protection and accompaniment programmes during the journey, seeking to answer the question: “is not emigrating and being confined to the place of origin a priority with regard to protecting children?” Fabrizio Terenzio, of Enda TM, emphasised the work being undertaken jointly with AMWCY and other NGOs and international organisations in Africa, where “the main aim is that the child is not isolated, as this worsens the problem of vulnerability.” Terenzio spoke about the network of centres in eight African countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as the importance of “word-of-mouth” for spreading information among child migrants and the importance of using simple and explanatory leaflets, all of which help protect and support children during movement, to the extent where the child knows “that they can come and go, and this is an element in the chain that affords greater stability and security.”

Olivier Feneyrol, manager of the “Mobilités” project run by the NGO Terre des Hommes in West Africa, explained the importance of generating four-stage series prevention and protection devices: before and at the moment of departure, during movement, the “period of occupation and integration”, and at the moment of return or integration into a new environment. Feneyrol strongly stressed the need to “create local protection networks as part of a unique mobility space,” i.e. unique protection brokers.

The AMWCY experience in supporting child migrants is, in this sense, extraordinary and one of the main sources of inspiration when it comes to finding new, efficient and effective solutions for protection devices. The two African Movement of Working Children and Youth representatives used images to illustrate the ability of parents’ associations and groups to provide instant answers as well as answers 365 days a year regarding the needs of children during the four stages of migration. This case shows how community-based solutions often provide the most feasible solution and the most solid response to the challenges posed.

The Barcelona Conference concluded that, “research is an integral part of protection,” be it in relation to improvements in the conceptualisation, understanding and scope of ‘Children on the Move’, to current practices and developments in terms of prevention, protection, awareness and advocacy, to the factors that generate risks and vulnerabilities, to a better understanding of the information and decision-making process of child migrants, to their motivations and expectations, and also to the alternatives for breaching the gap between current institutional rules and those called for in The Best interests of the Child.







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# TOWARDS STRATEGIC COORDINATION

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The **strategic coordination** of these bases put forward at the Barcelona Conference involves two types of coordination: operational, which requires supervision and information mechanisms, and another between agencies, which poses important ethical challenges and political obstacles. Many bodies, organisations and institutions superimpose actions in the same territories without any coordination or knowledge. Experts say that the way forward is to generate a common vision to form the basis for dialogue between actors, cooperation (north-south and south-south), the creation of common databases (the problem which was emphasised several times at the conference) and identify opportunities to improve protection during the different stages of the process.

The need for strategic coordination environments is a key element to the construction of long-lasting solution and even more so with the warning to surfers from University of Sussex researcher, Ann Whitehead, “we have a huge dilemma,” she said, “which is that the actions that we are (currently) taking to protect children are actions which affect children.”

Trafficking specialist with the International Organization for Migrations (IOM), Ana Fonseca, added to this reflection on long-lasting solutions by stating that, as a result of work with unaccompanied minors (UAMs), the importance of two key questions has become apparent. This means strengthening coordination mechanisms between countries of origin, destination and transit, which involves the necessary boosting of state capacities and as well as this coordination being considered a comprehensive approach not limited simply to analysing vulnerabilities, but also to individual motivations, expectations and strengths. Although the dissemination and placing of problems of ‘Children on the Move’ on the local and international public agenda were seen as a necessary next step, researcher Jacqueline Bhabha warned that invisibility is not the fundamental problem, as injustices are not resolved simply by bringing them to light. Bhabha cited the role of border authorities who view child migrants “as vulnerable and guilty at the same time, needing protection but illegal,” as is the case of hundreds of thousands of Mexican children, who, as they are considered illegal, are automatically returned to the border without anyone listening to them, without access to assessment or advice, without consulting their parents or guardians. In other contexts, solutions are not automatic, but determine long periods of children being detained at Centres (“euphemistically called refuges”, says the researcher). In both cases, Bhabha says that the role of legal representatives and experts in child social and welfare are completely subordinate.



From left to right: David Mlnoves, Director General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Action, Generalitat de Catalunya; Juan Carlos Mato, Director General for Social, Family and Children's Policies, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Spain; Moussa Harouna, representative from the African Working Child and Youth Movement.

When consulted, child and teenage migrants request access to the same rights and protections as children in the reception society, citizen children. And depending on their age, some are more valid than others. Although opportunities for education, skills development and a safe place to live are common to all, calls for improvements to professional skills and employment opportunities increase among the 15 to 18 year-old population. This conflicts with and comes under the ambivalence of today's societies, where child labour is considered a violation of human rights, which in practice only brings these children into closer contact with forms of exploitation and risks. Access to work is an open, ambivalent and provocative subject that lays bare the structural problems faced by modern societies and, in the midst of all this, are the child migrants.





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# CHILDREN'S VOICES

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## *“The universal story is the story of just one man”*

JORGE LUIS BORGES

*‘Voices of Children in the Move’ refers to the participation of children from around the world at the Conference (CoM), united by a single desire: to improve their lives, that of their families and their communities. Coming together at the event gave them the opportunity to exchange experiences, share and speak up for those left behind. They have lived through the phenomenon of migration in all its guises and are the leading players in the stories, whether they have been told or not, that they carry with them in their suitcases and which they opened to share these stories.*

*They talk about their dreams of finding a better life, full of opportunities and expectations, where access to education and basic services to help them develop are hugely important. They also talk about the obstacles that they have encountered along the way, about discrimination and the reasons for emigrating to somewhere better. Because, as they say, a child should experience childhood.*

*Sometimes, after all the problems that they have suffered, the life that they find is even worse than the one that they had (Alí, from Eritrea). The fact of not having documentation or legal status or a nationality when they are stateless children creates all kinds of setbacks which mean that any opportunities for development are lost along the way, as well as the value of their identity. Children need to develop a sense of belonging, of union and family ties and the fact of not having any papers may isolate them and consequently expose them and make them vulnerable to different risks.*

*The decision to leave is very often not taken by them, but by their families, yet it is the children who suffer from the separation. We need to learn to listen and through this give them the support and necessary protection, as this is all they need. It is as unique an aspect as each of their stories.*

*This is what it is all about: protection and support. Protection for childhood that does not affect children, which creates an unexpected effect: revictimisation. All cultural, social and personal aspects that affect them must be observed and taken into account, with protection mechanisms made available to them which will enable them to change from being invisible and isolated to being the very protagonist of their own story. Information is power, friendship and support for children during transit is indisputable and these are the best alliances for safer growth, development and movement.*

*The children taking part in the Conference have been working for months and have been reunited with their parents to give their account and be heard. The explanations that they have prepared, the materials and information that they have brought to the conference open up a new perspective which simply says: listen to us, because children’s voices, support and being there are the solution.*








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# PARTICIPATION: A MEANS AND AN END

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'Voices of children in the Move' formed a central space at the start of the International Conference (CoM), where the voices of child migrants took on the role of unique protagonist in a dialogue with experts and authorities from international bodies and NGOs, transforming the event into an active platform for participation and interaction.

The "Intergenerational Dialogue" Panel initiated an exchange of experiences and knowledge which served to explore causes and possible solutions and new questions from a number of approaches. The panel acted as a forum for the voices of children, experts and authorities at the Conference to be heard. How can mobility be prevented? What does prevention mean? What are the hopes for children who migrate alone? What can be done to protect them during their journey? What feelings are awakened when they go back home, especially on the return trip? When do feelings of failure appear? What type of protection could we be talking about when children are dying during the process?

Although these questions opened the door to issues relating to the mobility process, as to why they decided to migrate, or who makes the decision on behalf of the child, and to the risks and vulnerabilities, the reflections focused on the importance of protection and actors with responsibilities.

This served to highlight the importance of observing the challenges faced by the destination and origin countries of migrations and of seeking alternatives and innovative ideas through the use of case studies. It also established the need to strengthen monitoring and support systems in different geographical locations, and an analysed case comprised the Mexican borders and current strategies.

Child migrants viewed *protection not as a shield, with children seen as victims where adults say that they have problems but do not provide solutions. Personal knowledge of their social and cultural aspects is required. It is important not to ignore several aspects and thereby create a balance. Children need support and solidarity to be able to trust (...) We can also listen to children through other children.*

*Yet what do we mean by protection?* The voices on the panel looked beyond situations of violence, exploitation and abuse. *Feeling safe anywhere is protection* was a point of consensus which referred back to the questions. *How do we do it?* Those in charge of this safety at the place of origin, during the process and at the destination must participate and work together on vulnerabilities and risks and information and protection mechanisms. Social workers and experts, the police, civil servants, the child migrants themselves, their parents or guardians and intermediaries have an initial responsibility to reflect and act in light of this social phenomenon.





Miquel de Paladella  
Executive Coordinator,  
Global Movement for Children.



Imma Pérez-Rovira  
Secretary General for Children,  
Generalitat de Catalunya.

*How can we achieve a quicker and more efficient response? Is there no protective body in place? Freedom of movement is opposed to reality, or vice versa, and every day the mass media provides us with figures on detentions for so-called 'illegal' or 'irregular' migration, secret border crossing businesses. The role of the United Nations is a matter that comes on to the scene, it has representatives in different countries to deal with young emigrants, a Commissioner for the Rights of the Child, and these can enter into dialogue with governments, and generate information campaigns using the radio and create the networks through which the information circulates. And most importantly, they can use the networks of the friends (travelling companions in the case of unaccompanied minors) of other children who are also on the move. Friendship works. Strengthening friendship ties to get information across is the way to make it work.*

*"More children's voices, simply the most valuable contribution that we can make, that will most help us in our quest for solutions," says Moussa Harouna, a child migrant who is now part of the African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY). "We need to promote initiatives like this one. And not just listen to our experiences, but demand more proposals for improvements. I believe we have made progress, but there's still a long way to go. A solid accompaniment is a basic element, but we need a more specific idea of what we're going to do after this conference. Everyone understands that we need something mobile (accompaniment devices), since we children don't see borders. For us, the reality lies in crossing them and making new contacts, these are our initiatives, our dreams and when we do them, we don't see the police, the borders..., we just keep moving on. That's why I feel that taking part actively in an event like this can help us protect ourselves. The solution is to listen and be there for children."*



## ERIKA

18 years old, from Nicaragua

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I was nine when my parents decided to go to Costa Rica. The entire family emigrated in different stages. There were better work opportunities there. In Costa Rica, no-one knew us, they didn't give us Identity Cards, or nationality and that's why we can't go to school and get a good education. Nicaragua also has a form of social spite, they call us 'traitors', (...) I would like it if they made possible for us to be granted nationality or a legal status so that we can study. We can't get qualifications without the ID card, and without them, there's no university. There are also lots of illegal children, births that aren't registered, mainly in rural areas where emigrant women give birth at home with midwives because they're frightened to go to a health centre or hospital. They're afraid of being deported and they'll only treat you if you've got an ID card. Lots of children are unregistered, have no ID card and **their right to nationality** is being violated. All this recreates cycles of poverty. In fact, a lot of mothers who work lose their children because they're left unattended and are passed on to Foundations, where conditions very often are not the best.

Erika, represents teenage migration in Costa Rica and has brought with her a mural depicting a mother and her child standing in front of a wall and beyond it is a labyrinth with words that reflect obstacles. They have to cross it if they want to reach the mountains, which symbolise their dreams. **Simply put, she is saying no to both personal and institutional discrimination** and is asking the government for free education or accessible grants and free healthcare centres for everyone, as many (Nicaraguan children) have been born and live in this country.

## GLORIA

From Albania

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She is here to explain that there are several reasons for emigrating. Many children cannot attend school as they have to work to help their families. They are sometimes even sent by their family to other countries where they are exploited, sometimes even entered into false marriages. That's why a lot of them emigrate to Greece or Italy so that they can enjoy a decent life and avoid the abuse, child labour and trafficking networks. Some of them want to return to their families and live like children. Childhood should be able to live in a better country which recognises the rights of the child. **We are children and should be able to live as such.**



## ALÍ AHMED

17 years old, from Eritrea

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He had never thought about leaving his village. However, he was having problems and might have ended up on the street when he decided to leave with two friends. He explained the story of a friend of his who over two years walked from Ivory Coast to Italy. He described the problems that he faced, the border, when he was caught and held at reception centres, the violence to which he was exposed and when he reached his destination, he slept in the street. He didn't have any papers. He arrived in Sicily but he didn't speak Italian. He couldn't find work and he couldn't go to school. He decided to go to Rome on his own on the bus and there he met another boy from Eritrea. He didn't have anything with him and he tried talking to the police so that they would take him to a centre where he would be given food and somewhere to sleep. He asked for political asylum and was lucky as they helped him, because living on the street can make you go mad. It's important to have documents so that you can travel and go to school and so you don't end up like my friend who after **two years' travelling has a worse life than the one in his village.**

## THANAT

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He comes from Thailand, but his father is from Burma and his mother is from a Korean ethnic minority. Members of ethnic minorities are not recognised as citizens and are treated as foreigners in the country in which they were born. Thanat is a Stateless Child: he has no nationality. Without the necessary documentation, he cannot get a job or an education. Things have changed a lot and now the state recognises the right of the child to an education, but work exploitation of child migrants in particular continues to be a serious problem. The sense of belonging and identity is important to a child. **I'd like to have an identity, a nationality.** Thanat remembers his sports skills and his life: **I couldn't play football because I didn't have any papers.**



## GUSTAVO A. ROMERO

11 years old from Venezuela

He has travelled from Venezuela to Barcelona for a family reunion. He was seven and he remembers going to the airport. He felt both happy and sad because he missed his family that he was leaving behind, his grandparents and his cousins. His parents had emigrated because of the insecurity in Venezuela, political problems and in search of a better life. His mother was threatened continuously with being fired, of reports being filed against her, of having her salary cut, apart from all the ups-and-downs that were constantly interrupting her daily life. He adapted well, although he was criticised by people who did not treat people from abroad well. Is it because they couldn't understand why we had come here? My friends here also came from other countries, but I adapted well. At the CoM Conference, he explained the significance of his flag, the indigenous games of his country of origin... **I was little and I didn't know anything. I am very happy to be here and represent the children of Venezuela who are unable to talk...** [he starts crying from the emotion].

## FABRICE y SÉVERINE

From Burundi and Benin

Bouth are from Burundi and Benin. They are both representatives of the African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY) or Mouvement Africain des Enfants et Jeunes Travailleurs (MAEJT), an information and support programme with an extensive network of centres in eight West African countries. Children emigrate for a whole number of reasons and it is they who normally take the decision to leave and find a better future, where they can get an education and a decent job. The initiative that Fabrice and Séverine represent is based on community-level guardian angel committees, the aim of which is to help children on the move anticipate the risks that they may encounter. This helps them with threats of exploitation, abuse and child trafficking. This is a highly successful network in terms of mobility, safety and protection, where unaccompanied children can move freely with the support and knowledge that they need, thanks to their companions. This is why the AMWCY has created groups for children and young workers the length and breadth of West Africa, including Senegal, Mali and Togo, where they have championed campaigns for the rights of the child and the right to remain at home. The most striking element is that when children organise themselves, they are capable of producing significantly more results working together than individually, so when they act as a group in activities that generate profit and work, emigration is systematically reduced. They have brought with them the "Tree of Mobility", which explains the reasons risks and challenges facing children on the move. There are in fact two types of migration, national (rural to urban areas) and international (crossing borders). Being together and **listening is a way of learning to solve problems.**





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# CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

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## 1.

The International ‘Children on the Move’ Conference, organised by the Global Movement for Children (GMFC) from 5th to 7th October in Barcelona, has provided a space in which to exchange analyses, practices and proposals regarding migration and children on the move. The Conference has also been a space for consensus regarding the critical questioning of current paradigms maintained by national and international public policies that focus on the “immigration problem” and not on the deep-seated and growing intra- and inter-state social inequalities, which frequently confuse protection with detention. Consequently, the subject on which delegates widely agreed was the suggestion that **prevention does not stop migration, but it does stop exploitation.**

## 2.

We have still not sought answers to the important questions. The conclusions of the conference are of particular interest, since, on the one hand, we have not asked questions as to why these children decide to migrate, **we have not listened to their answers or the complex stories that they have to tell** about the lack of opportunities at home, their family responsibilities, discrimination, exclusion, violence, exploitation, hope, enthusiasm, ambition, determination and desire. In this sense, the Conference has been an innovative proposal, as there has been significant agreement and active participation on the part of representatives of children’s movements, whose personal lives contain stories of migration.

Besides this, with regard to the current paradigms which dominate the creation and implementation of policies that relate to this question, we have not resolved the following dilemma: **is not emigrating and remaining in their place of origin a priority for protecting children?** The analysis of the state of the question and the practices presented in the various spaces at the Conference of the erroneous suppositions of the dilemma, reaching conclusions such as the need to exit the migration and safety discourse.

## 3.

A challenge facing agencies and donors whose work involves these questions, is to find protection and intervention solutions during movement, in other words to adapt protection systems to child mobility. It is ‘relatively’ easy to protect children before and after mobility, but the devices during mobility have been badly defined. The Conference recommended **parallel actions both to protect children and in advocacy to achieve strategic changes in policies and practices.**

## 4.

Prevention, protection and support for child migrants must move along the path of action coordination to reduce vulnerabilities in the three stages or phases of the process: **pre-mobility, mobility** in itself and **post-mobility.**

## 5.

At the same time, we see child migrants in today’s societies as ‘poor and innocent children’ and in turn “not really our children.” We live in **societies with ambivalent perceptions** and, considering this is important when it comes to analysing the bases of public policies concerning child migrants which co-exist at national and international level. In relation to this question it is important to note that frontiers are wide open to trade, to transfer money, goods and other operations, but not to people seeking protection and compassion. Policy, programme and project coherence plays an important role in the construction of new questions that guide the action and in which **participation by child migrants** is not just necessary, but also essential.

## 6.

Although important advances in the methodology for **Determining the Best Interests (DBI)** of the child have been achieved, there is a gap between these and the problems involved in activating state mechanisms to make the rights established in the 1989 Convention effective. The need to activate and strengthen advocacy mechanisms is a strategic question in relation to prevention and the protection of child migrants.





## 7.

**Yet what do we mean by ‘Children on the Move’?**

The CoM Conference in Barcelona acted as a work space in which to make progress in determining the scope and extent of the concept. A number of experts and child migrants highlighted the need for progress in terms of the **conceptual clarity** required, not only to improve protection and support actions, but also to offer certainty to stakeholders, be it in their coordination or in the formulation, design and assessment of strategies and actions.

## 8.

The conclusion reached that **‘Children on the Move’ is not a new category** of children, such as children who are the victims of trafficking, refugees or unaccompanied children, has gained ground at the Conference debating spaces. This consensus is in response to the work carried out by international agencies and NGOs in the **construction of a new systems-based approach** which provides coherence to prevention and protection mechanisms for child migrants during the three phases of the migration process already described. There was also agreement in that going beyond the category-based approach offers new opportunities for focusing attention on vulnerabilities, risks and the lack of protection in the different parts of the journey.

## 9.

The conceptual clarity of ‘Children on the Move’ faces a **challenge of integration** for children in a situation of pre-mobility, mobility and post-mobility, and even those **‘children left behind’** by their parents or guardians, who, without abandoning them, have emigrated for work within their country of residence or abroad, or also **stateless children** who also suffer the risks and vulnerabilities of mobility.

## 10.

The conclusions emphasise the duty of states to have identification systems for **stateless children** and the importance of the register of births to act as a path towards nationalisation or citizenship. From the point of view of an agenda encompassing the work of different international bodies and organisations, the need was established to design campaigns to oblige states to take on responsibilities for children within their borders, the mobilisation of local agents and communities to collaborate in the design and implementation of long-lasting solutions and the need to establish a world network of agencies working in this field.

## 11.

The construction of an integrating approach also provides greater coherence for a **joint and coordinated action by actors**, be it in relation to the implementation of efficient protection mechanisms based on information exchange, research and data analysis, in the creation of prevention and awareness strategies and programmes or in monitoring and assessing actions during all stages of the process.

## 12.

pecial mention was made in reference to the **strategic alignment of donors’ agendas**. If a new point of view defines new aims, why earmark more funds for ‘categories’ rather than strengthening social services that make the rights of the child effective? Or why not, in terms of coherence, also finance projects in destination countries and question current public policy paradigms?



## 13.

A central question relating to the **challenge of integration** of the ‘Children on the Move’ concept has revolved around the need to accompany this development and review of practices **by improving and expanding lines of research**. The importance was established in monitoring the lives of child migrants, of monitoring risk and vulnerability factors in the different contexts and phases of the mobility processes, as well as analysis of the environment of the child migration process, with particular emphasis on the family (issues of abuse, violence and resources) and communities (situations of exclusion, racism, social services, work opportunities, local leaders and women’s groups).

## 14.

One topic popular with several debate space were the **“mobile protection devices”**. Several experiences presented showed the potential and abilities of these protection and accompaniment programmes during transit, as well as the need to create local protection networks as part of a unique mobility space, i.e. unique protection brokers.

## 15.

The **strategic coordination** required to work on the protection and support for ‘Children on the Move’ involves a degree of operational coordination, which, for example, needs to establish supervision and information mechanisms, and another degree of coordination for the actions carried out by different agencies, which, given the state of the current situation, poses important ethical challenges and political obstacles. Many bodies, organisations and institutions superimpose actions in the same territories without any coordination or knowledge. Experts say that the way forward is to generate a common vision to form the basis for dialogue between actors, cooperation (north-south and south-south), the creation of common databases (the problem which was emphasised several times at the conference) and identify opportunities to improve protection during the different stages of the process.

## 16.

Although the dissemination and placing of problems of ‘Children on the Move’ on the local and international public agenda were seen as a necessary short-term step, warnings were given that **the invisibility of the subject is not the fundamental problem, as injustices are not resolved simply by bringing them to light**. Child migrants are viewed as vulnerable and in turn guilty, needing protection but illegal. When consulted, child and teenage migrants request access to the same rights and protections as children in the reception society, citizen children. And depending on their age, some are more valid than others. Although opportunities for education, skills development and a safe place to live are common to all, calls for improvements to professional skills and employment opportunities increase among the 15 to 18 year-old population.

## 17.

**Access to work is an open, ambivalent and provocative subject that lays bare the structural problems** faced by modern societies and, in the midst of all this, are the child migrants.





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# APPENDICES

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1

- Department of Studies and Publications of the Intervida Foundation.

2

- International Organization for Migration.  
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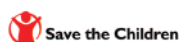
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PROTECTING  
AND SUPPORTING  
**CHILDREN  
ON THE MOVE**

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