



Major Group for
Children and Youth
the space for children and youth in the United Nations

GFMD Youth Forum 2021 Outcome Documents

Regional Roundtable 1: Latin America and the Caribbean

(ENGLISH VERSION)

In the framework of the III Forum of Youth on Migration, and in the context of the XIII Summit of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), Latin American and Caribbean youth discussed the state of public narratives on migration in Latin America and the Caribbean to (1) learn about the relevance of narratives in the integration of migrants and (2) build an action plan to shape migration narratives and its relationship with integration.

The following youth priorities were discussed during the regional session:

1. Narratives and Integration in Latin America and the Caribbean

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 has exacerbated the situation of vulnerability of thousands of migrants, who have been trapped in countries of transit, or who are without sufficient protection in their destination sites, in particular, children, adolescents and youth. In addition to negative effects in access to humanitarian protection, COVID- 19 has facilitated an increase in discourses of xenophobia. Based on narratives that associate migrants with the virus outbreaks or with the economic crisis, media and other actors in some countries have spread hate speech against migrants in the region, which can particularly affect minors.

According to a study carried out by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), as a result of the pandemic, xenophobic expressions and prejudice toward migrants have increased by 70% in 7 receiving countries of the region: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama and Peru¹. The increase in hate speech during the pandemic is correlated with the increase in xenophobic attacks, and in general, has a negative impact on the integration of migrants in their destination communities².

Considering this context, we propose recommendations for decision-makers, and a work plan for the network of young people in migration grouped in the Forum:

¹ Cortes, C and Rodríguez, M. ¿Qué se ha dicho en las redes sociales sobre las personas migrantes durante la pandemia? <https://blogs.iadb.org/migracion/es/redes-sociales-migrantes-prejuicios-pandemia/>

² Regidor, C. (2020). What Must We Do to Combat Xenophobia Against Nicaraguans in Costa Rica? Confidencial. <https://confidencial.com.ni/what-must-we-do-to-combat-xenophobia-against-nicaraguans-in-costa-rica/>

2. Recommendations for shaping narratives on migration and migrants, and favouring integration

- Create a network of young people to address work strategies at the regional level on migration and childhood, as well as to share experiences, learning and methodologies for the integration of migrants and refugees and the fight against xenophobia at the regional level.
- Collaborate in training initiatives for front-line public officials who work with people in situations of human mobility.
- Strengthen links between civil society and government actors through the creation of national and regional working groups and networks of young migrants and members of host communities to promote advocacy strategies for integration.
- Create spaces for dialogue between members of host communities and migrants. This is because the less contact host communities have with migrants, the more likely they are to generate negative narratives towards migrants.
- Establish clear work routes to promote the regularization of migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Make the validation of professional qualifications of migrants more flexible to promote labour integration.
- Change narratives highlighting people based on empathy and the benefits of migration for host communities.
- Use new formats, communication channels and digital tools to tell the stories of migrants and connect with new audiences generally apathetic towards migration.
- Articulate efforts between the different communication and awareness initiatives that already exist. It is important to take advantage of the fact that those with the greatest reach serve as a platform to promote new campaigns.
- Co-create communication and advocacy campaigns to transform narratives that rescue the ideas and stories of migrant children, adolescents and young people and host communities.
- Carry out a registry of migrant professionals in the region to make visible the potential for labour integration.

- Develop a diagnosis of the psychosocial and nutritional conditions of migrant children during the pandemic and their migratory transit in Latin America.

3. Action Plan 2021 and follow-up to the Youth Forum

Strengthen the network of young leader groups during the Forum, to create strategies for working on migration, children and youth at the regional level. For this, the UNMGCY LATAM database will be updated with support from the Youth Forum participants.

- The Regional Focal Points and Volunteers will update the database of youth-led organizations working on migration in the region and will share this data with participants, with the aim of creating support and exchange networks. A list of the young participants, their skills and work experience will be included to encourage alliances.
- Volunteer participants will create a digital library with up-to-date information and research on migration narratives in Latin America and the Caribbean. They will also collect pedagogical material (stories, videos, stories, spots) on migration and integration narratives in Latin America, focused on the situation of children and adolescents during COVID-19.
- Create a private Facebook group between Forum participants, allies and Regional Focal Points to periodically share bibliography and dissemination material. All participants will be able to share, and there will be an administrator team in charge of generating content in Spanish for the official UNMGCY network.
- Hold quarterly follow-up meetings between the young participants of the Forum and the UNMGCY grassroots team in the region, to strengthen alliances.

The goal in the short term is to create a strong network of Latin American youth that can scale youth-led actions for the protection of the rights of migrants and the management of migration at the local, national and regional levels. In the medium term, this network seeks to be an informative reference in Latin America and the Caribbean on innovative experiences of young people.

Provide training on migrants' rights, narratives and integration, with a focus on front-line officers and officers working with migrants in different initiatives. All these training sessions will take place online.

- Build a collective work methodology to structure webinars and / or online workshops that address human rights, the transformation of narratives regarding migrants, and integration. For this, diverse interdisciplinary and intersectional teams will be created between the Focal Points and young leaders participating in the Forum.
- Plan 3 webinars and/or semester workshops on the topics proposed by the Forum participants, with an emphasis on informing frontline officials and staff of local initiatives that are part of our network. These spaces may be organized in alliance with other organizations for dissemination among recipients and other young leaders.

The goal in the short term is to provide information and training regarding migrants' rights to public officials and personnel of organizations working with migrants. The training sessions will also emphasize the positive impacts of migration in the economy and society, and best practices for integration. In the medium term, we want to expand the scope of this pilot project to work with local and regional organizations in different countries.

4. Thinking about the future

In the long term, we imagine that in the network at a regional level we could work on the following actions:

- Strengthen UN MGCY network, by mapping organizations and youth experiences with Forum participants.
- Create a group that collects and spreads information regarding granting, fundraising and financial support for youth-led projects on migration.
- Create a webpage to collect and share information on different youth-led initiatives working with immigrants at the national and regional levels.
- Design a regional newsletter to share news, opportunities and best practices of different youth-led initiatives regarding migration in the region.
- Develop a pilot training project with local public officials.

5. Alliances and Key Actors

We seek to collaborate with international cooperation organizations, migrants-led organizations and host communities at the local level, to create partnerships and collaborate in building alliances to support migrants and youth across the region.

To carry out all these activities, we aim to establish and strengthen alliances with these organizations:

- UN agencies and regional organizations have collaborated with UNMGCY's work in the past (IOM, UNICEF, ECLAC). In this case, we seek to strengthen alliances.
- Establish new alliances with other international organizations on migration and human rights. Young leaders that participated in the Forum are essential actors to help expand this network.
- Strengthen and establish new alliances with local, national and regional civil society organizations led by migrants and host communities.
- Expand relationships with local governments, when possible. The young leaders participating in the Forum are critical to establishing and strengthening these partnerships.