Reporting on Migration

A Handbook for Journalists in West Africa

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Quotes

"

It is very important for journalists and the media to cover migration-related topics in Liberia because it will help inform the population about the root causes of migration and also know the migration path of the country. Information of where, why, who are involved in the related issues will be disseminated to the population."

Fanta Keita, Journalist (Liberia)

"

Journalists should understand what is under the umbrella of migration, there is often a lack of understanding of migration and the different terms that englobe it. When covering migration journalists should be cautious to not reinforce the stigma that migration is bad, and they should understand that it's key to respect the integrity and dignity of all migrants."

Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Migrants as Messengers, IOM (Burkina Faso)

"

Reporting migration related topics would give insights to the societal situation of migration in a particular locality such as the factors leading to migration. Journalists should work with organizations of returned migrants to get true and realistic information."

Brown Okojie, Returnee migrant (Nigeria)

"
Often simplified to numbers or statistics, reporting on migration teaches us that behind each face is a uniquely touching tale of a genuine struggle for survival and an aspiration for dignity."
Emmanuel Wongibe, Media Consultant (Cameroon)

"
When journalists cover migration, they should know that they have a heavy responsibility, that migration involves more than the actors directly concerned meaning local authorities, territorial communities, civil society and migrants themselves. Talking about migration also means creating platforms for exchanges, raising the real issues about migration."
Codou Loum, Journalist (Senegal)

"
It is good to cover topics related to migration because it allows the population to have information on the issue and to know whether or not to leave, but also if there might be something else to do here."
Ramatoulaye Diene, Journalist and Migrants as Messenger Volunteer (Senegal)

Table of Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACS	American Colonialization Society
AU	African Union
CEN-SAD	The Community of Sahel-Saharan States
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease (2019)
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
EAC	East African Community
EC	European Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GDP	Gross domestic product
GIJN	Global Investigative Journalism Network
GPS	Global positioning system
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ICT	Information and communication technology
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally displaced person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LMK	Low- and middle-income countries
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
REC	Regional economic community

SDGs	Sustainable development goal
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USD	United States dollar
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

"Since earliest times, humanity has been on the move, some people move in search of new economic opportunities and horizons, others move to escape armed conflict, poverty, food insecurity, persecution, terrorism, or human rights violations and abuses, still others do so in response to the adverse effects of climate change."

New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants
*Adopted 13 September 2016 by the
United Nations General Assembly*

Migration is a global phenomenon. Migration has always been a method of adaptation and contributes to the wealth, dynamism, survival and stability of societies. Today, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that one out of every seven people, or one billion people, is a migrant – someone who has moved across an international border, or within a State, away from their habitual place of residence.

There are internal migrants: those who move but stay within their country of origin, and international migrants: those who leave their country of origin or country of habitual residence to another country. As of 2017, there were 763 million internal migrants and 272 million international migrants – that's equivalent to 3.5 per cent of the world population (UNHCR, 2019). There are also 60 million forcibly displaced people – those who have fled a situation of conflict and/or persecution (more than 20 million of whom have fled outside their country of origin referred to as "refugees").

Journalists have an obligation to report on the issues of migration, refugees and human trafficking in an accurate, fair, balanced, humane and ethical way. These are complex stories. Research and news reports indicate the issue of migration affects countries across the globe on the political, economic, demographic, security, social, cultural, and other fronts. So, it is important for media to become as knowledgeable as possible on the subject and to create awareness in their respective communities by reporting on it in the best way possible.

But before delving into the details, journalists must do their homework and then allocate the necessary amount of time, effort, perseverance and resources. Since

not all journalists can dedicate their complete attention to this story, they must at least acquire basic, important information and skills that will help them prepare for the assignment. To start, journalists should understand the reasons behind irregular migration that lead people to journey to another place and what routes they take to reach their destinations which will ensure accurate coverage of people on the move.

This handbook seeks to provide guidance for journalists so they can:

- ▶ Better understand the complexities of migration.

- ▶ Explain how migration can be covered through people- and rights-based storytelling.

- ▶ Have a solid understanding of where and how to find migration-related story ideas and sources.

- ▶ Better understand the importance of media's role in covering migration.

- ▶ Understand the laws and procedures surrounding the different forms of migration.

- ▶ Apply ethical considerations during reporting.

- ▶ Adopt a gender-sensitive and gender-inclusive approach to reporting.

The target group for this handbook is journalists and media professionals working for public or private media, in print or online in West and Central Africa and other parts of the world. Although it is adapted for journalists, this guide may also be an invaluable resource for other audiences discovering migration issues, such as communication and journalism students, associations or humanitarian organizations, civil society players, senior public officials and teachers and students.

Additional resources were created to go alongside this handbook, including an online game called "A Migrant's Journey". This choice-based game is based on the real-life experiences of migrants. It highlights some of the many difficult decisions people face in irregular migration

The game is available at the Migrants as Messengers and Yenna sites (https://yenna.org/migrantjourney)

1. Migration: A Global Phenomenon

1.1 The migration phenomenon

Migration is: "the movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State"

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

We live in an era of unprecedented human mobility. Mobility, an integral part of human development, has always been a method of adaptation to environmental, political and economic spheres. It contributes to the wealth, dynamism, survival and stability of societies.

But what exactly is migration? Migration is the movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State.

OVERALL PICTURE: INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT POPULATION

130.6 MILLION
WOMEN

31 MILLION
CHILDREN

272 MILLION INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS

25.9 MILLION
REGISTERED
REFUGEES

3.9 MILLION
ASYLUM SEEKERS

4.8 MILLION
INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS

164 MILLION
MIGRANT WORKERS

Figure 1. Overall picture: International migrant population. Source: IOM, 2019, UNHCR, 2019.
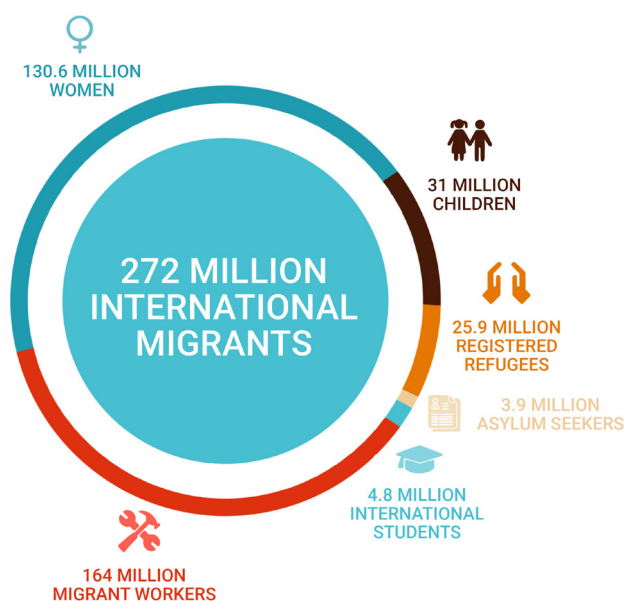
International migration is defined by IOM as the movement of persons away from their place of usual residence and across an international border to a country of which they are not nationals.

Internal migration is the movement of people within a State involving the establishment of a new temporary or permanent residence (adapted from IOM, 2015). Internal migration movements can be temporary or permanent and include those who have been displaced from their habitual place of residence such as internally displaced persons, as well as persons who decide to move to a new place, such as in the case of

rural–urban migration. The term also covers both nationals and non-nationals moving within a State, provided that they move away from their place of habitual residence. Such internal or international movements may be voluntary, forced or somewhere in the grey zone in between.

Regular migration is migration that occurs in compliance with the laws of the country of origin, transit and destination.

A migrant in a regular situation is a person who moves or has moved across an international border and is authorized to enter or to stay in a State pursuant to the law of that State and to international agreements to which that State is party.

There is no universally agreed definition of irregular migration, however, it can be defined as the movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination. From the point of view of the country of destination, irregular migration occurs when migrants enter, reside in and work in the country irregularly, i.e. without the authorizations or documents required under immigration law to enter, live and work in the country concerned.

A migrant in an irregular situation is a person who moves or has moved across an international border and is not authorized to enter or to stay in a State pursuant to the law of that State and to international agreements to which that State is a party.

A MIGRANT IN AN IRREGULAR SITUATION MAY BE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES.

Irregular entry   Irregular residence   Irregular employment

MIGRANTS CAN MOVE BETWEEN REGULAR AND IRREGULAR SITUATIONS AS LAWS AND POLICIES CHANGE.

Crossing the border   No residence permit

Irregular   Regular

Figure 2. Irregular and regular migrants. Source: IOM Global Migration Data Analysis Centre, 2018

Forced migration (or *displacement*) accounts for 10 per cent of international migration. Of the 763 million internal migrants, 41.3 million were internally displaced persons (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2019), forced to leave their habitual place of residence by, for example, a conflict or climate-related disaster.

Migration is a serious concern for women and girls. Almost half of migrants are women and girls and women are increasingly migrating alone or as heads of their households. Women migrants face major risks including sexual exploitation, trafficking and violence. They face double discrimination: as women and as migrants.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the contribution of migration to sustainable development. Migration is a cross-cutting issue, relevant to all of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Eleven out of 17 goals contain targets and indicators that are relevant to migration or mobility. The SDGs' central reference to migration is made in target 10.7 to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies, which appears under Goal 10 to reduce inequality within and among countries.

Some facts and figures that can be used to illustrate the phenomenon of migration:

■ Every seventh person is a migrant: taken together, the 272 million international migrants (130.6 million are women and 31 million children) (DESA, 2019) and the 763 million internal migrants (DESA, 2013) total over 1 billion people who have left their usual place of residence.

■ Of the 272 million international migrants in 2017, 25.9 million were refugees and 3.5 million were asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2019); in other words, about 10 per cent were forced migrants.

■ Most of the international migrants – about 90 per cent – were migrant workers and members of their families, or international students, etcetera.

■ International migrants comprised 3.5 per cent of the global population in 2019, compared to 2.8 per cent in 2000.

■ Between 2000 and 2017, the relative number of international migrants originating from Africa experienced the largest increase (+68 per cent), followed by the number of migrants born in Asia (+62 per cent), in Latin America and the Caribbean (+52 per cent) and in Oceania (+51 per cent) (DESA, 2017).

■ In 2016, there were 4.8 million international students – they are also considered migrants.

■ Contrary to a belief commonly held worldwide, only a minority of migrants – 34 per cent in 2015 – migrate from a country of the Global South to a country of the Global North, compared to 38 per cent South-South migration (World Bank, 2016 and DESA, 2017).

1.2 Defining migrants

There is no legally recognized definition of the word migrant. For the purposes of this handbook, the IOM definition of migrant is used: "An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place

of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students."

There are many different types of migrants. Some leave temporarily, some permanently, some are forced, some voluntary and some go far while others stay closer to home.

Most people migrating across a border do so in their immediate region, to neighbouring countries to which they may find it easier to travel and from which it may be easier to return. Indeed, for displaced persons fleeing a disaster or crisis, such as a conflict or extreme violence, or rapidly evolving dangers such as meteorological events or climate-related disasters, the important thing is to reach safety quickly. People also tend to seek safer places close by, either in the same country or across a border.

The term migrant worker refers to a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national. According to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, migrant workers:

a. Are considered as documented or in a regular situation if they are authorized to enter, to stay and to engage in a remunerated activity in the State of employment pursuant to the law of that State and to international agreements to which that State is a party;

b. Are considered as non-documented or in an irregular situation if they do not comply with the conditions provided for in subparagraph (a) of the present article.

Internal or international movements may be voluntary, forced or somewhere in between. There are what we call "push-pull factors" where some elements such as low wages, scarce job opportunities or the effects of climate change (e.g. drought forcing farmers to find better climes) will "push" people to migrate while higher wages and job opportunities in destination countries or regions are "pull" factors.

The 26 million refugees and 4.2 million asylum seekers in 2019 are also migrants and are a particular and vulnerable category of migrant because they have had to flee crossing a border and have either lost the protection of their country of origin or cannot benefit from it (UNHCR, 2020).

According to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is someone who has a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of their nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country". Their situation is often so perilous and intolerable, that they cross national borders to seek safety in nearby countries, and thus become internationally recognized as refugees. They are so recognized precisely because it is too dangerous for them to return home, and they therefore need sanctuary elsewhere. These are people for whom denial of asylum has potentially deadly consequences.

A refugee "de facto" is an asylum seeker who may not meet the Refugee Convention criteria and may not be entitled to refugee status but may suffer persecution if they were to be returned to their country of origin. In this case, they may be granted "de facto" legal status to be able to enjoy the protection of the asylum country.

Moving as adaptation

[MIGRANT SIDE]

[AT HOME]

Empowerment

Education

Discovery of new culture

Network building

Language learning

Working skills improvement

Income

Access to jobs

↑ OPPORTUNITIES

↓ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC COSTS

Loneliness estrangement

Cost of living (debt repayment)

Hard working conditions

Low wages

Poor housing conditions

Xenophobia

Travel risks (irregular migration)

Human security

Food

Health

Housing

Increased resilience

Adaptation investments

Business investments

Land

Work tools

Vehicles

Consumer goods

Brain drain

Skill drain

Household insecurity

Family breakdown

Disruption of social ties

REMITTANCES

ADEQUATE POLICIES

IMMIGRATION LAWS

HUMAN RIGHTS

WORKING RIGHTS

ORGANIZED COMMUNITY ABROAD (DIASPORA)

GLOBAL ECONOMIC SITUATION & RELATED LEVELS OF COMPETITION BETWEEN WORKERS, XENOPHOBIA, ETC.

← *FACTORS INFLUENCING POSITIVE / NEGATIVE*

Figure 3. Moving as adaptation. Source: IOM Environmental Migration Portal. Produced by Zoï Environment Network, 2015. © IOM

Internally displaced person (IDP) is someone who is forced to flee their home but who remains within their country's borders. They are often referred to as refugees, although they do not fall within the legal definitions of a refugee.

Environmental migrant: Climate change is a key issue in West Africa as it is around the world. The United Nations believes there may be 250 million environmental migrants worldwide by 2050. Environmental factors include exposure to natural hazards, exposure to environmental degradation and availability of ecosystem services. While the first two are likely to push people to move, ecosystem services can act in either direction, depending on the level of availability of such services.

Environmental factors are often intimately linked to economic factors, notably through the impacts of reduced land productivity on rural wages, prices and employment. Large-scale displacement can also put major strains on the environment in receiving areas, whether in camp settings or not, particularly when natural resources are already scarce/stretched. The issue of migration and the environment and climate change will be discussed further on page 11.

Legally, the term "climate refugee" is inappropriate as it is not covered by the definition of refugee in the 1951 Refugee Convention. In the case of environmental migrants, most people risk being displaced within their own country, rather than across an international border.

There are also abusive forms of migration – the crimes of trafficking in persons (internal or transnational) and smuggling of migrants.

According to the UN Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, smuggling of migrants refers to the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident. Smuggling of human beings necessarily implies crossing a border. The smuggling of migrants, while often undertaken in dangerous or degrading conditions, involves migrants who have consented to the smuggling.

In the case of human trafficking, two additional elements beyond smuggling must be present: there must be some improper form of recruitment, such as coercion, deception or some abuse of authority; and activity must have been undertaken for some exploitive purpose, although that purpose need not necessarily have been fulfilled.

Trafficking victims have either never consented or, if they initially consented, that consent has been rendered meaningless by the coercive, deceptive or abusive actions of the traffickers

Victims of trafficking can be nationals exploited in their own country, or international migrants in a regular or irregular situation.

According to the International Labour Office, there are nearly 25 million people (migrants and nationals) who are victims of forced labour globally.

1.3 Migration in West Africa

West Africa has the most mobile population on the continent. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is the only regional economic community (REC) in Africa that has implemented the free movement protocol. These free movement protocols and regulations enhance the high rates of mobility within the subregion with top destination countries being Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria. These countries are also the top migrant-sending countries in the subregion (Awumbila, 2014).

In 2019, over 21 million Africans were living in another African country, a significant increase from 2015, when around 18.5 million Africans were estimated to be living within the region (IOM, 2020a). Since 1990, the number of African migrants living outside of the region has more than doubled, with growth in migration to Europe most pronounced. In 2019, most African-born migrants living outside the region were residing in Europe (10.6 million), Asia (4.6 million) and North America (3.2 million) (IOM, 2020a).

Between the start of 2017 and 30 June 2017, approximately 47,000 West African migrants arrived irregularly in Italy. Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal were all placed in the top ten countries of origin in this period, making West African irregular migrants the biggest contributor to the so-called migration crisis in the EU since dramatic reductions in arrivals from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria (EU, 2017).

Intraregional migration is significant in West Africa and is characterized by migration flows that are influenced by multiple drivers but primarily environmental and economic. Recent estimates indicate that most international migrants in West Africa move within the subregion. Intraregional migration dominates for several reasons, including visa-free movement among ECOWAS members, the relatively small sizes of many countries in the subregion and the strong networks among the many ethnic groups scattered across the subregion (IOM, 2020a).

Workers: Intraregional migration within ECOWAS is mostly due to labour mobility, with seasonal, temporary and permanent migrant workers moving largely from countries such as Niger and Mali toward Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. A large number of migrant workers are in low-skilled sectors, including domestic work, informal trade and agriculture. In parts of West Africa, agricultural labourers often move during the harvest period (July to September), as well as through the offseason harvest that runs until March. Some of the migrant workers are children, as is the case with the movements between Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso (IOM, 2020a).

Smugglers: The use of smugglers to cross borders even within free movement areas such as ECOWAS is not uncommon, particularly in circumstances where people do not possess identity documents. It is important to emphasise, however, that most West Africans who are smuggled overland begin their journeys as regular migrants under the free movement protocol and only violate immigration laws after exiting the ECOWAS area. Moreover, a number of borders in West Africa are extremely porous, enabling unauthorized movements between countries, with several ECOWAS borders cutting across politically unstable and sparsely populated areas, which are also characterized by security deficiencies (IOM, 2020a).

Safety: For many West and Central African migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe, Niger is an important country of transit as well as a major smuggling hub. Niger's weak border management capacity has been exacerbated by an increase in attacks by armed and extremist groups operating along the country's borders. Most attacks, including from Boko Haram, have been concentrated in Niger's Diffa region, located in the south-east of the country, bordering Nigeria. The violence has had a devastating impact on health services and education and has driven thousands of people from their homes (IOM, 2020a).

Conflict: Some of the violence and displacement in West Africa is linked to conflict between pastoralists and farmers over land and resources, although these conflicts often have ethnic and religious dimensions too. The Boko Haram insurgency, which began in 2009 in Nigeria's northern State of Borno, combined with counter-insurgency operations and communal clashes over scarce resources, have also led to significant displacement in the Lake Chad region. With more than 2.2 million IDPs, Nigeria ranked among the top 10 countries with the highest number of people displaced due to conflict and violence by end of 2018 (IOM, 2020a).

There are also stateless people. Statelessness is most likely to occur among a number of identified categories, such as: historical migrants and their descendants; children of unknown parents; border populations; refugees and returnees, particularly refugee children born abroad; displaced persons and some categories of contemporary migrants or trafficked persons.

One of the most significant positive aspects of migration in sub-Saharan Africa is the financial contribution migrants make through remittances. Remittances are cross-border, private, monetary or non-monetary (in kind) transfers made by migrants for the benefit of their families or communities.

These remittances help to diversify and substantially increase household incomes, allowing families to invest in education or housing. They also protect people from instability, ill-functioning markets, failing State policies and a lack of State-provided social security. On the national level, remittances have proved to be an increasingly important and reliable source of foreign currency. Although migrants remit to their family members, these resources set off a process that affects the whole economy.

In 2019, remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) overtook foreign direct investment (FDI) as the largest source of incoming capital, having previously overtaken official development assistance (ODA) and private portfolio balance (Ratha et al., 2019).

COVID-19: More recently we've seen how the pandemic has affected migration in West Africa. Data collected at 35 key transit points across West and Central Africa by IOM indicate regional migration has dropped by nearly 50 per cent during the first half of 2020 (compared with 2019) due to government travel restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (UN, 2020).

The response to the pandemic has caused great disruption to cross-border mobility and trade. The World Bank (2020) is projecting remittances to sub-Saharan Africa will drop 23 per cent in 2020. Although mobility restrictions such as border closures have been instrumental in limiting the spread of the virus, they have had devastating repercussions on regional trade and livelihoods. Migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs) disproportionately face the effects of these restrictions. Border communities and cross-border commerce have been impacted in a region where 60 per cent of the economy is informal (UN, 2020).

> *In June 2020, there were estimates that at least 33,000 migrants were stranded at borders including in overcrowded transit centres as a result of COVID-19 mobility restrictions, according to the IOM (UN, 2020).*
>
> *"Most of them have lost their jobs or incomes, which can also be an obstacle to accessing health services."*
>
> **Sophie Nonnenmacher**
> *Acting Regional Director for IOM's Regional Office for West and Central Africa*

1.4 Migration, environment and climate change in West Africa[1]

The links between migration and the environment are not new, people around the globe have always been moving due to the environment. This is true for the West Africa region too, which carries a long history of mobility, be it in the form of migrant workers moving during the harvesting season, pastoralists moving with their herds for greener pasture, or the more tragic displacement due to floods and drought (IOM, 2020b).

Over the last decades, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation have intensified environmental events and processes in West Africa, such as droughts, desertification, deforestation, water scarcity, rising sea levels, coastal erosion and flooding, compelling more people directly and indirectly to leave their homes (IOM, 2020b).
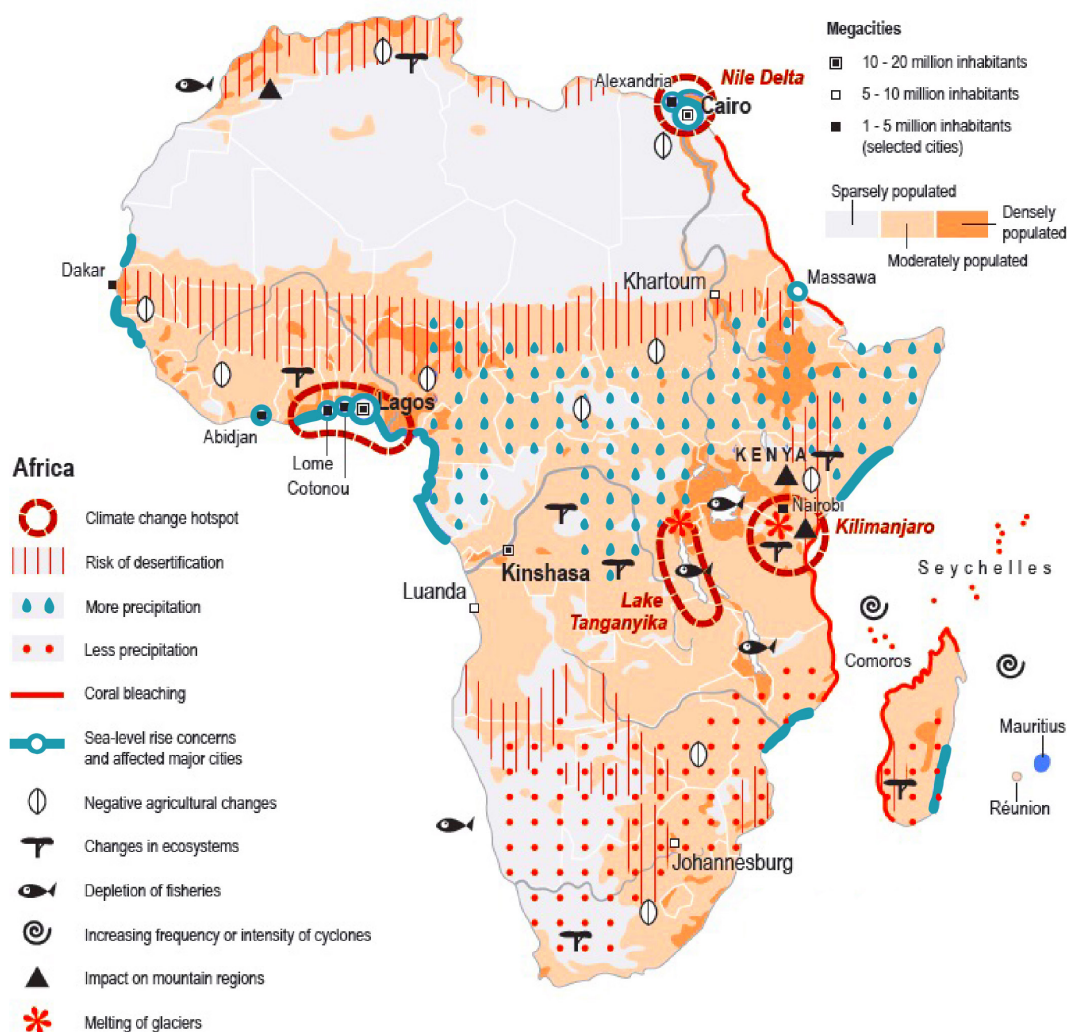
Figure 4. Regional impacts of climate change in Africa. Map extracted from The Atlas of Environmental Migration (Ionesco D., Mokhnacheva D. and Gemenne F., Routledge, Abingdon, 2017), p. 63. © IOM (Mokhnacheva, Ionesco), Gemenne, Zoï Environment Network, 2015. Sources: IPCC (2013, 2014)

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1 Developed together with the IOM Migration, Environment and Climate Change Division, Ileana Sinziana Puscas, Project Officer for Migration, Environment and Climate Change.

Environmental Migration

There is no legal definition nor an internationally accepted one for persons on the move due to environmental drivers. In 2007, IOM put forward a working definition: "Environmental migrants are persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad" (IOM, 2007:33).

Environmental migration can take different forms: forced and voluntary, temporary and permanent, internal and international. Environmental migration can be driven by slow-onset events and processes (sea level rise, increasing temperatures, land degradation) or sudden-onset events (floods, cyclones, storms), both of which are exacerbated by the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

Migration in the context of the environment can thus be both a problem and a solution. If not well-managed, migration can put people in vulnerable situations when they have to flee their homes; but it can also build the resilience and adaptation capacity of people by allowing for income diversification (IOM, 2014).

In addition, migration can have a positive impact on departure areas by easing the pressure on dwindling natural resources, and remittances can open up alternative sources of income, reduce reliance on the environment for subsistence, and contribute to climate action.

Key Facts and Figures

Environmental stress rarely has a direct impact on mobility. There are a multitude of drivers of migration including: economic, political, demographic and social, to which environmental stress is added thereby leading to a decision to migrate.

There is no global figure of environmental migrants. We do not know how many people are on the move due to slow-onset events and processes, such as sea-level rise and desertification. What we do know is that 24.9 million people were internally displaced in 2019 alone due to sudden-onset disasters, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2020), out of which some 327,000 were in West Africa (IOM, 2020b). The majority of people displaced in the context of disasters remain within their country or region. Even though cross-border movements often get significant media coverage, these movements are less frequent.

Significantly, the World Bank projects that some 143 million people could become climate migrants by 2050, if we do not take any climate action (Rigaud et al., 2018). Projections for West Africa show that 54.4 million people could become internal migrants by 2050 due to climate change (Rigaud et al., 2018:109).

Solutions and International and Regional Frameworks

There are three main solutions for environmental migration: i) solutions for people to stay – protecting the environment so people do not have to move; ii) solutions for people to move – allowing people to move in a regular, safe and orderly way; and iii) solutions for people on the move – offering aid and protection to those displaced (IOM, 2018).

At the international level, States have recognized the links between migration and the environment (IOM, 2018a). The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) adopted in 2018, acknowledges for the first time in an international migration framework, disasters, climate change and environmental degradation as drivers of migration. The 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change recognizes the human rights of migrants when taking climate action, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) of 1994 also identifies the link between desertification, land degradation, drought and migration. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 addresses displacement as a consequence of disasters.

At the regional level, the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS have also acknowledged the links between migration and environment (IOM, 2020b). The Migration Policy Framework for Africa 2018-2027 and the 2009 Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (the Kampala Convention) establish a significant framework for addressing migration and displacement in the context of disasters and climate change.

In West Africa, the Free Movement Protocol of 1979 is a key policy allowing people, including environmental migrants, to move freely in the sub-region; and the 1998 Transhumance Protocol allows for herders and their livestock to cross borders.

Environmental Migration Stories in West Africa

Mobility in West African countries has long been a traditional adaptation strategy to climatic stressors. Present environmental changes are stressing the agricultural sector, which accounts for 35 per cent of West Africa's GDP and employs over 80 per cent of the workforce (IOM, 2020c). Employment in agriculture is so high that decay in agricultural production is one factor that leads to forced migration – which gives access to complementary income or better opportunities (IOM, 2020c).

Disasters have immediate displacement effects and can disrupt established migration patterns and combined with a host of socioeconomic factors are driving ever greater numbers of people to migrate internally and across borders. Though often interlinked, as incremental climate change can increase the risk of certain disasters, their onset and consequences have widely varying implications for regional migration and international policymaking (Heimann, 2015).

For example, West African coastal areas, which have long provided livelihoods for fishermen and tend to be more densely populated, are also under threat, according to a recent Brookings Institution (2019) article, coastal ecosystems used to provide a range of essential services, including a huge fishery resource. Productive fishery ecosystems (mangroves, deltas and estuaries) are essential to the fishing, agriculture and tourism sectors. They are being hit by rising sea levels, which triggers floods, erosion, increased salinity, the disappearance of certain species, and disruption of species' natural migration patterns, and so on.

One example of this is happening in Saint-Louis, a city of 230,000 people and a UNESCO World Heritage site. The city spans a thin peninsula between the Senegal River and the Atlantic Ocean and is particularly vulnerable to the rising sea levels and urban crowding. With damage now unavoidable, Senegal's government and the World Bank are mobilising to resettle nearly 10,000 people from the city's riskiest zone (Pronczuk, 2020).

Effects of migration on the environment

Population movements have both direct effects on the environment (the settling of migrants in natural areas can cause deforestation, biodiversity losses, water pollution and soil erosion) and indirect ones (the extension of the community encroaching on natural spaces). Displaced populations can also manage natural resources unsustainably, which can create risks for the migrants and their communities: unsustainable waste disposal polluting water, soil erosion and forest fires causing air pollution (IOM, 2007).

Interconnected factors

Environmental changes in West Africa are impacting human livelihoods and mobility. For example, although precipitation events in the Sahel are slowly increasing, they are becoming increasingly unpredictable, leading to the frequent occurrence of droughts and floods. In Niger, an estimated 40,000 disaster displacements were recorded at the end of 2018, while in Nigeria, there were around 600,000 displacements as a result of floods in the same year (IOM, 2020b).

At the same time, rapid population growth has led to the intensification of cropping, deforestation and overgrazing, contributing to land degradation (IOM, 2020).

Despite an increase in the scale of agriculture in the subregion, food insecurity remains rampant. For example, at the end of 2018, more than 3 million people were affected by food insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin. Millions of people in West Africa depend on Lake Chad; however, the Lake's volume has decreased by 90 per cent in area in the last 40 years, due to increased drought and human-related causes, such as increased irrigation withdrawals (IOM, 2020).

The lake's shrinkage has not only affected the livelihoods of millions of people, but also impacted cattle transhumance, and is increasingly a source of tension and communal conflict. The deterioration of living conditions has made it difficult for people living along the Lake to adapt to the harsher conditions and has created an ideal environment for armed groups to emerge (IOM, 2020).

The complex and interconnected environmental changes – such as droughts and floods, overexploitation of resources and climate change – are contributing factors to rural–urban and cyclical mobility within countries and across borders in the subregion. Migration is one strategy used to increase livelihoods and reduce risks in the Western Sahel, particularly in light of uncertain agricultural returns. There is also a connection between the impacts of climate change on natural-resource-dependent livelihoods and food insecurity and conflicts and mobility.

Reflection time

Think about the impact of migration on the politics, economics, demographics, environment, security, education and cultures of your country? Impact on the sub-region? The world?

2. Human rights, Migration and the Media

International human rights apply to all human beings, regardless of immigration status. Everyone should enjoy basic human rights such as the right to life, liberty, and security of person; freedom from slavery or torture; the right to equal protection of the law and freedom from discrimination; freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention; the presumption of innocence; and freedom of association, religion and expression. Other international human rights norms include the right to leave, the right to return and the right to free movement within a country.

This chapter will highlight international human rights norms regarding migration while Chapter 3 will look more closely at other relevant laws.

2.1 Human rights and migration

International human rights law applies not only to the nationals of a State, but to everyone within the State's jurisdiction, including migrants, be their status regular, irregular, documented or undocumented. Their human rights are not isolated from the rights of others and, with the exception of the right to enter another country and to vote and stand for election to political office, migrants should enjoy the same human and labour rights as nationals.

These human rights are protected by international treaties, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

Articles 13 and 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example, are quite important.

- ▶ Article 13 states:

  - Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.
  - Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

▶ And Article 14 states:

  · Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

There are several other treaties that specifically address the human rights of migrants, including the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. These treaties outline rights of particular importance to migrants, including due process, family reunification and asylum. For example, Article 8 of the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families states:

1. Migrant workers and members of their families shall be free to leave any State, including their State of origin. This right shall not be subject to any restrictions except those that are provided by law, are necessary to protect national security, public order (ordre public), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others and are consistent with the other rights recognized in the present part of the Convention.

2. Migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right at any time to enter and remain in their State of origin.

There is also the Declaration on the Human Rights of Individuals who are not nationals of the country in which they live. This declaration guarantees those individuals several civil and political rights as well as the right to decent conditions at the workplace.

But even with all these rights, journalists should also bear in mind that migrants and their families are often vulnerable and face discrimination. While migrants are not inherently vulnerable, they can be vulnerable to human rights violations. Migrants in an irregular situation tend to be disproportionately vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation and marginalization, often living and working in the shadows, afraid to complain, and denied their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Human rights violations against migrants can include a denial of civil and political rights such as arbitrary detention, torture, or a lack of due process, as well as economic, social and cultural rights such as the rights to health, housing or education. The denial of migrants' rights is often closely linked to discriminatory laws and to deep-seated attitudes of prejudice or xenophobia (UNHCR, 2014).

Journalists should also be aware of stigma: when people have failed to reach their desired destination and return to their place of origin or return after a period away, they can face stigmatisation.

Generally, both voluntary and forced returnees often experience psychological and social vulnerability. Many returnees say they are stigmatized when they return home from a trip that they deem unsuccessful. They often experience feelings of shame and "loosing face" within their communities and their families.

2.2 The role and responsibility of the media in covering migration

Wittingly or unwittingly, media can play its part in creating an unbalanced discourse about migration, including labour migration. Inaccurate, biased media reporting can lead to dis- or misinformation, and at worst, may be an instigator for discrimination and unfair treatment.

Disinformation is information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organization, or country. Misinformation is information that is false but not created with the intention of causing harm.

We are seeing disinformation increasingly used as part of tactical pursuits of power, with negative impacts on public, political and social media discourse, on societal values, and on public policy issues such as migration, displacement and migrants (including refugees).

There are a number of things that journalists can do to ensure they cover migration topics responsibly and professionally.

- Ensure balanced coverage. Avoid victimisation and oversimplification. In most cases, migrants are perceived in extremes, either as a problem or as victim. Challenge these notions and myths and cover other aspects of migration such as stories of successful artists, diaspora remittances and the contribution of migrants to development.

- The public service mission of the media and the responsibility for the media to serve their communities is particularly important when looking at a complex topic such as migration.

- Promote evidence-based public discourse. Journalists should use accurate information and resources, understand that correlation does not mean causation, be transparent and share with the public resources to further explore the topic at hand. Confront, fact-check and analyse statements to hold accountable authorities, educate the public and contribute to a deeper understanding of migration. There is further discussion of fact-checking in Chapter 7.

- Provide context and use reliable, accurate facts.

- Use correct terminology related to migration.

- Inform the public of the added value of migrants for the host country and share the benefits of an open policy on migration.

- Challenge hate.

- Instead of talking on behalf of migrants, give them a voice: show their humanity.

- Ensure humane treatment of information: protect migrants' dignity and safety. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

In general, the media does not tell people what to think, but what to think about. Remember:

► The standards of journalism, including objectivity or impartiality and fairness, are essential to media credibility and public support of the media. The first responsibility of the news media is to take no sides and report the truth as best ascertained.

► Objectivity is an ideal, an essential technique for removing bias in seeking truth. Objectivity, while not absolutely achievable, is a commitment by the journalist to set aside personal or other values that would shape the story differently.

► Journalists also have responsibility to not produce information or see their information be used to mislead the public, to inflame conflict.

► Sensational, biased, narrowly defined, elite-sourced reporting occurs for many reasons including media owners' imperatives, government censorship, intimidation and a lack of understanding of where to find sources.

Remember too that not only is the political salience of migration high, and frequently fevered, but the capacity for rapidly disseminating disinformation to influence the public discourse has expanded. Your job as a journalist is to ensure the veracity of the information you share with your audience.

Given the media's fundamental role in shaping narratives and forming public opinion, it is critical that journalists have the knowledge and skills to report on migration in an evidence- and human rights-based manner.

Globally, migration flows are mainly urban and that is no different for West Africa: migrants, both internal and international, settle primarily in cities and urban areas, thus contributing to their diversity and economic dynamism. And the media are largely in main urban centres covering the issues of those centres so it would make sense that journalists cover stories of migration.

All of this is to say that migration has significant impacts on all aspects of society: cultural, economic, political, social, health and so much more.

3. Legal and Ethical Considerations Surrounding Migration

Migration is a historical reality. Today, it is a lasting reality recognised in international law. The rights of migrants are granted mainly by human rights law as mentioned above earlier, as well as through treaties from other branches of international public law, including:

▶ Refugee law;

▶ Transnational criminal law, especially treaties relating to human trafficking and smuggling;

▶ Humanitarian law; and

▶ Labour law.

3.1 Legal issues surrounding migration in West Africa

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

International law recognizes the right of everyone to leave any country, including their own, and to return to their own country. Drawing on public international law, the ICCPR, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966 and has been in force since 1976, journalists should be aware of the three rights relating to freedom of movement (Article 12):

1. Everyone lawfully within the territory of a State shall, within that territory, have the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence.

2. Everyone shall be free to leave any country, including his own.

3. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country.

However, international law does not establish a right of entry to another country; instead, it upholds the sovereign prerogative of States to decide on criteria for the admission and expulsion of non-nationals, including migrants.

Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

The 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol stipulates that States are prohibited from returning anyone to countries where they have a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.

States are also expected to provide due process in removal or deportation proceedings and to avoid collective expulsions. General interpretation of international law also stipulates that there are certain unacceptable grounds of discrimination, such as race, sex, religion or health status (e.g. real or perceived HIV status) concerning who may be admitted; these should also be avoided in migrant selection procedures or quotas (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2015).

States are not obliged to admit non-nationals unless they have resident status in the country, have asked for asylum or are unaccompanied minors or children separated from their families. Indeed, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its General Comment No. 6, indicated that "allowing the child access to the territory is a prerequisite to [the] initial assessment" of the child's best interest (United Nations, 2005).

Principle of non-refoulement

States thus have the right to control the entry, stay and deportation of non-nationals. That discretionary power must be framed by law and may not be exercised arbitrarily. The right to control the entry, stay and deportation of non-nationals must not be exercised in contravention of other fundamental rights of the person, such as the right to family unity and the right to health. The principle of non-refoulement, under customary international law, guarantees that no one should be returned to a country where they would face torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and other irreparable harm.

United Nations Global Compacts

The world has witnessed historic change at the global level with United Nations Member States coming together to finalize two global compacts on the international manifestations of migration and displacement: The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact on Refugees. The finalization of the compacts, in December 2018, and is the first, intergovernmental negotiated document, prepared under the auspices of the United Nations, to cover all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. The GCM is meant to be consistent with target 10.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in which Member States committed to cooperate internationally to facilitate orderly, safe and responsible migration.

The GCM is a non-legally binding instrument grounded in values of state sovereignty, responsibility-sharing, non-discrimination, and human rights which recognizes that a cooperative approach is needed to optimize the overall benefits of migration, while addressing its risks and challenges for individuals and communities in countries of origin, transit and destination.

The Global Compact ensures that the human rights are respected at all stages of migration, their specific needs are properly understood and addressed, and they are empowered as agents of change.

International law also contributes to create some common denominators through the definitions provided by international instruments that are binding on the States that are parties to them. Among the most significant examples are the definition of a refugee in the 1951 Refugee Convention or the ones contained in the two Protocols on Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes (see Chapter 1).

There is also the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, which supplements the Convention against Transnational Organised Crime.

Journalists should also be aware of the International Labour Organization's Migration for Employment convention. However, the only West African countries that have ratified it are Nigeria and Burkina Faso. The convention was followed up by Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 and United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The latter is also important and while most West African countries have signed on, many of them have not yet ratified the convention.

Journalists can find all these treaties and updated information at https://treaties.un.org.

The recent European Commission's proposed Pact on Migration and Asylum seeks to put in place a comprehensive, rights-based, whole of route approach to migration. The complexity of the proposed framework reflects the nature of migration governance itself. Ensuring policy consistency and coherence amongst the sheer number of stakeholders invested in its effective management, while essential, is likely to pose significant challenges.

Freedom of movement and of establishment is the subject of intense debate and discussion, notably within the African Union (AU). Over the past decade, migration has been elevated on the regional agenda, resulting in a number of policy frameworks. In 2018, the Africa Union adopted he Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (AU Free Movement Protocol) that includes, "free movement of persons, right of residence and right of establishment, which foresees right of entry and the abolition of visa requirements, an African common passport, the free movement of border communities, the harmonization of national laws and policies on immigration, the free movement of students, researchers and workers, the mutual recognition of skills, right of residence, portability of social security, protection of property, remittances and right of establishment" (UNCTAD 2018:52).

The implementation of the Protocol in the different Regional Economic Communities (RECs) has been slow, all RECs, except the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), have adopted free movement protocols, however the ratification rate is highly uneven. The RECs that have shown progress have been the East African Community (EAC) and ECOWAS.

The AU adopted the Migration Policy Framework for Africa in 2006, which provides comprehensive and integrated non-binding policy guidelines for its member States and regional economic communities to address migration challenges and promote migration and development in the region.

Compared to other regions of the world, West Africa has a relatively advanced refugee protection legal framework. All member-States of ECOWAS have acceded to the Geneva Convention

relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and its additional Protocol (1967), as well as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (1969), which provides for specific measures for refugee movements in Africa.

But many countries have not signed the United Nations Conventions relating to the Status of Stateless Persons of 1954 and 1961 (UNHCR).

ECOWAS has something called the Free Movement of Person, the Right of Residence and Establishment Protocol which came into effect in 1980. It provides the legal framework for ECOWAS community citizens to enter, reside and establish economic activities in the territory of other member States.

The Protocol stipulates the progressive implementation of these rights in three phases equivalent to 15 years:

- ▶ **Phase 1** includes the elimination of the need for visas for stays of up to 90 days in ECOWAS Member States by community citizens;
- ▶ **Phase 2** includes the right to reside in other member States for the purpose of seeking and taking up paid employment;
- ▶ **Phase 3** includes the right of ECOWAS citizens to carry out economic activities, including establishment of businesses in other ECOWAS Member States.

Regarding the right of entry, all countries have implemented the abolition of visa and entry requirements for a 90-day stay. In relation to the right of residence, a specific residence permit for ECOWAS citizens is granted only in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia and Nigeria.

In 2008 ECOWAS adopted the Common Approach of Member States to Migration.

Journalists should be aware of the immigration laws in their own country, the countries they operate in and most importantly the countries where their material will be published. An innocent interview or photo could lead to the refusal of someone's asylum application or worse – they could face violence. Always make sure your sources know where their footage will be aired and understand what the implications may be (Dart Center, 2016).

National laws and policies are insufficiently aligned with international, regional and sub-regional policy frameworks for the protection of women migrant workers, and effective enforcement is lacking. While migration and labour laws are in place, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO), labour-related provisions only apply to men and women migrant workers working in the formal economy, whereas most migrants, both women and men, work in informal employment (ILO, 2020).

According to a recent ILO report, labour legislation provisions relevant to women workers, both nationals and migrants, are inadequate. Such provisions are related to equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value, protection against discrimination in employment and occupation and protection against gender-based violence and harassment. Implementation mechanisms also need to be established and information on measures taken made widely available to workers, employers and government authorities (ILO, 2020).

3.2 Ethical issues surrounding migration and reporting migration

Media coverage of migration often opens the door to regrettable missteps: pictures and headlines leaning towards sensationalism, stigmatization and xenophobic words that fan the flames of anti-migrant sentiment. Migrants, and in particular those in an irregular situation, are often in situations of great vulnerability.

The basic ethical rules of the profession remain the same, but they take on particular importance here, given the potential harm that can be done: respect for picture rights, concern for people's security and respect for minors must be in the journalist's mind at all times. Not respecting a migrant's request not to be named, for example, can have serious consequences for them and their family.

We need to remember that migrants can be vulnerable and can quickly become scapegoats for social and economic decline, crime and unemployment, pressure on health and welfare services and lack of security. As we have discussed, the media play a critical role in explaining migration and telling the stories of migrants. Journalists can help people better understand the complexities of migration by applying ethical principles, avoiding stereotypes, developing good newsroom practices and engaging with the audience.

This is important also because decision makers pay attention to the media, and independent journalists reporting with care, humanity and professionalism have enormous power to tell stories that can have significant impact not just on policy but on peoples' lives.

The Ethical Journalism Network has come up with a set of guidelines that journalists should apply and respect as they cover migration-related issues. In fact, these guidelines are five core principles of all journalism:

- ► Accountability: media transparency and commitment to correct error.

- ► Humanity: sensitive and careful journalism that avoids doing undue harm.

- ► Impartiality: fair reporting that tells all sides of the story.

- ► Independence: journalism free from self-censorship and political pressure.

- ► Accuracy: fact-based reporting, analysis and commentary.

Asking the right questions: The ethics of interviewing migrants

We usually hear migrants in the media telling their stories and talking about what are often harrowing events. What they say tends not to be very political, and yet they obviously have more to tell than simply a victim's account. Journalists tend to speak "for" them or "about" them, but rarely give them the opportunity to analyse or reflect on their situation. That needs to change. Migrants are interviewed in critical situations, but less often asked to talk about their resettlement, their experiences, their integration into society in the country of arrival or about their experiences returning and resettling.

Let's ensure that we allow migrants to tell their stories but let's be sure we do so ethically. Hearing the voices and stories of migrants not only enhances your story's credibility but is more likely to garner the attention of policymakers and other decision makers.

How can we most effectively interview migrants while addressing ethical issues such as protecting sources and impartiality and considerations about one's own emotions?

The first step is to get informed consent. Informed consent of sources must be obtained before collecting any data, including personal information, videos, photographs and audio recordings of interviews or discussions. Informed consent means people are given clear information about the story, how the information will be used and where it will be published. You have a duty to inform the potential source of their right not to participate, withhold personal data or withdraw consent at any point in the process.

Legally, children (under the age of 18 years) do not have the capacity to consent unless the national law of their country specifically States they can give consent above a certain age (for example, above 16 years old). Parents or legal guardians should provide consent on their behalf and must represent the best interests of the child at all times. If you are working with children and adults who are not able to give informed consent, you should apply international guidance and standards to work ethically and carefully to establish whether participation is appropriate and properly supported in these situations.

Bear in mind that every phase of the migration cycle from pre-departure to return has different and new challenges and threats to the mental health and psychosocial well-being of migrants. Be aware that no matter how long ago a traumatic loss or violent injury occurred, the person re-telling the story of what happened is likely to experience intense emotions. You need to stay calm and behave with empathy. Again – do not assume you understand and don't say you understand. You probably don't.

Ask your source how they prefer to be referred to or what they identify with: victim/survivor/domestic trafficking/returnee, etc. and use that term in your story.

Explain what you are doing, why you are doing it and the potential consequences of your reporting.

All of these actions will help you build trust with your sources.

> **There are also a series of questions journalists should consider that will help them to identify cases of trafficking. If "yes" is the answer to any of the following, then journalists should tread carefully.**
>
> ■ Has the person I'm dealing with been forced, whether through violence, psychological bullying or other forms of control, into this situation?
>
> ■ Is the person a victim of violence and intimidation?
>
> ■ Has the person been subject to coercion by someone in a stronger situation and with power over them?

Reflection time: What would you do?

In order to build trust as you interview refugees, you present your informed consent form and explain what your story is and how their interviews will be used. You are surprised when one refugee responds by saying: "We are tired of journalists coming to record our stories amidst all the problems we are encountering – forced repatriations, sleeping in the bush for fear of being rounded up at night, reduction of our food rations, prohibition from accessing land and social services. Nobody cares. You just get our stories and videos of how we are suffering and you disappear. How is your story going to help us?"

How do you respond?

ANSWER: There is no right answer as there often isn't in ethical dilemmas. You can choose to look for other people to interview or you can take the time to explain that you will also seek to share their concerns with the relevant officials. Explaining the role of journalists and how critical their stories are to help create change is important and often very helpful with sources who are skeptical.

Countering stereotypes

Journalists can also fall into the trap of using clichés and stereotypes which are usually not true. Ask yourself how you are presenting the story. Why are you reporting it in this way? Resist the temptation to use stereotypes and check your own stereotypes. Applying journalistic best practices of verification, accuracy, balance, proper sourcing) can go a long way to maintaining your integrity as a journalist and ensuring responsible journalism.

Reflection time

Think about a recent story you did and ask yourself if you did everything you could to ensure you abided by best ethical practices. What, if anything, would you have changed? Why would you have changed it and how?

4. Migration in the Region

Every country in West Africa has its own specificities when it comes to migration. This chapter seeks to highlight some of these in seven countries: Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

Côte d'Ivoire

History

Since the 1950s, Côte d'Ivoire has been a destination country for immigrants from Francophone countries in West Africa. Since colonial times and the development of the plantation sector, the economy of the country has largely been reliant on foreign labour force. Workers from neighbouring countries, such as Burkina Faso, with limited natural resources and an overabundance of workforce, have greatly contributed to the national economic development of Côte d'Ivoire (ICMPD, 2015). Significant migrants have also come from Benin, Guinea, Liberia and Mali (DESA, 2015). According to a census conducted in 2014, Côte d'Ivoire is home to more than 5 million foreign citizens, which represents nearly 25 per cent of the country's total population (IOM, 2018b).

A coup d'état in 1999 began a cycle of political turbulence in the country. The instability experienced in Côte d'Ivoire since the 1999 coup d'état contributed to the emergence of forced migration in the hinterlands and increased the flow of Ivorian emigration towards Europe and some neighbouring African countries (IOM, 2009).

The flow of migrants into the country lessened and some established migrants left the country with the help of IOM and also from their countries of origin. Côte d'Ivoire has also been a country of emigration with the main destinations being Burkina Faso, France, Italy, Liberia and Mali (DESA, 2015).

Côte d'Ivoire has one of the highest numbers of stateless people in the world. A 2019 study led by national authorities and supported by UNHCR identified 1.6 million people as stateless or at risk of statelessness in Côte d'Ivoire (UNHCR, 2020a).

Statelessness is most likely to occur among a number of identified categories, such as: historical migrants and their descendants; children of unknown parents; border

populations; refugees and returnees, particularly refugee children born abroad, and displaced persons; some categories of contemporary migrants or trafficked persons.

Driving factors

The main driving factors of migration are the search for a better life, unemployment and violent conflict.

► A better life
Most Ivorian migrants leave in search of jobs or economic opportunities. For women, the second reason for leaving is reunification with members of their family (7%) and for men the pursuit of studies and education comes second (5%) (IOM 2018b). Côte d'Ivoire suffers from brain drain which particularly affects medical personnel. (IOM, 2009).

► Unemployment
With a rapid population growth and recurrent political crises, the World Bank and other sources indicate that unemployment in Côte d'Ivoire rose steadily between 2000 to 2012 before declining for four years. Today, unemployment is on the rise again resulting in driving the bulk of migrants from the country.

► Armed conflict
While there has not been a war between two identified armed groups in Côte d'Ivoire, violence erupts regularly between supporters of various parties or coalitions of parties, particularly around elections. It is estimated that the current crisis surrounding the 2020 presidential election resulted in over 3,000 Ivorians fleeing to neighbouring countries (UNHCR, 2020a).

The response

The regulation of migration-related matters is a central issue within Ivorian politics, which goes further than the regulation of entry and stay of foreigners and their access to the national labour market. Indeed, since the late-1990s the most discussed, controversial and pressing issues have related to the access of foreigners to land ownership, the identification of nationals and foreigners, naturalisation and access to political rights (Bruni et al., 2017).

Policy framework of migration phenomenon is, in part, governed by regional (ECOWAS) and international cooperation frameworks. Indeed, Ivorian migration policy lays emphasis on the regional management of migration issues, since the national framework is inappropriate to tackle all issues related to the movement of persons (IOM, 2009).

Côte d'Ivoire is a signatory of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund set up by the European Union to re-admit migrants. The Fund has also financed biometric identity systems to identify undocumented migrants in Europe so they can be returned to their countries of origin.

The Gambia

The smallest country in continental Africa, The Gambia has a population of 2.3 million people. 35.2 per cent of the population live below the poverty line, with a significant difference between

rural (76.6 per cent) and urban areas (23.4 per cent) (The Gambia Bureau of Statistics). In 2019, the country ranked 174th out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2019). Given the youth unemployment rate of 41.5 per cent (ages 15-35) – in part due to low level of skills, no formal job placement/internship programmes, skills mismatch to the labor market needs and lack of job centers.

The Gambia has a long tradition of migration and trade. A first wave of migration of Gambians towards the United Kingdom followed the country's independence in 1965. By the end of the 1980s, internal migration towards cities and emigration to North America and the EU became "common coping strategies" to the economic situation in the country. Later on, outward migration was also a response to the Jammeh regime.

Despite the hardening of European migration policies in the last decades, The Gambia's per capita migration rate remains one of the highest in Africa. Limited viable economic opportunities are identified as the main cause for migration for young Gambians without vocational skills (EC). It is also a destination country from other African countries, especially among its neighbors, and a transit country for sub-Saharan migrants on their way to Europe (EC). An estimated 215,000 migrants are resident in The Gambia (IOM, 2020b). With cross-border movement and trade restricted as of March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of migrants have become stranded in The Gambia and have been in need of assistance.

Irregular migration of Gambians to Europe, primarily through the Central Mediterranean Route via Libya, peaked between 2015-2017, with high numbers arriving and staying in Italy (EPSC, 2017). During these three years, over 30,000 irregular Gambian arrivals were recorded (Frontex, 2020). Though these numbers have since decreased (2,780 in 2018 and 394 in 2019 according to Frontex) and there is generally more awareness on the risks of irregular migration, there remains some interest in Europe-bound migration. This was evidenced in a fatal shipwreck off the coast of Mauritania in December 2019, in which hundreds of Gambians took off aiming to reach the Canary Islands, leading to over 60 deaths (IOM, 2019b).

Furthermore, remittance accounts for a significant portion of income for a large section of Gambian society. The figure for remittance flows through formal channels in 2019 alone stands at USD 318 million. This makes The Gambia the second biggest remittance-recipient country in sub-Saharan Africa as a percentage of GDP. The Gambian government historically has not prioritized the developmental potential of remittances and has yet to put in place facilities that leverage remittance receipts. In recent years, however, a shift in this position has been observed, with the government starting to reach out to Gambian communities abroad.

Guinea

History

Guinea was the only country of the French colonial empire to reject the draft constitution in the referendum of 28 September 1958 and proclaimed its independence on 2 October 1958. The colonial power, France, withdrew suddenly and rather brutally. Overnight they went with French staff in high administration and took with them all the technical equipment they could carry.

In the context of migration, Guinea is mostly a country of origin and transit. Most migrants coming to Guinea come from Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone and Senegal. Guineans

favour these five countries as destinations: Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone (DESA, 2013).

Guineans mainly seek refuge in Angola and European countries, such as France, Germany, Belgium, and Italy; a number of Guinean refugees and asylum seekers are hosted by the United States (Bruni et al., 2017).

The main cause of displacement, particularly for individuals from Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, is the aftermath of political unrest and armed conflicts in both countries (Bruni et al. 2017).

Driving factors

In the first two decades following independence, the single most important factor for migrating was political. Other factors include recurring food insecurity, unemployment and natural disasters.

► Political factor
The regime that took over from the French was a revolutionary one and not everyone could toe the line. As a result, many Guineans fled the country, with Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal as top destinations. The regime turned its back on France and the West and instead dealt with the East and other African revolution-oriented countries like Angola.

► Other factors
Today other factors of migration include economics, recurrent food insecurity and natural disasters such as floods and wildfires. Epidemics, like Ebola, break out from time to time, driving some Guineans away from their area of residence and even outside the country.

From a historical perspective, Guinea can be best described as a rural state. As such, a significant increase in rural-urban migration has emerged and is likely to continue in the future (Bruni et al., 2017).

Geographically situated as a coastal country with porous borders and also stricken with poverty and an underdeveloped infrastructure, Guinea functions as both a point of origin and transit for irregular migrants (Bruni et al., 2017). Despite the ratification of both the 2000 Human Trafficking Protocol and 2000 Human Smuggling Protocol by the United Nations, Guinea is ranked low, by the US Department of State's (2017) Trafficking in Persons Report.

Guinea's role in irregular migration is partially illustrated in a research report written by The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime which stipulates that Guinea is part of two larger migration networks; specifically, Guinea primarily functions as a country of origin for migrants taking the Western Route and the Central Route to Europe (Bruni et al., 2017)

The response

Guinea is in the process of finalizing a national migration policy. Generally, Guinea has ratified all the main international conventions which protect human rights and migrants' rights more specifically. As a member of ECOWAS, the country is also bound by that organisation's treaties

and protocols.

Guinea has signed bilateral agreements with Spain and Switzerland though not with France which is an important destination country.

Despite the existence of strict regulations on irregular migration, migrants are tolerated in Guinea and are not likely to be deported or imprisoned, particularly if they are from ECOWAS member states.

The Government of Guinea has yet to adopt legislature on the trafficking in persons. Still, all forms of forced labour are prohibited by its Labour Code.

The government has adapted its penal code to take into account human smuggling and trafficking. There is a concerted effort between the government and civil society to raise awareness about irregular migration and human smuggling and trafficking.

Liberia

Migration in its DNA

Liberia's first inhabitants were ancestors of the Gola and Kissi peoples from north-central Africa who arrived as early as the 12th century in southward waves of migration. Around the 15th century, people of the Mande language group (including Gbandi, Gio, Kpelle, Loma, Mano and Mende) migrated into the region.

The over 500 years Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade formed the basis or the root cause of migration to Liberia, in Liberia and of Liberians. Through raids of the coast of Africa, Africans, including Liberians, were forcibly brought to Europe and North America for sale as slaves.

In 1816 the American Colonization Society (ACS) was founded in the USA to resettle former slaves in Africa and in 1820, the first freed slaves arrived in West Africa and eventually established the settlement of Monrovia, named after U.S. President James Monroe.

Unlike most African countries where rural exodus is the major migratory trend, inter-urban migration is the leading form of movement in Liberia. The 2008 census results and analysis point at Monrovia as the destination of this dominant stream of urban-to-urban migration.

Remittances from migrants in the European Union and America play an important role in the Liberian economy. According to the World Bank, personal remittances accounted for approximately 10 per cent in 2018, down from about 22 per cent in 2011.

One major concern in terms of the spatial demography of Liberia is the increase in the population of Monrovia relative to its land area and social and economic infrastructure: nearly one-quarter of the country's 5 million people lives in Monrovia.

The Conflict drive

During and after 14 years of civil conflict that ended in 2003, Liberia experienced significant migration flows into and out of the country and is now hosting tens of thousands of refugees

and asylum seekers, from Sierra Leone and more recently from Cote d'Ivoire following post-election violence in 2010. With peace and stability restored and an economy set to grow, Liberia is expecting continued migration, including the return of Liberians living in the sub-region in response to the invocation of the refugee Cessation Clause on June 30, 2012. (IOM, 2016).

There are more than 500,000 Liberians residing outside the Republic of Liberia – the overwhelming majority of them are Liberians who re-settled abroad as a result of the 1980 military coup and 14 years of civil war.

In 2008 there were 92,563 documented people travelling into Liberia out of which 69,321 were from the ECOWAS region, particularly Guinea, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire. In 2013, there were 225,484 international migrants in the country, with no major differences between men and women. The great majority of them are coming from Côte d'Ivoire, but also from Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. According to UN data, the leading destination countries are Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the United States (IOM, 2016).

Hyper-mobility of impoverished rural youth is a common factor for mass exodus across three neighbouring states (Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire) in the Upper Guinean Forest region. While these youth are not a sufficient cause of armed conflict, their availability for recruitment when other employment opportunities fail is a major factor in fuelling insurgency in all three countries.

The labour drive

The slave trade which created one of the most historic forms of forced migration was induced by the search for cheap labour and Liberia was a major supply point.

Internal migration today in Liberia is driven mainly by demand for labour in mining and the rubber industry.

- ▶ Rubber plantations like those belonging to the U.S. firm Firestone attract thousands of Liberians from all part of the country for regular work and a high level of seasonal work. Estimates put the total population of rubber plantation workers at 25,000.

- ▶ Post-harvest migration is a prime example of the high mobility of particularly young people within Liberia and across into the cocoa and coffee plantations in Côte d'Ivoire or in fishing ports on the West African coast.

- ▶ Diamond, gold and iron ore mining leads to important temporary migration into remote forests and mountains especially given their very clandestine nature of the activity.

The environmental factor

Liberians, like their immediate neighbours, cross national borders freely. Artisanal mining in the Highlands and forests are becoming an increasing migration push factor as mud and landslides are increasing in frequency.

Liberia's coastline which is home to about 58 per cent of the country's population is recording serious coastal erosion and consequential destruction of infrastructure, agricultural land and natural resources due to sea level rise.

Response

Liberia is invested in pushing migration issues to the policy agenda and hosted the first meeting of the high-level panel on international migration in Africa in January 2018. The government and its partners want to gradually integrate refugee programmes into local development strategies ensuring that all activities are beneficial to both refugees and hosting communities (WHO, 2018).

The responsibility for the management of refugees in Liberia falls under the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission guided by the Liberia constitution, the Liberia Refugee Act, the National Local Integration Strategy plan and the Kampala Convention. Provision of international protection and humanitarian assistance to the population of concern is done through collaboration, coordination and cooperation with humanitarian and development partners.

Nigeria

History

One in three Nigerians has considered emigration for economic opportunity but Nigeria is also traditionally an important destination for migrants in West Africa with at least one million foreign residents. Fifty-one per cent of foreign residents were nationals from ECOWAS Member States, 16 per cent were nationals from other African states and 33 per cent were non-Africans in 2006. More specifically, Benin, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Togo appear to be the main countries of origin (ICMPD, 2015).

In West and Central Africa, arguably the main destination of Nigerian migration flows, Cameroon, Ghana, and Niger are believed to be preferred destinations. Among OECD countries, the U.K. and the U.S. are the main countries of destination; during the past decade, there has been a diversification of Nigerian migration among EU Member States, primarily towards Italy and Spain (ICMPD, 2015).

Beyond OECD countries, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Member States, primarily Saudi Arabia and the U.A.E., are believed to be the main countries of destination, especially for individuals from the north of Nigeria (ICMPD, 2015).

According to the World Bank, remittances to Nigeria make up approximately one-quarter of the country's GDP.

Driving factors

Several factors have contributed to migration to and from Nigeria including economic, conflict and environmental. A key economic factor was the Structural Adjustment Program austerity measures of the mid 1980s led to emigration of many Nigerian-based professionals.

Conflict has also played an important role in migration in Nigeria. International terrorism is becoming Nigeria's greatest push factor for both in and out of country emigration. Boko Haram has displaced millions of people from their homes. With more than 2.2 million IDPs, Nigeria ranked among the top 10 countries with the highest number of people displaced due to conflict and violence by end of 2018 (IOM, 2019b).

Poverty and injustice caused by corruption weaken any sense of mutual tolerance, social solidarity or coexistence, while reawakening social hatred, radicalism and violence.

Individual perceptions of the strength of Nigeria's democracy are most strongly associated with Nigerians' desire to migrate abroad, in addition to low levels of trust in local security institutions. The October 2020 nationwide demonstrations against corruption and brutality of the country's security forces are an example.

Environmental factors have also been key. The high intensity of droughts in most of northern Nigeria worsens crop production, leads to the only adaptation strategy, widespread forced migration. Rising sea levels trigger floods, disappearance of aquatic life, increased salinity of land, destruction of coastal infrastructure and habitat and in 2018, there were around 600,000 displacements as a result of floods (IOM, 2019b).

The meeting point:

► Nigeria offers a unique example of how climate change is not just a major push factor for migration but how it worsens the situation.

► The climate change induced drought in North Eastern Nigeria, for example, has created a no man's land stretching thousands of hectares that has been occupied by Boko Haram (Nwokeoma and Kingsley, 2017).

Response

Nigerian authorities have worked towards the development of a comprehensive national migration policy. To date, a draft Labour Migration Policy for Nigeria and a draft National Migration Policy have been drafted. In 2017, Nigeria issued its first diaspora bond, raising USD 300 million to fund infrastructure projects (IOM, 2019b).

Senegal

History

In the years following Senegal's independence in 1960, there was no visa requirement for travel between Senegal and France, which was at the time the main destination for Senegalese migrants. At the same time, in Francophone West Africa, Senegal was the second country of destination, after Côte d'Ivoire, for nationals of neighbouring countries. Most migrants came from Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania and Sierra Leone.

France, The Gambia, Italy, Spain and the U.S. are the main destination countries. Traditional countries of destination, such as Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon, have become less attractive. At the same time, migration towards OECD countries, primarily Italy and Spain, has grown significantly since the 1990s. (EU, 2017b)

Although Senegal has traditionally been an important country of destination for West and Central African migrants, it has gradually lost its attractiveness. It still remains a country of transit for migrants seeking to reach European states and, to a certain extent, it is also a country of immigration (ICMPD, 2015).

Emigration reached its peak in the mid-2010s. Young Senegalese boarded makeshift boats and tried to reach Europe, with the rallying cry "Barça wala Barsakh" ("Go to Barcelona or die trying" in Wolof). There are an estimated 3 to 4 million Senegalese abroad.

Driving factors

The main driving factors of migration are the dream of a better life, unemployment, and conflict.

▶ A better life

For many Senegalese, Europe is seen as the Eldorado. In the second decade of the century, Barcelona Football club was reigning supreme in European football, with a few African stars in its ranks. As a result, many young male Senegalese dreamt of the glory and wealth football could bring.

According to the EC, nearly half of Senegalese migrants do so to join family abroad (EU, 2017b).

▶ Unemployment

At the beginning of the century, unemployment was very high among the younger section of the labour force in the country, despite promises to tackle the issue by the newly elected government. Indeed, the authorities implemented voluntary youth employment policies by setting up different kinds of funds to finance youth projects, however this did little to stem the flow of migrants.

▶ Armed conflict

Since 1982, there has been waves of Senegalese from Casamance fleeing a low-intensity conflict between the Movement of Democratic Forces for Casamance and the Government. The refugees share ethnic, cultural, and linguistic affinities with the local population. The openness of host communities, favourable protection environments and positive attitudes of the local authorities, as well as geographical proximity, facilitated a smooth integration of refugees in the countries of asylum. Some destination countries such as Guinea-Bissau have started a naturalization process for all Senegalese refugees.

The response

Senegal does not have a formal migration policy. While migration management does not constitute a priority for public authorities, a great deal of attention has been given to migration-related policies. Over the past years, Senegal has developed a large number of initiatives, especially in the areas of protection, migration and development, and initiatives relating to the return and reintegration of Senegalese migrants. In addition, close cooperation has been organised with EU Member States in the field of border management.

The authorities have responded by setting up funds to create jobs. Civil society organizations have also launched awareness campaigns. On the international front, the country has signed agreements with Europe to re-admit returnee migrants and a Trust Fund has been set up to help settle those returnees. A joint task force, Frontex, has been created to patrol the seas in search of migrants.

Sierra Leone

Reaching for the sky

Remittances by Sierra Leoneans in the diaspora make a significant foreign currency contribution to the country's economy annually. According to a UN report, the Sierra Leone Government calculations place the figure between USD250 and 400 million, or 20-25 per cent of GDP which would be among the very highest in Africa.

Driving factors

There are several driving factors resulting in migration from Sierra Leone: conflict, labour and environmental.

Between 1991 and 2002, Sierra Leone faced massive displacement both within and outside of its borders due to civil war. Estimates by relief organizations show that up to two million people were displaced in the country, out of a total population of six million and some 500,000 sought refuge abroad (ICMPD, 2015). Sierra Leone's migration problems have been worsened by the repeated conflict situation in neighbouring countries especially Liberia.

Economics are also a significant factor. The economy is heavily reliant on natural resources, making it extremely vulnerable to natural and external shocks. Internal migration, both between and within urban and rural environments, makes up a significant trend in Sierra Leone.

Diamond, iron ore, rutile and bauxite mining leads to important temporary migration into these villages with around 10,000 seasonal workers while the Western and Northern Regions have very dynamic inter-regional migratory exchanges.

About one-third of the country's 7.4 million are between the ages of 15 and 35 years. Due to inherent structural deficiency and low quality of education in Sierra Leone, about two-thirds of the country's youth is unemployed or unemployable. Not unexpectedly, the Human Development Index for 2016 ranked Sierra Leone 179 out 188 countries. Since that time, the general condition of the youth and young women in Sierra Leone has remained stagnated, if not worsened.

This situation was compounded by the 10-year civil war (1991-2002), Ebola epidemic of 2014-2016 and recent collapse in the price of extractive minerals. The decline in the economy, lack of opportunities especially for youth has given rise to irregular migration, trafficking of women (mainly to the Middle East as commercial sex workers and domestic servants) and children (to neighbouring countries as farm labourers and street beggars).

Sierra Leone is prone to recurring natural disasters, particularly flooding, landslides and mudslides because of high levels of precipitation and erosion. The mudslide and flooding disaster of 2017 left 502 people dead and over 600 missing. The floods caused widespread destruction of at least 1,245 properties with over 300 houses destroyed. According to ONS information, the mudslides rendered 11,816 people displaced of which over 7,000 were sheltered in temporary camps in Freetown. Moreover, the livelihoods of the affected people were completely disrupted. The Government of Sierra Leone has made disaster preparedness and risk management one of its top priorities.

The 2013-2016 Ebola outbreak resulted in a lot of internal movement of people in Sierra Leone while small numbers of refugees fled to neighbouring countries invoking fear of Ebola, or the death of family members as grounds for humanitarian protection.

The unique revolving door

Statistics from 2015 show that almost 25 per cent of the total population of Sierra Leone, does not live in the district they were born. Migration in Sierra Leone stimulated national and international concern. A significant percentage of migrants in Sierra Leone come from Guinea, followed by Liberia, Nigeria, Ghana and Gambia. Research suggests that most of these migrants regularly go back and forth between Sierra Leone and their countries of origin at regular intervals.

Shining the Spotlight

Sierra Leone was one of a few countries that passed anti-trafficking legislation in 2005 but registered no convictions for many years. Ultimately two women were convicted on both trafficking and money laundering charges on 11 February 2020 and sentenced to 20 and eight years in a landmark trial. The convictions and sentencing were described as "historic wins for young Sierra Leoneans who have been abused by unscrupulous traffickers," said Sanusi Savage, IOM Head of Office in Sierra Leone (IOM, 2020a).

5. Overcoming Challenges of Reporting on Migration

Just as there are ethical considerations, there are a myriad of risks and challenges associated with covering migration. Many of these can be guided by professionalism, demand for facts and respect for ethics without falling silent or engaging in complacency.

Reflection time

Think about some of the challenges you have faced in the past as you covered migration-related stories. Were you able to overcome these? Are there other challenges and risks you think you might face in the future?

5.1 Reporting on migration during conflicts or natural disasters

Conflicts and natural disasters pose significant challenges to journalists as they are often large-scale events that happen quickly with little or no time to prepare. They also have a significant impact on migration and can disrupt regular migration patterns or result in new migration.

Disaster displacement represents one of the biggest humanitarian challenges of the 21st century. Between 2008 and 2014, 184.6 million people were forced from their homes due to floods, earthquakes, tropical storms, volcanic eruptions and other natural disasters (Heimann, 2015).

Conflicts and disasters mean situations are fluid: changes happen quickly, and data and information are not only difficult to obtain but are everchanging. Affected areas are often difficult to reach and present safety concerns making it difficult to get accurate information. Reporting from such areas is often hampered by damaged or destroyed infrastructure.

These challenges add an extra dimension to reporting migration. Yet at the same time, times of disaster or conflict are often when communities most need and want accurate, timely information and they rely heavily on journalists to provide this information.

Here are some tips to keep in mind that may help you the next time you find yourself reporting on migration from a conflict or disaster zone.

- Partner with journalists in the affected community. Collaborative reporting can be beneficial and useful in such circumstances.

- Be sure to report only what can be verified.

- Do no harm and do not cause panic which can lead to further instability or problems.

- Be trauma informed and remember that people may be scared, in shock or working in stressful, dangerous conditions. This is discussed further in Chapter 9.

- Be careful not to hamper emergency rescue and relief efforts.

- Be aware that there is likely to be no public security or ways to request assistance and plan accordingly.

- Be aware that whatever caused the disaster could happen again (e.g. aftershocks in the case of an earthquake).

- Do not report names of people before next of kin have been notified.

- People managing disaster response may have certain expectations of journalists and may not understand how journalists operate. Similarly, journalists should respect the need for relief workers to do their job. Communicate and be patient.

- There are always important longer-term, follow up stories including lessons for the future. Don't forget these when you return home.

5.2 Staying safe

Reporting on migration can also present safety challenges – to both reporter and migrant. For the reporter, going into areas affected by disaster and conflict means being prepared. In addition to the tips above, there are a number of things that you can do to ensure you are adequately prepared. These include:

- ▶ Do some initial research so you know what kind of environment you are going into.

- ▶ Ensure a solid risk assessment is completed prior to you heading out. Remember that nothing ever goes as planned and always have backup plans and supplies.

- ▶ If you go to an affected area, be sure to bring in your own supplies of food, water, fuel and first-aid kit.

- ▶ Have appropriate clothing and gear for the climate.

- ▶ Prepare yourself emotionally and mentally. Covering disasters and conflict can have a significant toll on the journalist.

- ▶ Once in the field, stay in touch with your newsroom.

- ▶ Get permission from first responders to enter a disaster site.

- ▶ While you are at the disaster site, practice situational awareness. Situations can change

rapidly. If they do change, reassess whether you should stay or evacuate. If in doubt, always follow warnings by authorities and disaster experts on the ground.

► Try to work in a team.

► Check the location of the venue is not dangerous, such as an unstable structure damaged during an earthquake or by heavy artillery in a conflict situation. Do not delay people evacuating an area.

► Wear clear identifying clothing or a press badge so as not to be mistaken for another actor in the situation and identify yourself clearly to the interviewee.

Journalists must also keep in mind the safety of their sources (migrants) when in these situations. Bear in mind the following:

► When conducting interviews, always be aware of not just your own but also your interviewees' emotional limits.

► Do not inspire false hope or make promises that you can't keep.

► Do not identify your source/s if it can put them in danger.

► Do no harm.

► Stress the difficulties migrants face and not their trauma.

► Promote investigative and collaborative reporting on migration.

► Shield victims' identity and dignity.

► Avoid revealing people's identities, place of residence or nationality.

► Inform the person being interviewed about their rights (the right not to reply, to change their replies, to be informed about how the interview will be used).

► Be careful not to victimize women, with a view to their empowerment.

► Abide professional journalistic ethics and best practices.

► Be accountable.

► Deconstruct myths and fight clichés and stereotypes.

► Let migrants speak for themselves.

► Be a champion of facts, groundwork and rigorous analysis.

Chapter 8 looks at interviewing migrants and their families in more depth.

6. Effective Storytelling: Ideas, Words and Visuals

Media, in all its forms, plays a significant role in the framing of policy discourse that affects how people act, what people think, how policymakers prioritize agendas, and how migrants make decisions. That means you need to use appropriate terminology, have a good understanding of how to tell these stories ethically and professionally and know where to find story ideas (IOM, 2018d).

Journalists play an important role in countering negative attitudes and behaviour towards migrants by raising awareness on risks or situations of human rights violations faced by migrants and advocating for them to stop.

This chapter seeks to provide some practical tips that journalists can follow as they adopt a human-rights based approach to reporting on migration-related issues.

6.1 The right words

In the rise of xenophobic and anti-migrant discourses, as stated by IOM in Migration Initiatives 2019 - Migration governance: From commitments to actions, media professionals and journalists have an important role in shaping perceptions.

The first step is to ensure you use the right words – words that are appropriate and precise. Chapter 1 defined the key terms in IOM´s Glossary on Migration but we'll flag some common issues here.

Words matter. For example, journalists often employ inexact terms like *"illegal aliens"* or fail to distinguish between asylum seekers, migrants, refugees and the rights and the protection they are entitled under international law. The use of one word over another, can have a direct impact on the lives of men and women. It can also have extraordinary influence on policy and policymakers. Think carefully about the words you choose in your story.

It means something specific when you label someone a *"refugee"* – or not. Refugees are entitled to protection and have a specific status under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and regional legal instruments relating to refugees.

Another example is the use of *"migrant or refugee crisis"* which makes the people a problem when it is actually a *"crisis of migrant policy"*.

Likewise, the word *"illegal"* has a legal connotation that does not allow the migrant to plead his or her case. It is generally considered inappropriate to treat people committing reprehensible acts as criminals until they are proven guilty. Here again, in the context of migration, public figures and the news media use the word *"illegal"* every day. Irregular entry, stays and professional activities should not be – and in many countries are not – crimes, but rather administrative offences. Not distinguishing between the two terms strengthens negative stereotypes of irregular migrants as criminals. A better term is: *"irregular migrant"*.

It is often a challenge for editorial teams to use the right terminology. Discussion of the weight of words raises ethical, political and legal questions and you should be having these discussions in your newsrooms.

As you begin working on your story ask yourself how you are portraying the stories of migration? You should be guided by ethical decision making at every step. Ask yourself these questions:

- ▶ What is my motivation?
- ▶ Why am I using these words and not others?
- ▶ Am I perpetuating stereotypes?

Think also about how you tell your migration stories and why you are telling them in the manner you are.

Respect the dignity of migrants. Avoid the use of dehumanizing language and metaphors that cast migration as a form of a natural disaster (often a flood), or migrants as animals, especially insects ("swarms").

Challenge hate speech. Avoid stereotypical, negative expressions referring to the ethnic origin of suspects, for instance, crime reports emphasizing the legal stay status of a person (IOM, 2018c). The Ethical Journalism Initiative has developed a helpful tool and reminds journalists that just because someone said something outrageous it doesn't make it newsworthy.

6.2 Finding story ideas

Journalists often have difficulty finding story ideas and as a result there tends to be an overreliance on press releases and event coverage rather than enterprise journalism. Similarly, if the topic or beat is new for a journalist, they will be unsure of where to go for information. Which people should they interview? Where might they find data? This chapter seeks to address this.

One challenge journalists might face is how to balance human interest reporting and broader analytic reporting which looks at the causes, consequences and policies of migration. "Scholars of migration journalism have argued that migration is hard to cover because it's a story that oozes, rather than breaks — so the breaking news of a smuggling ship sinking is easier to do than the massive sociopolitical, demographic and economic challenges of the entire phenomenon." wrote Giovanna Dell'Orto, a journalism professor at the University of Minnesota, in a January 2017 post (Dell'Orto, 2017).

Some journalists act more like "disaster tourists than migration correspondents," Anna Masera, public editor of Italian daily La Stampa, was quoted as saying in a 2016 article (Albeanu, 2016). They are creating "moving storytelling without really explaining politics, giving the data or giving context to the data," she said, adding that simply publishing high resolution photography of the crisis is not enough (GIJN, 2019).

While there may be complexities involved in covering migration there are also migration-related stories just about everywhere.

Consider, for example, covering migration at various levels: national, regional, international. Each level provides a different angle and perspective and likely a whole different story.

Consider too stories that focus on different types of migrants such as returnees, IDPs, refugees, etc. Look also at host communities and how they are adapting and working with migrants.

Look at the phases of migration and which phases particularly affect your country such as integration and reintegration.

Let migrants tell their stories. These stories can take on a variety of angles and may also focus on the phase of migration. For example:

▶ Profiles of migrants who are preparing for their journeys, either regularly or irregularly: what are their motivations? What knowledge do they have and how do they get information? What risks do/did they face? How do they plan for the journey? What are their fears and vulnerabilities? What, if any, legal issues have they encountered?

▶ Profiles of migrants who are on their way: What risks and vulnerabilities do they face? What support do they have? What, if any, mistreatment have they encountered? What have their travel conditions been like?

▶ Profiles of migrants who are in a reception or transit center: What are the conditions like? What doubts and questions do they have? What support are they receiving?

▶ Profiles of migrants in a host country: What economic, educational and other opportunities have they had? What, if anything, do they miss about home? What stories do they have about contributions to their host country, contributions to their country of origin, integration, racism, exclusion, living far away, family pressure?

▶ Profiles of returnees: What have their experiences been on reintegration? What, if any social pressures, have they faced? Why did they return?

Don't forget the families of migrants as they also have important stories to share. Their stories may include topics such as:

▶ Support from family members who have migrated: cultural and economic contributions to the family and community.

▶ Difficulties related to the absence: concerns and vulnerabilities, lack of resources in the family, social and family pressure.

▶ Change in the family unit: separation, distance, structural dynamics, change of emotional ties, independence of migrants, impact of technology.

There are plenty of other possible story ideas including:

- Importance of the diaspora, support and links with home and host countries.
- The contribution of migrants in host countries or return to countries of origin.
- Migration induced by climate change and environmental degradation.
- Historical/geographical/ethnological aspects of migration.
- Migrating for security reasons: migrants forced to flee a conflict or threatening context, migration perceived as a source of instability and new conflicts.
- Legal migration (international/regional treaties).
- Migrating for "comfort", those who have the choice to choose where they want to live.
- Migrating for family reunification.
- Migrating to "discover the world", for travel, diversity and encounters.
- Migrating to study.
- Migration and arts: how is migration perceived in the arts? Art as a means of openness to the other, a means of mixing, diversity, integration, sharing and education.
- Migration and sports.
- Migration and host communities and the role/s that migrants play in host communities.
- Migration and brain drain.
- Migration and the rural-urban drift.
- Migration and COVID-19.

Journalists should also consider how they can most effectively tell their story. Which of the many formats might be most appropriate?

- ▶ Breaking/hard news coverage
- ▶ Profiles
- ▶ Interactive discussions/talk shows
- ▶ Documentaries and magazines (short, medium and long)
- ▶ Editorials/opinions
- ▶ Graphics
- ▶ Features

6.3 Finding sources

Once a story idea has been thought of, the next step is to find reliable data and documentation. But where do you find appropriate sources?

Finding sources: People

Connect with migrants. Include a variety of sources, engage with migrants, refugee groups, activists and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that can provide vital information. It is important to include the voice of migrants and reflect the human aspect of migration, advocate and report on the humanitarian crisis and/or violation of human rights at hand.

- ▶ Communities (families, diaspora, migrants)
- ▶ Local, national and microlocal authorities and institutions
- ▶ UN Agencies such as IOM
- ▶ International organizations/NGOs

- ▶ National organizations and civil society organizations
- ▶ International co-operation agencies
- ▶ International and regional institutions/commissions
- ▶ Universities, think tanks and research centres
- ▶ Media
- ▶ Social networks and relevant websites
- ▶ Social media

Once a journalist has identified sources that will speak, the journalist must ensure that they protect them, particularly those who may be vulnerable such as trafficked persons. This is discussed further in Chapter 8.

Due to the vulnerability of migrants, journalists should ensure they obtain consent prior to any interview. This can be in the form of a written consent form or verbal recorded consent. Be aware that even with consent, the journalist will have to assess the possible risks the person may face by doing the interview and if the story is published or broadcast. Sometimes sources don't realize the consequences of the publication of their story or information on social media, for example.

Finding sources: Data

Collecting data and including it in your stories is a critical element for most stories. We may know the big picture but we won't get an accurate picture of the details without data. Depending on what you are looking for there are a variety of places to go. Here are some organizations you can go to (either in person or online) to find all kinds of data and information.

Data sources

- ■ Database of migration law:
  https://imldb.iom.int/_layouts/15/IML.Portal/AppPages/Home.aspx
- ■ Database of migration-related treaties:
  https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ParticipationStatus.aspx?clang=_fr
- ■ UNHCR Statistics and Operational Data:
  https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/
- ■ Internal Displacement Monitoring Center:
  http://www.internal-displacement.org
- ■ Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) Resources Publications:
  https://www.nrc.no/expert-deployment/contact-norcap/
- ■ Your national immigration department or ministry is likely to have data.

6.4 Gender and migration

Gender sensitivity and gender inclusivity in migration coverage

Migration is highly gendered. Exit, entry, travel and other experiences are gendered and have different implications for women and men. The migration of women into foreign countries was initially for the purpose of joining their husbands. However, a new trend of today's global migration flows is the increasing rate of migrant women with independent economic interests seeking to elevate their social and economic conditions (ECOWAS).

Increase of women migrants in formal and informal employment

Women migrants' participation in both formal and informal employment is rising as a survival strategy to increase low household incomes. Women migrant workers represented 3.6 million workers in Sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for almost 30 per cent of migrant workers, and have a labour force participation rate of 47.3 per cent (ILO, 2018). In West Africa, almost half of the migrants are women moving within the subregion or to other parts of the world; the majority are low-skilled young women, although the region also has semi and high-skilled female migration. Female migrants constitute 46.7 per cent of migrants in West Africa (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019).

Vulnerability of women migrants

At every stage of the migration process, women migrant workers, especially those in irregular situations, are vulnerable to harassment, intimidation or threats to themselves and their families, economic and sexual exploitation, racial discrimination and xenophobia, poor working conditions, increased health risks, trafficking, forced labour and other forms of abuse, debt bondage, involuntary servitude and situations of captivity.

Stigmatization of women returnees

Very often, women find it hard to return because of the stigmatization and shame they feel from their experiences such as sexual abuse. The psychosocial support they receive is an essential step that allows them to rebuild themselves and to re-establish links with their relatives and loved ones. For women whose journeys did not end as they wished, reintegration offers opportunities for gender equality and a second chance to achieve lost dreams.

Barriers to information

Barriers such as low literacy rates among women can exclude them from receiving information shared via print media. Obstacles related to mobility, as well as Internet, television and radio access should also be considered when planning an event or sharing information online, on television or via radio.

Women are 10 per cent less likely than men to own a mobile phone and power relations between men and women in the household indicate that women may only have controlled or restricted access to phones or other devices.

Some specific things to keep in mind:

- ▶ Language – Use gender-sensitive language.
- ▶ Representation – Use diverse sources and images in your stories.
- ▶ Data protection, security and informed consent – Women are often especially vulnerable. Be sure to have informed consent and adopt a "do no harm" approach.
- ▶ Challenge biases and assumptions – Avoid gender assumptions based on the way a person looks or the sound of their voice.
- ▶ Interviewing – Ask interviewees about their preferred pronouns and terms.
- ▶ Barriers to women's and girls' participation – Be aware of accessibility, language, literacy and mobility barriers.

Journalists need to be mindful of stereotypes, such as only portraying women as disempowered or as victims. Also, consider how men might be victims and how the context might contribute to men's vulnerability. Stereotypes rarely communicate accurate information about people. Generalisations based on gender norms and roles can be harmful because they can hide important information about people by deterring them from freely expressing their needs, capacities, priorities and experiences. By making certain assumptions about people, gender stereotyping can also contribute to gender-based discrimination. In extreme cases, gender stereotypes can even encourage gender-based violence. It is crucial to show gender diversity in all communications. Remember that gender representation is not just ratio and quantity, but it also depends on the diversity of the roles portrayed.

Finally, we should also consider gender and migration policies. A gender-responsive approach in labour migration policies is not widely applied. Almost all ECOWAS Member States have developed or are planning to develop a national migration policy or have a similar strategic framework in place. Including a gender-responsive approach would consider men's and women's needs, constraints and opportunities, as well as the possible differential effects and impacts of migration measures on men and women.

Recognition of women's increasing role in labour migration and promotion of equality of opportunity and treatment is limited. A focus on specific dimensions relevant to women migrants, such as access to health care, sexual and reproductive health, maternity leave, and protection against violence and harassment, including sexual harassment is needed. Legal and policy progress will help in promoting women migrant workers' rights and equal opportunities in the context of the migration process.

6.5 The impact of images

We all know about the power of images and the saying "a picture is worth a thousand words". In many instances we've seen how true this is when covering migration-related stories.

It is important to stress the importance of depicting migration in all its complexity. Other representations, other visuals of the migrant exist alongside that of the tragic shipwreck victim. They can cast another light on the migrant reality. Talk about how the media can use pictures of migration, deliberately or involuntarily, in such a way that they reinforce myths and justify certain points of view.

Let's remember that the use of pictures of migration, deliberately or involuntarily, may reinforce stereotypes and negative perceptions. Think twice before taking pictures and videos of people in distress. There are serious ethical questions to be considered in such cases. Ask yourself: Why am I using this picture and not another? What is my motivation? Consider the effects of your visual content going viral through social media and across various digital platforms – is this your intent? If not, then reconsider your choice of visual.

Always ask migrants and refugees if you may take their pictures. Some may be reluctant or say no. Likewise, always protect your sources: ensure you have informed consent and that images do not have identifiable people – particularly if it can jeopardize them in any way.

⚠ **Remember: Do no harm**

Always keep the context in mind: your photo is frozen in time, or your video is used over several news cycles and then archived. The migrants' and refugees' story doesn't end there.

Which pictures? Think about potential impact, damage, context, motivation.

Photo 1. Cell phone market. Licensed under CC0 1.0.

The photo of mobile phones is an accurate depiction of the importance of mobile phones in the daily lives of migrants who, far from being isolated, are in constant touch, via social networks (Facebook) and mobile messaging and call apps (Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Viber) with their families and friends. On the migration route, it is crucial to have a mobile phone, which can be used to do myriad things – receive money, change route, stay in touch with family and friends. Importantly, migrants can also get help but only if helpline numbers are known to them. This is an example of how journalists can help – by ensuring critical information regarding services is available to migrants.

Produce videos where refugees speak and explain their situation, give a voice to local communities.

Reflection time

Here are two similar photos. Think about which you would choose to use and why.

Photo 2. Migrants on beach. Source: UNHCR. Licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0.

Photo 3. Migrants en-route. Source: UNHCR. Licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0.

7. Social Media, Technology and Migration

Social media and technology both play an increasingly important role in migration as well as the reporting on migration topics. This chapter aims to shed some light on how journalists can use social media effectively to help tell their story as well as how they can avoid common pitfalls of social media.

7.1 Migration and technology: an introduction

The media's responsibility to provide an objective and balanced account of migration globally has never been more important. Not only is the political salience of migration high, and frequently fevered, but the capacity for rapidly disseminating disinformation to influence the public discourse has expanded. And never before has the role of technology been so significant in both the act of migration but also in the reporting of it.

One of the most significant enabling factors that acts to facilitate migration is telecommunications technology. On the one hand you have the appification of migration but on the other you have disruption and disinformation which are increasingly being deployed as part of tactical pursuits of power, with negative impacts on public, political and social media discourse, on societal values, and on public policy issues such as migration, displacement and migrants (including refugees).

Social media can be useful for migrants. There are many different mobile apps that migrants use to make their lives easier. Migrant tech has the ability to support migrants all the way through the migration cycle, including as a means of supporting safe, regular and orderly migration.

The use of apps to share information in real-time, including to support clandestine border crossings, together with the consolidation of social media platforms to connect geographically dispersed groups with common interests, has raised valid questions concerning the extent to which technology has been used to support irregular migration, as well as to enable migrants to avoid abusive and exploitative migrant smugglers.

The flip side is the use of social media in migrant smuggling has witnessed an exponential

growth in recent years. Smugglers use social media to: advertise smuggling services; provide information on migration routes; and to facilitate communication. Migrants also increasingly make use of social media, both at pre-departure stage (e.g. to get into contact with smugglers) as well as during journeys (e.g. to communicate and receive information on migration routes). The use of social media by migrants differs by nationality, ethnicity, and region of origin, and also depending on the availability of the Internet as well as the level of education of the migrant.

So, what is the connection between migration and technology and how can journalists use technology and social media in their coverage of migration?

In answering the first question, it is important to note that migration is intertwined with technology and innovation. Technology is increasingly critical throughout the migration process, especially newer forms of technology. In recent years, for example, we have witnessed the use of information and communication technology (ICT) by migrants to gather information and advice in real time during migration journeys; an issue that is raising interest and, at times, concern.

The use of ICT, such as apps to share the latest information, including to support clandestine border crossings, together with the consolidation of social media platforms to connect geographically dispersed groups with common interests, has raised valid questions concerning the extent to which technology has been used to support irregular migration, as well as to enable migrants to avoid abusive and exploitative migrant smugglers and human traffickers.

Due to the ever-increasing access to emerging technology at low cost, migrants have also developed applications to support their integration in receiving countries, while maintaining social links and financial support to their families and societies back home, including through the increasing prevalence of "mobile money" apps (IOM, 2020).

Recent discussions have also turned to blockchain technology and its consequences for migration, especially for remittances, but also for digital identities and global mobility. Social media technology is also increasingly impacting the politics of migration, with a surge of far-right activism on social media platforms seeking to influence political debates and ultimately political decisions.

How do migrants use technology? Many migrants rely upon smartphones to find safe passage. Maps and GPS help chart the best course. Messaging apps provide a lifeline to loved ones. Apps of every kind help find a place to sleep, translate foreign languages, offer guidance on what to pack, and help manage money. So many needs are met with mobile.

According to a recent European Commission (EC) report, Facebook, WhatsApp and Viber are more commonly used as channels of communications rather than platforms to gather information on migration. Comparatively, Twitter and Skype are rarely used either to communicate or obtain information on migration. Social media's primary role in migration is to facilitate private communication between migrants, potential migrants and their networks. However, it has important secondary and tertiary functions:

► To connect migrants with smugglers.
► To expand migrants' diaspora networks – migrants en-route and in Europe used social media, primarily Facebook, to connect with others in the diaspora. Migrants then used these contacts as a source of information for the journey (EC, 2016).

While social media is not the main tool by which migrants receive information on migration, social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp were commonly cited channels of communication with the diaspora in Europe used by migrants in transit. As such, social media is important for connecting migrants to other people, rather than as a source of information about migration (EC, 2016).

But not all have access to this technology. It is no surprise that the migrants carrying smartphones are those who could afford them back home. And holding onto the device during arduous journeys is no easy feat. Border patrol guards often confiscate mobile phones at government checkpoints (Brunwasser, 2015). And even those who have phones don't always have access to the Internet, or to apps and services that might help them (Ram, 2015).

There is a growing role of Internet and social media for recruitment and distribution of exploitation material among traffickers as well. By using these platforms, organized groups, regardless of their numeric size, are increasingly able to utilise open, real-time (un-curated) publishing to distort narratives in attempts to realize changes in political (and policy) decisions. Overall, the way we – as countries, as communities, and increasingly as transnational value-based groups – describe and discuss migration to ourselves and to others is being shaped by the massive changes in the media landscape.

Recent research on these changes has been undertaken utilizing big data analysis on Twitter, for example, finding that some groups are engaging in "entanglement" of messaging in order to
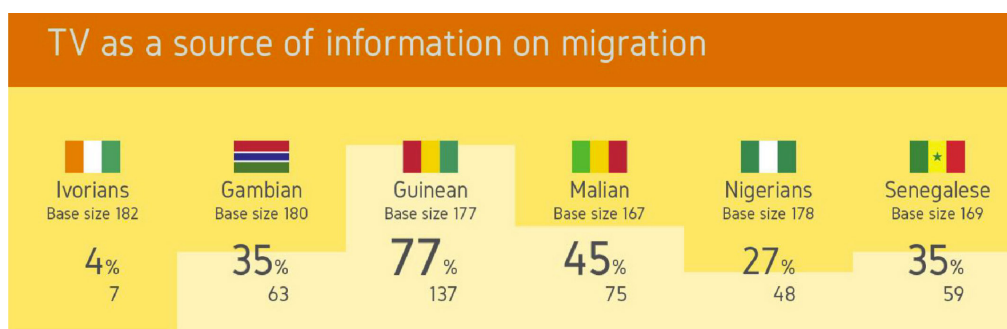

Figure 5. TV as a source of information on migration. Source: European Commission (2017).
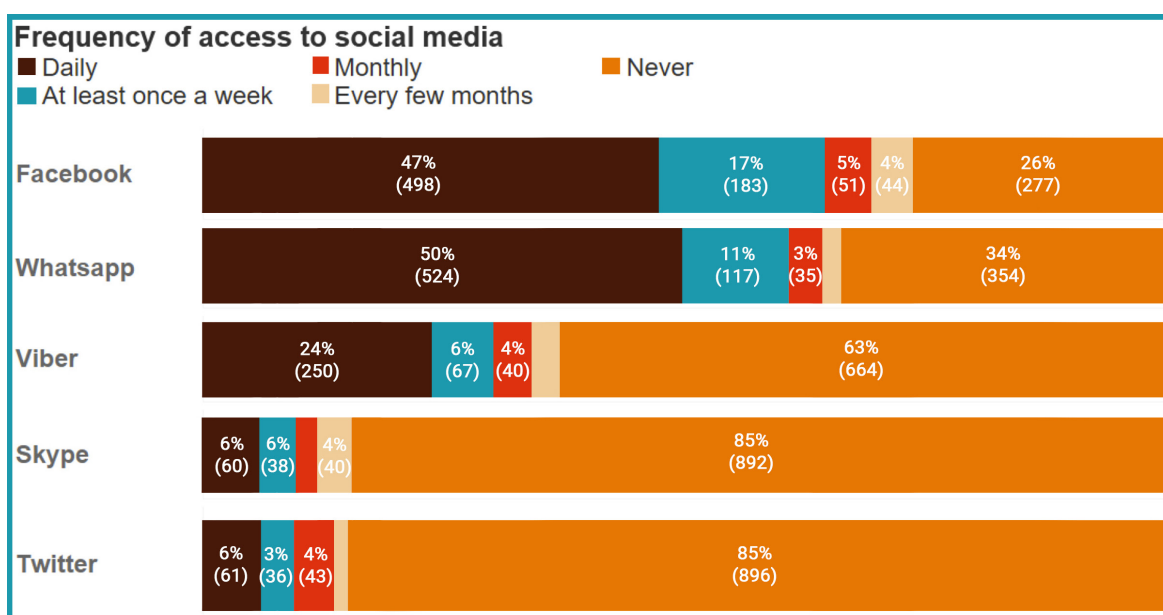

Figure 6. Frequency of migrants' access to social media. Source: European Commission (2017).

portray refugees and other migrants as negative, regardless of the facts (IOM, 2020).

So, what can journalists do? Balanced public discussions require greater scrutiny of "fake" social media content, including by promoting a better understanding of the responsibilities that go hand-in-hand with free speech. This is currently a hot issue in many parts of the world, with stricter regulatory regimes being actively considered, or having been put in place. This is where journalists come in.

Many journalists in West Africa rely on social media to gather and share information and to find sources of information. But social media is also rife with mis- and dis-information including that related to migration.

When journalists use social media, they should apply journalistic best practices. These include:

▶ **Do not give in to immediacy**
The "flow" and immediacy that characterize social networks can be a "trap" for journalists, tempted to give in to the "information race" at the detriment of information verification. Have you sought confirmation from experts?

▶ **Check your facts. Identify and verify the author of the message and information before using or redistributing it**
Who is the author of the information? Look for the primary source of the information (not just the identity of the user that redistributed the information). If the author is unknown, you should be careful! Instead, rely on official media and known sources. When you have information, whose source is not verified and/or verifiable, adopt a precautionary approach.

▶ **Check the date of the information (and the author)**
Beware of old publications that "come back" when they are largely shared. The risk is to consider them as recent.

▶ **Be careful with the popularity of "posts"**
The number of engagements is not a guarantee of reliability and truth. It is very easy to buy "likes" on social networks.

▶ **Do not give in to sensationalism and too powerful or "loaded" images**
Like any professional journalist, do not let your emotions guide you. Even if the theme speaks to their human instincts and reflexes, the journalist must keep "the distance" of reflection and follow the principles of the profession.

▶ **Cite and credit your source if you reuse or redistribute information**
Be transparent about your sources, EXCEPT for security reasons. Plan technical measures to keep sources anonymous if necessary.

▶ **Be careful with the personal digital data you are leaving behind**
The web remembers everything, and you can be identified through your browsing history. Do not forget that information relayed on social networks can be spread around the world and cause cascades of reactions without us being able to easily remedy them. Publishing inaccurate or incomplete information can easily be missed out and have

disastrous consequences. You can be held accountable for a mistake you made for years. Think about your trustworthiness and that of your outlet.

▶ Be aware of your digital trail
Just as the web remembers everything, be aware that using technology (mobile phone, computer) can leave a digital trail which can alert authorities or other actors to your whereabouts and thereby putting you at risk.
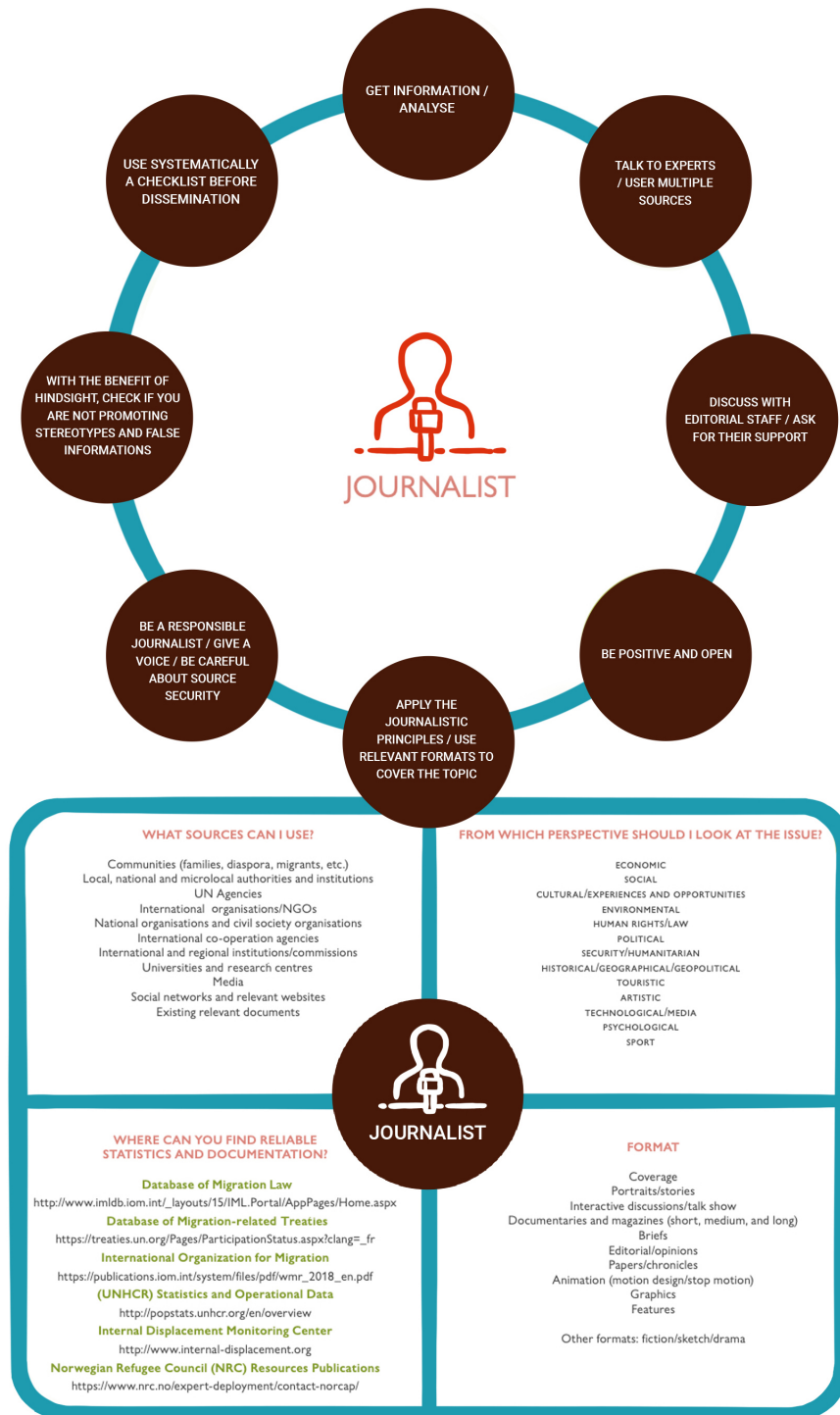

Figure 7. Media Coverage on Migration: A practical guide for journalists. Source: IOM (2018c)

7.2 Fact-checking: Identifying possible mis- and dis-information

There is a continuously growing and improving body of data and evidence that can help us make better sense of the basic features of migration and how they are changing – as well as understanding how the context in which migration is occurring is evolving. This is increasingly important as public debates, littered with misinformation and untruths, are increasingly able to utilize the ongoing expansion of social media platforms to achieve distortion and misrepresentation of migration and migrants.

The journalist's role is to verify and to fact-check everything they do and this is no different when it comes to migration-related stories. In fact, due to the sheer volume of mis- and disinformation related to migration, the fact-checking role is critical.

So how can journalists go about verifying information? One option is to remind themselves of the discussions in Chapter 6 around finding sources and data. This will be invaluable in fact-checking.

Second, there are numerous fact-checking organizations. Poynter's International Fact checking network includes Africa Check (https://africacheck.org) and has sites in both English and French. The site includes an "Info finder" on topics including migration and provides facts per topic as well as tutorials on how to fact-check.

Third, do your own fact-checking by following these steps (adapted from africacheck.org):

1. Where is the evidence? Ask for evidence and if it is not provided then there is likely a problem with the claim.

2. Is the evidence verifiable? Can you test the accuracy of the evidence provided? Again, if this cannot be provided then there is likely a problem.

3. Is the evidence sound? In other words, ask yourself these questions:

> ▶ Could the source know what they claim to know?
> ▶ If there is data, when was it gathered?
> ▶ Was the sample large enough? Was it comprehensive?
> ▶ How was the data collected?
> ▶ What is the bigger picture?

4. Data sources, experts and the crowd. Data, experts and crowdsourcing can help to verify a claim if the source won't provide the evidence.

5. Spotting fakes. Photos and videos are often used and it's often difficult to know if they are real or fake. Tools like TinEye, Google Reverse Image and Yandex can all help you find out if an image or video was used online elsewhere or what the origin of the image is.

6. Be persistent. Verification and fact-checking can be frustrating and time consuming but it is a critical aspect of journalism. Persistence is essential.

7. Be open. Not everyone will like what you report but if you can back up your reporting and fact checking and explain your methodology you may win a few converts along the way and help protect yourself against possible lawsuits.

8. Migrant Voices: Interviewing Migrants and their Families

Interviewing is perhaps the most important skill in the pursuit of journalism, but the one many journalists take the most for granted and prepare for the least. Interviewing migrants is often more sensitive and journalists must take extra steps to apply a trauma-sensitive approach when interviewing persons affected by migration.

Before you do any interview, be sure you have collected background information and research so you can better understand and assess the types of situations interviewees have experienced.

This chapter seeks to provide tips on interviewing migrants and their families.

8.1 Identification and protection

Migrants are often vulnerable and may not want to speak to members of the media. Due to the vulnerability of migrants, journalists should ensure they obtain consent prior to any interview. See Chapter 3 for more information on this.

Journalists should do all they can to ensure their source is safe and is able to relax during the interview; this includes finding a safe place in which to conduct the interview. You may also want to have another person present while you are doing the interview. Be aware that interviewing a person has the potential to raise their profile and put them under pressure or subject them to jealousy, suspicion or stigmatization.

Journalists should let their sources know that the story will be available for everyone to see. Some may be ok with this, while others may fear their name will grab the attention of authorities and don't want their name available to the public. Journalists have an obligation to warn them of the potential consequences of media coverage, including unwanted law enforcement attention and ramifications of worldwide distribution on the Internet. But if a subject knows all of that and opts to go forward, journalists should respect and honour that choice.

Interviewing migrants, refugees, human trafficking survivors and minors is different from asking an official to provide statistics or an opinion about migration. Journalists must demonstrate sensitivity, understand if the interviewee is reluctant to answer,

has been exposed to potentially traumatizing events, is afraid of authorities, worries about endangering the lives of loved ones left behind, fears forced return, or wants to protect their privacy.

Should a source ask to remain anonymous then the journalist should not share information that could lead to their identification. Vulnerable people are at a heightened risk when information such as their real names or personal details are shared. Change names or use initials, take "anonymized" pictures, give the name of a region rather than a town, etc. Make it clear to the audience that the identity has been changed in order to protect the source.

The situation is even more delicate with minors, particularly if they are unaccompanied, have lost their loved ones and have nowhere to turn. Journalists should take into account who has the rights to the photos and videos they're shooting. If those rights are solely those of the journalist or news organization, it should be explained to the interviewee (Abu-Fadil, 2019). The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma provides guidelines on interviewing children and is a good starting point (Chin, 2013).

Journalists should also be aware of their own safety when covering migration-related stories.

8.2 Asking the right questions

Migrants have interesting things to say about the countries they travel through and the societies in which they settle. Migrants are interviewed in critical situations, but less often asked to talk about their resettlement, their experiences, their integration into society in the country of arrival. It is important to allow migrants to speak when reporting, not least because doing so enhances the story's credibility (IOM, 2019).

Interviews are a key component of migrant and refugee stories and should be handled professionally.

Journalists should learn as much as possible about the topic and the person they plan to interview before even asking for an appointment to meet. For effective interviews, journalists should ask open questions as opposed to yes or no questions. Listen and watch attentively and note not only what is said but how it is said and what is not said.

There are different types of interviews you will likely do as you cover migration. Some stories may have all of these, some perhaps just one or two. The interview types include:

► The profile interview: an interview that tells the story of one person, in this case it will likely be a migrant, a family member or someone who works with migrants.

► The witness interview: an interview with a witness or a person who was part of an event or affected by an event.

► The statement interview: an interview with a person who has a statement to make or a stance to clarify; usually politicians or officials.

► The explanation interview: an interview with a person who explains an event or a phenomenon; usually scientists, experts, academics.

Tips to remember

Before:

- Identify yourself before, or at the beginning of, the interview.

- Break the ice and make a good first impression. Make your interviewee feel relaxed.

- Get the spelling and pronunciation of your interviewee's name. This is a good way to begin an interview and to make sure your gear is working. You can also check audio levels this way.

- Explain how the material will be used.

- Tell the source how much time the interview is likely to take.

- Be prepared. Make sure you've researched the topic, prepared your questions and know about the person you're interviewing.

- Know what you want to get from the interview. What's your plan? What's your focus?

- Your interviewee should know what the topic of the interview is, but you should never give your questions in advance unless there is some extraordinary circumstance.

- Never pay for an interview.

During:

- Do use an interpreter but remind them to ask the questions directly, to translate precisely and not to make any assumptions about what your source is saying.

- Do make sure expectations are understood and managed.

- Use follow-up questions to get the full picture.

- Give the source ample time to reply but don't let them ramble or go off-course.

- Ask the source to clarify complex or vague answers.

- Read back answers if requested or when in doubt about the phrasing of crucial material.

- Listen, listen, listen. Don't be a slave to your questions. Listening will lead to follow up questions.

- Be persistent but courteous. Ask, ask and ask again.

- Ask for clarification. Ask for examples.

- Don't be intimidated.

- Watch your interviewee's body language.

- Take notes during the interview. Note details of the location, what the person is wearing, anything that will add colour to your story. Remember, one of your roles is that of observer.

- If your source makes requests to speak confidentially or "off-the-record", be prepared to respond in an appropriate way.

- Never force your interviewee to talk and be wary of the possibility of retraumatization.

- At the end of the interview, ask if the interviewee has anything to add or if they recommend other people you should speak to and whether you may call back later with questions.

- Always use appropriate language and terminology.

- Do not ask two questions at the same time.

8.3 Trauma and other sensitivities

Many migrants have experienced or witnessed extremely difficult or unspeakable things. Be aware that those you interview could suffer flashbacks or intrusive thoughts leading them to re-experience the event. Part of your job during such interviews is to do no harm.

There are a number of actions journalists can do to minimize the risks of such negative outcomes. These include:

- ▶ Make sure the space is safe, accessible and comfortable.
- ▶ Have someone else with you.
- ▶ Make sure you are at a reasonable distance from them – not too close.
- ▶ Limit physical contact.
- ▶ Make sure roles, procedures and objectives are clearly explained and understood.
- ▶ Do ask if they feel comfortable being videotaped, photographed and/or recorded and let them know how you will use all of this.
- ▶ Do conduct the interview in a safe and private space: Interviewing someone may raise their profile and put them under pressure or may create suspicion or expose them to stigmatization. Ultimately, however, the source should decide where to do the interview.
- ▶ Be familiar with basic grounding techniques in case individual begins to show signs of excessive stress, so that you are able to reorient the individual to the here-and-now and to reality.
- ▶ Listen to everything the interviewee may want to speak to you about, even if not relevant to your interview.
- ▶ Don't push. Remind the person they can stop the interview at any time. Do not insist if the person is anxious or ill at ease with a particular question.
- ▶ Do offer to share the final story.

When interviewing victims of traumatic events (adapted from GIJN):

- ▶ Ask for consent throughout the process.
- ▶ If they later withdraw consent, do not use the interview (even if at first they gave it).
- ▶ They decide where you interview them.
- ▶ Ask them if you can take video/photos; do not assume (also let them know in advance of interview that you might want videos or photos and ask again at time you take them).
- ▶ If at all possible, avoid directly challenging the victims account of things (danger of re-traumatization), but DO validate the information provided by victim with outside sources.
- ▶ Don't accentuate discrimination or stigmatization. Make sure your language and choice of words does not reinforce discrimination based on ethnic, religious or social grounds.
- ▶ Close the interview on a less sensitive subject (e.g. something about daily life, time, weather, etc.).

After the interview make sure you conduct a thorough safety check. That means:

- ■ Tell the interviewee that distressing memories may be more present for them after the interview.
- ■ Check whether they have access to a support system.
- ■ Ask how they are feeling now that they have disclosed the experience.
- ■ Refer them to appropriate services if necessary.

9. Working with your Editors

One of the most significant challenges in the newsroom is getting your editor to agree to your story idea. Usually the problem is not the story idea but rather the constraints of the editor and/or how the story is pitched. This chapter seeks to enhance your understanding of an editor's role and how you can more effectively pitch your story.

9.1 Role of the gatekeepers

Editors are the gatekeepers of the newsroom and while you are likely aware of most of their roles, it is worth reiterating them here.

Here are just some of the tasks of editors:

- ▶ Oversee the work of all newsroom staff.
- ▶ Assign stories to reporters, liaise with copy editors.
- ▶ Decide which stories will make it to publication/broadcast/online and be able to explain why.
- ▶ Allocate space and time in the various publications/broadcasts.
- ▶ Check for legal and ethical issues in reports.
- ▶ Responsible for newspaper's editorial voice.
- ▶ Hold the reporter accountable.

It is also useful to acknowledge the challenges that editors face so that participants will know what they are up against. These include:

- ▶ Time and space constraints.
- ▶ Commercial/financial pressures.
- ▶ Edits often take longer than expected (so the more the reporter can ensure the quality and accuracy of the content the better).
- ▶ Often have to produce multi-media and/or multi-platform content.

Editors must understand audience-centric thinking.

Who is our audience? What do they want? Where do they find us? We can now measure and understand our audience(s) to a degree of specificity that is both exciting and terrifying.

Editors must understand distribution channels

If our stories can now exist on mobile apps, social platforms, websites and podcasts, editors can't afford to only grasp one of these channels. Editors need to develop an ability to cognitively toggle between formats.

All of this and the reality is that most editors have never received specialized training to do their jobs, they simply moved up the ranks!

So how can journalists help their editors? Journalists can strive to do the following to meet their editor's needs and expectations:

▶ Ensure pitches are newsworthy.

▶ Ensure pitches are clearly focused, short and straight to the point.

▶ Ensure pitches are timely.

▶ Ensure there is strong audience appeal which means you have to have a good idea of who your audience is.

9.2 Pitching for success

Many journalists will simply wait for their editor or assignments person to hand them a story, usually in the form a press release. We need to encourage journalists to be proactive, find stories on their own (see Chapter 6) and pitch them for success.

Editors are busy people and often don't have time to know all the intricacies of the story that the reporter does. The reporter's job is to present a brief 60 second pitch or one memorable sentence to your editor with the following elements:

▶ Someone (for example: migrant, returnee, family member, policymaker, etc.)

▶ Is doing something (for example: is setting up a space for returnees to meet)

▶ Because (for example: because sharing their stories has been found to help them reintegrate)

Reporters should also be prepared to answer the editor when he or she asks: Why should I care?

In addition, in this world of multimedia, it's likely that editors will want to know how best to engage the audience with this particular story. How will the reporter initially connect with them? And after the reporter finds them, how might they use things like callouts, tagging, social media

groups and live events to engage and reach them outside of the "main event", wherever they are (which won't always be plugged in to your storytelling).

If you are expected to present the story on different platforms, you need to be ready to explain how you will do this as well. Knowing where your story will appear will help you plan and allocate resources accordingly. Think through all the forms your storytelling could take: website, newspaper, radio, social media, podcast, etc. What assets and help might you need to make your story and the associated elements a success? Consider these elements: audio, video, data, social, illustrations, photographs, brand marks/logos.

Techniques for pitching your story

- Know your newsroom or media organization.
- Be story focused.
- Indicate key sources.
- Provide technical and logistical details.
- Give a deadline.
- Package neatly.

Finally, remember that journalism is a team sport! So:

- ▶ Be open and honest with your colleagues and create space for exchange and discussion.
- ▶ Be sure that you and your colleagues know where to get information. Migration is a complex topic with a myriad of actors. Take advantage of trainings when offered and think about creating a migration beat in which you have one or two journalists specializing in migration-related issues.
- ▶ Anticipate the impact of the story on the media, the journalist's sources and the audience.
- ▶ Ensure everyone is abiding by best ethical and journalistic practices.
- ▶ Do not focus only on negative aspects. There are a lot of solutions-oriented and positive migration-related stories.
- ▶ Do not give in to sensationalism, scoop and competition, especially when using images and social networks. Promote quality work. The audience will appreciate your work.
- ▶ Consider collaborative projects with other media outlets either locally, nationally or regionally.

Ensuring that journalists have addressed all (or most) of these key elements BEFORE pitching to the editor is more likely to ensure a successful pitch AND a successful story.

Glossary

Assisted voluntary return
Administrative, logistical, financial and reintegration support to rejected asylum seekers, victims of trafficking in human beings, stranded migrants, qualified nationals and other migrants unable or unwilling to remain in the host country who volunteer to return to their countries of origin.

Asylum seeker
An individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every recognized refugee is initially an asylum seeker.

Facilitated migration
Regular migration that has been encouraged or supported by State policies and practices or by the direct assistance of international organizations to make the act of migration and residence easier, more transparent and more convenient.

Freedom of movement
A human right comprising three basic elements: freedom of movement within the territory of a country (Art. 13(1), Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948: "Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state."), the right to leave any country and the right to return to his or her own country (Art. 13(2), Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948: "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country."

Human trafficking
The "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of

organs." (Additional Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000, art.3).

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.

IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination. There is no clear or universally accepted definition of irregular migration. From the perspective of destination countries, it is entry, stay or work in a country without the necessary authorization or documents required under immigration regulations. From the perspective of the sending country, the irregularity is for example seen in cases in which a person crosses an international boundary without a valid passport or travel document or does not fulfil the administrative requirements for leaving the country. There is, however, a tendency to restrict the use of the term "illegal migration" to cases of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons.

MIGRANT

IOM defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is. IOM concerns itself with migrants and migration-related issues and, in agreement with relevant States, with migrants who are in need of international migration services.

MIGRATION

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

REFUGEE

A person, who "owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Art. 1A(2), 1951 as modified by the 1967 Protocol).

RELOCATION

In the context of humanitarian emergencies, relocations are to be considered as internal humanitarian evacuations and are understood as large-scale movements of civilians, who face an immediate threat to life in a conflict setting, to locations within the same country where they can be more effectively protected.

Repatriation

The personal right of a prisoner of war, civil detainee, refugee, or of a civilian to return to his or her country of nationality under specific conditions laid down in various international instruments

Resettlement

The relocation and integration of people (refugees, internally displaced persons, etc.) into another geographical area and environment, usually in a third country. In the refugee context, the transfer of refugees from the country in which they have sought refuge to another State that has agreed to admit them.

Return migration

In the context of international migration, the movement of persons returning to their country of origin after having moved away from their place of habitual residence and crossed an international border. In the context of internal migration, the movement of persons returning to their place of habitual residence after having moved away from it.

Smuggling

The procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident (Art. 3(a), UN Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000). Smuggling contrary to trafficking does not require an element of exploitation, coercion, or violation of human rights.

Sustainable reintegration

In the context of international return migration, reintegration can be considered sustainable when returnees have reached levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities, and psychosocial well-being, that allow them to cope with possible (re)migration drivers.

Vulnerability

IOM defines vulnerability in a migratory context as "the reduced ability of an individual or group to resist or recover from violence, exploitation, abuse and violations of their rights. It is determined by the presence, absence and a mix of factors and circumstances that (a) increase the risk and exposure to, or (b) protect against violence, exploitation, abuse and rights' violations".

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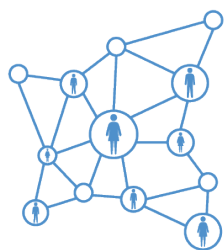
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