



**United Nations Children's Fund  
(UNICEF)**

**Topic:**

**Childhood in danger: Latin America and Caribbean  
migration**

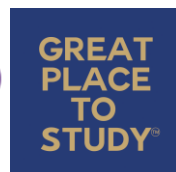
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## Introduction:

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was established by the United Nations General Assembly on December 11, 1946, in the aftermath of World War II. Initially designed to provide medical treatment to mothers and children in post-war nations, UNICEF has evolved into a critical international organization dedicated to the well-being of children worldwide.

## Mission and Focus:

UNICEF's primary mission is to protect children from sickness and ensure access to quality healthcare. Over the years, its focus has expanded to address various aspects of children's well-being, including education, nutrition, protection from violence, and advocacy for their rights. UNICEF operates globally, working in collaboration with governments, NGOs, and communities to create sustainable and positive changes in the lives of children.

## Current Situation:

The committee will address the specific issue of childhood in danger, focusing on Latin America and Caribbean migration. This region has been grappling with numerous challenges, including economic instability, violence, and political unrest, leading to migration that significantly impacts the lives of children.

## Critical Points for Consideration:

- ✓ **Migration Challenges:** Explore the challenges faced by children in the Latin America and Caribbean region due to migration, including issues related to health, education, and protection.
- ✓ **Access to Healthcare:** Examine the current healthcare accessibility for migrating children and propose measures to improve their well-being, especially considering UNICEF's historical commitment to providing medical assistance.
- ✓ **Education Disruptions:** Discuss the educational disruptions faced by migrating children and propose strategies to ensure continuous access to quality education, aligning with UNICEF's broader mission.
- ✓ **Protection from Exploitation:** Address concerns related to the vulnerability of migrating children to exploitation, trafficking, and violence, emphasizing UNICEF's role in safeguarding children's rights.
- ✓ **Community Engagement:** Explore the involvement of communities and local



organizations in supporting migrating children, aligning with UNICEF's collaborative approach to child welfare.

### **Background:**

In September 2023, UNICEF reported a staggering reality—millions of children and families embarking on arduous journeys throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, compelled by the challenging circumstances in their countries of origin. Migration from this region has emerged as a critical and multifaceted issue, often rooted in economic, social, or political contexts.

The increasing concern revolves around the profound impact of migration on the children of Latin America and the Caribbean, exposing them to a myriad of risks and challenges throughout the migratory process. The United Nations, in its September 2023 assessment, identified several root causes of migration:

- ✓ **Economic Factors:** In pursuit of improved living conditions and employment opportunities, families leave their countries due to economic instability.
- ✓ **Violence:** Escaping high levels of violence, families, particularly children, are compelled to abandon their nations in search of safety.
- ✓ **Natural Disasters:** Frequent natural catastrophes trigger cross-border movements, with children often bearing the brunt of the resulting separations.
- ✓ **Lack of Access to Healthcare and Education:** Insufficient access to essential services prompts families to migrate, seeking better opportunities for their children.

### **Consequences of Migrations:**

Migration brings forth a host of consequences that significantly impact the lives of children:

**Human Trafficking:** Migrant children become susceptible to forced labor and sexual exploitation in the harrowing realm of human trafficking.

**Separation from Families:** The migration process often leads to involuntary separations, disrupting family structures and exposing children to the challenges of navigating alone.

**Exploitation:** Migrant children confront various forms of exploitation, including child



labor and recruitment into criminal gangs.

**Lack of Access to Education:** Relocated children frequently encounter barriers to education, hampering their overall development.

**Health Risks:** Limited access to healthcare facilities exposes migrant children to health risks, including malnutrition and a lack of immunization.

### Challenges:

Amid these complexities, several challenges stand out:

- ✓ **Social Integration:** Ensuring the social integration of migrant children into host communities is vital for their prospects.
- ✓ **Education and Skills Development:** Providing opportunities for skill development and quality education becomes imperative to empower the children of migrants for a better future.

### Timeline of Events:

- **Late 20th Century:** Economic challenges, political instability, and civil wars in various Latin American and Caribbean nations trigger waves of immigration as families seek safety and better prospects elsewhere.
- **2000s:** The 2000s witnessed increased attention to the issues faced by migrating children, leading to international conferences and dialogues addressing their rights.
- **2010:** Growing concerns arise about children migrants arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border, especially those from Central American nations, resulting in increased dialogues about their rights.
- **2014:** A surge in unaccompanied migrant minors from Central America brings attention to child protection and human rights concerns.
- **2018:** The U.S. government's "zero tolerance" policy leads to the controversial separation of migrant children from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border, sparking global outrage and condemnation.
- **2020s:** Ongoing conversations and actions at regional and global levels aim to address the challenges faced by migrant children, encompassing policy changes, humanitarian assistance, and international cooperation to ensure child protection.



## Key terms:

1. **Child Protection:** The safeguarding of children from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect.
2. **Humanitarian Aid:** Assistance provided for the well-being of individuals and communities affected by crises.
3. **Family Reunification:** The process of reuniting separated family members, is a critical aspect in the context of migration.
4. **Child Labor:** The employment of children in work that is harmful to their physical and mental development.
5. **Access to Education:** Ensuring children have the right and means to quality education regardless of migration status.
6. **Healthcare Accessibility:** The availability and accessibility of healthcare services for migrant children.
7. **Social Integration:** The process of migrants becoming part of the host society, including children's integration into communities.
8. **Psychosocial Support:** Providing mental and emotional support to mitigate the impact of migration-related stress on children.
9. **Birth Registration:** The official recording of a child's birth, essential for establishing legal identity.
10. **Child-Friendly Spaces:** Safe and protective environments designed for children affected by emergencies or migration.
11. **Detention Alternatives:** Identifying and implementing alternatives to the detention of migrant children.
12. **Separated Children:** Children separated from their families during migration, emphasizing the need for protective measures.
13. **Unaccompanied Minors:** Children migrating without the presence of a responsible adult or legal guardian.
14. **Integration Policies:** Government strategies and initiatives promoting the inclusion of migrants into the host society.
15. **Remittances:** Funds sent by migrants to their home countries to support family members.
16. **Child Advocacy:** Efforts to promote and protect the rights and well-being of children, especially in migration contexts.



17. **Cultural Sensitivity:** Awareness and respect for the diverse cultural backgrounds of migrant children.
18. **Trauma-Informed Care:** Providing care that recognizes and responds to the effects of trauma on children.
19. **Child Welfare:** Ensuring the well-being, safety, and health of children in all aspects.
20. **Community Engagement:** Involving local communities in initiatives and decisions affecting migrant children.

#### Conventions:

1. **1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR):** Protects the civil and political rights of individuals, including provisions relevant to migrants and children.
2. **International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR):** Focuses on economic, social, and cultural rights, impacting the well-being of migrants and their families.
3. **Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (Palermo Protocol):** Addresses human trafficking, a concern for unaccompanied migrant minors.
4. **Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment:** Prohibits the torture and mistreatment of individuals, including migrants.
5. **The UN Convention on Migrant Workers (CMW):** Specifically addresses the rights of migrant workers and their families, including children.

#### Guiding questions:

#### Research questions:

- What are the major push factors driving child migration in Latin America and the Caribbean
- How have international treaties and conventions, such as the CRC, been implemented in different countries to protect migrant children?
- What are the specific challenges faced by migrant children in detention



centers and temporary shelters, and how can these challenges be mitigated?

- How do cultural, social, and economic factors impact the experiences of migrant children in host countries?
- What role do non-governmental organizations and civil society play in providing support and protection to migrant children in the region?
- What are the long-term consequences of migration on the mental and physical well-being of children?
- **Guiding Debate Questions:**
- How can countries in Latin America and the Caribbean collaborate to create comprehensive regional policies ensuring the safety and well-being of migrant children?



- What measures can be taken to enhance educational opportunities for migrant children, considering language barriers and differences in educational systems?
- How can countries improve the social integration of migrant children, encouraging inclusivity and reducing discrimination and xenophobia?
- What strategies can be implemented to prevent human trafficking and exploitation of migrant children, both within their home countries and during their migration journey?
- How can host countries balance border security concerns with their obligations under international law to protect the rights of migrant children, particularly in cases of family separations?

#### **Resolution Paper Questions:**

- What specific policies and programs can be implemented at the national level to protect the rights of migrant children and ensure their access to education, healthcare, and social services?
- How can countries cooperate to enhance information sharing and intelligence to combat human trafficking networks targeting migrant children?
- What financial resources can be given to support initiatives for the social integration and mental health support of migrant children?
- How can host countries and international organizations collaborate to create standardized protocols for the humane treatment of migrant children in detention centers and temporary shelters?
- What steps can be taken to provide legal assistance and representation to migrant children, ensuring they understand their rights and have access to due process?





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