



Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: West Africa



This Quarterly Mixed Migration Update (QMMU) covers the West Africa (WA) region. The core countries of focus for this region are Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria. Depending on the quarterly trends and migration-related updates, more attention may be given to any of the countries over the rest.

The QMMUs offer a quarterly update on new trends and dynamics related to mixed migration and relevant policy developments in the region. These updates are based on a compilation of a wide range of secondary (data) sources, brought together within a regional framework and applying a mixed migration analytical lens. Similar QMMUs are available for all MMC regions.

The Mixed Migration Centre is a global network consisting of six regional hubs and a central unit in Geneva engaged in data collection, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration. For more information on the MMC, the QMMUs from other regions and contact details of regional MMC teams, visit mixedmigration.org and follow us at [@Mixed_Migration](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

MMC's understanding of mixed migration

"Mixed migration" refers to cross-border movements of people, including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking, and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people in mixed flows have a range of legal statuses as well as a variety of vulnerabilities. Although entitled to protection under international human rights law, they are exposed to multiple rights violations along their journey. Those in mixed migration flows travel along similar routes, using similar means of travel - often travelling irregularly, and wholly, or partially, assisted by migrant smugglers.

Front cover photo credit:

Jean-Baptiste Joire (2017)

Women watching boats in Joal-Fadiout, Senegal, February 2017.

SUPPORTED BY:



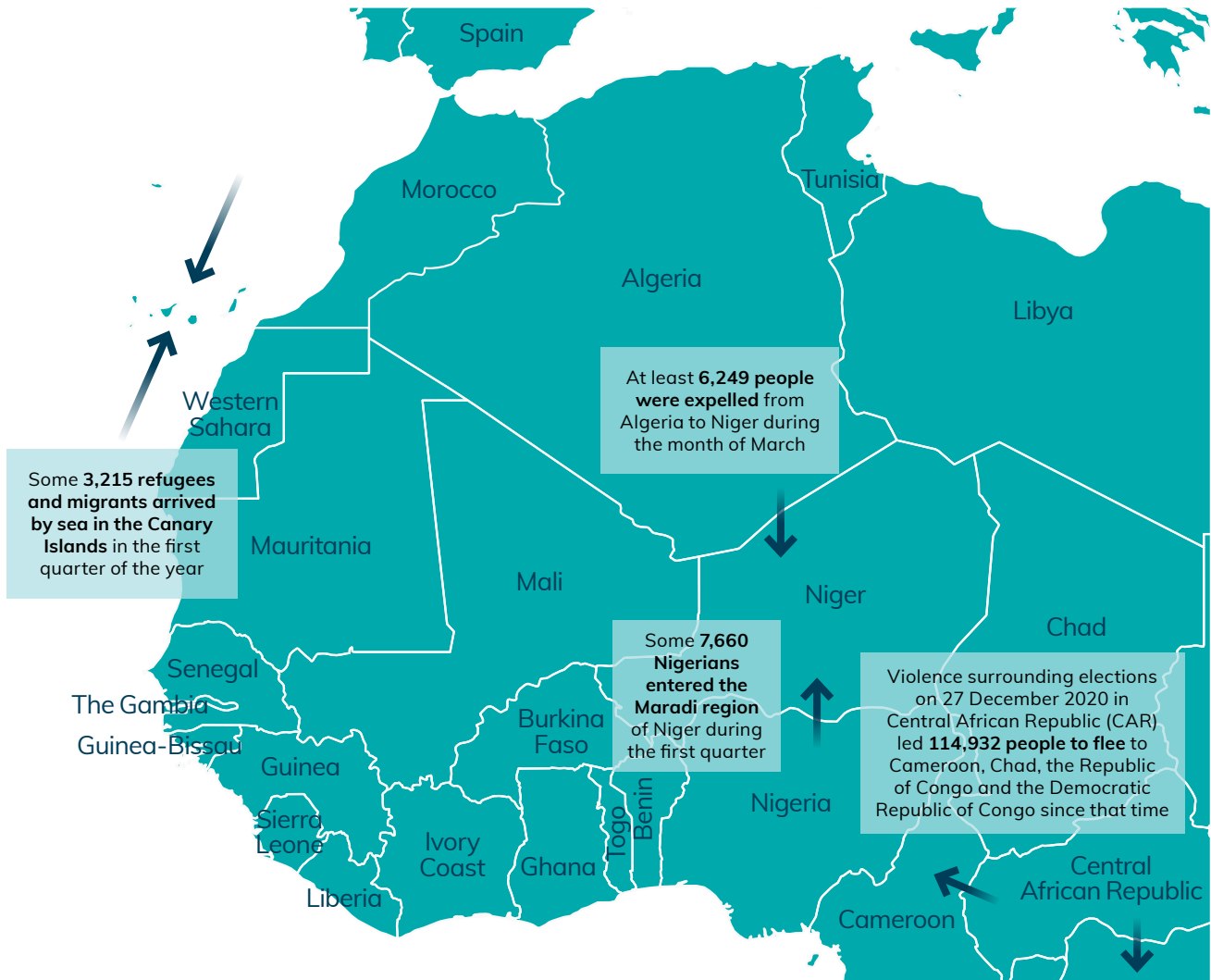
Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: West Africa

Quarter 1 - 2021

Key Updates

- **Cross-border displacement to Maradi, Niger:** In early March, UNHCR estimated that more than [7,660 people](#) from northwest Nigeria had crossed the border into the Maradi region of Niger thus far in 2021, primarily women and children fleeing attacks in Nigeria's Sokoto state. This brought the number of Nigerian refugees in the region to 77,000.
- **Election related displacement in Central African Republic (CAR):** Violence surrounding [elections](#) on 27 December 2020 in CAR caused [large-scale displacement](#), with [UNHCR](#) reporting as of late March that some 132,810 people had been newly displaced within the country since the beginning of the electoral crisis, and that 114,932 people had fled to Cameroon, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville and the Democratic Republic of Congo since then.
- **Canary Islands arrivals:** Continuing the trend seen in [2020](#), approximately half of arrivals to Spain in the first quarter of the year were to the Canary Islands. Despite a drop in arrivals in [February](#), some 3,215 refugees and migrants arrived by sea to the Canary Islands during the first quarter of the year.
- **Expulsions from Algeria:** While there seems to have been a lull in the beginning of the year, some [6,249 individuals](#) were expelled from Algeria into Niger in March.
- **Gambia migrant killings re-examined:** New evidence presented to the Gambia's Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission directly connected former president Yahya Jammeh to the [summary execution of more than 50 West African migrants](#) in 2005.

Regional Overview*



*Information on the map relates to selected updates and does not represent all mixed migration flows within and out of West Africa.

Mixed Migration Regional Updates

West Africa region

In early March, UNHCR estimated that more than [7,660 people](#) from northwest **Nigeria** had crossed the border into the Maradi region of **Niger** already in 2021, primarily women and children fleeing attacks in Nigeria's Sokoto state. This brought the number of Nigerian refugees in the region to 77,000. Some 3,500 Nigerien citizens were displaced internally during the same period. According to [UNHCR](#), in the first two months of the year the security situation worsened on both sides of the border. The increase in the amount and severity of attacks in Maradi threatened humanitarian operations there. Overall displacement in the Maradi region stood at approximately [100,000](#) as of the beginning of March.

Niger's Tillabery and Tahoua regions also saw continued violence, for instance attacks in early January in Tillabery which led to the displacement of [10,600 people](#). Internal displacement in these regions had reached more than [138,000 persons](#) by January 2021, compared to 78,000 a year earlier. This is in addition to the [60,000 Malian refugees](#) and close to 4,000 Burkinabés hosted there at that time. In March, an attack by unidentified armed assailants in Tahoua region killed [137 people](#), most of whom were internally displaced. The victims also included six Malian refugees. UNHCR deemed this violence against displaced people and their host communities to be "targeted and deliberate."

Activities of armed groups from **Burkina Faso** had caused displacement on both sides of its border with Niger, and [UNHCR](#) anticipated that the situation would continue in the coming months. As of March, Niger hosted at least 7,032 people from Burkina Faso, more than double the [3,083](#) seen at the end of 2020.

As of the end of February, [1,121,960](#) people were internally displaced in **Burkina Faso**. While this was 46,967 more people than as of [31 December 2020](#), the [rate](#) of new internal displacement appeared slower compared to much of 2020. Between December 2020 and the end of the first quarter of 2021, UNHCR had assisted some [6,751 refugees](#) from **Mali** to return to Goudoubo Camp in northern Burkina Faso. These refugees had self-settled in nearby towns after attacks on refugee camps earlier in 2020 had caused thousands to leave the camps.

According to UNHCR, as of February some [4,982 Nigerian refugees](#) living in the Far North region of **Cameroon** had stated their intentions to return to **Nigeria**. This came after assurances from the Nigerian government that [Boko Haram](#) is no longer a major danger. Local media sources reported in early March that the [repatriation](#) had commenced.

Violence surrounding [elections](#) on 27 December 2020 in **Central African Republic (CAR)** caused [large-scale displacement](#), with [UNHCR](#) reporting as of late March that some 132,810 people had been newly displaced within CAR since the beginning of the electoral crisis, and that 114,932 people had fled CAR to Cameroon, Chad, the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo since that time.

Displacement following the 31 October [presidential election](#) in **Cote d'Ivoire** persisted, with some [30,134 Ivoirians](#) who had fled to Liberia, Ghana, Guinea and Togo pre-registered by UNHCR as of late March.

Policy and legal updates

Eight young Malians who were [trafficked to Côte d'Ivoire](#) as children have brought a class action lawsuit against the world's largest chocolate companies, claiming the companies knowingly benefited from the illegal and exploitative labor of thousands of children in their cocoa production. The plaintiffs all report being recruited in **Mali** and trafficked to **Côte d'Ivoire** where they worked in harrowing conditions. The case has been brought to a US court under the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2017.

On February 22, 2021 the Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission (TRRC) of **The Gambia** began its current session on the 2005 massacre of more than 50 West African migrants which occurred under former president Yahya Jammeh. Reporting from 2018 by [TRIAL International and Human Rights Watch](#) found that Jammeh's closest associates were involved in the [detention and summary execution](#) of the migrants - contradicting earlier reports which stated that the Gambian government was neither "directly or indirectly complicit" in the killings. New evidence presented to the Commission directly connected [Jammeh](#) to the torture and execution of the migrants, who originated from Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

In March, the Economic Community for/of West African States (**ECOWAS**) held an internal validation meeting for its [Strategy for Strengthening Protection in the Context of Mixed Migration](#). The Strategy seeks to improve identification of vulnerable migrants in the complex mixed migration movements that characterize the region, as well as coordination within ECOWAS and among member states. The validation meeting identified potential areas of improvement which will be incorporated into the Strategy before its presentation to the Member States Mixed Migration Working Group.

The new [African Migration Observatory](#) set up by the African Union (AU) in Rabat, **Morocco** began operation in February 2021. The observatory will research migration in Africa with the aim of establishing a clearer AU vision on migration, as well as challenging the existing thinking on migration. It seeks to support migration policy-making and governance on the African continent through generation of its own independent data.

Mixed migration from West Africa towards North Africa and Europe¹

Western Mediterranean Route

As of 4 April, UNHCR reported that there had been [6,651 total irregular arrivals](#) by land (Ceuta and Melilla) and sea (Spanish mainland, Canary Islands, Balearic Islands, Ceuta and Melilla) to Spain thus far in 2021. This was a 14% increase over the corresponding period in 2020. Recent nationality figures were not available, but as of September 2020 citizens from four West African countries were among the top nationalities of arrival: Mali (13%), Guinea (8%), Cote d'Ivoire (7%) and Senegal (5%).

Continuing the trend seen in [2020](#), approximately half of these arrivals were to the Canary Islands. Despite a dip in arrivals in [February](#), a compilation of UNHCR's [Spain Weekly Snapshots](#) (4 January – 4 April) showed the arrival by sea of some 3,215 refugees and migrants in the Canary Islands during the first quarter of the year. Migration along this route continued to be marked by incidents of distress and deaths at sea. As of the end of March, UNHCR statistics tallied [34 known deaths](#) on this route, including that of a [two year old Malian girl](#), who was unconscious following her rescue at sea and later died in hospital.

In the Canary Islands themselves, plans to move refugees and migrants from hotels to six purpose-built camps took longer than anticipated. Initially intended to have occurred by the [end of 2020](#), at which point more than [8,000 arrivals](#) were still staying in hotels. According to early March reporting by the Las Palmas newspaper [La Provincia](#), the Government Delegation in the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands indicated that only 6,501 non-minor refugees and migrants remained on the islands under the auspices of the state, in hotels or in other centers. While some have been deported, some are living on the islands outside of formal reception facilities, and some have been officially transferred to the mainland, this nonetheless presents a sharp contrast to the estimated 25,400 adult arrivals between the end of 2019 and February 2021. It suggests that significant numbers of people have found ways to leave the Islands on their own, although Spanish authorities increased [measures](#) to prevent this at the end of 2020. As of 19 March some [1,700 refugees and migrants](#) remained accommodated in hotels, but Spain's Minister of Migration stated that by the end of March the transition to alternative accommodation would be complete.

While delays in opening the centers have been attributed to [challenges](#) related to weather, bureaucracy and urban planning, these have not been the only problems facing the centers. Some refugees and migrants previously accommodated in hotels fear that [transferal to camps](#) is a step towards deportation and have opted to fend for themselves, primarily sleeping rough outside of the formal accommodation system. While exact numbers are not available, NGOs estimate that hundreds of people have made this choice. There have also been significant concerns raised over humanitarian conditions at several camps, particularly [Las Raíces](#) on the island of Tenerife. Multiple protests over inadequate food, heat and hygiene in the camp have taken place there since its opening in early February.

Tensions have been increasing on the Islands as frustration grows among locals who feel that they have

¹ Numbers in this section reflect best estimates available at time data was accessed (mid-April) but source figures may be subject to later updates.

been [left alone](#) with a burgeoning crisis and refugees and migrants who are unable to move to find work and are blocked from going to the Spanish mainland. This inability to move onwards has also been a subject of [protests and hunger strikes](#), and there have been reports of refugees and migrants attempting suicide or otherwise harming themselves as their desperation grows. There have also been anti-migrant protests, and reports of xenophobic and vigilante [attacks](#) against refugees and migrants.

Coming out of a meeting held in late March and attended by officials from UNHCR, the European Parliament and Spain's central government, the [Canary Islands Immigration Forum](#) issued a statement calling on the EU and the Spanish central government for further assistance and responsibility-sharing in the reception of refugees and migrants. On the same day, the Spanish Prime Minister announced a new policy, "[Africa Focus 2023](#)" which would seek to strengthen economic and institutional linkages with a variety of African countries. In his remarks the Prime Minister recognized that Spain is "Europe's southern gateway" for Africa; he hoped that by creating opportunities for young Africans through Spanish investments in their countries of origin, they would be deterred from migrating to Europe.

The Foreign Minister of [Senegal](#) was present at the policy unveiling, and the Spanish Prime Minister was due to visit Senegal in early April. Spain's [plan](#) to resume direct deportations to Senegal has gotten off to a slow start, as scheduled deportation flights in [February](#) and [March](#) were both canceled. Spain has not carried out any deportations between the Canary Islands and Senegal itself since 2018. However, Senegalese comprised the majority of deportees on a [November 2020](#) flight of expulsion from the Canary Islands to Mauritania.

Central Mediterranean Route

According to [UNHCR](#), 7,419 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea in the first quarter of 2021. This is more than 2.5 times the number of irregular sea arrivals recorded in the same period in 2020 (2,794). Four of the top 10 most common [nationalities](#) of arrival were from West and Central Africa: Côte d'Ivoire (14%), Guinea (10%), Mali (4%) and Cameroon (3%).

Southbound mixed migration

International activities in Niger

While Niger's land borders have been closed since [19 March 2020](#), movement through Niger to and from Algeria and Libya continues, with [expulsions](#) from Algeria particularly notable in the month of March.

During the first quarter various search and rescue operations occurred, underscoring the dangers of transit through the Nigerien desert. [Alarm Phone Sahara](#) reported a rescue of six passengers stuck near Dirkou in mid-January, and a rescue of 25 people carried out in conjunction with MSF between N'guigmi and Bilma in early February. In early March, [IOM](#) carried out two rescue of stranded migrants, assisting 8 Nigeriens left by their smuggler some 270 kilometers north of Agadez, and an additional 22 Nigeriens returning from Libya north of Dirkou.

It appears that onward resettlement of refugees and asylum seekers evacuated from Libya to Niger under UNHCR's Emergency Transit Mechanism continued to take place in the first quarter of the year. The number of evacuees departed from Niger increased to [2,809](#) as of March 2021 compared to [2,729](#) as of December 2020. As of [March](#), 623 evacuees remained in Niger, with 69 departures pending.

Expulsions from Algeria to Niger and Mali

Mass expulsions of refugees and migrants from Algeria have continued during the first quarter of 2021. While there seems to have been a lull in the beginning of the year, the month of March accounted for both official and unofficial convoys carrying at least [6,249 individuals](#) in total, according to NGO Alarm Phone Sahara. At least eight separate expulsions were carried out in both "official" convoys, comprised mostly or entirely of Nigerien citizens, and "non-official" convoys, which are comprised of non-Nigerien citizens who are left in the desert border area between Algeria and Niger and left to walk to the border post at Assamaka in Niger.

Alarm Phone calls into question the respect of the Algerian government for the rights of children, noting in particular the substantial number of minors returned through official convoys on 23 March ([87 girls and 94 boys](#)) and 30 March ([55 girls and 70 boys](#)). Their sources also reported the arrival of some [190 minors](#) returned in a convoy on 11 March, but allegedly not included in official figures.

There were also [reports](#) of 125 men, seemingly deportees from Algeria, being received by the Regional Directorate of Civil Protection in Gao. They appeared to have been expelled in some cases directly to the Mali-Algeria border, and in others to the Niger-Algeria border.

Thematic Focus: Journey preparation and experiences of young people in West Africa

According to the European Commission's 2020 report on [youth and migration](#), youth (persons aged 15-29) accounted for 21% of all international migrants in 2019. They have represented the second largest age cohort among international migrants overall since 1990. More specifically, a 2019 report from [Mo Ibrahim Foundation](#) estimates that 27.5% of migrants hosted within the African continent are between 15-29 years of age. Young people find themselves in a [transitional period](#) of their lives, and young people who are migrating may be subject to both specific opportunities and vulnerabilities. Thus, this is a numerically and substantively important group in understanding migration in West Africa and globally.

Age can impact migrants' and refugees' experiences before their departure, during transit and after arriving at their temporary, seasonal or permanent destination. For actors aiming to meet the needs of people on the move, understanding the experiences of young people through age disaggregated data is particularly important. Using data from the joint MMC/UNFPA project "Youth Migration in Transit²", we examine the situation of young migrants and refugees according to age. We specifically examine whether and how age impacts young migrants' and refugees' migration decisions, how they funded their journey, who they travelled with and their perception of risks and challenges along the way.

Respondent profile

Between November and December 2020, the MMC West Africa surveyed 2,008 persons in Bamako, Mali (25%, n=501) Niamey, Niger (36%, n=718) and Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (39%, n=789). Enumerators identified 39% of respondents as women and 61% as men. Common countries of origin were Benin (18%), Côte d'Ivoire (14%), Guinea (10%), Niger (10%) and Togo (10%). Respondents were overwhelmingly single (83%) and childless (81%), although more women (25%) reported having children than men (15%).

Respondents ranged from 15 years old to 29 years old, with a mean age of 23. In this analysis we recognize that while both still technically 'youth' according to the OECD definition, a 15 year old and a 29 year old are at different stages of their lives and therefore their experiences of migration may differ. This is in line with [UNDESA's](#) recognition that "within the category of "youth", it is also important to distinguish between teenagers (13-19) and young adults (20-24), since the sociological, psychological and health problems they face may differ." In order to target these potentially different experiences, we divided the respondents into

2 "Youth Migration in Transit" is a data collection project led by the Mixed Migration Centre West African and financed by the United Nations Populations Funds (UNFPA). It aimed at understanding the migration drivers of youth from 15 to 29 years-old in the cities of Ouagadougou, Niamey and Bamako, as well as their experiences and social and health needs.

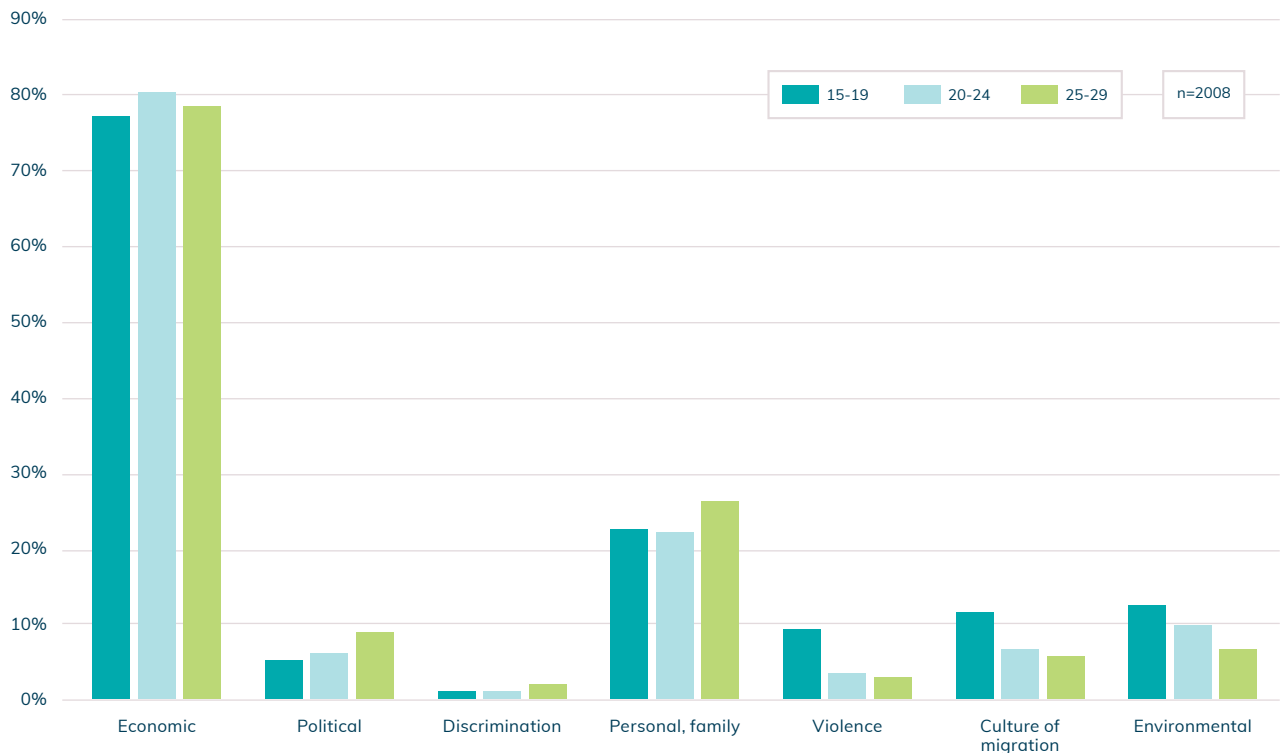
three age groups: 15 – 19, denoted as “19 and younger” (17%, n=344), 20 – 24 (44%, n=883) and 25 – 29, denoted as “25 and older” (39%, n=781).³

Migration decisions

The main migration drivers for respondents appeared similar regardless of age, although with some slight variation, suggesting that certain drivers are ubiquitous for all youth. Respondents predominantly cited economic (79%, 1592/2008) and personal and family reasons (24%, 476/2008) as drivers in their decisions (see Figure 1). Respondents aged 25-29 showed a slightly higher tendency to cite personal and family reasons (26%, 206/781) compared to those 20-24 (22%, 194/883) and 15-19 (22%, 77/344), perhaps because they have a greater likelihood to have direct dependents of their own.

While overall respondents cited violence (4%, 82/2008), culture of migration (7%, 140/2008) and environmental reasons (9%, 179/2008) relatively infrequently, these factors drove younger respondents’ decisions to a greater degree. For example, for those respondents 19 and younger, 9% (32/344) cited violence, 11% (39/344) a culture of migration and 13% (43/344) environmental causes as motivating their migration decision compared to 3% (22/781), 6% (43/781) and 7% (52/781) of those respondents 25 and older, respectively.

Figure 1. What were the reasons for you to leave your country of departure?



³ This analysis predominantly focuses on differences across age groups. However, the age groups were not perfectly identical in terms of gender and city of interview – two additional variables which appeared to correlate with important differences in the data. For example, while the two younger age groups were relatively gender equal (44% and 46% respectively) the oldest age group was skewed toward males (71% men vs 29% women). As such, gender may account for some of the difference in this group described below, in addition to age. Finally, 52% of the middle age group came from Ouagadougou, a city with a much greater emphasis on migration for education purposes as compared to Niamey or Bamako. As such, differences in the second age group may represent differences in age, as well as the unique situation of migrants in Ouagadougou.

Risks en route

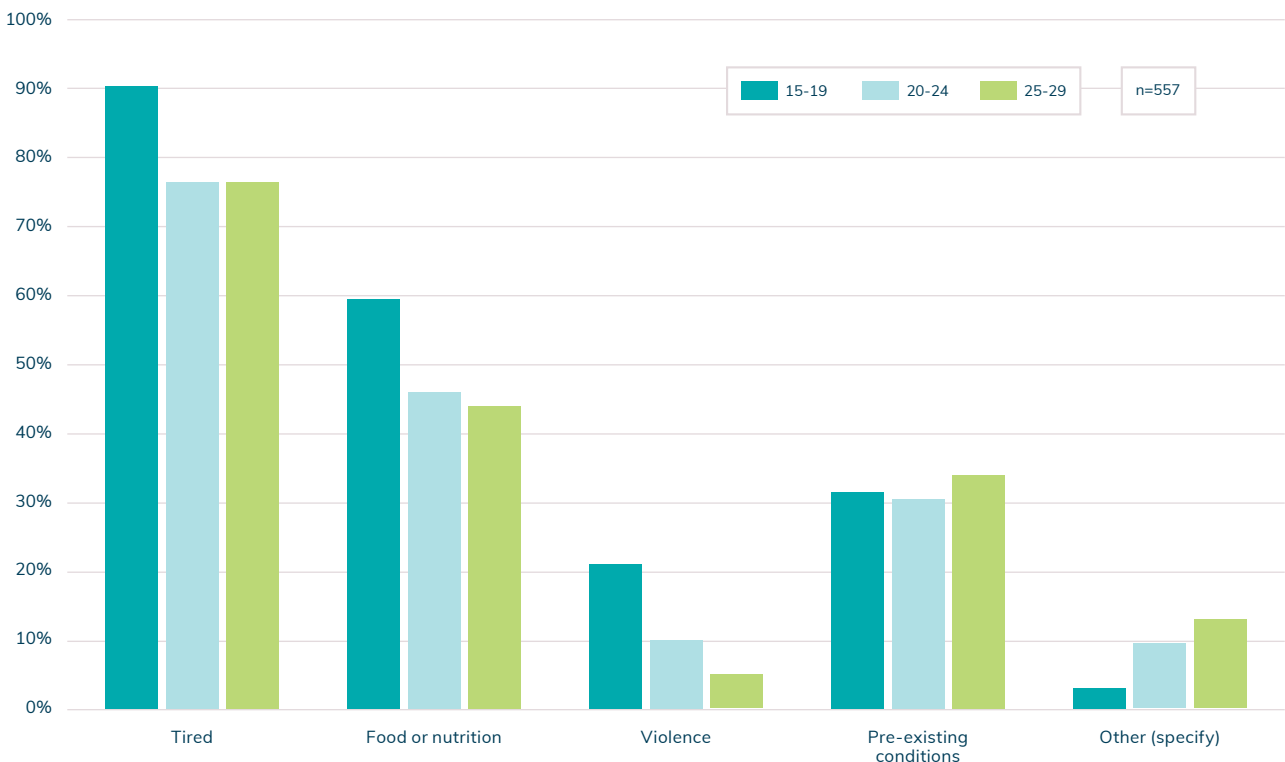
Protection

When asked their perception about the risks that children face while traveling, physical violence was considered a risk by the most respondents (52%, 1040/2008), followed by sexual violence (34%, 687/2008), being robbed (31%, 618/2008), death (25%, 504/2008) and kidnapping and abduction (20%, 409/2008). At times, both age and gender appeared to impact respondents' perceptions of the risks children faced. For example, respondents 25 and older judged sexual violence to be a bigger risk for children (39%, 305/781) than those 19 and younger (29%, 101/344). Female respondents (38%, 295/782) also perceived sexual violence to be a greater risk for children en route than male respondents (32%, 392/1226). Conversely, male respondents perceived death (27%, 330/1226) as a bigger risk for children migrating than did female respondents (22%, 174/782).

Health

When asked whether they themselves had faced any dangers to their health (aside from Covid-19) while in transit, 72% (1437/2008) of respondents, regardless of age, said they had not. However, for those 28% (557/2008) of respondents who reported some risk to their health during the journey, their perception of these risks did differ by age. Fatigue (79%, 440/557) and challenges related to food and nutrition (47%, 264/557) were the most common. Respondents 19 and younger were more likely to mention both of these risks (91%, 87/96 and 59%, 57/96) as compared to respondents 25 and older (77%, 164/214 and 44%, 94/214). Younger respondents also cited violence as a risk at a much higher proportion (21%, 20/96) as compared to those 25 and older (5%, 11/214). These findings may assist in targeting protection programming according to age.

Figure 2. For what reason(s) do you think your health was in danger during your trip?



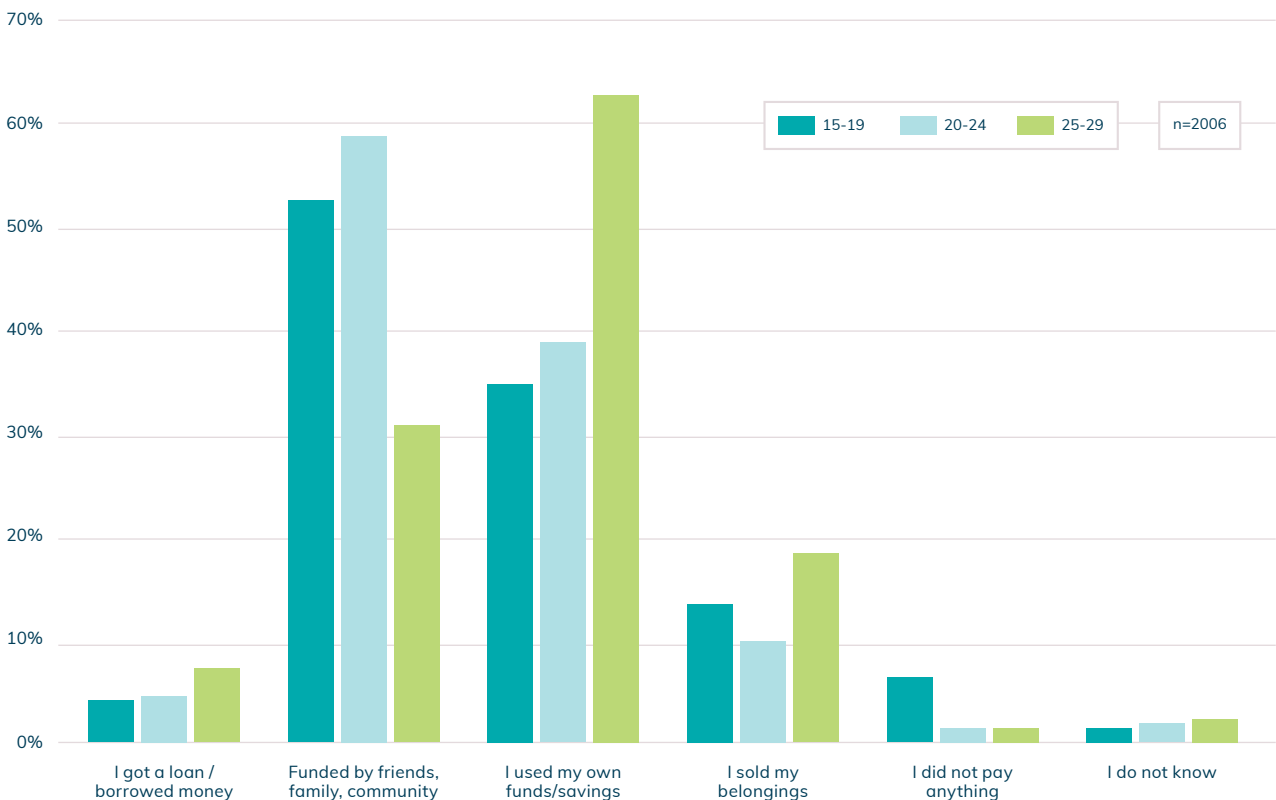
Travel companions

Younger respondents traveled alone less frequently than older respondents. For example, 34% (117/344) of those 19 and younger travelled alone, compared to 45% (396/883) of those between the ages of 20 and 24 and 50% (392/780) of those 25 and older. For those travelling with others, age also impacted with whom they travelled. While traveling with friends was most common among respondents overall (52%, 576/1102) with little difference according to age, traveling with parents was more common for younger respondents; this was cited by 27% (61/227) of those 19 and younger compared to 8% (32/388) of those 25 and older. Similarly, travelling with children (2%, 4/227 for those 19 and younger and 8%, 31/388 for those 25 and older) and partners (3%, 7/227 for those 19 and younger and 11%, 42/388 for those 25 and older) was more common with older youth. Older youth also more often travelled with other refugees and migrants from their own country (34%, 78/227 for those 19 and younger and 48%, 187/388 for those 25 and older).

Funding sources

Overall, the funding sources for respondents' journeys particularly included friends, family and community (47%, 940/2006) or their own funds and savings (47%, 948/2006), with 14% (276/2006) selling their own belongings. Very few respondents borrowed money formally (6%, 111/2006). Age was seen as impacting these funding sources, with older respondents demonstrating a greater financial independence in their migration financing. For example, respondents 19 and younger more often relied on their friends, family and community (52%, 180/343) compared to respondents 25 and older (31%, 241/781). In contrast, respondents 25 and older more often relied on their own funds and savings (63%, 489/781) than respondents 19 and younger (35%, 119/343).

Figure 3. How did you finance your trip so far?



The different economic realities respondents faced prior to departure likely directly influenced how they funded their trips. Life stage impacted respondents' economic opportunities and previous economic activity in their country of departure. For example, the older the respondents were the more likely they were to have a small enterprise (30%, 233/781 for those 25 and older and 18%, for those 19 and younger (62/344) and from 20 to 24 (163/883). Additionally, respondents 19 and younger were slightly more likely to be involved in agriculture and pastoralism (7%, 25/344), be studying (34%, 118/344), and be unemployed (10%, 33/344) compared to those 25 and older (3%, 23/781; 19%, 149/781; and 6%, 43/781 respectively).

Conclusion

Age impacted youth respondents' experiences prior to their journey and in transit, presenting further evidence that age matters. Programs seeking to assist young people on the move must thus differentiate according to respondents' ages – even with youth-focused programming. However, respondents' experiences were also at times similar regardless of their age, speaking to the strength and ubiquity of certain migration trends (eg economic drivers for migration in West Africa).

Highlighted New Research and Reports

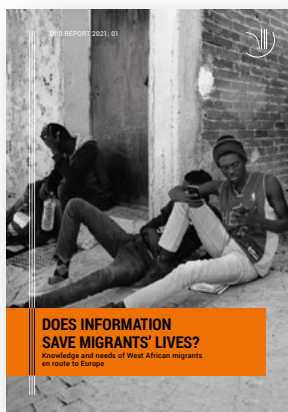


[Development Interventions, Education and the Migration Choices of Young People in West Africa](#)

MigChoice | January 2021

This policy brief examines the relationship between poverty, livelihoods and mobility in West Africa. Specifically, it investigates how development interventions focused on education impact people's migration decisions (i.e. to migrate and where to migrate), their aspirations and their movement. The report draws on key informant interviews and data collected from dozens of young people aged 18 to 35 across Guinea, Senegal and The Gambia. The brief challenges the narrative that it is people lacking in education and

skills who are the most likely to migrate. Rather, for some, migration serves as a response to educational barriers in local communities which deter youth from continuing their education at home, and/or a lack of opportunities after they have finished schooling. The brief also looks at the efficacy of vocational training and skills-promoting development interventions, finding that they have not tended to be successful at providing alternatives to migration.

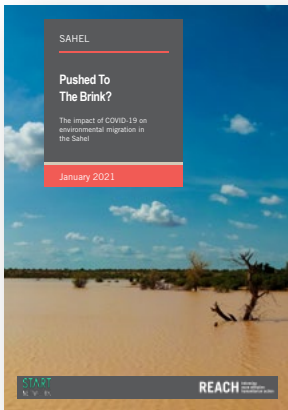


[Does Information Save Migrants' Lives? Knowledge and needs of West African Migrants en route to Europe](#)

Danish Institute for International Studies | February 2021

This report examines West African migrants' consumption and usage of information in relation to migration and examines the strengths and vulnerabilities inherent in their experiences. It discovers that while trusted social networks (family and friends, other migrants) are critical in preparing for departure and when on the move, there are nonetheless gaps in information about specific risks en route. The report goes on to investigate vulnerabilities

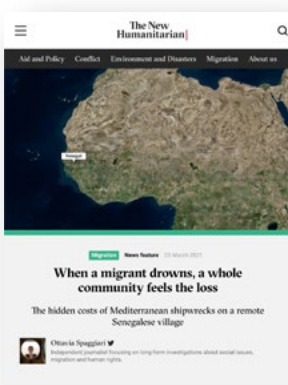
while in transit, noting that while human smugglers and traffickers are often perpetrators of protection incidents against migrants, other actors are also significant perpetrators. Indeed, migrants may seek out smugglers for protection to avoid abuse by authorities. The report concludes that information campaigns are generally unsuccessful as migrants do not view the information provided as useful and also do not wish to be discouraged from their journeys. It underscores the importance of building trust with migrants when seeking to provide them with assistance, and provides a series of recommendations on safer migration from migrants themselves.



[Pushed to the Brink? The impact of Covid-19 on environmental migration in the Sahel](#)

REACH | January 2021

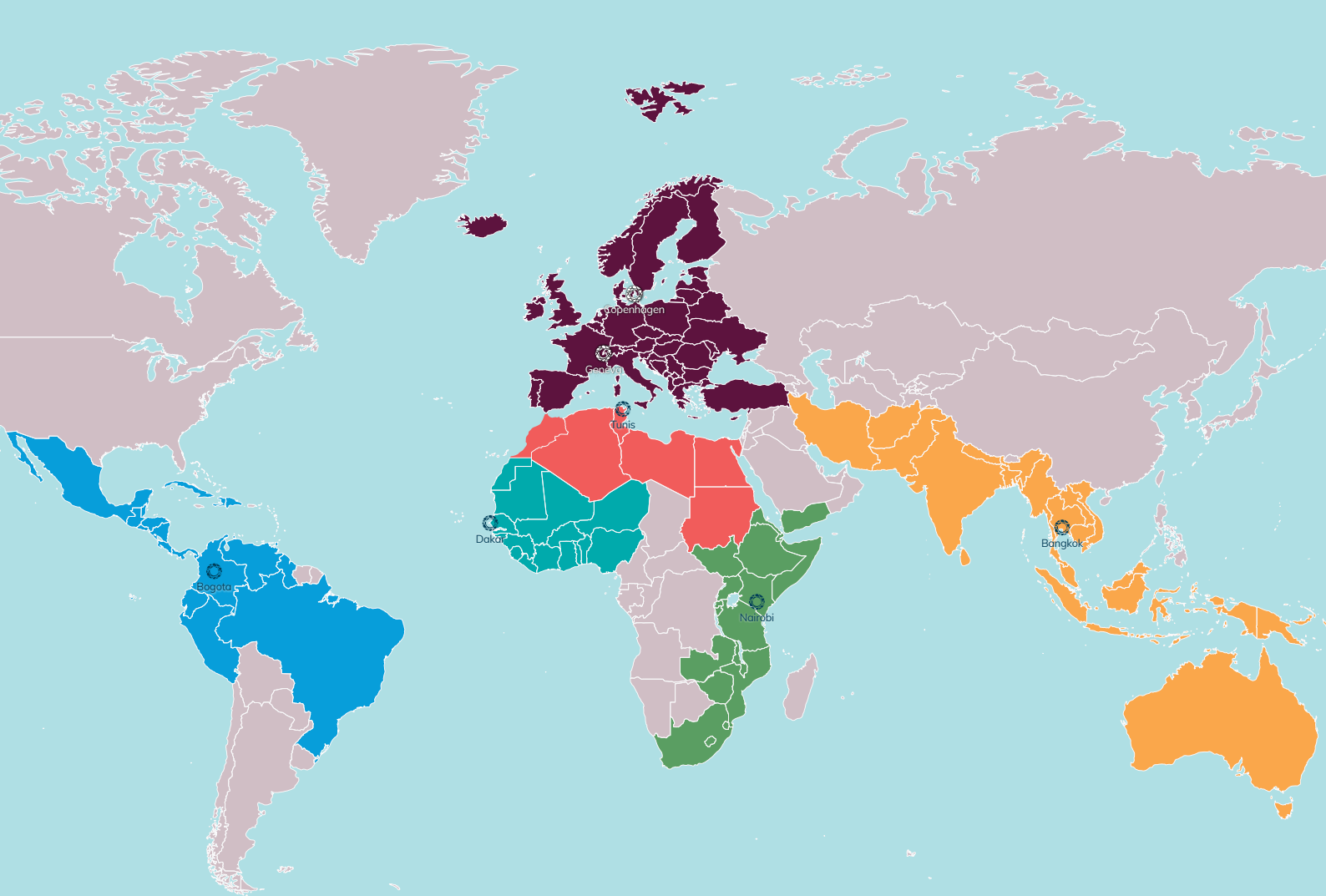
Migration is a longstanding practice of livelihood diversification and environmental adaptation in the Sahel, characterized for instance by seasonal movement patterns of nomadic pastoralists or seasonal rural-urban migration in line with agricultural cycles. Covid-19 and its ensuing restrictions and border closures impacted long-held seasonal migration patterns, in turn influencing revenue flows in the region. Based on secondary data and 135 individual migrant interviews, the report investigates this phenomenon and finds that even prior to the pandemic, Sahelian migration was frequently undertaken out of duress, with the Covid-19 outbreak upsetting this precarious cycle. There were immediate negative impacts for livelihoods, and these may continue in the mid-term. Impacts examined in the report include: loss of income, rise in expenditures, spending savings and delayed or otherwise impacted harvest. The report concludes that Covid-19 is a threat accelerator and the challenges it has exacerbated will continue post-pandemic.



[When a migrant drowns, a whole community feels the loss: The hidden costs of Mediterranean shipwrecks on a remote Senegalese village](#)

The New Humanitarian | March 2021

Through interviews with community members in a Senegalese village, this long-form article focuses on how migrant deaths along the dangerous Mediterranean routes impact those the migrants left behind – the “invisible victims of the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean.” Interviews with mothers, widows, and other family and community members reveal the material consequences (e.g. loss of income, loan not repaid, animal sacrifices at funerals) and profound emotional impact these migrants’ deaths have had on their communities, as well as the realities and aspirations which drive migrants to journey beyond Africa and attempt to reach Europe. In contrast to the remittances from ‘successful’ migrants and the advances such money transfers bring about for families – which are readily visible – for those who perish along the way, their families often never receive definitive information on what happened to them. The article also highlights those who witness such deaths and the emotional impact it has on these survivors. The article closes by the challenges in providing sustainable reintegration for returnees, highlighting the stubborn nature of the migration cycle in these communities.



The MMC is a global network consisting of six regional hubs and a central unit in Geneva engaged in data collection, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration. The MMC is a leading source for independent and high-quality data, research, analysis and expertise on mixed migration. The MMC aims to increase understanding of mixed migration, to positively impact global and regional migration policies, to inform evidence-based protection responses for people on the move and to stimulate forward thinking in public and policy debates on mixed migration. The MMC's overarching focus is on human rights and protection for all people on the move.

The MMC is part of and governed by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). Global and regional MMC teams are based in Copenhagen, Dakar, Geneva, Nairobi, Tunis, Bogota and Bangkok.

For more information visit:

mixedmigration.org and follow us at [@Mixed_Migration](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

