

Safe movement of young people

## POSITION PAPER

Effective Access of Migrant Children and Youth (MCY) to Inclusive Education Adapted to Their Specific Needs



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### INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right that ensures the physical, intellectual, and moral development of the child. States that have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international instruments such as the ICESCR have the obligation to guarantee equitable access to inclusive and quality education.

However, despite existing legal frameworks and efforts deployed, many children in situations of mobility remain excluded from the formal education system. This exclusion weakens their development, limits their prospects, and reduces their ability to protect themselves during their migratory journey.

### EDUCATION: AN ESSENTIAL RIGHT FOR ALL

Education is a human right guaranteed without discrimination. It contributes to personal development, social integration, and the economic and cultural progress of countries.

The principle of “education for all” implies that education systems must adapt to the realities of each child, especially the most vulnerable children.

The UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education and Article 2.2 of the ICESCR remind States of their commitment to ensuring equitable access to education regardless of the child’s status, origin, or social situation.

### ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR Migrant Children and Youth: A WORRYING REALITY

Although mobility may represent an opportunity, it often generates vulnerabilities and rights violations, particularly regarding the right to education. For many Migrant Children and Youth, especially those involved in economic or non-school mobility, migration leads to temporary or permanent school dropout. Many receive neither formal education nor vocational training, compromising their chances of integration.

A 2024 study by the Mixed Migration Centre reveals that 57% of surveyed caregivers report that the children they support have no access to any educational services, and only 17% attend school. Lack of financial resources is the main barrier.

Current reintegration programs remain limited: the traditional school model is often not adapted to the living conditions of Migrant Children and Youth, making it necessary to adopt more flexible and contextualized approaches.

### BENEFITS OF PROVIDING MIGRANT CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH ADAPTED EDUCATION

Adapted education allows Migrant Children and Youth to increase their knowledge, better understand their environment, and develop skills needed to seize opportunities in transit or destination locations. It strengthens employability: the Mixed Migration Centre shows that young migrants with low education levels face more difficulty finding employment.

Beyond economic integration, access to relevant education also strengthens the individual and collective resilience of young migrants against risks linked to mobility.

## ADAPTED EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES: A NECESSARY RESPONSE

Given the limitations of the traditional school system, several alternative educational initiatives have been tested:

- \* Second-Chance Schools (Burkina Faso)
- \* Accelerated Learning Programs and other accelerated schemes (Benin, Mali)
- \* Mobile Schools
- \* Literacy Programs

These approaches have proven relevant for out-of-school children and should be documented and scaled to develop a model specifically suited for Migrant Children and Youth. States and local authorities have the responsibility to integrate these alternatives into existing protection mechanisms, particularly in transit and reception areas.

These educational options act as bridges allowing:

- \* possible reintegration into the formal school system
- \* acquisition of essential skills (reading, writing, numeracy)
- \* preparation for vocational training

strengthening adaptation and self-protection capacities

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To guarantee the effective right to education for Migrant Children and Youth, it is urgent to bring education closer to their living environments and adapt learning methods to their specific realities. Children and youth members of MAEJT recommend that States:

1. Capitalize on and strengthen existing alternative education initiatives to build a model adapted to the needs and realities of Migrant Children and Youth.
2. Develop and operationalize national alternative education programs dedicated to migrant children and youth.
3. Support local authorities in creating specific educational spaces and implementing adapted initiatives in transit and reception zones.
4. Raise awareness among Migrant Children and Youth and other vulnerable children about the importance of education and its role in achieving their life projects.
5. Sensitize communities, local leaders, and elected officials to encourage a supportive attitude toward Migrant Children and Youth's education and strengthen their engagement in realizing this right.

