

UN Migration Network Blog Series on the Regional Reviews of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

Bridging information gaps around migration with the experiences of people on the move at the centre

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The Covid-19 crisis has underscored both the challenges and opportunities accompanying international migration: shedding new light on the precarious conditions many migrants live and work in, as well as migrants' essential contributions to country's economies and [Covid-19 responses](#). Against the backdrop of the ongoing [health, economic and protection crises](#), many states have implemented policy measures towards migrants in line with commitments envisioned under the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). Examples include offering [pathways towards status regularization](#), and allowing people, regardless of their migration status, [access to the Covid-19 vaccination](#). Whether states enacted these measures consciously to fulfill their obligations under the GCM or not, these [positive actions are likely to strengthen the GCM's relevance](#) in the long run.

A significant challenge the migration sector faces, with a view towards improving global migration governance under the framework of the GCM, is a lack of data to implement evidence-based migration policies and design programs that address and reduce migrants' vulnerabilities. The Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) works to fill this information gap via its innovative data collection project on mobile and hard-to-reach populations, the [Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative \(4Mi\)](#). 4Mi takes a people-centered approach, placing those on the move and what they say at the heart of its understanding of the mixed migration phenomenon. 4Mi monitors, many of whom have a migration background themselves, continuously conduct in-depth interviews with refugees and migrants – 75,000 since the start of the programme in 2014 - documenting the range and nuance of their experiences. The 4Mi network uses the same tools across Asia, East Africa, North Africa, West Africa, Latin America, and Europe, enabling global and cross-regional comparison.

The vast 4Mi data set addresses both objective 1 (collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies) and objective 7 (address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration) set out in the GCM. [Two recent MMC studies](#) based on statistical analysis of a dataset of over 15,000 4Mi interviews conducted in West and North Africa offer insight on what factors could render someone on the move more likely to experience a protection incident. The institutional embeddedness of MMC within the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the close partnership with other humanitarian organizations ensures that MMC's work is grounded in operational reality and [provides opportunities to link MMC evidence to programmatic responses](#). For example, the two above mentioned studies, improved the evidence base for targeting strategies and tailoring assistance to the needs of different vulnerable groups of an NGO consortium working on mixed migration across the Central Mediterranean Route.

When the Covid-19 pandemic became a global reality in early 2020, MMC was able to quickly suspend its in-person 4Mi data collection and adapt the [4Mi methodology](#) to allow for the remote implementation of a new survey focusing on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on refugees and migrants. Since the start of the pandemic, MMC has collected over 21,000 4Mi interviews in five regions, resulting in the world's largest database on the impact of Covid-19 on those on the move. MMC's adapted 4Mi survey offers insights on the impact of the pandemic on income loss, access to information and health services, smuggling prices, migration journeys and much more. Findings have been made public [via global and regional analysis](#), drawing attention [to key issues facing those travelling on mixed migration routes](#). MMC's recently launched portal for exploration and visualization of data on mixed migration – [4Mi Interactive](#) – now allows users to directly access and tailor 4Mi data on the Covid-19 crisis according to their needs and interests. Going forward, and to further contribute to the implementation of GCM objective 1 - MMC is making all 4Mi data from ongoing interviews with refugees and migrants available through 4Mi Interactive, where users (policy makers, researchers, practitioners, journalists, etc.) can access the data, find the information they need by applying a range of filters and create graphics.

In the era of fake news and the high degree of politicization and polarization of the migration debate, it is ever-more important that policy and humanitarian programmatic responses are based on the nuanced reality on the ground. Through its global and regional offices, MMC actively participates in global and regional policy fora and the GCM reviews, and works closely with stakeholders at both global, regional, national and – importantly – local levels (including city authorities) to ensure that its evidence and analysis, based on direct interactions with refugees and migrants around the world, are brought to the policy table.

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