



A Situational Study on Children and Youth on the Move in Senegal

2024



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This report primarily presents the perceptions of children and youth. It is complemented by a separate report developed using the ChildFund Community-Based Child Protection Mechanisms toolbox, which captures responses from community members regarding Children and Youth on the Move, as well as insights from partner institution representatives.

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List of Acronyms

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ADPRS	Accelerated Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy	GDP	Gross Domestic Product
AEJT	Association of Young Working Children	HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
AEMO	Educational Action in Open Setting	ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
CAP	Centre d'Animation Pédagogique (Pedagogical Animation Centre)	IGA	Income Generating Activities
CDPE	Departmental Child Protection Committee	IMF	International Monetary Fund
CHR	Centre Hospitalier Régional (Regional Hospital Center)	MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
CP	Child Protection	MPFEF	Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children, and the Family
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CRSA	Child Rights Situation Analysis	ONGI	International NGO
COSAED	Collective of Support Structures for Children and Young People in Difficulty	ONPEC	National Guidelines for the Care of Vulnerable Children
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	PDESC	Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Program
CSO	Civil Society Organization	PJJ	Juvenile Judicial Protection Program
CWIQ	Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire	PNPPE	National Child Protection and Promotion Policy
DPDE	Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights	RAO	West Africa Network
ENTSS	National School for Specialized Social Workers	SEJUP	Educational, Judicial and Preventive Services
EWS	Early Warning System	TSAS	Senior Social Action Technician
EU	European Union	UN	United Nations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
		HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

Key concepts



Child



According to the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is defined as any person under 18 years of age.

Youth



In this study, “youth” refers to individuals aged 18-24. This group is in a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, often facing unique challenges related to mobility, such as job searching, education, and social integration.

Family



The term “family” encompasses all individuals within a child’s or youth’s emotional support network. In Senegal, this often includes extended family members and relatives who play significant roles in providing both emotional and practical support to mobile youth. Primary caregivers may sometimes be non-traditional family members, such as mentors or peers.

Mobility



Mobility refers to the movement or change in location, whether geographical, social, economic, or educational. For children and youth, this often includes movement to access opportunities or to respond to crisis situations.

Social Support System



The social support system consists of services and supports organized to promote the well-being of mobile children and youth. It includes social services, healthcare systems, educational services, and child protection mechanisms. The goal is to create a safe and supportive environment for these children and youth while strengthening the capacities of families and communities to support them.

Child Protection



Child protection aims to prevent and respond to child abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against children. This includes specific interventions for displaced children, unaccompanied minors, and refugee children.

Cultural Compatibility



Cultural compatibility refers to the alignment between the child protection system and the local cultural and social realities of children. A culturally compatible system supports positive cultural practices while working to change those that are harmful to children’s well-being. It is essential for the child protection system to align with local beliefs and practices to be effective and sustainable, particularly for children and youth in constant mobility.

Moreover, this system must be integrated, meaning it should work in coordination with other existing systems and services (such as education, healthcare, and legal services) to provide a comprehensive and coherent response to the needs of mobile children and youth.

Integrated Preventive Protection Services



In Senegal, these services combine initiatives to build the capacity of families and communities to protect mobile children and youth. They operate within an integrated framework, including educational programs, awareness campaigns, and support resources, to prevent risk situations before they harm children.



Intervention Services

Intervention services provide direct assistance to children at risk or those who have experienced abuse, neglect, or exploitation. These services aim to protect young people, reduce future risks, and restore their well-being, considering the specific challenges of their mobility.



Formal System

The formal system includes governmental, international, and local NGOs involved in child protection, recognized and regulated by the government. These organizations work in a structured and regulated manner to provide child protection services tailored to the needs of youth on the move.



Non-Formal System

The non-formal system refers to community, family, and individual initiatives for the protection of mobile children and youth. These initiatives, although unstructured, play an important role in the day-to-day support and protection of these young people at the local level, often filling gaps in the formal systems.



Risky Mobility

Refers to migratory movements where children and youth are exposed to significant dangers, such as violence, trafficking, or exploitation, due to the precarious or unregulated conditions of their travel.



Risk or Victim of Exploitation

Includes all forms of exploitation, including sexual, economic, or human trafficking, where children are manipulated or forced to work under abusive conditions.



Street Situation

Concerns children and youth who live or work primarily on the streets, without access to a stable home or basic services.



Lack of Access to Healthcare and Education

Highlights the barriers that children face in accessing essential services that are important for their well-being and development.



Abuse

Covers various forms of physical, psychological, or sexual violence that children may be subjected to.



Prolonged Transit

Refers to the situation where children and youth on the move may remain in a state of prolonged transit, which can exacerbate their vulnerability and risks.



Illegal Work

Refers to the participation of children in unregulated and often dangerous economic activities, where their rights are ignored.



Conflict with the Law

Involves situations where children, often out of necessity or lack of choice, find themselves involved in illegal activities, exposing them to legal sanctions.



Harmful Traditional Practices

Includes cultural customs and practices that, although traditional, are detrimental to children’s rights and well-being, such as early marriage or female genital mutilation.



Orphan, Separation, or Abandonment

Refers to situations where children are left without adequate parental care, either due to the loss of their parents or abandonment, thereby increasing their vulnerability.

Executive Summary

The study used a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to collect data from 1004 CYM, 170 community actors, and 35 institutions across 10 departments in Dakar, Kédougou, Kolda, Kaffrine, and Ziguinchor. This approach provided a comprehensive view of CYM's conditions. The CBCPM ChildFund Toolbox was utilized to guide the development of data collection tools and frameworks, ensuring standardized assessment methods. For more details, see the Child Protection Guidance. Ethical standards were maintained throughout the study to protect participant rights.

Key Findings

Origin of CYM

A significant portion of CYM (67.6%) originates from Senegal, with others coming from Nigeria (9.5%), Guinea-Conakry (6.9%), Mali (6.9%), Guinea-Bissau (3.4%), Burkina Faso (2.7%), Gambia (1.1%), Niger (1.1%), Ghana (0.4%), and Mauritania (0.4%). The diversity in origin reflects varied migration drivers and needs across different regions.

Transit Locations and Planned Destinations

Major transit regions include Kédougou (29.9%), Kaffrine (26.2%), Dakar (17.6%), Kolda (15.2%), and Ziguinchor (11.1%). Post-transit, 32.5% of CYM plan to stay in their current region, 27.3% consider moving to another region within Senegal, 25.4% aspire to migrate to another West African country, and 14.8% aim to reach Europe. Their choices often reflect a search for better economic opportunities and safety from environmental and conflict-related crises.

Motivations and Travel Decisions

Key factors influencing mobility include region of origin, gender, and age. Youth from areas like Ziguinchor demonstrate greater autonomy in their decisions, while younger children depend on adults. Girls show decision-making autonomy similar to boys but may be driven by different motivations. The impact of climate change, environmental disasters, and conflicts significantly influences their migration decisions, pushing them towards safer and more stable environments.

Risks and Challenges CYM face major risks, including exploitation (up to 62.5%), unsafe mobility (up to 29.9% in Kédougou), and limited access to healthcare and education (26.2% in Kaffrine).

Girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and harmful traditional practices, while boys are more exposed to early mobility and illicit activities. Economic vulnerabilities and hazardous working conditions exacerbate their challenges. The interplay of climate change, environmental disasters, and conflicts further compounds these risks.

Impact of Challenges

Emotional responses among CYM reveal a mix of hope, sadness, resilience, and stress. Approximately 70.5% maintain hope despite the adversity, though some experience intense sadness, especially in areas like Ziguinchor. Resilience is notable, with 80.1% overcoming challenges, though 19.9% experience significant stress, particularly in Kolda. Girls are more likely to recognize and report exploitation, indicating a heightened awareness and protective instinct. Boys may underreport such issues, possibly due to different perceptions of risk or social expectations.

Coping Strategies

CYM employ various coping strategies to address economic and safety challenges, including gaining experience, avoiding sexual aggression, personal development, ensuring daily survival, and pursuing education. Community and institutional responses are important in supporting these strategies. Local communities build solidarity networks, offer temporary accommodation, and involve leaders to enhance protection. Recommendations include establishing mentors, creating secure shelters, expanding vocational training, and improving legal support.

Priority Needs

Enhanced Security: Efforts should focus on preventing child trafficking, strengthening protection in border and transit areas, and improving coordination among protection actors. Addressing the risks associated with economic instability and emergency situations is vital.

Improved Access to Education

Simplify school enrollment, provide language support, transportation services, and scholarships. Education is a key factor in improving economic opportunities and mitigating the impact of crises.

Financial and Material Support: Allocate funds for civil documents, educational resources, and support for orphans and vulnerable children. This support is essential for enhancing economic stability and resilience.

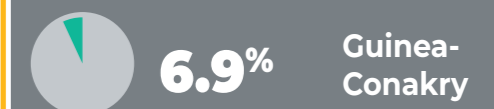
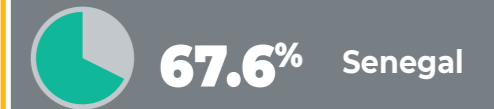
Community Awareness

Conduct campaigns on the importance of stable childhood and promote dialogue between parents and children. Community engagement is important for effective protection and support.

Creating an Inclusive Environment

Train teachers in managing cultural diversity, combat discrimination, and establish support programs for CYM inclusion. Inclusivity and participation of CYM in decision-making processes are important for their development and protection.

Percentage of CYM by Country of Origin



Main Recommendations

1. Strengthen Coordination

Develop collaboration protocols with authorities and participate in local protection committees to ensure comprehensive protection and support.

2. Conduct Studies and Collect Data

Undertake cross-border studies on risks and data collection on crossing points and destinations. This data is critical for understanding migration patterns and improving interventions.

3. Establish Reception Centers

Create centers offering psychosocial and educational services, particularly in high-risk areas affected by crises.

4. Awareness and Training

Organize campaigns on child rights and train local actors in CYM protection, focusing on economic opportunities and emergency responses.

5. Develop Vocational Training

Create vocational training programs tailored to the needs of youth on the move, emphasizing practical skills for better economic prospects.

6. Ensure Sustainability

Involve decentralized services from the start and implement monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the long-term impact and effectiveness of interventions.

This study highlights the critical need for integrated strategies that address the economic, environmental, and participatory aspects of the challenges faced by CYM. By enhancing security, improving access to education, and fostering community involvement, we can better support these vulnerable children and youth in their journey towards stability and opportunity.

The right of every child to safety and protection does not cease when they are compelled to move into a different jurisdiction. In fact, States must guarantee that children on the move are never separated from their families, are not deprived of liberty and that they are entitled to the continuum of the protection to their human rights.”

~ United Nation Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children.

I. Methodology

Scope of the Study

This study aimed to provide an in-depth analysis of the mobility patterns of children in Senegal, with a particular emphasis on their protection and the realization of their rights. A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data. The study was designed to incorporate key criteria essential for understanding the unique realities of each community, the distinct experiences of both boys and girls, and to actively engage community leaders throughout the process.

Research Criteria and Supplementary Studies

To enhance the depth of analysis, this study drew upon a variety of relevant reports and studies, including the Regional Study on the Profiles of Children and Youth on the move (CYM) in West Africa, the Mapping of Child Protection Actors and Services in West Africa, the Evaluation of the National Child Protection Strategy (SNPE) in Senegal, and the National Study on Out-of-School Children in Senegal. These studies provided relevant insights that complemented the field data and informed future intervention strategies. Additionally, standardized questions from the “What We Need to Know” (WWNK) framework were utilized to develop mobility-related protection indicators for CYM.

The primary criteria for this study included cultural contextualization, a gender-sensitive approach, community participation, a holistic perspective, and sustainability. The study also considered standard criteria for defining emergency actions, assessed the long-term impacts of mobility, addressed potential challenges, and adapted data collection methods to accommodate the region’s linguistic diversity.

International Normative Framework (see Annex)

Senegal has ratified several international and regional legal instruments designed to protect the rights of children and youth on the move, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions on child labor. At the regional level, Senegal adheres to frameworks like the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and ECOWAS protocols on free movement and the fight against child trafficking.

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Control children helped identify variables specific to mobility and those influenced by other determinants. Interviews were conducted with key informants and strategic and operational structures. Data collection was carried out using the Kobo platform, with statistical analysis performed using SPSS software, including chi-square tests, analysis of variance (ANOVA), regressions, and factor analysis.

The sample for the semi-structured questionnaire included 524 children and youth, evenly distributed across different regions of the country, maintaining a balance between targets and controls. Diverse participation was also ensured during community profiling activities and focus groups. In total, 1,004 children and youth, 170 community actors, and 35 strategic institutions participated in this study, supported by the involvement of 10 researchers.

Challenges Encountered.

Despite facing various methodological and logistical challenges, the study successfully gathered significant data on the mobility of children and youth workers in Senegal. Key obstacles included:

- In Kolda, the complex geography and limited infrastructure made accessing certain areas difficult, necessitating significant efforts to build trust.
- In Dakar, the absence of an important focal point caused a one-month delay in the data collection schedule.
- In Kedougou, some participants expressed expectations of remuneration, requiring clear communication to manage these expectations.
- In Kaffrine, geographical dispersion and cultural constraints, such as Ramadan, limited community interactions, necessitating an adapted approach.
- In Ziguinchor, logistical and linguistic barriers were encountered, particularly in the Lydiane neighborhood with the Bissau-Guinean community. The intervention of local authorities facilitated activities after a period of waiting to plan meetings.

Despite these challenges, strong partnerships with local authorities and CDPE focal points facilitated community access. Participatory methods and a culturally sensitive approach encouraged children and youth to share their experiences, enriching the study's findings. Flexibility in planning and linguistic inclusiveness also contributed to the high-quality data collection.

II. Analysis of Mobility drivers among CYM

This section provides an in-depth analysis of the profiles and underlying drivers behind the mobility of Children and Youth on the Move (CYM), focusing on the factors that shape their resilience and vulnerability. Our methodological approach divides the sample into two distinct groups: CYM who are currently in transit, and a control group consisting of non-mobile children.

This comparative structure allows for the precise identification of variables uniquely associated with mobility, as well as those influenced by other determinants. The primary objective is to develop a comprehensive profile of the specific needs of CYM, enabling the design of tailored protection programs that address their unique circumstances.

Migration Profile in Senegal

Before delving into the characteristics of the sample, it is essential to contextualize this study within the broader migration trends in Senegal. According to data from the National Agency for Statistics and Demography (ANSD), the country recorded a positive net migration balance of 102,472 individuals in 2019. The majority of these migratory movements involved Senegalese nationals, driven primarily by family visits, return of residents, and tourism.

Regarding returnees, data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) indicate that in the second half of 2018, 1,034 migrants were assisted in returning to Senegal. Among these returnees, only 5% were women, and minors under 18 constituted a mere 2% of the total. The majority of returnees were men, particularly young adults aged 18-26 (51%), 27-35 (32%), and 36-44 (8%). Most returns originated from West and North Africa, particularly from ECOWAS countries and Mauritania (45%), as well as other African countries like Libya and Morocco (51%). Returns from European countries accounted for only 4%.

Sample Overview

This study involved semi-structured interviews with 524 children and youth, including 244 CYM and 280 control group children. The research was conducted across ten departments in Senegal:

- Dakar (103 participants)
- Kaffrine (118)
- Kedougou (103)
- Kolda (100)
- Ziguinchor (100)

The gender distribution among participants shows a slight male majority, with 233 girls and 287 boys, making up 54.8% of the sample. The insights gathered from this research will be critical in informing the development of targeted protection and assistance programs.

Figure 1: Age and Region Breakdown

Region	Age Group	Witness Sample Size	% within Region	CYM Sample Size	% within Region	Total Sample Size	% within Region
Dakar	5-9 years	1	1.7%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%
	10-14 years	19	31.7%	10	23.3%	29	28.2%
	15-17 years	23	38.3%	14	32.6%	37	35.9%
	18-23 years	17	28.3%	19	44.2%	36	35.0%
Kaffrine	5-9 years	5	13.5%	14	21.5%	19	18.6%
	10-14 years	10	27.0%	22	33.8%	32	31.4%
	15-17 years	10	27.0%	20	30.8%	30	29.4%
	18-23 years	12	32.4%	9	13.8%	21	20.6%
Kedougou	5-9 years	5	15.2%	0	0.0%	5	4.3%
	10-14 years	0	0.0%	13	15.5%	13	11.1%
	15-17 years	13	39.4%	15	17.9%	28	23.9%
	18-23 years	15	45.5%	56	66.7%	71	60.7%
Kolda	5-9 years	2	3.4%	0	0.0%	2	2.0%
	10-14 years	11	19.0%	10	24.4%	21	21.2%
	15-17 years	10	17.2%	12	29.3%	22	22.2%
	18-23 years	35	60.3%	19	46.3%	54	54.5%
Ziguinchor	5-9 years	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	10-14 years	2	2.9%	0	0.0%	2	2.0%
	15-17 years	13	18.6%	2	7.1%	15	15.3%
	18-23 years	55	78.6%	26	92.9%	81	82.7%
Total	5-9 years	13	5.0%	14	5.4%	27	5.2%
	10-14 years	42	16.2%	55	21.1%	97	18.7%
	15-17 years	69	26.6%	63	24.1%	132	25.4%
	18-23 years	135	52.1%	129	49.4%	264	50.8%
Total général		259	100%	261	100%	520	100%

A particular focus was given to profiling Children and Youth on the Move (CYM). Children on the move, as opposed to those who are stationary, form a diverse group with significant differences in age, nationality, and gender distribution.

Age and Gender Distribution

The majority of CYM are concentrated among adolescents and young adults, primarily aged 15-23. This concentration within a specific age group reflects social and economic dynamics, where young people, often in search of economic opportunities or fleeing adverse conditions, are more likely to migrate. It is important to note that researchers adhered to specific guidelines during data collection to ensure balanced representation between girls and boys. Therefore, the figures presented below may not exactly mirror demographic realities, but they do provide significant insights into the trends observed.

- 15-17 years: Boys represent a notable proportion (29.8%), suggesting that this age group is often associated with entry into economic activities that require or encourage mobility.
- 18-23 years: Girls make up the majority in this age group (53.1%), indicating that their mobility may be driven by factors such as marriage, education, or the pursuit of economic opportunities.

Gender Distribution Across Regions

The gender distribution among Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) in Senegal reveals deeply entrenched socio-economic and cultural influences. While both boys and girls are involved in migration, the nature of their mobility and the opportunities available to them are distinctly shaped by gender norms, societal expectations, and economic pressures. Understanding this distribution is essential for grasping the broader context of mobility in Senegal, as well as the specific challenges faced by each gender during migration.

In rural regions such as Kédougou, boys dominate the migration landscape. This is largely due to the nature of the economic activities available in these areas, such as mining, which are physically demanding and traditionally considered male roles. Boys are expected to take on these responsibilities at a young age, driven by cultural expectations that associate male mobility with financial contribution and the pursuit of economic opportunities. The pressure to migrate

in search of work often places boys in hazardous environments without adequate support or protection, amplifying their vulnerabilities.

Conversely, in urban centers like Dakar, girls tend to migrate in equal or even greater numbers compared to boys. The economic landscape of cities offers girls more opportunities in domestic work or service-oriented roles, which align with gendered expectations of caregiving and service. While this offers girls an avenue for employment, it also exposes them to specific risks tied to gendered labor. The demand for domestic workers in urban areas continues to draw young girls away from rural communities, where opportunities are scarcer and often confined to family-based agricultural work. While migration offers opportunities for girls to engage in paid labor, the reality is far from ideal. Girls are often employed in domestic work, which is both isolating and leaves them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Gender norms reinforce this trend, pushing girls into roles that reflect their socially prescribed responsibilities of care, even when they migrate. These roles, though providing a semblance of economic independence, often perpetuate cycles of dependency and exploitation, limiting girls' ability to escape precarious working conditions.

Boys, on the other hand, are typically involved in physically intensive occupations such as apprenticeships in trades like metalwork or agriculture in rural areas. While these roles offer boys a pathway to skill development and future employment, they also carry significant risks, particularly in sectors like mining, where boys are often placed in dangerous conditions with little oversight or protection. The gendered expectation that boys will take on physically demanding and high-risk work underpins their migration experience, often pushing them into sectors where injuries and exploitation are common.

The hidden vulnerabilities of LGBTQ youth further complicate the gender distribution among CYM. LGBTQ youths, facing societal stigma and discrimination, are less visible in migration data, yet they are present in significant numbers. Due to fear of being ostracized or attacked, LGBTQ youths often do not disclose their identities, which makes their experiences difficult to capture in traditional data collection methods.

However, qualitative data from the Community-Based Child Protection Mapping (CBCPM) has shed light on their unique challenges. Rejection by their families, compounded by their marginalized status, often forces LGBTQ youth into dangerous survival strategies, including migration and exploitation in informal sectors. Their vulnerability is further exacerbated by the lack of supportive social networks, making them easy targets for abuse and exploitation, particularly in contexts where their identity places them at greater risk.

Emergencies, such as the conflict in Casamance, have also had a profound impact on the gender distribution of CYM. In conflict-affected areas, both boys and girls are often displaced, taking on new roles as they navigate the uncertainty of conflict. Boys may be recruited into armed groups or forced into hard labor, while girls are more likely to take on caregiving roles or, in the worst cases, become victims of gender-based violence. The ongoing conflict continues to shape mobility patterns, particularly in regions close to Casamance, where children and youth are forced to move in response to the volatile security situation.

In addition, climate change is emerging as a significant driver of mobility, particularly in regions affected by flooding or droughts. In areas prone to environmental disasters, children and youth are increasingly forced to migrate in search of safer living conditions or economic opportunities. In regions experiencing flooding, such as certain parts of Dakar during the rainy season, young people are displaced, and many are pushed into precarious forms of labor as their families struggle to recover from the destruction of their homes and livelihoods. Boys may be drawn into sectors like construction or fishing, while girls often take on caregiving or domestic roles, even in emergency settings.

In sum, gender distribution among CYM in Senegal is not merely a reflection of who migrates and why, but a window into the broader socio-economic forces, cultural norms, and emergencies shaping their mobility. Boys and girls navigate different paths based on deeply ingrained gender roles, facing unique risks and vulnerabilities shaped by their economic and social environments. The inclusion of LGBTQ youth in this analysis highlights the need to address hidden forms of vulnerability that are often overlooked in gendered discussions of migration. Understanding these dynamics is critical for designing effective interventions that protect all children and youth on the move, ensuring that they are supported, regardless of gender or identity, as they navigate the complexities of migration.



15–23 years: The Age of Movement

The majority of Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) are adolescents and young adults aged 15–23. Driven by poverty, conflict, or the search for opportunity, this age group is at the forefront of migration across regions.



Ages 15–17: Boys on the Move

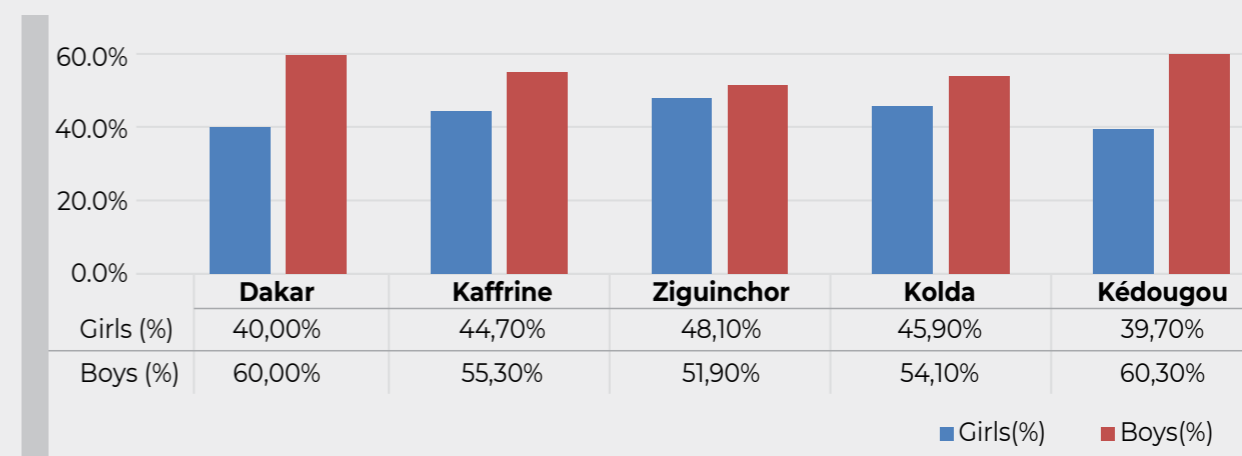
The majority of Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) are adolescents and young adults aged 15–23. Driven by poverty, conflict, or the search for opportunity, this age group is at the forefront of migration across regions.



Ages 18–23: Girls on the Move

The majority of Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) are adolescents and young adults aged 15–23. Driven by poverty, conflict, or the search for opportunity, this age group is at the forefront of migration across regions.

Figure 2: Gender Distribution Across Regions



Sociocultural Characteristics of Children and Youth on the Move (CYM)

The majority of Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) in Senegal are of Senegalese origin, though a significant number also come from neighboring West African countries such as Nigeria, Guinea-Conakry, Mali, and Guinea-Bissau. Within this mobile population, various ethnic groups are prominent, often associated with specific lifestyles and cross-border movements. For instance, young people of Peul origin are frequently linked to pastoralist lifestyles that promote mobility.

Other ethnic groups, such as those of Wolof and Mandinka origin, are also well-represented, each bringing their own traditions and languages into this context of mobility.

Languages Spoken and Integration

The diverse origins of CYM result in a marked linguistic variety. The most commonly spoken languages among these youth include Wolof, Peul, and Mandinka, in addition to French, which serves as the official language in Senegal.

French: While French is the official language, it is not the mother tongue for most CYM. Those who have had access to formal education generally manage to speak it, but for many, limited proficiency in French creates barriers to accessing education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

Wolof: As the most widely spoken language in Senegal, Wolof often serves as the lingua franca in daily interactions. CYM who are proficient in this language are generally better integrated, particularly in major cities such as Dakar or Ziguinchor.

Peul (Fula): This language, spoken by a significant portion of mobile youth, is particularly useful in regions with large Peul communities, such as Kolda or parts of Tambacounda.

Mandinka: Youth who speak Mandinka, often originating from Guinea or Mali, may face challenges integrating into areas where Wolof or French predominate, due to a lack of proficiency in these local languages.

Proficiency in local languages is therefore important for the integration of CYM across different regions of Senegal. Those who do not speak Wolof or the dominant local language may find themselves marginalized, especially in areas where these languages are predominant.

Linguistic Impact on Integration

The linguistic diversity among CYM directly influences their ability to integrate into local communities and access essential services. For example, a youth proficient in Wolof will have better chances of integrating into urban areas, whereas in regions like Kolda, proficiency in Peul may be essential for successful integration. Those who do not speak Wolof, Peul, or French may be particularly vulnerable to social exclusion.

To facilitate the integration of CYM, several measures could be implemented, such as literacy and language training programs, multilingual public services, and the use of cultural mediators to overcome language barriers.

Religious Affiliation

The majority of CYM are Muslim, consistent with the religious composition of their countries of origin. This religious homogeneity can strengthen social and community support networks, particularly in contexts of migration or mobility. Religion can thus play a central role in the integration of mobile youth, facilitating their inclusion within host communities that share the same religious practices.

Parental Family Status

The family status of CYM's parents plays a very important role in the vulnerability of these youth. The majority of parents are married (67.2%), but the presence of deceased parents, particularly in Kédougou and Kolda, exacerbates the precariousness of youth in these regions. The absence or loss of a parent can push youth to migrate in search of subsistence means or social support elsewhere, exposing them to additional risks.

Residence and Co-Residence

Variations in the places of residence and co-residence of CYM across regions reveal local

adaptations to the living conditions of migrant youth.

Dakar: the majority of CYM live with host families (51.2%), reflecting a well-established support network and strong traditions of hospitality in the capital. These dynamics are often accentuated by the consequences of climate change and natural disasters, which exacerbate displacement, particularly for those coming from more vulnerable regions.

Kaffrine: a significant proportion of youth reside with their employers (35.9%), indicating that integration in this region is often tied to informal work arrangements.

Kédougou: The tendency to live with friends or roommates (35.6%) in Kédougou can be seen as a social survival strategy, where youth rely on peer relationships to share costs and resources. This phenomenon is also amplified by the effects of pandemics, such as COVID-19, which limit economic opportunities and increase youth precariousness.

Kolda and Ziguinchor: the predominance of co-residence with host families (55.6% and 66.7%, respectively) highlights the importance of family and community networks in these regions for supporting mobile youth. These dynamics are sometimes influenced by the consequences of climate change and regional security crises, which force families to adjust their hospitality strategies.

Occupations of Children and Youth on the Move

The landscape of occupations for Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) in Senegal presents a complex tapestry of informal work, survival strategies, and traditional labor pathways. These occupations, ranging from agriculture, domestic work, apprenticeships, to more niche roles such as tailoring and gold mining, are deeply intertwined with the social, economic, and cultural fabric of Senegalese society.

Across regions such as Dakar, Kolda, Kédougou, and Ziguinchor, the participation of children and youth in labor is widespread and diverse. Quantitative data reveals a significant number of youths, particularly from rural areas, working in sectors like agriculture and fishing, where they often assist family members in cultivating crops or managing livestock. Agriculture features prominently in Kolda and Ziguinchor, where 28% of girls in Kolda and 25% in Ziguinchor are involved. This type of labor often starts early in the day, as described by a community member: "Many youths in Ziguinchor start their day before sunrise, helping their families with farming or livestock." Boys in Kédougou are predominantly engaged in the mining sector, with 17% of boys involved in this physically demanding work. These figures reflect the harsh reality of youth labor in rural areas, where children are important contributors to the family economy.

In urban areas like Dakar, the labor dynamic shifts towards more commercial and service-oriented

roles. Domestic work is especially common for girls, with 30% of girls in Dakar and 28% in Kolda engaged in this field. These girls take on responsibilities such as cleaning, cooking, and caring for children, showcasing the gendered division of labor. As a girl working in domestic service explained, "I wake up early to clean and prepare meals, but I also look after the children of the family. It's hard, but I have no choice if I want to help my family." Boys, however, are more frequently involved in commerce or apprenticeships. For instance, 17% of boys in Dakar work in commerce, performing jobs such as street vending, shoe shining, or carrying goods in the market. These young boys often work long hours, with one boy describing his daily routine in Dakar: "I start early in the market, carrying goods for shopkeepers. It's tough, but I have to earn something to survive."

One key feature of youth occupations is the widespread participation in apprenticeships across several regions. Whether learning a trade such as tailoring, metalwork, or masonry, young people are immersed in traditional craftsmanship, often beginning their training at a very early age. Apprenticeships in tailoring and metalwork are particularly common in Dakar, Kolda, and Ziguinchor, where youths work under experienced tradesmen to acquire skills they hope will lead to stable employment. As one youth from Ziguinchor explained, "I'm learning to be a tailor. I want to open my own shop one day, but for now, I'm just learning from the master." These



Girls in Agriculture (Kolda & Ziguinchor)

28% of girls in Kolda and 25% in Ziguinchor work in agriculture.

"Many youths in Ziguinchor start their day before sunrise, helping their families with farming or livestock." — Community member



Boys in Mining (Kédougou)

17% of boys in Kédougou are engaged in mining, a physically demanding job that reflects the tough economic choices facing rural youth.



Girls in Domestic Work (Dakar & Kolda)

30% of girls in Dakar and 28% in Kolda are employed in domestic work, highlighting the gendered nature of urban labor.

The majority of CYM are Muslim, consistent with the religious composition of their countries of origin. This religious homogeneity can strengthen social and community support networks, particularly in contexts of migration or mobility. Religion can thus play a central role in the integration of mobile youth, facilitating their inclusion within host communities that share the same religious practices.

Prostitution is something I didn't want to do, but when you have no family and no way to survive, you have to make difficult choices."

~ Young girl, Ziguinchor

Prostitution remains one of the most hidden and sensitive forms of youth labor. While only 3.3% of girls in Ziguinchor report involvement, the real number is likely higher. Cultural stigma and fear of judgment keep many silent, yet behind these numbers are stories of survival, desperation, and deep socio-economic pressure.

apprenticeships provide important vocational skills, yet often lack formal regulation, leaving children exposed to potential exploitation.

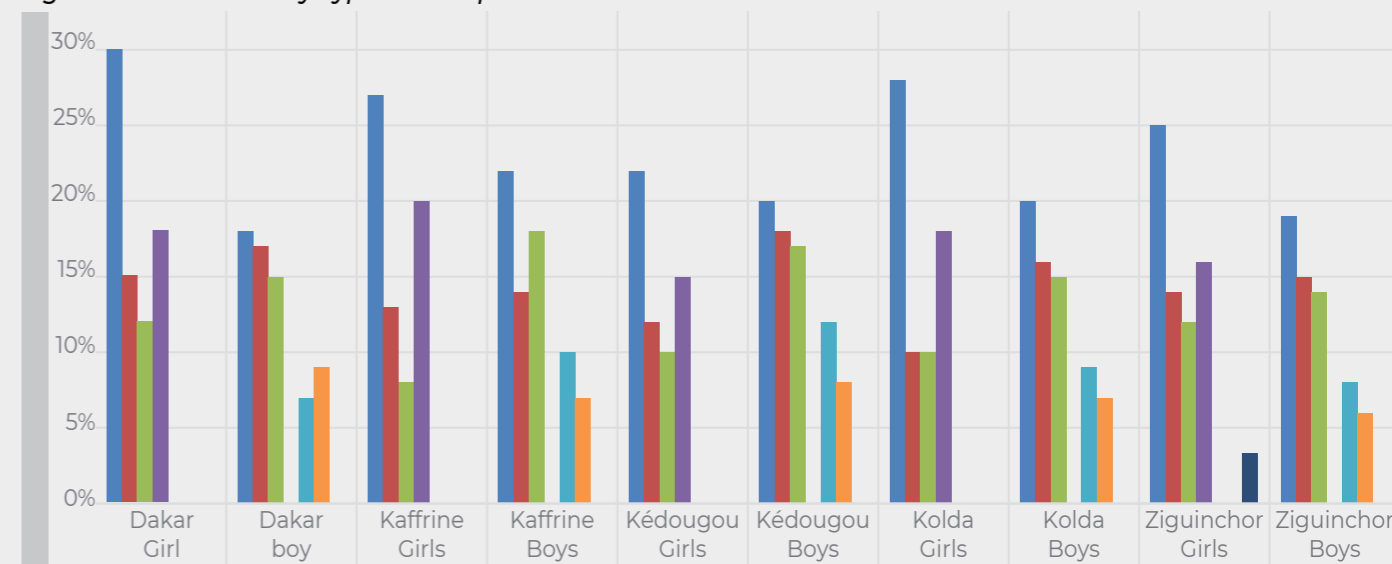
Begging is another prevalent occupation, particularly for boys in Kaffrine and Dakar, where mendicité (begging) is closely linked to religious and cultural practices. In fact, 26% of boys in Dakar are engaged in begging, usually under the supervision of religious leaders in traditional daaras (Islamic schools). This type of labor is a unique dynamic where children are expected to earn their daily sustenance while receiving religious education. A participant in one of these schools commented, "I came here to learn the Quran, but I spend most of my time in the streets, begging for food or money. It's hard, but it's what we have to do." This form of labor, while culturally embedded, also subjects children to significant risks and hardship.

Fishing and gold mining represent more specialized occupations, particularly tied to the geography of the region. Fishing is a common occupation for boys in Ziguinchor, where the proximity to coastal areas supports this trade. Meanwhile, in Kédougou, 17% of boys are involved in artisanal gold mining, a dangerous occupation that nonetheless offers the allure of potential earnings. Youths in mining work long hours in hazardous conditions, often with little oversight or protection.

Prostitution emerges as a particularly sensitive and hidden occupation. While quantitative data indicates that 3.3% of girls in Ziguinchor are involved in prostitution, this figure likely understates the reality, as cultural stigmas and social pressure often prevent full disclosure. The Community-Based Child Protection Mapping (CBCPM) reveals the socio-economic pressures that drive young girls into prostitution. As one girl from Ziguinchor confided, "Prostitution is something I didn't want to do, but when you have no family and no way to survive, you have to make difficult choices." This occupation remains underreported due to the shame and fear associated with it, yet it represents one of the most vulnerable sectors for young girls.

Through these occupations, children and youth on the move are not merely seeking employment but are navigating complex socio-economic landscapes that influence their choices and opportunities. From agriculture in rural areas to commerce and domestic work in cities, these young individuals are forced into labor as part of broader survival strategies. They are often driven by necessity, the need to support their families, or, in the case of many girls, the lack of viable alternatives. Each occupation reflects a deeper layer of vulnerability for children and youth on the move, who remain some of the most exposed and underserved populations in Senegal.

Figure 3: Distribution by Type of Occupation and Gender



	Dakar Girl	Dakar boy	Kaffrine Girls	Kaffrine Boys	Kédougou Girls	Kédougou Boys	Kolda Girls	Kolda Boys	Ziguinchor Girls	Ziguinchor Boys
Domestic Work	30%	18%	27%	22%	22%	20%	28%	20%	25%	19%
Commercial Services	15%	17%	13%	14%	12%	18%	10%	16%	14%	15%
Begging	12%	15%	8%	18%	10%	17%	10%	15%	12%	14%
Studies or Training	18%	0%	20%	0%	15%	0%	18%	0%	16%	0%
Mining	0%	7%	0%	10%	0%	12%	0%	9%	0%	8%
Apprenticeship	0%	9%	0%	7%	0%	8%	0%	7%	0%	6%
Prostitution	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3,30%	0%
Total	75%	66%	68%	71%	59%	75%	66%	67%	70%	62%



26%
boys in Dakar engage in begging



Often under the supervision of religious leaders in traditional daaras (Islamic schools). This practice blurs the line between education and exploitation.



17%
boys in Kédougou work in artisanal gold mining.



Often under the supervision of religious leaders in traditional daaras (Islamic schools). This practice blurs the line between education and exploitation.

Figure 4: Occupations by Region

Region	Gender	Qualitative Observations
Dakar	Girls	Girls are primarily engaged in domestic work (30%) and commercial services (15%). The prevalence of begging (12%) indicates high vulnerability, necessitating interventions to reduce exploitation and violence risks. The involvement in studies and training (18%) highlights the need for educational support to prevent school dropouts.
	Boys	Boys are frequently involved in domestic work (18%) and commercial services (17%). Begging (15%) is also common, suggesting an urgent need to improve working conditions and social protection. Engagement in hazardous activities such as mining (7%) and vocational training (9%) is concerning.
Kaffrine	Girls	Girls are mainly involved in domestic work (27%), commercial services (13%), and studies or training (20%). Begging (8%) and the lack of familial or community support increase their vulnerability.
	Boys	Begging (18%) and involvement in mining activities (10%) highlight significant safety and health risks. Domestic work (22%) and commercial services (14%) are predominant occupations, with a need to enhance vocational training opportunities (7%).
Kedougou	Girls	Girls are largely engaged in domestic work (22%), commercial services (12%), and studies or training (15%). Begging (10%) and marginal activities increase their vulnerability, requiring social and educational support programs.
	Boys	Boys show a strong involvement in domestic services (20%), commercial services (18%), and begging (17%). The risks associated with mining (12%) and vocational training (8%) necessitate
Kolda	Girls	Domestic work (28%), commercial services (10%), and studies or training (18%) are predominant. Begging (10%) remains a major concern, emphasizing the need for economic and social support programs.
	Boys	Boys are mainly involved in domestic services (20%), begging (15%), and commercial services (16%). Activities in mining (9%) and vocational training (7%) require actions to reduce injury risks and improve working conditions.
Ziguinchor	Girls	Girls are primarily engaged in domestic work (25%), commercial services (14%), and studies or training (16%). Begging (12%) and prostitution (3.3%) reveal high vulnerability, necessitating urgent interventions to protect girls from abuse and exploitation.
	Boys	Boys are predominantly involved in domestic services (19%), begging (14%), and commercial services (15%). Activities in mining (8%) and vocational training (6%) show high exposure to health and safety risks.

Analysis of CYM Occupations

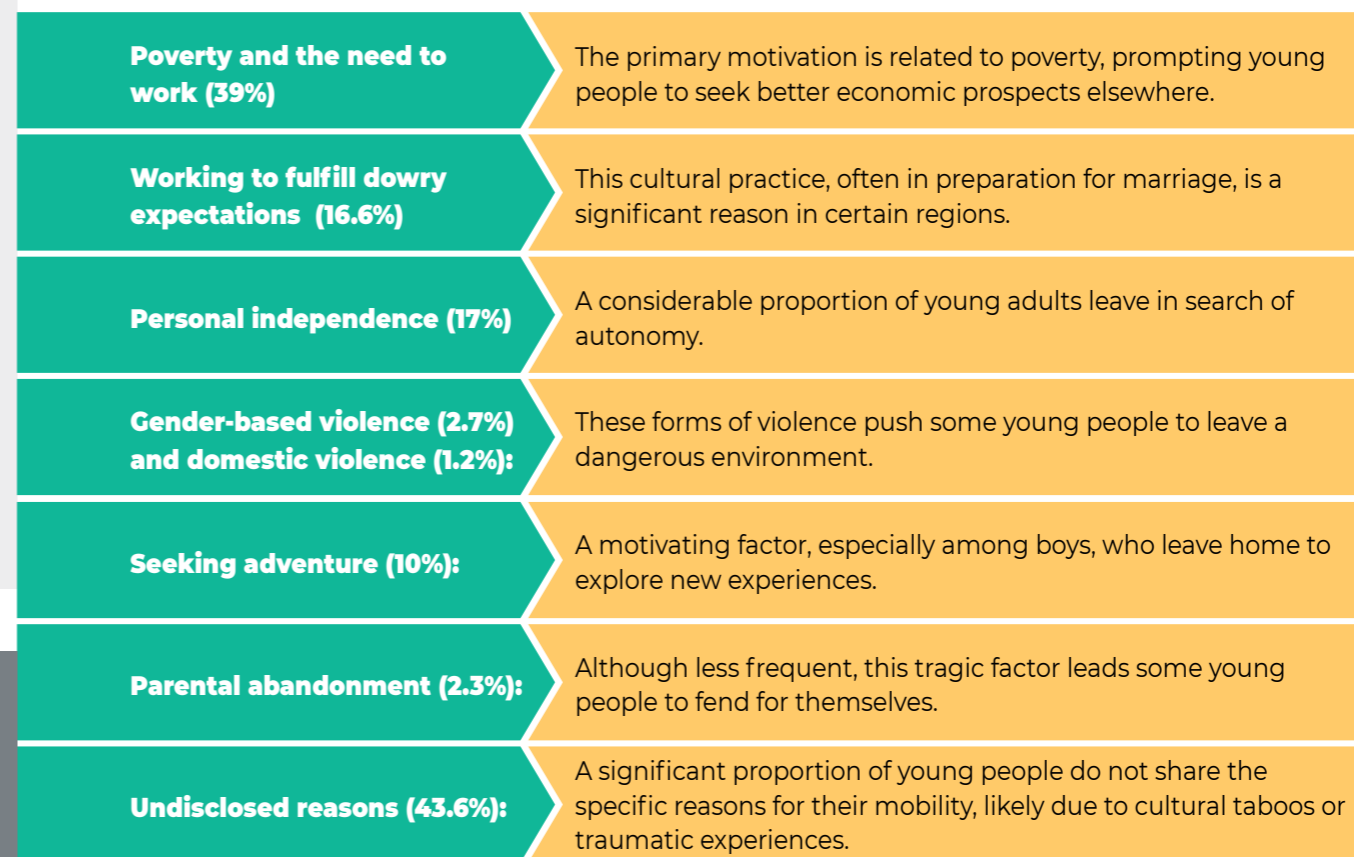
The analysis reveals that Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) present varied profiles influenced by their occupation, place of residence, and family situation. These factors determine their level of vulnerability and the challenges they face. Domestic work and begging are among the most common occupations, exposing youth to high risks of exploitation and abuse. Boys are often engaged in hazardous activities such as mining and construction, while girls are particularly vulnerable to domestic abuse and exploitation in commercial sectors.

This diversity of profiles underscores the importance of a targeted and adapted response to support CYM. The following sections of this report will address the necessary support strategies and provide practical recommendations to improve the situation of these youth. In particular, it will be important to invest in social protection initiatives and access to education while strengthening community networks and reception structures to promote the integration and well-being of CYM across various regions in Senegal.

III. Mobility Dynamics and Trajectories of Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) in Senegal

Numerous reasons drive Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) to embark on their journeys, often reflecting a combination of socio-economic, familial, and personal factors:

Figure 4: Reasons for mobility



Begging is a prevalent occupation, particularly for boys in Kaffrine and Dakar, where mendicité (begging) is closely linked to religious and cultural practices. 26% of boys in Dakar are engaged in begging, usually under the supervision of religious leaders in traditional daaras (Islamic schools).

Analysis by Region

In Dakar, the main motivations for the Children and Youth on the Move include seeking better economic opportunities and family support. 65.1% of the children mentioned poverty and the need to work to help their families as the primary reason for their departure. This high proportion reflects significant economic pressures in the capital, where employment opportunities are perceived as more accessible. However, precarious living conditions and urban socio-economic challenges exacerbate the risks for young migrants.

The quest for independence (7.0%) and parental abandonment (4.7%) are also notable, indicating issues with family structure and social support.

In Kaffrine, 73.8% of the children do not disclose their reasons for mobility, suggesting severe social pressures and significant cultural taboos. The reluctance to share motivations may be attributed to social stigma and the fear of negative repercussions. Working to prepare a dowry (21.5%) and fleeing gender-based violence (10.8%) are also significant reasons. These responses highlight the influence of cultural norms and traditional practices on young people's migration decisions.

In Kédougou, domestic violence (38.6%) and the desire for independence (31.3%) are the main

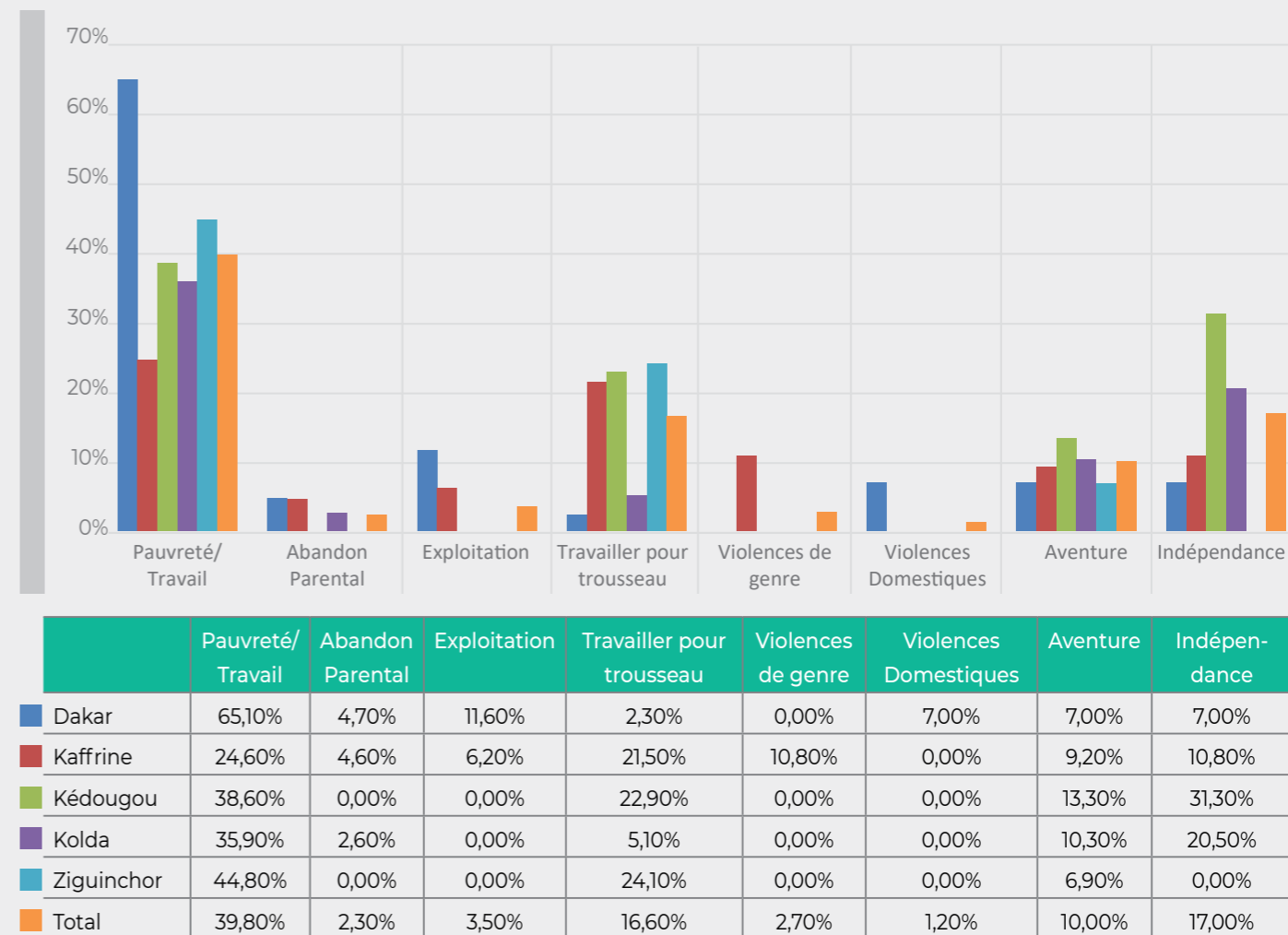
motivations. Difficult socio-economic conditions and geographical isolation increase family tensions, pushing young people to seek safety and opportunities elsewhere. This region shows a particular profile where young people seek to escape a violent family environment and build their autonomy.

Kolda, 35.9% of children migrate to work and prepare a dowry, a cultural practice in preparation for marriage. Becoming independent (20.5%) is also a key motivation. The young people in this region are often motivated by specific cultural and economic expectations, driving them to accumulate resources necessary for their social and family status. Preparations for marriage and obligations to support the family strongly influence migration decisions.

In Ziguinchor, 44.8% of children leave to help their families by working, and 34.5% do not disclose their reasons, reflecting complex dynamics of family support and social pressure. Children in this region are driven by economic obligations and family expectations to migrate, often into precarious jobs, increasing their risk of exploitation. The diversity of undisclosed motivations underscores the complexity of factors influencing mobility.

35.9% of children in Kolda migrate to work in order to fulfill dowry obligations - a cultural practice tied to marriage preparation. Another 20.5% cite the desire for independence as a key motivation. In this region, young people are often driven by strong cultural and economic expectations, prompting them to seek resources that enhance their social and family status. Marriage preparations and the need to support their families significantly influence their decisions to migrate.

Figure 5: Motivations for Mobility by Region



Origins and Influencing Factors

Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) in Senegal hail from various West African countries, with a significant majority being of Senegalese origin (67.6%). Each national group exhibits distinct characteristics that shape their mobility trajectories.

The Senegalese youth, representing 67.6% of the CYM, are primarily engaged in internal migrations driven by the search for economic opportunities in other regions of the country or abroad. Economic disparities between different regions of Senegal influence mobility decisions, pushing young people to relocate to areas perceived as offering better prospects.

Youth from Guinea-Conakry (6.9%) and Mali (6.9%) share historical migratory ties with Senegal. These long-standing relationships facilitate their regional mobility, enabling them to leverage established networks to cross borders and integrate into Senegalese communities. These networks, often familial or community-based, play a critical support role in their migratory journeys. Nigerian youth (9.5%) stand out for their strong tendency to migrate towards urban centers or countries where economic opportunities are perceived to be more abundant. This group is often motivated by the desire to escape difficult socio-economic conditions in their home country, seeking to improve their situation by relocating to more prosperous areas.

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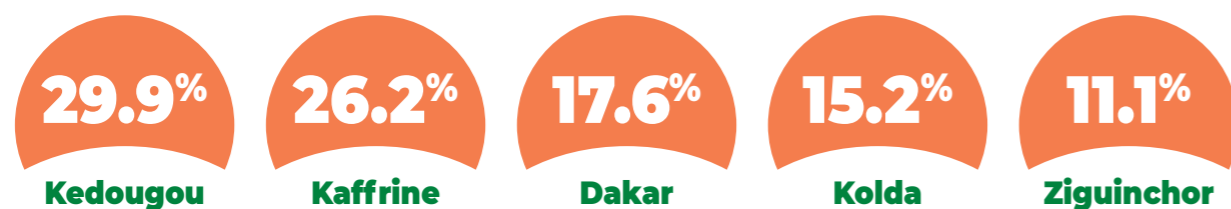
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Regional Disparities in Mobility Intentions.

The varying percentages of intended destinations highlight regional disparities in the aspirations and challenges faced by CYM. For instance, the high percentage of youth intending to settle locally may reflect better local conditions or stronger community ties in certain regions. In contrast, the desire to migrate abroad, particularly to Europe, indicates a perception of limited local opportunities and the allure of better prospects overseas, despite the associated risks.

Transit Locations and Geographic Distribution. Within Senegal, the regions studied play an important role as points of departure and transit for CYM. The following percentages illustrate the distribution of CYM in these specific areas, each offering distinct opportunities for temporary integration, the development of support networks, job seeking, or continuing education.

The regions selected for the study, due to their strategic location and role in the trajectories of mobile youth, are:



Intended Destinations: Aspirations and Projections.

The destinations envisioned by CYM after their transit offer deep insights into their aspirations and the underlying factors shaping their choices.

A third of CYM (32.5%) express the desire to integrate locally. This choice may be driven by strong social or familial ties or by satisfaction with the opportunities found on-site. These youth may perceive their current region as offering sufficient security or potential to justify their decision to settle there permanently. Some youth (27.3%) intend to continue their mobility within the country, attracted by the economic or educational opportunities available in other regions. This internal migration is often a means of overcoming local obstacles by seeking more favorable living conditions elsewhere in Senegal. A quarter of CYM (25.4%) plan to continue their journey outside Senegal, often motivated by the search for new economic or educational opportunities in neighboring countries. This trend reflects a regional dynamic where borders are relatively permeable and where youth seek to capitalize on the advantages offered by neighboring countries.

A significant proportion of youth (14.8%) dream of migrating to Europe, attracted by the prospect of better living and working conditions. However, this ambition is often hindered by legal and financial challenges, making this dream difficult to achieve despite its allure. Europe is perceived as a dream, but access is restrictive, underscoring the risks these young people take to try their luck.

Decision-Making in Mobility.

The mobility decisions of CYM in Senegal are strongly influenced by their region of origin, gender, and age. These factors help determine who initiates migration and why.

Youth from certain regions of Senegal are more inclined to make the decision to leave independently. In regions like Kaffrine (62.5%) and Kedougou (61.6%), where youth are often more autonomous, the decision to migrate may be linked to local traditions valuing independence or to economic contexts that push youth to seek opportunities elsewhere. Conversely, in regions like Dakar, youth seem more influenced by social pressures or external circumstances (97.3%), which reduces their autonomy in decision-making.

Age also influences the autonomy of young people in decision-making. The youngest, particularly children aged 5-9, largely depend on adults for their mobility, not yet having acquired the capacity or confidence needed to decide independently. Adolescents aged 15-17 (69.5%) and young adults aged 18-23 (68.4%) demonstrate greater autonomy. They are often motivated by aspirations for independence, pursuing education, or improving their living conditions. This ability to make independent decisions increases with age and experience.

Support Networks in Mobility.

Networks play a fundamental role in the mobility of CYM. These networks, whether family, community-based, or among friends, influence departure decisions, chosen routes, and the integration of youth into their transit or destination locations. Networks not only provide information and logistical support but also offer moral assurance that encourages youth to depart and helps them navigate sometimes hostile environments. Youth are often encouraged to migrate by network members who have already undertaken the same journey. Information about economic opportunities and living conditions in potential destinations is important for these decisions.

Routes are often dictated by the prior experiences of network members. This includes the choice of routes, transit points, and strategies to avoid risks associated with migration. Upon arrival in transit or destination areas, youth use their networks to access temporary housing, find jobs, or pursue education. Networks offer important support in the face of risks, whether by providing help in case of legal problems or avoiding situations of exploitation.

The Role of Informal Networks in Mitigating Migration Risks.

The importance of informal networks in guiding migration routes and providing support in transit and destination areas cannot be overstated. These networks often mitigate the risks associated with migration, such as exploitation or legal challenges, by offering reliable information and assistance based on the collective experience of the group.

Motivations for Mobility.

Many reasons drive CYM to embark on their journey, often reflecting a combination of socio-economic, family, and personal factors:

- Poverty and the need to work (39.8%): The primary motivation is linked to poverty, prompting youth to seek better economic prospects elsewhere.
- Working to build a trousseau (16.6%): This cultural practice, often in preparation for marriage, is a significant reason in certain regions.

- Personal independence (17%): A substantial proportion of young adults leave in search of autonomy.
- Gender-based violence (2.7%) and domestic violence (1.2%): These forms of violence drive some youth to flee a dangerous environment.
- Quest for adventure (10%): A motivating factor, especially among boys, who leave home to explore new experiences.
- Parental abandonment (2.3%): Although less common, this tragic factor leads some youth to fend for themselves.
- Undisclosed reasons (43.6%): A significant proportion of youth do not share the precise reasons for their mobility, likely due to cultural taboos or traumatic experiences.

The Impact of Social Taboos on Reporting Mobility Motives

The high percentage of undisclosed reasons for mobility (43.6%) suggests that social taboos and the stigma associated with certain motivations may prevent youth from openly discussing the factors driving their mobility. This highlights the need for culturally sensitive approaches in addressing these issues, ensuring that youth feel safe and supported in sharing their experiences.

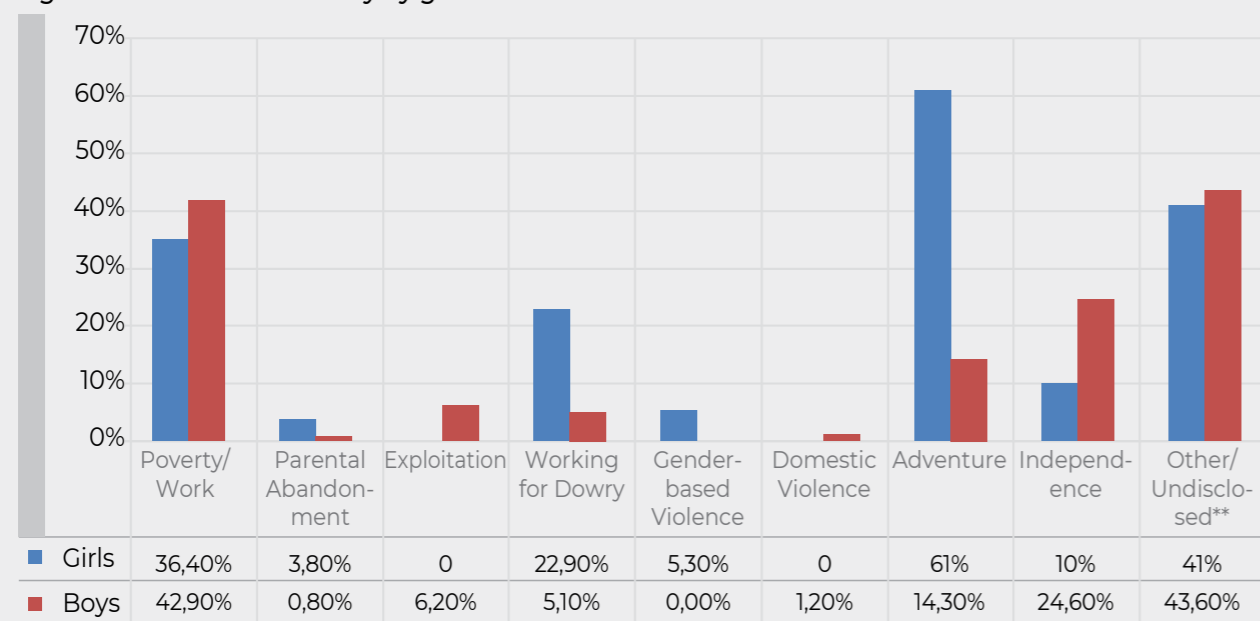
Gender Differences in Mobility Motivation

The role of gender is significant in shaping how youth approach mobility

Girls: Girls, for instance, are sometimes driven to migrate to escape situations of vulnerability, such as gender-based violence, environmental disasters, or health crises. Notably, 65.6% of girls reported that their journey was a personal choice, indicating a relative degree of autonomy in their mobility decisions. This autonomy could be linked to factors such as the pursuit of independence or the desire to escape gender-specific vulnerabilities, including family pressures or gender-based violence.

Boys: A slightly lower percentage of boys (62.6%) reported that their journey was voluntary. Boys frequently migrate for economic reasons, often motivated by the need to support their families or improve their personal situation, particularly in contexts marked by poverty and the impact of climate change. These trends suggest that while boys exhibit autonomy, they are also subject to different social pressures or expectations, exacerbated by political instability or economic crises.

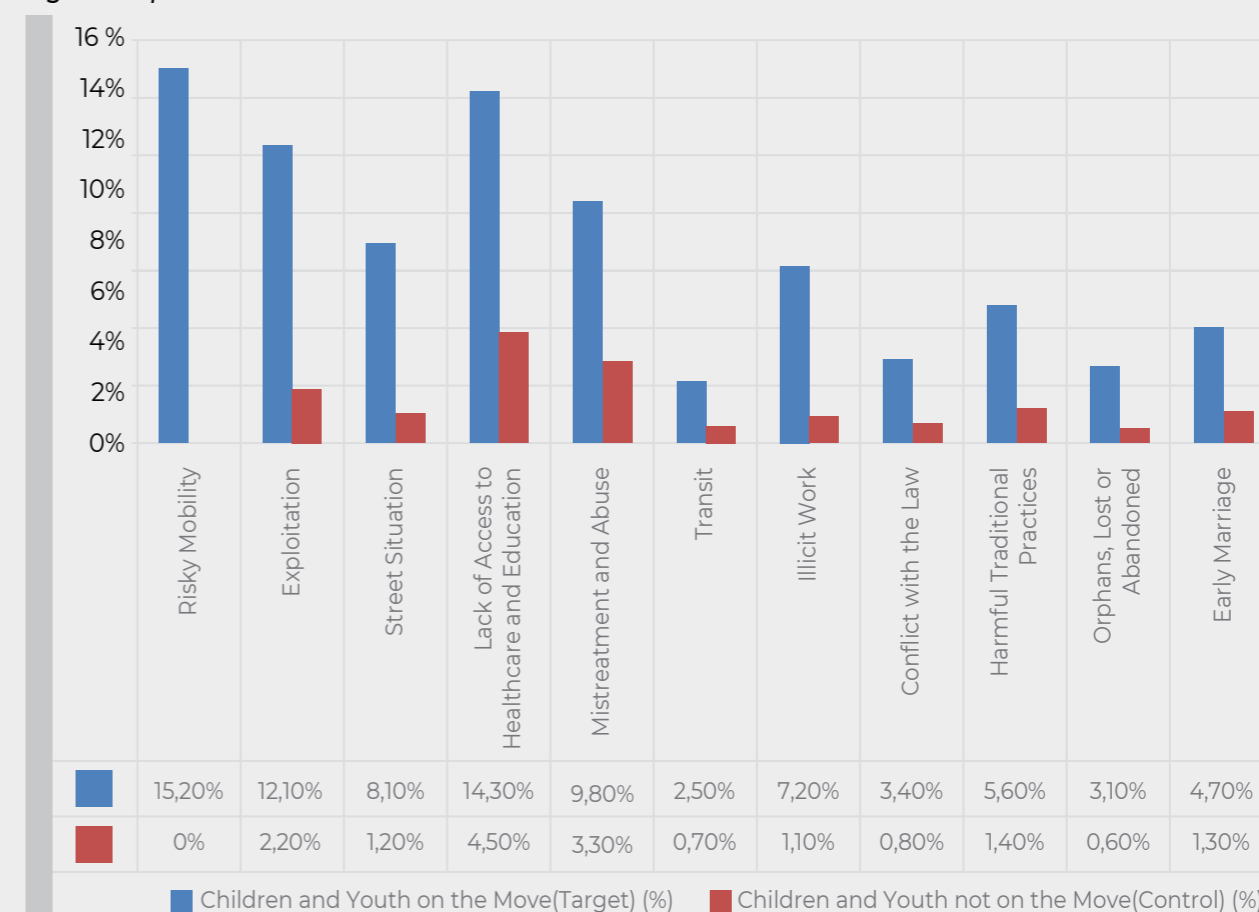
Figure 6: Reasons for Mobility by gender



IV. Major Challenges for CYM in Senegal: Risks, Vulnerabilities, and Determinants

In Senegal, the unique socio-economic landscape, coupled with deep-rooted cultural norms and varying environmental conditions, sets a complex backdrop for the Children and Youth on the Move (CYM). These factors collectively influence and exacerbate the challenges CYM face, often locking them into cycles of instability and hardship. The issues they confront range from immediate risks like exploitation and limited access to necessary services to deep-seated vulnerabilities stemming from young age and the absence of family support, further complicated by regional disparities and gender dynamics.

Figure 7: Specific Risks for CYM



Girls are sometimes driven to migrate to escape situations of vulnerability, such as gender-based violence, environmental disasters, or health crises. Notably, 65.6% of girls reported that their journey was a personal choice, indicating a relative degree of autonomy in their mobility decisions. This autonomy could be linked to factors such as the pursuit of independence or the desire to escape gender-specific vulnerabilities, including family pressures or gender-based violence.

Figure 8: Profiles of Risk Among Children and Youth on the Move

Primary Dangers Encountered	Description	Percentage of CYM Having Experienced the Situation
Exploitation	CYM are at risk of or victims to economic and sexual exploitation, including forced labor in hazardous conditions and human trafficking. These abuses occur in both transit and destination locations, severely impacting their mental and physical health.	62.5%
Risky Mobility	CYM, often minors traveling alone or under the guardianship of another minor, frequently move without adequate protection. This exposes them to potentially life-threatening dangers such as severe accidents and violent encounters. Adults in this group may also travel in conditions where their lives are at significant risk.	17.6%
Transit	CYM are frequently in transit, facing uncertain and precarious conditions that disrupt their sense of stability and security, often leading to chronic stress and anxiety.	7%
Lack of Access to Healthcare and Education	CYM often lack access to essential services like healthcare and education, which significantly limits their opportunities for personal and developmental growth, perpetuating cycles of poverty and ill-health.	2.9%
Abuse and Mistreatment	CYM face physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, often at the hands of caregivers, employers, or other youth. These experiences can lead to longterm psychological trauma and barriers to trusting relationships	2.5%
Street Situation	Youth living on the streets face harsh environmental conditions, high levels of violence from both peers and adults, and extreme scarcity of basic needs such as food and shelter, leading to chronic insecurity and vulnerability.	3.3%
Harmful Traditional Practices	CYM are subject to rites and customs that violate their rights and endanger their health, such as forced excision, ritual scarification, or child betrothals, which are deeply ingrained in certain cultures.	3.3%
Early Marriage	CYM are often coerced into early marriages, which drastically affects their education, health, and personal development, leading to a loss of autonomy and perpetuation of dependency.	4.1%
Orphaned, Lost, or Abandoned	CYM who are orphaned, lost, or abandoned face heightened vulnerability with little to no support system, making them easy targets for abuse and exploitation.	1.2%
Illegal Work	CYM engage in illicit work activities such as drug trafficking, theft, or working in dangerous and unregulated sectors, driven by economic desperation and a lack of viable alternatives.	0.4%
Conflict with the Law	CYM often find themselves in conflict with legal systems, primarily due to survival behaviors that are deemed illegal, such as theft or undocumented travel, leading to potential legal penalties and further marginalization.	0

Risks by Region of Origin

The risks associated with the mobility of CYM vary by region, with each presenting unique challenges that affect youth differently.

- **In Dakar**, Children and Youth on the Move face numerous challenges. One child shared, “We constantly live in fear and uncertainty.” Risky mobility and the risk of exploitation each affect 27.9% of CYM, while 16.3% are deprived of access to healthcare and education. Additionally, security crises and political tensions make this environment even more dangerous.
- **In Kaffrine**, the risks are diverse and concerning. “I have to work to help my family, but I also want to go to school,” explains a young boy. Here, 26.2% of CYM are at risk of or are victims of exploitation, and an equivalent number lack access to healthcare and education. The impact of natural disasters, such as droughts and floods, exacerbates these conditions, increasing the precariousness of youth.
- **In Kedougou**, the situation is alarming, with 29.9% of CYM in a situation of dangerous migration. One child testified, “We often have to move to survive.” Moreover, 29.9% are at risk of or are victims of exploitation, and 7.8% are subjected to harmful traditional practices. Extreme weather events, linked to climate change, force these young people to migrate more frequently, further increasing their vulnerability.
- **In Kolda**, Children and Youth on the Move are particularly vulnerable. “I just want to go to school like the other children,” shared a 10-year-old girl. Many CYM (15.2%) are in risky mobility situations and at risk of exploitation, with 8.1% lacking access to healthcare and education. The COVID-19 pandemic has also restricted access to essential services, exacerbating the difficulties faced by these young people.
- **Ziguinchor** presents unique challenges for mobile children and youth. “We often lack food and care,” says one child. Thus, 11.1% of CYM are in risky mobility situations and at risk of exploitation, while 2.9% suffer the consequences of the Casamance crisis, which exacerbates already difficult living conditions due to regional conflicts.

Figure 9: Distribution of Risks by Region

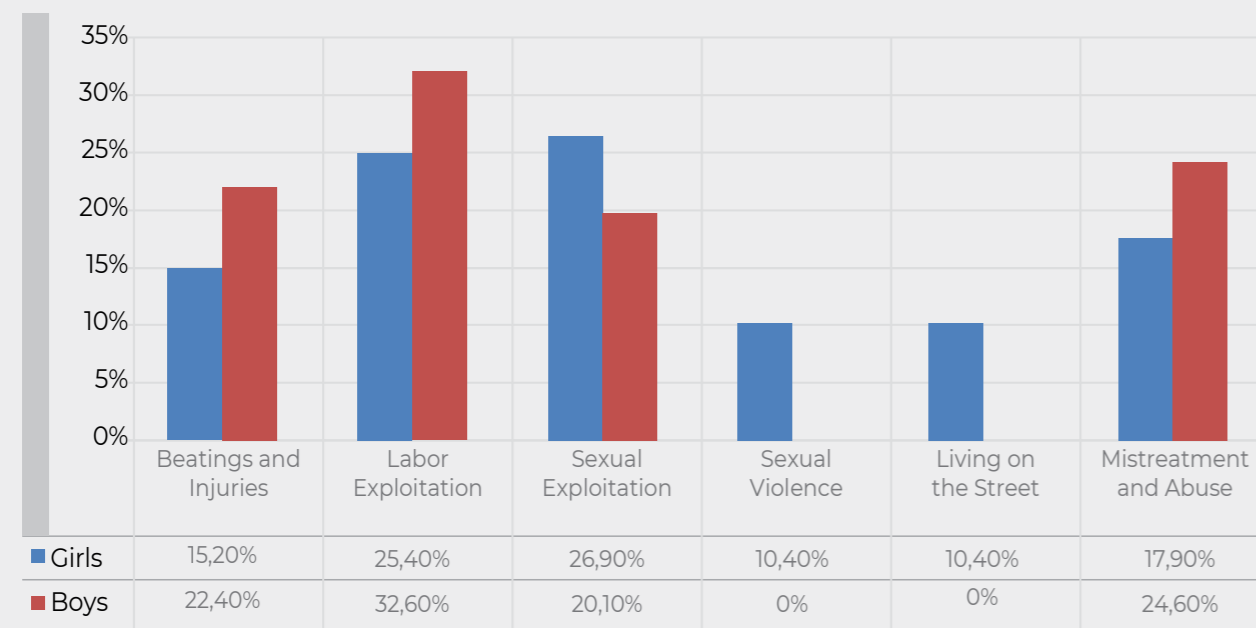
Region/Primary Dangers Encountered	Risky Mobility (%)	Exploitation (%)	Street Situation (%)	Deprivation of Access to Healthcare and Education (%)	Abuse and Mistreatment (%)	Transit (%)	Illegal Work (%)	Conflict with the Law (%)	Harmful Traditional Practices (%)	Orphaned, Lost, or Abandoned (%)	Early Marriage (%)
Dakar	27.9	27.9	0.0	16.3	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	0.0	4.7
Kaffrine	26.2	26.2	0.0	26.2	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.4	7.4
Kedougou	29.9	29.9	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.8	0.0	7.0
Kolda	15.2	15.2	0.0	8.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0
Ziguinchor	11.1	11.1	0.0	2.9	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	0.0

Risks by Gender

The risks associated with mobility vary significantly by gender, necessitating specific approaches to adequately protect both girls and boys. Girls are particularly vulnerable to gender-specific dangers, such as commercial (15.3%) and sexual (15.6%) exploitation, often exacerbated by conditions of poverty that force them into dangerous activities or coercive relationships to meet their needs. Crises such as climate change, natural disasters, and public health epidemics like COVID-19 further exacerbate these situations, increasing girls' exposure to these forms of exploitation. Harmful traditional practices, such as early marriage (5.3%), also disproportionately affect girls, limiting their access to education and autonomy.

In comparison, boys are more often confronted with early mobility (19.2%) and lack of supervision (19.2%), making them more vulnerable to illicit work and street life. Security crises, such as civil conflicts and rebellions like the one in Casamance, increase the risk for boys of becoming involved in dangerous or illegal activities. The economic pressure on families, where boys are often considered economic supporters, reinforces their exposure to risks, including exploitation through labor and conflicts with the law.

Figure 10: Distribution of Risks by Gender



Boys are more often confronted with early mobility (19.2%) and lack of supervision (19.2%), making them more vulnerable to illicit work and street life. Security crises, such as civil conflicts like the one in Cassamance, increase the risk for boys of becoming involved in dangerous or illegal activities. The economic pressure on families, where boys are often considered economic supporters, reinforces their exposure to risks, including exploitation through labor and conflict with the law.

Risks by Age

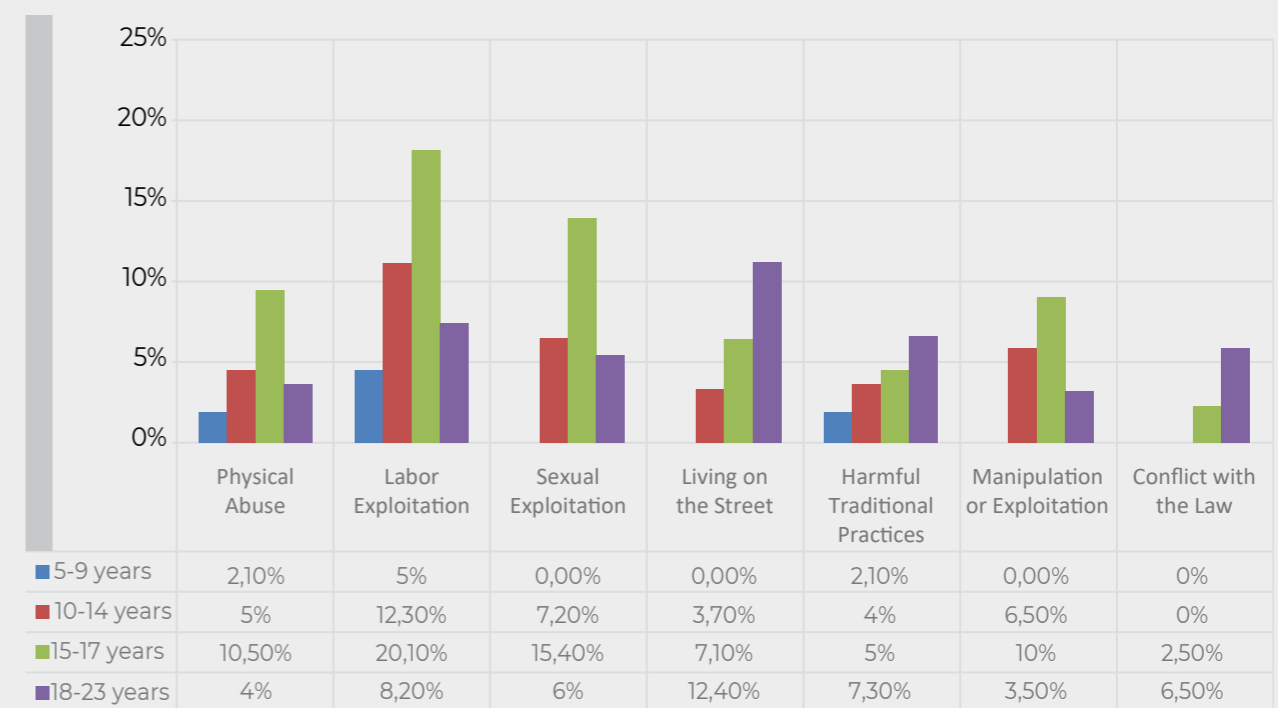
The age of Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) is a critical determinant of their exposure to risks, with each age group facing specific challenges.

The youngest children (5-9 ans old) are particularly vulnerable to harmful traditional practices (2.1%) and physical abuse, as they are often seen as dependent and incapable of defending themselves or escaping abusive situations. Crises such as natural disasters or public health emergencies, like COVID-19, can exacerbate these vulnerabilities by further limiting the resources and support available to these children. At this tender age, their reliance on adults for protection and guidance is paramount, yet the very adults they depend on may sometimes be the source of their risk.

Children aged 10 to 17 ans' experience a peak in vulnerability, particularly in terms of labor exploitation (20.1% for 15-17-year-olds) and sexual exploitation (15.4% for 15-17-year-olds). At this age, economic pressures on families can push youth to seek work, often in dangerous and informal conditions, without social or legal protection. Adolescence, a period of transition and self-discovery, also makes them more susceptible to being manipulated or sexually exploited, especially in the absence of adequate education or family support. Civil conflicts and rebellions, such as the one in Casamance, can further exacerbate these pressures, forcing adolescents to take risks to meet their needs.

From the age of 18, youth in mobility continue to face significant risks, notably street life (12.4%) and harmful traditional practices (7.3%). At this stage, the lack of a strong family or community structure pushes them to live independently, often without resources or support, exposing them to precarious living conditions and an increased risk of social marginalization. Climate change and economic crises can also make these young people more vulnerable, forcing them into survival situations in hostile and often criminogenic environments.

Figure 11: Risks Associated with Mobility by Age



To deepen the analysis of the risks associated with the occupations of Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) in Senegal, it is essential to understand in detail the specific activities these young people are engaged in and the circumstances that amplify the dangers they face.

Automotive repair or driving, primarily in the regions of Dakar and Ziguinchor, often involves youth working as apprentices or helpers in informal garages. These young people, sometimes as young as 12 ans old, spend their days handling heavy tools, lifting mechanical parts, or working under vehicles without adequate safety equipment. The nature of this work exposes them to frequent accidents, such as burns or injuries from falling objects. The survey shows that 100% of these children were male, which reflects the gender-specific nature of this occupation, often placing boys in physically dangerous jobs without proper safety training.

One youth explains: *“I was taught how to fix cars, but no one told me how to avoid the dangers. I often get burns or cuts, but I can’t stop, or I’ll lose my job”* (youth, Dakar). These tasks, combined with a lack of formal safety training, make the risk of injury a constant threat. Furthermore, extreme weather conditions, such as heatwaves, worsen their already precarious working conditions. For these youths, the reality of working in the informal sector without proper safeguards results in high physical risks.

Mining, particularly observed in Kedougou, is another highly hazardous occupation. In this sector, 33% of youth reported physical injuries, aligning with the dangerous nature of the job. Mining involves heavy labor, exposure to toxic materials, and accidents like slips or falling rocks, making it a highly dangerous occupation for these boys, who are the sole participants in this sector according to the data. The complete absence of girls in this field reinforces the gendered division of labor, where boys are disproportionately assigned the most physically demanding tasks.

Agricultural work in rural regions such as Kolda and Ziguinchor exposes young people to a different set of dangers. They labor from dawn until dusk in fields, using rudimentary tools and working with chemicals like pesticides and fertilizers, often without any form of protective gear. A youth from Kolda describes: “I work in the

fields from dawn until dusk, often without a break, and sometimes I have to handle products that give me headaches or skin rashes” (youth, Kolda). 28.6% of youth in agriculture reported physical injuries, which highlights the perilous nature of agricultural labor, particularly when combined with long hours, lack of breaks, and insufficient clothing. Seasonal agricultural work further traps these youths in cycles of poverty, where survival depends on enduring unsafe working conditions.

In commerce and office work, the risks appear less physically dangerous than in sectors like mining or agriculture, but they still pose significant challenges. Youths working in this sector may face exploitative conditions such as long working hours, low pay, and lack of labor protections. 5.3% of the youths involved in commerce reported labor exploitation, while 15.8% reported incidents of physical abuse or neglect. Although this sector does not involve heavy manual labor, the risks of abuse, overwork, and mental stress are common, especially when young people are working in informal or unregulated settings.

In large cities like Dakar, many youths without stable employment find themselves doing odd **jobs or begging** on the streets. Begging is not without risks; 10% of youths involved in begging reported physical injuries. These injuries stem not only from street exposure but also from the exploitation by adults who often control their earnings. Health issues due to poor living conditions and long hours without proper rest compound their vulnerabilities.

Those involved in **domestic work** are mostly girls (98.1%), and although only 3.8% of domestic workers reported physical injuries, this may obscure other forms of exploitation, such as psychological abuse, overwork, or underpayment. The data likely underreports these subtler forms of harm, which disproportionately affect girls.

The unique risks girls face in domestic environments include long working hours, isolation, and abuse, often left unrecorded due to the private nature of the work.

Prostitution emerged as a significant risk factor, though affecting a small portion of girls (3.3%), while no boys were recorded as involved. The girls

in prostitution are highly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and violence, with 18.5% experiencing sexual exploitation and 33.3% encountering sexual violence. The realities they face point to gender-specific vulnerabilities where young girls are more likely to be coerced into dangerous and abusive environments.

The presence of missing data in our dataset, particularly regarding the involvement of youths in prostitution and sexual exploitation, highlights a significant challenge in understanding the full range of risks faced by marginalized groups. These gaps often stem from the reluctance of vulnerable populations, such as LGBTQ youths or boys involved in prostitution, to disclose their experiences due to fear of stigmatization. Strong cultural and religious beliefs in Senegal shape societal attitudes, creating environments where revealing certain behaviors or identities could lead to social exclusion or retaliation. As a result, many children and youth on the move remain silent about the exploitation they endure, obscuring the full picture of their vulnerabilities. Significantly, while the dataset indicates that 33.3% of girls in prostitution reported experiencing sexual violence, this figure likely underrepresents the scope of the issue, particularly among LGBTQ youths. Cultural and religious stigmas surrounding sexual identity often drive these individuals into silence, fearing societal repercussions. This reality is compounded by the fact that these are not only marginalized individuals but children and youth, often separated from their families and communities, navigating perilous environments alone.

Understanding the specific vulnerabilities of children and youth on the move requires addressing both the gaps in data and the broader context of their mobility. Many of these children are driven into high-risk situations, including prostitution, not by choice but by the circumstances surrounding their migration—be it economic hardship, family rejection, or social exclusion. The Community-Based Child Protection Mapping (CBCPM) exercise, guided by the ChildFund Handbook, was instrumental in shedding light on these hidden realities.

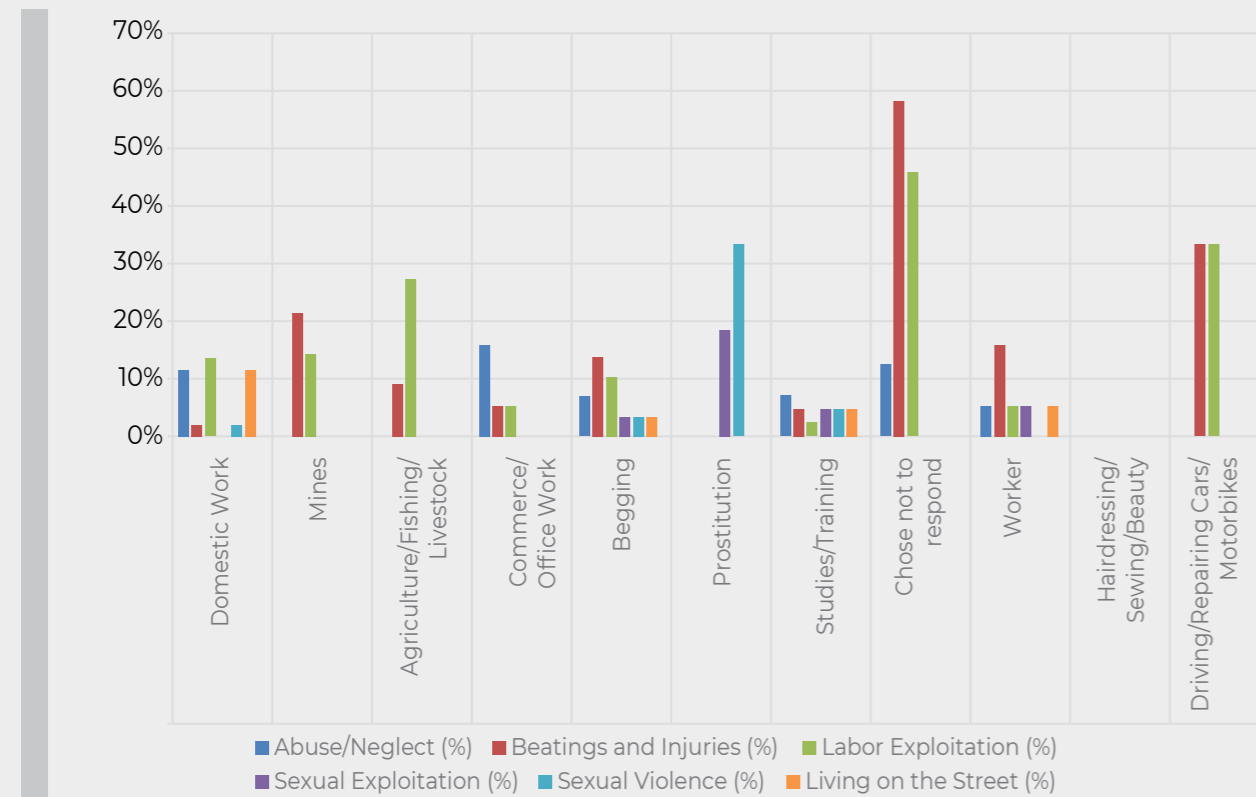
By engaging children, youth, and community members in participatory dialogues, the CBCPM created a safe space for open conversations about sensitive issues that traditional data collection methods often fail to capture.

Through the CBCPM process, it became clear that LGBTQ youths, like many other children and youth on the move, face multiple layers of vulnerability. These children, often rejected by their families or ostracized by their communities, are frequently forced into prostitution as a means of survival. Community members participating in the CBCPM provided critical insights into the harsh realities facing these youths, helping to reveal why many of them choose not to disclose their involvement in prostitution or instances of sexual exploitation. Fear of judgment, discrimination, and further violence compounds their reluctance to speak up, leading to significant underreporting of their experiences.

The CBCPM also highlighted how the intersection of being a child on the move and identifying as LGBTQ exacerbates the risks these youths face across different sectors. In addition to prostitution, LGBTQ youth are vulnerable to exploitation in sectors such as **begging, domestic work, and agriculture**. However, many do not report these abuses due to fear of social stigma, mistrust of authorities, or the risk of further exploitation. The category of “other” occupations, which likely includes unregulated and informal labor, provides further evidence that these children and youth, especially LGBTQ individuals, face hidden layers of abuse that are often missed by traditional surveys.

In this context, it is important to emphasize that these are children and youth on the move—individuals in transition who are often separated from their primary sources of protection, such as family and community support. The risks they face, whether in prostitution, domestic work, or other forms of labor, are intensified by their mobility. The fact that they are constantly moving, without stable support systems, makes them more susceptible to various forms of exploitation, including physical violence, sexual abuse, and coercion into dangerous or illegal activities.

Figure 12: Risk Profile/Type of occupation



Younger children, especially those aged 5 to 9, appear to be more vulnerable, displaying intense emotions of sadness or fear. For instance, among CYM, 80% of children aged 10 to 14 experienced their journey with sadness, compared to 25% of children aged 15 to 17. This data suggests that age plays an important role in how children perceive and experience their mobility. Younger children are generally more vulnerable in the context of mobility for several reasons, including their psychological development, dependence on adults, and lack of experience in dealing with difficult situations. The psychological burden on these young children is often heavier because they are less equipped to understand or cope with the stresses of displacement and the harsh realities of life away from home.

V. Psychosocial Impact of Mobility-Related Risks and Adaptation Strategies

Mobility exposes Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) to a myriad of psychosocial risks. These children, displaced from their homes, face significant emotional and psychological challenges, influenced by their gender, age, and the type of work they undertake. This section aims to delve deeper into these psychosocial dynamics, highlighting the emotional constraints and the coping strategies CYM employ to survive in often hostile mobility contexts.

Psychosocial Constraints:

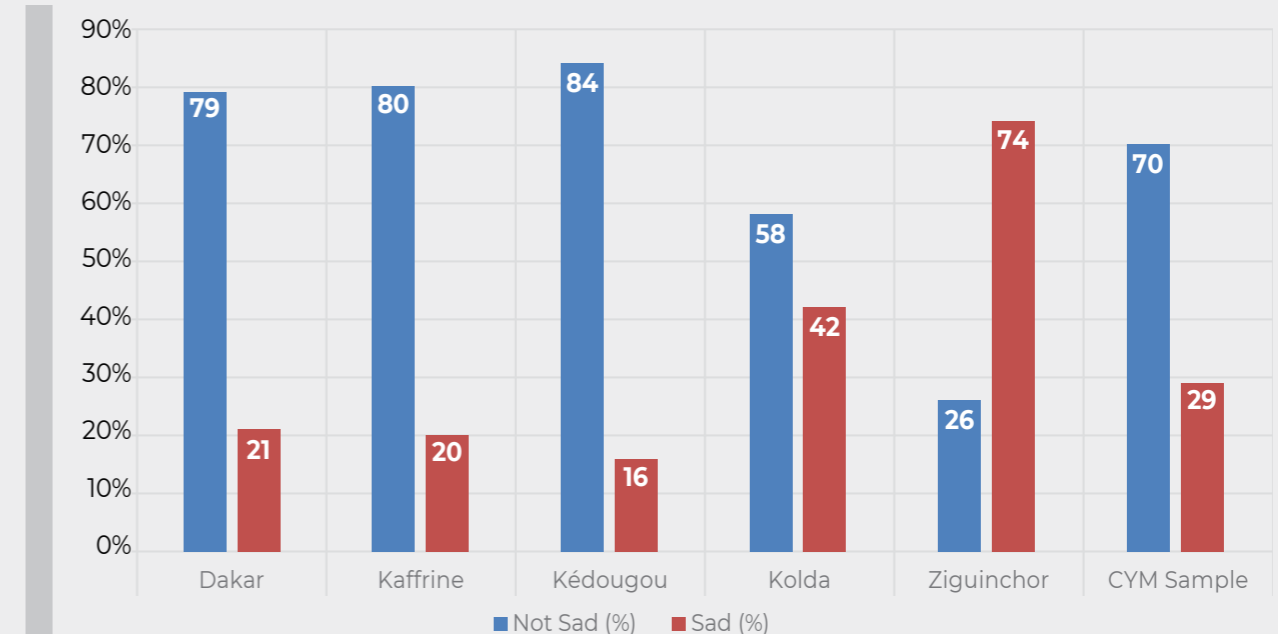
The emotional experiences of CYM reveal a reality where hope coexists with deep sadness, and where resilience is continually tested by ongoing stress. This stress reveals the daily challenges these children face and the psychological impact of their mobility experience. Despite their difficult circumstances, these children show a remarkable ability to navigate the psychological challenges associated with their mobility. However, the high proportion of children expressing sadness in certain regions is a key indicator of the severe conditions they face: 29.5% experience profound sadness, particularly in regions like Ziguinchor, where 73.9% are affected.

Age-related vulnerabilities:

Younger children, especially those aged 5 to 9, appear to be more vulnerable, displaying intense emotions of sadness or fear. For instance, among CYM, 80% of children aged 10 to 14 experienced their journey with sadness, compared to 25% of children aged 15 to 17. This data suggests that age plays an important role in how children perceive and experience their mobility. Younger children are generally more vulnerable in the context of mobility for several reasons, including their psychological development, dependence on adults, and lack of experience in dealing with difficult situations. The psychological burden on these young children is often heavier because they are less equipped to understand or cope with the stresses of displacement and the harsh realities of life away from home.

By adding these points, the text now better reflects a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by CYM, while maintaining all the original ideas and data/

Figure 13: Feelings of Sadness or Hope During the Journey



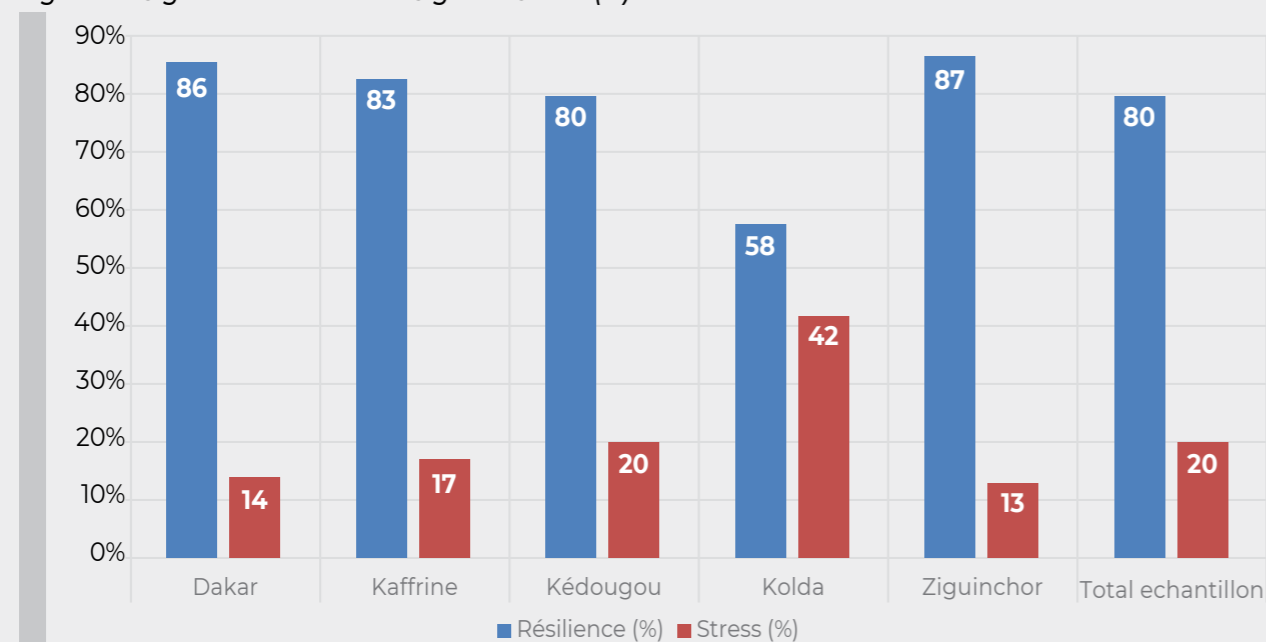
Signs of Resilience and Stress in Children and Youth on the Move (CYM)

Resilience among CYM is evidenced through actions such as continuing their education or engaging in peer support. Despite the challenges they face, many CYM demonstrate remarkable strength and adaptability. However, signs of stress—such as anxiety, withdrawal, or intense emotional reactions—are also prevalent. These responses vary by gender, age, and environment, highlighting the complexity of the CYM experience.

Researchers were notably surprised to find that 80.1% of CYM exhibited strong resilience, even in the face of stress and adversity. For instance, in Dakar and Ziguinchor, 86.2% and 87% of CYM respectively showed significant capacity to overcome challenges. This high level of resilience suggests that many of these young people possess internal or external resources that help them navigate their difficult circumstances.

However, resilience is not universal: 19.9% of the children reported experiencing intense stress, with particularly high levels noted in Kolda, where 42.1% described their journey as very stressful. This heightened stress is often linked to crises such as natural disasters, civil conflicts, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors exacerbate the already challenging conditions, making it harder for these children to maintain their resilience.

Figure 14: Signs of Resilience vs. Signs of Stress (%)



Emotional and Behavioral Reactions Among CYM in Senegal

Children in mobility in Senegal respond to challenges differently based on their age, gender, and environment. Girls often seek help more readily and look for practical solutions, expressing their emotions, such as sadness, fear, or frustration, through crying, followed by gradual adaptation. In contrast, boys tend to minimize dangers or choose inaction, influenced by social pressure that values endurance and independence, pushing them to hide their emotions.

The area of residence also significantly influences these reactions. In Ziguinchor, sadness predominates due to harsh living conditions and a lack of social support. One child described this period as “a time of fear and loneliness” (child, Ziguinchor). In Dakar, despite similar conditions, some children exhibit

greater resilience, likely due to a stronger support network. “It was difficult, but I learned to stay strong” (youth, Dakar).

Young children, particularly those aged 5 to 9, are more vulnerable to sadness and stress. One child shared: “I didn’t understand why we had to leave; all I felt was fear” (child, Kolda). Their dependence on adults for security can also become a major source of stress, especially when the adults themselves are struggling. “I just wanted to be with my mother, but she was as scared as I was, which made me even more afraid” (child, Kedougou). The lack of experience makes these children more susceptible to dangers and abuse.

Feelings of hope, sadness, resilience, and stress among CYM are strongly influenced by their social environment, age, and the support they receive. In regions affected by crises, such as the Casamance rebellion, stress is more pronounced, highlighting the importance of community and family support in helping these children develop resilience mechanisms.

Adaptation Strategies Among CYM

Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) in Senegal develop various strategies to overcome the daily challenges they face. They acquire survival skills, avoid assaults, and mature quickly. For example, a youth in Dakar expressed: “It allowed me to gain experience” (youth, Dakar). In Kedougou, another shared: “It helped me a lot to escape attempts” (youth, Kedougou). Other youths, such as those in Kolda, Kaffrine, and Ziguinchor, explained how these strategies helped them grow, survive, avoid violence, and maintain their dignity. A youth in Kedougou also emphasized the importance of education: “I continue my studies in peace” (youth, Kedougou). These strategies, though varied across regions, demonstrate the resilience and determination of these youths in the face of mobility challenges.

Figure 15: Summary of Adaptation Strategies

Adaptation Strategy	Description	Testimony
Gaining Experience	Acquiring practical and survival skills through difficult life experiences.	“It allowed me to gain experience” (Youth, Dakar).
Avoiding Sexual Assaults	Developing strategies to avoid risky situations.	“It helped me a lot to escape attempts” (Youth, Kedougou).
Growing and Maturing	Rapid maturation and development of resilience.	“It made me braver and move forward” (Youth, Kolda).
Surviving	Adopting behaviors focused on meeting basic needs.	“It helped me survive” (Youth, Kaffrine).
Avoiding Violence	Taking measures to avoid violent confrontations.	“It will allow me to avoid physical violence” (Youth, Ziguinchor).
Maintaining Dignity	Preserving a sense of self-respect and dignity.	“To be respected and protect my belongings” (Youth, Kolda).
Continuing Studies	Continuing education despite obstacles.	“I continue my studies in peace” (Youth, Kedougou).

The CYM adopt a variety of strategies to cope with the challenges of their situation. These strategies include seeking help, fleeing, resisting, or remaining passive when they feel lost. For instance, a child in Dakar shared: “I chose to do nothing because I didn’t know who to turn to for help. I felt alone and lost” (child, Dakar).

Community Strategies

Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) in Senegal adopt several strategies to cope with the challenges they face, often with the support of their communities. One key strategy, promoted by the PROTEJEM initiative (Save The Children, 2023) in Dakar’s suburbs and Kolda, is the creation of solidarity networks, where the community, including religious leaders and respected figures, organizes to monitor, protect, and support the CYM. For example, in some rural areas, network members take turns monitoring children’s movements to prevent exploitation or abuse. These networks also play an important role in disseminating information about potential dangers and helping CYM avoid risky situations.

Another important aspect is temporary shelter within the community. Volunteer foster families offer refuge to homeless or immediately endangered CYM. This type of shelter, often informal and based on verbal agreements, allows youths to find some stability. In urban areas like Dakar, this support is essential for those fleeing street violence or trafficking. Sometimes, these families receive community support in the form of food or clothing donations to help them meet the children’s needs.

Community mediation is also an effective strategy, especially when CYM are involved in conflicts. Community leaders, such as elders or religious chiefs, act as mediators to resolve disputes. For example, if a youth is accused of theft, the mediators intervene to prevent the conflict from escalating, finding peaceful solutions and promoting dialogue, which protects the youth from severe sanctions or violence.

Local communities also mobilize resources to meet the immediate needs of CYM, such as food, clothing, and sometimes money. Religious and traditional leaders play a central role in this mobilization. These resources are then distributed to the most vulnerable CYM, providing important material support. For example, some communities organize regular food distributions to prevent youths from going hungry.

Psychosocial support is another mobilized resource, with community members trained to offer emotional support to distressed youths, helping them overcome the traumas related to their mobility.

Finally, education and vocational training are priorities for breaking the cycle of poverty and marginalization. Communities raise awareness among parents and guardians about the importance of education, even for children in mobility, and collaborate with local schools to facilitate their enrollment. Local vocational training initiatives are also established, offering youths practical skills that increase their chances of finding stable employment. For example, in some rural areas, carpentry or sewing workshops are organized, enabling youths to develop income-generating skills.

These community strategies play an essential role in supporting CYM, providing immediate and locally adapted solutions. However, these efforts often require additional support from broader institutional interventions to be fully effective.

Psychosocial support is another mobilized resource, with community members trained to offer emotional support to distressed youths, helping them overcome the traumas related to their mobility.

Institutional Support for CYM: Operational and Strategic Interventions

Institutions involved in supporting CYM (Children and Youth on the Move) in Senegal are divided into two categories: operational and strategic. Operational ddfb vulnerability.

Despite the diversity of actors involved in supporting CYM throughout their journey, the services offered remain largely insufficient. For instance, in Dakar, only 2.3% of CYM received aid upon arrival, mainly in the form of food assistance. In Kaffrine, institutional support is rare, with only 1.6% of CYM benefiting from personal assistance. Kédougou stands out for better involvement of reception centers, where 1.4% of CYM received direct aid. In regions like Kolda and Ziguinchor, informal and institutional support is present but remains insufficient to meet the needs of this vulnerable population.

The following section will delve into the strategies and institutional challenges, examining the responses of operational and strategic organizations, which will describe in more detail the institutional support provided to CYM.

What Response to the Primary Needs of CYM?

Institutional strategies play a complementary role to community initiatives, providing resources, specialized services, and coordination that exceed local capacities. These institutions, whether governmental, non-governmental, or from civil society, intervene at various levels to strengthen the protection of CYM in Senegal.

Prevention Services

The prevention services provided by institutions primarily aim to strengthen the capacities of families and communities to protect CYM. This includes educational programs on children’s rights, the dangers of mobility, and ways to prevent risky situations. For example, awareness campaigns are regularly organized in schools and community centers to inform young people and their families about the risks of child trafficking and early marriages. These campaigns use visual aids, interactive workshops, and testimonies to effectively convey key messages. Additionally, some institutions work closely with local authorities to train community leaders to identify signs of danger in children and to intervene appropriately.

Intervention Services

Regarding direct intervention, institutions provide immediate protection to CYM through reception centers, social services, and reintegration structures. Reception centers offer a safe haven for youths in immediate danger, such as those fleeing



Limited Support Upon Arrival in Dakar

Only 2.3% of CYM in Dakar received any aid upon arrival, mostly just food assistance.



Gaps in Institutional Help in Kaffrine

In Kaffrine, only 1.6% of CYM accessed personal assistance from institutions — highlighting a critical support gap.



Reception Centers Make a Difference in Kédougou

Kédougou shows slightly better support: 1.4% of CYM received direct aid through reception centers — still far from enough.



Inadequate but Present – Kolda & Ziguinchor

Both Kolda and Ziguinchor offer a mix of informal and institutional support, but it remains insufficient to meet the needs of migrating children and youth.

exploitation or violence. These centers are often equipped to provide basic medical care, psychological support, and school reintegration services. For example, in Kédougou, reception centers play a key role by offering direct aid to 1.4% of CYM, which, although modest, represents an essential safety net for those who benefit. Social services, on the other hand, work to reintegrate CYM into their families of origin or place them in safer environments while providing continuous support to ensure their long-term well-being.

Coordination and Capacity Building

Institutions also play an important role in coordinating efforts among the various actors involved in protecting CYM. This coordination is essential to avoid duplication, fill gaps, and maximize the effectiveness of interventions.

For example, child protection committees are often set up at the local and regional levels to ensure smooth communication between social services, NGOs, local authorities, and communities. These committees meet regularly to assess progress, identify new challenges, and adjust strategies accordingly.

Capacity building for local actors is another key component of institutional strategies. This includes ongoing training for social workers, teachers, healthcare workers, and law enforcement officers on best practices in child protection and managing cases of mobility. These trainings are often accompanied by the provision of additional resources, such as practical guides, monitoring tools, and logistical equipment, to ensure that local actors have the necessary means to implement interventions effectively.

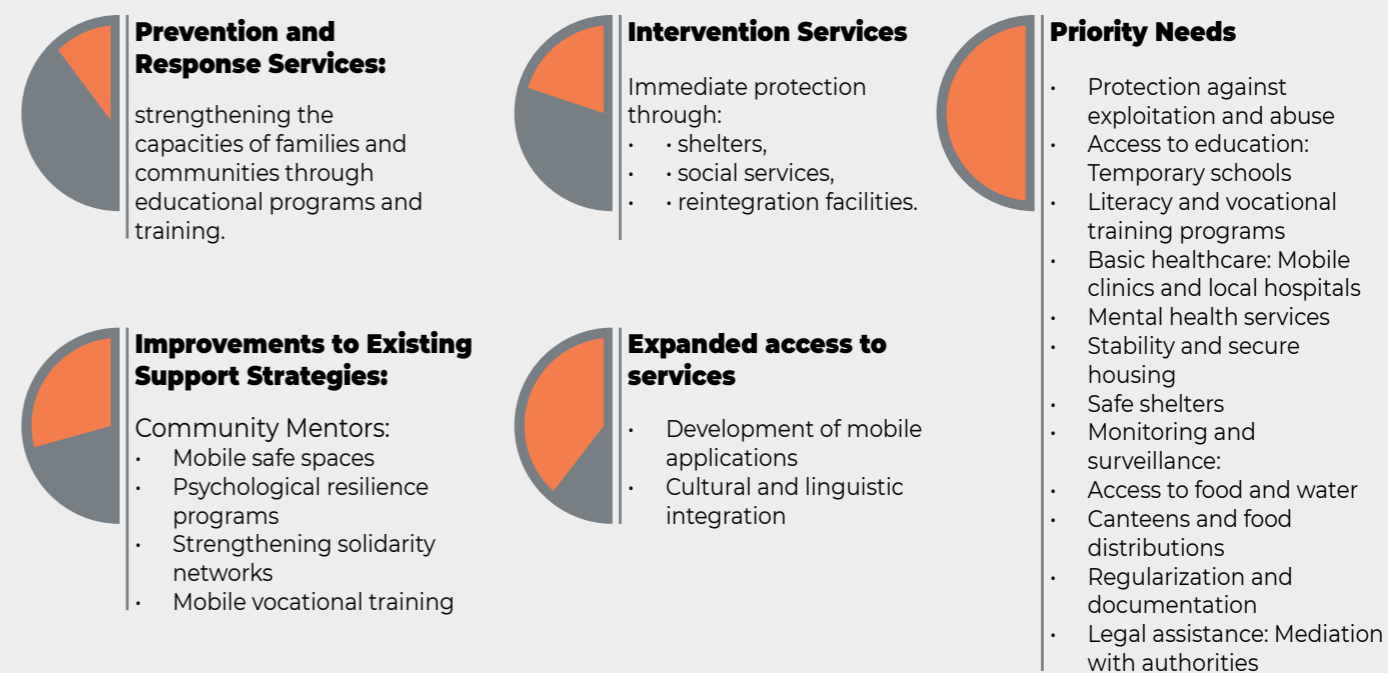
Legal Support and Access to Services

Access to legal services is also a priority for institutions supporting CYM. Children in mobility, often without legal documentation, are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, making access to legal assistance essential for regularizing their status. Institutions set up mobile legal assistance services, which travel to transit areas to offer advice and help in obtaining necessary documents, such as birth certificates, residence permits, and school documents.

Despite the involvement of many actors, the mobility of CYM in Senegal remains inadequately supported. In Dakar, only 2.3% of migrants received assistance upon arrival, primarily in the form of food aid. In Kaffrine, institutional support is rare, with only 1.6% of migrants benefiting from assistance. In Kédougou, reception centers have played a more significant role, with 1.4% of migrants receiving direct aid. In Kolda, informal support is more present, with examples of assistance from family members, although this remains rare (2.7% of cases). Ziguinchor stands out for more marked institutional and community support, with psychological support offered to 3.7% of respondents. Overall, a significant portion of migrants received no assistance, with 4.7% in Dakar and 1.6% in Kaffrine reporting a complete lack of support. These percentages show that even when support is present, it only reaches an insignificant fraction of CYM, highlighting the need for increased and better-coordinated institutional assistance.

Support for CYM remains inadequate. In Dakar, only 2.3% of migrants received assistance upon arrival, primarily in the form of food aid. In Kaffrine, institutional support is scarce, with just 1.6% of migrants benefiting from any form of assistance. In Kédougou, reception centers have played a more significant role, with 1.4% of migrants receiving direct aid. In Kolda, informal support, such as assistance from family members, is more common, although still rare (2.7% of cases). Ziguinchor stands out for more substantial institutional and community support, with 3.7% of respondents receiving psychological support. Overall, a large proportion of migrants received no assistance, with 4.7% in Dakar and 1.6% in Kaffrine reporting a complete lack of support.

Figure 16: Initiatives and perspectives



These initiatives aim to enhance the protection of young people by leveraging local strengths and adapting interventions to cultural and social realities. However, stakeholders have expressed significant concerns regarding child protection in areas affected by the mobility of Children and Youth on the Move (CYM). A notable portion of responses (around 30%) indicates that child protection is currently weak and requires substantial improvements. For instance, some institutions described the situation as “concerning” and emphasized the need to create more shelters, provide vocational training for the disabled, and establish safe houses. The terms “weakness of reception structures” and “lack of qualified personnel” are frequently mentioned, highlighting the existing gaps in infrastructure and human resources.

Approximately 25% of responses emphasize the need to strengthen collaboration and coordination among the various actors involved in the protection of CYM. Institutions have pointed out “challenges in institutional response” and the need for “synergy in the intervention of actors.” For example, one response suggests “setting up mechanisms to support CYM (reception structures, community committees for case detection, especially at the border level)” to improve the effectiveness of interventions.

Financial and logistical challenges represent about 20% of the responses. Institutions identified the “cost of care” as a major obstacle. They also mentioned the necessity of “strengthening border controls” and “building zonal centers for the care of vulnerable children and youth.” These responses indicate that current resources are insufficient to meet the growing needs of CYM.

Awareness and education efforts are also highlighted in about 15% of the responses. Institutions recommend “enhancing communication and awareness” and implementing specific programs for CYM. For instance, they suggest creating “structures or listening and reception points for CYM” and conducting cross-border awareness campaigns.

Around 10% of responses point to the lack of dedicated programs and projects for the protection of CYM. Institutions note the “absence of specific programs for young people and children in mobility” and call for the implementation of such programs to fill this gap.

35%
of the CYM highlight psychological and emotional effects, including trauma, stress, and loss of self-confidence.

30%
of institutions report negative impacts on education, such as school abandonment and dropout.

20%
of responses link mobility to increased social vulnerability, including tendencies toward delinquency and criminal behavior.

10%
of responses mention health risks, such as early pregnancies and malnutrition.

5%
of responses cite exploitation and abuse, including violence and trafficking.

Training and capacity-building needs are mentioned in about 10% of responses. Institutions indicate that “capacity-building for actors and communities” is essential to improve CYM protection. They also call for better “training, capacity building, and supervision” for social workers and other professionals involved.

Effects of Mobility on the Lives of CYM

Institutions have identified several effects of mobility on CYM. Approximately 35% of responses highlight psychological and emotional effects, such as trauma, stress, and loss of self-confidence. Responses such as “trauma, stress, drugs, alcohol, prostitution” illustrate the severity of these impacts.

Nearly 30% of institutions emphasize the negative impact of mobility on CYM’s education, with consequences such as school dropout. For example, “school abandonment and dropout, stigmatization” show how mobility hinders CYM from continuing their education. Mobility also increases social vulnerability and the tendency toward delinquency, with responses like “They turn to banditry, juvenile delinquency.” Approximately 10% of responses concern health problems and physical risks, such as early pregnancies and malnutrition. “Early pregnancies among young girls, juvenile delinquency among boys” exemplifies these dangers. Finally, 5% of responses mention forms of exploitation and abuse, such as violence and trafficking.

Effects of Children and Youth Mobility on the Locality

Institutions have also noted the effects of mobility on localities, with 40% of responses highlighting insecurity and violence as major consequences. For example, “violence, prostitution” shows the dangers faced by CYM and their communities. About 30% of institutions report a deterioration in socio-economic conditions, such as the mass departure of CYM leading to a reduction in the local workforce. “Poverty, reduced economy” is an example of this. The impact on education is mentioned in 20% of responses, with concerns such as low enrollment rates. Finally, 10% of institutions note a decline in morals and social cohesion, and 5% focus on health and well-being issues.

Potential and Opportunities for Supporting Children and Youth on the Move

The analysis of services deemed most useful by CYM in Senegal reveals significant opportunities, despite regional disparities. The testimonies of CYM highlight several key areas where interventions could be strengthened to improve their living conditions and future prospects.

Education and training emerge as essential elements for the professional integration of CYM. Many young people emphasize the importance of continuing to learn and acquiring specific skills to secure employment. “Technology will allow me to learn new styles and promote my work” (Dakar, male, adult), says one youth, emphasizing the importance of technological skills in their professional development. To meet this need, it is important to strengthen vocational training programs and improve access to tailored educational resources. Indeed, 36.2% of respondents consider education and training as essential elements for finding a job in their field of interest.

Financial and material resources constitute another fundamental aspect for these youths. The lack of resources is often cited as a major obstacle to realizing their professional projects. “If you have money, you can start a business” (Ziguinchor, female, minor), explains one youth, illustrating the need for financial support to undertake business ventures.

Microcredit initiatives, grants for young entrepreneurs, and material support programs can provide important opportunities to help CYM start their own businesses. This need is highlighted by 29.3% of respondents who mention the importance of financial and material resources for achieving their ambitions.

Housing is a fundamental need and a highly valued service by CYM. In several regions, particularly in Dakar and Kolda, housing is cited as one of the best services received. “The center welcomed us, takes care of us, and feeds us” (Kolda, female, minor), says one youth, emphasizing the importance of having a safe and stable place to stay. To address this need, it would be relevant to consider expanding reception centers, creating temporary housing, and providing long-term housing solutions for young people in mobility.

Job creation and entrepreneurship are also seen as promising avenues for CYM. “I want to create a multi-service business” (Dakar, male, adult), affirms one youth, reflecting the desire of many young people to become entrepreneurs and create their own job opportunities. This aspiration, shared by 6.9% of respondents, highlights the importance of facilitating access to funding, offering business management training, and developing start-up incubators to support this goal.

Finally, community support and social networks play a key role in the journey of CYM. “Social networks will make it easier for me to sell” (Kédougou, female, adult), states one youth, emphasizing the impact of modern technologies on their economic activities. Strengthening community networks, using digital platforms to promote products and services, and implementing mentorship programs can contribute to creating a more supportive environment for young people in mobility.

When asked what they need to succeed in their field of interest, CYM primarily cite education/training (36.2%), financial/material resources (29.3%), and job creation/entrepreneurship (6.9%).

36.2%
of respondents identify education and vocational training as key to securing employment in their field of interest.

29.3%
of respondents identify education and vocational training as key to securing employment in their field of interest.

6.9%
of respondents identify education and vocational training as key to securing employment in their field of interest.



Safe Housing and Community Support:

6.9% of respondents identify education and vocational training as key to securing employment in their field of interest.

Continuous support in these areas is important to helping them overcome employment obstacles and succeed in their entrepreneurial initiatives.

Priorities Identified

Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) in Senegal face heightened risks due to their displacement, whether caused by poverty, exploitation, or the lack of adequate protection. These risks vary depending on gender, age, and occupation, with particular vulnerability for young girls and the youngest children, who are often exposed to harmful traditional practices and abuse. Additionally, factors such as climate change, emergencies, and natural catastrophes exacerbate these vulnerabilities, particularly displacing families and children in regions like Kédougou, Kaffrine, Kolda, Ziguinchor, and Dakar, which were the focus of this study. The ongoing conflict in the southern region of Casamance also pushes many children into precarious situations. Other regions, such as Tambacounda, Matam, and Saint-Louis, while not included in this study, also face significant mobility challenges due to similar socio-economic and environmental pressures.

Despite these challenges, CYM develop adaptive strategies, such as creating solidarity networks, accessing education and vocational training, and receiving psychosocial support, which demonstrate their resilience. However, to strengthen these efforts, broader institutional interventions are necessary, including better

coordination among actors and increased resource allocation.

Priorities that emerged include the creation of specialized reception centers, the development of vocational training programs, and the need for capacity building within local protection structures. Collaboration with local and international actors is important for ensuring sustainable results, while awareness campaigns in schools and communities are essential for addressing social and cultural barriers. Financial opportunities should also be expanded for vulnerable families, and interventions must be adapted to the specific needs of each region. A subregional approach to research, encompassing neighboring countries in West Africa, is critical for understanding cross-border mobility risks and ensuring that protection strategies are effectively implemented across the region

The table below summarizes the identified priorities for improving the living conditions of CYM in Senegal, based on analyses of challenges, resilience strategies, and existing support.

Institutional strategies complement community initiatives by providing resources, specialized services, and coordination that surpass local capacities. These institutions, whether governmental, non-governmental, or from civil society, intervene at various levels to strengthen the protection of Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) in Senegal.

Institutions have identified several effects of mobility on CYM. Nearly 30% of institutions emphasize the negative impact of mobility on CYM’s education, with consequences such as school dropout. For example, “school abandonment and dropout, stigmatization” show how mobility hinders CYM from continuing their education. Mobility also increases social vulnerability and the tendency toward delinquency, with responses like “They turn to banditry, juvenile delinquency and prostitution.” Approximately 10% of responses concern health problems and physical risks, such as early pregnancies and malnutrition. “Early pregnancies among young girls, juvenile delinquency among boys” exemplifies these dangers. Finally, 5% of responses mention forms of exploitation and abuse, such as violence and trafficking.

Table of Recommendations Issued by CYM and Other Stakeholders

Figure 17: Table of Recommendations Issued by CYM and Other Stakeholders

Recommendation	Details	Responsible Parties
Synergy	Establish formal collaboration protocols with authorities and institutions involved in child protection to ensure judicial and social protection for CYM. Actively participate in local child protection meetings and committees to coordinate efforts.	Ministry of Women and Solidarity, NGOs, Communities, CYM
Cross-Border Study	Conduct a detailed cross-border study on the risks and vulnerabilities of children in mobility within border areas to adapt interventions. Collect data on frequent crossing points and destinations of children and youth in mobility.	Ministry of Women and Solidarity, NGOs, National Social Action, CYM
Existing Initiatives	Map and evaluate existing local initiatives to integrate and strengthen ongoing efforts. Establish formal partnerships with local organizations to pool resources and share best practices.	Ministry of Women and Solidarity, NGOs, National Social Action
Reception Centers	Create and equip specialized reception centers offering psychosocial, medical, and educational services. Develop family and community reintegration programs for children and youth in mobility.	Ministry of Women and Solidarity, NGOs, National Social Action, Communities
Departmental Services	Collaborate with departmental child protection services for coordinated care. Mobilize technical services to provide specialized support in health, education, and legal protection.	Ministry of Women and Solidarity, National Social Action, NGOs
Awareness and Training	Organize awareness campaigns on child rights and mobility-related dangers in schools and communities. Train teachers, social workers, and local authorities on child rights protection.	Ministry of Women and Solidarity, National Social Action, Communities, NGOs
Care Provision	Identify and remove children in dangerous situations and place them in safe environments. Organize digital workshops to educate children about online dangers and protect them from exploitation.	Ministry of Women and Solidarity, National Social Action, NGOs, CYM
Capacity Building	Train and equip local child protection structures to improve their response capacity. Provide logistical and IT equipment to local structures to facilitate their interventions.	Ministry of Women and Solidarity, National Social Action, NGOs
Equal Opportunities	Ensure equitable access to education for all children, with particular attention to girls and vulnerable children. Implement programs to combat discrimination in schools and communities.	Ministry of Women and Solidarity, National Social Action, NGOs, Communities

Regional Adaptation	Tailor interventions to local contexts and the specific needs of children in mobility in each region. Involve community actors in the design of interventions to ensure their relevance.	Ministry of Women and Solidarity, National Social Action, NGOs, Communities
Training and Equipment	Organize ongoing training on gender-based violence (GBV) for local actors. Provide logistical and IT equipment to local structures to enhance their intervention capacity.	Ministry of Women and Solidarity, National Social Action, NGOs
Partnerships and Awareness	Establish strategic partnerships with local and international NGOs for a coordinated approach. Raise community awareness about the negative impacts of social networks and cultural influences on children and youth.	Ministry of Women and Solidarity, National Social Action, NGOs, Communities, CYM
Sustainability	Involve decentralized services from the start of interventions to ensure their sustainability. Establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to sustain results and adjust strategies based on developments.	Ministry of Women and Solidarity, National Social Action, NGOs
Vocational Training and Reintegration	Develop vocational training programs focused on digital skills and entrepreneurship for youth in mobility. Facilitate school reintegration for children in mobility by strengthening formal and non-formal education systems.	Ministry of Women and Solidarity, National Social Action, NGOs, Communities, CYM
Intergenerational Conflicts	Promote dialogue between parents and children through workshops and mediation sessions. Raise awareness about the importance of non-monetized social relationships and education for children's development.	Ministry of Women and Solidarity, National Social Action, Communities, NGOs
Income-Generating Activities	Collaborate with Departmental Child Protection Committees (CDPE) to develop economic activities for vulnerable families. Create income-generating projects for families to reduce risks related to child mobility.	Ministry of Women and Solidarity, National Social Action, Communities, NGOs
Active Services	Strengthen and support existing support services to better meet the needs of children in mobility. Support departmental family and child protection services as contact points for children in mobility.	Ministry of Women and Solidarity, National Social Action, NGOs

These recommendations emphasize the importance of expanding the scope of research beyond national borders. Conducting a comprehensive subregional study would provide a better understanding of cross-border risks and vulnerabilities faced by CYM in different West African countries. This research could track mobility patterns, identify high-risk areas, and share best practices across nations.

A subregional approach is essential for adapting interventions to common challenges faced by neighboring countries, ensuring that policies are harmonized and resources are optimized to protect children across borders. Additionally, such collaboration could lead to coordinated efforts for tackling human trafficking and exploitation more effectively.

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