

Barcelona, September 15th, 2010. The [Global Movement for Children](#) (GMC) and [Save the Children](#)

have launched “

[Leaving Home](#)

”

, a report on the causes, risks and consequences of migration for children. With the support of the Catalan Government, the report collects the experiences of children who are or have been on the move, an often unseen group within the global migration phenomenon.

The report denounces the invisibility of children within international debates and immigration policies on the issue as well as the lack of adequate policies to address their specific needs. It voices the experiences of children who, willingly or unwillingly, have left their homes and it analyses the wide array of causes and consequences that migration has for children beyond those who have been victims of criminal activities such as child trafficking or exploitation. Current protection responses, both at destination and countries of origin focus on those children who are victims of trafficking or exploitation but are oblivious to all those who are equally vulnerable but who have not fallen in the hands of international criminal networks.

It also exposes the fact that, too often, immigration policies at destination for this vulnerable group either don't exist or are totally inadequate to address children's specific needs since they are mainly focused on returning them to their home countries without assessing each case individually nor the causes why they migrated. To this end, the report presents a case study on Catalonia, where innovative policies on receiving migrant children have recently been put in place.

Mass migration and displacement is on the increase driven by poverty, conflict, failing states, natural disasters and climate change. In 2005, 191 million people migrated from one country to another with the numbers of people migrating within countries estimated to be even higher. Many of these are children. But for them, movement can be a dangerous and risky experience, which can leave them vulnerable to exploitation, coercion, deception, violence and isolation at every stage of their journey.

“The importance of keeping in mind that migration for many children may be a positive change when they are running away from abuse or extreme poverty or because they leave in search of a better life, hence, we must not criminalize them when they end up as undocumented migrants at destination ”, says Miquel de Paladella, GMC's Executive Coordinator.

The report summarises a good number of studies conducted by NGOs working with children on the move such as [Terre des Hommes](#) , [Plan International](#) , [UNICEF](#) or the [African Movement of Child and Youth Workers](#) (MAEJT), among others. The report ends with ten general recommendations on best practices when working with this vulnerable group and it points to the need of taking into consideration children's views and experiences when drafting protection responses.