

DevInfo in Action

Using DevInfo to Publicize International Migration Data

Spurred by a steady increase in international migration over the past decades, migration has clearly emerged as one of the most critical – and complex – global issues of the 21st century. Today, an estimated 3 per cent of the world’s population now live outside their country of birth,¹ underscoring the crucial need for accurate migration data to guide evidence-based policy-making.

But until recently, data disaggregated by sex and gender was simply unavailable. According to Jeronimo Cortina, Assistant Professor of Political Science and Director, Project on Migration, Development and Evaluation, University of Houston, “Even though many individual countries have been collecting data on persons under 20 years of age who were born outside the country of enumeration as part of the population census, there were no harmonized estimates for all countries and areas of the world.”

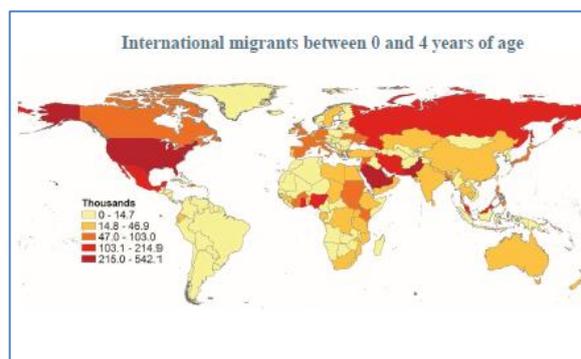
The result? Countries were formulating migration policies in the absence of any evidence – which may have had unintended consequences, especially when dealing with policies affecting the most vulnerable sub-populations: women, children and adolescents.

In response, the Population Division of the United Nations, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA), UNICEF and the University of Houston (USA) partnered on a new online data portal: [MigrantInfo](#), a flexible database system that displays the United Nations Population Division’s newly-generated comparable estimates of the international migrant stock, disaggregated by age and gender. Adapted from the UN-endorsed [DevInfo](#) database platform, MigrantInfo was launched officially in November 2010 in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico at the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

“This is truly a breakthrough in terms of data-sharing,” explains Cortina excitedly. “This is the first time that the world has had access to this type of age- and sex-disaggregated migration data in a reliable, comparable way. Of course, the numbers are also now available for download from the UN Population Division’s website, but MigrantInfo allows users to generate tables, graphs and maps using a single-source software, which facilitates, increases, and speeds-up knowledge sharing among stakeholders.”



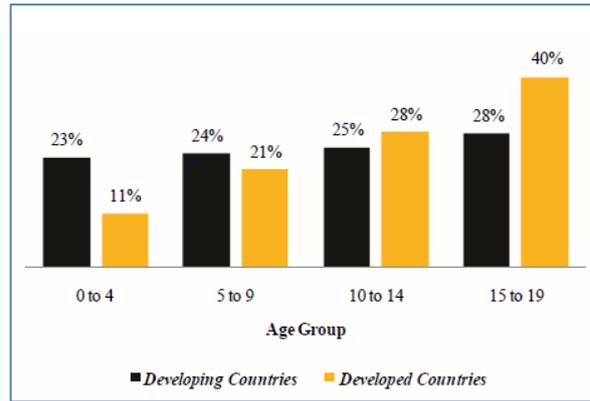
MigrantInfo online database



International migrants between 0 and 4 years of age

¹ Statement by the President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly, Helsinki, 13 October 2011, accessed at <http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/66/statements/finland131011.shtml> on 8 November 2011.

Far from serving as just another data dissemination portal, MigrantInfo is envisioned to fill a major gap in supplying national policy-makers with reliable migration data for decision-making. Cortina continues, “In particular, these global estimates will allow policy-makers to understand the levels and trends of child and adolescent migration across the globe, to support the formulation of coherent policies regarding safeguarding the rights and welfare of women, children and adolescents. Policy-makers now have access to reliable disaggregated data by age and gender at the national and regional levels, to measure the impacts of migration and minimize its negative effects on migrant families and communities.”



Migrants under 20 years of age

Looking ahead to 2012, Cortina plans to continue his efforts to promote the use of data for evidence-based policy-making by increasing global awareness of the MigrantInfo platform. “While good data may not solve all the world’s migration-related problems, it can certainly help support the development of solutions to tackling existing ones,” he affirms.

Data making a difference.

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