

# Narrative – Migration

Migration is a defining issue of our time and one of the biggest challenges facing societies around the world today. Worldwide, nearly 1 out of 40 children have been uprooted from their homes.

Save the Children estimates that due to prolonged exposure to the horrors of war and life as refugees, millions of Syrian children could be living in a state of toxic stress<sup>55</sup> which can affect the development of a child's brain and cause life-long physical and mental health problems.<sup>56</sup>

The social service workforce stands on the front line supporting migrants through family and community-based support, but the impact of their work depends on receiving the proper political and financial support.

A strong social service workforce is comprised of paid and unpaid, governmental and nongovernmental professionals and para professionals working to ensure the healthy development of migrant children around the world, including ensuring family reunification and psychosocial support.

Unaccompanied children in the United Kingdom, Zambia, and Mexico are assigned social workers who are well-trained to understand their needs and rights and can ensure access to safe services.<sup>57</sup>

Studies show that a well-planned, well-developed, and well-supported workforce<sup>58</sup> is better equipped to support migrant children and families to recover from emergency situations and crises and go on to reach their full potential. Failing to strengthen the workforce means limiting the effectiveness of solutions that have been proven to work.

Policy and decision-makers can ensure the health, and resilience of migrant families and children by strengthening the social service workforce to give them the tools and resources they need to tackle one of the most pressing issues facing us today.

<sup>55</sup> Save the Children (2017), Invisible Wounds, The impact of six years of war on the mental health of Syria's children.

<sup>56</sup> WithoutViolence, How violence & neglect leave their marks on a child's brain, infographic: <http://www.withoutviolence.org/infographics/>

<sup>57</sup> UNICEF (2016), Uprooted, The growing Crisis for Refugee and Migrant Children.

<sup>58</sup> Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (2016), The Evidence Matrix for the Social Service Workforce.