



Ayuda en Acción

Global Forum on Migration and Development

Position paper

Geneva, 22nd-25th January 2024

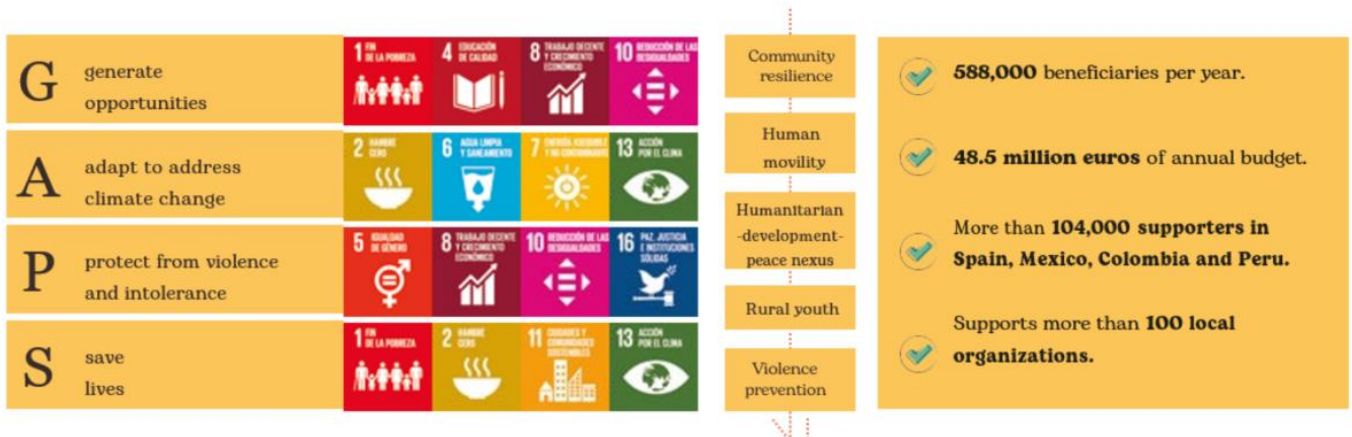
Who we are

Ayuda en Acción is an international NGO that fights the causes and consequences of poverty and inequality around the world. In **19 countries** across Latin America, Africa and Europe, we work to generate opportunities so that young people can build a better future.

We have been working for more than **40 years** with long-term programs, supporting thousands of vulnerable people, mainly women, in key stages of their lives (childhood and adolescence).

We act in areas affected by climate change, conflict and poverty, responding to the most basic needs with a long-term vision, and seeking solutions to prolonged crises. We mobilize to ensure safe, equitable and prosperous environments in which communities have the most favorable conditions for their own development, whereby **migration is a free and informed choice**.

What we do



Our rights-based approach to migration & development



Address structural factors

We work to mitigate the adverse drivers and structural factors that hinder people from living in dignity in their place of origin. We help vulnerable communities to develop adaptation and resilience strategies to cope with the impact of climate change and environmental degradation, and promote sustainable livelihoods. We also foster local economic development and decent jobs, and promote inclusive governance and social cohesion.



Socio-economic inclusion

We support socioeconomic inclusion of migrants, refugees, IDPs and returnees by promoting access education and training, as well as decent employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, in collaboration the private sector. We strive to promote long term structural changes and enabling environments in host communities in order to expand opportunities for both migrants and locals.



Humanitarian action and protection

We promote a safe migration and mobility for refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons under a rights-based and a gender-responsive approach. Along migration corridors, we provide basic humanitarian aid, including legal assistance and psychosocial support.



Fight against racism and discrimination

We work with schools, local media, public authorities and the private sector in building positive public narratives, discourse and attitudes towards migration.

Global Forum on Migration and Development

The [GFMD](#) is a state-led, informal and non-binding process, which helps shape the global debate on migration and development. It provides a flexible, multi-stakeholder space where governments can discuss the multi-dimensional aspects, opportunities and challenges related to migration, development, and the link between these two areas. The GFMD process allows governments - in partnership with civil society, the private sector, local and regional governments, youth, the UN system and other relevant stakeholders - to analyze and discuss sensitive issues, create consensus, pose innovative solutions, and share policy and practices.



Why the GFMD is important for us

Poverty, inequality, conflict and human rights violations are some of the factors that cause internal displacement and cross-border migration. On the other hand, **migration is an important driver of sustainable economic and social development**, and a way of adapting to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

As an International NGO, we face the daily challenges of migration in some of the main migration corridors in Latin America and Africa, where many people risk their lives on dangerous migration routes in the absence of legal pathways to migrate and access to international protection. At the same time, our efforts to promote the welfare of vulnerable communities, both of origin and destination, find in migration an important driver for economic, social and cultural development. Taking into account this background, the GFMD represents an opportunity to contribute to discussions and debates, make social realities visible, and exchange good practices

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around the migration and development nexus. Our frontline experience working with migrants, refugees, displaced persons and host communities, as well as with authorities and local stakeholders, represents a valuable asset from which we hope to contribute to building **a fairer world for people in mobility** around the world.

Our advocacy points

As part of the global Civil Society, we have participated in the preparatory activities coordinated by the Civil Society Action Committee. The result of these months of fruitful exchange and discussion has been a set of key positions from Civil Society that we fully subscribe as observant organization of the Action Committee. In addition to them, we would like to highlight the following messages, as they are of great relevance for Ayuda en Acción:



Impact of climate change on human mobility

- We firmly defend the **right to live in dignity in the place of origin**, and likewise the right to (not) migrate. Migration must be an act of free choice. In the context of the current climate crisis, this requires decisive actions and political commitment to mitigation and adaptation to climate change. We urge governments, particularly in the Global North, to meet their international commitments, and forward a renewed and more ambitious global agenda to tackle global warming and boost environmental protection.

- We call for **climate justice** as climate change disproportionately impacts marginalized communities. When it comes to climate-induced cross-border migration, the lack of international protection instruments and the restrictive border management policies, put migrants at risk. Again, this situation disproportionately affects vulnerable people from the Global South. Consequently, together with our call for Climate Justice, we claim for Migration Justice.
- We welcome initiatives such as the environmental humanitarian visa program (for populations affected by socio-natural disasters in Central America and the Caribbean) implemented by Argentina. However, **broader international cooperation** is needed in this regard to expand this type of protection initiatives.
- Adaptation and mitigation efforts, as well as disaster preparedness must **put local communities on the lead** and include migrants in origin, transit and host communities.
- While understanding migration as an adaptive measure to the impact of climate change and it needs to be rights-based, it is important not to neglect the situation of **“trapped populations”** that do not have the means to migrate (nor the intention, in some cases). Often these groups are the most vulnerable.
- **Greater effort is needed on research** for evidence-based programs to inform and enforce public policies. Ayuda en Acción contributes to this effort with several research initiatives that put migrants’ views at the centre.

Rights and labour migration

- We advocate for the **respect of the rights** of migrants workers and their families in all stages of their migration projects, and regardless of their migration status.

- **Legal pathways** to labour migration and regularization procedures must be available throughout time, be inclusive, gender-sensitive, and have a wide scope. In addition, family unity must be a guiding principle.
- Legal status is a necessary precondition to ensure migrants rights at work, but **additional protection mechanisms** must be in place. National authorities should enforce labour and antidiscrimination standards to protect the rights of migrant workers regardless of their legal status (including collective bargaining and freedom of assembly), combat xenophobia, ensure inclusion, fair working conditions and gender equality.
- **International legal instruments** must be ratified and fully implemented, in particular, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).



- **Social dialogue** including public authorities, trade unions, private sector and migrants' organizations should be encouraged. With labour rights at the centre of the discussion, all parties may benefit from the inclusion of migrants in local economies.
- **International cooperation** should be strengthened to promote skills recognition, portability of social benefits and Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements that respect labour rights.
- **Gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace must be eradicated.** This must be a priority for employers, labour authorities and trade unions.
- **Migrant workers in the informal economy**, as well as those working in sectors that often lack regular migration pathways (e.g. care and domestic work, agriculture) require **special protection** from authorities. Some of these sectors have a large participation of migrant women and exploitation and quasi-slavery practices are on the rise.
- **Self-employment** is another way for migrants' socioeconomic inclusion that must be overlooked. National legal frameworks and policies to support entrepreneurship should consider migrants and refugees as beneficiaries with specific needs and distinct potential.

Positive narratives, culture and discourse

- We promote a culture of peace, solidarity and citizen participation, and **combat xenophobic and racist discourses** that criminalize migrants. It is necessary to make visible the benefits of migration in host communities and build evidence-based narratives and discourses that give rise to human rights oriented policies.
- We firmly believe that **Rights based migration and safe pathways** for orderly human mobility, helps to combat hate speech, xenophobia and exclusion.

- Building positive narratives on migration must come **from the voices of migrants**, avoiding presenting them as inherently vulnerable or lacking agency. Consequently, the right to political participation of migrants (to elect and be elected) should be as inclusive as possible.
- Climate migration narratives must be carefully addressed. Rather than presenting excessively distant dystopian futures, it is necessary to frame the debate from the **current experiences of migrants** and communities affected by the climate crisis.



Useful references and resources

- [Documentary *The other side of migration in Mexico*](#).
- [Report: *Climate Change, Youth and Human Mobility in the Arsi zone Oromia, Ethiopia*](#).
- [Migration: Livelihoods and psychosocial factors that strengthen people's roots in their communities \(Spanish\)](#).
- [Context, current situation and trends. The challenge of human mobility in a context of poverty, climate change and conflict \(Spanish\)](#).
- [Food crisis in Cabo Delgado \(Mozambique\): Armed conflict and forced displacement as drivers of food insecurity \(Spanish\)](#).

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