

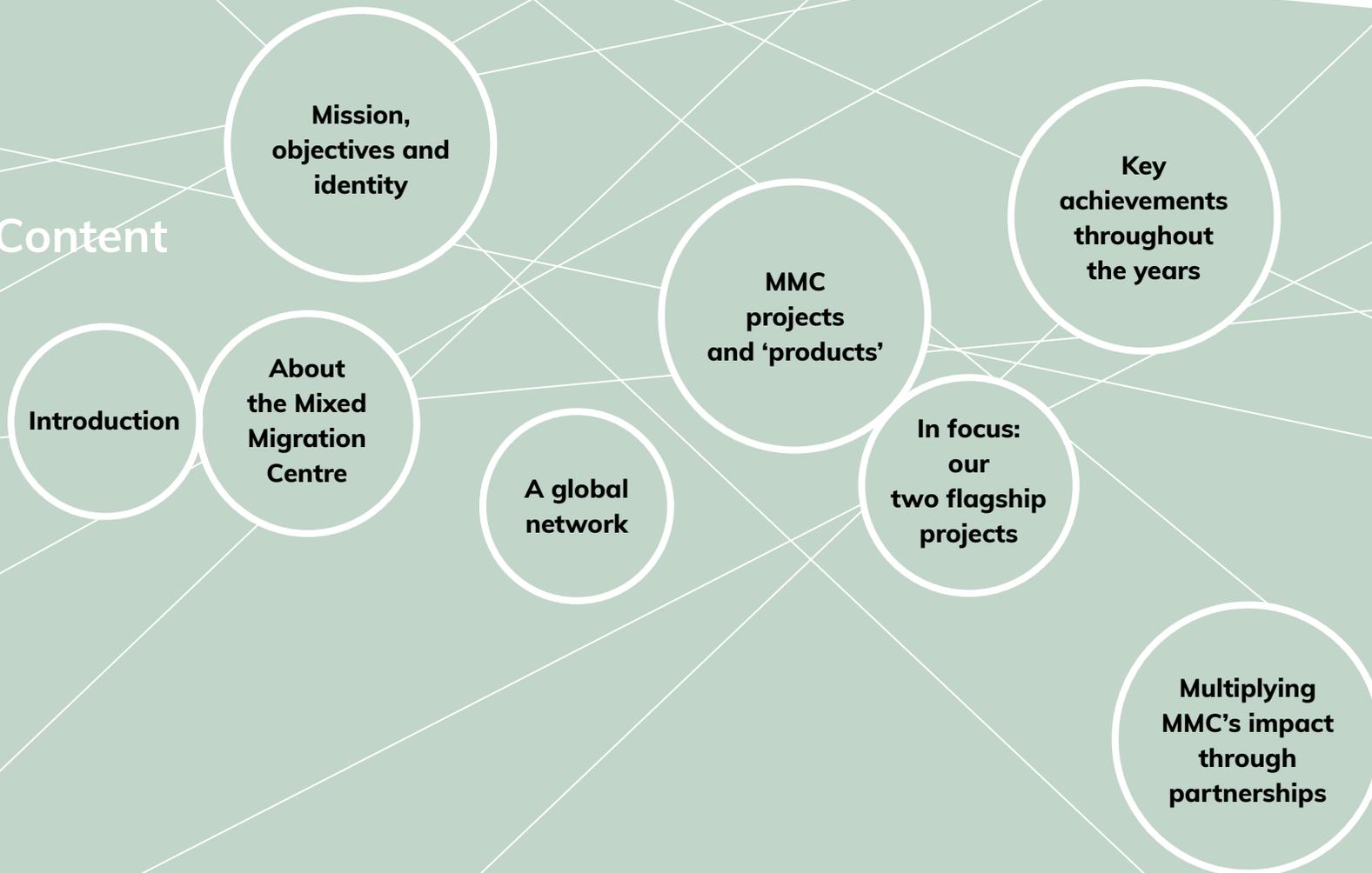
# Insights and evidence on mixed migration

An introduction to the work of  
the Mixed Migration Centre





## Content





# Introduction

**Migration is one of the defining issues of the 21st century.**

Migration is inherently linked to some of the key challenges the world faces today, be that climate change, urbanisation or demographic shifts.



Further, the global economy relies more than ever on movement of people, as the economic downturn created by the COVID-19 pandemic has very powerfully illustrated. Globally, people are on the move for a variety of reasons and motivations and movement is becoming increasingly dynamic and complex. Refugees and migrants continue to try and cross the Mediterranean from North Africa and face hardship while crossing the Sahara Desert and in Libya. Millions are on the move within regions and countries, fleeing conflict or natural disasters and moving for economic opportunities from rural areas to urban centres. Refugees and migrants from the Horn of Africa continue to cross the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden to war-torn Yemen, for many in order to reach Saudi Arabia. Bangladesh now hosts the largest refugee camp in the world after the arrival of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, and Rohingya refugees together with labour migrants from Bangladesh are using smugglers to get on boats towards South East Asia. Millions of Venezuelans are leaving their country because of the economic meltdown and are finding refuge in countries all over South America.

Conflict in the Middle East continues to displace large numbers in and from Syria and Iraq, who are joined by other refugees and migrants from countries nearby and further away in mixed migration flows leaving the region.



## Mixed migration poses challenges to policy makers and practitioners around the world:

**How to respond to mixed flows of people, with different legal statuses, but travelling along the same routes, using the same smugglers and facing similar risks and challenges while on the move? How to differentiate between refugees and migrants, while their experiences when on the move are similar and in the immediate humanitarian response the distinction may feel artificial to those on the ground? How to better understand the factors that influence people's decision to migrate, and their aspirations? How exactly do current challenges like climate change, and the responses to these challenges, impact on human mobility? And how do the changes in human mobility in turn impact upon our world, our governance structures and frameworks?**



Migration remains a sensitive topic, over which elections are won or lost. The general public demands action and policy makers and politicians often lack time for reflection. Migration is characterised by fast-changing dynamics, and constant media, public and political focus. As a result, we see an increase in so-called binary thinking: between refugees in need of protection and migrants not in need of protection; between voluntary and involuntary movement; between portrayal of smugglers as 'evil' or as 'mere travel agents'; between the 'good and deserving' refugee and the 'bad and undeserving' migrant. Complex issues are reduced and oversimplified; opinions and feelings dominate facts and sound analysis, and debates around migration take place within a tense atmosphere. The migration debate is highly politicised and polarised, making it difficult to acknowledge and address the far more nuanced reality on the ground.

The Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) focuses on some of the most difficult conversations currently taking place around migration, displacement and development. It uses a mixed migration lens to look at and analyse the issues

around migration and mobility, and it aims to offer a much-needed voice of reason, based on solid data and sound, balanced analysis. Through on-going data collection based on the actual experiences of migrants, through high-quality research output and analysis, through honest and transparent engagement in policy development through policy papers and representation in a range of fora, and through an actual presence within various regions and on the ground and embeddedness within a large humanitarian organisation (the Danish Refugee Council), MMC is able to play this role and support policy makers and practitioners within the broader sector to inform evidence-based policies and operational responses on mixed migration.

This document introduces the work of MMC in detail and ends with several possibilities on how to support MMC to enable us to continue this work.



Adam Dean/Panos (2017)

## MMC's understanding of mixed migration

Mixed migration refers to cross-border movements of people including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people in mixed flows have different legal statuses as well as a variety of vulnerabilities. Although entitled to protection under international human rights law, they are exposed to multiple rights violations along their journey. Those in mixed migration flows travel along similar routes, using similar means of travel – often travelling irregularly and wholly or partially assisted by migrant smugglers.



# About the Mixed Migration Centre



Piccaya

The Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) is a leading source for independent and high-quality data, information, research and analysis on mixed migration. Through the provision of credible evidence and expertise on mixed migration, the MMC aims to support agencies, policy makers and practitioners to make well-informed

decisions, to positively impact global and regional migration policies, to contribute to protection and assistance responses for people on the move and to stimulate forward thinking in the sector responding to mixed migration. The MMC is part of, and governed by, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). While its

institutional link to DRC ensures MMC's work is grounded in operational reality, it acts as an independent source of data, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration for policy makers, practitioners, journalists, and the broader humanitarian sector.

**“When the Mixed Migration Centre was established in 2018, it was an attempt by the Danish Refugee Council to create a global platform that, based on evidence and analysis, offers a voice of reason and reflection in the often emotional and politicized debate on migration and people on the move. It was about providing a nuanced and balanced perspective on mixed migration so as to inform and inspire policy choices and responses based on principles, values and decency. Today MMC plays a key role in the organization, where the data and analysis as well as regional field presence, enable us to plan**

**better and provide more evidence-based programming in support of people on the move. Equally important, MMC also plays an important role as an independent source of data, research and analysis on mixed migration for policy makers, practitioners and the broader humanitarian sector and thus contributes much-needed factual input to the global debate on displacement and migration.”**

Charlotte Slente, Secretary-General of the Danish Refugee Council



# Mission, objectives and identity

The mission and identity of the MMC and its strategic objectives have been developed as part of our 2018–2020 Global Strategy, which was the result of a consultative process within the MMC network, between MMC and DRC, at global and regional levels, and with external partners and members of the Friends of MMC (see page 14).

## Mission

Migration policies, responses and public debate are based on credible evidence, nuanced understanding of mixed migration, placing human rights and protection of all people on the move at the centre.

## Objectives

- To contribute to a better, more nuanced and balanced understanding of mixed migration (knowledge)
- To contribute to evidence-based and better-informed migration policies and debates (policy)

- To contribute to effective evidence-based protection responses for people on the move (programming)

## Identity

The identity of the MMC is defined by the following core characteristics:

- A field-based network, with close access to the people on the move, grounded in the operational reality of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), a leading humanitarian organization.
- Access to unique primary data based on interviews with people on the move through the MMC flagship project the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4Mi).
- An honest broker, providing a balanced and evidence-based analysis of mixed migration issues in a highly polarized political and public debate.
- An innovative, forward-thinking network, challenging conventional thinking and breaking new ground in data collection, research and analysis.

- A collaborative actor, working with UN agencies, INGOs, multilateral international organisations, research centres and civil society, at local, regional and global levels, to increase visibility, scope and reach and ensure uptake of produced knowledge in both policy and programming.



Sanjit Das/Panos (2018)

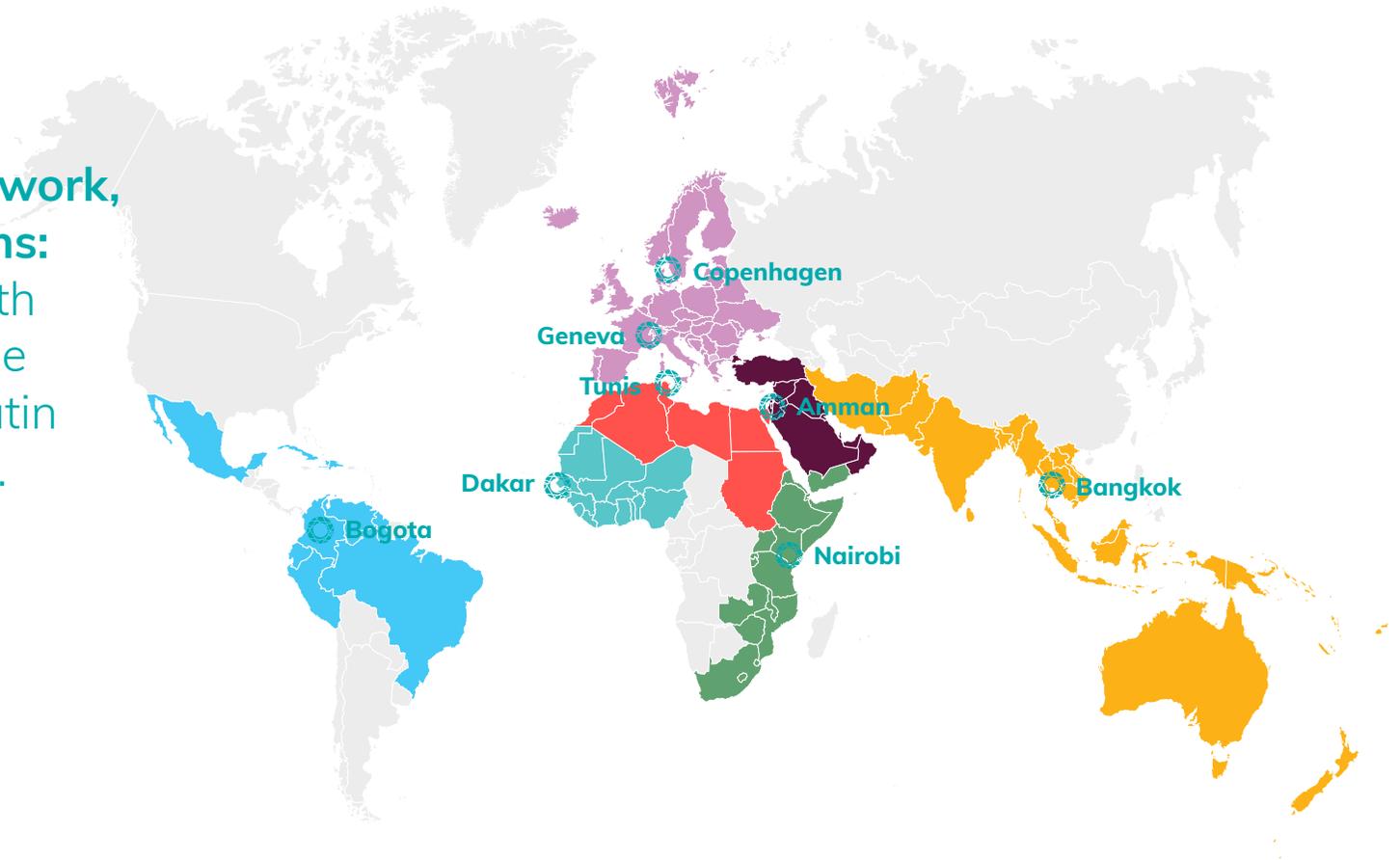


# A global network





**The MMC is a global network, focusing on seven regions:** East Africa & Yemen, North Africa, West Africa, Middle East, Asia, Europe and Latin America & the Caribbean.



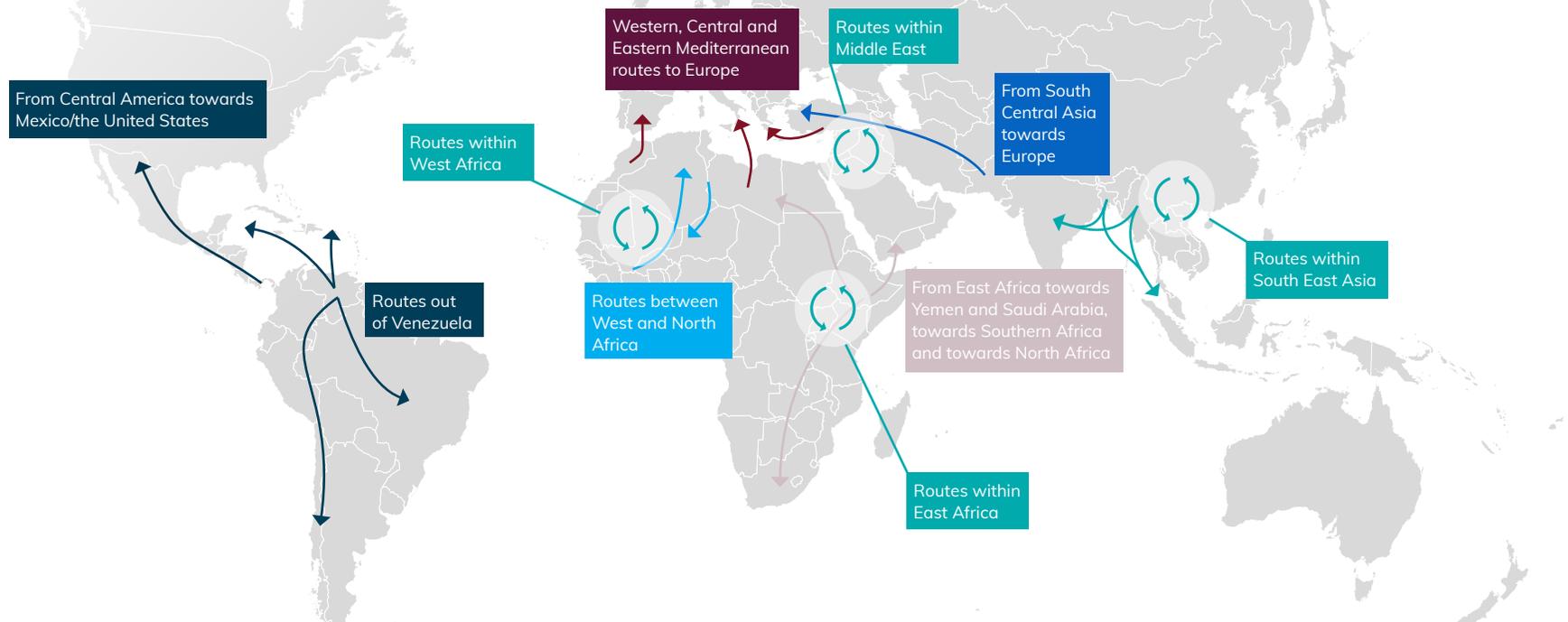
Almost all our approximately 40 staff members are based in the regional hubs: in Amman, Bogota, Dakar, Nairobi, Tunis and Bangkok, where they work in close cooperation with regional partners, stakeholders and donors, and we have a small team in Geneva and

Copenhagen. In addition, around 120 monitors working under MMC's flagship data collection project, the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi), are stationed on key migration routes around the world, conducting over 10,000 in-depth interviews

with refugees and migrants on the move every year. This field-based network provides MMC with close access to people on the move, and ensures our work is grounded in operational reality.



The networked structure means that while maintaining a strong focus on intra-regional migration, **MMC can undertake cross-regional collaboration and a route-based approach to data collection, research, analysis and policy engagement.**



Main migration routes MMC focuses on as of 2020



## Development of MMC: from one regional hub to a global network

The timeline on the next page visually presents the growth of the MMC network since it began (under a different name) in 2011. After the initial emergence of several loosely connected regional secretariats and 4Mi initiatives, MMC was established as a global network in 2018.

This structure enables MMC to speak in one voice and have one common recognisable identity, while maintaining local agility and presence, contextual relevance, close cooperation with local stakeholders, and high levels of autonomy within regions, which are all hosted within DRC offices.

A small team in Geneva is responsible for the overall strategy and direction, global external representation and policy engagement, development of standard MMC research

products, 4Mi coordination and methodological innovation, and coordination of cross-regional and route-based projects. MMC Geneva also leads the development of the [Mixed Migration Review](#), MMC's flagship annual publication on mixed migration, further introduced below.

In the two years since MMC was established, this approach has ensured harmonisation, professionalisation and consistency in quality of output. The network approach, working at local, regional and global level, enables knowledge to flow from the regions to international policy fora, and vice versa.

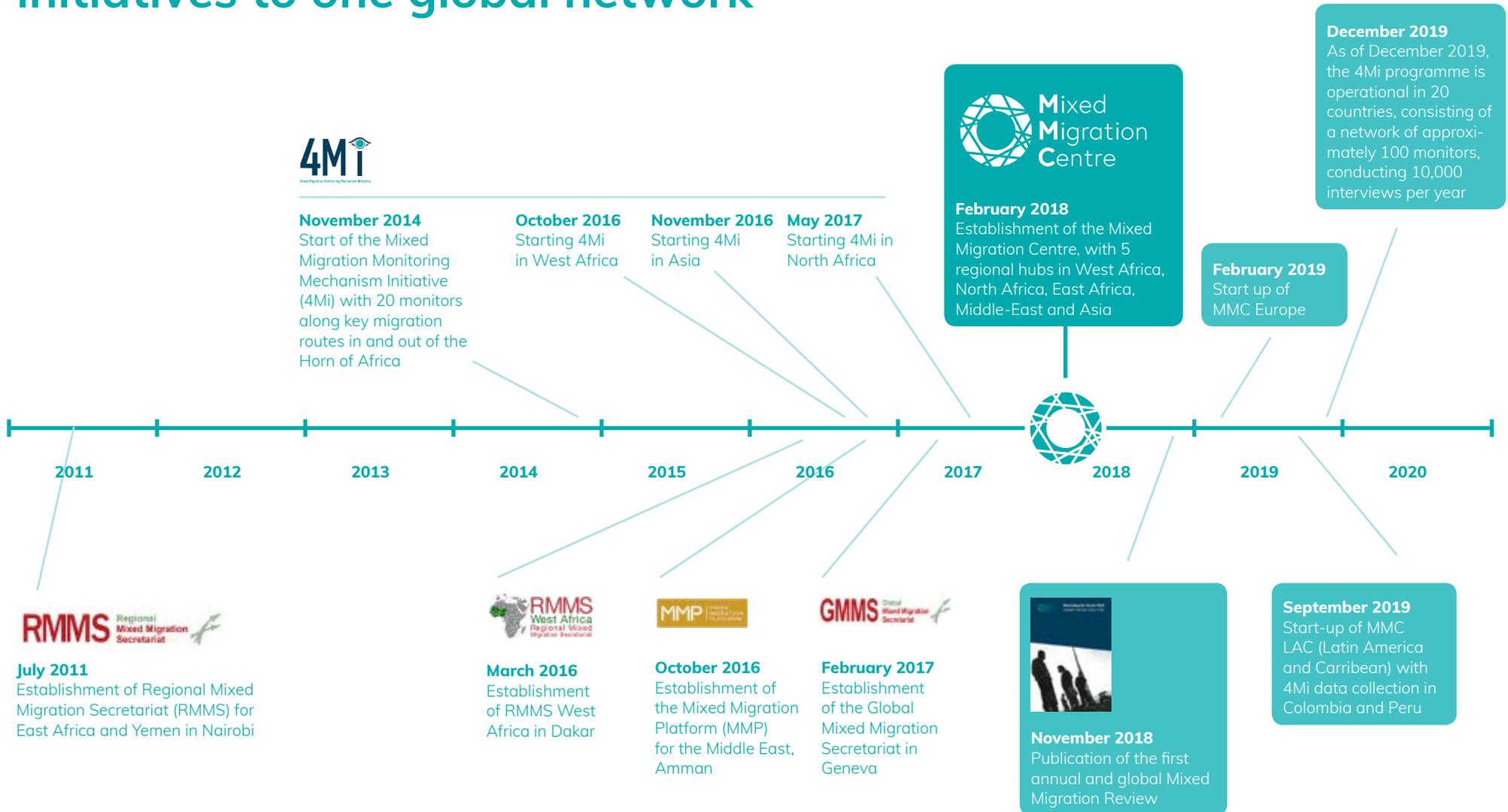
The [2019 annual catalogue](#) gives an indication of what MMC offers in terms of activities, products and output.



Sven Torfim / Panos (2017)



# Development of MMC: from several regional initiatives to one global network





## Governance

MMC is placed within the Programme Division of the Danish Refugee Council. A steering committee is the governing body of the MMC, and is composed of the DRC Head of Programme Division, the DRC Regional Directors, the DRC Geneva representative and other senior representatives from the HQ-based External Relations Secretariat, Asylum Department and International Department. The core responsibilities of the Steering Committee are around strategic direction, programmatic setting, expansion and risk management.

## Staffing structure

The global unit in Geneva is made up of the head of MMC, a global programme coordinator, a global 4Mi coordinator, programme assistant and data analyst.

Each regional MMC hub consists of a regional manager, 4Mi project manager and additional research and project staff, the number of which depends on the number of projects and the size of the regional portfolio.

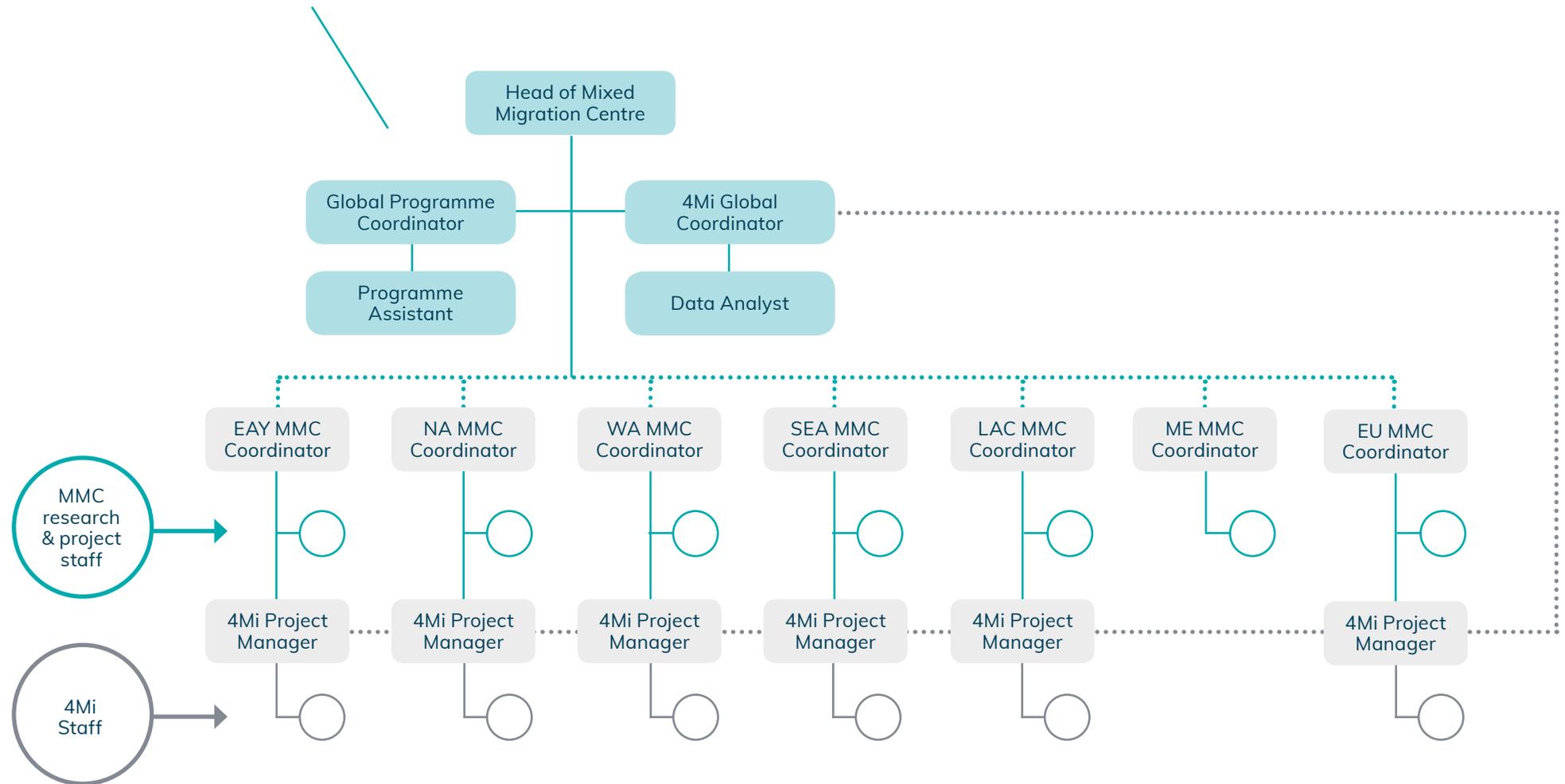
## Spotlight: the Friends of MMC

The 'Friends of MMC' is MMC's independent advisory council. The advice and support of the Friends of MMC enhance MMC's capabilities, resources and networks, and increase the scale and impact of its work. The objective of the 'Friends of MMC' is to help set the overall strategic direction of MMC, including advice on the MMC strategy, priorities, and objectives and workplans. More informally, it creates a space for discussion between traditional donor countries, UN agencies, and NGOs. Current members are: IOM, UNHCR, OHCHR, DRC, NRC, ICMC, Danida, the Swiss FDFA, European Commission (DG DEVCO) and the DFID of the UK.





## MMC internal organigram





# MMC projects and 'products'



## MMC has a number of standard knowledge products



### Research reports

In depth reports based on primary data, which could be 4Mi data or qualitative data, or both, and secondary data and literature analysis.



### Briefing papers

Shorter, sharper and easier-to-digest research papers, combining analysis of primary data – if available and relevant – with secondary data and literature.



### Quarterly Mixed Migration Updates

Updates compiling all the new data and resources on mixed migration in each region and on relevant routes (from UNHCR, IOM, DTM, research reports, media reports, situation reports, policy documents and other sources). All seven regional updates are published on the same day, shortly after the end of every quarter.



### 4Mi snapshots

Published frequently, and fully based on 4Mi data, these brief analytical pictures focus on visual content. They can be thematic, route-based or concentrate on specific target groups, trends or themes.



### Mixed Migration Review (MMR)

An annual review of mixed migration around the world focusing on key events and policy developments. Including a series of essays, interviews and route-based analysis of 4Mi data.



### Discussion/policy papers

Short papers to present our analysis/opinion on a specific topic or policy issue, aiming at stimulating debate and forward thinking.



### Articles

MMC staff or external contributors post quick but well researched reads on the MMC website, offering new insights on timely issues in mixed migration.



## In focus: the two flagship projects of the Mixed Migration Centre

This section describes in a bit more detail the two flagship MMC projects: our 4Mi data collection and the Mixed Migration Review.

### 4Mi data collection

#### A global data collection initiative

The Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) offers a regular, standardized, quantitative system of collecting globally comparable primary data on mixed migration flows. It has been collecting data directly from refugees and migrants on the move since 2014, when it first started in East Africa. 4Mi field monitors situated along frequently used routes and in major migratory hubs in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America conduct face-to-face interviews with refugees and migrants on a continuous basis. These interviews offer unique, in-depth and rich information on the profiles of people on the move, the drivers of migration, aspirations and intentions, facilitation of journeys (including interactions with smugglers) and the experiences along the journey and in destination countries, with a strong focus on protection.

For more information on 4Mi and the methodology, visit <http://www.mixedmigration.org/4mi/>.



### Spotlight: unique access to hard-to-reach populations

Refugees and migrants in out-of-camp settings, who are on the move on mixed migration routes, are a particularly hard-to-reach population, both for research and data collection, as well as for operational responses on the ground. They form a highly diverse group, speaking many different languages, and are highly mobile. Moreover, they are often 'under the radar', for example because of their irregular status in a country. Over the years, MMC has developed a unique capacity to reach this group through 4Mi, by using local monitors, who are often migrants and refugees themselves and who are embedded within local communities, ensuring a level of trust between respondent and monitor.

MMC also interviews another, possibly even harder-to-reach group, namely smugglers. Over the years, our 4Mi monitors have interviewed hundreds of smugglers all over the world, using a smuggler-focused structured survey. This resulted in the largest database of interviews with smugglers globally, offering a unique perspective. Data from these interviews and quotes from smugglers have featured in various publications by MMC, such as [Unpacking the Myths: Human smuggling from and within the Horn of Africa](#), [Players of Many Parts: The evolving role of smugglers in West Africa's migration economy](#) and the [Mixed Migration Review 2018](#).



Since it began in East Africa in 2014, 4Mi has conducted more than 40,000 interviews and has become the largest in-depth data collection mechanism on migration globally. **4Mi now operates in 15 countries with approximately 120 monitors.**

4Mi data aims to contribute towards building a solid evidence base to inform targeted responses on the ground, as well as informed policy decisions. The data is revealing new insights all the time: on what is driving migration decisions, on the scope and scale of bribery during migration journeys, on the key 'hotspots' for incidents of violence. These insights are published in [4Mi snapshots](#) and research reports, feed into programmatic responses and 4Mi data is increasingly shared with other organisations to feed into specific reports.



### **A flexible, adaptable and context-specific data collection tool**

4Mi's infrastructure – its regional setup and network of monitors conducting continuous data collection – makes it an extremely versatile tool, that can be adapted to fill information gaps at a particular time, in a particular place, or within a particular population.

Thanks to its infrastructure, MMC was able to rapidly adapt data collection after the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Within weeks, MMC

had consulted with stakeholders and developed a new survey and methodology to enable remote data collection. By the end of April, MMC was publishing analysis of the impact of the crisis on refugees and migrants. Thousands of interviews were conducted within a few months since the adaptation in five regions (13 countries), and [new global and regional analysis](#) is published regularly. MMC provides the only large scale data collection among refugees and migrants themselves on the impact of COVID-19 on their lives.

**“It is good what you are doing, because this is how you know who really need help, and the reality of the bad conditions in which many families find themselves.”**

27-year-old female from Venezuela interviewed in Peru



This data is widely referenced, including for example in humanitarian assessments and situation reports by REACH and UNOCHA in Libya.

**4Mi urban**, in contrast, is more about adapting to a different population. 4Mi can shift its sampling strategy and survey instrument with relative ease, and rapidly begin collecting data on the experiences of refugees and migrants in cities, without an extended period to build a new team and structure.

Adaptation also happens at the regional level – while the core survey remains the same, specific questions may be added to address an **urgent information gap in one place**, for a particular time. In West Africa, MMC is working with UNFPA on an adapted version of 4Mi focusing on young migrants and issues around sexual and reproductive health. Along the migration route from East Africa towards Southern Africa, 4Mi has been adapted to gather data on children on the move, in partnership with UNICEF.

**“The Mixed Migration Centre were particularly quick off the blocks in the early phases of the COVID-19 crisis. By swiftly adapting their collection method and focus MMC are now in a position to provide highly relevant and much needed data and information on the actual situation of migrants on the migratory routes. This proves to be of great use at a time when hard evidence from the field is particularly hard to get.”**

Conradin Rasi, Head of Foreign Policy section on Migration, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), Directorate of Political Affairs, Human Security Division

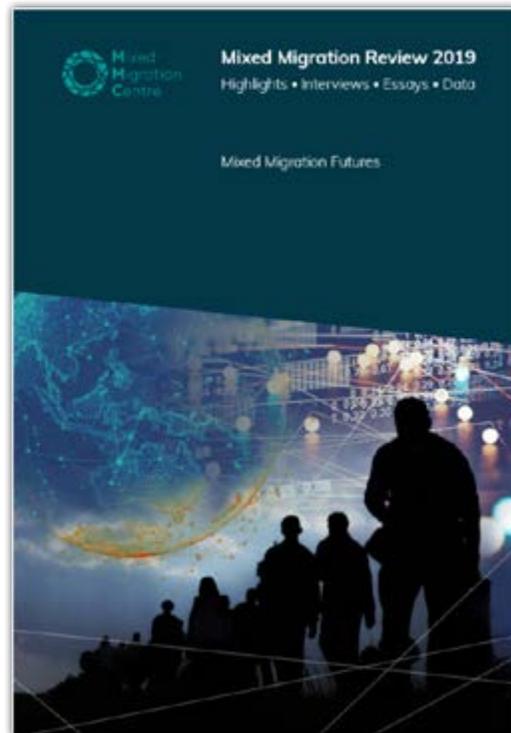




## The Mixed Migration Review

The Mixed Migration Review (MMR) is the flagship annual report of the Mixed Migration Centre, first published in 2018. The report offers a deep analytical dive into the world of mixed migration, using the mixed migration lens to offer a critical and necessary framework to understand and respond to the complex characteristics and protection imperatives that defines contemporary human mobility.

The MMR speaks directly to MMC's vision: *Migration policies, responses and public debate are based on credible evidence, nuanced understanding of mixed migration, placing human rights and protection of all people on the move at the centre.* The MMR does not offer one-size-fits-all solutions or simple conclusions, but raises many difficult questions and treats the mixed migration phenomenon with the complexity it deserves. It aims to offer a voice of reason and to contribute to a more rational, nuanced and evidence-based understanding and analysis in a highly politicised migration debate.



**“The Mixed Migration Centre’s unique data collection set-up, their research capacities and analytical work are of great value to the Danish MFA. Mixed migration is a complex issue and evidence-based research and analyses are essential when it comes to ensuring that decisions and policies are based on a comprehensive and factual understanding of the situation at hand.”**

Mia Steninge, chief advisor and team leader, migration and development, Migration, Stabilization and Fragility, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark



A debate in which there are no easy answers. Which makes it even more important to offer a platform for, and to listen to, different voices in the migration debate and to allow space for new thinking.

The **objectives** of the Mixed Migration Review are:

- To contribute to a better, more nuanced understanding of mixed migration
- To contribute to more rational and evidence-based public and policy debates on mixed migration
- To offer a comprehensive overview of the state of mixed migration globally

In terms of **content**, each MMR offers a number of standard sections:

- Global **overview of mixed migration trends** and dynamics of the past year ('keeping track') by region.
- An overview of **new policy developments** ('managing flows').

- A series of thought-provoking **essays** looking at the most salient and polemical issues facing mixed migration.
- A series of **interviews** with individuals and officials closely associated with or relevant to the sector and its challenges.
- **Data** updates from MMC's 4Mi project, presenting a selection of data from the approximately 10,000 interviews with refugees and migrants MMC conducts every year along different mixed migration routes across the globe, ensuring the voices of those on the move in mixed migration are heard.
- **Migration stories** of individual migrants, using a small number of the interviews with people on the move.

#### **Thematic focus**

Additionally, every year the MMR introduces new features and presents a different overarching focus, reflective of the dynamic and fast-evolving nature of mixed migration.



In 2019, the MMR focused on the future of migration. The MMR2020 focuses on urban migration as an overarching theme.

#### **Launch**

The MMR reports are always launched early November, with the first launch in Geneva, followed by a series of launches and discussion events in various cities.



# Multiplying MMC's impact **through** **partnerships**



The MMC is a relatively small organisation, with highly independent global and regional teams working together in a network organisation to ensure agility. However, to increase our visibility, scope and reach and ensure uptake of our data and analysis, we often partner with other organisations and are active members of different fora.

At a global level, we have signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the three major international organisations working on migration:

- With the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) we have shared our 4Mi data on missing migrants and migrant deaths, providing the largest source of data for IOMs [Missing Migrants Project](#).
- With the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) we have shared our 4Mi data on protection incidents along migration routes to and through Libya for a joint UNHCR-MMC report on violence against refugees and migrants.
- With the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) we are in the process of signing an MoU to formalise our existing cooperation, as part of which MMC has been leading scenario building workshops within the context of the Khartoum and Rabat Processes, enabling the uptake of MMC data and expertise during closed-door meetings with European and African policy makers.

Additionally, we have shared 4Mi data for use in reports by other organisations such as [Clingendael](#) and the [Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration](#).

As well as partnerships, MMC is a convener and platform for voices on mixed migration. Whether it is by providing a [bibliography](#) of key reading on the subject on the MMC website or links to other data platforms, hosting events to bring people together to discuss timely issues, or inviting thought leaders to share their reflections in the Mixed Migration Review, **MMC aims to be a go-to resource for people seeking sound analysis and thinking on mixed migration**

**“As the Secretariat of the intergovernmental Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development ( the Rabat Process), we have been looking for a reliable partner offering high quality, evidence-based data with innovative, forward-thinking approaches to support policy debates and decision-making. We found such a partner in the MMC who has supported us in delivering a top-notch scenario-building exercise to the Rabat Process countries in October 2019. As a result of this successful pilot project, we are now moving a step forward with the development of another exciting fully-fledge scenario building package as well as a signature of a strategic partnership between our two organisations.”**

Audrey Jolivel, ICMPD Coordinator of the Rabat Process Secretariat, ICMPD Focal Point for West Africa, Migration Dialogues and Cooperation Unit.



An overview of active memberships of MMC, which are also meant to multiply our impact and increase the uptake of our research and analysis:

EFFEXT advisory board Effects of Externalisation: EU Migration Management in Africa and the Middle East'  
**2020-2024**

Project advisory committee of Eurasyllum, MOAS and X-change project initiative to support the socio-economic regeneration of Cox's Bazar  
**Duration of the project**

Advisory board of Trilateral-led EUH2020 proposal on Addressing the challenge of migrant integration through ICT-enabled solutions  
**Duration of the project**

Member of Ending Violence against Migrants (EVAM) <https://evam.global/>  
**Duration of the project**

Member of the Civil Society Action Committee, focusing on implementation of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM)  
**Ongoing**

Migration Working Group Burkina Faso  
**2018**

Niger GMT (Migration Working Group)  
**2018**

Workstream 3 of the UN Network on Migration (strengthening states' capacities to expand regular migration pathways, including admission and stay, and to address and reduce vulnerabilities faced by migrants)  
**2020**

International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (UNICEF, UNHCR, IOM initiative)  
**From 2020**

H2H Network <https://www.h2hworks.org/>  
**From 2019**

International NGO Forum (INGOF) Libya  
**From 2019**

Protection Sector Libya  
**From 2019**

North Africa Mixed Migration Taskforce  
**From 2015**

Mixed Migration Working Group Libya  
**From 2019**

PFONGUE (platform of NGOs in Senegal)  
**2018**

Regional Migrant Response Plan East Africa – led by IOM  
**Pre 2017**

'Red Sea' regional directors working group in the Horn of Africa  
**From 2019**

Information Management Working Group Europe  
**Unspecific**

Protection Working Group Colombia  
**Since 2019**

One Refugee Working Group Jordan  
**Since 2018**

Informal Tented Settlement Working Group Jordan  
**Summer 2019**

Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APPRN)  
**From 2020**

Mixed Migration Working Group West Africa  
**2017**



# Key achievements throughout the years



## Objective 1: To contribute to a better, more nuanced and balanced understanding of mixed migration (knowledge)

### Influencing terminology

MMC has influenced the terminology and narrative on mixed migration. In 2018, we published our [understanding and terminology](#) around mixed migration. Since then, this definition has been taken over or pushed for by other organisations, such as OHCHR, [UNDP](#) and the [Start Network](#). In the context of abuses of refugees and migrants by smugglers and criminal groups in Yemen, MMC coined the term '[commodification](#)' of migrants in 2014 and introduced the concept of [bilateral flows between East Africa and Yemen](#) in 2016, which from then on became a common narrative in other publications and discussions.

### Putting the spotlight on key issues

Over the years, the MMC has successfully highlighted key concerns for people in mixed movements. This includes:

- **Migrants' deaths in the desert**

While all focus in 2016 was on migrant deaths at sea in the Mediterranean, MMC published – based on 4Mi data – the article 'Forgotten fatalities', to raise the issue of deaths before the Mediterranean during the desert crossing, a narrative that has since been taken forward by many. The article was featured by the New York Times and Reuters.



Jean-Baptiste Jorje

- **Missing Women and Girls**

In a ground-breaking study in 2014 - [Abused and abducted](#) - MMC for the first time highlighted the high number of women and girls going missing upon arrival in Yemen.

- **Kidnapping and extortionate detention**

In 2019 MMC provided data for a [Guardian article](#) on kidnapping of refugees and migrants, later followed by the research paper [Everyone's Prey: Kidnapping and Extortionate Detention in Mixed Migration](#).

- **As mentioned above for years MMC has provided the bulk of data on migrant deaths to IOM's Missing Migrants Project.**



## Key contributor to knowledge on specific themes, target groups or migration routes, such as:

- From the start in 2011 in East Africa (under a previous name, the RMMS), MMC has been trendsetting in research on mixed migration routes within and from the **Horn of Africa** region, with a series of 10 research reports that have been widely quoted.
- MMC is a key player globally on knowledge on **migrant smuggling**, offering nuanced perspectives through a wide range of publications on smuggling in East Africa (such as Migrant Smuggling in the Horn of African and Yemen: The political economy and protection risks and Unpacking the Myths: Migrant smuggling from and within the Horn of Africa), Southern Africa (Smuggled South) and West Africa (Players of Many Parts) and unique primary data collection among smugglers themselves through 4Mi.

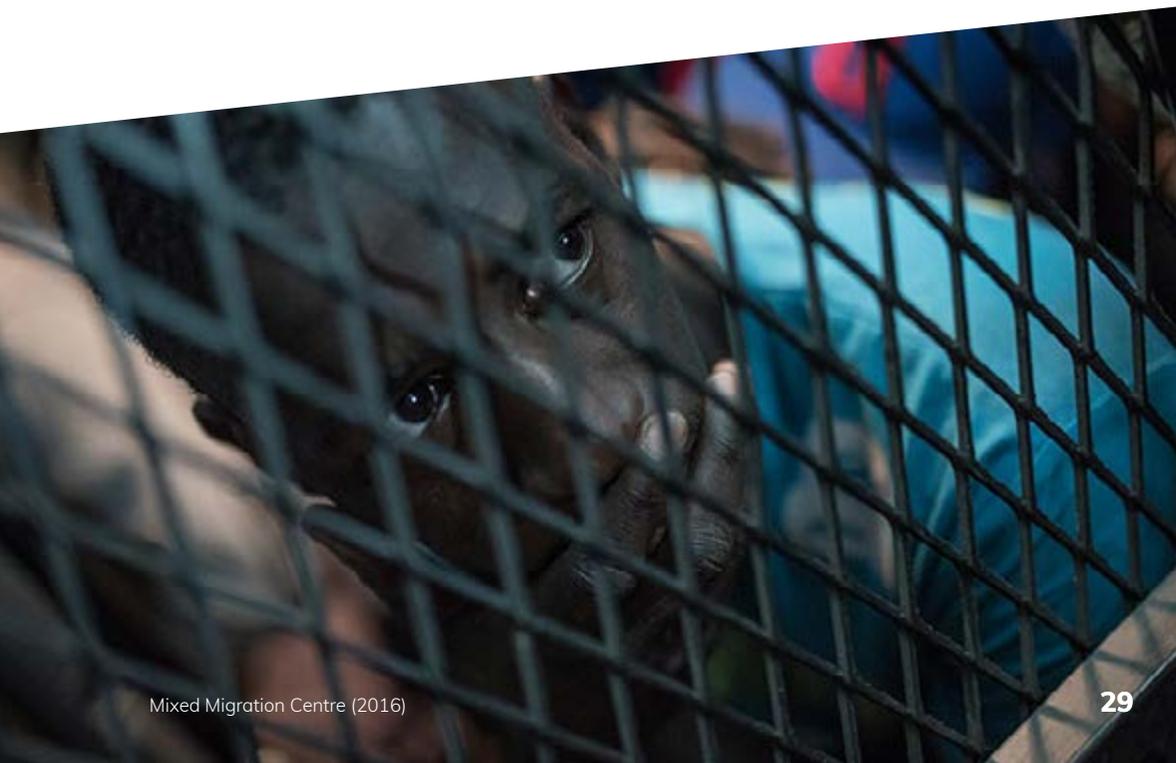
**"MMC is an industry leader and an invaluable source of timely, accurate and principled data, research and analysis on migration. They move beyond the more limited counting and tracking exercises, to provide in-depth qualitative analysis and reporting based on the views and perspectives of migrants themselves – voices that are so often missing in the debate. The UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) regularly relies on MMC's thoughtful analysis and expertise in informing our work on migration. MMC's important and timely analysis on the key trends and challenges facing migrants around the world is an invaluable resource to governments and to the UN system. Their focus on the human rights protection of all migrants, regardless of status, helps to focus our attention on what really matters in policy debates around mixed migration: people."**

Ben Lewis, Human Rights Officer, Migration and Human Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)





- MMC increasingly focuses on the **nexus between migration/displacement and climate change**, through a range of publications on the Middle East ([Migration, Displacement, and the Environment: A perspective from the Middle East](#)), East Africa ([Weak Links: Challenging the climate and migration paradigm in the Horn of Africa and Yemen](#)) and as part of the [Mixed Migration Review 2019](#), while not falling in the trap of alarmist, counter-productive and imprecise 'predictions'.
- An ongoing and much-needed focus on **forgotten migration routes and issues**, beyond the media headlines. Examples are reports and articles on [West Africans in Latin America](#), [destinations of Syrians outside Europe](#), [Rohingya in India](#), [migration to Yemen from the Horn of Africa](#), [South Sudanese refugees](#), [non-Syrian refugees and migrants in the Middle East](#) and [migration to Saudi Arabia](#).
- The migration **experiences of women and girls** in the [Middle East](#) and in [Libya](#) and a [Report](#) comparing the experiences of women and girls along various migration routes globally. All 4Mi data can be disaggregated by gender.
- Finally, **children on the move** remains a key focus. In East Africa, West Africa and the Middle East we carried out research studies on children on the move ([Young and on the Move: Children and youth in mixed migration flows within and from the Horn of Africa](#), [Young and on the Move in West Africa](#) and [On My Own: Protection challenges for unaccompanied and separated children in Jordan, Lebanon and Greece](#)), while in Southern Africa in partnership with UNICEF 4Mi data was used to shape understanding of mixed migration trends and needs and support interventions through a direct referral mechanism.





## Applying scenario-thinking

Exploring future developments and their potential impact on mixed migration enables us to take a step back and reflect on the issue of mixed migration in a more balanced manner. Reflecting on possible future developments also helps to better anticipate challenges and increased policy preparedness. As such, MMC has been specialising in scenario studies in recent years. In 2012, we published our first scenario study in East Africa ([Global Migration Futures: Using scenarios to explore future migration in the Horn of Africa and Yemen](#)), followed by a [‘What if?’ discussion paper](#) in 2015. In 2018, we developed various [migration scenarios for West and North Africa](#), in partnership with ACAPS, while in 2019 ‘future migration’ was the overarching topic of the [Mixed Migration Review](#). Finally, in 2019 MMC started to bring scenario thinking to policy tables during workshops in the context of the [Rabat Process](#) and [Khartoum Process](#) under the auspices of ICMPD.

## Thought-provoking discussion papers and articles

To stimulate debate and new thinking, MMC regularly publishes thought-provoking discussion papers articles. Examples include a 2016 discussion paper titled [A Perfect Storm](#), a 2019 report comparing the [War on Drugs with the emerging war on migrant smuggling](#) and a 2020 article, [Mistaken Metaphor](#), critically assessing the ‘root causes of migration’ narrative.

Based on solid evidence, we also regularly dismantle myths, such as in two articles challenging the common assumption that decreases along one route automatically lead to or are related to increases along other migration routes ([The Italian Connection](#), and [The ‘Shift’ to the Western Mediterranean Migration Route](#)).





## Objective 2: To contribute to evidence-based and better-informed migration policies and debates (policy)

MMC staff in the regions and globally regularly participate in conferences, round tables and other fora. MMC has been invited to provide updates on migration trends and policies at events ranging from small off-the-record presentations at embassies to academic conferences or High Level panel presentations, (including the High Level Summit on Refugees and Migrants in New York in 2016, which saw the start of the development of the two Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees).

Since 2018, we have been closely involved in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), during both the 2018 summit in Marrakesh and the 2019 summit in Quito. At the GFMD In Quito, MMC was one of the leads on mixed migration during the civil society day and presented on GCM implementation in plenary at a high-level panel during the Dialogue on GCM implementation with all stakeholders (states, civil society, UN, business, mayors).

Additionally, MMC often provides (closed-door) briefings to member states on mixed migration trends and dynamics to enable policy discussions in an informal setting. Finally, through our cooperation with ICMPD as described above, MMC has a seat at the table to present our findings and discuss with policy makers from across Africa and Europe.

**"During the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) Summit in Quito in January 2020, civil society was extremely fortunate that the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) had been chosen as its thematic lead for mixed migration, one of the five thematic priorities, bringing to the discussion among 229 NGOs and Networks from all over the world not only its expertise but also a unique approach, combining rigorous data collection, giving a voice to refugees and migrant, field-based advocacy and sharp analysis. Those are qualities, amply confirmed during the COVID-19 crisis and the extremely relevant updates from MMC, which are sufficiently rare to be emphasized."**

Stéphane Jaquemet, Director of Policy ICMC (International Catholic Migration Commission) Head of the GFMD Civil Society Coordinating Office"



Sven Torfinn Panos



**Global Compact**  
FOR **Migration**

## Spotlight: MMC and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

MMC has been closely engaged in the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) process, from the stocktaking conference in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, throughout the negotiations, during the conference to adopt the GCM in Marrakesh and during the first years of implementation. Throughout the negotiations, MMC published 5 [policy statements](#) commenting on the various drafts and offering suggestions for improvements. Through close contact with one of the member states closely involved in the negotiations, input from MMC was directly used in the plenary negotiations in New York. Together with APRRN, ICMC and Act Alliance, MMC drafted a statement for the UN Migration Network to argue for a stronger focus on and inclusion of mixed migration in the UN Network workplan, which was taken up in the final draft. MMC has also participated in various

informal discussions between government representations and civil society organisations in Geneva throughout the negotiations as well as in regional consultations during the consultation phase in Nairobi and Brussels.

In 2019, we launched the first study – [Wheels in Motion](#) – taking stock of one year of GCM implementation and were asked to present the outcomes during a high-level panel at the Global Forum on Migration and Development in Quito.

Finally, in 2020 MMC launched research into the extent to which the Compact serves as a tool to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on refugees and migrants and provide guidance for international cooperation, response and policy making in times of crisis. It will also assess the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the implementation and viability of the Compact itself.



## Objective 3: To contribute to effective evidence-based protection responses for people on the move (programming)

At the core of MMC's mission is protection and assistance for people on the move. This is achieved by a close collaboration with humanitarian actors along main mixed migration routes, as well as in countries of origin and destination.

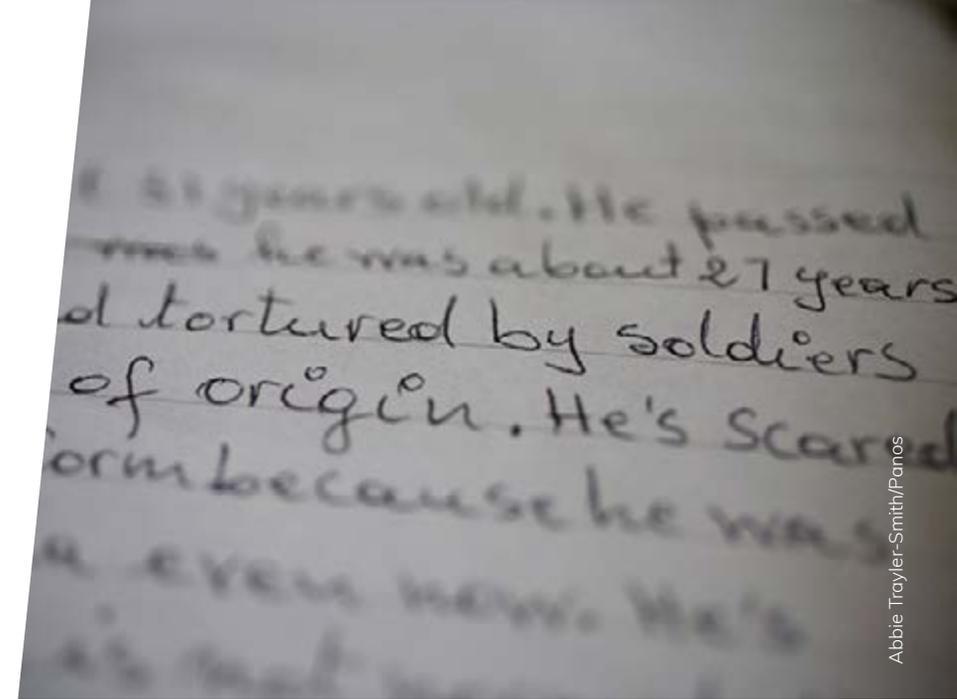
MMC is part of and embedded within the Danish Refugee Council, one of the world's largest humanitarian organisations. The vast majority of MMC staff are operating from DRC regional offices across Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. MMC is also part of several large NGO Consortia operating in some of the most complex protection and assistance responses globally.

Over the years, MMC's data and analysis have been used to inform operational responses on the ground. In some cases, our research has informed the set-up of programmes by donors

funding operational responses. A key example is the DFID Safety, Support & Solutions programme. In 2017, DFID opted to establish a dedicated mixed migration programme on the basis of a number of MMC (and its predecessor, the RMMS) products, explicitly referencing RMMS data and analysis in the business case to create the programme. DFID, as well as DANIDA, felt that analysis had influenced global decision-making on allocation of funds and donor engagement.

Mixed migration contexts are relatively new to the wider aid community, and are proving particularly challenging for effective

programme response. Operational responses to mixed migration require the adaptation of existing models and approaches to a "new" reality of diverse and often very mobile target populations. In several contexts, MMC has played a central role in accompanying humanitarian actors in this process. Most important, MMC has ensured the production of evidence that fills operational information gaps, in a timely and easily digestible format. MMC's research objectives and questions are produced through a collaborative process with operational partners on the ground, and its findings are disseminated in various formats and fora.



Abbie Trayler-Smith/Panos



**“I'm thankful to you for the survey, I feel relax and comfortable for sharing all my sadness and problems with you. I hope this kind of surveys can help us and can share our problems with UN and other communities who supports asylum seekers and refugees.”**

53-year-old female from Afghanistan interviewed in India

## Spotlight: Programme adaptation and use of MMC evidence in complex mixed migration operational responses – the Mediterranean Mixed Migration (3M) NGO Consortium

Programme adaptation is one of the key elements of the approach proposed by the 3M NGO consortium. Initially planned for a period of three years, the project requires regular need assessment and analysis updates, particularly in the areas of profiling and vulnerability. MMC's data collection and analysis are an inherent part of the Consortium, and of the project's aim to adapt its response to changes in the context, as illustrated in the project proposal: “With an established presence along the West & North African migration axis and a strong focus on continuous data collection, research and analysis, the consortium is well placed to generate, internalise and apply evidence to inform adaptive programming. Flexibility will be a key focus of the proposed action, which includes in-built mechanisms and processes that will allow responsive and adaptive programming. Furthermore, the proposed action will emphasise the dissemination of evidence and learning to increase understanding on mixed migration flows, ensure relevant information is available to persons of concern (PoC) and to inform contextually appropriate migration policies and strategies.”



## Spotlight: Research on detention in Libya and the impact on DRC's and IRC's response

In the Summer of 2019, MMC North Africa launched a research project exploring what makes refugees and migrants vulnerable to detention in Libya, based on 4Mi data collected in country since 2017. To ensure the relevance of the research for protection programming and coordination throughout the research process, MMC shared the research concept note with, and invited feedback from, the DRC Libya Team and NGO partners in Libya, including the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

Once the results were ready, the draft report was shared with senior management at DRC Libya for feedback on the findings and discussions were held with DRC's Country Director for Libya on how to best link with implications for humanitarian operations.

During the report launch both DRC and IRC provided interventions that responded to three questions: 1) Which findings, if any, aligned or

contrasted with observations from the field? 2) Which findings were most relevant to your organization's programming or advocacy? 3) What are the broader implications for your work? The DRC Libya Country Director, noted that the new key findings from the report included the significance of migration status in determining detention, along with the high prevalence of detention in the East in comparison to the numbers of surveys conducted in Benghazi. He highlighted that the latter key finding was particularly relevant to their DRC programming given the concentration of humanitarian actors within the West of the country around Tripoli and the limited presence of actors in Benghazi and other eastern provinces. Moreover, he noted that understanding the potential of payment methods to influence protection risks provides some new and interesting insights for programming. Information campaigns (potentially also disseminated by diaspora communities) could be used to help educate refugees and migrants around this topic along their route to Libya. The IRC Libya Health Coordinator noted cases of refugees and migrants asking to be detained and refusing to leave detention centers in hopes of being resettled. He also highlighted that actors in

the room should be particularly cautious of potential tuberculosis outbreaks in Libya, specifically within detention centers as well.

These critical reflections to programming were key in thinking about how to improve the humanitarian response in Libya. The floor was then opened up to feedback and questions from the audience, 60 participants from INGOs, UN agencies, donor agencies and governments, the media, and academic institutions.

Specifically, three main takeaways noted by event attendees included:

1. Informing the Alternatives to Detention Debate: Insights from the event should encourage caution when calling for closure of DCs for refugees and migrants who can also be at great risk when released to the community.
2. Debunking misconceptions on trends of those being detained (i.e. geographic distribution of the risk of being detained, religion or age, etc.)
3. Understanding the role of detention and forced displacement: People who are victims of persecution in their country of origin are at greater risk of being detained.



To capitalise on our link with the Danish Refugee Council and further push a stronger uptake of MMC's evidence in operational responses, MMC launched in 2019 a study on [Evidence-based Operational Responses to Mixed Migration: challenges and best practice](#). The study's recommendations have been implemented, and MMC is improving its processes to ensure a closer link between MMC research and analysis, and DRC's operational responses.

**“MMC produce high quality research and analysis that really help to shape policy and programmatic responses. They have collected high quality data and present it in a clear, simple and understandable way. Throughout SSSII their data and insights into mixed migration along the Central Mediterranean Route have helped DFID and our partners have a good understanding of the trends and needs of migrants. This has helped us grow and develop our thinking, informed our policy and shaped our programmatic responses along the route. Ultimately helping us to improve how we support people on the move.”**

Michael Kemsley, Department for International Development (DFID), Migration and Modern Slavery Department, Migration Programme Team

## Spotlight: Informing responses: **examples from the field**

The study mentioned above offered various concrete examples of how MMC has influenced responses on the ground:

- In Afghanistan, 4Mi data highlighted gaps in existing responses in Nimruz region, prompting DRC Afghanistan to expand operational coverage to the area.
- In Niger, 4Mi data was used to inform content in training sessions targeting local authorities.

In Burkina Faso, 4Mi data on the involvement of security actors in protection incidents affecting refugees and migrants, was presented to and discussed with security actors directly by DRC's sister organisation Danish Demining Group.

- In West Africa, 4Mi's foothold in West Africa functioned as a strategic entry point for DRC to initiate mixed migration programming in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.
- In partnership with UNFPA, 4Mi implemented urban surveys among refugee and migrant youth which helped shape operational trials and pilot interventions with youth across 4 cities (Beirut, Cairo, Nairobi, Tunis).



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