

#MMNAct - Migrant Media Action Media & Migration Guide



**#MMNAct - Migrant Media Action
Media & Migration Guide
The Gambia**

Acknowledgement

A guide for supporting media organisations and communities in The Gambia towards enhanced capacities in creating and sharing credible migration news.

Produced from empirical research by #MMAct in The Gambia, and with contributions from:

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In partnership with

r0g_agency for open culture and critical transformation (Germany) & the Peace Hub The Gambia (The Gambia)

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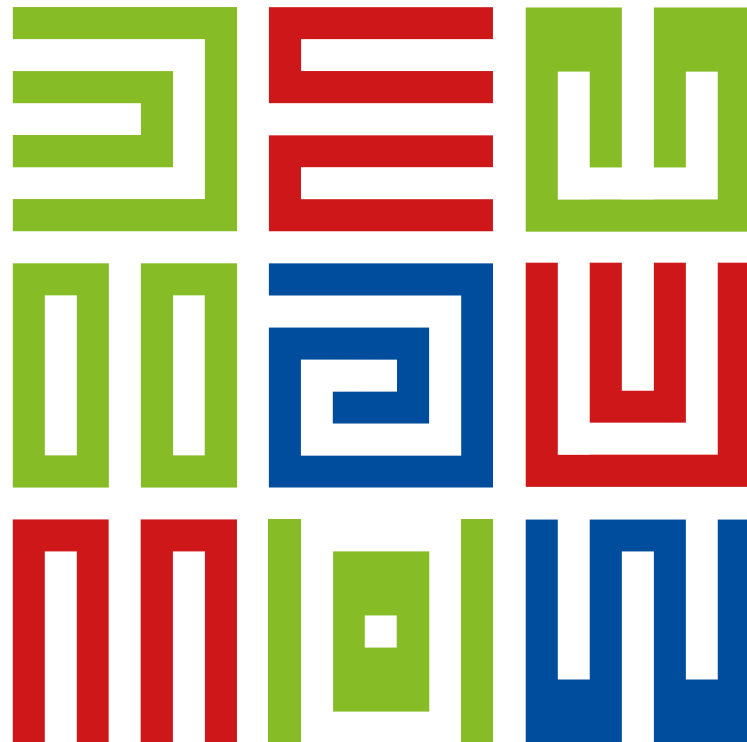
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SECTION I

Introduction

1.1 Migration in The Gambia

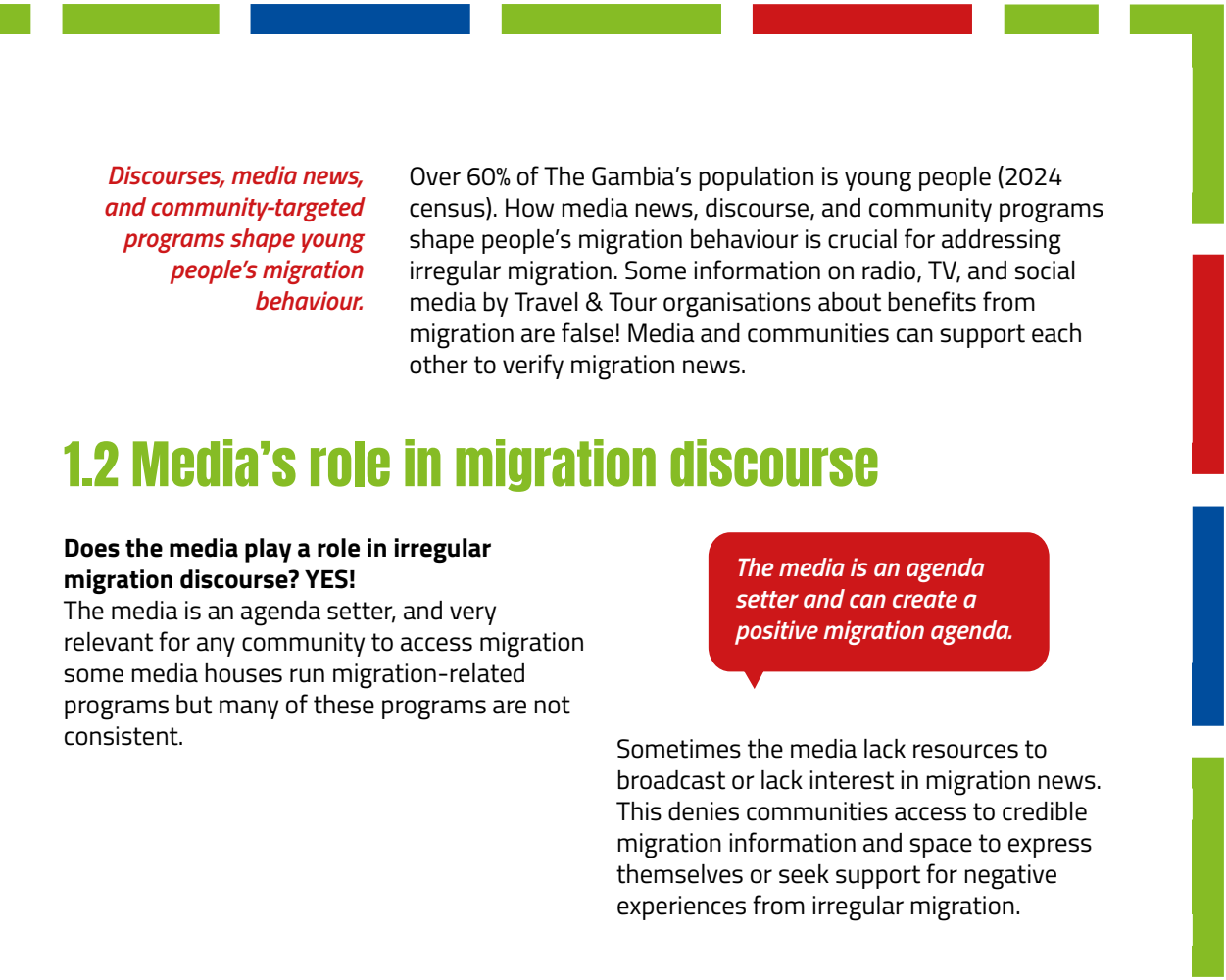
'Yeah, everybody, but migration news is relevant most especially for the youth... timing also is very, very important... so you cannot bring youth hour at 5 p.m. It is not possible because around 5 p.m., all the youths are getting hungry and looking for food...'

a conversation with a community youth leader about media migration programs, Kerewan, North Bank region, The Gambia; November 2025

Travelling to another country without proper documentation and on unapproved routes is irregular migration. **Imagine you enter someone's home compound or room without their permission!** This is what irregular migration or 'backway' migration is. **Young people in The Gambia are particularly affected by irregular migration**, as can be seen in the two conversations quoted above.

..no no, when they are planning and deciding, they keep it secret; they do not tell anyone, only their close friends or no one at all; but when they are back here in psychological breakdown; I do not know what happens in the desert maybe they are injected with some chemical; then they come back and now they need help. '

a conversation with a media professional in Banjul, The Gambia, December 2025



Discourses, media news, and community-targeted programs shape young people's migration behaviour.

Over 60% of The Gambia's population is young people (2024 census). How media news, discourse, and community programs shape people's migration behaviour is crucial for addressing irregular migration. Some information on radio, TV, and social media by Travel & Tour organisations about benefits from migration are false! Media and communities can support each other to verify migration news.

1.2 Media's role in migration discourse

Does the media play a role in irregular migration discourse? YES!

The media is an agenda setter, and very relevant for any community to access migration some media houses run migration-related programs but many of these programs are not consistent.

The media is an agenda setter and can create a positive migration agenda.

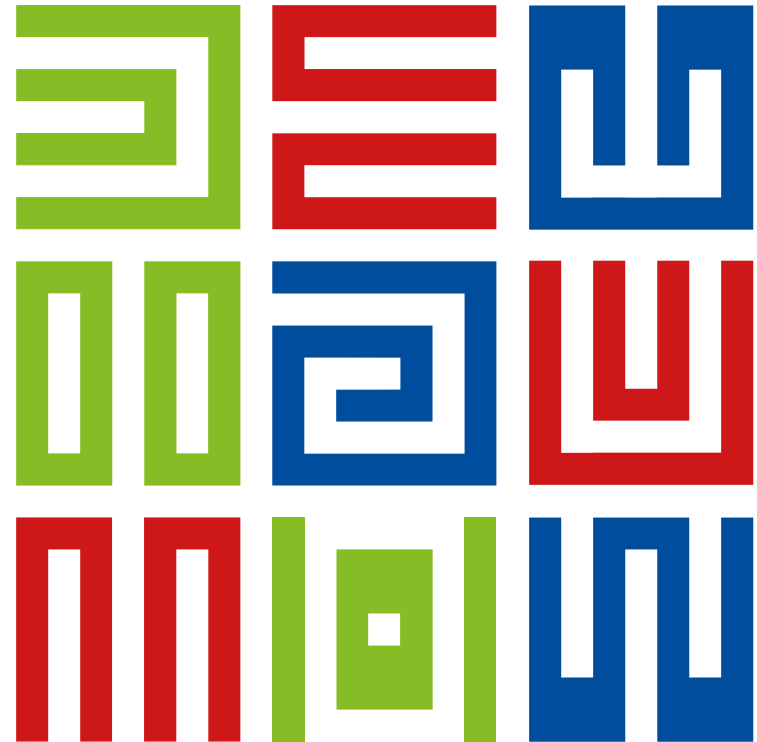
Sometimes the media lack resources to broadcast or lack interest in migration news. This denies communities access to credible migration information and space to express themselves or seek support for negative experiences from irregular migration.

1.3 Media usage patterns

This Migrant Media Action (#MMAct) project recognises the potential of media to support communities and other stakeholders. In addition to traditional media, social media are popular among Gambians for obtaining and creating news.

This Migrant Media Action (#MMAct) project recognises the potential of media to co-create migration news with communities to counter irregular migration.

#MMAct fosters stronger relationships between media and communities to address irregular migration.



SECTION II

The Migrant Media Action project
(#MMAct)

2.1 Project structure

In October 2025, r0g_agency with its partners in The Gambia and Ghana began the Migrant Media Action project (#MMAct). This responds to the quest to contribute to addressing challenges facing media and communities in migration dialogue.

Challenges facing media organisations to create and broadcast migration news include limited knowledge of formal migration discourses, inadequate knowledge on migration governance, lack of research, limited space for freedom of expression for communities to share, and low capacities to develop efficient news verification systems.

This project is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

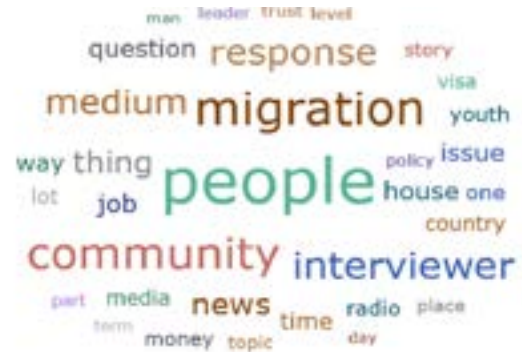
Migrant Media Action (#MMAct) will be implemented until March 2027. It evolves from and connects with the achievements of Migrnt Media Network (#MMN) (<https://migrantmedia.network/>).

2.2 Project goal and objectives

The Migrant Media Action project focuses on community ownership of migration discourse and positive actions.

People, community, migration, media, and news are some of the key concepts in #MMAct.

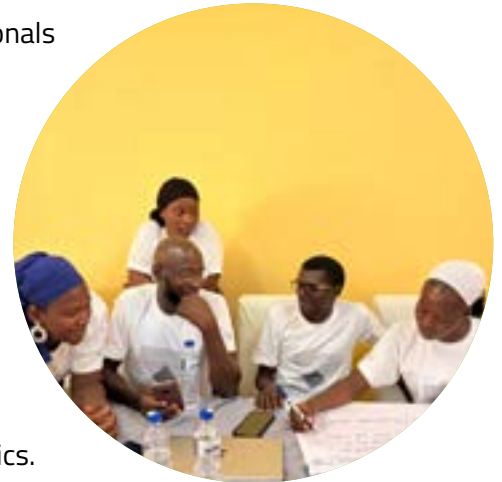
#MMAct contributes to safe and regular migration and livelihood options. The project will implement community-level activities in 16 communities in four regions each in The Gambia. The regions are West Coast, North Bank, Upper River, and Lower River.

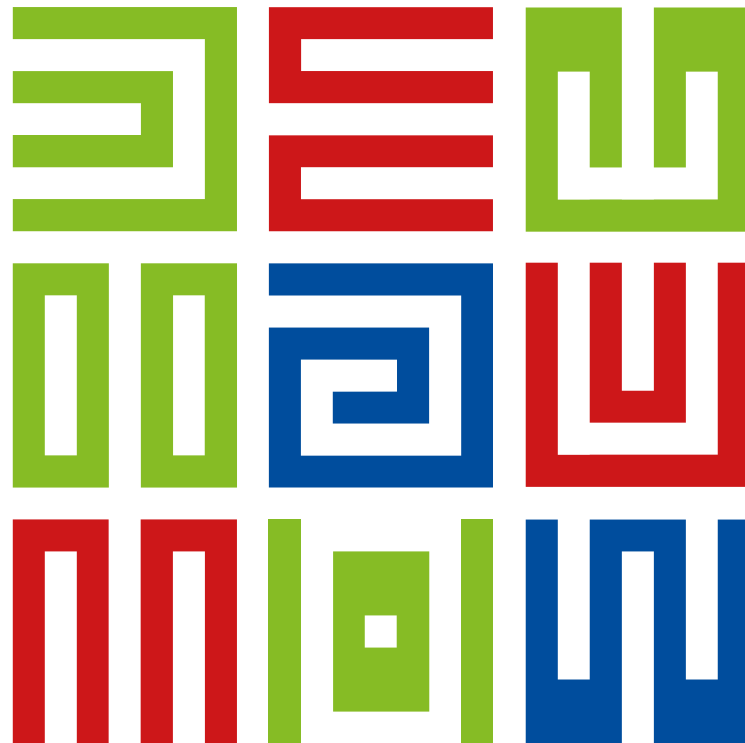


2.3 #MMACT programs for news credibility

#MMACT community-based activities include the following:

- a **project launch** in each region to create project visibility, gain support of the media, and to invite inputs in the development of this guide.
- two **media trainings** to enable media professionals refresh their knowledge and skills for irregular migration reporting.
- two **agoras** every month in each project region: agora is an inclusive and free forum for small groups of people to create and discuss activities in response to challenges described in this guide..
- a **radio show** once a month in radio stations or community communication centres in each region on migration and migration-related topics.





SECTION III

Methodology behind this guide

3.1 Qualitative research

This Media and Migration Guide was produced out of a qualitative empirical research completed by **#MMAct** team in The Gambia.

3.2 Sampling process

Radio stations are the key target participants reached in the **#MMAct** research for this guide. This is because the radio is the main media accessible to communities in non-urban areas in all the project regions.

Six main steps were followed to create a sampling frame of media and communities and eventually to sample, identify, and reach research subjects (Figure 3.1).

Step one: identification of project regions

#MMAct team identifies four regions in the country as among the most affected in terms of youth emigration to urban centres and irregular migration across the Mediterranean.

Step two: creation of sampling frame

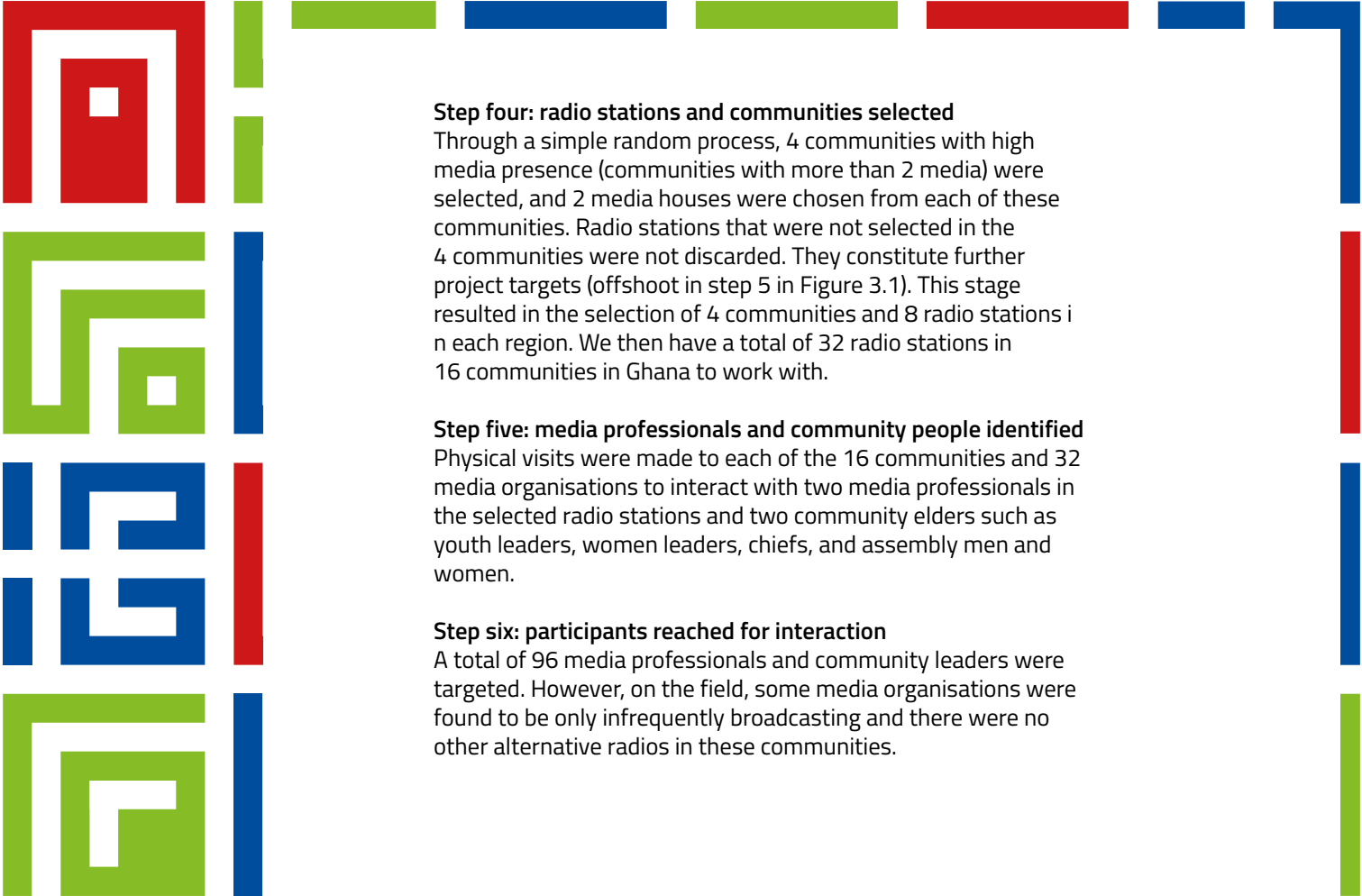
A list of media houses in good standing in each region was obtained from the Gambia Press Union (GPU). The list for radio stations was better structured thus a sampling frame of radio stations was constructed from this list.

Step three: construction of media presence index

An index of radio station presence in each community where the media is located (in the GPU list) was constructed.



Figure 3.1 methodological steps for data collection



Step four: radio stations and communities selected

Through a simple random process, 4 communities with high media presence (communities with more than 2 media) were selected, and 2 media houses were chosen from each of these communities. Radio stations that were not selected in the 4 communities were not discarded. They constitute further project targets (offshoot in step 5 in Figure 3.1). This stage resulted in the selection of 4 communities and 8 radio stations in each region. We then have a total of 32 radio stations in 16 communities in Ghana to work with.

Step five: media professionals and community people identified

Physical visits were made to each of the 16 communities and 32 media organisations to interact with two media professionals in the selected radio stations and two community elders such as youth leaders, women leaders, chiefs, and assembly men and women.

Step six: participants reached for interaction

A total of 96 media professionals and community leaders were targeted. However, on the field, some media organisations were found to be only infrequently broadcasting and there were no other alternative radios in these communities.



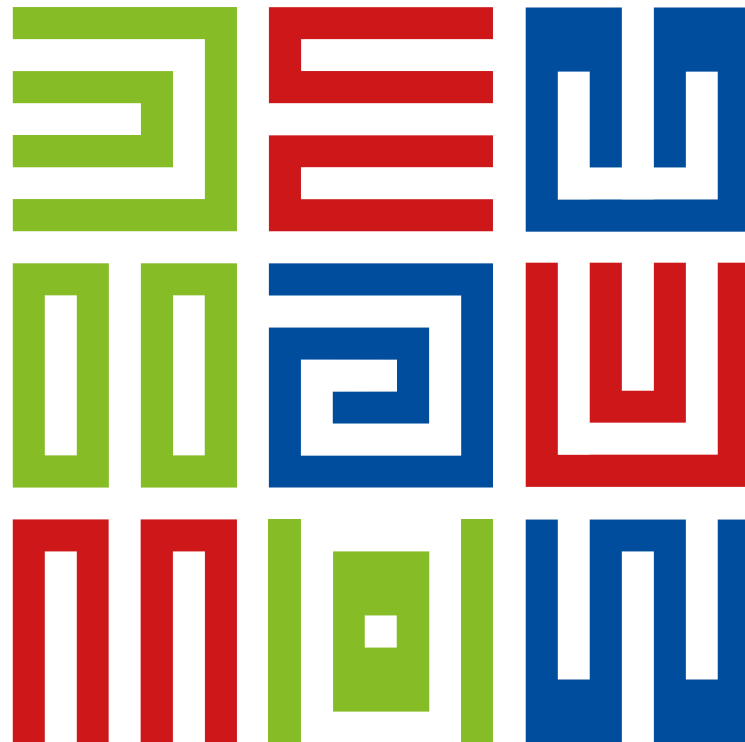
Grounded and inductive data analysis

In-depth qualitative research audios from the fieldwork were transcribed and analysed.

Symbolic and signifier text segments of the transcripts were identified and coded

Analysis of the data was inductive, resulting in 10 key themes.

The themes describe challenges identified and suggested measures to address them.



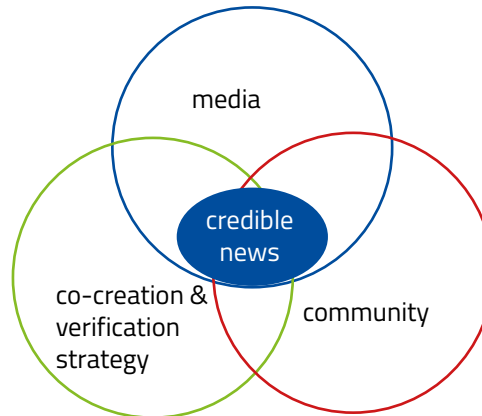
SECTION IV

The Media and Migration Guide

4.1 Guide values: creativity, credibility, & co-creation

The core values of the #MMAct's Media and Migration Guide are:

- media organisations and communities to **co-create credible news** on migration, not just consume news from elsewhere.
- co-created news is **context news**; it promotes the resourcefulness and capacities of media and communities to benefit from safe migration options.
- time, thinking, money, and materials spent on irregular migration can be used rather to **plan a safe regular migration** or invested in improving capacities and capital for positive alternative livelihoods at home.



4.2 Participants

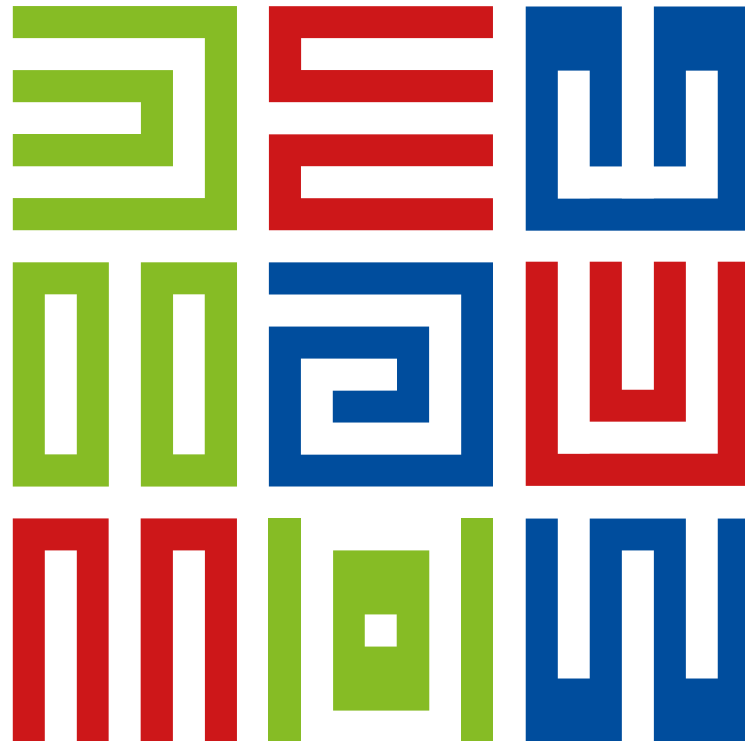
This Media and Migration Guide primarily **targets media professionals and community people** including youth and traditional leaders. It also identifies national formal agencies and civil society organisations in migration-related work as relevant stakeholders.

4.3 Building on achievements

The Migration Media Network (#MMN) project (implemented between 2019–2021) provided young people in Ghana and The Gambia with reliable migration information, social media training, and awareness of safe legal migration options. **#MMAct** builds directly on #MMN achievements, leveraging media – community relationships to co-create and co-report credible migration information.

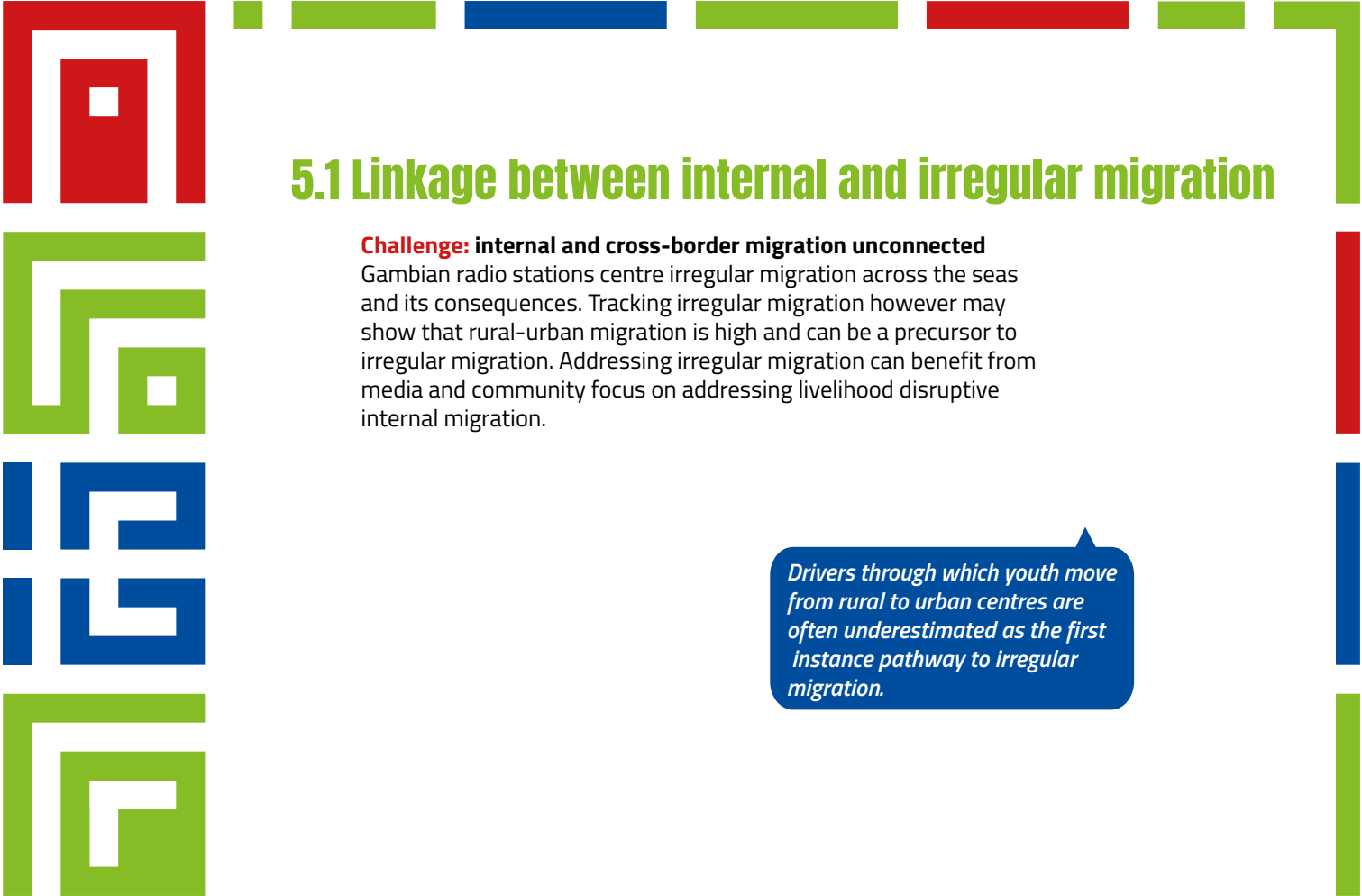
4.4 How to use this guide

This guide can be considered constantly evolving. Ideas to improve the measures are most welcome! It is structured in sections, with each section on a specific theme. Users should adopt their own flow, not necessarily the flow of the themes. The media and communities can develop their own activities to address the challenge associated with each theme.



SECTION V

Themes and measures - research findings and related actions



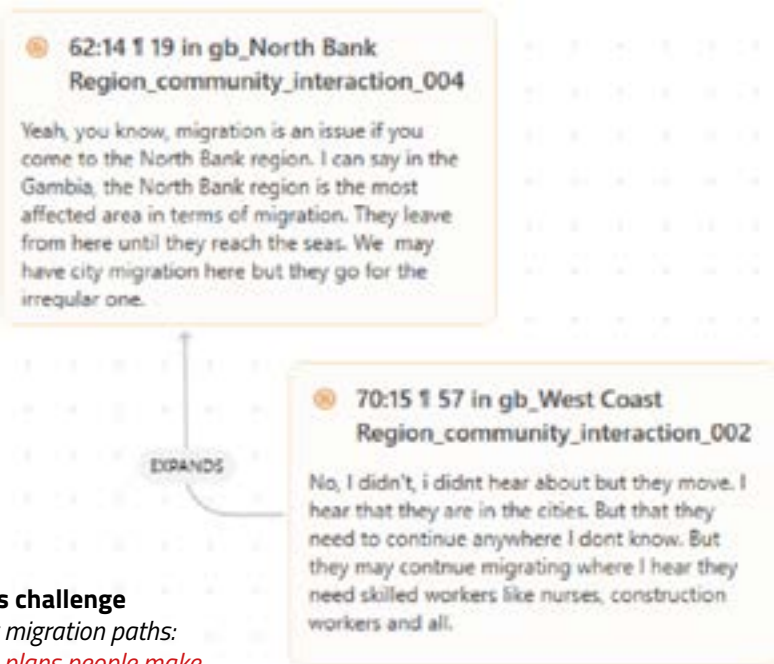
5.1 Linkage between internal and irregular migration

Challenge: internal and cross-border migration unconnected

Gambian radio stations centre irregular migration across the seas and its consequences. Tracking irregular migration however may show that rural-urban migration is high and can be a precursor to irregular migration. Addressing irregular migration can benefit from media and community focus on addressing livelihood disruptive internal migration.

Drivers through which youth move from rural to urban centres are often underestimated as the first instance pathway to irregular migration.

How communities express challenge



Measure: how to address challenge

Create activities to identify migration paths:
e.g., identify connections in plans people make to move from one place to another.

5.2 Community - media trust

Challenge: fear as constraint to freedom of expression

Families and individuals who lost relatives in irregular migration sometimes find media insensitive to their pain / loss.

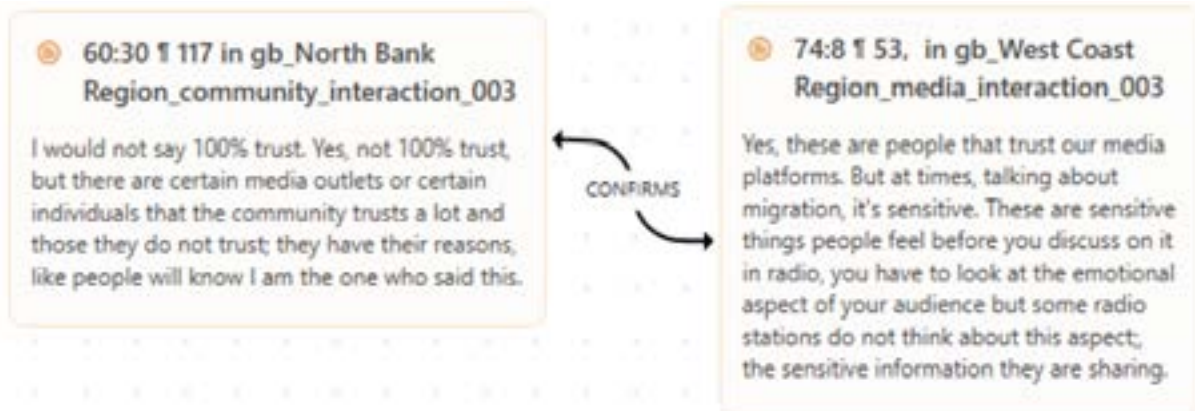
In some communities, people hesitate to share experiences with the media due to risks like reprisals or misrepresentations.



Encourage community people to shape and share their aspirations through media access.



How communities express challenge



Measure: how to address challenge

Create activities collaboratively to report or verify news in trust:

Encourage reporting in a non-personalised manner, but present facts e.g., report on a sensitive migration event and identify or conceal identities of persons involved, , then observe reactions. Always obtain consent from persons who are subjects of news.

5.3 Youth migration ambitions

Challenge: misguided migration ambitions

Youth are ambitious and have high desire to move. In fact, young people ambitious to migrate see media as a threat to their migration ambitions!

How communities express challenge



Measure: how to address challenge

Create activities to enhance youth partnership with media:
e.g., develop programs for media to frequently meet and stimulate youth to recognise and harness livelihood opportunities in community resources.

Also, emphasise the economic, social, and cultural benefits and advantages one can derive from migration if it is regular migration.

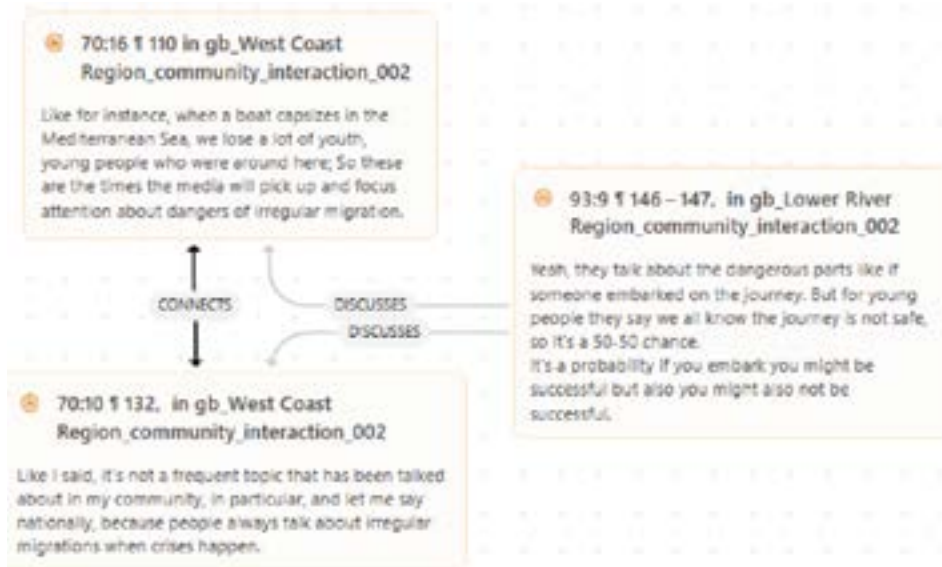


5.4 Beyond danger narratives

Challenge: news on irregular migration dangers losing deterrence

The media and community coverage of irregular migration heavily focuses on dangers along routes to Europe. But these danger narratives no longer some youth from trying; young people see irregular migration as a 50-50 chance of luck.

How communities express challenge



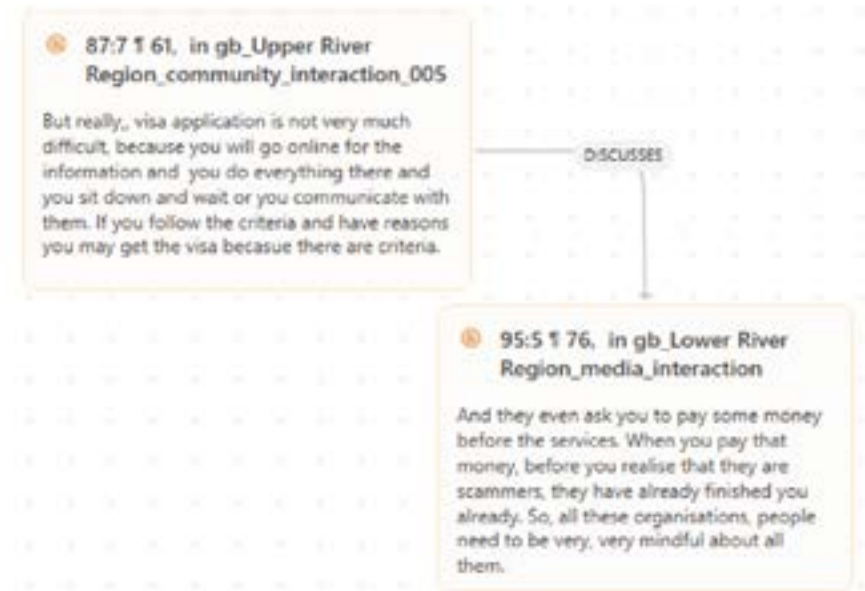
Measure:
how to address challenge
Create activities to promote positive outcomes of safe migration:
e.g., promote in-tra-African migration as a profitable and safe alternative to irregular migration. It offers livelihood opportunities for young people.

5.5 False migration offers

Challenge: migration 'con men' and 'con women'

In The Gambia, many people hoping to migrate get scammed by so-called connection men and women when seeking passports, visas, or travel services.

How communities express challenge



Measure: how to address challenge

Create activities to access official and passport information:

e.g., establish regular research and obtain reliable job and migration-related information from organisations such as the National Youth Council, National Enterprise Development Initiative, National Youth Service Scheme, Gambia Youth Chamber of Commerce, The Gambia Songhai Initiative, Embassies of African countries, German Embassy, other EU embassies, among others for enhanced media and community knowledge on entrepreneurial resources, migration policies and laws, and passport and visa acquisition processes.



5.6 Stigma

Challenge: bundling stigma stifles redress

Reporting on stigma is usually one of the topics media does news about. But in news, the source of stigma is bundled and does not address ways people are affected differently.

How communities express challenge



Measure: how to address challenge

Create activity to encourage peer-to-peer sharing of constructive experience, knowledge, and support among young people:

e.g. regularly highlight returnees who rebuilt lives at home through work, even without money from abroad.

Emphasise that migration may be beneficial economically if it is done the safe, regular way.

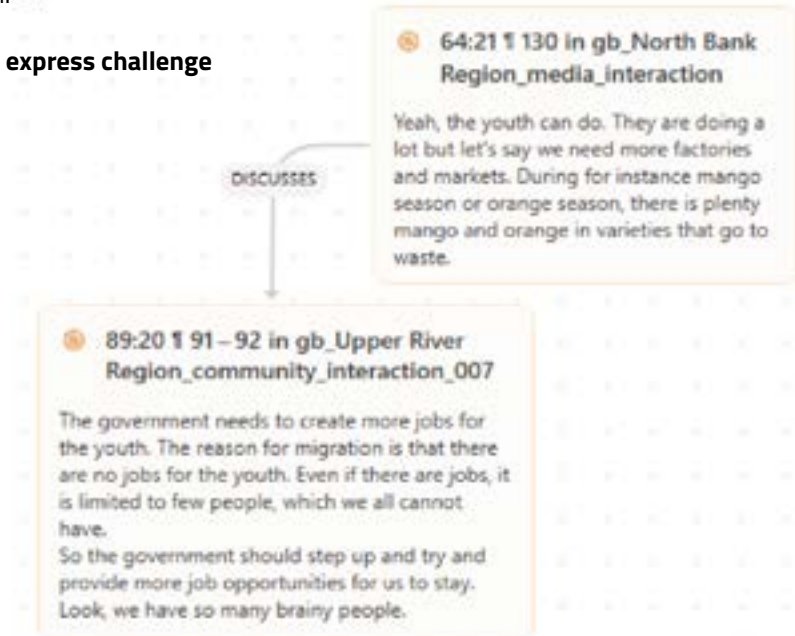


5.7. Youth jobs and unemployment

Challenge: youth lack motivation to create jobs

Youth face high unemployment and underemployment, which drives irregular migration. Many lack information and motivation to create their own jobs. This precarity makes risky migration seem like the only option.

How communities express challenge



Measure: how to address challenge

Create activity to stimulate young people to harness their creativity for livelihoods:

e.g. develop programs to renew youth mentalities and attitudes that they can create more jobs for themselves. Also create programs for youth to access entrepreneurial information and training they need, from across the country and beyond.



5.8 Social media potentials and limitations

Challenge: limited capacity for social media news verification

Social media supports access to information. But it also spreads fake migration news and scams about opportunities abroad. Yet there is lack of clear approaches for news verification for communities and media.

How communities express challenge

76:11 f 150 in gb_West Coast
Region_community_interaction_004

Social media helps spread information. For many youth, they find information on social media, like TikTok and facebook or instagram. But you will normally find videos some by Gambians, showing luxury things that will influence the other people that are here, and normally that would inspire them to use the journey.

91:12 f 105, in gb_Upper River
Region_media_interaction_003

The fake ones are there; you know that people will just create these AI videos and then create other things which you know are not real. They can use people's image to mix it and they can use people's words, and other items and to remix, which you know are fake and not okay.

Measure: how to address challenge

Create simple and accessible ways to actively verify news:

e.g., run weekly "truth check" radio segments exposing specific scams. Also, identify and support focal persons in communities and the media to track and report fake news.



5.9 Women, media, and migration

Challenge: women migration constraints underreported in migration news

Women's migration constraints remain significantly underreported in migration-related news coverage. Across community, regional, and national levels, structural factors, including cultural norms, gender stereotypes, institutional frameworks, political dynamics, and regulatory environments, systematically reinforce women's social, economic, and political marginalization. These barriers limit women's access to and control over critical resources such as information, financial capital, and decision-making spaces.

As a result, women face reduced opportunities to participate in and benefit from migration processes. This lack of access also increases their vulnerability to exploitative migration practices and constrains their ability to leverage reintegration opportunities in their communities and local labour markets following return.

In the context of irregular migration in particular, limited access to information and resources heightens women's vulnerability and sustains distinct risks. These include exposure to sexual violence, lack of safe and adequate spaces for reproductive health, forced labour,

separation from children, kidnapping, and other forms of exploitation.

Across both regular and irregular migration pathways, the specific needs and experiences of women and girls often remain overlooked, frequently obscured by dominant and patriarchal narratives in media reporting. Local media actors have a critical role to play in addressing this imbalance by promoting more gender-responsive migration coverage. Doing so requires a deliberate commitment to producing and disseminating migration-based information that reflects women's realities and rights.

Women-responsive migration reporting helps understand ways the peculiar difficulties women and girls go through in migration are created, evolve, and impact their lives in all forms of migration including safe and irregular migration. For instance, women-responsive migration reporting helps:

- expose the systems that enable this exploitation, including travel and tour agencies and their networks, the sources of gendered disinformation targeting women, and the companies and individuals that profit from women's labour.
- understand and discuss the traditional cultures, values, practices, norms etc that contribute to keeping women burdened and disadvantaged in access to and participation in harnessing resources for livelihood, and ways to change these structure
- critique contemporary concepts and discourses and support communities to understand how these concepts and discourses create false economic and social benefits that promote unnecessary or irregular migration among women
- encourage and support women to engage in political activities to claim decision-making



spaces and leadership roles in their communities to help make their needs visible and understood

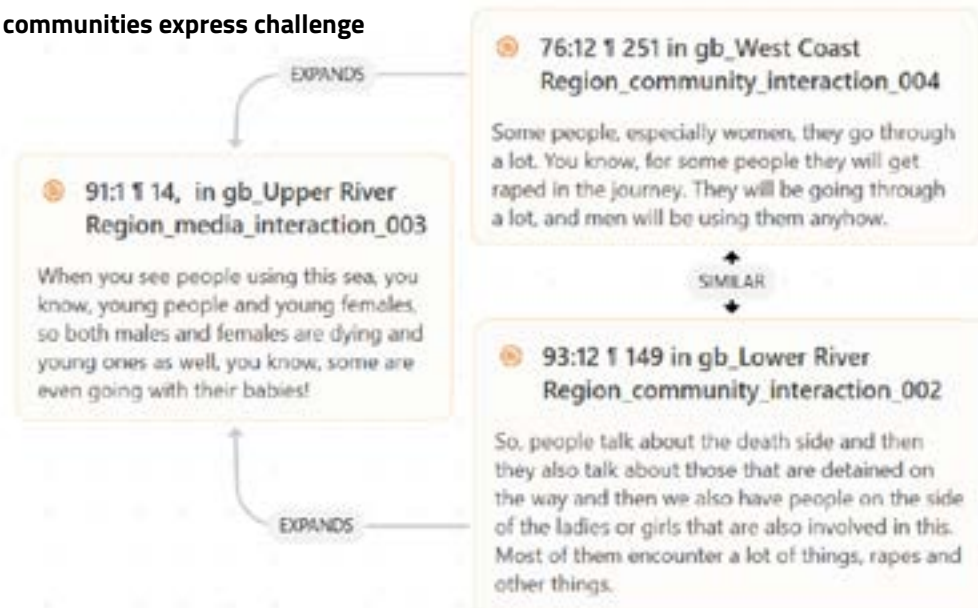
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- promote a culture of self-reflection among media professionals so they avoid framing migration stories in ways that focus on women's supposed "poor choices" as victims, and instead prioritise exposing the agencies, individuals, laws, and networks that sustain women's vulnerabilities within migration systems.

While media houses and communities will find this Media and Migration Guide useful for better understanding and contributing to transforming women migration for positive outcomes, they should stimulate themselves to find solutions from within their own contexts. This is because focussing exclusively on external solutions can often be cultural imperialism that should be

avoided. Media professionals should constantly remind themselves that understanding how their newsmaking and reporting will be understood in the social, political, economic, and cultural contexts of their communities is crucial because what is defined as just, unequal, harmful, or discriminatory may be different from one place to another.

How communities express challenge





Measure: how to address challenge

Create dedicated activities and spaces where women can share and reflect on their migration journeys and distinct experiences. Also, in everyday news coverage, consistently foreground the cultural, social, economic, and political systems that limit women's ability to realise their potential, whether through regular migration pathways or as entrepreneurs in their countries:

e.g. research and identify local social, economic, political, and infrastructural opportunities that can enable women to participate effectively in the livelihoods of their choice. This will strengthen their prospects for local entrepreneurship and expand safer, more empowering options and reduce their vulnerabilities in migration.

5.10 Partnership strategies

Challenge: Limited integration of migration programs

Many useful programs on migration remain scattered and isolated from each other. This creates duplication, wasteful efforts and resources, and leads to weak outcomes.



Through partnerships, the media and communities strengthen their capacities for news creation, news sharing, and enhance knowledge in migration discourses.

Civil society organisations, community organisations, state agencies and local governments, the diaspora etc are relevant to the media and communities.

Create activities that enable access to partners:

e.g., invite civil society organisations, community organisations, state agencies, the diaspora and community elders to community and media programs. Also, attend relevant programs organised by these partners and report on them in the media.



Measure: How to address challenge

Create activities that highlight the cultural, social, economic, and political systems that constrain women, men, returned migrants, internal migrants, and youth from harnessing their livelihood potentials whether in safe regular migration or as entrepreneurs in their own countries:

e.g. research and identify ways local social, economic, cultural, and political systems help different categories of people become active like anyone else in careers and jobs.

Also, research and identify how individuals, groups of people, organisations, and businesses exploit the diversity of people especially women in irregular migration and in attempts at entrepreneurship in their own countries.

5.11 Some resources on migration

Migration information on The Gambia

<https://diaspora.gm/national-migration-policy/>
National Migration Policy, The Gambia

<https://dakar.diplo.de/sn-en/service/visa>
visa information for travelling to Germany

<https://rumoursaboutgermany.info>
Rumours about Germany

Academic scholarships

<https://banjul.diplo.de/gm-en/2648826-2648826>
Studying in Germany

<https://www2.daad.de/deutschland/stipendium/datenbank/en/21148-scholarship-database/>
Studying in Germany (through DAAD)

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/opportunities/individuals/students/studying-abroad>
Erasmus scholarship

https://www.deutschlandstipendium.de/deutschlandstipendium/de/services/english/english_node.html
Some academic scholar information for studying in Germany

<https://www.boell.de/en/scholarships>
Heinrich Boell Foundation scholarships

<https://www.rosalux.de/en/foundation/studienwerk>
Rosa Luxemburg Foundation scholarships

African migration information

<https://au.int/en/visa-free-africa>
African Union visa free policy



<https://www.acsrn-au.org/work/migration-and-media-changing-the-african-migrations-narratives/?hl=en-GB>
African Union article on migration

<https://www.acsrn-au.org/?hl=en-GB>
African Centre for Study and Research on Migration

General information for media migration reporting

<https://www.ilo.org/resource/media-friendly-glossary-migration-middle-east-edition>
Media-friendly glossary on migration

https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf
Glossary of terminologies

https://gijn.org/artigos/migration-reporting-guidelines-assessment/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
Tips on migration reporting

<https://ijnnet.org/en/story/5-tips-reporting-migration-africa-%E2%80%94-and-around-world>
Tips on migration reporting

<https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/73/195>
Global Compact for Migration

<https://www.iom.int/global-compact-migration>
UN system for migration

<https://www.yenna.org/en>
Migration social and behaviour change

Women and migration

<https://interactive.unwomen.org/multimedia/explainer/migration/en/index.html>
<https://womeninmigration.org/>
<https://www.migrantwomennetwork.org/projects/>

