



In today's increasingly globalized and interconnected world in which more people migrate than ever before in human history, young migrants between 15 and 24 have become powerful agents of change and development. By mid-2010, the total number of migrant youth was estimated at 27 million, representing an eighth of the 214 million international migrants in the world today.

Young migrants, either alone or accompanied by family members, leave their homes for different reasons. Some leave in search of jobs, others to flee persecution.

On International Youth Day 2013, which has as its theme "Youth Migration: Moving Development Forward", IOM highlights the importance of engaging, enabling and empowering youth to fulfil their development potential. Migration continues to be the greatest poverty reduction strategy, presenting both challenges and opportunities for young people.

"As the number of young people migrating through both regular and irregular channels has risen, safe and regular migration must be promoted to reduce the risks of exploitation and abuse. Sharing information on migration options is essential, because it increases awareness and enables young people to make well-informed decisions," says IOM Director General William Lacy Swing.

IOM promotes regular migration and positive alternatives among youth by raising awareness of the dangers of irregular migration, while proposing positive alternatives, including education and skills training for employment.

Through schools and universities, IOM also contributes to the prevention of human trafficking. In Egypt, for example, it has launched a comprehensive information campaign on the varied risks associated with irregular migration and organizes job fairs at both national and local level.

Manuals for schools and universities have also been produced in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan to raise awareness among young people of their rights and enhance their civic engagement at local and community levels.

Reducing the risk of forced migration due to recruitment by illegal armed groups or other forms of violence is also of the utmost importance. In Colombia, IOM works together with partners to guarantee the human rights of vulnerable children, adolescents and young people. In Sri Lanka, it gives career guidance to young former combatants who have undergone rehabilitation and are being reintegrated into society.

"Engaging and including youth in migration debates and policy formulation is essential to enhance development. Young migrants need to be given opportunities to participate, to express themselves, to be listened to and to have their needs and interests taken into account," notes Swing.

"Social inclusion of migrant youth helps shape positive attitudes among migrants and native youth alike and brings down social barriers of xenophobia, marginalization and discrimination," he adds.

IOM has also worked with ten partner agencies in Europe to create a public online training platform as part of the *iYouth project*. *iYouth* aims to empower youth organizations to work toward young migrants' integration and the prevention of their exclusion. The online training platform is a publicly available resource for organizations and individuals who want to support migrant youth in their integration process.

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It is essential that youth are aware of the risks and opportunities of migration, that their voices are heard throughout all parts of society, and that they are empowered to influence their own lives and frame their futures – wherever this may be. In today's increasingly globalized and interconnected world, youth represent the most interconnected generation of all.

To exchange views on youth migration and development, to discuss the main opportunities and challenges for young migrants in different regions, and to provide a global audience with the opportunity to interact with IOM experts from all parts of the world, IOM is organizing a 90-minute Google+ Hangout on International Youth Day, August 12th, starting at 3.00 pm CET. You can view it live at

[gplus.to/IOM](https://plus.google.com/+IOM)

. More details can be found on the event's webpage at:

<http://weblog.iom.int/google-plus-hangout>

Additional links:

- [Join IOM's Google+ Hangout on International Youth Day](#)
- [Event page](#)

