

# CHANGING THE NARRATIVE ON MIGRATION IN SADC **A NEWSROOM MANUAL**

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A conflict-sensitive approach  
to migration reporting



**Internews**



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# Foreword

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In a region where there is a challenging, emotional and dangerous conflict over migration and migrants, conflict management and peace building are by-products of conflict-sensitive reporting. The media that practise such journalism can assist citizens to make educated choices that can bring about a just and peaceful society, where human rights are observed. The purpose of this manual is to empower journalists to report on migration conflict professionally, without feeding the flames of conflict.

This manual brings together principles of conflict-sensitive journalism with practical strategies for reporting on migration. It explores how media workers can play a role in protecting and promoting rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. It provides guidelines that both editors and their journalists can follow as they strategise around ways of reporting on the migration issue, what to do during conflict and how to cover the post-conflict period.

This handbook was developed for the Southern African media after an eight-month project that explored the roles journalists can play in reporting on migration in the region. It is based on presentations delivered at a series of workshops organised by Internews in South Africa on the theme 'Changing the Narrative on Migrants in Southern Africa'. The workshops included a combination of presentations from subject specialists, panel discussions and practical activities facilitated by academics and practitioners, who combined the fundamental theories in their field and rich experiences of their practice.

Contributions to the manual include input from journalists from the following countries: Botswana, eSwatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Scholarly insight on migration in Southern Africa was provided by the African Centre for the Study of Migration and Society, Save the Children South Africa, as well as several economists, political analysts, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), unionists and South African government representatives.

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# Key terms and definitions

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**ASYLUM SEEKERS:** These are people who have been forced to leave their country because of war or other factors, such as persecution for political reasons or sexual orientation, and are seeking protection from another country because they cannot return to their own. An asylum seeker must prove that they have faced persecution in their home country due to race, religion, citizenship, membership of a social group, or their political opinions.

**CROSS-BORDER OR INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS:** People who migrate outside their country.

**INTERNAL MIGRANTS:** People who migrate within a country.

**INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION OR CROSS-BORDER MIGRATION:** Movement of persons who leave their country of origin to establish themselves either permanently or temporarily in another country.

**IRREGULAR MIGRATION:** Migration that occurs outside the regulatory norms or normal travel regulations of countries (i.e. origin, transit or destination country). There are two groups of irregular migrants: those who arrive secretly, and those who arrive and then overstay the period stated in their visa. Irregular migrants include undocumented migrants (also children), victims of trafficking, smuggling, migrants in detention centres, deportees and stranded migrants.

**MIGRANT:** A migrant is any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a state away from his/her usual place of residence.

**MIGRATION:** Migration is the movement of people from one geographical location to the other. This movement can occur regardless of a) the person's legal status, b) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary (e.g. looking for work or leaving because of war), c) the causes of the movement (e.g. lack of employment opportunities), and d) the length of stay. People can migrate internally within their country, or they can cross a border to go to another country.

**PUSH AND PULL FACTORS:** Push and pull factors are used to describe why people migrate from one area to another. Push factors encourage people to leave their points of origin and settle elsewhere, while pull factors attract migrants to new areas. There are several push and pull factors that account for why children migrate. These factors can be environmental, social, economic and political.

**REFUGEE:** A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so (UNHCR). All refugees are initially asylum seekers but not all asylum seekers obtain refugee status.

**REMITTANCES:** Money that migrants send back to their home countries to support their families and relatives.

**SEPARATED CHILDREN:** Children who are separated from both parents or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives. This category includes children accompanied by other adult family members or relatives who continue to look after them.

**SMUGGLING:** Smuggling is the facilitation, for financial or other material gain, of irregular entry into a country where the migrant is not a national or resident (UNODC).

**TRAFFICKING:** Human trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit (UNODC).

**UNACCOMPANIED CHILD:** A child under the age of 18, who has been separated from both parents and is not cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, has a responsibility to do so.

# 1

## Changing the Narrative on Migrants in SADC

### CONTEXT

In 2020 the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa released a survey on the drivers of anti-immigrant sentiment in South Africa. This survey found that traditional media (TV, radio and newspapers) were by far still the most trusted sources of information about foreigners in South Africa. The media, not just in South Africa but also in other Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, play a big role in how migrants are perceived. Yet the coverage of migration issues by the media still remains problematic. With a few exceptions, migration issues are only covered when something goes wrong, the reports are often polarising and dangerously stereotypical while over-simplifying stories of migrants and xenophobia, with the voices of migrants largely absent from the narrative.

This kind of reporting, coupled with increasing rhetoric on nationalism and xenophobic utterances from government officials and community leaders, makes for a very hostile environment for migrants, particularly African migrants, who make up the largest number of migrants in SADC and bear the brunt of xenophobic attitudes and attacks.

In South Africa these xenophobic attacks have become a perennial occurrence. This is particularly concerning as South Africa receives the most number of migrants in the region. In 2019 at least 12 people died in multiple cities across South Africa as a result of a wave of xenophobic attacks targeting African foreign nationals. For the first time, refugees who were victims of the xenophobic violence of August 2019 camped at the UNHCR offices in Pretoria and Cape Town, demanding to be relocated to other countries where they would be better received.

This xenophobic violence created diplomatic fractures between South Africa and other African countries. In the wake of discontent on the continent brought about by the violence, South African businesses in Nigeria and Zambia suffered attacks from locals, who were taking revenge for attacks against their countrymen and -women in South Africa.

### TOP MIGRANT-RECEIVING COUNTRIES IN SADC

- 1 South Africa
- 2 Democratic Republic of Congo
- 3 Angola

### TOP MIGRANT-SENDING COUNTRIES IN SADC

- 1 Democratic Republic of Congo
- 2 South Africa
- 3 Zimbabwe

SADC IS HOME TO OVER  
**7.9 MILLION**  
 CROSS-BORDER MIGRANTS



In light of all this, the project ‘Changing the Narrative on Migrants in Southern Africa’ has responded by providing training that encourages sensitive and in-depth reporting on migration, xenophobia and migrants’ rights in Southern Africa. The project has also elevated the voices and stories of migrants in the media, with the overall goal of changing the narrative about migration and migrants in the region. SADC is home to over 7.9 million cross-border migrants, most of whom are from elsewhere in the region.

The purpose of the changing the narrative about migrants in Southern Africa is to change the current polarising narrative to more fair and nuanced reporting, which we believe will benefit the region socially and economically.

CURRENT NARRATIVE	DESIRED NARRATIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polarising</li> <li>• Victim orientated</li> <li>• Male</li> <li>• One-sided</li> <li>• Undocumented migrant</li> <li>• Often void of the context of facts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive of different voices (women, children, LGBTQI, documented migrant)</li> <li>• Reflect different narratives and nuances of lived experiences of migrants in Southern Africa</li> <li>• Reflect urgency of migrants</li> <li>• Seek out truth</li> <li>• Constructive</li> </ul>



## ABOUT CONFLICT-SENSITIVE JOURNALISM

It is clear from the previous chapter, and from the chapters to follow, that questions relating to migration have culminated in a range of conflicts in the SADC region, conflicts that have played themselves out in deadly ways in South Africa. These conflicts are complex and cannot be easily disassociated from other social and political concerns that have caused instability and suffering across the continent. Stories of people fleeing war-ravaged and economically decimated homelands, only to confront xenophobic violence in their adopted countries, are all too common. So too are stories of migrants responding angrily to the lack of care shown them by government departments in host countries. These are all complex stories that pose real challenges for journalists, who must report on them in ways that enable audiences to really understand what is happening. These stories become even more complex when journalists feel unsure where they are positioned on a personal level in relation to these events.

Ross Howard, one of Conflict-Sensitive Journalism's (CSJ's) original advocates, argues that: 'Professional journalists do not set out to reduce conflict. They seek to present accurate and impartial news. But it is often through good reporting that conflict is reduced' (2004). This does not, however, suggest that journalists should leave the contribution we can make towards enabling people to resolve conflict to chance. Instead, we need to take seriously the conviction that good journalism makes a difference and invest time and resources in ensuring our coverage of stories about migrants and refugees is as fair, accurate and comprehensive as possible.

While it is widely accepted that the journalist's role is to inform, educate and entertain, a conflict-sensitive approach to reporting holds that these roles need to be expanded further to encompass journalism's true potential for contributing towards conflict management and peace building. A CSJ approach to journalism suggests that news media have multiple overlapping roles to play. Some of these, which are relevant to disputes and confrontations related to migration, are outlined briefly on page 7 (see Du Toit 2012).

## HEADLINE

Peace making is not the journalist's responsibility, but good, in-depth reporting can contribute significantly towards the creation of conditions that enable people to respect each other and resolve differences.

## OBJECTIVE

This chapter has two primary objectives:

- it explores how excellent journalism can play a role in enabling parties to find solutions to the conflicts that are too frequently sparked by people's responses to migration; and
- it examines how responsible journalists can avoid exacerbating conflicts between migrants, host communities and officials.

### **Journalists can provide a channel for real communication to take place between parties.**

By interviewing groups caught up in conflicts and making enquiries about their fears and their concerns, as well as their hopes, journalists can make it possible for members of different groups to communicate with each other. They can often facilitate real dialogue in which they report on what one group says and on how another responds to what is said. To do this effectively journalists will want to avoid being used as a weapon by parties who simply want to provoke opponents and their own supporters. It is never the journalist's role to serve as a mouthpiece for different groups as they launch verbal attacks on each other.

### **Journalists can provide leaders and followers with the information they need to make wise decisions.**

Many conflicts occur because people lack information about factors leading to the conflict, about the other parties involved and about the impact that engaging in the conflict might have on them in the long run. If journalists can identify people's knowledge gaps and provide them with the necessary information, they can play an important role in reducing conflict. It is also much easier for leaders with contentious intentions to manipulate groups if people are ill informed. By informing the general populace, journalists can help to counter this kind of propaganda.

### **Help parties to broaden the search for solutions.**

The prospects of groups in conflict being able to find solutions is often contingent on their being able to generate several ideas that will meet their needs. The conflicting parties must then agree on the options that achieve the best results for everyone involved. Journalists are well placed to increase the range of choices open to people by consulting with specialists who have experience in dealing with the conflict and giving them opportunities to make recommendations.

### **Journalists can educate people about different ways of managing and resolving conflicts without violence.**

Conflicts sometimes turn violent because groups are not familiar with the different avenues and processes that might be available to them to solve conflicts without confrontation. By engaging with specialists who can educate people about ways of addressing conflicts, journalists can help people explore alternatives to violence. They can also educate people by writing stories that show how other people, facing similar problems, have been able to resolve their problems.

### **Journalist can play a role in counteracting stereotypes.**

Reporters are often well placed to pick up on the different stereotypes people from competing groups believe about each other. They can see how these can be damaging to relationships and allow groups to believe the worst about each other. By publishing stories that counteract stereotypes, journalists can encourage people to examine their beliefs about other groups and to question whether their stereotypes are fair and accurate. For example, a story about a local businessman aiding a migrant community that has been subject to a xenophobic attack can show that not everyone from a host community is unsympathetic to the migrants' needs.

### **Journalists can play a role in counteracting misperceptions.**

Conflict will frequently be exacerbated by the fact that groups make incorrect assumptions about the reasons for other groups acting in the way they do. These misperceptions can often lead to confrontations unless they can be rectified. When journalists engage regularly with groups in conflict, they can observe how people act based on misperceptions. In these circumstances, journalists can provide people with an opportunity to explain their (mis)perceptions and encourage other groups to clarify these issues in their reports. The fact that groups have misperceptions about each other is a worthwhile story.

### **Journalists can identify the underlying issues.**

If parties are to find solutions to their conflicts, they need to understand the underlying causes behind the conflict. It is common for parties to make extensive demands and express extreme opinions. These generally represent the groups' positions and obscure their underlying needs and interests. It is often only when these interests are made visible that parties can truly see whether there will be opportunities for compromise and accommodation. Journalists can play a key role by asking questions about the interests and concerns of parties that underlie their demands and accusations.

### **Journalists can provide a space where people can talk about their emotions.**

Conflict situations can be exceptionally emotional times and people will often resort to violent behaviour to express these emotions. By making it possible for people to express their feelings publicly through the media, journalists can help to reduce the need for people to engage in destructive activities.

### **Journalists can play a role in empowering weaker parties caught up in conflicts.**

Most conflicts are asymmetrical. One group will almost inevitably be more powerful and able to dominate the other. This does not mean the weaker party will not retaliate and continue the fight. Parties are more likely to reach agreements if they see each other as equals. By providing groups with equitable coverage, journalists can help to empower weaker groups and to ensure their concerns are not ignored.

All these roles are consistent with traditional understandings of good journalism and each of them can contribute in different ways to lowering the temperature when it comes to conflicts between migrant communities, between migrants and host communities and between migrants and officials. CSJ does not ask journalists to side with groups, but it does ask journalists to think about whether their coverage can contribute towards groups finding solutions. It also ensures that marginalised groups are fairly represented and given a voice. It does not suggest that journalists should tell groups how to act, but it does suggest that groups must be held accountable for their actions. It does not advocate particular solutions, but it does ask that parties consider the implications of their actions and decisions and the effects these will have on others.

While it does not clash with usual tenets of journalism, CSJ often provides a motivation for going the extra mile. If journalists recognise that their work can contribute to reducing conflict and possibly saving lives, they are likely to go beyond the normal reporting routines. CSJ asks that journalists refuse to accept what they are told at face value and that they continuously dig deeper to uncover

Describing the responsibility of journalists in reporting on conflict  
Howard writes that they have the following duties:

- to understand the conflict
- to report fairly
- to report on the background and causes of conflict
- to present the human side
- to report on peace efforts
- to recognise their own influence.

the real causes of conflicts. Simplistic explanations for why locals sometimes turn on foreigners will never be good enough. Conflict-sensitive reporters will always want to know more. A conflict-sensitive approach to reporting will always push journalists to want to go beyond the usual sources, as they seek out people who are often ignored, but who can provide deeper insights into how and why conflicts have developed. Ultimately, conflict-sensitive reporting aims ensure that their different audiences have a deeper understanding of what lies beneath people's actions and this kind of reporting can inform the way society's problem-solvers approach migrant conflicts. It also ensures that they do act. Leaders cannot say, 'We did not know', when the stories were widely broadcast and covered in print.

## What is causing conflict between migrants and South Africans?

Numerous factors have been identified as having contributed towards conflicts between migrants and host communities in South Africa. Many of these are commonly identified among the different causes of conflict, namely:

- Scarcity of resources and inequality in the way these are distributed.
- The denial of individuals' identities and failure of groups to respect each other's cultural practices.
- Communication barriers between groups because of language differences, but also because of people's inability to understand different cultural practices and ideological positionings.
- Stereotypes and misperceptions. These are often promoted by leaders who manipulate them for political gain.
- Structural imbalances in society, which lead to people resenting the fact that they are treated differently to others.
- A lack of information.
- Goal incompatibility.
- Uncertainty. Fear of the unknown can often lead to people engaging in acts of violence.

These are discussed in greater detail in different parts of this manual. The key question is how journalists who adopt a conflict-sensitive approach to reporting can play a role in reducing the harmful impacts of these underlying sources of conflict.

## How should journalists treat conflict related to migration issues?

The principles of conflict-sensitive reporting can be applied to conflicts about migration in multiple ways. This list is not exhaustive, but it does provide an overview of some of the key possible interventions.

A conflict-sensitive approach to reporting on migrant conflicts could help to ensure the following:

- That different groups from migrant and host communities can communicate with each other, discuss their hopes and fears, and ultimately explore possible solutions to their challenges.
- That people from marginalised and vulnerable groups can express themselves and draw attention to the difficulties they face and to their needs.
- That both migrants and members of host communities, including government officials, are familiar with key legislation and international frameworks impacting on migrants. For this to happen, journalists need to educate themselves about laws and international agreements and build relationships with specialists who can educate people about these issues.
- That journalists spend time with the various parties, learning from them about how they feel conflicts can be resolved or transcended. This means continually asking: 'What are the different parties key concerns?' and 'How can these be addressed?'
- That journalists understand that the factors that trigger the outbreak of a violent conflict are not necessarily the causes. When a dispute between a migrant and a local resident triggers a bigger conflagration, journalists must know enough about conflict to understand that the fight was a trigger, but that the real causes of the conflict are more substantial and deep seated.
- That journalists respect the work of organisations that are seeking to build peace between communities. It is important for journalists to understand these organisations are often engaged with highly sensitive processes that can be derailed by inaccurate or sensational reports.
- That journalists seek to include the voices of all stakeholders in their narratives. What are the hopes and fears of people living in host communities? What are the needs and interests of migrants? What drove them to leave their countries? How are they contributing to their new communities? What lies behind the stereotypes and prejudices that different groups hold towards each other?
- That journalists actively pursue the truth. It is not enough to simply report on what people are saying and the claims that are made. Journalists must seek to verify claims and demand evidence when people make provocative assertions.
- That journalists ensure that people who promote violence through their words and actions are exposed and called upon to explain their actions.
- That people who are promoting peace and tolerance are recognised, along with those who seek to improve the lives of people affected by conflict.
- That journalists continue to show that migrant stories are always complex and that there are no simple solutions to these challenges.

## CASE STUDIES

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FbhKrcBNwJo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=774XY0oEDOU>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/09/south-africa-scores-held-looting-anti-foreigner-protests-190903064029232.html>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSD\\_ET2j4pQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSD_ET2j4pQ)

<https://www.thesouthafrican.com/news/xenophobia-attacks-south-africa-latest-fake-news/>

These are some of the ways in which journalists can make a positive difference. It is also critical for journalists to recognise how, through inaccurate, irresponsible and biased reporting, they can contribute towards the escalation of conflicts that can cost lives. Stories need to be sensitively crafted and journalists must hold to the basic ethical principle of continuously striving to 'do no harm'.

## ACTIVITY

### Conflicts between migrants and citizens

Divide the team into four groups. Give each group stories on migration and ask each group to answer the following questions about each conflict.

- What was done well in this story?
- What could have been done better?
- What are some of the follow-up stories that could be produced?
- What was each conflict about?
- Who were conflicting parties?
- What gave rise to the conflict?
- What will make the conflict get worse?
- What will reduce conflict?

# 3

## Unconscious Bias

Journalists must be relatively independent of partisan struggle, group interests and personal motivation. Avoiding the pitfalls of hidden biases can lead to more inclusive reporting (Goldsmith 2019; Eberhardt 2019)<sup>1</sup>.

### WHAT IS BIAS?

Bias is prejudice or favour for or against an individual or group (Goldsmith 2019). It is often an inaccurate and unfair judgement. We are all biased. The bias blind spots in our thinking are largely the result of our socialisation and experiences. These shape the way we respond to people and the assumptions we make about them. Unconscious bias is also linked to how the brain processes the flood of information it constantly receives. We receive billions of bits of information every day, most of which we can't consciously process. Some people might honestly acknowledge that it feels easier to work with people who look like us, talk like us, think like us. As Jennifer Eberhardt, author of *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think and Do* said, some people might honestly acknowledge that it feels easier to work with people who look like us, talk like us, think like us. But unconscious bias can be at work without our realizing it, and even when we wish to treat all people equally, ingrained stereotypes can affect our visual perception, attention, memory and behaviour. (Next Big Idea Club 2019).

### Factors affecting our unconscious bias

- Our background and upbringing
- Personal experience
- Societal stereotypes
- Cultural context

Unconscious bias can lead to inaccurate assumptions, poor story selection, lack of inclusivity in reporting and damaging stereotypes. It also

- robs viewers and listeners of accurate information they need to take educated positions about migrants;
- leads to amplification of anti-migrant voices;
- can lead to the assumption of innocence or guilt;
- can mean only a few types of people are interviewed and have their views broadcast or published; and
- can lead to the use of insensitive language and use of degrading images in the coverage of migration issues.

### HEADLINE

Know your inherent blind spots

### OBJECTIVE

A journalist who fails to recognise she/he has blind spots can unintentionally distort the meaning of their reporting. The objective of this chapter is to provide journalists with tools to help them recognise their biases.

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Specialists argue unconscious bias take many forms. Goldsmith 2019 has identified the following types:



### AFFINITY BIAS

This bias occurs when we are drawn to people like ourselves. We are biased in favour of those with whom we share an affinity. With affinity bias, we would tend to ignore faults in people who are more like us and notice faults in people who are less like us. For example, amplifying voices of populists, only interviewing locals in migration stories and not challenging people who share the same beliefs.



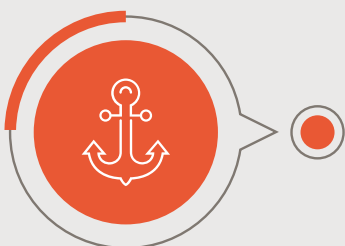
### IMPLICIT BIAS\*

Implicit bias refers to an automatic or unconscious tendency to associate particular characteristics with particular groups. It is not malicious but could lead to disparate treatment of individuals and groups. For example, using images of African migrants when reporting on migration, targeting Nigerians and Zimbabwean as the only migrants in South Africa, labelling Nigerians as criminals guilty of human trafficking and drug peddling and accusing Zimbabweans of stealing local jobs.



### CONFIRMATION BIAS

This bias occurs when we favour information, that confirms what we already believe. For example, if we are not in favour of policy X, we are more willing to believe that minor setbacks are major problems and proof that ultimately policy X will fail.



### ANCHOR BIAS

This bias occurs when we rely too heavily on the first piece of information we receive, and we are anchored down by it. For example, if the first piece of information we receive comes from an official who says Y is a problem – we will see Y as a problem, rather than questioning whether or not this is true in the first place.



### BANDWAGON BIAS

Jumping on the bandwagon means joining in something just because it is fashionable or popular. Journalists often follow stories or trends because other media outlets are doing so. Journalists need to keep up with current trends, but just because other media houses are following a story it doesn't necessarily mean it's important or true.

\* <https://niemanreports.org/articles/how-implicit-bias-works-in-journalism/>



## Test your knowledge of unconscious bias

### QUESTIONS

**QUESTION 1:** Unconscious bias is a quick judgement based on limited facts and our own life experience. True or false?

**QUESTION 2:** A minister claims 40% of awaiting trial prisoners in the country are foreigners. You view this as confirmation that most migrants are criminals. Later, a fact-checking institution finds that the minister's figures were exaggerated. This is confirmation of a bias on your part and unconscious bias on the minister's part. True or false?

**QUESTION 3:** If you choose to recruit candidate Z because you get on with them because you studied at the same college – this is not affinity bias if they are a different gender and ethnicity to you. True or false?

**QUESTION 4:** Unconscious bias is based on the following:

- Gender
- Appearance
- Previous experience
- Ethnicity
- All the above

**QUESTION 5:** What is affinity bias?

- Believing something because an official believes it.
- Being more receptive to the views of locals who are like you.
- Looking for evidence that backs up your beliefs about a group.
- Creating stereotypes about different groups of people.

**QUESTION 6:** Unconscious bias can give people an unearned advantage and unearned disadvantage. True or false?

### ANSWERS

- True. Biases are often based on quick judgements. Examining your assumptions is a good way to counter bias.
- True. In this case, a minister is someone who should always base his information on facts. This is unconscious confirmation bias on the journalist's part.
- False. It is affinity bias because you still feel an affinity to them through a shared experience of college.
- All the above.
- b is correct.
- True.

## HOW TO AVOID UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- Be aware of the different types of unconscious bias.
- Think about the situations where you are likely to be susceptible to unconscious bias.
- Find your trigger points when you are likely to make snap judgements.

## POSSIBLE TRIGGERS FOR UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- Under the pressure of a deadline.
- Under pressure from your boss to come up with stories.
- When you are tired, stressed or hungry.
- When you are in unfamiliar territory or with unfamiliar people.
- When you feel threatened or judged.

## MEASURES FOR TACKLING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- Step out of your comfort zone. Talk to as many different types of people as you can.
- Put yourself in the other person's shoes. See things from their perspective.
- Counter stereotyping by imagining the person as the opposite of the stereotype.
- See everyone as an individual rather than a type.
- Flip the situation. Imagine a different group of people or flip the gender. Would you still come to the same conclusions?
- Be careful with your language and images. Make sure they do not contain assumptions, harmful stereotypes or inaccuracies.

**HEADLINE**

The number of cross-border migrants is on the rise annually. Every country is affected by migration, whether as a receiving country or sending (normally both). There is a growing need for journalists to know how to report on issues of migration with the same level of excellence given to other beats.

**OBJECTIVE**

- Provide principles to help journalists better report on migration and migrants.
- Emphasise the importance of knowledge of law and reliable statistics.
- Sensitise journalists to under-reported migrant voices and narratives.

Migration is a global phenomenon that is not new, nor is it about to come to an end. The International Organization for Migration estimates that in 2019 there were over 272 million international migrants across the world (IOM, 2019), 6.4 million of those where in Southern Africa (Migration Data Portal, 2021). Many migrants coming to the countries in this region do so mainly for economic opportunities, political stability and because of drought and flooding caused by climate change. Journalists face a mammoth task in covering the complex issues that affect migrants in this region. This chapter aims to give journalists principles that will help them cover migration in a way that is informative, accurate, fair and balanced. These are as follows:

**KNOW THE LAW**

Although migration is a big topic, many newsrooms do not have it as stand-alone beat, which often means that the journalists covering migration stories do not know the laws around migration in their country or region. Knowing the law helps journalists to educate their audiences and it helps them to hold political leaders and community leaders accountable. A journalist who knows the law is one who can accurately educate and informatively challenge.

**KNOW THE FACTS AND GIVE CONTEXT**

Journalists have a responsibility to include reliable facts and statistics in their stories as a way of giving accurate information to citizens. It is not enough to just report on what was said without checking if it is true. Good journalism does not stop at just giving facts; it gives context to the facts and paints as clear picture of the real situation as possible.

**HUMANISE THE STORY**

The stories that journalists are telling are about people. They are not about the law or statistics or language; they are about people. The law, statistics and the other things are important, but their importance is in serving people. People may not always understand or care for laws and facts, but they connect to people's stories. Humanising migration stories goes a long way in challenging 'othering' attitudes.



### GIVE MIGRANTS A VOICE

There are many times when journalists write stories about migrants or write on issues affecting migrants, but never actually speak to the migrants themselves. One of the basic principles of journalism is speaking to all the relevant parties involved in the story, and the same applies to covering issues that affect migrants.



### USE THE CORRECT LANGUAGE

When covering issues related to migration, journalists must be careful not to use language that dehumanises, polarises, others or impacts negatively on migrants. Terms such as 'illegal migrant', 'and flooding in' are dehumanising and already create a negative impression of migrants. The language used by journalists can sometimes stereotype.

Journalists must also ensure that they understand and use certain terms accurately. An economic migrant, a refugee and an asylum seeker are terms referring to different things, not blanket words.



### CHALLENGE STEREOTYPES

The media in Southern Africa often paint the picture of migration as black, male, poor, victim, scary, helpless and dependent. Through always telling a certain kind of story, always using certain images and headlines, the media paint in the minds of their audience a certain image of who is a migrant and what they are like. Migrants are not just black heterosexual males, there is more to migration than xenophobia, refugees are not always behind barbed wired fences and migrants are not only there to take without giving back to the country. There is more to the migration narrative and this must be reflected in the media.

## ACTIVITY

Google and read/watch/listen to one or two migration stories from your country. If you have done a story on migrants or migration before, one of the stories can be yours. As you read, rate the story based on the principles discussed in this section. What did the journalist do right? Where do they need to improve?

## Solutions Journalism<sup>3</sup>

Stories on migration mostly focus on problems without interrogating solutions. The aim of this chapter is to introduce the basics of solutions journalism to journalists as a way of encouraging them to pursue this type of journalism when covering migration stories.

One of the main pillars of good journalism is telling all sides (or as many sides as possible) of the story. This is what Solutions Journalism aims to do: report on the problem, but also give a voice to those who have found solutions to the problem.

Solutions Journalism Network describes Solutions Journalism as ‘rigorous and compelling reporting about responses to social problems. It investigates and explains, in a critical and clear-eyed way, examples of people working toward solutions.’

In an age where many people are disengaging from the news because it leaves them feeling depressed and powerless, Solutions Journalism offers reporting that empowers the reader and increases engagement.

### FOUR PILLARS OF GOOD SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM

1

**Is thorough, detailed, compelling reporting of a solution to a social problem**

Good solutions journalism is investigative. The journalist does not just accept what is given to them, but thoroughly investigates the details.

2

**Focuses on effectiveness that can be proved through results**

Reporting on people who are doing something with good intentions or well-meaning attempts that do not have evidence of impact is not solutions journalism.

3

**Gives insight into what the limitations of the approach are**

Reporting on a solution does not mean the journalists has to sugar coat issues. Even when people have found solutions, they will be challenged. Reporting those challenges is not only part of balanced journalism but it also helps to prepare those who might want to duplicate the solution.

4

**Offers insight that other people can use**

The heart of Solutions Journalism is to present to audiences possible solutions that work.

## GETTING STARTED WITH SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM

---

1

Identify the problem.

---

2

Besides exposing the problem, what is missing in public conversations on the problem?

---

3

Start looking for candidates for solutions journalism. Are there people who have been consistently doing well when it comes to dealing with the problem you identified?

---

4

When selecting which stories you can use, remember to keep asking yourself, is there evidence of impact? Is the evidence credible? Was it a one-off success or can this be replicated? Can this be relevant to my community?

---

5

Decide on how you will report your story. Do you want it to be a once-off story or did you find multiple responses to the problem and you think a series would be best?

## HEADLINE

Africa's goal of increased economic development and regional integration is tied to free movement of persons.

This chapter aims to outline the interdependent nature of the SADC economy and offer some insight on key issues on the movement of goods and persons in the region.

NB: South Africa is one of the few middle-income countries where the impact of immigration has been widely analysed. Thus, South African economic data dominates this chapter to demonstrate that South Africa needs Africa and Africa needs South Africa.

## KEY THEMES

- Key economic challenges and benefits of migrants in SADC.
- AfCFTA and migration.
- Historical trends in migration into South Africa (from Botswana, Lesotho and Zimbabwe).
- Key stories around migration and labour.
- Migration and remittances in selected SADC economies.
- Migration and tourism in South Africa.

Immigration is intrinsically linked with South Africa's history, and migrant labour contributes significantly to the economy. According to data from the International Organization for Migration (2019), at least 20 000 migrants travel through the Great Lakes and SADC regions to try to reach South Africa each year. South Africa has also attracted the most African migrants in southern Africa, at about 2.4 million (including approximately 1.5 million from Zimbabwe). The OECD and International Labour Organization (2018) point out that these migrants contribute to the country's fiscus as well as GDP.

The relationship is one of interdependence. 26.7% of South African exports in 2018 were delivered to fellow African countries. According to Tralac (n.d.), Botswana, Namibia and Mozambique were some of the main customers of export from South Africa in 2018 and Nigeria is one of the main suppliers of imports at 4.1% in 2018.

Africa remains the biggest contributor to South African tourism income.

Most African tourists, more than 90%, came to South Africa for a holiday. Business is the second biggest reason for visits, followed by students coming to study and those coming for medical treatment.

South Africa cannot afford to push away African tourists because of xenophobia. We need to end xenophobia and call out xenophobic friends (Tralac n.d.).

Furthermore, in March 2018, African countries signed a landmark trade agreement, the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA), which commits countries to remove tariffs on 90% of goods, progressively liberalise trade in services and address a host of other non-tariff barriers. If successfully implemented, the agreement will create a single African market of over a billion consumers, with a total GDP of over \$3 trillion. This will make Africa the second-largest free trade area after Asia. This trade agreement is complemented by other continental initiatives, including the Protocol on Free Movement

of Persons, Right to Residence and Right to Establishment, and the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). The scale of AfCFTA's potential impact makes it vital to understand the main drivers of the agreement and the best methods to harness its opportunities and overcome its risks and challenges (African Union 2018). The implementation phase of the trade agreement commenced on 1 January 2020. How will this affect migration and economies of the countries involved?

Migrants will often risk their lives in hopes of economic opportunities that will enable them to send money home (remittances) to their family members who remain behind.

## AfCFTA and migration: What to look out for

The impact of the AfCFTA is expected to lead to the alleviation of poverty in Africa (Pendleton et al. 2014: 195–201; Migration Data Portal 2021). The World Bank Group (2020) estimates that by 2035, full implementation of the Agreement could lift 67.9 million people on the continent out of moderate poverty. Freer intra-African trade would help women by lowering the gender wage gap, and it would help all workers by increasing decent employment opportunities. A growing manufacturing sector would provide new job opportunities, especially for women. A report by the World Bank Group (2020) attests that full implementation of AfCFTA would lead to an almost 10% increase in wages, with larger gains for unskilled workers and women.

- Are African states changing the tone of offering African young people as a bargaining chip to lure foreign direct investment that can amass profit from cheap labour?
- Are there new development frameworks to guide and shape the free trade arrangement?
- Is there a human capital development strategy? This will enable recognising African young people both as the key drivers and the beneficiaries of economic growth and development through education, skills development and appropriately rewarding job opportunities.
- Is there protection of vulnerable groups of society through effective national and sub-regional social policies on welfare, employment, social protection, education, health, gender and environment?
- Is the implementation of AfCFTA facilitating an increase in fair labour practices and increasing employment opportunities?

## KEY ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES OF MIGRATION

### 'Brain drain'

- Emigration of skilled persons and drain to the fiscus of the native country.

### Undocumented migration

- Limited avenues for legal migration.
- Protection of the human rights of all migrants.
- Trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.

### High costs of migration

- Lack of portability (skills, social security, diplomas).
- Recruitment fees.
- Costs of transferring remittances.

### Fiscal costs of migration

With some short-term and localised negative variation, there are positive returns in the form of remittances. In aggregate migration drives innovation but 'brain-drain' consequences in sending countries need to be managed. Migration supports the participation of native women in the economy.

- Increase in wages for unskilled workers and help to close the gender wage gap.
- Convergence in remuneration of labourers.
- How can we harness skill development for labour migration in Africa?
- What policies are in place to facilitate recognition of skills and qualifications of migrant workers?
- Brain drain and brain waste are often listed as a concern regarding labour migration. How can we reverse this to ensure brain gain in each of our regions?

South African migration is the South-South type and can be characterised as ‘brain-drain’ of well-trained professionals from neighbouring states and unskilled and illegal migrants from Mozambique and Angola. Migrant labour is not a post-apartheid phenomenon but has been in place in South Africa for many centuries. Many members of the families of non-nationals who are labourers in South Africa have a history of generations working in South Africa, with their great grandparents, grandparents and parents often having worked in the same industry as current migrant labour.

South Africa’s economy was built mainly by black South Africans and migrant labour, who were used as cheap labour during apartheid. The case study of migrants from Lesotho, Botswana and Zimbabwe in the next section attests to this historical phenomenon.

## Migration from Lesotho to South Africa: Historical context

During the apartheid period between 1945 and 1982, 60% of adult Basotho (people of Lesotho) males between the ages of 20 and 44 were employed in the mines in South Africa (Path, Holland and Carvalho 1987). About 70% of rural households in Lesotho had at least one member who was a migrant. For Lesotho, the impact of so much migration to South Africa had a direct effect on labour available to Lesotho agriculture (Path, Holland and Carvalho 1987). Migration was often regarded as having a consistently negative impact on development, i.e., on all aspects of Basotho economic, social and cultural life: dividing families, weakening domestic social structures and organisation, undermining agricultural production and productivity, compromising health, exacerbating rural poverty and intensifying gender inequality. Migrant remittances are the country’s major source foreign exchange, accounting for 25% of GDP in 2006 (Crush et al. 2010).

Since 1990, patterns of migration from Lesotho to South Africa have changed dramatically. These changes include significant increases in legal and irregular cross-border movement between Lesotho and South Africa; declining employment opportunities for Basotho men in the South African gold mines; increased female migration from Lesotho; growing internal migration of young women within Lesotho; a ‘brain drain’ from Lesotho to South Africa (Crush et al. 2010).



## Migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa: Historical context

Migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa is now a well-documented phenomenon (Crush, Chikanda and Tawodzera 2012). Over the last two decades, the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe has transformed the country from an immigrant-receiving to a migrant-sending country.

The studies have categorised migration into three waves: the first wave was in the 1990s, the second wave was between 2000 and 2005 and the third wave includes the past 15 years. A unique characteristic of migrants from Zimbabwe points to circular migration; most of the migrants makes frequent visits to Zimbabwe. In 2005, nearly a third of migrants returned to Zimbabwe at least monthly and 50% of migrants returned at least once every few months. Amongst third wave migrants, less than 1% return monthly and only 9% return once every few months; as many as 46% had not been back to Zimbabwe since coming to South Africa.


Migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa is a complex, dynamic and hugely diverse phenomenon (Crush and Tawodzera 2016). In 2015, study by Southern African Migration Programme (SAMP) found that 82% of remittances are often spent on food and the rest on education and clothing. Further findings show that 28% of migrants have remitted foodstuff; for Zimbabwe, as high as 44% of remittances by migrants to SADC countries are in the form of foodstuff, only second to 58% by Mozambicans migrants (Crush and Tawodzera 2016). Muyambo and Ranga (2020) suggest that a major reason for migration from Zimbabwe is economic. Migrant households want to improve their purchasing power and enhance their consumption of goods. Remittances are sometimes inadequate to meet all household needs.

## Host countries


South Africa (4.2 million), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (963,833) and Angola (669,479) were estimated to be the three countries hosting the highest number of international migrants in the sub-region at mid-year 2019.


## Migration from Botswana to South Africa: Historical context


According to Parson (1984), in 1974/5 approx.


**90%** of Botswanan households had a wage worker. 

Less than **1/4 of households** relied on the agricultural economy alone.


**80%** of the population worked in agriculture in some way, but agriculture contributed only **35% of total rural income**. 

**OVER 50%** of households were below the poverty level, and most had to rely on a variety of income sources for subsistence. 

**68%** of rural households (Botswana is 84% rural) had absent wage earners. 

**WHILE 45%** had **1 or more** wage earners present. 

Absent wage earners worked mainly in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs in:


**44%** Botswanan towns 

**22%** Botswanan villages 

**19%** South African mines 

**8%** Other jobs in South Africa 

Individuals with low socioeconomic status migrated to South Africa. 

Those with higher status moved to Botswanan towns. 

## Destination countries

In absolute numbers, most migrants from Southern Africa move to other countries within Africa. Except for migrants from Madagascar, Mauritius, South Africa and Zambia, the top destination countries for migrants from the other twelve countries in the sub-region are in Africa (UN DESA 2019; Migration Data Portal 2021)<sup>4</sup>.

## Migration and remittances

Countries in Southern Africa received an estimated 7 billion USD in remittances in 2019 (World Bank 2017). Remittances sent by migrants are a significant source of capital in most Southern African countries (Truen et al. 2016: 9), but the costs of receiving remittances continue to be among the highest globally (Migration Data Portal 2019). In 2019, the Democratic Republic of the Congo received the highest amount of remittances in the sub-region in absolute terms. As a percentage of GDP, Lesotho was the highest recipient of remittances in the sub-region in 2019 (World Bank 2017). Aggregated projections for Southern Africa are currently not available, but remittances to sub-Saharan Africa are projected to decline by 23% in 2020 due to COVID-19 (Knomad 2020). In Namibia, where 98% of urban residents maintain rural ties, migrants in urban areas send cash remittances to their relatives in rural areas in exchange for agricultural produce.

## Remittances flows as a percentage of GDP: Selected SADC economies

Remittance flows are important source of financing in Southern African economies according to a World Bank Group (2018) report. These remittance flows account for large proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) and, after foreign direct investment (FDI), are the largest source of foreign currency for Southern African economies. Remittance flows have great potential to contribute to economic development and poverty reduction in SADC. The remittances have been helping households to meet day-to-day consumption needs, and to invest in better health care and education.

Lesotho and Zimbabwe on average have higher remittance flows, as a proportion of the size of their economies for the countries in Table 1. Table 1 shows that remittances received in the case study of four countries is on average 13% of the size of their economies. From 1995 through to 2019, Lesotho received personal remittances, which on average are approximately 42% of the country's GDP. Migration flow has helped the economies with an influx of foreign currency in the form of remittances received.

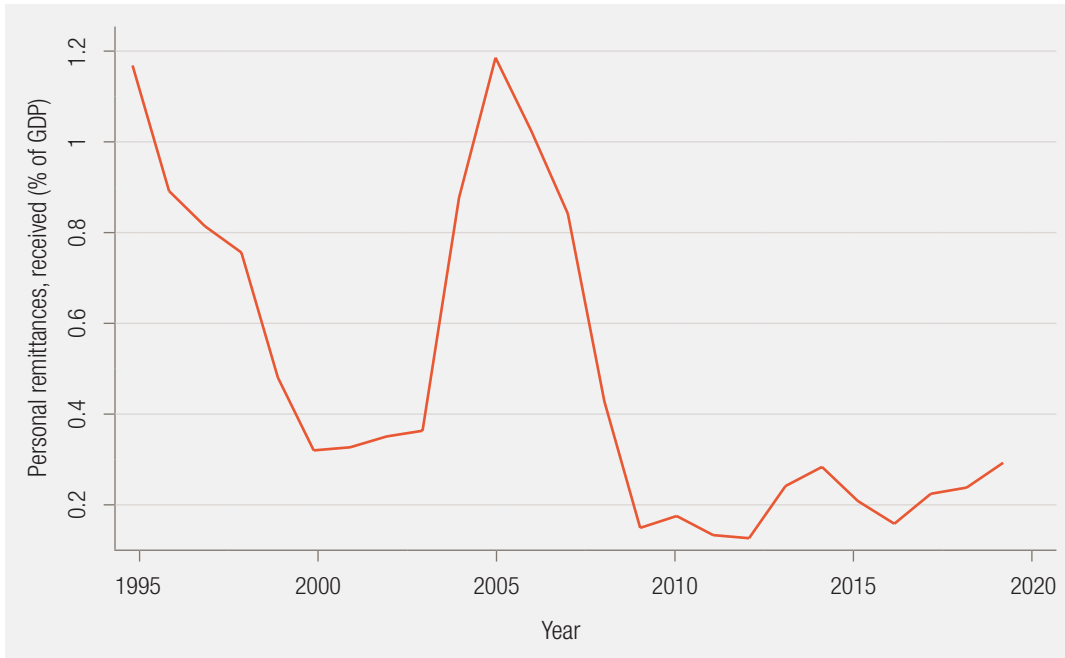
**TABLE 1:** Personal remittances, received (% of GDP) – average of 1995 to 2019

COUNTRY	REMITTANCES/GDP (%)
Botswana	0.48
Lesotho	41.7
South Africa	0.22
Zimbabwe	7.5
Overall sample average	13.03

Source: World Development Indicators (WDI).

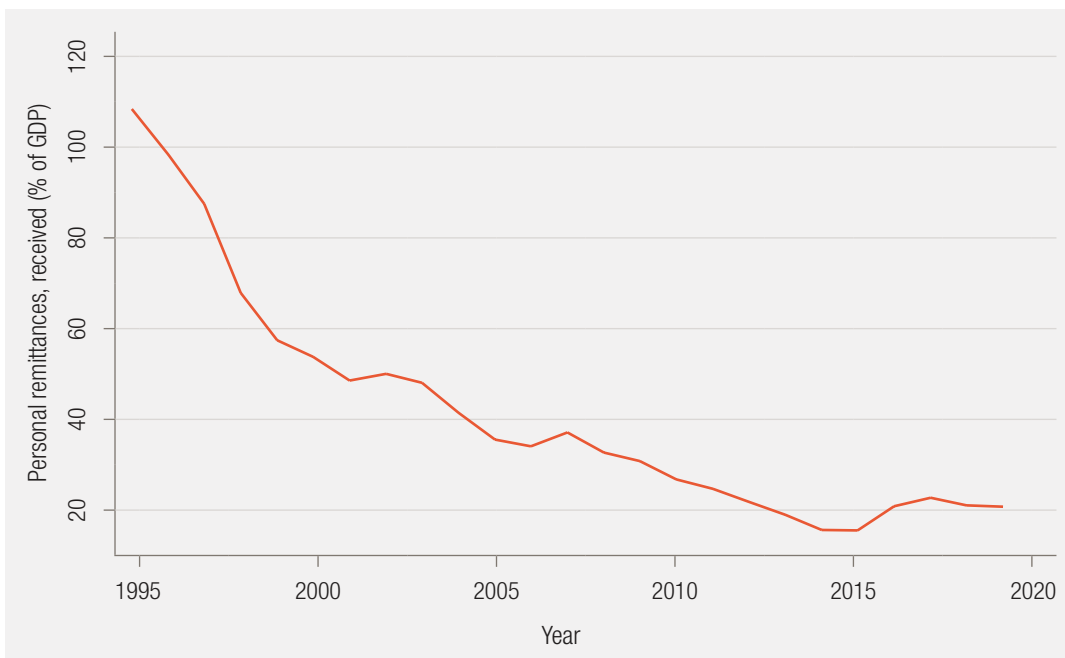
As shown in Figure 1, a Botswana's remittance flow has been very low and was at its peak in 2006. During this period South Africa witnessed its highest GDP growth and commodity prices were at their peak and workers employed in South Africa could remit more funds to Botswana.

**FIGURE 1:** Botswana remittance flows (1995–2019)



Source: World Development Indicators (WDI).

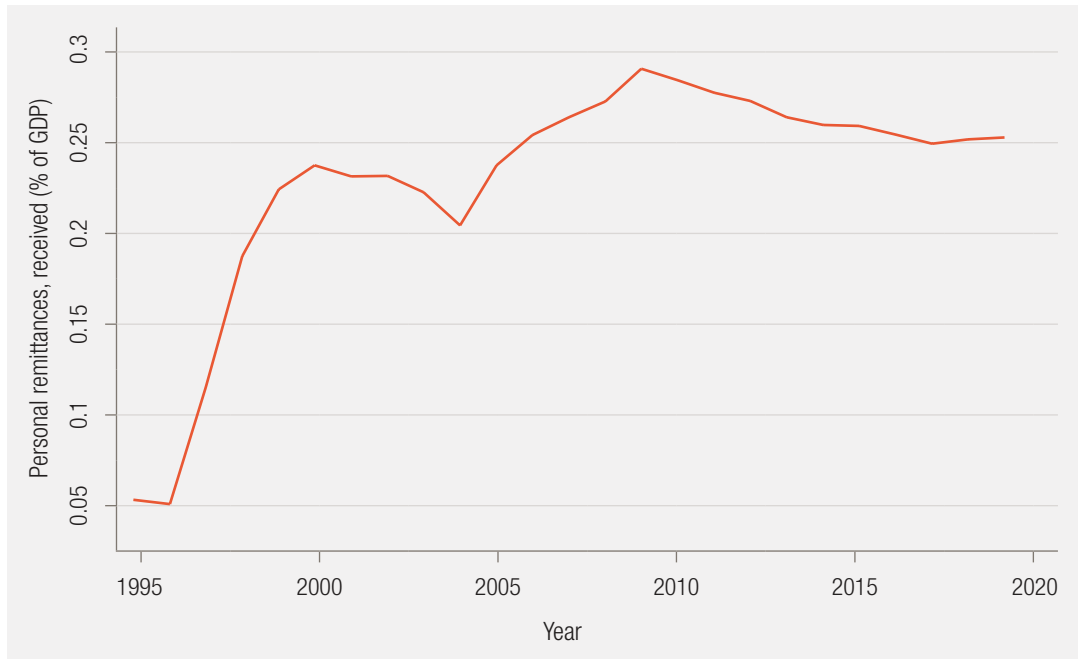
**FIGURE 2:** Lesotho remittance flows (1995–2019)



Source: World Development Indicators (WDI).

Remittances in Lesotho were high and declined gradually over time due to the weak and low absorption of male migrants in mining sector. The mining sector in South Africa has increasingly been employing South Africans.

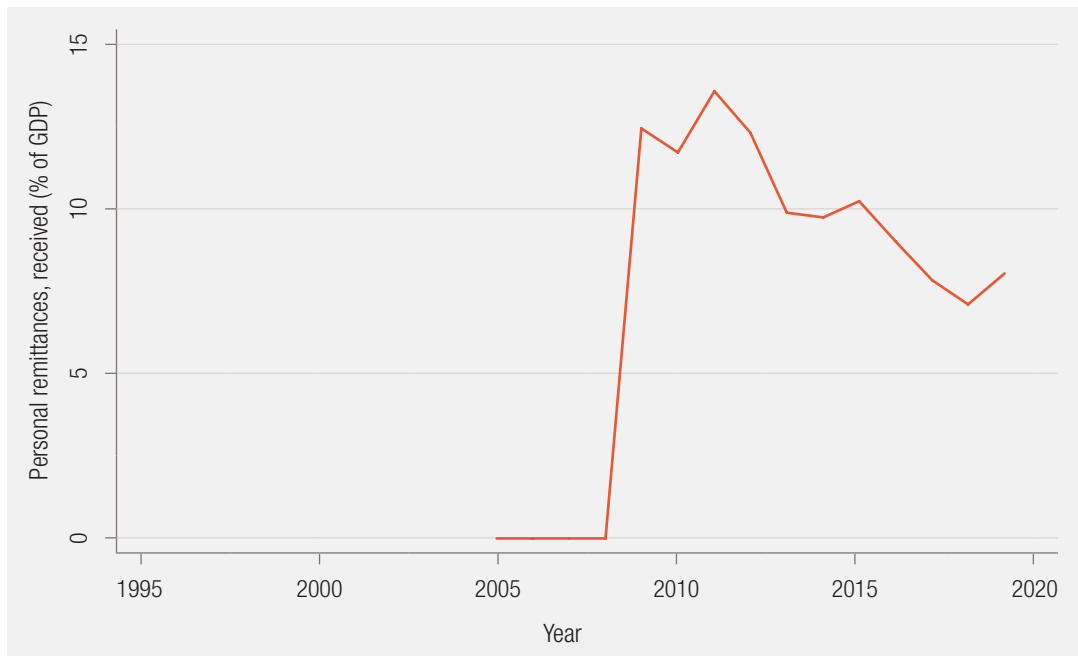
**FIGURE 3:** Remittance flows received by South Africa (1995–2019)



Source: World Development Indicators (WDI).

South Africa received the least remittances as a proportion of the size of its economy among the sample countries. The remittances, however, have been increasing gradually in recent years and confirming a marginal increase in migration by South Africans.

**FIGURE 4:** Remittances received in Zimbabwe as a share of the economy (1995–2019)



Source: World Development Indicators (WDI).

Zimbabwe witnessed a sharp increase in remittances from 2005 till 2010. The remittances gradually fall after 2010 due to difficult economic conditions in host nations of Zimbabwean migrants.

## How to assist journalists in reporting on migration and labour (Munakanwe, 2020)

1. Policy briefs by African Centre for Migration and Society (ACMS) – e.g., MiWORC Empirical studies (2012–2014).
2. Reporting based on scientific data, rather than hyperbole/sensationalisation to promote sales. For example, there are 3 million Zimbabweans in SA – demystified by the Dispensation for Zimbabwe Permits (DZP) (decommodify news).
3. Triangulation of sources.
4. Critical engagement with existing laws and policies on migration and expose the gaps that pave the way for xenophobia in its different forms – structural, institutional, physical, etc.
5. Balanced reporting on emigration, internal migration and immigration.

### Key stories around migration and economy

Most labour migrants come from the SADC countries (60.1%), in particular, the neighbouring states of Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Zimbabweans are the largest group of non-nationals residing in South Africa (International Organization for Migration 2013). The International Organization for Migration (2013) documents the impact of cross-border and informal migration on the well-being of migrants. The cross-border and informal migrants are highly limited in access to banking and insurance services and this has denied them decent housing and sanitation in South Africa. Migration in Southern Africa has been a long-standing feature of the labour market, particularly in the mining and agricultural sectors, and some consider that ‘industrial development of some countries was only made possible by the use of labour from other countries’. There was an increase in the proportion of foreign workers in contract labour, particularly in mining, with levels rising from 40% in the late 1980s to close to 60% in 2009. There has been a marked decline in migrants to South Africa due to the weakening of the mining and industrial sectors that provide regular employment to migrant workers. For example, the number of Basotho employed in the South African mining sector fell from 127,000 in 1989 to 47,000 in 2005, mainly because of the declining profitability of gold mines (International Organization for Migration 2013).

A skilled migrant in South Africa who earns approximate R900,000 as an annual salary would pay approximately R20,000 to the South African Revenue Service (SARS) and spend approximately R15,000 on food, accommodation and other budgetary items, including education and communication expenses in South Africa. A migrant,

### CASE STUDY

South Africa is part of multiple structures set up to ensure the free movement of people and goods across the region. One of these is the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), an African regional economic organisation and the world’s oldest custom union, founded in 1910. If imports and exports are stopped during a truck strike, then this affects the whole region’s ability to meet their trade deadlines and benefit from the common tariff. This puts under threat trade deals with countries like the US and many others, which import our precious metals and stones (platinum and diamonds), vehicles, iron and steel, ores, slag and ash, and machinery and agricultural products worth billions of dollars.

## ACTIVITY

Migration issues against the backdrop of broader continental developments like the AfCFTA? What does this mean for regional developments – can the Employment and Labour Sector (ELS) do something different?

- Unemployment, growing youth, rising urban growth and increasing migration – politics vs pragmatics?
- How to achieve increased economic development, regional integration in the absence of free movement of persons?

in this instance, would plough back into the South African economy approximately 75% of his/her earnings every month and help to create domestic demand and maintain (in some cases, expand) employment opportunities in South Africa. In this instance, an individual migrant in South Africa creates their own employment and creates opportunities for employment for local South Africans in the hospitality and retail sectors.

### Benefits of migration for host and receiving countries

- Is migration a burden or benefit: to who and how?
- Does it supplement domestic demand?
- Contributes to direct and indirect tax revenue (VAT and PAYE).
- As stated in the history of migration in Southern Africa, migration remains a source of cheap labour in informal sectors such as construction and agriculture.

### Migration and public purse

- Do migrants contribute more in taxes and social contributions than they receive in benefits?
- What is the impact of labour migrants on the public purse?

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

- Our overriding conclusion is that migration is conducive to native and aggregate prosperity, especially over longer time frames.
- Contrary to popular belief that migrants migrate a lot of remittances; most of the non-skilled migrants originating from these rural areas often struggle to meet their own survival needs.
- The AfCFTA agreement is fully implemented and, with adequate reforms in the labour market and trade facilitation centre such as the introduction of One-Stop-Border Post (OSBP), will yield massive economic and welfare impact on African inhabitants, including women and the unskilled workforce.
- There is a huge proportion of temporary and circular migration in SADC and most of it is in search of medication and better educational opportunities in South Africa.
- Lastly, cross-border remittances in some economies, such as Lesotho and Zimbabwe, are a major source of foreign currency and taxes and contribute immensely to the balance of payment transactions for the native countries.

“

At some point during our liberation struggle, I spent 2 years in Zimbabwe avoiding and evading arrest and possible death by the security branch of the apartheid regime. In those 2 years I was fed, housed and educated by the Zimbabwean government for free ... so in my lifetime it was only in this foreign country where I got free education. The unfortunate thing is that I cannot reciprocate this noble gesture as my countrymen due to their own inadequacies are up in arms against our own African brothers and sisters, claiming they are taking their jobs. Hundreds of thousands of South Africans lived in African states and were catered for and even given jobs there, whereas now that we got our artificial freedom we are chasing our African nationals away. Ask yourself why are South African industries employing foreign nationals and whether such practice is not consistent with neoliberal policies and tenets of capitalism? Are those African nationals targeted for xenophobic confrontation not part of a class that is under extreme servitude, which is the working class? What guarantees those who are agitating for violence against their own fellow Africans that once they succeed in their xenophobic escapades they will get those jobs?

*(the late Patrick Mkhize – Former General Secretary of the Transport Retail and General Workers' Union, an affiliate of the South African Federation of Trade Unions and also, Black consciousness movement stalwart – March 2019)*

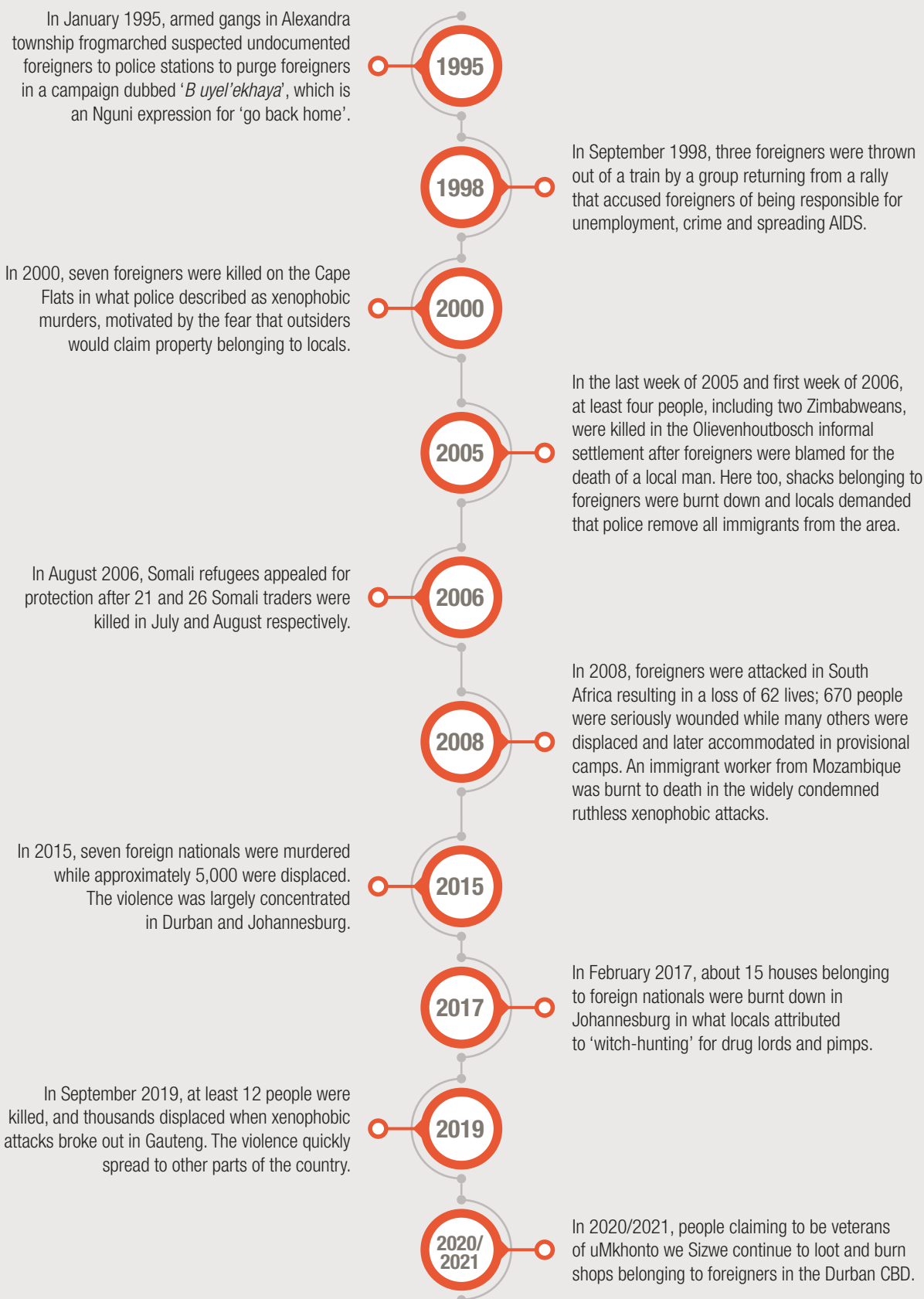
”

This chapter attempts to unpack the causes of xenophobia and provide a framework on how the media could play a meaningful role in promoting peaceful integration of foreign nationals within local communities.

South Africa has a relatively long history of hosting immigrant communities and refugees from countries elsewhere on the African continent. In the post-1994 epoch, with the advent of democracy, many Africans moved into South Africa to seek a better life, employment, income opportunities and asylum. However, for many years, xenophobia has posed a huge threat between host and immigrant communities. Incidences of xenophobic attacks in South Africa have become a perennial occurrence.

The timeline on page 29 shows a brief history of major xenophobic attack incidences in South Africa post-1994.

## INCIDENCES OF XENOPHOBIC AND AFRO-PHOBIC ATTACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA





This chapter mainly focuses on xenophobic violence which is the manifestation of xenophobia that receives the most media coverage.

## Casual causes of xenophobic violence

The causes of xenophobic violence are often more complex than the explanations we normally hear. For example, although the struggle over resources is often cited as the reason for xenophobic violence, alone that explanation may not be sufficient because there are other communities that experience the same level of struggle for resources, but they do not experience xenophobic violence. To better understand the causes of xenophobic violence, it would be more useful to consider different factors such as underlying conditions, proximate causes and triggers. Xenophobic violence is usually the result of a mix of these three factors. Sometimes the only difference between a community that experiences xenophobic violence and one that does not is community leaders; sometimes it is lack of opportunity to mobilise (Masingo and Mlilo 2020).

### The role of the media

Research conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council in 2020 on the attitudes of South Africans towards foreigners shows that the traditional media is still by far the most trusted source of information on migrants. Considering this, it is particularly concerning that the media's reporting on migrants and migration issues continues to perpetuate narratives and stereotypes that contribute to xenophobic attitudes.

These are some of the problematic elements of media coverage of migrants and migration:

- **LACK OF KNOWLEDGE:** Because migration is not a specialised beat in newsrooms, there is lack of knowledge of the issues. This can be a lack of knowledge in basic terminology, like the difference between an asylum seeker and a refugee, or a lack of knowledge in local and regional immigration laws.
- **VICTIM JOURNALISM:** Often migrants are portrayed as helpless, dependent victims, not as people with agency who contribute to their host countries.
- **NO VERIFICATION OF INFORMATION OR INTERROGATION OF OPINIONS:** Political leaders and 'experts' are quoted without being challenged or verification of what is being said.



**XENOPHOBIA IS DESCRIBED AS THE FEAR, DISLIKE, OR PREJUDICE OF PEOPLE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES**

Xenophobia can manifest itself in different ways, including:

- selective enforcement of by-laws;
- discriminatory policies;
- discriminatory political pronouncements; and
- xenophobic violence.

### CAUSES OF XENOPHOBIA

- **UNDERLYING CONDITIONS:** socio-economic, political conditions.
- **PROXIMATE CAUSES:** Struggles over local resources and community leadership positions, deficit in local governance and community leadership, service delivery failures, scapegoating of immigrants/outside & no effective, trusted conflict-resolution mechanisms.
- **TRIGGERS:** Mobilisation of collective discontent, service delivery protests (Masingo and Mlilo 2020).

- **HEADLINES AND IMAGES THAT PERPETUATE VIOLENCE:** Headlines like ‘War against Aliens’ or shocking images of graphic violence add to the problem.
- **LANGUAGE:** The use of the term ‘illegal’ migrants to refer to all undocumented migrants is inaccurate and criminalises migrants in the eyes of locals.
- **STEREOTYPES:** Reporting that confirms or reinforces existing biases or stereotypes against migrants. For example, unnecessarily mentioning the nationality of a person when a migrant is involved in crime reinforces the unfounded association between migrants and crime.

To report fairly on migrants and migration issues and avoid contributing to xenophobic violence and attitudes, Internews recommends journalists use the checklist below.

## Checklist for Reporting on Migration

- Truth Seeking:** A commitment not only to produce stories but to seek and make known what is previously unknown, so that people are aware of matters that actually impact their lives.
- Active Accuracy:** The pursuit of truths and, beyond the ubiquitous quote and attribution, the actual evidence of these truths. What do the law, facts and stats say?
- Focus on Relevance:** Put the needs of the audience first. The choice of what to present and how to present it favours relevance to audience over values like prominence, currency or oddity.
- Good Storytelling:** Heavy focus on how information is presented. Recognise access to information, freedom of expression and the safety and security of its practitioners as requisites.
- Humanising the Story:** A focus on giving the relevant people a voice and telling their stories. Build human connections.
- Language:** The use of language must be correct, accurate and non-inflammatory.
- Alternative Narrative:** Actively seeking to tell all sides of the story from different role players and not just sticking to the accepted stereotype.
- Dignity:** People who have been subjected to violence, even the most harrowing violence, still have the right to be represented with dignity. The use of text, images, video and sound should never strip people of their dignity.



**Internews**

## Introduction

Migration is inevitable and benefits and impacts on all of us. Migrant children are a vulnerable population. For journalists to properly report on migrant children, it is important that they understand why and how children migrate and the challenges they face in their destination country. While migrant children are vulnerable, it is also important to see them as active agents in their own development, rather than passive victims of adversity. Journalists must find a balance between giving migrant children a voice, letting them tell their stories and making sure the children are protected and not harmed by the story.

First, let's start by understanding the different categories of migrant children.

## Categories of migrant children

### 1. Asylum seekers

These are children who are seeking safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than that of his/her own and awaiting a decision on the application for refugee status under relevant international conventions and national legislation. Both children and adults can be asylum seekers.

### 2. Refugee children

A refugee is 'a person who owing to the well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, citizenship, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her citizenship and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a citizenship and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it' (UNHCR 1951). The core elements of being a refugee include: being outside one's country of origin; well-founded fear; persecution; reasons for persecution; and an inability or unwillingness to seek protection from one's country or return there.

### HEADLINE

Children are one of the most vulnerable migrant groups and it is important that journalists know the issues they face and highlight those issues.

### OBJECTIVE

- Highlight children as one of the migrant groups that are not usually given a voice in the media and some of the issues faced by child migrants.
- Identify different types of migrant children.
- Learn tips for reporting on children.
- Identify issues that migrant children face that journalists can report on.

### 3. Unaccompanied and separated children

An unaccompanied child is a child under the age of 18 who has been separated from both parents and is not cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, has a responsibility to do so (UNHCR 1977).

Separated children are children who are separated from both parents or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives. This category includes children accompanied by other adult family members or relatives who continue to look after them.

### 4. Trafficked children

These are children who have been recruited and transported by force, coercion or deception for the purpose of exploitation. This definition also includes children who are adopted legally or illegally, or forced into marriage for purposes of exploitation. Consent is irrelevant because a child cannot voluntarily or willingly enter into an agreement that results in trafficking, even if the child's parents gave consent.

### 5. Smuggled children

These are children who have been transported illegally into a country. Both adults and children can be smuggled. Smuggling usually takes place with the consent of the individual and the agreement comes to an end upon the person's arrival in the destination location. Child victims of smuggling can end up as victims of trafficking.

### 6. Migrant children

Children who have moved through regular channels from one place/country to another.

### 7. Stateless children

Children who are not considered by any state to be a national of theirs.

Although all these children may face different challenges, they are vulnerable in one way or another. Here are some factors that make children vulnerable:

- They are non-nationals.
- They lack socio-economic protection from caregivers.
- The means of travel used.
- Their existence outside the scope of law enforcement.
- Lack of documentation.
- Their age (if too young) or disputed age (if they look older).
- They might not understand the language spoken.
- They might be categorised stateless from where they are coming from.
- They might not be aware of their rights.
- Lack of awareness about the legal framework and assistance provision.
- They may appear 'accompanied', but in reality they are being smuggled or trafficked.
- The accompanying adult may be either unable or unsuitable to assume responsibility for their care.

The following recommendations from the International Federation of Journalists will help journalists to report on migrant children and give them a voice while still protecting them.

-  strive for standards of excellence in terms of accuracy and sensitivity when reporting on issues involving children;
-  avoid programming and publication of images which intrude upon the media space of children with information which is damaging to them;
-  avoid the use of stereotypes and sensational presentation to promote journalistic material involving children;
-  consider carefully the consequences of publication of any material concerning children and minimise harm to children;
-  guard against visually or otherwise identifying children unless it is demonstrably in the public interest;
-  give children, where possible, the right of access to media to express their own opinions without inducement of any kind;
-  ensure independent verification of information provided by children and take special care to ensure that verification takes place without putting child informants at risk;
-  avoid the use of sexualised images of children;
-  use fair, open and straightforward methods for obtaining pictures and, where possible, obtain them with the knowledge and consent of children or a responsible adult, guardian or carer;
-  verify the credentials of any organisation purporting to speak for or to represent the interests of children;
-  do not make payment to children for material involving the welfare of children or to parents or guardians of children unless it is demonstrably in the interest of the child;
-  journalists should critically examine the reports submitted and the claims made by governments on implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in their respective countries.

The media should not consider and report the conditions of children only as events but should continuously report the process likely to lead, or leading, to the occurrence of these events.

Issues journalists can look out for concerning migrant children include:

- access to education;
- child hunger;
- right to work vs child labour;
- trafficking;
- birth registrations; and
- integration.

# 9

## Other Migrant Groups and Topics to Take Note of

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### 1. Women and migration

Nearly half of migrants globally are women. Despite this, the story of migration continues to be told largely through a male lens and migrant women remain invisible. Migration can be a tool to empower women, but women can also be impacted negatively by migration. Gender inequality is as much a reality in migration as it is in our societies. This is reflected not only in the absence of women migrant voices in the media but also in gender-neutral policies made without consideration of the unique challenges that female migrants face.

#### ISSUES TO LOOK OUT FOR

**Gender-based violence (GBV):** Migrant women have not escaped the wrath of GBV (while in their country of origin, during the journey, and after arriving in the host country). GBV has been proven to be one of the reasons that some women and girls migrate. In SADC, South Africa has one of the highest rates of GBV. South Africa is also the biggest recipient of migrants in the region. The state of documentation, financial security and education on rights are some of the factors that influence vulnerability to GBV.

**Effects of xenophobic attacks on women migrants:** In violent situations, women and children are the most vulnerable, and the South African xenophobic attacks are not an exception. They leave migrant women vulnerable to being exploited and abused to survive. When telling the story of xenophobia, women are often left out of the narrative.

**Cross-border traders:** Small-scale trading by mostly women who cross the border to buy and sell goods. In the SADC region, 70% of informal cross-border trading is undertaken by female migrants and accounts for 30–40% of SADC trade. Although often 'legal' in that they have the proper documents to travel and stay for short periods, cross-border traders face challenges that include policy issues, delays at the border and inefficient processing, bribery, sexual harassment by law enforcement officials, no places to store goods or sleep.

**Effects of restrictive travel policies:** Research has shown that restrictive policies do not deter people from immigrating; it just pushes them to more illicit methods of doing so. Irregular travel disproportionately disadvantages women and children.

## 2. LGBTQI and migration

Homophobia is still a big issue in Africa, so much so that some members of the LGBTQI community are forced to leave their countries because of their sexual orientation. These migrants remain largely invisible as their issues are not prioritised by officials or by the media.

### ISSUES TO LOOK OUT FOR

**Vulnerability to trafficking and other forms of exploitation:** People who migrate due to their sexual orientation usually do not know anyone or do not have anyone in the destination country who can help them settle down or if necessary provide them with food and shelter while they try to get on their feet. This may influence the vulnerability of some members of the LGBTQI community to abuse, exploitation and trafficking.

**Discrimination from officials:** Even in countries where same-sex relationships are permitted, those migrating because of their sexual orientation still face discrimination by officials. Officials who discriminate against migrants because of their sexual orientation include border officials, police and home affairs officials.

## 3. Healthcare and migration

Despite treaties and policies that guarantee migrants the right to healthcare, what happens on the ground is often very different. Many of the SADC member states have overburdened, inadequate public health systems, and access to proper healthcare can be difficult for both nationals and migrants.

### ISSUES TO LOOKOUT FOR

**Medical xenophobia:** Globally, the common narrative when it comes to migration and healthcare is that migrants place a burden on the receiving country's healthcare system. Though not an official term, medical xenophobia refers to the discrimination of migrants by either the healthcare system or healthcare professionals. The discrimination by healthcare professionals can either be intentional when migrants are denied medical services simply because of their nationality or unintentional when doctors or nurses do not have knowledge about the types of ID documents that migrants present to them.

**Policy:** Policies that promote the movement of people and recognise migration as a determinant of health are strongest at a continental level and weakest at national level. Despite being signatories to treaties and agreements that recognise the benefits of movement of people and promote health as a basic human right, some SADC countries have local laws and policies that make access to healthcare for migrants very difficult.

**Migrants and COVID-19:** The COVID-19 pandemic affects everyone, regardless of nationality and documentation status. However, some regulations make access to testing or vaccination more difficult for migrants. With the roll-out of vaccines, the media has a role to play in ensuring equal treatment of everyone, regardless of their nationality or documentation status.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 We have also adapted a resource from Media Helping Media using the migration framework. See from <https://mediahelpingmedia.org/2019/08/22/unconscious-bias-and-its-impact-on-journalism/>.
- 2 These principles were adapted from the Ethical Journalism Network's 'Five Point Guide for Reporting on Migration'. (n.d.) <https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/infographics/ethical-guidelines-on-migration-reporting>.
- 3 The contents of this chapter were taken from Solutions Journalism Network: <https://www.solutionsjournalism.org/>.
- 4 (UN DESA, 2019). <https://migrationdataportal.org/regional-data-overview/southern-africa>.

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