

Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration Stocktaking meeting

This intervention is on behalf of the University College London-Lancet Commission on Migration and Health. In the commission we aim to obtain, appraise and present evidence on current issues in migration and health.

We strongly push for the importance of including health and health service responses in the Global Compacts. While usually a positive experience, when not managed well, migration can lead to short term and lasting physical and mental illness, particularly for those who are in the most vulnerable situations.

As recently stated by the Director General of the WHO: “Universal health coverage is a human right.” The Global Compact is a unique opportunity to contribute towards addressing this. But universal health coverage will not be achieved unless the hundreds of millions of migrants globally are included during all stages of their journey. This is for all migrants including trafficked, smuggled, undocumented and economic migrants. Beyond this, we urge that migration is considered in its totality, taking into account the health of families left behind and host populations.

Achieving optimum health requires a commitment to the following human rights based approaches:

Firstly, access to healthcare should be equal and non-discriminatory. No migrant should be denied access and health interventions need to be made available to all at every point in the migration process. Health and public health facilities must be accessible - barriers such as documentation must not be introduced, and financial impediments to access must be removed. Healthcare workers are not border control guards or accountants.

Secondly, services must be culturally and socially acceptable to migrants and of high quality. This means using evidence-based approaches to the delivery of health care and to improve health outcomes in migrants. These should be implemented and quality assured.

Finally, states must be answerable and held to account for the observance of healthcare as a human right. There must be a commitment to monitoring the health outcomes of migrants in the post-Compact process. We in the academic community are willing and able to help with this.