

Child migration continue to increase worldwide – Studies

A study conducted on children on the Move Young Migrants suggests for revision of existing legal frameworks and the development of innovative policies and interventions that take into consideration the dynamics of the movement.

It also suggested that current knowledge and perspectives regarding free movement in the ECOWAS Bloc largely exclude the dynamics of the movement of young people.

It said while there were various migration-related policies to protect young people, there was no single comprehensive one to facilitate, promote and protect the migration of young people with respect to the dynamics of child migration.

Dr Delali Badasu, the immediate past Director of the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS) and a research Fellow at the Regional Institute of Population Studies, University of Ghana, said this at a public lecture organised at the Centre in Accra.

The Lecture formed part of the Merian Institute for Advance Studies in Africa, College of Humanities (MIASA) Seminar series, which sought to find out whether ECOWAS has any framework to support children on the Move.

The study dubbed “The Underside of the free Movement within the ECOWAS Bloc: Vulnerabilities and policy Dimension of Children on the Move” was conducted by the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS), University of Legon.

It focused on three main inter-related issues on the movement of the young people, including children within the context of free movement regime in West Africa. Dr Delali said with reference to the migration infrastructures concept, the study examined the different migration patterns of young people and the complex interplay of natural and demographic factors, social networks, and human agency, among other factors.

“We also examine the trafficking of children as a consequences of child migration and sustained socio-cultural practices such as child fostering. Ghana is often described as a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking,” she added.

That, she said, meant victims of trafficking, both adults and children were in the mix of the huge numbers of migrants within the country and in the sub-region.

Thirdly, the study examined the legal documents, laws and policies on migration that directly or indirectly affected young migrants. Out of 523 migrants rescued in 2018 by both Government machinery and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), 122 were children while the rests were voluntary migrants.

Dr Delali said though they did not have official data on child migration in Ghana, research has shown that about 33 million children are on the move worldwide.

She said not all children who migrated were trafficked as some children willingly offered themselves to be taken away and stressed the need to look into the socio-cultural context before classifying one as trafficked.

She, therefore, called for financial resources to delve into more research, intensify education and awareness creation in that area.