



MIGRATION POLICY PRACTICE

Short articles to better connect migration
research, policy and practice worldwide

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The Gender–Migration Index (GMI): Gender-responsiveness and migrant inclusion in policy planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Lara-Zuzan Golesorkhi¹

Introduction

In 2018, United Nations Member States came together to adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The Global Compact is a non-binding document covering various dimensions of international migration, with 23 objectives and 10 cross-cutting guiding principles.² Assessments of the Global Compact took place four years into its implementation at the 2022 International Migration Review Forum, where voluntary national reviews (VNRs) – which reveal important insights on the state of migration policy in specific countries and regions³ – were submitted. The reviews also provide insights with regard to the Global Compact’s guiding principles, including gender-responsiveness.

As part of efforts to contribute to this international review through a gender perspective, the Center for Migration, Gender, and Justice, under the author’s leadership, developed the Gender–Migration Index (GMI), a guidance tool for gender-responsiveness and migrant inclusion in policy. The GMI is based on an indicator system that provides benchmarking criteria to ensure that the intersection of migration

and gender is considered in policy planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The indicator system assesses the extent to which gender dynamics are mentioned, engaged with and committed to, and is based on a “traffic light” framework, whereby the three traffic light colours correspond to limited, moderate and extensive levels of gender-responsiveness. In this way, GMI offers an innovative and sustainable practice in the context of the Global Compact and beyond.

The Gender–Migration Index

Gendered experiences in migration occur along a continuum comprising origin, transit and destination countries. Based on a country’s policies, gender dynamics might not only premise reasons for migration but also affect experiences along migratory routes and in destination countries. Along this continuum, women, girls, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual + (LGBTQIA+) and gender-diverse persons face heightened risks of marginalization, vulnerability and violence.

At the same time, women, girls and LGBTQIA+ and gender-diverse individuals remain largely left out of migration policy processes that affect their lives. To address the gap between their lived experiences and migration policy, the GMI provides a guidance tool for stakeholders to ensure gender-responsiveness and migrant inclusion in policy planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation by addressing their needs and the challenges they face.

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² IOM, *Global Compact for Migration* (n.d.).

³ United Nations Network on Migration, *Global Compact for Migration: Follow-up and review* (n.d.).



The GMI is premised on participatory action research and follows a multi-stakeholder approach in its methodology and design. Based on a paradigm of democratizing knowledge production in policy and to centre migrants' lived experiences therein, the GMI emphasizes the participation of those affected by migration research and policy, namely migrant communities and organizations working with them, in data collection and international reviews.

The Gender–Migration Index indicator system

The GMI indicator system builds on the IOM Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) and UN-Women's Minimum Set of Gender Indicators and is complementary to other efforts towards ensuring gender-responsiveness in the Global Compact, such as the Gender + Migration Hub and the UN-Women publication, *Policies and Practice: A Guide to Gender-Responsive Implementation of the GCM*.

- (a) The MGI programme was developed with the establishment of the Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF) by IOM in 2015 and offers a tool to assist countries with their national migration governance. Indicators are grouped under six domains: (i) migrants' rights; (ii) whole-of-government approach; (iii) partnerships; (iv) well-being of migrants; (v) mobility dimensions of crises; and (f) safe, orderly and dignified migration.⁴

- (b) The use of the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators as a “guide for national production and international compilation of gender statistics”⁵ is the result of an agreed-upon 2013 decision (i.e. Decision 44/109) by the United Nations Statistical Commission. The Minimum Set of Gender Indicators consists of 51 quantitative indicators and 11 qualitative indicators related to gender equality and women's empowerment.

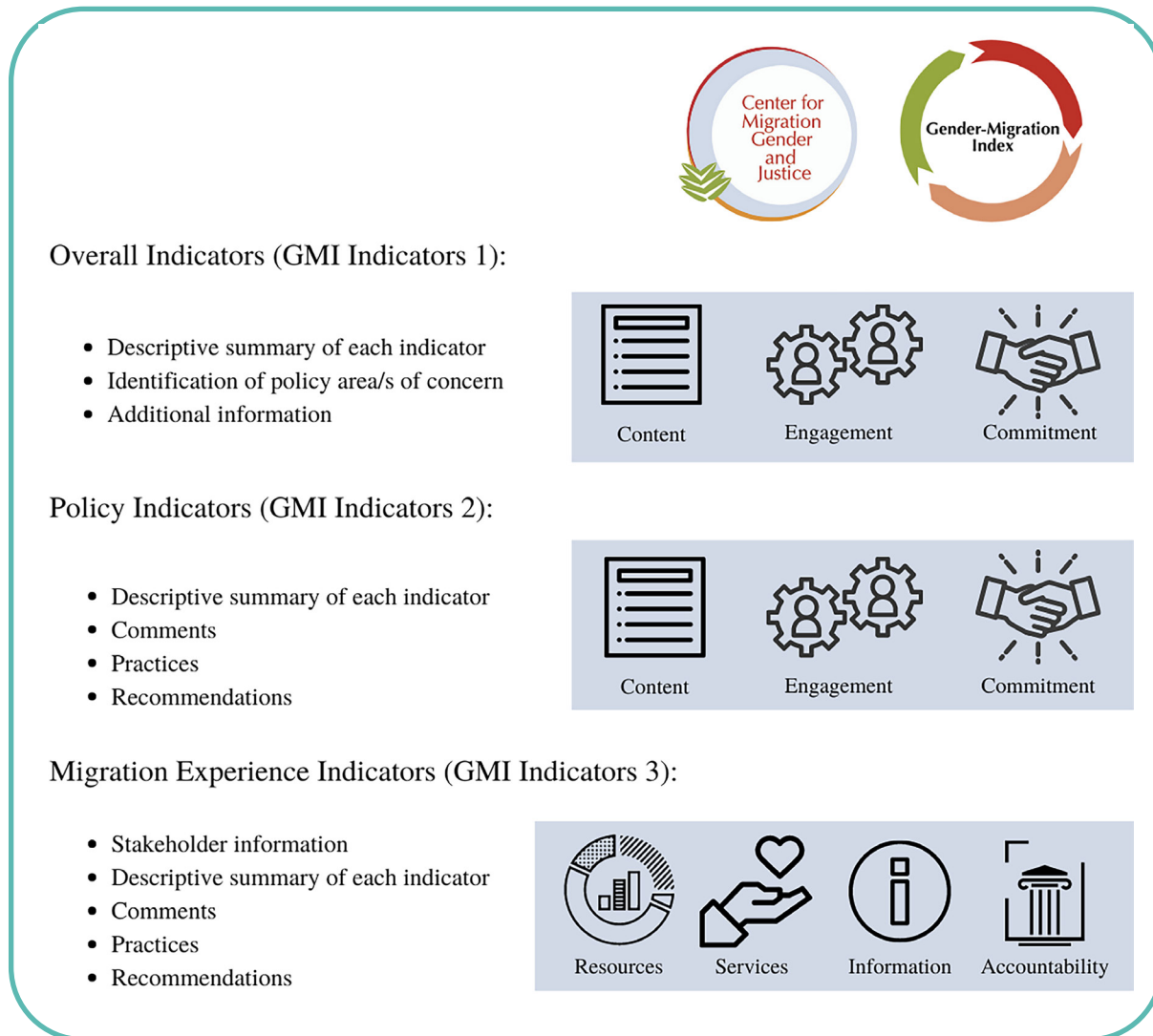
In line with these existing indicator systems and based on principles of participatory action research, the GMI facilitates collaborative inquiry into gender-responsiveness and migrant inclusion in policy with corresponding engagement in international reviews. The application of the GMI is thus a co-curated methodology with a concrete research–action trajectory that encourages the compilation of civil society shadow reports.

⁴ IOM, *Migration Governance Indicators* (n.d.).

⁵ United Nations Gender Data Hub, *Minimum Set of Gender Indicators* (n.d.).



Figure 1. Gender–Migration Index Indicator analysis



Source: Author's own elaboration.

Notes: The icons represent the GMI indicators with respective guiding questions for analysis as follows:

Content: Indicators 1.1.1 and 2.1.1 (Overall)/Indicators 1.2.1 and 2.2.1 (Policy) – In what ways are gender/migration dynamics mentioned?

Engagement: Indicators 1.1.2 and 2.1.2 (Overall)/Indicators 1.2.2 and 2.2.2 (Policy) – How are gender/migration dynamics addressed?

Commitment: Indicators 1.1.3 and 2.1.3 (Overall)/Indicators 1.2.3 and 2.2.3 (Policy) – What kind of commitments are made in regards to gender/migration dynamics?

Resources: Indicator 3.1 (Migrant experiences) – What kind of resources do migrants use?

Services: Indicator 3.2 (Migrant experiences) – What kind of services do migrants access?

Information: Indicator 3.3 (Migrant experiences) – To what extent are migrants aware of their rights and protections?

Accountability: Indicator 3.4 (Migrant experiences) – In what ways do migrants engage with accountability mechanisms?

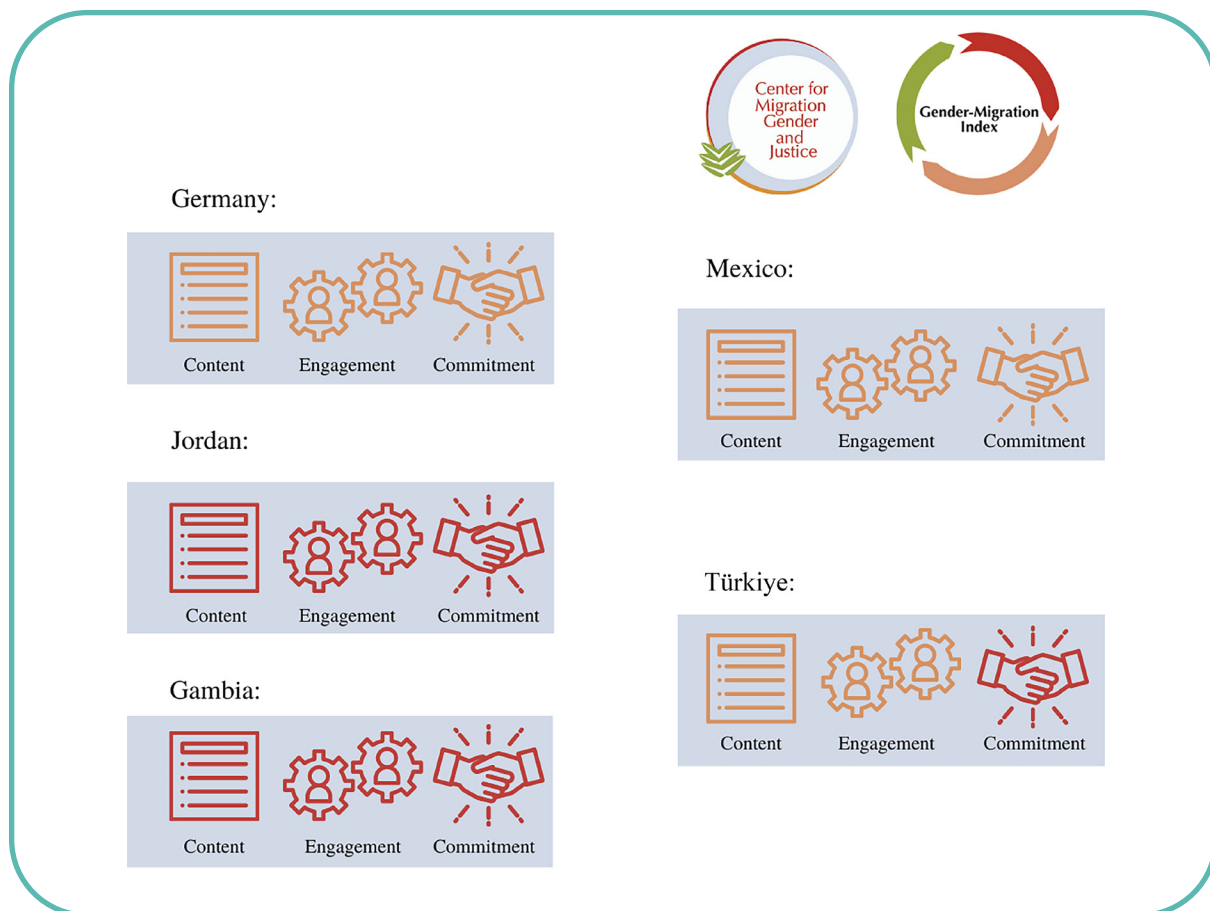


Case studies

In developing the GMI, several sample case studies of Global Compact VNRs were conducted for different countries across several regions in order to offer comparative insights on gender-responsiveness. These included the GMI analyses of Germany's VNR (GMI Indicators 1, 2 and 3), in partnership with the local community-based organization, WithorWithout (WoW is a local, community-based, non-profit, non-governmental organization based in Stuttgart,

Germany, which promotes equality and diversity in the labour market by addressing intersectional discrimination experienced by migrant women); Jordan's VNR (GMI Indicators 1 and 2); and VNRs submitted by Mexico, the Gambia and Türkiye (GMI Indicator 1). Based on GMI Indicator 1, overall gender-responsiveness can be described as "limited to moderate" in all examined countries. This section presents abridged findings of these country case studies.

Figure 2. Case study analysis



Source: Author's own elaboration.

Notes: The icons represent the indicators with respective guiding questions for analysis as follows:

Content: Indicators 1.1.1 (Overall) – In what ways are gender dynamics mentioned?

Engagement: Indicators 1.1.2 (Overall) – How are gender dynamics addressed?

Commitment: Indicators 1.1.3 (Overall) – What kind of commitments are made in regards to gender dynamics?



Germany

Based on Germany's Global Compact VNR, the country's overall gender-responsiveness (GMI Indicator 1) as regards migration can be described as "moderate".⁶ While migrant women are mentioned in relation to labour, empowerment and violence prevention, there is but one mention of LGBTQIA+ migrants and no references to sex, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation and gender-responsiveness in the document. Given the moderate level of content that addresses the gender dynamics of migration, there is similarly moderate engagement with gender dynamics in existing efforts.

Notably, with regard to the labour market, Germany's VNR states that a "special focus is on the support of immigrant women, who often face specific challenges and have specific needs." This focus is linked to so-called digital streetwork, which aims to improve migrants' access to information.⁷ In line with this moderate level of mention of and engagement with the gender dynamics of migration, commitments in this regard are similarly moderate, as they remain implicit in ongoing and future efforts.

Labour presents a constitutive aspect of Germany's VNR. Indeed, labour, work and employment are mentioned frequently throughout the document as it pertains to existing and planned efforts, and labour market access is listed as a "priority policy area for the Federal Government with regard to the [Global Compact for Migration's] objectives".⁸ Yet, in terms of gender dynamics in the labour market, challenges such as language proficiency, digital literacy and lack of information are simply noted and barely engaged with and/or committed to.

This limited content, engagement and commitment with regard to labour policy (under GMI Indicator 2) in the context of gendered migration dynamics points to important practices and recommendations to consider until the next Global Compact Regional Review, as provided by WoW, the stakeholder involved in the GMI Indicators 3 analysis.⁹

As with GMI Indicators 1 and 2, the analysis of migrant experiences (GMI Indicator 3) presents mixed findings. According to WoW, migrant women moderately use resources that address their specific challenges and needs in the labour market and moderately access services pertaining to employment. These moderate levels of usage and access stem from two factors: the first being that there are limited available resources that take into consideration intersectional experiences, such as those of Muslim migrant women; the second being that these available resources that take these varied experiences into consideration often remain inaccessible due to limited language proficiency and/or household structures (that is, childcare).

In terms of the extent to which migrant women have knowledge of their rights and protections and engage with accountability mechanisms, the WoW assessment points to limitations, such as restrictions on the scope of certain rights and protections that do not apply to migrants as third-country nationals and/or non-citizens, as well as fears of reporting instances of discrimination because of their migration status.

In light of this analysis of migrant experiences under GMI Indicator 3, WoW offered indicator-specific recommendations for the next Global Compact Regional Review, including providing

⁶ Government of Germany, *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: Regional Review, Contribution by the Federal Republic of Germany* (2020).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

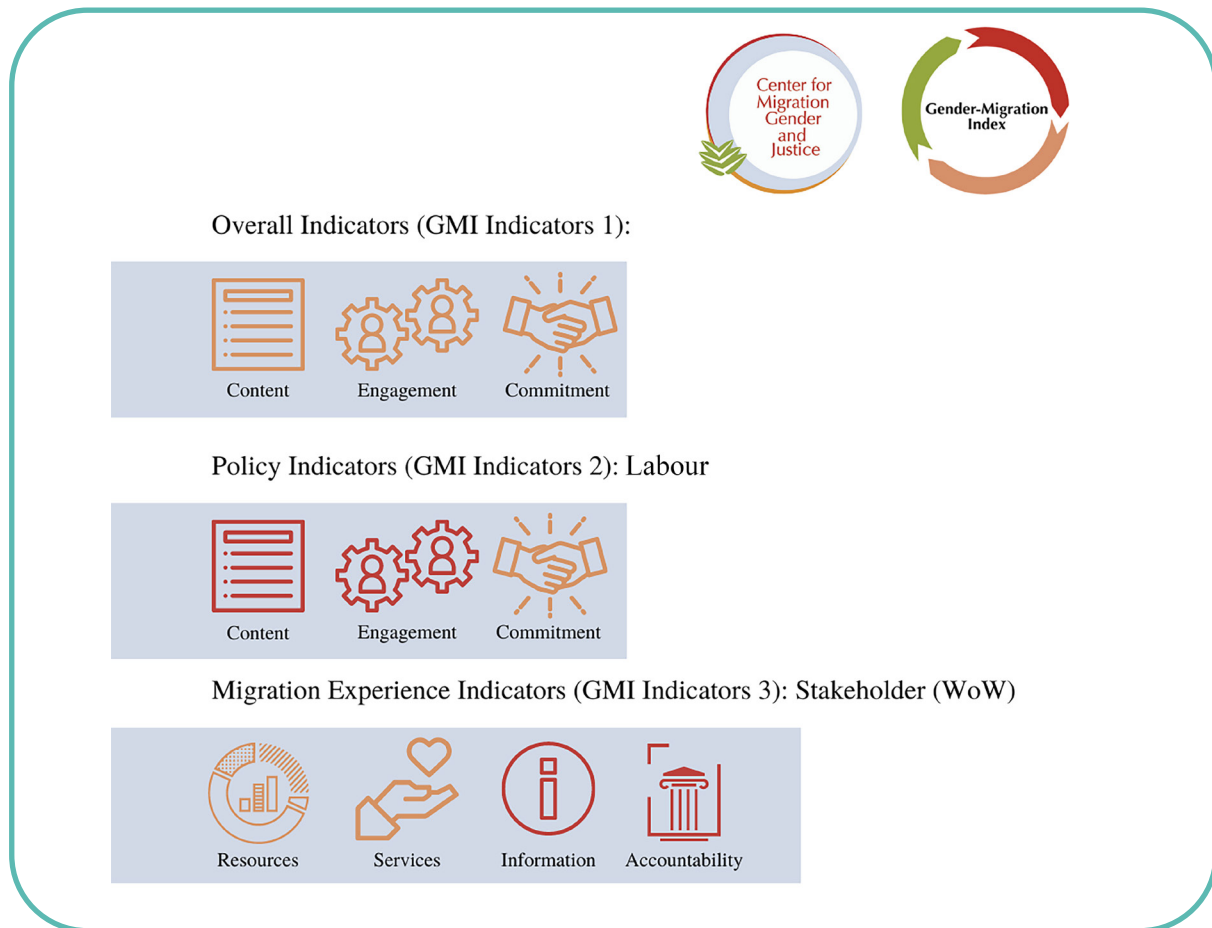
⁹ Center for Migration, Gender, and Justice and WithorWithout, *Migration, Gender, and Labor: the case of Germany*, United Nations High Level Political Forum Report (July 2021).



resources considerate of the challenges that women face in accessing available services (that is, childcare), refining and increasing data collection on migrant women's experiences of the labour market, and incorporating anonymized application procedures into Germany's anti-

discrimination frameworks. The last was emphasized as a key recommendation to address structural challenges in migrant women's labour market participation, as it is common practice in Germany to include a personal photograph and indicate one's nationality in a résumé.

Figure 3. Germany case study analysis



Source: Author's own elaboration.



Jordan

Based on Jordan's Global Compact VNR, overall gender-responsiveness (based on GMI Indicator 1) as regards migration can be described as "limited". Migrant women are mentioned only once in the VNR document in relation to labour (specifically domestic work), while girls and LGBTQIA+ and gender-diverse persons are not mentioned at all.¹⁰ There are also no references to gender, sex, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, gender-responsiveness, or gender-specific or gender-sensitive dynamics of migration.

As with the limited content that addresses the gender dynamics of migration, there is similarly limited engagement with gender dynamics in the country's existing efforts. The one policy mentioned in this context is the Domestic Workers' Regulation. According to Jordan's VNR, the regulation "introduced enhanced protection [as regards] payment of wages, complaint [mechanism] privacy and workers' right to leave work in case of sexual or physical abuse or violation of workers' fundamental rights".¹¹ The VNR further notes:

A Domestic Workers by-law has been issued by the Ministry of Labour, with improvement towards protection of domestic workers in comparison with the previous by-law. The by-law was published in the official gazette in July 2020. One of the main challenges in reforming these policies was to engage relevant stakeholders in reforming the regulation and the [amount of] time needed to adopt these amendments.¹²

Outside of this development regarding the 2020 Domestic Workers' Regulation, there is limited commitment to addressing the gender dynamics of migration. While labour demands in the garments and domestic work sectors (both of which are heavily gendered) are identified as priority areas in the area of migration, Jordan's VNR merely states that "ensuring decent work and mitigation measures to prevent labour and other forms of exploitation were at the forefront during the lockdown period in the spring of 2020" but does not offer details in this regard.¹³

Nevertheless, labour presents a constitutive aspect of Jordan's VNR as per GMI Indicator 2. In terms of policy, the extent to which gender dynamics in labour migration are mentioned can be described as "limited", while engagement with and commitment towards these dynamics can be considered "moderate". For instance, the issuance of the 2020 Domestic Workers' Regulation presents a moderate level of commitment towards sustainably considering the gender dynamics of migration. As previously noted, the regulation expands previous protections of domestic workers, who are disproportionately migrant women. In this regard, the review emphasizes that further policy and legislative measures "are needed to ensure a more holistic approach to labour migration to Jordan in terms of admission, stay and departure of migrant workers that is in accordance with international human rights and labour standards and the [Global Compact for Migration]".¹⁴ This reflects potential for increased engagement and commitment towards protections in the labour market that will affect the gender dynamics of migration, even if not explicitly mentioned as such.

¹⁰ Government of Jordan, *First Regional Review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the Arab Region* (Voluntary National Review) (2021).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

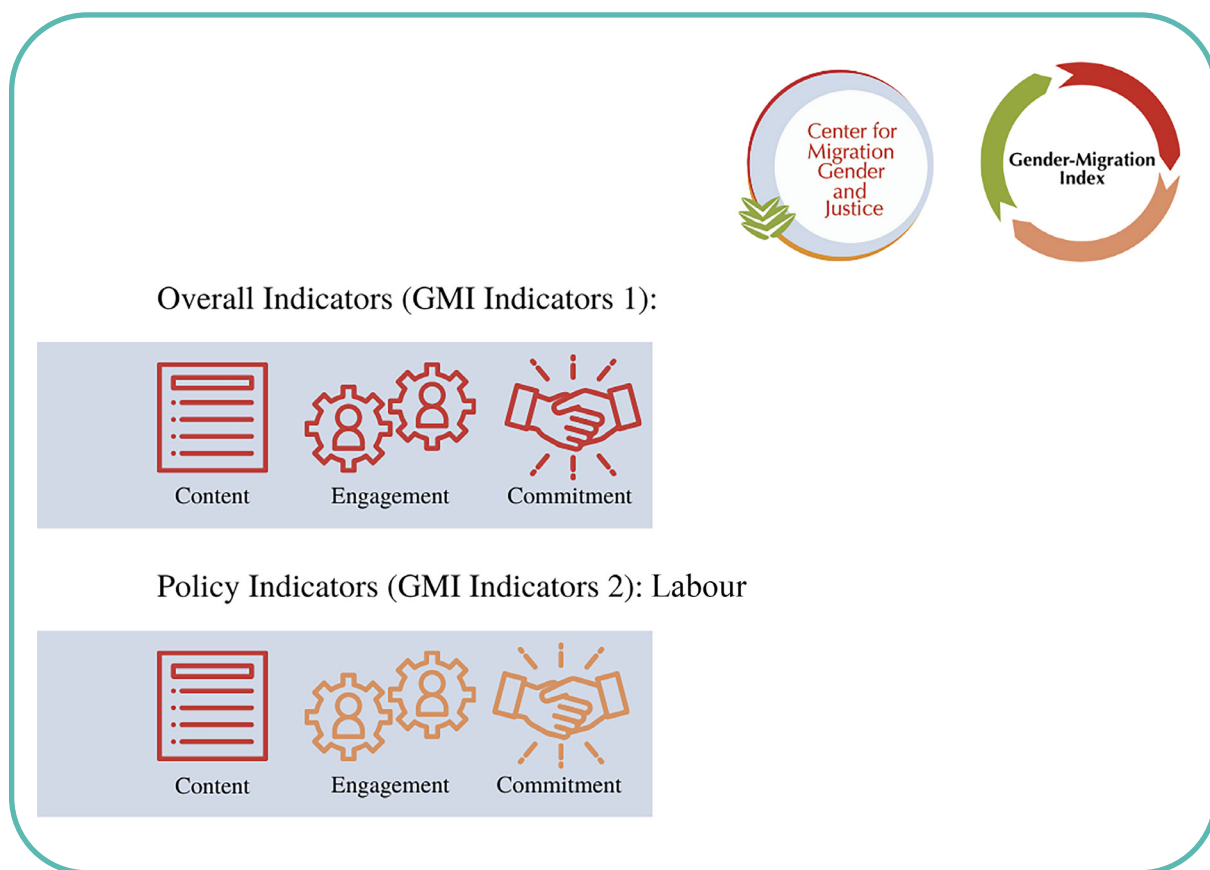
¹⁴ *Ibid.*



The limited content, yet moderate engagement and commitment, as regards labour policy pertaining to the intersection of migration and gender point to important practices, such as aligning labour migration policies with international human rights standards, to consider until the next Global Compact Regional Review, and recommendations to be made, such as the

ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189) and ILO Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190).

Figure 4. Jordan case study analysis



Source: Author's own elaboration.

The Gambia, Mexico and Türkiye

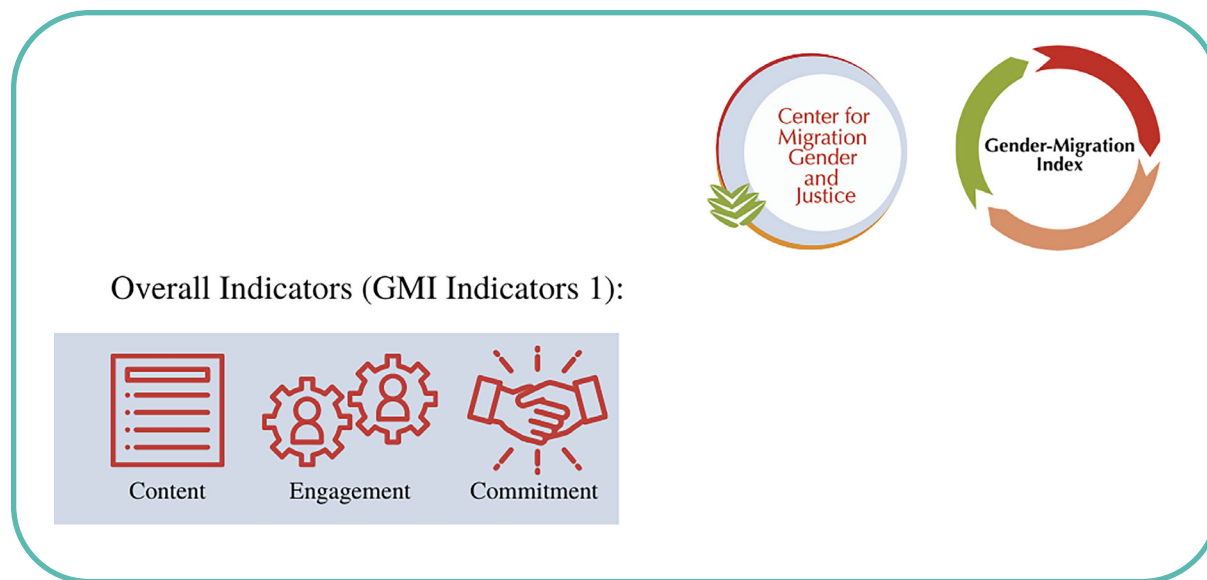
Based on the Gambia's Global Compact VNR, overall gender-responsiveness (based on GMI Indicator 1) in the area of migration can be described as "limited".¹⁵ Gender is referenced

three times, and gender-responsiveness is mentioned once in relation to the National Migration Policy (NMP). There is no reference to women, girls, LGBTQIA+ and gender-diverse persons, sex, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, or gender-specific and gender-sensitive dynamics of migration. Similarly, with regards to engagement with and commitment

¹⁵ Government of the Gambia, *First National Review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the Gambia: Final Report on the Progress of Implementation* (May 2021).



Figure 5. The Gambia case study analysis



Source: Author's own elaboration.

to gender dynamics in migration, gender-responsiveness is limited. While the Gambia's NMP "calls for improved nationwide services for vulnerable female migrants and provides a mechanism for a gender analysis to improve the working conditions of female migrants,"¹⁶ the gender dynamics of migration remain largely unaddressed outside of this commitment.

Based on Mexico's Global Compact VNR, overall gender-responsiveness (GMI Indicator 1) as it pertains to migration can be described as "moderate". Gender is mentioned a total of nine times, with three mentions made in the context of gender-based violence.¹⁷ Additionally, migrant women are mentioned twice, and migrant girls are mentioned nine times. There are references to neither LGBTQIA+ and gender-diverse migrants nor to sex, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, gender-responsiveness, or

gender-specific and gender-sensitive dynamics of migration. Similarly, with regard to engagement with and commitment to the gender dynamics of migration, gender-responsiveness can be considered as "moderate". According to Mexico's VNR, the project "*Destajo, tarea, servicio o jornal para mujeres (locales y migrantes) en la agroindustria azucarera*", launched in 2018, seeks to address disparities in wages and eradicate gender-based violence in the agricultural sector.¹⁸ This project, alongside Mexico's ratification of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189), presents a moderate level of commitment towards sustainably considering the gender dynamics of migration.

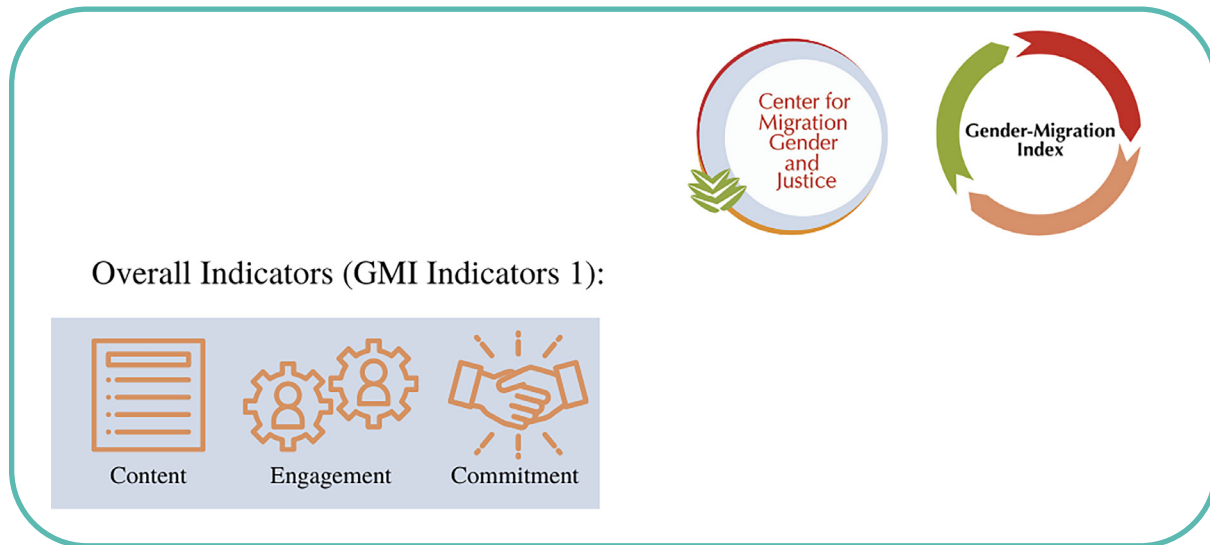
¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, *Revisión Regional Sobre la Implementación Del Pacto Mundial para la Migración Segura, Ordenada y Regular en América Latina y el Caribe* (2020).

¹⁸ Ibid.



Figure 6. Mexico case study analysis

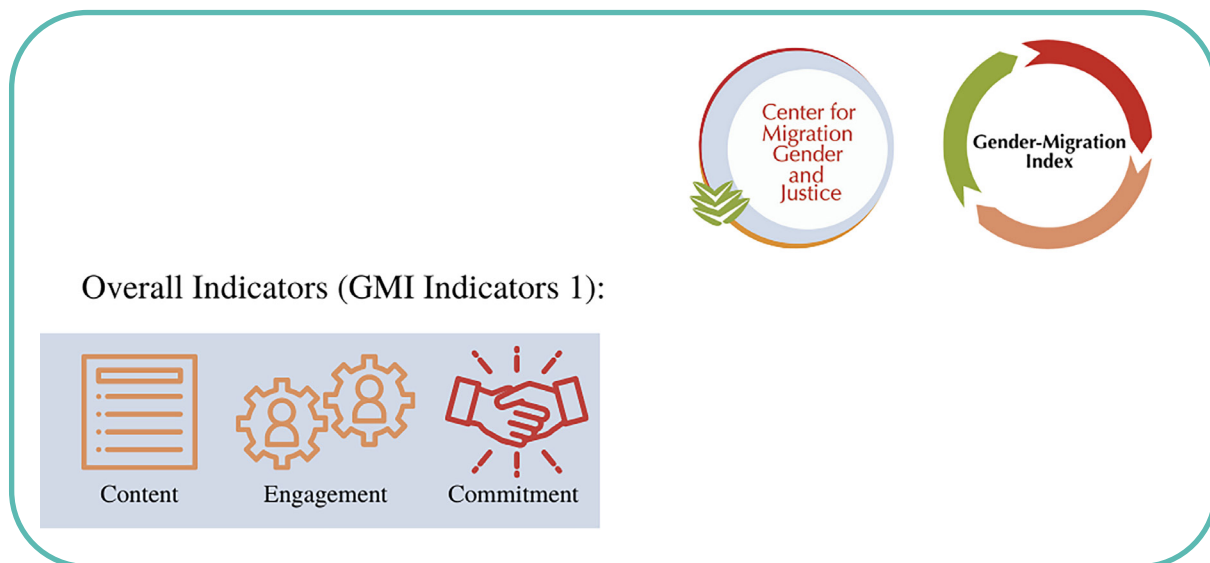


Source: Author's own elaboration.

Based on Türkiye's Global Compact VNR, the overall gender-responsiveness (GMI Indicator 1) as it pertains to migration can be described as "limited to moderate".¹⁹ While gender dynamics are mentioned and engaged with in relation to labour, trafficking and access to basic services, as well as with regard to irregular migration and

specific vulnerabilities, commitments towards gender-responsiveness are limited. Outside of noting two initiatives that explicitly engage with gender dynamics in migration, it remains unclear what Türkiye commits to do in this context as per the VNR.

Figure 7. Türkiye case study analysis



Source: Author's own elaboration.

¹⁹ Government of Türkiye, *The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) Regional Review, submission by Turkey* (n.d.).



Next steps

As a guidance tool that facilitates gender-responsiveness and migrant inclusion in policy by addressing the needs and challenges of migrant women, girls, and LGBTQIA+ and gender-diverse persons, the GMI is aligned with various international review processes beyond the Global Compact for Migration, such as the following:

- (a) United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW);
- (b) United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);
- (c) United Nations High-Level Political Forum (HLPF);
- (d) United Nations Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW);
- (e) Global Compact on Refugees and Global Refugee Forum (GRF).

The next steps in the application of the GMI thus involve analyses of relevant documents submitted by the United Nations Member States in the context of these international review processes, upon which gender-responsiveness (that is, the CMW, GRF and HLPF) and/or migrant inclusion (that is, the CSW, CEDAW and HLPF) is determined based on respective indicators and in collaboration with stakeholders. With regard to the review cycle of the Global Compact for Migration, a comprehensive VNR analysis of the GMI indicators is planned ahead of the next regional and international reviews (that is, the 2026 International Migration Review Forum).