

Intergenerational family solidarity, Health and Migration

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Research for Practice

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What is Intergenerational family solidarity?

Intergenerational family solidarity (IGFS)

- refers to the degree of closeness and support between different generations within a family, is measured in 6 dimensions (Silverstein & Bengtson, 1991)
- has shown to be an important determinant of wellbeing throughout the entire life course (Albert, Labs, & Trommsdorff, 2010)
- higher family solidarity contributes to better adjustment in situations of crisis or transition such as experiencing immigration (Katz, 2009; Silverstein & Bengtson, 1991)



Why is IGFS important for Health and Migration?

Family is an important driver for migration, with migration decisions often based on family considerations.

Changing patterns of life, work and leisure have a significant impact on health.

(Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, WHO 1986)

“without migration the EU's working age population will decline by 17.5 million in the next decade. Migration will increasingly be an important way to enhance the sustainability of our welfare system and to ensure sustainable growth of the EU economy”

European Agenda on Migration, launched by the European Commission in 2015 (EC 2015, p14)



What do we know about the interplay of family, health and migration?

Immigration history and geographical proximity do influence IGFS

(Albert, Ferring, & Michels, 2013; Matias, Andrade, Fontaine, Alves, & Martinez, 2008).

A protective effect of living in multigenerational households can be observed.

Left behind family members have an increased risk of mental health problems and self harm.

Knipe, D, Gunnell, D, Pearson, M, Jayamanne, S, Pieris, R, Priyadarshana, C, Weerasinghe, M, Hawton, K, Konradsen, F, Eddleston, M & Metcalfe, C, 2018, 'Attempted suicide in Sri Lanka – An epidemiological study of household and community factors'. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, vol 232., pp. 177-184



What do we know about the interplay of family, health and migration? (cont)

Family members who have left behind parents and relatives often feel guilty

- for not being able to take care for their elderly parents
- for not being able to sustain contact between grandparents and grandchildren

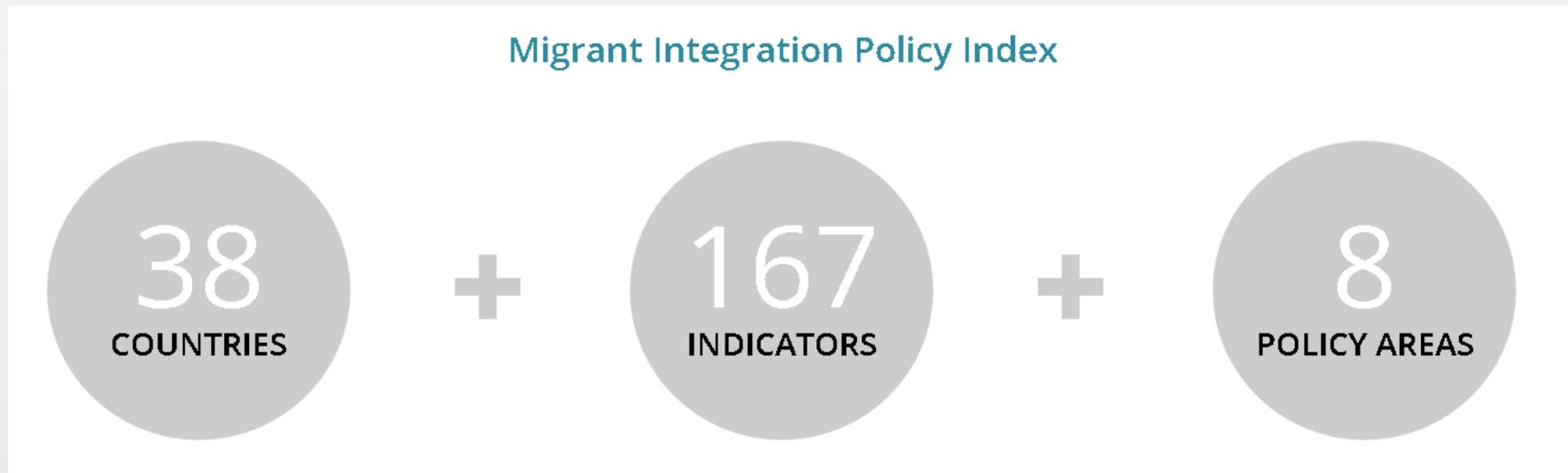
Trummer, U., Novak-Zezula, S. (2018) Intergenerational Family Solidarity of Immigrants from Two Successor States of Former Yugoslavia Living in Austria.

In: Društvena istraživanja Zagreb God. 27 (2018), BR. 1, Str. 67-83.

http://c-hm.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/di139_04trummer.pdf



Migration Integration Policy considerations on Family



The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a tool which measures policies to integrate migrants in 38 countries

Family reunion is one of the 8 monitored policy areas

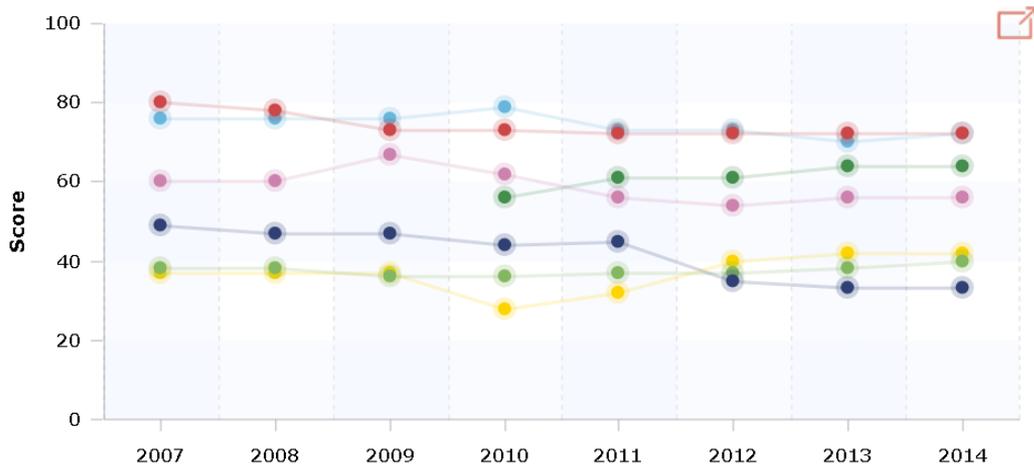
<http://www.mipex.eu/family-reunion>



Small numbers, little attention, stable policies

“Transnational couples [...] are rarely identified through statistics and assisted to reunite. According to 2011/2 estimates from 17 European countries, 5-7% of non-EU citizen adults were not living with their spouse or partner”

Family reunion, BE, BG, DK, IE, IT, NL, UK



“family reunion is increasingly politicised, with policies changed based on electoral promises, not robust evaluations”

<http://www.mipex.eu/family-reunion>



COST Action Intergenerational Family Solidarity across Europe (INTERFASOL) (2014-2018)

http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/isch/IS1311; <http://www.interfasol.eu/>

- 76 experts from 30 countries
- Increasing attention for impact of migration on families and well being of family members in the course of the action

Submission of a new COST Action on Family, Health and Migration in autumn 2018