Children and Migration

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Executive Summary

Globally, high rates of adult migration in various forms means that the numbers of children affected by all kinds of migration world-wide is truly staggering. This paper is a preliminary effort to foreground the issue of children in DFID’s work on migration, through a review of the available literature and a discussion of the implications of their findings. The report concentrates only on children left behind and independent child migrants; a child being defined as anyone between the ages of 0 and 17 and ‘independent child migrants’ meaning any child who migrates separately from their parents.

The report finds that estimating the number of individuals and families that have migrated and/or are affected by migration is extremely difficult due to a range of methodological problems, including: the paucity and poor quality of the data sources; countries differing widely in the extent to which they document migration; figures not being collected in any standardised way and the illegal and/or undocumented nature of some movement. These problems are further compounded in the case of estimating the numbers of children affected, because: children often do not appear separately from adults in the statistics; reliable national level data about the incidence of all kinds of child migration are exceedingly rare; where these are available categories are used in different ways by different surveys and writers, and there is a lack of consensus regarding terms and their operationalisation. Additionally, the focus on particular types of child migrants – such as trafficked children – invisibilises child migrants who do not fall into these categories such that there are few estimates as to how many other children are moving and for what reasons. However, there does appear to be a general agreement in the literature that there is a substantial increase in the numbers of children leaving their home communities independently of their families.

The difficulties in estimating the numbers of child migrations makes it difficult also to assess the impact of migration on children’s health, mortality and education. In terms of children left behind, few studies tackle directly the implications that migration as a livelihood strategy may have for the well-being of children. Instead we have to infer the effects on children from studies of the effect on the household as a whole. However, we find that it is difficult to generalise about whether the impact on children left behind with parental labour migration is positive or negative. Whether the outcomes are positive or negative in strictly resource terms depends on a large number of factors, of which a key one is the extent to which the work that migrants are doing is well rewarded in local terms. Where fathers are migrants, and wives and children are cared for by other senior males so that they do not lose their social place in the
community, then some of the potential detrimental effects may not emerge. Support from relatives may, however, come at a price. Where the rates of male absenteeism are very high and prolonged, fragmented family structures may result in profound effects on well being and on children because children have no father to bestow recognition on them. On the other hand, remittances by absent fathers can, in some instances, ensure food security, help repay debts and cover the costs of schooling and illness of relatives left behind. What little research has been done on the effects on children of mothers’ migrating suggests that this might have more adverse effects, particularly psycho-social ones, although there is growing discussion of scattered evidence that remittance behaviour differs between men and women migrants, with women being more concerned about children’s well being.

A major problem with assessing the harmful effects of independent child migration is the very large differences in the tenor and direction of the findings that come from the different kinds of literature. What research is available suggests that the effects of migration are likely to be context-specific, given the wide variety of migration flows involved. There is little direct material on the meaning and social context of children’s movement for work, or for other reasons. For example, the research on the kind of work independent child migrants do is really quite thin, and is skewed to those who work in the most harmful and abusive situations. Clearly the different kinds of migration have a profound effect on children. The medium term effects will depend, *inter alia*, on what has been the trigger for migration, what kind of living situation they secure in their places of destination, whether they work or go to school, what kind of work they do, what kind of social support is in place for them, and whether they fall prey to the many hazards and dangers posed by intermediaries, bad employers, or bad working conditions, and so on.

A key issue in the literature that looks at the factors that affect children’s independent migration is the ambivalent treatment of the relative roles of the parent and the child in decision-making; the emphasis tends, instead, to be on the degree of compulsion or coercion from parents. As a result, a central motivation for children to migrate that is generally underplayed is their need or desire for income. Migrating for education is another insufficiently stressed aspect of children’s migration in a number of areas. What few sources there are suggest that the link between education and migration is also context specific, some finding that there is a statistical link between not going to school and the propensity of rural children to migrate to work, while others find that migration is clearly positively associated with access to education.
Areas where there does appear to be agreement in the literature are that; a good deal of contemporary independent migration is of children from districts where there are and have been high rates of adult migration; and that children rarely travel and seek work alone, and often work on the basis of deferred payment and/or payment in kind.

When considering the legislation relevant to children migrants, the report indicates that no international nor regional legislative frameworks exist that deal directly with this issue, although there a number that are directly or indirectly relevant to children’s accompanied and unaccompanied, forced or voluntary movement; most significantly those that deal with children’s welfare in general and those that are related to the protection of children from economic exploitation and harmful work. However, these protective measures are difficult to put into place in many developing countries. Many countries have enabling legislation, but it is rarely acted upon, often because of a lack of resources, and because measures put in place ostensibly to protect children, can also have negative effects. The report considers this in detail by discussing different assessments of the role of intermediaries in independent child migration; where some sources stress that these systems are open to abuse and may force children into conditions of servitude, while others suggest they may be highly protective.

The report concludes with a discussion of the policy implication of the findings of the literature review. We argue that the consequences of migration for children needs to have a much higher profile in policy discussions, although the contours of this concern will remain obscure until more research is available on all forms of migration flow that affect children, including those of independent child migrants. A key finding, though, is that the policy space to make recommendations with respect to independent child migrants is very narrow. It is squeezed by the international conventions and protocols which are key elements of child protection policies. It is also squeezed because the success of advocacy with respect to particularly abused and vulnerable children (bonded child labour, ‘street’ children, ‘trafficked’ children, etc.) has lead to this being a potential good source of development funding for national governments. International advocacy has focused much needed attention on exploited and abused child migrants, but has also made it difficult to address the very real needs of other child migrants.

The report highlights a number of policy areas for discussion. 1) The impact of poverty and underdevelopment, and the need for programmes that alleviate the regional and rural poverty that trigger high levels of adult and child migration. 2) As much child migration is migration for work, the need for open and sensitive national and regional debates to establish what is
locally acceptable and unacceptable child labour, and mobilise discussions about young people’s working conditions and rights, as well as of the causes of child work and migration.  
3) The need for systems of support and recourse to be built for all working children in hardship, not simply those who have been trafficked.  
4) The need to stress that education is a universal right for all children, regardless of work status and/or migrant status, and to institute measures to allow working/migrant children to access school, non-formal education and/or training.  
5) The need to reassess international definitions of trafficking and the dominance of this category in the debates about and the interventions around children’s migration, in the light of studies indicating they increase child migrants’ risk of harm and exploitation, by ignoring the cultural context of migration and the institutional capacity to implement them.
Children and Migration

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is a preliminary effort to foreground the issue of children in DFID’s work on migration. The numbers of children affected by contemporary migration flows world-wide is very high, since they can be affected as children left behind, when either father, mother or both parents migrate; as children in families that have migrated, and when they migrate themselves independently of their families. Rates of adult migration are currently high and growing, and this is associated with a number of processes that are affecting many countries. These include urbanisation, in which particular forms of employment are spatially concentrated; diversification of livelihoods, in which migration is one set of diversification options; globalisation, which has created new forms of international divisions of labour that produce areas and countries of huge labour demand; conflict and environmental stress, which displace populations and produce refuges and internally displaced persons; and, finally, high rates of HIV/AIDS, which produce fragmented households incapable of maintaining rural livelihoods, and whose members move to cities and towns.

Rates of migration of persons under the age of 18, the internationally recognised age at which children become adults, are also growing, although we have few reliable estimates of the contemporary migration flows of children. As with adults, these are likely to be extremely varied in terms of who goes, to where, why, for how long, and with what effects. Given the high rates of all these forms of migration, the numbers of children affected world-wide is truly staggering.

The typology overleaf lays out the key categories of children affected by migration, with some broad indication of the regions in which particular kinds of migration flow predominate. It also gives a rough indication of the kinds of issues that have predominated in the literature. The report does not consider the effects of migration on the very many children world-wide that have experienced migration as young dependants when their parents have moved. It does not deal with forced migration, or family re-unification. It deals mainly with migration for work and focuses on two particular categories - the children left behind when one or both of their parents migrate and independent child migrants.
# Typology 1: Categories of Children Affected by Migration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Regional Areas</th>
<th>Main Research Themes Relevant to Children</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Migrating as Family Members</strong></td>
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<td>National Migration and Regional Migration to Urban and Rural Areas</td>
<td>S and S.E. Asia; Africa; Latin America; USA; Europe</td>
<td>Health/educational benefits and disadvantages</td>
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<td>- Social exclusion</td>
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<td>- At risk on the street</td>
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<td>- Poor and hazardous conditions</td>
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<td>- Social exclusion</td>
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<td>International Migration Asylum Seekers/ Refugees/ Economic Migrants</td>
<td>Europe USA</td>
<td>Access to Education/health care</td>
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<td>Discrimination/Identity/Psychosocial problems</td>
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<td>Transnational Families/Staggered and Chain Migration</td>
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<td><strong>Left behind</strong></td>
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<td>When fathers migrate</td>
<td>Latin America; S. Asia; Africa; China; East Asia; Ex CIS states</td>
<td>female headed households and poverty; effects on children’s education and/or wellbeing; household vulnerability</td>
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<td>remittances role in livelihoods</td>
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<td>When mothers migrate</td>
<td>E Asia; S Asia; China</td>
<td>Psycho-social effects on children</td>
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<td>Health and education of children</td>
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<td>Abuse of children</td>
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<td>Effects on domestic Gender Division of Labour/family break up</td>
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<td>When both parents migrate &amp; children cared for by grandparents and other relatives</td>
<td>Southern Africa; Latin America; China</td>
<td>Effects on children’s well-being; health and education</td>
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<td>Burden on grandparents</td>
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<td><strong>Migrating Autonomously</strong></td>
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<td>Labour migrants/Education migrants</td>
<td>Numerous developing world regions</td>
<td>Child labour</td>
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<td>Trafficked children</td>
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<td>Bonded slave labour</td>
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<td>Foster children</td>
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<td>Trafficked children</td>
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<td>Refugees/Asylum Seekers/ Forced migrants</td>
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<td>Street children</td>
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<td>Orphans from HIV/AIDS</td>
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Estimating the numbers of children who belong to each category world-wide is highly problematic. There are four key factors here: 1) estimating the number of international migrants is intrinsically difficult; 2) there are many variations in the way in which national migration rates are arrived at; 3) routine national statistics do not identify households with one or more members away on migration; 4) these problems are compounded in the case of children where variable age definitions, lack of attention and problems of method all serve to make migrant children statistically invisible. Many sources do not disaggregate by age (see
for example some of the better estimates of certain kinds of international migrants, summarised in Box 2).

However, sources that do pay attention to age are often unclear about the definition of age used to specify who a child is and their relation to international conventions; which generally define children as those below the age of 18. It is often not clear in published estimates of numbers whether this has been the age cut-off used to define children. It is also not uncommon to distinguish between children up to the ages of 14, 15 and 16 from those in the older category of 16 to 18. This is particularly the case with respect to children’s work, where, in any case, ILO guidelines give different cut-off points at which children should be allowed to engage in work, which are then reflected in country legislation (see section 5).

The issue of numbers is also obscured because several different kinds of independent child migration are the subject of highly active advocacy lobbies. Children who are refugees, who live or work on the ‘street’, or who have been ‘trafficked’, are the subject of specialist literature which routinely estimates the numbers of children affected. Some of the limitations of these numbers that make comparisons difficult are discussed below. Importantly, as well, singling out particular kinds of child migrants for policy attention invisibilises child migrants who do not fall into these categories. This further means that there are few estimates as to how many other children are moving, for what reasons and, of course, the relation between hazardous child migration and more benign forms.

This report first considers some of the difficulties of establishing overall numbers of migrants in greater detail (section 2) and then goes on to discuss the children affected by migration as children left behind (section 3), including here a discussion of problems in estimating how many are affected and independent child migrants (section 4), along with a discussion of estimates of the numbers involved. Section 4 reviews what we know about the motives for and effects of migration for children who move without their families. It also discusses the differences in perspective and interpretation apparent from different kinds of sources, using the example of accounts of girls’ domestic work. This section also discusses the differences in perspective and interpretation apparent from different kinds of sources, using the example of accounts of girls’ domestic work. In Section 5 we turn to look more closely at the link between some child protection issues in the developing world and child migration. We review the relevant international legislation and then focus on current anti-trafficking measures and their appropriateness in specific contexts. Section 6 of the report is a concluding discussion, containing recommendations.
2. ESTIMATING MIGRANT NUMBERS

Estimating the number of individuals and families that have migrated and/or are affected by migration is extremely difficult. The variety of migration flows, intrinsic complexities in identifying who are migrants and the illegal or undocumented nature of some movements, all contribute to the paucity and poor quality of the data sources (Black 2004, Hayase 2003). Countries differ widely in the extent to which they document internal migration and the figures are not collected in any standardised way. Box 1 identifies some of the difficulties of using national census data.

**Box 1 Estimating Migration: Problems with National Census**

Censuses are held at long intervals and rather irregularly in many developing countries. National estimates of the number of migrants are unreliable and difficult to compare. Some countries still do not include direct migration related questions in their censuses (for examples see Bell, Rees and Wilson 2003, Black 2004). Censuses are particularly likely to miss or underestimate certain types of migration, such as seasonal, circulatory or temporary migration (Edmonds 2003, Srivastava 2003).

Additionally, there are no standard practices with respect to the collection of migration data in national censuses. The most commonly asked questions are: 1) place of birth, 2) place of permanent residence (1, 5 or 10) years ago and 3) last permanent place of residence before coming to present place. Using a change in residence definition gives a figure for population mobility, but does not indicate reasons for migration and cannot distinguish worker mobility from other types of mobility, such as moving to marry (Srivastava 2003).

The raw census data can be made to yield very different results according to the definitions applied. Skeldon illustrates how migration rates data based on national censuses are affected by the spatial unit used to define migration. He points out that the 1981 Indian census counted only individuals who were living in a different state than previously as migrants. This produced a percentage of 3.6% of the total Indian born population as migrants. “When the much smaller district is used the proportion becomes 29.1% which suggests a completely different level of migration” (Skeldon 1987: 1076). The kinds of variation in questions asked to collect the raw data and then the variables and indicators produced from national censuses are surveyed in Bell, Rees and Wilson (2003), who attempt to provide a global inventory of internal migration data.

Estimates of the numbers of regional international migrants involved in circular and seasonal labour migration across national borders are very poor, especially where these are well-established historical trends (as, for example, in West Africa or South Asia) so that migration is relatively easy and unremarked upon. Substantial numbers can be involved. For example, about one third of the population of Côte d’Ivoire are migrants, the majority of them from nearby West African countries (SCF Canada 2003: 5).

Countries with high rates of transnational international out-migration rarely collect comprehensive data about rates. In Bangladesh, for example, the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training has estimates for the numbers of documented out-migrants to the Middle East, but does not have figures for migrants to industrialised countries (Siddiqui 2003: 4). They estimate that the number on short term contracts to the Middle East is more than 3 million, with many more travelling irregularly. Developed industrialised countries do make estimates of in-migrants and Siddiqui suggests that these number 1.1 millions. This is about 4
or 5% of the population, but the number of households affected is likely to be around 20%.

**Box 2 Estimating International Migration: Problems with Other Sources**

There are several problems with data sources often used for estimates of international migration: These include:

- available data being focused on particular areas of concern, such as the “brain drain” in Africa, with the result that little attention is paid to other types of migration or their implications for poor migrants’ livelihoods (Black 2004).
- data often being based on imputation or proxies of the numbers of foreign born; in particular, data on citizenship are used in the absence of data on place of birth (UN 2002).
- responsibility for the formulation, implementation and evaluation of migration data often being diffused among Government bodies, as well as among international organizations (UN 2002, IOM 2001).
- as a result data are frequently not recorded according to the same categories and formats (UN 2002).
- figures frequently do not include undocumented cross-border migration or illegal migration; for example, data on the Senegalese diaspora shows that over half a million Senegalese live outside Senegal, at least half of which are not officially registered in their country of destination (Diatta and Mbow 1999).

Many receiving countries do estimate rates of international in-migration, but collecting this data is often the remit of agencies that focus on particular kinds of migration to produce estimates of their target populations. Box 2 lists some of the problems with these data sources.

There are also many international bodies charged with collecting data. These figures reflect specific areas of policy concern and often arise out of international protocols, and international and national legislative definitions. Some sources for these kinds of figures are illustrated in Box 3.

**Box 3 Examples of Data Sources of Numbers of International Migrants**

- Global estimate of numbers of internally displaced peoples, but not disaggregated by age or gender. (Compiled by IDP project, available http://www.idpproject.org).
- UNHCR data on ‘populations of concern’ by age, gender and region of asylum/residence and by country of asylum/residence (UNHCR 2002)

**Key messages**

*The number of households, adults and children involved in all forms of global migration flow is unknown. The most accurate estimates are of international migration to developed countries, but shorter distance undocumented movements to these countries are also difficult to assess. The migration flows of the adult or child members of poorest households are particularly poorly documented.*
3. CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND WHEN PARENTS MIGRATE

This section comments on the difficulties of estimating the numbers of children affected by parental migration and then reviews the themes in the literature on its effects. The numbers of children living in households affected by migration in the communities of origin can be very high. More migration research has been done on international or transnational labour migration than on internal migration, although there are good reasons to believe that many more households are affected by internal and local regional migration than by transnational flows. It is, however, very difficult to identify migrant households of all kinds within normal national statistics, as the kinds of households in which the left behind family members live can be very varied in their composition. Variation in household composition means that there is no standard household form which the migration of one member produces (for example, not all female-headed households are the result of migration) and, that it is not immediately apparent whether a child whose parent or parents are not living in the same household is that of a migrant household member, a divorced couple or an orphan.

A recent nation-wide survey in South Africa found fully 25% of all households have members who are migrant workers, but this proportion rises to over 40% of households in deep rural areas (SAMP 2004). Much more typical information is that from Bangladesh, where there are no available figures for national rates. Instead, case studies of specific rural areas suggest that between 18 and 40% of rural households have at least one migrant member living and working elsewhere (Afsar 2003). Recent case study research in areas of high circular migration suggests that between 50-60% of people living in rural Tanzanian households have at least one member away, while the figure for rural Mali was 80% (Tacoli 2002).

Although these figures are only illustrative, and they do not refer only to migrants who have children, very many migrants do, and, thus, they suggest that living in a family with at least one parent away for long periods is part of the normal experience of childhood for many children in the developing world. However, very little research directly addresses the issue of what effects the absence of a parent has on the well-being of children in households and families left behind.

The extent to which it is fathers, mothers, or both parents who migrate and whether they leave their children behind varies very much from circumstance to circumstance. Historically, for example, male labour migrants in Southern Africa were not allowed to bring their families with them due to colonial, and later, apartheid labour movement regulations (O’Laughlin
There are also barriers to many migrants being accompanied by spouses and children, either because they lack legal status in their host communities, or because their legal status (for example as temporary labour migrants) does not carry the entitlement to bring their families for the duration of their contracts.

Sometimes both parents migrate, leaving children behind. Central American and Mexican families with young children often make arrangements for children to stay with relatives in their home country. They do this in order to avoid exposing them to uncertainty and protect them from the dangers of travelling without documents and crossing the US border (Orellana et al 2001). Migration of both parents, leading to a number of households in rural areas being composed of elderly grandparents and the young children of migrant parents, has become very common in South Africa, with concern about the well-being of both grandchildren and grandparents. There are indications of a growing counter-trend, in which parents take their children with them, in part because of better educational facilities at the destinations (SAMP 2004).

Nevertheless, it is more often that only one parent migrates for work. Men began to migrate earlier than women in most areas, although there is evidence that, globally, women have formed a high proportion of migrants for at least the last 30 years. Recent statistics suggest that in different regions between 44 and 50% of contemporary international migrants are women (Zlotnik 2003 quoted in Jolly 2003). Internal migration by rural young women to towns in sub-Saharan Africa, also, is reportedly increasing (Gadio and Rakowski 1995, Ouedraogo 1995 cited in Tacoli 2002). Tacoli, for example, states that in her three country studies of Mali, Nigeria and Tanzania, “the migration of young women is seen as a relatively new but steadily growing phenomenon” (Tacoli 2002: 20). Until recently, female migrants have been relatively invisible in migration policy and research. Given prevailing norms about child rearing responsibilities within families, the issues posed for the parent left behind and for their children are likely to be different according to the sex of the migrant. It is certainly the case that there has been a rise of research and debate about the specific effects on children when mothers migrate, especially with the growing numbers of transnational women migrants between the ages of 25 and 40. Historically, however, most research has dealt with male migrants and the effects of their migrations tend to be very different according to whether the migration is transnational, regional or internal. One reason for this is that migration to the better paid work in Europe and North America is costly to initiate and can only be afforded by households of higher socio-economic status in sending communities. The poorest migrants are confined to
much less lucrative regional labour markets, although distances travelled may be large.

**Transnational Migration**

Transnational migration is usually better rewarded than internal or regional migration and these migrants tend also to come from better off households that are more able to amass or borrow the resources required to finance the migrant. A considerable literature documents the high level of remittances of transnational migrants and the important contribution they make to household income in many rural areas with high levels of out-migration. The role of remittances actually or potentially in the development of sending countries is a current hot topic in migration research and is a significant focus in the work of the World Bank. Little of this work concentrates specifically on the impact of remittances on children’s well-being, although there is growing discussion of scattered evidence that remittance behaviour differs between men and women migrants, with women more concerned about children’s well-being. Anthropological and sociological research in areas with long-standing international migration, often linked to researching destination countries, has concentrated more on the effects on family and community relations. Jolly (2003) summarises Donnan and Werbner (1991) as showing that migration within Pakistan, and overseas to the UK or Middle East, has brought about social changes in many parts of Punjab. Long-term male absences have sometimes allowed wives greater decision-making power regarding land, children’s education and household finances. Evidence suggests these powers do not revert back to the male upon his return. For many daughters of such families, the increased purchasing power has led to inflated dowries, withdrawal from agriculture and increasing seclusion (Jolly 2003).

Chantavich (2001) comments on how female out-migration may result in men who are left behind taking on greater childcare responsibilities, but also that this may not be maintained upon women’s return. Filipino women working abroad often continue bearing the responsibility for childcare by organising and funding a domestic worker back home to raise their children, with little expectation that men will increase their caring role (Parrenas 2001). Women may do more of the networking work, which enables migration and sustains links with the source areas (Chant 1992, Chantavich 2001). However, there is evidence of considerable insecurity on the part of some migrant women workers. Chantavich (2001) found that most women domestic workers in Hong Kong sent money to parents rather than to their husbands because they feared their husbands would spend money on liquor and new girlfriends.
The social and emotional consequences of separations between family members are explored by Hugo (2002), who reviews research on the effects of international migration on the family in Indonesia. He stresses considerable changes in family structures and many negative effects on emotional and psychological well-being. “Migration is often associated with migrants becoming independent earners as opposed to workers on the family land under the control of the family head. The consequent breakdown of the extended family as the key unit of economic production has certainly loosened patriarchal authority and the dominance of the extended family” (Hugo 2002). He summarises the effects on families of international migration as being both positive and negative. These include the elderly being abandoned as the carer generation dwindles and extended absence leading to marital instability and the break-up of the family unit. He cites evidence of a higher rate of divorce among migrant households, abandoned families left to fend themselves, and the development of ‘dual families’ in places of origin and destination (ibid).

Hugo also emphasises several negative effects for children with parents working away, including a higher incidence of mental disorders, lower levels of school performance and impeded social and psychological development (ibid). Other research on psychological and social issues in the same regions is more positive. Battistella and Conaco (1998) review labour migration in the Philippines and conclude that migration need not necessarily be disruptive for the children left behind, particularly if it is not the mother who migrates. This view is supported by Asis (2000) in her review of the findings on the links between international migration and changes in the family in Asian families (particularly in East and Southeast Asia) in the past thirty years. She does, though, also suggest that compared to when father’s migrate there are more adverse consequences for children – specifically lower academic performance and social adjustment. In general, the issue of the psychological and emotional impact of absent fathers is rarely explored in literature from a wide variety of regions.

Some literature emphasises that although transnational migration has brought about family separation, forms of transnational family develop in which families maintain high levels of contact over large distances (Orellana et al 2001). This depends on levels of earning, length of absence and access to technologies of communication. Important in all of this, is the way in which transnational mothers, and fathers, relate to and keep in contact with their children. Generally mothers put more effort into maintaining relations with children left behind than do fathers, communicating with children through letters and phone calls, and sending gifts.
**Internal and Regional Migration**

Recent literature on internal and regional migration stresses the way in which such seasonal, temporary or circular movements constitute a significant aspect of the livelihood strategies of rural households (see Waddington 2003). One or both parents or whole families may move in search of income or food security, or as a response to vulnerability. The impact of a father’s absence on temporary labour migration may well depend on family structure. In many regions of sub-Saharan Africa the absence of husbands on labour migration has contributed to high rates of female-headed households. This is not the case in the savannah areas of West Africa, which record low rates of female headed households, but high female sex ratios and high rates of male out-migration. Wives of absent men are incorporated into households headed by their husbands’ senior male family members, or excess females are married polygamously. Where wives and children are cared for by other senior males and do not lose their social place in the community, then some of the potential detrimental effects may not emerge. Support from relatives may, however, come at a price. Rafique and Rogaly (2003) describe how the wives of seasonal labour migrants in North India depended for support on their parents, brothers and other of their own kin, but women have to make compromises to keep the goodwill of their relatives. The impact on family relations and on women, children and the elderly left behind, can be quite significant. The absence of men adds to material and psychological insecurity, leading to pressures and negotiations with wider family.

Poor rural areas where the rates of male absenteeism are very high and prolonged, because of the lack of work in both destination and origin communities may produce fragmented family structures with profound effects on well-being and on children. In Southern Africa, O’Laughlin finds increasing numbers of men who never form domestic groups at all. The deepening rupture between marriage and bearing children is caused by the simultaneous marginalisation of small-scale subsistence production, because of the expansion of commercial farms, and the relative loss of opportunities for unskilled workers, following the restructuring of migrant labour in Southern Africa (O’Laughlin, 1998: 22). Children who have no father who bestows social recognition on them are disadvantaged in many ways, not least because they have no possibility of affiliation to a father’s lineage, a considerable loss in this highly patrilineal society (O’Laughlin 1998).

Few studies on sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia tackle directly the implications that migration as a livelihood strategy may have for the well-being of children left behind. Instead we have to infer the effects on children from studies of the effect on the household as a whole.
Even here there are very few studies based on national level data sets which can compare households with different kinds of migration experience and the impacts this has on well-being. We have instead to rely on case histories of particular localities.

Whether the outcomes of migration are positive or negative for household members left behind in strictly resource terms depends on a large number of factors, of which a key one is the extent to which the work that migrants are doing is well rewarded in local terms. These levels of reward may change markedly over time and migrants who have once been able to send relatively substantial remittances, may end up only being able to clothe and feed themselves. This has certainly been the case for the men who migrate from northern Ghana to southern Ghana, often to work on cocoa farms, but also to work in towns. Caldwell (1969) records these labour migrants as making substantial remittances in the 1960’s, but by the late 1970’s anthropological research in the communities of origin suggests that relatively little cash was being sent back (Whitehead 1996). Tacoli (2002) argues that remittances have become much more important to rural household survival, in northern and central Mali, in south-east Nigeria and in northern and southern Tanzania, but this is at the same time as the amount being sent back has declined, as rates of unemployment and the cost of living in urban areas has gone up.

In sub-Saharan Africa the whole role of income from circular labour migration as a rural livelihood strategy has changed with the declining economic fortunes of some sectors. In southern Africa changes in the patterns of male industrial labour migration have had dire effects on rural poverty in Malawi and Zambia. This kind of labour migration used to be a source of investment in farming, but this has ceased to be the case (Chirwa 1997, Ferguson 1999, Moore and Vaughan 1994). Arguments about the changing role of migration in livelihood strategies have been made most strongly by Bryceson (2002) who argues that current increasing diversification of off-farm activities in many part of sub-Saharan Africa is a survival strategy and no longer provides a route to accumulation. She suggests that new forms of migrations, especially of young people seeking any kind of small income, are part of this trend. There are still some countries, such as Kenya, where urban migration by some family members still provides moderately good income for rural households, but this is mainly migrants who can secure jobs requiring educational qualifications. In most countries a good many of the increasing numbers of out-migrants work in the urban informal sector, where income rates are low and uncertain.

In addition to having to infer the effects on children left behind from studies such as the ones
above, it is difficult to generalise about whether the impact on children left behind with parental labour migration in Africa is positive or negative, and this is partly captured in the poverty rates for female-headed households. Most studies show that while some female-headed households are among the poorest in rural areas, this is not true of all female-headed households. Some of those households that are female-headed because a male migrant is away have been relatively well-off because of the role of remittances. However, while this is historically true in some African countries, it is difficult to assess whether it is still true, given the paucity of recent research on the changing nature of internal migration in Africa.

The available research on migration in Asia suggests that it is similarly difficult to generalise about the impact of migration on children in this context. For example, Afsar’s (2003) work in Bangladesh suggests that around 40% of temporary migrants’ families use remittances to educate children and treat sick members. Similarly, Rahman et al (1996 quoted in Afsar 2003) state that school enrolment rates among members of migrants’ families in rural areas are greater compared with age cohorts of non-migrant families. This is in contrast to Srivastava (2003), who found that in India male migration further reduces the chances of girls acquiring an education. Siddiqui reports similar effects in Bangladesh in the absence of mothers, when she states that, “In some instances migration afforded children better educational opportunities, and in others, children’s education suffered because of the absence of their mothers” (Siddiqui 2003: 6).

Siddiqui (2003) also suggests that the uncertainty of the timing and magnitude of remittances can push women and children from poor labouring households to participate in the labour market under adverse conditions. Other negative effects are reported by Rafique and Rogaly (2003), whose work in India indicates that the health of women and children left behind when men migrate may be jeopardised as the amount of food that is cooked is reduced. In contrast, Anh et al (2003) found that the opening of borders between Vietnam and Cambodia, Laos and China has increased rural out-migration in Vietnam and, although the size of earnings is not large enough to allow a considerable amount to be remitted, cash remittances can ensure food security, help repay debts, cover schooling costs for children and illness of relatives left behind.

**Key messages**

*There is little statistical information on the effects on the well-being of children who have been left behind when a parent or both parents migrate. The income and livelihood effects on household members left behind depend on the level of income that migrants earn and the*
extent to which they can and do send remittances back. A good deal of internal and regional migration represents strategies for survival in which the members of households left behind, including children, are in poverty and want, and migrants themselves may fare little better. There is growing concern at the negative effects on children of the transnational migration of mothers.

4. INDEPENDENT CHILD MIGRANTS

Unreliable Numbers

Children who live independently of their households and families, and those who have moved away from their home communities are the focus of considerable policy concern, despite the virtual absence of any reliable information on how many such children there are and of the effects their migration has on their well-being. Although there appears to be a substantial increase in the numbers of children who leave home communities independently of their families, investigating this is hampered because children often do not appear separately from adults in the statistics (Westin 2002). It is widely assumed that children are captured in data sets as members of their parents’ households. This means that there is little investigation of the characteristics of the population under 15 years of age, or under the age of 18 that are not in these living situations. International data sets dealing with demographic information, such as those provided by UNICEF, the ILO and UNFPA tend not to link the sectors of age and population movement. Some particular categories of vulnerable children who are involuntary migrants, such as refugees fleeing from violence and conflict or from severe environmental crisis, and migrating HIV/AIDS orphans, are the subjects of specialist literatures.

Most of the readily available information about other child migrants who end up working or at school or as family members in households other than those of their parents comes from those working in child protection. Concern about the well-being of children away from their parents means that they are the subjects of child protection policies and legislative measures which serve to single out particular kinds of migration flow - such as trafficking, or migration to abusive work, or migration that leads to homelessness (‘street children’), and there are many estimates of these different kinds of child migrants. Strenuous international efforts on behalf of all child labourers, of children working in hazardous or abusive conditions, of street children, of trafficked children, of children working in conditions of bonded or slave labour and of child sex workers, all generate
different numbers of affected children, different categories of harm and different kinds of policy interventions. Examples of estimates of some of these categories of children are to be found in Boxes 4 to 6.

**Box 4 Global Estimates of Economically Active Children Ages 5-17 in 2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Total Population ('000s)</th>
<th>Number at Work ('000s)</th>
<th>Work Ratio (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>600,200</td>
<td>73,100</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>599,200</td>
<td>137,700</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-14</td>
<td>1,199,400</td>
<td>210,800</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>332,100</td>
<td>140,900</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,531,100</strong></td>
<td><strong>351,700</strong></td>
<td><strong>23.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ILO 2002

**Box 5 Estimates of Domestic Workers**

The ILO estimates that there are 250 million child workers in the developing world; the proportion represented by child domestic workers is not known, but high. It also estimates that domestic work is the largest employment category of girls under age 16 in the world. Local studies carried out in the last decade have attempted to estimate prevalence. In Dhaka, Bangladesh, as many as 300,000 children work as domestics. 63% in Haiti, of an estimated 250,000 child domestic workers or restaveks, 20% are 7 to 10 years old. In Indonesia’s capital, Jakarta, alone, an estimated 700,000 domestic workers are under age 18. In Nepal, some 62,000 urban domestics are under age 14. In Lima, Peru, the number of domestic workers under 18 is estimated at 150,000. In the Philippines, there are an estimated 29,000 domestic workers between 10 and 14 years old, comprising 4% of the total 766,000 domestic workers nationwide. The largest concentration (36%) is between 15 and 19 years old. In Sri Lanka, an estimated 100,000 children are employed in domestic service and food catering. Very few studies indicate whether the numbers are increasing or decreasing. In Cotonou, Benin, there would appear to have been an increase in the numbers of child domestic workers; 100 were identified in 1991; 950 in 1993. By contrast, in a lower middle-class area of Nairobi, Kenya, 20% of households employed a child domestic worker in 1981 compared with 12% in 1991 (of which, 11% were under age 10). Other studies indicate proportions of the child workforce employed as domestic workers. In Brazil, 22% of all working children are in domestic service. In Venezuela, 60% of working girls aged between 10 and 14 are domestic workers.

Source: Innocenti Digest 1999

**Box 6 Estimated Number of Trafficked children, 2000**

- Asia/Pacific 250,000;
- Latin America and Caribbean 550,000;
- Africa 200,000;
- Transition economies 200,000;
- Developed industrialized economies N/A

Total (rounded) 1,200,000.

Source: ILO 2002

As there are a great many agencies using and publicising these kinds of figures it is important to note that they have many limitations. Most of the information comes from extrapolating from micro-surveys or other specialist studies (Srivastava 2003). The methods of extrapolating and these micro studies themselves contain many methodological problems.

- Categories are used in different ways by different surveys and different writers, making comparisons and analyses confusing. An example of this is provided in Box 7 below.
about street children.

- Lack of consensus regarding the meaning of children’s movement, terms and their operationalisation in studies is a very widespread problem. As an example, see Social Alert (2000) for a discussion of the definitional issues related to the concept of “trafficking”.

- Terms are insufficiently explained so that it is unclear what researchers are actually referring to. For instance, when referring to children, it is not always spelled out whether the UN definition of a child is being used or the age of majority in the country in question, which might be lower.

- Assumptions about the social context of child migration raise many methodological issues. For example, it is often assumed that domestic workers are child migrants. However, while live-in domestic workers may indeed be migrant workers, some might not be live-in workers and some might be but have their families close by and the extent to which they can be thought of as migrants is questionable.

In all these sources there is a further problem, namely lack of consistency with respect to age categories. Many sources fail to check rigorously the age cut-offs in use in a particular study and so it is very difficult to know whether one is comparing like with like when numbers are being estimated. This matters for exploring inconsistencies in estimates between sources. It matters beyond this too. Although the Convention on the Rights of the Child defines all those under 18 as children (see below), other international conventions are careful to distinguish different kinds of age specific behaviour, especially those concerned with child migrants and work. The ILO conventions (see below) distinguish between ages at which all work is prohibited for children from ages at which some work can be permitted. National governments interpret ILO definitions to suit prevailing practices and norms about children’s work. For example, in Côte d’Ivoire, the minimum age for light agricultural work is 12 years; children aged 12-14 must have parental consent and cannot work for more than four and a half hours a day. For other sectors the basic minimum working age is 14 years, except domestic work (12 years), light underground work and work on scaffolding (16 years) and for girls working in street stalls and using pedal driven sewing machines (16 years). In addition, education is compulsory up to the age of 16 years. Yet the ILO, UNICEF and World Bank Inter-agency Understanding Children’s Work Project in Côte d’Ivoire uses as a definition of child work “any activity other than study or play remunerated or unremunerated carried out by a person under the age of 15” (Francavilla and Lyon 2002: 2). The difficulties of comparing accounts using
these different definitions, and, of course, at arriving at a policy consensus, are obvious.

**Box 7 Who are Street Children?**

Many estimates and studies of street children assume that children working on the street are living there and are by implication migrants, but many such children work on the streets and live with their families (Luiz de Mora 2002). Until recently the most widely used set of definitions of street children has been that set up by UNICEF, which distinguishes these categories:

- **Street Living Children**: children who ran away from their families and live alone on the streets.
- **Street Working Children**: children who spend most of their time on the streets, fending for themselves, but return home on a regular basis.
- **Children from Street Families**: children who live on the streets with their families.\(^{12}\)

While these distinctions are useful, each category still identifies some form of *street* children, enabling sources to conflate the categories. For example, “In 1996, the Inter-American Development Bank and UNICEF estimated there were 40 million children living or working on the streets of Latin America - out of an estimated total population of 500 million” (Mexico Child Link 2003).

This figure is quoted on the website of a UK based charitable trust entitled “Mexico Child Link” (ibid.). Its section on Mexican Street Children also gives the following figures, under a sub-section entitled “Mexican street children facts and figures”:

- Mexico City has 1,900,000 underprivileged and street children. 240,000 of these are abandoned children. (Action International Ministries cited in ibid.)
- In the central area of Mexico City there are 11,172 street children. 1,020 live in the street and 10,152 work there. (City of Mexico/Fideicomiso, Report, 1991 cited in ibid.)
- Begging - Some 20% of the children survive by begging, 24% by selling goods and others by doing subcontracting work. (“Over 5 Million Child Laborers in Mexico”, Xinhua: Comtex, 14 September 2000, citing National System for the Integral Development of the Family (DIF), “Prevention, Attention, Discouragement and Eradication of Childhood Labor” cited in ibid.)

This example illustrates how categories become conflated, making it difficult to distinguish whether or not children are living *and* working on the streets, and whether or not they are separated from their families, as well as to assess the numbers of children involved in each category or overall.

Elsewhere, however, the following really useful distinction is made: “‘Street children’ is a term often used to describe both *market children* (who work in the streets and markets of cities selling or begging, and live with their families) and *homeless street children* (who work, live and sleep in the streets, often lacking any contact with their families)” (Ibid.). These definitions appear to be gaining some ground, presumably as a result of concern over the conflation illustrated above.

In terms of their migration status, although many homeless children are true migrants others are children who have lost contact with families, or whose families cannot provide basic shelter for them. Many market children, or children working in the informal economy on streets, are not migrants in that they have families in whose homes they sleep. These distinctions may be relatively unimportant in terms of the kinds of needs to be met.

**National Level Data**

It is by now abundantly clear that reliable national level data about the incidence of all kinds of child migration are exceedingly rare. Some information comes from the overlap between definitions of fostering and incidence of child migration. Data from surveys in Africa has been used to estimate the numbers of children who are not living with their parents. This has been down for West Africa by Pilon from whom the following table has been taken (Pilon 2003: 9). For the ten countries listed, the percentage of households with one or more children under 15 living without (biological) parents is at least 15%. It exceeds 20% (one in five
households) in seven countries and reaches almost one-third in Senegal. Between 10 and 20% of children in the 6-9 age bracket are not living with their parents and between 13 and 25% in the 10-14 age group.13

Case study data tries to distinguish between children who are being ‘fostered’ because they are orphans, because they are going to accessible schools, or because they are working in their foster homes. For example, a survey of 1,200 rural households, commissioned by the NGO Plan/Burkina to investigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on family systems, revealed that nearly 40% of the children taken in by another household are there because they became orphans. Of the remainder, 29% are hosted to perform domestic chores and 26% to attend school (Yaro and Dougnon 2002 cited in Pilon 2003).

Table 1 Percentage of households with children under 15 living without their parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>2000-01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>1992-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Côte d’Ivoire</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>2000-01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>1992-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pilon 2003

A few national level studies of child labour start by estimating how many children are not living with their parents. Keilland and Sanogo (2002) find that 9.5% of Burkinabe children aged between 6-17 years lived outside the proximity of their parents. Of these, 30.4% live in another village14, 40% have left for cities, and 29% are abroad, most often in the Côte d’Ivoire (22%). Using a complex set of categories, Keilland and Sanogo identify about one half of these minors as migrant child labourers15 and give a total number of 165,000 as children who have migrated to work; 83,000 of these are working in neighbouring West African states, mainly in Côte d’Ivoire. This and other studies rarely address the issue of 16-17 year-olds (usually girls) who have moved to marry.

The Ghana Child Labour study also gives a national picture of the kinds of migration undertaken by children looking only at households within Ghana (Ghana Statistical Survey 2003). They found eleven per cent of the children in households surveyed were no longer living in their place of origin. Fifty four per cent of these children had migrated ‘involuntarily’, with ten per cent of these moving with their parents, seven percent have
moved because of the loss of a parent and 37% having been sent by parents to live with their current households. This means that 46% of the migrants had migrated alone.\textsuperscript{16}

Some child labour studies conducted by the ILO’s Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) also contain information on child migration. Based on the 1996 Migration and Employment Survey, their study in Nepal showed that of child migrants aged 5-17 about one third had migrated for economic reasons (Kumar et al 1997). Two thirds of these children were in India and one third in other areas in Nepal. Just over one per cent of the child population of this age range had moved from their place of origin for economic reasons (about 80,000). Many more of these were male rather than female and a majority of these children were aged 15-17. Work migrants represented 3.4% of the total children in this age group. A further 120,000 children aged 5-17 were identified as child migrants who move for non-economic reasons, but were also undertaking economic occupations before and after their move. More of these migrants were female and living in Nepal, and might well have migrated to marry, but 53,000 (44%) were in India, predominantly in cities and towns (ibid.).

The Visible and Invisible Migration Flows of Independent Child Migrants

As described earlier, there is every reason to believe that the numbers of children migrating independently of their parents is under reported, as well as being under-researched. Children move independently of their parents within their countries of origin, very often within cross-national regions and sometimes transnationally. They move to rural areas, to small towns and to small and large cities. They move in response to conflicts and wars, to being orphaned, to work, to gain access to education and sometimes to replace missing children in other families. However, in addition to having little reliable information on how many children and of what age are moving, we are also very far from understanding the meanings and social contexts of children’s moving to work.

Although the data given above are only indicative, they suggest that there can be high rates of independent child migration. Case studies suggest that these occur in particular localities, especially ones that are already characterised by high rates of adult (over 18) migration (see Castle and Diarra 2003, Punch 2002\textsuperscript{17}). Rates of work and migration are also much higher in the older age groups. Punch (1998) finds that the typical age to begin migrating is fifteen or sixteen, for children of both sexes. This does not mean that quite young children are not involved in migrating independently. Iversen (2002) suggests that very young males from
rural Karnataka in India leave for the city in considerable numbers to seek work. Caouette (2001) also finds that are some young children among the many children along the borders of China, Myanmar and Thailand who have migrated to find work.

A further critical factor that affects how we understand independent child migration arises from the ways in which particular categories of child migrants achieve visibility. International child protection campaigns are exceedingly important in visibilising the harmful situations of many child migrants and they have also been very important in raising awareness of the extent to which children in the developing world are living away from their parents and home communities. However, as they bring some children into focus, they also invisibilise child migrants who do not fall into these categories and make it difficult to estimate how many other children are moving and for what reasons. As has been noted earlier, certain categories of children in difficult circumstances tend to be the subject of particular interest and research. The typology below illustrates where these categories of children emerge from the mass of all migrant children by giving some broad indications of the reasons why children migrate, and the varying circumstances in which, as a consequence, they might find themselves. The literatures which emphasise the vulnerability of child migrants focus on the element of coercion involved in children moving, either in the migration triggers (HIV/AIDS; conflicts/disasters), or in the process of migration (trafficked by intermediaries) and on the harmful circumstances that children end up in, either with respect to the kind of work that is done (abusive, sex work, physically beyond their capacities) or in their living circumstances (on the street, unable to escape from employers’ homes). Trafficked children, street children, AIDS orphans, child soldiers and child refugees are all important categories of child migrant. However it is important to stress that such categories of vulnerable children are not synonymous with independent child migrants. The remainder of this section focuses on what kinds of other children are moving independently of their families and explores what we know about the reasons they migrate and the effects on them of migrating.

**Typology 2: Circumstances of Migrant Children**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Migration Trigger</th>
<th>Living Situation At Destination</th>
<th>Type of Work</th>
<th>Form of Coercion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income/Livelihood/ Education</td>
<td>Relatives</td>
<td>Quasi-familial</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS (Orphans)</td>
<td>Institution (camp or orphanage)</td>
<td>(including some apprentices)</td>
<td>Contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict/ Displacement (including refugees)</td>
<td>Strangers (employers or landlords)</td>
<td>Waged work</td>
<td>Middlemen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homeless (street)</td>
<td>Informal economy</td>
<td>Deception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hazardous work</td>
<td>Bonded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sex Work</td>
<td>Physical abuse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18
Key Messages

Several different kinds of independent child migration are the subject of highly active advocacy lobbies (for example, ‘street’ children or ‘trafficked’ children), but estimates of the numbers of children involved need to be treated with caution. The focus on particular types of child migrants invisibilises child migrants who do not fall into these categories. While estimating the numbers of children who have migrated independently, whether nationally or regionally across borders is highly problematic, there does appear to be a general agreement that there is a substantial increase in the numbers of children leaving their home communities independently of their families.

Why do Children Migrate?

As well as a result of armed conflict, children move in response to other kinds of political conflict that disrupt livelihoods and security. Caouette, in her study of the children who have migrated to work on the borders of Myanmar, China and Thailand, emphasises the effect of political conflict in Myanmar. Some migration has been stimulated by resettlement and relocation policies which have been implemented in response to the ongoing political conflict in Myanmar and efforts to develop the country (Caouette 2001: 40). High rates of HIV/AIDS infection also trigger child migration in a number of contexts. In research for DFID, a detailed study of young AIDS migrants in Southern Africa suggests that they migrate as a response to a number of difficulties, such as treatment by the foster family, rivalry between children, disrupted schooling (Ansell and Young 2002). Several studies note that AIDS orphan in Africa contribute to ‘street children’ in towns and cities in countries such as Zambia and Uganda (Andvig 2000; Francavilla and Lyon 2002). Severe society wide economic crises also precipitate movements of children, as well as adults. Anecdotal evidence suggests an increase in the number of unaccompanied Zimbabwean children entering South Africa in 2003 for work in the northern border areas as a result of economic crisis and drought (see SAMP 2004). Lim discusses the drop in school enrolment rates that accompanied the East Asian crisis in the Philippines and a parallel rise in labour force participation of both 10-14 year olds and 15-17 year olds (Lim 2000).

A good deal of contemporary independent migration is of children from districts where there are currently and have been historically high rates of adult migration. These are districts that are poor compared to neighbouring or other regions/areas where economic opportunities are few. An ILO study of child labour in Nepal suggests that more and more migration is
occurring, aggravated and accelerated by rural poverty “which has led to more exploitation of child labourers in recent years and (particular) trends of child migration ... (have) also been increasing alarmingly” (Kumar et al 1997: 3). The parents of child labourers are often unemployed, underemployed or seasonally employed, and “[p]overty drives children into work” (ibid. 2). Punch emphasises in her study that many of the young people would rather stay at home in Bolivia, but “lack of work, or irrigation, of financial help mean that many farmers from rural communities are forced to seek a living elsewhere” (Punch 2001: 15). Children in these poor areas see themselves as economic agents making a contribution to household livelihood strategies and migration of adults and children may be part of rural household livelihood strategies (Waddington 2003). Children’s individual decisions to migrate may be triggered by household crisis. Young maids in Morocco had often been precipitated into their migrations to work by family economic crisis - as for example when a father became too ill to farm, or as a result of harvest failure or loss of land (Pedersen 2001).

In contrast, Keilland and Sanogo caution against the assumption that poverty is the root cause of child migration in Burkina Faso. They argue that while poverty is the most cited reason parents give for sending their children abroad, by comparing the households of child migrants with those that stayed it was found that poverty was a much weaker factor that anticipated (Keilland and Sanogo 2002: 4). Instead Keilland and Sanogo emphasise that there is a culture of migration in rural Burkina. Rates of adult migration are high and children are thought to gain emancipation and maturity through migration.

Several studies find that parents actively encourage or support the migration of their children, seeing it as opening opportunities for a better future to them. “Many parents prefer their children to go and work across the border seeing it as an opportunity to improve their situation and get more life experiences and training” (Caouette 2001: 44). Here the unequal development of regions or particular areas in developing countries (OR in developing country continents) is understood to give rise to a poverty of experience, as well as of resources. The desire of young people themselves to have new experiences is a commonly reported motivation for migration. Young people in rural Bolivia, for example, migrate initially out of curiosity and because migrating while young is an adventure (Punch 2001). The most influential role models are returned migrants, who inspire others to leave (Beauchemin 1998; Castle and Diarra 2003).

A key issue in the literature that looks at the factors that affect children’s independent migration is the ambivalent treatment of the relative roles of the parent and the child in decision making, and, as is clear from typology two, the emphasis tends instead to be on the
degree of compulsion or coercion. Some sources attribute little if any scope for children to make decisions about their own movements and portray these as largely taken by parents, who want or need their children to work. Other research, especially anthropological studies, finds considerable evidence of children’s autonomy in decision making.

One example, here, is that of child fostering, which, as discussed in section 2, is one of the main ways in which children leave home to live elsewhere in Africa. Although this is often portrayed as a decision between adults in which households needing more farm and domestic labour are helped by other relatives, several sources draw attention to the fact that children themselves may play a big part in the decision to do this (Andvig 2000). One reason for this is because some fostering is associated with access to better educational opportunities (Pilon 2003).

The link between independent migration and education appears to be very context specific. Some sources argue that there is a statistical link between not going to school and the propensity of rural children to migrate to work (Castle and Diarra 2003); others argue that children migrate because they are disappointed that their parents will not send them to school (Beauchemin 1998). In contrast, a small scale ethnographic study in northern Ghana finds that many children migrate in order to further their education, either moving to be able to attend school or to be trained, or migrating for work to get the money needed to attend school (Hashim 2003). Migrating for education is an insufficiently stressed aspect of children’s migration in a number of areas (see, for example, the discussion of domestic workers below). Piperno’s study suggests that the high rate of underage Albanian outflow is “probably a reflection of the social and educative structures inadequacy” in Albania, (Piperno 2002: 6) although figures are not supplied. Orellana et al (2001) report that Korean children migrate to the United States in order to pursue their education and that they take the lead in this decision to migrate, supported by their parents as part of a long-term strategy for economic advancement.

An interesting link between migration and education is discussed by Ping and Pieke (2003), who suggest that in China, because rural-urban migrants enter a strongly segmented labour market, there is little incentive to acquire an education beyond elementary literacy. Consequently in villages specialising in out-migration, pupils frequently drop out of school before the completion of compulsory education to migrate to the cities. However, they also point out that migration has a positive impact on education, because the earnings of these young migrants can be used to pay for the education of a sibling. They warn though, that there is an important gender aspect to this, which works to the detriment of girls. There is in any case a lower likelihood of girls being educated because they will eventually marry out,
and this might be being exacerbated by a collective family strategy toward upward mobility which acts as an incentive for girls to migrate to support their brothers’ education. They cite two studies which found that “some girls come to work in the ‘entertainment sector’ in southern China to earn money in order to support their younger brothers’ education” (Pan Suiming 1999; Huang Ping 2003 cited in ibid: 8).

A central motivation for children to migrate that is generally underplayed is their need or desire for income. There are a number of reasons why children have such need. Many come from rural economies in which children start earning their own independent incomes quite early, as well as making a contribution to family income. Children may be encouraged to earn income for aspects of their own consumption, such as clothes, or school fees. Children may also perceive a need to generate savings that can improve their livelihoods or prospects. They may engage in a form of target migration for specific outlays - for girls this may include ‘trousseau’ items - for which the scope for independent earning at home is limited. Children may also feel a responsibility for making some contribution to the overall welfare of their households or families. For the Bolivian adolescents, earning capacity is greater in Argentina, allowing young people the chance to save for their future, to buy land and have something put by for when they marry. At the same time, remittances are sent home or money brought back at the end of the season help contribute to the family income (Punch 2002: 126). In these cases children already see themselves to some extent as independent economic agents and they seek work where opportunities are better. Children themselves often cite looking for employment or better work opportunities as the reasons to migrate.

A final migration trigger for children is family neglect or family abuse. A minority of children in a small number of studies is reported to have left their homes due to sexual abuse or other forms of violence (Beauchemin 1998, Iversen 2002). Increasing rates of independent child migration are sometimes accompanied by accusations of poor parenting and identification of the breakdown in the moral fabric of community and society in local advocacy accounts (Beauchemin 1998).

Recent research in Ghana (Hashim 2004b) suggests that being orphaned or losing one’s father might be a significant trigger for children’s migration. This might be either as a result of children’s own initiative, because they are not sufficiently cared for within their father’s extended family household or because of the desire to support a widowed mother, or at a relative’s instigation, because of the need to spread the cost of childrearing or because such children are more easily moved to another household that might require the labour of a child.
What are the Effects?

Assessing the impact of migration on children’s health, mortality and education using national level statistics is difficult because of the problems discussed earlier regarding identifying child migrants in national surveys. Policy makers and advocacy institutions have to fall back on studies of either particular groups of child migrants, or groups which are presumed to contain many migrants, or of local level studies of child migration. Despite the methodological limitations in many of these studies, they may be more illuminating because the effects of migration are likely to differ from context to context, given the wide variety of migration flows involved.

Of considerable concern are the hazards and harms that independent child migrants may suffer, which might underlie any effects on gross health and mortality statistics. There are inherent insecurities, risks and dangers attached to the process of migration itself, to which children are especially vulnerable (see Box 8). Some of the effects of migration derive from the other hazards they are likely to fall prey to, such as being homeless, working in jobs that are exploitative or hazardous, being unable to attend school. None of these hazards are unique to child migrants, but they may be much more vulnerable to them than other children. Falling prey to trafficking systems is a particular hazard faced by migrant children. As illustrated in typology 2, the medium term effects will depend, *inter alia*, on what has been the trigger for migration, what kind of living situation they secure in their places of destination, whether they work or go to school, what kind of work they do, what kind of social support is in place for them, and whether they fall prey to the many hazards and dangers posed by intermediaries, bad employers, or bad working conditions and so on.

**Box 8 Multiple Hazards for child Migrants in Asia**

Caouette’s study of child labour migrants on the borders of China, Myanmar and Thailand gives the most detailed picture of the costs of migration. She records that there is “extensive debt-bondage, sexual abuse, illegal confinement, confiscation of documents, arrest and exhortation, forced overtime, few basic resources and poor living conditions that were overcrowded, insecure and often violent” (Caouette 2001: 6). When children migrate, “they generally left their homes not knowing for certain what kind of job they would actually find abroad” (ibid. 50).

Many child migrants suffer from health problems which they have no way of addressing due to their illegality and lack of money; most of the children do not attend school because of language difficulties, “constant mobility, remoteness, insecurity and lack of documentation” (ibid. 6); they are exposed to exploitation and abuse from employers: they are illegally confined; living and working condition are deplorable with very basic resources, occupational hazards, overcrowding, and insecure, often violent, environments; the sex workers among them are exposed to HIV and AIDS. Drug abuse is also a serious problem amongst these child migrants, as well as local drug production (which leads to ease of availability and low cost) and trafficking. Many of the children are addicted to amphetamines and heroin. Other hazards are those connected with children being trafficked across borders and into certain jobs. “The majority of these young people were trafficked into sex work, marriage, domestic service or begging rackets” (ibid. 107). Sex workers suffered abuse, as did many domestic workers and other migrant females.
Direct material on the kind of work independent child migrants do is quite thin. Child migrants within Nepal work in agriculture as family servants, as plough-men and cattle-herders, and others work in trade and commerce and services, in industry and transport. Nepali child migrants also reportedly work in India in carpet factories and as domestic servants in the big cities or small hotels (Ghatia 1988 cited in Kumar et al 1997). Bourdillon’s (2001a) work on Zimbabwe also mentions domestic service as a significant receiving sector, as well as informal mining and commercial agriculture. Many child migrants in West Africa work in agriculture, some work as fishing labour, many work in the informal economy of urban areas as shoe shiners, porters, assistants to urban market women and in the commercial sex industry (Agarwal et al 1997, Beauchemin 1998, Castle and Diarra 2003, Hashim 2004a, SCF Canada 2003, Schildkrout 1981). The Bolivian child migrants to Argentina worked in agriculture (boys) or domestic service (girls) (Punch 2001, 2002). The girl child migrants on the borders of China, Myanmar and Thailand sought jobs in factories, shops and restaurants, sex work, directly or indirectly in the entertainment industry or as domestic workers (cleaning and care-taking). Male migrants found jobs in the fishing industry, as manual day labourers, or in construction work or agriculture (Caouette 2001). Child migrants are found in a wide variety of employment in India. Iversen’s (2002) work on child migrants in Karnataka notes that 50% of his sample is boys with current or previous employment in hotels and restaurants. Hotels and restaurants also offer implicit contracts interlinking accommodation and employment transactions. The girls in his study, on the other hand, primarily work as domestic servants. Other examples from India are migrant girls from the southern state of Kerala working thousands of kilometres away from home in the prawn curing factories of Gujerat and Maharashta, north India (Nieuwenhuys 1995).

Several aspects of this material are worth noting: children’s work is markedly gender segregated; child migrants work in both urban and rural areas; they often enter the same labour market as adult migrants from the same area, but in some countries specific child labour markets have developed. The range of jobs involves a wide range and degree of hazard (see Bourdillon 2001a and b), some of which are covered by international conventions concerned with children’s rights, in general, and the elimination of harmful or abusive children’s work, in particular.

Assessing Harm and Hazards: The Problem of Perspective

A major problem with assessing the harmful effects of independent child migration is the very large differences in the tenor and direction of the findings that come from different kinds of
literature. Nieuwenhuyys, for example, draws attention to the contrast between the public or adult view and the child’s view of the prawn-curing work of migrant girls from Kerala (Nieuwenhuyys 1995). She finds that “they spoke of enjoying working in the company of other girls, of the exciting bus journey across India, of the video show on Sunday, and above all of the respectability their income had gained them in their own homes” (ibid. 213). This contrasts sharply with the way the girls’ situation is portrayed in the newspapers, which told “sorrowful stories of crude profiteering to which they are exposed” (ibid.).

There also appears to be a strong contrast between the accounts from NGOs and those from research anthropologists. Caouette’s (2001) material in Box 8, from a participatory assessment of the conditions of child migrants, which draws out the many negative effects and experiences that they told, comes from an NGO perspective. It contrasts sharply with Punch’s anthropological account of Bolivian child migrants, which concentrates more than most on the potential benefits of migration. “[Migration] serves as a learning experience both socially and in the world of work. … The migrants break away from their sheltered, often isolated community, to start to become independent” (Punch 2001: 7). She also emphasises the material benefits. While she concedes that “emigration can be difficult for young people as they have to adjust to a new environment as well as to leaving home for the first time” (ibid. 14), she concludes that “the overall experience is often worthwhile, since young people discover their independence, meet new people, see new places, and earn their own money much more quickly than they would have done if they had remained in their home community” (ibid).

It is hard to evaluate the reason for these differences, given the general paucity of material. Clearly the different kinds of migration have a profound effect. The Bolivian migration to agricultural work is done by older children, is a long established pattern and the rural working conditions, though hard, are relatively benign. All this is in very marked contrast to the highly commoditised and apparently rapacious market for labour in Thailand. Other differences in the kind of research site may influence the findings. For example, accounts from rural communities that contain returned child migrants perhaps select a different sector of the child migrant population than those to be found in NGO projects and programs for child migrants in destination settings.

Some differences in perspective arise because researchers are actually looking for different things. An example here is accounts of street children. Street children are the most likely to be portrayed by international agencies and NGOs as vulnerable and at risk in a wide range of ways. Some evidence-based and ethnographic studies support these views. Studies in Brazil,
for instance, report overwhelmingly that street children end up in prison, with mental illness or in other institutions, or die - by being ‘disappeared’, from venereal disease, abortion, childbirth or suicide (see Hecht 1998, Raffaelli 1999 in Panter-Brick 2002: 164). Raffaelli’s review concluded that studies show that homeless youth are at higher risk of sexually transmitted infections and of abusive sexual relations than are their peers (Raffaelli 1999 cited in Panter-Brick 2002: 162). Yet Panter-Brick (2002: 156) argues that the portrayal of street children by the UN’s CRC and other development and welfare agencies as vulnerable, incompetent and relatively powerless in society does not recognize their ingenuity in coping with difficult circumstances. She documents studies that focus on coping strategies in which children form social relationships and social institutions to protect each other (Burling 1990a, Vittachi 1989, Van Ham et al. 1992 cited in Bar-On 1997: 68-9), on their individual resilience and social and emotional skills (Oloko 1991 cited in Bar-On 1997: 71), and on the relative adequacy of their incomes (Gross et al. 1996 cited in Panter-Brick 2002: 161).

Assessing Harm and Hazards: The Example of Domestic Work

A number of these issues are illustrated by the circumstances of female domestic workers. Most child domestic workers are migrants in the sense that they do not live with their parents. Living and doing domestic work in another family’s home is globally the most common form of work for girls. The circumstances of this work are highly varied: girls enter this work in a variety of ways; they may be living quite close to their parental homes or very far away; the culture of employment may be relatively caring or highly exploitative, and so on. Wages for child domestics are uniformly reported to be very low, especially for the youngest children (Andvig 2002, Innocenti 1999). Rates in an Ethiopian study were about a sixth of adult wages (Kifle 2002), although several sources report older girls are in a much better position to demand higher wages.

Girls and their parents appear to prefer this kind of work because it is using skills the children have already obtained in their own homes and working within a family is thought to offer more protection. However concern has been expressed that the employment situations may put children at considerable risk, for example of physical and sexual abuse, and that long established patterns of providing young domestic workers through child-sharing institutions, such as fostering, are being abused to meet an ever growing demand for domestic workers. Paradoxically, this demand is fuelled by the increasing enrolment of girls in schools, especially as families get wealthier and in urban environments, which reduces the family labour supply for domestic work (Andvig 2002, Beauchemin 1999, Innocenti 1999).
A UNICEF report (Innocenti 1999) is careful not to condemn all child domestic work, pointing out that for some girls, with good employers it can improve their well-being in terms of access to food and other necessities. Nevertheless it concentrates on such negative aspects of this work as long hours, hazards in the kitchen, poor wages or remuneration, risk of physical and sexual abuse, and foregone access to school. The few studies that have listened to child domestic workers themselves find them much more positive about their experiences (Somerfelt 200; Castle and Diarra 2003).

It is exceedingly difficult to evaluate these arguments against each other (see Camacho 1999). For some hazards, not enough information is presented and quantification may be missing. How frequently do girls come to harm in the kitchen and how does this compare with the incidence of burns and kitchen hazards of children living with their parents? “In Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia and the Philippines, child domestic workers often work for 15 hours a day, seven days a week, at times extending to 18 hours. In Zimbabwe, the work day is 10-15 hours long; in Tanzania it can be as long as 16-18 hours” (Innocenti 1999: 7; our emphasis).

Another area of contrasting interpretations are of the form and manner in which children are paid - often in kind and with exceedingly informal contracts between employer and employee - which support the fiction that this is not really work. Forty per cent of child domestics in a study in Ethiopia (Kifle 2002) and 75% in a study Bangladesh (Blanchet 1996) received wages in kind. The UNICEF report comments negatively on these payments in kind and on the fact that girls’ rarely keep their wages. In some cases it goes direct to parents or family members; in others girls send a portion of their income to parents (Innocenti 1999: 4). Only a tiny proportion of the children in Blanchet’s (1996) study who had money wages received the money themselves. The implication is that it is more exploitative if wages go direct to other adults, if children don’t keep their wages themselves or are not paid in money.

Parental control over this money emerges quite differently from qualitative studies. A careful and wide ranging study in Morocco points out that parents are one of the most important social resources girls have to counter abusive employment and that parental involvement through their links to the wages of the girls encourages this involvement. Girls without good relationships with parents tend to keep their own money and to be more at risk (Somerfelt 2001). Andvig (2000) also reports that children are in a better position if they maintain contact with their parents and where there is closer social and physical distance between parents and employers.

In contrast to accounts of the potentially dangerous and exploitative aspects of child domestic
work, all the few studies that have spoken directly to children give a much more positive picture. Many child domestic workers depict the decision to work and migrate as their own, although made in consultation with other family members (Philippines, Camacho 1999). Their migration to work may be linked with the desire to get money for their school fees (Ghana, Hashim 2004a) or for the wedding trousseau (Mali, Castle and Diarra 2003). In rural Mali, girls wanted to do domestic work because they knew how to do it and they felt they would be safer in family based work. The majority of those who had returned from domestic work were very positive about their experiences, and some had been reluctant to leave their employers. Some did report difficulties with employers, but these had usually been ironed out, often by the use of a family member or other social contact who acted as an intermediary for the girl employee (Castle and Diarra 2003: 94). Few, if any, girls spoke of harsh conditions and they all reported eating well. Some of the dangers of journeying to work and getting this type of work are lessened by a heavy use of social contacts, especially female kin. Camacho (1999) argues that family based contacts in the recruitment process serve to make the migration process less risky. Castle and Diarra (2003) give an extraordinary account of the experiences of two young Malian domestic workers who went to work in Mecca illegally. Highly developed multigenerational kinship networks, often containing mothers resident in Saudi Arabia, helped the girls to get work, which was well regarded by the girls themselves as better-paid and easier.

Contrasting perspectives are also well illustrated when the effect of girls’ domestic work on their education is discussed. A negative impact on schooling is the major negative effect of child domestic work flagged throughout the literature. Innocenti (1999) cite studies which found that domestic workers are deliberately kept away from education to maintain their willingness to work and points out that even where they are allowed to attend school they are too tired to benefit. There is a general absence of careful statistical data that could illuminate this. Pedersen makes some estimates about the relationship between domestic work and education in Morocco: “of the probable young domestic servants (identified in the survey as girls aged 7-14 with no relation to the household head) about 70% were recorded as neither attending, nor ever having attended school, in comparison to 45% of other girls in the same age group” (Pedersen 2001: 18). He points out that these domestic workers “make up only a small proportion, about 6-8% of the girls that are currently not enrolled” in Morocco (ibid. 18). It is a pity however that the comparison was not made with girls in the same age group in rural areas, where most of the girls in domestic service come from.

Once again, however, the issue appears to be context specific and not all domestic work
impacts negatively on girls’ education. The case studies show that some employers pay for children to attend school or allow children to use their wages on school fees (Ethiopia Kifle 2002). Some girls say that they specifically migrate for domestic work in towns in order to have access to school (Philippines Plfug 2002), and to save up for school (Hashim 2003).

**Intermediaries and Work Contracts**

The issues of the role of intermediaries in travelling to and getting work and of the kinds of work contract that girls have are of relevance to a great many other child migrant workers. Children rarely travel and seek work alone. Caouette notes that “those wanting to migrate, especially across the border, sought out someone who had been there before and could arrange the travel and jobs upon arrival. The majority travelled with a friend, relative or broker who would make all the necessary arrangements that often included a job on the other side” (Caouette 2001: 45). Punch’s (1998, 2001, 2002) work on labour migration from rural Bolivia also notes that the majority of child migrants travel with experienced migrants or have relatives or friends in the area of destination who can assist them in finding work or accommodation. Iversen’s work on Kerala in fact finds that “although peers may be catalysts for autonomous behaviour, it is not by facilitating employment arrangements for potential migrants” (Iversen 2002: 823). Servizio Sociale Internazionale (2001) finds that there is an effective information channel through networks which informs unaccompanied minors in Italy which regions have the best services to respond to their needs.

It is also common for children to enter into contracts in which payment for their work may be delayed till the end of the contract. This is common in agricultural work -see SCF Canada 2003 for Côte d’Ivoire, Rogaly et al 1998 for West Bengal, and Punch 2002 for Argentina - but is also reported in the fishing industry in Ghana (Tsikata pers. communication). Contracts often include payments in kind such as accommodation or food (Punch 2001, 2002, Iversen 2002, Nieuwenhuys 1995). Other examples where the contract is made with the parent are in the fast food and hotel sector and reportedly in urban market work for girls in Kerela (Iversen 2002). In some cases the intermediary who has helped a child find work may also be responsible for receiving the payment. As discussed in the next section, this use of intermediaries and the existence of contracts with third parties, of deferred payment and payment in kind are open to abuse and may force children into conditions of servitude, but they may also be highly protective. The ability to distinguish between positive and negative instances and circumstances is a key issue with respect to anti-trafficking measures (discussed in detail below).
Key Messages

Children are often regarded as being unable or unlikely to be making independent decisions when they migrate, although academic research suggests that for a proportion of independent child migrants this is part of a set of the child’s own objectives and strategies. Migration for income/work is one of these. Critical differences in perspective between the academic literature and the advocacy literature make it difficult to give objective assessments of the harmful effects of independent child migration. Children who migrate are especially vulnerable to a range of hazards and harm.

5. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY ISSUES AND HOW THEY INTERSECT WITH CHILD MIGRATION.

It will be apparent by now that there is little academic research on autonomous child migration, although there has been a concerted focus within the advocacy and agency literature on the growth of child migration, the risks and dangers that child migrants face and the coercion involved in some migration flows. Child protection policy deals with issues about children’s welfare in general and also increasingly seeks to identify categories of children in the most harmful situations, or in exceptionally difficult circumstances. A good deal of the money from international agencies and INGOS that goes to assist children in developing countries is spent on behalf of children identified in this way. This section looks at the issues raised by the fact that several of these well-developed child protection lobbies intersect with concerns raised by child migration.

Relevant Legislation

Child Protection policy works within the framework provided by legislation frameworks, much of which it has fought to get accepted. No international nor regional legislative frameworks exist that deal directly with the issue of child migrants. However, there are a number of frameworks that are directly or indirectly relevant to children’s accompanied and unaccompanied, forced or voluntary movement. These can be broadly grouped under four categories:

1. Legislation related to children’s welfare in general.
2. Legislation related to the protection of children from economic exploitation and harmful work.
3. Legislation related to refugees.
4. Legislation related to migrant workers.

Legislation Related to Children’s Welfare

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The primary international legislative framework concerned with the protection of children is the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF n.d.). This convention aims to bring together, in a single legal instrument, all standards concerning children. It is the most widely accepted human rights treaty and has been ratified by all but two member states, Somalia and the United States (ibid.). The Convention defines a child as “every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”. Within the Convention there are several articles with direct or indirect relevance to the movement of children. Article 20 recognises the right of the child who is “temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment” to special protection and assistance provided by the State. And Article 21 deals specifically with adoption, including inter-country adoption, while asserting the need for Member States to take measures to ensure such an adoption does not result in improper financial gain for those involved in it.

Article 22 asserts that state parties should “take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law” should “receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties”.

Articles 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36 recognise the right of the child to be protected from all forms of exploitative work or work that would be prejudicial to any aspects of the child’s welfare, including in Article 35 “appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form”. Article 11, includes a specific reference to the measures that States Parties should take to combat the illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad.

Articles 9, 10 and 20 also reinforce the integrity of the family, including the child’s right not to be separated against their will from their families, unless the appropriate authorities deem this to be in the best interests of the child, and that applications by a “child or his or her parents to enter or leave a State Party for the purpose of family reunification shall be dealt with by States Parties in a positive, humane and expeditious manner”.

Two regional Charters are relevant to the child migrants discussed most extensively in this
The 1999 charter (OAU 1990) similarly defines a child as any individual under the age of eighteen and establishes the same rights as those in the CRC with respect to family integrity (Article 19), protection from exploitative or harmful work (Article 15), sexual exploitation (Article 26), sale trafficking and abduction (Article 28), adoption, including inter-country adoption (Article 24), separation from parents (Article 25). In addition, in Article 23, it makes a special reference to internally displaced children, in addition to refugee children. Paragraph 4 of Article 6 also guarantees to a child the right to a nationality, as does the CRC, but includes too, the right to the nationality “of the State in the territory of which he is has been born, if at the time of the child’s birth, he is not granted nationality by any other State in accordance with its laws.”

- The Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia

The South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation’s (SAARC) countries of Bangladesh, Butan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, are signatories to this convention (SAARC 2002), which was adopted in 2002. Although, not as comprehensive as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child or the African Charter, the Convention makes reference to State Parties reaffirming the rights of the child guaranteed by national laws and regionally and internationally binding instruments, including the CRC, to which they are all signatories.

*Legislation Related to the Protection of Children from Economic Exploitation and Harmful Work*

Given that some of children’s migration is associated with their movement for work international legislation related to the protection of children from exploitative or harmful work is particularly relevant. There are a range of international instruments in place concerned with the protection of children in work, including the ILO’s Convention 29, Forced Labour Convention (1930); Convention 105, Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (1957); Convention 138, Minimum Age Convention (1973), and Convention 182, Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (1999).25

The most far-reaching of these are the Minimum Age Convention (ratified by 132 countries) and the 1999 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (ratified by 147 countries). The former
sets out measures to “ensure the effective abolition of child labour and to raise progressively the minimum age for admission to employment or work to a level consistent with the fullest physical and mental development of young persons” (ILO 1996: 24-5), while the latter is aimed at the protection of individuals under 18 from all harmful and exploitative work, and includes a specific reference “to all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict”.

A range of other instruments also make indirect references to trafficking and/or slavery, including The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976), the UN Convention on Slavery (1926), the UN Additional Convention on the Abolition of slavery, slave trade and institutions and practices alike (1956), the Convention on the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949), the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950), the Inter-American Convention on International Traffic in Minors, adopted by the Organisation of American States in 1994 and the SAARC Regional Convention on Combating the Crime of Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution (2002). 26

With regard to the issue of trafficking, of particular note are two recent protocols. The 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (UN 2000a), supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, ratified by 18 countries, aims to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, particularly women and children; to protect and assist the victims of such trafficking; and to promote cooperation among States parties to meet these objectives. Finally, the 2000 Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air (UN 2000b), supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, ratified by 17 countries, aims to combat and prevent the smuggling of human cargo, reaffirming that migration in itself is not a crime, and that migrants may be victims in need of protection. Although not legally binding the Protocols serve as a model for national legislation.

It is well known that these protective measures are difficult to put into place in many developing countries. There is for example a long running and voluminous debate about the best ways for developing countries to deal with these internationally determined abusive forms of work. Many countries have enabling legislation, but it is rarely acted upon. One reason for this because enforcement of these laws is grossly inadequate, both because labour
inspectorates are frequently overburdened and understaffed, and because children are frequently working in sectors that were less accessible and visible (Myers and Boyden 1998). Another is the recognition that children are driven to work by many factors, including the need for children from poor households to earn an income (ILO 1996), to work to finance school costs (Psacharopoulos 1997) and as a means to learn skills from their work (Myers and Boyden 1998). The recognition that making work illegal for children makes them vulnerable in the labour market is a further factor. The most notorious example of this is the way in which children working in the garment industry in Bangladesh went into work with even worse conditions and worse pay when the garment factory employers were threatened with boycotts for employing them (UNICEF 1997 cited in Murshed 2001: 169).

**Trafficking: A Debate about Intermediaries?**

It is apparent that harmful abusive forms of work for children are defined partly by the nature of the work they do and by their modes of recruitment to that work and the types of relationships they have with employers. The consequent emphasis on slavery like conditions of work and trafficking has led to these being a major focus of international effort. We have seen earlier the very large numbers of children who are said to have been trafficked in some sources, although trafficking can be very difficult to establish.

**Mali Child Migrants: Trafficked or Not?**

This is well illustrated in the case of Mali’s independent child migrants. For the past few years, leading chocolate producing companies have been subjected to criticism regarding the use of child labour and trafficked children in the cocoa farms of West Africa, where 70% of the world’s cocoa is produced (SCF Canada 2003). Côte d’Ivoire, in particular, being the leading producer of the world’s cocoa (50%), has been singled out as a country where many children are involved, including children considered to be trafficked. According to SCF Canada (2003) the reduced prices going to cocoa farmers, under privatization of the cocoa market, has translated into a reduced price paid for labour, which in turn, translated into an increased search for the cheapest forms of labour. As a result, child migrant workers have been extremely important in the establishment and expansion of cocoa production in the Côte d’Ivoire. Although many of these come with their families and are working as family labour, some are independent child migrants and they have been the subject of considerable public concern about coercion used to recruit them and the slave like conditions of their contracts.

While the actual numbers of migrant child workers in Côte d’Ivoire is of some debate, there is
an acknowledgment that thousands of children from surrounding poorer countries are working on cocoa farms in Côte d'Ivoire. For instance, one study found that some 66,000 Burkinabe children where living and working in Côte d'Ivoire without their parents (Keilland and Sanogo 2002), and another found that of all the children engaged in agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire there are 38.2% Ghanaian, 24.5% Burkinabe, 23.7% Malian and 17.3% other African children (Francavilla and Lyon 2002). In addition to the low pay these children receive, concern is around the extent to which they may be in hazardous circumstances - since, according to the ILO, workers in agriculture run at least twice the risk as workers in other sectors of dying, either from cutting tools and machinery, or from the effects of agro-chemicals - and around the extent to which they have been trafficked to undertake this labour (SCF Canada 2003). Sustained campaigns have lead to an increasing level of research; national, regional and international collaboration to address the issue, and the adoption of various agreements, protocols and legislation to combat child labour and protect child victims of trafficking.

In 1995, Mali became the first West African country to adopt a national approach on child trafficking, after NGOs presented evidence to the government of the trafficking of Malian children to Côte d'Ivoire. In September 2000 Mali signed a Cooperation Agreement on Combating Trans-Border Trafficking of Children with Côte d'Ivoire (UNICEF 2002). The agreement uses as its basis the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which considers that, an intermediary who gives or receives payments (or expects to give or receive payments) can be considered a child trafficker if there is intent on the part of the intermediary to exploit the child.

The agreement sets out to confirm the obligation of each country to prevent trafficking and to protect the victims of trafficking. The agreement makes reference to the obligation of the sending country to:

*Identify the areas of origin of networks and individuals practicing child trafficking on a professional or occasional basis.*

*Set up a management mechanism for the repatriation and insertion of children who are victims of trafficking.* (Castle and Diarra 2003: 5)

And the receiving country will:

*Organise and facilitate repatriation to source or starting country of children who are victims of trafficking on their territory to partners involved in the fight against trafficking and to contribute to the operation.* (ibid.)
Under these agreements, and heavily supported and funded by organisations, such as SCF Canada and UNICEF, by the end of 2002, 531 trafficked children had been repatriated from Côte d’Ivoire to Mali (UNICEF 2002). Save the Children Fund Canada (2003) reports that 169 children were also intercepted and prevented from before being trafficked from Mali into Côte d’Ivoire.

Interesting light is shed on the implications of this increasing attention to child trafficking in West Africa, in a particularly detailed and sensitive study of children’s migration for work from Mali to Côte d’Ivoire undertaken by Castle and Diarra (2003). Their study, set out to look at the nature of the movement of young people within and between these two countries, and to explore the causes, consequences and contexts of youth migration. In findings from which have been referred to earlier, boy migrants were working in urban areas as well as in rural areas on cocoa, coffee, cotton, yam or cashew plantations or in the charcoal manufacturing sector. They argue also that migration is not simply an economic phenomenon, but “comprises social and psychological dimensions pertaining to the need to explore new places, experience new settings and accumulate material possessions in order to conform to peer group aspirations. It is as much a rite of passage as a financial necessity” (ibid: i).

Castle and Diarra were particularly concerned to identify and understand trafficking and worked closely with the Malian authorities to identify trafficked children. They interviewed one hundred and eight children, some of whom were identified through lists of children described as ‘trafficked and repatriated’ provided by NGOs and government agencies. Of these 108 children only four could be considered to have been trafficked. This is because, although in almost all cases an intermediary was involved in the movement of the child, in only four cases was there an intention to exploit on the part of the intermediary (see definition above). They argue that because determining such intent is very difficult, what happens in practice is that the focus is placed on whether or not an intermediary was involved. They show how the use of an intermediary in many social and economic activities is almost obligatory in rural Mali, this effectively criminalises routine cultural practices. Castle and Diarra also found (as, as discussed earlier, others have done elsewhere) that children travelling without an intermediary were much more likely to be exploited or harmed, as the role of the intermediary is to act as “an interlocutor and advocate for the person seeking the favour and at the same time seek to maximise benefits for the other party” (ibid: 7).

An additional finding in Castle and Diarra’s research is that the measures put in place ostensibly to protect children, such as the checking of identity cards and other documents, have negative
effects. They are exploited as a basis for bribery by the police and they have to be taken into consideration in determining the costs and methods of migration, making journeys more clandestine and dangerous, and forcing children into the hands of potentially unscrupulous drivers or intermediaries. Thus, rather than making migration safer, the introduction of these documents is likely to increase children’s need of intermediaries in order to negotiate at borders, and, paradoxically, increases their vulnerability and the levels of risks involved.

Castle and Diarra also interviewed some children who had been repatriated to Mali. In addition to finding that children were not accompanied back to their villages or helped to be reintegrated into their communities and offered alternative income-generating opportunities, they found that many children resented being repatriated and were teased by family and friends for returning empty-handed; thus probably precipitating another journey soon afterwards. They also quote an NGO worker who stated that ‘repatriated children’ were not the victims of trafficking but were children who had been found without the correct papers or those under 18. The policy emphasis on the vulnerability of trafficked children and the plethora of measures and institutions put in place to deal with it may constitute a self-imposed need to find such children. In this case the differences in perspectives highlighted in section 4 are capable of having quite deleterious effects on children.

Overall, Castle and Diarra’s study highlights many of the weaknesses in the conceptualisation of international definitions and trafficking, the extreme difficulty of applying them operationally in the field, and the potential mal-effects on those they are intended to protect.

Similarly, another piece of research that Castle and Diarra also collaborated in, illustrates how efforts to reduce trafficking in Cambodia in fact may be making conditions worse for those who migrate voluntarily (Busza et al 2004). This research with Vietnamese sex workers to Cambodia found that, while these young women frequently expressed dissatisfaction with their working conditions or stated that they had not fully anticipated the risks they might face, in contrast to the emotive description of them in the international media as sex slaves, they knew prior to their departure that they would be engaging in sex work.

As in the case of Mali, intermediaries from their home communities were again important in facilitating their safe migration and, of the 100 participants in the research, only six reported either being betrayed by an intermediary or being tricked into sex work. Again, similarly to the case of Mali, a policy focus in Cambodia on ‘trafficking’ seemed to threaten rather than safeguard these migrants’ rights and health. For example, raids aimed to rescue these young
people, often resulted in their being placed in rehabilitation centres against their will. They then had to pay bribes to secure an early release, adding to their debts. However, since raids also scared off custom, they were faced with reduced earnings and increased competition for clients, which resulted in a pressure to accept condom-free sex and/or an increase in their tenure. The fear of raids also meant sex workers’ mobility was restricted, including access to health care.

Contrasting the studies of migrants from Mali and Vietnam leads the authors to conclude that, “The needs of vulnerable young migrants, whether trafficked or not, can be met only through comprehensive understanding of their motivations and of the cultural and economic contexts in which their movements occur. Criminalising migrants or the industries they work in simply forces them ‘underground,’ making them more difficult to reach with appropriate services and increasing the likelihood of exploitation” (ibid. 1370-1).

They suggest, as a result, that the best policy would be to establish programmes that provide migrants with appropriate services and that advocate for better work conditions. This move to focus on the welfare of all migrant children, rather than on ‘trafficking’ is particularly important given research which suggests that many child migrants who have not been trafficked do suffer harm (Riisøen et al 2004; Hashim 2004b).

Key Messages

No international or regional legislative frameworks exist that deal directly with children migrants. Those that deal with children’s welfare in general and those that are related to the protection of children from economic exploitation and harmful work are directly or indirectly relevant to children’s accompanied and unaccompanied, forced or voluntary movement. The protective measures within the Convention of the Rights of the Child and regional Charters, the ILO Conventions on child labour and the UN Protocols on trafficking are difficult to put into place in many developing countries. Many countries have enabling legislation, but it is rarely acted upon, often because of a lack of resources, and because measures put in place ostensibly to protect children, can also have negative effects. There is evidence that anti-trafficking measures in particular have had negative effects on children.

6. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Complexity

This report has highlighted the significance of migration in the wellbeing and vulnerability of children in the developing world. Many millions of children are affected by migration, an unknown number directly experience migration and a proportion of these are adversely
affected. The consequences of migration for children needs to have a much higher profile in policy discussions, although the contours of this concern will remain obscure until more research is available on all forms of migration flow that affect children, including those of independent child migrants.

A key finding of this report is that the policy space to make recommendations with respect to independent child migrants is very narrow. It is squeezed by the international conventions and protocols which are key elements of child protection policies. It is also squeezed because the success of advocacy with respect to particularly abused and vulnerable children (bonded child labour, ‘street’ children, ‘trafficked’ children, etc.) has lead to this being a potential good source of development funding for national governments. International advocacy has focused much needed attention on exploited and abused child migrants, but has also made it difficult to address the very real needs of other child migrants. The available research indicates that migration is not a single process. Many of its positive and negative effects do not arise from the fact of migration itself, but depend on what triggers movement, what kinds of circumstances migrants move to and, of course, the distance moved and the length of stay away. Children’s migration has economic, social (especially family) and socio-cultural motivations. Policy makers need to recognise that the strength of these motivations means that seeking to stop it will simply cause migrants to leave in a clandestine and potentially more dangerous manner (Busza et al 2004).

These complexities are further exacerbated by the fact that the meaning and consequences of migration are context specific. The implication of this is that there is a need for evidence based policies that arise out of understandings of the nature of child migration in a particular context and the specific problems child migrants face in given circumstances.

In sum, a more flexible and realistic approach to labour migration among young people is required. The needs of vulnerable young migrants can be met only through comprehensive understanding of their motivations and of the cultural and economic contexts in which their movements occur (ibid.).

**Poverty and Underdevelopment**

Regional underdevelopment triggers migration at the community level, as does specific poverty and livelihood vulnerability at the household level. Children migrate for economic reasons, but also for other reasons to do with the impoverishment of their environments in terms of the experiences and educational provision they provide.

Economic policy and poverty reduction policies should be alert to regional, particularly rural,
poverty issues that trigger high child (and adult) migration rate and should pay attention to the processes leading to growing exploitation of young labour.

Economic interventions, such as credit and agricultural schemes, aimed at raising incomes and opportunities for adolescent men and women, together with local debates about the value of young people actively participating in their community’s development are needed (Castle and Diarra 2003). Very little attention is paid anywhere to adolescent livelihood strategies\textsuperscript{28}.

Even so, stopping those below age 18 from leaving without parental permission is not realistic in settings where such young adults can be highly productive and gain both financial remuneration and important life-skills away from home (ibid). However, fostering national debate about the undesirability and vulnerability of young children (under 14 years of age) migrating to work, including domestic work, is essential, as they are more exposed to physical and economic exploitation and their chances of schooling impedes more than 14-18 year olds. (ibid.). Legal limitations on the migration of children under the age of 14 also need to recognise that local capacities to enforce limitations, without other negative consequences for children, may be at present limited.

**Child Labour and Support for Young Workers**

Much child migration is migration for work. This raises the very complex issues of policy interventions around child labour, especially for children outside their families and outside the immediate reach of their families.

Recommendations have to be within the UK government’s commitment to the CRC and other international protocols, which commit governments to the view that child work is unacceptable and to putting in place age-specific prohibitions. Antislavery International’s work in West Africa to establish a code of conduct for child domestic workers is very sensitive to the issues raised in seeking to ameliorate children’s working conditions. These run up against the problem that seeking to adopt norms and standards regularises the child’s work and integrates child labour into normal labour laws (Antislavery International 2004: 5). Supporting children who work de facto recognises it.

The key here has to be open and sensitive national and regional debates, which are certainly not easy to achieve, given the international press attention to ‘trafficking’ as the predominant form of independent child migration. These national debates within press and other national media and in government and civil society fora should establish what is locally acceptable and unacceptable child labour, and mobilise discussions about young people’s working conditions.
and rights as well as of the causes of child work and migration (cf Antislavery International 2004). Openness is needed about the potential or actual opportunities for corruption that anti-migration and anti-trafficking measures provide, the ways in which clandestine migration increases vulnerability of young migrants and the difficulties in identifying trafficking practices. Donors and NGO’s can support these discussions be being alert to what is specific about a national or local context and to the social and economic divisions in these contexts which may scapegoat migrants, the poor, the employers of child migrants, or benign intermediaries. Many NGO interventions in this field seem to have only a very shallow and restricted understanding of the locally specific economic and social circumstances of children and young people.

Systems of support and recourse need to be built for all working children in hardship, not simply those who have experienced trafficking and not simply those working abroad (Castle and Diarra 2003) without criminalising child workers. Attention needs also to be paid to the specific vulnerabilities of different categories of migrants. Girl migrants, for instance, are often undocumented due largely to the type of jobs they undertake, are isolated (due to fear and confinement), not easily accessible, due to the unwillingness of employers to register them, and less likely to be able to access education and/or to be exploited due to the lack of sensitivities to their particular situations, needs and rights.

Much more attention should be paid to what children themselves say. When child domestic workers were asked what they think the government and the society can do for them, the children identified four priorities: higher wages and more benefits, protection from abusive employers, appropriate education programmes and a change in society’s low regard for domestic workers.

Community development activities need to be extended. Drop-in centres have been used with some success, with reports that have been very effective for isolated young workers, such as domestic workers enabling girls to network, to have external support, some fun and maybe access to literacy and healthcare. There is a role for strengthening informal linkages between new migrants and more established counterparts in their chosen destination. Ketel’s (2002) work in Côte d’Ivoire and Senegal seems unique in that it focuses on the supportive role of networks (in this case, participatory movements for child workers) once the child has arrived in the work setting, rather than is facilitating the migration itself. This study argues the major achievements of the EJT (Enfant Jeune Travailleur) Movement in West Africa are increased pride, self esteem, security, and knowledge. Participating in the Movement provides children with ‘a more structured life, increased security and a vital sense of belonging’ (Ketel 2002: 28).
**Education**

Within these national debates regarding young people’s working conditions and rights, it is important to stress the right of all children to education. Education is a universal right for all children, regardless of work status and/or migrant status. Awareness raising regarding the right and need for education can go alongside interventions that provide support for child workers, such as through drop in centres, networks and self help groups, informal education and training. Earn-and-learn schools, in which children work in commercial agriculture (tea and coffee estates, for instance), are referred to by Bourdillon; “In the peak tea-picking season, the children had to work for seven hours in the morning before attending school in the afternoon. At other times, life was a little easier, with school in the morning and work in the afternoon” (Bourdillon 2001a: 3). It is worth noting, too, that the most successful ILO programmes on children’s work in Africa were those that provided vocational training (which children preferred to formal education), and/or where alternative income sources were created.

The importance of both formal and community schooling as a deterrent to migration also cannot be over-emphasised. Children’s testimonies consistently reiterated that pupils had long-term goals and seemed less susceptible to peer-pressure to obtain material items than their uneducated counterparts. Continued investment in education is thus a priority, not just to develop the intellectual capacity of young people, but as a strategy to retain them and so that their skills can be used to strengthen their home communities.

**Anti-trafficking and Support for Safer Migration**

Part of this report has focused on research which suggests that anti-trafficking interventions often ignore the cultural context of migration and can increase migrants’ risk of harm and exploitation. These authors stress that illegality and controls creates increased vulnerabilities, that current ‘anti-trafficking’ approaches do not help reduce the harm and abuse that some child migrants undoubtedly suffer and that intermediaries often assist safe migration (Busza et al 2004, Caouette 2001, Castle and Diarra 2003).

There are a number of implications. For one, there needs to be a simplification of the international definition of trafficking to make it appropriate for individual contexts, and clear training and awareness-raising about the positive and negative roles of intermediaries. Regulatory frameworks for intermediaries and middle men, which do not regard them as automatically traffickers might be one method by which the positive role of intermediaries in safe-guarding children is enhanced and individuals monitored. Efforts to reach migrants in
destination areas could also use intermediaries.

Secondly, the existing migration flows of children and young people have to be recognised so as to protect the most vulnerable child migrants and to foreground facilitating safe, assisted migration for the rest. This means listening properly to the needs expressed by young migrants for appropriate services at destination points and ending practices of forced repatriation.

Equally, NGOs intervening in the domain of ‘child trafficking’ should engage in more open discussion and collaboration in order to be more locally sensitive and to avoid competition amongst themselves over programmes, services and interventions.
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NOTES

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3 Unless otherwise indicated the definition of a child used in this report includes individuals aged 0 to 17. Different legislations affecting children use different age cut-offs. This is discussed in detail later.

4 This term is used in lieu of anything better; the problem of the correct way to describe these child migrants is a tricky one. What is meant here is children who migrate independently of their parents. The decision to move may or may not be an autonomous one; they may or may not make their journeys in the company of known adults or other children; at their destinations they may or may not be living with other family members or kin; most often they remain in contact with their families and family ties have not been broken, unless by conflict, but they do include some runaways; they also include orphan children. See section 4.

5 For a review of the evidence on women and migration see Jolly (2003). The high aggregate rate conceals considerable regional variation in the gender balance of migrants.

6 By transnational is meant migration across continents, typically from southern countries to those of the EU and North America; by regional is meant across national borders, but within a broad geographical region, such as the migratory movements throughout West or Southern Africa; by internal it is meant within a specific nation-state.

7 Although in many cases these costs are met by families taking out loans, which then have to be paid with the migrant’s remittances.

8 See Waddington (2003) for a review and sources, and the country papers held by the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty all available at http://www.migrationdrc.org/publications/working_papers.html

9 One study in the Ecuadorian Andes found a depression like disorder amongst children separated from their fathers, who commonly migrate to the US (Pribilsky 2001). Pribilsky argues that in addition to explanations in terms of psychological ideas of separation and attachment, this malady reflects the limits of children’s abilities to accept the terms of family life increasingly defined through transnational migration.

10 See http://www.jointcenter.org/international/hiv-aids/2_section4b.htm for a bibliography of sources.

11 The exceptions are the growing number of detailed statistical surveys on child labour published by SIMPOC at the ILO (see http://www.ilo.org/public/ english/ standards/spec/simpoc/index.htm)

12 For criticism of this typology of street children see Ennew (2003).

13 Comparable estimates for other areas in Africa include “Moderately high incidence of child fostering (10 to 20 per cent) in most of Kenya and Cameroon” (Isiugo-Abanihe 1994: 166)

14 A good proportion of these are girls who have married and moved into their husbands’ communities.

15 They do not include here any of the children who are living in other rural areas.

16 The proportion is probably greater than this, since qualitative studies in Northern Ghana suggest that the category ‘sent by parents’ may contain some children who want to migrate and have persuaded their parents to let them do so.

17 Punch (2002), in her study of rural Bolivian youth transitions, finds that over half of the young people in the village of Churquiales had migrated in search of paid work either in the nearby town or in rural Argentina.

18 Italics categories suggest the potential for children to be vulnerable, while those in bold indicate situations where children are undoubtedly in difficult circumstances.

19 As a number of writers have emphasised, the view that children are independent economic agents sits very uneasily with dominant western conceptions of childhood, in which the work of childhood is solely to go to school and perhaps to help around the house, with most of childhood devoted to play. (Boyden 1997, Delap 1999, Morrow 1996).

20 In West Africa for example, children who are not living with their parents, who are identifiable in national census surveys, may be orphaned, fostered, or working within the families with whom they reside.

21 “Most young men from Bankass went to Abidjan where they worked in the transport industry, in the docks or as market porters. Their counterparts from Kolondiéba went to the rural areas of Côte d’Ivoire where they worked on cocoa, coffee, cotton, yam or cashew plantations or in the charcoal manufacturing sector. The majority of girls from all villages worked as domestic servants although some were also employed in restaurants or did market trading. Dogon girls from Bankass went to Abidjan whilst those from Kolondiéba went to smaller towns in northern and central Côte d’Ivoire. In addition, there appeared to be long-term and significant migration by very young Dafing girls from Bankass to Mecca in Saudi Arabia where they worked as maids.” (Castle and Diarra 2003: i)

22 This is quite a thought-provoking figure, given that domestic service is the major employer of girls’ labour outside the home so that other areas of work are unlikely to be making a large contribution to the 92-94% of non-enrolment that is not accounted for by girls working as maids.
There is an important, undiscussed issue here of whether children should be paying their own school fees, which might be regarded as theirs by right from their parents. However many children accept that their parents are not in a position to pay everything needed to go to school and in some communities a child’s commitment to education is assessed by his/her willingness to work for some of the costs (Hashim 2004a).

See Ennew (2003) for a comment on this last category.


See Keilland and Sanogo (2002) for another discussion regarding the difficulties of operationalising the concept of exploitation, intermediaries and intent.

For an exception see Brown (2001).