

THE COSTS OF (IM)MOBILITY: CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND AND CHILDREN WHO MIGRATE WITH A PARENT

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I. THE CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND

A. Current state of knowledge

Mexican Migrants Leave Kids, Problems Back Home
(National Public Radio, 9 May 2006)

Children Left Behind Face Tough Road
(*China People's Daily*, 2 June 2004)

Migrant Workers' Children Left Behind, Left Out
(Inter Press Service News Agency, 2003)

The plight of children left behind by one or both migrating parent(s) in developing countries has attracted growing attention in recent years, surfacing as news headlines in different countries. The heightening awareness is timely in this globalized era when increasingly uneven development and porous borders are encouraging more people – particularly labour migrants from rural regions and/or developing countries – to cross borders in search of better job opportunities. Many of these labour migrants – both men and women – have left their children behind with extended family members or friends in the home countries in their quest to improve livelihood circumstances for themselves and their families through migration. While improved economic circumstances after migration have been noted in a range of studies, the psychological, social and emotional costs of their departure – especially on those left behind – have been often omitted from the migration balance sheet.

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As Sassen (2006) reminds us, “most of the people touched by globalization [and the resulting migratory flows] are quite immobile”. The “immobile people” she is referring to include those who “lack the means or permissions to travel”, for instance the “members of non-elite, transnational migrant families and communities”. While numerous migration studies (see for example Boyle and Halfacree, 1999; Watkins, Leinbach and Falconer, 1993; Willis and Yeoh, 2000; Yeoh, Huang and Lam, 2005) have already recognized that migration is not merely the business of the individual but also involves and affects the migrants’ families, fewer studies – as noted by Toyota, Yeoh and Nguyen (forthcoming) – have progressed to examining in detail the circumstances of those left behind and how their lives have been reshaped in a complex manner by the departure of key household members. In this context, this paper seeks to focus on the impact of migration on one distinctly immobile, yet vulnerable group; namely, the children who are being left behind by one or both of their migrating parent(s). The paper delves into existing studies detailing the stories and experiences of children left behind and subsequently examines them vis-à-vis those concerning children who have migrated with a parent. Finally, some existing policies pertaining to those left behind are reviewed and gaps or deficiencies highlighted with the view of stimulating policy discussion and formulation that will lead to improving the overall well-being of those left behind.

Before answering the question of *what* we know about children left behind, it is imperative to first define *who* is a child. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), a child is defined as “every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier” (<http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/crc.pdf>, accessed 14 November 2006). However, the age limit varies according to country and policy: it may be as low as 14 years of age in some instances or as high as 21 years of age in others. It should also be noted that in some of the existing studies drawn upon in this paper, the ages of the children discussed in the study are not specified, making it all the more difficult to insist on precision. With this in mind, this paper will assume the broad definition of including anyone under 21 as a child, although it has to be borne in mind that children’s ages are likely to be of significance in any discussion of the impact of migration and policy issues.

Difficulty in determining the age range to be used in defining childhood constitutes one of the reasons why it is so problematic to estimate the numbers of children affected by the out-migration of one or both of their parents (Whitehead and Hashim, 2005). Furthermore, working with national migration statistics is inherently complicated as different countries employ different criteria and calculation methods. The variety of migration channels, ranging from the legal to the illegal, and the internal to the international, further obscures the figures. In cases where data relating to the number of children left behind are not readily available, the best-case scenario is to derive an estimate from the number of labour migrants from the country. For instance, Whitehead and Hashim (2005, p. 11) found that 25 per cent of all households in South Africa have members who are migrant workers and the percentage increases to over 40 per cent for households in rural areas; case studies in certain rural areas in Bangladesh¹ indicate a range of 18 to 40 per cent of rural households having at least one migrant member working elsewhere; between 50 to 60 per cent of people living in rural Tanzanian households have at least one family member away; while the figure is around 80 per cent for rural Mali. In Thailand, Bryant (2005) estimates that about half a million children aged 0 to 14 years are left behind by their international migrant parents – mostly fathers.

According to Chinese newspaper accounts (Li, 2003, cited in Xiang, forthcoming), “a ‘conservative’ estimate of at least 10 million children [in China] are either looked after by their mothers alone or by grandparents as a result of their parents’ migration”. With around 106 million rural-urban migrants in China, this figure is likely to grow². The situation seems to be more acute in provinces such as Henan, Anhui, Hubei, Hunan and Jiangxi where large numbers of the rural population migrate to cities for work (*China*

¹ In another study by Kuhn (2006), using data from the 1996 Matlab Health and Socioeconomic Survey which surveyed some 210,000 people in 141 villages, it was discovered that an overwhelming 91 per cent of the 5,930 children aged between 5 and 14 have one migrant parent (mainly fathers) who is away. Another 2 per cent of the sample has neither parent living in the household. While total international emigration figures are not available, there are an estimated 1.1 million Bangladeshis living overseas (Siddiqui, 2003).

² According to Jie Gao (2006, personal communication.) from the National Working Committee on Women and Children under the State Council, the number for rural-urban migration in China has risen to 150 million in 2005.

People's Daily, 2004). In Anhui alone, local officials estimate that 125 to 250 children per 1,000 migrants are being left behind. As Xiang (forthcoming) postulates, if this is a valid figure that can be applied to other provinces, there could be as many as 13 to 26 million children left behind in rural China.

Elsewhere in Asia, the Philippines stands out as the major supplier of labour migrants to over 100 countries. In 2004, some 10 per cent of the country's 85 million people or around 8.1 million Filipinos were working and/or residing overseas (Asis, 2006a). While reliable data on the number of children left behind are not available from the government, Parrenas (2005a) – after compiling estimates from a coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) – placed the figure of children living apart from one or both parents at approximately nine million, or 27 per cent of the total youth³ population. Meanwhile, another non-governmental advocacy group for children of migrant labourers, Kakammpi (cited in Bryant, 2005, and Parrenas, 2005a) gives a more conservative estimate of 5,847,000 Filipino children aged 0 to 17 being left behind. In narrowing down to a specific age group, a study conducted by the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People-Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (ECMI-CBCP)/Apostleship of the Sea-Manila, the Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration in 2003, estimated (based on statistics and assumptions) that out of a total of 3,463,540 Filipino families with at least one child in the 10-to-12-year age group, there were around 2.7 per cent or 91,790 of deployed migrant workers with at least a child in that age range left behind (SMC, 2004). Finally, what is distinctive for this country is that the majority of the children have been left behind by their *mothers*, given that female migrants outnumber their male counterparts in the Philippines (table 1). Many of these migrating Filipinas work in such feminized sectors as domestic work, care-work and entertainment around the world.

³ The age range is not specified.

The increasing feminization of labour migration is a troubling trend also observable in such other Asian countries as Sri Lanka and Indonesia⁴ (table 1). Sri Lanka is facing a similarly severe “deficit” in mothers as some 600,000 women (around 60 to 80 per cent of the total legal migrant population) leave the country for work each year. Based on the latest available statistics, out of 858,000 migrants in 2000, 590,420 were women. Within this group, 75 per cent were married and 90 per cent of these married women have children (Save the Children, 2006). According to a study conducted by Save the Children (2006), this meant that approximately one million Sri Lankan children are being left behind by their mothers. These numbers would be expected to be larger if those being left behind by their fathers were also included.

Table 1. Selected country profiles

<i>Country</i>	<i>Total population (millions) mid-2006</i>	<i>Percentage of population 0-14 years</i>	<i>Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)</i>	<i>Documented overseas workers (d)</i>	
				<i>Annual deployment</i>	<i>Percentage female</i>
	(a)	(b)	(c)		
Indonesia	245.5	28.8	34.4	474,310 (2005)	69
Philippines	89.5	35.0	22.8	1,063,000 (2004)	69 ^a
Sri Lanka	20.2	24.1	14.0	858,000 (2000)	69
Thailand	64.6	22.0	19.5	158,000 ^b (2002)	15
Viet Nam	84.4	27.0	25.1	118,756 (2000)	20

Sources: Columns (a), (b) and (c): CIA, 2006.

Column (d):

Indonesia: Departemen Tenaga Kerja and Transmigrasi (Department of Labour and Transmigration) 2005.

Philippines: Philippines National Statistics Office, 2005.

Sri Lanka: Save the Children, 2006.

Thailand: Ministry of Labour, 2002.

Vietnam: Anh, Tacoli and Thanh, 2003.

^a percentage applies to land-based workers only

^b number of documented Thai workers abroad

⁴ Bryant (2005) makes an educated guess that around 1 million children have been left behind in Indonesia. This figure includes both regular and irregular migrants.

While these figures offer a glimpse into the immensity of the situation in selected countries, they are by no means complete or conclusive. As mentioned earlier, no authoritative figure of the number of children left behind is available and much depends on inferences and estimates drawn from existing data on labour migration and other household data. Overall, these statistics suggest that tens of millions of children around the world are being left behind by their migrant parents, mostly lower-skilled workers from developing countries. Thus far, little is known about the duration children are separated from one or both parents. Information about the children left behind by more elite migrants is also scarce; though probably statistically insignificant, this group could serve as an interesting comparison. Therefore, more specific data segmenting the number of children left behind by country, by age group, by gender of the migrating parent, by one or both parents, by duration and so forth are crucial as baseline information. More systematic data collection is necessary to allow for comparative work between countries where children left behind number in the millions, as in China and the Philippines, and those where they account for only a few thousand, as in the case of Mongolia⁵, Fiji or other Pacific island countries.

B. The impact of migration on children left behind

Existing studies suggest that the circumstances surrounding each cohort of children left behind are highly variable. Some children are left behind by their fathers, others by their mothers and some by both their parents. In turn, depending on the migrant's profile, children left behind may be cared for by varying groups of people:

⁵ In a household survey by Batbaatar *et al.* (2005) involving 964 migrant and non-migrant families in eight sites in Mongolia, 4.7 per cent of the children are left behind in rural areas by one or both parents. Further qualitative research with 335 children and 209 parents suggests that more children may be affected.

mothers, fathers, grandparents, other extended family members and even non-relatives. These are all important variables that can affect the impact of migration on the children. By incorporating some aspects of these variables into a table, Whitehead and Hashim (2005) outlined the types of issues that have dominated the literature when one or both parents migrate for work. Table 2 is a further attempt to expand their work and include other issues and countries that may be relevant so as to guide future studies and generate other suggestions for further investigations. To provide insight into the impact of migration on children left behind, the rest of this section reviews specific studies conducted on children left behind in such selected countries as China, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Sri Lanka as well as other studies on the effects of migration as experienced by the migrants' households in general.

1. Forms of communication

Interestingly, some of these studies reported regular and, in some cases, increased communication between the migrant and those left behind. Communication can take place in the form of telephone calls, letter writing, text messages (short message service, or SMS) and/or gift exchanges. In the 2003 Children and Families Survey conducted in the Philippines⁶ – hereafter referred to as the 2003 Philippines Study – (Asis, 2006b; SMC, 2004), children with migrant parents have higher ownership of landline telephones and mobile phones compared with children from non-migrant families. The increase in ownership of telecommunication tools is both a product as well as a facilitator of migration. With the increased household income from migration, migrants' families are

⁶ The study involved 1,443 children aged between 10 and 12 years of migrant and non-migrant parents. The children came from seven provinces/areas in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao: the National Capital Region, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, Cebu, Negros Occidental and Davao del Sur (SMC, 2004).

able to purchase tools to facilitate communication with the absent parent(s) and also allow for parenting to continue across borders. Parrenas' (2002) study on young adults in the Philippines shows that communication with migrant parents also helps to lessen the negative impact of migration and makes it easier for children come to terms with their parent's absence.

According to Jolly, Bell and Narayanaswamy (2003), mothers are generally the ones who tend to put in more effort into sustaining relationships with the children they have left behind, compared with fathers. However, in Dreby's (2006) study on the experiences of Mexican transnational fathers and mothers residing in New Jersey, she found that parents, regardless of gender, behave in surprisingly similar ways when internationally separated from their children. Dreby observed that migrating fathers and mothers call their children who were left behind with the same regularity (once a week) and have similar types of conversation topics (school, siblings and what their children want from America).

2. Level of remittances

Almost all the studies reviewed reported high levels of remittances sent back by the migrants, thus increasing significantly the household income as well as the quality of life for the families left behind (see for example Afsar, 2003; Asis, 2006b; Dreby, 2006; Huang and Pieke, 2003; Koc and Onan, 2004; Kuhn, 2006; Whitehead and Hashim, 2005). However, differences between the remitting behaviours of fathers vis-à-vis mothers have been observed. Typically, migrant mothers tend to be more concerned with

their children's well-being and remit more money home⁷ (UNFPA, 2006; Whitehead and Hashim, 2005). This is also reflected in another study by Anh *et al.* (2003) where Vietnamese female migrants are the ones remitting more money to their families left behind. Migrants' remittances have a major impact on the lives of those left behind; for instance, the money remitted can be used to ensure food security, repay debts, cover schooling costs and medical bills, and basically improve the well-being of those left behind.

⁷ Most of the money will be spent on their children's education.

Table 2. Categories of children left behind by migrating parents

<i>Children</i>	<i>Regional areas</i>	<i>Main research themes relevant to children</i>
When fathers migrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Africa ▪ East Asia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People’s Republic of China • Mongolia ▪ Ex-Soviet Commonwealth of Independent (CIS) States ▪ Latin America ▪ South Asia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh • India • Nepal • Pakistan • Sri Lanka ▪ South-East Asia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambodia • Indonesia • Myanmar • Thailand • Viet Nam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Female-headed households and poverty ▪ Effects on children’s (boys’ versus girls’) education ▪ Effects on children’s (boys’ versus girls’) health and/or well-being ▪ Household vulnerability ▪ Remittances role in livelihoods; access to services
When mothers migrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ East Asia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People’s Republic of China • Mongolia ▪ South Asia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh • India • Sri Lanka ▪ South-East Asia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambodia • Indonesia • Malaysia • Myanmar • Philippines • Thailand • Viet Nam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Psycho-social effects on children (boys versus girls) ▪ Education of children (boys versus girls) ▪ Health and well-being of children (boys versus girls) ▪ Abuse of children (boys versus girls) ▪ Effects on domestic gender division of labour/family break up ▪ Reorganization of family roles
When both parents migrate and children are cared for by grandparents, other relatives or non-family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ East Asia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People’s Republic of China • Mongolia ▪ South Asia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh • India • Pakistan • Sri Lanka ▪ South-East Asia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambodia • Indonesia • Malaysia • Myanmar • Philippines • Thailand • Viet Nam ▪ Latin America ▪ Southern Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children’s (boys’ versus girls’) mental health ▪ Effects on children’s (boys’ versus girls’) health and well-being ▪ Effects on children’s (boys’ versus girls’) education ▪ Burden on grandparents ▪ Reorganization of family roles

Source: Adapted from Whitehead and Hashim (2005, p. 7).

3. Health and well-being

The 2003 Philippines Study revealed that the overall well-being of children of migrants is generally better than that of the children of non-migrants. In cases where young adults in the Philippines experienced emotional hardships due to their parent's migration, they were able to come to terms with the separation with the support of extended families and communities, among other reasons (Parrenas, 2002). In the 2003 Philippines Study, children with migrant parents perceived themselves as average or not poor and came from families with higher home ownership. In terms of their physical health, they were also taller, heavier and fell ill less frequently when compared with children of non-migrants. According to Asis (2006b), the finding on physical health in the 2003 Philippines Study in general "does not replicate the poor showing of children of migrant mothers" in Battistella and Conaco's 1996 study⁸.

Fewer incidences of abuse were also reported among migrants' children in the 2003 Philippines Study but it must be noted that experiences of abuse seemed to be divided by gender rather than the migration status of their parent(s) as more boys than girls said they suffered abuse. In terms of happiness, Filipino children from migrant families were a little less happy than children of non-migrants but they were also allegedly less anxious and lonely. This contradicted Battistella and Conaco's (1998) finding which showed that children of migrant parents actually experienced higher anxiety and loneliness. Asis (2006b) echoed Parrenas' (2002) sentiment that the increase in regular and frequent communication probably accounted for the lower levels of anxieties and loneliness in the 2003 group. When probed on the actual emotions, however, more migrants' children expressed feelings of anger, confusion and worries in comparison with non-migrants' children. The problem appeared to worsen for children with both parents away as well as children with migrant mothers who are reportedly unhappier than children of migrant fathers.

⁸ In that study, 709 children aged between 10 and 12 years in Metro Manila, Bulacan, Rizal and Quezon were surveyed. The groups of children compared included children of non-migrants, children of migrant fathers, children of migrant mothers and children with both parents away.

In summary, the 2003 Philippine Study showed that “contrary to popular perception (as well as the study of Battistella and Conaco, 1998), the children of migrants fared just as well, if not better, than the children of non-migrants in non-material realms” (Asis, 2006b, p. 51), in addition to having an edge over children of non-migrants in terms of physical health. What appears consistent in the various studies, however, is that children left behind by mothers tend to fare less well compared with other groups of children with migrating parents. Those with migrant mothers tend to have more difficulties academically and performed more poorly in terms of their physical and emotional health (Asis, 2006b; Battistella and Conaco, 1998).

Caregivers in a study on children in Sri Lanka left behind by their mothers⁹ (Save the Children, 2006) – referred to henceforth as the Sri Lanka Study – reported certain negative behaviour, though not in the majority, in the children after their mothers leave. Some of these behaviours include loss of appetite, weight loss for children under five years of age, and temper tantrums among those of all ages, especially adolescents. Children between 6 and 17 years old also feel lonely and/or sad. In this study, incidences of abuse were not high and there were no observably higher levels of violence from fathers in the absence of mothers¹⁰. Ultimately, the lack of physical punishment has a positive impact on the children. In other cases, children with older caregivers have more emotional needs and are unable to communicate with their older carers. Unfortunately, the situation is worse for children with mental and physical disabilities. Their already marginalized position in society can degenerate further in the absence of a parent. Children with disabilities are often neglected, have low hygiene levels, and many of them are not in school. They may eventually have to be institutionalized due to neglect.

⁹ The Sri Lanka study used a random sample of 1,200 households with mothers who had migrated overseas for work for at least the past six months at the time of the study. The two study areas were districts with the highest numbers of female migration, Colombo (Colombo and Hanwella DS divisions) and Kurunegala (Kurunegala and Ridigama DS divisions). A sample survey involving 200 children from each district (400 in total), representing the three main age groups (below 5 years, 6-14 years and 15-17 years), was also included. Another 200 families from the Colombo district where mothers are working in Sri Lanka (100) and mothers who were not working (100) were added to the study. Both groups of women have the same socio-economic status as that of migrant mothers (Save the Children, 2006).

¹⁰ Nonetheless, the same study acknowledged that child abuse in Sri Lanka is an increasingly serious problem and children with migrant mothers are seen as more vulnerable to abuse. There were also reported cases of abuse from the sample households. Examples include abuse of a female child by a close relative (uncle) as well as two cases where female children were in imminent threat of being raped or sexually abused by a father or other relatives (Save the Children, 2006).

Negative consequences on the health of children left behind have also been reported in China. In one incident highlighted by Xiang (forthcoming), the sale of “fake milk formula” by unscrupulous companies left many infants in the care of poorly-educated grandparents by their migrant parents with serious malnutrition or “big-head disease”. Some 171 infants in Fuyang municipality of Anhui Province were affected, among whom 13 died. Cases of rape and abuse of children left behind have also been reported (*China People’s Daily*, 2004; Xiang, forthcoming). In another study involving 250 junior high school students in Jichun County, Hubei, with experiences of being left behind for at least half a year, over half of them had difficulties adjusting; “16.6 per cent felt abandoned, 12.3 per cent had problems expressing difficulties or obtaining help, and 6.5 per cent felt “anguished” about being left behind (Liang, 2004, p. 26 cited in Xiang, forthcoming). Huang (2004, cited in Xiang, forthcoming) also reported that children left behind are marginally less healthy than other children.

Grim images of the lives of children left behind continue with Rogaly *et al.* (2001, 2002) who further reported that the absence of men in the family adds to the material and psychological insecurity of those left behind in India. The general health of members in households left behind also suffers (Rafique and Rogaly, 2003). These findings clearly contrast with those from the 2003 Philippines Study, in which children of migrants appeared to enjoy improved material circumstances and were able to adjust to their situation of being left behind.

4. Education

The education of children left behind is also affected by the migration of one or both parents, though the evidence is often mixed. According to media reports, parental absence in Mexico is an important reason why children left behind do poorly in schools. A headmistress interviewed claimed that as many as 10 out of 73 children in a class are left behind and that these children often drop out of school or turn to crime in their parent’s absence (National Public Radio, 9 May 2006). In India, migration of males is reported to lower girls’ chances of acquiring an education as they have to take on more

domestic responsibilities. At the same time, Indians who migrate to urban areas have a heightened awareness of the value of education which translates into greater attention to ensuring that their children receive a better education (Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003).

Studies of the impact of migration on the education of children left behind in Bangladesh have also shown mixed results. Several of these studies show that a large proportion of the migrants' remittances was used for children's education (Afsar, 2003; Kuhn, 2006) – a finding that is replicated in other country studies such as Jampaklay's (2006) on children left behind in Thailand and Hugo's (2002) study on the impact of migration on Indonesian families. Rahman *et al.* (1996, cited in Afsar, 2003) also discovered that school enrolment rates were higher among migrants' families in the rural areas. The study by Kuhn (2006) further showed that the emigration of fathers and male siblings often resulted in improvements in the education of children left behind in some rural areas in Bangladesh¹¹. He concluded that out-migration of fathers and brothers in these rural areas have substantial and predominately positive impacts on the pace of schooling of children, both boys and girls, left behind in Matlab. However, the migration of sisters has no effect on their sibling's education while cases of migrant mothers were still too rare to warrant further study. While a parent's migration sometimes provides Bangladeshi children with better educational prospects, Siddiqui (2003) argued that the absence of mothers causes children's education to suffer.

The 2003 Philippines Study shows that migrants' children are mainly enrolled in private schools and that they are generally happy at school. At least during the elementary years, children of migrants are found to perform better at school and received higher grades and more school awards when compared with children of non-migrants. In contrast, Battistella and Conaco (1998) reported that Filipino children of migrants fared worse academically in relation to non-migrants' children. Both studies have similar findings relating to children with migrant mothers – those with absent mothers have a tendency to lag behind children of the other groups. The migration of mothers thus presents a “catch 22” situation where, although migrant mothers remit more money to

¹¹ The study integrated data from the Matlab Health and Socio-Economic survey with those from the Matlab Health and Demographic Surveillance System and covered the Matlab *Thana* (sub-district) of Bangladesh.

invest in their children's education, their children often end up not performing as well owing to their absence. Similarly, in Sri Lanka, the educational performance of children left behind by mothers is lower than for those with mothers working in Sri Lanka and non-working mothers. According to Gamburd (2005), the children of migrant mothers tend to drop out of school to look for work or help with household chores. In another study, children with migrant mothers have poorer attendance and performance at school (Save the Children, 2006). The study stated that children left behind in rural areas did better in school but emotionally they felt more lonely and sad owing to the departure of one or both parents.

Jampaklay (2006) also reported that the absence of parents have negative impacts on the school enrolment of children left behind in Thailand¹². She further elaborated that while long-term absence of fathers does not have any impact on children's education chances, the reverse is true of mothers as their long-term absence apparently lowers the educational chances of children left behind. Nonetheless, the short-term absence of fathers also appeared to reduce children's chances of school enrolment. Jampaklay (2006, p. 108) explained that the adverse effects of mother's absence on children left behind are probably due to "the situation of living in the extended household that jeopardizes the educational chances of children". Lastly, she argued that while migrants' remittances raised the prospects of children left behind staying in school, they also lured some children into dropping out and migrating.

In China, numerous studies reviewed by Xiang (forthcoming) also presented a rather depressing picture on the state of the education of children left behind. For instance, a 2003 study conducted by Zhao on 1,184 children left behind in Da County found that only 12 per cent of the children did better than average, 41 per cent performed in the medium to low range and nearly half of them, 47 per cent, performed poorly in their studies. In another study by the Women's Federation of Meishan city, Sichuan province, 12,000 students from 21 rural schools were surveyed in 2004. Within the sample, 51.2

¹² Jampaklay's (2006) analysis draws upon the 2000-2003 dataset of a longitudinal study (Kanchanaburi Demographic Surveillance System) in Kanchanaburi province, Thailand. She used a four category dependent variable (enrolled and not moved; enrolled and moved; not enrolled and not moved; not enrolled and moved) describing the children's enrolment and migration status in 2003 while the key independent variables were father's and mother's living status during 2000-2002.

per cent were children left behind. The study indicated that children left behind have “high drop-out rates, poor academic performance, and problems in socialization and psychological development”. However, Xiang (forthcoming) noted that the study drew on poorly defined concepts and unclear descriptions. In his review of other studies, Xiang noted that studies on children from non-migrant families produced similar results and that parental migration did not appear to be an independent factor contributing to the withdrawal of children left behind from school. The similarities were attributed to the rural environment that the children are in; that is, rural parents, whether at home or away, generally do not invest attention and resources in their children’s education. Basically, education in rural areas is especially vulnerable to the negative consequences of migration such as the brain-drain of teachers and reduction of funding.

The sad state of rural schools is also highlighted in a study on Mongolia (Batbaatar *et al.*, 2005). They argued that the education of children left behind in rural areas in Mongolia is first and foremost affected by the out-migration of the community in general rather than the migration of the children’s parents alone. Migration has led to falling enrolment in some rural schools which in turn produced declining resource allocation and services as well as created the threat of schools closing down. Rural schools in areas with high emigration are often sorely lacking in resources. The poor state of school buildings, the lack of electricity and textbooks in schools, and shortages of teachers as well as the “lower” quality of the remaining teachers who have to teach multiple subjects are all factors that are directly or indirectly caused by high out-migration rates, consequently affecting the education of children left behind in these communities.

5. Social behaviour, relationships and the socialization of children

Migration of one or both parents may affect their children’s social behaviour in different ways. Battistella and Conaco (1998) learned that Filipino children with absent mothers showed poorer social adjustment and suffered from impeded social and psychological development. The 2003 Philippines Study in contrast showed that the children in the survey have generally adjusted well socially, have strong social support

and get along well with other family members. This result was nevertheless not very different from that of non-migrants. In Sri Lanka, the Save the Children (2006) study also reported that children left behind have positive relationships with their caregivers and that minority ethnic groups have higher extended family ties when mothers migrate. Nonetheless, the Sri Lanka study also reaffirmed Jampaklay's (2006) findings in Thailand that a mother's love is often irreplaceable, even by the best caregivers as more negative effects on the children left behind by mothers can be observed.

Xiang's (forthcoming) review of studies on children left behind in China showed children developing behaviours at two extremes under the care of their grandparents. Children left behind are either withdrawn or excessively aggressive as their grandparents either spoil or neglect them. Children left behind in Mexico are also reportedly lacking in confidence without their parents and are less respectful of grandparents, uncles or teachers (National Public Radio, 9 May 2006).

Finally, the 2003 Philippines Study found that migration of parents did not matter in the socialization of children or in the transmission and formation of important values and spirituality. Even when their parents are not around, children left behind continue to be assigned common chores by caregivers as part of their responsibility training. However, children of non-migrant families on average have to do more chores relative to the children of migrant families. The same type of values and spiritual information is also being transmitted to children, whether from parents or caregivers. In terms of future career choices, children of both genders, regardless of their parents' migration status, have similar aspirations.

6. Reorganization of gender and familial roles

The migration of either or both parents often results in the reorganization of roles within the family. Such changes may ultimately have an effect on children left behind as well. The long-term absences of males as a result of internal or international migration have often accorded wives with more autonomy and greater decision-making power over land issues, children's education and household finances (Jolly *et al.*, 2003; Voigt-Graf, forthcoming). Women are likely to continue holding on to their increased power even

after their husbands' return. In various parts of the Punjab, the increased purchasing power of daughters in such families has reportedly led to inflated dowries, withdrawal from agriculture and increasing seclusion (Donnan and Werbner, 1991 cited in Jolly *et al.*, 2003).

On the flip side, the assumption of heavier responsibilities, coupled with several other reasons such as uncooperative relatives, lack of support and husband's extra-marital affairs, has brought about higher levels of stress and vulnerability among women left behind. Roy and Nangia (2005) discovered that wives left behind in Bihar, India, were likely to suffer greater stress, both physically and mentally. The women also exhibited symptoms of reproductive morbidity such as a burning sensation or pain when urinating, abnormal vaginal discharges and other menstrual problems. Wives left behind in India were also likely to experience loneliness and isolation (Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003). Such negative emotions among mothers may be inadvertently transferred to their children.

When women migrate, men left behind often have to take on more care-giving roles. This was evident in studies on Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka (Afsar, 2005; Chantavich, 2001; Hugo, 2005; Save the Children, 2006) but the change, especially in the case of the Philippines, did not always continue after the women's return. In Bangladesh, husbands who take on household chores in the absence of their migrant wives often do so with the help of older children (Afsar, 2005). In Sri Lanka, the assumption of care-giving roles among fathers left behind has led researchers to observe a greater amount of flexibility in fathering and that "ingrained notions of gendered responsibilities in the household may be seeing certain kinds of transformations in the context of the migration of females within families" (Save the Children, 2006, p. 7). Changes in fathering roles may be able to counteract the negative impact of mother's absence on children left behind. Most of the children left behind also view the change in their father's roles positively. On the negative side, more fathers left behind appear to be experiencing greater stress, with more of them exhibiting drinking and drug-taking habits. This may eventually increase risks among the children, have an adverse effect on children's emotions, and affect their performance in school examinations (Gamburd, 2005; Save the Children, 2006).

It should be noted that migrant parents do not forsake but instead adapt their parenting roles after migration. Migrant Filipinas continue to bear most of the responsibility for childcare even after leaving the Philippines (Asis, 2006b; Parrenas, 2002; 2005a; 2005b). This is true among other migrant communities where the role of caregiving continues to fall on women's shoulders even after migration (see for example Dreby, 2006; Spitzer *et al.*, 2003). Migrant Filipino mothers continue to maintain close contact with their children and to play the role of providing funds and arranging for others to raise their children. In fact, Parrenas (2005b) argued that gender norms, "both their reifications and transgressions", persist in transnational Filipino households. In her study, the maintenance of traditional gender ideologies actually intensifies despite women's wage work overseas and occasionally even generates conflicts within many Filipino migrant families. Filipino fathers do not easily change the way they view their place in the family. This has led to confusion among children left behind, resentful of fathers who further widen the distance by shunning nurturing roles and generally failing to "reconstitute fathering in ways that balance and reciprocate the efforts of mothers to perform transnational mothering" (Parrenas, 2005b, p. 140).

In Dreby's (2006) study, although migrant Mexican fathers and mothers communicate with their children left behind in similar ways, gender expectations in parenting remain unchanged even in a transnational context. The relationships between migrant Mexican mothers and their children left behind are dependent on their ability to "demonstrate emotional intimacy from a distance" (Dreby, 2006, p. 56). In contrast, migrant fathers' relationships with their children left behind are correlated with their capability in providing economically for the family when away. As successful economic migrants, fathers regardless of marital status are able to maintain stable and regular relationships with their children in Mexico. However, the author acknowledges that more studies on the children's perspective are needed to assess the quality of parent-child relationships.

The migration of both parents generates other sets of problems. When children are left under the care of elderly grandparents, the increased burden on grandparents may lead to health problems and stress among the aged and require a reversal of care-giving

roles among the young and old. Intergenerational gaps between grandparents and children left behind may also prove detrimental to the development of the young.

The configuration of families may be affected when one or both parents migrate. The separation of spouses as a result of labour migration may result in a more permanent separation owing to marital instability and family break-up (Afsar, 2005; Hugo, 2002; 2005). Migrant parents may form new families and have new children when away (Dreby, 2006; Lauser, forthcoming; Yea, forthcoming). Children left behind may in turn experience feelings of jealousy and abandonment while parents who have formed new families overseas may find it difficult to negotiate conflicting demands of both families (Dreby, 2006; Yea, forthcoming). Eventually, old family relations may be compromised as a result of new liaisons.

II. WHEN CHILDREN MIGRATE WITH A PARENT

Not all children are left behind – others either migrate independently or with their families. This paper will only focus on those who migrate with *a* parent. Recent research shows that there are increasing numbers of children¹³ being brought overseas, usually by one parent, specifically for their education. The first significant trend that generated much interest among migration scholars was the formation of “astronaut families”, a term used to describe families dispersed across borders in two or more countries (Skeldon, 1994; 1997). More specifically, it refers to a situation where a parent, usually the mother (caregiver), remains with the children in the host country where there are better educational opportunities, while the other parent, the astronaut (breadwinner), returns to the home country to work. While the family may have migrated together initially, difficulties in finding a job in the host country and parental preference for children to receive better education overseas result in the splitting of families across oceans – fathers in the home country while mothers and children (satellites) are “left behind” in the destination country. This is often a deliberate transnational family strategy pursued for the family good, and consciously employed to maximize household resources to reap maximum benefits for the family.

¹³ The ages of the children in this cohort vary from primary school to university level.

In her study of the migration of persons from Hong Kong, China to Canada, Waters (2002; 2005; 2006) found that migrant households in her sample used the astronaut strategy to help their children accumulate social and cultural capital. Mothers stayed on in Canada to care for their children and monitor their learning while fathers returned to Hong Kong, China to work¹⁴. Parents invest in this transnational family strategy to provide their children with a direct ticket to university and to circumvent the possible failure of their children in securing a university place in the extremely competitive Hong Kong, China environment.

A situation similar to that of the Hong Kong, China astronaut family has recently emerged in the Republic of Korea, where *gireogi* or “wild goose” fathers stay on in the Republic of Korea to work while mothers migrate with their children overseas – mostly to English-speaking, developed countries (Cho, 2005). The purpose of their migration is for their children’s education and mothers often privilege motherhood over wifehood by choosing to migrate with their children, leaving their husbands behind (Huang and Yeoh, 2005). In the case of Hong Kong, China astronauts, many mothers do leave their children (parachute kids) to rejoin their husbands – some leaving as soon as within a few months. However, what is distinct in the case of the Republic of Korea is that the parents – often educated and largely from the professional and managerial class – usually plan this strategy from the very beginning, knowing that mothers will leave with their children. Thus far, existing studies on *gireogi* do not reflect the same desire to return among the migrant mothers. Instead, the tendency is to continue their stay overseas and prolong the separation.

A similar migration phenomenon observed in Singapore is that of the Chinese study mothers or *pei du ma ma* as they are known in Mandarin (Huang and Yeoh, 2005). Here, middle-income women from developing countries – in this case China – leave their spouses behind and migrate with their children to Singapore, also for the sake of their

¹⁴ In the first wave of the early astronaut families, the migrants were mostly persons from Hong Kong who mainly migrated as a family to escape the political uncertainty at home around the time of the “return” of Hong Kong to China’s rule in 1997. Subsequent difficulties in finding a suitable job in their host country, as well as the eventual stable political situation at home enticed fathers to return for economic reasons.

children's education. Again, the decision to migrate is a planned and orchestrated strategy aimed predominantly at investing in the future of their children.

Transnational household strategies entail significant social and emotional consequences both for those staying in the home country as well as those who are migrants in the host country. In the early phases of migration, the experiences of satellite wives in the host countries were predominantly highly negative, as they experienced difficulties coping in an English-speaking environment and felt extremely lonely with the loss of existing support and social networks (Waters, 2002). Their emotional and mental stress may be eventually transferred onto their children as many parents have to now rely on their children for help in navigating relatively simple day-to-day activities such as grocery shopping and banking (Bartley and Spoonley, forthcoming). While family structures and children experience added stress as a result of such reversal of roles, children's extra responsibilities and "elevated" positions may impart important life skills to them. With time, migrant mothers eventually acquire new language skills and social networks, and may experience a sense of liberalization from traditional patriarchal constraints to some extent (Waters, 2002; Huang and Yeoh, 2005).

In terms of marital relations between couples separated by distance, consequences are varied. While some couples experience conflict and emotional distance, divorce, and extra marital affairs, others actually develop stronger emotional ties during their separation (Chee, 2003; Huang and Yeoh, 2005; Waters, 2002). In the Korean study, mothers stated that their children are more precious than their husbands and they are willing to sacrifice conjugal relationships for their children's futures (Cho, 2005). Nonetheless, achieving a sense of security for the sake of their children comes at the cost of an increase in emotional insecurity within couples. Among many Chinese mothers who have accompanied their children to Singapore, life after migration is not as rosy as they imagined. Subjected to negative prejudices in the host society, the lives of study mothers remained very fluid, "characterized by repeated housing moves, transient jobs, unexpected expenses, constant worry about finances and the challenge to maintain a relationship with their spouses, parents and in-laws in China" (Huang and Yeoh, 2005, p. 395). Their children are also not spared the negative perceptions of their mothers and are

also constantly worried if they can continue to stay in Singapore for their studies in view of all of the uncertainties in their circumstances. Overall, the effects of migration on the children are notably mixed. While, as noted earlier, children acquire important social and cultural capital, develop important life skills and gain more independence, they may also stray off designated paths in their new, more liberal environments and appear more rebellious in their parents' eyes. Besides the potential strain on family relationships, children may also face considerable difficulties in identity negotiations as they continue to live overseas.

Many of the families in the studies above belong to a higher social and economic class, thus having the means to go overseas. At the other end of the spectrum, there are cases in which some labour migrants have little choice but to bring their children to harsh and unhygienic worksites with them. In India, migrant workers do not have easy access to various health and family care programmes and are also faced with a lack of crèche services in their destinations. Women workers also have to resume work immediately after childbirth owing to a lack of maternity benefits (Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003). These children are exposed to various health hazards and are deprived of education as a result of their transient status in the destination areas (Rogaly *et al.*, 2001; 2002).

III. EXISTING POLICIES

In considering policy interventions relating to children left behind, it must be first stressed that the impact of migration on children is a highly variable and complex relationship. Children migrating or left behind can be and are affected not only by the migration process itself but also circumstances and policies relating to broader processes including development, urbanization and education at different levels¹⁵.

¹⁵ Containing case studies relating to migration from such countries such as Bangladesh, China, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam, papers presented at the Regional Conference on Migration, Development and Pro-Poor Policy Choices in Asia, Dhaka, Bangladesh in June 2003 attempted to provide an overview and discussion of relevant policies whilst offering recommendations for change and improvement (http://www.livelihoods.org/hot_topics/migration/dhaka_conf.html, accessed 15 November 2006).

Policies relating specifically to children left behind are unfortunately few and far between. The study on Sri Lanka, for example, confirms that there are hardly any policies tailored especially for children left behind (Save the Children, 2006). Nearly all the respondents (97.3 per cent) in the study stated that they had not received any assistance from any agency. Many reasoned that this is because of their “socially marginalized positions, ... weakness of government agencies and the poor outreach of social welfare agencies, particularly to highly disadvantaged, remote areas such as those in the sample, from where the highest frequencies of migration occur” (Save the Children, 2006: 10). In the same study, only 7.3 per cent of respondents said that they knew of any organizations in the village – mainly community level NGOs – that could help them take care of children. Despite the general dearth in government bodies engaging in proactive programmes and research on social problems and issues in Sri Lanka¹⁶, initiatives were taken by the North-Western province Department of Probation and Childcare “where the commissioner has established village-level committees to address needs arising from migration and attempted to bring in all stakeholders to expand this experience in the province (Save the Children, 2006, p. 10). In other parts of the country, such regional NGOs as The Women’s Development Foundation (WDF) of Kurunegala help to tackle problems resulting from the migration of mothers and also to strengthen the role played by fathers in child rearing. Community organizations, such as temple or mosque societies, funeral aid societies and family and social mobilization programmes, have also been contributing towards strengthening family and community ties by offering help at a localized level.

In the Philippines, while the country has been praised for its programmes for migrant workers, the 2003 study also revealed that more needs to be done for migrants’ families. In the meantime, existing groups helping migrant families include the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (ECMI), the service arm of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines; The Apostleship of the Sea (AOS), a special apostolate of the Catholic Church for seafarers; and Overseas Workers

¹⁶ The Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) organizes training programmes for those women who have registered with them and are migrating to work as domestic helpers for the first time. SLBFE also has welfare officers who visit schools to identify and find solutions for problems faced by children of migrant mothers.

Welfare Administration (OWWA), the main government agency tasked to promote the welfare of migrant workers and their families (SMC, 2004). The variety of services offered by these groups include educational programmes, school-based programmes, gatherings, counselling sessions, welfare benefits and services as well as insurance and health-care services. While the presence of these services is encouraging, there are millions of migrants' families needing help from limited staff (sometimes inadequately trained for specific problems) and resources of existing institutions. The current programmes also need to be reviewed and fine-tuned to better serve the families with insights gained from "on-the ground" realities (SMC, 2004, p. 58).

In Mongolia, the country's budget for education is insufficient to support the provision of good-quality education throughout the country in the first place (Batbaatar *et al.*, 2005). Besides inadequate teacher training, the grade-focused incentive plan for teachers also means that teachers tend to concentrate on getting good grades from better performing students and neglect poor and/or migrant children. Existing assistance to the education sector from external sources is also limited to schools in the city and does not reach schools in the rural areas.

The studies on Mongolia, China and other countries reviewed in this paper hint that the greater root of the problem may actually lie with poverty and development issues in the respective countries. As Xiang (forthcoming) argued, the problem does not merely lie with individuals being left behind but the fact that the entire population left behind has as a whole been left behind both economically and socially. He emphasized that many of those left behind are stuck in vicious poverty cycles. Therefore, there is a need to address both the institutional causes of the problem as well as specific issues faced by the individual migrant household.

IV. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY IMPROVEMENT

The impact of migration on children left behind is observably mixed, with some countries having a better than expected outcome while the situation in other countries looks bleak. An important task which needs to precede policy formulation is to conduct more detailed systematic studies on the various "high-risk" cities and countries so as to

gain a better understanding into the situation in order to decide on what really needs to be done. Such statistics are necessary if we are to grasp more accurately the magnitude of the problem and help project the amount of resources required to make a difference.

The real reason why migrants move provides another useful indication of what policy makers should address. While many migrant parents move due to poverty, there are others who move because of existing cracks in their families or marriages in the first place. Hence, migration may be an excuse or escape from undesirable existing situations. In the Philippines, the rule against divorce means that some females choose to migrate in order to escape unhappy marriages (Constable, 2003). Understanding the root of the problem triggering migratory moves is thus important as a basis for future policies. It should also be noted that while most studies focus on children left behind from poorer families, children left behind by transnational elite families should also not be ignored, as they provide an interesting comparative foil. The migration trigger here tends to relate to improving human capital as opposed to livelihood issues.

It is also important for policy makers to (re)address policy issues at the different scales: individual, household, community, region and country. For children left behind, there needs to be different policies catering to the needs of the different age groups of children, from infants to teens and young adults. Policies should also take into account the gender of the migrating parent: studies have shown that children left behind by their mothers tend to suffer more emotionally, physically and in terms of education. Therefore, appropriate attention should be paid to these areas to help bridge the gap resulting from the mothers' absence. For example, Parrenas (2002; 2005a; 2005b) has shown that increase in communication between migrant mothers and their children left behind can help lessen the negative impacts of migration. Perhaps, the government may look into providing better and cheaper infrastructure for telecommunications in the community to help facilitate this. Parents left behind, including fathers, can also be further empowered in their new roles through counselling sessions and support groups. Cases of abuse, no matter how limited, should also not be ignored and policies on children's rights should be examined and reworked to better protect the vulnerable child in the absence of his or her parent(s).

Policy makers should avoid the pitfall of focusing solely on children left behind and neglecting the other members left behind, such as caregivers, extended family members, teachers and community leaders. These too have to carry the burden of caring for the children and should be adequately equipped with the proper resources to do so. Different types of training could be provided and awareness of issues heightened through the media, focus group discussions and other support groups at the community level. Schools are also good venues for the exchange of information and implementing support programmes.

Overall, government bodies need to take a closer look at poverty and underdevelopment issues through the lenses of the children left behind and community at large. There should be more inter-department collaboration to address varied issues. While no one policy fits all and policies should be culture-specific, good practices from some countries can serve as a reference point for other countries. Different government agencies should also collaborate and share their good practices with each other. Recommendations on policy changes gleaned from existing studies on specific countries can also spark ideas for policy changes in other countries; see table 3 for some suggestions. There should also be inter-government collaboration to help migrant workers. For instance, employers in receiving countries should be educated to become more sensitive to their workers' needs to communicate with their families at home. Migrant workers, especially domestic workers, should also not be discriminated against or pressured into hiding the fact that they have left their children at home. Issues involved in reintegrating migrants into their families after their return is another area needing attention.

Table 3. Suggestions on policies from existing studies

<i>Country</i>	<i>Study</i>	<i>Suggestions</i>
Philippines	2003 Children and Families Study (SMC, 2004, pp. 58-61)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and fine-tune existing programmes. - A regular assessment of existing programmes is necessary to review objectives and approaches, and to develop plans of action (including the identification of critical resources) to carry out

		<p>these programmes. Most of the programmes or projects targeting families are economic assistance programmes. Very few are specifically targeted at young children; or if children were the focus, these were special programmes which were offered on a short-term basis (e.g., drama or art workshops). Focus group discussions (FGDs) with the community development workers and NGO/Church personnel revealed useful insights into "on-the-ground" realities that would be helpful in reviewing existing programmes. They mentioned, for example, the need for training (particularly in counselling and approaches in community organizing), financial resources to carry out the programmes, and awareness about good practices and strategies based on the experiences of other organizations and institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The mass media can be harnessed to provide education and information to overseas Filipino workers' (OFWs) families (e.g., parenting tips, child rearing, the role of fathers, changing gender roles), particularly in reaching inaccessible groups such as husbands. - The school has an important role to play in delivering programmes to OFW families. It is a "natural" venue in reaching out to children, parents and caregivers. The school could be a venue for offering programmes on parenting/care-giving, gender sensitivity, constructive coping mechanisms, and programmes for children. As noted by the study, young children approached teachers, classmates and friends when they encountered some problems. The familiarity of the teachers, particularly the home room advisers, about the children's background was apparent during the field work for the study. The role of teachers as part of the support system of OFW children can be enhanced through programmes to increase their awareness and understanding of migration issues. - One of the findings of the study points to the popularity of marketable jobs abroad in shaping the children's career and life aspirations. The school can offer programmes and activities -- or incorporate topics in the curriculum -- to guide
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		<p>children in making plans about work and life. Curricular offerings can also include more inputs that would promote nationalism, on the one hand, and an appreciation of multiculturalism and other values that promote interdependence, on the other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The involvement of the local government in the promotion of the welfare of OFW families was a suggestion that came out of the FGDs with community development workers and Church/NGO personnel working with OFW families. They pointed out that there are millions of OFW families that the staff and resources of their institutions (OWWA, the Church, and NGOs) cannot adequately handle. Local government units could be encouraged to establish Migration Desks to coordinate activities pertaining to the migrant sector. - To promote more awareness of migration issues, particularly the social impacts, the involvement of the Department of Education and the Department of the Interior and Local Government can be harnessed in the celebration of migration-related events, such as International Migrants Day (December 18), Migrants Day (June 7), and National Migrants Sunday (first Sunday of Lent). - The importance of communication between family members cannot be overemphasized. Training migrants and their families on the use of the Internet and e-mail (as an alternative to cell phones) and exploring possibilities for employers/workplaces to provide more communication facilities (e.g., shipping lines) could also be explored.
Sri Lanka	Save the Children (Save the Children, 2006: 10-11)	<p>Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establish more programmes for women before they migrate to let them know the necessary childcare support that needs to be in place; - ensure childcare plans are in place when women migrate; - conduct periodic follow-up by officers and - encourage registration with SLBFE.

		<p>Others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establish programmes to support primary caregivers to address the emotional, intellectual and other needs of children left under their care as well as ensure caregiver’s well-being. - government bodies should help in the management of remittances. - develop an action plan to increase effective coordination between relevant national- and provincial-level agencies. - develop constitutional provisions leading to legislative reforms on children’s rights. - Ministry of Education should take the lead in ensuring schools, principals and teachers set, observe and monitor standards of educational performance and behaviour issues. - document good policies and replicate them throughout the country.
Mongolia	Children on the Move (Batbaatar <i>et al.</i> , 2005, pp. 60-62)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review budget allocation methods for education and monitor resource flows for education. - Reconsider the models of rural education. - Fully implement programmes to enable the poorest and most marginalized to get an education. - Look at non-formal education needs of children.
China	The Left Behind in Rural China (Xiang, forthcoming)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address the problem of rural communities being left behind. - Accord equal rights for migrants and allow them to settle in host cities. - Community-based markets for services driven by migrant remittances and the demands of those left behind can be further developed. - Leave children with other community members, especially school teachers on a commercial basis. For example, teachers “raising piggies” in Wenzhou area of South-eastern China. - Enrich social capital among the left behind, forming support groups or mutual-aid groups.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reformulate the state finance system to ensure remittance returns to home communities instead of the urban sectors. - Create a rural-friendly institutional setting that is attentive to the needs of the poorest communities.
China ^a	China Migration Country Study (Huang and Pieke, 2003, p. i)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The experiences in some areas of origin and destination could be built upon to assist in designing an integrated development strategy that includes the creation of a viable and prosperous countryside as one of its key objectives. Migration can play an important role in achieving this objective. - The strong links between migrants and their home communities created by the household registration and land tenure systems, along with the active involvement of governments of sending areas in the affairs of migrant communities, have many positive sides to them that should be preserved. - Migrants could continue to have a stake in the development of their area of origin, even if they settle elsewhere more permanently, by allowing them to retain certain rural residency and land rights on top of similar rights they may enjoy in the area of destination.
India ^a	An Overview of Migration in India, Its Impacts and Key Issues (Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003, pp. ii)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A key focus of policy intervention should be to improve synergy between migration and development. - Internal migration is a consequence of unequal regional development. In the case of international migration, the impact on pro-poor growth should be maximized through appropriate institutional and policy measures. - Four major categories of interventions can be envisaged, which will differ for internal and external migration. These categories relate to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addressing underdevelopment and improving the synergy between migration and development; • improving labour market outcomes; • ensuring basic entitlements to migrant workers; and

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving the social and political environment for migration.
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Sources: Adapted from the studies cited in the table.

^aFor other more detailed policy recommendations for China and India, and for such other countries as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam, refer to http://www.livelihoods.org/hot_topics/migration/dhaka_conf.html, accessed 15 November 2006).

V. CONCLUSION

It must be stressed that, while the various studies reviewed in this paper reveal mixed and occasionally conflicting results, the situation is not as bleak as many predicted it to be. However, this does not mean that governments can be complacent and leave individual households to work out their own problems. Providing guidance to facilitate the careful management of remittances, ensuring the quality of care in the choice of caregivers and encouraging constant communication between parents and children left behind form the basis of helping migrant parents compensate for the damaging aspects of the impact of migration among children left behind. Stopping migrant outflows from rural or poorer places will not solve any problems, as numerous studies comparing migrant to non-migrant families have shown that migrants' families often fare better after migration. Finally, the 2003 Philippines Study reaffirms that a stable and resilient family is important in withstanding the separation brought about by migration. Strengthening family ties even before migration becomes a reality is hence another important area to work at.

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