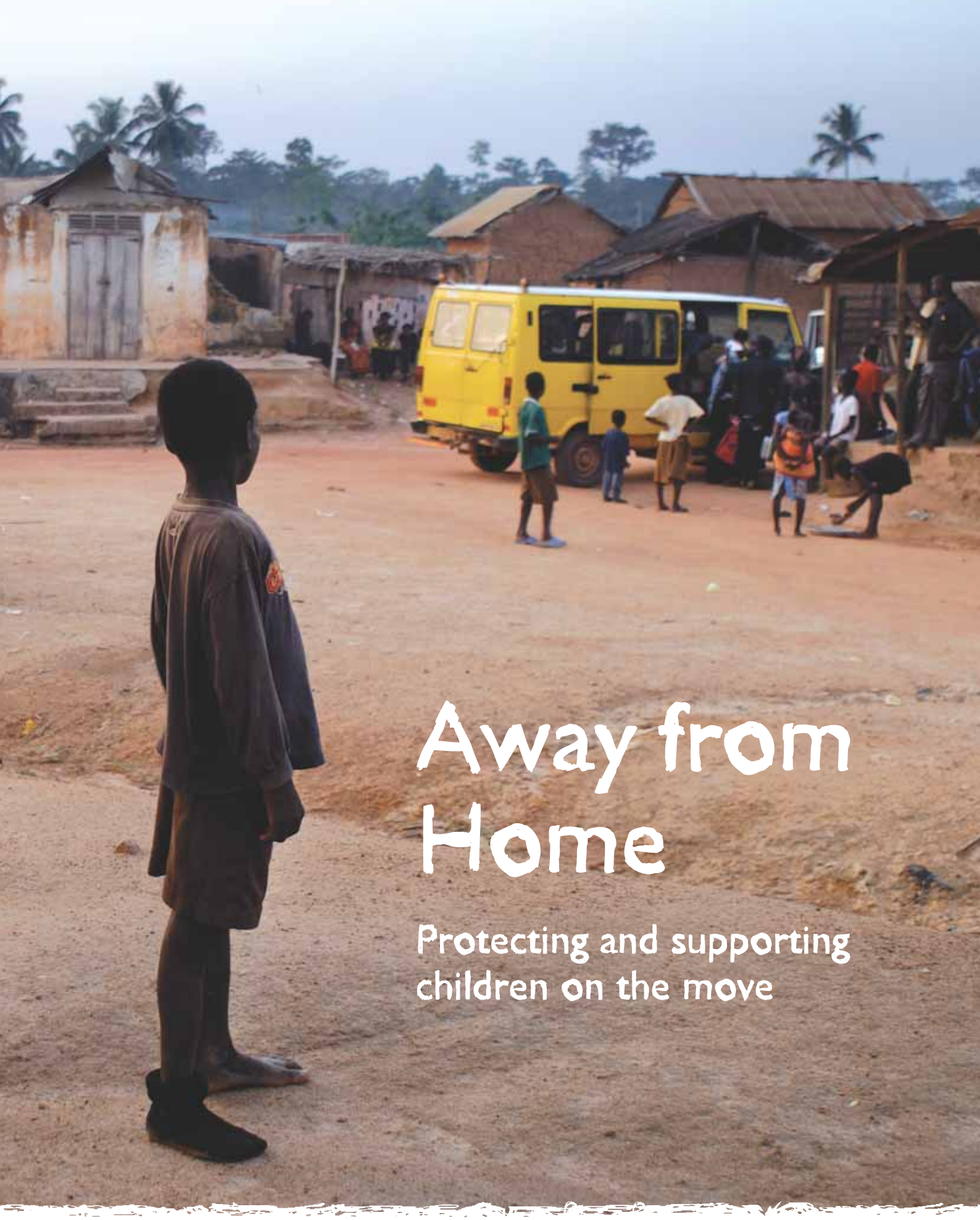

Away from Home

Protecting and supporting children on the move

Save the Children
UK

Away from Home

Protecting and supporting children on the move

Daniela Reale

We're the world's independent children's rights organisation. We're outraged that millions of children are still denied proper healthcare, food, education and protection and we're determined to change this.

Save the Children UK is a member of the International Save the Children Alliance, transforming children's lives in more than 100 countries.

Published by
Save the Children
1 St John's Lane
London EC1M 4AR
UK
+44 (0)20 7012 6400
savethechildren.org.uk

First published 2008

Cover photo: Child in Bayerebon 3 in western Ghana
(Photo: Aubrey Wade/Panos Pictures)

Typeset by Grasshopper Design Company
Printed by Page Bros (Norwich) Ltd

Printed on recycled paper

Contents

Acknowledgements

This report would not have been possible without the advice and contribution of many inside and outside Save the Children.

In particular, we wish to thank Dr Iman Hashim for preparing a comprehensive research report on child migration for Save the Children. Findings from her work have provided an important input to this paper.

This report has also benefited from the insight provided by a seminar on child migration organised by Professor Ann Whitehead from the Migration Globalisation and Poverty Development Research Centre, University of Sussex, which took place in May 2008.

Thanks to Mike Dottridge for his comments, and to Andy West and Jonathan Blagbrough for their contributions.

We are grateful to all those colleagues worldwide who commented on this document, offered suggestions to improve it and shared experiences from their work with children on the move, including Edelweiss Silan, Coordinator of Save the Children's Cross-border Project against Trafficking and Exploitation of Migrant and Vulnerable Children in the Mekong subregion; Mark Canavera, Save the Children UK in Côte d'Ivoire; Christopher Bjornestad, Save the Children in Mozambique; Dr Zosa De Sas Kropiwnicki and Lucy Hillier, Save the Children UK in South Africa; Lamia Rashid, Save the Children in Myanmar; and colleagues from Save the Children in South-East Europe.

Finally, special thanks go to Bill Bell of Save the Children UK for his thoughtful input to this report, and to Ravi Wickremasinghe for his help in editing it.

Summary

The movement of children is significant but largely invisible

Millions of children are on the move, both within and between countries, with or without their parents. They are part of large-scale population movements currently taking place in many parts of the world. This trend is set to continue over the next few decades, driven by economic developments, violent conflict, state failure, natural disasters, and environmental and resource pressures, especially climate change. Yet, despite the numbers of children involved, the needs and interests of children on the move are largely absent from mainstream debates on both child protection and migration. As a result, most governments and international institutions have failed to develop effective policy responses to help these vulnerable children.

This report looks at what we mean by children on the move, what their experiences are, what support they need, and how protection systems can be adapted to meet these needs. It proposes a new framework of protection and assistance to safeguard the rights and well-being of 'children on the move'.

Children on the move are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse

Children on the move, especially those moving independently, are especially vulnerable to exploitation, coercion, deception, and violence. They are particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labour and to sexual exploitation and abuse. As a result of their vulnerability, the discrimination they experience and their status as new arrivals, children who move face barriers when trying to access basic services, particularly education and healthcare.

Movement can be positive for children

On the other hand, when movement occurs in safe conditions, it can be positive for children, providing opportunities to access education, to contribute to their family's income, to develop new skills or realise other aspirations. Some children report that they value these opportunities and that they are prepared to accept other, negative outcomes – such as low pay, hard working conditions and poor living conditions – if necessary.

Trafficking is not synonymous with all children's movement

In recent years, attention to the protection of children who move has been focused on child trafficking, which has increased in parallel with the increase in migration flows. There are indications that this focus on child trafficking as a criminal act, while extremely important, has had unintended, sometimes negative consequences for other children on the move. Crucially, children's independent movement and their role in the decision-making process around movement have been largely ignored.

We need to support positive outcomes, as well as respond to negative outcomes

States have legal obligations to ensure protection and provide essential services for all children, including children on the move who may have no right of residence. Children need to be protected from exploitation, violence and the worst forms of child labour. However, policy-makers and practitioners also need to understand the reasons why children are moving, their specific needs, and the role of children's decision-making and experiences. Similarly, the beneficial effects of children's movements need to be acknowledged, and efforts made to capture these benefits more effectively and consistently.

Child protection systems and other services, as well as the design and implementation of migration policies, need to be adapted to work for children on the move

Such an approach requires attention to the following areas:

- prevention from exploitation, violence and the worst forms of child labour
- support for safer movement
- policy and legal change
- the identification and assistance of exploited and abused children
- the provision of accessible, appropriate and relevant services, such as education, job counselling, and training.

Children on the move must be listened to

Effective protection of children on the move is critically dependent on listening to children, and involving them in decisions around appropriate policy responses.

Recommendations

Save the Children recommends that governments, supported by intergovernmental agencies such as UNICEF, the International Labour Organisation, the International Organisation on Migration, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and by NGOs, should:

1 **Ensure that children on the move are visible in all relevant national and international policy discussions.**

2 **Ensure that anti-trafficking initiatives, while vital, do not 'crowd out' or impact negatively on the support and care for all children on the move.**

3 **Address gaps in legislation, policies and services to protect and support children on the move, with the full involvement of children themselves.**

4 **Support cooperation and partnership initiatives that promote the best interests of children on the move.**

Introduction

Millions of children are currently 'on the move', both within and between countries. The majority move with their families, but significant numbers do so independently. Yet, in spite of the large and growing number of children who move, they are largely neglected in the debates on child labour, decent work, migration, urbanisation, and international development.

This report argues that child protection systems and other services, as well as migration policies, need to be adapted so that they work for children on the move. To do this, we need a better understanding of children's movement and we need to listen to what children themselves say about why they move, what their experiences are and what support they need.

The context of global migration

In 2005, nearly 191 million people migrated to another country – a massive increase of 116 million since 1960.[1] Movement within national borders, while difficult to quantify, is in some countries far greater than international migration.[2]

One outcome of this increased migration is that in 2008, for the first time in history, more than half the world's population – 3.3 billion people – live in urban areas. The United Nations estimates that about 180,000 people are being added to the urban population every day, with the vast majority of movement to cities taking place in Africa and Asia. By 2030, it is expected that nearly five billion people will live in cities.

In addition to the increasing movement from rural to urban areas, there has been a growth in more transitory forms of seasonal or temporary movement between rural and urban areas, between different towns and cities, and between different rural locations.

Many of the new urbanites and other migrants are poor. And many of them are children, sometimes moving with their parents or relatives, but also moving alone in search of alternative livelihoods, educational opportunities, or seeking safety from conflict or natural disasters.

Adapting child protection systems and other services for children on the move

The debate on children's movement has tended to focus predominantly on negative outcomes and criminal aspects. As a result, policy responses and their implementation have neglected the many forms and consequences of children's movement. This has meant that responses to protect children, particularly from exploitation, have been skewed in two ways. They have either tended to assume that a child on the move is always trafficked; or these responses have adopted a 'one fits all' approach to exploitation, without taking into account the fact

that some children they intended to protect were living outside their home environment, thereby increasing, rather than reducing, their vulnerability.

The variety of circumstances, the different reasons and purposes for movement, and the characteristics of children themselves, produce a diversity of experiences that need to be understood and addressed to ensure more effective protection for children. This report, therefore, aims to engage policy-makers and others working in child protection in considering a new framework for looking at a particularly vulnerable, but largely invisible, group of children: children on the move.

1 Children on the move: who are they?

A focus on the parts, not the whole

There are many terms used to describe children who have moved from their place of birth to a different location, and the reasons why they moved: eg, trafficked, unaccompanied, separated, autonomous, street, fostered, independent, kidnapped, forced, refugees, asylum seekers, and most recently, nomadic.[3]

This bewildering range of terms, and the consequent multiplicity of uncoordinated protection responses, signals the need for an alternative framework for analysing children's movement, and for identifying the best responses for their protection and support.

Analysis of children's movement has been limited in two main ways. On the one hand, children's movement has been considered largely within the limits of the debate on child trafficking. On the other hand, in the broader debate on migration, children's movement has been researched mainly as part of their parents' movement. Both frameworks are inadequate.

Children's movement is not synonymous with trafficking

Through its focus on trafficking as a criminal act, the child trafficking debate has downplayed the issues of why and how children initiate their journeys. In other words, the debate ignores the role of children's own decision-making, both as a trigger for movement and as an element for their protection. As a result, trafficking responses have tended to be seen as the main answer to all forms of children's movement. Not enough attention has been paid, for example, to how to protect children on the move from falling into exploitative situations – including sexual exploitation – other than through preventing movement itself.

Children's movement is not identical to adult migration

Meanwhile, the migration debate has predominantly focused on the movement of adults.[4] As a result, migrant children's own perspectives have only rarely been heard, and their migration is often assumed to be just for economic reasons.[5] The full extent and diversity of children's movement is not considered in the literature on general migration.[6]

Focusing on children on the move

This report aims to move beyond such limiting boundaries, through a more inclusive framework for 'children on the move'. Large numbers of children are moving alone, as well as with their parents. Children's movement is complex and multi-dimensional, and has both positive and negative outcomes. This report looks at children who move, with or without their families, who are particularly vulnerable, especially to exploitation,[7] because of their mobility.[8] It looks at the different

ways that mobility affects children's lives – both negatively and positively.

The category of children on the move includes children who are trafficked, those who are migrating, and those who are displaced by natural disasters or conflicts. It includes children who cross national borders, and those who move about within a country. The focus on children on the move recognises the common issues that influence and have an impact on all children who leave their place of origin. At the same time, this focus takes into account children's diversity in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, motivations, aspirations, and other factors that affect their vulnerability and resilience.

Similarly, considering the reasons why children move and the part played by their own decision-making, allows us to recognise that, in some circumstances, children are powerless victims of exploitation, and that many other children on the move are active subjects who identify strategies for their own protection. As a result, the framework for children on the move opens more space for interventions that genuinely respond to their needs and that are respectful of children's rights, including children's right to express their views, and to access services and other support to promote their best interests.

2 How many children are on the move?

There is a dearth of information on population movements for different age groups, and very little is known about the magnitude of children's movement. Our attempts to construct an estimate of annual child migration faced many limitations:

- Robust data on internal migration at national and global levels is very patchy. As the scale of internal child migration is likely to be far higher than international child migration, this is a big challenge. While there is some data on annual internal migration flows, temporary and seasonal migration is not adequately captured, except in a limited number of micro-studies. These types of migration are important for children, and are likely to affect those moving alone or with their families for temporary work.
- Disaggregation of migration data by age is uncommon and, where it does exist, is inconsistent across countries and studies. Without adequate disaggregation, it is extremely difficult to estimate the proportion of migrants – both internal and international – that are under the age of 18.
- While data on annual urbanisation growth could be useful for estimating child migration, it is not disaggregated by age and does not capture rural–rural migration, which still appears to be a significant form of internal migration for children in many countries.

There are some estimates of particular groups of children on the move (eg, children who are refugees, who live or work on the street, or who have been trafficked). However, such specific attention has had the effect of making those children on the move who do not fall into these categories statistically invisible.[9]

Although we have few reliable estimates of the contemporary movement flows of children, there appears to be agreement in the literature that rates of movement of children are growing, following the same trends observed in the migration flows of adults. Globalisation and urbanisation, involving the migration of people out of rural areas into cities, are also likely to impact increasingly on adults and children. The movement of children, already a normal experience in many contexts, is becoming even more common.

People's movement: global estimates[1]

In 2005, there were an estimated 191 million international migrants worldwide, up from 176 million in 2000; they comprise 3% of the global population. Every year, an average of 2.5 million people are new international migrants.[2] It is unknown what proportion of these are children.

There are roughly 30 to 40 million unauthorised migrants worldwide, comprising around 15–20% of the world's immigrant stock.[3]

By 2030, an estimated five billion people will be living in cities. The increase in urbanisation is expected to take place mainly in Africa and Asia.[4]

In 2006, an estimated 18.1 million children were living with the effects of displacement, including 5.8 million as refugees and 8.8 million as internally displaced.[5]

According to the ILO, of an estimated 8.4 million girls and boys in the "unconditional worst forms of child labour", in 2000, an estimated 1.2 million children under the age of 18 were trafficked.[6]

The number of street children is likely to run into tens of millions across the world, with some estimates as high as 100 million.[7]

An ILO study of migrants on the Cambodia-Thailand border suggests that 42% of migrants are children. Estimates of illegal Burmese migrants in Thailand range from 800,000 to 1.5 million, 20% of whom are children.[8]

It is estimated that close to 120 million people migrated internally in China in 2001. Temporary internal migrants outnumber registered migrants by approximately four to one.[9]

In India, roughly 20 million people migrate seasonally each year.[10] In Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, one study conservatively estimates that around 3% of children under 15 years, equivalent to one million children, have migrated alone without their mothers. For older children, aged 17 and 18, the proportion rises to around 25%.[11]

An estimated 50–80% of rural households in sub-Saharan Africa have at least one migrant member.[12] In Tanzania, 23% of households had male children who had migrated out, and 17% had female children who migrated.[13]

Sources

[1] Unless otherwise stated, all data is from *Trends in Total Migrant Stock: The 2006 revision*, United Nations, http://esa.un.org/migration

[2] United National Population Division, 2008, *An overview of urbanization, internal migration, population distribution and development in the world*

[3] United Nations, *Trends in Total Migrant Stock: The 2003 Revision*

[4] P Deshingkar and S Grimm, 'Internal Migration And Development. A Global Perspective', Overseas Development Institute, IOM, 2005

[5] Machel Review Study. http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/internallydisplaced.html

[6] ILO/IPEC: *Every Child Counts: New global estimates on child labour*, Geneva, ILO, 2002

[7] UNICEF, *State of the World's Children 2006: Excluded and Invisible*. New York: UNICEF

[8] Global IDP database

[9] Guest, cited in P Deshingkar and S Grimm, *Voluntary Internal Migration: An update*, Overseas Development Institute, 2004

[10] As above

[11] Edmonds and Salinger, *Economic Influences on Child Migration Decisions: Evidence from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh*, Institute for the Study of Labor, 2007

[12] DFID, cited in P Deshingkar and S Grimm, *Voluntary Internal Migration: An update*, Overseas Development Institute, 2004

[13] P Deshingkar and S Grimm, *Voluntary Internal Migration: An update*, Overseas Development Institute, 2004

3 Why children move

Movement is not inherently negative for children. It may offer a rapid route out of poverty or violence at home, and may lead to opportunities, such as education, that children may have missed otherwise. In some cases, movement is a route to safety for children who have no choice but to leave their communities because of conflict or natural disasters. There are many reasons why children move – some positive, some negative.

For example, children move in order to:

- look for employment or education opportunities
- escape chronic poverty
- escape abuse or domestic violence
- access consumer goods or entertainment opportunities
- gain status
- rebuild their lives as a result of the impact of HIV and AIDS, conflict or natural disasters
- escape discrimination.

"I came to South Africa when my mother and father died. I was experiencing a hard life. I didn't even have money. I made the journey on foot."

"I had a friend next door who knew this place called Musina. And she said, "You know you are not in school, you are dying of hunger, there is no point in staying here. It is better that we go to South Africa to look for a job."

"I do this so I can get money to send to my sisters for school in Zimbabwe."

Zimbabwean children in Musina (South Africa), close to the border with Zimbabwe.

"My brother invited me to South Africa, saying that I would have a better life than I do in Moamba. Also the school, I didn't see the advantage of continuing. Instead of continuing to sit at home, I decided to go with my brother."

Mozambican child

Sources

G Clacherty, *'Poverty made this decision for me': Children in Musina. Their experiences and needs*, Save the Children UK, 2003; Save the Children UK, *Our Broken Dreams: Child migration in Southern Africa*, Save the Children, Maputo, Mozambique, 2008

In many cases, children are involved in deciding about the opportunities available, and about whether they should go, and how. In this, they are often influenced to move by returning migrants, who inspire others to leave.[10]

Parents often encourage or support the migration of their children, seeing it as opening opportunities for a better future.[11] In other cases, however, children may move against the wishes of their parents[12], or may have no close family because, for example, their parents or other family members have died from AIDS.

Poverty

Many children migrate so that they can contribute to their family's income. Save the Children's studies in a number of countries show that many children are pushed to seek earning opportunities by a strong sense of filial responsibility.[13] Children interviewed in a village in Myanmar (Burma), for example, said they wanted to migrate to help and support their parents.[14] In South Africa, interviews with children living on farms and in towns confirm that poverty is a crucial factor in children's decision to leave their families and look for work.[15]

In many instances, however, it is not absolute poverty and destitution that pushes children to move. The expenses associated with migration mean that in some cases it is children from families with some level of disposable income who can migrate,[16] rather than the very poor.[17] In such cases, rather than absolute poverty, the triggers for children's movement are more often relative poverty, inequality, and the opportunities that exist elsewhere – or that are perceived to exist elsewhere.[18] On the other hand, there are indications that very poor families are prepared to incur debt, or even bondage, to obtain the cash to pay the expenses necessary to migrate. Save the Children's research on exploitation in the football sector in Côte d'Ivoire, for example, shows that families go into tremendous debt to send their children abroad, lured by promises of football opportunities.[19]

Movement as a transition to maturity

In many cultures migration is seen as a rite of passage, with adolescents encouraged by their peers and parents to seek new experiences in order to gain independence. For example, in a study of rural Burkina Faso, Save the Children found that the primary factor pushing children to move was the culture of migration, where children were thought to gain maturity through migration.[20]

Seeking education opportunities

Many children, like those interviewed by Save the Children in southern Africa,[21] point to the lack of education opportunities as one of the main reasons for their movement. However, little research has been done on the links, positive or otherwise, between children's movement and education.

Nevertheless, we know that, for many young people living in rural areas, education is either not available at all or only available at primary level.[22] Even if schools are available, the perception of the benefits school can bring is a crucial factor for children. For example, schools in rural areas are more likely to be under-resourced, with poor-quality teaching, which may lead young people to move to schools elsewhere.[23] Save the Children's research in Côte d'Ivoire, for example, shows that many children who attend school are prepared to give up education and move away from their families if other opportunities appear more appealing elsewhere.[24]

Violence and discrimination within the school is also a factor pushing children to drop out from schools and move elsewhere, in search for other opportunities.

Escaping natural disasters and conflict

Environmental degradation and change force many children to seek new livelihood opportunities. Earthquakes, flooding and volcanic eruptions also trigger major population movements among children.

Children's views about movement, risks and protection in south-east Europe

Between 2002 and 2006, Save the Children implemented pilot anti-trafficking projects with children involved in, or vulnerable to, risky migration and trafficking in seven countries/entities: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the UN administered province of Kosovo, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia. In 2007, building on the lessons learned from the pilot interventions, the programme conducted participatory research with children on the reasons for leaving home, the risks, and children's own strengths and resilience.

Children involved in the research said that reasons to leave included:

- Poverty and inequality; social exclusion and discrimination against minority ethnic groups
- No employment opportunities
- School perceived as unhelpful, or better education opportunities at destination
- Families needed their economic contribution to survive
- To escape abusive family situations or, in the case of girls in particular, lack of freedom to socialise with friends
- Death of one or both parents
- Promise of material goods, recreation and entertainment in western Europe from friends and families living abroad
- Escaping conflict
- Escaping institutions
- Marriage.

Children complained about not being listened to and, as a consequence, would not turn to adults for help and support.

Key recommendations emerging from consultation with children include:

- Providing a holistic response to address the multiplicity of risks within home and community environments
- Providing information and targeted messages on making movement safe, including life skills training
- Making schools safe and relevant
- Creating safe public spaces for children (eg, children's and youth centres)
- Addressing racism and marginalisation
- Supporting children's participation in defining problems and finding solutions.

Source

Save the Children, *Children Speak Out: Trafficking risk and resilience in south-east Europe*, Regional report, July 2007

Save the Children's report, *Legacy of Disaster*, estimates that in the next decade up to 175 million children every year are likely to be affected by the kinds of natural disasters brought about by climate change.[25] It has also been estimated that there will be around 200 million 'climate refugees' by 2050. Children will be part of an increasing flow of forced climate migrants.[26] There is a greater risk of children being separated from their carers or becoming orphans. Furthermore, the loss of livelihoods and the displacement brought about by disasters, combined with more difficult access to education and healthcare services, are likely to put further pressure on households to send children to work.

Armed conflict is an additional powerful driver of children's movement, even over long distances, as shown in a Save the Children study conducted in

South Africa, with children moving from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi.[27] Children move to escape the consequences of conflict, to avoid being recruited into armed forces or, in some cases, even to join guerrilla groups or armed forces, for food, or friendship, to protect their families, or lured by promises of wealth.[28]

Children whose parents have died

The death of one or both parents (due, for example, to the HIV and AIDS pandemic) is a key reason for children to leave their home communities. Many children who have lost their parents move in order to join relatives who foster them. Others move without that security, in the hope of making a new start to their lives. They may be joined later by others fleeing abusive fostering situations. In Mozambique and Zimbabwe, for example, it is not uncommon for members of the extended family to seize property and belongings that children or widows should inherit after the death of one or both parents, leaving them with nothing of real value and totally dependent economically on the extended family, and vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.[29]

Escaping violence and abuse

Many children move to get away from physical and/or sexual violence in their family, school or community. In a Save the Children study conducted in China, many children classified as 'street children' reported violence and abuse at home and at school as a reason for migrating to seek safety and opportunities elsewhere.[30]

4 The risks children face when they move

There are inherent risks, insecurities and dangers involved in moving and arriving somewhere new. Children are especially vulnerable because they move to a place where they don't know who to turn to for help, and where they might even be seen as not worth helping.

Risks in transit

Travelling conditions

The triggers for children's migration affect the conditions of their movement and the risks involved. Children may be forced by extreme circumstances, such as chronic poverty, conflict or violence, into the 'worst forms of movement' – ie, movement that is clandestine or dangerous or which takes place in unsafe conditions and without the support of trustworthy networks, consequently exposing children to exploitation and abuse in transit and/or at destination. At the other end of the spectrum, in Ghana for example, long-established migration flows for work mean that children's travelling conditions are relatively benign, with children frequently travelling with and/or to friends or relatives.

Crossing borders often entails extra dangers. For instance, girls who migrated to South Africa from other countries have reported that they were forced to have sex with border guards to secure entry. Boys described being forced to swim across dangerous rivers[31] – there have been reports of children who drowned in the Bight of Benin, when forced to swim, when travelling from Benin and Togo to Gabon.[32]

However, it cannot be assumed that moving across an international border necessarily involves vulnerability to harm. Many borders are porous, and crossing them poses little danger. Where groups of people sharing ethnic identity, nationality and language straddle one or more borders, individuals will often have extended family or friends on both sides.

Intermediaries

Children rarely move entirely alone. They usually rely on others to facilitate their travel and, sometimes, their activities at their destination. Because of the focus on trafficking in the literature on children on the move, much of the information available on intermediaries focuses on criminals preying on ignorant or desperate individuals, extracting exorbitant fees, coercing children into debt bondage in payment for transportation and/or job placement fees, or deceiving children about the nature of the employment that awaits them.

Trafficking in children and smuggling young migrants across borders are highly lucrative activities, attracting criminal groups as well as highly exploitative individuals. What is less known, however, is that in many cases children's movement is facilitated by friends and relatives, or members

of the same community. Some of these individuals are exploitative; others are not, and might even offer the child protection from exploitation and harm.[33] By labelling all intermediaries as traffickers, we risk destroying such protective networks, leaving exploiters as the only ones who mediate the movement of children.

Risks at destination

Employment opportunities and work exploitation

Chronic poverty and lack of access to quality schooling mean that the prospect of finding a job is one of the main reasons why children move. Such children mainly work in the informal sector – in agriculture and fishing, factories, restaurants and domestic households. Others are involved in mobile and temporary activities in agriculture, the construction sector or mines.[34] Some children move several times during their childhood, moving at different ages for different types of work. Gender also dictates the jobs that children can do.

In some cases, the work done by children on the move does not have a harmful impact, even though it may be tiring, repetitive or unacknowledged. Employment enables these children to earn a living, pay for their education or send money home to their families. For the children concerned, these benefits often override the difficult circumstances they find at their destination. And as they learn more about their new surroundings, they may find a job that offers better conditions.[35]

In other cases, however, children end up in work that is highly dangerous or exploitative.[36] Being outside their family and community, children on the move are often more vulnerable to the worst forms of exploitation – coercion, violence, physical and mental abuse, and exhaustion. Discrimination and language barriers may leave them at the mercy of an employer, who might retain pay or force them into debt bondage or illegal confinement. Research by Save the Children on child domestic workers in India shows that an average working day was 15 hours, and that 68% of children had faced physical abuse, and 86% emotional abuse.[37]

Children with no right of residency in the place they have moved to – which in some cases applies to movement within the same country – and who are under the legal working age, are particularly vulnerable. They have fewer options of work and face a higher risk of ending up in hazardous work. They have no recourse to the law if employers exploit them or withhold their wages.[38]

Another area of considerable concern is illegal work, especially if it involves organised criminal activity.[39] In such cases, rather than being identified as a child on the move who is a victim of exploitation – and therefore entitled to assistance – the child tends to be identified as a criminal, and subjected to prosecution and punishment.

Even if not involved in criminal activities, once they arrive at their destination, children on the move might be identified as 'illegal migrants' or 'failed asylum-seekers' and be subject to criminal prosecution, detention or unsafe repatriation.[40]

Living conditions

The living conditions in which children on the move find themselves – in transit and at destination – can expose them to a range of hazards and harms. At their destination, children may end up in institutions,[41] in detention centres, on the street,[42] or in overcrowded, low-quality accommodation, shacks or informal settlements.[43] Children working in markets and for blacksmiths in Lomé (Togo) or Cotonou (Benin), for example, report unhealthy living conditions.[44] Children who move to join kin households (eg, for fostering, education, domestic work or apprenticeships) may find more or less satisfactory living conditions, depending on the quality of care offered by their relatives.[45] In some cases, children living with relatives are subject to various forms of exploitation.

However, unaccompanied children have also demonstrated initiative in supporting and protecting themselves and one another.[46] A group of girl

migrants in Accra paid a small sum to a shop owner to let them sleep in the shop after working hours, giving them shelter and safety in numbers from theft or sexual violence.[47]

Access to education

As stated earlier, education is a key trigger for children to move. However, on arrival they may face a number of barriers to getting an education.

Indeed, school attendance in migrant communities is typically low. A study of migrant workers in the fishing sector in Thailand found that less than a quarter of children under the age of 15 attended school, for reasons ranging from poverty, to discrimination against migrant children, to fear of security forces.[48] In South Africa, child migrants reported not attending school because they did not have enough money for fees, uniforms and materials, because schools were overcrowded, because of their nationality, or even because they did not make themselves known to school authorities for fear of deportation.[49] In China, the cost of education for unregistered migrants who have moved from another part of the country means many cannot afford to send their children to school.[50]

Working children may have difficulty in attending school. For example, employers might limit the freedom of movement of children who work for them, or might deny them time off to attend school. When schools are some distance away from children's place of work, the time and the cost to get to and from school becomes another enormous barrier. Additionally, language and cultural differences often deter them.[51] In many cases, children on the move have never attended school in their community of origin, which makes accessing education at their destination even more challenging.

Access to services

Basic services are not designed to take account of children on the move. Children who do not have documentation, or who face language barriers, often have difficulty in accessing basic services.[52] As a result, while many children do not access services in their home or place of origin, moving elsewhere does not necessarily improve their chances. Children who have moved and who are in difficulty, for example, are unlikely to receive support in finding legal assistance, alternative care or accommodation. Indeed, any so-called support that is offered may be unhelpful or inappropriate, such as detention in residential institutions for an indefinite period.

Because most service provision is static, there are significant challenges in providing services for children who are part of mobile working communities, both immigrant and returning seasonal workers. Some of these children lose their right to access education or healthcare services, because they are away for long periods.

Moreover, movement resulting from climate change and urbanisation is likely to increase the pressure on urban infrastructure and services. As a result, access to health services, nutrition and education for children who move into cities may get worse in the future.

Gender, age, ethnicity and discrimination

Gender is a key consideration in understanding the vulnerability of children on the move. Large numbers of girls leave their families for marriage, to contribute to their families' finances by working as domestics, for example, or to access education. The reasons why girls leave, their travel patterns and the activities they carry out at their destination, are highly influenced by gender norms. Women and girls may be prevented from entering paid employment, or their employment opportunities may be limited to informal, isolating and potentially hazardous activities, such as domestic work. Some girls leave their families to avoid a forced marriage, or leave to escape an arranged marriage. Others become, or are forced to become, sex workers once they reach their destination, although this was not part of their initial plan when they started their journey. In other cases, due to the dearth of employment opportunities open to girls, some migrate to

become sex workers in tourist areas or where there is infrastructural development.

Age is also important. Children who are over the legal working age will require support in finding work that is not hazardous, and in accessing vocational training to improve their prospects of finding better employment. Working children who are under the legal age for employment may be in a position of double vulnerability to being exploited.

Ethnic discrimination exposes children to further risks of exploitation, and/or acts as a barrier to accessing basic services. In extreme cases, xenophobia puts children's lives in danger, as shown in South Africa where violence against Mozambicans, Somalis, Zimbabweans and other migrants is spreading.

5 Tackling the 'worst forms' of children's movement and exploitation

Prevention

Prevention is not about preventing movement *per se*. Rather, the purpose is to prevent children from becoming vulnerable, preventing the 'worst forms' of movement, and increasing children's choices (including about whether to move or not). Prevention includes interventions in children's home communities to reduce vulnerability to exploitation, abuse and violence, and action to ensure that when children do move, they do so in a safer manner. It also implies developing those practices and institutions that have a protective function for children on the move, as discussed below.

Targeting anti-poverty strategies and employment support

Given that many children move to look for work to help their families' finances, it is vital that child protection mechanisms and anti-poverty strategies are coordinated in order to reduce pressures to migrate into exploitative work. Anti-poverty strategies need to be targeted at reducing the worst forms of movement and the risk of ending up in the worst forms of child labour. They can do this by focusing on income generation activities and livelihood support for vulnerable families. In addition, support for adult and youth employment in home communities – job counselling, education and training – needs to play a strong part in prevention strategies. The success of such strategies also depends on the way it is implemented locally. In West Bengal, India, for example, community-based protection committees have proved effective in preventing children from being pushed to leave their villages to work as domestics, by making families' access to government anti-poverty programmes and grants conditional on keeping young children in their own communities, and sending them to school.

Social protection measures include insurance, cash transfers, pensions, child grants, social welfare and family support mechanisms.[53] These have proved effective in supporting families and reducing their vulnerability in various contexts, including in emergencies[54] and in child labour interventions[55], by providing financial incentives to parents to keep their children in school.[56] Such measures could also prove effective to support families and prevent the risks connected with child economic migration, provided more research is conducted to look at ways in which the measures can reach vulnerable families. In Mozambique, for example, the Food Subsidy Programme is only for people over 18 years of age, thereby excluding children and child-headed households from accessing the benefits of these measures.

Investing in education

Continued investment in education is a priority, both in developing the intellectual capacity of children and young people, and in strengthening social capital in their home communities.

To ensure a reduction in the incidence of risky child movement, however, children and their communities need to see that education brings benefits, compared with other opportunities elsewhere. Local education, therefore, needs to be relevant, of good quality, and to be flexible.

Tackling abuse

Domestic violence, including physical and sexual abuse, is one of the reasons why many children move. Addressing it requires monitoring and awareness-raising activities aimed at parents and the community, including local teachers and health professionals. These professionals need to be trained to identify signs of violence, abuse and neglect, and how to react to them. Save the Children's work with child peer educators in south-east Asia has demonstrated that awareness-raising with children themselves is equally important in empowering children and helping them protect themselves and support other children.[57]

Addressing orphanhood

In many countries, orphanhood is normally dealt with through extended family arrangements. In many African societies, for example, the extended family network traditionally absorbs crises, such as the death of a parent, through fostering.[58] However, such systems become less effective in times of emergency and overload, caused by 'shocks' such as the AIDS pandemic. As a result, children are more likely to embark on more dangerous forms of movement.

It is, therefore, important that national governments and international agencies help preserve such protective mechanisms by putting in place family support and appropriate alternative care mechanisms.[59] Systems to support child-headed households and to safeguard children's inheritance and other legal entitlements are equally important, particularly in areas with a high incidence of HIV and AIDS, in order to prevent risky migration by children with no parental care.[60]

Preventing the most risky movement

Raising awareness and providing relevant information on migration

Children and their families need information about the risks related to movement, particularly the risks of exploitation during travel and at their destination, and how to avoid them. For example, young people in the Mekong sub-region said that strategies aimed at making movement safer were one key thing they needed in order to make them less vulnerable.[61]

Children and their families also need practical information about migrant rights, the living conditions at their place of destination, labour laws and regulations, how to access services, and basic financial management training. In China, Save the Children is providing training on these practical issues to young migrants and to employers.[62]

Various information and sensitisation tools and techniques have been used for this purpose, from national media campaigns to the production of information materials targeted at children and distributed in schools and other centres. In Mozambique, for example, Save the Children has produced a children's magazine on migration that highlights the risks and also the services that children can access.[63]

In high emigration areas, it is crucial that this information becomes part of school programmes.

Young people who want to move for work commonly ask for help in finding out whether job offers they have received from elsewhere are genuine. Providing this kind of information requires collaboration between organisations working in both the place of origin and the place of destination.

Supporting local communities to protect children

Enabling local communities to take action to protect children should be a central part of creating a child-protection system. Child protection committees, which include people from the local community, and in some cases from local authorities, can monitor children's movement by keeping records of:

- the names of people who enter and leave the community
- the names of the people children move with
- children's contact details, transport plans, routes, and intended destinations.

Child protection committees have, in many cases, proved effective in raising awareness and building the capacity of local people to protect children. For example, an adult living in a village in Mon State, Myanmar, said *"If children from our village are going to work in Thailand, we will note down the address and national registration number of the person who is taking them along. We will tell the broker to honour his or her word and to ensure that the children will not get into trouble. We had no idea to tell such things to the broker until Save the Children came here."*[64]

However, it is crucial to distinguish between cases of child trafficking and children travelling in other circumstances, so that these community-based systems work in the best interest of children on the move. This will also help to avoid cases such as those observed in west Africa and south-east Asia, where vigilance committees set up to protect children from trafficking ended up stopping indiscriminately any young people from moving, including those over 18 years of age.[65]

Research by Save the Children shows that in order for monitoring mechanisms in local communities to be effective, they need to be based on good training of community volunteers. They must also be coordinated with responsive and appropriate statutory services and structures, sustained financially, and properly supported (eg, through on-going training and support to volunteers).[66] This coordination helps ensure responses are sustainable and trusted by children and adults.[67]

Supporting children in transit

During their journey, children who are on the move need advice and practical support. Protection measures include:

- information booths at busy transport hubs
- drop-in centres in places where young migrants who have just arrived tend to gather together (such as city markets in west Africa)
- providing safe residential accommodation
- telephone helplines to give advice to young people wanting to migrate.

Child migrants from a village in Northern Shan State in Myanmar registered that they would be migrating at an information centre set up by the child protection committee, supported by Save the Children, in their village of origin. At the time of registration, they were given the number of a 24-hour mobile phone hotline to call in case they needed help. When they were abused and exploited in China, they called the hotline, and following this, they were traced and rescued.

However, supporting children in transit is challenging. First, tracking children's routes can push them into looking for more 'invisible' routes to evade detection, if they suspect that the aim is to control their movement. As a result, they may be exposed to even harsher travelling conditions. Second, when travelling involves crossing borders illegally, it is more difficult for service-providers to assist children legally.

Governments, therefore, need to ensure that the protection of children takes priority over other policy and political considerations.

In addition, the role of police and, in the case of those children moving across borders, immigration officers is central. In many cases, police and immigration officials are not trained to protect children on the move, and are even responsible for violence and exploitation. Building these professionals' capacity to identify children at risk and to ensure that they act for children's protection, and in line with their best interests, is part of an effective child protection system.

Encouraging safer migration in the Greater Mekong Region

Thousands of children who are on the move across Cambodia, China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand and Vietnam (the Greater Mekong Region) experience, or are vulnerable to, exploitation, abuse and violence.

Save the Children UK's Cross Border Project helps develop models of child protection systems that can ensure helpful and effective prevention, rescue, recovery and reintegration of children on the move who are victims of exploitation. The project follows children's movement routes by setting up interventions at places of origin, transit and destination. It advocates for policy change and regional coordination mechanisms across the Mekong.

Between 1999 and 2007, for example, in Yunnan Province in China, the project set up a pilot Safe Migration Channel. It involved local authorities, parents and children in monitoring migration, supporting children to complete compulsory education, and providing life skills training for potential migrant young people in their villages of origin. The project also kept a register of recruiters and employers, to match potential employers with young people looking for work.

In areas of destination, the Safe Migration Channel project worked with local authorities and the Youth League to raise migrants' awareness of labour exploitation, to assist migrant families to integrate into a new community, and to mediate conflicts between migrants and their employers. It involved the private sector in the protection of children and, in partnership with local schools, ensured access to education for children on the move.

The model is now being implemented directly by the local authority in the village of Daluo in Yunnan, where children tend to migrate from, and is being replicated by the Women's Federation in 38 other counties.

A protection role for intermediaries?

It is important to find ways of distinguishing those intermediaries who are interested in a child's welfare, from those intermediaries who are exploitative and criminal. This is clearly important to protect children in transit. It is also important at their destination, as children who have moved tend to be employed in informal sectors where monitoring and protection is more challenging.

For example, often the only contact that child domestic workers have, apart from with members of their employer's household, is with intermediaries who periodically visit the children to help them send remittances home. Those intermediaries who are not exploitative could be engaged in a safeguarding and monitoring role for children's protection. Similarly, as Save the Children has demonstrated in India, employers can be motivated to ensure that child workers access education and other services.

In conclusion, protection services should raise awareness among benign intermediaries on how they can help protect children. Policy-makers need to explore regulatory frameworks for non-exploitative intermediaries that do not automatically regard them as traffickers.

Identifying, supporting and reintegrating children who are being exploited and abused

Interventions that respond to the exploitation and abuse of children are needed at every stage of children's movement.

Providing safe spaces

Wherever possible, governments, in collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), should ensure that children on the move have access to safe accommodation or a social centre or other safe place, where they can meet with other children, store possessions, wash themselves and their clothing, or retreat from the streets for a while. Drop-in centres are also important hubs for advice and information on services – eg, letting children know who they can contact for assistance if they are abused. Such centres have been used by Save the Children in interventions aimed at, for example, domestic workers, and migrant and trafficked children in India and South-East Asia.

Responding to exploitation

Identifying children on the move who are victims of exploitation can be particularly challenging, as they are more likely to work in the informal sector and be hidden by their employers. Strategies for protecting children on the move should include:

- children's participation in identifying others at risk of exploitation
- working with children's social networks.

Similarly, tracking mechanisms for children on the move, combined with systems for data and case management in transit areas and destinations, can help to identify and follow up cases of exploitation. Coordination between services at places of origin and destination is particularly important for the purpose of identification, follow-up and reintegration of children who have moved and found themselves in exploitative situations.

The standardised and inflexible nature of some child-labour interventions may not be effective in responding to the exploitation of children on the move. Often, such responses tend to focus primarily on withdrawing children from work, with little or no consideration of the need for children on the move to earn an income, to secure safe shelter, or to access culturally appropriate and flexible education services. At the same time, while anti-trafficking responses have taken many of the mobility variables into consideration, the part played by children's decision-making in starting the movement process has rarely been considered in actual responses.

Research that involves listening to working and exploited children shows that their main concerns relate to working conditions and pay.[67] Protective measures that focus on improving these may be particularly effective in protecting children on the move who work.

Governments and NGOs should, therefore, ensure that child-labour responses are appropriate and effectively tailored to protect children on the move. Additionally, a long-term objective for governments should be to ensure that employment standards are respected and that labour inspectors are trained in protecting children who have moved for work and are aware of their specific needs. The role of employers and the private sector in protecting children on the move from exploitation should also be further explored. For example, the private sector should be involved in setting up vocational training programmes for children that genuinely provide job opportunities for young people. Organisations run by children, both in their home communities and at destination, such as those in India, the Child Watch Clubs in Cambodia,[69] and participatory movements for child workers such as *Mouvement Africain des Enfants et Jeunes Travailleurs* in Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal,[70] play a key role in identifying cases of exploitation, particularly when children work in the informal sector and live outside their home environment. They should be supported.

Data and case management systems for children on the move: two examples

The database of the Cross-border Project against Trafficking and Exploitation of Migrant and Vulnerable Children in the Mekong sub-region

Save the Children UK's Cross-border Project in the Mekong region is currently implementing a new database system across six countries in the sub-region. The database aims to support case management work for vulnerable children on the move. It supports case workers in managing relevant information on vulnerable children, action plan development and follow-up, and the monitoring of service provision. The database, which runs information in six local languages, is also used to measure the impact of protection responses on children's lives, and as an advocacy tool to influence policy-makers on issues of protection for children on the move. The first set of data from the database was reported in June 2008, with information on 850 cases from Cambodia, China, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The Interagency Child Protection Database

Save the Children, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and UNICEF, as part of their work with separated children, children associated with armed groups and forces, and other particularly vulnerable children, are working together on supporting an inter-agency child protection database to facilitate family tracing and reunification, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), and other child protection programmes. The database supports case management and family tracing and reunification. It is also an information management tool to generate reports and analyses for vulnerable children on specific protection concerns. The information provided by the database is also used for programme planning, monitoring and evaluation, and for global advocacy work on child protection.

The database is currently being used in Myanmar, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Guinea, northern Sudan, southern Sudan, Uganda, Indonesia, Nepal, Chad and Kenya, by a number of different agencies and governmental and nongovernmental partners.

Recovery and reintegration

A strategy for providing urgent support and planning for the future is necessary for children who have left hazardous or exploitative work, or a place where they were sexually exploited or subject to violence. This includes enabling them to secure financial support and accommodation, as well as personal and emotional support.

To date, it has often been assumed that children on the move have either been trafficked or are illegal immigrants, and therefore need to be returned home. This may not be in the child's best interest. Where children are returning to their families and neighbourhoods, long-term support for multi-sectoral assistance, including attending school, accessing training or finding alternative livelihoods, needs to be available. Where children are being returned after international migration, processing children's legal status can involve long delays in family identification and assessment. As a result, the child is often kept in basic shelter for prolonged periods of time.

Governments should ensure that policies on returns reflect the best interests of the child, in line with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and with General Comment No 6 issued by the UNCRC Committee on the Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside their Country of Origin. According to such principles, governments should conduct a risk assessment and ensure that a child is not returned into a situation of danger.[70] Governments need to give full consideration to protection issues affecting children on the move in the areas where they originate, as well as during their time in transit and at their destination.

Children's participation in developing protection services

Participation means children are:

- able to express opinions and ideas
- listened to by service-providers, organisations and government
- involved in making decisions
- involved in taking action.

Meaningful participation is even more crucial to the protection of children on the move, as their decision-making is an important factor in their movement and in identifying survival strategies. Participation supports children in challenging the discrimination and exclusion they often face. Children are also key actors in protecting other children, by identifying children who are otherwise 'invisible' and who are being exploited, and by providing peer support in an unthreatening way.

However, it is also important to remember that children's decision-making is often constrained. When children choose to undertake risky movement, or to remain as migrants even in situations of some vulnerability, they are probably only able to choose the least bad option. Intervention can only be successful if such constraints to children's decision-making are taken into account and viable alternatives provided to children.

6 Providing services and support for children who move

At the same time as tackling the worst form of movement and the exploitation of children on the move, we need to support the positive outcomes of movement and access to good-quality services. While such services should be accessible to all children, they need to respond to the specific needs of children on the move.

Ensuring access to services for children on the move

Governments should ensure that children's rights to social welfare, education and healthcare are clearly recognised in national legislation and implemented, irrespective of their residence status and whether they possess relevant documentation (eg, birth certificates or identity cards). Informal systems of identity cards for migrants, which protect children on the move from official harassment and allow them to access services, have been introduced in some programmes in India, together with migrant resource centres that provide information on jobs, wages and rights.[72] In the Mekong region, migrants are issued with cards that entitle them to access government health programmes.[73]

Integrating and coordinating services for children on the move

Because children on the move are seen through the lens of other categories of children (street children, domestic workers, working children, children in conflict with the law, trafficked children, etc.), in many countries responsibility for responding to children's problems tend to be divided among different agencies. Responses are, as a result,

Helping internal migrants access services in Myanmar

In Northern Shan State in Myanmar, migrant families, including children, are able to register to receive services and protection. This means, for example, that local child protection committees can monitor the working conditions and salaries of migrants. In one township in Mon State, the local child protection committee, with support from Save the Children, was able to convince the medical officer to provide immunisation to migrant children and to help migrant children attend school.

Informal education for migrant children in Thailand

In the northern Chiang Mai province in northern Thailand, Baan Uan-Aree, a partner of Save the Children, has set up informal weekend education for stateless and migrant children in two subdistricts. Teachers in the unit provide creative activities for children aged two to 12 with instruction in Thai.

In Takuapa in Phang nga province in southern Thailand, Save the Children's partner Foundation for Education Development found that migrant children living in remote areas and rubber plantations were unable to reach learning centres. In response, it has set up mobile education units in four different locations. More than 100 children have taken part in the programme, which has adapted the curriculum from that used at local learning centres.

Both projects are part of Save the Children UK's Cross-border Project against Trafficking and Exploitation of Migrant and Vulnerable Children in the Mekong Sub-Region.

fragmented. Vertical and horizontal co-ordination within and across agencies, NGOs, government authorities, and administrative levels is crucial for the protection of children on the move. This requires one agency to be made responsible for the overall coordination of services for children on the move.

Education for children on the move

Innovative responses are needed in order to include children on the move in education and other services, especially when children are engaged in seasonal work or are part of mobile working communities. One successful example is a project in Balochistan, Pakistan, where the authorities have allowed children of seasonal migrants and nomads to rejoin school on their return to their main place of abode, and to relax age limitations, since most children were over the set age for their grade. This was as a result of having missed a substantial part of the school year. The lack of tracking mechanisms, however, meant that these children could not be followed up when they moved again following seasonal work patterns.[74]

For children on the move, there are a number of key concerns, including:

- the location of schools
- the language used by teachers
- information about the schools they can or cannot attend
- getting permission from employers to leave the workplace
- the direct and indirect cost of education.

Education provision needs to be geographically and culturally flexible, to respond to the timing, language and other constraints experienced by children on the move.

Where employment is an obstacle to working children's ability to access education, awareness-raising activities targeted at employers should run alongside interventions that provide support for child workers, such as informal education and training.[75] An interesting example is the model of earn-and-learn schools: these involve children working in commercial agriculture (eg, tea and coffee estates), and have had some success in Zimbabwe.[76] The importance of earning an income

for children on the move is reflected in the success of programmes on children's work in Africa that provided vocational training (which children preferred to formal education), and/or where alternative income sources were created.[77]

In order that education initiatives for children on the move are successful, schools located in the vicinity of migrant communities should have a welcoming approach towards children on the move, and should not discriminate against migrant or minority ethnic children. In addition, they should provide bridging courses for those children who need them to prepare for enrolment into mainstream school.

Table 1: Summary of protection responses

Prevention	Safer movement	Better conditions at destination
Empowerment and awareness-raising strategies to: • improve status of children, to reduce domestic abuse and inter-generational conflict • highlight the right to education. In conflict contexts, increase awareness of the dangers of joining armed forces and guerrilla groups. Support for existing protection measures that absorb family crisis. Poverty reduction and income-generating activities. Increase funding for and access to formal and community or vocational education. Support for community-based child protection mechanisms. Support for children's participation.	Information campaigns on: • conditions at destination • labour rights • migrants' rights. Research and training on the positive and negative roles of intermediaries. Encouraging training and peer support mechanisms for children who might move. Training of key workers, including policy and customs agents. Improved regulatory frameworks that distinguish between criminal intermediaries and non-criminal networks. Addressing illegal status through: • temporary work permits • temporary migration schemes. Registration and citizenship rights for children born in-country.	Enforcement of labour legislation: • protective measures for potentially hazardous work • hours of work • pay. Trade unions support for working children. Support for children's (working) organisations. Advocacy around child workers' right to educational opportunities. Provision/encouragement of: • vocational training • earn-and-learn schools. Shelters and food provision. Card schemes for government health insurance programmes. Registration with UNHCR for refugee/asylum-seeking children and, where possible, conflict affected Internally Displaced Populations. NGO-provided social services, healthcare and education. Provision of drop-in centres. Family tracing mechanisms. Coordination between NGOs, INGOs, government agencies, and civil society. Empowerment and awareness-raising strategies to challenge discrimination. Legal mechanisms. Adherence to child protection standards and safety and security norms in camps for displaced populations.

7 Conclusions and recommendations

Millions of children are on the move today. Their number could grow dramatically in the next decades, as a consequence of global trends such as urbanisation and climate change. Yet, children on the move are virtually invisible to many policy-makers.

The protection of children on the move can no longer be ignored. Much greater attention must be paid to assessing and responding to their vulnerabilities to exploitation, abuse and violence, as well as to supporting the positive outcomes of children's movement.

Protection policies, laws and implementing services are still lacking in many countries, and where they do exist, they do not adequately protect children on the move. Moreover, policies intended to prevent or control child migration can have unintended negative consequences for children, putting them into even more vulnerable situations, and further constraining their already limited choices and opportunities.

It is imperative that governments, with support from donors and international agencies, introduce national child protection systems for all children, and that these protection systems are inclusive of – and responsive to the needs of – children on the move. In addition, systems in different countries should be linked in order to protect children when they move internationally. Coordination and cooperation agreements are, therefore, needed at bilateral, regional and international levels.

Children on the move fall through the cracks of international and national policies on migration and on child protection. Despite the fact that the numbers of children on the move are likely to grow, the larger debates on child labour, decent work, poverty reduction and international development ignore the role played by these children and their vulnerability. The protection and support of children on the move should be a high priority, given the risks they face and the dangers of inappropriate policy-making. So far, there is no home for children on the move in the international community, both literally and figuratively.

Recommendations

Save the Children recommends that governments, supported by intergovernmental agencies such as UNICEF, the International Labour Organisation, the International Organisation on Migration, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and by NGOs, should:

1 **Ensure that children on the move are visible in all relevant national and international policy discussions.**
The rights and needs of children on the move must be a key component and appropriately integrated in the development and implementation of national and international policies and programmes on child protection, child labour, migration, poverty reduction, development and decent work.

2 **Ensure that anti-trafficking initiatives, while vital, do not 'crowd out' or impact negatively on the support and care for children on the move.**
Children on the move should be seen as a large group of children with common protection needs, of which trafficked children are a subset. The movement of children, and the protection of children on the move from exploitation and abuse, should be addressed on a broader level than the current interpretations of trafficking allow. Children on the move should not be excluded from protection initiatives because they fall outside the current policy frameworks. Programmes and policies need to be better targeted and need to take into account the reasons why children move, children's ages, the real level of risks they face, and their home and travelling circumstances.

3 **Address gaps in legislation, policies and services to protect and support children on the move, with the full involvement of children themselves.**
A review of these instruments at the international, regional and national levels should be carried out to ensure that children on the move are specifically mentioned and protected by legislation. This includes ensuring that their right to access to basic services is recognised and implemented, independently of their immigration and documentation status; that children on the move are not discriminated against; and that they are not criminalised. Protection responses for children on the move should be integrated into National Plans of Action on child labour, trafficking and orphans and vulnerable children. A focal point should be indentified at national level for the protection of children on the move, and clear guidelines and training should be put in place to guide government departments, agencies and local authorities in protecting children on the move.

4 **Support cooperation and partnership initiatives that promote the best interests of children on the move.**
Cooperation and strategic partnerships should be promoted and supported at the international and regional levels, as well as between local authorities in areas where children move from, and areas where children tend to move to. Responses should be coordinated, and monitoring and tracking mechanisms for the protection of children should be put in place. These initiatives should consider the reasons why children move, focus on the best interests of children, and should not be limited to stopping movement. The positive role of local networks that protect children who move should be explored and supported, rather than criminalised.

Endnotes

Introduction

[1] UN Population division, *Trends in Total Migrant Stock: The 2005 Revision*. http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/migration/UN_Migrant_Stock_Documentation_2005.pdf

[2] P Deshingkar and S Grimm, *Internal Migration and Development. A global perspective*, Overseas Development Institute, IOM, 2005

1 Children on the move: who are they?

[3] D Balahur and R Budde, 'Nomadic child and childhood' in S Swärd and L Bruun, *Conference Report: Focus on Children in Migration – From a European research and method perspective*, Warsaw, Poland 2007, p. 40

[4] R King, 'Towards a new map of European migration', *International Journal of Population Geography*, Vol. **8**, 2002, p. 97

[5] S Punch, 'Migration Projects: Children on the Move for Work and Education', paper presented at *Workshop on Independent Migrants: Policy Debates and Dilemmas*, London, 12 September 2007, p. 1

[6] S Punch, 'Migration Projects: Children on the Move for Work and Education', paper presented at *Workshop on Independent Migrants: Policy Debates and Dilemmas*, London, UK, 12 September 2007, p. 1. R King, 'Towards a new map of European migration', *International Journal of Population Geography*, Vol. **8**, No. 2, 2002, pp. 89–106, p. 97. A Whitehead and I Hashim, *Children and Migration: Background paper for DFID Migration Team*, Department for International Development, UK. p. 7, March 2005

[7] Following Save the Children's definition, 'exploitation' means the use of children for someone else's advantage, gratification or profit, often resulting in unjust, cruel and harmful treatment of the child. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. See International Save the Children Alliance (2007) *Save the Children and Child Protection*, Save the Children, Sweden, available online: www.rb.se/.../C8803BEF-6AEF-4760-9545-46CBACA9CB91/0/FinalSCAllianceChildProtectionDefinition121007.pdf

[8] It is worth noting that although this paper is not concerned with children left behind by parents, some argue that the needs of these children should also be considered within this framework, since they may be vulnerable to many of the same risks and hazards as independent migrant children (L Kelly, '"You can find anything you want": A critical reflection on research on trafficking', *International Migration*, Vol. **43**, No. 1/2, 2005, p.247; Save the Children, *Children Speak Out. Trafficking risks and resilience in south-east Europe*. Regional report, p. 22, 2007). For a discussion of this, see J O'Connell Davidson and C Farrow, *Child Migration and the Construction of Vulnerability*, Save the Children, Sweden. pp. 51–54, 2007 and A Whitehead and I Hashim, *Children and Migration: Background paper for DFID Migration Team*, Department for International Development, UK. pp. 10–12, March 2005.

2 How many children are on the move?

[9] A Whitehead and I Hashim, *Children and Migration: Background paper for DFID Migration Team*, Department for International Development, UK. p. 7, March 2005

3 Why children move

[10] S Castle, and A Diarra, *The International Migration of Young Malians: Tradition, necessity or rite of passage?*, School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London. 2003. I Hashim, *Independent Child Migration in Ghana: A research report*, Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty, University of Sussex. 2005. D Thorsen, *'If Only I Get Enough Money for a Bicycle!' A study of childhoods, migration and adolescent aspirations against a backdrop of exploitation and trafficking in Burkina Faso*, DRC on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty, University of Sussex, UK. 2007

[11] I Hashim, *Independent Child Migration in Ghana: A research report*, Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty, University of Sussex. 2005. S Khair, *Preliminary Report on Child Migrant Workers in the Informal Sector in Dhaka*. RMMRU, Dhaka and Migration DRC, Sussex. 2005

[12] Save the Children UK, *Participatory Action Research Report with Migrant Children and Youth in Northern Provinces of Lao PDR Bordering China, Myanmar (Burma) and Thailand*, Save the Children UK, 2005. Save the Children UK, *Child Protection Programme Cross-border Project against Trafficking and Exploitation of Migrant and Vulnerable Children*, Save the Children Myanmar. 2007. Hashim 2005 (see note 8), Khair 2005 (see note 9), Thorsen 2007 (see note 8)

[13] The sense of filial responsibility is found very strongly across different cultures. It emerged, for example, from interviews with girls aged 16–18 in Vietnam (see A West, *Children on the Move in South East Asia: Why child protection systems are needed*, Save the Children UK, 2008.) and children of various ages in Latin America

(see Save the Children, *Position on Children and Work*, 2003.) and in the African context.

[14] Save the Children UK Cross Border Project, Consultations with children, 2008

[15] L Hillier, *Children on the Move: Protecting unaccompanied migrant children in South Africa and the region*, Save the Children, 2007

[16] Save the Children UK, 2005 (see note 10), p. 30

[17] Save the Children UK 'Visitors from Zimbabwe: A Preliminary Study Outlining the Risks and Vulnerabilities Facing Zimbabwean Children who have Crossed Illegally into Mozambique', nd. p. 5

[18] A Whitehead and I Hashim, 2005 (see note 6), p. 25

[19] Save the Children UK, Research on child exploitation in the football sector in Côte d'Ivoire, forthcoming

[20] D Thorsen 2007 (see note 8); see also A Kielland and I Sanogo, *Burkina Faso: Child labour migration from rural areas*, 2002, p. 4

[21] L Hillier, *Children on the Move: Protecting unaccompanied migrant children in South Africa and the region*, Save the Children, 2007

[22] N Ansell, 'Secondary Schooling and Rural Youth Transitions in Lesotho and Zimbabwe', *Youth and Society*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2004, pp. 183–202. S Punch ' The impact of primary education on school-to-work transitions for young people in rural Bolivia', *Youth and Society*, Vol. **36**, No 2, 2004, pp. 163–182

[23] M Bey, 'The Mexican child: from work with the family to paid employment' *Childhood*, Vol. **10**, No. 3, 2003, pp.287–300. I Hashim, 'Working with Working Children: Child labour and the barriers to education in rural north-eastern Ghana', D.Phil thesis, University of Sussex, 2004

[24] Save the Children UK, Research on child exploitation in the football sector in Côte d'Ivoire, forthcoming

[25] Save the Children, *Legacy of Disaster*, 2007

[26] For a review of the extent of movement and migration caused by natural disasters and climate change, see: IRIN News: "Hot topic": special journal issue on climate and migration reviewed. http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=80646 and Forced Migration Review: Climate change and displacement. Issue 31. October 2008.

[27] I Palmary, *'Children Crossing Borders: Report on unaccompanied minors who have travelled to South Africa'*. The Forced Migration Studies Programme, University of the Witwatersrand, for Save the Children UK. South Africa, 2007

[28] Save the Children, *Fighting Back: Child and community-led strategies to avoid children's recruitment into armed forces and groups in West Africa*, London, 2005

[29] Save the Children in Mozambique, *Denied Our Rights: Children, women and inheritance in Mozambique*, Maputo, 2007

[30] Y Zhou, *Children who can't go home: Research by street children in Guangdong and Zhengzhou'*, Beijing: Save the Children, 2006

4 The risks children face when they move

[31] See note 29, p15.

[32] Personal communication, Mike Dottridge, 22 February 2008

[33] Whitehead and Hashim 2005, (see note 6), pp. 4, 35

[34] E Beauchemin, *'The Exodus: The growing migration of children from Ghana's rural areas to urban centres'*, Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) UNICEF, 1999. Castle and Diarra 2003 (see note 8), Hashim 2004 (see note 21), Save the Children Canada, *Children Still in the Cocoa Trade: The buying, selling and toiling of west African child workers in the multi-billion dollar industry*, 2003, D Thorsen 2007 (see note 8). T Caoeutte, *Small Dreams Beyond Reach: The lives of migrant children and youth along the borders of China, Myanmar and Thailan'*, Save the Children UK, 2001. S Punch 'Youth transitions and interdependent adult–child relations in rural Bolivia' *Journal of Rural Studies*, Vol **18**, No. 2, 2002, pp. 163–182. V Iversen, 'Autonomy in child labor migrants', *World Development*, Vol. **30**, No. 5, 2002, pp. 817–834. O Niuewenhuys, 'The domestic economy and the exploitation of children's work: The case of Kerala', *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, Vol. **3**, 1995, pp. 213–225. S Khair 'Preliminary Report on Child Migrant Workers in the Informal Sector in Dhaka'. RMMRU, Dhaka and Migration DRC, Sussex, 2005

[35] This scenario is less ambiguous, at least from a legal perspective, in the case of children who are above the legal age for employment (15 or 14 in many developing countries). However, many children below the age of 14 or 15 do work because of lack of school opportunities and the need to contribute to their families' income. These children when on the move are especially vulnerable. Their protection requires more careful interventions that balance the legal requirements linked to their age with their survival needs and the risks they face. The entitlement to access education and basic services in the area of destination becomes a key component of any protection intervention, particularly for this age group.

[36] Whitehead and Hashim 2005, (see note 6), p. 30

[37] Save the Children, *Abuse among Child Domestic Workers. A research study in West Bengal*, Calcutta, 2006

[38] It has to be said, of course, that legal entry into a state also may be followed by an experience of exploitation and abuse, while 'illegal' migration can represent a means through which a child secures rights and freedoms.

[39] Save the Children UK, nd, (see note 15), p. 9

[40] Save the Children UK, *Children Speak Out: Trafficking risk and resilience in south-east Europe regional report*, 2007, p. 4; D Wenke, 'A broader perspective to protect the human rights of children on the move – applying lessons learnt from child trafficking research' in S Swärd and L Bruun, *Focus on Children in Migration: From a European research and method perspective*, Conference Report, Warsaw, Poland, 2007, p. 4–5

[41] Human Rights Watch, *Nowhere to Turn: States' abuses of unaccompanied migrant children in Spain and Morocco*, Human Rights Watch, New York, 2002

[42] Save the Children UK, 2007, (see note 36), p. 116

[43] L Hillier, Save the Children UK, 2007, (see note 21) p. 16

[44] Anarfi, J., Gent, S., Hashim, I., Iversen, V., Khair, S., Kwankye, S., Thorsen, D., and Whitehead, A., *"A Better Understanding of How Life is": Voices of child migrants, DRC on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty*, University of Sussex for the Department for International Development, London, UK. 2006. p. 16

[45] It is unrealistic, however, to assume that children living with relatives are necessarily better treated and safer.

[46] C Panter-Brick, 'Street children, human rights, and public health', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 31, October, 2002, p. 156

[47] As above

[48] International Labour Organization, *'The Mekong Challenge – Underpaid, Overworked and Overlooked: The realities of young migrant workers in Thailand'* – Volume 2 (ILO) 2006 – Fishing Sector

[49] L Hillier, Save the Children UK, 2007, (see note 21), p. 18

[50] A donation of over 12000 rmb equivalent to 1,500 USD per year is cited as necessary for school in Beijing for unregistered migrants (M Tunon, *Internal Labour Migration in China: Features and Responses*, Beijing: International Labour Organisation, p. 15, 2006,).

[51] Save the Children UK, nd, (see note 15), p. 10

[52] Some countries in the south-east Asia – for example, China, Vietnam, Myanmar – have legal restrictions on rights of residence and population movements internally, even if these are not always fully enforced nowadays. Some, such as the Vietnamese Ho Khau schemes, were introduced to curtail migration. The lack of permanent registered inhabitant status is a barrier to access some social services such as healthcare and education for children. See A West, *Children on the Move in South-east Asia: Why child protection is needed*, 2008.

5 Tackling the 'worst forms' of children's movement and exploitation

[53] Cash is either directly disbursed to vulnerable households, or delivered in exchange for work or fulfilment of certain conditions. Unconditional cash transfers include social pensions, disability pensions, child and family support grants, and other cash grants to vulnerable individuals and households.

[54] Save the Children, *In the Face of Disaster: Children and climate change*, London, 2008

[55] B Henschel, *Child Labour related Programmes: A review of impact evaluations*. Understanding Child Work Project (UCW), 2002

[56] Brazil's Programme for the Eradication of Child Labour (PETI). This provides 'school scholarships' to the families of children who have dropped out and started work while still of compulsory school age.

[57] Save the Children UK, *Striving for Good Practices: Lessons learned from community-based initiatives against trafficking in children in the Mekong Sub-region*, Save the Children UK, 2006, p.19

[58] R Akresh, *Risk, Network Quality, and Family Structure: Child fostering decisions in Burkina Faso*, Department of Economics, Yale University, 2003

[59] UNICEF *et al.*, *Enhanced Protection for Children Affected by AIDS*, March 2007

[60] UNICEF *et al.*, *The Framework for the Protection, Care and support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children Living in a World with HIV and AIDS*, July 2004

[61] Save the Children UK, 2006 (see note 56), p. 34

[62] Save the Children UK, 2006, (see note 56), p.34–38

[63] Save the Children, *Living and Working Away from Home*, Maputo. Mozambique

[64] Save the Children UK, Myanmar (Burma), *Child Protection Programme, Impact Assessment Report*, December 2007

[65] S Castle, and A Diarra, *The International Migration Of Young Malians: Tradition, necessity or rite of passage?* London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 2003; M Dottridge, *A Handbook to Prevent Child Trafficking*, Terres des Hommes, Lausanne, Switzerland, 2007

[66] Save the Children, 'Community-Based Approaches to Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation', forthcoming

[67] In situations of emergencies caused by, for example, conflict or natural disasters, various measures of prevention and support for separated children, or children at risk of separation from their families, have been put in place. These include, amongst others, identity schemes for children at risk, awareness-raising on risks of separation and way-stations along key routes to help reunify children with their families along the way. For more information on protection measures for separated children, see: S Uppard and Celia Petty, *Working with Separated Children: Field guide*, Save the Children, 1998.

[68] A Camacho, 'Child domestic workers in Metro Manila', *Childhood*, Vol. **6**, No. 1, 1999, pp. 57–73.; Hashim 2005 (see note 9); M Jacquemin, 'Children's domestic work in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire: The petites bonnes have the floor', *Childhoods*, Vol. **11**. No. 3, 2004 pp. 383–97

[69] A West, 2008 (see note 51)

[70] Capitalisation des bonnes: Expériences des EJT sur la lutte contre l'exode précoce et la traite des enfants. http://eja.enda.sn/capitalisation_exode.htm

[71] Where children are returning from armed forces and groups, governments and agencies should ensure that the steps taken to reintegrate them are in accordance with the *Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Groups*. For more information see UNICEF, *The Paris Principles. Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated With Armed Forces or Armed Groups*, February 2007, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/465198442.html [accessed 9 October 2008] s, 2007.

6 Providing services and support for children who move

[72] P Deshingkar, S Grimm, *'Voluntary Internal Migration: An Update'*, Overseas Development Institute, London, p. 34. 2004

[73] Deshingkar and Grimm, 2004, (see above) p. 34

[74] Personal communication with Salma Majeed Jafar, Technical Director for Child Protection, Save the Children UK, Pakistan Office. 4 March 2008

[75] Whitehead and Hashim 2005, (see note 6) p. 47

[76] Bourdillon, M. (ed.) (2001) *Earning a Life: Working children in Zimbabwe*, Weaver Press, p. 3

[77] Whitehead and Hashim 2005, (see note 6), p. 48

Away from Home

Protecting and supporting children on the move

Millions of children are 'on the move', both within and between countries, with or without their parents. Yet, the needs and interests of children on the move are largely absent from mainstream debates on migration, child protection, urbanisation and international development. As a result, most governments and international institutions have failed to develop effective policy responses to help these vulnerable children.

Drawing on the experiences of children themselves, *Away from Home* provides vital insights into why children move and the risks they face. It looks at how policy-makers and service-providers can support children who are on the move, including tackling the worst forms of children's movement and exploitation. It argues that child protection systems and other services, as well as migration policies, need to be adapted so that they work for children on the move.

"An important and timely report about the very many mobile children and young people around the world who migrate without their parents and are not trafficked."

Ann Whitehead
Professor of Anthropology, University of Sussex, and research convenor at the Migration, Globalisation and Poverty Development Research Centre

"This is a timely contribution to understanding the opportunities to protect children on the move.... It is time to press governments to stop ignoring or abusing such children and to start protecting them more effectively."

Mike Dottridge
Consultant on human rights and child rights

COVER PHOTO: AUBREY WADE/PANOS PICTURES

Save the Children
UK

savethechildren.org.uk