

**Gender, Migration and Children's Rights**  
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The increasing feminization of migration internationally and in many developing countries is a phenomenon that implies a redefinition of the economic role of women in the society and within their family as well as a redefinition of the traditional family. At the family level, fathers who are not traditionally geared for being house-bound, have to suddenly take over the role traditionally held by the wife and mother. The migration of a man or woman has different implications on the children left behind, because different were the roles that fathers and mothers played in their life and society expected from them. In the same manner, boy and girl children cope differently when they are left behind depending on their stage of development and who is the migrating or left behind parent or guardian. Boy and girl children also cope differently depending on their developmental stage when they migrate to another land.

The number of children affected by migration is estimated to be very high. In the Philippines, there is around 3 to 6 million (10-20%) children left behind, one million in Indonesia, half a million in Thailand.<sup>1</sup> Around 218, 000 children had at least one parent living abroad in Ecuador in 2005. The impact or effect of migration to children left behind varies from positive to negative consequences.

The impact of migration varies - ranging from economic benefits not only for the family but the country in generally through its remittances to the security and well being of the family of migrants. But a major concern here is the social costs of migration specifically to the children left behind. A study by Scalabrini reveals that there is a variation in terms of gender roles when women migrate compared to men. *"When men migrate, the left-behind wives indeed assumed more responsibilities with their dual roles as fathers and mothers. But when women migrate, it appears that families go through more adjustments – this is not surprising because changes in women's roles often have more implications for the family than changes in men's roles. If women assume men's responsibilities when the men are not around, men do not as readily take up care giving.*

Parental absence creates "displacement, disruptions and changes in care giving arrangement." There is always an emotional aspect that goes along with parents leaving their children, especially for long periods of time. Nevertheless, it is also a relief to have the extended family looking after the children left-behind and the use of technology. However, it cannot negate the fact that the children are longing for the love and care of their biological parents.

*General Impact on Children*

Children have a different level of acceptance or tolerance of the situation depending on their "cognitive development"<sup>2</sup>. For young children, they only see migration as a form of abandonment

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<sup>1</sup> Data from UNICEF, "Migration and Children: A Need to Fill Information Gaps in Order to Guide Policy Responses"

<sup>2</sup> Carandang, 2007

of their parents; while adolescents may either be receptive or resentful. Related articles on children left behind also focus on the effects of mother's absence to children, where children have varied reactions to migration situation depending on the age of the child – i.e. for pre-school children (0-5 years old), the absence of mothers is somewhat easily accepted since no bonding has yet been established but the adjustment for those children ages 6-16 years of age is more difficult because they had already known and established affection with their mothers.<sup>3</sup>

There are several factors that may negatively or positively affect the formation and personal development of the children:

1. Global parenting

This is what Tanalega (2002) is also talking about (Global Parenting) wherein parenting becomes a long distance love affair synchronized with the fast paced development of technology. The absence of the parents is substituted through the different technological mechanisms (cellphones, emails, videocams) to make their presence felt by their children even if they are thousand miles away. Unfortunately, this “techy” parenting will still not replace the emotional bonding that can develop in the relationship when they are physically present. At the same time, they will miss the growing up years of their children and their value formation.<sup>4</sup>

2. Search for role models

“The strength of family relationship particularly the children's closeness to their parents, is reflected in the children's choice of their parents as role models.”<sup>5</sup> Migration has somehow influenced the children's choice of career and future plans. In the 2003 study, 60% of OFW respondents would like to work abroad and would like to take courses in medicine/nursing, teaching, and engineering/architecture. This view is likewise supported by Añonuevo (2002) showing an alarming reality in terms of children's aspiration to work like their parents. Even if they dream of finishing college education, they already developed in their consciousness that they could get a higher salary abroad even without having a college diploma.<sup>6</sup>

### Towards Migration and Development

Using the thematic issues of the Global Migration and Development as a framework for the review, this section will look into the possible impacts/issues on children affected by migration vis-à-vis the thematic issues.

- 1. Migration, Development and Human Rights**

#### *Economic benefits vs social cost*

In 2006, approximately US\$300 billion remittances were sent to migrants' households in their places of origin.<sup>7</sup> “From a development perspective, this enormous transfer of resources from

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<sup>3</sup> Añonuevo, “Coming Home: Women, Migration and Reintegration, 2002

<sup>4</sup> Tanalega, “Families on the Move”, 2002

<sup>5</sup> 2003 Philippine study by Scalabrini

<sup>6</sup> Añonuevo, “Coming Home; Women, Migration and Reintegration, 2002

<sup>7</sup> IFAD, 2007 as cited in “Gender, Remittances and Development: The Case of Filipino Migration to Italy”, United Nations INSTRAW, IFAD, and Filipino Women's Council, 2008

wealthier to more impoverished regions of the world represents a unique opportunity for improving the well being of those communities involved.”<sup>8</sup>

Remittances do help improve the quality of life of the migrants and their families. A huge percentage of the remittances go to tuition fees of children, thus, children of migrants have better educational opportunities where they can enroll in private schools offering good quality education.

Despite the gains of remittances, one study shows that there is not much tremendous improvement in the lives of the families, the money being sent is just enough or sometimes hardly meet the demands and needs of the families left behind. (Arellano, et al: 2007). Narratives of this book were based from real life stories of families in poor urban communities where the mother is the migrant worker. The stories illustrate the realities faced by the left behind families including how they manage the remittances which are hardly enough to sustain their daily needs especially if the remittances have been delayed. Likewise, Edillon (2008) asserted that there is not really much of a significant difference with regard to the family’s economic status as they remain poor. Hence, other priorities such as health considerations including hygiene-related health problems are taken for granted. Visit to doctors only occur when very ill (though this is also true even to poor non-migrants). They are also vulnerable to “economic shocks” especially related to the country’s economic and political situation.<sup>9</sup>

In the study of Coronel and Unterreiner (2007), the authors look at other areas where remittances can be used for the benefit of the child: (a) access not only to leisure and recreation but also to cultural activities, (b) contribution to higher achievements at school, (c) ensuring that other critical elements such as physical, mental, moral, spiritual and social aspects of living are considered, among others.<sup>10</sup>

While the current volume of remittances reaching \$14 billion by December 2007 seems to constitute a great resource to tap for the promotion and protection of children’s rights, the prevailing separation of one or both parents from their children definitely goes against the interest of the children. It is, therefore, almost imperative to determine how these remittances are utilized to find ways to increase the positive effect of remittances on these rights and promote their best use to ensure the creation of assets for the stability of the future in terms of enhancing human and social capital. (Dungo, 2008)

A paper by Coronel and Unterreiner (2007) points out that “in order for remittances to have a maximum effect on the realization of children’s rights, the status of the migrant must be improved so that they can avoid being in vulnerable situations abroad which would negatively affect their ability to provide care for their children.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> “Gender, Remittances and Development: The Case of Filipino Migration to Italy”, United Nations INSTRAW, IFAD, and Filipino Women’s Council, 2008

<sup>9</sup> Edillon, Rosemarie G. “The Effects of Parent’s Migration on the Rights of Children Left Behind”, Asia Pacific Policy Center, UNICEF, 2008

<sup>10</sup> Coronel, F.K. and Unterreiner, F. “Increasing the Impact of Remittances on Children’s Rights: Philippines Paper”, UNICEF, 2007

<sup>11</sup> Coronel, F.K and Unterreiner, F. “Increasing the Impact of Remittances on Children’s Rights: Philippine Paper”, UNICEF, 2007

However, the social cost of migration is also something that needs serious attention. While economics may focus more on the impact of remittances which include but not limited to increase in the country's GNP, better standard of living of the migrant families, good education opportunities of children, and assistance to community development, among others; the unfortunately reality which may not be measurable by money (and which cannot be bought by any currency) is the impact of migration to families left behind especially on children.

There were several studies to show migration of parents is indeed heart breaking for children:

- longing for parental care

Though family separation may not necessarily lead to extreme cases of emotional disturbance and delinquency among children (Scalabrini:2004 and Asis:2000), children have different levels of acceptance and tolerance of the migration depending on their "cognitive development". For young children, they see this as abandonment and not seeing the other side of the picture; it could however have either a positive or negative effect for the adolescents – somewhat happy because of the material benefits but the painful one is they cannot hide their sadness. (Arellano-Carandang, et al: 2007 and Anonuevo: 2002). But regardless of the material benefits and possibly the care that these children left behind receive from their parents from a distance nor from their relatives, children of migrant particularly of migrant mothers still consider the migration as a form of abandonment. Children have much higher expectations for mothers to provide care for the family even if they are working abroad. Though they recognize the economic benefits they are gaining, they do not recognize this as a form of care. (Parrenas: 2006). This situation is also consistent with Battistella and Conaco's (1996) study which reveals that parental absence is experienced particularly as a sense of loneliness and abandonment and that children of left behind generally lagged behind from their classmates with both parents present.

On the level of psychological and emotional well-being, children of migrants revealed that they were less socially adjusted. Children with the mother abroad tend to be more angry, confused, apathetic and more afraid than other children. It is also asserted that the absence of the mother could be the most disruptive in the life of the children. (Battistella-and Conaco: 1996 and Migrante-Anak Pamilya Foundation: 2005). Likewise, children do not want their mother to work overseas. (Cruz:1987)

The parents' long period of absence gives the child left behind a feeling of "permanence of absence," very similar to those experience by orphans and abandoned children. Most of them have not really gotten to know their parents well because they have not lived with them for years. Children can only associate their parents with the money, gifts and phone calls (Atikha and Balikpapan: 2002).

- burden of girl children in performing the "caring" work

Many young adults who have migrated mothers felt neglected or abandoned. They do not see their fathers as performing the 'caring' work in the family, rather they pass over the caring responsibilities to other women in the family, more often to the eldest daughter. This immense responsibility in turn affects their performance in school. (Parrenas: 2006). As noted in another study, when mother migrates, the father does not automatically assume the roles previously undertaken by women, hence, it becomes a burden to the girls in the family who assume the roles of the mother migrants. (Asis: 2000).

- Confusion over gender boundaries and reversal of gender roles

It is unfortunate that gender boundaries are very much keen on children's views on parental migration, "*children of migrant fathers are more likely to say that their father left the Philippines to provide for the family, whereas children of migrant mothers more commonly claim that their mothers left to escape poverty.*" (Parrenas:2006). This study of Parrenas further shows how the society views the dysfunctional transnational families by blaming the migrant women's disruptions of the gender conventions where there is also a greater demand for children's care expectations from women than from men. And when the father is the one left at home, there is an impact to children of the reversal of roles of fathers from being a main provider to that of a nurturer. (Pingol:2001). There is also confusion and resentment of children over the transformation of traditional gender roles especially where most fathers refuse to perform nurturing roles even in the absence of the mothers. (Yeoh and Lim: nd)

- Developing a consumerist attitude

Most children accept the migration of their parents as an opportunity to have a better life, they only see the "money equivalent" of migration. As long as they receive their money regularly, they will be fine.<sup>12</sup> This also leads to a materialistic attitude of children of migrants.

- Vulnerability to abuses

Vulnerability of children to abuse and violence is one of the worrying aspects of parental absence. Study shows that among the common form of abuse are verbal, intimidating and hurting children. And among children of migrants, it is the male children who reported experiencing more abuse<sup>13</sup> than female children. "Gender differences were largest for such abuses as being belittled and being hurt. The feeling of being abandoned was rather pronounced among the children of migrant mothers (boys and girls alike)."<sup>14</sup>

## **2. Secure, Legal Migration can achieve stronger development impacts**

Usually due to poverty, citizens of developing countries see migration as the only option to get out of their impoverished situation. And just to go to other countries for more job opportunities, people will use all alternatives and means even through illegal channels without considering the possibilities of subjecting themselves to more extreme abuses. If parents are into this kind of situation, the children are definitely mostly affected. Aside from the fact that they cannot visit their countries of origin regularly, thus, leaving no other physical visitation alternatives to their children, the parents cannot demand and access for protection and social services in the host country leaving them vulnerable to human rights violations.

### *International Standards/Conventions on Migration*

According to Stephanie Grant, "migrants have been invisible in much human rights discussion, and that fact has contributed to popular belief that they were a group apart, without the same fundamental rights as others."<sup>15</sup> It is true that there were several international and regional treaties and standards on migrant workers (see Annex 1 for the listing of international and regional

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<sup>12</sup> Scalabrini, 2004

<sup>13</sup> The boys left behind by migrant parents were particularly vulnerable to being touched in sensitive areas

<sup>14</sup> 2003 Philippine Study by Scalabrini

<sup>15</sup> Stephanie Grant, International Migration and Human Rights, GCIM, Sept 2005

treaties), but none of which specifically addressed the needs and concerns of neither children of migrants nor migrant children in general.

A comprehensive international treaty on protecting migrants is the *Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers & Members of their Families* calling for equal treatment and same working conditions for migrants in the host countries as well as non discrimination of migrants and their families. It also ensures that the right of migrant to remain connected to their country of origin is guaranteed. But it has no specific provision for children. As of July 2007, the Convention has 37 parties<sup>16</sup> (with 28 signatories), but it is unfortunate to note that “no western migrant-receiving country has ratified the Convention, even though the majority of migrant workers (nearly 100 million out of a total of 175) live in Europe and North America. Other important receiving countries, such as India, Japan, Australia and the Gulf States, have not ratified the Convention either.”<sup>17</sup>

Even the two ILO conventions do not have provisions specific for children. *ILO Convention No. 97 Concerning Migration for Employment (1949)* calls State Parties to provide adequate and free service to assist migrants for employment as well as providing them with accurate information. Measures should be established to facilitate the departure, journey and reception of migrants for employment including fair provision for remuneration, accommodation, benefits, and social security. Furthermore, *ILO Convention No. 143 Concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers (1975)*, provides protection for legal migrants such as enjoyment of equal treatment with nationals in respect to guarantees of security of employment, relief work and retraining.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) particularly addresses the needs and concerns of migrant children where State Parties should uphold regardless of the children’s status within their territory. The CRC also has a General Principle relating to non-discrimination, best interests of the child, right to development, and right to be heard. The Committee even adopted a General Comment (No. 6) on the treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin.

Though the laws and standards are there, the enforcement and implementation of such policies is a different thing.

#### Host Countries’ Policies on Child Migrants

One affirmative action to look at with regards to upholding the rights of child migrants is their right to education which in turn can aid them in their integration to the host country. The European Community has clear directive concerning the education of children of migrant workers. According to European law, “minors who are children of third-country nationals with the status of long-term residents have since November 2003 received the same treatment as nationals as far as education is concerned, including the award of study grants.”<sup>18</sup> However, European countries

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<sup>16</sup> Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Nicaragua, Peru, Philippines, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, Uruguay

<sup>17</sup> Information Kit on the United Nations Convention on Migrants Rights.

[www.unesco.org/most/migration/convention](http://www.unesco.org/most/migration/convention)

<sup>18</sup> “Integrating Immigrant Children into Schools in Europe”, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, European Commission, 2004

and even other countries of destination often require language proficiency before they can access the education system and at the same time those who are not permanent residents are not entitled to educational benefits. Aside from this, the host countries do not have control over some prejudices and discrimination that children migrant might experience from other nationals of the host country, specifically the children and the parents. .

- Japan

Following the inevitable trend of immigration flow, the Japanese government has recognized the need to facilitate migrants' settlement into Japanese society. But despite of the efforts made, immigrants continue to face some difficulties with regard to social integration including education problems when their children start to go to school. The Japanese government still lacks effective means to address such problem; it does not even have a one-stop agency for immigrants.<sup>19</sup> Despite of this, there is an increasing duration of residency among migrants especially those coming from China, Brazil, the Philippines, and Peru. "As of late 2001, there were 280,436 individuals registered as a Spouse or Child of a Japanese National."<sup>20</sup> In the case of the Philippines, this can be attributed to the many Filipinas who worked as entertainers and later on married a Japanese man.

The Japanese government does not automatically grant citizenship even to those married to Japanese nationals. They, however, have the "Second Basic Plan for Immigration Control" (2000) which contains a section on "The Smooth Settlement by Long-Term Foreign Residents in Japan". Under this provision:

" a foreigner who is parenting or in guardianship of a child who is the actual child of a Japanese and who wishes to stay in Japan with the child, will be granted 'long-term residency' as a general rule, provided certain conditions are met - 1) that the child produced with a Japanese national has been in the care or under the guardianship of the person for a considerable period of time, 2) the person has parental authority (*shinken*) regarding the child, and finally 3) the child is recognized by a Japanese father to be his child."<sup>21</sup>

But a progressive amendment was made, which is allowing the female foreigner to reside even after the divorce from a Japanese spouse in order to protect the rights of people living together as a "family".<sup>22</sup>

In terms of education, there are problems concerning the teaching of the Japanese language. The problem is basically rooted in migrants' lack of Japanese language ability. Japanese is essential in migrant children participation in school and social activities.

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<sup>19</sup> Yuka Ishii, "The Residency and Lives of Migrants in Japan Since the Mid-1990s" in Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, August 19, 2005

<sup>20</sup> Yuka Ishii, "The Residency and Lives of Migrants in Japan Since the Mid-1990s" in Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, August 19, 2005

<sup>21</sup> Yuka Ishii, "The Residency and Lives of Migrants in Japan Since the Mid-1990s" in Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, August 19, 2005

<sup>22</sup> Yuka Ishii, "The Residency and Lives of Migrants in Japan Since the Mid-1990s" in Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, August 19, 2005

- United States

The United States recognize the pivotal role that education play in maintaining the social fabric of educating good citizens in their country including maintaining their political and cultural heritage.<sup>23</sup> Realizing that illegal migrants may continue to flow in the country, the Congress passed in 1982 the “Immigration Reform and Control Act” which imposes sanctions on employees who hire illegal aliens. An amnesty program for undocumented aliens was also included in the law.<sup>24</sup>

“The social climate in some US states is hostile to bilingual education. Mandates by state and local boards of education to teach only English in public schools have signaled a resurgence of xenophobic attitudes and policies directed at migrant families and their children.”<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, there are proficiency tests required in elementary and secondary schools which further isolated migrant and undocumented children. However, there are also some schools that have migrant-friendly admission and school procedures and quality educational practices even to undocumented families and children.<sup>26</sup>

### Impact on Children Migrants

Whether migrants went through the legal or illegal process, children migrants generally experience difficulties in coping and adopting in the new environment.

- lost identity or culture gap

Children migrants experience the dilemma of lost identity or identity crisis. This second generation living abroad not only have difficulty in being accepted in the mainstream of the country where they grew up because they look physically different from the natives but at the same time they could not connect with their parent’s home country. This is also known as the culture gap.

In San Francisco, USA where there are many immigrants living in the inner city, “their kids go to multi-racial high schools where those belonging to the same ethnic group tend to stick to each other for protection.<sup>27</sup>” Since the parents are often busy with their work, they could not spend much time with their children, living the children with difficulty of understanding and finding a common ground which is being exacerbated by insufficient community facilities that cater to their needs. Unlike in the Philippines, where extended families and social networks can be counted on to look after the children when parents are at work, in other countries, migrants have no one else to rely on except themselves. As such, these kids spend much of their time with their friends who could influence them either positively or negatively. And sometimes, these children blame their parents as they undergo the process of searching their identity.

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<sup>23</sup> Green, Paul, “The Undocumented: Educating the Children of Migrant Workers in America”, University of California, Riverside, nd

<sup>24</sup> Green, Paul, “The Undocumented: Educating the Children of Migrant Workers in America”, University of California, Riverside, nd

<sup>25</sup> Green, Paul, “The Undocumented: Educating the Children of Migrant Workers in America”, University of California, Riverside, nd

<sup>26</sup> Green, Paul, “The Undocumented: Educating the Children of Migrant Workers in America”, University of California, Riverside, nd

<sup>27</sup> “The Investigative Reporting Magazine”, Manila, Jan-Mar 1997.

- fear of xenophobia

Migrant children feel discriminated especially since they are the minority and therefore has a feeling of inferiority. In several European countries, “there are extreme political parties and groups promoting prejudices and fear...some of them have got a foothold in parliaments or local assemblies...extremist media have also played a negative role and disseminated stereotypes and in some cases even hate propaganda.”<sup>28</sup>

Mr. Thomas Hammarberg, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, recognized that poverty, exclusion and discrimination do have social consequences, and that “gaps in the schooling reduce the chances of future employment. The feeling of not belonging and the lack of hope about the future contribute to a destructive atmosphere.”<sup>29</sup> He further stressed of the connection between welfare policies and harmony, that is having mutual respect between individuals in society.

- Challenge in the access to education system

Children’s mobility can have an effect to children’s performance in school as well as finishing and meeting school requirements. And when in school, children migrants experience bullying from other children. They have difficulty in socializing due to language barriers, cultural differences, and their physical differences. This problem is much more profound to undocumented children.

### **3. Policy and Institutional Coherence and Partnership**

- Since labor migration remains to be an attractive option to many workers in developing countries despite of the various problems they might face in the countries of destination (i.e. non payment of salaries, contract violations, illegal detention, physical and sexual abuse, and psychological distress), states who are attending the GFMD should work together.

#### *Toward a Concerted Efforts*

Addressing migration issues and concerns is not just the sole responsibility of the State, all sectors (church, schools, community, family) of society have a stake in this issue and therefore should facilitate a migrant-friendly environment. They should not discourage the participation of families outside the conventional paradigm<sup>30</sup> and instead be supportive to the transfiguration and changing of gender roles occurring in transnational households. Biases against children of migrants should be avoided because it has a profound impact on children.

Civil society and government organizations working with children of migrants are actually doing policy interventions such as – (a) use of radio, television, schools, magazines, pre-departure

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<sup>28</sup> Hammarberg, Thomas, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, “The Rights of Children in Migration must be Defended” presented during the Save the Children Sweden Conference in Warsaw, March 20, 2007

<sup>29</sup> Hammarberg, Thomas, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, “The Rights of Children in Migration must be Defended” presented during the Save the Children Sweden Conference in Warsaw, March 20, 2007

<sup>30</sup> The conventional paradigm is having both parents physically performing the fathering and mothering acts for their children (Parreñas:2006)

seminars to share advice and information on the care of children of migrants, (b) use of teachers to monitor children of migrants – these teachers are given training in what to expect and how to react towards them, (c) workshops with children and caregivers, (d) individual counseling – can be expensive but an effective way to really monitor the children of migrants.<sup>31</sup>

There is, however, no global coordinating mechanism or commonly agreed framework to guide policymaking on migration, meaning the international regulatory framework to protect migrants is fragmented, poorly developed and distinctly marginalized within the UN system. The key treaty on migrant rights, the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families reached the required minimum number of ratifications, all of which are by migrant-sending countries. So far not one Northern, migrant-receiving country, has ratified the convention nor have other important receiving countries such as India, Japan, Australia, or the Gulf States.<sup>32</sup>

### Looking Forward & Some Recommendations

Before concrete actions can be done to protect and promote children of migrants and migrant children, there should first be recognition that these children are “children” who should enjoy the same rights and privileges as the other children. Below are some possible recommendations that can be looked upon:

1. There is a need to review existing government programs for migrant workers since most of these programs or projects were economic assistance which very few targeted young children. Programs for children are often only special programs with short term basis such as drama, play, or workshops. The 2003 study of Scalabrini *revealed that there is a need for training (particularly in counseling, approaches in community organizing), financial resources to carry out the programs, and awareness about good practices and strategies based on the experiences of other organizations and institutions.*
2. There should be continuous dialogues, bilateral agreements between the sending and the receiving or host countries to ensure protective measures of its citizens.
3. Right to education is a central right for children and thus “migrant children should be ensured access to compulsory education – irrespective of their parents’ legal status. In some European countries – for instance, in France and Switzerland – migrant parents with irregular status hesitate to send their children to school fearing that their registration would lead to the expulsion of the family.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Opiniano, Jeremiah, “Statistics on Filipinos’ International Migration: Issues and Steps Towards Harmonizing the Data”, 2007

<sup>32</sup> Jolly Susie and Reeves, Hazel. “Gender and Migration: Overview Report” in BRIDGE Development – Gender. University of Sussex, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, 2005

<sup>33</sup> Hammarberg, Thomas, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, “The Rights of Children in Migration Must be Defended”, Save the Children Sweden Conference, Warsaw, March 20, 2007

Likewise, schools should have teachers who are migrant-friendly. And since language barriers often get in the way for accessing quality education, the “intercultural approach” to teaching is the way forward.<sup>34</sup>

4. Right to health as well should be given priority. Government should ensure that there are appropriate policies which are effectively implemented in ensuring that basic health care services are provided for children.
5. Policy for family reunification should also be considered. “The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly has recommended states “to facilitate the family reunification of separated children with their parents in other member states even when parents do not have permanent residence status or are asylum seekers, in compliance with the principle of the best interest of the child” (Recommendation 1596).<sup>35</sup>
6. There must be a pre-departure and post-arrival comprehensive briefing and orientation.

Finally, migration should first and foremost be just one of the options , therefore, government should be able to create more jobs with decent wages, ensuring as well that prices of basic commodities are affordable.

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<sup>34</sup> Hammarberg, Thomas, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, “The Rights of Children in Migration Must be Defended”, Save the Children Sweden Conference, Warsaw, March 20, 2007

<sup>35</sup> Hammarberg, Thomas, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, “The Rights of Children in Migration Must be Defended”, Save the Children Sweden Conference, Warsaw, March 20, 2007