

Session 1.2: Gender Impact of Migration on Children and Families of Migrant Workers

***Sponsors:** United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Women and Gender Institute-Miriam College (WAGI-MC)*

***Schedule:** 25 September/ 1:00-3:00pm/ Boracay Function Room*

Session Abstract

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.

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. The impact or effect of migration to children left behind varies from positive to negative consequences.

Positive impacts can be gleaned from the financial and material benefits of migration such as ensuring food security, payment of debts, covering the costs of bills, sending children to good schools, providing health care, etc.

The negative impacts are both complex and intractable. They include a number of situations such as long absences by either the father or mother or both. Migration also deprives children of a steady and stable family environment especially when family roles and reconfiguration of families as a result of separations, the increase in second families and other family issues. Children left behind may find themselves exploited and abused by relatives or friends to whom they were entrusted by their parents.

Session Objectives

1. Understand the economic, psycho-social and gender impact of international migration on families especially children left behind;
2. Understand the challenges of the increasing feminization of migration and the responses that promote both women's and children's rights; and
3. Identify policies, programs and good practices that respond to the rights of children left behind.