

The impact of migration on children

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migrant sugar cane workers, India 2002



D. Lange - FSA, Oklahoma, 1930



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The challenges

- Little attention has been given to children in the international debate on migration
- Children and young people are big stakeholders
- Invisible and neglected phenomenon. Focus only on specific groups: refugees, victims of trafficking, AIDS orphans, child soldiers, street children
- Lack of statistics and data
- Dynamic process
- Multidimensional impact of migration on children

The CRC

Art 2 NON DISCRIMINATION

- *“States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child **within their jurisdiction** without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status”.*

**The CRC protects every child ,
regardless of nationality
or immigration status**

Impact relationships



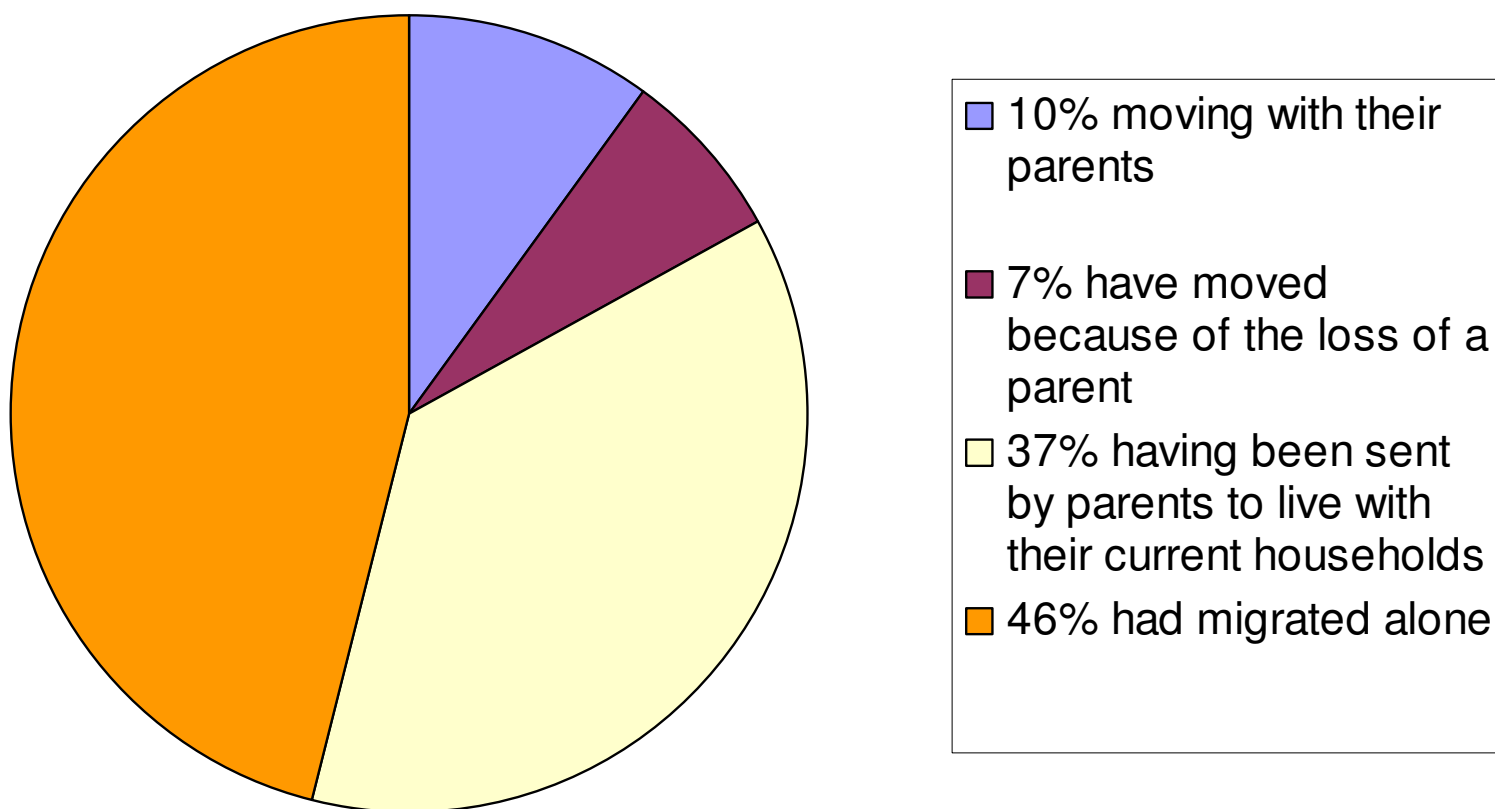
The impact of migration on children

Migration can affect children in different forms
“**Affected children**” is used to refer to children and young people under 18 years of age:

- **Migrating with their parents** (children of migrants)
- **Migrating alone**
- **Left behind by one or both migrating parents**
- **Living in context affected by migration**

Child migrants

Children no longer living in their place of origin.



Source: Ghana LFS, 2003

Child migrants

China has 19.81 million migrant children, nearly 20 percent of the total migrant population .

(China Census, 2000)

Left Behind

- **Living in a family with at least one parent away for long periods is part of the normal experience of childhood for many children in the developing world.**
 - South Africa: 25% of all households have members who are migrant workers, but this proportion rises to over 40% of households in deep rural areas (SAMP 2004).
 - Bangladesh: between 18 and 40% of rural households have at least one migrant member living and working elsewhere (Afsar 2003).
 - Tanzania: that between 50-60% of people living in rural households have at least one member away, while the figure for rural Mali was 80% (Tacoli 2002).

A different approach

Assessing the impact of migration : a misleading question?

**Unpack
Child
Migration**

**Impact on
each child**



From general assumption
to a specific assessment
for each child

Impact of migration

	Negative impacts	Development benefits
Children migrating with their parents		
Children migrating alone		



Impact of migration

	Negative impacts	Development benefits
Children left behind		
Children living in a context affected by migration		es

Remittances

The income and livelihood effects on household members left behind depend on

- *The level of income that migrants earn,*
- *The extent to which they can and do send remittances back and*
 - *How is used in the household*

Remittances

- **Salary** Extent to which the work that migrants are doing is well rewarded in local terms (change over the time)
- **Percentage sent back.** It can decline, as rates of unemployment and the cost of living in urban areas has gone up. Gender: women may send back home an higher percentage even if they are earning a lower salary
- **Uncertainty of the timing** and magnitude of remittances can push women and children from poor labouring households to participate in the labour market under adverse conditions
- **Intra-household distribution** In some cases women domestic workers sent money to parents rather than to their husbands because they feared their husbands would spend money on liquor and new girlfriends.

Remittances

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\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

Remittances

Father



Mother

\$\$\$\$

Mother



Father

\$\$\$\$\$

Remittances

\$

**Policies affecting
each components**

Left Behind

- **The extent to which it is fathers, mothers, or both parents who migrate and whether they leave their children behind varies very much from circumstance to circumstance**
 - Due to barriers to many migrants being accompanied by spouses and children
 - To avoid exposing them to uncertainty and protect them from the dangers of traveling without documents and crossing the border
 - Possibility to leave the children within the extended family (grandfathers)

Illegal migration

Vulnerability of children
greatly increases with
irregular migration

Child Protection

Protecting migrant children from:

Child labour

Child trafficking

Violence

Conflict with the law

Lack of birth registration/stateless

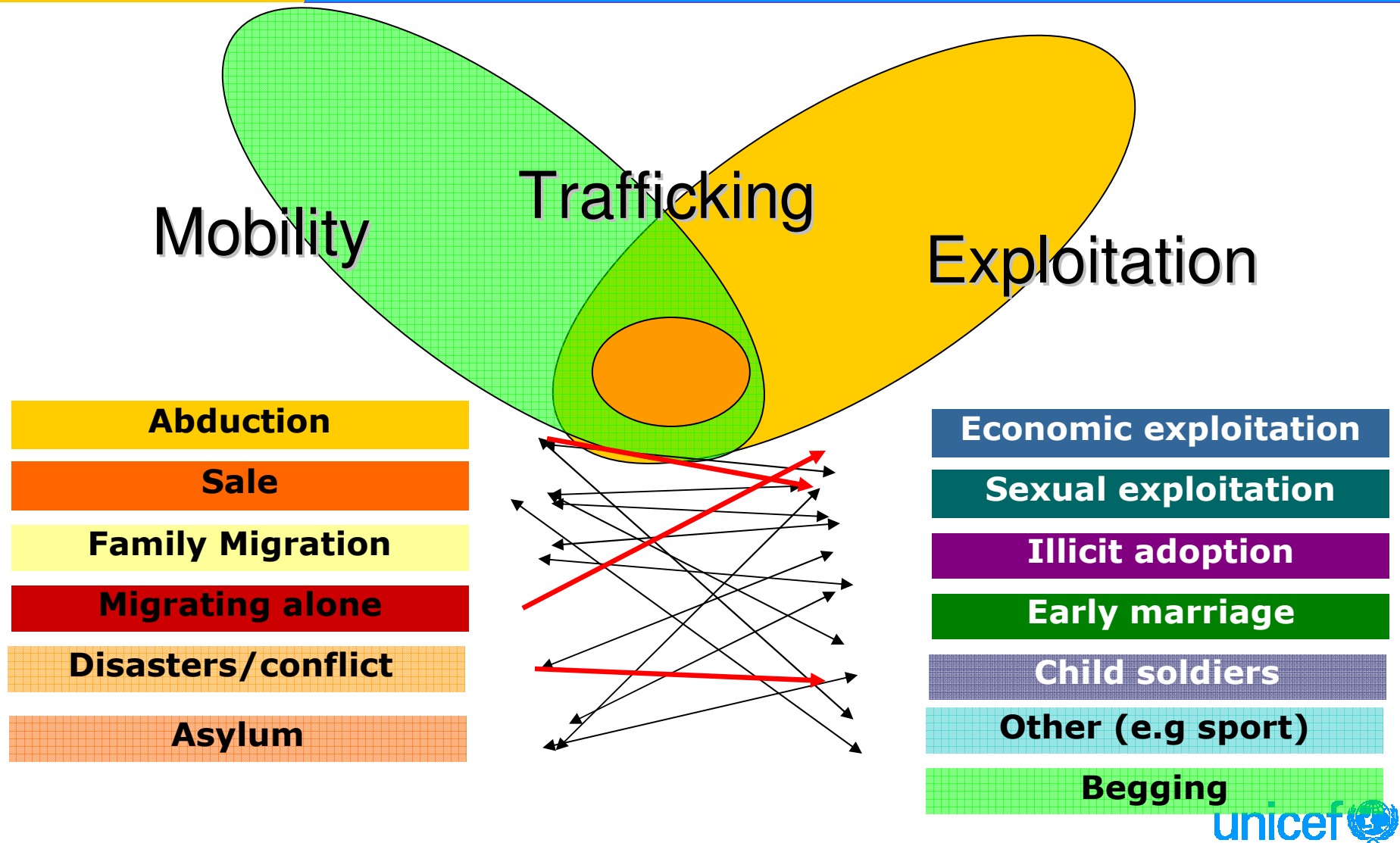
Early marriage

...not from migration

Child Protection

The needs of vulnerable young migrants can be met only through comprehensive understanding of their motivations and of the cultural and economic context in which their movements occur. Not doing it can increase migrants' risks of harm and exploitation.

Child trafficking



Child Rights Approach

- **Non discrimination**
- **Best interest of the child**
- **The child's right to have her or his views taken into account**

Questions

- Is repatriation the best interest or the only solution?
- Do migrant children have full access to child protection services?
- Does the child want to be rescued?
- What is a long term solution?

Key actions

- Reach the children
- Evidence based programming to decrease negative impact and maximize development benefits of migration
- Cross-sectional approach
- Youth and adolescents
- Monitor enforcement and impact
- Non duplication - added value

Thank you!

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