

MOVING YOUNG



state of world population 2006 youth supplement

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Youth Supplement

Editorial Team

The State of the World Population 2006 Youth Edition

**Coordinators/Researchers/Authors Introduction,
Background Content and Conclusions/
Production Managers:**

Dr. Laura Laski and Saskia Schellekens

Journalists/Authors Life Stories:

Martin Caparros and Shyamala Shiveshwarkar

**Research/Co-Author Introduction Section and
Background Content:**

Maria José Alcalá

Research/Editorial Associates:

Mandeep Janeja and Martine Mangion

Editor:

Martin Caparros

Final Editor:

Alex Marshall

Research, Editorial and Administrative Assistants:

Sandra Barron and Malak Khatib-Maleh

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MOVING YOUNG: PREFACE

This report explores the lives of young women and young men who have ventured into new lands to chase their dreams or to escape oppression, war, poverty or misfortune. It profiles the lives of young women and men from ten countries – Burkina Faso, Colombia, India, Kenya, Liberia, Moldova, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Suriname and Zambia. Some have never migrated, but their lives are marked by the experiences of spouses or relatives who have moved abroad. They were interviewed by journalists Martin Caparros and Shyamala Shiveshwarkar in their countries of origin or destination.

From a desire and intention to migrate (Bibi, Suriname) to a search for a better life in a new land (Falcao, Colombia; Myanmar; Noraida, the Philippines); from the hunt for an advanced education and freedom from gender biases (Kakenya, Kenya) to the spill-over effect of relatives who moved abroad (Rajini, India; and Edna, Zambia); from the construction of a new cultural identity (Khadija, born to Moroccan migrants in the Netherlands) to the risks and challenges of crossing borders (Natalia, Moldova; Adama, Burkina Faso); to escaping violence and persecution (Richard, Liberia); the profiles of

young people presented in this report show a picture marked by hope and success but also by disillusionment and desperation.

The report includes a brief introduction with overall information about young people who move. Because young people have been largely invisible in debates and policies about international migration, the information available is very limited. We hope that by listening to the voices of young people touched by migration, by showing their human faces as they live their lives and by sharing their concerns and needs for education, employment, health, security and peace, this report will help to call attention to young people, as part of the discussion on international migration.

The ten young people interviewed in this report talked with honesty, courage, and openness. They show that even in the most adverse and risky situations young people have an extraordinary resilience and ability to cope.

In addressing migration issues, governments have an opportunity to release the resourcefulness and vitality that young migrants bring with them rather than considering them as a burden or a risk. In September 2006, member states will meet in a special session of the United

Nations General Assembly to discuss international migration. This High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development represents a unique chance to address the concerns of young people on the move.

We hope this report will raise awareness about the need to develop responses that protect the human rights of young migrants, regardless of their place of origin, their sex, their age or their ethnic background. It calls for appreciation of the contributions that young people make to countries both of origin and destination; contributions that could be much enhanced with closer attention to their diverse needs and rights. Their stories remind us that there are millions of young women and men like Natalia, Edna, Falcao, Adama, Bibi, Rajini, Richard, Kakenya, Khadija and Noraida. They cross borders every day, driven by insecurity, violence or poverty or in search of better opportunities, whatever the odds, to achieve their legitimate desire to lead better lives.

MOVING YOUNG: INTRODUCTION

More than ever, young people move. Over the past few decades, political, economic, social and demographic changes in many parts of the world have uprooted many people and stimulated migration to cities and abroad. The growing volume of trade, faster and cheaper transport, and easier communication have encouraged more young people to migrate within and across national borders.

The dream of better opportunities and demand for their labour from abroad sets many young people in motion. Violence, war, poverty, unemployment, crime or persecution drive many others to escape.

Many leave with few belongings, little money and scanty information about their destination; but they take with them the great assets of youth, resilience, resourcefulness and perseverance. But, precisely because of their age, they face obstacles and risks that test their endurance.

Young people on the move are determined. Many lack working papers, and cross borders as visitors or tourists. Others pay smugglers to get them in. If necessary they cross oceans in precarious boats, or burning deserts hidden in cars. They find a way.

On the move, young people are vulnerable. They may be taken by smugglers to a different destination than they set out for. What started as a move for a better life may end up for many, in particular young women, as a trap: in the nets of sex traffickers, or consigned as domestic workers to semi-slavery. Some young people are hurled into the maelstrom of war or civil conflict. They are taken as soldiers or escape as best they can, with their families or without.

The international migration of young people has demographic, social, cultural, and economic implications. Young people aged 10 to 24 now account for more than 30 per cent of the population of developing countries.¹ Most of the young migrants come from these countries.

Many countries, in particular those with aging populations, benefit from young migrants who fill the lowest-paid jobs that no one else wants, contributing to the huge machinery that moves cities and communities. They provide manual labour in agriculture and construction; they do domestic work and service jobs in homes, hotels and restaurants. There is also a growing demand for qualified workers in such

areas as health care, communication technologies, and sports.

The emigration of young people reduces the labour force among a highly productive age group in sending countries, including many who are newly qualified or skilled. But young migrants send money back to their home countries, and bring their skills and experience with them when they return.

Migration means losing the networks of family and friends that give young people support and a sense of identity and direction. On the other hand, young women especially may find some liberation from traditional restrictions.

Integration largely depends on the host countries' policies to help young migrants learn the language, find employment, housing, education and health care, and protect them from racism, xenophobia and discrimination. It also depends on migrants' ability to adapt. Young people are often more flexible and eager to learn and can help their elders.

Young women who migrate alone may join the host society on their own terms and enjoy the autonomy conferred by education and employment: but within the family the

instinct in many immigrant communities is to limit their daughters' "outside" contact and the risks that go with it. Such issues can set up tensions between migrants and their hosts, and within immigrant communities, which are only now being fully recognised.

In spite of the risks of moving abroad, most young people find it a rewarding experience, offering employment, increased skills, knowledge of the world and networks with benefits for both host and home countries.

Dreaming of Moving Abroad

Globalisation and greater access to information may have made young people more aware of the opportunities they lack at home. Exposure to cinema and TV, increased access to the internet, the tales of migrants, and what they can see of the lives of better-off people in their own countries motivate their dreams.

Young people hope for a future where their visions and full potential can be realized. With limited and unequal opportunities, it does not come as a surprise that a large proportion of young people in developing countries and countries in transition wish to emigrate, for example: 51 per cent in the Arab countries;² 63 per cent in Bosnia;³ over 60 per cent in the Primorye Region of Far Eastern Russia;⁴ 47 per cent in Peru;⁵ and 25 per cent in Slovakia.⁶

Their wishes seldom become reality. Few make actual plans to leave, and even fewer make it to the countries they set out for. Nevertheless, the realization that so many young people contemplate their escape has become a contentious issue for many societies.

How Many Go Abroad?

Little is known of the full diversity and complexity of young people's international migration. Data are extremely limited, because for many years international migrants were presumed to be men of working age. Women and young people were presumed to migrate only as part of family units. Many countries now collect information on women and young people migrating alone, but few make it available in a usable form and fewer still analyse it. Young people remain largely invisible in research, public debates and policy about international migration.

Despite their absence in debates about international migration, experts agree that young people between 15 and 30 years of age historically and to this day represent a large share of migrants. It is estimated that in 2005 there were over 191 million international migrants worldwide.⁷ The majority come from developing countries and countries in transition.⁸ They migrate to better-off neighbouring countries or to developed countries.

It is estimated that the proportion of youth from developing countries who cross borders is about a third of the overall migration flow and about a quarter of the total number of immigrants worldwide,⁹ with numbers ranging from 20 percent of all Tajikistanis in Russia¹⁰ to 50 percent of all Nicaraguan migrants established in Costa Rica.¹¹ If we were to extend the definition of youth to also include those who are between the ages 25 to 29, youth would constitute half of the migrant flow and a third of the stock.¹²

Women migrate as much as men.¹³ It could be assumed that the same applies for young people. For example, young women are a major share of domestic workers and nurses who migrate. Young men predominate among migrants from Central America.

In today's world physical mobility is increasingly equated with upward socio-economic mobility. Early in life, without an established job or family, the perceived benefits of migrating in search of new and improved opportunities can considerably outweigh the costs.¹⁴ Youth offers the advantage of a longer time-frame to overcome the challenges of moving abroad, and to reap the potential rewards.¹⁵

Reports from various regions indicate a rising proportion of adolescents among migrant workers. In the Americas, this has become an important feature of migration in the past

15 years.¹⁶ For example 15 per cent of all Mexicans seeking employment in the US in 1997 were adolescents.¹⁷ Survey results from shelters in Mexico and Central America, at transit points for migrants heading to the United States, reported that 40 per cent of new arrivals were adolescents between 14 and 17 years of age.¹⁸ Studies on the border between Thailand, Myanmar and China report adolescents as young as 13 crossing borders alone.¹⁹

Young people generally have less voice and less power than their elders, and international migration itself has only recently come to the forefront of public and global agendas. The lack of data on young people crossing borders is a major obstacle to the development of appropriate policies and responses for this most vulnerable age group.

The Diverse Faces of Young Migrants

Young women and men who migrate come from all kinds of social, economic, educational and ethnic backgrounds. They cross borders for many reasons: in search of work, both temporary or permanent; as refugees escaping conflict or persecution, who have sometimes lost or been separated from their parents; in search of a better education; to be reunited with parents or other relatives who have already settled in a foreign land; or for marriage, including young women involved

in arranged or forced marriages. Some parents encourage their children to go abroad to escape poverty and limited options at home. Others want to ensure that they and other family members will be taken care of later in life.²⁰ Many are lured away from their homes by false promises of better lives elsewhere. Some are travelling accompanied, others alone. Tens of thousands of children and adolescents who cross borders undocumented without their parents or legal guardians are detained and deported every year.²¹

Individual aspirations, family situations, cultural mindset and overall quality of life are among the factors that influence young people's decisions to migrate. For young men, travel abroad can be a rite of passage. For young women in some parts of West Africa it is customary to migrate for a period of time to do domestic work, either in their own countries or abroad.²² The young women save their earnings in preparation for marriage. While many young people and their parents know the challenges and risks of migration, others do not, and end up disillusioned with harsh living and working conditions.

Some migration streams and types of work favour one sex over the other. For example, young men were the majority of migrants leaving Albania²³, India (Kerala State)²⁴ and West Africa.²⁵ Young men are preferred for

physical labour such as construction work. Well-educated young men who are highly skilled in information and communications technologies and scientific research are recruited by multinationals and welcomed by countries eager to stay competitive and profitable in global markets. A rarer form of forced sex-selective migration is the trafficking of boys, especially from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, to become camel jockeys in countries of the Arabian Gulf where the sport is popular.²⁶

Young women predominate in migration for domestic work. For many young women, migration can provide a route to escape the restrictions of traditional gender norms. But because they are female, young women's experiences of migration are replete with abuse and violence, especially of a sexual nature. In countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, where young women have moved in large numbers from rural to urban areas to work in export-oriented factories, their incomes can raise their status within the family and grant them a greater say in decisions about their destinies, such as resisting pressures to marry and bear children early. Though by no means exempt from sexual harassment and other infringements on their human rights, for many young women the experience and skills they acquire in this work can be a step to migration abroad for better-paid jobs.



Adama

BURKINAN, IMMIGRANT IN SPAIN

His life had no stories. Adama S. was born in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, in 1981, and he never went to school. His father grew millet, corn and tapioca on a very small piece of land, barely enough to feed the family. At twelve, Adama started working as an apprentice at a mechanical workshop; three years later, he was able to fix electro-generating equipment. He probably would have stayed there for a long time if his boss hadn't died.

The workshop closed. Now unemployed, already twenty years old, he started to wonder what he was going to do with his life. He had heard so many stories about relatives and neighbours who had gone to Europe, and how well they were doing. He had saved 200 euros: his decision seemed obvious.

First, I applied for a visa at the French Embassy, but they wouldn't give it to me. What I wanted was to go to Europe, I didn't care where. I was told that first

I had to go to Spain, because it's the only European country with an African border, and from there you can go wherever you want.

The trip got off to a good start. At the beginning of 2002, Adama bought a bus ticket to Bamako, the capital of Mali. He slept in the station for a few days, and found out that he should take another bus to Gao; there, for a hundred euros, he got a ride with a van that would carry him across the Sahara to Tamanrasset, Algeria. The journey took five nights. During the day, he and the other twenty passengers hid in caves and waited for sunset.

He was still far away from Morocco: he had to go all the way through Algeria, travelling by night, hiding by day. Sometimes he walked, sometimes he could hitch a ride by truck. Sometimes, he stayed without transportation for four of five days in an oasis, always fearing the police. It took him almost two months to cross the desert

and the Atlas Mountains, and reach the Moroccan border. There, smugglers took him across the border; after four nights of unbearable walking, he arrived at Oujda. Then a bus took him to Nador, the Moroccan city near Melilla.

Melilla is a Spanish territory on the African continent separated from Morocco by a wire mesh fence. Every night, Adama would walk along the fence, looking at Europe (so near, so very near), trying to think of a way in. He knew that some had jumped, but that didn't seem so easy. Three years later, migrants would invent the avalanche technique, which involves hundreds of people throwing themselves together against the fence; in those days however, jumping was an individual endeavour.

Once he got too close, and the Moroccan police arrested him and deported him to Algeria. Adama made his way back into Morocco, only to be deported again two months later. Adama felt defeated. He had run out of money long ago. It was the

olive harvesting season; Adama worked for two months and got enough money to go back to Morocco. But this time, he headed to Rabat. The fence at Melilla seemed insurmountable and he wanted to try the water route, by the famous pateras, single-motor, ten-metre long, very precarious vessels.

In Rabat, I spent a year sleeping on the streets, eating from the garbage. I didn't have a dime, I knew nobody, I couldn't get a job. Not even the Moroccans had jobs. I suffered a lot. I wanted to go back to my country, but I needed money for that too.

One day, desperate, Adama turned himself over to the police in an attempt to be sent home. An officer shouted that if he wanted to go back, he'd better do it himself. Adama thought he had reached the bottom.

Young migrants often fill jobs at the lowest end of the labour market, or jobs that nationals are not willing to do.

In my country, at least I was able to eat. I felt very miserable. But I kept fighting, because I had to make a life for myself.

Then his luck started to change. He met a Malian who offered him a place in his room and put him in touch with a man in the patera business. This man, a Ghanaian, proposed a deal: if Adama could find twenty clients willing to pay between 1000 and 1500 euros, he could travel free. Around that time, Adama was finally able to call home to let his parents know he was still alive, if still in Africa. It was then that he learned that his father had died.

My mother told me he had been poisoned, but I never found out what really happened, because I could never get back to my country.

At first, Adama couldn't find any clients; nobody trusted him. Little by little, however, he made his reputation and, by the end of 2004, Adama had already sent forty travellers. He had earned his trip. He had spent two years waiting for this moment.

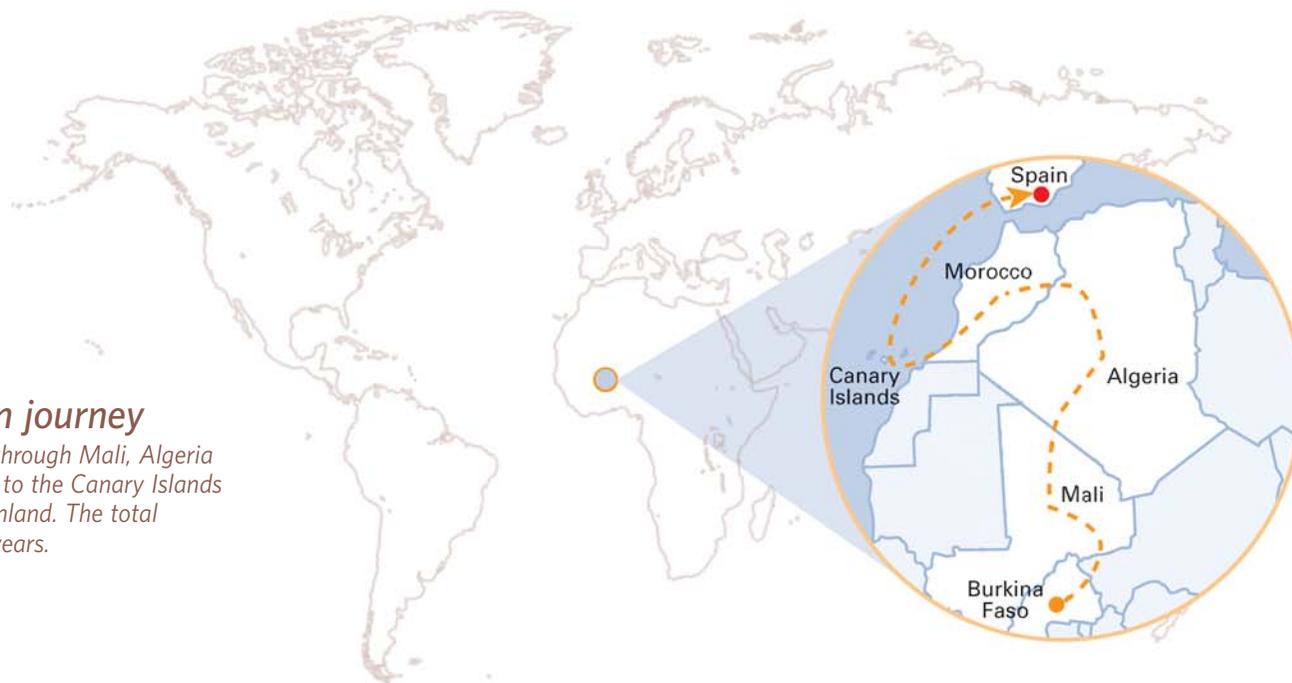
From Rabat, a truck took him and twenty other men to a shelter in the desert. There, they had to wait until the police officers, who had been bribed by the smugglers were on duty. They spent several days without water. Adama saw others drink their

urine but he couldn't do it. Then, one afternoon, they were all put back in a truck that took them to a secluded place on the Atlantic coast. The smugglers made them throw away their identity papers before getting on the boat.

On the beach, in the moonlight, Adama had another shock: the Moroccans who worked for the smugglers robbed them of everything they had, money, watches, clothes. Adama tried to defend himself and one of them cut him in the hand with a knife. Wounded, he got in the patera. His shirt and his shorts were all he had left in the world, but at long last he was sailing to Europe.

The captain was a fisherman from the Gambia; the trip was his pay. He asked Adama to watch the compass. They had to keep a heading of 340 degrees – if they went off course they were dead. He said the trip was easy and they'd be in the Canary Islands in less than a day. Even if the boat was wrecked, he said, he and Adama would survive: they were the only ones who had plastic fuel containers to float on until someone came to their rescue.

That calmed me down. At least I would survive. But I was very nervous anyway: I had never seen the sea before.



Adama's migration journey

took him from Burkina Faso through Mali, Algeria and Morocco to Spain – first to the Canary Islands and later to the Spanish mainland. The total journey took Adama over 3 years.

The first hours were calm: at midday, the sea grew rough but the patera held on. In the afternoon, they saw an island; soon after the Spanish coastguard stopped the boat and took them off. Adama's relief was brief: they mistook him for the captain, and questioned him. Adama didn't give away the real captain – among adventurers, he'd say later, one can't do such things. In the end the Gambian was identified, arrested and deported. Everybody else received food and clothes at a government shelter, where they spent the standard forty days.

(During the quarantine, the Spanish police question the immigrants. For those found to have no legal grounds to remain in the EU, orders of expulsion are issued, though they generally can't be executed

because the identities of the immigrants can't be determined, or because their countries won't accept them. That's why they get rid of their documentation. Hiding one's identity is a legal loophole, a paradox by which thousands of Africans manage to stay in Europe.)

In the Canary Islands, Adama didn't know what would become of him. One night the immigration officers told him he was being taken to Madrid the next day, to be released. There, Adama agreed to spend three months learning Spanish in a Castilian town, on a programme of the Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado. In May 2005, he was back in Madrid; it was time to start his new life.

For a month, Adama slept in a park along with dozens of other Africans. Finally,

a man from Sierra Leone offered to give Adama his work permit. In return, Adama would pay him 100 euros each month.

And I said yes, because I didn't come here to do nothing.

Thousands of immigrants in Spain are in similar situations; they are exploited by other immigrants who have papers, and by their local bosses. Now, Adama works as a gardener for a construction company and lives in a suburb near Madrid in a room too expensive for him. He makes 650 euros per month, half of which he spends on lodging, 100 on food, 50 on transportation, 100 for his exploiter. He sends some money to his mother, nothing left over.

No, I still haven't found what I was looking for when I left home. I don't have money, I don't have papers. I went through a lot to get here. I slept in the streets, I walked through the desert, but now I'm here and I'm still in a lot of pain. I knew I would have to suffer to get here, but I thought that once I arrived the suffering would be over.

Adama insists that he likes Spain a lot, though sometimes the people, he says, can be a little racist (they look at him funny). But the government is kind to African people. The papers are his main problem. Lawyers told him that he has to wait for three years to get the document that will turn him into a legal worker. That's why he gave all his money to a local man who said he was going to expedite the process and then disappeared. When these things hap-

pen, he says, he feels defeated, and he worries about time. Time passes: he was twenty when he left his country and now he's twenty-four and nothing's changed; his life is slipping away. Adama says he's much too worried about the future to have fun. At times, on the weekend, he plays soccer, but he says he doesn't think about women: he already has too many problems.

I'm not saying if I would like to be with someone or not. If I looked for a woman, I'd find one. But what I need right now is my money. I left a lot of women in my country to come here, looking for my money. When I get some, I can go back and get married. But first I have to make my money, so my children can have a future. If my father had done what I'm doing now, I wouldn't have to suffer so much.

Adama's story may be true or it may not; but it has the ring of truth. Many Africans trying to avoid being deported from Spain pretend they're escaping from war and ask for political asylum. Or they say they're from countries that wouldn't take them back. Thousands are making up life stories, looking for a better life than the one they left behind. Sometimes, salvation rides on having a good story. But salvation can be tough to reach.

If things stay like this, will you go back to your country?

How am I supposed to go back without money? What am I going to say to my mother, to my family? It's impossible. I'd rather die. If I go back like this, I would die of shame. No, I can't go back. It would be the worst shame.

NO EDUCATION, NO JOB: JUST DREAMS

Discouraged by the lack of prospects for work in their home countries, more young people like Adama are risking their lives to find better job opportunities somewhere else. The UN special representative for West Africa reported that the attempts of hundreds of youths in August and September 2005 to storm Spanish enclaves in North Africa to try to get to Europe reflect the serious unemployment situation in West Africa.¹ According to the Spanish Red Cross, more than 1000 migrants drowned in the first three months of 2006 – a third of all those leaving the African coast for the Canary Islands.²

Young people in the Middle East and North Africa face one of the highest unemployment rates in the world – over 25 per cent.³ In sub-Saharan Africa the proportion of young people who are out of school and out of work is 21 per cent.⁴ In the transition countries of Europe almost one third of those between 14 and 25 are neither in school nor working.⁵

In many countries, unemployment rates among young women are higher than among young men. Many of women's economic activities are not paid or accounted for, especially in rural areas where traditional family-based forms of production predominate. Because women are often discriminated against in the formal job market, they are likely to take on informal sec-

tor work in trade and retail, often crossing borders to purchase or sell their merchandise.

Most young people who have jobs are in the informal sector, working long hours for little pay: in Africa and Latin America, over 90 per cent of all new jobs for youth workers are in the informal economy.⁶ And worldwide, 59 million young people between 15 and 18 work in hazardous conditions.⁷ Some of the more-educated, urban young people are finding new opportunities in internet cafes and related services.

Migrants often fill jobs at the lowest end of the labour market, or jobs that nationals are not willing to do. Richer countries have completed the "demographic transition"; that is, they have moved from high birth and mortality rates to low fertility and extended life-spans. The result is an aging population with fewer workers to pay the taxes, social security benefits and other services on which the quality of life of an expanding group of older people depends. To help maintain both social services and economic productivity, young workers from abroad are and will continue to be needed.

However, countries should also create jobs so that young people do not feel they have to move to find work. Governments, in cooperation with international development partners, need to act

on commitments made in the Millennium Declaration to "develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work." Increased investments are needed in education and vocational training; employment creation for young women and young men should be at the centre of macro-economic policies.



Noraida

FILIPINO, OVERSEAS DOMESTIC WORKER

Her first migration led Noraida to her aunt's village. It was only two hours by bus, but for Noraida it was the start of a different life.

Noraida was born in 1982 in the overcrowded, poverty-stricken Al-Salam Mosque Compound in Quezon City, the Philippines, the fourth of eight children of an imam and a fishmonger. By the age of eight Noraida had already dropped out of school and spent her days playing in the streets. She was home, however, that afternoon, when her aunt came by:

I overheard my aunt, who was childless, ask my parents if she and her husband could adopt me. I just went in and said I'll go.

Noraida imagined that life would be better for her if she went, and that it would also ease the pressure on her parents who were struggling to feed so many mouths. Her uncle worked as a security officer: he had a good income and the couple treated

her "like a daughter". Unlike her mother, who would be away all day selling fish, her aunt was always there for her. Noraida helped her with the housework and didn't miss her family all that much.

When Noraida was 13, her aunt suggested that she go as a domestic worker to the Gulf of Arabia. That meant she would have to travel on a fake passport because the minimum age for working abroad as stipulated by the government was 18. Noraida readily agreed; she knew of other girls in the village who were working abroad. The fact that she did not know anyone there and that she did not speak Arabic or much English, did not bother her.

I was so excited about going abroad and earning money and helping my family that I did not think very much about all this.

So the aunt got her a placement through an agent and Noraida was sent off without even getting a chance to say goodbye to her parents.

Upon arrival, Noraida was welcomed by her employers, who were appalled when she told them her real age. Noraida was lucky: she just had to be a companion for their five-year old daughter and one-year old son, and they treated her like one of the family. She was permitted to help herself to whatever was in the refrigerator and the family took her everywhere with them, to the malls, amusement parks and the beach. And they were consistent about wire transferring her monthly salary to her aunt. It was so different from her life in the Philippines. She quickly picked up Arabic and there was so much to do that Noraida cannot remember ever having felt homesick during the three and a half years she spent with them.

But when she returned to Philippines, it was back to her parents' house in the Al-Salam Mosque Compound. Relations had soured while she was away between her parents and the aunt, who had given them nothing from Noraida's earnings. Noraida was saddened by her aunt's betrayal, by her

parents' continued struggle with poverty and sadder still that her life had brought her back where she had started. For a while, she worked as a salesgirl in a department store, but the money was far from adequate. So Noraida decided to migrate again. Her knowledge of Arabic and her "ex abroad" status – meaning one who had worked abroad – stood her in good stead. She was

Given the nature of their work in the private domain, and away from the public eye, domestic workers are especially vulnerable to exploitation.

able to get a visa in just three weeks – a process that may take as long as a year – and was placed as a domestic worker in the home of a senior member of the Saudi judiciary, a widower with two daughters.

It was a large, opulent house and Noraida was one of ten domestic workers. She was assigned to the younger daughter, a 16-year-old medical student, and her responsibilities were limited to cleaning her rooms, washing her clothes and serving her meals. Noraida was happy. She worked regular hours, enjoyed the company of the other domestic staff and more importantly, was able to send her entire salary of \$200 to her parents, making it possible for them to buy

some land and build a house of their own.

Two and a half years later, she returned briefly to her home town before getting another placement through the same agency. She was also hoping to save for herself while continuing to help her family. Very few migrants save enough during the first contract to sustain families in coming years. Moreover, employment opportunities and alternate sources of livelihood in the Philippines are so few that most returnees are pushed back into overseas employment. Their children and grandchildren may follow their example.

But this time Noraida was greeted quite differently:

The husband was friendly, but the wife had a frown and the children refused to come to me. I didn't worry much and thought it would all settle down.

It did not. The family lived in a two-story house with two living rooms, four bedrooms and seven bathrooms: Noraida had to clean and dust the entire house every single day, wash and iron, cook all the meals and take care of the children including a baby only a month old when she joined the family and a 4-year-old daughter

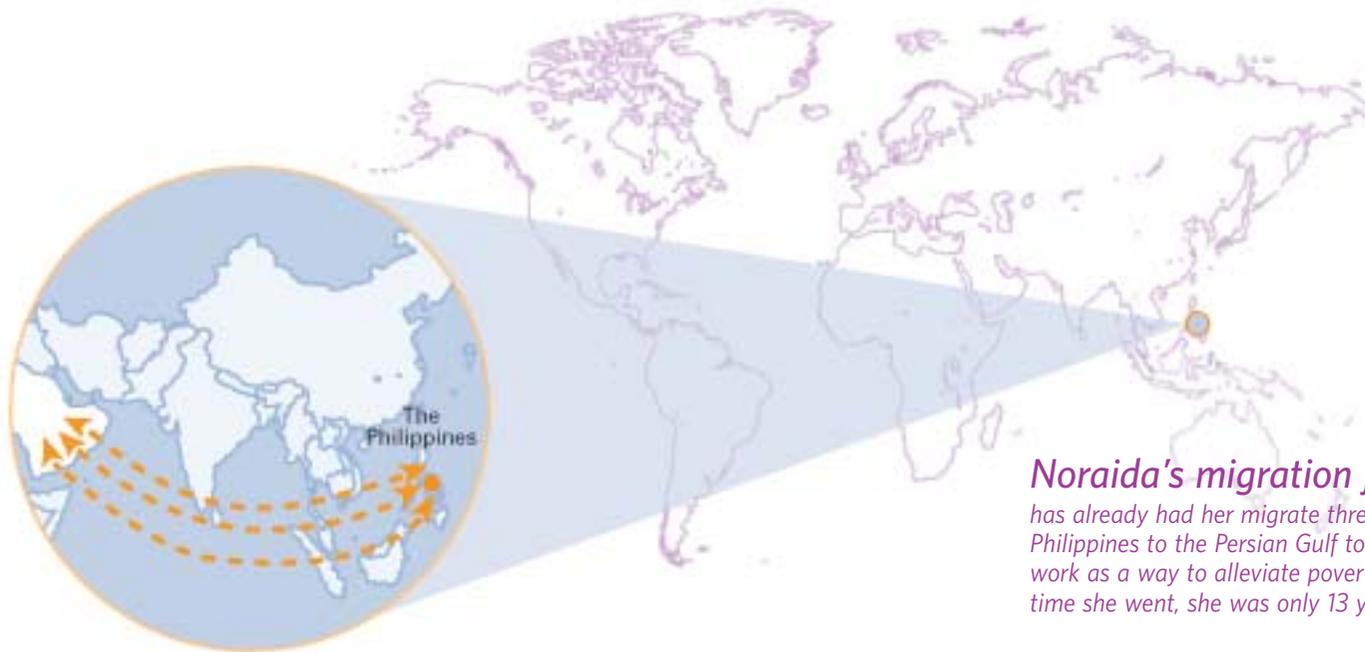
who had to be bathed, dressed and taken to and from school.

My day began at 5:30 every morning and rarely ended before midnight because my employer would shout, curse and rap me on the head if the chores were not done. I was being exploited and I hated the verbal insults and physical abuse. Sometimes the husband would intervene. He would say, "Don't mind her. She is like that," while trying to calm down his wife.

After a few weeks Noraida found herself shouting back at her employer, something she had never done before. By the third month she was desperate to escape.

I was working day and night yet nothing I did seemed to please my employer. I was lonely, weary and homesick. I had no access to the telephone and was not allowed to talk even to my parents. All I wanted to do was leave.

The opportunity came about a month later. The husband had asked for a cup of tea and when Noraida was handing it to him their hands touched in passing. The wife noticed; the next morning she stayed home from work and when the husband left



Noraida's migration journey

has already had her migrate three times from the Philippines to the Persian Gulf to undertake domestic work as a way to alleviate poverty in her family. The first time she went, she was only 13 years old.

she started to hurl abuses and curses at Noraida. She called her a “dirty woman” and began pushing her around. Fed up with the abuse, Noraida threatened to leave. The response she got was “The door is open, you can leave.”

And that is what I did, I just walked out of the house. I was so angry and upset. I had nothing with me. No money, nothing, and I didn't even know where I was going.

Then just as she reached the gate the husband came home. He asked her why she was crying and tried to calm her down, but she insisted on going to the agency that had got her the placement, so he accompanied her. She complained to the person there of

how she was doing all the housework though she had been hired as a nanny and that her last month's salary had been withheld. The husband said that he could do little because his wife claimed she would not pay unless Noraida improved her work.

Noraida had no option but to continue working for the family: if she broke the contract she would have to pay for her passage back. So she agreed to work for another three months and returned to the house with the husband.

For about a fortnight after that there was calm in the house. Then the shouting and abuses started again. The wife and I were constantly quarrelling and I was a virtual prisoner. From now on one of the parents

would take and fetch the daughter from school so I was never allowed to leave the house. When they were not in the house, the telephone was disconnected and I was locked in from the outside.

A couple of times Noraida managed to connect the phone and complain to the agency. But this only made matters worse: the agency would tell the couple that she had called, and the wife would get furious. Noraida later learnt that two other girls had left this family before completing their contract.

So in just seven months Noraida was back again in her parents' home. She came back empty-handed: she had nothing to show but the bruises that she got when her

employer had grabbed her and pushed her against a cabinet the day before she left.

Noraida decided she would never migrate again. A few months later, she married Alam, a 27-year old neighbour, with hopes of making a new life for herself in the Philippines. It has not been easy. Alam ekes out a living selling pirated CDs, while Noraida takes care of their 10-month old baby. They live in her parents' home, a dimly lit space partitioned into two miniscule rooms and a kitchen. The rest of the house has been rented and Noraida and Alam share this space with her parents, two unemployed brothers and six nieces and nephews, children of her sisters who work in the Gulf.

There is nothing in the house, no fittings, no furniture, and no sense of well-being, though four of Noraida's siblings work abroad. The children play outside the front door next to an open drain. Clothes hang on lines along the wall for want of cupboard space. The kitchen is piled high with dirty dishes and the stove needs to be repaired. No cooking is done

and the family is surviving on rice made in the cooker and twice a day some curry bought at the market.

What is the difference between your life here and in the Gulf?

I would say the difference is between wealth and poverty. Our lives here are so full of hardship and want. My parents run the house and we try and chip in when we can. Sometimes the mothers of these children send small amounts but it is hardly sufficient. And none of the others can help because they have their own families to care for.

Noraida finds herself at a crossroads. She is dogged by uncertainties. Her last experience abroad has taken its toll and she is wary of seeking employment overseas. But if she wants to pull herself and her family out of the morass they are in, she might have no other option but to migrate again.

DOMESTIC WORKERS, FAR FROM HOME

Girls and women do most of the world's domestic work, as they always have done. The ILO estimates that domestic work is the most common form of child labour for girls.¹ Many adolescent girls like Noraida migrate in search of a living that allows them to support themselves and send some money to their families back home. While remittances can help alleviate poverty, many domestic workers and NGOs report hardship, abuse and exploitation.

In Asia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia send most of the region's domestic workers. Women make up between 60 and 80 per cent of registered migrants from these countries,² most of them domestic workers. Since 1998, some 400,000 Indonesians have migrated to other countries each year.³

The demand for domestic workers comes largely from countries in the Middle East, Western Europe, North America and wealthier Asian countries including Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore. As of the mid-2000s, some 6.3 million Asian migrants, many of them domestic workers, were legally working and residing in the more developed countries in East and South-east Asia; another 1.2 million undocumented migrants are alleged to be in the region.⁴ In the Middle East, the countries of the Persian Gulf also employ millions of immigrant women in

domestic work. No fewer than one million work in low-level occupations, including domestic work, in Saudi Arabia alone.⁵

Domestic labour migration is also common in Latin America, where it makes up to 60 per cent of overall internal and transnational migration. Young women from countries like Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru leave for more developed countries like Argentina and Chile. Many also head for North America and Western Europe.⁶ Female immigrants from Mexico and other parts of Latin America make up most of the domestic workforce in the US. In Central and West Africa, girls who are trafficked across borders often end up as domestic workers.

The pre-departure stage can be fraught with abuses.⁷ Girls and women may be held in recruitment centres for months at a time, under heavy security and poor conditions.

In the case of adolescent girls, labour agencies usually falsify the ages on their travel documents in order to take them out of the country. Domestic migrant workers are often misinformed about the migration process; may have their salaries withheld in a form of “debt bondage” to repay fees related to their recruitment and travel, and may be duped as to the type of work and conditions to which they are going.

Once they arrive, many are also denied information about their rights or where to turn for help with abusive employers. Given the nature of their work in the private domain, and away from the public eye, they are especially vulnerable to exploitation. They are usually not covered by labour legislation that could protect them in cases of abuse, non-payment, or the arbitrary withholding of wages. In addition, they are often forbidden to write letters or have communication with their families back home, have their passports taken away from them by labour agencies or employers, and face threats if they attempt to escape. If they do escape, they do not know how to manage without money, documents or friends to assist them in a city that is not their own.⁸ Many experience abuse, including sexual violence. They are at increased risk of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV infection.

To improve the situation of domestic workers, some governments have adopted new laws and policies. The Philippines, for instance, has developed a programme for overseas workers that includes a mandatory pre-departure orientation on rights and health issues. Other countries, in particular in South Asia, have begun to strengthen consulates to protect the rights of overseas workers and supervise private employment agencies. This is of particular benefit for

domestic workers in abusive situations. Domestic workers themselves have established their own networks and in some cases trade unions have allowed domestic workers to associate for collective bargaining of fair employment contracts. Both sending and receiving countries have put in place mechanisms to regulate and monitor the activities of recruitment agencies. Civil society organisations in various parts of the world advocate for the rights of domestic migrant workers and assist them in filing complaints and address cases of abuse.

Countries receiving housekeepers, nannies and other domestic workers from abroad must act to protect their human rights. For example, countries should extend labour laws specifically to cover domestic workers. Countries could also require employment agencies placing domestic workers in private homes to provide a written contract between employers and employees setting out pay, hours and other basic conditions of the job. Employees should be provided information on their entitlements under the law and avenues of recourse. In this way, both employers and employees would have transparency and abuses could be avoided.



Kakenya

KENYAN, STUDENT IN THE USA

When Kakenya was ten years old, she didn't have time to think about the future. Her days were endless: as soon as she came home from school she had to milk the cows and take them to pasture, bring water from the river, collect the firewood, clean the house, take care of her younger sisters and cook for them. She was too worried about what to eat for supper to think about anything else: the future, she would say later, is a luxury that only rich societies can indulge in.

Nevertheless, even if she had thought of it, she could never have imagined her present life at the University of Pittsburgh, in the USA, where she is enrolled in a postgraduate programme in education.

Kakenya Ntaiya was born in Enoosaen, a Masai village in the south of Kenya in June 1978, but she doesn't know on which day: her mother can't remember. The Masai have always been a society of semi-nomadic warriors and shepherds who have lately established themselves in villages; 400,000

people, half of their total population, lives in Kenya. The Masai raise goats and sheep, but cows are their most valuable possession: they live off the milk and blood, only killing them on very special occasions.

In Enoosaen there has never been running water or electricity; Kakenya's house was an adobe hut made of straw, manure and cow urine, just like the others. Kakenya can't recall when she started working: she had always worked. When she was five years old, her parents promised her hand in marriage to a six-year old neighbour. This is the Masai custom and thus everybody in the village spoke of them as a couple; they played together, herded the cows together and called each other husband and wife. Many years later, Kakenya would say that she was lucky even to have met her future husband: often, Masai girls are introduced to their spouses the very day of the wedding.

Her life was decided: Kakenya would get married, have children, take care of the

cows, work the land. In those days, she didn't even know that other kinds of lives existed. Seen from her perspective, the world was a small and homogeneous place.

Yet she was uneasy and afraid: her mother worked non-stop and her father spent long stretches away from home, working as a policeman in Nairobi, Kenya's capital city. It was worse when he got back: he hit her mother and sold their cows. In those desperate moments, her mother would say she wished her daughter's life could be different. The only way of changing it was to get an education, so Kakenya studied all she could.

When Kakenya was eleven, somebody arrived in town. Morompi Ole-Ronkei was a twenty-something neighbour who had the qualifications and the money to study in the USA. It was a revelation. Morompi had a camera, jeans, sneakers, a satisfied smile; he told stories about a country where everybody was rich, had sunglasses and several cars, and the machines did all the work.

Kakenya was fascinated –a brand new world was opened to her. So she doubled her efforts at school: now her goal was set. When she got to high school, Kakenya was one of the only two girls in a class full of boys.

In her community, girls are not supposed to do those things. They have to get married, and to do so, first they must be circumcised. Kakenya managed to postpone that moment for two or three years, and kept studying. But when she turned fifteen her father told her

Young women migrate for university education abroad, but to a much lesser extent than their male peers, because of cultural norms that restrict their mobility.

she couldn't wait any longer. Female genital cutting – *emuratisho* – would mark her entrance into adult life: the moment of quitting school and getting married. Kakenya took a firm stand and negotiated: she would only do it if she were allowed to finish high school. She insisted so much that her father promised her this in front of the men of the village. According to tradition, such a promise must be kept, and Kakenya knew how to use tradition in her favour.

Many Masai girls look forward to the cutting with great enthusiasm. They have heard so much about it, about the moment in which their real lives will begin.

But nobody tells us what they're actually going to do to us: we only know there's going to be a big party, and we're going to be the centre of attention. And it is a beautiful party: a whole week of singing and dancing and banquets. Until one morning they take you to the cow corral and right there, in front of everybody, a grandmother comes and does it to you. You feel this horrible pain but you can't cry: ever since you're a little girl, they tell you you can't cry. And once it's over, you can't talk about it with anyone.

Even now, as she remembers, Kakenya's face darkens. She says she feels that absent part of her body every single day and that she's going to spend her life trying to eradicate that custom. Every year, about two million women in Africa, Asia and the Middle East risk female genital mutilation. Generally, the operation is done under very risky conditions, with no antiseptic, nor proper surgical instruments.

Kakenya finished high school with very good grades. It was time to get married, to stop being Kakenya. In her society, when a girl gets married, she becomes her husband's property. The Masai girl's birth name lasts until her wedding day; on that day, the groom and his friends choose another name for her, which she'll use for the rest of her life. It is difficult to think of a more extreme exercise of power.

I'm Kakenya, and I'll be Kakenya till the day I die!

So she says now, many years later. But to accomplish that, she had to flee her homeland.

I wish we didn't have to escape from our homelands to be what we want to be. If I would have stayed, I would have been forced to marry, have children, to live the life they wanted, not my own. I had to leave in order to keep being myself.

Kakenya went looking for Morompi and asked him to help her find a university in the United States.

Why the United States?

Because I didn't know of any other place.

After a lot of paperwork, a small university for women, Randolph-Macon in Virginia, admitted her. But the difficult part was the money. Kenya has thirty-five million inhabitants, half of them under the poverty line. For months Kakenya worked to convince the women and men in her village that a girl could do what so few boys had done. She promised them she would come back to set up a school and a maternity hospital, and install running water. She also promised she would come back alone: she wouldn't marry a stranger. In the beginning, they said no, a woman can't go anywhere, she needs to respect her elders and stay where she is.

In the end, thanks to her persuasiveness and insistence, Kakenya got the authorisation of the old men in the village and a little money. At the beginning of 2000 she travelled to Nairobi: there she saw, for the first time in her life, an apartment building, a television set. A few days later, she got on a plane to cross the Atlantic. When the flight took off she was crying tears of happiness because she had made it.

Kakenya was so lost: it's hard to imagine a journey more radical than hers. At Randolph-Macon she was received with

Kakenya's migration journey

led her in search of an education and freedom from the strict gender norms her native community imposes on girls and women to leave rural Kenya to study in the United States.

enthusiasm, affection and an extraordinary blizzard. Kakenya couldn't believe that snow would fall from the sky, nor that her classmates would take their mattresses to use them as sleds. She was discovering, at the same time, two peculiar aspects of Western culture: something as valuable as a mattress can be spoiled for the sake of fun, and even adult women still think about playing.

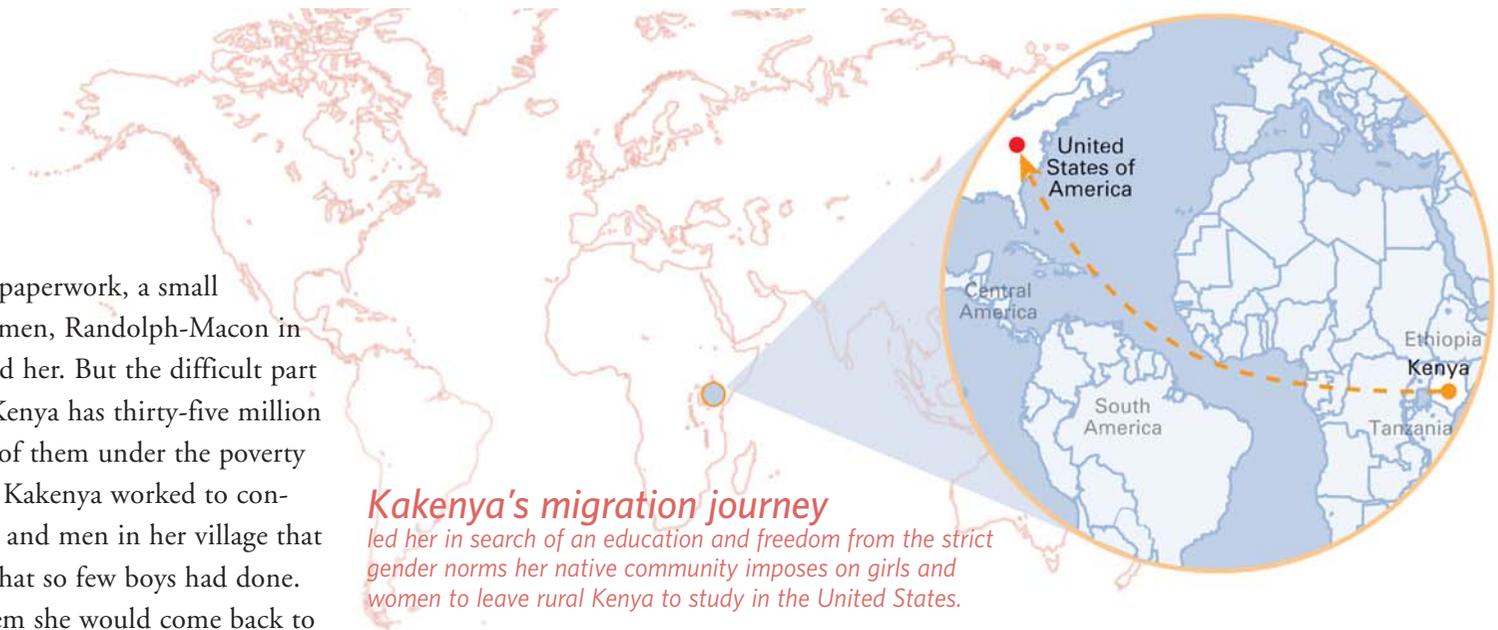
Her first year in college was not easy. She felt overwhelmed and all she thought about was going back home.

When I got my first computer, I was frightened to death. I thought that if I pressed any button, the thing was going to explode. Electricity scared me a lot.

Eventually she adapted, and managed to graduate with very good grades. But at the same time, Kakenya discovered that Americans ate raw vegetables "just like animals," that they walked too fast, that they smiled without a reason, that everybody wanted to look young, that not everybody was rich and that money didn't grow on trees. Life in the United States could be very hard work too.

Kakenya has been living in the United States for more than five years now and she learned to say she's Kenyan, not Masai. Kakenya says repeatedly that her heart is in her village, but the two times she returned, one of them for her father's burial, she felt uncomfortable: she's not like them anymore.

At home, Kakenya did all she could. She was kind to everyone and she tried to inte-



grate. She didn't use American clothes so as not to make them jealous. But the Enoosaen water made her sick, she couldn't carry the firewood, and everyone made her feel the difference. Some people praised her, others were jealous, and still others seemed to regard her with all kinds of suspicions. And many asked her for money because anyone who lives in America has to be rich. Kakenya knows she is not American, and she's afraid of being stuck in the middle, which is to say nowhere.

They don't know, they imagine everything is easy here. And every day I think, Oh God, I owe them so much, I made them so many promises...

Here in the United States, she says, she has a good time and learns a lot, but she never stops feeling guilty: she can't remember a day in which she thought, Oh, I'm so happy. And often she misses the time when the future was not an issue, when she did not spend her days and nights thinking how to improve her village's situation. Those days when she'd fall into bed and sleep would come without her even noticing. Now she knows so many more things about the

world, she says, she worries so much more and she can't stop thinking about what she can do to help people be happy without having to leave their homeland behind. She wants to contribute to bring such a world into existence, though she doesn't know how. For the moment, what she has most faith in is education.

Education is the key to everything. Getting an education opened so many doors for me that I want to prepare myself as much as I can to improve education in my country.

So says Kakenya in the cold of Pittsburgh, her wool hat pulled down over her frozen ears, as she dreams of setting up a school in her homeland to educate women and girls, to convince them they don't need to be dominated by men, to reject genital cutting, to keep their names, to be what they want to be without having to leave home.

If the women of my homeland had access to education, they could choose what to do with their lives. And that would be a real change, and I would feel I had paid my debts.

STUDYING ABROAD

The number of students who pursue their studies abroad¹, has been rising for decades, and has become the focus of growing attention.² Kakenya is one of many who have contributed to the rise in numbers. She has made a remarkable journey from her childhood years in rural Kenya, where the access of girls to education still poses many challenges, to higher education at an American university. Kakenya's story illustrates that gender norms keep girls from continuing school. Her migration has also been a way of getting free of the expectations that her community put on her because of her gender.

Over the past two decades, the proportion of adolescents aged 10-14 who have never attended school has fallen from 21 to 11 per cent for boys, and from 39 to 18 per cent for girls.³ Moreover, young people in developing countries are spending more of their adolescence in school than ever before.⁴ Nevertheless, while gender gaps in primary education are closing globally, more girls than boys are still out of school. In later adolescence (ages 15-19) the gender gap widens, overall attendance rates drop substantially, and regional differences become more pronounced.⁵

Students leave their countries to study abroad for a variety of reasons, including lack of access to tertiary education in their home countries; the opportunity for better-quality education,

and the experience of studying and living abroad in preparation for an increasingly globalised world.⁶ Many hope that studying abroad will bring better job opportunities in their own countries. For many, however, life will take a different turn: rather than returning to their roots, they will stay on in the country where they studied.

In 2004, at least 2.5 million tertiary students studied outside their home countries compared to 1.75 million just five years earlier, a 41 per cent increase since 1999.⁷ More than two-thirds of the world's foreign students are in just six countries: 23 per cent study in the United States, followed by the United Kingdom (12 per cent) Germany (11 per cent), France (10 per cent) Australia (7 per cent) and Japan (5 per cent). In these countries mobile student populations grew almost three times as fast as domestic enrolment over recent years.⁸

Sub-Saharan Africa has the largest percentage of students abroad: about one in every 16 students, almost three times the global average.⁹ But only five out of 100 young people of tertiary age are enrolled in tertiary education in Sub-Saharan Africa, compared to 69 in North America and Europe.¹⁰ In Cape Verde, Comoros and Guinea-Bissau the number of students abroad exceeds domestic enrolment. They account for more than 50 per cent of students in

Botswana, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Lesotho and Namibia.¹¹ About half of the mobile students from Sub-Saharan Africa go to Western Europe. North America and Sub-Saharan Africa itself attract about an equal number of the remaining mobile students. For those who study abroad within the region, South Africa is by far the most popular destination, attracting about nine out of ten mobile students.¹²

Over the past few years, the Arab region has also seen a sharp increase in student mobility. The pursuit of higher education abroad is major factor in youth emigration, especially for young men. Young women migrate for university education abroad, but to a much lesser extent than their male peers, because of cultural norms that restrict their mobility.¹³ Two out of three mobile students from the Arab States study in Western Europe and another 12 per cent go to North America. About 13 per cent stay in the region.¹⁴

There has been an expansion of arrangements whereby universities from developed countries develop partnerships with universities in developing countries or establish branch campuses there. Governments have supported or encouraged these arrangements in the hope both of improving the training opportunities for their citizens without having to send them abroad and of attracting qualified students from other countries.¹⁵

Young women like Kakenya should not have to leave their communities, surroundings or homelands in pursuit of an education. One of the Millennium Development Goals is to ensure that by 2015 all children go to school and that girls have the same educational opportunities as boys. Parents and communities should value girls' education as much as boys'. Girls should not be removed from school early to be married, or because of unintended pregnancy. Girls and boys alike should have access to high-quality education in a gender-sensitive school environment that supports their educational aspirations.

To this end countries should work to eliminate or reduce school fees; provide incentives to retain children and young people in school, and monitor in each community the access and retention of children and young people at all levels of education.



Edna

ZAMBIAN, LIVING WITH HIV

It wasn't only that she had to drop out of school because her parents couldn't afford it any more; that day they also told her they had a husband for her: the wedding would take place in a month. Her mother showed her a picture: the man was in his twenties and looked handsome in his soldier's uniform. He was the younger brother of a neighbour in Mpika, a town in the northern province of Zambia. The neighbour and her parents had arranged every last detail.

The bride-price wasn't much, just around three hundred thousand kwacha, because I'm a Bemba, and the Bembas don't charge much for their women.

Three hundred thousand kwacha was the price of a calf. Edna was 17, and she found the marriage quite logical: what else could she do, since she had to leave school?

I didn't know him, but I knew his family, and my parents chose him. It was all right.

Her father was a retired civil servant and her mother a housewife. They had fourteen children: it was hard to support the whole family. Edna was a bit scared the first time she saw him: it was strange to think she was going to spend her life with him. But her parents had decided it, and Edna knew from her elders that elders are always right.

What would have happened if you hadn't wanted to marry him?

I don't know.

Edna laughs, she says that idea never crossed her mind. The soldier took her to a house near a military camp in Kabwe-Chindwin Barracks, in the central province of the country. Edna was quite happy. Her husband was kind and, in a year, a little girl was born: things were going well. It was true, though, that the soldier wasn't always at home. He was often sent away on missions for long periods. But when he returned, he used to bring her presents, and

a new pregnancy. Sometimes Edna was upset: it was clear that her husband had been with other women during those missions, like that time he spent six months on the Namibian border. Looking back, Edna would think that it was then that the disaster began.

She understood him, though. A man won't be without a woman for too long, and her husband was no exception. She was faithful – things are different for women. When her husband was away, Edna baked pastries and cakes and sold them at the market. His salary was all right – in the meantime he had become a sergeant – but it was always good to earn some extra money.

The family had grown with two more children – two boys – when Edna's husband started feeling sick and weak. He didn't feel sick all the time, but every once in a while he would stay in bed for a few days, unable to stand up. Edna kept telling him to go to see a doctor. In the beginning of 2001, her fourth child, another daughter was born. Half a year later, Edna's father died.

At the end of that year, the family left for Kapiri Mposhi, a nearby town, to attend a funeral. Edna's husband was walking with his friends and relatives when he suddenly collapsed and was rushed to hospital where he later died

Edna was faced with a new life: she had no father or husband to take care of her and her four children. She didn't know where to go, what to do. A couple days after her husband's funeral, she found a letter from him,

Of the 6.2 million young people living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, three out of four are female.

that he had left in case he died. There, he said he had tested positive for HIV, but had preferred not to tell her.

What did you feel when you found that letter?

Nothing.

Weren't you mad at your husband?

Well, at first I was depressed. I got sick and spent two weeks in the hospital. But then I realized there were many widows

just like me who had managed to go on, so I could manage too. Now I think it's not worth it to be mad at him. He's dead anyway, there's nothing I can do to him.

Edna supposed that her husband had caught the virus that time he was in Namibia. But that didn't change a thing.

When she learned that her husband had died of AIDS, Edna knew she had to get tested, but she was afraid. For two years, she chose not to know. She suspected the worst, but she preferred to carry on as she was. One day, she got the courage and went to a clinic. She was told to come back a week later to get the results. That day, the nurse asked her if she was prepared. Edna was very nervous; she didn't know what to say. The nurse told her to go home, prepare herself and come back again the next day. At that point Edna knew the nurse was going to tell her what she had suspected all along.

"Now that I'm HIV positive, what am I supposed to do? I need someone to tell me what to do," she asked the nurse the next day. The nurse sent her to talk to the staff at Corridors of Hope, an NGO that works with high-risk groups such as commercial sex workers and truck drivers, and with people

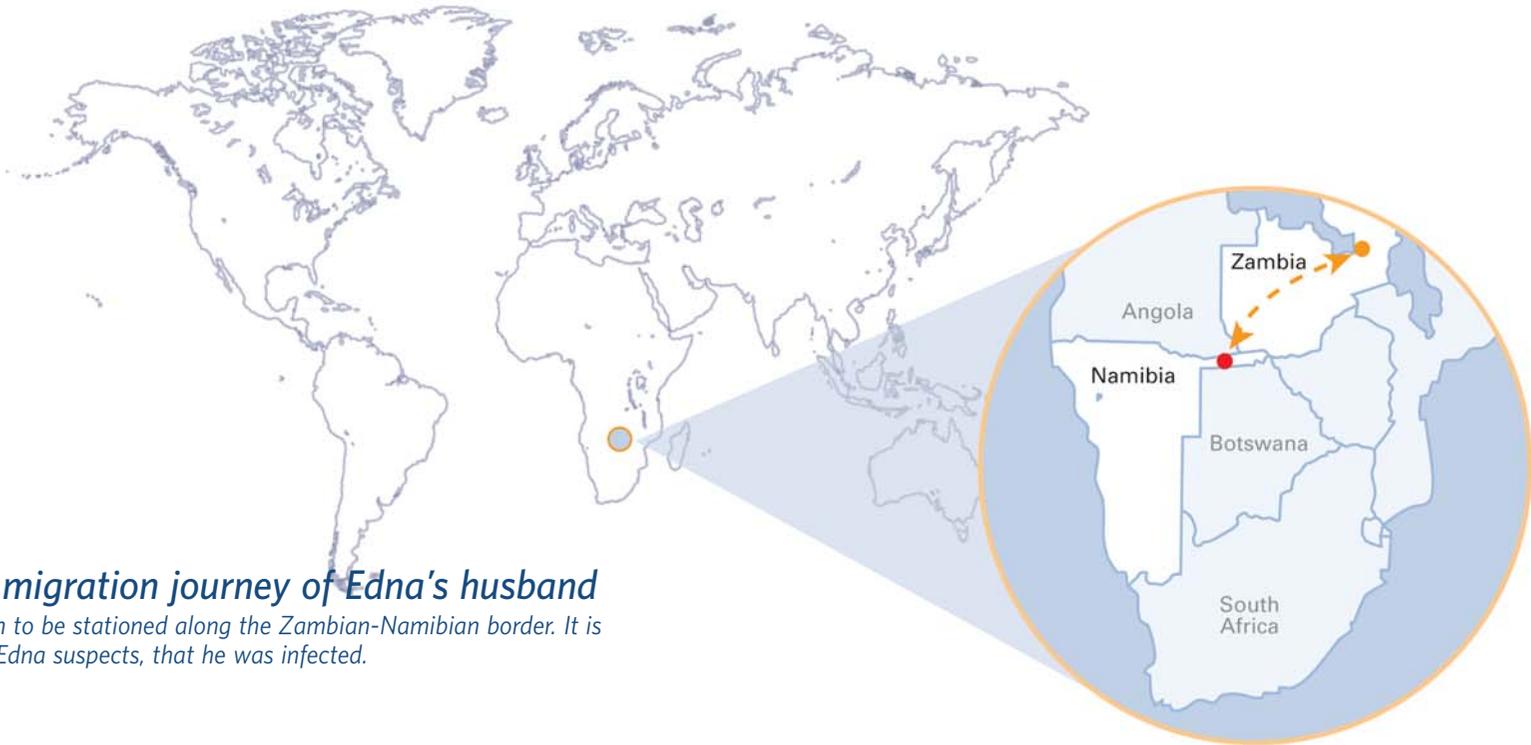
living with HIV and AIDS. They told her that she was going to start treatment with antiretroviral medicine they would provide, that AIDS is not the end of the world, that with the treatment she could live in good health for years. And they taught her that being HIV-positive is not a social stigma: she had to face it, not hide it. In Zambia, about one out of five people is HIV-positive, and they are learning not to hide anymore. AIDS is a key issue in Zambia; street signs, newspapers, TV, the government and the people talk a lot about it. Almost half of the hospital beds in the country are occupied by AIDS patients, and the number of "AIDS orphans" increases every day.¹

The disease struck Edna hard. In the past three years, two of her sisters died from AIDS. She stayed with them in their final days and took in their four children, along with her own four. A few months ago, she discovered her youngest daughter is also infected.

I didn't know my baby could be infected. I never thought a little girl could be HIV-positive.

What did you do when you found out?

Nothing. I had already learned about the disease and was able to accept it. Now,



The migration journey of Edna's husband

led him to be stationed along the Zambian-Namibian border. It is there, Edna suspects, that he was infected.

what I have to do is take care of her, love her, help her not to feel isolated.

Did you feel guilty?

No, that would make it worse. I was taught that if I focus on feeling guilty, I'll feel weak, stressed, and that's bad for my disease. I could die sooner and leave her all alone. Feeling guilty would be the worst thing to do.

The girl is six years old, and she also has tuberculosis. The doctors have to take care of her lungs before she can be given anti-retroviral drugs. The government, with wide

international support, strives to provide the drugs free, since most infected people can't afford them. Edna receives the drugs at the hospital in Kapiri Mposhi, the town where she lives now. In the hospital, most of the doctors are foreigners, Médecins Sans Frontières' volunteers. In Zambia there is a critical shortage of health workers, including doctors, because many Zambian health workers migrate within a few years of completing their training to England, the USA or Canada.

At the hospital, Edna receives a supplementary meal. She doesn't have much money and her diet – crucial to her

treatment – is not what it should be. Edna makes some money as an HIV/AIDS educator for various local NGOs, and she continues to sell food at the market. She looks fine: active, curious, that big smile on her face. She has accepted the way her life has gone: that her husband cheated on her and infected her, that her sisters died of AIDS, that her daughter is also HIV positive – with that smile on her face.

How do you manage to accept so many things?

Like I said before, by talking to people,

friends that are going through the same things. We are so many that I have realized that you can also live like this, being positive.

And what do you expect of the future?

Nothing. I want to do all I can to help my children live happily, maybe start a business so they can have a better life. I don't know, but that's it. I want to do something good for my children before I die.

Are you afraid of death?

No.

She laughs.

Why not?

I've seen a lot of people die. My brothers, my sisters, my father, my husband, they all died. I will die too someday, but I'm not afraid. The Scriptures say there is an afterlife, and I believe them.

How do you imagine it?

I don't imagine it. I can't imagine it.

Edna says she doesn't have a man in her life but she's not worried about that. Well, she would say later, there is a man courting her, and he even proposed. She told him she was HIV-positive and he said that didn't matter, that he loved her all the same. But the man is a merchant from another town

who comes to Kapiri Mposhi every once in a while, and he's married. That's not a problem, though; he's willing to make her his second wife. In Zambia, customary law allows men to have several wives. Yet, Edna is not decided: she thinks her children might have a bad time with a man who is not their father.

Anyway, if I got married, he'd have to use condoms. I don't want him to get sick and go on spreading AIDS.

And he'll agree to use condoms with his present wife?

I don't know, I didn't dare to ask him yet.

VIRUS WITHOUT BORDERS

Migration plays a critical role in the spread of HIV, as Edna's story makes clear. Several factors link mobility and HIV, including the conditions under which people migrate; poverty; gender inequality; separation from families and partners, and the absence of the socio-cultural norms that guide people's behaviour in stable communities.²

In Zambia, like in the rest of Southern Africa, HIV/AIDS is devastating. Internal and cross-border migration exacerbates the spread of the disease. Hundreds of thousands of men from the region make a living by working in the mines in South Africa, where they spend years away from their families. While away from home, many men engage in unsafe sexual behaviour. They have other partners, go to sex workers, and seldom use condoms.

Gender inequalities and lack of respect for women's and girls' rights adds to their risk of contracting the virus. Of the 6.2 million young people living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, three out of four are female.³

Mobile populations, like labour migrants; commercial sex workers; truck-drivers; salesmen; railway workers, and members of the military are among the groups particularly at risk. Truck drivers and traders, for example, crossing what is called the "Great Corridor from the Cape to

Cairo", are known to be at particular risk of contracting HIV. Maps show how towns and cities on that route are hotspots for HIV. Along the corridor, in truck-stops and squatter camps, border communities and near army bases, poor women may turn to commercial sex work to find a living. Men often share sex partners, increasing everyone's vulnerability to HIV.⁴

Not only has migration helped to spread HIV/AIDS, but research shows that the epidemic itself has brought with it a new form of migration, of HIV/AIDS-affected children and young people forced to leave by the illness or death of one or both parents. In Southern Africa, the region most affected by HIV/AIDS, roughly one in ten children have lost their parents.⁵

As household income dwindles due to the illness and loss of adult family members, children and young people move to live with relatives. When there are already too many mouths to feed in relatives' homes, they may have to drop out of school to earn their keep. They may be pushed out to live on the streets. Girls may be married off early. Some young people move to take care of an ailing parent or relative. Quite a number of them are left to survive on their own, as heads of household. For young people migrating abroad, not only are they leaving behind familiar surroundings and friends, but they may not know the language and culture,

posing additional challenges to their sense of belonging.

Both international and domestic migrants need access to a complete spectrum of HIV prevention options, including counselling, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections; affordable condoms, and information on assessing, reducing and eliminating the risk of infection.

For example, in Asia, another region where poverty pushes young people to migrate, UNFPA and the European Union have launched the Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in Asia to respond to these needs. Under this initiative and in collaboration with the International Planned Parenthood Federation, young migrant factory and sex workers in communities in the "Golden Triangle" on the borders of Thailand, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, and Southern China are beginning to enjoy expanded access to sexual and reproductive health services, including HIV prevention.⁶



Natalia

MOLDOVAN, TRAFFICKING VICTIM

In 1990, when she was seven, Natalia's mother died of cancer. Natalia was convinced that her mother's illness was her father's fault for beating her so much, and that she should have protected her mother somehow. But her father was doing nothing unusual: there's a popular saying in Moldova, "A woman without beating is like a house without sweeping".

Natalia was left alone with her four brothers and her father, who worked the fields. Her father used to beat her and tell her she was a burden to everyone in the family, that there was no point in sending her to school. Her brothers weren't any nicer. Natalia started looking for ways to earn some money to get by.

I never understood why they didn't care for me, why they treated me so bad all the time.

When she was fourteen, Natalia was hired to work at a neighbour's house. She cleaned, took care of the animals and cut firewood.

Three years later, she asked the neighbour for help to continue her education. Natalia started taking classes to become a teacher of gym and martial arts, until she ran out of money and had to go back to work.

At home again, she gave her father and brothers almost all the money she made in an attempt to win them back, but they beat her anyway. When she was feeling very lonely, Natalia would walk to the cemetery and tell her mother her troubles. In time, she decided to move to Chisinau, the capital city, where she found a job in the central market. But her brothers went looking for her and dragged her back home, because someone had to take care of the house.

When she turned 19, Natalia agreed to marry a young man from a nearby town. She was not in love with him, but she thought this was the only way to start a new life. In the beginning, they were happy. They were living in a room in Chisinau and each had a job; they laughed and had fun. Then he grew jealous of her, complaining

about every penny she spent. They began to argue, and he started beating her. When a doctor told her she was pregnant, she feared for her husband's reaction. At first, he seemed pleased, but then said that if she had to stop working he would be forced to support the three of them. He blamed her for not taking precautions, and beat her up again.

One day, her husband suggested moving to Italy, to build up their future. Natalia accepted the idea; like everyone else, she had heard stories of successful migrants. Her husband introduced her to a friend who would get them papers and lend them money. The friend was a pleasant forty-year-old, smart and sophisticated. Now, when everything is over, she calls him Mr. X.

You had never heard about human trafficking?

I didn't watch TV, I didn't read the papers. I heard something, but I never believed it.

Anyway, one thinks that those things always happen to other people.

Her husband convinced her to travel ahead first and he would follow soon after. She was to work as a maid for Mr. X's sister.

I was really looking forward to going. I thought I could give my child a better life.

That afternoon, Natalia got into Mr. X's car. She soon fell asleep. When she woke up, it was dark and she was in a wasteland by a river. In the car were two other girls who told her they were in Romania. Mr. X. told them

Trafficked girls who manage to escape their captors should be provided a safe place to stay, heal and recover as they prepare to rejoin the real world.

to get out of the car and walk for a while. Natalia asked him why; he told her to shut up and do it. Natalia started crying; she knew something terrible was going to happen.

They walked in the shadows, in the middle of nowhere, until they found a car with three men inside. Natalia saw how the men gave Mr. X a great deal of cash. She tried to get away but the men grabbed her,

beat her up and kicked her to the ground. As she was lying there, Natalia told Mr. X said she was going to go back to Moldova and he was going to be sorry. Mr. X laughed and said she was never going back, because someone close to her had made sure that this would never happen.

It took me some time to realize that my husband had sold me for three thousand dollars. My husband! I can't imagine a worse betrayal.

Lying on the ground, Natalia screamed. Her new owners handcuffed her and pulled out a syringe to drug her for the trip ahead. Natalia tried to stop them, yelling that she was pregnant, but it was no use.

She spent the journey dreaming and hallucinating, as well as being threatened and beaten. She

was raped and awoke naked and injured in the back of a jeep. She was terrified.

Later, she and six other girls were forced to walk for hours across the mountains. One tried to escape and was killed. One of the guards broke Natalia's arm. The men beat her up until they got tired of it. She ended up in a house in the outskirts of a town, where a man told her that he had bought

her and she would have to work hard for him. By way of welcome, two thugs tied her up and raped her.

I was locked in my room by day. At night, they took me out, gave me alcohol and forced me to do whatever the customers wanted.

One night she felt sick and told her boss she was pregnant. The man told her not to worry. A so-called doctor aborted her pregnancy. Natalia spent three days crying.

Weeks later, she managed to escape and took shelter in a convent. But soon the nuns asked her to leave, because they were afraid of what could happen. Back on the streets, her boss found her immediately, but he was tired of her and sold her cheap. Her new boss told her that if she was a good girl and paid him back her price, in a few months he would let her go. Every night, Natalia had to dance and "satisfy the clients".

They were animals, people with no soul. Sick, perverse and violent.

Natalia wipes away a tear and looks at it as if it were the enemy. Her small hands twist a piece of plastic angrily.



Natalia's trafficking route
 took her from Moldova through Romania
 and across various national borders to a
 country where she suffered from exploitation
 and abuse.

Several weeks went by, and a regular client offered to help her escape. Natalia found refuge in the client's house, only to find that all he wanted was the brothel services for free. Natalia fled again. She was running across a field when she heard a car. It was the brothel's thugs. They grabbed her and tried to shove her in the car. She screamed that she would rather die than go back there, and managed to run. They chased her with the car, ran her over, and left her for dead in the road.

What would you do if you found the people who kidnapped you?

Natalia laughs. For the first time in this long conversation, she's really laughing.

I'd run them over with a car.

After three days in a coma, Natalia woke up in a hospital. Doctors told her she might never walk again. She underwent several operations and six months of convalescence; she also learned she had Hepatitis B. Natalia feared that she could never get back to Moldova.

Then a lawyer appeared and offered to help and pay for her ticket. Natalia suspected he might have been sent by her boss to

make sure she was not going to turn him in to the authorities. Or maybe not; Natalia never knew.

Nobody was waiting for her when she arrived at the Chisinau airport. She went to her home town, but her father and her brothers didn't want to talk to her. They said that they considered her dead; they said that she was ungrateful because she had left and never sent any money home. Natalia did not tell them what had happened to her. She just left for an aunt's house in another town.

Her aunt let her stay and lick her wounds. Natalia was worried because she couldn't help her in the house and she didn't

want people to feel sorry for her. Still on crutches, one day she left for Chisinau, looking for a job and a life of her own. She left an audio tape at her aunt's, telling her story. She wanted her to know but was ashamed to tell her face-to-face.

In Chisinau, Natalia slept in the park until she found a job in a kindergarten. The director let her sleep there as long as nobody noticed. She never left the school; she worked during the day, and hid at night. Later, a cousin told her about the hot line to La Strada, an NGO fighting against human trafficking. Natalia called, and found a shel-

ter run by the International Organization for Migration. That's where she is now, trying to recover from her physical and psychological trauma.

When Natalia talks, she looks down; her voice is low and she speaks in a monotone; she is always about to cry. Every word is a search, a stammer, a tremble.

Why are you talking to us?

Well, first, I wanted to hide my story, because when people know, instead of treating you like a victim, they think you're

guilty. But I have to talk; if I don't, I'm going to spend my life thinking about those months. Talking about it is the only way to leave it behind and help others, so that this doesn't happen to other girls like me.

What do you expect from the future now?

Natalia is silent; she thinks and tries to smile.

"What a tough question," she says.

CONTEMPORARY SLAVERY

Natalia is one of an estimated 140,000 Moldovan women who have fallen prey to sexual trafficking.

Worldwide, sexual trafficking of young people is on the rise.¹ An estimated 1.2 million children and adolescents under the age of 18 are affected every year.² South Asia and South-east Asia are major trafficking areas. The International Organization of Migration estimates that 225,000 women and children are trafficked annually from South-East Asia.³ An estimated 300,000 Bangladeshi children work in brothels in India, which is a major destination country in South Asia.⁴

Data from Eastern Europe suggest that increasingly young girls are targeted by traffickers, as they can earn more money with them than with adult women.⁵ A shift in demand towards younger girls is also reported in other parts of the world, like South-East Asia, where the belief that having sex with a virgin may prevent and even cure HIV/AIDS, has contributed to this effect.⁶

Trafficking is not only carried out for sexual exploitation but also assumes other forms: exploitative labour, debt bondage, domestic work, begging, marriage, involvement in armed conflicts or in illegal drug or organ trades.⁷ In Africa, for example, an estimated 200,000 West and Central African minors are trafficked annually both internally and across international

borders.⁸ Boys are generally trafficked to work on agricultural plantations, while girls are largely exploited as domestic servants.⁹ Most of those trafficked from the African continent to Western Europe are from Ghana, Nigeria and Morocco. Some were sold by their parents, and while most of them are between 17 and 20 years of age, others are as young as 14.¹⁰

The root causes of trafficking are multiple and complex, and include poverty, lack of employment opportunities, lack of girls' and women's rights, impunity from prosecution, and a general lack of education and awareness.¹¹ Sometimes young people are sold by their parents, who are not able to feed them, or who consent to their children going away with a relative or friend, promising to find them a good job.

The consequences of human trafficking include damage to victims' physical or mental health, exposure to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancy and death. Instead of receiving assistance and protection, trafficking victims often face prosecution and imprisonment.¹² They may also be subjected to humiliating and intimidating treatment at the hands of the authorities, both in sending and receiving countries.¹³ Those who have been in the sex industry are especially vulnerable to further abuse on their return. Returnees may also face serious diffi-

culties reintegrating in their community or family, particularly if they are regarded as dishonoured or as failing to reap the benefits of their migration.¹⁴

Over the last few years, some progress has been made to focus attention in the international community on guaranteeing the protection of trafficking victims. For example, in Moldova UNFPA and the International Organization of Migration (IOM) have been collaborating closely to assist trafficking victims like Natalia. The IOM shelter is not far from a UNFPA-supported health centre, which offers a complete array of sexual and reproductive health services. IOM, in collaboration with UN agencies, is also providing returnees with skills training.

Yet much remains to be done. Countries affected by trafficking must ensure that national policy and action places the human rights of trafficking victims at the core of their actions in the fight against human trafficking. This is especially important to protect children and adolescents, who are the most vulnerable. International co-operation is needed to prosecute and disperse trafficking gangs. Trafficked girls who manage to escape their captors should be provided a safe place to stay, heal and recover as they prepare to rejoin the real world. They also need to receive advice and support to regain their self-esteem and confidence.



Bibi

SURINAMESE, NURSE TRAINEE

When she was a little girl, before she had even finished elementary school, the only thing Bibi liked to watch on television were shows about hospitals. She always wondered what it would be like to be there. Whenever anyone got hurt or sick at home, she was the one who would take care of them, she was the one who had, as she says, the will and the guts to do it.

Bibi Sattuar was born in Paramaribo in 1983, the first daughter of a Guyanan Indian couple who arrived in Suriname thirty years ago, looking for work. Suriname – the former Dutch Guiana – is 165,000 square kilometres of tropical rain forest and has only about 492,000 inhabitants, almost all of whom live on the coast.

Through the years Bibi's father had many jobs, while Bibi's mother stayed at home to take care of her and her brother. Her parents never made a lot of money, but were able to raise and educate their children. Bibi's mother always said that they were

privileged: just imagine, she would say, your ancestors were brought over to these lands as slaves and now we are free, we can make a decent living; what else could we want? Bibi would often reply that she wanted a little more, that she wanted to be a nurse – because she had always dreamed of it and because she craved for an education. In her family, the men worked with their hands as carpenters or mechanics, jobs that called for little formal training and provided quick money, while the women stayed at home.

You didn't want to be a doctor?

Yes, maybe. But it was impossible. Medical school is too expensive and my family couldn't pay it. The nurse training is different, you study and work at the same time.

But her parents did not want her to study. Her mother told her that it was foolishness: she had to get married, have

children and look after her home, like she did, like every woman in the family did. Bibi grew desperate.

I saw my aunts, my cousins, my mother who had to stay at home and depend on their husbands. In my family, the women were tied to their homes and could not do anything without their husbands' approval. I could not stand the idea of living like that.

When she finished high school, her grades were good enough to get her into a health assistant career, which lasted for three years. After that, she could continue her studies to become a registered nurse. But her mother said that her high school degree was more than enough. And Bibi had to accept that. Her mother told her:

You couldn't do it, anyway

Of course I can.

No, I know you. You are my daughter, and I know you can't.

For almost two years, Bibi had to stay at home. She took half a dozen computing courses and got her driver's licence, but she was not satisfied. Finally, in mid-2005, a friend helped her to fill out the forms to sign up for Paramaribo's nursing school. She was accepted, and her mother finally gave up trying to convince her otherwise: she said that if Bibi insisted on making mistakes she was no longer going to try to stop her.

Healthcare workers who move represent an irreplaceable loss in human resources to already weakened health systems in developing countries.

Now I have to finish it, even if just out of pride, so that my mother can not say that she was right. But that's not why I'm doing it.

In October 2005, Bibi started her courses—a combination of classroom work and hands-on training at Sint Vincentius Hospital. Bibi is quite pleased, although the work can be tough: sometimes it is hard to feed, clean or help a patient. It is always tough to deal with certain injuries, with people on the verge of

death. Bibi is friendly by nature, but sometimes having to behave in that manner, even with rude patients is the hardest part of her job.

It becomes difficult when a patient tells you that you have to do something because he or she is paying you. It's a really hard job and the pay is very bad. It's not always easy to go on.

Five of her thirty-three classmates have already dropped out of the programme “because being a nurse is not for just anybody”. Bibi does not even consider dropping out, but she complains that her life has become quite difficult. She spends eight hours a day in the hospital and earns only 50 Suriname dollars, about \$US 18 a month. That is not even enough to cover her transportation costs, let alone books and photocopies, or the mandatory uniform. Only two of her classmates are men: Bibi thinks that they cannot take the things that women can:

My brother always tells me that he would never do what I'm doing, working and studying so much and getting nothing in return. He prefers to work in a supermarket. Women are more patient.

Bibi speaks good English. She says that now the hospital is her whole life. She does not have a boyfriend. Her parents don't want her to, and besides, she says, a boyfriend is “a headache”. Now she has to finish her studies and that keeps her busy all the time.

But you must go out occasionally...

No, my parents don't like it when I go out. I was not brought up that way. I was taught that if you have a boyfriend, it's serious, and if it's not serious, you don't have a boyfriend. What really matters is getting my degree.

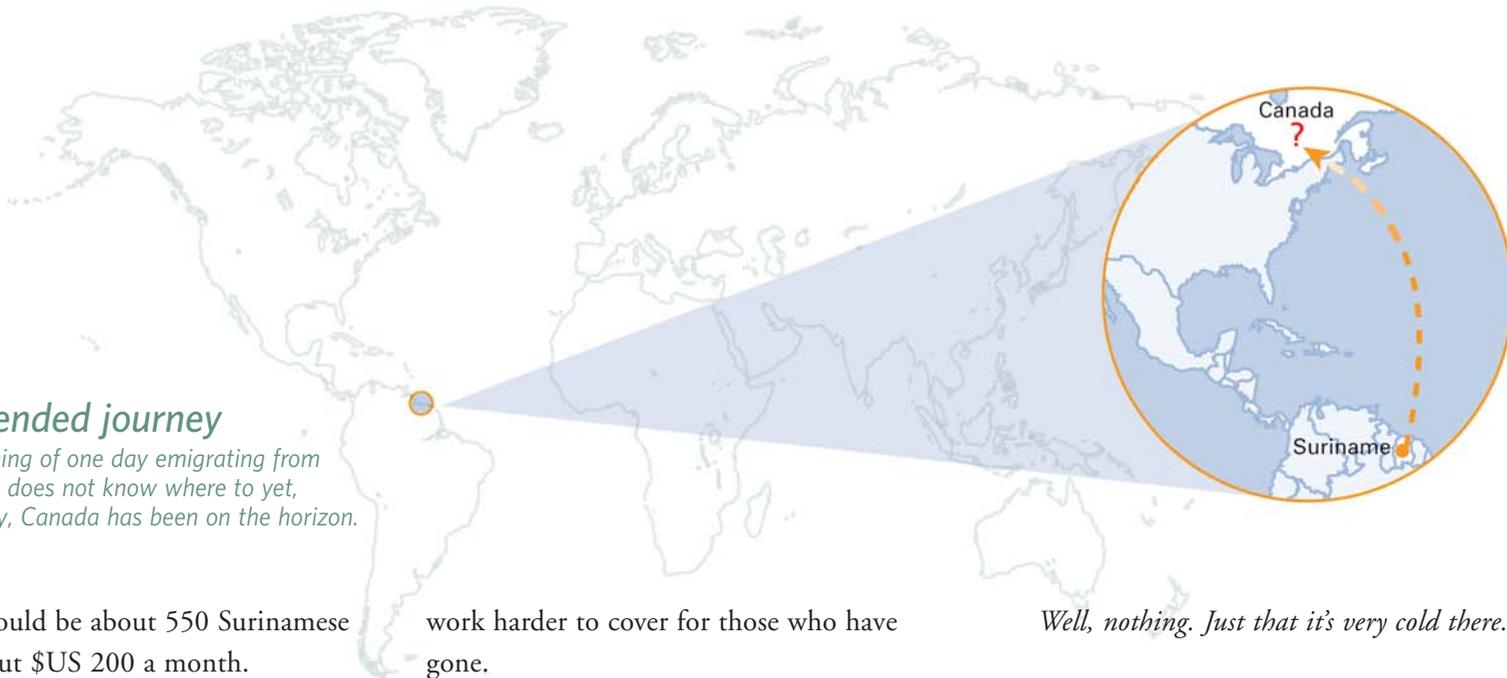
And what do you think you'll do when you get your degree?

I will probably leave.

Leave?

Yes, I'll go abroad.

In Suriname, brain drain is a major problem in health care: doctors and, above all, nurses leave the country as soon as they can, generally as soon as they finish their studies. Bibi attributes the problem to the low pay for medical professionals. Her start-



Bibi's intended journey

has her dreaming of one day emigrating from Suriname. She does not know where to yet, but as of lately, Canada has been on the horizon.

ing salary would be about 550 Surinamese dollars –about \$US 200 a month.

It's unfair that you work so hard and don't even have enough to pay the bills. With so little money, you are lucky if you can make ends meet and not go into debt. And to get even that much, you have to work hard every day. I want to save money for the future. I like this job; it's what I have always wanted to do. But here I can't make a living, and if I have to go somewhere else to keep doing what I chose, I will.

The work is hard, but the fact that so many professionals leave makes it even harder. It is a vicious cycle: the more people leave, the more people want to leave because those who stay have to

work harder to cover for those who have gone.

And there is no shortage of opportunities. In the past, Dutch companies would occasionally publish an ad in a local paper looking for nurses. Still there are relatives and friends in other countries, tip-offs at work, casual comments – and everything points in the same direction. One of Bibi's aunts is a nurse in Canada. A few months ago, while Bibi's mother and her aunt were talking on the phone, her mother mentioned that Bibi was attending nursing school. Her aunt replied "Oh, so when she gets her degree she can come here to work with me." Since then, Canada has been on the horizon.

What do you know about Canada?

Well, nothing. Just that it's very cold there.

Can you imagine yourself living somewhere else?

Yes, I can imagine myself anywhere. In life, you have to have ambition. If not, you get stuck. I'm brave and want to get ahead, so I'm not worried about what life might be like elsewhere.

But if you go somewhere else, would it just be because they pay you better or are there other reasons as well?

No, there's no other reason. It's just that I work hard and want to be paid what I deserve.

All of Bibi's classmates in her programme say that they consider leaving Suriname. The destinations they mention most often are the Netherlands, Curaçao and Aruba, the US, the UK and Canada. They generally know very little about the countries to which they may wish to go to, all they know is they want to leave. For these women, the idea of emigrating is not just a day-dream but a near certainty.

And if you leave, do you think you will come back?

I don't know. I'm going to try to live in some place where life is better. Here it looks like you'll always be stuck in the same place.

What would a better life be like?

I don't know...owning my own home, maybe having a car, being able to make ends meet.

All material things...

Yes, the rest comes later.

But you know there is a need for doctors and nurses here. If you go, you are contributing to that problem.

Yes, but I don't care. If I can go, I will.

Like Bibi, her classmate S. discovered her vocation at an early age. She tells us about that afternoon. She arrived at her home in a small town, in the countryside and heard her neighbour crying for help, and saw that she was in labour. S. found two plastic bags which she put on her hands by way of gloves. She grabbed onto the baby's head, which was already sticking out, and told the neighbour to push. The delivery turned out well and the experience led S., who was 12 years old at the time, to decide that she wanted to be a midwife. But six months later, the baby got sick. She was salivating a great deal. Her mother took her to the local hospital, but its only doctor had left a month earlier and the only health professional left was a veterinarian. The veterinarian prescribed some medicine, and S. always suspected that it was not the right one. The baby's condition further deteriorated over the next two days and S. asked her cousin to take her and the baby to the hospital. For lack

of other transportation they had to go by bike. By the time they arrived, the little girl was dead. S. had to carry the dead baby home again in her arms. For S. the lack of medical care is not an abstraction, but even so she has decided that she wants to work abroad.

Doesn't it make you feel guilty to contribute to what makes that these things keep happening?

No, why should it? I'm not the one who has to solve them.

It is as if the country has not managed to convince its citizens to participate in a collective project. They all know that if they leave they will harm it in some way, but they plan on going anyway. Bibi sums it up:

You mean, you'd go even though you know that you won't be there while your country needs you?

If they need me, they also have to meet my needs. It should be a give-and-take, shouldn't it?

THE DRAIN OF YOUNG BRAINS

While countries may encourage the exodus of skilled workers in exchange for remittances, they are also concerned about losing their best-educated professionals, thinkers and entrepreneurs, potential future leaders, to other countries.

In spite of migrants' remittances, when the proportion of educated workers represents a substantial share of the migrant population, migration generally results in a severe net loss to the source country. Source countries lose not only the services of skilled professionals but their contributions to productivity. They also see no return on their investments in educating highly-skilled workers.¹

Bibi is one of the thousands of health care workers from developing countries who plan to go to Europe or North America in search of a well-paid job. Her plan to migrate is not exceptional: she lives in a region that sends abroad a high proportion of its skilled professionals. In fact, the Caribbean has the highest percentage of migrating skilled workers in the world. The latest figures on skilled migrants in Suriname show that almost half the educated labour force left the country between 1965 and 2000.² Due to migration, the educated labour force of both Jamaica and Haiti has been reduced by 85 per cent.³

In some middle-income countries, governments train young people for work abroad. For example, the Philippines places trained nurses in OECD countries such as the UK or the US immediately after graduation.⁴

Although they account for a small proportion of labour migrants, healthcare workers who move represent an irreplaceable loss in human resources to already weakened health systems in developing countries.⁵ According to the World Health Organization, about 23 per cent of doctors trained in ten Sub-Saharan African countries are currently working in eight OECD countries, in particular, in English speaking countries. At the same time, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has rapidly increased the demand for health care workers in the region, given not only the growing caseload but the impact of HIV/AIDS on health care workers themselves.

Better remuneration, living conditions and security in receiving countries, and lack of facilities, promotion incentives and prospects in their own countries, are among the principal reasons given by physicians from Cameroon, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe for moving abroad.⁶

A few source countries are experimenting with innovative programmes that address some of the conditions driving migration. Ghana for

example, which has lost about 69 per cent of the physicians and 19 per cent of the nurses trained between 1995 and 2002, has adopted a "brain gain" action plan that includes incentives such as overtime pay, cars for doctors and other non-financial compensations. The plan has already yielded positive results among doctors.⁷

The Philippines is also trying to bring healthcare migrants home after a period of service abroad. In 1995, the government created the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration which developed an incentive-based programme including loans and subsidized scholarships for returning workers.⁸

Receiving countries can also contribute to reduce the flow of qualified migrants by abstaining from recruiting in countries with shortages of health care workers; sending countries see this as good ethical practice. South Africa and the UK for example have signed agreements to collaborate in exchange programmes for health workers; twinning partnerships among institutions, and sabbatical leaves to encourage short-term movement among health care workers of both receiving and sending countries, with the expectation of removing some of the factors that make health workers leave for good.⁹



Khadija

DUTCH & MOROCCAN, STUDENT

The old man with the white beard leaned toward her. He looked like an imam but he wasn't; he called her "my child" though he wasn't her father. He even asked her, in a low-pitched voice, if she had been a nice girl. If she had, he would give her candy; if she hadn't, a spank. Khadija was frightened.

Khadija was five years old, just starting school. The old man was *Sinterklaas*, a Dutch Santa Claus who shows up every 5th of December. The other kids knew who he was but she had never seen him before, because at her house they didn't do those things. Khadija cried and cried, and the teachers couldn't comfort her.

When I got to school I realized that everybody spoke Dutch much better than me, because they had always spoken it at home. I hadn't; my parents spoke Berber. Dutch, they said, you will learn at school. That's when I realized I was different.

Khadija was born in 1979 in a working class immigrant neighbourhood in north Amsterdam, the fifth daughter of two Moroccan parents. Her father arrived in the Netherlands at the end of the 1960s. Back then, European countries needed Mediterranean workers – Turks, Maghrebis, Spaniards, Portuguese – for jobs the locals rejected. In his homeland, Khadija's father could barely make a living and emigration offered better possibilities. In the Netherlands, he started as a butcher, but stopped because he didn't want to touch pork. He changed jobs several times until he was hired to work in a pharmaceutical factory which, literally, took a piece of him. One can still see the missing bit of his arm, where a machine ate his flesh.

For a long time, Khadija's father lived in cramped rooms packed with other immigrants, away from his family, working full time to send back some money. Ten years passed before he could finally bring his wife and children to live with him. A few months

later, Khadija was born on Dutch soil, though she had been conceived in Morocco. She believes this could be so meaningful.

I can't say I'm one thing or the other. I'm a Moroccan Berber who was born in the Netherlands, with Dutch citizenship. I'm both, and that enriches me and troubles me too, all at the same time.

The relationships between North African immigrants and their new neighbours were not easy. Many Dutch thought North Africans were authoritarian and antiquated; many North Africans found the Dutch too easygoing.

Khadija's father was strict. He knew what to do, when, and how, and he expected his family to follow his lead. Sometimes Khadija's mother helped her. For example when he forbade her to take swimming classes because she would have to appear in a swimsuit in front of boys, her mother secretly took her to the pool.

The teachers invited us to meetings and excursions, but he wouldn't let me go. I didn't want them to see this man who didn't look like the rest of the parents, who spoke their language badly, who wouldn't let me do things.

Khadija learned that other rules and customs existed outside her front door. She realized she was living in two different worlds, apart from each other, and she

Young people of migrant descent often feel caught between two cultures and their struggle to find their place may bring them into conflict with members of their families and ethnic communities, but also with members of their new society.

had to find a balance between them. Her parents' traditions didn't reflect her own lifestyle, and Dutch society often didn't understand her choices.

Her father wouldn't let her go out with boys. That wasn't part of their tradition: boys and girls are supposed to get engaged and then married, but they're not supposed to "go out". Khadija did many things without him knowing.

My parents wanted me to be completely Moroccan, but that is impossible for someone who was born and grew up in the Netherlands. I didn't know how to explain to them I belong to both cultures. It's painful to reach that particular age when you think you're smarter than your parents.

Khadija was confused. She wouldn't attend her classes and she lost her chance to go to university. At the same time, she was looking forward to finding her own place. She read the Koran and was very interested in investigating the traditions. One day, at sixteen, she wore a scarf over her head, to see what it felt like. It was a strange experience. She felt as if people didn't see her, or noticed her only because she was different.

In those years, Khadija decided to reclaim her beliefs, and now she considers herself a religious person.

I'd say I'm a liberal Muslim. To me, religion is something very personal; I don't like talking about it.

When she finished high school at eighteen Khadija started doing small jobs; but

she felt she was wasting her life. She signed up for a pre-university programme, studied law for a year and then, three years ago, started attending philosophy classes, where she is the only Moroccan girl. At first, she couldn't bear her classmates.

They were "Oh so happy" that I was a Muslim! "We know this is very complicated for you but please don't worry, we'll help you."

Khadija asked them if they knew that philosophy schools had existed in Morocco and the Arab region for centuries.

The one thing I hate is when people try to emancipate me in their own way. Those who say that we shouldn't live the way we do, that we have to take our scarves off our heads in order to stand up and say no to repression. They're asking us to be free – what they consider freedom. Nobody can tell anybody else how to be free. People have to respect us and let us conquer our own freedom in our own way. Then, if we choose to keep our heads covered it's our decision. I can't tolerate that, in the name of tolerance, people tell me how to live my life. I can't stand that they treat me like a moron who doesn't know how to live it.

Khadija goes on, very passionately:

People love to talk about “the oppression of Muslim women”, so they avoid their own problems. Here, men are still paid more than women for the same job.’ But they’d rather not talk about that.

Khadija belongs to a generation of young Muslims who are trying to find a way of being Muslim without turning their backs on the Western world where they grew up; a generation in which girls have acquired new social roles, and often are performing better, academically and professionally, than boys. The daughters of migrants are eager to profit from the opportunities they have in their new society, opportunities that their mothers never had.

In other countries or periods, the immigrants’ dream was to see their children become part of the new land and adopt their customs. To many immigrants in the Netherlands, this is the nightmare. There have been brutal reactions, the so-called “crimes of honour”, in which fathers and brothers punish women – sending them back to their home country, or even killing



them – for having relationships without their parents’ consent or for dating men of different descent. Khadija knows about these stories, though nothing like that has happened in her close circle.

Her reaction to the problem:

I don’t like blond, blue-eyed guys. I prefer the Mediterranean type, with dark hair and a passionate spirit. But the truth is that you also think about your parents: they’d just drop dead if I ever showed up with a Dutch boyfriend.

Khadija came to feel that things were falling into place – and then there was that afternoon. That afternoon when Khadija saw those two

The migration journey of Khadija’s father

took him from rural Morocco to the urban Netherlands. Several years later, his wife and children followed under the rubric of family reunification. Soon after, Khadija was born on Dutch soil.

planes crashing into the Twin Towers. First she thought about those poor people, such a terrible thing was happening to them. She couldn’t know, at the time, that these images would change so many things for her.

I feel that people are looking at us now with a magnifying glass to lay bare any fault we might have. The media exploit the prejudice against Muslims, and many people just believe them. For them, we people with dark hair and black eyes are all just Islamic terrorists. This has created a breach in society that makes everything harder.

Things have been happening in the Netherlands – the kind of things many

Dutch people thought could never happen on their own land. Pim Fortuyn, a new politician, won a wide audience with his controversial views on immigration among other things. He was killed in 2002 by a left-wing environmentalist. In 2004, a Moroccan-Dutch man killed Theo Van Gogh, an outspoken film-maker. Khadija went to a demonstration protesting the killing and demanding free speech for all. She was insulted when some marchers said that she should go back to her country. Khadija had to tell them she was Dutch as well and this was her country too.

If there's a football match between the Netherlands and Morocco, who would you like to win?

Oh, tough question. Very difficult indeed. It's like having to choose between your mother and father, you just can't. Like your mom is Morocco and your dad is the Netherlands...

Now, Khadija works at *Het Spiegelbeeld* – Mirror Image – an organization created by Saida el-Hantali, a Moroccan-Dutch woman who had the courage to speak out for the first time, about sexual abuse within her community. *Het Spiegelbeeld* helps Moroccan women to cope with integration problems,

domestic violence, sexual abuse and reproductive health issues. It also helps first-generation female immigrants who are getting older and dealing with depression.

These are women like my mother, who stayed at home, always afraid of not being able to understand or being understood, always worried about what others would say or think. I'm lucky, I'm so different.

Khadija is still studying and she plans to teach philosophy. Like all Dutch students, she has a government scholarship. She does temporary work to fill in the gaps. She lives at her parents' house and has a Moroccan-Dutch boyfriend, some years her junior. She's concerned about that, but when she told him so, he said it wasn't important: Khadija bint Khuwaylid, the first wife of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was older than him.

Not long ago, she even considered for the first time moving to Morocco.

I had never thought of living there. I didn't think there was anything there for me. But lately, when I see the way things are changing in the Netherlands, I sometimes think it wouldn't be such a bad idea to live in Morocco. The sad thing is thinking about it for these reasons, isn't it?

SOCIAL INTEGRATION OR CULTURAL CLASH

Research has shown that the children and grandchildren of migrants tend to be more educated and have better-paid jobs than earlier generations. This upward mobility is one of the positive aspects of international migration.²

This does not rule out the possibility that children of migrant families may have feelings of alienation. Like Khadija, young people of immigrant descent often feel caught between two cultures. Their struggle to find their place may bring them into conflict with members of their families and ethnic communities but also with members of their new society. Many feel that they are weighted down by traditional expectations about appropriate attitudes and behaviours for men and women, even as their circle of friends and social environment present them with other ideas. They may also feel the pressures of conforming to norms in their new communities that may not coincide with their own values or personal choices.

Parents may not understand their children's choices and perceive them as rebellion against their own authority. They try to work out the difficulties, but some react with restrictions, especially for adolescent girls, including taking them out of school, secluding them at home, placing oppressive limitations on their participation in social or sporting events with their friends, and in the most extreme cases, with violence and abuse. Arranged or forced marriage of daughters

with someone from the “old country” is one strategy for immigrant parents to ensure that their daughters remain true to their values.³ Daughters are also seen as a prized “visa” for the future groom. In Norway 82 per cent of daughters of Moroccan immigrants married Moroccan citizens between the years 1996 and 2001.⁴ The proportion was 76 per cent for Norwegian daughters of Pakistani immigrants for the same period.⁵ Marital arrangements can also work the other way around: young women from countries of origin find themselves married off to men who have migrated abroad, but want a wife from their own cultural background.

Overall, immigrant girls do better in school and fit in more smoothly than boys into the society of the country of settlement. Immigrant girls report more positive attitudes toward integration and use the national language more than boys.⁶ In contrast, boys generally are more likely to approve of separatism and feel more discriminated against.⁷ Young men may also become enforcers of traditional customs on their female peers.

Entire enclaves and neighbourhoods of immigrants can grow up, as families arrive to join their relatives and settle where they can find familiar social and religious institutions. These enclaves play a positive role in helping newcomers find jobs and settle down in the receiving country. But migrant enclaves can also reinforce barriers to social and economic adjustment and change. Children may have less education and linguistic skills, and become marginalized from the local community.

Employers often discriminate against young migrants from certain ethnic groups. In Europe, racism and discrimination against young people of Moroccan and Turkish origin is often cited as a reason for their high unemployment rates. In 2000, the unemployment rate for workers of immigrant descent in Germany was about 16 per cent, more than twice the national rate.⁸

Young men lacking economic and social prospects may be susceptible to ideas that promote confrontational attitudes with the establishment.⁹ Efforts to attenuate and prevent violent confrontation should focus on socially and culturally alienated young men, as well as economically marginalized and underprivileged young men from all communities. The political, cultural and economic integration of young people of migrant descent to their new countries should be facilitated by policies that address integration and participation in schools, community and political and economic institutions. In schools, teachers need to be trained to prevent racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

Some countries and communities focus on enhancing young people’s educational prospects, improving their transition from school to labour market, connecting them to labour networks and eliminating barriers that limit their access to civic participation.

Measures can be taken to prevent discrimination and exclusion. Promising practices to combat xenophobia and racism include mentoring programmes, like the one run by Peacemaker in the

UK, which pairs at-risk youth with mentors from a different ethnic background.¹⁰ Successful programmes also seek to reach out to migrant parents and community leaders and involve them in integration efforts aimed at their youth.

Fortunately, there is a growing recognition across receiving countries that integration is a two-way process, requiring adaptation not only by migrants but also by institutions and communities of the country of settlement, and that to be successful it must take place in four spheres of life: economic, social, cultural, and political.¹¹ Nowadays there is a plethora of initiatives at the local level, among employers, unions, community groups, and the public, providing language support, mentoring, advice, access to jobs, and means of participation in civic society.¹²

Increasingly, countries see the need to grapple with the situation of disadvantaged youth of immigrant descent. For example in Europe, where the friction arising from migration has brought policy and public attention to marginalized youth, four European heads of state called for the EU to establish a “Pact on Youth”. The pact focuses on education and training to eliminate the marginalisation of young people and enable the European Union to reach its economic goals.¹³

In addition, the Council of Europe launched a campaign from June to September 2006 aimed at youth with the theme “All different – all equal” emphasising human rights, participation, diversity and inclusion.¹⁴



Richard

LIBERIAN, FORMER WAR REFUGEE

Things back then were so... normal. We had all we wanted, we had running water, electricity, food; I wasn't thinking about how to get something to eat all the time. Everything was perfect. And I had a dream: I wanted to be the president of Liberia.

Richard Allen was eight years old. Everything was normal and everything was perfect. He studied at a Calvary Mission Academy School run by his father, Theophilus, a Baptist pastor. At home, he had a family, books, and peace – though, at that time, he didn't think of peace as something you may or may not have.

Until the day when everything changed. Richard had already seen something weird on TV: on the news they spoke about “rebels” who killed people, ate their flesh and drank their blood.

I didn't understand, I thought they were talking about some kind of animal...

In Richard's mind, those “rebels” were just creatures from the TV world, but that day his father told him they were men, and they were getting close to the Liberian capital, Monrovia. The family fled to the town where his grandmother lived. That day in 1989 marked the end of normal life once and for all for Richard, and another three million Liberians.

Liberia, on the West African coast, is the oldest and one of the smallest republics on the continent, 96,000 square kilometres of iron, diamonds, gold, timber and very little agriculture.

At first, life in the village was pleasant. Richard and his brothers didn't have to go to school, Mom and Dad were with them – and Grandma too, whom Richard loved so much. Then one morning, they heard shots. Pastor Theophilus told everyone to go inside the house and he locked doors and windows. A couple of minutes later, bullets were raining down. Everybody hid under the beds. At one point, Richard's three-year-old

sister stood up and started to walk; his father leapt out and grabbed her and each was hit by a bullet. The attackers were Krahn rebels; they were looking for Gio people to kill. The Allens were saved because a Krahn neighbour who was visiting them started screaming in his dialect and the attack ended. Father and daughter spent a few days in the hospital; once they were out, the Pastor decided that Liberia wasn't safe anymore: the family should flee to Sierra Leone.

Richard remembers they walked many days. Then they were in a boat, crossing a lake for hours. On the other side, right before the border, they ran into a rebel check point. The soldiers took aside the boys over ten: if they didn't want to fight for their army, they were killed. The rest of the civilians were separated into two groups: men on one side, women and children on the other.

Some rebels were betting on the sex of a pregnant girl's baby. They laughed; some

said a boy, others a girl. Finally, they opened her up with a knife and took the foetus out: it was a boy. The winning side cheered the victory with gunshots, chopped the baby's head off and put it on the roof of their van. I couldn't stop crying.

The civil wars in Liberia lasted fourteen years, from the uprising of the army led by Charles Taylor in 1989 to its definitive defeat in 2003. There were different phases, interrupted by negotiations and moments of ephemeral peace – Liberians called them World Wars 1, 2 and 3 – and a quarter of a million people died. Many soldiers were adolescents under the influence of drugs and

In 2005, there were approximately 12.7 million refugees in the world, roughly half of them children under the age of 18.

alcohol; their commanders and shamans convinced them that nobody could kill them if they drank human blood or ate the flesh of a virgin, and so they did. That afternoon in the check point, there were dead people hanging in the trees gushing blood into buckets; and the soldiers drank it. Then soldiers tried to put Richard's little four-month-old sister in a mortar, to tear her

apart. His grandmother clung to her and wouldn't let her go, and a soldier stabbed her in the chest.

Then they stabbed her dozens of times, all over her body. My father was watching, but there was nothing he could do; if he moved they would kill him too. Then they took my Granny and they dragged her everywhere, fighting over who would eat her. They ate her raw. Raw, my God! At that moment, I would have done the worst things to them.

The Allens were saved because a rebel recognized the Pastor, and let them go. The family crossed the border and walked for days through the jungle, until they found a warehouse crammed with hundreds of Liberian refugees. Life there wasn't much better: the children starved to death or were bitten by snakes, hunted down by wild animals or killed by diseases.

One day, a UN mission arrived and led the refugees to a more protected area; there wasn't always food, but they had a safer shelter. One night, the rebels came from the other side of the border; they took the men one by one and asked if they'd rather have

long or short sleeves. If they replied long, they chopped their arms off at their wrists; if they said short, at the height of the shoulder. Some were given the option of long or short pants, or of the "cellphone": they chopped off their fingers leaving just the pinky and the thumb, simulating a telephone. Those who refused to choose were killed.

Once more, the family escaped, first to a nearby town, then to Freetown, Sierra Leone's capital. The only thing Richard remembers about those years with no school and no playing, is the struggle to survive, to eat. In 1992, the war seemed to be over and the Allens returned to Monrovia. Richard was eleven and had problems at school; memories haunted him, but he learned to adapt.

That lasted until 1997, when the ex-rebel Charles Taylor won the election, and violence returned. Pastor Allen had the same family name as the general secretary of the ruling party. Even though they were not relatives, he was targeted by Taylor's enemies, the new rebels. The family went into hiding again. Thanks to his Baptist contacts, Theophilus Allen was invited to a convention in the US, and he left. It was only with forged IDs that Mrs. Winnifred Allen and her five children were able to cross into neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire.

There they lived in a UN refugee camp, and Richard tried to finish high school. His father sent money, while his mother sold bread and sweets. But in 2000, violence broke out in Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia seemed like a safer place, so the Allens went back. In Monrovia, the three oldest brothers entered one of the best schools in town, which was also attended by President Taylor's daughters.

One morning in 2002, Richard saw a group of soldiers courteously escorting the Taylor girls out of the school. Something was going on. Richard gathered his brothers and they went back to their house. That afternoon, violence was unleashed once again in the city, and Mrs. Allen took her family to Ghana.

During the fourteen-year-long war, more than eight hundred thousand people left their homes; half a million were displaced inside the country, and the rest (one out of every ten Liberians) fled to neighbouring countries.

In Ghana, the Allens found shelter in another refugee camp, packed and with foul sanitation. But Richard was able to finish high school, and signed up for a computer study programme. With other refugees, he created a group of young people who collected money to pay for the studies of those who couldn't afford it. They also

Richard's escape from civil war

has taken him from Liberia to Sierra Leone, where he spent his life between the ages of 8 and 11. Back in Liberia, he had to flee again at the age of 16 to Cote d'Ivoire and back to Liberia a few years later, when war broke out there as well. Two years later, he once again had to escape civil war and fled to Ghana, where he spent the next three years, before returning to Liberia in September 2005.



organized meetings, discussion groups and campaigns against AIDS.

Another big disappointment came when my family moved to the US, in 2003. My father got asylum, and he could extend it to my mother and the rest of my brothers. But they wouldn't give it to me. They said I was over the required age, that it was impossible. My father got me a scholarship but then my student visa was rejected. I don't understand. My whole family lives there and I haven't seen them in more than three years. I don't know what to do.

In Ghana, he wasn't able to get a job or papers. He felt he was wasting his life there, and he heard that his country was recover-

ing. Richard Allen returned to Liberia once again in September 2005.

It is true that his country is trying to recover. In November 2005, Liberia elected the first woman president in Africa, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and people are hopeful. However, the country still has no running water or electricity, the economy is destroyed and only 20 per cent of the people have a job. Poverty is extreme.

My friends in Ghana said I was crazy to go back, that there was nothing I could do, that I shouldn't trust any government because all politicians are corrupt.

Today, Richard Allen lives by himself in the family house, a few kilometres from

downtown Monrovia. He works as a freelance programmer for an Internet company that doesn't always pay him. At times he thinks he may have to leave the country to continue his education; but even if he does, he wants to return to Liberia.

Do you still feel this is your home, after all?

Sometimes I wonder what I'm doing here. But I have to keep trying. I have to think positive, even though it's not easy. Last time I left I thought I was never coming back, I was fed up. But then you start missing your country, your language, and you want to live in a place where you know the people and you can do something with your life; that's very difficult when you're not in your country. I came back to start working, to be a man.

In the past two years, thousands of war exiles returned to Liberia. Many more didn't. Richard's best friends stayed in Ghana; some of them had seen their entire families killed. Richard used to argue with one friend who said he was never going back to Liberia, because if he saw the people who shot his parents he would kill them, and he doesn't want to do that.

I think we have to start forgiving each other, we have to reconcile. If I ran into

the guys who killed my Granny, I wouldn't kill them. I'd tell them I forgive them, so they'd understand and say, ah, I'll never do something like that again.

Today, Richard is twenty-four. He doesn't think about getting married because he can't afford to support a family, but he keeps his old dream alive.

Do you still think about becoming the president of Liberia?

Yes, of course. I pray for it. I love my country very much and I want to see it changed for better.

Richard has a gentle smile and very sad eyes.

And you still think you could be president?

Yes, of course. Our president went through some very rough times; I did too. So I don't see why not. If I work hard, why not? And I'd have a message for everyone: look, I know what it is to starve, to be without work, to sleep in the street, to see my relatives killed. If I went through all of this and became president, that means you can make it too.

ESCAPING CATASTROPHE: YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE RUN

Like Richard, who has spent much of his adolescence in refugee camps, many young people around the world have been forced to flee their homes to escape the horrors of war, civil conflict and other disasters. In 2005, there were approximately 12.7 million refugees in the world, roughly half of them children under the age of 18.¹ In urgent need of assistance and protection, adolescent refugees are vulnerable to violence, neglect, exploitation, and abuse in a variety of forms.

In a crisis, the family support so vital to young people often collapses. The social and cultural networks that provide protection, support, information and role models disintegrate. Young refugees and displaced persons are deeply affected not only by their exposure to violence, deprivation, and personal traumas such as the loss of family members, but by the disruption of education, employment and a clear path to the future.

Even community members, families, and peers can pose a threat to displaced children and young people. They may be forced into labour by their families and subjected to various forms of abuse. Girls may be forced into early marriage as a means to secure income or physical safety for themselves and their families.² Adolescent refugees rarely have access to education.³ If they do, families may keep girls especially out of school to help with family tasks, or for fear of their safety.

Displaced young women are especially vulnerable. The violent break-up of stable relationships and the disintegration of community and family life sweep away the social norms governing sexual behaviour. Sexual contact in such circumstances is often violent and always dangerous, especially for women, whose risks apart from physical injury and unwanted pregnancy include greater vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. Insurgency groups regularly force young men to commit rape, traumatizing both the men and women involved. The risks for women extend beyond the conflict itself: partners and wives of returning ex-combatants are also at risk.

In Liberia, nearly 80 per cent of displaced girls underwent abortions by the age of 15 after exposure to sexual exploitation and violence.⁴ In Uganda, it is estimated that 80 per cent of girls abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army were HIV positive when they returned to their communities.⁵

Once they reach the "safety" of refugee camps young women are not necessarily protected from gender-based violence. Rape, unprotected sex and unwanted pregnancies are common in refugee camps. Stigmatization of girls and women subjected to rape and unwanted pregnancies is extreme.

Young men in refugee camps may be ex-combatants, abductees or displaced by violence. They have lost their sources of self-esteem and find themselves frustrated by inaction and powerlessness. They have few opportunities for education or employment, and few other outlets. The outcome is often violence, including gender-based and sexual violence, and substance abuse.⁶

Refugee camps may be vulnerable to attack from outside and domination by violence within. Armed groups can use camps as abduction and recruitment points. Abducted boys and girls often end up as soldiers; girls may be used as domestic workers and sex slaves.

Under international agreements such as the 1951 Convention on Refugees, countries have pledged themselves to give refuge and succour to people displaced from their countries by violent conflict, including children and young people. With support of the international community, countries of asylum should make the maximum effort to understand and respond to the plight of refugees and asylum-seekers.

Most refugees are in developing countries, where governments often find extreme difficulty in providing more than rudimentary support. They need the help of the international community to support young refugees, protect their

rights and help those who are unaccompanied to reunite with their families. They should be able to provide not only immediate relief but education, health and psychological rehabilitation to young refugees.

Young people who have been repatriated also need specialized assistance. In countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone, UNFPA has supported faith-based organizations to educate young girls, many of whom have been victims of sexual violence during the war, on HIV/STI prevention, along with teaching them income-generating activities, such as market gardening, poultry farming, and hair styling, so as to help these young girls avoid having to turn to sex work in order to survive. Similar initiatives are being implemented in Cote d' Ivoire, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In addition to programmes that promote livelihood opportunities and address sexual and gender based violence, it is of critical importance that young people, including former refugees as well as ex-combatants, are involved in post-conflict reconstruction efforts to restore the social and economic fabric of societies and build lasting peace.



Rajini

INDIAN, GULF WIFE

Their horoscopes matched perfectly, and their community gives a lot of importance to the matching of horoscopes, so nothing else really mattered: Rajini and Unnikrishnan were to get married.

Rajini grew up in a small town called Kotakkal, in India's small south-western state of Kerala, the youngest of four brothers and sisters. Her father was a pharmacist in a company that produced herbal medicines.

Rajini led a very sheltered existence. She went to a local school and received a bachelor's degree in history through the Open University, which meant she did not have to travel to college to attend classes. Rajini never went anywhere alone, and her father took all decisions for her, however big or small. When he died in 1999 her elder brother, as the new head of the family, took charge of her life. Traditional Nair families like Rajini's take hierarchical relationships seriously. Respect and regard is due to elders: younger members of the family,

especially women and girls, rarely defy their decisions.

So in 2002, when Rajini was 20 years old, it was decided she would marry Unnikrishnan, who was working as chief checker at the harbour in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Their families were not known to each other, and it was a neighbour who had proposed the match to the would-be bridegroom, then on home leave. Unnikrishnan readily agreed, even without having met Rajini and knowing that they would not be living together, because Saudi Arabia would not allow his wife to join him.

But Rajini was against it:

I knew there would be long periods of separation and I would have to live with his widowed mother. But there was really very little I could do about it. My family saw it as a good alliance because he was working abroad and felt that the financial security and well-being that would come with such a marriage were of prime impor-

tance. Moreover, our horoscopes matched perfectly, so nothing else mattered.

Rajini and Unnikrishnan met for the first time at their engagement ceremony; their wedding day was just a few weeks later because both families were keen on solemnizing the marriage before Unnikrishnan returned.

Luckily we immediately liked each other. The month and a half we spent together before he went back to Jeddah was perhaps the happiest time in my married life. He is a warm, gregarious person and the house was full of sound and laughter. His friends would come over and we would go out a lot to shop and see movies. When he left even the neighbours commented on the difference because suddenly there was no sound from the house.

In a few weeks, Rajini had become a "Gulf wife", one of more than a million

married women in Kerala who are living without their husbands, who have migrated to the Gulf countries. This means solitude but at the same time can be empowering for a young woman: with her husband gone, she is the one taking decisions, handling family finances, running the home and caring for children and elderly in-laws.

Suddenly, I was no longer a carefree, pampered daughter. Before leaving, my husband told me that he would be sending me money every month and that it was up to me to manage everything. I found myself burdened with responsibilities.

The clear benefit of remittances is to mitigate the effect of poverty on families back home and to raise living standards.

Rajini had to deal with the running of a large house in constant need of repairs, care for an elderly mother-in-law and in due time for their baby daughter.

Initially I was very frightened because I had never done such things before and there was no one there to tell me what to

do. I just learnt from experience, and over time I started to enjoy these responsibilities because I knew I have the full support of my husband in everything I did. So I feel positive, strong and greatly empowered compared to my pre-marital days when I had absolutely no control over my life.

But the real turning point, Rajini says now, was two years ago, when she almost single-handedly had to oversee the building of their new house. The plans had been drawn up during Unnikrishnan's home leave and a loan from the bank had been taken in Rajini's name.

The fact that I was able to oversee the construction, handle the workmen, and manage huge amounts of money, have given me the confidence that I can cope with any situation.

But this does not make up for the huge emotional vacuum in her life. Rajini speaks to her husband almost every day, but she misses him all the time, and particularly when her daughter or her mother-in-law falls ill or during festival times when everyone is rejoicing. Every so often, Rajini and her husband talk about ending this separa-

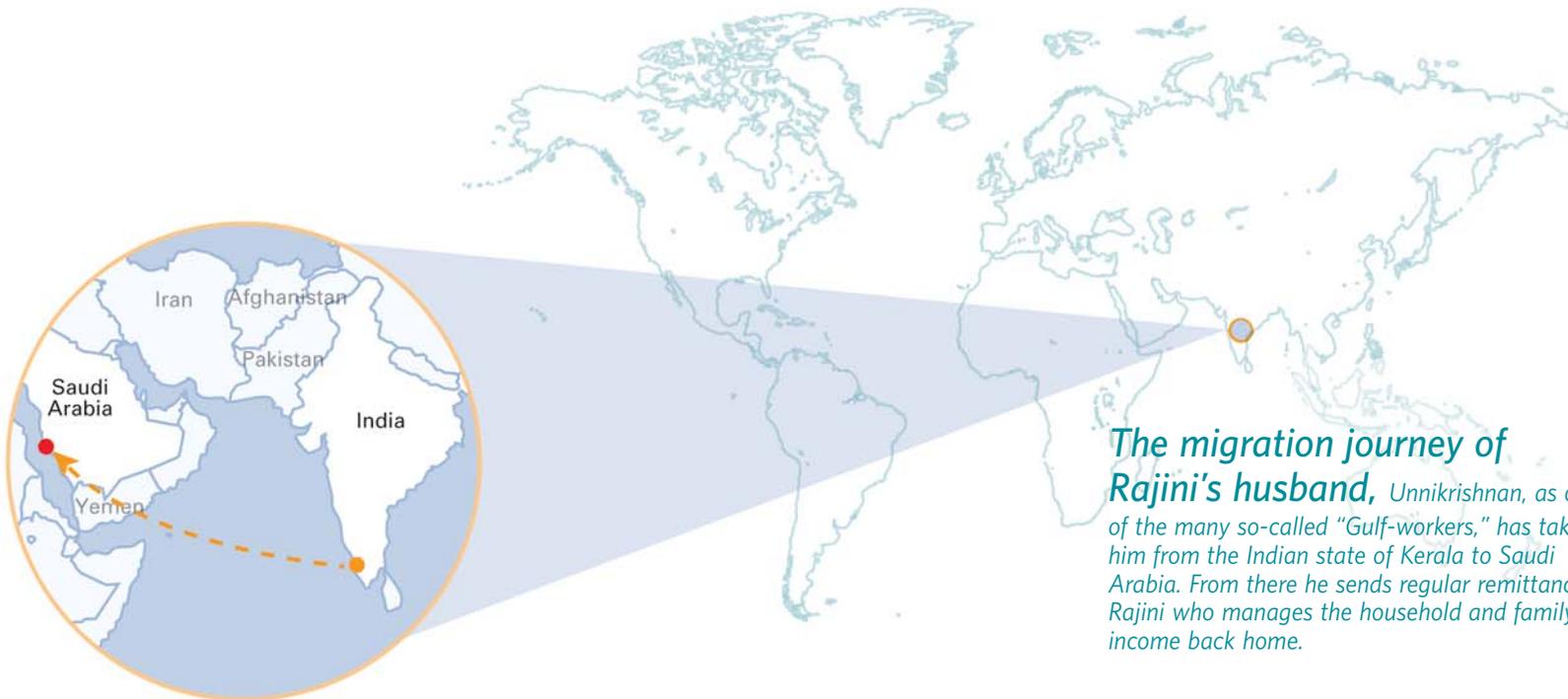
tion: he is also not happy being away from her. But they are aware that their options are limited. Having completed no more than secondary school, there is little chance of Unnikrishnan finding a job in India that would enable him to earn as much as he presently does. And the other option of starting his own business, something most migrants dream of doing, will have to wait until they pay back the loan they took to build their house.

So Rajini is now hoping that he will be able to find a job in a country that would permit the family to be with him.

That would be best because we have got used to a certain standard of living, and not having to stint on food, clothes or medical care.

Rajini goes to the local government hospital only for routine procedures like vaccinations and booster shots for her daughter. For everything else they can afford to see more expensive private doctors. She plans to send her daughter next term to one of the best and perhaps most expensive schools in Kotakkal. The tuition fee has already been set aside

But still, Rajini feels she has to pay too high a price:



The migration journey of Rajini's husband, Unnikrishnan, as one of the many so-called "Gulf-workers," has taken him from the Indian state of Kerala to Saudi Arabia. From there he sends regular remittances to Rajini who manages the household and family income back home.

I don't think any amount of money can make up for the terrible loneliness that a Gulf wife has to deal with. People who have seen me evolve, from being just someone's daughter to a woman who is managing a home and family all by herself, are very impressed. They speak well of me and give me a lot of respect but they don't know how lonely I am, especially at night with only a mobile phone for company. Others have someone they can talk to. Who do I talk to?

Rajini's loneliness is further compounded by dreary domesticity and an endless routine

of cooking, cleaning the two-bedroom house, taking care of her three-year-old daughter, shopping and going to the bank. Her day begins at 6.30 in the morning and most evenings she is in bed by 10 pm, too tired to read or even watch the soaps on television. The only break she gets is for an hour or so every evening, when she walks across to visit her family about half a kilometre away.

Would you like to see your daughter marry a Gulf worker?

Never, may God bless her so that she does not have to.

The only respite from her monotonous routine is when her husband comes home, once every two and a half years – for two months. He is not able to make it more often: the ticket is expensive, he has to bring gifts for everyone in the family, and his employer is sticky about giving leave. That is why Unnikrishnan could not be there when their daughter was born.

I went to my mother's place for my delivery as is the custom and my family did everything they could to make me comfortable. The hospital I went to is one of the best in Kotakkal but I missed my husband,

especially when I was in labour. There was no one to give me moral support and strength the way he would have, and when the baby arrived I wept because he was not there to share the moment with me. He saw her for the first time when she was one and a half years old.

So, now, Rajini doesn't want to have another child. Unnikrishnan is keen that they do, but she has told him she will not unless they live together. And she is concerned with their daughter starting her school life without her father. He seems to agree; the last time he was over he talked of returning by the time she starts school, because he wants to be part of her growing up.

He also realizes how important it is for us to live together, because the realities would be quite different if he was here. What we are now doing is just "play-act a marriage". We haven't dropped our masks and it's all very unnatural. When he comes for just a few weeks we both put our best foot for-

ward. We are loving and caring and I do everything for him, like cooking the things he likes to eat. And he does everything possible to make me happy. Even if we have differences and arguments it is soon forgotten because he's here for just a few weeks and we want to make the most of it. The sorrow of separation is also so new each time. As his departure date nears we start counting the days that remain and start to feel sad and unhappy. So he has only seen one side of me... my positive side. And I don't think I know the real him.

Rajini dreams of living with her husband, but she is afraid it will not happen anytime soon. Her horoscope told her it was her destiny to be separated from him for some time: astrologers said it could be as long as 17 years.

I feel quite desolate when I think of such a possibility but I have never mentioned it to my husband, because I am hoping through my prayers to change my destiny.

SENDING MONEY HOME

Rajini's experience is not unusual in South Asia, raising her children alone with her husband away for very long periods. In India, young migrants often marry women from their own communities and leave them behind, so that they can simultaneously start a family, ensure that somebody cares for their aging parents and provide better living conditions for everyone.

In these circumstances, marriage may be reduced to two and a half months of joy every two years, and to children who hardly know their fathers. But there are some positive effects. Circumstances force "Gulf wives" to make decisions on their own, and take responsibility for managing the family income and running the household. They acquire a sense of independence and judgment that raises their social status in the community and provides a positive role model for their children. This experience may empower the younger generation of girls in turn.

A large research project has shown that increased income through remittances has led to several changes in lifestyle and consumption patterns for the wives left behind. These include ownership of land, housing and household amenities; the nutritional and health status of their households; their social status; and the quality of their children's education.¹

During the last two decades, there has been more analysis of remittances and their impact on the wellbeing of families left behind. For some developing countries with high migration flows, worker remittances now represent the largest source of external finance, surpassing foreign direct investment.²

The Caribbean and Asia are the two regions of the world with the highest share of remittances as a proportion to GDP,³ followed by the Middle East and Northern Africa.⁴ In the Caribbean, remittances represent around 20 per cent of GDP.⁵ In the Philippines, where over 10 per cent of the 84 million total population is abroad, annual remittances are over \$US 10 billion, which does not include money sent through friends, relatives and couriers. These remittances are bringing better food, clothing and education to an estimated 30 million dependents.⁶

Although there are no estimates of the proportion of remittances sent by young people, a recent review concluded that young male migrants who are married are more likely to send money regularly.⁷ With increasing numbers moving abroad, young women also tend to contribute regularly to their families, particularly if their children are left behind.

The clear benefit of remittances is to mitigate the effect of poverty on families back home and to

raise living standards. A study conducted in Latin America has shown that they are most commonly used to complement household incomes that are otherwise insufficient to cover living expenses.⁸ In fact, it is estimated that for most families left behind, remittances go most towards basic needs such as housing, food and health care.

But for many young people and children, remittances also allow them to continue their studies and get a better education. A study conducted in 11 Latin American countries shows that education ranked third in the overall use of remittances sent in 2002 after housing and food.⁹ The same is probably true for other regions.

National diaspora organizations often co-ordinate efforts to send “community remittances” home. Over half of 174 remitters from the Somali community in London had donated an average of \$US164 each during 2005 for village schools and universities throughout the country.¹⁰

Remittances have also been used to help migrants’ children start businesses such as shops, cafes, bars, or construction firms. In Tajikistan, about 5.2 per cent of overall remittances in 2003 had been used in this way.¹¹

But migration does not necessarily lead to the expected rapid improvement in the well-being

of individual families left behind. Studies have shown that remittances have little impact on wealth disparities within societies. Migration has neither led to the substantial individual accumulation of wealth, nor accelerated the pace of domestic small and medium business development.¹²

However, it is agreed that remittances contribute to a country’s economy and improve the well-being of those left behind. Many countries with high migrating populations are trying to direct remittances towards investments in development. The “three by one” programme in Zacatecas, Mexico, is an example. The federal, state and municipal governments invest one dollar each in community improvements for every dollar invested by the Zacatecan community in the US.¹³ With increased interest and availability of information about the use of remittances, countries have now an opportunity to promote the use of remittances for local development.



Falcao

COLOMBIAN, FOOTBALL PLAYER IN ARGENTINA

That morning, in October of 2005, Radamel Falcao García Zárate was really nervous. The coach of River Plate, one of the most important football teams in Argentina, had just called him to his room.

This afternoon, you are starting in the first team, kid. Don't be nervous, everything will be OK. But don't tell anyone. They will find out when the time comes.

It was lunchtime. The boy was nauseous, he couldn't eat a thing. His team mates gobbled up the classic pre-game spaghetti; he didn't know what to do. He couldn't help thinking about all the years he had spent preparing himself for this moment: his entire life.

Although, truth to tell, the preparation had begun before he was born, in Santa Marta, Colombia, in 1986. His father baptized him with his own name –Radamel – and the name of a Brazilian football star

whom he admired: Falcao. His father was a professional football player, though his career had not been brilliant. He never stayed with one team for very long, and his family travelled with him to different cities in Colombia and Venezuela, following his contracts. But when his first son, Radamel, was born, he decided that he would be a great football player, and gave him the name of his idol.

Little Falcao learned to kick a ball before he could talk. His first memories are connected to football. His father taught him, encouraged him, took him to his games, to his training sessions. And Falcao did as expected: nothing mattered to him more than the ball. When Falcao was ten, his father retired and the family settled in Bogota. There, Falcao joined a football club and he was soon catching the eye of the trainers.

That's when I got convinced that I could be a real football player. So I decided to give it my all, that my future lay there.

When was that?

When I was eleven or twelve. I began to play for the city team first, then for the Colombian team. That's when I saw that I had to dedicate all of my time to this. I understood that I really had to live for football.

In Latin America, most boys dream about being football players. And thousands of them can hold onto that dream into their adolescence: they are the best, the ones who get into the youth divisions of the professional football teams. Falcao was one of many such kids until, one Saturday when he was 14, his coach told him to get ready because the next day he was travelling to Buenos Aires: a businessman had organized a tryout with River Plate.

Falcao was overjoyed: Argentina was one of his goals. He had always followed Argentine football, one of the most powerful leagues in South America. Besides, his coach

had been to Buenos Aires and told him a lot about it. He liked the idea of it:

*An old and beautiful football-loving city.
A city with different seasons, very warm
people, whose way of speaking is so funny.
It was always my dream to come here.*

Were you scared?

*No, I was not scared. My mind was made
up, and I was hungry for success. It was
the opportunity of a lifetime and, with
God's help, I didn't want to let it go by.*

Some years ago football players migrated when they were eighteen or twenty, now it is common for them to leave their countries soon after they turn twelve.

The tryout went well. They offered him a contract and set him up in a hotel. He had to learn to live alone in a city that was not his own. At the beginning, he was not homesick. Only after a year, when an injury put him on the disabled list for months, did he grow discouraged; there were moments when all he wanted to do was go home and forget about everything. He was 16 years old. At an age when most young people are beginning to

think about what to study, where to work, the course of their lives, the football rookies have their fate on the line. Many have to leave their cities, their studies, their amusements, their friends. They know that this is their only shot.

*It is a very dull life: training, watching
what you eat, going to bed early, seeing
everyone else doing things that you can't.
Sometimes it bothered me a lot, it exasperated
me. But then I told myself that I was
here for a reason, that I had to sacrifice
everything to make it.*

Nine out of ten don't: at the age of 18 or 19, they consider themselves failures, people who have missed the boat. Falcao did not want to be one of those people, and he found the strength to endure. He trained

more and more, learned to be strong and not to fall into temptation, to convince himself that his goal was the most important thing. A professional football player must be obsessed with competition and victory.

At the beginning of 2005, Falcao was promoted to the first team, but he never got a chance to play. Until that October morning, when his coach told him that his day had come.

*That afternoon, when I was getting
dressed, my legs were shaking. But when
I hit the field, I was transformed. The
stadium was full, people were shouting,
and I realized that I felt that hunger, that
drive to beat anyone who crossed my path,
that adrenalin, that confidence. It is
something that you cannot explain,
you have to experience it.*

That October afternoon was perfect: River Plate won and Falcao scored two of the three goals. The next day, all the newspapers were talking about the great new talent, about the guy that was going to put an end to his team's losing streak. In the next six games, Falcao scored five more goals. He was becoming a star.

*It's an incredible feeling. Suddenly, from
one day to the next, your life changes. You
can't go anywhere, people recognize you on
the street, your team mates look up to you.*

And you can even make a lot of money...

*Yes, it's amazing how much some players
earn. You make a fortune, and they are
paying you to do what you like doing. You
just have to play and they pay you, though
you do have to make sacrifices, you miss*

Falcao's migration journey

had him leave Colombia to play with one of the best Argentine football teams where he now dreams of some day joining one of the big clubs in Europe.

out on a lot. But today football players are models for many people. They are in ads for all sorts of things. A lot of people dress like football players, or get haircuts like football players. It's strange to think that maybe someday there will be kids who try to do the things that I do...

On November 22, 2005, everything seemed to go to pieces: Falcao's knee was seriously injured, and he would not be able to play for many months.

At the beginning, I was really down in the dumps. I asked myself why this had to happen to me now, why God had done something like this to me. Then I realized that these things happen for a reason. They help you to grow up and mature. They can be for the best. I think that helped me to keep it together, to know that I should not take it so seriously: everything can vanish at any moment. I understood that I had to be strong and present, to stick with it.

Falcao knows that coming back is going to be rough. Many promising young players are injured. Some of them can overcome it; some cannot. He is now eagerly awaiting that moment, while getting on with his studies. Last year, he enrolled in a journalism programme at a university in Buenos Aires. Though he does not have much time to study, he says that it is better to do something unrelated to football, to get an education, to open his mind to other things.

In football, you can be lucky and become a big star, you can do OK and play as well as many, or you can be unlucky and not make the big leagues. It's a lottery. You never know what will happen. You give it your all, but you have to be prepared to lose.

You depend on too many factors: luck, teams, injuries...

Falcao lives in an apartment in a tall modern building in one of the most expensive neighbourhoods in Buenos Aires. From his living room, you can see the river, the River Plate stadium as well as the most brutal concentration camp of the Argentine dictatorship in the 1970s. His father, his mother and his sisters live with him: the boy has become the breadwinner. Throughout South America, fathers and mothers who twenty or thirty years ago would have scolded their sons if they saw them "wasting time with a ball," now encourage them, because football can offer them a better standard of living



than any other profession. The stakes are high, and Falcao cannot stop imagining his future.

I think about it a lot, I have a lot of dreams. I want to go to Europe, to play with the best in the world.

Where would you like to go?

To Real Madrid, to Milan, to the big teams.

Do you think that is possible?

Yes. River sells players to the best teams in the world. Everything depends on how I do.

For many Latin American players, Buenos Aires is a stop on the way to Europe: the springboard from which they can reach, once and for all, the wealth and fame that they have sought since they were children. Since they were very young, most young players from Latin America have one goal: performing well on their teams so that they are “bought” by a European team. *Buying* is a strong word.

And the idea of moving from country to country doesn't bother you?

No. That's the way a football player's life is, always moving, going after the best. In this profession, if you are lucky you can get everything you want, even the greatest luxuries.

What luxuries would you like?

Well, mostly a car. A BMW convertible, that kind of thing ...

Falcao emigrated for the first time when he was 14, and he thinks he will keep doing it. He still has a close connection to Colombia: his countrymen can admire him on television, he has played for the Colombian youth league, and he hopes to play for the national team. But he is no longer certain that he will return to Colombia to live.

I used to think I would, but now I am not so sure. I feel more comfortable here, in Argentina. If I go to Europe, maybe I will want to stay there. Who knows if I will ever live in my country again, after all this?

A VERY LONG SHOT

All over the world, millions of boys dream of becoming football stars as a road to fame and fortune and an escape from poverty and need. They pursue their dream in the dust, on bare feet, with footballs made out of rags. They hear stories about the millions earned by the superstars in Europe, which further adds to their determination. But only a lucky few will ever get a real shot at a professional career and a breakout from the economic realities they face in their countries. Falcao is one of them.

The issue of mobility and top sport has gained prominence over the past few years. It was recently the topic of scientific debate at the International Conference “Globalised Football: Nations and Migration, The City and the Dream”, in Lisbon in May 2006.

The global mobility of human talent is at its most visible in the world of football, but it can equally be seen in other highly competitive sports where a lot of money is at stake. Out of the 14 teams in cricket's last World Cup, ten had foreign coaches and training staff, something that would have been unimaginable even a decade ago.² Professional sports in North America – baseball, basketball, American football and ice hockey – show a similar migration of talent.

But football is the biggest international market by far for elite players from developing countries. Most of the players from developing countries in the 2006 Football World Cup play

abroad, the majority of them in Europe where the sport is most competitive and lucrative. Every player on the Cote d'Ivoire national team, for example plays for a club outside his country.³ Conversely, some European teams, like London's Arsenal, may be composed entirely of foreigners.⁴ Another London club, Chelsea, had 17 players on 10 different national teams in the 2006 World Cup.⁵

The major European teams have scouts who travel across Africa and Latin America in search of promising, exportable new talent. And since the competition is so fierce, they have to find them earlier and earlier, before the other teams do. If some years ago players emigrated when they were eighteen or twenty, now it is common for them to leave their countries soon after they turn twelve.

There have been cases in which agents offered boys contracts that contained confusing stipulations about agents' percentages of salaries and transfer fees.⁶ Many young players from developing countries, promised untold riches by unscrupulous agents, have been exploited by the very people who were supposed to be looking after them. The phrase "football slavery" was even coined to describe football players who ended up living in poor conditions and little money many miles from their homeland.⁷

For many African and Latin American clubs, the only way they can stay afloat is by producing

players to export to the major football centres in Europe.

Some national leagues in Europe have imposed a quota on the number of non-EU players for each team. In an effort to get around such restrictions, clubs help their foreign stars to change their nationality.⁸ Over the past few years, many players have been investigated for holding false passports that enable them to play as "Europeans" on football teams.⁹

Some believe that African football has benefited from the export of its skilled players, and that the recent success of African national teams is contingent on the migration of elite talent.¹⁰ The drain is thought to enhance the skills of migrant players, the transfer of know-how and better playing techniques to their home-based compatriots, and the overall popularity of the game on the continent.¹¹ Others charge that the "expropriation" of Africa's playing resources is actually undermining the regional development of the game. Nevertheless, some of the best players continue to give time and money to their national team and their country of origin even after moving overseas.

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) have tried to improve the situation: in 1997 the African Club Champions League was established to provide top-level club

competition, and to create the structures and economic incentives needed to encourage players to remain with African clubs.¹² But in Latin America, where football is a well-established tradition, the migration is stronger than ever. European clubs pay their players so much more than any African or Latin American team, that such measures are unlikely to even slow down the "feet drain".

Nevertheless, the success stories of young football stars that make it on the international football scene, will continue to inspire young people in developing countries for years to come. Serving as role-models for whole generations of youth, they can have a positive effect on local development. As young people play football, or other sports for that matter, they learn about teamwork and fair play. Sports enhances personal development and growth of both boys and girls, builds their self esteem and can open doors to new opportunities. This, in turn, can contribute to the well-being of communities and countries at large.

Protecting Young People in Migration

This report has attempted to reconstruct in their own words critical passages in the lives of 10 young people. Their testimonies cover a wide range of the challenges and opportunities facing millions of young women and men affected by international migration. Although their stories are very diverse, they all point to the desire of every human being to live a better life.

As young people make their transition to adulthood, they hope for a good education and a decent job. They expect personal security under the rule of law. Every year, millions of young people leave their own countries in search of these conditions.

Some young people will leave out of a sense of adventure, or to escape personal tragedy, or simply because travel is easier than it ever has been. But most of the people whose stories we tell would have preferred to stay at home. Ensuring that migration is voluntary, establishing safe and secure conditions for migration and respecting both human

rights and national borders are challenges for all countries.

ADAMA might not have left his country if sufficient jobs were available for the millions of young people like him who enter the labour market each year in developing countries. No one should have to leave their own country because of lack of job opportunities at home.

KAKENYA would not have left, if her community had valued girls' education and if her country's education system had offered her the opportunities she needed. As this report goes to print, Kakenya has been awarded a grant to start building a school for girls and a maternity hospital in her own village. Her dream has begun to come true.

BIBI would not be thinking about packing up and leaving if her country had been able to offer health workers like her decent wages and better working conditions.

EDNA would have benefited from HIV information and services targeted at high-risk groups such as male migrant workers and their relatives. High-risk groups also include young women living in poverty, whether married or not; sex workers and young women at risk of transactional sex. These vulnerable young women need to be able to protect themselves from HIV infection.

NATALIA and others like her will benefit from government interventions that combat gender-based violence; recognize trafficking as an abuse of human rights; protect trafficked persons; provide assistance to returned victims through rehabilitation programmes, and protect them from being trafficked again. Governments should take action against those responsible for trafficking and join with other countries to prevent it.

KHADIJA will benefit from policies and programmes, for migrant families and citizens of receiving countries alike that promote

integration and acceptance. Full acceptance is required for social harmony and cohesion and to maximize migrants' contribution to their new societies. Effective political leadership and objective media coverage promote a positive perception of migrants.

NORAIDA and millions of other overseas domestic workers will benefit from government regulation of employment agencies, for example through a standard employment contract including wages, hours of work, weekly rest days and other terms of employment, according to international labour standards. Sending countries should also assist victims of abuse by providing services at embassies and diplomatic missions, with access to legal aid, health care, trauma counselling and shelter.

RICHARD would have benefited from prompt action by the international community to prevent the conflicts in which he was swept up, or at least to mitigate their impact on civilians. International instruments provide

for the rights and needs of war-affected adolescents. The Convention of the Rights of the Child, for example, states that adolescents should be spared from the brutal consequences of war and when war is not avoided, should receive the care and protection that they need. But these instruments are only as effective as the political will to back them up. Countries should give more attention to the provision of appropriate educational opportunities and reproductive health services for young people displaced by armed conflict and its aftermath. Countries should develop gender- and culture-specific programmes with the full involvement of young people themselves. Every effort should be made to reunite refugee and displaced young people with their families

RAJINI although she has to live apart from Unnikrishnan, will continue to receive remittances that have empowered her and many "Gulf wives" like her to manage their households and invest in the education

and health of their children. Many would benefit from programmes that show how to manage remittances and invest savings wisely. Remittances are important for countries as well as individuals, and Governments should consider lowering fees to facilitate transfers.

FALCAO embraces the desire of so many children and adolescents around the world to reach a better future through their talent for sport. But talented young people also need protection, for example from exploitation by unscrupulous agents and managers. National governments and international bodies governing sports and entertainment should take action to protect the rights and well-being of their young workers. In the meantime, young men like Falcao will continue to inspire the dreams of millions of children and youth of becoming football stars and at having a shot at a better future.

Young women and men who move are changing the ethnic composition of communi-

CONCLUSION

ties across the world. They are the single most visible element of the “human face of globalisation”. Migration is likely to continue as long as there is demand for labour from countries of destination, and unstable economic and social conditions in countries of origin.

International migration is ingrained in human history. Entire nations have been built on the basis of opening their doors to the world. Many of today’s better-off countries have seen their own citizens leave at times of economic or political difficulty in the past. In spite of long

accumulated experience, management of international migration remains a challenge for all societies.

Migration offers great opportunities to receiving and sending countries alike, if managed with policies and programmes that protect the human rights of migrants, discourage discrimination and xenophobia, and promote the integration of migrants into host societies.

As more children and young people migrate alone rather than with their families, countries need better data and analysis

to guide responses and policies, and help them adapt to changing conditions.

These and other issues will be discussed at the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in September, 2006. The meeting is an opportunity to give young people the attention they deserve as a major share of the world’s migrants.

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