

# A Multi-Country Study on the Education of Migrant Children

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wise

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## Foreword

Leaving home in search of a better life has been, from the beginning, an elemental human reality. Tales of ancestral voyages are embedded in our identity, our oldest epics and histories. In our own times, the immigrant's journey is at the heart of much literature and art. We pass along family stories of migration, of building new lives in unfamiliar places that became home. Wealthy societies owe much of their success to the determination and sacrifice of immigrants. Yet many view immigrants with indifference, if not outright suspicion and hostility.

An undocumented 'Dreamer'—brought to the United States as a child—scrambles to seize opportunities and education, and through wits and determination builds a thriving life for herself and becomes a leader in her community. On the other side of the world, a farmer may have little conventional education or government support. But he has leveraged technology and social networks to access knowledge, and has grasped the realities of his world. He understands that changing climate and other pressures means he and his family must take an agile approach to their livelihood. But those who pull up sticks too often face complex added barriers to opportunity and improvement, including accessing a good education for their children. When migration separates families, further issues emerge. In some regions, the parents leave the farms to seek employment in urban areas, leaving the children to be raised by the elders.

Even when government responds with revised laws, and constitutional rights are bestowed, enforcement may be neglected or impeded. In some rich countries and poor alike, migrants face the ambient tensions of 'identity politics', dispiriting official neglect, even blatant hostility and persecution. Over recent decades, entrenched patterns of migration have become the enduring hallmarks of an age of economic growth and disruption, often created or aggravated by policy, conflict, even pressures linked to climate change. Discussions about migration should trigger a deeper examination of social stressors, individual motivation, and policy.

This WISE Report describes how education for migrant children is managed in four Asian and three western countries. The portraits usefully include the historical development of unique practices and systems, such as the household registration schemes used in China, Thailand, and Vietnam for the management of internal migrants. The team of authors has brought together substantive information and resources that will be useful for further research on the creative practices and initiatives that facilitate equal, quality access—while supporting cohesive social well being and security. Governments would be well advised to support access to quality education for migrants. They are often highly motivated, determined, and hard working. They are worthy of our constant advocacy.

**Stavros N. Yiannouka**  
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## Executive Summary

**Mobility — the capacity of people to move from one part of the world to another — is one of the defining features of the modern era.** Every year, millions of families uproot themselves from their homes and move to another city or country in search of work, taking their children with them. It is thus very important for researchers and practitioners to understand the needs and challenges of migrant children around the globe who have made this transition. Mobility is an important characteristic of modernity: in contrast to the traditional agrarian societies where most people live their entire lives in the locality that they were born to, modern societies are characterized by mobile individuals and families who cross local and national borders. These mobile individuals and families, however, often run into barriers that limit their cultural, social, political or legal rights and prevent them from integrating into their new communities as full members. Different nations and localities offer different opportunities and pathways — if any at all — for these mobile individuals to obtain cultural, social, political, and legal membership.

In the following chapters, “migrant children” encompasses immigrants who move across national borders to live in host countries as well as internal migrants who cross administrative boundaries within the country. With different social, political, and economic histories, however, these seven countries present different immigration and migration patterns as well as substantial variations in terms of which migrant groups are regarded as salient social problems.

The chapters included in the first part of this document describe the nature and circumstances of the migrant child population in seven countries: China, Vietnam, Thailand, Japan, Finland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Each chapter outlines the context and make-up of that country’s migrant population, discusses educational rights issues faced by migrant children and successful initiatives to address those issues, and makes policy recommendations. The second part of this document presents a comparative analysis of some of the most salient issues raised in the individual country reports. It is our hope that this report will help governments seize the opportunity they have now to make policy decisions that benefit migrant children, and bring about a future that is more just and prosperous for everyone.

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

- ACS:** American Community Survey  
**BMEI:** Binational Migrant Education Initiative  
**CAMP:** College Assistance Migrant Program  
**CDE:** California Department of Education  
**DACA:** Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (US) program  
**DLA:** Dialogic Language Assessment  
**EMAG:** Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant  
**ESEA:** Elementary and Secondary Education Act  
**FDI:** Foreign Direct Investment  
**FRPG:** Fourth Ring Play Group (China)  
**GCSE:** General Certificate of Secondary Education  
**GPRA:** Government Performance and Results Act  
**GSO:** General Statistical Office, Vietnam  
**IDEA:** Individuals with Disabilities Education Act  
**IHE:** Institution of higher education  
**IOM:** International Organization for Migration  
**IPS:** Inter-Census Population and Housing Survey  
**IRRC:** Identification and Recruitment Rapid Response Consortium  
**MEIR:** Migrant Education Identification and Recruitment Initiative  
**MEP:** Migrant Education Program  
**METS:** Migrant Education Tutorial and Support Services  
**MEXT:** Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Japan)  
**MiraCORE:** Migrant Reading Achievement: Comprehensive Online Reading Education  
**MOET:** Ministry of Education and Training, Vietnam  
**MPI:** Migration Policy Institute  
**MSIX:** Migrant Student Information Exchange  
**MSRE:** Migrant Student Records Exchange Initiative  
**MWEAC:** Migrant Education and Action Research Center (China)  
**NCELA:** National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition  
**NRPF:** No Recourse to Public Funds  
**OECD:** Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development  
**OELA:** Office of English Language Acquisition  
**OESE:** Office of Elementary and Secondary Education  
**OME:** Office of Migrant Education  
**ONS:** Office of National Statistics (UK)  
**PISA:** Programme for International Student Assessment  
**SEA:** State educational agency  
**SEAMEO:** Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization  
**SMILE:** Supporting and Mentoring in Learning and Education  
**UN-HABITAT:** United Nations Human Settlements Programme  
**UPE:** Universal Primary Education

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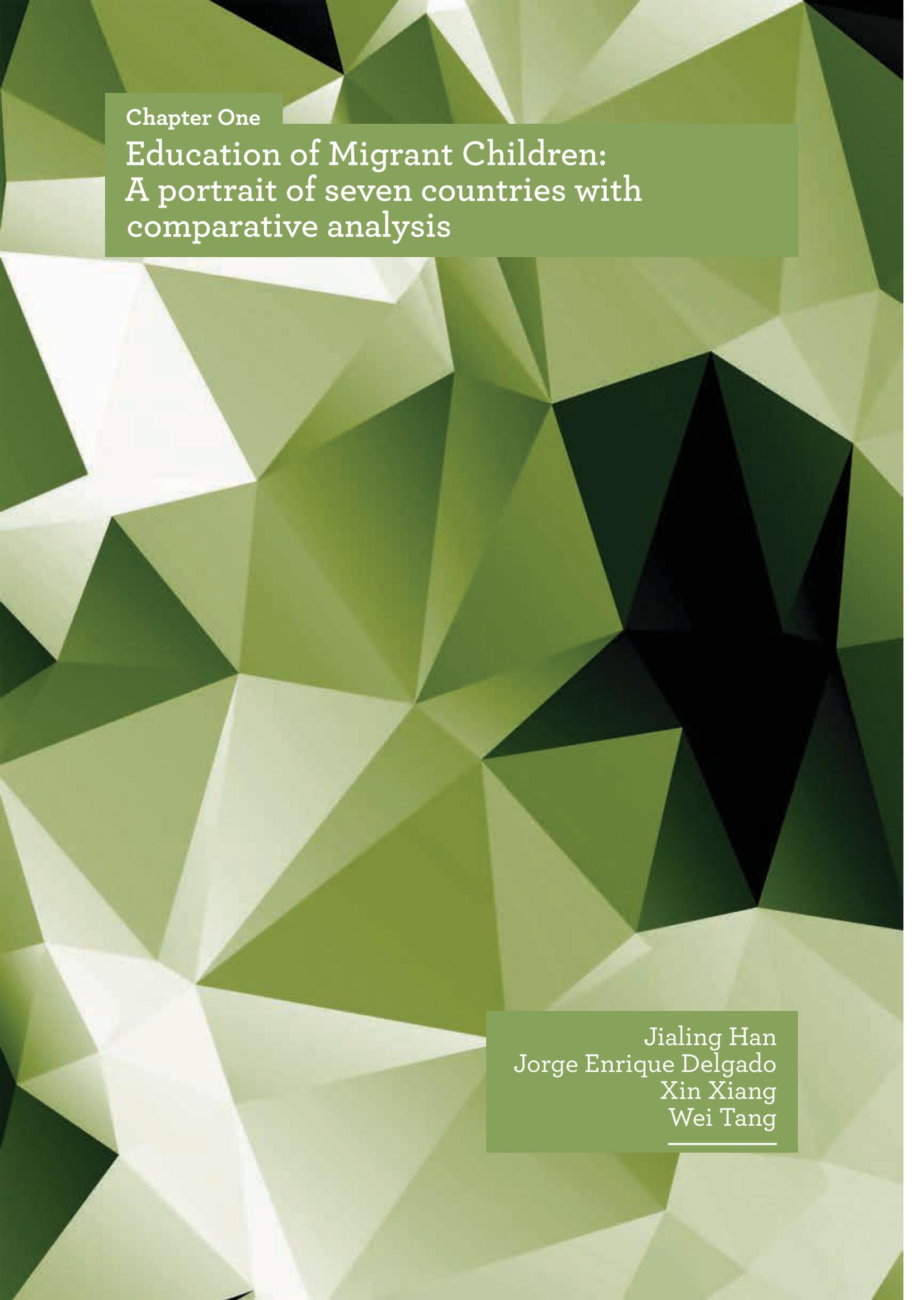
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Chapter One

Education of Migrant Children:  
A portrait of seven countries with  
comparative analysis

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**M**obility is an important characteristic of modern societies in which individuals and families cross local borders (internal migration) and national borders (external migration) in search of better work opportunities and quality of life. Often, migrants face obstacles to acceptance and integration in receiving places. One of those difficulties is access to quality education. However, the context of migration and the struggles migrants face vary from one place to another. This volume depicts and compares the state of migrant children's education in seven different countries: the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), Finland, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, and China. It discusses the nature and circumstances of migration and how migrant children find opportunities and face challenges to obtain access to quality education.

Chapter two, on the US, focuses on how education for immigrant children is addressed through federal legislation and programs that are a component of the compulsory free public education system (grades 1 to 12). The system is highly decentralized and states can apply for funding and support depending on their own needs and policy. Nevertheless, all children have the right to attend public schools regardless of their national origin, citizenship, or immigration background. With a population of more than 300 million, 13.5 percent of people living in the US are foreign-born nationals, residents, and naturalized citizens, 5.7 percent of whom are 17 years old or younger. Over half of the immigrants are from Latin America and 30.6 percent are from Asia. They gravitate to the most populated states and cities, like the state of California, where almost 30 percent of immigrants in the US reside. Near 11.4 million immigrants are undocumented, and 90 percent of undocumented children, or US-born children of undocumented parents, are enrolled in public schools. Education policy is designed to meet students' learning, language, and ability needs. English is the general language of instruction, but a high proportion of immigrant children struggle to meet the language proficiency requirements and this affects the achievement of other academic goals, which is evident through the data available. With heated debates about immigration and the new government in place in the US, it is uncertain if there will be changes in migrant education programs at the federal level.

The second country case is the UK. In 2016, the UK population was 65 million, of which 14 percent (8.9 million) were foreign-born. Eight percent were foreign-born children (15 or younger) and 12 percent were 15-to-25-year-old youth. Between 1993 and 2015, foreign-born people in the UK more than doubled from 3.8 million (seven percent) to nearly 8.7 million (13.5 percent), with the majority settling in London. The political debate around migration has been particularly contentious in the last few years and migration policy has become more restrictive. Migrant children in the UK have the same rights to education as national citizens, that is, free and compulsory school education from age five to 16 (and until 18 in England). Schools are not allowed to inquire about a child's immigration status. The student population in the UK school system is diverse: 17 percent of UK school students have an immigrant background. In 2015, about 19 percent of primary school students and 15 percent of secondary school students received support for English as an Additional

Language. There is a strong policy focus on all children accessing high quality mainstream education. There are positive examples of inclusive practices by schools, good English as an Additional Language support, and civil society support for vulnerable groups of children in the country. Young migrants who arrive before the age of 18 catch up quickly with English proficiency and have broadly similar educational outcomes to the UK-born population. There are variations, though, regarding age at arrival, community norms, and gender.

The chapter on Finland also focuses on international immigration. The country has a population of 5.5 million, of which 4.4 percent are foreign-born residents. Most immigrants are from Estonia, Russia and the European Union. In recent years, due to the conflicts in the Middle East, asylum requests have increased. However, it has become more difficult for immigrants to find employment and well-paying jobs. Hence, many immigrants live in poverty. In 2016, the number of foreign-language speakers increased to 6.5 percent, and they were mainly speakers of Russian, Estonian, Arabic, Somali, and English, who tended to concentrate in urban areas. Official languages are Finnish and Swedish. The government has strived to maintain free education for everybody. Even though there have been recent cutbacks in public funding, education remains free at all levels (preschool to higher education) for everyone regardless of their background. Basic education is compulsory and is managed by local authorities and education providers. Preparatory education includes Finnish as a second language of instruction. Regardless of the many opportunities available to achieve learning goals, weaker outcomes are associated with previous education experiences, parental resources, and socioeconomic position. A 2016 report by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland concluded that the 32,400 asylum seekers put the system to the test with new demands for education due to their traumatic experiences and backgrounds. The Ministry of Education and Culture also launched a plan to prevent increasing hate speech and racism.

Japan is a unique case where foreign residents are referred to as “oldcomers” and “newcomers”. Oldcomers are Korean, Chinese, and Taiwanese immigrants/descendants who arrived before World War II. Considered permanent residents, oldcomers make up 15 percent of the over two million registered aliens. Newcomers have a more temporary status; they are Japanese descendants and foreign workers (mainly Chinese, Korean, Brazilian, Peruvians, and Filipinos) who have arrived since the 1970s. Immigrants tend to be concentrated in prefectures with large factories. The Japanese government has not been proactive in developing comprehensive immigration legislation. There are discrepancies regarding data on migrant children: In 2016, the Ministry of Justice estimated there were nearly 170,000 6-to-8-year-old children, while the Education counterpart (MEXT) calculated there were around 80,000 foreign students enrolled in public/private schools. Thus, the need of children with multiple citizenships for Japanese instruction is not recognized. Nearly 90,000 children attend ethnic schools established by Brazilian migrants, which are not accredited as “miscellaneous schools,” or

are not schooled at all. In 2004, MEXT attempted to ease school facility and educational requirements. Consequently, 12 out of 72 Brazilian schools were accredited as “miscellaneous schools” in 2011; however, they still operate outside the education system, are underfunded, and fail to teach Japanese and to prepare students for higher education examinations. Recently, MEXT recommended assigning Japanese teachers, providing support to foreign children, and implementing a Japanese as a second language curriculum. Initiatives are increasing but improvements are not significant, particularly among students from Brazil, Philippines, and some non-Asian countries.

Vietnam started socialist market-oriented reforms in 1986 that triggered urbanization, industrialization, and internal and international migration mainly toward large cities (Ho Chi Minh and Hanoi). Migration growth prompted the government to ease restrictions like those related to the residence registration book (*ho khau*) and to increase access of non-registered migrants to social welfare. Vietnam has a population of 86 million, of which 20.7 percent are children and 13.6 percent are migrants. The chapter on Vietnam analyzes minors’ internal migration (17 years of age or younger), their vulnerability, and obstacles to access state-run schools. Migrant children may travel with their parents, travel alone, or be left behind by migrant parents. Basic education in Vietnam consists of 12 years of schooling and the official language taught in schools is Vietnamese, though instruction must preserve ethnic minority languages. As recognized in the National Constitution of 1992, education is a right for all citizens and elementary education is mandatory and free. However, migrant children do not receive any specific support as they are not explicitly mentioned in antidiscrimination policy. The main educational issues among migrant minors are the high dropout rates and the fact that 36 percent of migrant children from poor families are enrolled in private institutions (which shows how the permanent resident certification or *ho khau* system is still a barrier to enrollment in public schools). In addition, 21.2 percent of 6-to-14-year-old migrant children are not enrolled in schools. Universal education policy in Vietnam promises access to education for migrant children; however, barriers relating to *ho khau* need to be eliminated.

Similar to the situation in Vietnam, industrial urbanization has been associated with an increase in internal and external migration in Thailand, a country of 66 million. Internal permanent and seasonal mobility from rural areas to industrial cities like Bangkok is the main migration trend in Thailand. Data from 2013 show that 9.4 percent of the population migrated in the previous five years, of which 5.1 percent moved between provinces, 2.4 percent within provinces, and 1.15 percent from other countries. Regular migrants have access to social security, but irregular migrants do not receive such benefits. International migrant workers must register and reside in the places where they work. Close to 20 percent of international and 13 percent of internal migrants were 15 years of age or younger. Thailand faces a humanitarian challenge of unaccompanied minor migrants moving from neighboring Laos,

Myanmar, Cambodia, and Vietnam, who are often exploited and/or victims of human trafficking. Forced repatriation of unaccompanied children is condemned in this country. Internal migrants often consist of families with children or parents who left children with relatives in their places of origin where there are better education opportunities. Compulsory education in Thailand is free, consists of 14 years of schooling, and is managed by local governments. Unregistered migrant children can enroll in Thai schools, as mandated by the Cabinet Resolution on Education for Unregistered Persons of 2005, which guarantees the right to education to all children. The Thai government provides funding to support schools that enroll migrant children.

The chapter on China focuses on education for internal migrants. With a population of 1.37 billion, China had 247 million internal migrants in 2015. The increasing migration to big cities has challenged education provision because access has been restricted to places of origin through the household registration or *hukou* system. In China, compulsory education is free and includes nine years from primary to middle school. The financial responsibility of the multi-layered Chinese education system is shared by district offices (cities) and county and township committees. Hence, it is difficult for migrant children (especially from rural areas) to benefit from education subsidies in places different from where they are registered, due to a lack of financial resources or because governments are not responsible for them. In 2001, the state council established the “two main responsibilities” principle, according to which municipal governments in destination cities are responsible for the education of migrant children and public schools must enroll them. In 2003, the Chinese central government proposed the non-discrimination principle for migrant children, especially those from rural areas. The number of migrant children in compulsory education increased from 11.67 million in 2009 to 12.95 million in 2014. Currently, migrant children attend public schools or migrant-only private schools (around 20 percent) in their destination cities; 78.5 percent of elementary school aged migrant children are enrolled in public school and 82.3 percent of middle school aged migrant children are enrolled in public school. The chapter describes the Shanghai model and some community-based initiatives run by non-governmental organizations as examples of education provision for migrant children.

The descriptions of migrant children’s education in the seven country cases conclude with a brief comparative analysis. Three papers, Thailand, China, and Vietnam, emphasize internal migration (primarily associated with industrialization and urbanization), while the other four look at external migration. All the papers in this volume highlight migration trends toward big urban, densely populated settings. The magnitude of migration can be overwhelming in countries like China, with 247 million internal migrants, and the US, with more than 43 million foreign-born nationals, residents, and naturalized citizens, including 11.4 million undocumented residents. Migrants face more challenging situations when mobility is irregular (related to restrictions of household registration systems, as in Vietnam and China,

or undocumented immigration, as in the US and the UK) and/or when they travel with adults or alone. Among the more developed countries, there are fewer barriers for migrants to move across administrative boundaries within country. Nevertheless, challenges and often heated debates focus on external migration. Local governments and school districts in Vietnam and China need more incentives to fund and provide education to migrant children based on where they reside and not where they are registered. Many migrant children return to their hometowns to complete school or abandon school to join the labor market. From a policy point of view, the US and the UK recognize immigrant children's right to access free compulsory education and school admissions are usually based on residence place rather than immigration status; thus, immigrant children can enroll in public schools. Education is managed at the local level in both the US and the UK, but the US sees more involvement of the federal government in migrant education with supporting programs and funding. Educational participation and outcomes of undocumented children are probably lower than regular immigrants due to culture, demographic factors, internal mobility, and lack of opportunities for post-secondary education and regular jobs. In Finland, the UK, and the US, immigrants often struggle with the language of instruction, if different from native languages, and with the pressures to acquire fluency and meet school achievement goals. In Japan, newcomers are the main ones facing challenges since children primarily attend ethnic schools that operate outside the mainstream education system without government subsidies and provide instruction in students' mother-tongue, not Japanese. Therefore, the achievement gap is wide.

In conclusion, the seven cases presented in this report show how some migrant children face challenges in accessing quality education. In countries like China, Vietnam, and Thailand, where internal immigration is more prevalent, barriers come from the household registration systems and the lack of action by local governments and schools, even if there are some incentives from the national government. In these cases, there are a few successful initiatives from which governments can learn. On the other hand, in countries such as the US, the UK, and Finland, the main two issues are related to attaining fluency in the local language and the possibility for students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds to achieve the academic level of their local classmates. Even if students are undocumented, they can enroll in public schools; however, the immigration status creates other challenges for these students. In Japan, newcomers tend to enroll in ethnic schools that often lack Japanese language instruction, placing students at a disadvantage in comparison to locals and oldcomers. There are many challenges, but also some successful initiatives that could become the object of future research. Governments should make policy decisions to favor migrant children that, in turn, will make societies more just and bring about more prosperity.

Chapter Two

# Education of Migrant Children in Finland

Camilla Nordberg

**T**he Finnish context of migrant children's education is that of a specific welfare and migration regime and a specific understanding of the citizen (Nordberg, 2015a; 2015b; 2016). Finland is part of the European global north and belongs to the group of five Nordic countries that are renowned for their comparatively egalitarian social policy model. A vast amount of benefits and services are universal, targeted to the population at large. The welfare system in this region is still, in a comparative sense, characterized by a relatively high level of publicly subsidized or free social and health care services. These services are largely funded by taxation, employer and employee contributions (Anttonen et al, 2012; Koikkalainen et al, 2011; Kananen, 2014). Inherent to the egalitarian ideal, there has been a strong political will across party divides to offer free education for the whole population as a way to enable social mobility and economic redistribution (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017).

Social and economic equality has been understood as a value that is linked to individual justice but also to promoting solidarity and nation building (Kettunen, 2006). The project of the welfare state has since its early days been dependent on the social integration of the population at large in education and the labor market, including women. Since the 1960s it has been an explicit goal to implement a dual bread-winner model through publicly financed and organized child and elder care. This transformation created a huge, indeed gender segregated, labor market, but it also liberated women from unpaid care work in the home (Borchorst & Siim, 2008). The dual bread-winner model has since become a trademark of the Nordic social policy model.

Finnish basic education has gained substantial international attention, both in academia and among the general public through various media outlets. This has been due to Finland's top-ranking in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) held since the year 2000 by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). PISA assesses the learning outcomes of students, aged 15, in mathematics, science and reading literacy (PISA, 2015).

However, despite the top scores in performance and in social mobility, Finland has been less successful in relation to migrant students' learning when compared to the OECD average (PISA, 2015). Moreover, despite egalitarian ideals, the last decade has seen a rise in poverty levels among, for example, families with children (Jäntti, 2010). Neoliberal ideas of privatization and consumer choice have gained increasing ground. It has even been argued that Finland is approaching the liberal type of welfare state model (Anttonen & Häikiö, 2011). Large-scale cutbacks in public funding have been particularly prominent during the current and previous right-wing governments.

This report discusses the Finnish educational system in general and some of its factors in its success regarding learning outcomes, but also offers some challenges and suggests ways forward, particularly in relation to students from migrant backgrounds. Firstly, it outlines the national context of migration and the particular migration regime defining migrant education in Finland. Secondly, it explores the general characteristics of the national education system, policies on migrant children's background education and documented learning outcomes for this specific group of children. Finally, it discusses current policy initiatives and interventions, concluding with some critical comments and suggests ways forward.

## Migration and Migrants in Finland

### Socioeconomic Context of Migration

Migration of refugees to Finland has escalated simultaneously with economic recessions. This has been detrimental especially for the most vulnerable migrant groups who normally already have a hard time searching for employment. Arguably, in terms of migration and promoting migrant integration into education and the labor market, Finland has been less successful than it has been promoting class and gender based equality. Large numbers of migrant residents remain outside the labor market or work in precarious positions with short-term contracts and low pay. There are legislative, cultural as well as structural reasons for the vulnerable position many migrants face. There are also gendered and national divisions between groups of migrants; national background in particular may be more determining of an individual's labor market position than individual skills or the level of education (Koikkalainen et al., 2011: 155).

The National Institute for Health and Welfare coordinated a study in 2015 based on a random sample of 3,000 persons aged 18 to 64, born in Somalia, Iraq, Iran or Russia/Soviet Union. The research drew on a computer-assisted structured interview, a health examination (45-60 minutes) and a short interview for those who did not want to or were unable to participate in the longer interview (15-20 minutes). The study showed that up to 78 percent of Kurdish background residents, 57 percent of Somali background and 23 percent of Russian background residents had had a major traumatic experience in their country of origin. Permanent injuries by violence were most common among Kurdish background residents. During their time of residence in Finland, more than 20 percent of migrants had experienced verbal abuse in everyday life; disrespectful treatment was even more common. Many respondents had severe symptoms of depression and anxiety, with half of Kurdish women and one in four Kurdish men showing symptoms (Castaneda et al., 2012).

Generally speaking, men have a higher degree of employment, but the positive effect of length of residency in Finland is clearly stronger for women than for men, indicating that society has been more successful in supporting women migrants' employment (Eronen et al., 2014: 33). The chances for employment start to decrease after a migration age of 37 years. Hence, employment difficulties are not a problem solely for older migrants but for persons in the middle of working life (Eronen et al., 2014: 38).

The demographic change poses a major challenge to Finnish society. The population is ageing, the share of the working-age population is decreasing, and despite the high unemployment rate, there is a demand for labor, particularly in certain sectors. The migrant population has often been seen as an instrumental solution to the aging population problem (Nordberg, 2016). While it indeed is the case that the migrant population has a more positive demographic situation, over time the migrant population acquires similar family formation patterns as the population at large (City of Helsinki, 2016: 22). Moreover, migrants that arrive as children and young people today will be older a few decades from now.

Unemployment is also reflected in poverty figures. Myrskylä and Pyykkönen (2015) conclude that where migrants earn an annual average of 27,500 euros (\$32,703 USD) a year, native Finns earn an annual average of 36,800 euros (\$43,762). This is an income gap of 25 percent. Income levels are highly gendered, with migrant women faring worse than men. When people out of work are taken into account the gap is even wider. Native Finns receive higher unemployment benefits and other social security payments. While a migrant on average receives 3,100 euros (\$3,686) in annual benefits a year, native Finns out of the workforce receive around 7,500 euros (\$8,919) a year. The majority of migrants live in poverty, even when possible benefits are accounted for (Myskylä & Pyykkönen, 2015).

### Scale and Types of Migration

Finland has a population of 5.5 million people on an area of 338,000 square km, an average population density of 18 inhabitants per square km. The south is the most populated part of the country, particularly the Helsinki capital region, which accounts for about one fifth of the population. Foreign nationals amount to only 4.4 percent of the entire population in Finland (Official Statistics of Finland, 2017a).

Finland has a comparatively short history of larger-scale immigration. In the 1960s and early 1970s, due to rapid industrialization and urbanization as well as a profound transformation of the prevailing agriculture-based working life, Finns emigrated to Sweden and North America to find employment and a better life. In the early 1990s the trend changed and there were more immigrants entering the country than there were persons emigrating.

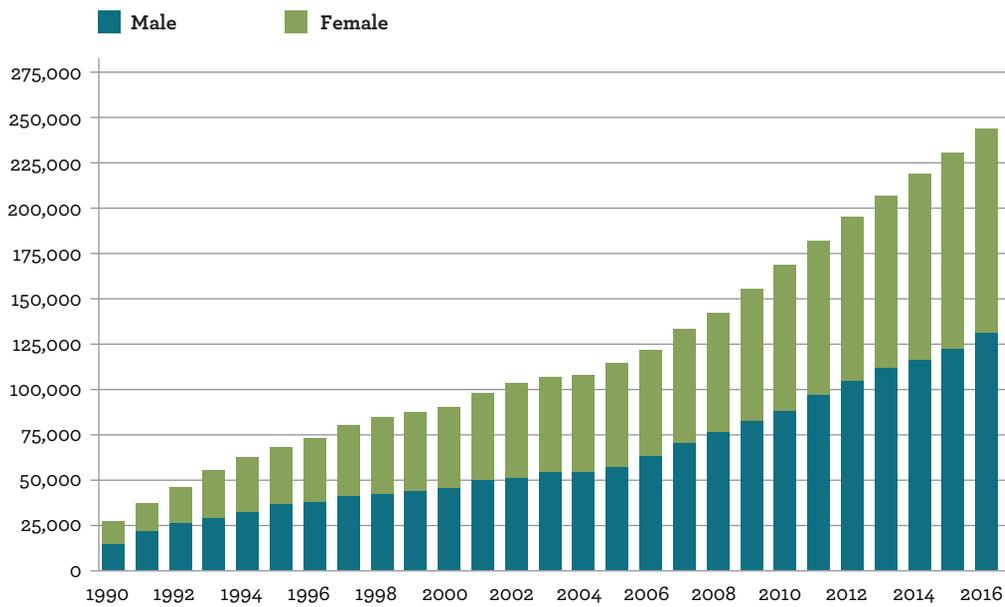


Figure 1. Foreign nationals by sex 1990–2016, Finland Source: Official Statistics of Finland 2017

The largest groups of migrants are from Estonia and Russia; more than one third have a background in the European Union.

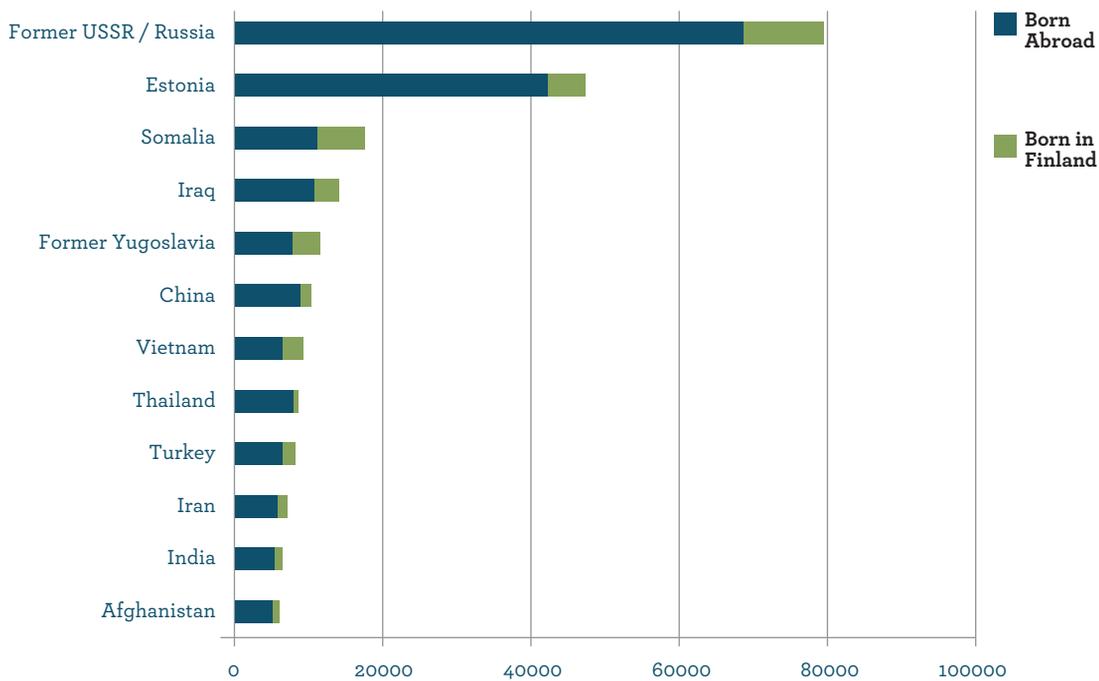


Figure 2. Largest foreign-born groups in Finland in 2015 Source: Official Statistics of Finland 2015

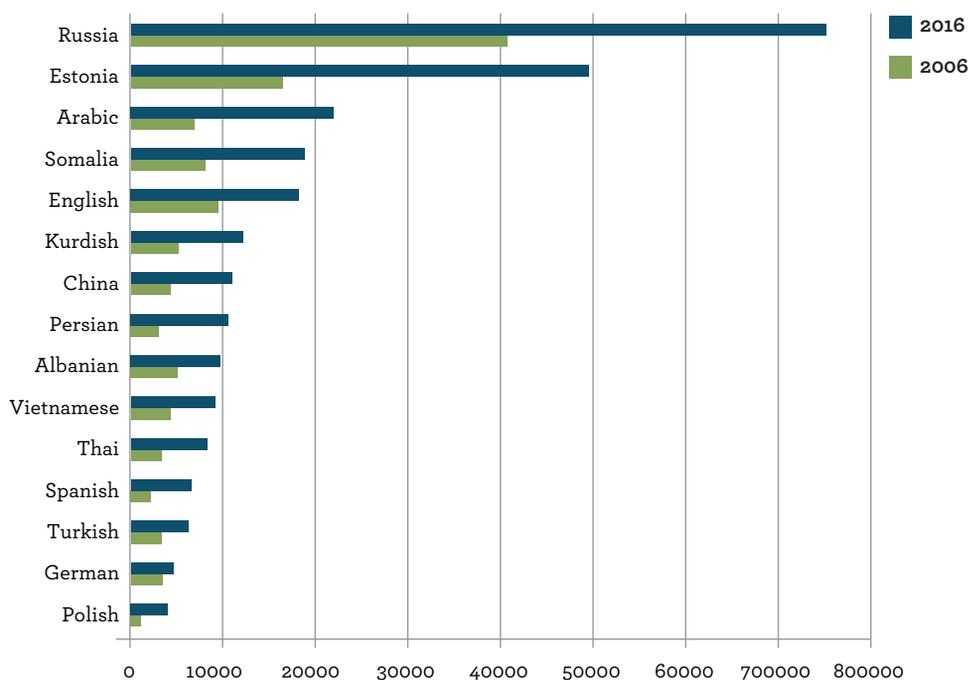
Many migrants are returning migrants of Finnish descent or their family. According to the foreign-born population's self-reported reasons for immigration, 54 percent have moved to Finland for family reasons, 18 per cent have immigrated for work related reasons and around 10 per cent as students. Only around 11 percent have a refugee background (Sutela & Larja, 2015). A more systematic recruitment of labor was not typical until around 2007 (Helander, 2011).

Finland has accepted an annual quota of 750 government-sponsored refugees in collaboration with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) since the year 2001. In 2014 and 2015, due to the situation in Syria, 1,050 quota refugees were admitted. The typical number of asylum seekers has been between 1,500 and 6,000. In 2015, due to the difficult global situation for refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria in particular, there was a sharp increase in the number of asylum-seekers, amounting to 32,476 applicants (Official Statistics of Finland, 2017a). The current right-wing government has since that time amended the *Finnish Act on Migration* on several occasions and made it more difficult to gain residency and apply for asylum in Finland (Nordberg, forthcoming). In 2016, the number was down to 5,651 asylum-applicants (Official Statistics of Finland, 2017a). Academics, the political opposition and human rights activists have particularly criticized the change of legislation that has excluded humanitarian grounds as a reason for a positive asylum decision (Nordberg, forthcoming). Subsequently, while in early 2016 only 28 percent of the asylum-applications from Iraqi citizens were declined, in June 2016 the number was 77 percent (Finnish Immigration Service, 2017).

The number of undocumented migrants reflects the number of asylum-seekers. Over the last years the police has identified around 3,000 undocumented migrants annually. In 2015, the number of undocumented migrants was 14,286. The majority of the undocumented migrants are persons who have received negative asylum decisions (National Police Board, 2017).

The Finnish landscape of cultural and ethnic diversity is also defined by its spoken languages. The official languages in Finland are Finnish and Swedish. Although the Swedish population is concentrated in certain areas in the west and south, Finnish and Swedish are formally equal languages throughout the country. Moreover, the mother tongue of the first nation people, the Saami, is spoken by approximately 2,000 people. They live in the northernmost part of Finland and have the right to access public services in their own language. The official languages are the languages of instruction in educational institutions on all educational levels. Typically, either Finnish or Swedish is the language of instruction. However, there are also bilingual upper secondary vocational institutions and universities. Sami language instruction is available in some basic education, in upper secondary general and vocational institutions in the Saami-speaking areas (The Ministry of Education and Culture, 2015).

The share of the population speaking languages other than Finnish and Swedish has increased. At the end of 2016, the number of foreign-language speakers was 6.5 per cent. The largest non-national languages registered as a mother tongue were Russian, Estonian, Arabic, Somali and English. (Official Statistics of Finland, 2017a).



**Figure 3. The largest groups by native language in Finland 2006 and 2016** Source: Official Statistics of Finland 2017

The highest share of foreign-language speakers can be found in urban areas, particularly in southern Finland around the capital area, where almost ten per cent of the population are foreign-language speakers (Official Statistics of Finland, 2017a).

### Researching Migrant Children’s Education in Finland

This report is based on current research and statistics related to the education of children with migrant background in Finland. The primary focus is on basic education. In the Finnish context the notion of “migrant background” usually implies having at least one parent born abroad. Finland produces statistics only on citizenship, not on race or ethnic nationality. However, information on language is available through the population information system. The child’s mother tongue is registered when the child is born. It is possible to change the registered language at any time based on a separate application (Official Statistics of Finland, 2017b). As discussed above, the social category of migrant background people refers to a broad diversity of individuals who are foreign born or have a parent that is foreign born. In practice, being categorized as an immigrant has racialized connotations and there are different hierarchies of power and possibilities for social engagement and equality based on intersectional categories of nationality, race, gender, able-bodiedness, age, religion, sexuality and so forth.

## Education of Migrant Children in Finland

### The Education System in Finland

For citizens and for people with a residence permit in Finland, education is free at all levels from pre-primary to higher education. For undocumented migrants, basic education is free of charge. The consensual tradition of policy-making is also salient as regards education and training. Changes in government do not interfere with approving medium-term plans for education. Consequently, the development of education is assumed to be predictable. The Basic Education Act (2008) adheres to an ideal of equal opportunities for education irrespective of ethnic origin, age, wealth or place of residence. This has been a key principle of Finnish education — everyone, regardless of background, should have equal access to high-quality education and training. Hence, there is a strong formal policy emphasis on decreasing inequality gaps in terms of educational success regardless of the students' background (The Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016).

Basic education is compulsory for young people until the age of 17. It is organized by local authorities (municipalities) and other education providers. While there is the option to attend private schools, fewer than two per cent of the children attend private schools, and such schools are typically based on a specific pedagogical philosophy like Steiner or Montessori or on a specific language or religion. Free school meals are also provided. Secondary education is not compulsory but it is free for students and can be conducted in general high schools or in vocational schools. While both these routes can provide access to universities, there is a cultural valuation of secondary education to the benefit of general high schools, from which the access to tertiary education is smoother (Harinen & Sabour, 2014). Tertiary education is also basically free and organized in universities and polytechnics. The educational system at all these levels is predominantly publicly funded.

Teachers are generally well educated — even teachers in basic education are required to have a masters degree — and they have a comparatively high level of autonomy and integrity in relation to their teaching. The national core curriculum enables local adaptations. Quality assurance is mostly the responsibility of education providers rather than authorities exercising top-down control. There is no inspection system in Finland. Moreover, national examinations are less established than in many other educational systems in the global north, the exception being the matriculation exam, which is used as a port of entrance to tertiary education (e.g., Sahlberg, 2011).

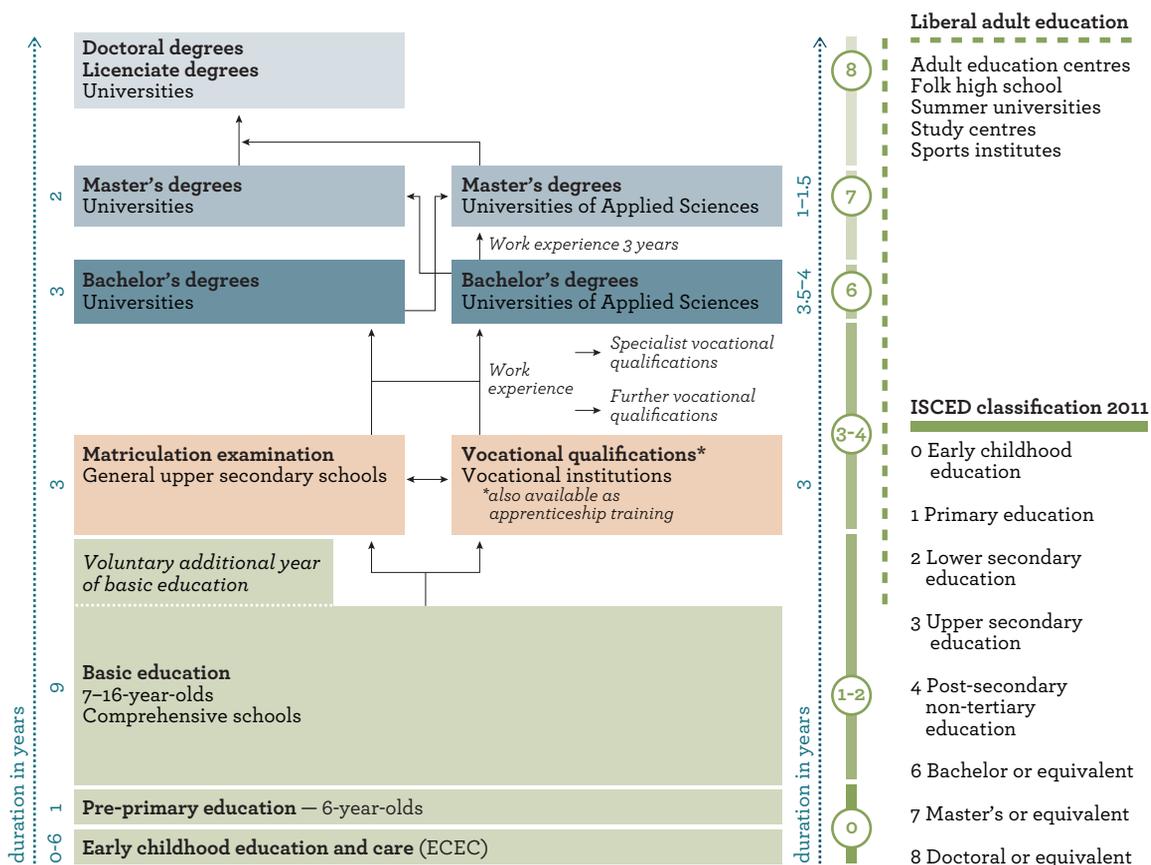


Figure 4. The education system in Finland Source: Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture 2017

The neo-liberalization of the welfare state has also conveyed a more instrumental and rational understanding of education, whereby education is argued to be less valued as a societal good per se. Discursive references to labor market requirements have increasingly conditioned educational strategies and sped up educational paths and graduations. This trend has been argued to be particularly challenging for migrant students with weaker language skills (Harinen & Sabour, 2014; The Developmental Plan for Education, 2011).

### Policies for Migrant Children in Finland

The formal aim of migrant education is to provide people moving to Finland with opportunities to function as equal members of the Finnish society and to guarantee the same educational opportunities that are offered to the majority population. Compulsory education concerns migrants as well as the majority population (Finnish National Board of Education, 2017a). According to the core curriculum for basic education, there are still issues understood as particularly important to consider in migrant education, such as 'background', language, culture, residence period, previous learning history and 'traditions'. Education aims at supporting students to become active members of the Finnish language and cultural community as well as supporting their own cultural background. Migrants should receive necessary support to obtain equal learning ability (*The Basic Education Act 628/1998*; Finnish National Board of Education, 2017b).

Support measures developed by the administration include preparatory education and Finnish as a second language studies. According to the *Basic Education Act (628/1998)*, migrant children have the right to one year of preparatory education if their Finnish/Swedish language and other skills are not sufficient for participating in preliminary or basic education. Students have a right to be transferred to basic education before one year is full if they obtain sufficient qualifications to study in basic education. Every student gets his or her own personal study plan. The goal of the preparatory education is to provide the student with an understanding of the Finnish school context and the basics of the Finnish language, so that they can continue in a regular class. Subsequently, preparatory education not only includes Finnish language education, but also other subjects such as mathematics, sports and arts. The aim is for the child to get familiar with Finnish/Swedish vocabulary and the school environment while studying different subjects. According to the National Core Curriculum for Instruction Preparing for Basic Education, the student should be integrated to the level of basic education during preparatory education. In addition, students should be introduced to the new group before the official transfer. Integration is typically implemented during arts, because the Finnish language is not a crucial factor in studying these subjects (Tani & Nissilä, 2010; Päivärinta & Nissilä, 2010).

If a migrant student's level of Finnish/Swedish is evaluated to be insufficient in many areas of language skills (listening comprehension, reading comprehension, oral skills, writing, vocabulary and structure), they can get Finnish as a second language education. Students have a right to education in Finnish as a second language during the whole compulsory education period. Education can be organized in different ways: students can study alone, with a group or study Finnish as a second language a few times a week and participate in the Finnish language course with other majority population students. If the results of the language test show that the language level is sufficient, the pupil can transfer to the majority population group full-time with the parents' petition (Finnish National Board of Education, 2017c).

Finland is emphasizing the notion of multicultural education in general, which is mostly visible in providing mother tongue education for migrants. In Finland, mother tongue language education is provided in 50 languages. (Finnish National Board of Education, 2017d). The idea is to strengthen the students' multicultural identity and build grounds for bilingualism and multilingualism. The rationale behind mother tongue teaching is that integration requires recognition of one's own culture and language besides Finnish culture and language (Immonen-Oikkonen & Leino, 2010: 25).

Finland has an *Act on Freedom of Religion*. The Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church have special positions among religious denominations, including taxation rights. The majority of Finnish people — around 72 percent — belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Only around one percent are members of the Orthodox Church. The rest of the population are members of other denominations or do not belong to any religious denomination. Children and young people in basic and secondary education have the right and obligation to instruction in religion. Teaching is

non-denominational; religion is approached rather as a cultural issue. Those students who do not participate in instruction in the country's dominant religion are offered instruction in their own religion, provided there are at least three students in the group. However, serious shortcomings have been identified in standards regarding teaching and teachers of minority religions (Sakaranaho, 2013; Ministry of the Interior, 2008, 26-30).

While traditionally, education in Finland has been based on an idea of students as rather homogenous in terms of resources and needs, the last decades have recognized migrant students as often being in need of special attention and treatment. Criticism has, however, been raised against the fact that special needs and resources have been justified by pedagogical and cognitive challenges rather than the disadvantageous positions migrant students possess in schooling and in society at large (Harinen & Sabour, 2014; Souto 2011).

### **Educational Outcomes of Migrant Children**

Children in Finland have consistently outperformed their counterparts in other OECD countries in the PISA surveys since 2006. Notwithstanding, Finland has been less successful in closing the gap between Finnish-born and migrant-background children. PISA assesses the learning outcomes of 15-year-old students in mathematics, science and reading literacy. The latest PISA survey from 2015 points to an increasing difference in results between boys and girls, where boys perform weaker than before (PISA, 2015).

Despite the high-level formal ambitions related to social justice and equality, migrant students face challenges with reading, writing and comprehending Finnish/Swedish, and with mathematics (Nissilä & Sarlin, 2009: 38). The difference between low performers in mathematics between migrant students and those without a migrant background was one of the highest among the PISA-participating countries in 2015 (PISA, 2015). Difficulties related to reading are also visible in other subjects, such as history, biology and geography. The smallest differences are found in arts and handcraft (Immonen-Oikkonen & Leino, 2010). According to a study by Kilpi-Jakonen (2010), at the end of compulsory education — that is 9th grade — the average final grade is 7.4/10 for migrant children and 7.8/10 for majority children. However, there are differences between migrants groups. The comparatively weaker learning outcomes are, to a large extent, explained by the child's previous educational experiences, by parental resources, and by socio-economic position such as parents with a lower level of education. These results support research from other European studies (e.g., Bratsberg et al, 2011; Algan et al., 2010; Tasiran & Tezic, 2006). According to another study by Kilpi-Jakonen (2011), migrant children also have a bigger dropout risk than the majority population. Moreover, migrants are more likely to choose vocational education than upper secondary education.

Despite the fact that socioeconomic background is an important determinant for children's learning, it is worth noting that, even after accounting for socioeconomic status, the difference in science performance between migrants and non-migrants is one of the largest among PISA-participating countries (65 PISA Score, rank 7/62) (PISA, 2015). While the PISA survey (until now) has had a strong focus on learning performance, there are several other elements related to migrant children's education that require special attention. In this context it is essential to keep in mind that migrant children are a particularly diverse group of people with very different backgrounds, needs and capacities. Many of them are still united by joint experiences of discrimination and racism related to one's background. Harinen and Sabour (2014) conclude that we need more profound analyses if we want to understand the complexities of ethnic inequalities in a learning society. It is important to recognize that educational exclusion is rooted in different social structures and patterns of marginalization in society rather than in individual choice.

## Critical Reflections

### Successful Policies, Initiatives and Cases

In terms of policy initiatives, the strong role of the state in education is generating different forms of statements and reports regarding the development of education. The current state of increasing migration is reflected in these with an improved recognition of the broader socio-political context. There has recently been a stronger focus on the role of civil society in education and migrant incorporation as well as on authority collaboration. Nevertheless, there are still open questions regarding the practical implementation of some initiatives.

The Ministry of Education and Culture (2016a) has in a recent steering group report discussed the educational tracks and integration of migrants, outlining problematic areas and making proposals for actions. They conclude that the 32,400 asylum-seekers who arrived in Finland in 2015 have put basic education to a test. As approximately 35 percent of asylum-seekers and up to 90 percent of children arriving alone will be granted resident permits, the current system faces big challenges in terms of catering to forthcoming demands for education and guidance. In their report, the steering group calls for additional training and support materials for health care and teaching staff to improve their ability to recognize and guide children and young people with traumatic experiences. Migrant students should be encouraged to participate in arts, cultural, and sports activities, and the state should try to involve in these activities actors outside formal education, such as staff in youth workshops and municipal youth workers. Importantly, one specific policy goal is to recruit teachers with migrant backgrounds. The report lists a total of 56 procedures (The Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016a).

At the government level, the Ministry of Education and Culture (2016b) launched an action plan in 2016 to “prevent hate speech and racism and to foster social inclusion”. It is being argued that “The current economic situation, fast changes in society that create uncertainties, and the refugee crisis are a fertile breeding ground for hostile speech, extremism and sharp polarization. Hate speech is directed at different population groups, minorities and individuals. It shakes the foundations of trust and safety. Hate speech and a sense of threat have made people react negatively towards migrants and anyone perceived as different. Trust and mutual respect between people and strong institutions are the cornerstones of wellbeing in Finland. Hate speech and racism mean that certain population groups have to live in an atmosphere where their status as equal members of the community is openly questioned. A decent life must be safeguarded for everyone, which means that no one should have to experience violence, threats or hostility” (The Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016b: 3).

The new measures suggested by the action plan to deal with racism and hate speech are mostly rooted in grass-root level actions. It has been typical in the Finnish context to study racism and hate speech mainly from a legal point of view where the focus has been on freedom of expression, grounds for criminalization of hate speech and regulation of information networks and places where hate speech occurs. The plan suggests that more resources should be invested in fighting racism, that public spaces like libraries should be acknowledged as meeting points promoting active citizenship, that different NGOs create opportunities for multicultural and equal participation, that teaching staff and youth workers are trained and youth services involved in promoting human rights and multiculturalism and tackling hate speech. There is also an emphasis on promoting dialogue and interaction between people and curbing racism in sports (The Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016b).

A national youth guarantee was established in 2013. The youth guarantee contains a youth society guarantee, an educational guarantee and a young adults’ skills program. The youth society guarantee, targeted to persons 25 years old or younger, offers education, practice training or a job placement within three months of unemployment. There is not a separate law related to the youth guarantee, but it is established on recommendation from different ministries and most of the municipalities are committed to following these instructions (Youth Guarantee, 2017b; City of Helsinki, 2015). The objective of the youth guarantee is “to support young people in gaining education and employment, to prevent prolonged youth unemployment, to identify factors contributing to social exclusion and to offer support at an early stage, in order to prevent social exclusion and marginalization of young people” (Youth Guarantee, 2017a). During 2015-2016 there were 64 different experiments in 16 different municipalities across Finland, in which different municipal organizations tried to develop new ways to cooperate between each other and develop attainable services for young people (Youth Guarantee, 2017c). In the frame of the youth guarantee many municipalities have started to develop a new multisectoral model for young people called “Ohjaamo”, from which young people can get consultation, guidance and support. Staff from the social welfare office, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, the unemployment office and different educational institutions are working under the same roof and can give their services simultaneously (Ohjaamo, 2017).

## Challenges and Critical Issues

It was concluded above that much previous research on migrant background children has been based on learning outcomes, skills and performance. This final section of this report raises some critical points related to the more profound aspects of migrant background children as part of the larger society, as citizens and citizens in the making. It is important to open up the understanding of migrant education and suggest ways forward that reach beyond the mere fulfillment of learning performance.

For example, Dervin, drawing on the phrase “diverse diversities” has argued that we need to be more attentive to the diverse identities of all pupils, rather than solely focusing on ethnic and racial identities linked to migration (Dervin, 2013). The whole notion of substantial citizenship assumes policies that promote both recognition of different identities and redistribution of resources. A politics of recognition, in this context, is about the acknowledgement of the traditional citizenship norm as being white, heterosexual, able-bodied and male. To recognize diversity is therefore to recognize the uniqueness of the individual with multiple identities (Nordberg, 2015b). Banks (2002), when discussing multicultural education, argues that the very notion of the multicultural means more than “foreign origins”, and includes various forms of intersectional diversities such as gender, religion, social class, language; able-bodiedness and sexuality are also important identity markers for young people. Moreover, identities are not stable, but fluid. Different identities are triggered at different occasions for the same person (Nordberg, 2015b; Isin & Wood, 1999). Dervin (2013) maintains that in order to counteract the hierarchization of “otherness” in Finnish classrooms, these multiple diversities must be acknowledged, and “otherness” must be understood as a universal issue rather than solely a migrant issue. Imaginaries of difference and similarity can have long-lasting consequences, especially for people without access to power.

The right to self-identification is a key to substantial citizenship. Labeling children as “immigrants” or “others” is problematic as they may refuse these labels themselves. Parents and children may also differ in their approaches to group identity. Dervin (2013) rightly asks how it is possible that children whose parents are born outside Finland, but who themselves were Finnish-born, are labeled as “immigrants” by educational institutions.

Subsequently, it would be of paramount importance to incorporate intersectional theory and practice in classroom teaching in a much more mainstream way than is currently the case. Notions of multiculturalism, racism, discrimination and inclusion otherwise risk being isolated as specific phenomena that concern a narrow group of students (the migrants) rather than society at large.

Chapter Three

# Education of Migrant Children in the UK

Ruth Cheung Judge

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**The UK's foreign-born population in 2016 was estimated to be over 8.9 million, around 14 percent of the total population of 65 million (Salt, 2016).**

Of the foreign-born population around eight percent are children (aged 0-15) and 12 percent are youth (aged 15-25) (Markaki, 2015; Rienzo & Vargas-Silva, 2017). Britain's multicultural population has been described as "super-diverse": in addition to established minority communities from former British colonies, there have also been recent migrant inflows from a wide range of origin countries who have diverse socio-economic and legal statuses (Vertovec, 2007). Thus, there are significant numbers of migrant children in the UK with an array of backgrounds and educational needs. Furthermore, immigration has played a dramatic and incendiary role in British politics in recent years, with debates centering on supposed burdens to the welfare state and concerns with integration. Critical commentators characterize government policy in the UK as increasingly, "based on the belief that creating a 'hostile environment' for migrants... is an effective means of encouraging them to leave, and that it is Britain's 'generosity' to migrants that attracts them" (The Coram Children's Legal Center, 2013: 4), and restrictions on the provision of legal aid, housing, welfare and secondary healthcare for migrants have been steadily made in the last few years.

Migrant children's education is therefore an issue of pressing practical and political concern in the UK. This chapter outlines the UK migration context (Part 1); summarizes data on migrant children's access to and attainment in education (Part 2); and discusses current challenges and good practices around migrant children's education, making recommendations based on these (Part 3). The chapter is based on the synthesis and critical review of a range of existing data – including government statistics, qualitative peer-reviewed academic research, and non-governmental organization (NGO) reports. It is thus intended to give a broad overview of the UK context, and readers should refer to the works cited for more detailed insight into particular aspects of migrant children's education. The chapter argues that the picture in the UK is mixed. On the one hand, a strong right to education irrespective of immigration status means that the vast majority of migrant children access mainstream education, and there are positive examples of high quality "English as an Additional Language" support, inclusive practices by schools, and civil society support for particularly vulnerable groups. Young migrants who arrive before 18 and catch up quickly with English proficiency have broadly similar educational and employment outcomes to the UK-born population, though these headline figures hide variation around age of arrival, community norms and gender (Strand, 2016; Markaki, 2015). On the other hand, the fragmented and competitive education system means that levels of support are varied, exacerbated by cuts to ring-fenced funding for minority students, and there are threats to migrant students' abilities to access and thrive in education from the 'hostile environment' where discourses about "undeserving" and "bogus" migrants (Arnot et. al., 2013) stoke exclusionary practices.

## Migration and Migrants in the UK

### Socioeconomic Context of Migration

The UK has a long history of substantial immigration, but has seen a marked increase in total arrivals since the early 1990s. The country has also seen the political debate around migration taking on an inflammatory — and at times xenophobic — turn in the last few years.

International migration long precedes the contemporary globalized era, and in this regard Britain is no exception. It is important to note that the “native” population of Britain is itself the product of conquest and settlement by the Roman Empire and groups from northern Germany, Scandinavia and France. Migrant groups — such as the French Huguenots, fleeing religious persecution in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and extremely large numbers of Irish migrants in the nineteenth century — played a significant role in Britain’s development into a capitalist industrial power. Legislation controlling immigration to the UK dates back to the Aliens Act 1905, which, in response to influxes of pogrom-fleeing Eastern European Jews, enforced immigrant registration to prevent the entry of “paupers and criminals” (Gainer, 1972).

Contemporary immigration in the UK is inextricably linked to histories of empire. A crucial period was the arrival of Commonwealth migrants from the Caribbean, South Asia and Africa after the Second World War to fill labor shortages in the public sector — healthcare and transport in particular. The British Nationality Act of 1948 gave Commonwealth migrants full rights of entry and settlement by creating a new citizenship categorization: “Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies.” These extensive rights of Commonwealth arrivals were reduced amid concern about the “social problems” of immigration under legislation in 1962 and 1971, which required employment permits, and created legal stratifications between groups of migrants. During the 1970 and 1980s, economic recession meant that out-migration from the UK exceeded immigration, though in this era there was consolidation of Commonwealth communities through family reunification, and significant East African, Asian and Vietnamese refugee influxes.

From the 1990s onwards, immigration to the UK has exceeded out-migration, and between 1993 and 2015 the foreign-born population in the UK more than doubled from 3.8 million to around 8.7 million, and increased in proportion of the total population from 7 percent to 13.5 percent (Rienzo & Vargas-Silva, 2017). This increase was influenced by economic growth, an increase in asylum-seekers fleeing global conflicts, and the enlargement of the European Union (EU), within which there is free movement. The highest growth in the foreign-born population occurred between 2005 — 2008, reflecting EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007 (Rienzo & Vargas-Silva, 2017). London dominates as the place of settlement for migrants, and employment rates and types vary significantly, as further explored below.

This growth in immigration has played a dramatic role in British politics in the last decade. Politicians have played into to populist fears about immigration, which revolve around the idea of migrants arriving to take advantage of state benefits and public services, and fears about the segregation of Muslim minorities. The former conservative Prime Minister, David Cameron, stated in his election manifesto of 2010 that his party would reduce net migration to “of thousands a year, not hundreds of thousands.” He reiterated this “tens of thousands” promise in his 2015 election manifesto, despite lacking obvious routes to do so, given Britain’s need for skilled migrants, the strong demand from employers for workers in agriculture, food processing, construction and hospitality (Salt, 2016), and already strict asylum policies. Yet the virulence of popular discontent with immigration was starkly reflected in the “Brexit” vote — in which a referendum to leave the EU won with 52 percent of the vote (in general from areas with low immigration) in June 2016. Inflammatory rhetoric about migration by politicians and in certain sections of the media was accompanied by an upsurge in hate crimes — verbal and physical attacks — after the EU referendum. For instance, the number of racially or religiously aggravated offences recorded by the police in July 2016 was 41 percent higher than in July 2015 (UK Home Office, 2016).

### Scales and Types of Migration

**Measuring migration.** This report draws on a number of official statistics surrounding migration, which operate with different definitions of “migrant.” Official UK statistics on immigration come from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), and they are based on the International Passenger Survey and Home Office data on migrants from *outside* the European Economic Area (EEA). ONS data define migrants as individuals “coming to or leaving the UK for over one year.” The other major data source on migration is the Annual Population Survey, which includes data from the Labour Force Survey, a continuous survey of around 60,000 households each quarter. These surveys define migrants as “foreign born” individuals — that is, those born outside the UK, irrespective of citizenship or length of residence.

It is worth noting some limits of this data. Firstly, there is a significant variance in estimates between data sources, which are primarily based on sample surveys. ONS data relies on self-reporting about intended length of stay, and does not count short-term migrants of under a year, who are visible within the measure of National Insurance Number Registrations: in 2016, there were 626,000 registrations by EU nationals and 198,000 by non-EU nationals. The Labour Force Survey does not account for those arrived in the last six months, asylum seekers, or those living in mobile residences (e.g. trailer parks or hostels). Therefore data underestimate recent migrants. Furthermore, a 2007 estimate suggested there are between half a million to a million undocumented migrants and their children in the UK, a significant population who we know little about yet who are vulnerable through their lack of legal status (Migration Observatory, 2011). Estimates of migrant populations at the local level vary widely, being based on a combination of data sources, which can create difficulties in planning and resource allocation for public services.

**Scale of migration.** Since the 1990s, immigration into the UK has exceeded outmigration and net migration has grown to average around +250,000 per year from 2004 onwards (see Figure 1). This “net” figure results from total immigration minus total emigration, with ‘+’ indicating the amount by which immigration exceeds emigration. This is the third highest level of immigration among OECD countries (OECD, 2017; Vargas-Silva, 2011). The most significant reason for increased net immigration to the UK in recent years has been the accession of ten new countries into the EU, mostly Eastern European, in 2004, and two further countries in 2007.

In September 2016, net long-term international migration in Britain was estimated to have been +273,000 during the preceding year. Within the net migration figures, we see there were +165,000 EU citizens, +164,000 non-EU citizens and –56,000 British citizens (ONS, 2017). With regard to EU immigration, around 50 percent of immigrants were from EU15 (older EU member) countries, with A8 (countries joining in 2004) and A2 (countries joining in 2007) countries accounting for around 25 percent each.

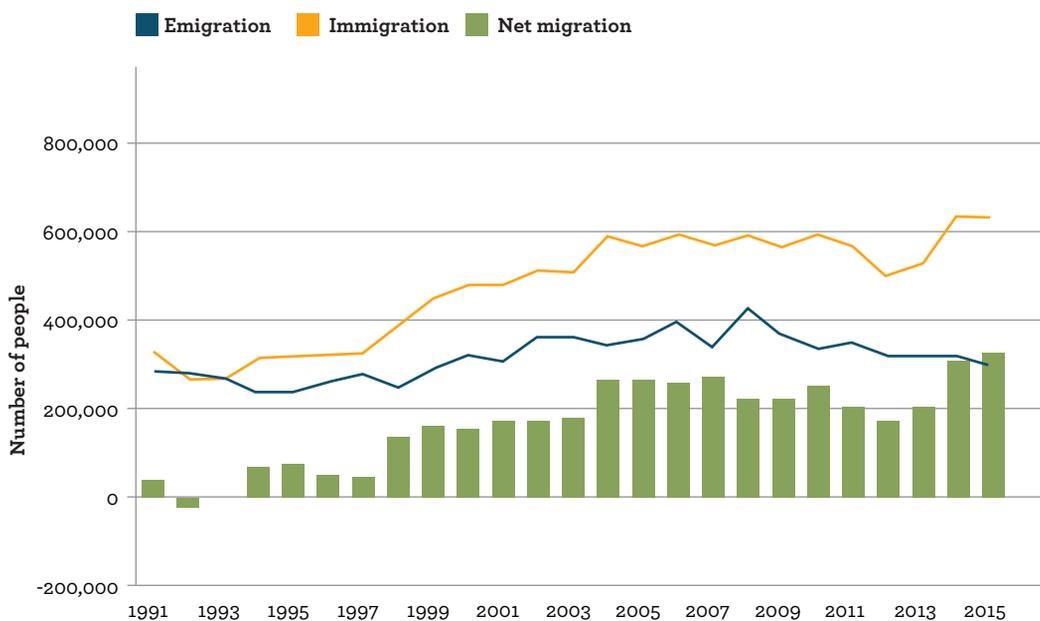


Figure 1: Immigration, emigration and net migration in the UK, 1991-2015

**Types of immigration.** The dominant reason immigrants come to the UK is to work. About 50 percent of immigrants in 2016 came to work (ONS, 2017). Labor market statistics show that migrants account for 11 percent of the total UK labor force; of those, 7 percent were EU nationals (ONS, 2017). The second most common driver of immigration to Britain is long-term study, which accounted for around 22 percent of immigration in 2016 (ONS, 2017). Of these, around two thirds were from outside the EU, the top five countries being China, USA, Hong Kong, India, and Malaysia. The proportion of these students who apply to stay to work after their studies is challenging to estimate but is thought to be around 25 percent (Vargas-Silva, 2011). Around 12 percent of immigrants come for family reasons, such as marriage, children accompanying parents, and family reunification (ONS, 2017). The UK is below the OECD average in this category (Vargas-Silva, 2011). Asylum seekers account for a very small

proportion of total migrants — although in 2016 the UK received 38,517 asylum applications (including dependent children) only 9,933 were granted asylum or other protection (ONS, 2017), as well as a further 4,369 people granted protection under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. The UK's number of asylum applications is half the peak level in 2002, and low in per capita terms compared to Nordic nations and Germany (ONS, 2017; Vargas-Silva, 2011, Salt, 2016). The top 3 countries of origin for asylum seekers were Iran, Pakistan and Iraq (ONS, 2017).

It is notable for this study that the proportion of children and youth seeking asylum has grown drastically recently due to the “refugee crisis” (predominantly due to the Syrian conflict) in Europe. There was a 57 percent increase in children seeking asylum in the UK between 2015-16, many of these unaccompanied (The Children's Society, 2016). In April 2016, a former child-refugee Labor peer, Lord Alfred Dubs, sponsored an amendment to the Immigration Act which committed the government to relocating unaccompanied refugee children in the UK, proposing resettling 3,000 children. However, the scheme was controversially closed by a vote of parliament in March 2017 after only resettling around 350 child refugees.

Migration policy has become notably more restrictive around permanent settlement. In 2016, the number of non-EEA nationals granted permission to stay permanently in the UK was 59,009, around a quarter of the peak number of 241,586 granted settlement in 2010. Permissions to stay for work, family reasons and asylum were all reduced (ONS, 2017; Salt, 2016).

**Countries of origin.** Poland, India, Pakistan, Germany and Romania are the top countries of origin for both migrants under 30 years of age and the foreign-born population as a whole, with Ireland also a major country of origin for older migrants (Migration Observatory, 2016). Romania, India, China and Poland have been the largest origin countries of migrants over the course of the last few years (Salt, 2016).

**Geographical distribution of migrants.** The vast majority of the UK's foreign-born population live in London (36.8 percent) and comprise a high proportion of total residents— 41 percent of the residents in inner London are foreign-born. Beyond this, the Southeast also contains a large share of the foreign-born population (12.8 percent), with Wales, the Northeast and Northern Ireland having the lowest shares (Rienzo & Vargas-Silva, 2017).

**Socioeconomic status of migrants.** The extreme heterogeneity between as well as within migrants from different countries of origin makes it difficult and problematic to generalize about migrants' socio-economic standing. On a broad-brush level, the employment rates of the foreign-born population (70 percent) is overall similar to the native population (73 percent) (OECD, 2017). But there is wide variation. Indian nationals were issued the largest proportion (40 percent) of skilled work visas out of any immigrant group in 2010 (ONS, 2017), whereas Pakistani migrants have some of the lowest rates of educational attainment and employment (Lymperopoulou & Parameshwaren, 2014). It appears that an increasing number of migrants are being employed in low-wage, low-skilled occupations. For instance, in 2002, there was only one low-skilled occupation (food preparation) on the list of top ten occupations with

the highest shares of foreign-born workers. In 2016, there were five low-skilled occupations on this list, such as factory work, cleaning and hospitality (Rienzo, 2016). For instance, Polish migrants tend to have relatively high levels of education but end up working in services or construction (Sales et al., 2008).

### Researching Migrant Children in the UK

As the last two sections have demonstrated, when we discuss migrant children in the “super-diverse” UK context (Vertovec, 2007) we are discussing a wide range of children, from EU migrants, to accompanied or unaccompanied asylum seeking children, to migrant children joining established ethnic minority communities, with a range of socioeconomic backgrounds, legal statuses and linguistic and educational needs.

Overarching data estimates suggest that around 20 percent of the foreign-born population is under 25 years old (Markaki, 2015). The OECD specifies that 17 percent of UK school students have “an immigrant background,” though this includes first and second generation migrants (OECD, 2015). An important and closely related category for data on migrant children is that of children receiving support for English as an Additional Language (EAL), when English is not the first language spoken at home. EAL status is self-reported and used in schools in England only. It may include second-generation migrant children and crucially, does not capture migrant children whose first language is English (Migration Observatory, 2011). It is estimated that in 2015 about 19 percent of primary school students and 15 percent of secondary school students were EAL, a figure which has doubled since 1997 (Strand, 2016). The proportion of EAL students varies widely by location, ranging from only 1.3 percent of pupils in Redcar and Cleveland in North-East England to 73.5 percent of pupils in Tower Hamlets, London.

It is important to underscore that in the UK, a detailed picture of the distribution and experiences of heterogeneous groups of migrant children is somewhat unclear, having to be discerned via a number of proxy research and policy categorizations around ‘ethnic minorities’ and ‘English as an Additional Language’ students, many of whom are second-generation migrants. Schools collect no data on the immigration status of the children they enroll. As will be further discussed, this has positive aspects in the commitment to providing children access to mainstream education independent of immigration status, but on the other hand may limit the ability of policy and research to effectively address the needs of migrant children in the UK (Arnot et al., 2013; Reynolds, 2008). There is a need for more direct research on migrant children in the UK (Reynolds, 2008), though it should be research that does justice to the diversity of their experiences. However, after a brief summary of the education system in the UK, the remainder of the report synthesizes existing data on the educational rights and outcomes of migrant children, highlights challenges and good practices, and makes recommendations for the future.

## Education of Migrant Children in the UK

### The Education System in the UK

In addition to the diversity of migrant communities in the UK, it must also be noted that educational policies and practices are also highly diversified. Due to the UK's devolved politics, there are significant variations in the education systems of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, with differences in school starting age, curricula, assessments, monitoring, and governance.

Across the UK, public “state schools” are free and compulsory from ages 5-16, and in England, children must stay in education or training until they are 18. For children under the age of five, publicly funded nurseries and pre-schools are available for a limited number of hours each week. In the first two years of school, children are entitled to free school meals, after which children are eligible for free school meals on a means-tested basis. National exams occur at the age of 15-16, where students take “General Certificate of Secondary Education” (GCSEs), or National 4/5s in Scotland, and at 17-18, where pupils take “Advanced Levels,” or Highers / Advanced Highers in Scotland.

UK education is characterized by a fragmented and diversified system. For instance, in England, the different models of state school governance can be bafflingly complex. “Maintained Schools” receive funding via the local authority, and can be of different types, such as “Community Schools,” with staff employment and admissions run by the local authority or “Foundation Schools,” with employment and admissions run by their own governing body. There are also ‘Academies’, state schools which receive their funding directly from the government, not local authorities, with employment and admissions run by a trust (which may govern multiple Academies). Over the last two decades, under New Labour and the Conservative government there has been a significant shift towards making more and more schools “academies,” either through “converting” high performing schools or “sponsoring” underperforming schools. Currently, 82 percent of primary schools and 35 percent of secondary schools are run by local authorities, with 17 percent of primary and 59 percent of secondary schools as academies.

Private schools (confusingly, the most elite of these are known in the UK as “public schools”) play an important role in maintaining class divisions in Britain. Although only around seven percent of the UK population attended private school, 71 percent of senior judges, 62 percent of senior armed forces officers, 55 percent of Whitehall permanent secretaries, 50 percent of members of the House of Lords, and 44 percent of people on the Sunday Times Rich List went to private school. Thus, many migrant students, due to socio-economic background, are excluded alongside many working-class UK-born children, from the benefits of social mobility through education (Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, 2014).

According to PISA, which measure learning outcomes of students age 15 in Maths, Science and Reading, the United Kingdom performs around average in Maths and Reading and above average in science compared to other OECD countries (2015). The United Kingdom has higher levels of participation in higher education than the OECD average, with a participation rate that has grown steadily over the last decade to reach 48 percent in 2014/15, with young women around 10 percent more likely to participate in higher education than young men (Department for Education, 2016; OECD, 2009).

### **Policies for Migrant Children's Education**

Migrant children have exactly the same rights and entitlements to education as national citizens, that is, free and compulsory school education from age five to 16, and education or training until 18 in England. Whilst proof of address is needed for school registration, schools have no duty to determine the immigration status of the child, and parents have a duty to ensure their children are in full-time education. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children “looked after” by local authorities are a high priority for education and should be found a full-time educational placement in a mainstream school within 20 school days (The Children's Society, 2016).

The universal right to education is well supported at many levels of legislation. The UK is a signatory of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (UNCRC), which states in Article 28 the right of every child to education without discrimination. This is brought into law at the national level by The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 which state that all children are eligible for healthcare, education and support for children's services. In 2004 a national framework called “Every Child Matters” was launched, aimed at strengthening the rights of children, regardless of immigration status, though this was replaced in 2010 (Refugee Council, 2011). Notwithstanding future changes linked to Brexit, European legislation binding the UK has also emphasized equal treatment in education, with the European Convention on Human Rights recognizing the right for all to an education, and specific policies highlighting the importance of mainstream and high-quality education for minorities and migrants, for instance in the 2005 Resolution on the Situation of the Roma in the EU (Faas et al., 2014).

At a local level, this is brought into action by Section 13A of the Education Act of 1996, which states that “Local authorities have a duty to provide suitable full-time education for all children of compulsory school age resident in that local authority, irrespective of their immigration status, race and nationality and appropriate to their age, ability and special educational needs they may have” (The Coram Children's Legal Centre, 2013: 27). Furthermore, schools are bound by the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 to “eliminate racial discrimination.” The duty to follow non-discriminatory admissions policies towards “children from overseas” is underlined in the Revised Schools Admission Code 2008, and in 2007 the government funded the “New Arrivals Excellence Programme” providing guidance, advice and training to schools on how to include national and international new arrivals.

Education policies have emphasized “inclusive education”, that is, ensuring quality education for all children in mainstream schools (Reynolds, 2008). Policy emphasizes that provision for English as an Additional Language should also as far as possible be integrated into mainstream classrooms — in line with the Calderdale Judgement of 1985-86, which found a school that placed Asian migrant pupils in a separate center with a lower-quality curriculum guilty of unlawful practice under the Race Relations Act 1976 (Refugee Council, 2011).

There has also been support for ‘multicultural’ education, in terms of recognizing that no child should be forced to reject their heritage, and that schools should celebrate diversity, as outlined in the Swann Report of 1985 (Reynolds, 2008). However, ‘multicultural’ education policies have been criticized as superficially celebrating markers of cultural difference (“saris and samba”) rather than fostering substantial anti-racist and equal practices (Gillies & Robinson, 2012), and arguably in recent years there has been a political shift away from multiculturalism to an assimilationist emphasis on fostering a common British identity, including the directive in 2014 that schools should promote “British Values.”

In summary, migrant children have equal access to education as citizen children and proof of immigration status is not required for school registration; thus migrant children’s participation in education is generally high. However, some of the most vulnerable do face barriers to access, and educational experiences are far from equal in reality. These issues will be explored below, after a brief summary of the data on migrant children’s educational attainment.

### **Educational Outcomes of Migrant Children**

According to the last three PISA surveys, students from an immigrant background (first or second generation) in the UK performed roughly as well in Maths (OECD, 2012), and more poorly in Science (OECD, 2015) and Reading (OECD, 2009) than other students. The science attainment gap is cancelled out by accounting for socio-economic status, highlighting the importance of migrant socio-economic status in their educational outcomes. Reading performance was primarily correlated to whether English is spoken at home, regardless of whether migrant children are first or second generation (OECD, 2009). Overall, the gap between immigrant and native student attainment is better in the UK than the OECD average.

A crucial factor shaping migrant children’s achievement is their age at arrival (Strand et al., 2015). An encouraging finding is that migrant children who arrive young (earlier than 11) do not differ significantly in achievement at age 14 from English-only speakers (Strand et al., 2015) and census data find that migrants who arrive before 18 have broadly similar employment outcomes to the UK-born population (Markaki, 2015). Although there is an attainment gap for migrant children who arrive later, it appears that over time the attainment

gap evens out somewhat (Strand, 2016). However, these headline figures hide variation around gender, community norms and so forth. There is significant variety in achievement by language; for instance, speakers of Igbo and Yoruba (spoken in Nigeria) achieve as well as English speakers, but French, Arabic and Somali speakers perform more poorly (Strand et al., 2015).

Analysis of the educational attainment of ethnic minority groups based on the 1991, 2001 and 2011 census (Lymperopoulou & Parameshwaren, 2014), shows that ethnic minority groups and many migrants have higher levels of educational attainment than the white British population, in particular Indian, Chinese and black African groups. In terms of migrants in particular, over a third (35 percent) of foreign-born people had degree level qualifications compared with a quarter (26 percent) of people born in the UK. It is important to note however that there is substantial variation between groups, with Bangladeshi and Pakistani migrants still having fewer qualifications than the UK-born population, and that this positive picture is also strongly shaped by skilled and international student migration, rather than necessarily reflecting the success of first-generation migrant children in the British education system. Furthermore, minority educational attainment does not translate into equality in the employment market, as the unemployment rate of the black African group — one of the most qualified — was around three times higher than that of the white British group.

This section has painted a generally positive picture of access and attainment. However, in practice, migrant children's experiences of education vary hugely. The final section of the report turns to summarize qualitative research which highlights the "diverse opportunities and barriers" (Sime & Fox, 2015: 529) migrant children in the UK face.

## Critical Reflections

### Challenges to Migrant Children's Education in Practice

The last section outlined that there are strong legal frameworks underpinning migrant children's right to education, and that policy has tended to emphasize "inclusive" and "multicultural" education. However, when we seek to understand whether this translates to equality in practice, we can see several limits to truly equal opportunities for migrant children. This section explores several key issues identified by research that have an impact on migrant children: highly varied levels of resourcing and practical support for migrant students, concerns about the over-use of ability tracking and "internal exclusion" on migrant students, and evidence that a 'hostile environment' around immigration is impacting the participation and performance of some vulnerable migrant groups.

**Uneven resourcing to support migrant children in education.** There is a wide variety in the funding available to support migrant children, depending on local authority and school. In 2011 there was a major change to the resourcing of support for migrant children in the removal of the “Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant” (EMAG), ring-fenced central government funding to support the learning of EAL pupils and the achievement of ethnic minorities. EMAG was calculated by number of EAL and ethnic minority pupils, and most funding devolved to schools, with some also being used to support local authority support teams. In 2011, despite much opposition, EMAG was mainstreamed into the “Direct Schools Grant” over which schools have freedom of use. Although local schools forums can grant extra funding on the basis of the number of recent EAL migrant students, the lack of ring-fenced, targeted funding for migrant children is likely to have led to a more varied standard of provision for migrant children based on local funding politics (Nusche, 2009).

**Uneven practical support for migrant children in education.** Varied levels of resourcing are accompanied by varied levels of practical support for migrant students. Ensuring that migrant students catch up as early as possible in English language ability has been demonstrated as crucial to educational attainment (see Section 2.3.), yet the unevenness of provision is also clear. Sales et al. (2008) in a study of Polish pupils in London primary schools across London found a wide range of EAL support practices. In Tower Hamlets, the borough (district) with the highest proportion of EAL students, there were dedicated staff teams in schools and local authorities, in-depth inductions and extra support classes based on students’ needs, detailed monitoring of student progress, the creation of dual-language resources, and the recruitment of teaching assistants from migrant children’s backgrounds. In contrast, many schools in other London areas relied on mainstream teachers providing basic EAL support in class, for instance in incorporating more non-verbal communication and language structure. This variety seems to be related to a combination of local authority support and local and schools’ experience. As well as high variety in types and amounts of support, Sales et al. (2008) highlight several other issues with other EAL provision even where there is good practice. There can be a lack of specialized language support for subject-specific material which can limit migrant students’ higher-level learning, and although dedicated EAL staff are highly valued by migrant students and families, they can quickly be overburdened and face poor communication with mainstream teachers who see migrant students as “their concern.”

It is also crucial to note that the predominant focus on providing support around the category of “EAL” students may leave English-speaking migrant children unsupported in emotionally-taxing transitions such as making friends, dealing with trauma, adjusting to new systems, and facing prejudice. This is crucial as data from 2011 indicate that 46 percent of foreign-born children aged 3-15 years had English as their first language (Markaki, 2015), which is a huge proportion.

There are also important questions to be further explored about how the nature of the wider community may influence the experience of and support for migrant students. Reynolds (2008) suggests migrant children may face less support in regions where local authorities have little experience of dealing with the educational needs of migrant students, and the wider population is more homogenous (Arnot et al., 2013; The Coram Children’s Legal Center, 2013).

**Difficulties of ensuring effective support for migrant students in a competitive education system.** Local variety in support for migrant students is exacerbated by the highly fragmented school system. For instance, the increasing numbers of Academy schools have more autonomy in decisions on admissions, and more incentives to present themselves as competitive in the school choice market. None of this safeguards support and investment in pupils with higher needs as is the case with most migrant students, and there have been instances of discrimination in access to school places for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (Refugee Council, 2011). More generally, a diversified education system can disadvantage migrant children, in that problems such as lack of transportation and low-paid, long hours in jobs can hinder parents’ ability to take advantage of “school choice.”

Support for migrant students can be undermined in the culture of assessment prevalent in UK schools. This can be a particular issue depending on the time of entry of a migrant student into the school system. If migrant children arrive mid-year, schools and teachers face a conflict of priorities between attending to students with particular needs and results-oriented teaching for exams, even though EAL students can be excluded from league table results for up to two years.

Furthermore, ability tracking, commonly used in British schools and particularly in competitive school environments, is problematic for migrant students. Several studies have found that migrant parents are shocked and disappointed when their children may be quickly relegated to lower ‘ability’ tracks due to teacher bias and language abilities (Nusche, 2009; Sales et al., 2008). In particular, early-age ability grouping, common in British schools, is associated with greater inequality of educational outcomes but does not have any discernible effect on mean performance, and may fix migrant children into classes where level of input, teaching quality and expectations are lower, before they have had a chance to prove their full educational potential. This may lead to internalized low expectations and hinders the ability of migrant communities to achieve social mobility through education (Nusche, 2009).

**Practices threatening inclusive and equal education.** Education researchers have identified worrying contemporary practices within schools which may threaten inclusive and equal education in the mainstream classroom. There is an increasingly common practice of informal exclusion within British schools in the use of ‘pupil referral units’ or ‘behavior support units’ (Gillies & Robinson, 2012). The stated aim of these units is to provide tailored support for individual “problem” pupils and help them develop emotional skills

and control. However, these units arguably lead to “de facto exclusion from mainstream classrooms” (Gilles & Robinson, 2012:157) and despite the units often providing positive mentoring relationships for students, there is often very poor formal academic educational input, and emphasis is placed on students’ personally compliant behavior over an institutional responsibility for non-discriminatory educational opportunities. Evidence suggests that these practices affect ethnic minority students (migrants and British nationals) and working-class students disproportionately – such as young black men in single-mother households (Gillies & Robinson, 2012), and unaccompanied asylum-seeking youth (Refugee Council, 2011). Because these units are internal, official policies about processes and length of stay in units are vague and inconsistent, and there is a lack of publically available data on the practice.

Amid the concerns about the “limits” of multiculturalism and terrorism in the West, schools are seen as a forum for integration and learning about national values (Faas et al., 2014). The emphasis on fostering social cohesion through the education of migrant students is in part positive, in that it is linked to the provision of mainstream education, but there is a risk that an emphasis on migrant students assimilating and assenting to so-called national values is “increasingly being interpreted as a ‘requirement’ or rather a mandatory condition for having access to certain rights” (Faas et al., 2014:312). The UK’s ‘counter-radicalization’ agenda in schools (the Prevent Agenda) has been subject to criticism for profiling and subjecting Muslim students to scrutiny and suspicion.

#### **A “hostile environment” affecting migrant children’s participation.**

Several studies highlight the increasingly “hostile environment” around immigration in the UK as having negative effects on migrant children in various ways, including in education. In particular, in the past five years, the central government has been increasingly applying the legal categorization of “no recourse to public funds” (NRPF) – where migrants or asylum seekers have the right to remain in the UK (as deportation is costly and in many case contradicts the UK’s Human Rights commitments) but are given “disincentives” to do so in the form of having almost all of their social benefits removed (The Children’s Society, 2016a). The destitution of migrant families in this position is increasingly common<sup>1</sup> (The Children’s Society, 2016a; The Coram Children’s Legal Center, 2013).

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1. Though destitute migrant families can apply for assistance from local authorities under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, which stipulates the duty of local authorities to aid ‘children in need’, local authorities only support 38 percent of applicants, often doing the minimum to prevent total destitution. They receive no funds from central government to provide this support, whilst being under pressure from funding cut, and thus are in effect becoming ‘last resort’ providers of support in the face of harsh immigration decisions from central government (The Children’s Society, 2016a; The Coram Children’s Legal Center, 2013).

Therefore, whilst attending school is considered a basic right, not a use of “public funds,” family destitution and the lack of entitlement to free school meals after the age of seven, or financial support for uniforms and transport (which are linked to state benefits, a “public fund”), may negatively impact the educational participation and performance of children in families with undocumented or “no recourse to public funds” status (The Coram Children’s Legal Center, 2013). As it has been put by one organization with a strong track record of direct support to migrant children and families, “a lengthy journey to school on an empty stomach, after having left overcrowded and unhygienic accommodation, is likely to adversely affect children’s well-being and attainment at school” (The Children’s Society, 2016: 29; The Coram Children’s Legal Center, 2013).

On the most extreme level, a “hostile environment” is impacting even access to education for the most vulnerable groups of migrant children. Whilst schools should not check the immigration status of children, undocumented families may not know this, which may deter access (Refugee Council, 2011). There is strong evidence that unaccompanied asylum seeking children are particularly vulnerable with regard to participating in education. They are dependent on the local authority finding them a place, and although they are deemed a “high priority” group as “looked after” children, practice can be variable. A particularly difficult issue is that many nearing the age of 18 face age disputes, and are unable to access education until the dispute is resolved, as well as having little recourse to contest their status determination given severe cuts to legal aid (The Children’s Society, 2015; Refugee Council, 2011). Left out of education, often highly isolated, and facing destitution if they are not given asylum status, these young people are severely vulnerable to poor mental health outcomes and exploitative and illegal labor (The Children’s Society, 2015, 2016a).

In 2012, two asylum-seeking young people took Croydon local authority to court over failure to provide them with an appropriate educational placement. The school in question had refused to accept the social workers’ assessment of age and questioned the validity of the young people’s asylum claims. Judicial review found the local authority had failed to meet its duty to find the young people a place in a mainstream school, and failed in assessing and meeting their individual needs as looked after children with high priority for education. This is a worrying example of how there is severe inconsistency and discrimination in some local authority’s practice despite the strong rights of migrant children to education (Refugee Council, 2011).

### **Successful Policies, Initiatives and Cases**

Despite the significant challenges facing migrant children in education in the UK, there are also some positive practices to be celebrated and built upon. Many promising practices come more from the grassroots actions of schools, teachers and civil society rather than from the state.

**Many schools as inclusive spaces for migrant children.** Firstly, many local schools undertake inclusive actions that benefit migrant children and their whole families. Schools have the autonomy to, and often do, put their duties as caring professionals above colluding with a restrictive immigration stance (Arnot et al., 2013). For instance, there is evidence of schools providing free school meals to destitute students irrespective of benefits eligibility (The Children’s Society, 2016a); ensuring their schools comply with an “open-door stance” to allow flexible admission timings for migrant students (Refugee Council, 2011); and engaging in critical pedagogy within schools, building students’ critical awareness of “dehumanizing” portrayals of migrants or even fostering student political activism, for instance the “Schools Against Deportation Campaign” in Forest Gate school in London (Arnot et al., 2013). Others found that personal actions of individual teachers and EAL support staff, such as pairing migrant students with local “buddies,” providing a counseling and mentoring role, and advising children and families on wider public and community services available, made a significant difference to migrant children and families’ integration and social capital (Sales et al., 2008; Sime & Fox, 2015). Recruitment of teachers and teaching assistants with national, linguistic, or ethnic backgrounds that are shared with migrant students, or at least with migrant identities that have been identified, is practiced by some schools, and has greatly assisted children’s and family support (Sales et al., 2008; Reynolds, 2008).

**Civil society advocacy and support for migrant children.** There are voluntary advocacy and support programs for migrant children and families which aim to counteract the difficulties faced by young migrants in accessing public services. The Children’s Society has a number of projects providing advice, advocacy and support for undocumented children, refugees, and migrant families facing destitution, and the Coram Children’s Legal Centre provides legal advice and support, including the Migrant Children’s Project (The Coram Children’s Legal Center, 2013). The Refugee Council ran a three-year project from 2008-11, “Supporting and Mentoring in Learning and Education” (SMILE). The SMILE project operated in three regions and paired asylum-seeking and refugee children with 1-1 mentors to support them in accessing educational placements and achieving whilst in education. A total of 101 young people were supported and evaluation of the project found extremely positive results in terms of young people’s ability to navigate the complexities of entering the education system, and in terms of aiding their language skills and confidence which enabled stronger learning, and their enjoyment and friendships at school. Clearly such third-sector projects can be of great benefit to small numbers of young migrants, but their limited scope means they should not be seen as a replacement for coordinated, well-funded central government action, but rather as a safety net in the face of the failures of state support.

**Migrant children’s agency.** Migrant children are not constrained completely by their educational experiences and attainment and by the structuring environment or the social position of their families; they can also exert agency in controlling their access to social capital and integration. Sime and Fox (2015) found that newly arrived Eastern European children aged 7-16 in Scotland made intra – and inter-ethnic friendships, and relationships with teachers, which helped them understand and access local services and activities available for the whole family. They became key mediators between their families and statutory services as translators, and in some cases directly intervened in their own education by asking parents to complain about education provision e.g. spending too much time outside the mainstream classroom learning EAL. Similarly, there is emerging research on the role of migrant children as “language brokers” and cultural mediators who aid the integration of their entire families (Cline et al., 2014).

## Recommendations and Conclusions

This report has given an overview of migrant children’s education in the UK. It has provided contextual background to the large and “super-diverse” population of migrant children in the UK. It has argued that migrant children’s rights and access to education on the whole remain strong, but that there are increasing threats to this for vulnerable migrants, such as unaccompanied children or migrant families with no recourse to public funds. Furthermore, it has argued that there is significant variation as to the quality and equality of educational opportunities for migrant children in practice. The following recommendations are suggested.

**Protect, share, and build on good practice in supporting migrant students.**

Overall, schools still often function as a “protective” mechanism for migrant children amid other challenges, but this relies on the will of the individuals involved. Good practice is fragmented and localized, and the increasingly competitive education system, combined with the cuts to ring-fenced funding, means that provision of support for migrant students risks becoming even more varied in scope and quality than it already is. In the absence of the reinstatement of ring-fenced funding, schools and local authorities should continue to use general funds to generously support migrant children, and where possible national, regional and local policies to guarantee financial resourcing should be made.

Schools and local authorities should share innovative good practices, and encourage known good practices, such as: recruiting staff with national, linguistic, or ethnic backgrounds shared with migrant students; recruiting more dedicated EAL staff who are well supported and ensuring that there is frequent communication between them and mainstream teachers; ensuring EAL migrant students catch up in language ability as early as possible but also

have language support for subject-specific and higher-level learning; provide support for migrant students who speak English as their first language; communicate more with migrant parents about their children’s needs and progress; and maintain a focus at all times on integrating migrant students into the mainstream classroom and providing them with equal opportunities to fulfill their potential.

Academics and policy makers should conduct more research on the variety and effectiveness of support for migrant students between school types, local areas and different groups of migrant children and feed it into policy guidelines. There is also potential for further research on how migrant children’s agentive actions – and those of their families and communities – can be best recognized and supported for the benefit of their education, and how schools can take more family-centered approaches to migrant children’s education.

**Identify and counteract practices negatively profiling migrant students.**

There is an urgent need for a transparent and critical assessment of how schools may use ability streaming and internal exclusion units in ways that are explicitly or subtly discriminatory, and how this interacts with migrant children’s behavior (for instance, around mental-health and language needs) in particular. Schools of all different types should be asked to systematically collect and release transparent data about internal practices around migrant children’s ability streaming and internal exclusion, and be asked to develop and implement policies to tackle subtle but pervasive forms of discrimination in schools. The concerns of migrant parents about the treatment and the chances of social mobility for their children should be taken seriously.

**Counteract a “hostile environment” affecting children’s education.**

Research on the impact of the restrictive nature of central government immigration policy on children’s lives is damning. Migrant children’s education cannot but be affected by a “hostile context” where families face cuts to their benefits and destitution, and suspicions about immigration status prevail over concern for rights, and begin to infringe on state services beyond the border agency. We know for certain that unaccompanied asylum-seeking children certainly face problems with access to education due to age disputes and discrimination as some schools take speculative immigration status into account in admissions, even though this is unlawful (Refugee Council, 2011).

Education policy and teacher training must emphasize the importance of keeping immigration concerns absolutely separate from the provision of essential services and concerns for the “best interest of the child.” The government should allow age disputed young people to continue with their education until “proven” to be over 18, since their inability to access education strongly compounds isolation, social segregation and distress for this already vulnerable group. Teachers and schools should challenge the prioritizing of concerns about migrant status over children’s rights. Continued advocacy from within and beyond the educational sector is needed to oppose the “hostile environment” around immigration which threatens to undermine educational equality, children’s rights, and indeed the rights of entire migrant families as they seek a better life.

Chapter Four

# Education of Migrant Children in the United States

Jorge Enrique Delgado  
Wei Tang

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## Introduction

**T**here is a shared understanding that the United States is a country of immigrants. Before the establishment of the first British settlements in the early 1600s, the territory was the long-time home of diverse tribes of descendants of immigrants from Asia (Lloyd, 1996). Throughout its history, the country has attracted people from different nationalities and cultures. Currently, 13.5 percent of the US population are foreign-born nationals, residents, and naturalized citizens (over 43 million), of whom 5.7 percent are children age 17 or younger. In 2012, the Department of Homeland Security estimated that 11.4 million people lived in the US without authorization. Even though all children in the US have the right to attend public elementary and secondary school regardless of their national origin, citizenship, or immigration background (U.S. Department of Education—USDOE, n. d., 2014c; Zong & Batalova, 2017), the undocumented status of some residents prompts difficult debates at the local, state, and federal levels. Legislation provides the framework for students to have access to quality education and the services to meet their learning, language, ability, and other needs. However, undocumented migrant children or US-born children of undocumented parents often fall behind their counterparts in meeting educational standards and English language proficiency. This paper reviews federal legislation and programs issued in December 2016 that guarantee migrant children access to education. With an emphasis on undocumented migrants, this paper analyzes some accomplishments and challenges of such programs since education is managed at the state and local levels.

## Background

### **Socioeconomic and Demographic Background of Immigrants in the US**

People from different regions and backgrounds, and for different reasons, migrate to the US. Foreigners move for family reasons or for work. The jobs migrants may do range from highly specialized jobs to areas where less skilled manpower is needed. On one hand, computers, science, health, and engineering are some of the fields that require expert knowledge. On the other hand, there are seasonal workers or those who labor in sales, construction, or production. Children of families with professional parents usually adapt more easily to the US education system, while those from less skilled, less educated, and undocumented backgrounds and whose first language is not English tend to be poorer and struggle more in school (Zong & Batalova, 2017).

**Socioeconomic background of undocumented migrants.** Among the US's 11.4 million undocumented residents, 7.8 million are from Mexico and Central America and 1.5 million are from Asia. Data from 2014 show that Mexico (56 percent), Guatemala (six percent), El Salvador (four percent), Honduras (three percent), and China (two percent) are the top countries of origin for undocumented residents. Asian undocumented residents are often overlooked due to the magnitude and visibility of migration from Central America. With regard to age, eight percent of these residents are 16 years of age and younger and 15 percent are between the ages of 16 and 24 (Migration Policy Institute—MPI, 2017a). In 2014, census data and the American Community Survey (ACS) showed that there were 10.1 million undocumented residents age 16 and older 64 percent of whom were employed, seven percent were unemployed, and 29 percent were out of the labor force. Regarding top employment sectors, 18 percent worked in entertainment, hospitality, and food services; 16 percent in construction; 14 percent in professions, science, and management; 12 percent in manufacturing; and nine percent in retail sales.

**Education and English language proficiency.** English is the general language used in education. Every year, states report to the USDOE the five most spoken languages other than English and the number of English Learners (ELs). Around 50 languages made the list in 2014-2015. The top most spoken languages were Spanish (3,659,501 ELs—or 89.3 percent of total ELs), Chinese (97,117), Arabic (95,572), Vietnamese (75,529), and Haitian Creole (25,129) (Office of English Language Acquisition—OELA, 2017a). Census data and the 2014 ACS show little difference when compared with OELA 2017 data, regarding the most spoken languages at home. In both cases, Spanish is the most spoken language at home followed by Chinese.

In 2014-2015, there were more than 840,000 immigrant students and 4.8 million ELs in the US, which comprised 9.6 percent of all students in K-12 education (OELA, 2017b; USDOE, 2014c). U.S. Census Bureau data from 2014 showed that 90 percent of undocumented residents ages three to 17 were enrolled in school. Furthermore, 25 percent of adults age 25 and older had a high school diploma, 20 percent had attained 6-8 grade education, 17 percent a 9-12 grade, 13 percent a bachelors or professional degrees, 13 percent a 0-5 grade, and 12 percent some college (MPI, 2017a).

### **Definition, Scale, and Types of Migration**

The U.S. Census Bureau defines recent immigrants as foreign-born persons who have resided at least one year abroad. This includes naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, others who lived in the country before 2015, temporary non-immigrants, and unauthorized immigrants (Zong & Batalova, 2017). In general, US immigration law distinguishes between temporary non-immigrants (visitors and workers—visa holders), permanent residents (refugees, asylum seekers, family-based and work-based residents—green-card holders), and naturalized citizens (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2017).

In 2015, the US had a population of 321 million, of which 13.5 percent were immigrants, 51.1 percent of whom came from Latin America and the Caribbean and 30.6 percent came from Asia. As has been explained, the magnitude of undocumented migrants primarily from Mexico and Central America, most of whom risk their lives fleeing extreme poverty and violent conditions, is a contentious issue that generates a humanitarian crisis and political debates within the US (Lesser and Batalova, 2017; USDOE, 2014c).

The eight most populated states are California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and New Jersey. They account for 47.1 percent of the total US population. However, as shown in Table 1, only in California, New York, New Jersey, Florida, Texas, and Illinois the proportion of immigrant population is larger than the national average. Other states with percentages of immigrant population higher than the national average include Nevada, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Maryland, Connecticut, and Washington, and the District of Columbia (MPI, 2017a, 2017b). Understanding the reasons for the differences in attracting immigrants requires examining the unique dynamics, history, and geography of each state.

State	Total State Population	Foreign-born Population	Percentage
California	39,144,818	10,688,336	27.3
Texas	27,469,114	4,671,295	17
New York	19,795,791	4,530,087	22.9
Florida	20,271,272	4,086,240	20.2
New Jersey	8,958,013	1,977,325	22.1
Illinois	12,859,995	1,826,156	14.2
Massachusetts	6,794,422	1,095,953	16.1
Georgia	10,214,860	1,023,717	10
Virginia	8,382,993	1,018,626	12.2
Washington	7,170,351	980,158	13.7
Arizona	6,828,065	914,400	13.4
Maryland	6,006,401	911,582	15.2
Pennsylvania	12,802,503	837,159	6.5
<b>US total</b>	<b>321,428,821</b>	<b>43,290,372</b>	<b>13.5</b>

**Table 1. States with the largest immigrant population in the US** Source: MPI tabulations of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's ACS and Decennial Census, year 2015 (MPI, 2017a, 2017b)

Since the 1970s, gross numbers of foreign-born inhabitants in the US have been steadily growing from being less than five million (five percent) in 1970 to reaching an estimated 42-43 million by 2020 (MPI, 2017c). Between 2014 and 2015, the immigrant population grew 2.1 percent, which is a lower growth rate when compared to the 2013-2014 period when foreign-born population grew 2.6 percent. The 2016 version of the ACS found that 27 percent of the total US population consisted of immigrants and their US-born children, that is, 84.3 million people (Zong & Batalova, 2017).

In 2015, 1.38 million foreign-born persons moved to the US. The top origin countries were India, China, Mexico, Philippines, and Canada. Indian nationals received 70 percent of H1B work visas for certain professions like computer programming. Most of these arrivals were immigrants new to the country. Mexico was the main country of origin for immigrants to the US until 2013, when India and China took over (Chishti & Hipsman, 2015; Zong & Batalova, 2017).

**Mexican and Central American Immigrants.** Around 54 percent of undocumented immigrants reside in California (27 percent), Texas (13 percent), New York (eight percent), and Florida (six percent) (Zong & Batalova, 2017). The number of Mexican migrants apprehended at the US borders dropped in 2015 to the lowest level in half a decade. The decline started in 2007 during the recession and has continued ever since. In 2015, the U.S. Border Patrol reported apprehended 18 percent fewer Mexican migrants, compared to the previous year, and the lowest number since 1969. Data from the Pew Research Center estimate that the number of undocumented migrants in the US was 5.6 million in 2014. The decline in emigration of Mexicans to any country, though, has been a general trend.

Mexico has also been a dangerous route for undocumented migrants from the so-called Northern Triangle (Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras) to enter the US. In 2016, US Borders and Customs Protection intercepted 46,900 unaccompanied children. In 2015, 85 percent of Central Americans, or eight percent of all immigrants in the US, were from the Northern Triangle. Regardless of the rise of recent immigration, mobility of Central Americans has existed since the 1980s, motivated by civil wars, political instability, economic adversity, and even natural disasters. Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Nicaraguans became eligible for Temporary Protected Status until 2018 due to natural disasters (Lesser & Batalova, 2017).

### Researching Migrant Children in the US

The present chapter argues that despite the legal framework created by the US federal government and programs that allocate grants to states to guarantee migrant children access to adequate education, issues like poverty, high mobility of families, and the uncertainty about what policy the current government will adopt regarding deportations and education make it difficult to predict.

## Education for Migrant Children

### US Education System

The US education system includes three levels of schooling plus preschool and adult education. Children can attend nursery school or kindergarten between the ages of three and five. Primary and secondary education, that is, grades 1 through 12 (ages six–18) is compulsory, and is provided mainly by local public school districts and some private providers (e.g., private and charter schools). Public education is funded, in general, by income taxes, though there are variations between states. The structure of schools also varies between districts including elementary, middle, junior high, senior high, and/or high schools.

### Education Policies and Programs for Migrant Children

By federal law, all children in the US have the right to attend public k–12 school regardless of their citizenship, or immigration background (USDOE, 2014c). Minors who have arrived without an adult are entitled to access education in their local communities. This is not the case for unaccompanied children. In those situations, the Department of Human and Health Services is responsible for providing educational services at designated shelters (USDOE, 2014c). The following are the programs and supporting legislation for provision of education to undocumented migrant children.

**Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965.** ESEA was part of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s “War on Poverty” and it has been the most far-reaching federal legislation on education in the US history. ESEA’s goal was to close the achievement gap between children living in poverty and those with more privileged backgrounds through a pool of grants for school districts and state education agencies (SEAs) (USDOE, n. d.). ESEA was amended in 2001 under the No Child Left Behind Act, which included the creation of an accountability system and teacher quality standards (Council for Exceptional Children, 2017). In 2015, President Obama signed a reauthorization of ESEA through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that builds on previous legislation by emphasizing teaching at high academic standards and protections for disadvantaged children (USDOE, n. d.). Particularly important in this federal legislation are Title 1, Parts A and C and Title III, which concerns migrant education and language instruction for students with limited English proficiency (State of Washington, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2016).

**Title I, Part C, Education of Migratory Children.** The ESEA establishes that SEAs and local education agencies (LEAs) must have migrant education programs (MEPs). Their goal is to ensure that all migrant students meet challenging academic standards and graduate with a high school diploma (or a GED) that prepares them for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment (USDOE, 2017d). MEPs receive funding from the federal government with the aim of helping to ensure that migratory children who move between states are not penalized by disparities in curriculum, graduation requirements, or state academic content and student academic achievement standards. It also ensures that migratory children are provided with appropriate supportive services that address their special needs and that such children receive full and appropriate opportunities (USDOE, 2017d). MEP-funded services to migratory children are based on state plans that reflect the results of current statewide comprehensive needs assessments (USDOE, 2014a). Services provided through the MEPs include: academic instruction; remedial and compensatory instruction; bilingual and multicultural instruction; vocational instruction; career education services; special guidance; counseling and testing services; health services; and preschool services (USDOE, 2017d).

Funding is allocated through formula grants called consortium incentive grants. The USDOE provides financial incentives to SEAs to participate in high-quality consortia that improve interstate and intrastate coordination of MEPs by addressing key needs of migratory children who have their education interrupted (USDOE, 2016a). In 2015, there were four types of awards: the Pre-School Initiative (PI) to improve school readiness; Graduation and Outcomes for Success for Out-of-School Youth (known as GOSOSY) to improve educational attainment; Migrant Reading Achievement: Comprehensive Online Reading Education (called MiraCORE) to improve reading skills; and Identification and Recruitment Rapid Response Consortium (known as IRRC). All the awards emphasize evidence-based services (USDOE, 2015a). The allocation formula is based on state per pupil expenditures for education and counts of eligible migratory children, ages 3 through 21, who reside in the state (USDOE, 2017d).

**Title I, Part A, Poor School Districts.** Title I, Part A of the ESEA provides funding to raise achievement of children attending high-poverty schools. Immigrant children attending Title I schools are eligible for these services (USDOE, 2014c; USDOE and Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2017). This is important since undocumented children tend to attend urban and/or poor schools.

**Title III, Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students, as amended by the ESSA.** Title III seeks to ensure that ELs achieve English language proficiency and meet state academic standards in math, reading, and science. It provides grants to SEAs, LEAs, and sometimes external entities. As stated by the ESSA, ELs are 3-to-21-year-old students enrolled in an elementary or secondary school, whose native language is not English, and do not have sufficient English skills to meet academic standards (NCELA, n. d.). ELs used to be called limited English proficient students.

Three grant programs were created by Title III: State Formula Grants, National Professional Development, and Native American and Alaska Native Children in School (NCELA, n.d.; USDOE, 2016a). The Title III State Formula Grant Program provides federal funding to states for the education of ELs. In return, states must demonstrate ELs are progressing in state content, achievement standards, and English learning. These grants are administered by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) and allocated to SEAs. On the other side, the National Professional Development Program provides funding for the training of ESL teachers and assistance for them to meet professional standards. OELA administers these grants. In addition, there are research-oriented grants administered by other federal government agencies (NCELA, n.d.). ESEA permits an SEA to enter a consortium with another state or “appropriate entity.” An “appropriate entity” can be any public or private agency or organization, such as a school district, a charter school, a nonprofit or for-profit organization, or an institution of higher education. However, only SEAs are eligible applicants to receive consortium incentive grants (USDOE, 2015b).

**McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, renamed in 2000.**

Originally known just as the McKinney Act, McKinney-Vento is a federal law that provides funding for homeless shelter programs. Under McKinney-Vento, through a liaison school districts must identify eligible homeless children (those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence), ensure they are immediately enrolled in school and have full access to opportunities, and guarantee they are referred to health, dental, mental health and other services. Unaccompanied children who have been released or reunited with a sponsor may be eligible for McKinney-Vento services on a case-by-case basis (USDOE, 2014c).

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990, amended in 2015.** IDEA (reauthorization of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act) ensures that all students with disabilities receive the same educational opportunities as students without disabilities. (USDOE, 2014c; USDOE, and Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2017). Immigrant students with disabilities are eligible for assistance under IDEA.

**Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993.** GPRA was designed to improve government performance through strategic planning and results measurement. All agencies must develop five-year strategic plans, annual performance plans, and annual performance reports (USDOE, 2017d). Under GPRA, agencies related to migrant education must comply with these measures and procedures.

### Special Education Initiatives for Migrant Children

***Binational Migrant Education Initiative (BMEI).*** The BMEI is a multiple-state initiative that provides elementary, secondary, and tertiary educational and social services for students who migrate between the US and Mexico. The first efforts started in 1976, between California and Mexico; in 1990, the departments of education of both countries signed a memorandum of understanding that emphasizes federal-level collaboration and encourages joint activities at the state, local, and institutional levels (USDOE, 2016b).

***Comprehensive Needs Assessment.*** This is an ongoing process that started as a pilot project in 2002 in four states: Arizona, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Texas. The goal was to document a process that SEAs could follow to develop a highly reliable comprehensive statewide needs analysis. The second phase of the project helped states gather and analyze data, and the third phase was devoted to using the findings in decision making. One product of the project was the development of a training resource that can be used by states to improve the needs assessment process (USDOE, 2014a).

***Migrant Education Identification and Recruitment (MEIR) Initiative.*** The Office of Migrant Education (OME) identified three programmatic areas of the MEP to help migrant children achieve academic standards and graduate from high school. One area includes identifying and recruiting eligible children within a state, particularly those who are the most mobile; selecting students based on priority of service and needs; and providing services at a sufficient level. The MEIR initiative was launched in 2000. It understands that identification and recruitment are the responsibility of each SEA, which is crucial for the most needy children because they are the most difficult to find; migrant children would not benefit from school or would not attend school at all if the SEAs failed to identify and recruit. In addition, children cannot receive MEP benefits if they do not have a record of eligibility. Funding of each SEA's MEP is based, in part, on its annual count of eligible migratory children (USDOE, 2017c).

***Migrant Student Records Exchange (MSRE) Initiative.*** The USDOE must assist states in developing effective methods to electronically transfer student records and to determine the number of migratory children in each state. In addition, the USDOE must ensure the linkage of migrant student record systems. The MSRE was created with the primary mission of ensuring the appropriate enrollment, placement, and accrual of credits for migrant children (USDOE, 2014b). States share educational and health information on migrant children who travel from state to state and accumulate multiple records through a tool called the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX). The MSIX helps improve the timeliness of school enrollments, improve the appropriateness of grade and course placements, and reduce incidences of unnecessary immunizations of migrant children (USDOE, 2014b).

**High School Equivalence Program.** This program helps migratory and seasonal farmworkers or their children who are 16 years of age or older and not currently enrolled in school to obtain the equivalent of a high school diploma and subsequently to gain employment or begin postsecondary education or training. The program serves more than 5,000 students annually. Competitive awards are made for up to five years of funding (USDOE, 2017b). The goals of the program are to help individuals obtain a general education diploma that meets the guidelines for high school equivalency established by the state in which the project is conducted and gain employment or be placed in an institution of higher education (IHE) for postsecondary education or training (USDOE, 2017b).

**College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP).** The CAMP assists students who are migrants, seasonal farmworkers, or children of farmworkers enrolled in their first year of undergraduate studies at an IHE. Funding provided through CAMP supports the completion of the first year of studies. Competitive five-year grants for CAMP projects are made to IHEs or to nonprofit private agencies that cooperate with such institutions. The program serves approximately 2,000 CAMP participants annually (USDOE, 2017a).

**Government agencies involved in migrant education.** MEPs and initiatives are in general overseen at the federal level by the USDOE, particularly the OESE, with two key units: OME and OELA. As mentioned earlier, OME is the Office of Migrant Education, whose mission is to provide leadership, technical assistance, and financial support to improve the educational opportunities and academic success of migrant children, youth, agricultural workers, fishermen, and their families. The OME administers grant programs that provide academic and supportive services to the children of families who migrate to find work in the agricultural and fishing industries. OELA, the Office of English Language Acquisition, is supported by the NCELA to meet the needs of ELs in US schools (NCELA, 2017). The NCELA provides technical assistance in research-based approaches like academic language development and shares data and models for the creation of Newcomer Centers for recently arrived immigrant children and ELs (USDOE, 2014c).

## Outcomes

**Funding granted and support provided to states.** Outcomes of the federal MEP can be measured by the funding granted and support provided to states. Table 2 shows the top nine states that received grants for MEPs; altogether they account for 74.8 percent of MEP funding. States like California and Texas used the funding to serve the needs of their large migrant populations. Other states, probably with small populations and/or little growth by state population, have also developed strategies to attract migrants and obtained MEP funding.

State	Allocation (US\$)
California	128,657,713
Texas	58,218,323
Florida	22,494,503
Washington	14,921,087
Kansas	11,412,543
Oregon	10,121,464
New York	9,763,957
Pennsylvania	8,946,495
Michigan	8,459,407
US total	364,751,000

\* Source: FY 2015 MEP allocations

**Table 2. Main MEP state allocation recipients, year 2015 (US dollars) \***

*Funding for English language acquisition.* Table 3 presents the top state recipients of allocations for English language acquisition, years 2015, 2016, and 2017. The amounts are consistent with the size of general and immigrant populations. The 2016 estimates showed that those states received around 70.2 percent of funding for English language acquisition (USDOE, Budget Service, 2016). In the school year 2014-2015, 93.5 percent of ELs participated in Title III-funded programs (100 percent in the states of Hawaii, Iowa, Maryland, and South Carolina) (OELA, 2017b).

State	2015 Actual	2016 Estimate	2017 Estimate
California	146,895,715	149,984,648	167,648,377
Texas	105,840,017	108,065,628	116,813,967
New York	60,930,612	62,211,864	64,912,700
Florida	43,840,142	44,762,015	48,332,133
Illinois	26,868,801	27,433,799	29,472,447
New Jersey	20,504,724	20,935,899	21,742,118
Pennsylvania	16,035,482	16,372,677	16,855,930
Washington	15,804,270	16,136,603	17,476,689
Georgia	15,140,642	15,459,020	16,633,945
North Carolina	14,448,005	14,751,819	15,929,809
Massachusetts	14,223,822	14,522,922	15,543,284
Arizona	14,127,726	14,424,804	15,407,714
Virginia	12,001,412	12,253,779	13,692,841
<b>US total</b>	<b>737,400,000</b>	<b>737,400,000</b>	<b>800,400,000</b>

\* USDOE Budget Service. December 14, 2016

**Table 3. U.S. Department of Education allocations for English language acquisition \***

*Children whose education was interrupted.* In 2015, different states received funding from the four Consortium Incentive Grants. They are listed in Table 4. The annual budget for these grants is usually \$3 million. It is interesting to note that state recipients are not necessarily the ones with the highest general and immigrant populations (Migrant Education Program, 2015).

Consortium Incentive Grant	Participating states
GOSOSY	Kansas (Lead State), Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Vermont
IRRC	Nebraska (Lead State), Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Tennessee.
PI	Pennsylvania (Lead State), Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Maine, Missouri, Oregon, and Washington
MiraCORE	Utah (Lead State), Delaware, Hawaii, Mississippi, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Vermont, and Virginia

\* Source: Migrant Education Program. (2015). Resource Library.

**Table 4. States that participated in the Consortium Incentive Grants for migrant children whose education was interrupted (2015 data)**

**Academic Achievement.** Another group of outcomes regards students' academic achievement. The main indicators showing fulfillment of the performance requirements under GPRa were the percentages of MEP students who: 1) Scored at or above proficient on their state's annual reading assessments in grades 3 through 8; 2) scored at or above proficient on their state's annual mathematics assessments in grades in grades 3 to 8; 3) were enrolled in grades 7 to 12, and graduated or were promoted to the next grade level; and 4) entered grade 11 and had received full credit for Algebra I (USDOE, 2017d). Tables 5 and 6 show the percentage of students in MEPs who scored at or above proficient in reading and math. Expectations were that less than 50 percent of students would achieve proficiency in those subjects; however, in 2014, the percentage of students who achieved proficiency exceeded expectations. However, in 2015, achievement was lower for reading (63 percent) and math (55 percent). In the school year 2014-2015, close to 25.6 percent of ELs who were enrolled in elementary or secondary schools, and participated in the annual state English language proficiency assessment, achieved proficiency (OELA, 2017b).

Year	Target	Actual (or date expected)	Status
2012	Not available	47.9	Historical actual
2013	Set Baseline	44.1	Baseline
2014	44.1	49.6	Target exceeded
2015	44.1	27.8	Target not met
2016	44.1	(June, 2017)	Pending
2017	44.1	(June, 2018)	Pending

\* Source: The School Year 2014-2015 Consolidated State Performance Report. Updated: 5 March 2016. Frequency of data collection: annual

**Table 5. Percentage of MEP students who scored at or above proficient on their state's annual reading/language arts assessments in grades 3 through 8**

Year	Target	Actual (or date expected)	Status
2012	Not available	50.8	Historical actual
2013	Set Baseline	47.6	Baseline
2014	47.6	49.5	Target exceeded
2015	47.6	26.2	Target not met
2016	47.6	(June, 2017)	Pending
2017	47.6	(June, 2018)	Pending

\* Source: The School Year 2014-2015 Consolidated State Performance Report. Updated: 5 March 2016. Frequency of data collection: annual

**Table 6. Percentage of MEP students who scored at or above proficient on their state’s annual mathematics assessments in grades 3 through 8**

**Graduation rate.** In the school year 2011-2012, the EL graduation rate was 59 percent, which is lower than the national rate of 80 percent. This percentage is critical since nine percent of students (4.6 million) in the US were ELs served by Title III-served activities (USDOE, 2015c). Factors such as language spoken at home, socioeconomic background, parents’ education level, and family mobility are possible explanatory factors of academic achievement from the student side. On the other hand, urban schools, poor school districts, number of certified or licensed teachers, and quality of teaching could be explanatory factors from the school side. Data may vary between states and between years due to different types of assessments used, criteria to determine English language proficiency and eligibility for EL services, conditions for exiting EL programs, English language proficiency and content-area standards, and information management systems (USDOE, 2015c).

**Dropout rates.** In 2014, the national dropout rate among 16-to-24-year-olds was six percent; 5.3 percent for US-born and 12.4 percent for foreign-born students. Dropout rates tend to be higher among males than females; for migrant students the dropout rate was 14.2 and 10.4 percent respectively. By region/country or origin, there were large variations between Hispanics, of which Central Americans had the highest dropout rate (32.7 percent); specifically, Guatemalans (46.3 percent), Hondurans (28.7 percent), and Salvadorans (27.8 percent) had the highest dropout among all foreign-born students. When English was the language spoken at home or was spoken very well, dropout was 5.5 percent; however, when other languages were spoken at home or English was not spoken very well, the dropout rate was 25.8 percent (Snyder et al., 2016).

## Discussion

### Successful Policies, Initiatives, and Cases

This section shows how MEPs are organized in three states: California, New York, and Pennsylvania.

**State of California.** The MEP of California is the largest in the US, because one third of all migrant students live in that state. Currently, over 102,000 migrant students attend California schools during the regular school year, while around 97,000 take classes during the summer. At least half of those students are ELs (California Department of Education, 2017a, 2017c). Also, half of the school districts have migrant students enrolled in their schools (California Department of Education, 2017a, 2017b). There are 15 regional offices of the MEP and five funded school districts in California. Over \$128 million was budgeted for MEP in 2016 (Table 4) (California Department of Education, 2017a).

The California Department of Education (CDE) administers regional offices that deliver local services and programs to school districts with migrant students. At the same time, the CDE designs and conducts statewide programs such as MEIR and BMEI (California Department of Education, 2017b). All programs and services focus on the needs of migratory children and their families in matters such as assessment, teaching, professional development, funding, and the relationships between school, parents, families, and communities (California Department of Education, 2017b). One interesting such program is Mini-Corps, a statewide service for K-12 migrant students. This outdoor education program also prepares teachers with bilingual and bicultural skills to help improve the academic achievement of migrant children (California Department of Education, 2017b).

**Migrant education portal and hotline.** California created this portal to offer teachers, parents, and students more than 200 video examples of instructional practices and literacy strategies in K-12 education. The disciplines covered include English, Spanish, Algebra, and migrant education best practices. On the other hand, the hotline provides information and advice on enrollment for migrant children, services and resources for daily life, and assistance to migrant farmworkers (California Department of Education, 2017b).

**State of New York.** New York has a Migrant Education Tutorial and Support Services (METS) Program that provides migrant families with academic, health, and social services through local agencies. The Migrant Unit of New York's Education Department initiated the program in response to the USDOE's MEP. The state of New York has nine regional projects that are operated by the State University of New York Colleges and Boards of Cooperative Education Services. The projects cover all school districts in the state (New York State Education Department, Office of Accountability, 2017b). Three offices coordinate these programs:

**Migrant Resource Center.** The Migrant Resource Center supports strategic planning and addresses the needs of migrant students to improve their academic and social skills. One of the center's initiatives is the Parent Involvement and Early Childhood Service, which ensures that eligible migrant children have access to early childhood education. A second service, the State Parent Advisory Council, provides advice to parent representatives about

the state MEP. The third initiative is the Migrant Youth and Out-of-School Youth Service, which works with eligible in-school migrant adolescents and out-of-school-youth. The goal of this service is to make sure that students are participating in the Portable Assistance Study Sequence or PASS Program and getting assistance to graduate from high school. They also offer training and technical assistance to staff working on this area (New York State Education Department, Office of Accountability, 2017b).

**MEIR office.** Also known as ID&R, the office is responsible for identifying and recruiting all eligible migrant children in the state of New York. Program recruiters find and collect information of migrant families, providing them with information about the Certificate of Eligibility system. In addition, recruiters update information about the migrant status of students with the regional METS and the statewide ID&R. Data collected on the Certificate of Eligibility and the Student Intake Form are entered in the MIS2000 system at each regional METS program. Finally, the data are shared with the Migrant Student Information Exchange system (New York State Education Department, Office of Accountability, 2017b).

**Professional Development and Inclusion Center.** This center provides technical assistance and conducts professional development trainings for staff at all levels, covering everything from leadership management to teaching instruction (New York State Education Department, Office of Accountability, 2017c).

New York is also invested in the CAMP Program. This comprehensive support service, which includes financial aid, is provided to first-year college students from migrant families. It benefits students who have the skills to successfully complete the first year of college. Follow-up services are also offered after the first year, so migrant college students can complete their studies (New York State Education Department, Office of Accountability, 2017c).

**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.** Like California and New York, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has developed its MEP. Pennsylvania has five local Migrant Education Offices: Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit #16 in Milton, the Chester County Intermediate Unit #24 in Downingtown, the Lincoln Intermediate Unit #12 in New Oxford, Millersville University in Millersville, and the Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit #5 in Edinboro. An intermediate unit is an agency that provides educational services to school districts and other educational institutions within a county. The services provided through the MEP in Pennsylvania include afterschool tutorial and enrichment programs, summer programs, preschool programs, in-home programs, referrals for social support services, student support services, parental involvement, advocacy, language development, enrichment education in mathematics and science, increasing graduation and promotion rates, preparation for postsecondary education, participation in the national free lunch program, assistance with credit accrual, referral to the CAMP program, student leadership programs, workshops and lessons for out-of-school youth,

participation on the Bi-National Teacher Exchange program, and participation in the Congressional Award (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2017). To qualify for the MEP, children must have moved within the past 36 months between school districts to enable the children, their parents, or guardians to obtain temporary jobs in agricultural or fishing work. In this case, migrant children are defined as persons 21 years of age or younger who have migrated by themselves or as dependents of migrant workers. The Pennsylvania MEP assists school districts and charter schools in coordinating the continuity of educational services for children whose schooling has been interrupted (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2017).

***Migrant fabric in Pennsylvania.*** As we have mentioned in this paper, the most populated states in the US tend to have the highest immigrant populations. That is not necessarily the case in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania is a former industrial powerhouse that has experienced an exodus of population with the fall of the steel and manufacturing industries. There has been a slow rebirth with the expansion of sectors such as health care, higher education, high technology, and energy. Most of Pennsylvania is made-up of small towns and rural and suburban areas, with two major urban hubs, Philadelphia in the southeast and Pittsburgh in the southwest.

Historically, most immigration in southwestern Pennsylvania has been of highly educated professionals, with a growing number of Indian and Chinese professionals in particular. In the past, immigration from Latin America tended to be mostly from South America. Along with professionals and graduate students, there has been an increase in unauthorized migrants from Mexico and the Central American Northern Triangle who come to look for jobs in agriculture, construction, food, and hospitality. Many of those immigrants are males who move between regions seeking better job opportunities. Nevertheless, many families settle down in the region as well. In general, the children of unauthorized migrant families have access to schooling, as the only requirement for entering school is a proof of residence with a utility bill. Most of these immigrants reside within the lines of urban districts, which have developed the capacity to offer services to ELs and support for parents and relatives. Immigrant students from families with professional parents tend to reside in more affluent and prestigious suburban school districts. In recent years, a multisector initiative resulted in the Pittsburgh Promise, a scholarship that all high school graduates from Pittsburgh schools are eligible to receive if they graduate with a certain minimum GPA. The goal is to encourage children to attend college. Undocumented children are not eligible for the Pittsburgh Promise, but the office that coordinates the program can submit cases for consideration. Some students have benefitted from this to attend private institutions that do not require proof of immigration. However, the scholarship does not cover all expenses and fees.

## Challenges and Critical Issues

The fact that there are children born in the US to undocumented resident parents as well as children who arrived in the country at an early age constitutes a puzzle for the legal system. The former are considered US citizens. However, there is pressure on the government to implement policy denying such status to those children and deporting unauthorized residents. Reasons cited include using children as shields to avoid deportation, security matters, and displacement of US nationals from jobs.

**DACA Program.** One risk of deporting minors is that many of those children arrived unaccompanied and removing others from their families could cause a humanitarian crisis, as we have observed recently. The DACA program emerged as a partial solution. Announced on June 15, 2012, DACA granted two-year deportation relief and work authorizations for eligible youth. The requirements to become a beneficiary included: being at least 15 years old; having entered the US before the age of 16; having continuously lived in the US since June 15, 2007; being enrolled in school, having earned a high school diploma, or being an honorably discharged veteran; and not having been convicted of a felony or certain misdemeanors. In 2016, the MPI estimated that 1.9 million people qualified for DACA status (Zong & Batalova, 2017).

## Policy Recommendations

As we have shown throughout this chapter, the US Federal government has created a set of policies, programs, and grants available for states to support the education of migrant children. They are designed to cover all areas to guarantee student academic success. States can use those resources to meet their own needs and develop plans. However, it is up to them and school districts, based on their complex demographics, capacity, and specific needs, to implement strategies to provide access and quality education to guarantee student academic success.

Substantial efforts have been oriented toward guaranteeing that ELs attain language proficiency and achievement in subjects like math and reading. However, internal migration within the country, interruption of schooling, family background, and school capacities have proven to be a challenge and more work needs to be done. As a response, several states have increased the number of teachers trained in English as a second language; provided support through information centers and using available technologies like hotlines, online tutorials, and websites; created parent councils and interpretation services; out of school programs; and so on. Achievement data show that meeting academic standards is still a big challenge, both in highly populated and less highly populated areas, and throughout regions of varying levels of cultural and linguistic diversity. A major emphasis on meeting these standards is necessary at the local level. The EL graduation rate of migrant students has been lower than the general population rate. It is considered critical for the education system to provide ELs with the skills and knowledge they need for college and careers. Their success affects the US's long-term prosperity (USDOE, 2015c).

## Conclusions

Immigration has gained policy and political predominance in recent years. This has been prompted by the need for reforms of the immigration system and national and border security, as well as debates about the role of the US in refugee resettling. Most of the content presented in this paper is about available federal-level policies for migrant education. This paper has provided some data about coverage and achievement, and includes examples of what some states have done to meet the needs of migrant students. This paper includes what is documented at the USDOE and other organizations like the MPI and the policies and programs that are in place as of early 2017. The three state cases described show how migrant children's education has been molded by the resources available at the federal level.

However, the new White House administration is looking to cut government expenditure on social programs, to increase deportations of unauthorized immigrants, and to control the entry of migrants without visas and from certain regions. That is a very complex endeavor. Therefore, it is uncertain if there will be changes in migrant education at the federal level, which could then move the responsibility and probably the burden to local and state governments. This paper has argued that despite efforts by the US federal government to create and adjust a legal framework and implement programs that allocate grants to states to guarantee that migrant children have access to adequate education, issues like poverty, high mobility of families, and uncertainty about what policy the current administration will adopt, make it difficult to predict the road ahead.

Chapter Five

# Education of Migrant Children in Japan

Hiromi Uemura

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**M**igrants in Japan are categorized into “newcomers” and “oldcomers” in accordance with when their family arrived in Japan. “Old-comers” is a term that is used to refer to the migrants from the Korean peninsula, China, and Taiwan who came to Japan prior to World War II and their descendants. As soon as the American occupation ended, on April 28th, 1952, and the peace treaty came into effect, the Japanese government considered the people from former colonies and their children as having lost their Japanese citizenship. Later, under the *Immigration Control Special Cases Act* promulgated in 1991, legal status as “special permanent residents” was granted to these people, and remains effective today. As of December 2016, 338,950 of the total 2,382,822 registered foreigners in Japan are these “oldcomers”, and this is a ratio of roughly 14 percent of the total number of immigrants (Ministry of Justice, 2016). 335,163 are from Korea (South or North), 2,179 are from China and Taiwan and 1,608 are from other countries.

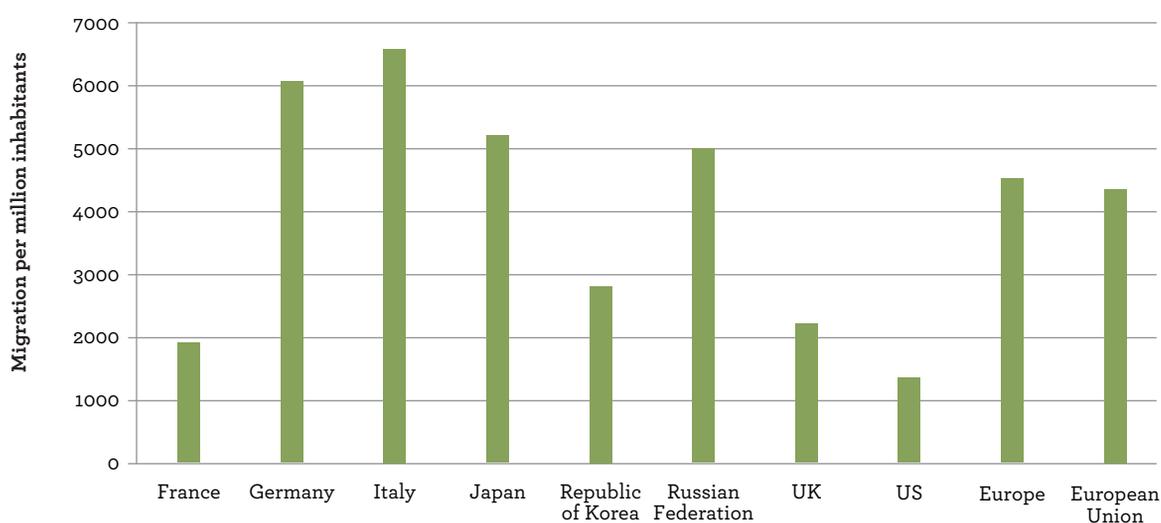
The other 86 percent of Japan’s immigrant population is made up of so-called “newcomers.” “Newcomers” is the term used to refer to the foreign workers who have been coming to Japan since the 1970s, in particular since the 1989 revision of the *Immigration Control Act*. The difference between “oldcomers” and “newcomers” is that the “oldcomers” have relatively stable permanent residence status and do not face restrictions on the type of occupation or industry they may choose. In contrast, many of the “newcomers” face limitations with respect to the duration of their stay, and it is difficult for them to have occupations that are not within the range of those acknowledged in their status of residence. In other words, in contrast with the “oldcomers,” who have settled down and assimilated into Japanese society over the course of several generations, the “newcomers,” most of whom arrived in 1990s, have difficulty in learning Japanese and thus tend to be relatively isolated from the local Japanese community, are more likely to encounter conflicts with local residents, and so on. Indeed, the difficulty of living together with the “newcomers” – whose number has increased significantly since 1990 – has emerged as a major issue in the Japanese society today.

This report focuses on the experience of new migrants, or “newcomers,” as citizens living in the Japanese community, discusses the reasons behind the government decision on acceptance of migrants from abroad, and surveys the educational issues of migrant children. This report also considers the scale and socioeconomic backgrounds of migrants in Japan, issues faced by migrant children and government policies and the engagement of NPO groups as a new “social actor” toward resolution of these issues.

## Migration and Migrants in Japan

### Scale and Types of Migration

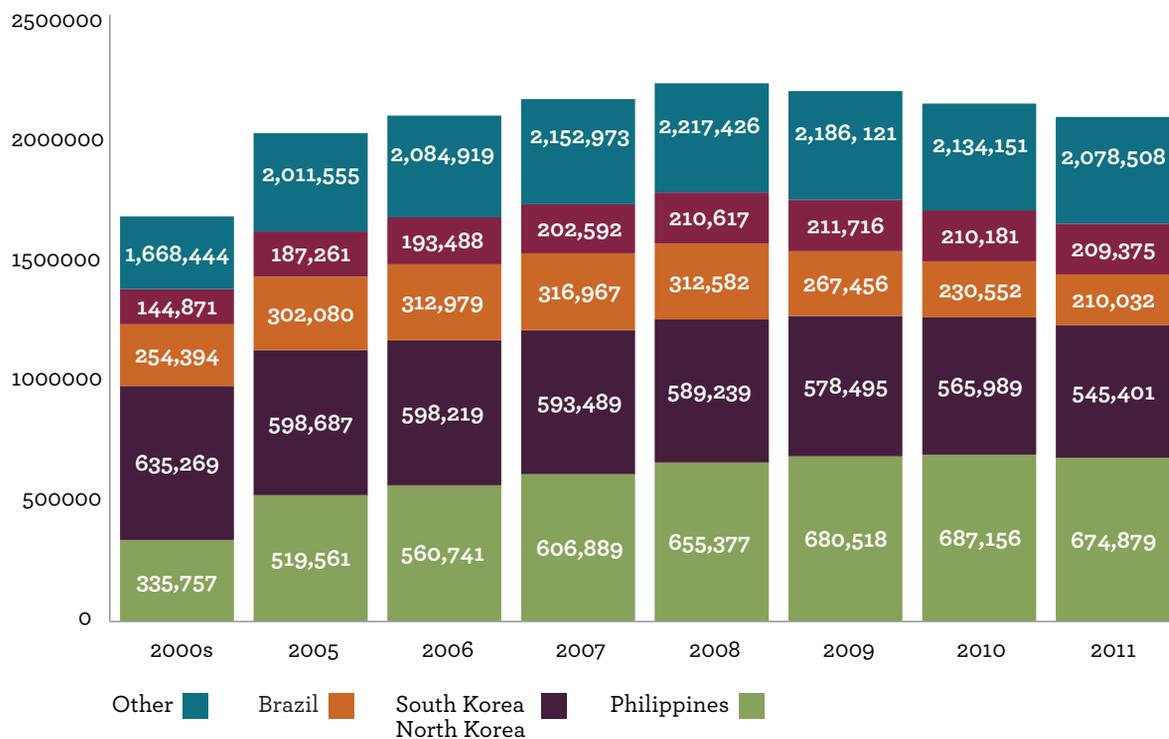
As of 2015, Japan has an extremely low birthrate of 1.45 children — among the lowest throughout the developed world — and thus faces a rapidly aging population (Japanese Cabinet Office, 2015). Therefore, the decline of the working age population (aged 15 to 64) is inevitable in the absence of replacement migration. According to the report *Replacement Migration: Is it a Solution to Declining and Ageing Populations?* released by the United Nation (UN), the population of Japan, as well as virtually all the European countries, will have experienced a significant decline between 1995 and 2050 (UN, 2001). If Japan wishes to keep the size of its population at its 2005 number, the country would need 17 million net immigrants by the year 2050, or an average of 381,000 immigrants per year, between 2005 and 2050. The working age population of Japan is projected to decline continuously, from 87.2 million in 1995 to 57.1 million in 2050. In order to keep the size of the working age population at the 1995 level of 87.2 million, Japan would need 33.5 million net immigrants from 1995 through 2050, or an average of 609,000 immigrants per year. In terms of average annual net number of migrants between 2000 and 2050 needed to maintain size of working age population per million inhabitants in 2000, Japan comes in third after Italy and Germany (see Figure 1). The new challenges posed by the declining and ageing populations will require comprehensively reassessing, with an eye to the long term, many of the established policies and programs. Critical issues that need to be addressed include; (a) the appropriate age for retirement; (b) the levels, types and nature of retirement and health care benefits for the elderly; (c) labor force participation; (d) the amounts of contributions from workers and employers to support retirement and health care benefits for the elderly population; and (e) policies and programs related to international migration.



**Figure 1. Average annual net number of migrants between 2000 and 2050 to maintain size of working age population, per million inhabitants in 2000** Source: United Nations Population Division 2011

When compared with other developed countries, Japan's infrastructure for receiving immigrants is extremely underdeveloped. As Flowers (2012) has said, "Japan's immigration policy is based on the idea that Japan is not now and has never been an immigration country. This approach seeks to preserve the myth of a homogeneous Japan." (Flowers, 2012: 518). In fact, the category "immigrant" is avoided in ministerial documents completely. Instead, official policy refers to "foreign nationals". Up until the 1990s, most Japanese people believed Japan to be a racially homogeneous island country. Of course, at that time Japan was already home to a small number of "oldcomer" migrants, whose ancestors had immigrated from Korea, China and Taiwan before World War II. However, the government had neglected these immigrants' access to political and social institutions, and so they had long faced discrimination and marginalization. Additionally, not only the government but also Japanese people denied the existence of other ethnic groups living in Japan because Japanese have quite a strong sense of prejudice. Even today, many realtors and landlords prefer to avoid dealings with foreigners and many ordinary citizens in a local community also avoid getting involved with them. Later, the government began to consider creating new programs and accepting the new type of migrants referred to as "newcomers". When Japan faced labor shortages in the 1990s, the government created programs and visa categories that were essentially side doors to allow much-needed low-skilled and unskilled workers to enter Japan (Flowers, 2012). In the 1990s, a new visa category was created that allowed so-called "Nikkei migrants", mainly from Latin America, to come to Japan in order to ensure a certain amount of most-needed and low-skilled labor force. The second-generation Nikkei migrants were granted the "Spouse or Child of Japanese National" visa, while the third generation Nikkei migrants and those people married to a Nikkei Japanese received a "Long Term Resident" visa (Ishikawa, 2014). Thus, these migrants were not considered foreign laborers by Japanese Immigration Control, but rather travelers who had come to Japan to see their relatives, although in reality most of them had come to Japan with the specific purpose of working (Ishikawa, 2014). The 1989 revision of the Immigration Control Act, another fundamental law that manages foreigners, liberalized the employment of Nikkei migrants (second – and third-generation Nikkei migrants) in Japan, and this led to a significant increase in the number of people from Brazil and Peru. In recent years, the subcontractors and of automotive companies have come to rely on the labor of Nikkei migrants for whom employment was liberalized.

The number of registered foreigners in Japan reached 2 million in 2005 (see Figure 2). The number reached its peak in 2008, followed by a gradual decrease due to the economic downturn precipitated by the global financial crisis. The number of foreigners from Brazil also peaked in 2008, and has subsequently decreased. The number of people from China, which had been gradually increasing, began decreasing at the end of 2011. Traditionally, the plurality of foreigners had come from South Korea and North Korea, (see Figure 2), but as of 2007, people from China (including Taiwan and Hong Kong) usurped them. People from South Korea and North Korea are in Japan because of the country’s colonization of the Korean peninsula, while those of Japanese descent from places like Brazil are in Japan because Japan had sent many immigrants to such countries in the past. In either case, these immigrants are a projection of the history of Japan.



**Figure 2. Shift in the number of registered foreigners in Japan** (as of the end of each year) Source: Statistics on Foreign Residents from the Japanese Ministry of Justice.

Year	Brazil	Peru	Total
1988	4159	864	5023
1989	14,528	4121	18,649
1990	56,429	10,279	66,708
1991	119,333	26,281	145,614
1992	147,803	31,051	178,854
1993	154,650	33,169	187,819
1994	159,619	35,382	195,001
1995	176,440	36,269	212,709
1996	210,795	37,099	238,894
1997	233,254	40,394	273,648
1998	222,217	41,317	263,534
1999	224,299	42,773	267,072
2000	254,394	46,171	300,565
2001	265,962	50,052	316,014
2002	268,322	51,772	320,104
2003	274,700	53,649	328,349
2004	286,557	55,750	342,307
2005	302,080	57,728	359,808
2006	312,979	58,721	371,700
2007	316,967	59,696	376,663
2008	312,582	59,723	372,305
2009	267,456	57,464	324,920
2010	230,552	54,636	285,188
2011	210,032	52,845	262,875

**Table 1. The explosion of Japanese descendants due to the revision of the Immigration Control Act** (Units: people) Source: Statistics on Foreign Residents from the Japanese Ministry of Justice

### Socio-economic Impacts of Migration

Migrants from Brazil have contributed to the Japanese society as convenient laborers to be mobilized “just in time” when Japanese workers could not be supplied easily as Japan was slow to create a coherent policy on foreign laborers. Additionally, Brazilians actively work long hours even though their economic conditions are not at easy. The Nikkei migrants are willing to do hard manual labor in order to earn money quickly, and then go home. However, in reality, more than 70.3 percent of Nikkei migrants stay in Japan longer than they had planned, for a variety of reasons: they are worried about the economic recession in their country whereas they can receive better pay in Japan; they have become used to life in Japan; they have a Japanese spouse; or they would like their children to continue their education in Japan (Ishikida, 2005b).

According to a survey conducted in 2009 in the Tokai region of Honshu—where there is the largest population of Nikkei migrants in Japan—53.9 percent of households had a yearly income of between 2 and 4 million yen (\$18,317 to \$36,633 USD), (Table 2). Virtually all Nikkei migrants, or 97.9 percent, earn less than six million yen; the average family income for them was 3.074 million yen (\$28,150). That same year, the average household income in Japan was 5.49 million yen (\$50,275). This situation has remained the same since 2008. There does not seem to be a significant difference between the economic situations of Nikkei migrant populations across different regions in Japan.

	Less than 2 million yen	2 million yen	4 million yen	6 million yen	8 million yen	N	Average in 10000 yen
Ooizumi	16.7%	62.5%	16.7%	4.2%	n/a	24 people	317.1
Toyohashi	22.5%	56.2%	20.2%	1.1%	n/a	89 people	299.8
Hamamatsu	24.4%	48.7%	24.4%	1.3%	1/3%	78 people	313.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>22.5%</b>	<b>53.9%</b>	<b>21.1%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>191 people</b>	<b>307.4</b>

**Table 2. Newcomers' household annual income** (Shindo Kei et al, 2009: 22)

	Factory worker	Construction Civil Engineering	Logistics delivery, handling cargo	Sales staff	Cook	Management of shops, restaurant	Clerk	Engineer	Interpretation Translation	Without an occupation (housewife)	Without an occupation (currently unemployed)	Other	Total people
Ooizumi	75.5%	—	—	1.9%	—	5.7%	1.9%	—	—	9.4%	1.9%	3.8%	53
Toyohashi	76.2%	2.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	—	3.0%	1.0%	2.0%	7.9%	—	5.0%	101
Hamamatsu	76.5%	—	1.2%	3.7%	1.2%	—	1.2%	1.2%	4.9%	1.2%	—	8.6%	81
<b>Total</b>	<b>76.2%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>235</b>

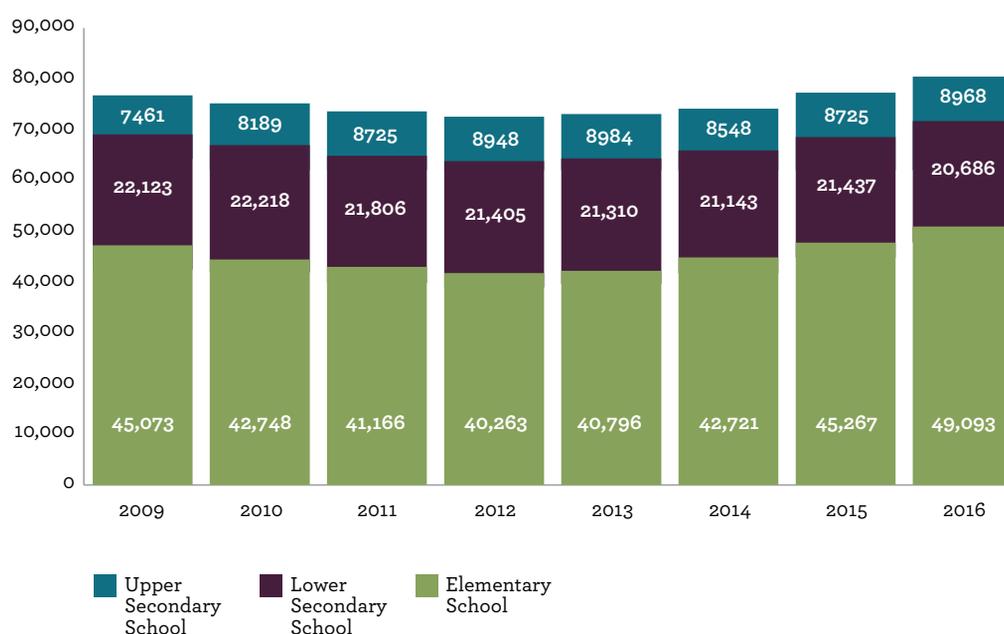
**Table 3. FY 2008 Newcomers' current occupations** (Shindo Kei et al, 2009: 22)

After the economic crisis began in 2008, the Japanese government began offering Nikkei migrants tickets back to their home country and a lump sum of money if they would agree to go home and never seek work in Japan again (Flowers, 2012). From this attitude of Japanese government, we can see the Nikkei migrants, or “newcomers”, are not given enough respect though they contribute to Japanese society as convenient laborers to do hard manual work as the Japanese working age population shrank.

### Definition and Scale of Immigrant Children

In this paper we use the word “immigrant,” but the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (MEXT) uses the term “foreign children” in public statistical data reports, such as the School Basic Survey and the Enrollment Status by Mother Tongue of Foreign Students Who Need Japanese Language Guidance. The government has continued to refer to people who ought to be called “immigrants” as “foreigners”, perhaps of its reluctance to fully address the issue of immigration. Here, one can see the passiveness of the Japanese government towards immigration as an issue.

What, then, would be the number of school age children among the immigrants? According to immigration statistics recently released by Japan’s Ministry of Justice, in December 2016 the country had about 169,512 foreign residents from age 6-18 years (Ministry of Justice, 2017). The School Basic Survey released by MEXT (2016), on the other hand, only reports 80,119 foreign students in fiscal year 2016 enrolled in public and private K-12 schools (excluding correspondence courses)(see Figure 4). Therefore, there are around 90,000 migrant children in Japan who do not attend public schools, intending instead to go to private or non-traditional schools or do not go to school at all. In any case, we cannot fully understand the education situation of these children, as MEXT has not carried out national surveys on these issues. It should be noted that currently, educational support resources like Japanese language programs and counseling programs supported by the school board are available only to children who attend public schools.



**Figure 4. The number of foreign students in public schools in Japan** Source: The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2017b)

\* Under the revised the School Education Law, nine-year compulsory education schools were newly established in 2016 and offered for nine years from elementary to lower secondary school with an integrated compulsory education curriculums

## The Education of Migrant Children in Japan

### The Education System in Japan

Japanese education is centralized under the direction of the MEXT. The school system in Japan was a multi-track system before World War II, but after the war it developed as a single-track school system. The modern school system has its beginnings in 1872, when elementary school was made compulsory. Within just 30 years, the attendance rate in the compulsory education exceeded 90 percent. Later, as a part of post-war reform of the educational system, the “6-3-3-4 system” was introduced under the guidance of the United States and the single-track system was established.

Under the current system, all children six years of age and older must attend school. Elementary school is a six-year course, and after completing the elementary school course all children must advance to the three-year junior high school system. These nine years constitute the free compulsory education period in Japan.

The aim of senior high schools in Japan is to give students a high-level education or specialized education. Senior high schools exist in three different types: the full-time schooling system, the part-time system, and correspondence courses. The length of the course of study is three years for the full-time schooling system, and four years or more for the part-time system and correspondence courses. Public high schools (mainly established by the prefectures) make admission decisions based on the results students obtained at the one-time examination conducted by the relevant prefectural board of education to test scholastic ability, evaluation reports submitted by the junior high schools, and other essential documents.

Educational institutions that students go on to after graduating from upper secondary education mainly include universities, junior colleges, and other miscellaneous schools. Entrance to universities and junior colleges is determined based on entrance examinations. All students aspiring to go on to a higher stage of education, including students who have graduated from senior high or junior high schools, or have foreign university enrollment qualifications such as the International Baccalaureate, the Abitur, Baccalaureate, or the GCEA Levels and are 18 years of age, are eligible for the examination. Miscellaneous schools are facilities that have a governing structure similar to the public education system, but offer programs focusing on acquiring skills in areas such as language, hairdressing, culinary, social welfare, driving, and English conversation. They are set apart from regular school education. In recent years, some ethnic schools established by immigrant parents have been accredited as “miscellaneous schools” by the educational administration.

It has been pointed out that the characteristics of the Japanese educational system reflects the fact that Japan is a degree-oriented society and therefore educational credentials become an indicator of a “social birth,” and a lifetime achievement (Kariya, 1995). The competition to obtain better educational credentials through admission into better high schools and colleges is so fierce that it is sometimes referred to as an “examination war”. All high schools and colleges are academically stratified and therefore graduation from a particular school is a measure of academic achievement (Ishikida, 2005a). Entering a top academic high school that provides students with a high-level education is a fast track to entering a good college.

The educational expenses for primary and secondary education are affordable in Japan unless the parents choose to send their children to private schools or pay for private tutors (Ishikida 2005b). According to the FY 2014 survey on educational expenses conducted by MEXT (2015), the average family spends 5.23 million yen to pay for one child’s education from public preschool through public high school. These expenses include the costs of tuition, books, school lunches, school supplies and excursions, field trips, cram schools, and other things related to education (MEXT, 2015). Meanwhile, the survey estimated that it costs 17.7 million yen for a child who attends private schools from preschool through high school.

### Policies for Migrant Children

Starting with the national-level policy issued in 1989 concerning migrant children’s education, the Japanese government has attempted to create more concrete measures for helping them in public primary and secondary schools, especially since 1991, when the number of school-age children of Nikkei newcomers began to grow after the revision of 1990 Immigration Control Law. Around this time, MEXT decided to adopt a number of necessary measures as follows.

**Acceptance of migrant children in public schools.** Migrant children, legally speaking, are not compelled to attend school in Japan, but those who wish to join public and private elementary and junior high schools of Japan are accepted in the schools and after acceptance they are treated the same way as Japanese children. Since 1991, municipal administrations have sent a welcome-to-school notice to every household, including migrant households, in which a six-year-old resides. Upon enrolling in public school, migrant children are provided free tuition and free textbooks like any other Japanese child<sup>2</sup>.

**Implementation of Japanese language survey.** In 1991, the MEXT started to conduct its first survey on Japanese language education in public schools because Japanese schools had not had migrant children who could not understand Japanese language until then. Of the 5,500 migrant children who were included in the survey, half were Nikkei migrant children from Latin American countries. Of the students from Latin American countries, Portuguese-

2. Due to the Memorandum of the Result of Consultation Based on the Japan-South Korea Status of Forces Agreement, MEXT issued “Implementation of the Education-related Matters in the Consultation Regarding a Status of a Citizen of the Republic of Korea living in Japan” (notice by the Director-General of the Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau) to the heads of all prefectural boards of education in 1991. After issuing this official notice, not only South-Korean students but also the other countries’ students are treated the same way as Japanese children.

speaking students, 36 percent of those who needed Japanese language education, were “Nikkei newcomer children” from Brazil, and Spanish-speaking students, 14 percent were “Nikkei newcomer children” from Peru and other Latin American countries (Ishikida, 2005n). As mentioned earlier, these people were concentrated in residential areas of industrial prefectures like Aichi, Shizuoka, and Kanagawa prefecture.

**Raising the MEXT’s financial support for the special teachers who are associated with migrant children.** Starting in 1992, in accordance with the special provisions for the creation of new employment of special teachers to deal with Japanese language guidance for migrant students, MEXT started “Project for the allocation of special teachers to correspond to students who need special support such as Japanese language tuition”. In 1994, MEXT started the project “Dispatch of teaching collaborators for foreign students –using their mother languages” (Maruja M. et al. (Eds.), 2017). The project provides workshops for teachers on educating migrant children in the regions where newcomer migrants had settled. It also dispatches educational counselors to consult with migrant students and their parents in their native language, and sends assistant instructors who speak the same language as migrant children to help them with schoolwork and to coordinate with their teachers.

By the 1990s, almost 70 percent of Nikkei migrants brought their family with them, in contrast with earlier migrants who had planned to return to their country in a few years. More and more immigrants were, in fact, staying in Japan for a long time. As a result, the number of migrant children kept increasing in public schools. MEXT then decided to take a number of necessary measures, including the establishment of a Research Council for sharing of migrant education related experiences, promotion of Japanese language education for migrant children (a curriculum development and development of testing method for Japanese language proficiency), and construction of a comprehensive educational support system in communities as a whole beyond the school. The specifics are as follows.

Since 2001, information exchange about advanced initiatives and the implementation of measures in all regions is conducted through personnel in charge at center schools in the regions promoting internationalization of education, along with returnee and foreign students and key teachers of the prefectural and municipal board of education. At the same time, the “Research Council for the Education of Returnee and Foreign Students” was established for conducting research on challenges and relevant measures to be addressed. In order to improve the Japanese proficiency level of migrant students, in 2001, the curriculum was flexibly structured with the aim of fostering abilities enabling participation in learning activities using the Japanese language so as to deal with the diverse learning abilities of different children. The development of a Japanese-as-a-second-language (JSL) curriculum that integrates Japanese language and subject teaching has been undertaken (Sato, 2009). Furthermore, the most common pedagogical method used in Japanese language education is the “pullout” method. Migrant children who need Japanese language education are pulled out of Japanese language arts and social studies classes, and they are tutored in Japanese in small groups until they are able to keep up with their classes (Ishikida, 2005a).



Japanese language education using the “pullout” method Source: Hiromi Uemura, a municipal elementary school in Hiroshima City

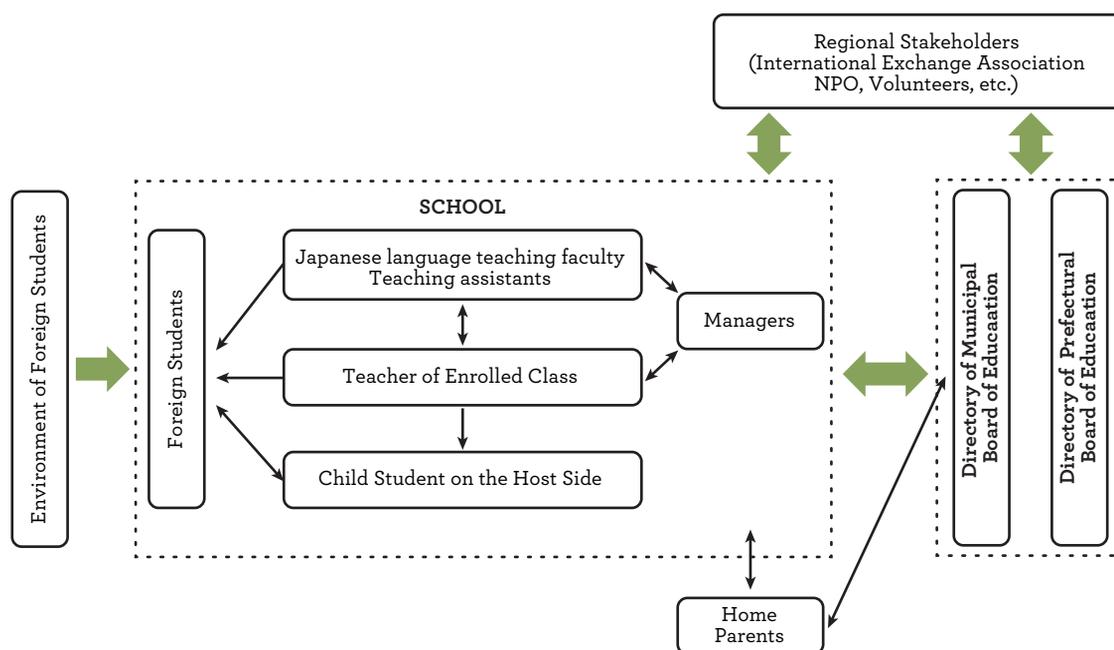
The project “Regions for Promoting Internationalization of Education Conducted Along with the Returnee and Foreign Child Students” was implemented in order to promote internationalization of education in schools and regions in 2001 (Sato, 2009). Within this project, practical research is conducted with the collaboration of schools and regions regarding the ideal manner of education to cope with the needs of individual returnee and foreign students and to promote cultural understanding in education through mutual development of foreign students and their peers.

“A Model Project for the Educational Support System for Returnee and Foreign Child Students” was started in 2006, in order to provide a comprehensive maintenance of the acceptance system for returnee and foreign children. As part of this project, key schools have been set up in regions with migrant children and teaching assistants and coordinators who understand the native languages are positioned at the appropriate center schools; Japanese teaching classrooms have also been established.

In addition, MEXT decided to establish a multi-year fund called the “Bridge School Fund” with a budget of 3.73 billion yen (approx. \$ 39 million USD) from the emergency supplementary budget. The International Organization for Migration, or IOM, was requested by MEXT to manage the Fund and implement a “Support Program to Facilitate School Education for Foreign Children in Japan.” The program started in July 2009, and continued until March 2015 (IOM, 2015). The main beneficiaries of this program were school-age migrant children who were not enrolled in school. It encompassed such objectives as conducting classes on Japanese language and other subjects; assisting migrant children’s learning process via their mother tongues by bilingual instructors; promoting smooth transfer of these migrant children to

formal schools; promoting Japanese language education for migrant children.

Also, in 2011, MEXT created a “Guide for Accepting Foreign students” and as shown in Figure 5, the policy states that all the actors in the school, including not only teachers in the classroom, Japanese language teachers and faculty in charge, Japanese language teaching coordinators and managers, but also students in the schools that accept them, will be involved with the foreign students. Further, it also states that it’s important not only for schools but also regional stakeholders (International Exchange Associations, NPOs, including volunteers) and boards of education at each level to comprehensively address the challenges. In 2013, the “Program for In-depth Supporting for Returnee and Foreign Child Students” was started. MEXT called for measures to establish a comprehensive support system for these students from acceptance through employment after graduation (Kojima, 2015). In 2014, if approved by school principal, it became possible to offer the new Japanese language class as a “Special Educational Curriculum” in elementary and junior high schools, through the law revision of Article 56, paragraph (2) of the Ordinance for *Enforcement Regulations of the School Education Act of 2014*. This new measure could help to establish Japanese language education tailor-made to individual immigrant students according to each school’s own circumstances.



**Figure 5. Structure of the “Guide for Acceptance of Foreigners” in Japan** Source: The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2011)

On the other hand, as Nikkei migrants continued, with increasing frequency, to stay longer in Japan than they planned in the 2000s, another argument about education of migrant children is emerging. With sharply increasing numbers of Nikkei migrant children, there are not enough resources for them

all to attend public schools in the cities where they settled together, and as many as 40 percent of them have no choice but to be unschooled<sup>3</sup> (Ishikida, 2005a). In addition, although all Nikkei migrant children were accepted in public schools, some of them could not adapt to Japanese schools and faced bullying, and because of this social stress eventually refused to go to school. Against this background, in 1997, Nikkei migrants from Brazil established a Brazilian school to accept their children who could not attend public schools or refused to go to Japanese schools in Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka Prefecture, and its school welcomed 140 Brazilian children. After that, more Brazilian schools were established in cities where many Nikkei migrant children live, such as in Toyota City and Toyohashi City, Aichi Prefecture. The Brazilian schools that are classified as ethnic schools and that have rapidly increased in number in recent years were established with the assumption that families working away from home would return to their country (Onai, 2003). The education provided at Brazilian schools matches Brazil's curriculum, and these schools primarily started to be established in the latter half of the 1990s. Brazilian schools are different from Japanese schools in that they conduct all of their classes in Portuguese, the official language of Brazil. The children do not fall into a situation where they cannot fit in due to linguistic or cultural differences. In fact, there are a considerable number of cases where Brazilians get bullied at Japanese schools and subsequently transfer to Brazilian schools (Kojima, 2011).

Initially, Brazilian schools were not accredited as miscellaneous schools<sup>4</sup> (MEXT, 2010). In 2004, MEXT revised Miscellaneous School Regulation to relax the standard of school ground size and permit use of other school facilities under designated conditions (MEXT, 2012a). In 2007, the Director of MEXT's Lifelong Learning Bureau announced that the following cases would be included in approving accreditation of miscellaneous schools in special cases and with guarantees of having no obstacle to provide education.

In 2010, a manual for specific support for acquisition of accreditations as a miscellaneous school in the MEXT "Research Survey Relating to the Education of Foreign Nationals" was prepared in Japanese and Portuguese, and the number of Brazilian schools accredited as miscellaneous schools increased. As of 2011, there were 12 such schools (MEXT, 2012a).

### Outcomes: Access and Performance

As a result of efforts by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), as well as those undertaken by local boards of education, governments, and various stand-alone initiatives, the number of local public groups and schools involved in establishing the required system for acceptance of foreign students is steadily increasing (MEXT, 2016a). More

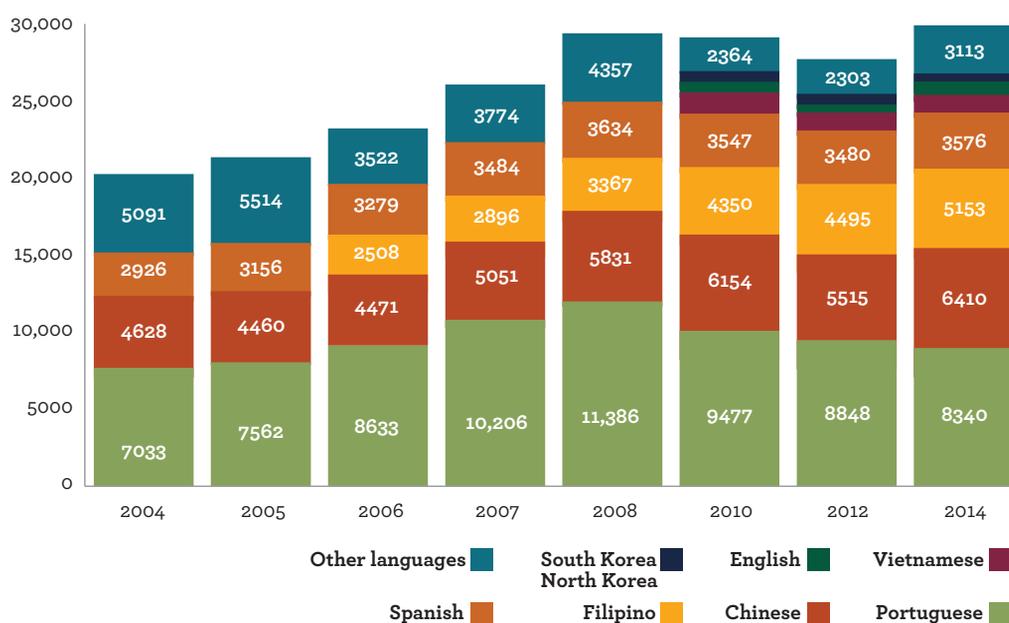
3. In a national survey conducted in 2010 in 29 select cities, the percentage of migrant children who did not attend any school was 0.7% on average, but there was no information for 21.5% (MEXT, 2011).

4. Some Brazilian schools were officially accredited by Brazilian government while others were completely unaccredited. However, even children who went to unaccredited schools could take an academic skills test for a school they want to enter after returning to Brazil and be placed in the appropriate year for their academic abilities (MEXT, 2010).

and more prefectures and municipalities have made advancements in terms of shouldering the costs for teaching staff in charge of educating immigrant children in Japanese language and the subjects; the number of such teachers has increased from about 1,100 in 2008, to about 1,600 in 2013.

According to the School Basic Survey conducted by MEXT in 2015, most migrant children who need Japanese language education are Nikkei migrant children from Brazil, though many Nikkei migrants from Brazil returned to Brazil, affected by the global economic crisis in 2008, as mentioned above. The general trend is that while the number of students with Portuguese as their mother tongue is decreasing due to the 2008 crisis, the number of students on the whole, propelled by an increasing number of students with Chinese or Filipino as their mother tongue, is starting to increase again (MEXT, 2015).

In regard to the issue of testing Japanese language skills of migrant children, the so-called Dialogic Language Assessment (DLA), a language testing method that registers language proficiency, has been utilized at schools around Japan since 2014. With this method, all schools and teachers can easily evaluate Japanese language proficiency, though it has been pointed out for a long time that there is no standard procedure for such evaluation (Yamamoto, 2014).



**Figure 6. Enrollment of Foreign Students Requiring Japanese Language Guidance by Mother Tongue as per the MEXT Survey**  
 Source: The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2015)

According to the Survey conducted in Tochigi Prefecture in 2015, the percentage of junior high graduates of a migrant background going on to the full-time high schools (including both public and private) was 68 percent (Tamaki, 2015). Compared with the average ratio of the full-time high school enrollment of 92.8 percent indicated in the survey conducted in the same prefecture during the same year (Tochigi Prefectural Government, 2015), this number represents an academic gap between migrant and Japanese students. It's worth noting that the advancement rate in high schools for migrant students who received Japanese language education is higher than those who did not. Furthermore, the percentage of migrant junior high graduates going on to the part-time high schools (including both public and private) was 19.7 percent. Compared with the average ratio of the part-time high school enrollment of 1.9 percent in the same prefecture during the same time, this number represents a large academic gap between migrant and Japanese students. There exists a large difference in the college-going rate between the full-time high schools and part-time high schools. According to the School Basic Survey conducted by MEXT in the same year, the college-going rate for part-time high schools was a mere 12.6 percent, while the rate of full-time high schools was 55.6 percent.

## Discussion

### Successful Policies, Initiatives and Cases

In 2011, the “Guide for Acceptance of Foreign Students” created by MEXT mentions that there is a great demand for involvement of regional stakeholders in solving these problems. Thus, in recent years, NPO groups and college students have started conducting volunteer activities to support the children of “newcomers” in order to improve their Japanese language abilities.

One of the most successful initiatives has been “Yumenoki Kyoshitsu” (“Tree of Dreams” Classroom), an afterschool program provided by NPO group Kodomono Kuni (“Children’s Country”) at Nishihomi Elementary School in Toyota City in Aichi prefecture. The program was cited as a pioneering example at the 2007 MEXT “Education and Research Conference regarding Foreign Students and Students Returning from Abroad.” In the program, support was given for children to learn Japanese in coordination with Nishihomi Elementary School. At the beginning of every month, the attendance sheet for the program from the previous month was submitted to Nishihomi Elementary School; support staff then exchanged information about children of concern, and countermeasures to help the children were discussed. Additionally, the program staff has an information exchange with the homeroom teachers of all of the children once a week, where the homeroom teachers convey the students’ homework, current academic progress, and individual learning situation (Tuchiya, 2011).

Meanwhile, although Brazilian schools are outside the scope of formal education, MEXT aims to promote relaxation of accreditation standards for them. In 2004, in order to resolve various issues with Brazilian schools, local governments in many prefectures followed the direction and ideas of the central government to enact school accreditation standards for Brazilian schools and relax standards. According to a survey conducted by MEXT in 2012, in terms of advantages of being accredited as a miscellaneous school, the attractive benefits are: 1) the provision of subsidies in accordance with the number of students; 2) the use of student discount commuter passes such as for the train line; 3) increased external credibility; and 4) contribution to continuity of school administration (MEXT, 2012b). In addition, the prefectures that implemented flexibility in the criteria noticed that there was an improvement in the educational environment of the children of immigrants and it was confirmed that no problems emerged in the education or administration of the schools for foreign nationals.

### Challenges and Critical Issues

If migrant children can get over the Japanese language barrier with effort and patience, they still need to face the Japanese culture barrier. Migrant children, especially those from non-Asian countries, may strongly feel cultural differences. For instance, among the children of Brazilians of Japanese descent who do not have strong Japanese language abilities, there are many who cannot fit into Japanese classrooms and who gradually move away from schooling. A researcher says, “An educational structure that emphasizes monoculturalism in Japanese schools is likely to create acculturative pressure on migrant students, and that may lead to these student’s school disorientation” (Yamamoto, 2014, p.63). Furthermore, the school culture that is characteristic of Japan, where conformity is highly valued, inevitably causes bullying toward children of foreign nationalities (Sakai, 1998). Additionally, as mentioned above, Brazilian homes where guardians work long hours and the living situation is unstable cannot provide a favorable educational environment for children. When children do not have a comfortable home or school life, they desire a different place, and in recent years, there has been a surge in the number of Brazilian children participating in crime in nighttime shopping districts. Almost all the children held at a certain reform schools are Brazilian children (Minister’s Secretariat International Department Planning and Coordination Office, 2013).

The relaxation of accreditation standards for miscellaneous schools promoted by MEXT results in no large increase in the number of accredited schools. Even now, the vast majority of Brazilian schools cannot be accredited. According to MEXT, there were 72 Brazilian schools across Japan as of 2011 (MEXT, 2012a). Currently, there are still 60 Brazilian schools that continue to be administered without accreditation. These Brazilian schools operate as non-formal education and are not subsidized by the Japanese government; they are financed only by the tuition collected from students, and therefore

continue to be in extremely difficult financial situations. In addition, since migrant workers, including Brazilian nationals, are easily affected by employment changes owing to economic conditions, the number of students tends to fluctuate greatly in schools for Brazilian nationals. Therefore, it's often difficult to conduct stable school administration (MEXT, 2012a). The economic downturn caused by the 2008 global financial crisis forced many Brazilians in Japan to return to their country, and the 88 Brazilian schools that existed in 2007 were reduced to 72 schools as of 2011 (Haino, 2013). In other words, when the number of students decreases, the operating expenses immediately run dry, and it becomes difficult to maintain the school.

Furthermore, particularly in recent years, in an effort to resolve the various issues surrounding the education of migrant children, teachers and researchers devising comprehensive support systems for those children have found that the main issues are their academic struggle and low academic achievement. In order to illustrate this, two cases are presented, which are typical of migrant children from non-Chinese character using zones such as Brazil and other countries.

In regard to the low advancement rate of migrant students, it's clear that their full-time high school enrollment rate is lower than Japanese students. On the other hand, their part-time high school enrollment is higher than Japanese. Furthermore, the college-going rate for full-time high schools is more than four times higher than that for part-time high schools. These facts show that, in Japan, there are major disparities in educational advancement and academic achievement between the types of high schools. Therefore, choosing which type of high school to attend influences a child's academic path and future status. However, there are some variations in levels of academic achievement depending on student's ethnic background. Migrant children from non-Chinese character using areas such as Brazil and other countries have a much harder time getting good grades in the Japanese school system than those from Chinese character using areas like China and Korea (Yamamoto, 2014).

As mentioned previously, migrants from Brazil actively work long hours from early in the morning until late at night or undertake night shifts. They put in as many hours as possible to increase their savings even if it means reduced time with their families. However, their economic conditions are not at all affluent. In contrast, it's quite expensive to go to college in Japan. In the 2014-2015 school year, college students spent an average of 1.86 million yen (17,039 USD) a year for their educational and living expenses (JASSO, 2016). In Japan, the education expenses for sending children to schools weigh heavily on households, and it's more difficult for migrant parents to bear the full costs of their children's educational costs than Japanese parents. Japan is a degree-oriented society and therefore graduation from a particular school is one of the important measures of social status. It would not be an exaggeration to say that a person who has low level of education will face some social and economic limitations for the rest of their lives.

### Policy Recommendations

As a result of an increase in foreign students, MEXT has implemented measures such as creating teaching materials for Japanese language and allocating additional teachers. Furthermore, municipalities with many foreign children have tried their own initiatives to increase staffing of Japanese language teachers, part-time instructors, and Japanese language teaching support staff, following the direction taken and the ideas presented by the central government. However, despite these initiatives, there is as of yet no observable significant improvement in the educational environment for immigrant children. In recent years, Japanese-language education initiatives for the children of “newcomers” are being pursued not only by the government, but also by volunteer activities of NPO groups. The “social actor”, which stands between individuals and the government as seen in organizations like NPOs, has been increasing its activities in recent years, demonstrating increasing autonomy from the government. It’s not a stretch to say that this sector has grown to the point where it is supporting the contemporary Japanese society.

Also, there is yet no accurate collection of even basic data regarding the education realities of immigrant children. That is why it is not possible to have a very concrete discussion of this issue in this paper. Given these facts, it can be said that the current public education system in Japan is only for the Japanese and has the fundamental problem of not assuming the existence of immigrant children. As mentioned above, the reality of ensuring educational opportunities for immigrant children in Japan is unfortunately characterized by a lack of recognition of the existence of immigrant children in the system by the central government. MEXT should acknowledge the existence not only of “foreigner (child students)” but all immigrant children, and in addition undertake measures for ensuring educational opportunities for them. Furthermore, it is essential that the establishment of the following system be conducted as soon as possible:

**Make efforts to narrow the gap between Japanese students and migrant students.** Regardless of nationality, all immigrant children should be guaranteed inclusion in the “foreign child student” category in the future. MEXT should establish a system to understand the school entrance conditions of immigrant children and conduct regular nationwide surveys to understand the actual conditions related to school entrance for all kinds of schools, including those related to advancement to a higher level of education.

**Develop the education system.** Schools need to incorporate the educational policies for immigrant children in their Course of Study and immediately formulate a curriculum for Japanese language teaching. The government should also consider the establishment of a license for Japanese language education in universities and nurture faculty who can speak the native languages of immigrant children, including upgrading full-time teachers in charge of immigrant children. As advancement to high school education is necessary for employment in Japan, it’s important to provide subject guidance to enable the majority of the immigrant children to advance to a higher level of education after graduating from compulsory education.

**Provide support to ethnic schools in obtaining “miscellaneous school” credentials.** The local government should consider a system that enables municipalities to provide financial support to schools for foreigners, that is, “miscellaneous schools”. The government should also devise a system to ensure Japanese language education for immigrant children studying in “miscellaneous schools”.

## Conclusions

In order to ensure the quality of schools for migrant children, issues such as the following need to be addressed: making clear teacher certification standards for foreigner schools; standards on how to treat teacher certification obtained abroad; and course credit for matriculation to ordinary Article 1 public schools as pointed out by the MEXT (MEXT, 2012b). Some of this criticism relates to the legal position of ethnic schools and touches upon the core of Japanese school education system. It will require long-term deliberation.

The Japanese Constitution states, “All of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin” (Article 14, Paragraph 1). As defined in the constitution, it is time for not only Japanese government but also each Japanese citizen to hold a serious discussion on basic human rights guaranteed for migrant parents and children who have made a big contribution to Japanese society, and furthermore, how to narrow the gap between global norms and Japan’s unique values in a highly homogeneous society.

Chapter Six

# Education of Migrant Children in Thailand

Buraskorn Torut  
Xinjian Qi  
Pichapon Robru

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## Overview and Background

**I**n recent decades, Thailand has evolved into a migration hub in Southeast Asia for both international and internal migrants. Thai people migrate within and across Thailand's borders in search of the better economic opportunities that present themselves with industrial urbanization. Internal migration in Thailand has been influenced by the disparities in both the economy and the standard of living between urban and rural areas. The widening of these disparities was accelerated by the rapid economic growth since the 1980s that has been mainly concentrated in Bangkok and its vicinity. Export-led growth policies create high demand for laborers, attracting large flows of workers from rural to urban areas.

The Thai government has attached great importance to the expansion of quality education, regarding the essential mechanism by which to enhance human capability. Since the constitutional reform in 1997, Thailand has had the mission to allow all people to access quality education. The main objectives of this mission are to provide diverse sources of learning and knowledge consistent with the interests of the learners, and to promote lifelong learning in Thai society.

The dynamic pattern of migration makes comprehensive policies for stimulating both economic and human development, especially for children, very challenging. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the current state of internal migration and the recent policies for compulsory education in Thailand. The first part of the paper provides concept and background relating to internal migration in Thailand. The second part of the paper reviews current educational policies in Thailand for children required to attend compulsory education in Thailand. The third part of the paper forecasts the trend of child migration and the feasibility of educational policy for the inevitable trend of migration. Lastly, the paper discusses and recommends appropriate educational policy for child migrants.

### Internal Migration in Thailand

Internal migration is the process by which the population moves from its area of origin to an area of destination within its country of origin in the duration of more than five years. Internal migration can be permanent or temporary. Permanent migration (also called lifetime migration) includes migrants who are recognized by law in their area of destination for permanent settlement and migrants that live or work in the place of destination for a long time even though they are not fully accepted by the area of destination. Temporary (sometimes called seasonal) migration refers to migrants that travel from their area of origin to live or work in the area of destination for at least three months at a time, but less than a year (Patcharawalai, 2007).

Rapid change in rural and urban economic disparity stimulated increases in the movement of Thais to the Bangkok metropolitan area and other industrial cities. Internal migration in Thailand is most likely to be rural-urban migration, with the purpose of job seeking for adults and education for children and youths. Internal migrants play an important role in the economic and social development of the country. The Thai population is relatively active in terms of mobilizing regularly for both long-term and seasonal migration. As shown in Table 1, according to 2010 Population and Housing Census, 9.4 percent of the population had changed residence during the past five years and more than half of the migrants had moved between provinces. The data from the 2010 survey includes different types of migration, with the nationwide migrant population reaching around 6.2 millions.

Type of migration	Both sexes	%	Male	%	Female	%
Total population	65,981,642	—	32,355,056	—	33,626,586	—
<b>Total migrants</b>	<b>6,227,495</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,205,535</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,021,960</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Within province	1,675,283	26.9	865,993	27.0	809,290	26.8
Between provinces	3,372,533	54.2	1,695,949	52.9	1,676,584	55.5
From another country	757,306	12.2	434,904	13.6	322,402	10.7
Unknown	422,373	6.8	208,689	6.5	213,684	7.1

**Table 1: Migration of Thais in the past five years, by type of migration and sex** Source: Thailand, National Statistical Office, the 2010 Population and Housing Census (2013)

As shown in Table 2, the Population and Housing Census also indicated that more than 60 percent of internal migrants are between 15 to 39 years old, making them of working age and above the age for compulsory education. However, approximately 20 percent of internal migrants are under 15 years of age, the age under which students must attend compulsory education in Thailand. Meanwhile, people above age of 50 years old tend to be the smallest group of internal migrants in the country.

	Both Sexes	Male	Female
<b>All ages</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>9.0</b>
0-4	8.4	8.3	8.6
5-9	5.1	5.1	5.2
10-14	5.1	5.1	4.9
15-19	14.5	12.8	16.1
20-24	26.1	26.1	26.1
25-29	19.0	19.7	18.3
30-39	12.0	13.1	10.9
40-49	6.4	7.2	5.6
50-59	4.0	4.6	3.5
60-69	3.0	3.5	2.5
70 and over	2.0	2.1	1.9

**Table 2. Percentage of Thais migrating during the previous five years by age group** Source: Thailand, National Statistical Office, the 2010 Population and Housing Census (2013)

There are various reasons for internal migration. A plurality of migrants, around 35 percent, migrate for working reasons; around 20 percent migrate to follow household members; around 18 percent declare for change of residence for certain welfare privilege such as school enrollment; and 16 percent migrate for educational reasons.

Reason	Both sexes	%	Male	%	Female	%
Total	6,227,550	100.0	3,205,579	100.0	3,021,972	100.0
To look for work	1,662,991	26.7	901,625	28.1	761,366	25.2
Job assignment	809,525	13.0	453,717	14.2	355,808	11.8
To study	795,616	12.8	311,808	9.7	483,808	16.0
Following persons in household	1,007,647	16.2	416,944	13.0	590,703	19.5
To return home	128,159	2.1	61,535	1.9	66,624	2.2
Change of residence	1,092,504	17.5	538,777	16.8	553,727	18.3
Change to institutional household	394,039	6.3	324,002	10.1	70,036	2.3
Others	52,577	0.8	36,929	1.2	15,649	0.5
Unknown	284,492	4.6	160,241	5.0	124,251	4.1

**Table 3. Number of Thai migrants during the previous five years by sex and reason for moving, 2010** Source: Thailand, National Statistical Office, the 2010 Population and Housing Census (2013)

Moreover, in addition to the Population and Housing Census conducted by the National Statistics Office every ten years (the latest survey was in 2010), recently Thailand has been conducting the National Migration Survey since 2005. The survey focuses specifically on permanent, internal migration. The most recent report, from 2016, showed that there are 934,212 internal migrants in Thailand, or approximately 1.4 percent of Thailand's total population of 67.3 million.

As seen in Table 4, the plurality of migrants — more than 40 percent — are in the central region of Thailand, where the Bangkok metropolitan area and industrial provinces such as PathumThani, Chon Buri, and Rayong are located. There was no significant difference in the regional distribution of internal migrants between genders, although overall there were slightly more male than female migrants in 2016.

Area of Destination (Region)	Both sexes	%	Male	%	Female	%
Total population	67,293,709	—	—	—	—	—
Total migrants	934,215	100.0	478,570	100.0	455,645	100.0
Bangkok	63,498	6.80	30300	6.33	33198	7.29
Central Region	338,975	36.28	175,564	36.69	163411	35.86
Northern	160,950	17.23	80,705	16.86	80,245	17.61
Northeastern	220,979	23.65	116,010	24.24	104,969	23.04
Southern	149,814	16.04	75,991	15.88	73,823	16.20

**Table 4. Internal migration classified by area of destination** Source: National Statistical Office, the 2016 Thailand Migration Survey

As seen in Table 5, the survey found that around 13 percent of all internal migrants in Thailand have children under the age of 15. There are around 60,000 migrants who have children of the compulsory education age and live and work in the central region, including Bangkok.

Area of Destination (Region)	Both sexes	%	Male	%	Female	%
Total population	67,293,709	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Total migrants</b>	<b>117,651</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>62,954</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>54,697</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Bangkok	8,364	7.11	4,532	7.20	3,832	7.01
Central Region	53,811	45.74	29,245	46.45	24,566	44.91
Northern	18,438	15.67	8,630	13.71	9,808	17.93
Northeastern	22,246	18.91	12,929	20.54	9,317	17.03
Southern	14,792	12.57	7,618	12.10	7,174	<b>13.12</b>

**Table 5. Internal migration classified by migrants who have children aged under 15** Source: National Statistical Office, the 2016 Thailand Migration Survey

Although almost half of the migrants leave their place of origin alone, the other half migrate with family members, as shown in Table 6. Around 34 percent of those who migrate with family members migrate with all of their family members, while around 14 percent migrate with only some of their family members. This indicates that recently, internal migrants are more likely to take some family members with them.

	Both sexes	%	Male	%	Female	%
Total population	67,293,709	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Total migrants</b>	<b>934,215</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>478,570</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>455,645</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Migrate with all family members	313,632	33.57	163,484	34.16	150,148	32.95
Migrate with some family members	158,506	16.97	70,314	14.69	88,191	19.36
Migrate alone	462,077	49.46	244,771	51.15	217,306	<b>47.69</b>

**Table 6. Internal migration in Thailand classified by sex and form of migration** Source: National Statistical Office, the 2016 Thailand Migration Survey

Area of Destination (Region)	Total	%	Bangkok	%	Central Region	%	Northern	%	North Eastern	%	Southern	%
Total Migration	934,215	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>465,623</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>40,355</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>161,472</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>67,998</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>119,931</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>75,866</b>	<b>100</b>
Looking for job	97,930	21.03	4,045	10.02	28,764	17.81	11,831	17.4	46,621	38.87	6,669	8.79
Changing job	34,091	7.32	1,734	4.3	18,932	11.72	2,838	4.17	7,195	6	3,393	4.47
Looking for more incomes	25,225	5.42	1,499	3.71	7,207	4.46	1,107	1.63	11,275	9.4	4,137	5.45
Job assignments	57,547	12.36	2,325	5.76	24,261	15.02	9,359	13.76	10,766	8.98	10,837	14.28
Education	21,712	4.66	4,259	10.55	3,965	2.46	4,866	7.16	7,153	5.96	1,469	1.94
Change of residence	43,714	9.39	1,431	3.55	15,106	9.36	11,988	17.63	3,272	2.73	11,917	15.71
Return to place of origin	120,205	25.82	20,228	50.13	40,231	24.92	13,944	20.51	23,239	19.38	22,563	29.74
Follow family members	54,103	11.62	2,967	7.35	21,129	13.09	9,283	13.65	7,855	6.55	12,869	16.96
Family business	3,439	0.74	—	—	132	0.08	238	0.35	2,370	1.98	699	0.92
Health care	302	0.06	—	—	302	0.19	—	—	—	—	—	0
Dependency	1,443	0.31	—	—	—	—	131	0.19	—	—	1,312	1.73
Taking care of others	846	0.18	—	—	545	0.34	115	0.17	186	0.16	—	—
Others	5,065	1.09	1,867	4.63	899	0.56	2,299	3.38	—	—	—	—

**Table 7. Trends for reasons for internal migration in the future classified by regions** Source: National Statistical Office, the 2016 Thailand Migration Survey

As seen in Table 7, in 2016 migrants' main reasons for moving in the future were looking for job opportunity, changing jobs, having job assignments, and looking for more income. From Table 7, it is also interesting to see that a large number of migrants said they would return to their places of origin.

### Types of Internal Child Migration

**Independent child migration.** Independent child migrants are children under 15 years of age who leave their home independently in search of work or a place to stay. Independent child migrants include not only Thai children but also children from the neighboring countries like Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam. These children are vulnerable to exploitation and human trafficking, especially in the capital city of Bangkok, its surrounding economic zone and various tourist destinations. The reasons for independent child migration are various. Aside from the economic motivation, some Thai children may leave their home because they have been abandoned by their parents or are being abused by their family. Children from neighboring countries may migrate independently to Thailand because of poverty, to seek for jobs and better livelihood options. Internal child migrants under the age of 15 living on their own are likely to be missed by censuses and other official data sources.

**Child migration with parents.** In rural communities, economic reasons are the main motivator for population to migrate to cities, especially to Bangkok and other industrial cities. The children either migrate with their parents to work in the city or stay with grandparents and relatives in their places of origin. When parents leave children behind in the countryside, it tends to be because they believe their children will receive a better education there.

Child migration for educational reasons. Thai children may migrate from home to further their education. In the past, it was common for adolescents to move to a dormitory or live with relatives in the bigger city to attend schools. These groups of children usually come from families who can afford to send them to better schools and intend for their children to advance to a higher level of education and attend a highly competitive school or win a scholarship in the future. Although the number of children who migrate to study in bigger cities before age of 15 is not available in secondary data, this phenomenon is common in Thai society, and relatives are usually able to support and accommodate these children while they are away from home for education.

## Education of Migrant Children

Thai education is based on the principles of providing education for all segments of society and participating in developing and providing continuing education. The principles and concepts of the Thai educational system are reviewed in this section of the paper.

## Educational System in Thailand

The 1997 Constitution recognizes the right of all Thai people to receive ongoing education. It protects the rights of children, youth, and the underprivileged to education. It ensures the right of local organizations to participate in the provision of education and input appropriate resources at a local level. The local government can manage and administer schools with freedom. The 1997 Constitution also ensures the right of all Thai people to receive quality compulsory education for at least 12 years. In order to meet the above requirements, the first *National Education Act* was promulgated to serve as the fundamental law for the administration and provision of education. The aim of the act is to promote and oversee all levels and types of education that are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

Educational reform in Thailand aims to improve the quality of services under bureaucratic organizations. The reform is to facilitate decentralization of authority to educational service areas, and local administrative organizations. Moreover, the reform encourages other agencies to participate in providing educational administration at both central and local levels. The Ministry of Education is responsible for overseeing educational policies, plans, standards, and for mobilizing necessary resources to achieve the goals under the amendments of the *National Education Act*. The Office of the Education Council is in charge of proposing the national education scheme and coordinating and promoting educational development. The council also provides opinions and advice on relevant laws and ministerial regulations as stipulated in the *National Education Act*. The Office of the Basic Education Commission is charged with overseeing the basic education commission of approximately 33,000 schools all over the country in 175 educational areas.

*The Educational Strategic Action Plan* announced in 2004 aims to accelerate education reform and steer the direction of the Ministry of Education. The Plan's mission is to establish an efficient system of quality education, to raise educational standards and to enhance Thailand's competitiveness at an international level. The main strategies are to first create educational opportunities by generating equality of access to basic education. The plan encourages social partners to participate in educational provision. The plan extends to strengthening vocational education by encouraging the private sector to invest in workers with vocational degrees. In terms of the Plan's provision for informal education, the strategy is also to promote access to lifelong learning for the general public through educational institutions. The second main strategy is to develop quality of learning through developing curriculum relying on knowledge-based livelihoods and utilize innovations and media for disseminating knowledge. The Plan aims to strengthen the educational supply by promoting educational personnel with sufficient trainings and bettering the quality of life. In order to develop quality learning, the management system needs to be strengthened by improving rules and regulations. The Plan aims to improve the application of technology to educational administration in order to encourage good planning, monitoring

and evaluation with the criteria for good governance. In addition, better use of technology will allow educational resources to be used efficiently and be shared by all with upgraded standards. Through the implementation of the Plan by the Ministry of Education, it is expected that all people will have equal and continual access to education. People of all ages will be endowed with knowledge, competence and ethical values for contributing to society.

Type and level of education	Ordinary students	Disadvantaged students in welfare education	Students from low income families	Students in non-formal education system
Primary	1,100 (\$33 USD)	4,140 (\$125)	1,560 (\$47)	2,080 (\$63)
Lower Secondary	1,800(\$54)	4,220 (\$127)	4,300 (\$130)	700 (\$21)
Upper Secondary	2,700 (\$81)	5,120 (\$154)	4,240 (\$128)	4,240 (\$128)

**Table 8. General expenditure per head for public school students in Thailand. Unit: Thai baht** Source: Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, 2004

Education is classified into three types: formal education, non-formal education, and informal education. Formal education is divided into two levels: basic education and higher education, with services provided through public and private institutions. Basic education covers two years of pre-primary, six years of primary, three years of lower secondary, and three years of upper secondary education (Kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade). Free basic education covers 14 years of basic education. The educational institutions at this level are decentralized in terms of administration and management according to the *National Education Act*. Higher education is provided at universities and equivalent institutions. It is divided into two levels, lower than degree level and degree level. Lower than degree level education is offered in vocational colleges, physical education, dramatic arts and fine arts. The majority of courses offered under vocational and teacher training education requires approximately two years of study. Degree level programs take two years of study for students who have already completed two-year diploma courses, and four to six years of study for those finishing their upper secondary education.

Level	Age Group	2000	2001	2002	2003
Pre-primary	3-5	2,892	2,906	2,961	2,987
Primary	6-11	5,838	5,835	5,820	5,808
Lower secondary	12-14	2,827	2,845	2,881	2,914
Upper Secondary	15-17	3,006	2,905	2,842	2,823
Higher	18-21	4,431	4,344	4,220	4,077
Total	3-21	24,827	24,585	24,447	24,346

**Table 9. Student enrollment by age in Thailand in 2004** (in 1000s) Source: Office of the National Education Commission, Thailand Education Statistics Report, 1999-2003, Thailand

Formal education also covers special needs and welfare education. Special needs education is provided for children with learning disabilities. The teaching and learning in special education is organized in both special schools and inclusive schools. A special curriculum is adopted for the hearing impaired, mentally handicapped, visually impaired, physically impaired and health impaired. Welfare education is provided for those who are socially or culturally disadvantaged. Students not only receive their education for free but also accommodation, food, clothing, equipment, textbooks, and other necessities. These students are given special vocational training relevant to their locality with the aim of gaining skills for their future employment.

Number of Educational Institutions	Total	Public	Private
Pre-Primary	44,760	42,075	2,685
Primary	33,043	31,426	1,617
Lower secondary	10,490	9,903	587
Upper secondary (general)	2,837	2,666	171
Upper secondary (vocational)	889	540	349

**Table 10. Number of educational institutions in Thailand** Source: Office of the National Education Commission, Thailand Education Statistics Report, 1999-2003, Thailand

Formal education also covers vocational education offered to school children at both primary and secondary levels, to provide them with work experience and assist them in career preparation and application of technology. Vocational education conducted at upper secondary schools leads to the lower certificate of vocational education; at the post-secondary level it leads to a diploma or other high certificate; and at the university level it leads to a degree.

Non-formal education aims at providing more flexibility in management, modalities, and duration of completion. The content and curricula can be adjusted to meet the needs of learners. There are five types of non-formal education provided by both public and private institutes: pre-school, education for literacy, general non-formal education, vocational non-formal education, and quality of life improvement activities. Pre-schools can be established by local communities or family-based centers for children two to six years of age. Education for literacy is provided for adults aged 14 years and over who are still illiterate. These programs emphasize the integration of literacy and problem solving skills to improve quality of life. Activities to promote Thai language usage among Thai Muslims, minorities, and hill-tribes are served by teachers located in areas with the targeted population. General non-formal education provides continuing education for those not enrolled in formal education. The degree covers primary to higher-level education organized in public schools, official premises, factories, or other accessible organizations. Learners are awarded the same qualification as those in the formal school system. The learning process is comprised of classroom learning, distance learning, and self-learning. Vocational non-formal education, meanwhile, is offered through polytechnics, industrial and community colleges. This type

of non-formal education is supervised by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Labor. Courses provide training in vocational skills and aim to improve quality of life for populations who have no chance to study at a higher level in rural areas. Vocational training in the form of non-formal education comes in both short courses and interest group programs for those with specific needs. Quality of life improvement activities are provided to the general public by the Ministry of Education and other agencies responsible for education, welfare and public services.

Informal education enables individuals to study subjects according to their interest, potential, and readiness. Such education is provided through media, libraries, museums, and community learning centers. For example, community learning networks offer reading centers in health offices, agricultural offices and natural learning centers. Informal learning also includes transfers of local wisdom using local media and cooperative networks. Furthermore, home schooling is encouraged to get parents involved in providing basic education. However, the government has yet to come up with guidelines to ensure home school educational standards.

### **Policy for Migrant Children: Right and/or Access**

Rights for migrant children are crucial in terms of ensuring their quality of life and human development. Hence, it's necessary to review and analyze rights for migrant children in accordance with the policies of the Thai educational system. The right to quality of life of migrants can be divided into five aspects: right to social security, right to education, right to movement, right to property entitlement, and right to life.

**The right to social security.** Regular migrants only receive access to social security schemes. These schemes include work accident compensation, disabilities, or unemployment. Irregular migrants, however, are denied these compensations. Regular migrants under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) labor import schemes are covered with the same benefits as Thai workers under the Social Security Office scheme.

**The right to education.** Unregistered migrants and their dependents can enroll in the Thai education system. This is made possible by the Cabinet Resolution on Education for Unregistered Persons in 2005, which provides the right to education at all levels for all children in Thailand. All educational institutions are required to admit children of school age to study, with or without civil registration. The Thai government has also allocated additional funds to support schools providing education for migrants. The following paragraph provides an example of informal education for migrant children in urban Thailand.

**Construction Camp Learning Center.** Construction Camp Learning Center is a typical school for young migrant children who have accompanied their parents working at construction sites in Bangkok. This school is built of yellow shipping containers and it welcomes more than 40 migrant children from rural Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar. Located next to the railway's construction site, it is the only construction camp learning center in Thailand. It is funded by Bangkok Transit System Engineering Company and the Foundation for the Better Life of Children. Various language skills, life skills, games, and art are introduced to young learners as part of a pre-kindergarten curriculum. A volunteer teacher who has been teaching street children in Bangkok for more than 20 years is the principal of this school. Together with short-term volunteers from various universities in Bangkok, the staff provides informal and interactive education for migrant children who are not permanent residents of Bangkok.

**The right to movement.** The right to movement for international migrant workers is restricted under Thai laws and policies. The workers must reside and travel only in the province where they have their labor registration. Leaving or traveling out of a province where they work and reside is a violation of immigration law. Registered migrants can travel outside the province only when the governor of that province grants them permission to do so. Moreover, migrant workers are denied the right to apply for a motorbike or vehicle license.

**The right to property entitlement.** In general, migrant workers have the right to property entitlement and to transfer their properties, but this right is not acknowledged and the implementation of the policy is still unclear. Before 2009, migrant workers could not transfer remittances to their home countries since they were not allowed to open a bank account due to lack of Thai identification. In 2009, the Ministry of Interior and the Bank of Thailand decided to allow registered migrants to use their ID cards to open a bank account and transfer money within Thailand or abroad. Despite being denied vehicle licenses, migrant workers are allowed to buy and register vehicles.

**The right to life.** Under Thai and international law, deportations of migrant workers to areas of conflicts are unlawful. Forced repatriation of unaccompanied children to countries where they face uncertain livelihoods or unfamiliar customs is condemned. The right to life argument can also be used as grounds to deny the deportation of migrant workers when deportations are potential threats to the lives and the survival of these people.

### **Outcomes: Access and Performances**

Major initiatives have been taken at both the policy and planning levels, and are being implemented at both the institutional and the local level. There have been significant changes in educational administration and achievements. Some recent achievements related to youth education are discussed below.

The first achievement is the expansion of free schooling to fourteen years. In 2002, 12-year free basic education covering six years of primary and six years of secondary education was granted to students throughout the country for the first time. As of 2004, the benefits were extended to include two years of pre-primary schooling. In 2003, the Compulsory Education Act required that all children aged 7-16 be enrolled in basic education institutions. The second achievement for children regarding access to education is the success of the needy schools project. The project aims to keep open smaller schools, or those with less than 120 students, since these schools are located in poorer rural areas. Without this project, students would have faced difficulties travelling to a more distant school, and in the long term this could discourage children from attending. Mobile computer units are another achievement that utilizes creativity and innovation to make the best use of technology in expanding access to education. Mobile computer units are vehicles equipped with approximately 15 computers plus one teacher; these mobile units visit two or three schools per day. The aim of the visits is to develop new Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills among students as well as to increase access to a broader base of knowledge and information. The fourth achievement is child-friendly school projects. The project focuses on improving learning environments for children by creating child-friendly spaces to encourage creativity and learning. In this project, the Ministry of Education partners with international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), and Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO). Another achievement that has increased opportunities for children in rural area is the "One District, One Fellowship" program. This project provides fellowships to secondary school students from poor families to enable them to pursue higher education either in Thailand or abroad. In addition, there are plans to introduce income-contingent loans to ensure that all can afford higher education. Dream Schools Project is another achievement that aims to improve schools and teachers in every district across the country. Each of the schools under the project would be well equipped, have highly skilled teaching staff and would be managed by trained educational administrators.

These achievements help facilitate migrant children gain equal access to education from any province in Thailand. In the past, children were restricted to attending schools enlisted in their registered hometown. New educational policies allow migrant children to receive same quality of education at the school near their current residence instead of having to relocate back to their hometown. This helps migrant children access education anywhere while being able to live with their parents.

## Challenges and Critical Issues

As the 2013 Population and Housing Census showed, the bulk of internal migration occurred among citizens moving between provinces from rural to urban areas. The most common purpose of such migration was related to job searching, followed by searching for better educational opportunities. Among these migrants, only 20 percent have dependents moving along with the head of the household. According to national statistical data, 8.4 percent of migrants were children less than four years old, 5.1 percent were between five and nine years old, and 5.1 percent were between 10 and 14 years old. The data confirm the trend of adult migrants leaving their children at home to be cared for by grandparents. Internal migration, especially of young laborers, causes significant changes to their children and challenges the intergenerational relationships between the young and the old in rural areas.

Reversal of rural to urban internal migration promises to be a future trend in migration movements in Thailand. According to data obtained by the population survey, the majority of migrants are now considering moving back to their places of origin to find work in their hometown. This trend will perhaps be similar to the time when Thailand was hit with financial crisis in 1997, and the economic downturn slowed the flow of migrants to the industrial and service sectors, since there was a higher chance of unemployment in those areas. With this trend, there may be less migration of children following their parents, and they will be more likely to enroll in local schools in their hometown.

From the data and resources discussed above, we recommend that policies at the national level incorporate access to education into the highest laws of the country. The basic principles of education for Thailand are mandated in the Thai constitution. This results in implementation of equal education to all people in Thailand, regardless of their origins. It is stated that every person shall enjoy the equal right to receive basic education and such education should be provided for free for at least 12 years. The constitution applies to all children in Thailand, no matter if they are certified as Thai citizens or not. Moreover, the assurance of basic quality education requires all educational zones to maintain their quality and provide access to all children even if they are not born in their hometowns. In terms of policy recommendation, the laws and strategic planning by the Ministry of Education should ensure the right of local organizations to participate in the provision of education. Therefore, educational reform should emphasize the concept of decentralization in educational administration. As far as education is concerned, the guidelines contained in acts and decrees related to education should be monitored and evaluated according to enactment of national education law.

Education is compulsory for all children even if they are not residing in their hometown. This ensures that child migration does not conflict with the child's right to obtain an education. The quality of education should be equal for all levels of compulsory education. The Ministry of Education is mandating all administrators to monitor quality assurance by law. However, due to the recent trend of reverse migration, it's recommended that the Thai government provide more resources, both in terms of funds and teachers, to schools in areas with a lack of educational facilities.

In general, the greatest concerns with regard to child migration involve the lack of access to education and the discontinuity of schooling. Seasonal migration of families with children could result in a child's education being discontinued and thus the child fails to complete the education requirement. However, educational policy in Thailand provides access to education for all children regardless of the child's place of origin. Hence, children can enroll and continue their education with the same quality and still receive financial aid from the government. Another problem facing children migration is access to education. As stated above, the Thai education system includes alternative informal education from the primary to college level. Moreover, both private and non-profit organizations play an important role in providing optional schooling. The shipping container school at the construction site is an example that illustrates that education is accessible even at small working sites for migrant children. Overall, the policy of education in Thailand provides compulsory quality education, access to education, and alternative education for all children, including the children of migrants.

Chapter Seven

# Education of Migrant Children in China

Jialing Han

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**I**n 1979, China began its transition from a traditional planned economy to a **socialist market-oriented economy**. Since the reforms of the late 1970s, China has seen remarkably rapid economic development with nine percent annual GDP growth, relying largely on investment – and export-led economic strategies. This economic growth has been accompanied by rapid industrialization, urbanization and massive internal migration. The volume of rural-urban migration in such a short period is likely the largest in human history.

Large-scale population migration started in the late 1980s and accelerated in the 1990s. By the end of 2015, the number of internal migrants was 247 million, about 18 percent of the total population, with a growth of six to eight million people each year (National Bureau of Statistics, 2011). The large-scale internal migration between rural and urban areas, or between different regions, has become a unique and compelling social phenomenon in China.

In 2010, China's economy surpassed Japan's to become the second largest in the world. The rapid growth of the Chinese economy drew attention worldwide; what brought about the 'China miracle' of such rapid economic development? With the reform and opening-up policy in 1978, China started to increase its participation in the global market economy. With the historical constraints of the lack of capital and low share in global markets, China strategically switched to an export-oriented development model relying on low-cost labor from rural areas. Migrant workers, especially internal (rural-to-urban and town-to-city) migrant workers, provided important labor resources for China's economic development. The transition from rural to urban and from peasant to worker resulted in an increased need for urban social services, particularly education.

## Migration and Migrants in China

### Socioeconomic and Demographic Background of Internal Migrants in China

China's household registration system, or *hukou* system, was introduced during the Cold War, when China was closed to the world. It helped to maintain social stability and balance development between rural and urban areas by restricting population migration and coordinating the allocation of social resources. After 1979, the system loosened a little in terms of restricting the flow of population. However, it was still used to allocate the distribution of social services like subsistence allowances, social security, and education. In this case, although people can migrate to cities for work, they can not access the social services that local citizens enjoy.

Development and social transformation over the last 30 years have generated massive flows of migrants, mainly from rural to urban areas. The population of this group is large and has grown rapidly. The number of migrants increased from 6.57 million in 1982 to 220 million in 2010, and 247 million in 2015. In metropolises like Shanghai, Beijing, and Guangzhou, more than 40 percent of the population is migrants (Zheng, 2013).

In China, most migrants are young workers between 16 to 30 years old, migrating from rural to urban areas. In 2010, there were 150 million migrants from rural areas. About 54 percent of intra-province migrants and 82 percent of inter-province migrants were from rural areas. The overall direction of migration was from China's middle and western regions to the east coast; that is, from undeveloped areas to economically developed areas with more work opportunities. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong attracted lots of migrant workers, which made Guangdong the province with the most migrants. After the 1990s, the Yangtze River Delta (including Shanghai, Jiangsu Province and Zhejiang Province) and areas around Beijing also became prime destinations for migrant workers (Zheng, 2013).

More employment opportunities and improvement in public services resulted in migrant workers staying for a longer time in their destination cities; many migrant workers now live in the cities and seldom return to their hometowns in rural areas. Migrant workers are also getting older: half of the population of migrant workers was above 29 years old in 2015, compared to 23 years old in 1982 (Zheng, 2013).

In the 1990s, migrant workers in China tended to be very young and they did not have children that they had to take with them. Unlike the common migration pattern seen in other countries around the world, there were few migrants under 15 years old. However, as the number of migrants increased, the age, gender, and type of migrants changed. There were more married migrant workers, and they tended to migrate with their families. According to a survey conducted by the National Health and Family Planning Commission in 2015, the average family of migrant workers had 2.61 people, and more than 50 percent of families had three or more family members. More than 50 percent of migrants were female. The proportion and number of migrant children increased at the same time (National Health and Family Planning Commission of the People's Republic of China, 2016).

As the government has made great efforts to offer equal public services, more migrants have had access to basic health services, family planning services, and social and medical insurance. However, social and medical insurance coverage among migrants is still lower than among local residents of the same age (All China Women's Federation, 2011). Migrants' participation in social and political activities is also much lower. Even today some children still do not have equal access to education in destination cities. These challenges exclude migrants from becoming true urban citizens.

### Definition, Scale, and Types of Migration

In China, there is international and internal migration. Apart from internal migration, China is increasingly attracting international migrants who come to work in China. For example, there are migrants from Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar and their children living along China's southwestern border, and there are African and Arab migrants in Yiwu, Zhejiang and Guangzhou, Guangdong. In addition, there are millions of Chinese workers working abroad. However, the biggest group of migrant workers in China is internal migrant workers who have moved from rural to urban areas and from small towns to big cities. Compared to the large number of internal migrants, international migrants and their children do not draw as much attention from researchers and the media.

In China, migrants are called the “floating population” because when they move from their hometown to their destination city, they cannot change their *hukou* registration to the place where they live and work. Most migrants come from rural areas and are therefore referred to as *nongmingong* [peasant workers]. According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics, in 2013 nearly 31.4 percent of migrants worked in manufacturing, about 22.2 percent in construction and 11 percent in wholesale and retail. In addition, the number of the migrants who were employed in the informal sector or tertiary sector of the economy is increasing (National Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

As young migrant workers work and live in the cities, they get married. They either get married in their hometown and bring their new family with them, or get married and give birth to a child in the city. However, under the current Chinese *hukou* system, a newborn's *hukou* is derived neither from place of birth nor from residence, but from parents' place of *hukou*. No matter where these children are born, they still cannot obtain household registration in destination cities under China's *hukou* system. The children who live in cities without urban *hukou* are China's so-called “migrant children”; those who remain in rural areas while their parents migrate to the cities for work are called “left-behind children.”

In this paper, ‘migrant children’ are understood as those individuals who are under the age of 18 years and have been living with their parents in a place different from their place of *hukou* for more than six months. Street children and international migrant children are not included in this paper.

According to China's sixth population census, which was conducted in 2010, the total number of migrant children has increased to 35.81 million, that is, twice the number of migrant children in 2000 and 41.73 percent higher than in 2005. Among children enrolled in schools in urban areas, 31.06 million were migrant children, making up one fourth of the total number of urban schoolchildren (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2011). In 2010, 80.34 percent of migrant children, or 28.77 million children, had household registration in rural areas. The rest were registered in small urban areas. At the same time, there were 61.02 million children left behind in rural areas

because their parents had migrated to large cities. More than 70 percent of migrants had migrated to the eastern part of the country (National Health and Family Planning Commission of the People's Republic of China, 2016). Guangdong Province had the largest population of migrant children with 4.08 million, followed by Zhejiang Province (2.8 million), Jiangsu Province (2.14 million), and Shandong Province (1.94 million). These four provinces totaled about 32.5 percent of migrant children (Yang, 2016). At the same time, metropolises with more opportunities, such as Beijing (3.25 million migrant workers and 160,000-200,000 migrant children), Shanghai (2.37 million migrant workers and 190,000 migrant children), and Guangzhou (2 million migrant workers and 150,000 migrant children), also attract more migrant workers and migrant children (National Health and Family Planning Commission, 2015).

Some migrant children were born in rural areas and migrated to large cities with their parents; some were born and grew up in big cities. In recent years, a growing number of migrant children were born in a city far away from their parents' hometowns, where their *hukou* registration remains. As this generation of migrant children has grown up, a series of issues relating to their compulsory education in urban areas has arisen.

### Researching Migrant Children in China

This report is based on current research and statistics related to the education of migrant children in China. Previous research by the author is also included. The primary focus is on compulsory education. The central government has created a legal framework that allocates grants to guarantee access to adequate education for migrant children. However, the imbalance of the Chinese education system at the local level makes it complicated to evaluate the achievement of such policies at the local level. This paper discusses the barriers to equal access and quality education for internal migrant children and reviews the development of education policies in China. It highlights successful initiatives in this area and concludes with a discussion of challenges and future policy implications and suggestions.

## Education of Migrant Children in China

### Educational System in China

Education in China is a state-run centralized public service that is administered by the Ministry of Education at the national level to plan and coordinate education. All levels of government (province-level municipality/province/municipality; city; and county/district) have a Department of Education.

The education system in China consists of preschool, elementary school, secondary school, vocational education, and higher education, as well as special education and adult education. In 2015, the Ministry of Education reported a 99.79 percent attendance rate for primary school and an 80 percent rate for both primary and middle schools (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2016). Public schools are the main education providers, though private education institutions have existed since the 1980s.

According to the Chinese Constitution and the Compulsory Education Law (1986), regardless of gender, ethnic, economic and religious differences, all school age children have the right to equal education. Nine-year compulsory education requires all citizens must attend school for at least nine years, which is funded by the government. It includes six years of primary education, starting at age six or seven, and three years of junior secondary education (junior middle school) for ages 12 to 15. Children are supposed to enroll in schools near their registered places of residence.

**Funding for compulsory education is the responsibility of county-level governments.** In the Chinese education finance system, different levels of education are funded by different levels of government. Higher education is mainly the responsibility of the central and provincial governments. In 2002, the State Council confirmed that the financing of compulsory education is primarily the responsibility of district/county-level governments (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2003). China has a population of 1.38 billion with 56 ethnic minorities. Because China covers a vast territory and has a big population, the demographics vary from one place to another. The local government is responsible for compulsory education and must fully mobilize local resources to develop an education systems that meets a variety of local needs. With tremendous variations in economic development across different regions and localities, district/county-level governments' ability to finance compulsory education varies drastically. While the central and provincial governments also provide some funding for compulsory education, this varies a lot from province to province, and education resources investment in compulsory education in the rural areas is notably lower than that in major urban municipalities.

To balance the allocation of educational resources and narrow the gap between rural and urban China, the Chinese government initiated a financial support system called the 'Two Exemptions and One Subsidy Plan' in 2006 to provide compulsory education for economically disadvantaged students from rural areas. It waived incidental fees and offered free textbooks and living subsidies. The central government is responsible for providing free textbooks; the local government is mainly responsible for incidental fee waivers and living subsidies for students who live on campus. Starting in 2006, the central government has waived incidental fees for students from rural areas in western regions and provided funding for school building repair and maintenance. In 2007, the Two Exemptions and One Subsidy plan benefited 150 million students from rural areas. In 2008, the plan expanded to urban areas

and benefited migrant children in the cities. In addition, starting in fall 2011, a nutrition improvement project was initiated for students enrolled in compulsory education in rural areas. It aimed to improve the health of economically disadvantaged students by offering more nutritious food. In 2011, the pilot project started in some counties with the national financial support. The project will cover all the counties under the average poverty level by the end of 2017. In 2015, the central government put in ¥10.51 billion RMB (\$1.58 billion USD) to guarantee funding for compulsory education and narrow the gap between rural and urban areas. However, the education quality gap between rural and urban areas remains a big challenge for education equity in China.

**Hukou based admission and exam system.** In China, under the compulsory education system, school-age children are admitted to the school nearest to their place of household registration. Accordingly, local governments are only responsible for local school-age children's education (e.g. those with registered permanent residence or *hukou* in the area); other children like migrant children living in their jurisdiction are not taken into account during budget and education planning. Hence, when migrant children leave their place of registered permanent residence, especially those coming from rural areas, they cannot benefit from education subsidies in other places where the government is not responsible for them and may not have the financial resources to provide for their education. This has influenced not only compulsory education, but also post-compulsory schooling (senior middle school), during which students begin studying for the college entrance examination.

After they have completed their compulsory education, students have to take the entrance examination for high school and college. Students may go to educational institutions including universities, junior colleges, higher professional schools, special vocational schools, and other schools. The college entrance exam that determine college admission is very competitive. Each province may have their own exam questions and college admission quota is allocated at the provincial level. For fear of intensifying competition within their province and reducing local students' chances of college admission, most provinces only allow students with local *hukou* to take the exam and participate in college admission in their province. Therefore, most cross-province migrant children have to go back to their place of *hukou* to take the test. Inability to change *hukou* limits migrant children's opportunities for further education and getting a good job in the future, which in turn limits their social mobility. As China grapples with the long-time debate about whether to adopt a model of elite education or mass education, And there is a large gap in educational quality between rural and urban areas, as well as between different regions.

China has the largest number of students, teachers, and schools in the world. Like parents from other East Asian cultures influenced by Confucianism, Chinese parents are famous for their strict family education and great emphasis on children's education. The exam-oriented education emphasizes knowledge over skill training, and focuses on obtaining a degree over obtaining experience. Performance on the college entrance exam is almost

the only criterion for college admission, which makes Chinese education extremely exam-oriented. In general, Chinese education is criticized for a lack of emphasis on creative and critical thinking. As China grapples with the long-time debate about whether to adopt a model of elite education or mass education, there is a large gap in educational quality between rural and urban areas, as well as between different regions.

### Policies for Migrant Children

Beginning in the late 1980s, especially after 1991, large-scale migration accelerated industrialization and urbanization, and the education needs of migrant children became more prominent as more and more migrant workers brought along their families. Providing equal education to migrant children is the foundation of educational equity and social justice. In China, the *hukou*-based enrollment system and the financing structure for compulsory basic education are the systematic barriers to education for migrant children.

Since 1996, a series of policies have set the policy framework of education for migrant children and narrowed the gap between migrant children and local children in education. The efforts made by the central government and the challenges faced in these efforts are analyzed below.

**Migrant children attending public schools in receiving areas.** Before 1995, there wasn't any specific legislation or policies regarding school admission of migrant children in receiving cities. As the education needs of migrant children increased, it became necessary to issue laws and regulations on this issue. In 1996, the Enrollment for School Age Migrant Children program was piloted in Beijing, Shanghai, Zhejiang, and three other areas (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 1996). In 1998, the first policy specifically addressing the issue of migrant children set the foundation for future efforts in this area (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 1998). The regulation affirmed conditional enrollment for migrant children in public schools in receiving areas. Under this law, families of migrant children had to pay extra fees because their registered places of residence was different, and parents had to show an employment permit for admission. This was conditional enrollment.

**The two main responsibilities of government in destination cities and public schools.** In 1998, the first policy regarding migrant children asked public schools in destination areas to enroll migrant children, but it did not clarify the responsibility of municipal governments in destination cities. In 2001, *the State Council Decision on Reforming and Developing Basic Education* (State Council, 2001) clearly stated that municipal governments in destination cities are mostly responsible for the education of migrant children and public schools should be mostly responsible for enrolling migrant children. This policy is known as the "Two Main Responsibilities," and it provides the fundamental principle for determining school admission responsibilities for migrant children. This decision ended a prevarication game between sending and receiving city governments and institutions. It is still the key policy for providing education for migrant children.

**Equal education for migrant children.** In 2003, the Chinese central government proposed the ‘Non-Discrimination’ principle for migrant children, especially those from rural areas (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2003). This policy changed differential enrollment rules for students whose registered place of residence is different from their current residence. It eliminated fees charged to students who attend a school other than their local one. The principle held that to achieve non-discriminatory and equal education, migrant children should have the same access to compulsory education as local students. Secondly, it held that migrant children enrolled in public schools must have the same rights as local students inside and outside classrooms, including eligibility for scholarships and access to extracurricular activities. Third, according to the principle, governments of receiving cities should set standard fees throughout compulsory education and eliminate other related fees for migrant children so as to level the playing field for migrants students and their local peers.

**Support and management for migrant schools.** In 1998, the first regulations regarding private schools for migrant children officially characterized migrant schools as a supplemental solution to solve the education challenges of migrant children, together with public schools (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 1998). It provided laws and regulations concerning the non-registered private schools for migrant children that had already sprung up at that time.

In 2003, departments of education in destination cities were called for both management and support for migrant children schools (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2003). On one hand, governments in destination cities should support those schools with building maintenance funds, place, and teacher training. On the other hand, migrant children schools should be managed with the same standards as other private schools, with the exception of a few administrative conditions for which there could be lower standards. In 2011 and 2012, policies intended to facilitate the balanced development of compulsory education allowed governments in receiving areas to purchase seats in qualified migrant schools to offer education to migrant children (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2001; 2012).

**Constructing a public financing mechanism for migrant children’s education.** The ‘Two Main Responsibilities’ policy gave no clear clues as to how governments in receiving cities are to fulfill their responsibilities. In 2003, the central government indicated that local governments should calculate the average expenditure per student for migrant students based on the real number of students in public schools. It also specified that funding for migrant children education should be included in the local governments’ budgets (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2003). Overall, this policy protected the budget for migrant children’s education and motivated more public schools to enroll migrant children.

In 2006, the ‘Suggestions for Solving Migrant Workers’ Challenges’ policy confirmed the responsibilities, especially financial responsibilities, of governments in receiving cities. It specified that migrant children should be included in the regional education development plans and budget of receiving cities (State Council, 2006). This was known as the ‘Two Inclusions’ principle.

In 2008, another national policy significantly advanced migrant children’s education in receiving cities by requiring that migrant children in public schools enjoy the same free compulsory education as local students (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2008). Under this policy, the central government shared the financial responsibilities of providing compulsory education for migrant children by offering rewards to those areas with higher enrollment rates of migrant children. During 2008 and 2014, the central government allocated ¥5665 million RMB (\$848.9 million USD) in subsidies for migrant children’s compulsory education in urban areas, among which ¥2258 million (\$338.4 million) was used for incidental fee waivers (Department of Finance, 2015).

All of the above regulations and policies were issued after 1996. At present, the fundamental policy framework for solving the challenges of migrant children’s education is already in place. In other words, the government and public schools in destination cities are mainly responsible for adopting various ways to protect the rights of migrant children in obtaining compulsory education.

### **Educational Outcomes of Migrant Children**

The education of migrant children has improved over the last 20 years, especially in small and medium-sized cities. Currently, migrant children attend public schools or migrant-only private schools in destination cities. Although regulations by the central government stipulate that all migrant children have the right to attend a public school in the cities, challenges remain due to the large population of migrant children in large metropolises.

According to the Ministry of Education, the number of migrant children receiving compulsory education increased from 11.67 million in 2009 to 12.95 million in 2014. Migrant children enrolled in public school at a rate of 77.3 percent for elementary school and 80.8 percent for middle school in 2009. In 2014, 78.5 percent of migrant children were enrolled at a public elementary school and 82.3 percent at a public middle school (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2015). More than 20 percent of migrant children, or two million students, studied in migrant schools. These migrant children tend to be those in the most economically disadvantaged situations. Their parents work in heavy-duty and low-paid jobs, such as construction, restaurants, factories, housekeeping services, and other jobs that many local citizens are not willing to do. They are the group of migrant children who need the most support and attention.

So-called migrant children-only private schools (*dagongzidixuexiao*), called migrant schools for short, started appearing in 1992 and 1993, in areas where rent was relatively inexpensive and the number of migrant children was large. These schools met the educational needs for migrant children by offering the same courses and curricula as public schools, flexible admission, and low tuition. School conditions were poor because they could rely only on the small tuition fees collected from students to maintain the facilities. Most teachers had a lack of teaching experience and the turnover rate was high. At first, the government did not certify these schools. Gradually, some local governments started to work with qualified migrant schools to address the challenges and improve migrant children's education. To this day, migrant schools play a supplementary role in solving the education problem for children who cannot access public schools. These schools addressed the education challenge for migrant children using migrant families' resources before the governments made great efforts. They remain an important supplementary measure for those migrant children who cannot be admitted to public schools.

To summarize, most cities have made great efforts to offer equal access to education for migrant children and implement the Two Main Responsibilities policy. Many provincial capitals with large populations of migrant children from the surrounding areas have set a good example. Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province, started a successful effort to increase public school enrollment rates of migrant children as early as 2000; public school enrollment rates of migrant children increased from 30 percent in 2000 to 95.1 percent in 2012 (Xinhua Net, 2012). Fuzhou in Fujian province, Shijiazhuang in Hebei province, and Hefei in Anhui province also effectively provided education for migrant children. Over 90 percent of migrant children in Jiangsu province, on China's east coast, attend public schools in their destination cities. However, challenges remain in major metropolises with a larger population of migrant children.

## Critical Reflections

### Successful Policies, Initiatives, and Cases

In response to the Two Main Responsibilities and Non-Discrimination principles advocated by central government, local governments have developed local policies to arrange for migrant children's education. Different governments have designed their policies on migrant children's education based on local resource needs and development. While local governments started out as passive stakeholders, they have over time improved and expanded their services as reforms took place. Most small and medium-sized cities have made public schooling accessible for migrant children. Therefore, most provincial capitals that draw migrant children from the rest of province were able to set good examples with regard to this issue.

**Shanghai model.** The Shanghai model is worthy of promotion and study. As one of China's mega-metropolises, it has an enormous population with a high proportion of migrants. The Shanghai model was founded on a much more explicit municipal commitment to improve schools for migrant children by providing enough funding to grant full access to public and migrant schools, and assuring more available seats in public schools for migrant children. The main characteristics of the model that allowed Shanghai public schools to accept more migrant children are: more seats, low threshold, fewer requirements, free education, and eligible substitutions.

*Public schools provide more seats.* During the three-year plan (2008-2011), ¥1.04 trillion RMB (\$153 billion USD) was invested to build more schools. Under the plan, 144 schools for grades 1-9 were built, providing 150,000 more seats to meet the increasing demand from migrant children. Public schools also developed more ways to include migrant children, such as recruiting migrant children, assigning them to special classes, or mixing migrant children with local students.

*Significantly reduced requirements to enter public schools.* Under the Shanghai model, only two documents, a certification proving the child's parents are from a rural area, and a residence permit or employment certification, are required to apply for admission to public schools (Shanghai Education, 2008). This is a significantly less stringent requirement when compared to the five documents (household registration book, parents' temporary residence certification, employment permit, certification that nobody could take care of children in hometown, and permission to apply for public schools) that were required according to the 1998 policy.

*Free education.* Migrant children in public schools do not need to pay school choice compensation fees and can be granted government funding to pay for books and other fees in both public schools and migrant schools. Before 2008, these benefits were only available for migrant children with certain qualifications, such as those who possess blueprint registration or those with residence permission.

*Entitlement to enroll in a migrant school in the destination city.* Migrant children who are not admitted to public schools due to lack of available seats can enroll in migrant-children-only schools instead. They can also access free education with no fees for books and other items because the Shanghai government bought 150,000 seats in migrant children schools. Education quality in migrant children schools has also improved with support from the Shanghai government through, for instance, school infrastructure investment and teacher and principal training.

Thus, migrant children in Shanghai have to a large extent enjoyed the same educational rights as local students. By spring 2010 97.2 percent of migrant children were enrolled in free compulsory education. In addition, by fall 2010, compulsory education covered 470,500 migrant children in Shanghai, of whom 336,000 were enrolled in public schools, which is 71.41 percent of the total population (Han, 2017). The others were enrolled in migrant schools where the Shanghai government had bought seats. The Shanghai model represents a successful application of the “Two Main Responsibilities” principle.

**Participation of the social sector in education for migrant children.** After coming to the cities, migrant children become long-term residents in the city instead of short-term migrants. As new residents in the destination cities, they not only encounter difficulties in terms of adapting to new types of life and patterns of behavior, but are also unable to enjoy the same public services and rights as local children. They often reside in peripheral areas with limited living space and deplorable conditions. Their study environment is precarious, lacking adequate resources and space to do homework. Their parents are usually busy with work and return home late, which limits their time to help their kids with their studies. To meet migrant children’s needs, some NGOs offer community-based support for migrant children.

*Case one: The Migrant Education and Action Research Center.* One of the first community-based NGOs in China, the Migrant Education and Action Research Center (MWEAC), adopts a combined action and research approach and offers free public education and social services to migrant children and their families, including after-school programs and weekend activities. Founded in 1999, it is located in suburban Beijing. MWEAC offers a place for migrant children to study and to socialize after school. MWEAC programs include after-school tutoring on weekdays, one-to-one tutoring on Saturdays, and reading, information sharing, and a variety of other activities on weekends (e.g., English speaking class, drawing, dancing, and computers). The multidisciplinary activities are designed to enrich migrant children’s social skills, health, nutrition, and other aspects of their daily lives. Children are not just the target group; they also help design the activities. The materials and resources used for the activities are simple and come from their life. For example, recycled boxes can be used to make handcrafts. Through interaction with other migrants and volunteers, children get to know more about the city and public resources (e.g. libraries, museums), gain confidence, and feel included in a community. They are also empowered by gaining self-management and community participation experience. Parents also do networking and are encouraged to participate in their children’s education. In addition, through building relationships and understanding with migrant children and their parents, MWEAC built a platform of equal communication between urban society and the floating population and explored a community-based service model for assisting migrant children.

*Case two: Fourth Ring Play Group.* Because some migrant parents cannot afford the high cost of kindergarten for migrant children, Fourth Ring Play Group (FRPG) encourages parent participation in the early education of their children. FRPG is a pre-school organization based in Beijing. Most parents are self-employed as street vendors or small businesspeople. Migrant parents are empowered to become teachers in the community. They participate in classes by learning how to work with children, telling stories of their hometowns, and creating teaching materials on their own. This environment promotes network building between parents. In addition, parents, especially mothers, can take turns to lead class activities and help each other. They rely on community resources to obtain materials for the class activities and human resources for program development and empower migrants with a sense of inclusion in their destination cities.

With all these efforts, the community-based service model for migrant children is spreading. Because of the demand generated by the success of this model thus far, there are hundreds of community-based NGOs offering different kinds of services to migrant children all over China. Recently, governments have begun to adopt this model as some government-run community centers have started to include migrant children in their social service activities. Furthermore, some NGOs have received funding from governments to support their social services for migrant children.

### Challenges and Critical Issues

**Reforming the *hukou* system.** The reform of the *hukou* system in 2014 set the guidelines for household registration in different types of cities. The reform unified the household registration system in both rural and urban areas and created a residence permit system (public service is based on place of residence). Household registration for small cities is open and less restricted than in mid-size cities, but household registration in super metropolises is still strictly controlled. Only metropolises such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen have tightened enrollment requirements for migrant children. The new residence-based admission system is merit-based and depends on parents' level of education and work. Therefore, it mostly benefits highly educated migrants, which prevents other migrant workers and migrant children from being included and obtaining an education in mega cities. As a result of the new policy, the number of migrant children enrolled in public education in Beijing dropped from 75,000 in 2013 to 58,000 in 2014 (New Citizen Plan, 2014). Even Shanghai has tightened their policies for migrant children's education. As a result of these stricter policies, many migrant children have to go back and become "left-behind children" in rural areas.

**Access to education.** Although most migrant children can enjoy basic education, and the Two Main Responsibilities and Non-Discrimination principles have been in place since 2001, significant barriers to accessing education remain. The main challenges for migrant children to get access to public schools lie in the numerous and ambiguous requirements as well as the high extra expenses associated with admission to public schools. In the past, applying to public schools usually required five documents—household registration (*hukou*) book, parents' temporary residence certification, employment permit, certification that none could take care of children in the hometown, and permission to apply for public schools. Now, most destination cities have dropped the last two requirements in the previous list and instead require a social security certificate; some cities may require other documents. However, these certifications are not available to those parents who work in non-formal economic sectors.

Those families that cannot afford to go to public schools choose migrant schools. Although the facilities and teaching quality at migrant schools tends to be poor, the school fees are lower, access is more flexible, and services are more suited to the needs of migrant children. These schools have little financial support from the government and rely on the tuition they collect to maintain daily operations. In this respect, migrant children's families have a heavy financial burden but little payoff for their efforts. According to the Survey of Living Quality of Rural Migrant Workers conducted by National Bureau of Statistics of China in 2006, the average migrant child's family in an urban area spent ¥2,450 RMB (\$360USD) a year on education, comprising 19.78 percent of their family's total annual expenses (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006).

**The college entrance exam system.** China's college entrance exam system limits the social mobility and education of migrant students. The difficulties of working in the big cities have made migrant parents aware of the importance of education in transcending their marginalized status. The majority of migrant workers hope that their children can obtain a good education so that they may have the opportunity for a better future. Therefore, among migrant parents, there is a strong interest in the opening up of high school education and the college entrance exam for their children in destination cities. At present, migrant children can only take the college entrance exam in their registered place of residence. Under this system, migrant students hoping to study for the college entrance exam must return to their place of *hukou* for high school. In 2012, the State Council issued a policy that allowed migrant children to take the high school entrance exam in their destination city. However, because of regional protectionism, there remained strict restrictions on migrant children's admission. In 2013, about 4,500 qualified migrant children took the college entrance exam in destination cities; in 2014, the number went up to 56,000. And in 2015, the number was 70,000 (Yang, 2016). However, there were few qualified migrant children taking the college entrance exam in mega cities such as Beijing and Shanghai.

## Policy Implications

**In order to achieve justice and universal access, public policy should take into consideration the interests of society's most disadvantaged groups.** Compulsory education is one of the basic public services offered by the government, and is the right of migrant children. Strengthening the government's role in public services, expanding urban education and reducing requirements for school access can prevent intergenerational transmission of poverty and the ossification of the class structure.

The Shanghai model has showed that reduced requirements didn't result in an unexpectedly huge increase in migrant children's enrollment and didn't lower the quality of education resources. Rather, the reforms protected the educational rights of migrant children and offered higher quality education to migrant children in a more convenient way. On the other hand, market-oriented models such as that seen in Guangdong resulted in limited government responsibility and limited funding support for migrant children in both public and private schools. Under such models, the probability that migrant children get equal access to quality education largely depends on their parents' income.

Therefore, education policies should follow the principles of fairness, universal access, and maximizing the interests of the disadvantaged. There should be no systemic barriers for the equal education rights of disadvantaged students such as migrant children.

**Province- and municipal-level governments in destination areas should shoulder more of the fiscal burden for education.** The financial implementation of compulsory education in China follows the principle of "local responsibility in a multilevel administration". This means that the local government is responsible for compulsory education, but there are different levels of administration from the community up to the central government. The financial responsibility of the local government is borne by subordinate units, which in the city are district offices, and in the county level county commission. This structure creates disparities in the education budget between rural and urban areas, and even within urban areas. In districts where there are more migrant children, the fiscal burden for education is heavier for local governments. Therefore, all levels of government should work together to take responsibility for funding migrant children's education, to ease regional protectionism and the fiscal burden from migrants. Provincial governments in particular should play a more important role in collecting education funds from taxes and rents and ensuring the input for education. The experience in Shanghai showed that support and coordination by the provincial government (Shanghai is a province-level municipality) ensures free education for the majority of migrant children. The Shanghai government has increased the average funding per student for migrant children in private schools from ¥2,000 RMB (\$294USD) in 2008 to ¥6,000 (\$883) in 2016. Under this system, the Shanghai government and the district governments share costs so that the district governments are not financially overburdened.

**School enrollment should be residence-based.** As the Chinese economy continues to grow, urbanization and migration continue to be the main trends among the population. The hukou-based public services system in urban areas cannot meet the increasing needs of migrants. Shanghai's experience shows that there will be a large gap in public education resources if the rapid growth of migrant children is ignored in educational development planning. To increase the capacity of public education in suburban areas, the governments should reallocate education resources according to the number of residents and estimates of future population growth. Social service provision should be adjusted to meet the needs of urbanization and migration and better include migrants in urban society.

In 2006, the revised *Compulsory Education Law* clarified the responsibility of governments in destination cities for migrant children's education. However, the "enrollment in nearby school" principle is still based on the registered places of residence or *hukou*. There have been few changes in the *hukou* system and in the system for financial implementation and administration in compulsory education. To change the uneven distribution of educational resources and ensure migrant children's access to quality education, education development and budget planning should be based on actual place of residence instead of place of *hukou*.

## Conclusion

Most cities have made great efforts to offer equal access to education for migrant children following the Two Main Responsibilities policy in China. Currently, the challenge of equal access for migrant children remains in metropolises such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and other provincial capital cities. These cities tried to reduce the burden imposed by the growing population and acted passively to offer education to migrant children. Taking a cue from the long-existing rural-urban dual structure and the gap between rural and urban areas, administrators in urban areas treated migrants as a lesser group. They were afraid that the growing population of migrant children would overburden existing educational resources and lower over all education quality. They thus made policies that favored more highly educated migrants over migrant workers. However, the experience in Shanghai has showed that reducing requirements didn't result in an unexpectedly huge increase of enrollment of migrant children and didn't lower the quality of education resources.

After the 2014 reform of the *hukou* system, most cities became more open, while the mega cities have tightened enrollment for migrant children. Shanghai put more emphasis on the stability of parents' jobs and residence than before, and admissions became more merit-based.

With the increasing need for labor in urban areas, the second generation of migrant workers should be treated as essential workers and equal citizens in destination cities. Education for migrant children should be treated as protection of citizens' basic rights and be included in local education development planning.

Between the 1970s and mid 1990s, a large-scale structural change in socioeconomic development and social mobility was triggered by institutional reforms in China. Since the mid 1990s, the Chinese class structure has solidified and become more rigid. In the future, education will be the main channel of social mobility. Education and skills training constitute important channels for social mobility. Opportunities for the second generation of migrants to escape the vulnerability and marginalization experienced by their parents and realize intergenerational mobility through education are key to social equity.

Since most of the second-generation migrants are still in school, it is still too early to say to what extent their experience of growing up in the city and of education has affected their intergenerational mobility. But those who have entered the labor market have repeated their parents' experience with employment, having few opportunities for becoming an urban citizen. Poverty tends to pass between generations and become more entrenched as time goes on. Therefore, it is vital to establish a more equal educational and social system so that the second generation of migrants may realize intergenerational mobility through their personal efforts and education. The extent to which migrant children are able to access compulsory education will prove to be the greatest test of education equity and social justice in China.

Chapter Eight

# Education of Migrant Children in Vietnam

Huynh Thi Ngoc Tuyet

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**S**tarting in 1986, Vietnam initiated a series of reforms known as ‘Doi Moi’ to open the country to the world and create a “socialist-oriented market economy”. Since then, the country has experienced dramatic transformations in economic, social and cultural arenas. The economic growth generated by participation in the open market brought about significant advances in hunger eradication and poverty reduction. The reforms also led to a marked increase in both internal and international migration as they loosened some migration restrictions related to the ‘*ho khau*’ (residence registration) system that had previously curbed access to social welfare by migrants without ‘*ho khau*’. Simultaneously, when Vietnam greatly reduced the number of state-sector employees it had a relatively young population and high rates of unemployment. Economic motivations became the major force driving emigration for many Vietnamese.

The economic reforms introduced in 1986 therefore provided a reservoir of unattached rural laborers who wanted and were able to move, while urbanization and industrialization significantly increased employment opportunities. The social network of migrants has further facilitated the migration process, especially from rural areas to large cities. As a matter of fact, the main trend of migration within Vietnam during recent decades is internal and rural-to-urban. Both quantitative data as well as qualitative study results show that there is a new trend in migration known as ‘feminization’ and ‘rejuvenation,’ in which more and more women and children migrants move independently and leave behind them families in need of financial support. Such trends raise important questions about Vietnamese society and the future of migrant children’s work and educational conditions.

Looking to Vietnam’s long-term future, it is especially important to consider Vietnamese migrant children and their lives. The education of such children, therefore, becomes an important issue for research. This chapter aims to conduct an overview of Vietnamese migrant children’s education based on secondary sources of data and information rather than primary data due to limited time and budget. The synthesis and analysis will rely upon both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The overview will conclude with some issues as to the policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, reformatting and revision as well as the effective cooperation between governmental and civil society organizations for the enhancement of active support to migrant children. This chapter limits the focus of discussion to internal migrant children rather than international, as Vietnam is a sending country, not a receiving country, and therefore the author cannot collect a sufficient amount of information on Vietnamese migrant children abroad within such a limited research timeframe.

The chapter is divided into three main parts. Part one describes the overall background of migration in Vietnam, focusing on socioeconomic basis, types and scale of migration, and current status of migrant children, in order to draw an overall picture of the context of migration in Vietnam. Part two will analyze the education of migration children in Vietnam, and will include descriptions

of (i) the education system; (ii) policies for migrant children’s education, focusing on rights and the right to access to education, and (iii) performance outcomes. Part three aims to discuss (i) successful policies, initiatives and cases; (ii) challenges and critical issues; and (iii) policy recommendations. Finally, we will conclude with a summary of the overall situation of migrant children’s education and policy recommendations to improve their living and studying conditions in the context of Vietnamese sustainable socioeconomic development and integration to global society.

## Migration and Migrants in Vietnam

### Socioeconomic Background for Migration

Vietnam has undergone a significant migration transition over the past three decades. At the beginning of the 1960s, most movement in the North was controlled by the government through a strict household registration system. Movement to rural areas was encouraged and supported by the government, but movement to urban areas was discouraged. In the South, during the 1960s and first half of the 1970s, the rural-urban migration flow was led by both economic and political factors, especially those related to the wartime conflicts originating from the Vietnam War, which lasted from 1954 to 1975.

Following the Open Door policy, or so-called “Doi Moi” (renovation), Vietnam has been shifting to the free market economy in order to be integrated to the global marketplace. Promotion of industrialization and modernization led to the growth of industrial zones, which attracted foreign direct investment (FDI) and absorbed a massive young labor force mostly moving from rural areas. Such a shift has brought about much migration flow internally and internationally in which rural-urban migration is the most relevant emerging trend.

Nowadays, Vietnam is still a developing country with a population of about 95,261,021 people (as estimated in July 2016; U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2017). According to the General Statistical Office (GSO), as of 2016, Vietnam has 71.5 million persons aged 15 and above, 54.4 million of whom are participating in the labor force (not including people aged 15 and above who are not currently residing in Vietnam). Even though the urbanization process has been going on for some time, the rural labor force is still dominant, currently accounting for 67.8 percent of the total labor force. At present, almost 75 percent of the workforce is living in rural areas. Most of them are low skilled and poorly paid. Nearly 1.7 million people enter the workforce every year, and the National Employment Generation Program cannot meet the demand (GSO, 2010). With a young population, Vietnam has no shortage of manpower, but still faces major challenges in providing employment and a stable income for its people (Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, 2012). The statistical figures clearly reflect a surplus of working age labor, as well as a demand for employment in both urban and rural areas, especially

in many rural locations. As a matter of fact, the migration flow from rural to urban areas is led by push and pull economic factors for finding new work, new income sources and new lives to solve problems in underemployment and unemployment. Rather than being a burden on the receiving sites as they are viewed by their detractors, migrant laborers have been contributing to the socioeconomic development of the sending and receiving locations,

Led by the industrialization process, migration is concentrated in the country's biggest cities such as Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi as well as other top cities and areas where there are industrial processing zones, trade and service businesses.

### Definition, Scale and Types of Migration

In this report, the term “migrant” is used for the Vietnamese context and is defined as one who leaves one administrative unit to go to another administrative unit for six months and more. This is in line with most surveys in Vietnam, which indicate a migrant as a person who settles down and lives in a receiving site for six months up till the survey time. Migrant children are defined as people younger than 16 years old<sup>5</sup> who migrate across the borders of a district, province or city.

Migrant children in Vietnam are not homogenous. In this study, the term ‘migrant child’ covers: (i) children who migrate and live with their parents, but may or may not work with or without their parents; (ii) migrant children who migrate by themselves and work as child migrant laborers, or “unaccompanied migrant children”. For this last category of children, most are moving and working under the eye of brokers and therefore are subject to labor exploitation as they are not with their parents. Some studies use the term ‘street children’ to indicate such type of migrant child labor. However, this author does not agree with and use that term, since not all migrant child laborers are living and/or working on the street. As used by UNICEF, street children are those under 18 years old and include three types: children living on street, children working on street, children of street living families (UNICEF, 2010). While migrant children only rarely live and work on the street, they more commonly live in a rented room or share a room with others and work in occupations that include domestic work, housekeeping and working in restaurants, or as parking lot attendants.

This report will focus mainly on education of migrant children who migrate from rural areas to urban areas, since they are the most vulnerable and face more obstacles and constraints in access to education at receiving sites. However, it does not exclude the education of returnees who migrated in the past but returned to their home site for various reasons, as they also faced obstacles in their studies while they were migrants. In addition, the discussion in this report also includes the education of left-behind children of migrant parents, as these children also face difficulties in their education due to the absence of daily care from their parents.

5. The age at 16 is based on the latest Vietnamese Law on Children, effective on 1 June 2017. Article One states that ‘a child is a human being below the age of 16’.

In Vietnam, the net migration rate is at  $-0.3$  migrant (s)/1,000 population as of 2016 (CIA, 2017). This means that the number of people entering Vietnam is less than the number of those leaving Vietnam.

Vietnam is both a sending and receiving country in terms of cross-border migration flows. As a receiving country, Vietnam receives a portion of foreign workers recruited and working in specialized economic, industrial zones or high-tech parks, as well as business investors' zones that attracted FDI incorporations as well as skilled business investors. As a sending country, Vietnam sends around 100,000 workers to foreign countries every year, based on labor contracts for labor exportation signed between licensed labor export companies and foreign companies.

As mentioned in the introduction, since this study only focuses on internal migration issues that are directly related to the main subject of education for migrant children, this part will discuss the historical background of the internal migration as a contextual basis for the dramatic change in the scale of internal migration in Vietnam during the three last decades.

Vietnam's economic reforms have increased economic opportunities and provided more freedom by lessening control of population move. The delinking of household registration to the access of essential goods meant that this barrier to movement lost much of its ability to control migration (World Bank Group and Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2016). At the same time, industrialization and urbanization contributed to an increase in rural to urban migration. The social networks created by the increasing numbers of the rural population migrating to urban areas, many of who work on a temporary basis, have further fueled the movement from rural to urban places.

The transformation of migration from a rural to rural movement to a rural to urban movement can be observed in the last two censuses. For the five-year period prior to the 1999 census, approximately 4.35 million persons changed their place of residence, constituting 6.5 percent of the population aged five years and above (GSO & UNFPA, 2001). In the five-year period before the 2009 census, a total of 8.6 million Vietnamese were defined as internal migrants (GSO & UNFPA, 2011), accounting for nearly ten percent of the national population.

Between 1994 to 1999 and 2004 to 2009, urban-urban migration fell and urban to rural migration increased slightly, while migration between rural and urban areas and between rural areas increased markedly (GSO & UNFPA, 2011). Overall, during the period of 2004 to 2009, 33.7 percent of migrants moved from rural to rural areas, 31.6 percent moved from rural to urban areas, 26.3 percent moved from urban to urban areas, and 8.4 percent of migrants moved from urban to rural areas. For the period 1994 to 1999, only 27.2 percent of migrants moved from rural to urban areas (GSO & UNFPA, 2001). Results from the Inter-Census Population and Housing Survey (IPS) show that for the period 2009 to 2014, the proportion of migration from rural to urban areas and the proportion from rural to rural areas remained high and were at a similar level of 29 percent (GSO & UNFPA, 2015).

Statistical data also shows that the big cities, such as Ho Chi Minh City in the south, Hanoi in the north, and Da Nang in Vietnam's central region, receive many rural-urban migrants whose numbers constitute a high proportion of those cities' population. For instance, migrants in Ho Chi Minh City account for 31 percent of the city's population, and up to half of the population in seven of the city's 24 districts. In Hanoi, migrants account for ten percent of the local population. In Da Nang, they account for 6.4 percent.

Recently, household data from the 2015 National Internal Migration Survey conducted by the GSO and UNFPA shows that 13.6 percent of the population of Vietnam are migrants. Among the population aged 15 to 59 years old, the percentage of migrants is higher, at 17.3 percent of the population, accounting for 11.17 million people (GSO & UNFPA, 2016).

The migrants identified in the survey mentioned above can be classified into three groups: in-migrants; return migrants; and intermittent migrants. Sixteen percent of those aged 15 to 59 are classified as in-migrants. Return migrants account for a small proportion of the population at 0.8 percent; and intermittent migrants are the smallest group of migrants at 0.4 percent. Given the perception that this intermittent migration is common, especially to large cities such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, that the number of migrants classified as intermittent migrants was so small was unexpected. It was also expected that intermittent migration would be more likely to occur in urban areas which are developing more rapidly than rural areas. However, the levels are marginally higher in rural areas than in urban areas. It appears that intermittent migration occurs at much lower levels than is seen in other Southeast Asian countries (GSO & UNFPA, 2016).

Regarding gender differentiation, female migrants make up 17.7 percent of the female population aged 15 to 59; the figure for male migrants is 16.8 percent. The percentage of females among all migrants aged 15 to 59 is 52.4 percent. This confirms the findings regarding "feminization of migration" noted in the 2004 Vietnam Migration Survey and other surveys (GSO & UNFPA, 2016).

In terms of age, compared with the findings in 2004, migrants in the 2015 National Internal Migration Survey were younger. Their average age was 29.2, and most of them (85 percent) were aged between 15 and 39. In 2004, only 79 percent of migrants belonged to this age group (GSO & UNFPA, 2016).

## Education of Migrant Children in Vietnam

This part of the report is based on current research results and statistics (during 2009-2016) related to migrant children's education in Vietnam. Focal points are the education system, policies stipulating rights in education, the role of responsible bodies and extent of access to education for migrant children.

### Education System in Vietnam

Education in Vietnam is a state-run system of public and private education managed by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). It is divided into five levels: preschool; primary school; secondary school; high school; and higher education. Formal education consists of twelve years of basic education. Basic education consists of five years of primary education, four years of intermediate education, and three years of secondary education. The first level of basic education is compulsory and free of tuition, while the second is compulsory but students must pay tuition. The majority of basic education students are enrolled on a half-day basis. The main education goal in Vietnam is “improving people's general knowledge, training quality human resources, and nurturing and fostering talent” (*Education Law of Vietnam*, approved in 2005 and amended in 2009).

According to the Education Law approved in 2005 and amended in 2009, the national education system consists of formal education and continuing education. This is a departure from past laws, which considered continuing education to be only a type of education service, not a part of the education system. Regarding different sub-sectors and training qualifications, Vietnam's education system is comprised of early childhood care and education, including preschools and kindergartens; general education, including three levels: primary, lower secondary and upper secondary or “high school”; and vocational education with an elementary, intermediate and college level.

In terms of curricula and programs, there are some structured on the basis of educational levels and training qualifications as stated above. There are also some not directly equivalent to an educational level or training qualifications, such as continuing education programs or professional training, in-service training, updating knowledge and skills, etc.

Educational institutions in Vietnam include schools, colleges, universities, institutes and educational centers. Their tuition levels depend on a number of factors: the school's qualifications; education quality as classified by the education system; network or management agencies and even societal perceptions; the student's major (technology, economics, natural sciences, social sciences, etc.); living costs around the school's location; special situations such as orphans; people with disabilities; ethnic minorities and the poor; and exemptions for disciplines that are seen as serving national development strategy like pedagogy, military, and security. In general, tuition levels increase as student's progress from the lowest level to the highest level of education.

In fact, tuition is not a burden for students since it is quite low in public schools. In terms of education, most of the financial burden for families come from the kinds of fees students must pay in the name of ‘voluntary contribution to school development’, including school maintenance, class facility renewal, cleaning and sanitation, student uniform, and textbooks. They vary in cost and depend on each school board, which is out of the control of management agencies and school-based parents’ association. World Bank and Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (2016) data show that the annual costs are high in both public and private systems at all levels:

	Public schools	Private schools
Preschool	9.1 (\$400 USD)	13.8 (\$607)
Primary	7.8 (\$343)	24.0 (\$1,056)
Lower secondary	8.9 (\$392)	28.0 (\$1,232)
Upper secondary	12.0 (\$528)	23.8(\$1,047)

**Table 1: Average annual educational costs by private vs. public and school level in Vietnam in 2015** (Million VND) Source: World Bank & Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (VASS) (2016) Vietnam’s Household Registration System

Vietnam is also making efforts through the media to offer distance learning and education. As for the school/class network, the principle is one of “close to people”. Currently, educational institutions are present in all residential areas nationwide. More specifically, these are functioning with the co-management of relevant responsible agencies (i.e., governmental educational management unit and the People Committee) at all levels from commune to district to province or city.

**Types of educational establishments.** Regarding ownership, as prescribed in Article 44 of Vietnam’s Education Law, there are four types of educational establishments.

- *Public education establishments* are monitored by the state which nominates administrators, sets staff quotas, invests in infrastructure and allocates funding for spending.
- *Semi-public educational establishments* are set up by the state to mobilize organizations and individuals to invest in infrastructure.
- *People-founded educational establishments.* Social or economic organizations apply for permission from the state to set up an institution with non-state funds.
- *Private educational establishments.* Individuals or groups apply for permission from the state to set up and invest in the institution by themselves.

### Policies for Migrant Children

According to the *Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam*, issued in 1992, all citizens have the right to education. The National Education Reform began in 1986 and has over the past three decades moved from the centralized planning system to the socialist-oriented market mechanism. During this time, general education reform has become oriented toward modifying curricula objectives and content, textbooks and perceptions of education; toward gradually achieving comprehensive quality in a manner appropriate to each type of student, teacher, school and locality; toward linking general education with vocational education; toward strongly affirming the state's responsibilities and implementing socialization of education. While implementing socialization of education, it was important to avoid any unrealistic expectation of public subsidies. In order to address this problem the government took several measures, including allowing the collection of tuition fees at all levels (with the exception of primary education as this sub-sector has a target of universalization); giving permission to open private kindergartens and semi-public and people-founded classes/schools at all levels; classifying learning activities according to levels of student abilities; establishing specialized schools at lower and upper secondary levels for gifted students; and establishing selective classes for excellent students in normal/teacher-education lower and upper secondary schools (specialized schools and selective classes were not proposed at primary level in order to avoid overload, that might compromise children's development (World Bank, 2015).

Article One of the *Law on Universal Primary Education* (adopted in 1991) stipulates that the state will implement compulsory universal primary education (UPE) for all children aged six to 14. In April 2000, Vietnam established the *National Action Plan for Education for All (2003-2015)* in order to apply its commitments made to the international community at the International Forum on Education for All held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000. Approved by the prime minister on July 2, 2003, the plan focuses on three priority targets: early childhood care and education (ECCE); basic education (primary and lower-secondary education); and non-formal education (continuing education). It has the following strategic goals: quality education; universal primary and lower-secondary education; providing opportunities for life-long learning; mobilizing the full participation of the community; and ensuring effective management and better use of resources. The plan also sets out specific targets regarding access, quality, and efficient management for education for all (EFA).

As mentioned above, all Vietnam's policies ensure equality for all citizens, regardless of their status associated with ethnicity, religion, sex, age, ability and family background. Children from ethnic minorities and children with disabilities are given special attention with specific support. Children of the poor and poorest families certified and given poverty identification status are prioritized in tuition exemption or reduction at all education levels. Migrant children, however, are not given any special attention and support if they

do not belong to one of the aforementioned special groups. Therefore, they are not mentioned and cited as prioritized beneficiaries of specific support legalized by policy with any law and sub-laws. For these reasons, although migrant children are not discriminated against by law, in reality, they are excluded from the legal framework supporting them with specified measures compatible with their situation. Furthermore, the classification, certification and acceptance for a family or an individual migrant child is based on the *ho khau*, so that a migrant child or migrant parent would lose benefits in receiving areas since the migrating persons' entitlement and priority are based on their *ho khau* in home locations.

With regard to the implementation of educational policies, there are critical obstacles for migrant children to benefit from the Education for All Plan and the Law on Universal Primary Education. Firstly, the *ho khau* based enrollment regulations inhibit access to education for migrant children accompanying their parents in receiving areas. Without the proper *ho khau*, migrant parents are not allowed to send their children to schools in the public system. Instead, they must send their children to private schools and bear much higher costs. According to data collected by the World Bank (2016), the overall costs of private school are much higher than that of public school at every level, as previously shown in Table 1. Secondly, even for the few migrant children who are accepted to public school, there are high costs originating from many types of extra fees beside official tuition. These costs are the negative results of the so called 'socialization in education aiming to call for contribution from students' families', which is unintentionally creating barriers to migrant children whose parents' jobs and incomes are mostly of a low level and unstable. Thirdly, there are few detailed and clear actions from education management units or local authorities to support migrant children in education, except few initiatives and specific measures helping them to overcome diverse difficulties.

These constraints lead to shortcomings in migrant children's educational outcomes, to which this paper now turns.

### **Educational Outcomes of Migrant Children**

As previously mentioned, migrant children face many obstacles to attaining education which lead to weaker education outcomes. Research from the 2008 Migration Impact Survey carried out in two sending provinces of Thai Binh (in the North) and Tien Giang (in the South) and two major receiving destinations of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City found that 43 percent of the children surveyed cannot go to school, and out of those children, 84 percent cannot go to school because they do not have *ho khau* at the place of residence (Migration Impact Survey, 2008). Meanwhile, migrant parents who are able to send their children to school have to pay higher school fees than the standard rates, which cuts considerably into their earnings, and has adverse impact on their living conditions. Such difficulty is also experienced by the migrant children of workers employed in industrial parks (Le Bach Duong et al., 2011), as shown in the following case.

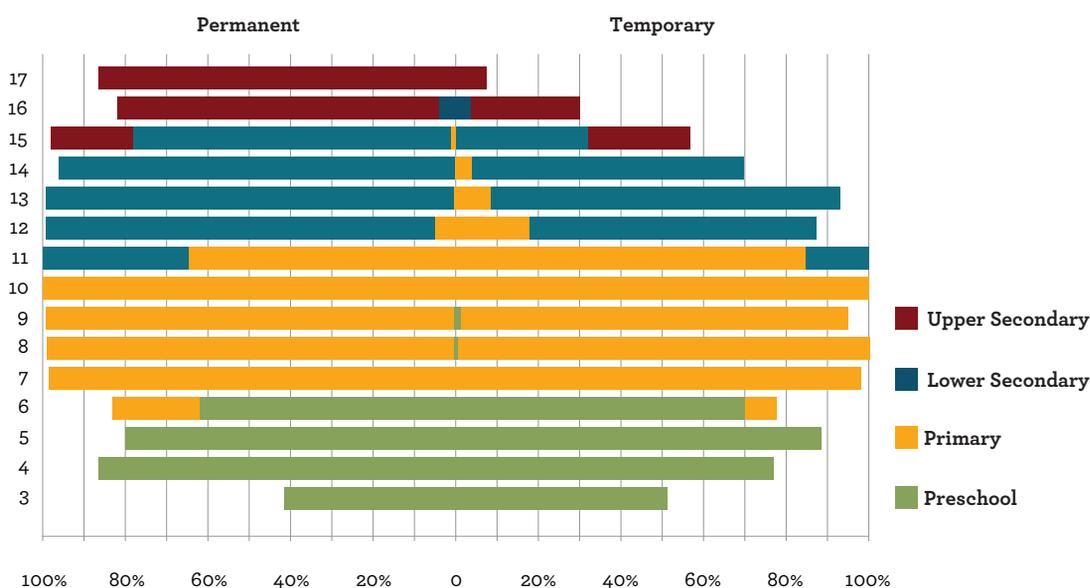
**Box 1:**

Thuan An and Di An industrial zones in Binh Duong Province were overwhelmed with migrant families, with the result that local authorities could not enrol many children without '*ho khau*.'

(Source: <http://www.vietnamplus.vn/nan-giai-tre-nhap-cu-bo-hoc-tai-cac-khu-cong-nghiep-binh-duong/344097.vnp>)

Another indicator of migrant children's lack of access to education is the high percentage of children dropping out of school. This phenomenon was made clear by the Urban Poverty Survey, conducted in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in 2009. It reported that 2.3 percent of children aged 10 to 14 dropped out to work; six out of every 100 children aged 10 to 14 in the poorest families dropped out to work; and 15 out of every 100 migrant children aged 10 to 14 had to stay home and work (Urban Poverty Survey, 2009). The tuition fee exemption and reduction policies are not applied to poor migrant people since they are based on *ho khau*. As a result, migrant children face difficulty enrolling in public schools, leading to a high percentage — 36 percent — of migrant children from poor families studying at private schools (UNICEF & MOET, 2013).

Newer studies by the World Bank (2016) and Oxfam and the Southern Institute of Social Sciences (SISS; 2015) also found that migrant children have lower school attendance at all levels if compared with those students in possession of permanent registration *ho khau*. The gap is especially large in upper secondary grades, with student aged 15 to 17: net enrollment rates for short-term temporary registrants are 74 percent for lower secondary and eight percent for upper secondary, while enrollment rates are 99 percent and 89 percent for permanent registrants (World Bank, 2016). Meanwhile, according to Oxfam and SISS (2015), net enrollment rate for migrant children aged six to 14 who follow their migrant worker parents to live at the location of their employment is 79 percent.



**Figure 1. School attendance rates by age for permanent vs. temporary registrants<sup>6</sup>** Source: World Bank (2016: 27), analysis of the data of 2015 Household Registration Survey

*“The gap in lower secondary enrollment for temporary vs. permanent registrants is larger for girls. The reason for this gender difference is uncertain but may indicate that temporary registrant parents are willing to make greater efforts to overcome ho khau barriers for male children.” (World Bank, 2016: 27)*

As described earlier, a high percentage of migrant children enroll in private schools since they cannot enroll in public schools due to their *ho khau* status. As the World Bank (2016) found in interviews for the ‘*Ho Khau* Qualitative Survey’, both parents and local officials admitted that temporary registrant children may be less likely to attend urban schools that give first priority to students with permanent registration since they face high levels of demand and space is not available for temporary registrants. Such constraints lead to a big gap between migrant children and permanent resident children in terms of equal right to education choice and access. Table 2 shows data collected by the World Bank about recent educational outcomes of migrant children.

6. Temporary registrants in the World Bank report refers to those not getting *ho khau*, or regular/permanent registration.

REGISTRATION STATUS	Permanent	Temporary		
		All temporary	Long-term temporary	Short-term temporary
<b>Preschool (3-5 year old)</b>				
Public net enrollment	45%	21%	25%	10%
Private net enrollment	29%	52%	52%	52%
Total net enrollment	73%	73%	77%	62%
<b>Primary (6-10 year old)</b>				
Public net enrollment	93%	81%	80%	88%
Private net enrollment	5%	14%	15%	6%
Total net enrollment	98%	95%	96%	94%
<b>Lower secondary (11-14 year old)</b>				
Public net enrollment	98%	80%	86%	60%
Private net enrollment	2%	8%	7%	14%
Total net enrollment	99%	88%	93%	74%
<b>Upper secondary (15-17 year old)</b>				
Public net enrollment	79%	25%	32%	8%
Private net enrollment	10%	5%	7%	0%
Total net enrollment	89%	30%	39%	8%

**Table 2. Public and private net school enrollment rates by registration status** Source: World Bank 2016

Migrant parents are therefore forced to send their children to private schools, if they can afford higher tuition. Otherwise they have to send their children back to the home destination or even let them drop out of school to stay at home or to work as child laborers. One parent told the World Bank, “Even at the kindergarten level, I have to send my children to private schools because it is impossible to be accepted by public schools. When they were small, I sent them to a private kindergarten. I will send them back to my hometown for schooling as I am not sure that I can apply for my children to be admitted to schools in this city.” (World Bank, 2016: 26).

## Critical Reflections

### Successful Policies, Initiatives and Cases

Vietnam has made significant strides towards protection of children’s rights, due to a revised legal framework covering constitution, laws and by-laws that ensure children’s overall development. The universal education policy is a solid platform. Vietnam achieved universal primary education in 2000 and has been promoting universal early childhood care and education for children at the age of five. Some parts of the country have universal secondary education. The nation’s literacy campaign has been developed over the years (Vietnam National Education for All 2015; MOET, 2015). However, the overall achievements have not been distributed equitably among regions, because of bottlenecks and barriers preventing vulnerable children from access to education. Migrant children cannot benefit from such programs and action plans because of many obstacles, of which *ho khau* is the biggest. In other

words, Vietnam has made great advances in universal education in primary and lower secondary levels but this achievement does not cover most migrant children, most of whom do not have *ho khau* in their destination city.

While there have been few successful efforts by official government agencies and education management units in supporting migrant children, other kinds of initiatives have provided assistance to migrants and migrant children in terms of access to education, both in the formal and informal systems. Key agents of these initiatives may include local governments (including local police and grass root level local authorities) and a huge range of civil society mass-organizations, such as local and international non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, and faith-based group.

The following case studies represent typical interventions for migrant children to help readers understand the innovative efforts and the ways in which key actors offer support to migrant children.

**Case 1:** Long Hua commune, Can Duoc, Long An Province. Can Duoc is a receiving site where some 3,200 migrant workers are registered as temporary residents, working in local industrial zones or self-employed. Local police certify residence registration so their children can attend school.<sup>7</sup>

**Case 2:** The Binh An Center (Peaceful Promotion) on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City is a Catholic charity providing education and care for migrant and poor local children. With seven women volunteers, who receive a small allowance, the center serves some 200 children. Most start to work as laborers at an early age, scraping together income from rubbish collecting, shoe shining, or other jobs. At the center, they study universal curriculum and learn life skills. One boy, living with his uncle, studies at the school in the morning and collects rubbish in the evening to earn some money to support his parents in the countryside. Often, parents need to be persuaded to send their children to the center. Many students bring along a younger sibling to look after.

**Case 3:** A charitable class in Phu Cuong ward, Thu Dau Mot town, Binh Duong City was established respond to the needs of migrant children who could not enroll in public schools. Most are from very poor families that do not have *ho khau*, and therefore face obstacles in accessing education and health care for their children. Most migrant children work to contribute to household incomes.<sup>8</sup>

7. Source: SDRC – a local Ho Chi Minh City-based NGO – interview, dated 10 March 2015, conducted and recorded by Mr. Chu Dung, a SDRC's social worker.

8. Source: <http://sokhen.binhduong.gov.vn/New/de-tai-kha-nang-tiep-can-dich-vu-y-te-giao-duc-va-vui-choi-giai-tri-cua-tre-nhap-cu-nghien-cuu-truong-hop-tai-lop-hoc-tinh-thuong-phuong-phu-cuong-thanh-pho-thu-dau-mot-binh-duong-565>.

**Case 4:** An August 2015 report appearing in the well-known daily online newspaper Thanh Nien (Youth) reflects the typically strong sense of responsibility and accountability of local authorities regarding migrant children's enrollment. It tells of the struggle in crowded Ho Chi Minh City to place migrant children in schools after failing to anticipate an influx of migrant workers with school age children. Figures show that the city has 85,000 new students per academic year. Migrant children account for more than a half. The sudden surge is obvious in several outlying districts where factories are located, offering job opportunities for low-skilled migrants. Many primary schools have had to build extra rooms to accommodate the new students, and finding qualified teachers is difficult.

According to managers, full-day classes, as well as time in the libraries, gyms, and playgrounds had to be reduced, affecting learning. Officials report that finding land to build new schools is a challenge.

**Case 5:** The international NGO Save the Children has been active in Vietnam for many years. From 2013 to 2016, SC has implemented a project [footnote], supported by the IKEA Foundation, in eight schools in the districts of Go Vap and Cu Chi, Ho Chi Minh City. The project aims to improve child protection and education, particularly for marginalized children. The project has benefited about 2,000 such children, including those with HIV/AIDS, issues of domestic violence, exploitation or neglect.<sup>9</sup>

**Case 6:** Community leaders play an important role in supporting improved access for migrant children. Ms Tran Thi Hang, 70, a retired teacher who helps many migrant workers and their the children find access public services, including school, is a good example. In Binh Thuan Ward, Ho Chi Minh City, 13 families living in rented rooms received their temporary *ho khau* after Ms Hang mobilized landlords and other households to sponsor the migrant workers. More than 20 children could enter grade 1 and transfer from countryside schools to the local public schools. In brief, Ms Hang has the enthusiasm, kindness, and social responsibility of a good citizen as well as connections with local social resources. These are essential factors for providing efficient and practical support to migrant workers (Oxfam, 2015). These efforts by individual and organizations in Vietnam show how strong the role of civil society has been in helping migrant children as well as other vulnerable groups to reach the goal of Education for All. Without these devoted efforts, migrant children would be even more marginalized and excluded from the education development process.

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9. Improved Protection and Quality Education for Migrant and other Marginalized and Vulnerable Children in Ho Chi Minh City (2013-2016), Save the Children, 2016.

The efforts of such individuals and organizations in Vietnam demonstrate the strong role civil society has in helping migrant children, as well as other vulnerable groups to gain access to quality education. Without these devoted efforts, migrant children would be further marginalized and excluded from the education development process.

### Challenges and Critical Issues

As shown in the earlier parts of this report, migrant children have limited access to education, which is clearly shown in the low percentage of enrollment in lower and upper secondary level in big cities. This should serve as a warning for the quality of the labor force in the near future. This situation will negatively affect the outcome of Vietnam's Open Door policy and integration into regional and global labor market. Migrant children, only 74 percent of whom attend school at lower secondary level and only eight percent of whom attend upper secondary, certainly face significant barriers when confronted with more demanding requirements of the high-tech labor market. This will prove to be a daunting challenge for the young labor force of Vietnam in the future.

In order to solve the problems created by migrant children's limited access to education, specific, concrete and detailed measures are needed to support migrant adults and children to benefit from national targeted programs, especially the Education for All and Education Universalization Plans. These plans should be accompanied by a very obvious action plan as well as guidance in details for the implementation of supporting measures for migrant children (i.e. tuition and school fee exemption or reduction, free textbooks, credit loan for migrant parents' job creation and income generation, education loan for migrant students' studies at upper secondary level, vocational training center, professional college and university, special continuing education combined with vocational training for migrant children dropping out of school).

As mentioned above, the uttermost barrier confronting access to education of migrant children is the *ho khau* system. All management and service provision, planning and budget allocation in Vietnam are still based on *ho khau*, leading to the restriction of migrant children's school enrollment in their destination city. To support migrant children, action to eliminate barriers and bottlenecks originating from *ho khau*-based management is required.

Recently, there has been many good initiatives at the local level with the collaboration of government agencies, mass organizations, social organizations, and active individuals. These can offer models for building and scaling programs for the support of migrant workers. In Vietnam nowadays, there is a large number of organizations and individuals who actively support migrant workers and their children to access information and education in order to obtain public school attendance. Now is the time for Vietnam to formalize and model good initiatives to support migrant children in order to replicate good practices in all regions of Vietnam as well as to learn lessons from other countries from around the world.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion: Migrant Children's Education  
from a Comparative Perspective:  
What can we learn from these seven  
countries' experiences

**The previous chapters describe the context of migration in four Asian and three western countries, with a focus on the education of migrant children.**

The country studies consider a full range of topics around policies that impact access, and presents programs, outcomes, challenges, achievements, and potential areas for improvement. Some papers include successful and/or promising initiatives in migrant education. This chapter compares the seven treatments, and provides recommendations for improving education for migrant children. The chapter defines migration and describes its scope, then reviews policies and outcomes.

## Characteristics and Magnitude of Migration

### Defining Migrants

Migrants are generally defined as mobile individuals and families who cross local or national borders mainly in search of job opportunities, for family reasons, or seeking refuge (asylum). Whether voluntary or as a result of conflict, all migration could be considered a combination of both, but in legal and policy terms there is not forced migration as such. Three papers on Thailand, China, and Vietnam-- focus on internal migration. While there are various directions of migration, the papers mostly address issues around migration toward big urban settings, generated by industrialization and urbanization. Temporary migration may be primarily associated with seasonal workers, or related to the temporary status of newcomers attending ethnic schools in Japan, for example. Each country presents a unique context often based on historical factors. Japan, for example, with the existence of two migrant groups: oldcomers (permanent residents from before World War II) and newcomers, Japanese descendants and workers from other countries such as Brazil.

Migrants may be labelled 'regular', those with appropriate authorization, or 'irregular', those without. Irregular migration becomes contentious, posing challenges of access to education for undocumented families or individuals. The chapters about Vietnam and China show how household registration systems create obstacles to public education in destination cities seeing influxes of migrants. The US chapter considers the situation of undocumented international migrants, who, although entitled to attend school, face challenges in access to quality education as well as the possibility of deportation.

### Characteristics of Migration in the Seven Countries

Countries such as the UK, the US, Finland, and Japan are sharply contrasted to Vietnam, Thailand, and China. With well-established industrialization, urbanization, and modernization, the first group likely sees less internal migration flows from rural to urban. Internal mobility in the first group doesn't pose an obstacle to access because of the universal legal right to education. Schools do not collect migrant/resident status information beyond proof of residence. The issue of undocumented individuals has become an issue for heated debate in the US and the UK beyond education.

**Thailand, Vietnam, and China.** Rapid urbanization and industrialization in these countries produces massive internal migrant flows from rural to urban centers. Peasants seeking work make up a substantial part of the migrant population.

**The UK and the US.** These countries are international immigration hubs where foreign-born individuals make up 13.5 percent of the total population of each country. Immigrants tend to be highly concentrated in certain regions and cities nationwide. London accounts for 36.8 percent of all immigrants in the UK; California has more than a quarter of all US immigrants. Immigrant populations in both countries are socio-economically and ethnically diverse. Controversy often arises around the impact of migration on welfare systems, and perceived threats to national identity and culture.

**Regularity of Immigration.** There are substantial numbers of undocumented immigrants living in the UK and the US. In 2012, the estimated number of undocumented immigrants in the US was 11.4 million (over a quarter of foreign-born population) with half of these undocumented immigrants coming from Mexico.

**Finland and Japan.** Compared to Vietnam, Thailand, and China, Finland and Japan do not have massive internal migration or barriers to the integration of migrants. Compared to the UK or the US, Finland and Japan do not have large immigrant populations. Finland's socio-economically diverse immigrant population primarily comes from Russia, Estonia, and other European Union countries. Only 6.5 percent of the immigrant population speaks languages other than Finnish or Swedish, the official languages of Finland. Japan's two-million registered immigrant population is generally categorized as oldcomers and newcomers. Newcomers, those who came to Japan after the 1970s, mostly from North and South Korea and China, do not have pathways to permanent residency and face restrictions, often see Japan as a temporary stop. This could explain the existence of ethnic schools where Japanese is not necessarily the language of instruction. As in the UK and the US, immigrants generate debates about how migration impacts the welfare systems and national coherence.

### **Magnitude of Migration**

The main receiving areas tend to be large cities or highly populated provinces with more urban, industrial, and economic development. In Japan, newcomers concentrate in prefectures such as Aichi, Shizuoka, and Kanagawa where automakers have large plants. In the US, the most populated states like California and Texas and the biggest cities like New York, Miami, and Chicago have also the largest immigrant populations. In China, the main receiving provinces are developed coastal areas like Guangdong, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, and Shandong. Other main metropolitan areas are Bangkok in Thailand, Ho Chi Minh and Hanoi in Vietnam, and London in the UK.

When using gross numbers to analyze migration, the magnitude could be overwhelming in countries like China with 247 million internal migrants (19 percent of the population) and the US with 11.4 million undocumented immigrants. Those amounts are particularly challenging for service provision and when legality of residence is an issue. On the other hand, the percentage of migrants could pose challenges to governments. Regarding international migrants, the US and the UK have the largest percentages, both with 13.5 percent, while Finland and Japan have smaller immigrant populations and Finland (4.4 and 1.57 percent respectively). Some of the papers also describe migration flows in specific periods. For instance, in Thailand 9.4 percent of the population migrated in a five-year period, while the US received 1.38 million migrants in 2015.

***Children of migrant parents.*** In countries like China and Vietnam, the household registration system limits access to education for internal migrants. Even if children are born in the receiving cities, they are registered in the place where their parents come from. When undocumented immigrant parents have children in countries like the US, the children are citizens. The access to services like education may not be an issue but the immigration of the family is an issue as parents can face deportation and families could be separated. In the UK, children of undocumented migrants born in the UK can apply to become citizens after they live in the country for 7 to 10 continuous years. Most of them are successful but this is not an automatic right. It can cause complicated struggles when children of migrant parents do not even realize they are “illegal”.

***Unaccompanied children.*** Among those countries where international migration is more relevant, the issue of children who arrive alone is of particular concern. The children are vulnerable as targets for human trafficking and forced labor, and they are subject to immigration decisions regarding their access to basic services like education. The Thailand paper mentions Thai and unaccompanied children from Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Vietnam. In the UK Between 2015 and 2016, there was a 57 percent increase in children, many unaccompanied, seeking asylum. Although these are a high priority for funding in educational placements, research shows that unaccompanied asylum seeking children are highly vulnerable. Unaccompanied children in the US primarily come from Mexico and Central America, followed by a significant proportion from Asia.

## Education of Migrant Children

In Vietnam and China, internal migrant children have some obstacles to access equal educational opportunities. Despite constitutional acknowledgement that all Chinese children have the right to free compulsory education and national policies that grant migrant children equal education access, funding in these two countries is based on the number of children with permanent household registration in a locality rather than on the actual number of children living there. With national governments assuming little fiscal responsibility to support migrant children's education, local governments and school districts often have little incentive to provide migrant children with educational services. The household registration system in both countries is somehow the basis of discriminatory school admission practices. Migrant children and their families have few channels, if any, to participate in policy making. Thus, in Vietnam, 36 percent of migrant children from poor families are denied access to free public schools and must enroll in unsubsidized private schools, and 15 percent of 10-to-14-year-old migrant children drop out of school to work. Limited education access and curtailed educational opportunities impede the full integration of migrant families into new urban communities. They pursue economic opportunities in large cities but are denied the social services and security entitled to urban residents. Many migrant children return to their hometowns for further schooling or must quit schooling and go to the labor market at an early age. Many migrant workers also return during economic downturns or when they enter old age.

Legislation in the US and the UK recognize immigrant children's entitlement to equal access to free compulsory education up to the secondary level. Because school admission processes in these two countries are usually based on residential address and do not require proof of immigration status, most immigrant children can access public elementary and secondary schools. Furthermore, the prevalence of inclusiveness, diversity, and multicultural discourses in these two countries means that schools are often expected to facilitate the integration of minorities and immigrants into local communities and to respect immigrants' cultural traditions. There are two challenges in the US education system regarding inclusion of migrant students. One is the frequent mobility of some migrants between within the country. Schools are required by law to identify those children and re-enroll them but, depending on the region migrants, mainly undocumented, tend to move like "under the radar" to stay little visible. The other is that large urban highly diverse school districts tend to attract more immigrants and be more used with multiculturalism, but other schools, like in some suburban areas, could be less inclusive and diverse.

On the issue of supporting migrant children's education, however, the distribution of responsibility between central/federal governments and local governments and schools are very different in these two countries. In the US, the federal government has a role in providing funding and support to states in migrant children's education. Federally funded and state coordinated Migrant Education Programs help to ensure that migrant children are not penalized by disparities in curriculum, graduation requirements, or state academic standards. Targeted funding for high-poverty schools benefit immigrant students in the lowest socioeconomic levels. Federally funded English language instruction for English learners and immigrant students supports migrant students to build sufficient English skills to meet academic standards. Numerous other programs target subsections of migrant children; those targeting homeless children and children with disabilities also benefit some migrant children. In the UK, by contrast, support for migrant children largely depends on local authorities and schools. There is no targeted funding for migrant (or immigrant) children. After the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, ring-fenced central government funding for English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners was mainstreamed into non-targeted grants in 2011. Thus, there is even greater variability in the level of support that EAL migrant children receive. Furthermore, the UK government policy of creating a "hostile environment" for migrants, through cutting many social benefits, means that many migrant families are suffering from destitution, poverty, poor housing and hunger, which affects the participation and performance of some migrant children in education, although the right to education remains universal.

Just as native-born Finland citizens, immigrant children enjoy public-funded basic and secondary education. In addition, they have access to at least one year of preparatory education to transition into Finnish/Swedish instruction, Finnish/Swedish as a second language education, and mother-tongue instruction (the Finnish section does not describe funding mechanisms of these services). Despite this support and the Finnish education system's reputation of academic excellence, the achievement gap between immigrants and native-born Finnish students are higher than the average of OECD countries.

Japanese laws grant immigrant children the same right as citizen children to attend public schools for nine years; local authorities and schools are responsible for providing special guidance for the integration of immigrant children who wish to enroll. However, the different legal status and immigration trajectories of these two groups of immigrants mean that they have very different educational opportunities and choices. Even though their economic activities are forced to be confined in a special area, newcomers have built long-term communities and homes in Japan, and 90 percent of oldcomer immigrant children attend mainstream public schools rather than segregated ethnic schools. Only a small percentage of families send their children to ethnic schools to preserve their national and cultural identity. Newcomers, in contrast, primarily send their children to ethnic schools that operate outside the mainstream education system without government

subsidy, provide mother-tongue instruction, and might even match the curriculum at their home countries. Thus, newcomer immigrant students often have trouble acquiring sufficient Japanese proficiency to live in Japanese society. Their rate of advancement to high school after completing compulsory education is substantially lower than that of Japanese children.

**Ethnic Schools.** In Japan, there are ethnic schools established by newcomers (Brazilian schools have increased rapidly). The education provided at Brazilian schools matches Brazil's curriculum and conducted in Portuguese. There are less cultural differences and more correspondence to the needs of the parents. Schools for foreigners help children adapt school with more country identity, but limit the opportunity to learn Japanese language and are categorized outside the compulsory education system in Japan. Therefore, they cannot accept the necessary measures such as providing funding taken for resolving educational issues by the Japanese government.

In Japan, there are ethnic schools established by 'old comers' to preserve their national consciousness and culture, as well as ethnic schools established by new comers (Brazilian schools have increased rapidly). Both types of ethnic schools offer more classes conducted in their mother tongue languages. For example, the curricular include 'Korean Language,' 'South Korean History,' and 'South Korean Geography' in Korean schools and Korean is used in the school as much as is possible. The education provided at Brazilian schools matches Brazil's curriculum and conducted in Portuguese. There are less cultural differences and more correspondence to the needs of the parents. Schools for foreigners help children adapt school with more country identity, but limit the opportunity to learn Japanese language and are categorized outside the compulsory education system in Japan.

### Education of Unaccompanied Children

While undocumented immigrant children in the UK and the US can theoretically access elementary and secondary schools without providing information about their immigration status, their educational participation and outcomes are probably poorer than their immigrant peers with legal status because of the constant fear of deportation and blocked post-secondary education and economic pathways. Due to their undocumented status, this vulnerable group of children is perhaps the least understood by education researchers and authorities.

### Language Issues

In the case of international immigrants, language barriers pose important education challenges to social inclusion. When the immigrants come from low education and socioeconomic levels in their original home, migrant children and their parents face the challenge of assimilation into the new culture, language, and new educational demands. The education system that receives the immigrants, on the other hand, is faced with concentrations of many migrant children and/or adults who need language training, and who speak diverse other languages. National governments assume the situation with different strategies that involve the provincial, local, and school levels.

In Japan, for example, ethnic schools such as Brazilian schools, which are not recognized by the government and are solely funded by tuition fees, often fail to prepare students to achieve Japanese language proficiency. This makes it more difficult for them to pass admission examinations in post-secondary education institutions. In the long run, this also limits access to well-paid jobs. Until recently, there have been some initiatives to promote the teaching of Japanese as a second language in compulsory education for mainly newcomers. However, improvements have not been significant.

The official languages in Finland are Finnish and Swedish. The number of foreign-language speakers (Russian, Estonian, Arabic, Somali, and English) increased 6.5 percent. They tend to concentrate in urban areas. Preparatory education (Basic Education Act, 1998) includes teaching of Finnish as a second language. Regardless of the provision of many opportunities to achieve learning goals, weaker outcomes have shown association with previous educational experiences, parental resources, and socioeconomic status.

In the UK, about 19 percent of primary school students and 15 percent of secondary school students received support for EAL. English is also the general language of instruction in the US, which often requires special arrangements for students without the needed proficiency of regular classrooms. Even though there are more than 50 foreign languages spoken in US schools among foreign migrants, Spanish is predominant (89.3 percent). Some of the federal programs provide funding and support to states and local school districts to provide language instruction to English learners.

## Conclusion

The seven cases presented in this report show how some migrant children face challenges in access to quality education. In countries like China, Vietnam, and Thailand, where internal immigration is more prevalent, barriers come from the household registration systems and the lack of action by local governments and school, even if there are some incentives from the national governments. There are a few isolated cases of successful initiatives from which governments could learn. In countries such as the US, the UK, and Finland, the main two issues are related to instruction in the local languages and the possibility for students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds to attain the academic level of their local classmates. Even if students are undocumented, they can enroll in public schools; however, the immigration status creates other challenges for these students. In Japan, Japanese descendant newcomers tend to enroll in ethnic schools that often lack Japanese instruction placing students at a disadvantage in comparison with locals and oldcomers. There are many challenges, but also some achievements. Governments have the opportunity to make policy decisions that could favor migrant children that, in turn, will make societies more just and later will bring more prosperity.

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## About 21st Century Education Research Institute



Established in 2002, 21st Century Education Research Institute is a non-profit organization for research in educational policies and education innovations. The Institute is dedicated to educational research and policy advocacy from a non – government perspective. In the pursuit of “good education”, the Institute seeks to cultivate wisdom within and outside the education system to promote China’s education reform and development. In both 2014 and 2015, the 21st Century Education Research Institute was recognized as the 2nd most influential non-governmental think tank by Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences’ *China Think Tank Report*.

## About WISE



world innovation summit for education  
مؤتمر القمة العالمي للابتكار في التعليم

An Initiative of Qatar Foundation

The World Innovation Summit for Education was established by Qatar Foundation in 2009 under the leadership of its Chairperson, Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser. WISE is an international, multi-sectoral platform for creative, evidence-based thinking, debate, and purposeful action toward building the future of education. Through the biennial summit, collaborative research and a range of on-going programs, WISE is a global reference in new approaches to education.

The WISE Research series, produced in collaboration with experts from around the world, addresses key education issues that are globally relevant and reflect the priorities of the Qatar National Research Strategy. Presenting the latest knowledge, these comprehensive reports examine a range of education challenges faced in diverse contexts around the globe, offering action-oriented recommendations and policy guidance for all education stakeholders. Past WISE Research publications have addressed issues of access, quality, financing, teacher training, school systems leadership, education in conflict areas, entrepreneurship, early-childhood education, and twenty-first century skills.

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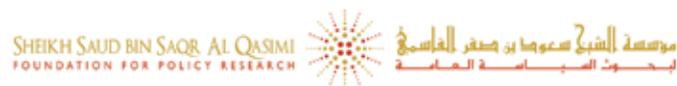
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