

## Filipino Families in Motion

The scale, extent and diversity of international labor migration from the Philippines has become legendary. The statistics are remarkable. Some 10 percent of the country's population – 7.41 million as of December 2001 – live and work abroad. In the late 1990s, the yearly deployment of Filipino workers averaged 800,000 each year. In 2003, 867,969 left to find work in more than 100 destinations. In the same year, some \$7.6 billion worth of remittances were ploughed back into the economy, a major boost to the country's lifeline.<sup>1</sup> There is more beneath and beyond the statistics and the dollars.

The migration of Filipinos to work in other countries has been a source of mixed blessings to the country. On the one hand, the economic benefits of migration have enabled ordinary Filipinos to attain a better life. Remittances have bankrolled the building of homes, the education of children and some businesses. For the country, remittances mean revenues and a major source of foreign exchange. On the other hand, the social costs are a cause of great concern. Unlike economic impacts, social costs are more difficult to measure. The very act of migration itself raises serious questions. What does it mean that many Filipinos are leaving the country to find work elsewhere? Are people losing hope in carving a future in the country? Since migration is not always safe, there are also concerns about the safety and protection of Filipino nationals abroad. Most of all, there are anxieties about the consequences of separation for families. How can families weather the strains brought about by separation? What kinds of adults will result from children who will be growing up without fathers, mothers, or both?

These questions have assumed more importance – and have also been laced with greater alarm – with the increasing participation of women in international labor migration. In the 1970s and 1980s, the departure of fathers, mainly to the Middle East, already caused apprehension. Somehow this was assuaged by the thought that mothers were around to pull the family together. Also, fathers leaving the home to find work elsewhere was part of their role as providers. In the 1980s, women started to take up jobs abroad and the trend has become irreversible. With women's migration, more

<sup>1</sup> The stock estimate of the overseas Filipino population came from: [www.poea.gov.ph/docs/StockEstimatesFilipinosOverseas202001.xls](http://www.poea.gov.ph/docs/StockEstimatesFilipinosOverseas202001.xls), accessed 30 June 2004; data on the 2003 deployment came from: [www.poea.gov.ph/docs/DeployedOFWsByDestination1998-2003.xls](http://www.poea.gov.ph/docs/DeployedOFWsByDestination1998-2003.xls), accessed on 30 June 2004; data on remittances came from: [www.bsp.gov.ph/statistics/spei/tab1.htm](http://www.bsp.gov.ph/statistics/spei/tab1.htm), accessed on 30 June 2004.

questions came up and more unease was felt.<sup>2</sup> Given the role of women as the primary caregiver in the family, their departure has put the well-being of the family on the line. Can fathers – or other caregivers – take the place of mothers? How will the family adjust to the absence of mothers? How will children be raised without the “light of the home” (*ilaw ng tahanan*)? The migration of women, thus, posed more concerns about the family, and by extension, Filipino society. What will become of Filipino society if the family were endangered? Considered by Filipinos as central to their sense of well-being (e.g., SyCip, Asis and Luna, 2000), the family is also widely regarded as the source of strength of Filipino society. Former President Corazon Aquino (2002:109) has remarked:

Much of our national traits – both good and bad – spring from our sense of family. On the negative side, this has tended to breed nepotism, overdependence and parochialism, stunting the growth of a dynamic, entrepreneurial culture. On the positive side, this strong sense of family has made us rather sensitive – what we might call a “feeling” (more than a “thinking”) people. When pulling together, we can be a caring, hospitable, closely-knit community founded on a strong sense of kinship.

### **Perceptions and Research Findings: Do They Meet?**

In the realm of public opinion, the verdict is largely negative. Many stories, rumors and speculations circulate about philandering husbands or wives, spendthrift children and children becoming wayward. Findings from research present a less monolithic picture or at least more variable outcomes.

When men migrate, the left-behind wives indeed assumed more responsibilities with their dual roles as fathers and mothers (e.g., Go and Postrado, 1986; Arcinas and Bautista, 1993). Although the experience was not easy, the wives acknowledged that they learned new things about themselves. Capable wives were also behind families which successfully managed the economic advantages brought about by migration (Arcinas and Bautista, 1993).

When women migrate, it appears that families go through more adjustments – this is not surprising because changes in women’s roles often

<sup>2</sup> The Philippines is one of three countries of origin in Asia – along with Indonesia and Sri Lanka – where women comprise the majority of legal migrant workers deployed every year. In the case of the Philippines, women are the majority of the *new hires* (land-based) deployed every year.

have more implications for the family than changes in men's roles. If women assume men's responsibilities when the men are not around, men do not as readily take up caregiving. There are indications, however, that gender roles are not immutable. Data from in-depth studies indicate that changes are underway. In their wives' absence, some men had come to experience how it is to cope with the demands of paid work and caregiving, which has opened their eyes to women's multiple tasks; in some cases, men opted to become full-time caregivers (e.g., Asis, Huang and Yeoh, forthcoming; Asis, 2001; Pingol, 2001). Due to the nature of the data, it is difficult to say whether these observations are true only for a few cases or whether they apply to the larger population.

Findings from studies on left-behind children also paint a less pessimistic picture than popular perceptions suggest. Cruz' (1987) survey of high school and college students in selected Catholic schools in Metro Manila, Batangas and Pampanga (n=462) reported similarities between the children of migrants and non-migrants in their values, attitudes and behaviors. The children of migrants did not come out to be more problematic than the children of non-migrants. When asked to weigh the pros and cons of their parents' migration, the children of migrants overwhelmingly saw more advantages than disadvantages. Similarly, a recent study by UP et al. (2002) did not find decisive evidence that the children of migrants were disadvantaged or more problematic compared to the children of non-migrants. Focusing on children 10-21 years old (n=2,388), the nationwide study did not detect markedly positive or negative psychological outcomes. The two groups of children exhibited similar academic performance; in terms of health, the children of migrants perceived themselves to be healthier compared to the children of non-migrants. Qualitative studies also point to similar tendencies. Parreñas' (2002) study of young adults left behind by migrant parents shows that although the children experienced emotional hardship, the support from extended families and communities, communication with their migrant parents, and an appreciation of why their parents had to leave ease their difficulties.

Battistella and Conaco (1998, 1996) investigated the impact of parental absence on the younger children left behind. They surveyed 709 children in the ages 10-12 years old in Metro Manila, Bulacan, Rizal and Quezon. Comparing four groups of children – children of non-migrants (both parents present), children of migrant fathers, children of migrant mothers, and children with both parents abroad – they found that children of migrants were generally well-adjusted and cared for by the extended family. The absence of parents, however, did make a difference in the children's grades and social adjustment. In particular, the children of migrant mothers had lower

grades and poorer social adjustment compared to children in the other groups.

Although there has been considerable research delving into the consequences of migration on the left-behind families, the findings are far from conclusive. There are several limitations which characterize existing studies.

- Most studies are limited to communities that are known to be major areas of migration, mainly in Luzon. In other words, a national picture is sorely lacking.
- Very rarely do existing studies utilize probability sampling. Most of the time, the sampling is purposive, which does not allow for findings that can be extended or generalized to the larger population.
- Many studies focus solely on respondents from OFW families or households. While this gives a good picture of the experiences of OFW families or households, the lack of comparison with respondents from non-OFW families or households is a problem.
- Almost all studies have a cross-sectional design which does not capture changes or trends over time.

Aside from design issues, other questions call for further research. What will a nationwide study reveal about the impact of international labor migration on young children? How do children view their parents' migration? What roles do children play, if any, in the adjustment of families to the absence of one or both parents? What kinds of values and socialization process are imparted to children in migrant and non-migrant families? How do children and families left behind view the family in the context of migration? These are concerns that prompted the need for a systematic study.

## The 2003 Children and Families Study

### Objectives

As part of efforts to understand the social consequences of large-scale labor migration on Filipino society, the Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC), in partnership with the Episcopal Commission on the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People-CBCP (ECMI)/Apostleship of the Sea-Manila (AOS-Manila) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), conducted the 2003 Children and Families Study, a nationwide research project on the children and families left behind. The launching of the study coincided with the declaration of 2003 as the Year of the OFW Family.

The general objective of the study was to assess how parental absence due to migration affects the well-being of young children left behind. The specific objectives of the study focused on the following areas:

- To determine children's conceptions and perceptions of overseas migration;
- To examine the impact of parental absence on selected aspects of children's well-being (physical development, health status, academic performance, values and spiritual formation, and social/emotional well-being); and
- To identify the factors which help the children cope with the difficulties and opportunities posed by migration.

The 2003 Children and Families Study attempted to overcome the limitations of earlier studies. It had a nationwide coverage; it employed probability sampling in the selection of respondents for the survey; it included the children of non-migrants as a comparison for different groups of children of migrants; and it included the children and families of seafarers. Furthermore, the study employed both quantitative (survey) and qualitative (focus group discussions or FGDs) approaches in the collection and analysis of data. When resources allow, follow up studies may be conducted later on which would provide a longitudinal view of the experiences of children and families through time.

### The Survey of Children

Young children in the ages 10-12 years were the target respondents for the survey. The children included in the study belonged to families where the parents were together (i.e., as a rough proxy of the parents' marital

relationship - if the parents lived together, presumably the marriage was fine), except when one or both parents were working abroad in the case of the children of migrants. This criterion was adopted in order to control for variations in family situations. Such a strategy sharpens the analysis of the consequences of migration, but on the other hand, the analysis excludes children belonging to other types of families – e.g., children in single-parent families (due to marital problems or the death of a parent), children raised by grandparents or other relatives on account of the parents' separation, and children who had a foreign parent. When we refer to the children of migrants in this report, we are referring to the children of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

The children-respondents were categorized into five groups:

- Children of non-migrants (NM)
- Children of migrant mothers (MM)
- Children of land-based migrant fathers (FL)
- Children of seafarer fathers (FS)
- Children with both parents working abroad (BP)

The study focused on the 10-12 age group because the conditions of young children are good indicators of the kind of care and attention that they receive in the family. Also if the purpose were to examine how children are affected by migration, it makes sense to target specific age groups rather than to cover children of various ages. Pre-adolescents, for example, do not have the same concerns as adolescents. Many factors are at work in adolescence – bodily and psychological changes, expansion of the reference group to peers, etc. – whose influences must be isolated from the effects of migration. Each of these groups deserves specific research attention.

In the Philippines, adolescents have been the focus of many studies while young children have not received much attention in research (Alampay-Peña, 2003). Also, their voices are usually not heard in the development of policies and programs that are intended to benefit them.

### *Selection of Respondents*

The use of probability sampling in the selection of respondents entailed various stages and required much preparation. Data from several sources

(deployment data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, data on registered OFWs from the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, and the reports of the Survey of Overseas Filipinos by the National Statistics Office) were used in sampling provinces/areas. The selected areas were:

- Luzon: *National Capital Region* (Manila, Taguig); *Bulacan* (Hagonoy, Angat); *Cavite* (Cavite City, Imus); *Laguna* (San Pedro, Los Baños),
- Visayas: *Negros Occidental* (Bacolod City, Binalbagan); *Cebu* (Cebu City, Liloan)
- Mindanao: *Davao del Sur* (Davao City, Digos)

Due to resource constraints, the study employed school-based rather than household-based sampling. Within sampled provinces/areas, public and private schools were randomly selected. A total of 132 schools were selected, but only 130 schools (76 public, 54 private) gave permission for the interviews to be conducted. Once the schools were identified, the project carried out pre-screening activities in order to identify the children of non-migrants and the children of migrants. Respondents were then randomly selected within each of the five groups.

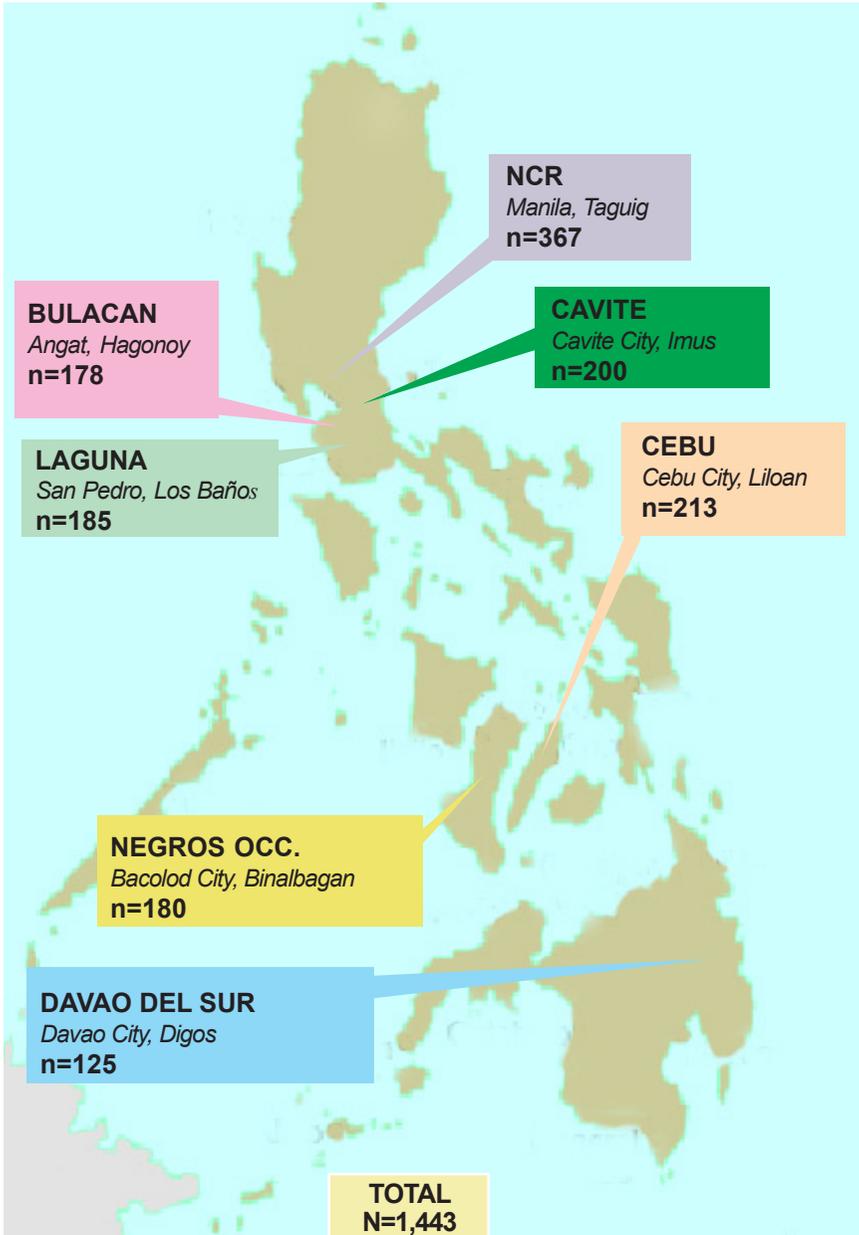
The study targeted to interview 1,640 children, of whom 1,443 children (88 percent) were actually interviewed. Some of the selected respondents who turned out to be ineligible were not interviewed. Figure 1 presents the number of respondents interviewed in the sample areas. Further information on the distribution of respondents by category are detailed in Table 1.

### *Field Work*

Four research teams were organized to conduct the pre-screening and interviews in the different regions. SMC coordinated the data collection in Luzon. For the other regions, the project linked up with researchers in Colegio San Agustin-Bacolod, the University of the Philippines College Cebu and the Ateneo de Davao University to coordinate the data collection in Visayas and Mindanao.

The preparatory activities – development of the sampling design, communication with the Department of Education officials and officials and teachers of the sampled schools, conducting the pre-screening activities, construction of the sampling frame, developing the instrument, pre-testing questionnaire, the training of interviewers – took place between June and September 2003. Interviews with the children were conducted from October

FIGURE 1  
SAMPLE AREAS



**TABLE 1**  
INTERVIEWS COMPLETED BY PROVINCE/AREA AND RESPONDENT CATEGORY

Area	NM	MM	Type of Respondent		BP %	Total
			FL	FS		
<b>LUZON</b>						
NCR- Manila	40	46	56	57	30	229 (15.87)
- Taguig	40	39	20	20	14	133 (9.22)
Bulacan	40	65	39	14	20	178 (12.34)
Cavite	40	44	40	57	19	200 (13.86)
Laguna	39	34	60	34	18	185 (12.82)
<b>VISAYAS</b>						
Negros Occ.	40	60	20	40	20	180 (12.47)
Cebu	39	26	66	70	12	213 (14.76)
<b>MINDANAO</b>						
Davao del Sur	40	32	19	18	16	125 (8.66)
<b>TOTAL</b> (%)	318 (22.04%)	347 (24.05%)	319 (22.11%)	309 (21.41%)	150 (10.40%)	1,443 (100.0)

to December 2003, and a few remaining ones were completed in Digos, Davao del Sur in January 2004.

The questionnaire was divided into the following sections: background information (this section was supposed to be filled up by the respondents' teachers); family composition, economic status and gender role divisions; migration, family relationship and socialization; school and academics; health and well-being; social skills and social support; identity, psychological and emotional health; and aspirations. The questionnaires were administered in three languages: Tagalog (which was used in Luzon and Davao del Sur), Cebuano (the language of interview in Cebu) and Hiligaynon (the language of interview in Negros Occidental). Interview time ranged from 20 to 80 minutes (mean completion time was 34.52 minutes).

### **The Focus Group Discussions**

In addition to the survey which focused on young children, the study also sought out the voices and perspectives of other family members as well as

workers and volunteers who work with the families left behind. FGDs were conducted for three groups of participants:

- Sons and daughters of OFWs (6 FGDs with sons; 5 FGDs with daughters);
- Husbands and wives of OFWs (3 FGDs with husbands; 5 FGDs with wives, both land-based and seafarers); and
- Staff of government agencies, non-government organizations (NGOs) and the Catholic Church, including volunteers who are working with OFW families (3 FGDs with community workers).

Altogether 23 FGDs were conducted involving participants from Manila, Cavite, Laguna, Bulacan, the Cordillera, Ilocos, Negros Occidental, Cebu, Davao del Sur, Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao and Cagayan de Oro City. Most of the FGDs were carried out in conjunction with the Youth Counseling Workshop conducted by OWWA in selected regions. The staff of OWWA, ECMI and AOS-Manila provided assistance in the recruitment of participants while SMC arranged for facilitators and documentors. Most of the FGDs were carried out between August and November 2003. Three FGDs were completed in January 2004 due to difficulties in arranging the FGDs earlier on. The FGDs ran for 1.5 to three hours. The sessions were tape-recorded and the tapes were transcribed.

The FGDs provided additional data on the experiences and views of older children and caregivers. The discussions with the community workers gave some insights about on-the-ground realities of ministering to the left-behind families. The FGDs brought out the emotional side of labor migration. The survey, on the other hand, provided data that can be measured and can thus give indication on levels and patterns. Taken together, the two methods complement and strengthen the data base on migrant families.

## **The Report**

This is the first report based on the 2003 Children and Families Study. This report provides an overview of the findings of the study's objectives based on the descriptive analysis. The survey data presented here is based on weighted data, i.e., data which have been projected to reflect the distribution of children-respondents in the actual population. In other words, although the data were gathered from 1,443 children of migrants and non-migrants, the weighted data pertain to the children of migrants and non-migrants in the population.

There are plans to undertake further analysis of the data to explore the factors that contribute to the resilience and vulnerabilities of left-behind children and families. This will be the subject of another report.

## Migration in the Eyes of Filipino Children

Before we discuss the findings, first of all, we have to determine how many children in the ages 10-12 years had one or two parents working abroad at the time of the survey in 2003. Since this is not readily available, it was necessary to estimate this number.<sup>3</sup>

Based on data on the number of families as of 2000 and the projected growth rate of 7.5 percent between 2000 and 2003, there were some 14,414,879 Filipino families in 2003. The next step was to determine the number of families which had at least one child in the 10-12 years age group. Using the 2000 Family Income and Expenditures Survey data, it was estimated that 21.1 percent or 3,463,540 families had at least one child in the 10-12 years age group. Based on some assumptions about the distribution of married migrant workers (with due consideration to the gender distribution and whether they were land-based or sea-based workers), it was estimated that 2.7 percent or 91,790 families of deployed migrant workers had at least one child in the 10-12 years age group. Thus, of the universe of 3,463,540 families with at least one child in the ages 10-12 years old, the overwhelming majority, 97.3 percent or 3,279,960 were non-migrant families which had children in the 10-12 years age group. These estimates were used in projecting the distribution of respondents in the sample survey to their actual distribution in the population. Unless otherwise stated, the findings reported here are based on weighted data, which refer to the population not just the sample.

### Profile of the Children

Background data on the children are summarized in Table 2. More female children than male children (54 percent vs. 46 percent) were in the ages 10-12 years (Grades 4-6). There were a number of children who were younger or older than the 10-12 years age group. Overall, the mean age was 10.72 and standard deviation was 1.15 years.

The type of school the children attended shows a clear difference between the children of migrants and the children of non-migrants: 40.9 percent of OFW children were in private schools compared with 14.9 percent among non-OFW children.<sup>4</sup> The children were distributed into the

<sup>3</sup> We thank Dr. Ana Maria Tabunda of the University Philippines Statistical Center for these estimates.

<sup>4</sup> It may be recalled that of the 130 sampled schools, 42 percent (n=54) were private schools and 58 percent (n=76) were public schools.

TABLE 2  
BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE CHILDREN

Variable	Total	Children of	Children	Children of Migrants			BP
		Non-Migrants	of Migrants	MM	FL	FS	
<b>Gender</b>							
Female	<b>54.0</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>53.5</b>	50.5	53.7	52.5	59.7
Male	<b>46.0</b>	<b>46.0</b>	<b>46.5</b>	49.5	46.3	47.5	40.3
<b>Age</b>							
9 yrs. & younger	<b>15.2</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>16.2</b>	12.6	18.7	18.3	11.6
10 yrs.	<b>29.7</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>30.9</b>	23.6	34.4	30.2	34.2
11 yrs.	<b>30.3</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>30.8</b>	37.1	25.4	33.0	33.2
12 yrs.	<b>19.9</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>19.9</b>	24.2	18.9	17.3	19.1
13 yrs. & older	<b>5.0</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>2.2</b>	2.6	2.5	1.2	1.8
Mean	<b>10.72</b>	<b>10.72</b>	<b>10.63</b>	10.81	10.56	10.52	10.65
s.d.	<b>1.15</b>	<b>1.15</b>	<b>1.14</b>	1.05	1.23	1.05	1.01
<b>Type of School</b>							
Public	<b>84.4</b>	<b>85.1</b>	<b>59.1</b>	67.4	60.5	42.6	62.7
Private (sect & non-sect)	<b>15.6</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>40.9</b>	32.6	39.5	57.4	37.3
<b>Grade Level</b>							
Grade 4	<b>35.6</b>	<b>35.7</b>	<b>33.9</b>	31.6	37.0	33.0	29.3
Grade 5	<b>29.7</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>31.0</b>	27.3	29.1	33.6	40.0
Grade 6	<b>34.6</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>35.2</b>	41.1	33.9	33.4	30.7
<b>Section</b>							
Middle & upper	<b>25.4</b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>30.4</b>	30.9	30.7	27.4	32.5
Lower	<b>8.5</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>5.0</b>	5.6	5.6	2.8	5.3
Mixed	<b>66.1</b>	<b>66.2</b>	<b>64.6</b>	63.4	63.7	69.8	62.2
<b>Household Profile</b>							
Mean household size	<b>6.52</b>	<b>6.52</b>	<b>6.67</b>	6.83	6.31	6.25	8.19
s.d.	<b>2.10</b>	<b>2.10</b>	<b>1.98</b>	2.11	1.83	1.76	1.69
Mean no. of adults	<b>2.44</b>	<b>2.45</b>	<b>2.14</b>	2.50	2.04	1.82	2.24
s.d.	<b>1.04</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>1.37</b>	1.61	1.26	1.23	1.25
Mean no. of workers	<b>2.08</b>	<b>2.07</b>	<b>2.28</b>	2.69	1.98	1.76	3.26
s.d.	<b>1.08</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>1.25</b>	1.32	1.13	0.91	1.09
Mean no. of children	<b>3.67</b>	<b>3.69</b>	<b>2.99</b>	2.92	3.00	2.99	3.05
s.d.	<b>1.66</b>	<b>1.66</b>	<b>1.29</b>	1.44	1.24	1.18	1.27

following grade levels: 35.6 percent were in Grade 4; 29.7 percent in Grade 5; and 34.6 percent in Grade 6. Most of the children belonged to heterogeneous classes. A higher percentage of children of migrants belonged to middle and upper sections than children of non-migrants (30.4 percent vs. 25.2 percent).

Some variations can be noted in the profile of the children's households. The children of migrants belonged to households that were bigger (especially notable is the larger household size of children whose two parents were abroad, 8.19) and had more workers compared to the children of non-migrants.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the children of non-migrants were part of households that had more adult members as well as more children compared with children of migrants.

### **Parents' Migration and Occupational Profile**

The migration and occupational background of the children's parents are displayed in Table 3.

For the children who had parents working abroad at the time of the survey, 17.82 percent of the migrant parents were seafarers and the rest were land-based workers. The latter were distributed as follows: Middle East, 48.59 percent (Saudi Arabia alone accounted for 34.48 percent); Americas (11.89 in the US); East Asia, 19.38 percent (11.03 percent were in Japan); and Southeast Asia, 7.25 percent (2.73 percent were in Brunei); Europe, 6.64 percent (2.92 percent were in Italy); and the rest were in Oceania and Africa.

Among migrant fathers, Saudi Arabia was the top destination (47.63 percent), with the United States as a distant second (11.10 percent). The single largest occupational category for migrant fathers was seafaring – 38 percent. If we consider only the land-based migrant fathers, the largest numbers or 45 percent were in production-related occupations (particularly as repairmen/technicians and construction workers); professionals made up about a quarter, 24 percent; and the third largest numbers were in services, 15 percent.<sup>6</sup> Migrant fathers had been working abroad for an average of 6.6 years, with seafarers averaging about eight years.<sup>7</sup> There were also more cases of seafarers – 47.1 percent – who first left for abroad when the respondent children were less than a year old. A large majority of

<sup>5</sup> The number of workers per household refers only to family members.

<sup>6</sup> About 17 percent of the children could not specify the occupation of their migrant mothers; 24 percent could not specify the occupation of their migrant fathers. The data on the occupation of migrant parents is limited to those with valid answers.

<sup>7</sup> According to Dr. Tabunda, children may not provide reliable or correct information about time (communication, 18 June 2004).

**TABLE 3**  
**PARENTS' MIGRATION AND OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE**

**A Migrant Parent(s)**

• Region/country of migrant parent(s)			
Middle East		48.59	
<i>Saudi Arabia</i>		34.48	
East Asia		19.38	
<i>Japan</i>		11.03	
Americas		15.30	
<i>US</i>		11.89	
Southeast Asia		7.25	
<i>Brunei</i>		2.73	
Europe		6.64	
<i>Italy</i>		2.92	
Others		2.84	
Sea-based		17.82	
• Region/country of migrant fathers		• Region/country of migrant mothers	
Middle East	57.94	Middle East	34.72
<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	47.63	<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	14.99
Americas	14.63	East Asia	29.58
<i>US</i>	11.10	<i>Japan</i>	17.60
East Asia	12.51	Americas	16.28
<i>Japan</i>	6.59	<i>US</i>	13.07
Southeast Asia	7.20	Europe	10.12
<i>Brunei</i>	2.50	<i>Italy</i>	4.22
Europe	4.30	Southeast Asia	7.32
<i>Italy</i>	2.04	<i>Brunei</i>	3.07
Others	3.43	Others	1.97
• Occupation of migrant fathers (land-based)		• Occupation of migrant mothers (land-based)	
Professional	24.24	Professional	22.93
Adm., managerial	2.31	Adm., managerial	2.39
Clerical	3.34	Clerical	3.90
Sales	2.32	Sales	4.83
Service	14.70	Service	62.58
Production	44.85	Production	1.40
Agriculture	0.49	Agriculture	-
Others	7.75	Sea-based	1.98
• No. of years migrant fathers abroad		• No. of years migrant mothers abroad	
1-3	29.90	1-3	46.40
4-6	20.80	4-6	25.00
7-9	18.50	7-9	13.90
10+	30.70	10+	14.80
Mean	6.62	Mean	4.83
s.d.	3.88	s.d.	3.37

TABLE 3 (continued)  
PARENTS' MIGRATION AND OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE

• R's age when migrant fathers 1 <sup>st</sup> left		• R's age when migrant mothers 1 <sup>st</sup> left	
Less than 1 yr.	28.60	Less than 1 yr.	12.60
1-4 yrs.	23.70	1-4	18.80
5-9 yrs.	42.60	5-9	55.20
10+	5.10	10+	13.40
Mean	4.07	Mean	5.88
s.d.	3.48	s.d.	3.40
• Father has returned for vacation?		• Mother has returned for vacation?	
% Yes	86.2	% Yes	77.3
• Fathers' last vacation		• Mothers' last vacation	
Less than 1 yr.	62.1	Less than 1 yr.	57.8
1-2 yrs.	31.8	1-2 yrs.	35.6
3-4 yrs.	4.8	3-4 yrs.	4.2
5+ yrs.	1.3	5+ yrs.	2.3
<b>B Non-migrant Parents</b>			
• Fathers' occupation (Phils.)		• Mothers' occupation (Phils.)	
Not working	9.94	Not working	47.98
Professional	5.53	Professional	5.90
Adm., managerial	2.70	Adm., managerial	1.27
Clerical	1.92	Clerical	2.67
Sales	11.86	Sales	22.21
Service	10.44	Service	15.85
Production	40.47	Production	2.17
Agriculture	5.86	Agriculture	1.03
Gov./Military	8.03	Gov./Military	1.40
Sea-based	3.26		

migrant fathers (86 percent) had visited their families. The last visit of fathers, according to 62 percent of the children, was less than a year ago.

Among migrant mothers, Japan was the topmost destination (17.60 percent), followed by Saudi Arabia (14.99 percent) and the US (13.07 percent). Almost all, 99 percent, of migrant workers were land-based workers. Some 63 percent of migrant mothers were in service occupations, usually as domestic workers or caregivers; about 23 percent were working abroad as professionals, either as nurses (11.33 percent) or as performing artists (7.31 percent). Migrant mothers had been abroad for a shorter period of time compared with migrant fathers. On the average, mothers had been working abroad for 4.8 years (almost two years less than the migrant fathers). More than half of migrant mothers first left when their respondent children were

a little older, between five to nine years old. Majority of migrant mothers (77.3 percent) had returned home to visit their families. Some 58 percent of the children said the most recent visit of their migrant mothers was less than a year ago.

Turning to non-migrant parents, like their counterparts working abroad, majority of non-migrant fathers (40 percent) were also in production-related jobs. Close to 27 percent of fathers whose wives were working abroad were not working - this is more than twice the percentage of non-working fathers (9.8 percent) whose wives were also non-migrants. On the other hand, most non-migrant mothers (47 percent) whose husbands were also non-migrants were not employed at the time of the survey. The figure is higher among those whose husbands were working overseas: some 68 percent of seafarers' wives and some 60 percent of the wives of land-based workers were not working. For non-migrant mothers who engaged in economic activity, regardless of the migration status of their husbands, most of them were in sales.

Among the children of non-migrants, some of their parents had actually worked abroad but had returned to the (Philippines and were classified as non-migrant at the time of the survey). Some 5.6 percent of fathers of children of non-migrant families had worked abroad.

## **Migration through Children's Eyes**

### *Awareness of Migration*

It seems that the large scale migration of Filipinos is not widely known or appreciated among children. Asked whether they had ever heard of Filipinos migrating abroad, only a little more than half (55.9 percent) answered in the affirmative (Table 4). The children of migrants were more aware of this phenomenon than their counterparts in non-migrant families. The most popular source of information on migration came from the media – TV, radio, newspapers (62.5 percent) – and about a fifth said that migration was covered in their subjects in school. Much fewer (11.5 percent) reported that migration figured in family discussions. Moreover, children in OFW families reported less family discussion on the issue than children in non-OFW families (7.1 percent vs. 11.7 percent).

Children's view of migration is very economic – four out of five respondents attributed the migration of Filipinos to economic reasons, primarily because of need, and secondarily in order to better their lives.

Children of migrants were asked if their family had ever discussed why their parents went abroad; only 51.7 percent said yes. Children with two parents abroad appear to have been more involved in discussions about their parents' departure than children from other migrant families. A substantial number of children thus appear to have been left out in the decision-making of their parents concerning migration. It may be recalled that some children reported that their parents had been migrating since they were babies (or before they were even born in the case of some). Children also viewed their parents' migration as rooted in economic reasons.

### *Feelings about Parents' Migration*

How do the children regard their parents' migration? Across all groups of children of migrants, those who expressed that it was against their will is clearly a small minority, less than three percent said so – a notable exception is the larger share of children of migrant mothers, 6.5 percent who were against their mothers' departure. More than half said that they accepted their parents' migration, while another 35 to 39 percent were more ambivalent about it, i.e., they found it difficult but they were coping with it. Vignettes from the FGDs with adolescents reveal the varying degrees of acceptance of their parent's migration and their coping strategies (see Boxes 1 and 2).

If someone in the family had to migrate, in general, the popular choice was the father, 49 percent, according to all the children, and much higher, 66.1 percent among the children of migrants. Few children mentioned the mother as the preferred migrant, except among the children of migrant mothers. The multiple roles mothers play in the day-to-day lives of their families are part of the reasons why children, mothers and fathers would prefer women to stay (see Box 3). Economic difficulties, however, incline family members to adjust to the situation (see Box 4). There seems to be a tendency for the children to consider the parent(s) who had actually migrated as the likely candidate for migration. Those whose mothers were migrants were likely to name their mothers; those who had migrant fathers offered their fathers as the preferred migrant. In the case of children with both migrant parents, many of them mentioned their mothers and fathers as the likely migrants.

**TABLE 4**  
**INFORMATION OR PERCEPTIONS OF MIGRATION**

Variable	Total	Children of Non-Migrants	Children of Migrants	MM	FL	FS	BP
Ever heard of Filipinos migrating abroad?							
Yes	<b>55.9</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>58.9</b>	58.9	57.9	61.0	59.7
Sources of migration information							
Taken up in school	<b>20.6</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>10.6</b>	8.7	10.4	11.7	13.2
TV, radio	<b>62.5</b>	<b>62.0</b>	<b>80.2</b>	79.7	81.0	78.8	80.6
Discussed in family	<b>11.5</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>7.1</b>	9.4	6.4	7.5	4.7
Other	<b>5.3</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>2.1</b>	2.3	2.2	2.1	1.4
Reasons why Filipinos migrate							
Economic need	<b>56.7</b>	<b>56.4</b>	<b>66.4</b>	69.9	66.1	66.1	61.2
Economic advancement	<b>25.5</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>22.2</b>	20.0	20.1	25.7	28.2
Other	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>1.3</b>	0.5	2.1	0.1	1.6
Don't know	<b>15.5</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>10.1</b>	9.5	11.7	8.1	9.1
Ever discussed why parent(s) migrated?							
Yes	<b>51.7</b>	-	<b>51.7</b>	50.0	52.3	46.1	61.0
Children's view of parent's migration (one migrant parent)							
Accepted	-	-	<b>59.9</b>	55.2	62.5	60.3	-
Has difficulty but OK	-	-	<b>36.6</b>	38.2	34.8	38.7	-
Against will	-	-	<b>3.5</b>	6.5	2.8	1.1	-
Children's view of parents' migration (two migrant parents)							
Accepted	-	-	-	57.1	60.3	-	-
Has difficulty but OK	-	-	-	39.7	36.6	-	-
Against will	-	-	-	3.1	3.1	-	-
Which family member may go abroad?							
Father	<b>49.0</b>	<b>48.5</b>	<b>66.1</b>	39.0	79.8	82.3	48.3
Mother	<b>20.4</b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>14.6</b>	41.9	4.7	-	11.5
Sibling	<b>18.3</b>	<b>18.6</b>	<b>8.3</b>	9.7	8.5	6.7	-
Father/Mother	-	-	-	-	-	5.0	29.1

*Box 1: Feelings about their Parent's Migration*

The departure of a parent to work abroad has been both a welcome and dreaded occasion in the life of Filipino families. For some adolescents, this experience can be very trying. The period of adolescence is problematic enough as it is without having the added burden of coping with the absence of a parent and the changes in the family structure that goes with it.

The reason behind a parent's migration has been generally perceived in a noble light, particularly in response to the economic need of the family.

*My father pursued a job abroad so that we can achieve what our parents did not accomplish, like finishing school...and also so that he can provide for our needs.*

Missy, 15 years old, from Manila (FS)

However, for some adolescents, the departure of a parent for abroad can be a welcome relief from some unpleasant situations.

*It's not nice for children to see their parents quarreling. I don't know, sometimes they quarrel over some very petty things...and my siblings get to witness it. It's not nice....they somehow seem so shallow.*

Issa, 19 years old, from Bulacan (FS)

*When both of them are around, they often fight. ..because when papa is not abroad...we can all see his vices like gambling and drinking. So my parents fight over that. But if he does these things abroad, we don't get to know about them...so there's no fighting.*

Ric, 19 years old, from La Union (FL)

Although the children often understand why their parents have to leave, still the parents' departure can exact an emotional toll on the children left behind:

*I was still young then. I cried a lot. It took me a long time to adjust (to my father's absence) because he was with me for about six years before suddenly going away. Ah...it seemed hard to adjust then since I was still very young.*

Ric, 19 years old, from La Union (FL)

Aside from missing their parents, children also worry about the situation of their parents abroad:

*I pity my mother and fear for her safety because we are not sure about the situation in the Middle East...war might erupt anytime.*

Amin, 20 years old from Cotabato (MM)

Some children, however, take their parents' departure in stride. Such reaction may be understood in light of the children's more pragmatic view:

*Me? I felt happy....because my parents had jobs abroad... uhhh....so finally I can buy whatever I want. That's all.*

Ana, 13 years old, from Baguio (BP)

*I felt happy because my dream of finishing school will be fulfilled and our lives would be in order.*

Hafiz, 19 years old, from Cotabato (MM)

*Box 2: In the Absence of Mothers/Fathers*

Families have various ways of adjusting to the absence of a loved one who is working abroad. The emotional burden is often eased when family members help each other in coping with the situation in their homes.

*For me, I can only adjust to my father's absence the moment things are ok with mama...because whenever my papa leaves, mama gets so upset that she even collapses. It's like... if we also cry, mama will have no one to turn to when she's hurting. We know that she's ok when she is able to start doing her regular chores again.*

Cara, 16 years old, from Manila (FS)

Children also seem to get strength from the thought that the parent's absence is for the family's welfare.

*Before, I used to be very sad whenever my mother leaves for abroad. I pity my youngest sibling because he always pines for her. I just bear in mind that it is for our own good...to enable us to study in good schools. I realize that it's really for our own benefit because no mother would purposely leave her children behind.*

Farid, 20 years old from Cotabato, (MM)

As the family gets used to the absence of a parent after a couple of years, the relationship with the migrant parent assumes a different dimension.

*As long as there's financial support, I'm ok with that. If you have money, you can find your own enjoyment.*

Migs, 19 years old, from La Union (FL)

For some, the long absence has affected the way the children relate to the migrant parent.

*Life is more comfortable when father is not around, but at the same time sad, because we never had the chance to get to know our father really well. The reason it's more comfortable is because there's no one around to scold us or nag us.*

Honey, 13 years old, from Cordillera (FL)

*Sometimes, it's hard for me...I feel ill at ease with him. Although my daddy is really kind..... I don't know...I feel like there's a stranger in our house. We also talk to each other but somehow I couldn't seem to bring myself to be closer to him.*

Issa, 19 years old, from Bulacan (FS)

For others, there is a feeling of regret over past experiences they could have shared together as a family had the parent been here and not abroad.

*It feels different without papa around. I remember when I was still in the elementary grades, I used to ask my Tito's help with school projects that require a lot of detailed work and some adult assistance....like making frames. I miss him when he's not around because when he's here I'm so happy. We have such fun, especially the two of us, running around, throwing things at each other...I treat him like a close friend (barkada).*

Don, 19 years old, from La Union (FL)

### *Comparisons: Migrant and Non-Migrant Families, OFW and Non-OFW Children*

Data on how OFW children and non-OFW compared their families and their conditions reveal interesting contrasts. The analysis below is limited to children who were aware of the migration of Filipino workers.

The comparisons of family indicators *before* their parents' migration and the *present* (at the time of the study) reveal both continuities and changes. A little more than half noted no change in their economic status (56.3 percent); about half (49.1 percent) said that their family ties (closeness) remained the same. Where changes were reported, the less positive ones (decline in the family's economic status, the family being lonelier, the family being less united, or the family being less close) were only true for the minority of the children (ranging from 4 percent to 16 percent, or less than one-fifth of the children). In general, the direction of the changes is for the better: improved economic status, the family being happier, more complete and closer. The impact of the parents' migration on the children's assessment of their traits followed the same patterns. More than half said that they were not any less or more responsible at the time of interview compared to when their parent(s) were present. Children's sense of independence showed a three-way split. Half of the children did feel that they had more freedom and the majority said that they were happier than children of non-migrants. Close to half (42 percent) said that they faced fewer difficulties in life than non-OFW children.

When non-OFW children compared their family and personal conditions vis-à-vis OFW families and children, they viewed the latter group in more problematic terms. This reinforces earlier observations about the different appreciation of respondents from migrant and non-migrant families of the consequences of migration (Asis, 1995). Compared to their own families, non-OFW children saw OFW families as being economically better off, but in other respects, the largest percentage considered OFW families as less happy (37.4 percent), less united (49 percent) and less close (51.3 percent). Compared with the children of migrants, children of non-migrants viewed themselves as more responsible (44.6 percent). More than half (54.2 percent) considered themselves as less independent and about the same percentage (53.7 percent) said they were less lonely. The largest percentage of the children of non-migrants (38.1 percent) said that they were as free as the children of migrants.<sup>8</sup> The children of migrants were more likely to claim that they were freer and had fewer difficulties in life.

<sup>8</sup> There were no marked patterns of responses in the non-OFW children's views about facing difficulties in life.

### Box 3: The Roles Mothers Play

Given the choice on which parent they prefer to leave for abroad, most adolescents chose their father. Many regard the mother's role as nurturer of the family to be very important to the welfare of the children left behind.

*As they say...it's better to lose 100 fathers than a single mother.*

Anthony, 17 years old from Cavite (FL)

*...When father is left behind, he is always mad at me. I couldn't be open to him about my feelings...but it's different with my mother...we enjoy a good relationship. She can understand me better since she had also gone through similar experiences. There are some similarities between us.*

Janet, 15 years old, from Cordillera (MM)

Some adolescents also believe that mothers are more competent than fathers in performing the dual role of being both mother and father to the family.

*....My mom can be both a father and mother. I sometimes see her go up our roof. I can see her doing tasks that a father is supposed to be doing, but if my father were here instead, maybe he wouldn't be able to cook as well as mom.*

Don, 19 years old from La Union (FL)

Although the important role of the mother is generally accepted and recognized, there are adolescents who seem to prefer mother-absent family arrangements.

*If mothers are left behind, the clothes are neater, the house is cleaner... everything smells good because she's much better in handling household chores. However, when the situation is reversed....the house is not too clean...same with the clothes...but the house is well maintained because all the things that need to be repaired are repaired right away.*

*But for me, I prefer my mother to go abroad because when she's here she always scolds me...whereas my father seems almost close to me. It's enough for him to see that I'm ok. As long as I get back to the house without any problem, it's ok with him. But it's different with my mother. Whenever I come home late by a few hours...she would always question me...."Where have you been?" "What did you do?" That's so like my mother eh...."Why don't you tell me....blah, blah,blah..."*

Randy, 18 years old from Baguio (MM)

#### Box 4: Holding On To Mothers and Letting Go

It is not just the children who acknowledge the many roles that cast mothers as critical to the well-being of the family (*see also* Box 1). Mothers, too, recognize the many details that they have to take care of.

*A mother has more roles than the father. Actually, the father just takes care of finances; he just gives that kind of assistance. But we, as a mother, you must be a teacher, you must be a friend, you must be a maid, a nanny. The number one [responsibility], most of all, you need to raise a child with Jesus in his/her heart. That is most important, a strong faith.*

Flor, seaman's wife, Bacolod City

In the discussion with the left-behind wives in Manila, the participants came up with the following list of to-dos:

*The canal is clogged, you do it.  
The drainage is clogged, you do it.  
The light is not working, that's a mother's job.  
I have experienced going up to the roof to apply vulca-seal.  
It's like that, everything, a woman has to do everything.  
Me, there's just two of us at home, with the babies. My God, I wake up really early, clean up, cook, wash clothes, I do these at the same time.*

The husbands generally subscribe to the ideal of homebound wives. However, due to the needs of the family, they had to reconfigure their wives' roles as well as their own. Some of them would rather be the ones to work abroad, but the job opportunities for men are more limited.

*If we had our way, we would not want them to go abroad, but because of our need, because of the difficulties of life, this is what happened to us.*

Danny, husband of domestic worker, Laguna

*We cannot work abroad; they are the ones who can find work.*

Pete, husband of domestic worker, Laguna

Most children in both groups considered themselves to be less lonely compared to the other.

#### Migration Intentions

Close to half of the children (47.3 percent) reported that they had entertained thoughts of working abroad someday (Table 5). Not surprisingly,

more children of migrants said that they had plans of working abroad than the children from non-migrant families (60.4 percent vs. 47 percent). Among the children of migrants, those with migrant mothers were the least likely to signify an intention to go abroad. A recent survey among adult Filipinos, the 2001 Pulse Asia study, recorded a smaller percentage (20 percent) of respondents wanting to go abroad. The higher percentage of migration intentions among the children may reflect a lack of awareness about migration restrictions, among other reasons. In Parreñas' (2002: 51) study of young adults left behind, almost all said they would not want to leave their children to work abroad because they would not want their children to experience what they had gone through. In the FGDs with the adolescent sons and daughters of migrants, they raised many considerations, thus the answer is not a pat yes or no (see Box 5).

The dominant reason for wanting to go abroad among young children was mostly economic, especially among the children of non-migrants. Interestingly, non-economic reasons also figure in the migration intentions of the children of migrants. This was also evident in the FGDs with adolescents (see Box 5).

Among the intended destinations, close to half (48.8 percent of all the children) had set their sights on going to the United States. Ranked second were East Asian destinations, which were mentioned by about a quarter of the children (24.2 percent); Japan took the largest share among the East Asian destinations. The Middle East, a major region of destination of Filipino workers, also figured highly (11.3 percent). The remaining regions were mentioned by less than three percent.

As to their intended occupation abroad, children mentioned occupations which are known to be marketable abroad. More than half (52.5 percent) aspired to take up professional jobs overseas. Under the professional occupations, 30 percent indicated that they planned to work abroad as doctors, nurses and related medical personnel. Engineers (7.4 percent) ranked next to medical professionals, followed by some 5.5 percent who wanted to work as entertainers. Overall, sea-based occupations did not figure in the aspirations of the children, except among the children of seafarers - about a third (32.0 per-cent) said they wanted to work abroad as seafarers, a case of children following in the footsteps of their parents.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> During the dissemination-validation workshop (17 June 2004), Dr. Alicia Lamigo, founding president and chair of the Board of Trustees of the Seamen's Wives Association of the Philippines shared that in a survey that they conducted, 20 percent of the sons of seafarers (no information on age) were not inclined to follow in the footsteps of their fathers. They found that mothers discourage their sons from going into this kind of job; another reason was the lack of security in seafaring.

TABLE 5  
MIGRATION-RELATED INTENTIONS

Variable	Children of Non-		Children	MM	Children of Migrants		
	Total	Migrants	of Migrants		FL	FS	BP
<b>Has plan to work abroad?</b>							
Yes	<b>47.3</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>60.4</b>	49.8	68.3	51.1	68.4
No	<b>50.5</b>	<b>50.9</b>	<b>36.4</b>	47.0	30.0	43.3	26.8
Don't know	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>3.2</b>	3.2	1.7	5.7	4.8
<b>Reason for wanting to work abroad</b>							
Economic need	<b>53.8</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>43.3</b>	39.4	47.0	41.4	39.2
Economic advancement	<b>17.0</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>18.0</b>	16.4	18.0	19.7	19.0
Other	<b>23.5</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>35.2</b>	43.1	31.4	35.1	36.0
Don't know	<b>5.8</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>3.4</b>	1.2	3.6	3.8	5.8
<b>Intended Destination</b>							
East Asia	<b>24.2</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>17.6</b>	25.4	14.7	6.9	26.9
<i>Japan</i>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>10.2</b>	12.4	7.5	5.1	21.2
Southeast Asia	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>4.0</b>	6.0	2.1	4.1	7.6
Middle East	<b>11.3</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>18.1</b>	14.1	23.6	5.2	18.4
<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>12.1</b>	5.8	17.7	4.8	10.3
N. America	<b>52.3</b>	<b>52.6</b>	<b>42.1</b>	36.9	46.3	47.2	30.3
<i>U.S.A.</i>	<b>48.8</b>	<b>48.8</b>	<b>38.1</b>	31.4	41.9	43.0	30.0
Europe	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>5.6</b>	8.6	2.6	4.8	11.9
<i>UK</i>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>2.1</b>	3.3	0.8	3.2	3.7
<i>Italy</i>				3.0	-	-	5.8
Others	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>2.6</b>	0.0	3.4	3.0	3.6
Sea Based	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>3.7</b>	1.6	0.5	20.2	0.0
Don't know	<b>7.4</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>6.4</b>	7.3	6.7	8.6	1.7
<b>Intended Occupation</b>							
Professional/							
Technical	<b>52.5</b>	<b>52.9</b>	<b>46.7</b>	44.7	48.7	37.2	51.8
<i>Doctors, nurses</i>	<b>30.1</b>	<b>27.4</b>	<b>30.0</b>	24.7	27.1	28.9	30.9
<i>Engineers</i>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>11.5</b>	10.1	14.6	5.2	9.6
<i>OPAs</i>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>2.2</b>	2.5	2.3	0.6	5.5
Adm/Managerial	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>1.4</b>	2.3	1.1	1.8	3.3
Clerical	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>3.6</b>	2.3	1.1	1.8	2.2
Sales	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>1.8</b>	1.8	1.5	2.1	2.2
Service	<b>16.9</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>10.4</b>	14.4	10.4	9.5	6.7
<i>Domestic workers</i>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>3.7</b>	9.6	2.1	4.3	0.3
Agriculture	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.7</b>	1.2	0.8	0.0	0.3

TABLE 5 (continued)  
MIGRATION-RELATED INTENTIONS

Variable	Total	Children	Children	Children of Migrants			
		of Non- Migrants	of Migrants	MM	FL	FS	BP
Production	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>6.7</b>	6.0	9.1	1.2	5.3
<i>Repairmen</i>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.2</b>	3.7	2.1	1.2	1.4
<i>Factory</i>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1.3</b>	2.3	1.3	0.0	1.2
<i>Construction</i>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>2.5</b>	0.0	4.6	0.0	1.3
Government officials, military, others	<b>6.8</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>14.1</b>	13.4	13.7	9.8	20.5
Sea based	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>7.4</b>	4.2	2.0	32.9	2.1
<i>Seafarers</i>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>7.0</b>	3.7	2.0	31.4	2.1
Don't know	<b>9.4</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>7.2</b>	8.9	7.7	3.0	8.0
Choose Filipino citizenship?							
% Yes	<b>98.5</b>	<b>98.6</b>	<b>95.2</b>	96.6	94.5	95.9	93.5
Why Filipino citizenship?							
Taken for granted (born here, etc.)	<b>42.3</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>44.8</b>	45.8	43.2	42.7	51.3
Positive traits	<b>28.5</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>28.1</b>	25.0	29.4	30.0	27.1
Loves the							
Philippines, etc.	<b>17.6</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>18.0</b>	18.5	17.5	19.4	16.7
Other	<b>11.6</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>9.1</b>	10.6	9.9	7.9	4.8

Are migration intentions in any way related to plans to change citizenship? One concern that cropped up many years ago is that elementary school children reportedly wished to acquire another citizenship, a development that many associated with the eroding sense of nationalism brought about by overseas migration. On the contrary, according to the findings of Canieso-Doronila, some 61-76 percent of Filipino youth said they wanted to live and work in the Philippines (cited in Asis, 1995). A survey of school children in the 1990s in a number of migrant sending communities found that while many children had intentions to go abroad in the future, fewer said that they would like to change their citizenship (Asis, 1995). In the studies of Cruz (1987) among high school and college students in the 1990s and the 2000 National Youth Survey (2002) conducted among Filipino youth, 62.6 percent in the Cruz (1987) study and 81 percent in the National Youth Survey (2002) said that they preferred to keep their Filipino citizenship. A 1996 survey of young Filipinos in the ages 15-21 (n=1,200) found that about 93 percent of respondents were quite proud or very proud to be Filipinos (Sandoval et al., 1998).

*Box 5: Adolescents on Seeking Greener Pastures*

The FGDs presented an opportunity to further explore the reasons why young people are attracted to the idea of going abroad.

Many adolescent sons and daughters said that they had plans of going abroad. Those who did not want to reasoned that they did not want to live apart from their families. A few, such as Alice, expressed the desire to use their skills in the service of the nation:

*It's like this ... I want ... when I finish journalism, when I become a journalist, I will stay here in the Philippines. This is where I was born, so I will serve here.*

Alice, 14 y/o, Bulacan (FL)

Going abroad was attractive mostly for economic reasons, as Ron's statement below succinctly puts it:

*I will go abroad. I don't like it here in the Philippines because there is no possibility to move up. I see that I will have a future abroad.*

Ron, 19, y/o, Cagayan de Oro City (FA)

Others are less certain of leaving and would only consider working abroad if opportunities in the home country run dry:

*If there are good opportunities here ... if I get a good job, I would rather stay here. If there is a need, that is the time that I will go abroad.*

Jeremy, 19 y/o, Cagayan de Oro City (FA)

*... If nothing happens here in the local or national, you better try international. I really prefer it here. My first option is to work here. It seems the values here are good. You have a good idea of how things work here. If you go abroad, the culture is different; you won't know what to do. You might turn out bad there.*

Migs, 19 y/o, Ilocano group (FL)

Family considerations and concerns about the country also get into the equation, which suggest that staying home has its own attractions.

*I'm thinking of many things. It's like there is a conflict. It might be better if you work in other countries, but the family that you will leave behind, you do not know what will happen to them. It's also difficult.*

Risa, 17 y/o, Manila (FS)

*When I graduate, pass the board exam, work, maybe get married when I am 25. I am not sure if it's early, to save, and then if the opportunities in other countries are good, I might go there. But if it's OK here, I want to stay here. I also get affected by the issue of brain drain. Because I hear the professionals in the Philippines, they go to other countries, and then the other countries progress but where they came from, there is no progress.*

Ric, 19 y/p, Ilocano group (FL)

In the present study, some nine out of 10 children said that they would rather be Filipino citizens, with slightly more children of non-migrants saying so than the children of migrants (98.6 percent vs. 95.2 percent). The children's reasons, however, suggest a rather essentialist basis, which would be subject to changes later on. The largest majority based their choice on taken-for-granted notions such as "because I was born here" or "because my parents are Filipinos." Alternatively, about half of the children also recognized the positive aspects of the Filipino people or the country (28.5 percent) and those who expressed love for Filipino culture or country (17.6 percent).

## The Well-Being of Children: Does Migration Matter?

Comparisons between the children of migrants and the children of non-migrants (and further comparisons of the children of different types of migrants) provide some measure of migration outcomes on selected indicators of well-being. By limiting the respondents to children coming from two-parent families, the comparisons will not be affected by extraneous factors. This detail is important to keep in mind in the interpretation of the findings.

We begin by turning to dimensions which show marked differences in the conditions or perceptions of the children of migrants relative to the children of non-migrants.

### **Where Migration Clearly Matters**

#### *Socio-economic Status*

The family's socio-economic status (SES) shows a very clear divide between the children of migrants and the children of non-migrants. This came out whether the measure was perceived social class or the more "objective" indicators, such as home ownership and ownership of durable goods.

The children's perception of their family's class status was measured by the question: "Filipino families have different statuses in life. Some are poor, some are not poor, and some are in the middle. In this card, where would you locate your family?"

Most of the children, especially the children of migrants, put their families in the middle (Table 6). Compared with non-OFW children, fewer OFW children considered their families as poor (31.2 percent among non-OFW children vs. 12 percent among OFW children); conversely, more OFW children considered their families as not poor compared with non-OFW children (28 percent vs. 19 percent).

The children's perceptions about their families' SES are also supported by children's reports on home ownership and ownership of durable goods. Families of migrants are more likely to own homes than non-migrant families. Also, migrant families owned more appliances than non-migrant families (8.41 vs. 5.65). Ownership of major appliances was distinctly higher

among migrant families. The access of migrant families to communication facilities is also very notable – OFW families are twice more likely to have a landline telephone connection than non-OFW families (63 percent vs. 29 percent). Ownership of cell phones is even more telling: some 94 percent of migrant families had cell phones as opposed to 60 percent among non-migrant families. Children of migrants have also become part of the proliferation of cell phones – more than a third (35 percent) of OFW children had their own cell phones compared with only 12 percent among non-OFW. This access to communications technology plays an important part in linking family members separated by borders (see Box 6).

### *Gender Roles in the Family*

The migration of one or both parents has definitely rearranged the division of labor in the family during the time when fathers, mothers or both parents are abroad. This is shown in Table 7 where the parent(s) expected to be responsible for taking care of the material and emotional needs of the young is (are) being replaced by other family or household members.

Among the children of non-migrants, gender roles in the family can be summarized as follows: mothers were the ones largely responsible for caregiving, preparing the food, taking care of the house, helping with the children's school work, attending programs and meetings at school; disciplining the children; teaching the children about faith; teaching them good manners; and teaching them about what is right and wrong. Fathers were largely responsible for earning money, and sharing with mothers the tasks of disciplining the children and teaching them what is right and wrong.

The arrangement described above only holds true among OFW families where the fathers worked abroad. For these families, fathers brought home the bacon so to speak, but mothers had to take care of everything else. In the absence of the fathers, it can be seen that a higher percentage of mothers had to assume responsibilities that were otherwise shared by fathers in non-migrant families.

The rearrangement of gender roles is more evident among OFW families where mothers or both parents are not present. For these families, the provider-father and nurturer-mother roles have given way to the following configurations:

- Caregivers had shifted from mothers to fathers and other female family members. Although some studies report the emerging role of fathers as full-time caregivers (e.g., Asis, Huang and Yeoh, forthcoming; Pingol,

TABLE 6  
SOCIAL ECONOMIC STATUS INDICATORS

Variable	Total	Children of Non-Migrants	Children of Migrants	Children of Migrants			
				MM	FL	FS	BP
Perceived economic status							
<i>Mahirap</i> (Poor)	<b>30.6</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>12.0</b>	14.2	12.2	9.6	10.4
<i>Salinya</i> (On the line)	<b>50.1</b>	<b>49.8</b>	<b>60.0</b>	58.3	60.2	63.6	57.2
<i>Hindi mahirap</i> (Not poor)	<b>19.2</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>28.0</b>	27.5	27.5	26.8	32.3
Own house/lot							
Yes	<b>50.2</b>	<b>50.1</b>	<b>56.3</b>	55.1	56.1	59.8	54.3
No	<b>42.6</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>38.6</b>	40.6	37.5	35.4	42.9
Other	<b>7.2</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>5.1</b>	4.3	6.4	4.8	2.8
Appliances owned							
<i>Major appliances</i>							
Landline (tel.)	<b>30.1</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>63.0</b>	53.5	59.0	75.5	76.1
Jeep/car	<b>17.2</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>26.8</b>	29.6	21.4	36.3	25.5
Motorcycle/ tricycle	<b>15.5</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>15.3</b>	20.6	8.5	20.9	19.7
Air condition	<b>14.3</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>33.6</b>	26.1	30.7	48.6	35.3
Child has cellphone	<b>13.1</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>35.0</b>	32.6	31.4	42.0	41.1
<i>Other appliances</i>							
TV	<b>91.6</b>	<b>91.4</b>	<b>98.4</b>	97.6	98.4	99.3	98.5
Gas/elec. Stove	<b>72.5</b>	<b>72.0</b>	<b>90.7</b>	83.1	93.2	94.4	91.3
VHS/VCR/DVD	<b>64.2</b>	<b>63.6</b>	<b>86.5</b>	79.8	86.5	92.4	90.5
Cellphone	<b>60.9</b>	<b>60.0</b>	<b>93.7</b>	91.5	94.8	96.2	90.4
Washing machine	<b>58.5</b>	<b>57.9</b>	<b>81.4</b>	81.0	77.4	88.8	85.3
Refrigerator	<b>55.4</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>88.4</b>	82.5	87.5	95.9	91.4
Component/ stereo	<b>53.7</b>	<b>53.0</b>	<b>81.7</b>	77.5	82.3	88.7	77.8
Mean	<b>5.72</b>	<b>5.65</b>	<b>8.41</b>	7.97	8.13	9.40	8.70
s.d.	<b>3.12</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>2.35</b>	2.60	2.32	1.86	2.12

2001). The data suggest that fathers receive support from other female family members. In fact, in mother-migrant families, caregiving has fallen more on other female family members than on the fathers (43.2 percent vs. 40 percent). The role of other female family members was also evident in families where both parents worked abroad. The only areas where fathers were more prominent than other female relatives are the discipline of children, helping the children with school work, attending school meetings, teaching the children good manners and teaching them about what is right and wrong.

- The provider role is no longer the preserve of fathers. Although dual-earner families are also sizable in non-migrant families, the percentage of such families among OFW families is greater (33.6 percent vs. 43.4 percent). Mothers were mentioned as providers in mother-absent families (30.8 percent mentioned mothers only; 49.3 percent mentioned both fathers and mothers) and where both parents were abroad (77.9 percent mentioned both fathers and mothers).

When children were asked to identify who were responsible for taking care of them, 85 percent named their mothers. However, when mothers and both parents were abroad, fathers and other female relatives were mentioned as the primary caregivers.

## **Where Migration Seems to Matter, But...**

### *Being Family/Family Relationships*

To have a better gauge about the parents' marriage, the study looked into the children's perception of their parents' relationship. In general, the children viewed their parents' marriage as positive – less than three percent noted that their parents were often not in good terms (Table 8). Majority of the OFW and non-OFW children (59 percent) described their parents' relationship as very good (*magkasundong-magkasundo*). More OFW children described their parents' relationship as very good compared with non-OFW children (70 percent vs. 59 percent). However, among the children of migrants, the children of migrant mothers were the least likely to describe their parents' relationship in the same light.

The mean scores of the children's assessment of their parents' relationship and their own relationship to various family members show interesting patterns. Mean scores were computed using a four-point scale ranging from

### Box 6: Cellphone Families

Communication between the migrant parent and the family left behind is crucial in maintaining a feeling of solidarity among the family members across the miles. It assures children that they are loved and that their families remain intact.

*My father always ends his text messages with 'I love you' and how much he loves us. It gives me a nice feeling that he can express his love for us even through text messages. It would have been very difficult without any communication between us.*

Missy, 15 years old, from Manila (FS)

*My father gets to go to different countries. We learn about where he is whenever he calls. Once when his ship docked in Europe, he bought a cellphone and sim card so he could call us at home. He calls often or sends text messages to mama... every minute, every time he is free.*

Aris, 18 years old from Cavite (FL)

When there is no regular communication or when the migrant parent chooses to speak only to some family members, this creates discontent.

*No communication....no letters. Nothing! She just calls our youngest at home through our landline every month. I am able to talk to her only on Christmas.*

Mike, 19 years old, from Baguio (MM)

For the left-behind parents, communication with the migrant parent also eases the difficulties of raising children. With the easier access to long-distance calls, couples have more opportunities to consult each other about things concerning children. Migrant parents, thus, are able to participate in family life, which is made more real by their voices being heard by their spouses and children:

*... that's why, the discipline by the father, his obligations, his responsibilities to us, they are still there, except that he is not here, [but] his voice remains in us.*

Olive, husband in Dubai, Laguna

To maintain family ties, OFW families invest in communication:

*When you consider how much was spent, you might think twice. If you count the phone cards he consumed, the amount could be our food budget. If you compute the expenses, my God, I could have bought a washing machine. But that's it; it's the only way, if you take it away, nothing.*

Sonia, seafarer's wife, Manila

*There was a time, my child summed up the costs of the calls, "Mama, imagine, Papa's phone bill is P15,000!" because he sent the phone cards ... [When she proposed to cut down on the calls, the husband objected.] ... he replied, "You can say that because you are there with the children. In our case, what do we see, land, ah, the sky and the ocean?"*

Flor, seafarer's wife, Bacolod

*Box 6: Cellphone Families (continued)*

While regular communication bridges the distance between family members, it can never substitute for actual presence:

*For me, the feeling is ... wow, we're a family! Phone calls are not really enough ... really not enough. Our parents are not working abroad for themselves ... they need lots of support. As children, we should be more understanding towards them and do what is right in return for their sacrifices.*

Lito, 18 y/o, Cavite, FS

*And the intimacy of fathers-children, especially for daughters, because usually a daughter would be shy of the father. If the father were here, that intimacy would develop. The time will come when they [daughters] won't be shy to confide their problems to them ... that's why sometimes, I feel sorry for my husband. Because it's like they lose out on many things.*

Sonia, seafarer's wife, Manila

*My husband feels bad about it, because they say [someone butted in, "they have a difficult time"] ... yes, that's what my husband had expressed, "Why is Beth distant to me?" And you would think that it was your fault ... what I did was, every time my husband calls, I will let them talk to each other .... And I would explain to her that no matter what happens, he is your father. You should trust him, everything. No malice, whatever you want to ask, you could ask him.*

Lina, husband in Taiwan, Manila

"1" (not very good) to "4" (very good). The mean scores indicate that the children saw their parents' relationship as good to very good (mean of 3.57), with OFW children reporting a higher mean score compared to non-OFW children (3.66 vs. 3.56). Among OFW children, however, the children of migrant mothers had the lowest score compared to children from other migrant and non-migrant families. The Battistella and Conaco study (1998, 1996) also noted that children in mother-absent families were more likely to describe their parents' relationship as problematic. The persistence of this finding over time suggests that the cracks in the marriage in mother-absent families may have prompted the mothers' migration. Where divorce is not an option or legal separation is a long process, migration is one of the few options available to women wanting a way out of a difficult marriage.

On the whole, most of the children reported good to very good relationship with other family members. Mothers figured as the family member the children were closest to. In addition, mothers were also mentioned as the persons they wanted to be close to (see *also* Liwag et al., 1998). Other male family members were more likely to be mentioned as persons in the family the children felt distant to.

TABLE 7  
GENDER ROLES IN THE FAMILY\*

Variable	Total	Children of Non-Migrants	Children of Migrants	Children of Migrants			
				MM	FL	FS	BP
Takes care of R & sibs							
Mother	<b>60.4</b>	<b>60.8</b>	<b>43.8</b>	-	70.6	67.7	-
Father & Mother	<b>13.0</b>	<b>13.3</b>	-	-	-	-	-
Other female relative	<b>11.0</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>29.4</b>	43.2	16.7	11.7	71.8
Father	-	-	<b>10.9</b>	40.0	-	-	-
R/Non-relative	-	-	-	6.1	4.3	6.3	13.4
Other male relative	-	-	-	-	-	-	8.3
Prepares food							
Mother	<b>59.7</b>	<b>60.4</b>	<b>34.8</b>	-	54.9	57.0	-
Other female relative	<b>10.5</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>30.3</b>	47.5	19.4	9.7	63.8
R	<b>5.8</b>	<b>5.9</b>	-	-	-	-	-
Father	-	-	-	28.9	-	-	-
Non-relative	-	-	<b>9.4</b>	7.5	8.4	12.0	12.2
Other male relative	-	-	-	-	-	-	8.1
Takes care of house							
Mother	<b>53.3</b>	<b>53.9</b>	<b>34.0</b>	-	55.7	49.7	-
Other female relative	<b>12.4</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>26.7</b>	45.6	13.9	10.6	56.9
R/Relative/ Non-relative	<b>7.9</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>9.3</b>	9.6	10.1	10.8	12.8
Father	-	-	-	20.9	-	-	-
Non-relative	-	-	-	-	-	-	17.3
Helps with school work							
Mother	<b>33.8</b>	<b>34.0</b>	<b>26.1</b>	-	42.8	38.3	-
Other female relative	<b>21.1</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>33.7</b>	37.1	29.4	23.8	56.8
Other male relative	<b>11.4</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>13.0</b>	14.8	12.7	9.5	16.0
Father	-	-	-	27.7	-	-	-
Attends programs/ meetings in school							
Mother	<b>74.7</b>	<b>75.2</b>	<b>52.9</b>	-	83.6	84.4	-
Father & Mother	<b>8.6</b>	<b>8.8</b>	-	-	-	-	-
Father	<b>7.7</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>12.7</b>	47.9	-	3.4	-
Other female relative	-	-	<b>24.9</b>	39.2	8.8	6.2	79.8
Relative/Non-relative	-	-	-	3.6	3.0	-	5.4
Other male relative	-	-	-	-	-	-	7.4

TABLE 7 (continued)  
GENDER ROLES IN THE FAMILY\*

Variable	Total	Children of Non-Migrants	Children of Migrants	Children of Migrants			
				MM	FL	FS	BP
<b>Disciplines R &amp; siblings</b>							
Mother	<b>37.1</b>	<b>36.9</b>	<b>42.9</b>	-	70.1	60.8	-
Father & Mother	<b>36.0</b>	<b>36.7</b>	-	-	10.8	18.3	-
Father	<b>16.0</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>14.9</b>	52.9	-	-	-
Other female relative	-	-	<b>18.0</b>	23.7	-	-	70.1
Relative/Non-relative	-	-	-	7.1	7.5	6.3	11.4
Other male relative	-	-	-	-	-	-	13.5
<b>Teaches about God &amp; faith</b>							
Mother	<b>46.0</b>	<b>46.1</b>	<b>41.9</b>	-	65.5	57.8	-
Father & Mother	<b>18.5</b>	<b>18.8</b>	-	-	6.3	12.6	-
Father	<b>11.1</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>10.5</b>	30.3	-	-	-
Other female relative	-	-	<b>25.2</b>	35.3	14.5	9.6	66.7
Other male relative	-	-	-	7.1	-	-	7.2
Non-relative	-	-	-	7.1	-	-	7.9
<b>Teaches good manners</b>							
Mother	<b>42.8</b>	<b>42.8</b>	<b>42.3</b>	-	68.7	58.5	-
Father & Mother	<b>36.1</b>	<b>36.8</b>	-	-	9.6	24.9	-
Father	<b>10.6</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>14.7</b>	45.7	-	7.2	-
Other female relative	-	-	<b>16.9</b>	27.1	-	-	52.2
Relative/Non-relative	-	-	-	10.5	8.0	-	25.4
Other male relative	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.8
<b>Teaches right/wrong</b>							
Father & Mother	<b>40.5</b>	<b>41.2</b>	-	9.6	16.7	27.7	-
Mother	<b>35.7</b>	<b>35.6</b>	<b>37.6</b>	-	59.2	51.7	-
Father	<b>14.0</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>15.5</b>	45.7	-	8.9	-
Other female relative	-	-	<b>16.2</b>	21.1	8.2	-	55.7
Relative/non-relative	-	-	-	-	-	-	21.5
Other male relative	-	-	-	-	-	-	6.8
<b>Earns money</b>							
Father	<b>52.3</b>	<b>52.6</b>	<b>40.5</b>	9.6	59.3	63.9	2.8
Father & Mother	<b>33.9</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>43.4</b>	49.3	35.0	31.4	77.9
Mother	<b>8.7</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>8.7</b>	30.8	35.0	2.9	-
Relative/Non-relative	-	-	-	-	4.9	-	-

NOTE: \* Based on top three answers.

The strength of family relationship, particularly the children's closeness to their parents, is reflected in the children's choice of their parents as role models. Indeed, despite the hype about celebrities and sports personalities, majority of the children (64.1 percent) chose their parents as the persons they would like to be. Similar findings were tapped by other studies among young people (Abrera, 2002; Sandoval et al., 1998). Although the age group (15-21 years old) is different, a Social Weather Survey of young people in 1996 found that young Filipinos were more likely to report a good relationship with their parents compared with young Americans (Sandoval et al., 1998).

### *Communication Makes Family*

Most of the children – about three in four – said that they could talk to their parents about anything (Table 9). However, the frequency of communication between children and parents is on the low side: majority of the children (58.3 percent) reported that they talk with their parents only “sometimes.”

For the children of migrants, the majority said that they had regular communication with their migrant parents. At most, some 10 percent (the children of seafarers) reported that they had no regular communication with their migrant parents. The importance of keeping in touch between those left behind and those who migrated was particularly highlighted in the FGDs. Separated by migration, participants, particularly the caregivers, related that communication not only kept family members updated about what goes on in their daily life (for migrant parents, hearing the voice of their family members was very important), but it has also made it possible for fathers and mothers to continue their parenting role. Through phone calls, migrant parents are consulted over decisions affecting the family, including discipline issues concerning the children.

Letters, the traditional way of communication between migrants and the left-behind families, have definitely been replaced by the telephone and SMS (short messaging services) or texting (see *also* Box 6). As may be recalled, the children of migrants had higher ownership of cell phones compared to the children of non-migrants; OFW families also had higher ownership of landline telephones and cell phones. With cheaper long-distance calls, the FGDs confirm the frequency of contacts and more opportunities for family members, including children, to communicate with migrant family members.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> This facility is one of the qualitative differences between migrations in the past and contemporary ones under conditions of globalization. Migrants these days can maintain links with their countries of origin, including their families, which was not that possible in the past. For this reason, some scholars have proposed the term “transnationals” to refer to individuals who have links across borders.

**TABLE 8**  
**ASSESSMENT OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

Variable	of Non- Total	Children of Migrants	Children of Migrants	MM	FL	FS	BP
Parents' relationship							
Very good	<b>59.2</b>	<b>58.9</b>	<b>69.5</b>	58.4	73.6	68.9	78.0
Sometimes good, sometimes not	<b>38.3</b>	<b>38.6</b>	<b>27.9</b>	37.4	24.4	28.3	21.0
Often not good	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>1.9</b>	2.6	1.4	2.7	0.9
Not good	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.7</b>	1.6	0.6	0.1	0.0
Mean	<b>3.57</b>	<b>3.56</b>	<b>3.66</b>	3.53	3.71	3.66	3.77
s.d.	<b>0.54</b>	<b>0.54</b>	<b>0.55</b>	0.63	0.52	0.53	0.44
R's relationship with mother (4=very good)							
Mean	<b>3.67</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>3.72</b>	3.68	3.73	3.69	3.80
s.d.	<b>0.54</b>	<b>0.54</b>	<b>0.51</b>	0.53	0.51	0.53	0.46
R's relationship with father (4=very good)							
Mean	<b>3.58</b>	<b>3.57</b>	<b>3.68</b>	3.51	3.73	3.73	3.76
s.d.	<b>0.60</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>0.53</b>	0.63	0.48	0.49	0.47
R's relationship with sister (4=very good)							
Mean	<b>3.25</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>3.27</b>	3.34	3.16	3.39	3.37
s.d.	<b>0.75</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>0.72</b>	0.65	0.77	0.67	0.63
R's relationship with brother (4=very good)							
Mean	<b>3.22</b>	<b>3.22</b>	<b>3.25</b>	3.13	3.27	3.25	3.38
s.d.	<b>0.78</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>0.73</b>	0.75	0.73	0.74	0.65
R's relationship with caregiver (4=very good)							
Mean	<b>3.49</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>3.55</b>	3.59	3.43	3.46	3.55
s.d.	<b>0.53</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>0.63</b>	0.62	0.49	0.74	0.65
Family member R is closest to:							
Mother	<b>47.4</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>47.0</b>	31.7	58.5	57.3	23.8
Father	<b>22.8</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>19.2</b>	30.8	14.0	17.3	17.5
Sister	<b>7.7</b>	<b>7.8</b>	-	-	7.4	6.8	-
Other female relative	-	-	<b>12.2</b>	18.6	-	-	30.3
Family member R wants to be close to:							
Mother	<b>40.7</b>	<b>40.9</b>	<b>34.0</b>	40.0	29.7	38.0	30.5
Father	<b>22.2</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>27.1</b>	25.9	31.9	24.6	17.4
Mother & Father	<b>10.2</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>10.2</b>	-	10.5	-	18.7
Brother	-	-	-	-	-	12.0	-
Other female relative	-	-	-	8.4	-	-	-

TABLE 8 (continued)  
ASSESSMENT OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Variable	of Non- Total	Children of Migrants	Children of Children of Migrants	MM	FL	FS	BP
Family member R distant to:							
None	<b>25.8</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>32.8</b>	29.9	34.3	34.2	31.1
Brother	<b>20.4</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>17.9</b>	16.6	18.0	21.2	15.3
Father	<b>19.2</b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>14.0</b>	-	15.8	18.1	-
Sister	-	-	-	12.4	-	-	-
Other female relative	-	-	-	-	-	-	14.5
Role model							
Parent(s)	<b>64.1</b>	<b>64.0</b>	<b>65.1</b>	59.2	69.3	68.9	56.5
Other family	<b>13.8</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>12.4</b>	14.7	10.8	10.4	16.1
Other familiar persons (e.g., teachers)							
Heroes/achievers	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>5.0</b>	0.6	4.8	3.1	3.0
Celebrities	<b>7.6</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>5.2</b>	8.4	4.0	4.3	2.7
Other	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.9</b>	5.1	4.6	4.5	8.6
None	<b>7.0</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>8.2</b>	0.7	0.4	1.1	2.3
				11.3	5.9	7.8	10.7

NOTE: \* Based on top three answers.

TABLE 9  
COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Variable	of Non- Total	Children of Migrants	Children of Children of Migrants	MM	FL	FS	BP
Talk with parents about anything?							
% Yes	<b>77.5</b>	<b>77.4</b>	<b>80.5</b>	78.0	80.8	81.5	83.1
How often?							
Often	<b>25.2</b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>24.7</b>	23.1	23.4	26.6	29.2
Sometimes	<b>58.3</b>	<b>58.2</b>	<b>61.9</b>	61.2	64.7	60.7	55.5
Daily	<b>16.6</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>13.4</b>	15.7	11.9	12.7	15.2
Most common means (migrant fathers)							
Telephone	-	-	<b>71.1</b>	-	69.7	67.4	80.5
Texting	-	-	<b>15.1</b>	-	17.4	13.2	10.0
Letters	-	-	<b>5.3</b>	-	5.5	7.3	1.7
Most common means (migrant mothers)							
Telephone	-	-	<b>74.2</b>	74.3	-	-	74.5
Texting	-	-	<b>11.6</b>	9.9	-	-	15.0
Letters	-	-	<b>4.9</b>	5.7	-	-	3.3

### *Academic Indicators*

As noted earlier, more children of migrants were enrolled in private schools than the children of non-migrants. The investments OFW families make on education are not surprising since providing for the education of children (and other family members) is one of the reasons motivating people to work abroad.

Nine out of 10 children reported that they were happy or very happy with school (Table 10). The children's responses to the importance they attached to high grades, gaining knowledge, learning good manners and seeing their friends in school were quite similar across all groups. Getting high grades registered the highest importance.

At least during elementary, the children of migrants perform well in school. In fact, they have fared slightly better than the children of non-migrants in several indices of academic performance. As a measure of school performance, the study looked into the child's general weighted average (GWA) during the past school year (2002-2003), awards received in the past three years, inclusion in the honor roll or top 10, participation in extra-curricular activities, and experience of failing or repeating a grade level.

Although the children of OFWs had higher general weighted average compared to non-migrant children (83.7 vs. 82.3) last school year, the difference is not so marked. In terms of awards received in school in the past three years, around 31 percent of the children of migrants have received various awards in school, with 23 percent receiving academic awards. The corresponding figures among children with both parents present are much lower, at 20 percent and 13 percent, respectively. When the grades and awards of parent absent children were compared, the children of mother-absent families did not do as well in school as those who had fathers working abroad or both parents working abroad.

Many more children of migrants are included in the honor roll and are more involved in extracurricular activities. The data on failing or repeating a grade level also attest to OFW children's good performance: fewer OFW children (three percent) repeated a grade level compared to children of non-migrants (11 percent).

Turning to factors that could account for these school outcomes, the study examined the number of hours children spent studying, the number of hours spent in school, and number of absences. Around 60 percent of children, regardless of parents' migration status, spend one to two hours

TABLE 10  
ACADEMIC-RELATED INDICATORS

Variable	of Non- Total	Children of Migrants	Children of Children of Migrants	MM	FL	FS	BP
Happy in school?							
Very happy	<b>32.8</b>	<b>33.1</b>	<b>20.5</b>	24.3	17.3	24.1	18.6
Happy	<b>64.7</b>	<b>64.3</b>	<b>76.9</b>	72.4	80.1	74.9	77.4
Not happy	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.6</b>	3.2	2.6	1.0	3.4
Not really happy	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.1</b>	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.6
Importance of: (10=Most important)							
High grades							
Mean	<b>9.54</b>	<b>9.54</b>	<b>9.54</b>	9.50	9.64	9.42	9.46
s.d.	<b>1.24</b>	<b>1.24</b>	<b>1.12</b>	1.25	0.95	1.29	1.10
Gain knowledge							
Mean	<b>9.14</b>	<b>9.13</b>	<b>9.44</b>	9.39	9.58	9.22	9.40
s.d.	<b>1.76</b>	<b>1.77</b>	<b>1.27</b>	1.40	0.95	1.62	1.27
Learn good manners							
Mean	<b>9.24</b>	<b>9.24</b>	<b>9.58</b>	9.41	9.68	9.57	9.57
s.d.	<b>1.67</b>	<b>1.68</b>	<b>1.13</b>	1.49	0.84	1.17	1.07
Be with classmates							
Mean	<b>8.12</b>	<b>8.11</b>	<b>8.55</b>	8.55	8.58	8.55	8.42
s.d.	<b>2.68</b>	<b>2.69</b>	<b>2.12</b>	2.35	2.00	2.04	2.18
GWA: 2002-2003							
Below 75	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.1</b>	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3
75-79	<b>24.6</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>16.8</b>	20.8	13.4	16.7	20.0
80-84	<b>47.78</b>	<b>47.8</b>	<b>42.0</b>	44.4	42.7	38.0	40.5
85-89	<b>21.3</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>32.0</b>	31.2	34.8	31.4	25.6
90 and up	<b>5.8</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>9.2</b>	3.6	9.2	13.8	13.5
Mean	<b>82.37</b>	<b>82.34</b>	<b>83.72</b>	82.95	83.96	84.27	83.66
s.d.	<b>4.26</b>	<b>4.26</b>	<b>4.15</b>	3.85	3.86	4.49	4.85
Received school awards							
Yes, any award	<b>20.5</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>30.6</b>	22.9	37.5	30.6	22.1
Yes, academic award	<b>13.0</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>22.9</b>	16.2	29.0	22.3	16.0
Among honor roll/top 10							
Yes	<b>20.2</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>23.9</b>	18.9	23.9	30.5	24.0
Participation in extracurricular activities							
Field trip/camping	<b>35.3</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>52.8</b>	51.1	50.2	57.6	57.5
School programs/ sports	<b>39.9</b>	<b>39.7</b>	<b>46.5</b>	43.4	44.3	52.6	50.9
School clubs	<b>15.2</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>23.1</b>	20.9	21.6	28.6	24.6
Other activities	<b>7.1</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>9.1</b>	5.3	11.9	7.2	9.4
% Repeated a grade level							
	<b>10.6</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>3.0</b>	4.0	2.5	2.1	4.3
Absences last month							
Mean	<b>2.08</b>	<b>2.08</b>	<b>1.93</b>	1.97	1.91	1.84	2.06
s.d.	<b>1.97</b>	<b>1.97</b>	<b>2.01</b>	2.01	1.96	2.07	2.07

studying at home. However, non-migrant children spend longer hours in school than the children of migrants. About 65.5 percent of non-migrant children reported spending nine hours or more in school compared to 56.3 percent among children of migrants. The children of migrants have slightly fewer absences compared to those of non-migrants for both the present and the previous school years. During the month preceding the interview, children of non-migrants averaged 2.08 absences, while children of migrants had a mean of 1.93. Sickness was the most common reason why the children missed school.

In general, thus, the children of migrants are doing well in school, registering even better school outcomes than the children of non-migrants. Among the OFW children, however, the children of migrant mothers tend to score lower than the other children. This finding also came out in the 1996 study and seems to suggest the importance of mothers' presence in the academic performance of the children.

### *Physical Health*

The study tried to get some objective indicators of physical wellbeing, like the height and weight measurements of the children. However, such information was patchy, except for those in Negros Occidental, which provided complete data. Because of this, the analysis of the height and weight data would be limited to the Negros sub-sample.

Based on the data, the children of migrants are generally taller and heavier than the children of non-migrants (Table 11). Among the females, the children of sea-based fathers are the tallest (mean height of 145.32 cm) compared to the children of other migrant groups. They are also the heaviest (mean weight of 42.45 kg). With the males, however, the children with both parents absent are the tallest (mean height of 143.36 cm) and the heaviest (mean weight of 44 kg) compared to children of other migrant groups. Comparing children across migrant categories, those with land-based fathers working abroad were found to be the shortest and lightest, regardless of gender. In the pre-teen age group (10-12 years), the female children were also found to be taller and heavier than their male counterparts, since most of the children have yet to experience physical changes due to puberty.

Unlike the 1996 study, the present study did not find any negative impact of mother's absence on the children's physical well-being. It appears that the higher socio-economic status of parent absent families may have more bearing on the nutritional status of the children. The role of caregivers

TABLE 11  
HEALTH INDICATORS

Variable	of Non- Total	Children of Migrants	Children of Migrants	MM	FL	FS	BP
Child's height (cm)*							
Female							
Mean	<b>134.47</b>	<b>134.40</b>	<b>140.98</b>	140.17	138.14	145.32	140.12
s.d.	<b>8.54</b>	<b>8.49</b>	<b>10.65</b>	8.71	12.09	8.69	11.25
Male							
Mean	<b>132.17</b>	<b>132.07</b>	<b>141.10</b>	139.16	138.67	143.00	143.36
s.d.	<b>8.26</b>	<b>8.19</b>	<b>9.46</b>	9.46	10.24	8.77	8.43
Both sexes							
Mean	<b>133.61</b>	<b>133.52</b>	<b>141.03</b>	139.75	138.30	144.27	142.00
s.d.	<b>8.51</b>	<b>8.45</b>	<b>10.17</b>	9.04	11.56	8.80	9.84
Child's weight (kg)**							
Female							
Mean	<b>33.57</b>	<b>33.52</b>	<b>38.19</b>	36.54	34.86	42.45	42.12
s.d.	<b>12.71</b>	<b>12.72</b>	<b>10.71</b>	8.50	10.05	11.52	10.48
Male							
Mean	<b>30.76</b>	<b>30.67</b>	<b>38.36</b>	37.00	31.00	44.00	38.36
s.d.	<b>7.14</b>	<b>7.01</b>	<b>12.12</b>	9.74	8.56	13.26	11.39
Both sexes							
Mean	<b>32.51</b>	<b>32.45</b>	<b>38.26</b>	36.73	33.70	43.15	39.95
s.d.	<b>11.04</b>	<b>11.02</b>	<b>11.32</b>	9.04	9.78	12.35	11.16
Frequency of: (4=oftentimes)							
Cold							
Mean	<b>2.93</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>2.84</b>	2.92	2.78	2.88	2.82
s.d.	<b>0.77</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>0.75</b>	0.74	0.75	0.77	0.78
Cough							
Mean	<b>2.76</b>	<b>2.76</b>	<b>2.68</b>	2.70	2.67	2.66	2.69
s.d.	<b>0.75</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>0.70</b>	0.71	0.73	0.68	0.64
Fever							
Mean	<b>2.54</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>2.43</b>	2.46	2.43	2.35	2.49
s.d.	<b>0.76</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>0.78</b>	0.82	0.78	0.73	0.80
Headache							
Mean	<b>2.67</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>2.63</b>	2.69	2.66	2.60	2.52
s.d.	<b>0.85</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>0.87</b>	0.89	0.88	0.79	0.88
Stomach ache							
Mean	<b>2.59</b>	<b>2.59</b>	<b>2.44</b>	2.46	2.44	2.45	2.40
s.d.	<b>0.79</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>0.79</b>	0.81	0.78	0.73	0.83
Loss of appetite							
Mean	<b>2.33</b>	<b>2.33</b>	<b>2.26</b>	2.34	2.21	2.27	2.26
s.d.	<b>0.93</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>0.94</b>	0.91	0.97	0.93	0.93
No. of ailments							
0	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.1</b>	2.5	3.8	4.7	7.4
1	<b>7.6</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>11.7</b>	9.4	14.2	10.5	9.9
2	<b>14.1</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>18.0</b>	16.2	16.7	20.1	22.7
3	<b>24.3</b>	<b>24.3</b>	<b>25.3</b>	26.6	26.6	24.6	19.5
4	<b>22.4</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>19.7</b>	23.3	18.0	20.0	18.2
5	<b>14.1</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>13.8</b>	14.0	13.6	12.4	16.2
6	<b>12.7</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>7.3</b>	8.0	7.1	7.7	6.1
Mean	<b>3.45</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>3.16</b>	3.33	3.10	3.13	3.04
s.d.	<b>1.61</b>	<b>1.61</b>	<b>1.55</b>	1.47	1.56	1.55	1.63

TABLE 11 (continued)  
HEALTH INDICATORS

Variable	of Non- Total	Children of Migrants	Children of Migrants	MM	FL	FS	BP
No. of hours sleep More than 8 hrs.	<b>70.2</b>	<b>70.4</b>	<b>65.3</b>	60.0	68.2	61.3	71.3
No. of times: toothbrush/day							
Mean	<b>2.64</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>2.65</b>	2.65	2.67	2.62	2.62
s.d.	<b>0.82</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>0.76</b>	0.88	0.74	0.70	0.71
No. of times: bath/ week							
Mean	<b>7.02</b>	<b>6.99</b>	<b>8.16</b>	7.82	8.35	8.44	7.70
s.d.	<b>3.04</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>3.76</b>	3.43	3.98	3.78	3.44

NOTE: \* Limited to the Negros Occidental sample. In other areas, information on the children's height and weight was lacking.

of parent-absent children may also be a factor in affecting the children's physical well-being. Caregivers seem to have ensured that the children's health does not suffer in the absence of their parents. Similar findings also emerge in the children's susceptibility to common ailments.

#### *A. Susceptibility to Common Ailments*

Susceptibility to common ailments was explored by the question: "How often do you experience any of the following: cold, coughing, fever/flu, headache, stomachache, and loss of appetite."<sup>11</sup> Children's responses were categorized into: (1) not experienced it at all, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, and (4) oftentimes. Based on the children's self-report, the study found that, in general, the children of non-migrants are more susceptible to illnesses than the children of migrants (Table 11) – this is suggested by the slightly higher mean scores of the children of non-migrants vis-à-vis the children of migrants. This finding differs from the 1996 study which did not find appreciable differences in the health outcomes of the two groups.

When comparing the mean scores among the children of parent absent families, mother-absent children were observed to be the most susceptible to cold, cough, headache, stomachache and loss of appetite. The differences are slight, but they suggest that the mother's absence is associated with the children falling ill. In contrast, children with both parents who are migrants appear to be the most resistant to common ailments. Fewer children with both parents abroad reported experiencing cold, headache and stomachache.

<sup>11</sup> Aside from common ailments, the question also asked about psychological indicators.

### *B. Healthy Practices*

Simple indicators of health-promoting practices and behaviors were explored in terms of the amount of sleep and personal hygiene.

Most of the children enjoy adequate sleep, with about 70 percent sleeping more than eight hours daily (Table 11). However, more children of non-migrant parents get more than eight hours of sleep daily compared to children of migrants (70.4 percent vs. 65.3 percent). Among parent-absent children, those with mothers absent get the least amount of sleep per day (60 percent).

For personal hygiene, basic health practices such as hand washing, tooth brushing and bathing were asked of the children. Of these measures, some variability was noted in the children's daily bath habits. Children of migrants reportedly take a bath more often weekly than non-migrant children.

### *Current Abuse*

The vulnerability of children to abuse and violence is one of the worrying aspects about parental absence. Thus, the study attempted to determine the extent and the kind of abuse or violence experienced by young children using the indicator "current abuse" which was used by the Department of Health in its baseline survey (Department of Health, n.d.). Current abuse refers to "a person's experience of any form of abusive or violent behavior at least once during the current year of his/her life, either inflicted by a family member or other people, or both" (p.182). The study defined "current year" as the past 12 months. The measure does not identify where the abuse took place nor does it identify the source of abuse.

The study utilized certain indices to determine if children had been subjected to various forms of abuse, violence or neglect. Children were asked if they had ever experienced (at least once in the past 12 months) being cussed at, belittled, intimidated, hurt, abandoned or touched in sensitive areas. Aware of the sensitivity of the issue, it was stressed during the training of interviewers to ask this question in a very straightforward way and not to push it if the children were not inclined to give any response. No details and further probing were pursued.

Generally, the most common form of abuse reported by the children was verbal (48.4 percent had been cussed at in the past year); intimidating

TABLE 12  
EXPERIENCE OF CURRENT ABUSE OR VIOLENCE

Variable	of Non- Total	Children of Migrants	Children of Migrants	MM	FL	FS	BP
<b>Cussed</b>							
Female	<b>43.6</b>	<b>43.6</b>	<b>44.3</b>	44.9	46.5	36.5	46.7
Male	<b>54.0</b>	<b>54.1</b>	<b>50.6</b>	45.3	54.3	51.6	47.4
Total	<b>48.4</b>	<b>48.4</b>	<b>47.2</b>	45.1	50.1	43.7	48.4
<b>Belittled</b>							
Female	<b>30.6</b>	<b>30.6</b>	<b>31.0</b>	27.4	31.1	33.8	32.6
Male	<b>43.8</b>	<b>43.9</b>	<b>41.3</b>	39.7	44.2	41.2	34.0
Total	<b>36.7</b>	<b>36.7</b>	<b>35.8</b>	33.5	37.2	37.4	33.2
<b>Scared</b>							
Female	<b>39.2</b>	<b>39.1</b>	<b>40.4</b>	44.6	34.9	47.6	40.5
Male	<b>45.5</b>	<b>45.6</b>	<b>44.1</b>	46.4	46.8	47.4	22.5
Total	<b>42.1</b>	<b>42.1</b>	<b>42.1</b>	45.5	40.4	47.5	33.3
<b>Hurt</b>							
Female	<b>32.8</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>32.4</b>	27.5	33.3	32.8	36.9
Male	<b>53.0</b>	<b>53.3</b>	<b>41.6</b>	34.7	46.6	42.1	37.9
Total	<b>42.1</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>36.6</b>	31.1	39.4	37.2	37.3
<b>Abandoned</b>							
Female	<b>11.1</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>9.1</b>	9.5	9.2	8.6	8.9
Male	<b>11.4</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>10.3</b>	11.6	10.0	8.3	11.8
Total	<b>11.2</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>9.7</b>	10.6	9.6	8.5	10.0
<b>Touched sensitive areas</b>							
Female	<b>7.6</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>3.6</b>	5.3	1.3	4.6	6.1
Male	<b>9.6</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>10.4</b>	7.9	12.4	8.4	12.7
Total	<b>8.5</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>6.8</b>	6.6	6.4	6.4	8.7

and hurting children were also quite widespread (42.1 percent). Less common were reports of being abandoned or being touched in sensitive areas of the body (at most, this was reported by 12 percent of the respondents). Incidents of abuse or violence were experienced more by the children of non-migrants (Table 12). When the child's gender was controlled, boys reported higher incidence of abuse than girls, and this was true for all types of abuse.

Among children of migrants, male children also reported experiencing more abuse than female children. Gender differences were largest for such abuses as being belittled and being hurt. The feeling of being abandoned was rather pronounced among the children of migrant mothers (boys and girls alike); this was also high for boys whose two parents were abroad. Overall, despite the presence of both parents, children of non-migrants were more likely to report being abandoned than the children of migrants.

It is possible that the pressure of earning a living may have kept parents from spending more time with their children. This finding can be related to the observation among urban poor families wherein *pansin* (attention) came out as the number one stressor among children; *pag-aaral* (education) and *magulang* (specifically, the fights or quarrels of their parents) were the other major concerns (Arellano-Carandang, 2001:19, 21).

The boys left behind by migrant parents were particularly vulnerable to being touched in sensitive areas. More left-behind boys than non-migrant children claimed that they had experienced this problem (10.4 percent vs. 9.5 per-cent), and this was highest among the sons of land-based migrant fathers (12.4 percent) and where both parents were abroad (12.7 percent). Fewer girls reported this experience (the highest was 6.1 percent among girls who had both parents abroad).

### *General Well-being*

An overall measure of well-being was tapped by the children's responses to the following question: "Overall, would you say that you are very happy, somewhat happy, somewhat unhappy, and very unhappy?" On the whole, the mean scores suggest that the children described themselves as somewhat happy to very happy (Table 13). Looking at the response categories, it is interesting to note that none of the children considered themselves as very unhappy; rather the responses generally reflect much optimism. Although the differences are slight, among the children of migrants, the children of migrant mothers and those with both parents abroad tend to have lower mean scores than the children of migrant fathers.

The study also probed into specific aspects of daily life which the children were busiest with, what posed the most problem to them, and what made them happiest. Among the choices presented to them, the children said they were most preoccupied with school (69 percent). Moreover, school matters not only kept the children busy, they also posed the most problem (or stressor) to them. The emphasis on education (specifically, doing well in school) in Filipino families can be a source of stress to the children (Arellano-Carandang, 1995; 2001). Although respondents also acknowledged problems with other issues – money, family, relationship with teachers and classmates, relationship with friends – school was mentioned by most respondents (32 percent). On the other hand, the source of happiness for the majority of children (67 percent) was the family. Among the children of migrants, children who had both parents abroad were the least likely (49 percent) to identify the family as that which made them

TABLE 13  
WELL-BEING INDICATORS

Variable	of Non- Total	Children of Migrants	Children of Migrants	MM	FL	FS	BP
Overall Assessment							
Very unhappy	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.6</b>	0.3	0.9	0.4	0.6
Somewhat unhappy	<b>8.0</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>7.8</b>	13.4	4.6	8.6	6.6
Somewhat happy	<b>42.8</b>	<b>42.8</b>	<b>45.4</b>	45.2	46.0	41.0	50.3
Very happy	<b>49.1</b>	<b>49.2</b>	<b>46.2</b>	41.1	48.5	50.0	42.5
Mean	<b>3.41</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>3.37</b>	3.27	3.42	3.41	3.35
s.d.	<b>0.64</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>0.65</b>	0.69	0.63	0.66	0.63
Aspects of life children were:							
Most preoccupied with							
- school/studies	<b>69.0</b>	<b>68.9</b>	<b>71.4</b>	74.1	71.1	64.7	77.1
Most problematic with							
- school/studies	<b>32.2</b>	<b>32.1</b>	<b>33.1</b>	38.4	30.4	33.4	31.5
Happiest with							
- family	<b>67.0</b>	<b>67.2</b>	<b>61.5</b>	62.9	62.7	65.4	49.1
Emotional Health							
Social anxiety scale (values range from 0 to 12)							
Mean	<b>5.17</b>	<b>5.18</b>	<b>4.77</b>	4.97	4.84	4.37	4.75
s.d.	<b>2.30</b>	<b>2.30</b>	<b>2.45</b>	2.63	2.42	2.23	2.41
Loneliness scale (values range from 2 to 24)							
Mean	<b>10.73</b>	<b>10.75</b>	<b>9.95</b>	11.01	9.68	9.47	9.49
s.d.	<b>4.19</b>	<b>4.19</b>	<b>4.03</b>	4.36	3.99	3.79	3.42
Frequency of feeling (4=oftentimes)							
Lonely							
Mean	<b>2.52</b>	<b>2.52</b>	<b>2.53</b>	2.69	2.43	2.49	2.58
s.d.	<b>0.91</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>0.89</b>	0.87	0.87	0.89	0.92
Angry							
Mean	<b>2.58</b>	<b>2.58</b>	<b>2.70</b>	2.77	2.73	2.63	2.55
s.d.	<b>0.80</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>0.82</b>	0.82	0.81	0.82	0.84
Confused							
Mean	<b>2.61</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>2.66</b>	2.67	2.70	2.63	2.55
s.d.	<b>0.84</b>	<b>0.84</b>	<b>0.83</b>	0.84	0.82	0.79	0.84
Unloved							
Mean	<b>1.87</b>	<b>1.87</b>	<b>1.80</b>	1.95	1.78	1.65	1.84
s.d.	<b>0.94</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>0.91</b>	0.96	0.88	0.85	0.96
Unfeeling							
Mean	<b>2.06</b>	<b>2.06</b>	<b>1.95</b>	2.06	1.97	1.82	1.84
s.d.	<b>0.93</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>0.91</b>	0.96	0.91	0.87	0.94

TABLE 13 (continued)  
WELL-BEING INDICATORS

Variable	of Non- Total	Children of Migrants	Children of Migrants	MM	FL	FS	BP
Afraid							
Mean	<b>2.57</b>	<b>2.57</b>	<b>2.55</b>	2.62	2.63	2.40	2.42
s.d.	<b>0.86</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>0.92</b>	0.92	0.94	0.90	0.85
Different from other children							
Mean	<b>2.28</b>	<b>2.29</b>	<b>2.03</b>	2.17	2.01	1.94	1.98
s.d.	<b>0.96</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>0.91</b>	0.91	0.89	0.91	0.94
Worried							
Mean	<b>2.78</b>	<b>2.78</b>	<b>2.89</b>	2.95	2.93	2.87	2.87
s.d.	<b>0.84</b>	<b>0.84</b>	<b>0.89</b>	0.81	0.90	0.93	0.93

happiest. Thus, during this period, children are most pressured by school requirements while the source of their happiness is the family.

### A. Emotional Health

Several questions measuring anxiety and loneliness were included in the survey. A modified Social Anxiety Scale (SAS) and Loneliness Scale (LS) were computed to provide summary measures. The modified SAS ranged in value from 0 to 12 while LS values went from 2 to 24 – the higher the score, the higher the levels of anxiety and loneliness, respectively. Other indicators of emotional health can be gauged from the mean scores on children's responses to specific feeling states.

The present study suggests that the children of migrants are less anxious and less lonely compared with the children of non-migrants (Table 13) – these findings depart from what was observed in the 1996 study. What is consistent with the earlier study is the pattern of children of migrant mothers scoring higher in anxiety and loneliness scales. It must be qualified, however, that the differences are slight. When the other measures are considered, the same pattern holds. The children of migrant mothers reported feeling lonely, angry, unloved, unfeeling, afraid, different from the other children, and worried compared to all other groups of children, including non-OFW children.

### B. Access to Social Support

Almost all of the children (98.5 percent) claimed that they had close friends. Their usual activities with their friends were playing, helping each other with

school-work and talking. The study probed whether children had encountered problems in several life areas - assignments and school-related work, relationships with teachers, classmates, siblings and parents, and "crushes" - and whether they had access to some support if they did. Virtually everyone reported having had problems with school-related work; the least of their problems had to do with crushes (28.9 percent said that this was not a problem). When the problem relates to school matters, children readily seek out other family members - typically, mothers, and to some extent, siblings and fathers (some departures are observed in the case of OFW children). If the problem concerns teachers, classmates and siblings, at least nine out of 10 children approach someone; if the problem has to do with parents or crushes, 22 percent and 25 percent, respectively, do not approach anyone. Other than approaching mothers and other family members, children also turned to teachers (particularly when the problems concern classmates) and friends (specifically for concerns related to crushes). At this stage, children are dependent on family members, especially mothers, for support. Due to the changed configuration and composition of migrant households, a lower percentage of the children in migrant families consulted with mothers. What is important to highlight is the fact that children have access to some support and that for the most part, they take an active part in doing something about difficulties that they encounter.

## **Where Migration Does Not Seem to Matter**

In the earlier sections, we have considered outcomes in terms of measures such as the economic status of the children's families, gender roles in the family, family relationships, academic performance and so forth. In addition to outcomes, the 2003 Children and Families Study also probed into the socialization of children, i.e., the "inputs" side of the equation, which may have a bearing on indicators of outcomes.

### *The Socialization of Children*

In the Philippines, many studies have documented the contributions of children in household chores. The FGDs with caregivers confirm the importance of assigning some chores to children as part of responsibility training. According to Table 14, the most common chores assigned to children are cleaning the house (90 percent) and setting the table/washing dishes (83 percent). Close to half of the children said that they render help

TABLE 14  
CHILDREN'S CHORES AT HOME\*

Variable	Total	Children of Non-Migrants	Children of Migrants	Children of Migrants			
				MM	FL	FS	BP
Chore assigned to children (% yes)							
Taking care of siblings	<b>50.2</b>	<b>50.5</b>	<b>37.3</b>	37.4	38.6	38.2	31.2
Helping with siblings' assignment	<b>44.5</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>37.8</b>	43.4	38.6	37.5	25.9
Cleaning the house	<b>89.5</b>	<b>89.5</b>	<b>87.4</b>	85.8	90.0	85.4	84.7
Cooking/marketing	<b>27.8</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>20.0</b>	20.6	22.0	16.1	18.1
Setting the table/washing dishes	<b>82.9</b>	<b>84.0</b>	<b>80.1</b>	78.8	81.4	80.4	77.5
Buying items	<b>49.8</b>	<b>49.9</b>	<b>45.5</b>	40.8	48.5	44.0	46.7
Watering plants	<b>44.5</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>39.8</b>	39.2	42.5	34.2	40.2
Washing/ironing clothes	<b>20.8</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>17.2</b>	19.9	15.8	16.7	17.3
Other chores	<b>15.5</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>9.1</b>	8.4	7.3	11.2	13.3
Mean	<b>4.16</b>	<b>4.17</b>	<b>3.63</b>	3.56	3.78	3.53	3.37
s.d.	<b>1.70</b>	<b>1.70</b>	<b>1.81</b>	1.93	1.73	1.79	1.84

NOTE: \*Based on the response category with the most responses.

in the following: taking care of their siblings, helping siblings with school assignments, buying items, and watering plants/taking care of animals. Fewer children were assigned cooking/marketing and washing/ironing clothes. Chore by chore, the study found that more non-OFW children are given assignments: non-OFW children have, on the average, 4.17 chores while OFW children were assigned 3.63 chores.

### *Values and Spiritual Formation*

The transmission of values, including spiritual formation, from one generation to the next is one of the major responsibilities vested in the family. Data in Table 15 indicate that whether parents are present or other caregivers are stepping in as parents, the values taught to children are very similar. The rankings of the values may differ somewhat for children in OFW families and those in non-OFW families – likewise, the rankings may shift a little among children of different migrants – but what is quite striking is the convergence in the kinds of values passed on to children. The top ranking

values nurture sensitivity to other people: good manners/kindness, generosity and obedience. Foremost child psychologist Arellano-Carandang (2001) noted that a Filipino child has to learn a lot of *pakiramdaman* (feeling out) in navigating through the extended family system. Interestingly, fostering independence is less emphasized.

Almost all the children had a religious affiliation. The majority – 82 percent – were Roman Catholic. The rest identified themselves as belonging to other religions or churches: 4.5 percent were Iglesia ni Cristo; 2 percent were Protestant; 4.4 percent were born-again; 0.6 percent was Islam; and 6.6 percent belonged to other churches. Belief in God was not only nearly universal (98.6 percent), but also very important in the children's life. Asked to rate the importance of God in their lives on a 10-point scale, about nine in 10 children across all groups answered "10." In terms of religious practices, the picture is less solid. The modal response to frequency of visits to the church or mosque is "sometimes" (49.3 percent). Only 30 percent said that they often went to the church or mosque, with the figure being higher among the children of migrants than among non-migrants (42 percent vs. 30 percent). More children reported saying prayers often (49 percent), and again, more children of migrants reported that they prayed often than the children of non-migrants (57.1 percent vs. 48.5 percent). Close to 90 percent of respondents said that they prayed as a family, with most respondents reporting that they "sometimes" and "often" prayed together.

### *The Future*

What do the children want to be when they grow up? Among the girls, regardless of the parents' migration status, the most popular choices are careers in medicine/nursing, teaching and engineering/architecture (Table 16). For children with two migrant parents, the third choice for a future career is to be a performing artist. Among the boys, across all groups, the top choices are careers in medicine/nursing, followed by engineering/architecture, and the military. Sons of seafarers somehow departed from the pattern; for this group, the third choice is to become seafarers, reflecting the influence of the fathers' occupations on the sons' career goals.

The prospect of entering a new phase, adolescence, was something that two-thirds of the children were looking forward to; another 18 percent said that they also looked forward to becoming teen-agers, but had some reservations; and 16 percent claimed that they were not that keen. Of the latter group, more children of migrant mothers expressed this sentiment.

With a lifetime ahead of them, how did the children view their future? Overwhelmingly, the children anticipated a good future: nine out of 10 held a positive view of what the future holds for them. The rest were either less hopeful about the future or did not know what awaits them.

TABLE 15  
VALUES AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Variable	Total	Children	Children	Children of Migrants			
		of Non-Migrants	of Migrants	MM	FL	FS	BP
Values taught at home (% yes)							
Good manners	<b>98.6</b>	<b>98.6</b>	<b>98.7</b>	97.4	100.0	98.8	96.8
Generosity	<b>95.7</b>	<b>95.6</b>	<b>96.0</b>	94.8	95.6	96.5	98.7
Obedience	<b>95.6</b>	<b>95.5</b>	<b>98.5</b>	98.1	98.8	98.1	98.7
Industry	<b>95.2</b>	<b>95.1</b>	<b>98.1</b>	97.2	98.9	97.5	97.9
Faith in God	<b>94.7</b>	<b>94.7</b>	<b>95.9</b>	94.8	95.6	96.3	98.5
Respect for others	<b>93.0</b>	<b>92.9</b>	<b>97.7</b>	97.6	98.0	97.7	96.5
Patience	<b>91.5</b>	<b>91.5</b>	<b>92.5</b>	91.0	91.4	94.9	95.5
Thrift	<b>90.6</b>	<b>90.5</b>	<b>93.6</b>	89.8	95.4	92.0	97.0
Responsibility	<b>90.8</b>	<b>90.7</b>	<b>93.7</b>	92.7	94.6	93.3	93.6
Independence	<b>89.2</b>	<b>89.2</b>	<b>89.1</b>	85.6	89.8	92.1	89.2
Believe in God?							
% Yes	<b>98.6</b>	<b>98.6</b>	<b>99.5</b>	99.3	99.9	99.2	98.9
How important to God? (10 = most important)							
10	<b>93.1</b>	<b>93.1</b>	<b>94.8</b>	93.2	96.2	94.1	94.0
Frequency: going to church/mosque							
Doesn't go	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.2</b>	1.4	1.4	1.0	0.0
Rare	<b>17.3</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>13.4</b>	15.9	12.1	13.7	12.8
Sometimes	<b>49.3</b>	<b>49.5</b>	<b>41.6</b>	39.9	44.1	39.1	40.3
Often	<b>30.0</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>42.0</b>	40.5	40.9	44.5	44.8
Other	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>1.8</b>	2.2	1.6	1.7	2.1
Frequency: praying							
Doesn't pray	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>0.8</b>	0.0	1.3	0.4	0.9
Rare	<b>7.8</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>5.1</b>	4.3	4.2	8.4	4.9
Sometimes	<b>41.3</b>	<b>41.4</b>	<b>37.0</b>	44.1	35.2	33.3	34.9
Often	<b>48.8</b>	<b>48.5</b>	<b>57.1</b>	51.6	59.3	57.8	59.4
Frequency: family prays?							
% Yes	<b>87.8</b>	<b>87.6</b>	<b>92.4</b>	88.1	92.9	94.5	96.3
Rarely	<b>11.8</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>8.1</b>	6.5	6.8	8.4	15.3
Sometimes	<b>46.4</b>	<b>46.2</b>	<b>50.5</b>	56.5	49.5	43.9	52.4
Often	<b>40.9</b>	<b>41.0</b>	<b>39.9</b>	36.6	41.2	46.3	32.2
Other	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>1.5</b>	0.5	2.5	1.5	0.0

TABLE 16  
FUTURE PLANS

Variable	Total	Children of Non- Migrants	Children of Migrants	Children of Migrants			
				MM	FL	FS	BP
What they want to be:							
Girls							
Medical doctor, nurse, physical therapist, medical technologist	42.3	42.1	47.8	44.7	46.5	50.0	53.9
Teacher, artist	26.2	26.4	19.0	17.6	22.8	18.0	10.9
Engineer, architect	5.5	5.4	7.0	9.2	7.4	3.4	6.6
Performing artist	3.4	3.4	2.3	1.6	1.1	1.9	7.2
Boys							
Medical doctor, nurse, etc.	26.5	26.7	18.5	17.5	18.1	18.4	22.5
Engineer, architect	20.1	20.0	25.1	28.2	28.7	18.9	14.7
Military	11.0	11.1	8.3	13.6	4.4	6.4	14.1
Seafarer	4.1	3.9	11.2	5.7	6.2	32.6	5.3
Look forward to adolescence?							
Yes	66.7	66.6	70.9	70.1	71.8	66.1	76.4
Yes, with reservation	17.5	17.6	13.4	11.5	13.2	18.0	10.9
No	15.8	15.8	15.7	18.4	15.1	15.9	12.6
View of the future							
Good	89.9	89.9	91.2	89.6	90.8	92.8	93.4
Not good	7.1	7.2	4.0	6.2	3.5	3.8	1.6
Don't know	3.0	2.9	4.8	4.2	5.6	3.4	5.0

## Discussion and Conclusions

What does the 2003 Children and Families Study reveal about the impact of international labor migration on the young children and families left behind? On the question of parental absence, based on the survey, the study finds that parental absence creates displacements, disruptions and changes in caregiving arrangements. The departure of one or two parents leaves an emotional mark on the young children left behind – the children long for the presence of the migrant parent(s), especially when the mothers are away. But the study also suggests that the children are attended to by the family - mostly the mothers when it is the fathers who migrate, other female relatives and/or the fathers when it is the women who leave, and other female relatives and the extended family when both parents are out. Despite the emotional displacement, the children of migrants are not disadvantaged vis-à-vis the children of non-migrants in many dimensions of well-being. Thus, when the family is stable, it can withstand the separation imposed by migration.

In terms of socio-economic variables, the children of migrants are markedly better off compared to the children of non-migrants. Aside from objective indicators of SES, such as home ownership and ownership of durable goods, the children of migrants also perceive their families as doing well as far as economic status is concerned. This economic advantage appears to provide the children of migrants with other advantages. More OFW children are enrolled in private schools. The study has also documented that OFW children are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities, such as camping, field trip, school programs, and so forth. Their exposure to these programs not only broadens their learning, which may have contributed to their overall academic performance. Unlike the 1996 study (Battistella and Conaco, 1998, 1996) which found that OFW children fared less in academic performance relative to non-OFW children, the present study found the opposite. At least during the elementary years, various school/academic indicators point to OFW children belonging to higher sections, earning higher grades and receiving school awards. However, consistent with the 1996 study, the children of migrant mothers tend to lag somewhat behind compared to the other children. It is also possible that the better economic status of migrant families has contributed to the better health outcomes observed among OFW children.

The cradle of the extended family system provides the children of migrants with care and socialization which are not that different from what the children of non-migrants receive. Children, both from OFW and non-

OFW families alike, are given chores at home, which forms part of their responsibility training. The values transmitted to children – basically an emphasis on traits and characteristics to promote smooth interpersonal relationship – are similar in both migrant and non-migrant families. Children in both groups also receive spiritual formation from their families. Interestingly, the present study finds higher church/mosque attendance and praying among the children of migrants than non-OFW children.

Due to the migration of one or both parents, children in OFW families experience a reconfiguration of gender roles in the family as well as different ways of maintaining family relationship. The departure of mothers and both parents has clearly rearranged caregiving and provider roles. Thus, in migrant families, the distribution of gender roles is different from the traditional stay-at-home mothers and “working” fathers or the emerging dual-earner families. The changing roles of mothers, fathers, and the extended family (particularly, other female relatives) are evident in migrant families. Family relationships remain close, but in migrant families, these are maintained not by presence but by constant communication. The popularity of cellphones and the use of phone calls and texting have displaced other modes of communication. Particularly in the FGDs, it was apparent that the access to instant communication has helped bring family members together despite the distance.

In terms of physical health and socio-psychological measures, the children of OFWs are as well-adjusted or they even fare better compared to non-OFW children. Among OFW children, however, the children of migrant mothers do not do as well (although the differences are not always marked).

Thus, data from the survey indicate that in general terms, the children of OFWs in two-parent families are managing well. The challenge is the future. For now, the children are fine. However, the FGDs with the adolescents indicate trouble spots ahead since they have to deal with issues other than family and school. The challenge, thus, is how families and other institutions can shepherd and support children as they tread the transition into adolescence.

It should be mentioned that when we consider the data from the FGDs with left-behind caregivers and adolescents, we also get a different picture: the lingering emotional costs of the separation of family members. For the most part, families (according to left-behind caregivers and adolescents in the FGDs) manage their problems within the family and through prayers. There is reluctance to seek out other agencies or institutions when it comes

to non-economic problems – concerns about trust and confidentiality were mentioned. When FGD participants were asked about programs OFW families need, the usual answer was “livelihood” and “income-generating programs.” The FGDs with the community development workers and NGO/Church personnel highlighted the difficulties experienced in drawing the participation of OFW families (particularly husbands) and in sustaining their participation in programs that cater more to social-psychological concerns.

The children’s responses indicate that overseas migration will continue. This early, the children are already entertaining thoughts of migrating and working abroad, and their career plans are very much shaped by what would be marketable abroad. This has implications not just for the family but for the country as a whole.

### **Towards Caring Families and Communities**

Findings from the study provide some implications for policies and programs concerning left-behind families. The recommendations were discussed in a dissemination-validation workshop attended by the staff members of the partner organizations and some resource persons.<sup>12</sup>

Following are some recommendations:

- Although there are existing programs targeted at families of OFWs, there is a need to review and finetune these programs (see Box 7). A regular assessment of existing programs is necessary to review objectives, approaches, and developing plans of action (including the identification of critical resources) to carry out these programs. Most of the programs or projects targeting families are economic assistance programs. Very few are specifically targeted at young children; or if children were the focus, these were special programs which were offered on a short-term basis (e.g., drama or art workshops). The FGDs with the community development workers and NGO/Church personnel revealed useful insights of “on-the-ground” realities which would be helpful in reviewing existing programs. They mentioned, for example, the need for training (particularly in counseling, approaches in community organizing), financial resources to carry out the programs, and awareness about good practices and strategies based on the experiences of other organizations and institutions.

<sup>12</sup> The dissemination-validation workshop was held on 17 June 2004 at the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration.

### *Box 7: Programs for OFW Families*

The Philippines is oftentimes cited as a source of many good practices for programs concerning migrant workers. When it comes to the families of OFWs, however, much remains to be done. OFW families are everywhere, their needs are many and their conditions vary, ECMI-CBCP, AOS and OWWA are among the organizations offering programs for the left-behind families.

#### **ECMI-CBCP**

The programs of ECMI, the service arm of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, try to combine pastoral and social services. ECMI has three basic programs for OFWs and their families:

*Talakayan*, an educational program that aims to promote awareness of migration issues and their implications for value formation.

*Dulugnayan*, a direct assistance program offering paralegal and counseling support to OFWs and their left-behind families.

*Unladsanayan*, refers to programs aimed at promoting the economic capacity of families. The program includes training on socio-economic development, micro-finance projects, livelihood, budgeting and promoting the value of saving.

For the sons and daughters of OFWs (mainly high school and college age children), through its parish groups, ECMI organizes monthly gatherings, leadership training, counseling and value formation seminars.

ECMI has been involved in school-based programs through the provision of teachers' training on the use of educational modules on international migration and development. The modules are currently being revised; there are plans to integrate them in values education and social science subjects in the elementary and high school curriculum. There are also plans to include migration issues in the college curriculum, but these will have to be worked out.

#### **AOS**

AOS is a special apostolate of the Catholic Church for seafarers. It is part of an international network of more than 100 Stella Maris Centers and some 300 AOS chapters throughout the world. In the Philippines, AOS has offices in Manila, San Fernando-La Union, Cebu, Iloilo, Maasin, Davao, Cagayan de Oro and Iligan. AOS spearheads the organization of the annual National Seafarers' Day.

The programs of the AOS chapters in the Philippines usually include ship visitation, hospital visitation, counseling, legal assistance and information-education (through its seminars and publications). AOS in the Philippines is also actively involved in advocacy and lobbying for the protection of seafarers' rights. For the families left behind, the various AOS chapters engage in visitation, counseling, providing spiritual support and organizing families to provide support to each other.

*Box 7: Programs for OFW Families (continued)*

**OWWA**

As the lead agency tasked to promote the welfare of OFWs and their families, OWWA is responsible for the delivery of welfare benefits and services. It takes care of the welfare-related needs of OFWs on-site and the needs of the families left behind. OWWA's welfare officers abroad provide assistance and support to OFWs (see OWWA Data Bulletin). For OFWs in distress and those who fall ill or die outside the country, OWWA repatriation programs ensure that workers or their remains are brought home.

For the left-behind families, OWWA offers insurance and health care benefits, credit and loan assistance, and educational and training programs. OWWA's community development officers also organize OFW families to ensure that intended beneficiaries are aware of the programs and services that they can tap. OWWA also pioneered in the provision of business counseling and enterprise development loans to support the reintegration of returning workers. In 2003, OWWA conducted a youth counseling workshop in selected regions to help the children of OFWs understand migration realities and to enhance their coping strategies.

- The mass media can be harnessed to provide education and information to OFW families (e.g., parenting tips, child rearing, the role of fathers, changing gender roles), particularly in reaching inaccessible groups such as husbands.
- The school has an important role to play in delivering programs to OFW families. It is a “natural” venue in reaching out to children, parents and caregivers. The school could be a venue for offering programs on parenting/caregiving, gender sensitivity, constructive coping mechanisms, and programs for children.

As noted by the study, young children approached teachers, classmates and friends when they encountered some problems. The familiarity of the teachers, particularly the home room advisers, about the children's background was apparent during the field work for the study. The role of teachers as part of the support system of OFW children can be enhanced through programs to increase their awareness and understanding of migration issues.

One of the findings of the study points to the popularity of marketable jobs abroad in shaping the children's career and life aspirations. The school can offer programs and activities – or incorporate topics in the curriculum – to guide children in making plans about work and life. Curricular offerings can also include more inputs that would promote

nationalism on the one hand, and an appreciation of multiculturalism and other values that promote interdependence on the other.

- The involvement of the local government in the promotion of the welfare of OFW families was a suggestion that came out of the FGDs with community development workers and Church/NGO personnel working with OFW families. As they pointed out that there are millions of OFW families, which the staff and resources of their institutions (OWWA, the Church, and NGOs) cannot adequately handle. Local government units could be encouraged to establish Migration Desks to coordinate activities pertaining to the migrant sector.
- To promote more awareness of migration issues, particularly the social impacts, the involvement of the Department of Education and the Department of the Interior and Local Government can be harnessed in the celebration of migration-related events, such as International Migrants Day (December 18), Migrants Day (June 7), and National Migrants Sunday (first Sunday of Lent).
- The importance of communication between family members cannot be overemphasized. Training migrants and their families on the use of the Internet and e-mail (as an alternative to cell phones) and exploring possibilities for employers/workplaces to provide more communication facilities (e.g., shipping lines) could also be explored.

These avenues for cooperation underscore that "it takes a village to raise a child."

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