

WOMEN IN THE WIND :

**ANALYSIS OF MIGRATION, YOUTH ECONOMIC
EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER IN VIETNAM AND
IN THE PHILIPPINES**

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RESEARCH REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings of a study exploring the experiences of young people who migrate internally in Vietnam and the Philippines. While internal youth migration is thought to be an increasingly prevalent phenomenon in a number of Southeast Asian countries, very few research studies have examined this topic in depth. In particular, little is known about the experiences of young women who migrate internally, and scant scholarly attention has been paid to the gender specific aspects of youth migration: the question of how gender hierarchies and gender norms influence decision making and experiences in relation to youth migration.

In 2016, Plan International France and the Plan International in Asia contracted Coram International at the Coram Children's Legal Centre to conduct a research study on 'Gender, Youth Economic Empowerment and Internal Economic Migration in Vietnam and the Philippines'. Field work for the study was carried out in October and November 2016.

The purpose of the study was to: examine push and pull factors driving youth internal migration, identify difficulties and risks as well as opportunities faced by young migrants, and analyse the potential for law, policy and programming to mitigate these challenges. The study afforded particular focus to the gendered dimensions of migration, and the entry of young women into migrations streams.

Findings from the study are intended to inform evidence-based policy, programs and advocacy to protect and promote the rights, safety, wellbeing and empowerment of girls and young women, before, during and after experiences of migration. It is important to note that while forced migration and the phenomenon of 'left behind' children are relevant to the study, a comprehensive inquiry into these topics is beyond the scope of this study.

The findings of the study are intended to inform and feed into Plan International's '*Because I am a Girl*' (BIAAG 2.0) and the Global Strategy for Youth Employment, Entrepreneurship & Empowerment (YE3, see Annex page 43). BIAAG is a global movement to transform power relations so that girls everywhere *learn, lead, decide and thrive*. The BIAAG 2.0 movement aims to build on the momentum created by the 2015 decision by world leaders to place girls' rights at the heart of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. BIAAG

2.0 is dedicated to ensuring justice for all girls and young women by 2030, in particular in relation to access to education ('learn'), meaningful participation in decision-making ('lead'), sexual and reproductive health ('decide'), freedom from violence and access to justice ('thrive').¹

1.1 Definition of key terms and concepts

Youth has been defined in accordance with the respective national law in both countries. In Vietnam, 'youth' refers to any person between the ages of **16 and 30 years**, in accordance with Vietnam's Youth Law.² In the Philippines, 'youth' is defined as including anyone between **15 and 30 years**, in line with the Filipino Youth in Nation-Building Act.³

Gender refers to ideas, norms, roles and identities associated with being 'male' or 'female'. Gender norms often prescribe and dictate what is considered acceptable and unacceptable in relation to identities, roles and behaviour. In this study, the term 'gender' is used to describe socially constructed roles and identities that are assigned and negotiated on the basis of social and biological sexual differences.

Internal migration refers to the movement of people from 'one place to another temporarily, seasonally, or permanently... for voluntary and/or involuntary reasons', within the borders of a sovereign state (Anh, Hoang Vu, Bonfoh, & Schelling, 2012, p.2).⁴

Given the policy and migration context in both countries, it is important to distinguish between *inter*-provincial internal migration, which involves movement across provincial boundaries, and *intra*-provincial internal migration, which only involves movement *within* one province, but across district or municipal boundaries (see e.g. Anh et al., 2012). This study examines both inter-provincial as well as intra-provincial internal migration, and highlights differences between the two when relevant.

There is no single measure for determining when the 'movement of a person from one place to another' should be counted as 'internal migration'. Government policies and research studies that have sought to track internal migration patterns, have constructed the concept in different ways, using various 'time intervals' (e.g. movement since birth, over the last 10 years, permanent, or temporary movement, etc.), as well as 'movement thresholds' (e.g. province, district, street, household, etc.), to identify when incidence of internal migration should be recorded (see Bell & Charles-Edwards, 2014, p.3).

¹ For more information about the BIAAG 2.0 movement, please see: <https://plan-international.org/because-i-am-a-girl> (accessed 09.02.2017)

² Youth Law 2005, Article 1

³ Youth in Nation-Building Act 1994, Section 2, Paragraph 2.

⁴ The distinction between internal and international migration may not always be straightforward, as states' sovereignty and/or borders may evolve over time (e.g. ex-Yugoslavia) or be disputed (e.g. Israel/Palestine).

The secondary data analysis included in this study used the measures of internal migration provided by the respective data source (e.g. survey). The qualitative analysis relied on data from respondents who self-identified as current or previous internal migrants, without using strict cut-offs in relation to the 'time intervals' or 'movement thresholds'.

As with internal migration, there is also no single definition of the term '**economic migration**'. However, **economic migration** is frequently conceptualised as 'migration with the intention of earning money' (Hampshire, 2002, p.19). As such, 'economic migration' is typically juxtaposed with other types of migration such as 'marriage migration', 'forced migration' or trafficking (see e.g. Anh et al., 2012). While these distinctions may make sense from a purely theoretical perspective, in practice it is often very difficult to distinguish between different types of migration (e.g. between economic migration and marriage migration), as migrants' decisions to move will usually be influenced by a range of factors, and their experiences will typically lie somewhere on a continuum between 'forced' and 'unforced' movement. The focus of this review is on internal economic migration of young people in Vietnam and the Philippines. However, this analytical focus does not imply that 'earning money' is the only motivation for migration, or that the experiences of economic migrants are free from any degree of compulsion or force.

Push and pull factors: There is no single theoretical framework that can fully capture or explain the complexity of migration. However, one possible way of explaining the phenomenon makes use of the so-called 'push-pull framework', which dates back to Ravenstein's seminal 'Laws of Migration' published in the late 19th Century (Ravenstein, 1885). This simple framework conceives of migration decisions as determined by a set of 'push factors', which operate in the migrant's home community (or 'source' community), and a set of 'pull factors', which operate in the migrant's destination community.

Push factors that operate at the individual-, relationship-, community- and structural-level can include factors such as poverty, unemployment, gender discrimination, landlessness, natural disasters, rapid population growth, political repression or conflict, low social status, poor marriage prospects etc. **Pull factors**, in turn, may also operate on multiple levels and can include factors such as better income or job prospects,

better access to education and welfare systems, land to settle and farm, good environmental and living conditions, political freedom etc. (King, 2012, p.13). A number of scholars using the 'push-pull framework' have also added **intervening obstacles** or 'barriers' as variables, which may help to explain why individuals migrate (or stay in their home communities). Intervening obstacles may include factors such as physical distance, travel costs, language barriers, or legal and political restrictions (ibid.).

Whilst the 'push-pull framework' is attractive due to its simplicity, it lends itself to a somewhat deterministic and reductionist view of migration. In particular, it fails to adequately account for the importance of inter-personal and cultural factors that may influence individuals' decision to move. In addition, the 'push-pull framework' is not well suited to account for the important role played by migration networks,⁵ chain-migration, and returning migrants (see King, 2012, p.20). Despite the above-mentioned limitations, the framework can provide an insightful analytical framework for understanding the operation of different drivers of migration. This study will primarily make use of the terms 'push factor' and 'pull factor' to categorise different variables that can be said to influence young people's decision to migrate. However, wherever necessary, the study will also consider intervening obstacles (e.g. laws or policies), inter-personal and cultural factors, as well as the role of migrant networks; and analyse how these impact on youth migration patterns in Vietnam and the Philippines.

This research study was exploratory in nature, seeking to gather preliminary information about a topic on which there has been limited research to date. The study was also action-oriented: aiming to inform the development of policy and programming to support young migrants, and promote positive experiences of migration, especially of young female migrants. Findings in relation to the gender dimensions of internal migration provide Plan International with an evidence-base upon which to develop programmes aimed at achieving the gender-equality goals enshrined in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

⁵ Migrant networks are "sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, non-migrants and former migrants in webs of kinship, friendship and shared origin" (King, 2012, p.21).

2. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research design was applied, to enable researchers to explore the topics of gender, youth and migration, in an in-depth, contextualised manner, and to obtain evidence with strong explanatory power. Existing (secondary) quantitative data was additionally analysed and synthesised in order to examine the extent and nature of internal economic migration in Vietnam and the Philippines (Topic A), and to inform the selection of research locations (as set out in the table below).

2.1 Research Questions

BROAD TOPIC		
A. Extent and nature of internal economic migration in Vietnam and the Philippines	<p>What is the extent of youth economic internal migration in Vietnam and the Philippines?</p> <p>What is the socio-economic profile of migrating young women and men?</p> <p>Where do young women and men migrate to and from?</p> <p>What kind of work do young men and young women end up with in their new environment?</p>	Desk review (analysis of existing data and evidence)
B. Experiences of young men and women who migrate: push and pull factors	<p>How does a women's position in the sending community influence her ability to decide to migrate and to access the resources necessary to do so? How does a woman's position influence her decision to migrate?</p> <p>What kind of perceptions or behaviours of the parents / community encourage or discourage youth migration, in particular, of young women?</p> <p>What external socio-economic factors encourage or discourage youth migration, in particular, of young women?</p> <p>What are the profiles, roles and functions of intermediaries?</p>	Qualitative data collection (key informant interviews; focus group discussions)
C. Experiences, in particular, problems and risks, faced by young women and men who migrate	<p>What are the risks and opportunities for young women and men when they migrate?</p> <p>In what sectors do young women work? Are they limited to particular sectors compared to men?</p> <p>How do traditional gender roles and stereotypical images regarding the place of women in society influence the type of work for which a migrant young woman is recruited, compared to young men?</p> <p>What level of direct knowledge do young women and men have on the situation and risks in the region of destination?</p> <p>What capacities do young women and men have to directly address the risks in the region of destination?</p> <p>What laws / regulations exist to protect young workers, especially women?</p> <p>How do labour laws influence the vulnerability of women who migrate internally, either positively or negatively?</p> <p>To what extent are young women and men knowledgeable of existing complaint procedures in their destination communities?</p>	Qualitative data collection (key informant interviews; focus group discussions)
D. (Influences and impacts of) legislative and policy responses to challenges faced by young women and men who migrate	<p>What are the existing practices and programme approaches that are effective in addressing the issues related to economic internal migration of young women?</p>	Qualitative data collection (key informant interviews; focus group discussions)

2.2 Data collection methods

Analysis of existing evidence: desk review

A desk-based review of existing literature, data sets and published research findings was carried out to examine the extent and nature of internal economic migration in Vietnam and the Philippines. This included published international academic articles and research studies, existing quantitative data sets with information on internal migration, and reports published by international organisations and NGOs. The review also included relevant legislation, and policy and programming information. The findings from the desk review allowed preliminary conclusions to be drawn on the prevalence and patterns of internal economic migration in both countries (from Census and other household data sets), along with findings on the profile of migrants, including prevalence rates and migration and work patterns according to age and gender. The desk review also examined existing data on the extent to which migrants access support services (in particular, healthcare, social security and education), and limited information on the effectiveness of policies and programmes in improving migration experiences of young women and men, encouraging ‘safe’ migration and mitigating risks associated with internal migration.

Semi-structured interviews

Individual, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants, including government officials, community professionals, migration intermediaries, and community leaders in migrant source and destination communities. Key informant interviews were also carried out with central level government representatives from relevant government sectors (labour, justice, immigration, etc.). A total of 34 key informant interviews were carried out; with 21 KIIs carried out in Vietnam and 13 KIIs carried out in the Philippines.

Focus group discussions (FGDs)

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were carried out with young people who had migrated, and young people and adult community members in ‘source communities’. FGDs explored prevalent attitudes and norms in relation to youth (economic) migration, perceptions of why young people or their peers may decide to migrate, and the various risks and opportunities associated with doing so. FGDs provided a useful forum for exploring attitudes and norms concerning gender and the gendered dimensions of push and pull factors,

opportunities and risks associated with migration.

Focus group discussions were carried out with groups of 6-8 individuals, divided by gender and age group. A total of 27 FGDs were carried out. In Vietnam, researchers conducted 5 female-only FGDs, 4 male-only FGDs, and 5 mixed gender FGDs with young people and adult community members. The age of respondents ranged from 16 to 60 years old. In the Philippines, researchers conducted 6 female-only FGDs, 5 male-only FGDs, and 2 mixed FGDs with adult community members. The age of FGD respondents in the Philippines ranged from 17 to 62 years old.

Life history interviews

A series of in-depth, life history interviews was also carried out with young people who had internally migrated. These interviews provided in depth and detailed accounts of individual migration journeys. Interviews explored young migrants’ decisions and experiences before, during and after migration, and the factors that influenced them.

The purpose of following a life-history approach was to achieve a holistic picture of participants’ life trajectories: enabling an integrated understanding of their personal and family circumstances, and their experiences of migration and work, allowing us to identify any systematic patterns and themes that thread their experiences. A total of 8 life history interviews were carried out. In Vietnam, 4 life-history interviews were conducted (2 with female migrant workers and 2 with male migrant workers), with the average respondent age being 23 years. In the Philippines, researchers conducted 4 life-history interviews with female trafficking victims, aged 16 to 19 years.

2.3 Sampling

In order to capture some of the diversity in relation to migratory experiences in Vietnam and the Philippines, source communities (where migrants come from) and destination communities (where migrants go to) were selected in each country in order to capture rural-urban differences, ethnic diversity and differences in the level of economic development. For example, one source community in each country (Ifuago in the Philippines and Ha Giang in Vietnam) was selected to capture some of the rich ethno-linguistic diversity within each country. In consultation with local Plan offices, source and destination communities were also selected from current or previous Plan programme areas in order to facilitate access to respondents and to ensure relevance of findings to Plan’s programming. Finally, research sites were also chosen because certain characteristics make

them particularly interesting in relation to internal migration. For example, in the Philippines, the second destination community chosen for this study, Mariveles, represents the oldest Export Processing Zone in the country; a feature which has significantly influenced migration patterns in

this particular community. Thai Nguyen, the second source community selected in Vietnam, in turn represents an interesting case of mixed migration flows, as significant in-migration is accompanied by out-migration to surrounding urban areas.

COUNTRY	TYPE OF LOCATION	SELECTED LOCATION	GEOGRAPHIC CONFIGURATION	RELATIVE ECONOMIC STATUS	OTHER RELEVANT DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES
The Philippines	Destination	Manila	National capital, urban	Developed	Largely Tagalog, Christian
		Mariveles	Central Luzon, urban/ peri-urban	Developed	Largely Tagalog, Christian
	Source	Ifugao	Cordillera Administrative Region (North Luzon), rural/ remote	Less developed/ low income	Ethnically diverse (home to ethnic minority groups including Ifugao, Ilocanos, Kalahan), animist
Vietnam	Destination	Hanoi	Red River Delta (North), urban	Developed	Predominantly Kinh (Viet)
	Source	Thai Nguyen	North Central, rural	Medium development / medium income	Predominantly Kinh (Viet)
		Ha Giang	Far North, mountainous, rural, remote	Low development/ low income	Predominantly ethnic minority community: Tày, Nùng, Dao, and Hmong

Participants were selected for participation in the research from within these communities based on maximum variation sampling, with a mind to representing diversity in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, level of education and livelihood.

2.4 Data analysis

All raw qualitative data was transcribed and uploaded into Nvivo software. It was then coded to identify key themes, patterns, relationships and explanations relevant to the research questions. Findings from the literature/desk review were integrated into our analysis of primary data to help situate the findings into their broader social and cultural contexts.

The quantitative data presented in this study was analysed using information from relevant survey reports and other secondary analyses. Gaining access to the raw data of relevant surveys was not possible, given time and resource constraints.

2.5 Validation

The research findings and interpretive analysis were validated through a presentation and participatory workshop led by the research team, and including Plan staff members and other key stakeholders. The aims of the workshop was to

validate the content of the draft research report and, in particular, to gather feedback and inputs from participants on the recommendations, with a mind to making them more action-oriented, detailed, practicable and realistic.

2.6 Limitations

Given the qualitative nature of the collected data as well as the purposive sampling approach, it is important to emphasise that the findings are not comprehensively representative. As mentioned above, the research locations were selected to capture some of the geographic and demographic diversity within both countries, with the aim of generating rich, complex, diverse and explanatory data, rather than representative and quantifiable data.

In addition, it should be noted that time and resource constraints did not allow researchers to include a number of potentially interesting/relevant source and destination communities in the study. In light of the

study's limited geographical scope, findings from the in-country data collection should be understood primarily as *exploratory* rather than comprehensive or conclusive.

2.7 Ethics

The research was carried out by trained and vetted consultants, with extensive experience in conducting research with children and young people. Data collection was carried out in accordance with Coram International's Ethical Guidelines for Field Research, and Plan International's Child Protection Policy. Procedures were established for obtaining consent, ensuring anonymity, and protecting the safety and privacy of research participants at all times.

3. CASE STUDY 1: THE PHILIPPINES

3.1 Context of internal youth migration

3.1.1 Migration prevalence and demographics

There are no accurate, representative data on internal migration patterns in the Philippines, rendering it difficult to establish the exact prevalence of youth internal migration (Asis & Battistella, 2013, p.38). The most important source on internal migration currently available is the Census of Population and Housing 2010, which found that around 2.74 million Filipinos had changed their place of residence within the previous 5 years. This suggests that the prevalence of internal migration in the Philippines stands at around 3.3% of the total population (aged 5 years and older), which (as far as available data allows comparison) could arguably be classified as medium to low compared to global trends (United Nations Population Division, 2013).

This figure does not distinguish between work-related migration and other types of migration (migration for the purposes of marriage, etc.),⁶ and is not disaggregated by age-group or gender. However, in a 2004 study on rural-urban migration

flows in the Philippines, Gultiano & Xenos (2004) used older census data from the year 2000 to show that 10% of youth (aged 15-29) in the less urbanized areas and 19% in the National Capital Region (Metro Manila) were inter-provincial migrants. They also used 2000 census data to show that the age brackets 15-19, 20-24, and 25-29 (i.e. 'youth') make up the overwhelming majority of the internal migrant population, especially in the highly urbanized areas.⁷ Taken together, these findings suggest that internal migration in the Philippines is primarily 'a prerogative of the country's youth' (see Basa, Villamil, & Guzman, 2009, p.12).

Using the same 2000 census data, Gultiano & Xenos (2004, p.7) also considered the gender breakdown of internal migration patterns. They noted a consistent pattern since the 1960s of growing proportions of young female workers engaged in rural-urban migration, estimating that by 2000 young female migrants significantly outnumbered young male migrants (82% were female) in urban areas; a trend which has been dubbed by policy makers as the 'feminisation of migration' (indicating that women comprise an increasing proportion of voluntary migrants). A recent study by Asis & Battistella (2013) confirms that internal migrants are predominantly female and suggests that this gendered pattern is now also increasingly replicated amongst Filipino workers overseas. Despite this reality, very little is known about the implications of this trend, and the lived realities and experiences of young economic migrant women. This study aims to fill the gap in the existing evidence-base on the lived experiences of young female migrants in the Philippines.

3.1.2 Patterns of migration flows

Using data from Mindanao, Quisumbing & McNiven (2006) show that other rural areas and small towns may also be significant destinations of internal migration (p.11). Our study also highlighted a pattern of rural-to-rural migration, particularly during harvesting, when internal migrants, known as 'cicadas', migrate from farming communities to other rural areas to work on plantations on a seasonal basis.⁸ Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of migration in the Philippines appears to be characterised by movement from rural areas to urban centres. These internal migration flows are contributing to rapid expansion of key urban centres in the country, generating stark disparities in levels of

6 KII with Representative of Youth Employment Bureau, Department of Labour and Employment, 28.10.16, Metro Manila; KII with Social Marketing Manager and two Social Workers, Educational Research and Development Assistance CSO, 25.10.16, Metro Manila.

7 Philippine Statement to the Commission on Population and Development, on its 46th session, 22 – 26 April 2013, presented by Commission on Filipinos Overseas, http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/pdf/commission/2013/country/Agenda%20item%204/Philippines_Item4.pdf

8 KII with Representative of Youth Employment Bureau, Department of Labour and Employment, 28.10.16, Metro Manila; KII with Social Marketing Manager and two Social Workers, Educational Research and Development Assistance CSO, 25.10.16, Metro Manila.

9 Philippine Statement to the Commission on Population and Development, on its 46th session, 22 – 26 April 2013, presented by Commission on Filipinos Overseas, http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/pdf/commission/2013/country/Agenda%20item%204/Philippines_Item4.pdf

social economic development. It is estimated that, by 2030, approximately eight in 10 Filipinos will be living in a city.⁹

Using relatively up-to-date census data from 2010, Perez (2016) shows that the top three destination regions within the Philippines are clustered around the metropolitan area of the National Capital Region (NCR). In 2010, around 30% of all inter-provincial internal migrants resided in Calabarzon (Region IVA), 20% lived in Metro Manila (National Capital Region), and 13% lived in Central Luzon (Region III) - just north of Metro Manila. These patterns in relation to key destination communities of internal migration were also confirmed in a recent UNICEF research report on youth migration in the Philippines (Asis & Battistella 2013). However, our research indicates, that whilst a large proportion of internal migrants have been found to reside in the areas around Metro Manila (in 'bedroom regions'), many are likely to be engaged in work within Metro Manila, to which they commute from their residence in the surrounding regions.¹⁰

In contrast to the evidence on destination communities, there is very little information on which provinces or areas represent the most significant 'source communities' within the Philippines. The limited available evidence on 'out-migration' rates suggests that the Bicol region in South Luzon and Eastern Visayas are amongst the most important source regions of inter-provincial internal migrants in the Philippines (Basa et al., 2009; Hosoda, 2007).

3.1.3 Legal and policy context

In contrast, the internal movement of persons within the Philippines is not legally controlled. There are open possibilities for (economic) migration, through different regions, districts and barangays; with the exception of movement that violates legal rules prohibiting the use of exploitative labour contained within The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, 2003. While specific rights and protections are not provided to internal migrants who are in the labour force, the country's Labour Code and other labour laws (e.g. the Domestic Workers Act of 2013) will, of course, apply.

The increasing trend of internal migration from rural to urban centres has led to calls for a more organised and coordinated national policy response, including the development of improved

support systems and services specifically for internal migrants. The absence of government strategy for attending to the issue of internal migration, and the lack of responsive and effective policy interventions to protect the rights and welfare of persons who migrate within the Philippines, appears to be, at least in part, hindered by a lack of robust data on internal migration patterns and flows.¹¹

This stands in contrast to the ample policy attention that has been afforded to the issue of international migration. Since the 1970s, overseas emigration has been promoted by the Philippines Government as a means of increasing labour market opportunities for Filipino workers (See ILO Philippines, 2013, p. 4). Initially started as a 'stop-gap measure', the promotion of international migration has become a key permanent feature of Government policy to address rising unemployment, harnessing expanding foreign labour markets (See Asis, M., & Battistella, G., 2013, p. 2). Over the past few decades, a comprehensive institutional and legal framework has been developed, governing all stages of the migration process, from pre-departure to return and reintegration (See ILO Philippines, 2013, p. 4), providing for a range of protections, restrictions and legal controls.

3.1.4 Migration patterns in the 3 research sites

Destination Case study 1: Metro Manila

Metro Manila includes Manila proper (the capital of the Philippines), and 12 other cities in the National Capital Region. It is home to 12.9 million persons (UN Statistics Division, 2015), and is one of the most populous and dense urban centres in the world. Manila is the country's economic centre; this has been fuelled by the Government's economic policy, which is considered to be 'Manila Centric' (World Bank, 2016).

Manila and its surrounds appear to attract a large proportion of internal migrants: 2010 census data demonstrated that over 60% of internal migrants lived in Metro Manila or the surrounding regions (see above). While there is an absence of quantitative data on the types of migrants who move to Manila, the qualitative data from our study were illustrative of a diverse mix of migration flows into the city. One particular pattern noted by research participants was the movement of individuals from poor, rural areas into Manila to pursue a variety of work and /

10 Key Informant Interview with Deputy Executive Director, Commission on Population, Metro Manila, 27.10.16.

11 KII with Deputy Executive Director, Commission on Population, Metro Manila, 27.10.16: however, it was noted that the Commission on Population are currently carrying out work to strengthen the Migration Information System: the Government's main mechanism for tracking population movement.

or educational opportunities, particularly following graduation from secondary school. The qualitative data also suggests that many arrivals in Manila have travelled to the capital as a ‘stop-gap’ measure, with the intention of making arrangements to continue their migration journey overseas. Young overseas workers tend to migrate to Manila first, in order to gain experience, save money to pay for the necessary fees and transport costs, and submit the applications which are necessary for getting a job overseas. According to a 2013 report by the International Organization for Migration, international migrants move mostly from Metro Manila and the surrounding provinces.

Destination Case study 2: Mariveles

Mariveles is the first dedicated Export Processing Zone (EPZ) established in the Philippines, and has fundamentally shaped the nature of migration patterns in this Municipality. The job opportunities created by Mariveles’ EPZ status has made it a major destination area for internal migration. A key informant from the municipal government included in the study estimated that, of a total population of 120,000 in Mariveles, more than 75% are internal migrants.¹² The evidence collected through interviews in Mariveles suggests that migrants are primarily young people who have migrated to Mariveles in order to work in factories producing manufactured goods (jackets, backpacks, tennis balls, optical lenses) intended primarily for export.¹³

Young migrants in Mariveles come from various regions within the Philippines, with locations in Central Luzon Region mentioned as a primary ‘source’ of migrants living in Mariveles.¹⁴ Many of the migrant workers interviewed in Mariveles expressed the intention to move back to their home communities in their old age; once they had saved up enough money to buy a plot of land and build a house. However, these statements were aspirational, and it is not clear to what extent this has happened in practice.

Even though no robust quantitative data are available, qualitative evidence from interviews suggests that factories in Mariveles prefer hiring young female migrants as girls are perceived to be more ‘flexible’ and ‘manageable’ than boys.¹⁵

Source Case Study: Ifugaos

Ifugao is a remote mountainous province in the North of the Philippines, and was selected as a ‘source community’ for this study. Ifugao is a relatively poor province; home to over six ethno-linguistic minorities. Evidence from qualitative interviews conducted in Ifugao suggests that migration patterns in this province are made up of seasonal rural-to-rural migration flows into neighbouring provinces as well as more long-term out-migration to major urban centres or overseas.¹⁶ Job opportunities in Ifugao Province appear to be very limited. A number of respondents noted that rice farming is ‘the only [livelihood] option’ for uneducated young people and that local government is the main employer of college graduates.¹⁷ Even though there is no robust quantitative data on out-migration from Ifugao, qualitative evidence from the interviews suggests that out-migrants are primarily young people. Many young Ifugao men (especially those from poor households) appear to migrate to neighbouring Benguet Province on a seasonal basis to work on vegetable or rice plantations;¹⁸ whilst, many young Ifugao women migrate to major urban areas such as Baguio, Manila, or Laguna to work in factories or as housemaids.¹⁹

3.2 Drivers of internal youth migration

This section explores the push and pull factors that shape young people’s decisions to migrate internally in the Philippines, drawing in particular on case study source and destination communities. *See chart in annex page 42.*

3.2.1 Poverty and (lack of) economic opportunities

Internal migration is an important livelihood strategy in the Philippines. Previous studies have identified migration as one of main ways in which young people (and their families) try to overcome poverty and lack of employment opportunities in their home communities (Asis & Battistella, 2013; Quisumbing & McNiven, 2006). Many young migrants interviewed in ‘source communities’ and ‘destination communities’ in the Philippines confirmed these findings. Consider, for example, the following two quotes from group discussions with young people in Mariveles (a destination community) and Asipulo (a source community).

12 Key informant interview with Public Employment Officer, Mariveles Municipal Government, 25.10.16

13 FGD with young female migrants, Mariveles Town Hall, 25.10.16

14 Key informant interview with Public Employment Officer, Mariveles Municipal Government, 25.10.16

15 FGDs with young female migrants, in Mariveles Town Hall and in EPZ factory, 25.10.16

16 FGDs with community members in Asipulo, 29.10.16

17 FGD with community members in Asipulo, 29.10.16

18 FGD with community members in Lamut, 29.10.16

19 FGD with young women in Lamut, 29.10.16

What were the main reasons for coming here to Mariveles? *Work opportunities! We came here to find work and support our families back home.*²⁰

What are the main reasons for young people migrating away from Asipulo? *They leave to seek better job opportunities. Here in Asipulo there are no job opportunities.*²¹

The evidence thus suggests that differences in employment opportunities (between the source and destination communities), fuelled by disparities in economic development across the country, are among the most important drivers behind interviewed young migrants' decision to move to other regions within the Philippines. Importantly, (un)employment in the Philippines is also highly stratified along gender lines, which may push women in particular to look for opportunities elsewhere. For example, it is estimated that the female labour force participation rate in the Philippines stands at just 53 per cent, which is extremely low compared to a male participation rate of 81 per cent.²²

Youth unemployment, in particular, can be understood as a primary push factor influencing young Filipinos' decisions to migrate. A recent UNICEF report states that youth unemployment in the Philippines 'remains twice as high when compared to the entire adult labour force; 50 percent of unemployed persons are between 15-24 years of age. High youth unemployment thus constitutes the most immediate premise for youth migration' (Asis & Battistella, 2013). As discussed in more detail below, the qualitative data collected in Ifugao Province also suggests that there is a mismatch between young people's education and the types of employment opportunities available in their home communities, which leads young people to look for employment opportunities elsewhere.

On the demand-side, it also appears that the manufacturing industry's preference for young labourers acts as an important pull factor for internal migration in the Philippines. Consider, for example, the following excerpt from a group

discussion with female migrant workers in Mariveles, a major export processing zone.

Are migrants more likely to be younger or older? *Most companies here have age limits. The workers need to be 18 years or older. Companies also have upper age limits, at around 30 years. It is mostly young people that migrate. They are stronger and in good health.*²³

In the source communities visited by researchers, 'land poverty' was also identified as an important factor pushing young people to look for job opportunities elsewhere. Consider, for example, the following quote from a group discussion with community members in Lamut, Ifugao.

*Those that are poor have to leave. The wealthy, those who have land to till, they stay.*²⁴

Even though poverty and lack of employment opportunities were identified as important push factors behind internal migration in the Philippines, it must also be noted that the relationship between poverty and migration was not always straightforward. For example, in a number of interviews it was revealed that poverty can also act as a barrier to migration, especially if the costs of migration are high (e.g. when migrating overseas or without support from family networks).

*The poor have to borrow money if they want to leave. This can be expensive: 10% interest monthly if you borrow from friends, 5% weekly if you borrow from the bank.*²⁵

3.2.2 Gendered opportunities

Pursuing better employment opportunities appears to be one of the main reasons for migrating in the Philippines regardless of the migrant's gender. Consider, for example, the following excerpt from a key informant interview with a representative from the Youth Employment Bureau.

Are there different reasons that young women and men migrate? *I think it's largely the same – to look for opportunities, to look for work, or for higher wages.*²⁶

However, the research revealed that employment opportunities in the Philippines are also highly stratified along gender lines, which, in turn, appears

20 FGD with young male migrants, Mariveles, Bataan, 25.10.16

21 FGD with community members, Asipulo, Ifugao, 28.10.16

22 See <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2015/03/21/is-gender-inequality-really-so-low-in-the-philippines/> (accessed 13.02.17)

23 FGD with female migrant workers, Mariveles, Bataan, 25.10.16

24 FGD with community members, Lamut, Ifugao, 29.10.16

25 FGD with community members, Lamut, Ifugao, 29.10.16

26 KII with Youth Employment Bureau (DOLE) representative, Manila, 28.10.16

to affect internal migration patterns. For example, Gultiano & Xenos (2004) suggest that female migrant workers are still “generally confined to low-paying jobs in the service or domestic sector” (p.15). Group discussions with young migrant workers in Mariveles, a major export processing zone, also revealed that the manufacturing industry primarily employs young female migrants. This appears to be the case because girls are perceived to possess skills and attributes that make them particularly well-suited to perform the required work.

In the electronics companies [in Mariveles] there are more girls, because they have more flexible hands! It also has to do with the temperament of the men. Girls are more patient so they are more suited for these jobs.²⁷

There appears to be a perception that women are more ‘detail orientated’. They are also perceived to be more ‘manageable’ – this may be associated with a norm that requires women to be more compliant in the workforce. This is evidenced, for example, in the following excerpt from a group discussion in Lamut, Ifugao:

Why do the companies prefer to hire women? Women are perceived as more reliable and efficient.
Are these your views or those of the bosses? These are our views and of the superiors.²⁸

A similar dynamic appears to apply in the large domestic work sector in the Philippines, which primarily employs female migrants (Asis & Battistella, 2013). Young migrants and community members tended to express the view that it is more ‘natural’ for women to perform household work, and that women are ‘naturally’ more suited to this work. This appears to be related to dominant gender role norms, which associate women with having a “reproductive role” in Filipino society,²⁹ and see them as better ‘household managers.’

Why do you think the domestic services sector primarily employs women? The idea is still prevalent among Filipinos that women are better household managers than males.³⁰

Young men, in turn, are primarily employed in transport, motor repair and agriculture; (Gultiano &

Xenos, 2004; Quisumbing & McNiven, 2006). Jobs in these sectors “take physical strength” that, according to a number of respondents interviewed for this study, only young men are perceived to possess.³¹

3.2.3 Gendered expectations

Gendered ideas about what constitutes ‘men’s work’ and ‘women’s work’ also frame expectations in the young migrants’ home communities, which appear to ‘push’ young females to migrate, whereas they create barriers to migration for young men. Consider, for example, the following quotes from group discussions with young migrants in Malabon and Quezon City:

Women come to the city because they can’t do farm work; the men do the farm work.³²

When the men are lazy, the women have to go and find work elsewhere. This happens a lot. The men get involved in drugs and then it falls on the women to earn the income.³³

It appears that young women in particular are expected to migrate in order to send remittances back home and support their families. The notion that young women have an obligation to ‘pay back’ their parents frequently surfaced during group discussions in source and destination communities.

Why are there more female migrants here? The boys simply stay at home if they don’t find a job. This is not okay for girls. Boys want to hang out and drink. Girls are expected to support their families. **Why is there such an expectation?** It’s payback time! We have to return something to our parents for their sacrifice.³⁴

When asked why they thought that women, rather than men, were expected to carry the ‘burden’ of migrating to support their families, respondents suggested that “girls are seen as more mature and responsible”³⁵ and that, as a woman, “you have to feed your kids”.³⁶ These gendered expectations in source communities thus appear to place the ‘double-burden’ of productive as well as reproductive responsibilities on women.

27 FGD with female migrant workers, Mariveles, Bataan, 25.10.16

28 FGD with young women, Lamut, Ifugao, 29.10.16

29 KII with Dean of School of Labour and Industrial Relations, University of the Philippines, 27.10.16

30 KII with representative from the Commission on Population, Metro Manila, 27.10.16.

31 FGD with young women in Malabon, Metro Manila, 25.10.16

32 FGD with young women in Malabon, Metro Manila, 25.10.16

33 FGD with male migrants, Quezon City, Metro Manila, 24.10.16

34 FGD with female migrant workers, Mariveles, Bataan, 25.10.16

35 KII with Interagency Council against Trafficking representative, via Skype, 08.11.16

36 KII with Provincial DSWD Officer, Lagawe, Ifugao, 28.10.16

3.2.4 Educational opportunities

Besides economic motivations, education also appears to play a key role in determining young migrants' decision to move within the Philippines. For example, in their study of youth migration, Gultiano & Xenos (2004) provide evidence that an increase in individuals' level of education 'increases the probability of rural to urban migration, for both males and females' (Gultiano & Xenos, 2004, p.9). While the correlation between education and migration is relatively uncontroversial, it is less clear whether internal migration is a consequence or a cause of educational attainment.

On one hand, there is evidence that many young Filipinos move to urban areas to pursue further education. Consider, for example, the following excerpt from a key informant interview with a representative from the International Labour Organisation.

For the younger ones, who have been able to finish [secondary education] and want to pursue higher education, a lot of the colleges are in bigger cities and bigger towns. So [young people migrate] not just for employment, but for further education as well.³⁷

On the other hand, it also appears to be the case that better educated young people are more likely to move to urban areas in the first place, as there is typically a mismatch between their acquired skills and the requirements of the rural job market in their home communities (Gultiano & Xenos, 2004; Perez, 2016). This dynamic was, for example, confirmed by a key informant from the provincial government in Ifugao. *"The government does not have statistics on internal migration, but we know that many graduates have to 'get out'. There is a mismatch between their education and the available jobs."*³⁸ Focus group discussions with young people also highlighted this mismatch. *"Even in Solano [the next biggest city in Nueva Vizcaya Province] we would need to work as cashiers in the supermarket; even though we all have college degrees!"*³⁹

In addition, it appears that many employment opportunities in the destination areas are only open to individuals who have at least a high-school degree. For example, young female migrant workers interviewed in Mariveles suggested

that *"high school level [education] is a minimum expectation for jobs in the factories."*⁴⁰ Higher skilled and high-paying jobs in sectors that attract internal migrants (in particular the fast-growing call-centre industry) also appear to be restricted to young migrants with higher educational attainment. Importantly, Asis & Battistella (2013) also observe that the call-centre industry in the Philippines has very high turnover rates and that the health risks for employees are considerable (including those related to stress, sleep-deprivation, long working hours, etc.).

Importantly, the relationships between education, employment and migration also appear to be strongly mediated by dominant gender norms in the source communities. For example, Quisumbing & McNiven (2006) find that daughters are typically perceived as 'more studious,' 'patient,' and 'willing to sacrifice', so that Filipino families prefer to 'invest' in their daughters' education. Gender norms that de-value men's education thus appear to act as indirect barriers to migration for young men, by limiting their educational opportunities, which in turn restricts the number and types of jobs they can apply (and migrate) for.

When asked why young men were (perceived to be) performing less well at school, respondents interviewed in source communities suggested that young men lacked 'role models', which would encourage them to do better at school and be more ambitious. Consider, for example, the following excerpt from a group discussion with young women in Lamut, Ifugao.

*It is mostly girls that graduate from college. The boys are lazy! They prefer working here on the rice fields. The young men stay here. They lack self-confidence and they have lower self-esteem than the girls. Most of the boys only finish elementary school. **Why?** In the classrooms you can see that girls' grades are better. Girls don't want to work in the rice fields, they have ambitions. **Why do you think the girls are more ambitious?** Well, most of the girls' mothers will have worked abroad as OFWs, so they see them as 'role models'.⁴¹*

Another way in which education appears to act as a driver of internal migration in the Philippines is by 'pushing' some family members to migrate in order to finance the education of other (usually younger) family members. Consider, for example, the following quote

37 KII with ILO representative, Manila, 26.10.16

38 KII with Provincial DSWD Officer, Lagawe, Ifugao, 28.10.16

39 FGD with young women, Lamut, Ifugao, 29.10.16

40 FGD with female migrant workers, Mariveles, Bataan, 25.10.16

41 FGD with young women, Lamut, Ifugao, 29.10.16

from a key informant interview with a representative from the International Labour Organisation:

*[Migration allows individuals] to put their children or other relatives through school. There is a kind of perception that education is an investment, but that 'I can't do it for myself so I have to support my family to get an education.'*⁴²

3.2.5 Marriage

Gultiano & Xenos find that migrant youth aged 15-29 are much more likely to be married (40.3%) than their non-migrant youth counterparts (32.5%) (see Gultiano & Xenos, 2004). The authors explain this pattern with reference to the fact that marriage is an important reason for residential movement across provincial boundaries within the Philippines. Using panel survey data from Mindanao, Quisumbing & McNiven (2006) also find that female migrating in Mindanao are more likely to be married than their male counterparts. Similarly, female migrating to areas outside Mindanao are more likely to be married than to be single, while males are about equally likely to be single or married. The authors suggest that this finding is driven by gender differences in migration motivations, with the proportion of 'marriage migrations' larger amongst the female population. It is, however, difficult to disentangle 'marriage migration' from 'economic migration', as individuals who migrate for marriage are often motivated by a mix of economic and personal reasons.

The qualitative interviews in source and destination communities in the Philippines did not include cases where young women or young men migrate for 'better marriage prospects', but there was evidence that some young women migrate to escape early marriage or abuse by their husbands in their home community. For example, a key informant from the Ifugao Provincial government suggested that the two most important reasons for out-migration were "job opportunities and escaping early marriage".⁴³ The following excerpt from a group discussion with young women in Malabon also highlights how domestic violence can push women to migrate to other provinces.

*I separated from my husband in the province. My mother sent me to Manila to live with my sister. She wanted me to come to the city to escape my husband. He used to be violent and beat me.*⁴⁴

In some cases, gendered norms around the role of women in marriage can act as a significant barrier to migration for young women, especially when they are married and have children. The following excerpt from an interview with a young married woman in Lamut, Ifugao, illustrates this well.

*I want to leave, but my husband doesn't let me go. **Why?** He says: 'If you leave then there will be no-one to take care of the child!' **How do you respond to that?** I have tried to persuade my husband, but he is stubborn. He is jealous when I leave. He makes the final decisions. Now I work as a day labourer in agriculture. **Does this happen a lot here?** Yes, it happens. Men don't allow their wives to leave. The reasons they give are always: No-one will take care of the children.*⁴⁵

Early marriage and gendered norms that enshrine women's role as the primary caregiver in the family also appear to shape the age profile of young women who migrate. Consider, for example, the following excerpt from an interview with young women in Asipulo, Ifugao:

***What is the profile of those who leave Asipulo?** Usually it is the 25-plus group that is the largest group of young people leaving. Those with grown up children will move away to support their children's college education. **So when do women usually have children here?** Most girls here have children when they are under-age [under the age of 18].*⁴⁶

3.2.6 Networks

Family and friend networks can act both as drivers of and barriers to internal migration. On one hand, it appears that existing family or friend networks in the destination areas are a key pre-condition and/or facilitating factor of internal migration. Consider, for example, the following excerpt from a group discussion with young women in Lamut.

***How did you hear about the opportunities that made you migrate?** Our relatives called us. They said: 'If you want to try your luck, come to Laguna. They are hiring here. **How did you go about moving to Laguna?** We stayed with our relatives first. The relatives told us how to get to Laguna.*⁴⁷

On the other hand, family and friend networks can also be one of the main reasons why youths decide not to migrate from their home towns. For example, in their study of internal migration patterns in Mindanao, Quisumbing & McNiven (2006) find that the most important reason for not moving cited by respondents living in rural areas is the presence of

42 KII with ILO representative, Manila, 26.10.16

43 KII with Provincial DSWD Officer, Lagawe, Ifugao, 28.10.16

44 FGD with young women, Malabon, Metro Manila, 25.10.16

45 FGD with young women, Lamut, Ifugao, 29.10.16

46 FGD with young women, Asipulo, Ifugao, 28.10.16

47 FGD with young women, Lamut, Ifugao, 29.10.16

friends and family (p.22). This finding was also confirmed in a number of interviews with young people.

Why did you decide to stay in [Lamut] and not migrate? *Like this we are closer to home. On the weekends we can help our fathers on the rice fields.*⁴⁸

3.2.7 Perceptions of life in the city

A closely related pull-factor influencing internal migration appears to be young people's perceptions and expectations of life in the city.

*I thought 'before I get married' ... I wanted to see other faces, experience other places, have other opportunities, that aren't available in my home province.*⁴⁹

Ideas about life in the city as being 'full of opportunities' and 'exciting' appear to be shared by young women and young men alike, and the qualitative evidence suggests that these ideas are frequently influenced or reinforced by family or friend networks, especially by former migrants who return to their home communities. The following excerpt from a group discussion with young men in Malabon highlights these dynamics well.

*I thought Manila would be beautiful, good. I thought Manila had lots of cell phones, lots of malls, lots of choices. In my province, people say 'there is good pay in Manila and jobs.' **Where did you get these ideas from?** From my friends in my home province who had been to Manila.*⁵⁰

3.2.8 Political factors

Political factors can also play an important role as drivers of (or barriers to) internal migration. Whilst most of these political factors relate to accessing services (see Section 3.3 below), in some instances governments also aim to directly initiate, restrict or encourage internal migratory movements. For example, Perez (2016) suggests that so-called Population Transfer Agreements between Local Government Units in the Philippines can provide incentives for migrants to move across provincial boundaries. According to the author, the LGUs initiating these agreements typically seek to attract

migrants in order to boost the local economy and increase the supply of labour.

In Mariveles, one of the destination communities included in the study, tax exemptions granted to foreign companies were identified as a significant indirect pull-factor for internal migration, as they appear to have boosted investment and job opportunities in Mariveles. *"The laws on tax exemption in the Export Processing Zones are the ones with a significant impact on youth migration."*⁵¹ Key informants also suggested that President Duterte's plan to prohibit the 5-month contracts frequently used by foreign companies will to some extent have a moderating impact on internal migration.⁵²

3.2.9 International migration

The Government's policy of encouraging international migration of Filipinos may also act as a significant driver of internal migration. Internal migration to major urban areas is often a 'stepping stone' for individuals who want to become Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). As such, international migration can be seen as a major 'pull factor' of internal migration in the Philippines. Individuals' decision to migrate abroad appears to be primarily motivated by a desire to improve their income. This motivation was expressed in a number of interviews with former OFWs: **Why do young Filipinos migrate overseas?** Overseas workers can earn double!⁵³

The 'two-step pattern' associated with international migration appears to be primarily the result of the high costs and strict job requirements associated with becoming an OFW. Consider, for example, the following observations from a key informant interviewed at the Philippine Commission on Population.

*Those migrating abroad are not the poor, because you need capital to go abroad. Those migrating abroad are not the jobless, they are the Filipinos who already have a job in the Philippines but they are in low paid jobs and they want higher pay. This is one of the main reasons why people come from the rural areas to the urban areas.*⁵⁴

Group discussions with young people and community members also confirmed this 'two-step pattern'. The following excerpt from a group discussion with community members in Lamut, Ifugao, is illustrative of the responses received by researchers.

48 FGD with young men, Lamut, Ifugao, 29.10.16

49 FGD with young men, Malabon, Metro Manila, 25.10.16

50 FGD with male migrants, Malabon, Metro Manila, 25.10.16

51 KII with Public Employment Officer, Mariveles Town Hall, 25.10.16

52 KII with Public Employment Officer, Mariveles Town Hall, 25.10.16; see also <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-duterte-labour-idUSKBN12X0P9> [accessed 19.10.17]

53 FGD with young women, Quezon City, Metro Manila, 24.10.16

54 KII with representative of Commission on Population, Metro Manila, 27.10.16

Why did most of you first migrate to Manila and not abroad? Manila is a transit. You cannot go directly overseas

Do you need to save up for going abroad?

Yes, there are expenses: For the passport it is 1500 pesos, for medical checks 25 000 pesos, and then there are the visas, birth certificates, blood tests. Fees to become an OFW in Hong Kong are 40 000 pesos, 300 000 in Israel. Saudi Arabia is the cheapest, because you can deduct it from your salary and it is only 20 000 pesos.

3.3. Experiences of young migrants: risks, challenges, opportunities

The data collected in source and destination communities in the Philippines highlighted a range of opportunities, risks and challenges faced by young internal migrants. The ability of migrants to enjoy opportunities, and the particular kinds of risks and challenges they face, appears to be influenced by their identity characteristics and background circumstances, in particular, their gender and socio-economic status. These factors can limit opportunities and compound some of the risks and challenges facing internal migrants.

3.3.1 The process of migration

Many young internal migrants interviewed for this study indicated that they had decided to migrate following the recommendations of relatives or friends. The following quote from a group discussion with young female migrant workers in Mariveles is illustrative of the types of responses received by researchers in this respect.

I was told by my cousin that [a factory in Mariveles] is hiring workers. I came here knowing that [the factory] was looking for workers.⁵⁵

Official recruitment agencies, it appears, are rarely active in the recruitment of internal migrants, focusing instead on the recruitment of Filipino Overseas Workers. Consider, for example, the following excerpt from an interview with a representative from the Ifugao provincial government.

Are there any recruitment agencies operating in Ifugao? No, there is no official recruitment office in Ifugao. There are some private agencies that operate without being registered with the LGUs or DOLE. They recruit migrants for overseas work as nurses and engineers.⁵⁶

The qualitative evidence also suggests that many young internal migrants, especially those migrating to work in the manufacturing industry, move to their new location without having secured employment prior to their departure.

Did you have jobs lined up before you migrated? No, we went to Laguna without having secured a job first. We had to get up at 3 am every morning to queue at the factories' recruitment offices.⁵⁷

I came [to Mariveles] without a job offer and started looking when I arrived. Is this the normal thing to do for young people? Yes, this is the normal process. It usually takes one week to one month to get a job offer.⁵⁸

Whilst young migrants look for employment opportunities in their new locations, they are typically supported by their family or friend networks, who either send them allowances or provide them with temporary accommodation (in the destination communities). Both young male and female migrants included in the study described this as a survival strategy. The interviews with young migrants also revealed that this support is often limited to a particular time period, which may place young migrants under significant pressure to find employment quickly. Consider, for example, the following quote from a young male job-seeker interviewed in Mariveles.

I am currently staying with a friend while I look for work. My family is still supporting me. But they will only support me for another four months. Then I have a deadline.⁵⁹

3.3.2 Experiences of empowerment

As discussed in the section 3.2 on drivers of migration, one strong pattern emerging from the research was that young Filipinos move to urban centres to pursue better economic opportunities. Participants in the focus group discussions tended to speak favourably about the increased job opportunities in

55 FGD with female migrant workers, Mariveles, Bataan, 25.10.16

56 KII with Provincial DSWD Officer, Lagawe, Ifugao, 28.10.16

57 FGD with young women, Lamut, Ifugao, 19.10.16

58 FGD with male migrants, Mariveles Town Hall, Bataan, 25.10.16

59 FGD with male migrants, Mariveles Town Hall, Bataan, 25.10.16

the destination communities, and the experiences of independence and economic empowerment that this can achieve.

Earning an income and gaining economic independence was one of the dominant themes in the group discussions, when participants were asked what positive experiences they associated with migration: “Good migration is when you become independent and learn to survive on your own.”⁶⁰

It appears that this increased economic independence can be empowering, especially for women from rural areas, where norms relating to gender roles and hierarchies often limit their decision-making power.

*In the Philippines, whoever has the money, makes the decision ... once women are able to earn an income ... they get to decide for themselves, and they get to have higher decision-making power. I think migration can help them do that.*⁶¹

Internal economic migration does not only empower migrants themselves, but also appears to contribute to economic empowerment in migrants’ home communities. The additional income from migrants’ remittances, for example, can help support families to establish a business, put siblings through school and overall, improve the economic situation and prospects of the family.

*I send my monthly salary to my family back home. It helps them a lot. It can feed my family, it can send my siblings to school, it can help my parents when they get sick. So in terms of helping a worker and his family, it [internal migration] is really a good thing.*⁶²

3.3.3 Restricted opportunities

While respondents often associated migration with increased job opportunities, economic independence and empowerment, the qualitative data also suggest that this is limited by the types of jobs that many internal migrants end up with, which appears to be largely restricted to lower skilled and lower paid jobs. As discussed above in Section 3.2.2. on ‘gendered opportunities’, a gendered labour market influences the profile

of migration within the Philippines, and gender-related expectations can be seen to be a significant driver of migration. According to the data, gender norms also restrict the economic opportunities that migration offers – particularly to young women. This is illustrated by the following comment from a focus group discussion with young migrants in Malabon:

What are the roles of men and women in your home provinces? Usually women do the housework and men do the farming. Are these roles different in Manila? There is no difference. Women are still doing the housework and men are still doing the ‘outside work’.⁶³

It also appears that job opportunities are more restricted for women, as they may not have the same ability to refuse jobs as men. As discussed in the previous chapter (Section 3.2.3 on ‘gendered expectations’), there appears to be a higher expectation that migrant girls and women will be ‘responsible’ and financially support their children or other family members through remittances. This may limit their employment opportunities, as, in addition to being limited to specific sectors, they need to take whatever job is offered to them as quickly as possible.

*Life is very difficult here [in Manila]. You can’t choose the job that is right for you, you have to settle for anything; the first thing that you can find. I have children to care for, so even if I was offered a job that pays 100 PHP, I have to take it. I have no choice. I have to accept washing clothes. I have to do whatever I can get.*⁶⁴

Young male migrants, in contrast, appear to have more freedom to decline job offers and decide independently what types of jobs to take up.

*Compared to women, men have higher expectations; they don’t want to do the cleaning jobs. Men also have a lower tolerance for work such as maid-work.*⁶⁵

Employment opportunities also appear to be restricted according to gender within sectors, and even within specific institutions, often to the detriment of women. According to the data, where men perform domestic work, they are typically expected to perform ‘outside work’, such as gardening or driving, rather than childcare or ‘housework’. Men will typically earn more than women for positions in the domestic work

60 FGD with community members, Asipulo, Ifagao, 28.10.16.

61 KII with Deputy Executive Director, Commission on Population, Metro Manila, 27.10.16.

62 KII with Dean, School of Labour and Industrial Relations, University of the Philippines, 27.10.16, Metro Manila.

63 FGD with young migrant men, Malabon, Metro Manila, 25.10.16

64 FGD with young migrant women, Malabon, Metro Manila, 25.10.16

65 FGD with young migrant men, Quezon City, Metro Manila, 24.10.16.

sector,⁶⁶ perhaps indicating that these roles are more valued. Consider, for example, the following quote from a key informant interview with the Domestic Workers Union.

*The salary of the male domestic worker is higher. For example, drivers are included in domestic worker legislation, but in reality they get higher salary than other domestic workers; and not only the family driver, but all male domestic workers get higher salary.*⁶⁷

3.3.4 Working conditions

The Philippines has a comprehensive set of labour laws, mostly contained in the Labour Code of the Philippines, which includes provisions on pre-employment policies (including establishing minimum ages of employment); employment conditions; health, safety and welfare; training and development; and post-employment (including termination).⁶⁸ However, the qualitative data collected for this study suggests that migrant workers are unlikely to be afforded all the protections contained in this legislation in practice.

It appears that internal migrants have reduced bargaining power in the labour force, and this compromises their ability to secure a job with good employment conditions. Many research participants were employed on a largely 'informal' basis, without contracts; a pattern particularly pronounced in the case of domestic workers. Others – particularly those working in factories in Mariveles – were working on 'verbal contracts' or on temporary contracts (typically less than 6 months) that deprive them of the protections and benefits afforded to more longer-term or permanent employees.

*When the contracts are 3-6 months long they are always verbal agreements. In general young people don't have contracts. There is no job security. ... I have a friend who was on short-term contracts for 2 years, even though he had already worked at the company for 4 years. He wanted a permanent contract with benefits such as annual leave, sick leave and social security.*⁶⁹

It appears that migrants are placed in a position in which high living costs, often coupled with the

need to support family members, effectively mean that they are unable to refuse job offers, even those with very poor wages/conditions.

*Migrants are more desperate, so they are also more likely to accept jobs without contracts and benefits.*⁷⁰

*People from the provinces are forced to get a job straight away to cover their costs, like rent and food. They have to accept any type of low paid work.*⁷¹

Conditions for female factory workers

I quit the job [in an electronics factory in Laguna] because the bad odour in the factory affected my sinuses. I also got a urinary tract infection. You know, you cannot leave the workplace to go to the bathroom. We had to stand from 6 am to 6 pm. They only gave us two breaks throughout the day. If you really wanted to use the bathroom, you would have to find a replacement for the time – a reliever. But there were times when we had to meet quotas, so we had to tolerate the standing and not being able to relieve ourselves.⁷²

Once employed, this reduced bargaining power and lack of knowledge and experience restricts the ability of migrants to secure favourable working conditions.

Rather than being considered a legal entitlement, whether migrants enjoy fair and lawful working conditions appears to also depend on the personality, confidence and experience of individual workers, and the goodwill of the individual employers. Those who are younger, less educated and with less knowledge and experience of 'the system' may be unable to negotiate favourable and fair working conditions.

Are migrants treated the same way as others in the work place? *It depends on the employer. If the employer is good, then the employees will be treated well. There is a difference, because employers think that people from the provinces have less knowledge. They think that people from the provinces are ignorant, with low education and less knowledge compared to people from the city.*

67 KII with representative from the Domestic Workers Union (United), Manila, 27.10.16.

68 A fuller discussion of labour laws and regulations is outside the scope of this report.

69 FGD with young migrant men, Mariveles, 25.10.16.

70 FGD with young migrant men, Quezon City, Metro Manila, 24.10.16

71 FGD with young migrant women, Malabon, Metro Manila, 25.10.16

72 FGD with young women, Lamut, Ifugao, 29.10.16

How does this influence how migrants are treated in the workplace? *There are some people from the provinces who have strong personalities. They can argue with employers and have opinions. But others are nervous and not so aggressive. They don't argue.*⁷³

Migrants who participated in the research showed reluctance to take formal action in the case of violations of lawful working conditions. While some migrants mentioned, hypothetically, that they could complain to the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) in the case of a breach in their working conditions, none had done so in practice, including those who were knowingly being paid below the minimum wage or had experienced inhumane or unfair treatment at work.

Conditions for migrant domestic workers

The Domestic Workers Act, which was adopted in 2013, sets out a comprehensive range of rights and entitlements and employment conditions applicable to domestic workers, and contains a registration system to improve domestic workers' access to their rights and entitlements. However, according to several key informants, the Act is poorly implemented, with the vast majority of domestic workers being unregistered. According to a representative of the Department of Labour and Employment, while they have labour inspectors, they *"cannot enter private homes; the workplace of domestic workers."* This places domestic workers in a very vulnerable situation, particularly the vast majority of workers who are unregistered. This vulnerability is likely compounded for internal migrants, who may not have a support network of family or friends.

3.3.5 Accessing services

Accessing services (in particular services related to healthcare, social security and education) may often be more difficult for internal migrants as opposed to non-migrant populations. While there are no legal restrictions placed on migrants' access to services, socio-cultural stigma and

lack of knowledge about service provision plays an important role in limiting internal migrants' access to services.

The data indicates that migrants may be lacking in knowledge or confidence required to access some services, such as social welfare and social security services. While some participants had access to social security, pensions and health insurance through their employment contracts, many did not have employment contracts and were unregistered workers. In the absence of these benefits, participants tended to be unsure of where to go to access support and services, or whether they are available in their area.

Does anyone of you know if there is help for migrants provided by the government or NGOs? *No, there is no such help; the government only helps fire and flood victims ... When our need gets extreme, then maybe we can go to the NGOs. But NGOs have many requirements for providing support. So what are the options for getting help? Pray! And family; These are the only two options for getting help.*⁷⁴

These challenges have been highlighted by several previous studies, that have found substantially lower rates of educational enrolment and completion (Gultiano & Xenos, 2004), and reduced service-seeking behaviour among migrants (Basa et al., 2009, p.23).

3.3.6 Social costs, isolation and exclusion

Participants – including migrants, community members and key informants – tended to mention 'social costs' as being a negative consequence of migration. For both male and female migrants, being separated from family members was expressed as a 'sacrifice.' Some mentioned feelings of loneliness or isolation brought about by being in a new location, away from family and social support systems.

What were the biggest problems or challenges that you've faced since moving to Manila? *Having no family in Manila; it gets lonely and difficult.*⁷⁵

Interestingly, while some participants mentioned isolation and lack of family as a negative effect of migration, participants tended to express feeling welcome in their destination communities, particularly in Mariveles, where more than 75% of the population are migrants (though it was noted that 'new migrants with accents' may experience discrimination).

73 FGD with young migrant women, Malabon, Metro Manila, 25.10.16

74 FGD with young female migrants, Quezon City, Metro Manila, 24.10.16

75 FGD with young migrant men, Quezon City, Metro Manila, 24.10.16.

Key informants tended to mention the social cost for families that are 'left behind', particularly where migrating parents leave behind children.

What is the impact of out-migration on Ifugao? *At face value it is a positive thing. But there is also the problem that family separation is not good. There are abandoned children, there is sexual abuse by uncles, so we can see that migration also has bad impacts.*⁷⁶

*It's a social consequence because you also have internal migrants who have left their children in the province so they can go somewhere else to work. So you have children who do not know their mothers and maybe fathers, and they will be left in the care of their grandparents, aunties, uncles, any other relatives.*⁷⁷

3.3.7 Personal security

Research participants working in factories in Mariveles mentioned fear of violence as a negative aspect of their new location. Young women mentioned having to walk through areas that are notorious for crime, following their night shifts, and feeling unsafe.⁷⁸ Similar concerns were expressed female migrants interviewed in Lamut, Ifugao.

*It's not safe in the boarding homes [in Laguna]. There are lots of drunkards and drug addicts around the boarding homes. And if you work night shifts you have to go home at 10pm or 11pm. Some of our colleagues got robbed and there were some rape cases as well. This happened on the way from night shifts from 10pm onwards. **What did you do to protect yourself and to prevent this from happening?** Pray and be alert!*⁷⁹

3.3.8 Trafficking and exploitation

Case study: 17 year-old trafficking victim residing in The Haven for Girls, Metro Manila

My mother was selling corn and my father had no regular work. Because my mum was not earning regularly, she couldn't send all of us to school. I had a friend in Cavite and she asked if I wanted to go with her to work in a bar...I thought I was only going to have to be drinking with the customers. But then, the bar owner told me that part of the job was to go out with customers. I still didn't know what he meant when he said 'go out with customers.' I didn't know it meant having sex with them. I was there for two weeks. Then I was rescued together with a lot of other girls ... When I discovered the true nature of the work, I wanted to go home, but I didn't know how to get there. I couldn't tell anyone because my co-workers were all from Cavite, and they couldn't help. I didn't feel very close to them.

Findings from the study confirm existing research, which suggests that internal economic migrants are at risk of being placed in exploitative situations, including being trafficked.⁸⁰ According to the data, trafficking often takes place through 'informal' channels: for instance, when a young person is encouraged by a family member, neighbour or acquaintance to travel from their home province to another location to a job or situation in which they are sexually exploited or are otherwise placed in an exploitative work situation. Young people will often be recruited by friends or other persons that they know and trust;⁸¹ according to one key informant, girls are sometimes charged with trafficking offences for 'recruiting' friends into sex work under false pretences.⁸²

*Usually they are recruited through their neighbours and acquaintances. They're promised jobs as waitresses, dishwashers and such. The bar owners are the ones who then force them into sex work.*⁸³

76 KII with Provincial Social Welfare and Development Officer, Lagawe, Ifugao, 28.10.16.

77 KII with Dean, School of Labour and Industrial Relations, University of the Philippines, 27.10.16, Metro Manila.

78 FGD with young women, Mariveles, Bataan, 25.10.16

79 FGD with young women, Lamut, Ifugao, 29.10.16

80 According to the Philippines Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2003 (which reflects the definition contained in international law), trafficking is the 'recruitment, transportation, transfer or harbouring or receipt of persons'...by means of threat or use of force, or other forms or coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of position, taking advantage of the vulnerability of the person or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation.'

81 KII with Youth Focal Person and Focal Person for the Recovery and Reintegration of Trafficked Persons, Protective Services Bureau, Department of Social Welfare and Development, 27.10.16, Metro Manila.

82 KII with the Director of the Haven for Girls, Metro Manila, 28.10.16

83 KII with the Director of the Haven for Girls, Pampanga, 26.10.16

According to the data, young people may also be vulnerable to being recruited into an exploitative situation through making contact with a 'recruiter' on social media.⁸⁴ It was noted by key informants that young migrants are also vulnerable to being exploited once they have already travelled to a destination. Having limited qualifications and a need to earn an income to cover living costs and perhaps support family members, young migrants are more vulnerable to being sexually or otherwise exploited.

They come from the Visayas and Mindanao and come here [to Manila]. They have no qualifications and they want to earn a high income, so they end up being [sexually] exploited.⁸⁵

The data suggests that those vulnerable to trafficking are persons from disadvantaged families, often in rural areas and with limited opportunities. According to key informants, these factors place them in a situation in which they are 'desperate' to accept any job or educational offer that appears to provide them an opportunity to develop or earn an income.

They come from the rural areas, from families who are living in the rural areas, they would like to study, and if offers come in from friends or relatives to work from Manila or other regions to help them study – they take the promise of education, support, a brighter future – they are so gullible to that.⁸⁶

Most of them are from poor families, and want to support their families.⁸⁷

There is also a gender dimension to trafficking – according to the data, boys tend to be trafficked for 'hard labour' – pig and poultry farming, and work in rice fields; while girls will be trafficked for sexual exploitation.

The vulnerability of young migrants to trafficking and other forms of exploitation appears to be exacerbated by a weak institutional framework to enforce the country's comprehensive anti-trafficking law.

What are the challenges in implementation?
There are so many. But mainly we need more police, more social workers dedicated to implementing the laws.⁸⁸

The institutional focus appears to be on 'rescuing' and supporting trafficking victims, with little attention being paid to addressing the root causes of trafficking and preventing internal migrants from being placed in exploitative situations. While this is beginning to shift, with government agencies and civils society organisations undertaking initiatives to address root causes of trafficking, respondents reported that the emphasis of government and NGO activities continues to be on response.

Does the DSWD try to stop potential trafficking victims from being trafficked from their home communities or is it the case that they are picked up once they reach their destination? *With the DSWD, we are more to do with the 'after' but we also do advocacy activities to inform or increase the awareness of the community on what are the red flags.⁸⁹*

Who are the main actors – government and non-government – who are working on internal migration issues? [For internal migrants], it's the DSWD, but I can see that support is only coming when they are already victims of trafficking. So, there is not much being done in terms of prevention? *There is, but it's more on training, not on addressing the root causes, like e.g. opportunities in places where they are coming from, access to services and education in places where they are from, providing the means to study.⁹⁰*

4. CASE STUDY 2: VIETNAM

4.1 Context of internal youth migration

4.1.1 Migration prevalence and demographics

The General Statistics Office's 2015 National Internal Migration Survey contains the most up-to-date statistics on internal migration patterns in Vietnam. The study was implemented in 20 provinces and centrally-run cities, selected to represent Vietnam's six socio-economic regions. The study estimates internal migration rates to be 13.6% of the overall population, and 17.3% of the population between the

83 KII with Youth Focal Person and Focal Person for the Recovery and Reintegration of Trafficked Persons, Protective Services Bureau, Department of Social Welfare and Development, 27.10.16, Metro Manila.

84 KII with the Director of the Haven for Girls, Metro Manila, 28.10.16

85 KII with Social Worker, ECPAT Metro Manila, 25.10.16.

86 KII with the Director of the Haven for Girls, Pampanga, 26.10.16

87 KII with Representative Interagency Council on Child Trafficking (Department of Justice), 08.11.16 (by skype)

88 KII with Youth Focal Person and Focal Person for the Recovery and Reintegration of Trafficked Persons, Protective Services Bureau, Department of Social Welfare and Development, 27.10.16, Metro Manila.

89 KII with Social Worker, ECPAT Philippines, 25.10.16, Metro Manila.

ages of 15-59 years; a high rate when compared with global averages (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, United National Population Fund). The largest category (about a third) of internal migrants surveyed indicated that their primary motivation for migration was to find employment.

Gender and age

Recent studies, including the National Internal Migration Survey, suggest that women comprise just over half (52.4%) of internal migrants. Existing studies also find that younger people are significantly more likely to migrate than older people. The National Internal Migration Survey (2015) estimates the average age of internal migrants to be 29.2 and Coxhead et al (2015) place the average age of inter-provincial migrants at 23 years, around 12 years lower than the average age of non-migrants.⁹¹ These findings suggest that prevalence of internal migration is significantly higher amongst 'youths' (i.e. individuals aged 16-30) compared to the overall population of Vietnam.

Finally, studies suggest that women are particularly likely to migrate young: looking at age and gender differentials amongst Vietnamese youth migrants, Guilmo & De Loenzien (2014) find that women tend to migrate at a younger age than men do, and are especially likely to migrate below the age of 25. Similarly, Jones (2014) reports that female internal migrants are on average a year younger than their male counterparts.

Ethnicity

Finally, disaggregating VHLSS internal migration data by ethnicity, Coxhead et al. (2015) find that Kinh (ethnic majority) and Hoa (ethnic Chinese) people are significantly more likely to migrate internally than other ethnic groups in Vietnam. They suggest that these results are driven by the fact that a large proportion of ethnic minorities in Vietnam live in mountainous and remote areas of the country, where they may have very limited access to information on migration opportunities (p.11). This finding was confirmed by qualitative research conducted in Ha Giang Province (see below).

4.1.2 Migration patterns and flows

Internal migration in Vietnam is characterised by movement from rural areas towards major urban centres, in particular, Ho Chi Min City (henceforth HCMC) and Hanoi, where most of the country's recent economic growth has been concentrated (Guilmo & De Loenzien, 2014; National Internal Migration Survey, 2015). Using data from the 2010 and 2012 VHLSS, Coxhead et al. (2015) show that the economic (out-) migration rate is significantly higher in rural areas (5.33%), compared to urban areas (1.93%).

Coxhead et al. (2015) also find that around 52% of all internal economic migrants moved to one of the two largest cities in Vietnam, i.e. HCMC and Hanoi. Of these two major urban areas, HCMC appears to attract a significantly greater number of internal economic migrants, with 37% of all internal economic migrants to be found in HCMC, compared to 14% in Hanoi. These patterns are also confirmed by Nguyen-Hoang & McPeak (2010), who use older data on internal migration from the 2009 Population and Housing Census.

In relation to source communities of internal migration in Vietnam, both the National Internal Migration Survey and VHLSS data reveals that individuals from the rural Central Coast region are the most likely to migrate internally, followed by the Mekong River Delta and the Northern Mountain regions. In contrast, individuals in the Central Highlands and the South East - Vietnam's richest region – were found to have the lowest net migration propensity. According to Nguyen-Hoang & McPeak (2010), the two provinces with the highest negative migration ratios, or highest outward migrant flows, in Vietnam are Thanh Hoa and Ben Tre (with over 60%). Despite the dominance of rural-to-urban migration patterns in Vietnam it is important to underline that there is also a not insignificant amount of urban-to-urban and peri-urban-to-urban migration in Vietnam (Nguyen-Hoang & McPeak, 2010, p.12; National Internal Migration Survey, 2016, p.3).

4.1.3 Legal and policy context

In contrast to the Philippines, the political-economy of Vietnam has long been characterised by expansive State control over the internal mobility of its people. Policy measures for regulating migration have included explicit legal and institutional arrangements restricting the geographic movement of people, most particularly through the use of the *ho khai* ('household registration') system. Through this system, access to social welfare services and benefits are tied to legal registration with a local authority; meaning that a person cannot move and keep these benefits without the formal permission of a local official (Duong & Thu Hong 2008). This makes Vietnam one of the very few countries in the world whose citizens must formally ask the government's permission before migrating to other parts of the country (Jones, 2014).

Whilst economic reforms since 1980s have led to an increasingly open and marketised economy, resulting in increased movement of people in search of better job opportunities, the residence-based nature of the social protection system has resulted in swathes of internal migrants in urban centres being effectively cut off and excluded from social welfare services, including access to health care, education, social

91 Both datasets includes respondents aged 15-59

security and others (Duong & Thu Hong 2008; Le, Tran, & Nguyen, 2011). While it appears that the *ho khau* system is much less stringently enforced nowadays compared to previous decades, it still prevents many Vietnamese internal migrants from obtaining legally permissible and affordable services. The 2004 Migration Survey estimates that up to half of all migrants in Vietnam are unofficial, and therefore potentially without access to important rights and services (as cited in Jones, 2014, p.10).

In this context, concerns about an expanding class of urban poor, have led to calls for a range of reform; including: recognition of the legal status of migrants in destination locations; provisions to promote migrants' access to social and economic benefits; and labour policies and institutions that protect migrant workers from unreasonable wages, harmful work conditions, and unemployment (Duong & Thu Hong 2008; Le, Tran, & Nguyen, 2011).

4.1.4 Migration patterns in the 3 research sites

Destination Case Study: Hanoi

Hanoi is the capital of Vietnam and the country's second largest city, with an estimated population of 7.7 million people in 2015 (Government Statistics Office). While Hanoi ranks second behind Ho Chi Minh City in terms of in-migration rates, it was chosen as the destination case study for the research because it is the primary destination for migrants from the northern part of Vietnam, where Plan operates (National Internal Migration Survey, 2015). As the seat of government, Hanoi's is Vietnam's political and cultural centre, and is also considered to be the academic capital of the country, with numerous universities and higher education institutions. Hanoi is also the industrial centre of northern Vietnam, with an expanding number of industrial zones (14 at the time of the study). Surrounding provinces also contain a number of industrial zones (there are 15 in neighbouring Bac Ninh Province).

Qualitative data from the study suggests that Hanoi attracts a diverse range of migrants groups pursuing a variety of opportunities in the city. In particular, participants emphasised that young people migrate to Hanoi to complete higher education, or to pursue employment opportunities, either in an industrial zone company, in the informal sector (e.g. waitressing, housekeeping, construction, street vendors), or, more rarely, in a professionalised industry. This finding is consistent with analysis of data from the National Internal

Migration Survey, which found that employment and study were the two most prominent reasons identified by migrants for travelling to Hanoi.

Source Case Study 1: Thai Nguyen

Thai Nguyen, a source community in the study, is a province in north-eastern Vietnam. It was chosen as a case study because of its diverse migration patterns (including both inter and intra provincial migration) and low barriers to migration. Thai Nguyen has a traditionally agricultural economy. It remains a largely rural province, with a relatively large provincial capital, Thai Nguyen city. According to recent government data, 66% of the population lives in rural environments.⁹² The province is rich in natural resources, which has led to significant industrial development in the region. Research participants reported that industrial investment in Thai Nguyen is increasing, particularly by foreign companies. Together with the expansion of Thai Nguyen city, and an associated increase in economic opportunities, this is reported to have reduced the prevalence of interprovincial migration in recent years.

Research participants in Thai Nguyen described several different migrant flows occurring from and within the province. Seasonal migration is prevalent in Thai Nguyen, where farmers migrate during the off-season, for short term work in construction, logging, mining and manufacturing: *"they will have a short contract with the companies... just a very simple job, even for three to six months. Sometimes in less than one month they will come back. It is simple work, like construction work. Recently there are some people working for the satellite branches of Samsung"*.⁹³ In addition to seasonal migration, respondents reported that young people migrate for long term employment, particularly manufacturing jobs in industrial zones, both within Thai Nguyen province, and outside, primarily around Hanoi. Finally, respondents reported that young people migrate to Hanoi and Thai Nguyen city to pursue work in the service sector, construction/manual labour and domestic work. Even longer term migration appears to be temporary; participants explained that the vast majority of migrants return to Thai Nguyen after several years.

Source Case Study 2: Ha Giang

Ha Giang, the second source community for the study, is a remote rural province in the far north of Vietnam, on the border with China. Ha Giang was chosen because of its high barriers to migration, and ethnic diversity and extreme poverty (which make it a useful comparator for Thai Nguyen Province). It is one of the least populated provinces, with a population of only 820,073 persons and population density of 89 persons per square kilometre. Ha Giang is inhabited by a number of ethnic minorities, including Hmong,

⁹² <http://english.thainguyen.gov.vn/-/natural-conditions>

⁹³ Focus group discussion, commune level authorities, Dinh Hoa District, 9/11/2016

Tay, Dao and Nung peoples. It is one of the poorest provinces in Vietnam with a poverty rate of 38.75% and is an extremely mountainous region, making agricultural activity a challenge. Despite this, the majority of economic activity in Ha Giang is small scale farming and forestry. There is also some mining in the province, and the government is encouraging foreign direct investment to increase industrial activity.

Barriers to migration are high in Ha Giang, which is largely due to the fact that travel is extremely difficult due to the mountainous terrain. Research participants explained that the main migration flow is illegal cross-border migration to China, to work informally in the farming industry or doing other types of manual labour. Additionally, young people may migrate to Ha Giang city for jobs in the service industry or informal labour markets (e.g. construction, street vending etc). Local government authorities also explained that in some rare cases families migrate permanently to other Vietnamese provinces, out of economic desperation, in search of more arable land.

4.2 Drivers of internal youth migration

This section explores the push and pull factors that shape young people's decisions to migrate internally in Vietnam, drawing in particular on case study source and destination communities.

4.2.1 Poverty and (lack of) economic opportunities

Respondents consistently identified economic factors as the dominant drivers of youth migration in Vietnam. In particular, economic necessity, a desire for economic advancement, and a lack of economic opportunities in source communities, operate as powerful push and pull factors that influence young people to migrate:

What are the main reasons young people come to Hanoi? It is the centre, the capital of the country, there are a lot of opportunities to find jobs.⁹⁴

Why did you come to Hanoi originally? It is hard to find jobs in my home town – the jobs are very few and the labour resources are abundant... Many of my friends come to Hanoi to work and when they come home for New Year they would tell me how it is easy to find a job, the income is higher, there is a wide variety of choice for work.⁹⁵

It appears that young people's migration is motivated by increasing disparities in employment opportunities and earning potential between rural and urban areas in Vietnam, which have increased as the country has transitioned from an agricultural economy and industry has expanded. As a researcher at the Institute for Social Development Studies explained, *"With agriculture shrinking the city is more attractive, so the flow of migration comes to the city – whatever you do in the city is better than in the village because in the city you can earn at least 2-3 dollars a day. This would require a week or a month in the countryside. That is why it is on the rise."*⁹⁶

Indeed, research participants consistently explained that rural source communities offer few employment opportunities for young people, outside of basic subsistence farming, pushing them to seek further opportunities elsewhere. Many of the young migrants included in the study came from 'farming families', and told researchers they decided to migrate in order to pursue alternative livelihood opportunities. As put by a district level government official responsible for vocational training: *'The driving force is poverty reduction and to switch from the agricultural sector to higher income jobs in other industries – the monthly salary in the industrial zone is equivalent to the whole year in Xin Man, so they can send money home.'*⁹⁷

This finding is consistent with existing evidence; in an analysis of data from the 2004 Vietnam Migration Survey, Anh et al suggest that economic motives account for the movement of more than 70% of all types of migrants (Anh et al., 2012).

Respondents explained that young people face pressure to migrate to earn income as a coping strategy, in response to economic crisis at home. For instance, in Ha Giang province, where barriers to movement appear to be quite high, respondents tended to describe migration as a 'measure of last resort':

The reason they migrate is lack of water for agricultural work. Even when they can grow corn in the dry season sometimes the corn does not do well so they lose the crop and have difficulty with income and finances. So they have to migrate.⁹⁸

Recently, in the past few years, the migration [from] Xin Man has increased - because the weather condition here is very harsh and the living conditions are very poor and the understanding of persons – they have limited knowledge. So that is the reason behind the significant migration in the past few years.⁹⁹

94 Focus group discussion, female migrants (18 – 24), Hanoi, 8.11.2016

95 Individual interview, male migrant worker, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

96 Individual interview, key informant, Institute for Social Development Studies, Hanoi, 24.10.2016

97 Individual interview, representative from DOLISA (district level), Ha Giang Province, 26.10.2016

98 Focus group discussion, village leaders, Ha Giang Province, 27.10.2016

99 Individual interview, Vice Chairman, People's Committee, Ha Giang Province, 26.10.2016

Findings suggest that migrants often move temporarily, in order to gain income capital needed for investments at home. This may be particularly the case for young people, who choose to migrate as an income earning opportunity prior to settling down to raise a family in their hometowns:

What is the age range of people who migrate? *They are still young and want to save money so they can come back and get money and get married and start a small business.*¹⁰⁰

This trend was further explored in a study examining rural-to-urban migration in Vietnam (Phan, 2012), which found that for households with a high demand for agricultural investments and high net migration returns, migration is used as a way to finance capital investments in their home community.

While poverty and lack of economic opportunity were identified as important push factors, which drive young people's migration in Vietnam, it is important to note that in some cases extreme poverty may operate as a barrier to migration. Several respondents explained that some employment opportunities require an upfront investment, which poor families cannot afford, or may be reluctant to pay when they lack confidence in the recruiter.

4.2.2 Gendered opportunities

Respondents emphasised that economic opportunity is the primary motivation for both young men and young women's migration, regardless of gender:

What are the different considerations that influence women's decision to migrate as compared to men? *The ultimate goal is to find a job and explore the world outside of their environment.*¹⁰¹

*The reasons are similar for men and women in terms of coming here for finding a job and earning extra money.*¹⁰²

Existing research studies in Vietnam highlight how, whilst both young men and women migrate, migration patterns are shaped by gendered differences in the employment opportunities that are available for women and men, in particular, with women increasingly dominant in foreign manufacturing jobs (Locke et al, 2008). Similarly,

findings from the qualitative research suggest that the type of employment opportunities available to and pursued by young people are heavily influenced by gender, with respondents reporting that certain roles are more appropriate for men, and others for women. In particular, according to research participants, women are reportedly more likely to work in the service industry, whilst construction, manual labour, mechanical work and jobs that require heavy lifting, are dominated by men.¹⁰³ These trends reflect gendered labour patterns which emerge from the Philippines case study. As commune authorities in Thai Nguyen told researchers: *"Women are more likely to work in a job that is less tiring, and men are more likely to work as a porter or construction"*.¹⁰⁴

In addition to demonstrating gendered patterns in the types of work that men and women engage in, research findings suggest that in certain industries labour demand is gender specific due to gendered perceptions about women's strengths. In particular, respondents consistently reported that there is greater demand for female labourers in manufacturing jobs because they are 'meticulous', 'detail oriented' and less likely to 'get into fights' with colleagues or management. As an informal recruiter working in Hanoi explained, *"for mechanical engineering companies or heavy load kinds of jobs like ceramic bathrooms for households, they prefer male – 80% of those employed are male. For electronics they prefer female because they are more detail oriented and industrious."*¹⁰⁵ Despite the increasing preference for women's labour, Locke et al. find that female migrants in Hanoi have consistently lower income than their male counterparts (2008, p.11).

4.2.3 Educational opportunities

Education also appears to operate as a key driver of migration in Vietnam. Findings from the National Internal Migration Survey (2015) suggest that migrants tend to be more educated than their non migrant counterparts; the survey found that 31.7 % of migrants had attained a college education or higher as compared to 24.5% of non-migrants. While the correlation between education and migration is relatively uncontroversial, it is less clear whether internal migration is a consequence or a cause of educational attainment.

Qualitative evidence from the study suggests that education can facilitate economic migration by increasing the opportunities that are available to young people. Respondents explained that many of the manufacturing jobs in industrial zones in Vietnam require a highschool degree, and young people

100 Focus group discussion, young people (mixed), Thai Nguyen Province, 10.11.2016

101 Focus group discussion, female migrants (18-24), Hanoi, 8.11.2016

102 Individual interview, intermediary providing recruitment services, Hanoi, Vietnam, 25.10.2016

103 Individual interview, female migrant worker, Hanoi, Vietnam, 7.11.2016

104 Focus group discussion, commune level authorities (mixed), Dinh Hoa District, 9.11.2016

105 Individual interview, intermediary providing recruitment services, Hanoi, Vietnam, 25.10.2016

participating in focus groups in Ha Giang explained that they lack the skills to pursue employment opportunities from outside of the commune:

Does the government help people in your community to find good jobs outside of the commune? *I have no idea. There are no opportunities. People from elsewhere come and take all the chances. There are some opportunities here but we lack the skills for the jobs.*¹⁰⁶

Additionally, respondents reported that young people migrate to pursue further educational opportunities after graduating from high school, including university education or vocational training opportunities. Indeed, 23.4% of respondents in the National Internal Migration Survey (2015) identified education as the reason for their migration. Opportunities in higher education tend to be concentrated in large cities, and particularly Hanoi: *“those from my age group graduate from high school and come to pursue further study... in our hometowns education and job opportunities are not as abundant as abundant as in Hanoi”.*¹⁰⁷ Findings suggest that young people who move to the city for further studies often pursue informal employment on the side in order to cover their costs, and tend to stay in the city after graduating in search of employment.

Qualitative evidence found education to be a less important pull factor than employment, however; according to research participants across generations and research sites, young people tend to complete education after highschool, in order to seek employment opportunities. In fact, many respondents expressed scepticism about the value of higher education in the context of the Vietnamese job market:

*For me a university degree is not as high value as it was previously considered. People now think about experience of a person in a certain field rather than looking for certain qualifications. There are a lot of media reports lately that university graduates are unemployed at a high rate.... University graduates only receive theoretical training rather than practical training to meet the needs of the market – that is why the unemployment rate is so high.*¹⁰⁸

The perception that higher education is not a worthwhile investment was raised by research participants in source communities and destination

communities. For example, in Thai Nguyen, a group of mothers explained that a university degree can be a disadvantage for young people applying for industrial zone jobs: *“if they show their university degree they are unlikely to get a place in the plant, because the plant does not want to pay that high. They just prefer high school graduates”.*¹⁰⁹

4.2.4 Gender norms and expectations

In addition to shaping the opportunities available to young migrants, gender norms and expectations operate as underlying determinants which place pressure on young people to migrate in some cases, and restrict them from migrating in others. Despite the evidence that female economic migration is increasing, many respondents still expressed the view that migration is ‘not good’ for women, due to patriarchal norms which portray women as vulnerable, control their sexuality and dictate their responsibilities in marriage and childcare (Locke, 2008):

Why do females prefer to stay in the province while males are more comfortable going outside? *Because male people have the health condition to go for long periods but females, after they get married, they need to stay close to home and look after their kids.*¹¹⁰

Particularly in Ha Giang Province, respondents expressed views that it is not appropriate or acceptable for women to migrate alone, or travel independently:

*[A young woman] must have a reliable person to go with her and support her when she migrates – only under this condition will the family allow their daughter to go.*¹¹¹

*There will be a rumour in the community that if a girl goes out of this area and works somewhere else and then returns that maybe she worked as a prostitute and no one will want to marry her. It is a social prejudice and then they are afraid of that and they won't go.*¹¹²

Stigma around female migration may create a barrier to young women migrating, particularly given that for most young migrants, migration is temporary, and it is important to maintain an on-going relationship with their source community. Indeed, a commune level local authority in Ha Giang province described how restrictive and gendered attitudes create barriers to young women's migration:

¹⁰⁶ Focus group discussion, mixed gender young people, Ha Giang, Vietnam, 28.10.2016

¹⁰⁷ Focus group discussion, male migrants in vocational training, Hanoi, Vietnam, 8.11.2016

¹⁰⁸ Focus group discussion,

¹⁰⁹ Focus group discussion, women, Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam, 10.11.2016

¹¹⁰ Focus group discussion, young women, Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam, 10.11.2016

¹¹¹ Focus group discussion, female migrants, Hanoi, Vietnam, 8.11.2016

¹¹² Individual interview, Commune Women's Association, Ha Giang Province, 27.10.2016

Do you think that young women in this commune will be interested in these jobs? Or are there social barriers to them going independently to work?

They just have some social barriers. There are women and girls who migrate to other provinces or neighbourhoods and when they come back they change the way they dress. They are fancy and look differently from people behind them. So they receive a different reaction from the people who live here.

A positive reaction or a negative reaction? *A negative reaction.*

Why? *The social prejudice – locally and also because of their limited knowledge and limited travel experience they have a mind-set that is not good.*¹¹³

4.2.5 Marriage and family

Dynamics relating to marriage and family structure operate as important push and pull factors that shape young people's decisions about if and when to migrate. Respondents explained that young people are more likely to migrate before they marry and start a family, because; "it is easy to get around without family members when you are single".¹¹⁴ This finding is consistent with a previous Plan study on migrants in Hanoi found that only 16% of female migrants and 6% of male migrants to be married (PLAN, 2009).

Responsibilities related to family life, primarily childcare, and the responsibility of looking after family property, appear to serve as barriers to migration for married young people. This is particularly the case for women, due to gendered expectations that they are responsible for home keeping and childcare:

*Men are more likely to migrate than women... Men are considered to be the bread winner and after women get married they have babies and parents to take care of.*¹¹⁵

*If they are a couple the woman has to stay and manage the house and property, the land and the cattle.*¹¹⁶

This attitude is in contrast to findings in the Philippines case study communities, where men

reportedly often stay at home and manage farm work, whilst women migrate for employment opportunities (often in the manufacturing industry). This division of labour appeared less acceptable in Vietnam case study communities, perhaps due to stronger expectations about women's responsibilities within the home, and greater social anxiety about (married) women travelling independently. As is demonstrated by the excerpt below, however, it appears that where parents or other family members are able to provide child care support and take care of property, it may be possible for young people to migrate independently even after they are married and have children:

For those who are living with their parents, it is easier for them to go, even if they get married. If you do not live with your parents it is very difficult for you to go.

Why is it difficult? *If you stay with the parents the parents will look after the kids and the wife can do agricultural work. If they live alone then the wife looks after the kids and you can only go for a short while.*¹¹⁷

Several respondents expressed concern that if a man or a woman were to migrate independently after marriage, this could lead to family breakdown:

The bad side about migration is that you will be away from your family for a long time, and that causes problems... The couple may get divorced, or abandon their children or marry foreigners! Even if someone offered my wife 30 million VND a month I would not allow her to go!

Why not? What are you worried about? *It is likely that a third person will come into the relationship if we part!*¹¹⁸

Indeed, family ties and the importance of maintaining family networks appears to operate as a barrier to migration in source community case studies included in the study, particularly in Ha Giang province. When asked why young people are hesitant to accept employment opportunities in industry promoted by local government, one commune level authority explained: "They are afraid of being away from the family for such a long time."¹¹⁹ Her perspective was echoed by a Plan staff member working in the region: "The culture of ethnic minorities is that you need family. Before members of the family would never go very far from their homes. If a man went to one place the wife would follow. But now the traditional culture is changing."¹²⁰

¹¹³ Individual interview, commune level authority, Ha Giang Province, 27.10.2016

¹¹⁴ Focus group discussion, young men, Hanoi, Vietnam, 23.10.2016

¹¹⁵ Focus group discussion, young people (mixed gender), Thai Nguyen province, Vietnam, 10.11.2016

¹¹⁶ Individual interview, Commune Women's Association, Ha Giang Province, 27.10.2016

¹¹⁷ Focus group discussion, young men, Ha Giang province, Vietnam, 27.10.2016

¹¹⁸ Focus group discussion, young people (mixed gender), Thai Nguyen province, Vietnam, 10.11.2016

¹¹⁹ Individual interview, Commune Women's Association, Ha Giang Province, 27.10.2016

¹²⁰ Individual interview, plan staff, Ha Giang Province, Vietnam, 26.10.2016

Given the importance of family bonds in Ha Giang, respondents reported that having family connections in destination communities is an important enabling factor which may make young people more likely to migrate: *“In the past women migrate where they have relatives in Lao Cai [the destination community] and the relatives say it is more favourable conditions for agricultural work so they should move there”*.¹²¹

4.2.6 Marriage migration

Existing evidence suggests that marriage also functions as a pull factor that influences migration for some groups of women and girls. 12.9% of internal migrants surveyed for the National Internal Migration Survey identified ‘marriage’ as their primary reason for migration. In addition, analysing the VHLSS 2010 data, Coxhead et al. (2015) found that migration for the purpose of marriage (21%) is the second most dominant reason for internal migration after moving for employment purposes. It is, however, difficult to disentangle ‘marriage migration’ from ‘economic migration’, as individuals who migrate for marriage are often motivated by economic and personal reasons. As put by a group of respondents in Ha Giang explained that marriage migration is often economically motivated: *“there are some cases where the couple goes together but when the wife gets the opportunity to marry a Chinese man and get more money and she stays and the husband comes back alone... the woman flees back to China because she sees the opportunity to make more money marrying a Chinese man, and be better off”*.¹²²

Ha Giang province was the only case study included in the study in which ‘marriage migration’ was found to be a prevalent phenomenon. Women reportedly migrate (or in some cases are trafficked) into China in order to marry Chinese men: *“If she is single, the only way [a woman would migrate] is to go to China... they go to China to find a husband”*.¹²³ Escape from abuse within marriage was found to be a push factors which motivates women and girls to pursue marriage migration. As a group of young men and women in Ha Giang province explained, *“In some families there are problems – the husband mistreats the wife and then she cannot stand it any longer and she will run to China”*.¹²⁴

4.2.7 Perceptions of life in the city

In addition to promising greater opportunities in employment, education and income generation, respondents identified the excitement and diversity of city life as a pull factor that influences young people’s decision to migrate:

*The city is attractive to young people – the vibrant life, exposure to new values and new life style, entertainment, cultural activities, and also the opportunity for social participation and enlarged social networks. And opportunity of life – you never know, you may meet somebody here and get married and stay! And learning opportunities of course – not learning in University but learning other things, every day in the big city. This is one of the pull factors.*¹²⁵

Young people’s perceptions of the city are informed by friends and family who have migrated and return to their hometowns with tales of the excitement of urban life. When asked about advice he would give to potential migrants in his village, a young male migrant in Hanoi exclaimed; *“you will have a chance to open your eyes, to explore, to be exposed to a new and modern life!”*¹²⁶ Similarly, a young female migrant replied, *“... Life is more interesting – you have the chance to meet people. It is much better than a boring home town, raising cattle”*.¹²⁷ Indeed, the increase in opportunities available in an urban context is likely to be greater for female migrants who tend to face more restricted options in their home communities.

4.2.8 Law and policy

Government policy may also influence internal migration; either encouraging migration by supporting the creation of economic opportunities, or through the development of restrictive policy, which makes migration onerous or difficult.

For instance, the government’s encouragement of industrial investment in certain regions has created increased opportunities for migrant and local labourers. The impact was clearly visible through the qualitative case studies; for instance, young people interviewed in Thai Nguyen province explained that recent factory openings in Thai Nguyen city have created opportunities for migrants and shaped internal migration flows. Representatives from DOLISA in Thai Nguyen Province explained their efforts to reduce unemployment through encouraging investment:

121 Individual interview, Commune Women’s Association, Ha Giang Province, 27.10.2016

122 Focus group discussion, young men and women, Ha Giang Province, Vietnam, 28.10.2016

123 Focus group discussion, commune level leaders, Ha Giang Province, Vietnam, 27.10.2016

124 Focus group discussion, young men and women, Ha Giang Province, Vietnam, 28.10.2016

125 Individual interview, director, Institute of Social Development Studies, Hanoi, Vietnam, 24.10.2016

126 Focus group discussion, young men, Hanoi, Vietnam, 8.11.2016

127 Individual interview, young female migrant, Hanoi, Vietnam, 7.11.2016

*"We signed an agreement with Samsung to support the poor households so that they will guarantee jobs to poor households."*¹²⁸

In Ha Giang, however, government efforts to encourage and facilitate employment migration reportedly have had limited success, presumably due to higher barriers to migration: *"There is a quota assigned to each district to get a certain amount of workers to migrate, Xin Man will never be able to recruit through DOLISA to meet that request"*.¹²⁹

As is discussed above, the Vietnamese government has a legacy of controlling population movement, including internal migration. While policy makers and officials reported that they encourage formalised migration in some circumstances, informal, or 'free' migration, continues to be highly discouraged, in particular through the continued use of the household registration system. While the policy is reportedly becoming less restrictive, respondents explained that it creates real challenges for migrants, and may serve as a barrier to (safe and supported) migration:

Another thing is household registration – this is the most important barrier for migrants. Without household registration in the city you cannot buy a house, not entitlement for health care or education.

*It is [becoming] more open but it is very difficult for migrants. There are different categories of residents. If you don't have a house you have to register as a temporary resident and it is difficult to get health insurance and education – you have to pay. Not entitled to access public services.*¹³⁰

The impact and practical implementation of this policy are explored in further depth in the access to services section of this report.

See chart in annex page 42.

4.3 Experiences of young migrants: risks, challenges, opportunities

*When I first arrived I just had a backpack. I went to an area under a bridge and looked for a notice to share [a] room. I went to a tourist area and found a job working from 9 AM to 9 PM. I was given a monthly salary and lunch and dinner. The salary was to pay rent and to send money to my mother. The job was selling clothes for a clothing shop.*¹³¹

4.3.1 Experiences within employment

Whilst, as discussed, many young women and men migrate to access improved employment opportunities; the data evidences that young migrant workers in Vietnam tend to be confined to specific industries; typically low-paying and stratified along gender lines. Working conditions are often poor, and migrants typically work long hours, struggling to raise enough money to support the high costs of living in the cities, as well as to send remittances home to support their families.

Tending to have low levels of education and qualifications, many migrant workers face barriers to access to forms of secure employment in the 'formal' sector. With reduced employment prospects and bargaining power, migrants of both genders are often confined to working 'informally', without any official employment contracts. Workers may be paid on an hourly basis, without any additional rights or entitlements, such as sick pay, and other forms of social or medical insurance. Participants explained:

*They work in the informal sector. [Or] they work in the formal sector as informal workers. They work from one short term contract to another. There are a lot of stories about companies avoiding insurance.*¹³²

*There is no contract and they don't have any documents. When these informal workers have any accident while working they will not be covered by insurance. e, illness insurance, death (for the family) and retirement (pension).*¹³³

In the absence of formal contracts, rights and entitlements, migrant workers are at the discretion, disposal and mercy of their employer: "the working conditions depend on [his] mood".¹³⁴ Migrants explained that those who have 'a good boss' will be

128 Individual interview, DOLISA representative (provincial level), Thai Nguyen Province, 9.11.2016

129 Group Interview, TVET, DOLISA (district level), Ha Giang Province, Vietnam, 26.10.2016

130 Individual interview, key informant, Institute for Social Development Studies, Hanoi, 24.10.2016

131 Individual interview with female migrant worker, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

132 Individual interview, Representative from ISDS Hanoi

133 Individual interview, Representative from Light, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

134 Individual interview with female migrant worker, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

treated fairly, but others are susceptible to having their pay withheld, and other forms of mistreatment at work:

*Some bosses or recruiters have bad attitudes towards us. There are cases where people will have payments delayed because they have no legal agency to guarantee [their pay]. Without an agreement it is very hard. With a contract it would be easier to resolve.*¹³⁵

*There are some cases where the migrant workers are not fully paid for what they did and have to return with just partial wages, and there are some cases where [migrants] do dangerous jobs and the health conditions [are poor]...[it] may even cause death.*¹³⁶

Whilst these are common experiences of internal migrants in many contexts around the world, young internal migrants in Vietnam face additional barriers to being able to access safe, secure and formal forms of employment, due the legal and policy context in Vietnam, characterised by the government management of population flow through the household registration system. Many migrant workers do not have legal residency in their 'destination' locations, and young migrants interviewed in the research explained that legal residency may be a requirement for accessing official forms of work; for example:

*Better jobs are not available to migrants. If I apply for a job that requires a contract address – I use this address because of the proximity – it makes me seem available. But when it comes to showing evidence that I have residency I do not have any paper work.*¹³⁷

However, despite these challenges, it is worth noting that both male and female migrants included in the research reported enjoying their work, and having employers and managers who did treat them well and with respect. Importantly, the ability to negotiate fair treatment was often associated with age, maturity and experience "now I am mature and know my rights and entitlements so I know how to get the best out of an agreement".¹³⁸

Health and safety

The dire health and safety conditions in employment sites where many migrants work was a consistent theme raised by participants in the research: heavy physical work, skipping meals, limited (or no)

availability of safety equipment and protective gear, toxic chemical exposure, repetitive strain injuries and others, were all raised as risks associated with typical forms of migrant labour. Migrant explained that being in 'strong' and 'good' physical health was absolutely essential to being able to manage employment, and that they intended to work only as long as their health lasted; reflecting the sense in which migrant bodies are regarded as a 'resource' which is used until it becomes worn, then easily disposed of. This was described as particularly the case for male migrants working in (what were perceived as) more physically taxing industry, such as construction.

Gender and vulnerability

Young female migrants are particularly likely to end up in precarious and risky forms of labour (Guilmoto & De Loenzien, 2014, p.48), often working informally as street hawkers or as domestic employees, where they are particularly prone to forms of exploitation and abuse, by their employers as well as law enforcement. One stakeholder explained the risks:

*For those who work as freelance or domestic workers [the employer] may end the contract without any notice and no organisation will protect their rights. Or if they are sexually abused there is no organisation to protect their rights. Female workers are especially hesitant and avoid speaking out about their problems – so they are vulnerable.*¹³⁹

Interview with a young female migrant working as a street vendor

I do want to find a job, but jobs also require a high school certificate and [an] English qualification. For example jobs washing dishes, selling clothes, serving – they all require those certificates. They prohibit street vendors. Sometimes I need to step into the street and it disturbs the traffic. I am not allowed, especially in the old quarter. The biggest challenge is being caught by the police. They will keep all the fruits and ask for a fine, a payment - equivalent of 200,000.00 VND. I give up the fruits and pay that money – and go home. Once they take the fruits I just have to give it up. Some people... just want to take money from street vendors, especially female workers. My mother [also] has some disputes with people in the markets or problems with the police standing in the area - or problems with thieves stealing things. She sells sweet potatoes.

¹³⁵ Focus group discussion, young male migrants, Hanoi, 8.11.2016

¹³⁶ Individual interview, Commune leader, Xin Man District, Ha Giang, 27.10.2016

¹³⁷ Individual interview, young female migrant, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

¹³⁸ Individual interview, young female migrant, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

¹³⁹ Individual interview, representative from DOLISA (district level), Ha Giang Province, 26.10.2016

In addition to working as street vendors and domestic help, young female migrants often end up working in factories associated with the textile industries; research has demonstrated that foreign-owned enterprises in Vietnam's export processing zones - that offer jobs in the clothing, footwear and furniture industry and others – overwhelmingly employ female workers (Fukase, 2014). The conditions of employment with such firms are reportedly characterised by 'short-lived' and easily disposed contracts, and female migrant workers are vulnerable to exploitation by employers and harassment by local police and authorities (Locke et al, 2008). One migrant woman explained:

Inside companies I recall complaints of sexual abuse by supervisors. In order to get bonus or get promoted some female workers are abused to get promoted. Do sexual favours. It is not popular but we have recorded some cases. [Also] sometimes the managers shout at the workers if they do not meet quota.¹⁴⁰

4.3.2 Life in the city, migrants and vulnerability

When in the hometown they have thoughts and when they arrive there are many temptations and if they cannot control themselves with will get caught in temptations – gambling, drugs, illegal types of work.¹⁴¹

In addition to their precarious situations at work, young migrants often spoke of feeling 'unsafe' in their surroundings, and raised concerns about experience of harassment, discrimination, violence and abuse, including by government officials and law enforcement personnel. This was found to be particularly the case for female migrants:

Hanoi is also more dangerous for female migrants because people flirt with them a lot - even the policeman sometimes. They always flirt. After work I close the door. I lock the door and do my cooking inside. I worry that if we open the door something may happen.¹⁴²

Most migrants are private renters, unable to afford permanent and safe forms of housing; they often sleeping in crowded rooms, and lack access to

basic water and sanitary facilities. One migrant explained her living circumstances:

It is very humid and we run out of water. The living cost is very high. I share a room with 5 people, but it is very tight and we do not use the bed by just sleep on a flat mat on the floor. There are 10 people sharing two bathrooms.¹⁴³

Feelings of loneliness and social exclusion are also common experiences of many migrants. Cut off from their family and community networks, many young migrants reported feeling isolated and alone; one participant explained:

Compared to other countries where I have travelled, Vietnam has a traditional way. [You are] protected by a certain network in your community, so when you leave your community you leave your network.¹⁴⁴

Many participants raised concerns that these feelings of isolation could drive many young migrants into the more dangerous aspects of city life, including petty crime, gambling, drug use, sex work and others; often referred to as 'social evils'.

Migrants spoke of being subject to discrimination by local communities; and this was found to be particularly the case where migrants were from lower income, rural and less educated backgrounds. Meanwhile, lack of legal residency excludes migrants from access to support and justice mechanisms in response to experiences of violence, abuse and discrimination.

There are some cases where local people look down on migrant workers and try to drive them out of the area. They say 'you are from rural areas – you look like rural people!!' I do not know why. Maybe because of our appearance. I cannot afford good clothes. They say, 'you are rural people'!¹⁴⁵

I have a problem that my voice is not originally from Hanoi – I have an accent. People from Hanoi speak with a good voice already. This is a barrier to accessing my dream.¹⁴⁶

4.3.3 The sex industry

Many young migrant women and girls, as well as (to a lesser extent) boys, end up working in the sex industry; either on the streets, or as part of their employ within restaurants, bars, karaoke clubs,

140 Group interview, Center for Development and Integration, Hanoi, 11.11.2016

141 Individual interview with male migrant worker, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

142 Individual interview with female migrant worker, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

143 Interaction 14: Focus group discussion with male migrants in vocational training, organised by REACH, Hanoi, 8.11.2016

144 Individual interview, Representative from NGO, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

145 Individual interview, Representative from NGO, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

146 Individual interview, Representative from NGO, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

massage parlours and beer gardens. Vietnam has a vibrant sex trafficking industry (fuelled by both domestic demand, and foreign ‘sex tourism’) and migrants, particularly young, female, migrants, are overwhelming represented within its ‘workforce’. One key stakeholder claimed:

We used to work with a group of sex workers. 90% came from other places to Hanoi. They had the intention to [migrate to] find a decent job but end up being trafficked to become a sex worker.¹⁴⁷

As this extract suggests, young migrants’ experiences in relation to migration and the sale of sex appear to lie along a continuum, with the ‘autonomous’ decision to enter the sex industry (before, during or after migration) at one end of the spectrum, and being the victim of ‘trafficking’ for the purposes of sexual exploitation on the other.

Vietnamese law sets out that ‘procuring’ or ‘providing’ money or goods in exchange for sexual acts with a young person under the age of 18 years is a sexual offence, and where this is done with the purpose; otherwise the buying and selling of sex is still ‘prohibited’ but subject to lesser, administrative and civil sanctions (Hamilton et al., 2015). Further, where the child is ‘moved’ for this purpose through force or trickery, this constitutes the offence of trafficking.

A range of different forms of expression, conveying variant degrees of choice, coercion and force were used to describe how young migrants enter into the sex industry in practice: young migrants, particularly those who were young, and from relatively disadvantaged, uneducated, and poorer backgrounds, were characterised as being ‘lured’, ‘persuaded’, ‘cheated’, ‘misled’, ‘trapped’ or ‘forced’ into ‘illegal forms of work’, ‘social evils’, and the sale of sex in exchange for money. For example:

Some are ‘lured’ to work in the prostitution centres.¹⁴⁸

Many young people are trafficked – they are cheated into providing service - in restaurants, karaoke, massage parlours - and gradually become engaged in sex work. When they don’t have work in the home village, and they cannot find a job [in the city] with enough income. They may do it on the side of something else...¹⁴⁹

One young woman described her experience, intimating dangers associated with both engaging in sex work as well as with refusing to do so:

There are risks in all types of jobs. I used to work at street bar restaurants and there are a lot of temptations and if I did not know the risks and how to react to it the consequences would have been very bad.

Do you mean offers to pay you for sex or things like that? Yes.

Is that something a lot of young women deal with? It depends on the customer – there are good guys and bad.

Is there anyone who could help you in that kind of situation? I just resolve the problem myself – I do not want to scale it up. It just takes a good gesture to make a good refusal in a polite way.¹⁵⁰

These extracts convey how vulnerability, pressure, perhaps a degree of deception and manipulation on the part of a ‘recruiter’, feelings of insecurity, and ‘cultural’ and environmental influences may all combine to lull young migrants into gradually engaging in the selling of sex, as a feasible, easy, or desirable means of making money.

You know, without some skills it is easy for them to get trapped by social evils in the city. It is easy to fall into shame. Female migrants are young, so they look naïve, and bad people can recognise that and lure them and try to make them believe something that is not real about ‘jobs’ - or ‘good opportunities’ - waiting for them if they follow that bad person.¹⁵¹

It is a popular phenomenon in society, particularly in Hanoi where the need to money to earn a living is high. There are some cases where female migrants are willing to take jobs as a prostitute or to work as a mistress for affluent people so they accept the job.¹⁵²

Whilst many migrants working informally are vulnerable to exploitation, younger migrants, young women and girls migrate informally appear to be particularly vulnerable to forms of recruitment into industries associated with the sale of sex;

There is a difference between middle aged people and young people – the middle aged people have clear objectives and intentions but young people are just thinking about opportunities to earn more money, and this may create a trap for them so they may be deceived and trapped in social evils.¹⁵³

147 Individual interview, Representative from NGO, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

148 Individual interview, Representative from NGO, 28.10.2016

149 Individual interview, Representative from ISDS Hanoi

150 Individual interview, Representative from NGO, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

151 Individual interview, Representative from NGO, Ha Giang Province, 26.10.2016

152 Individual interview, Representative from NGO, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

153 Individual interview, Representative from NGO, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

*The most vulnerable group are adolescents who migrate from the rural area – they will easily be misled or forced to do illegal work by bad people.*¹⁵⁴

Whilst young female migrants are thought particularly likely to end up in forms of sex work, or situations of sexual exploitation, some participants were also keen to emphasise that such issues also affect young migrant men and boys: *“there are both male and female sex workers, [and] most of them are migrant workers.”*¹⁵⁵

4.3.4 Access to services

As noted the *ho khau* system requires citizens to be registered as ‘permanent residents’ before they can purchase housing, work legally, receive vocational training, register births and access government-subsidised health care (UNFPA, 2010). Although a number of reforms in recent years have improved social welfare coverage for internal migrants, the research findings indicate that significant barriers to access to social welfare services, including healthcare, childcare, education and others remain. Some of these barriers are the direct result of continued legal restrictions; others are the indirect consequences of structural forms of marginalisation and exclusion; whereby feelings of insecurity, precarity and illegitimacy, compromise migrants confidence to seek out services, and leave them without the skills and knowledge to navigate complex administrative and bureaucratic procedures. The following extracts are illustrative of migrants perceptions of the issues:

Children [of migrants] cannot enter public school because it is only for local children.

If you don't have official household registration you cannot receive support from the government.

We have to manage by ourselves. We could go to our friends. I would only go to the Doctor if the situation was very serious! The fee for the doctor is expensive, and I only have insurance coverage in our hometown.

A number of benefits and services are available to those with ‘temporary’ registration certificates. However, the procedures for applying and obtaining temporary registration are reportedly complex,

long and onerous; and many migrants included in this study were without temporary registration. Those who had applied described their challenges with the process:

*I requested from the local authority for a temporary registration – it was very onerous. I had to go to Ha Tay and bring the documents back. And I was working all day so I had no time!*¹⁵⁶

*The procedure to do registration for temporary residence was very difficult. [He lowers his voice]. I had to bring all these documents back to my hometown and get the signature of the local authority and then bring them back to get the signature here, and [then] wait two weeks. I had no difficulty with my hometown authorities, but here they kept requesting more documents. I have no idea why! I believe they were following legal procedures.*¹⁵⁷

As well as legal restrictions, and a lack of knowledge and confidence, lack of access to cash funds and other resources, and limited time off work are other significant factors impeding migrants’ ability to access services. For example:

*From my experience people who migrate do not have the opportunity to go to the doctor as regularly as people who have money. My brother in law recently died of cancer – he went late and died a few months later. [Migrants] will not go to the doctor until the last minute - they anticipate that they will need to pay a fee and give up time to go to the doctor.*¹⁵⁸

*By law yes [migrants] can [access services]. The main barrier is the working time. If they take a day off their salary will be deducted for the whole month. On Sundays there are no hospitals open. That is their only day off. Private services are much more expensive but it is lower than the bonus they might lose.*¹⁵⁹

*[Child care] is really a problem. The public kindergarden is only open during office hours and these kindergardens close at five and the workers stay until 8 so there is no one to take care of children.*¹⁶⁰

These findings are triangulated by existing quantitative evidence: data from the 2004 Vietnam Migration Survey suggests that access to health services is lower for internal migrants compared to

154 Group interview with Hanoi Centre for Employment Services, DOLISA Job Placement Centre, Hanoi, 11.11.2016

155 Individual interview, Representative from NGO, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

156 Individual interview with female migrant worker, Hanoi, 7.11.2016;

157 Individual interview with young male migrant, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

158 Individual interview with young male migrant, Hanoi, 7.11.2016

159 Individual interview, representative from NGO, Hanoi, 11.11.2016

160 Individual interview, representative from the Center for Development and Integration, Hanoi, 11.11.2016

non-migrants, and that migrants are more likely to resort to self-treatment (UNFPA, 2006), citing expensive treatment fees as the main reason for non-access. In addition, the Vietnam Migration Survey found that respondents with permanent household registration (KT1) were more likely to have a health examination compared to those with temporary household registration (KT2-4), with un-registered migrants having the lowest health examination rate.¹⁶¹

According to a qualitative study on youth migration in Hanoi, as well as access to health and education, household registration status also impacts migrants' access to loans, student support funds, and vehicle registration. The study suggests that government circulars typically require the beneficiaries of such services to be permanent residents or temporary dwellers of at least one year upwards (PLAN, 2009).

4.3.5 Positive experiences

Although this chapter has explored many of the challenges that migrants face, it is nonetheless important to recognise that not all experiences were negative. Many migrants spoke in positive terms about the excitement, diversity, novelty and opportunities of their new lives in the city: *"you can communicate with different people;" "I will have the chance to know different dishes from around the world;" "there are opportunities to expand your knowledge, open your eyes"* were typical ways that participants characterised their experience. Overall, the majority of migrants were keen to emphasise that the benefits of migration outweighed its drawbacks and risks.

5. RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

The study identified a number of risk and protective factors associated with youth internal migration in Vietnam and the Philippines. A **risk factor** refers to any attribute, characteristic or exposure of a young migrant that increases his or her likelihood of becoming a victim of any form of abuse, violence, or exploitation. A **protective factor**, in turn, is the mirror image of a risk factor, referring to characteristics or attributes of a young migrant, or conditions contained within the broader social environment, that prevent, mitigate or reduce

the impact of abuse, violence, or exploitation. The following chapter provides a brief summary of the study's findings on the key risk and protective factors associated with youth internal migration in Vietnam and the Philippines.

5.1 Economic status

The study revealed that young migrants from poor family backgrounds are particularly vulnerable to abuse or exploitation - during the process of migration as well as in their destination locations. Young migrants from poor family backgrounds often migrate out of a sense of 'desperation', which limits their ability to refuse job opportunities, regardless of the working conditions or terms of employment, and reduces their bargaining power vis-a-vis their employers. Economic vulnerability was found to have a particular impact on young women, given that they tend to experience stronger expectations to provide financial support to their families.

5.2 Education and knowledge

The study also revealed that young migrants who have no or limited access to education and/or information are at a particular risk of ending up in exploitative or abusive working environments. In particular, those young migrants who have limited knowledge and understanding of their rights, the labour laws, and available complaints procedures are vulnerable to being exploited by labour agencies, employers and co-workers. This risk factor was found to operate across genders.

5.3 Age

Evidence from the study suggests that younger migrants are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation than older migrants. This appears to be because younger migrants are less likely to be aware of their rights and/or less likely to recognise abuse or exploitation when it occurs. Consider, for example, the following excerpt from an interview with a representative from ECPAT Philippines.

At what ages are children [in the Philippines] trafficked, based on your experience? Most of the women or children we see are in the ages of 12 – 15 years.

And beyond 15, are they less likely to be vulnerable to these situations? Yes, but it also depends on how smart she is to sense that something is not good for her.¹⁶²

161 KT1 refers to permanent residence. KT2 denotes semi-permanent residential status involving intra-provincial movement. KT3 refers to semi-permanent residential status involving inter-provincial movement. Lastly, migrant workers and students temporarily residing outside of their province of permanent residence fall under KT4 (Hardy, 2001).

162 KII with ECPAT Philippines representative, Metro Manila, 25.10.16

Age, however, does not always act as a protective factor and can in some cases also result in restricted access to services for young migrants who experienced exploitation and/or abuse. For example, the shelter for trafficking victims visited by researchers in Pampanga (in the Philippines) only provided services (accommodation, food, counselling, education, etc.) to girls under the age of 18 years, at which point they would be re-integrated into the community regardless of their (or their families') preparedness.¹⁶³

5.4 Gender norms and perceptions of risks

Respondents interviewed for this study generally perceived female migrants to be more at risk of sexual abuse and trafficking than their male counterparts. This was evidenced, for example, in group discussions and individual interviews conducted in Ha Giang Province (Vietnam).

Is it more dangerous for a woman to migrate? Yes, there are more risks.

What kinds of risks are these? [The women] are afraid of being cheated and of trafficking – so women go with friends or they go with their parents.¹⁶⁴

Female migrants are young, so they look naïve and bad people can recognise that and lure them ... Most trafficking victims are young women.¹⁶⁵

Male migrants, in turn, were often perceived by study respondents to be more at risk of becoming involved in drugs, gambling, and criminal gangs in their destination community. Consider, for example, the following quote from a group discussion with young women in Hanoi (Vietnam).

[Male migrants] are tempted by social evils. Like using drugs, racing motorbikes, fighting and gang activities.¹⁶⁶

Even though female migrants were generally perceived to be more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse than their male counterparts, evidence from the study also showed how traditional gender norms can stigmatise male victims of abuse, creating gender-specific barriers to accessing services for male migrants who experience abuse and/or exploitation.¹⁶⁷ The following quote from a representative from ECPAT Philippines illustrates this dynamic well.

*Even though he may be the victims of the same child trafficking, a boy will not tell of his victimization. He will suffer inside and will not let others know that he is a victim ... So we find that we have more difficulty helping boys because of the culture: boys don't cry, boys don't speak, because boys are not supposed to be abused.*¹⁶⁸

5.5 Family and friend networks

The study identified existing family and friend networks as important protective factors, reducing young migrants' exposure to abuse and/or exploitation in their destination locations. Family and friend networks were often mentioned as the first point of contact if young migrants experienced any problems or challenges.

Did you experience any risks or challenges whilst migrating?

No, we had contacts in Mariveles already. They picked us up from the bus stop when we first arrived.

Are there any risks you face here in Mariveles?

Not really, we have lots of friends here who help us out.¹⁶⁹

Family and friend networks also appear to play an important role in 'initiating' young migrants into life in 'the city'; making them aware of potential risks and dangers that may not exist in their home communities.

*Girls are vulnerable ... if they don't have a family or support system that can protect them for while during the transition period.*¹⁷⁰

5.6 Law and policy

A lack of laws (or, perhaps more often, a lack of enforcement of existing laws) regulating employment was identified as a major risk factor contributing to the vulnerability of young migrants in Vietnam and the Philippines. For example, many young migrants interviewed in the Philippines indicated that they were employed on an 'informal' basis, without contracts; a pattern particularly pronounced in the case of domestic workers. Without contracts, young migrants are particularly vulnerable to exploitative employment practices, as the following case study illustrates.

¹⁶³ KII with manager of haven for Girls, Pampanga, 26.10.16

¹⁶⁴ FGD with young women, La Chi Chai Village, Ha Giang, 27.10.16

¹⁶⁵ KII with Plan Vietnam Field Office Manager, Ha Giang, 26.10.16

¹⁶⁶ FGD with young women in Technical School for Disadvantaged Youth, Hanoi, 24.10.16

¹⁶⁷ This, of course, does not imply that girls and women who experienced abuse and/or exploitation do not face gender-specific barriers to accessing services.

¹⁶⁸ KII with ECPAT Philippines representative, Metro Manila, 25.10.16

¹⁶⁹ FGD with young migrant workers, Mariveles, Bataan, 25.10.16

¹⁷⁰ KII with ECPAT Philippines representative, Metro Manila, 25.10.16

Interview with a former domestic worker, Quezon City, 24.10.16

My employer used to deprive me of food. I would only eat twice a day. And I would only get half portions. My employer had bad views about maids, she discriminates against maids. After being in hospital she forced me to work again, already after two weeks. I was shaking! **What did you do about this?** I ran away from that house. **Was there anyone you could ask for help?** No, there was no-one. **Did you have a contract?** No, only a verbal agreement, no written contract.

Laws and policies that restrict access to services based on migrants' residence status were also identified as significant factors that increase the risk of further exploitation/abuse and prevent migrants from seeking the help they may need. The household registration system in Vietnam, for example, prevents unregistered migrants and temporary residents from accessing education, health care and other public services; services they may need to access when experiencing abuse or exploitation in their destination locations.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research provides detailed and in-depth evidence and analysis on: the push and pull factors driving youth internal migration in Vietnam and the Philippines; young migrants' experiences, including the challenges and opportunities they face in their destination; and the risk and protective factors that shape their experience, and may determine whether migration is safe, positive and empowering for young migrants. These findings have implications for law, policy and programming, which are explored in this section.

Determinants of youth migration

Findings from the study suggest that economic factors are the most important drivers that influence both young men and women to migrate: a dearth of employment and income earning opportunities, in some cases compounded by income shocks, push young people to migrate away from home communities; meanwhile, a range of employment opportunities with much higher earning potential pull them to urban centres. This reflects similar findings in the recent Indonesia study¹⁷¹, which found that young people chose to migrate to obtain better jobs due to limited employment

opportunities in their home communities. In both Vietnam and the Philippines, the types of employment opportunities available to men and women were found to vary according to gender, with a greater demand for female workers in manufacturing jobs, and the domestic work and service sectors, and a greater demand for male workers in jobs that require physical strength (e.g. construction) and mechanical industry.

Other important push and pull factors identified by the study, which tend to encourage young people's migration, include: education opportunities; opportunities to marry, particularly for young women; the excitement and diversity of urban life, an important factor which emerged from Plan's Indonesia study; and legal and policy measures which shape the availability of opportunities for young migrants. Other important considerations which emerged from the study, and shape young people's decisions in relation to migration include: gender norms and expectations, including those that place particular responsibility for providing family support on young women; marital status and family dynamics, including young migrants' ability to access child care arrangements; networks of family and friends; and educational status. Educational status was found to be a particular push factor in the Indonesia study (2015), with educated young people more motivated to migrate and seek opportunities commensurate to their qualification; this dynamic appears to influence young people's decision making in Vietnam and the Philippines also.

Interestingly, differences in push and pull factors emerged across case study communities. For instance, in Ha Giang, highly conservative and gendered norms prohibited young women from migrating, particularly alone. In Philippines case study communities, however, women faced particular pressure to migrate, often independently, in order to provide support to their families, and even after they were married with children; a scenario which appears to be much less acceptable in Vietnam.

Experiences of young migrants

Evidence on young migrants' experiences in destination communities demonstrates that whilst migration can be empowering for young people, they face a number of challenges and experience multiple vulnerabilities in their destinations. Young people's experiences were characterised by: a lack of guidance and support; limited opportunities and, as a result, little negotiating power with employers; hazardous working conditions; difficulty accessing services; experiences of isolation and exclusion; threats to personal security, which were experienced by both young men and women; and vulnerabilities to various forms of exploitation, including trafficking, which appear to have a particular impact on young

171 Mentioned in the introduction to this report.

women. Themes relating to migrants' experiences were found to be similar across Vietnam and the Philippines.

Risk and protective factors

The study identified household poverty and limited access to education and information as important risk factors, increasing migrants' vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. Young migrants appear to be particularly vulnerable compared to older migrants, given that they are often less aware of their rights and less likely to identify exploitation and abuse when it occurs. Female migrants appear to be at greater risk of sexual abuse and trafficking compared to their male counterparts, whereas male migrants were reportedly more exposed to risks associated with drugs, gambling, criminal gangs, and labour trafficking. Family and friend networks in the destination locations were found to be important protective factors against abuse and exploitation of young migrants, as well as improving resilience and access to resources, including services. The study also provides evidence that a lack of laws (and law enforcement) regulating employment and ensuring protections increases young migrants vulnerability to abuse and exploitative employment practices, both in Vietnam and the Philippines. Laws restricting access to services were in turn found to discriminate against internal migrants, limiting their ability to adequately respond to exploitation and abuse.

6.1 Implications for policy and programming: recommendations

These findings have important implications for the development of policy and programming, and a number of recommendations are set out below.

The recommendations should be used to inform and strengthen Plan's programming, particularly within the context of key frameworks on girl's empowerment and youth and economic empowerment. Plan International's **'Because I am a Girl' (BIAAG)** global movement is dedicated to ensuring justice for all girls and young women by 2030, in particular in relation to access to education ('learn'), meaningful participation in decision-making ('lead'), sexual and reproductive health ('decide'), and freedom from violence and access to justice ('thrive').¹⁷² Plan International's programming on **youth and economic empowerment (YEE)** is 'aimed at working with governments, the private sector and civil society to remove barriers for young people and prepare

them for work based opportunities in the labour market.'¹⁷³

The risks, challenges and opportunities that internal migration presents for young people, and for girls in particular, are associated with the above programming frameworks and goals. Programming within the context of these frameworks should always consider the unique situation and experiences of young migrants.

The following recommendations are structured according to three different 'levels' of intervention relevant for Plan's programming: law / policy; community; and individual. Links to existing programming frameworks (BIAAG and YEE) are made where relevant.

Law and policy recommendations

- ▶ NGOS should **engage in partnerships with government and local civil society organisations** in order to influence the development of law and policy on internal migration, and (particularly in the Philippines), informal migration.
- ▶ NGOs should advocate for **more comprehensive, age- and gender-disaggregated data collection** on internal migration in Vietnam and the Philippines. Improved data on migration and population flows would ensure more effective policy and programmes and better targeting of resources.
- ▶ In Vietnam, NGOs should advocate for **the removal or relaxation of legal regulations that limit freedom of movement**, including those that require migrants to obtain permission from source and destination community authorities in order to move, either temporarily or permanently. This could be achieved by forging or joining a coalition of advocates in order to carry out direct policy advocacy activities to reform the law; it is recommended that NGOs forge links with employer's organisations and industry bodies in order to encourage support for these advocacy efforts.

In Vietnam, where migrants have different public service / benefit entitlements than permanent residents, NGOs should consider **advocating for legal reform to ensure that internal migrants are entitled to the same services as permanent residents**, including education, particularly education for migrants' children, health care and social security services. *Lack of access to government services creates vulnerability and heightens risks of migrants being recruited into exploitative forms of work.*

¹⁷² For more information about the BIAAG 2.0 movement, please see: <https://plan-international.org/because-i-am-a-girl> (accessed 09.02.2017)

¹⁷³ Plan International, 'Tackling youth unemployment: youth economic empowerment', <https://plan-international.org/economic-security/tackling-youth-unemployment>

- ▶ NGOs should consider advocating for the **expansion of benefits programmes** that apply to other vulnerable groups (e.g. students, farmers) to apply to migrant labourers as well. *Lack of access to benefits programmes can place migrants in a vulnerable situation, in which they have limited ability to refuse jobs, including those with poor or exploitative conditions.*
- ▶ It is recommended that NGOs advocate for the Government to develop **lifelong education and training programmes for young migrants**, or where general education and training programmes already exist, to advocate that they accept young migrants. These efforts could link to NGOs programming in the context of YEE: NGO's existing efforts to encourage the Government to develop training programmes for young people should include specific initiatives for ensuring that these programmes are accessible to young migrants and that the content they includes is relevant to young people's needs. It should also link to programming in the context of BIAAG: the 'learn' dimension of BIAAG aims to ensure that girls have access to education, including continuing education and training programmes. These programmes should explicitly include young women migrants. *Access to further or continuing education and training programmes could support young migrants to access improved education and job opportunities.*
- ▶ In Vietnam, NGOs should consider advocating for the reform of legal provisions, which limit **migrants' right to association**. In the Philippines, NGOs should consider promoting the consistent implementation of **collective bargaining rights**. *The right to association and collective bargaining is essential to migrant workers' empowerment and ability to promote access to their basic rights.*
- ▶ NGOs should also consider advocating for the enforcement of legal requirements stating that employers are required to provide **complaints mechanisms**, and inform all workers about how to use these. In cases where these mechanisms are not in place they should be developed and institutionalised. The existence of complaints mechanisms is likely to improve the enforcement of workers rights. *Complaints mechanisms that are known and accessible by employees are an essential safeguard against exploitation of migrants in the workplace.*
- ▶ NGOs should consider forging links to industry bodies in order to raise awareness of the barriers to migrants working in these sectors and advocate for the **removal of barriers to young migrants' employment in more formal sectors**. *This is important as young migrants face considerable barriers to working in more formal and secure employment.*
- ▶ It is recommended that NGOs establish channels for **participation of young migrants in government policy and law making at national and local levels**. This could be linked to existing efforts by Plan and / or other organisations to develop child and youth participation institutions (e.g. youth councils), and links to programming in the context YEE and BIAAG (which focuses on supporting girls to develop citizenship skills and engage at all levels in political, economic and social spaces). *It is important that the voices of young migrants are heard and taken into account at all levels of government in the formation of law and policies that affect them.*
- ▶ It is recommended that NGOs work with the Government to develop awareness-raising and sensitisation campaigns and strategies to **tackle discriminatory gender norms** that influence and limit young women's (and men's) experiences of migration and work opportunities. *Gender norms and stereotypes (e.g. that place responsibility on women to support the family and limit their job opportunities) can place young women, in particular, in a vulnerable situation in which they greatly lack options and bargaining power in the workforce and have restricted choice in migration decision-making.*
- ▶ NGOs should work with relevant Government departments to advocate for increased efforts to **identify and prosecute acts amounting to human trafficking**, but also to build the capacity of the institutional anti-trafficking framework to **implement prevention programmes, dealing with the root causes of trafficking, and response systems**. Support programmes for victims of trafficking, and response programmes to support them to rehabilitate and reintegrate should also be developed.

Programming recommendations at the community level

- ▶ In source communities of internal migration, consider implementing programmes to **ensure that individuals and families have access to a range of services and support**, including social security and social welfare, as young migrants will be under less pressure to migrate. In the Philippines, this could be achieved, for example, by expanding the conditional cash transfer programme (a programme providing cash payments to impoverished families on the condition that their children attend school), and ensuring that it provides enough income supplementation to be a genuine incentive for children to finish secondary school, while providing families with important economic support. It is also important to ensure that there is an adequate coverage of social welfare officers,

with the capacity to provide services to victims of violence and abuse across the country. *This is important to ensure that the decision to migrate is a choice, rather than a requirement due to family poverty and lack of services and support in source communities.*

- ▶ **Promote local employment opportunities for young people.** For instance, ensure that the needs of young migrants are incorporated into programming relating to Youth Employment Solutions (a global programme aimed at leveraging relationships with the private sector to increase employment opportunities for marginalised youth). *It is important to ensure that migrants have access to a range of decent and secure employment opportunities.*
- ▶ In source communities, **develop awareness programmes to ensure that persons are aware of the risks and challenges of internal migration.** Where possible, this should be done through a working group or counseling format, rather than sensitisation messaging. *It is important to ensure that migration is an informed decision, so that migrants are able to avoid the risks and plan effectively for the challenges in their destination.*
- ▶ Develop programmes aimed at addressing **gendered divisions of labour** and the gendered expectation that women are responsible for taking care of the family in order to increase the opportunities available for women in the workforce, for example, through women's empowerment campaigns. *Gender norms can be a barrier to internal migration, and can also increase risky migration and limit job opportunities for women (and men).*
- ▶ Consider introducing **community social sessions** for new migrants and community members in areas in which there are large populations of migrants. It may be helpful to encourage networks with 'alumni'
- ▶ Consider developing **online support networks** for internal migrants to connect, share experiences and advice and offer support. *Support networks are a key protective factor for young migrants.*

Programming recommendations aimed at individuals and families

- ▶ In Vietnam, consider developing a **programme that facilitates migrants' registration as temporary residents.** *This would minimize migrants' vulnerability to exploitation and improve their access to services.*
- ▶ Support young migrants to **know and understand their rights** as employees and

empower them to take action to enforce these rights.

- ▶ Consider developing **information and advice services** to ensure that migrants have access to accurate and accessible information and advice about employment laws and regulations (e.g. information drives, telephone advice line, advice clinics or centres in areas or workplaces containing a large number of migrants).
- ▶ Where support services for **migrants exist, ensure that migrants are aware of where and how to access these services**, and that they have access to advice and assistance to help them negotiate access.
- ▶ Develop programmes to promote **migrants' access to free advice and support services** – legal advice and assistance, contacts with unions – to assist them in taking action to enforce fair and lawful working conditions and to take action in the event of a breach in employment laws.

Internal migrants are vulnerable to violations of fair working conditions and labour rights, due to their employment in less formalised (and less unionised) sectors; their restricted ability to be selective in the job market; their lack of bargaining power; and their lack of knowledge of and confidence in navigating 'the system' in a new environment.



PLAN'S RESPONSE

The rapid growth of the Vietnamese and Philippine economies, as well as the corresponding modernization of industries and urbanization of cities, are having profound effects on the internal movement of young people – which raise questions on how our programs are designed to respond to these changes.

The search for jobs and other economic opportunities is the main driver of migration. But upon arriving in destination cities, young migrants face much more complex situations than what they may not necessarily be prepared for.

Cut off from social services and arriving with limited to no knowledge and skills to acquire decent employment, young migrants are more likely to end in informal employment, with little to no negotiating power against employers. Jobs are characterized by poor and/or hazardous working conditions, with workers engaged in long hours and struggling to raise enough money to support the high costs of living in the cities.

Furthermore, prevailing gender norms dictate the educational and economic opportunities that are made available to young women and young men, going as far as influencing their decision to move. Young women are particularly vulnerable upon arriving in cities. Pushed by the need to earn for their families, and away from the protection of their families and social networks, young women are exposed to threats to their personal safety, sexual exploitation and abuse.

These experiences remind Plan International to reassess how programs respond to the evolving needs of the children and young people that the organization has committed to serve, and to tackle social norms that create gender-based inequalities and exclusion.

In the succeeding paragraphs, Plan International relates the recommendations from the Women in the Wind report to the policy and programmatic work being done in youth economic empowerment and gender in both countries.

In Vietnam and the Philippines:

Plan International will strengthen its influencing role at the local level to bring change at the national level, with support from strong research and evidence from programs that can build the business case for reforming regulations that

impede young internal migrants' access to decent economic opportunities in destination communities.

In terms of policy, Plan International Vietnam will continue to work with stakeholders and partners to advocate to the government to:

- ▶ Loosen restrictions on “freedom of movement”; that is, the requirement to obtain permission from source and destination community authorities to move, either temporarily or permanently
- ▶ Ensure internal migrants access the same services as permanent residents, including education, healthcare and social security; and
- ▶ Uphold migrant workers' right to association, and to collective bargaining, which are essential in enabling migrants to secure better working conditions for themselves.

In the Philippines, Plan International will work with stakeholders, especially young people, and partners in program areas to advocate for:

- ▶ Developing a national policy on internal migration in the Philippines, including the collection of comprehensive, disaggregated data on population flow and internal migration trends;
- ▶ Improving young migrants' access to existing social services, such as healthcare, education and social security, after movement to the destination city;
- ▶ Engagement of young people in national policy and law-making; and
- ▶ Improved access to existing government skills development training programs for young migrants.

Plan International Vietnam have already made headway in improving the situation of young internal migrants. The “Empowering Female Migrant Youth to Succeed in the City and the Workplace” project, funded by Plan International Australia, has interventions focused on facilitating a peer support network; delivery of vocational and life skills training; advocacy to government for health and protective services; and linking of young women to have improved business start-up activities.

Plan Philippines, on the other hand, are developing interventions to address findings from sponsorship program data that reveal sponsorship cancellations to be heavily caused by employment in major cities in the country. Interventions include the introduction of soft

skills and safe migration modules to sponsorship children, and strengthening alumni youth networks as peer support for young migrants.

In spite of the work done in Vietnam and the Philippines, programs have largely focused on either destination or source communities, not both. Plan International recognizes the need for stronger linkages with both communities, especially in strengthening women's economic empowerment and connecting young people, especially young women, to the value chain to really achieve this report's recommendations.

In the region:

The policy recommendations from the Women in the Wind research complement Plan International's 5-year regional gender advocacy agenda, which aim to influence decision-makers from various sectors, including governments, industries, multilateral banks and youth and civil society organizations, to address the economic exclusion, migration and gender-based violence affecting young women in Asia.

Through the Youth Employment Solutions (YES!) Digital Ecosystem, Plan International will leverage digitally-enhanced assets to support country offices in connecting young people on the move to skills development programs, peer support networks, job opportunities, and information on rights and social services in source and destination communities. Additionally, technology-driven monitoring and evaluation will improve the collection of data about youth beneficiaries, which feed into the design of interventions that respond to young people's needs – especially when they migrate.

The Women in the Wind research confirms the need to continuously improve Plan International's knowledge and understanding of how migration and gender affect the economic empowerment of young people in the region.

As it strives to support the transition of young people into decent work of their choosing, Plan International will take these research findings into the heart of its advocacy/influencing and program interventions to really tackle the root causes of migration and gendered divisions of labor.

PUSH FACTORS IN SOURCE COMMUNITIES

PULL FACTORS IN DESTINATION COMMUNITIES

Gender norms in source communities in the Philippines make families more likely to 'invest' in the education and migration of girls

Gender norms in source communities place a particular burden on women to support their families

Lack of access to higher education

Lack of employment opportunities

Lower salaries

Land poverty

Mismatch between education and available employment opportunities in source communities

Expectations to migrate in order to support family through remittances

Escaping domestic abuse and early marriage



Expectations of life in the city as 'exciting' and 'full of opportunities'

Social networks in destination communities

Better employment opportunities

Better opportunities for capital investment in source communities

Higher salaries

Increased access to higher education in destination communities

Prospects of marrying someone 'better off'

Gender norms stratify labour demand and employment opportunities along gender lines

BARRIERS TO MIGRATION

Lack of resources to finance migration

Legal /administrative restrictions on internal movement (Vietnamese household registration system)

Gender norms that place responsibility on women for children, families and property

Limited access to information about migration pathways and opportunities in destination communities

Gender norms that restrict women's autonomy and insist upon control of women's sexuality

FACILITATING FACTORS

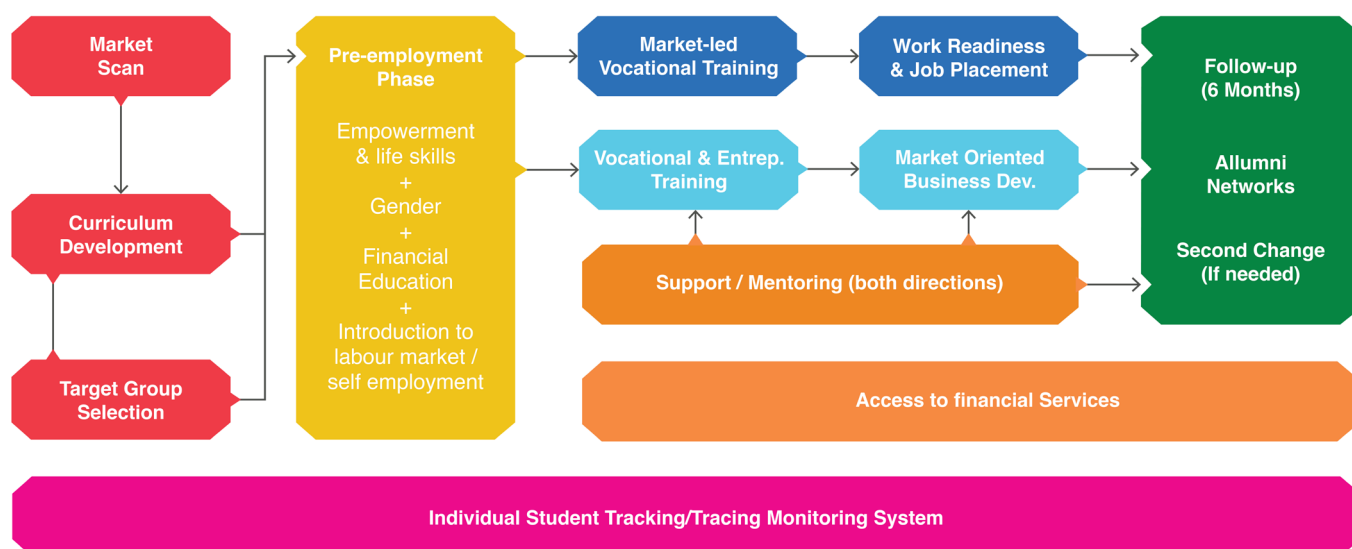
Family and friend networks in destination communities

Increased access to information about opportunities in destination communities

Recruitment agencies

Safe and affordable transport links to destination communities

YOUTH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (YEE) PATHWAYS



PLAN INTERNATIONAL GLOBAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP & EMPOWERMENT - YE³

The 2017-2022 Global Strategic Framework for Youth Employment, Entrepreneurship & Empowerment (YE3) aims to enable 1 million vulnerable and excluded young people, especially girls and young women, to engage in decent work, either waged or self-employment, of their own choosing.

The Global YE3 Strategic Framework's 5 outcomes:

1. Youth Skills Development and Empowerment

Vulnerable youth, especially young women, have acquired relevant and market-driven skills and have transitioned to decent work of either waged or self-employment

2. Private Sector Engagement

Businesses, both formal and informal, demonstrate increased human and financial investment to reduce barriers faced by youth, especially young women, in getting and keeping decent work of their choosing.

3. Community Support

Primary caregivers and key stakeholders initiate actions that address prevailing norms, attitudes

and behaviours that prevent vulnerable youth, especially women, from claiming their equal rights to education, training and employment opportunities

4. Enabling Environment

Key stakeholder and duty bearers create and sustain an enabling environment that systematically addresses entrenched discriminatory policies and practices that impede the full participation of youth, especially young women, in the labor force and in market driven skills and enterprise development programs in both public and private spheres of influence.

5. Program Quality

Plan has further widened the scope of, and improved the quality of YE3 programs through scalable solutions and technologies, increased involvement of key stakeholders⁴ and youth, especially young women, in decision-making processes and in monitoring, evaluation and learning.



Young woman with
her child (Vietnam).

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Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organisation that advances children's rights and equality for girls.

We believe in the power and potential of every child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it's girls who are most affected. Working together with children, young people, our supporters and partners, we strive for a just world, tackling the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children.

We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood. And we enable children to prepare for – and respond to – crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge.

We have been building powerful partnerships for children for over 80 years, and are now active in more than 71 countries.

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