Impact of Labour Migration on “Children Left Behind” in Tajikistan
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Foreword

Since recent developments have made labor migration one of the biggest socio-political issues for Tajikistan, there is an increased need to assess and study its impact on the population. To date, significant focus has been placed on remittances, health, human rights, border management, and control issues related to labor migration. It is imperative that additional focus is placed on the impact of labor migration on children and women left behind, especially those who have been abandoned.

This study was undertaken by UNICEF in order to shed light on the impact of migration on the well-being of children as it relates to health, education, economic activity, and psycho-social variables, using a child rights-based approach. The study has revealed mixed positive and negative impacts of migration on children and women depending on whether they belong to migrant, non-migrant or abandoned households.

On the one hand, this study confirmed that migrant households’ access to increased income through remittances has a positive impact on children’s perceived health and nutritional status. On the other hand, it showed that by and large, one of the most important impacts of a parent’s migration on the children left behind is on their psycho-social well-being. Especially in the case of abandoned households, the social costs of migration were found to be high, due to family disintegration and lack of parental care. Evidence from both the qualitative and quantitative information clearly showed that children left behind had a tendency to become withdrawn, sad and depressed. This was more common with girls than boys and particularly pronounced for children in abandoned households. Moreover, depression in abandoned households does not relate only to children – sometimes those who are badly affected are the mothers who have to deal with the burden of raising their children alone.

The recognition of the social impacts of migration is the first step towards adopting measures and policies needed to mitigate the impact of parental migration on children and families left behind. This study provides extremely valuable data to better grasp social impacts of migration, and the policy recommendations provided in this report are intended to enhance the debate on lessening the negative social effects of migration on children left behind through improving migration management, social protection, and advocacy. Obviously, there is a need for a coherent national social protection policy that is not solely focused on poverty reduction, but also addresses the protection of vulnerable people, including children left behind by migrating parents. In addition, special considerations should be given to the problems of abandoned families, who are particularly vulnerable.

UNICEF is inviting the Government of Tajikistan and other international and national development partners to unite their efforts to address the adverse aspects of labour migration for the sake of children and women in Tajikistan.

Laylee Moshiri
UNICEF Representative
Tajikistan
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Abbreviations

AQ  Adolescent Questionnaire
ETF  European Training Foundation
FAO  Food and Agriculture Organisation
GBAO Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province
GDP  Gross Domestic Product
HIV/AIDS Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ILO  International Labour Organisation
IOM  International Organisation for Migration
LFS  Labour Force Survey
MLSPP Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population
NGO  Non-Governmental Organisation
OPM  Oxford Policy Management
SDQ  Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
TB   Tuberculosis
TLSS Tajikistan Living Standards Survey
UN   United Nations
UNCRC United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund
USD  United States Dollars
YA   Young Adolescent
YAQ  Young Adolescent Questionnaire
Executive summary

This report presents the background, methodology, findings and conclusions of a research project on understanding the impact of labour migration on children left behind in Tajikistan. The project was commissioned by UNICEF Tajikistan and conducted by Oxford Policy Management between June 2010 and March 2011. The report has been developed on the basis of a comprehensive review of literature on the impact of migration on children left behind, as well as qualitative and quantitative research.

Conceptual framework and methodology

This study adopts a child-rights-centred approach, which assesses child well-being against health, education, economic activity and psycho-social variables. The conceptual framework used in this study recognises that the nature of the impacts of migration on children will be driven significantly by the type of migration that adults in the household are undertaking, as well as by individual, household, and societal characteristics.

Consequently, the conceptual framework includes three components:

- First, there are the outcomes of current interest – the health, education, economic activity and psycho-social well-being of children.
- Second, there are characteristics of individuals (age, gender, and ability), households (size and structure, education levels, labour capacity, income, attitudes, etc.) and the broader context (livelihood options, societal values, service provision, etc.), which influence these outcomes.
- Third, there are the features of the migration experience, such as remittance level, duration and frequency of migration, and communication, which affect outcomes for children.

The methodology preferred for this study was the triangulation of data from different sources, adopting and integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods. Both the quantitative and qualitative component of this study considered three types of households, each of which are influenced in a different way by migration: migrant households, abandoned households and non-migrant households.

The primary research for this study was undertaken in four districts of Tajikistan:
1. Gafurov in Sughd Oblast;
2. Kulyob in Khatlon Oblast;
3. Shugnon in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province; and
4. Vahdat in the District under Republican Subordination.

Fieldwork was conducted in the period of November-December 2010 by the fieldwork company Sharq. In all the districts, research had to be extended, mainly due to the difficulty of finding abandoned households in the initially selected villages.

The techniques adopted for the qualitative study included a combination of group work (focus groups) and individual interviews with children and caregivers, as well as interviews with key local informants using semi-structured questionnaires. For the qualitative component of the study, five focus group discussions were conducted in each region, together with 10 individual in-depth interviews. The key research participants in the qualitative research were: children (male and female and of various ages), caregivers (mostly female), and key local informants, such as teachers, doctors, local NGO workers, and local authorities.

The quantitative method selected for this study was a small and non-representative survey based on non-probabilistic sampling. This method does not allow nationwide statistically sig-
significant conclusions to be drawn, but is useful to explore these differences when triangulated with results from the qualitative research. For the quantitative survey, a total of 60 household questionnaires were administered in each region. In addition, self-administered young adolescent and adolescent questionnaires were collected from 100 young adolescents (aged 11-14) and 98 adolescents (aged 15-18).

The limitations of this study’s methodology include lack of representativeness and imperfect data entry and transcription protocols, such as are inevitable for a study of this size. Standard data-cleaning methods were employed to minimise such problems, including the identification of outliers and logically inconsistent entries. While this study is probably indicative of some wider trends, concrete results cannot be generalised for the entire country.

Findings

Perceptions on overall impacts of migration

Although migrant households were more likely to rate the overall impact of migration as ‘very positive’ or ‘positive’, some 30 per cent described the impact as neutral and 33 per cent (the highest percentage for this category of households) as negative. Despite the benefit of additional money, a significant number of migrant households appeared to be unhappy about the choice they were forced to make in order to sustain their families. This negative perception of the overall impact of migration was also shared by 48 per cent of non-migrant households.

The category that was most likely to stress the negative impacts of migration was abandoned households.

The extra source of income was considered the largest advantage of migration, as it helps pay for health and education, better nutrition, and better housing. While for abandoned households no positive impacts of migration were listed, non-migrants appeared to give similar responses to migrant households.

The most important negative effects identified were lack of parental guidance and impacts on children’s aggressiveness and depression. All households agreed that, though positive effects may exist, children are often affected negatively by the absence of a parent, with a particular impact on their psycho-social well-being.

Impact on health

This section focuses on the impact of migration on access to healthcare, including nutrition and food diversity, health practices, and morbidity.

According to the literature, one of the main determinants of households’ access to healthcare – other than supply-side constraints – is the availability of cash to pay for medicines and services. Evidence from this study clearly demonstrates the direct link between access to healthcare and household income, showing that remittances play a significant role in smoothing access to healthcare for migrant households. At the opposite end of the scale, abandoned households reported facing great difficulties in covering their necessary health needs, as confirmed by key informant interviews with doctors.

Given that poverty and lack of financial resources were cited as the main barriers to accessing healthcare, it is unsurprising to find a direct impact of remittances on access to healthcare and treatment in migrant (non-abandoned) households. When asked whether it had been easier or more difficult to provide for their children’s healthcare since their mother/father had migrated, 25 per cent of migrant households said it had been ‘much easier’ and 29 per cent ‘a bit
easier’. When asked to explain why, the vast majority of migrant households (87 per cent) said the main reason was that they had more money from remittances (see Figure 8).

As expected, the situation was very different for abandoned households. None of the respondents declared that providing for their children’s healthcare had been ‘much easier’ and only 2 per cent said it was ‘easier’, while a large majority (65 per cent) said it had been ‘much more difficult’. The most important reason most caregivers gave as to why it had been more difficult (81 per cent) was that the household had less money available. Other reasons included the fact that there were less people to help in the household (8 per cent), that children were more rebellious and difficult to look after (6 per cent) and that children were more depressed and prone to illness (6 per cent).

Studies highlight the fact that migrant households’ access to increased income through remittances has a positive impact on children’s nutritional status, which was confirmed by the evidence of this study. First of all, it was found that many caregivers reported that they did not always have enough food for their household in the last 12 months. However, this was mostly prevalent in abandoned households, with migrant households faring relatively better even than non-migrant ones. Second, it was found that migrant households’ proportion of expenditure spent on food alone was marginally lower than in non-migrant households and significantly lower than in abandoned ones, highlighting how remittances help to shift households’ expenditure towards less ‘basic’ needs. Third, the dietary diversity of migrant households was either similar or equal to that seen in non-migrant households, with abandoned households once again lagging behind, especially in the consumption of higher-nutrient food types such as meat, fruit, fish and beans/lentils/peas/nuts.

A potential realm of impact of parents’ migration on children left behind, as set out in the international evidence, is the impact on children’s health practices. The evidence on preventive healthcare practices from this study did not highlight particular differences in trends between children in migrant, abandoned and non-migrant households. Vaccination rates were very high across the three household types and personal hygiene practices such as teeth-brushing and bathing were more or less uniform.

Moreover, unhealthy behaviour such as smoking and drinking did not appear to be common among the children who were interviewed. For girls in particular, smoking and drinking were mostly referred to as ‘shameful’ and no interview revealed any female engaging in such activities. For boys, such behaviour was less frowned upon, though it still did not appear to be common practice. Evidence from interviews with adolescents from migrant and abandoned households showed that most respondents did not engage in smoking or drinking, in some cases for religious reasons and in others because of awareness of the negative consequences this could have.

The risk of male migrants spreading sexually transmitted and other infectious diseases was reported by key informants such as doctors, but the research did not uncover any details of this among wives of migrants. However, it should be stated that this is partially due to the delicacy of the issue, which would require extremely invasive questions not appropriate in a quantitative survey or focus group discussion.

Evidence regarding the impact on children’s morbidity is difficult to find in the international literature, which is partially due to the skewed information that can be collected through quantitative surveys that use short recall periods. Because of the small and non-representative nature of the survey that was set up for this analysis, it was impossible to gather data on mortality rates among the selected sample and difficult to collect adequate data on morbidity. However, there was some indication that children in non-migrant households were less prone to illness.
than those in migrant and abandoned ones, an assumption which was supported by the qualitative findings.

With regard to the percentage of children aged 0-18 who suffered from an illness in the last 30 days, there seems to be a trend by which children in non-migrant households are less prone to illness than those in migrant and abandoned ones (15 per cent and 17 per cent for girls and boys respectively compared to 26 per cent/27 per cent in migrant households and 21 per cent/29 per cent in abandoned ones). A rudimentary wealth-based disaggregation of health status for children in the study shows that the health of children in richer households is most often rated as ‘very good’ or ‘good’ (78 per cent of children) compared to households with a more deprived background: 57 per cent for those in the lowest and 61 per cent for those in the medium wealth tertile.

**Impact on education**

Analysing the impact of migration on the education of children left behind is complicated by the fact that this impact may depend on various factors, such as the child’s sex, age of the child at the time of parent’s migration, number of siblings and family structure, educational level of migrating parent and parent left behind, as well as level of urbanisation of the migrant’s community. Therefore, evidence on school enrolment, years of schooling, school attendance, and achievement is mixed, both internationally and in Tajikistan.

The research supported the hypothesis that migration status does not affect enrolment in school, because this is mandatory, enforced, and free up to the age of 16, so enrolment rates are typically very high. The legal framework is therefore the key factor determining enrolment in basic and secondary school, rather than features of migration or household-level factors. Enrolment changes only after basic school age.

The disaggregation of data by age indicates that children only stop being enrolled in school after the age of 16. While enrolment up to the age of 16 in our sample is close to 100 per cent for all categories of households, for 17-18 year olds enrolment falls quite significantly for all categories. These data are in line with the Tajikistan Living Standards Survey averages. It therefore appears that abandoned children (particularly females) are slightly less likely to be enrolled after basic school age. However, the sample sizes here are very small, so these data should be treated with caution.

The research did not indicate that being in an abandoned or migrant household alone determined the stage at which children drop out. Drop-out age and years of schooling are influenced by a household’s economic circumstances and attitudes to education. These circumstances and attitudes are affected by and affect the migration experience, so certain types of migration can have an impact. Sometimes, there is a negative impact of the prospect to migrate upon the incentives to invest in education (the ‘demonstration’ effect), but sometimes this can be positive depending on individual characteristics. Where poverty is not a barrier to school and where attitudes are conducive, remittances can have a positive impact on years of schooling.

Poverty and gender norms influence attendance and drop-out rates. Girls were more likely than boys to leave school for work after Grade 9. Some mothers reported that fathers were key decision-makers but paid less attention to their daughters’ education than that of their sons. This has various implications for migration. In difficult economic circumstances, girls may be expected to be asked to leave school first. However, when husbands abandon families, the shift in decision-making may improve girls’ education chances.
In theory, school attendance is positively affected by income (including remittances), and negatively affected by demand for child labour (both within and outside households), by negative demonstration effects, by poor quality school provision, by high costs and by low expectations regarding the usefulness of schooling. In our sample, attendance up to the end of basic school did not appear to be influenced strongly by migration. It was influenced mainly by illness and by household poverty and labour capacity, which compelled children to work at home or for money. Abandoned children tended to miss school slightly more as a result. The level of education of the parent who remains in the household appears correlated with the likelihood of regularly attending school.

All types of children reported occasionally missing school in order to work at home, but this was mentioned much more by boys. No girls reported missing school to do household work, but their mothers did mention that some girls missed school for household work. However, this was surprisingly rare. The quantitative data (measured by the number of days missed in the last year by different genders and household types) indicate a similar pattern of boys missing more days than girls and abandoned children missing more days than others.

The international literature on achievement, as for other indicators of education, is mixed. Migration can affect achievement negatively through reducing parental supervision and assistance, through children becoming de-motivated or behaving worse, and through children becoming distracted by other duties. On the other hand, remittances may allow households to purchase higher quality education for their children. The evidence from our fieldwork does not show strongly that migrants perform better or worse than non-migrants. However, there are indications that children in some migrant households lack support from their parents with regard to education, and that this may harm their performance. This is somewhat alleviated by remittance provision in non-abandoned households.

The quantitative data indicate that girls in our sample receive better average grades than boys, but that there was no difference between different categories of migrant. Somewhat counter-intuitively, and contradicting the qualitative data, abandoned girls receive the best grades on average.

**Impact on children’s economic activities**

Studies suggest that the impact of migration on the economic activity of children left behind varies depending on whether the child was working within the household or outside the household. When children are employed outside the household, one would expect the income effect of remittances to contribute to a reduction of child work. For children employed within a household, the effects could be twofold. First, the child may work more to replace the labour of absent adults. Second, remittances can influence the productivity of children if they are used to finance productive investments, such as land or equipment.

The evidence from this study indicates that children from all household types undertake work outside the household. Children from poorer households are likely to work more and abandoned households are usually poorer, so there is a correlation between work and abandonment. To some extent, there is also causation between migration and child work, as children in abandoned and migrant households become labour substitutes for their absent parents. However, this is not strong and the situation is diverse: non-migrant children also work, and some abandoned and migrant children do not. In addition to wealth and labour capacity as drivers, attitudes play a strong role in driving child work: some perceive work as beneficial and others as harmful.
Quantitative data collected at the household level indicate that around 20 per cent of 328 children aged 6-18 in our sample have worked for cash or kind. Male non-migrants appear to work more frequently (35 per cent of 40 children in the sample worked), but otherwise there is little difference in the quantitative data between male and female workers. Abandoned children did not work more than the average. The most common form of work was in cotton fields (72 per cent of the 57 children reported working).

Children in all types of households reported working at home. This was largely driven by societal norms and attitudes, since working at home is considered to be a normal part of growing up and is combined with schooling. The absence of parents may have increased this slightly, as labour capacity is reduced.

Children in abandoned, migrant, and non-migrant households all spend similar amounts of time working at home or in the family business. This is invariant in regard to the region in which they live, suggesting that norms and attitudes are similar across different regions. Moreover, there was no difference in this indicator between households in different assets classes, which suggests that time spent working at home is not strongly related to income. The only slight difference is between girls and boys, with girls spending slightly more time working at home.

**Impact on psycho-social well-being**

The research showed that, by and large, one of the most important impacts of a parent’s migration on the children left behind is on psycho-social well-being. Especially in the case of abandoned households, the social costs of migration were found to be high, due to family disintegration and lack of parental care. Four main impact areas of migration on children’s psycho-social well-being were considered:

1. Depression and isolation;
2. Lack of parental control, aggressiveness and rebelliousness;
3. Bullying, teasing and stigma; and
4. Risky behaviour (alcohol, drugs and sexual behaviour).

Evidence from both the qualitative and quantitative research clearly showed that children left behind had a tendency to become withdrawn, sad and depressed. This was more common with girls than boys and particularly pronounced for children in abandoned households. Moreover, depression in abandoned households does not relate only to children – sometimes those who are worse affected are the mothers who have to deal with the burden of raising their children alone.

Female respondents aged 15-18 appeared to be the most affected by sadness and depression, with peaks for migrant and abandoned girls. Younger children across the three categories appear to be less affected, while older children – especially those 15-18 – show higher levels of withdrawal, sadness and depression. For example, non-migrant boys and girls reporting they had felt sad or depressed in the last week were 33 per cent and 50 per cent respectively, higher values than reported by migrant and abandoned children that age. This is true across other similar dimensions analysed and could be due to the particular sample selected for this study or to the fact that younger adolescents are affected in a different way by their parents’ migration.

From the results of this study, the problem of children becoming aggressive or rebellious as a consequence of migration appeared to be quite common among migrant and abandoned households, with mothers complaining they were not always able to control their children without the help of their husbands. Aggression appeared to be particularly common among
boys (who often did not respect their mother’s authority), as well as children aged 11-14 (with older children ‘calming down’ and becoming more cooperative in the household).

The research showed that there was no explicit stigma associated with being the children of migrants, probably because the phenomenon is so widespread in the country. However, there were several reports of abandoned children being teased because their father had married another woman and ‘forgotten’ about them. Moreover, mothers in migrant households reported that their children were ‘over-exposed’ to teasing and bullying because of the lack of a fatherly ‘protective’ figure.

There is not sufficient evidence to support the hypothesis that adolescent boys from migrant families are more likely to commit juvenile crime and be victims of abuse. Although there was some anecdotal evidence on increased juvenile crime provided by local authorities, the comments could reflect prejudices rather than actual evidence. Analysing issues connected to domestic violence and abuse would require in-depth and long-term qualitative analysis with highly trained researchers and consequently such an analysis was not possible for this study.

Factors that affect the impact of migration

The study considered the differential impacts of migration based on:

a) Differences in the migration experience itself (which affect outcomes); and
b) Differences in the characteristics of individuals and households (which mediate outcomes).

Differences across households identified by the study included the following:

• Children who could count on an extended family for financial and psychological support suffered less from the consequences of the parent’s migration.

• Having a migrant in the household did not necessarily translate into regular remittances, and effects depended on the amount, frequency and predictability of remittances.

• Effects of migration varied over time. Especially with younger children, the most difficult phase appeared to occur soon after migration occurred, improving with time. Visits were reported as being positive, but also a source of distress at every new departure.

• Although most of the respondents interviewed were either wives or children of fathers who had migrated, participants agreed that migration of mothers would be worse.

• Age of children played a role at two inter-related levels: when their parents departed (especially in the case of fathers who never came back) and current age.

• The gender of children in migrant and abandoned households appeared to affect the overall impact of their parent’s migration significantly.

• One extremely important household-level factor that mediated the impact of migration on children left behind was the overall level of household income.

• Education levels within the household, particularly of mothers, were considered extremely important in school outcomes.

• The attitudes of parents and children towards the importance of education were crucial determinants of years of schooling, attendance, and achievement.

Policy implications

The study considers the existing policies and relevant policy environment in migration management and social protection in Tajikistan, and provides recommendations for their improvement.
Impact Of Labour Migration on “Children Left Behind” in Tajikistan

a) Migration management

The government’s migration policy in Tajikistan and the institutional framework for implementing the migration policy are convoluted. Although a self-standing Migration Service under the Tajik government was created in January 2011, and a new draft Strategy on Labour Migration was presented to the government for approval before that in December 2010, policies addressing the problems of migrant families and their children remain sporadic.

Based on the results of the research and international best practice, migration management policy in Tajikistan should aim to:

1. Strive to promote regularised migration;
2. Improve the migration experience of Tajik migrants;
3. Provide assistance and services to migrant families; and
4. Develop the domestic infrastructure to generate employment opportunities to both prevent potential migrants from leaving and encourage migrants to return home.

To this end, the following measures should be implemented:

- Continue bilateral negotiations with the Russian Federation on the regularisation of Tajik migrants.
- Adopt and effectively implement the newly developed Strategy for Labour Migration, and including references to the problems of migrant families and social protection measures designed to assist vulnerable families and children.
- Consider the implementation of special programmes designed to support migrant families, such as matching grants, savings, and/or insurance programmes.
- Build the capacity of the new Migration Service to promote evidence-based, qualitative policies in the area of labour migration.

b) Social protection

The child protection system in Tajikistan is predominantly focused on residential care and there are limited programmes, if any, targeted specifically at the children of labour migrants. Social work services to help families and children are largely absent. This concept is relatively new to Tajikistan and there are efforts to introduce a social work curriculum and train social workers.

There is growing support in the academic literature and development discourse that, in order to develop effective, efficient, context-specific, and gender-based policy responses to the problems of migrant families and children left behind, it is necessary to provide a framework directly linking migration and social protection. In this context, the social protection policy in Tajikistan should include the following features:

5. Protect children from exploitation and abuse. Policies and services to regulate child labour and to monitor and punish various forms of abuse should be strengthened and developed;
6. Support caregivers in their child-rearing responsibilities. Programmes for extra-school support could help both caregivers and children left behind, particularly from abandoned households; and
7. Support finding productive employment for youth and adults.

There is a need for a coherent national social protection policy not solely focused on poverty reduction (which is necessary, but not sufficient) but which also addresses the protection of vulner-
able people, including children left behind by a migrating parent(s). Both cash and non-cash social support programmes are necessary to mitigate the impact of parental migration on children:

**Cash support:**
- Develop an effective system of targeted, needs-based social assistance;
- Consider the relevance of more intensive financial support for abandoned families/children cared for by single parents (usually mothers); and
- Reduce documentation costs for civil registration documents and social assistance payments.

**Non-cash support:**
- Develop an organised system of social services, led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population, but able to transcend institutional/sectoral boundaries;
- Develop effective mechanisms whereby the state can intervene and provide temporary or longer-term care and protection for children who are deemed to be exposed to a determined level of risk of violence, abuse, or neglect;
- Develop a clear system of identification, assessment, referral, and review for children at risk (including children in migrant households);
- Develop community-based social services;
- Develop school-based interventions for psycho-social support;
- Support the rehabilitation and inclusion of people with disabilities; and
- Challenge the prejudice and stigma associated with migration as a matter of policy.

**Preventing and reducing abandonment**

Policies to promote family strengthening could be implemented, involving community and religious leaders in working with current and potential migrants. Specific measures to minimise the effect on families in the case of abandonment could be considered and advocated for. Examples of such measures include:

- Requiring civil registration of all marriages, rather than nikah only;
- Introducing changes to the family legislation, prescribing the rights of the wife in relation to in-laws;
- Promoting joint titling of property; and
- Promoting transfer of property to the name of the woman.
Impact Of Labour Migration on "Children Left Behind" in Tajikistan
1. Introduction

This report presents the background, methodology, findings and conclusions of a research project on understanding the impact of labour migration on children left behind in Tajikistan. The project was commissioned by UNICEF Tajikistan and conducted by Oxford Policy Management (OPM) between June 2010 and March 2011. The report has been developed on the basis of qualitative and quantitative research, carried out with the assistance of the Tajik Research Centre ‘Sharq’ in October and November 2010, and a comprehensive review of literature on the impact of migration on children left behind and of migration trends and policies in Tajikistan.

Migration processes in Tajikistan reflect the complex history of the country and the dramatic economic and social changes seen in recent years. The permanent ethnic migration of the early 1990s, mostly of the Russian population, was replaced first by migration caused by the civil conflict in the mid-1990s, and then in the last decade by temporary labour migration. As migration has become a key characteristic of the economic and social development of Tajikistan, researchers and practitioners alike have studied various aspects of migration and its impact on poverty, economic development, human capital, and other variables. They have identified remittances as a key factor supporting economic growth and poverty reduction. At the same time, labour migration can generate family disruption that may entail high social costs. However, limited evidence exists on the impact of migration on household dynamics, while studies on the impact of migration on children left behind are virtually non-existent. This study aims to address this gap by examining the impact of labour migration on the various aspects of children’s well-being, such as health, education, economic activity and psycho-social well-being.

Migration is a complex phenomenon and has many different forms and features. Migration can be legal or illegal, long-term or seasonal, high-earning or low-earning; migrants can be involved in formal or informal sector jobs, integrated in the host country’s society or isolated, etc. The nature of the impacts of migration on children will be driven significantly by the type of migration that adults in the household are undertaking. In effect, this could be compared to the situation of parents having different jobs, such as with high regular wages and good conditions or low, irregular, unpredictable wages and terrible conditions, but with more complex aspects added, such as location, distance, length of absence, etc. Child well-being is also complex, with different aspects weighing more heavily in some households than others. Therefore, one would not expect to find a uniform impact of migration on child well-being overall, but rather attempt to identify causality between elements of migration on elements of child well-being.
The fundamental objective of the project is to provide evidence regarding the well-being of children in migrant and abandoned families, raise awareness among various stakeholders regarding the problems of children left behind, and generate policy responses to address these problems. To this end, this study contextualises the understanding of labour migration issues in Tajikistan at the macro level, looking through the prism of children’s well-being and helping to define the area of impact. Secondly, it provides a comprehensive understanding of the micro-level social, cultural, and economic context of labour migration and household livelihood strategies in Tajikistan. Thirdly, it identifies existing challenges/gaps in policy and practice, and what can potentially be done to address those gaps.

1.1 Structure of the report

This report is organised as follows. Section 2 introduces the issue of migration in Tajikistan, considering migration trends and characteristics, the profile of migrants and their families, and the empirical evidence on the effects of migration on households and household dynamics. Section 3 conceptualises the causal link between migration and children’s well-being and lays out the analytical framework for the study. Section 4 explains the specific research methods and instruments adopted for the study, based on the conceptual framework. Section 5 presents the findings of the field research, derived from the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data. It also analyses the different factors that affect the impact of migration on children left behind. Finally, Section 6 analyses policy implications and gives recommendations for future actions.
2. Migration in Tajikistan

2.1 Migration trends and characteristics

Migration can be depicted as a complex social, economic and political phenomenon, in which the expected income differences and the expected probability of finding employment abroad play a significant role, but additional factors, such as ethnic, political, social and gender considerations and expectations of quality of life at home still remain relevant. Economic stagnation, unemployment and poverty are widely believed to be the main drivers of Tajik migration (Olimova and Bosc, 2003) but demographic factors play an important role. In the 1980s, the rate of natural population growth was about 3 per cent and, though this decreased significantly in the 1990s (due to the civil war and economic crisis), population growth accelerated again following the end of the war and stood at over 2 per cent in 2005 (Republic of Tajikistan, 2006). As a result, Tajikistan’s average population growth in the period 1997-2006 was 1.3 per cent despite significant emigration.

The fast rate of natural growth, reflecting a high birth rate, has major implications for the demographic structure of the population. The average age is just over 22 years and 37 per cent of the population is less than 14 years old, while the working-age population (15-59 years) comprises 57.5 per cent of the whole population, and just 5 per cent are aged over 60 (Republic of Tajikistan, 2006). With such a large population of children in the country, labour migration is an important factor affecting the lives of Tajik children left behind.

Official data provided by the Migration Service of the Tajik Ministry of Internal Affairs suggests that, in 2008, as many as 852,100 people were registered as migrants in the Russian Federation, which represents approximately 12 per cent of the population (European Training Foundation (ETF), 2010). According to data from the National Bank of Tajikistan, remittances sent home by migrants amounted to about USD 2.67 billion or 49 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2008. Although the amount of remittances decreased to an estimated USD 1.75 billion in 2009 as a result of the financial crisis (Migration Policy Institute, 2010), this remains one of the main sources of financing household needs in Tajikistan. This level of mass migration has many elements and affects not only the economic but political, social and demographic spheres as well. There are significant impacts on household dynamics, children left behind, and any development/poverty reduction programmes.

The high level of remittances, distributed to a large number of households, has generated demand-driven growth and has had a significant poverty reduction effect in recent years. Accord-
According to the World Bank, the rate of absolute poverty has fallen from 74.9 per cent in 1999 to 47.2 per cent in 2009 (Table 1). Households in rural areas are poorer, which is extremely important considering that the vast majority of the population (73.7 per cent) lives in rural areas.

Table 1. Changes in the poverty headcount, per cent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate of absolute poverty</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>49.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate of extreme (food) poverty</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The World Bank

It is important to note that, in the period between 2007 and 2009, extreme poverty remained practically unchanged, with 17.5 per cent of the population in both rural and urban areas not being able to afford to purchase a food basket satisfying basic dietary needs. The poorest regions, with significantly higher levels of absolute and extreme poverty rates, are the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province (GBAO) and Khatlon (Figure 1).

The regional differences are based primarily on the different income levels, the cost of living and the overall level of socio-economic development of the various regions. Unemployment can be seen as one of the main factors contributing to poverty. Households whose heads are not employed full-time also have poverty rates that are higher than average, particularly in rural areas. Growth in employment is lagging behind growth in the labour force, which is one of the factors driving migration, as the surplus labour force seeks employment abroad.

According to a World Bank analysis (World Bank, 2009) based on the data of the 2007 Tajikistan Living Standards Survey (TLSS), Russia is the main destination of migrants from Tajikistan, attracting 96 per cent of the total number of migrants, with more than 51 per cent heading for Moscow. An assessment of the more recent 2009 TLSS data carried out by the project team indicates that 96.6 per cent of all migrants move for work or to find work, 98.33 per cent go to Russia and 59.9 per cent specifically go to Moscow. In addition, data from the 2009 TLSS
suggests that 70 per cent of migrants do not have work permits and 73.3 per cent do not have pre-planned work arrangements.

Although anecdotal evidence suggests that the number of female migrants has been growing consistently in recent years, and some experts claim that female migration currently accounts for some 15 per cent of the total number of migrants, this has not been confirmed by household studies. Representative surveys indicate that about 95 per cent of Tajik migrants are men (World Bank, 2009). There seem to be significant regional differences in migration patterns, with female migration having a higher incidence in the GBAO region. Although women are less likely to migrate abroad, they tend to stay abroad substantially longer, while male migration has clear seasonality patterns (World Bank, 2009).

Analysis of the 2009 TLSS data indicates that 29.7 per cent of families have temporary migrant workers. Families with children are more likely to have a migrant member in the household: 31.6 per cent of families with children have migrant workers, while only 20 per cent of families with no children have migrant workers. Whether a household has a young child does not affect the probability that they receive remittances when someone from the household is currently working abroad.

A 2010 study on migration and skills (ETF, 2010), which surveyed both potential and returning migrants, found that limited opportunities for finding decent work at home made 42 per cent of respondents consider migration, accounting for a high number of potential migrants. The desire to migrate was directly linked with the level of family income; those who were not satisfied with the financial situation of their families were more likely to think about seeing a job abroad.

Thus, citizens of Tajikistan see migration as one of the most important sources of income to meet the basic needs of their families. The fact that labour migration to Russia is predominantly illegal does not give migrant workers an option of family migration and generates family disruptions that have an impact on children. Illegal migration also puts migrants at risk of different forms of abuse, discrimination and exploitation, which, in turn, affects their ability to send remittances. If the status of the migrant worker is unstable and insecure, then s/he is not necessarily able to send remittances to her/his family, which may translate into negative outcomes for children left behind without the compensatory effect of remittances.

### 2.2 Profile of migrants and their families

The major characteristics of migrants and their families can be derived from several sources of data, including the TLSS and the Labour Force Survey (LFS), as well as academic research. Although there are minor differences in the data from different sources, evidence abounds on the broad trends and profile of the migrants and their families. Following Olimova and Bosc (2003), Tajik international labour migration can be divided into four main types:

1. **Hired workers**: Migrants with permanent state or private jobs, with formal or informal contracts;

2. **Construction workers**: Migrants with jobs in construction enterprises, usually with some form of contract and on a seasonal basis (for nine months of the year from spring until autumn);

3. **‘Shuttle traders’ or ‘shopping tourists’**: Migrants engaging in the buying and selling of goods between different regions. According to International Organisation for Migration (IOM) estimates, about 28 per cent of Tajik migrants are engaged in some form of ‘shuttle trading’; and
4. **Agricultural workers:** Rural Tajiks usually migrating to southern Russia and Kyrgyzstan to work on private farms as farm labourers during the agricultural season.

The current flow of migrant workers within these four types comprises predominately men (95.3 per cent) of a young age (World Bank, 2009). Migrants are more likely to come from households in rural areas: 14.8 per cent of rural households had someone currently working abroad, while 10.4 per cent of urban households did (analysis of 2009 TLSS data). Because a greater number of Tajik migrants come from rural areas, they experience great difficulties with adaptation to an urban lifestyle in the destination country. This can result in their “marginalisation [and] departure from socio-cultural standards of their society, which contributes to growing risk behaviour” (Olimova and Kuddusov, 2007).

Just over half of all Tajik international migrants have general secondary education; less than every seventh migrant has lower than general secondary education and a similar number hold a university degree (World Bank, 2009). This profile is confirmed by the data of the 2004 LFS, which indicate that the majority of migrants are men (94.5 per cent), aged between 15 and 29 years old (53 per cent), and with no professional training (57 per cent having completed secondary education). Finding employment with a proper contract and a good salary appear to be related to education and access to information. One of the main issues related to migration in Tajikistan is migrants’ lack of information about the legal and labour market structures in the receiving countries, particularly in the Russian Federation, which puts them at risk of exploitation. Lack of language skills and the overall low average skill level of the migrants (compared, for instance, to migrants from the Kyrgyz Republic) also mean that secure employment opportunities are less attainable. On the other hand, migrants with better information about the destination countries and with better qualifications, who are often employed as skilled workers in industrial and construction enterprises, have much better prospects of getting a proper contract and a relatively good salary.

The majority of migrants work in the construction sector (55 per cent) or perform other unskilled tasks (22 per cent). In all occupations, with the exception of agriculture, migrants earn abroad on average six times the monthly average income of workers in Tajikistan (World Bank, 2009). Analysis of the 2009 TLSS data indicates that the average net monthly income of a migrant working abroad is USD 370, with a median net income of USD 300.

The underlying problems this migration profile creates can be enormous, not only in terms of the economic impact but in terms of social and political aspects as well. For instance, it is reported that migrants with low language and other skills are prone to being exploited, with many returning to the home country mentally distraught and economically much worse off than when they left, having not been paid by their employers even after several months of work. Because the majority of Tajik migrants work abroad illegally, they are often subject to discrimination, extortion and abuse, inhuman and unsafe living conditions (Weine et al., 2008) and have limited access to social services and medical care.

On the other hand, the literature suggests that labour migration establishes a certain group of dynamic people with not only higher ambitions of meeting the basic needs of their families, investing in enterprises, house construction and education of children, but also of new lifestyle norms, behavioural models, standards and values. Although it is suggested that remittances serve to modify culture (Funkhouser, 1995; Itzigsohn, 1995), they also tend to stimulate traditional cultural demands through the way they assist families in fulfilling cultural and religious responsibilities and bearing expenses in relation to social arrangements such as weddings, funerals, circumcision of boys, etc.
Many young unskilled workers migrating to the Russian Federation or Kazakhstan earn relatively low wages compared to their required expenditures in the host country. Therefore, they are likely to improve their conditions only marginally. Consequently, one could expect that families of labour migrants can also fall into the category of families most likely to be poor. Out of the total number of households who had someone working abroad at the time of the 2009 TLSS, 87.9 per cent reported receiving remittances. This means that the number of families that do not receive remittances and/or are ‘abandoned’ amounts to approximately 10 per cent.

Families that have lost their breadwinner, or ‘abandoned’ families, are particularly vulnerable. Such families suffer all the drawbacks of family disruption without the compensatory positive effect of remittances. The next sub-section discusses household dynamics and the problem of abandoned households in more detail.

2.3 The effects of migration on households and household dynamics in Tajikistan

Households consider labour migration as necessary to ensure their survival. Women often perceive their spouses’ migration positively despite the difficulties it brings to them. One survey showed that the decision of labour migration is taken collectively within the household, though poor families take more account of wives’ opinions than non-poor households (Olimova and Kuddusov, 2007).

However, labour migration appears to have significant negative effects on family relations and increases the social and economic vulnerability of women, as well as the vulnerability of children to abuse (UNICEF, 2004). A study of labour migrants (Olimova and Bosc, 2003) suggested that the wives of labour migrants who acted as the heads of households in the absence of their husbands encountered resistance from wider society, such as community elders, with regard to independent decision-making. Nevertheless, another study found that women’s reputations are likely to increase when their husbands return home and particularly when they return with money (Olimova and Kuddusov, 2007).

Women left behind by their husbands work at home as well as in non-home settings, take care of children and the elderly and generally work more hours than women in non-migrant families (Olimova and Kuddusov, 2007). These domestic and care tasks commonly carried out by women are generally unpaid and are traditionally less valued and less visible than paid work, usually carried out by men. It seems that gender socialisation within the family of labour migrants tends to increase, although women take up new roles as heads of families and are given more responsibilities but less power and appreciation. Although migration is changing economic and social norms, it is hard to overcome the traditional stereotype that men’s work is more valuable than women’s (Olimova and Kuddusov, 2007).

In general, there appears to be increasing female involvement in economic activity in Tajikistan, which is challenging the traditional gender balance in society. A study in Tajikistan demonstrates that some households can be multi-generational and comprise a wife of a migrant worker, his children, his parents, and also some members of his extended family (Olimova and Bosc, 2003). In areas of high labour migration, some households can solely consist of women and children (ibid.). Studies suggest that families headed by women after the husband abandoned them or went missing are particularly vulnerable (Pickup and Kuvatova, 2003). Women are at risk of entering a second or third marriage, getting several jobs and suffering from time poverty, resulting in insufficient time spent with their children. The prevailing male migration in Tajikistan does not seem to be associated with a negative connotation that migrants who are fathers are abandoning their children. Moreover, male migration does not involve questioning
the paternal role of father-migrants, whereas in many countries the migration of women who are mothers tends to be considered child abandonment. The number of children from migrant families in orphanages is growing because women can no longer provide them with care (Save the Children report, 2007 cited in ETF, 2010).

In addition, it is also argued that the long-term absence of men from families with traditional patriarchal structures could have cultural consequences (Laruelle, 2007). A deficit of men could, in turn, reinforce the already high value given to boys and men in Tajik society and devalue the role of females. Olimova and Kuddusov (2007) suggest that gender-oriented roles and responsibilities with regard to the authority and management of households have not been changed by labour migration and remain patriarchal despite an increase in women’s responsibilities in the household.

The literature suggests that, from the point of view of children left behind, the sex of the remaining parent in the family matters. The dynamics of access to resources for children within households of labour migrants can vary depending on the children’s age, the sex of remaining parent and the role of extended family. It could therefore be claimed that children left with mothers would be better cared for if mothers themselves have access to resources, as mothers are argued to allocate more resources to children, although it is also claimed that women migrant workers remit a larger share of their income (Cortes, 2007). The priorities of women in migrant households, and their capacities to invest remittances, are central to this question.

The issue of how resources are distributed within the family of the labour migrant and whether they are allocated in the best interests of children needs further research. This is particularly important given the fact that the respect for the views of the child within the family is likely to be limited due to traditional societal attitudes towards children (UNCRC Committee, 2010). In the next sections, we consider the different migration-related factors that influence the well-being of children, lay out a conceptual framework for the study, and analyse global and Tajik evidence on the impact of migration on children.
3. Conceptual framework on children left behind

3.1 Framework

This section presents a conceptual framework, which guides the structure of our review of the literature, the hypotheses we generate, and the findings we present. This framework is based on an iterative analysis of evidence from around the world and from Tajikistan on the link between the migration experience of parents and the well-being of their children. The framework consists of three components (outcomes, mediating factors and migration features) and a set of relationships between these components.

3.2 Definitions

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ratified by Tajikistan, proposes a comprehensive approach to child well-being, defining the obligations of a state towards every child. The UNCRC sets out the right of the child to the highest attainable standards of health and education, and the right to be free from discrimination, exploitation, and abuse. Consequently, a child-rights-centred approach assesses child well-being against health, education, economic activity and psycho-social variables. Our conceptual framework is based on this approach and it guides our selection of outcomes of interest.

This study follows the UNCRC’s definition of children as ‘individuals below the age of 18’. However, many other studies that we use define children as being those below the age of 15, and we are specific where we refer to these studies.

The definition of ‘migrant’ is complicated and debates around who is a migrant are nuanced as to the duration, location and nature of migration. This study does not aim to resolve these debates. The feature of interest about migration in this study is the absence of the migrant from their household for an extended period of time – not their location or what they are doing there. For the purposes of this study, we therefore define a migrant as any person who has been away from their household for the majority of the last year. In practice, most Tajik migrants

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1 We acknowledge that there are several other important conceptual frameworks for determining children’s well-being, described in the literature and used in individual countries, which include additional indicators and group them under different categories. We have chosen to focus on the child-rights-centred approach based on the UNCRC, as described in Rossi (2008), due to the fact that this conceptual model has been used in the literature to specifically consider the impact of migration on children left behind.
travel abroad for work, but we also include individuals who travel within Tajikistan, or for study. Indeed, we will argue that different migration experiences have significant differences in terms of their impact on children.

### 3.3 Components

The conceptual framework used in this study has three components. First, there are the outcomes of current interest – the health, education, economic activity and psycho-social well-being of children. Second, there are characteristics of individuals, households and the broader context that influence these outcomes and that mediate the impact on these outcomes of migration. Third, there are the features of the migration experience that affect outcomes for children. We briefly consider each of these in turn.

#### 3.3.1 Outcomes of interest

We are interested principally in four outcome areas: the health, education, economic activity and psycho-social well-being of children in Tajikistan. These areas can be broken down into more precise issues.

**Within children’s health, we examine:**

- *Access to healthcare.* This describes the possibility of a child being able to receive quality healthcare when needed. This requires adequate provision of quality health services, available funds, and health-seeking behaviour.
- *Nutrition and food security.* This describes the possibility that a child has adequate nutritional intake at all times, so that nutritional deprivation never has negative impacts on their physical, emotional or cognitive development.
- *Health practices.* This refers to lifestyle choices and preventive healthcare.
- *Morbidity and mortality.* This refers to disease and mortality rates.

**Within children’s education, we examine:**

- *Enrolment.* This refers to the possibility that a child is enrolled in a school that provides adequate education.
- *Drop-out age and years of schooling.* This refers to the age at which children leave school and the number of years they spend there, which has consequences for their level of qualification and the skills they acquire.
- * Attendance.* This describes the proportion of days on which children attend school.
- *Achievement in school.* This describes performance of children in school.

**Within children’s economic activity, we examine:**

- *Children working outside the household.* This refers to paid or unpaid work that children undertake outside their home or family farm. This may or may not be illegal or in contravention of global conventions on child labour (depending on the extent of work), but in either case could cause children to miss school, reduce their leisure time, or affect their health.
- *Household work* – the time children spend working within their households or on their family businesses or farms.
Within children’s psycho-social effects, we examine:

- Depression and isolation
- Lack of parental control, aggressiveness, behavioural problems
- Bullying and stigma
- Risky behaviour: alcohol, drugs and sexual behaviour
- Juvenile crime
- Exposure to violence and abuse

### 3.3.2 Mediating factors

We hypothesise that these outcomes are affected by parental migration. However, this influence is neither unique nor direct. There are several other factors that influence these outcomes and that influence the impact of parental migration on children. To understand and trace the impact of migration on these outcomes, we need to identify, understand and analyse the factors that influence this impact.

These mediating factors can be divided into individual, household and contextual factors. Without claiming to provide an exhaustive list of factors that influence the four outcomes outlined above in Section 3.3.1, we briefly present the major factors used in this study:

**Individual:**

- *The age of a child.* This is relevant not only for child outcomes but also for how migration affects them. For example, risky behaviours are far more likely to pertain to adolescents than young children, the impacts of nutritional deprivation are likely to be more serious for younger children, and education is mandatory for children up to the age of 16 only. Very young children may not be much affected psychologically by the absence of a parent, when in the care of the remaining parent, but older children may have a larger emotional response.

- *The gender of a child.* For example, the education of male children may be prioritised over that of females, while female children may have more household chores.

- *The ability of a child.* Children possess different attributes and abilities, and these influence our outcomes of interest.

**Household:**

- *Household size and structure.* For instance, larger households have more costs, particularly if many members are children, but may also have more people to help with bringing in income or performing household tasks.

- *Education levels of household members.* The education level of household members, particularly adults, affects not only their income-earning ability but also their attitude towards the education, health, labour and development of their children.

- *Labour capacity of household members.* This refers to household members’ ability to work, including whether they have any disabilities, chronic illnesses or injuries.

- *Social support from elsewhere.* This refers to households’ social links with other households, individuals and institutions in the area that can provide them with help or care. For instance, other households may provide social support or care for children.
• Household income. This determines the amount of goods and services that can be bought for children and the level of stress in the household, which in turn affects outcomes for children. Income is determined by own family earnings, remittances and gifts from others, and support from government or other organisations.

• Household attitudes. These are affected by the range of other characteristics in the household, including education. The attitudes of household members, particularly decision-makers, towards the development and nurture of their children strongly influence the distribution of resources that determine outcomes.

• Bargaining power within the household. This reflects the distribution of earnings, social status, and education. Bargaining power may affect, for instance, educational investment or nutrition, with mothers typically preferring more education and nutrition for children and fathers prioritising other investments. Their relative bargaining power will influence the final outcomes.

Wider context:

• Employment and livelihood opportunities. These affect not only the need to migrate, but also the availability of alternative income for those left behind (including children). In turn, this therefore affects income and outcomes for children directly.

• Societal values. This refers to social norms pertaining to women, education, and marriage, which affect the allocation and investment decisions of parents. For example, the role of women is commonly perceived to be limited to marriage and raising a family, and this reduces the perceived returns on the education of girls (Hegland, 2010).

• Service provision. This reflects the quality and quantity of the provision of health, education and social welfare services, including the different barriers involved in accessing them (such as cost, attitude of teachers and health workers, location, etc.).

• Social protection provision. This reflects the availability and offer of different social protection services, such as child benefits, minimum income, unemployment allowance, social care and support services, etc. These provisions may be available in law, but the analysis should reflect actual access arrangements.

• Legal framework. This affects children’s outcomes and mediates migration in various ways. For instance, the enforcement of mandatory education means that parents may be compelled to send children to school to avoid the penalties for non-attendance. The legal framework also influences the remittances and links between migrants and their families.

3.3.3 Migration features

Migrants and migration experiences are diverse in many ways. Different types of migrants and different types of experiences have varying implications for households and outcomes for children within them. We distinguish between the following features of migration:

• Level of remittances. This has significant implications for households’ ability to purchase health and education, and for what other activities they need to undertake to meet basic household needs.

• Predictability and frequency of remittances. Households need to be able to plan expenditures and security of income is critical to this. If migrants send remittances unpredictably, this can hamper the ability of households to make long-term investments in health or education. Remittances will be affected by the type of job that the migrant holds, and by where they move.
3. Conceptual framework on children left behind

- **Who migrates.** The migration of fathers, which is much more common, has different implications for changes in their relationships with, and the development of, their children, than the migration of mothers (which appears to be more widespread in Shugnon). This may also affect whether migration has a demonstration effect for children.

- **Duration and frequency of migration.** The time that parents are away and the frequency with which they come and go have implications for their relationships with their children, their involvement in schooling, health, and emotional development.

- **Communication with household.** This again affects the development of the emotional relationship between children and their migrant parent. This will be affected by the location of migration.

3.4 Relationships between components

The relationship between these components is complex. For instance, while our approach focuses on the impact of the migration experience on outcomes for children, and assumes that this is mediated by individual, household and societal characteristics, these characteristics also influence the type of migration undertaken. Similarly, outcomes for children are influenced by household characteristics, but, in turn, influence the household. Figure 2 sets out the framework of our approach.
This framework clearly demonstrates that the impact of migration on outcomes for children is diverse, depending on the type of migration experience and the characteristics of the children, as well as on the household and the society in which they live. This is not surprising, but underpins the diversity of empirical findings on the subject, which we present in the sections below.

Even in Tajikistan, where there may be considerable similarities in different communities in terms of the societal factors presented above, there is likely to be great diversity in terms of the impact of migration on children, depending on the migration experience and individual and household characteristics. The analytical challenge presented by this framework therefore matches the policy challenge: to identify the characteristics of migration and context that contribute to migration having a positive impact on children, and foster these characteristics, as well as identifying those characteristics that have negative impacts on children, and reduce, mitigate or eliminate them.
4. Methodology of the study

4.1 Introduction

The limited empirical evidence on the impact of migration on children is partially due to methodological challenges (including issue conceptualisation, definition and framing) and data constraints. Most of the quantitative empirical research about children left behind is based on data derived from standard household surveys (Rossi, 2008). However, such household surveys are usually designed to analyse information about households that are not specifically focused on migration and remittances and, consequently, may or may not include an adequate migration module linked to the rest of the data.

Furthermore, even when detailed census-type data is available, important methodological issues have to be considered in isolating the impact of migration from the influence of other factors. There are significant analytical challenges associated with comparing migrant and non-migrant households, due to the systematic differences of the migrant population from the non-migrant population, which generate sample selection bias and endogeneity issues (Rossi, 2009). Thus, if migration costs are high, members of comparatively richer households may migrate, which could result in an overestimation of the positive impact of migration on education, health or other variables. Conversely, a negative income shock due to an economic crisis can affect both the amount remitted and the quality of public services, which may result in an overestimation of the negative effects on children left behind. Moreover, household surveys are not necessarily an optimal tool for analysing household dynamics and economic implications for household members.

Because of these challenges, the methodology preferred for this study was the triangulation of data from different sources, adopting and integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods. The advantage of this ‘mixed methods’ approach is that it allowed the research team to quantify the impact of parents’ migration on a set of key outcome indicators while, at the same time, untangling the causal dynamics through which those outcomes come to be. Quantitative and qualitative methods were integrated throughout the research process, including at the design stage, when developing hypotheses and research instruments, and at the analysis stage.\[2\]

\[2\] For more information on the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods in impact evaluations, see Garbarino and Holland (2009).
Table 2. Methods adopted for the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative survey</td>
<td>240 households</td>
<td>Aimed at measuring, aggregating, modelling and predicting behaviour and relations. Allows researchers to interview a larger number of respondents and assess overall trends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative interviews and focus groups</td>
<td>20 focus group discussions, 40 in-depth interviews</td>
<td>Contextual: sacrifices breadth of population coverage and statistical generalisability in order to explore issues in depth. Relates to people’s understandings, interpretations, values, beliefs, preferences, aversions and priorities, allowing us to understand the why and how and therefore untangling causality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Garbarino and Holland (2009)

4.2 Working hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework presented in Section 3, and a consideration of both the international evidence on the impact of parents’ migration on their children and the specific data on Tajikistan, we laid out a set of initial working hypotheses on the impact of migration on children left behind in Tajikistan, as compared to children from non-migrant families. These hypotheses guided our research and informed our study instruments. Particular attention was paid to generating enough information on these hypotheses and where possible international standard approaches and indicators were used to ensure the clarity and comparability of results (see Section 5 for the findings of our research and an exploration of whether or not the data confirmed these hypotheses).

Table 3. Summary of working hypotheses related to impact of migration on children left behind as compared to children from non-migrant families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impacts on:</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Economic Activity</th>
<th>Psycho-social effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 1</td>
<td>Better nutrition</td>
<td>Fewer years of schooling</td>
<td>Children work less outside the household</td>
<td>Worse emotional state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 2</td>
<td>Better quality healthcare</td>
<td>Similar school enrolment rates</td>
<td>Children work more within the household</td>
<td>Higher incidence of behavioural problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 3</td>
<td>Similar mortality rates and vaccination rates</td>
<td>Higher attendance and lower drop-out rates</td>
<td>Higher incidence of juvenile crime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 4</td>
<td>Worse health practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No stigma within the community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Methodology of the study

4.3 Focus of the study: migrant, abandoned and non-migrant households

Both the quantitative and qualitative components of this study considered three types of households, each of which are influenced in a different way by migration: migrant households, abandoned households and non-migrant households. While the first two provided a picture of households’ varying exposure to the risks of migration, with abandoned households suffering the most because of the double loss of a family member and a source of income, non-migrant households were used as a control group to untangle whether migration alone was the trigger of positive/negative impacts within the household.

It is important to note the limitations of this control group. Migrants migrate because they choose to, whereas non-migrants choose to stay at home. This could be for any number of reasons, many of which are likely to have an effect on children’s welfare. For instance, non-migrants may have better economic prospects in Tajikistan than those who choose to migrate. A better counterfactual group would be non-migrant households in which a parent would have migrated but for a factor that does not affect the children, but such a group is very hard to identify and this is beyond the scope of this study.

The working definitions for the three types of households used throughout fieldwork are provided below:

1. **Migrant households**: A household containing at least one child (under 18 years old) who has at least one parent who has been abroad during all of the last three months. This parent should be away either for work or for study, and should have been in contact with the household at least once during the past three months.

2. **Abandoned households**: A household containing at least one child (under 18 years old) who has at least one parent who has been abroad during all of the last year. This parent should be away either for work or for study, and has not been in contact with the household during the last year and not remitted any money over the last year. In addition, the family should consider themselves abandoned.

3. **Non-migrant households**: A household containing at least one child, both of whose parents have not migrated during the last ten years. The household may contain other family members, such as uncles or brothers, who migrate.

These definitions were used to create three groups whose migration status was as different as possible. This enabled any impact which migration may have to be identified as strongly as possible with a small sample size. However, it meant that certain types of households were not included in the study and hence some ‘realities’ of migration have been missed (e.g. households containing members who migrated during each of the last ten years except for the most recent one). It is important to realise that, in reality, no simple disaggregation into these three household types exists. There is a spectrum of household types, corresponding to the large variety of migration practices. Moreover, abandonment is not clear-cut – there is often an extended period of time in which it is not clear whether a household has been abandoned. Given a larger representative sample, it would be important to cover the whole spectrum of households and to identify more precisely how these factors affect the impact of migration.

It should be noted that a theme that came out of the initial qualitative research is that abandoned children often live in the same households as children of different parents, with the

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Note that the definitions of these types of household are not obvious, and are specific to this project, as defined in the Terms of Reference and refined during fieldwork. They were developed to provide maximum clarity for fieldworkers, to fully embody the characteristics, and to ensure no overlap of household types.
abandoned children sometimes neglected in favour of the others. This highlights the importance of intra-household differences between children, especially given the large size of many Tajik households. In order to address this issue, the quantitative data was mostly disaggregated using the standard ‘household-level’ approach (adopting the three definitions of ‘household’ described above). However, a second ‘individual level’ of disaggregation was also created, attempting to highlight the migrant/abandoned/non-migrant status of individual children in the household.

A second issue highlighted by the qualitative data was the very strong link between household levels of financial well-being and key impact areas such as health and education. In certain cases, it appeared that such impacts were mostly mediated by households’ capacity to pay for key services rather than by their migrant status. In order to disentangle this, a further level of disaggregation was introduced into the quantitative data. Households were ranked into three groups of households, tertiles, using an ‘asset index’ that gives an overview of their relative wealth status compared to other households in the sample. While this index was constructed without performing a prior econometric analysis on the TLSS (i.e. allowing the identification of a poverty-predicting equation) and was consequently used with caution, we believe it is a good rough indicator of household wealth well correlated with household monthly expenditure and other poverty indicators in the study. The assets that were used for its construction, moreover, presented high fluctuations across household types, and included the following items: fridge, mobile phone, satellite TV, car, washing machine, stove and connection to gas supply.

A further set of disaggregations was included in the quantitative analysis, so as to analyse differences across households as set out in the conceptual framework. While some of these highlighted interesting trends (age and gender of children, length of parent’s migration, education level of parents, etc.), others appeared to have less of an influence on the key impact areas (for example, job performed by parent abroad).

One limitation ensuing from the focus of the methodology on households is that the study does not capture children who have been institutionalised as a result of migration, or children who are on the streets. According to a 2007 Save the Children report, more and more migrants’ wives are obliged to take their children to orphanages, because they are unable to maintain them or because they themselves also migrate to join their husband (ETF, 2010). Anecdotal evidence confirms that the number of institutionalised and street children is growing as a result of migration-related abandonment. To fully understand the impact of migration on children, this issue should be investigated further.

4.4 Research areas and fieldwork outcome

The primary research for this study was undertaken in four districts, all of which are priority areas for UNICEF’s work in Tajikistan. There were: (1) Gafurov in Sughd Oblast; 2) Kulyob in Khatlon Oblast; 3) Shugnon in GBAO; and 4) Vahdat in the District under Republican Subordination. These areas are shaded in blue on the following map:

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4 Note that originally this was supposed to be Rasht. However, the location was changed after consultations with UNICEF following civil unrest in the area in September-October 2010.
4. Methodology of the study

4.4 Research areas and fieldwork outcome

From each district, between three and five villages were selected to conduct quantitative household interviews and qualitative interviews and focus groups, ensuring a variety of experiences of the migration process.

4.4.1 Fieldwork overview

Fieldwork was conducted in November and December 2010 by the fieldwork company Sharq. Research had to be extended in all the districts, mainly due to the difficulty of finding abandoned households in the initially selected villages. In Vahdat, for example, there were very few cases of abandoned households, meaning the research was expanded to 10 other villages (specifically villages that were considered poor). Similarly, in Shugnon, no abandoned households could be found in any of the initially selected villages. Even after including neighbouring villages, very few abandoned households were identified. A local NGO (Kalam) was asked to help but, in the end, only five out of the 15 abandoned households identified agreed to be interviewed or participated in the focus group. Apart from these anomalies, there were few other

5 These abandoned households were replaced with migrant households.
deviations from the original fieldwork plan with respect to the number and type of households that participated in interviews and focus groups.

It should be noted that one consequence of the postponement of fieldwork that occurred for the reasons described above was that it became more difficult for the fieldwork teams to find households where seasonal migrants had not come back yet for the winter period. In a handful of cases, this resulted in households being interviewed ‘as though’ the migrant was not back yet, referring to the period just before his return.

Fieldwork reports submitted by the enumerators mention that, overall, respondents in the study areas were glad to see interest in their problems and were open in sharing information. However, households with particularly difficult situations (e.g. abandoned mothers that were sent away by the husband’s family) mostly refused to participate. Abandoned wives were ashamed to talk openly about their problems and were afraid of becoming emotional during the focus groups and interviews.

The reports also highlight that children were more willing to talk than adults and that girls were more active than boys and less emotional. In one case, boys started to cry during the focus group. Moreover, children from non-migrant families appeared less stressed and happier, while children from migrant and especially abandoned families lacked confidence, hesitated in providing examples from their own experience and, in some cases, refused to answer some questions. Also, children from abandoned and, in some cases, migrant households, especially boys, asked not to be recorded. In one case of a focus group with abandoned children, several parents asked to be present during the interview.

Men with migrant wives were the most difficult sector to persuade to participate in focus groups. When first asked, they refused to come; in the end, they agreed to participate but only if the discussion was not recorded. Even though some of these men had to stop working because of diseases that occurred during migration, having a wife who migrates for work was considered dishonourable.

### 4.4.2 Data entry and transcriptions

Following fieldwork, the quantitative data collected was entered into purpose-built data-entry spreadsheets by Sharq. The data was subsequently analysed in STATA. Given the small sample size and complex questionnaire, it was not cost-effective to run as much piloting, training and data cleaning as would usually be the case for a nationally representative survey based on a similar questionnaire. As a result, there were more problems with the quantitative data that could not be fully resolved than would usually be the case in a large survey. For instance, it was not possible to check all miscodes against the hard copy questionnaire, some being simply recoded to blanks. Also, with many seasonal migrants having returned home by the time of the questionnaire, there were a small number of migrants who were treated as non-migrants during the questionnaire. However, despite these problems, the overall quality of the data is good, and it can be used to draw valid conclusions.

With respect to the qualitative data, recorded interviews were first transcribed into Tajik and then translated into Russian by Sharq. The transcripts in Russian were subsequently translated into English and coded by a Russian-speaking migration expert working for OPM, ready for analysis. While this process was extensively quality-controlled (with Tajik recordings and Russian translations being double-checked), it is important to note that dual translation from Tajik into Russian and from Russian into English may have brought some limitations to the research.

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6 These included a couple of cases where the gender of the interviewees was changed from the original plan.
In the initial translation into Russian, some nuances were lost as the translation tried to ‘correct’ the language and not to exactly convey what was said. Therefore, some quotes in English might not be the exact translation of the original text and might not reproduce the meaning in the most accurate manner. Moreover, while analysing the transcripts, discrepancies between regions in the quality and number of follow-up questions were observed; for example, there were fewer attempts to ask follow-up questions in the transcripts from the Kulyob district. Despite these slight limitations, the qualitative data provided extensive and consistent information for analysis.

### 4.5 Qualitative research

As explained in the introduction to this section, the qualitative research methodology was developed in coordination with the quantitative methodology, to ensure complementarity. The techniques adopted included a combination of group work (focus groups) and individual interviews with children and caregivers, as well as interviews with key local informants using semi-structured questionnaires. Given the objectives of the study, the key research participants in the qualitative research were:

- **Children** (male and female and of various ages);
- **Caregivers** (mostly female); and
- **Key local informants** (those with access to specialised or detailed knowledge and information about the impacts of migration). These included:
  - Teachers;
  - Doctors/nurses;
  - Local NGO workers (in the village in question); and
  - Local authorities and police.

For the purpose of focus groups, interviews with children and caregivers were divided into the three migrant categories adopted for the study (migrant, abandoned and non-migrant), by gender (male, female) and – for children – by age (6-12, 13-17). On the one hand, this enabled the researchers to explore the differences in opinions according to respondent; on the other, it ensured uniformity within group discussions, facilitating the flow of discussion.

For the qualitative component of the study, five focus group discussions were conducted in each region, together with 10 individual in-depth interviews. A summary of this information, together with the specification of the respondent types is given in Table 4 and Table 5 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person type</th>
<th>Household type</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver/parent (male)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver/parent (female)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (6-12, male)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (6-12, female)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (13-17, male)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (13-17, female)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that if it is not possible to conduct such groups with male caregivers (as almost all migration is male) these group discussions should be substituted by additional groups with female caregivers of the same type.
Table 5. Overview of qualitative in-depth interviews conducted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person type</th>
<th>Household type</th>
<th>Number of interviews per district</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gafurov</td>
<td>Kulyob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver/parent</td>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver/parent</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver/parent</td>
<td>Non-migrant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (13-17)</td>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (13-17)</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (13-17)</td>
<td>Non-migrant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health worker</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO worker</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.1 Issues around research with children

Participatory research methods are used with both children and adults. Participatory work with children requires particular care, including adherence to UNICEF and United Nations conventions on child rights and on research with children. The methodology is based on the UNCRC’s. It is useful to reiterate the main principles here since they underlie the methodology that follows.

Any research with children must, in addition, provide fully adequate safeguards to ensure that all children are fully protected at all times from the potential negative effects of the process and consequences of the research. As researchers, managers, and practitioners, we take extremely seriously our responsibilities – outlined in the UNCRC – to ensure that ethical difficulties are met in our methodology. An Evaluation Technical Note from UNICEF’s Evaluation Office summarises the key points:

- Children’s participation should be considered on an equal and non-discriminatory basis.
- Researchers and evaluators must consider how the research supports the best interest of each child.
- Children’s views should not be used merely as data from subjects of investigation, and should be considered and taken into account in all matters that affect them.
- Children have the right to freedom of expression and information in a medium of their choice.
- Children’s participation in research must be fully informed.
- Children must be free not to participate.
- Researchers must acknowledge and ideally seek to build on children’s freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, and parents’/guardians’ role in exercising this right.
- Research should recognise children’s right to free association and peaceful assembly, and where possible should ideally support their representation at wider forums.

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4. Methodology of the study

These principles inform our methodology, which aims at the upper end of Hart’s ladder of participation, at what Hart calls ‘Models of Genuine Participation’. Our methodology can be classed, in Hart’s terms, as ‘Adult Initiated, Shared Decisions with Children’. This reflects the fact that, although the research is initiated by UNICEF and then conducted by a research organisation, the decisions made during the research (and ideally after) are substantially made by children, shared with adults. Our research included adolescents (age 13 and above), who are likely to have the ability to participate at these high levels. Nevertheless, given the fact that the research worked with younger children, we retained Hart’s principle that “programmes should be designed which maximise the opportunity for any child to choose to participate at the highest level of his ability.”

4.5 Research methods and tools

A combination of methods was used with different research participants. This approach is considered to be best practice in conducting research with children because it helps to retain their interest while covering a range of topics (see, for example, the Mosaic Approach). The importance of providing various modes of expression applies to adults as well (Crivello et al., 2008).

4.5.2 Group work

Focus groups with children and adults used a variety of methods. These included:

- **Migration mapping**: The idea of this very simple exercise was to help children to display graphically where their parents travel to for work, and then to ask some questions about this. This exercise allowed children to talk about their relationship with the absent parent in the form of a game. The emphasis is not on drawing a beautiful or accurate map but on setting out distance and exploring the effects that this causes.

- **Good and bad things** – balloon and rock analysis: This tool was used to generate information on children’s views of their parents being away, including positive and negative consequences of the parent’s absence. The children were asked to think about opposing forces on them caused by their parents being away and to then draw them: good ones, represented by helium balloons, pulling them upwards, and bad ones, represented by stones, pulling them downwards.

- **Vignettes/Story completion**: These are open-ended stories read by the facilitator that participants could then discuss and complete and are a useful technique for dealing with potentially sensitive issues, such as behavioural problems. Vignettes were also an effective way to break the ice in group work.

- **Time-use exercise**: This exercise helped us understand how children spend their time at a more detailed level, in a way that is also interesting for children. It provided information on schooling, work in the household, work outside of the household and leisure time.

- **Who matters?** This technique asked participants to identify key people or institutions in their social world. It was used to explore more fully who children turn to in the absence of parents, and whether this emotional support is adequate.

- **Free listing and ranking**: This technique, mostly used with adults, allowed participants to list answers to a closely specified question (e.g. what are the problems caused for children’s behaviour in a household when a father leaves for work?). These answers could then be ranked or scored in terms of their severity or importance. The group could then discuss the causal links between the answers and the migration. This technique also allowed participants to raise uncomfortable issues.

---

• **Semi-structured discussion.** This technique allowed participants to investigate hypotheses in detail, give their comments and experiences of this, and suggest means by which any negative consequences of migration could be offset.

These methods were designed to allow participants to enjoy the research but also to put issues in their own terms and representations. The exact mix of methods and the focus of the discussion varied slightly depending on the composition of the group.

### 4.5.2.2 Interviews

Semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted with children, caregivers and key informants. In these, the interviewer had a checklist of issues to cover (defined in the interview guidelines), but the interviewee was allowed to direct the flow of the interview.

In interviews with children, some techniques similar to those described in the group work above were adopted to liven the flow of the conversation and turn the interview into a game. Key informants specifically were asked to provide a more general overview of their views on key issues around children and migration in their villages, including statistical data if available.

### 4.5.2.3 Casual observation and conversation

Some of the most interesting insights for this study were collected outside the formal research structure, particularly on subjects where participants felt nervous or sensitive. Our research teams were asked to observe practices and strike up casual conversations with community members, recording their informal thoughts and observations without citing names. The content of these reports was included in the final analysis for this study and provided some useful background overviews of migration trends in the study communities.

**Table 6. Summary of information from each group/interview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group/interview type</th>
<th>Method used</th>
<th>Information collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Parents/caregivers (group) | Free listing      | • Positive and negative effects of parental migration on children’s education, health, work and psycho-social well-being  
|                          |                   | • Ranking of positive and negative effects                                             |
|                          |                   | • Differences in positive and negative effects by different types of migration (remitting or non-remitting, depending on relationship to migrant, length of migration, etc.) |
| Children (group)         | Migration mapping | • Who has migrated, how far away, regularity of contact, preference for their location |
|                          | Balloon and rock drawing | • Good and bad things about parents’ migration and exploration of overall balance (good/bad) on health, education, happiness, work. Differences between different parents, duration, etc. |
|                          | Who matters       | • Location of important people and reasons why these people matter, in order to explore differences between migrant and non-migrant children |
|                          | Story completion (vignette) | • Understanding views on impact of parents’ migration on children’s education, health, and psycho-social well-being in hypothetical scenario to allow more explicit suggestion |

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For more details, refer to the qualitative interview guidelines for this study.
### Methodology of the study

#### 4.5 Qualitative research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group/interview type</th>
<th>Method used</th>
<th>Information collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents/caregivers (interview)</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>• Understanding details of family composition and dynamics. Exploring details of children’s health, education, time use and behaviour. Exploring causality with migration of parents if this applies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (interview)</td>
<td>Who matters</td>
<td>• See above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time use</td>
<td>• Understanding children’s patterns of time use to check work/school balance and why this is so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Balloon and rock drawing</td>
<td>• See above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion on health</td>
<td>• Understanding of comparative health and nutrition and what happens when children are ill, in order to compare behaviour between household types.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers/psychologists</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>• Level of migration and overall assessment of positive and negative effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Level of migration in school in general and effects of migration on children’s attendance, performance, emotional state in class, and motivation in school in general, compared to normal practices of attending school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health workers</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>• Level of migration and overall assessment of positive and negative effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Community health situation (disease profile, malnutrition, health infrastructure, barriers to access, dangerous behaviours, vaccination profile). Differences between different types of migrant household for all these things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO workers</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>• Level of migration and overall assessment of positive and negative effects for education, health, psycho-social well-being of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Institutional arrangements for migrants and suggested policy improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Level of migration and overall assessment of positive and negative effects for education, health, emotional state of children. Statistics on migration Institutional arrangements for migrants and suggested policy improvements Crime levels and relationship to migration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.5.2.4 Sampling

Two sampling methods were used for the qualitative research: expert sampling and snowball sampling. Interviewers started their search with local governments and NGOs such as IOM, which provided contact details for Jamoat leaders\(^\text{12}\) and preliminary indications of households that could be interviewed. Having identified initial respondents, these households were then asked whether they knew other households that fell into the same category – leading to a ‘snowball effect’. So as to avoid network biases, fieldworkers also used other sources to find their respondents, based on casual observations in the villages.

\(^{12}\) The Jamoats are third-level administrative divisions, similar to communes or municipalities.
4.6 Quantitative research

4.6.1 Research methods and tools

The quantitative method selected for this study was a small and non-representative survey based on non-probabilistic sampling. This method does not allow nationwide statistically significant conclusions to be drawn, nor does it allow statistically rigorous differences to be drawn on the welfare of children in the three chosen typologies of households: migrant, abandoned and non-migrant. However, it is very useful to explore these differences when triangulated with results from the qualitative research. Using these methods, we are able to present an in-depth analysis of the causal chains through which parents’ migration affects children who are left behind. In addition, a qualitative module was used within the quantitative questionnaire, both to quantify people’s beliefs and to make maximum use of a small sample.

The main tools used for the quantitative research were:

a. A household questionnaire;

b. A young adolescent questionnaire for children (11-14 year olds); and


The design of these three instruments, described in more detail below, was informed by results from the literature review (see Annex A), consultations with UNICEF, opinions of stakeholders and extensive testing during the pilot phase of the survey. The key objective was to identify differences between migrant, abandoned, and non-migrant households and draw meaningful evidence regarding the impact of migration on children’s well-being.

4.6.1.1 Household questionnaire

For the quantitative survey, a total of 60 household questionnaires were administered in each region. According to design, they should have been administered to 30 migrant households, 15 abandoned households, and 15 non-migrant households. However, due to difficulties in finding abandoned households in some areas (and non-migrants in others) a small number of migrant households were substituted for abandoned households. The final number of questionnaires administered was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Type</th>
<th>Gafurov</th>
<th>Kulyob</th>
<th>Vahdat</th>
<th>Shughnon</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-migrant</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The household questionnaire was designed to collect general information on all household members, including those who had migrated. It includes a very important ‘subjective’ module,

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This method was chosen based on the budget available on one hand and by the specifications in the Terms of Reference on the other.

Note that these limitations are due to several reasons: a) the sample is not random; b) the total size of the sample is too small; c) the sample is composed of many sub-groups (four districts, three household types), which further reduces the sample size for each group, and; d) the sample does not statistically account for other explanatory factors that impact the overall well-being and behaviour of children left behind (such as temporary or permanent migration, educational level of parents and caregivers, amount of remittances, occupation type of migrant, household’s poverty levels, etc.).
which asks qualitative-type questions to children’s caregivers to assess their perceptions and attitudes in relation to the four key impact areas analysed in the study: health, labour, education and psycho-social well-being.

A brief description of each section and its function in relation to this study is provided below:

- **Section 1 and 2, Household roster and Migrant roster:** these sections provide general information (sex, ethnicity, education levels, occupation, health status, etc.) on all household members, including migrants. For migrants specifically, information includes destination, length of stay, occupation abroad, remittances (amount, regularity, time-interval), frequency of contact (phone and physical) and a range of other explanatory factors for the impact of migration on children left behind.

- **Section 3, Education (children 3-18):** this section provides specific information on key education indicators such as enrolment, attendance, reasons for non-attendance, drop-out age, cost of schooling and attainment for children of school age (including attendance at pre-school for children 3-6).

- **Section 4, Time use (children 6-18):** this section helps to draw conclusions on the economic activity of children, whether in the household or outside. Questions on child labour can be very controversial and generate falsified results, which is why this section was designed to capture ‘time use’ and worded in a non-stigmatising way, so as to capture both the entity of child activity and its main drivers.

- **Section 5, Health (children 0-18):** this section is carefully designed to untangle morbidity and access to healthcare, also assessing the overall cost of healthcare for children in the last 12 months as well as the adoption of preventive health behaviour.

- **Section 6, Subjective assessment (administered to caregiver):** this section presents a series of qualitative-type questions aimed at understanding caregivers’ opinions on the key impact areas under analysis. It includes questions aimed specifically at caregivers of migrant and abandoned children and intended to untangle the causal chains that link migration to the key impacts (e.g. is it easier or more difficult to provide for children in the household’s health since their mother/father is away?). This section is extremely useful in terms of presenting a quantitative assessment of issues that can only be tackled in depth through qualitative research.

- **Section 7, Housing characteristics and ownership of assets:** this section provides information on households’ amenities and assets (number of rooms, heating material, electricity, distance to key amenities, asset ownership), which help to generate a very basic poverty profile of each household.

- **Section 8, Diet, food security and expenditure:** given that one of the main health-related impact areas is the impact on food security, this section allows assessment of children’s dietary diversity over the previous week, as well as other key indicators of food security (number of meals per day, size of meals, etc.). It also provides a rough estimate of household income, which helps to generate some of the overall impact indicators.

- **Section 9, Intra-household decision-making:** this is a brief section aimed at understanding how decision-making happens within the household and what role migrant members play in the process, untangling gender relations.

- **Section 10, Aid programmes, remittances and borrowing:** on one side, this section assesses any support the interviewed households may already be receiving. On the other, it probes for possible policy intervention areas that respondents feel may help them improve
their condition (e.g. if you were government, how would you help people that are in your same situation?).

4.6.1.2 Young adolescent and adolescent questionnaires

These two questionnaires were administered to any children in the household who belonged to the reference age groups: 11-14 inclusive for the young adolescent questionnaire (YAQ) and 15-18 inclusive for the adolescent questionnaire (AQ). As they are both self-administered questionnaires, designed to be extremely simple and user-friendly (i.e. there are no skip patterns or complicated wording). Moreover, most questions are present in both instruments, though the young adolescents were not asked about risky behaviour.

One important element of the YAQ and AQ was the use of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to assess adolescents’ behavioural problems. The SDQ is an internationally validated, self-administered set of 25 questions that provides a brief behavioural screening of adolescents\(^{15}\). The outcome of the ‘test’ is a scoring along four key outcomes: emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, and peer relationship problems.

The main themes addressed by the YAQ and AQ, which provide a unique opportunity to understand adolescents’ perspectives, are:

- Experience, perceptions and attitudes around schooling;
- Experience, perceptions and attitudes around labour;
- Relationships with peer group, including bullying;
- Sadness and depression (including suicide);
- Aggressive behaviour;
- Perceptions of migration and its impact; and
- Risky behaviours (smoking, alcohol, drugs and sexual intercourse).

As the questionnaires were self-administered, it was not possible to choose the sample size. Table 8 below shows the total number of AQs, by household type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire type</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young adolescent (11-14)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent (15-18)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6.1.3 Sampling

As with the qualitative research, two main types of sampling were used to identify the households to be interviewed, in an attempt to reduce the inevitable sampling bias of a non-random sample:

1. **Expert sampling**: using information from local actors such as Jamoat leaders, local government and IOM centres to identify migrant and abandoned households specifically.

2. **Snowball sampling**: asking households that met the criteria for inclusion in our study to recommend others who also met the criteria. This method made use of homophily – the tendency of individuals to associate with others considered similar.

Although the team considered using data from the 2007 TLSS for the sampling of this study, it did not employ this technique as per agreements with UNICEF, given the large amount of time

\(^{15}\) See http://www.sdqinfo.org/ao.html for further details.
and high cost necessary for developing such a sampling framework. The focus of the research was on rural areas, considering the rural profile of migration and poverty in Tajikistan.

### 4.7 Limitations

As discussed previously, the triangulation of different data types and the use of innovative methods ensured that available resources were used as efficiently as possible. However, a study of this size inevitably has serious limitations and it is very important that these are not overlooked. A nationally representative study enabling statistical significance to be established would have given more solid evidence upon which policy could be based. However, such a survey would be much larger and much more expensive. The sample used in this study is only representative of itself, and while it is probably indicative of some wider trends, concrete results cannot be inferred for any group of society. This is true for both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the research.

The limitations are most strongly felt in the quantitative survey, as quantitative research usually pertains to objective information and is unable to incorporate nuance and context in the way that qualitative research can. As such, the quantitative results should be viewed as support to the main story, which comes from the qualitative work. An effort has been made to contextualise the quantitative research and to investigate any systematic differences between the types of households selected in each of the three categories, but some such differences are inevitable, and sample sizes for some disaggregations are very low.

The literature review (see Annex A), qualitative and quantitative research in this report are intended to form part of the wider debate on the impact of migration on children left behind. While we hope that the report will be useful for the advocacy of the issue and will further the debate around it, we also hope that the limitations of the study will be borne in mind if it is used to inform policy decisions.
5 Findings

5.1 Introduction

This section draws on the fieldwork and literature review (see Annex A) to present evidence on the impacts of parents’ migration on their children and the specific data on Tajikistan. The hypotheses developed from the literature review are tested using quantitative and qualitative data. The findings are structured by area of impact: health, education, economic activity, and emotional well-being. Qualitative and quantitative findings are presented together, and contrasted where necessary with each other and with secondary Tajik and international evidence. Throughout, the findings are disaggregated by household type and gender (where possible).

5.2 Characteristics of interviewed households

The households sampled for our quantitative survey are neither nationally nor regionally representative. As discussed in the methodology section, the sampling was not random, and the sample size was also small. In order to understand the type of households that the quantitative results relate to, it is thus important to benchmark their characteristics. This is done below according to factors identified in the conceptual framework as influencing the impact migration has on children left behind.

5.2.1 Household size and structure

Household structure in Tajikistan is complex and extended, and multi-generational families are common. This is reflected in the range of relationships to the household head seen amongst household members: 12 per cent of household members are the resident household head, 51 per cent are the household head’s spouse or child, 9 per cent are their son-in-law or daughter-in-law, 21 per cent are the grandchild of the household head, and 5 per cent the father or mother of the household head. Furthermore, households tend to be quite large. Some 11 per cent of households interviewed contain at least 10 members.
5 Findings

5.2 Characteristics of interviewed households

Table 9. Number of resident household members by household type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of resident household members</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The prevalence of extended family households is important for several reasons. Firstly, the migration of a parent may have less psychological or educational impact on a child if the child lives also with wider family. For instance, an uncle may fill the role of father figure for a child whose father has migrated. Secondly, however, extended families may also be biased against abandoned children. The qualitative data suggests that abandoned children living in other households can be neglected in favour of other children in the household:

“But if children are left in the care of other relatives, others than grandparents, they are abused. The children of migrants do not have protection on the streets; they are being bullied. Sometimes at schools teachers abuse these children, and it affects their mental state...”

Thirdly, the diversity of household structure makes the identification of the effects of migration more difficult.

Abandoned households appear to be smaller on average than migrant and non-migrant households. This could be because there will typically be no new children after the time that the family is abandoned unless the remaining parent re-marries. They also typically have more residents per room, which could be because of lower income.

Table 10. Residents per room by household type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean number per household of:</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rooms</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents per room</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Caring for children requires resources and, consequently, the more children in the household the more pressure there is to earn more income and the greater the number of dependents for each income earner. In our sample, there are two notable points. Firstly, some parents have a large number of children; secondly, there is no discernable difference in numbers of children across the three household types.

Table 11. Number of children per household by household type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16 Interview with NGO worker, Shugnon.
### Table 12. Number of children and households with a generational gap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household type</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of children living with grandparents and not parents</td>
<td>8.3% (35)</td>
<td>1.4% (2)</td>
<td>1.7% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of households containing children living with grandparents and not parents</td>
<td>12.5% (17)</td>
<td>2.2% (1)</td>
<td>3.5% (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.2.2 Education level of household members

The education level of resident household members can have an impact on child well-being in many ways. For instance, according to the literature, more educated parents are more likely to encourage their children to stay in school. Amongst resident adults, we see that a large proportion have some education beyond Grade 10 and around a quarter of males have been to university, although access to higher education is seen to be lower for women. There are no large differences between household types, although it seems that a smaller proportion of resident members of abandoned households have been to university.

### Table 13. Education level of resident adults by household type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest educational level</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10 or below</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further pre-university training</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10 or below</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further pre-university training</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.3 Labour capacity and economic activity of household members

In a country with widespread poverty such as Tajikistan, labour capacity is a very important indicator of welfare. Households with disabled or chronically ill members are often poor:

“There are no differences between those families in which there are migrants and those families in which no migrants. But there are families where members cannot go anywhere (for work), that are unable to work or do not have any skills to work such as construction. These families have a lower standard of living than working families.”

A significant proportion of respondents do report disability and/or chronic illness. As will be discussed below, the incidence of both is more common in abandoned households. The high prevalence of chronic illness in abandoned households could be both a cause and a consequence of migration. This relatively strong correlation between abandonment, chronic illness, and disability should be investigated further.

Table 14. Disability and chronic illness by household type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of adults:</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With a long-term physical, mental or psychological disability</td>
<td>12% (387)</td>
<td>23% (117)</td>
<td>11% (165)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffering from a chronic illness</td>
<td>21% (391)</td>
<td>28% (116)</td>
<td>13% (167)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at the main activities of household members, we see that the proportion of housewives is higher in migrant households. This might be because remittances reduce the need to earn extra income, so that women are able to stay at home. It could equally be because, without the father, there are more tasks to be done in the household, increasing women’s need to stay at home. The fact that abandoned households have the lowest prevalence suggests that both these reasons play some role.

Furthermore, migrant households have fewer members who earn a salary and a higher proportion of members with no specific duties. Finally, abandoned households have a higher incidence of self-employment in agriculture, in line with a greater prevalence of subsistence agriculture among them.

Table 15. Main occupation of resident household members by household type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main occupation</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaried employment</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed in agriculture</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed in non-agriculture</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No specific duties</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17 Interview with NGO worker, Vahdat.
5.2.4 Financial support from outside of the family

The practice of borrowing money is commonplace in Tajikistan and many migrant households state not having to rely on borrowing as a positive outcome of migration.

In the quantitative data, 31 per cent of migrant households, 46 per cent of abandoned households and 52 per cent of non-migrant households report borrowing money in the last three months. 77 per cent of this borrowing is from friends and neighbours, 19 per cent from family, and just 4 per cent from banks.

In the qualitative transcripts, the practice is discussed many times and it is used both to cover large and unpredictable expenditures such as healthcare and to survive through lean periods when income falls below subsistence levels. Its use in the latter case depends strongly on the regularity and predictability of income. All households types are affected, but in different ways. Migrant remittances, even if large, are often unpredictable and migrant households then find themselves running out of money. Relying on income from workers in Tajikistan can also be risky; many jobs in Tajikistan are insecure and wages and employment can fluctuate. This is especially true for abandoned mothers, who are often forced to take unskilled jobs with poor working conditions.

Although, as Section 6 indicates, there is no satisfactory safety net in case of shocks such as abandonment, there is evidence of some social support in the qualitative data:

“[Poor] people are provided with assistance from the government. For example, we provide wheat and vegetables for the village from our private farm for these needy families. They distribute this aid as they consider proper.”

The existence of social support is reported in the quantitative data: 27 per cent of migrant households, 26 per cent of abandoned households, and 16 per cent of non-migrant households report receiving support from the government or other organisations in the last three months. However, this seems to be driven by pensions, with little evidence of other social support – of those receiving support, 70 per cent receive an old age pension, 15 per cent a disability pension, and 20 per cent an electricity/heating subsidy.

Household income, wealth and poverty

Household income is an extremely important factor for child welfare. Three natural questions arise in our study: How large are differences in income between household types? How much does income level affect child welfare? And how large is the effect on welfare of income in comparison to other aspects of migration?

To begin to answer these questions, we first need to assess the income and poverty levels of the household type, and then create income variables by which we can disaggregate in later analysis. The following reflects that income is generally low and that poverty is widespread in Tajikistan, largely because of the lack of good jobs:

“Now all the families are very poor, and there is no difference if the family migrated or did not migrate. Even if men are at home, there is no work.”

Turning to the quantitative data, simple indicators on property that form proxies for wealth do not show clear differences between migrant and non-migrant households. However, they all show an enormous difference between abandoned households and non-abandoned households.

---

18 Interview with non-migrant caregiver, Vahdat.
19 Interview with caregiver, Gafurov.
Table 16. Indicators on property by household type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of households:</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owning a plot of agricultural land (at least one acre)</td>
<td>79% (136)</td>
<td>42% (45)</td>
<td>78% (58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where the nuclear family of the caregiver owns the property where the family lives</td>
<td>82% (136)</td>
<td>44% (45)</td>
<td>90% (58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having made improvements to their house during the last year</td>
<td>27% (136)</td>
<td>7% (46)</td>
<td>33% (58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having access to electricity</td>
<td>85% (136)</td>
<td>65% (46)</td>
<td>79% (58)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lower level of wealth of abandoned households is observed throughout the data. Household expenditure and expenditure per capita show that they spend much less than non-abandoned households. They also show that migrant households spend more than non-migrant households.

Table 17. Monthly expenditure by household type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average expenditure last month:</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per household (USD)</td>
<td>143 (134)</td>
<td>91 (46)</td>
<td>127 (57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita (USD)</td>
<td>25 (134)</td>
<td>16 (46)</td>
<td>23 (57)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This data is split into tertiles to enable a more detailed look across the wealth spectrum. The same pattern is found. Migrant households spend the most, with 42 per cent in the top tertile and only 22 per cent in the bottom. Non-migrants spend slightly less, with 26 per cent and 35 per cent respectively. Abandoned households spend the least, with only 11 per cent in the top tertile and a very large 63 per cent in the bottom tertile.

Table 18. Monthly expenditure tertiles by household type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tertile</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per household expenditure tertiles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita expenditure tertiles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asset ownership was also investigated in the questionnaire. Again, a similar pattern is seen, especially for more luxury goods such as satellite TV, cars and fridges.

Table 19. Asset ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion owning or having access to:</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hot water</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV/video player</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satellite TV</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proportion owning or having access to: | Migrant | Abandoned | Non-migrant |
--- | --- | --- | --- |
Washing machine | 7% | 4% | 7% |
Bicycle | 8% | 0% | 3% |
Car | 35% | 7% | 35% |
Refrigerator | 46% | 28% | 43% |
Stove (electric/gas) | 83% | 85% | 86% |
Indoor toilet | 4% | 0% | 2% |
Drinking water piped into the house | 48% | 39% | 43% |
Gas | 32% | 24% | 26% |
Mobile phone | 93% | 76% | 90% |

Wealth tertiles\(^20\) were generated based upon the ownership of satellite TV, washing machine, car, fridge, stove, and mobile phone, as well as the availability of gas supply. The tertiles are subsequently used as a proxy for wealth in the study. They were chosen over tertiles of monthly expenditure because expenditure data is notoriously difficult to collect and no consumption module was administered. It was thus deemed more reliable to use the index based on ownership of seven assets rather than to use questionable expenditure data. The following table shows that the asset-based index gives a very similar spread across tertiles by household type, as do the expenditure tertiles.

Table 20. Asset-based wealth tertiles by household type

| Tertile | Migrant | Abandoned | Non-migrant |
--- | --- | --- | --- |
1 | 28% | 61% | 33% |
2 | 29% | 24% | 29% |
3 | 43% | 15% | 38% |

5.2.6 Ethnicity

Although not stated in the conceptual framework, information on ethnicity is important in terms of context. The majority of those interviewed within our study were Tajik, with a small minority of Uzbeks.

Table 21. Ethnicity of household members by household type

| Ethnicity | Migrant | Abandoned | Non-migrant |
--- | --- | --- | --- |
Tajik | 90% | 91% | 96% |
Uzbek | 10% | 9% | 4% |

\(^{20}\) Due to the granularity of the asset data, the tertiles are not true tertiles: tertile 1 contains 35 per cent of households, tertile 2 contains 28 per cent, and tertile 3 contains 36 per cent.
5.3 Characteristics of migrants from interviewed households

This section characterises the migration trends of individuals in both the migrant and abandoned households in our survey, focusing mainly on characteristics that might affect the impact of migration on children as detailed in the conceptual framework.

5.3.1 Who migrates

The average numbers of migrants is 1.4 in migrant households and 1.2 in abandoned households, with the majority of our households containing just one migrant.

Table 22. Number of migrants in household by household type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Migrants</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3+</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table shows that a high proportion of migrants have left children in the household:

Table 23. Proportion of migrants with children by household type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex of migrant</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>79% (145)</td>
<td>87% (52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>79% (33)</td>
<td>100% (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of children they have left behind ranges widely in both migrant and abandoned households:

Table 24. Number of children of migrants by household type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In migrant households, 81 per cent of migrants are male. This is divided at the district level as 94 per cent in Gafurov, 97 per cent in Kulyob, 91 per cent in Vahdat and 60 per cent in Shughnon. Some 79 per cent of migrant households have only male migrants, 12 per cent both male and female, and 9 per cent just female.

In abandoned households, 96 per cent of migrants are men, with another 96 per cent of these households containing only male migrants, and the other 4 per cent only female migrants.

Note that this is not surprising given the definitions of these household types.

The high prevalence of women migrants in Shughnon (GBAO) is in line with the literature review.
Migrants’ ages are spread across the working-age range, with migration being most prevalent amongst 35-44 year olds:

Table 25. Age of migrants by household type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Migrants’ relation to the household head is particularly interesting. The high number (46 per cent) of migrant household migrants who are the son or daughter of a household head shows how commonplace it is for those left behind to live with the migrant’s parents, i.e. children with their grandparents and parents with their in-laws. We also see that migrants are often still considered household heads even when absent, which could have important consequences for household decision-making.

Table 26. Relationship of migrants to household head by household type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship to household head</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household head</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%(^\text{23})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife/husband/partner</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son/daughter</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father/mother</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son-in-law/daughter-in-law</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.2 Migrant employment

Of migrants in migrant households, 89 per cent are currently working and 7 per cent are looking for work. The proportion working rises to 93 per cent amongst those with children. However, whilst extremely important, finding a job upon migration is not always easy:

“When a father leaves, he does not know if he will get a job or not once he is abroad. If he cannot find a job, it will be very hard for his family; they will have to double their work. Before finding a job, the father suffers and the family suffers with him. It has a psychological effect on his family. If the father does not find a job there will be no money, and he won’t be able to return. This will adversely affect his boy and his family. They will have to work day and night to pay for the father’s flight back to home.”\(^\text{24}\)

Male migrants in our survey work mostly in construction (55 per cent), with some working in trade (20 per cent) and some in services (21 per cent). Female migrants work largely in services (62 per cent) and also in trade (23 per cent).

\(^{23}\) Two categories were given in the questionnaire for household head to specify residency status: Resident and Absent head. It appears likely that absent head has been misinterpreted for abandoned households.

\(^{24}\) Focus group with mothers, Gafurov.
5 Findings

5.3 Characteristics of migrants from interviewed households

5.3.3 Level of remittances

Remittances are the main source of positive effects from migration on children left behind. They are a crucial source of income to recipient families, not just for ensuring daily subsistence, but also for generating enough money for larger expenditures. Numbers remitting and the amount remitted are thus key:

“From the earnings of migrants, this year we had the opportunity to marry off our son and our daughter. This is a very high cost. Also, we built a new house, though small, but still.”

In migrant households, 89 per cent of migrants (94 per cent of those with children) have remitted in cash at some point during the last 12 months, covering 95 per cent of migrant households. Few (14 per cent) have remitted in kind.

This high remittance rate is fortunate, as the situation appears bleak when remittances are not sent (as is the case for abandoned households), especially for boys left behind:

“If the father leaves but does not send money, this will affect the boy. He will replace his father. He will stop going to school and will work.”

The mean amount remitted over the last 12 months by migrants in migrant households is USD 513; USD 250 for women and USD 571 for men. Amongst those with children, the number is slightly higher at USD 537. The average amount received by migrant households receiving remittances is USD 692. The month prior to the survey appears to have been typical, with the average amount received over the last 30 days by households receiving remittances being USD 52.

5.3.4 Predictability and frequency of remittances

Importantly, only 45 per cent of those remitting were said to remit predictably, with 55 per cent remitting unpredictably. Although this is affected strongly by having children (50 per cent of those with children remit predictably compared to only 24 per cent of those without), this relatively low level of predictability could cause problems for household budgeting and leave women and children vulnerable.

The extent of the difficulties caused by this unpredictability depends upon what remittances are spent on. If they are used mainly for large capital expenditures (such as home improvements), then unpredictability is not a problem. If they are used for daily subsistence then it might be more of a problem, but we have seen that households are used to borrowing small amounts to smooth income. The key question is whether households can get money from migrants when it is urgently needed (for example for medical treatment). There is evidence in our qualitative research that, in such situations, households phone the migrants who are able to quickly organise cash transfers. However, this is not always possible, and households often need to use many methods to ensure enough income for survival:

“I remit once every 2-3 months, rarely in winter. My wife receives the money and spends it on family needs. The transfers are not predictable; my wife always puts

25 Focus group with mothers, Vahdat.
26 Focus group with mothers, Gafurov.
27 In 2008, 852,100 Tajiks were registered as migrants in Russia and, according to the IMF, USD 2.3 billion was remitted, giving a rough average of USD 2700 remitted per migrant. This is significantly higher than the average figure found in our data. However, on the macro-level, there are many methodological issues connected with classification of remittances in the national accounts data. On the household level, recall questions are notoriously problematic, especially on sensitive income questions. Furthermore, the sample is not representative. Hence the difference is not surprising.
In addition to being unpredictable, remittances are also fairly infrequent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over once a month</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every month</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every 2 - 3 months</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every 3 - 6 months</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every 6 months - 1 year</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a year</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The difference between a migrant household and an abandoned one is not clear-cut and the transition between the two is a very difficult time for the household. Uncertainty of remittance income plays an important role, with the mother having to adjust to earning enough money for the subsistence of the family:

“My husband has been in Russia for two years. Previously he sent a little money, but for the past year he has not sent any money and we have had no news from him. On the phone we do not talk properly. The last phone conversation with him was in August, three months ago. I live on my earnings only. When people ask me to sew their ‘Kurpa’ (blanket), I am less worried, because I already know that if I do the work, I will have money to live on... In the collective farm orchard, we also collect firewood, and from manure we make ‘tappak’.”

Remittances are often not spent on the welfare of children. Only 39 per cent of remitters list children’s caregivers as primary recipients (45 per cent amongst those with children). Amongst the rest, 27 per cent remit to their parents, 21 per cent to their brothers, and 11 per cent to other family. This is important because, as picked up elsewhere in the study, who receives the money influences how it is spent and caregivers are more likely to be concerned with the welfare of the children. Women left to live with their in-laws often have little bargaining power in the household, and this is exacerbated when remittances go directly to the migrant’s parents. Qualitative evidence suggests that the welfare of women and their children in such a position is sometimes neglected in favour of capital expenditures such as household improvements:

“My husband sends the remittances to his mother. Sometimes she comes and checks on my children, how they work and how much they help me. She says that if they suffer now they will get ready for life. We have no house. It would be good if he would send the money directly to me so I could build one.”

---

28 Interview with a migrant, Vahdat.
29 Focus group with abandoned caregivers, Gafurov.
30 Focus group with mothers, Gafurov.
5.3.5 Impact of the 2008 economic crisis

Macroeconomic data indicates a 30 per cent decline in inward remittances as a result of the world economic crisis, which has certainly represented an income shock for remitting households as their disposable income has declined. Considering the importance of remittances for not only the consumption of migrant households, but also for their access to public services, it is clear that the economic crisis had a negative effect on families in general and children left behind in particular.

Although the nature of this study does not allow us to quantify the effect of the 2008 economic crisis, qualitative data indicates that, due to the crisis, many migrants have lost their jobs or have not been paid:

“Yes, this trend changed over time. Before the 2008 crisis we had more migrants, but now, compared with 2008, these rates have decreased. This is because in the past all could get a job, and now work is difficult to find there. Many migrants have returned home without money; the employers did not give them money for their work, so they even borrowed to return home. Many of them are working here.”

The migrants face a tough environment for many reasons, and the financial crisis in 2008 made the situation even more difficult:

“Previously there was work and now there is not. The crisis has affected our work. Many businesses went bankrupt and we were not given our salary; we had to borrow money and go home. I wanted to say more about the fact that many migrants are dying out there. Death occurs from the cold or they die on the job, but nobody knows exactly what is happening with them. Migrants are not aware of their rights. I’ve become disabled; it has affected my life. I cannot work. My wife is earning, but I do not know how long this will last.”

Nevertheless, it seems that, after several months of hardship, the situation of some migrants has improved:

“For us, too the crisis had an influence. At that time I was selling flowers grown in greenhouses in the city. A few months ago, my husband was not sending money, but gradually it has all become as before.”

This is in line with macroeconomic data, which indicates that, in the first half of 2010, remittances in Tajikistan increased again by 25 per cent, and real GDP growth reached 7 per cent.

5.3.6 Duration and frequency of migration

Migration in Tajikistan is often seasonal, but there are also many migrants who do not come home every year, partly because it is very expensive to do so.

“She [a migrant mother] comes home once a year. The cost of a return ticket is very expensive and so I think it makes sense for her not to come all the time. She could instead send us the money and I think that we can tolerate her absence.”

31 Interview with NGO worker, Gafurov
32 Focus group with caregivers, Gafurov.
33 Focus group with children, Gafurov.
Table 28. Frequency that migrants in migrant households return home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over once a month</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every month</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every 2 - 3 months</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every 4 - 6 months</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a year</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every 2 years</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than every two years</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When migrants do return, they typically stay for a number of months:

Table 29. Length of time spent at home by returning migrants in migrant households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of time spent at home when visiting</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than a week</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 weeks - 1 month</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - 3 months</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 6 months</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 months - 1 year</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 1 year</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another important factor of migration duration in terms of the impact of migration on children is how long the parent has been migrating for, i.e. the time elapsed since the parent started migrating regularly. In our questionnaire, we ask a proxy for this: how many of the last 10 years the individual has been migrating. There is a good spread on this variable, reflecting migration being a long-term feature of the labour market in Tajikistan.
5.3.7 Communication with household

Although migrant parents are only able to return infrequently, the data suggests that they keep in regular contact with their children on the telephone. 88 per cent of migrant fathers and mothers are reported as speaking to their children on the phone at least once every two weeks:

### Table 30. Frequency of telephone contact with children amongst migrant parents from migrant households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speak to their children on the phone</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice a week</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every two weeks</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a month</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 Overall impact of migration

The following sections of this report will describe in detail the specific impact of parents’ migration on a set of key outcomes, ranging from health to education, from children’s time use to their emotional state. Before doing that, however, it is useful to take a step back and assess households’ overall perceptions of the impacts of migration on their day-to-day existences. Do families left behind perceive migration as a ‘necessary evil’ that is worth enduring because of its final benefits? What are considered the most positive impacts of migration and which the most negative? What types of households are most likely to view migration negatively/positively? How do caregivers rate the importance of the diverse impacts of migration on children in the household?

5.4.1 Overall rating

A graph generated from the quantitative data collected for this study helps us to start addressing some of the questions listed above (Figure 5 below). It shows caregivers’ rating of the overall impact of migration, on a scale from ‘very positive’ to ‘very negative’, differentiating between migrant households, abandoned households and households with no migrants at all. A first striking result highlighted by Figure 5 is that, although migrant households were more likely to rate the overall impact of migration as ‘very positive’ or ‘positive’, some 30 per cent described the impact as neutral and 33 per cent (the highest percentage for this category of households) as negative. Despite the benefit of additional money, a significant number of migrant households appeared to be unhappy about the choice they were forced to make in order to sustain their families. Interestingly, this negative perception of the overall impact of migration was also shared by 48 per cent of non-migrant households, who were obviously aware of the challenges faced by other members of the community. However, the category that was most likely to stress the negative impacts of migration was abandoned households (where 60 per cent opted for ‘negative’ and 18 per cent for ‘very negative’), illustrating the harsh consequences of the loss of a breadwinner and loved one.
Results from the qualitative interviews help to substantiate the evidence presented above, highlighting the resigned approach of mothers and children in migrant households. As many stressed, the need for money and lack of jobs leaves few choices and migration is sometimes the only solution. A quote from a focus group of migrant mothers in Gafurov testifies to this way of thinking:

“Many of our women, whose husbands migrate for work, have become accustomed to living without husbands. I believe that if my husband sends me money, I can tolerate his long absence. I know that my children and I need a father and husband, but our present life makes us used to suffering.”

Similarly, below is the view of a 17-year-old boy:

“Naturally, my father and brother have a very important place in my life, although they are far away from us. I really miss them, especially my father, but what can one do? This is the situation prevailing in the country.”

The most emblematic quote on the necessity of migration, viewed as a constrained choice, was given by a group of young boys from non-migrant families, who considered themselves lucky (and rich) enough never to have to migrate themselves:

“Those people who go to Russia do not go on a whim, but out of despair, from a bad life. They are willing, for the future of their children, to endure many hardships. They have no other choice.”

The overall judgement on migration described by abandoned households during the qualitative research was even less subtle. Both children and mothers stressed how “there is nothing good from a father’s departure” as they have to suffer the double burden of being “poor” and “missing him terribly”. As one child explained, referring to the rock and balloon game played during her interview:

34 Views from abandoned mothers are not presented in this context, as they are all invariably negative.
35 Focus group with migrant mothers, Gafurov.
36 Interview with 17-year-old migrant boy, Gafurov.
37 Interview with 15-year-old abandoned girl, Shugnon.
Findings

5.4.2 Most positive impacts of migration

However, not all households shared this negative attitude towards migration. In some cases, mothers in migrant households explained the advantages of having an extra source of income and did not seem to mind the consequences they were expected to endure in order to achieve this. “Now there are fewer problems with finances and nutrition has improved”, a mother explained in Shugnon, summarising what many others described as the most positive impacts of migration. As Figure 6 shows, 46 per cent of migrant households in the sample believed that the most important impact of migration was that they now had more money for health and education, with 15 per cent saying ‘better nutrition’ (which was also a very popular second most important impact for migrant households, at 35 per cent). While for abandoned households no positive impacts of migration were listed, non-migrants appeared to give similar responses to migrant households (with 33 per cent mentioning ‘more money for health and education and 13 per cent mentioning a better diet).

Figure 6. Caregivers’ views of most important impacts of migration (positive)

Caregivers’ views of most positive impacts of migration (%)

Note that this chart should be read in conjunction with Figure 7 below, as respondents’ answers add up across positive and negative impacts. This is why the percentages for abandoned households are very low in this chart.

One of the most striking things among the many stories of the good things from migration by children in migrant households was the heartfelt description given by a 17-year-old boy highlighting how the monetary impact prevails above all:

“Now we do not have to have debts, we can purchase school supplies, if one member of our family is sick we can get medical help... we eat quality food, can build a new house, have good clothes... we now have money, we can even arrange a wedding. With the departure of my father, our family has the opportunity for a fulfilling life (...). If my father was here and did not work, then we could not go to school, eat well, dress – we would be forced to borrow and the situation would be deplorable. These are the positive sides of migration... but there are downsides, of course.”

38 Interview with 15-year-old abandoned girl, Kulyob
39 Interview with 17-year-old boy, Gafurov.
The word ‘money’, in fact, was mentioned in all but two interviews with migrant mothers and children (including focus groups), showing how important a positive effect it had on households who received remittances. This opinion was shared by many key informants in the study areas, who stressed that migration is “positive from a financial point of view”\textsuperscript{40} and can “help to decrease social tensions”,\textsuperscript{41} but can have many other negative consequences. A more detailed account of the mechanisms involved in this was made by a doctor in Kulyob:

“The positive impact is that the majority of our compatriots improve their living conditions as a result of migrant earnings. Wages at home cannot meet their demands; they are very small. The earnings of migrants serve to enhance life, to build houses, to improve household food and clothing.”

\subsection{5.4.3 Most negative impacts of migration}

As mentioned earlier in this section, however, not all migrants felt that the overall impact of migration on children was positive. Negative views of migration were also extremely common in abandoned households and, to a lesser extent, in non-migrant households. So, what were considered the most negative effects? Results varied, but the most important factors as identified by the quantitative data were increased aggressiveness and depression amongst children, as well as the lack of parental guidance. For example, some 19 per cent of migrant caregivers stated that the most important impact of migration was that children become more aggressive and rebellious, together with 28 per cent of abandoned caregivers and 29 per cent of non-migrant ones. Moreover, depression appeared to be the most important problem for abandoned households, with 40 per cent declaring it the most important impact and 37 per cent the second most important impact.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure7.png}
\caption{Caregivers’ views of most important impacts of migration (negative)}
\end{figure}

Note that this chart should be read in conjunction with Figure 6 above, as respondents’ answers add up across positive and negative impacts. This is why the percentages for abandoned households are very high in this chart.

These quantitative results were confirmed by an overwhelming majority of the qualitative interviews, whether with children or adults, households or key informants, respondents from migrant, abandoned or non-migrant households. All agreed that, though positive effects may

\textsuperscript{40}Key informant interview with female NGO worker, Vahdat.
\textsuperscript{41}Key informant interview with male NGO worker, Shugnon.
exist, children are often affected negatively by the absence of their parent, with a particular impact on their psycho-social well-being. As above, the consequences cited most often were ‘depression’ and ‘sadness’, ‘lack of protection’ and ‘guidance’, ‘bad’ and ‘aggressive behaviour’, ‘less help’ with education and homework and increased housework – all of which are analysed in detail later on in the report. One quote from a young boy in a focus group of migrant children summarises some of these issues, highlighting the multiple dimensions through which children are affected by their parent’s migration:

“When my father is not home, I miss him, I’m sad... there is no one to help me in the house. At school, my classmates tease me because my father is not around. I am hurt. When my father’s not around, it is so difficult. I am the eldest son in the family, so I chop firewood, take care of animals... If my father is not with me I also find it hard to do homework. If he is home, he helps me.”

The following quote from a doctor in Kulyob is also helpful to disentangle when and why the negative effects of migration can be particularly strong for children left behind:

“If a migrant doesn’t send enough money home, or a migrant has problems in the workplace, or men forget about their families and do not care about them any longer, negative effects are stronger (...) The children of such migrants are often sad and withdrawn, they are emotionally vulnerable, there is lot of discouragement.”

These differential trends will be analysed in more detail below, in line with the conceptual framework set out in Section 3.

5.5 Impact on health

Evidence from the international literature shows two possible effects of migration on health. On the one hand, remittances increase access to health services, medicine and food. On the other hand, lack of parental care may result in insufficient attention to health-related behaviour. Most of the literature, moreover, highlights that the general health of children may decline during the first years of their parents’ migration, but improves over time as remittances contribute to improved access to healthcare.

From the results of this study, these key effects appear to be confirmed. Migrant households who were receiving reliable remittances found it substantially easier to cover the health costs associated with their children. They were also able to satisfy the food needs for the household, while their children were also eating a wider variety of food (including food types with high nutritional value). However, the evidence was less clear-cut when it came to health-related behaviour, including immunisation (which was very high among all household types) and preventive healthcare (where there seemed to be no significant differences across household types).

Disentangling the impact of migration on health is not easy, for a series of reasons. First of all, a multitude of other factors influence health outcomes and should be accounted for when analysing the effect of migration. At a micro-level, these include respondents’ overall poverty, ethnicity, parents’ education and occupation, and who is the caregiver of the child left behind. At a macro level, they include the availability and cost of health services, cultural attitudes and legal frameworks and policies. Moreover, as described in more detail below, the effects of migration can vary with time, making it more difficult to trace the impacts with a snapshot survey or study.

42 Focus group with 10-year-old boys from migrant families, Vahdat.
43 Key informant interview with male doctor, Kulyob.
Despite these methodological limitations, however, this study highlights some interesting trends, focusing on the impact of migration on access to healthcare, nutrition and food diversity, health practices, and morbidity.

### 5.5.1 Access to healthcare

Evidence from this study clearly shows the direct link between access to healthcare and household income, testifying to the huge role played by remittances in smoothing access to healthcare for migrant households. At the opposite end of the scale, abandoned households reported facing large difficulties in covering their necessary health needs, as confirmed by key informant interviews with doctors.

**Table 31. Access to healthcare hypothesis test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children left behind in Tajikistan have better access to healthcare for migrant households</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
<td>Remittances increase household income, a proportion of which will be allocated to accessing healthcare for sick children and other household members, which is important not only for well-being but as an investment in the household’s human capital. This of course does not apply to households with low remittances and to abandoned households</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The strong link between the availability (and most often unavailability) of cash and access to health services and medication was highlighted in several interviews. Unsurprisingly, the most powerful quotes supporting this came from abandoned households, who not only lost a household member who could help them take care of their children but also an important source of income. According to these testimonies, only those who had money were able to meet their health needs:

*“The quality of your health depends on the money you have... if you have it, they give you (the service), if not, they do not.”*[^44]

*“Medications are very expensive and we have no money, so we have to be treated at home. If we go to the doctor they don’t even pay us attention because we have no money. It has become such a time that doctors treat the rich first, and then us. I can cite an example from my experience – last year my youngest son became ill, so we went to the doctor. He had a high fever, but the doctor said he could not accept him. Then another rich visitor came, and the doctor took him in without any conversation. I strongly quarrelled with him and only then did he visit my son.”*[^45]

*“Due to frequent stress and the hard life I lead, I have a constant tremor in my head. Yet I have no money for treatment. If the money is there, I try to spend it on food.”*[^46]

Similar observations were also made by most of the doctors that were interviewed as key informants in the study communities, who pointed out the additional burden of poor households not receiving early treatment of their diseases. As a doctor in Kulyob district reports:

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[^44]: Interview with abandoned mother, Hissor (pilot study).
[^45]: Interview with abandoned mother, Gafurov.
[^46]: Interview with abandoned mother, Vahdat.
5 Findings

“Low-income families try not to go to the doctor, since finances in the family are not enough. This brings even more damage because early treatment is not too expensive, but aggravation and neglected diseases require large expenditures.”47

Given that poverty and lack of financial resources was cited as the main barrier to accessing healthcare, it is unsurprising to find a direct impact of remittances on access to healthcare and treatment in migrant (non-abandoned) households. “My daughter fell ill with bronchitis... I called my husband and asked him to send money to cure our daughter, and he sent it straight away”48, a mother explained in Shugnon, a common theme in similar stories in several other households. Interviews with children in migrant households also revealed a similar trend:

“I was treated at home; mum paid for drugs, with money that was sent by my father.”49

“When my parents are not here they give money to my grandmother, grandfather and uncle – my parents send them money, and they provide me with everything I need.”50

However, while the impact of remittances on children left behind’s access to healthcare is undeniable (for those who actually receive money), it should be noted that not all migrant households find it easy to pay for their children’s healthcare. In some cases, this is linked to the fact that not all households with migrant members necessarily receive money or receive it on a regular and predictable basis. In other cases, it is due to the fact that households whose members choose to migrate tend to be those most in need, the poorest. A couple of caregivers from migrant households explained that they often preferred to use traditional drugs, as it is “very expensive to go to hospital”.51 As a nurse insightfully pointed out in Vahdat:

“The main problems arise when parents go to Russia and cannot find a job so don’t send money... in those cases children here go hungry or eat low-calorie food, they get intestinal worms and don’t have warm clothes or shoes (...). Poverty and lack of jobs is the real problem here; migration is just a consequence.”

Similarly, a female family doctor is Sughd explained:

“They come to us, but only once they are already heavily sick – they first engage in self-treatment, and then come to us... honestly, now drugs are very expensive, not everyone has the money. We have a clinic not far away, people walk there (...). There is no difference between migrant and non-migrants, they all come for help. Both those at home and those abroad all live in the same situation of poverty here.”52

These findings were also supported by quantitative evidence. When asked whether it had been easier or more difficult to provide for their children’s healthcare since their mother/father had migrated, 25 per cent of migrant households said it had been ‘much easier’ and 29 per cent ‘a bit easier’. When asked to explain why, the vast majority of migrant households (87 per cent) said the main reason was that they had more money from remittances (this can clearly be seen in Figure 8 below).

47 Interview with male doctor, Kulyob.
48 Interview with migrant mother, Shugnon.
49 Interview with 17-year-old boy, Khatlon.
50 Interview with 15-year-old boy, Shugnon.
51 Interview with male caregiver, Gafurov.
52 Interview with female family doctor, Sughd.
Interestingly, however, of those migrants that had not found it ‘easier’ or ‘much easier’, 38 per cent of migrant respondents declared their ability to provide for their children’s healthcare had not changed since migration and 6 per cent said it had been ‘a bit more difficult’. This is in line with the qualitative findings presented above, suggesting that the positive effect of additional income is not an automatic guarantee of increased access to healthcare (and also that migration does not always translate into remittances). Confirming this trend, as many as 21 per cent of migrant households declared it was ‘impossible’ to find the money to pay for the healthcare of their children, with 42 per cent declaring it was difficult. These results are similar to those in non-migrant households and not too far off from those in abandoned households.

Table 32. Caregivers’ perceptions: providing for children’s healthcare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of caregivers reporting that providing for their children’s healthcare since their mother/father has been away was:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much easier</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bit easier</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bit more difficult</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much more difficult</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of caregivers reporting that finding the money to pay for the healthcare of the children in the household was:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impossible</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not difficult</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one has needed healthcare</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As expected, the situation was very different for abandoned households. None of the respondents declared providing for their children’s healthcare had been ‘much easier’ and only 2 per cent said it was ‘easier’, while a large majority (65 per cent) said it had been ‘much more difficult’. The most important reason most caregivers gave as to why it had been more difficult (81 per cent) was that the household had less money available. Other reasons included the fact that there were less people to help in the household (8 per cent), that children were more rebellious and difficult to look after (6 per cent) and that children were more depressed and prone to illness (6 per cent). These last two reasons, moreover, were frequently given as the second most important reason why it was more difficult to provide for children’s health (17 per cent and 28 per cent respectively), as shown in Figure 8 below.

Overall, these high levels of out-of-pocket expenditure on healthcare (particularly medication) for respondents from the poorest and most vulnerable households highlight a worrying trend, stressing the need for further government support to cover health expenditures (especially in the case of severe health-related shocks).
Some interesting trends are also highlighted in Table 33 below, which looks at the health-seeking behaviour of children aged 0-18. The indicator that shows the highest variation between the different household types, in accordance with the hypotheses, is the percentage of children for whom caregivers were unable to afford medicines or healthcare at least once in the last 12 months. While this was between 22-27 per cent for migrant households and non-migrant households (with no significant gender variations), it was as high as 44 per cent for abandoned girls and 54 per cent for abandoned boys, proving the large role that remittances play in paying for healthcare.

For the other indicators presented in the table, it is important to interpret this data correctly, as health-seeking behaviour is partially linked to health needs, which are, in turn, influenced by the overall well-being of a household. For example, children who have never consulted a healthcare provider may have not done so either because they could not afford it or because they have never needed to – two opposite assumptions that are difficult to untangle. This is possibly why the results presented below are not very clear-cut when it comes to comparative results across household types. Despite these important limitations, however, what seems to emerge from the data is that children from non-migrant households are marginally more likely to have consulted a healthcare provider in the last year. However, average expenditure per child on health in the last year was lowest in non-migrant households compared to both migrant and abandoned households (possibly because of their higher morbidity).

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53 Note that this link between household wealth and ability to pay for healthcare is strengthened by analysing this same data based on wealth tertile disaggregations. While only 7 per cent of households in the highest wealth tertile were ever unable to afford medicine or healthcare for their children in the last 12 months, this was as high as 40 per cent for those in the middle tertile and 46 per cent for those in the lowest tertile.

54 Results on children who have never consulted a healthcare provider appear to be low in abandoned households and figures on abandoned children’s health expenditure over the last 12 months relatively high, especially if compared to non-migrant households.
5.2.2 Nutrition and food diversity

The impact of migration on children’s levels of nutrition and food diversity is an extremely important indicator of health outcomes and one that deserves careful analysis. Using data from Tajikistan’s 2007 TLSS and 2009 Micronutrient Status Survey (MSS), various studies have already been completed on this topic, highlighting two important issues.

On one hand, it is clear that the food consumed by poor children in Tajikistan is “not adequate, and the diet is not balanced among proteins, fats and carbohydrates”: households with children obtain most of energy (calories) from bread and cereals, as well as so-called “cheap calorie” products, while not consuming enough meat and fish (TLSS, 2007). Moreover, food consumption is extremely seasonal, with fruits and vegetables lacking in diets from early winter until late spring. This translates into the fact that malnutrition and food insecurity are serious concerns in Tajikistan. According to 2009 estimates by the MSS on children aged 6-59 months, 20 per cent have low height-for-age rates (–2 z-scores), while 3.1 per cent have low weight-for-height (−2 z-scores). Moreover, almost one third (28.8 per cent) of the children studied had Hb values < 11 g/dL, indicating the frequency of anaemia, with 52.9 per cent having iodine deficiency (UI < 100 μg/L).

On the other hand, studies highlight the fact that migrant households’ access to increased income through remittances has a positive impact on children’s nutritional status. In particular, a recent paper by Azzarri and Zezza based on the 2007 TLSS proves that “living in a household with migrants increases the child z-score by 0.2 standard deviations among the children in the lower part of the income distribution”, and that migration has a “positive and statistically significant influence on calorie consumption” (Azzarri and Zezza, 2011).

Note that this average expenditure may be affected by large expenditures in particularly grave cases.

Note that these results (that apply only to children 6-59 months) are an improvement compared to previous years and compared to TLSS 2007 estimates.
Results from quantitative and qualitative research performed for this study confirm the overall trends highlighted in the literature. First of all, it was found that many caregivers reported they did not always have enough food for their household in the last 12 months. However, this was mostly prevalent in abandoned households, with migrant households faring relatively better even than non-migrant ones. Secondly, it was found that migrant household’s proportion of expenditure spent on food alone was marginally lower than in non-migrant households and significantly lower than in abandoned ones, highlighting how remittances help to shift households’ expenditure towards less ‘basic’ needs. Thirdly, the dietary diversity of migrant households was either similar or equal to that in non-migrant households, with abandoned households once again lagging behind, especially in the consumption of higher-nutrient food types such as meat, fruit, fish and beans/lentils/peas/nuts.

Table 34. Nutrition and food diversity hypothesis test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children from non-abandoned families left behind in Tajikistan have access to better nutrition</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
<td>Remittances increase household income, a large proportion of which is allocated to buying food for members of the household. For these reasons, both the quantity and diversity of food consumed increased in migrant households</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Descriptive information from caregivers shows that 33 per cent of caregivers in migrant households reported not always having enough food for their household in the last 12 months. While this is a relatively high percentage, it is comparable to responses in non-migrant households (38 per cent) and is much lower than rates in abandoned households (57 per cent). Similarly, the percentage of caregivers reporting not having enough food for three months or more was lowest in migrant households (14 per cent), compared to 26 per cent in non-migrant households and – unsurprisingly – 56 per cent in abandoned ones. The average number of days children in the household had skipped meals or eaten smaller portions because there wasn’t enough food was also lowest in migrant households, at 1.7 compared to 2.1 days in non-migrant households and 5.9 in migrant ones, confirming the hypothesis that increased income from remittances has an impact on households’ ability to cover their food needs. A quote from a mother in an abandoned household succinctly summarises the relationship between income and ability to cover the household’s food needs:

“Every day the price of food goes up, so of course it is difficult for me to buy all the necessary products for my children... though I try to make sure they are not hungry. Yet I can’t buy all the products, I have no money, we live very poorly.”

Table 35. Food security

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of caregivers reporting:</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They did not always have enough food for their household in the last 12 months</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not having enough food for the household for three months or more over the last 12 months*</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

57 Interview with abandoned mother, Gafurov.
Impact Of Labour Migration on “Children Left Behind” in Tajikistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spending over 90% of their monthly budget on food</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the higher number for the first indicator reported is due to the skip pattern in the questionnaire.

* The starred values have been calculated only for those who reported not having enough food over the last 12 months.

Related to the discussion presented above, an interesting indicator of a household’s food availability is the proportion of monthly expenditure that is allocated to food alone. As the literature on this topic highlights, poorer households tend to spend a much higher proportion of their income on basic needs (mostly food), as they don’t have enough money to spend on other less ‘essential’ goods. This trend is supported by the data from this research and is clearly visible in Figure 9 below, which shows differences among the three household types for this key indicator. As the graph traces, only 10 per cent of migrant households declare spending over 90 per cent of their monthly budget on food, compared to 54 per cent of abandoned households and 22 per cent of non-migrant households. Interestingly, migrant households allocate comparatively less resources to food consumption than non-migrant households, demonstrating the strength of the income effect triggered by remittances.

Figure 9. Proportion of monthly expenditure on food, by household type

Another extremely important indicator of food security is dietary diversity. This simple indicator reflects, in a snapshot, the economic ability of a household to consume a variety of foods (Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), 2007). Several studies have shown that an increase in dietary diversity is associated with socio-economic status and household food security (household energy availability) (Hoddinot & Yohannes, 2002; Hatloy et al., 2000).

Results from the small survey conducted for this study show that children in migrant and non-migrant households fare better than children in abandoned ones in terms of the food types they consume, especially when it comes to higher cost and more nutritious food such as meat, fruit, fish and beans/lentils/peas/nuts. In fact, as Figure 10 highlights, children in migrant households appear to have had the most varied diet over the seven days prior to the interview.
This is confirmed by adopting a summary index of dietary diversity, constructed using an approach similar to that of FAO’s Household Dietary Diversity Score\(^\text{58}\) (FAO, 2007). With a score of 10.4, children in migrant households boasted the highest weekly dietary diversity, closely followed by non-migrants at 9.8 and by abandoned households at 9.\(^\text{59}\) Moreover, while no differences were observed between the three groups in regard to the consumption of basics such as cereals and tubers, differentiated trends similar to those explained above were found in relation to the consumption of meat/fish, fruit and pulses.

The qualitative interviews with caregivers of children with migrant parents who sent remittances back home were in line with these findings, with people explaining that the additional money was being used to buy more and better food. “Yes, the food has improved (since my husband has left), we consume more meat, vegetables, dairy, and fruits”,\(^\text{60}\) a mother of four explained in Vahdat. A father whose wife had migrated similarly reported: “since my wife’s departure it became much easier to provide the children with enough food... earlier, when just I was working, I could not buy enough, because I earned very little”.

The description of a 17-year-old boy’s diet (from a migrant household) gives a sense of the general availability of food within his household:

“I eat as much as much as I want. Meat and rice we eat one or two times per week... fruit in summer: apricots, cherries, peaches, etc. are available to us and sometimes we buy apples and pears (four to five times per month). We have a cow that gives milk and we eat dairy products two to three times per week... we have porridge, Chakka, yogurt and so on. Sugar is always there and we eat vegetables three to four times per week, mostly in soups, stews...”\(^\text{61}\)

---

\(^{58}\) This is a simple summary indicator of food diversity within a household, constructed by adding up the food types consumed by each household in the last 24 hours. For the summary score presented above, the food categories consumed by each household in the last week were added and then averaged across household types.

\(^{59}\) Note that the overall diversity scores are relatively high because food consumption was analysed over a week. Also, interviews were conducted just before the start of winter, when food variety is still relatively high.

\(^{60}\) Interview with migrant mother, Vahdat.

\(^{61}\) Interview with 17-year-old migrant boy, Gafurov.
Generally speaking, this positive attitude towards food availability in the household seemed to prevail in most interviews with children. This was the case even among abandoned households, possibly showing how children adapt to what they have (but also stressing the role of home-grown food in guaranteeing basic dietary diversity).

“For breakfast, I ate cake with butter. For lunch I ate plov and for dinner damlama. Yes, I am happy with what I have, because my mum is a very good cook. I eat no more, no less than other children.”

“.for breakfast milk, for dinner pumpkin or pea soup, yogurt, no fruits... We grow vegetables (onions, dill, cilantro), and we eat vegetables two or three times per week. We only have three people in the family, so it is not as difficult as in other large families. We eat meat products once or twice a week. But because of lack of money, we don’t buy expensive products often.”

5.5.3 Health practices: preventive healthcare and unhealthy behaviour

All in all, evidence on preventive healthcare practices from this study did not highlight particular differences between children in migrant, abandoned and non-migrant households. Vaccination rates were very high across the three household types and personal hygiene practices such as teeth-brushing and bathing were more or less uniform. Moreover, unhealthy behaviour such as smoking and drinking did not appear to be common among the children who were interviewed. Regarding sexually transmitted diseases, the only evidence found was anecdotal, from doctors and nurses in the study areas.

Table 36. Health practices hypotheses test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to vaccination among children left behind is not significantly different than among children from non-migrant households</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
<td>Vaccination rates are determined by systemic issues within the healthcare system of Tajikistan. Consequently, there was little variation in these rates among children from migrant and non-migrant households.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children left behind, particularly adolescents, have worse health practices (personal hygiene, alcohol and tobacco use)</td>
<td>Not confirmed</td>
<td>The assumption was that children left behind will have worse health practices due to decreased parental attention. While some anecdotal evidence confirmed this, we did not find widespread evidence to support the hypothesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5.3.1 Preventive healthcare (vaccinations and personal hygiene)

Quantitative data showed very high rates of children receiving their full course of vaccinations (89-95 per cent), with no significant differences between household types. This is in line with Tajikistan’s struggle to ensure universal immunisation for all of its citizens (ensured partially through free vaccinations). It is also in line with the evidence provided by doctors who worked in the communities where interviews were conducted. Doctors assured us that most villagers

62 Interview with 17-year-old abandoned boy, Gafurov.
63 Interview with 15-year-old migrant girl, Kulyob.
Findings

5.5 Impact on health

(“the educated ones”,64, one nurse commented) came to the clinic to have their children vaccinated while the few who didn’t were reached by door-to-door campaigns.

However, although these trends are encouraging, it should be remembered that 2010 saw the first outbreak of polio in the country since 1997, with the disease striking 458 people, 90 per cent of who were under the age of 15 (UNICEF, 2011). While reference to the outbreak was not encountered in this research, it reveals possible problems with the overall immunisation effort described above.

Regarding other personal hygiene practices, teeth-brushing also did not seem to differ significantly across migrant, abandoned and non-migrant households, with high percentages of children never brushing their teeth across all three types (slightly lower for females than males). A similar lack of differential results was also found for children washing their hands with soap before meals and frequency of bathing, suggesting that caregivers of children who are left behind are just as attentive towards their children’s basic cleanliness.

Table 37. Children’s preventive healthcare behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female (Migrant)</th>
<th>Abandoned (Migrant)</th>
<th>Non-migrant (Migrant)</th>
<th>Female (Abandoned)</th>
<th>Abandoned (Abandoned)</th>
<th>Non-migrant (Abandoned)</th>
<th>Female (Non-migrant)</th>
<th>Abandoned (Non-migrant)</th>
<th>Non-migrant (Non-migrant)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of children who received their regular course of vaccinations</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of children who clean their teeth:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice a day</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a day</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of children who usually wash their hands with soap before meals</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of children who bathe/wash:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>713</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5.3.2 Unhealthy behaviour (smoking, drinking, etc.)

Unhealthy behaviour such as smoking and drinking did not appear to be particularly common among the children who were interviewed, and this was confirmed by interviews with key informants such as doctors and teachers. For girls in particular, smoking and drinking were mostly referred to as ‘shameful’65 and no interview revealed any female engaging in such activities. As one 15-year-old girl explained:

64 Key informant interview with female nurse, Vahdat (pilot study).
65 Interview with 15-year-old non-migrant girl, Vahdat.
“In our family no one smokes or drinks. Mum always warned us that this is a shame and disgrace for a girl.”

For boys, such behaviour was less frowned upon, though it did not appear to be common practice. Evidence from interviews with adolescents from migrant and abandoned households showed that most respondents did not engage in smoking or drinking – in some cases for religious reasons and in others because of awareness of the negative consequences such activities could have.

“No, in general smoking and drinking alcohol is forbidden for a Muslim. It is very harmful for health. I understand all this and in the future I will not smoke and not drink alcohol.”

“In our family no one smokes or drinks. This has a very bad effect on human health, especially for the liver and heart. There is much talk on this subject on TV.”

However, a 17-year-old boy whose father is a migrant worker gave a particularly strong account pointing in the opposite direction:

“Some of my peers, whose fathers are migrants, do bad things. They smoke, drink. Sometimes they tease me that I am not like them. Some of them, after their father’s departure, no longer listen to their mothers, smoke cigarettes, even drink alcohol. Some of them meet with girls and rape them... this is very bad.”

That said, results from the quantitative questionnaires administered to 15-18 year olds confirmed the overall trend highlighted by qualitative interviews. Though it should be noted that the overall numbers analysed are low and the behaviour is self-reported, smoking and drinking was mostly associated with males (with one notable exception for abandoned females) and was distributed quite uniformly across different household types.

Table 38. Smoking and drinking among adolescents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>Non-migrant</td>
<td>Migrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of 15-18 year olds who declared smoking a cigarette at least once in the last 30 days</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of 15-18 year olds who had an alcoholic drink at least once in the last 30 days</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

66 Interview with 15-year-old abandoned girl, Kulyob.
67 Interview with 17-year-old abandoned boy, Sughd.
68 Interview with 15-year-old abandoned boy, Vahdat.
69 Note that this is the only account of this type in the qualitative data.
70 Interview with 17-year-old migrant boy, Khatlon.
71 Note that 7 per cent of 14 respondents means one abandoned female declared she had smoked at least once in the last 30 days.
An interesting and overarching perspective on the ‘unhealthy’ behaviour of adolescents is taken by doctors in the communities where interviews were undertaken. Their opinion was that, all in all, cases of children smoking, drinking and using drugs were isolated, though they could often be triggered by lack of parental supervision. One example of this came from a doctor in Sughd:

“Our cases are isolated, but there are kids who follow bad practices, with risks to their health. Kids use drugs, alcohol, but these are just few cases. Most often, they come from migrant and abandoned families because these children are unsupervised... but there are children from non-migrant families doing this too.”

Doctors also highlighted another health risk linked to male migration, which they had witnessed in their communities: that of sexually transmitted and other infectious diseases.

“I know women who contracted various diseases after the husband returned.”

“If a migrant in Russia has been subjected to some kind of contagious disease, it will have consequences for his family. In most cases, the children of migrants contract tuberculosis.”

However, while key informants such as doctors reported this threat, the research did not uncover any details on sexually transmitted diseases among wives of migrants. However, this is of course partially due to the delicacy of the issue, which would require extremely invasive questions not appropriate in a quantitative survey or focus group discussion.

### 5.5.4 Morbidity

Because of the small and non-representative nature of the survey that was set up for this analysis, it was impossible to gather data on mortality rates among the selected sample and difficult to collect adequate data on morbidity. However, there was some indication that children in non-migrant households were less prone to illness than those in migrant and abandoned ones – an assumption confirmed by the qualitative findings.

#### Table 39. Morbidity hypotheses test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morbidity/mortality among children left behind is not significantly different than among children from non-migrant households</td>
<td>Not enough evidence, not confirmed</td>
<td>Morbidity rates are supposedly determined by systemic issues within the healthcare system of Tajikistan so we would expect not to see significant differences across household types. However, some evidence showed that non-migrant households fared better than migrant and abandoned ones in terms of morbidity levels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 40 below shows, there are only slight variations among the three household types for caregivers’ rating of health status, although abandoned caregivers were more likely to describe their children’s health as poor. On a second useful morbidity indicator, the per-
percentage of children aged 0-18 who suffered from an illness in the last 30 days, there seems to be a trend by which children in non-migrant households are less prone to illness than those in migrant and abandoned ones (15 per cent and 17 per cent for girls and boys respectively compared to 26 per cent/27 per cent in migrant households and 21 per cent/29 per cent in abandoned ones).

Table 40. Health status and morbidity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of children whose health is reported as:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘very good’</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘poor’</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of children 0-18 who suffered from an illness in the last 30 days</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings appeared to be corroborated by evidence from focus groups and from key informant interviews with doctors and other health workers, who pointed out that a lot of households’ health burden is often carried by the mothers who stay behind. As a doctor in Sughd put it:

“All the wives of migrants have problems; their children are sick, many with high blood pressure. All the women are very nervous, they have a turbulent life. (...) They are the woman and the man in the house and have to do heavy work at home too. Many of them have anaemia, haemorrhoids and indigestion, as well as undeveloped foetuses if they are pregnant.”

Interestingly, a rudimentary wealth-based disaggregation of health status for children in the study shows that the health of children in richer households is most often rated as ‘very good’ or ‘good’ (78 per cent of children) compared to households with a more deprived background: 57 per cent for those in the lowest and 61 per cent for those in the medium wealth tertile (see Figure 11). Similarly, households from the highest tertile were less likely to have had a sick person in them over the last 30 days (19 per cent) compared to households in the lower tertiles (27 per cent on average). This is in line with many of the observations made in the previous paragraphs, which show the direct link between remittances (and therefore additional income) and children’s overall health status.

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75 This was also supported by casual observations by the fieldworkers in the four districts, who pointed out in their final reports that children in abandoned families especially were often ill and sickly.

76 Interview with female doctor, Sughd.
5.6 Impact on education

The impact of parents’ migration on children’s education is ambiguous in the literature. McKenzie and Rapoport (2006) argue that migration influences educational decisions through three distinct channels: the income effect brought about by remittances; the direct effect of adult migration on the demand for child work; and the impact of the prospect to migrate upon the incentives to invest in education (the ‘demonstration’ effect). Consequently, while remittances are expected to increase the resources available for education, parental absence could result in more work for children at home, less help with school work from parents, poorer educational performance, an increase in school drop-out rates, and lack of interest in learning due to the demonstration effect.

Analysing the impact of migration on the education of children left behind is further complicated by the fact that this impact may depend on various factors, such as the child’s sex, age of the child at the moment of parent’s migration, number of siblings and family structure, educational level of migrating parent and parent left behind, as well as level of urbanisation of the migrant’s community. This means that the results of empirical research can be highly specific to the region, country, and particular circumstances under study, making it difficult to generalise such results and draw conclusions about the relationship between migration and the education of children left behind.

5.6.1 Main impact areas

5.6.1.1 Enrolment

The legal framework is expected to be the dominant mediating factor influencing enrolment. Since school enrolment in Tajikistan is mandatory for children under the age of 16, and this is largely enforced, no difference in enrolment rates is expected between children in migrant and non-migrant households. However, in particularly straitened circumstances, some abandoned households may not enrol their child because they will be required to work at home or

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77 This does not mean that enrolled children attend school (see below). In some countries, low enrolment in public state school could imply higher enrolment in private or institutional facilities, and migration can affect this (e.g. raising enrolment in private facilities as more money is available). However, in rural Tajikistan, this is very rarely the case since there are few private facilities.
for money. Moreover, migration may affect when children drop out of school from the age of 16, through a range of mechanisms.

In Tajikistan, the education structure is divided into:
- Pre-school (ages 1 to 6);
- Primary (ages 7 to 11, grades 1 to 4);
- General basic (ages 11 to 16, grades 5 to 9);
- General secondary (ages 16 to 18, grades 9 to 11); and
- Higher and professional education.

Data indicate that primary and basic enrolment rates in Tajikistan are generally very high (at 97 per cent for girls and 99 per cent for boys, and secondary school enrolment is still over 75 per cent. This is irrespective of the high rates of migration: primary and basic school is mandatory and free, and enrolment is largely enforced.

Pre-school enrolment, by contrast, is extremely low – at less than 9 per cent overall and less than 4 per cent in rural areas. Enrolment rates for higher and professional education are also low at around 15 per cent in rural areas. Indeed, both rates are so low that the impact of migration on them is unlikely to be detectable in this survey.

Our field research supported the hypothesis that migration status does not affect enrolment, because enrolment in school up to the age of 16 is mandatory, enforced and free, so enrolment rates are typically very high. The legal framework is therefore the key factor determining enrolment in basic and secondary school, rather than features of migration or household-level factors. After basic school age, enrolment changes, and this is explored in more detail in Section 5.6.1.2 below.

**Table 41. Enrolment hypothesis test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School enrolment under 16 is the same for children from migrant and non-migrant households</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Children are enrolled in school up to the age of 16 irrespective of migrant status, because school is mandatory, enforced and free</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In qualitative interviews, there were no reports of problems with enrolment up to the age of 16. When asked about enrolment in school, respondents in all types of households replied ‘of course’, noting that school is free. Teachers and parents noted that all children are required to study up to Grade 11 (aged 16), and one teacher remarked that “parents or guardians do not allow children to leave school, and the school in turn prevents children from dropping out of school.” Respondents discussed the age of dropping out, and here it appears that girls in poorer households (including abandoned households) may be more disadvantaged, and this is explored in Section 5.6.1.2 below.

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81 Interview with teacher, Shugnon.
However, as a mother of a migrant had it, “education in schools is free. I want my children to study up to grade 11.” It seems unlikely, therefore, that the direct costs of school fees should prevent enrolment up to 16. However, other education costs (such as books or uniforms) may prevent attendance (see below).

There also appears a strong social commitment to enforcing basic school enrolment. A migrant father noted that, “school is the most important thing. We don’t have one uneducated child in the village. If we do not send our children to school, we will be accused – in society this accusation is accepted.”

Migration and abandonment, however, were never mentioned as reasons why children should or should not be enrolled in school. No abandoned children reported not being enrolled in school as a result of a parent’s absence.

Pre-school enrolment is a different case and is generally low, as noted above. Pre-school was not discussed in qualitative interviews. In our quantitative sample (focusing on the 128 children in our sample aged 3 to 6), no abandoned children are enrolled in pre-school (in a sample of six). The reason for not going to school was usually because it was too far away. However, the sample is too small to draw clear conclusions and the data show no correlation between pre-school enrolment and wealth, migrant’s occupation, or remittances. Children are only slightly more likely to be enrolled in pre-school if they have more educated parents.

In our quantitative sample, the impact of migration on enrolment up to 16 appeared minimal, since enrolment rates were very high (and the available sample relatively small). Quantitative data indicate that 95 per cent of 481 children of school-going age in our sample are enrolled in school, which is in line with national averages.

These data can be disaggregated by age, and this makes clear that children only stop being enrolled in school after the age of 16. While enrolment up to the age of 16 in our sample is close to 100 per cent for all categories of households, for 17-18 year olds enrolment falls quite significantly for all categories. These data are in line with the TLSS averages cited above. It therefore appears that abandoned children (particularly females) are slightly less likely to be enrolled after basic school age. However, the sample sizes here are very small, so these data should be treated with caution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 42. School enrolment by age and household type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-16 year olds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18 year olds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% enrolled in an educational institution. Numbers in brackets.

The main reported reason that abandoned 17- and 18-year-old females were not enrolled in school was lack of money (in 71 per cent of the seven cases). Lack of money prevented enrolment for only two other children in the entire sample.

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82 Interview with migrant mother, Kulyob.
83 Interview with migrant father, Shugnon.
5.6.1.2 Drop-out age and years of school

While enrolment, particularly up to the age of 16, does not appear to be strongly affected by migration, drop-out rates – and therefore the number of years of completed schooling – may be affected. There are several possible explanations for this.

First, migration can generate a demonstration effect, causing children, in particular boys, to drop out of school to follow their migrant parents as soon as they complete the mandatory school programme (usually at the age of 16). In our conceptual framework, this pertains to an influence of migration on the attitudes of household members towards education, and to societal norms towards the education of boys and girls.

The scale of migration in Tajikistan and the limited employment opportunities at home could generate a significant demonstration effect. This was detected in our pilot research, where a teacher noted that, in their class, “only eight out of 19 stayed after Grade 9. Many of those who dropped out went to Russia themselves.” High drop-out rates at 16 are also evident in the TLSS, where attendance rates fall by around 40 per cent after the age of 16 (see below).

Second, girls from migrant households might complete fewer years of schooling, but this is because of the re-emergence of traditional views and family dynamics rather than due to the demonstration effect. This would reflect some findings that migration contributes to the reinforcement of patriarchal household and societal structures, and this reduces the likelihood that households invest in the education of girls.

Gender norms are strong in Tajikistan. For instance, Hegland (2010) argues on the basis of extensive anthropological research that girls’ drop-out rates “are dramatic... poverty and spending priorities result in gender socialisation of girls to marry and raise children, thus bringing about a low participation of girls in education.” She notes that females comprise only a quarter of higher education students in Tajikistan. Now that higher education is no longer free, and following the economic crisis, “If they can muster any resources whatsoever, families choose to send their sons to universities and institutes rather than their daughters” (Hegland, 2010).

The decline of Soviet political and social culture has, according to Hegland, allowed the re-emergence of Islamic and other cultural attitudes that severely limit the agency of females, particularly girls. She cites Harris (2006), who argues that “it would be social death for a young person to assert her right to autonomy, and she understands this very well.” This means that girls are unlikely to be able to make their own decisions about education, and are unable to migrate independently. The surplus of women means that their marriage choices are even more restricted. Even after marriage, mothers-in-law control daughters-in-law, as newly married couples tend to live with the husband’s parents (Hegland, 2010).

Third, children from abandoned households are expected to complete even fewer years of schooling, due to the reduced income available for school fees and the increased demand for child work. In our conceptual framework, this refers to the impact of migration on household labour capacity and incomes, and through this to the ability to pay for school.

The relative importance of these effects depends on both the nature of the migration experience (including the amount of remittances from migration) and the particular mediating factors in each household, including family structure, and the relation (perceived and actual) between the job market and schooling.

In Tajikistan, the available data suggest that most children remain in school until the age of 16, when schooling is no longer mandatory. The transition ratio from primary to basic is 98

84 Interview with teacher, Vadhat (pilot study).
per cent, and the expected years of schooling is 11.4 years on average (lasting to the end of basic school).  

Our research did not indicate that being in an abandoned or migrant household alone determined the stage at which children drop out. Drop-out age and years of schooling are influenced by a household’s economic circumstances and attitudes to education. These circumstances and attitudes are affected by and affect the migration experience, so certain types of migration can have an impact on drop-out rates. There is sometimes a negative demonstration effect, but sometimes this can be positive, depending on the individual characteristics. Where poverty is not a barrier to school and where attitudes are conducive, remittances can have a positive impact on years of schooling.

Table 43. Years of schooling hypothesis test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children left behind in Tajikistan, in particular boys, complete fewer</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>Children leave school depending on their economic circumstances and attitudes to schooling rather than their migrant status. Abandoned children tend to have worse economic circumstances and are less likely to attend upper secondary school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>years of schooling than children from non- migrant families</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative findings present some evidence for the demonstration effect. Overall, the negative aspects of the demonstration effect are probably strongest in abandoned households. However, the demonstration effect does not always manifest itself in the same way, and other household types also experience types of demonstration effects.

First, some children seek simply to emulate their parents or other relatives. As one abandoned mother reported during the pilot study:

“My boys are now adults (16 and 18) and they can’t find employment... so they want to go to Russia... they tell me ‘mother, I know you are in a difficult situation, but we’ve got to leave you’.”

This also applies to non-abandoned children. For instance, one 17-year-old girl in a migrant household reported that:

“I currently do not go to school. After completing ninth grade, I no longer wanted to continue my studies because I do not see any reason to learn. I want to be a dressmaker and sew traditional dresses. I’m learning this skill from my brother’s wife. My parents do not interfere with my wishes.”

Second, some children in abandoned households want to find their parents, at the risk of missing out on school. An abandoned mother noted that:

“When my son graduates from high school he wants to go to his father and bring him home. My son wants to go to his father, after the ninth grade. I always tell him that he should be a good student, like all children who have fathers. I have great difficulty

86 Interview with abandoned mother, Hissar (pilot study).
87 Interview with migrant female child, Vahdat.
In our fieldwork, such an attitude was not found in non-abandoned households, suggesting that this influence of migration on children’s attitudes – and therefore their schooling chances – is specific to subsequent non-contact.

Third, some children in migrant households want to join their migrant parents, but to combine this with studying. For instance, an abandoned boy reported that:

“When I graduate from high school, I want to go to university. I have not yet decided, but I want to go to Russia and be with my father, to live and study there. And my mother too, I will take her. Because I want to be with my father.”

Fourth, some children are affected by a positive demonstration effect, where they seek to emulate successful relatives. For example, one abandoned female child stated:

“I would like to be like my aunt. She was a very good student in school, and graduated from a prestigious university. She now works in a good institution and often travels abroad.”

Not all individuals are affected by this demonstration effect. Some children (including in abandoned households) want to do the opposite of their migrant parents, and to stay in school. Children in all categories have aspirations to technically skilled jobs and seemed convinced that school would allow them to do this. For instance, an abandoned migrant child reported that:

“I want to continue my studies in the future and become a doctor. Mum always says that I should definitely get an education and a profession and not work as she does, in the field.”

A non-migrant child reported that, “I would like to enrol in technical college and become a programmer.” A migrant male child exemplified the determination of many:

“I want to continue my studies after graduation at university, it’s my long-standing dream. My father and brother want to help me with this. They require from me only good grades in school and that I should not wander aimlessly in the street. I comply with their requirements, as I understand it’s only for my sake.”

Here is a second good example, from a migrant child, of the links between aspirations to jobs and schooling:

“When I grow up I want to find work in an international organisation. I want to live in Dushanbe, because in the capital there are the best conditions for life. Yes, the school helps me to get basic knowledge but I would like to do more. Because I want to be ready to enrol in college.”

88 Interview with abandoned mother, Vahdat.
89 Interview with abandoned male child, Gafurov.
90 Interview with abandoned female child, Shugnon.
91 Interview with abandoned female child, Kulyob.
92 Interview with non-migrant male child, Kulyob.
93 Interview with migrant male child, Kulyob.
94 Interview with migrant male child, Shugnon.
A third example comes from a group of non-migrant children. The group work suggests a social norm around attending school:

“In order to enter university, to become a banker, you need knowledge. And this knowledge we receive in school. For example, knowledge of mathematics is very necessary for me to go to university and become an economist.”

The views of children have an important implication for their age of dropping out – and their attentiveness and motivation at school – but often it is their parents (in all household types) who take the decision on whether or not the child should drop out, particularly in the case of younger children. For example, abandoned migrant children talk of their mothers being “very strict” in monitoring their schooling. Another abandoned child noted that her “grandfather and mother decide whether I should attend school or not.”

A 17-year-old male in a migrant household noted that he had to comply with his father and brother’s wishes to work hard, and a 14-year-old non-migrant girl made the role of parents clear:

“I cannot choose by myself to attend or not attend school. Because I’m still a little child, my parents will choose. I always choose after consulting my parents.”

Household decision-makers’ attitudes to schooling and gender roles therefore play an important role in determining drop-out ages. There did not appear to be a significant difference between the views of different household types. Most (but not all) parents appeared to have positive views on further education for their children, both male and female. These positive attitudes make it very likely that children will attend school.

A mother in a migrant household wanted her daughter to “learn up to the eleventh grade, and, after graduating from high school, enrol in medical college.”

A focus group of mothers felt that “education is very important for a human being. If a person has no education, they cannot find a job and are always confronted with difficulties in life.”

A non-migrant caregiver was clear about the importance of education for his children and grandchildren, and that this was an accepted norm in his household:

“They should still have the opportunity to learn for their future. All members of our family think so... Yes, my brother is the school director. I often ask him about the progress of children. We check their diaries, notebooks. Once or twice a month I go to school and talk with the teachers.”

A non-migrant mother agreed, saying that, “my husband and I think that children must attend school until the eleventh grade and continue their education after high school.”

Most parents felt that they should meet the costs of school, at least up to the mandatory age. For example, mothers in Kulyob felt that children should “challenge adults to create conditions to ensure that children go to school. If every child earns the money needed to pay for school, then what are the parents for?” However, children are much more likely to drop out after the

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95 Focus group with non-migrant children, Kulyob.
96 Interview with abandoned female child, Kulyob.
97 Interview with abandoned female child, Shugnon.
98 Interview with non-migrant female child, Gafurov.
99 Interview with migrant mother, Kulyob.
100 Focus group of mothers, Shugnon.
101 Interview with non-migrant male caregiver, Vahdat.
102 Interview with non-migrant mother, Shugnon.
103 Focus group of mothers, Kulyob.
mandatory age (Grade 9), especially in straitened economic circumstances, as costs are hard to meet. Abandoned children (but not children of migrants) are particularly likely to face these difficult economic circumstances because their households often lack a main income earner.

On the other hand, some parents have a negative view of the usefulness of schooling, an attitude that makes it very likely that children will leave school as soon as possible. For instance, a mother from a migrant household felt that “they should work, make a living. The son will join his father in migration.”\textsuperscript{104} Some parents also thought their children were less committed to school than the children themselves suggested, and this may reflect children’s desire to appear enthusiastic about education to outsiders. Some key informants had a similarly pessimistic view of schooling, arguing that the labour market in Tajikistan does not reward education for many individuals: “a boy [in a migrant household] has no example to follow and many of them think that education is useless, since there is no work in Tajikistan and one does not need knowledge in order to migrate for work.”\textsuperscript{105}

Others might have felt schooling was useful, but do not judge the value of the education of their children as sufficient to make it worthwhile investing further. In particular, gender norms are such that is sometimes felt that it is not worth investing in the education of girls, because the role of the daughter is to get married and look after children. In these cases, household poverty combines with gender attitudes to prevent enrolment, and children leave school as soon as they legally can (at Grade 9). Such a state of affairs does not appear to be related to migration. This view was usually most forcefully expressed by male caregivers, but also by some women. For example, an abandoned mother argued that:

\begin{quote}
“They must attend school until the end of secondary education and if possible, they should receive higher education. The girl does not necessarily get a higher education, since she must learn to keep the household, but for the boy higher education is necessary because in the future he will provide for his family.”\textsuperscript{106}
\end{quote}

A husband of a migrant notes that:

\begin{quote}
“After Grade 9 I’ll give my daughter away for marriage. As for my son, I will send him to Russia. I also want my children to study and after graduation enter university, but well, I do not have the opportunities to do so. My oldest son wants to go to Russia and work there. He says that the main thing in this life is not education but being active. If a person is clever then he can achieve all by himself. (…) All my children are learning well. My eldest son always gets 3s. And my daughters get 4s. I do not force them to go to school, because I will give my daughter in marriage, so what does she need studies for?”\textsuperscript{107}
\end{quote}

In another example, the husband of a migrant discusses how costs prevented his son from enrolling in further education. He also notes that education for girls after Grade 9 is optional, and here his attitudes are important in preventing the girl from being enrolled in school:

\begin{quote}
“All children should learn, but nowadays nothing can be done without money. My oldest son graduated from high school last year and wanted to go to a police school, but money was demanded for the enrolment. Now he is forced to work abroad with his mother and save money for admission to a police school. Perhaps, in the future, education will help our children. I think education is necessary for boys. Education
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{104} Interview with migrant mother, Khatlon.
\textsuperscript{105} Interview with NGO worker, Vahdat.
\textsuperscript{106} Interview with abandoned mother, Gafurov.
\textsuperscript{107} Interview with migrant father, Gafurov.
Findings

after Grade 9 for girls is optional. My eldest daughter is 17 years old, and she does not go to school, she looks after the house, her brother and sister and grandmother, as her mother is abroad. For girls, education is optional; they must learn to do their job.\textsuperscript{108}

An abandoned mother was also clear that poverty influences the years of schooling a child can have:

“My kids love to go to school. The children’s desire to go or not go to school does not depend on migration. If they want to go then go, but if they do not want to, do not go. There are children that want to go, but they have to work to provide for their family, and they are forced to leave school.”\textsuperscript{109}

While none of the small group of non-migrant adult interviewees mentioned poverty and gender norms, their children were clear that these issues restrict girls’ years of schooling:

“In today’s life you can see dozens of girls like Anor who are victims of difficulties in the family that mean she will not reach her goals. There are many such cases in our village. If we begin to look for examples in our school or in our class, you can find many such examples. Most girls do not attend school after Grade 9 because they have no conditions for this. Some of them drop out of school, but cannot enrol in college, because the conditions of present life do not allow it.”\textsuperscript{110}

Teachers agree that girls were also more likely than boys to leave school for work:

“Basically, children do not drop out of school. After ninth grade, many girls do not come to school anymore. It does not depend on the family (migrants or not); it depends on the traditions of the family. In classes where I teach there are no such cases. Many girls that leave learn embroidery, others help their mothers with household work, some go out to work. There are children, who, depending on the situation in the family, decide not go to school and instead go to work and provide food for their families.”\textsuperscript{111}

The presence or absence of certain decision-makers can influence school enrolment. On the one hand, some key informants felt that the absence of parents reduced years of schooling. As a teacher interviewed during the pilot study put it:

“Up to ninth grade education is obligatory... then about 30 per cent of our students drop out... this is especially the case for children with migrant parents because they have no-one to put pressure on them.”\textsuperscript{112}

On the other hand, some mothers reported that fathers were key decision-makers but paid less attention to their daughters’ education than that of their sons:

“It’s no secret that in our families the last word is the husband’s, regardless of ability. It happens that if the son should go to college, and there is no money, we find the money, we borrow, we sell what we can, but unfortunately the husband will not always do the same for a girl.”\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{108} Focus group with migrant fathers, Gafurov.
\textsuperscript{109} Interview with abandoned mother, Gafurov.
\textsuperscript{110} Focus group with non-migrant children, Kulyob.
\textsuperscript{111} Interview with teacher, Sughd.
\textsuperscript{112} Interview with teacher, Vahdat (pilot study).
\textsuperscript{113} Focus group with mothers, Kulyob.
This has ambiguous implications for migration. In difficult economic circumstances, girls may be expected to be asked to leave school first. However, when husbands abandon families, the shift in decision-making may improve girls’ education chances.

Remittances were felt by some respondents to increase years of schooling. As noted above, poverty can be a reason to drop out of school (particularly where attitudes to education are not conducive to study after 16), and remittances can help to reduce poverty. This implies that abandoned households are disadvantaged in this respect and mothers and children both noted this. A mother in a migrant household attributes her children’s continued schooling to remittances: “thanks to [remittances], they were able to get secondary education, and if they have the opportunity they might continue to college.”114 Children in focus groups referred to the role of migrant fathers in sending money for their children’s continued education and current expenditures. For example, a boy in Kulyob noted that “my father has migrated, and the good news is that he will send us money... we can buy school uniforms and food products.”115 Girls in Kulyob noted the same thing.

Key informants also saw the beneficial impact of remittances. For example, a teacher notes that, “money that migrants send is used for the schooling of children.”116 Indeed, another teacher felt that migrant children are better off than their peers: “Differences were observed in the fact that migrant children are better off, they wear clothes of better quality, they are tidy. Children from non-migrant families do not really pay attention to this aspect.”117 An NGO worker notes that children of migrants have the opportunity to learn and to pay tuition fees.118

Few respondents in the qualitative study mentioned fee costs as a barrier to basic school, but uniforms were often a more significant problem. For example, a migrant mother felt that “the remaining costs of school are not so big, and there is my salary.”119 Another migrant caregiver noted that, “remittances are spent on education, but a very small part. Their school is free.”120 One exception was an abandoned mother who reported that:

“There is the presidential scholarship of 20 somoni each month, for three to four months. This comes before the beginning of school to purchase school uniforms, supplies... This is of course not enough; I had to borrow from the neighbours. I do not want my son to be in need of something or someone to tease him because of the fact that he lacks something.”121

In the pilot study, a teacher remarked that:

“The main problem for children with migrant parents, especially for those who are abandoned, is their clothes. In winter they don’t even have shoes so they can’t come to school. Also, their nutrition is poor and their performance suffers as a result of this... their parents don’t send money as often as you think they do; sometimes, if the money doesn’t come for two to three months, they use no heating and they get sick... one of my students has five siblings and his father is away. The only subsistence they have for months is their backyard which they

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114 Interview with migrant mother, Kulyob.
115 Focus group with male children, Kulyob.
116 Interview with teacher, Gafurov.
117 Interview with teacher, Vahdat.
118 Interview with NGO worker, Shugnon.
119 Interview with migrant mother, Shugnon.
120 Interview with migrant male caregiver, Gafurov.
121 Interview with abandoned mother, Vahdat.
The quantitative data are consistent with these ideas. Table 42 above (and repeated here) indicates that girls, particularly in abandoned households, leave school before those in other types of households. This is consistent with the idea that girls are disadvantaged in education by the attitudes of decision-makers, and that poverty (associated with abandonment) increases the likelihood of children leaving school.

Table 44. School enrolment by age and household type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-16 year olds</td>
<td>99% (225)</td>
<td>96% (85)</td>
<td>97% (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18 year olds</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77% (34)</td>
<td>69% (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>85% (13)</td>
<td>43% (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>71% (21)</td>
<td>89% (9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More detailed analysis of years of schooling using the quantitative data is not possible because the sample sizes of those children who drop out of school is very small (see the table above). Our quantitative survey does not provide specific data on the year of dropping out for children in different households. However, they emphasise again the clear break after Grade 9 and then Grade 11, when a large number of individuals leave school.

Table 45. School years for 17-25 year olds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of education</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than Grade 9</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9 to 11</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Grade 11</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asking all household members aged 17-25 for their highest educational qualification.

Quantitative data also indicate that abandoned households spent less on education than other households. As was apparent in the qualitative interviews, uniforms were by far the most significant item of expenditure, and children in abandoned households had less spent on their uniforms than other children, which meant they spent less overall.

122 Interview with teacher, Vahdat (pilot study).
123 We are able, however, to conduct some analysis on school attendance (see the next section).
124 This is because adults in migrant households may not have been children in migrant households, so we cannot attribute their year of dropping out to migration status.
Households receiving higher remittances per capita spent more on education, as shown in Table 46. However, remittances per capita are not correlated with education outcomes (such as attendance, enrolment or achievement), which suggests that spending on education in Tajikistan does not significantly affect educational outcomes. This is probably because most education is very cheap or free, and that additional investments make only marginal difference to outcomes, as they largely refer to investments in uniforms.

Table 46. Education spending by remittance amount

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remittance tertile</th>
<th>Total spent on education (Tajikistan Somoni)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tertile 1</td>
<td>331 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertile 2</td>
<td>376 (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertile 3</td>
<td>477 (66)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remittance tertiles generated by grouping individual remittance data reported in household interview. Numbers in brackets.

Despite these limited correlations, the provision of remittances marks a striking contrast between migrant and abandoned households in terms of education. While 42 per cent of 176 migrant households reported that migration had made it easier to provide for children’s education, and 42 per cent reported no change, 70 per cent of interviewed abandoned households found it more difficult, and 28 per cent saw no change. The main reason why it had become easier was because of money from remittances (90 per cent of cases), and the main reason why it had become more difficult was lack of money (94 per cent) (see Table 60 on page 87 for more details). Moreover, while around 30 per cent of migrant and non-migrant parents in our sample saved for their children’s education, only 9 per cent of abandoned parents saved.

Quantitative data also provides some indications of attitudes to education. It was difficult to detect significantly different attitudes to school between different types of household. Almost all the 240 respondents to the quantitative questionnaire felt that primary and secondary education for girls and boys was very important or important. Typically, parents felt that girls’ education was slightly less important than for boys: 80 per cent of migrant and non-migrant
parents found it very important that girls attend primary and secondary school and 90 per cent found it very important that boys attend. A slightly smaller percentage of abandoned households (70 per cent) felt that schooling for girls was very important, but there was no difference in their attitudes towards boys. This probably therefore reflects constraints in their circumstances. Around 85 per cent of parents felt that schooling after 16 would improve boys’ and girls’ chances for the future, but 60 per cent of parents felt that this was essential for boys’ chances, while only 50 per cent felt that it was essential for girls’ chances.

### Table 47. How important is education for boys and girls?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is very important:</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>91 (135)</td>
<td>87 (46)</td>
<td>90 (58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>81 (136)</td>
<td>72 (46)</td>
<td>83 (58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>91 (135)</td>
<td>87 (46)</td>
<td>90 (58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>82 (136)</td>
<td>72 (46)</td>
<td>80 (58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>71 (134)</td>
<td>85 (46)</td>
<td>72 (58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>49 (136)</td>
<td>65 (46)</td>
<td>47 (58)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of caregivers thinking education is very important. Numbers in brackets.

As we can see, a smaller percentage of respondents felt that university was important, particularly for girls. On average, 24 per cent of respondents felt that university for girls was not very important (9 per cent had the same view for boys). A higher proportion of parents in abandoned households felt that university was very important for boys and girls (85 per cent and 65 per cent respectively, compared to 70 per cent and 50 per cent in other household types). However, only 33 per cent of parents in abandoned households felt that they would send their children to university, compared to around 70 per cent of parents in other households. According to 89 per cent of abandoned households, this was because university cost too much. 11 per cent felt that it would not help to get a better job.

### 5.6.1.3 Attendance

In theory, school attendance is positively affected by income (including remittances), and negatively affected by demand for child work (both within and outside households), by negative demonstration effects, by poor quality school provision, by high costs and by low expectations of the usefulness of schooling. The impact of migration on school attendance is therefore strongly conditioned by remittances. This implies that children from abandoned households are likely to attend less school than non-abandoned migrant households.

Overall, international evidence suggests that the impact of migration on attendance depends on the level of remittances, the family structure, the age and gender of the child, and the nature of migration (one parent, both parents, abandoned or not, and duration). Our hypothesis was that the remittance transmission would outweigh other considerations around attendance.

In Tajikistan, school attendance up to the age of 16 seems to be high. Data from the 2007 Tajikistan Living Standards Measurement Survey indicate that overall school attendance was 95.2 per cent. According to the same survey, 97.3 per cent of 7- to 11-year-old children at-

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tend school, 91.5 per cent of 11-16 year olds attended school, and 48.9 per cent of 16-18 year olds attend school. Table 48 sets out attendance rates by gender. Female attendance rates in particular decline after the age of 11, but remain fairly high. This makes it difficult to detect the influence of migration using a small sample. Attendance rates decline most severely after 16, when school is no longer mandatory, and here the influence of migration may be more evident.

Table 48. School attendance in Tajikistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-11</td>
<td>96.1%</td>
<td>98.5%</td>
<td>97.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-16</td>
<td>87.9%</td>
<td>94.8%</td>
<td>91.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>61.7%</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In this study, attendance up to the end of basic school did not appear to be influenced strongly by migration. It was influenced mainly by illness and by household poverty and labour capacity, which compelled children to work at home or for money (see subsequent sections). Abandoned children tended to miss school slightly more as a result.

Table 49. Attendance hypothesis test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School attendance is higher and drop-out rates are lower for children from migrant households</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>There appears no significant difference between types of children missing school. Abandoned children appear to miss school slightly more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most children reported that they tried not to miss school, and that their parents enforced school attendance. This was not dependent on migrant type. For instance, an abandoned boy reports that, “I’m in Grade 11. If one counts, there are 216 school days. I miss none; I do not want to miss lessons. There is no chance I would miss lessons because that is a shame.” An abandoned girl reported that her parents were also strict in this regard: “My mother is very strictly monitoring our studies and school attendance, so we try not to miss classes.”

Children reported missing school, largely because of illness, paid work, and household work. There were some differences between genders, and between abandoned, migrant, and non-migrant households.

All types of children of all genders reported missing school for illness. This was the most commonly cited reason, and often the only reason. For instance, an abandoned girl reported that, “Now I’m in ninth grade. I went to school about 210 days in a year. I try not to miss classes. Unless I’m sick, when I do not have to go to school until recovery.” Migrants and non-migrants similarly reported only missing school when they are sick, or, in one case, “to visit ill relatives.”

---

126 Interview with abandoned male child, Gafurov.
127 Interview with abandoned female child, Kulyob.
128 Interview with abandoned female child, Kulyob.
129 Interview with non-migrant female child, Vahdat
Various households reported that their children had to miss school due to work outside the home. However, this appeared much more common for abandoned households. A migrant mother reported that her sons sometimes missed school to work outside the home. An abandoned boy reported that, “In the year there are 200-210 school days. Except for a few days, I do not really miss much school. Sometimes, due to the collection of cotton, I have to miss classes. This month I missed three days.”

Some abandoned respondents mentioned not being able to send their children to school regularly because they are needed to earn money. For instance, a focus group of mothers reported that: “Everyone should get education. It is for the future. My daughter helps me, and on many days she doesn’t go to school. The school director called me in and complained. I explained everything to him, that she was helping me earn some money. We sew ‘kurpa’ and make ‘ligand’. He understood me. My girl did not go to school for five days and then was afraid to go, and I had to go and explain everything. I understand that she should learn first of all. But it was very hard; my husband does not help. And I’m forced to engage her.”

This example indicates that families with labour shortages and low incomes (such as many abandoned migrant households) need children to work at home. This is reflected by the views of a teacher who felt that, “abandoned children are much more likely to miss school. Their living conditions are much more difficult than in other families”.

All types of children reported occasionally missing school in order to work at home, but boys mentioned this much more. For instance, a migrant boy reported that, “The main reason to miss school is that we look for the cows on our or my uncle’s farm. Except for this and days when I am ill, I always attend school.” A non-migrant boy reported sometimes missing school to do urgent work at home. Household work tends to be rationed out. Migrant children refer to missing school when it is “our turn to go with the sheep.”

No girls reported missing school to do household work, but their mothers did mention that some girls missed school for household work. However, this was surprisingly rare.

Teachers note that that school attendance is equal for:

“...migrants and non-migrants, because 60 per cent of migrants migrate to ensure their children’s education. This applies to both boys and girls. Even if in the family the husband migrates and sends money, the mother ensures that children are in school. In our village, education is taken very seriously. Parents, guardians and teachers have control over the child and they go to school. If a child misses class for a few days, the class master should call or go to the student’s home, and check why the child is missing.”

The determinants of attendance seem therefore to be related to migration only through economic circumstances, which play an important role in whether or not children attend school principally because children are required to work to earn, rather than because the direct costs
of school are high. Teachers note that children enrolled and attending school have to work less, and that children who drop out of school do so to work. The inter-relation between school and work is explored more in Section 5.7.1.

The qualitative data did not provide much evidence that the education level of parents influences attendance. One NGO worker remarked that, “it also depends on the degree of education of the mother in the family. If the mother is not educated and unenlightened, she cannot deliver education to children.”\textsuperscript{138} However, this was not clear elsewhere.

Respondents recognise that absences from school can affect educational outcomes. For instance, a focus group of non-migrant children noted that:

“If a girl looks after her younger brother, she will miss many lessons. She will lag behind her peers. She will not go to school. And she cannot become a doctor, as she wanted.”\textsuperscript{139}

It also seems, however, that absences can complicate children’s relationship with teachers, and make them less willing to return. This is also found in other studies.

The quantitative data show some small differences between the proportions of children of each type missing school in the previous 30 days, as set out in Table 50. Overall, boys were slightly more likely to have missed school, which reflects the qualitative findings. Abandoned children were overall more likely than other types of children to miss school in the last 30 days, also reflecting the qualitative findings. Note that the proportion of children reporting missing school (around 45 per cent) is much higher than in the TLSS, but this is driven in part by a difference in the definition of attendance (where the TLSS refers to missing four weeks in a year).

Measured by the number of days missed in the last year by different genders and household types (see Table 51), there is a similar pattern of boys missing more days than girls and abandoned children missing more days than others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 50. Attendance by gender and migrant type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% reporting missing school in the last 30 days. Numbers in brackets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 51. Attendance by gender and migrant type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of days missed in the last year. Numbers in brackets.

These data can be usefully disaggregated by various different mediating factors. As shown in Table 52, wealth appears to influence the likelihood of missing school, with poorer households more likely to miss school. This supports the qualitative data presented above. However, for children that miss school, there is little difference between wealth tertiles in terms

\textsuperscript{138} Interview with NGO worker, Vahdat.

\textsuperscript{139} Focus group with non-migrant girls, Gafurov.
of how many days they missed. Interestingly, this is not correlated with remittances. It is not clear, of course, from these data, why fewer children in richer households miss school, but it may be connected to better health, lower demands for their labour, better preparation, or a combination of factors.

Table 52. Attendance by asset class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset tertile</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% reporting missing school</td>
<td>48% (172)</td>
<td>51% (135)</td>
<td>29% (151)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days missed in the last year</td>
<td>6.9 (157)</td>
<td>6.6 (127)</td>
<td>5 (140)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% reporting missing school in the last 30 days. Numbers in brackets. Asset tertiles calculated from the list of seven assets (see Section 5.2.5).

The level of education of the parent who remains in the household appears correlated with the likelihood of regularly attending school. Table 53 shows that while the education level of the absent father makes little difference to the probability of missing school, an educated mother being present in the household makes children much less likely to miss school. Again, it is not clear whether this is due to a correlation with greater wealth, a demonstration effect, or greater concern for education among educated mothers.

Table 53. Attendance of children in migrant households by parents’ education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education level of parents:</th>
<th>Completed grade 10</th>
<th>Further pre-university training</th>
<th>University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td>42% (36)</td>
<td>44% (117)</td>
<td>45% (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>62% (61)</td>
<td>37% (97)</td>
<td>31% (26)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of children reporting missing at least one day of school in the last 30 days. Numbers in brackets.

Quantitative data also provide reasons for missing school, as set out in Table 54. Children of all types most frequently missed school due to illness. Lower absence rates for wealthy children could therefore reflect better health. However, as reported in various anecdotal interviews, non-migrant children were less likely to miss school due to illness, and abandoned children were slightly more likely to miss school due to illness. Non-migrant males appear slightly more likely to miss school to work outside the home, but this may because they are a slightly older group than others interviewed. Around 30 per cent of abandoned females reported missing school for work at home or outside, compared with 15-20 per cent of other types of children. This was not clear from the qualitative research, but reflects the higher time burden on abandoned females, also explored in the sections below on economic activities.

The other striking finding in Table 54 is that 15-20 per cent of abandoned migrants in our sample missed school because of stress at home, while this reason was negligible for other household types. Although this was not picked up in the qualitative research, this reflects interviews indicating that abandoned households suffer more emotional and economic stress, and shows that this stress has an impact on our outcomes of interest.
Table 54. Reason for missing school by gender and migrant type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Individual type</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21% (96)</td>
<td>33% (27)</td>
<td>13% (83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20% (118)</td>
<td>30% (20)</td>
<td>16% (76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work outside home</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4% (96)</td>
<td>11% (27)</td>
<td>10% (83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6% (118)</td>
<td>10% (20)</td>
<td>21% (76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work at home</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>13% (96)</td>
<td>19% (27)</td>
<td>4% (83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>13% (118)</td>
<td>10% (20)</td>
<td>4% (76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress or problems at</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4% (96)</td>
<td>15% (27)</td>
<td>1% (83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>home</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3% (118)</td>
<td>20% (20)</td>
<td>1% (76)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of school-age children giving this reason for missing school. Numbers in brackets.

5.6.1.4 Achievement

The final component of educational outcomes is achievement. This reflects not only whether children are enrolled in and attend school, but also how they perform. In Tajikistan, the evidence on educational achievement is unclear. Literacy rates are very high (97.4 per cent of people are able to read, according to the TLSS 2007), so these are unlikely to vary significantly by migration in our small sample.

The evidence from our fieldwork does not show that migrants perform better or worse than non-migrants. However, there are indications that children in some migrant households lack support with regard to education from their parents, and that this may harm their performance. This is somewhat compensated by remittance provision in non-abandoned households. However, the picture is complex, and the education levels and attitudes of parents also play an important role.

Migration can affect academic achievement negatively through reducing parental supervision and assistance, through children becoming de-motivated or behaving worse, and through children becoming distracted by other duties. On the other hand, remittances may allow households to purchase higher quality education for their children, and some interviews from our pilot research indicate that children of migrant families are higher achievers, with one teacher in particular noting that:

“Children with migrant parents in my class are much better behaved than the others... it would be nice if they could get some additional support... children of migrants are often the strongest in class because of their situations. They are leaders... they have suffered, so they are stronger.”140

Of course, teachers are in the best position to offer such conclusions on the relative academic performance of migrants and non-migrants, but their views differed. In contrast to the teacher above, some teachers felt very strongly that migrants performed worse on average. For instance, a teacher in Gafurov felt that migrant

“Children are far from their father’s love, some of them are ill, others have bad grades, miss their parent, and are not doing homework. There are others that learn well and obey. But there are very few of these last ones.”141

140 Interview with teacher, Vahdat (pilot study).
141 Interview with teacher, Gafurov.
Other teachers noted differences between migrant and abandoned children, noting that abandoned children struggle much more: “the difference between the families of migrants and non-migrants is not big. Abandoned families have very little opportunity.” Furthermore, other teachers argued that the differences depend less on migration and more on maternal education:

“If in the migrant families, the mother is educated, this is very good. If, on the contrary, the mother is a single mother and illiterate, that certainly has a negative effect on children.”

Indeed, many migrant families report migrating expressly to improve children’s educational achievement. For instance, a focus group of male caregivers in migrant households argued that:

“It is important for the family to have an income and for children not to be forced to work. They would study instead of working.”

A mother in a migrant household summarised the issues well:

“The absence of a father does not affect the health and education of the child. Yes, I can always afford children’s education. They are always provided with textbooks and notebooks. The only thing that I cannot help them is with their homework.”

Further to this, many respondents mentioned problems in education resulting from migration removing the possibility for supervision and help with homework.

The quality of schooling and teaching is relevant to children’s achievement. There were no clear reports of discrimination in the classroom against migrant or abandoned students. Children were typically positive about their teachers, who treat them well provided they are diligent students. For example, one abandoned child said, “My teachers treat me well. If you prepare for lessons, the teacher will not find a reason to treat you badly.” Another abandoned child echoed this emphasis on good preparation: “I’ve never had any misunderstandings with the teachers, because I’m always ready for lessons and they have nothing to blame me for.” However, one migrant boy stated: “What I do not like about school is being lined-up. Because I was not ready for a history lesson once, they brought me up in front of my classmates.” Although not evident in our data, it is possible that this emphasis on preparation disadvantages abandoned households with home environments less conducive to learning.

Where children do criticise their schools, this is because of a lack of electricity, which is a major problem in the winter, since they can’t attend school from morning to evening. This is reported in several groups, but is put particularly well by a group of non-migrant children:

“Conditions in school are not bad. Teachers conduct lessons as well as possible. As Farhad said, in winter we cannot use technical means because of lack of electricity. If schools were given full electricity, the quality of education would rise significantly.”

Parents’ absences are felt to have psychological effects on children (see Section 5.8) and, even where there is contact, the unpredictability of this contact or support can harm a child’s developmen...
In some cases, this is felt to lead to a lack of control and application to their schooling. After migration, for instance:

“Children miss classes and become mentally unstable. For example, when parents were at home, even though they were poor the child received positive evaluations. However, now the parents have migrated, there is no control over the child.”

The lack of discipline that follows a father’s migration or abandonment was emphasised as having negative consequences for schooling by several respondents. As one teacher put it, “the negative side is the absence of his father’s instruction.”

Many respondents felt that parental absence compromised the intellectual support that children receive. For example, a teacher felt that:

“The guardians help less with homework. Caregivers are mostly grandparents and probably at their age cannot help their grandchildren. There are also guardians who take care of their children and the children of somebody else, and it is probably hard to help both your children and the children of migrants.”

A father whose wife had migrated agreed with this point, noting that he would want to help his children but wasn’t able to, because he had to work too hard:

“I don’t know how it is for other children, but my children are affected by the absence of my wife. If she were here she would have drawn attention to their education. And I have a lot of work, I always have something to do and am hurrying somewhere, so I never really pay attention to their education. This is of course very bad, but I also have to do it. If I do not find a job as a handyman, then we are left without money and without anything.”

A focus group of mothers felt that grandparents could not help children with their homework, and that performance would deteriorate. An NGO worker also noted that guardians take less care of children, and give less support to their education, than their parents would. However, some guardians were more positive about their role, noting that it was important:

“There are often meetings at the school, and my wife and I always go and we also visited their school to talk with teachers about the progress of the children [ours and my brother’s]... Usually the absence of parents is always a bad influence on children’s academic performance, but most of all it depends on the caregiver, how responsible they are. We take a very strict attitude towards the performance of children in our household.”

Non-migrant boys were clear that their fathers helped them with homework: “My daddy helps with homework, especially in algebra. I get enough help from my parents.” A non-migrant child speculated that her parents’ absence might have negative effects on her:

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150 Interview with teacher, Gafurov.  
151 Interview with teacher, Shugnon.  
152 Interview with teacher, Kulyob.  
153 Interview with teacher, Sughd.  
154 Interview with migrant father, Gafurov.  
155 Focus group with mothers, Shugnon.  
156 Interview with NGO worker, Shugnon.  
157 Interview with non-migrant female child, Vahdat.
“Since my parents are with me I cannot tell. But I think that their absence would affect me negatively. If they weren’t close, I would think about them all the time and my thoughts would be occupied by them. So, I would not be able to concentrate on my studies.”

Migration was also felt in some cases to reduce the attention that parents pay to their child’s schooling. However, this varied. For instance, a teacher felt that:

“Fathers who migrated never come, never call. But there are parents who, after returning home after labour migration, come to school to learn about the progress of their children.”

A migrant mother similarly argued that:

“I often go to school and talk with the teacher. Some children probably are affected badly by a parent’s departure, but my daughter is not affected, since she almost does not know her father.”

A migrant also argued that his wife was able to look after the children’s schooling adequately in his absence:

“No, quite the contrary. I try to make my kids see my situation, so they will study better, became enlightened. Every week I go to school and talk with the teacher. In my absence, the wife controls the children.”

An abandoned mother similarly felt able to follow her children’s progress at school. However, abandoned children more commonly spoke about doing their homework themselves, without help from their parents.

The attitudes of children and parents, already discussed in the sections above, naturally play a role in children’s achievement. Our findings suggest that the attitudes of children and parents to schooling are typically positive. For example, one teacher reported that the “attitude to education in our village is very good. This does not depend on the families of migrants and non-migrants.” Another teacher noted that, “people here believe education is important, especially uneducated people who are suffering from this. They want to give their children a better chance.” Indeed, this teacher noted that the principal difference in attitudes was not migrants and non-migrants, but girls and boys: “Only girls do not really pay attention at school.”

Children do not report significant differences in their attitudes to schooling. Children in non-migrant, migrant and abandoned households report enjoying school, enjoying being with classmates and friends, and not having disagreements with teachers. For instance, a mixed focus group of children reported that:

“The school is our second home. I love going to school. We learn in school, every day we learn something new. I also like the school, as every day I meet with my class-

\[158\] Interview with non-migrant female child, Sughd.
\[159\] Interview with teacher, Gafurov.
\[160\] Interview with migrant mother, Kulyob.
\[161\] Interview with male migrant, Vahdat.
\[162\] Interview with teacher, Sughd.
\[163\] Interview with teacher, Vahdat (pilot study).
\[164\] Interview with teacher, Sughd.
mates. They are interesting. School teaches us to be human. If we want to become somebody, we must learn well.”\textsuperscript{165}

Although not detected directly by our fieldwork, some respondents felt that migrant children have worse attitudes to education. According to an NGO worker, children in migrant households do not always do their homework, and imagine they can always rely on their parents to provide money for education.\textsuperscript{166} These perceptions seem more likely to reflect prejudice than reality, particularly given our other findings presented here.

Quantitative data collected indicate that girls in our sample receive better average grades than boys, but that there was no difference between different categories of migrant. In our sample, 90 per cent of 224 girls in all categories received a school grade of 4 or 5, whereas only 60-70 per cent of 236 boys received a grade of 4 or 5 (where 5 is the best grade).

Paradoxically, and contradicting the evidence presented above, abandoned girls receive the best grades on average.

Table 55. Achievement by gender and migrant status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.26 (96)</td>
<td>4.41 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.86 (120)</td>
<td>3.84 (19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average score out of 5, where 5 is the best. Numbers in brackets.

In line with international findings, achievement appears strongly connected with wealth (measured by assets). This could be for various reasons, including better school attendance, better health, a more conducive learning environment at home, more time for homework, and more highly educated parents. It is also not the case that wealth is necessarily a cause of better grades, as well as a correlation.

Table 56. Achievement by asset class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset tertile</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>3.87 (171)</td>
<td>3.96 (138)</td>
<td>4.33 (158)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average score out of 5, where 5 is the best. Numbers in brackets. Tertiles are calculated from the list of seven assets (see Section 5.2.5).

As found in other studies, achievement appears significantly correlated with the level of education of parents, particularly mothers.

Table 57. Achievement in migrant households by parental education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of education</th>
<th>Completed grade 10</th>
<th>Further pre-university training</th>
<th>University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td>3.92 (38)</td>
<td>3.99 (116)</td>
<td>4.2 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>3.82 (61)</td>
<td>4.08 (98)</td>
<td>4.31 (26)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average score out of 5, where 5 is the best. Numbers in brackets. This is calculated for individuals whose father is a migrant.

\textsuperscript{165} Focus group with children, Gafurov.

\textsuperscript{166} Interview with NGO worker, Shugnon.
Quantitative findings on the impact of migration on performance tallied with qualitative findings. Abandoned caregivers felt more than migrant caregivers that their children’s performance worsened when the children’s fathers or mothers left, and none felt performance improved. Adolescents and children typically felt more strongly than their parents that their performance worsened, with the exception of male abandoned children.

### Table 58. Caregivers’ perceptions of impact of migration on children’s performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worsened – worse behaviour</td>
<td>2% (130)</td>
<td>8% (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worsened – more days absent</td>
<td>2% (130)</td>
<td>3% (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worsened – no one to help with school work</td>
<td>3% (130)</td>
<td>5% (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>3% (130)</td>
<td>0% (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No change</td>
<td>70% (130)</td>
<td>76% (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t say</td>
<td>20% (130)</td>
<td>9% (46)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of all caregivers responding to the question, ‘How have the children of this household’s performance changed since their mother/father went away’? Numbers in brackets.

### Table 59. Adolescents’ and young children’s perceptions on impact of migration on own performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19% (16)</td>
<td>17% (12)</td>
<td>40% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18% (40)</td>
<td>30% (10)</td>
<td>33% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19% (31)</td>
<td>33% (12)</td>
<td>0% (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29% (24)</td>
<td>0% (8)</td>
<td>0% (6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of respondents feeling that their performance worsens when their parent is away. Numbers in brackets

Quantitative data also revealed whether caregivers felt that it was easier or harder to provide for their children’s education after migration. Here, the results are stronger in dividing migrant households and abandoned households, and this reflects the role of remittances. Table 60 provides the details. Abandoned households felt largely that migration had a negative effect on their ability to provide education, mainly because of a lack of money. As secondary and tertiary reasons after lack of money, households finding it more difficult referred to the absence of a role model (seven households), no one to help with homework (six households), and no one to enforce studying (12 households). This chimes with the qualitative findings.

### Table 60. Effect of migration on child education provision, caregivers’ perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caregivers reporting that providing for their children’s education since their mother/father is away was:</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N (130)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much easier</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bit easier</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Impact Of Labour Migration on “Children Left Behind” in Tajikistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A bit more difficult</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much more difficult</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of those responding ‘more difficult’, the primary reason was:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N (7)</th>
<th>N (32)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less money</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child now needs to help on plot or in household</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one to help with homework</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of those responding ‘more difficult’, the second reason was:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less money</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child now needs to help on plot or in household</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No role model</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one to help with homework</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one to enforce studying</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of those responding ‘more difficult’, the third reason was:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less money</td>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No role model</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one to help with homework</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one to enforce studying</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages may add up to more than 100, because respondents finding it easier may have also had problems.

5.7 Impact on children’s economic activities

The impact of migration on the economic activity of children left behind varies depending on whether the child is employed within or outside the household. When children are employed outside of the household, one would expect the income effect of remittances to contribute to a reduction of child work. For children employed within a household, the effects could be twofold. First, the child may work more to replace the labour of absent adults. Second, remittances can influence the productivity of children if they are used to finance productive investments, such as land or equipment. Consequently, the overall impact of migration on the economic activity of children depends on the new division of labour within the household, and the type of effects that predominate as a result of migration. This may depend significantly on a child’s sex, as well as on whether the household is rural or urban, as well as attitudes to work of various types.

In this section, we analyse the impact on both paid work and work at home. Here, we do not attempt to categorise children by whether or not they are child labourers according to international definitions, but merely seek to address the impact of migration on their economic activities. The UNICEF and International Labour Organisation (ILO) definitions of child labour are presented below.
International definitions of child labour

UNICEF
UNICEF defines child labour as work that exceeds a minimum number of hours, depending on the age of a child and on the type of work. Such work is considered harmful to the child and should therefore be eliminated.
- Ages 5-11: At least one hour of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work per week.
- Ages 12-14: At least 14 hours of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work per week.
- Ages 15-17: At least 43 hours of economic or domestic work per week.

ILO
The ILO defines child labour as “work that
3. Is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and
4. Interferes with schooling by
   ◦ depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;
   ◦ obliging them to leave school permanently; or
   ◦ requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

In its most extreme forms, child labour involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities – often at a very early age.”

Broadly speaking, these definitions separate child labour from child work by the duration of that work and its consequences for the child’s development. The scope of our survey did not permit the identification of child labour (as opposed to child work) based on time use or consequences, since this requires a far more detailed questionnaire than was possible, so this section discusses the effect of adult migration on child economic activities without trying to identify child labour specifically.

Reports about labour migration from Tajikistan have noted that those remaining behind (usually women) need to replace the absent labour of the husbands that have migrated. This quote from an interview with women reported in Olimova and Bosc (2003) is indicative: “about 80-85 per cent of men from our kishlak left to earn money in Russia. And who is doing their work? Of course it’s the women who plough the soil and sow the grain and plant the cotton. Women do everything.” Olimova and Bosc note that although females have not traditionally engaged in agriculture, it has become their responsibility as a result of male migration.

The principal areas of impact considered in this study are on working outside the household and working inside the household. These are explored in turn.

5.7.1 Working outside the household
Children from all household types undertake work outside the household. Children from poorer households are likely to work more, and abandoned households are usually poorer, so there is a correlation between work and abandonment. To some extent, there is also causation between migration and child work, as children in abandoned and migrant households replace
their absent parents. However, this is not strong and the situation is diverse: non-migrant children also work, and some abandoned and migrant children do not. In addition to wealth and labour capacity as drivers, attitudes play a strong role in driving child work: some perceive work as beneficial, and others as harmful.

Table 61. Working outside household hypothesis test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children left behind in Tajikistan work less outside the household</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>Data do not indicate significant differences in children working outside the household. Children in all types of households work outside the household. The main drivers of children working outside the household appear to be the availability of labour and income</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The qualitative data also indicate that almost every respondent worked either at home or outside the home alongside schoolwork. Responding to the qualitative questionnaires, some children in abandoned households report doing paid work because they need to cover their fathers’ absence. Qualitative data indicate that males largely take this on. For example, a male abandoned child reported that he needs to load stones, and that “all the workload of the house is on me. If my father were here, it would be much easier.”

In many cases, abandoned children report working in order to earn the money required to sustain them. For example, a girl in an abandoned household describes the support they provide to their mother:

“My mother works at the farm, and somehow sustains us. We help her by working the land during the cultivation of cotton during its collection. We work together with mother. For this we receive little pay, and we somehow manage to live with this money.”

However, the relationship between working and migration or abandonment is not straightforward. This follows from our conceptual framework and is present in the data.

First, it is not the case that all children in abandoned households work outside the household (though working within the household is considered more acceptable). Where the level of household poverty permits, children do not work, either because parents worry that this will detract from their education, or because girls’ work contravenes gender norms. There are various examples of children in abandoned households not being allowed to work by their parents. For instance, a 17-year-old abandoned male child notes that, “Mum will not let me work for money either. She always tells me that I must, above all, be a good student, and then I can work wherever I want. But, of course, I want to do something to help my mother.” A participant in

167 Interview with abandoned male child, Vahdat.
168 Interview with abandoned female child, Kulyob.
169 Interview with abandoned female child, Kulyob.
170 Interview with abandoned male child, Gafurov.
a focus group of mothers argued that, “a 12-year-old girl cannot work in the market or somewhere else. The boy can handle this job, but she hardly can. As a mother, I could never let my daughter work.”\(^{171}\) Another mother in an abandoned household emphasised the importance of schooling for her children. The consequence of this was that they were permitted to help around the house, but “I do not let them work for money, because now it’s important for them to learn.”\(^{172}\) Teachers also note that, while many children assist in their households, this can lead to some negative consequences as children drop out of school.\(^{173}\)

Second, non-abandoned children also report working. This is either in response to labour shortage (in migrant households), poverty or because work is not considered a negative. Labour shortage and poverty are significant drivers. For instance, a male caregiver whose wife had migrated to Russia remarked that:

> “After she left, my eldest daughter does her job. The smallest is engaged in taking care of the house. Yes, my son is helping. He usually works the land (digs). Not very much, about five or six hours every day. That’s usually my son’s job, my daughter rarely go there. If there is a need, they go there to clean and to take out the harmful plants. My eldest son sometimes helps me and is paid for the portion of the work which he does. My daughter sews.”\(^{174}\)

A girl in a migrant household reported that, “last year I worked on the farm and was paid.”\(^{175}\) Non-migrant children also work, although perhaps less because their fathers are present: “for cotton-picking and collecting stones we receive a little pay. We give all the money to mum, and when she needs to she spends it on us. If it were not for my father, maybe we would have to work harder.”\(^{176}\)

The absence of the father in some cases changes the decision-making structure of a household, and this can allow children to work. For instance, a 17-year-old boy noted that:

> “My father was against me gathering cotton for so little money. Maybe if my father and brother were here, I would not have to do much of what I’m doing now. I think it’s all in my favour, but it’s just a pity that there is little time for lessons.”\(^{177}\)

Working outside the household is naturally influenced by the attitudes of parents towards work. While there are examples of worry about the negative consequences of work (some are cited above), it is important to note that not all respondents perceive children working outside the home as a negative, particularly when it comes to older children. For example, one 15-year-old abandoned boy said that, although he had to load stones, “it is good for your health.”\(^{178}\) A mother in a migrant household was clear that work is not only important to earn money for the household, but also good for both girls and boys because “the child becomes a hard worker.”\(^{179}\) Although “migration increases the duration of work, work does not bring any harm.”\(^{180}\) Another migrant mother thought, “this will be good for them. They learn to work, and it is good for their future.”\(^{181}\) A migrant father had similar views:

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171 Focus group with abandoned mothers, Vahdat.
172 Interview with abandoned mother, Gafurov.
173 Interview with teacher, Vahdat.
174 Interview with father in migrant household, Gafurov.
175 Interview with migrant female child, Vahdat.
176 Interview with non-migrant male child, Kulyob.
177 Interview with migrant male child, Kulyob.
178 Interview with abandoned male child, Vahdat.
179 Interview with migrant mother, Kulyob.
180 Interview with migrant mother, Kulyob.
181 Interview with migrant mother, Shugnon.
Quantitative data collected at the household level indicate that around 20 per cent of 328 children aged 6-18 in our sample have worked for cash or kind. Male non-migrants appear to work more frequently (35 per cent of 40 children in the sample worked), but otherwise there is little difference in the quantitative data between male and female workers. Abandoned children did not work more than the average. The most common form of work was in cotton fields (72 per cent of the 57 children reported working there). The six male abandoned children interviewed had a wider range of work (including construction), but the low sample sizes mean that no conclusion can be drawn from this.

These household-level data are partly reflected in questions asked directly to adolescents. Around 21 per cent of adolescents filling in questionnaires on work and education reported earning money from someone outside the household. Within the small sample of those reporting earning, boys reported doing this far more than girls, as Table 62 indicates. In the week before the survey, interviewed adolescents did a maximum of 10 hours of paid work outside the household, and over 50 per cent did less than five hours.

Table 62. Adolescents (15-18) earning outside the household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of respondents</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you ever earn any money from someone outside your household?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions were asked in the quantitative survey on the time children spent on different activities on a normal school day. These are presented in Figure 13 below, which does not indicate clear differences between the time use of abandoned children and other types of children. As expected, girls spent a slightly higher proportion of their time on helping at home, and a slightly smaller proportion of their time on leisure, but these differences are not sufficiently large to be recorded clearly.

When time use was disaggregated by asset tertile, children in wealthier households spent less time working for money outside the household, and more time doing their homework. This is in line with expectations that household wealth allows children to focus more on schoolwork and less on earning income. This would be expected to have positive implications for school achievement.

These data were disaggregated by a number of other factors, including remittances sent per capita, education levels of migrant parents, and duration of migration. There were no significant differences found in these disaggregations. This indicates that time use is more strongly driven by wealth, labour capacity and attitudes than by other factors of migration. However, the sample sizes are small at this point, so these conclusions should be treated with caution.

182 Interview with father in migrant household, Gafurov.
183 A regional disaggregation may have revealed different patterns of work type, but the small sample size and differences in regional-level data collection make comparisons risky, so these are not presented here.
5.7 Impact on children’s economic activities

5.7.1 Impact on children’s economic activities

These questions were also asked in regard to a non-school day, where it appeared that female abandoned migrants work longer hours than others for pay outside the household. However, the number of children in these datasets was small.

5.7.2 Children’s household work

Children in all types of households reported working at home. This was largely driven by societal norms and attitudes, since working at home is considered to be a normal part of growing up, and could be combined with schooling (as the figure above shows). The absence of parents may have increased this slightly, as labour capacity is reduced.

Table 63. Household work hypothesis test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children left behind in Tajikistan spend more time doing household work</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>Children in all types of households work at home. Girls tend to work at home more than boys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The consequence of the absence of parents for child work and additional labour for other adults is emphasised in several interviews. It often seems to be the case that men replace absent male labour, and women absent female labour. For example, an abandoned girl wishes “my father was with us at home. If my father was here, my brother and my grandfather would not have so much work to do. My brother now works a lot, and my grandfather is very weak, but he is forced to work as well.”\textsuperscript{184} This does not affect everyone, however, as the girl continues by noting that the absence of her father does not affect what she does during the day.

\textsuperscript{184} Interview with abandoned female child, Shugnon.
Mothers also report that it is necessary for children to help out in households given their low labour capacity, especially with the household head absent. For example, in Kulyob, a mother in a migrant household reported that there is “no other way out. If my daughter did not help, it would be very difficult.”\(^{185}\) She continued that, “in the absence of the father the child is forced to do all the hard work instead of his father. For example, he carries water and firewood, caring for livestock, etc.”\(^{186}\)

Similarly, where mothers migrate, children and daughters replace their labour. As a father whose wife had migrated put it: “most of the work my wife did, my children do now. If my wife was here, she would be doing the majority of the housework. And now this job is done by my daughters and sons.”\(^{187}\)

However, as with (and even more than) paid work, work at home is not confined to abandoned or migrant households, and work at home is not perceived as entirely negative. First, work at home is considered quite normal in most households, whether those households are wealthy, abandoned, or migrant. As a boy in a non-migrant household put it: “if there is work on the plot, I help.”\(^{188}\)

Another non-migrant girl noted that, “we have no fields or farm. I wash the dishes and help mum around the house. I don’t work for extra money.”\(^{189}\) Similarly, a non-migrant girl reported that, “basically, I help my mother in the household: cooking, cleaning the house, laundry, bringing water, etc.”\(^{190}\) However, they felt they would have more work if their parents were not present. For instance, a 15-year-old non-migrant female argued that, “if my parents were not here, of course all the domestic work would fall on me, such as taking care of my sister and working at home.”\(^{191}\)

Caregivers in different household types were also clear that working at home is a necessity, as well as being very useful to them. As this non-migrant father put it:

> “Children help us in any job. For example, we have land where we work, and my grandchildren are still small, but they often go with us, at least to talk to us during the work, so we are not bored. They brought us tea in a teapot. This help is also important. Our daughter also helps us, she works with us in the field and also helps her mother in household affairs... every week they work for two or three hours. Girls do the work easier, and the boys are still small. They read books, watch TV. My daughter-in-law is a teacher, so does not allow children to waste their time. Our lives are like this. One person cannot cope with this work. Therefore, we must involve them too. I don’t see anything wrong in this.”\(^{192}\)

This transcript demonstrates clearly the societal and individual attitudes towards children assisting parents with tasks around the house: it is necessary (since one person cannot cope with all the tasks alone) and useful (since it binds the family unit together and makes work more enjoyable), and therefore not considered bad.

Children in all types of households typically perceived helping out in the house as important and necessary where labour and finances are scarce. In one focus group, children argued that children in abandoned or migrant households should help their mothers to improve the situation of the family.\(^{193}\) In another focus group, they accepted the necessity of children working,

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185 Interview with migrant mother, Kulyob.
186 Interview with migrant mother, Kulyob.
187 Interview with father in migrant household, Gafurov.
188 Interview with non-migrant male child, Shugnon.
189 Interview with non-migrant female child, Gafurov.
190 Interview with non-migrant female child, Vahdat.
191 Interview with non-migrant female child, Vahdat.
192 Interview with non-migrant father, Vahdat.
193 Focus group with male children, Gafurov.
but noted that caregivers would first attend to the educational needs of their own children. A third focus group with female children argued that family members should divide up the household tasks between them so that all the work is done and children are able to go to school.  

Many children are aware of the constraints on adults’ decision-making around children’s time-use allocation, and are realistic about the choices that their caregivers face. A group of children in non-migrant households put this eloquently when confronted with a hypothetical situation:

“No we cannot judge the parents that they are forcing us to work and not go to school. Because life has become very hard. Everyone has to work at the same level as the adults. Life forces it. I think she (Anor) had to work. But she also has to go to school. It is very difficult to judge.”

Second, the attitude of parents towards work influences whether children are required to work, where there is a choice available. There is a range of attitudes towards children working at home. On the one hand, parents in some cases do not allow them to work, even if they express a wish to. For instance, an abandoned male child reported that, “my mother will not let me do paid work or household work. She always tells me that I must above all be a good student, and then I can work wherever I want.” On the other hand, and more commonly, people perceive benefits from children working at home. These benefits may be development for the children. For instance, one non-migrant mother reported that “a girl from an early age should learn to help her mother around the house. I do not give her difficult tasks around the house, so that she gradually learns.”

As noted above, however, the benefits may also be felt in terms of the family structure. A participant in a focus group of non-migrant children sums up this attitude:

“I want to say that if we help parents with the housework and in the field, they will be very happy and glad. I think that this is also showing respect for parents.”

The quantitative data presented above in Figure 13 support the idea that children in all types of households carry out household work. Children in abandoned, migrant, and non-migrant households all spend similar amounts of time working at home or in the family business. This is invariant to the region in which they live, suggesting that norms and attitudes are similar across different regions. Moreover, there was no difference in this indicator between households in different assets classes, which suggests that time spent working at home is not strongly related to income. The only slight difference is between girls and boys, with girls spending slightly more time working at home.

Most 15- to 18-year-old children (80 per cent of the 89 who responded) reported that they do more work at home when their parents travel, but there were no significant differences between different household types or gender of adolescents, except that female abandoned children felt that their time use was less likely to change. A very similar pattern presented itself for the 89 children aged 11 to 14 who were asked to fill out this questionnaire. This is in line with the qualitative data presented above.

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194 Focus group with female children, Kuylob.
195 Focus group with female non-migrant children, Gafurov.
196 Interview with abandoned male child, Gafurov.
197 Interview with non-migrant mother, Shugnon.
198 Interview with migrant mother, Shughnon.
199 Focus group with non-migrant male children, Kulyob.
5.8 Impact on psycho-social well-being

Evidence from both the qualitative and quantitative research showed that, by and large, one of the most important impacts of parent’s migration on the children left behind was psychological. In the case of abandoned households in particular, the social costs of migration were found to be high due to family disintegration and lack of parental care. Many of the children in the study were strongly affected by their parent’s migration, showing symptoms of withdrawal and depression, as well as increased aggressiveness and rebelliousness. An emblematic citation from the wife of a migrant summarises the overall psychological effect of parents’ migration on children left behind:

“Maybe you all have noticed that the nervous system of our children has become very thin. They react very strongly to any news. Their mental health is very weak... this is also a disease, this should also be treated. But I think no medicine will help, only love and care from relatives and parents.”200

Doctors and nurses working in the villages where interviews were carried out also highlighted the higher incidence of psychological and neurological diseases among migrant and abandoned households, pointing out that a mother’s psychological health is very likely to have a serious impact on her children as well:

“In households with migrants (...) the most common diseases are associated with the nervous system. I have frequently observed hypertension and other neurological diseases, especially among mothers... this affects their children too.”201

Results from the study highlighted four main impact areas of migration on children’s psycho-social well-being: depression and isolation; lack of parental control, aggressiveness and rebelliousness; bullying, teasing and stigma and; risky behaviour (alcohol, drugs and sexual behaviour). These are analysed in turn below.

5.8.1 Depression and isolation

Evidence from both the qualitative and quantitative research showed that one of the main impacts of parents’ migration on children left behind was their tendency to become withdrawn, sad and depressed. This was more common with girls than boys and particularly pronounced for children in abandoned households.

Table 64. Children’s depression hypothesis test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children left behind have higher levels of depression than children in non-migrant families</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
<td>The departure of a parent has both short-term effects on children’s mood and longer-term effects on their overall emotional state. This is due to a sense of abandonment and lack of a caring figure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When analysing the impact of migration on symptoms of depression and isolation among children left behind, the reactions of abandoned children – who have no contact with their father – are unsurprisingly the strongest, as the following three quotes testify:

200 Focus group with mothers, Sughd.
201 Key informant interview with male family doctor, Kathlon.
“Others have fathers who care for them. I also want my father with me. If someone offends me, there is no one to intercede for me. I am very sad; sometimes I sit in despair and cry.”

“Without my father it is very difficult, especially for mum. I am sometimes very sad, and I cry. This is because I really miss him, I feel lonely. My mum tries, so we do not feel so alone, but still I sometimes feel really bad, as nobody can replace him.”

“My father does not know anything about us, not our health, nothing – we have no contact, not even on the phone. The heavy burden of life has fallen on our shoulders; there is now sadness, grief and depression in the family. We were left without a man.”

Depression in abandoned households, of course, does not only affect children. In fact, sometimes those who are worse affected are the mothers who have to deal with the burden of raising their children alone. The following two quotes, one from a 15-year-old abandoned girl and one from an abandoned mother, powerfully portray this:

“I feel sorry for my mother when she is hiding away her tears. We have no man in the household, and although now things are peaceful I am scared at night. In general, a house without a man is full of problems.”

“We all fell ill when my husband left, but no doctor could cure us. I was anxious, depressed, all they gave me was Valeriana, saying I would improve. But nothing changed.”

Cases of sadness and depression were not only confined to abandoned households. Similar cases were also found in families with migrant parents who stayed in contact with their children, though to a lesser extent. Interestingly, a group of mothers whose husbands had migrated pointed out that, if a father “often returns and leaves again it will be difficult for children to deal with it” leading them to “depression”: “(the child) will be sad about saying goodbye every time, whereas if a parent does not come home for a long time, the child gradually gets used to it. If the parent returns often it is worse.” While this is an interesting point, it highlights the distinction between ‘short-term sadness’ linked to a loved one leaving and the long-term sense of abandonment and solitude that can be the consequence of prolonged lack of contact and support (this second feeling being more typical of abandoned households).

Nevertheless, even the sadness of a temporarily missing parent can be extremely disturbing for children who experience it, especially when they compare themselves to their peers at school or to the life they used to have before their parent left. The story of a 15-year-old boy in Shugnon is emblematic. “Of course it is difficult, especially when I see the attitudes of parents of my friends. This make me very sad”, he explained, going on to describe his difficult relationship with an uncle who is “very rough” and “yells” at him, while his

202 Interview with 15-year-old abandoned boy, Vahdat.
203 Interview with 17-year-old abandoned boy, Sughd.
204 Interview with 15-year-old abandoned girl, Kulyob.
205 Interview with 15-year-old abandoned girl, Kulyob.
206 Herbal remedy used to relieve anxiety.
207 Interview with abandoned mother, Hissor (pilot study).
208 Focus group with migrant mothers, Shugnon.
own parents never used to beat him and “always explained things calmly”\textsuperscript{209}. A girl whose mother had migrated echoed these feelings, talking about her difficult relationship with a grandmother that she lives with:

\textit{“Without mother it is hard for me, because I miss her. She’s very good; I feel very lonely and I sometimes feel so sad I want to just call her and tell her to drop everything and come back... but then I calm down and think about my grandmother and say nothing.”}\textsuperscript{210}

Quantitative data from the small survey conducted confirm the qualitative findings. Table 65 below reports the opinions from caregivers of children in the household. Interestingly, 25 per cent of caregivers in migrant households and as high as 78 per cent in abandoned households report that their children have become more withdrawn or depressed since their mother or father left. As shown in Figure 14, moreover, some 10 per cent of migrant caregivers and 39 per cent of abandoned ones went to the extent of saying that the most important reason why the impact of migration on children is negative is that they become sad and depressed (17 per cent of migrants chose this as a second reason, as well as 23 per cent of non-migrants).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure14.png}
\caption{Depression as an impact of migration, caregivers’ views}
\end{figure}

Similarly, 18 per cent of girls and boys in migrant households were described as being “withdrawn, sad or depressed” in the last month. Understandably, the numbers were higher for children in abandoned households, at 45 per cent and 31 per cent for girls and boys respectively, and lower for children in non-migrant households, at 10 per cent and 13 per cent. Interestingly, this divergence between ‘migrant’, ‘abandoned’ and ‘non-migrant’ children becomes even greater when looking at individual-level disaggregations (i.e. untangling abandoned children who may be living in a non-migrant household and similar cases).\textsuperscript{211} For example, using individual-level disaggregations, 22 per cent of the daughters of migrant parents are described as having been withdrawn, sad or depressed in the last month, together with 54 per cent of abandoned ones.

\textsuperscript{209} Interview with 15-year-old migrant boy, Shugnon.
\textsuperscript{210} Interview with migrant 15-year-old girl, Sughd.
\textsuperscript{211} See the methodology section for further details.
5 Findings

Table 65. Caregivers’ perceptions of children’s depression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of caregivers reporting that:</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Non-migrant</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children in the household became more withdrawn or depressed since their mother/father went away</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>184</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The most important reason why the overall impact of migration on children is negative is that children become sad and depressed</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over the last month, girls in the house had been withdrawn, sad or depressed</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over the last month, boys in the house had been withdrawn, sad or depressed</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Total N’ refers to the total number of observations the indicators refer to. Note that the last two indicators (depression over the last month) are based on individual data from each child in the household. This means that the overall number of observations is higher.

A quantitative overview of adolescents’ opinions and perceptions on their own status of depression was also revealing, although less clear-cut. Table 66 has three levels of disaggregation: by male and female, by migrant status and by the age of the adolescents interviewed (young adolescents are those aged 11-14 and adolescents are 15-18).

Table 66. Children’s views on depression and sadness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of adolescents reporting:</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of adolescents reporting:</td>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>Aband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of adolescents reporting:</td>
<td>A  Y A</td>
<td>A  Y A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They had felt sad or depressed in the last week</td>
<td>41  21</td>
<td>29  8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling so sad and hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped performing usual activities (over the past 12 months)</td>
<td>41  28</td>
<td>50  33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriously considering suicide</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They sometimes felt so worried they could not sleep at night</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They had not often felt unhappy, down-hearted or tearful in the last six months</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>17  33</td>
<td>14  12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Note that Adolescents (A) range from age 15-18 and Young Adolescents (YA) from age 11-14.
While the above percentages should be treated with care (because of low Ns in some cases and because the questionnaires used were self-administered and based on self-perception), various observations can be made on the basis of this table. These are summarised in the bullet points below:

- The overall percentages relating to self-reported sadness and depression appear to be relatively high across all the groups, especially when compared to similarly self-reported estimates performed nationally through the Global School-Based Health Survey (GSHS) in 2007\(^{212}\). For example, in the GSHS, 23.9 per cent of adolescent respondents said that, during the past 12 months, they had felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks in a row that they stopped doing their usual activities, contrasted to peaks of 50 per cent and 41 per cent among abandoned and migrant adolescent females respectively (See GSHS 2007 for further comparison).

- Female respondents aged 15-18 appeared to be the most affected by sadness and depression, with peaks for migrant and abandoned girls: 41 per cent of migrant girls and 29 per cent of abandoned girls that age reported they had been sad or depressed in the last week, while this was reported by none of the non-migrant adolescent girls. Similarly, 12 per cent of migrant and 14 per cent of abandoned 15- to 18-year-old females said they sometimes felt so worried they could not sleep at night, while non-migrant girls had not suffered from that problem.

- Results for respondents aged 15-18 also reveal that there are no great differences between migrant and abandoned households in terms of the incidence of depression, suggesting that parents’ absence, rather than frequency of contact, determines moods. It should be noted, however, that this is in contrast with what was reported by caregivers (presented above)\(^{213}\).

- Results relating to younger adolescents (11-14) show less clear-cut results across the three household types. For example, non-migrant boys and girls reporting they had felt sad or depressed in the last week were 33 per cent and 50 per cent respectively, higher values than reported by migrant and abandoned children that age. This is true across other similar dimensions analysed and could be due to the particular sample selected for this study or to the fact that younger adolescents are affected in a different way by their parents’ migration.

This last point, on the differential impact of parent’s migration on the depressive behaviour of children of different ages, is clearly portrayed in Figure 15 below. As the chart highlights, younger children across the three categories appear to be less affected, while older children – especially those 15-18 – show higher levels of withdrawal, sadness and depression. These important age-related differences are explored and explained in more detail in Section 5.9.2.1 below.

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\(^{212}\) The GSHS was administered to 99 schools across Tajikistan, with a total of 9,714 adolescents responding. Some of the questions in this study’s questionnaires were replicated on the basis of the GSHS ones to guarantee comparability.

\(^{213}\) Information from caregivers should be of a higher quality, as it is based on much higher numbers.
5.8.2 Behavioural problems

From the results of this study, the problem of children’s aggression and rebelliousness as a consequence of migration appeared to be quite common among migrant and abandoned households, with mothers complaining they were not always able to control their children without the help of their husbands. Aggression appeared to be particularly common among boys (who often did not respect their mother’s authority), as well as children aged 11-14 (with older children ‘calming down’ and becoming more cooperative in the household).

Table 67. Children’s aggression hypothesis test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children left behind have higher levels of aggressiveness and rebelliousness than children in non-migrant families</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
<td>Boys especially lack respect for the authority of their mothers, particularly in early adolescence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mothers, who were forced to cope with children they were unable to control, told the most powerful descriptions of how migration had affected the levels of aggressiveness and rebelliousness of children left behind. As the wife of a migrant worker who had been regularly travelling to Russia in the last four years (a mother of three) explained:

“It is more difficult to take care of them (my children) now. The older one is 10 and rebellious, and since his father left he doesn’t listen to me as much – ‘I am not afraid of you’ he tells me (...) when my husband comes back he tells them to respect me, says ‘listen to my wife!’ and the children obey and calm down”\textsuperscript{214}

Many other mothers, whose stories appeared to be linked to societal norms that reinforce women’s inferior position in society, shared this experience:

“There is nothing good from a man leaving for Russia, except for the money. Children start behaving badly (...) they are more afraid of their father so he has more influence on them, that is why his absence is so negative (...). A mother cannot substitute a father... some men go to Russia and don’t even remember their children.”\textsuperscript{215}

\textsuperscript{214} Interview with migrant mother, Hissor (pilot study).
\textsuperscript{215} Focus group with migrant and abandoned mothers, Vahdat (pilot study).
"Migration affects children negatively, as children are more obedient to their fathers. They may listen to mothers, but in our families the main authority is the father."\textsuperscript{216}

"I have two sons and looking after them is very difficult; sometimes they do not listen and they swear a lot. If their father were here they would probably not mistreat me so often."\textsuperscript{217}

Interviews with children also highlighted this trend, suggesting that increased aggressiveness is mostly a problem with boys rather than girls. "Migration affects both girls and boys. Of course, girls are more obedient, but there are some that do not obey. Boys in families with migrant fathers become more daring in relation to their mothers, they miss classes at school, start smoking, drinking\textsuperscript{218}, a 17-year-old boy explained.

Key informants from the four study districts, however, had mixed judgements on children’s disobedience and aggressiveness linked to their parent’s migration. While some were categorical in stressing that “children whose parents migrate are no longer obedient\textsuperscript{219}, others presented a more balanced view, arguing that individual reactions to migration “depend on the child”\textsuperscript{220} and that sometimes children actually become “more obedient” as a result of their increased responsibilities. A teacher in Kulyob gave an interesting interpretation, highlighting once again how traditional ‘subordinated’ women have a harder time maintaining authority over their children:

“In families where the mother has no rights... the situation changes after the departure of the father. The child becomes disobedient, defiant – in some cases a delinquent. In general, the upbringing in a home depends on who matters... Control through the father on the phone to some extent is useful.”\textsuperscript{221}

The importance of aggressiveness as a key impact of migration can also be clearly traced in the quantitative data. When asked about their opinions on the most important impact of migration, 19 per cent of caregivers in migrant households, 28 per cent in abandoned and 29 per cent in non-migrant ones reported, “children becoming more aggressive and rebellious” as their first answer. These results, including those who stated this as either the second or third most important impact, are reported in Figure 16 below.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure16.png}
\caption{Aggressiveness as an impact of migration, caregivers’ views}
\end{figure}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{216} Focus group with migrant mothers, Vahdat.
\item \textsuperscript{217} Interview with abandoned mother, Gafurov.
\item \textsuperscript{218} Interview with migrant 17-year-old boy, Kathlon.
\item \textsuperscript{219} Key informant interview with female NGO worker, Vahdat.
\item \textsuperscript{220} Key informant interview with female NGO worker, Gafurov.
\item \textsuperscript{221} Key informant interview with male teacher, Kulyob.
\end{itemize}
As with the qualitative data, the survey also highlighted that aggressiveness was mostly a male problem. Among boys, 25 per cent of those from migrant families and 18 per cent from abandoned families were reported by their caregivers as being “aggressive or particularly rebellious in the last month”, as opposed to 10 per cent in non-migrant households. A similar trend, though less pronounced, could also be seen for girls, as shown in Table 68 below. Interestingly, levels of aggressiveness for males appear to be by far the highest among migrant households, even compared to abandoned ones. While this may be due to the composition of the specific sample of households interviewed, it may also be because boys in abandoned households are forced to take on the role of their absent fathers, pushing them to be less rebellious and more helpful to their mothers.

Table 68. Caregivers’ perception of children’s aggressiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>Non-migrant</td>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>Non-migrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of children who were reported as being aggressive or particularly rebellious in the last month</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the percentages in this table are calculated by individual child in the study, leading to higher numbers.

Interestingly, as with depression, levels of aggressiveness were strongly dependent on the age of children in the household, as clearly exemplified by Figure 17 below. The ages where children in migrant households especially (but also in abandoned ones) were most ‘out of control’ were 6-10 and 11-14, with a strong decline for older – and more mature – children. As with the impact on depression, these age-related differences are further explored in Section 5.9.2.1.

Information from the self-administered questionnaires given to adolescents aged 15-18 also supports the overall evidence, though females appear to show higher levels of anger than
males. For example, the percentage of girls 15-18 reporting getting very angry and losing their temper in the last six months was 71 per cent and 50 per cent for migrant and abandoned girls respectively, against 43 per cent for non-migrant girls. For boys, the percentages were 46 per cent and 60 per cent for migrant and abandoned children and 33 per cent for non-migrant ones.

Table 69. 15-18 year olds’ views on aggressiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>Non- migrant</td>
<td>Migrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of adolescents 15-18 reporting getting very angry and losing their temper in the last six months</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the size of the Ns for the self-administered questionnaires is very low for abandoned and non-migrant adolescents. The percentages presented should therefore be interpreted accordingly. Similarly, it should be noted that results from self-administered questionnaires can be less reliable.

5.8.3 Bullying, teasing and stigma

Findings from this study showed that there was no explicit stigma associated with being children of migrants, probably because the phenomenon is so widespread in the country. However, there were several reports of abandoned children being teased because their father had married another woman and ‘forgotten’ about them. Moreover, mothers in migrant households reported that their children were ‘over-exposed’ to teasing and bullying because of the lack of a fatherly ‘protective’ figure.

Table 70. Children’s bullying, teasing and stigma hypothesis test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children left behind are not stigmatised within the community</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
<td>Children left behind are not stigmatised by the community, due to the high rate of migration in Tajikistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children left behind can be more prone to being teased and bullied</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
<td>The lack of a protective fatherly figure meant that children could be teased without anyone defending them. Moreover, abandoned children were teased because of their father having a new family in Russia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bullying and teasing linked to parents’ migration was not reported by a large proportion of the children interviewed, suggesting that stigma linked to migration is not particularly prevalent in Tajikistan, possibly because of how widespread the phenomenon is. As children from migrant households explained in a focus group:

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222 It should be noted, however, that this last set of data is calculated from a self-administered questionnaire where the Ns are very low, making it less trustworthy than the sources presented above.
Findings

5.8 Impact on psycho-social well-being

“Society does not treat us differently, no-one teases us. We are like all children, but thanks to our fathers we now have less problems in the house and more money. Our friends and classmates are glad that we too have the opportunity to come to school.”

Children from non-migrant families also stressed how common migration is in everybody’s daily life, making it a subject that children are not commonly teased about:

“In our class there are girls who have parents working abroad... we never discuss such issues and do not tease them. In our society, many fathers or mothers are away – it has become a common thing, we just got used to it! Nobody discusses the departure of anybody’s father or mother, no one dares... this is not good.”

However, the handful of children who suffered bullying described it as a harrowing experience, especially because they had nobody to protect them:

“Some people tease us saying ‘your parents are in Russia having fun and you are here’ (...) they say ‘we are rich and you are poor, that is why your parents leave you’... others beat us up because no-one can protect us.”

“There is one boy, whose name is Kurbonali. He teases me, saying I am ‘fatherless’, and so he calls me names. I am very angry with him.”

One example from a 15-year-old boy in Vahdat is particularly disturbing, as it involves physical violence. Though the episode is not necessarily linked to the father’s migration, the child does mention that he gets teased more since his father left:

“This morning I fed the cattle at home and missed the first lesson. The teacher did not allow me in and told me to come to the second lesson. In the schoolyard this student approached me with a knife in his hand threatening me to go to class. I refused and we fought. Since my father is not home for such a long time, I am sometimes teased at school... I am very worried about this.”

Mothers’ perspectives on their children’s experience of bullying at school also provides an interesting angle, with some also highlighting that the teasing is linked with children’s lack of a fatherly ‘protective’ figure:

“Sometimes my son fights with the boys at school. They scoff at him, calling with bad names. I think the guys know that he does not have support”.

“The children often ask the same question: ‘When will our father return?’ One day my son was teased by his peers: ‘your father now has a Russian wife and you will have Russian brothers and sisters.”

One abandoned mother whose husband had been gone for 12 years feared other people’s opinion about her own situation and her children’s, showing how poverty is the real motor of social stigma, especially when this translates into not being able to provide for basic needs such as adequate clothing:

223 Focus group with migrant children, Shugnon.
224 Focus group with non-migrant girls aged 16-17, Gafurov.
225 Focus group with mixed children from migrant and abandoned households (boys and girls, aged 13-14), Vahdat (pilot study).
226 Focus group with migrant boys, age 10, Vahdat.
227 Interview with 15-year-old male, Vahdat.
228 Interview with migrant mother, Vahdat.
229 Focus group with migrant mothers, Shugnon.
“Behind my back they say a lot of bad things about women like me. I do not pay attention to these conversations, because I have to feed my children... If I can’t get clothes for my children, everyone will laugh at them; they will say I was not able to provide what they need for them...”

Similarly, key informants such as an NGO representative had an opinion in this regard, highlighting once again the importance of migrant children’s ‘lack of protection’:

“The children of migrants do not have protection on the streets. They are being bullied. Sometimes, teachers abuse these children as well, and it affects their mental state”

One important additional consideration that should be made when analysing bullying and teasing relates to the extent to which children of migrant parents become bullies themselves. This theory could be validated by the fact that these children are often labelled as ‘aggressive’ (see Section 5.8.2 above) and could therefore sometimes be the ones to initiate bullying behaviour towards others. Evidence on this is not easy to extrapolate from qualitative data, though one teacher provided an interesting insight on this issue: “children of migrants are often the strongest in class because of their situations. They are leaders... they have suffered, so they are stronger”

The quantitative data collected from adolescents aged 15-18 also suggests that migrant and abandoned children tend to ‘do or say bad and unpleasant things’ to their companions proportionately more than non-migrants their age: among females, 24 per cent of migrant girls and 21 per cent of abandoned ones against none in non-migrant households; among males, 29 per cent in migrant households against none in other household types.

**Table 71. Adolescents’ perceptions of bullying**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Migrant Abandoned Non-migrant Migrant Abandoned Non-migrant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of adolescents 15-18 reporting:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being bullied at least once in the last 30 days</td>
<td>24 14 14 22 0 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having said or done bad or unpleasant things to somebody else in the last 30 days</td>
<td>24 21 0 29 0 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>17 14 7 41 10 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the size of the Ns for the self-administered questionnaires is very low for abandoned and non-migrant adolescents. The percentages presented should therefore be interpreted accordingly. Similarly, it should be noted that results from self-administered questionnaires can be less reliable.

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230 Focus group with abandoned mothers, Vahdat.
231 Key informant interview with NGO representative, Shugnon.
232 Key informant interview with male teacher, Vahdat (pilot study).
5.8.4 Other related impacts: juvenile crime and exposure to violence and abuse

As set out in the inception report, analysing these types of impacts on children and adolescents would require in-depth and long-term qualitative analysis with highly trained researchers and this was not possible for this study. However, while no evidence was found on exposure to violence and abuse, a couple of anecdotal comments were made on juvenile crime by key informants such as NGO workers. “Boys becomes more aggressive and commit crimes”, said a worker in the Office of the State Agency of Social Welfare, Employment and Migration in Shugnon. “Many (migrant) families break the law because of the drudgery of life, many women commit suicide, do not do good things, children commit crimes, are engaged in theft, drink alcohol”, commented another female NGO worker in Sughd. It is important to note that these comments could reflect prejudices rather than actual evidence.

Interesting evidence also came from the quantitative data, based on caregivers’ perceptions of the impact of migration. When asked whether they thought that children in families where one or both parents migrate ‘behave worse and get into more trouble at school and with the police’, 54 per cent of migrant caregivers, 30 per cent of abandoned ones and 64 per cent of non-migrant ones answered ‘yes’.

Table 7.2. Children’s exposure to juvenile crime and abuse hypothesis test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent boys from migrant families are more likely to commit juvenile crime and be victims of abuse</td>
<td>Not enough evidence</td>
<td>Adolescent boys from migrant families are more likely to commit juvenile crime due to family disintegration and lack of parental attention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.9 Factors that affect impact: differences across households

In the previous sections, the key impact areas of parents’ migration on children left behind were analysed in detail. Based on the conceptual framework, this section goes one step further, attempting to untangle the differential impact of migration based on: a) differences in the migration experience itself (which affect outcomes); and b) differences in the characteristics of individuals and households (which mediate impact on outcomes).

While this will not be possible for all the variables summarised in Figure 2 (i.e. the conceptual framework), key issues are analysed in turn below.

233 There are various reasons why this type of research involves such complications. First, discussing domestic violence and abuse can clearly be very distressing for participants. Researchers who raise these issues therefore have an obligation to provide counselling services for participants and research staff affected by the research. Second, researchers may have a moral obligation and in some cases a legal obligation to report cases of domestic violence or abuse to social services authorities and this raises complications for confidentiality. This also means that research of this nature can have profound consequences that are beyond the control of researchers. Third, researchers have a very clear obligation to maintain absolute confidentiality at the level of the household and community. This implies interviewing only one person per household, avoiding much group work, and having a range of dummy questionnaires available to disguise the fact that we are asking about domestic violence.

234 Key informant interview with male NGO worker, Shugnon.

235 Key informant interview with female NGO worker, Sughd.

236 This is interesting, as it shows that non-migrant caregivers have a more negative opinion of migrant children’s behaviour than mothers who have actually experienced migration.

237 Please refer to the conceptual framework for further details.
5.9.1 Aspects of the migration experience that affect outcomes

As set out in the conceptual framework, migrants and migration experiences are diverse in many ways – from the amount of remittances that are sent home to the predictability with which the money is sent, from the duration and frequency of migration to the level of communication between the parent who has left and the child who is left behind. Different types of migrants and different types of experiences have varying implications for households and outcomes for children within them, as explored in the paragraphs below.

5.9.1.1 Support from extended family and communication with absent parent

While the impacts presented above were quite uniform across interviewed households, it was clear that children who could count on an extended family for financial and psychological support suffered less from the consequences of the parent’s migration.

Interviews with children and mothers in migrant and abandoned households revealed that those who were supported by uncles, grandparents or other family members were doing a lot better, both economically and psychologically. As a 15-year-old girl whose father had married a Russian woman described as “frivolous and immoral” explained, “my uncles and grandparents are very supportive of us. If they were not, our lives would be much harder than they are now.”

Similarly, a boy whose parents both seasonally migrated confessed:

“Most of all I love my grandfather, because he always helps me with advice and he never travels anywhere – he makes me happy.”

Support from extended family also contributed to children’s schooling. Where parents were absent, some caregivers were able to substitute by following up with teachers and monitoring their children at school.

Another factor positively affecting children’s emotional well-being and performance in school was the amount of contact they had with their parents, whether through frequent visits or phone calls. As Parrenas found in the Philippines (2002), parent-child separation can be eased through constant communication, when parents provide “emotional care and guidance from afar.”

This ‘mitigating effect’ was apparent from interviews with children and caregivers, as well as opinions from key informants such as doctors. As a 14-year-old girl whose mother had recently migrated explained, “my closest friend is my mother – even if far away, through the phone, she always helps me.”

Another example came from a 17-year-old boy in Khatlon whose father and brother were working in Russia seven months a year. The boy spoke to his father frequently, receiving guidance and advice on his schooling, encouraging him to follow his dream of going to university:

“I talk to my father on the phone every week. He always tells me to help my mother and to listen to her, to be a good student in school, not to argue with classmates, neighbours, brothers and sisters (...) I want to continue my studies at university after graduation; it is a long-held dream. My father and brother want to help me with this; they require from me only good grades in school and that I should not wander aimlessly in the street. I comply with their requirements, as I understand it’s only for my sake.”

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238 Interview with 15-year-old abandoned girl, Kulyob.
239 Interview with 15-year-old migrant boy, Sughd.
240 Interview with 14-year-old migrant girl, Sughd.
241 Interview with 17-year-old migrant boy, Khatlon.
In contrast, the situation in households with little or no contact with the person who has migrated was less positive. This was mostly the case for abandoned households, where children and mothers described the sense of loss that came with being ‘forgotten’. As a mother in a focus group complained:

“We do not talk on the phone. He gives us a new phone number each time. But when we call this number, it is sometimes off, sometimes not in service. When the children ask, ‘Where is my father, when he will call, did he forget about us?’ I have no answers to their questions. That makes it very hard for me… and for them especially.”

A 15-year-old girl echoed these feelings, saying “father does not ask about us, about our health, even on the phone. A heavy burden has fallen on our shoulders.” The opinions of two doctors in Sughd and Vahdat also provided an interesting insight:

“If migrants are sending money, if they call, then the children will behave well and be well educated. But if they do not call and do not send money, then kids will not go the right way, they will not know what is good and what is bad.”

“If the migrant often calls the family and children, they feel support and connection between them and the father. Children in such families are more obedient and not alone.”

5.9.1.2 Amount, frequency and predictability of remittances

As highlighted throughout this study, having a migrant in the household does not necessarily translate into regular remittances. In some cases, migrants leave and don’t find a job for months, whilst in other cases they are not always able to send money on a regular and predictable basis, making it difficult for households left behind to budget adequately and cover all their needs. A group of mothers from migrant and abandoned households explained the vicious cycle that can be triggered by a man not finding work abroad:

“When a father leaves, he does not know if he will get a job abroad or not. If he cannot find a job, it will be very hard for his family, as they will have to double their work. If the father does not find a job there will be no money, and he cannot return. This will adversely affect his family – they will have to work day and night to pay for a flight back home.”

A male doctor in Vahdat stressed the importance of the regularity of transfers, stating that, “Migrant children are better nourished, dressed… If he (the father) regularly sends money, the family wealth, children have everything, and good food, and clothing.” However, as a local Jamoat leader explained in Gafurov, “remittances are mostly irregular, they come sporadically”. According to his estimates for the Jamoat he governs, “70 per cent of all migrants send money irregularly, and 30 per cent of migrants do not call and do not send anything home.”

242 Focus group with abandoned and migrant mothers, Sughd.
243 Interview with 15-year-old abandoned girl, Kulyob.
244 Interview with female family doctor, Sughd.
245 Interview with male doctor, Vahdat.
246 Focus group with abandoned and migrant mothers, Sughd.
247 Interview with male doctor, Vahdat.
248 Key informant interview with male government official, Gafurov.
In the quantitative questionnaire, although average levels remitted over the last year were high (USD 513), only 45 per cent of remitters are said to remit predictably and only 38 per cent are said to remit at least monthly. The following is typical:

“My husband sometimes makes transfers two or three times per month, sometimes only once in three to four months. Remittances are sent when needed, if possible. If no money is available when needed, he sends money later.”

5.9.1.3 Varying effects over time: duration and frequency of migration

As the international literature points out, the negative effects of parents’ migration on children left behind may vary over time and be particularly strong in the initial period after parents’ departure when the “sense of family disruption may be at its zenith” (De la Garza, 2010). D’Emilio and Cordero (2007) present evidence from Nicaragua where the majority of children reported periods of depression linked with a parent’s departure. In a study on Mexico, Cortes (2007) shows that the general health of children declines during the first years of their parents’ migration, but improves over time as remittances contribute to improved access to healthcare. This is also confirmed by the findings of McKenzie and Stillman (2009).

This time-effect is identifiable in our study, though it was mostly evident when looking at the emotional and psychological impacts on children, as described in previous sections of this report. Especially with younger children, the most difficult phase appeared to occur soon after migration occurred, improving as the months and years went by. Frequent visits, moreover, were reported as being positive for the children, but also a source of additional distress at every new departure. A citation which summarises this overall trend comes from a focus group with migrant mothers in Shugnon:

“If the parents are away from the baby for a long time it can gradually become accustomed to their absence... and if they often return and leave again it will be difficult for the child to deal with it. [The child] may get into depression, will be sad about saying goodbye to his parents so often... if a parent does not come home for a long time, the child gradually gets used to it, but if the parent often returns, it will be difficult for the child to get used to the parent’s departure.”

5.9.1.4 Migration of fathers vs. mothers

Given that, as set out in the introductory section, migration is by and large a male phenomenon in Tajikistan, most of the respondents interviewed for this study were either wives or children of fathers who had migrated. However, an interesting testimony from a father whose wife migrated to Russia to work in a chocolate factory shows the differential impact of mother’s migration on their children:

“The absence of their mother has affected my daughters a lot. All domestic work is now done by my daughter. If the mother has migrated, it is very difficult, especially for the girls. The mother can take the place of a father, but from my own experience a father cannot take the place of the mother. A boy is closer to his father... and if the father has migrated, it is also very difficult for them.”

A group of mothers in a focus group in Gafurov expressed their general scepticism about a father being able to take care of his children as a mother can: “if the migrant is the mother, then

249 Interview with migrant mother, Khatlon.
250 Focus group with migrant mothers, Shugnon.
251 Interview with migrant father, Gafurov
everything would probably change. For example, if I had gone to work (abroad) I would have worked so hard so that my children wouldn’t starve, but the father will not take care of the children as a mother will.252 Mothers in Kulyob and Shugnon felt very similarly:

“When the husband leaves for migration, the wife stays with the children and the whole concern lies with her, even after a year or even ten she will wait for her husband. But if the wife is going to migrate, the children won’t let her leave... because the family is unified when the mother is in the house, as difficult as it is... men are different.”253

“A mother will be somewhat able to replace a father but a father could never replace a mother. Without a mother it is difficult for the child – the child will feel like an orphan.”254

Children who were asked how they would feel if their mother migrated also gave very decisive responses, usually agreeing that a mother’s migration would be much worse. This appeared to be uniform across boys and girls. For example, a 17-year-old boy explained,

“If the father migrates, then of course it’s better than if mother would migrate. The mother mainly cares for the children, keeping order in the house. A father must support his family.”255

Similarly, a child in a focus group of 13-14 year olds exclaimed, “If my mother left I would become ill immediately!” All his friends agreed. Another boy explained how he felt, highlighting that fathers are perceived as a less ‘stable’ source of love compared to mothers: “If my father were here and my mother away, he would find another woman. We need the love of our mother”. “A father cannot substitute a mother”, another child went on to explain, “if our mothers left, we’d want to follow them wherever”. 256

However, some children emphasised the difficulty of a father moving out:

“The father is the light in the house. When the father goes away from home, this light goes out. Of course, if the father is there, it is good.”257

The evidence presented above appears to be in line with other studies conducted internationally. For example, in a comparative study on the various costs of migration Yeoh and Lam (2008) conclude that “migration of one or both parents may affect their children’s social behaviour in different ways”, indicating a more negative effect in cases when the mother migrates.

One additional issue, which should also be considered when comparing the impact of female and male migration, is that female migrants command lower salaries abroad than males do, with an impact on the amount of money they are capable of sending back. As a grandmother whose daughter had migrated pointed out in a focus group of caregivers:

“If a migrant is mother, she cannot send a lot of money, because for women there are only jobs as a dishwasher, sorting, packaging... also, a mother can look after children better than the father, and that is why, if the father migrates, it’s better than the mother.” 258

252 Focus group with migrant and abandoned mothers, Gafurov.
253 Focus group with migrant and abandoned mothers, Kulyob.
254 Focus group with migrant mothers, Shugnon.
255 Interview with 17-year-old boy, Kulyob.
256 Focus group with mixed children (migrant and abandoned; male and female) aged 13-14, Vahdat (pilot study).
257 Focus group with migrant children, Vahdat.
258 Focus group with female migrant caregivers, Gafurov.
Lower salaries and remittances from female migrants are not only the consequence of the types of jobs that women perform abroad; sometimes they are also due to the fact that women are taken advantage of by their employers. A woman in a focus group of abandoned mothers told a sad story along these lines:

“The executive committee told us that 20 women were selected to work abroad; we were promised USD 500 a month and I was among them. We worked for one month, but we were never paid. We were told that because we were being fed and given shelter, that was the pay for the work. We were in despair; we fled to Moscow, found friends and returned home with them. After this incident, I no longer tried to migrate.”

5.9.2 Characteristics of children and households that mediate the impact of migration on outcomes

While different experiences of migration can affect the overall impact on children left behind, there are characteristics of children and their households that can also have a role in determining overall outcomes. For example, children of different ages react to migration very differently, as do boys compared to girls. Similarly, wealthier households will have fewer problems covering their children’s educational and health needs, while large households or households with adult members who are unable to provide for their children (because they are sick or disabled) will find it more difficult.

In the conceptual framework, these ‘mediating factors’ were divided into individual, household and contextual factors. In the following section, we analyse a few of these in turn, starting from individual-level factors and focusing on those most sustained by the evidence.

5.9.2.1 Children’s age

Evidence from our research supported the idea that children of different ages are affected by their parents’ departure in a different way. Age played a role at two inter-related levels: on one side, the age of children when their parents departed (especially in the case of fathers who never came back) and, on the other, their current age.

The age of children when parents depart influences the level to which they were attached to the father when he left. Very young children, aged three and younger, appeared to be less hit by the departure, as they were less aware of what was happening. As an abandoned mother recalled: “When my husband went to Russia for the first time, his daughter was only two years old, she did not understand. Now she is 16 years old, she actually does not know her father at all.”

Similarly, the wife of a migrant explains:

“If the parent left at the age when a child still does not understand anything, he learns to live without a father or mother at an early age and he gets used to it. If the mother or father leaves again, then in the child’s life almost nothing changes.”

Children aged three to 10, on the other hand, reacted strongly to the departure in the short to medium-term, but appeared to get more used to living without their father in the long-run compared to their older siblings.

259 Focus group with abandoned mothers, Vahdat.
260 Interview with abandoned mother, Kulyob.
261 Interview with migrant caregiver, Shugnon.
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“If the child is younger, he still does not understand anything and does not pay attention to the departure of his father. Older children are more susceptible to this situation.” 262

“Small children aged three to 10-12 miss their parents more than bigger children. But they easily get used to not having their father around.” 263

Children who were 11+ when their father left (adolescents) appeared to experience an almost opposite effect to their younger siblings. While suffering less in the short term, as they ‘understood’ the economic need for their parent’s departure, they seemed to show more symptoms of depression in the longer term:

“My elder son (age 10) understands his father has to work, but my youngest one (six) cannot understand... but she calms down after a while and forgets, while her brother misses him more.” 264

The current age of children affects their perception of their parent’s migration in a similar way. As explained above, older children understand the need for their parent’s migration and tend to compensate by helping more in the household (this seems to apply mostly to children 15+). A 17-year-old boy in Khatlon explained his feelings towards his father and brother’s migration in the following way:

“I really miss them, especially my father, but what can one do? This is the situation prevailing in the country. There are no jobs, so my father had to go to work. I understand everything and try to help my mother and brother’s wife.” 265

This was confirmed by interviews with caregivers, who reported older sons and daughters becoming more responsible and helpful at home as a consequence of their parent’s migration. This is partially a necessity, as mothers are overburdened when their husbands are away. “If the child is older in the family, he has to work harder and look after the younger ones”, a woman explained in Shugnon. Similarly, a mother shared her experience of the effects on her two sons aged nine and 15:

“There is a lot of difference between my two boys. The eldest son became more prudent after the departure of his father – he helps me around the house and became more responsible – but he also asks about his father more than my younger son, as well as protecting his brother.” 266

A difficult age, as apparent from a few interviews, was early adolescence, when boys especially start asserting their independence and misbehaving more with their mothers. This was confirmed both by quantitative data on children’s aggressiveness, as exemplified in Figure 17 in the previous sub-section, and by qualitative interviews:

“His father is far away from him and it’s very bad for a 12-year-old boy. Twelve is a very difficult age, especially for a boy, and it is very important at this age that father is there, controlling the boy.” 267

262 Interview with abandoned mother, Vahdat.
263 Interview with migrant mother, Khatlon.
264 Interview migrant mother, Hissor (pilot study).
265 Interview with 17-year-old migrant boy, Khatlon.
266 Interview with abandoned mother, Gafurov.
267 Focus group with migrant mothers, Shugnon.
For younger children, the situation was different – and easier. Once the initial stages of detachment were overcome, they appeared to be less aware of the situation and therefore less affected by it. An NGO worker in Shugnon summarised this effectively: “If a child is small, the absence of a parent will affect him less, because he does not yet understand.”

### 5.9.2.2 Children’s gender

The gender of children in migrant and abandoned households appeared to affect the overall impact of their parent’s migration significantly. This was apparent throughout impact dimensions, as laid out in the previous sections, but particularly relevant in terms of the impact on emotional well-being and to some extent on education.

According to key informants such as NGO workers, for example, “girls are more emotional and therefore feel the absence of a parent more, while boys are less affected... but become more aggressive, disobedient, and commit more crimes.” Several key informants shared this opinion, making similar comments on “girls always getting depressed” and boys becoming “more aggressive when their father is away”. The most common reason that was given for boys’ changed behaviour was that “a mother can stop a girl, but boys are unlikely to be controlled by mothers” as “many boys mostly listen to their father.”

Analysing the gender differences across the two dimensions of depression and aggressiveness, as explained in detail above and summarised in the two figures below (Figure 18 and Figure 19), confirms these general perceptions.

**Figure 18. Children's depression, by gender and type**

![Graph showing children's depression by gender and type]

- **Note:** Calculations based on individual-level data, for a total of 322 girls and 323 boys.

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268 Key informant interview with male NGO worker, Shugnon.
269 Key informant interview with NGO worker, Shugnon.
270 Key informant interview with NGO worker, Shugnon.
271 Interview with female family doctor, Sughd.
Another common (and contrasting) opinion among adults, which didn’t necessarily reflect the opinion and behaviour of the children interviewed for this study, was that “girls do not really feel the absence of the father” while for boys it is “necessary that the father is there” to support them in their development. A group of migrant mothers explained why they thought this was the case:

“Boys suffer the most from the migration of their father, because the girl is attached to the mother and son to the father. Boys need reliable advice from their father in a difficult moment... boys will also suffer more, because in the absence of their father they are obliged to work more at home, and even more if the family has farm and land.”

In terms of education, the gender of the child strongly influences the norms around the age of dropping out. Societal norms attribute lower returns to the education of girls after the age of 16, as many consider the next stage for girls as marriage rather than employment. This lowers the returns on further education and therefore reduces girls’ schooling in households that have labour or income shortages, including many abandoned households. An abandoned mother set this out clearly:

“The girl does not necessarily get a higher education, since she must learn to keep the household, but for the boy higher education is necessary because in the future he will provide for his family.”

This gendered impact is replicated through the gender of the decision-maker, as men will prioritise the education of boys:

“It’s no secret that in our families it is the husband who has the last word, regardless of ability. It happens that if the son should go to college but there is no money, we find the money. We borrow, we sell what you we can, but unfortunately the husband will not always do the same for a girl.”

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272 Focus group with migrant and abandoned mothers, Gafurov.
273 Focus group with migrant mothers, Shugnan.
274 Interview with abandoned mother, Gafurov.
275 Focus group with migrant and abandoned mothers, Kulyob.
5.9.2.3 Household income

Unsurprisingly, one extremely important household-level factor that mediated the impact of migration on children left behind was the overall level of household income. Income – determined by own family earnings, remittances and gifts from others, as well as support from government or other organisations – in turn determines the amount of goods and services that can be bought for children, with important consequences on key impacts such as access to health and education.

Evidence on this link was found both in the qualitative and in the quantitative data, where a rudimentary asset-based wealth index was constructed to show how some of the stronger effects on abandoned households were mostly due to the lack of additional income.

While information on this is scattered throughout the report, two quotes summarise the essence of the problem. The first is from an abandoned mother, the second from a nurse – both presenting two sides of the same coin:

“The quality of your health and schooling depends on the money you have... if you have it, they give you (the service), if not, they do not...”\(^{276}\)

“Poverty and lack of jobs is the real problem here; migration is just a consequence.”\(^{277}\)

5.9.2.4 Education levels within the household

As commonly found in the literature, the education levels of parents are strongly linked to the key outcomes achieved by their children. This is partly due to demonstration effects and partly related to different attitudes among educated people towards education, work and, to some extent, health.

Education levels within the household, particularly of mothers, were considered extremely important in school outcomes. This quote exemplifies the perceived relationship between schooling and maternal education:

“[Attendance] also depends on the degree of education of the mother in the family. If the mother is not educated and unenlightened, she cannot deliver education for the

\(^{276}\) Interview with abandoned mother, Hissor (pilot study).

\(^{277}\) Interview with female nurse, Vahdat.
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The positive side is to provide children with food, clothing, and educational facilities for the school."\textsuperscript{278}

This is reflected in the quantitative data, where the level of education of the parent who remains in the household appears correlated with the likelihood of regularly attending school. Table 53 earlier showed that, while the education level of the absent father makes little difference to the probability of missing school, an educated mother present in the household makes children much less likely to miss school.

Table 73. Attendance of children in migrant households by parents’ education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education level of parents:</th>
<th>Completed grade 10</th>
<th>Further pre-university training</th>
<th>University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td>42% (36)</td>
<td>44% (117)</td>
<td>45% (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>62% (61)</td>
<td>37% (97)</td>
<td>31% (26)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of children reporting missing at least one day of school in the last 30 days. Numbers in brackets.

Educational achievement appears correlated with parental education. This correlation was reflected in qualitative interviews. For example, a teacher judged that:

"If, in the migrant families, the mother is educated, this is very good. If, on the contrary, the mother is a single mother and illiterate, it certainly has a negative effect on children."\textsuperscript{279}

As Table 74 shows, this was also found in the quantitative sample.

Table 74. Achievement in migrant households by parental education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of education</th>
<th>Completed grade 10</th>
<th>Further pre-university training</th>
<th>University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td>3.92 (38)</td>
<td>3.99 (116)</td>
<td>4.2 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>3.82 (61)</td>
<td>4.08 (98)</td>
<td>4.31 (26)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average score out of 5, where 5 is the best. Numbers in brackets. This is calculated for individuals whose father is a migrant.

5.9.2.5 Household attitudes

Household attitudes play an important role in determining the levels of schooling, work and care that children receive. The attitudes of parents and children towards the importance of education were crucial determinants of years of schooling, attendance, and achievement. For instance, a mother from a migrant household felt that children “should work, make a living. The son will join his father in migration.”\textsuperscript{280} In another example, a husband makes clear the importance of attitudes:

"After Grade 9, I’ll give my daughter for marriage. As for my son, I will send him to Russia. I also want my children to study and after graduation enter university but, well, I do not have the opportunity to do so. My oldest son wants to go to Rus-

\textsuperscript{278} Key informant interview with female NGO worker, Vahdat.
\textsuperscript{279} Interview with teacher, Vahdat.
\textsuperscript{280} Interview with migrant mother, Khatlon.
sia and work there. He says that the main thing in this life is not education but being active. If a person is clever then he can achieve all by himself... All my children are learning well. My eldest son always takes 3. And my daughters take 4. I do not force them to go to school, because I will give my daughter in marriage, so what do they need studies for?281

Another example makes this even clearer:

“All children should learn, but now nothing can be done without money. My oldest son graduated from high school last year and wanted to go to a police school, but money was demanded for the enrolment. Now he is forced to work abroad with his mother and save money for admission to a police school. Perhaps, in the future, education will help our children. I think education is necessary for the boy. Education after Grade 9 for girls is optional. My eldest daughter, who is 17 years old, does not go to school; she looks after the house, her brother and sister and grandmother as their mother is abroad. For girls, education is optional; they must learn to do their job.”282

Finally, attitudes can be crucial for performance too:

“There are often meetings at the school, and my wife and I always go and we also visit their school to talk with teachers about the progress of children [ours and my brother’s]... Usually the absence of parents has a bad influence on children’s academic performance, but most of all it depends on the caregiver, how responsible they are. We take a very strict attitude towards the performance of children in our household.”

Attitudes also make a difference for time spent working, as this parent indicates:

“I think, on the contrary, that working is good for them. They see that their mother and I are working hard. They want to support us and earn money independently. It’s certainly hard for them, but they have to do it.”283

The attitudes of children are also important:

“I want to say that if we help parents with the housework and in the field, they will be very happy and glad. I think that this is also showing respect for parents.”284

281 Interview with migrant father, Gafurov.
282 Focus group with migrant fathers, Gafurov.
283 Interview with father in migrant household, Gafurov.
284 Focus group with non-migrant male children, Kulyob.
6. Policy implications

6.1 Migration and policy

As laid out in the conceptual framework and the empirical evidence above, the relationship between the migration of parents and the well-being of the children left behind is complex and depends on factors related to the individual, household, and societal levels. Government policies and service provision are part of the wider societal context, which can both determine the migration experience of the individual and influence the outcomes for children. The policy challenge is therefore to manage migration in a way that minimises family disruption, as well as to provide a social protection framework that mitigates the negative impacts on children. We consider in turn the existing policies and relevant policy environment in migration management and social protection in Tajikistan, and provide recommendations for their improvement.

6.2 Migration management

6.2.1 Institutional framework for managing migration

The government’s migration policy in Tajikistan and the institutional framework for implementing migration policy are convoluted. Decision-making authority is concentrated in the presidential administration, where migration issues are the prerogative of the Department for Social Protection, Employment and Migration. On the executive, government level, however, migration policy has been managed by the Ministry of the Interior’s Migration Service, a prerogative transferred from the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population (ML-SPP) in December 2006. This set-up proved to be conducive to a law-enforcement approach to migration policy, and less effective in providing support services to migrants. Consequently, in January 2011, the President of Tajikistan issued a decree285 to create a self-standing Migration Service under the Tajik government.

The new Migration Service will be responsible for managing labour migration policy, including professional training of labour migrants, facilitating employment abroad, ensuring the link with diaspora organisations, and regulating in-migration to Tajikistan. The Migration Service will take over prerogatives currently exercised by the Ministry of Interior and its representa-

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285 President’s Decree No. 1014, January 21, 2011.
tives in the Russian Federation, the Consulate of Tajikistan to the Russian Federation, and the State Agency for Social Protection, Employment and Migration under the MLSPP. It is envisaged that the Migration Service will have labour migration attachés in selected countries that are destinations for Tajik migrants.

To make the Migration Service operational, the Tajik government has been tasked to:

- Develop and adopt the regulation, organisational structure, management mechanism, and list of subordinated organisations of the Migration Service. This task has to be completed within two months from the adoption of the Decree, i.e. by the end of March 2011;
- Develop the budget and recommendations for financing the Migration Service; and
- Propose necessary amendments to the legal framework.

The creation of the Migration Service presents a good opportunity to adopt a holistic approach to migration policy in Tajikistan, which would take into account both the economic and social and psycho-social effects of migration. Specific recommendations to this end are presented below.

### 6.2.2 Policies for managing migration

Migration policies adopted by the Tajik government before 2010 indicate an insistence on considering migration as an end in itself and not as a means to the ultimate development of the economy. Thus, the main policy areas related to migration, where a certain amount of progress has been achieved (in many cases with the support of international organisations and the private sector), are mostly geared towards encouraging individuals to migrate and preparing individuals for migration. These include:

- A liberal out-migration policy, which allows the citizens of Tajikistan to freely travel outside their country;
- A policy that encourages dual citizenship with Russia, which allows migrants to become regularised and defend their rights more effectively;
- Bilateral negotiations with receiving countries for increasing the time limit imposed on migrants to register on arrival (currently Russia allows only three days for Tajiks to register before they become illegal; the Tajik government wants to increase this to at least five days but preferably to 30 days);
- A developed, tax-free money transfer system, which is affordable and attractive for labour migrants;
- A relatively developed system of transportation services (with the exception of air travel);
- Support for the establishment of information centres (mostly to provide information on legal requirements in the receiving country but also about job opportunities available etc.) to better prepare people for migration and hence accrue proper rewards from such a venture (these centres are primarily financed by international organisations, such as the IOM and the Organisation for Cooperation and Security in Europe); and
- Support for the establishment of vocational training centres for potential migrants before they migrate. Some of these are combined with the information centres described above. There is also discussion about providing some basic language training to individuals before they migrate to Russia.

This approach, however, creates disparities in terms of the scope of policies and the relative ease of their implementation. Policies are lacking with respect to migrants’ rights and the so-
6. Policy implications

6.2 Migration management

Social protection of migrants and their families. Once in Russia, some Tajik migrants are subject to exploitation and abuse; others go missing or intentionally disappear with spouses and children left behind. The scale of this problem became particularly evident after the onset of the economic crisis in 2008. NGOs specialising in the protection of migrants’ rights have indicated that the number of migrants who were not paid their wages increased significantly, which also affected their families as they were left without an important source of income.

To address these problems, in 2010, the Tajik government created two inter-departmental working groups, supported by independent experts, to elaborate a five-year Strategy and Action Plan on labour migration, as well as the Law on Labour Migration. The draft strategy was presented to the government for approval in December 2010 and is expected to be adopted by the end of March 2011. The law is still being elaborated. The draft strategy centres on four priority policy areas:

1. Establishment of an effective labour migration management system, which provides for the adoption of a new Law on Labour Migration and the streamlining of migration management policies and regulations;

2. Development of effective tools and methods for labour migration management, which set out the strengthening of the institutional framework for labour migration management and the creation of a system for organised recruitment of labour migrants;

3. Improvement of labour migrants’ skills, along with improvements to pre-departure training, which provides for the development of a national pre-departure orientation and training programme, as well as the design of an efficient reintegration mechanism for returning migrants; and

4. Expanding and strengthening public-private partnerships in the area of training, recruitment and protection of the rights of migrant workers abroad, which aims to involve diaspora organisations and networks in the process of protecting migrants’ rights.

Policies to address the problems of migrant families and their children have been sporadic and often deficient; even the new draft strategy fails to tackle this policy gap. For example, in response to the anecdotal evidence about the growing number of law violations (including child labour) committed by children from migrant households who lack parental care, the government developed amendments to the Criminal Code, introducing sanctions for the parents of such children.

In 2007, the Tajik government adopted a new law prohibiting organising costly family events, such as weddings, without the permission of the mahalla (neighbourhood) council. This was done in response to analysis that showed that a large proportion of remittances are spent on such events. According to a 2009 survey of migrants in the Sughd and Khatlon regions, after the adoption of the law, spending on ceremonies decreased by almost 50 per cent, resulting in higher investment in the education and healthcare of family members (Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development, 2009). However, despite the apparent effectiveness of this policy, more comprehensive policies are necessary to improve the financial literacy of migrant households.

In addition to the lack of appropriate policy responses to the problems of migrant families, a major concern is about the efficiency of the implementation. In the absence of government willingness or ability to lead the coordination of all donors/multi-laterals/NGOs working in the country, there is replication of several projects at best and, at worst, competition among all actors in terms of their role in the country’s welfare.
It is difficult to gauge whether the new strategy and the forthcoming Law on Labour Migration will improve management of labour migration and effectively address the problems of labour migrants and their families, as this greatly depends both on the details of the policies and the approach to practical implementation. In this context, any policies and practices in this area should address the wider developmental needs of Tajikistan, and should respect the rights of the migrants and their families.

6.3 Social protection

6.3.1 Institutional framework for social services and child protection

The child protection system in Tajikistan is organised in three levels: national, regional, and local (see Figure 21 below).

In child protection, the republican government is responsible for the formulation and monitoring of policies. Through the Ministry of Education, the government provides institutional care to vulnerable children, such as orphans or the poor; the Ministry of Health provides care to children through infant homes and a health residence; and the MLSPP is in charge of an institute for mentally disabled children, as well as being responsible for policies related to benefits and allowances (Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, 2008).
In practice, the national social protection and social services provision systems are rather complex and fragmented, with a number of authorities at different levels having overlapping responsibilities, in both policy development and service provision. For example, both the MLSPP and the National Commission on Child Rights develop child protection policies, and both are subordinated to the republican government.

The child protection system is undergoing an important organisational reform. A Department for the Social Protection of the Family and Children was recently set up under the MLSPP, which is responsible for the development and implementation of policy on family and child protection issues. However, it is not very clear how this department interacts with the National Commission on Child Rights and the local Child Rights Commissions, or what the scope of their respective responsibilities are.

Child-rights departments were set up within a pilot project on deinstitutionalisation, but it is not yet established whether they provide broad child protection services or are merely responsible for services within the scope of that project. These departments work with children aged 7-15 who are either institutionalised or waiting to be placed in an institution as a result of a request. Children under seven fall under the policies of the Ministry of Health and are therefore not covered by such services. In addition, when line ministries, such as the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education, provide care for children in need, they seek to address health or educational needs, as opposed to the required social protection. This confusion regarding both policies and institutional arrangements for child protection puts children in need of assistance at risk of not receiving care and services that they are entitled to.

### 6.3.2 Social services and child protection policies

Under the UNCRC, ratified by Tajikistan on 26 October 1993, the government has an obligation to promote and protect the rights of children and specifically provide support to their parents and families, protect children from harm and provide those deprived of family care with alternative care arrangements. A range of domestic legal documents, including the Tajik Constitution (1994) and the Family Code (1999), as well as several sets of laws and regulations, set out the policy on child protection and social services. Notably, the National Plan of Action for the Interests of the Child 2003-2010 sets out objectives such as the implementation of the UNCRC. However, these documents often overlap, are not sufficiently financed, and lack a clear implementation mechanism. It is not always clear which authority has the primary responsibility for developing child protection policy and strategies, how they interact and work with families at the local level, and who provides services.

The child protection system in Tajikistan is predominantly focused on residential care and there are limited programmes, if any, targeted specifically at the children of labour migrants. Social work services to help families and children are largely absent. This concept is relatively new to Tajikistan and there are efforts to introduce a social work curriculum and train social workers.

There are several groups of children – including those of migrants – who can be in need of special protection. This is particularly important for children from abandoned migrant households, where the mothers have to work to compensate for the absence of the breadwinner. Anecdotal evidence indicates that, on some occasions, the loss of the household breadwinner causes families to send their children to residential care as a mechanism to manage risks. Sometimes children are institutionalised only temporarily, until the migrants start sending remittances.

The government provides allowances and/or exemptions from paying public utilities and tuition fees for those children with no breadwinners or whose fathers have abandoned them and are providing no support (Pickup and Kuvatova, 2003). Although, in theory, the abandoned
wife of a labour migrant can appeal to social security bodies for an allowance due to the loss of a breadwinner, in practice this is quite difficult, as a court ruling on the missing husband is necessary to benefit from such an allowance.

In addition, in order to benefit from other pensions and allowances, migrants and members of their families need to contribute to the state system of social insurance and have a personal Social Identification Number. Labour migrants, as with any citizens of Tajikistan, can be registered within the social insurance system and make contributions to it, but social insurance for migrants is voluntary. Labour migrants often do not pay social insurance contributions and even those who do often make contributions in the country where they work, i.e. Russia and Kazakhstan. Considering that there are no agreements regarding the mutual recognition of the social deposits of labour migrants between Tajikistan and Russia or Kazakhstan, labour migrants prefer not to make any contributions to the social insurance system and therefore make themselves and their families vulnerable (Olimova and Kuddusov, 2007).

Children of labour migrants are a diverse group and need different forms of state assistance. The current social protection system in general and child protection in particular are not able to respond and meet the needs of children left behind, as both the legislative protection and policy implementation are not effective enough to protect children from risks and to support families.

6.4 Views of interviewed households on policy

In analysing existing policies relating to migrant families and thinking about policy recommendations for the future, it is interesting to see what the views of migrants themselves are. When asked how they would help people in their situation if they were the government, only 19 per cent of migrants and 26 per cent of abandoned households said they would give money/cash transfers. Most of the households, both migrant and abandoned, would like to have housing. Many also preferred the provision of free services such as healthcare (which 53 per cent and 61 per cent respectively stated).
6. Policy implications

6.5 Policy recommendations

Our findings and policy overview could inform three principal areas of policy: migration management, social protection, and advocacy.

6.5.1 Migration management

The findings of our research indicate that regularised migration improves the migration experience of individuals and minimises family disruption and the negative impact on children left behind. Regularised migrants have a secure status, which gives them the option of family migration and/or family visits, allows them to send a stable and predictable flow of remittances, and helps protect them from exploitation and abuse. In this context, migration management policy in Tajikistan should aim to:

1. Strive to promote regularised migration;
2. Improve the migration experience of Tajik migrants;
3. Provide assistance and services to migrant families; and
4. Develop domestic infrastructure to generate employment opportunities to both prevent potential migrants from leaving and encourage migrants to return home.

Migration management is complex and policies in this area can be very diverse. There are numerous studies in Tajikistan that have identified problems relating to migration management, as well as expert advice on policies meant to deal with such problems. Although it is outside the scope of this study to provide a comprehensive set of recommendations on migration management policies specifically, the following measures should be implemented:

- **Continued bilateral negotiations with the Russian Federation on the regularisation of Tajik migrants.** The Tajik government should use international forums and opportunities such as the Presidency in the Council of Heads of Commonwealth of Inde-
ependent States, as well as its membership of the Eurasian Economic Community, and initiate discussions on a new policy on labour migrants.

- **Adopt and effectively implement the newly developed Strategy for Labour Migration.** As mentioned above, the strategy addresses several important issues that could improve the migration experience, including training and skills development, assistance in finding a job, and improved mechanisms for rights protection. To further strengthen the strategy, the first component dealing with labour migration management could be modified to include references to the problems of migrant families and social protection measures designed to assist vulnerable families and children.

- Develop and adopt legislation to effectively regulate migration, which should clearly spell out the roles and responsibilities of various government authorities both towards migrants and their families. There is no consensus among experts and practitioners in Tajikistan as to whether a new law on migration is necessary or useful. Nevertheless, it is necessary to regulate such issues as pre-departure orientation of migrants, social insurance of migrants and their families, etc., which would require legislative changes. **It is important that any new legislation responds effectively to the problems of migrants and their families and respects their rights.**

5. The Tajik government should consider the implementation of **special programmes designed to support not just the migrant, but migrant families as well.** Examples of successful programmes elsewhere include:

  - Matching grant programmes for using remittances to start a new business, available to both the migrant and migrant’s immediate family (i.e. spouse). Examples that could be considered in considering such programmes include a programme linking remittances to rural development in Mexico, which allows women migrants to remit seed capital for family-run agricultural investments coupled with receiving entrepreneurial training. In addition, D-MADE (Development Marketplace for the African Diaspora in Europe), an initiative by the World Bank and some European governments, encourages African diaspora groups to access grants to finance entrepreneurial projects to benefit African home countries. A large programme in Latin America has, since the late 1990s, supported projects linking remittances and microfinance.

  - Savings programmes, such as cost-free savings accounts to finance children’s future education. A project to promote migrant savings, improve financial services and provide alternative investment opportunities for remittance senders and recipients has been funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development in Nepal.

  - Insurance programmes, such as a Social Fund, to insure the migrant’s family from migration-related risks. One option would be to allow voluntary participation of the migrant in the state social insurance system at home. This would require introducing incentives making the system attractive, informing migrants about the benefits of social insurance, etc. In addition, introducing requirements for mandatory social and/or health insurance could be considered. The latter option, however, would require careful consideration of migrants’ rights, as well as weighing of costs, benefits and enforcement options.

- **Capacity building for the new Migration Service to promote evidence-based, qualitative policies in the area of labour migration.** The capacity of the Migration Service will play a key role in the effective implementation of the strategy and the new law. This should include the strengthening of the position of labour attachés to effectively inform and protect Tajik migrants.
6. Policy implications

6.5 Policy recommendations

6.5.2 Social protection

There is growing support in the academic literature and development discourse that, in order to develop effective, efficient, context-specific, and gender-based policy responses to the problems of migrant families and children left behind, it is necessary to provide a framework directly linking migration and social protection. Social protection policies must be geared towards protecting citizens going abroad and providing services that children left behind need. At the same time, social protection measures geared exclusively towards children left behind can be discriminatory and counterproductive (Cortes, 2007). Consequently, social protection policy should aim to empower and promote the social rights of all children. In this context, the social protection policy in Tajikistan should include the following features:

1. Protect children from exploitation and abuse. Policies and services to regulate child labour and to monitor and punish various forms of abuse should be strengthened and developed;
2. Support caregivers of children in their child-rearing responsibilities. Programmes for extra-school support could help both caregivers and children left behind, particularly from abandoned households; and

Our research clearly indicates that children in migrant households, particularly in abandoned families, face a range of problems that need to be addressed within a wider social protection context. The main issues that emerge directly or indirectly from the research include:

- Prominence of mental health issues among children (and also left-behind parents). Mental health is not a well understood or well recognised concept in Tajikistan and the opinion that ‘children just have to cope’ prevails.
- Lack of awareness/sensitisation amongst a wide range of stakeholders (children, caregivers, and professionals, such as doctors and teachers, community leaders, etc.) about migration and the impact of migration on children left behind. This is demonstrated by numerous prejudiced views on the subject and includes lack of awareness about child rights (and in particular child development) and the prevalence of ‘culturally specific/traditional’ approaches to gender, which results in some practices that are discriminatory and damaging.
- Lack of sensitivity to children by teachers and other professionals who could be part of a wide and supportive system of child support and protection.
- Inclination towards ‘categorising’ children as part of a wider group (‘migrant children are like this’, ‘non-migrant children are like that’) rather than as individuals with very individual sets of needs.
- Lack of mechanisms to get the voice/views of children heard as a norm – as opposed to adult views and perceptions about children that, whilst well intentioned, may not fully reflect the view of the child.
- Lack of adequate educational support for children outside of school, even when they have time to study.
- Ambiguity on ‘boundaries’ between what is a fair/normal contribution to household/family chores and what constitutes unhealthy child labour (a problem which is not exclusive to children left behind).
- Limited effectiveness of mechanisms for the financial support of families in need, due to their limited amounts, poor targeting, and high documentation costs.
• Lack of mechanisms whereby the state (or a body on behalf of the state) can intervene and protect children where there is a credible and objectively verified need to do so, including the provision of appropriate alternative care where needed.

The analysis of these issues, as well as of the social service and child protection policies in Tajikistan and best practices in countries with high out-migration, indicate that both cash and non-cash social support programmes are necessary to mitigate the impact of parental migration on children. There is a need for a **coherent national social protection policy that is not solely focused on poverty reduction (which is necessary, but not sufficient) but also addresses the protection of vulnerable people, including children left behind by migrating parents**. This policy should be based on evidence of real need rather than perception of need/solution to need. These two key aspects of policy (cash and non-cash) may need to be addressed separately from a technical point of view, but should be harmonised to respond to clearly articulated overall social protection objectives. It is evident from the research that some of the problems that children identify and express are income-related, but other aspects of their welfare or well-being are a concern for them in what seems like fairly equal measure (e.g. lack of time and support for education, depression/unhappiness, vulnerability to unfair labour, violence and abuse, etc.).

In addition, **special considerations should be given to the problems of abandoned families**, who are particularly vulnerable. The policy challenge in this case is twofold: (i) reducing the occurrence of abandonment; and (ii) providing social assistance to those families who fall into poverty because of abandonment.

Reforms and measures in the above-mentioned areas could include the following:

**Cash support:**

• **Develop an effective system of targeted, needs-based social assistance.** Currently, there are various assistance payments to different categories of people, which do not target effectively the poorest and most vulnerable. The Tajik government, with the assistance of development partners, particularly the European Union and the World Bank, is currently addressing the cash benefits system. Considering that migration is such an important and widespread phenomenon in Tajikistan, issues connected to migration and the well-being of migrant families, particularly abandoned families, should be taken into account in the design of targeting mechanisms, administration of payments, and documentation costs.

• **Consider the relevance of more intensive financial support for abandoned families/children cared for by single parents (usually mothers).** This could also serve to give women more voice/bargaining power. An analysis of policy options, which would look at potential support programmes and consider issues such as income level and criteria for receipt, is required in order to determine the best way forward in this area.

• **Reduce documentation costs for civil registration documents and social assistance payments.** Although this is a cross-sectoral issue, which relates not only to cash support, this issue emerged strongly during the research. In particular, the following problems should be addressed:
  ◦ **Unregistered marriages and births.** The legal status of women and children in unregistered marriages and births is not regulated, which affects their property rights and their ability to receive alimony, inheritance, social assistance payments, etc.
  ◦ **Residency registration (propiska).** Many migrant wives and children live with the parents of their husband, but do not have official residency registration there. This
prevents them from enforcing their property rights and from accessing public and private services, particularly if they are abandoned and asked to leave the property. Many services/rights are linked to registration at the place of residence (housing, pensions, medical care, schooling and bank accounts). Propiska also gives the right to a portion of the property (or the value of it) in case of divorce or the death of the woman’s husband. Until September 2010, persons who did not have residency registration could not even open bank accounts. Although this requirement was eliminated, awareness about this seems low, even among bank employees.

- **Documentation for assistance payments and allowances.** Documentation costs (number of documents, travel requirements, etc.) for assistance payments and allowances can be very high in Tajikistan and this prevents migrant households from accessing social assistance payments.

**Non-cash support:**

- **Develop an organised system of social services, led by the MLSPP, but able to transcend institutional/sectoral boundaries.** Such a system would not only be effective, but would capitalise on existing resources (e.g. the education and health systems, local community structures and resources, etc.). Under the MLSPP, modern social work is emerging as a new profession and can play a critical role in working with and across sectoral/institutional boundaries, particularly in leading on assessing need/risk for children (from a holistic/overall developmental viewpoint), and liaising with schools, health providers, NGOs and communities to try and access the right kind of support for the child and family. Child protection systems have been developing faster than the wider social services system in Tajikistan and, whilst this is very positive in many ways, it needs to develop as an integral part of the overall social protection system, so that policy decisions can be made with a view to addressing the rights and needs of all vulnerable people with the resources available.

- **Develop effective mechanisms whereby the state can intervene and provide temporary or longer-term care and protection for children who are deemed to be exposed to a determined level of risk to violence, abuse or neglect.** Although care for children may in reality be provided by a range of actors (e.g. the ministries of health and education, NGOs, etc.), these services must be developed and delivered in-line with the social protection policy.

- **Develop a clear system of identification, assessment, referral, and review for children at risk (including children in migrant households), with social services taking a lead role and working in active collaboration with health, education, law enforcement, and civil society actors.** For this, it is crucial to clarify the role and configuration of state social protection bodies at a local level. Local social protection structures should have a central role in leading the assessment of local social protection needs (in order to inform appropriate service development and influence allocation of budget resources) and in co-ordinating interventions and delivery of core/statutory services (such as assessment, care placements, formal reviews, etc.).

- **Develop community-based social services.** As local schools are an obvious place where children can be seen and interacted with, as well as a place of connection with parents, serious consideration should be given to locating/developing some basic non-cash social support services in/around/near to schools, which can provide a flexible range of services including extra-curricular support (help with homework and studies), ‘counselling’ and advice for children and parents. Moreover, these would then be places where referrals can be made to other services when there are particular concerns or specific needs arising. They could act as a ‘window’ into other services and interventions. In addition,
opportunities for the involvement of civil society organisations in the provision of community-based services should be explored.

- **Develop school-based interventions for psycho-social support.** In addition to general social services mentioned above, specific programmes to help children deal with depression and aggression should be considered. A starting point could be the introduction of psycho-social programmes for teachers, aimed at providing them with a variety of skills, including:
  - Skills for integrating psycho-social and psycho-pedagogic components in their regular work with the class (i.e. in lessons) and in other job-related activities (meeting with parents, etc.);
  - Skills for providing individual support to children in need;
  - Skills for working with parents; and
  - Skills for mobilising support in the community.

- **Support the rehabilitation and inclusion of people with disabilities.** Although this is not intrinsically linked to migration, this issue came up in the research, and should be included as part of a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approach to social welfare. Community-Based Rehabilitation is a well known model (promoted by the World Health Organisation internationally) and, like child protection services, should ideally be integrated into the wider social protection/social welfare system.

- **Challenge prejudice and the stigma associated with migration as a matter of policy.** Two classic strategies are necessary:
  - With the support of donors and development partners with relevant experience, carry out **awareness-raising activities** involving media, schools, health facilities, and social services providers.
  - Introduce **awareness on migration and the effects on children into all educational curricula, programmes and special/in-service training courses** for key professionals (including teachers and health professionals, groups where stereotypes and prejudices abound). This would include the need to communicate sensitively with children, provide them with a safe space to express their feelings/views on a regular basis, etc.

**Preventing and reducing abandonment**

Reducing the occurrence of abandonment is a challenging task, which requires changing behavioural and cultural norms at the individual, household, and community levels. Significant advocacy measures are needed to increase awareness about the impact of abandonment on families and society at large. Policies to promote family strengthening could be implemented, involving community and religious leaders in working with current and potential migrants.

In addition, specific measures to minimise the effect on families in case of abandonment could be considered and advocated for. Examples of such measures include:

- Requiring civil registration of all marriages, rather than nikah only;
- Introducing changes to the family legislation, prescribing the rights of the wife in relation to in-laws;
- Promoting joint titling of property; and
- Promoting transfer of property into the name of the woman.
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References


Annex A. Literature review

A1. Introduction

In academic research, relatively little attention has been paid to the impacts on, and implications for, children and youth left behind by one or both migrant parents. Consequently, there is limited empirical evidence that shows the causal link between migration and changes in children’s well-being. This is partly due to the limited availability of data that would cover both the complex aspects of migration and the various dimensions of children’s well-being. Nevertheless, with the growing interest in the non-economic consequences of migration and concern about long-term effects on children from migrant households, some topics have been explored more thoroughly. This permits the development of certain conclusions regarding the expected link between migration and children’s well-being.

In recent years, several detailed reviews of empirical evidence on migration and children left behind have been produced, most notably by Andrea Rossi (2008) and Rodolfo de la Garza (2010). The analytical frameworks and definitions described in these reviews inform and guide our analysis of the relationship between the migration of parents and the well-being of their children.

A2. Definitions

The UNCRC, an international convention ratified by virtually every country in the world, including Tajikistan, proposes a comprehensive approach to child well-being, defining the obligations of a state towards every child. The UNCRC sets out the right of the child to the highest attainable standards of health and education, and the right to be free from discrimination, exploitation, and abuse. Consequently, a child-rights-centred approach assesses child well-being against health, education, economic activity and psycho-social variables. This approach is not only comprehensive, but also practical, as limited availability of specific data on the impact of migration on children compels researchers to rely on other sources of information, such as demographic, health and labour force surveys (Rossi, 2008).

Any study on the impacts of migration on children calls for a clear definition of ‘children’ and ‘migration’ in accordance with international standards. The international convention defines children as ‘individuals below the age of 18’. However, given the limitations in the availability of data and the use of other datasets such as the census or the LFS, studies often use cohorts of 15 years, rather than data that divide the population into 18-year intervals.

The United Nations (1998) defines a migrant as any person ‘who changes his or her country of usual residence’. Migration can be permanent if the individual never returns to his country of origin, long-term if he moves to another country for at least a year and short-term if he moves to a country other than his usual place of residence for at least three months but less than a year. In spatial terms, movement within a country is defined as internal migration, while international migration occurs when an individual moves from one country to another and becomes transnational if migrants ‘forge and sustain multi-stranded relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement’ (Schiller et al., 1992).
A3. Factors that affect the impact of migration on children left behind

One of the reasons for the difficulty in drawing robust conclusions about the relationship between migration and children’s well-being is the fact that the impact of migration on children differs depending on various factors, such as the child’s age, sex, and age at the parent’s first departure. Moreover, papers show important differences in the child’s welfare in the following cases: if the father migrates, if the mother migrates, or both; if the migrant parent resides legally or illegally in the host country; and if parents’ migration has a seasonal or long-term character. Family size also might be a factor, as children from an extended family might deal with their parent’s migration differently compared with children from a nuclear family (having siblings might positively influence their emotional state). Who is taking care of the child and the parent’s relationship to the caretaker could also affect the child’s well-being and emotional state.

Papers also suggest different approaches when analysing the impact on children versus adolescents. Atman (2010) estimates that older children in the family left behind have bigger drop-out rates compared to their younger siblings. Even though younger children seem to be emotionally much more affected by migration than older children, UNICEF Moldova (2008) stresses the particular situation of teenagers who have to take full responsibility as household heads. Young children and teenagers perceive migration differently; while young children perceive the parent’s migration as a ‘bad thing’, teenagers see it as a source of money and a logical decision taken to overcome the family’s financial problems.

Geographical, cultural, and gender aspects are also a factor. Yeoh and Lam (2008) show, in a comparative study of Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand, that the impact of parents’ migration on children differs even from one migration cohort to another and the parent’s migrant profile is a determinant in child’s post-migration life. Mansuri (2006) estimates an extremely significant impact of migration (through remittances) on girls’ health (height and weight related to age) and different results for boys. He also argues that better nutrition has a greater positive impact on younger children; consequently the age of the child at the time of the parent’s migration plays an important role.

A4. Impact on health

A number of factors make it difficult to assess the overall impact of adult migration on the health of children in their households. First, the effects of migration can vary with time. In a study on Mexico, Cortes (2007) shows that the general health of children declines during the first years of their parents’ migration, but improves over time as remittances contribute to improved access to healthcare. Second, research indicates that the effect of migration on children’s health depends on the age of the child, particularly at the time when the parent or parents migrated. Kanaiaupuni and Donato (1999) found that migration from a community raises infant mortality in the short term and lowers infant mortality in the long term, due to both household and community effects.

Moreover, a multitude of other factors influence health outcomes and these should be accounted for when disentangling the effect of migration. This generates measuring errors: when data...
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is collected, one has to take into account, among other things, the respondent’s ethnicity, parents’ education and occupation, and who is the caregiver of the child left behind.

When analysing the impact on health, researchers try to compare the physical and physiological state of children left behind with the state of their peers. Some researchers look at infant mortality and nutritional status, others health-related behaviour (eating habits, smoking, drinking, internet abuse), as well as distress and the child’s emotional state. Researchers try to find out if children have access to preventative measures, such as vaccination, and if specific diseases might be caused by a parent’s absence (mother or both).

Evidence from the international literature shows two possible effects of migration on health. On the one hand, remittances increase access to health services, drugs and food. Evidence from Liberia (UNICEF 2009) suggests that the increase in household income due to remittances reduces malnutrition among children and pregnant women. In Mexico, Hildebrandt and McKenzie (2005) find that migration results in 364g higher birth-weight, and lowers the probability of children being underweight by 6.9 per cent, controlling for other factors. Multivariate studies that analysed the impacts on indicators such as weight and height for age were also consistent with the positive influence of remittances on child health indicators (World Bank, 2006; Acosta et al., 2007). Similarly, a recent survey in rural households with migrants in Pakistan (Mansuri, 2006) suggests that migration has a positive impact on the weight and height of girls.

Most studies indicate a positive impact of migration on health, mostly due to the contribution of remittances to improved access to healthcare. One of the main determinants of households’ access to healthcare – other than supply-side constraints – is the availability of cash to pay for medicines and services. For example, in Mexico, Guatemala and Nicaragua positive health outcomes were mainly linked to remittances, which over time improve access to healthcare (Cortés, 2007). Moreover, as highlighted by Rossi (2008), these positive effects are mostly “confined to households in the poorest quintile of the income distribution”, where health choices are strongly affected by lack of income.

On the other hand, Yeoh and Lam (2008) review several studies in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and China and conclude that, even though there is some evidence of children from migrant families faring better than children from non-migrant families, when one considers specifically children left behind by mothers, they performed more poorly in terms of their physical and emotional health. This is due to ‘negative behaviour’ by children left behind, including loss of appetite, weight loss for children under five years of age, and temper tantrums among those of all ages, especially adolescents, as well as to neglect and low hygiene levels. This is confirmed by a UNICEF (2009) study on Moldovan children left behind, which suggests no difference between migrants’ children and others in the state of their health, including diet and hygiene, but indicates that children with both parents away (as well as children with migrant mothers) are reportedly unhappier than children of migrant fathers. Such effects of parents’ migration on the emotional health of children left behind are analysed further in the sub-section on the psychological and social effects (Section 5.8).

A potential realm of impact of parents’ migration on children left behind, as set out in the international evidence, is the impact on children’s health practices. This includes preventive healthcare on the one hand and unhealthy behaviour, such as drinking and smoking, on the other. In Mexico, McKenzie (2006) found that children in migrant households are less likely to receive preventive healthcare, suggesting that there may be long-term negative impacts on children’s health outcomes due to parental absence. A cross-sectional study conducted in several Chinese regions by Gao and Ping (2010), moreover, concluded that parental migration “is a risk factor for unhealthy behaviour” for their children. These children, especially girls, have high levels of physical inactivity, are overweight, watch more TV, drink alcohol and smoke.
Health repercussions associated with migration may also include increased risk of infectious and sexually transmitted disease contracted from returning migrants (de la Garza, 2010). Such effects are specific to a sub-group of the migrant population and are covered by a large strand of literature on infectious diseases.

A5. Impact on education

There are several documents that collect and summarise existing studies on the impact of migration (see Cortes, 2007; Lu and Treiman, 2007; de la Garza, 2010 internationally, and e.g. Bryant, 2005 for country-specific reviews (of Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand)). Although the evidence on the impact of parents’ migration on children’s education is often mixed, the general hypothesis is that remittances increase education opportunities. McKenzie and Rapoport (2006) argue that migration influences educational decisions through three distinct channels: the income effect brought about by remittances; the direct effect of adult migration on the demand for child work; and the impact of the prospect to migrate upon the incentives to invest in education (the ‘spillover’ or ‘demonstration’ effect). Consequently, while remittances are expected to increase the resources available for education, parental absence could result in poorer educational performance, an increase in school drop-out rates, and lack of interest in learning due to the demonstration effect.

Analysing the impact of migration on the education of children left behind is further complicated by the fact that this impact may depend on various factors, such as child’s sex, age of the child at the moment of parent’s migration, number of siblings and family structure, educational level of migrating parent and parent left behind, and level of urbanisation of the migrant’s community. This means that the results of empirical research can be highly specific to the region, country, and particular circumstances under study, making it difficult to extrapolate such results and draw conclusions about the relationship between migration and the education of children left behind.

On the one hand, many studies indicate that remittances have a positive influence on educational choices, attendance and performance of migrant children in comparison to children of non-migrants (Taylor, 1987; Jones, 1995; Cox-Edwards and Ureta, 2003; Hanson and Woodruff, 2003; Curran et al., 2004; Lu, 2005; and Calero et al., 2007). Typically, this is related to the provision of remittances (see Borraz, 2005 and López 2005 on Mexico). De la Garza (2010) notes that remittances have a positive impact on human capital formation, controlling for other factors.

On the other hand, several studies find negative impacts on school attendance and performance (Battistella and Conaco, 1998; Kandel and Kao 2001; Hanson and Woodruff 2003; Acosta 2005; and McKenzie and Rapoport 2006). In general, negative consequences result from greater demand for labour in the absence of a parent, from a lack of supervision, and from the demonstration effect of migration (in that children seek to work rather than attend school).

In the international literature, there are several examples of studies that demonstrate a positive impact of remittances on enrolment. Calero et al. (2007) show that remittances increase school enrolment and decrease the incidence of child work, especially for girls and in rural areas. Using a survey in rural Pakistan, Mansuri (2006) concluded that migration had a positive impact on school enrolment for boys and girls. Yang (2006) finds that children in migrant

Proxies for measuring impact on education

- Years of schooling
- School enrolment
- School attendance
- Drop-out rates
- Marks and test results
- Access to private education
Annex A. Literature review

households in the Philippines have improved educational access due to remittances. Of course, the degree of impact of migration on enrolment would depend on the level of remittances sent, and on the level of enrolment without the impact of migration.

The impact of parents’ migration on the education of their children seems to vary over time and depend on the duration of parents’ absence. Yeoh and Lam (2009) show that, while remittances increase access to education, children without parental care are more prone to drop out of school and turn to crime, after a certain period of time. Jampaklay (2006) also argues that the long-term absence of parents, especially of mothers, has a negative impact on the school enrolment of Thai children.

The international literature on the demonstration effect of migration is relatively compelling (even though often offset by the positive impact of remittances). For example, Kandel (2003) argues that Mexican adolescents who aim to migrate place less emphasis on school, knowing that their prospects in the migrant labour market are not clearly improved by school. As a result, children of migrants are more likely to miss or drop out of school. This demonstration effect counteracts the positive impact of remittances (Kandel and Kao 2001; Chiquiar and Hansen, 2005). Since boys in Mexico have a higher chance of migrating, the negative demonstration effect is stronger on them (McKenzie and Rapoport, 2006).

Again, unsurprisingly, the international evidence on the impact of migration on attendance is mixed. A study on migration from Tonga to New Zealand (McKenzie, 2009) did not find that migration had a significant influence on the school attendance of children left behind. Cox-Edwards and Ureta (2003) found that remittances contributed positively to school attendance, but that children with both parents absent miss school more often than children with one or both parents at home. Mansuri (2006) found that, although migration had a positive impact overall on enrolment in Pakistan, boys whose fathers migrated attended school less, probably because they did more work outside the household.

The negative effect of migration on the education of children left behind seems stronger when a large percentage of the population depend on remittances for economic survival (as is the case in Tajikistan). Usually, this is followed by a greater dependency on additional remittances, a reduced labour force and changes in consumption patterns (Coronel and Unterriner, 2005). As has been demonstrated in other studies (e.g. OPM 2010), there is a direct link between schooling and work, and more work involves less schooling. The final result could also be time sensitive; Mansuri (2006) found that the age of the child before migration significantly influences school attendance and the years at school. Adolescents in particular may be encouraged to become the main caregivers where parents are absent (de la Garza 2010). Similarly, UNICEF Moldova (2006) found that children in the 15-18 age group missed school to take care of household duties.

Giannelli and Mangiavacchi (2010) applied multiple-choice models to evaluate the school progression of older children and adolescents from Albanian migrant households, after which they analysed these children’s school participation using discrete and continuous time models. Their results show that past parental migration has a negative effect on school attendance in the long term, with higher levels of school drop-outs for children left behind, particularly boys. They also find that, when the head of the family is female, there is a positive impact in the long term on children’s success at school, suggesting that with men’s migration women’s decision-making power increases and women decide to invest more in children’s education.

The international literature on achievement, as for other indicators of education, is mixed. Overall, de la Garza (2010: 16) finds that “it is still unknown how remittances contribute to the quality of learning among children, who have either one or both parents absent for extended
periods of time.” Some studies find a negative connection. For example, Salah’s (2008) qualitative study on Moldovan children left behind argues that, although there is a positive impact of remittances on education, the parent’s absence has a substantial negative impact on children’s morale and school performance. A representative survey of 1,200 households in Sri Lanka indicated that children with migrant mothers performed worse than children with mothers working in Sri Lanka or not working (Save the Children 2006). This finding was attributed to the negative impacts of mothers’ absences on the psychological well-being of children. A negative influence of parental migration on children’s schooling was also found in Ecuador, where a small survey of 450 children found that children with migrant parents perform worse and have more household duties, particularly girls (Cartillas sobre Migración, 2006). A qualitative study in Moldova found that adults felt that children of migrant parents were at risk of leaving school through lack of motivation, parental monitoring and supervision (UNICEF Moldova 2007). This study argued that children could not rely on caregivers to be adequate substitutes for parents.

Other studies find no connection. For example, research on children left behind by migrant parents in Ghana (Kwaku 2009) reveals that there is no difference in the marks of children with migrant parents and their peers (in Science, English and Mathematics). Battistela and Conaco (1998) find that migration need not be disruptive to the development of children who remain, particularly if the mother remains and the child lives with relatives.

Some reviews find that teachers believe migrant children have worse attitudes to education. For example, studies in Ecuador and Moldova found that some teachers resented the children of migrants because they received high levels of remittances, and felt that migrant children were sometimes rude or arrogant (Carrillo and Herrera 2004, UNICEF Moldova 2007).

Finally, some studies find a positive connection. For example, a large survey in 2003 in the Philippines found that migrant children outperformed non-migrants, but that they were often enrolled in private schools (Scalabrini Institute, 2003). However, Yeoh and Lam (2009) indicate no difference in private schools in marks between migrants’ children and their peers in the Philippines.

In line with the literature on intra-household allocations, where an increase in female bargaining power coinciding with a simultaneous increase in household resources results in better outcomes for girls and not boys, Antamany (2010) establishes a positive relationship between parental migration and the education of girls in Mexico. Since fathers’ migration also coincides with a shift in household structure, it may be that women are left as the primary decision-makers in the household when a father migrates and these women invest their marginal dollars in the education of girls. To the contrary, where mothers travel, all children are less likely to attend school (de la Garza, 2010).

A6. Impact on economic activity

Studies suggest that the impact of migration on the economic activity of children left behind varies depending on whether the child was employed within or outside the household (Rossi, 2008). For children employed within a household, the effects could be twofold. Firstly, the child may work more to substitute for absent adult labour and, secondly, remittances can influence the productivity of children if they are used to finance productive investments, such as land or equipment. When children are employed outside the household, one would expect the income effect of remittances to contribute to a reduction of child work.

Proxies for measuring impact on economic activity

- Wage employment outside the household
- Time spent on household work
- Household-budget management
Consequently, the overall impact of migration on the economic activity of children depends on the new division of labour within the household, and the type of effects that predominate as a result of migration. This may depend significantly on child’s sex, as well as on whether the household is rural or urban.

Generally speaking, higher remittances tend to lead to lower labour demand for children outside the household. For example, Acosta (2006) finds that remittances have a positive influence on child work, by replacing the income children had to earn and reducing the need for their economic activity. However, this may be counterbalanced by a switch to more domestic work. Yang (2004) investigates the impact of the variation of remittances in Filipino households on time devoted to work by children left behind, distinguishing between the different types of child work, and finds that receipt of remittances lowers the incidence of wage employment, but increases the amount of time spent doing household work. According to Yang, the overall impact of remittances on child work is positive, as the increase in household work is smaller than the reduction in wage employment. UNICEF Moldova (2007) also found that household work increases, as children have to take care of their younger brothers and sisters when their parents travel abroad.

The effects of migration on child work are closely linked with the labour capacity and available jobs for adults in the household. For instance, de la Garza (2010) notes that migration can increase child work where there is a shortage of adult labour in the household, and where extended social support cannot be accessed to replace the labour of the absent migrant. This also explains differences in the impact of remittances between rural and urban households. In rural areas, which are often characterised by high levels of within-household employment, the impact of remittances on economic activity is less significant than in households in urban areas. For example, in a study on Ecuador, Bertoli (2007) finds that the proportion of children employed in family-run activities is twice as high for children in rural areas than for children in urban areas. Our survey is mainly conducted in rural areas with similar patterns of high in-household employment.

The international evidence also suggests that the gender of the migrant and the gender of those left behind influence changes in work patterns at home. Mansuri (2006) found tentatively in Pakistan that boys have a higher paid work burden when their fathers migrate. However, this reflects the gender patterns in Pakistan, where men generally tend to have more responsibilities for paid work outside the household. In female-headed households, children have higher domestic work burdens, so any positive impact of migration on reducing child work that may come about through remittances is neutralised (Cortes 2007).

Cortes (2007) notes that “studies indicate that before migration in poor households boys performed work for income, and girls helped in the domestic tasks. After migration girls still worked in the household, which hampered their permanence in school.” She concludes that, overall, migration cannot “modify ingrained gender relationships which allocate domestic work to girls and mothers and might limit their right to access paid work and higher education.”

### A7. Social and psychological effects

The effects of migration on the emotional well-being of children left behind are not clear-cut. Although remittances can increase a household’s capacity to access better health, education and employment opportunities, the social costs of migration for such households can be very high, due to family disintegration and lack of parental care. Such costs may be exacerbated in the case of long-term or permanent migration. Studies that analyse the cost and benefits of
migration generally observe the above competing effects between the adverse effect of family disruption and the compensating effect of increased income due to remittances (Hanson and Woodruff, 2003). However, very few studies address the social costs of migration and the psychological and emotional impacts of migration on children left behind and, consequently, there is still limited empirical evidence in this regard.

When studying the effect of migration on children’s emotional state, various factors, such as the size of the family, child’s sex, age at migration, type of parental migration, relationship with caregiver/tutor, relationship with parents, and community attitude can play a role and have to be considered.

In general, studies indicate that parental absence has a negative impact on children’s behaviour and emotional state. D’Emilio’s study in the Caribbean region finds that children left behind are exposed to “psychological and emotional stress” and suffer from “low self-esteem”, both of which are problems that might damage the child’s overall development. Studies in the Philippines and Sri Lanka also suggest that children with migrant mothers “showed poorer social adjustment and suffered from impeded social and psychological development”, while Toth (2007) finds that children with migrant mothers are “more prone to bouts of depression” than others.

The negative effects of parents’ migration on children left behind may vary over time and be particularly strong in the initial period after departure. D’Emilio and Cordero (2007) present evidence from Nicaragua where the majority of children reported periods of depression linked with a parent’s departure. A UNICEF study (2009), confirmed by the findings of McKenzie and Stillman (2009), showed that the general health of children declines during the first years of a parent’s migration, including their emotional health.

Not many studies have focused on the impact of migration on children’s aggressiveness. However, a couple of papers have made this connection. In Moldova, a UNICEF 2010 study, quoting interviewed children, concluded that children left behind “are unable to control and express their emotions in different circumstances without aggressiveness”. Similarly, in his ‘multidimensional perspective’ on children left behind, De la Garza (2010) explains that “boys appear to be prone to internalising their pain and manifesting it in aggressive behaviour”.

The attitude of the community and opportunities for community participation are also important. Children of migrant parents are often confused, showing signs of increased responsibility and behaving in a bad way at the same time. Some children are ashamed to recognise that a parent is a migrant whilst others are proud to have the father working abroad (Kwaku, 2009). While in some countries (China, Indonesia) the community is supportive and tries to ameliorate the situation of children with no parental care, a study by UNICEF (2010) finds that people in Moldovan communities label migrant’s children “money children”. This attitude leads to stigma and adverse reactions from children.

According to the literature on the subject, bullying and stigmatising of children from migrant households often depends on how widespread the phenomenon is in the country and is influenced by prevalent cultural attitudes. In Ecuador, Herrera (2004) argues that the mass media associates migrants with illegal practices and family disruption. According to his research, children of migrants are discriminated against mainly in middle- and upper class-urban schools, while stigmatising is much less evident in rural areas and public schools. This suggests that

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stigma in this case may be more of a class divide than anything else. Reports by the Scalabrini Migration Centre (2003) on the Philippines highlight a strikingly high incidence of physical abuse suffered by children of migrants, especially boys. In contrast, research from Jamaica shows that the cultural acceptance of migration is extremely high, meaning that there is no stigma attached to children left behind, especially as children are welcomed into a wider – and protective – family network (Waters, 1999).

There is a considerable lack of agreement in academic literature about what causes juvenile crime: some researchers link juvenile crime to family violence and lack of parenting and some argue against this link. In general, although there is no agreement as to the direct causes of juvenile crime, researchers and practitioners point to children’s decreased emotional stability and parental protection as risk factors that can increase juvenile crime and the exposure to violence and abuse. Based on a study in Ukraine, Tolstokorova (2009) suggests that, after migration, “emotional ties between family members decline” and the spiritual well-being of the child is affected, citing evidence that shows an increase in juvenile delinquency among those left behind. Salah (2008), on the other hand, tries to explore the situation in Moldova through a qualitative study into the risk of abuse, exploitation and violence that children left behind experience. The research implies that, due to a lack of role models and multiple deprivations, the probability that these children would be the subject to violence and human trafficking is higher; nevertheless, there are no data to support this assumption. This could be due to the analytical challenges of studying the exposure of children to violence and abuse, and the specificity of research tools that could be applied to uncover such severe child-rights violations.
Annex B. Anecdotal information

B1. Anecdotal evidence on the impact of migration on children left behind in Tajikistan

In general, most of the people interviewed agreed that migration is crucial for economic growth and poverty reduction in Tajikistan. Many, however, are concerned that migration brings significant negative side-effects in terms of children’s education, health, and psychological well-being, which will have long-term implications for the development of Tajikistan. Many presented anecdotal evidence that showed, in their view, that migration contributes to: a) higher drop-out rates and lower levels of education; b) poor nutrition, deteriorated health due to increased household labour, and higher incidence of public health problems, such as TB and AIDS; c) an increase in child labour and child migration; and d) more acute behavioural problems and increased violations by minors.

Analysing the anecdotal evidence presented, it is very difficult to disentangle the problems that are specifically linked to migration of parents from the general developmental problems confronted by Tajikistan, such as fall in the quality of public services or growing social conservatism, particularly in rural areas. Additionally, the situation of households that receive remittances seems to be significantly different from the situation of households that do not receive remittances. There are also important regional variations in Tajikistan that affect the characteristics of migration and the impact on children from migrant households. When asked to consider the matter from all angles, many people admitted that migration has a positive effect on households.

The following is a brief summary of emerging issues in considering the impact of labour migration on the main aspect of children’s well-being: health, education, economic activity, and psychological and social effects.

B2. Health

The inception mission yielded limited evidence on the impact of migration on health. Some people pointed out that, because of the seasonality of remittances, children from migrant households are subject to periods of malnutrition. Others, however, have pointed out that this is a general problem in Tajikistan, which is linked to poverty rather than migration. The TLSS in Tajikistan contains a nutrition module and some nutrition studies have been conducted over the years.

Some people have pointed out that because some people migrate with their families, children are not properly immunised. However, this seems to be a relatively small problem, as, in the majority of cases, wives and children of migrants stay behind in the village.

There is limited evidence that migrant workers have higher TB and HIV/AIDS rates, which affects their families upon their return. As of mid-2010, IOM was conducting an extensive study on HIV/AIDS.
B3. Education

On the one hand, children from migrant households seem to have better access to education, as remittances can be used for clothing, school supplies, renting books, and other related costs. Some migrants even use remittances to pay for university fees and ensure that their children receive tertiary education. On the other hand, the increased burden of household work generates pressure to drop out of school or spend less time on educational activities.

Many people indicated that, due to low returns of education and the lack of domestic opportunities, many boys aspire to migrate or actually migrate as soon as they reach 16 (in Tajikistan, education is compulsory until the age of 16). There are important problems with girls’ education as well, but these are mostly due to the growing conservatism and the increasing number of early marriages. There seem to be significant regional differences in attitudes towards education. For example, in the autonomous region GBAO, populated mainly by Ismailis, people invest in education much more than in the other regions. This is despite the fact that, in GBAO, women are more likely to migrate with their husbands and leave the children with grandparents or extended families. Some experts have indicated that investment in the education of children strongly depends on the mother’s level of education.

B4. Economic activity

Many people interviewed considered that children in migrant households are more likely to perform household chores, as the burden of household chores increases in the absence of the father. Child labour in markets, car washes, and cotton fields has also become widespread. However, it is not clear whether children from migrant households are more likely to work than children from non-migrant households with a similar income level.

Many have noted that the situation of households differs significantly depending on the amount of remittances received, and children from abandoned households or from households that do not receive remittances are much more likely to work. A growing problem is the use of child labour in the cotton fields. Children as young as six work on cotton fields, and some have migrated with their mothers from other regions in Tajikistan.

Some of the people interviewed have cautioned against linking child labour with migration without conducting a thorough analysis, as child labour was traditionally used even when Tajikistan was part of the Soviet Union.

B5. Psychological and social effects

Many people have expressed the opinion that children from migrant households are psychologically more vulnerable, due to the absence of the father and the more irritable attitude of the mothers. This can lead to a range of effects, including suicide, sexual abuse and trafficking, and a higher level of influence for local religious leaders.

Some people pointed out that domestic violence is quite widespread in Tajikistan, and that the absence of fathers can actually have a beneficial effect on children’s psychological well-being, as the violence that they witness is reduced.

Many people link the growing criminality among youth (in particular, thefts) to migration and the absence of the authority figure in the family. However, statistics presented by the Ministry of the Interior indicate that only some 10 per cent of the young people detained in the first six months of 2010 come from migrant households.
Annex C. List of people met

Mr. Alisher Yarbabaev, Head of Employment and Social Protection Department, Executive Apparatus of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan
Mr. Zarif Alizoda, Ombudsman of the Republic of Tajikistan
Ms. Kimatgul Aliberdieva, First Deputy, Committee for Women and Family Affairs
Mr. Shirinkeb Mirzoev, Deputy Head, Department for Prevention of Law Violations Among Minors and Youth
Ms. Hongwei Gao, Former Country Representative, UNICEF
Mr. Arthur van Diesen, Deputy Country Representative, UNICEF
Mr. Jamshed Hasanov, Social Policy Officer, UNICEF
Mr. Farhod Khamidov, Former Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, UNICEF
Ms. Siyma Barkin Kuzmin, Chief, Child Protection, UNICEF
Mr. Salohiddin Shamsiddinov, Programme Assistant, Child Protection, UNICEF
Mr. Ayadil Saparbekov, Chief, Health and Nutrition, UNICEF
Mr. Sabir Kurbanov, Health Specialist, UNICEF
Ms. Takaho Fukami, Chief, Education, UNICEF
Ms. Baro Mukhammadieva, Education Officer, UNICEF
Mr. Zainiddin Karaev, Country Officer, World Bank
Mr. Sudharshan Canagarajah, Senior Economist, World Bank
Mr. Matin Kholmatov, Consultant, World Bank
Mr. Bakhtiyor Safarov, Project Coordinator, “Strengthening the National Statistical System”, World Bank
Mr. Zeinal Hajiev, Chief of Mission, IOM
Mr. Zohir Navjavonov, IOM
Ms. Malika Yarbabaeva, IOM
Ms. Gulchehra Ibragimova, IOM
Mr. Sobir Aminov, National coordinator, ILO
Ms. Muhayo Khosabekova, National Programme Coordinator, ILO-IPEC in Tajikistan
Mr. Tohir Valiev, Migration Project Manager, ACTED
Mr. Shamsidin Muhidinov, Disaster Management Programme Coordinator, IFRC
Mr. Farrukh Kasimov, Disaster Management/ Water and Sanitation Programmes Officer, IFRC
Ms. Bess Brown, Regional Economic and Environmental Advisor, OSCE
Ms. Zaynabi Kutbonova, Programme Assistant, OSCE
Ms. Nargiz Babaeva, Migration Coordinator, UNIFEM
Mr. Geoffrey Poynter, Deputy Director Programmes, Save the Children
Mr. Moyonsho Mahmudbekov, Head of the Migration, Urbanization, and Population Department of the Academy of Studies of the Republic of Tajikistan
Mr. Tojidin Jalolov, Executive Director, Child Rights Centre
Prof. Muzaffar Olimov, Director, Research Centre “Sharq”
Mr. Jamshed Quddusov, IRC “Socservice”
Annex C. List of people met

B5. Psychological and social effects