



Poverty among Migrant Families in London

How should we respond

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Who are international migrants?

- Asylum-seekers, those granted refugee status, HP and discretionary leave, programme refugees
- EU labour migrants pre-2004
- EU labour migrants from A10 countries
- EU secondary migrants - Congolese and Tamils from France, Somalis from Netherlands.
- Work permit holders and dependents
- Family reunion cases
- Overseas students and dependents
- Irregular migrants: clandestine entrants, asylum and visa overstayers, including many among 450,000 'asylum legacy cases.
- 'Returning' British nationals, for example from Zimbabwe.



Changes to Migration Post 2002

- Increased international migration
- Increased mobility within the UK
- Areas of super-diversity - 80 languages in one secondary school
- Greater return and circular migration

Mobility, return and circular migration a feature of a new migration paradigm. Different public policy responses - for example language teaching. Yet public services assume stability and permanence.



Changes in international migration post 2002

- Less asylum migration -48,406 applicants in 2003 and 23,520 applicants in 2006
- Evidence of asylum-seekers using other migratory pathways to enter the UK, as students, work permit holders or remaining as irregular migrants after clandestine entry.
- Main groups of asylum-seekers are from Iran, Iraq, DRC, Somalia, Zimbabwe and Afghanistan.



Changes cont.

- Increased labour migration from EU, particularly from Poland: 350,000 estimate from LFS
- Poles and Portuguese largest groups with children
- Increased labour migration via work permit schemes, although work permit system is undergoing changes.
- Migration of minority, refugee and migrant communities from other EU states - Somalis from Scandinavia and Netherlands, Tamils from Germany, Ivorians from France.
- Slow increase in student migration -309,000 overseas students in 2006 (284,000 in 2005)
- Rise of the 'worker-student'



Changes, cont.

- Increases in children coming to UK by themselves, not always through asylum system. Schools and social services not aware of carers of these children.
- Probable increase in numbers of irregular migrants. This is a political issue in UK - with the advent of biometric ID cards
- Many irregular migrants are living in stressful and difficult situations



Increased 'chaotic migrancy', characterised by

Increased numbers of migrants living in difficult circumstances, which includes

- Irregular or time limited immigration status
- Housing mobility
- Overcrowded, poor housing, verging on shanty conditions
- Household employment in informal sector
- For children separation from usual carers and lack of love
- Little or no contact with educational and welfare agencies
- Possession of little educational cultural capital



What do we know about child poverty among migrant communities?

Many migrant families, including refugees, are educationally successful and are not living in poverty. But disproportionate numbers of migrant families experience levels of poverty above and beyond that of UK-born population.

Labour Force Survey data 2006

France-born 15% economically inactive, 85% employment rate

Ghana-born 13% economically inactive, 77% employment rate

Somalia-born 72% economic inactive, 18% employment rate



Average gross hourly pay from main job of economically active population aged 16-59/64 by country of birth, 2005/06

- USA - £17.10
- Australia - £15.20
- Uganda - £13.40
- Kenya - £12.50
- Italy - £11.90
- Jamaica - £11.60
- UK - £11.10
- Nigeria - £10.80
- Pakistan - £10.20
- Ghana - £9.40
- Bangladesh - £9.30
- Turkey - £8.20
- Somalia - £7.90
- Poland - £7.30



What groups of child migrants experience poverty in London?

1. Children of low paid migrant workers - 'in work poor'.
2. Unemployed migrants, Somalis largest group
3. Irregular migrants - usually visa and asylum overstayers. They include 450,000 asylum legacy cases.
4. Children in households support irregular migrants
5. Children of families in receipt of BIA subsistence only support.



Causes of child poverty among migrants

- Unemployment
- Low pay
- Occupational segregation in low paid jobs
- Inability to access child care or unwillingness to put very young children in care of strangers
- Remittance obligations
- Fear of loss of benefits among some groups
- Lack of knowledge of in-work benefits
- Loss of support networks - fewer second-hand items and no sharing of shopping and cooking
- Asylum policy - leaving families destitute at end of process
- Family/community obligations towards fellow migrants
- Informal sector and illegal working without protection of NMW



Effects on Children

- Hunger
- Compounding of children's sense of isolation
- Parental working of long hours - children left unsupervised
- Poverty closely associated with sub-standard and overcrowded accommodation



Recommendations

- Campaign against asylum destitution
- Clearing of asylum legacy cases as soon as possible
- One off regularisation of irregular migrants is only economically feasible option.
- Living Wage and procurement requirements
- Work with community groups to ensure better uptake of in-work tax credits.
- Targeted projects with Somalis.
- Campaign for national standard for uniform grants
- Vacation allowance when children do not receive free school meals.