



**EXPLORING THE LINKAGES BETWEEN CHILDREN'S  
INDEPENDENT MIGRATION AND EDUCATION:  
EVIDENCE FROM GHANA**

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## **Abstract**

Migrating for education is an insufficiently stressed aspect in the literature on children's independent migration and it is frequently assumed that migration undermines children's educational opportunities. What little research has been done suggests that the link between children's migration and education is very context-specific. In this paper the linkages between children's independent migration and education - formal and non-formal - is explored in a specific context by drawing on interviews with young migrants who have moved from rural, farming households in northern Ghana to rural and urban households in central and southern Ghana. The paper illustrates how, in contrast to the positive light in which education is usually presented, the findings of this research suggests a more ambivalent and complex picture, and illuminates both positive and negative aspects of the linkages between child migration and education.

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## INTRODUCTION

The issue of children's independent migration<sup>2</sup> is generally absent from research agendas, the context of their movement tending to be subsumed within the literature on family migration<sup>3</sup> (Young 2004). Even more absent is attention to the linkages between education<sup>4</sup> and migration<sup>5</sup>, the general assumption being that migration undermines children's educational opportunities. What research has been done suggests that the linkages between independent migration and education are very context specific (Whitehead and Hashim 2005). The aim of this paper is to explore the interconnections between migration and education in one particular context, that of young migrants who have moved from rural, farming households in northern Ghana to rural and urban households in central and southern Ghana.

The issue of children's migration in this context first emerged during research carried out on children's education and family-based work in a village in north-eastern Ghana in 2000-2001. It was found then that relatively large numbers of children migrate independently to the cocoa-growing areas of Ghana, and that some of these children migrate in order to further their education; either moving to be able to attend school or to be trained in a vocation, or migrating for work to get the money needed to attend school (Hashim 2003). The issue of migration was an unexpected outcome of that research, consequently only some return migrant children and some children who had moved into the village were interviewed. Additional fieldwork was carried out between May and July 2004 with the aim of further exploring children's independent migration in Ghana. The paper will draw on the findings of both these periods of fieldwork, focusing only on those findings that are relevant to the linkages between children's migration and education; formal and vocational<sup>6</sup>.

The paper is organised as follows: the next section gives an overview of the two periods of fieldwork and the methods employed, and provides some contextual information regarding the area from which the migrant children originate. The section following will detail the educational system in Ghana and the attitudes towards education that emerged during the first period of fieldwork, this being critical to understanding linkages between education and migration. This will be situated within a general discussion of children's work, migration and education. Finally, the findings of the research pertaining to education will be detailed and discussed.

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<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise indicated the definition of a child used in this report includes individuals aged zero to seventeen. The term 'independent child migrants' is used to refer broadly to any child who migrates independently of their parents, although the decision to move may or may not be an autonomous one.

<sup>3</sup> For example, in the context of this paper, the role of remittances in educating children is occasionally commented on (Afsar 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Throughout this paper, the term education is used very broadly to refer to formal and non-formal education.

<sup>5</sup> See Orellana et al (2001), Pilon (2003) Ping and Pieke (2003) and Piperno (2002) as exceptions to this.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the full findings of that research, see Hashim (2004b).

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

### The Two Periods of Fieldwork

The first period of fieldwork was carried out in the farming village of Tempene Natinga in the north-east of Ghana. With the exception of a break for part of December and January, I lived in the village from September 2000 to June 2001. This meant that I actively participated in the life of the village, recording all my observations, conversations, activities as well as thoughts and feelings in my field diaries. In addition to this, with the assistance of a translator, research was carried out using a range of techniques, including social surveys of the ninety-six households making up Tempene Natinga central, detailed questionnaires of nine households, and structured, semi-structured and informal interviews with a range of social actors (Hashim 2004a).

The research aimed to explore the lived experiences of children in a specific context. It examined how children spend their time, the work that they do and their experiences of education. It considered the role that children play in households' livelihoods strategies, the nature of inter-generational relations, the negotiations and decision-making processes associated with boys' and girls' various activities, the different strategies children themselves adopt in improving their livelihoods, and the variations in these on the basis of age and gender (ibid.).

It was found during the fieldwork that relatively large numbers of children from the village were living and/or working outside the village without their parents. For instance, at the time of a survey on migration in March 2001 it was found that out of a population of 447 children (257 boys and 190 girls<sup>7</sup>), some 77 children (41 girls and 36 boys) had migrated out of the village without their parents. This represented 15 percent of the child population and 50 percent of the 96 households in the village reported having a child living elsewhere. Forty-eight children (18 boys and 30 girls) were also living in the village away from their immediate family. A survey of all those under 18 years of age found also that a further 17 children (9 boys and 8 girls) had in the past been independent child migrants, and of course this is likely to be much higher since only those under the age of 18 were surveyed (ibid. 102).

The issue of migration was an unexpected outcome of the initial fieldwork. As a result only some children who had migrated into the village (two boys and two girls) and some of those who had returned (three boys and three girls) were formally interviewed in 2000-2001. The purpose of the second period of fieldwork was to build on what was found in 2000-2001 in two ways. First, the aim was to explore in

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<sup>7</sup> This sex ratio discrepancy will be discussed later.

greater detail the nature of the processes involved in migration. By this it is meant both the social networks that come into play in the movement of children and also the household negotiations that are involved in children's movements. The second purpose of the research was to broaden the scope of the children considered to include children who were at the time living as independent migrants. During this second stage, therefore, fieldwork was carried out in several sites: in the village of Tempene Natinga, as well as in the places where children had migrated to and were currently living as independent child migrants. Thus, between May and July 2004, I returned to the village of Tempene Natinga and interviewed a total of twenty parents regarding their children's migration. These consisted of five mothers of girls, five mothers of boys, five fathers of girls and five fathers of boys. A further ten interviews were carried out with young people who had been independent child migrants. The aim of these interviews was to explore the negotiations surrounding the decision to migrate, with a particular emphasis on the impact of gender and age on this, and the social networks (if any) utilised to facilitate migration. The aim also was to identify the location of migrant children in the south as I intended to trace these children in order to interview them.

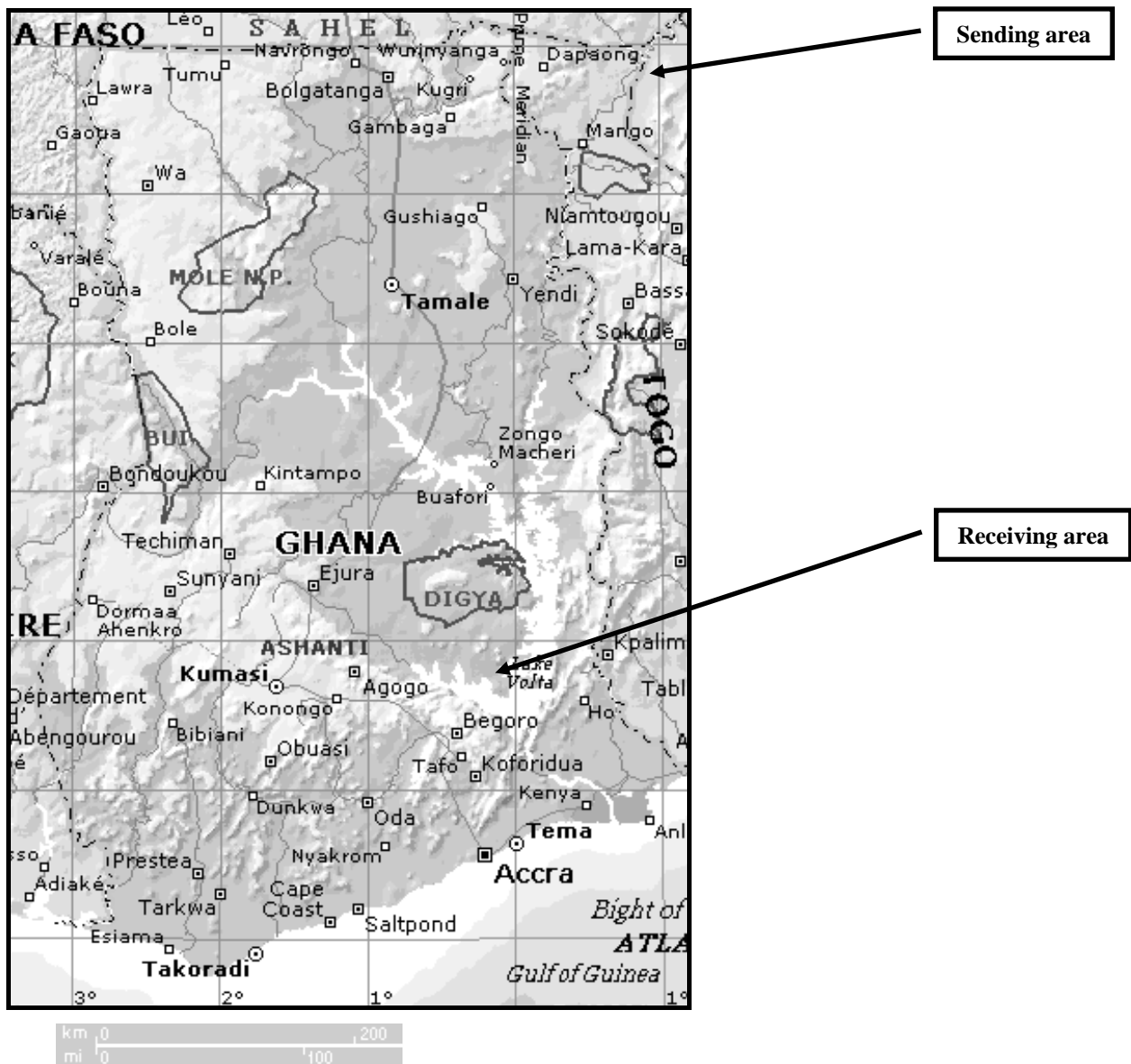
Having completed these interviews, I then travelled south with my translator to locate and interview these children. However, for a number of reasons, this was found to be practically impossible in all but five cases<sup>8</sup>. Instead I concentrated on interviewing principally children of the Kusasi ethnic group (the numerically dominant ethnic group of the sending area), from the same district in which I first worked. I based myself in the capital of the Ashanti region, Kumasi, moving out from there to over thirty different communities within a 100 mile radius, interviewing thirty boys and thirty girls in eighteen different locations (see map below).

Since most of the little research that has been done on independent child migrants tends to focus on those working for a non-related person and/or in the urban sector, I was particularly interested in speaking to children living in rural areas and/or with relatives. Consequently, I concentrated on these types of children, nineteen boys and nineteen girls in each category being interviewed. However, in order to capture potential differences in experience arising from rural or urban location and on whether a child was living with and/or working for a related or non-related individual, a further eleven girls and eleven boys that fell into the urban and/or non-related categories were also interviewed. The youngest migrant interviewed was eight and the oldest were in their early twenties although they had been seventeen years of age when they first migrated. Key questions for these interviews related to exploring the reasons for migration, the extent to which this was a child's own welfare-maximising opportunity or the degree of compulsion involved, the social networks utilised during migration and children's experiences of migration.

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<sup>8</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this, see Hashim (2004b).

Map of Ghana



(Source: <http://www.expedia.com>)

### The Originating Area

The originating area of the children interviewed is the Bawku East District of the Upper East Region in the very north-eastern corner of Ghana (see map 1). The area is relatively inaccessible, being poorly serviced by all-weather roads and having as the main access route only a partially tarred road between the district capital, Bawku, and the regional capital, Bolgatanga. Only twenty percent of the population of Bawku East District is urban (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) 2002: 50). The primary economic activity is farming, but this is limited agriculturally as, in addition to its relative inaccessibility, it is located in the Sudan savannah, which is characterised by a single and short rainy season, and has increasing soil infertility (Awambila 1997, Devereux 1992, Dietz and Millar 1999).

Historically, the area has had little investment in infrastructure or services, including in education. This under-investment began during the colonial period, when the British colonial administration pursued a policy of under-developing the north, promoting its role largely as a labour reserve for the south and there were high rates of migration from the north to the large towns and the cocoa growing areas of Ghana (Whitehead 1996). Under-investment continues post-independence because this informal division between north and south has become part of the national culture (Whitehead 1996: 32). These factors contribute to the area having the highest concentrations of the poor in Ghana, a recent World Bank study estimating that 90 percent of the population in the Upper East Region is now poor, while almost 80 percent is extremely poor (Canagarajah and Pörtner 2002: 22). Other indicators point to the degree of under-development and poverty in the area. For instance, under-nutrition in children under five is the highest in the Upper East (GSS and World Bank 1998: 38). Adult literacy rates in the Upper East Region are also amongst the poorest in Ghana, the level of illiteracy being 78 percent (GSS 2002: 24), which is of considerable significance considering the correlation between parental and children's educational status (Moore 2001: 10).

The village of Tempene Natinga, in which fieldwork was carried out in 2000-2001 and in 2004, is broadly representative of the originating villages of all the children interviewed. It can be characterised as a farming village, although there are a small number of individuals, such as teachers, for whom farming is a secondary, not primary, occupation. Agricultural production is primarily of food crops and is a mixture of cash-cropping and subsistence crops, the aim being to produce sufficient food for a year's consumption and sell enough crops for cash necessities. With the exception of the dry-season gardens, cultivation is rain-fed and largely non-mechanised. As a result, farming is labour intensive, requiring input from all able-bodied household members. This is reflected in the relatively large average household sizes. Households are large both because polygamy is practised and because households are not always based on a conjugal core of one man and his wife or wives, but on a complex extended family household.

The social organisation of farming is quite complex, being subject to divisions of labour according to age, gender and status hierarchies. Production and consumption are organised around the household. Although farming is gendered to the extent that some tasks are more likely to be done by males and some by females, both male and female labour is essential for growing the main crops. All household members are obliged to work under the direction of the household head in the 'compound farm' to produce the millet and maize necessary for domestic consumption for the year. There are also other hierarchies regarding access to household labour in operation. The household head can call on all household members' (dependants')

labour, senior household members can call on their juniors (juniors including women, provided they are not their mothers or equivalents). Thus, access to the labour of others is based on seniority and gender. This also impacts on the individual or 'private' farms most household members work on for personal profit or consumption, since the ability to farm privately is dependent on the time (and resources) necessary to do so.

From a very young age children are encouraged and expected to contribute to the household's subsistence. From the age of four or five they are helping with tasks such as caring for their siblings and running errands. Between seven and thirteen, they gradually begin engaging in almost all those tasks that adults are carrying out, although in a more limited sense in terms of work occupying their time and the extent to which they have the physical capacity to achieve as much as an adult. By the age of fourteen they are carrying out all those tasks that adults of their gender are able and expected to do. The system of private farming also extends to children so that they, too, are expected to provide for themselves those personal items that are seen as the responsibility of the individual. As a result, from about the age of ten children are given their own small plot of land to begin to start farming for themselves.

It is clear, therefore, that in Tempene Natinga work is seen as an age-appropriate behaviour for children. This is not merely related to the necessity of children's labour for subsistence, nor for teaching children the skills required to secure their livelihoods as adults. It is a process of enculturation into their roles in the domestic economy and wider community. Central to this is the understanding of their responsibilities in the production of the households' food crops and cash crops, and their roles in the reproductive labour necessary to secure the household's subsistence. However, because the domestic economy includes the pursuit of independent endeavours, this also involves the adoption of a sense of self-reliance (Hashim 2004a).

The reliance on unpredictable rainfall, coupled with highly depleted soil fertility and increasing demands on land in the face of a growing population has meant that it is increasingly difficult to secure subsistence, particularly without agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and/or bullock ploughs. Consequently, many individuals engage in some trading and/or artisan production, and there is also a small local labour market. In addition, the historical roots of migration in colonial policy has continued as a dominant experience for most households, with migration that may be permanent, seasonal or temporary occurring between the north and the cocoa-growing areas of Ghana and, to a lesser extent, to Côte d'Ivoire. A household survey carried out in March 2001 revealed that over 68 percent of the households in the village had one or more adult male away (Hashim 2004a: 68).

Although there are degrees of variation in relative wealth, the majority of the population is very poor. For example, a wealth-ranking exercise indicated that in 2000-2001 half the households in Tempene



Natinga fall into what can be described as a poor and insecure category, producing insufficient food and/or cash-crops, and having little assets or other income sources to fall back on should the rains fail or a crisis occur to push them into the destitute category (ibid.). Overall the population experiences poor health and nutrition and, as will be taken up later, low rates of literacy and educational enrolment<sup>9</sup>.

## WHY EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT

### Children's Work, Migration and Education

As a number of writers have commented on, education and childhood are intimately connected with one another (Boyden 1997, Nieuwenhuys 1996). This came about in the industrialised world during the nineteenth century as a result of economic, social and political transformations: transformations which institutionalised 'childhood' as a category separate from adulthood (Davin 1996, Morrow 1996). In particular, 'the development of the need for educated wage-labourers created a previously-unknown institution of "childhood" which soon extended children's dependency into adolescence' (Minge-Kalman 1978 cited in Robertson 1991: 117). Through these processes, education became one of the key concepts implicated in the provision of 'average' or 'normal' childhood (Boyden 1997: 200) and 'proper' childhood became viewed as being based on 'the sanctity of the nuclear family on the one hand and the school on the other as the only legitimate places for growing up' (Nieuwenhuys 1996: 242).

As Invernizzi (2003: 323) discusses, seeing a child's daily life as being geared exclusively to education and play renders work a binary opposite. In this way, 'work becomes a "pathology" when associated with childhood' (White 1999: 34), and work and education become constructed as mutually exclusive<sup>10</sup>. This, in part, explains the absence of research on the inter-linkages between children's migration and education. That is, as a review of the literature on children's migration illustrates, there is a virtual absence of any reliable data on how many independent child migrants there are and what the effect of migration is on their well-being (Whitehead and Hashim 2005). However, since a significant amount of children's independent migration is migration for work<sup>11</sup>, it tends to be *assumed* that migration undermines children's educational opportunities; consequently the inter-linkages between migration and

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<sup>9</sup> Some 54 percent of men and 81 percent of adult women had never attended school, while 41 percent of boys and 35 percent of girls were not enrolled in school at the time of the 2000-2001 fieldwork (Hashim 2004a: 67, 139).

<sup>10</sup> This is particularly true of the policy literature. What little academic research there is in the area of child labour does question the extent to which education and work are seen as mutually exclusive (see, for example, Grootaert and Kanbur 1995, Myers and Boyden 1998). Research specifically focussed on education has long interrogated this relationship (See Casely-Hayford (1999, 2000) for an interesting discussion of the role of education in children's socialisation among the Dagomba of Ghana). Nonetheless, few if any of these studies are explicitly concerned with the inter-relationship between children's migration and education.

<sup>11</sup> For example, Kielland and Sanogo (2002) find that 9.5% of Burkinabe children aged between six and seventeen live outside the proximity of their parents and that of these, half are migrant child labourers.

education, such as migration for education, is an even less stressed aspect of the little research that does address children's migration.

What research has been done on education and children's migration suggests that it is very context specific. For example, some sources argue that there is a statistical link between not going to school and the propensity of rural children to migrate to work (Castle and Diarra 2003, in Mali). Others argue that children migrate because they are disappointed that their parents will not send them to school (Beauchemin 1999, in Ghana). Ping and Pieke's review of children's migration in China suggests that because rural-urban migrants enter a strongly segmented labour market, there is little incentive to acquire an education beyond elementary literacy. Consequently in villages specialising in out-migration, pupils frequently drop out of school before the completion of compulsory education to migrate to the cities, although the earnings of these young migrants can be used to pay for the education of a sibling since the ideology of a collective family strategy toward upward mobility acts as an incentive for (particularly) girls to migrate to support their brothers' education (Ping and Pieke 2003: 8).

These studies are important not only in drawing attention to the context-specific nature of the inter-linkages between migration and education, but to why this might be the case. As Punch illustrates with her study of childhood in Bolivia, for the poor in rural areas a vital factor in determining whether education is considered as a viable option or not is adults' and children's perception of the benefits of education compared with other available opportunities, as well as having the confidence that education will guarantee an alternative or viable livelihood for a child (Punch 2002: 126). These considerations are particularly important if the labour market 'is structured such that there is a market for children's work and for unskilled adult labour, but a limited market for semi-skilled labour offering limited improvements in returns in addition to poor quality education' (Moore 2001: 8).

Thus, parents and children in such circumstances may either not pursue education as a practical strategy or adopt a variety of tactics to secure the potential return on the investment in education. For example, Liddell et al's (2003) work in South Africa found that, for a variety of reasons, the chances of children completing schooling was slim. Consequently, parents 'spread the risk by attempting to educate all offspring to a level where employment opportunities are enhanced. Their reasons for expending so much on education when the returns are, in reality, very low, may be explained by the fact that employment prospects increase significantly with an increased number of school grades completed' (Liddell et al 2003: 62). In contrast, Sommerfelt's research in Morocco found that poor rural parents may struggle to keep a successful student in school by finding other sources of income, including sending an 'unsuccessful' daughter to work as a housemaid (Sommerfelt 2001: 57).

My own research in the village in Ghana found both similar and differing approaches to education. Prior to presenting these, though, it is first necessary to set the context by providing an overview of the education system in Ghana and the variations in its uptake.

## Education in Ghana

The education system in Ghana changed in 1987 from a seventeen-year pre-tertiary system, to a twelve-year one. The former system involved ten years of elementary education, followed by five years of secondary schooling. Students fulfilling entrance criteria then proceeded to a two-year six-form course, potentially followed by university or a training college. In the current system, six years of primary school and three years of junior secondary school have been consolidated into nine years of free and compulsory basic education. Following this, students who qualify (by attaining a high enough mark in exams) can proceed into senior secondary schools (Ghana Ministry of Education (GME) 2000). At this stage fees become payable. While these vary between schools – depending on factors such as the nature of the school (boarding or day-school), its location and the perceived desirability of the school – overall, they are very costly and often unaffordable for poorer parents<sup>12</sup>. Students who pass the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination at the end of three years of senior secondary school can pursue a degree course at university or a diploma course at some other tertiary institution (*ibid.*). Again, these are costly.

Thus, although fees are required for senior secondary and tertiary education, education is meant to be free and compulsory for the first nine years in Ghana. Despite this, it is still the case that Ghana does not have a 100 percent enrolment record at these levels. According to UNICEF (2003), for example, Ghana, between 1996 and 2002, has a gross primary enrolment rate of 84 percent for boys and 77 percent for girls, which drops dramatically to 40 percent for males and 33 percent for females in secondary education (although this is quite high compared to other sub-Saharan African countries).

There are also apparent differences in the take-up of and attitude towards education by region, locality and household heads' occupation. For example, the Northern Region fared the worst in terms of individuals over fifteen living in rural areas who had never attended school (83.7 percent), followed closely by the Upper East (82.7 percent) (GSS and World Bank 1998: 30). The Upper East also fared worst in other indicators, having the highest drop-out rates, the highest number of children who had to

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<sup>12</sup> At the time of the first fieldwork the annual senior secondary school fees were ₵120,000. To illustrate how costly this is it is worth noting that, depending on the time of year, a bag of millet cost between ₵100,000 and ₵120,000, and seven bags of millet are sufficient for a year for a family of ten.

travel over thirty minutes to reach primary school, the highest number of children who found school 'useless or uninteresting', and the highest number of children who were the most likely not to attend school, either because they had failed an exam or due to ill health (ibid.). The same study by the Ghana Statistical Service and the World Bank found that of those children in their survey who had never attended school, the majority (50.6 percent) came from households headed by agricultural own-account workers, as most are in the Upper East Region (ibid. 26), as did the lowest proportions of senior secondary and post-senior secondary graduates (ibid). Dropout rates were also found to be highest for children in households headed either by private sector informal employees or own-account agricultural workers (ibid.).

In Ghana, in general, and in an area such as Tempene Natinga, in particular, there are a number of reasons why educational enrolment may not be 100 percent, despite education being free and compulsory. For one, although in theory it is free, and no fees are required for the first nine years of schooling, levees are usually demanded for a range of miscellaneous necessities, such as school equipment, extra teachers, and so on. In 2000-2001, these costs were significant in a context such as Tempene Natinga, where poverty was rife and family sizes large (Hashim 2004a: 123)<sup>13</sup>. A study by the Ghana Statistical Service, which canvassed 17,034 children, supports this perspective as it found that the highest percentage (63.7 percent) of Upper East children did not attend school because their parents could not afford for them to do so (GSS 2003: 38). Moreover, there were indirect costs involved in schooling, such as the loss of a child's labour, which, as has been mentioned, was important in households' livelihood activities, particularly once children reached the age of about twelve.

These factors, in part, explain the low school enrolment rates in Tempene Natinga, where, despite there being a primary, junior secondary and, recently senior secondary school, only 62 percent of school-aged children were enrolled in 2000-2001. It is important to note too, that these children were concentrated in the early stages of the educational system, with 47 percent (70 boys and 61 girls) being enrolled in primary school, 10 percent in junior secondary (15 boys and 12 girls) and 5 percent in senior secondary school (7 boys and 6 girls)<sup>14</sup> (Hashim 2004a: 139).

Nonetheless, 62 percent is a relatively high figure for a village in a poor, rural area. It would appear, therefore, that there is some aspiration to education in the village, as reflected in the initial enrolment of most children, but that for a variety of reasons this rarely results in the completion of primary, and even less so, secondary education for the majority of children in Tempene Natinga. A consideration of the

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<sup>13</sup> See Hashim (2004a: 121) for precise details of the amounts of and reasons for levees charged in 2000-2001.

<sup>14</sup> A closer inspection of the enrolment figures in each class reflects the same gradual reduction in the numbers of all children enrolled the higher one goes up the educational ladder. For example, 64 boys and 66 girls were enrolled in Primary 1, 48 boys and 27 girls in Primary 2, 29 boys and 37 girls in Primary 3, 34 boys and 22 girls were enrolled in Primary 4, 23 boys and 16 girls were enrolled in Primary 5, and 20 boys and 13 girls in Primary 6 (Hashim 2004a: 139)

attitude and approach to education and its role in children's development in Tempene Natinga illuminates why this might be the case.

### **Attitudes to Education in the Research Community**

The 2000-2001 research found, overall, that the benefits of education were not evaluated only in terms of its merits for a child, but also in terms of securing households' well-being, and that education was not considered of benefit unless a child completed secondary school, since formal job opportunities were minimal without a senior secondary school certificate (ibid. 112). These factors are of significance to parents' and children's approach to education in Tempene Natinga.

As is clear from the enrolment figures above, parents frequently aspired to educate their children. However, education was seen as one among a range of means of securing their own and their children's long-term welfare. Consequently, the ability and desire to educate all their children was tempered by a child's perceived interest and scholastic ability, by parents' assessment of education as a viable livelihood strategy, and by the need to secure and protect the household's immediate well-being, which might require a reduction in expenditure, such as those associated with educating a child, or a need for labour to ensure subsistence. Thus, whilst most children, initially, were sent to school, as they grew older, and therefore became both more productive and more responsible for maintaining themselves, conflicts arose around which children should continue to go to school and how costs would be met. Consequently, children became increasingly likely either to choose or to be asked to drop out, or forced to, as a result of parents' withholding monies for school levees, uniforms, and so on (ibid. 141). Children also made conscious decisions around whether the pursuit of education was in their own long-term interests, particularly since they were increasingly able to pursue their own work for an independent income and to be expected to cover some of the costs of their education. Thus, a child's own assessment of education as a means of securing his or her future well-being might encourage them to drop out or, alternatively, to go to extraordinary lengths to pursue their education<sup>15</sup> (ibid.).

Most households, therefore, adopted a strategy of selecting only some children to go to school – those who were most willing, able and determined – while other children were kept at home to ensure the availability of the necessary labour to secure livelihoods and assets. In a small number of households all or most children attended school. As one might expect, this often coincided with an incidence of an educated individual. However, I argue that it was more complex than the standard correlation regarding educated parents,

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<sup>15</sup> During the first fieldwork I knew one young teenaged boy who, in addition to farming, was carrying out a range of other income-generating activities, such as pushing a donkey cart during the holidays, in order to fund his schooling (see Hashim 2004a: 129)

particularly mothers, resulting in a higher rate of enrolment<sup>16</sup> because this also was about the types of livelihoods these households were pursuing (Hashim 2004a). In other words, the likelihood of children's enrolment in school was related not simply to an appreciation of education on the one hand or to the ability to cover the indirect or direct costs of children's schooling on the other. Rather it was also an outcome of the different ways in which households were organised, the manner in which household members' time was occupied and the types of assets they invested in, including human capital. For example, the teachers rarely kept livestock, preferring instead an alternative means of investing their savings. Consequently, they would be less likely to require a child in the house to act as a cattle-herd. This, coupled with the fact that teachers valued education for education's sake, rather than simply as a means of securing a livelihood meant that children in these households were more likely to be able to attend school.

These households were exceptional and, with the difficulties associated with completing schooling and the limited labour market for educated persons, the majority of the population in Tempene Natinga were not yet certain of the value of education. Consequently, in contrast to the 'modern' conceptualisation of childhood, discussed earlier, education was not implicated in 'normal' childhood in the same way, and the inability to attend school did not represent an opportunity denied. Transformations were occurring in the meaning of education as a result of the changes in the lived experiences of individuals in Tempene Natinga, in particular due to the manner in which the labour market had changed and the increasing importance of the 'modern' sector economy. However, education was not fully implicated in the construction of childhood but rather viewed as a new form of recruitment to work, representing the *possibility* of alternative livelihoods.

**MIGRATION AND EDUCATION: THE INTER-LINKAGES**

Overall, the reasons given by parents for children's migration can be divided into three broad categories: to search for work for money because of poverty, to help a relative, and for educational purposes, which includes not only children that had migrated in order to attend school or secure apprenticeships, but also children who had gone in search of money to continue their education or training (Table 1).

**Table 1: Reasons Given by Parents for Children's Migration**

Reason for Migration	Female	Males	All
Work/Poverty	6	6	12
To help a relative	3	1	4
Education	1	3	4
<i>Totals</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>20</i>

<sup>16</sup> See Andvig (2000) and Rupérez (2003) for a discussion of this.

It is important to note, however, that the reasons given by parents for their children's migration could not always wholly be relied upon, as illustrated in the case study below.

### Case Study One

Afif<sup>17</sup> is a 12-year-old girl. Her father and mother had both told me she had been moved to her uncle's in order that she might have a better education, since her uncle lived in a large town with better schools and with electricity. On tracing Afifo to her uncle's, however, she informed me that although she was attending school, she was in fact moved to cook and clean for her uncle as his wife was a full-time student.

She complained that she was shouted at a lot by her aunt. She also said, 'When I was at home I would eat in the morning and they would give me chop money [to eat], and when I came home they would give me food. Here it is not until I return home that I eat.'

This family was one which I knew very well when I first carried out research in Ghana. Afifo was already living away from home then and her father often commented to me that it was at her insistence that she stayed with her uncle. Afifo's version of events contradicted his claims. She, potentially, was receiving a better education than she would have done had she remained in Tempene Natinga, given her location. However, since she also had greater domestic responsibilities than she would have had, had she remained in Tempene Natinga, and as she complained about lack of food and verbal abuse, it is not possible to be certain that she was able to reap the benefits of a better school and physical environment.

This case study illustrates that it is necessary to consider in particular the reasons *children* gave for their movement, not merely adults' accounts. Table 2 details these reasons, and illustrates that they were in broad conformity with the reasons adults gave, except that children provided two further explanations for their migration: health (where a child travelled either to earn money to cover the health expenses of a family member or for better medical treatment for themselves) and neglect (where a child reported that they had moved -- on occasion by running away -- because they were not being cared for in their households in the north)<sup>18</sup>. What is clear from these figures is that, overall, education is the second most significant reason for children's movement away from their immediate family, education being reported as the motivating factor in the movement of 20 of the 90 migrant children on which information was collected (although It is worth bearing in mind that this includes what the 20 parents informed me, which, as we have seen, is not as reliable).

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<sup>17</sup> All the respondents' names have been changed in order to protect their identities.

<sup>18</sup> Beauchemin (1998) in Ghana and Iversen (2002) in India also found that one of the migration triggers for children was family neglect or family abuse.

**Table 2: Reasons Given by Children for their Migration**

Reason for Migration	Female	Males	All
Work/Poverty	8	19	27
Education	7	9	16
To help a relative	14	1	15
Neglect	4	3	7
Health	2	3	5
<i>Totals</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>70</i>

However, even if education was not the primary motive for children's movement, this does not necessarily mean that education was not a secondary consideration in their movement, as will become clear. Similarly, if education was the primary factor, this does not mean that children were not also carrying out other activities, in addition to pursuing educational aspirations. In fact, as reflected in Table 3, with the exception of one boy whose only occupation was to attend school, all children were engaged in some form of other activity, whether this was assisting in farming activities, the informal economy and/or reproductive work.

**Table 3: Children's Work and Other Activities**

	Females <sup>19</sup>	Males	All
Farm-work	11	20	31
Small enterprise/petty trading	6	5	11
Domestic work	9	1	10
Apprenticeship	3	4	7
Apprenticeship and farm-work	1	-	1
School and farm-work	1	3	4
School and household work	3	-	3
School and small enterprise	1	-	1
School	-	1	1
Loading buses at the transport park	-	1	1
<i>Totals</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>70</i>

It is clear, then, that there are significant linkages between migration and education. Generally speaking, these can be organised under three broad (and related) categories:

1. Where children are 'fostered' in order to ensure their continued access to education or to a better education.
2. Where children are actively seeking an apprenticeship opportunity.
3. Where children have travelled to secure the resources to continue or to complete their education

<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that all the girls I interviewed reported doing some domestic work, consequently even if they are in the category of school, for instance, it can be assumed that they will be carrying out some household work. In the rural areas this could be very time-consuming as there was no pipe-borne water and girls were usually responsible for collecting water. However, even in the urban centres, although water collection might not involve pumping water, it could still involve collecting water in basins from a nearby pipe. It should also be noted that some boys who worked for a non-related person were also, on occasion, expected to perform domestic work, such as collecting water. Boys tended to be embarrassed to tell me this, since it is not considered boys' work and thus I have also not included this in the figures as it is likely to be under-reported.



(or, less commonly, to assist a sibling to do so).

## Fostering and Education

One of the main ways in which children leave home to live elsewhere in Africa is through the process of fostering, which is seen as 'a strategy that redistributes the costs and benefits of childbearing' (Isiugo-Abanihe 1994: 171). Fostering across distances comes about because migration across sub-Saharan Africa, particularly among poor families, results in communities that are generally fluid, with individual households and family members often scattered across space (Young 2004: 472). Individual households may be supporting several extended family members, either through remittances or the migration of those in need of particular assistance (ibid., see also Loch and Hertrich 1994). Thus, as Pilon (2003) points out, the traditional causes of fostering vary widely, and include illness, death, divorce, parents' separation, mutual help among family members, socialization or education, and the strengthening of family ties. For example, a survey of 1,200 rural households in Burkina revealed that 26 percent of the children taken in by another household are there to attend school. Of the remainder nearly 40 percent have been fostered because they became orphans<sup>20</sup> and 29 percent are hosted to perform domestic chores (Yaro and Dougnon 2002 cited in Pilon 2003).

The circulation of children in Ghana is also well-documented (Fentiman et al 1999, Goody 1982) and economists using World Bank Living Standards Measurement Survey data from Ghana have shown that 'educational investment can explain some instances of fostering' (Akresh 2003: 3). As one would expect, participants in this research reported similar processes. As is clear from Table 4, nine children were attending school in their destination places and these included five children who informed me that they had moved to a relative's specifically to attend school. For example, Sharifa, a 15-year-old girl living in a suburb of Kumasi, had been brought there some five years earlier, upon the death of her father, by her father's sister in order that she might continue her education. All her school costs during this period had been covered by her aunt's son. At the time of the interview, she had just sat her Junior Secondary School exams and if she passed these she hoped to move back to the north in order to attend senior secondary school in Bawku. She anticipated that her cousin would continue to pay for her schooling there.

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<sup>20</sup> Becoming an orphan, particularly as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is frequently cited as a cause of fostering with consequential negative implications on children's educational opportunities (see Ansell and Young 2002). No AIDS orphans were interviewed in this research, most likely reflecting the low levels of HIV/AIDS infection in the sending area and/or reluctance to discuss this due to the stigma attached to disease.

**Table 4: Independent Child Migrants Educational Background<sup>21</sup>**

Children's Educational Background	Female	Male	All
No education	9 (1)	5 (1)	14 (2)
Dropped out in primary school before migration	13 (1)	9 (2)	22 (3)
Dropped out in junior secondary school before migration	-	4	4
Dropped out from senior secondary school before migration	-	1	1
Dropped out in primary school to migrate	2	1 (1)	3 (1)
Currently in primary school	3	2	5
Currently in junior secondary school	-	2	2
Completed junior secondary school	2 (3)	3	5 (3)
Currently in senior secondary school	1	3 (1)	4 (1)
<i>Total</i>	<i>30 (5)</i>	<i>30 (5)</i>	<i>60 (10)</i>

Although apparently a clear-cut example of educational fosterage, it is worth bearing in mind that some children may move in order to fill a labour deficit in a household, their 'compensation' being their school costs or access to better schooling. Case Study One is one such example. Another is Fostina, a return migrant, who told me that she had been asked to move to her mother's brother to help his wife with childcare and domestic work. She had been persuaded to do so because the school in her uncle's area was better than that in her village.

Children, though, appeared vulnerable if the house to which they moved became unable to maintain their costs. For instance, Fostina only attended school for three years in the south. Although her uncle paid her school costs to begin with, once his own children began attending school he told her parents he could no longer afford to cover her costs. Fortunately her elder brother agreed to pay her costs in Tempane Natinga. However, with each move (to the south and then back north) she was made to repeat a year (in the first instance because her standard was considered to be too low and in the second because the correct class was already full), causing significant disruption to her education.

Nonetheless, there does appear to be a general expectation that a child who has been moved because of a labour shortage should be catered for, including with education if the child is a student or the family approach to education was one which valued it. These expectations are made explicit in one father's comment regarding his brother's responsibilities to his daughter who had been 'collected'<sup>22</sup> to care for her uncle's child: 'He didn't pick her as a labourer whereby he would be paying her. It's only a relationship. That means that he takes responsibility for her.'

Thus, children were transferred between households in order to secure their education if their own household

<sup>21</sup> The numbers in brackets is for return migrants, those outside the bracket are for the current child migrants.

<sup>22</sup> People frequently used the words 'collected' or 'picked' to refer to a child's movement at the instigation of another, while 'followed' tended to be used to refer to a child's initiation of the movement.

was struggling to cope with the costs of education and had the suitable networks available. Moreover, as Young reminds us, when talking of migration as a livelihood strategy for poor families in the sub-Saharan context, 'situating children's migration within these wider contexts, however, is not to suggest that they lack autonomy in the decision-making process'. (Young 2004: 472). That is, children themselves actively seek opportunities to pursue education. Certainly this was the case with the 12-year-old daughter of one of the teachers in Tempane Natinga. She was 'worrying' her father to allow her to move to an uncle's to attend school. At first she had wanted to move to an uncle in Bawku, but her father refused on the basis that this uncle was already caring for a deceased brother's children. Subsequently, she asked to move to Nalerigu (another large town in the north) because her father had a cousin who was a pastor there. Her father was still trying to decide whether to allow her to move or not. This example illustrates, too, that educational fosterage 'is dependent upon the existence of the family network able to receive the child' (Riisøen et al 2004: 37). This is very relevant in this context given what has been said about the attitudes to education and because most migrants have migrated to rural areas, where schools are not easily accessed, in order to farm in the more lucrative and fertile agricultural areas of Ghana. Consequently, the extent to which educational fosterage is available to those from the Upper East Region is limited.

Theorists also warn that with the scale of economic, environmental and health crises in sub-Saharan Africa there may be too much strain being placed on fostering mechanisms that otherwise serve to protect vulnerable children, 'such that rural children sent to be fostered in towns so that they can have access to education may find themselves working as unpaid domestic servants' (Ennew 2003: 12)<sup>23</sup>. I came across a similar situation. Attini, a girl of about eleven, had been orphaned at a young age and had moved to her direct eldest sister's house, also in the north, to be cared for. A few months later an older half-sister arrived from Kumasi to collect Attini, telling her this was in order to place her in school. However, when Attini arrived in the south she was placed instead with an Ashanti woman for whom she hawked cooked eggs in Kumasi town. In spite of this, Attini was happy with her treatment by her employer and satisfied with her pay, despite it only being c5,000<sup>24</sup> per day<sup>25</sup>.

Research also suggests that as families become wealthier and live in urban environments, children (particularly girls) are more likely to attend school, which reduces the family labour supply, creating a demand for domestic workers that might be acquired through fostering (Andvig 2002, Beauchemin 1999, Innocenti Digest 1999). For example, Pilon's thorough review of the material on fostering

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<sup>23</sup> Other sources go further to state that increasingly fostering is being associated with trafficking (see ILO 2002: 3). According to the IOM, for example, 'Traffickers are now exploiting this age-old tradition [of fostering] resulting in parents inadvertently but effectively selling their children' (IOM 2003).

<sup>24</sup> During the fieldwork, 16,000 Ghanaian Cedis (¢) were worth £1. The daily minimum wage was ¢11,200.

<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that it is not clear whether Attini will receive the benefits of her pay, since her half-sister was collecting the money on the basis that she was saving it for her. However, neither should it be assumed that her sister would not give her the money eventually.

suggests that rural fostering in West Africa appears to be associated with better access to education, but that the situation in cities is quite different where, except for boys in Côte d'Ivoire, children living without their parents in urban areas seem to have lower enrolment rates than the household heads' own offspring (Pilon 2003: 15). Under-enrolment affects girls more than boys and appears to be related to the increasing enrolment of urban-based girls in schools and women's access to employment or other income-generating opportunities (Boursin 2002 cited in Pilon 2003).

These types of changes in people's perceptions and aspirations as a result of migration, including transformations in attitudes towards the value of education, are well-documented (see Kabeer 1999, Smith 2004). Certainly from speaking to adults in the south, my strong impression was that there was a higher appreciation of education there (and probably a greater ability to afford the direct costs of schooling). Paradoxically, therefore, the increasing enrolment of girls in the south may be increasing the demand for domestic labour, which in this context is filled by young girls being brought from the north.

Some of the responses I received to a question regarding whether the migrant child was treated the same as the household head's children seemed to support this analysis, since a child would occasionally say they were treated differently because the household's children attended school while they did not. Unfortunately as I had not included a specific question regarding this in the interviews it is not possible to state how frequently this occurred, although I do know that this was the case in at least ten households.

Moreover, although this is more likely to happen in the southern parts of Ghana, given the regional disparities in wealth and access to schooling, it is not necessarily restricted to the south. Nor might it necessarily be restricted to domestic labour but apply to all family-based labour. For example, as discussed in the section on attitudes to education, there were a small but evident number of households in Tempene Natinga with an historical accumulation of human capital based on education. They, too, appeared to adopt this type of strategy to cope with labour deficits, as illustrated in the case study below, taken from the first period of fieldwork.

### **Case Study Two**

Ayaaba was an eight year-old boy who had been brought into Tempene Natinga to work as a cattle-herd, according to him because the household into which he had moved had placed all their children in school so there were no children available to carry out this role. He told me that it was not his choice to move to Tempene Natinga. However, despite telling me they he was not treated as well as the household children, 'because they go to school', he still wanted to stay permanently because 'they give me things', such as cloth and 'money to buy sweet food'. It was unclear what the precise relationship was between Ayaaba's immediate family and the household in Tempene Natinga where he was living, but it appeared from my conversations with teachers who knew his father that there

was a distant relationship. They suggested his father was probably hoping to further cement these relations, since the household to which Ayaaba had moved was of some significant status (Hashim 2004a: 111).

## Migration and Apprenticeships

It is not only for formal schooling that 'fostering' can occur, since included among the children interviewed were those who had moved to a relative in order to pursue an apprenticeship opportunity. Apprenticeships encompass a broad range of experiences and arrangements, but in general they are the practice of learning a trade from someone experienced in a particular field or profession. The norm was that girls entered tailoring, tie-and-dye, hairdressing and catering-oriented apprenticeships, while boys trained as mechanics ('vehicle fitting'), carpenters and as assistants on trucks ('lorry mates'). As with Riisøen et al's (2004) work in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali, I found that apprentices were required to pay a fee to their 'master' or 'mistress', that they were not paid for their contribution to the enterprises' work, and that they sometimes received *chop* money as a food allowance. This could vary from as little as ₪4,000 every three days to ₪10,000 a day.

In total, eight of the current migrant children I interviewed were apprentices; four girls and four boys. Of these, two (both girls) were having their apprenticeship fees paid for them by the relative they were living with and carrying out domestic and occasional farm-work for. In addition, children were promised the payment of apprenticeship fees as a reward for their labour, one young teenaged boy telling me, for example, 'They asked me to come and help them [farm], and when they get money they will let me enter a vehicle fitting apprenticeship.'

In other cases, children were simply hopeful that a relative would assist them with their apprenticeship fees. For example, one girl who was living with a married sister and helping her with domestic and farm-work, told me, 'Because she is my sister when I go home she will buy something to send with me'. When I asked her what sort of item she might expect her sister to send her home with, she responded, 'A sewing machine or she will allow me to enter an apprenticeship'. Sewing machines (which cost around ₪600,000) were a relatively common way of rewarding girls for their labour contributions to a household. In all, one return migrant and three current migrants had been bought sewing machines, while a further two girls were expecting to be given sewing machines. Six girls also were hoping their relatives would pay for or help them pay for an apprenticeship.

It was not only in the hope or promise that they would have their apprenticeship costs covered that children

moved to relatives. As a result of the general poverty and limited labour market in the north, apprenticeship opportunities there were few and far between. Moreover, given what has been said about the fact that children are not remunerated for their labour contributions as apprentices, securing a household where they could ensure shelter and food while pursuing an apprenticeship was of some significance.

Girls in particular appeared keen to pursue apprenticeship opportunities. One reason for this might be the changes that were apparent in terms of marriage practices. In the case of girls there appeared to be an increasing expectation that females 'should bring something to the marriage'<sup>26</sup>. This could mean two things. First, that they now were expected to bring with them some of the articles necessary for setting up one's own hearth, such as pots and basins<sup>27</sup>. The second expectation was that women should have their own income-generating activity, such as being a seamstress. Women who did could not only expect to make better marriages, but could also secure some independent income and respect. As one respondent put it, 'If her husband says "You are looking to me to support you", she can say, "No I have my own thing"'.

Overall, there are significant motivations for children, particularly girls, to migrate in pursuit of better opportunities to undertake some vocational training. Nonetheless, the costs of vocational training could be high. For example, I happened to be passing a school where a group of girls had just completed an exam on their vocational training course in catering. They told me they pay €300,000<sup>28</sup> a year in fees and have to buy all the inputs, such as cooking utensils, uniforms, ingredients and charcoal. Similarly, Afia, a return girl migrant told me that she had migrated to cover the costs of her weaving training in nearby Garu<sup>29</sup>. Although she had completed the training she could not *pass-out* (graduate and receive her certificate) because she had paid only €180,000 and was required to pay a further €300,000 for the certificate and for the remainder of her training fee. The fees for boys' apprenticeships, often as vehicle fitters, could be as high as €1.5 million, although, as already mentioned, boys were more likely to receive more chop money.

Young people were not always able to capitalise on their training. For instance, Laadi, a return migrant I interviewed, had trained as a bread-maker but was unable to work because the nearest place which had ovens was Bawku, and the daily transport fare there and back would be more than any potential profits she might make. She was trying, instead, to undertake a weaving apprenticeship in Garu, but had no money for the fees. Consequently Laadi might be likely to end up migrating again.

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<sup>26</sup> Whitehead (1996) notes similar changes in her work in the same area.

<sup>27</sup> The general finding of the research was that girls were migrating in large numbers in order to acquire the items necessary for marriage (Hashim 2004b, see also Agarwal et al 1997, Castle and Diarra 2003).

<sup>28</sup> This, of course, begs the question of why these children do not pursue formal education, since apprenticeships can be more costly. As will become clear, this is probably related not only to the high rates of failing in school but also to the attitudes regarding the best and most appropriate means of recruitment to work.

<sup>29</sup> Garu is a rapidly urbanising village five kilometres east of Tempene Natinga and is the most important service area for the households in my research community.

The case study below, which traces a teenaged girl's attempts to pursue vocational training during both the first and second phases of fieldwork, illustrates another type of risk involved in pursuing vocational training, as well as the importance of support networks.

### **Case Study Three**

#### **Thesis Extract 2000-2001 Fieldwork**

Sala was a sixteen year-old girl who had just returned from a few months in Kumasi, where she had been selling oranges. She said that she had wanted to go to earn some money to continue her education. Her brother had arranged to send her and she stayed with a distant relative. She was away only a few months but had earned C200,000, most of which she had used to sign up for vocational courses run by the Catholic Mission School in Garu. She told me, 'Kumasi is nice, but I prefer Tempene because my parents are here' (Hashim 2004a: 109).

#### **Diary Extract 25 May 2004**

I stopped to ask after Sala and found her actually to be there visiting, having recently delivered her first child. She married one of the students attending the senior secondary school in Tempene Natinga. He is now a teacher. She did use the money from her migration to begin learning tie and dye at the vocational classes run in Garu. However, the school-manager embezzled the money and disappeared, which caused the school to collapse. Later, her husband sent her south again, this time to learn hairdressing. She says that she will open her own shop, once the baby is grown a little.

In addition there were other negative aspects associated with apprenticeships. For one, as already indicated, children were rarely remunerated for their labour input into their master or mistresses' enterprise. This might reflect the poor returns to small enterprises, as Diallo points out with regard to apprenticeships in Mali: 'Small tradesmen have such difficulties making ends meet that apprentices not living at home have skimpy food and lodging and rarely any remuneration' (Diallo 2003: 23). Alternatively, other research, such as Ikejiofor's on building firms in Nigeria, found that where firms did hire apprenticeships they in fact were not usually trained but rather used as additional hands (Ikejiofor 1997: 422). Riisøen et al raise similar concerns when they warn that the excess demand for apprenticeship positions enables employers to take advantage of the child's willingness to learn a profession, allowing them to exploit the apprentice, who undertakes tasks that would otherwise have to be paid for, and enabling them to dispense with the need to provide safe living and working conditions (Riisøen et al 2004: 23). Nonetheless, all the apprentices they interviewed stated that they wanted to pursue their apprenticeships (ibid.). Similarly, the young people in this study were equally keen to pursue their training or to seek out an opportunity for one.

### **Migrating for an Income for Education**

My field diaries and interview notes are full of references to young people travelling south because they had dropped out of school as they had failed an exam or been unable to acquire the funds to continue schooling. For instance, Samuel, who dropped out in Senior Secondary Two said to me, 'I told my father

and mother, "I can't support myself in school and if I stop schooling I will be sitting doing nothing. You are old and can't work, so I should go [south to work] and even I can support you".

However, my field diaries and interview notes were also littered with examples of young people who, rather than dropping out, had migrated to acquire the funds to re-sit exams or further their education. As one teenaged boy who farmed for himself informed me, 'I was attending school but because of the financial problems I came here to work and get money to go back'. When I asked him at what point he had stopped schooling, he responded, 'I completed the first term of Senior Secondary One. In September I will harvest my crops, and go back and continue my education from there'.

One 17-year-old migrant boy I interviewed moved not just to earn money to go back and continue his education, but actually ended up continuing his schooling in the south, while working on weekends as a *by-day* (daily paid) labourer. As he explained it, 'I was in school up to Junior Secondary Two but when I was to register I had no money<sup>30</sup>, so I came to find work to get money. I got contract<sup>31</sup> work, but I said [to myself] all the schooling will go on costing, so I used the money to register here and write my exams'. Although he did well enough in his exams to proceed to senior secondary school, he decided to completely stop schooling after junior secondary school because 'I'm getting small, small [a little money] to support myself and my parents, so it would be difficult for me to continue'.

Another tactic teenaged boys, especially, utilised, was to travel south for the holidays to earn an income with which they could continue their schooling, as illustrated in the diary extract below.

#### Diary Extract 26 May 2004

I was speaking to some students from the senior secondary school [in Tempene Natinga] today and two of them told me they regularly travel south to work. They have been going during the school holidays for three years now to earn money for their schooling. One is in Senior Secondary One and the other is in Senior Secondary Two. Lawrence [my translator] tells me this is very common and that he too used to go south to one of his brothers' during vacations. He told me, 'They would give me plenty [of money] because I am caring for our mother, while they are farming in the south'. The two students, too, have relatives in the south, which is where they stay. They go and pick cocoa *by-day*, earning ₦15,000 per day. Social networks are extremely important then, it would seem.

On later interviewing one of these students, he explained to me, 'One vacation my brother invited me to come and told me that there was by-day work. ... My parents are farmers and they don't have enough money to care for me in school, so I have to go there to work by-day. I also help my brother and he

<sup>30</sup> Although no fees would be payable, since this boy was still in junior secondary school, it was usually when they registered that children were expected to pay the various levies that might be due.

<sup>31</sup> Contracts usually referred to a specified piece of work and fee, such as clearing land for a new farm.



adds something small'.

These two boys were interviewed in Tempene Natinga in the north, since while I was in Ghana it was during a school term, but I also came across one boy, Taro, in the south who informed me that he also regularly travelled to his brother in order to earn money to pay his school costs. Taro happened to be there this time during term-time because Taro's father was sick and had sent Taro to collect money from his brother for his treatment.

In addition to the costs associated with senior secondary schooling, it is the case that this coincides with the age at which children are expected to be to some degree self-reliant. Many children accept that their parents are not in a position to pay everything needed to go to school and in Tempene Natinga a child's commitment to education was partially assessed by a student's willingness to work to cover some of the costs (Hashim 2004a: 141). It is probably for these two reasons that I encountered several junior secondary graduates who were working to earn money to assist in the payment of their senior secondary school fees. As one father put it to me, 'In the old days when you passed your [Junior Secondary School] exams they would collect a cow and sell it so you could continue your education, but now, no cows, no food, so [children] have to find the money'.

Of course, the important point to note about these examples is that in order to adopt such a strategy one needs to have the networks available in the first place. As Punch points out, with reference to her work with children who migrate from Bolivia to Argentina, 'the marked difference between migration for education or for work is that young people are much more likely to have support networks available when seeking migrant work but not for secondary education' (Punch 2002: 129). This partly explains why few children migrated for schooling in her study. Similarly, in my own study the numbers who migrated to attend school was comparatively small, but since the distances migrated in many cases were relatively manageable in the context in which I was working, children could engage in a form of temporary, target migration to earn an income for a specific outlay such as education.

Although I encountered this much less frequently, young people also migrated to earn an income that would allow them to assist siblings to access education. For example, one 16-year-old boy told me, 'Because my father died I had to give up school in Primary Six, so I decided to come here and work to help my juniors in the house, because the costs [of schooling] are very high'. Similarly, Emina, in addition to travelling south to earn money to enable her to continue a tailoring apprenticeship in the north, had also sent money back to assist with her junior brother's school costs.

On failing school exams, young people often also decided to change tactics from pursuing formal education to pursuing a vocational one. Indeed, obtaining a position as an apprentice may be considered more relevant for future prospects than formal education (Riisøen et al 2004: 37). For example, the two Ghana Statistical Service studies referred to earlier looked also at training opportunities for children. One found that for the Upper East, although the overall percentage of children who were receiving any form of training was low at only 2 percent of all the children involved and had the highest proportion of children who could not afford training (56.6 percent), it had the lowest number of children who were not interested in training; a mere 1.1 percent (GSS 2003: 43). This was in contrast to the findings on interest in schooling, as the Upper East had the highest number of children not interested in schooling at 12.6 percent (GSS and World Bank 1998: 26). A discussion with a non-governmental organisation worker in Bawku, who worked predominantly on issues related to education, casts some light on this. He explained to me that the paucity of salaries for jobs that required formal education – such as his own occupation or teaching – made it very difficult for individuals such as him to persuade parents of the benefits of education. As he put it, ‘They see it that all these resources are wasted [due to the cost of formal schooling] meanwhile for the person to return [recoup] these costs, it’s sometimes not possible’.

Thus, despite the hardships they might encounter, there were incentives for young people to migrate in search of an income to pay for vocational training especially. The extract from an interview with a 16-year-old girl who had travelled south to earn some money to enable her to continue her tailoring apprenticeship in the north illustrates this. Her employer owned a small shop in Kumasi town, in which she also sold food, and had been working for her employer for four months.

#### **Interview Extract**

*When do you start work?*

I start work at 4 am and close at 10 pm.

*Is this all selling in the shop?*

No, the household activities too.

*Can you describe your day for me?*

Early in the morning I will sweep the house and bring out the [shop] items, item by item, I will wash the children’s school uniform and there is a man who comes and brings clothing for me to wash too. I will take out the refuse and fetch the water. [After keeping shop] Then when I close the shop I will bring the items back in ... Where I sleep is not comfortable because the items they are selling are put in the same place so there’s not enough room.

*How much are you paid?*

¢5,000 per day. [At this point Emina began to cry]<sup>32</sup> ...

*Does your employer treat you differently than her children?*

Yes, because she thinks that I am working for money she gives me only ¢2,500 for breakfast and I won't eat until night, but for her children she will give [more].

In sum, the costs and experiences of formal education, as well as the general attitudes to formal education, meant that vocational training was an attractive option, even under circumstances such as Emina's above. For example, Afia (mentioned earlier) told me, 'I didn't pass my Junior Secondary School exams, which is why I started weaving'. Similarly, as one boy explained to me, 'I completed Junior Secondary School and didn't get money to continue, so I decided to come for work and I'm learning to drive'.

Thus, seeking apprenticeship opportunities is not limited to fostering situations. Young people, especially males, were migrating to seek an apprenticeship opportunity. In total, six boys I interviewed were pursuing apprenticeships without relying on relatives or employers for food and shelter. Moreover, other young people were travelling south to earn the fees for an apprenticeship. As Suli explained, 'I decided to come here work and get money, and then go back and enter fitting work'. However, this too could be risky, as illustrated by the case of Afia, again. I had originally been told about Afia during the first period of fieldwork when she was a migrant in the south searching for the money to complete her weaving apprenticeship. On interviewing her in Tempane Natinga during the second period of fieldwork, by which time she had returned, she informed me that she had been very disappointed by her migratory experiences as she had been unable to find (paid) work. She had ended up living with her maternal uncle and his family, helping his wife with her reproductive labour for eight months, before being able to persuade them to pay for her to return to Tempane Natinga.

I also encountered a number of young men who, being over eighteen at the time of their migration, were not formally interviewed, but whom I did talk to about their experience. They had completed senior secondary school but, having failed to receive high enough grades to continue their education, were working in order to earn the money to re-sit exams. Two of these young men told me that it was the poor quality of the schools and teaching in the north that had caused them to fail. In addition, one of these young men was keeping both formal and vocational education options open. When I met him he was undertaking a vehicle fitting apprenticeship. Having asked him whether he could leave if he wanted, he confided in me that he could not since, 'I'm in the hands of the master because I'm not certain of being able to continue my schooling, so I

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<sup>32</sup> As discussed in Hashim (2004b) a variety of strategies were adopted to assist children who were in difficulties and wished to be helped. In this case, Emina said she needed no help as she had decided to resign and was leaving her employer to return home within the next week or so.

have to continue to work and keep him happy so I have something if I can't get money to repeat my exams".

**CONCLUDING DISCUSSION**

While education, for the most part, is viewed in the literature in a positive light and migration is assumed to interfere with children's ability to access education, the findings of this research suggests a more ambivalent and complex picture, and illuminates both positive and negative aspects of the linkages between child migration and education, as summarised in Table 5.

**Table 5: Summary of Positive and Negative Aspect of Inter-linkages**

Inter-linkage	Positive	Negative
Fostering and education	Access to school or to a better school	Replacement labour deepening existing disparities between north and south
Migration and Apprenticeships	Access to apprenticeship opportunities Ensuring food and shelter while training	Disguised form of labour exploitation Degree of usefulness of training
Migrating for an income for education	Ability to earn an income	Being paid a derisory amount Coinciding of responsibility for aspects of one's own consumption with period when school and apprenticeship fees become due

The first examples of these are evident in the linkages between education and migration through 'fostering'. The connectedness between urban and rural migrants in the cocoa-growing areas of Ghana with their home villages in the north, and the resultant mutual help between households, is one mechanism by which children's continued access to formal education or apprenticeship opportunities are secured, through the movement of children between households. This strategy of fostering when local educational opportunities are limited is also reported by other researchers (see Akresh 2003). Yet there is also evidence that these relationships of reciprocal obligation are increasingly strained (Smith 2004: 225), with some suggesting that remittances and the responsibility long-established migrants have for the economic and physical well-being of new arrivals, has meant there is a lack of money available for children's needs (Brockerhoff 1995: 1380).

While the increasing value of educational investment in children as a result of rural-urban migration may be viewed as a positive development, and one might anticipate that the large numbers of 'fostered' children are benefiting from these changing aspirations, two other findings suggest that there are factors operating to reduce the likelihood of 'fostered' children attending school. For one, the demand for 'foster' children, paradoxically, may be fuelled by the increasing enrolment of migrants' own children. The resulting negative impact on girls' education, in particular, has been commented on by a number of authors (see Beauchemin 1999, Innocenti Digest 1999). Secondly, anecdotal evidence suggests that if a family receives a foster child for household labour reasons, it is unlikely the child will attend school (UNICEF 1999 cited in Akresh 2003).

These more negative aspects, particularly the gendered ones, are likely to be of significance in the context in which I was working because migrant families tend to be younger and to not live in the extended family units that are found in the north. Women, therefore, are less likely to have a daughter grown enough or another girl in the household on whom they can call, which is vital given the arduousness and time-consuming nature of reproductive tasks in this context. One father I interviewed in the north vocalised this when he told me, 'The young men [in the south] are causing the girls to go. ... Their wives say "Bring me a small girl", so they come home and collect someone. It's for this reason all these girls go'. In light of what has been said about the association between migration and changes in attitudes toward education, it might also be that the strategy to replace the labour lost in a southern household from sending a child to school is not restricted to domestic labour but extends to all family-based labour, including agricultural labour.

The mere fact that children in the north were less likely to be enrolled in formal schooling appeared also to be instrumental in their movement south since, for the most part, those that migrated were non-students, as discussed and illustrated earlier in Table 4. Only four children told me that they had dropped out of school to migrate. Thus, attending vocational or formal education seemed to be the reason why children were less likely to be collected by relatives to help with family-based labour<sup>33</sup>. This is reinforced by one father's comment about his daughter's migration, when he explained that, 'If my daughter had her own handiwork [apprenticeship] my brother would not have ventured to even say she should follow him, but because she hadn't, he asked'. Similarly, when it was children's initiative to migrate south, parents seemed to feel they could not dissuade them, either because their child wished to travel to earn money - 'I am not happy but I don't have to control. I don't have a job here to be supporting him' - or because they had been unable to provide their children with an education or training 'because I had no money to send her to handicraft I have to allow her to go'.

The low level of children's enrolment in the north, consequently, appears to be influential in the movement of children into southern households, deepening the already existing disparities in educational take-up and outcomes between regions. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that I encountered only five children who had been fostered to secure their formal education.

Much more common were those children that had migrated or been moved in an attempt to pursue vocational training, either by securing a 'fostering' situation or by earning the income to do so. This reflects the findings of the Ghana Statistical Services surveys, which established that many more children were interested in vocational training than schooling in the Upper East, but that there were few opportunities to

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<sup>33</sup> Kielland and Sanogo (2002) similarly found that school attendance reduces the likelihood of children migrating, while children's testimonies in Castle and Diarra's (2003) study consistently reiterated that pupils had long-term goals and seemed less susceptible to peer-pressure to obtain material items.

pursue this (GSS 2003, GSS and World Bank 1998). Certainly apprenticeships were highly valued by the majority of children I spoke with, and migrating for work for an income to pursue one (or to pursue formal education) was a strategy adopted by many of the older child migrants, particular as they reached the age when children were expected to begin to take on responsibility for aspects of their own consumption. The higher costs of schooling (senior secondary fees) and/or the taking up of vocational training (usually after the completion of junior secondary schooling) coinciding with this period when children were expected to be more self-reliant (and were increasingly able to earn an income) appeared to be a significant factor in the movement of boys and girls in their mid-teens who went in search of apprenticeship opportunities and/or the income for education.

Although frequently they were paid derisory sums, children in their mid-teens, particularly boys, were able to earn amounts far more than they would have been able to if they had remained at home, given what was said earlier about the claims elders have on juniors' labour time, as well as the lack of opportunities for paid labour in the north. Girls' earnings tended to be particularly derisory. Alternatives for them, however, were very limited because of the time constraints on their opportunities to earn an income. Consequently securing the funds to cover their apprenticeship costs was especially difficult for girls. The fact that vocational training was deemed more appropriate than school for girls and the increasing expectation that women should have some form of independent means was also placing more pressure on girls to pursue apprenticeship opportunities or the income for an apprenticeship; even at some cost to themselves, as illustrated by the extract earlier of the interview with Emina.

The increasing pressure on girls to have some form of vocational training, as well as the demand for domestic labour probably partly accounts for the sex ratio discrepancy I encountered during the first period of fieldwork, where girls under the age of eighteen numbered 190, as compared to the 257 boys in the village (Hashim 2004a: 39, 51). Fentiman et al (1999: 333-4) report similar 'missing girls' in their research in Ghana, which they state indicates clearly that more school-aged girls than boys are migrating from their communities<sup>34</sup>. Thus children, particularly older ones, were more likely to report that they had moved in search of the money for an apprenticeship (five) or with the hope or promise of an apprenticeship (fourteen; although some of these might be due to post-migration alterations in expectations), while eight children were actually undertaking apprenticeships.

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<sup>34</sup> Another factor might be, as Dahlström's research on young people's out-migration from rural areas in Norway suggests, that high rates of migration by females 'has to be seen against the backdrop of a "male periphery" where rural life is defined in terms of male perspectives and activities, and where issues around the perceived constraints of rural life are strongly felt by young women' (Dahlström 1996 cited in Glendinning et al 2003: 132).

In sum, vocational training was somehow implicated in the movement of 27 of the 70 children interviewed. However, it should also be noted that this might be seen as a negative phenomenon, since the training that children received in apprenticeships was often costly, and, moreover, might be considered a disguised form of labour exploitation, since children were invariably working whilst training<sup>35</sup>. Maurice's study of apprentices in Senegal supports this interpretation: 'where apprenticeship is the "hub of the system of unpaid labor" in which boys circulate among workshops just as other children circulate among families' (Maurice 1982 cited in Ennew 2003: 12).

Moreover, there are issues related to the merits of the apprenticeships pursued, particularly given the vast number of individuals that were being trained in a limited number of occupations and the low future returns for such occupations, especially in the north. A development expert in Ghana shared these concerns, her argument being that tailoring apprenticeships (the most popular girls' apprenticeships) were of little use in rural areas, where individuals buy new cloth only at Christmas or during the spring festivals (per. comm. Rudith King 10/6/2004).

To summarise, education, usually, is construed as a positive thing and most of the research on children's independent migration views their movement as negative, since, in addition to fears regarding children's welfare if they are outside the relations of their immediate family, there is a tendency to assume that children's independent migration undermines children's education, as most child migration is migration for work. There is a general absence of careful statistical data that could clarify this. The data presented here, however, suggests that the linkages between migration and education are more complex than this. Migration undoubtedly afforded some children the opportunities to access and/or further their education or training. However, the data also brings to light a more ambivalent picture and illuminates some of the more negative aspects of the linkages between education and migration. The long history of migration in this context and the substantial numbers of Kusasi and other northern ethnic groups who have migrated to the cocoa-growing areas of Ghana appears to be instrumental in the movement of large numbers of children from the north to related and non-related households in the south, particularly on the part of girls. This is especially so because of the difficulties parents and children experience in covering the costs of schooling or vocational training, as well as the poor state of schooling in the north which leads to low enrolment rates, which in turn either encourages relatives in the south to request a child to assist with their reproductive and productive work or, alternatively, encourages children to migrate in search of work. While this sometimes enables young people to access opportunities they might not otherwise have been able to, children also put themselves at risk or have their desire to pursue opportunities taken advantage of. On

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<sup>35</sup> Murray's (2003) historical analysis of apprenticeships in the US suggests similarities in the role of apprenticeship for poor children and similarly question who benefited most from these arrangements.

the other hand, it is undoubtedly the case that often migration does afford children the possibility of either acquiring an education or training by exchanging their labour for support in pursuing educational opportunities, or of earning an income to either acquire an apprenticeship position or cover school costs. Consequently it cannot be assumed that migration necessarily means the denial of educational opportunities; at least not in this context.



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