



## REPORT

*International Conference*

# **Economic Stress, Human Capital, and Families in Asia: Research and Policy Challenges**

**3-4 June 2010**

# **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ECONOMIC STRESS, HUMAN CAPITAL, AND FAMILIES IN ASIA: RESEARCH AND POLICY CHALLENGES**

**3 - 4 June 2010**

Shaw Foundation Alumni House  
National University of Singapore  
11 Kent Ridge Drive



## **Jointly organised by**

- The Changing Family Cluster, Asia Research Institute (ARI), NUS
- Family Research Network, Ministry of Community Development, Youth, and Sports (MCYS)
- Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, NUS
- Department of Social Work, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, NUS
- Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, NUS
- Department of Epidemiology and Public Health (EPH), Yong Loo Lin School Of Medicine, NUS

This report is compiled by W. Jean Yeung, National University of Singapore, in August 2010.  
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The organizing committee gratefully acknowledges:

- The Changing Family in Asia Cluster  
Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore
- Family Research Network  
Ministry of Community Development, Youth, and Sports
- Department of Sociology,  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore
- Department of Social Work,  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore
- Institute of Policy Studies,  
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore
- Department of Epidemiology and Public Health,  
Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore

## ***Convenors:***

Professor W. Jean Yeung  
Asia Research Institute & Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore

Associate Professor Angelique Chan  
Department of Sociology and Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School, National University of Singapore

Professor Gavin W. Jones  
Asia Research Institute and Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore

Dr Yap Mui Teng  
Institute of Policy Studies, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore

## ***Secretariat:***

Ms Valerie Yeo  
Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore  
469A Tower Block, Level 10, Bukit Timah Road, Singapore 259770  
Website: [www.ari.nus.edu.sg](http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg);  
Tel: (65) 6516 5279; Fax: (65) 6779 1428  
Email: [valerie.yeo@nus.edu.sg](mailto:valerie.yeo@nus.edu.sg)

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# PART I: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

## **International Conference on Economic Stress, Human Capital, and Families in Asia: Research and Policy Challenges**

The changing demographic landscape, globalization, natural disasters, financial crises, and the revamping of social safety nets in many Asian countries in the past few decades have subjected countless people to economic stress. Job and income loss, volatile gasoline and food prices, and growing residential insecurity top the list of sources of family economic stress in recent years. Research has shown that economic stress is linked to poor human capital development, emotional distress, health problems, unstable marriages, curtailed family consumption, modified employment behavior of family members, changing union formation and fertility patterns, more frequent geographic movement, and harsher parenting behavior. Falling incomes and rising poverty may also erode a family's social networks of support, leaving them isolated and unable to engage in social exchange. The ability of families and governments to adapt to changes in the economy has long lasting implications for human capital development, intergenerational mobility, and future economic growth of a society. Research from western countries where incomes are high and social safety nets are relatively more developed may not be applicable to Asia because of differences in culture, economy, demography, and social policies. This conference provides a forum for researchers, policy makers, and practitioners to share findings about the consequences of economic stress, adaptation behaviour, and the policy implications for human capital development and family well-being in Asia from multidisciplinary perspectives.

Organised by NUS' Asia Research Institute (ARI), in collaboration with the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, NUS' Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and the Institute of Policy Studies at NUS, the international conference "Economic Stress, Human Capital and Families in Asia: Research and Policy Challenges" was held in the National University of Singapore on 3 and 4 June 2010. The objective of the conference was to discuss the consequences of economic stress, adaptation behaviour and the policy implications for human capital development and family well-being specific to Asia Pacific countries.



About 200 eminent policy-makers, practitioners, researchers, academics, and non-governmental organisations from 18 countries, including Thailand, Korea, China, Indonesia, India, Vietnam, Australia, Singapore, the UK, USA, Sweden, Pakistan and the Netherlands, gathered to address challenges that families face today under the changing family institution, financial crises, natural disasters and the revamping of social safety nets in the past few decades.

The conference was opened by Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports, with welcome remarks from Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, president of the National University of Singapore. The conference convenors were Professor W. Jean Yeung, Professor Gavin W. Jones, Associate Professor Angelique Chan and Dr Yap Mui Teng.

More than 50 professionals and academics from 18 countries presented a total of 37 papers featuring experiences of countries in the Asia-Pacific region (see appendix – conference program). The papers addressed a wide spectrum of themes, including how economic stress relates to health, parenting behaviour, children and youth well-being, social support networks; family relations, and public safety nets. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, the presenters brought perspectives from multiple disciplines such as sociology, economics, social work, demography, public health, anthropology, and public policy. This report provides a background for the conference and highlights some of the presentations.



## Significance and Background of the Conference

The changing demographic landscape, globalisation, natural disasters, financial crises, and the revamping of social safety nets in many Asian countries in the past few decades have subjected countless people to economic stress. Job and income loss, volatile gasoline and food prices, and growing residential insecurity top the list of sources of family economic stress in recent years. Rising income inequality and decreased economic mobility in some areas are frequently reported in the mass media. Research has shown that economic stress is linked to poor human capital development, emotional distress, health problems, unstable marriages, curtailed family consumption, modified employment behaviour of family members, changing union formation and fertility patterns, more frequent geographic movement, and harsher parenting behaviour. Falling incomes and rising poverty may also erode a family's social support networks, leaving them isolated and unable to engage in social exchange.

Previous research shows that changes in opportunity structure do not affect all households in the same manner. Family wealth, social capital, and support networks help buffer families from sudden economic shocks. Community resources, public assistance, and local labour market conditions also affect families' ability to cope with adversity. Certain groups, such as unskilled workers, the working poor, single-parent families or ethnic minorities, are at greater risk of economic hardship. Families with multiple barriers are especially vulnerable to economic stress. However, recent research reveals that middle-class families or highly skilled workers are not immune to these economic uncertainties either. Research also shows that

family members carry unequal burdens, with more adverse impact typically on women, children, and the elderly. The ability of families and governments to adapt to changes in the economy has long lasting implications for human capital development, intergenerational mobility, and future economic growth of a society.



Research from western countries may not be applicable to Asia where many countries still have a relatively lower income, public safety nets are more tenuous than in many American or European countries, and family ties are shrinking with low marriage and fertility rates, and populations ageing more rapidly than in many Western countries. There is a pressing need to understand how Asian families are faring under economic stress in recent years.

### **Excerpt of Dr Vivian Balakrishan's Speech**

We all view the family as the traditional building block of society because it is the only social institution capable of generating new capital and indeed nurturing and building up human capital for the future. We also know that the family is under great stress and that there is a complex interplay between the economy on one hand and the family as an institution on the other hand. Economic deprivation affects families directly and indirectly. At a primary level, it impairs the ability of the family to provide the basic needs of food, shelter and security. At the secondary level, economic stress may impair the family's ability to invest in the long term, particularly it decreases investments in education and in health care, and these in turn, will lead to impaired economic capability in the next generation.

In the case of Singapore, in our usual non-ideological manner, we have decided that children are the key focus. Most of our community care schemes are really focused on ensuring that children will get the opportunities that they deserve, so we make it easier and affordable to get childcare and kindergarten, we provide additional support for children from needy families, we will have to provide additional support for children from dysfunctional families, and for juvenile delinquents, for children with learning disabilities. In the midst of all these changes and all these policy challenges, this is the time more than ever that we need evidence-based approach to policy making and we need research.



## KEYNOTE SPEECH

### Addressing the Economic Crisis on Communities and Families in Asia Pacific: Towards a More Inclusive and Resilient Development

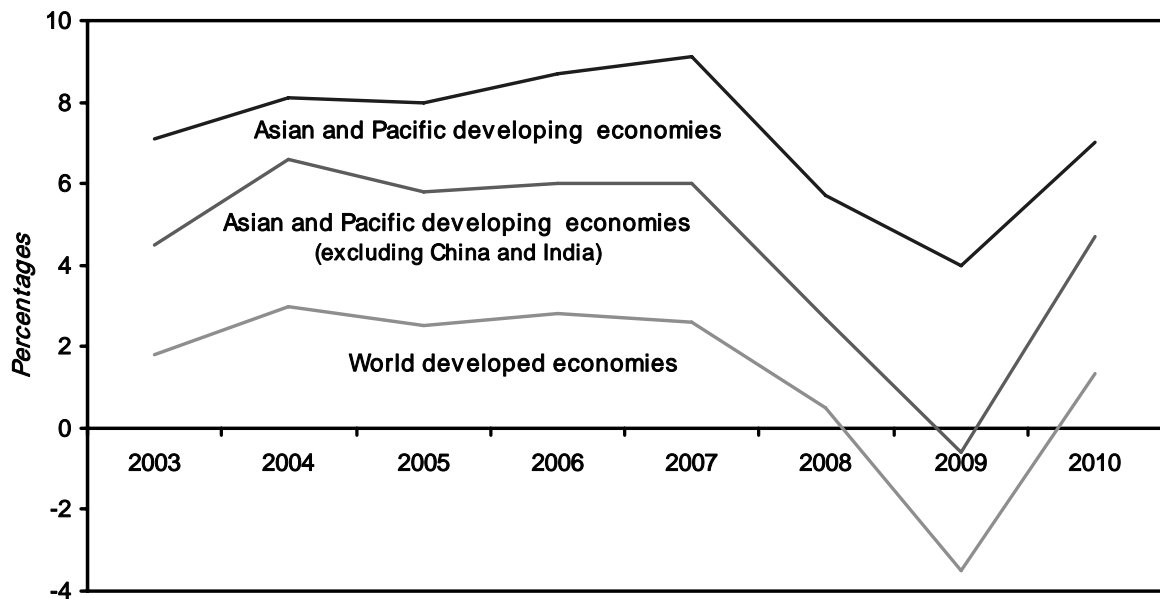
Dr Noeleen Heyzer, Under Secretary General, UN and Executive Secretary, UNESCAP, kicks off the conference with an overview of how the recent economic crisis has affected the communities and families in Asia Pacific and suggests how this region can move toward attaining a more inclusive and resilient development.

She highlights how the global financial crisis had, by the third quarter of 2008, affected Asian economies, leading to rising unemployment rates in this region. Exports dropped sharply at rates that were almost twice as large as and more widespread than those experienced in past crises. Dr Heyzer shows that since the first global economic contraction hit Asia and the Pacific late in 2008, economic growth among developing economies of the region decelerated sharply from 9.1 percent in 2007 to 4.0 percent in 2009. The growth rate remained positive as a result of the continuing rapid growth in China (8.7 percent) and India (7.2 percent). She points out that if these two powerhouses were excluded, growth of developing economies in the rest of the region would have contracted to 0.6 percent, not unlike the rest of the world. (Figure 1)



The decline in growth rates was followed by massive job losses in many of the key export manufacturing industries in the region. According to UN estimates, by 2009 the number of unemployed in the Asia Pacific region had increased by 10 million relative to 2007, thus increasing the unemployment rate to 5.0 percent. These trends, combined with the weakening family and community support structure in the context of increasing urbanization, migration, and ageing populations, could result in adverse social consequences that will take many years to reverse.

**Figure 1: Real GDP Growth of Asian and Pacific Developing and World Developed Economies, 2003 to 2010**



Dr Heyzer cautions that while the region is experiencing a healthy recovery, the recovery has several downside risks, including premature withdrawal of the fiscal stimulus, protectionism, return of inflation, and financial and exchange rate instability. She notes that the recent global financial crisis has revealed the limits of this region's export-oriented, low-cost, labour-intensive growth model. She argues that the region has to address its own macroeconomic, social, ecological, and development imbalances and development gaps and this could be done by empowering the poor and generating growth which is more inclusive of the poor and which is more ecologically sustainable. She also makes the suggestions as follows:

- First, strengthening social protection should be a high priority. If poor households can rely on social protection systems that will automatically trigger social safety nets at times of adversity they will be able to maintain food intake and continue to use education and health services.
- Second, as the majority of the poor live in rural areas and derive most of their income from agriculture, they are likely to benefit from agricultural growth. Thus, a more knowledge-intensive green revolution that combines advances in science and agricultural engineering with the region's unique traditional knowledge and makes agriculture more environmentally resilient is needed.
- Third, the Asia Pacific economies should develop new and greener industries and businesses based on innovations that will save energy and materials. This will provide more affordable products for the poor while maintaining growth and promoting environmental sustainability.
- Fourth, the financial system has to be more inclusive so that millions of the unbanked can gain access to modern financial services, and small and medium enterprises can be assisted to contribute to development. In addition, a more resilient and inclusive social protection system is needed and the state and the private sector need to rethink how it can invest in new human capacity development. A change is needed in the way social protection strategies are formulated and implemented and the goal and structure of social protection programmes and interventions must be transformed from a welfare strategy to an investment one.

## **The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Children in East Asia and the Pacific: A UNICEF Perspective (2009-2010)**

Festo Kavishe, Mahesh Patel, Dejana Popic and Samman J. Thapa present a UNICEF perspective on the swift and severe impact of the financial crisis since 2008 on children in East Asia and the Pacific (EAP), threatening to reverse progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. They note that children face more severe risks than adults during economic crises and caution the adverse impact on children's health and education, and the increase in child labour. In particular, they call for special attention to countries that have low income, most affected by the financial crisis, and have minimal fiscal cushions to cope with shock.

They note that the different countries in EAP were affected in various levels by the crises and the recoveries have been similarly varied. This has important implications for the abilities of different nations to maintain social commitments for the poor and vulnerable, especially children.



They highlight the crucial role of China in the recovery of Asia. For instance, its US\$600 billion stimulus program and monetary easing that led banks to dole out US\$1.2 trillion in 2009 have been effective in ensuring the growth it experienced in 2009 (Financial Times 2009). Emerging Asia too grew by over 5 percent while Advanced Economies contracted by 3.2 percent (IMF 2010). The growth gap between these two groups has never been wider (Economist 2009). The report also shows that EAP economies overall have made a "V" shaped comeback, largely due to China's strong performance.

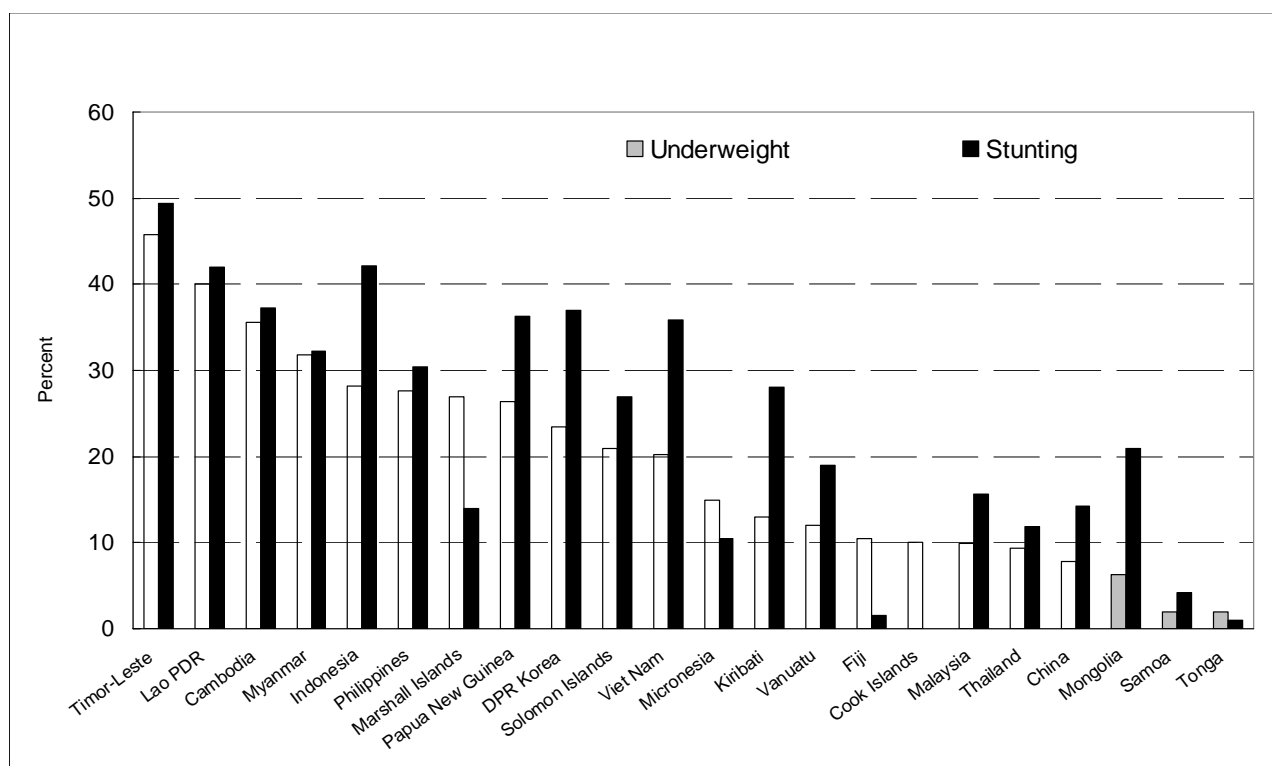
Despite the overall bright long-term growth prospects in East Asia and the Pacific (EAP), the researchers point out that countries such as Cambodia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, and the Pacific Islands that are hard hit but have minimal fiscal ability to recover are facing severe challenges. The situation is particularly dire for children in these countries.

The researchers illustrate how economic crisis can potentially turn into a crisis for children with Mendoza's framework (2009) that captures how the world economic crisis can transmit to children through different channels. When exogenous shock in the form of financial crisis hits the world economy, the goods and services trade, private investments, foreign aid, and other linkages in the national economy is adversely affected. At the micro level, the household economy is then affected when it is deprived of access to public services, employment, financial services and basic goods, and remittances. The increased deprivations caused by these transmission channels of exogenous shocks in turn have the potential to exacerbate child poverty in the region.

For the poorest and most vulnerable, the twin shocks of higher food prices and falling or lost incomes could result in adverse coping strategies such as withdrawal of children from school, delay in school payments or reduction in healthcare expenditure, further worsening life conditions of vulnerable children. In terms of health outcomes, the researchers quote another study done by UNICEF Cambodia which revealed that wasting among poor urban children in the country increased from 6 percent in 2005 to 15.9 percent (above the 15 percent threshold of a "humanitarian emergency") in 2008, primarily due to rising food prices (Cambodia Anthropometrics Survey 2008).

Illustrated by Figure 2, they explain how wasting, stunting and underweight levels among children in EAP are very high once the regional aggregates for these indicators are decomposed. Stunting rates of 40 percent or above in countries such as Indonesia, Cambodia and Lao PDR are comparable to levels observed in countries in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Poor households in the region spend up to 75-80 percent (ADB 2008) of their income on food and lowered purchasing power due to higher food prices, reduced incomes and higher fuel/commodity prices could lead families to adopt adverse coping strategies such as cutting down on their food intake that may permanently jeopardise the healthy development of their children.

**Figure 2: Percentage of Children Stunted or Underweight in East Asia and the Pacific (UNICEF 2007)**



The researchers also use data collected from real-time monitoring initiatives from countries such as Indonesia, Lao PDR, Vietnam, and Mongolia to highlight notable government responses that can potentially avert or mitigate the impact of financial crisis on children. UNICEF has played a key role in supporting these initiatives. The researchers note that the EAP region has borne significant social costs for children during the 1997 Asian crisis, and argue that it is critical to invest in social protection of children, which not only is morally desirable but makes economic and political sense, during the recent global economic recession.

## The Long Reach of Early Childhood Poverty

Professor Greg J. Duncan focuses on the long-term impact of poverty based on experiences from western societies. He notes that international comparison shows that the US has one of the highest poverty rates among industrialized countries. Drawing the poverty line at 50 percent of median disposable income (about US\$29,000 for a family of three in today's dollars) classifies 16 percent of the US population as poor. Poverty rate is lower in the UK and continental Europe, and lowest in Scandinavian countries. He notes that the two Asian countries that participate in the Luxembourg Income Study program – Taiwan and South Korea – have poverty rates that are in between those of the US and most other Western countries.

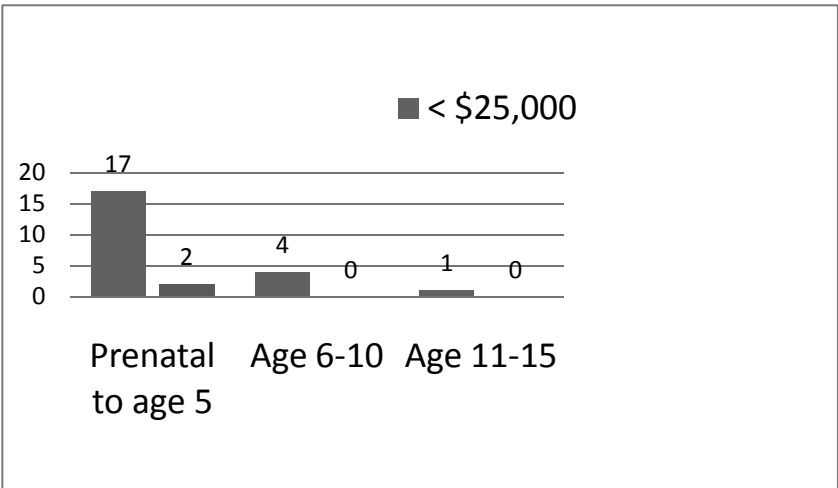
More striking, the child poverty rates in the US are particularly high, with nearly one-quarter of US children classified as poor using the 50%-of-median standard. In particular, deep poverty for US children is considerably more pervasive than among children in most Western industrialised countries.

Duncan and his colleagues investigate the question of whether and how childhood poverty compromises one’s life chances. They examine the relationships between early childhood income and later adult outcomes based on data from a longitudinal study in the US - the Panel Study of Income Dynamics - on children born between 1968 and 1975. Adults outcomes were collected between ages 30 and 37.



Compared with children whose families had incomes of at least twice the poverty line during their early childhood, he notes that poor children completed two fewer years of schooling, earned less than half as much, worked 451 fewer hours per year, received US\$826 per year more in food stamps as adults, and were nearly three times as likely to report poor overall health. Poor males were more than twice as likely to be arrested. For females, poverty was associated with a more than five-fold increase in the likelihood of bearing a child out of wedlock prior to age 21. Their analysis shows that for families with an average early childhood income below \$25,000, a \$3,000 annual boost to family income was associated with a 17 percent increase in adult earning (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Percentage Increase in Adult Earnings Associated with a \$3,000 Annual Increase in Childhood Income**



A \$3,000 annual increase in the prenatal to age-five income of low-income families was associated with 135 additional work hours per year after age 25. In contrast, increments to early-childhood income for children in high-income families were not significantly associated with higher adult earnings or work hours.

Duncan and colleagues also find long term impact of early childhood income on adult attainment measures. Income increases in early childhood were generally favourable in terms of earnings, work hours, the absence of receipt of welfare income, and “on-time” completed schooling in adulthood. In contrast, most adult behaviour and health measures were more likely to be responsive to income increases later in childhood as well, although the patterns were not nearly as consistent as those found for the attainment measures.

With regard to policies, Duncan concludes that we should ensure that sanctions and other regulations do not deny benefits to families with very young children. Providing income support to working poor parents through wage supplements has been shown to improve children’s achievement, according to data from experimental welfare reform evaluation studies undertaken during the 1990s. Thus income may play a causal role in younger children’s achievement, and beneficial welfare-reform programs should increase both income and parental employment.

## **PART II: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO ECONOMIC STRESS**

Economic stress takes many forms under different circumstances. Several presentations in this conference describe the extent of economic stress experienced in specific countries and discuss how families and communities respond to economic hardships. A few of them are highlighted in this report.

Lih-Rong Wang and Fen-ling Chen investigate how the economic recession influences family finance and people's attitude towards family. Elizabeth Frankenberg explores the tsunami's immediate and longer-term impact on mortality, mental health, and economic well-being of Indonesian families. Janet M. Arnado examines how the interaction of family economic stress and strained gender relations motivate Filipino women's migration to Singapore to serve as domestic labour.

### **The Impact of Global Financial Stress on the Family in Taiwan**

Wang and Chen show that Taiwan's export-oriented economy has been vulnerable to the vacillation of the global economy in the past decade, particularly during the recent financial crisis. Official data show that the economic growth in Taiwan was -1.05 percent in the third quarter of 2008 and -8.41 percent in the fourth quarter, both of which were lower than those of most neighbouring countries except Japan. There was a substantial rise in unemployment rate and proportion of low-income families, total household disposable income decreased, and the disparity between high and low income families widened. The low-income families were particularly hard hit during the downturn in 2008, depleting savings and accumulating debts.

According to the survey conducted in 2008 and 2009, families in Taiwan experienced substantial economic hardships during the two economic downturns, between 1997 and 2004 and between 2008 and 2009, particularly during the latter one. More than half of the respondents experienced loss of income, about half experienced property loss, and a quarter had at least one family member experiencing job loss or bankruptcy as a result of the most recent recession. In addition, data show that children's access to educational resources was greatly reduced and many seniors had to leave their nursing homes.

Families in Taiwan also had fewer resources to support their children or parents. Ironically, those who were affected considerably by the financial crisis had higher expectations of intergenerational support than those who were less affected. One-third (33.3 percent) of the respondents believed that financially strapped children should still take care of their elderly parents; 51.9 percent thought that children should do their best to fulfil their intergenerational responsibilities.

The survey reveals that financial insecurity is the biggest anxiety for most Taiwanese. Descriptive data show that this anxiety may have affected Taiwanese's attitudes, behaviours and expectations of intergenerational support. Driven by the financial uncertainty and concerns about their children's future prospects, those affected by the financial crisis want fewer children. The researchers speculate that the unstable economy could be one of the most crucial reasons for the decline in marriage and birth rates and the increase in domestic violence and in Taiwan.

In view of the economic hardships and uncertainties, the strong intergenerational links among families in traditional Taiwanese culture may be considerably weakened because of economic stress despite the strong family values exhibited in the survey data.

## The Aftermath of the Tsunami: Evidence from Indonesia

Natural calamities can generate massive economic stress. On 26 December 2004 the Sumatra-Andaman earthquake of magnitude 9.3 on the Richter scale and the tsunami it triggered wreaked havoc on 10 countries and thousands of kilometres of coastline around the Indian Ocean. Frankenberg and her colleagues report findings from the Study of Tsunami Aftermath and Recovery (STAR) in Indonesia which follows roughly 39,500 individuals in 9,300 households in 525 communities in coastal Aceh and North Sumatra. The tsunami destroyed properties which were estimated to be at \$US 4.5 billion and resulted in roughly 150,000 (5 percent of Aceh's total population) deaths, and more than 700,000 survivors being displaced. What followed after this natural disaster was the largest reconstruction effort ever in a developing country.

The study shows that adults who were heavily affected by the tsunami had a much severe post-traumatic stress level than those who were not affected. A large number of the population in severely damaged areas lost their spouses, parents or children.

Frankenberg notes that despite the remarkable recovery in the most damaged areas, progress has been unequal across subgroups. Women, children and the elderly appear to be more vulnerable than others. For instance, there were a considerable number of individuals who lost their spouses but women's rate of remarriage is slower than men's, and older adults fare less well than younger adults in economic recovery and perhaps mental health as well.

Children are among those severely hurt, with 19 percent of those aged 11-18 in the heavily damaged areas having lost one or both parents. Frankenberg observes that the disaster has had differential impact on these children's school enrolment, college aspirations, and time use. Data show that male orphans had a lower school enrolment rate in subsequent years than non-orphaned males despite scholarship support while teenage female orphans were twice as likely as non-orphaned girls to become married presumably as a result of the economic hardship after the tsunami. In addition, female orphans who lost their fathers were more likely to enter the labour force or did household chores and were less likely to aspire to go to college than male orphans and female orphans who had lost their mothers. Consequences for children who lost parents are expected to evolve over time.





## **Economic Stress and Gender Relations and Migration of Filipinas to Singapore**

In the Philippines, economic stress takes yet another form. The Philippine President admitted in 2001 that the local job market was tough and the national economy relied on remittances from overseas workers as the country had not been able to recover from its recession since the seventies. Arnado cites Faist's study in 2000 that shows that the Philippines has a disproportionately high emigration level, with roughly 10 percent of its total population (about 8 million) working overseas as compared with the 2 percent total world migrant population.

Arnado illustrates with ethnographic data that many Filipino families cope with the economic stress by sending family members abroad to work and strive for survival through the remittances from their labour and the global structural opportunities. She argues that such coping strategy is strongly intertwined with gender relations at home. For example, past researchers found that there is an association between economic stress and domestic violence, such as marital violence and engagement in vices such as drugs and alcohol. And economic stress and domestic violence affect marital relations and parent-child relationships. Thus the need to cope with family economic stress and strained gender relations motivate them to migrate to Singapore, even when they have very little information about the country.

Being abandoned or husband abandonment are often hidden reasons behind the migration for work among Filipino women. This strategy provides economic relief and space for emotional recovery for them.

In view of the country's high unemployment rate, Arnado speculates that labour will continue to dominate the Philippines' export commodity in the future. Many family members will continue to live apart and rely on technological devices to communicate. Abused women may find solace in other countries or they may be victimised by their employers. Women who have never been married are very likely to have a harder time finding a marital partner given the sexual, time, and space restrictions in their workplaces in Singapore.

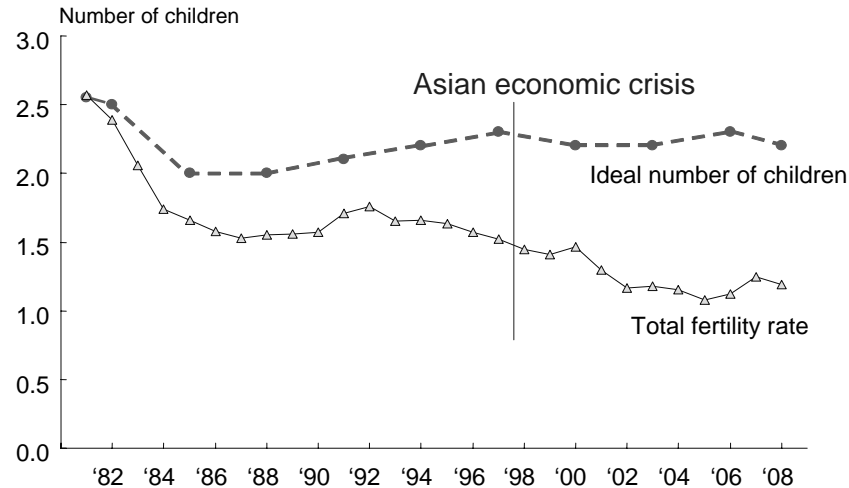
## PART III: ECONOMIC STRESS, PARENTING AND CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

How economic stress affects parenting behaviour and children's well-being is the theme of several presentations at the conference. Among them, Doo-Sub Kim explores the effects of the 1997 Asian economic crisis on the levels of achieved and desired fertility of Korean couples. Hong Liu and Zhong Zhao examine how layoff of workers in state-owned enterprises in China has influenced their children's health outcomes, and Treena Wu, Lex Borghans and Arnaud Dupuy investigate how parental investments in children's education have been affected by the financial crisis in Indonesia. Zhang Yanxia studies the quality of child care received by children in China in households with different levels of economic resources.

### Recent Economic Crisis and Changes in the Pattern of Achieved Fertility and Ideal Number of Children in Korea

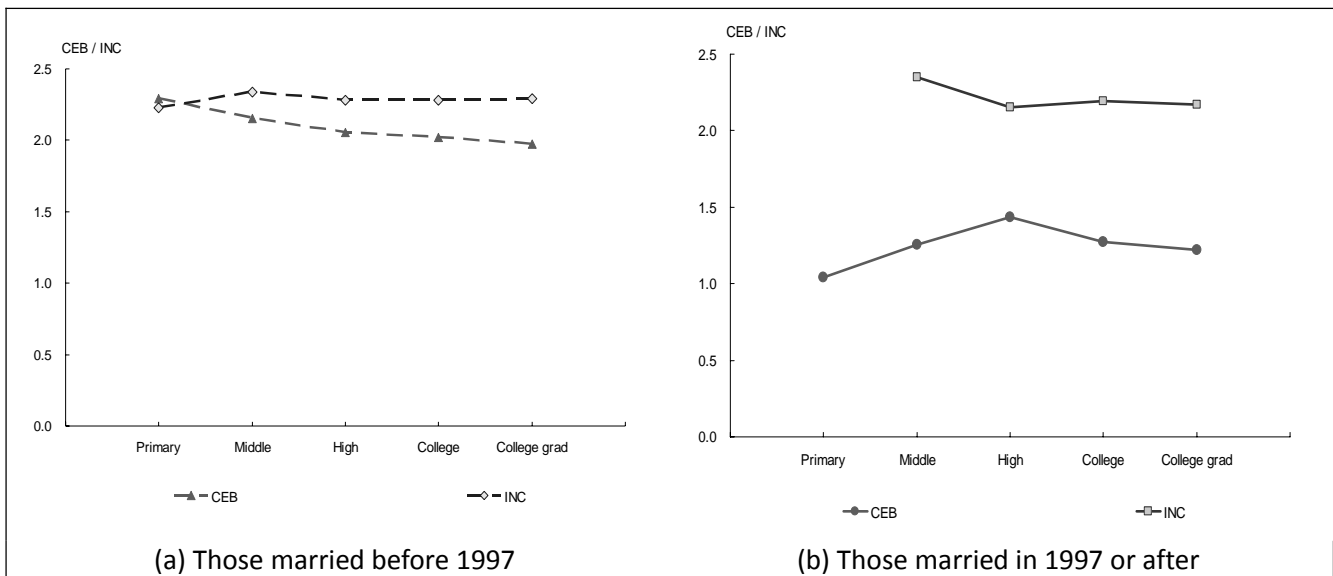
Based on data from the 2006 Korean National Fertility Survey, Doo-Sub Kim's research examines the extent to which the 1997 Asian economic crisis has affected the level of desired and achieved fertility for couples of different socioeconomic status. He finds that the economic crisis has had a significant negative impact on the number of children ever born (CEB) to Korean couples even though it has not reduced Korean women's ideal number of children (INC) (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Trends in Total Fertility Rate and Ideal Number of Children, Korea, 1981-2008**



He compares fertility between women married before 1997 and those first married in 1997 or thereafter. The gap between INC and CEB has become wider after the 1997 Asian economic crisis. For those who were married before 1997, the gap between INC and CEB is not found to be meaningful and does not appear dependent on the socioeconomic status of the couple (measured by wife's level of education). However, for those who were married for the first time in 1997 or thereafter, the gap between desired and achieved fertility turns out to be widest among those with the lowest socioeconomic status, and the narrowest among those with middle or upper-middle status (Figure 5)

**Figure 5: Gap between INC and CEB by Wife's Education**



The researcher notes that the economic crisis appears to have altered the causal mechanisms of Korean fertility. The post-crisis fertility shows a different pattern according to the socioeconomic status of the couple than before. In the ultra-low fertility context after the economic crisis, level of recent fertility is highest among those with upper-middle socioeconomic status, followed by those with the highest socioeconomic status, and finally those with the lowest socioeconomic status.

These results suggest that the economic crisis has likely created the greatest economic stress for the segment of the population that has low social capital and income to the extent that they cannot have as many children as they desire to. Kim notes that the current level of lowest-low fertility in Korea is mainly due to a strong sense of job insecurity for young couples in an uncertain economic environment. To encourage young people to marry earlier and have children, the researcher contends, overall improvements in the security of the labour market is needed. In addition, Kim argues that policy makers should focus pro-natal programs on least educated couples to effectively boost fertility, and priority should be given to selected groups that show a wider gap between achieved and desired fertility.



## **Parental Job Loss and Children's Health: Ten Years after Massive Layoff of SOE's Workers in China**

Since 1998, the Chinese government has drastically scaled back on state-owned enterprises (SOEs). As a result, massive layoff of the SOE workers, estimated to be about 30 million, had occurred, creating considerable economic hardships among these layoff families.

Hong Liu and Zhong Zhao examine how parents' job loss had affected children of the laid-off SOE workers living in urban areas in 9 Chinese provinces based on data from the China Health and Nutrition Survey. They find that the unemployment of father had significant negative effect on children's health (measured by height and weight) whilst mother's job loss had no significant effect. The researchers explore explanations for this differential impact and they find that father's job loss reduced the household income significantly while mother's job loss did not. After a father had lost his job, his children tended to receive less protein intake, particularly in low income families. The researchers also find that a father's unemployment significantly increased the likelihood of his children picking up the smoking habit. This negative impact was not observed among children whose mothers had been laid off. Laid-off mothers allocated more time on childcare, buying food for the household, and preparing and cooking food than when they were employed, thus alleviating the negative effect of mothers' job loss.

## **Parental Investment in Children's Education during the Asian Financial Crisis: Evidence from Indonesia**

Wu, Borghans and Dupuy examine how the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis affected parents' investment in children's education in Indonesia. Based on longitudinal data from the Indonesia Family Life Survey 1997 and 2000, the researchers use the Asian Financial Crisis as a "natural experiment" of an exogenous shock that shifted the household incomes for both rich and poor Indonesian families. They compare how parental income in 2000 affected investment in junior high compared to 1997 and found that a drop in household income significantly reduced parental investment in children's junior high education. There was a sharp decline in the percentage of children who completed primary school and transitioned to junior high school.

This was driven by how parents weigh the costs and benefits of additional years of education. For poor households, the short-term economic benefit of having teenage children enter the labour market is often viewed to outweigh the benefits of extra years of education in junior high school.

During the period of the Asian Financial Crisis, 80 percent of financial investments in junior high education were caused by parental income differences between rich and poor households and the remaining 20 percent were caused by parental preferences and attitudes towards education. Parents' preference for more schooling at the junior high level was also influenced by their children's school performance. When children performed better, parents expected the payoff for allowing them to continue to higher education to be greater and thus were more willing to invest in senior high education.

Wu et al. found that parental investment decreased most significantly at age 12, when children transitioned from primary school to junior high, and then at age 15. The reduction in financial investment was far greater at age 15, the final year of junior high and the minimum legal age for employment, than in earlier grades of junior high. This suggests that the child may have entered the labour force and gained earning opportunities that matched the skills accumulated up to junior high. As households bear up to 60 percent of the total educational cost, parents in low income households may see senior high education as entailing costs that far outweigh market earning opportunities.

Although both rich and poor Indonesian households clearly value the skills that their children build in primary school, the challenge is to highlight the gains in the junior high education so that both groups of parents would value higher education. The researchers call for public expenditures for the junior high level to be a priority during economic hard times to minimise the drop out of children from school. The critical period for government support in children's education is at ages 12 and 15, if children are to attain more years of schooling and avoid joining the workforce prematurely.

### **“Care-Poor” Children in Urban China: How Economic Stress affects Child Care Arrangements and Children’s Wellbeing**

Against the backdrop of the rising urban poverty in China due to the increasing rural migrants and working poor families, a high unemployment rate, and a rising income disparity, Zhang Yanxia examines the quality of childcare for Chinese children under economic stress and its implications for children's development. Zhang finds a wide disparity in the quality of child care received by children by household income. While children from higher income had access to well-known private or private kindergartens, those from low-income families often had no access to quality or any kindergarten care and relied on mothers and grandparents who had limited human capital to provide childcare. She refers to these children as the “care-poor” children.

Zhang argues that the “care poor” status of children from families under economic stress will have negative impact on the human capital and psychological development of these children. The paper ends with a discussion on policy considerations regarding government's role to improve the basic early childhood care for economically disadvantaged families in urban China so as to mitigate the long-term adverse impact of the growing income inequality in China.

## PART IV: RECESSION, YOUTHS AND LOW WAGE WORKERS

The impact of economic stress varies across social groups. Certain groups are more vulnerable than others, and each employs different coping strategies within structural and resource constraints. Fina Itriyati and Zeeshan Shoki focus on a vulnerable group of youths and explore how unemployment and migration in developing Asia can affect the development of their human capital. Chang-Keun Han and David W. Rothwell study how Singapore families adapt to the impact of the recent global economic recession. Alex E.Y. Lee and his colleagues examine the financial struggles faced by low-income families and how they cope with these struggles. Juri Konwar investigates the impact of household economic stress among Bangladeshi immigrants in Assam. Cindy Godden studies how the economic downturn in Cambodia has impacted a vulnerable group of waste pickers working at the Phnom Penh dumpsite and how they cope with financial hardships.



### Global Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Youth of Asia

Zeeshan Shoki raises concerns about yet another vulnerable group under economic stress – youths. He first points out that the youth labour force in the Asia Pacific region, particularly in South Asia, is expected to grow rapidly to 21.9 million in 2015. However, this growing youth population is experiencing increasing unemployment in developing Asia, especially after the global financial recession. Shoki also observes the regional differences in youth labour force participation rates; they are higher in East Asia than in Southeast Asia and South Asia.

He notes that shrinking economic opportunities during economic recession and the lack of adequate social safety nets for youths in Asia could cause high costs to the social and economic development of the region. Shoki cautions about the potential links between unemployment and civil unrests, which he argues may lead to radicalism. He urges the government to find ways to address the pressing needs of youth in the area of employment.

### Youth Migration and Vulnerability: The Dynamics of Young Rural to Urban Migrants in Tangerang City, Banten Province, Indonesia

Itriyati describes the economic stress faced by youth migrants from rural areas to urban slums in the outskirts of Jakarta, Indonesia, in search of economic opportunities in 2008 when the global financial crisis started. In her study, she reveals that a large proportion of migrants were single, aged 25 on average and working in the manufacturing sector. Young migrants were more vulnerable than natives due to lack of

parental presence, inadequate living conditions, insufficient income, and lack of social connectedness. Almost all of them had no health insurance.

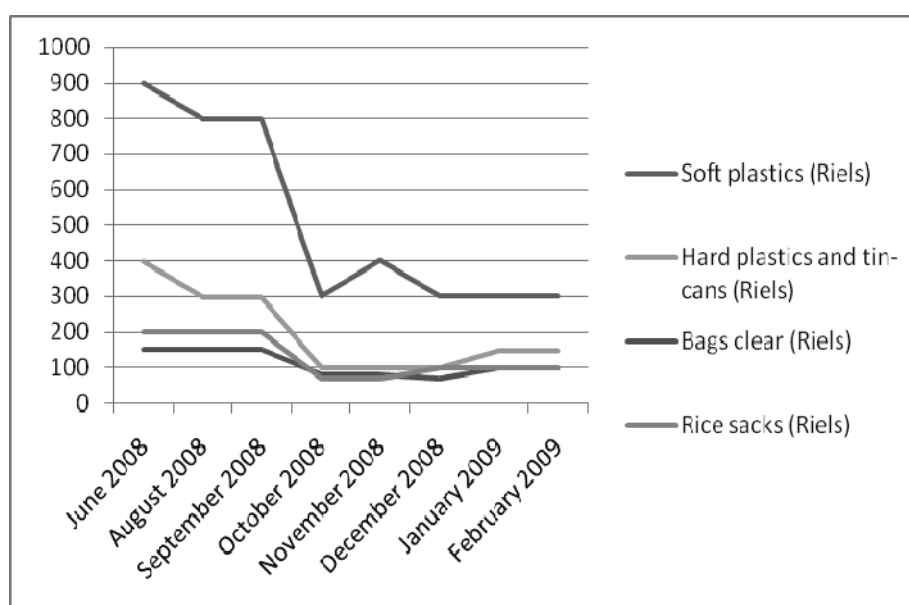
Her preliminary analysis shows that despite the higher educational status of young female migrants compared to male migrants, females were more vulnerable than males as most of them were earning low salary and working long hours in domestic labour. Compared with the non-migrants, the young migrants had insufficient housing and they mostly stayed in poor settlements in urban settings. Even though there were some youth programs in the community, the young migrants could not reach these programs and they reported fewer friends, fewer sources of support, stronger sense of insecurity and lack of well being in their environment compared to non-migrants. Itiriyati urges the government to pay more attention to this vulnerable group, who often falls through the cracks in the social protection structure.

## Strategies of Families Living Next to an Asian Dump in Cambodia

Godden describes how one of the most vulnerable groups in Cambodia, the waste pickers, coped with economic stress during the most recent financial crisis. She notes that, unlike in other countries, the decision to become a waster may not be the last resort for Cambodians, since being a waste picker requires little start-up investment, no literacy skills, and no daily capital but offers flexible working hours, and the work is accessible to poor uneducated persons, even children. The average age of adult collectors was 30 years old, but children made up one fifth of the population working at the rubbish dump. Not confined by strict employment agreements with their dealers, the waste pickers enjoyed the benefits of being their own boss and often kept this job for a significant period of time. The average length of their employment was 6 years and some of them had been working at the dump for longer than 20 years.

Godden illustrates how this vulnerable group suffered from the economic stress due to the price fluctuation in Cambodia during the border dispute between the Thai and Cambodian governments and the financial crisis in 2008. The prices for recyclables had dramatically dropped, in most cases by more than two-thirds. Since the beginning of December 2008, the global recycling industry had become a casualty of the developing financial crisis. As consumer demand for goods, cars, appliances and new homes declined, so did the demand for scrap and other recyclables by mills, factories and production plants. With one of their major markets suddenly closed, followed by the global financial crisis, the prices of recyclables on the dumpsite and throughout Cambodia was kept at a low level for a period of ten months (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Price fluctuations for recyclables in Cambodia during 2008-2009**



Prior to the 2008 economic downturn, waste pickers in Cambodia earned well above the \$1.35 World Bank poverty line, and often more than \$5 per person per day. Before the financial crisis, price of soft plastics was low at 800r/kg (US\$0.20/kg), but after the crisis, it became even lower at 300r/kg (US \$0.08/kg). The waste pickers became increasingly frustrated and anxious about their future.

In response to the economic hardship, Godden highlights that families in Cambodia cut back on food and other purchases, extended their existing loans with money lenders and collected more food and other items from the dumpsite. Meanwhile, competition for aid from voluntary organisation between families grew intense, often resulting in heated arguments as to who were more deserving of assistance.

Godden's study demonstrates how the vulnerable population managed to survive in the absence of a welfare system. In Cambodia, as a form of charity, the government openly allows waste pickers to disobey rules, and the waste pickers claim their own rights to common resources at high risks to their own health and wellbeing. Despite the lack of regulatory protection, the waste pickers have developed their own structures of protection based on social rules, religious beliefs and connections to their rural "homeland", that have enabled them to cope with the shocks of the past two years. These coping strategies include making personal sacrifices, maintaining strong kinship networks, and relying on their spiritual beliefs.

## **Savings and Resilience during a Recession: An Exploratory Study with Lower Income Singaporeans**

Han and Rothwell use survey data collected from 200 low- to moderate-income households in Singapore to examine how families experienced the 2008 recession and analyse how changes in household economic resources were related to family strains and family resilience. They find that over half of their informants reported that their income, savings and economic status had deteriorated. 61 percent of their informants had reduced their living expenditures since the recession and these impacts were more pronounced among the lower-income group compared with the moderate-income group.

Han and Rothwell identify that income poverty, asset poverty, debts, and reduction in savings were significantly associated with family support. They find that a reduction in savings increased family strain and decreased family resilience stemming from reduced family support and cohesiveness. In addition, Han et al. discover a positive association between debts and family resilience. They speculate that the various types of debts could have had different impacts on family resilience, which depended on the types of debts and how the debts were used. Future studies to identify the links between different types of debts and family resilience are recommended.

Han et al. urge that an evaluation system should be launched to assess effectiveness of savings programmes and improve their capacity to reach out to disadvantaged populations. In addition, they recommend some progressive interventions, such as asset-building policy, which provide institutional saving opportunities to low-income households. Meanwhile, the government should consider empirically-tested interventions that promote savings among the low-income.





## Stories of Challenges and Resilience among Low Income Families on the Work Support Programme

Lee and his colleagues report preliminary findings from a study that is designed to evaluate the impact of Singapore's Work Support Programme, which includes the Work Support Enable (WSE) and Work Support Self Reliance (WSSR) tracks. The Programme aims to assist clients in finding jobs and achieving financial independence via financial support and other assistance. These findings, based on qualitative interviews of 11 families receiving WSSR assistance, suggest that concern for children's needs was one of the primary factors motivating families to seek formal help. The trigger event for formal help seeking involved an impending crisis such as a cut in utilities supply, shortage of food for children, or the threat of loss of housing.

Lee et al. outline a variety of coping methods employed by families, such as cost saving practices, borrowing from relatives and friends and seeking help from community resources, including the Community Development Councils which administer the WS programme. Several families revealed that while they tapped on relatives and friends for financial assistance, they also attempted to repay such informal support as soon as they could. Lee et al. explain that this was to ensure that those who lent them money would be assured of getting money back and perhaps be willing to lend again in the future.

While many adults in the Work Support Programme actively attempted to gain employment, or find better paying jobs, Lee et al. remark that some families experienced multiple barriers to work. These barriers included having a criminal record, health problems, and having working conditions that affected the care of their children. These experiences in turn negatively affected family relations and functioning, as it appeared that those families with chronic stressors seemed to experience poorer marital relations and diminishing social support.

## **Vulnerable Group and Economic Stress: A Case Study among Bangladeshi Immigrants in Assam, India**

Konwar draws our attention to how economic stress has hurt the working poor, particularly women, in India. She notes that the high levels of economic pressure among working poor families tend to lead to elevated emotional distress among family members which in turn may cause family problems such as domestic violence, marital conflicts, or child abuse. She argues that such family problems related to economic stress are increasingly prevalent in contemporary Asian societies.

From a study of 121 Bangladeshi immigrant women in India and their children, she finds that there was a high level of job insecurity among these women and their partners. Among the 484 children, 62 boys and 42 girls in the age group of 6-10 years had been physically assaulted by their parents. Citing research conducted by Finkelhor and Araji in 1968, Konwar argues that the child abuse was a consequence of economic stress. Apart from child abuse, spouse abuse, including wife battering, also appear to have occurred in families under economic stress. According to her study, roughly 41 percent of wife battering cases involved women aged 11-15. Unemployed or idle men were twice as likely to batter their wives as employed men. Last but not least, her study reveals that during economic hard times, 32 percent of the women's husbands had multiple wives and 26 percent of the women faced broken marriage at a very young age between 11 and 15 years old and were forced to become sex workers. Konwar proposes that education and job development such as micro finance schemes could be essential intervention strategies for working poor families during economic downturn.



## **PART V: THE HEALTH IMPACT OF ECONOMIC STRESS AND ITS POLICY IMPLICATION**

As noted by Phua Kai Hong, timely assessment of the health impact of the economic crisis is crucial in formulating evidence-based policies to mitigate the impact of the financial crisis. Despite several previous studies, how economic stress has affected health in the Asia Pacific region has remained largely unexplored. Phua reviews past evidence of health impact of economic crises and draws lessons from experiences in Asia. Kattika Thanakwang examines the effects of economic strain on mental health among Thai elders. Jean Yeung and Zhenhua Xu investigate how economic stress affects health of China's oldest-olds.

### **The Health Impact of Economic Crises: Policy Implications and Lessons from Asia**

Phua's review of past evidence reveals that the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s had significant impact on the health risks, utilisation of health services, and mental health of Asian populations.

Health risks associated with the financial crisis include an increase in mortality and incidence of infectious diseases, mental and related problems, malnutrition, declined immunisation level, and loss of health insurance. Quoting a 2009 UNICEF report, Phua noted that child mortality rate for children under 5 increased during the East Asian financial crisis from 68.3 percent to 79.7 percent per 1,000 live births in 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 respectively in countries that were most severely affected.

Partly due to a rise in the cost of imported drugs and supplies and the loss of job-linked health insurance after the financial crisis, there was a reduction in access to health services and a shift in demand for cheaper care from private sector to the public sector and NGOs. Research shows that there was a tendency for individuals to delay care-seeking, to self-treat or even forgo care-seeking from health care providers.

Past research also suggests that financial crisis is related to an increase in substance abuse, depression, mental disorder and related problems. For instance, research shows that in Japan, Korea and Hong Kong, the suicide rates were higher in 1998 compared with 1997 (10,400 more suicides) and this increase was associated with the economic crisis, and with the rise in unemployment.

Past experience reveals that vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities, the poor, single mothers with children, the elderly and disabled often bear the brunt of cutbacks in public spending on health and social services. Foreign workers, dependent families, the elderly, and lower-skilled employees become the most immediate victims of retrenchment.

Phua warns that time-lags in detection and treatment of health problems would become worse considering the long term effect on physical and mental health in later life. He argues that the 1997 financial crisis revealed the weaknesses in social safety nets and the health care financing system. The 2009 UNICEF report underscores the role of government in providing social protection for vulnerable groups especially in view of the competing demands on government and the needs to strengthen social safety nets.

Phua suggests that the government should diversify social and healthcare financing, re-examine priorities and provide access to affordable essential healthcare. Urgent priority should be given to strengthening the mental health services in anticipation of increased demand during economic crisis. In short, evidence-based health sector reforms which expand public health budgets and avoid long-term social and economic costs should be implemented. Phua concludes that investing in prevention, early detection, and treatment of illness is good public policy in times of economic crisis.



## **Economic Strain and Psychological Well-being among Thai Elderly**

Thanakwang first describes the aging population in Thailand as a result of declining fertility and prolonged life expectancy over the past several decades, with the proportion of 60-year-olds and above accounting for 11.8 percent of the total population. She then notes that more than one-fourth of Thai elders have an annual income below the poverty line and are financially dependent on their children. Based on survey data collected in 2002, Thanakwang finds that only 24.3 percent of the farmers aged 50-64 years were financially prepared for their old age, and 31.3 percent did not have savings or any financial assets.

Previous research shows that in Thailand, family members or children in particular, were a main resource and assistance provider to their parents. The financial dependency on children was even higher for older persons aged 70 years old or above and for female elderly, whereas income from work decreased with age.

In line with previous research, Thanakwang finds a negative relationship between economic constraint and psychological health. Thai elders who needed financial support were 3.6 times more likely to suffer from financial strain than those who did not need financial assistance. Meanwhile, the poor who did not receive financial support were 7.8 times more likely to experience financial strain than those who were not poor but received financial support.

Given the increasing dependency ratio, the elderly will be supported by a shrinking class of working age population, and the burden on family members caring for their elderly parents will increase significantly in the foreseeable future.

With the low fertility rate in Thailand, along with the effect of HIV/AIDS, Thanakwang estimates that some families may have no offspring to provide instrumental, emotional and financial support. Thanakwang argues, therefore, that the financial security and well-being of the elderly will become a big challenge to Thai society.

She concludes that future work needs to further examine the moderating or mediating mechanisms through which economic stress affects one's psychological well-being. Longitudinal study is needed to examine the effects of poverty and financial strain on both physical and psychological well-being of the elderly.

## Economic Stress and Mortality Hazard for China's Oldest-olds

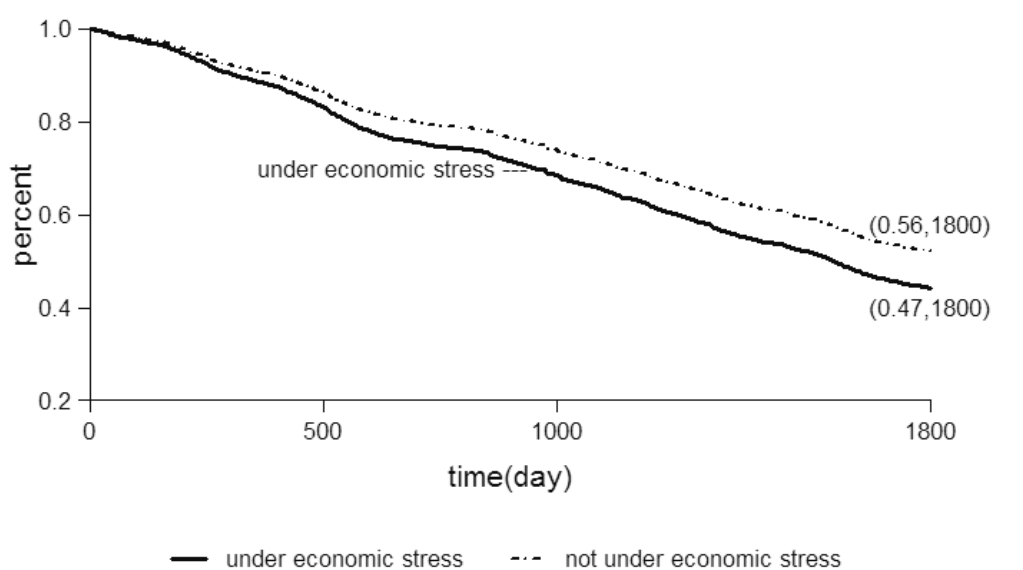
Yeung and Xu examine the impact of economic stress on the mortality hazard of the elderly in China. Due to the one-child policy initiated in 1979, China is experiencing an even sharper increase in the dependency ratio than Thailand. The working age population will begin to decline in about 15 years as a result of fewer children born (the proportion of population aged 0-14 halved from 40.7 percent to 22.9 percent between 1964 and 2000). The proportion aged 60 and above has risen from 6 percent in the 1960s to about 12 percent today. In particular, the proportion of oldest-olds (those 80 and above) is estimated to climb very rapidly, from 14 percent of the total elderly population in 2000 to 34.4 percent in 2050, amounting to 114 million.

Yeung and Xu note that the social safety nets for the elderly in China have weakened since the economic reform in 1978, as a result of the privatisation of health care provision and the consequent increase in out-of-pocket medical cost and a large uninsured population. As a result, many Chinese elderly live in poverty. They cite a study conducted in 2000 which shows that 11.3 percent of those aged 60-64 were poor. Among the oldest-olds, poverty was even more prevalent, with the proportion having increased dramatically to 22.6 percent for those aged 75-79, 27.7 percent for those aged 80-84, and 30.3 percent for those aged 85-89.

Based on the data from the Chinese Longitudinal Healthy Longevity Survey, Yeung and Xu show that 16 percent of the oldest-olds in China were under economic stress in 2000. About two thirds of the oldest-old mainly relied on their children as main source of income, and 14.8 percent relied on pension as their main income source. These two groups were less likely to be under economic stress than those who relied on other types of governmental assistance, own work, or grandchildren. The majority of the oldest-old relied on family and children to pay for their medical costs and to be their main caretakers when they were ill. Those who were responsible for their own medical cost were more likely to be under economic stress.

The researchers find that living under economic stress in 2000 increased mortality of the oldest-olds over the subsequent five years (Figure 7). By the end of the fifth year, 47 percent of those who were under economic stress vs. 56 percent who were not, had survived. This negative effect on longevity was partly due to the detrimental impact of economic stress on the mental health of the elderly and the quality of health care.

**Figure 7: Kaplan-Meier Survival Estimates by Economic Stress for Oldest Old in China, 2000-2005**



Yeung and Xu pointed out that the upcoming generation of elderly, those who were born during the baby boom in the 1950s, have fewer children (and many have no son) to rely on in their old age than their predecessors due to the one-child policy. In addition, the skewed sex ratio means there are fewer daughters and daughters-in-law to perform the care giving tasks which have traditionally been females' responsibility. These demographic changes will weaken family support for the elderly. They further caution that rural-urban migration has accelerated the aging process in the rural areas. Although pension reform is under way, a majority of the elderly population still do not have access to these government resources. Alleviating economic hardships of the elderly will become a major challenge for the Chinese government.

## **PART VI: ECONOMIC STRESS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT**

Social support is often viewed as a critical resource that helps buffer hardships in economic hard times. Investigating the role of social networks in times of disaster, Zhao Yandong illustrates the key role social networks play in the disaster relief and reconstruction process in areas affected by the Wenchuan earthquake in China. Sam Wong, however, argues that the strategy of using social capital to build resilience of low-income families and communities during economic crisis has its limit as it may risk destroying their already-limited social networks and reinforce existing inequalities. Meredian Alam and his colleagues analyse the role that religious activities could play in facilitating local integration after a natural disaster in Indonesia.

### **Social Networks and Reduction of Risk in Disasters: An Example of Wenchuan Earthquake**

Rescue efforts had been underway in China's Sichuan province after the devastating Wenchuan earthquake measuring 7.9 on the Richter scale struck in 2008. According to Xinhua news agency, nearly 15,000 people died in the disaster, with as many as 24,000 trapped under rubble from collapsed buildings, and another 14,000 declared missing. Based on data from a two-wave survey with about 4,000 households conducted in 2008 and 2009, Zhao Yandong finds that after the earthquake, around 95 percent of survivors were rescued by relatives, neighbours and other persons nearby. Only a very small proportion of trapped victims were rescued by external rescue personnel, such as PLA soldiers, professional rescue teams, or volunteers. Social networks played an indispensable role in facilitating information flow in the disaster area. After the earthquake, around 16 percent of the residents in the earthquake area acquired information about the government's disaster-relief policies through relatives, friends and other social ties.

Zhao finds that those with more heterogeneous networks found it easier to obtain new information. Some victims also received various types of support from social networks during recovery. Though the government was the main support provider, social networks provided important informal support. Larger networks also brought greater social support. More than 30 percent of respondents considered social networks to be their most important source of support.

Zhao finds that social networks helped to provide emotional support, hence reducing the traumatic impact of disasters and maintaining good mental health for survivors. In addition members in the affected communities helped each other more actively and participated more in collective activities after the earthquake than before. Through this process, Zhao argues, new types of social capital were formed as the study finds that there was a higher level of trust among community members and a majority of members believed their communities had become stronger than before. Zhao thus stresses the critical role of social networks in facilitating the recovery and reconstruction process after a disaster, and urges the government to tap on the existing social capital and invest in fostering strong new social networks.

### **“Wicked” Social Capital and the Resilience of Asian Families in Times of Economic Crises**

Sam Wong draws on empirical research on the experiences of poor mainland Chinese migrants in Hong Kong during the Far East economic crisis, and casts doubts over the conventional view of social capital interventions for the vulnerable population. He points out that women were disproportionately affected by the crisis because of the high unemployment rate in the labour intensive garment and textile industries, and family reduction of investment in human capital in economic hard times which often involves forgoing female's education. He explores migrants' perceived and real opportunities and constraints of community participation during economic hard times.

Wong provides background information that the Hong Kong government set up a HK\$300 million Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF) in 2001. The key objective was to promote “bottom-up solutions that seek to promote the development of social capital”, such as forming new social groups and strengthening existing local organisations, in order to build a mutually-supportive community. Improving relationships between migrants and local people was a key priority in social reforms.

Wong highlights that the conventional “design principles” lose sight of human intentionality, the dynamic nature of institutional changes, power inequalities among social groups, and paradoxes of participation. He proposes a new concept “wicked social capital” to explain the daily interactions of the poor mainland Chinese migrants during, and after, the economic crisis in Hong Kong in the late 1990s. The notion of “wicked social capital” takes into account the mixed motivation of members in the network, the dynamic and fragile nature of social capital, the plurality of institutional arrangements, and the hidden power inequalities. He argues that social capital can be built on unequal power relations that prevent the disadvantaged groups from making claims on relational resources. As a result, the disproportionately high costs of participation in claiming relational resources can make poor people worse off in public engagement.

In the case of poor migrant women in HK, their social capital was very fragile during the crisis because their family members and friends were themselves poor. Thus mutual assistance was limited. In addition, due to unequal gender relations, they were expected to bear the responsibility of relieving family financial pressure by working and attending to childcare and domestic tasks at the same time, leaving little time to participate in community activities.

Wong recommends that there is a need to build a more poverty-sensitive and gender-sensitive model of collective action by taking serious consideration of the complex nature of social relationships between social groups that have varying levels of resources.

## **From Tears to Peace: The Social Impacts of Religious Activities on Local Integration in the Post-Earthquake Area**

In May 2006, an earthquake of magnitude 5.9 on the Richter scale devastated hundreds of villages in Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta Special Province of Indonesia and traumatised many local people. Alam et al. use this natural calamity to illustrate the role of religion in helping the community return to a spirit of integration after the disaster. They conduct in-depth interviews to examine the process of religious participation and participants’ experience of the event.

They find that conflict, polarisation, and sense of injustice prevailed because of the unsatisfactory distribution of aid support. Nevertheless, their study revealed that religious activities, such as *tahlilan*, *yasinan*, and *pengajian*, along with Islamic teachings served as an effective tool to rebuild local integration, strong social bonds, and local traditions. The community eventually saw the earthquake as a challenge from God which triggered social and economic impact that could not be foreseen and controlled. Furthermore, the religious leaders played an important role in resource distribution and stability maintenance. Alam et al. underscore that the importance of religion in community integration should not be underestimated.



## **PART VII: ECONOMIC STRESS AND PUBLIC SAFETY NETS**

Several presentations evaluate specific policies implemented in a number of Asian countries that aim to reduce poverty, alleviate deprivation, or increase access to health care and children's access to schools. Sheila Kamerman and Shirley Gatenio-Gabel discuss the Conditional Cash Transfer as a policy strategy to reduce child poverty in Asia. Puzziawati Ab Ghani, Martin Evans and Yik Koon Teh discuss the economic stress of single mothers in Malaysia and policy uncertainty. Gang Chen, Gordon G. Liu and Fei Xu evaluate the basic medical insurance for urban residents in China. Ho Kong Weng and his colleagues evaluate the impact of work support programs on families under stress in Singapore.

### **Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs): A Child Policy Strategy in Asia**

Kamerman and Gatenio-Gabel review the effectiveness of Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs), cash benefits that impose behavioural conditions on recipients, which is an increasingly popular tool for alleviating childhood poverty and for investing in children's future in less developed Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia and the Philippines. The education component of CCTs is usually a cash grant targeted at school aged children which covers school related fees and costs. The health and nutrition component covers the cost of food or offsets the opportunity costs of travel and waiting time for parents attending health care centres, on condition that the children attend health clinics and women obtain prenatal care.

While early evidence shows that CCTs have been highly effective in reducing poverty in both developed and developing countries; recent evidence is mixed with regard to the value of conditionality. In addition, cash benefits alone are not adequate to achieve health and education goals. Kamerman and Gatenio-Gabel focus on whether CCTs in these countries have achieved their goals of reducing child poverty; increasing school enrolment; and improving health and nutrition, especially in Asia and discuss the conditions under which CCTs can be effective. They raise questions regarding the effectiveness and cost of CCTs relative to unconditional cash benefits, whether CCT is a viable option for all countries or only for those with an adequate level of resources, whether CCTs are more effective for girls than for boys, and how conditional and unconditional benefits can promote social inclusion and minimise risks of exclusion.

Kamerman and Gatenio-Gabel conclude that the challenge for both unconditional and conditional cash transfers in developing countries is to ensure that in the longer term these interventions develop into sustainable social policies for children that can be supported by national social protection systems.



## Single Mothers in Malaysia: Economic Stress and Policy Uncertainty

As in most other countries, female headed families in Malaysia have higher risks of poverty than the general population and form a large group of those claiming social assistance. Puzziawati et al. note that policies for single mothers in Malaysia are often based on weak evidence from mostly cross-sectional data collected from non-representative samples.

Malaysia also has a problem in clearly defining “single mothers” for policy purpose. Although there is a range of small programs such as marital counselling to reduce divorce, or area programs (often means-tested) that assist women in employment and economic development, social assistance to single mothers in Malaysia is fragmented and with limited budget. The majority of assistance comes from the general system of federal social assistance in Malaysia. “Financial aid” is provided on scales that are set by a national “poverty line” according to the Economic Planning Unit. Additionally assistance from local *zaqat* funds to help poor people can be requested from the Sultanate level Islamic authorities. Evans comments that there is little strategic co-ordination between the systems and experiences of single mother applicants of social assistance are often reported as difficult and stressful.

Much welfare provision for Malaysian single mothers comes from familial sources, essentially through shared households and informal transfers. However, the primary policy response is to see single mothers as separate households and to use strict and inconsistent means and asset testing. As a result, there are gaps in provision and risks that undermine familial and informal welfare which need reconsideration. Moving to systems of support that can identify poverty through proxy means testing would have considerable advantages and would promote both familial and informal welfare whilst ensuring subsistence adequacy and economic activity wherever possible.

The researchers suggest that programs which address the underlying structural risks of single motherhood, primarily divorce and widowhood, are needed. They recommend that the promotion of opportunities to earn and learn through employment and training should be made central to a more integrated approach across the many providers of services to poor single mothers. They also note that a new survey conducted in 2009 will provide more adequate data to profile single mothers in Malaysia, examine their needs, and to discuss policy implications.

## **Does Widely Accessible Mean More Affordable for the Deprived?**

### **An Impact Evaluation of Urban Resident Basic Medical Insurance in Urban China**

Chen et al. introduce the background of the New Rural Cooperative Medical System (NRCMS) which was introduced for the rural population in 2003 and the Urban Resident Basic Medical Insurance (URBMI) for urban residents in 2007. These are two landmark policy efforts that serve as the Chinese government's attempts to overcome China's health care situation where a majority of the population has no health insurance and health care cost is high. These challenges are particularly serious for the low-income population. According to the latest National Health Survey in 2008, since the implementation of these initiatives, the percentage of the population without any social health insurance decreased sharply to 12.9 percent.

Participation in the government-subsidised URBMI is voluntary. URBMI uses a combination of three mechanisms for financing, including tax subsidisation, social insurance, and out-of-pocket payments. Coverage starts at a low level but gradually increases and it mainly covers treatment of major illnesses. According to research by Yin and Lin et al., around 401 million Chinese had become members of URBMI by the end of 2009 and URBMI seemed to have been well received thus far by the target population.

Results of Chen et al.'s rigorous statistical analysis based on probability survey data show a promising picture that both outpatient and inpatient health care utilisation had increased. Nevertheless, the effects were limited for the deprived population in that the non-hospitalisation rates had also significantly increased for the poorest and remain unchanged for the least educated who were insured, compared with their counterparts who were not URBMI members. These limited positive effects could have been due to the high health care costs.

The researchers find that out-of-pocket expenditure for outpatient treatment had not been significantly reduced for URBMI members compared with the uninsured, while the cost of inpatient treatment was more likely to benefit the richer population than the disadvantaged, leaving the situation of the deprived unchanged. They speculate that URBMI could have possibly increased the cost of health care per visit for the insured population.

Chen et al. argue that there is an urgent need to reduce the financial burden for the insured, especially for the deprived. They echo the view of other researchers such as Yip and Hsiao (2009) that for the system to be sustainable, it may be advisable for the government to *increase the reimbursement level and adopt a prospective payment approach that provides better incentives for health service providers*.

## **Impact of Work Support Program on Families under Stress:**

### **A Study based on Basic Tracking of Recipients**

Ho et al. report preliminary findings from a study that is designed to evaluate the impact of Singapore's Work Support Programs, including Work Support Enable (WSE) and Work Support Self Reliance (WSSR), which aim to assist clients in finding jobs and achieving financial independence via financial support and other assistance. Their study profiles the socioeconomic characteristics of the recipients and examines whether the work support programmes have improved the household income, increased household saving and employment opportunities of the participants.

Without any pre-program information, they compare the data collected in three interviews conducted since July 2009, and they find that the savings among the informants were particularly low and their arrears were high, with the average savings at \$135 per month and the average arrears at \$5,086. Nevertheless, there was no statistical difference from the first interview to the third. They speculate that there has been no financial improvement for the informants. To verify such preliminary insight, Ho et al. acknowledge that a longer

tracking period and more detailed data collection are needed. Their future research will examine the effect of short-term vs. long-term assistance, and evaluate what type of assistance is more effective in helping the Singaporean population in need.

## Summary

This conference underscores how macro-level economic stress can filter down through households to affect the economic and socio-psychological well-being of individuals. Collectively, the presentations reveal a wide spectrum of economic stresses experienced by families in various Asia Pacific countries due to financial crises, natural calamity, reform of social welfare system, or depressed economy. Countries have been affected to varying degrees and are coping at different rates. The bright prospect of regional economic growth led largely by China and India should not mask the considerable stress felt by many families and individuals, particularly vulnerable groups such as children, women, the elderly, and the working poor. The economic shocks in the past several decades have exposed the vulnerability of the family institution and the weaknesses in this region's social protection systems that can lead to detrimental long-term effect on human capital development.

Family and community responses to economic deprivation and uncertainties often weaken family ties or compromise individuals' life chances. As seen in this conference, such responses include cutting back on social services, curtailing expenditures on children's food, education and health, taking youth out of school prematurely to engage in often dangerous trades, migrating away from family members, compromising health care, more frequent family conflicts, and postponing or even foregoing having children.

As seen in Korea and Taiwan, the current lowest-low fertility rates are attributed, to a great extent, to the population's anxiety over the economic uncertainties. Children in developing Asian countries, namely Indonesia, Cambodia and Lao PDR, are experiencing stunting rates at levels comparable to those in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. In China, children of laid-off Chinese fathers receive less nutrition and pick up the smoking habit. In Indonesia, youths leave schools prematurely to enter the job market after the Asian financial crisis. In areas struck by natural disasters, a large number of children have become orphans. Findings from longitudinal studies in the US that illuminate the long-term adverse effect of childhood economic deprivation on individuals' achievements should alert us to pay special attention to such early deprivations.

Women are dealt multiple blows when families sacrifice female education, female unemployment rise when labour-intensive industries shut down, public policies are ambivalent about providing assistance to single mothers, or when economic hardships lead girls to resort to early marriage or to become sex workers, as seen in Chinese and Filipino migrant women, single mothers in Malaysia, and girls in Indonesia, India, and Bangladesh, among others.

With limited resources to buffer economic stress, the working poor and elderly often delay seeking health care or self treat when medical cost is high and they have no access to health insurance, as we see in many countries. Economic stress is associated with greater emotional distress, more chronic diseases, and higher mortality. The studies on Taiwan, China, and Thailand show that although the elderly in Asia are heavily dependent on children for care, recent demographic trends suggest that the next generation of the elderly cannot expect to rely on children to care for them in the same way as their predecessors did.

Given the demographic changes in this region, family networks have become significantly smaller and the working-age population will start to decline soon in many countries. As the family institution undergoes rapid transition, the economies in Asia Pacific need to transform themselves to be more productive than before. Enhancing human capital, therefore, is key to sustainable development in this region. As noted by Dr

Heyzer, however, Asia Pacific has the lowest level of public expenditure on social protection. Expanding such effort for the most vulnerable groups should be a policy priority.

These presentations also reveal that in times of intense economic stress, social support networks have been crucial and their potential as resource provider can be tapped more vigorously. Wide and heterogeneous social support networks are useful in times of economic stress. However, for the vulnerable population, social support networks are fragile and sometimes reinforce existing social inequality as those in the networks of the deprived are often poor themselves and have limited socio-psychological resources. As the presentations illustrate public policies need to be more poverty-sensitive and gender-sensitive to help strengthen family and community ties to help families and individuals tide over the economic hard times.

# PROGRAMME

## OPENING & WELCOME REMARKS

**Prof Tan Chorh Chuan**, *President, National University of Singapore*

## Guest-of-Honor

**Dr Vivian Balakrishnan**, *Minister For Community Development, Youth and Sport, Singapore*

## PLENARY SESSION 1

ADDRESSING THE ECONOMIC CRISIS ON COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES IN ASIA PACIFIC:  
TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT

**Dr Noeleen Heyzer**, *Under-Secretary-General, United Nations and Executive Secretary,  
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific*

## PLENARY SESSION 2

THE IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS ON CHILDREN IN EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC:  
A UNICEF PERSPECTIVE (2009-2010)

**Dr Festo Kavishe**, *Deputy Regional Director, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office*

## PLENARY SESSION 3

THE LONG REACH OF EARLY CHILDHOOD POVERTY

**Prof Greg J. Duncan**, *University of California, USA*

## PLENARY SESSION 4

CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFERS (CCTS): A CHILD POLICY STRATEGY IN ASIA

**Prof Sheila B. Kamerman**, *Columbia University, USA*

## PLENARY SESSION 5

THE AFTERMATH OF THE TSUNAMI: EVIDENCE FROM INDONESIA

**Prof Elizabeth Frankenberg**, *Duke University, USA*

## **PANEL 1: ECONOMIC STRESS AND SOCIAL SAFETY NETS**

*Chairperson: Yap Mui Teng, Institute of Policy Studies, National University of Singapore*

**IMPACT OF WORK SUPPORT PROGRAMS ON FAMILIES UNDER STRESS: A STUDY BASED ON BASIC TRACKING OF RECIPIENTS**

**Ho Kong Weng**, *Nanyang Technological University*

**Irene Y.H. Ng, Alex E.Y. Lee & Nesam Tharmalinga**, *Dept of Social Work, National University of Singapore*

**SINGLE MOTHERS IN MALAYSIA: ECONOMIC STRESS AND POLICY UNCERTAINTY**

**Puzziawati Ab Ghani**, *Dept of Statistics, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia*

**Martin Evans**, *Dept of Social Policy and Social Work, University of Oxford, UK*

**Yik Koon The**, *Faculty of Defence Studies and Management, National Defence University of Malaysia*

**OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY TRENDS IN SINGAPORE, 1995-2009: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS USING MARKOV CHAIN THEORY**

**Toh Mun Heng**, *NUS Business School, National University of Singapore*

**DOES WIDELY ACCESSIBLE MEAN MORE AFFORDABLE FOR THE DEPRIVED? AN IMPACT EVALUATION OF URBAN RESIDENT BASIC MEDICAL INSURANCE IN URBAN CHINA**

**Gang Chen**, *Centre for Health Economics, Monash University, Australia*

**Gordon G. Liu**, *Dept of Applied Economics, Peking University, China*

**Fei Xu**, *China Center for Pharmacoeconomics & Outcomes Research, Peking University, China*

## **PANEL 2: ECONOMIC STRESS AND HEALTH**

*Chairperson: Chia Kee Seng, Dept of Epidemiology and Public Health, National University of Singapore*

**THE HEALTH IMPACT OF ECONOMIC CRISES: POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LESSONS FROM ASIA**

**Phua Kai Hong**, *Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore*

**ECONOMIC STRESS AND HEALTH FOR CHINA'S OLDEST-OLDS**

**W. Jean Yeung**, *Asia Research Institute & Dept of Sociology, National University of Singapore*

**Zhenhua Xu**, *Institution of Population Research, Peking University, China*

**EFFECTS OF POVERTY AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT ON FINANCIAL STRAIN AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG THAI ELDERS**

**Kattika Thanakwang**, *Boromarajonnani College of Nursing Nopparat Vajira, Thailand*

**ANALYSIS OF INFLUENTIAL FACTORS OF HEALTH DEMANDS AND ITS PROJECTION IN CHINA: DEMOGRAPHY PERSPECTIVE**

**Guo Wei**, *Institute of Population Research, Peking University, China*

### **PANEL 3: ECONOMIC STRESS, VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCY**

*Chairperson: Lai Ah Eng, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore*

**DIRT POOR: STORIES AND STRATEGIES OF FAMILIES LIVING NEXT TO AN ASIAN DUMP**

**Cindy Godden**, *Australian National University & Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore*

**CONGRUENCE BETWEEN MEASURED AND PERCEIVED ECONOMIC STRESS: EXPLAINING STRESS HARDINESS AMONG FILIPINO FAMILIES. FINDINGS FROM THE CEBU LONGITUDINAL HEALTH AND NUTRITION SURVEY**

**Judith B. Borja**, *Office of Population Studies Foundation, University of San Carlos, Philippines*

**Linda S. Adair**, *Dept of Nutrition, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA*

**PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING: UNDERSTANDING STRESSORS, ENCOURAGING RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES**

**Cheryl Charmain Arnold**, *Centre for English Language Communications, National University of Singapore*

**STORIES OF CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCE AMONG LOW INCOME FAMILIES ON THE WORK SUPPORT PROGRAMME**

**Alex E.Y. Lee, Irene Y.H. Ng, Ngiam Tee Liang & Nesam Tharmalingam**, *Dept of Social Work, National University of Singapore*

**Ho Kong Weng**, *Nanyang Technological University*

### **PANEL 4: ECONOMIC STRESS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK**

*Chairperson: Angelique Chan, Dept of Sociology & Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School, National University of Singapore*

**MOBILIZING KINSHIP NETWORKS FOR HUMAN CAPITAL: FINANCING CHILDREN'S EDUCATION DURING ECONOMIC REFORMS IN A VIETNAMESE VILLAGE**

**Nguyen Tuan Anh**, *College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Hanoi*

**Oscar Salemink & Fleur Thomése**, *Faculty of Social Sciences, Free University Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

**SAVINGS AND RESILIENCE DURING A RECESSION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY WITH LOWER INCOME SINGAPOREANS**

**Chang-Keun Han & David W. Rothwell**, *Dept of Social Work, National University of Singapore*

**COMPETITION FOR CARE? CORESIDENCE, CARE-GIVING AND CHILDREN'S EDUCATION**

**Elisabetta Magnani**, *School of Economics, University of New South Wales, Australia*

**Anu Rammohan**, *Dept of Economics, Business School, University of Western Australia*

**FUNCTIONAL HEALTH AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS AMONG OLDER ADULTS IN VIETNAM: IMPLICATIONS FOR HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIC STRESS**

**Bussarawan Teerawichitchainan**, *School of Social Sciences, Singapore Management University*

**Kim Korinek**, *Dept of Sociology, University of Utah, USA*



## **PANEL 5: IMPACT OF ECONOMIC STRESS ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

*Chairperson: Irene Ng, Dept of Social Work, National University of Singapore*

IMPACT OF ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN ON RURAL CHILDREN: EVIDENCE AND LESSONS FROM NORTH-EAST INDIA

**Falendra Kumar Sudan**, *Dept of Economics, University of Jammu, India*

GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS AND ITS IMPACT ON YOUTH OF ASIA

**Zeeshan Shoki**, *PAK Education Society/Pakistan Development Network*

PARENTAL JOB LOSS AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH: TEN YEARS AFTER MASSIVE LAYOFF OF SOE'S WORKERS IN CHINA

**Zhong Zhao**, *School of Labor and Human Resources, Renmin University of China*

'CARE-POOR' CHILDREN IN URBAN CHINA: HOW DOES ECONOMIC STRESS AFFECT CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS AND CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING?

**Zhang Yanxia**, *Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore*

## **PANEL 6: PARENTING, GENDER AND FAMILY RELATIONS**

*Chairperson: Gavin W. Jones, Asia Research Institute & Dept of Social Work, National University of Singapore*

RECENT ECONOMIC CRISIS AND CHANGES IN THE PATTERN OF ACHIEVED FERTILITY AND DEAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN KOREA

**Doo-Sub Kim**, *Dept of Sociology & Institute of Population and Aging Research, Hanyang University, Korea*

PARENTAL INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION DURING THE ASIAN FINANCIAL CRISIS: EVIDENCE FROM INDONESIA

**Treena Wu**, *Maastricht University, The Netherlands*

**Lex Borghans & Arnaud Dupuy**, **Maastricht University, The Netherlands**

THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL FINANCIAL STRESS ON THE FAMILY IN TAIWAN

**Lih-rong Wang**, *Dept of Social Work, National Taiwan University*

**Fen-ling Chen**, *Social and Policy Science Dept, Yuan-ze University & Social Policy Research Center, National Taiwan University*

'WICKED' SOCIAL CAPITAL AND THE RESILIENCE OF ASIAN FAMILIES IN TIMES OF ECONOMIC CRISES

**Sam Wong**, *Geographical and Environmental Studies, University of Bradford, UK*

## **PANEL 7: Economic Stress from Natural Disasters**

*Chairperson: Greg K. Clancey, Asia Research Institute & Dept of History, National University of Singapore*

**SOCIAL NETWORKS AND REDUCTION OF RISK IN DISASTERS: AN EXAMPLE OF WENCHUAN EARTHQUAKE**

**Zhao Yandong**, *Institute of Science, Technology and Society, Chinese Academy of Science and Technology for Development, China*

**FROM TEARS TO PEACE: THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES ON LOCAL INTEGRATION IN THE POST-EARTHQUAKE AREA**

**Meredian Alam**, *Peace Generation Yogyakarta, Dept of Sociology, Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia*

**Gavin Brent Sullivan**, *School of Psychology and Psychiatry, Monash University, Australia*

**Tri Hayuning Tyas**, *Clinical Psychology Dept, Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia*

**DISPLACEMENT AND CHANGING GENDER AND INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS:**

**EXPERIENCE OF HOT MUDFLOW AFFECTED FAMILIES IN EAST JAVA, INDONESIA**

**Achmad Uzair Fauzan**, *Dept of Research and Networking, Lafadl Initiatives Association, Indonesia*

**Bosman Batubara**, *Lafadl Initiatives Association, Indonesia*

**RISING DISASTERS: CHALLENGES IN DISASTER RECOVERY AND RISK REDUCTION**

**Emmanuel Raju**, *Lund University Centre for Risk Assessment and Management (LUCRAM), Dept of Fire Safety Engineering and Systems Safety, Lund University, Sweden*

## **PANEL 8: ECONOMIC STRESS AND MIGRATION**

*Chairperson: Ho Kong Chong, Dept of Sociology, National University of Singapore*

**MIGRATION AND RETURN MIGRATION: IS IT AN IMPLICATION OF GLOBAL CRISIS?**

**INSIGHTS FROM NEPAL**

**Bala Raju Nikku**, *Kadambari Memorial College of Science and Management, Purbanchal University, Nepal*

**YOUTH MIGRATION AND VULNERABILITY: THE DYNAMICS OF YOUNG RURAL TO URBAN MIGRANTS IN TANGERANG CITY, BANTEN PROVINCE, INDONESIA**

**Fina Itriayati**, *Social and Political Sciences Faculty, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia*

**ABANDONED OR ABANDONING MEN: ECONOMIC STRESS AND GENDER RELATIONS AND MIGRATION OF FILIPINAS TO SINGAPORE**

**Janet M. Arnado**, *Research Institute for Gender and Women, Inc., Philippines*

**VULNERABLE GROUP AND ECONOMIC STRESS: A CASE STUDY AMONG BANGLADESHI IMMIGRANTS IN ASSAM, INDIA**

**Juri Gogoi Konwar**, *Dept of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University, India*

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

**W. Jean Yeung**, *Asia Research Institute & Dept of Sociology, National University of Singapore*

# ABSTRACTS

## PLENARY SESSION 1

### **Addressing the Economic Crisis on Communities and Families in Asia Pacific: Towards a More Inclusive and Resilient Development**

#### **Noeleen Heyzer**

Under Secretary General, United Nations and Executive Secretary,  
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia & the Pacific (UN-ESCAP)  
heyzer@un.org

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In 2009, economic growth in Asia-Pacific developing countries decelerated to 3.4 per cent from a pre-crisis 8.8 per cent rate. As a region whose economic success is heavily dependent on trade with the rest of the world, the fallout from the global economic crisis brought intense economic stress and social insecurity to families and communities, as millions, many of whom are low skilled suddenly lost their jobs, or were forced into harmful coping strategies. An additional 52 million people are at risk of slipping back into extreme poverty by 2010.

How the region addresses these challenges in the next few years will determine the nature, speed and sustainability of the region's future development. The keynote address will examine policy challenges that need to be responded to if we are to foster foundations to build a fairer, more inclusive and sustainable pattern of economic growth and development in Asia-Pacific in the aftermath of the financial crisis. By placing the poor at its center, new sources of economic growth can be generated from within the region, energizing domestic demand and building inclusive societies that will be more resilient to external shocks in the future.

**Noeleen Heyzer** is Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. At the end of August 2007, the Secretary-General of the United Nations appointed Noeleen Heyzer (Singapore) as Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at the level of Under-Secretary-General. She is the first woman to occupy this position. Since taking office, Dr. Heyzer has championed institutional change and development effectiveness positioning ESCAP as the regional hub assisting countries to build the economic and social foundations for inclusive and sustainable societies in the Asia Pacific region. She has been cultivating regional co-operation and strong partnerships to mobilize support and harness new energies to address shared development concerns, striving for common prosperity, social progress, stability and ecological sustainability in a region challenged by high growth with growing inequalities and persistent poverty.

## PLENARY SESSION 2

### The Impact of Economic Crisis on Children in East Asia and the Pacific: A UNICEF Perspective (2009-2010)

#### **Festo Kavishe**

UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO)

fkavishe@unicef.org

#### **Mahesh Patel, Dejana Popic and Samman J. Thapa**

UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO)

mpatel@unicef.org; dpopic@unicef.org ; sthapa@unicef.org

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The aim of this proposed paper is threefold: first, to explain the transmission of the economic crisis to a crisis for children in East Asia and the Pacific; second, to outline the potential implications in terms of outcomes for children and the MDGs; and third to highlight notable responses to avert or mitigate the impact on children. Data collected from real-time monitoring initiatives from a number of countries in the region will be used to support the analysis. The paper shall stress the unique ways in which children can be impacted by the crisis and show that timely interventions can avert or mitigate these successfully.

**Festo Patrick Kavishe** is the Deputy Regional Director for the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Region since August 2008. Prior to this Dr Kavishe worked with UNICEF as the Representative in Zimbabwe; UNICEF Representative in Eritrea; Chief of a Community Based Programme on realization of child rights in Cambodia and as Regional Adviser on Nutrition for UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office in Nairobi, Kenya.

**Mahesh S. Patel** is currently serving as Regional Advisor, Social Policy and Economic Analysis for UNICEF's Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific Islands (EAPRO). He has previously served UNICEF as Regional Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Advisor for CEE, CIS and Baltic States and for Eastern and Southern Africa as well as Project Officer in Sudan. He previously worked for the World Health Organization as Regional Health Economist for Europe and for UNDP on the first Human Development Report.

**Dejana Popic** is currently serving as Social Policy Officer at UNICEF EAPRO. A graduate of the London School of Economics and Political Science, she previously worked as a Programme Analyst on Governance at the United Nations Development Programme's Regional Centre in Bangkok.

**Samman J. Thapa** is working as a consultant for UNICEF-EAPRO's Social Policy and Economic Analysis Section. He has a BA in International Relations from Webster University and an MA in International Development, and International Economics from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS).

## PLENARY SESSION 3

### The Long Reach of Early Childhood Poverty

**Greg J. Duncan**

University of California, USA  
gduncan@uci.edu

**Katherine Magnuson**

University of Wisconsin, USA  
kmagnuson@wisc.edu

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Most poor children achieve less, exhibit more problem behaviors and are less healthy than children reared in more affluent families. We look beyond correlations such as these to a recent set of studies that attempt to assess the causal impact of childhood poverty on later attainment. We pay particular attention to the potentially harmful effects of poverty early in childhood, and to links between early poverty and such adult outcomes as earnings, work hours, criminal arrests and health status. Evidence suggests that early poverty has substantial detrimental effects on school achievement, adult earnings and work hours, but on neither general adult health nor such behavioral outcomes as out-of-wedlock childbearing and arrests.

**Greg J. Duncan** is Distinguished Professor in the Department of Education at UCI. Dr. Duncan comes to the University of California, Irvine from Northwestern University, where he served as the Edwina S. Tarry Professor in the School of Education and Social Policy and Faculty Affiliate in the Institute for Policy Research. He was principal investigator of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics project at Michigan, professor of economics, and Distinguished Research Scientist at Michigan's Survey Research Center for 13 years before going to Northwestern in 1995. Dr. Duncan continues to study skill development across childhood and the impacts of poverty and other environmental conditions on children and adolescents.

## PLENARY SESSION 4

### Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs): A Child Policy Strategy in Asia

#### **Sheila B. Kamerman**

Compton Foundation Centennial Professor for the Prevention of Child and Youth Problems,  
School of Social Work, Columbia University, USA  
sbk2@columbia.edu

#### **Shirley Gatenio-Gabel**

Graduate School of Social Service, Fordham University, USA  
gateniogabe@fordham.edu

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Conditional cash transfers (CCTs) are cash benefits that impose behavioral conditions on recipients and are an increasingly popular tool for alleviating childhood poverty and investing in children's futures. The majority of CCT programs are in Latin America but can now be found throughout the world, including the United States, the EU and CIS countries, Africa, and Asia. This paper reviews the effectiveness of conditional cash transfers as a policy tool in less developed countries by focusing on whether CCTs in these countries achieve their goals of reducing child poverty; increasing school enrollment; and improving health and nutrition, especially in Asia. While early evidence found highly positive results, some recent evaluations now challenge the highly positive, initial evaluations of CCTs. The paper discusses the conditions under which imposing behavioral conditions on cash transfers can be effective.

**Sheila B. Kamerman** is the Compton Foundation Centennial Professor for the Prevention of Child and Youth Problems at the Columbia University School of Social Work, and director of the University-wide and interdisciplinary Columbia Institute on Child and Youth Policies. She also directs the ICFP web-site based Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child and Family Policies ([www.childpolicyintl.org](http://www.childpolicyintl.org)). Between 2001 and 2002, Dr. Kamerman was the Interim Dean of the School. Her current and recent research activities include: a study of early childhood care and education policies and programs in the OECD countries, a study of parental leave policies in these countries, and social protection policies in developing countries.

**Shirley Gatenio Gabel** directed public policy analyses, lobbying and community organization efforts and spearheaded the founding of local collaborative entities aimed at improving service delivery and programming for the changing needs of children and their families. Dr Gatenio Gabel also helped create and is the manager of internet-based *Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child and Family Policies* at Columbia University. Her research areas of interest are comparative child and family policies and outcomes, particularly those helping families with young children, and the implementation of early childhood education and care policies in the United States.

## PLENARY SESSION 5

### The Aftermath of the Tsunami: Evidence from Indonesia

**Elizabeth Frankenberg**

Public Policy Studies and Sociology, Duke University, USA  
e.frankenberg@duke.edu

**Jed Friedman, Bondan Sikoki, Cecep Sumantri, Wayan Suriastini and Duncan Thomas**

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On December 26, 2004 the Sumatra-Andaman earthquake and the tsunami it triggered wreaked havoc on 10 countries and thousands of kilometers of coastline around the Indian Ocean. This paper explores the tsunami's immediate and longer-term impact in Indonesia. We draw on data from the Study of the Tsunami Aftermath and Recovery (STAR), a panel survey of a representative sample of some 39,500 individuals in the tsunami-affected areas of Aceh and in nearby comparison areas of inland Aceh and the neighboring province of North Sumatra. Because the baseline survey was collected before the tsunami, we are able to control for pre-tsunami characteristics such as location of residence and socioeconomic status. In addition, information about the degree of destruction in communities includes data collected from village leaders, administrative records and satellite imagery. Individual and household outcomes considered include mortality, mental health, and economic well-being.

**Elizabeth Frankenberg** is Professor in the Sanford School of Public Policy and the Department of Sociology at Duke University. Her research focuses on three thematic areas. One area concerns the ways in which the health and social service environment shapes the well-being of individuals. A second focus addresses the ways that interactions among family members influence well-being, and in particular the role of power in family relationships. A third theme involves research on unexpected events as a window into understanding how individuals respond to change.

## PANEL 1 - ECONOMIC STRESS AND SOCIAL SAFETY NETS

### Impact of Work Support Programs on Families under Stress: A Study Based on Basic Tracking of Recipients

**Ho Kong Weng**

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

kwho@ntu.edu.sg

**Alex E.Y. Lee, Irene Y.H. Ng and Tharmalingam Nesamani**

Department of Social Work, National University of Singapore

swkleea@nus.edu.sg; swknyhi@nus.edu.sg; swktn@nus.edu.sg

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The Work Support programs of Singapore help low-income families via cash assistance, case management, job matching, budget and expenditure planning, and other forms of assistance. All graduates from Work Support programs, including Work Support Enable (WSE), and Work Support Self Reliance (WSSR), were interviewed two months, four months, and six months after graduation in a basic tracking exercise, beginning November 2008, and lasting for about three years. Based on the information gathered, we will study the socioeconomic characteristics of the recipients, and attempt to examine whether the Work Support programs have improved the household income, increased household saving, and employment opportunities, and how these economic variables evolve over time. We will investigate if the outcomes depend on the socioeconomic background of the families under economic stress.

**Ho Kong Weng**, Assistant Professor at Division of Economics, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, has published in the areas of social mobility, international outsourcing, wage inequality, technopreneurship, and unemployment, including both theoretical investigations and empirical studies using Singapore data. His current research topics include intergenerational transmission of religious human capital, economic growth of a small open economy in a world of ideas, trade and indeterminacy, non-monotonic relationship between human capital and unemployment, and happiness studies.

**Irene Y.H. Ng** is an Assistant Professor of Social Work in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore. Her research areas include poverty and inequality, intergenerational mobility, youth crime, and social welfare policy. Currently, she is Principal Investigator of a research project with the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports to evaluate the Work Support programme.

**Alex E.Y. Lee** is Senior Lecturer and Deputy Head of the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore. His current research interests include poverty, ageing, and programme evaluation in Social Work. He has consulted with the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore Prisons Services, National Council of Social Service, SAGE Counseling Centre and the Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises. He is currently involved in the longitudinal evaluation study on the Work Support Programme.



## PANEL 1 - ECONOMIC STRESS AND SOCIAL SAFETY NETS

### Single Mothers in Malaysia: Economic Stress and Policy Uncertainty

#### **Puzziawati Ab Ghani**

Department of Statistics, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia  
puzzikamel@gmail.com

#### **Martin Evans**

Department of Social Policy and Social Work, University of Oxford, UK  
martin.evans@socres.ox.ac.uk

#### **Yik Koon Teh**

Faculty of Defence Studies and Management, National Defence University of Malaysia  
ykteh11@yahoo.com

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Female headed families have higher risks of poverty in Malaysia than the general population and form large groups of those claiming social assistance. Malaysian social policies for a wide range of such families come under a single heading of “Single Mothers”. This paper analyses the profile of non-elderly women with children from a variety of sources including administrative data, general survey data and a specific survey of single mothers undertaken in 2009. The paper looks at the two main causes of single motherhood, divorce and widowhood, and examines how the incidence of these causes of economic stress matches with the design of social protection, taxation and employer provident funds to prevent economic hardship.

**Puzziawati Ab Ghani** is currently an Associate Professor at the Center for Statistical Studies, Faculty of Computer and Mathematical Sciences, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia. Her research interest has been in Social Statistics and Demography focusing on statistical modeling of women and work, gender and family issues, aging population, fertility and mortality.

**Martin Evans** is Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Social Policy and Social Work and works across the Social Disadvantage Research Centre and the Centre for South African Social Policy. His research interests are in income, poverty and social security, developing countries, neighbourhood deprivation and welfare to work programmes. Dr Evans was Economic and Social Research Council Research Fellow 2005-2008 was a Visiting Fellow at the School of Social Welfare at the University of California, Berkeley.

**Yik Koon Teh** is Professor of Sociology at the Department of Strategic Studies, Faculty of Defence Studies and Management, National Defence University of Malaysia. Her present research interests are rehabilitation and correction of prisoners, non-traditional securities, crime prevention, fraud and corruption, gender and sexuality, and HIV/AIDS social issues. She is also active in non-governmental organisation (NGO) work, particularly with the marginalized communities.

## **PANEL 1 - ECONOMIC STRESS AND SOCIAL SAFETY NETS**

### **Occupational Mobility Trends in Singapore, 1995-2009: An Empirical Analysis using Markov Chain Theory**

**Toh Mun Heng**

NUS Business School, National University of Singapore  
biztohmh@nus.edu.sg

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This paper studies the occupational mobility of our resident workforce, using data from the General Household Survey and Census. In particular, the theory of Markov chains is applied to provide retrospective insights on the changes in labour market flexibility during the period of three years ending in 1995, 2000 and 2009 in Singapore.

The results of the study suggest that occupational mobility has increased between 1995 and 2000, but somewhat declined by the end of the 2000s. The movement of workers indicate that workers in the managerial, professional, technician and clerical occupational groups are able to respond to wage changes while it remains difficult for workers outside these occupational groups to move to the managerial, professional and technician occupational classes.

**Toh Mun Heng** is an Associate Professor of the Department of Business Policy National University of Singapore. His research interests and publications are in the areas of econometric modeling, input-output analysis, international trade and investment, human resource development, productivity measurement, household economics and development strategies of emerging economies in the Asia Pacific.

## **PANEL 1 - ECONOMIC STRESS AND SOCIAL SAFETY NETS**

### **Does Widely Accessible Mean More Affordable for the Deprived? An Impact Evaluation of Urban Resident Basic Medical Insurance in Urban China**

#### **Gang Chen**

Centre for Health Economics, Monash University, Australia  
gang.Chen@buseco.monash.edu.au ; chengang1029@gmail.com

#### **Gordon G. Liu**

Dept of Applied Economics, Peking University, China  
ggliu@unc.edu; gordon@gsm.pku.edu.cn

#### **Fei Xu**

China Center for Pharmacoeconomics & Outcomes Research, Peking University, China  
xufei0505@hotmail.com

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The launch of the Urban Resident Basic Medical Insurance (URBMI) in 2007 marked a new phase in achieving universal health insurance coverage in China. Based on baseline and first-wave, follow-up survey data, this paper explores the impact of URBMI in urban China, especially on the deprived (with the lowest income or lowest education level). Using several regression-based techniques (recursive bivariate probit model, random-effects with group-mean Tobit model, and double-hurdle model) to handle the unobserved heterogeneity and ultimate decision on consumption issues, results show that URBMI has increased the likelihood of both outpatient visits and hospitalisation. Moreover, the probability of non-hospitalisation for the poorest people has also increased significantly, while this remains unchanged for the least educated people. Further analysis of the out-of-pocket (OOP) health care expenditure reveals that the insurance effect on outpatient OOP expenditures is almost insignificant except for those with the lowest level of education. As for the inpatient OOP expenditures, the protective effect of URBMI greatest for the rich, while this remains unchanged for the deprived.

**Gang Chen** is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Health Economics, Faculty of Business and Economics, Monash University. He gained his Master of Management Science and Bachelor of Medicine Degree from Xi'an Jiaotong University. His recent researches focus on the nexus between health investment and economic growth, health insurance system design and evaluation, health status determinants.

## PANEL 2 - ECONOMIC STRESS AND HEALTH

### The Health Impact of Economic Crises: Policy Implications and Lessons from Asia

**Phua Kai Hong**

Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore

spppkh@nus.edu.sg

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The long-run impacts of the current crisis will not be negligible and should deserve serious considerations and further research. Future research efforts are needed to fully explore the policy implications of short and longer term effects, including what they mean to different countries with disparate levels and income classes, vulnerable population groups such as the unemployed, elderly, mothers and children, specific disease categories including mental health and suicides, malnutrition and infections; and to offer policy options to health-related government services and development agencies on how they can be more responsive to public policy formulation and implementation.

**Phua Kai Hong** holds a tenured appointment in Health Policy & Management at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and teaches health policy, health care management and health economics in the various graduate programmes in public policy, public health and business administration at the National University of Singapore. He is currently on the editorial boards of various international health journals, and is an associate editor of the Singapore Economic Review.

## PANEL 2 - ECONOMIC STRESS AND HEALTH

### Economic Stress and Health for China's Oldest-olds

#### **W. Jean Yeung**

Asia Research Institute & Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore  
ariywj@nus.edu.sg

#### **Zhenhua Xu**

Institution of Population Research, Peking University, China  
xuzhenhua521@gmail.com

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This paper examines the relationship between economic stress and health for the oldest-old in China. We base our investigation on data drawn from the Chinese Longitudinal Healthy Longevity Survey conducted between 2000 and 2005. Our sample includes 10,972 men and women between the age of 80 and 105 in 2000. Data show that about 16% of these oldest-olds lived under economic stress in 2000. The risk factors for living under economic stress include age, being male, living in a rural area, being a minority member, having a low occupational status, having no living children and not having children as their main source of income. We found that economic stress is significantly associated with higher mental distress and less adequate medical care, which contribute to the poorer physical health of the oldest old. Our results also show that living under economic stress increases the risk of mortality for these oldest-olds by about 40%, even after controlling for basic demographic characteristics, life style factors, and major health events.

**W. Jean Yeung** is a Professor at the Department of Sociology and the Asia Research Institute in the National University of Singapore. Professor Yeung is affiliated with the China Center for Economic Research in Peking University, the National Poverty Center of the School of Public Policy and the Institute for Social Research in the University of Michigan. Her current research and teaching focus on intergenerational studies, family and children's well-being and policies, social inequality, and China's socioeconomic and demographic transition.

**Zhenhua Xu** is a graduate student in the Institution of Population Research in Peking University, China. She specializes on Aging and Health, Living Arrangements of the Elderly, and Disablement Process. Her current research focuses on the determinants of changes in health status, the relationship between living arrangements and health among Chinese elderly, and the disablement process of the elderly in China.

## PANEL 2 - ECONOMIC STRESS AND HEALTH

### Effects of Poverty and Financial Support on Financial Strain and Psychological Well-being among Thai Elders

**Kattika Thanakwang**

Boromarajonnani College of Nursing Nopparat Vajira, Bangkok, Thailand  
kattika99@yahoo.com

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The purpose of this study was to examine effects of poverty and financial support on economic strain and psychological well-being among Thai elders. Data were taken from the 2002 National Elderly Survey in Thailand. The sample included 23,220 elders age  $\geq 60$  years. Binary and multiple logistic regression models were employed for data analysis.

Findings revealed that Thai elders who were poor and needed financial support had 3.1 and 3.6 times more likely to suffer with economic strain than their counterparts who were not poor and need financial support, respectively. The elders who received financial support were 55% less likely to have financial strain than those who did not. In the interaction between poverty and financial support, the poor who were not receiving financial support had 7.8 times more likely to experience economic strain when compared to the elders who were not poor but received financial support. For multiple regression analysis, poverty and the need for financial support were significantly and negatively associated with the psychological well-being of the elderly.

**Kattika Thanakwang** is a lecturer in the Boromarajonnani College of Nursing Noparat Vajira, Bangkok, Thailand. Her research interests include 1) social networks and social support influencing positive aging (Active aging, successful aging, and productive aging), 2) psychological well-being, 3) Depression in diabetic elders, and 4) Development the culturally-sensitive measures of positive aging. She also focuses on vulnerable groups, such as the oldest old, the poor, and the widowhood.

## PANEL 2 - ECONOMIC STRESS AND HEALTH

### Analysis of Influential Factors of Health Demands and its Projection in China: Demography Perspective

**Guo Wei**

Institute of Population Research, Peking University, China

pku.guowei@gmail.com, guowei2008@pku.edu.cn

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China has experienced some natural disasters and financial crises in recent years. In 2008, Chinese government promised to set up a “safe, effective, convenient and affordable” health system that would cover all urban and rural residents by 2020. The core of the reform was to clarify government’s being a dominant role in providing public health, basic medical service and increasing health funding to ease financial burden of individuals. With economic boom, China can afford the necessary reforms so that economic development goes hand-in-hand with improved health among different groups.

However, according to who definition of health, health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Anyone at any stage of life is facing health risks, and, except for some basic health risks, one at different stages of the life course will face some particular health risks. To carry out a positive analysis of health demands, this paper focused on exploring the important factors like the population structure, spectrum of disease, the status of the provision of health services and population health changes’ impact on the health demands.

**Guo Wei** is a PhD Candidate majoring in Demography at Peking University, graduated in Aerospace Engineering, Beihang University, Beijing, China. His research interests include population, environment and health, demography, labor force. He has published some papers in the *Journal of Nanjing University*, *Chinese Journal of Population Science*, *Special Zone Economy* and other famous Social Science journals.

## PANEL 2 - ECONOMIC STRESS AND HEALTH

### **Dirt Poor: Stories and Strategies of Families Living Next to an Asian Dump**

**Cindy Godden**

Australian National University & Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore  
cindy.godden@anu.edu.au

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This paper explores the economic downturn in Cambodia and its impact on the urban poor, in particular a group of waste pickers working at the Phnom Penh dumpsite. Based on 15 months of ethnographic fieldwork, this paper shares the stories of a group of poor disadvantaged families facing significant financial and emotional stress and how they survived. The paper discusses the concept of protection, specifically, that without the means to support their families, the waste pickers have claimed their own rights to common resources at high risks to their health and wellbeing. In the absence of a welfare system, the government openly allows them to disobey rules as a form of charity and merit-making offering the waste pickers little regulatory protection. In turn, the waste pickers have developed their own structures of protection based on social rules, religious beliefs and connections to their rural 'homeland', that have enabled them to cope with the shocks of the past two years.

**Cindy Godden** is currently completing her PhD dissertation with the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, Research School of the Humanities, Australian National University. She is a Visiting Scholar at the Asia Research Institute at NUS. Her research interests include visual anthropology and photography, the anthropology of waste, poverty, development and Buddhism.



## **PANEL 3 - ECONOMIC STRESS, VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCY**

### **Congruence between Measured and Perceived Economic Stress: Explaining Stress Hardiness among Filipino Families. Findings from the Cebu Longitudinal Health and Nutrition Survey**

**Judith B. Borja**

Office of Population Studies Foundation, University of San Carlos, Philippines  
judithborja@gmail.com

**Linda S. Adair**

Department of Nutrition, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA  
linda\_adair@unc.edu

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Filipinos are known for their resiliency to adversity, and a belief system that God governs their destiny resulting in complacency to life's events for which they are destined. Collectivism, family solidarity, and self-respect are traditional values that may be upheld over material wealth, increasing the capacity to withstand economic hardship. These make assessing stress levels in this population a challenge. This paper compares Filipino mothers' perceptions of economic status with empirical assessments using standard parameters of economic well-being from the Cebu Longitudinal Health and Nutrition Survey (CLHNS). The CLHNS is an ongoing survey which has collected household- and individual-level data from 3080 mother-infant pairs since 1983. We examine data on over 1900 mothers from surveys done in 1998, 2002, and 2005 defining economic stress as changes over time of selected household economic indicators. We further examine how factors such as religiosity, educational level, household composition, financial autonomy, depressive symptoms, and the conditioning of prolonged exposure to given socioeconomic conditions influence the perception of economic stress.

**Judith B. Borja** is a Senior Research Associate (and currently the Deputy Director) of the Office of Population Studies of the University of San Carlos, Cebu City, Philippines. She has been involved with the Cebu Longitudinal Health and Nutrition Study (CLHNS) since 1985 and is the study's overall coordinator. Her research focuses on nutrition and health issues throughout the life course, with a special emphasis on maternal health and child growth.

## **PANEL 3 - ECONOMIC STRESS, VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCY**

### **Psychosocial Well-being: Understanding Stressors, Encouraging Resilience and Empowering Communities**

**Cheryl Charmain Arnold**

Centre for English Language Communications, National University of Singapore  
arnold.cher@gmail.com

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The Psychosocial Framework of understanding has been designed to help identify spheres of support required to ensure an individual or community is provided with skills, knowledge and resources to overcome Stressors. An underlining premise involves recognizing that resilience is often a by-product of stress and respecting the fact that Asian communities have their own coping mechanisms that spring out of their heritage, cultural practices and beliefs. Employing a Psychosocial framework of understanding and adapting it to suit Asian communities has no doubt become a valuable tool by which interventions have had significant and long lasting impact.

This paper will look at the Psychosocial framework of understanding from an Asian perspective. It will also look at the implications Stress Factors have upon the well being of Families and it will posit that there is an urgent need to incorporate a Psychosocial approach to understanding issues and challenges within the Asian Region so that it may have long lasting implications for policy development in the future.

**Cheryl Charmain Arnold** completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Counselling and Psychosocial Work in 2005 and became actively involved in the training of psychosocial workers engaging in community rebuilding efforts in the North and South of Sri Lanka. Her work also led her to become involved in research pertaining to Psychosocial Needs assessments and Policy governing the elderly and disabled in Sri Lanka. She is deeply interested in research that promotes well being and community development, language acquisition and needs assessment methodologies.

## PANEL 3 - ECONOMIC STRESS, VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCY

### Stories of Challenges and Resilience among Low Income Families on the Work Support Programme

**Alex E.Y. Lee, Irene Y.H. Ng, Ngiam Tee Liang and Nesam Tharmalingam**

National University of Singapore

swkleea@nus.edu.sg; swknyhi@nus.edu.sg; swkntl@nus.edu.sg; swktn@nus.edu.sg

**Ho Kong Weng**

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

kwho@ntu.edu.sg

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Based on qualitative interviews of recipients of the Work Support Programme, this paper will present the stories of the lives and livelihood of low income families at the time when they request for financial assistance through the Community Development Council. Subjects are drawn from 800 participants of a longitudinal evaluation research on the effectiveness of the Work Support Programme commissioned by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports. The paper will uncover the financial struggles faced by low income families and how they cope with those struggles. The impact of chronic and sudden financial difficulties on the way low income families manage their lives will be explored. In particular, we will discuss how financial difficulties affected the options and choices available for low income families in their search for suitable jobs; how families drew upon past experiences to cope with current financial needs; and how family relationships are affected by the financial stresses and strains.

**Alex E.Y. Lee** is Senior Lecturer and Deputy Head of the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore. His current research interests include poverty, ageing, and programme evaluation in Social Work. He has consulted with the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore Prisons Services, National Council of Social Service, SAGE Counseling Centre and the Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises. He is currently involved in the longitudinal evaluation study on the Work Support Programme.

**Ho Kong Weng**, Assistant Professor at Division of Economics, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, has published in the areas of social mobility, international outsourcing, wage inequality, technopreneurship, and unemployment, including both theoretical investigations and empirical studies using Singapore data. His current research topics include intergenerational transmission of religious human capital, economic growth of a small open economy in a world of ideas, trade and indeterminacy, non-monotonic relationship between human capital and unemployment, and happiness studies.

## PANEL 4 - ECONOMIC STRESS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK

### Mobilizing Kinship Networks for Human Capital: Financing Children's Education during Economic Reforms in a Vietnamese Village

**Nguyen Tuan Anh**

Faculty of Sociology, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Hanoi  
anhxhh@gmail.com

**Oscar Salemink and Fleur Thomése**

Faculty of Social Sciences, Free University Amsterdam, The Netherlands

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This paper identifies how social capital in kinship relations is employed to foster children's education in the Economic Reform era (*Đổi mới*), based on an anthropological and sociological study in Quỳnh Đôi village, Quỳnh Lưu district, Nghệ An province, Vietnam. In the *Đổi mới* period, the state policy of 'socialization of education' amounted to a privatization of education causing financial hardship to pupils' households. Facing this situation the patrilineage, the predominant kinship form prior to the August 1945 Revolution, during the *Đổi mới* again assumed the important role of funding and promoting education among kin networks. In this paper I argue that social capital, understood as enforceable trust and reciprocity exchanges, was the foundation for raising patrilineage study encouragement funds which - in contrast with the past - involved both patrilineage members and non-members as contributors to these funds. Moreover, pupils receiving financial study encouragements could be either patrilineage members or non-members. Thus, the kin-based support system for education did not just constitute a comeback of the patrilineage, but the support networks glossed here as social capital covered both patrilineage and other kin relations.

**Nguyen Tuan Anh** is a lecturer at the Faculty of Sociology, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Hanoi. In 2005 he started working for a doctoral program under the supervision of Prof Oscar Salemink and Dr Fleur Thomése at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Free University Amsterdam. His dissertation examined the changes of kinship relations based on fieldwork in Quỳnh Đôi village, Quỳnh Lưu district, Nghệ An province, Vietnam.

## PANEL 4 - ECONOMIC STRESS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK

### **Savings and Resilience during a Recession: An Exploratory Study with Lower Income Singaporeans**

**Chang-Keun Han**

Department of Social Work, National University of Singapore

swkhck@nus.edu.sg

**David W. Rothwell**

Department of Social Work, National University of Singapore

swkdwr@nus.edu.sg

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This study aims to advance the understanding of how families adjust to a dramatic economic recession. Using a survey of 200 low- to moderate-income households in Singapore, this study analyzes how changes in economic resources (in particular assets) are associated with family strains and family resilience. We also explore how family strain may mediate the relationship between economic resources and family resilience. Key findings of this study are as follows: (1) a majority of the sample experienced deterioration of economic resources; (2) a reduction of savings has increased family strain; (3) households experiencing savings decreases have lower levels of family resilience measured by family social support and family cohesiveness; and (4) savings and family strains were found to have direct relationships with family social support and family cohesiveness rather than mediating relationships. This paper concludes with several implications for policy and practice.

**Chang-Keun Han** is Assistant Professor at the Department of Social Work, National University of Singapore. His areas of research interests include examination of asset poverty, development and evaluation of asset-based policy and programs, and asset ownership impacts on children, family, and community. His work on evaluation of saving programs in Korea, USA, and Uganda has been published in several journals. In addition, he extends his research to comparative studies on social service policy and programs in the Southeast Asian region.

**David W. Rothwell** is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Social Work, National University of Singapore. His areas of research interests include social developmental approaches to poverty, family stress and resiliency, program evaluation, and community development. His papers on evaluation studies of asset-building program in Hawaii have been published in several journals.

## PANEL 4 - ECONOMIC STRESS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK

### Competition for Care? Coresidence, Care-Giving and Children's Education

**Elisabetta Magnani**

School of Economics, University of New South Wales, Australia  
e.magnani@unsw.edu.au

**Anu Rammohan**

Department of Economics, Business School, University of Western Australia  
anu.rammohan@uwa.edu.au

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Does the household's reallocation of time and resources due to the presence of co-residing elderly family members impact upon the schooling of younger household members? We address this issue by investigating the impact of intra-household inter-generational resource redistribution in the face of care-giving directed to the elderly. We model the allocation of resources by adult children between competing caring jobs- those that benefit co-residing elderly and those towards co-residing children. This analytical framework allows us to reach some testable predictions. We test these implications by focusing on Indonesia, a country characterized by heterogeneity in social and cultural norms, population ageing and heavy reliance on the family for elderly support. Specifically, using the last two waves (2000 and 2008) of the Indonesian Family Life Survey (IFLS), a continuing and nationally representative longitudinal socioeconomic survey, we find that co-residence with elderly family members improves the school performance of children. This result is strong in samples of female children, but absent when samples of male children are considered. Contrary to expectations, we find that care-giving activities occurring in the presence of elderly family members' bad health does not negatively impact on children's school performance.

**Elisabetta Magnani** is Associate Professor at the School of Economics at the University of New South Wales. Since her appointment at UNSW in July 1996, Elisabetta has worked to expand the research work in the broad area of Labour Economics she began at Yale University as a PhD student. She has extensively worked on issues of technological, demographic and organizational change, with an emphasis on their impact on wages, employment arrangements and labour market institutions. Her most recent research projects involve the investigation of how labour markets' design, institutions and demographic factors shape behaviours, opportunities and constraints for environmental sustainability.

**Anu Rammohan** is Associate Professor at the Department of Economics, Business School, University of Western Australia. Her key research areas include development economics, health economics and labour economics.

## PANEL 4 - ECONOMIC STRESS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK

### Functional Health and Living Arrangements among Older Adults in Vietnam: Implications for Household Economic Stress

**Bussarawan Teerawichitchainan**

School of Social Sciences, Singapore Management University

bteerawichit@smu.edu.sg

**Kim Korinek**

Department of Sociology, University of Utah, USA

kim.korinek@soc.utah.edu

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Lacking universal health insurance, Vietnam has a high incidence of catastrophic household health spending by international standards (World Bank 2008). Unprecedented increase in number and proportion of older adults projected for coming decades has exacerbated the government's concerns over healthcare provision, particularly for the elderly whose life expectancy may be prolonged but usually plagued with functional limitations. To date, there is little systematic knowledge about daily living (ADL) disability among older Vietnamese adults and its implication for long-term care. Given Vietnam's shift from a collective to a market economy – accompanied by the imposition of user fees at public health facilities and burgeoning private health sectors – families' role as caretakers for older adults have become even more pronounced than in the past. Using recent nationally representative data from the 2006 Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, our research will examine the extent of economic stress and the strategies families under stress use to deal with older adults with activities of ADL disability. We focus on the strategies in living arrangements and resource allocation that households adopt to deal with the population aging and potential household economic stress in Vietnam.

**Bussarawan “Puk” Teerawichitchainan** is Assistant professor of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Singapore Management University. She received a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Washington and was a postdoctoral fellow at the Population Council. Her research interests include social demography, sociology of family, gender, and the life course and aging in Southeast Asia.

## PANEL 5 - IMPACT OF ECONOMIC STRESS ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

### Impact of Economic Slowdown on Rural Children: Evidence and Lessons from North-East India

**Falendra Kumar Sudan**

Department of Economics, University of Jammu, India

fk\_sud@rediffmail.com

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The study is based on primary data and information collected from 625 households confined to 25 villages of district Mamit of Mizoram State in north-east India. Before crisis, in 88% of poor households, at least one person per family had migrated as survival strategies. With onset of crisis, these households have affected adversely by fall in remittances. They are also affected by second-run effects on informal employment and depressed local economy. Deterioration of households' economic situation is translating into poorer diet and decreased expenditure on children's health and education, more poverty and debt, and engagement into low-earning, informal income earning activities. Main coping mechanisms adapted are reduced quality and quantity of food consumed, withdrawal of children from school and pushing them in labour, curtailing health expenditure, selling livestock and domestic assets including land and gold and raising credit for livelihood sustenance. Interventions in response to slowdown should not only mitigate immediate effects on children in poor households but also continue to tackle basic causes of poverty and food insecurity, including improvement of services (health, water, sanitation, and education), infrastructures, agricultural productivity and access to credit.

**Falendra Kumar Sudan** is Associate Professor of Economics at University of Jammu (India) and teaches courses on Demography and Environmental Economics focusing on gender, environment and development. He is Visiting Senior Fellow at Institute for Human Development, New Delhi and also serving as Executive Director (Honorary), Jammu and Kashmir Child Rights and Research Trust and working on Child Rights and You (CRY) funded advocacy, training, and research projects focusing on displacement, child labour, and child abuse in non-Kashmiri migrants' camps in Jammu region.



## PANEL 5 - IMPACT OF ECONOMIC STRESS ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

### Global Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Youth of Asia

#### **Zeeshan Shoki**

PAK Education Society/Pakistan Development Network  
zeeshanshoki@gmail.com; zeeshan\_shoki@yahoo.com

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The global financial crisis which has effected everyone belonging to any region, have socially and economically depreciated by the youth of Asia. The youth constitute major population of Asia are confronting with the challenges of unemployment, which has dramatically increased after the global recession. This poses a great challenge for government and international organizations and may lead to an increase in terrorism or anti peace activities, if not tackled properly.

Governments must find ways to address rising tensions at the earliest opportunity. Possible interventions include monitoring fluctuations in the price of consumption items to provide an early warning mechanism to predict social instability. Government should also formulate policies that promote Entrepreneurship and increase investment in the country. More incentives should be given to youth to go out from the shackles of poverty.

**Zeeshan Shoki** is Founding Chief Executive of PAK Educational Society (PES) / Pakistan Development Network (PDN). He has wide experience in multidisciplinary research and writes extensively on issues like human resource development and its utilization, education, child labour, human rights, poverty, and civil society development. He is also member of various national and international organizations such as International Society for Human Values (ISHV), Geneva, IPB, International Youth Parliament, People's Right Movement, and the Population Association of Pakistan (PAP).

## **PANEL 5 - IMPACT OF ECONOMIC STRESS ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

### **Parental Job Loss and Children's Health: Ten Years after Massive Layoff of SOE's Workers in China**

**Zhong Zhao**

School of Labor and Human Resources, Renmin University of China  
mr.zhong.zhao@gmail.com

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This paper investigates the impact of the parents' layoff on the well-being of their children; especially we will focus on health outcomes. The data that we will use is the China Health and Nutrition Survey (CHNS). CHNS is a longitudinal survey, which has collected seven waves of data in 1989, 1991, 1993, 1997, 2000, 2004, and 2006. The survey covers 9 out of 31 provinces in China, including coastal, middle, northeastern and western provinces. In each province, both big cities and small cities are sampled. CHNS also includes cities from different income levels, and surveys both rural and urban residents. Our identification strategy will rely on the variations of layoff among different regions and across different sectors. We find that father's job loss has significant negative effect on children's health; whilst mother's job loss has no significant effect. The rationale behind the findings is the laid-off mothers are likely to increase their time to take care of their children; this will alleviate the negative effect resulting from job loss.

**Zhong Zhao** currently is a professor of economics at the School of Labor and Human Resources, Renmin University of China, and a research fellow of the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) at Bonn, Germany. His main areas of interest are labour economics, applied microeconometrics, social program evaluation, development economics and the Chinese economy.

## PANEL 5 - IMPACT OF ECONOMIC STRESS ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

### **‘Care-Poor’ Children in Urban China: How Does Economic Stress Affect Child Care Arrangements and Children’s Well-being?**

**Zhang Yanxia**

Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

arizyx@nus.edu.sg

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This paper aims to examine the impact of the economic stress on care provision for economically disadvantaged children and their human capital development and psychological well-being in the Chinese context. Based on a secondary analysis of longitudinal statistical data, an analysis of a range of documentary evidence, and extensive in-depth interviews with mothers and grandmothers from different economic backgrounds, this paper argues that there was a significant division between ‘care-rich’ and ‘care-poor’ children along the line of economic status in urban China. While children from high income families had access to the well-known private and public kindergartens and regularly relied on more complicated care arrangements, children from low-income families were constrained by financial resources and were excluded from using quality kindergartens or indeed any kindergarten. Although their parents can mobilize their familial resources to compensate for their disadvantaged positions in the state system and the market, they tend to have less family resources than those more privileged, and often rely on mothers and grandparents who have limited education and economic resources for child care, thus exacerbating the disparity.

**Zhang Yanxia** is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Asia Research Institute, NUS. She was a research fellow at Women’s Studies Institute of China in Beijing and contributed to several journal articles examining the impacts of the post-1978 socioeconomic transition in China on the employment, social status and economic wellbeing of different kinds of Chinese women. Her current research interests include child care, elderly care, gender, poverty and social security, and comparative family policies. Her geographical areas of research focus are East Asia (China, South Korea and Japan) and Singapore.

## PANEL 6 - PARENTING, GENDER AND FAMILY RELATIONS

### Recent Economic Crisis and Changes in the Pattern of Achieved Fertility and Ideal Number of Children in Korea

**Doo-Sub Kim**

Department of Sociology & Institute of Population and Aging Research,  
Hanyang University, Korea  
duskim@hanyang.ac.kr

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The main purpose of this study is to explore the effects of the 1997 Asian economic crisis on the level of achieved and desired fertility, and on the pattern of socioeconomic differentials. This paper explores recent changes in the level of fertility and ideal number of children (INC) according to socioeconomic status of the couple. This study focuses on a comparative analysis of children ever born (CEB), the post-1998 CEB and INC of married women. For the second round of comparative analysis, the study population is split into two groups: those married before 1997 and those married for the first time in 1997 or thereafter. The level of CEB and INC as well as the pattern of socioeconomic differentials of the two groups are then compared. Results reveal that the economic crisis significantly affected the causal mechanisms of Korean fertility. CEB and the post-1998 CEB show contrasting patterns according to socioeconomic status of the couple. In the context of ultra-low fertility after the economic crisis, the relationship between socioeconomic status and the level of fertility is found to be positive. For the highest socioeconomic group, however, the level of recent fertility tends to decrease slightly as socioeconomic status rises.

**Doo-Sub Kim** is Professor of Sociology and Director of the Institute of Population and Aging Research at Hanyang University. He is also Director of the Korea Social Science Data Archive and Chairman of the Population Association of Korea. His current research focuses on low fertility, population aging and marriage migration in Asia. He also has research and teaching experience at the East-West Center, Seoul National University, University of Oxford, University of Iowa, and University of British Columbia.

## PANEL 6 - PARENTING, GENDER AND FAMILY RELATIONS

### Parental Investment in Children's Education during the Asian Financial Crisis: Evidence from Indonesia

**Treena Wu**

Maastricht University, The Netherlands & Haas UC Berkeley, USA

treena.wu@maastrichtuniversity.nl

**Lex Borghans and Arnaud Dupuy**

Maastricht University, The Netherlands

lex.borghans@maastrichtuniversity.nl ; a.dupuy@roa.unimaas.nl

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Using the Asian Financial Crisis as a source of exogenous variation in household income, we investigate changes in the household income distribution and the effects on investments in children's human capital ages 6 - 15. We find that income matters for educational investments based on i) incomplete credit markets and ii) the hierarchical structure of the national education system. When income falls in both rich and poor households, parents selectively complement early financial investments in primary school with later investments in junior high. The selection criterion is school age 12 and 15. Also for parents to complement early and later investment this is conditional on taking and passing the national qualifying exams that assess children's accumulated skill sets. However when we specify investments in terms of schooling time, we find that parents fail to capitalize on time invested in primary school with time invested in junior high. We also find evidence of children aged 14 and 15 who simultaneously attend school and work in response to an income reduction. The tradeoffs between education and child labor increase the risk of failing to achieve higher levels of education.

**Treena Wu** is a European Commission Marie Curie Fellow at Maastricht University and a Haas Visiting Scholar at UC Berkeley. Her research interest focuses on developing countries in the following three areas i) family income and child outcomes ii) how families respond to shock (economic crises, civil conflict and natural disasters) and iii) the interaction between the demand side and supply side of human capital. She has worked for the United Nations Development Program in Asia in development project implementation and the US Department of Health and Human Services Head Start Program in program analysis.

## **PANEL 6 - PARENTING, GENDER AND FAMILY RELATIONS**

### **The Impact of Global Financial Crisis on the Family in Taiwan**

#### **Lih-Rong Wang**

Department of Social Work, National Taiwan University  
wanglr@ntu.edu.tw

#### **Fen-ling Chen**

Social and Policy Science Department, Yuan-ze University &  
Social Policy Research Center, National Taiwan University  
flchen@saturn.yzu.edu.tw

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In the periods from 1997 to 2004 and from 2008 to the 2009, Taiwan experienced mass unemployment and family sufferings. According to survey data conducted by the Social Policy Research Center at National Taiwan University, 2008 and 2009 separately, named SQSQ survey in Taiwan, most Taiwanese citizens' biggest worry is financial insecurity at the time of financial tsunami. Their anxiety in turn affects their willingness to have children or/and values of support their parents. The data show that victims of financial crises have a greater awareness of the necessity of providing intergenerational support, but they want to have fewer children. The data clearly present that economic hardship changes the traditional generational contract as well.

**Lih-Rong Lillian Wang** is a professor in the Department of Social Work, National Taiwan University, and currently serves as the Director of Social Policy Center, National Taiwan University (since 2006). Her major research area includes gender-based violence, gender and health, as well as gender and work. Her recent research area has been extended to social quality indicator in Asia, social quality between genders, and disaster and social work and social policy.

## PANEL 6 - PARENTING, GENDER AND FAMILY RELATIONS

### **‘Wicked’ Social Capital and the Resilience of Asian Families in Times of Economic Crises**

**Sam Wong**

Geographical and Environmental Studies, University of Bradford, UK

s.wong2@brad.ac.uk

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This paper develops the concept of “wicked social capital” and argues that using social capital to build the resilience of poor Asian families and communities in order to manage economic crisis may risk destroying their already-limited social networks and reinforce existing gender and power inequalities. Drawing on the experiences of the Far East Economic Crisis, we suggest that social capital was increased in some Asian countries, but it decreased in others during the crisis. Using poor Mainland Chinese migrants to cope with the economic crisis in Hong Kong in the late 1990s as a specific case study, it underlines the less-conscious and less-strategic motivations for civic engagement. It shows the dynamic, ad hoc and fragile nature of social capital which eludes institutional designs. The interplay between new and old institutions can create double victimisation for poor people. This chapter suggests that we need to build a more poverty- and gender-sensitive model of collective action by taking power dynamics and the complex nature of social relationships seriously before any interventions take place.

**Sam Wong** is a lecturer at the University of Bradford, UK. His research interests lie in poverty, participation and empowerment. Apart from Hong Kong and China, he has wide research experience in Bangladesh, India, Ghana and Ecuador. He has received research grants from the British Council, British Academy, EPSRC and NESTA. His work has been covered by the BBC’s Radio 4 and Yorkshire’s Sunrise Radio.

## **PANEL 7 - ECONOMIC STRESS FROM NATURAL DISASTERS**

### **Social Networks and Reduction of Risk in Disasters: An Example of Wenchuan Earthquake**

**Zhao Yandong**

Institute of Science, Technology and Society &  
Chinese Academy of Science and Technology for Development, China  
zhaoyd@casted.org.cn

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Social capital and social networks are considered as one of the most dependable resources in the aftermath of natural disasters. Based on the data from a rapid needs assessment survey after the May 12 earthquake in Sichuan, China, this paper described the role of social networks in the searching and rescuing the victims, providing information and support, and maintaining the mental health of the affected population in earthquake area. The theoretical and policy implications are also discussed.

**Zhao Yandong** is currently a professor and deputy director of Institute of Science, Technology and Society, Chinese Academy of Science and Technology for Development, Beijing, China. His research interests include social capital and social development, sociological studies of risk and natural disasters, regional innovation system, science, technology and society, social stratification and mobility etc.



## PANEL 7 - ECONOMIC STRESS FROM NATURAL DISASTERS

### From Tears to Peace: The Social Impacts of Religious Activities on Local Integration in the Post-Earthquake Area

#### **Meredian Alam**

Peace Generation Yogyakarta, Department of Sociology, Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia  
mere.alam@gmail.com

#### **Gavin Brent Sullivan**

School of Psychology and Psychiatry, Monash University, Australia  
sullivan@monash.edu.au

#### **Tri Hayuning Tyas**

Clinical Psychology Department, Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia  
greenfrog76@gmail.com

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In May 2006, 5,9 Richter scale of earthquake devastated hundreds of village in Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta Special Province Indonesia and traumatized many local people. Large amounts of financial aid for housing reconstruction sourced from governmental institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as well as personal donations were distributed to the affected people in the damaged areas. Because of the lack of coordination in the grassroots level between the community assessors and government officials, mismatched data on destruction levels and community expectations as well as norms regarding the fair distribution of aid generated intense emotion within community, reduced participation in communal work (*gotong-royong*), polarized groups, created distrust in local actors who managed the aid, and lead to social friction amongst the locals. This research attempts to delve deeper by analyzing the cultural meaning of events that occurred after earthquake (e.g., reconciliation), the role of religious actors in conveying Islamic teachings/practices, and delivery of the religious teachings and events for the social stability carried out in post-earthquake areas in Bantul.

**Meredian Alam** is currently doing his master's degree in Sociology and is also actively involved as trainer and facilitator for youth development in Peace Generation Yogyakarta, a community-based organization who works on disseminating peace values in the community. Before graduating from undergraduate course in Sociology department, Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia. He was appointed Supervisor for Yogyakarta Contingent in Youth Leadership for Indonesian Programme 2007 in Miami sponsored by U.S Department of State in collaboration with Florida International University, Miami, U.S., and American Corner of Gadjah Mada University.

## PANEL 7 - ECONOMIC STRESS FROM NATURAL DISASTERS

### Displacement and Changing Gender and Intergenerational Relations: Experience of Hot Mudflow Affected Families in East Java, Indonesia

**Achmad Uzair Fauzan**

Department of Research and Networking, Lafadl Initiatives Association, Indonesia

**Bosman Batubara**

Lafadl Initiatives Association, Indonesia

bosman2000id@yahoo.com

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This paper analyzes the impacts of Lapindo hot mudflow disaster in East Java on people's welfare dynamics at household level. It outlines the impacts on mud-driven displacement, livelihood, gender relations and intergenerational relations among the Kedungbendo villagers who lose their houses and not yet capable to buy a new one. Many of them are now living in one single roof by merging the former households or are now living with their relatives. Women are generally able to adapt themselves to new social environment, since there are more informal or communal women meetings. Among the mud affected households gender several new pattern of gender relations are emerged, including double burden for women. Loss of livelihood and shrinking of space indeed, have contributed to the making of new intergenerational problems. Those problems could be divided into two: *between adults* and *between adult and children*.

**Achmad Uzair Fauzan** is the head of Research and Networking department at Lafadl Initiatives Association. He was the leading researcher for this research project.

**Bosman Batubara** is a part-time researcher and community organizer at Lafadl Initiatives Association, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Field work for this paper was conducted in Porong, East Java, Indonesia by Lafadl Initiatives team (Coordinator: Achmad Uzair; researchers: Heru Prasetya, Bosman Batubara, and Yoseph Christophorus Kelik Prirahayanto; field assistants: Paring Waluyo Utomo and Cristiano Nizar) under the auspices of International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development (ISSBD) for travel scholarship to present the poster in Adelaide on July 2009.

## **PANEL 7 - ECONOMIC STRESS FROM NATURAL DISASTERS**

### **Rising Disasters: Challenges in Disaster Recovery and Risk Reduction**

#### **Emmanuel Raju**

Lund University Centre for Risk Assessment and Management (LUCRAM),  
Department of Fire Safety Engineering and Systems Safety, Lund University, Sweden  
emmanuelraju27@gmail.com

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This paper draws insights from the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004. It focuses on challenges in post-disaster reconstruction in the context of disaster policy. It uses primary data collected during field studies in the Tsunami affected region in India. Given the process of repeated learning after disasters, it calls for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction. This helps in reducing economic losses and various impacts during disasters. It also looks at the importance that states place on issues of vulnerability. It is important to address issues of development during disaster reconstruction. If recovery helps communities to build back better, resilience helps to face future hazards and minimize loss. When disasters are seen as isolated events, disaster response becomes more prominent than building a culture of preparedness.

**Emmanuel Raju** is currently a PhD candidate at Lund University Centre for Risk Assessment and Management (LUCRAM), Sweden. He graduated with a Masters in Disaster Management from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai, India. He was a visiting scholar at the Research program for Undergraduates at the Disaster Research Centre, University of Delaware, USA in 2008. His current works focuses on Disasters, Development and Disaster Risk Reduction.

## PANEL 8 - ECONOMIC STRESS AND MIGRATION

### Migration and Return Migration: Is it an Implication of Global Crisis? Insights from Nepal

**Bala Raju Nikku**

Kadambari Memorial College of Science and Management, Purbanchal University, Nepal

nikku21@yahoo.com

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The aim of this paper is to analyze the impacts of return migration on the household economy and marital relationships in families in Nepal. In addition the role of International organizations and national policy making bodies in addressing the issues of safe migration and return migration in Nepal. The research questions are: What are the social, economic and political impacts of the return migration at family level in Nepal? What are the trends of Migration and return Migration in the last five years in Nepal? What has been the relation between the rate of return migration and Global financial crisis? The main methodology used to unravel the policy complexities we are using 'politics of policy' framework to understand the migration policies and politics during their implementation on the ground.

**Bala Raju Nikku** is the head of the department of social work at Kadambari College, an affiliate of Purbanchal University, Nepal. He is currently a visiting scholar at the Faculty of Social Administration, Thammasat University, Thailand. Dr. Nikku serves as the member of South Asia working group of the International council on Social Welfare (ICSW) and also a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of *International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment*.

## PANEL 8 - ECONOMIC STRESS AND MIGRATION

### Youth Migration and Vulnerability: The Dynamics of Young Rural to Urban Migrants in Tangerang City, Banten Province, Indonesia

**Fina Itriyati**

Social and Political Sciences Faculty, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

itriya\_15@yahoo.com

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This study attempts to investigate youth rural urban migration vulnerability and social development in Tangerang, the major industrial city on the outskirts of Jakarta with more focused on youth migrants' strategies to cope with vulnerable conditions and to improve their quality of life during 2008 and 2009 when economic stress happened and directly impact on their lives in the city. More specifically, it is the aim of this research to examine how youth migration has powerful contribution in human capital development, quality of life as well as social positioning. The field research conducted both in Tangerang city and Tangerang district in 2008 and 2009 and as part of collaborative research on rural urban migration in Indonesia. This study uses data gathered from household urban survey as well as depth interview with some young migrants in urban slum areas in Tangerang. Young migrants in this study were more vulnerable than natives in terms of lacking parental presence, inappropriate living conditions, insufficient income and lack of social connectedness so that requires more program attentions.

**Fina Itriyati** is a lecturer and researcher at Sociology Department, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Besides serving as lecturer, she is also energetically involved in community development activities in Yogyakarta. Now, she is one of young researchers involved in rural urban migration longitudinal collaborative research project in Indonesia.

## PANEL 8 - ECONOMIC STRESS AND MIGRATION

### **Abandoned or Abandoning Men: Economic Stress and Gender Relations and Migration of Filipinas to Singapore**

**Janet M. Arnado**

Research Institute for Gender and Women, Inc., Philippines  
janetarnado@gmail.com

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While reasons for labour migration are varied, family economic stress is a common pattern among Filipina labour migrants. This paper examines the interaction of family economic stress and strained gender relations as motivating factors in Filipino women's decision to migrate to Singapore for domestic work. In particular, this paper analyzes how major life events (i.e., death of a husband, marital dissolution) and economic stress (i.e., loss of a breadwinner, poor agricultural productivity, and insufficient income) promote emotional distress and impact gender relations and well-being of the family. I draw my analysis from my ethnographic fieldwork in Singapore between 2006 and 2007, involving in-depth interviews with 43 Filipina domestic workers and participant observation of Filipina domestics in public places.

**Janet M. Arnado** is the founding president of Research Institute for Gender and Women, Inc. (RIGAW). Her work focused on Filipinos in Philippines, Singapore and Germany. Currently, her project deals with gendered uses of money among Philippine indigenous populations. Arnado has held teaching appointments at Virginia Tech, Xavier University, and Bukidnon State University. She has received grants from the Ford Foundation, Social Science Research Council, Virginia Tech, and University of California at Irvine, among others.

## PANEL 8 - ECONOMIC STRESS AND MIGRATION

### **Vulnerable Group and Economic Stress: A Case Study among Bangladeshi Immigrants in Assam, India**

**Juri Gogoi Konwar**

Department of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University, India

jgkon@tezu.ernet.in

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Family problem and adhering stresses are growing alarmingly in the present days. Family stress model and stress theories describe how economic conditions create major external contexts for families. One of the vulnerable groups in Assam (India) is the illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, who are mostly landless labourers and daily wage earners. They tend to suffer from stress related domestic violence, marital conflict, marriage breakdown, elopement and extra marital sex relation, child abuse, hostile parenting, and anti-social activities like robbery, killing, drug and women trafficking.

The present investigation was taken up among the Bangladeshi immigrants of the state who comprise a major part of the working poor. The impact of household economic stresses among the immigrants is tested with a data set built for random sampling with questionnaire whether financial well being and household income serve to elevate or reduce the risk of 'intimate partner violence' towards women, marriage failures, child abuse etc.

**Juri Gogoi Konwar** works as an Assistant Professor, Department of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University, Assam, India. Her area of specialization is Advance Social and Cultural Anthropology. Presently, as Principal Investigator, she has been pursuing an ICSSR funded research project entitled "A Study on Preparation-preservation and Nutritional Aspects of Indigenous Foods of Some Selected Ethnic Groups of Assam".

## CONVENORS AND CHAIRPERSONS

**Angelique Chan** is an Associate Professor jointly appointed at the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore, and the Program in Health Services and Systems Research at the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School. She is also the Director of the Tsao Foundation Ageing Research Initiative which focuses on research surrounding healthy aging, caregiving, and long term care financing. A/P Chan's main areas of interest are health issues among the aged and family and social support systems for the elderly. Her published works include academic papers and book chapters that focus on ageing in Singapore and comparative analysis of Singapore with other countries in the region.

**Chia Kee Seng** is the Professor and Head in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, National University of Singapore and also the Director, Centre for Molecular Epidemiology. He is also an Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology at the Karolinska Institute, Sweden. His current research focus is gene-environment interactions in chronic diseases (cancer, cardiovascular disease, myopia, and diabetes mellitus), record linkages, disease registries and health informatics.

**Gavin W. Jones** is Professor and Leader of the Research Cluster on the Changing Family in Asia in ARI, and has a joint appointment in the Department of Sociology. His earlier appointments were at the Australian National University for 28 years, including eight years heading the Demography Program, and prior to that, almost 10 years with the Population Council, a New York-based foundation, including advisory postings in Thailand and Indonesia. His main research interests are in demography and development in Southeast Asia, and in marriage and fertility trends and determinants in East and Southeast Asia. He is founding editor of the journal *Asian Population Studies*.

**Gregory K. Clancey** graduated from the MIT Science, Technology & Society Program in 1998 and has since been teaching Japanese History and the History of Science and Technology at the National University of Singapore. Since 2006, he has also been Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, where one of his priorities has been to build a Science, Technology & Society Research Cluster.

**Ho Kong Chong** is co-author of *City-States in the Global Economy: Industrial Restructuring in Hong Kong and Singapore* (Westview, 1997) and *Youth.sg: State of Youth in Singapore*, (National Youth Council, 2006). He is currently working on the following survey projects: International Student Migration in East Asia (MOE Tier 2 Grant), Social Attitudes of Singaporeans (with MCYS), National Youth Council Youth Survey 2010 and the High Density Thresholds Survey (with the Centre for Sustainable Asian Cities).

**Irene Y.H. Ng** is an Assistant Professor of Social Work in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore. Her research areas include poverty and inequality, intergenerational mobility, youth crime, and social welfare policy. Currently, she is Principal Investigator of a research project with the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports to evaluate the Work Support programme.

**Lai Ah Eng** is senior research fellow at Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. Trained in economics (Universiti Sains Malaysia), development studies (Sussex) and social anthropology (Cambridge), her research fields are in migration and diversity; multiculturalism, ethnicity and religion; family and gender; and local histories and heritages. Her present projects include migration and diversity in Asia, family transformation and resilience in Asia, and life histories of immigrant and local women in Singapore.

**W. Jean Yeung** is a Professor at the Department of Sociology and the Asia Research Institute in the National University of Singapore. Professor Yeung is affiliated with the China Center for Economic Research in Peking University, the National Poverty Center of the School of Public Policy and the Institute for Social Research in the University of Michigan. Her current research and teaching focus on intergenerational studies, family and children's well-being and policies, social inequality, and China's socioeconomic and demographic transition.



**Yap Mui Teng** is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies, where she leads research in the area of Demography and Family. Her current research interests include policy responses to low fertility in Singapore and elsewhere, policies on the aged, migration policies, and poverty alleviation policies. She worked as a statistician at the Population Planning Unit, Ministry of Health, before joining IPS in 1989.

# LIST OF SPEAKERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

No.	Name	Organization / Affiliation	Email Address
1.	Puzziawati Ab Ghani	Dept of Statistics, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia	puzzikamel@gmail.com
2.	Achmad Uzair Fauzan	Dept of Research and Networking, Lafadl Initiatives Association, Indonesia	
3.	Alex E. Y. Lee	Dept of Social Work, National University of Singapore	swkleea@nus.edu.sg
4.	Angelique Chan	Dept of Sociology & Duke NUS Graduate Medical School, National University of Singapore	socchana@nus.edu.sg
5.	Anu Rammohan	Dept of Economics, University of Western Australia	anu.rammohan@uwa.edu.au
6.	Arnaud Dupuy	Maastricht University, The Netherlands	a.dupuy@roa.unimaas.nl
7.	Bala Raju Nikku	Kadambari Memorial College of Science and Management, Purbanchal University, Nepal	nikku21@yahoo.com
8.	Bondan Sikoki	Survey Meter, Indonesia	bsikoki@gmail.com
9.	Bosman Batubara	Association of Lafadl Initiatives, Indonesia	bosman2000id@yahoo.com
10.	Bussarawan Teerawichitchainan	School of Social Sciences, Singapore Management University	bteerawichit@smu.edu.sg
11.	Chang-Keun Han	Dept of Social Work, National University of Singapore	swkhck@nus.edu.sg
12.	Cheryl Charmain Arnold	Centre for English Language Communications, National University of Singapore	arnold.cher@gmail.com
13.	Chia Kee Seng	Dept of Epidemiology & Public Health, National University of Singapore	phcks@nus.edu.sg
14.	Cindy Godden	Australian National University, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore	cindy.godden@anu.edu.au
15.	David Rothwell	Dept of Social Work, National University of Singapore	swkdwr@nus.edu.sg
16.	Dejana Popic	UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, Thailand	dpopic@unicef.org
17.	Doo-Sub Kim	Dept of Sociology, Hanyang University, Korea	duskim@hanyang.ac.kr
18.	Elisabetta Magnani	School of Economics, University of New South Wales, Australia	e.magnani@unsw.edu.au
19.	Elizabeth Frankenberg	Public Policy Studies and Sociology, Duke University, USA	e.frankenberg@duke.edu
20.	Emmanuel Raju	Lund University Centre for Risk Assessment and Management (LUCRAM), Dept of Fire Safety Engineering & Systems Safety, Lund University, Sweden	emmanuelraju27@gmail.com
21.	Falendra Kumar Sudan	University of Jammu, India	fk_sud@rediffmail.com
22.	Fei Xu	China Centre for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research, Peking University, China	xufei0505@hotmail.com
23.	Fen-ling Chen	Social and Policy Science Dept, Yuan-ze University & Social Policy Research Center, National Taiwan University	flchen@saturn.yzu.edu.tw
24.	Festo Kavishe	Social Policy and Economic Analysis, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, Thailand	fkavishe@unicef.org
25.	Fina Itriya	Social and Political Sciences Faculty, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia	itriya_15@yahoo.com

			Email Address
26.	Fleur Thomése	Faculty of Social Sciences, Free University Amsterdam, The Netherlands	
27.	Gang Chen	Centre for Health Economics, Faculty of Business and Economics, Monash University, Australia	gche32@stu.monash.edu.au ; chengang1029@gmail.com
28.	Gavin Brent Sullivan	School of Psychology and Psychiatry, Monash University, Australia	sullivan@monash.edu.au
29.	Gavin W. Jones	Asia Research Institute & Dept of Sociology, National University of Singapore	arigwj@nus.edu.sg
30.	Gordon G. Liu	Dept of Applied Economics, Peking University, China	gordon@gsm.pku.edu.cn
31.	Greg J. Duncan	Dept of Education, University of California at Irvine, USA	gduncan@uci.edu
32.	Gregory K. Clancey	Asia Research of Institute & Dept of History, National University of Singapore	hisgkc@nus.edu.sg
33.	Guo Wei	Institute of Population Research, Peking University, China	pku.guowei@gmail.com ; guowei2008@pku.edu.cn
34.	Ho Kong Chong	Dept of Sociology, National University of Singapore	sochokc@nus.edu.sg
35.	Ho Kong Weng	Division of Economics, Nanyang Technological University	kwho@ntu.edu.sg
36.	Irene Y.H. Ng	Dept of Social Work, National University of Singapore	swknyhi@nus.edu.sg
37.	Janet M. Arnado	Research Institute for Gender and Women, Inc., Philippines	janetarnado@gmail.com
38.	Judith B. Borja	Office of Population Studies Foundation, University of San Carlos, Philippines	judithborja@gmail.com
39.	Juri Gogoi Konwar	Dept of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University, India	jgkon@tezu.ernet.in
40.	Katherine Magnuson	University of Wisconsin, USA	kmagnuson@wisc.edu
41.	Kattika Thanakwang	Boromarajonnani College of Nursing, Nopparat Vajira, Bangkok, Thailand	kattika99@yahoo.com
42.	Kim Korinek	Dept of Sociology, University of Utah, USA	kim.korinek@soc.utah.edu
43.	Lai Ah Eng	Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore	arilae@nus.edu.sg
44.	Lex Borghans	Maastricht University, The Netherlands	lex.borghans@maastrichtuniversity.nl
45.	Lih-Rong Wang	Dept of Social Work, National Taiwan University	wanglr@ntu.edu.tw
46.	Linda S. Adair	Dept of Nutrition, University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill, USA	linda_adair@unc.edu
47.	Mahesh Patel	UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, Thailand	mpatel@unicef.org
48.	Martin Evans	Dept of Social Policy and Social Work, University of Oxford, UK	martin.evans@socres.ox.ac.uk
49.	Meredian Alam	Peace Generation & Dept of Sociology, Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia	mere.alam@gmail.com
50.	Ngiam Tee Liang	Dept of Social Work, National University of Singapore	swkntl@nus.edu.sg
51.	Nguyen Tuan Anh	Faculty of Sociology, Vietnam National University, Hanoi	anhxhh@gmail.com
52.	Noeleen Heyzer	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Bangkok	heyzer@un.org

No.			Email Address
53.	Oscar Salemin	Faculty of Social Sciences, Free University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands	
54.	Phua Kai Hong	Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore	spppkh@nus.edu.sg
55.	Sam Wong	Geographical and Environmental Studies, University of Bradford, UK	s.wong2@brad.ac.uk;
56.	Sheila Kamerman	School of Social Work, Columbia University, USA	sbk2@columbia.edu
57.	Shirley Gatenio-Gabel	Graduate School of Social Service, Fordham University, USA	gateniogabe@fordham.edu
58.	Tharmalingam Nesam	Dept of Social Work, National University of Singapore	swktn@nus.edu.sg
59.	Toh Mun Heng	NUS Business School, National University of Singapore	biztohmh@nus.edu.sg
60.	Treena Wu	Maastricht University, The Netherlands & Haas UC Berkeley, USA	treena_wu@haas.berkeley.edu
61.	Tri Hayuning Tyas	Clinical Psychology Dept, Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia	greenfrog76@gmail.com
62.	W. Jean Yeung	Asia Research Institute & Dept of Sociology, National University of Singapore	ariywj@nus.edu.sg
63.	Wayan Suriastini	Survey Meter, Indonesia	suriastini@gmail.com
64.	Yap Mui Teng	Institute of Policy Studies, National University of Singapore	yap.muiteng@nus.edu.sg
65.	Yik Koon Teh	Faculty of Defence Studies and Management, National Defence University of Malaysia	ykteh11@yahoo.com
66.	Zeeshan Shoki	PAK Education Society/Pakistan Development Network, Pakistan	zeeshanshoki@gmail.com; zeeshan_shoki@yahoo.com
67.	Zhang Yanxia	Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore	arizyx@nus.edu.sg
68.	Zhao Yandong	Institute of Science, Technology and Society, Chinese Academy of Science and Technology for Development, China	zhaoyd@casted.org.cn
69.	Zhenghua Xu	Institution of Population Research, Peking University, China	xuzhenhua521@gmail.com
70.	Zhong Zhao	School of Labor and Human Resources, Renmin University of China	mr.zhong.zhao@gmail.com

**ASIA RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

NUS Bukit Timah Campus

469A Tower Block, #10-10, Bukit Timah Road, Singapore 259770

Tel: (65) 6516 3810 Fax: (65) 6779 1428

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