MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT
No one knows exactly how many international migrants and refugees there are in the world. The UN puts the number of people living outside their countries of birth at close to 200 million, about 3 percent of the world’s population. This issue of SIPA News examines diverse aspects of this global phenomenon: why people move, the often dangerous journeys they undertake, the tragedies as well as the triumphs they experience as they struggle to make their way in new places, and the policies that could reduce their suffering and improve their lives. SIPA students and faculty are deeply engaged in rigorous study of migration and displacement as interns, as members of capstone consultancy workshops, and as alumni in hands-on projects to mitigate the human costs.

The recent earthquakes in Haiti and Chile caused widespread death, destruction, and displacement. The earthquake struck Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on the afternoon of January 12. Just two minutes earlier, SIPA Professor Elisabeth Lindenmayer and six SIPA students had left the seven-story UN headquarters building, which was reduced to rubble. The group endured a harrowing night helping survivors in the driveway outside the relatively undamaged UN Development Programme compound. In the morning, the UN transported the group to its base near the airport, where they spent the next two days working with doctors and nurses from Partners in Health to care for seriously injured victims. They were then evacuated to Santo Domingo on a UN helicopter filled with the injured. The SIPA group had gone to Haiti to study the economic aspects of the UN peacekeeping mission, specifically the possible role of private-public partnerships in promoting economic growth. In the ensuing weeks, they collected and sent medical supplies and supported efforts to raise funds for reconstruction.

SIPA students were also involved in aiding victims of the Chilean earthquake on February 27. As soon as the earthquake struck, SIPA students realized they could help through Ushahidi, an ad hoc organization that was developed to allow citizen journalists to map reports of postelection violence and peace efforts in Kenya, using information submitted on the Web. The Ushahidi-Chile Situation Room was launched, and within 48 hours, 75 SIPA students were trained to monitor and map reports. They took information on the location and condition of victims from Chilean radio broadcasts, online and television media reports, and from SMS, phone, e-mail, Twitter, and Facebook messages sent by the public. The SIPA volunteers identified GPS coordinates for each report and then geo-tagged them on the easy-to-read Ushahidi map.

SIPA’s first year (2009–10) as an independent school within Columbia University achieved some notable results. Students entering in the fall found a new, more focused curriculum. New bylaws transformed the governing structure of the School. A new, independent budgeting process took shape. Eight new faculty members arrived to strengthen the School’s course offerings and research profile. First-ever academic reviews of two SIPA centers were undertaken (the Picker Center for Executive Education and the Center for International Conflict Resolution). A strategic planning process was completed. At the end of the year, SIPA celebrated the 50th anniversary of its International Fellows Program by announcing two gifts totaling $5 million that will make it possible to restore the program to its former glory when it is formally relaunched in the fall of 2011.

Sincerely,
John H. Coatsworth
Dean, Professor of History and International and Public Affairs
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Around 5,000 Tamil protestors shout slogans and carry banners as they participate in a demonstration in Geneva on August 10, 1998. The demonstrators protested against what they say is suppression of Tamils in Sri Lanka and against asylum seekers being turned down.
Dehydrated, but declining medical treatment, Jacob Samuel Christian, 29, died on December 23, 2009, from a stomach infection after refusing to disembark from an Australia-bound vessel in the port of Merak, Indonesia. Christian and 255 other Tamil asylum seekers from Sri Lanka chose to remain on the Jaya Lestari after it broke down in Indonesian waters off the coast of Java in October 2009. As of March 31, 2010, they remain on board, with no resolution in sight.
Like other asylum seekers fleeing war-ravaged states, the Tamils of the Jaya Lestari claim persecution at the hands of Sri Lanka’s Sinhalese majority. They say they paid smugglers as much as $20,000 per person with the hope of reaching Australian waters to have their asylum cases heard. The Tamils fear, however, that if they accept the offer of the Indonesian authorities and come ashore, they may be locked in detention centers, with no guarantee that their cases will be reviewed. Since Indonesia is not party to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the government has no legal obligation to protect asylum seekers—those migrants applying for refugee status—found in Indonesian territory.

The Tamils’ concerns are not without merit. Human Rights Watch reports that Indonesian authorities have blocked asylum seekers access to the offices of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the past. The UNHCR is charged with weighing the persecution claims and determining the fate of thousands of asylum seekers around the world each year.

The Pacific Solution

“We’ve golden soil and wealth for toil. Our home is girt by sea.”

These lyrics from Australia’s national anthem succinctly summarize both the challenges and advantages Australia has in managing migration. In one instance, Australia’s regional neighbors perceive the country as a land rife with opportunity.

In another, by virtue of its isolated geography, Australia is able to more effectively deter asylum seekers than any other country in the world.

During his election campaign in 2001, former Australian Prime Minister John Howard said his government, “will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come.” Howard’s government was responsible for enacting the “Pacific Solution” policy that excised more than 4,000 Australian islands from Australia’s immigration zone, effectively allowing Australia to circumvent its obligations under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. The policy led to the processing of asylum seekers and other irregular migrants—those migrants travelling without proper documentation—in detention centers in states outside Australian jurisdiction around the Asia-Pacific region, where refugee law was not necessarily valid.

According to Edward Santow, a law professor at the University of New South Wales, Australia has long encouraged immigration, with one key caveat outlined in the White Australia Policy. This policy “encouraged white only migration to Australia,” Santow says. “While the policy was abandoned in the 1970s, its legacy lingers in xenophobia directed especially against people from Asia, the Middle East and Africa... There is a real fear on the part of a segment of the Australian community that Australia might be turned into a country of Asia.”

While some of the racial tension lingers in a large segment of Australian society, Santow says insecurities of the post–Sept. 11 world have been used to justify draconian measures in dealing with those seeking asylum in Australia. “Many politicians justify the strict migration policy by claiming that if immigration restrictions are too lax, and there was a terrorist attack committed by an irregular migrant on Australian soil, the backlash against immigrant communities in the country could be extremely damaging.”

The Politics of Immigration

While the “Pacific Solution” reduced the number of migrants washing up on Australia’s shores, the program drew fire from numerous human rights organizations. A 2002 Human Rights Watch report claimed that in Australia “detainees are held in prison-like conditions” and that mandatory detention of asylum seekers “constitutes a penalty because it is an unnecessary restriction upon the rights of refugees.”

In 2008, under pressure to reform, newly elected Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd ended the “Pacific Solution,” closing all of the detention centers Australia had been operating outside its territorial boundaries. Although the excised territory still remains, Australia’s Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) favors bilateral and multilateral approaches to target and catch migrant smugglers. The government committed US$586 million to a comprehensive police strategy for combating smuggling in 2009 and 2010. During the same period, DIAC’s total
budget for refugee and humanitarian assistance was a paltry $24.4 million, an inadequate sum given the needs of refugees in the region, experts say.

According to a DIAC spokesman interviewed for this article, “more boats have been prevented from departing for Australia than have arrived in our waters. Since September 2008, authorities in Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia have disrupted more than 130 ventures involving more than 3,000 people.” In spite of DIAC’s recent successes, opposition politicians have painted the Rudd government as weak on immigration for lifting the “Pacific Solution,” which they claim has led to an increase in boats destined for Australia.

While not explicitly mentioning lingering xenophobia in the Australian electorate, DIAC still works to improve the public’s perception of immigration at home. In spite of arranging events such as “Harmony Day,” the DIAC spokesman admitted that improving public opinion is often challenging. “A particular bugbear of ours is the misconception that refugees are paid more in welfare benefits than other Australians,” he said.

With all of the concern surrounding Australian immigration policy, it is easy to forget that this Pacific island nation sees much smaller inflows of irregular migrants and asylum seekers than many other countries. For example, in 2008 Australia handled 161 irregular migrants by boat while Italy absorbed 36,952 irregular migrants arriving by boat in the same year.

The Need for Control

In a Feb. 15, 2010, interview with Australia’s ABC News, Indonesia’s Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa was optimistic about the way forward and the “need to bring on board in a more systematic…and predictable way the participation of countries of origin, transit, and destination so that [this] doesn’t simply become an Australia-Indonesia issue.”

By virtue of its isolated geography, Australia is able to more effectively deter asylum seekers than any other country in the world.

Bill Frelick, refugee policy director at Human Rights Watch, concurs that better cooperation is needed. “Because there is no regional [refugee protection] instrument, there is a tendency to treat refugees on an ad hoc basis that has led to politicization of the refugee issue,” he says. He stressed that the international community must recognize the equitable responsibility of different countries’ governments “to provide due process to migrants.”

Australian journalist David Marr has criticized the government’s approach to preventing migrant smuggling. Marr believes that detaining migrants does little to deter the leaders of smuggling networks who shield themselves from prosecution by employing Indonesian fishermen—who have little understanding of the legal issues of their boss’s trade—to pilot their boats. “For Australian politicians, the key to their success is showing … the public that they’re in control,” Marr says. “The public mostly forgets that since 1976 there have been 23,000 arrivals by boat, while in the same period, the Australian government has accepted 3.5 million immigrants, a significant burden for a country of 21 million.”

In spite of the inordinate amount of money spent on preventing migrant smuggling, Marr is not optimistic about changing the public’s perception of asylum seekers, which he says is dependent on the will of Australia’s political parties: “If they wish to do it, they can create change. But no one will ever challenge the status quo.”

Andrew Bilo is a first-year Master of International Affairs student concentrating in Urban and Social Policy and is chair of SIPA’s Migration Working Group. Before SIPA, he worked for five years in Vietnam combating human trafficking and other forms of irregular migration.
Leaving the Sundarbans: Environmental Migration in South Asia

BY LAUREN D. KLEIN

Flood-affected villagers run to collect food packets and relief supplies dropped from an Indian Air Force helicopter in the area hit by cyclones on Patharpatima Island in the Sundarbans delta, about 62 miles south of Kolkata on May 27, 2009.
Dilip Das once looked forward to the monsoon season when heavy rains replenished his rice paddy fields on the Sundarban Islands off the northeastern coast of India, ensuring a healthy harvest in the fall. Now every time the clouds darken, he wonders if this will be the storm that renders his family homeless.

For more than six years Das, 36, has watched the rain and sea that once nurtured his livelihood consume his land on Ghoramara Island. The island is part of the Sundarban’s intricate delta system in the Bay of Bengal that scientists say is under threat from a rising sea level that is eating away at the land.

Every time the sea swallows another chunk of Ghoramara, Das and his family move a few more meters inland. They build another embankment and hope this time it will be enough to keep the elements at bay.

More than likely, however, Das and many of Ghoramara’s inhabitants will join a growing number of environmental migrants, according to Sugata Hazra, an oceanographer at Jadavpur University in Kolkata, India. Hazra has studied the rising sea levels around Ghoramara and the many islands making up India’s Sundarban islands. He found that the land erosion has displaced about 6,000 people in the last 30 years. If the seas continue to rise at the present rate, 70,000 more residents will join the migrants between 2020 and 2030, he said. The forced migration from the Sundarban Islands is not unique. Estimates for displaced environmental migrants by the year 2050 range from 50 million, according to the UN University’s Institute for Environment and Human Security, to 200 million, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

While weather accounts for part of
SIPA NEWS

In 2007, UNESCO listed the Sundarbans as one of 26 World Heritage sites threatened by human-induced climate change. The biodiverse islands are home to the largest mangrove forest in the world and a dwindling Royal Bengal tiger population.

Dilip Das, however, has never owned a gasoline-powered vehicle or sprayed an aerosol can; climate change is a concept he knows little about. What he does know is that the storms hitting his home may be less frequent, but they have become more severe—a fact substantiated by Hazra’s 2001 study.

“Every time a cyclone comes, it rains, [and] we worry,” Das said back in 2007. “We know that at any time this could be the end.”

Standing on the edge of what was once his fertile land, capable of producing enough food for his 11-member family, he looked out to a never-ending horizon and pointed to a mark in the sea about 200 meters from the cliff.

“There, that was my home, and here was my pond,” Das said, referring to a muddy ditch behind him that disappears during high tide.

Das has moved his family five times due to land eroding storms and rising sea levels. After the most recent surge Das could no longer find land on the island to farm. He said there is barely room for a day laborer building embankments or fishing. He earns about US$1 a day, if he is lucky.

Life was always hard, he noted, but at least he owned land. With little savings or alternative skills to earn income, Das said he is relying on and waiting for the Indian government to help him relocate.

“Environmental refugees have lost everything,” Rabab Fatima, the South Asia representative of the IOM told the New York Times in a January 2010 article. “They don’t have the money to make a big move. They move to the next village, the next town and eventually to a city.”

Recognizing this new pattern of forced migration, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2007 began supporting the development of National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPA), which aim to help developing countries identify ways to adapt to climate change and access funds to implement plans.

Substantial funding came through in December 2009 at the Copenhagen Climate Summit. Developed nations pledged $100 billion to help countries such as India manage the consequences of climate change. Smaller amounts of aid were pledged for the next few years, but the bulk of the $100 billion is not expected to begin flowing until 2020.

Beyond pledging money, other experts are pushing the United Nations to recognize the term “environmental refugees” as a way of creating a support mechanism for these migrants. Since they are not legally covered by the terms “refugee” or “asylum seeker,” but arguably do need protection and assistance, as they often migrate against their will and with minimal resources.

This tactic has proven quite controversial, however. Opponents of the “environmental refugee” term argue that classifying environmental migrants as refugees would lead to a deterioration of the current protection for more traditional, “convention refugees” and allow governments to reduce their responsibilities even further.

While these debates continue, vulnerable populations are literally left out in the cold.

Eight years ago, after one particularly brutal night of rain, Badal Jana, 29, made the reluctant but necessary shift from Gharamara to another Sundarban island.

“You could not imagine the rain,” Jana said. “In just a few moments, everything was gone.”

Farmland, livestock, and some of their only worldly possessions, such as posters of popular Bollywood stars, were washed away in one sleepless night, he said.

Jana left with 340 families and relocated to Sagar, another island in the Sundarbans where they set up a colony. The Indian government allocated enough money for a house for each family, many only one- or two-room homes. Like Das, Jana works as a laborer but says he only finds work about 15 days out of the month and often faces competition with the local inhabitants of Sagar.

“They don’t like us here,” Jana said about the native residents of Sagar. “They say we are taking their land.”

And Sagar is sinking too, which only adds to Jana’s worries about his future on that land. About 30 square kilometers have been submerged already, according to Hazra’s study.

Life for Jana and his children remains precarious. He may have a house, but he does not have a home, he said.

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Iraqis in Exile:
SAVING A GENERATION OF SCHOLARS

By Caroline Stauffer

Following the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, a man in Baghdad began placing a taxicab sign on the roof of his car and left home at a different time each day, always taking a different route to work. Though he dressed in the simple clothes of a day laborer, the man was a dean of dentistry at a local university. He had no fixed schedule and lived in constant fear of being attacked. Today he lives abroad, having completed a two-year academic fellowship sponsored by the Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund.
Vicious and targeted assaults against scholars remaining in Iraq continue, particularly in the aftermath of Iraq's 2010 parliamentary elections. Iraqis in exile worry about the future of a country that lacks academic leadership, but many scholars abroad feel lucky even to be alive.

The Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund, which has helped threatened scholars from around the world continue their work in safety since 2002, seeks to mitigate the damage, drawing on the historical experience of the New York-based Institute of International Education (IIE), founded in 1919.

Henry G. Jarecki, chairman of IIE's Scholar Rescue Fund, received a simple letter from Iraq's Minister of Higher Education Abid Al-Ajeeli in 2007: "Our scholars are being killed," he wrote. "Please save them." In response, IIE's Scholar Rescue Fund launched a separate Iraq initiative, supported by organizations such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the U.S. State Department. Nearly 200 Iraqi scholars have been placed on two-year academic fellowships, and half of the total requests for assistance submitted to IIE's Scholar Rescue Fund have come from Iraq.

The ongoing persecution of academics is an attempt to, "get rid of the intelligentsia," Jarecki said. "Scholars are more secular in their interests and open to new ideas. They are persecuted by various groups."

According to BRussels Tribunal, a group that campaigned against the U.S. invasion, there were at least 300 documented cases of scholar assassinations in Iraq between 2003 and 2007. Reports from inside the country are far higher.

"Various Iraqi study centers gave shocking figures on this tragedy by listing more than 1,500 university professors and lecturers who were assassinated between 2005 and 2007," said Ghaleb A. Tawfeeq al Wiswasee, an Iraqi journalist currently living in Amman.

Al Wiswasee said many Iraqi professors, lecturers, and doctors have managed to get jobs in Jordan and Syria because of the strong reputation of Iraqi professionals. "They have been mixed and merged with the society, where they are accepted and respected," he said.

IIE's Scholar Rescue Fund's Iraqi scholars represent all of Iraq's ethnicities and religions, and 20 percent are women. Seventy percent are scholars of engineering, science, or medicine. Though he anticipated receiving more applications from political scientists, Jarecki believes these percentages reflect the composition of Iraq's professorate under Saddam Hussein. Most of the scholars in Jordan have temporary resident status sponsored by universities, although a handful have United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) status.

Besides sponsoring fellowships, IIE's Scholar Rescue Fund also holds academic trainings for the scholars. Columbia University Lecturer in Sociology Christopher Weiss traveled to Amman in January for one such training session at the Columbia University Middle East Research Center. He gave a presentation on the structure of higher education systems and arranged focus groups so the scholars could discuss rebuilding Iraq's higher education system.

"It was hard for us not to feel aware that these scholars were in exile now—at least to some degree because of the American-led war and occupation," Weiss said. "We never felt any animosity or ill will from the scholars—none. But we did think a lot
about how a couple of younger American scholars would appear to this audience."

Funding and training, however, don’t eliminate the struggle of leaving home and adapting to life in exile. Many scholars were greatly constrained by decades of war and state-imposed travel restrictions and struggle with post-traumatic stress and physical ailments. “Settling into their academic responsibilities is a heavy burden, but one which we have seen again and again handled with strength and determination to create opportunities for their families and themselves as well as for the future of Iraq,” Miller said.

Many nonacademics have also fled the violence; by the end of 2009, 300,000 Iraqis had registered with the UNHCR, primarily in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. But the absence of intellectual leadership is sorely noticed inside Iraq. According to Al Wiswasee, the doctors now working in Baghdad’s hospitals are recent graduates with little work experience, and the city’s intellectuals and professors are either dead or teaching in Jordanian and Syrian universities. "These two sectors, education and medical care, are the pillars of developing any society,” he said. "If you lose both of them, then there is no chance of advancement and development, at least for another decade."

IIE’s Scholar Rescue Fund aims to stop this development paralysis by helping its scholars maintain links with faculty and students at home and encouraging an eventual return. To date, three scholars have returned and two have been placed on fellowships in the semi-autonomous Kurdish region of Iraq, but another 22 have accepted opportunities to stay abroad after completing their fellowships.

Some professors on fellowship advise their PhD and master’s students in Iraq from abroad.

“These two sectors, education and medical care, are the pillars of developing any society. If you lose both of them, then there is no chance of advancement and development, at least for another decade.”

—GAHLEB A. TAWFEEQ AL WISWASEE

The IIE’s Iraq Scholar Rescue Project also started an E-lecture program in 2008, filming lectures by Iraqi professors from safe locations outside the country that are shown at universities inside Iraq.

But considering that the scholars have received death threats, were kidnapped, or witnessed the murders of family members, facing the realities of their homeland can just be too traumatic. "Some are engaged in Iraq," Jarecki said. "Others have had to turn their backs.”

According to Miller, scholars in Iraq were targeted in the weeks before and after the March voting in Baghdad, including two scholars killed, two wounded, and a medical professor who was stabbed to death in his house. Scholars reportedly voted from Jordan, Syria, the U.S., and the UK.

Al Wiswasee does not believe the return of Iraq’s intellectuals and doctors is likely in the foreseeable future. "Very few of them have any remorse for leaving the country or think of going back unless things change for the better and unless they receive real and serious assurances from the new government that their lives and rights will be seriously protected," he said.

Though the UNHCR is prepared to support the return to Iraq of up to 5,000 refugees from Jordan in 2010, a survey conducted in 2009 showed that the majority of refugees there had no immediate plans to return home. In a February report, the agency anticipated 700 additional Iraqis registering with the UNHCR in each month of 2010 in Jordan alone.

Even when the violence does relent in Iraq some day, IIE knows from experience that academics around the world will face persecution for as long as humanity engages in despotism and war. Chairman Jarecki is keenly aware of this unrelenting need for assistance, having fled Nazi Germany as a child.

IIE recently reviewed its effort to rescue Spanish scholars in 1939. “We realized the situation could have been Iraq today,” said Daniela Kist, IIE vice president for strategic development and co-author of the book Scholar Rescue in the Modern World. ‘It’s happened before, and it will happen again.”

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Rethinking the Political Implications of Immigration Reform

BY RODOLFO O. DE LA GARZA
The American immigration system's failure to deal with undocumented migration has created a policy crisis. The issue is being framed today essentially as it has been previously: undocumented immigration needs to be controlled, those here need a pathway to citizenship, and, since 2001, there has been an increasing need to secure the nation's borders. All of these are clearly addressed in the principal current reform proposals introduced by Chicago Democratic Congressman Luis Gutierrez and Senators Charles Schumer (D-NY) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC). However, these initiatives not only offer little that is new, but they also fail to consider three major facets of the issue: the continued demand for education and other services in languages other than English, rapid unpredictable population growth, and the need for foreign governments to participate in managing immigration flows. Consequently, even if reform were to be enacted, which is most unlikely in view of how politicized the issue has become, immigration would remain a major political problem.

Effecting meaningful progress requires changing how we think about immigration. We should begin by conceptualizing immigration issues in terms of four dimensions: the economic, the demographic, the cultural, and the international. The economic is the most easily managed. Despite claims that immigrants displace American workers and lower wages, extensive empirical research shows that immigrants, whether legal or undocumented, have minimal impact on wages, supply low cost workers, take jobs that go unclaimed, start businesses, and through consumption, sales, and social security taxes, are arguably a boon to the economy. Studies on political issues are less developed and are the focus of my reform proposal.

The political issues are fueled by the impact that immigration has on the size and composition of the U.S. population, on the nation's culture, and on the behavior of the nation states whose citizens are emigrating in large numbers. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 allowed millions of undocumented immigrants to legalize their status but had virtually no impact on limiting future immigration. The problem, therefore, is back on the national agenda, and these new proposals virtually ignore future immigration flows. As the late Samuel Huntington's anti-immigrant screed Who Are We? evidences, high rates of immigration give rise to unfounded fears that Spanish (and other languages) will displace English as the national language and that immigrant values will undermine American society.

These proposals also ignore the incentives sending states currently have to generate emigration and make no mention of the need to involve them in finding solutions to the problem. Given that immigration affects sending as well as receiving states and that nothing can be accomplished without the participation of the former, this is a major oversight.

To get beyond these obstacles, I propose the following:

First, family-based legal immigration must remain the foundation of our immigration policy.

Second, to reduce continued population growth spurred by undocumented immigration, a "ticket" system should be established that will be open only to individuals who are least 18. These individuals will then enjoy the same employment rights as citizens and legal resident aliens (LRAs). Employers will be obligated to certify workers using either existing documents that citizens and LRAs already possess, such as a U.S. birth certificate, a valid Social Security card or passport, proof of LRA status, or a ticket. This system will not require a national identity card nor will citizens or LRAs be required to obtain any documents they do not already have. Employers will certify workers by processing any of these existing documents. Their failure to comply with the system will result in substantial fines, and repeat violators will face jail sentences.

Effecting meaningful progress requires changing how we think about immigration.

The price of tickets will be less than the cost charged by illegal traffickers, which can vary from $3,000 for Mexicans to more than $20,000 for Chinese. This will not only undercut human smugglers, but it will also reduce what undocumented immigrants have to pay to come to this country. Tickets will be non-duplicable and issued by U.S. consulates abroad. Applicants will be selected by a lottery system developed in accord with sending countries. When identified, non-ticket holders will be returned to their countries of origin through repatriation systems developed in accord with sending countries.

Tickets will be allocated to sending states based on a formula combining U.S. national interests and a foreign state's willingness to cooperate in developing the lottery system and repatriation programs. Additionally, the number of tickets allocated to states will be affected by the extent to which sending states provide social services and are politically accountable to their citizens. As the high rates of emigration from Cuba, Mexico, and Guatemala illustrate, a state's failure to be politically accountable and responsive to the needs of its citizens fuels massive emigration. Failure to require states to change their internal policies to benefit their populations is tantamount to encouraging states to use emigration as a political safety valve and must be stopped. The formula for allocating tickets will also consider internal conditions that may be beyond the control of the state, such as the January 12 earthquake that struck Haiti. Finally, demand for tickets in sending countries will also reflect the needs of the American labor market. Currently, for example, demand would be lower than it was in the 1990s.

The objective of this article has been to propose a new approach to immigration reform. If new policies are to be effective, they must address the issues raised here. Otherwise, engaging in immigration reform debate will do little more than add to the already toxic quality of national politics.

Rodolfo O. de la Garza is Eaton Professor of Administrative Law and Municipal Science in Columbia’s Political Science Department and School of International and Public Affairs.
North Koreans on the Move:
The Failure of International Policies

By Regina Jun

Testimonies and images of malnourished or tortured North Korean refugees occasionally surface in the international media. “Staying in North Korea meant that I would simply be waiting to die,” Hong Song-man said in a story published by the Tokyo-based nongovernmental organization Life Funds for North Korean Refugees. “I had no choice but [to] repeatedly return to China for the food to survive.” When the mainstream press covers North Korea, the focus is more often on a nuclear arms threat or rumors about the eccentric authoritarian leader, Kim Jong Il, who is addressed by his nation as the “Dear Leader.”

Yet the realities of this nation of approximately 23 million people, also known as the “Hermit Kingdom” in the West, are largely unknown to the world. And increasingly, so are the needs and desires of North Korean emigrants and would-be emigrants. The estimated number of North Koreans living abroad ranges from 30,000, according to the United Nations and the U.S. State Department, to 300,000, according to other humanitarian organizations. In-person interviews with the migrants are difficult to arrange. While the U.S.-based nonprofit Liberty in North Korea campaigns to raise awareness of North Korean refugees, the organization does not coordinate interviews with the resettled refugees in the United States because it believes the North Koreans should be able to leave their pasts behind.

But new information that is available is puzzling: An increasing number of surveys and reports, including one published by the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in 2006, indicate that many North Korean defectors have voluntarily crossed or wish to cross the border back into North Korea.

Brian Meyer, a scholar of North Korean propaganda and cultural identity at Dongseo University in South Korea, says that North Koreans may earn money abroad in order to pursue business opportunities at home or may return to bribe officials, hoping to avoid the consequences of defecting in the future. “Most importantly, though, North Korea is home for these people,” he said. “It really is where they feel at home most.”

**Different Approaches**

The international community is divided over how to classify and subsequently handle North Koreans who defect. On one end of the spectrum, the United Nations and governments including the United States consider North Korean defectors to be refugees in need of international protection. Leaving North Korea without the government’s permission is considered a serious crime, so all defectors who are repatriated are subject to imprisonment and rumored to be sent to labor camps. The United Nations dictates that all North Korean defectors should be eligible to apply for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR) status and believes they fled for political or humanitarian reasons. Mongolia and Thailand, common destinations for defectors travelling through China who hope to file themselves as UNHCR refugees, have policies that focus on permanent resettlement in a third country. The South Korean government has several legal provisions to guarantee the automatic acceptance of North Korean defectors. Under public pressure, the United States enacted the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, classifying North Korean defectors as refugees and allotting US$20 million to resettling them in the United States. To date, only about 100 North Koreans have been resettled in the United States.

On the other end of the spectrum, China, Laos, and Myanmar maintain that North Koreans who cross the border are illegal economic migrants, similar to the undocumented Mexican migrants who cross the border into the United States. China defends its decision to repatriate North Koreans regardless of their motive for fleeing and argues that it is obliged to do so under a bilateral 1986 agreement.

**Changing Demographics and Perceptions**

UNHCR surveys and the NGOs that file the emigrants’ papers show that South Korea is the preferred destination of defectors, with the United States ranking second. For several decades, from the Korean War to the 1990s, the elite members of North Korean society comprised most of the defectors, since they were the only ones with permission to travel. Armed with valuable information about North Korea, they were heralded as heroes and treated with generous rewards by the South Korean government. Then a famine hit in the 1990s. Extreme poverty and malnutrition were so widespread that the North Korean military had to relax its height requirement. Mostly laborers and farmers from the northern region began to cross the Chinese border in search of food, employment, and security. This shift in both demographics and volume created two new issues for the global community. The Chinese government paid more attention to locating and repatriating the North Koreans, and the South Korean public grew less welcoming of the resettled North Koreans in South Korea.

Soyoung Ho wrote about an experience interviewing a North Korean defector in South Korea in a 2005 article for Slate magazine. “The defectors think they have nothing to gain, and often so much to lose, by talking,” she wrote. “They also dread having their lives exposed to South Koreans, who already look down on them for their inability to function in a free and capitalist society.”

North Korean refugees settled in South Korea are also becoming increasingly disgruntled by the reality of their lives. Many were initially attracted by word of mouth—promises of economic wealth available in South Korea, reinforced by visual images of South Korean life gleaned from bootlegged DVDs and magazines that make their way illegally across the border. However, as the number of North Korean migrants increases and the value of the political insight they offer decreases, both the South Korean government’s generosity and public support are dwindling. Meyer said that many of the resettled North Koreans now “complain about life in South Korea, because they feel that their blood brethren should be treating them better.”

**Solutions**

The precarious health of the aging ruler, Kim Jong II, fuels questions about the future of North Korea. No matter who succeeds the “Dear Leader” or how the regime transition occurs, a mass North Korean migration is already a serious international concern.

Existing policies leave a large gap in meeting the presumed needs of North Korean defectors. Resettlement policies disperse North Koreans around the world when they often wish to return to North Korea, and unconditional repatriation policies do not provide an alternative relief to an economically desperate population. Some scholars or politicians compare the two Koreas with formerly divided Germany and propose unification as a cure-all solution. However, Charles Armstrong, Korea Foundation Associate Professor of Korean Studies in the Social Sciences at Columbia University, mirrors the view of many academics and policy analysts. “Unification under current circumstances would create an even bigger problem of North Koreans, perhaps millions of them, flooding into South Korea,” he said. “In the long run, the best way to resolve the migration issue is to improve the situation within North Korea. This will be a long and difficult process.”

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A New Community Grows in Brooklyn:
Women from the Middle East Find Support at a Local Community Center

BY HEIDI ROSBE
Faozia lived her whole life in Morocco and never knew anything beyond the country’s borders. The year she turned 23, however, she married, became pregnant and immigrated to Brooklyn, New York, knowing only one person there—her new husband.

While her husband immigrated to New York City because of the lack of jobs in Morocco, Faozia came with and for him. She is like numerous Arab women who make this journey yearly—sometimes by choice, sometimes from family pressure to marry and move away. These women arrive in a new and unknown city where they must make a home and learn to balance the traditional values of their childhoods in the Middle East with the independent mind-set confronting them in the United States. According to recent estimates by the Arab American Institute, New York State is now host to 405,000 recent Arab immigrants, with 117,000 living in Brooklyn.

Women like Faozia often come to the Arab American Association of New York (AAANY), a small but lively family services center in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, to find others who are learning to navigate their new surroundings. While AAANY offers services ranging from a free legal consultation to help with immigration papers to tutoring for children, many women come to the center to take English lessons. Some plan to seek jobs when their English is better. Others hope to study questions that will help them pass their citizenship test. Many simply want a place to meet other women and make new friends. The women in AAANY’s English as a Second Language (ESL) class hail from Yemen, Egypt, and Morocco, countries with different dialects, sometimes so different they say they can barely understand each other’s Arabic. But they’ve formed their own community in Brooklyn, supporting each other through their shared experiences. “The women are the glue that holds these families together,” says Dina Emam, a caseworker at AAANY. “They come not only to better themselves but also to help their husbands and kids.”

Hassan, Faozia’s husband, had been living in New York for four years before he returned home to Morocco to marry and bring her back to New York. Alya, recently married, pregnant, and also from Morocco, says she too came because she married a man who immigrated to the United States. Gathered in a circle, each woman at the center agrees—they all emigrated because of a husband. Most had known no one in New York other than their spouses prior to arriving. They had to form new lives, making friends with the wives of their husbands’ friends, and find a new community in their English class. “It was hard—at first,” Faozia says. “The first month was hard.”

Having studied English in college back in Morocco, Faozia has had much less trouble communicating in her new surroundings than many of her companions. Still, she has faced her share of daunting challenges. The women describe the frustration in pursuing a seemingly simple
task like going to the store, where the checkout staff speaks English so quickly. Faozia says that while there is a Rite Aid just a couple blocks from AAANY, she walks another 20 minutes to go to one with an Arabic-speaking pharmacist. Imam confirms that one of the biggest challenges for the women is finding their way to AAANY. But, “they always make it,” she says.

Furthermore, after Sept. 11, 2001, life became more hostile for many Arab immigrants. Asma, a middle-aged Yemeni woman who moved to Brooklyn in 1988, describes the changes. Her son, then in middle school, came home crying on Sept. 12 when a friend told him, “You can’t come over, Osama bin Laden.” Asma’s husband found sympathetic teachers upon visiting the school, and no further incidents occurred, but Asma’s sister faced confrontations on the street when strangers yelled, “Go home, terrorist!” and was afraid for weeks to leave the house. Despite these incidents, Asma smiles and describes the support she received in her downtown multi-ethnic Brooklyn community. Her neighbors, both Christian and Jewish, gathered at her house and told her to let them know the minute anyone bothered her family.

Away from the rest of the group, Asma confides that over the 22 years she has lived in Brooklyn, she often wished she could go back home. She says she misses the sense of community in Yemen, where neighbors won’t let anyone go hungry and family is paramount. But she values the life she lives in her adopted home. “American people [are] good people,” she says.

Despite the obstacles, the women by and large are determined to assimilate, mostly for their children who will grow up in the United States. Asma says that years ago her husband suggested she take the children and move “back home,” but she refused to leave. She wanted to stay with him and keep the family together.

While the AAANY regularly helps women with logistical and practical tasks related to assimilation, sometimes the center helps victims of domestic violence. In these instances, caseworkers have to proceed cautiously, mindful of cultural differences. On rare occasions, women decide it is in their best interest to seek sanctuary in a shelter, leaving their husbands without a trace. Usually the help of the local imam is sought, as domestic violence is often seen as an issue that a family must address with a religious official. Child custody is often a major factor in the women’s decisions. Whereas in the United States, custody is generally granted to the mother, most Arab countries grant custody to the father, so many of the women worry their husbands will take away their children if they leave their spouse.

Some women also experience other conflicts with their husbands, including attending English classes against their husbands’ wishes. The women do so anyway, hoping to make themselves more self-sufficient in their new country. One woman asked the English teacher never to call her home to notify her if class was canceled, because she didn’t want her husband to know she was enrolled. In another family, the mother and two daughters faithfully showed up to English class. It later turned out the daughters were 10- and 12-years-old and their father wouldn’t allow them to enroll in school because he worried it would corrupt them.

Despite the challenges some Arab immigrant women face, it would be incorrect to paint a dire picture of the entire community. Faozia plans to pursue a nursing degree after her baby is born, and her husband supports her in her goals. In many other families that come to the AAANY, both parents attend English classes and support each other through the transition. When differences of opinion arise within the family, women like Asma assert their voices and command the full respect of their husbands and families. Many female Arab immigrants work as doctors and lawyers and in businesses. Imam says many of the women feel empowered in their new community, because “they have more freedom, and fewer eyes are on them.”

It’s not easy for any immigrant who moves to a new country with inadequate language skills and no support network. The distrust of the Arab and Muslim community post-Sept. 11 in New York has only made the transition harder. Still, each of the women at the AAANY exudes optimism about her future. Their strength and resolve are apparent. “People think [Arab women] are submissive and don’t ask questions,” Emam says. “The total opposite is seen here … They really want to be independent … The women get together and motivate and inspire each other.”

Faozia says the only major challenge she has faced in living in Brooklyn is the weather. “It’s so cold!” she exclaims.

Rasha, a young woman from Egypt, says it doesn’t bother her so much. “Not me, she says, smiling, ‘I love the snow.”

*Names of the immigrant women interviewed for this story have been changed to protect their privacy.*

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The scene is Juba, South Sudan—summer 2008. It is late in the afternoon when I meet with a high-level government official in his dilapidated office to discuss South Sudan’s plans for recovery, three years into the South’s Comprehensive Peace Agreement with the regime in Khartoum. My host has a PhD from Oxford University, and he has just returned from a study tour in the United States. “This is what we have to work with,” he says, as he makes a sweeping gesture, taking in the dusty binders, the whirring ceiling fan, and the virtually empty desk. Outside the office, a guard snoozes on a plastic chair in the sweltering heat, an AK-47 on his lap. “I know exactly what must be done,” my host says. “I can carry out detailed needs assessments, draw up intricate work plans, and even submit well-considered funding proposals to the donor community. Should I get all the resources I’ve asked for, I can maybe build the schools and health clinics that are so sorely needed and replace these crumbling government offices with gleaming new structures, filled with computers and communications gear. But I can’t buy human capital. Where do I find the teachers, the physicians, the nurses, the planners, the administrators? For how many years will I depend on the charity of international aid organizations to provide the skills that we don’t have?”

This vignette from an otherwise long forgotten consultancy keeps haunting me. Are we, as a community of development experts, missing the point when we discuss how to meet the needs of countries coming out of conflict? Much has been said about the lack of interagency coordination, the institutional gap in our response to postconflict recovery. No single agency is seen as the obvious global leader. We also are aware of the peculiar financing constraints that emerge when a humanitarian crisis has stabilized, so that money earmarked to save lives dwindles to a trickle, while large-scale development funding, allocated in lengthy planning cycles, remains...
stuck in interminable pipelines. Where do we find the money for quick impact projects? Finally, although there is a vast body of professional literature, virtually all generated in the past decade, describing the knowledge gaps in the development community, we still don’t have an evidence-based reconstruction model that is guaranteed to deliver results once the shooting stops. But is that all that’s lacking?

Could the international community, armed with strong institutions, reliable and sustainable funding, and a coherent conceptual model, bring a rapid end to the stagnant misery of so many countries lingering in a postconflict coma? The answer is, absolutely not: the one missing link is the need for adequate human capital in the afflicted countries. Yet, this often does not seem to be a serious consideration for the international development actors. Both the United Nations’ “Development Assistance Framework” and the World Bank’s “Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers,” ghost-written for their client governments, blithely assign responsibilities to national ministries and regional entities that are totally unsupported by a serious human capital capacity analysis. Civil society and local structures hardly play a role. The fact that people are traumatized after protracted violence, that entire generations have missed out on schooling, is given little weight in these plans.

What, then, is to be done? On the margin, the UN and the World Bank have tried to fill some of those gaps in national knowledge and skills with internationally recruited technical advisors from the developed world. I participated last summer in a study that is about to be published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It drew some very critical conclusions: technical advisors are expensive (easily some $200,000 each per year total), they leave before they have understood the context of their work environment (assignments range from six months to two years), rarely know local languages and cultures, and try to impose techniques and systems that are far too complex and difficult to maintain. They tend to try and get things done, rather than build capacity, and when they leave, a vacuum results. Somewhat better results are obtained when technical advisors come from the developing world—in “South-South” cooperation, costs go down and compatibility increases. Still, turnover remains high, and the transfer of knowledge remains limited. To some extent, this also holds true for the temporary assistance offered by NGOs, although there the capacity building component is more robust.

Ultimately, the solution has to come from inside: mobilizing every last “national” brain that can be of use and investing massively in the next generation. It is astonishing how many competent people manage to leave when the going in their country gets rough. Therefore, tapping into each country’s diaspora might be one strategy that pays off. Globally, diasporas send back some $225 billion annually to their home countries (World Bank 2006), and this may even be a low estimate, given the many informal channels used for such remittances. This is far more than the entire official development aid offered by the industrialized countries, and it reflects a vast productive and competent community of expatriates—if these remittances are just their savings, one can imagine how much wealth they generate overall that does not make it back to their homelands. How massive a reservoir of skills and knowledge has crossed borders?

It may be hard to convince a successful Somali or Haitian to give up a lucrative existence abroad and return permanently in order to contribute to national recovery, but in countries such as Liberia or Sierra Leone, efforts to lure skilled migrants back have actually had some results. To some extent, this can be attributed to the revival of functioning government institutions, which provide an incentive to become involved. Ultimately, however, massive returns of skilled diasporas are unlikely. Fortunately, there is an alternative, a magic formula that works, hidden away within the UNDP’s Volunteer Program. It is called the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN). This small program has been quietly running since 1977, enabling nationals to return to their home countries for short-term consultancies. There is no need to give up their life abroad, but during a few months now and then they bring back their expertise, train counterparts, and create lasting professional networks. Their knowledge of the languages, context, and culture of their own counties makes them effective in a manner that outsiders could never emulate. Over the years, hundreds of expats have benefited from TOKTEN, as the UNDP paid their way and covered their subsistence costs. In Afghanistan, from 2002 to 2006, for example, 38 TOKTEN volunteers contributed to the national capacity-building efforts of the Afghan Interim administration. In the Palestinian territories, more than 500 TOKTEN experts have served since the program was created in 1994 (UNV data). Yet, in absolute terms, these numbers are trivial. This program could now be scaled up massively, advertised worldwide, funded generously, and brought out of the shadows to become a major source of capacity building, mobilizing thousands of national experts every year.

Such optimal reintegration of diaspora capacities may fill some current gaps and kick-start national human capital formation. It can help, but investing massively in the next generation is the only lasting solution. Nothing less than a global campaign of unprecedented dimensions is needed. In the world’s poorest countries, half of the population is below the age of 18. These young people are either a promise or a threat. Access to primary education has improved somewhat, but the Millennium Development Goal Number Two for 2015, whereby primary education becomes universal, will not be reached by a long shot. According to the United Nations, more than 100 million children will be missing out. Actually, the goal itself seems timid: the availability of good secondary and tertiary education for every child would be a less paternalistic objective. It would also recognize that a massive group of young people thwarted in its ambitions and living below its potential could present a vast problem—a future shortage of skills globally, combined with a huge reservoir of uncontrollable anger and resentment.

Countries coming out of conflict or recovering from major disasters need particular attention, as their educational backlog is the most acute. How about a Global Human Capital Development Agency, a public-private partnership that sets truly ambitious goals, mobilizes public opinion and resources on a vast scale, and advocates recognition for a new crime against humanity: starving young talent by withholding access to education?

For how many years will I depend on the charity of international aid organizations to provide the skills that we don’t have?”

—Sudanese government official

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SIPA NEWS 21
Improving Health Care in Some of the Toughest U.S. Work Environments—Migrant Worker Camps

BY JULIA D. HARRIS

The sandy back roads of New Jersey’s farm-lands snake into fields of ripening blueberry bushes, tomato vines crawling up carefully placed green plastic dowels, and tangles of cucumber and squash plants unfurling their broad prickly leaves onto the ground. At the heart of South Jersey’s economy, agriculture generates more than $82 billion in sales and 15 percent of the state’s 4.8 million acres are in active production. Yet the people who make this industry possible go by wholly unnoticed. Tucked discreetly behind the wholesome roadside farm stands, there are approximately 3 million migrant and seasonal workers performing the backbreaking labor of planting, picking, and packaging produce in the United States. Three-quarters of them were born in Mexico, and their work and living conditions are causing a myriad of health problems—from back pain to alarming concerns of HIV in the camps—that are noticed only by a handful of community organizations.
A physician’s assistant feels the pulse of a migrant farm worker during a checkup in a mobile clinic at a farm near Wellington, Colorado. The Salud Family Health Centers send the mobile clinic to farms across northeastern Colorado to serve the migrant population, most of whom are immigrants with little other access to basic health care.
By mid-June every year, Hammonton, New Jersey, the city known as the “Blueberry Capital of the World,” is primed and ready for an intense eight weeks of harvest. Arriving to the Garden State by the truckload, workers pour in from the citrus groves of Florida or Virginia’s tobacco fields. South Jersey is only one of many stops on the difficult journey up and down the East Coast. To be preserved and packaged for consumers who crave unblemished perfection, thousands of tons of blueberries are carefully handpicked in Hammonton each year.

“The hours they work are really shocking,” says Migrant Outreach Specialist Jesse Moraney, from Southern Jersey Family Medical Centers (SJFMC). “They are out there in the heat working upwards of 12 hours a day, six or seven days a week.” And by law, U.S. farms are exempt from paying laborers overtime. Agricultural work ranks among the most hazardous occupations in the United States, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Migrant workers, an immobile, isolated labor force, toil long hours in some of the harshest working and living conditions in the country.

Severe back pain, the result of bending down to repeat the same cutting motion hundreds of times a day, can become unbearable. Infectious diseases such as tuberculosis can move like wildfire through overcrowded and unsanitary living quarters. Consistent access to medicines for chronic diseases such as high blood pressure and diabetes is often rendered impossible because of farmworkers’ insufficient financial resources, language barriers, and limited access to transportation. Of growing concern to health workers has been the potential for a rapid spread of HIV within farmworker communities, something that until now has only been minimally assessed.

On a brisk evening last May, mostly young, undocumented Mexican men traveling without their families, gathered timidly around Moraney, who works for one of the 154 federally funded migrant health centers established by the Migrant Health Act of 1962. This network of health centers is charged with the enormous task of providing primary and supplemental health services to migrant farmworkers and their families. The health outreach team at SJFMC travels nightly into the camps to bring services directly to the farmworkers. Armed with basic medical supplies and a few screening tools, such as blood pressure machines, glucometers, thermometers, Neosporin, and Band-Aids, outreach specialists attempt to bridge the enormous and widening gap in access to medical care that lies before this vulnerable population.

Farmworkers are often reluctant to seek out health services—missing a day of work during the busy season can be the equivalent of a month’s pay back home.
This early in the season, Moraney’s visit serves as an introduction to the camp to make sure the workers know about available health care services, in case anyone should need to see a doctor. With hands pressed deep into the pockets of their well-worn jeans, workers’ shy eyes maintain their gazes near the floor. There are no questions from the group, and workers shift their weight uncomfortably from one foot to another—all this despite repeated assurances that Moraney is not with “La Migra,” the slang term workers use to refer to federal immigration authorities.

A combination of fear, mistrust, and confusion often overwhelms even the most skilled outreach worker’s first attempts to build relationships with new camps in the beginning of a season. Because of fear of discovery by immigration authorities and overwhelming economic pressures to earn as much as possible for their families while in the United States, farmworkers are often reluctant to seek out health services—missing a day of work during the busy season can be the equivalent of a month’s pay back home.

Jessica Culley of El Comité de Apoyo a Los Trabajadores Agrícolas (CATA), a nonprofit organization that supports farmworkers, says she was shocked by the persistent invisibility and isolation the migrant workers lived in when she started working with CATA 10 years ago. “Most farmworkers when I first started didn’t have cell phones or vehicles,” she said. “There was maybe one payphone for people to call out from the camps. So many people have no clue about who is doing this work.”

In response to farmworker families vocalizing concerns about HIV in their communities, CATA has facilitated an HIV/AIDS Prevention Program in South Jersey since the mid-1980s. CATA’s approach is to guide individuals’ choices—recognizing that crucial decisions are not made in a vacuum. Culley notes, “separation from their families, separation from the larger community, issues of labor exploitation, all of those things have an influence over the decisions people make.” CATA’s HIV education program aims in part to make workers feel comfortable talking about condom use and voicing their concerns.

The exact rate of HIV/AIDS in migrant worker communities is still unknown, says Jennifer Freeman, HIV mobilization project director with Farmworker Justice. The vast majority of data available is based on small, local studies. However, some of those studies have found HIV prevalence among Mexican migrant workers as high as three times the general population. Freeman says that what surveys definitively do show is that migrant farmworkers have a high number of behavioral and environmental risk factors, which leave them particularly vulnerable. These include low rates of condom use, less use of testing and health services, elevated rates of alcohol and substance abuse—sharing needles for not only illicit drug use but for antibiotics and vitamin injections, and high use of prostitution services. “I don’t think that the threat of HIV spreading is overblown; if the disease hasn’t already entered the community, then this is the time to be aggressive with prevention efforts and educate people,” she said.

The efforts appear to be paying off, and migrant workers are playing an ever greater role in the health of their own communities. In Hammonton last spring, a group of about 20 farmworkers slowly trickled into Casa Puertorriqueña, a small local meeting hall that was rented to hold Promotores de Salud (Health Promoter) meetings. SJFMC coordinators pulled open folding chairs and set out hot pizzas for dinner. Farmworkers who were enthusiastic and outspoken about issues affecting the future of their communities were encouraged to volunteer their time and join the bimonthly education program as representatives of their camps. In each session, Promotores were given practical, in-depth information about topics ranging from HIV to mandatory wage minimums. Promotores, empowered with the tools to navigate through an unfamiliar system, then went on to spread this information to their fellow farmworkers—conducting “inreach” as opposed to “outreach.” Proudly donning their royal blue T-shirts with the words “SJFMC Health Promoter” written boldly across the front, the farmworkers began to take their seats around the circle, eager to discuss that week’s topic.

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A Chinese boy goes back home after school in Beijing, China on March 28, 2010. Thirty children of migrant rural workers in Beijing’s Shijingshan District may have to go back to where they came from—usually the impoverished villages—as their free kindergarten is facing demolition. The kindergarten, rebuilt from a pig farm, was set up by Ma Xiaoduo, a migrant worker from Jiangsu, in 2007.
Children of Migrant Workers in China:
Innocent Victims of Economic Development

By Yuhuan Zhang and Lin Shi

When Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited a school for migrant children in Beijing in 2003, he wrote on a blackboard: “同在蓝天下，共同成长进步.” This translates as “Under the Same Blue Sky, Grow Up and Progress Together.” Sadly, the same blue sky seems to be the only thing the children of migrant workers do share with urban children. The huge economic gap between migrant families and city dwellers as a result of imbalanced economic growth means that migrant children are marginalized and discriminated against in China’s society.

While China’s skyrocketing economy helped cultivate a well-educated generation, migration experts have observed that unless social policies are reformed to support education for the children of migrants, China may also be creating a new demographic that is unstable and frustrated with the status quo.

Economic Plight and Social Discrimination
The average salary of Chinese migrant workers as of 2010 is approximately US$150 per month, with the average migrant child in China living on about US$2 per day, according to China’s National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). These numbers are modestly above the extreme poverty line. However, because the statistics are based on incomplete information, some NBS experts say the real figures might be lower. In contrast, NBS officials estimate that the average monthly salary of permanent urban residents in China is more than US$1,200.

Economic segregation in cities has created and enforced stereotypes between migrant and
local children. A survey of migrant children in Beijing, published in *Educational Science Research*, a research journal of the Beijing Municipal Commission of Education, revealed that they usually view city people as richer, better dressed, more knowledgeable, and speaking better Mandarin than migrants. However, they are also seen as disrespectful, impolite, lazy, and living off the hard work of migrants. Nonmigrant city dwellers view migrant children as desperately poor and dirty.

"Most of us eat the lunch arranged by our school which only costs US$0.08 per meal, yet this student only eats rice buns," Li An, a Beijing student, said about her migrant peer from Jiangsu Province in the winter of 2009. “We once asked why he did not eat the lunch prepared by the school. He explained he likes rice buns. In fact, the actual reason is that he is poor and does not have enough money."

More often than not, however, migrant children do not even attend primary schools. Even though education is mandatory for all Chinese children through grade 9, a report from www.china.com.cn, a state-run news site, estimates that in Beijing more than 100,000 migrant children between 6 and 14 years old do not receive formal schooling. Low household incomes prevent a great number of migrant children in the cities from attending public school because they cannot afford tuition and other fees. In some cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai, there are schools set up specifically for migrant children, but many say they lack resources and provide subpar educational services.

"The schools are unable to get the local funding to set up the facilities, and there are poor quality teachers," Yao Lu, an assistant professor of sociology at Columbia University said. "Most of the teachers are migrant workers themselves or community volunteers."

Furthermore, huge economic disparity and strong social discrimination make it extremely difficult for children of migrant workers to adjust to city life. In a *Zhengjiang News* report on April 19, 2007, the 14-year-old son of a migrant family, who came to Shanghai four years earlier, explained the confusion and frustration he confronted.

I come from a rural area. Now I am living in a city, but I am not living a city life...What am I? A half city dweller and a half peasant? My parents are busy working and they do not pay much attention to me. Many times, I feel very lonely. Teachers only come to my home to tell my parents about my bad behavior. This is not useful. My parents simply do not have time to care about me. Most of the time, they stay in a dormitory. Otherwise, they come home late and go out very early...I usually only see them a few times in a month.

### The Response

Since 2000, the Chinese government has gradually been realizing the plight of migrant workers and their children. In an attempt to reduce the negative impacts of economic development on migrant children, the State Council of China, the highest executive organ of state power, has launched a series of initiatives, called “The Blue Sky Campaign.” As part of this campaign, volunteers usually referred to as “loving mothers,” “stand-in-parents,” or “loving buddies” are recruited to provide emotional and practical support in order to ease migrant children’s feelings of alienation and to improve their psychological health in general.

In addition, some local governments have started to lower or abolish temporary student fees and injected more money into the public schools to accommodate migrant children. For instance, by 2006, Beijing had accepted 270,000 and Shanghai 400,000 migrant students, bringing migrant student attendance rates (when private schools were included) to about 90 percent. By 2008, the government of Hennan province had invested US$270,000 to upgrade 24 primary and secondary schools and had accommodated 83 percent of migrant children in state-run schools, according to the *Farmers’ Daily*, a Chinese newspaper focusing on the agricultural sector.

Nonetheless, these actions alone cannot resolve the issues facing migrant children. The cause of social discrimination is rooted in an economic gap. According to the World Bank, there is a significant income inequality and potential danger to social stability in China as a result. If China takes no decisive action to narrow the income gap between migrants and urban residents, the problem will remain and could develop into an even more severe issue in the future, according to a Carnegie Endowment for International Peace policy brief by Albert Keidel.

### The Future

With China’s rapid urbanization showing no signs of slowing, there will be more and more migrant workers in cities along with their children. In the next 15 years, more than 200 million migrants are expected to move to cities, according to Anthony Saich, the Ash Institute faculty director at Harvard’s Kennedy School. As the second generation of migrants, these children are more sensitive to inequality and discrimination. While their parents usually compare their life in the city with that back home, the second generation migrant children are more inclined to compare their living standards with those of urban families, said an academic at Jilin University in China who requested to remain anonymous.

Loneliness, maladaptation, depression, and hostility among migrant children will most likely result in social problems such as the increasing rate of suicides, the breakout of epidemic diseases, the bulge in the number of juvenile delinquents, and even social riots, if these issues are not addressed by China.

The huge economic gap between migrant families and city dwellers as a result of imbalanced economic growth means that migrant children are marginalized and discriminated against in China’s society.
For Many African Migrants the Gateway to Europe Disappoints

BY SHEENA JONES
In the last 12 months, at least five Italy-bound migrant boats disappeared in the Mediterranean Sea. Earlier this year, migrant agricultural workers rioted in Calabria after local Italians drove by a migrant camp and shot an African worker in the leg with a pellet gun. Revolts erupted last summer at the immigration center in Lampedusa, an island southwest of Sicily and east of Tunisia, after a 300-strong detainee hunger strike went awry. These are just a handful of events that underscore Italy’s immigration woes.

With nearly 5,000 miles of coastline, Italy is a likely destination for African migrants. In the 1980s and 1990s, Italy’s low birth rate led the country to welcome immigrants and enact legislation that protected migrants seeking work within its borders. However, the number of immigrants coming to Italy has increased exponentially over the past few years. According to the International Organization for Migration, in 2008 roughly 33,000 illegal immigrants landed on the shores of Lampedusa alone. The sheer volume of people entering the country places a great strain on Italy’s reception capacities and has led to tensions between Italians and the newly arrived immigrants.

“Italy is traditionally very active ... in the fight against discrimination, racism, and xenophobia, especially supporting the specific activities of the [United Nations] Human Rights Council,” Luca Zelioli, first counselor of the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations, stated in an e-mail.

Human rights advocates, however, are concerned about the tens of thousand of African immigrants who cross the Mediterranean Sea to Italy, conditions in Italy’s immigration centers, and the fates of those who are shipped to Libya and ultimately back to their countries of origin.

Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi’s center-right government has taken a strong stance against illegal immigration. The Turco-Napolitano Law, introduced in 1998, called for the mandatory detention of irregular migrants—who have entered Italy illegally or stayed beyond the expiration of their visas. This legislation established the police-controlled Centers for Temporary Stay and Assistance (CTSAs), where suspected illegal immigrants at these centers were subjected to physical assault, sedative and tranquillizing drugs, unsanitary living conditions, and inadequate health care.

Immigrants from North Africa are escorted by the Coast Guard as they arrive on southern Italy’s Lampedusa island in September 2008.

Top: Flames rise from a “welcome center” for illegal immigrants on Lampedusa in July 1998, following a riot by immigrants who were being held there after arriving from North Africa. Bottom: Illegal immigrants from North Africa are escorted by the Coast Guard as they arrive on southern Italy’s Lampedusa island in September 2008.
immigrants are held while authorities determine their status. A decree issued by Berlusconi’s cabinet last year extended the period for which illegal immigrants can be held at the centers from two to six months.

Human rights groups claim that the CTSAs are hotbeds for grave human rights violations. As early as 2005, Amnesty International reported that immigrants at these centers were subjected to physical assault, sedative and tranquilizing drugs, unsanitary living conditions, and inadequate health care. In February 2010, Doctors without Borders reported the absence of treatment and sanitation protocols that rendered two of Italy’s centers unfit to detain people in reasonable living conditions. “The detention centers are basically like prisons,” Roble said after visiting one such center in Malta. “Women get raped. Men are beat up.”

These conditions have nurtured a growing discontent among detainees. Last year, following the riots in Lampedusa, inmates set fire to the island’s CTSA. “The immigrants are exasperated,” Bernardino de Rubeis, the mayor of Lampedusa, told the BBC. “They have had enough.”

In 2008, a “Friendship Pact” was signed between Italy and Libya wherein both countries agreed to take a stronger stance against illegal immigration by strengthening Libya’s border control system. The pact has raised substantial criticism among human rights advocates. Bill Frelick, refugee policy director of Human Rights Watch, called the treaty a “dirty deal” that allows Italy “to dump migrants and asylum seekers on Libya and evade its obligations,” he said.

Not all immigrants who land in Italy are sent to the CTSAs, however. Human Rights Watch documented several instances of the Italian coast guard intercepting northbound immigrant boats and immediately sending them back to Libya. This practice, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, may undermine Italy’s international obligation of nonrefoulement. Established in Article 33.1 of the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, nonrefoulement stipulates that refugees should not be returned to countries where they are likely to face persecution or torture.

Libya’s own policy toward refugees is hard to pinpoint. Though Libya’s constitution prohibits the expulsion of “political refugees,” the country lacks laws or procedures for those seeking asylum and thus sends would-be refugees back to their countries of origin, where they are particularly vulnerable to human rights violations.

According to the International Rescue Committee, about 3.2 million of the world’s refugees and 25 million internally displaced people come from the African continent. The displaced are forced to leave their homes for a variety of reasons, from civil wars to natural disasters to political or ethnic persecution.

In February 2010, Italian Interior Minister Roberto Maroni asserted that Italy’s migration problem is also Europe’s migration problem. “Italy and Libya alone cannot carry the burden of a migration problem that touches the whole of Europe,” he said.

This sentiment echoes Libya’s stance that it cannot act as a guard for Europe. The Libyan government suggests that the real solution lies not in the repatriation of migrants back to their homelands, but in Europe investing heavily in Africa. However, the abatement of migration through such investment could take years to come to fruition.

In the meantime, thousands of people continue to make the perilous journey across the Mediterranean Sea, arriving on Italy’s shores in droves. As a result, human rights advocates agree that Italy’s government must enact policy changes that would receive the newcomers in a more sustainable and humane fashion. “Immigrants are assaulted, not welcome, cannot go anywhere, and have no protection,” Roble said. “There has to be some sort of mandate.” Without reform, the journey will remain ridden with challenges for those hoping for a better life on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea.

Sheena Jones, MIA ’11, is concentrating in Human Rights. She is the World Affairs editor of SIPA’s student-run newspaper, Communiqué.
DREAMS ON HOLD

Thousands of immigrant students in the United States face an uncertain educational future.

BY CLARA MARTÍNEZ TURCO

Students throw their caps during a mock graduation ceremony in Washington, D.C. Several hundred students and advocates took part in a demonstration in 2004 to urge Congress and the Bush administration to pass the DREAM Act, which would put U.S.-raised immigrant students on the path to college and U.S. citizenship.
Angie's biggest dream is to go to college. The 18-year-old high school senior has been thinking about college applications and choosing a career path since 9th grade.

"At first I was thinking about pursuing law studies, but now I am leaning towards psychology because I'm interested in understanding why people act the way they do," she says.

However, Angie's status as an undocumented immigrant means her dreams are contingent upon changes to existing laws.

While there is no federal or state law that prohibits undocumented immigrants from attending U.S. colleges and universities, the obstacles they face are significant. A federal bill called the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act—reintroduced last year—would provide these students with a conditional path to citizenship and the opportunity to study and work legally in the United States. This bill, however, has not yet made it to the House or Senate floor. In addition, a New York State proposal for state-aided scholarships has been in limbo since early last year.

A native of Arequipa, Peru, Angie has lived in the United States since she was 9 years old. She speaks perfect English, and most of her memories are from Queens, New York, where she lives with her mother.

Angie is one of 65,000 students who will graduate from U.S. high schools in 2010 but face limited prospects for completing their education or working legally in the United States, because they were originally brought here by parents lacking immigration status, according to the National Immigrant Law Center (NILC).

While the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1982 that undocumented children are entitled to attend public schools and receive free education from kindergarten to high school, the courts have not given clear directives on their right to higher education.

For the past nine years, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as the NILC, the National Council of La Raza, and the Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities have been lobbying for congressional approval of the DREAM Act.

This federal law—first introduced in 2001 and reintroduced in March 2009 by Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Richard Lugar (R-IN)—would allow undocumented students who have grown up on U.S. soil to apply for six years of temporary legal status. In exchange, they could go to college for at least two years or serve in the U.S. military for two years. After those six years, they could be granted permanent residency.

To qualify, according to the 2009 DREAM Act proposal, students must have been brought to the United States before they reached age 16, they must graduate from a U.S. high school, and they must prove "good moral character."

"These kids are American in every way imaginable," says Erika Beltran, the education policy analyst of the National Council of La Raza, one of the largest and most influential Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organizations in the United States. "Most of them do not speak a language other than English," she says. "Many children are not encouraged to continue studying. There are high rates [of undocumented students] who drop out of middle school because they feel that they have no future. The DREAM Act will serve as an incentive for these kids to continue their studies."

But the DREAM Act would benefit the entire country, not just undocumented students, according to Fabiana Perera, who used to work for the Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities. "Even the American society will benefit from these kids going to college because it means a greater educated workforce that contributes to the economy, but also translates into higher tax revenues."

According to a document released by the NILC, "only about 5 to 10 percent of undocumented young people who graduate from high school go on to college, compared with about 75 percent of their classmates."

"Even the American society will benefit from these kids going to college because it means a greater educated workforce that contributes to the economy, but also translates into higher tax revenues." —Fabiana Perera

Most undocumented students who attend college live in one of the 10 states where state assemblies have passed laws permitting undocumented students to pay in-state tuition, the same fees paid by legal residents, to attend state and city colleges.

However, because section 505 of the Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Act of 1996 "prohibits states from providing any higher education benefits based on residency to undocumented immigrants unless they provide the same benefits to U.S. citizens," these 10 states have to pay a penalty to the federal government. The states are California, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Since 2001, New York State has allowed undocumented students to pay in-state tuition rates if they have graduated from a New York State high school that they attended for at least two years.

While New York residents pay $4,950 tuition to attend the State University of New York (SUNY), students from out of state have to pay $12,870. Fees at The City University of New York (CUNY) and other community colleges are similarly structured ($3,150–$4,600 tuition for residents vs. $3,150–$6,200 for nonresidents).

Although undocumented students don't have access to federal and state aid, they can apply for local and private assistance such as the Peter F. Vallone Academic Scholarship Program, awarded by the New York City Council.

In February 2009, New York Assembly member Adriano Espaillat introduced Bill A05234, hoping to amend the state educational law. The proposal would make undocumented students eligible for state grants and financial aid to attend SUNY and CUNY, explained Espaillat.

"It could benefit 8,000 kids to have access to higher education because they will be able to qualify for financial aid, then be able to attend college, graduate, and be prepared for the challenges of the next generation," he said.

However, the bill has not yet been approved and has been held since January for consideration by the New York Senate Committee on Higher Education.

Meanwhile, the undocumented students who are accepted at CUNY or SUNY have to file "an affidavit stating that they have applied for legal status, or that they will apply to do so as soon as they are eligible."

This means investing money, time, and effort that these students sometimes do not have.

So far, Angie has applied to six state and city colleges. However, the decision of which college to attend, if any, depends on her ability to pay tuition.

Even if SUNY or CUNY accepts her, Angie will not be able to pay in-state tuition. Without a scholarship, Angie's mother, who works five days a week as a nanny in Manhattan, won't be able to afford to send her to school.

If the DREAM Act is not approved by the end of this year—the first bill passed the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2003 and in 2006 but was not brought up in the House—Angie and other students in her situation will have a hard time going to college.

Even if she is able to attend college, Angie will continue facing difficulties after graduation, unless immigration laws are reformed. For while she would have a U.S. degree, she would still not be able to work as a legal U.S. citizen.

Clara Martínez Turco, MIA ’10, is concentrating in International Media and Communications. She is a Venezuelan journalist, and prior to SIPA she worked as an editor at El Universal Daily.
The occasional explosion of violence between native-born French and North African immigrants or the recent riots between African immigrants and Italian citizens in Calabria, Italy, remind us that immigration is not just a U.S. phenomenon. The violence also reminds us that for all the ugliness of U.S. public opinion or U.S. policy toward immigrants, the U.S.’s anti-immigrant backlash is relatively tame in comparison with other societies. The pull of labor markets and the desire to seek a better life remain strong across the world.

The problem is that the pull for jobs and the policy to facilitate immigration and integration do not always match. Perhaps more problematic is that the principal engine for workers to cross borders—the businesses that employ them—remains largely unwilling to confront the contradiction between the need for and receptiveness to immigrants. While businesses may attract immigrants and admit they benefit from them, they are too often unwilling to defend immigrants and immigration.
Who Needs Immigrants?

According to the Economist Intelligence Unit’s (EIU) Global Migration Barometer,1 the top 10 countries ranked by their attractiveness and accessibility for migrants, all but two are English speaking (Australia, Canada, the U.S., the U.K., and New Zealand) or in Northern Europe (Sweden, Norway, Belgium). The outliers are Singapore and Hong Kong, both small economies that have actively sought to bolster their shallow workforce with the skills of immigrant workers.

The barometer is a composite of two indices. The first measures the attractiveness of a country to migrants, looking at economic growth, cultural-historical proximity, and quality-of-life factors such as the quality of public services, access to financial and credit services, civil liberties, and ease of remitting money. The second index measures accessibility for migrants; essentially, the countries are marked by more immigration-friendly policies, including government policy toward migration, ease in hiring immigrants, and programs to integrate immigrants.

The countries included in the top 10 make sense on one level. Most of them are developed countries that combine higher rates of growth with generous social safety net programs that promise a cushion to immigrants as they adjust. Countries farther down the list—Germany (17), France (18), Italy (20), Austria (21), and Japan (28)—are curious exceptions. In these cases, factors such as GDP growth and quality of life measures are relatively on par with the upper 10. Where they diverge largely is in their accessibility for migrants. On this single scale, Germany ranks 24, Italy 29, Austria 39, France 43, and Japan a low-scoring 53—all out of 61.

All of this would make sense if it matched these economies’ need for immigrants. To measure this, the EIU looked at the replacement rate of the labor markets, the old-age dependency ratio, the natural increase of workers entering the labor market, and employment ratio, pension liabilities, and productivity. Yet here, Japan tops the list, followed by Italy. Lower down are France (7), Austria (9), and Germany (15).

In other words, 15 of the top countries that most need immigrants to replenish an aging labor population and state coffers for social outlays are some of the least welcoming in their immigration laws.

This wouldn’t matter if there were an active private sector—the primary beneficiary of immigrant labor—leading the charge to correct this imbalance. But there isn’t.

Who Hires Them?

A second study in 2009 by the EIU surveyed the attitudes of 501 business leaders globally toward immigration. The vast majority of the executives (73 percent) report that they employ immigrant or foreign-born workers, and an even higher number (76 percent) agreed that hiring foreign workers was important to fill specific staffing needs.

Most of those were skilled rather than unskilled workers, due in large part to the global nature of the businesses included in the EIU study. Fifty-seven percent of the companies have global sales of more than $500 million, with 28 percent of the total from North America, 28 percent from the Asia-Pacific region, 27 percent from Europe, and 19 percent from Latin America, the Middle East, or Africa. It’s no stretch to assume that if you included more local, service industries in the mix you would get a far higher number of companies employing low-skilled immigrants.

But would they be any more courageous in standing up for immigration and addressing hurdles to hiring and integrating foreign workers? We can only hope so, because the businesses in the EIU survey demonstrate a sad lack of backbone on what they themselves admit is a crucial element in their ability to compete.

In the survey, 88 percent of the international business executives surveyed said that there are one or more challenges to hiring foreign workers. In fact, 40 percent said that it is difficult to hire workers for low-skilled jobs. Most cited the limitations on visas and the complications and costs of the system. Sadly, though, only a minority, 15 percent, is willing to advocate before their government for more open immigration policies and laws. And only 10 percent is currently engaged in promoting more liberal immigration laws in the name of their company.

A higher number of businesses, however, commit to helping their foreign-born employees integrate into their newfound places of residence. Whether it’s funding housing (48 percent), providing orientation and materials to foreign workers (30 percent), or helping them adjust culturally (21 percent), some businesses appear willing to help ease the process of integration. This is no small step. As we are seeing in violent reactions against immigrants, whether in France, Italy, Germany, or the United States, the immigrant workforce and their families remain a target of discrimination and even violence, largely because they are seen as being distinct, separate, unintegrated, and a drain on public resources. The efforts of the private sector can go a long way toward alleviating that exclusion and dependence on public services.

Again, though, remember the profile of these employers: largely multilateral businesses. Most of their employees are skilled laborers, not the under-skilled (and often undocumented) immigrants who have been the target of recent violence or racist outrage. Who speaks for them? Who will help them integrate if even the most international companies balk at helping their skilled employees and only half assist them in adjusting to their new homes?

The topic affects more than the productivity and competitiveness of businesses. Immigration determines the capacity of countries themselves to survive in the global economy. For the countries mentioned above—Japan, Germany, and Italy—there is a dangerous disjunction between the immigration policies of their governments and the long-term economic and public need for a new labor force. Surely, arguments can be made about the cultural homogeneity and the closed sense of nationhood that dominate these countries and challenge the integration of outsiders. But in a globalized economy, such notions are not just anachronistic; they run against economic and even national logic.

Unfortunately, as the surveys above demonstrate, businesses seem unwilling to put these hoary myths of nationhood to rest. But if businesses won’t, who will? At first, the private sector will be the one to suffer. Eventually, though, business and production will move, enjoying the benefits of a global economy that has made borders more porous and eased transportation and communication costs. In the end, if national businesses are unwilling to assume the responsibility of defending their need for labor and the rights of their employees, companies from other countries will, or these businesses will move on, leaving behind their home country in search of better labor markets. And when they do, traditional notions of cultural homogeneity and nationalism tied to race will seem not just quaint but economically catastrophic.

Christopher Sabatini is the founder and editor-in-chief of Americas Quarterly, senior director of policy at the Americas Society/Council of the Americas, and adjunct professor at Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs.

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1 Full disclosure: Christopher Sabatini is on the peer review panel for the EIU study, along with Frans Bouwen, The Hague Process on Refugees and Migration; Dr. Graeme Hugo, University of Adelaide, Australia; Benjy Meher, International Business Leaders Forum; Robe Wilke Meins, International Fund for Agricultural Development; Dr. Demetrious Papademetriou, Migration Policy Institute; Dr. Dilip Ratha, The World Bank; Donald Terry, Boston University School of Law; Nicolette Van Excel, Business for Social Responsibility; and Jeremy Preepscius, Business for Social Responsibility.
As the eyes and hearts of the world focused on the devastated nation of Haiti, the disaster’s impact was all too real for several members of the SIPA community. Under the direction Professor Elisabeth Lindenmayer, head of the UN Studies Program, a team of six graduate students had been engaged in a research project studying state building and the private sector in Haiti. When the earthquake struck on January 12, the team was in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, conducting interviews with UN officials, Haitian government officials, and other officials working in Haiti. John Burnett, a member of the Haiti Research team, gives a first-hand account of his experience.

When Humanity Is Your Only Light By John Burnett

It’s not easy to describe what was seen, heard, and smelled in Haiti. After the earthquake, all of us were moved so rapidly into a world that was and is simply incomprehensible. A place where life is constantly at risk, total destruction is everywhere, and incredible pain eats at everyone around you. Certain memories remain so vivid in my mind. Spending that first long evening under the stars in a walled parking lot, a small handful of peacekeepers standing watch, never knowing what the morning might bring. I remember looking up at the stars, thinking, hoping, that as long as I could see them, there would not be any rain and all the wreckage that would flow from it. I remember the constant shaking of the earth throughout the night from the aftershocks, with a frequency that made one think, this is the way the world has always been. I remember seeing the initial cloud of dust rising from the city around us as buildings collapsed, and then the faint glow of distant fires burning into the evening sky. I remember that deafening silence of the night, broken by the anguished cries of a woman overwhelmed by the loss of her husband. Those were the first few hours. We left two days later.

I could write on and on like this, but words do not do the experience justice. However, there is another vivid memory burned in my mind, which is equally difficult to express. It is the response of so many to the destruction around us. It is the memory of the incredible humanity, stepping forward in ways previously unimaginable. Helping strangers simply because it was needed, asking nothing in return. A humanity that understands that we were all in this together. Where, despite, or perhaps because of, the overwhelming force of the earthquake and all it wrought, we were shaken into a truer sense of who we all were inside, with a simplicity of purpose defined only by the need to help one another however we could.

Starting with my friends, I can only say this. I have never been so proud to be associated with such incredible individuals—Gabrielle Apollon, Annika Allman, Megan Rapp, Gerald Stang, and James Taylor—each of them reacting in the only way they could, with a vigilance and reason to protect life however they might. From the initial fearless charge to pull people trapped under rubble, to extending love to those who were injured and alone. Every minute we were there. There can be no hesitations, or qualifications, about what my friends did in the first 48 hours after the earthquake. It was simple; they did everything they possibly could to help, and then some.

Our leader, our rock, was Professor Elisabeth Lindenmayer. I won’t ever fully know what she felt and all she did to help us. When I am asked how we were evacuated so quickly, I can only answer that it was because of her. Yet while I feel intense sadness seeing the names and faces of those we met who were less fortunate than us, I can only think that for her these were friends and colleagues whose ties were forged over an extensive career. None of us will ever forget her courage and direction in bringing us safely home.

While we are back home, life continues, such as it is, for the people of Haiti. I caught only a small glimpse of Haiti’s soul, but it is filled with such strength and solidarity that will help her carry on. In a place where the external destruction is the inverse of the inner force of the people, there will always be possibilities. On an island at the origins of the Americas have always coexisted, the current moment will also yield once again to the frontier of hope.

There are many of us here, now, who want to help. My only suggestion is to listen, rather than tell, what is needed. To know your own strengths and limitations, and to never lose sight of why you want to help. You may do something now, such as raising funds or collecting essential supplies, or you may help 10 years from now. But whatever you do, never forget that the human spirit is at its fullest when we can look each other in the heart and know that we share the same inner light, burning brightly in a vast universe.

John Burnett, MPA ’11, is concentrating in Energy and Environment.
A group of SIPA students spent much of spring 2010 using digital technology and crisis mapping tools to aid Chilean earthquake relief efforts with the Web-based Ushahidi platform.

On February 27, Patrick Meier, Ushahidi’s director of crisis mapping and strategic partnerships, spoke at a conference at Columbia on the role of digital technology in international affairs, sponsored by the student-run blog The Morningside Post. Just that morning an 8.8 magnitude earthquake—one of the largest on record—had struck central Chile, tearing apart homes, bridges, and highways, and killing hundreds. As Meier described his group’s efforts to monitor and map reports of emergency incidents in Haiti, the topic quickly turned to how SIPA students could do the same for Chile. The “Ushahidi-Chile Situation Room” was launched that same day, and within 48 hours, 75 SIPA students were trained to monitor and map reports.

Ushahidi, which means “testimony” in Swahili, was developed to allow citizen journalists to map reports of postelection violence and peace efforts in Kenya, using information submitted on the Web and via mobile phones. What started as an ad hoc group of volunteers has since become an organization that creates customizable crisis maps that track everything from crime patterns to weather emergencies to elections.

“One of the things that students at SIPA do remarkably well is to find ways to connect new forms of information gathering to solve problems and confront crises,” said SIPA Dean John H. Coatsworth. “The earthquake demonstrated that during a catastrophic event, even a highly developed country can face insurmountable problems when responding to a crisis. This initiative allows people thousands of miles away to communicate with those who need help in Chile and to transmit those messages to people who can intervene.”

Reports came from inside Chile via radio, online and television media reports, and from SMS, phone, e-mail, Twitter, and Facebook messages sent by the public. The SIPA volunteers monitored the information, identified GPS coordinates for each report and geo-tagged them on the easy-to-read Ushahidi map.

“Ushahidi democratizes the field of humanitarian affairs,” said Anahi Ayala Iacucci (MIA ’10), director of the Ushahidi-Chile Situation Room. “It’s no longer a top-down process with relief workers simply telling people what they need. Now people who need help can also reach out and ask for specific assistance. Ushahidi aggregates information from all sources, and it is these sources that confirm the validity of each report.”

The earthquake in Chile destroyed roads and bridges, isolating rural mountain villages. The SIPA team collected more than 1,000 messages such as “need urgent assistance in the following areas where aid has not yet come...have no water, electricity, or food.” The students then mapped alternative routes and provided information about bridges, which the military could use in reconstruction, enabling residents to gain access to supplies. The Ushahidi-Chile Situation Room has also kept communities informed about the locations of field hospitals and re-opened pharmacies and grocery stores.

The Ushahidi-Chile effort brought together students who had been researching crisis mapping for a UN agency in Iraq with another student group that focuses on how to use new media in international affairs. Together, they worked to transfer ownership of the platform to the Chilean organization ChileAyuda this spring, so it can be used for long-term reconstruction efforts. They also focused on outreach efforts to nongovernmental groups as well as Chile’s Ministry of Health, information technology companies, and Chilean universities so they can establish their own situation rooms in preparation for other crises.

“Universities have assets that other organizations do not—a large group of passionate, dedicated students who can organize quickly and devote significant amounts of time,” said New Media Task Force Co-chair Jaclyn Carlsen (SIPA ’11). “In the long run, this will allow universities to be first responders in humanitarian crises, and SIPA has a great role to play in this movement.”

Kristen Coco, MIA ’10, is concentrating in International Security Policy, with a focus on East Asia.
10th Annual Global Leadership Awards Dinner

On April 29, 2010, SIPA hosted its 10th Annual Global Leadership Awards Dinner at New York’s Mandarin Oriental. The event honored (from left to right) Fareed Zakaria, editor of *Newsweek International* and *CNN* host; Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, managing director of the World Bank and former finance minister and foreign minister of Nigeria; and Partners In Health, a nonprofit health care organization, represented by Paul Zintl, COO. SIPA Dean John H. Coatsworth (far right) hosted the Annual Global Leadership Awards Dinner, which provides critical fellowship support to SIPA’s 1,200 students while honoring individuals and organizations that exemplify the qualities and achievements that SIPA seeks to embody.

SIPA’s Second Annual Alumni Day

SIPA held its second annual Alumni Day on the Columbia University campus, on Saturday, May 1, 2010. This year’s theme focused on two issues: health care agendas and how to find employment in a recession. The day kicked off with a welcome address from NYC Public Advocate Bill de Blasio (MIA ’87), followed by two policy panels and career workshops. It concluded with a keynote address during the cocktail reception, by Dr. Jay Levy (IF ’62, MD ’65), co-discoverer of the AIDS virus, HIV.

Health care has been an issue on everyone’s radar this past year. In the United States, it dominated U.S. congressional debates. The recent historic passage of universal U.S. health care, albeit with partisan support, was a landmark legislative event that will no doubt be a turning point in U.S. social policy. The first policy panel on “Health Care in the United States: Healing a Broken System,” moderated by Dr. Lawrence Brown (Mailman School of Public Health), specifically focused on this debate, its passage, and affected stakeholders.

On a global scale, natural disasters such as the earthquakes in Haiti, Chile, and China and recent floods in Brazil highlighted the lingering damage and destruction that limited health care access and weak infrastructure can have on devastated populations. The second policy panel on “Global Health Care: Emerging Trends and Priorities,” moderated by Dr. Marni Sommer (Mailman School of Public Health), addressed issues of health care access, infrastructure, and public/private partnerships for emerging economies.

In addition to policy panels on health care issues, alumni also had the opportunity to attend workshops focusing on general employment challenges during a recession. Whether one has a job, has lost a job, or is looking to change jobs, a closer look at emerging trends in a recovering economy can benefit everyone. The workshop session “Where the Jobs Are: Boosting Your Career in a Recovering Economy,” moderated by Meg Heenehan, executive director, Office of Career Services, SIPA, provided perspective and insight for anyone looking to make a career move and/or evaluating current career choices.

In all, as noted by Alumni Council Chair Roger Baumann (MIA ’85, IF ’84), “Alumni Day provided a unique opportunity to reconnect with old friends, ask questions, share ideas, and learn about the extraordinary achievements of our alumni as well as exciting developments under way at SIPA.” If you missed it this year, be sure to check out the pictures on our Web site. We hope that you can reconnect with us next year.

Daniela Coleman is the director of Alumni Relations at Columbia’s School of International and Public Affairs.
International Fellows Program Is Relaunched

On the evening of Friday, April 30, 2010, in the Teatro of the Italian Academy, SIPA hosted a reception to kick off a yearlong celebration of the 50th anniversary of the International Fellows Program (IFP). More than 100 guests mixed, mingled, and shared memories of their experiences as International Fellows. In addition to Dean Coatsworth and Professor Richard Gardner, IFP alumni David Ottaway, John Porter, Rick Storatz, and Julie Rasmussen addressed the group. Dean Coatsworth announced that due to the efforts of a task force he had appointed to help review the IFP, as well as the generosity of some of the program’s most loyal alumni, SIPA is now in a position to endow and relaunch the IFP.

In many respects, the new IFP will resemble its past incarnation. Students from all of the University’s graduate and professional schools will be eligible to apply and participate. They will make an annual trip to the United Nations as well as to Washington, D.C. On the relaunch of the IFP, Dean Coatsworth said, “I am immensely proud and excited that due to the generosity of donors, as well as the efforts of the IFP Task Force, SIPA can restore the IFP to its former glory. The IFP was once and now again will be an exciting opportunity for top graduate and professional students interested in international affairs throughout the University. We are confident that the IFP will have a great impact, not only on the students who participate, but also on the reputation of SIPA and the University as a whole. It is my sincere hope that the IFP will be as meaningful for future generations of Columbia graduates as it has been for so many past generations.”

There will be additional events celebrating the program’s relaunch throughout the year, and additional details are forthcoming. Inquiries may be directed to sipadev@columbia.edu or 212-854-7280.

Troy Eggers Named Senior Associate Dean at SIPA

Troy Eggers has been appointed senior associate dean at Columbia’s School of International and Public Affairs. Eggers comes to SIPA from the Columbia Business School, where he served as associate dean for Executive Education.

“Troy brings a great enthusiasm for SIPA’s mission and an exceptional record of achievement as an academic administrator,” said Dean John H. Coatsworth. “He has a thoughtful approach to the challenges and opportunities before us.”

In his role as senior associate dean, Eggers is the senior administrative officer at SIPA, serving as chief of staff to Dean Coatsworth and managing day-to-day operations. He also works closely with the dean and other faculty and staff on strategic planning and development for the School and the implementation of all major initiatives.

“SIPA is poised to build on its wonderful tradition as one of the world’s premier public policy schools,” said Eggers. “I am eager to join this tradition and work with the School’s extraordinarily talented people as they confront the complex challenges of the world today and prepare for those of tomorrow.”

Eggers served the Columbia Business School beginning in 2001. His work included financial planning and forecasting, strategy development, IT, and executive education. As assistant dean, he played a critical role in the renewal and growth of the school’s Executive MBA program, which rose in Business Week’s ranking to number four after dropping from the top 25 in 2005. As associate dean for Executive Education, Eggers created the first executive education program at Columbia University’s new Global Center in Amman, Jordan. He succeeds Robert Garris at SIPA, who joined the Rockefeller Foundation as managing director of the Bellagio Program.

Eggers holds a bachelor’s degree in music from Ithaca College and an MBA from Columbia Business School.

Alex Burnett is communications officer at Columbia’s School of International and Public Affairs.
Faculty News

By Alex Burnett

Jean-Marie Guéhenno: United Nations Advisory Group
Professor Jean-Marie Guéhenno has been appointed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon to chair the newly created Senior Advisory Group for the Review of International Civilian Capacities at the United Nations. The group is a key component of the agenda for action outlined in the Secretary-General’s 2009 Report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict. The goal of the review is to improve the international response in the aftermath of conflict by strengthening the availability, deployability, and appropriateness of civilian capacities for peacebuilding.

Professor Guéhenno said in the announcement, “this group, ably assisted by the Peacebuilding Support Office, with the support of Member States, could have a significant impact on the abilities of the international community to provide critical support to countries seeking to achieve a sustainable peace.”

Ester Fuchs: Partnership for New York City
Professor Ester Fuchs, director of SIPA’s Urban and Social Policy concentration, spent her spring 2010 sabbatical serving as a senior policy fellow at the Partnership for New York City, a nonprofit member-ship organization comprised of two hundred CEOs from New York City’s top corporate, investment, and entrepreneurial firms. Professor Fuchs worked with the Partnership on projects involving city and state budgets, economic development, education, federal urban policy, and immigration.

Professor Fuchs served as special advisor for governance and strategic planning to New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg from 2001 to 2005. She is currently researching and writing a book about governing the 21st-century city.

Bentley Macleod: School Choice and Competition
Professor Bentley Macleod participated in a task force at the Brookings Institution to develop proposals on expanding school choice to increase equity and create a market within the public sector for school quality. Professor Macleod and the group released their report in February 2010, the first of a series on rethinking the federal role in education.

The report argues that parents should be afforded the maximum degree of choice. It provides a series of practical and novel recommendations for reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including national chartering for reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including national chartering of virtual education providers; expanding the types of information collected on school performance; and creating independent school choice portals to aid parents in choosing among schools.

David Dinkins: Papers Open for Scholarly Research
The papers of David Dinkins, former New York City mayor and SIPA professor, are now open for research in Columbia’s Rare Book and Manuscript Library. The collection includes documents from his campaigns for Manhattan borough president and New York City mayor; campaign and fundraising literature, endorsements, speeches, position papers, and photographs. Mayor Dinkins was elected a New York State assemblyman in 1965. He later served as president of the New York City Board of Elections, city clerk, and Manhattan borough president from 1986 to 1989. He was then elected New York City’s 106th and first African-American mayor, serving from 1990 to 1994.

In addition to teaching, Mayor Dinkins serves on SIPA’s Advisory Board, chairs The Earth Institute’s NYC Sustainable Development Initiative, and hosts the annual Dinkins Leadership and Public Policy Forum. In 2003, the David N. Dinkins Professorship in the Practice of Urban and Public Affairs was established at Columbia University.

SIPA to Host Energy Students from Portugal

By Alex Burnett

Beginning in 2011, SIPA will host nearly two dozen students from Portugal’s Instituto Universitário de Lisboa’s Business School (ISCTE) during each fall semester. The students, from ISCTE Business School’s MBA program in energy systems, will enroll in energy-related courses at SIPA, such as those offered through the school’s Energy and Environment concentration in collaboration with SIPA’s Center for Energy, Marine Transportation and Public Policy.

The students from ISCTE will spend their first two semesters at its campus in Lisbon, Portugal, followed by a semester of classes at Columbia University. The partnership provides an opportunity for the brightest energy policy students in Portugal to learn from leading energy and sustainability scholars and practitioners in the United States, and vice versa.

“Our program at ISCTE endeavors to develop new generations of highly skilled management professionals and leaders in the constantly evolving energy industry,” said Dean António Mota of ISCTE Business School. “This unique partnership will provide our students with the opportunity to benefit from a challenging academic environment at two international universities and gain a wider perspective on energy and environmental policy.”

SIPA’s Energy and Environment concentration provides students with the analytical tools and substantive knowledge to address the key economic and environmental challenges of the 21st century and to pursue leadership careers in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors. The Center for Energy, Marine Transportation and Public Policy sponsors research, lectures, and conferences on energy-related issues, in addition to supporting the energy curriculum and student activities.

“We’re delighted to host such a diverse and talented group of students,” said SIPA Dean John H. Coatsworth. “Portugal is on the cutting-edge of innovation when it comes to renewable energy, with the largest solar plant in the world and biggest wind park in Europe. We expect to learn much from them even as they are learning from us.”
1964
John Garrard, Certificate
John Garrard (Cert, SIPA, PhD
GSAS) is a professor of Russian
and Slavic studies at the Uni-
versity of Arizona. He and his
wife, Carol Garrard, have jointly
written a biography of the Red
Army’s combat correspondent,
Vasily Grossman, titled
The Bones
of Berdichev: The Life & Fate of Vasily
This book was translated into
Italian as
Le Ossa de Berdichev: La
Vita e il Destino de Vasilij Grossman
in 2009 and won the Giovanni
Comisso Prize for the best
biography/history of 2009.

1980
Andrew Loewinger, MIA
Andrew Loewinger, an attorney
at Nixon Peabody, based in
Washington, D.C., was
recognized as a leader in the
area of franchising in the 2010
dition of Chambers Global: The
World’s Leading Lawyers for Business.
Andrew focuses his practice
on corporate, regulatory,
torsional, and international
franchising. He co-leads the
firm’s franchise team and is a
key member of the international
franchising practice, which
represents world leaders in fran-
chising and retail distribution.
Andrew has handled several
hundred franchise transactions
and joint ventures in more than
85 countries in Asia, the Middle
East, Africa, Western and Cen-
tral Europe, and Latin America.

1982
Rochelle (Fortier) Nwadibia, MIA
Rochelle (Fortier) Nwadibia
combines her interest in inter-
national affairs with the legal
profession at her own law prac-
tice, RAFNLAW, in California,
specializing in immigration law.
“T get a chance to step inside
the world where my clients live
and help improve their lives,”
Rochelle says. After receiving
her MIA from SIPA in 1982,
Rochelle went on to get her JD
from Washington University
in 1984. Rochelle has won two
major cases in asylum law, one
of which, Mohammed v. Gonzales,
is “the leading federal appellate
case” on female genital mutila-
tion as grounds for asylum.
Her second major refugee case
was Ndam v. Adenfot, in which
Rochelle successfully petitioned
for asylum for a Senegalese man
fleeing political persecution.
Both these cases “are positioned
quite prominently in global
refugee law,” she notes. “Foreign
courts are citing our courts in
taking the lead in these cases.”

1985
Anne Kabagambe, MIA
Anne Kabagambe writes, “I
have been working in the
development field since gradu-

Class Notes Compiled by Mohini Datt
John Turnbull, MIA
John Turnbull writes, “I have joined the board at Clarkston Community Center east of Atlanta. Its summer initiative is a World Cup festival that will provide free big-screen viewing for hundreds of resettled refugees from Angola, Burma, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Liberia, Nepal, Sudan, and elsewhere.”

1990
John Oseid, MIA
John Oseid is currently employed in the media industry as a freelance writer. He works for Condé Nast Traveler on a combination of projects that involve fact-checking, editing, and writing and now has free time to write for other outlets as well. Check out John’s blog at http://www.concierge.com/cntraveler/blogs/80days/boom_box/index.html

1991
F. Bruce Cohen, MPA
Bruce Cohen writes, “I currently run a health care company in Chicago. A few years ago, I traveled to Kenya to build a school in memory of my parents. The experience was so great that I and a few like-minded individuals formed a 501(c) (3) nonprofit called Knock Foundation, Inc., which does work in Africa (www.knockfoundation.org). In partnership with the Columbia University Earth Institute’s Millennium Cities Initiative, Knock Foundation, Inc., and United Urology Centers, LLC (my employer), I will be traveling to Kenya in late April with five urologists who will be doing volunteer work at one of the provincial hospitals.”

Deborah Ball, MIA
Deborah Ball writes, “I and a Wall Street Journal reporter in Zurich recently published a book about the Versace story. It is entitled House of Versace: The Untold Story of Genius, Murder and Survival (Random House). It is available from Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, and Borders.”

2000
Juan Jimenez, MIA
Juan Pablo Jimenez, economic affairs officer for the Economic Commission for Latin America-UN (ECLAC), presented the workshop “Intergovernmental Relations and Decentralization in Latin America,” which ECLAC organized in Santiago de Chile. For more information, go to http://www.eclac.cl/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/de/agenda/9/37999/P37999.xml&xsl=/de/tpl/p3f.xsl&base=/de/tpl/top-bottom.xslt

2003
Jonathan Adams, MIA
Jonathan Adams writes, “Silicon Sweatshops,” an investigative report I conceived and wrote for the Global Post, recently won a Best in Business award from the Society of American Journalism Educators. For more information, go to http://www.globalpost.com/article/030325/ers/news-silicon-sweatshops-

Eric Garcetti, MIA
Eric Garcetti is striving to effect urban change in Los Angeles, as LA City Council president. After SIPA, Eric completed his PhD in ethnicity and nationalism in the UK and then returned to LA to teach public policy at Occidental College. In 2001, he ran for City Council and was elected in 2005. In 2008, he co-chaired Obama’s California election campaign. Eric was an activist for the urban cause as far back as his time at Columbia. His work and activism were recently profiled in Columbia College magazine. Read more at http://www.college.columbia.edu/ccc/mar_apr10/features0.
Business Editors and Writers. The report exposed working conditions at factories in China that build components for companies like Apple and Nokia. The series was co-reported by Beijing-based GlobalPost colleague Kathleen E. McLaughlin and me.” Read the original report series at http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/china-taiwan/091103/silicon-sweatshops-globalpost-investigation.

Ryan Renicker, MPA
Ryan Renicker was recently promoted to senior VP from VP at Ticonderoga Securities, located in New York City. He works on forecasting the stock market and generating trading strategies for institutional investors. His focus is on option strategies and alternative investments.

2004
Alexis Berthier, MIA
Alexis Berthier writes, ‘I have left the French Embassy in D.C. and will shortly be moving to Paris, where I have passed the Foreign Service exam. Even though my stay here in Washington has been quite short, my experience in this nation’s capital has been a great one. Over the next four months I will be in training at the French Foreign Ministry, before taking up my first appointment as secrétaire des affaires étrangères, most likely in Paris for a few years, before going back overseas.”

Ryan Renicker, MPA
Ryan Renicker was recently promoted to chief financial officer from group accounting manager at Zingmobile Group Ltd, an Australian Listed Company in Singapore. ‘I was promoted to the CFO position after working with the firm for the past two years. It was a chance to fundamentally transform the company and a substantial intellectual challenge.

2005
Myo Myint, MIA
Myo Myint was recently promoted to chief financial officer at Zingmobile Group Ltd, an Australian Listed Company in Singapore. ‘I was promoted to the CFO position after working with the firm for the past two years. It was a chance to fundamentally transform the company and a substantial intellectual challenge.

There were a lot of strategic and operational issues where I felt I could add value to this company. I want to thank SIPA for empowering me with the MIA degree (International Finance and Business concentration) four years ago.”

2006
Julia Love, MPA
Julia Love, who was director of communications at The Resource Foundation, has accepted a position at iMentor, in New York City, as director of corporate partnerships. She describes iMentor as “one of the largest and most innovative mentoring organizations in New York City. Over the last nine years, it has developed and refined a mentoring model combining e-mail communication and in-person meetings. As the director of corporate partnerships, I am responsible for securing corporate funding and will help to establish iMentor as the #1 employee volunteer program for companies and individuals seeking to have an impact on youth and adults in New York City and around the country.”

2007
Sarah Rimmington, MIA
Sarah Rimmington writes, ‘I moved from Washington, D.C., to Geneva, Switzerland, in January 2010 for a position as a technical writer with the Medicines Patent Pool Initiative at the international drug purchasing facility UNITAID. I am living in Old Town, and I’m looking forward to connecting with friends and colleagues from SIPA in the months ahead.” Sarah was previously employed at Essential Action as an attorney.

2008
Leonardo Bullaro, MPA
Leonardo Bullaro writes, ‘I have been working as the director of strategic initiatives at Sweat Equity Enterprise (SEE) since graduation. SEE is an education nonprofit started by designer and entrepreneur Marc Ecko in 2005. SEE provides training, support, and online services to schools and community centers to involve students in real-world corporate challenges. I would equate this program to a SIPA Capstone Workshop project for high school students.” Past clients have included RadioShack, Best Buy, Nissan, New Era, and Saks. I am looking to connect with SIPA alumni and students who are currently working in education reform or have an interest in public education. You can e-mail me at leob@sweatequityenterprises.org.”

Kurkrit Chaisirikul, MPA
Kurkrit Chaisirikul was recently awarded the MOF Innovation Award for 2009 by the Ministry of Finance, Thailand, an award designed to promote the development of quality government services. In his current post as a customs technical officer with the Royal Thai Customs, he created a comprehensive service of parallel risk management via an electronic based application called ‘E-Risk.”

Gabriela Dias, MPA
Gabriela Dias writes, ‘While a student at SIPA, I founded the nonprofit Vital SEEDS Inc. in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 2007.” Vital SEEDS Inc. aims to nurture destitute children during the vulnerable years of childhood by providing them with vital sustenance, education, empowerment,
development, and socio-economic security. The nonprofit links community-initiated educational projects with international and local resources and long-term benefactors. It provides schools and children with supplies and builds awareness and empowerment of parents. Gabriela achieved success with her program in Addis in just 18 months and now plans to implement it in São Paulo, Brazil, over a period of two years. Visit www.vitalseeds.org for details.

Ibrokhim Musaev, MPA
Ibrokhim Musaev, together with Dr. Yuriy Polyakov, founded Global Eco-Innovation Forum, a user-generated platform that brings together leading specialists in multiple fields of science, policy, and business, disseminates innovative and creative ideas across disciplines, and provides an efficient interdisciplinary collaboration framework within which innovative and comprehensive solutions to the world’s critical problems can be developed.

Shi-Wei Ye, MIA
Shi-Wei Ye recently accepted a position at the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), located in Bangkok, Thailand, as permanent representative to ASEAN. The representative contributes to the implementation of FIDH activities in the Asian region, with a focus on ASEAN member states. He will contribute to implementing goals, strategies, and priorities for FIDH work within the ASEAN region, as well as at the level of the ASEAN institutions.

2009
Colman Chamberlain, MIA
Colman Chamberlain has accepted a position at the East Harlem Tutorial Program as deputy director of development and communications. He writes, “Since graduation I have been working to raise awareness and funds for one of New York’s oldest after-school programs: the East Harlem Tutorial Program. This program gives kids strong academic support, great film, dance, and arts programs, and a safe haven. Every year, it helps 500 kids ages 5 to 18 by strengthening their math, literacy, science, and music skills and offering classes like Robotics, mask-making, screen writing, and poetry slams. More information can be found at http://vote.ehtp.org/.”

2010
Aaron Dibner-Dunlap, MIA
Aaron Dibner-Dunlap writes, “As a J-termer, I finished at SIPA in December 2009 and surprised everyone by getting a job as a project coordinator with Innovations for Poverty Action. This position takes me to Uganda for the next six months, where I will set up a randomized control trial measuring the impact of savings accounts on households and businesses. After this experience, I will transition back to the U.S., where I will manage this and three similar studies worldwide.”

Mabim Datt, MIA ‘10, is concentrating in International Economic Policy.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR
Sipa News welcomes letters from our readers. Please send your comments to JoAnn Crawford at jac12@columbia.edu.

To the Editor,

I’d like to offer a thought on Rob Grabow’s piece in the January 2010 issue, “Drone Attacks in Pakistan.” Rob offers important cautionary advice to military planners and policymakers regarding the increasing use of UAV technology in the Afghanistain/Pakistan theater, but I would have welcomed more thorough sourcing. He writes, “Of the 60 predator drone attacks between January 2006 and April 2009 in the region, only 10, or about 17 percent, hit their targets, killing 14 al-Qaeda leaders and several hundred operatives, according to The News International, a Pakistani daily paper. In the process, however, the attacks also killed 687 Pakistani civilians.”

The News International has a well-deserved reputation in Pakistan as a sensationalist tabloid that stretches the limits of responsible journalism. The paper tells us vaguely that “several hundred” al-Qaeda operatives were killed in addition to precisely 687 civilians. If the paper could count the good guys so accurately, why not the bad guys?

There is a fairly comprehensive body of public documentation and credible press reporting, both Western and Pakistani (including Brookings, NY Times, Aviation Week, etc.) that, taken together, draws a pretty fair picture of the program and its results. Rob cites a few credible sources later in his article; recourse to more might have resulted in a stronger story.

While Rob does an admirable job in identifying several key points, including the low cost and low risk of UAV strikes, he could have drawn out more fully the links between the Pakistani government’s regrettable failure to rid its territory of insurgents and the impact of the strikes on Pakistani public opinion. The United States is conducting operations that the Pakistani government should be conducting; as a result, the U.S. government’s reputation among the Pakistani public suffers, while the Pakistani government reaps the rewards.

I’m sure these views were beyond the scope of Rob’s otherwise excellent 1,000-word article, but it feels like the article only scratched the surface of a topic that requires a far more thorough treatment.

Richard Reiter, CC ‘83, SIPA ‘85

Rob Grabow replies:

I’d like to thank Mr. Reiter for his letter. His gentle tone makes it particularly easy for me to admit that I was too credulous about the quality and partiality of The News International reporting prior to writing the article. I appreciate Mr. Reiter’s willingness to point out my error. Important lesson learned.

The article’s thesis—that drones in Pakistan serve as a good case study in how technology could cease to be the tool of policy and risk driving it instead—stands somewhat apart from Mr. Reiter’s important comments.

Fundamentally the article was about the intersection of public policy and technology. Scientific advancement, such as MRIs, computers, cars, satellites, and even predator drones can be profoundly constructive tools that save lives, increase workplace efficiency, capture our imagination, and kindle a conflagration of innovation and feelings of common cause. On the other hand, technology and distance can also desensitize and if used incorrectly undermine the very objective for which they are employed. In the case of drones in Pakistan, if through their use, promising technologies undercut or even jeopardize the long-term policy interests of the U.S. (say by alienating the Pakistani population), it is possible we have less control over the technology than we assume. If the dog is big enough, international public policy needs to take great care as to what wags which.

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