READING BETWEEN THE LINES

ANALYSIS OF CHILD SPONSORSHIP CANCELLATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

REPORT SUMMARY
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PLAN INTERNATIONAL

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The child sponsorship program helms Plan programing across country offices, and is the means of supporting long-term child-centered community development (CCCD) and other rights-based programs. As the cornerstone of the organization's programs, Child Sponsorship also represents the largest source of income and resources to sustain meaningful relationships with communities, families and Sponsors. The two primary elements involved in the program are the Donor and the Sponsored Child (SC). The donations help fund projects specific to the needs of the community covering areas like education, food and nutrition, health, clean water and sanitation. In some communities, child sponsorship can set the foundations for stable family income through skills and business trainings for parents, so they can support their children for the long term.

In this report we will study the details of cancellations occurred in the Sponsorship Program to understand the trends in sponsorship cancellations and also identify its possible implication on our current program. In general, sponsorship cancellations refer to sponsored children who no longer receive interventions supported by Sponsorship funding. Cancellations for any reason can be

a sensitive issue, and an understanding of the local context, especially the family's situation, is vital so that these can be managed appropriately.

This report sheds light on the various factors and reasons that account for employment-related child sponsorship cancellations in the Philippines between June 2014 and December 2016. It aims to identify existing patterns and trends from the data available, and provide perspective as to how current programming can adapt to address the growing number of SC cancellations.

The research piece studies the overall cancellation details vis-à-vis employment-related cancellations for the period of June 2014 – December 2016. A total of 15,797 Sponsorship Cancellations were recorded from the Business Intelligence Online (BI Online). Out of which, 2,385 were employment-related cancellations as reported by individual Program Units.

In 2014, there were 1252 cancellations, 497 cancellations in 2015 and 636 cancellations in 2016. The total cancellations due to relocation for employment (D2) for the entire period were 849; of which 59% were female

and 31% male. Total cancellations due to relocation of family seeking employment (E2) were 1,536; of which 46.41% were female and 26.88% were male.

Out of 500 female SC Cancellations in D2, almost 33% were currently employed as Housekeepers. Likewise, out of 263 male SC Cancellations in D2, 11% were primarily employed as Housekeepers.

Further disaggregating them by age, 1.8% of Sponsored Children fell under the age bracket of 8-13 years old, 24% in 14-16 years old and 40.4% in 17-18 years old.

Out of the total 1,536 E2 cancellations, only 27% of the Sponsored Children were recorded to have been pursuing their education in the destination communities. However, around 71% of the data about their education status was unavailable.

With respect to migration, it was observed that Manila was the most preferred destination city for both Sponsored Children and their families looking for employment opportunities. 30% of the total relocation took place in the capital city, comprising of 38% female, 20% male and the rest unknown. Similarly, the movements of the Sponsored Children were similar when the destination was analyzed by province. 55% of the total SC relocations were to the National Capital Region, out of which 53% were female, 30% were male and rest were unknown. The overall discrepancy arose due to the significant amount of unavailable data when disaggregated by gender, work or education status.

It was observed that each year there was a gradual increase in cancellations. Despite the overall drop in cancellations in 2015, D2 cancellations have steadily grown. There was a need for a considerable amount of effort and investment in finding out where these children ended up and reducing the amount of unknown data points. These data points are useful in determining the success of the Sponsorship Program. With different factors influencing the decision of sponsored children and their families alike to relocate for econ-

omic opportunities, rehabilitate due to a natural disaster or seek a better quality of life, there is a growing need to help them build economic resilience and awareness of their labor rights to avoid any form of exploitation or abuse. Also, when these children relocate with their families, their education status will be crucial in determining whether they will continue to receive any formal education which will be a critical success factor for the Sponsorship Program. This research piece opens up further scope of in-depth study to explore the different dimensions in the Child Sponsorship Program.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings of a study exploring the trends and patterns uncovered from analyzing sponsorship data from Plan Philippines. It is a detailed study of the cancellations occurred in the Child Sponsorship Program in the period June 2014 – December 2016.

Started out as "Foster Parents Plan for Children in Spain", the Child Sponsorship Program started in 1937, the founding year for the organization. Present in more than 50 countries, in Africa, the Americas and Asia, most of the work is done with children and communities to prepare for and respond to crises and to overcome adversity; and support the safe and successful progression of children from birth to adulthood. The Child Sponsorship Program started in Philippines in 1961, with the aim of helping children realize their rights to healthcare, education, protection and a high quality of life.

The cancellation of sponsorship for these children is a condition when they (either the Sponsored Child or their families) decide to drop out of the program and no longer wish to receive Plan Support in the future or they reach the maximum age, 18 years, for coverage under the Sponsorship Program. The cancellation may be triggered due to various reasons related to economic, social or local context. It is however important to understand the sensitivities related to the cancellations as the analysis of this data could deepen an understanding of both long and short term impacts on our current programming.

Each cancellation on the Business Intelligence (BI) Online is assigned with a unique code. The following is the glossary of the cancellation codes used in this research:

- L – SC Cancellation due to Graduation
- D2 – SC Cancellation due to relocation for employment.
- E2 – SC Cancellation due to relocation of family seeking employment

L accounts for the highest number of cancellations in the period 2014-2016. However, in this research our focus is only on D2 and E2 to understand the cancellation and migration trends of both individual sponsored child and their families.

The emphasis on the analysis of employment related SC cancellations is primarily to understand the motivations that draw Sponsored Children towards active job seeking or other forms of economic opportunities. This analysis throws light on the growing number of sponsored child job seekers who end up in the informal sector for an immediate or primary source of income to support themselves or their families.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The main objectives of conducting this study are:

- To identify existing trends and patterns for cancellations in the Child Sponsorship Program for Plan Philippines.
- To identify direct and indirect implications of these cancellations on our current programming.

The research design was both qualitative and quantitative to enable the researchers to explore the topics of historical impact of cancellations, education status, gender disaggregated job and migration trends. The data were pulled out from the existing Quantitative SC Cancellation Sheet produced monthly by each Program Unit to the Country Office. The qualitative data was recorded from the interviews conducted by the Program Unit staff with the family or neighbors of the Sponsored Children. It was observed that the information obtained from interviews conducted across the Program Units was inconsistent across the board, and hence posed a challenge and limited the researchers from diving deeper into broader topics. However, preliminary conclusions were presented from the desk-based review of the Program Officers in Plan International Philippines for a focus group discussion to validate and eliminate any assumptions arising from the limitation of data.

2.1 Research Questions

Historical Trends
Method: Desk Research

1. What is overall statistics in employment related SC cancellations in 2014-2016?
2. What is the significance of the overall rise or fall in employment related SC Cancellations each year?

Education Status
Method: Desk Research

1. What percentage of Sponsored Children are able to continue their education once the families relocate for employment opportunities?

Migration Trends
Method: Desk Research & Consultation with Plan Philippines

1. What factors influence the sponsored children or their families to relocate from their source communities to the destination communities?

Program Recommendations
Method: Focus Group Discussions with YEE experts from across Asia and the Pacific

1. How can our current Programming evolve to incorporate elements which address the needs of the growing SC cancellations?

2.2 Data Collection Methods

Analysis of Existing Data: Desk Review

A desk-based review of existing sponsorship cancellations data from Plan Philippines was carried out. The researchers consolidated all existing databases on SC cancellations, and disaggregated the data by:

- Age
- Sex
- Program Unit
- Year of Cancellation
- Month of Cancellation
- Destination Province/City (if available)
- Occupation/Education status (if available)

The consolidated data base is available here.

Analysis of Historical Trends: Desk Review

A desk-based review was conducted to consolidate the overall employment related cancellations in the period 2014-2016. Once collected, the data was disaggregated by:

- D2
- E2
- Sex

Analysis of Education Status: Desk Review

A desk review was conducted to consolidate information on Sponsored Children whether they were in education after their families have relocated to the destination communities. The date was collected and disaggregated by:

- Age
- Sex

Analysis of Migration Trends: Desk Review & Consultation with Plan Philippines

The overall data collected was disaggregated by:

- Age
- Sex
- Source Community
- Destination Community

The preliminary conclusions were put forward for consultation with Plan Philippines staff to understand what external factors could have influenced the movements of both Sponsored Children and their families.

Program Recommendations: Focus Group Discussion with YEE experts

The findings of this research were presented at the Youth Employment Network Meeting, where the YEE experts from Asia and the Pacific got an opportunity to analyze and draw similarities in the SC cancellations from their countries and give general program recommendations.

2.3 Research Focus

This research focused on sponsored child cancellations due to employment and due to relocation of family seeking employment, which are classified as D2 and E2, respectively, in the Business Intelligence Online system. The research focused on existing quantitative data on sponsorship cancellations for the following program areas:

- Masbate Central
- Masbate South
- Eastern Samar
- Northern Samar
- Western Samar
- Occidental Mindoro

The data was collected between June 2014 and December 2016, and involved 2,385 total data entries from Program Units (PUs).

Maria* left the village on May 2015. Date of her return is unknown. She is currently working in another town which is not covered by Plan's sponsorship program. Her parents have no capacity to send her to college. However, she was able to finish secondary education. Her parents earn a living through fishing. At the moment they are on vacation outside the village since November until December this year. Maria is unlikely to return to the village for the next three months.

There is no information provided about the education of siblings. Maria is now 16 years old.

*Name was changed for child protection purposes

3. HISTORICAL TRENDS

D2 and E2 cancellations cumulatively made up 17.36 percent of total cancellations for 2014-2016. The total D2 cancellations were 849, of which 59% were female, 21% were male. The total E2 cancellations were 1,536, of which 47% were female, 28% were male. The discrepancy is due to unavailable data when disaggregated by gender. Figure 3.1 illustrates the trends for this period.

The highest number of cancellations was recorded in 2014, accounting for 51% of the overall cancellations for D2 and E2 in this period. This is primarily associated with the devastating effects done by typhoon Haiyan in affected provinces of Northern and Eastern Samar where most of the families and beneficiaries came from.

In 2015, cancellations dropped by 56.15%, which is significantly lower compared to all of the three years combined. However, there was also an increase of 5.85% in D2 against E2, implying that more sponsored children left their provinces in search for economic opportunities, despite being underage.

By 2016, there were more E2 cancellations than D2 cancellations. The growing trend in E2 is due to families relocating to the National Capital Region or to nearby rapidly industrializing provinces, like Masbate for new economic and livelihood opportunities.

4. JOB TRENDS

There were 849 total cancellations for D2 in the given period, the third highest contributor to the overall sponsored child cancellations. Although 46% of the total D2 cancellations cannot be determined due to insufficient data which means there is no information about the SC's economic activities after leaving the program, particularly the vulnerability towards potentially exploitative, dangerous or abusive work.

Housekeeper or Domestic Helper is the most common job type, accounting for 25 percent of the total D2 figures. However, 45% of wo-

2014
1,252 Cancellations
D2: 418 (33%)
E2: 834 (67%)

2015
497 Cancellations
D2: 256 (52%)
E2: 241 (48%)

2016
636 Cancellations
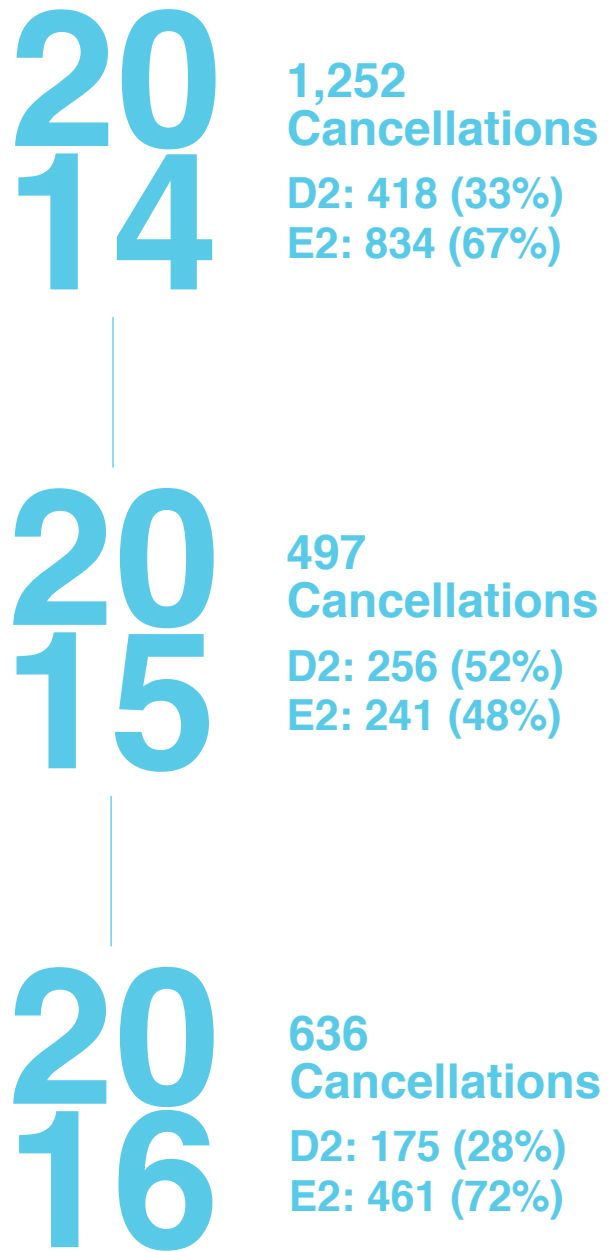**D2: 175 (28%)**
E2: 461 (72%)

Fig 3.1

men and 49% of men end up in jobs with no information available. The Sponsored Children are either actively seeking these low paid jobs for an immediate opportunity of securing financial stability or they end up being housekeeper for their relatives or distant family members who give them refuge in lieu of domestic help.

Out of these housekeepers, 79% are young girls, who might be vulnerable and at a higher risk of exploitation. From an internal research conducted by Plan International in Asia titled "Women in the Wind: Analysis of migration, youth economic empowerment and gender in Vietnam and in the Philippines" which outlines the existing risks and vulnerabilities young migrant girls are currently exposed to,

224 (54%) ? **130 (49%)**
UNKNOWN

166 (33%) **30 (11%)**
HOUSEKEEPING

30 (16%) **13 (5%)**
JOB SEEKING
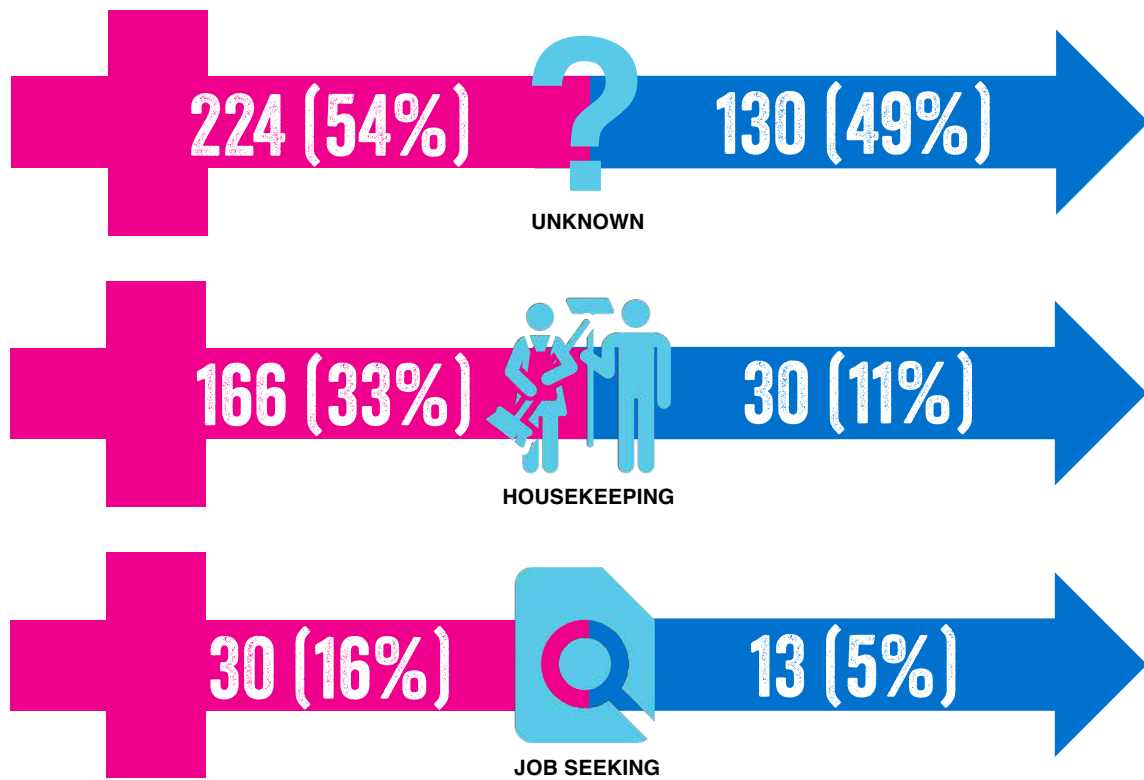
Top 3 Jobs
Fig 4.1

the study affirms the above conclusion.

Both boys and girls also commonly work as Sales Person, Store Helper, Construction Worker or Factory Worker.

4.1 Job Trends by Gender

The breakdown of different jobs dis-aggregated by sex gives a certain impression of gender division – i.e. the jobs that are usually stereotyped for women have very low participation from their male counterparts. For instance, 19.5% are women housekeepers as compared to only 3.5% of male house-keepers. Also, jobs that are socio-culturally defined to be performed by men as they require more physical labor have little or no participation from their female counterparts: young men have chosen to work either as a factory worker or a construction worker whereas young women would rather choose a job as a sales person or a store helper.

4.2 Job Trends by Age

The overall D2 findings were further disaggregated by age to identify at what age are young sponsored children either employ-

ed (both formally and informally) or job seeking. They are divided into three age categories:

• 8-13 years old
• 14-16 years old
• 17-18 years old

However, it is important to note that the overall 57% female were in unknown jobs as compared to 33% male, rest were unknown data. And these unknown jobs were more prevalent in the age bracket 14-16 and 17-18 years old.

Sponsored children as young as 8-year-old had cancelled as they were reported to be out of their province and living with distant relatives and employed in odd jobs with no information.

There were 204 sponsored children between 14-16 years old. 65% were young women, out of which 50 (38%) were primarily employed as Housekeeper. Out of the remaining 64 young boys, 17% were primarily employed as Housekeeper. This goes to show that most of the sponsored children in this age group would prefer taking up a jobs

as Domestic helper as an immediate source of income.

The total Sponsored Children between 17 and 18 year olds were 343. Out of which 64% are female and primarily employed as Housekeeper. Out of 36% male sponsored children, 45% have no information on the kind of employment they are currently in.

5. EDUCATION TRENDS

There were 1,536 E2 cancellations for 2014-2016. From the interviews conducted with families of Sponsored Children or their neighbors, majority of them relocated to other regions with their entire family to seek better economic opportunities. Data suggests that after relocation, only 27% of SCs were verified to still be pursuing formal education, of which 59% were girls and 31% were boys. No data exists about the education of the remaining 71% of E2 SC cancellations.
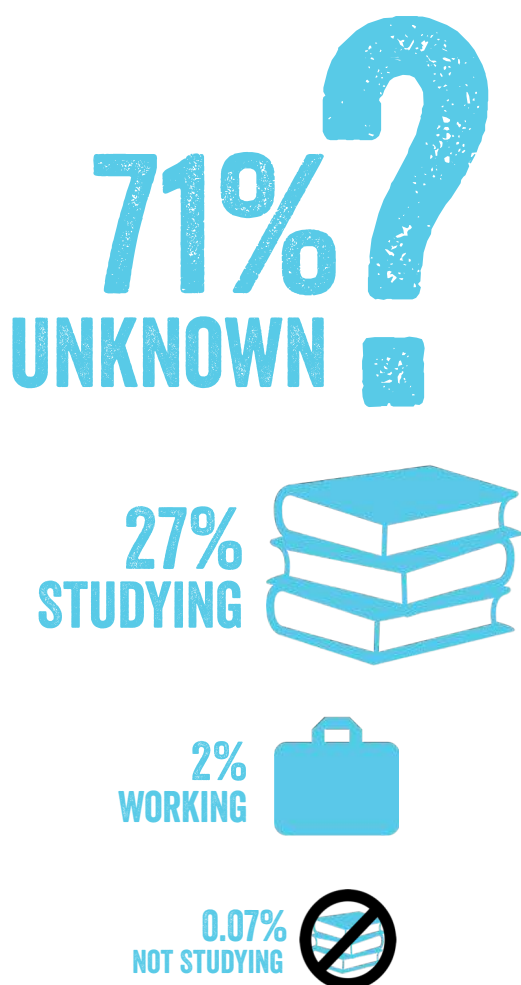
71%
UNKNOWN

27%
STUDYING

2%
WORKING

0.07%
NOT STUDYING

Fig 5.1

6. MIGRATION TRENDS

The migration analysis of overall D2 and E2 has a substantial chunk of unknown relocation destination accounting for almost 61% for both. Manila is the highest preferred destination city for most Sponsored Children or their families. With the hope of creating a better quality of life and securing decent jobs, 30% of the relocating Sponsored Children end up there. This is followed by the new growing industrial areas in cities like San Jose, Catarman and Tacloban.

Contrary to the migration trends witnessed in cities, the unknown data constitutes the least for migration to provinces. Around 55% of the relocating sponsored children or their families move to the National Capital Region primarily for securing a better livelihood or economic opportunity in the urban area. Similarly, Northern Samar, Masbate and Leyte are slowly growing as the next preferred destination for relocation with upcoming industries and ease of commute to these areas.

Even though the internal migration trend is the highest towards the capital, the growth in movement towards a nearby developing city provides a good insight for Plan Philippines to follow up on the current state of the Sponsored Children if the area is covered under Plan Program.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

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The research provides an overview and analysis on employment related cancellations for individual Sponsored Children and their families. It sought to identify patterns and trends related to migration and employment. However, the following should be noted:

- Considerable amount of effort and investment is needed to find out what happens to the youth after leaving the sponsorship program
- Plan Philippines' Sponsorship Program needs to respond to the emerging trends in cancellations, particularly to the inevitable movement of youth for economic opportunities.

Over the years, the cancellations have a sinusoidal growth pattern and is sometimes largely influenced by external or economic shocks. It is interesting to note that:

The growth in total number of D2 cancellations over the years confirms that each year more Sponsored Children, especially in the age bracket of 14-18 years old are willing to migrate for economic opportunities. With natural, political, economic or socio-cultural factors influencing the decision of the youth, they are required to be prepared on building economic resilience and exercising labor rights to prevent any forms of exploitation or abuse.

A disaggregated study by gender and age showed that employment is predominantly low-skilled, low paying jobs, and are influenced by predominant gender roles.

With high unknown figures it is highly unlikely to draw definite conclusions on where the Sponsored Children end up after relocating. More than 40% end up in informal sector and close to 50% are in unknown jobs, leaving behind less than 10% of the overall sponsored children who are accounted for in the formal economy.

When the families decide to relocate to a new destination community, the education status of the sponsored child will determine if they continue any form of formal or informal education as this will significantly reduce their risks of being exploited as child labor.

- As high as 71% of unknown education status of sponsored children shows the urgent need to conduct an in depth study to validate if they are in any form of formal education.
- Less than 30% youth who move with families mostly end up in school, but some work to provide income to their families.

Internal migration has been a big factor for cancellations and the pattern noticed for migration of sponsored children for employment is similar to that of their families seeking economic opportunities.

- Movement is to nearby, more developed but not necessarily urbanized areas
- For D2 youth, families and social ties in destination communities could play a huge role in influencing the decision to move, and to work in certain occupations.

7.1 Recommendations

- The implication of a significant unavailable data is a challenge which our current sponsorship program needs to address by streamlining and creating an in-depth data collection process. This process should be facilitated by Program Units and it needs to indicate a clear education level and status of the Sponsored Children after relocation.

- Primary caregivers need to be trained and informed on various YEE Components, e.g. life skills modules on safe migration and work readiness. This will help prepare the relocating families or the Sponsored Child to be aware of their rights and reduce vulnerabilities.

- Training the families of Sponsored Children or their primary caregivers on household economic security will help in building economic resilience to tackle any unforeseen natural disasters or economic shocks.

- Prioritize Program Units as project areas for future YEE programs to address the gaps between Sponsored Child graduating or migrating and transition to decent work.

- Anticipate migration to cities and respond to potential risks. Eg: By establishing strong alumni network on key source and destination areas will help in providing support to young people migrating.

- Explore further the gender dimensions affecting SC cancellations and migration trends.

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