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Making Migration Work for Development
10 key findings

Development Research Centre on
Migration,
Globalisation
& Poverty

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The Centre's findings indicate that

"for migration to have its full developmental impact, the most beneficial policy change would be to reduce barriers to migration, at all levels and particularly for the poorest."
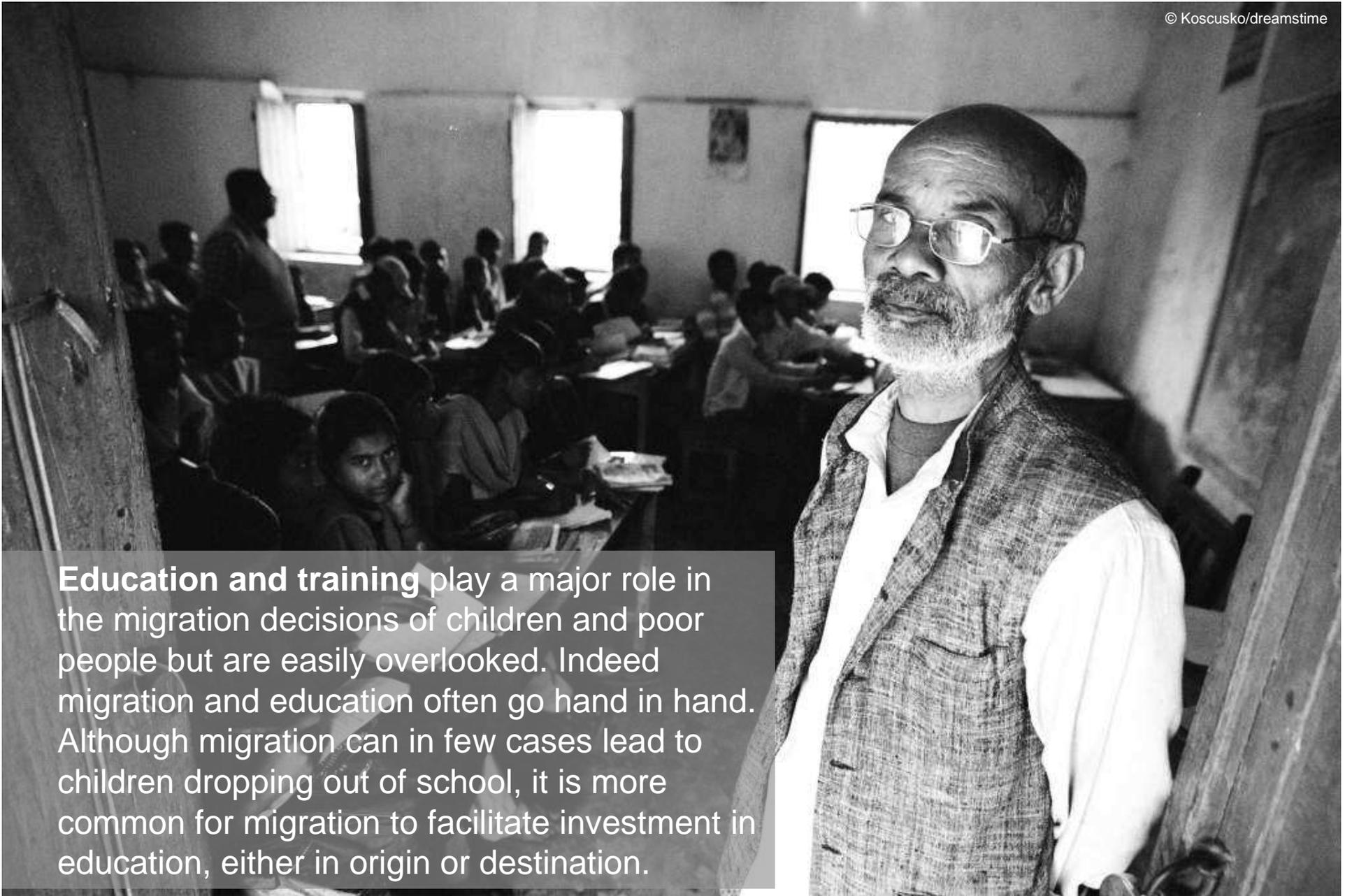
Poor people are more likely to move over shorter distances, either within or between poor countries. Despite being overlooked by most policy makers, these **South-South** international migrants and internal migrants in the South represent a clear majority of migrants worldwide.
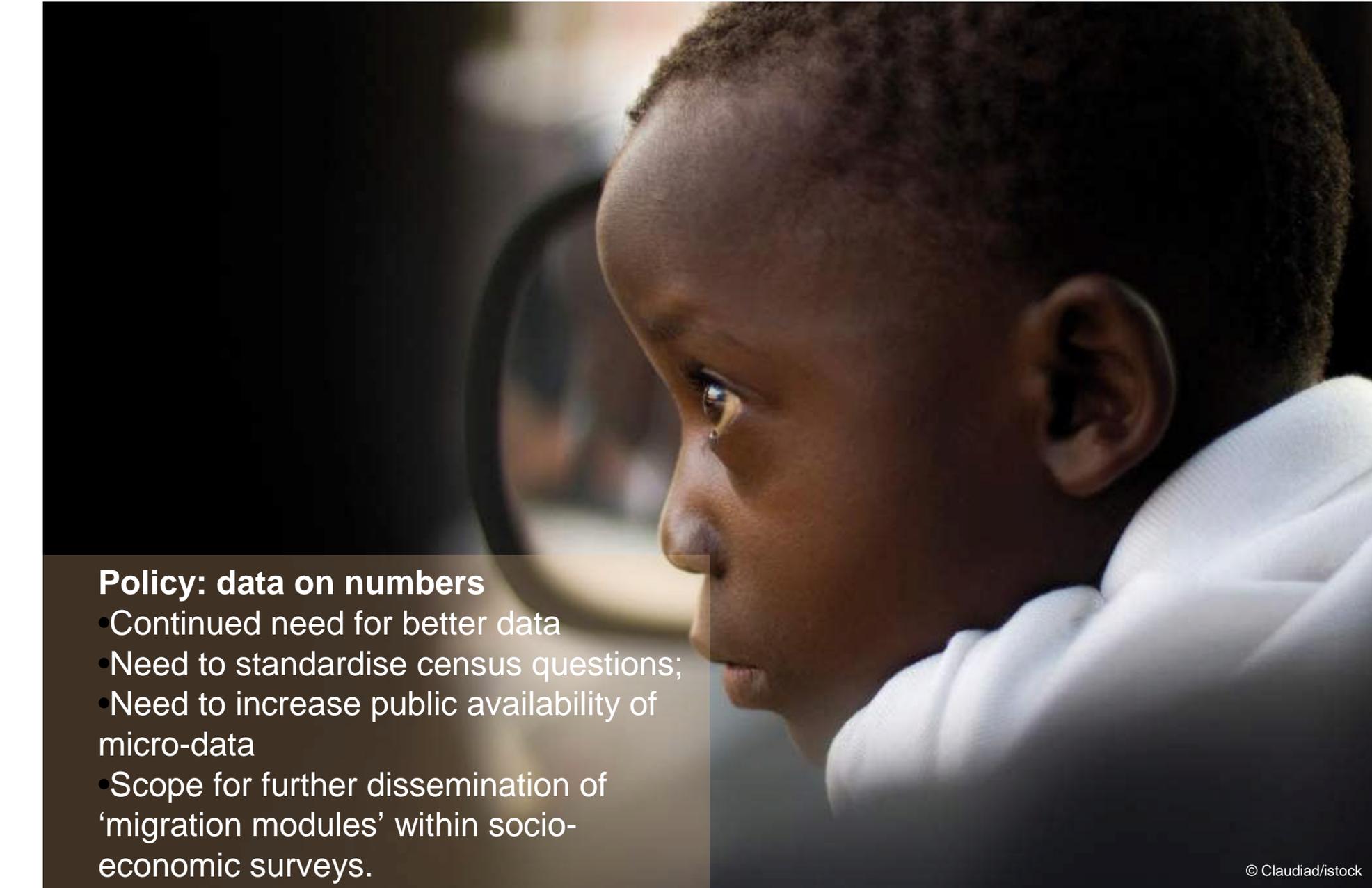
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One of the least visible forms of migration, but one of particular importance in poor communities, is that of **children and young people** who move without their parents. Children and youth seek economic and social opportunities in better off regions and often make their own decisions to move.
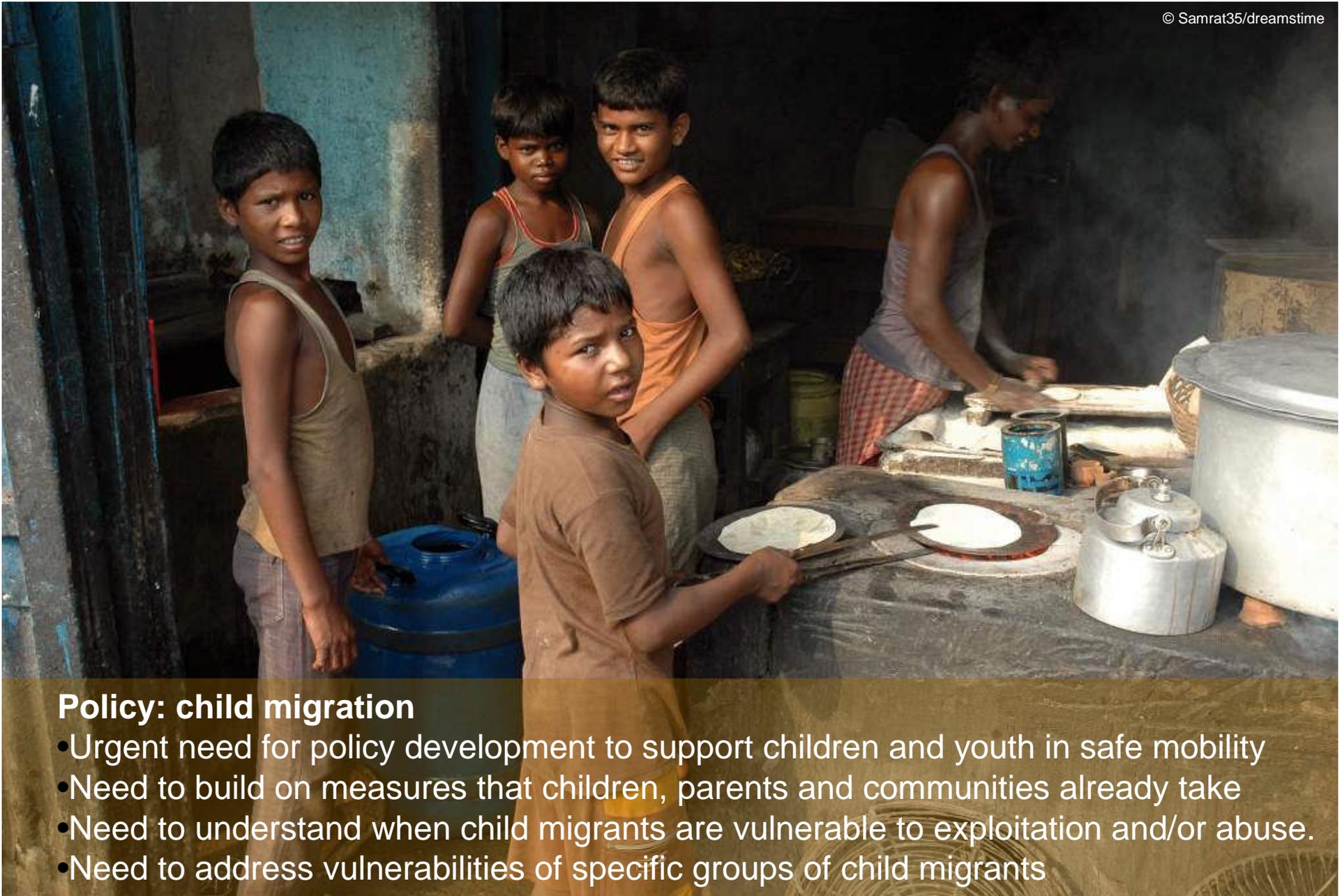
Education and training play a major role in the migration decisions of children and poor people but are easily overlooked. Indeed migration and education often go hand in hand. Although migration can in few cases lead to children dropping out of school, it is more common for migration to facilitate investment in education, either in origin or destination.

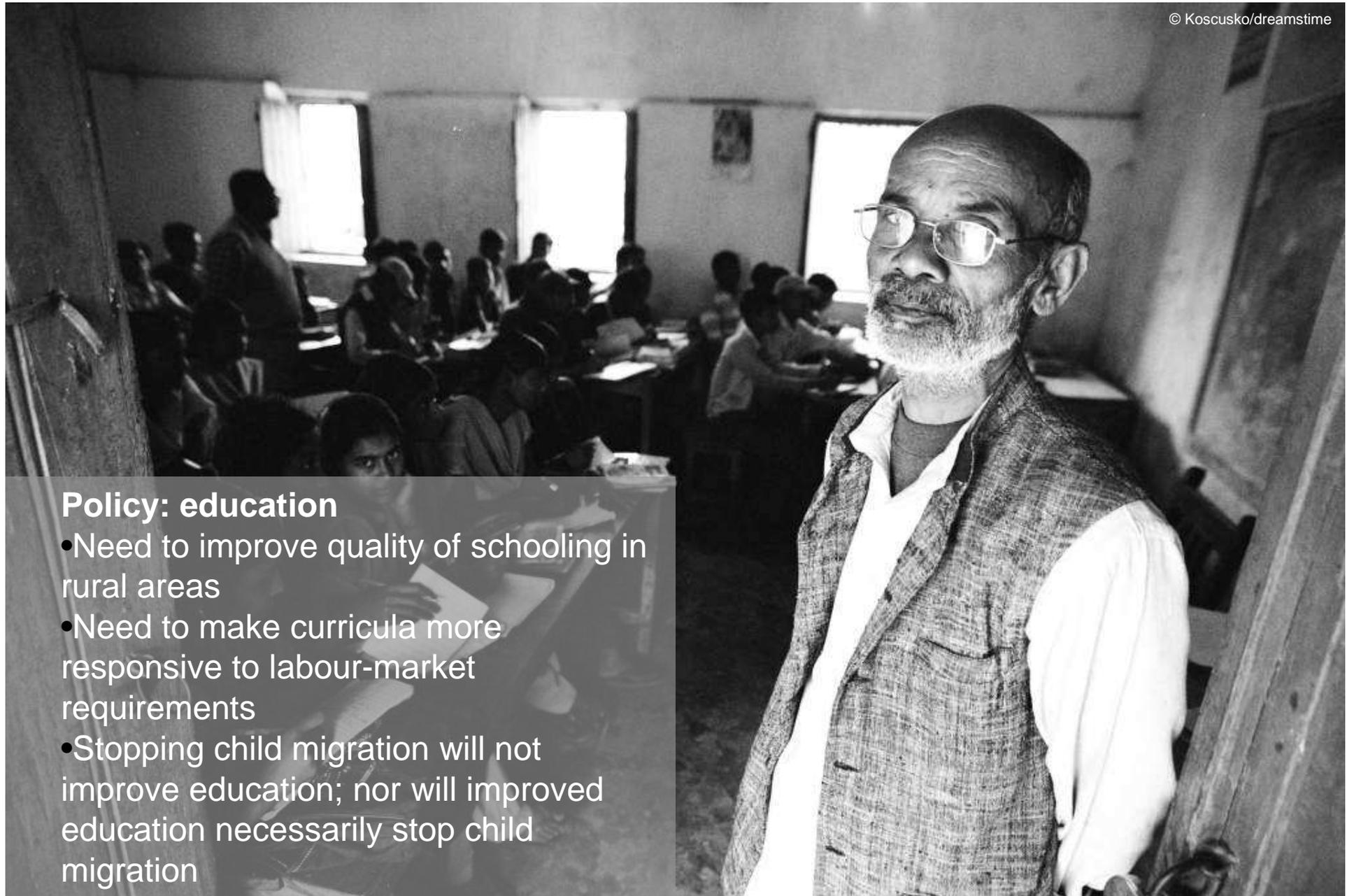**Policy: data on numbers**
•Continued need for better data
•Need to standardise census questions;
•Need to increase public availability of micro-data
•Scope for further dissemination of 'migration modules' within socio-economic surveys.

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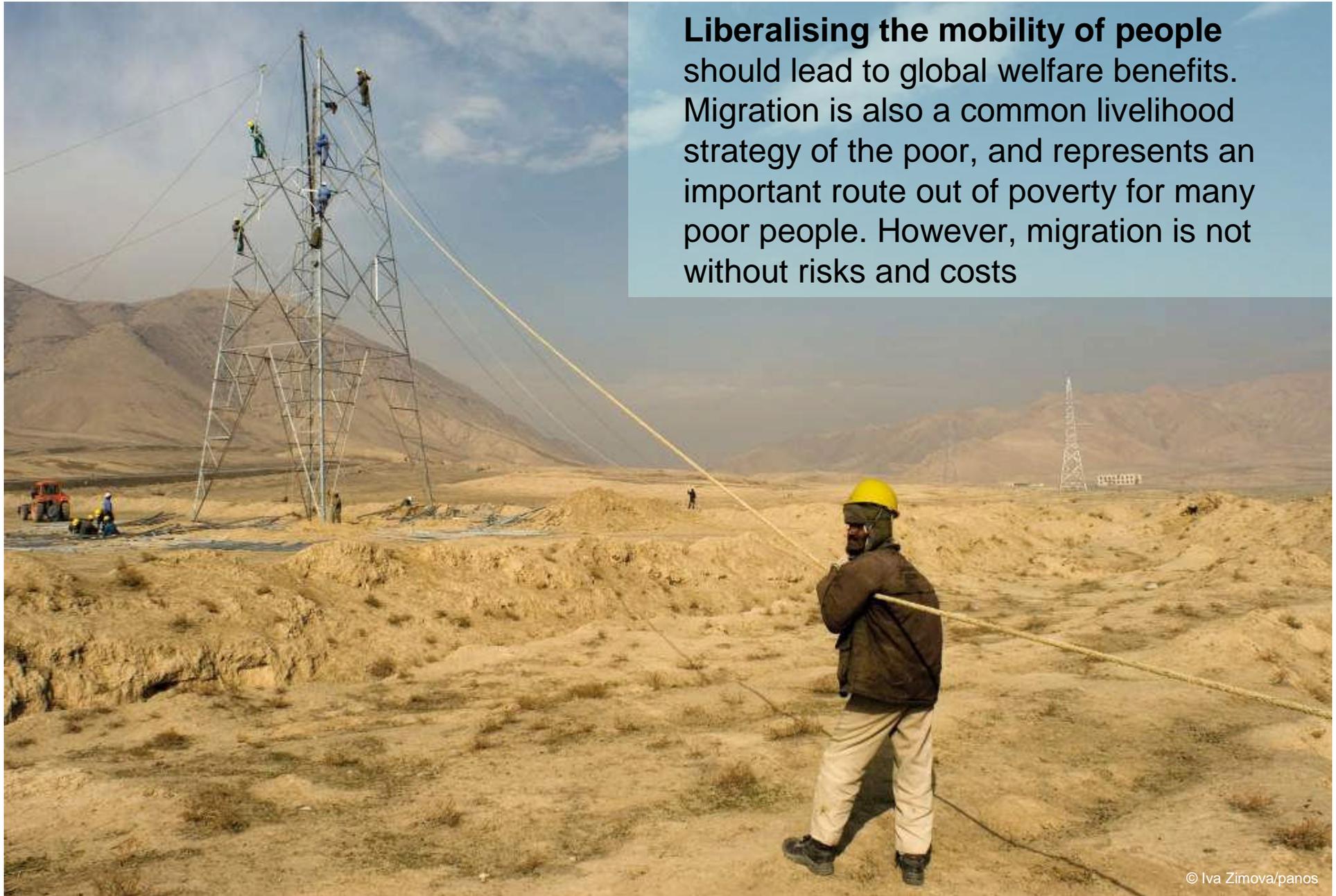© Samrat35/dreamstime

Policy: child migration
- Urgent need for policy development to support children and youth in safe mobility
- Need to build on measures that children, parents and communities already take
- Need to understand when child migrants are vulnerable to exploitation and/or abuse.
- Need to address vulnerabilities of specific groups of child migrants

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Policy: education
•Need to improve quality of schooling in rural areas
•Need to make curricula more responsive to labour-market requirements
•Stopping child migration will not improve education; nor will improved education necessarily stop child migration

Liberalising the mobility of people should lead to global welfare benefits. Migration is also a common livelihood strategy of the poor, and represents an important route out of poverty for many poor people. However, migration is not without risks and costs

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Where poor people have a greater choice in terms of migration destinations, the net effect on **inequality** is more likely to be positive.

Migration can increase or decrease inequality, depending on geographical scale and the location and type of inequality.
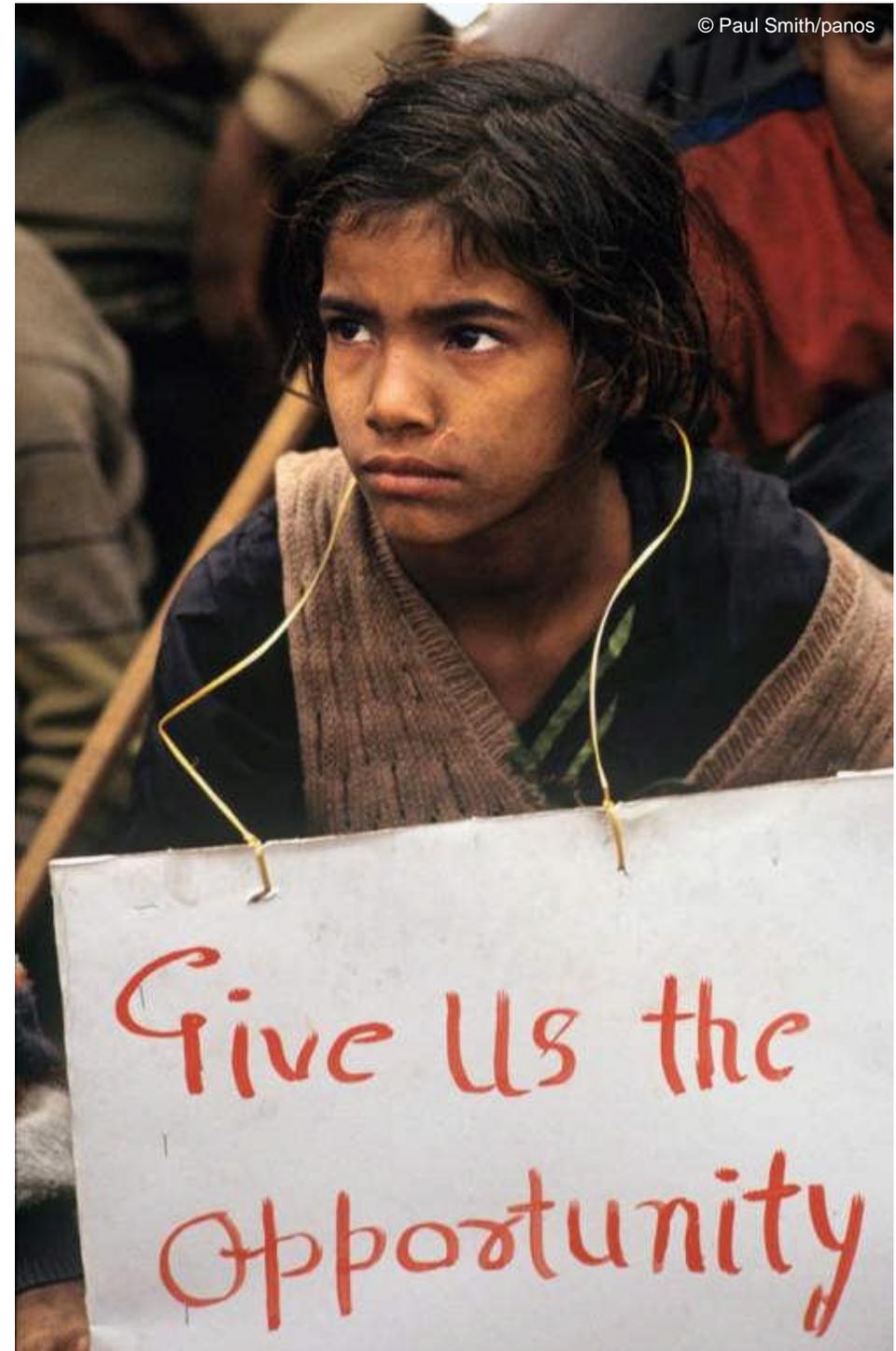
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Access to formal **social protection** for migrants is highly patchy, as are agreements between countries that allow people to transfer social benefits from one state to another. This lack of portability can undermine the development potential of international migration

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Policy: reducing barriers
- Policy should seek to reduce barriers to labour migration in order for it to contribute more fully to poverty reduction.
- Need to reduce *de jure* or *de facto* restrictions on internal migration, as well as unnecessary barriers to international migration

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Policy: reducing inequality
•Wider access to legal migration opportunities for poor people should reduce inequality
•Scope to reduce inequality by facilitating economic conditions for investment and redistribution of remittances

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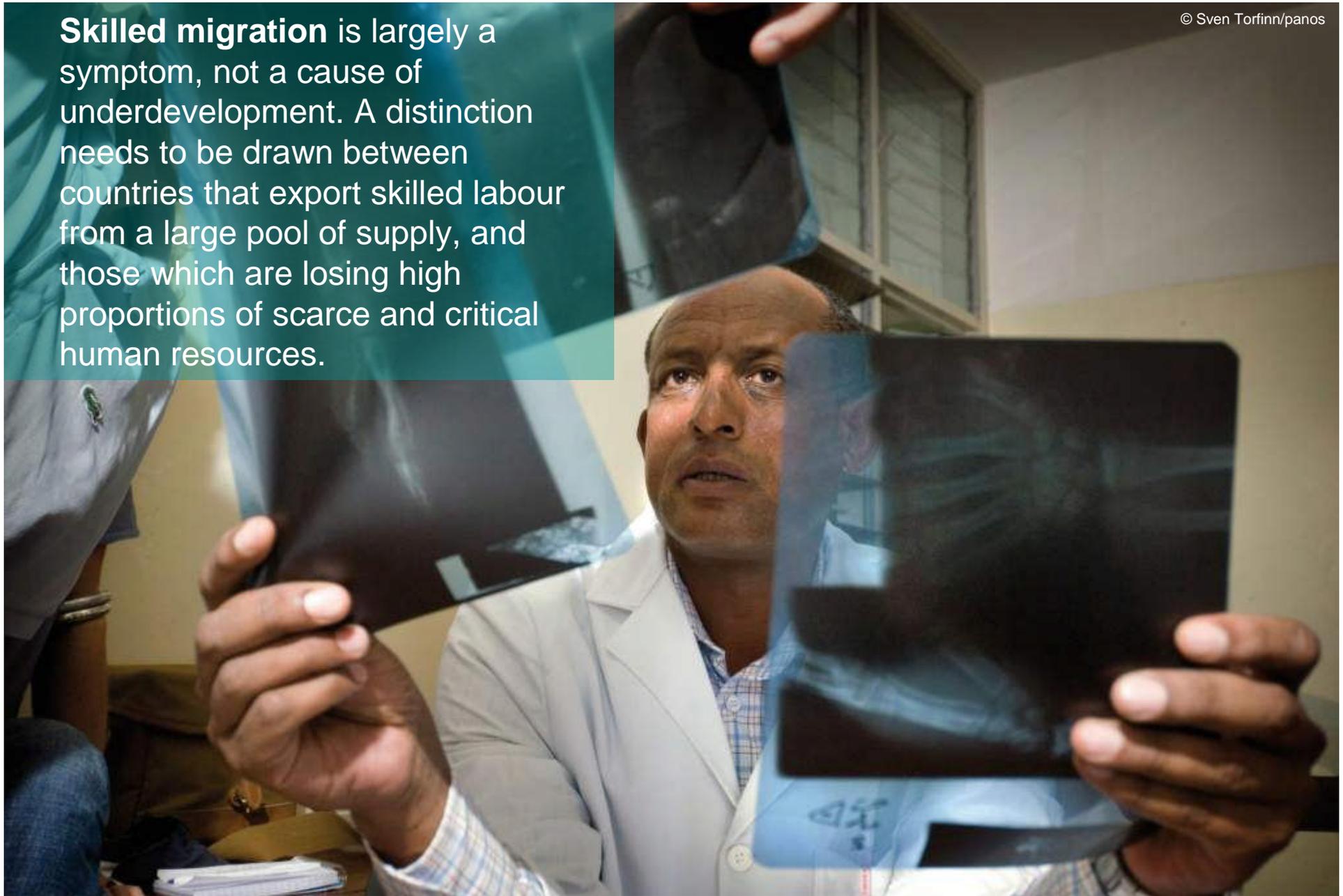
Policy: social protection
•Facilitate portability of social benefits
•Develop capacity in the South to coordinate pension payouts across borders
•Increase support to migrants' associations to bolster informal social protection structures.

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Skilled migration is largely a symptom, not a cause of underdevelopment. A distinction needs to be drawn between countries that export skilled labour from a large pool of supply, and those which are losing high proportions of scarce and critical human resources.

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Migration streams, migration work destinations and migration impacts show marked **gender differences** that are not accurately described by the notion of a 'feminisation of migration'. Migration can both exacerbate the impact of existing gendered roles and bring about significant changes in gender norms.

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Diaspora engagement can contribute to the development of countries of origin but this is a highly politicised arena. Such engagement includes transfer of financial capital, exchange of skills and knowledge, and does not require migrants to return to be effective and sustainable.

Policy: skilled migration
- 'Ethical recruitment' should not involve barriers to movement
- Need for migration and development policies that support human resource development
- Need for different approach in small and large states

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Policy: gender
• Some opportunities for policies to build on the transformational potential of migration
• Need to pay attention to regulation of labour standards in areas of women's employment

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Policy: diasporas
•Pro-active policies in origin countries to mobilise diaspora can be helpful
•Attention also needs to be paid to issues of citizenship, trade and investment regulation and corruption.

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Policy development on migration remains fragmentary, and there is still a lack of consensus on what pro-poor migration policies should look like in poor countries.