



# Children affected by migration in China

The majority of the students at the Yangzhen Primary School in the Chinese province of Anhui are left behind by their parents who have migrated to find work in urban areas. This is why Save the Children started a Children's Activity Centre here in September 2006.

The Centre provides a safe space for children to play and spend time together, helping them to cope with being far away from their parents, and to build self-confidence.

The Children's Activity Centre is managed by children selected by the children themselves, with some necessary support from teachers. All children are welcome to read, play and make friends in the Centre.

Several migration groups are set up for the left-behind children to help one another, with a supporting adult volunteer in each group. Training and workshops are provided for both children and teachers to raise awareness of children's rights – especially about non-discrimination and child protection.

The centre was established in cooperation with Anhui Provincial Youth League, Changfeng

County Youth League and Yangzheng Primary School.

## The story of Hu Jun Jie

Hu Jun Jie, 13, is a triplet who lives with one of his brothers at his paternal grandfather's, while the other brother lives with his maternal grandmother.

His township has a large rate of labour migration into the urban areas of Hefei City, some 30-40 kilometres away. Most people here work in agriculture, and many villagers seek extra income in the cities before and after the growing and harvest seasons.

Hu Jun Jie is in fifth grade at Yangzheng Primary School. The school has a basketball ground, but its buildings and surroundings look old, rugged and dirty. More than 50 students can be supervised by one head teacher in each class.

The Children Activity Centre at the school not only provides Hu Jun Jie with the opportunity to play, but

has also taught him about children's rights and child protection. This is something he is passing on to his family.

This is Hu Jun Jie's own story, abridged:

*"My parents have worked outside of this town since I was five or six years old. My mom is a saleswoman. My dad is a carpenter. They come home once a month or every two months. Otherwise, we visit them during long holidays and stay with them.*

*The house where my second brother lives is about half an hour away by bus. He has lived with my mom's mother since he was little because it's impossible for my grandfather to take care of all us. We see my second brother once a week, so I don't miss him that often.*

*When I get home in the evening, I normally do my homework and watch a bit of TV. Then I'll go and play with friends in the village. I spend about half an hour doing my homework. Usually it's my grandfather who helps me. He is a peasant. Sometimes my homework is all correct; sometimes not.*

*I like mathematics, but my English teacher is my favourite because he is funny and always tells jokes. I also like to play ping-pong and basketball. Every two weeks, I do activities at this (Children Activity) centre. I read and play ping-pong there.*

*I would like to tell my parents that if I have done something wrong, I think we should sit down and talk through it rather than use violence. I had training with Save the Children on children's basic rights. And children should have the right not to experience family violence. We have talked a little about it. My parents listened to me and their behaviour has changed a bit."*

