

Migration, the United Nations and International NGOs: Challenges and Lessons learned

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In recent years there has been a positive climate shift in the way political leaders as well as common society view migration. Although still abundant, closed minded and xenophobic behavior is being substituted with new ideas of how to promote migration as well as create helpful and protective migration reform legislation. With an estimated 215 million international migrants globally, 3.2 percent of the world's population, countries are beginning to see the major impact migrants have on both the economic and socio-cultural aspects of global stability (Bingham, 2013; Sutherland, 2013; Swing, 2013). When creating new and improved legislation to help protect migrants, both the economic and humanistic aspects must be approached with careful analysis leading to a deeper understanding of how to properly encourage international immigration while simultaneously protecting migrants' human and labor rights.

The United Nations is taking an active and innovative role in the global conversation on migration. According to High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (2013), the migration reform was presented with the aim to change policy and link countries together through migration development. Therefore, such a discussion came at a poignant time because of future changes in the Millennium Developmental Goals (MDG), which are set to change in 2015 (Swing, 2013). Furthermore, Sutherland (2013) stressed that the MDG influenced global changes that cultivating improvement on both an economic and humanistic scale. Needless to say, agents of change within migration reform are actively pursuing that

migration reform become a part of the dialogue within the new MDG's, particularly due to the changes moving toward a global influences attaining sustainable developments something the MDG and current UN dialogue on migration reform, High-level Dialogue (HDL), connect upon (Swing, 2013). A course of action has been planned by both the UN and civil society organizations where a 5 year, 8 step agenda has been created to regulate the following:

On Labour and Mobility

1. Regulating the migrant labour recruitment industry and labour mobility mechanisms
2. Guaranteeing the labour rights of migrants.

On Rights and Protection

3. Addressing protection needs of migrants stranded in distress, including migrants in transit
4. Addressing vulnerabilities, rights and empowerment of women and children in the context of human mobility

On Human Development, Diaspora Action

5. Ensuring migrants' and migration's rightful place on the post-2015 development agenda (i.e. in the "next generation" of Millennium Development Goals)
6. Engaging migrants and diaspora as entrepreneurs, social investors and policy advocates in development

On Migration Governance and Partnerships

7. Promoting the implementation of national legislation reflecting international standards regarding migrants and their families (in particular with regards to enforcement policies, social protection and due process)
8. Redefining the interactions of international mechanisms for migrants' rights protection (High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, 2013, p.1)

While all aspects listed above are crucial to a positive shift in migration development, this paper will specifically focus on the human rights aspect of migration and what the International Non-governmental organizations' vital efforts. Focus on major human rights issues, such as human trafficking among vulnerable migrant populations, women and young migrants, can turn new perspectives on how to properly protect migrants from being exploited physically and in their labor efforts. Although many migrants are unfortunately trapped in unsafe migration situations, this portion of the paper will specifically focus on the most high risk migrants, women and young adults, whose rights must be established in order to protect them from human

trafficking and equally harmful legislation. Recent HDL within the UN discussed the issues surrounding such limited understanding of migrants' human rights and proposed new techniques to keep migrants safe as well as creating more effective ways of stopping human rights violators.

It is estimated that 21 million people are currently enslaved within human trafficking rings (Marshall, 2013). Be it for sex or labor, migrants confined within the devastating life conditions of human trafficking are trapped through two factors, criminal and legal. Although labor and human rights laws are fairly effective for those migrants with a regular status, those migrants with irregular statuses are effectively ignored under the eyes of the law, creating a perfect recipe for criminal exploitation. Those within the criminal trafficking ring recognize such legislative defects and ultimately find easy targets in irregular migrants, especially those desperate to remit money back to their families (Agis, 2013). The Final Report of the High-Level Dialogue Series (2013) indicated that migrants are exploited within trafficking rings through “ (a) threat or physical harm to the worker, (b) restriction of movement and confinement to the workplace or to a limited area, (c) debt bondage, (d) withholding of payment or excessive wage reductions, (e) retention of passports and identity documents, and (f) threat of denunciation to the authorities where the worker has an irregular immigration status” (Round Table2.2013, p. 37). After understanding the systems involved in generating such exploitations, focus on specific populations within migrants must be undertaken in order to achieve a full understanding of how to protect their human rights.

Of those migrants who are caught within the abuse, many are women and young adults with irregular statuses. Women and youth migrants are seen to be the most prominent of migrants, where almost half the world's migrants are women and around 27 million international migrants are between the ages of 15-24 (High Level Dialogue on International Migration and

Development, 2013; United States Mission to the United Nations [USUN, 2013). However, many of these women and youth migrants are refugees, persons who are forced to leave their homes due to crisis and unsafe life in their country of origin and therefore find themselves desperate to relocate and start a new and safer life. Because of age and gender discrimination seen around the world and especially in exploitive work places, women and young refugees, usually with irregular migration statuses, are often purposefully intimidated by employers; thus, leaving them with no choice but to stay within the harmful work environment (Jakyel, 2013,). Confronting law enforcement yields only fear of deportation and detention. According to the International Organization for Immigration (IOM) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2013) thousands of women and youth migrants are detained every year, making them vulnerable targets for sexual violence, as well as improper care towards health concerns, such a pregnancy or puberty related issues. Similarly, youth migrants who face changing protective statuses, student to graduate, appears to be vulnerable to deportation; thus, forcing them into situations, which creates vulnerability and exploitation (High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, 2013). On the other hand, especially unaccompanied minors, status change can cause great distress on many levels of settlement, such as social participation, socioeconomic influences, and overall well-being (Centre for multicultural youth, 2013). The realities of exploitive work places, deportation, detention, and an unmanageable life in a new country are the overwhelming issues which strike fear into migrants who are innocently and rightfully looking to start a life of safety and prosperity.

Although recommendations to remedy the injustices burdened upon irregular migrants are abundant, they lack in legislative implementation. Only through countries cooperating with one another on researching, forming and implementing these recommended policy changes, can

improved living be a reality for irregular migrants and refugees. While there are dozens of different ideas in creating a safer and more humanistic approach to migration reform, the recommendations discussed here are picked specifically for those migrants discussed throughout this paper, women and young adults. Specific to women migrants who are looking for fair employment opportunities, the International Organization for Immigration (IOM) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2013) suggested that discrimination from employers, trafficking and being excluded from the protection of labor laws must be combatted through “ (a) gender-sensitive legislation that covers all stages of migration, including for domestic workers, (b) targeted measures on violence against women migrants, (c) critical support services for women migrants regardless of immigration status, (d) gender-sensitive and efficient remittance transfers and investment, (e) and coherence between migration and labour and trafficking laws” (International Organization for Immigration (IOM), & United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA,2013, p.192). In regards to young migrants, the Centre for Multicultural Youth (2013) provides 9 recommendations specific to problems facing youth migrants. Although numerous recommendations and sub-recommendations are presented, five key elements are addressed here:

1. Increase the opportunity for unaccompanied young adults to reunite with family
2. Increase the effectiveness of government funded youth services to meet the needs of unaccompanied youth
3. Pilot and resource pre-employment programs in areas with high numbers of unaccompanied young adults, which integrate literacy and numeracy training, career pathways counselling, introduction to workplace culture, information regarding rights at work and practical support with actually securing employment
4. Develop targeted health responses in regions with high numbers of unaccompanied young adults that are refugee, youth and gender specific
5. Develop longitudinal research and data collection on onshore unaccompanied young people... in order to measure settlement outcomes and inform good practice (pp 31-32).

Overall, although world-wide discussions are taking place to rectify current human rights migration laws, much work on research and implementation needs to be done. Serious

consideration of the recommendations listed above must be done on a consistent basis with all parties, States and specialized groups within the UN, cooperating with one another to reach the goal of safe and supportive migration.

Role of NGO's

NGO's on the other hand, have a responsibility not only to protect migrants, but provide ways to treat these survivors of trauma, as well as to work on prevention. Meaningfulworld, Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP) has been working since 1990 to promote psychosocial, emotional, and eco-spiritual well-being, by providing workshops to help process and transform trauma into healing and meaning-making. We use psychoeducational workshops, healing groups and empowerment lectures to actualize these goals integrating the mind-body-eco-spirit.

Human rights violations continue to be a major problem globally. However, across the Atlantic, in the continent of Africa, the United Nations works most diligently on peacekeeping & political operations, as it currently has 13 missions stationed there. Not including the North African region in this count, this is where the United Nation's Peacekeeping Department works the most exclusively to ensure human rights, as stated in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Including the North African region, the UN would total 14 operations in Africa with its mission in Libya.

Migrant workers today too face many challenges and hardships all over the world. In the Middle East, migrant workers are willing to pay a large premium in order to work in USA, even though they would face work that is less than ideal. In Bangladesh, migrant workers may earn as little as \$50 a month, and still stand to get their wages cut. India has failed to provide legal/social protection to migrant workers. The labor market for migrant workers' demands hard labor but

denies many basic health and living services. However, in some areas of the world such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and South Sudan calls for political reform have led to dialogue and cooperation between governments on both regular and irregular migration, as well as to provide services to migrants. Unfortunately, despite the facts that migration can benefit migrants, origin countries, and destination countries, migrants still endure unsafe work and living conditions, discrimination and arbitrary detention.

ATOP Meaningfulworld has been committed to support migrants, refugees, and displaced people for over 25 years locally and globally. Just in Africa, Meaningfulworld Humanitarian Teams have served in Sierra Leone post-civil war, Kenya post political violence and election violence, Rwanda post genocide, Democratic Republic of Congo post political violence, and Burundi, post genocide and political corruption. We have been serving to educate, empower, and transform the wounds of trauma of wars, genocide, and political oppression. We incorporate the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Millennium Development Goals, as well as our 7-step Integrative Healing Model in all of our educational, empowerment, and teaching programs. We work on empowering women, educating men, protecting children, and teaching parenting skills to parents and teachers. At Meaningfulworld our ultimate goal is to prepare a generation of conscientious individuals who are guided by love, peace, passion, empathy, forgiveness, gratitude and meaning.

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