



Report of the Workshop

Another World is possible – Migrant workers as promoters of global governance: The nexus of just development and human rights

at the World Social Forum of Migrations 5.-8. December 2014 in Johannesburg

Organised by: Bread for the World – Protestant Development Service, Global Migration Policy Associates, German Commission for Justice and Peace

Venue and Date: Constitution Hill, Kotze Road, Women's Jail, Lekgotla, 7. December 2014, 12.00h- 14.30h

Facilitator: Nicola Piper, Global Migration Policy Associates & The University of Sydney Australia

Speakers: Sophia Wirsching, Bread for the World, Germany,
Christal O. Spel, Research Fellow of Social and Public Policy, University Helsinki

Rapporteur: Hildegard Hagemann, German Commission for Justice and Peace

The workshop linked up to the discussion held at the 5th World Social Forum on Migration in Manila in 2012, where the issue of solidarity building between migrants and local/social movements for the purpose of sustainability was brought to the forefront. Also, the panel 'Migration, globalisation and crisis: trends and alternatives' at the 6th WSFM focused on the economic dimension of migration as a means for cheap labour in a neoliberal market mechanism.

Nicola Piper recalled the fact that migrants are selected according to their usefulness for economies of countries of destination. The dominating paradigm behind the perceived need to have a functioning migration management system in place underlines this economic view, leading to border control, discrimination and a selective approach to migrants. The possible solution out of this negative tendency is the demand for the implementation of decent working conditions for everybody, considered as a human right, hence universal and binding for Governments as well as economic actors. Migrant rights are primarily about labour rights and decent work here and there, hence 'migration managements' needs to be accompanied, if not replaced, by employment management. The ILO Domestic Workers Convention (C189) from 2011 can be considered a blue print, because it takes a sector approach and thus works for migrant and local workers.

Sophia Wirsching outlined the tendencies in European Migration policies, being an instrument for the above selection policies. The number and geographical distribution of countries with bilateral visa regulation is telling its own story. All African countries and only very few Latin American and Asian countries need visa to come to the Schengen area. Irregular migration means criminalisation of the migrants. On the other hand migration and the remittances coming along with it are praised as means of development cooperation. This attitude determines the discussion on Post 2015 Agenda as well as EU Development strategies. This policy confirms or even widens the gaps between economically weaker countries starting a race to the bottom to offer cheap labour force.

Christal Spel started her presentation with shocking examples of day to day situations and challenges migrants face on the roads of RSA, but also in many other countries. Migrants face criminalisation, discrimination and denial of access to basic social and medical services. Additionally migrants are endangered to lose their living and to be uprooted whenever settlement takes place. Hence migrants though being an asset to societies are not able to contribute as much as they could to the destination societies. Sustainability is jeopardised. Christal Spel suggests to change the concept of the triangle governments, host society and migrants as being on of Entrepreneur (Govt), client (Migrant) and staff (population). With this new perspectives develop since clients are treated as welcome contributors to economic, social and cultural wealth. It is desirable to have a lasting and sustainable relation with clients. On political level she calls for the African Union to develop policies for coherence and integration as well as making a stand for their peoples on international platforms and in bilateral negotiations with the EU e.g.

The discussion revolved around the theme of the tension between an economic approach to migration and the social implications for sending and receiving societies. The economisation of human labour to support global capitalism dominates the public debate. Human rights, ethics and a wholesome human development are sidelined. The right to stay/to remain in home countries leads to the necessity of holding governments accountable for employment politics and sustainability development policies. Current conceptualisations of democracy are undermined by the exclusion and economisation of migrants and their families. As a result, xenophobia is on the rise. Externalisation of border management to neighbor countries as practiced by the EU in the Maghreb states e.g. is the latest step, based on the misperception of the need to reconcile the right to migrate and the right to stay.

The solution lies to a great part in solidarity building of local social and labour movements with migrant organisations. By joining forces economic actors can be challenged more effectively, foremost by demanding governments to replace migration management with employment strategies based on the right to decent work and the concept of social dialogue, social protection, labour rights for everybody regardless of migration status.

Bonn, 16. December 2014