

Migration and Development - Reflection Dinner

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Migration and Development - Experience
and practice meet practical assumptions



Migration and Development Dinner and Reflection

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**Bringing Experience and Practice
to the Migration and Development Table**
Observations and Questions for Reflection

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INTRODUCTION

I'm not going to talk about the 200 million international migrants, or the US \$400 billion in remittances they send home each year.

Instead, let's look directly at migration and development—not with a European perspective alone but from a global perspective; first at the context for migration and development today, and then at some practical questions for reflection and discussion, here and after, on issues that are either the foundation or at the heart of the migration and development debate.

There's a story about two men who love to collect, of all things, old iron safes, and the heavier the better. One day they hire a plane to go out east looking for safes for a week. When the pilot comes back at the end of the week to pick them up, he sees *four* heavy safes on the runway.

“We can't take all of these!!” he says.

“Well, we had four last year!” they say.

“Well, if you did it then, we will do it again!”

So they load all of the safes onto the plane and take off. They're in the air for about an hour and then they crash.

One guy says to the other, “Do you know where we are?”

“Yes. I think we are... about two kilometers from where we crashed last year.”

The story is about trying the same thing even though it doesn't work.

The lesson is that with a little reflection, new and better results may be possible.

1. It's a NEW DAY for international migration. <i>What's new:</i>
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Far and away the first new thing is that, without forgetting very real migration issues like absorption adjustments, integration, brain drain etc., the world is for the first time seeing a *global mutuality between what nations need and what migrants need*. The traditional “push-pull” analysis of migration is still important, but it is no longer the controlling dynamic. Suddenly it is much more a dynamic of *mutual need*, primarily economic, and specifically of migrant labour. Moreover, the need is for both skilled and non-skilled labour. And it’s a need not exclusive to countries of the north alone. The need for migrant labour is worldwide, which is perhaps most dramatically evident in the growing pattern of “musical chairs” migration in so many countries where, when the music stops everyone is in a different place. In this musical chairs however, governments are increasingly playing, and with enthusiasm, moist of the music that moves people around. Unprecedented numbers of Polish and Czechs, for example, are migrating westward for work, replaced in varying degrees in their home labour markets by migrant workers from the Baltic countries; Argentinean workers moving to Europe are to a large extent being replaced at home by migrants from Bolivia and Paraguay. There are similar patterns among Mexican nationals migrating northward for work, with migrants from Central and South America filling jobs behind them; Indonesians migrating for work in Malaysia and the Middle East with nationals of multiple Asian countries moving into the vacuum they’ve left; and in China and India, this “musical chairs” phenomena in internal as well as external migration.

One of the great challenges of our era will be to facilitate an ordered and effective *matching* of the need.

The second new thing is that the nations of the world and broader international community have just completed a number of major, top-level studies of the phenomenon and experience of global migration, with *one conclusion in common*: there is an underappreciated and untapped value in looking at the *positives* of migration, that is, the significant, measurable contributions of migrants and refugees, in countries of origin and destination. A series of ground-breaking analyses of migrant labour and remittances published by the World Bank since 2003, the acclaimed report of the Global Commission on International Migration and Development in 2005, the 2006 report on Migration and Development of the UN Secretary General, all stress the importance of migrant labor and remittances to societies and economies in all regions of the world, as well as social and other contributions that migrants and their families offer to the countries they move to or from.

The clear challenge is to *act* in a manner consistent with the positive conclusion reached by these studies.

The third new thing is the engagement of so many new players and new processes, global and regional. There is for example, the entirely new “Global Forum on Migration and Development,” the result of no less than the High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development at the UN General Assembly in 2006; innumerable international seminars and regional consultations, many of them organized by the International Organization for Migration, and an ongoing series of interregional meetings between the European Union and Africa. On its own motion as well at the invitation of States and international organizations, the private sector/business is a big new player in the debate.

It will be an enormous challenge for all of these actors to *move in concert*.

Fourth, this all adds up to an extraordinary attention to linking migration and development. The challenge is for *all* to see the links and benefit to the maximum extent possible.

Obviously, if it's a new day, it's foolish to do things same old way...

2. There is also a NEW CENTER and a NEW CONSENSUS emerging.

Increasingly, the international community, regional bodies like the EU, States and non-government organizations (NGOs):

- **Agree on the need to *manage migration*** (though because of how that term has been so often used and applied, NGOs prefer to say “organize” migration...)

There is in fact *total* agreement on reducing irregular migration, in particular the worst and most dangerous kinds: smuggling and human trafficking. In fact, NGOs already do quite a bit to reduce irregular migration, including anti-trafficking programs worldwide, and the provision of legal services that increase compliance with immigration laws.

There is wide agreement and growing agreement on the specific need to reduce *forced* migration, in part by greater recognition and support of the *right to not migrate*. More and more we hear—and wholeheartedly join in—the refrain: migration should be a choice, not a necessity.

Finally, there is general agreement on the great need & *capacity* of increasing numbers of countries to receive migrants looking for work.

- **There continues to be universal agreement that some migrants have an *unequivocal right to specific protection*: refugees**, though we and many in the international community are concerned about the significant erosion of this right in recent years, with restrictions on asylum processes, etc.

People fleeing persecution have a right to protection under international conventions. And refugees and other forced migrants are a key component of the migration and development debate.

- **There is increasing experience and recognition that “*enforcement-only*” approaches don’t make sense**—that they just push people into the worst kinds of migration, including people truly in need of protection, and create chaos in receiving societies—chaos in the economy, in labor, and in tax systems, and are disastrous for integration, social cohesion and stability.
- In fact, there is a **emerging convergence is that enforcement is only ¼ of “managing migration,”** that enforcement makes sense only as part of comprehensive immigration policy—and a growing **sense that in the linkage of migration & development, we more clearly see *the other 3 parts* to “managing migration”**:

Because a **second part** of managing migration is to *provide legal channels* that more closely match the mutual need: of nations that need migrants and migrants that need to migrate. It is becoming increasingly acknowledged in the migration and development debate that more realistic legal channels benefit both origin and receiving nations, their economies and development as well as the migrants themselves.

The **third part** of managing migration is to *provide targeted development* in countries of origin, to reduce *forced* migration.

And finally the **fourth part** is to *provide and respect migrant rights... and obligations*.

- In receiving countries: rights together with obligations support both contributions by migrants to their new society and their integration within it. In turn, this increases the ability of migrants to fight poverty and facilitate development back home.
- In countries of origin: development in particular is about expanding choices and rights. Moreover, development recognizes rights not only as human but as practical, and brings that perspective to migration.

3. There is much upon which to reflect, including 4 areas of significant tension in the migration and development debate.
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1. The *two-way* directionality of the debate

- What does *migration* do to development, and what does *development* do to migration?
- ...and how do we increase the *positives* and decrease the *negatives* of both?

2. How do we reconcile very distinct logics...

- individual decision making in migration v. the community approach of development
- political decision-making that typically reacts to migration with immediate or short-term measures v. development as a long-term process

...and how can we get the two camps to talk and work together?? One sign of the challenge is that *development* actors are only slowly coming to the migration and development table, mostly occupied by migration-types!

3. In *migration*: tensions of how to reconcile the *transnational* nature of migration v. the national politics of migration? In this regard, isn't the critical national political (and social) question really how to (better) manage *integration*?

In *development*: tensions of "traditional" vs. "new" development. How can we properly maximize migrant remittances? How can we target development, especially to reduce not simply irregular migration, but *forced* migration?

4. Where can we, here in Europe, make our *next* steps most productive?

- The need for better structures to deal with migration management
- Is it really an endless contest among national v. bilateral v. regional v. inter-regional or international processes?
- In the grand debate between regional v. international approaches, is it possible that the answer is not "either-or," but both, e.g., *regional* agreements on migration and development (including the framework on Co-development that the Council of Europe is considering next week in Strasbourg), with *international standards* on rights (such as the International Convention on Migrant Workers and ILO Conventions)?

- Should the focus be on South-North migration or South-South migration? And what about *internal* migration?
- What about the need to re-direct social reactions and public opinion?

4. To summarize with 4 propositions, to provoke reflection, discussion, and... *action!*

1st proposition for reflection: In order to manage migration in ways that match realities (in particular, the mutual need of receiving nations and migrants), **there is a clear need for a *comprehensive approach, including increasing legal channels of migration.***

Because experience tells us all that there simply is no other way. Fighting or slowing regularization offers no value whatever. “Enforcement-only” not only doesn’t work, but makes it worse.

And there are suddenly several examples going in the right general direction on this: EU Commissioner Frattini’s talk of blue (“green”) cards, and Commissioner Michel’s idea of job centres in Africa. *Who would have imagined serious proposals of that kind at that level in Europe even 3 years ago?* Of course, there’s a lot of work that we will all need to do together on the details of such proposals...

→ **Discussion Question:** How do States and regions like Europe stop calling *needed* migration “illegal,” and increase legal channels to match realities? Among other things, what must be done regarding EU competencies in the area of migration?

2nd proposition for reflection: There is a need to *target development to reduce forced migration.*

Perhaps this calls for *new forms* of development, including more holistic forms of co-development. Perhaps experience has taught us that among other things, we need to *support refugee rights to livelihood and self reliance*, whether in camps and urban refugee settings, so that refugees can return home and participate in development rather than continue to be dependent, or re-migrate, e.g., to Europe.

→ **Discussion question:** Is there a need to create new *forms* of development or new *criteria* that measure progress in a more holistic way, or just simply extend or better apply existing models?

3rd proposition for reflection: Rights are *practical*; in fact, they’re the very *key to contributions by migrants and to social cohesion, but only in balance with obligations.* It is time to recognize both.

For *States*—receiving nations in particular (and not just in Europe)—this means that it is time to more fully recognize universal rights of migrants—including:

- full and fair economic rights
- the International Convention on Migrant Workers
- other rights—beginning with family rights.

Two rights that we as *faith-based organizations* are particularly supportive of are the right to family unification, and the right to development (which again is so important to the right to *not* migrate!)

For *NGOs*, it means that even as *NGOs* continue to press for migrant rights, we recognize as well two things:

- that economic *interests* and economic *rights* are not necessarily opposite and enemies!
- that migrants also have fundamental obligations, including basic obligations of *integration*.

→ **Discussion question**: *Is it time for a new social contract, enumerating migrant rights and obligations??*

4th and final proposition for reflection: There is **much more** to this migration and development debate than has been explored so far. **Linking migration and development is *practical***; migration and development links States and migrants and *NGOs* in *practical work*. Sensible migration and development policies:

- **link States** together productively: both in regions and among countries of origin, transit and destination;
- **link migrants with countries of origin**: for example, in co-development activities and in circular migration; and
- **link States with *NGOs* and migrant communities**, advancing integration and social cohesion in receiving States; and in countries of origin, promoting the more productive use and investment of remittances; co-development, circular migration and return of skills.

As we will see in the 3 presentations after dinner, *NGOs* and broader civil society have enormous experience in achieving these practical results, often in partnership with States, the EU and others. Among the real, *visible and measurable examples*:

- **reducing abuses of labor migrants, including services for victims of trafficking**, as Najla Chahda will describe in her programs in Caritas, Lebanon;
- **reducing problems of *forced* migration with targeted development**, which Sister Roxanne Schares will describe in her work with JRS in Africa;
- **supporting *legal* immigration**, which Fr. José Núñez will describe in his work with Misereor in the Dominican Republic.
- **increasing integration and social cohesion** with cultural orientation programs, language, livelihood and employment training programs that ICMC and our members do in many countries.

[After dinner: These practical *NGO* experiences and program in 3 case studies.]

→ **So the last discussion question**: Do States properly appreciate the experience and *practical role of *NGOs** in helping to link and achieve the real benefits of migration and development?