



International Grail Publication 2011

MIGRATION MATTERS



'All countries today are points of origin, transit and destination.
We are all in the same boat'.

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FOREWORD

At the meeting of the International Grail Council and Network Coordinators in Utrecht in 2008, in a session on Global Justice Overcoming Poverty (GJOP), the world-wide migration of people came up for discussion. We realised that we knew little about where and how Grail women were actively engaged with people who had left their home place to live in another country. The meeting also questioned the extent of the knowledge and understanding in the Grail of the many dimensions of this global reality of our time.

It was recommended that these matters should be further explored. In 2010, the present International Leadership Team (ILT) asked those responsible for the GJOP monthly Bulletin to produce, in 2011, a publication on 'migration' and related issues, which could provide a basis and stimulus for continued action and reflection. Here it is.

The decision was taken to interpret 'migration' to mean 'movement from one country and culture to another' and so to include in the publication:

- people seeking permanent residence in accordance with receiving countries' planned immigration programs;
- refugees and asylum seekers who may, or may not, fit into countries' planned immigration programs;
- migrant workers (among whom there may be victims of trafficking).

All of these you will find in *Migration Matters*.

All but two of the contributions that follow come from Grail members. The leading article by Professor John Salt, reprinted from a publication of The Grail in England with the permission of all concerned, provides us with a clear, informative overview. The *Catholic Information Service for AFRICA* is the source for the article on human trafficking in Africa. All Grail members were notified of this project and invited to write freely whatever they wished to contribute. (We have provided contact addresses so that readers may follow up directly with the writers anything they would like to discuss further.) The result is a very readable collection of human stories, reflections and insights, research data and findings, which the publication team considers a stimulating initiation into some of the complexities of the movements of people in our world today.

There is much to interest us here and there is much missing. Approximately twenty Grail women, mainly from 'receiving' or 'destination' countries, wrote for this publication. Rosaurora Espinosa alone writes from a 'sending' country, one with a long, hard experience of losing its citizens through emigration. We can claim for *Migration Matters* no more than that it begins to explore the movements of people in our world and how Grail women are constructively involved. What will follow from it? The publication team and, we feel sure, the contributors hope for some practical proposals that will give further effect to the engagement of The Grail with global migration.

John Salt clarifies the meanings of several terms. However, one term 'migrant' is used differently in different countries and this calls for a comment here. For example, Mary Boyd quotes a Canadian definition of 'migrant' as meaning 'anyone who moves to another country without being granted the right to stay there permanently' and she distinguishes between 'migrants' and 'immigrants'. In Australia, 'migrant' is used for newcomers to the country whether permanent or temporary residents; in ordinary parlance, the word 'immigrant' is not used at all.

Readers may wonder, in the case of one contribution, why the name of the author is withheld. This was decided jointly by the author and the editors to protect the identity of the woman written about. Inconsistencies in spelling may be another cause for questioning. Some articles use American spelling;; the others have been edited according to Australian usage.

Grateful acknowledgment is due to all those who have shared their experiences, knowledge and caring insights in this publication. We acknowledge with thanks, also, the sources of the two reprinted articles mentioned above.

'I, libelle' ('Go forth, little book').

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Marian Kelly.(design)

from Psalm 139

*You search me, God, and know me.
You know if I sit or stand,
you read my innermost thoughts;
whether I walk or rest,
you know everything I do.*

*Where can I hide from you?
Where can I flee from your presence?
If I climb the heavens you are there!
If I plunge to the depths you are there, too!*

*If I think night will hide me
and darkness give me cover,
I find darkness is not dark.
For your night shines like day,
darkness and light are one.*

*If I fly toward the dawn,
or settle across the seas,
even there you would still be guiding me,
your right hand holding me.*

*Search my heart, probe me, God!
Know my thoughts.
Do not let me stray on crooked paths.
Lead me along your sure and constant way.*

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION TODAY: AN OVERVIEW

Professor John Salt, Migration Research Unit, University College London

What is migration?

Researchers and policy makers confront the confusion that surrounds the issue of migration daily. Concepts are unclear. Statistics are partial and frequently quoted by the media in ways that alarm rather than inform. A very incomplete picture of population movement is often presented. Reductionism is rife. Migration becomes ‘immigration’; ‘immigration’ and ‘asylum’ are assumed to be the same. The rich complexity is too often reduced to sound bites and there is a depressing foghorn dialogue between lobbies that might loosely be described as ‘pro’ and ‘anti’.

The answer to the question ‘What is migration?’ is by no means straightforward. It is, in fact, a sub-category of a wider concept of ‘movement’, embracing various types and forms of human mobility from commuting to permanent emigration. People move from one country to live in another for varying periods: three months, six months, a year, ten years, a lifetime. At what point should we regard them as immigrants? In fact, what we define as migration is an arbitrary choice.

Types of migration

Migration streams are dynamic, involve different types of people and motivations, have different roles and different implications for host and sending societies and are influenced and managed by different agencies and institutions. They are also two-way: the migration debate in the United Kingdom focuses almost entirely on immigrants, yet thousands of people leave every year.

The concept of permanent migration, for example, is epitomised in the idea of new lands of opportunity, perhaps typified by Australia. But today what we mean by ‘permanent’ is less clear: mostly it occurs indirectly, resulting from previous temporary migrations, perhaps accompanied by family reunion and family formation.

Most voluntary migration in recent decades has featured temporary labour migrants, an enormously diverse group which includes au pairs and domestic servants, agriculture and construction workers, hotel, catering and cleaning staff and highly skilled corporate secondees. The health and education systems have been actively recruiting professionals for varying time periods and the universities have been striving successfully to attract more foreign students.

Possibly growing in numbers are migrants who are in an irregular position, mostly entering the host country illegally, often with the help of traffickers and human smugglers. The evidence for this is not, however, conclusive. Data on irregular migration flows across Europe, mainly based on apprehension data, revealed no evidence of increasing numbers in recent years.

The mobility spectrum must also take some account of the vast numbers of tourists and business travellers. For some of them brief trips abroad are fact-finding missions which ultimately lead to longer term moves; for others, business travel is a substitute for two or three years’ corporate secondment.

Finally, it is important that these diverse groups are not seen as discrete, since one type of migration journey may transform into another. An overseas student may marry and stay on; an asylum seeker may be granted leave to remain; or someone given right of settlement may decide to ‘go home’.

How many migrants are there?

The United Nations defines international migrants as people living outside their country of birth. Today, that number is estimated to be 214 million, around 3% of the world’s population. Interestingly, the proportion has remained fairly constant for the last 40 years, so it seems that the number of migrants globally is related to the size of the world’s population. Working age migrants (20 – 64 years) are around

three-quarters of the total; and two-thirds of them are in developed countries. About 15% are aged under 20 years. Half of all migrants are women.

There seems little likelihood of substantial reductions in numbers of international migrants for several reasons:

- Global population will continue to rise by an estimated 2-3 billion by the middle of the century. Most of this increase will be in poorer countries, intensifying emigration pressures.
- Increased economic globalisation leads to more globalisation of migration, so that new migration sources and nodes will emerge.
- Ageing populations in developed countries will require compensatory labour immigration, particularly for labour-intensive personal care occupations.
- Pressure on food supplies will require more seasonal agricultural workers.
- Environmental deterioration will encourage emigration from marginal areas.

(This article first appeared in 'Grail Good Life', 29, Summer 2011, published by The Grail in England and printed here with permission of the author.)

MIGRANTS AND UNITED NATIONS INSTRUMENTALITIES

Sharon Joslyn, USA



1 International Migrants' Day: 18th December, 2010

The twentieth anniversary of this day was commemorated at the United Nations, New York, with a panel presentation and open discussion on the topic of migration. There are over 200 million migrants around the world. 'All countries today are points of origin, transit and destination: we are all in the same boat', said a participant in a conference, *Building Common Ground for the Global Governance of Migration*, Geneva.

On 17th December, seven panelists, all experts on the subject, presented the challenges of global migration confronting all countries. There are three universal

Conventions that provide the legal framework for the protection of migrants' human rights and labor rights and for national migration policies and international cooperation to regulate migration. These Conventions are complementary:

- 1) the International Labor Organisation (ILO) *Migration for Employment Convention (C-97)*, 1949;
- 2) the ILO *Migrant Workers Convention, (C-143)*, 1975;
- 3) the UN *International Convention on the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW)*, 1990.

The third of these, the UN Convention 1990, reinforced the international legal framework concerning human rights that had been established in three earlier documents: *the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948*, the *International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966* and the *International Convention on Civil and Political Rights 1966*. It protects the basic rights of all migrant workers and their families and grants regular migrants a number of additional rights on the basis of equality with nationals. In spite of intensive international effort by many to increase the number of countries ratifying the treaty, progress has been very slow. So far, it is the least ratified treaty of all the major human rights treaties, with only 44 countries ratifying and no high-income, destination country among them.

'The negative public perception of migration and migrants is a huge problem, which creates significant impediments for politicians. When you talk about our country's needs, it is clear that we need more

migrant workers. But when you open the newspapers, you get an extreme and opposite view.’ (An Ambassador of a European country)

Our efforts as citizens in our countries can be directed to urging our governments to sign, ratify or accede to these Conventions:

- *To sign* a treaty shows an intention to adhere to the treaty and is done by the Executive Branch of Government.
- *To ratify* a treaty requires the additional action of the Legislative Branch of Government. This is a country’s formal agreement to the text of a treaty and the adoption of its standards in the nation’s laws.
- *To accede* to a treaty is to omit the preliminary signing and to take the necessary legislative action to adopt the treaty.

By ratifying, or acceding, to a treaty a national state becomes a ‘state party to the treaty’ and the treaty becomes legally binding for that state once it enters into force, ie, once it is signed by a minimum number of state parties, usually 20.

When a treaty ‘enters into force’, it becomes binding on the nation states that have ratified or acceded to it and these countries then have to report periodically on what they have done to implement the standards, or norms, contained in the treaty.

In the following table, the total number of countries that have ratified the three conventions referred to above is indicated. Individual countries listed include only those where there are Grail entities.

Countries that have ratified the three Conventions referred to above

State	ILO Convention- 97 (Total : 49)	ILO Convention-143 (Total: 23)	UN Convention 1990 (Total: 35)
Brazil	June 1965		
Germany	June 1959		
Italy	October 1952	June 1981	
Kenya	November 1965	April 1979	
Mexico			March 1999
Netherlands	May 1952		
Philippines	April 2009	September 2006	July 1995
Portugal	December 1978	December 1978	
Sweden		December 1982	
Uganda		March 1978	November 1995

Part of our work as a non-Government Organisation (NGO) is to monitor the implementation of treaties ratified by states. We in The Grail have done this to a great extent with the Commission on the Status of Women, in particular the Working Group on Girls, a subcommittee of UNICEF. As a consequence, the participation of girls has increased substantially. We need to do more follow-up on issues concerning migration, climate change and indigenous peoples.

2 Advancing Rights for Migrant Women

This Report is the outcome of a meeting on 'Gender and Migration', held in March 2010, which was sponsored by United Methodist Women, who have offices in the Church Centre of the United Nations in New York. *Carol Barton*, (Grail USA) is employed by United Methodist Women and made this report available.

Migrant women in all regions of the world face particular barriers and challenges to the fulfillment of their human rights and gender equality. In most regions, the basic rights of citizens are not extended to migrants, particularly those with irregular status. Women's efforts to strengthen legal statutes and social protection for women in their nations will not improve the rights of migrant women unless specific efforts are made to recognize migrant women's full human rights. This includes political rights, labor rights, economic and social rights and full recourse to legal protection.

Women are 75% of all refugees and 52% of the total global population of people in migration, estimated at over 220 million. Migration is occurring within nations, between neighboring countries in all regions, and from South to North. By and large, women migrate out of necessity, such as economic need, climate change and war. The neo-liberal economic model, imposed on many nations through trade, aid, economic and financial policy, has undermined national economies and forced millions to migrate in search of livelihoods. Increasingly they are met with hostility and criminalization.

There is a profound hypocrisy in policies that create the necessity for migration and then take advantage of migrant workers and penalize or criminalize them for their presence. Xenophobic and racist attitudes are reflected in the media, public discourse and legislation. As migrants are utilized as a commodity that is sometimes needed and sometimes expendable, xenophobia intensifies in times of economic crisis when jobs are scarce. Migration issues must be addressed through global economic policies that enhance sustainable development and job creation, especially in the global South, and make migration a choice rather than a necessity. An essential priority is the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) No.8, 'a global partnership for development' that more equitably shares global resources.

Women migrants face unique challenges. Many women must leave their children behind in order to find work to support their families. Others migrate with their families and bear the burdens of intense work combined with care-giving at home. Women tend to find work in traditional women's roles—domestic work, child care, cooking, garment-making and other piece work—where they work long hours for low pay and intense exploitation. Domestic work is a particularly egregious situation, where women are isolated and sometimes abused with no benefits or recourse in an occupation not internationally recognized as 'work'. Women migrants may also face abuse and violence by employers, law enforcement agents, 'coyotes'¹ and spouses. Because of the growing criminalization of migrants, they are often unable to seek redress for such abuse. Non-government organizations (NGOs) must utilize several international venues to promote global migrant rights, particularly the rights of migrant women. They need to:

- 1) reaffirm the specific needs and realities of migrant women in relation to the Beijing Platform for Action, as noted in the Beijing+5 review, and address the diversity of women's experience in all aspects of the review;
- 2) recognize that MDG goals must go beyond programs for citizens to address the needs of migrant women (including those without formal status) within national territories, eg, regarding women's poverty, maternal mortality and education for girls;
- 3) urge the universal ratification of the *UN Convention on the Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families*, linked to the *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)* and the *Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)*;

¹ 'Border smugglers' who help people cross the border illegally.

- 4) raise awareness within the UN Human Rights Council of the human rights abuses women experience as workers, detainees and deportees;
- 5) support the new *Convention on Domestic Workers*, adopted by the International Labor Organization (ILO) at its annual convention on June 16 with an historic set of international standards for tens of millions of domestic workers worldwide; (this binding legislation is pending ratification by ILO member countries)
- 6) address migrant women's needs in the context of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, and specifically promote a gendered analysis of the impact of dubious 'circular migration' schemes.

THE INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE, HOCHFELD – WHAT'S NEW?

Karoline Robins, Germany

The International Initiative, Hochfeld, was launched in Duisburg in the beginning of the 1970s by two members of the Grail; Hilde Derksen and Silvana Ferraguti. Since 1980, the main centre of activity for the Initiative has been the part of Duisburg called Hochfeld. Duisburg is a town in the west of the Ruhr district, strongly dominated by mining and the steel industry. Because of the lack of local workers in the 1960s, the so-called 'Gastarbeiter' (guest workers) were recruited from Italy, Spain, Greece and Turkey. This is why more than 60 % of the inhabitants have an emigrant background. This part of Duisburg now has a more than average number of unemployed and single parent families. Today the Initiative has three full-time employees and eleven part-time co-workers of five different nationalities.

The main focus of the work of the Initiative was, and still is, providing information for families, with or without migration background, increasing local participation and creating places where local people can come together. The work has been adapted to meet the particular requirements of the inhabitants of Hochfeld. Day to day help is also provided in sudden emergencies. For a number of years, numerous services for children have successfully been offered; there is regular homework supervision and we have already planned for the annual school holiday leisure program. Children of fifteen different nationalities get together in these various groups.

A further focus of the centre's work is providing women with German language courses and information workshops, arranging social get-togethers, consultations and excursions and trips. Participants from at least fourteen different nationalities take part in these activities.

It becomes apparent, especially during the excursions, how limited the women's normal daily activities are. A large number of the 'Hochfelders' are only familiar with the local area, which they rarely venture out of. The feeling of really belonging to a place becomes more possible when one is familiar with the social structures and the cultural history of a town or place and its surrounding environment. To help broaden the women's horizons, we take the women on excursions to other parts of the Duisburg district, eg, to the harbour, the recreational park 'Landschaftspark Nord' or into nearby green-belt areas. Last year we went on an excursion to the 'Zeche Zollverein' in Essen, a world heritage site for mining, to learn more about the history of the Ruhr district. There we visited the 'Ruhrmuseum' and discussed the development of the Ruhr district, from the first migration to the present day. We also visited three different places of worship: the Merkez-mosque, the Salvator church and the Duisburg Synagogue. In February this year, at the request of mainly Muslim women, we visited the Cathedral in Cologne. We were pleased that numerous women who do not usually make use of the services of the Initiative joined us on these trips.

There is another area of need that has claimed our attention over the last 4 years.. In 2007, Bulgaria und Romania became members of the European Union (EU). Citizens of the EU have freedom of movement in all Member States, which means that they are allowed to travel in the other EU countries, take up

residency and actively look for work. As a result, Duisburg-Hochfeld has experienced a large inflow of people from both of these countries. Many Bulgarian and Romanian families are discriminated against in their own countries and, as a consequence, live in appalling conditions. The fathers are often unemployed and the children never, or rarely, go to school. In the hope of a better future for themselves and their children, they have left their homes in Bulgaria and Romania and have come to live in Duisburg. Over 10 % of the people living in Hochfeld area are now Bulgarian nationals.

The right of free movement in the EU does not simultaneously include a work permit, so that Bulgarians and Romanians are often blocked from taking regular normal jobs. This has grave consequences in their everyday life: It means they have to earn a living by accepting illegal work, which pays minimal wages if they're lucky, or they busk on the streets. They often have no health insurance and live in the most precarious housing. In addition, they suffer discriminatory remarks and stereotyping attitudes from other members of the society, such as, 'Bulgarians throw their rubbish onto the street', 'Gypsies steal', 'Ever since the Bulgarians arrived the place has been going downhill'.

Over the past four years, we at the Initiative have been actively seeking contact with Bulgarian families. Women and children have been making use of our services, eg, Bulgarian women come to our counselling office for help with their problems. From the beginning of 2011, we have been offering a beginners' course in German especially for Bulgarian women. There has been tremendous interest in it

We have also started a project to bring together people from various institutions who are in contact with Bulgarian and Romanian families, such as schoolteachers and social workers. The aim of this project is to improve significantly the living conditions of Bulgarian and Romanian migrants. As local government has been wholly ignoring their needs, the objective of this project is of vital importance for future social development in Hochfeld.

We want to warmly thank all the members of The Grail for the many years of support they have given the Initiative and its staff.

So that we can carry on our work, donations are crucial and always welcome and appreciated. Our bank details are Sparkasse Duisburg, IBAN DE 02 3505 0000 0240002949, SWIFT BIC DU ISDE 33 XXX.

(Karoline Robins has been working at the Initiative in Hochfeld since 1982)

HUMAN TRAFFICKING GROWING IN AFRICA: NEW CHURCH STUDY



Human trafficking for the purposes of forced labour and commercial sexual exploitation is a growing problem in East Africa, according to a new study.

The study was published in April 2009 by the Catholic agency, *Koinonia Advisory Research and Development Service (KARDS)*, to establish the response to the vice from faith-based organisations and other actors. Fifty-one organisations participated. The study was conducted in Malindi, Mombasa and Nairobi in Kenya and Dar-es-Salaam and Zanzibar in Tanzania.

The study found that, in Tanzania, boys are trafficked for forced labour on farms and in mines, the fishing industry and the informal business sector.

'Tanzanian girls from rural areas are trafficked to urban centres and the island of Zanzibar for domestic servitude and commercial sexual exploitation; some domestic workers fleeing abusive employers fall prey to forced prostitution'. Tanzanian men are reportedly trafficked to South Africa for forced labour and girls are trafficked to Oman, the United Arab Emirates and possibly Europe. Kenyan children are

trafficked within the country for domestic servitude, street vending, agricultural labour, herding, work as bar maids and commercial sexual exploitation. Other trafficked Kenyans end up in other African nations, the Middle East, Europe and North America. 'Employment agencies facilitate and profit from trafficking of Kenyan nationals to the Middle East, notably to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Lebanon, as well as to Germany'. Chinese, Indian and Pakistani women transit Nairobi en route to Europe for the sexual trade. Foreign women are also employed in Nairobi brothels and massage parlours. Children are trafficked into Kenya from Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Uganda and Somalia.

The report blames the vice on poverty, unemployment, migration, globalisation, cultural and social norms, lack of birth registration and appropriate laws to deal with human trafficking. 'Tanzania has enacted a law on human trafficking that is yet to be gazetted and enforced. Kenya's efforts to develop an appropriate law have been dragging on since 2007 when non-Government organisations sent a recommended bill to the [Attorney General]', the report says.

Source: Catholic Information Service for AFRICA, Nairobi, 8th May 2009, www.cisaneWSafrica.org, reprinted by Dutch Foundation of Religious against Trafficking in Women (SRT); submitted by Ton Brouwer for the GJOP Bulletin, January 2010

SOUTH PACIFIC MIGRATION

Sheila Hawthorn, Australia

This reflection was compiled from discussions I had with migrants from Papua New Guinea and Tokelau who now live in Townsville. Tokelau is one of the Pacific Island nations whose residents have New Zealand (NZ) citizenship. From the late 1950s through the 60s, because the Tokelau islands were very overcrowded, many Tokelauans resettled in New Zealand under the NZ government's Resettlement Scheme. Since then, Tokelauans have continued to migrate to NZ, so that now more of the people live in NZ than in Tokelau. In recent years, many Tokelauans have chosen to migrate to Australia via NZ and direct from Tokelau. These are the main reasons they give:

- They seek more choices in life for themselves and better educational opportunities for their children.
- The increase among Pacific Islanders of 'western' diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease, calls for health services (both education and treatment) that are not available to them in their homeland.
- They can escape the worsening frequency of cyclones, tsunamis and storms that ruin homes, gardens and livestock and trap them in a cycle of destruction, rebuilding, destruction, rebuilding again.
- They want to be free of the patriarchal authoritarianism in the society, at the personal, community and political levels. One Tokelauan woman spoke of feeling 'claustrophobic', of longing for more physical and psychic space than a traditional life on a small island could provide her.

One woman said, 'Of course there are costs'. What are these?

- Separation from the extended family;
- complex and costly procedures for obtaining permanent residency and citizenship in Australia;
- loss of cultural attributes and languages, especially among young people.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is a large island nation of approximately 4 million people immediately north of Australia, which was an Australian Mandated Territory from 1945 to 1975. There is much movement between the two countries for business, tourism, aid projects, high school and tertiary studies and medical services. The flight between PNG's capital, Port Moresby, and Cairns, a large regional city in North Queensland, takes less than two hours. Many Papua New Guineans are settled in Australia, mostly down the eastern coast. One PNG woman spoke of her 'rights' in Australia which are not widely available in her home country. 'Men and women in Australia have the same rights when they are married and when

they are separated. Accessing health care and social services is so much easier and working conditions have been very much better for me here than in PNG’.

Migrants from Pacific Island nations have settled in Australia over many years, the largest numbers being from PNG, Fiji, Tokelau and Tonga. These countries are spread across a vast area of the Pacific Ocean. While physical poverty is a pivotal cause of the movements of people around the world, it has been less of a reason for migration in the Pacific. People in many of the Pacific Islands are able to live healthy and productive lives within their traditional economy. The industrial world needs to value the traditional economy at its true worth. Because it is not included in assessing the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), these countries are categorised by the ‘developed’ world, wrongly, as impoverished and so in need of ‘developmental’ projects. The projects that follow frequently bring real poverty where there was none before. Fertile food-producing land is taken for ‘development’, such as products for export, buildings and infrastructure for corporate enterprises, and farmers and gardeners and their dependants are forced off their land to live in overcrowded conditions and buy more expensive, less nutritious, imported food. The comments of the Pacific Islanders I interviewed show that it was not so much physical poverty that pushed them to migrate but poverty of opportunities for education, health and choices in life. ‘Development’ projects that serve corporate and foreign interests rather than those of the people are changing the situation for the worse. So also are the more frequent and fiercer storms, caused by climate change, that have already destroyed land and food products, housing, roads, fresh water supplies – everything that sustains life. Physical poverty is an oppression Pacific Islanders now increasingly suffer as a direct consequence of the self-interested decisions of the ‘developed’ world. What Pacific Islanders most desire in their countries are productive work on their own land, transport infrastructure to facilitate the movement of people and produce and better access to improved educational and health services. In addition, they seek labour mobility in the region, particularly just provisions in Australia and New Zealand, for Pacific Island workers to gain temporary work contracts outside their country so that they can take their earnings home to finance small projects there. NZ already has a successful labour mobility program in place. Australia is currently lagging behind with a limited trial program.

It is certain that permanent migration of Pacific Islanders will increase in the future, as they lose their livelihoods because of so-called ‘development’ and climate change.

JUSTICE FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

Mary Boyd, Canada

Each year, Canada receives many immigrants - people from other countries eligible for permanent status - and migrant workers. Migrant workers are usually sponsored under a government program and must have a job before they arrive. They come to this country to find employment and to escape poverty at home; and they work in many areas of the economy including the service industry, in agriculture, fishing and domestic work. After two years of work, if their evaluations are positive, some in certain categories become eligible to apply for citizenship. Many migrants, and immigrants, are skilled workers or professional people whose training and qualifications are not recognized in Canada.

There are approximately 175 million people in the world that fit this simple definition of a migrant, ‘anyone who moves to another country without being granted the right to stay there permanently’,² Migrants from the Global South constitute the largest migration to the North. Economic globalization and free trade agreement have increased the gap between rich and poor, thereby causing more and more people

² *Migrant justice*, KAIROS Canada, 7th April, 2011

to migrate. Free trade deals such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) are pushing small Mexican farmers off the land. Migration has become part of the development strategy for the Philippines as migrant domestic workers send money home to their families and to the government. They are part of the huge pool of domestic workers throughout the world who the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates to number between 53 and 100 million.

Migrant workers in Canada often have to endure low wages and long hours, working at jobs that nobody else wants. They can be denied overtime pay and some are subject to verbal and physical abuse. In extreme cases, their documents have been withheld from them. Since they lack permanent status, they have limited access to social services, few guarantees of labor rights and often suffer from crowded living conditions and lack of privacy.

Hopeful signs

One group of migrants, domestic workers and live-in carers may be on the verge of receiving some much needed protection, thanks to the ILO. At its June 2011 Conference in Geneva it approved a landmark Convention that sets standards for the treatment of domestic workers and aims to improve the living and working conditions of migrant workers who are vulnerable. According to ILO figures, 56% of domestic workers world-wide are without the protection of a law establishing how long their working week can be; 45% are not entitled to at least one day off per week and 36% of female domestic workers have no legal entitlement to maternity leave.

A glance at what *The Convention Concerning Decent Work For Domestic Workers* is striving to change gives insights into the plight of many migrant domestic workers. The text of the Convention begins with the following factual observations:

‘Recognizing the significant contribution of domestic workers to the global economy, which includes increasing paid job opportunities for women and men workers with family responsibilities, greater scope for caring for ageing populations, children and persons with a disability and substantial income transfers within and between countries; and

‘Considering that domestic work continues to be undervalued and invisible and is mainly carried out by women and girls, many of whom are migrants or members of disadvantaged communities and who are particularly vulnerable to discrimination in respect of conditions of employment and of work and other abuses of human rights; and

‘Considering that in developing countries with historically scarce opportunities for formal employment, domestic workers constitute a significant proportion of the national workforce and remain among the most marginalized...’³

In addition to the above, the Convention recognizes that up until now a very large segment of the workforce has been excluded from the protection of the law. According to the ILO, ‘When a country ratifies the Convention, it opens itself to international scrutiny and this puts pressure on member states to ensure that their laws and policies are in conformity with the Convention.’⁴ The Convention will recognize domestic workers as workers entitled to the minimum protection that all other categories of workers are entitled to enjoy. It establishes ‘the right of domestic workers to be informed, in a manner they can understand’, of what the terms and conditions of their employment are: what work they need to carry out; how long they are expected to work; and how much, when and in what manner they will be paid; and it provides for a weekly rest of 24 consecutive hours. It also introduces special measures to address the vulnerability of particular groups of domestic workers - young domestic workers above and below the minimum age of employment’.⁵

³ Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers, ILO, 100th session, Geneva, 16th June, 2011.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ Questions and Answers on the Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers, ILO, Geneva, 21st June, 2011

FILIPINO MIGRANTS CARE FOR PARENTS OVERSEAS⁶

Gloria Lazzarini, Australia



Recent estimates are that migrants send approximately US\$300 billion in financial remittances from developed to developing countries annually and that such money is important at the micro and macro levels in relieving family poverty. As a migrant-receiving country with a culturally and linguistically diverse population, Australia has many migrants from developing countries who are part of this phenomenon. Little is known, however, about the purposes for which migrants send money home, the role it plays in intergenerational care and perceptions of the impact of these payments on the recipients and on their own families in Australia.

This study has a specific focus. It is interested in understanding the financial support provided to aged relatives in developing countries from Australian citizens. The term, 'intergenerational financial transfers' (IFTs) is used to distinguish money sent overseas by migrant adult children to parents or older relatives from general remittances. In Australian government accounting systems, money sent to the home country by migrants is collected as aggregate data and it is therefore not possible to obtain a statistical understanding of how much money is being sent for specific purposes. This thesis explores the practice of making IFTs within one group of Australian citizens - Filipino migrants. Filipinos are one of the more numerous recent groups migrating to Australia from its own geographic region; they are known to send IFTs home; and they have good English skills that will facilitate research participation.

The exploratory study uses in-depth interviews with a purposive, cross-sectional sample of 20 permanent Filipino migrants (10 female and 10 male). The interviews explore participants' current practices of sending money home to older relatives, the influences and motivations to send money over the life cycle, and the perceptions of the impacts of the practice on themselves and the recipients.

A thematic analysis of the transcribed data shows that sending money home is not only a migrant activity, since more than half the participants sent money home to parents before migrating to Australia. It also shows that this sample did not migrate to Australia primarily to make remittances, but for some, migration made it possible to do so. Cultural factors were the main motivation for making IFTs, followed by socio-economic circumstances of parents and family values. No participant would consider abandoning their commitment and those who experienced difficulty in making IFTs over the life cycle were prepared to sell items or take out loans to continue their practice.

The data analysis also showed that as well as females sending on average \$500 per annum and males \$1,000 per annum as cash or cheques through agents or banks, participants also purchased other one-off items and sent substantial amounts of money for various emergency situations. Participants assisted parents with a wider variety of personal caregiving, provided other forms of caregiving, on occasions co-operating with their siblings to do so. This included practical care, giving ongoing psychological and emotional support and sending large packages of goods home. IFTs are an important component of support for older people in many developing countries and are made without expectation of financial return.

The data showed that the practice of making IFTs was problematic for some participants at different stages of the life cycle. Because of the strong cultural values and obligations underpinning the practice,

⁶ This is the abstract of Gloria's Ph.D. thesis which examined this topic in reference to Australian social policy.

participants sometimes felt pressure to make IFTs from potential savings when, for example, school-age family expenses were high and had to be met; or when some women in their intercultural marriages were unable to meet IFTs from their own earnings as their preferred option and had to negotiate IFTs from household income.

The thesis builds knowledge in the area of intergenerational financial transfers, transnational families and transnational caregiving for older people. It also adds depth to the understanding of the caregiving responsibilities and commitments to older people of some Australian citizens. This research adds an understanding of the practice of one group of migrants who send money home to ageing parents in the 21st century. It provides insight into current processes and practices and points to areas of policy where migrant Australian citizens might receive greater recognition for observing cultural obligations to care for parents and older relatives.

IN THE PARISH AND LOCAL COMMUNITY

Marian Schwab, USA



There are multitudes of individuals and small groups expressing their concern for people who have left their homes to seek a better life among strangers in a new land. Such action at the local level, where personal relationships of trust are built, is of the utmost importance.

Marian Schwab is working through her local parish in Hamilton, Ohio, with recent immigrants from Mexico and Central America. Most of these immigrants are 'economic refugees'. Marian listens to their stories of migration and writes articles about them for publication in the parish newsletter as a way of helping build relationships of understanding in the parish. With the parish leadership she is engaged in countering anti-immigrant attitudes among the parishioners.

Dora Delancey is a parish pastoral minister, providing services to immigrants in Houma, Louisiana. Most of these immigrants have crossed the southern border of the USA from Mexico illegally. These services include emergency financial support, translation in hospital and court, liturgies in Spanish.

Carol McDonnell has been: working for years resettling refugees in South Bend, Indiana.

LANGUAGE TEACHING IS MORE THAN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Jill Herbert, Australia

Currently I am teaching English to adult migrants. Some in my class are studying in the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) - 510 hours of English classes provided by the Australian government. (A proportion of visa application fees goes towards the funding of this program.) Some students are paying fees, because they have been in the country a long time and are not now eligible for the AMEP but want to improve their English, or because they have completed their 510 hours and still need more English practice.. Of the women students, many came to Australia because they married an Australian. Others are the spouses of the primary visa holders who have entered the country on a 'skilled migrant' visa.

Of great concern to me among this group are the women - for a number of reasons. Most believe that they have to behave like women in their country of birth and we often have discussions where I tell them about

Australian women and encourage them to look at their domestic expectations a little differently. Recently, a son came along with his mother, aged in her 60s, and told me that his mother could not come to class because he and his father were pursuing their own studies and could not drive her anymore. When I asked why she could not catch the bus, he told me she would not be able to learn to do this. After some heated discussion and a few phone calls on my part, she is still coming to class and is fine on the bus.

Of more concern, of course, is domestic violence. An Australian Indian female police officer recently asked one of my students if her marriage was a love marriage, an arranged marriage or a forced marriage. This last kind of marriage is becoming more common in some ethnic groups in Australia. Often, the man has been here for some years and wants a wife from his country of birth. One Indian woman who was in my class is in a relationship that is particularly violent because of her partner's alcohol abuse. She called the police once, but then said it was a mistake. However, it was the first step in her taking control of her own life and understanding that there is help available should she want it. Just one small story of a huge problem in Australia.

As teachers, it is important that we help students come to know the laws in our country and understand that, while some things are culturally acceptable in their countries of origin, they are not acceptable here. Of course, there are many organisations which help migrants in our country, but often their English teacher is the first Australian person (apart from their Australian husband) whom they get to know.

The International Grail has, over the years, helped me to understand cultural differences and provided me with opportunities to meet women from around the globe. These experiences have shaped my thinking and action towards migrants in our country.

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A SCHOOL PRINCIPAL **Frances Warner, Australia**



My direct contact at present with people who have moved here from other countries is through my work as a school principal in suburban Sydney. I have a small number of students enrolled who are in Australia because their parent (usually their mother) has been granted a visa by the Australian government to work in an occupation in high demand in the Australian society. Nursing is one such 'high demand category' of employment. The women are working in a large local teaching hospital, or an aged-care facility in the area, or a prison in a rural area at a long distance from Sydney. These jobs are not highly paid in comparison with other professional jobs in Australia and there are quite severe shortages of Australians who are trained and willing to work for the pay offered. The families I see have usually come to Australia from Zimbabwe, Sudan, Ethiopia, South Africa or the Philippines. Mostly they are very happy to have the opportunity to live and work in Australia and often bring one or more members of their extended family to join them after some time. The school students are often highly motivated to achieve success in their learning, but some struggle with the many demands made on them by a new country, a new social scene, a very different culture in the school and wider community, child-minding responsibilities at home because the mother works varied shifts including night shifts, and at times, sadly, bullying and racism. Despite all the new demands, some of the students have been hugely successful. They have been elected to student leadership positions, have been very active in faith-sharing and liturgy, have achieved high Higher School Certificate results and have made a mature transition to university studies.

THE PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACT OF BECOMING 'UNDOCUMENTED'

Samia Saad, Canada



Many people migrate for safety and better opportunities. Unfortunately, immigration policies influenced by globalised neo-liberalism dictate the type of immigrants who are welcomed by states in the Global North, while at the same time creating the conditions for the exclusion and rejection of most immigrants.

Those welcomed are often the global elite who are considered to have human capital (money and education, etc.). Other immigrants who do not meet this criteria are considered 'unwanted'. They become the subject of much criticism and criminalisation. They often migrate as asylum seekers or temporary workers and, sometimes, cross the border unnoticed. Research is beginning to reveal that

present immigration policies produce damaging psychosocial effects upon these unwanted immigrants. I will focus on the Canadian situation.

I am a therapist and program coordinator for Latino immigrants and refugees in an agency called *The Lighthouse*, in Toronto. In my work, I encounter many asylum seekers whose refugee claims have been denied and who have been forced to become 'undocumented' after a deportation order was issued. Noticing how their, and their family's, well-being declined as a result, I decided to investigate this further. I conducted a qualitative research for my postgraduate degree program exploring the psychosocial impact of becoming undocumented after getting a negative asylum decision. I did ten interviews and wrote a journal on 21 clients, all of Latino descent. I found that, after becoming undocumented, the psychosocial health of people and their families quickly deteriorates.

People were asked to describe their immigration process, which is characterized by two stages: legal procedures leading to the refugee hearing and the legal recourse to change a negative decision. This study shows that with the adoption of exclusionary immigration policies, the Canadian state creates illegality. These policies make it more possible for people to become undocumented.

I found that after becoming undocumented, people become legally non-existent. First, they cease to have access to public services such as health care, a day-care subsidy and work permit. Second, they are actively sought for deportation, so they must hide. The risk of deportation makes it dangerous to engage in everyday activities, to assert their rights and seek protection from the authorities. Because of this, people's vulnerability to abuse and exploitation increases dramatically. Sometimes people are not even paid for work completed and are susceptible to threats from unscrupulous employers, friends, even family members, to call immigration authorities. Women are usually more vulnerable to gender-based violence from all the above. Women can become subject to deportation even when they are the victims.

The impact of losing status on the mental health of persons and families is great. The loss of social entitlements, vulnerability to abuse and exploitation and an overall sense of danger create the conditions for people to experience trauma. These conditions lead to an increase in fear and powerlessness. People experience hypervigilance, paranoia and the sense that they can do little to change their situation. Fear and helplessness were often accompanied by depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, guilt, frustration, anger and self-blame. Children are subject to the same experiences as adults, which, occurring during their early years of development, can have long-term effects.

Family life is disrupted after becoming undocumented. People suffer what I call 'non-status stress', produced by fear of deportation and the constant struggle to survive. With insufficient money and no access to a safety net in the event of financial crises, they work longer hours to make ends meet. The risk of deportation and the prospect of unemployment keep them fearful and anxious, consume their time and energy and do not allow them the freedom to enjoy themselves with their families. The conditions described above constitute the perfect setting for violence and aggression to manifest themselves.

Repressed anger and frustration led many to more arguments and outbursts of anger towards family members. Women and children are particularly vulnerable here.

How is it that people can live in such conditions? I found that people's needs and desires to stay and make a better life for themselves and their children gave them the courage and strength to continue the struggle for status. They became resourceful finding some supports through community agencies, churches and good people, especially at critical times. Faith played a key role in helping the majority of families cope. In the end, most people find ways to survive but not before these exclusionary policies create such pain and suffering in their lives and families. Let us continue our solidarity efforts by supporting and advocating for just immigration policies.

'ILLEGAL' FOR TWENTY YEARS

I am in contact with a 50-year-old lady who has been in the country illegally for more than twenty years. Her family lives here; she lives with her elderly mother. I met her about eight years ago. She spoke very little Dutch. I helped her to visit two different lawyers, who could not help her as she has a passport from her country of origin but no legal proof that she has been in the Netherlands for such a long time. Then I brought her into contact with an organisation that supports illegal people. They took her to an excellent lawyer and he is prepared to make a case, but he gives her only a 25% chance of success. If the case goes ahead, her name will be known to the police. So far, she has not dared to give her permission to proceed. She is trying to integrate into the community, taking Dutch lessons and joining in social activities. She is also trying to learn to ride a bicycle and she earns a little money for herself by cleaning. With our present government I agree that she should wait, but what will happen when her mother is no longer alive? Will she be able to stay with one of her brothers or sisters?

(Contributor's name withheld, Netherlands)

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THE NETHERLANDS **Chris de Leeuw, Netherlands**

For a couple of years I have been working as a volunteer on the prison-boats (also known as 'detention pontoons') in my hometown, Zaandam, where some 550 male refugees and asylum seekers are being kept. They have not committed any crime, but simply don't have the right papers to be in our country. (There are several such prisons for men and one for women. Children were once kept in these prisons, too, but judges declared this illegal and so mothers and children stay either in a reception centre or in a house by themselves.)

The Netherlands has a long history of receiving immigrants and we used to welcome refugees of many different backgrounds. We also like to see our city, The Hague, as the juridical centre of the world with the Permanent Court of Justice, the Peace Palace, the International Court, the International Criminal Court, Europol, the Yugoslavian Court of Justice and others. But, to our great regret, the atmosphere has changed from tolerance to animosity towards refugees. How could this have happened? It is not only because of the increasing number of people trying to enter our country, but there seems to be a deeper psychological source. In these individualistic times, when small social groups and church communities no longer provide society with a framework of clear rules to live by, the growing uncertainty and discomfort is a breeding ground for one-liners of populist politicians!

At first, the grumbling remarks were waved away; it was not done to speak negatively about foreign people; it was politically incorrect. Some of our people, however, felt that politicians were living in an ivory tower and were not heeding their problems with foreign people. Is this why our most right wing political party has grown so quickly – a party that is anti-Islam, anti-Koran, anti-Muslims; a party creating ‘Islamophobia’, talking about ‘Eurabia’, about Muslims ruling in Europe? Scientific reports say that the Muslim population in Europe is expected to grow from 6% in 2010 to 8% in 2040 – only 2%. But this extreme right party exacerbates people’s feelings of fear with half-truths. It shows disrespect to all immigrants who have already come here and managed to integrate well into our society. There are, indeed, young Moroccans causing trouble in different cities; some become aggressive or extremist as a result of the way they are denigrated by others. But there are many of them who are doing well at school and at work.

Since last year, we have a government which, for the sake of its own survival, needs to tolerate some of the policies of this extreme right wing party. As a result, the rules for refugees and asylum seekers are much more stringent than they used to be. It often happens that families have to wait up to 10 years before they hear definitely whether they are accepted or not. All these years they are not allowed to do any work. In July this year, a family heard that they will have to leave the country with their two children of 11 and 9 years old. The second child was born in the Netherlands! Thankfully, the whole village, including the mayor, protested against this injustice of sending a Dutch-bred child to a ‘foreign’ country. We do not yet know the final decision.

Policemen can ask anybody to show their papers and can take them into custody if they do not have the right papers. The detention pontoons are worse than prisons. The detainees are in their cells for 16 hours a day. During the other 8 hours they have nothing to do; there is no work; only four times a week they may spend 45 minutes playing sport, or doing some handicraft. There is a small library, but they are not allowed to study. The Imam and Christian Pastors lead religious services once a week and the Pastors have organised some discussion groups. Twice a week they are allowed visitors. During these visiting hours, I have noticed the psychological condition of the detainees grow worse and worse.

Officially the maximum stay in detention is 6 months, but 12, 13, 14 months is not unusual. The Minister for Immigration replied to a letter I wrote to him that the detention period is extended only when people refuse to cooperate with being sent back to their own country. But we know that about 50% of them cannot go back to their own country, because they are rejected by their fellow countrymen, or do not have the necessary papers. When these men are eventually pushed out of detention, without money and with notice to leave the country within 24 hours, either they are lucky enough to have friends where they have stayed before, or they enlarge the number of homeless people on our streets - ‘cobblestoned’ is our word for this.

As a volunteer, I am hostess at the Sunday services and, together with a small group of other volunteers, talk and play games with the detainees once a fortnight – this gives them one hour only for having some fun, being spoiled with sweets and fruit juice, forgetting their situation for a while. Feeling that outsiders know about them, care for them, listen to them, seems to help them to persevere. Leaving the boats and going to my own comfortable home, I often feel so powerless...

This is the dark side of the migration problem, but of course there is also a bright side! Many people are indignant about the way we treat our fellow human beings and many groups have formed to do something about it. To mention some:

- *Vluchtelingen Werk Nederland*, Dutch Council for Refugees, with 600 paid employees and more than 7000 volunteers, offers practical support to refugees to ensure a fair asylum procedure and help those who are allowed to stay to rebuild their lives. The Council has contacts with the government, refugee-lawyers, policy makers, radio and television staff, and it writes valuable reports. Their magazine has a positive influence in our society.

- *The International Network of Local Initiatives with Asylum seekers (INLIA)* is an organisation of the Churches. In many cities, INLIA helps homeless migrants to find a temporary roof over their heads; helps them to find out if they may stay or when they have to leave. There is quite some discussion about church-asylum. The government has tried to legislate against helping ‘illegal foreigners’, making it a punishable offence, but the churches protested strongly that God’s law of charity clashes with such a law. After an Iranian man burned himself to death on an Amsterdam square, INLIA spoke out and helped prevent many men from committing suicide because they could see no future. Of course, INLIA workers also hear false refugee stories and it isn’t always easy to keep a balance between being naïve and realistic, but INLIA’s policy is that all who come to the organisation are treated as genuine individuals and not as ‘one of those fortune-hunters’.
- *UAF* is a Foundation for Refugee Students, which helps educated refugees to study and gain official recognition of their diplomas. Even while they are waiting for resident status in the country, many are being helped in this way and are able to find work afterwards.
- *Jeanette Noël House*, a Catholic Worker home in Amsterdam, temporarily accommodates refugees who still have a chance to stay in the country. They are doing a marvelous job. It happened that a policeman brought a pregnant woman to them to shelter.
- *Amnesty International*, *Humanitas* and others write papers about the situation of imprisoned refugees and their critical remarks have brought some improvements.

There are hopeful signs that things might change. Five political parties and many politicians in other parties are critical of the asylum policies of our current government. As well, the European Parliament has issued warnings against unlawful rules and regulations. Last but not least, hundreds of volunteers all over the country visit, organise, teach and help in many ways adult and child migrants from all over the world.

I realise that this is only a part of the story of immigrants in our country. Many people have been accepted and have followed a civic integration course and live freely here. But I feel so indignant about the way refugees are being treated that I just have to write about it.

SUMAN AND LUDMILLA

Moira Leigh, England

At the Grail Centre in Pinner, England, we have frequently given a home to someone from another country and culture and have helped them gain further qualifications to enable them to work in their own country or have helped them to settle here.

Here is the story of Suman and Ludmilla (Lucy) who were not fortunate enough to gain permanent residence in England.

About eight years ago, our parish priest asked if we could house a young Indian student living in the parish and studying Business Management. He was living in one room, not eating properly and not being able to make ends meet. During this time he had a student visa which allowed him to stay in this country and also work a few hours a week.

He came to live here at a low rent in return for some help in the house; and our parish priest employed him occasionally to clean the parish centre after functions. He also got part-time work at McDonalds in Pinner. When he got his degree, he became the manager at McDonalds and so was more financially stable, but continued to live here. We then had Ludmilla (Lucy), a volunteer, who came to help us from the Ukraine for about a year. They fell in love. Lucy returned to Kiev to finish her English studies and, for a while, they visited each other, either here or there.

When Lucy became pregnant she tried to get a visitor's visa for this country, where they planned to get married. However, when she went to the British Embassy in Kiev, her visa was refused. Suman could not get a visa to settle in the Ukraine, because he would not be able to get work there as he couldn't speak Ukrainian. When the baby was born, Suman went there to be at the birth and to register the birth. David Sumanovitch is the name on the birth certificate.

During the next two years, Suman visited Lucy, but was never there long enough to bond with David, or for them to become a family, as Lucy was living with her mother in a two-bedroom flat.

Our parish priest knew someone who worked in Immigration in England, but, though he tried, he could not enable their marriage in England. Suman investigated the possibility of marrying in India, but fulfilling all the legal requirements there also posed many difficulties. Finally, he and Lucy launched themselves into another process of getting all the documentation from India needed to register their marriage in the Ukraine, which involved a mountainous accumulation of signatures and stamps in India, the United Kingdom (UK) and the Ukraine. Suman was then able to apply for custody of his son, which meant that Lucy could come into the UK. This happened just after David's second birthday in September 2009. We were able to offer them a small unit with one bedroom, a kitchen, a bathroom and a large living room. This was the first time they had lived as a family, and David displayed behavioural difficulties, eg, he had extreme temper tantrums, during which it was impossible for anyone to quieten him.

By this time, McDonalds in Pinner had closed, and Suman was working further afield in McDonalds in Hatfield, open 24 hours a day. This was not a permanent job, but a contract which was renewed every six months. The company wished to retain Suman and was planning to renew his contract, but just before our General Election in May 2010, the government introduced measures to curb the number of foreign nationals working in this country. Companies were directed not to employ foreign nationals to do jobs which English people were qualified to do. Suman's contract was not renewed and, unsure how long it would be before he and Lucy found work, they and David returned to the Ukraine in June 2010.

REFUGEE SETTLEMENT PROGRAMS IN NORTH QUEENSLAND Sheila Hawthorn, Australia

The so-called 'boat people' from Vietnam arrived in North Queensland in the early 1970s, followed by many Latin Americans, especially from El Salvador, and, since the early 90s, displaced homeless people from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Ethiopia, Liberia, Somalia, Indonesia and Myanmar (Burma). Expected new arrivals will be Bhutanese, who are ethnically Nepalese, but not allowed back into Nepal.

For approximately the last 20 years, I have been increasingly involved with the Townsville Multicultural Support Group (TMSG), incorporated in 1992, first as a friend and volunteer, then a member of the Management Committee, and, for the last six and a half years, President of the Committee. The TMSG began some 23 years ago, when a number of women from a variety of cultures living in Townsville were feeling a deep sense of loneliness. They were wives of university students who were pursuing graduate studies after attaining their basic degrees, women who had left abusive domestic situations, women reluctant to go out from their homes for reasons such as inadequate English language skills and a limited public transport system, women who felt quite overwhelmed by the expectations of the education system. So, they decided to gather regularly for handcraft, sharing cultural knowledge, educational and social activities and the personal support the meetings gave them all. Often the opportunity to be with people who are facing similar difficulties and challenges is itself comforting and supportive and can be empowering. Originally, I went to this group to introduce a friend with a Maori background who was feeling very lonely and who, I thought, could also contribute to the group with her friendly personality, her musical talent and culture.

In 1992, when the group was quite large in number and had a few people doing some part-time secretarial work, they decided to incorporate and to become more active in promoting cultural awareness in the wider population by addressing 'needs through greater participation in, and contribution to, a better quality of life for our multicultural society'. This remains the mission statement of TMSG. In 2011, in pursuit of its mission, TMSG is responsible for three major and some smaller programs with funding from all three levels of government – national, state and local.

This year, Australia is committed to settling 13,750 refugees nationally through its Human Settlement Services (HSS) also known as the Refugee Resettlement Program (RSP). These are national programs and TMSG has a contract with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to settle up to 150 refugees annually for the next 3-7 years in this large northern region of Queensland. This contract obliges the service provider to:

- offer sufficient orientation and opportunities for new arrivals to comprehend the public services available such as Centrelink, Medicare, banks and the education system;
- find short and long term accommodation;
- arrange early medical appointments, some obligatory for everybody and some particular to individuals;
- refer to special youth services where applicable;
- obtain and deliver a basic household kit (supplied by government) and ensure that the recipients understand fully how to use all appliances, especially electrical ones;
- ensure tenants understand tenancy laws and rental requirements.

The HSS local manager is responsible for ensuring that detailed records of every case are efficiently kept, constantly updated and regularly reported to DIAC, who audits the service randomly by personal visits to Townsville.

Entrants remain in this Program for up to 12 months, depending on their needs. They may then be assisted for another five years or so under the Settlement Grants Program (SGP) where TMSG also has a full-time worker. There are 3 full-time and 6 part-time workers, as well as some casual staff and several volunteers in the HSS program. Sometimes, there are clients with such high needs that resources are stretched unbelievably tightly. For example, in April this year, a single male refugee, aged about 30 years, had a complex mix of personal, health, housing and social needs that required 30 hours of additional work in one week. As well as the Case Manager and Accommodation Officer, two other employees and some volunteers had to drop whatever they were doing to assist. The National Translation and Interpreter Service also helped. This ready cooperative response within TMSG is largely the result of a sound work ethic, based on human rights and social justice. Much time and effort is put into maintaining this work ethic. However, I do find it disturbing when, at such times, there is a disproportionate use of volunteer labour to try and cope with the demands of settling such clients satisfactorily.

It should be noted that the Multicultural Women's Group remains a fixture in the TMSG monthly calendar, doing much the same educational and social support work as the original group all those years ago, although now there are several groups. Erin Rigby, a 3rd year social work student at the university, was placed with TMSG for a period of practical work and described what she saw: 'Friday mornings were a hive of energy as all the groups came together at TMSG for their activities. There was a buzz of interactions and it felt like many family members getting together and working together. There were 2-3, and occasionally 4, separate English language classes. I spent several Friday mornings with the sewing group. There was a blend of humour and storytelling among this band of women as they learned sewing skills and, in turn, freely and patiently shared those skills with new group members. This occurred under the watchful guidance of the sewing and craft teacher, who had been patiently and freely sharing her knowledge and skills over many years'. Despite the daunting challenges they confront, it is inspiring to see the cheerful determination of so many of our clients to learn English and to adjust to a totally different environment.'

There are 17 other contractors offering the HSS program in 23 regions in Australia. In addition, a few other groups offer specialist services to refugees with complex needs or experiences of torture and trauma.

Community Action for a Multicultural Society (CAMS) is a program funded by the Queensland state government, which aims to build inclusive communities throughout Queensland. One full-time and one part-time worker assist and support the many ethnic communities in Townsville with the programs and activities they initiate.

In partnership with the Townsville City Council, TMSG provides cultural consultants to visit schools to talk about their culture and settlement experiences. More resources are needed for this program so that it could fulfil its potential and provide more students with the opportunity to interact with the diversity of others around them who are culturally different from themselves.

Over the years, many refugees and other migrants have become part of TMSG's workforce as case managers, students on placement, casual workers, office staff, drivers and volunteers, which is positive and pleasing. However, I still dream of a time when the numbers of the world's homeless, unwanted, displaced people will greatly diminish. Global political goodwill committed to human rights for all could go a long way towards achieving this.

MEXICO, PAIS DE MIGRANTES

Rosa Aurora Espinosa, Mexico

Mexico has a long migration history. Our independence from Spain was achieved, but Mexico became vulnerable to other forms and sources of foreign intervention, including military and economic. Our rich resources had to be delivered to other countries to avoid wars against our country. One of the consequences of all this was that the poor of Mexico lived and worked under slave conditions. Many of them escaped to other regions and cities, including the USA. Most are gone for ever.

Poverty and foreign debt, combined with government policies which offered little help to the poor, made for the worst possible outcomes for the rural population. They lacked basic material needs and the money to acquire them; they received no support to improve their production and create jobs, which is what they wanted to do..

Inequity is embedded in our history and consequently, also, times of civil strife. When there was civil war, the rebels and the army tried to enrol as many young people as they could. Most were forced to be involved.

From around 1950, Mexico and the USA signed treaties to enable Mexican labour to replace workers lost in the Second World War. A significant number of our youth left the country and were happy to go, because it gave them hope for a better life as well as money they could send back for their families' survival. More than half of them never returned to Mexico. This continued until the beginning of the 1980s when Mexican workers began to be refused entry to the USA. Migration correspondingly decreased and continued to do so during the following 30 years. A number of workers in the States were deported and did not find jobs at home. Accustomed to earning money, they became misfits in the society. Xenophobia and violence are 'partners' in the history of poverty and migration in Mexico.

Still today, the inadequacies of local economies are pushing Mexicans to leave their communities of origin in order to survive.. Each week there are people, even teenagers and children, trying to cross the border into the USA. Many of them are killed by criminal groups and also by members of the Border Patrol.

Migration is part of our reality at all levels. Our young people particularly are a major concern, as they suffer the lack of jobs and opportunities, including exclusion from the health and education systems. We are in a new wave of migration. Demographers now speak of the 'demographic bonus', by which they mean that we are sending our young productive energy to other countries (in what is popularly called a 'brain drain'). Here we give life to this energy and creativity, but political and economic policies are not designed to keep these young people here and enable them to serve the needs of our people

The Mexican government has signed treaties and agreements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which have opened our borders to allow imported foods to undercut the food production of our farmers. The cheaper prices of the imports have forced farmers out of the market. Unable to compete, they have stopped production and left their land. With the elimination of local competition, the prices of the imported commodities have risen. What was formerly farmland is now put to other uses. Peasant families are fragmented: some family members stay in the villages while the others leave to try and find work and enough money to buy the imported food for their families.

NGOs and people's organisations are making every effort to change this terrible situation. In particular, some are researching the current state of our enormous natural resources and campaigning against the policies of our government, which serve foreign interests. Our corrupt political leaders are in collusion with big business and are selling huge tracts of forest and agricultural land for so-called 'development' for tourism. Worse still are those using the land to grow illegal drugs, leading to the physical harm and violence associated with drug trafficking.

Violence in our country is increasing every day. During the current period of government of President Calderon, who assumed office in December 2006, we have the shocking statistic of 40,000 victims of violence including kidnapping, murder, torture and mutilation.

Here you have the key factors in Mexico's history of migration.

JUSTICE FOR PALESTINE

Ann Aboud, Australia

I am Ann Aboud from the Brisbane Grail Group. I am a member of a group called *Justice for Palestine* (JFP) in Brisbane. This group is one of many groups advocating for Palestine. We are a small but vigorous group aiming to increase public awareness of the injustices suffered by the Palestinians. On Friday, 13th May 2011, there was a rally in Brisbane Square to commemorate Al Nakba, the catastrophe for Palestinians when Israel was formed on Palestinian land. Other activities are organised to raise awareness and raise money for Palestine, such as film showings - even a Palestinian Film Festival - concerts, dinners, conferences. The recent focus has been on the *Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions* (BDS) campaign. This campaign advocates such measures as refusing to buy goods from Israel so long as they continue to build settlements on the occupied territories in Palestine which is against international law. JFP's website has some visual images of these activities. See www.justiceforpalestinebrisbane.org

Some members of the group have travelled to Palestine recently and some of us, myself included, have been there in the past. People write letters to the papers and contact TV stations, protesting the biased reporting on Palestine. We write letters to the newspapers to put views supportive of Palestine. Some of our members have formed a Palestinian Cultural Group to concentrate on cultural activities, eg, films, library displays, activities in schools, etc.

There are many UN Resolutions supportive of Palestine that have never been enforced. It is clear to me that the only way to shift public opinion is a movement at the grass roots level. This is the focus of JFP.

The construction of the wall separating the Palestinian people from their livelihood, their farms, their schools, their water and their families is a total violation of their human rights. The wall has little connection with security as it snakes its way through Palestinian land, digging deep into Palestinian territory. Deeds to land are ignored as land is taken to build Israeli-only roads that cut the country into Bantustans.⁷ Many other restrictions are placed on people who have won scholarships to Western universities or have had other chances of freedom. Many Palestinians languish in refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and other Arab countries; and even though Palestinians are grateful for the refuge, they are often denied citizenship and the right to work. Unemployment in Palestine is so high that if it weren't for overseas aid and the money sent home by Palestinians abroad, survival would be impossible.

Sympathetic Israelis who try to help are in risk of their lives, as the recent killing of the son who filmed his mother's work in *Arna's Children* amply demonstrates. The *Coalition Against House Demolition* is another Israeli initiative, where Jews and Palestinians work side by side to reconstruct houses demolished by government decree. They acknowledge that it is a battle they cannot possibly win as houses are demolished every day.

We can only hope and pray that people of goodwill will persevere in their efforts for justice for Palestine and that the Palestinians will find peace in my lifetime.

I believe in the fundamental right of all people to live in peace and harmony in their own country.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Loek Goemans, South Africa



‘A human rights-based migration policy for South Africa should be a priority for our government’. This was the message of Black Sash policy analyst, Ms Nkosikhulule Nyembezi, in a recent article in a Johannesburg daily newspaper.

South Africa, and not just Johannesburg, is considered by many people in other parts of Africa as the pot of gold at the bottom of the continent. Migratory labour has always been a feature of South Africa's economy with much of the mining industry drawing its labour for over a century not only from rural South Africans but also from other southern African countries. Migrants in South Africa, even today, send home large sums of money each year and, in some of the countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), remittances from citizens working in South Africa account for more than a quarter of the gross domestic product. These migrant workers, no matter how long they worked in the country, did not lose their migrant status and were expected to ‘go back home’ once they got ill or were too old to be economically useful..

How differently the South African exiles were treated during the apartheid years. Other African countries, such as Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia, to name but a few, were generous in providing safe housing and education; and often it was their government's policy to provide care and support to these exiles. In doing so, they risked the wrath of the apartheid regime which did not spare civilians in those countries when they bombed suspected members of the African National Congress or

⁷ ‘Bantustan’ is often used today in a pejorative sense when describing a region that lacks any real legitimacy, consists of several unconnected enclaves, and/or emerges from national or international gerrymandering - Wikipedia.

Pan-African Congress. Whether in Europe, Africa or elsewhere, South African exiles were treated with sympathy by the ordinary citizens among whom they lived.

It is therefore ironic, strange and sad to see the hostility that exists within South Africa against refugees and migrants from other African countries. Xenophobia can manifest itself in several ways - victimisation by police, brutal assaults, murders, ethnic cleansing, even mass expulsion from the country. In May 2008, xenophobic attacks against foreigners from other African countries escalated to horrifying proportions and many people were threatened, even though they had lived in South Africa for many years.

The recent xenophobic violence in South Africa (May 2011) was primarily directed against foreigners living in some of the poorest urban areas of the country. However, it also impacted on those who have acquired citizenship because of their specialised skills, such as medical doctors, academics, scientists and engineers. And it has also affected those with legitimate work and study permits, such as the tens of thousands of Mozambicans working in mines, mathematics teachers from Zimbabwe and foreign university students.

Unfortunately, many South Africans, and not just those living in the poorest areas, are opposed to the presence of a large number of foreigners from other African countries and they blame foreigners for many of the ills in South Africa, including the high unemployment of locals and crime.

An example from one of our close neighbours

It is estimated by the United Nations that South Africa has between 1.5 and 3 million Zimbabwean migrants living in South Africa. While many of them had to leave their country for political reasons, the others have had other motivations, including economic needs and study.

During 2010, South African immigration authorities offered a blanket amnesty to all Zimbabweans who were in the country illegally. They had to register at an office of the Department of Home Affairs by 31st December 2010. In the following 7 months, up to 31st July 2011, the Department was due to adjudicate applications for work, study and business permits, as part of the last phase of the Zimbabwean Documentation Project. Those meeting the criteria would receive permits to remain in South Africa; the rest would be repatriated to Zimbabwe, a country at war with its people and with few employment opportunities; and the thousands who did not submit their applications by the end of last year would also be deported. Thus, the fate of 275,762 applicants would be known by the end of July 2011.

A prerequisite for receiving a South African permit was the possession of travel documents issued by the Zimbabwe government. However, the processing of these documents stalled in Zimbabwe and civil society and human rights groups pleaded for an extension of the 31st July deadline.

The Department, realising itself that it could not meet the July deadline, extended it by one month to the end of August 2011. This date came and went also; and now at the end of October the Department has still not completed the project. Some applicants are still coming for fingerprints, some are still submitting additional documents to support their applications and only a few permits are being issued. For instance, at one Home Affairs office in Johannesburg, out of the more than 17,000 applications received, only 8,800 permits have been dispatched.

What is more disappointing and serious is that the South African government has started deporting Zimbabweans before the completion of the Project. It is unclear to us as members of the civil society why they have resumed the deportations of Zimbabweans now. The timing is bad for several reasons. Firstly, the deportations coincide with the 2011 national census (with door-to-door visits from 15th to 31st October 2011) and essentially undermine the census, because the immigrant community will not open their doors to the enumerators for fear that immigration officials and law enforcement agents will catch and deport them. Secondly, the South African government is surely fully aware of the socio-economic and political problems that still prevail in Zimbabwe. What then informs South Africa's decision to start deporting Zimbabweans at this juncture? Thirdly, the underhand way the deportations have been resumed

is quite disturbing. While the Department of Home Affairs has been consulting widely with civil society during the Project, they have decided not to consult on their move to start deporting. They have excluded key stakeholders, so that there is no agreed Standard Operating Procedure on how to conduct the deportations.

They are currently arresting, detaining and deporting people countrywide. This policy of mass deportation means that a significant number of people who would legally qualify for refugee status will be sent out of the country in violation of international conventions. We are deeply concerned about this situation. Meanwhile, on the Zimbabwean side, NGOs, such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), have re-staffed reception and support centres that have been dormant for the past few years. At the beginning of August they were expecting around 24,000 deportees a month.

It is feared that Zimbabweans are likely to be only the first of major groups of migrants from the SADC to face mass deportation. Next in Home Affairs' sights - migrants from other countries.

Pragmatism aside, our moral vision should see 'the other' as brother and sister. After all, many of us were once exiles and refugees, too.

References: *The Jesuit Institute*, South Africa; *People Against Suffering, Oppression and Poverty (PASSOP)*; *The Star*, *Mail* and *Guardian* newspapers.

FINDING HOME

Anne Marie George, Australia

Where does my family's travel story fit into these pieces on people-movement? To some, our experience is unique in that we lived in several countries before finally settling in Australia. All our moves, however, were voluntary and non-traumatic – we weren't forced out by persecution or famine or directed by army or diplomatic postings. The driver, it seems, has simply been the search for 'home'.

The journey begins

My dad left India as a 30-year old single man in search of, in his own words, his 'ego' (I later understood this to mean a combination of identity + 'home'.) His mother had died when he was three, and after his father remarried, it was clear that his stepmother regarded him and his younger sister as outsiders. When the opportunity for overseas work arose, there was little reason to stay. (Interestingly, he says that if his mother were alive, she would have persuaded him to stay and he would have, despite harbouring dreams to work overseas.)

Since that first step, the search has taken the family through Tanzania, Nigeria, USA, Guyana, Zambia and finally to our adopted home of Australia. Each country along the way was 'home' for a while, until some new factor challenged the adequacy of that 'home' for a young, growing, expatriate family.

The decision to move first to Africa in the early 1960s, a time when many Africans were agitating for independence, set in train an unsettled, nomadic life – one which many expatriates in Africa shared. Developing nations are by nature still developing, which means there's an appealing vitality and thrust to life which can't be found in the First World, but they can be unstable in unpredictable ways and that was certainly true of the African countries we lived in. The moves from Tanzania, Nigeria and Zambia were all partly influenced by civil, political or economic rumblings which didn't bode well for the future of a young foreign family.

The journey continues

After Tanzania and Nigeria, we detoured to the heart of First World, New York City, so Pa could pursue some quality higher study to better his prospects. Three years later, with a Masters and PhD from Fordham University, he had options to teach at a prestigious Manhattan school or a South American university. He chose the latter – New York was too impersonal and crowded and the ordinary folk didn't seem to understand people from the Third World. Destination: Georgetown, Guyana.

Georgetown would have made a great home for a young Indian family – a small but lively and egalitarian society with a large population of Indian descendants but also Africans, Europeans, Chinese and indigenous Amerindians. We certainly didn't feel different because difference was the norm! But Guyana was financially unviable, taxing joint-income families at 70%. Two years later we packed up to move again. Africa beckoned once more.

Zambia ticked many of the 'Good Home' boxes at first – professionally and financially rewarding, beautiful climate, good schools and strong friendships with other expatriate families like us. Once again however, a few years into our stay, our little paradise began to lose its shine. Neighbouring Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) was struggling for independence and the instability brought occasional food shortages and social unrest to Zambia as well. It was time to move again.

We moved from Zambia to Australia in 1980. The 'developing country' theme was finally broken. Pa justifies it by saying, 'Australia wasn't as developed as the USA'.

Are we there yet?

After 30+ years here, Pa says Australia is more like home now because the people have become more diverse and accepting. Mum says she is at home here – she has a family, a house, a garden and she contributes generously to her neighbourhood and community. She has woven herself into Australian society and there is little need to worry about the family's future here. Does she feel 'at home' when she visits India? 'Oh yes', she says, 'because my sisters and brothers are there and it's where I grew up'. But she has no place there where she can commandeer the kitchen, the garden, the cleaning, etc. – it seems the freedom to influence your surroundings is another aspect of feeling 'at home'.

Pa says his ideal of 'home' now is back in India, in his home-state of Kerala amongst 'his people' and a wide network of relatives where the welcome is warm wherever and whenever. I remind him that the network was there when he first decided to leave and that his mother is still not there. But now he's married, he says, with his own family and the need for his mother is lessened. He dreams that our family will return to Kerala, immersed in the familiar and the familial. I break it to him that that is just not going to happen and he laughs. Kerala is not *my* home. It has never felt like home despite the warm welcome wherever and whenever. I am not embedded in the fabric of Kerala and I don't have the jungle skills required to do so, ie., fluency in language and customs and the sheer guts and know-how it takes to survive in an unfamiliar, overcrowded, chaotic Indian city.

My sisters and I must build on the connections and know-how we have acquired here -- that prescription to grow and bear fruit where you are planted helps create a stronger sense of home and belonging. I suspect we have missed out on that *something* that comes from belonging to a place from an early age, which allows you to embed deeper and wider earlier and therefore grounds you psychologically and emotionally as well. But as persons, we have been formed by many different physical and social settings on this earth. It is impossible to tell how this has shaped our outlook but I'm certain that it has. (Interestingly, we relate better to those who have had similar patchwork childhoods.) Perhaps in a world of increasing people-movement, that will turn out to be a valuable asset. Time will tell.

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