

## **HOW TO MAKE THE MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT NEXUS WORK FOR DEVELOPMENT**

### **MAINSTREAMING MIGRATION IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: THE NEED FOR A HUMAN CENTRED APPROACH**

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A NGO contribution to the Global Forum on Migration and Development,  
from a practitioner viewpoint, based on the Caritas experience.

#### **Introduction**

*The focus of our attention should be on the human aspect of migration. We have to keep in mind the faces of 200 million international migrants and millions of displaced people or internal migrants. We have to focus on the Poverty – Inequity – Violence triangle including at its centre, the face of a person, who tries to build or to rebuild his/her life.*

Generally speaking we have to bear in mind that the face of migration is increasingly female, as half of the migrant population are women, many of them migrating independently.

A win-win solution is not enough. *Caritas advocates for a triple win solution: country of departure, country of reception and migrants themselves.*

In that sense the Caritas vision of development is not about economic growth only, but embraces integral human development, an approach that takes into consideration the wellbeing of the person and all people in their different dimensions: economic, social, political, cultural, ecological and spiritual – in order to achieve a just society.

In the same way the focus on the instrumental function of migration for economic development completely leaves out of the picture that migration might have the consequence of **improved livelihood security** and well-being of migrants and their families. A governmental focus on economic growth as the only criteria to measure the contribution of migration to development of a specific nation can provide justification for policies that harm the well being of individual migrants and their families and exclude them from fundamental human rights.

Moreover, current migration and development policies target countries that are most important in immigration statistics. This puts doubts to the Policy coherence for Development commitment of migration policy makers. *The criteria for prioritising developing countries should be their needs in Human Development and their level of performance in achieving the MDGs*, rather than the number of citizens present or trying to reach the EU or the USA. The least developed countries are under-represented in migration statistics and consequently run the risk of not being considered. There is too little attention given to the so called south-south migration, both in academic expertise and in agencies concern. Too much emphasis on migration for the so called south towards OECD countries hinders us to see the real picture of migration in today's world: receiving countries are often emerging countries; developed countries may be also sending countries, as it is the case for my own country, France.

After these preliminary remarks, I want to focus on major points expressed as recommendations to the Global Forum.

### **1. Introducing the migrants and their organizations as actors of the debate and the action.**

Speaking on the nexus migration and development, we have to take into consideration the persons of the migrant. And their organizations, the role the latter could and should play. The debate cannot be limited to a discussion between governments. The migrants and their organizations should be considered as legitimate actors.

It is too limited to speak in term of “a win win solution” (in favour of the departure country and in favour of the receiving country). We advocate for a triple win solution: country of departure, country of reception and the person of the migrant.

**Migrants are not to be instrumental** to the sending countries nor to the receiving countries.

There is a risk with **receiving countries** to consider migrants only as instruments (to achieve their policies): migrants considered merely as workers. But non workers are sometimes also migrants: spouses, children... these ones have also rights, see the results of the last GFMD in the Philippines, the human rights of the migrants have to be protected and promoted.

Receiving countries tend to consider migrants only under the point of view of their interest: to fulfil the deficit of workers in certain sectors; to help to maintain the size of the population; to help to balance the income and expenses of the social security system, or the system of payments for retirements; to attract high qualified tertiary educated people; to avoid the brain drain by the US, etc...

**Sending countries** have also the tendency to consider migrants as instrumental: as a safety valve to relieve political tensions; to avoid unrest among educated unemployed young people; to expect remittances, money to alleviate poverty; to contribute to the balance of payments; to fulfil the social tasks the State is unable or unwilling to exercise; to expect the migrants one day to return and to enrich the nation through their skills, etc...

**Migrants are human beings, with human rights.** We should put at the centre of our reflections and concerns the person of the migrant. The aim of any state policy should not be the only interest of the state itself, but the well being of the person of the migrant. Because migrants are human beings, and not (only) instruments of any state policy, as legitimate it could be.

## **2 What does it mean to mainstream Migration in Development planning?**

### **Migration and development programmes in action:**

#### **2.1. A joint framework for exchange and learning: we have to broaden the frame of the discussion and switch to a “governance approach”, and not limit the debate to an intergovernmental negotiation.**

The discussion on the link between Migration and Development is still young and sometimes confusing. In order to achieve results and clarity – not simplistic solutions, but capturing the complexity of this debate – there is a need for a framework for the exchange of expertise, knowledge and further common learning at all levels. In order to achieve a consensus of understanding and a consensus of action, we need to extend the exchange of knowledge and good practices not only to the receiving and sending countries (it means : states) but integrate in the debate other actors, starting from the migrants’ organizations themselves. We need a framework for discussion, for migrant **governance**: many actors, no limitation to state actors. The agenda of the debate should not be decided by states alone, but all stakeholders should be in a position to contribute including in the agenda.

The task of NGOs in this regard is to try to change the agenda of the discussion and of the interest in the field of research: switching from a security and state based approach to a much wider approach with more concerns and more stakeholders involved in the debate (for instance: migrants’ organizations, diasporas, trade unions, religious communities, solidarity NGOs network in receiving countries, etc).

To tackle **forced migration** effectively, a coherent strategy must provide humanitarian assistance and protection, support strategies for sustainable return and re-integration, and address first and foremost the root causes of instability: poverty, conflict, natural disasters, bad governance and human rights abuses. Internally displaced persons and refugees need shelter, food, water and sanitation in the short term, in addition to health support, education and income-generating activities in the longer term.

In the host countries, development projects should integrate and balance the refugee population’s needs and those of the host communities in order to prevent new

conflicts. It is critical to promote projects dedicated to reinforcing solidarity links and inter-community dialogue which brings together the migrants/refugees and the local population of a given area.

#### **2.4. Development programs to create sustainable employment**

Very often, a lack of prospects encourages people to look elsewhere for opportunities they do not have locally. This phenomenon leads generally to individual migration, even if it is often the result of a family or community strategy.

The unemployment rate is a serious and increasing problem in developing countries. Young people represent half of the unemployed in the world. So it is an enormous challenge. Employment policies should improve and widen people's opportunities, especially young people. Increasing employment opportunities is a key element of development policies.

It is also a key to avoiding rates of migration, which impact negatively on the rest of society. A general lack of opportunities drives young people to migrate in search of these opportunities.

*The economic integration of youth, in helping them find a decent and useful job, is essential for economic growth, regulation of migration flow, and in order to stop the inter-generational transmission of poverty. The inadequacy of vocational training towards the labour market is often an aggravating factor.*

Primary education for all is a first step, but we have to go further. We must think about professional insertion and *reinforce our support to vocational training centres, which help prepare young people for jobs which are needed in their home country.*

In addition, it is necessary to promote initiatives aiming at employing the operational forces available in useful working sites such as infrastructures and hydraulic planning or to use them for disaster prevention (see disaster preparedness strategy recommendations, especially in Asia).

Finally, it is essential to support two other pillars of employment access, which are financing labour intensive projects, and access to micro credit.

<b>Example Mauritania</b>
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Mauritania currently hosts ca. 40,000 foreign migrants, many of them in transit. In addition to food and medical assistance for the most vulnerable cases the Caritas network provides counselling to find work and shelter and training for illiterate persons in order to improve the options both at home or in a country of destination
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Civil society should be promoted and empowered as a driving force for human development.

## **2.6. Participation of migrants in development programmes: Mobilising migrants as agents of development**

Considering that migrants' organisation as development actors will allow us to favour synergy between local communities in countries of origin (which elaborate local development projects), concerned local communities and migrant organisations from the relevant region. *Bilateral and multilateral cooperation should support those connections and synergies.*

## **3. Promote international mobility as an opportunity for the achievement of the MDGs, moreover as a basic freedom, as an element of human development.**

### **3.1. Promote international mobility.**

Demetrios Papademetriou, President of the Migration Policy Centre, argues that the world is now in an *"age of mobility"*, rather than an age of migration, therefore he advocates for a new system of labour migration rather than a new migration system.

*Preventing forced migration needs to be matched with an active migration policy. As international mobility of people can have a considerable positive impact on the*

development of countries, these countries all have interest in creating possibilities for their nationals to work abroad via legal channels. Good governance stands as a key condition for enabling the free decision to migrate.

Fair agreements between sending and receiving countries should be put in place regulating international workers' mobility in order to ensure safe movement and the respect of international workers' rights.

Freedom of circulation can be optimised through facilitated migration, which enables the migrant to fully exercise his/her role as a development actor. According to the OECD and the European Commission, organising circular migration could be part of the solution to the brain drain-brain gain dilemma, since it enables migrants to acquire new skills or to maintain their level of skills while providing the home country with their expertise.

### **3.2. Brain drain – brain gain**

Granting that the right of movement is a fundamental principle, which cannot be put under discussion, the brain drain phenomenon is nevertheless hindering the development prospects of countries with high rates of emigration of skilled people.

Each year approximately 20,000 skilled workers, that is 1/3 of African intellectual potential, leave the African continent and head towards the northern countries. Moreover, currently, a shortage of health care workers has increased the EU tendency to have recourse to health migrant workers from developing countries. This state of fact leads to unbalanced repartition of healthcare workforce worldwide. Thus, Africa, which represents 11% of the world population, carries 24% of the world's disease burden and only benefits from 3% of the world's health workers. Moreover, one in four doctors trained in Africa are now working in OECD countries.

Developing countries, while investing in the training of health care workers, suffer from the recruitment made by developed countries, which save significant money in training costs. In order to avoid dramatic brain drain, hosting countries shall be made responsible for the way of recruiting workers from third countries.

*To cope with this situation, the principle of responsible and ethical recruitment should be one of the driving principles concerning migrant workers.*

In that sense, Caritas is supporting the initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO), which, in March 2008, in Kampala, presented the first draft of a Global Code for Ethical Recruitment. Caritas asks for a proper follow up to that initiative and hopes that the World Health Assembly will respect its commitment to endorsing this Global Code of Practice for Ethical recruitment.

Receiving countries should take into account the impact head hunting has on health sectors in countries of departure. A significant increase (from 4% to 12%) of the public development aid dedicated to health measures is necessary, as has been demanded in France in *Secours Catholique, Médecins du Monde, Agir Ici (Oxfam) and Aide Médicale Internationale's campaign*. This would help to sustain health systems in Southern countries and prevent the erosion of health sectors due to mass emigration of skilled personnel.

Another measure could be to increase public development aid dedicated to strengthening national policies for reinforcing human resources (improvements in support of staff, wages, training and working conditions).

**Needed and exploited – The invisible suffering of migrant domestic workers. A need for regulation of migrant domestic workers' sector.**

Maria washes our clothing. Olha takes care of our children. Maria works 7 days a week. They work hard and manage to support their family in their country of origin. However they are exploited, discriminated against, as migrants, as women and as workers.

Many countries do not have legal channels for unskilled or semiskilled labour force – in spite of the apparent demand for it. Domestic workers have a big share in what nowadays is called “feminisation of migration”.

In many countries of the world, they are mainly irregular migrants, some of them are trafficked. According to the experiences of Caritas Lebanon and Caritas Sri Lanka,

for example, domestic work and trafficking are often connected. Women migrate for a work and better opportunities but end up without freedom and exploited.

Migrant domestic workers send remittances home. Researchers have already pointed out that with the current crisis, remittances are likely to diminish, which will put at risk the families in the countries of origin and often the education of children. If we don't regulate the sector of migrant domestic workers and leave them without a safety net, the burden on this group of people will double. Having no work to maintain the family from abroad and possibly returning with empty hands, putting the survival of the family at risk. Is this development?

Caritas believes that there should be a common framework which outlines the basic elements for the protection of migrant domestic workers. First and foremost we need a mentality shift, which recognises domestic work as work and respects those who do it as human beings with fundamental Human Rights.

Key elements which should be reflected in this framework are:

- Safe and affordable recruitment: the recruitment channels for foreign domestic workers should be legal, safe and affordable.
- Decent working conditions for migrant domestic workers are a sign of development and contribute to integral human development. The work should be regulated by a legal contract which determines duties and rights of the employees and the employers.
- Professional development should be made accessible to domestic workers, if they so wish. Working hours should allow for attending courses or a certain number of days should be granted for training.
- Domestic workers Ombudsman: this Ombudsman should have, in each country, the mandate – in close consultation with the domestic worker – to investigate cases and find means to solve them via mediation or bringing them to court.
- Domestic work is for children, but not to be performed by children!

Mobility centres should be set up to provide advice in the countries of origin, transit and destination and to foster migration as an informed option. Remittances have a significant effect on development but they must not be considered as an alternative to official development aid. They should also be used for the benefit of individuals, families and communities.

**Recommendations:**

- NGOs should actively try to influence the agenda of the debate (both academic and political) in the field of migration and development, and bring in it the concerns and interests of migrants themselves
- NGOs should push states to endorse the Global Code of Practice for Ethical recruitment.
- There should be an independent function – a domestic workers Ombudsman – in each country where domestic workers can file complaints independently of their legal status.
- Migrants should not be instrumental to any policy, including the achievement of the MDGs. A role of NGOs is to monitor the states and agencies to avoid this instrumental bias, both at methodological level (in the field of research) and at policy advice level.
- Development objectives should be mainstreamed into migration policies, trade policies and agriculture policies. The capacity of choice, especially of the poorest, should be reinforced.