



fuf

FÖRENINGEN FÖR
UTVECKLINGSFRÅGOR

Magazine.

MIGRATION

THE JUNE ISSUE // 2020

Beyond the border



LAUREN TROPEANO
EDITOR IN-CHIEF



HANNA GESCHEWSKI
EDITOR IN-CHIEF

It feels strange to release an issue about migration in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic. The irony of writing about the movement of people at a time when movement has been so severely restricted is not lost on us.

Yet the reminders of desperation, risk and loss that often accompany migration are present even now. At the end of March, sixty-four Ethiopian men suffocated in the back of a transport container on their way to South Africa. Fourteen of their country-

men survived the journey, surrounded by bodies. Over the Easter weekend in April, four boats of migrants attempting to reach Europe from Libya sent out distress calls that went unanswered by EU member states. This lack of response has been met with strong criticism amid fears that many migrants may have perished at sea.

With stories like these as examples of commonplace, daily realities, it remains important to acknowledge the interlinkages between migration and development

THE SWEDISH DEVELOPMENT FORUM

EDITORIAL

Photo: Rihaij, Pixabay.

and the changing nature of global population distribution in general. This issue of FUF Magazine will speak to these themes.

Happy reading!



THIS MAGAZINE AND ALL ARTICLES ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT OUR WEBSITE:
WWW.FUF.SE/EN/MAGAZINE.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED? CONTACT US THROUGH MAGAZINE-LUND@FUF.SE **OR VIA OUR FACEBOOK PAGE:** @FUFLUND.



UN case warrants protection for future climate change displaced persons

A news article by Alexandru Mocanu

A Kiribati national, after unsuccessful attempts to get asylum in New Zealand, brought his case to the UN Human Rights Committee. In spite of its negative ruling, the Committee seems to have opened the doors for granting protection for people at risk of displacement from climate change in the future.

Ioane Teitiota is a national of the island state Kiribati who fled his country and sought asylum in New Zealand. He was however unsuccessful and, after exhausting all domestic remedies, sought protection of his right to life at the UN Human Rights Committee. Composed of 18 independent experts, the Committee oversees adherence to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and allows individual complaints against states for alleged violations.

Pacific low-lying island states are among those most impacted by climate change, with rises in sea levels threatening their very existence. Although the Committee did not rule in petitioner's favour, the Teitiota's case is described as historic, a wake-up call, and a step forward.

In light of the particular circumstances of Teitiota's case, the Committee could not establish New Zealand's violation of his right to life under the Covenant. It has



been established that the 10 to 15 years' time frame indicated by Teitiota allows Kiribati to protect or relocate its population, if necessary. The Committee did nevertheless acknowledge that, as a general principle, a receiving country should not deport persons fleeing climate-induced conditions that threaten their lives.

It is noteworthy that two Committee members formally dissented from the findings that New Zealand was justified to deny asylum and order his deportation. They found, among others, that Teitiota's life conditions are "significantly grave", especially with regards to safe drinking water access, and pose "a real threat to his

life", where the Commission is called upon to handle "significantly irreversible issues of climate change". Either way, to Kate Schuetze, Pacific researcher for Amnesty International, the message of this case is clear: "Pacific Island states do not need to be under water before triggering human rights obligations to protect the right to life".

“

A receiving country should not deport persons fleeing climate-induced conditions that threaten their lives.”



Photo: Mark, Flickr.

One unsettled issue is that there is no internationally recognized definition of “climate refugee”. The UN 1951 Refugee Convention offers no ground to accept environmental degradation as “persecution”. Despite these legalistic constraints, the UN Human Rights Committee seems to have opened the doors to address this protection gap for future cases.

In this context, Prof. Jane McAdam, director of the Refugee Law Centre at the Uni-

versity of New South Wales, reminds of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration - a 2018 agreement that urges governments to create more flexible migration schemes protecting against the adverse effects of climate change. “The blueprints are already there; our leaders just need to find the political will to implement them”, adds McAdam.



Alexandru Mocanu

Alexandru is a graduate student of International Development and Management at Lund University. With a professional background in law, he is currently exploring the interlinkages between human rights, justice, and sustainable development.



The corona crisis requires global unity

A chronicle by Josefine Nilsson

During these turbulent times, ongoing humanitarian disasters are often overshadowed by the coronavirus. There seems to be a tendency to overlook commitments to international cooperation and assistance. We currently experience this both within the European Union and the United Nations.

The EU failed to answer Italy's request for assistance at the beginning of the outbreak, which has contributed to mistrust in the European partnership. If the EU and the UN do not maintain unity, cohesion and support between its member states, there are risks of long-term impacts.

Even before the corona crisis, there were news of inhumane conditions in Greek refugee camps, and tensions across the Greek border rose to the spotlight. Accord-

ing to a recent report by Amnesty International, migrants were shot dead attempting to cross the border from Turkey to Greece.

“

There seems to be a tendency to overlook commitments to international cooperation and assistance.”

Experts have highlighted the increased health risks associated with the possible mass spread of the coronavirus in overcrowded Greek Camps. They have been urging EU countries to assist in order to avoid a medical disaster. The case of Gree-

ce is one of many examples of how the already vulnerable are at a considerable risk of getting affected by the virus. This proves the need for all of us to do our part in tackling this crisis together - on the individual, national and international level.

As the United Nation's secretary-general António Guterres writes: "Only by coming together will the world be able to face down the Covid-19 pandemic and its shattering consequences". This is true for the ongoing situation, as well as in future global challenges.

“

The already vulnerable are at a considerable risk of getting affected by the virus.”

We should prevent further crises from overwhelming us by increasing our preparedness. We should make sure a virus, that knows no borders, will not dispropor-



T H E S W E D I S H D E V E L O P M E N T F O R U M

tionately affect humans based on an unequal global system. We should work in collaboration to make sure vulnerable communities survive.

Our eyes should not turn away from refugee camps in Greece, the millions of refugees and internally displaced people in

Yemen or any others that face increased challenges during these times. The corona crisis should teach us that global pressures are better handled together and that human rights and international unity are needed to provide a world liveable for all.



Josefine Nilsson

Josefine is a master's student in International Development and Management (LUMID) at Lund University. She recently returned to Sweden after spending the past years traveling, working and studying abroad. India has a special place in her heart, partly due to the delicious veggie food.



F U F M A G A Z I N E / / J U N E 2 0 2 0

The background of the entire page is a photograph showing the silhouettes of a group of people, likely migrants, walking across a flat landscape. They are silhouetted against a bright, large, yellow sun that is low on the horizon, creating a strong backlight effect. The sky is a mix of blue and yellow. The people are in various poses: some are carrying large bags or backpacks, one person is holding a child, and others are walking in small groups. The overall mood is one of journey and hope.

(How) can migration contribute to development?

A guest piece by Alice Hertzberg

My interest in the relationship between migration and development grew when anti-immigration discourses started to gain a stronger foothold in Europe and the US. In the meantime, the largest refugee crisis since the second world war took place in parts of the Middle East and Africa. The year was 2015, the same year the UN adopted the Sustainable Development Goals in Agenda 2030. For the first time in the history of the UN, migration was mentioned as a part of reaching the development goals. In the introduction of Agenda 2030, it states that “We recognize the positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development. We also recognize that international migration is a multi-dimensional reality of major relevance for the development of countries of origin, transit and destination, which requires coherent and comprehensive responses.”

I glimpsed a thin light of optimism in the discourse of migration – a different perspective that, perhaps, could help shift the focus from nationalistic depictions of the immigrant (note: non-westerners) or refugee as a non-deserving, lazy and even

dangerous “other”, to a view on migration as a phenomenon that affects and can benefit all of us. From a human development perspective, migration can indeed function as a survival strategy, income diversification strategy, and contribute to development on an individual and community level. A clear example is remittances (money sent from a migrant to individuals/communities in the country of origin) which worldwide constitutes more than three times the value of official development assistance. Destination countries and the inhabitants can also benefit from immigration in the form of labor force and tax income. When people move across borders, undoubtedly, ideas and knowledge spread as well.

However, the optimistic perspective needs to be nuanced. It is crucial to recognize that all individuals have the possibility to contribute to sustainable development, both on a personal and societal level – if the conditions are favourable. A few examples are the conditions of the labor market in the destination country, the money transfer fees, and the actual possibility to migrate to another country. Other factors that can inhibit potential positive

“To leave one’s country is a human right as well as to seek protection in another country.”

effects of migration are economic inequality within countries and repressive political systems or corruption. Moreover, migration should not be regarded as desirable only if it leads to societal development (which is a popular perspective in the EU and its member states). To leave one’s country is a human right as well as to seek protection in another country.

In a world with stricter visa regulations and borders controls, and an increased gap between the world’s richest and poorest, the hope for development cannot be put in the hands of migrants and refugees.

Rather, a global focus on how to produce coherent and comprehensive responses, as proposed by the UN, must be prioritized before the whole world can benefit from migration. As pointed out by the scholar Hein de Haas: development is a condition for investment and return by migrants rather than a consequence of migration. In other words, development as a social transformation can be enabled through migration only when the right political and economic conditions are put in place.



Alice Hertzberg

Alice has a background in human rights studies, and is currently writing a master thesis in International migration and ethnic relations. She has a broad interest in migration issues and how people and societies respond to migration and forced movements.

THE SWEDISH DEVELOPMENT FORUM



F U F M A G A Z I N E / / J U N E 2 0 2 0

UNHCR and digital identities: Targeted aid or enhanced

A chronicle by Donya Zikry

In 2015, UNHCR began rolling out the Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS), which collects photos, iris scans and fingerprints of refugees. They are stored in the organisation's digital Population Registration and Identity Management Ecosystem (PRIMES), which not only includes BIMS, but also comprises all of UNHCR's digital registration, identity management and case management tools.

The need for reliable, effective and transparent registration systems is underlined by the fact that in 2019, 70.8 million people were displaced. 25.9 million of them were refugees. Globally, nearly one person is forcibly displaced every two seconds.

The use of biometric data could have the potential to serve these people's needs, considering that the ability to verify identities is a matter of human dignity.

“

In 2019, 70.8 million people were displaced. 25.9 million of them were refugees. Globally, nearly one person is forcibly displaced every two seconds.”

However, it is crucial to also shed light on the failures of UNHCR to uphold these principles and protect refugees accordingly. The use of biometric data collection rather shows that refugee registration extends the power of the state in rendering refugees' lives more intervenable. In late 2018, Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh engaged in a hunger strike against the UNHCR's proposal to issue smart cards identifying them as "forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals" instead of "Rohingya". One reason for the strike was the fear that data would be shared with the Myanmar government, which has a history of systematic discrimination against the Rohingya. Thus, instead of offering protec-

tion, this high-tech tool puts refugees' lives at a higher risk.

“

The use of biometric data collection rather shows that refugee registration extends the power of the state in rendering refugees' lives more intervenable.”

The role of informed consent is also a highly contested issue. Although UNHCR

Photo: Sarcaser, Flickr.

emphasizes the importance of informed consent and full transparency, an internal audit by the UN in 2016 revealed a lack of protection and risks related to tampering, loss and misuse of personal data during registration processes in India, Thailand and the Democratic Republic Congo. It has also been argued that insufficient and intransparent information was shared with the refugees in these countries.

In order to address the detected flaws in UNHCR's practices, technology has to be used in a responsible manner and has to be human-centred. This also includes the integration of refugee registration activities into existing legal frameworks. Particularly in times of crises and emergencies, people's lives must be protected and not be put at further risk through data misuse and enhanced surveillance.



Donya Zikry

Donya is a Master's student in International Development and Management at Lund University. She is particularly interested in issues surrounding education, digital development and the MENA Region.

F U F M A G A Z I N E / / J U N E 2 0 2 0

COVID-19: Thousands of Nepali migrant workers remain in limbo

An interview by Hanna Geschewski

Hundreds of thousands of Nepali migrant workers are directly affected by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. To learn more about their precarious situation, FUF Magazine spoke with Dr. Jeevan Baniya, a labour and migration expert from Kathmandu.

As the coronavirus pandemic continues to affect jobholders around the globe, the 164 million people employed as migrant workers outside their home countries are particularly at risk. As noted in a recent ILO brief, “Migrant workers are often the first to be laid-off but last to gain access to testing or treatment”. This is also the fate of many of the three million Nepali migrant workers currently living in Gulf Cooperation countries and Malaysia, among others.

With the spread of the coronavirus in those destination countries, many Nepalis, particularly those working in construction, transport and hospitality, have suddenly lost their jobs – and this trend is expected to continue. The ILO estimates that the pandemic will result in the loss of up to 50 million jobs in regions where Nepali migrant workers typically reside. In places like Qatar and Saudi Arabia, both

currently under lockdown, workers are already struggling with the consequences, Baniya explains.

– Many Nepali migrant workers have been laid off from their jobs. Others, such as domestic workers, have been forced to work despite the insecure circumstances. Some are suffering food scarcity. And some workers reported that the hygiene and living situation is quite risky.

Baniya points out that many Nepalis are not able to get the help they urgently need in this situation.

– Workers have been deprived of information about available support. This is partly due to a language barrier, which is a major challenge for them. In March, 40 Nepali migrant workers were deported from Qatar after they were caught shopping despite the curfew. If they would have had

adequate information about the lockdown, they obviously would not have broken the rules.

As the situation abroad is worsening, many Nepalis have been wanting to leave. It is estimated that at least half a million Nepali workers are ready to return home. But the Nepali authorities have made no effort to bring them back, leaving them in limbo for months.

– The government is quite reluctant to opt for their repatriation. This seems to be mainly because there is no substantial plan for what to do with them upon their return to Nepal. But the pressure is build-

ing and demands for a plan for the rehabilitation of these workers and their reintegration into the domestic labour market have been voiced. The government needs to identify those who are most vulnerable and ensure their right to return, says Baniya.

“

The ILO estimates that the pandemic will result in the loss of up to 50 million jobs in regions where Nepali migrant workers reside.”



T H E S W E D I S H D E V E L O P M E N T F O R U M

After all, Baniya concludes, in turbulent times like these, it is easy to neglect the right to justice for migrant workers.

– Migrant workers in this situation are more likely to face a violation of human rights than merely labour rights. 153 countries came together to agree on the Global Compact for Migration in 2018 to protect and promote the rights of migrant workers. This is the time of testing, I

would say. If governments cannot help to protect the human rights of migrant workers in a situation like this, then I think we should question the usefulness of these instruments that we have agreed on.



Hanna Geschewski

Hanna is currently pursuing her master's degree in Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science (LUMES) at Lund University. Before moving to Sweden, she spent nine years in Nepal and India.



A day for volunteering

A chronicle by Carlos Ranero

Currently, there are almost 50 million children that have been forced to leave their country of origin. This has prompted different organisations such as Save the Children to establish various programs to help them during their migration. Some of these programmes focus on helping the children to have a better time while they wait for a decision on their refugee application.

Since 2019, I have been volunteering for one of these programs run by Save the Children in the Skåne region in Sweden. Through my participation I have been able

to experience how these programmes can make a small but significant difference to children. In this text I would like to share some of my experiences and explain why I think it is important to volunteer.

The program focuses on helping the children have a more enjoyable time during their stay at the migration center. For this purpose we go to the centre twice a week for two hours each. During the time we spend there, we carry out various activities ranging from painting, playing with toys or just talking, trying our best to entertain the children. Most of the commu-

Photo: Trocaire, Wikimedia Commons.

nication with the children is done with a mixture of different spoken languages, such as Swedish or ItañoI (a mixture of Italian and Spanish), as the majority are from Eastern Europe or the Middle East. At the end of the activity we say goodbye to the children in the hope that we have made their stay a little better.

I believe that participation in these types of activities is important for several rea-

sons. But most importantly these children deserve a good life. A life in which they can develop properly and reach their full potential, which could encourage them to go back and help change the reality in their home countries. And that is why we should give a day for volunteering.



Carlos Ranero

Carlos has been working on development projects in Mexico for over five years and is currently pursuing a master's in Development Studies at Lund University.



Magazine.

WRITTEN & EDITED BY FUF LUND, A PART OF THE SWEDISH DEVELOPMENT FORUM

LAYOUT TEMPLATE BY FREDRIK BJÖRKSTEN; LAYOUT BY HANNA GESCHEWSKI