



***Power, People and Policies;
A Critical Moment for the Future of Migrant Rights
PGA Berlin, 3 - 4 July 2018***

Overview and Outcomes

The 10th PGA in Berlin, Germany 3-4 July 2018, was hosted by Friedrich- Ebert-Stiftung (FES) at their headquarters in Berlin. Move Global (Berliner Verbandmigrantischer - diasporischer Organisationen in der Einen Welt) was the local organisation that co-organized the PGA in Berlin. Around 250 participants coming from different regions of the world attended the PGA in Berlin, many also having participated in the Civil Society Days of the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

The 2017 PGA provided an independent space for dialogue within the migrant rights movement, organized along three main tracks:

1. The Global Compact for Migration
2. Sustainable Development and Migrant Organizing
3. Anti-racism/Xenophobia

A “Women’s Rapporteur” also followed each of the tracks with a perspective on how gender concerns were integrated and addressed.

As part of the opening plenary, presenters spoke on various themes, addressing the local context in Berlin and from German civil society, as well as a global context for the current PGA, presented by William Gois of Migrant Forum in Asia and one of the organizers of the 2016 PGA that was held in Dhaka, in Bangladesh.

After a welcome word of the organizers of the PGA Berlin, the opening of the program started with an intermezzo by Ecuatorian-German Poet Walter Trujillo Morena who was accompanied with flute by Raminta Kurklietyte, a Lithuanian multi-instrumentalist, singer and a composer.

A first panel continued to carry out these themes, addressing **regional perspectives and issues** from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America and the MENA region.

A second plenary panel broadened the overview even further, speaking to **strategies and solidarity across movements** for social, economic and global justice.

Between the plenaries a video film was shown to the participants with Spoken Word from Lula Saleh.

Reports from the three thematic tracks

Each track included three sessions that addressed:

- A) Analysis of context
- B) Focus on local issues, connecting local and global
- C) Strategy and Action planning

In reporting, convenors were asked to share their key framing points; main discussion focus; any controversies; and political unities.

1. The Global Compact for Migration

Lead organisation: Global Coalition on Migration, with: GAATW, NNIRR, Alianza Americas, MFA.

The session began with a historical reflection on how the Global Compact for Migration emerged, including the controversy and lack of support for the Migrant Workers Convention, which has the second lowest number of ratifications of any UN convention. They noted how international migration had been tied for many years to issues of development, especially evident in the Global Forum on Migration and Development, and how challenging it has been to make human rights central to that discourse. Presenters discussed the current environment that has included a dramatic increase in migration globally, along with pushback from most destination countries and especially the Global North.

The session at the PGA was seen as a critical space to provide an analysis on the current global to local political landscapes within which the Compact is taking shape, regional priorities and strategies, and collective strategy for migrant rights movements to impact the compact towards one rooted in human rights rather than border militarization, detentions and deportations. The plans for action will feed directly into the Regional Civil Society Consultations beginning in July.

Participants raised many concerns about what could be achieved, considering issues such as detention, circular migration, and returns or deportations, all framed within a dominant deterrence framework. They also noted the reluctance of states to address the issue of regularization and to consider any pathway that would lead to permanent residence.

They noted how human rights language has also been co-opted and placed in the context, or subservient to, national security and control, including border controls.

Sexism/protectionism intersects with racism to demonize migrant men, while states barely talk about women, and if so, in a context of “victims” or in the framework of “women and children” victimhood. Participants also noted that there are many labor migration issues to consider, as well as keeping in mind privatization of immigration enforcement, role of corporations driving profit-oriented policies.

Participants acknowledged that within civil society, there are differing views of abolition/alternatives to detention, as well as on the nature and substance of different bilateral agreements.

There were several “unities” discussed, including: How “returns” and deportations are handled and used to justify states gaining public confidence by carrying them out. Intersectionality - multiple discriminations/injustices impact migrants. Importance of firewalls to ensure access for immigrants regardless of their status. Problem that there are 2 compacts - concern about reality of mixed migration. Discomfort about IOM as lead agency in compact process. Need for sharp critique of neoliberalism/capitalism/actions of transnationals that exploit migrants directly do do greater harm to all. Critical to keep a focus on all irregular migrants’ rights and protections.

Regional complexities were noted, and importance of organizing at sub-regional levels, across inter-regional corridors. Lack of familiarity with Compact on the ground, as well as lack of connection to local realities by international-level discussions. Concern about dynamic of political/economic pressure from Global North countries on those in the South. Need for inside/outside strategies to coordinate, not undercut or undermine each other.

Third session acknowledged the many challenges discussed in first two sessions, including concern about development based on model of remittances, commodification of migrant labor, compacts should not be used to promote temporary, circular, guest worker models. Need to promote ILO as a lead agency and ILO labor agreements. Opportunities to address best interests of women as women define these interests; address firewalls - has more reference from states; some expansion in support for no child detention; distinction of “smuggling” from trafficking. Note that some countries, especially GRULAC, Colombia, others, articulating good positions.

Always be prepared to talk about sustainable/alternative development strategies and about root causes -- engaging in the compact process should not deny us the right to advance a more ambitious agenda and push forward moral leadership.

2. Sustainable Development and Migrant Organizing

Co-Facilitators: Alexis (Migrant Forum in Asia - MFA) and Brid (Transnational Institute - TNI)

The goals of this session were to address:

1. How the current development paradigm relates to the root causes of migration
2. Current policy responses on integrating migrant initiatives to development policies & how this is formulated in the SDG
3. Challenges faced by migrants and their organizations in contributing to economic, political and socio cultural development
4. The potential for advancing rights-based migrant led development initiatives.

The session focused on the concern that migration has become “forced displacement” in the context of neoliberal globalization, including:

- Migration due to violence, conflict and catastrophe, climate change
- Smuggling and trafficking in persons
- Migration due to dispossession, exclusion extreme poverty and unemployment
- Migration due to over qualification and lack of opportunities
- Need to reframe the myth of migration – the Global North needs migrants

Main discussion focal points:

- The majority of governments narrowly view migration as a driver for development through remittances, looking more into economic aspect although social, cultural, and political aspects are equally important. Migration is a key aspect of contemporary capitalism as States make migration policies based on the priorities of corporations.
- Root causes: the deepening of uneven development, displacement because of unequal access and rights due to discriminatory policies and laws.
- La Via Campesina shared the example of translating their vision to workers through participatory actions, and trying to hold corporations accountable with the emerging treaties.
- Need to develop migration-related indicators as CSOs, not just at the national level but also considering the trans-national/cross-border nature of migration
- Role of trade unions – a way to include migrant workers from different sectors, while noting marginalization of ILO in the discussion on the GCM

Among the controversies in the sessions, participants:

- Questioned why follow the SDGs if it has a neoliberal agenda? Others noted that the 2030 Agenda is not the only solution, need to look at national agendas. Something that we can work with and around it.
- The dominant debate on migration and development is fraught with myths that distort reality under a unilateral deconstruction. How “development” is defined. Different context from the governments, private sector, and CSOs – mainly economic, does not reflect and translate the lives of the people on the ground (economic development different from economic growth).
- Language appropriation – a lot of agreements and process use the language of neutrality
- Multilateral and bilateral agreements – bilateral agreements may be helpful to really put into specifics but may create divide among the other countries. Perhaps having standard terms as a region but also adding in country context
- Look back into our roots as civil society. Not lose sight of our advocacy as, really, more of a commitment rather than being project-oriented, or treat advocacy as business.

The session participants agreed on:

- Building alliances with the regional networks - reaching out to other sectors and actors – media, trade unions, faith based orgs, diasporas, NHRIs, INGOs, lawyers, private sector, UN Special Mandates, municipalities, city administrations (local authorities).
- Creating unities with relatively progressive States, but also work strategically with more regressive States while not losing our own vision of the Global Compact.
- In organizing - uniting or connecting with the different sector and CSOs working on different issues (again, seeing how it connects to other movements).

Action Proposals Next Steps

- Establishing redlines, engage in national consultations.
- States should include migrant workers and migrant communities in the discussions and deliberations about the Global Compact and SDGs.
- Organize and mobilize migrant workers. Migrants have power when they are organized.

- Use technology to share information and connect the regional networks – webinars, PGA website, PGA Facebook, and other social media.
- Engage with other constituencies that do not have the access.
- Have our own global compact as CSO – to know what to negotiate with, operational rather than arguing principles, with the redlines that CSOs have defined.

3. Challenging Racism & Xenophobia

Lead organisations: Transnational Migrant Platform (TMP-E), INSAAN, Pan African Network in Defence of Migrant Rights (PANiDMR)

This session was organized to:

1. Better understand the contemporary policies of exclusion in the context of the historical roots of racism
2. Discuss how current restrictive and deterrence-based approaches to migration intersect with this historical context
3. Examine how these contexts differ across regions

In framing this track presenters spoke to:

- Previous PGA in Dhaka discussed xenophobia and racism, but an extra element now is global compact process. Concerns that it will make matters worse. Discussion has to be led by (awareness of) historical roots, context and mechanisms.
- Action suggested in Dhaka:
 - Taking back the space, changing the narrative.
 - Common website, space to share tools, campaign strategies.
 - Common logo: visibility and unifying, building on each other experiences.
- Racism and xenophobia used to keep status quo, the current global power balance. Used by populist politicians (right and left) to keep and/or gain power. How to challenge this globally and in the different regions.
- Mechanism xenophobia and racism used to construct/design immigration policies, labour migration (different labor sectors, different sets of rights), borders and immigration policies, criminal law, violence against black, migrant and refugee women, islamophobia, dependent residence/work permits on sponsor, spouse, employer. Racist discourse to “sell” restrictive immigration policy.
- Externalization of borders and border management, executed by IOM. Training of police in countries of origin, extra moments of control, visa policies, “development aid” for readmission citizens. Detentions centers, camps, run by private corporations.
- Colonial conference in Berlin 1884, African countries divided by European countries and USA. And now forced to close their borders, at least for the black citizens, not for the white citizens, so they will not come to Europe.
- Control of people: next to (temp) labour migration schemes, complexity gaining and extension residence/working papers, visa, conditions, documentation. It all keeps people in their place. Relation capitalism and racism, classism, sexism.

Main discussion focal points:

- Essential: Who controls the laws and resources?

- Northern countries present themselves as models of equality of women, as states of freedom and democracy, and ignore extreme racist movements and politics. Confront them with their racist policies of migrants.
- Racism internalized by colonialism. Recreation structures over the whole world. Trump effect. But it does not exist since Trump, racism and xenophobia was already there, in laws, in policies, in institutes, in social interaction. Embodied in societies.
- Problem is systemic. Replicated over and over again. Colonizing of the mind, that makes replications possible.

Strategy and action proposals:

1. Identify places of alignment and gaps in regional priorities and strategies. How can we maximize a coordinated impact on key issues across regions?
2. What are key opportunities to advance rights in the compact and strategies at local, national, regional and in global compact processes?
3. What are the redline issues and what is our strategy moving into stocktaking in Mexico and negotiations?

Framing points:

Concern that the Global Compact will not improve rights protections, but may potentially debilitate rights. The Global Compact is poised to build on a framework of discrimination, where deportations are acceptable, and that furthers racist and xenophobic practices. It will not be binding. The IOM is an instrument for the states to continue deporting and enforcing harsh immigration practices. IOM is not linked with the principles of the United Nations, but linked to problematic practices of the states. It is important for our working group to develop a strong position that is clear and critical, and that upholds human rights.

How do we shift the global narrative and anchor it on the compact, to say that the compact cannot be used to affirm a position that counters how communities are represented. However, there were concerns that we need to define our position on the Global Compact, since the compact will not be in our interest. How should we react, to develop an action plan.

Outcomes: Three groups create a Plan of Action on each of the above focal areas

Action proposals/next steps

Three break out groups looked at issues of language, media and work in different regions. Some of their talking points:

- Language, consequences and how used in the global compact. Human rights language used against migrants. How to counteract that?
 - Building up a campaign how racism and xenophobia is embedded and also extended by this processes.
 - Flipping the title, f.e. safe, orderly and regularly exploitation?; safe, orderly and regularly deportation? Etc.
- Deal with the media, create positive narrative on migrants. Challenging words as deserving and “non-deserving” migrants. Moving from there. Stories/examples about systematic racism. Creating network with journalist.
- Campaigns national, but also small, local campaigns. Connecting middle class locals. Building up long term relations between communities.

- Slogans: nothing about us, without us; everyone or no one ; we are all migrants.
- Use hashtags, learning from #blacklivesmatters movement.
- Address redlines:
 - Compact should not undermine human rights or agreements.
 - Documentation for all people and keep families together. No discrimination on ground residence status.
 - If mobility is a human right, make sure documentation not linked to an employer, to prevent labor exploitation. Plus that family always should kept together.
 - We must not accept detention centres (use other word, not using their words)
 - Articulate a declaration from the PGA to be used at regional consultations.
 - Articulate the fact that nobody should be excluded to go to another place (Muslim ban = islamophobia).
 - People global actions for human rights, People global actions for labour rights, etc. @peoplesglobalaction -- branding the movement.
 - Common days to push notions of antiracism: 21 March, 10 December, 18 December. Anchors for actions across the globe.

Address three levels: analysis, narrative, branding.

- Week of action - Between 10 and 18 December only week. Proposal: at the 10th declaration rights of migrants, at the 18th actions.
- December 3 International day disabled people, to include disabled migrants.
- However, the conference in Mexico is already on 2 – 3 December.

- Baseline = humanity
- Redlines included deportation, detention, criminalization of migrants and central role of IOM
- Concerning the redlines: people on the ground don't yet know what the compact is.
 1. Distribute info and debate during the action week in December and in March - branding our movement
 2. PGA declaration to be distributed to the consultations, WSFM in Mexico, and other spaces and defend it there.

Report from the Women's Caucus (lunchtime side event)

Key framing points

- History of WIMN – very much attached to the PGA
- Intersectionality, neoliberal critique, anti-racism, human rights framework – along with the feminist analysis
- Women in migration perspective

Main discussion focal points

- Labour paper: Abolish of job segregation by gender – way labour markets are structured are very gendered: Feminised labour sectors and how rights are upheld or not
- Way women are treated in the anti-trafficking framework – paternalistic support – how women's choices and agency are denied
- Girls as domestic workers on falsified identity cards/passports → often abuses constituting trafficking as well as other violations

- Agree re women's agency but need to ensure that we do protect migrant women – how to deal with patriarchy in society
- Alternatives to detention – a new form of slavery and privatisation and monetisation of migrants; women are being released with children (as children have to be released within a certain period of time) and ankle-tagged by private company which limits/denies their ability to work and support themselves economically. Traumatic and stigmatising – sets of metal detectors in store. Don't believe in any form of detention. Cases can take years to resolve. Women have to pay the private companies for the time they were forced to wear the monitor. (Larisa (sp?)/Alianza)

Controversies & concerns

- One of the (additional) problems of lunchtime session for the caucus is the lack of simultaneous interpretation
- Differing positions on detention

Political unities

- Seen the need for claiming space for women in all the decisions that affect their lives
- Clubbing our issues with others is not acceptable, leads to side-linings
- Not protection of *women* – protection of women's rights

Action proposals/next steps

- Following ethical recruitment sessions at CSD - the recommendations were not gender sensitive – women's recruitment systems are very different and do not have the resources (land/etc) to draw on so they often migrate in debt
- Regular migration more expensive – women prefer to migrate irregularly and help each other to do so