



MASTER IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

INTERNSHIP REPORT

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ABSTRACT

I interned at Global Migration Policy Associates; an international NGO dedicated for the advocacy of rights based approach towards migration and migrants. I worked there as a Research Associate which gave me ample chances to explore various areas of migration which extended from xenophobia against migrants, to adoption of universal social protection for migrants and advocacy for the universal ratification of the International convention on migrant workers and members of their family. The close geographical proximity of the organization to the UN, and the collaboration it has with organisations such as ILO, IOM and UNHCHR gave ample chances to interact with a range of professionals starting from officials who work on the field to officials who work on high-level policy formulation.

INTRODUCTION

The internship in which I participated was with Global migration Policy Associates, which is engaged in working on a rights based approach towards migration and migrants. Globalization and Liberalization have not only reduced the hurdles in the free movement of goods and services, but also have improved the free movement of people. Migration is not only inter-state but also includes intra-state movement of people. The scope and importance of migration has expanded especially after the introduction of phenomenon such as EU. The increased negotiations going on to adopt the sample of EU where people move freely within an agreed region without hindrance in search for jobs or for other purposes has made migration to arrive at the centre stage in policy and economics. According to UN it is estimated that there are almost 232 million foreign-born people residing in other countries, in other words migrants in the world. It is to be noted that this estimate does not include temporary migrants or seasonal migrants which. As, Secretary General of UN Ban Ki Moon said we are in the age of mobility. 90% of all migration of all migrants is bound up in employment outcomes, in economic activity, meaning people who are either working or dependent on those who are. Furthermore, ILO calculated that 105 million of the total people living outside their countries in the year 2010 were economically active. Likewise, it is estimated that the annual flow of remittances is more than 400 billion US dollars, which is way higher than the total overseas development assistance and larger than the total foreign direct investment. This underlines the importance of migration in this present world and the need to focus more efforts on ensuring that it is viable and follows some set of rules which upholds the rights of this group of people who play different roles of breadwinners, economic catalyst, creative magicians and change agents for the source as well as the recipient countries.

In spite of the understanding of the importance of migrants, there is a reduced availability of information to make well-informed decisions and the local politicians in many countries use

these people as the main reason to hide their performance failures and lead people in make uninformed decisions. This applies especially in the present times where countries are cracking due to recession and migrants are used as scapegoats. This argument is cemented by the recent rise in far right and extremist parties that propel their standing among people by engaging in anti-migrant rhetoric. While this happens, it is important to notice that the need of migrants for the economies of these countries to perform well in the future is inevitable. With working population decline due to aspects such as a large proportion of working population reaching retirement age, and reduced birth rate and the increasing burden on young generation to contribute to the previous generation, the importance of migrants to these countries increases rather than decreasing. This is why an increase in the influx of efforts to collect, analyze and make decision regarding upholding the rights of these people has become an issue of great importance.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Global Migration Policy Associates is an international research, policy development, advisory services and advocacy group, addressing international migration from a truly global, multidisciplinary and rights-based perspective. GMPA provides multi-issue research, policy development, advisory services and practical support for good governance, building on international norms and proven practice. Its comparative advantages include, Policy research and advisory services from a global perspective; Cross cutting approaches combining research with policy and practice, Global knowledge to deliver sound analysis, advice and programmes, breadth and diversity of linkages, covering all main areas of migration.

The organisation conducts activities and provides expertise in cooperation with governments, international bodies, social partners and civil society. Main areas of GMPA services include, research and analysis on international migration related issues & trends, identifying current and future governance challenges and responses, technical assessments of national/regional

situations and needs, elaboration of policy options and recommendations, advisory work on policy, legislation, administration and good practices, design and implementation of technical cooperation/capacity building, assessment, advice and assistance on institution building, design and implementation of capacity building/training activities, organization of conferences, workshops and seminars on migration, and guidance on public awareness and news media communications on migration.

It has a vast pool of associates who are engaged in myriad activities all around the world aimed at spreading a rights based approach towards migration.

MAJOR PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN

The first major project that I was given was to set up a library. This exercise was more of an appetiser for the work that I was about to do in the future. Through the act of setting up a library, I had ample time to go through some of the existing literature and learnt the various areas and approaches in the field of migration. Some of the examples of which are: Gender based approach, child oriented rights approach, economic approach; health based approach and many more. Apart from this, I had an opportunity to look into migrant problems in specific regions.

Later I was engaged in developing a contact list which as of now consist of more than 5000 contacts which could be used to send circulate newsletters, reports and other information on migration and GMPA. This list was also intended to be used for specific purpose of contacting the experts in it as and when a need arose. The creation and maintenance of the contact list was a continuous process and it required weekly checking and updation. The creation of this list has close relation to the next duty that I performed which was to modify, update and at times even create pages in the website in order to launch it in the public domain. Any document or news uploaded had to be circulated among the members in the

contact list. This was important so that the work that GMPA does was visible in the public domain while at the same time contributes to new rhetoric towards various aspects of adopting a rights based approach to migration.

Furthermore, my duty included attending conferences and meetings and later writing reports and feedback on that. This exercise ensured that I paid total attention in the conference and made notes which would later help me to clarify aspects which were not clear with my supervisor.

Moreover, I had a great opportunity in a meeting to speak to a group of national level senior policy makers from Asia and Africa about tackling xenophobia against migrants. They posed a lot of interesting arguments and questions for which I successfully answered while at the same motivated me to delve more into the subject later. Meanwhile, I was also involved in organizing events such as open meetings, seminars and workshops that gave me an opportunity to apply my event management skill. Likewise, one of the most important aspect of this internship is my participation in the Steering Committee to promote the ratification of convention on rights of migrants and their families. This helped me understand how UN agencies work in mutual collaboration with various countries, NGOs and trade unions to achieve their objective.

Furthermore, the scope of research activities that I undertook in GMPA was vast. I undertook to research of an array of topics related to migration such as mainstreaming migration; environmental migrants and their human rights in Bangladesh, building peace in a xenophobic environment against migrants. Likewise, I was also engaged in creating country profile reports of migration policy and practices of various states in south and South East Asia as well as data mining and recording xenophobic and discrimination activities in South and South East Asia.

Moreover, I was also bestowed with the duty of writing reviews to various books, and writing summaries for quick reading and understanding. Additionally, there were weekly staff meetings where the work of each peer was reviewed and the new work was designated and prioritized. The employees took turns to write down the minutes and I was given many a chance to do it.

Equally or a bit more important was my involvement with the Nigerian National Law review which included reviewing the relevant national law of Nigeria and compare with some of the most important ground breaking conventions such as the International convention on migrant workers and members of their families, ILO C143 - Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), and ILO C097 - Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) to identify whether Nigeria complies by the obligations that it has undertaken upon itself related to protection of migrants by ratifying those conventions. This helped in identifying the gaps in Nigerian national law related to protection of migrants, the bad practises that exist and noting the good practices that need international focus. This will enable the law makers in Nigeria to identify the focus point and concentrate their efforts their so that the migrants won't be deprived of their rights while at the same time Nigeria holds up to its international obligations. This exercise may be one of a kind and would set an example for such activities to be carried out in other states, and even international organisations.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND SHORTCOMINGS

Working with GMPA was a delightful experience. The work at GMPA demanded a lot of seriousness the homely atmosphere of the office made it easy to cope. The geographical proximity of the office UN and all its related agencies proved very useful when it comes to getting the required exposure. The low number of employees meant I could get individual attention from my supervisors. Furthermore, having such flexible supervisors definitely made

it easy to cope up with the complex tasks I had. However, the lack of funding is definitely a hindrance to exertion of the complete potential that GMPA has as an organization. The vast pool of members and their associates with their immense knowledge and practical experience in the field of migration is an asset that could not be put to complete use because of lack of funding. This lack of funding could be attributed to the approach that organization believes in and the subject on which the organization works on. As stated previously in the report, with emergence of far right parties and anti-migrant sentiments, countries and in situations are no way in a position or have the intention to fund an organization that works for rights of migrants. In addition, when migrants are looked by countries more as an object that propels economic growth rather than human beings; an organization that believes in a rights based approach will definitely find it harder to acquire funds. However, the pure nature and intention of this organisation is sincerely recognized by many working on migration and once the ECOSOC consultative status is applied which probably will happen this year, the organization has great scope to grow from thereon.

BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM

The internship at GMPA helped me understand some of the major trends that exists in migration and which a policy maker should necessarily know. Furthermore, I had the great opportunity to get firsthand experience of how many of the tools that I studied in my Migration class at GSD are put to use. It helped me understand the never-ending horizon of field of migration and served as lantern when I was baffled by its sheer scope and magnitude. The internship through hosting and attending conferences and meetings helped me meet new people who are practioners in the migration field.

Due to the small nature of the office, I had the great opportunity to participate in every project that the organisation had the supervisor's acceptance to put me into projects which have the potential to boost my career further, something I am thankful for. Moreover, the internship

out all my skills and my ability that I gained through my studies and my work experience to good use. It helped me gain a lot of knowledge, new skills and polish my existing skill.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With the vast pool of associates it has, GMPA has the potential to work on many fronts. Some of them could be promoting rights based approach towards migrants by private business. Efforts could be taken in cooperation with private companies to employ provisions that promote rights based approach towards migrants in their companies. This should be done as a result of understanding the impact that private companies can have in influencing the government policies and even straight down at the societal level. Moreover, the target companies must include the ones which have influence at the ground level. One such example would be mining and petroleum companies. This could be done through explaining to the companies how securing their employee rights could contribute to increased productivity and reduced labour turn over. Furthermore, connecting the compliance of private companies and governments to labour standards with prestige of the organization could bring in more results. This is a similar approach that NGO's fighting environmental problems have undertaken and successfully achieved.

Furthermore, GMPA should explore alliances with other NGOs who share the same agenda so that it could lead to the development of strong coalitions while at the same time increase the visibility of the organization as such. Likewise, it is very important that GMPA get the ECOSOC consultative status so that the chance of getting funding increases and access to UN becomes limitless.

Meanwhile, every organization is a business and every business needs funds to achieve its objective. Funding must definitely be given high priority in GMPA's agenda. Every process to be successful, first needs to be initiated. The organization should concentrate on procuring

funds from many of the Swedish organizations that are in search of organizations which can undertake creative approaches instead of usual approaches in which they seem to pour in money. Exploring tie ups with universities to jointly create an institute for Migration, if successful would definitely bring in funds. Additionally, governments tend to offer funds to organisation that work at the national level rather than international level. Since, GMPA has associates all around the world, concentrating more on country specific problems would not be expensive.

Furthermore, researching on private business that have advantages due to increased migration and exploring a possible tie up with them where GMPA could campaign for their cause unless and until it matches our vision could also be a possibility.

Having more projects gives visibility and more visibility brings in more interesting projects. Considering this mutual relationship between visibility and the work GMPA does, the organization has to concentrate more on increasing its visibility. GMPA has been active in participating in events all around the world, which needs to be continued, so that visibility of the organisation is improved. Also, if the associates start referring GMPA in the work they do, it would considerably increase the organization's visibility. Meanwhile, a clear internship plan has to be made and a monthly review has to be held. Finally, if there is a possibility interns should be allowed for field missions, which would give them greater on-field exposure.

CONCLUSION

The internship at GMPA is one that I enjoyed. It was a steep learning curve, but definitely one that is worth the time and effort. Migration in the future is going to be global phenomena if not already one with serious implications on economy and security. With many countries facing population decrease and economic upset, instead of a boost in rhetoric favouring

migration, there is rather increase in anti- migration rhetoric. This is backed by false proclamations and statistics. Moreover, migrants as mentioned above are first seen as commodities that boost the economy rather than h0075man beings with dignity and rights.

This is where the role of organization such as GMPA comes in. To promote rights based approach to ensure first that these people are provided the basic human rights as in the Universal Declaration of human rights and other conventions, and are treated equally to that of each country's citizens. With increased funding and the expertise, GMPA definitely has the potential to grow leaps and bounds and become the torchbearer among NGOs that work on promoting a rights based approach.

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