

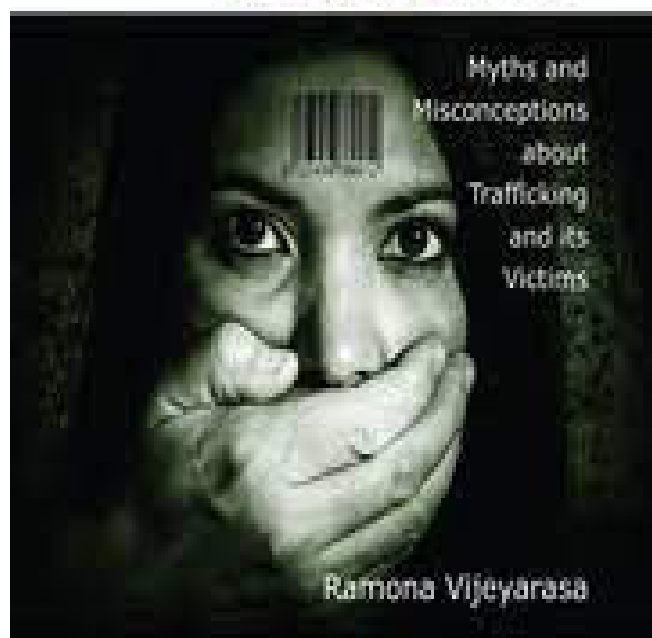
ROOTS & ROUTES

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Dear Readers,

Greetings!

The Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT) is pleased to present you with another issue of *Roots and Routes*!

In the past year, GRFDT in collaboration with other civil society organisations, has organised a series of webinars discussing all 23 objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). This issue presents you with two reports that have been produced as a result.

Firstly, you will find a report analysing Objective 3: *Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration*, which took place on 12th October, 2021. The discussion aimed to analyse the issue through an interdisciplinary approach by dialogue and knowledge sharing in order to better understand what type of information for migrants is necessary at each stage of migration, how it can be most effectively disseminated, what obstacles there are and how the stakeholders should be coordinated for a comprehensive approach.

Also, the current issue offers another report covering Objective 7: Address and Reduce Vulnerabilities in Migration. The deliberation explored a wide range of discourses on vulnerability, including vulnerabilities that are structural, personal and from the perspectives of children and feminist theories. The panellists gave due significance to the context of these vulnerabilities and how dialogue with the victims could unearth many situations that have not been taken into consideration. The report was written by M. Abdul Fathah.

Finally, the issue included a book review written by Tawafuddin Azimi of 'Sex, Slavery and the Trafficked Woman.' The book is written by Ramona Vijayarasa and contains a systemic analysis of human trafficking and the conventional notions about the nature and characteristics of its victims, which are dominated by narratives of the victims being extremely poor, illiterate, and female. The author is a human rights lawyer and academic who delves deeply into gender issues and social justice.

We hope you will enjoy reading our new issue of Roots and Routes! You may also find other reports and book reviews on our The Migration News website or watch the recordings of all of the webinars on Diaspora Transnationalism YouTube channel.

If you have any comments or suggestions, the GRFDT team can be reached through email at editorinchief@grfdt.com. We would be pleased to hear from you!

Happy Reading!

Indriga Valiukaite

GCM Report

Accurate and Timely Information is the Essence of Migration

An online panel discussion scrutinising Global Compact for Migration objective 3: *Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration* took place on 12th October 2021. It was co-organised by the Cross-Regional Center for Refugees and Migrants ([CCRM](#)), Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism ([GRFDT](#)), The International Institute of Migration and Development ([IIMAD](#)), Metropolis Asia Pacific ([MAP](#)), and Migrant Forum in Asia ([MFA](#)) as a part of an [International Six Month Online Certificate Programme on Global Compact for Migration](#).

The discussion aimed to analyse the issue through an interdisciplinary approach by dialogue and knowledge sharing in order to understand better what type of information for migrants is necessary at each stage of migration, how it can be most effectively disseminated, what obstacles there are and how the stakeholder should be coordinated for a comprehensive approach.

The panel was moderated by Ms Paddy Siyanga Knudsen, Vice President of GRFDT and included Ms Lorena Lando, a Chief of Mission, International Organization for Migration ([IOM Nepal](#)), Mr Akhil C S, a researcher from International Institute of Migration and Development ([IIMAD](#)), Dr Aaraon Diaz Mendiburo, a lecturer from Centre for Research on North America based in National Autonomous University of Mexico ([UNAM](#)), Ms Rositsa Mahdi, a researcher working on a Project [Digital Active Women](#) and Mr Ramon Sanahuja Vélez, an expert on local administration of migrants and refugees in Spain.

Comprehensive approach necessary with focus on human rights at its core

The discussion began with Ms Lorena Lando emphasising how politicised the discussions around migration commonly

are and stressing the necessity for a **comprehensive approach** to migration management that ensures effective policies protecting human rights and promoting human dignity. The effective cooperation and dialogue between countries and other stake holders is a key in achieving this.

“If we take the approach of fundamental human right, these should be applied to everybody, not just pick and choose what suits. This should be the approach to our work. This is not easy but we cannot give up. There are always things that are not going the way they should be going but it is essential that the dialogue would be there.” – Ms. Lorena Lando

She also stressed how COVID-19 exemplified the importance on providing information to migrants as they may often not be at the core focus of the governments but require tailored approach in similar circumstances.

Information must be accurate, relevant and accessible

The discussion then moved on to Mr Akhil C S detailing the issues that migrants from India and other parts of South Asia commonly face in terms of information provisions. He suggested that lack of **accurate and relevant information and accessibility** to information are among key issues faced by migrants at various stages of migration and it can reproduce vulnerabilities of migrants and lead to trafficking, forced labour, debt bondages and other labour rights violations. He emphasised that we should not only focus on lack of information or availability of information but also on how irrelevant or overloaded it may be and there are often lack of access of information due to migrant’s working patterns or levels of literacy.

He also agreed on the need for a comprehensive approach on information provisions that include and utilise various stakeholders, such as diaspora communities and trade

unions, and offer effective and accessible information at various stages of migration. He exemplified how COVID-19 demonstrated the efficiency of diaspora organisations in disseminating information to migrants.

“Lack of accurate and relevant information always reproduce vulnerabilities that migrants face in various stages of migration. It may lead to human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondages and other labour rights violations”
– Mr Akhil C S

Migrants should be seen as human beings and not just workers

The discussion then commenced with Dr Aaraon Diaz Mendiburo emphasising how temporal migrant workers from Mexico to Canada do not receive almost any information prior to the departure. And if they do, these are mostly the instructions of how to become a ‘good’ and ‘professional’ worker. He underscored that **temporal migrant workers are often not seen as human beings** and do not receive any information concerning their personal, sexual or emotional well-being. Drawing on personal experience, he suggested that governments are sometimes not willing or not concerned to change this as they may just be focusing on the economic gains. He offered to volunteer at the Ministry of Labour in Mexico to provide the necessary information for migrants’ pre-departure but was not welcomed to do so.

“There are some talks conducted at the Ministry of Labour; in the organisation that sends migrants to Canada, but they talk mostly about behaviours which is kind of control, they are just expected to be professional and productive. The migrants are just told to be good and not rude- that is the information they get. Nothing related to human or labour rights, sexual information or emotions.” – Dr Aaraon Diaz Mendiburo

Information provisions as gendered process

Ms Rositsa Mahdi then offered her insights based on research findings for project Digital Active Women. She discussed that it is often the **women specifically that are searching**

for information and are responsible for integration of the whole family. She stressed the necessity for convenient and efficient ways to provide information tailored for migrant women needs. She suggested this can be achieved through digital means by providing information in digital places that migrants usually seek it, such as Facebook groups and other social media platforms.

She also emphasised how citizens science can be utilised to understand better how, where and what information migrants needs and include their voice in the agenda.

“It is very often the case that women are responsible for the integration of the whole family”– Ms Rositsa Mahdi

Local administrations and information for irregular migrants

Finally, Mr Ramon SanahujaVélez contributed to the discussion by offering his insights on the role of local administrations on providing information and the necessity to include migrants with irregular status in the information provisions. He suggested to analyse information provisions for migrants also from a micro or local perspective as mobility of migrants is not just from country to country but from a specific city or village to a city in another country. The departure cities as well as arrival ones should have information points tailored to that localities and effectively provide relevant and accurate information for newly arrived migrants, such as there is one in Barcelona.

These information centres should include information for migrants with irregular status. Irregular migration is a reality and these migrants are part of the society and must know their rights and information regarding their legal status, ways to regularise, access to healthcare and education.

As other panelists, he also agreed that migrant workers are often seen just as workers and local administrations should work to assist migrants to broaden their spectrum of interests and promote their well-being.

“So migration is from one point to another and this is a key in understanding where the migrants get first information. Usually it is a friend or a relative. This information is not always reliable, especially because often migrants tend to portray their migration experiences as success ”- Mr Ramon Sanahuja Vélez

Return, reintegration and stigma around migration

At the final round of the insights, the panelists answered the questions from the audience. Ms Lorena Lando emphasised the importance of providing information as well on the risks of irregular migration and seeking more accessible and comprehensible ways to provide information such as through videos. Mr Akhil C S added that information for returning migrants should already start at the pre-return stage and Mr Ramon Sanahuja Vélez stressed that European Union and non-governmental institutions tend to spend more money on the programs initiating return rather than re-integration. The panel discussion concluded with the insight by Prof. Camelia Nicoleta Tigau from GRFDT. She proposed that information

provisions should not be reserved only to the information for migrants. It should also include the information about migration provided to the wider public because it shapes the societal perceptions on migrants and affects them and their well-being directly. Unfortunately, often these perceptions are politicised and misinformed.

“Communication on migration is just a very important field of study of action with direct consequences on the life of migrants” – Prof. Camelia Nicoleta Tigau

Indriga Valiukaite is a research intern at GRFDT. She holds a MSc in Global Migration from University College London. Her research interests lie in the political philosophy and sociology with special focus on issues related to democracy, migration, citizenship, nationalism, transnationalism, multiculturalism, ethnic conflict, politics of recognition, identity.



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Addressing Vulnerabilities: An Inclusive Approach For a Better World

On 23rd November 2021, [the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism \(GRFDT\)](#), [the Migrant Forum in Asia \(MFA\)](#), [the Cross Regional Center for Refugees and Migrants \(CCRM\)](#), [International Institute for Migration and Development\(IIMAD\)](#) and [Metropolis Asia-Pacific \(MAP\)](#) jointly organized a panel discussion on the Objective 7 of the [Global Compact for Migration](#). The session was moderated by Mr. William Gois, Regional Coordinator of the Migrant Forum in Asia and attended by three prominent panelists and various other experts who presented their ideas on the topic “Address and Reduce Vulnerabilities in Migration”

The failure of states to implement right-based governance

The moderator began the session by asking how we can bring the change that is necessary for a much more justice-oriented kind of governance program on migration. He gave a glimpse into the previous discussion that concluded how our response in migration governance are not nuanced in ways that involve the institutionalized and weaponized forms of discriminations along race, religion and nationality. Reflecting on the objective of the panel “Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration”, Gois critically examined various shades of reducing vulnerabilities and probed into the reason why member states have used the word “reduce” and not other alternatives. For him, vulnerabilities are much constructed by the member states who as duty bearers fails to implement a right-based governance approach. He drew a typical example of vulnerability by stating how allowing market forces to dominate the recruitment process result in irregular channels of migration and leads to xenophobic narratives about migrants. Gois then turned to panelists to have a deep look into the emerging issues of broader discussion on vulnerabilities and review some of the policy governance options.

Balancing the rights of migrants and sovereignty of member states

Aron Gebremariam is a migration and development specialist and has worked with the Commission for Africa and with International Organization for Migration in Gambia. He pointed out progressive developments in the GCM document with regard to recognizing access to business services and recognizing migratory status as a positive factor in reducing vulnerabilities.

He also pointed out certain low points i.e., the document has not addressed root causes in terms of expanding legal pathways for regularizing migratory status of irregular migrants. GCM also fell short of completely avoiding forced repatriation as the document qualifies it as ‘arbitrary’. Therefore, Aron says that GCM had treaded a unique balancing act by keeping human rights of the migrants at the center of the discussion while simultaneously respecting the sovereignty of member states. Answering moderator’s question whether states would be willing to bear the costs of basic services of the migrants at a time welfare states are facing resource constraints and also opposition from domestic forces, Aron highlighted why there is no evidence to support that migrants are consuming disproportionate resources from natives.

“The evidence suggests that migrants are actually contributing a lot more than non-migrants. If you look at the global GDP, the figure for 2020 is that migrant’s contribution to the global GDP is about 9 percent of total GDP while the number of international migrants only account for a little more than three percent”: Aron Gebremariam

Further, for him, it is not primarily a question of resources,

but of human rights and administrative and legal procedures that expel and detain irregular migrants. Aron also answered a question on regional configurations at African level that are looking at right-based approach to migration. He listed a host of institutional processes such as the Regional Consultative Processes on Migration (RCPs) that have played a very critical role in expanding our understanding of south-south migration dynamics and gave practical example of what can be done when there is an alignment of objectives in interstate dialogues. Though very effective in creating a political climate facilitating the GCM objective, he states that contrary to Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) that has resulted in policy developments in the form of regional free-movement protocol, the former has remained as a programmatic approach rather than a policy process. Aron however does not miss a common challenge to these interstate dialogues when there is a misalignment of objectives among member countries.

The lived reality of Somali diaspora and their potential for community development

Sara Ahmed, who is a PhD candidate in gender and Somali diaspora and Founder Director of Somalia Gender Hub focused her presentation specifically on youth vulnerability from a gender perspective. With a personal experience of being a refugee in Europe, she moved beyond considering vulnerability as a concept and rather examines it as a lived reality from stories enveloping vulnerabilities from the point of departure to the point of destination via transit. **“Vulnerability is very much linked to insecurity and inequality”** she stated as she points to the inequality at multiple levels of gender, ethnicity and disability that compounds to make the lives of migrants doubly problematic.

It is the unfortunate image of the western world as a dream destination and the economic imperatives that pressure young people with unprecedented burden to choose such a scenario. To address those multiple challenges and distinctive nature of each migrant that is usually missed in the analysis, she had made use of feminist tools and the concept of intersectionality. She narrates a story of young

Somali man who aspires to migrate to Europe to alleviate the difficult circumstance of his family, but ends up in the hands of smugglers who demands an exorbitant amount of ransom from his family. **“There is little known about the families that are left behind”** she adds as she reflects on the vulnerability of the policies and rules that are put in place for these already vulnerable migrants. African people migrating to Europe are understood as a burden while western people coming to Africa are generally seen as expatriates encouraged for their expertise. She pointed out this contradictory perception to recognize the potential of those African youths fleeing from conflict to be utilized properly so that they can be the agents who can go back home and bring about concrete change.

She also replied to a question from the moderator regarding the policies member states could do to initiate this potential, where she highlighted that refugee measures in Europe, except in some organizations like the [Shabaka](#) are not conducive to build an individual who can go home and contribute. By inviting listener’s attention to the role Somali diaspora has been playing in responding early and effectively to calamities, she asked them to think about how more robust migration policies could build resilient African communities better able to cope with these challenges. The potential is huge because as the speaker notes: **“they are doing so with the intention of building their lives, bettering their own family’s lives and contributing significantly to their communities”**

The refugee children: Inclusive decision making

Memory Mandikiana, who is working on the effects of COVID-19 on the displaced children of the Tongogara refugee camp in Zimbabwe specifically mentioned about the forced migration from the four different categories of migration. She listed labour migration, forced migration, retirement migration and internal migration as other categories where similar kind of structural and procedural violence exist. She understands the encampment policy of Zimbabwe government resulting in sexual abuse, mental challenges, child labour and language barriers for the asylum-seeking children coming from francophone countries. The other

vulnerabilities she charts include early marriages, teenage pregnancies and other subtler issues like limited dietary diversity and lack of basic services like leisure activities for children that are enshrined in the Article 31 of the UNHCR Convention.

“As much as refugees are perceived as a vulnerable group, refugee children are at the crux of that vulnerability complex” she states. Memory sheds light on some revolutionary practices in the field: the foster care system in Zimbabwe where minors are attached to a certain family who are willing to take and nurture them and other practices like offering training and counselling services to hear their problem from themselves. She said that these are applied through a partnership approach where organizations, UNHCR and the government pool resources together. She also lamented about the encampment policy of the Zimbabwe government in reservation of Articles 17 and 26 of the 1951 UN convention on refugees: **“this is sort of like a temporary situation. Unfortunately, it ends up being permanent somewhat because we have got refugees that have been in the camp for at least a decade or so”**. Finally, she stressed that as far as vulnerability of children is considered, it is not just about making decision for them,

but also to find out from them their condition and their understanding of the solution.

“Anything for us without us is not for us”: Memory Mandikiana

Wholly, the conversation explored a wide range of discourses on vulnerability, including vulnerabilities that are structural, personal and from the perspectives of children and feminist theories. The panelists gave due significance to the context of these vulnerabilities and how dialogue with the victims could unearth many situations that are not possibly taken into consideration. The moderator concluded the panel by asking the panelists and attenders to explore further the connection between GCM objective 7 and objective 2 that dealt with the drivers of migration. He alluded that the drivers of migration might be also the causes of some of the vulnerable situation migrants find themselves in.

MAbdul Fathah, Research Student at Jamia Madeenathunnoor and Graduate Student at IGNOU. Twitter: [@M_Abdul_Fathah](https://twitter.com/M_Abdul_Fathah)

Sex, Slavery and the Trafficked Woman- Myths and Misconceptions about Trafficking and its Victims,

by Ramona Vijeyarasa

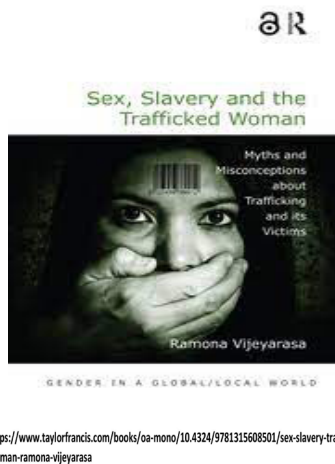
'Sex, Slavery and the Trafficked Woman,' written by Ramona Vijeyarasa, contains a systemic analysis of human trafficking and the conventional notions about the nature and characteristics of its victims, which are dominated by narratives of the victims being extremely poor, illiterate, and female. The author is a human rights lawyer and academician who delves deeply into gender issues and social justice. The book spans 284 pages, contains nine chapters divided into three sections, and was first published in 2016. Appended at the end of the book is a questionnaire to the refugees under study, an overview of the data collected, and an exhaustive bibliography with references to the important arguments and conclusions. The book attempts to deconstruct the complex issue of trafficking in persons in the light of empirical evidence derived from extensive fieldwork in Ghana, Ukraine, and Vietnam.

Part one of the book, which consists of three chapters, delineates the most important aspects of human trafficking and outlines the viewpoints and conclusions of the main stakeholders in the issue. The second part, which has four chapters, aims at disproving the belief that the quintessential victim of trafficking is poor, uneducated, coerced, and female. Part three offers alternative approaches and possible solutions to the problem.

The author, in the first chapter, presents an overview of the mainstream trafficking framework and of the structure of the book. The second chapter analyses the agendas of the various stakeholders, namely, the media, governments, religious institutions, and international organisations, which exert tremendous influence in shaping the academic

and legal discourse on human trafficking (p. 19). Based on these agendas, different archetypes of victims, which are, the poor, the female, the uneducated, the coerced, the weak, and the naive, are created. This stereotyping approach which gives preponderance to sexual exploitation, leads to the marginalization of equally important concerns like forced labour in men and women.

In the fifth chapter, the author's research work in Ukraine and Vietnam is widely cited for dispelling the traditional notion that naiveness and lack of education of the victims are prime factors that act as causes of migration (p. 101). It is found that the migrants from Ukraine who end up in exploitative situations are generally more educated than the average Ukrainian. Many of them have a university education and are graduates. The lack of opportunities in the home country and the desire for better prospects motivate them to make the decision to migrate. This natural human desire for a better standard of living in a foreign country motivates the educated Ukrainian to confront risks. Why the educated Ukrainians and Vietnamese do not find satisfactory accommodation in their respective societies is partly explained by the low quality of education in these countries (p.109). In Ukraine, particularly, the lack of qualified teaching staff and infrastructure is cited as one of the reasons for the poor outcome of education. Thus the better educated Ukrainian and Vietnamese, knowingly and aware of the consequences, take the decision to migrate. Another interesting aspect of the issue is that it is often the better educated, and the younger siblings decide to migrate, landing themselves in risky situations. The level of education plays a role in the decision-making process of the would-be



migrants, which means many migrants voluntarily choose to migrate. Thus, the preconception that the victims are enticed to accept these exploitative conditions through coercion and misrepresentation is also disproved (chapter 4).

The sixth chapter examines the stereotype of 'poverty-driven migration.' The main cause of internal migration, that is, mainly migration from rural areas to urban centres remains the poverty and lack of employment opportunities. This urban migration is an age-old phenomenon. Poverty induces people in Ghana to sell their children to recruiters and traffickers (p.118). Many of these children end up as conscripted child labourers in the fishing industry. Obviously, the reason is extreme poverty. However, there is a category of migrants who do not live in abject poverty yet, are not satisfied with their life, and opt for migration (p.123). This is the proverbial case of 'searching for greener pastures. Economic refugees who are found in Western European countries and North American countries mostly belong to this category. These migrant families are not tormented by extreme poverty. However, they look for a better standard of life, the image of which is instilled mainly by the media. So, the two categories of the poor- the very poor and the relatively poor, are vulnerable to temptations of migration which may entail sexual and labour exploitation.

Chapter eight deals with the present-day legal framework provided by international agencies like the UN and national criminal justice systems and focuses more on organized trafficking (p. 172), where the trafficker is considered a violator and is sought to be prosecuted. This prosecution-oriented approach tends to ignore the victim-oriented perspective. Thus, if it is proved that the victim has given lawfully valid consent to the transaction, the trafficker has loopholes to escape from indictment and punishment. In such a situation, it is the burden of the prosecutor to prove that consent was obtained through coercion, misrepresentation, or other illegal means. This procedure again offers the victims the proclivity to deny having given consent even when they originally were aware of the possible consequences of the consent they originally gave (p. 44). Thus, the general

tendency of international and national legal systems to regard migration mainly as organized trafficking and to focus on prosecuting the organised traffickers is flawed.

In the final chapter, the author makes some important suggestions to rectify some of the flaws in handling the issue of migration. From a legal point of view, the thrust of the migration protocols on fixing responsibility on the trafficker is justified. However, this criminal justice approach can be supplemented by adding a contractual angle between the victims and the traffickers and transporters (p. 176). Thus, when the agreement between the trafficker and the victim at the initial stage is considered a contract, all the usual legal factors that invalidate a civil contract, like coercion, fraud, misrepresentation, etc., in the deal become relevant and helpful.

The attempt of the author to take a comprehensive view of the issue of human trafficking is definitely commendable. Instead of looking at it from a criminal perspective, the author highlights the relevance of poverty and illiteracy as the primary motivating factors. The author reiterates the importance of considering the rights of the victims as human rights deserving a humane approach even in cases where the victims voluntarily opted for migration but eventually landed in situations of exploitation and injustice.

This book is a welcome departure from the run-of-the-mill approaches to the problem of migration. The author has succeeded in disproving certain assumptions that have long prevailed in studies on this issue. Thus, the author opens new perspectives in the discourse. New studies in the field will certainly benefit from the findings of the author.

Tawafuddin Azimi is currently pursuing a Postgraduate Programme in International Relations and Politics at Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala, India. He has completed his Bachelor's in Law and Political Science at the Bamiyan province, Afghanistan. During the six months

internship with UNDP, he got well acquainted with legal procedures of investigation of crimes, prosecution process, examination and cross-examination of witnesses and the formalities associated with judgments and decrees issued by

courts. He has worked on the staff of the Bamiyan Attorney for two years. He is a voracious reader and has a keen interest in studying international relations, gender justice issues and political developments.



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