



# BORDERS: WALLS OR BRIDGES?

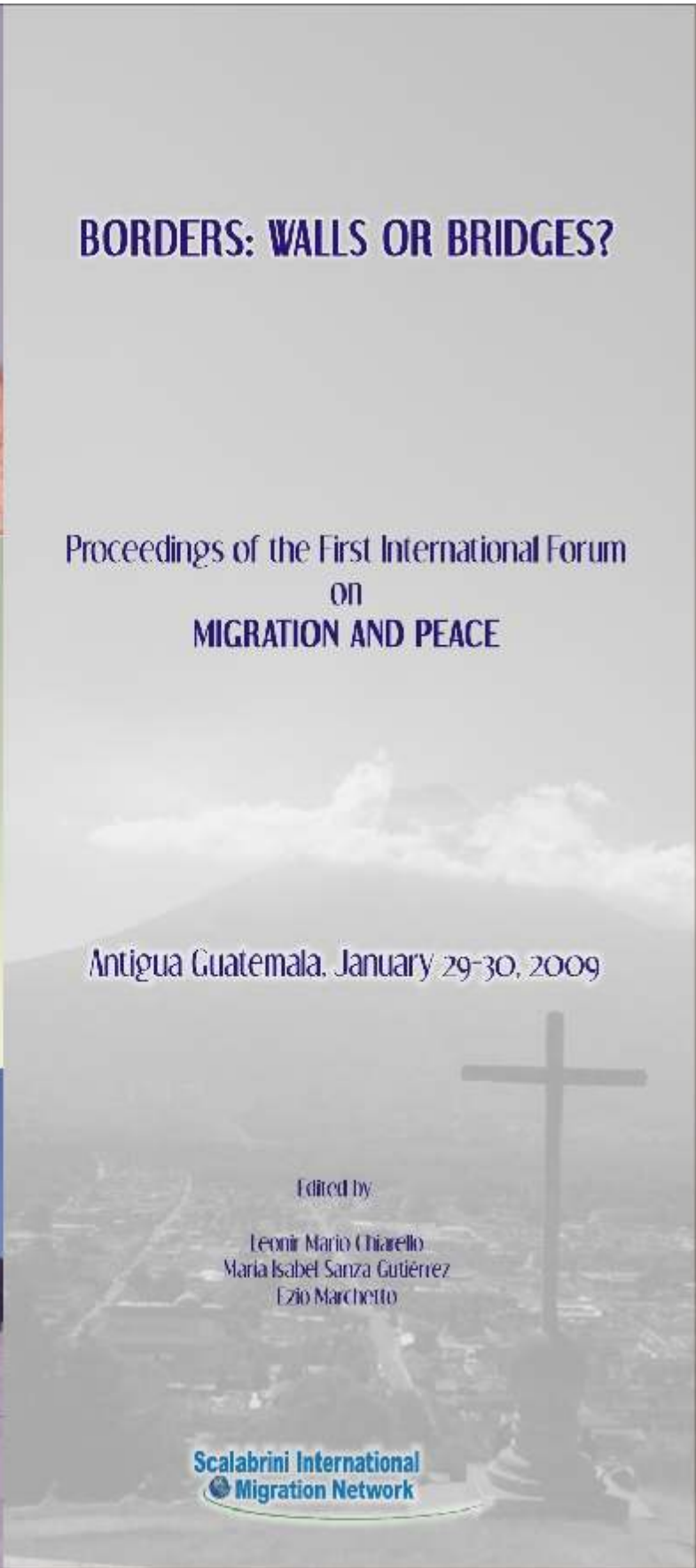
Proceedings of the First International Forum  
ON  
MIGRATION AND PEACE

Antigua Guatemala, January 29-30, 2009

Edited by

Leonir Mario Chiarello  
Maria Isabel Sanza Gutiérrez  
Ezio Marchetto

Scalabrini International  
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The Scalabrini International Migration Network (SIMN) is a non for profit organization established in 2006 to promote the dignity and the rights of migrants, refugees and people on the move worldwide. This publication contains the proceedings of the First International Forum on Migration and Peace, organized by the SIMN, which took place in Antigua, Guatemala, on January 29-30, 2009.

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*To all men, women and children  
who by crossing borders  
are peace builders...*

# Acknowledgments

The *Scalabrini International Migration Network* (SIMN) thanks everyone who, in one way or another, made possible the celebration of this First International Forum on Migration and Peace.

We are grateful to the Forum participants for their excellent contributions, especially the moderators and experts who took part in the debate panels and workshops, the proceedings of which are published in this volume.

We are indebted to the following sponsoring organizations: the Guatemalan Conference of Bishops' National Commission for Pastoral Care of Human Mobility, the Porticus Foundation, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Soros Foundation of Guatemala, the Fondazione Cassamarca, TROCAIRE Guatemala, Catholic Relief Services, the Guatemalan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Central American Parliament, as well as the Scalabrini Communications Center, and the Scalabrini Seminary and Migrant Support Center of Guatemala.

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during the Forum, and facilitating “live” media coverage of the event through Radio Migrantes.

In times like this it is easy to forget someone, however, we express our most heartfelt thanks to each and every one who was there, or who contributed in any way to this Forum.

Finally, we would like to thank all those who fight for, work for, and share in the ideal of *a world more just and more fraternal*, so that one day migration may be an actual choice, not a necessity, and walls may give way to bridges and meeting places for sharing in full the rights of each and every human being, regardless of documentation or provenance.

*Rev. Leonir M. Chiarello*  
*Executive Director*  
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In a world ever more complex and globalized, the increase in international migration in recent decades has become, and will in the future continue to be, one of the central issues on the public international agenda. Figures published by the United Nations indicate that approximately 200 million people reside in a country other than that of their birth. Despite restrictive immigration policies, border controls, and the expulsion of undocumented migrants, the pervasive socio-economic asymmetries, poverty, lack of jobs, natural disasters, armed conflicts and other international problems, among other factors, will continue to force millions of people across national borders in search of better living conditions. History shows that migrant movements cannot be contained or repelled by building walls. The most appropriate policy for managing migration is to build bridges toward international coexistence.

Discussions about the best way to address global migration, among governments and international organizations, currently focused on demographic, economic, cultural, and national security issues, will have to consider one of the most challenging aspects of this phenomenon: the peaceful coexistence between local communities and immigrants. Social and political conflicts generate forced migration, while negative perceptions of immigrants in receiving countries generate social conflicts and hostilities, making it difficult for the two groups to coexist harmoniously. This underscores the need to promote a culture of peaceful coexistence in the mobility and settlement of migrants in the communities of destination. From this perspective, migrants themselves, along with other social, political, national, and international actors, are the true protagonists in the debate.

For the past few years, on the American continent and elsewhere in the world, there has been a furtherance of peace and reconciliation processes that seek to heal the wounds caused by forced migration and the violations of human rights perpetrated by military governments and dictatorships, and during armed conflicts. In addition to solving the conflicts of the past, these processes are expected to contribute to a *sustainable peace* by focusing on solutions to structural problems such as injustice and social exclusion, which are at the root of the current conflicts.

With these things in mind, the *Scalabrini International Migration Network* (SIMN) envisioned the creation of a space for reflection and debate and organized the International Forum on Migration and Peace, choosing to

focus on the Americas at its inaugural meeting.

With the title “Borders: Walls or Bridges?,” and the support of the Guatemalan Conference of Bishops' National Commission for Pastoral Care of Human Mobility, the First International Forum on Migration and Peace was held in the city of Antigua, Guatemala, on January 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, 2009. During the two days, 218 expert panelists shared their reflections, commitments, and proposals for the promotion of a fully human and peaceful existence as the right of every person, at the international level, and particularly within the American continent. Among the participants in attendance were several Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, government representatives, delegates from international, civic, academic, and migrant organizations, as well as members of the media. The first day's discussions centered on the role of the various social agents in the processes of reconciliation and peace building, and their impact on international migrations. The second working day was focused on the role of public policy in building bridges to reach peaceful international coexistence.

This publication brings together the proceedings of the First International Forum on Migration and Peace, including the presentations by the seven debate panels around which the Forum was organized, and the conclusions from the six thematic workshops on best practices for the promotion of peaceful coexistence in the area of international migrations.

Following the papers presented during part one of the Forum are the presentations by the debate panels. Part two discusses the processes of reconciliation and peace building and their impact on international migrations. The first panel, *Reconciliation and Peace-Building Process: Their Impact on International Migration*; the second panel, *Migrations: Walls or Bridges for a Peaceful Coexistence?*; the third panel, *The Role of the Church in the Promotion of a Peaceful Coexistence between Migrants and Local Communities*; the fourth panel, *Experiences of Promotion of a Peaceful Coexistence Along the Borders*; the fifth panel, *The Role of Politics in Building Bridges for Peaceful Coexistence and Integration among the People of the Americas*; the sixth panel, *Migration Policies and Reconciliation Processes in the Americas*; the seventh panel *Beyond National and International Walls: New Challenges for a Peaceful Coexistence*. Following these are the reports from the thematic workshops on best practices for the promotion of peaceful coexistence (part three). Last are the Forum's conclusions and the proclamation of the Final

Declaration of Antigua. A series of interviews of several Forum participants, conducted by Mr. José Luis Perdomo Orellana, and supported by the Soros Foundation of Guatemala, are included with these proceedings.

The sharing of experiences, the inclusion of the work of so many different authors from such diverse backgrounds, and the networking among the various institutions represented at the Forum, are the essential elements in continuing the work initiated at this conference. Action requires the cooperation of all to create, implement, and strengthen the means necessary to generate and establish a culture of peaceful coexistence among all peoples (something sorely needed in the area of human mobility) with migrant persons at the center. Given their vulnerability, these persons need protection. Major efforts are required to ensure that their human rights are not just mere words and declarations of principle in treaties and statutes, but a reality. On the other hand, not only are these persons (men, women, youth, boys and girls in movement) the subject of rights, but are the principal agents in the construction of a common culture of *co-existence* that seeks to overcome the walls of fear and discrimination and cross the bridge to full enjoyment of the inalienable rights to which every human being is entitled.

The First International Forum on Migration and Peace, a space for encounter and debate, for input and commitment, has among its main goals: to acquire and contribute new knowledge regarding the connections between international migrations and the processes of reconciliation and peace building; and to encourage a high-level international dialogue about migration processes and the promotion of a fully human and peaceful existence for all. This is conceived as a dialogue among all the agents with decision-making and acting power in our societies, from Nobel Peace Prize Laureates to governments, civil societies, migrant advocates, international organizations, academia, and the media. The Forum hopes that governments will accept the knowledge generated by these dialogs and implement migration policies that respect and protect the rights of all migrants and their families, and develop concrete proposals that engage each and every one of the different social and political agents in the construction of a welcoming culture of solidarity and peace. It also aims to become a radius of dissemination for the Church's solid commitment to migrants, their families and communities (it is particularly symbolic that this first conference should take place at the same time as the first decade of the promulgation of the apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in America*). The

Forum promotes the creation of a support network for peaceful coexistence between immigrant and local communities in the Americas and, in very concrete fashion, calls on its participants to continue acting as agents of socio-cultural change and promoters of a more peaceful world.

The opinions expressed in the different reports published in these Proceedings are those of their respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the *Scalabrini International Migration Network* (SIMN) or the organizations sponsoring this Forum.

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Noni, spazio per il dialogo e l'aiuto

