



# BORDERS: WALLS OR BRIDGES?

Proceedings of the First International Forum  
ON  
MIGRATION AND PEACE

Antigua Guatemala, January 29-30, 2009

Edited by

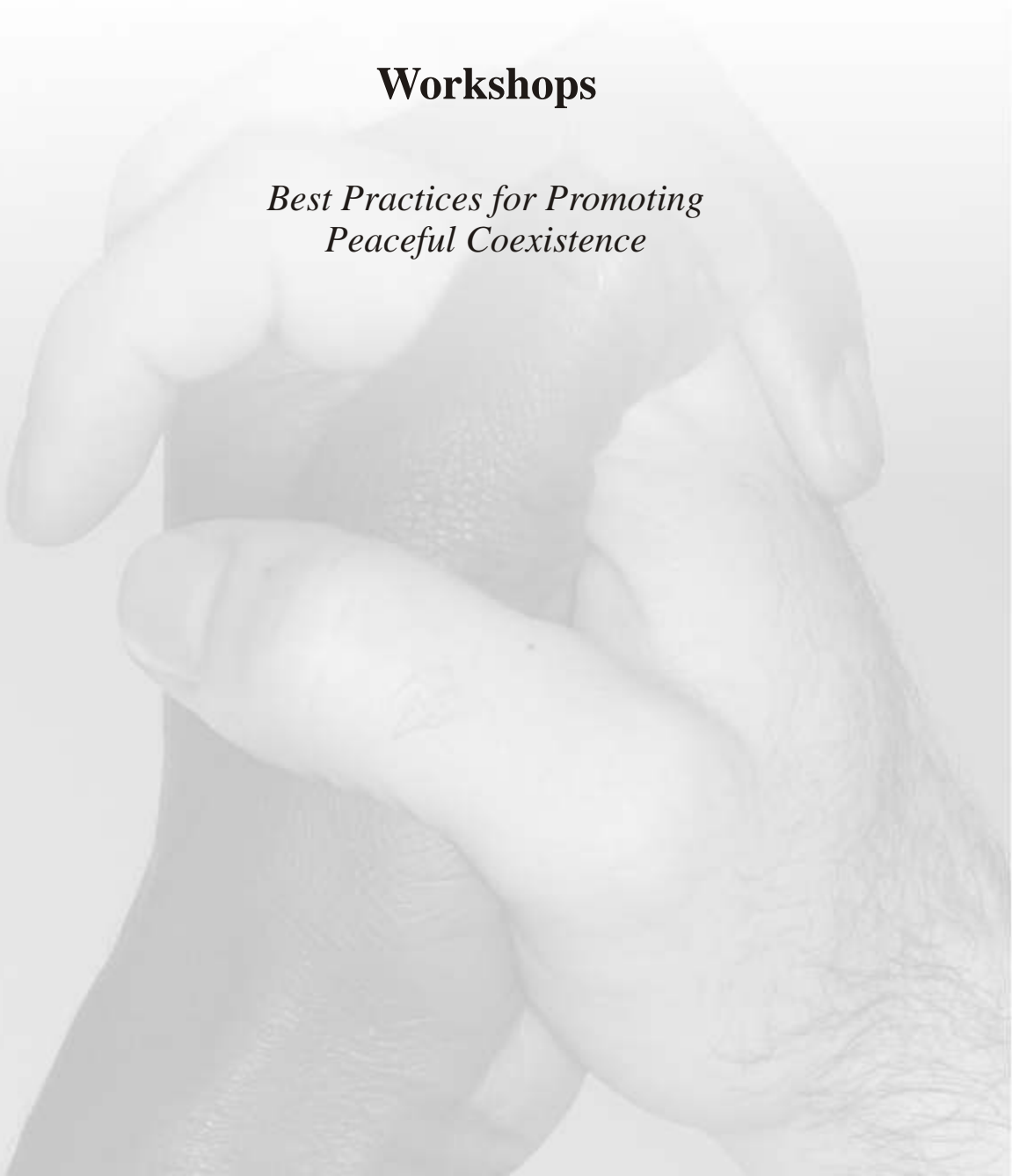
Leonir Mario Chiarello  
Maria Isabel Sanza Gutiérrez  
Ezio Marchetto

Scalabrini International  
Migration Network

BORDERS: WALLS OR BRIDGES?

## **Workshops**

*Best Practices for Promoting  
Peaceful Coexistence*





## Best Practices Promoted by Catholic Relief Services

### Mr. Richard Jones

*Deputy Regional Director for Justice and Solidarity*

---

The best practices group promoted by *Catholic Relief Services* (CRS) initiated its work with a brief introduction of the matter by Rick Jones. In this introduction Mr. Jones presented the following matters and best practices promoted by CRS in fostering peaceful coexistence:

- To include and serve the refugees as well as migrants in the receiving communities:

Migration and refugees can create pressures in receiving communities and competition for scarce resources. Both groups must be served for greater integration and social cohesion.

- Identify shared interests and specific solutions:

Links and opportunities must be discovered among the sending and receiving countries to strengthen social and economic ties: fair markets, links between *home town associations* and communities of origin, labor rights in the countries of origin and destination.

- Promote communication, images and civic events:

There is a lot of prejudice against migrants. Images and civic events can very powerfully affect perceptions and serve to humanize both immigrants and receiving communities.

- Generate dialogue and discussion within the Catholic Church:

Within the Church, there are sometimes people who are against migrants. In order to encourage integration, social cohesion and equality, we can begin within the Church (organizing encounters among Bishops, parish encounters, spaces where all voices and perspectives are heard).

- Have an input on immigration reform: this should be linked to development initiatives in the countries of origin.

Migration and development policies go hand-in-hand. People have the right to migrate and also the right not to migrate; better said: the right

to development. This can produce a true transformation. Promote links between Free Trade Agreements and migration, foreign aid, debt and related matters.

With this introduction as a starting point, the participants in the thematic group shared their specific experiences and proposed the following initiatives, which could broaden the best practices of CRS and the First International Forum on Migration and Peace, within the scope of promoting peaceful coexistence on an international level:

- Implementing programs for deportees and/or the returned to find jobs.
- Tend to the needs of refugees and receiving communities.
- Provide meeting spaces for dialogue between: employers and migrant workers; common and diverse interest groups inside the Catholic Church.
- Promote civic events and relations with the media to disseminate objective information.
- Link migration policies with development policies.

## Best Practices Promoted by TROCAIRE

### Lic. Blanca Blanco

*Program Officer, TROCAIRE, Guatemala*

---

The best practices group facilitated by TROCAIRE Guatemala began the discussion with a brief introduction of TROCAIRE's approach to migration matters. This being a relatively recent area of work for our institution, one of the objectives is to strengthen the knowledge and analysis of our staff and institution on the matter, especially on the causes of migration and its impact. On the other hand, TROCAIRE assists local organizations legally, by strengthening the way of life of the population as an alternative to migration at the same time that migrant population rights are protected and promoted, providing humanitarian help when necessary, and making contacts for their rights to be respected in their countries of origin, transit, destination, and return.

To exemplify the work TROCAIRE sponsors for promoting peaceful coexistence in Guatemala and the Central American region, the following best practices were shared:

<b>Nicaragua</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience in the organization of Nicaraguan migrants abroad</li> <li>• Promote and reinforce the processes of inter-institutional coordination</li> <li>• Design and implementation of impact strategies</li> <li>• Supporting migrants in destination countries to legalize their status (gathering facts, family reunifications, among others)</li> </ul>
<b>Honduras</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing a Returned Migrant Assistance Center at the airport</li> <li>• Forming 5 family committees for migrants and committee network</li> <li>• Proposal for the productive use of remittances:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the communities of origin</li> <li>• Generate local capacity</li> <li>• Follow up and auditing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>El Salvador</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening the organization processes and effectiveness of the migrant population abroad</li> <li>• Capacity for migrant population input in the country of destination</li> <li>• Promote efforts in the search of missing migrants</li> <li>• Monitoring of deportation process by land</li> <li>• Promoting and raising awareness of the right to migrate and not migrate</li> <li>• Forming alliances and coordinating efforts between countries of transit, destination, and return</li> </ul>
<b>Guatemala</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer attention, assistance and protection to the displaced population, refugees and migrants</li> <li>• Monitoring violations and abuses of human rights</li> <li>• Mapping of actors and risks</li> <li>• Preponderant role of the Catholic Church:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection on the matter (causes and implications)</li> <li>• Education and training of human resources in the matter</li> <li>• High levels of input on the matter with different actors</li> <li>• Participation in settings for the formulation of public policies, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Regional Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forming of groups, networks and forums on migration in each country</li> <li>• Institutionalization of Migrant Week celebration in each country</li> <li>• Regional Network of Civil Organizations for Migrations (RRCOM):             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On migration issues in the region</li> <li>• Civil society negotiator with the government in formal settings (Regional Migration Conference RMC)</li> <li>• Contribution through revision of RMC guidelines in matters of migration and boy-girl-and-adolescent possible trafficking victims, women, disabled, etc.</li> <li>• Presentation of diverse proposals (human rights panel; migrant database; inclusion of Caribbean countries in the setting)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>TRÓCAIRE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive approach to the matter</li> <li>• Institutional strengthening of counterparts</li> <li>• Coordination of donor contributions</li> <li>• Alliances and coordination to improve lobbying and input</li> <li>• Training of staff</li> <li>• Training of staff</li> <li>• Research and development of a regional strategy</li> </ul>

We still face great challenges to continue sponsoring and strengthening migration work, including:

Fight for the cause of migration from a rights and development approach:

- Work on the matter of remittances, which is ethically and morally correct.
- Financing and sustaining programs and projects.
- Input in destination countries, this being currently a controversial matter.

With this introduction as a starting point, the participants in the thematic group shared their specific experiences and proposed a series of initiatives that could broaden the best practices of TROCAIRE and the First International Forum on Migration and Peace, within the scope of promoting peaceful coexistence on a national, regional, and international level:

- Vision and more integral work in the matter, beyond assistance programs, on its causes and effects, from a rights and development approach, and with the participation of migrants and their families.
- Political input strategies including monitoring and follow-up activities.
- Strengthen networking to interconnect the diverse areas, experiences, and best practices from the role of diverse actors.

## **Best Practices Promoted by the *Open Society Institute (OSI)* and the *Soros Foundation of Guatemala***

### **Dr. Elena Yolanda Díez Pinto**

*Executive Director of Soros Foundation of Guatemala*

### **Dr. María Teresa Rojas**

*Deputy Director of U.S. Justice Fund, Open Society Institute (OSI)*

---

The group of best practices sponsored by the Soros Guatemala Foundation began with an introduction by María Teresa Rojas, Director of the *Justice Fund* of the *Open Society Institute (OSI)*. In her introduction, Ms. Rojas presented the best practices implemented by OSI in promoting peaceful coexistence on an international level:

The *Open Society Institute (OSI)* is a private foundation that gives donations or grants and was founded in 1993, in the United States, by investor-philanthropist George Soros. OSI seeks to influence the formulation of public policies to promote democratic governance, human rights, and economic, legal, and social reform.

OSI carries out its activities in Europe, Africa, Mongolia, Southeast Asia, Turkey, the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean. The Soros Foundation Network spans more than 60 countries, including the United States. The initiatives of OSI are directed to specific matters based in a broad regional or global network and are implemented in cooperation with the Soros Foundations located in the different countries and regions.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, OSI works closely with Soros Foundations in Haiti and Guatemala, as well as its Latin American program. The Latin American program is coordinated from Washington, DC and is geared to the strengthening of democratic institutions, securing international support for the goals pursued by OSI, and promoting transparency and accountability.

Since 1994, OSI has dealt with matters related to migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, displaced people and people with no citizenship (stateless persons).

The work on migration at OSI is based on the belief that an open society must protect the fundamental rights of all individuals regardless of

legal status or citizenship, and must also promote policies that allow for all to fully participate in society.

The main approaches to this work are the following:

- Improve the human rights situations and other conditions in the countries of origin so that people will have the choice of migrating or not,
- Promote the rights of migrants in the countries of destination,
- Combat discrimination in the migration trajectory and in the countries of settlement.

The mechanisms adopted by OSI in the area of migrations are the following:

- Developing policies of reform,
- Reform by means of the legal system ,
- Research, Studies, Documentation,
- Strengthening Civil Society.

The thematic agenda of OSI's work is the following:

- In countries of origin: analysis of the causes of migration and the economic and social impact of migration,
- In the countries of transit and destination: distinctions based on legal status or citizenship, the undocumented, citizenship and identity, detention and deportation, human trafficking, forced labor, border control and public debate.

The objective of OSI is to create a strong civil society that can advocate for the rights of immigrants, and to develop policies and recommendations between governments and other sectors for migration to be managed in line with international interests and international norms for human rights.

Next, Dr. Elena Yolanda Díez Pinto, Executive Director of the Soros Guatemala Foundation, presented the following history and strategic priorities in the migration area of the Soros Guatemala Foundation:

- Within the framework of the Reconciliation program (1998-99) initiatives were supported to promote research and help in the repatriated, displaced, and demobilized communities. We

collaborated to bring education to the Communities of the Sierra Population in Resistance, during the transfer and relocation of settlements.

- Later, the work was oriented to research and support of initiatives that would increase the visibility of the growing phenomenon of migration to the United States, especially within the agendas of the governments (Guatemala and México).
- In 2002, the Foundation supported the *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales* (FLACSO), in forming a group of specialists from Guatemala and México, with the goal of urging both governments to adopt a clear position on migration, and also to guide public policies, in view of possible legal reforms.
- In 2006-07, the Foundation supported the *Instituto Centroamericano de Ciencias Sociales y Desarrollo* (INCEDES) in the project “Observatory for Social Management of Migration to the United States,” whose goal was to deepen the knowledge, behaviors, features, and implications of the social phenomenon of migration in the communities of origin in Guatemala.
- In 2009, the Foundation supported the organization of the First International Forum on Migration and Peace, in Antigua, Guatemala.
- It is also financing the documentary film *abUSed: The Postville Raid*, which brings to the surface the violation of human rights, illegal detention, and the drama suffered by hundreds of migrants and their families, mainly Guatemalan, in Postville, Iowa (considered the worst migrant raid in the history of the United States).
- We will also support the efforts by the Pastoral of Human Mobility in sensitizing the population on the abuses and their prevention, reducing the migrants' human rights vulnerability, and improving the coordination and cooperation among migrant-serving organizations.
- We have included the initiative, *Migrants, Return and Opportunities*, in our Local Governability program.

The Soros Guatemala Foundation has among its pillars that configure its work dimensions the following:

- International migrations and their economic dimension: research and analysis of economic explanations of migrations, transparency in the remittance-banking system relationship, and its consequences locally.

- The criminalization of migrants in their places of origin, transit, and destination; the attention to migrants from the perspective of rights; *advocacy* work and communication media.
- Migration and Organized Crime: the phenomenon and its relationships with different forms of crime; generating research programs with national and international universities.

The Soros Guatemala Foundation assigns particular importance to the celebration of this First International Forum on Migration and Peace as a key setting for enriching its own strategy and that of OSI, and strengthening the dialogue with the different organizations that work actively with migrants, especially Central Americans.

With this introduction as a starting point, the participants shared their specific experiences and proposed a series of initiatives that could broaden the best practices of the Soros Foundation, within the scope of promoting peaceful coexistence on an international level:

- Support the coordinated work on a bilateral level, between countries of origin and destination.
- Combat racism and discrimination and promote freedom of speech: investigate why migrants feel discriminated against and why they are criminalized.
- Increase the matter's visibility in the media to create awareness (provide a voice and freedom of speech for migrants). For this purpose, we propose educating people and utilizing the media (movies, documentaries).
- Create a Reintegration Program for the Postville deportees.
- Support assistance programs for the country's human trafficking victims (asylees in Costa Rica).
- Promote the study of security in the trajectory to the North, of those fallen in transit to the North, and those deported.

ORGANIZED BY:

**Scalabrini International  
Migration Network**



WITH THE SUPPORT OF:



PASTORAL DE MOVILIDAD HUMANA  
CEB



FONDAZIONE CASSAMARCA  
Noni, spazio per il dialogo e l'ascolto



Centro  
**Scalabriniano**  
CURULICACAO  
[www.uscmlib.org/inf.asp](http://www.uscmlib.org/inf.asp)