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European  
Youth  
Citizenship at the  
Mirror

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**The Project:**

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[www.citizenshipatthemirror.org](http://www.citizenshipatthemirror.org)

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# EUROPEAN YOUTH CITIZENSHIP

AT THE MIRROR

**INTRODUCTION:**

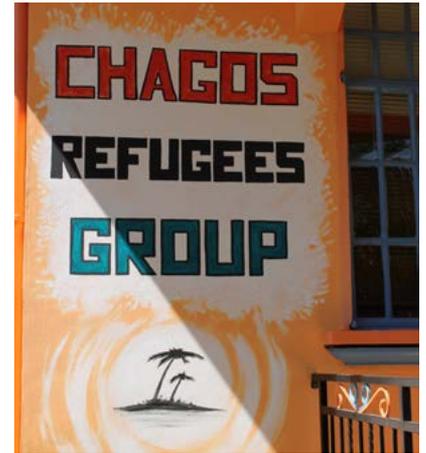
Background Of The  
Research



In 2013 SCI Italy put in a funding application to the EU for a youth research project on the theme of citizenship and social exclusion/inclusion. The application was through Youth in Action project Section 3; this supports projects that involve cooperation among youths from EU countries as well as from at least one country in each continent. Before securing the grant SCI Italy sent out a call to appropriate organisations in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa in order to acquire appropriate partners for the project in each location. Of those who responded with interest, VSI Ireland, SCI Nepal and SVI Mauritius, all of whom had historical partnerships with SCI Italy, were selected to participate in the project, along with a new partner, Natatè in Mexico. Together these five organisations in five different countries drew up a plan for a project that would bring together youth from each country to cooperate on the research project. The youth were to come face-to-face with life in a culture very different from their own while investigating social issues in their destination countries.

This plan was based upon the **AIMS OF THE PROJECT** which are as follows:

- To conduct research in five different countries from around the globe that analyses the concept of citizenship in each country and evaluates if it is inclusive or exclusive for those who do not possess it or who cannot exercise their citizen rights.
- To create an “intercultural convivence” (intercultural co-living) among youth from a variety of backgrounds to exchange different experiences and perceptions as well as common points around the concept of citizenship.
- To compile an e-book from the results of the in-country research and from the discussions of the seminars with a focus on the concept of citizenship and social inclusion/exclusion within EU and non-EU countries. The e-book is intended to increase awareness about these social issues.



In April 2014, one Irish and one Italian citizen, travelled to Mexico, another two to Nepal and two others to Mauritius to begin their in-country research. In June two Nepali, two Mauritian and two Mexican citizens travelled to Europe to spend six weeks in either Italy or Ireland to conduct their research. Upon the return of the volunteers from Mauritius, Mexico and Nepal, a seminar for all those involved was held in Rome, Italy; this allowed the volunteers to share their experiences and findings with the rest of the group. Additionally, several events were organised throughout the seminar, including talks from NGOs working in the field of human rights and dealing with issues of social inclusion and exclusion within the Italian context. There was also an interactive session with a lawyer, Salvatore Fachile, who discussed the issue of Citizenship. The seminar concluded with the participation of all the volunteers in a festival organised by SCI Italy called the "No Border Fest". This provided the participants of the project with the opportunity to obtain an overview of the situation of migrants and minority groups in Europe. This also gave the non-EU participants a very different view of the experiences of migrants in Europe. The final stage of the project then took place in Europe; the volunteers from Mauritius, Mexico and Nepal began their research in Italy and Ireland.

After five weeks of research in Ireland and Italy, the entire group met again for a seminar in Co. Wicklow, Ireland. The purpose of this final seminar was to work on the format of the eBook as well as to hold a concluding discussion on the findings of each research group and to try to find common threads which could link each country together and to give a cohesive flow to the project. Two talks were held on the topic of Citizenship locally and its meaning on a more global level. Ian White, from the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, provided some very powerful insights on his ideas and ideals of a "Peace Process" and its relevancy when it comes to the issue of "all inclusive citizenship".

*Caoimhe Butterly*, a peace activist, made a considerable contribution by encouraging the participants to think about the importance of looking at social issues in a different light. She discussed tackling both the symptoms and consequences of marginalisation as a complimentary solution, as opposed to treating each as mutually exclusive. She also had very powerful beliefs about social justice and advocacy policies which she sha-

red with the group.

The issue of citizenship is a key element of the contemporary interconnections between different areas of the world. The project concerns a comparison of the concept of citizenship in EU and non-EU countries, with a particular focus on the rights linked to this issue. Each research group was instructed to investigate the connection between citizenship and social inclusion/exclusion with a focus on the main issues within each individual country through field research (interviews, discussions, studies). For this reason the focus of the research in each country varies depending on the main issues affecting the socially marginalised in each location.

The topics for each country are as follows:

- **Nepal:** Women's rights; LGBT rights; youth opinions on social issues.
- **Italy:** Roma people.
- **Mexico:** civil rights and citizenship rights of migrants in transit from Mexico; rights of ethnic and minority groups; women and children's rights.
- **Ireland:** Irish travellers and their rights to have their ethnicity recognized.
- **Mauritius:** rights of the people deported from the island of Diego Garcia in order to construct a U.S. Navy military base.

As previously mentioned the project participants were free to focus on the topics and issues they felt most important in the context of the country they were based in and within the confines of the research topic – the connection between citizenship and social inclusion/exclusion.

In **NEPAL**, **Linda Kehoe** and **Elena Albergo** had the choice of a range of topics related to social exclusion. They spent time researching and contacting organisations based in the regions of Nepal they would be visiting (Kathmandu Valley, Pokhara, Chitwan);

connected to their personal and study interests, as explained in their section, they decided to focus mainly on women and LGBT rights. They met several organisations and had the possibility to conduct personal interviews with local leaders of the Nepali Congress, one of the most Nepalese political parties.

They also compiled a questionnaire in order to deepen their understanding of how the youth in Nepal perceive citizenship issues. The research approach was qualitative and one of the main aims was to talk face - to - face, in an informal way, about these topics with all people that Linda and Elena had the possibility to meet during their permanence in Nepal. This, in addition to studies and interviews, permitted them to acquire a better knowledge of this country, so small yet complicated and full of diversity.

In **MAURITIUS**, **Leah Sullivan** and **Diletta Donnarumma** conducted their research by visiting the National Library of Mauritius and the library of the University of Mauritius as well as through online research that focused on what previous research and newspaper articles said on the subject. They interviewed some members of the Chagossian community, including the leader of the Chagossian Refugee Group, Mr Olivier Bancoult, a Chagossian family and the representative of the Chagossians; the inter-generational gap of the interviewed and their different perspectives on the subject were the main focus of these interviews. They also conducted a small general survey in an attempt to better understand the social and cultural context in Mauritius and the general approach to the Chagossian issue on the island. A qualitative approach was employed for this research.

In **MEXICO**, **Louise Power** and **Irene Masala** conducted unstructured interviews with several organisations that worked in a variety of areas connected with the rights of women, children, minorities and indigenous communities. They also visited two local indigenous communities, Zinacantan and Chamula, and a Zapatista community, Oventic.

In **Italy**, **Shaheen Doussoruth**, **Valeria Meraz** and **Sajin Pasakhala** did their research by collecting facts and data about Roma citizens in Italy. They conducted a survey among Romas in Rome and witnessed the eviction of a Roma community from their temporary settlement. They also met with several different organisations that worked

with the Roma community and conducted an unstructured interview with an advocate that works with Roma people.

In **IRELAND**, **Angel Maldonado**, **Sanna Konga** and **Mishka Bundhoo** did their research by visiting several organisations that work with travellers; while there they interviewed the heads of each organisation. In addition to this they also interviewed two travellers and visited a traveller community.

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*The official definition of E.U. citizenship is as follows:*

*“Any person who holds the nationality of an EU country is automatically also an EU citizen. EU citizenship is additional to and does not replace national citizenship. It is for each EU country to lay down the conditions for the acquisition and loss of nationality of that country” (European Commission, 2014)*

*As said in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, “EU citizens are entitled to:*

- *move and reside freely within the EU;*
- *vote for and stand as a candidate in European Parliament and municipal elections;*
- *be protected by the diplomatic and consular authorities of any other EU country;*
- *petition the European Parliament and complain to the European Ombudsman.”*  
*(European Commission, 2014)*

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These rights apply to all EU citizens, who also have the right to interact with the EU institutions equally and to be protected by them, particularly in cases of discrimination on the basis of nationality. The Lisbon Treaty introduced in 2009 is a new form of public participation for European citizens that allows one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of EU countries to call directly on the European Commission to bring forward an initiative of interest to them within the framework of its powers.

According to the 30th article of the Constitution of **MEXICO**, a person can acquire Mexican citizenship, by birth and by naturalization. However, Mexican law differentiates between nationality and citizenship. Nationality is the attribute of a person in international law that describes their relationship to the State, while citizenship is given to those that hold Mexican nationality and entitles them to certain rights and responsibilities before the State. The 34th article of the Mexican constitution establishes that Mexican citizens are those Mexican (nationals) who are 18 years of age or older, and who have an “honest way of living”. Mexican citizens can: vote in all elections, be elected in all elections, associate freely to participate in the political affairs of the nation, enlist in the Mexican Army or the Mexican National Guard to defend the Republic and its institutions, and exercise the right of petition. (Mexican State, 1917; VisasMex, 2008)



IRENE MASALA,  
San Cristobal de Las Casas, Chiapas



In regards to **NEPAL**, if any one parent of the child is a citizen of Nepal he or she can claim the right to citizenship of Nepal. If any foreign national wants to become a citizen of Nepal he or she has to spend 15 years in Nepal and must to be able to read write speak and understand Nepali in order to apply for citizenship. (His Majesty's Government, Ministry of Law and Justice, 2006)

In **MAURITIUS** the following is the criteria to be considered a citizen: "A person becomes a citizen of Mauritius either by birth or by descent.

By birth: (i) A person is a citizen of Mauritius, if he is born in Mauritius before 1st September 1995, of either Mauritian or foreign parents. (ii) A person is a citizen of Mauritius if he is born in Mauritius after 1st September 1995 and if either of his parents is a citizen of Mauritius.

By descent: A person born outside Mauritius is a citizen of Mauritius under section 20(3) and 23 of the Constitution if either of his parents is a citizen of Mauritius by birth." (Government of Mauritius, 2014)

While these are the official definitions of citizenship in each country involved in this research the following articles will highlight that legally holding citizenship of a country does not necessarily equate to enjoying all of the rights associated with citizenship nor does it automatically mean social inclusion into that country's society. The various reasons for experiencing social exclusion and/or experiencing rights violations are explored throughout this eBook.

Ce  
tableau a été  
Peint Par  
Clement  
Siatous  
qui y a Reproduit  
la Scène de l'arrivée à  
Diego Garcia du  
Mauritius Trochetia  
le Jeudi 6 Avril  
2006  
Artiste-Peintre  
Siatous  
M.S.K



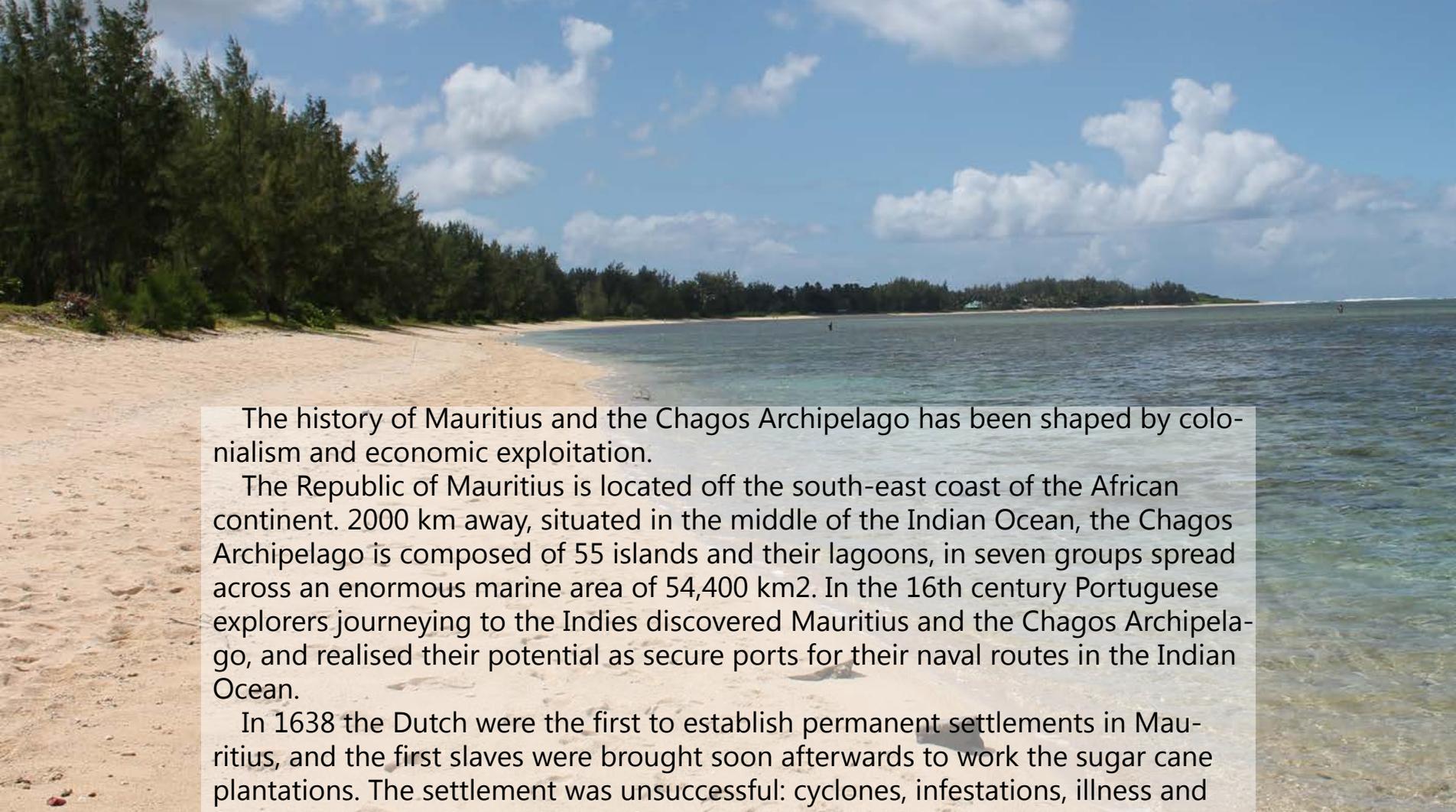
Visite Historique des certains Chagossiens



# MAURITIUS

LEAH SULLIVAN AND DILETTA DONNARUMMA

DILETTA DONNARUMMA  
Chagos Refugee Centre, Pointe aux Sables



The history of Mauritius and the Chagos Archipelago has been shaped by colonialism and economic exploitation.

The Republic of Mauritius is located off the south-east coast of the African continent. 2000 km away, situated in the middle of the Indian Ocean, the Chagos Archipelago is composed of 55 islands and their lagoons, in seven groups spread across an enormous marine area of 54,400 km<sup>2</sup>. In the 16th century Portuguese explorers journeying to the Indies discovered Mauritius and the Chagos Archipelago, and realised their potential as secure ports for their naval routes in the Indian Ocean.

In 1638 the Dutch were the first to establish permanent settlements in Mauritius, and the first slaves were brought soon afterwards to work the sugar cane plantations. The settlement was unsuccessful: cyclones, infestations, illness and food scarcity are all contributing factors. In the early 18th century the French took possession first of Mauritius (called now Ile de France) and then of Chagos and managed to establish themselves fully. They successfully reintroduced the sugar cane plantations, using slave labour. This was also the time of the mass introduction of slave labour from the areas known today as Mozambique and Madagascar. In Chagos coconut oil production had begun, using around a labour force of 200 slaves who inhabited for the first time the Archipelago, mainly Diego Garcia.

Following the Treaty of Paris after Napoleons defeat, the English took possession of Ile de France and all its dependencies. Decades of British domination did

little to change the cultural features of Mauritius. French was still the main 'civilised' language, Creole being spoken mostly by the slaves while they continued to live in a slave based society. And so the processing of sugarcane and of coconuts (production of copra, to form coconut oil) were the main economic activities, and big changes would come with the emancipation of slaves in 1834 consequent to the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833. Since the former slaves were leaving the plantations, the English administration started to call workers from abroad, conceiving a new form of exploitation; indentured labour. Indentured labourers, mainly from the southern regions of India, arrived in Mauritius facing almost the same treatment as slaves before them. At that very time there was a remarkable change in the social-cultural composition of the population that affected in different ways the evolution of Mauritian society and history. As for the Chagos Archipelago; the slaves benefited by their emancipation, the indentured labourers arrived on the islands. The entire adult population was employed within the copra oil business; their wage was paid in food and other benefits, with a little money also given. They survived in almost complete autonomy: a non-monetary society which took from the prosperous environment most of what was needed to survive; living in a sustainable lifestyle.

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## NEGOTIATION FOR INDEPENDENCE AND THE SHADOW OF THE US-UK AGREEMENT

The second half of the 19th century was for England the main period of decolonization, and following on from this Mauritius had the chance to emancipate itself from the Commonwealth in 1968. The geo-political and socio-economic implications of this process must be considered if you are to understand the history and situation of the Chagossians. It is important to note, by the way, that the story of the Chagos islands' exclusion from Mauritius and Seychelles independence is complicated, with blurred lines, different versions and interpretations depending upon the story-teller of the time.

In September 1965 there was a meeting in London where UK government invited Mauritius to discuss the final stage of a new Constitution and to talk about the chance to become an independent state, or consider a new form of association with Britain. The conference was held in Lancaster House and the main Mauritian political parties participated. During the conference the interest of the UK to excise Chagos Island from Mauritius, to be used as a communication centre for maritime shipping in the Indian Ocean was proposed and discussed separately.

The UK proposal was summarized in the "Agreement of Mutual Defense", where the detachment of Chagos was presented as a bilateral issue between Great Britain and Mauritius. The Mauritian government would renounce sovereignty of Chagos and receive in exchange the sum of 3 million pounds, the fishing rights to the Chagos area, and independence.

Much has been written since and conspiracy theories have gained momentum. Had the United Kingdom begun negotiations with the USA some years beforehand regarding Diego Garcia, on the Chagos islands, as a promising location for a strategic military base?

In the early 1960s the UK lost control over the Suez channel and found itself not to be in the economic condition needed to maintain the leadership of the region. The leasing of Chagos islands to Americans seemed realistic to Great Britain, who also obtained a purchase discount for Polaris missiles for its submarines.

From 1961 US started their study on the island and found the Archipelago suitable for filling the security gap they feared was opening up from Suez to Singapore. It has to be stressed how a military base strategically located could be relevant at that time, in a cold war context, where both blocks were eager for security and opportunity to gain advantages over their enemies.

Mauritius, during that period, was facing a tough social-cultural situation with riots, curfews and racial-secular based fights in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic context.

In November 1965 the Queen of England signed the Order in Council that created, under the Colonial Boundaries Act of 1895, the British Indian Ocean Territories (BIOT). The Chagos Archipelago was so detached from Mauritius and grouped with the Desroches, Farquhar and Aldabra Islands. Diego Garcia was made available to the United States for a period of 50 years, renewable for 20 years, for the installation of a military base.

On 23 March 1968 Mauritius became independent, maintaining its sovereignty on Rodrigues, Agalega and the archipelago of Saint Brandon..

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## WHAT HAPPENED TO CHAGOSSIAN PEOPLE?

As we know, hundreds of people have been living and working on the Chagos Archipelago since the 19th century. At the time the BIOT was declared around 2000 people inhabited the islands, mainly Diego Garcia. The United States wanted the Archipelago clear and clean. It has become a famous statement of the then Senior Foreign Office member who wrote that it was mandatory that

“ the object of the exercise is to get some rocks which will remain ours...There will be no indigenous population except seagulls ”

In 1965 the British government took steps towards the removal of the residents of the Archipelago, alleging Chagossians were just contractual workers, not permanent inhabitants of those islands.

Underlining their temporary status on the islands protected US and Britain from a UN intervention and any claim of human rights violations.

The exchange of notes and reports between United States and Great Britain have

revealed recently they both made sure that this small population wouldn't be a problem in any moment for the location of the US military base. A military base that now is one of the largest and most important in US possession, considered from the Pentagon "an indispensable platform for policing the world", and from which US engaged military action in the region of Afghanistan and Iraq.

From 1968 to 1972 the entire Chagossian population was deported from their place of birth. First, there was a prohibition on the importation of basic goods like salt, oil or medications, and any Chagossians who travelled to Mauritius and Seychelles for vacations or medical reasons were not permitted to return. Then the Chagossians who still lived on the Archipelago were forcibly put on a vessel to Mauritius (or Seychelles) having the right to take with them just one bag of belongings per person. At that time people didn't know the reason why they were expelled from their land, neither where they were going. Once they landed in Port Louis' harbour their lives changed beyond recognition.

They were deported to Mauritius, because it was said that they were Mauritian citizens, since Chagos were a Mauritian dependency until 1965. And in fact, the money the Mauritius government received from UK in exchange for the excision was conceived also as a fund to help the government to take care of Chagossian people. On the other hand, the Chagossians claim having received nothing that could have helped them integrate into the new society. The first housing given was in buildings with no electricity, no water or other kind of facility; lacking even doors, windows and floors. They had no money or skills to find a job in a modern money-based economy, where they needed to buy also food and water. During the first years they lived in Port Louis they incurred debts and some of them fell into prostitution,

DILETTA DONNARUMMA,  
Lisette Talate, one of the first women to  
fight for the rights of Chagos people





alcohol and drug addiction. Also depression, in creole sagren, killed a lot of people, who became sick or committed suicide.

The first small compensation was given by the UK government in 1978, in response to requests from the Mauritius for reimbursement for the Chagossians resettlement. After some protests in the streets and hunger strikes between 1980-81 the UK government gave the Government of Mauritius 4 million pounds, to which Mauritius added land worth 1 million pounds, for the Chagossians. The land offered was distributed in Point aux Sables, Cassis and Baie du Tombeau, around Port Louis. Much of the money had to be used to repay debts incurred during the years since relocation- whilst others built sheds where often more than 20 people lived in, still without the basic facilities.

Chagossians were invisible in a developing society and simply disappeared into the bottom layer of Mauritian society: the poor, illiterate and unemployed marginalized.

The Chagossians feel deceived time after time. The UK contribution which was framed in a Chagos Trust Fund and seemingly transparent and clear, but in exchange for that little money Chagossians were obliged to sign a renunciation form, stating their complete quit-claim on returning in Chagos. A lot of Chagossians signed with their thumbprint confident that the document was nothing more than a receipt.

As the leader of the Chagos Refugee Group (CRG), Olivier Bancoult said, protests started in the late 1970s because women were tired, depressed and they didn't know how to feed their children. The slogan 'Rann nu Diego' became popular (Give us back Diego) and they organized hunger strikes, protests in the streets to show their suffering and living conditions, but mainly to stress they didn't want anything other than the right to return to their homeland. homeland.

## Fights to go back home

Different levels of protest have been established. Referring to Laura Jeffery's work on the understanding of Chagossian peoples struggle that seemed to us particularly relevant, we also identify different levels of the struggle.

## Legal right to return

The Chagos Refugees Group started its fight to establish their legal right to return to the archipelago in the late 1990s. Referring to 1945 UN Charter where it is said that "decolonisation should be based on the principle that the interests of the inhabitants are paramount<sup>1</sup>", the CRG's legal team demonstrated how UK government neglected this premise exiling the Chagossians people to Mauritius and Seychelles. In 2000 the CRG won a judicial review against the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs based upon the argument that the exile, which had been legitimised by the 1971 BIOT Immigration Ordinance, was unlawful. The judge noted:

Section 4 of the Ordinance effectively exiles the Ilois from the territory where they belong and forbids their return. They are to be governed not removed. (Bancoult [2000]: paragraph 57).

British government replaced the 1971 BIOT Immigration Ordinance with a new one giving Chagossians the right to return to their homeland, with

the exception of Diego Garcia, where the military base is located. In 2002 UK also offered the Chagossians a boat trip to Chagos (apart from Diego Garcia of course), that they declined.

In 2002, having made no tangible progress towards visiting or resettling the island, the Chagossians launched a group litigation to determine whether any of them had the right to make further claims against UK for compensation and the right to return to Chagos Archipelago. This legal litigation was against the 1982 renunciation form many of the Chagossians signed. In 2003 the judge ruled, unfortunately, against the Chagossians.

In the meanwhile, in 2004, the UK government implemented a new BIOT Immigration Order prohibiting all unauthorized persons from entering BIOT on the ground of national security, thus removing by political means the legal right to return won by the Chagossians in *Bancoult* [2000].

Against this decision Mr Bancoult and the CRG's legal team moved a new litigation against the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in 2006.

On March-April 2006, however, British government organised a return visit to the main Chagos islands for one hundred islanders.

## Human and indigenous right to land

As UN Declaration on Human Rights's article 13 asserts, "everyone has the right to leave any country including his own and to return to his country". In 1994, the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations adopted a Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People to outline what its members considered their peculiar inviolable rights:

*Indigenous people have the right to the restitution of the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, occupied, used or damaged without their free and informed consent.*

In 1997, following appeals by Chagossian Social Committee's leader Fernand Mandarin and its lawyer Lassemillante, UN Group on Indigenous Populations recognised Chagossians as indigenous people. According to Lassemillante, the displacement and the continued exile of Chagossians is contrary to UN international declarations on human rights.

Lately, also CRG is increasingly framing its campaign for the right to return in terms of human rights and organised a demonstration outside the British High Commission in Port Louis on UN Human Rights Day in 2003.

## Decolonization and the integrity of national territory

The Mauritian government had also engaged in state-level debates about Chagos Archipelago in terms of national sovereignty. Referring to UN agreements on the granting of independence to colonial territories, it was prohibited to disrupt the territorial unity during decolonisation. Also the special 1965 Resolution on the Question of Mauritius asked that Diego Garcia was demilitarised and unconditionally returned to Mauritius. Since the 1980s the Mauritian government has claimed repeatedly its sovereignty over Chagos Archipelago.

Even if Mauritian government can be considered essentially responsible for the excision, UK and US also took advantage of their positions of power over it. In addition, just a few decades later Mauritius realized that they had lost all the economic advantages of Chagos; rich in various resources.

The Chagos Archipelago Marine Protected Area proposed by UK in 2010 is another tool British government wants to turn against Chagossians' right to return to their homeland, in order to guarantee the inviolability of Diego Garcia and the military base to US. As a US diplomatic cable released by WikiLeaks proved: a Foreign Office official asserted that "establishing a marine park would, in effect, put paid to resettlement claims of the Archipelago's former residents", who were described as "Man Fridays".

The Government of Mauritius initiated proceedings on 20 December 2010 against the UK Government under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to challenge the legality of the MPA, considering UK not being a “coastal State” under UNCLOS and international law, had no authority to purport to establish a marine protected area around the Chagos Archipelago and that the MPA was not compatible with the rights of the Chagossian people,

Navin Rangoolam, present Prime Minister of Mauritius, during UN’s general assembly in 2013, said: “The dismemberment of part of our territory, the Chagos Archipelago – prior to independence – by the then colonial power, the United Kingdom, in clear breach of international law, leaves the process of decolonisation not only of Mauritius, but of Africa, incomplete.”

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## CITIZENSHIP AND CULTURE

When thinking about the concept of citizenship in Mauritius, it is important to look at the history of the nation and of the Chagos community in their cultural and social perspectives, as well as the complex and rapidly changing society in which they were forced to live in Mauritius. In the late 1960s and early 1970s Chagossians entered a money-based capitalist economy in which their skills had been rendered irrelevant. They found themselves relegated to the ranks of not only to the Mauritian Creole population who suffered and continue to suffer discrimination and negative stereotyping, but in some instances also faced discrimination from within the Creole community. Much of the literature and research done on the Chagossians testifies to their cultural otherness - otherness not only from Indo, Sino and Franco-Mauritian cultures, but also from the Mauritian Creole culture which has developed on Mauritius. We were interested in learning more about how this Chagossian identity was created through the memories of those who lived on Chagos, and how it is maintained and transmitted through generations of Chagossians living in exile. We were also interested in learning more about how, in the context of a culturally stratified society, the Chagossians were received in Mauritius, including in the context of acceptance of their cultural identity. How important

would it be to maintain this identity for the survival of the group? How are these memories being passed on and how are they affecting the construction of cultural identity today?

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## MAURITIAN SOCIETY

Looking at how and why Mauritian society is the way it is, gives us an insight into why the Chagossians fared as they did, and have now, in 2014, succeeded in carving a place for themselves in the Mauritian society. Mauritians have a rich ethnic heritage. While the majority of the population can trace their ancestry to India, significant parts of the population tracing their roots to different parts of Africa, Madagascar, France, China, Malaysia and Europe, among others.

Mauritian social groupings are roughly consistent with immigration patterns to the country, which reflect a history of slavery, indentured labour and migration. Different waves of immigrants brought with them their own practices, belief systems, castes, biases and interests. Mauritians of Indian descent who make up the majority of inhabitants are largely the descendants of indentured laborers of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil origin, who are both Hindu and Muslim.

DILETTA DONNARUMMA,  
painting on the wall of the Chagos Refu-  
gee Group Centre in Pointe aux Sables



EN TÉMOIGNAGE DU  
DÉRACINEMENT ET DE L'EXIL  
DES CHAGOSSIENS ARRIVÉS  
SUR CE QUAI ENTRE

1965 — 1973

DIEU NOUS A PORTÉ  
JUSQU'À NOTRE ARRIVÉE ICI  
IL COMBATTRA POUR NOUS.

CE MONUMENT A ÉTÉ INAUGURÉ  
LE 15 NOVEMBRE 2003  
PAR L'HONORABLE  
PAUL RAYMOND BERENGER, G.C.S.K.,  
PREMIER MINISTRE  
EN PRÉSENCE DE  
LA COMMUNAUTÉ CHAGOSSIENNE

DILETTA DONNARUMMA,  
Memorial for the Chagos tragedy inaugurated  
in 2003 in the harbor of Port Louis, where the  
Chagos arrive the first time in Mauritius

Bringing with them their languages, culture, religions and traditions, they were able to replicate their lifestyle in India in Mauritius, and retained a strong sense of cultural identity. Creoles in Mauritius can trace some or all of their ancestors to Africa and Madagascar, who largely were brought to Mauritius as slaves to work on plantations. While the Franco-Mauritian elite who once owned the great part of the wealth of the country through the ownership of plantations still do to some extent today, the economic dynamics of the country are changing as a middle class is emerging and strengthening. However, not all parts of Mauritian society have benefited from Mauritius' economic success in the same way. While socio-economic development, however, has been more distinct among the Asian Indian and Chinese heritage communities, *"a significant heterogenous [Afro-Mauritian] minority of Mauritians, known locally as Creoles, have not profited from Mauritian economic success."*



## THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN SOCIETY

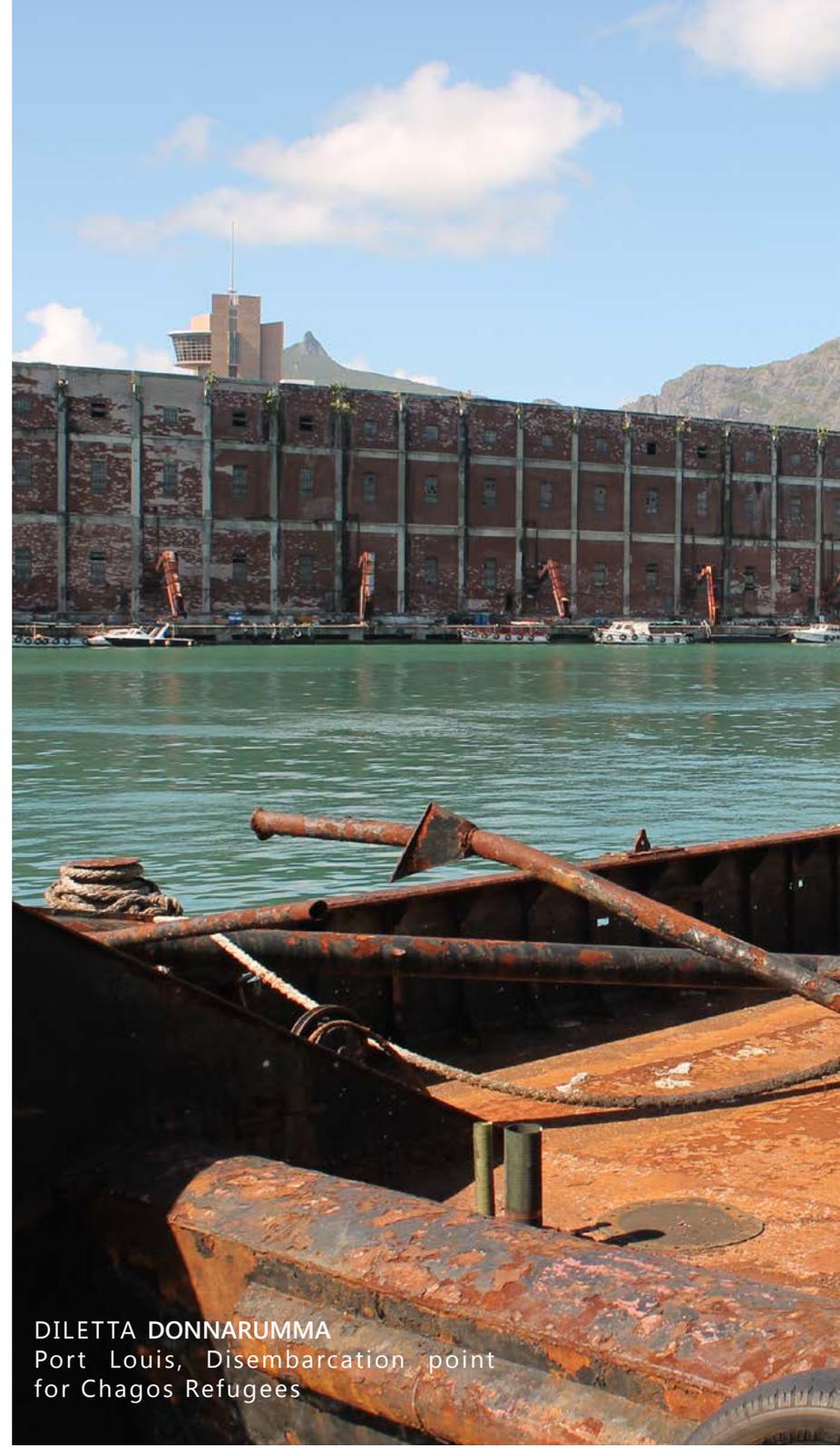
Membership by ethnic and religious affiliation is a source of identity for most Mauritians. A society which is highly divided among ethnic lines, there is an antipathy towards ethnic mixing among social groups, and favoring purity in marriage, in order to maintain cultural hierarchies.

Broadly speaking Chagossians are Creoles of African descent and are seen to be part of a heterogenous Creole population. Within a highly stratified cultural hierarchy, Creoles are the ones who struggle more to locate a common identity, and to exploit the social capital of a distinct cultural identity. Eriksen suggests that slavery, which firstly, destroyed any family and kin links among slaves who were brought to Mauritius from different places in Africa, and secondly the emphasis that slavery and freedom from slavery placed on the rights and freedom of the individual over the collective, has inhibited chances of a sense of social solidarity among the Creole population of Mauritius. In contrast to Indian populations, *"...there were few shared collective cultural resources; no shared language, no kinship structure, cosmology or traditional system of social organization that might have been transplanted and eventually reproduced."* Non Creole Mauritians can draw on an enormous resource of cultural traditions of India, China or France from which to draw a sense of belonging and ancestry.

However, how the Chagossians have fared in the context of being *Eksklu de lavi Moris*, (excluded from Mauritian life) seems to be up for debate, or at least, an evolving phenomenon. While McMoorghen found that, *"the Ilois of Diego Garcia, form a minority community relegated to the bottom of social hierarchies"*, Boswell, writing in 2006 finds that *"[p]resently, in the cultural hierarchy of Mauritius, the Ilois occupy a more prestigious position than the Creole Morisiyen. The invocation of a distinct history, homeland and tradition is helping them to fit into the integrationist, multicultural state of Mauritius."*

## PERCEPTION IN MAURITIUS - EKSKLU DE LAVI MORIS

The reports of older Chagossians who recall their arrival to Port Louis tell a sad tale. They wandered confused from the harbor, sought shelter anywhere they could, some living in places no bigger than chicken coops, sheds, living under the houses of friends or relatives and in slums. Chagossians reported discrimination from all sectors of society in Mauritius, entering *"...an environment of long standing racism and discrimination against people of mostly or entirely African descent,...[ who ] have remained primarily working class, generally at the bottom of the hierarchies."* They suffered a form of double exclusion, as described by Vine, suffering discrimination from both larger Mauritian society and within the Mauritian Creole population. This feeling was confirmed by the descendants of some Chagossians we spoke to who reported some stigmatization in their social lives and discrimination in the work place.



DILETTA DONNARUMMA  
Port Louis, Disembarkation point  
for Chagos Refugees



## A CHAGOSSIAN IDENTITY

Labourers brought to the Chagos Archipelago developed cultural traditions of their own, influenced by the geographical location, climate, flora and fauna of the islands. It is easy to imagine how this identity might have been crystallized due to the extreme remoteness of the Archipelago upon which generations of Chagossians lived. 2200 kilometers to the North East of Mauritius, Chagossians lived in a context of isolation and relative independence, and developed a unique “culture des iles”. They developed their own culture and customs, which can now be distinguished from those of Mauritius and the Seychelles, including distinct forms of song and dance (Sega), language (Chagos Creole), handicraft, furniture and cuisine. Given the remoteness of the islands and infrequency of inhabitants trips overseas, islanders had to attain a high degree of self-sufficiency which included making from hand implements and tools needed for daily life from the natural resources on the island.



## gender dynamics and identity

The gender balance of those first slaves brought to the islands, is also said to have influenced Chagossian society. Women, being fewer in number, were afforded a higher place in society than perhaps in others. Women earned a wage, managed their households, children were “owned” by women in the event of separation, drank alcoholic drinks and smoked. It was a matriarchal society of sorts, and resulted in their sexual freedom compared to Creole Morisyen women in Mauritius. These same attributes would be negatively perceived on their arrival in Mauritius, where it was much less common to see women smoking and drinking, outside the home.

This strength of Chagossian women is perceived

to have been critical in the Chagossian fight for their return to their home. Women led the protests and hunger strikes in Port Louis, campaigning for their right of return, which resulted in Government compensation deals. Olivier Bancoult is unreserved in his expressions of respect about the role that women, like his mother, like Lisette Talate, Charlesia Alexia and others, played in the fight for their rights. “My mother is my pride”, he says.

## maintaining cultural identities

It was challenging for us to establish the extent to which those descendants of Chagossian heritage who do not identify whatsoever as Chagossian - they necessarily do not associate themselves with the Chagos Refugees Group. And our reliance on this Group as a means of contact with Chagossians means that those with whom we came in contact have a strong sense of attachment to their heritage.

Chagossians have various ways of maintaining their "unique culture des iles" in Mauritius. They get together regularly to think about their ancestors buried on the islands and to pray for their souls. They also take the opportunity to share meals that are culturally specific to the islands. By coming together... *"they see themselves as part of a cultural diaspora and are able to dispense with negative stereotypes of hybridity by asserting their common origin in the Chagos islands."*

While the second generation Chagossians admitted that the feeling of being Chagossian was stronger among their parents in terms of language and dress, strong cultural traditions in food and music were passed down to some of the third generation Chagossians. Memory and identity is strongly associated with food and with song and dance, and again, women are often those seen as responsible for transmitting cultural practices.

*"our pride is our struggle"*

Mr Olivier Bancoult, leader of the Chagos Refugee Group, was born on Peros Banhos, but left at

the age of four along with his family and were forbidden from returning. He spoke at length from his own personal experience, and detailed the plight of his family, who suffered greatly after their uprooting. The CRG is focused on the dignity and rights of Chagossians in Mauritius, providing educational grants and social meetings. Bancoult feels that the Chagossian identity is strong amongst his community, and that the younger, second and third generations of Chagossians also feel resilient and proud about their identity.

Chagossians, particularly under the CRG, have successfully emphasized important elements of their ethnicity, namely, a sense of shared suffering and shared territory. By emphasizing those elements, they have managed to reaffirm their status as a culture-possessing group, an important achievement in a society concerned with ethnicity. Moreover, *"[t]he construction of Ilois identity appears to have been accepted by government and by other powerful ethnic groups in Mauritius."* Their distinct cultural identity inviting more acceptance to the claim for a return to their homeland.



**CHAGOS**  
**REFUGEES**  
**GROUP**



## CONCLUSION

Considering citizenship from a legal point of view Chagossians are a stark example of how it could be a geo-political tool to manipulate. Chagos islanders are excluded from Mauritian society and its citizen rights in general. As we considered they still live at the bottom of the socio-economical scale, as a consequence of how government handled their arrival. Stereotypes, lack of education, skills, different language and habits played a crucial role in the integration process, but most of all the fact they were a small group of poor and harmless people allowed Mauritius government to not care about their resettlement on the island until they claimed their rights out aloud.

At the same time, UK took advantage of their weak position, doing what at the time was more convenient for reestablish its power in a cold war background.

Deprived Chagos people of their right to live in their native land, even visiting it. Using the citizenship card to delegate to Mauritius the resettlement of Chagossians. Elaborate tricks to prevent Chagossians return on their islands even against judicial pronouncements. Manipulate UK citizenship in order to excluded Chagossians even when British citizens.

Moreover in Mauritius, we assessed the concept of citizenship not only in its legal sense, but in the concept of citizenship as a sense of identity and belonging. We found that a unique Chagossian culture and identity has been maintained through some generations of Chagossians in exile through the ongoing practice of customs developed on the islands, and passed down through families. This invocation of a distinct cultural identity has been important in bolstering a sense of pride among Chagossians in Mauritius, and in carving a place in a Mauritian society that places a high value on cultural heritage. We learned that, in contrast to gender dynamics in Mauritius, that Chagos communities had matrifocal systems. We also learned that the role of women was critical in campaigning and protest movements of the Chagos refugees in the 70s and 80s, and that women remain important in the role of passing on Chagossian traditions in food, music and language to younger generations.

This helped Chagossians to start and continue their fight to go back home.

Chicago's



Refugees Group I

OLIVIER

INTERVIEW WITH

BANCOULT

INTERVIEWERS

LEAH SULLIVAN

DILETTA DONNARUMMA



...Loveetah presents the SVI and the project "European Youth Citizenship at the Mirror"

OLIVIER BANCOULT: Let me explain you, I'm the one person who leads the Chagos Refugees Group. This office is a Chagos Refugees Group heritage, that we use for the welfare of the Chagos Community. One of our main activity here is encourage education. But also let me tell you: we are the people who were displaced from Chagos Archipelago, who consists of 65 islands, including the main island Diego Garcia. We were living in peace and harmony and then the UK government decided... before that there was an agreement between UK and USA and then between UK and Mauritius government. The first agreement between USA and UK was that US gave to UK a reduction to buy Polaris Missiles, in exchange UK offer a place where... because at that time US need a place that can make a difference in the fight with the Soviet Union, so UK said ok, you gave us a reduction for the missiles and of course we try to find a place where you can built a base point.

The first choice was a place called Aldabra, and when the experts went to Aldabra they saw a population of turtles and they said they didn't want to disturb those turtles and that lead to the second choice, and the second choice was Diego Garcia. You know... it was everywhere like this, before the introduction of the airplane, we were... the way of transport was ship, boat and in our country when there were ships there were a lot of people in the harbor to welcome or to say goodbye. People in Diego Garcia were delighted to welcome people, without knowing that was a decision taken that agreed everyone and that would have placed a military base in Diego Garcia.

At that time, when the US experts said that the place was fine, Diego Garcia and the Chagos Archipelago, because they were in the middle of the Indian Ocean, because of the shape of Diego Garcia, and it was not so far From Asia, Africa. The Us said yes of course, we like this place and propose to give a sum of 14 million pounds to UK government, just to do not let them change their proposition. The UK proposed a loan for 50 years. This was the first agreement.

The second agreement was... at that time in Mauritius we were recognized as a British colony, Mauritius was not yet independent . There was a meeting taking place on the 24 September 1965 where all our members were invited, all the different parties of Mauritius: Labor Party, SM, IFB all the representatives were present at the meeting with the UK Prime Minister, Wilson. At this time many politicians wanted to have independence, so he said, you want independence? the condition is to detached Chagos from Mauritius... because in 1964 you can see on my birth certificate is written dependency of Mauritius, that means that we were dependency of Mauritius as Agalega, Rodriguez and other countries. At that time, all accepted. All the political parties said of course, because the main issue for them was the independence, without taking into consideration that we on the islands, we were living in peace and harmony and they forgot about it. We didn't have the right to vote, we didn't participate to the election and this was the main argument that allow them to take us away. And from that moment started the nightmare for the Chagossians in consequence of what have been done by politicians.

This has been done without consult our people, it is not a reason that we didn't have the education level (education was introduced in 1960s, this is not a reason to decide on the head of people. At this time everything started and what UK government did, was to introduce the BIOT in 1965. They did it because they didn't want the Mauritian politicians changed their mind, and they gave the independence to Mauritius 12 March 1965. At that time I want you to know that all the provisions in Chagos came from Mauritius, every three months a ship came to Chagos. Since we have this connection with... and this is when our nightmare started. It was difficult to live and people in 1971 were ask to go to the Manager Office, we should tell also that the UK nominated a Commissioner for the BIOT. At that time Mauritius was independent and the deportation took place in Diego Garcia first, everyone was to the called to the manager office was there were also the Commissioner and other staff members and they told to the people that they should leave.

There were two choice: going to Peros Banhos and Solomon, or to move to Seychelles and Mauritius. Why Seychelles and Mauritius? Seychelles because there were

a lot of people from Seychelles that married to Chagossian people, Mauritius because of the economical link and when we were ill or for vacation we went usually to Mauritius. And we had some families also that weren't able to go back in Chagos once that they've landed to Mauritius for different reasons. At that time most of the people decided to go to Salomon or Peros Banhos, but the same thing happened also in Salomon e Peros Banhos after a while. And I want to let you know that the distance between those islands and Diego Garcia is 114 miles, even if so the British Government decided that they were not suitable for people to live. Everyone was expelled and in the case of my families, I have my little sister she was 1 and half year old, she was hurt to a leg and the nurse in Peros Banhos said to my mother that she needed to be treated in the Hospital because they didn't have the right medicine for here. My mother and father decided to came to Mauritius in 1968, just after the independence (the 13th of march we arrive and 3rd of march Mauritius got independence) and after two months my sister passed away so we decided to return and we realized that we cannot, because the island would be given to US for a military base. We were obliged to live in that conditions because nothing had been planned for us. And the same thing happened to the other people. The provisions became poor and every three months the ship came to give us one bag of sugar, for babies. A way to discourage people to stay. and little by little all the people were taken to Mauritius. And in Mauritius nothing had been planned, even if to the people were said that one they were in Mauritius there were houses, land a job. But it was never the case. We were left in the slum of Port Louis, no money no house, at that point somebody started some protests on the road and so they gave us houses used to kept animals coming from Madagascar, or houses without windows or doors. We were suffering a lot. And I would like to say that all the government were part of that.



**CHAGOS REFUGEES GROUP**  
*This Training and Resource Centre  
was inaugurated by Dr the Hon  
NAVINCHANDRA RAMGOOLAM,  
GCSK, FRCP, I  
Prime Minister of the  
Republic of Mauritius  
in the presence of  
Dr OLIVIER BANGOULT, OSK, chairman  
Chagos Refugees Group  
03.03.2010*

**LEAH: I was interested actually because, I read that the Group is not, in theory, opposed to the military base. Not having a problem with the base itself being there it seems that you see more the UK to be... or the Mauritian Government...**

OB: we have two big powers in front of us, we have our action against the UK without forget that we have also the US. But one other reason we put forward we are not against the base for the time being because we have people living in the base from Philippine, Sri Lanka, Singapore, why not Chagossians? That will mean if we oppose to the military base in the first place, we are like terrorists. This is why we say first of all, if the place was inaccessible, we can understand. but we cannot understand why it is accessible to the people living there and not for us. this is what we say. So when we put our first feet there we have more power . Because we were living there in peace and harmony and now our land is used to kill innocent people, you see. When you say that you are against America it easy for them to say that you are a terrorists. If you look at the International HR Charter you see that everyone has the right to live in his country. Who prohibit me to live in my birthplace? Other people can live there while I don't have the right to do it.

**L: I remember that I also read that you had voiced your solidarity in the name of the Mal-**

**vinas... Falkland Islands?**

OB: The most important thing is to give awareness to our situation, because many people are not aware of it. It was very hard to explain people were Diego Garcia is, now we know about it because of Afghanistan war, otherwise we never heard about it. With the media coverage now people know what we are fighting for. When we decided to enter the case, we thought that it could be the first time when the things can be overturned by the judge. When we enter the case against the British government there was a British law of 1961 that states nobody have access to Diego except English and US soldiers. I could I accept that. Someone acted in the name of the Majesty , Her Majesty was supposed to protect the rights of all citizens, in the same size Her Majesty prohibits my rights. That's why I had to go in this direction. When I took this direction it was not easy for me, because I was a single man, like me, against the UK government, big power. And I was contradicting then. They said that we weren't permanent inhabitants, but contractual workers, while I said how you can say that I am as contractual worker, I was born there, my father was born there, my grandfather was born there, my grand grand father was born there and we can show you that with our born certificates, how can you can consider me as a contractual worker! You see... We brought this to the court, and the conclusion of the judge was that we were belongers because according to HR, UN Charter, if you have lived in a

place for at least one generation you should consider yourselves as indigenous population.

**L: How did that victory change, if it changed, the sense of community among Chagos people in Mauritius?**

OB: In some things it happened because, you know, there is a difference between Mauritius and UK concept in Chagos. Mauritius wants to have sovereignty, it is the main goal. But one of the mistakes Mauritius did is they want the sovereignty without mentioning the problems of Chagossians, without taking into consideration the rights of those people., that were displaced from there. When we decided to enter the case against UK, it was very difficult for me, because many people, many politicians in Mauritius thought I was making troubles concerning the relations. I became sometimes unpopular, that I will put in danger somebody, but now at the time we are sitting together, the Mauritian government is having an action against the UK. Before we started the all thing, Mauritius government should had done it, because they were witnesses of what happened to us. They know that we are not pretending that we were suffering, because we WERE suffering.

**DILETTA: So, what is your relationship, not only with Mauritian government but with Mauritian parties, I mean, since they have started a struggle with the UK, you feel that you can join them or do you feel suspicious?**

OB: Well, this is one of the mistakes. They always want to know what we are doing, what action we are carrying on, but they don't want to let us know what they are doing. How can we work together. You see, and I don't blame just the Mauritian government, also the opposition parties care about the sovereignty and don't take into account our rights. If we have a real position of the Mauritian government, why the UK is proposing a Marine Protected Area? If the Mauritius was proposing a plan asking sovereignty in a view to make something also for Chagossians... No one, No political party had come forward with that. How we can do that.

**D: Actually I've read something about the role of MMM, that claimed and was involved in the Chagossian struggle, are you talking also about them?**

OB: I'm talking also about them? L'MMM! The political party who was most close to the Chagossians were MMM, then I was disappointed with them, because I've seen what they've been done. You know what happened? When MMM came into power in 1982, the one who wrote the book, de l'Etract was the foreign minister and he just made us sign a renunciation form to go back to Chagos, without explain what it was, and the most of our population don't have a level of education no one explained what was written in it. they put the money on the table and they said if

you sign or you fingerprint here you are going to have this sum of money. Even I! Everywhere when you get the money you have to sign! And when we realized what we signed, we realized that was not a renunciation with the UK government also with but the Mauritian government, how can we accept that! And when in Mauritius celebrate its independence is very hard for us, because for that they sold our land. So that's why we move independently, we have a plan! what they expect from us... We are making progress concerning education, everywhere in the commonwealth the UK give some scholarship, that never happened to Chagossians. We are in the middle, we have been problems with the Mauritian government and Uk government. This is why we go in our direction.

**D: And what about the Mauritian society? Do you feel that they are supporting you?**

OB: In the past maybe... but I don't blame Mauritian people because I'm very thankful to them, a lot of people support our action, those who day by day try to understand our situation. And the ones that don't want to know about us, accuse us, they say that we ask for money, to drink alcohol, to promote prostitution. Differences between living in Mauritius and in Chagos are huge: in Chagos everyone has his job, everyone has his house, everyone lives as a one family, because when we finished to work we went to fish and it was not to have fish only for me, it was about sharing. When there was a funeral or a wedding, we were all to-

gether. Arriving in Mauritius life changed, we had to pay rent, to have a job you need an education or a qualification. You have to know that when we arrived in Mauritius, many intellectual people used to leave Mauritius to go to UK or Australia, because they were afraid of the independence. But to have a job, as in every government, they give Mauritians first, no to Chagossians and the main difficulty was that we didn't have the educational level and to find a job when you don't have an educational level was to have a relation with the political parties, it is not surprising, everywhere there is corruption. We use to be fisherman, working with copra, the kind of works that we used to do in Chagos didn't exist in Mauritius. Even for fishing was different. In Mauritius you have to go on a fishing boat for 16 days, leaving families and then come back, it was not the case in Chagos. We went out, took the fish and come back living with your family. And also the way of living was very different.

**L: Do you think that the older Chagossians are maintaining their identity still, in Mauritius?**

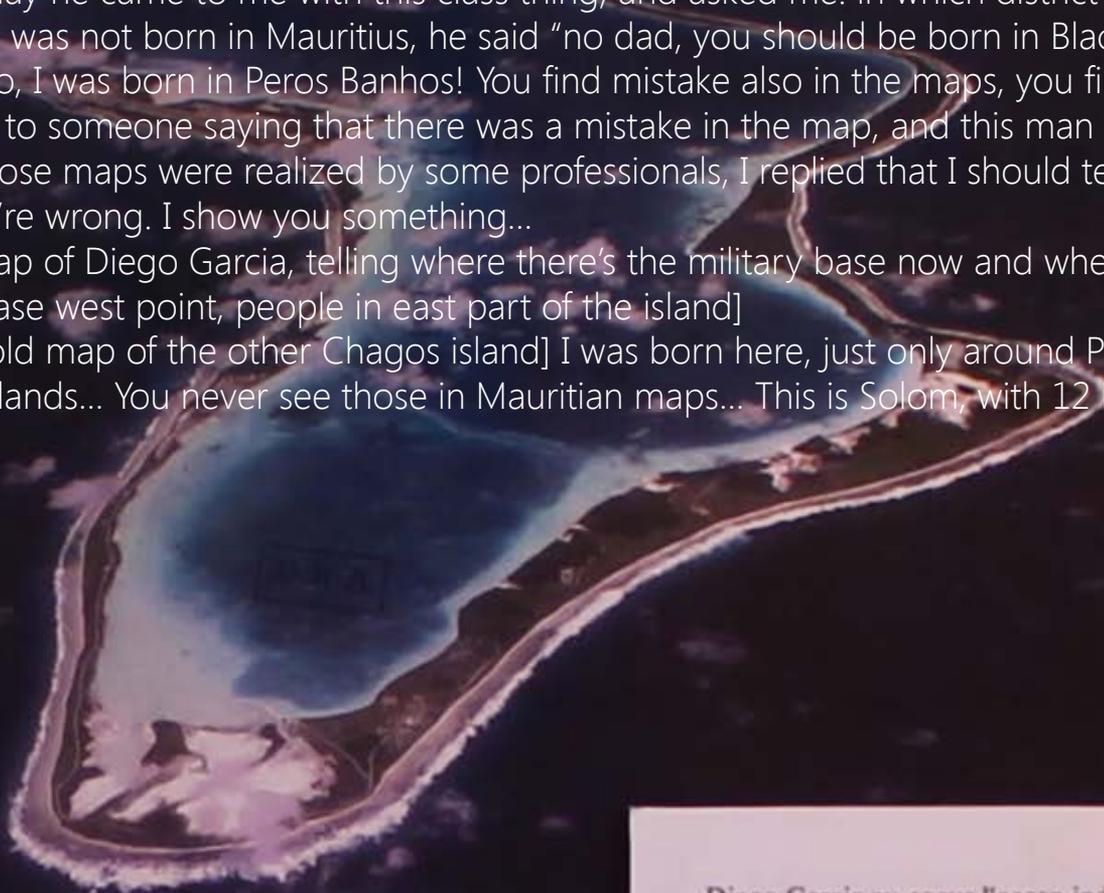
OB: Of, course we are maintaining our identity. Because Our pride is our struggle, we've been able to mark ourselves. And now people know. If you click on the internet you can see what we have been able to do. It's our pride, even if we are few we've been able to succeed.

**L: And the younger generation are feeling also this strong?**

OB: Of course, of course! In Mauritius many people come as slave, indentured labors, everyone wants to know their roots. Indians go to Behar, it is normal. I tell you one thing, my son at that time was 4, primary school, one day he came to me with this class thing, and asked me: in which district were you born? I said that I was not born in Mauritius, he said "no dad, you should be born in Black River or Moka! and I said no, I was born in Peros Banhos! You find mistake also in the maps, you find only Diego Garcia. I talked to someone saying that there was a mistake in the map, and this man told me I was crazy, because those maps were realized by some professionals, I replied that I should tell to those professional that they're wrong. I show you something...

[He showed us the map of Diego Garcia, telling where there's the military base now and where the people used to live → base west point, people in east part of the island]

[He also took a very old map of the other Chagos island] I was born here, just only around Peros Banhos we have 32 islands... You never see those in Mauritian maps... This is Solom, with 12 islands...]



Diego Garcia au coeur l'océan indien

### **L: Did you get the chance to visit in 2006?**

OB: Yes, I visited in 2000 and 2006, 2009 and I will visit this year.

### **LOVEETAH: every time you want to go you have the chance?**

OB: No, just certain times, that's why I'm pushing. The first time it was just me and my lawyer. I left when i was 4, I didn't know how was it, and also because of the evidences and when we came back we show all the evidences to everyone, we had a lot of things there and I bring forward for my legal team that can help us to prove that we were not contractual workers. To have access for my people... one day an old man just told me: I appreciate what you're doing, but you should continue to push the pressure, and I give you an advice, you know what you should do? In every religion it is a day dedicated to deceased people, one day you know what you do? You go in front of the High Commission, pretend that is the grave of your parents and leave the flower there." I thought it is a very good idea. We prepared, I kept in touch with a catholic priest and we went there putting the flowers there, when they ask me what have you done I said that we would like to take flowers to ours relative's grave but we can't. There was something about the feeling of the Mauritian community... As I told you many people were supportive to our cause and many people

weren't aware, because it is very said to know that many Mauritians don't know how Mauritius got independence.

One day, we went. 100 Chagossians visiting Chagos. That day we wanted TV crew, you see. The day we returned, the first picture in TV... people realized that there was something wrong. It could be, it could be you... how do you feel if one day someone displaced from your birthplace and then you have the chance to return. And at this time the support grew.

I want that people know, I'm a single man I don't look for celebrity, but i've been able to spread the story of my people and I will continue. I've been able to meet with Nelson Mandela, John II... Because I want to give awareness. And I tell you also about citizenship... At that time we were not eligible for Britain passport

### **D: Are you British?**

OB: I'm all. I'm British, I'm Mauritian and I'm Chagossian. And I will explain you why. My main objective was not to have British passport, it was never on my mind. My main objective is to have the right to live in my birth place. But when we entered the case the UK government decided to give the British citizenship to all the oversea territories. Concerning the case of Chagos, it didn't happen because the islands were considerate inhabited. The islands were used for defense purposes, so we were not eligible for that. When

the judge said that we were inhabitants, and that started to be in power, one of us said that what the judge said means that we should be included. At this time we was included. And even now, we have a some people that is eligible and some not. I can have the British passport and my children could have the British passport, my wife whose parents are from Diego Garcia is not eligible, because she was borne before the 26 April 1965. Because the negotiation has started before. In the constitution British nationality says that if some born from a mother before 1982 it should not be eligible. For the main islands, now it is possible to have a British passport from the mother side. For the father, if he is not married civilly the children would not be eligible. You see, and now they have changed the law for people who were born in Britain, if you have a grandparents born there you can be eligible, but that doesn't work for us. And it should be some flexibility for Chagossians because it is particular situation. And that's why we say one of the reason why we want to know what happened with Falkland people, what happened with Spanish people, why we want to know what happened to aborigines. To see in what way... it should be very simple for the UK to find a solution for the Chagossians, instead of let the people living in poverty. How can we not continue to fight? and if the Mauritian government is not good that I meet with people of other countries, I say to them, what are you doing for me? you're doing

nothing!

Coming to the situation in Mauritius, we have a lot of people in poverty, we realize that, we're suffering. But the difference we have those people who are suffering in Mauritius, they are in their own country, while we are living in poverty in a foreign country.

Concerning UK, we are talking about problem of citizenship because there are many people living in the UK from many countries and Chagossians in UK are facing the same problems. We have a problem of communication, of health, of housing. At that time a lot of people thought to settle in UK, but it is not a better life there, we have to face a lot of problems. That's also why our main object is to go back in our birthplace, because UK is not my birthplace, I cannot adapt myself in London, I prefer to be in my birthplace.

**L: How do you see the future of the campaign? Are you optimistic about what is happening in Istanbul or the future is going to be more legal or awareness raising?**

OB: This is something that I cannot understand. Do you know really what is going in Istanbul? I know about my case, I don't know about Istanbul. They need information, they called me when I was in UK and ask me "could you tell us..." How can we accept that! You only want to know, if you got difficulties you come across... We should have a way of communication between us.

**D: I read something about other two Chagossians organizations: the Chagossians social committee and another specific for Garcia people, they still exist?**

OB: In the past there was a division, but it's not the case now. Everyone know that the Chagossian group... one of the reason why you are here is because people know that we have in mind something, we are not wasting our time talking, we are in action. Our pride is to be able to demark ourselves from Mauritian and now we are proud to say that even Mauritian recognize that.

**LO: You mention earlier that when you came here there was an unemployment issue because of many problems: first, for education level, second you were trained in different jobs.. but after all these years how do you find your people facing this issue?**

OB: it was not easy for us, I have to be frank on this. But you cannot wait for success to come. You need to be strong to do something. But sometimes you need support also to go ahead. To be frank, one of the main mistake that have been done, when the Chagossians arrive in Mauritius if there were any training given to us... it was not the case! We were left aside, you see. Even education, you know, I was attending a primary school that was one of the Ministry of Education.

After the school I used to go to the cemetery to sell water to the people who came pay tribute to the parents. Only to help my mum, because my mum had to work in five different places, because my father had an heart attack and it was in very different conditions. But she always encouraged me, and I'm proud to say that she is my shadow, because everywhere I am she there and now she is going to be 89, she'd still strong and for every advice I go to my mum, "what do you think about that?" and she is my pride. If I've been able to succeed in life and I have a long way to go, but it is only because of the contribution of my mum. She always gave me education, and encouraged to education. I remember when I finished primary, there was a teacher giving tissue asking me to tell to my mum to let me take lessons after school at the price of 15 rupees. I went home and I asked her, and she said that she couldn't afford it. The teacher wanted to see my mum and when they met my mother repeated the same thing to her. The teacher insisted and she said that for our situation she would have given to me lessons half price. And you know to find this sum of money... my mother said I'm spending 7.50 rupees you need to bring a very good result otherwise you are going to have troubles with me. And I believed in what my mother said, I became the first. And when the results were out all my friends were very happy to bring to me a rubber, a pencil something like this...

**LO: Were there Chagossians students in the school?**

OB: Chagossians and Mauritians. And you know I had the chance to go to a secondary school where other students came from star schools, and I was a very good student. After that my mother said it is time for you to find a job, and it was very difficult for me to find one. I wanted to continue my study but my mum cannot afford it. But after my secondary I was invited to join this struggle, that's why I've a very good knowledge. I've done my learning with people like this (show portraits of the first members of the fight), they are the family of the Chagossian struggle : Charlesia Alexis, Lisette Talate...

**L: it's like you have very strong women from Chagos...**

OB: yeah, and it's good to know. do you know the oldest person in Mauritius is a Chagossian, she is now 112 years, I will show you (show a picture of the Lady)

**L: So how old was she when she was brought to Mauritius?**

OB: About 38, and she wants to go to Chagos and visit there, but she cannot. You will surprise how strong she is. And you know the reason why? Because we use to have fresh fish, we didn't have

the refrigerator and the main Chagossian meal was based on fresh fish.

**L: You went there the first time in 2006?**

OB: No, in 2000

**L: And you heard so much about it...**

OB: yeah it was very emotional, because you know I left there at the age of 4, I didn't have memories but when I arrive I was so surprise how I was moved, when I was in the cemetery just tear coming from my eyes and I said, you know, I can I accept. And I told myself: give me the strength to organize something to clean our graves.

**D: I read a lot that when people were deported here from Chagos they were fragmented, some in Point au Sable, some in Cassis, some in other places.. So, how did the fight start? Who was the one that said that's enough?**

OB: I have many respect for women. You know why? the struggle has always been led by women. One of the reason why, I will explain to you. The time when we arrive here in Mauritius, intellectual people used to go to Europe, Australia, elsewhere to have a better life, because they were afraid of the independence. But at this time we had also racial war, with riots. When we talk about SSU, the police soldiers, every man was afraid of them

mostly because of the curfew. If Mauritian were afraid of them why not Chagossians, because there were that ask to fallow them, this kind of situation. But the struggle started with women that said how can we accept that our children are dying of hunger, whereas in Chagos everyone had a proper meal, children go to bed without eating anything because parents wouldn't be able to afford. That's how it started. Enough is enough! We just want to say something: we want to return in Diego, Rann nu Diego, because there we had a better life. And they started to demonstrate and, maybe many people don't know, they were beaten. It was very difficult. I have some pictures. And this is how everything started, by Chagossians women. That's why I have respect for women, especially Chagossians women! They chose me as a leader, but I can not forget what they did. It is something that makes me proud.

**D: Can you say that was women's responsibility to transmit memory and the identity that comes with it to the children, that barely remember the place they left?**

OB: Yes, this is why I'm saying that I'm very proud. All this thing is just put forward by women, the mothers. They use to say that in Diego we did have a wonderful life, When we talk about promoting culture, it's women, to cook traditional food... I told you something... (he took...) the Chagossian basket. After going to the sea, it was full of fish. I

wish I had something to put in. Before going to UK I gave this to my children, I have three children two daughter and a son, and before leaving they said Dad, don't forget the basket to bring traditional food. And my grandchildren also want to have this one. It's about culture and everywhere UK thinks we should promote culture, I think and what about our culture. Do you want to destroy our culture?

**D: In Mauritius there are also Creols and usually Chagossians are considered Creol too, let's say General Population. Can you tell us if you feel Chagossians different from Creols?**

OB: Of course we are different. Why? Because in Mauritius we have many centers for promoting culture of different groups, Muslims, Hindus... Creols, we are divided by the church, this is the problem. And also that who pretend to be the Creol leader, he just use to have ... with the political party. That means not every Creol is in the same position like him. More often he use to take care of his own personal affairs, "you Creol leader, can you find a job for my son?"... but we are Chagossians and we have been able to do something for ourselves. Our pride is no creol association in Mauritius have a plots of land, a building... This was an abandoned yard (nda, the Chagossian Centre), with our affords, men and women, day by day we built it. And we are very proud to have here our headquarter here, where everybody can

come in, for solving problems, we use this place for ladies, we use it for education, we use seniors and I can let you know that we are having many progresses here. We have students taking lessons from British Council and Allianz Français, two well know institutions and very expansive, I've been able to arrange something with the cooperation of the British Commissioner. We started with 4 children, now we have 84. Last year 32 students who took part in international exam, Cambridge exam, all succeeded and 14 with the highest score. We have now a student signed up for university, in Political Science. This year other three in Financial Management and other issues. If you want to succeed you need to take care of yourself, make your own affords, with the support of others. And it's very sad to say, but even if you are making your own affords... we have in Mauritius CSR, and we are recognized, but nothing change. Every firm can choose what organizations they want to work with, constantly Chagos are excluded, everyone is afraid, because of the political issue. But even that, what to do? nothing to do, but we are trying to do thing anyway. We even started to make our own fundraising.

**L: There must be something about the community that existed in Diego Garcia and Peros Banhos that meant that when you came here there was a sense of strength and solidarity. I read that have been some labor protest**

**against the price of soap and other goods imported and show maybe the strength of the community. So was the isolation or the fact that women were also working in Chagos...**

OB: There was sometimes some protests that took place there. Men and Women worked and they all protested, but I can say that the most active were women. And they fully fully participate to the struggle.

**D: If one looks for the Chagossians struggle, your name pops us quite easily and you are the one that people referred to. But behind your shoulders there's a community and I want to know how they are involved in the fight, what are they doing to support you and the struggle?**

OB: The day when I see that people are not supporting me, it will be the day I say, it's the time we stop, now. You know, people are supporting me, it's not only my decision have my committee, a manager committee, an executive committee, a delegate committee and regional committee. That means that how we have managed we have people living in Point aux sable, in Cassis, in Baie du Tombeau, Roche Bois. In Every region we have a delegate, if there's a message to pass, the delegate pass to everyone. But I personally as a leader, I stay in contact with everyone. Sometimes I need to go to Roche bois, because I'm the Chairman of

the Chagossian Welfare fund, introduced by Mauritian government. We've been able to introduce, as first project a fund for funeral for all the old Chagossian ladies who passed away, an amount of 6000 rupees to cover the cost of the funeral. This is one thing for them. The second thing, because education is one of my main objective, we introduce scholarships, for 5 boys and 5 girls who pass the their CPE exams and we follow them up to university. Before the government we put forward a project for secondary school refund the access exam fees for all the Chagossians children. After that the government started to do it. I'm very proud of that. And every year we organize a three days residential seminar, where we group every Chagossian up to 60, because we are not able to see each other a lot, and give them the opportunity to live again their lives back in Chagos. And one day we invite the younger generation to come and listen. And then we have done something very important we our dance, our sega...

**D: In which way it is different from Mauritian sega?**

OB: We are running a small shop here. We call these place little Chagos, we have some plants and coconuts from Chagos, that do not exist here in Mauritius, chilli from Chagos, and some flowers that we use to bring in tribute to our relatives passed away. It is something that with all the af-

fords we are trying to let the people be aware. But I'm always listening what old people have to say to me, and all the decision is not only me, I'm the responsible but is not only me. I listen to them and sometimes I have troubles with them and at the end they are always right.

**L: did they see you as the child still...**

OB: Yes! But they respect me for me. They call me president and I say no call me Olivier, but they say: "No! President! I have something to tell you..." It's a way of... That's why I'm very close to my people. We're here to support to listen and there's a day, I'm very sure, there we'll be able to return in the very near future. We will return and you are the welcome!

**LO: two more questions for you before you leave. We are aware about the fight, the difficulties and the main aim. You were also mentioning about the problems that the people moving in the UK are facing. If tomorrow it will be given to you the right, everybody agrees, so right you go back in Chagos. What do you think you will do?**

OB: First of all, I must tell you, I take my own example, I've studied until secondary school, but you better me that we study both English and French but we are more fluent in French. I listen to my first interview, it was terrible. but day by

day I'm trying to improve. To understand the meaning of what people are asking me. I've been able to talk to many personalities. I was invited to tv show and usually I have to answer to very hard question: "how do you dare? what would you do there now? Really you want to go there or you want some compensation" But I say: this is my right. How would you live if you can not go in your birthplace. This is my point. When you talk about Runn nu Diego, and the time will come. And I say, I would go. Because it is the struggle aim and I never will give up on this. Even if I will be alone, but I'm sure that I would not be alone because there is a lot of people who will be with me, many Mauritian also. One day someone would say, you've been able to achieve something. I'll be able to challenge a British law. The last thing that the UK government did against us is introducing the largest marine protected area, so you have to choose between the protection of the environment and our right to go back. Do you want to make a protected area on my island, there's no study done on marine protected area realized without the participation of local people. How can I be put in a side of it? Without considering that there is a military base on the island that is affecting that? Even Greenpeace said that theirs is a very good idea. Uk says they want a marine protected area, but they have no budget, they have to bag money in Switzerland for the project. I spoke with the head of Greenpeace in Netherland and I explained our story to him and he changed his opinion. The BIOT is the only one among 14 overseas territories with no fund for people, but we have a budget for paying a petrol boat to prohibit illegal fishing, to protect the environment. So we cannot fish there but other can come and fish in Peros Banos and Chagos.

**LO: I have a second question, how do you feel the support of Mauritian government now?**

OB: Now, I think that we have to make affords, we need to work closely, but it's not the case. Without taking into account the participation of the Chagossians population... This is why we are very worried about it. And time has come for governments, society to decide what to do. And what will be planned for Chagossians. You have a plan, explained it to me. But this is not the case.

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After that O. Bancoult showed us the plants from Chagos whose seeds he was able to collect during his visits on the islands.

He also told us that the Chagos center was partially built thank to some EU money.





# NEPAL

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ELENA ALBERGO AND LINDA KEHOE



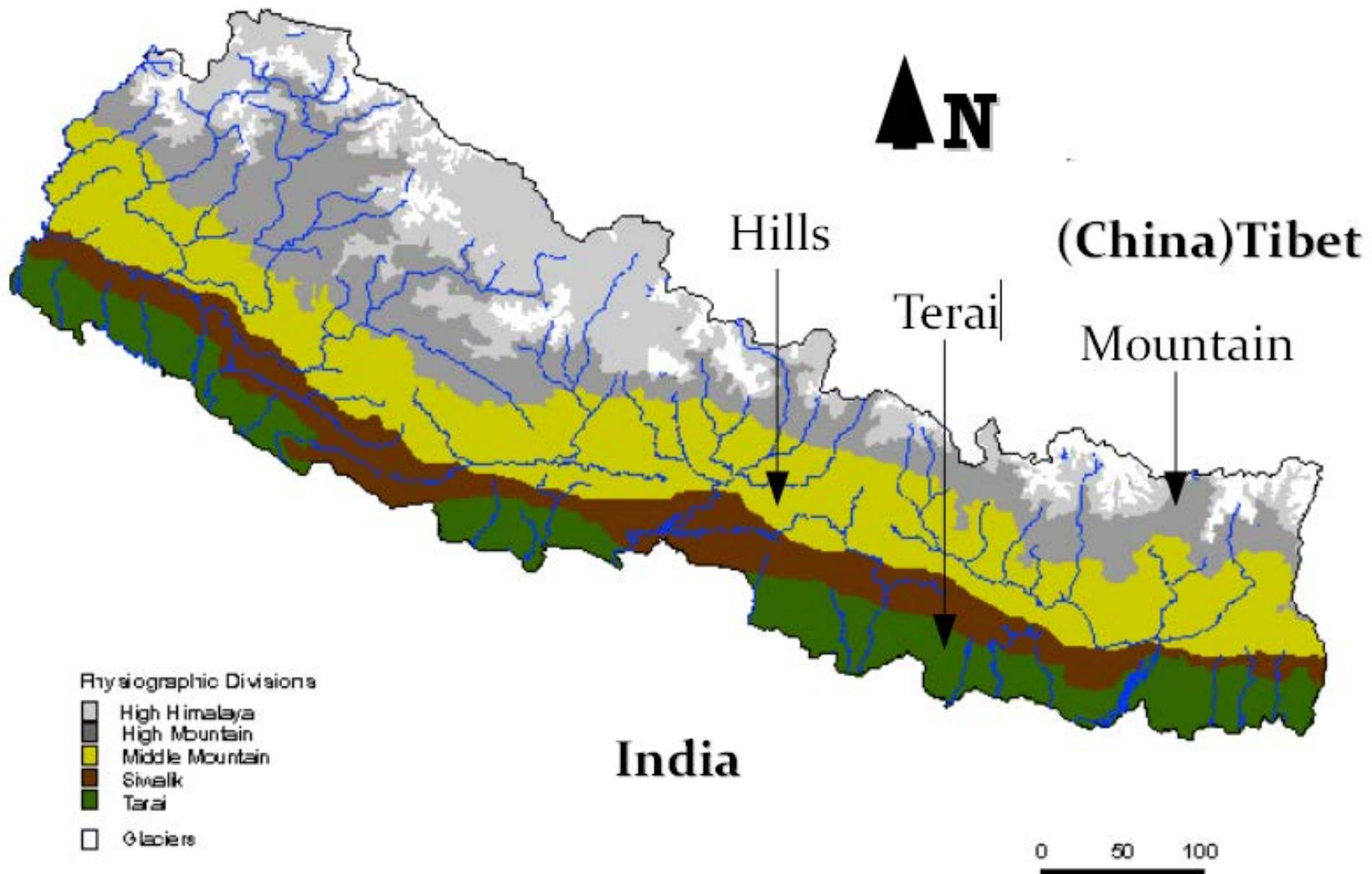
## GEOGRAPHY

Nepal is a beautiful country of diverse geographies and climates, cultures, traditions, languages and people. It is small, ~147,000km<sup>2</sup>, and landlocked between India and China (Tibet Autonomous Region). From North to South the country can be roughly divided into three ecological zones; Mountains, Hills and Terai. The mountain zone (altitude >2500m) covers 35% of Nepal; with transportation and communication facilities poor and unreliable only 10 percent of the total population live in this harsh terrain. The hill ecological zone (500m-2500m) has many fertile valleys amongst the mountains and is densely populated as a result (see the map).

The ruggedly beautiful terrain of the Hills and Mountains bring thousands of tourists trekking to Nepal every year, bringing much needed revenue to the local economies. The Terai zone in the south has fertile plains and forests and is home of much of Nepal's industries (wheat, fruits, spices, tobacco etc). Although it constitutes only 23% of the total land area of Nepal, 49% of the population lives there. It is more easily traversed than the other regions and has an open border to India which has encouraged more trade and development. The National Parks with wild populations of Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), Bengal Tiger (*Panther tigris tigris*) and Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) draw thousands of visitors each year.

## ECONOMY

This rugged landscape is just one of the factors contributing to Nepal's slow social and economic development. Recurrent political upheaval and efforts to establish a democratic government lead to political and civil unrest culminating in a ten-year civil war. In 2008 Nepal ended its 240 year old Monarchy, to become the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. A new constitution has not yet been formed; the uneasy truce between



Source: Topographic Survey Branch, Survey Department, HMG Nepal, 1987 and Digital Chart of the World



the Maoist and Congress parties delaying the process. Today, by the UN Human Development Index (HDI) Nepal ranks 145 of 187 countries, making it one of the poorest in the world.

Nepal has yet to exploit all of its available resources. The 6000 rivers of Nepal flowing down from the Himalayas and the Annapurnas give Nepal vast hydro-power potential. 42,000 MW of hydroelectric power are technically and economically viable for exploitation and only 659 MW are actually drawn upon annually (Nepal Electricity Authority). This fails to meet the growing domestic energy demand. 85% of Nepalese people live in rural areas; only 30% of them have access to electricity. While 90% of the urban population do have access to the national grid there is variable reliability and supply. Strict 'load-shedding' schedules mean that for up to 16 hours a day the electricity can be shut off. The negative effects of this are felt at every level of society and leads to use of petrol generators which cause air and noise pollution in the cities.



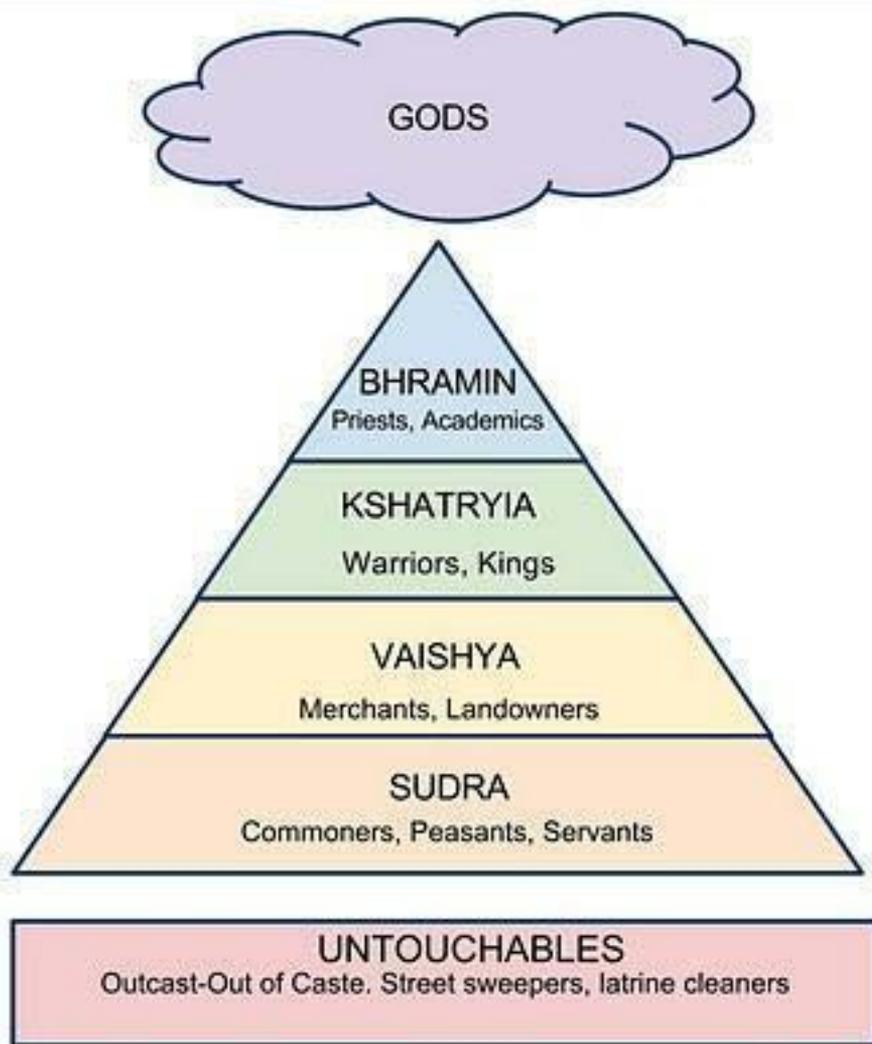
On a national scale it severely hampers development and causes economic, and so political, sub-ordination to other countries. Despite this abundance of fresh water, by 1990 only 37% population had access to piped water and 6% to sanitary waste disposal.

*The interim constitution of Nepal lists access to water as a fundamental right and has set a target to provide all Nepalese with access to basic water supply and sanitation services by 2017.* These figures have reached 80% and 62% respectively but the infrastructure does not guarantee supply and dry season leads to strict scheduling, with long water queues and unsanitary conditions resultant. The tap water in Nepal is often contaminated; in one study microbes which are harmful to human health were found in 80% of samples collected.

## SOCIETY

Nepal is a vibrant, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society with over 100 ethnic/caste groups, 65 still-spoken languages and a huge diversity of traditions. The Nepalese have 4 diverse origins; The Mountain people (eg: Sherpas) and the Bhotes originated from Tibet and Burma, the Newar are the indigenous people of the Kavre Valley in the Hill region, and the Hindus came from India bringing with them their religion and the caste system.

Today most people practice Hinduism or Buddhism, and the long overlap of these two religions means that in many areas (eg: Lalitpur) religious syncretism is common. Christians and Muslims are also found throughout the 5



regions of Nepal. Religion is a major part of the daily life of the Nepalese- temples, stupas, shrines and Gods are evident in every town and village in Nepal.

The articles we wrote whilst undertaking the project describe Religion in Nepali society in more detail than we can fit here.

The **caste system** has been banned since 1990 but it still makes up the social structure of everyday lives and old prejudices persist.

The four folds of the caste system are Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. The lower castes were excluded by the higher, and those without caste were termed the untouchables (*dalit*), and excluded by all. There are sub-castes within these castes creating further complexity, and varying levels of acceptance and exclusion. Nepali people can generally recognise an individual's caste by their surname, and in this way your caste marks you in society for life. In cultures without a caste system, this branding of an individual goes unrecognised, so it is a type of exclusion which people can only be subjected to by other Nepali.

To understand Nepal one must understand the role of family. The family provides you with your home, your name, your status, your work, your protection, your religion, your economic and emotional support and even your chance to socialize. The typical family system of Nepal has the extended family living together under one roof sons stay in their paternal home for life and once wed their wives move in with

them to start a new generation of the family. The home the woman leaves is '*maiti*'. It is not simply a word for a building, but for the whole life she leaves behind. Once married she belongs to her husband's family, follows their ways and traditions.

## INDIVIDUALS: THE CITIZENS

In Nepal people view individuality, personal freedoms and privacy differently than we do in Europe. The needs of an individual are not really considered as separate from the needs of the family. The concepts of 'lone-time' and 'personal space' do not seem to exist within the society, showing again another way in which our societies differ.

In Nepal the identity of an individual is determined by their ethnic group, caste and sub-caste, religion, family, gender and financial status. They can face social exclusion based on any one of these factors. As citizens of Nepal they have equal legal rights to live, vote, work and own land but societal-cultural traditions strip some of these rights from some of these citizens.



## RESEARCH BACKGROUND

This citizenship at the mirror project aimed to study social exclusion of citizens of different countries and continents. In geographically distant places human societies can share common values and rules and so, also share prejudices. Globally speaking discrimination often tends to centre upon race, origin, religion, class and gender. We choose to focus upon the gender issue; there are two primary reasons for our choice.

The first reason is a simple one; Gender discrimination is alive and well in this world. Women are not treated equally to men, and this discrimination is found in every country, at every level of society and affects every person. Though the level of discrimination may vary, it exists and remains a thorny issue which both symbolically and legally denies women true citizenship.

The second reason: Our identities

As young women we could try to imagine how our lives would be in Nepal as Nepalese women. We felt that to mirror different experiences and forms of citizenship we had to reflect first upon ourselves, our own experiences of life, our perceptions and future prospects. Throughout our time in Nepal we were constantly exposed to the lives of young women; as wives, mothers, daughters, orphans and as young professionals striving for independence. As we questioned their role in the complex Nepali society, we put the same question to our Irish and Italian identities and societies.

We cannot simply identify as 'Linda and Elena' but more importantly for this research project, two female citizens of Western Europe with all of the benefits, freedoms and opportunities that come with that identifier. The project aimed to draw parallels between youth life in the participant countries and so our identification as representatives of Europe significantly affected our research. This awareness gave us a better tool to compare and mirror lives than one-individual-to-another comparison would have.

We also had to be aware that our – multiples - subjectivities (gender, origins and personal backgrounds) would affect our actions and the research. We were not neutral, but full of preconceived ideas, stereotypes and prejudices about this topic and Asian/Nepali societies. To analyse Nepali Society, we had to be open to analysing our own.

Post-colonial research studies highlight the im-





portance of this to avoid an Orientalist Perspective. Researchers must also be aware that forms of neo-colonialism and new-imperialism still exist and persist in the world, of the unequal relationships (political, economic, cultural) existent between Western Europe and other parts of the world; “First vs. Third”, “Colonizer vs. Colonized”, “Developed vs Developing”

When there are cultural and societal differences within a research group it can add to awareness and help avoid biases and so the pairing of Italian and Irish added another intercultural dimension. We could not retreat into the familiarity of cultural thinking. This idea lives at the very heart of the citizenship project. We had two viewpoints on the gender question and were intent to gather more.

We gathered these viewpoints in different ways: Through living with local families and listening to them tell their stories, through surveying youths, through meetings with NGOs (See Appendix 2) and government representatives, through absorbing the culture and through literary research (See Appendix 3). In 45 days we experienced more than can be fit into this analysis, and so we have chosen the most pertinent of our observations to share here.



## LITERATURE & INTERVIEW RESEARCH

In Nepal we met numerous organizations that work in human rights and with a particular focus on gender issues. We gathered data on the different forms and levels of discrimination, exclusion and violence used to subjugate women in Nepal. Determining the position of women in Nepal is further complicated, as explained in the introduction, by the variety of ethnic groupings, castes and geographical proveniences. Each has distinct practices, traditions and cultural rules, and different levels of adherence to these rules, which link to the gender issue and cannot be explored here and so we provide instead a generalized overview. The overlying importance is to understand that in Nepal you are born to, and grow up with, acute gender discrimination.

A woman's place is in the home. Men are the wage-earners and the decision-makers. Girls and boys fall into these roles from an early age, with girls leaving school earlier than boys. Women are taught to cook, clean, be respectful of men and to accept their lesser position in society. In many ways it is not so different to Ireland and Italy of the past; societies with clearly defined feminine and masculine roles.

When both husband and wife have a job (especially in cities) it is still important for the man to be the main breadwinner (both socially and to maintain the current gender imbalance). The woman will have a "double presence" ; her job is in addition to, rather than in place of, her domestic role. Having paid employment doesn't mean an automatic and easy renegotiation of gender roles. This will take time, like everywhere.

### m igration and a developing nepal

Nepal is undergoing rapid change, and as a result their long-established family and society structures are under threat. Emigration, abandonment of agricultural land and the relative process of urbanization are big agents of this change, affecting more than just their economy. The phenomenon of emigration is rising constantly; Some

estimate 10000 per day leave Nepal (by own volition or not). Neighbouring India is no longer the sole destination, with many choosing destinations in Africa, Europe, the Gulf countries and Malaysia. According to the ILO (International Labour Organization) over two million Nepalese men and women work abroad, and this figure excludes the Nepalese working in India. Nor does this data represent the undocumented emigrants who are often subjected to exploitation, trafficking, discrimination (WOREC has a safe migration program which tries to educate and inform women (and men) of safe and best emigration practices). Women are the most vulnerable of the undocumented; often unskilled and uninformed about their rights who work abroad as carers, domestic worker and babysitters.

In the Report False Promise. **Exploitation and forced labour of Nepalese migrant workers** Amnesty International explains that:

Numerous credible reports, including by NGOs and UN bodies, have highlighted the increased risk of physical and sexual abuse, and forced labour faced by Nepalese women migrating for domestic work to countries, such as Gulf States and Malaysia. Addressing this concern, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in its 2011 Concluding Observations on the Report of Nepal, remained:

“concerned about the situation of Nepalese women migrant workers, and in particular at the fact that a large number of Nepali women are undocumented, which increases their vulnerability to sexual exploitation, forced labour and abuse; their concentration in the informal sector; the limited initiatives to ensure pre-departure information and skills training; and the lack of institutional support both in the State party and in countries of employment to promote and protect the rights of Nepali women migrant workers”

In addition to this exists also the very real and very big problem of sex trafficking and exploitation of children and young women to India. The organization Maiti Nepal, which we met with in Kathmandu, was set up to help victims of trafficking and has helped over



25000 girls to date. The president of Children-Nepal, Ram Chandra Paudel, has written a simple animated book **Fulmati** for

literate and illiterate people telling the painful story of one trafficked girl. The book is suitable as individual or school reading material for anyone over ten years old and has been used across Nepal to raise awareness of sex-trafficking and exploitation.

## e migration

Emigration, whether voluntary or enforced, affects Nepali women in Nepal or abroad. Those who remain home when the male head-of-the-family (husband/father/brother) has emigrated are vulnerable to abuse by in-laws and the community. Women are not only subject to familial control but also community control; with people, particularly other women, gossiping and judging their actions. This societal discrimination means that a woman who steps away from the community eye (for business or other reasons) can be subjected to the suspicion of extramarital affairs.

Migration, as immigration and emigration, has complex and wide reaching effects on a culture. The communities left behind lose not just individuals but families and entire generations

of people, as well as many of their cultural traditions. Individuals left behind may struggle to keep up with the physical chores, leading to eventual abandonment of farmland and the abandonment of entire villages. Money sent from abroad allows them to move to the cities- in search of an "easier" lifestyle. The emigrants themselves face adjusting to a foreign country and a different way of life, like every person who has ever begun a life in a new society, but for the poor and the undocumented it is worse. They end up living almost as slaves, with little or no control over their own lives and little opportunity to improve their situations; there is much documented evidence of the hardships these migrants, including Nepalese, face when working abroad. There are also problems linked to the eventual return- when the celebrations are over the community has to readjust- it is not always easy to fall back into old ways, with family and society roles which no longer fit.

Seasonal and short-term emigration disrupts family life too, and has its own set of problems. Many Nepali go to India as seasonal farm labourers, and as we learnt during the course our research, there is a percentage that returns with HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). Recent data collected by Shrestha (2013) explains that:

Very few migrants are provided with safety training and most of them do not have health

insurance. Migrant workers are considered to be at higher risk of HIV as a significant proportion of this population has unprotected sex with multiple partners when they are abroad. Migrants alone accounted for about 30% of HIV infections (NCASC, 2012). The 2008 IBBS survey estimated that 1,1% of the labor migrants to India from 11 western and mid – to – far western districts of Nepal were infected with HIV.

Interestingly the problem is so prevalent that in Nepal “Mumbai disease” is the common slang term for HIV/AIDS. Returned migrants infected with this or other STIs rarely have the sexual or health education necessary to deal with the infection, and the risk of infecting wives/ children/ others is very high.

## gender violence

“Translation should be understood in a sense not (only) linguistic or textual, but also as contextual. It should be the transposition of a whole

context [...] Translation becomes then inevitable, necessary, though never perfect, even as it guarantees nothing, it is characteristic of situation where violence can be removed (averted). The lack of translation on the contrary means violence”.



The philosopher Rada Iveković encourages us to open our minds to the meaning of translation. Rather than viewing it simply as transliteration of words from one language to another she asks us to think of it as a tool to critique, analyze and expose gender violence. Translation is not simply about linguistics and text, but also the context. It is the context that provides the true understanding and translation.

How often do misunderstandings arise because something was “taken out of context”?

She explains Gender as a border, a mental and physical border/division between people and social groups. Clashes and violence occur at every border. Language and the choice and use of specific words and topics can contain violence and be used to combat it also.



## FOR CLARIFICATION PURPOSES

Gendered based violence (GV) and its subcategory of violence against women (VAW).

In GV 'gender' is often incorrectly taken as specific to women. It is important to note that gender is a social-anthropological construction that does not identify with genetic sex, and as such it is a category that represents women, men, lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual. Gender violence can affect anyone of any sex or sexual-orientation.

VAW is defined by the United Nations (1993) as «any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life».

The Informal Sector Service Centre (IN-SEC) report *"Violence against Women/Girls. Assessing the Situation of Nepal in 2013"* underlines that:

*All women deserve a life with the opportunity to be educated, to work, to be healthy and to participate in all aspects of public life. Yet in every country in the world,*

*women and girls live within the confines of rigid gender norms, which frequently result in disproportionate access to essential services and major violations of their human rights.*

These inequalities can be linked to a variety of factors. As one example of this in Nepal some of the gender discrimination and VAW as underlined by WOREC are also connected to the civil war and the current period of post-conflict reconciliation. «Decade long conflict in the country followed by protracted transitional period leading to very fragile law and other situation, established culture of impunity, long and tedious court procedures and dominant patriarchal structure of governance are few established causes leading to this». None of the problematic social issues stand alone - they affect each other and therefore must be treated concurrently. True equality of citizenship can only be reached in this way.

The subjugation of women occurs at many levels in Nepal: from abuse by an individual to national, legal discrimination. Until recently women had no right to inherit property, and previous to 2006 a woman needed the permission of a male relative to apply for a passport evidencing her lack of personal choice and freedom.



The Domestic Violence (Offence and Punishment) Act of 2008 defines the forms of domestic violence as physical, mental, sexual and economic: further catalogued as:

- Domestic violence;
- Killing;
- Killing after rape;
- Dowry death;
- Trafficking of women/girls;
- Polygamy;
- Accusations of witchcraft;
- Caste discrimination against women;
- Corporal punishment;
- Rape

The 2013 INSEC report documents 3048 victims of VAW in Nepal: 2348 adult women (18-72+) and 700 girls under the age of 18. One harrowing case of a 14 year old girl, whom was raped whilst under arrest is currently being heard at the Supreme Court of Nepal. 1569 of the 2348 reported cases occurred in the family home “behind closed doors” making a lie of the “home is a safe haven for women” perception. The awful truth is that often this violence is considered “natural”, or is harder to recognize as abuse, and more difficult to face up to. It is shameful to report abuse by someone you love, and can have far-reaching re-

percussions within the family, especially in the context of Nepali society. This notion of “behind closed doors” can be expanded to community level also with the cultural acceptance of VAW and also the perception of it “not being my place to interfere (with another man/family)”.

It was not all negative learning; we met with Children-Nepal and WSDO, NGO's who empower women to earn a wage outside of their homes, allowing them to be self-sufficient and provide for their families or to escape confines. Improvement of Women's rights and children's rights go hand-in-hand, helping one helps the other. If, instead of going to school a child works to provide for his mother and siblings, forcing that child into a classroom is not progressive. Helping that woman, economically and psychologically, to provide for her family so that her child can go back to school is. This is a very simplistic example, but a valid one which is reflective of the aims of WSDO and Children-Nepal. These NGOs know that change must first come from within individuals and families before society can be changed. They have achieved much, and meeting with them allowed us to focus on the positive results of the Nepali women's struggle for equality.

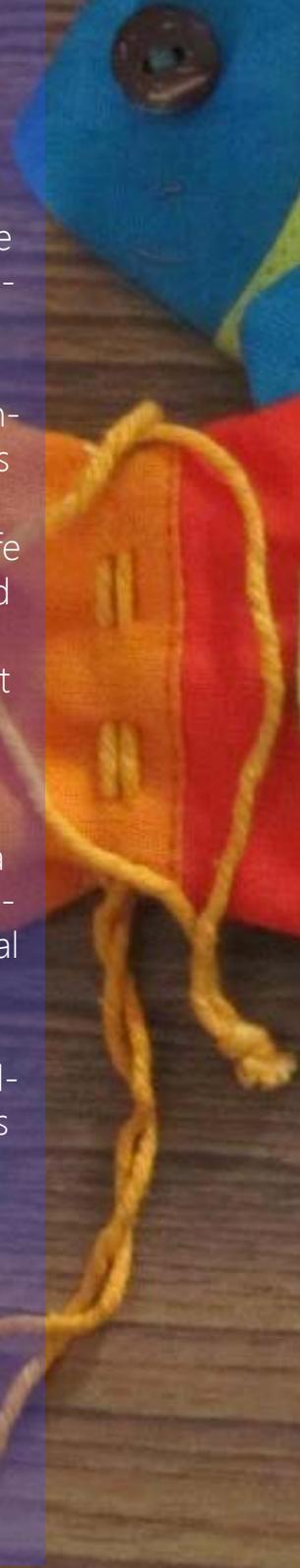


The vast majorities of marriages are arranged by family or through brokers, and although banned in 2009, the dowry system is common practice. In 2012 the Nepalese court increased the severity of punishments for dowry-practice, but as evidenced by the need for a National WOREC Anti-Dowry Campaign 2014, the ban has been largely ineffective.

Outside of the home there is social violence: examples include discriminatory practices based on caste, dowry murder, labour exploitation, acid spraying, allegation of witchcrafts (*boxi*) and social-religious traditions as *jhuma* and *chaupadi*. The *jhuma* «is a cultural practice in Eastern Nepal where second of the three or more daughters was offered to a Buddhist monastery». *Chaupadi* is a commonplace practice in the western part of Nepal (formerly across all districts) that affects Hindu women: During menstruation women are considered impure and cannot cook, work in the kitchen, feed animals or water plants, sit with the family to eat, go to temple, take part in religious ceremonies or share a bed with her husband. It is a form of abuse and from our point of view as witnesses- a shocking and public degradation of women. In Nepal these prejudices are so ingrained into culture they are unremarkable, and thus gender balance is only slowly being sought.

A study by WOREC highlighted that in Nepal the law «is still unclear on the definition of couples living together, issue of divorce and domestic abuse»>>. This means that in Nepal, domestic violence is permissible simply because the legislation which rules against it lacks the detail and clarity needed for prosecution.

Gender seems to be one of important factor responsible for social violence which cannot be ignored or trivialized. It becomes invisible in the sense that it is naturalized, accepted as a normal part of everyday life in society. It gets reinforced as a practice to maintain domination over women. It includes some of the traditional practices that are harmful to women which are usually carried out as a part of social, religious, cultural economic and political practice. Even though violence against women has no boundaries, it is normally seen that specific groups of women are particularly affected.



LINDA KEHOE,  
The work of the women of Suryamucki Handicrafts,  
Pokhara



A SOCIETY  
WHERE CHILDREN  
ENJOY THEIR RIGHTS

[www.children-nepal.net.np](http://www.children-nepal.net.np)

Token of Love

## Widowhood: discrimination by marital status

«Why working with widows? Women are always discriminated, under-classes, but widows more».

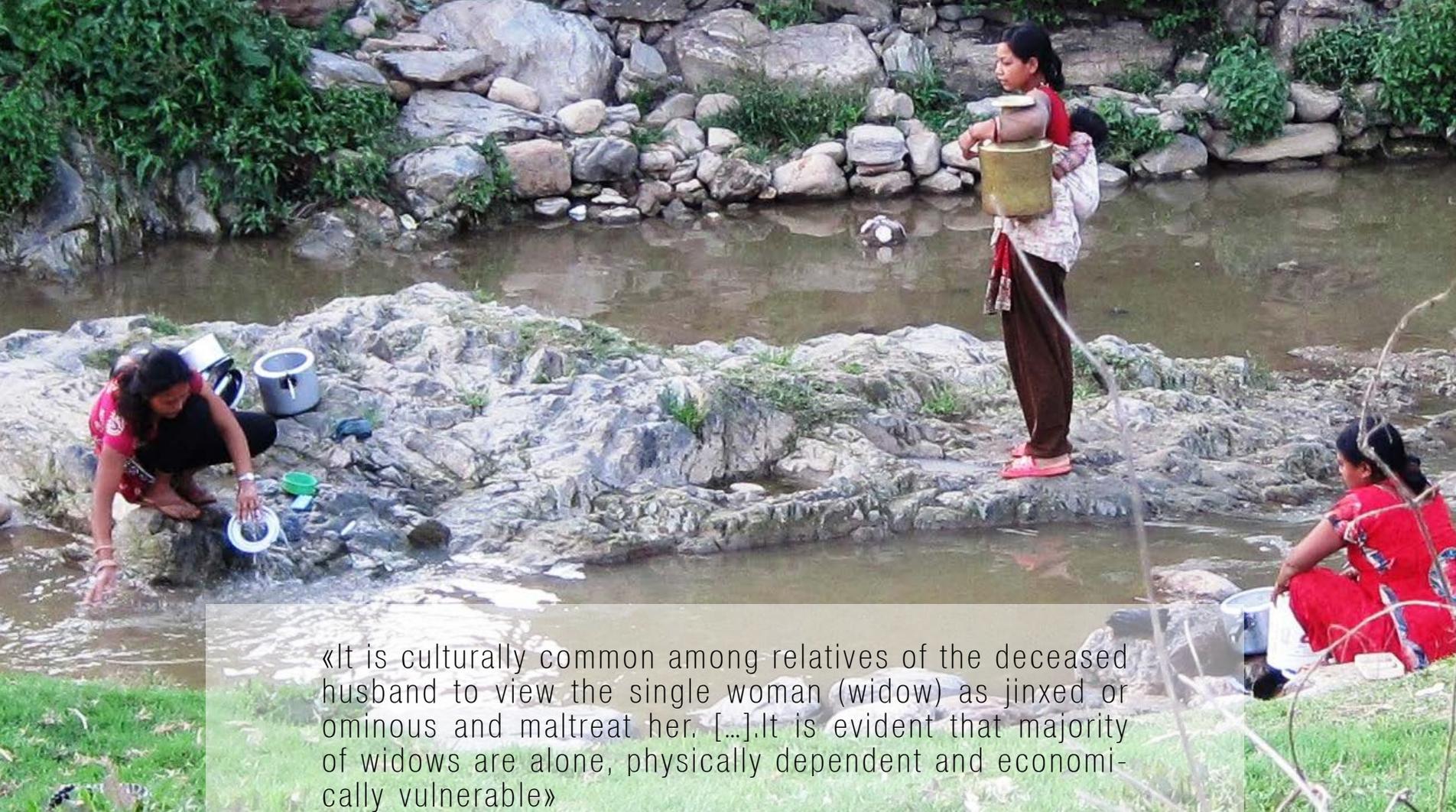
This was the first – short but clear – explanation given to us by Sumeera Shrestha, a program coordinator of the organization WHR - Women for Human Rights.

In our countries whilst widows may suffer from economic discrimination and poverty, they are generally viewed with respect: as a woman who has suffered the loss of her husband, (maybe) has to raise children alone, or spend her old age without her life-companion. They often receive economic and moral support and help from their family, and from the wider community. It was shocking to discover that in Nepal widows are one of most discriminated and vulnerable groups.

The key to understanding this stigma is found within Hinduism and the fact that in a Hindu marriage the man is taken not as an equal; but as the lord and master of the woman, to be respected, revered and served. *Sati* is the term for ritual self-immolation; whereby a woman throws herself upon her husband's funeral pyre as a sign of everlasting marriage and a display of her great respect for him. *Sati* brought honour on a wife and the family. A woman that did not perform *sati* was therefore seen as disrespectful, and in not fulfilling her wifely duties she brought shame onto herself and her family. She became as 'the walking dead', had to lead a restricted life devoid of colour, decoration and good foods and was seen as bad luck and a pollutant of rituals and ceremonies. The practice of *Sati* was only banned in Nepal in 1920 (The British in India banned it in 1829) and isolated incidences still do occur to this day.

Today self-immolation is not expected of wives, but the stigma of widowhood remaining strong in many communities. «Widowhood is not simply an inevitable period of the life cycle of woman, but seen as personal and social aberration to be deviously wished away».

Nepali widows are social outcasts who live a life of deprivation.



«It is culturally common among relatives of the deceased husband to view the single woman (widow) as jinxed or ominous and maltreat her. [...] It is evident that majority of widows are alone, physically dependent and economically vulnerable»

The stigma is cemented into society, as indeed many gender prejudices are, to the extent that it is simply unremarkable to many Nepali. If we look at the Nepali language we see it is not a neutral tool of communication, but a medium which expresses prejudices and stereotypes and reflects the dynamics of domination/subordination of society. Nepali society which has been patriarchal for thousands of years has a common language full of sexist words and expressions. Bidhuwa (widow) has such negative connotations the organisation set up to protect and defend these women refuses to use it, preferring instead the term ekal mahila or 'single woman' (which we will also adopt). Other negative terms for a widow include as bokshi (witch), raadi (bitch) and poi tokuwa (husband eater). The term 'husband eater' shows how powerful the stigma is, and

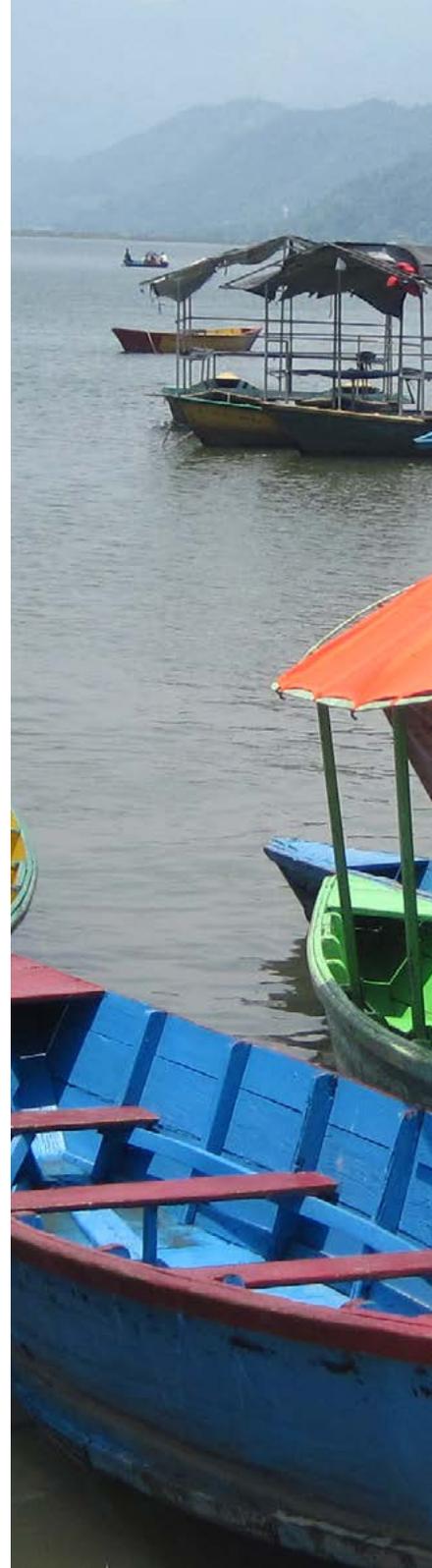
how language can be a constant re-enforcement of a stereotype.

In Nepal we often heard expressed 'First a daughter, then a wife and a mother' the unsaid meaning being that a woman is never simply a woman. Language has links to the delicate subject of identity and of recognition from one's own community. The identities permitted by society to a Nepalese woman are those of a daughter (of a man) and a wife (of a man). If this male reference point is lost and she becomes a widow, she loses her social identity and the rights connected to this, thus lowering her status.

The death of a husband means the painful transition from wife to single woman, and relegation to the ranks of the physically alive yet socially dead. As a "*living sati*" she is deprived of the colour, joy, and celebration of life. Single women cannot bear a tika on their foreheads, a vital part of Hindu celebrations. Single women have to abandon colourful dress and use only white, the symbol of mourning. This marks her widowhood for all to see and makes her vulnerable to societal abuse. Widows suffer physical, psychological and verbal abuse on the streets, in the market and on public transport. Nirmala Sharma Dhungana, a researcher and social activist, tells that widows must also:

Discard ornaments such as jewellery and nose rings and cease wearing cosmetics and perfume (Jhapa, 2003). Ideally they are expected to eat only bland foods and must give up nutritious and spicy food[...]. They must give up sleeping in their marriage beds and sleep on the floor. They are expected to pay no attention to their appearance and grooming. They may be excluded from their in-laws family and are not allowed to inherit property, to take part in happy ceremonies even the marriages of their own children.

Many of the prohibitions reflect the chasm between the role of 'wife' and that of 'widow' in society. In Nepal red is the colour of marriage, red saris and bangles symbolises the marital status for all to see, before her marriage a girl never wears red. The marriage is a rite of passage from single life to married life, from father to husband, from maiti to new life. The red sari, red bangles and a gold ring testify to men that she belongs to another, and demands the respect due to her as an equal



amongst other wives. Removing red from a woman removes all connected social, cultural and religious meanings, and also the personal memories of red linked with her wedded life. The importance is such that the WHR has organized several Red Coloured Camps to support single women and their right to dress in red, and bear a tika. The campaign tries also to raise awareness amongst family members (especially the in-laws who still bear responsibility for the wife even though the husband, their blood relative, is now gone), the community and religious leaders that death is a natural part of the life cycle. Educating and sensitizing the religious leaders of the community so they will be kinder to the single women, and stop treating them as bringers of bad luck and karma, will do much to elevate their status in the community.

Discriminations – social, religious, cultural, economic – affect all widows, but with variation according to the ethnic group, caste system, education level, religion, social strata and culture. According to WHR « the single women from a wealthier or higher caste family can face greater discrimination and marginalization than those from a lower level of society. The explanation being that the higher castes are more dogmatic in their beliefs, and also that more is “expected of them”.

Newari traditions protect their women from the worst of the stigma of widowhood. Newari women go through three marriage ceremonies which mark the passage of their lives: at the age of five they symbolically marry a God (represented by a fruit called a bel), upon puberty they take the sun as their husband, and finally they are wedded to a man and join his family. In this way they are linked in an eternal marriage to a god, and are freed from the stigma of widowhood. It also protects Newari women from the practice of *sati*.





## LGBTI

*Gender rights are almost always connected to women but, as mentioned above, gender includes also Men and Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex people. To develop a well-rounded understanding of gender discrimination we contacted the LGBTI community of Nepal as part of our research.*

In Nepal it is not solely women who suffer from gender and sexual bias. The sexual minorities of Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Inter-sex people (LGBTI) are also victims of severe discrimination. Although Nepal has decriminalised gay sex (2007) and liberalised its citizens to identify as "Male, Female or Other" on official documents (2011) having a legal status has not led to social acceptance. Openly LGBTI find it difficult to gain proper employment; they are subjected to discrimination ranging from verbal abuse to violent attacks by family, the public and the police force (ref).

Nepali society historically used gender-identity and sexual orientation as factors to define the roles of its citizens in much the same way as it used the factors of sex, ca-

ste, religion and family identity. As one example the *Hijras* the renowned third gender of Southern Asia were an elemental part of Nepali Society until the late 1800s. British colonization, the associated homophobia and the enforcement of anti-sodomy laws brought the *Hijra* community into disrepute. 'Non-heterosexuals began to be regarded as unnatural beings and criminals' (Pant, BDS, 2011) and this stigma has remained. *Hijra* remain an essential part of wedding ceremonies and birth celebrations, but are more controversial than in the past.

There are organisations which represent the LGBTI in Nepal- the Blue Diamond Society is the most well-known (Appendix and footnote). In the course of this research visits were made to the BDS Headquarters, Kathmandu and Rainbow, an associated LGBTI group in Narayangadh, Chitwan. They advocate for equal rights, support and education and sexual health awareness and checks.

### overview of meeting in narayangadh, june 2nd 2014

Weekly Sunday afternoon gathering in group headquarters; meeting followed by group lunch, with over 30 local LGBTI participants.

The language barrier was overcome through informal chatting and we gained a good idea about the LGBTI work in the Chitwan district.

These meetings have a dual function: Organisation of the work for the coming week and the provision of a platform for people to express themselves, discussing issues and find solidarity. Most of the participants were working for the organization as "mentors" who provide health education, spread awareness of HIV/AIDS, promote safe sex and distribute condoms to the wider community. These mentors track the numbers of condoms (male and female) distributed weekly and the LGBTI/sex-workers met with during outreach programmes.

One of the most successful of the BDS campaigns is their HIV/AIDS awareness campaign- which runs across all 75 districts of Nepal and has provided outreach to 90,000 LGBTI people since 2001.

The majority of the LGBTI met with stated that outside of their LGBTI group their sexual orientations must be kept secret. Discrimination and lack of available em-

ployment can force many of the openly-LGBTI to seek work in the sex trade. If their family is unsupportive of them and their 'choice', there is no state support or allowance provided for the unemployed.

The separation between LGBTI and non-LGBTI in society affects both people and organisations. NGOs which did not specifically work with LGBTI issues did not work with them at all; there is little crossover despite their shared struggles for equal acceptance and rights. WHR did mention their involvement with a case of a woman who used her lesbianism as grounds for a divorce from an abusive husband (in interview). Another interviewee of an NGO which helps sex-trade workers simply could not understand how a man could prefer another man over a beautiful woman. To her, as a liberal who was open-minded and accepting of these women and their struggle, the fact of homosexuality was deniable.

Nor do the LGBTI seem to expect crossover, and were surprised we were not researchers from the international LGBTI community. They are unused to others sharing their struggle towards freedom of expression. In the same way as the women of Nepal see *themselves* in *their* socially-determined roles the LGBTI self-discriminate also.





## YOUTH SURVEY – OPINIONS OF YOUTH

**aim:** Collect quantitative (yes/no) and qualitative data from Nepali youth and use this information to broaden our understanding of the issues affecting society and to see if opinions of the younger generation are more liberal than those reflected by society at large. The survey used is attached as Appendix 1.

**sample:** Students of third-level colleges in Panauti and youth we encountered in Banepa, Pokhara and Kathmandu aged between 17 and 24 years with an average age of 22

**sample size:** 48 (40 women and 8 men)

**obstacles encountered:** Encountering youth of targeted age group, School exam period in May-June, the language barrier, social barrier, Unwillingness of individuals to participate (from anxiety/need to ask parental permission) and Social control

Although we could not collect enough data to perform scientific analyses the questionnaire proved hugely important for our research; useful both as an introductory tool to schools and as a “pretext” to try and talk about these topics with youths.

QUESTION	YES		NO	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Do you think western influence has been good for Nepali people?	8	32	0	1
Do you smoke cigarettes?	2	5	4	26
Do you drink Alcohol?	7	35	0	4
Have you tried recreational drugs?	1	0	5	34
Is it ok to marry inter-caste?	5	21	3	17
Is it ok to marry against your family's wishes?	2	19	6	21
Will your family arrange your marriage?	7	32	1	8
Is it ok for unmarried couples to co-habit ?	2	4	6	36
Is it ok to be an unmarried mother?	1	0	5	40
Is it ok to be non-religious?	4	7	4	11
Is it ok to be Homosexual?	2	0	3	16

## analysis of results:

The results of the questionnaire corresponded to the attitudes and opinions we witnessed in Nepali society, and the information gathered from the various NGOs interviewed. This conformity to the mainstream opinion was somewhat unexpected in light of the access youth have to more liberal Nepali and external influences, internet, television, further education etc.

Some of the key points are analysed further below:

### **Is it ok to cohabit before marriage? / to be a single Mother?**

Only one person said it was ok to be a single mother, whilst 6 said that cohabitation was ok.

On further discussion we found the majority opinion to be "sex-before-marriage was ok, once hidden from family and society". Co-habitation, and the assumption of pre-marital sex, still has a strong stigma attached. As Nepal becomes more urbanized, apartment-living and living away from ones family is becoming a necessity. With this change co-habitation, and pre-marital sex, is increasingly possible.

Pregnancy is not easily hidden from society, and unmarried mothers and their children are likely to suffer discriminatory treatment (ref). When questioned further many of the youth thought it was wrong to raise a child outside of the traditional family setting because of societal persecution and many knew women within their communities who had been stigmatized in this way.

In Nepal contraception is available in supermarkets and pharmacies, but sexual education is substandard, and although incidence of pre-marital sex is on the increase safe-sex awareness is worryingly low. Abortion is legal in Nepal and available in clinics throughout the country. The stigma remains and women still seek clandestine, unsafe abortions.

### **Is it OK to be homosexual?**

25% of the males and 7.5% of the females asked said yes, they thought homosexuality is ok. The majority chose not to answer the question.

Further discussion on this topic was very difficult, youth and adults alike were clearly uncomfortable speaking about it, with nervous laughter the common response to our questions. We found this to be the norm in Nepal. LGBTI people and organizations have some “allies” but to be vocally supportive is very challenging for an individual or organization alike.

### **Do you smoke cigarettes?**

25% of boys and 12.5% of girl said yes, they smoke cigarettes

In 2006 smoking was banned from public places and it is very rarely seen even on the street. Nepali culture does not accept cigarette smoking, though men are freer than woman to smoke. A woman smoking in public risks public admonition and being labeled as “prostitute”. The youth said that they smoke in private because of this, and many were amazed that in Europe a woman could openly smoke.

### **Is it OK to marry inter-caste?**

The caste system is still much in evidence in Nepal, although today Socio-economic class is gaining in selective importance. Half of the youth said no- never would they marry outside of their own caste. Others were more open to the possibility, but based upon a caste of equal status as their own, economic level, etc.

## conclusions:

Family-life is the shackles and the greatness of Nepal.

Societal opinion is slow to change. The majority opinion is not always expressed by society, for fear of prejudice or social exclusion, or being identified as a trouble-maker or instigator of unwanted change. Even if the individual belief is more liberal, they cannot take a public stance on that believe for fear of rebuttal.

It's easier to “go wild” far from home. (Youth feel more free away from their own family and community and will smoke, drink, act differently away from the opinions of the people from their own community)

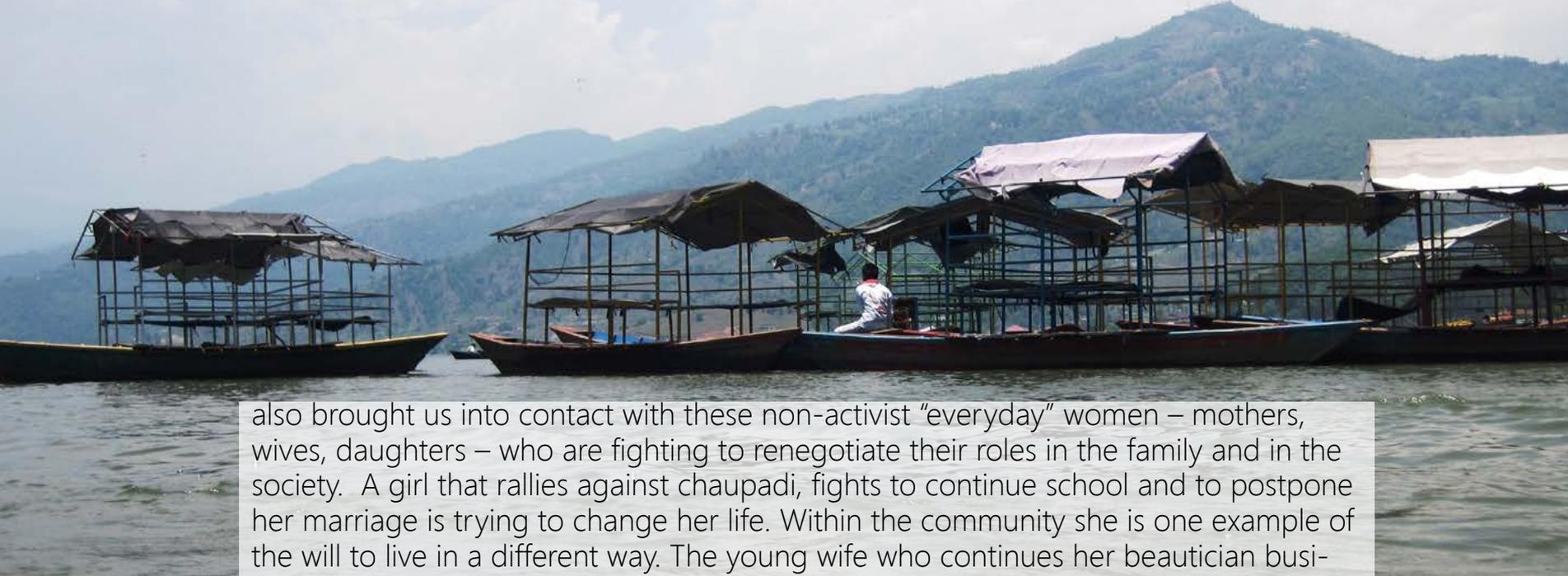
## CONCLUSIONS:

Nepal is a country to fall in love with. (To the western eye) the diversity found within its small borders is extraordinary and refreshing to behold. It has a rich and vibrant culture which displays both the best and the worst, in our opinions, of its traditional beliefs. Nepal is on the cusp of great change; and Nepalese society is facing this with both apprehension and expectation. It wants to hold on to the strong family and societal values which so define it, whilst embracing modern technologies which will improve health, living conditions, educational and professional possibilities for its citizens. They do not reject these changes, but simply fear disruption to the community life and losing their identities in the process. Finding the path which embraces the best of both worlds is the struggle they now face.

The changing role of a woman in Nepalese society is central to this. Gender discrimination is apparent (to us) but not always recognized by the victims or by the perpetrators. Realisation of the injustice must come before it can be fought against.

Some individuals and organizations fight openly for change; The 'Women Human Rights Defenders' (Women who choose to act as a voice for WHR in their local communities) are prime examples of these brave women who through their support of others risk taking the societal scorn and discrimination upon themselves. Other women don't even realise the wider impact of their personal choices; our research





also brought us into contact with these non-activist “everyday” women – mothers, wives, daughters – who are fighting to renegotiate their roles in the family and in the society. A girl that rallies against chaupadi, fights to continue school and to postpone her marriage is trying to change her life. Within the community she is one example of the will to live in a different way. The young wife who continues her beautician business after her marriage, and the one who waits a few years post-marriage to begin a family so she can continue with her career, these are the women who, slowly but surely, will change Nepal.

There are women victims, but we will not victimize all women. A chauvinistic perspective would label women as weak by nature, to be dominated and ruled; this is a false image which has been upheld for too long. The organizations we met in Nepal, and similar organizations across the globe, actively empower women; to lobby for their rights, stand up for themselves, push off the stereotypes, stride forward and create an equal society in which they are protected by law. Women cannot be seen as the victims and the men expected to change the world; it is a task for all members of society. Education, enabling people (to see and to question the inequalities in their own families and societies) and social development are vital tools in this struggle.

Societal opinion may be slow to change, but when it does, it is lasting and powerful and democratically elected governments are forced to take heed. ‘Top-down’ action alone is not enough to better the situation of women in Nepal; the laws which exist to give women equality and protection are not adhered to by the greater community nor by those charged to uphold them. Top-down action can be fleeting - unless written into the constitution. One example of this is the possible re-criminalisation of gay-sex, a move which would hugely damage LGBTI rights movement in Nepal.

“Now Nepal is at a very critical time; the writing of a new constitution. We have been doing a lot of campaigns, movements to ensure our rights. We feel like others, we, the sexual and gender minorities have an important role in the writing of a new constitution. A constitution was written before but only by those rulers and high society who were conservative and of majority. They have left the minorities behind. We are minorities who have always been subjected to pain and cruelty. There are a lot of others like us who have suffered. Only when all of the minority groups are included will a new constitution be a constitution in its true meaning”

*Sushila Lama - BDS*





APPENDIX 1:  
NGOS INTERVIEWED

WOREC

[www.worecnepal.org](http://www.worecnepal.org)



WOREC is a human rights organization relentlessly working for the protection and promotion of human rights. WOREC Nepal has been relentlessly working to ensure the rights of voiceless and marginalized groups to promote social justice. WOREC has been working with marginalized communities; and it is one of the leading national organizations that address the issues of Violence against Women (VAW), protection and recognition of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD), safe migration and human trafficking, and economical, social and cultural rights of women and other marginalized population groups.

WHR – Women for Human Rights

[www.whr.org.np](http://www.whr.org.np)



WHR began as a women's group meeting in homes for 2 years, until forming officially in 1994. WHR envision a non-discriminatory and equitable society where single women are respected and can live with dignity and there are sufficient legal provisions to protect single women's political, social, cultural and economic rights. They work to empower women economically, politically, socially and culturally in order to live dignified lives and enjoy the value of human rights. WHR has issued a national declaration to use the term 'single women' instead of Widow. The word Widow "Bidhwa" in Nepali carries negativity and disdainful societal views which leaves many single women feeling humiliated and distressed.

Maiti Nepal

[www.maitinepal.org](http://www.maitinepal.org)



MAITI Nepal was born out of a crusade to protect Nepali girls and women from crimes like domestic violence, trafficking for flesh trade, child prostitution, child labour and various forms of exploitation and torture. A group of socially committed professionals like teachers, journalists and social workers together formed Maiti Nepal in 1993 to fight against all the social evils inflicted upon our female populace. Most of all, its special focus has always been on preventing trafficking for forced prostitution, rescuing flesh trade victims and rehabilitating them. This social organisation also actively works to find justice for the victimized group of girls and women by engaging in criminal investigation and waging legal battles against the criminals. It has highlighted the trafficking issue with its strong advocacy from the local to national and international levels.

Blue Diamond Society

[www.bds.org.np](http://www.bds.org.np)



The Blue Diamond Society was established in 2001. As the Nepali constitution didn't recognize sexual minorities they registered as a sexual health program. Their mission is to improve the sexual health, human rights and well-being of sexual and gender minorities in Nepal including third-genders, gay men, bisexuals, lesbian, and other men who have sex with men. Through BDS outreach work; we have reached up to 350000 LGBTI/MSM. BDS is the only organization of this kind and their key activities include health promotion for sexual minorities, psycho-social counselling raising awareness of HIV/AIDS, promoting human rights and sexual health. They also document human right violations and provide counselling and litigation services to the victims and families.

## CHILDREN-Nepal

[www.children-nepal.net.np](http://www.children-nepal.net.np)



CHILDREN-Nepal is a non-governmental social organization working for the rights and development of children, youth and their families, living and working in difficult circumstances in Pokhara, Nepal. It is a society where children & youths enjoy their rights. They believe that every child has natural and social rights, capacities and responsibilities to develop their full potential as human beings. Developing the life of children includes a development of family and social life and so they provide different women and family programmes along with their work with children.

## WSDO

[wmensskillsdevelopment.org](http://wmensskillsdevelopment.org)



For more than 35 years the Women's Skills Development Organization has trained and employed otherwise impoverished and marginalized Nepalese women. These skilled women hand-make the wide variety of products, including bags, footwear and household accessories that you can buy from WSDO. Thousands of women benefit from WSDO's programs, 380 of which are currently employed at WSDO. They created a simple way to empower the women of Nepal, increasing their quality of life, not through charity but by giving them a career, selfconfidence and independence.

## Metta-centre

[www.mettacenter.com.np](http://www.mettacenter.com.np)



Metta Center Childrens home, situated in Banepa is a shelter for orphaned pre-teen and teenage girls. It was established in 2004, and is run by the alumni, devoted Buddhist monks and individuals from different professional backgrounds. Metta not only shelters the orphans but also supports their physical and mental well-being with sensitivity. In its short history the Centre has achieved much, and has a proud result of successful pass-outs of the girls into society as self-reliant and true citizens of Nepal.

## APPENDIX 2: YOUTH SURVEY



Hi, we wrote this questionnaire as part of a project - European Citizenship at the Mirror - that we are doing with S.C.I. Nepal. We are volunteers here for 6 weeks to mirror the life of youth in Nepal with youth in Italy and Ireland. While our countries are very different, they have a lot of similar things; the bad things: unemployment, pollution, worry about the future, the good things: art, music, stories, education and opportunities. Please answer the questions below to help us with our research, and ask your friends to do the same. (Don't worry, It is anonymous!)

## **INTRODUCTION**

How old are you?

Are you male/female/other?

What is your occupation?

What region of Nepal are you from?

## **FREE TIME AND SOCIAL LIFE**

What do you do for fun or what would like to do?

Who do you spend your free time with?

## **ALCOHOL, DRUGS, CIGARETTES**

Do you smoke cigarettes?

When do you drink alcohol?

Is it difficult for you to buy alcohol?

Have you ever been drunk?

Do you know what kind of drugs you can buy in your area?

If you want to buy drugs will it be hard?

What is your opinion of alcohol and drugs?

## **POLITICS & LAW**

Do you think it is important to be involved in politics?

Do you support the current Nepali government?

What changes would you like them to bring about in Nepal?

How can the government make a job for you?

What is the most important thing they need to work on?

## **FAMILY, RELATIONSHIPS, MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN**

What religion are you?

Are you from a traditional family?

Have you ever had a boyfriend/girlfriend?

Will your family arrange your marriage?

Would you marry inter-caste?

## **WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT EACH OF THESE THINGS - OK OR NOT OK?**

Inter-caste marriage

Marrying someone your family did not choose?

An unmarried couple living together

An unmarried woman having a baby

Not having any religious beliefs

Homosexuality (Gay, Lesbian, Transgender)

## **WESTERN INFLUENCE**

Do you think western Influence has been good for Nepal?

What do you like about it?

What do you dislike?

## **AND FINALLY**

What are your dreams?

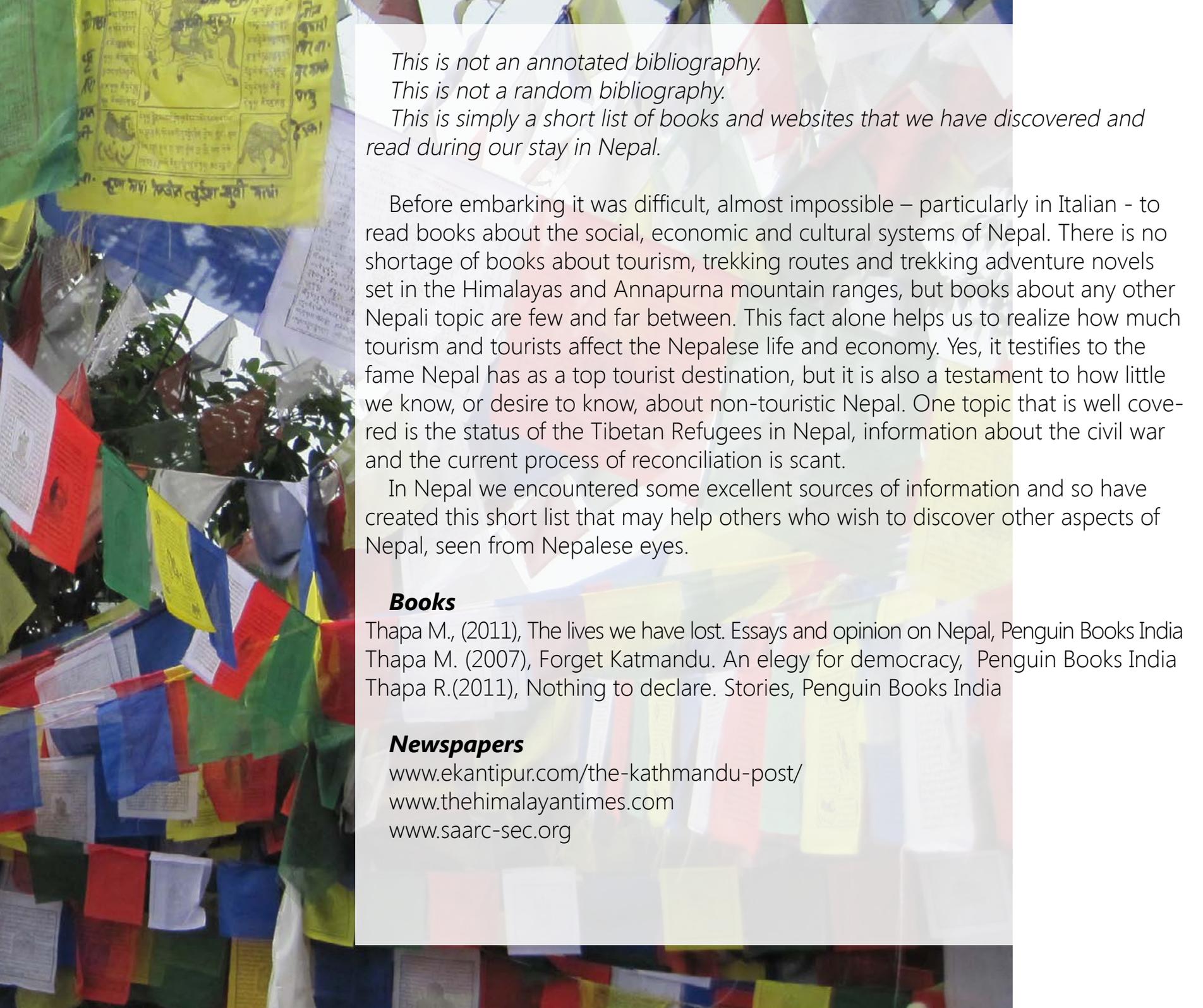
Thank you!

Elena & Linda,

For more information ask SCI Nepal 9841477871



APPENDIX 3:  
RECOMMENDED READING



*This is not an annotated bibliography.*

*This is not a random bibliography.*

*This is simply a short list of books and websites that we have discovered and read during our stay in Nepal.*

Before embarking it was difficult, almost impossible – particularly in Italian - to read books about the social, economic and cultural systems of Nepal. There is no shortage of books about tourism, trekking routes and trekking adventure novels set in the Himalayas and Annapurna mountain ranges, but books about any other Nepali topic are few and far between. This fact alone helps us to realize how much tourism and tourists affect the Nepalese life and economy. Yes, it testifies to the fame Nepal has as a top tourist destination, but it is also a testament to how little we know, or desire to know, about non-touristic Nepal. One topic that is well covered is the status of the Tibetan Refugees in Nepal, information about the civil war and the current process of reconciliation is scant.

In Nepal we encountered some excellent sources of information and so have created this short list that may help others who wish to discover other aspects of Nepal, seen from Nepalese eyes.

### **Books**

Thapa M., (2011), The lives we have lost. Essays and opinion on Nepal, Penguin Books India

Thapa M. (2007), Forget Katmandu. An elegy for democracy, Penguin Books India

Thapa R.(2011), Nothing to declare. Stories, Penguin Books India

### **Newspapers**

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[www.saarc-sec.org](http://www.saarc-sec.org)



APPENDIX 4:  
CULTURAL DICTIONARY





## Important Things We Learnt From Nepal

### bamdara:

Monkey. Many species are endemic to Nepal and are common in rural and urban settings. Monkeys are seen at many of the important temples of Kathmandu- and although lovely to watch can be dangerous, and can steal food, drinks, cigarettes and shiny objects. Some people carry long sticks to prayer to fend them off.

### chiya:

We can definitively state that tea (black tea, milk tea) is the national beverage. The first thing offered to a guest is tea- in homes, and when meeting with organisations. It was a great way to break the ice during meetings. Chiya can be black, Nepalese or spiced (ginger etc). The black one is often drunk at breakfast, ginger chiya is more appropriate for the monsoon season and has healthy properties for the stomach and for the digestion. The Nepalese one, milk tea, can be made from cow or buffalo's milk with added sugar and a touch of cardamom powder: it's delicious!

### curry:

Mixed spices, herbs, vegetables, chillies. Needs no explanation!

### dhau/ curd:

Yogurt- often home-made and delicately flavoured with cardamom – delicious! Bhaktapur is famous for

its curd.

### sel (sel roti):

Crispy rice doughnuts. Watching these being skillfully fried on the street in the morning is a lesson in itself. Delicious hot and taken with milk chiya.

### dal:

lentil – black or red – soup. This soup is always served with boiled rice and the name of this meal is dal bhat. Dal bhat can be accompanied by pickles, curry and curd.

### thukpa:

Noodle soup served at lunch time- between 9am and 1pm.

### didi:

older sister. In a society structured on family-system kinship – genetic and symbolic – is very important. Didi is your biological sister but also your sister-in-law, cousin, friend, neighbour. Respectful and familiar term.

### danyabhad:

Thank you!

### ho:

yes. In Nepalese many different words and gestures

mean yes: ho is one of them.

### muisa muisa?

Maybe maybe . The Nepalese people roll their heads iside-to-side up and down manner which can best be described as meaning "I'm thinking about it, maybe, ah, ok".

### jatra:

Festival, celebration, procession.

### momo:

Lunch time food in Nepal. Steamed or fried, round or crescent shaped, buffalo, chicken or veg, ten of them served with spicy red sauce.

### namaste:

Greeting to the divine within you. Always start a conversation with Namaste. As you say the word you must place hands together in prayer position, and bow your head.

### pani:

Water- bottled water available everywhere. 1 litre costs 20 ruppees, 25 if chilled, 50 if on top of a mountain.

### pani pooree-

Street food: spicy water served inside fried potato balls. (photo)

### ramro:

good!

### sari:

long length of colourful cloth worn by women wrapped around the body, ending over one shoulder, leaving midriff exposed. Still worn in daily life in Nepal by many, they are the dress used for occasions such as weddings.

### red:

symbol of marriage and celebration. Only a married woman may wear red clothing, red bangles or other jewellery.

### white:

The colour of mourning, white is worn by widows and family members after the death of a loved one.

### kurtha:

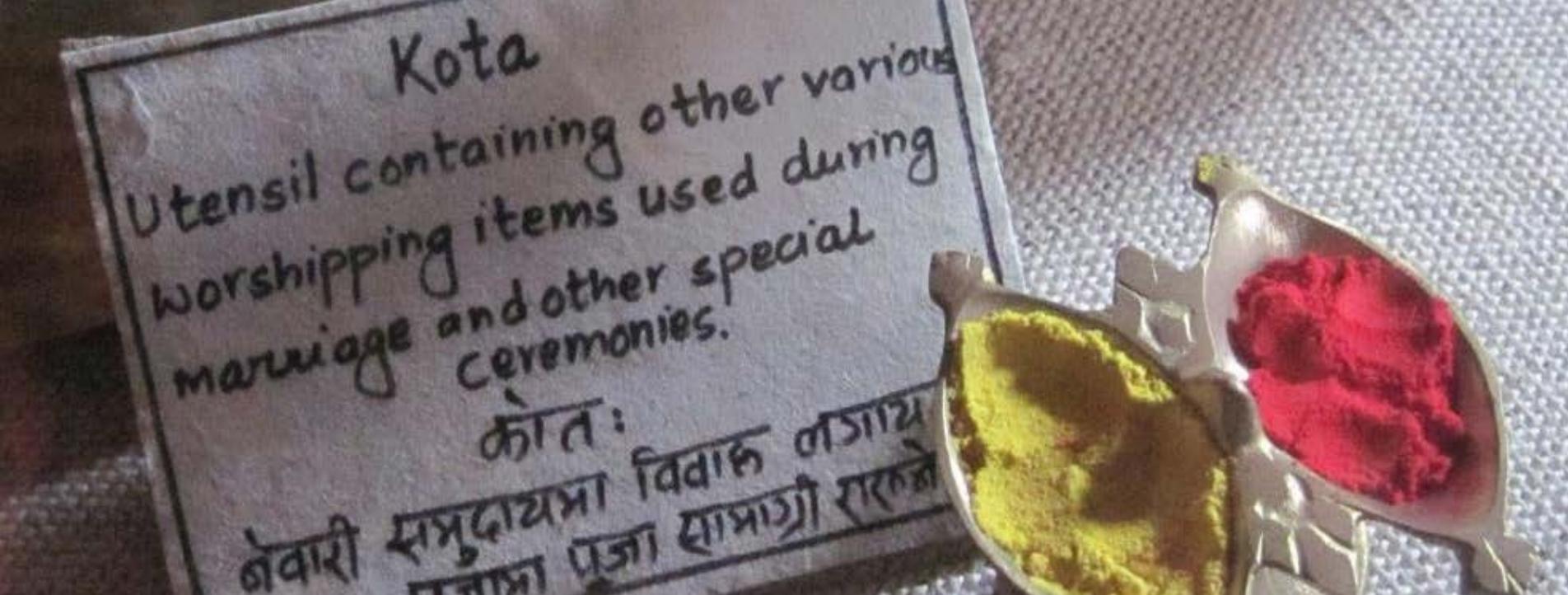
Traditional daily clothing of women- Long collarless dress worn above loose trousers. More casual than a sari.

Dress code:

Modest at all times, Sari's may expose midriffs but you should not. They will bathe naked, you should avert your eyes.

### tika:

(tilaka, tikli, sheether harr, tilakam or tilak tilaka) is a mark worn on the forehead and other parts of the body. Tika may be worn on a daily basis or for special religious occasions only, depending on different customs. They are blessings given to temple-guardians, gods, cows, dogs: Anything seen as blessed or



worthy of respect. Made of dyes, yogurt, rice, flour, flowers, spices

Some meanings of the colors this tika are:  
White - stands for purity & peace and to evoke pure feelings

Yellow - to guard off any kind of harm/disease.

Red - signifies good fortune and valour.

### dogs:

Believed to be good luck. Nepali believe that a dog is the guardian of a family, and that if a pet dog dies, it has done so to take the place of a family member.

### cats:

Not well liked, nor commonly kept as pets. Considered ill luck.

### cows:

Sacred. Harming them in any way can result in incarceration. People have been mobbed to death for hurting a cow.

### buffalo:

Dinner, Most castes of Nepalese eat meat, unlike many of their Indian neighbours.

### cut:

To ritually sacrifice an animal.

### 2071:

2014. Nepal has its own Lunar calendar rather than following the Gregorian Calendar as we do in Europe. The New Year falls in April. In April 2014 the year of 2071 began





# MEXICO

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LOUISE POWER AND IRENE MASALA



## Country Overview

The United Mexican States is a federation of 31 states with 117,409,830 inhabitants; over 10 million of its population is comprised of indigenous people. While there is no one official language Spanish is recognized as a national language along with other 62 Amerindian languages.

Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1810 and from 1946 to 2000 it was ruled by the PRI, the Institutional Revolutionary Party. The party's removal from power has led to feeling of distrust among the population about the political system, particularly the electoral system, largely due to many known cases of electoral manipulation. Mexico has signed many economic and political agreements with neighbouring United States of America (USA), including the NAFTA agreement, signed in 1994, at the onset of the Zapatista rebellion. The geographical proximity of the United States has impacted the migration routes from and through Mexico to the USA.

Regarding the economic situation, Mexico can be considered the fourteenth economy in global terms of Gross Domestic Product; in spite of this, both the distribution of wealth and the human development index are quite diverse: the highest parameter is comparable with that of countries such as Germany and Sweden, while the lower ones are close to the parameters of Burundi. In general it is the rural-dwellers and indigenous communities who are forced to live under impoverished conditions.

## Introduction

This article focuses on the outcome of research conducted in Mexico on the civil and citizenship rights of ethnic and/or minority groups in the Southern state of Chiapas. It begins by providing an outline of the methodology employed for the purpose

of this research, including both the advantages and disadvantages of this methodology. The following four sections focus on the main themes of this research: Democratic Rights; Women and Children's Rights; Migrants' Rights; and Ethnic and Minority Groups. Each section includes an examination of how rights and citizen participation are impacted by citizenship or a lack of citizenship, as well a discussion of the work done by local NGOs aiming to improve the lives of indigenous communities and/or migrants. The article then comes to a close with an overview of the main issues that arose while conducting the research.

## methodology

The research for this article was conducted in San Cristobal de las Casas in Mexico's Southern State of Chiapas in April and May 2014. Qualitative, unstructured interviews were conducted with six organisations that work within this region. This methodology was employed as it was deemed the most suitable for the aims of this research which are to highlight the link between citizenship (or a lack of) and social inclusion and/or exclusion with a focus on the civil and citizenship rights of ethnic and/or minority groups. Given the complicated nature of the research topic the researchers deemed it necessary to provide the interviewees with the freedom to discuss what they considered to be most important and relevant in the context of Chiapas. Each interview began by providing the interviewee with an overview of the research; they were then asked to discuss their organisation's work and in what way they felt their service users were included and/or excluded from society, both from their own sub-society and from Mexican society in general. The unstructured nature of this approach enabled both the interviewers and interviewees to focus on any significant topics or issues that emerged throughout the interview. This allowed for a rich and detailed discussion of the topic.

This approach, however, is not without its shortcomings. Any conclusions reached or arguments made cannot be considered to be representative of Mexico in general; they represent only the experiences of the researchers during the project and of the

organisations interviewed within the specific context of Chiapas. Furthermore, due to the number of topics researched in a relatively short period of time within what is a very complex situation further research would be required for a deeper and more representative understanding of the issues raised. This article aims to provide its reader with a strong foundation to an important and complicated issue.

## Democratic Situation

Mexico is a representative democracy; this means that the Mexican people delegate its powers to elected representatives and politicians through the electoral process. In the past, the electoral process in Mexico mirrored the high level of corruption inside the country, denying citizens of their decision-making power. In this context and with the aims of making the electoral process transparent and implementing the Mexican democratic structure organizations such as the one we interviewed were created.

In this context, we decided to talk to **Teresa Zepeda Torres, coordinator of Alianza Civica Chiapas**, an NGO which was created by a group of citizens and civil organisations in 1994 in the context of the Zapatista uprising with the objective of increasing participation in the democratic process and transparency of the electoral process. It continues to work today promoting civic education and citizenship participation. It was selected as its work is directly connected with the focus of this research – civil and citizenship rights and active citizenship.



"It was acknowledged that here in Mexico the elections were not entirely democratic; they had many pitfalls. In 1994, the EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional), somehow, shocked the conscience of the people by showing them that things were not working in accordance with the form of government we had here in Mexico. Several organizations met together in D.F. (a.k.a. Mexico City), for this reason we are called *Alianza Civica*; *Alianza* (alliance) because several organizations came together and *Civica* (civil) because it is comprised of citizens. We had experience in electoral observations, and from this experience we decided to do electoral observations throughout the country. The political education and organisation experiences of 1994 were very strong. We met with people twice a week to conduct political analyses. We decided to conduct a report of prisoners, to hold an informative discussion, to start implementing the San Andres Accords. We were invited to do a referendum on freedom; that is to say that we wanted to ask the people if they agreed with the economic policy of the country at that time.



A much stronger movement emerged in 1995, the EZLN called on us to consult the public of Mexico about 5 topics all related to rights (rights to health, to education, to work, to self-determination and to autonomy), mainly through Alianza Civica Chiapas. It was the first civil referendum to be done in Mexico, and was one of Alianza Civica's contributions. In 1997 we had our first project specifically on citizenship. We held federal elections to choose deputies, workshops to help the people understand the congress of the union, how the laws impact our daily lives and also training for those that wanted to become election observers. It was one of the most violent times I've seen here in Chiapas.

In 1997, there was also the massacre of Acteal. In this time of uncertainty some people had to leave their homes and go elsewhere. In this context the elections were held. Anyway you cannot say that, as a citizen, you have the right to a free vote when many violent parameters exist in the context in which you are living. In 2000 there was a big illusion that a different candidate of the PRI could join the state.

A lot of national and international observers came, and for Alianza Civica it was the last time we were part of the observations. They were the most organized and participatory; we coordinated around 800 observers throughout the state. They were so well monitored and interesting that I was at the point of trusting the system. Pablo Salazar won by a minimum, it was an example of citizenship. It was important for the people to see that it was possible to have democratic elections. In my life as a Mexican, I could not say that the electoral system was reliable, even less so now. This experience gave us the power to be able to say where the fraud was and how it was happens: in many cases the indelible ink did not work, in many cases it was the husband who voted for his wife. Here it is the custom of the community, the man of the family votes for his wife; he votes for the eldest daughter, he votes for all the women who have the right to vote. Like now, the end of 2012 was disgusting, Peña Nieto bought the election, totally, there is proof and you can read it. A citizen who does not want to be in any party no longer has access to community life. Our citizenship has lessened; they spent too much money for a supposed democratic life and then give us two or three pesos more for minimum wage. The only real achievement that we got was that an electoral observer figure was institutionalised into the code of elections, this was achieved through the work of Alianza Civica

Nacional, but in every way nobody was held accountable and things continue in the same way.

In 2013 I started working on water rights and environmental issues, which are also aspects of citizenship, the relationship that you have with your environment and the question of natural resources and the protection of these. The concept of citizenship has been transformed from political participation, that's how we started, from participation to the construction of a DECENT LIFE. The concept of citizenship is different for the indigenous communities. For them citizenship is something related with the responsibility that everyone has to the community and to the family. It has to do with attachment to the community, family and group work. And for us we are already citizens at 18 years old, when we have our political and civil rights but we don't participate in the civil life of our community. How do we think that we will defend a place if we don't care about it?

Working in this organisation, I have myself noticed that citizenship starts here (in the heart), inside of each person, it starts from when you are a child, it starts with your family, your environment. Now I see how the young people are acting, always with their mobiles, they don't learn about anything, what kind of citizenship is this?

What culture is this?

With all of this technology, where is the human element?"



## Women's and Children's Rights

Within women's and children's right we can find two different realities in Mexico, especially in rural areas or areas inhabited by communities. On the legal side, Mexico has ratified a number of treaties, including the Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and Their Contribution to Development and Peace, The General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In 1990 Mexico ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (No.169). Moreover, the Mexican Constitution provides that the State has the duty to promote respect for the dignity of all children and the full exercise of their rights. It also prohibits the use of child labour; minors under the age of fourteen can not legally work. . Despite this legal protection, the "street" situation is different, as pointed out by associations such as Chantiik, a nonprofit organisation that works with indigenous children and young adults that work on the streets in San Cristobal de las Casas. It focuses on issues such as protection, leisure activities, physiological needs and nutrition while also raising the standard of living and civic awareness of its service users. It does this through the development of skills in a sustainable manner through educational and productive projects and activities. This organisation was selected due to the large number of children working on the streets of San Cristobal de las Casas who are both unaware of and unable to exercise their citizen and civil rights. One of the main problems faced by adolescents who work on the street is, indeed, that many of them have no official papers because the system of birth registration is faulty, even more so for the indigenous communities. Carolina Guerrero, our contact person for Chantiik stated that "If you were born with the help of a midwife, and this midwife was not certified, she won't have a book of birth certificates which you can present to the public service of civil registry to request your

# ESCUELA PRIMARIA REBEL

official birth certificate. And without an official birth certificate you don't exist and you don't have access to any type of services, you can't even go to school. The biggest problem is this: if you are not registered you do not exist. And it gets worse when it is urban poverty. I'm talking about people that have been here for at least 2 generations, their parents migrated and they were born here. Many don't have official papers because the midwife wasn't certified, and in the indigenous population most are delivered by midwives. An essential part of our job is also to increase the level of awareness of their rights: it's important that the children know how to discuss, how to argue, without using violence neither at them nor at the police. So we can prevent a series of abuses by merely raising awareness of how to exercise their rights. It's not enough to know that these rights exist, they already know this, but they must also know how to exercise these rights. Whether or not you are registered you have rights as a human, and these rights must be exercised."

In regards to women's rights, one of the mediating elements of women's citizenship, especially within the communities, is access to the land, in other words the access that women have to land tenure, to use it and to profit from it. In all of Mexico but especially in Chiapas, land tenancy is gender-based. That is to say, it is men that inherit the land, so generally women are not legally recognised, nor morally, nor socially, to land tenure, to use or to profit from the land. Because of this we thought it necessary that the research include the experience of *Centro de Derechos de la Mujer de Chiapas*, an organisation that works with indigenous women from various regions of Chiapas. It aims to rid society of the culture of gender-based subordination,



# DE AUTONOMA ZAPATISTA



discrimination and violence that currently exists while building a culture respectful of human rights. Through its work *Centro de Derechos de la Mujer de Chiapas* wants to raise public awareness about the rights and actual situation of indigenous people, particularly women within these communities, while also enabling these communities to exercise their rights as citizens of their own communities and/or of the Mexican state. In 2004, the *Centro de Derechos de la Mujer de Chiapas* did an investigation on women's access to the land and they found that only 18.5% of land owners are women. As a result of this, women are very vulnerable in the sense that they cannot participate in community decisions, because community decisions are made in the assembly, and the assembly is made up of the land owners. This lack of access by women to the assembly also means that they were kept from making decisions within their families; therefore, women's decisions are all mediated by men. This lack of land tenancy for women limits all of their citizenship rights.

"At El Centro de Derechos we are constructing a movement in defence of women's rights to land tenancy, to use and profit from the land, and we are working on a process of analysis and discussion about their rights." - said Alma Padilla Garcia of Centro de Derechos - "And we also work on men's awareness of women's rights to land tenancy. And through all of this, we cannot forget all of the violence that the government is inflicting on the indigenous and peasant communities in order to take their land. By this I mean that all of the current policies of the Mexican government are associated with forms of dispossession, forms of dispossession backed by the same capitalist system that impoverished them or generated dispossession

IRENE MASALA,  
Oventick, Zapatista community, Chiapas, May 2014



of their territory and of the natural resources (water, mountains). In this capitalist vision of the land, inevitably dispossession of the villages happens, they are experiencing insecurity when exercising all of their rights, both men and women. But obviously those that are most affected are the women due to lasting, historical insecurity in women's rights. For the indigenous population, whom are mostly poor, this type of land-dispossession creates food insecurity, destroys country life and production and, therefore, their relations of identity with the land and between communities. And this has an impacts on the increase of community violence and violence against women. We know, through our studies, that the majority of food problems increase the levels of violence against women and of femicide. All of this is connected with the capitalist system, neoliberalism and patriarchy that generated the process of women's lack of access to citizenship. What does that mean? How do women exercise their citizenship rights with such uncertainty about their access to them? For us citizenship is the full and conscious ability to exercise your rights. When you don't have a full, clear and conscious ability to exercise your rights, it's a precarious version of citizenship, it's citizenship by name only. If I am a citizen but I don't have work and I can't go to the doctor, what is this? It is legal citizenship, but it's not citizenship that enables me as a human to exercise my rights in full, my right to work, to healthcare, to an education, to a life

with dignity, to housing, to pleasure, to love, etc. There are some social programmes such as "Opportunities", that is for women with children (if you have no children you are prohibited from participating in this programme), or "60 and Above", which is a programme for older men and women, and "Pal" which is for children between 0 and 5. They don't see human rights as rights for everyone, if the rights are not for women of all ages, for men of all ages then rights cannot be exercised fully. That is to say, the Mexican state shouldn't divide the population to satisfy their needs, it should look at the population as a whole and provide access to human rights in full and not only to small sectors. The only pressure against these politically motivated programmes is social pressure, that's all. The Zapatistas are fighting against these programmes, against capitalism, they don't accept any of it and they are denouncing and questioning these programmes and the government. Such programmes that divide the population are part of a strategy to absorb the indigenous communities so that they won't support the Zapatista movement and so that they won't organise themselves against the state. And this is connected with de-territorialisation, that is to say that more indigenous people will disappear and the government will have more access to the water and the rivers.

There is an interesting saying: struggle is like feet, if only the men fight you become lame, if both men and women fight you struggle on both feet."

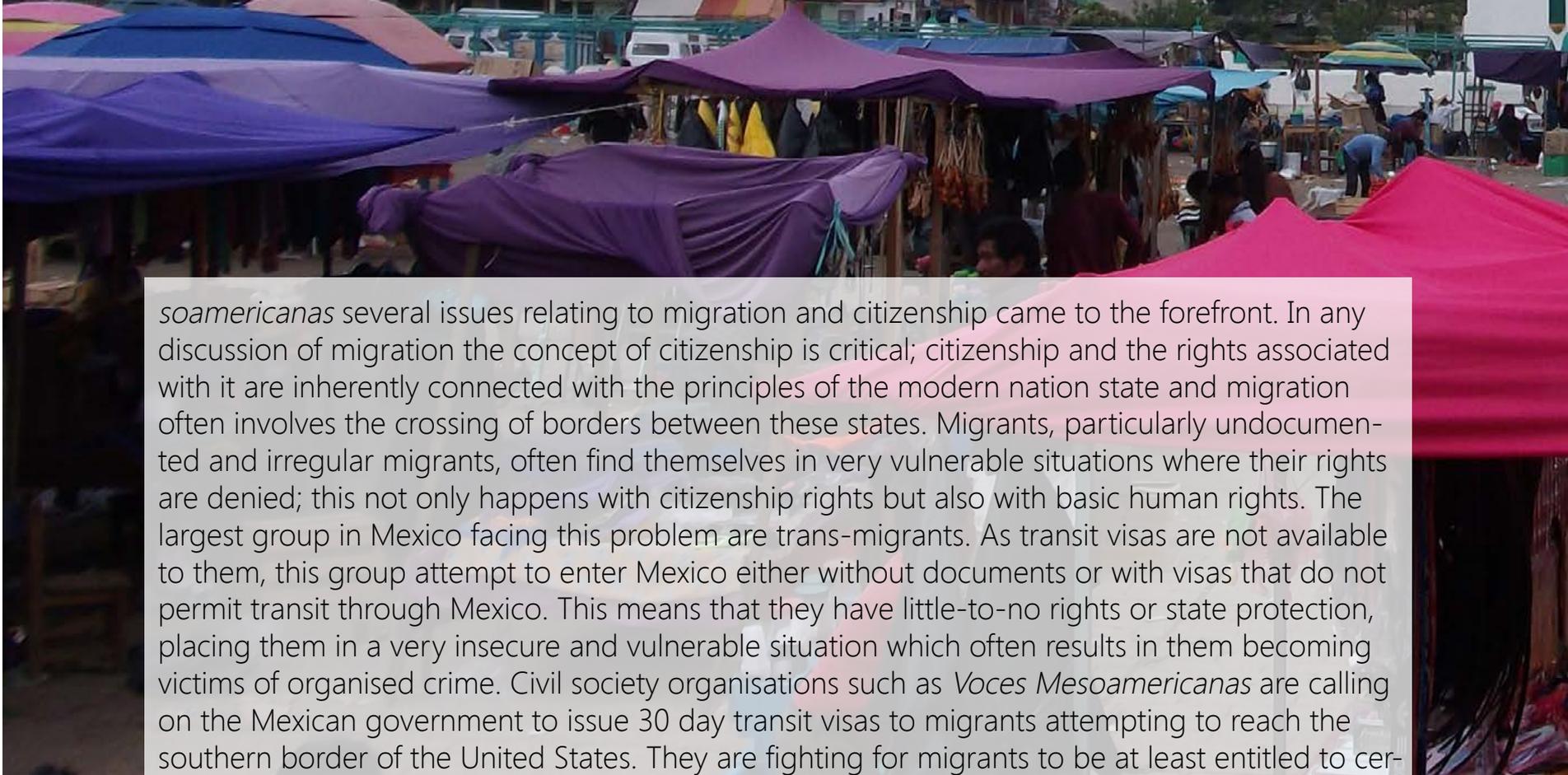
## Migrants' Rights

Mexico has wide-ranging issues with migration. Within Mexico the largest migrant group facing the denial and violation of their human and civil rights are the trans-migrants who pass through Mexico on their way to the USA or beyond. Estimates of the numbers of annual transmigrants vary greatly; official state bodies estimate there are 109,000 transmigrants each year while civil society groups generally believe the number to be about 400,000. Migrant workers, mainly from Guatemala, also face rights violations. It is estimated that between 45,000 and 75,000 migrants work in agriculture close to the Guatemalan border in Southern regions of Mexico. The rights of Mexican migrants are also at risk; it is estimated that 47 million Mexican migrants live worldwide, with the majority living in the USA (*Voces Mesoamericanas*). Their rights are often violated or denied while travelling and living abroad; moreover, they face further problems upon their return to Mexico. (Dimmit Gnam, 2013)

One organisation that works with migrants is *Voces Mesoamericanas* in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico. *Voces Mesoamericanas*, which began in 2009, is a civil organisation that works with migrants and their families. They aim to enable migrants and their families to exercise their human and civil rights while also participating in their own governance at a local, national and international level. It employs a transnational approach, working with Mexican both within and outside of Mexico as well as with transmigrants passing through Mexico on their way to the US border. This organisation was chosen as it works closely with migrants, it tries to improve their living situations and relationships with both the state and society in general; in other words they promote their civil and citizen rights while also trying to increase active citizenship. This makes the work of *Voces Mesoamericanas* and their service users very relevant to this research.

During an interview with Miguel Ángel Paz Carrasco of *Voces Me-*





*soamericanas* several issues relating to migration and citizenship came to the forefront. In any discussion of migration the concept of citizenship is critical; citizenship and the rights associated with it are inherently connected with the principles of the modern nation state and migration often involves the crossing of borders between these states. Migrants, particularly undocumented and irregular migrants, often find themselves in very vulnerable situations where their rights are denied; this not only happens with citizenship rights but also with basic human rights. The largest group in Mexico facing this problem are trans-migrants. As transit visas are not available to them, this group attempt to enter Mexico either without documents or with visas that do not permit transit through Mexico. This means that they have little-to-no rights or state protection, placing them in a very insecure and vulnerable situation which often results in them becoming victims of organised crime. Civil society organisations such as *Voces Mesoamericanas* are calling on the Mexican government to issue 30 day transit visas to migrants attempting to reach the southern border of the United States. They are fighting for migrants to be at least entitled to certain legal and protective rights while in transit. However, due to Mexico's subordinate relationship with the USA this transit visa is not on the horizon. (Paz Carrasco interview, 2014)

A second vulnerable migrant group in Mexico are those that enter the country to work in agriculture in the Southern regions such as Chiapas. Due to historical social, commercial and labour relations between Mexico and Guatemala two forms of Mexican visas are available to Guatemalan citizens in this border region. The first form is available to those that wish to enter Mexico for seasonal work in the agricultural sector and the second form of visa allows the bearer to enter Mexico up to 100km from the border for commercial or social activities but does not permit them to work. However, due to the restrictive nature of these visas and the fact that they can only be obtained at eight specific locations along the border many Guatemalans enter Mexico undocumented. Furthermore, employers tend to prefer undocumented workers as they can be mistreated and exploited with minimal risk of state intervention. Any migrants that are seized by the state are brought to migratory centres where they are detained and later deported; some

are held for periods of time that are in contradiction with Mexican migration laws. (Paz Carrasco interview, 2014)

Mexican migrants also face many problems within the context of citizenship, both while abroad as well as upon their return home. The majority of Mexican migrants are in the USA, with an estimated 11 million undocumented Mexican migrants residing there fighting for residency and citizenship rights. Those that return to Mexico, either by deportation or by choice, face further rights violations in Mexico, particularly those that are born abroad to Mexican migrants. Upon their return to Mexico they are unable to exercise their rights; such as rights to education, to health care, etc. because those born abroad they will not be registered with the Mexican state and so are undocumented within their own country. This is a growing issue in Mexico as in the last five years alone Mexico has seen six million migrants return home. (Paz Carrasco interview, 2014)

These diverse groups of migrants face various forms of social exclusion due to their lack of, or limited access to, citizenship and its associated rights. There are cases in Mexico of migrants coming together and uniting in an attempt to construct citizenship from below, to call for rights, to improve their situation and to play a role in their own governance. One such example is a group of roughly 900 trans-migrants of the 'Via Crucis Migrante' caravan who entered Mexico from Guatemala and marched to Mexico City in a call for basic rights of security, protection and transit through Mexico. This group were successful in gaining rights for themselves but the Mexican government has refused to change immigration laws and has since been refusing to issue transit visas to trans-migrants. Some progress, while limited, has been made with the introduction of Mexico's first immigration law three years ago which provides a very limited and basic amount of legal security to trans-migrants. Due to the diverse nature of Mexico's migrant problem no one solution will suffice; each group requires their specific needs to be reviewed and to be met, and at a minimum deserve their basic human rights observed. (Paz Carrasco interview, 2014)

# Indigenous and Zapatista Communities

Mexico has a strong indigenous population with almost 10 million of its 103 million population being indigenous (roughly 10%). This 10% is made up of various indigenous communities; each with its own customs and language; the Mexican government officially recognises 62 different languages. (Navarrete Linares, 2008) While these indigenous groups are officially recognised by the Mexican government and their autonomy and rights are guaranteed by the constitution many live with poverty, prejudice and regular rights violations. The Zapatistas (EZLN) are an autonomous community in Chiapas and the surrounding areas; in 1994 the Zapatistas gained international attention when they rose up against the state in a call for better conditions, autonomy and control of local resources by the indigenous communities. They continue to exist today, almost like a state within a state, with the aim to live within independent, self-sufficient, anti-capitalist communities with their own social services such as education, government and health systems. Since the violence of the 1994 uprising a low-intensity war has been ongoing between the Zapatistas and the Mexican state. In the end, what the Zapatista uprising has done is highlight the situation of the indigenous communities and pressure the state to respond while also proving that another form of society is possible.

In Chiapas there are several organisations that work with the Indigenous communities as well as with the Zapatistas. Two such organisations were interviewed for the purpose of this paper; they are SI Paz and *Promedios*. SI Paz, founded in 1995, is a civil organisation that works with the Zapatista communities in the region. It was created following the 1994 Zapatista uprising to draw international attention to the tense situation in Chiapas in an attempt to prevent a return to violence. Today SI Paz works with communities in the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero to prevent socio-political violence erupting. It aims to build positive peace among the communities in the region. This organisation was selected as the Zapatista uprising and their continuing struggle is a major issue in Mexican society today and is directly connected with the focus of this research.

*Promedios* is an organisation that provides media training and equipment to indigenous communities (largely but not solely to Zapatista communities) and peasant com-

IRENE MASALA,  
Zinacantam, Indigenous community, May 2014



munities in Chiapas to enable them to create various forms of media productions. These productions are used either internally within the communities or nationally/internationally to inform people on the work or way of life of the communities and/or of any violations of their rights by external actors. *Promedios* aims to make these communities self-sufficient in regards to media communication. This organisation was selected as the work it does enables the indigenous and peasant communities to increase awareness and understanding of their beliefs and their way of life both within their communities and in the world in general as well as highlighting any infringements of their rights; therefore, increasing citizen participation and rights awareness. One important element of citizenship and social inclusion is having your voice heard. Within the communitarian based society of the Zapatista and indigenous communities that struggle against the individualist mainstream society of Mexico and its government aligned media it is vital for them to have the means to make their own voices heard.

Indigenous communities have, in a sense, dual citizenship; they are citizens of their communities and citizens of Mexico. As citizens of the indigenous communities they live by strict customs and values which can, particularly for women, clash with the rights they are entitled to as Mexican citizens. SIPaz works extensively with indigenous women on issues such as their right to land and gender-based violence. Within the communities if a woman's husband immigrates to the US for example she loses her right to the land and it is the decision of his family as to what happens to her; for example they may allow her to live with them or return to her own family. If the woman decides to fight for her right to the land she is going against the community and risks losing other, maybe more important rights within the community. Gender violence is also a big issue within the communities with incidents of femicide from women's own families



IRENE MASALA,  
Zinacantam, Indigenous community, May 2014



not unheard of. Further clashes occur over marriage, the minimum age within the Mexican constitution is 18 years old, while traditionally within the communities girls are placed in arranged marriages or sold at the age of 15 or 16 years old, once a woman passes the age of 20 it is unlikely that she will marry at all. Women that go against the wishes of their parents in this regard and/or attempt to avail of their right to choose a husband risk being ostracised from their communities. SIPaz and other organisations that work on these issues face great resistance from the communities as a total change of cultural attitudes towards girls and women is required; this kind of change is slow and any real advances can take generations. Within the Zapatista communities this change is well under way, women in Zapatista communities face less violence, less rights violations and less prejudice than their counterparts in non-Zapatista indigenous communities but there is still a long way to go.

Within Mexican law the indigenous communities have extensive rights but there is a large discrepancy between what is in the constitution and what happens in reality. The problem the indigenous communities face is not obtaining rights but is actually availing of these rights; the state often refuses to fully grant them what they are entitled to by law. Most of the rights violations are connected in some way with natural resources. In a large portion of Chiapas there is a lot of biodiversity as well as natural resources such as drinkable water, hydroelectricity, petroleum and uranium; this region has a majority indigenous population, up to 90% of the population in some areas is indigenous (*Promedios* interview, 2014). The economic interests of the state, therefore, clash with the interests of the indigenous communities and the interests of organisations that work with them as well as the interests of those that work on environmental issues. Often social unrest results from this clash, which in turn results in human rights violations. In Chiapas the tendency towards a lack of

regulation regarding the ownership of land combined with the fact that Spanish is not the mother tongue of the indigenous communities makes them quite vulnerable and easily deceived by the state. State interests often win through promises of compensation such as building schools and hospitals which generally get built but are left empty due to a lack of staff and resources such as books, desks, running water, medicine etc. (SIPaz interview, 2014) Both SIPaz and *Promedios* work with the affected communities to highlight these violations and to prevent more from happening. SIPaz do this through their presence at negotiations and at any conflicts that arise, while *Promedios* provide the affected communities with the ability to create media productions about the issues. In short they are trying to increase the ability of the Zapatistas and indigenous communities to avail of their rights as citizens and increase their level of social inclusion.

## Conclusion

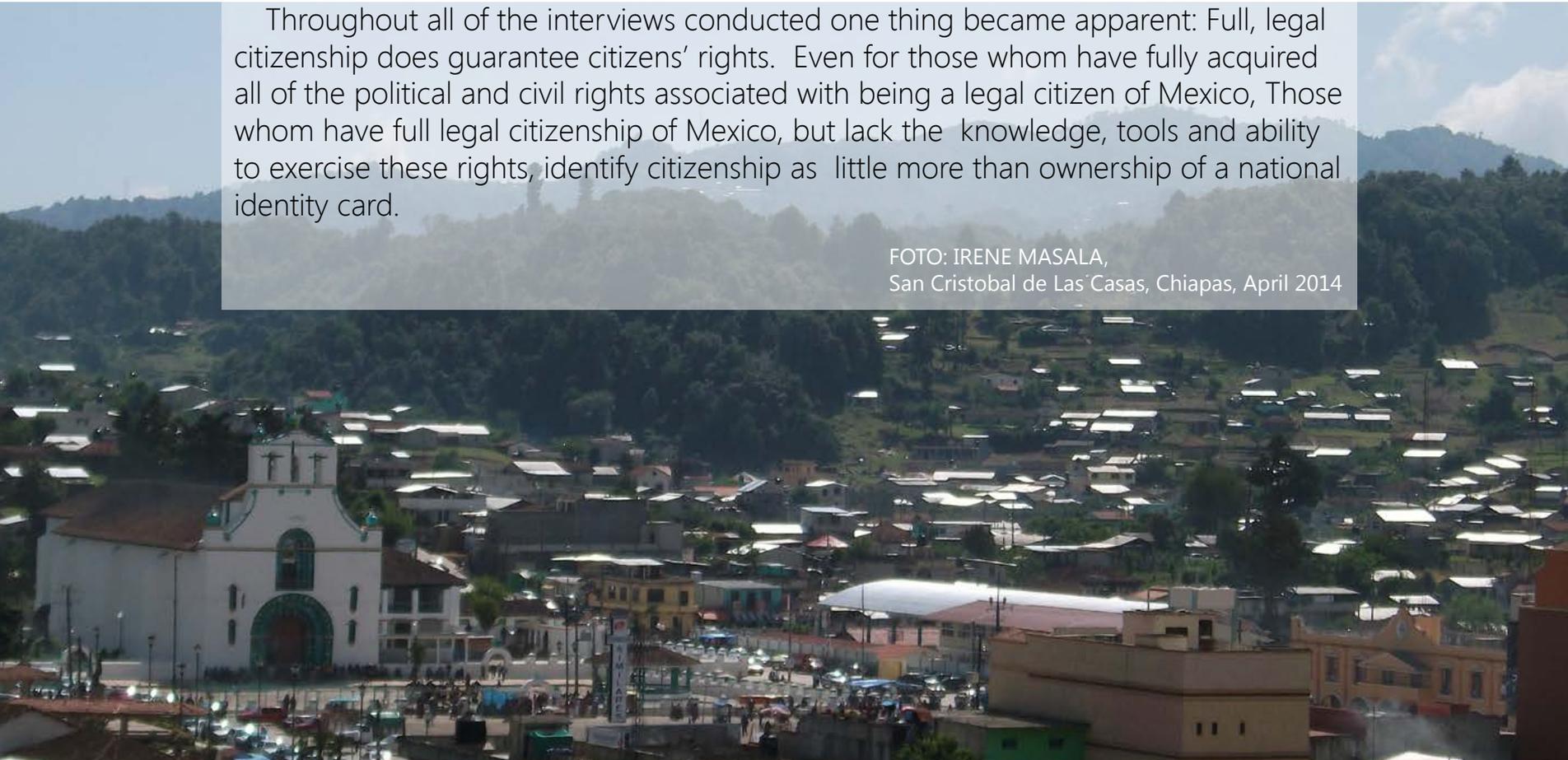
The interviews carried out within the EYCM project highlighted that Mexico, with regard to the concept of citizenship, can be characterized in two different contrasting ways. On one side there is the legal definition of citizenship, treaties in defence of minorities, women and children (as discussed above) and Article two of the Mexican Constitution which recognizes the rights and identities of indigenous communities. On the other side of this unsubstantial legal citizenship there is the communitarian concept of citizenship that is defined by one's membership of and distinct responsibility to the community, the family and group work. Within the indigenous communities this form of citizenship is based around assembly participation and voting; it is participation in a collective life. As previously discussed the indigenous communities have both of these forms of citizenship available to them but due to their contrasting nature availing of one generally negates the possibility of the other.

This research made evident the fact that legal status as a citizen of Mexico does not guarantee social inclusion and the enjoyment of rights as stated in the constitution. There is a considerable gap between what is stated within Mexican law and the rights that are enjoyed by the population as a whole; notably minority groups and migrants

(particularly the women and children within these groups) experience many rights violations and social exclusion. In Mexico there are different levels of social exclusion and a lack of awareness of the rights and duties of citizens. There are many social programs that aim to overcome the shortcomings of Mexico's welfare state which does not consider the cultural and social changes that are required, nor does it contain policies of social inclusion. It, therefore, became apparent that the legal concept of citizenship is merely a tool that enables one to exercise their rights as a citizen, when it is not complemented with genuine policies of social inclusion it is but an empty container and results in citizens not exercising their rights. The precariousness of rights has its roots in the same state action as all of the public programmes and politics associated with neo-liberalism. This means that the programmes being implemented by the state are mostly programmes that aim to override rights through support; in other words total assistentialism.

Throughout all of the interviews conducted one thing became apparent: Full, legal citizenship does guarantee citizens' rights. Even for those whom have fully acquired all of the political and civil rights associated with being a legal citizen of Mexico, Those whom have full legal citizenship of Mexico, but lack the knowledge, tools and ability to exercise these rights, identify citizenship as little more than ownership of a national identity card.

FOTO: IRENE MASALA,  
San Cristobal de Las Casas, Chiapas, April 2014







# IRELAND

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ANGEL MALDONADO, SANNA KONGA AND  
MISHKA BUNDHOO

# IRELAND OVERVIEW

## republic of ireland

Ireland, also known as the Republic of Ireland, is a sovereign state in Western Europe occupying about five-sixths of the island of Ireland. The capital and largest city is Dublin, it is located in the eastern part of the island and its metropolitan area is home to around a quarter of the country's 4.6 million inhabitants.

Ireland extends over an area of about five-sixths (70,273 km<sup>2</sup> or 27,133 sq mi) of the island of Ireland (84,421 km<sup>2</sup> or 32,595 sq mi), with Northern Ireland constituting the remainder. The island is bounded to the north and west by the Atlantic Ocean and to the northeast by the North Channel. To the east the Irish Sea connects to the Atlantic Ocean via St George's Channel and the Celtic Sea to the southwest.

The western landscape mostly consists of rugged cliffs, hills and mountains. The central lowlands are extensively covered with glacial deposits of clay and sand, as well as significant areas of bogland and several lakes. The west coast is more rugged than the east, with numerous islands, peninsulas, headlands and bays. The state shares its only land border with Northern Ireland, a part of the United Kingdom.

It is a unitary, parliamentary republic with an elected president serving as head of state. The head of government, the Taoiseach, is nominated by the lower house of parliament, Dáil Éireann.

Following the Irish War of Independence and the subsequent Anglo-Irish Treaty, Ireland gained effective independence from the United Kingdom as the Irish Free State in 1922. Northern Ireland exercised an option called the Ulster Month to remain in the United Kingdom. Initially a dominion within the British Commonwealth, the Free State received official British recognition of full legislative independence in the Statute of Westminster of 1931. A new constitution was adopted in 1937 and Ireland was declared a republic under the Republic of Ireland Act 1948. The state had no formal relations with Northern Ireland for most of the twentieth century, but since 1999 the two have co-operated on a number of policy areas under the North-South Ministerial Council created by the Good Friday Agreement.

In 2011 and 2013, Ireland was ranked as the seventh-most developed country in the world by the United Nations Human Development Index. It also performs well in several metrics of national performance, including freedom of the press, economic freedom and civil liberties. Ireland is a member of the European Union and is a founding member of the Council of Europe and the OECD. It pursues a policy of neutrality through non-alignment and is consequently not a member of NATO, although it does participate in Partnership for Peace.

Genetic research suggests that the earliest settlers migrated from Iberia following the most recent ice age. After the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age, migrants introduced a Celtic language and culture. Migrants from the two latter eras still represent the genetic heritage of most Irish people. Gaelic tradition expanded and became the dominant form over time. Irish people are a combination of Gaelic, Norse, Anglo-Norman, English, Scottish, French, and Welsh ancestry.

Irish is the “national language” according to the Constitution, but English is the dominant language. In the 2006 census, 39% of the population regarded themselves as competent in Irish. Irish is spoken as a community language only in a small number of rural areas mostly in the west of the country, collectively known as the Gaeltacht. Except in Gaeltacht regions, road signs are usually bilingual. Most public notices and print media are in English only. Most Government publications are available in both languages, and citizens have the right to deal with the state in Irish. In the Irish Defence Forces, all foot and arms drill commands are given in the Irish language. Other languages spoken in Ireland include Shelta and Cant, spoken by Irish Travellers.

## irish travellers

Travellers are an indigenous minority who, historical sources confirm, have been part of Irish society for centuries. Travellers long shared history, cultural values, language, customs and traditions make them a self-defined group, and one which is recognisable and distinct. Their culture and way of life, of which nomadism is an important factor, distinguishes them from the sedentary (settled) population.

There are an estimated 25,000 Travellers in Ireland, making up more than 4,485 Tra-

veller families. This constitutes approximately 0.5% of the total national population. It is estimated that an additional 15,000 Irish Travellers live in Britain, with a further 10,000 Travellers of Irish descent living in the United States of America.

Travellers, as individuals and as a group, experience a high level of prejudice and exclusion in Irish society. Many have to endure living in intolerable conditions, with approximately one third having to live without access to the basic facilities of sanitation, water and electricity. This leads to ongoing health problems among the Traveller community. A report of the Health Research Board (1987) revealed that Traveller men live, on average, 10 years less than settled men, while Traveller women live on average 12 years less than their settled peers. Discrimination and its effects are a daily feature of Travellers' lives.

In 1995, the Government published the Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community. This report presents a comprehensive examination of the situation of the Traveller community and contains significant and convincing proposals for necessary change. To date, some of the recommendations of this important report have been implemented, but much remains to be done. It is vital that, in the coming years, the various Government agencies responsible, together with the community as a whole, work to ensure the full implementation of all the Task Force Reports recommendations. Travellers might then have the experience of being treated and regarded as full, equal citizens of Ireland.



# I. TRAVELLERS

The situation of Irish Travellers within Irish Society is a paradox in itself. There is discrimination within Irish society, against the Irish, by the Irish. From an outsider's point of view, all of this came as a very cruel irony. While talking to several NGOs working with the Irish Traveller community, the main recurring issue was that of perception; be it social or personal perceptions.

On the 16th July, we met with the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM <http://www.itmtrav.ie/>), which is a national network of organisations and individuals working within the Traveller community. ITM was established in 1990 and now has over eighty Traveller organisations from all parts of Ireland in its membership. The Irish Traveller Movement consists of a partnership between Travellers and "settled people" committed to seeking full equality for Travellers in Irish society. This partnership is reflected in all of the structures of ITM.

By far the most interesting meeting we had was with Mr. Damian Walsh. He has been working in this field for quite some time and was able to provide us with very interesting facts; furthermore, he had some very strong opinions about the topic of Travellers, and how being recognized as a separate Ethnic group would help combat the discrimination they face and the social injustice they have to suffer from on a daily basis. We also had a very interesting talk about how the government's policies are geared to-

wards trying to make the Irish Travellers more "settled" as all of those policies are aimed at worsening their living conditions so as to push them out of their halting sites to modern "normal" houses.

As a result of this meeting, we did realize that "internalised oppression" is the root of all evils for Irish Travellers. The fact that traveller kids are taught from a very young age that they are not going to do well academically impacts them greatly; as a result, they drop out from school, and are less likely to find a proper job- it is a vicious circle which sucks them down to the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. Certainly, many get out of it, but they are very few in absolute numbers.

This is where having the Travellers' ethnicity recognized becomes of paramount importance. According to Pavee Point's website,

"recognition of Travellers' ethnicity would address an embarrassing inconsistency in the approach of the Irish government to Traveller identity, and have mainly positive impacts. Travellers can show clearly a distinctive culture, tradition and customs, and are seen by themselves and by others as different - thereby meeting the generally agreed definition of ethnicity"

*(Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre, 2013)*

Recognition of Traveller ethnicity would ensure that the consideration of Traveller needs in policy, particularly as anti-racism and intercultural initiatives would be seen as a right, rather than something to be demanded.

- It would allow their culture to be recognised as valid and improve the self-esteem and self-respect of the community, ending their historical exclusion.
- It would allow Irish Travellers to gain respect and recognition for the validity of their way of life, affirming Travellers as a group with a valid claim to be different and to expect to access services in ways consistent with their culture
- It would allow access to services to be effectively monitored, to ensure Traveller participation in services is provided on an equal footing with other groups and the majority population, and ensure improved outcomes for the community.

Our final meeting was with an NGO called the Navan Travellers' Workshop (<http://www.travellerheritage.ie/>). This Traveller led organisation works for Travellers, through Travellers, with Travellers! We had a very fruitful session where we talked about the effects of a changing lifestyle, the importance of clinging to your roots and the importance of family within the Traveller community. We also talked about education and the various problems which Travellers face in the society at large, and the challenges that the community face in today's time and age.

One of the recurring themes was how tightly knit the family bonds are within the Traveller community, and how religious they are. Considering these factors, being openly gay can be quite a problem. People within the community are not very accepting of this lifestyle or "choice" as some may dub it. There have been cases where openly





gay Travellers have been beaten up by members of their community, and then kicked out. For these individuals, life becomes a living hell for they cannot go back to their family, and “mainstream society” will not accept them, nor provide for them. However, some NGOs are launching programmes aimed towards making young gay Travellers feel at ease with their sexuality while providing a safe platform for them to express themselves, without any fear of being beaten up, or ostracized from their homes, families and community.

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## II. IRISH TRAVELLERS AND PAVEE POINT

Irish Travellers are an indigenous minority group who have been part of Irish society for centuries. They have a value system, language, customs and traditions which make them an identifiable group both to themselves and to others.

There was the time when Travellers were traders and tinsmiths. They made enough to feed their families. They had caravans, they travelled from place to place, knocked on doors and repaired things such as buckets and other tin goods.

The economy of the Traveller community collapsed. This downfall occurred when major changes came about within Irish society and particularly since the 1950s within the Traveller society. Changes in the agricultural climate, urbanization and the introduction of enamels and plastic replaced Travellers tin crafts. The shifts not only resulted in zero economic ways out but also over took Travellers' reasons for travelling as their crafts no longer were a form of earning money or a day to day necessity for living. People stopped buying their products. Thus, it seemed the changes did them no good but instead suddenly and very unfortunately snatched their importance from within Irish society.

The Traveller community has suffered the loss of their identity ever since. Though Travellers have always been a part of Irish society, they often experience exclusion from main stream society. The fact that they generally have no houses, they keep horses and dogs, are deprived of running water and toilets leading them to poor sanitation may have given rise to the view of Travellers as "problems" which could be solved if they would just be "normal" and try to fit in, in this context normal means settled like the majority of Irish society.

The offensive opinions such as Travellers being regarded as cheats, criminals and people who chose to live in dirty conditions without respect for anyone else, and that they are brutal and unwilling to work further intensifies the chances of racism and discrimination. Consequently, they are excluded from the mainstream labour market and society as a whole.

It's a disgrace to be a traveller in Ireland. One has to hide his or her identity just to have access to pubs or to shopping centres. And to have access to decent education,

health service, food and housing are far cries from their reality.

At the present there are approximately 35,000 Travellers seeking employment in Germany, France or Norway. Many who have no options, feel as if they have lost their pride, particularly men, as they are traditionally seen as the providers and bread winners of the family. Due to this horrible sense of loss, traveller men in particular suffer from mental illness, this can result in them being alcoholics and drug addicts and they intentionally or unintentionally happen to pour their frustration on their families. So, no wonder, suicide is a dominant cause of death among young Travellers. Traveller men have four times the mortality rate of the general population. Other main causes of death among Irish Travellers are heart diseases, cancer and lung diseases which according to the recent findings are 25%, 19% and 13% respectively.

Irish Travellers have numerous problems that need to be addressed and acted upon immediately. There are many organizations working to promote their living conditions. One of the active organizations that focuses on the betterment of Irish Travellers is PAVEE POINT.

Pavee Point is a voluntary and non-government organization which is committed to human rights for Irish Travellers. Members of the majority population work together in partnership with Travellers to address the needs of Travellers as a minority group which experience exclusion and marginalisation.

Pavee Point was formerly known as Dublin Travellers Education and Development Group (DTEDG). After ten years of activity the new name was adopted to reflect the fact that, while the organization is still based in Dublin, it has developed a national resourcing role and also an international focus.



**PAVEE POINT**  
**TRAVELLER AND ROMA CENTRE**



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**TRAVELLER AND ROMA CENTRE**



**PAVEE POINT**  
**TRAVELLER AND ROMA CENTRE**

the work of Pavee Point is based on two key premises:

1 Real improvement in travellers' living circumstances and social situation requires the active involvement of Travellers themselves.

2 Non-travellers have a responsibility to address the various processes which serves to exclude Travellers from participating equals in society.

Pavee Point plays the following roles towards equality and justice for travellers:

- Identifies, researches, analyses, and develops responses to the needs and aspirations of travellers as a marginalized minority group.
- Supports the effective participation, involvement, visibility, mobilization and self-determination of Travellers through encouragement, education, training, and inclusion in a broad range of socioeconomic activities.
- Promotes solidarity among Travellers, and also between Travellers, Traveller or Roma support groups, other community based groups, voluntary organizations and rest of the population.
- Develops and consolidates innovative initiatives and pilot projects which contribute to enhancement of Travellers' living circumstances and social inclusion.
- Provides a focal point for action and reflection

which fights exclusion, racism and xenophobia affecting Travellers, Roma, Gypsies and other minorities.

- Designs and delivers in-service training and capacity building for community-based groups, voluntary organizations, Traveller groups, and other bodies or agencies involved with Travellers.
- Fosters exchange of experience and facilitates learning from examples of good practices and innovative methodologies at national and international levels.
- Makes policy submissions and recommendations in relation to specific areas of concern to Travellers and monitors policy developments.
- Maintains an advocacy role in supporting Travellers and Roma to lobby and campaign to bring about socio-economic change.

Thus, the aim of Pavee Point is to contribute to improvement in the quality of life and living circumstances of Irish Travellers, through working for social justice, solidarity, socio-economic development and human rights.

### III. TRAVELLERS

#### definition

Many people confuse Irish Travellers with Gypsies but there are not many connections between them. Irish Travellers come from a nomadic background and gypsies originally came from India and then they crossed in to Europe. Irish Travellers are an indigenous group originally from Ireland. They have their own language called "cant".

Irish Travellers are an indigenous minority who have been part of Irish society for centuries. There are an estimated 25,000 Travellers in Ireland, making up more than 4,485 Traveller families. This constitutes approximately 0.5% of the total national population. It is estimated that an additional 15,000 Irish Travellers live in Britain, with a further 10,000 Travellers of Irish descent living in the United States of America.

#### living environment

Traveller people live in communities. These areas of land are given by the government. It is not known exactly how many Traveller Communities there are at the moment.

Irish Travellers live in caravans and houses. Some live in houses because the council gives it them but there are others who do not like to live in houses because they think they are too big and prefer to live in caravans, as is their tradition. Also, families find it more comfortable to live in caravans with others from their community. They can chose whether live in a house or in a caravan. The living conditions in a caravan are totally different to those in a house because in caravans there are no walls between family members so they coexist easily, something that they do not have when living in houses. In the Traveller Community a child can play with the other children and make life-long friends.

#### discrimination

Physically Traveller people look like the rest of the Irish population but they have a particular accent and some names are very common in the Traveller society. They suffer discrimination in public spaces like pubs, supermarkets or department stores.

## education

Over recent times Irish Travellers receive an education. A minority of Travellers finish school and then onto college. The majority leave school at about the age of 15 because of many cultural and traditional factors like marriage. The majority of young people nowadays do not speak the traditional Traveller language. They do not maintain their identity as a Traveller because it is easier to get on well with the rest of the Irish population and live peacefully outside of their traditional way of life. Unfortunately all media programmes that cover stories about Traveller people do so in a negative way. The positive things about their culture are never shown. Many youngsters get married and still go to college. There are cases of suicide within the young Traveller community because they feel isolated from the rest of society. Suicide rates are particularly high among men because when they find difficult to provide for the family they often start to abuse alcohol and drugs.

## culture

Travellers have a very old and traditional culture, they have their own customs like weddings, own language ("cant"), own accent, own economy, own workshops, own lifestyle and own beliefs.

The majority of Travellers (99%) are catholic.

Wedding traditions have changed, years ago the bride was carried to the church in a simple carriage and her dress was also simple and straight. After the ceremony the couple used to go to a pub to celebrate their wedding. Now she is brought to the church in a limousine, the dress is heavy and extravagant and after the ceremony the couple goes to a hotel and has an elaborate meal to celebrate their wedding.

When someone dies all of the community is affected. The funeral is a big occasion and after the people die all their belongings are burned (also the caravan) and the rest of the community pray each year for the person who has died. Cant is the language among the Traveller community but the new generations are missing this part of the culture. Traveller community also have their own recipes to cook soda and current bread, coddle and potato bread etc.

# NAVAN TRAVELLERS WORKSHOP

NTW Ltd is an organisation which has worked with Travellers and the settled community since 1965 in attempt to improve the situation of Travellers in Co. Meath. They run a variety of programmes and services. The aims of NTW Ltd are:

“To prevent the erosion of the economic base of Travellers.  
To enable participation of Travellers in the education system.  
To develop programmes which will encourage ownership and empowerment.  
To promote respect for Traveller identity and culture.  
To provide sufficient validation to create an atmosphere of self-determination and reduce dependency.”

✓ **Some of the programmes and services that Navan Traveller run are:**

✓ **Pre-School**

“Little Angels Pre-School caters for both Traveller and settled children in the 3-5 year age group it is a well – run and well – equipped facility and is a Traveller led pre-school which strives for an ethos of equality.”

✓ **Summer project**

“It is running since 1983. The week of fun and sports activities for children aged from 3 to 16 years old is the highlight of the year for many children in the town.”

✓ **Community**

“Each year there is a Traveller Christmas Mass, Christmas Card and Calendar Competition and regular trips for both adults and children events.”

✓ **Health**

“Twelve Traveller women provide health information and support to the local Traveller community.”

## point of view

There is no a map detailing the communities of Travellers who live in Ireland. When you go to visit a Traveller community you feel like you are in another environment because you can see the caravans while you are walking and the children playing on the small green areas they have. People live next to each other and you can see the other Travellers who live in houses in the same area. They can choose between living in a house or living in a caravan. Some Travellers choose to live in a house while others choose a caravan because they don't like to live in a house. They think that the house is too big for them and living there is a different experience for the family. They prefer to live in caravans together alongside others from their community as they have traditionally done for many years.









# ITALY

SHAHEEN DOUSSORUTH, VALERIA MERAZ  
AND SAJIN PASAKHALA



This report gives an insight of a project regarding the European Citizenship at the Mirror. The research was conducted in Italy based on the lifestyle of Roma people. Many prevalent prejudices are suffered by with this community. They are usually depicted as illiterate and criminal, and they still face discrimination. It is complicated for them to obtain a legal residence and to have their rights fulfilled. The report contains several elements of the current situation such as: housing, culture, employment, ethnicity, education and social life of the Roma people. Further-more, it includes the point of view of a Roma person and some proposed measures from his point of view to improve the situation.

## Introduction

Italy is a country located in Southern Europe that covers an area of 301,338 km, with 61 million inhabitants it is the 5th most populous country in Europe and has the 4th largest economy in the European Union, 3rd in the Euro zone and 9th in the world by (IMF, 2012). The country is divided in 20 different regions, each one into provinces. Regions are autonomous entities with powers defined in the Constitution.

Immigration to Italy is a phenomenon that became relevant after the postwar economic miracle starting from the late 1970s, which ended decades of poverty and emigration, induced by big social changes such as lower birth rates and an aging population. Italy became very attractive to foreign immigrants; even in the present-day Italy has 4.6 million foreign residents, making up some 7.5% of the total population.

The official information excludes illegal immigrants, because those numbers are very difficult to determine; they are estimated to be at least 670,000. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and more recently the 2004 and 2007 enlargements of the European Union the main waves of migration have originated from former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (especially Romania, Albania, Ukraine and Poland). The second most important area of immigration to Italy is North Africa (Morocco, Egypt and Tunisia), with soaring



arrivals as a consequence of the Arab Spring.

Currently about one million Romanian citizens (around one tenth of them being Roma) are officially registered as living in Italy, representing the most important individual country of origin, followed by Albanians and Moroccans with about 500,000 people each. The number of unregistered Romanians is difficult to estimate, but the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network suggested in 2007 that there might have been half a million or more.

Millions of Roma people live around the world, but the majority of them are settled in Europe, where they represent the largest minority. The Roma population migrated between the 9th and the 14th centuries from India and today they are present in every country in Europe and beyond. There are many stereotypes and prejudices that depict them like thieves, kidnappers, untrustworthy, lazy, antisocial, and uneducated people. During the Nazi period half a million of Roma were persecuted (killed/murdered? Or just persecuted?) and even today they are discriminated and have big problems to obtain a legal residence and having their rights recognized and fulfilled.

The generic term "Roma" is used according to the EU documents "as an umbrella which includes groups of people who have more or less similar cultural characteristics,

PHOTO: 21 Luglio

such as Sinti, Travellers, Kalè, Gens du voyage. The Council of Europe Roma and Travellers Division (CoE) estimates that 140,000 "Roma" live in Italy as an average amount corresponding to 0.23% of the total population, ranging between 110,000 (as a minimum) and 170,000 (as a maximum), given that it is very difficult to obtain exact facts. "Roma" as a total might represent a share of 0.22 to 0.25% of the total Italian population.

A report (ERRC, 2010) states that about half of all Roma and Sinti are Italian citizens, 20 to 25% are from other EU Member States (mainly Romania) and the rest are either from non-EU States or they are stateless (mostly from the former Yugoslavia countries). These percentages translate to nearly 75,000 Italian "Roma", 30,000 - 37,500 Roma with EU citizenship and 37,500 - 45,000 from third-country nationals or stateless.

There is not clear evidence of the geographic distribution of "Roma" population in Italy and only partial estimates exist for some region: Piedmont with 6,500 people, Lombardy with 13,000 people, Campania and Calabria each of them with 9,000 people and the municipality of Rome in the Lazio Region with 15,000 to 18,000 people (Sigona, 2008).

Even if the 0.22% of the total population is not a huge number this research considers necessary to have an general context of a community that for many years have been victim of stereotypes finishing in xenophobia, racism, and discrimination.

In this report our intention is just to give the general overview of the life style and the difficult legal situation they have been enduring for years, so that people in Italy and around the world can have information of a minority group in number that needs to overcome prejudices and inequalities to have better and fairer opportunities.



# Culture Of The Roma People



## itinerant lifestyle

Their arrival in Europe in the 1300s made the Europeans insecure about the fact that they would establish permanent settlements since they were of dark complexion and had an unfamiliar language. With time their nomadic experience developed into a way of life. They worked as seasonal farmers, traders, repairers of household good and as fortune-tellers and spreaders of news and gossip. In the present situation since European governments want them to stay in one place, most of those with Romani roots have settled permanently in houses or apartments. However, there are still some of them who are still employing the traditional migratory lifestyle.

## hierarchy

The scattered Romani people with no permanent house do not have any central government with a king or prime minister. However, over the years, they have set up a loose governmental structure to provide leadership. Conventionally, from 10 to several hundred extended families amalgamate into groups, or kumpanias, which travel together in caravans. Each band is controlled by a ruler called a voivode, whom the families designate for lifetime.

Furthermore regarding the welfare of the women and children, a senior women is selected for this responsibility and she is called a phuri dai who also advises the chieftain. Besides, within the groups, there are smaller alliances called vitsas, which are made up of families who are linked by heritage. Some large vitsas have their own chieftains and councils.

## family, courtship and gender roles

A Romani family usually comprises several generations including a father, mother, unmarried offspring and a married son with his family. Once an elder son is ready to settle his own house, the younger one often will have to marry and form his family to take the place of the departed one. Roma traditionally marry young, sometimes in their early to mid-teens, with matches made by elders in the family, sometimes to forge ties with another family. Habitually, the bride's family needs to pay dowry to the new husband's family. Romani families have many kids as they follow the Romani aphorism "many children much luck". According to Ian Hancock, an English scholar of Romani descent, Romani children often have been viewed as an economic resource, and often are put to work at young ages to help support the family.

## cleanliness and purity

Romani people have a different perspective about cleanliness and purity. They take into consideration the purity of the soul along with physical hygiene. There are strict rules about the clothes worn, for instance the clothing worn above the waist has to be washed separately from garment that are worn below the waist, and the hands have to be washed immediately after touching the shoes. Moreover, food that falls upon the floor cannot be eaten, and when bathing, the body must be washed with the water flowing from the head down. Besides, certain parts and functions of the female body are considered unclean. Additionally, a Romani person can become mahrim, or polluted, through misconduct or by becoming too close to the Gadze, or the non-Romani people.



## spiritual beliefs

Despite the fact that the Romani don't follow the religions of the Eastern and Western world; they do have deep-seated spiritual beliefs. According to Romani scholar Ian Hancock, Romani spiritualism has been heavily influenced by the mysticism of the ancient Vedic culture from which the Romani people emerged nearly a millennium ago. Their faith is based on benevolent deity called o Devel or o Del, and a devil, 0 Beng, who constantly struggle for supremacy over people's lives. Moreover, they adopt the same belief to the Indian Karma, that is, the good and bad actions determine one's future. They also emphasize the respect for elders since it is viewed crucial to maintain the required balance. Also, if they transgress any rule, they endure punishment which range from hitting one's toe to fatal illness or accident. This triggers the traditional Romani conviction that no event ever is determined by chance.



PHOTO: 21 Luglio



# Ethnicity



The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union prohibits any discrimination based on race, color, ethnic or social origin. The charter also guarantees respect for cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, in many cases and places this is not happening, being the Roma people one example of discrimination based in ethnicity.

In Italy there are three linguistic communities; Sinti, Roma and Camminanti. The first migratory wave of Roma was in the 14th century, followed by Sinti in the 15th century. Roma came mainly from the Balkans and settled in the South of Italy. The second migratory wave was between the 19th and 20th centuries, especially after the two world wars, they settled practically in all Italian regions, mostly in the North. The third wave consisted of migrants that arrived during the 1960s and 1970s they came mainly from the former Yugoslavia, as well as Poland, Romania and Algeria. The fourth migratory wave involved all the Italian regions and started with the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union in 1989, fact that makes even more difficult to people to have papers if they are from countries that do not exist anymore.

Roma people have a common romaine language but it is not recognized as a national historic linguistic community. They have their own flag, where the blue and green represents heaven and earth, and the wheel with 16 spokes represents the travelling spirit of the Roma.



## Housing situation

PHOTO: 21 Luglio

The right to housing should not be interpreted in a narrow or restrictive sense which equates it with, for example, the shelter provided by merely having a roof over one's head ...Rather it should be seen as the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity.

*United Nations Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, 1991*

The right to housing is a basic human right to which all people around the world should have access. Unfortunately this is far from being true, in 2005 according to the UN an estimated 100 million people worldwide were homeless, representing a huge worldwide problem. Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted 10 December 1948 by the UN General Assembly; contain this text regarding housing and quality of living:

Everyone has the right to access a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services.

In recent years, the housing system in Italy has been having huge problems, mainly due to the need to provide social housing for new population groups, apart from the

current economic situation, especially in vulnerable groups such as single parent families, young couples, low-waged working families, students, immigrants, etc.

Governments should ensure that everyone has at least minimum standards for housing in relation to habitability and location, also should prioritize the most vulnerable part of society, but generally is not the case. In Italy where between 12,000 and 15,000 Roma live (Amnesty International 2010) is an example of this, most of them don't live in proper houses, but in irregular and regular camps.

Irregular camps are very basic settlements that usually don't have access to services such as water and sanitation. They are also the most vulnerable to forced eviction, representing a serious problem in many aspects besides the fact that the permanent fear of being evicted has a negative impact in the daily life, especially in the children because without a permanent home it is very difficult to attend to the same school regularly and to get involved with social life outside the camps. In this kind of camp people can be evicted at any time, violating international human rights standards. Amnesty International has documented forced evictions in Greece, Italy, Romania and Serbia (Amnesty International 2010) without appropriate safeguards, adequate notice or prior consultation with those evicted), and without provision of legal remedies, adequate alternative housing



PHOTO: Amnesty International

or compensation. Usually the alternatives are tricky, making it impossible to accept. For example, authorities suggest separating women and men from one family, a situation that people will never accept, and the other possible solutions take too long so they get tired of waiting and settled in a different informal camp, perpetuating a never ending story that doesn't offer any kind of long term solution because the majority are forced to find shelter in unauthorized areas from which they may be evicted.

In Rome more than 4000 people live in authorized camps, which are improvised containers in segregated neighborhoods far from schools and job opportunities, according to municipal data 172 people live in Nomentano Camp, 521 in River Camp, 820 in Candoni, 150 in Casal Lambroso, 989 in Castel Romano, 243 in Giordani, 550 in Nuova Barbuta, 900 in Salone. Half of them are believed to be Italian according to Amnesty International, while the others are migrants from EU and non EU countries, many of them don't have documents which make even harder the access to legal housing. The situation was complicated especially after 2008 when a Presidential Decree declared a 'Nomad Emergency' and gave special powers to local authorities in several regions with the aim of closing and re-locating Roma camps, resulting in the eviction of a large number of settlements. Local organizations have estimated that between 2009 and 2013 32 million euro was spent on this plan, plus 30 million for the ordinary maintenance of the camps. This is a significant amount considering that the money spent offered no real solution to the housing situation.

Lately there has been an increase in the attention to the rights of Roma, particularly at the international and intergovernmental level specially to improving the rights of Roma in four key areas: education, employment, health and housing, because this four depend on each other and are mutually dependent. Life in the camps is hard for all the people especially for women, kids and old people. Creating this exclusive places perpetuate the bad treatment and discrimination that Roma people have been suffering for a very long time. One of the arguments used to justify the ill-treatment of the Roma is that they have chosen to live apart and that outside the camp they would not be productive and welcome members of society, but this only succeeds in discriminating against and isolating the community. Without proper housing access to education and employment are almost impossible, and this only will maintain the same unfair and non-inclusive treatment to them.

## Employment of Roma people

Different groups of Roma were demarcated by their job duties during their 400-year enslavement in modern-day Romania, some of which have persisted among slave descendants for generations. The Romani people were often excluded from professions, and were forced to find other ways to support themselves as they endlessly travelled.



For example, they often trained and traded animals, and before the development of modern veterinary medicine gave farmers advice on how to breed livestock and care for sick animals. They also specialize in scrap metal [National Geographic cited by Conger.C, 2014].

Roma people were also recognized as entertainers, which was an advantage, because they were able to improve their status. Indeed they were best known for their musical talent and they



could attract spectators by depicting them as exotic people from Egypt or elsewhere. Unfortunately they rapidly attracted the anger of the Roman Catholic Church, but also the allure of the forbidden [National Geographic cited by Conger.C, 2014] since they dressed themselves in perky(unusual?) clothing and practiced clairvoyance.

Sources recurrently underline the plight that they encounter in obtaining a job, they face significant discrimination and employment is typically a side note in their existence as most of the time employers don't want to hire them.

In the present situation in order to earn living, they might weave furniture, make bricks, and sell clothing, goods and trade horses.

Even in Eastern European countries where the communist regime allocated factory jobs for gypsies, their employment evaporated first after the iron curtain fell in 1989 [Godwin, 2013]. And



many people subsist on begging and neighbors repeatedly complain of stealing. While those accusations may be overblown, even Roma will warn outsiders not to trust other Roma.

According to the EU and UNDP report, 52 % Roma people who are between the ages of 20 and 64 are unemployed as compared to approximately 15 % of the non-Roma people living in the same area and sharing the same social and economic infrastructure. It is also noted that around 35 % of Roma people in the same age range had salaried employment, excluding self-employment, as com-

pared to approximately 55 % of the non-Roma people.

The US Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011, citing an unnamed 2010 NGO survey, states that 12.8 % of Roma had permanent jobs and 13 % had occasional or seasonal work. In addition, sources report that working Roma earn less than non-Roma.

According to World Bank Research, the integration of the Roma people in the labor market could bring monetary benefits assessed to be around €500 m yearly for some countries, such as Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia or the Czech Republic. This would result in an increase regarding productivity, would decrease government expenses for social assistance and would increase tax revenue.

Following the numbers of Pairs, in 2013 up to € 26.5 billion of EU funding is presently accessible for member states for social inclusion projects for the Roma. Nonetheless countries like Romania which has the highest number of Roma in Europe, is where more than 1.5m are having difficulties accessing this capital. In many circumstances, the EU is sponsoring only up to 80% of a scheme and the government needs to pay the rest.





## Education Situation Of The Roma People

“Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world”

*Nelson Mandela*

Education is a basic need that is required to prepare a child for its future. But 98.8% of the Roma children are still deprived of education. The last census showed that there are around 80,000 Roma children in Italy.

It is not just that the Roma children don't go to school, it is a more complicated circle, they are often discriminated against. As they are living in the camps they face poverty and are socially marginalized, sometimes their willingness and motivation decrease drastically. And even though they go to school often they are very far from the camps where they live. With these hard conditions to face most children get disappointed and leave school.

Education is a very important part of the social being, it should also be about respecting the students and with the children getting discriminated and ill-treated in the schools since a very young age. A man from a Roma camp in Rome said

“We want to integrate in the society; we do not want to live in the camps, far from the people. Yes, they tell us they will help us in integration, but how? Building bigger camps and placing us here in these isolated camps, where there is no public transport and other people. With whom our children should integrate, with trees?”

With the lack of education and the obstacles of more participation in society they don't have many options left. The impossibility of accessing a proper education leads to more problems, like not having a real chance to get a proper employment and the opportunity of sharing more cultural threads with the hosting country.

School is the second home for the children and creates the possibility of sharing and exchanging cultural backgrounds with the local society, and without that, they don't get the chance to improve the language, which makes more difficult to get the Italian citizenship, and limit the options for a future.

The best way to change the situation is to improve the education opportunities for Roma people, not only in paper but in practice and it should be a two way process with Roma people on one side and non-Roma people in other side, creating job opportunities that will set a chain reaction to solve the unfair treatment they receive to create a intercultural and diverse society.





## Social Life

Life in the camps is very difficult; many Roma people spend their days in a procrastinating lifestyle due to the lack of opportunities that increases the level of alcoholism in the community. Even in the camps there is discrimination among the families, and the isolated and peripheral location of the camps where Roma people live complicates their access to other people and services.

As most of the Roma people don't have papers to stay they are neglected by society, some of them get regular jobs, but as soon as the manager finds out the address, if it is in a camp, it is very likely that they will make some excuse and will get fired, due to this reason they either survive by selling scrap metal, washing car windshields, begging or performing and earn little money. In the worst scenario they are left unemployed.





MIGUEL

INTERVIEW WITH

FIORELLO

INTERVIEWERS

SHAHEEN

DOUSSORUTH

VALERIA

MERAZ

SAJIN

PASAKHALA



## Can you give a general overview on the lifestyle in the camp?

We should make a distinction between the different camps, there are small family-run and this determines the dynamics different every time, these types of fields are very livable and well-managed by the families who live there. While the dynamics of large institutional fields are a little different, I have seen those in Rome and are terrible, thousands and thousands of people crammed between them just because they are the usual ethnic group but of different origins: Italians, Kosovars, Bosnians, Macedonians in Romania etc.. a very dangerous mix. These fields are far away from the cities, from every service, from any possibility of exchange with the non-Roma communities and this creates distance and certainly does not allow a real inclusion. In fact, my perception is that every time you visit a concentration camp today.

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## How does it differ from people inside the camp and outside the camp?

Compared to the difference between those living in the camps and those outside it is easy to see that if you live in the urban center, there is a diversity of diversions and stimuli, but most of opportunities both at work - because if you live in a house you are not immediately perceived as Roma and then maybe a few more chance there is you - and undoubtedly relational. This same principle applies to human exchanges of adults and children. I grew up in a neighborhood attending schools right

from kindergarten and I can assure you that this has resulted in a sharp exchange and real inclusion.

## Why according to you is housing still a problem for the people? do you have any suggestions to improve it?

Accommodation is a crucial point for many of the negative trends considering that the institutions created something similar to concentration camps, which segregate people from society. It is not a lifestyle choice but an imposition because if you're roma you have to live in a field with thousands of other pe-

ople who do not know, that you have not chosen but with whom you have to share small spaces and moments. Typically in the camps are crowded and therefore there is no intimacy and are often subjected to sharing what you do not want to share. Sometimes the camps are located in unhealthy areas such as near incinerators or near the landing area of an airport which cause an exponential increase of diseases including cancers among others.

### **Do you have any suggestions to improve it?**

I think we should completely change the line, which also offer housing solutions for Roma as all the others or at least try them with dynamics different from those established by the institutions with training and vocational skills to enable families who already live in the camps to get out of the camps and then choose where and how to live within the laws.

### **What do you think about the education in the Roma community? How is the education system in the Roma community different from the education of the Italian children?**

I think that for children living in cam-

ps institutional schooling is more difficult because sometimes they are driven to school an hour later and taken an hour before, so they do not access the real program like everyone else. This is serious and demeaning because a child who misses lessons will never be on an equal footing in a question or a task in class as everyone else. So it's not like you want to suggest, that the Roma do not want to study, but the real problem is the inadequate education provided by the institution. Another dynamic that rests on these children is the fact that their parents cannot assist their children with homework because maybe the children are in special schools, or from other nations and therefore have language problems. These I think are the most serious dynamics.

### **What are your suggestions to improve the education possibilities?**

To improve the situation there is definitely a need for proper home school support for children, which means an adequate number of assistants, with enough hours a week to provide all children with difficulties to reach the level of the others. Undoubtedly that serves children attending schools in a comprehensive and continuous and

must invest in scholarships and support parents with paths Italian or training in order to trigger self-sufficiency from this point of view

### **What kind of jobs they have? What are your suggestions to improve the current status?**

At one time there were many types of jobs in traditional Roma where today there are only a few crumbs for the development of new production techniques and certain rules that are making it difficult to put them into practice. We need not also to underestimate the aspect of the perceptions of non-Roma: for example some trades as the circus or practice are impractical today because there are many difficulties to acquire permits. At one time there were also craftsmen, goldsmiths (like my grandfather), copper workers (pots, paintings, ashtrays, umbrellas, decorative fireplaces, etc.). There were schools of knife sharpeners, animal trainers of horses, not to mention the thousands of vendors who provided a very useful service for all those mountain villages where there are now large shopping centers which have now taken the jobs even of many traders who are not Roma.

The practice of musicians, now perceived as a nuisance, once was received with joy and euphoria in every part of Italy; while a musician today on the subway who tries to make a living from music is dignified in my opinion, people despise them and look down with eyes full of hatred. The same perception is of Roma when they meet to collect iron or sell flowers: is not observed even this type of practice, induced by various difficulties faced by many Roma in finding formal jobs. I would also make a note on the practice of alms so despised and demonized so much to turn it into an illegal act in called begging. On this I would say that asking for financial aid cannot be illegal because it is a relationship between two people: I ask and you decide whether to give or not to give. I do not see anything illegal in the 5X1000, 8X1000 or the thousands of stalls of various groups organizations and associations that you may ask for a contribution to support their projects. What is the difference with a mother who asks you if you want to help for his project of making dinner for her children?

One thing I would like to highlight, however, is that where there has been an inclusive policy and Roma were of-

ferred different possibilities, today the Roma and Sinti have conventional jobs such as ecological operator, mason, waiter, painter, electrician, roadside assistance, pizza, tiler, bartender, cook's assistant, operator, educator, filmmaker, photographer, actor, caregiver, mediator, and so on.

One idea to increase your chances is surely to allow everyone to attend school in a complete and adequate manner, and to stimulate the achievement of higher levels. Ghetto areas that do not offer opportunities, but deprive them of the possibility of exchange, interaction and inclusion.

**As a youth do you find it difficult to include in the Italian social lifestyle?**

Honestly, no. I've always had a lot of friends and non-Roma with them I

always played a lot of recreational activities from theater school, football or martial arts classes to be a witness at the wedding of a couple of friends non-Roma. Today I live with a girl non-Roma.

Undoubtedly there was always the kid in school who insulted you and called you gypsy. But many times there were my own companions to defend me. I think for a lot of guys who live in institutional mega camps far from cities and not attending school is really difficult to have the same types of interaction. Which non-Roma mother would send her child to do homework or playing at home the child who lives in a Roma camp? So I guess all the guys that live in the mega camps find difficulty in relations with the outside community.

## conclusion

Stereotypes of prejudices are the biggest enemies of the intercultural society. The Roma community has been suffering many kinds of discrimination obscuring their interaction with Italian society. Their legal status is complicated because some of them are from countries which no longer exist for instance from the ex-Yugoslavia and Italian citizenship is not obtained by birth which complicates even more the situation because some of them have been in Italy for their entire life and are officially not Italians. Indeed without the legal status of Italian citizenship, it is almost impossible to have access to proper living conditions such as employment, housing, education and their social inclusion to the society. It is noticed that all the problems are linked to each other since if one does not have an Italian Citizenship, he will not have residence permit and without this it is very difficult to get a job. Besides, sometimes the government uses



PHOTO: 21 Luglio



Roma people as a highlight of the political agenda, as a scapegoat. Even if the situation is not good, the circumstances are changing a bit thanks to NGOs such as the Associazione 21 Luglio, Mosaico, Per Rifugiati, Amnesty International and Service Civile International among others who are fighting for their rights. It is an emergency to stop the segregation in camps and in schools because education is the only way in which things can change. Moreover, it also involves the education of the entire citizens about the predicament of the Roma people. In this way it is easier to create an inclusive and horizontal society where differences are respected.



# conclusion

This section aims to underline the lessons learned from both the individual projects and those lessons learnt by the group as a whole across the complete EYCM project.

As stated in the introduction, this project aimed to analyse the concept of citizenship in each country and evaluate if it is inclusive or exclusive for those people who do not possess it or cannot exercise their citizen-related rights for various reasons, as well as to create an “intercultural convivence” (intercultural co-living) among youth from a variety of backgrounds to exchange different experiences and perceptions as well as common points around the concept of citizenship.

During the final group meeting in Ireland in August, we had the opportunity to discuss

together some aspects of our research on the concept of citizenship. In a general sense, we felt it was important that the concept of citizenship (locally and globally) continues to be questioned. Doing so helps to highlight issues around exclusion and inclusion both globally and locally, and highlights similarities faced by people across continents, which indicates the widespread use of the concept of citizenship and nationhood as a tool in global geopolitics in order to maintain structures of power.

We felt that it was important that EU countries were included in this study as Europe is a destination for migration, as assessing citizenship in the context of migration underlines issues of social exclusion. Moreover, in achieving “intercultural convivence”, it ena-

bled participants to experience intercultural co-living backgrounds and cultures which would not have otherwise been achieved, as well as enabling European participants to reflect upon the issues raised in the project not only in terms of their national context, but in a regional and institutional context. By connecting participants to other participants who are directly affected by the issues raised in the research, and by connecting participants to other project stakeholders, we developed personal connections to the issue, bringing a human dimension to the research and our future work going forward in our respective lives.

In terms of assessing the connection between citizenship and social exclusion/inclusion, we felt that the concept is one that is sometimes employed by geopolitical interests in order to include or exclude people, with the consequence of undermining the potential for solidarity among human beings when some groups are faced with challenges. We surmised that exclusion can happen at a subnational, national and international level, and while these forms of exclusion can be compounded on the individual, that one form of exclusion does not necessarily imply another – taking the example of the experience of some members of the travelling community in Ireland, who reported that

while they are discriminated against in Ireland, that while abroad, they are not treated differently than any other Irish person by the host community. In Nepal identity and exclusion/inclusion is often determined, at least in part, by caste which goes unrecognised abroad and therefore can not be used to discriminate. Citizenship, even when its aim is to include, does not prevent exclusion, inequality or discrimination by any means.

We asked ourselves what might be useful ways of increasing participation in advocating for inclusive citizenship. We were aware of the need to create sustained activism on the issue, and to draw in people by talking to people in ways they could understand. Communication, and the style of communication is of vast importance. It is important, we felt, for people to learn about the negative consequences of globalisation and to create awareness about the interconnectedness of social and transnational issues. In terms of efforts to bring marginalised persons into the conversation, there is a need to empower people to ensure their voices are heard, a need to increase an awareness of human rights of and within marginalised communities, and to create opportunities for cross-learning between marginalised and non-marginalised youth.



## Suggestions for increasing citizenship participation

During our “idea café” session, we decided to find suggestions as to how to increase citizenship participation in the best way possible.

At first, we figured that we should come up with two different categories, marginalized and mainstream, and devise means to increase those categories’ participation accordingly. However, it seemed very counterproductive to proceed in that way due to the very simple fact that it went against the ideal of citizenship we had in mind i.e. all-inclusive.

Nonetheless, the fact of the matter remained that in our day and age, this distinction is more

than real, so we eventually had to consider it. Throughout our combined research, we had all noticed that some agencies (whatever their nature) tend to focus on making their “voice” heard instead of making the “voices” of the marginalized communities heard. (NB: “Voice” is being used as an umbrella term for problems, issues, ideologies, solutions, struggles, and needs and wants)

Hence, we suggest that tools should be provided to those who are being left on the margins of society to empower themselves, to know more about their rights, what is expected from them and what they are duly entitled to so that they can make their own “voice” heard, on their own terms. The agencies should then take a back seat and merely act as an amplifier of the “voice” that needs to be heard. This would definitely help in making sure that vested interests and hidden agendas



IRENE MASALA  
Uno dei due zapatisti che ci hanno accompagnato durante la visita al Caracol zapatista di Oventic.

are kept out of the way of achieving the goals that those who are being marginalized want to achieve.

Firstly, it would be highly beneficial if agencies would focus on educating the youth as early as possible. The root of all evils, here, can be said to be the preconceived ideas that they will grow up with, which often leads to internalized oppression, as stated by Mr. Damien Walsh, from the Irish Traveler Movement (ITM) during his interview to the EYCM team in Ireland. As a matter of fact, the ITM has initiated the Yellow Flag Programme ([http://www.yellowflag.ie/about\\_yellow\\_flag](http://www.yellowflag.ie/about_yellow_flag)) which is a fantastic way to try to break this vicious circle by educating each and every kid about their background, and how to be proud of it instead of constantly trying to hide and deny it, and at the same time to develop mutual respect for other's culture and religion.

This brings us to the second part of our suggestion i.e. to create sustained activism. One way to do this would be to bring together the youth in a fun and friendly atmosphere. What we noticed was that many of today's youth have little interest in worldly affairs, unless it appears on their Facebook newsfeed, or is a trending tweet. After all, the key to any successful movement is knowing your audience - and this is exactly what this is all about. Which is why we came up with the idea of talking to them the way they understand; the hashtag, like and share language.

The main reason why youngsters are not interested in what is happening outside their bubble is because they do not fully understand the necessity of it. The importance of increasing citizenship participation is quite simple; once one realizes the paramount importance of having one's rights recognized and not taking them for granted, one will automatically raise awareness in one's immediate surroundings.

Making the youth see the "bad side" of globalization, the underlying

politics behind each and every decision taken by economic superpowers and every military action directed against a so called “anti-democratic” country will surely ignite a spark in them. Also, once they understand the inter-connectedness of social issues and trans-national issues, they will be in a better position to assess the situation they are in themselves, and hence, by contrasting and comparing their current lifestyle, they will see how much better off they are. This might trigger the expected result we are striving for—sustained activism, coupled with increased citizenship participation.

Our third suggestion is inspired by the **La Città Dell’Utopia**, Italy, where the whole EYCM team met for the first time. The main initiative is to bring kids/youth together to learn about everything related to citizenship and social issues as well as having exchanges, both on the local and global level, in a fun and friendly environment. Workcamps could be set up, or youth clubs where the kids could meet every so often to discuss issues that occurred during the week. Parents should also become an integrated stakeholder in this venture; they should be able to share the same interests as their children, or at least support them in their endeavour to bring that proverbial change in the world they live in.

In a nutshell, the youth is what we should target so that we can increase citizenship participation in a sustainable way. Those left at the margins of society need to be empowered so that they make their own “voice” heard, thus by-passing agencies which could potentially have vested interests. Also, once they are made aware of their rights, they will know exactly what they are entitled to! But the bottom-line still remains that we are aiming to achieve a society, a utopian society, in which no one would be tagged as being marginalized. To achieve this highly unlikely objective, our best bet is to involve as many young people as possible in this struggle. Why? Simply because they are the ones who have the most to lose if they do not work towards bettering the world around them. It is high time that we exploit the dormant potential that we all have inside of us and strive to improve the world we live in!

# partners involved

## SCI-Italia



Servizio Civile Internazionale is the Italian branch of an international voluntary movement, Service Civil International, which, since 1919, has been organising activities and campaigns for the promotion of peace, international solidarity, mutual and intercultural understanding. It co-operates with other S.C.I. branches and partner organisations in more than 70 countries around the world – promoting national and international voluntary activities – as international workcamps, youth exchanges and long term volunteering projects. All those activities are aimed at fostering a culture of peace and justice, human rights values, mutual understanding, solidarity and cooperation between people.

## VSI Ireland



Voluntary Service International is the Irish branch of Service Civil International a worldwide peace movement started in 1920 in the aftermath of the First World War. Voluntary Service International was founded in 1965 after several projects in the late '50s. Since then VSI has undertaken a wide variety of voluntary and community work throughout Ireland and has sent volunteers to many projects in over 60 countries

# SVI Mauritius



In 1959, or thereabouts, the then colony of Mauritius set up a commission under Professor Titmuss to study the social welfare needs of the island. One member of this commission was Yony Lynes who had earlier been an active member of the London group of International Voluntary Service for Peace, as the British Branch of S.C.I. was then known. Pat Alexander had also been a member of this group. Tony Lynes had spoken with a number of Mauritians about the possibilities of some S.C.I. volunteers coming to Mauritius and, when the cyclones Alix and Carole struck the island in early 1960, the opportunity arose for the Mauritian Government to invite I.V.S.P. to send two volunteers. Those selected were John Beckett and Pat Alexander who had just returned from S.C.I. work in France and Switzerland respectively.

# Nataté Mexico



Founded in 2006, Nataté is a group of people devoted to work in Chiapas in order to address different issues that are being experienced there. We collaborate with environmental, social, cultural projects as well as World heritage, in collaboration with UNESCO. We have no political, religious, or profitable affiliations. We do not receive any public or private funds. The only means of income, and thanks to which we have been able to maintain our work, are the volunteers' participation fees.

# SCI Nepal



Service Civil International (SCI) is a volunteer organization which delicates itself in the promotion of peace and culture. SCI Nepal was introduce in Nepal By Astha Ratna Buddacharya in 1969 he was also the first President of it . The First SCI Nepal was held in Chitwan to re-settle the flood victim of people of Raipur and Bardia. After this many workcamps has been conducted and many national and international volunteers had been active till date SCI Nepal has organize varieties of work camps and other events like Donation Program, Safe Drinking Water Distribution Program ,Peace Mandala , Trekking workcamps and many more .. This has been very effective in spreading the culture and helping in the promotion of Peace.



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P 21 ...*their free and informed consent: United nations 1994, Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, Part IV, Article 27*

P 24 ...*profited from Mauritian economic success: Boswell, in Vine, book p.135*

P 25 ...*a source of identity for most Mauritians: Isis Women, "Membership by descent and by religious affiliation in a community is a source of identity for most Mauritians." "In terms of identity, the Creoles exist in their own hierarchy of colouredness and mixed ethnicity; they do not necessarily think in terms of a Creole community, and politically they are referred to as the "general population."*

P 25 ...*cultural hierarchies: Boswell, La Malaise Creole*

P 25 ...*the bottom of social hierarchies: Mc Moorghen, p. 8.*

P 26 ...*at the bottom of the hierarchies: Vine, Island of Shame, p.138*

P 26 ...*the Mauritian Creole population: Vine, Island of Shame* p.143

P 27 ... *culture des iles: David Vine* p.94 "One the eve of the creation of the British Indian Ocean Territory in 1965, and the beginning of the closing of the islands, a society and culture unique ti the conditions of the Chagos was firmly in place.... Communities were tightly integrated, and there was in Chagos what many refer to as a distinct "culture des iles"

P 27 ...*language: David Vine* p. 91, Language - Chagos Creole: Island of Shame

P 28 ...*Creole Morisyen women in Mauritius: La Malaise, Boswell* - "unlike the Creole Morisyen, the Ilois woman occupied an important position in her communit....

P 28 ...*return to their home: Mc Moorghen*p.31 "Lindsay Collen mentioned that in the Chagossian struggle for rights, women have always been in the vanguard. In fact, she states that Chagossian women have been a source of inspiration for women's movements like Mouvement Liberation Fam."

P 28 ...*Government compensation deals: Laura Jeffrey*, p.81

P 29 ...*providing educational grants and social meetings: The CRG* provides educational grants to 10 Chagossian girls and boys every year to support their attendance throughout secondary school

P 54 ... *UN Human Development Index (HDI):* The HDI is a composite index measuring average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development—a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living. (The Life Expectancy at Birth (years) The mean years of schooling and the Gross National Income per capita) See (<http://hdr.undp.org/en>) for details on how the HDI is calculated.

P 54 ...*pollution in the cities: Developing Nepal's Hydroelectric Resources: Policy Alternatives* , Madeline Bergner

P 55 *...sub-ordination to other countries: Water Issues between Nepal, India & Bangladesh, Institute of Peace Conflict Studies*

P 55 *...samples collected: Rai SK, Ono K, Yanagida JI, Ishiyama-Imura S, Kurokawa M, Rai CK. A large-scale study of bacterial contamination of drinking water and its public health impact in Nepal. Nepal Med Coll J. 2012 Sep;14(3):234-40.*

P 57 *...a new generation of the family: Newari houses are built in line with this practice. Newari homes have the kitchen on the top floor (closest to the Gods) and the bedrooms and living areas underneath. As each new family unit is added, a new family room and bedroom is added, outwards or upwards depending on the space available. A Newari home is never finished- New generations mean new rooms!*

P 59 *...Orientalist Perspective: In this sense are very important Said's studies. Edward Said introduced the concept of Orientalism that has revolutionized the Social Sciences. We refer, in particular, to his Orientalism (1979) and Culture and Imperialism (1994).*

P 60 *..."double presence": The concept of "double presence" was introduced by Italian sociologist Laura Balbo in 1979. Balbo, L. (1979). La doppia presenza. Inchiesta, 32, 3-11.*

P 61 *...exploitation, trafficking, discrimination: We suggest the short, interesting report about undocumented Nepali workers in the Middle East made by The Guardian UK*

P 61 *...Nepali women migrant workers: Amnesty International (2011), False Promises. Exploitation and forced labour of Nepalese migrant workers, London , page 47. Available online.*

P 61 *...exploitation of children and young women to India: We suggest viewing*

Wendy Champagne's movie: Bas! Beyond the red light..

P 66 ...*extramarital affairs*: The International Water Management Institute in 2012 produced a film: Voices from women and men farmers in Nepal. Twelve men and women farmers from 2 villages of Dhanusha District (the Janakpur zone) were trained in film-making. They video-interviewed members of their communities, speaking about migration, climate and societal change. It includes an excellent section where women truly tell the difficulties- psychological and physical - of staying in the village while their husband is working abroad. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcsYunAH\\_wo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcsYunAH_wo)

P 60 ...*working abroad*: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmEP\\_a6CU7w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmEP_a6CU7w)

P 63 ...*infected with HIV*: Shrestha R.(2013) Understanding HIV-Related Risk Behaviours Among Returnee Male Migrant Workers in Nepal, [www.digitalcommons.uconn.edu/gs\\_theses/430](http://www.digitalcommons.uconn.edu/gs_theses/430).

P 64 ...*as underlined by WOREC*: We refer to Shiba Satyal Banskota, (2013), An-beshi. Status and dimension of violence against women, reality revealed. A year book on violence against Women 2013, WOREC. Kathmandu.

P 64 ...*a few established causes leading to this*: Ivi, pag. X.

P 64 ...*permission of a male relative to apply for a passport*: Poverty, Gender & Migration Volume 2 "Women & Migration in Asia"

P 65 *The Domestic Violence (Offence and Punishment) Act of 2008*: Nepal Government, Section 59 Kathmandu, Baishak 14 2066, additional volume 3

P 66 ...*offered to a Buddhist monastery*: A study of gender- based violence conducted in selected rural districts of Nepal, (2012), Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, pag. VI

P 66 ...*specific groups of women are particularly affected*: Pag 68.

P 68 ...*Women for Human Rights*: [www.whr.org.np](http://www.whr.org.np). Lily Thapa, WHR president discusses single women discrimination: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWqgSIYox9o>.

P 68 ...*everlasting marriage*: A Hindu is not regarded as dead until cremated, therefore on the funeral pyre husband and wife may 'die' together

P 68 ...*of her great respect*: Women for human rights, (2010) A journey towards Empowerment & The status of single women in Nepal, Kathamndu., pag.41.

P 68 ...*social aberration to be deviously wished away*: Woman for Human Rights, (2005) Problems and challenges of single women (widows) in Nepal. A study., Kathmandu.

P 69 ...*physically dependent and economically vulnerable*: Ivi, pag. 2

P 69 ...*husband eater*: Women for human rights, (2010) A journey towards Empowerment & The status of single women in Nepal, Kathamndu.

P 70 ...*socially dead*: Ivi, pag. 27

P 70 ...*Single women cannot bear a tika on their foreheads*: All people wear Tika (see Appendix 4). Tika is worn higher on the forehead/ hair line by married women to distinguish them from unmarried girls who wear it lower.

P 70 ...*marriages of their own children*.: Ivi, pag. 42

P 70 ...*before her marriage a girl never wears red*: Nowadays this is changing and girls wear some red, western-style clothing- but they still will never wear a red sari or red Kurtha unless married.

P 73 ...*As one example the Hijras: Hijra* can be eunuchs, intersex or transgender and have been part of South Asia's culture for thousands of years. Eunuchs are celebrated in sacred Hindu texts such as the Mahabharata and the Kama Sutra. Hijra are the ancient third gender of Southern Asia who were traditionally accepted and respected in their roles in Nepali Society. During the Mughal rule these eunuchs held positions of power in courts and in harems, hijra are actors and dancers, and are invited to weddings and births as "people consider their presence auspicious and seek their blessings" (1) and held influential positions in society.

P 75 ...*social barrier*: Most of the youth had never taken a survey nor been asked to reflect on aspects of their society. We were told by one participant that it was the first time a *personal* opinion had ever been required of them.

P 75 ...*anxiety*: Anonymity was impeded by teachers, fellow pupils and the individual. (Further anthropological studies in Nepal should take the communal nature of Nepalese society into consideration).

P 76 ...*Do you drink Alcohol?*: In many Nepali families alcohol (Made from rice) is part of religious and familial ceremonies, and therefore they will have tasted alcohol first at a very young age. This alcohol is socially acceptable. We tried to make it clear to the youth that we meant drinking alcohol outside of these settings.

P 77 ...*unsafe abortions*: Pre-2002 abortion was illegal and many women endured illegal and unsafe abortions and if discovered served lengthy prison sentences for abortion-related "crimes." Nepal had one of the highest maternal mortality rates in Asia, and more than half of gynecological and obstetric hospital visits were due to abortion-related complications.

P 77 ...*Abortion is legal in Nepal* : Abortion Law in Nepal; The Road to Reform <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/3776119?uid=3738232&uid=2&uid=4&sid=21104755442453>

P 106 ...*victims of organised crime*: Dimmit Gnam, A. L. (2013) 'Mexico's Missed Op-

portunities too Protect irregular Women Transmigrants: Applying a Gender Lens to Migration Law Reform', Pacific Rim Law and Policy Journal Association, 22(3), pp.713-749.

P 108 ...*Mexico has a strong indigenous population*: Navarrete Linares, F. (2008) Los Pueblos Indígenas de México, Mexico D.F.: Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo.

P 116 ...*Ireland Overview*: Source: ITM

P 119 ...*Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre (2013) Briefing: Why recognise Irish Travellers as an Ethnic Group?* [online], available: <http://www.paveepoint.ie/briefing-why-recognise-travellers-as-an-ethnic-group/> [accessed September 2014].

P 127 ...*programmes and services*: NTW Ltd., 2010 Irish Traveller Heritage [online], available: <http://www.travellerheritage.ie/default.asp> [accessed Sep 2014].

P 135 ...*to help support the family*: Kiger.P, 2012, American Gypsies Articles and Romani culture, National Geographic Channel. Available at: <<http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/channel/american-gypsies/articles/romani-culture-and-traditions/>>. Accessed on [24/06/2014].

P 135 ...*spreaders of news and gossip*: Kiger.P, 2012, American Gypsies Articles and Romani culture, National Geographic Channel. Available at: <<http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/channel/american-gypsies/articles/romani-culture-and-traditions/>>. Accessed on [24/06/2014].

P 136 ...*millennium ago*: Kiger.P, 2012, American Gypsies Articles and Romani culture, National Geographic Channel. Available at: <<http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/channel/american-gypsies/articles/romani-culture-and-traditions/>>. Accessed on [24/06/2014].

P 141 ...*National Geographic cited by Conger.C, 2014*: Conger.C, 2014, The Roma

Way of Life: Gypsy Work and Family Life. Available at: < <http://people.howstuffworks.com/gypsy2.htm>>. Accessed on [23/06/2014]

P 142 ...the EU is sponsoring only up to 80%: Pairs, 2013, Roma in See, South East Europe Transactional Cooperation programme. Available at: < <http://www.pairs-see.net/page?view=15>>. Accessed on [ 24/06/2014]

P 142 ...*working Roma earn less than non-Roma*: Pairs, 2013, Roma in See, South East Europe Transactional Cooperation programme. Available at: < <http://www.pairs-see.net/page?view=15>>. Accessed on [ 24/06/2014]