

CONFERENCE NEWS

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SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL METROPOLIS CONFERENCE

Looking out for her people abroad

"The Philippine people have always been very mobile. Our country consists of 7100 islands and we have always moved around, looking for better climate, better conditions and new opportunities," says Patricia A. Santo Tomas, Labour Secretary of the Philippines.

TEXT: BJØRG DYSTVOLD NILSSON

This mobility, among with low wages and an unemployment rate of 13 per cent, has led to the fact that 7 million Philippines today are living and working abroad. That is 10 percent of the country's population. Taking care of their rights is a major concern for the Philippine government, and delayed Santo Tomas in coming to the conference. She had to bring unregistered Philippine workers home from Malaysia.

"There are 600.000 Philippines living in Malaysia, 400.000 of them live undocumented in Sabah, close to the Philippine boarder. Malaysia passed a law in April this year, stating that all these unregistered workers should go home. They set a deadline to July for voluntarily return, and between 7000 and 8000 did. In August, Malaysia started to mass arrest people, and put 10.000 in detention camps under very bad conditions. There were reports of

infringements, and 12 persons died in the process, most of them children. We had to bring them home in four navy boats," she tells.

"This incident created a big outrage in the Philippines, a lot of things went wrong; a 13 year old girl was raped, and it became a major diplomatic problem. It doesn't make the issue any easier that the Philippines claims the territorial rights to Sabah," Santo Tomas says.

There are Philippines all over the world, and in crises of any kind, there is always a major concern about them. During this interview on Wednesday, the Philippine government was evacuating 117 persons out of Iraq, during the Gulf-war in 1990 30.000 Philippines were evacuated out of the area. "Whenever a bomb goes off in Israel, the first question Philippine media asks is "were any of ours involved?". We have had 3 casualties in Israel this year," she explains.

Santo Thomas tells about strong state mechanisms for controlling the process of sending people out of the country. "We have a licensing arrangement, where we held the local agents for the employers liable for what happens to our workers overseas. This forces them to look for responsible principals. The workers themselves are also tested both professionally and medically. We have 100 persons in other countries doing nothing else but checking the workplaces. Naturally, there are not so many of them in Europe, where the institutions are fairly well developed. And in the USA, where we have the biggest number of people, we only have one person. Most of them are in countries in the Middle East," Santo Thomas says.

She wants more international collaboration on rights and standards for migrant workers. "It is not like we dump our poor masses to other countries, mostly we send some of our best people," she says. "This is negative for the country, but the money they send back is very positive for the economy of the Philippines. Every year they remit no less than US\$ 6.0 billion to the country."



The history of the Philippines includes colonization; 400 years by Spain and 50 years by the USA, which Santo Thomas sums up to "400 years in a convent and 50 years in Hollywood". She has noticed that few developing countries attend the conference. "I am here to put forward the voice of developing countries in these questions."

Facts:

Education

- By the end of 2000 there were almost 9 000 children with minority languages registered in kindergartens. The number has remained stable in recent years. There was a decrease in the portion of children that received mother tongue training. 44 per cent of the minority language children received such training.
- An increasing number of people at the age of 16-18, born in Norway of two foreign-born parents take upper secondary education (86.6 per cent). The portion in this group was almost as high as among all 16-18 year olds.
- Of all persons age 19-24 26.4 per cent were registered as undertaking higher education. Among first-generation immigrants the portion was 12.7 per cent. Among people born in Norway of two foreign-born parents the portion was 20.9 per cent. SSB

Today's Youth:

The Turkish Youth Association of Norway is a politically and religiously independent organization. The organization's main purpose is to promote the cultural, academic and social interests of Turkish youth. Most of the work done so far has been in Oslo and the surrounding areas, where the largest population of Turkish youth is located. However, one of the goals is to reach Turkish youth all over the country by establishing local chapters in the major urban areas. The overall goal is to become a strong resource for the community in cases of integration. The percentage of Turkish youth in Norway with a higher education is very low. NTGD sees it as a challenge to increase their participation in higher learning-institutions by providing positive role models. www.norvecgeni.com

"CITIZENSHIP STILL HAS EMANCIPATORY POWER"



"The debate on citizenship Wednesday opened our horizons towards new concepts of citizenship. It was a debate in the core of the Metropolis conference; with a public official reflecting together with researchers of public policy and political philosophers," says moderator Andreas Føllesdal, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Oslo.

"The concept of citizenship is fascinating. Many who enjoy full citizenship take it for granted and do not use their political rights. Some worry that a lack of voting is a proof of this," says Føllesdal.

The question of whether obtaining citizenship in a country as an adult should be connected to testing of language skills or basic knowledge about the new country, was also debated. "In this debate J. Carens presented a very clear and stringent argument for the position

of making citizenship independent of such testing. But in the debate it was pointed out that testing might give an important signal to those who are already citizens. Offering a citizenship to someone means that the person says that they are willing to be governed by this person on equal footing," Føllesdal says.

He quotes panellist H.G. Sicakkan, who talked about the concept of citizenship among young people. "He illustrated how new identities are becoming as least as important as formal citizenships for youth. It may seem more important for them to be a full citizen of cyberspace than to have voting rights in the national territory their body happens to be in." At the same time, "Many young people in countries all over the world are dreaming about going to the USA or the EU, and have these flags on their walls. This is an expression of where they would want to become citizens if they had had the opportunity," Føllesdal says.

But Føllesdal thinks the concept of citizenship still has emancipatory and peace-promoting power, like it has had historically. Immanuel Kant's essay "On Eternal Peace", now available in Norwegian, is as relevant as ever.

TEXT: BJØRG DYSTVOLD NILSSON



Lunch

- Ham and cheese in puff pastry
- Bagels with cream cheese and smoked salmon
- Sandwich with American ham and dark bread
- Finger fruit
- Egg waffles

There is also a vegetarian lunch alternative. This is marked with a special sign.

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TOGETHERNESS IN DIFFERENCE

9 - 13 SEPTEMBER

What do you bring back with you home from this conference?



I've learned about the experiences of other countries. I bring with me new ideas for thinking about immigration in Canada. I've got lots of new contacts. It's been a very successful conference.

David Ley
Professor, RIMM, Vancouver, Canada



Interesting suggestions form the keynotes and reflections on comparability from a workshop. I've also come further in planning a common project between teams in different countries.

Rosita Fibbi
PD, Dr Sociology, Swiss Forum for Migration and Pop. Studies, Switzerland



I bring back suggestions for next year's program on topics and people to contribute. I have got new acquaintances, colleagues with whom I hope to strengthen further connections in the future, and practical applications of theoretical perspectives.

Monica Rosenzweig Armour
Dr, Transcultural International, Canada and The Netherlands



I've met a lot of interesting people. I do research on countries of origin, and I've got a better understanding of receiving industrialised states. I would really have liked to take back a CD with summaries of all the workshops. Make that next time!

Sean Loughua
Research officer, Refugee Study Centre, University of Oxford, UK



The great possibilities for learning between cities in Europe and in America. In my opinion the real challenge for the Metropolis project is to get beyond thinking about nations. Questions about cultural diversity, immigration and integration must be discussed with municipal governments and organisations that work with integration.

Brian Ray
Migration Policy Institute, Washington DC, USA

New Norwegian Centre for Immigrant Health

Towards a culture sensitive health care

“Equal provision of culture sensitive health services has long been an underestimated resource. We know from research that cross-cultural communication can be difficult for all parties involved, migrants and professionals alike. The result is highly volatile issues like aids prevention, female genital mutilation and forced marriages.”



TEXT: BJØRG DYSTVOLD NILSSON

This says professor of psychology Nora Ahlberg, the director of a new national centre for somatic and psychological health care for persons with immigrant backgrounds. The centre is going to be operative from January 2003, and is at the moment searching for staff members.

“We are looking for persons with a variety of backgrounds. We want to build a centre able to embrace both somatic and mental, or psychosocial, sides of health care. Cooperation across professional borders is also an important goal in itself for a centre of this character,” Ahlberg says. She hopes the process of finding new staff members will also put the centre in contact with people who later can be a part of it's network.

The main task for the new unit is information, especially between national and international colleagues. It will also focus on interdisciplinary research covering both immigrants, refugees and possibly other minorities, and in this sense it will benefit from the large clinical milieus at the university hospital at Ullevål. Prelimi-

nary plans are already made for a comparative study of aging, health and quality of life from an intergenerational perspective among the immigrant population. There will also be some teaching and counselling aimed at the primary health care sector, mainly in cooperation with other actors within the field. Among other things, Ahlberg, harbour hopes that the centre might be able to assist in implementing a master programme on multicultural issues for professionals in the social and health care sector.

Ahlberg, a clinical psychologist also educated in cultural studies and professor of comparative religion on leave, says the increase in life style related diseases of our time like type 2 diabetes and heart and coronary diseases, are increasingly reflected also in the migrant populations. “But I think the greatest challenges lie in the psychosocial field. A major issue is occasionally very serious intergenerational conflicts. We see youth acting out because they are squeezed between expectations and desperate parents,” Ahlberg says. She also underlines the

new challenges in taking care of the growing percentage of elderly people with minority backgrounds.

Nora Ahlberg is of minority background herself. “I come from a privileged minority – the Swedish community in Finland. This has given me a ‘double’ identity which makes it easier for me to cross and thrive across borders.” She has worked with therapy and research, including immigrants, refugees and returnees, but also with ideological minorities within the majority culture. Socio-cultural understanding is a key issue for her, that is in addition to majority-minority dynamics. “Cultural studies work like a mirror in which we can view our own society in clearer light. We can thus use our cultural competence to study and better understand the mechanisms of the society in which we live, including its health policies,” Ahlberg says, urging persons who are interested in cooperating with the centre to get in touch using the e-mail address below.

annemargrethe.svanes@ulleval.no

Performers Yesterday:



Roberto Caccam
«Side show Bob» Flames, stilts and an insane character, loved and hated by many, and it is guaranteed that everyone will be effected. Roberto Caccam has a background from the bodyart environment and side shows performance.



Jorunn Rakel Dahl
Jorunn Rakel Dahl has her background from street performances and physical theatre. Among her skills are stilts, costumes and masks. She is at the time working with an installation.

Henrik Høie

Henrik Høie has been working for Grenland Friteater, Teater X, Åpne teater, Hedmark Teater, Kenneth Dean Prod and Pain Solution. He is on tour at the moment with his new one man show «Stella».

Iris Korsnes

Iris Korsnes – freelance actress since 1996. She has been involved in street performance, side shows, TV and traditional theatre. At the moment she is developing a project which is a mix of traditional theatre, multimedia and bodyart.

DANCING YOUTH (DA-YO)

The group was founded 16 years ago when a group of kids who had “no-leisure-space” to take up dancing and theatre, founded DA-YO. They were three guys and one girl. Today DA-YO include youths from all side of the world, around 22 different nationalities and there is still place for all youth who wants to learn, participate and share the multinational environment with rhythm, dance, theatre and music. DA-YO's objectives target racism, violence, discrimination and the use of drugs. They have 200 pupils from Oslo and they train 5 times a week. They have won 7 national champions, 1st, 2nd and third places. Two times the national champions in group dance contests.

„GAINING FROM MIGRATION”

Opportunities for economic and social prosperity in a global perspective

8th International Metropolis Conference
September 15 – 19, 2003, City Hall,
Vienna, Austria

The City of Vienna joined the International Metropolis Project in November 2001, on the occasion of the Rotterdam conference. It now is ready to host the 8th International Metropolis Conference in autumn 2003, under the overall motto “Gaining from migration”. The proposed themes for the Vienna Conference will focus on the aspect of a positive re-thinking of migration and integration policies for both sending and receiving societies and it will be trying to define new roles for both political actors and civil society. Migration and integration should be conceived as new opportunities – both for receiving as well as for sending societies.

After the main theme of the Oslo conference, which was deliberately chosen to highlight the identity/citizenship nexus in integration policies, the Vienna motto will focus attention on the opportunities created by a responsible and broadly welcoming approach to immigration for both receiving and sending societies. Rather than formulating the policy agenda from a problem-driven perception – currently dominant in debates on immigrant minorities in Europe – a very

different treatment of migration issues will flow from policies that embrace economic growth, positive demographic change and cultural diversity which can result from structured and coherent immigration policies.

Again, as in previous Metropolis International Conferences, 4 sub-themes are proposed for Vienna 2003. Under the overall conference motto “Gaining from migration” we plan to focus discussions around 4 sub-themes:

- Managing migration globally
– Economic relations and political strategies
- EU enlargement and migration
– The accession states' transition from sending to receiving countries
- Multilevel governance of migration and diversity – Challenges for political actors and civil society
- Multiple dimensions of integration and diversity policies – The urban perspective

As a city steeped in tradition yet at the same time a modern metropolis at the heart of Europe, Vienna is closely involved in one of the most exciting large-scale projects in Europe, namely the expansion of the European Union.

Metropolis in numbers:

This Metropolis conference had 650 registered participants from 28 different countries. Not unexpectedly Norway had the biggest contingent with 298 registered participants. Canada came with 96, and Sweden, The Netherlands and the UK with 28. Those who had travelled the longest way were 1 from New Zealand, 12 from Australia, 1 from Japan, 1 from Bangladesh, 2 from the Philippines, 1 from Colombia, 1 from Mexico and 17 from the USA.