



# RACE AND ETHNICITY IN MIGRATION

Building on internal dialogues last year about the interlinkages between race and migration, the People's Migration Challenge organized two broad discussions among global civil society as part of its webinar series. It became clear that we are on a steep learning curve on the issues of race and ethnicity in migration, and that we are just beginning to explore how to incorporate racial justice in the context of migration. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing structural inequalities caused by institutionalized racism, shedding a light on how systemic injustices are deeply embedded in our societies.

## THE SPECIFIC IMPACT OF RACE AND ETHNICITY IN MIGRANT COMMUNITIES

Migration, while a global phenomenon, is significantly constrained by race, ethnicity, nationality, socio-economic class, caste, and religious belief. These social constructions create varying access and restrictions to migration for different groups of migrants, especially migrants of African descent and migrants from poorer socio-economic classes. The more oppressed groups' spatial and social mobilities are more restricted, and any gains they may accrue often disappear in times of crisis. Institutionalized racism also places citizens over foreigners, criminalizes border crossing, militarizes family separation, and depicts migrants as a burden on society. Migrants of African descent are particularly more discriminated and criminalized than others, and are the most likely to be deported on criminal grounds.

As civil society, we must advocate for widespread political commitments to racial justice, institutional change, and cohesive legislation and global policy on structural racism and discrimination. By focusing on more progressive and holistic structural changes towards race and ethnicity, we can begin to change repressive and discriminatory migration policies, and uplift inclusive social protections.

## THE INSPIRATION FROM BLM AND OTHER ANTI-RACIST MOVEMENTS

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and other anti-racist movements have played very important roles in naming racism, as well as informing and building solidarity around racial injustice around the globe. To counter the overpowering discourse that has created hierarchies of oppression, alliances between anti-racist movements are vital in linking the struggles of Black peoples' liberation with those of Asian and Latino migrant communities.

Work among racial justice movements should lead toward a convergence in advocacy strategies and collective actions, especially through leadership by grassroots organizations. This kind of solidarity and joint advocacy can begin to resolve the oppressions of the most marginalized, which can then result in the liberation for all migrants.

## EDUCATION, CULTURAL AWARENESS AND INTROSPECTION

The structural root causes of racism, discrimination, and the criminalization and exclusion of migrants originate also from historical legacies of slavery and colonization. Informal and formal educational systems must incorporate the realities that racialized groups have experienced for centuries, so that younger generations can have a real understanding of the oppressions suffered by Black, indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), and people with migrant backgrounds. It is our collective responsibility to demand that these be mainstreamed in schools' curricula, to educate students and encourage them to explore the history of racism and its impacts. These can also be mainstreamed socially, making an intergenerational effort to reach society as a whole and raise collective awareness and consciousness.

At the same time, we need to also reflect on our own civil society movements, governmental, non-governmental, and multi-lateral institutions, where White supremacy, class privilege and gender discrimination are internalized in our own organizational structures and leadership. This requires our own careful introspection as any political change must begin with us.