
LIVING AND THRIVING: A FORUM ABOUT SUPPORTING MIGRANT WORKERS IN PEI

APRIL 27, 2018
REPORT



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Living and Thriving: A Public Forum About Supporting Migrant Workers in PEI

Friday, April 27, 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

Seventy people from Island community and faith organizations and from government departments joined a group of migrant workers for a full day of presentations and discussion aimed at increasing our collective understanding of the challenges faced by migrant workers living in this province. We heard from migrant workers, experts in federal and provincial policy, and organizations working to promote the rights of migrant workers. The theme was food sovereignty, and the role migrant workers play in our food system. Out of the conversations there emerged many ideas for advocacy and policy and actions to support migrant workers to be treated fairly and recognized for the important roles they play in our economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the day there emerged several recommendations for policy work and actions.

Federal Policy Recommendations

- Expand eligibility for IRCC-funded settlement services to include migrant workers
- End Closed Work Permits – make Work Permits OPEN, not tied to one employer
- Employment Standards coverage for Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) workers
- Access to Permanent Residency for all workers

Provincial Policy Recommendations

- Legislation that: requires registration of employers; licenses recruiters; and bans recruitment fees
- Labour laws to cover agricultural workers
- Legislation that defines acceptable work and living space
- Proactive enforcement of legislation and anti-reprisals mechanism
- Funding for support services for migrant workers including language training
- Systematic distribution of information on rights, recourses and services
- Encourage permanent residence through the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP)
- Provincial healthcare coverage for all migrant workers on arrival

Recommendations for Immediate Action

These recommendations for immediate action emerged from the discussions:

- Create a report indicating where workers are coming from and where they are working in PEI, highlighting the experiences of some of the workers
- Ask Government to develop a registry to make sure we know where all the workers are in PEI
- Involve PEI migrant workers in national & local advocacy networks
- Challenge the PEI government to establish legislation specific to migrant workers

Living and Thriving; Supporting Migrant Workers on PEI

**Friday, April 27, 2018
Prince Edward Island Farm Centre**

1. Welcome

Hannah Gehrels, the chairperson of the forum, welcomed everyone, acknowledging that we were gathered on traditional, unceded, land of the Mi'kmaq people of Abegweit First Nation.

Julie Pellissier Lush opened the proceedings with a beautiful prayer, and a welcoming song.

2. Migrant Workers & Food Sovereignty

Ann Wheatley (PEI Food Security Network) presented the basic principles of food sovereignty, which include the right to food and valuing food producers. Most migrant workers in PEI are involved in food production. Ann talked about the need for fundamental changes to the current food system – to make it fair for everyone, and ensure that migrant workers are respected for their contributions to it. See Ann's full presentation – Appendix II, Page 8.

3. Panel Presentations

a) Federal and Provincial Policies and Impacts on Migrant Workers

Marisa Berry Méndez – Canadian Council for Refugees

Marisa spoke about labour migration within the context of Canadian immigration policy, and described how our current system allows workers to be abused and exploited. She summarized federal and provincial responsibilities and policies and how gaps in these increase the vulnerability of migrant workers. Finally, she presented recommendations for policy that would better support the rights of migrant workers in Canada. See Marisa's complete presentation in Appendix III, Page 10.

b) PEI Context

Paola Soto Flores – Cooper Institute

Paola presented a snapshot of where migrant workers are employed in PEI, and the different circumstances they encounter, often depending on their country of origin. She described the challenges they face with regard to healthcare, housing, and employment standards. See more on page 12, Appendix IV.

c) Community Building, Making Connections And Effecting Policy Change

Connie Sorio - KAIROS

Connie talked about our responsibilities as members of the community, to help ensure that the rights of migrant workers are respected. She noted the importance of community organizations in amplifying the voices of migrant workers and providing a basis for policy change. See more on page 13, Appendix V.

Questions

After the presentations by the three panelists, there was an open question and answer period.

a) Why does there seem to be more work done on the issues in Saskatchewan and Manitoba than in other places?

Marisa – those are two provinces that wanted to retain population so they were interested in the integration of migrant workers. There needs to be political will re: introducing legislation.

b) Open Work Permit process in BC – does the complaint have to be proven as true before PR? *Marisa* - Yes, it has to be accepted as legitimate and you have to supply evidence, which is not always easy. 2/38 complaints were rejected.

c) Language requirement – for Permanent Residency – is there any discussion of making this easier?

Marisa – At CCR we are encouraging provinces to lower or eliminate the language barrier, which is tantamount to not giving access. Provinces should fund language instruction for migrant workers. In some provinces there is online instruction, but other provinces are increasing barriers. For example Alberta is making language requirements more stringent. This is a huge issue.

Connie – In the Caregiver Program, language requirements are very high. If you are a Permanent Resident applying for citizenship you don't need to meet the same standard. As people take part in consultations about the Caregiver Program, they are asking for a lower language requirement. Some workers in Shediac expressed frustration because they have no time to learn English. They say, "if only the lobsters could speak to us!"

d) How do the experiences of women migrant workers differ?

Connie – In the SAWP 90% are men. Those working in the caregiver program are 90% women. Under the low-skill program, it's pretty well mixed. Women who are working in the Caregiver Program are very much vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse. In Alberta a worker confided that she had worked for 2 years without being paid, and lived with constant abuse. There is a fear of not being believed, and the threat of being terminated and deported. One's workplace is the home. It makes women very vulnerable. The United Nations has called Canada's attention to how women under caregiver program are not protected.

Marisa – The current federal government calls itself "feminist" and has committed to analyze all of its programs using a gender impact analysis. It hasn't happened for the Caregiver Program. CCR has a project around human trafficking. Under the TFWP there is an increasing number of cases of labour trafficking involving young male Guatemalan agricultural workers.

Paola – Sometimes women arriving are single parents, often separated from children. It can happen that men make them feel guilty. There can be an assumption that you are here to find a man to support your family.

e) What is the 180-day rule?

Hannah - In 2016 the federal government put caps on the number of migrant workers that employers could hire. This created a problem for fish plants. So for the past 2 years, there has been an exemption to the caps in this region - a certain number of workers (over and above the cap) can be hired on a 180-day contract. It has not been announced if this will be the case for 2018, and this causes uncertainty for workers as their contracts are set to expire this summer.

4. Group Discussions

At each table, a facilitator guided a conversation on a specific topic – healthcare, housing, labour, community – based on a set of questions they had been given. At the end, each group "reported back" to the larger group. Here is a summary of the table discussions:

a) Healthcare

Workers don't have access to health cards when their work permits are for 180 days, or when they are not working but have implied status. Mental health is an issue, related to isolation from the community. Lack of dental and vision care, transportation to medical appointments, language, scheduling and getting time off work are all issues.

Workers need the same benefits as other people living in PEI. They need:

- to get a PEI health card on arrival, with no restriction;
- more information about the health system that's easy to understand and in their own language ;
- access to transportation;
- space to grow food (we heard about one case where an employer is providing garden space).

b) Housing

Many workers are living in overcrowded conditions. Houses are often poorly maintained, can be isolated, are not regulated and can be really expensive. There can be crowded. It is even hard to get ready for work in the morning with so many people waiting to use one washroom. Any worker who raises issues puts their job at risk. In these small communities workers are even more vulnerable, as everyone knows one another.

We need to find out: How can we make sure standards are enforced? Which Department is responsible?

Lobbying for open work permits must be a key activity. Open permits would lessen vulnerability. We must put these issues on the agenda of our provincial and federal elected representatives.

c) Community

Isolation is an issue. One challenge for community members is that they don't usually know where workers are employed. Another related issue is the long hours that workers put in and also, around transportation – the times that they are picked up for work or dropped off after work don't always match their actual work schedules. There can be a lot of waiting. There is shyness in the community, lack of confidence in reaching out. Cultural awareness activities could provide workers a chance to teach others about their culture. Other Ideas:

- Language exchanges – workers could teach their language while learning English
- Neighbour-to-neighbour events – these happen now in O'Leary & Tignish
- Other events – Crafts Bazaar; Music; Community Gardens

Sandigang Pinoy is a new organization assisting Filipino workers – it's based in Summerside and they meet with workers, make sure they understand their rights, check in with them, help them to contact government or other agencies and other settlement supports.

It is important to work as a community because establishing relationships creates opportunities for newcomers to develop trust and to speak out about challenges. Collaboration empowers and strengthens our voices. The community can learn lots from migrant workers.

d) Labour

Issues:

- Language barriers have an impact on safety, understanding work responsibilities, taxation, and rights
- Lack of systematic distribution of information about rights
- Unequal distribution of resources according to the program (i.e. low-skill workers seem to get less)
- According to one farmer, government audits focus on Canadian workers, not on migrant workers
- 16 week wait for permits – and the inability to have continuous work
- Uncertainty around status
- No defined “minimum hours” – not getting enough hours when working – minimum number of hours should be in contracts
- Exclusion of agricultural workers from Employment Standards Act – although this also applies to Canadian workers, it should be understood that foreign workers are more vulnerable and need even more protections
- Lack of information before coming to Canada

Main solution = a clear and direct pathway to Permanent Residency

5. The role of migrant workers in the economy

a) Gabriel Allahdua – Justice for Migrant Workers

Gabriel came to Canada from St Lucia. He described the global forces that drive workers to leave their families and countries of origin. Global Inequality led him, and many other migrant workers, to Canada. He vividly and actively described the 20 injustices behind every piece of fruit or vegetable that we consume. See his presentation on page 14.

b) Marian Eliot & Charles Ian Odias – Royal Star Fisheries Co-op in Tignish

Marian spoke of the reasons she came to Canada from the Philippines, and the pain of separation from one's family. She praised her employer and the community of Tignish for welcoming the workers. She and her partner, Charles, talked about the pride they take in their work, and the contributions of all of the workers to the local economy. See Marian's presentation on page 15.

Questions: After Gabriel, Marian and Charles spoke, they answered participants' questions.

a) *Comment: Farmers in the Caribbean response to the World Trade Organization*

When you are in a disadvantaged situation, it can bring out creative solutions. When the WTO removed the preferred market (Europe) for bananas from the Caribbean, farmers had to regroup. Costs of production of bananas are high, you need a certain market and good return. They couldn't compete, and people were driven off the land. Their response was to engage in the Fair Trade market. This allowed farmers and families to access healthcare – it revolutionized the banana industry. Benefits were visible. Small cooperatives organized. They changed the economy. Money went into schools, etc.

b) *How is the Community of Tignish supporting workers?*

The local parish and community organize "meet & greet" events for new members of the community, once every two months. People invite workers to regular activities. The employer organizes "Fun Fridays".

6. Discussion Groups

Following Gabriel and Marian's presentations, at each table participants took part in a discussion, answering questions related to the role of migrant workers in PEI's economy and food system, and what can be done to protect their rights to healthy, safe working and living environments. Each group reported the highlights of their discussion, which are summarized here.

a) **How can we ensure migrant workers are respected for the important roles they play in PEI's economy and food system?**

Communications

- Raise awareness about the current situation – make sure Islanders understand the situation
- Break down the walls – convey that we are all part of one community and contribute to the economy
- Show how segregation negatively impacts the community and our wellbeing
- Use media
- Invite migrant workers to go to schools to talk about their cultures

Other

- Grassroots and community involvement
- Government should contract community-based organizations to provide orientation for workers
- Lobby for funding to hire interpreters to make sure workers understand their rights
- Lobby for training to be provided for workers in their own language
- Demand that migrant workers are included in all government (settlement/support) programs
- Start working right away on the 20 injustices, which involve many policy changes
- Advocate for Employment Standards Act protections to include housing, labour and health because these are all related – they are inseparable from one another

- Advocate for Federal legislative changes – open work permits!
- Organize community events where migrant workers are employed and make an effort to include them
- Appoint a migrant worker representative from each community to the Action Team
- Awareness – livestream events such as this forum
- Share accessible resources on social media
- Lobby for an ombudsperson for migrant workers
- Lobby for increased funding for support programs but these must be opened up to migrant workers
- More events such as the DiverseCity festival
- Create a Transportation page – ride-sharing

b) What kinds of policy changes need to happen?

- Open Work Permits
- PEI Health Card on arrival
- Free dental coverage
- Accessible language training
- More direct pathway to Permanent Residency
- Regular enforcement by Occupational Health and Safety
- More safeguards for workers who speak out

c) How can we make the changes happen?

- Group letters to Ministers
- Get church support for letters
- Get organizations – Association for Newcomers to Canada, Cooper Institute – to support letter

d) What are some immediate steps we can take?

- Get more information about the 180-day rule
- Issue a media release summarizing the main points from today's event
- Create a report indicating where workers are coming from and where they are working in PEI, highlighting the experiences of some of the workers
- Communicate with the Community of Tignish and Royal Star congratulating them on the actions of the community and employer in welcoming workers
- Ask Government to develop a registry to make sure we know where all the workers are in PEI
- Make this an annual event
- Investigate possibilities for involving PEI migrant workers in national and local advocacy networks
- Challenge the PEI government to establish legislation specific to migrant workers – speak to the Minister and Deputy Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, and Opposition Parties
- Invite migrant worker representatives from each community to join the Action Team

7. Final Words

Hannah invited people to complete a written evaluation. She thanked the sponsors of the forum, Cooper Institute, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), KAIROS Canada, Maritime Conference of the United Church of Canada, PEI Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and CUPE-PEI. And she invited people to sign up for the PEI Action Team for Migrant Worker Rights. Finally, she thanked Paola, who has put her heart and soul into her work advancing the rights of migrant workers. And Tony Reddin brought the day to a close, in song.

APPENDIX I: Speaker Bios

Marisa Berry Méndez

Marisa has been the Settlement Policy Director at the Canadian Council for Refugees - <http://ccrweb.ca> - for eight years. She works on issues related to the settlement and integration of refugees and other vulnerable migrants. In her time at the CCR, Marisa has developed the organization's campaign for the rights of migrant workers, conducting research, creating advocacy and awareness-raising tools, organizing fora and advocating with the federal government, as well as being involved in international conversations about migrant labour. Marisa holds a Master's Degree in Migration and Ethnic Studies from the University of Amsterdam

Paola Soto Flores

Paola Soto is a social worker and psychologist from Chile. She holds a Master in Primary Health Care from the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, and for the last 15 years, she has worked in hospitals and primary health in Chile. Since 2017, she works as the outreach coordinator of the migrant workers program at Cooper Institute – www.cooperinstitute.ca. Throughout her career Paola has led or participated on social interventions at the individual, family, and community levels. She has also been involved in the support of community organizations and has participated in outreach missions in her native Chile, Bolivia, and more recently Colombia.

Connie Sorio

As Ecological Justice Partnerships Coordinator in Kairos, Connie is responsible for establishing new and nurturing existing relationships with like-minded church groups and civil society organizations on social justice issues. She has helped organized speaking tours, delegations and visits of Southern partners in Canada on human rights and the negative impacts of mining/resource extraction on communities and their food sources and livelihoods. She is a member of the Executive Committee of Migrante Canada and the International Coordinating Body of the International Migrants Alliance.

Gabriel Allahdua

Gabriel is a migrant worker from St. Lucia who entered Canada under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. He is a member of Justice for Migrant Workers, a volunteer-run migrant worker advocacy organization located in Ontario. Justice for Migrant Workers is a member of the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change (MWAC), a network aimed at improving working conditions and achieving better protection for temporary foreign workers. MWAC is currently partnering with the Ontario Employment Education and Research Centre to create mechanisms for migrant workers to build leadership skills, meet with elected officials, and share their stories with the general public.

Ann Wheatley

Ann is a member of Cooper Institute, and has been involved in the PEI Food Security Network since its formation over a decade ago. The PEIFSN is an education and action organization, dedicated to changing community attitudes and public policy to promote: environmentally sustainable production and distribution of food; availability of affordable, healthy, culturally appropriate food; livable income for producers; the right to food; and PEI self-reliance in food.

APPENDIX II: Food Sovereignty and Migrant Workers

Ann Wheatley, PEI Food Security Network – <http://peifoodsecurity.wordpress.com>

Despite the fact that the local food movement has never been stronger, the migrant workers who are providing much of the labour to harvest and process our food are for the most part invisible.

But, if we think it's important that our food system is not just environmentally sustainable but also one in which everyone gets treated fairly, then we should know the migrant workers who support our food system, and understand the challenges they face.

Food security and food sovereignty: *Food security*, at its most basic, means that everyone has access to enough good food to be healthy and active. *Food Sovereignty* originates with La Via Campesina, a global movement of small-scale & peasant farmers. Basically, people have the right to define their own food system.

Our current global food system is almost the opposite of food sovereignty. Control is concentrated in the hands of a few huge multinational corporations. The system is unsustainable and it isn't feeding the world. A major contributor to climate change, the predominant model of agriculture depletes soil and pollutes water. It is based on exploitation of people across the system. And despite the massive amount of food that is moved around the world every day, millions of people are **food insecure**, even in PEI, Canada's Food Island.

Food Sovereignty is more complex. It acknowledges that everyone has the right to food, that charity alone cannot solve food insecurity. It is about localizing food systems, working with nature: taking care of the land, soil, water and forests, recognizing the connections between them.

It recognizes that food is sacred, deeply woven into the fabric of our cultures and traditions and communities – and that it should be treated as more than simply a commodity for trade and profit-making.

Food sovereignty values food producers, including migrant workers. From the orchards in BC to the meat packing plants in Alberta to the vineyards and fields of Ontario, greenhouses of Quebec, and to the farms and seafood processing plants in the Maritimes, Canada relies on migrant workers to produce food for both domestic use and for export.

In many cases, workers have come to Canada from places with rich agricultural traditions. But globalization and international trade agreements have had a huge impact on their food systems and caused displacement of the people who work in them. For example, after NAFTA came into effect in 1994, cheap corn, grown in the US, flooded the Mexican market, and farmers there could no longer afford to grow it. In the 20 years following the signing of NAFTA, over 2 million farm jobs were lost in Mexico. Unemployment and food insecurity increased, labour standards deteriorated and workers were often left with no other choice than to migrate north for work. This example is also something like the opposite of food sovereignty – the extreme effect of food treated as a commodity, and the loss of local control of the food system.

Food Sovereignty in the Lives of Migrant Workers

A few years ago a research project based in Ontario looked at the kind of food insecurity experienced by migrant agricultural workers in BC and Ontario. They found:

- workers were not always able to find culturally appropriate food in the communities in which they were working;
- many were living in crowded conditions where there was not enough space for storage, and for cooking;
- long hours of work reduced the amount of time they had to prepare food;
- they worked 6 days a week so had only 1 day to shop;
- they had to travel long distances to purchase food, and in many cases depended on their employer for transportation.

If migrant workers were part of a food system based on food sovereignty, they would be guaranteed enough paid hours and a wage to provide a livable income, to ensure their own food security and to contribute to the food security of their families.

If migrant workers were valued as people, not just a source of labour,

- Housing would be adequate and there would be space enough for people to store and properly prepare food.
- Workers would feel free to speak up about abuse, and not be fearful of losing their job because their permit is tied to one employer.
- They would have the same right as others, to become permanent residents.
- Migrant workers would be seen as working people, as individuals who are an integral part of our rural and urban communities, not simply as a cheap source of labour.

Moving Forward:

We are all part of the food system. We all have a part to play in making that system the best it can be. Supporting migrant workers' rights is an essential part of building a food system built on the principles of food sovereignty.

APPENDIX III: Federal and Provincial Policies and their impacts on Migrant Workers

Marisa Berry Méndez- Canadian Council for Refugees - <http://ccrweb.ca>

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) has several different categories:

- Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program
- Agricultural stream
- Caregiver Program/streams
- Low-wage
- High-wage

Workers coming in the low-waged streams do not have labour mobility, can't bring their families, and have no access to support services. There is no systematic distribution of information to migrant workers about their rights and there are often language barriers, and physical and/or geographic isolation. As many migrant workers arrive in Canada each year as do permanent immigrants (~300,000).

About the “temporary” feature of the program; the jobs are not temporary – they are always there – some people in SAWP have been coming here for 40 years, separated from their families for the better part of each year.

What are the objectives of our immigration policy and programs? To fill labour needs or nation-building? If the latter, then why are we discriminating? Until the 1960s we had a discriminatory immigration policy – it was racist. We should look at the temporary immigration program in that context – this is not an anomaly.

Abuse is well documented:

- Labour Standards
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Housing
- Access to health care
- Violence (verbal, psychological)
- Labour trafficking (human trafficking)

What makes them vulnerable?

- Tied permits – a systemic way of making people vulnerable
- Lack of access to services – support, information, counselling, referral
- Lack of information about rights
- Lack of real recourse – when someone complains they could be sent home
- Most provincial legislation is enforced reactively
- Language, isolation

Federal Policy change over the past 5 years:

- 2014 – overhaul TFWP –focused on employer abuse of the program – promised increased enforcement and penalties for violations of rules – this is just starting now
- 2016 - eliminated 4-year rule (that said workers could stay in Canada for a maximum of 4 years and had to be out of the country for 4 years before returning to work)
- since 2016 there has been more enforcement, the “bad employer list” has gotten bigger
- there are still issues with the ways rules are enforced – the system does not protect migrant workers
- legislative changes are expected in November, 2018 – the federal government may be examining closed work permit

Provincial Policy change over the past 5 years:

- Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia have legislation including registration of employers
- MB, SK – proactive enforcement
- Open work permits – in 2016, BC negotiated with federal government – if workers filed a complaint, they could access an open work permit – it's a short term solution
- BC – 58 settlement orgs to work with migrant workers, will help with filing complaint
- Access to permanent residence – PEI, MB, NL – some effort to make PR available to low-wage workers – depends on employer
- Some settlement support available in AB, PE, NB, NS BC – in SK all settlement programming is accessible to newcomers regardless of status
- SK – all workers have access to provincial healthcare on arrival

Provincial Recommendations:

- Registration and certification of employers
- Licensing of recruiters and legislated ban on recruitment fees
- Proactive enforcement of legislation and anti-reprisals mechanism
- Funding for support services for migrant workers
- Systematic distribution of information on rights, recourses and services
- Encourage permanent residence via PNPs

Federal Recommendations:

- End closed work permits
- Address recruitment fraud in Canada and country of origin
- Ensure proactive and equitable enforcement
- Expand eligibility for IRCC-funded settlement services to include migrant workers
- Stop discriminatory immigration practices – revise economic immigration program to include “low-skilled” workers

APPENDIX IV:

Paola Soto Flores – Cooper Institute - <https://www.cooperinstitute.ca/>

Migrant workers are employed from one end of the Island to the other. It's not easy to find workers, there's no list of where they are. They mostly come from Mexico, China, Guatemala & the Philippine and work as fishplant workers and farm labourers. In 2017 there were 962 low-skill workers in PEI, mostly in fish processing.

Workers from different countries face different realities:

Filipino Workers: are recruited by agencies, pay fees, agencies have no influence over them after arrival. They can stay in Canada if they apply for new contract (implied status), and usually stay a few years.

Mexican Workers: are recruited by agencies in Mexico, don't pay fees, agencies may have control over them. They must go home after each contract, and agencies decide who comes back each year

Chinese Workers: are recruited by agencies, pay \$2,000.00 every year; agencies have some control. They must go home after each contract

Health Care: Workers with contracts for 180+ days have access to a PEI health card. Others are covered by employer-paid private insurance but may pay up front and get reimbursed later. Filipino workers who stay (implied status) don't have access to any coverage when they are not working (between work permits). Workers have little information about how to navigate the healthcare system.

Housing: Some housing is employer-owned. Monthly costs can be as high as \$270.00 each (for shared accommodation). There is wide variation in housing conditions. 10 to 24 workers may live in a single house. Hallways and other small spaces may be used as sleeping area (safety concerns). No (or infrequent) inspections.

Labour: Education and language barriers (may sign work contracts without understanding them). No system within the TFW Program provides workers with information (about their rights, taxes, workers compensation, EI, etc.). No guaranteed minimum number of working hours.

Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program: Workers can stay in Canada for 6 to 8 months at a time, are required to return home each year. In 2017, 330 workers came to PEI.

Health: Covered by employer's private insurance. Lack of information on how to navigate health system. Some employers don't make easy to access healthcare, some difficulties with language barrier. May not know details about insurance coverage.

Housing: Employers must provide housing. Most places we have visited are in fair condition. Approximately \$2.25 per working day deducted for housing. Supervised by PEI Occupational Health and Safety. Most employers provide regular transportation for grocery shopping

Labour: Most of Employment Standards Act do not apply to them (or any other farm labourer). Contribute to Employment Insurance (EI) but have limited benefits. Employer-specific contracts. An employer can transfer workers to another farm but if a worker wants to change employer they have to apply for new permit. Lack of information about taxes and benefits. Some workers return several times, but can't apply for permanent residency. Some workers come back each year for many years; however, CPP benefits are usually low.

Conclusions:

- Migrant workers contribute to PEI's economy (Rent, taxes, shopping local, EI, CCP)
- They have limited access to benefits
- They usually fill undesired positions
- They are not able to apply for PR
- They are excluded and marginalized – second-class citizens
- Some farmers and companies are taking initiative, supporting workers to apply for PR

APPENDIX V:

Connie Sorio – KAIROS Canada <https://www.kairoscanada.org/>

Connie noted the important connection between trade and investment, including mining, and displacement of people.

KAIROS - Reconciling with migrant workers and diaspora communities. How are Canadian policies impacting their lives?

UN Declaration on Human Rights – we all have equal rights. Yet the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program fails to protect the rights of the people who come here to work.

KAIROS tries to bring communities together – migrant workers and the communities in which they live and work. They work through churches as places workers can go for refuge, rest, and to connect with people.

Migrant workers are making a big contribution, to our food security – so what is our responsibility as a host community? Policy changes won't happen if we don't know what is going on with the workers. We need to know their circumstances in order to change policies.

Government needs to know that policies not being enacted. It can only happen if there are strong relationships between community and workers. Because of their vulnerabilities, relationships must be built on trust. Community support can make workers feel brave and emboldened to say what is happening and what change is needed.

Example of organizing for change: In 2014 the 4-year rule stated that workers could stay in Canada for a maximum of 4 years before they had to leave for 4 years. Because of strong advocacy by communities, policy was changed in 2016. Policy change does not happen by itself. It happens because of strong collaboration . . . workers and community working together.

APPENDIX VI: The role of migrant workers in the economy

Gabriel Allahdua – Justice for Migrant Workers - <https://www.facebook.com/justice4mw/>

Gabriel started by saying that he's in Canada because of a hurricane, and climate change – which rich countries are causing – and poor countries are paying for. Global Inequality caused Gabriel to come to Canada. The World Trade Organization caused him to come. St Lucia historically exported bananas to England, a preferred market. This was changed with World Trade, which drove people off the land. Gabriel is in Canada because of the SAWP – which has a 50-year history of workers putting food on the table.

Gabriel came to this country to do the jobs Canadians don't want to do. The "D" jobs – difficult, dirty, and dangerous. He and other workers do not have the same rights as Canadian workers.

In Canada people who produce the food are disconnected from those who consume the food. But behind all the fruits and vegetables that we eat – and the wine, lobsters, other seafood – behind all of these foods, there is a migrant worker and there are 20 injustices involved.

The 20 injustices, dark fruits carried by migrant workers:

1. Tied Work Permit
2. With No Rights and No Status
3. Farmer Controlled Housing (below standard, not regulated)
4. Contracts are not Enforceable
5. Threat of Deportation
6. Harassment and Racism
7. Often Denied Minimum Wage, No Overtime
8. Dangerous Jobs, Little Protection
9. When Injured, Medical Repatriation
10. Not one inquest into death of a migrant worker in a workplace
11. Labour Laws Exclude Us
12. No Enforcement
13. No Access to Employment Insurance
14. Physically Separated from Families
15. Unjust immigration policies
16. Fees paid to recruiters
17. Illegal for farm workers to unionize
18. Power is given to employers
19. Canada hasn't signed the UN Declaration on Rights of Migrant Workers and Families
20. Migrant Workers' Organizations Not Consulted

Canada has always had programs that have dehumanized and systematically exploited people. For example the railway – built on the backs of Chinese migrant workers. And residential schools, and the Sixties Scoop. The migrant workers program is an unjust program, which is the continuation of unjust things.

Maybe we are the problem. Maybe we do not know these unjust policies exist. Or maybe we know and choose to be quiet. The world will be destroyed not by those who do evil, but by those who choose to do nothing.

With 20 injustices, the Canadian food system is not sustainable. But there is power in your hands – as consumers – if you are concerned about how producers are exploiting soil, land, workers - you can vote to vote for a fair and just food system.

APPENDIX VIII:

Marian Eliot and Charles Ian Odias

Marian came to Prince Edward Island from a small town in the Philippines. She said that life is difficult there. You are lucky if you get a job, and if you are paid enough to cover food, a home, transportation and family expenses.

For us, Marian said, the red and white of the Canadian flag means greener pastures, and hope. Hope that we will not experience misery.

It was a childhood dream of Marian's to be in Canada. Before coming here, she worked in Dubai, in a big hotel. She left there to work in Tignish, PEI, as a fish plant worker. Her plan is to get Permanent Residency and bring family here.

She arrived in PEI over a year ago. She has nothing but good words for the people of Tignish.

The general manager at the plant is very supportive. Marian believes there are equal opportunities for migrant and Canadian workers.

She had an opportunity to attend a supper with Premier MacLauchlan & former federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, John MacAllum. She was able to put forward the case for access to Permanent Residency.

In Tignish there are many Filipino workers, and some Mexicans. It is a good opportunity for us. The Canadians in Tignish are kind and generous. It is a supportive community.

And we are making a significant contribution. Many of us now have cars. We buy gasoline and food from local businesses.

Marian said she appreciates the support of Cooper Institute and this opportunity for airing issues.

Charles

Charles said he is proud to work in the plant. An added benefit is that we learn how to catch lobster. And for the first time he was able to see tuna. People are nice, and he is very grateful.

APPENDIX VII: Participants

Albert Juliana	Edith Perry	Leo Cheverie	Peter MacIntyre
Alfie Manon-og	Eliza MacLauchlan	Leti LaRosa	Philip Callaghan
Andrew Richardson	Farahnaz Rezaei	Madeleyne Espana	Raymundo Yu
Ann Wheatley	Flora Thompson	Marian Eliot	Reg Phelan
Ann Bagasbas	Gabriel Allahdua	Marie Burge	Rhyanne Beatty
Bethe Cameron	Gary Papaya	Marilyn Yap-Yu	Rick Cameron
Charles Ian Odias	Hanna Hameline	Marisa Berry Méndez	Robert Godfrey
Colleen Pidgeon	Hannah Gehrels	Mary Cowper-Smith	Robert Yeo
Connie Sorio	Irene Burge	Maureen Larkin	Rosalind Waters
Constance Robinson	James Manla	Meleden Asuer	Santina Beaton
Cristina Garcia	Jemmelyn Belison	Melanie Archambault	Scott Smith
Dandan Wang	Jermer Candulisas	Melissa Juliana	Shawn Shea
Danna Maree Tagalog	Jill Olscamp	Michelle Jay	Sherilyn Manantan
Debbie Theurekauf	Joe Byrne	Mike White	Teresa Tu
Diana Tividad	Jonathan Mosher	Natasha Hall	Tom Hilton
Edbertt D Rivadenera	Kate Dempsey	Nouhad Mourhad	Trish Altass
Eddie Cormier	Kate Liu	Paola Soto Flores	

APPENDIX VIII: Evaluation

Participants were invited to complete a written evaluation. The following is a summary of their comments.

What they liked:

Participants appreciated the program. They said it was well organized, focused and the pace was good.

They liked all of the presentations:

- the diversity and balance of speakers,
- the diversity of perspectives and experiences of participants, including people working in government,
- the amount of information that was shared, including by migrant workers,
- discussion groups leading to concrete actions, and
- the excellent broad view of the issues.

The table conversations were important – the interaction, and meeting so many engaged people made the forum interesting. The active involvement of migrant workers was important to people. And, they liked the food!

What they learned:

People gained new insight into issues affecting the quality of life for migrant workers in PEI and Canada.

They also learned about:

- where migrant workers are working in PEI;
- the isolation, lack of fairness and violation of their rights that they are experiencing;
- injustice in the food system, that there are 20 injustices behind each fruit & vegetable that we eat;
- what other provinces are doing to protect migrant workers' rights;
- the importance of community, and that Tignish could be a model for community engagement; and
- the 180 day permit, healthcare, and closed work permits.

What they said they'd like to know more about:

- 180 day permits and access to PEI health cards;
- why there are different realities for Filipino, Chinese and Mexican workers;
- the history of TFW in PEI in fisheries and agriculture;
- experiences of migrant workers, especially those who weren't there (e.g. Chinese workers);
- Canadian Council for Refugees;
- the process of developing legislation and the steps to bringing about policy change;
- how to improve language training for workers;
- pathways to Permanent Residency;
- Employment Insurance;
- the report cards published by CCR;
- what is working and not working in Manitoba and other provinces;
- the direct impact of migrant workers on PEI;
- how many workers are in which industry and how many are under the 180 day work permit and how many get PR;
- employers' obligations to migrant workers;
- how we can help; and
- Federal v provincial regulations.

And what they would change:

Several people indicated they wanted to do this again. They said they would like to invite:

- people from government (e.g. Occupational Health and Safety) to explain their side of some of the issues;
- policy makers and politicians;
- advocacy groups from the prairies;
- more workers to share their experiences, maybe in camera so they can speak in safety;
- migrant workers to deliver a cultural presentation about their countries and how they are enhancing cultural diversity in PEI.

And that they would like to:

- continue in the same spirit of respectful learning and education that was present today;
- have more time to connect with migrant workers if they feel comfortable;
- have another accessible game or fun activity that lets us mingle more, or another afternoon event that is relaxed, social as time during the event is limited;
- have an update each year to see if we are making a difference
- include a Q & A session for each panel/presentation;
- invite provincial officials to share their vision for the future (plans for migrant workers and pathways to PR);
- record a few speaker for sharing via social media;
- urge employers of migrant workers to attend, to discuss what they are doing or what they would like to do for migrant workers in PEI;
- get speakers from different government sectors such as immigration, service Canada, CRA;
- have everyone introduce themselves – have a sign-up sheet, share participants' contact information;
- talk about where and how migrant workers connect or contact someone if they need something or have questions about their papers;
- keep to the schedule a little better – breaks are important to network and have further discussion;
- shuffle seating at mid-day;
- get Hannah and Paola to lead it again!