

TRANSFORMING TOURISM INITIATIVE

Online-Seminar: Precariousness of Work in Tourism, September 2020

Context

The pandemic had a severe effect on the tourism sector in general and consequently on the people working in tourism. Precariousness and vulnerability of tourism workers are not new issues. Reasons are the incredible informality of the majority of work force. Liberal labour market reforms in the last 30 years, and an unparalleled growth of the sector, which was not simultaneously increasing the wealth of the people in many tourism destinations, had increased the trend.

The pandemic amplifies the pressure on workers. The effects on them, their households and communities, depend severely on the social protection system of their particular places. Their absence and a lack of support for the most vulnerable working groups result in widespread poverty and despair of the people most affected by the tourism decline.

This panel will shed a light on the precariousness and vulnerability of different groups of workers in tourism, but it will also show their fight for dignity and a fundamental change in the tourism system.

K T Suresh (Moderator)



K T worked for the last 30 years in a variety of organizations, enabling them to develop leadership and/or to, initiate, sustain and institutionalize change. His work includes securing rights and sustainable livelihood through collective action and education for people dependent on the informal economy in India. K T Suresh has a vital role in Action Aid India leading the national work on urban and labour.

https://www.actionaidindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Workers-in-the-time-of-Covid-19_ebook.pdf

<http://equitabletourism.org/>

<https://www.tourism-watch.de/de/schwerpunkt/von-der-leeren-hand-den-mund>

Eulalia Corralero, Kelly Unión, Spain



Eulalia works in the tourism industry as a housekeeper and is president of the federation of associations Kelly Unión. Her vision is to improve the profession of housekeeping and to make known the precariousness in which these women live.

“The situation of the chambermaids was always bad, it always has been, but now within the situation of this global pandemic what has happened is that we continue to be very much unprotected. Laws don't protect us. Next year we will be facing a situation of extreme poverty and above all it's the woman in this case who have been taking the burden of this.

As workers and as women, we have organized as Unión Las Kellys, so that we have a voice and people see us. The time has come for other workers in the tourism sector to do the same. We hope that the government will take actions and do what they promised which is protect us so that no workers are left abandoned, are left unprotected.”

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/LASKELLYS>

Edwin Dela Cruz, International Seafarers Action Center, Philippines



Edwin works as a labour, maritime and migrant lawyer for legal cases of overseas Filipino workers and is the president of the International Seafarers Action Center (ISAC). Moreover he represents seafarers in the Global Council of Migrants International and is the president of the Philippine Cuba Friendship Association (AMISTAD).

“The situation of the Filipino seafarers including the cruise ship crew even before the pandemic was a situation of extreme exploitation and oppression. There is no social security, wide spread discrimination, health benefits only for work related conditions and no assurance to rehire or making them regular employees. What we see now is that the cruiseship workers are organizing themselves and expressing their demands to be considered as regular employees.”

<https://isacph.wordpress.com/>

<https://www.tourism-watch.de/de/schwerpunkt/philippinische-seeleute-fordern-mehr-rechte>

Angela Teberga, Labor Movens Study Group, Brazil



Angela is an Assistant Professor at the Federal University of Tocantins on the Tourism Course. She is also a researcher from Alba Sud and coordinator of the Labor Moves Study Group on Working Conditions in tourism and a Ph.D. candidate in Tourism and Hospitality.

“Precariousness is one of the characteristics of work in tourism. From low wages and long working days to insufficient contracts, which don’t respect, or protect the workers. We can see that this has to do with the neoliberal policies and flexible accumulation of capital. During the pandemic it is easier just to layoff and have a new contract later with less money.”

<http://www.albasud.org/elblogdeangelateberga>

Adama Bah, International Center for Responsible Tourism, Gambia



Adama is an associate member of the International Centre for Responsible Tourism. He holds a MSc in Responsible Tourism Management and formed the International Centre for Responsible Tourism – West Africa

“With Covid, it is becoming clear to us, that tourism cannot be an alternative in terms of being a sustainable, long-term economic factor for our country, given that it is controlled from the outside. But there is a positive development that is taking place now the formation of Tourism Federation of Gambia with representatives from tourism workers, private sector, communities and tourism policy makers to look at issues of sustainable tourism/ responsible tourism. What COVID did was that tourism industry felt that how vulnerable we are, not just eth informal sector but also the formal sector – this hopefully will move us towards more sustainability.”

<https://www.icrtwestafrica.org/>