

Migration, Labor, and Organic Agriculture

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Abstract

In recent years, we have been witnessing a massive increase in migration of peoples around the globe, in particular of low-income migrants migrating from the global South to states in the North. Many of these displaced peoples are smallholders no longer able to make a living. This phenomenon has been exacerbated by environmental devastation, human rights violations and conflict, as well as inequitable trade policies and agricultural subsidies in the North that undercut the market for smallholders in the South.

Increasingly, agriculture - including organic agriculture - in the North is relying on an immigrant workforce for labor-intensive crop production. Rather than respond with more liberal immigration policies allowing people to relocate to where the demand for their labor exists, Northern countries - from the USA and Canada to Western Europe and Australia - are expanding their use of temporary agricultural worker programs, which in many cases deny basic rights to participating workers. IFOAM has a unique opportunity to be a leader in promoting human rights by fully implementing Chapter 8 on Social Justice.

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