All around the world, migrants are moved by hope.

In Indonesia, women approach labour recruiters to find out how much they can earn for their families as domestic workers overseas. In Bangladesh, men make their way to training centers to pick up the skills they need for construction work. Before they leave their country, migrants must face the prospect of debt, high placement fees, demanding training classes, and powerful worries of the unknown.

Who are the brokers, agents, and trainers that help migrants cross borders? How do migrants manage with gaps in regulation and a lack of protection? How can states govern the recruitment of low-waged migrant labour in Asia?

Join us for an evening of discussion as we turn the spotlight to these issues from a number of diverse expert perspectives.

Visit our photography exhibition on migrant domestic work, ‘Dreaming Singapore’, produced in collaboration with Ruom.

Date: 2 July 2015, Thursday  
Time: 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm  
Venue: *SCAPE media Hub  
#05-02, 2 Orchard Link (*SCAPE)  
Singapore 237978

*SCAPE is a five-minute walk from Somerset MRT.

Admission is free, but seats are limited.  
Please RSVP by emailing: valerie.yeo@nus.edu.sg
En Route to the Departure Hall: How Migrants Navigate Recruitment Processes

Date : 2 Jul 2015
Venue : *SCAPEmedia Hub
        2 Orchard Link, #05-02, Singapore 237978

This event is brought to you by Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, with funding from Migrating Out of Poverty Research Programme Consortium, and *SCAPE as a Programme Partner.

Speakers:
Dr Manolo Abella, Centre for Migration Policy and Society (COMPAS), University of Oxford, UK
Mr Nicolas Axelrod, Ruom
Ms Kellynn Wee, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, & Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2)

Chairperson: Prof Brenda S.A. Yeoh, Asia Research Institute, and Department of Geography, National University of Singapore

SYNOPSIS

Somewhere in Indonesia, a woman is speaking to a labour recruiter, trying to choose between staying at home and leaving to earn her livelihood in another country. In Bangladesh, a man is making his way to a training centre, intent on learning the necessary skills that will speed him to work overseas. Migrants are moved by hope, but the decision to migrate for work can often be a huge gamble as migrants face high fees and debts, demanding training procedures, and powerful worries about the unknown. Given these barriers, what dreams spur men and women across borders? Who are the brokers, agents, and trainers that make up the increasingly lucrative and complex migration industry? How do migrants make their way through gaps in regulation and protection? And what is the way forward?

This public symposium, featuring three presentations, offers a comparative perspective on the issues and challenges concerning the recruitment of low-waged migrant labour in Asia. The presentations will touch upon the obstacles and opportunities that governments face while trying to institute policies that regulate labour migration, and examine the ways low-waged migrant workers are recruited to Singapore. Accompanying the presentations is a photo exhibition titled ‘Dreaming Singapore,’ shot by photojournalist collective Ruom, which powerfully chronicles the repeated journeys of Indonesian migrant domestic workers to Singapore. Ruom is an organic collaboration between photographers, journalists, videographers, and researchers, drawn together by a passion for social documentary work. It is a space to showcase regional and international projects with the aim of giving voice to global issues that may be underreported by the mainstream media. The photographer will share on the experience of photographing and writing the stories of Indonesian women who come to Singapore to work.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Manolo Abella, a Filipino economist, was formerly the Director of the International Migration Programme of the International Labour Office (ILO) and a member of the Advisory Board of the Centre for Migration Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford. He has been actively involved in international efforts to develop a multilateral framework for the management of labour migration and spent many years writing and rendering advice to governments on policies and best practices. He is at present working on what various academic disciplines have to offer to improve the governance of migration, and how this knowledge can best be organized for the training of policy-makers.
Nicolas Axelrod has been based in Southeast Asia since 2008 and is a founding member of Ruom. Before moving to Cambodia he was living and working in Perth, Western Australia as a Freelance Photographer as well as for a Perth based commercial photography agency. He has worked for international humanitarian organizations such as UNICEF, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, UNESCO and Handicap International. His work has been published in various local and international publications such as *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *Die Welt*, *The International New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Time Magazine*.

Kellynn Wee is Research and Communications Officer at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. She is currently researching the role of brokers in the migration industry for domestic workers and the policy processes behind the formulation of the mandatory 'day off' legislation for domestic workers in Singapore.

**ARI ASIA TRENDS 2015 SERIES**

**Asia Trends** is an ARI flagship public outreach event. This annual series of public lectures showcase the work of ARI’s research clusters, highlights the relevance of ARI’s research to Singapore, and relates Singapore to the rest of Asia from the perspective of significant trends in the region. It is an opportunity for ARI to connect with the larger Singapore community through sharing and interacting with various public sectors (citizenry, government), civil society organizations, businesses, universities and colleges, by presenting cutting edge research on major trends in Asia. Some trends examined in the past include “Migration and Construction Work in Asia,” “Love and Money: Parenting after Divorce,” “China’s Leap from the Work’s Work Bench: Tech, Entertainment and the Quest for Soft Power,” “Creating Centralities” and “What is Sinophone World Literature?: China, Southeast Asia, and the Global 60s”. Each ARI research cluster hosts an evening talk, during which usually an overseas speaker, who is a prominent researcher or scholar, is invited to examine an emergent trend in that research field; a Singapore-based researcher then provides comments on local development with regard to the trend in question. Past seminars have witnessed interesting interaction between speakers and commentators and lively audience participation in the discussions.