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cordially invites you to an

Open Lecture

on

**Runaway Girls and Affective Performances of
Law and Legal Status: Case Study of
Bangladeshi Women in Hong Kong**

by



Veronika Stepkova

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UNDP Regional Hub Europe and Central Asia

Abstract

From 2013 to 2015, almost 60% of around 1000 Bangladeshi domestic workers in Hong Kong lost their legal status and opted for informal employment. In Hong Kong, this is the single most significant "runaway" event of a national group. Data from this 2-year-long multi-sited feminist ethnography in Bangladesh and Hong Kong suggest that migrant women's legal status was reduced to affective performances which make participants in this research more vulnerable to running away or staying with abusive employers for the sake of keeping valuable legality. Findings of this research suggest that in employment agencies and training centres for migrant workers, the migrant's capacity to approximate an ideal of a Third World Woman empowered by migration became a fulcrum for shaming tactics. With this approach, the research explores how emotions work under oppressive legal regimes and advances the view that affect is performative.

Profile of Speaker

Veronika Stepkova pursued her PhD on migration of domestic workers from Bangladesh as a Hong Kong Research Council PhD Fellow. Her research interests include law and emotions, gender and migration and workings of power in development initiatives. Veronika graduated from SOAS, University of London, and prior to and during her PhD worked in UN Women Cambodia, BRAC, OECD and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. She is currently working as a consultant in UNDP and she is writing chapters for two academic publications on international migration.

Wednesday, 14 February 2018, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm

T1, Big Bang Conference Room

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