

# REGION 1

*MAPID Research Highlights  
International Migration &  
Development:  
Policies, Practices & Perceptions*

*Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur,  
La Union & Pangasinan*

## The Ilocos Region (Region I)

- located in the northwestern part of Luzon.

Composed of four (4) provinces,  
9 cities, 116 municipalities, and  
3,265 barangays.

- Regional center - City of San Fernando, La Union.
- Ilocanos - 70% and Pangasinenses - 28%

## Profile:

- The region is averaged size economy
- GRDP is not growing fast enough vis-à-vis the growth in population.
- The economic sector is essentially led by the **agriculture and the services sector**
- **industry sector** contributes barely one-third of the output value of the other two sectors.
- The **investment performance** of the region had been rollercoaster.
- **Export performance** was worse than investment.
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- **Tourism performance** is erratic, but a major source of development prospects.
- Average unemployment rate is 10.60 percent (quite high)
- Misery index is computed at 16.40%--population feels that the economic situation has been turning from bad to worse.
- However, the region has many strengths and opportunities that can be taken advantage of. It is strategically located vis-à-vis other Asian countries. The agribusiness role of the Northern Luzon regions also provide opportunities for Region I. Can tap into its agro-industrial and tourism potentials in order to achieve a better quality of life for its people and its environment

# **1. International migration as part of regional/ local development plans, views and perceptions**

- Throughout history Filipinos, especially Ilocanos, have had a reputation for being found in all corners of the globe.
- The physical environment of Ilocandia has affected the Ilocano way of life. Ilocanos are thrifty and used to difficulties and hardships.
- During the Spanish times, abuses prompted the escape of Ilocanos towards Pangasinan and Central Luzon, which accounts for Ilocano speaking communities in Eastern Pangasinan and Central Luzon.
- The mounting population pressure during the mid-1800s caused the migration of Ilocanos out of their historic homeland.
- By 1903, more than 290,000 Ilocanos migrated to Central Luzon, Cagayan Valley, and Manila, Mindanao.

- During the American regime, they moved to Hawaii and California, where jobs for farmhands were plentiful, and then to the canneries in Alaska.
- The Ilocanos composed the largest number of expatriates in Hawaii, with more than 86% of the Filipino population. This is the best documented record of the Ilocano diaspora.
- Since the late 60s and 70s, when out-migration became a supported government option for our economic survival, there have been waves of Filipinos surging to join the OFW bandwagon.

- In the 50s and early 60s, those who usually left for the United States and Canada sought to become citizens or immigrants.
- In the 70s the picture shifted with the surge of workers bound for Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries.
- The late 70s saw the inclusion of Asian countries in the destination spectrum—Japan, Brunei, Hongkong, Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, and later, South Korea. Now, they are leaving for Thailand, China, Israel, Greece, Cayman Islands, Vietnam, and even venturing to high-risk places like Iran, Iraq and Nigeria.

- Region I ranks third among the regions where most OFWs come from, with the biggest number of women OFWs.
- Region I remains one of the top five source of women OFWs and Pangasinan was identified to have the biggest share.
- Region I has a share of 8% of the total overseas Filipino workers.
- POEA data in 2006 showed that La Union was the birthplace of some 9,677 land-based and 1,717 sea-based temporary contract workers.
- On the other hand, 1988-2005 data from the CFO revealed some 15,343 permanent residents abroad came from La Union (Opiniano, 2008).

## 2. Existing structures and mechanisms concerning international migration

- At the regional level, agency level entities have a compartmentalized view of international migration. Strict adherence to mandate and organizational objectives constrains most of them to relegate to DOLE/POEA/OWWA the issues and concerns regarding overseas Filipino workers, with CFO providing the oversight for other Filipinos overseas.
- Even the DOT, while present in some consulates overseas, does not concern itself with OFW problems, because their mandate is "to bring visitors to the Philippines, not bring them out of our country. "
- POEA's overall development thrust looks into the management of the welfare of OFWs as the agency regional center for Regions 1 & 2; with major focus on the fight against illegal recruitment, delivery of support services to OFW applicants, active workers and their families, as well as in developing programs that address the re-integration of OFW returnees.

- OWWA, being a welfare agency, seeks to address the upliftment of the Filipino family through the continuing education and skills enhancement of OFWs and their dependents and looks at documented cases of abuses against OFWs and seeks to provide them protection and redress, as well as guidance mechanisms for the OFWs themselves and their families.
- The OWWA respondent sees the engagement of LGUs in the welfare of their OFWs and also the participation of the local community as critical. Even DOH does not consider the out-flow of our nurses and other medical workers as critical, given the number of new nurses being graduated annually, although some concern is given for the departure of more experienced nurses.

- At the provincial level, there was no mention of international migration in their development /investment plans; more so at the municipal/city level.
- Perceptions about the phenomenon of migration elicited varied responses; with the most common reasons for leaving being limited employment opportunities, poverty and dissatisfaction with present lives/salaries/work conditions; the search for greener pastures and green bucks; the need to ensure the family's future (family security), and weariness of the hard life of farming. Also cited is the adventurous nature of Ilocanos.

- **Remittances** have benefited the local economy; unemployment reduction; and in the implementation of small development projects such as improved barangay roads, water supply system, provision of scholarships, donations in the form of buildings, classrooms, equipment, vehicles.
- Other benefits include the empowerment of OFW families in terms of food security, education, improvement of the property values of communities with the building of beautiful houses and improvement of roads leading to OFW bailiwicks; and donations to the local government in the form of buildings, waiting sheds, scholarship donations and from time to time the arrival of medical missions.
- Generally, the money derived from the sacrifice of the OFW is treated with respect and put to good use.

- Adverse effects are in the form of brain and brawn drain; family dysfunction and family related problems; the psychological problems that arise basically from the incapacity of those involved to handle extended separations.
- In general, the benefits are seen as outweighing the adverse effects.
- The general consensus is that the number of those leaving is just right.
- **As to policy requirements**, the common answer was that there were enough existing policies; what is needed is more focused/ vigilant implementation of these policies and advocacy for the protection of OFWs.
- **Employment opportunities** are seen as emanating from the agro-industrial sector, from the tourism sector, and from the small and medium enterprise sector. Concerns that need to be addressed however, are competitive remuneration or income generation; the development of high-value crops for export, the infusion of investments, the wariness of the young (and the restless) to work the land; development of export products, the one-town-one product (OTOP) movement; promotion of local industries, technology assistance for the agriculture sector; and improvement of the economic outlook.

- **Disparities** between OFW and non-OFW households are seen as critical in financial terms and in the entry of new behaviors copied from abroad, with OFWs easily identifiable because of the way they dress, flashy jewelry and gadgets, even the way they talk. It was noted that most successful OF/Ws are generous and often share their blessings.
- The **departure of professionals** was generally perceived as not critical, but in time, the brain drain will become a hindrance to development initiatives.

- **Social costs** of migration is well-recognized: the absence of a parent leading to single-parent households, more so with the absence of the mother who deprives her children of her care to take care of the children of others, and worse, the absence of both parents, leading to what the NEDA respondent calls "latch key" children, and resultant effects in terms of broken relationships, wayward and/or abused children, dysfunctional families. But mitigating factors are the closeness of Ilocano family ties, the present ease in communicating with one another and generally, Ilocanos know how to handle their money and are savings-oriented. The need for a strong support system for psychological and emotional needs of both the OFW and the family left behind was cited.

# Encouragement to return

was regarded

as not feasible at this time with no commensurate employment opportunities, and the financial deprivation of their families would create other types of problems.

- **RE reintegration policies**, the regional offices point to DOLE/POEA/ OWWA, and even DFA, as lead agencies to look into this.
- This role was acknowledged by POEA and OWWA, with re-integration programs in the process of being initiated as pet project of Administrator Roque which shall include among others the continuing education of OFWs and/or their dependents (Tulong Aral Program).
- Through the initiative of the POEA/OWWA, there is now a move ***to set up in every municipality an OFW association, with members consisting of OFW returnees and dependents to engage them in productive activities as well as provide a support mechanism.***

- **On the presence of OFWs and other international migrants,** the general perception is that every municipality is now infected with the OFW syndrome.
- As to sex disaggregation, the actual data shows that more females are now leaving, which conforms to the informants' perceptions.
- Most municipalities have identified source areas, due to the bandwagon effect on the community.

- **Views about future prospects of international migration:** At this time, OFWs are not encouraged to return, in fear of the loss of the revenues that are sourced out from remittances. In the long term, the exportation of our workers would be a continuing agenda of the government.
- Generally, OF/Ws are also viewed as **potential partners in development**, at the national and local level. They can bring in positive changes and even the unsuccessful ones can provide guidance to others.
- The graciousness of our overseas Filipinos, perhaps acting on a sense of guilt that they are enjoying development while those left behind are still mired in poverty, is known and their Filipino trait of looking back at their roots, elicits some form of altruism and philanthropy; hence their gifts and donations and other forms of assistance, especially during times of need (disasters).
- **Many of the key informants at the LGU level are now considering the inclusion of this sector in their development plans.**

## Practices in relating with overseas Filipinos:

- OWWA recommends a pre-departure orientation not only for the OFW but also for their families, so that they will at least foresee what is in store for them while their loved one is away earning a living in a foreign place.
- Setting up OFW associations in every municipality is also a move in the right direction as a support mechanism for the OFW and their families.
- On the other hand, most cases of abuse or need for repatriation are coursed through provincial/municipal social welfare and development units; local contingency funds may be allocated for travel expenses of the OFW in need.
- Ilocos Sur has a “libreng tawag” program. Church-based intervention facilities are also present.

### 3) Migrant-supported projects investments, and models of cooperation

#### Migrants' links with regional/local government

- All of the LGU key informants have a semblance of relationship with their migrants, ranging from very active to not so active. Most local officials see them as a potential source of development assistance, although practices in dealing with them are still **very informal**.
- Many of the Local Chief Executives link up with their relatives abroad who happen to be members of a local hometown association. The association or individual members are then tapped to donate some amount during fiestas by buying advertisement space in the Fiesta Souvenir program.
- Later, they may be tapped to donate some form of development assistance such as waiting sheds, lamp posts, vehicles, building, book donations, medical missions, and scholarship grants.

- Cute terms identify them: Laoageños, Bacarrenos, Paoayeños, San Nicolaeños, Ilocos Surians, Narvacaños, Naguilianons, Pozorrubians, etc. They are part of the mainstream life of the localities where they have come from, arriving in droves during fiestas or special holidays, during weddings or funerals, occasions where they touch base with their relatives and friends, and they come home with goodies to share.
- Sisterhood and twinning arrangements were mentioned by several informants such as Bacarra, Bauang, San Nicolas, Naguilian, Laoag City.
- Unfortunately, the informants could not give specific details of development projects that were initiated/completed in the LGU, because documentation is not available. Majority preferred to work with associations, basically because often the logistics required for the transfer of resources would require the cooperation of a number of people in addition to which associations have more resources to share than individuals.

## **Migrant Investments:**

- No data is available from the regional offices.
- The common comment from DILG and DTI is that they do not categorize investment funds' source whether coming from OF money or not. They do not have information on successful/ failed investments, even POEA nor OWWA.
- These two agencies now realize that they should have a hand in giving information and even training in support to investment potentials that may be tapped by OFs.
- In general, there is no organized plan to tap OF/Ws for investing in the LGUs. No data was elicited for offers from OFWs to share their expertise in the LGUs.

## **Regional/Local government contributions as development partners:**

- The willingness to cooperate and their past record of cooperating with OFs as their development partners is emphatically expressed by the regional/local government agencies
- There was even willingness to provide counterpart funding for development projects, and most offered to provide technical assistance and/or support information for potential projects.
- At the LGU level, this task was delegated to the office of the mayor, the PESO office, the MSWD, the tourism committee, but there was no formal desk for OF/Ws.

## Future plans and prospects:

- Trust-building would be a necessary factor in setting up plans for future collaborations between local entities and our migrants
- There should be image-building, the elimination of the climate of corruption, and the belief in the integrity of our leaders as effective ingredients towards trust building
- There was a general ignorance about the *tres por uno* model but there was eagerness to know more about it
- However, there were reservations as to its replicability to local conditions.

## ***CONCLUSIONS***

The regional overview of international migration trends of Region I validates the observation that the Ilocos is a major source of Filipinos overseas, whether as workers or as permanent residents/immigrants of the countries that they have selected to work and live in.

1. The development thrusts of all the provinces comprising the Ilocos Region is tied up to the agro-industrial sector with re-focus on potential export products and on tourism development with the identification of tourism "time zones". Government agencies focus their development thrusts in keeping with their mandates. Local government units tend to approach development prospects through focusing on agriculture, education, livelihood, tourism, health, the environment and peace and security.
2. Migration is generally seen as a way out of the harsh realities of life in the region, for lack of employment opportunities and the desire to provide and ensure a better future for the family and also caused by the adventurousness of Ilocanos who are found in almost all parts of the country and the world.

3. International migration has contributed to the improvement in the general well-being of the families, communities and the region, in terms of food security, education, and possessions. On the other hand, international migration has had adverse effects, particularly in the personal lives of the migrants and their families.
4. As to volume of those who are leaving, the general perception is that the number is just right, in terms of decongesting the number of those unemployed. In terms of policy requirements, the common answer was that we have enough policies but there may be lapses in their implementation. Whether to encourage them to come back or not, the answer was that it was not feasible at this time because they will not have alternative jobs here and that their return would aggravate the problem of unemployment.

5. The general impression in terms of dependence on remittances was that it is critical at the national level and that the government is not responding to the need for employment opportunities domestically.

At the household level, the impression is that there are isolated cases of overdependence on remittances; but generally, dependence on remittances is not critical, the money taken in from the sacrifice of OFWs is treated with respect and put to good use by the beneficiaries.

Disparities at the community and household levels are deemed not critical but beneficial, as a motivator for others to seek overseas employment or with the OF as helping in the development of the community.

6. In terms of reintegration policies, most line agencies point to OWWA/POEA/DOLE as the lead agency to tackle this issue in close coordination with LGUs. LGUs readily admitted that they do not have clear-cut policies on reintegrating their OFWs.

7. From the cited examples, there is proof that engagements with our international migrants are actively existing for most of the provinces/municipalities, but these are largely **informal**, not very well-documented, and no database of completed and on-going development projects exist. These are largely managed by the recipient LGU, usually through the local chief executive, which may explain why no database exist as they have a **personalistic** approach to engaging with OFs.

8. In terms of investments, again the need for disaggregating DTI/LGU data to identify OF investments should be attended to. In general, there is no organized plan to tap OFs for investing in the LGU. On the other hand, regional/local government units emphatically expressed their willingness to cooperate with OFs as their development partners, even expressing willingness to provide counterpart funding for mutually beneficial development projects.

- 9. Trust-building and transparency are cited as a necessary factors in engaging our OFs to support local development. There was a general ignorance about the *tres-por-uno* model, but a willingness to know more about it; although their was skepticism as to whether it will work under Philippine circumstances. The topics deemed most important would be those on livelihood training, establishing partnerships with OF associations, financial management/ investments, family counseling services, reintegration program initiatives, OFW protection, multi-cultural adjustments.
- 10. The case studies cited present diverse experiences on engagements with OFs—how they have organized themselves for mutual protection, empowerment and moral support (OFW Associations); how our overseas Filipinos have supported development projects that have lasting impact on the poorest of the poor (Gawad Kalinga); an example of an innovative way of engaging our OFs in development initiatives of the LGU (Bin-I Express Foundation of San Nicolas); and an example of an OF investment in La Union (Trinity). These generally point to the willingness of OF/Ws to organize themselves and put their experiences to good use; to pay back their home country and share their blessings; and to invest their hard-earned savings.

11. As a general conclusion, this researcher believes that historically, Ilocanos are imbued with the wanderlust—in search of new opportunities, new experiences, adventure and opportunity in foreign shores. But the hold of the home country is strong, and so they come home to assuage their nostalgia (iliw) for home and relatives.

At the present time, however, overseas employment has become a necessity for most families for lack of jobs and the taking off of the agro-industrial-tourism master plan of the region.

But the fact remains that in time, the wanderers will have to come home and when they do, we have to welcome them back as an important sector of civil society and potential contributors to local development.

**THANK YOU!**

***NITZ VILLARAMA***



# MAPID TRAINING PROGRAM - PHILIPPINES

## SESSION 2

### MIGRANTS' ASSOCIATIONS AND PHILIPPINE INSTITUTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT: ILOCOS REGION\*

Nenita Villarama\*\*

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\* This material has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the Scalabrini Migration Center and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

\*\* Dr. Villarama is Associate Professor and Head of the Planning and Development Unit & Core Faculty of the Graduate Studies at the Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University (DMMMSU) - Mid La Union Campuses. She finished her Master in Education at the University of the Philippines and her PhD in Technological Education Management at the DMMMSU. Before joining DMMMSU in 1974, Dr. Villarama worked as a teacher in various high schools and colleges in La Union and Bulacan.

## Executive Summary

The Ilocos Region (Region I) is located in the northwestern part of Luzon. It is composed of four provinces, namely, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union and Pangasinan, nine cities, 116 municipalities, and 3,265 barangays. Its regional center is located San Fernando City, La Union. The MAPID research in Region I covered all four provinces and selected municipalities.

The region is an averaged size economy, which is essentially led by the agriculture and the services sectors. The region's performance in investment, export and tourism had not been consistent. Unemployment is high at 10.6 percent. The potential for growth and development is strong. The region is envisioned to be the northern springboard of development by leveraging its location and agri-industrial and tourism potentials in order to achieve a better quality of life for its people and its environment.

The participation of Ilocanos in migration, both internal and international, is well-known and documented. In the early 1900s, Ilocanos were among the Filipinos who crossed the oceans to work in the plantations of Hawaii and the farms of the Pacific West Coast. Today, Ilocanos comprise the largest group of the Filipino population in Hawaii. Ilocanos were equally active in permanent migration, which accelerated from the 1960s. In the 1970s, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries became major destinations. By the late 1970s, Japan, Brunei, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, and later, South Korea added to the list of destinations of migrants from the region. More destination countries figured over the years, including high-risk places like Iran, Iraq and Nigeria. Presently, Region I ranks third among the source regions of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and a primary source region of women OFWs.

## Perspectives on the International Migration-Development Nexus

Key informants representing regional agencies tend to have a compartmentalized view of international migration. Strict adherence to mandate and organizational objectives seems to incline most of them to relegate international labor migration issues – specifically issues pertaining to overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) – to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA); other overseas Filipinos were viewed as under the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO).

Key informants from agencies involved in international migration viewed international migration issues through their agencies' mandates and objectives; the links to development issues were not as salient. The participation of LGUs in the promotion of the welfare of OFWs and families, however, was mentioned as a critical component.

At the provincial and municipal levels, there was no mention of international migration in their development/investment plans. Generally, overseas Filipinos and OFWs are viewed as potential partners in development. They can bring in positive changes and even the unsuccessful ones can provide guidance to others. Many of the key informants at the LGU level are now considering the inclusion of this sector in their development plans. Despite the long history of international migration from

the region, there are few structures in place aimed at institutionalizing the links between overseas Filipinos and the local communities.

Limited employment opportunities, poverty, and dissatisfaction with current salaries/work conditions were the major reasons cited why people leave. Also cited is the adventurous nature of Ilocanos.

The contributions of migration to development were seen in terms of remittance inflows, the reduction of unemployment, and the role of collective remittances in supporting small-scale development projects such as improved *barangay* roads, water supply system, scholarships programs, donations in the form of buildings, classrooms, equipment, vehicles. Other benefits include the empowerment of OFW families in food security, education and housing. Adverse effects are in the form of brain and brawn drain, psychosocial difficulties and family-related problems. The departure of professionals was generally perceived as not critical, but in time, the brain drain may hinder development initiatives. The social costs of migration are well-recognized: the absence of parents, especially mothers, was often mentioned as eroding family relationships. But mitigating factors are the closeness of Ilocano family ties, the ease in communicating with one another, and the famed Ilocano propensity to save and prudent use of finances. The need for a strong support system to meet the psychological and emotional needs of both the OFW and the family left behind was cited. In general, the benefits are seen as outweighing the adverse effects.

The general consensus is that the number of those leaving is just right. As to policy requirements, the common answer was that there were enough existing policies; what are needed are better implementation of these policies and more protection of OFWs. Employment opportunities - i.e., alternatives to overseas employment – are seen as emanating from the agro-industrial sector, the tourism sector, and the small and medium enterprise sector. Concerns that need to be addressed, however, are competitive remuneration or income generation; the development of high-value crops for export; the infusion of investments; the wariness of the young (and the restless) to work the land; the development of export products; the one-town-one product (OTOP) movement; the promotion of local industries; technology assistance for the agriculture sector; and improvement of the economic outlook.

Encouraging migrant workers to return was regarded as not feasible at this time in the absence of viable employment opportunities.

## **Existing Structures, Mechanisms and Policies**

With regards to reintegration policies, the regional offices point to DOLE/POEA/OWWA – some also mentioned the DFA –as the lead agencies working with OFWs. Through the initiative of the POEA and OWWA, there is now a move to set up in every municipality an OFW association, with members consisting of OFW returnees and dependents, to engage them in productive activities as well as provide a support mechanism.

Existing or proposed mechanisms at the local level are mostly about protection issues. OWWA recommends a pre-departure orientation not only for OFWs but also for their families in order to raise awareness among the latter about migration realities. Most cases of abuse or repatriation assistance are coursed through provincial/municipal social welfare and development units, and local contingency funds may be allocated to support OFWs in distress. Ilocos Sur has a “libreng tawag” program to provide channels of communication between OFWs and their families. Church-based facilities and services also provide support to OFWs and their families.

## Migrant-Supported Projects, Investments and Models of Cooperation

### *Migrants' links with regional agencies and local governments*

All of the LGU key informants mentioned having some links with overseas Filipinos. Most local officials see overseas Filipinos as a potential source of development assistance, although practices in dealing with them are still very informal. Many of the local chief executives link up with their relatives abroad who are members of a local hometown association, which can then be tapped for donations, such as for the celebration of the town fiesta. Later, these donations may expand into more development-oriented forms, such as funding the construction of community facilities (waiting sheds, lamp posts, buildings, or purchase of vehicles) book donations, scholarship grants, or medical missions. Overseas Filipinos behind these projects are identified according to their hometowns in the region – Laoageños, Bacarrenos, Paoayeños, San Nicolaesños, Ilocos Surians, Narvacaesños, Naguillianons, Pozorrubians, etc. Sisterhood and twinning arrangements were mentioned by several informants such as those from Bacarra, Bauang, San Nicolas, Naguillian, and Laoag City. Unfortunately, the informants could not give specific details of development projects that were initiated/completed in the LGU, because documentation is not available.

### *Migrant investments*

There are no data from regional or local offices on migrant investments. The common comment from the Department of Interior and Local Government and the Department of Trade and Industry is that the source of funds is not categorized as coming from overseas Filipinos or others. To date, there is there is no organized plan to tap overseas Filipinos or OFWs for investing in the LGUs.

### *Regional/local government contributions as development partners*

The willingness to cooperate and their past record of cooperating with overseas Filipinos were emphasized by key informants from regional and local government agencies. They also expressed willingness to provide counterpart funding for development projects; most offered to provide technical assistance and/or support information for potential projects. At the LGU level, this task was delegated to the office of the mayor, the public employment service office, the municipal social welfare and development, and the tourism committee in the absence of a formal desk dedicated to overseas Filipinos and OFWs.

Trust-building and transparency would be necessary factors in setting up plans for future collaborations between local entities and overseas Filipino communities. The informants were not aware of Mexico's *tres por uno* model. Many expressed interest about the scheme; some informants had reservations as to its replicability to local conditions. Key informants expressed interest in participating in the planned capacity-building programs. The following were suggested as topics for the training programs: livelihood, establishing partnerships with overseas Filipinos associations, financial management/investments, family counseling services, reintegration program initiatives, OFW protection and multi-cultural adjustment.

## Concluding Notes

The MAPID research affirmed the important role of international migration in the Ilocos Region. Other than economic factors, Ilocano migration was also seen as part of the Ilocano sense of adventure. The research also affirmed the various contributions of overseas Filipinos to local development. Many of these contributions have gone unnoticed due to lack of documentation. Also, the informal approach that characterizes most engagement with overseas Filipinos has contributed to a lack of appreciation to collect and use data as a planning, monitoring and assessment tool. Data on migrant investments are also lacking, if not, non-existent. Also, in general, there is no organized plan to tap OFs to invest in local communities.

The case studies documented by the MAPID research in the region point to the agency of overseas Filipinos as social actors, as indicated by how they have organized themselves for mutual protection, empowerment and moral support (through the formation of OFW Associations) and their support for projects that have a lasting impact on the poorest of the poor (e.g., Gawad Kalinga housing projects or the Bin-I Express Foundation of San Nicolas). Proactive policies and approaches by government institutions can open many possibilities for transnational cooperation involving overseas Filipino communities.