



MAPID TRAINING PROGRAM - SPAIN

VOICES OF PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS*

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I.A. International Migration and Development in the Philippines: Situating the MAPID Project

The Migrants' Associations and Philippine Institutions (MAPID) Project across the three sites – the Philippines, Italy and Spain – sought to pursue two general objectives:

1. to advance the understanding of the migration-development nexus among migrants' associations and Philippine institutions; and
2. to promote cooperation between migrants' associations and national and local government institutions in the Philippines

These objectives are specifically aimed at building the capacity and partnership between migrants' associations in Italy and Spain, and key national and local Philippine institutions in promoting development in the Philippines. As the homeland counterpart of the MAPID Project, the Philippine component focused on one critical stakeholder – Philippine government institutions.

Although the Philippines has been hailed as a model of migration management, this accolade pertains mostly to the country's success in securing labor markets for its nationals on the one hand, and promoting and protecting the rights of Filipino migrant workers on the other (e.g., Asis, 2008; 2006). As to whether this approach has contributed to sustainable development is another story. In fact, it seems that the Philippines does not figure much when the discussion turns to the contributions of international migration to development.

With an overseas population estimated at 8.7 million (stock estimate as of December 2007), which corresponds to about 10 percent of the Philippine population, it is easy to appreciate the possible links between international migration and development. Different kinds of migration invite different reactions in Philippine society. In the 1960s and 1970s, concerns and debates over brain drain emerged with the emigration of Filipino professionals, mostly doctors and nurses. The migration of political figures and the middle class in the wake of the declaration of martial law on 21 September 1972 (mostly to the USA) was regarded by those who remained in the Philippines as "betrayal" or "leaving a sinking ship." A reprise of this kind of migration occurred after

the assassination of Benigno Aquino, Jr. in 1983. A different regard and sentiment is associated with labor migration. In fact, the migration of overseas contract workers or OCWs (later, the term “overseas Filipino workers” or OFWs gained currency) from the 1970s generally evokes sympathy and concern. It is a migration that is imbued with sacrifice in the minds of many Filipinos because migrant workers leave their families behind and toil abroad to support their families back in the Philippines. In recognition of their contributions to the economy, President Corazon Aquino started the rhetoric of OFWs as the country’s *bagong bayani* or new heroes.* Of the different types of international migration from the Philippines, international labor migration has attracted the most comment, the most research, and the most policy response. Other international migrations are underway, but they have received far less reflection and action. Hence, Philippine migration policy is largely labor migration policy. *A comprehensive migration policy implies paying attention to other types of international migration, including international migration to the Philippines.*

To date, the development impact of labor migration from the Philippines has been seen mostly in terms of remittances. These inflows are generally regarded as making an important contribution to the economy, especially during economic downturns. The share of remittances to GDP (13 percent on average) suggests the critical role of remittances in propping up the Philippine economy. Another direct and obvious beneficial impact is the contribution of remittances to the country’s foreign reserves. In the absence of significant foreign direct investments and in the face of modest official development assistance, remittances are the primary source of foreign reserves for the country. The development impact of international migration is most palpable at the level of families and households where remittances have been shown to result in better housing, better educational opportunities, ownership of consumer durables, business enterprise and savings among the more successful OFW families. Findings from other studies counter this more sanguine outcome, suggesting instead that remittance-receiving households tend to use remittances in unproductive ends and family members become dependent on remittances. Methodological issues partly explain these conflicting results; some recommendations for future research are suggested by Orbeta (2008).

* See Asis (2008, 2006, 2005) for a discussion on public events honoring OFWs and their contributions.

Similarly, programs to enhance the development potentials of migration focus mostly on financial literacy programs to provide OFWs and their families the necessary information to make sound decisions on the use of remittances. While this is important, there are many other factors and many other windows of opportunities that the government needs to explore to reap the development potentials of international migration. Also, the government and other stakeholders have to be equally mindful of the risks and threats to development prospects that accompany international migration. The social costs of migration, which are difficult to measure and quantify, can be considerable and if left unattended, they may outweigh or blur the economic gains of overseas employment. *The challenge is in understanding and responding to maximize the benefits to development and to minimizing the risks, threats and social costs.*

The November 2007 conference on international migration and development, which was spearheaded by the Scalabrini Migration Center, provided an overview of the understanding of the migration-development nexus by officials and key staff of migration and/or development agencies (including government, NGOs and international organizations) in the Philippines (*see* Asis and Baggio, 2008). The various roundtable discussions with major stakeholders revealed that migration policies and development policies are pursued independently and that stakeholders in these two sectors do not necessarily converse with each other, a situation that speaks more of a disconnect than a nexus (e.g., Baggio, 2008). MAPID- Philippines is an attempt to address this disconnect and to build the capacity of government institutions to chart the country's development, mindful of the benefits and costs of international migration, and engage and partner with overseas Filipinos in promoting sustainable development for all.

a. Organization of the MAPID-Philippines Research and Methodology

Data collection for MAPID-Philippines was organized into two parts. Research involving national government institutions was undertaken by SMC and CFO. Building on the results of the 2007 conference, the study sought to follow up on issues that needed further discussion or elaboration. Data for the national context were obtained from reviewing new literature, reports and data and interviews with representatives of

migration and/or development government agencies, NGOs, academe, and the private sector.

Tab. I.A.1 – The Research Team and Areas Covered: MAPID-Philippines

RESEARCHER	INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION	REGION (S) & PROVINCES COVERED
Alicia Follosco	University of the Philippines Baguio	<i>Cordillera Administrative Region & Cagayan Valley</i> (Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya & Benguet)
Nenita Villarama	Don Mariano Marcos State University – La Union	<i>Ilocos Region</i> (Pangasinan, La Union, Ilocos Sur, & Ilocos Norte)
Ildefonso Bagasao	Economic and Resource Center for Overseas Filipinos	<i>Central Luzon</i> (Bataan, Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac & Zambales)
Jorge Tigno	University of the Philippines	<i>Calabarzon</i> (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas & Rizal)
Cristina Lim	Ateneo de Naga	<i>Bicol Region</i> (Camarines Sur & Albay)
Alan Feranil	University of San Carlos	<i>Western, Central & Eastern Visayas</i> (Iloilo, Negros Oriental, Cebu, Bohol & Leyte)
Chona Echavez	Xavier University	<i>Northern & Southern Mindanao & Socsargen</i> (Misamis Oriental, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur and South Cotabato)

SMC cooperated with a team of researchers to carry out the study in the different regions in the country. The seven interviewers in the Philippines covered 12 out of 17 regions in the Philippines and 29 out of 81 provinces. Regions and provinces in the three major island groupings – Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao – are represented in the study (Figure 1).

The data collection in the regions and provinces involved the review of secondary data (development plans, annual reports, etc.) and the collection of primary data through interviews with representatives of government agencies and local government units. The data collected in the Philippines are expected to provide a better picture of migration and development policies and practices at the sub-national levels, i.e., beyond national policies and programs. Part of the data collection involved the documentation of examples of development projects supported by overseas Filipinos, investments by overseas Filipinos, and examples of cooperation between local institutions and overseas Filipinos.

The provinces in each region were identified as major origin provinces of OFWs (based on membership data of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration).[†] The identification of cities or municipalities within provinces which are major source communities of OFWs was a challenge as there were no readily available data that identify such places. Also, information on investments, development projects and models of cooperation which involved the participation of overseas Filipinos were even more difficult to come by. Researchers were provided with a list of projects supported by overseas Filipinos through CFO's LINKAPIL Program.

Another useful starting point was the mapping of diaspora-supported projects in the Philippines undertaken by Opiniano (2005) and the projects profiled in (www.ofwphilanthropy.org). The study built on these earlier endeavors. Researchers used the preliminary information as leads to explore further details. For the most part though, they sought to gather primary data through sheer legwork and inquiries. These inquiries were time consuming; at times, further inquiries did not yield useful information.

[†] For information on the distribution of OFWs by province, the membership data of OWWA are the most readily available. The Survey of Overseas Filipinos is another potential source, but the published reports present data only for the regions, not provinces.

Fig. IA.1 – Regions (*) and Provinces (•) covered by Mapid-Philippines



The study was undertaken from June 2008 through January 2009. Most of the data collection was completed by October and the rest of the time was devoted to the preparation of the reports. Some problems were encountered during field work, which

caused some delay in completing the reports. The delay was due to several factors. Finding few materials and documents on the topic of migration and development specific to the region or provinces of interest meant that the interviews with key informants were the primary source of data. Most researchers covered 4-6 provinces. In the case of three researchers, they covered more than one region, which implied more coordination with an array of potential respondents in various locations. It was challenging to set up appointments, and even if appointments had been obtained, they were frequently reset. Weather conditions were another cause of delay. The data collection period coincided with the rainy season in the Philippines. Typhoon Frank devastated Western Visayas in June 2009 and the researcher had to wait for the province of Iloilo to recover from the calamity before resuming the interviews. The Ilocos Region was also affected by several typhoons. In Mindanao, data collection in South Cotabato was adversely affected when conflict broke out between government troops and the MILF over the contentious issue of the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity. Two members of the research team met with staffing-related problems.

Interestingly, one of the unintended contributions of the study was raising awareness about migration and development among the respondents.

I.B. Summary of Major Findings

a. The National Picture

Government to facilitate OFW deployment

The *2008-2010 Updated Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan* (MTPDP) states that as part of the strategic framework, the government shall continue to facilitate the deployment of one million OFWs per year. Earlier, the 2004-2008 MTPDP specifically mentioned a target of deploying one million workers every year (p.8). Overseas employment, thus, continues to be regarded as one solution to the limited job opportunities in the country. Overseas employment is seen not only to fulfill the mandate of employment-generation, but also as a means of poverty alleviation. Officials of migration agencies echo this view, considering their role as facilitating the overseas employment of those who wish to seek jobs abroad. Other key informants – including those outside of government or those in government agencies not directly involved with migration – also anticipated more migration in the near future. One of the factors contributing to the inevitability of migration, especially among young people, is the onset of a culture of migration.

The present and future prospects of nurse migration have received the most attention when it comes to highly skilled and professional migration from the Philippines. One major concern about continuing nurse migration is the loss of experienced nurses and the loss of mentors. Also, other health professionals are also leaving or are considering leaving the country. The departure of the highly skilled and professionals (i.e. other than nurses) is readily perceived to lead to brain drain. Citing a study by Pernia, the departure of workers was found to cause some disruptions in the workplace while vacancies are being filled. Moreover, even if replacements can be found, the country stands to lose the better trained and experienced workers (E-mail communication from NEDA, September 24, 2008). It has also been argued that the departure of professionals does not necessarily lead to brain drain. The migration of teachers, for example, is not the reason for the shortage of teachers in public schools. The country, in fact, has a surplus of educators. The main problem lies with the limited items (plantilla positions) that keep the Department of Education from hiring more teachers.

Government migration policy viewed as limited

In terms of responses to the lure of international migration, several key informants suggested alternative strategies or approaches to provide options to migration or to encourage return migration. Human resource development is critical in empowering people to be productive members of society. In this regard, the scientific talents who are now based abroad may be encouraged to share their expertise through such initiatives as the Balik Scientist Program.

There is also a sense that the management of migration thus far is limited to economic considerations and is myopic of other concerns and dimensions. One government official remarked that government policies concerning overseas Filipinos are “reactive” and that the critical factor behind the country’s economic problems (which compel Filipinos to work elsewhere) can be traced to lack of good governance, a theme that ran through the roundtable discussions with stakeholders (Asis and Baggio, 2008).

Also noted was the need to expand beyond the deployment orientation of the country’s labor migration policies. Negotiations with destination countries can also include provisions for the latter to share the costs and benefits with the Philippines. The memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed between the Philippines and some provinces in Canada (Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Manitoba and Alberta) is a step in this direction. Aside from specifications concerning the deployment of workers, the MOUs also include a provision to support human resource development in the Philippines. However, as the statement below suggests, the human resource development provisions of these agreements are practically geared to meet the needs of the destination countries. While they contribute to cementing the Philippines’ capacity to supply workers for the global labor market, the impact of such assistance to the country’s development is suspect.

Outside of the national framework, international migration issues are not quite within the radar of regional agencies and local government units. Migration issues have not been discussed in the meetings of the League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP) nor has the League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) drawn up a clear cut policy on migration. The League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP) is an exception because it recently started an initiative to promote the protection of OFWs. In 2007, LMC launched an advocacy program to enjoin municipalities to protect the OFWs

coming from their areas – the initiative carried the message, *Sa mga mahal naming OFW, may munisipyo na gagabay sa inyo* (To our beloved OFWs, there is a municipality that will guide you). The three leagues invariably indicated their interest in the MAPID Project and the planned training programs. The LPP and LCP were interested in partnering with SMC and CFO to pursue migration and development issues in their respective constituencies. Similarly, the LMP saw the migration and development platform as a rallying point for advocacy among municipal governments.

Migration, especially remittances, important to the economy

The National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) expressed optimism about the growth prospects for the country. In its assessment, prospects are brightest for the growing service sector, which is currently the backbone of the economy. In the short-term, i.e., over the next three years, the business process outsourcing (BPO) industry is one of the primary growth drivers in this sector. The current global financial turmoil may even expand this sector as companies in the developed countries may turn to emerging economies, like the Philippines, in order to save on operation expenses. In the industry sector, the growth in construction is expected to speed up with the government's focus on infrastructure development and high demand in real estate. At least for 2008, the agriculture sector is expected to perform well because of more government support via the FIELDS program (Fertilizer, Irrigation, Extension, Loans, Dryers and post-harvest facilities and Seeds of high-yielding, hybrid varieties) and favorable weather conditions this year. The hike in food prices, the volatile world oil prices and the global financial crisis can weaken the performance of the agricultural sector. OFW remittances are expected to shore up the national economy. The real estate sector is expanding on account of high demand for high demand for dwellings from remittance-receiving households.

Global conditions and trends can affect domestic conditions. The gains in recent years may be seriously undermined by the global financial crisis which started in 2008. According to NEDA, the volatility in world oil prices, higher food prices and slowdown in exports are among the challenges in attaining the 2008 target (E-mail communication from NEDA, September 24, 2008). Filipino exporters will have to contend with increased global competition; the need to diversify innovate, develop new products and

services with higher value-added; and the necessity to expand their markets. OFW remittances are also expected to be affected by the global financial crisis.

As stated in the MTPDP 2004-2010, 'One of the realities that the Philippines is facing that characterize its international environment is that overseas Filipinos will continue to play a critical role in the country's economic and social stability.' The MTPDP 2004-2010 (particularly the chapters on Labor, Foreign Policy, Culture, Trade and Investments; Basic Needs; and Science and Technology) is committed to promoting and protecting the rights and welfare of OFWs.

Civil society organizations concerned with the adverse impacts and social costs of international labor migration tend to view the government as promoting the export of Filipino workers. The government, for its part, says that as a matter of policy, it only aims to manage overseas employment in a manner that is consistent with the national development objectives. Labor mobility is provided in the 1987 Constitution and RA 8042. In the MTPDP 2004-2010, the policy towards OFWs is centered on the 'facilitation' of overseas work, i.e., fast processing of papers, and a reintegration program designed to assist returning workers, etc. The Plan is also emphatic on the protection and welfare of OFWs, considering this as a core principle in promoting markets and cultivating bilateral ties with labor receiving countries. For this purpose, government shall pursue the forging of bilateral agreements, in cooperation with the private sector, to secure the employment, security and protection of OFWs.

The development impact of international migration is typically measured in terms of the contributions of remittances to the country's economy. Remittances are the main reasons why the country continued to register a current account surplus despite the weak economies of its major trading partners. The inflows of remittances also contributed to the development of financial markets and other sectors of the economy such as the property sector. At the macroeconomic level, the remittances became an important factor in boosting national income since 2003. When spent on education and health services, remittances help develop the country's human resources. If invested in productive activities, remittances can create business opportunities and help improve the domestic economy. Remittances enable families to save, invest in property, or start businesses.

On the other hand, respondents expressed concerns that dependence on remittances can give rise to a culture of consumerism and create a moral hazard problem. The widening

disparities between remittance receiving households and non-recipients can also pose problems. Data indicate that families receiving remittances are from the top income deciles. In 2000 and 2003, 19.5 percent and 20.7 percent of the 9th decile and 17.2 percent and 20.3 percent of the 10th decile received remittance income, respectively. In other words, the top two deciles tend to be remittance-receiving households, which imply widening income disparity with non-recipients (Tullao, Jr., Cortez and See, 2004). Moreover, more remittance-receiving households are in regions with lower poverty incidence which may also create a wider income gap in the country (Email communication from NEDA, September 24, 2008).

Economic benefits and social costs

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) has been at the forefront of introducing policies and interventions to facilitate the inflow of remittances, measures which have increased the use of formal channels. Aside from banking systems, formal channels have expanded to include remittance service providers such as LBC and money telegram. Banks are also actively promoting their remittance services by establishing tie-ups with non-bank financial institutions. Furthermore, rural banks now accept dollar accounts which have expanded overseas Filipinos' options and mechanisms for remittance transfers. The increased participation of highly skilled workers in labor migration also contributes to increased remittances. While highly skilled migration may mean more remittances, on the other hand, it erodes the country's stock of qualified human resources. BSP's four-fold approach concerning remittances include: (1) to increase competition through transparency; (2) to improve the settlement/payment schemes to facilitate the transfer of moneys from one point to another – this will further reduce transfer costs; (3) to improve the quality of service, i.e., to speed up the transfer of remittances; and (4) to allow the use of technology to facilitate the transfer of remittances.

The infusion of migrant investments in China and India is one of the arguments pointing to the beneficial impacts of migration on development. The goal to attract investments by overseas Filipinos is in fact one of the motivations for the passage of the Citizenship Retention and Reacquisition Act of 2003. However, data on investments by overseas Filipinos are not available; also, there are no data thus far suggesting increased investments on account of the dual citizenship law. The Board of Investments (BOI)

had assisted a few overseas Filipinos in selling or disposing assets, but most of these are not investment-related. Most overseas Filipinos want hassle-free investment where they will just put in their money and be guaranteed of earnings. Overseas Filipinos are wary of making investments not deemed ‘popular’ or ‘surefire.’ Most overseas Filipinos tend to invest in real estate and condominiums, investments which do not generate employment. There is also a lack of information or advocacy about possible investments they might want to invest in. There is a need to convince overseas Filipinos to invest in existing national or regional businesses. The best example is through the Department of Trade and Industry’s OTOP (one town one product) program. In the early 1990s, the BOI had a program to promote investment among OFWs; currently there is a plan to revive the program. The BOI has been tasked to develop investment programs for overseas Filipinos.

The economic benefits of migration do not provide the complete picture. The separation of family members and fears over marital discord, the breakup of families, and the adverse impacts on children are associated with the downside of overseas migration. Although altered relationships and family roles resulting from overseas migration are not exactly harmful, these may give rise to conflicts affecting family unity and the children’s well-being. Remittances are feared to result in laziness and moral hazard. Anxieties over the migration of women – which are intimately connected to the welfare of young children – have led to considerations of restricting women’s migration.

Cooperation between overseas Filipinos and Philippine government institutions

The research has highlighted on-going best practices of cooperation between Philippine institutions and Overseas Filipinos for local development, like the LINKAPIL Program. LINKAPIL, an acronym for “Link for Philippine Development” was launched by the Commission on Filipinos Overseas in 1989 to harness the resources and capabilities of overseas Filipinos to meet the needs of disadvantaged sectors in the Philippines. It was designed to facilitate the transfer of various forms of assistance from Filipinos or other donors overseas to support various projects and services. It aims to provide a system to facilitate the flow of assistance from overseas to specific beneficiaries in the Philippines; provide a mechanism for better coordination and feedback among overseas donors, government agencies and beneficiaries; promote confidence among overseas donors through an effective and responsive monitoring and feedback system; and

espouse genuine collaborative partnerships between overseas Filipinos and those in the Philippines to achieve national development objectives.

Traditionally, the DOLE is very much associated with the management of labor migration, and its engagement with OFWs along the lines of deployment facilitation and protection of workers' rights overseas. It estimates that there are some 12,000 Filipino migrants' associations in the different regions of the world. Recognizing the potentials of overseas Filipino communities as partners for Philippine development, the DOLE spearheaded tapped overseas Filipinos to support the "Classroom Galing sa Mamamayang Pilipino Abroad (CGMA) Program" to support the basic education agenda of President Gloria Arroyo. In 2007, the DOLE inaugurated the National Reintegration Center for OFWs, signaling a new approach to the reintegration challenge. While the Center's rationale has a decidedly development-oriented agenda (see below), to date, it remains to be seen how the brain gain potentials of overseas employment can be realized.

A vehicle to promote and facilitate the transfer of knowledge to the Philippines is the Balik Scientist Program (BSP), which was introduced in October 24, 1975 by virtue of Presidential Decree No. 819 (BSP brochure). The Department of Science and Technology is the lead and implementing agency of the BSP. The Department of Health (DOH) currently does not have a mechanism yet in place to tap Filipino migrants' organizations for purposes of skills transfer. The Philippine Nurses of Association of the United States, for example, is willing to participate in the skills transfer programs. Also, the DOH does not have a mechanism yet to tap OF organizations to donate to public hospitals. It expressed interest in partnering with the CFO wherein the DOH will identify the areas in most dire need of financial and material assistance, while the CFO will meet those needs with available resources from the LINKAPIL program.

The Technology Resource Center, previously known as the Technology Livelihood and Resource Center, was established in 1977 with the mandate "to make technology easily accessible to the poor and readily applicable for business use." A government corporation now attached to the Department of Science and Technology, the TRC sees its role as serving "the public through the acquisition and promotion of technology and livelihood skills and information for Filipinos worldwide"

Cooperation between Overseas Filipinos and NGOs

NGOs and the private sector have also successfully engaged with overseas Filipinos in undertaking development projects. Until about the 1990s, and years before the migration-development nexus (re)gained currency, several NGOs started to explore addressing the cyclical nature of migration - and the approach taken was to empower migrants economically by preparing them for their return and reintegration in their home countries. The Asian Migrant Centre (www.asian-migrant.org – based in Hong Kong), the Migrant Forum in Asia (www.mfasia.org - with headquarters in Quezon City), and Unlad-Kabayan Migrant Services Foundation (www.unladkabayan.org – based in Quezon City, with offices in Davao City and Iligan City) started organizing migrants to form savings groups while they were working abroad and to offer training programs on financial management and entrepreneurship. Parallel programs were offered for the families of migrant workers in the home countries. In the Philippines, Unlad-Kabayan went into social entrepreneurship, providing mentoring to support the social enterprise ventures of return migrants, or migrant-supported investments in selected communities. In the Philippines, the continuing challenge of effective reintegration programs is another compelling reason to engage with development questions. The current interest on migration and development has inspired some migration-oriented NGOs to include the development agenda in their work. Atikha (www.atikha.org), for example, has added engagement with overseas Filipinos as potential sources of assistance to support social enterprise and local development in the Philippines.

An interesting development in the NGO community is the coming together of migration-oriented NGOs and development NGOs. The Philippine Consortium for Migration and Development (Philcomdev) was formed in 2007. It is a consortium of three networks: INAFI Philippines, Philsen and Migrant Forum in Asia-Philippine members. Another milestone transpired in October 2008, with the formation of an alliance of several stakeholders into one entity called Convergence - Philcomdev, several local governments and the Asian Institute of Management formed a multi-sectoral body to coordinate migration and development projects. As migration-oriented NGOs venture into development, it is interesting to note the new alliances and convergences that have occurred in a span of a short period of time, an indication that

the field of migration and development is indeed multidimensional and involves the participation of many stakeholders.

Cooperation between Overseas Filipinos and the Private Sector

The call for social responsibility has been a driving factor in the involvement of the private sector in promoting development. Ayala Foundation (www.ayala-foundation.org) of the Ayala Groups of Companies is one of the long-running foundations engaged in socio-cultural development. The foundation went transnational in 2000 when it created Ayala Foundation USA (AF USA) to mobilize Filipino communities in the United States to support development initiatives in the Philippines. A US-IRS registered public charity organization based in San Francisco, California, AF USA serves as a bridge between Filipino-Americans and Philippine-based non-profit organizations. In its initial years of operation, AF-USA was fairly “donor-driven,” with most contributions directed towards the preferences of individual donors. In 2005, it began campaigning among the diaspora for support of a specific program of national importance, the GILAS (Gearing up Internet Literacy and Access for Students) initiative. AF USA has raised about US\$4.2 million from 2000 to 2007.

b. Regional and Local Contexts

Lack of data on international migration

Across all regions, data on international migration are not produced by regional and local government agencies. That is, data on international migration come from national government agencies, mainly the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, and the National Statistics Office. The POEA and OWWA are sources of data at the regional level on OFWs. Even provinces that have long been involved in international migration do not collect data on international migration. Thus, information on cities or municipalities within provinces that are known to be major sending areas is based on reputation rather than empirically-founded. Data on the composition of migrants (gender, age, skills) and destination of migrants are also largely known through the reputational approach rather than data-based. The lack of interest in collecting migration

data may stem from the tendency to view international labor migration as a *national policy*. The study also endeavored to explore views and perceptions about migration and development. This was not easy. Not a few interviewees expressed that they were not knowledgeable about the issues. There were also instances when researchers were passed on to other personnel or officials; and there several occasions of resetting the interviews, only to be cancelled at the last minute.

International migration not mentioned in regional and local development plans

An examination of regional and local development plans reveals the absence of consideration of international migration in policymaking. The lone exception is the development plan of Region 6 (Western Visayas), which refers to the contributions of OFWs. Among local governments, one development plan of the province of Batangas (2004) is also exceptional in acknowledging the contributions of OFWs via their remittances. Across all regions, key informants concurred in citing jobs generation as the primary challenge facing the regions and local governments. The search for employment was, in fact, cited as the main reason as to why Filipinos continue to migrate in large numbers. Although they identified certain areas as growth prospects, they remarked that the employment possibilities were not sufficient to meet the needs of their working populations. The growth prospects tend to be similar across the regions – agriculture, tourism, and services. The role of manufacturing as an employment-generating sector has receded from the picture.

In view of limited employment prospects in the country, most informants stated that it was not advisable to encourage Filipinos to return to the Philippines at this time. Informants envision more migration in the future, citing economic reasons as the primary driver of increasing levels of overseas employment. The social and cultural dimensions of continuing migration did not emerge as salient factors in the responses of informants. There was a perception though that going abroad has become common. One of the reasons why it was difficult to identify specific communities where migration was pervasive was the perception that it was common everywhere. Many acknowledged the feminization of migration.

Few structures dedicated to international migration

In the regions and LGUS, there were few existing offices or desks that were dedicated to migration-related issues. The typical approach was to integrate international migration-agenda in existing structures. For example, the holding of jobs fairs, including information on overseas jobs, may be coursed through the public service and employment offices (PESOS). Another example documented by the study was the coordination provided by local governments to medical missions organized by overseas Filipinos. Among the existing structures are those formed by LGUs for the purpose of responding to the concerns of OFWs and their families – e.g., the Migrants’ Desk in the province of Isabela and the OFW Council formed in Tacloban City are some examples. In some LGUs, there are discussions or proposals to establish an office to take care of migration issue. Thus far, these structures were conceived to handle the protection of migrant workers. At the time of data collection in 2008, such proposals were under review in Rizal, which, upon the prompting by the Diocese of Antipolo, set out to organize an interagency council concerning OFW matters. The provincial government of Bohol set up a structure to deal with migration and development issues. Another example, at the municipality level, is a similar structure formed by the Municipality of Bansalan (Davao del Sur). One reason why local governments appear reluctant to set up a migrants’ desk has to do with funding and staffing requirements which they may be unable to meet and/or sustain.

Positive vs. negative impacts of migration

Key informants’ views of migration revealed ambivalent perceptions of international migration. On the positive side, they cited remittances as beneficial to migrants and their families. Many pointed to the changed landscape of communities with many migrants, particularly the emergence of more durable and beautiful houses. In the case of Batangas, some municipalities have become known as Italian Village or Spanish Village in recognition of the many residents who had migrated to Italy and Spain, respectively. On the negative side, they expressed concern over the growing dependency of families on remittances, thereby eroding initiative, industry and self-reliance. Concerns over the destabilizing impacts of separation on families were frequently mentioned – fears about the break-up of marriages, juvenile delinquency and the dangers of children falling into drugs were invariably noted among the heavy social

costs stemming from migration. These dualistic notions of the positive and negative impacts of migration came up frequently in the assessments of informants.

Overseas Filipinos as development partners

Key informants were divided in their views about the idea of overseas Filipinos as partners in promoting development in the Philippines. Some informants felt that they can be development partners, while others felt that it was entirely up to overseas Filipinos to decide whether they wish to support development projects in the Philippines. The latter view implies that overseas Filipinos do not have an obligation as such to contribute to the country's development project. All concurred that overseas Filipinos are endowed with resources. Aside from financial support, overseas Filipinos were regarded as possible investors and sources of expertise on certain areas of knowledge. A commonly held perception as to why overseas Filipino was interested to support projects in the country was the notion of sharing one's blessings.

Asked about the *tres por uno* program, virtually all respondents were unaware about Mexico's model of cooperation between Mexicans abroad (through the hometown associations and federations of hometown associations) and different levels of the Mexican government. Many informants expressed an interest in knowing more about the model. On whether the model may be replicable in the Philippines, many informants qualified that this needed further study as there may be conditions in the country which may not make it workable.

Examples of migrant giving

Migrant giving to support development projects is not uncommon in the Philippines. Many such examples – individually and collectively – were documented by the study. These donations had been taking place, even in the absence of government involvement for the most part. Lacking records and written reports, the identification of projects supported by migrants were put together based on the information provided by informants. The information provided depended a great deal on the knowledge and memory recall of informants. The projects identified by MAPID are far from comprehensive; nonetheless, they provide a fair indication of the range, diversity and nature of support extended by overseas Filipinos to their communities of origin.

An examination of the projects supported by overseas Filipinos in the study areas bears a strong resemblance to the profile of projects supported by overseas Filipinos under CFO's LINKAPIL Program. Across the regions, migrant giving was evident in support of humanitarian projects (medical missions are very common), disaster relief, community celebrations (e.g., town fiestas), medical missions, educational-related projects (scholarships, book donations) and equipment donation (e.g., computers or medical equipment for health centers or centers). Less popular projects were those pertaining to infrastructure and the least popular was support for livelihood projects. Typical examples of infrastructure projects are the construction or renovation of classrooms and school facilities (i.e., outside of the CGMA Program), churches, health centers, or training centers. In recent years, overseas Filipinos have been drawn to support Gawad Kalinga's housing project for the poor. Thus far, migrant giving tends towards communities of origin (mostly hometown ties) or institutions (such as schools) with which migrants have some connections. The development impact of diaspora philanthropy has also come under question because the projects tend to be high-impact and short-term (in some cases, they can be as short as one-shot projects), which do not substantially improve the life chances of the local population. Projects that aim at generating jobs are rare. In fact, even the celebrated *tres por uno* model has just recently moved in the direction of income-generating projects.

Based on the data gathered by MAPID, most of those who engaged in migrant giving were Filipinos based in the US, who are mostly permanent migrants. Aside from hometown or place-based associations, it is also worthy to mention that alumni associations are a vehicle for collective remittances. This was highlighted in the resources transferred by the alumni of Silliman University – book donations, scholarship support, sponsoring leadership awards, donations to the University building, and infrastructure (building construction). According to key informants, the ties that bind the alumni to the University can be traced to the “Silliman spirit,” which has not been extinguished by time or distance. Apart from financial and material support, there is also some evidence of transfer of knowledge with the participation of some alumni (notably in the College of Nursing) in curriculum and mentorship.

Examples of migrant giving by OFWs were also documented. An example is the toilet construction project of the Piat Overseas Workers Association (POWA) of Hong Kong. Through their fund-raising activities, domestic workers in Hong Kong were able to raise

P50,000 in 2007, which they donated for the construction of public restrooms in Maguili Junction, a stop area for travelers. The total construction cost was P80,000; the P30,000 was the counterpart of the municipal government. At the time of interview in 2008, discussions were underway between the association and the municipal government of Piat to cooperate on another project – the expansion of the public cemetery. According to key informants in Piat, the community appreciates the contributions of the OFWs – that although they do not earn much, they support projects that would benefit the community. Another group of domestic workers in Hong Kong, the Bohol Hong Kong Association, has been supporting charitable work, medical missions and scholarship programs in various communities in Bohol.

There was only case of knowledge transfer which was documented by the study – the case of Dr Norberto Ison, who was affiliated with the University of the Philippines Baguio under the Balik Scientist Program (BSP). Thus far, this is one of very few institutional approaches to encourage transfer of knowledge. CFO's LINKAPIL Program also includes knowledge transfer, but this has been limited thus far to lectures given by renowned overseas Filipinos.

Examples of migrant investments

Unlike migrant giving, migrant investments specifically refer to businesses put up by overseas Filipinos. Migrant investments were extremely difficult to trace and track down compared to migrant giving. Similar to migrant giving, there are no records or database to draw from, hence the cases documented by MAPID were products of asking around and following up one leads. In general, migrant investments are less common (or less commonly known) than migrant philanthropy. The documented investments are largely those that were identified with known migrants. It is possible that MAPID was not able to document businesses wherein migrants were partners. Another caveat that must be mentioned is the delimitation of considering migrant investments to those that generated some employment. Given this criterion, investments such as variety stores, tricycles and jeepneys were not considered. The study took note, however, of the groceria program, which was often mentioned by OWWA informants. Another form of small-scale investment overseas Filipinos engage in is pawnshop business.

Like migrant giving, most migrant investments were made by permanent migrants, mainly those from the US. Most of the larger businesses (in the sense that they require

considerable capita) initiated by Filipinos were individual rather than group investments. The businesses they have started are commercial buildings (including apartments), hospitals, schools, review centers, and hotels/resorts. The foray of migrant investments in hotels and resorts is an interesting development and it can be read as a variation of investing in commercial buildings for rental or lease. From what can be gauged from the motivations of investors, they also want to provide the community with amenities for recreation and venues to hold social events such as weddings. Also, hotels/resorts generate job opportunities. In Nabua, Camarines Sur (Bicol), the Macagang Business Center, an investment by a US-based migrant, is a welcome facility in the community (*see* www.macagangbusinesscenter.com), providing facilities for conferences, social events and recreation.

An example of a successful migrant investment that combines income generation, jobs generation, use of indigenous and local materials, and concern for the environment is the Bohol Bee Farm, established and ran by Vicky Wallace, formerly a migrant to the US and erstwhile nurse. Upon returning to the Philippines in 1996, she started organic farming with just four workers and from capital drawn from the household budget. Her farming venture has grown and expanded to include a bee farm, restaurant and bed and breakfast place (www.boholbeefarm.com). As of 2008, the venture employs 128 workers and is worth about P10-15 million. The business also demonstrates good practices in inculcating work ethic and solidarity among the workers.

Myrna Padilla of Davao City is an example of a former migrant worker who was able to start and sustain a business that provides local employment. As a domestic worker in Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong, Ms Padilla availed of various training opportunities in order to prepare herself for reintegration in the Philippines. In Hong Kong, her place of employment for 12 years, she was the Convener and Founding Chairperson of the Mindanao Hong Kong Workers Federation (MinFed), one of the largest federations of migrants' associations in Hong Kong. MinFed includes 12 associations composed of Mindanaoan OFWs based in Hong Kong. The organization worked not only to advance the rights of OFWs, but it also evolved into a charitable organization providing support to various projects in the OFWs' hometowns. She was introduced to the IT world when her employer gifted her with a laptop, an Internet connection and a phone line, in order to help her with her advocacy work. Through self-study, she was able to explore the many uses of the Internet. She "stumbled" into bug-testing when she sent her detailed

comments about the problems she encountered and offered suggestions on how to make the website more user-friendly. She got a reply from the company thanking her for her comments and an offer to work for them. She declined because she had no experience and she was not even sure how the work will proceed because the company was US-based. The company persisted and this introduced her to online job possibilities. She decided to return to the Philippines when she was diagnosed with an illness. With her separation pay from her employer, she opened Mynd Consulting, an information technology consulting business, in Davao City (www.myndconsulting.com). She met some problems initially, but she was able to weather them. Her company provides bug testing services and has expanded into website development. She also opened a portal, www.bangonfilipino.com, to provide a platform to exchange ideas with overseas Filipinos. For her many achievements and inspiring example, OWWA honoured her with a Most Outstanding OFW and Achievement Award in 2007.

Other remarkable examples of former OFWs who succeeded in establishing a business in the Philippines include Norberto Bajenting, also of Davao, and his efforts in establishing the Southeast Mindanao Transport Cooperative, or the long-running Kamiseta ni Julio built by Julio Lozada, of Tacloban City. These and other case studies, including an example of a failed multi-million investment, are detailed in the regional reports. In the case of OFW-investors, a common thread in their stories is the attention and focus they have given to their business – which was possible because they are back in the Philippine and can therefore be hands on.

Examples of modes of cooperation

Two important findings that emerged from the MAPID research are: (1) the variety of modalities of cooperation between overseas Filipinos and local or Philippines-based institutions, and (2) the variety of counterpart arrangements in these partnerships. Particularly as regards development projects, receiving communities or institutions in the Philippines are not just passive recipients of resources coming from overseas Filipinos, but they also contribute to the project, either financially or in kind. These will be shown in the examples below. The following types of cooperation and partnership have been noted:

1) *Overseas Filipinos and LGUs*

An example is the Ormoc City E-Learning Resource Center: the partners here are Mr Baylon, a US-based Filipino, and the local government of Ormoc City. Mr Baylon, in one of his visits to his hometown, noticed the lack of access to Internet resources by students from public schools. In order to enable public school students access to Internet resource, he wanted to have a facility which will not be housed in a particular school. This was also to avoid the transfer of computers for students' use to other uses. In a discussion with the city government, he was able to secure the following commitments: space, personnel to staff the center and to maintain the equipment, and payment of utilities. For his part, Mr Baylon committed to donating 50 computers. The E-learning Resource Center was launched in 2007, equipped with 20 computers and related equipment (printers, etc). Students can avail of access to Internet, use of computers and printing their papers, free of charge. Some 60-70 students come to the center during school days. In order to ensure the continuation of the project, the city government of Ormoc passed Ordinance 136, which provides that the initiative will be sustained even with the change of officials.

2) *Overseas Filipinos and Universities/Academic Institutions*

A good example of this partnership is that between the alumni associations of Silliman University and their engagement with their alma mater (as discussed in a previous section).

Individually, overseas Filipinos have given donations to their former schools. An example is the support provided by Diosdado Banato, a successful technopreneur in Silicon Valley, California, to the public school where he came from, Malabac Elementary School, in Iguig, Cagayan. An IT center was constructed in the school, computers were donated, and the school's library received books in science and math – these donations were also made possible by the networks and contacts of Mr Banatao. In these cases, the implementation mainly lies with the receiving institution. In the case of Malabac Elementary School, the local government was also a partner and it committed to paying for the electricity costs.

3) *Overseas Filipinos and Media Partner*

This is illustrated by the partnership between the Ilonggo Association in Southern California (ISCA) and Bombo Radyo in their endeavor to provide assistance to the victims of Typhoon Frank, which battered the province of Iloilo in 2008. ISCA collected clothes, wheelchairs and walkers for distribution to the needy in Iloilo. The group approached Bombo Radyo to take care of identifying the beneficiaries. They partnered with Bombo Radyo because they were assured of transparency in the donation process. To identify beneficiaries, Bombo Radyo asked interested parties to send a letter to the station and to state why were to be considered. Once the recipients have been identified, the wheelchairs and walkers were distributed to the chosen beneficiaries on November 8, 2008, the same day as Dugong Bombo (blood donation campaign) of the radio station. According to the station manager, they will consider participating in similar partnerships in the future as part of their public service.

4) *Overseas Filipinos and NGOs (including the Catholic Church)*

Locally based NGOs can provide a linking role between the donors and the receiving community. This is demonstrated by the partnership forged between local NGOs - Soroptimists International of Albay Magayon (SIAM) and the Bicol Small Business Inc. - and the US-based Albay Services Group (ASG). The latter wanted to do something concrete to help the communities that were badly affected by Typhoon Reming, with a special focus on helping women. ASG linked up with the two NGOs to conceptualize the “Best for Women Program,” which will offer livelihood assistance and the promotion of women’s rights and well-being. At the time of data collection, the Livelihood Training Center has been constructed in the Anislag resettlement site; this was made possible by a \$5,000-donation from ASG. SIAM aims to raise half a million pesos to realize the various projects.

The Catholic Church can also play a role as a support or linking organization or as a catalyst. The Amus na Kita Oasnon (ANKO), an association of residents of Oas, Albay who have immigrated to the US, worked with St

Michael Archangel Parish as their local partner. ANKO is cooperating with the local government on several projects: “Foundation 1000: Oas Library Museum” or “Oas Quadricentennial Library Museum” (OQLM), Oas Microfund Project (OMFP) and Participatory Governance in the Internet Age (PGIA). The last project is an interesting initiative which shows the contribution of overseas communities in local governance. ANKO lobbied with the local government to come up with an *Ulat sa Bayan* report. The acceptance of the local government to produce the report encouraged the group to support other community projects.

5) *Overseas Filipinos and the Private Sector*

The example of the Ayala Foundation USA’s engagement with Filipino-Americans has been presented earlier. Another variant is the case of Robinson’s “giving back” to migrants and their families by providing a service to them, considering that as a sector, they are important clients. Robinson’s opened up an OFW Center in their malls in Imus and Dasmariñas, Cavite.

In all of these partnerships, the role of overseas Filipinos has been recognized by the receiving communities or institutions. In the communities, especially during town fiestas, a special time, such as *Balikbayan Night*, or a special program, such as *Balikbayan Forum*, is set aside to engage with overseas Filipinos. The visits made by overseas Filipinos to the Philippines have been occasions to determine the needs of local communities, or where projects have been underway, to monitor and to assess how their projects have been implemented. Also, where resources or opportunities permit, representatives of local institutions visit Filipino communities abroad. In general, however, the efforts have been spontaneous. A more reflective approach in acknowledging the transnational dimensions of Filipino society and possibilities for cooperation with overseas Filipinos need to be undertaken.

I.C. Conclusions

The MAPID research provided an excellent opportunity to address the knowledge gap on policies concerning international migration in general and the migration-development nexus in particular at various levels: national, regional and local. Furthermore, the research had the unintended (but salutary) consequence of raising awareness about international migration-related issues among the key informants.

The migration-development nexus is not clearly understood and as a result, migration policies and programs are not linked or integrated with development policies and programs; also, development policies and programs are not informed by international migration realities. The disconnect is also apparent in the lack of coordination among government agencies. This is true at all levels: national, regional and local. The need for policy coherence and more interface among government agencies is urgent. The lack of data on international migration in the regions and provinces has rendered overseas Filipinos “invisible.”

The following observations are flash points to consider in thinking of the training program and future initiatives:

- Existing initiatives confirm the interest of overseas Filipinos to contribute to the home country, especially to their hometowns or institutions (e.g., universities) with which they have links.
- Migrant-giving has been largely donor-driven. To respond to the development needs of communities or groups, there is a need to develop educational programs for donors indicating where needs are the greatest. Ultimately, the final decision rests with migrants.
- Transfer of knowledge is rare (or not documented?). The Balik Scientist Program is the only scheme recorded in the study. There is a need to develop other schemes and twinning approaches to encourage and facilitate more meaningful targeted transfer of knowledge schemes. Links to industries and/or links to LGUs should also be considered.

- In general, local partners often have counterparts or contributions to migrant-supported projects. Aside from contributing resources, Philippine-based institutions also need to involve overseas Filipinos in project development, implementation and assessment.

- In general, there are many possibilities to enhance cooperation between overseas Filipinos and local institutions. The national government and LGUs have to be more proactive in exploring transnational cooperation for development may be achieved.

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