



POLICY BRIEF ADDRESSED TO THE ASSOCIATIONS OF FILIPINO MIGRANTS IN ITALY

In the last few years, the relationship between migrations and development has become the object of increasing attention at an international level, because of both the relentless migratory pressure and the awareness, never so obvious as now, of the interdependence between the various regions of our planet and, in particular, between those that, albeit inappropriately, are commonly defined as the “North” and the “South” of the world.

The aim of making the governing and governance of human mobility one of the pivotal elements of policies of co-operation for development is today among the priorities of the main international agencies, the European Union and, increasingly, the countries of origin and destination of migrants. In this new scenario, empowerment of the immigrant communities and the mobilisation of the associations are considered as being strategic leverage for the valorising of remittances and the launching of initiatives and projects capable of contributing to the economic and social development of the communities of origin.

It is in this context, rich in new opportunities, that we find the international Mapid project, *Migrants' Associations and Philippine Institutions for Development*, carried out by the Scalabrini Migration Center of Manila, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, the University of Valencia and the Fondazione ISMU of Milan, within the European Community programme Aeneas. By means of a three-year plan of research, training and the sharing of best practices, MAPID has set out to reinforce the planning capacities of the Filipino associations in Italy and Spain and of the government agencies in the Philippines, but also to offer operative indications to the different stakeholders engaged in the challenge of co-development, and in particular to Filipino migrants and their associations, the government institutions of the three countries involved in the project, and the various actors of civic society.

The remarks that follow are addressed to the associations of Filipino migrants (FAOs) and have been formulated starting out from the experience of the Mapid project, in particular from the results emerging from a research study on Filipino immigration and association-forming in Milan and Rome and from the reflections on the training course for association leaders.

SOME PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

The associational life of the Filipino community in Italy

The Filipino community in Italy, albeit boasting upwards of a thirty year presence here, extremely high levels of employment and a considerable degree of appreciation on the part of Italians, is not deeply involved in processes of social and professional mobility, with the result that many Filipinos continue to engage in work for which they are decidedly overqualified. It is thus worthwhile enquiring as to *what role the FAOs could play in the renewal of the integration model of the Filipinos in Italy.*

In fact, the associations, together with employment, constitute the main way in which Filipinos participate in the public sphere, hence they represent an extremely rich potential in calling Filipinos to action. This potential, however, has so far been functional above all in safeguarding the identity and the culture of origin and in compensating for the stress caused by migration. It is now necessary to *see to it that the FAOs become the instrument for a more complete integration of the Filipino community into Italian society.*

This need is felt with particular urgency by the second generation, who, while displaying a certain disaffection towards the associational life of the community, would nevertheless find themselves a place in it if the FAOs became the driving force for a fuller participation in the cultural, social and political life of their living context.

The role of the FAOs in the development process of the Philippines

There is a high level of interest of the FAOs in the promotion of activities capable of sustaining the process of development in the Philippines; this interest is also supported by the enviable capacity of the Filipino migrants to generate income and accumulate savings. The community also shows a considerable propensity to keep alive and active a close-knit web of transnational ties between host country, country of origin and other countries of residence of the Filipino diaspora.

However, counterbalancing these decidedly positive aspects are various critical points, regarding in particular the weakness of the FAOs in financial and organisational terms and in terms of rootedness in the Italian context. Moreover, there is a lack of systematic reflection and of awareness of those instruments and initiatives that could offer a significant contribution to a process of change having a certain medium- and long-term impact.

In effect, the effort of the associations has so far been manifested above all through philanthropic activities and aid intervention in emergency situations. These are for the most part actions designed to temporarily alleviate conditions of difficulty and hardship that threaten to resurface should the actors and institutions of the territories involved lack the will and capacity to provide a definitive solution to situations of need or to consign them to the care of local institutions.

INDICATIONS FOR AN EVOLUTION OF THE ROLE OF THE ASSOCIATIONS

Individual empowerment

First and foremost, in order to strengthen the capacity of the FAOs to become agents of development in their sending and receiving countries, there will have to be an improvement in the integration of Filipino migrants in Italy, encouraging pathways to professional mobility and greater participation in the life of the host society. To achieve this purpose, the FAOs must move in the direction of an empowerment of the individual, acting in particular on the following aspects:

a) *The strengthening of competence in the Italian language.* It is fundamental to promote the awareness that it is not sufficient to possess limited functional linguistic abilities in order to get by in everyday tasks. Learning the language of the host country is a strategic step towards full participation in the community of residence and for access to the opportunities offered. It is thus important for the FAOs to distribute better information as to the many Italian language courses existing in the various cities and also accessible online (note 1).

b) *The promotion within the community of an entrepreneurial culture* and, for those wishing to try out an autonomous work activity, of the knowledge of company start-up and management techniques. There is, in fact, a widespread interest in the possibility of starting up self-employed activities and in the strategies of professional mobility nowadays adopted by many immigrants of other nationalities; the information and skills needed to engage in a similar turnaround in the professional context are not, however, widely diffused. It is thus important to promote better information as to the training opportunities offered in the territory and accessible both to first-generation immigrants and, all the more so, to those of the second generation. The latter, in particular, clearly express a desire to undertake professions different from those of their parents, although all too often they find themselves treading roads that are completely new, with few examples to follow or reference points to rely on (note 2).

c) *The setting up of services of assistance in the process of recognition of study qualifications obtained prior to emigration.* In spite of the widespread discontent at the process of professional downgrading that unfolds with emigration, few Filipino migrants have attempted to undertake such procedures, discouraged as they are by their scant knowledge of the law and by a conviction that immigrants are in any case denied access to skilled jobs.

d) *Financial literacy.* Despite their extremely high capacity for generating income, Filipino migrants do not appear to have a sufficient level of knowledge of financial instrumentation or of the investment solutions available in Italy and in the Philippines. Furthermore, they lack an awareness of their own bargaining power towards the financial institutions as individuals, and, even more so, as organised groups. The promotion of training and literacy courses would facilitate the strategies for financial and patrimonial stabilisation of those families who decide to stay in Italy and for the fruitful use of their savings to be

invested in their home country (note 3).

e) *A better knowledge of the laws that regulate the acquisition of Italian citizenship.* Thanks to reforms enacted in the Philippines, the acquisition of Italian citizenship no longer entails the obligation to give up Filipino citizenship, and so it is today for many Filipino immigrants in Italy a goal to aspire towards. A sizeable proportion of the community, however, has a totally inadequate level of knowledge of the laws concerning the requisites and procedures for the acquisition of Italian citizenship or the possession of dual citizenship. The FAOs could play an important role both in circulating this information to a wider public and in spurring the representatives of the Filipino government in Italy to act more efficaciously in this field (note 4).

Actions in the cultural field

Side by side with these paths of action directed towards individual empowerment, it seems important to us to underline some crucial steps that could pave the way to an evolution in the relationship between the Filipino community and Italian society. In this context, the associations could play an important role in creating awareness among their members.

a) *The laying of emphasis on the question of citizens' rights and duties.* As we have already said, thanks to the possibility to have dual citizenship, a strong growth is foreseeable in the number of Filipinos becoming "Italianised" in the next few years. Nonetheless, the poor "quality" of the democracy in their country of origin, together with their own impact with Italian society – a society that stands out in the European context for its poor culture of legality and for its weak sense of the State - certainly does not bode well for the maturing of a sense of civil responsibility. It is precisely for this reason that *civil education* must be a priority of the actions directed at the Filipino community with the aim of transmitting the idea that being a citizen of a society should involve a greater awareness both of one's own rights, starting from the right to be treated as equal, and of one's duties, including that of participating in the social, cultural and political life of the country, by contributing ideas, capabilities and projects.

b) *Emphasis on the importance of regular employment, contributing to the collective good.* In particular, it is of fundamental importance to promote awareness of the fact that the "social" quality of a country depends on its capacity (naturally, with reference to its population) for being virtuous, correct and supportive also in the economic and work relationships between its citizens, firms and institutions. The Filipino community needs to promote the awareness that it is we ourselves that constitute the State – an apparently banal statement but one that in reality implies an exceedingly high and noble concept: nothing that we do as individuals remains or ends within our own context, being relevant to the "*societas*" constituted by the community in which our actions have their background and representation. From a democratic, fair and just State, we hope for, indeed at times we demand, the safeguarding and guaranteeing of our lives, health and future in terms of economic tranquillity and social

stability. Have we ever asked ourselves how much all this will cost and who will have to strive to produce this result, and with what resources? An occupation (whether as an employee, a self-employed person or an entrepreneur) which is conducted in a regular way, covered by a contract and hence producing income not only for the subject himself but also for the community through a just and fairly distributed taxation system, guarantees socio-economical stability for the individual and a steady flow of resources to the State, which can thus carry out, through mutuality, the primary function of administrator, manager and distributor of the common good. But work is a productive activity aimed at procuring those essential goods (and also those that are superfluous!) that are necessary for us to live but which take up only a part of the resources work provides; before, but above all after our entry into the labour market, these same needs, together with others (firstly, those linked for example to our cultural education, and secondly those connected with the growing physiological need for healthcare) will be adequately fulfilled depending exclusively on how much of our productive income contributes to furthering those institutions set up by the community for the pursuance of these aims. The coffers of the welfare and taxation system in general are filled with the income of citizens and of business enterprise, and we know that the predominant part of this resource is produced by labour, provided it is official, regulated and certified. The more successfully the labour force of a country (and hence its income) emerges from the spiral of a market without rules or rights, the more prosperous each individual citizen will become *per se*, at the same time contributing to the growth of the common and shared capital.

c) *A reflection on the management of pensions.* Given the more than thirty-year presence of the Filipino community in the Italian territory, the needs of migrants approaching old age are by now being felt with a certain frequency. On the one hand, it is becoming increasingly urgent to act at a political level for the right to transfer pension payments accumulated by emigrants to their country of origin. On the other hand, it is indispensable that the Filipino community should be made aware of the usefulness of contributing to the welfare apparatus by means of their pension contributions. It is thus vitally important to insist on regular work contracts, a requisite that is fundamental to the guaranteeing of an adequate level of contribution. In fact, thanks to the effect of a cultural trait already referred to, many Filipino migrants tend in the first instance to assign to family members the task of looking after their elderly, consequently underestimating the opportunities offered by an institutionalised system of socialisation of the fundamental risks and duties to be complied with in order to be able to take advantage of them.

It appears to be equally necessary to provide information as to the system of complementary pension schemes, the second pillar of the Italian pension system, which runs parallel to the compulsory State pension scheme. Only recently introduced in Italy, the complementary pension system offers numerous advantages and opportunities, of which many migrants still seem to be unaware (note 5).

Empowerment of the associations

In order to strengthen their action aimed at integration in Italy and at development in the Philippines, the FAOs are called upon to embark upon a process of internal evolution. The guide lines on which this process of transformation is based should be as follows:

a) *A redefining of the objectives of the FAOs*, with a shift of emphasis from the aggregative function to a greater functional specialisation. After more than thirty years of presence in Italy, the community reveals needs which go well beyond those of meeting each other, preserving the culture of origin and helping each other in the more difficult stages of migration. To respond to the real needs of the community as a whole, the associational practice will have to envisage new, specific and well determined objectives to be achieved through structured long-term programmes, planned and implemented in synergy with the other realities acting in the territory.

b) *A professionalisation of the associational structures*. It is crucial to make members aware of the importance of training, making for an increase in the competences of the FAOs in the field of communication, leadership, organisation and planning. Losing a few hours of paid work to invest in training is a really far-sighted choice, bringing medium- and long-term benefits to the communities in Italy and in the country of origin.

c) *The entry of the FAOs in local or national registers of the associations*, a fundamental prerequisite for participation in public competitions and, very often, also the open competitions launched by private institutions and foundations. Seizing these opportunities means taking advantage of an important possibility of financing, which would allow the FAOs to start up more organised and far-sighted projects (note 6).

d) *A deeper rootedness in the community of residence*. The capacity to enter into systematic collaboration with local, public and private institutions is an indispensable step towards enabling the associations to take an active and decisive part in the processes of integration of the Filipino community in Italy and the development of the communities of origin.

e) Finally, as regards the specific strengthening of the role of the FAOs as agents of development of the communities of origin, the real step forward lies in the capacity on the part of the Filipino diaspora to *act as a stimulus for sparking off a process of institutional innovation capable of broadening and enriching the welfare system of the country of origin*, in which family context and civic society play a role complementary to that of the public sector, without in any way replacing the latter (note 7).

NOTES:

The following notes will be published on the ISMU web site (www.ismu.org\settore economia e lavoro\mapid):

NOTE 1) In this regard, we suggest the online course of Italian as a second language promoted by the Fondazione ISMU within the project "Parliamoci Chiaro": www.ismu.org/parliamocichiaro

NOTE 2) In this regard, we suggest the following:

Punto imprenditorialità immigrata (Immigrants' entrepreneurship service point)

A free information, training and consulting service for migrants who are aspiring entrepreneurs, offered by Formaper (Azienda Speciale della Camera di Commercio di Milano [Special Company of the Milan Chamber of Commerce], devoted to training for the starting up and managing of business enterprises), and in particular by Asiim (Associazione per lo Sviluppo dell'Imprenditorialità Immigrata [Association for the Development of Immigrant Entrepreneurship] in Milan).

Address: Via Santa Marta, 18 - 20123 Milano

Tel. 02.8515.4342

Email: info@imprenditorimmigrati.it

Web site: <http://www.asiim.it/>

CESAIM – Centro per lo Sviluppo e l'imprenditoria dei Migranti (Centre for the Development and Entrepreneurship of Migrants)

To migrants who are aspiring entrepreneurs, the centre offers support and assistance in the setting up and management of a company; to the associations it offers support in the process of registration, in their search for funds and in the carrying out of their activities; to individuals, it offers a service of information and guidance in bureaucratic, financial, health and work matters.

Address: via Confalonieri, 3 - 20124 Milano

Mobile phone no. 339.7811063/ 389.9816231

Opening times for the public: from Monday to Saturday, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Appointments at other times can be made by phone.

Seniores Italia

This is a free support service for the organisations of the third sector, promoting the initiatives of new social entrepreneurship, in collaboration with the relevant consortiums and the public or private organisations that operate in support of these situations.

Address Lazio: Via Luigi Montuori, 5 - 00154 Roma

Tel.: 06 4819540

Address in Lombardy: Via Monza 16 - 20127 MILANO

Tel.: 02 28901186

General email address: seniores@tin.it

Fondazione Risorsa Donna (Foundation for Women's Resources)

This supports women's entrepreneurship by means of training programmes and other initiatives.

Address: Viale Aventino, 36 - 00153 Roma

Tel: 06 57289655

In addition, we suggest the collections of material created within the MAPID project, a copy of which can be obtained from the Fondazione ISMU for use for training purposes.

NOTE 3) In this regard, we suggest the collections of material created within the MAPID project, a copy of which can be obtained from the Fondazione ISMU for use for training purposes.

NOTE 4) For information on the procedures, including the documentation to be produced, to maintain or reacquire Filipino citizenship in the case of acquisition of Italian citizenship, consult the Mapid section on the ISMU web site: www.ismu.org.

Concerning the acquisition of Italian citizenship, we here limit ourselves to stating briefly that, in accordance with Law No. 91 of 5th February 1992 and subsequent modifications and integrations: a) Italian citizenship can be conferred by law on any foreign citizen born in Italy and having resided here legally without interruption until coming of age; he must, however, declare by the nineteenth year of age the wish to acquire Italian citizenship; Italian citizenship can be requested by foreign citizens of age, born in Italy, and legally resident in Italy for at least the last 3 years; Italian citizenship can be requested by foreign citizens legally resident in Italy for at least 10 years; Italian citizenship can be requested by a foreign citizen married to an Italian citizen, after 2 years from the date of marriage if he or she resides in Italy, or after 3 years from the date of marriage if he or she resides abroad. These waiting times are reduced by half if there are children born to the couple or adopted by them.

NOTE 5) For information and consultation on these matters, it is advisable to refer to the trade union advice bureaux . You should contact the email address mapid@ismu.org for an indication as to the most suitable services to address your particular needs.

NOTE 6) To register an association, we recommend proceeding thus:

- Draw up in Italian the deed of incorporation and the statute of the association, identifying it as a no-profit association for social or voluntary services.
- Apply for a National Insurance Number (Taxation Code) from the Agenzia delle Entrate (Taxation Office) of the territory of residence, referring to the address of the registered office of the association for identification, using form AA5/6. The application, in duplicate, must be submitted by the legal representative of the association or by a delegate bearing written authorisation and a photocopy of the president's identity card. The National Insurance Number will be issued on the spot.
- From the Agenzia delle Entrate (Taxation Office) you can also obtain the form "Domanda di ammissione ai benefici previsti dall'art. 1, comma 185, della legge 27 dicembre 2006, n. 296" ["Application for receipt of the benefits stipulated in art. 1, paragraph 185 of Law No. 296 of 27th December 2006"].
- To obtain contributions and tax concessions, the association must enrol in the appropriate registers.
 - 1) Single register for No-profit Organisations (in Italian, ONLUS): Entry in this register is by filling in the appropriate communication form, attached with instructions and substitutive declaration; note that a copy of the deed of incorporation and of the statute can be produced instead of the substitutive declaration .
 - 2) Entry in territorial registers (council, provincial or regional) or topical ones (immigration, training, promotion social ...) of an association gives it access to various concessions, benefits, subsidies, contributions and funding, which, however, vary depending on the case. It is advisable to obtain all the relevant information from the appropriate office.

For assistance in the registration procedures for the FAOs (starting from the setting down or translation of the statute and deed of incorporation), we suggest you contact the consultation services set up by the Fondazione

ISMU, at the email address mapid@ismu.org xxx

Other consultation services for associations are the following:

CESAIM - Centro per lo Sviluppo e l'Imprenditoria dei Migranti (*Centre for the Development and Entrepreneurship of Migrants*)
(see above.)

Ciessevi

Offers training courses and consulting services to voluntary associations. In addition, it places at the disposal of the voluntary organisations a 50-seat auditorium to be utilised for courses, meetings, events etc.

Address: Piazza Castello 3 - - 20121 Milano (MM1 Cairoli, Cadorna - MM2 Cadorna)

Office times: from Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. - 1p.m./2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Tel.: 02 4547 5850

- Fax 02 4547 5458 -

Email: info@ciessevi.org

CESV - Centro Servizi per il Volontariato (Centre of Services for the Voluntary Sector)

Address: Via Liberiana, 17, 00185 Roma

Tel: 06 491340 - 06 491448

NOTE 7. In this regard, we suggest the map created by the Scalabrini Migration Center within the Mapid project, which registers the Filipino institutions interested in promoting development through positive collaboration with the FAOs, indicating their main points of interest and action. The map can be consulted at the link: <http://www.smc.org.ph/MAPID/mapid.html>