Migration and Development Initiative for Western Visayas (MDI-WV) Knowledge Exchange with Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI) CALABARZON

The Migration and Development Initiative for Western Visayas (MDI-WV) Project conducted its Knowledge Exchange with the Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI) CALABARZON last November 8-10, 2015.

The activity, organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in cooperation with MDI counterparts in Western Visayas and Region1, took place in Batangas City, San Pablo City, and Dasmarinas, Cavite.

A total of 20 participants from Western Visayas representing the municipal/provincial LGUs in Iloilo, Antique, Aklan and Guimaras, migrant/civil society groups, relevant government agencies, and NEDA Region VI attended the study tour.

The study tour aims to encourage the exchange of best practices, lessons, ideas, and plans between the local stakeholders under the Migration and Development Initiative in Western Visayas and Ilocos regions. Majority of the provinces of Calabarzon have existing M&D institutions, structure, and key players that maximize the potential of migration along the lines of regional and local development.

The participants from Western Visayas together with their counterparts from the Ilocos region visited several migrant centers, cooperatives, non-government organizations, and government offices providing economic opportunities to Overseas Filipino Workers and/or make these migrant workers as partners in institutional development.
At the Batangas Provincial Capitol, JMDI-UNDP and NEDA IV-A SUMMID Calabarzon and representatives from the Batangas Province OFW Desk and Migrants Center presented the region’s various projects for the migrants and their families as well as the various initiatives at the provincial and regional level. Other topics discussed were the migrants’ contributions to social and economic development, entrepreneurial activities and opportunities as well as the different psycho-social interventions provided to OFWs.

The visit to the Soro-soro Ibaba Development Cooperative (SIDC) in Batangas City, one of the most successful agri-based cooperatives in the Philippines, provided the participants with information on how to tap the migrants as one of their potential partners in their various programs and projects through a special investment package.

Meanwhile, a non-government organization in San Pablo City, Atikha, presented their different initiatives addressing the social cost of migration. The NGO has implemented several trainings for the improvement of the lives of the overseas Filipinos and their families. It has also developed the Pinoy World-wide Initiative for Savings, Investment and Entrepreneurship (PinoyWISE) campaign. Atikha also established the Batang Atikha Savers Club, a youth organization which aims to empower children of the OFWs in upholding the value of financial discipline.

The third day of the study tour focused on the different M&D institutions in Dasmarinas, Cavite. The participants toured the Seamen’s Village, a 19-hectare village with 900 houses for seafarers and their families. They also visited the Cavite Migration and Development Center at the Cavite City Hall that provides direct service to migrants and families.

The National College of Science and Technology (NCST), the participants were presented with the school’s best practices and how it successfully connected the classroom to the industry through the dual training of modality of teaching.

The knowledge exchange and study tour succeeded in providing the representatives valuable insights on the social cost of migration and the importance of the existing M&D organizations in improving the lives of migrant workers. More importantly, it has empowered local government units to replicate the programs of the various institutions in order to improve the sustainability of the services catered towards Overseas Filipino Workers. (MDI-WV)