Joint Migration and Development Initiative
http://www.migration4development.org

BACKGROUND

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Converging Initiatives in Engaging Overseas Filipinos and other Stakeholders on Migration and Development</th>
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<td>Location</td>
<td>Hong Kong Polytechnic University, HJ305, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 11 Yuk Choi Rd, Hung Hom, Hong Kong</td>
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Providing an regional building, capacitating expanding programming, Regio through supported Under connections between migration and development is crucial. same level of attention as other stakeholders, while their involvement and potential impact on the particularly important for the civil society. However, in general terms, lo governments to be involved, making consultations and agreement with sub local level, be it in terms of effects on the local labor market, the size and demographic of the local population, This l the success and sustainability of an M&D initiative. When local authorities share a common vision with civil society partners, they develop a sense of ownership over projects that lead them to commit time, energy and resources, which effectively contribute to M&D nexus. When local governments are involved in M&D, they can return and reintegrate into their hometowns, particularly in regions. The Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI), a global programme supported by the European Union and the Swiss Development Cooperation, aims to optimize the contribution of migration to development by strengthening its local dimension. From 2008 until 2012, the JMDI Phase I supported migration and development (M&D) initiatives from civil society organizations in 16 target countries, including the Philippines. The findings of the JMDI show that the effectiveness of M&D activities largely depends on the identification and establishment of strategic partnerships between civil society organizations and governments at decentralized levels. The most successful and sustainable M&D interventions identified by the JMDI are those with strong anchorage with the local governments in countries of origin and destination, in line with the essential local-to-local dimension of the M&D nexus. When local authorities share a common vision with civil society partners, they develop a sense of ownership over projects that lead them to commit time, energy and resources, which effectively contribute to the success and sustainability of an M&D initiative. This linkage is all the more important as the drivers and impact of migration are often most strongly felt at the local level, be it in terms of effects on the local labor market, the size and demographic of the local population, or the need for public service provision. This is why provinces and local authorities are strategic levels of governments to be involved, making consultations and agreement with sub-national levels of governments particularly important for the civil society. However, in general terms, local governments have not received the same level of attention as other stakeholders, while their involvement and potential impact on the connections between migration and development is crucial. Under the JMDI Phase II, implemented starting December 2013 until May 2016, two local projects are supported in each of the 8 countries covered. In the Philippines, the focus of the local projects (JMDI Bicol through the City Government of Naga and SUMMID Calabarzon through the Regional Development Council of Region IV-A) is on mainstreaming migration into the local development planning and investment programming, building or strengthening local M&D structures particularly Migrants Resource Centers, expanding and institutionalizing local M&D services (from social to economic to migrant empowerment), and capacitating migrants and their families as partners for local development. For these purpose, various capacity building, mentoring and coaching activities have been conducted for local stakeholders, centered on local and regional government officials and migrant associations from the Calabarzon and Bicol regions. An important project component for both the JMDI Bicol and SUMMID Calabarzon is the strengthening of the link and network between the local governments and the migrant groups and communities, particularly in providing enabling environment by which the migrants can return and reintegrate into their hometowns,
access local M&D services, participate in local policy dialogues and activities, and maximize the use of both their financial and social remittances for personal, family and community development. For this purpose, the targeted local governments are mentored on how to prepare, package and market their very specific investment portfolios that will respond to the needs and interests of migrants. The local governments are likewise capacitated to form their local development councils (such as the M&D Council in Calabarzon provinces and the City Advisory Council for Overseas Filipinos or CACOF in Naga City) or make migration as a sector in the local process to enable the migrants and their families have a voice and participation.

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas, the JMDI’s national anchor government agency, has various programs and services that facilitate this link between national and local governments and the migrants such as the Diaspora to Development and BaLinkBayan programs. Under the JMDI Bicol project, one of CFO’s contributions is to provide avenue by which the Bicol LGUs will be able to present their M&D programs during gatherings of overseas Filipinos; thus, Naga City participated in the CFO’s Ugnayan in Qatar and Rome in December 2014.

The Pinoy Worldwide Initiative for Investment Savings and Entrepreneurship (PinoyWISE) is a network of national and local government, migrant organizations, NGOs, cooperatives and private sector involved in providing financial education, savings and investment mobilization and trade and tourism promotion. Atikha acts as one of the convenors of PinoyWISE. It is implementing its program in Italy, Qatar, UAE, Germany and Singapore and expanding in Hong Kong and in the provinces of Batangas, Laguna, Cavite, Rizal, Quezon, Oriental Mindoro, Tarlac, and will be expanding in Ifugao, Bohol, Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur.

Meanwhile in Hong Kong, MFA (through its members Asian Migrant Centre, Unlad Kabayan, Coalition for Migrants Rights), pioneered the advocacy for migrant savings, reintegration and economic justice; they spearheaded the “migrant savings for alternative investments” (MSAI) program since 1995. This has resulted in the creation of systematic channels for OF/OFW savings, which was institutionalized with the establishment in 2006 of the first and by far only HK government-registered migrant savings/credit cooperative (AMCU); PLU, APL-SENTRO and the Credit Union League of HK are the major partners of AMCU. The MSAI program also led to the establishment of migrant social enterprises in the Philippines since the early 2000, including in Passi (Iloilo), Cagayan Valley, and Bukidnon (FAMDEV Farm) – all owned and initiated by OFW/migrant domestic workers/savers from Hong Kong.

The forum with Filipino community in Hong Kong will gather relevant migrants and migrants’ organizations for the purpose of:
1. Converging initiatives of migrant groups, national and local governments, CSOs and private sector on local M&D policy dialogue, return and reintegration, and creating an enabling local business/economic environment for development.
2. Updating and enhancing awareness of OFWs/OFs in HK of key migrant-related policies, laws, programs/services by relevant government agencies and CSOs to help protect, support, provide redress for OFWs in HK and/or their families in the Philippines; these services/policies aim to defend OFWs against abuses so that they can plan and build their savings, investment and reintegration plans/preparations.
3. Building or enhancing the capacities of key migrants/migrant organizations as champions and advocates of the local-to-local dimension of M&D, which could potentially lead to more functional and productive twinning, territorial or sister-city partnerships and arrangements.
4. Informing migrants on programs and good practices of national and local government, NGOs, cooperatives, financial institutions that help facilitate savings, investment and enterprise development.

The Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking, through its Advocacy and Communications Committee led by the CFO, provided additional support to the forum. The JMDI Bicol, SUMMID Calabarzon, and Migration and Development Initiative in Western Visayas and Region I projects participated. JMDI Bicol is represented by the cities of Naga, Legazpi, Tabaco, Sorsogon and Masbate, and the province of Camarines Norte. SUMMID Calabarzon is represented by Atikha; MDI-WV by NEDA Region VI; and MDI-1 by CFO.
The national government is represented by the Philippine Consulate General in HK (which also represented the Office of the Labor Attache, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, Philippine Overseas Workers Administration, Social Security System and Pag-IBIG under the one-country team approach), CFO and the National Reintegration Center for OFWs.

The private sector is represented by the Soro-soro Ibaba Development Cooperative through Congressman Rico Geron.

A total of 135 participants attended the forum from the following Filipino organizations in HK:
- PLU-DW in HK
- Filipino Community Services and Information Network (FILCOMSIN)
- Overseas Domestic Workers Union in HK (ODWU)
- Filipino Migrant Cancer Support Society (FILMCASS)
- POFW-L-DN
- Free Believers Church
- SISA-HK
- LSE
- Alay Kapwa
- Enrich
- DOMO-HK
- Filipino Nurses Association-HK
- Asian Migrants Credit Union
- United Bicol Alliance
- DBC5 and youth groups

There are attendees who are not affiliated with any organization. Media entities from HK News, HK Life, The Sun and DBC5 also attended.

A mini-forum was conducted on September 28 at the PLU-DW office for OFWs who were not able to attend the September 27 forum. Fourteen PLU members participated. The issues/recommendations raised during the forum were on expanding the local M&D coverage to include regions beyond those under JMDI; migration and health especially on membership and benefits with PhilHealth; and savings for their eventual return.

Figure 1 Forum Part II with select PLU-DW members on September 28
**PROGRAMME**

8:30-9:30 am – *Opening ceremony*

Message from Hon. Bernardita Catalla, Philippine Consul General in Hong Kong

Overview of the forum and introduction of participants by Mr. Rex Varona, Migrant Forum in Asia

Overview of migration and development programs in the Philippines and for Overseas Filipinos by Ms. Golda Myra Roma, UNDP-JMDI

9:30-10:45 am – **SESSION 1: Existing Good Practices on Migration and Development and updates on Philippine migration laws and policies**

Resource persons:
- Consul Charles Andrei Macaspac, Philippine Consulate in HK
- Mr. Romeo Ramirez Jr., Commission on Filipinos Overseas
- Ms. Shiella Grace Estrada and Ms. Veny Non, Progressive Labor Union of Domestic Workers in HK

Facilitator: Mr. Rex Varona, Migrant Forum in Asia

10:45-12:00 pm – **SESSION 2: Building savings/assets/capital and preparing for reintegration**

Resource persons:
- Director Chona Mantilla, National Reintegration Center for OFWs
- Ms. Estrella “Mai” Anonuevo, Atikha Overseas Workers and Communities Initiative
- Mr. Clarence Lee, Asian Migrants Credit Union
- Mr. Rex Varona, Migrant Forum in Asia

Facilitator: Ms. Golda Myra Roma, UNDP-JMDI

12:00-1:00 pm – **Lunch**

1:00-3:00 pm – **SESSION 3: Understanding local/hometown programs and services for migrants and their families and investing in local and sustainable development activities; various investment/financial/entrepreneurial packages/options for OFs/OFWs**

Resource persons:
- Hon. Cong. Rico Geron, CEO of Soro-soro Ibaba Development Cooperative
- Ms. Aileen Constantino-Peñas, on behalf of Calabarzon LGUs
- Mr. Roderick Reforsado (Naga City) and Vice Mayor Ruby Sanchez-Morano (Masbate City), on behalf of Bicol LGUs
- Ms. Ma. Lourdes Miado, on behalf of Western Visayas LGUs

Facilitator: Ms. Golda Myra Roma, UNDP-JMDI

3:00-5:00 pm – **SESSION 4: Regional/LGU break-out sessions: networking, policy discussions and programming between overseas Filipinos and their respective regional/LGU representatives**

- Group 1: Calabarzon LGUs facilitated by Ms. Estrella “Mai” Anonuevo (Atikha)
• Group 2: Bicol LGUs facilitated by Ms. Maricel Juloc (Legazpi City), Ms. Ma. Antonia Burabod (Tabaco City), Ms. Elena Austria (Camarines Norte) and Mr. Orlando Huenda (Sorsogon City)

• Group 3: Western Visayas LGUs facilitated by Ms. Ma. Teresa Guadalupe (NEDA VI)

• Group 4: Ilocos Region facilitated by Ms. Rosemarie Juan (CFO) and Ms. Shiella Grace Estrada (PLU-DW in HK)

*Other regions not included above will join the regions of their choice

5:00-5:30 pm – Wrap-up and closing ceremonies

Statement and ways forward from PCG-HK, NRCO, CFO, Atikha, PLU-DW, MFA

Master of ceremonies:
Mr. Rex Varona

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Mr. Rex Varona welcomed the participants from the Philippines (local governments from Bicol, Western Visayas and Calabarzon; national governments from CFO and NRCO; and civil society organizations). He acknowledged the migrant workers who sacrificed their rest day to attend the forum, some of whom also assisted in the invitation and confirmation of participants and in the logistical preparation.

Consul General Bernardita Catalla, in her welcome remarks, emphasized that migration and development must go hand in hand and the reason for migrants taking chances overseas is so that they can improve their lot. She articulated the administration’s policy where migrants contribute productively to the development of the Philippines with the view that overseas employment will only be an option in the near future. Looking ahead, the government is laying the foundation for the reintegration of the temporary overseas workers into the economic mainstream of Philippine society. She also relayed how she network and cooperate with other Consulates in HK of countries that have similar situation involving their migrant workers so that they can advocate as one group the protection and promotion of migrants’ rights and interests.

With the Consulate serving 195,000 Filipino migrants in HK, Consul General Catalla hopes to pick up meaningful insights and practical measures that can easily be implemented to improve their services.

Ms. Golda Myra Roma provided the general information regarding the migration and development nexus at the global, national and local level. With 10 million Filipinos working and living in more than 200 countries, she emphasized on the need to have data on migration to enable national and local governments to respond to the needs and interests of migrants depending on their profile and demographics. With more than five decades of migration management in the Philippines, the country has ratified various international and regional agreements and conventions, signed bilateral and multi-lateral agreements on labor and social security, passed some of the most comprehensive laws on overseas work, trafficking in persons, overseas voting, dual citizenship, and “balikbayan” benefits, and has one of the most number of government agencies responding to migrants. These are available to respond to the whole cycle of migration – from the time Filipinos are in applying for overseas work to the time they return.

Ms. Roma also presented some M&D programs such as Diaspora to Development, PinoyWISE, Migrant Savings for Alternative Investment, etc. In understanding the M&D nexus, it is not limited to job generation, employment and remittances, but is also linked with gender sensitivity, responding to human rights, building resilient community, and the whole spectrum of human development including health, education, and family.

Mr. Varona presented the objectives and expectations for the forum. In addition to the presentations from the resource persons, the important part of the forum is the workshop planning where migrants and the LGUs will
discuss how to move forward in addressing the challenges, enhancing cooperation, and creating the process and mechanisms for regular dialogue. It is important to have migrant representation in the dialogue and discussion (whether in the form of forum or committees) so that the voices of migrants are heard and that the local and national programs respond to their needs.

This is a forum where four regions have pulled their resources together to participate and engage with the migrants from their respective localities with the intent of increasing their understanding of the conditions and needs of migrants and vice versa. In so doing, the LGUs can better prepare their policies and programs suitable to the migrant needs. In addition to the support from the national agencies, it is also advantageous for migrants to have a direct response and support from LGUs.

**SESSION 1: Existing Good Practices on Migration and Development and updates on Philippine migration laws and policies**

Mr. Varona describes the first session as the “do no harm” session where the protection of migrants is the first responsibility of government before any talks about empowerment, financial freedom and M&D can prosper.

In this session, **Consul Macaspac and Assistant Labor Attache Ma. Nena German** presented the programs and services of the Consulate. The role of POLO is to verify legality and validity of work contracts, thus requiring them to have regular dialogue with recruitment agencies both in HK and the Philippines, and meetings with immigration offices and migrant associations in addressing issues and concerns not just in HK but also in Macau. Atty. German advised migrants to get in touch with POLO for any work-related questions or cases for immediate action and redress.

The Consulate reinstated the provision of the Post-Arrival Orientation Seminar (PAOS) for migrants and is conducted every other week. PAOS discusses the regular programs of the Consulate, the cultural diversities of HK and Chinese nationals to enable migrants to understand and adjust their working and living conditions, assistance-to-nationals cases, financial literacy (in partnership with CSOs and private groups), and recently, the offering of Cantonese lessons for migrants, etc.
The Consulate is regularly in touch with HK authorities, other Consulate offices (e.g. with Indonesian Consulate for mutual arrangements in protecting migrant workers) and other partners on issues such as:

- Issuance of advisories thru PCG’s facebook account and website
- Meetings and information sharing with consulates general in Hong Kong
- Working-level meeting with Hong Kong Labour Department, Employment Agencies Administration, and the Hong Kong Immigration Department
- Meeting with the Hong Kong Police Force
- Endorsement of cases to PH Department of Justice

Mr. Ramirez presented the M&D programs and services of the CFO, with emphasis on the PESO SENSE and anti-trafficking programs particularly in relation to advocacy and communications. PESO SENSE aims to improve financial literacy by promoting productive expenditure, greater saving and entrepreneurship among Filipino beneficiaries of international or domestic remittances using IT-based platform such as website, social media and mobile application, in addition to knowledge materials. The Mobile Application helps migrants discover mobile entrepreneurial potentials; provides free platform for local products in the Philippines; creates awareness about entrepreneur-related initiatives of the government; provides access to payment facilities of overseas Filipinos in paying household utilities, medical and tuition fees, and hassle-free online payment for SSS, PhilHealth, PAG-IBIG and NBI, etc.

In relation to combating trafficking under the banner “Laban Kontra Trafficking, Laban Nating Lahat”, the 24/7 telephone and online features of the 1343 actionline, and the “Itanong Mo Kay Ato!” online legal counseling. The mobile application of the 1343 actionline enables users to report human trafficking activities, be aware of the different forms of human trafficking and get news and announcements, and contact relevant agencies to report cases or inquire, as appropriate.

SESSION 2: Building savings/assets/capital and preparing for reintegration

Dir. Mantilla presented the M&D framework of NRRO which taps into the financial, human and social capitals of migrants for development and vice versa. The financial capital is directed towards enhanced savings and productive investment; human capital allows the transfer and use of migrant knowledge and skills to the
benefit of sending countries; and social capital taps networks of migrant communities in receiving countries that can be explored for development. Two in every five OFWs were only able to save from their cash remittances; to prepare them for reintegration, the savings has to increase in addition to enabling the social, family and community readiness.

At present, NRCC caters to undocumented OFWs; displaced, distressed and repatriated OFWs; returning OFWs or OFWs who return to the Philippines on a temporary basis with the intention of going back abroad; OFW returnees or OFWs who return to the Philippines with the intention to stay in the country on a permanent basis; and Families of returning OFWs. In each of the clientele are specific programs and services. NRCC has a business plan competition for seafarers, brain gain program with professionals, and the Balik Pinay, Balik Hanapbuhay program for distressed workers.

Of importance is the “Sa ‘Pinas, ikaw ang Ma’am/Sir” program given that household service workers are the biggest occupational group in terms of new-hire deployment of OFWs. It is an OFW reintegration convergence project of DOLE, DepEd and other government agencies such as PRC, CHED, TESDA and PNU among others, which provides opportunities for OFW LET (licensure examination for teachers) passers to return, find employment and practice their profession as teachers. The program aims to gain back the Filipino workers overseas, particularly the OFW LET passers and reverse out migration by enhancing their skills and providing them with the option to stay in the Philippines to work as public school teachers.

Ms. Anonuevo presented the various programs of Atikha particularly the Pinoy Worldwide Initiative on Savings Investment and Entrepreneurship (PinoyWISE) program in preparation for the migrants’ return and reintegration. She also described the financial literacy and school-based M&D programs and strategies on social enterprises for OFs and families, particularly the Ekolife eco-agro-tourism program. She emphasized that OF/OFWs are only able to save if the planning is done together with their families. PinoyWISE is a convergence initiative of various government agencies, private sector and CSO to create an enabling environment for investment and business opportunities, foremost in the area of agriculture. The activities include training of trainers on financial literacy, family and income management, organizing of PinoyWISE International, and investment mobilization. Among those promoted is the egg-layer farming and eco-tourism of the Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative.

The Ekolife Homestay Ecotour in Bohol, Laguna, Batangas, Tarlac and Oriental Mindoro in partnership with homestay operators, tour guides, travel agencies, van rentals, activities, restaurants, caterers, etc. was also presented as it offers diverse potentials for prospective migrant investor.

Figure 4 Atikha’s Ms. Anonuevo advised migrants to prepare for return and reintegration even prior to departure for work overseas
Mr. Lee stated that as a permanent resident in HK, one is given an opportunity to borrow money from financial institutions for whatever legitimate purpose. For a lot of migrant domestic workers, this is not the case; they may be allowed to open a bank account but not borrow. The advantage of the Asian Migrants Credit Union, the only accredited migrant cooperative in HK, is that it is closing the gap between the opportunities afforded to permanent residents with that of the MDWs. Within AMCU, one can save and borrow with a minimal interest of 12% maximum per annum compared to the 32% of the banks and credit cards, with the additional benefit of getting the dividends annually. AMCU is helping migrants manage their money soundly. When migrants are able to save through AMCU, they buy out their loans from high-interest financial institutions to minimize their costs.

AMCU is the only legal cooperative institution that allow migrants borrow but is not able to provide the full service of a financial company or remittance agent 24/7, because it do not have a full staff. It is, however, working to have money exchange and remittance facility through partnership with banks.

Ms. Veny Non presented the programs of the PLU-DW, a registered trade union in HK but has members from OFWs in Macau. Its origin is traced to the Alliance of Progressive Labor-HK which is composed of social and regional organizations and trade unions. In 2012, APL-HK merged with other Filipino domestic workers’ trade union and organization to form PLU-DW and held its first congress in June 2012. It was established to unite all Filipino migrant domestic workers (MDWs) in Hong Kong; educate and raise awareness of MDWs on labor rights and protection; promote and advocate for legislation and the interests of the labor movement, the union and its members; support international workers movement and build workers’ solidarity; and empower women migrant workers. Its programs range from empowering MDWs (organizing, awareness raising, policy advocacy and lobbying for workers’ protection), redress of grievances (legal and financial assistance, and rescue, counseling and shelter services), and economic services (savings and loans, promoting migrants’ cooperative, reintegration programs).

In closing the morning session, Mr. Varona echoed the advantage for migrants to be organized (unions, associations which are legally recognized in host countries) so that they can assert their rights and interests, and negotiate with home and host countries for better working and living conditions. He also briefly described the work of MFA in relation to the Migrants Savings for Alternative Investment. The first M&D program in Asia started from the migrants in HK but did not push through hugely because of absence of strong structure, thus the creation of MSAI and AMCU as the formal structure. He challenged the migrants to prepare for return and reintegration and five years now, that migrants already have the resources that will enable them to return and live well back in the Philippines.

SESSION 3: Understanding local/hometown programs and services for migrants and their families and investing in local and sustainable development activities; various investment/ financial/ entrepreneurial packages/options for OFs/OFWs

Cong. Geron (he is also representing AGAP partylist in Congress) presented the programs of SIDs for overseas Filipinos. SIDC, which started in 1969 with an initial capitalization of P11,800, is now the largest agriculture-based cooperative in the Philippines. The sari-sari store in Batangas is its first venture but its services has now expanded to CoopMart, livestock production, agri-trading, rice mill and gas station, aside from the savings and loans. As of December 2014, it now has 30,000 members with a combined asset worth P1.8 billion. Its operations expanded beyond Calabarzon and now has members from Central Luzon, MIMAROPA, Bicol and Panay Island.

The programs specifically developed for overseas Filipinos is the egg-layer farming and eco-tourism, particularly investing in the Sorosoro Springs Resort and Adventure Park. Th egg-layer farm was established with a capacity of 75,000 layers and now has a capacity to produce 63,000 eggs daily. Various options of investments are available, the basic of which has a minimum of P50,000 with a lock-in period of 5 years and guaranteed 6% interest per annum upon completion of minimum investment. Most of the OF investors are from Italy and UAE.
On behalf of the LGUs in Calabarzon, Ms. Peñas presented the M&D programs of the region where 18% of the total number of overseas Filipinos are coming from. As such, it is the first region to have a committee on M&D created to address the issues of OFs and serve as an institutional mechanism to ensure that the concerns of migration are being tackled and addressed at the regional and local levels. With multi-stakeholder partnership, the members are DOLE, OWWA, NRCO, POEA, private financial institutions, NGO, faith-based organizations, OFW/migrant organizations, focal persons of migration offices of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon. Under the JMDI SUMMID Calabarzon project, it developed the Guide in Mainstreaming Migration and Development in Local Development Planning and Governance which will be endorsed for national application. All the five provinces now have their respective CMD; and Batangas, Cavite and Laguna now have their respective MRCs.

Through Atikha, the region also pioneered capacity building on family and income management, reintegration planning and counseling, and school-based M&D programs for local stakeholders, and is now piloting the training on pre-migration orientation seminar and case management.

In terms of business opportunities, agriculture and agri-business (Rice and corn seed production, Off-season production of high value crops [tomato, sili, calamansi, etc.], Fruit crop, coffee and cacao production) and tourism (homestay, tour guides, pasalubong center and transportation).

On behalf of the Bicol LGUs, Mr. Reforsado of Naga City presented the M&D programs of Bicol while Vice Mayor Morano presented the investment opportunities in the region. While not a major source region of migrants, its migrant population is increasing over the past ten years. The JMDI Bicol project traced its beginning with Naga City incorporating M&D in its Comprehensive Development Plan 2010-2020 and creating the City Advisory Committee on Overseas Filipinos chaired by the City Mayor. The Pamilyang Migrante Kan Naga represents the empowered OF Sector and member of the Naga City People’s Council. These innovations are now being replicated in 15 targeted LGUs in Bicol with additional support to the top performing LGUs – Tabaco, Legazpi, Sorsogon and Masbate Cities and Camarines Norte Province.

Each of these LGUs have now their respective programs and services and priority investments for OF/OFWs, the common of which are the mainstreaming of migration in the annual investment programs, setting up of
OF/OFW helpdesks and mapping and organizing of their migrant population. Legazpi City already has the Organisasyong ng Pilipino Migrante while Tabaco has the Federation of OFW Associations. Sorsogon City also conducted financial literacy and IT training for children of migrants; some of them were able to get summer jobs and scholarships from the city government. Tabaco has conducted M&D information campaign at the barangay level.

Legazpi is promoting the establishment of Retirement Village cum business resort; Sorsogon prioritizes agri- and tourism-based investments. Tabaco is into manufacturing of handmade native and cutlery products as well as furniture. Masbate focuses on eco-tourism (Buntod Reef Marine Sanctuary and Pawa Mangrove Park) and its related economic activities such as lodging, tour guides, transportation and pasalubong centers. Camarines Norte is promoting corn production.

**Figure 6** CGN has institutionalized M4D Program through the Employment & Migration for Development Center (EM4DC), a division under the Metro Naga Public Employment Service Office with Mr. Reforsado as focal person

On behalf of the Western Visayas LGUs, **Ms. Miado** presented the M&D programs and investment priorities of the region. Western Visayas is strategically located and provides the critical link that allows easy access to and from established markets of Metro Manila and Luzon, the thriving cities of Visayas, and the promising markets of Mindanao through the Western Philippines Nautical Highway. The main thrust of the region is agriculture and tourism, while its key sectoral development priorities are in road construction, improvement of airports and seaports, and the construction of key sites such as the Iloilo Business Park, Panay Transmission Backbone, and Jalaur River Multi-Purpose Project.

Like in Calabarzon, under the MDI-WV project, a Subcommittee on M&D is also created composed of government agencies, LGUs and migrants to provide a venue for regular discussion of policy issues concerning migration and OFs. MRCs in Iloilo and Capiz are also in process following the enhanced Antique Youth and Migration Center. The Migration Situationer will also help the targeted 15 LGUs in mainstreaming migration in their local plans, in creating their M&D Council and in enhancing their local M&D programs. In terms of investments, the provinces have the following: Aklan (loomweaving and indigenous fibers), Antique (muscovado/sugar), Capiz (horticulture), Guimaras (mango), Iloilo (bamboo) and Negros Occidental (giftware and holiday décor).
WORKSHOPS

**SESSION 4: Regional/LGU break-out sessions: networking, policy discussions and programming between overseas Filipinos and their respective regional/LGU representatives**

For Session 4, the participants were divided into four groups and focus on the local-to-local dimension of the M&D nexus, using the following guidelines and mechanics.

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**GUIDELINES AND MECHANICS FOR SESSION 4 (BREAK-OUT GROUPS)**

**A. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

1. These guidelines are for “SESSION 4: Regional/LGU break-out sessions: networking, policy discussions and programming between overseas Filipinos and their respective regional/LGU representatives”

2. All the participants will be divided into 4 breakout groups – one group for each region:
   - Group 1: Calabarzon LGUs facilitated by Ms. Estrella “Mai” Anonuevo (Atikha);
   - Group 2: Bicol LGUs facilitated by Ms. Maricel Juloc (Legazpi City), Ms. Ma. Antonia Burabod (Tabaco City), Ms. Elena Austria (Camarines Norte) and Mr. Orlando Huenda (Sorsogon City);
   - Group 3: Western Visayas LGUs facilitated by Ms. Ma. Teresa Guadalupe (NEDA VI);
   - Group 4: Ilocos Region facilitated by Ms. Rosemarie Juan (CFO) and Ms. Shiella Grace Estrada (PLU-DW in HK);

   *Participants from other regions not included above will join the regions of their choice.

3. If you have region-specific resource/information materials and/or giveaways (i.e. in addition to the materials that are in the kit), you will be responsible in distributing these during your group discussion.

4. Each group must designate a documentor/note-taker who will take and consolidate the notes for submission to the organizers.

5. The group discussions will run for 2 hours (3-5 PM); please make sure that you give time before the end of the session to consolidate your outputs which the note-taker will then submit to the organizers.

   - **For Calabarzon and Western Visayas groups**, the facilitator will summarize the discussions during the day and inquire from the group participants if they have further questions and suggestions vis-à-vis the objective of the forum and in connection with the purpose of the workshop. After the brief open forum, they will go directly to the workshop.

   - **For Ilocos and Bicol groups**, the facilitator/s will also summarize the discussions during the day and request the other LGUs to briefly present their programs in 5-10 minutes. After the presentations, they can proceed with the workshop discussions.

6. This is the last session before the closing/concluding plenary; therefore, the notes of outputs (key topics/ideas/issues/needs discussed; key recommendations) of each breakout group needs to be synthesized/consolidated and submitted to the organizers.

7. There will be no reporting back to the plenary, but the output will be used as reference in the post-activity follow-up and linking/partnering processes. During the wrapping up/closing ceremony, the over-all facilitator will randomly call the regions/participants to present key action points for the information of the whole participants.

**B. OBJECTIVES OF SESSION 4 (BREAKOUT DISCUSSIONS)**

1. To discuss and understand the key programs, activities, services, efforts of the groups from the Philippines (local/regional/national; government, LGUs, migrants, civil society, private sector) in terms of:
   a. protecting, serving, addressing, responding to the needs, issues, concerns of migrants in HK and their families (particularly coming from your region);
   b. empowering, supporting, facilitating the organizing, participation, representation of migrants in HK, their families, civil society groups in the M&D processes in HK, Philippines, and the region of origin;
   c. linking/assisting migrants/families (both those who are in HK and in the Philippines/region) in building their savings, investments, livelihoods, reintegration and development initiatives.

2. Recommend clear and concrete actions, strategies, processes to address the major gaps, obstacles, needs and essential elements necessary in achieving:
   a. effective protection/responsive services for migrants in HK and families, especially in cases of violations, problems, need for redress;
   b. sustained empowerment/participation of migrants in HK and their families (and their organizations), in the M&D processes in the Philippines/region;
c. effective partnership, cooperation, support in encouraging, building and developing the savings, investments, development and reintegration mechanisms, efforts and mechanisms of migrants in HK and their families in the Philippines/region.

**SUGGESTED QUESTIONS:**

a. *From the presentation of the LGUs, where do OFs/OFWs in HK see potential collaboration or partnership with their regions/LGUs/CSOs (in areas enumerated above – protection, networking, dialogue, social entrepreneurship, savings, etc.)? Discuss 2-3 potential but concrete and clear activities.*

b. *What are the participants’ proposals and recommendations to enhance and make responsive the LGUs’ programs and services? Discuss 2-3 potential proposals.*

c. *What strategies/mechanisms/processes can be adapted to ensure continuous dialogue and network? Discuss 2-3 potential strategies.*

**C. PROCESS FLOW**

1. Each group must ensure that they complete the attendance list which has the names, organizations, contact details (phone, email, etc.) of the participants. A copy of this must be given back to the organizers – critical for follow-up and future communication, coordination.

2. Facilitator/s must ensure that they stick to the time allocated, and facilitate the effective discussion and exchange of ideas.

3. It is suggested that the first 30 minutes be allocated to give chance for the following to BRIEFLY share information about their efforts/programs (as mentioned in Objective 1):
   - LGUs from the region;
   - migrant/family groups/civil society from the region;
   - migrants/civil society from HK.

4. The remaining time can then be allocated to analyze the needs, gaps, necessary processes/elements, and what can be done through partnership between the groups in HK and the groups in the Philippines/region.

5. The last 30 minutes can be spent in consolidating, prioritizing the recommendations, suggested actions стратегии.

6. Note-taker and facilitator/s must ensure that a copy of the notes/outputs and attendance list are submitted to the organizers at the end of Session 4.

**D. EXPECTED OUTPUT**

At the end of the session, it is expected that each group:

1. submit attendance list with contact details
2. has substantively discussed the focal topics mentioned in Objectives 1 and 2
3. submit output of the discussion
**During the actual workshop, Group 1 (Calabarzon) included participants from areas where Atikha is implementing its IFAD project such as Tarlac, Ifugao, Bohol, Agusan and other neighboring Calabarzon areas. Group 2 (Bicol) included Leyte and Samar and neighboring provinces/areas. Group 3 (WV) included Cebu and Negros. Group 4 (Ilocos) included Cagayan Valley and Cordillera Region.**

***During the actual workshop, the facilitators were assisted by the following documentors: Aileen Constantino Penas for Calabarzon, Maricel Juloc for Bicol, Ma. Lourdes Miado for Western Visayas and Romeo Ramirez for Ilocos region.***

**SESSION 4: BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION – REGION I**

A. **What are the participants’ proposals and recommendations to enhance and make responsive the LGU’s programs and services (ranging from services/redress to savings, investments, local development and reintegration)? Discuss 2-3 potential proposals.**

1. LGU should create a municipal help desk which shall have a contact person to closely monitor the status of the OFW and their families and identify current OFWs and their families who will become the members and frontrunners in all migration and development programs depending on the financial capabilities of recipients.
2. Conduct a wide information dissemination on financial literacy, workshops and regular meetings on all the services about migration and development in all sitios and barrios, and evaluate possible programs and further plan for its implementation.
3. The LGU should set up a website or social media account for public information drive to reach the communities and prospect stakeholders.

B. **From the presentation of the LGUs, where do OFs/OFWs in HK see potential collaboration or partnership with their regions/LGUs/CSOs? Discuss 2-3 potential but concrete and clear activities.**

1. Organizations/associations/cooperatives should be set up for small entrepreneurs and property owners which involves agri-business such as mushroom production. (SEC, Department of Agriculture, Department of Public Works and Highways)
   a. Road building: farm to market roads should be developed. (DPWH)
   b. Partner with cooperatives/shops in town to buy their specific products.
   c. Conduct agri-business seminars.
2. Tourism has one of the best potentials for growth. Tourism should be boosted and widely promoted. We need to educate our locals on how to take care of the environment. Develop infrastructures that can help in tourism. Agencies like tourism board and provincial planning office should participate in the partnership. TESDA can help by introducing courses at affordable costs.
3. In the case of OFWs sending their children to school, LGU should assist by providing financial assistance through loans.
4. Health programs should be introduced like improving or enhancing PHILHEALTH coverage.

C. **What strategies/mechanisms/processes can be developed to ensure continuous dialogue, networks or partnerships? Discuss 2-3 potential strategies.**

1. Retention and maintenance – ensure continuity of programs in areas to provide better benefits to clients/migrants.
2. Outreaches and constant monitoring of the situation and identify seasonal problems and formulate strategies and contingency plans.
3. Social Media account.

****The Northern Luzon group can also seek help from OWWA, NGOs and LGUs in identifying mechanisms and strategies.
SESSION 4: BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION – REGION IV-A

A. What are the participants’ proposals and recommendations to enhance and make responsive the LGU’s programs and services (ranging from services/redress to savings, investments, local development and reintegration)? Discuss 2-3 potential proposals.

******Active groups – Tagbilaran (Pinamalayan), Vismin; Other existing groups – Bohol (Jagna, Dauis), Gen San, CDO, Lanao, Leyte, Davao

1. Mainstream M&D in all regions in the Philippines and establish M&D Committee in other provinces
2. Map potential hometown associations (HTAs) in HK and revive HTAs in HK
3. Skills training: TESDA accredited for families left behind

B. From the presentation of the LGUs, where do OFs/OFWs in HK see potential collaboration or partnership with their regions/LGUs/CSOs? Discuss 2-3 potential but concrete and clear activities.

1. Areas of partnership in agripreneurs, agri-negosyo
2. Investment in cooperatives
3. Support to the tourism industry particularly in establishing pasalubong centers and training tour guides
4. Organizing of HTAs in HK and linking HTAs to their provinces

C. What strategies/mechanisms/processes can be developed to ensure continuous dialogue, networks or partnerships? Discuss 2-3 potential strategies.

1. Facebook: PinoyWISE International
2. At least 50 HTA members to invite PLGU counterparts for business opportunities seminar or Investment forum
A. What are the participants’ proposals and recommendations to enhance and make responsive the LGU’s programs and services (ranging from services/redress to savings, investments, local development and reintegration)? Discuss 2-3 potential proposals.

1. Proper/strict implementation of laws concerning migration and migrants welfare; Localization of national laws for specific concerns
2. Families of OFWs should not depend too much on cash remittances; they should be involved in income generating activities such as “merchandizing” arranged with companies
3. Better understanding/analysis of the life of OFWs by the families; restore/instill the moral values of the children

B. From the presentation of the LGUs, where do OFs/OFWs in HK see potential collaboration or partnership with their regions/LGUs/CSOs? Discuss 2-3 potential but concrete and clear activities.

1. Conduct of forum/discussion with OFW families in Bicol
2. Include testimonies of speakers (OFW) during the forum
3. Parallel organizations at the local level to receive, monitor and provide feedbacks

C. What strategies/mechanisms/processes can be developed to ensure continuous dialogue, networks or partnerships? Discuss 2-3 potential strategies.

1. Connect with OFWs not only during elections
2. Network at the local (other municipalities) through PESO managers
A. What are the participants’ proposals and recommendations to enhance and make responsive the LGU’s programs and services (ranging from services/redress to savings, investments, local development and reintegration)? Discuss 2-3 potential proposals.

1. There is a need to strengthen the Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) to be attended, not only by the departing OFWs, but by their families as well. During the PDOS, all related agencies should be invited like OWWA, Philhealth etc., to orient the OFs and their families of their rights, responsibilities and privileges.

2. There is a need for the employers to also attend a seminar regarding the characteristics of the OFWs for them to better understand and perhaps make some adjustments for the benefit of both the employers and the domestic helpers. The Philippine Consulate in Hongkong can facilitate the training.

3. It might be useful to the OFWs if there is a compendium containing possible issues and concerns that they might experience while working abroad, and the procedures/steps and concerned agencies that can assist them, including their addresses and the contact persons.

4. Migration Resource Centers must be established in the provinces and cities where the OFWs and their families can visit and can consult in times of need. Trainings such as livelihood, financial literacies etc. can be part of the services of the MRCs. The MRCs can also facilitate the needs of the OFWs especially those related to the services of the concerned agencies.

B. From the presentation of the LGUs, where do OFs/OFWs in HK see potential collaboration or partnership with their regions/LGUs/CSOs? Discuss 2-3 potential but concrete and clear activities.

1. All OFWs are encouraged to be a member of any migrant organizations in HK. Likewise, their families are also expected to participate in local organizations for them to appreciate the situation of migrants in HK and the sacrifices they made for their families so that the hard-earned dollars of the OFWs would be put to good use and not to be squandered by their families back home.

2. The OFWs are encouraged to be a member of the cooperative organized for migrants in HK. In the Philippines, the Migrants Coordinating Group will look for a partner in Region 6. For HK, the OFWs are encouraged to be a member of the Asian Migrants Cooperative c/o Mr. Clarence Lee. The investment will ensure the future of the OFWs when they decide to eventually return to the Philippines permanently.
3. For the forum, next time, all regional information (i.e. MDI Western Visayas including the potential investment areas of a particular region) should be discussed during the workshop instead of having it during the plenary sessions.

C. What strategies/mechanisms/processes can be developed to ensure continuous dialogue, networks or partnerships? Discuss 2-3 potential strategies.

1. OFWs at the local level (Region 6) to participate in the meeting of the Migrant Coordinating Group which will be organized on November 27-28, 2015 at the John B. Lacson Memorial Foundation University in Iloilo City. Migrants in HK are encouraged to inform their families regarding the meeting. In Region 6, the focal person is Mr. Rex Varona.

2. The workshop group composed of OFWs from Western Visayas is expected to maintain network with each other. For HK, the contact person is Ms. Lowelyn P. Villanueva (Bhing) with email address bhingy23@yahoo.com, contact number 852-95432353. A facebook page will be created by Bhing. The group is expected to meet at least once a year.

In the closing part of the forum, while the participants did not report anymore their workshop outputs, each group briefly discussed one or two highlights of their discussion and on the migrant focal person per region.

For Region V and neighboring provinces – Discussions centered on educating migrants and the families on the real life situation of migrants overseas, information dissemination on the programs of LGUs and NGOs, link with LGUs and NGOs to migrant families on the proper use of remittance, and building of trust between migrants and LGUs. The focal persons are: Ms. Lori Brunio, Mr. Arthur Buban, Ms. Veny Non.

For Region VI and Visayas – Discussions centered on regular dialogue and coordination through Facebook, and establishing the migrants resource centers to cater to the need of migrant families. The focal person is Ms. Bhing Villanueva.
For Region I and Northern Luzon – Discussions centered on investing in mushroom production, barangay cooperative to avoid excessive interest rates and help migrant families. The focal person is from the Filipino Nurses Association in HK (Ms. Lorna).

For Region IV-A and other provinces – Discussions centered on training and assisting families so that they can support the migrants when they return, avail of the training services of the Consulate and OWWA and apply it for business back home. The focal person is Ms. Lui and Ms. Janette.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Presentations:

1. Welcome Remarks: Consul General Bernardita Catalla
2. Presentation on the overview of M&D in the Philippines (Ms. Golda Myra Roma)
3. Session I presentation: Programs and services of PCG HK (Consul Charles Macaspac)
4. Session I presentation: CFO programs and services (Mr. Romeo Ramirez, Jr.)
5. Session II presentation: NRCo programs and services (Dir. Chona Mantilla)
6. Session II presentation: Atikha and PinoyWISE (Ms. Estrella Anonuevo)
7. Session II presentation: PLU-DW in HK (Ms. Veny Non)
8. Session III presentation: Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative (Cong. Rico Geron)
9. Session III presentation: Calabarzon M&D (Ms. Aileen Penas)
10. Session III presentation: Bicol M&D-Naga City (Mr. Roderick Reforsado)
11. Session III presentation: Bicol M&D-Masbate City (Mayor Ruby Morano)
12. Session III presentation: Bicol M&D-Legazpi City (Ms. Maricel Juloc)
14. Session III presentation: Bicol M&D-Sorsogon City (Mr. Orlando Huenda)
15. Session III presentation: Bicol M&D-Camarines Norte (Ms. Elena Austria)
16. Session III presentation: Western Visayas (Ms. Ma. Lourdes Miado)

Attendance Sheets:

17. September 27 forum
18. September 27 workshops
19. September 28 mini-forum part II